

## Assessing Therapies for Special Needs Learner From a Charlotte Mason Perspective

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Increased Sense of Responsibility

### Overview

- ❖ Tweaking CM
- ❖ Terms, Descriptions, Organizing Principles, Comparisons, Conflicts

❖ Example: Relationship Development Intervention

❖ Practical Application: Association Method

The sense of responsibility still rests upon us with a weight 'heavy as frost'; we have only shifted it to the other shoulder. The more serious of us are quite worn with the sense of what we owe to those about us. Vol. 3, pg. 25.

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Wisdom

### From "Backward Children" (The Parents Review)

- ❖ They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. Psalm 126:5
- ❖ There are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last. Luke 13:30

### Toss the Magic Age of Neural Plasticity out the Window!

- ❖ Learned Recitation (Language) at Age 17 (Tweaking CM)
  - ❖ Major Gains in Socialization at Age 18 (RDI Therapy)
  - ❖ Major Gains in Syntax since Age 15 (Association Method)
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Tweaking Charlotte Mason Methods

### Syntactic Aphasia

- ❖ Difficulties with word order and word forms.
  - ❖ Omits little words.
  - ❖ Large vocabulary.
  - ❖ Trouble with putting words together so as to make sense.
- Children should be taught, as they become mature enough to understand such teaching, that the chief responsibility which rests on them as persons is the acceptance or rejection of ideas. Principle 19.
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### Recitation of "The End"

When I was one, I had just begun.

When I was two, I was nearly new.

When I was three, I was hardly me.

When I was four, I was not much more.

When I was five, I was just alive.

But now I am six, I'm as clever as clever.

So I think I'll be six now for ever and ever.

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### Tweaking Recitation

- ❖ Copy: *When I was one,*
  - ❖ Do studied dictation.
  - ❖ If perfect, add a new line the next day:  
*When I was one, I had just begun.*
  - ❖ If not, teach a lesson and do studied dictation again.
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Assessing Therapies

### Elements to Analyze

- ❖ Terms – common to both and translating meaning
  - ❖ Descriptions
  - ❖ Organizing principles
  - ❖ Comparisons
  - ❖ Conflicts – identify them and know when to stray
- ### Relationship Development Intervention
- ❖ Friendship, empathy, and shared experiences
  - ❖ Flexible thinking
  - ❖ Problem solving
  - ❖ Developmental stages
  - ❖ Home-based, parent-driven (guided by a consultant)
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### Relationship Development Intervention

We do say that some educational theory which shall include the whole nature of man and the results of scientific research, in the same or a greater degree, is necessary. Vol. 3, pg. 65

The RDI Program is based on over 20 years of research by world's experts on typical development as well as scientific studies on people with autism.

(1) *Solving the Relationship Puzzle*, (2) *Relationship Development Intervention*, (3) <http://www.rdiconnect.com>

Common Terms

### Attention

- ❖ The age to cultivate is birth through six months.
  - ❖ Capture attention through delightful interactions.
  - ❖ Alter pace and vary to maintain interest.
- Both RDI and CM propose the first habit to cultivate in children missing this developmental skill is attention!
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### Simple Translation of Terms

Our part is to remove obstructions and to give stimulus and guidance to the child who is trying to get into touch with the universe of things and thoughts which belongs to him. Vol. 3, pg. 188

→ Relations: Things/Books

We also catalogue the child's areas of interests . . . as well as any factors that may present obstacles . . . deficits in self development, his resistance in allowing adults to guide his participation . . . SRP, pg. 57

→ Relations: People

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Complex Translation of Terms

### CM: Declarative Language

- ❖ Avoids endless commands and prompts.
  - ❖ Encourages non-verbal communication in habit training.
  - ❖ Prefers narration to direct questions.
  - ❖ Does not require narration until able to articulate.
- RDI avoids imperative wording (commands, requests, questions). It stresses declarative wording (non-verbal and oral communication to show curiosity, invite others to interact, share feelings/perceptions, coordinate actions).
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### Analyzing Descriptions (CM)

The child . . . dreams over the lacing of her boots—the tag in her fingers poised in mid air—but her conscience is awake; she is constrained to look up, and her mother's eye is upon her, *hopeful* and *expectant*. She answers to the rein and goes on; midway, in the lacing of the second boot, there is another pause, shorter this time; again she looks up, and again she goes on. Vol. 1, pg. 120

Sketch of Social Referencing: Refer to another's reactions, actions, facial expressions, to determine one's behavior

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### Analyzing Descriptions (RDI)

Billy and his mother are playing their tug-of-war game with a piece of string. Billy accidentally yanks a bit too hard and pulls the string out of his mother's hand. He shifts his gaze for a moment between the string in his hand and his mother's face. He realizes coordination has been lost and initiates a repair action—he holds the string out with an expectant expression, while glancing at his mother's face. When she doesn't immediately respond, he tries again by moving the string closer, so that it touches her hand. SRP, pg. 20

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### Organizing Principles

#### CM: Education is . . .

- ❖ Science of relations to a vast number of books and things
- ❖ An atmosphere
- ❖ A discipline through habit training
- ❖ A life of ideas

#### RDI: Socialization is . . .

- ❖ Science of relations to a vast number of people (first parents, then family, friends, maybe spouse)
  - ❖ A lifestyle
  - ❖ A discipline through developmental stages
  - ❖ A life of dynamic intelligence
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### Science of Relations: Things/Books

"Education is the Science of Relations"; that is, that a child has natural relations with a vast number of things and thoughts: so we train him upon physical exercises, nature lore, handicrafts, science and art, and upon many living books, for we know that our business is not to teach him all about anything, but to help him to make valid as many as may be of—"Those first-born affinities." Vol. 6, pg. XXX

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Affinity – fellow feeling, kindred spirit, attraction, empathy

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### Science of Relations: People

Relationships are self-motivating and inherently reinforcing.

When we engage in encounters with friends and loved ones, we feel an immediate increase in excitement and joy, or a sudden decrease in anxiety . . . We want the person to observe his social world because he is curious and excited about what he might see and hear around him rather than for any material reward. RDI, pg. 25

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## An Atmosphere: Lifestyle

### CM: Atmosphere . . .

- ❖ Offers knowledge for its own sake (not grades).
- ❖ Parents share home's ways.
- ❖ Siblings tease and pet one another.
- ❖ Learns from baby, chums, and great-grandmother.
- ❖ Romps and tumbles.
- ❖ Plays at battle and siege with sofa and table.

### RDI: Lifestyle. . .

- ❖ Offers interaction for its own sake (not rewards).
- ❖ Blends seamlessly into day-to-day activities.
- ❖ Enriches the life of the whole family.
- ❖ Relates to different social pairings and context.
- ❖ Plays at beanbag forts, islands, and dodge.

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## A Discipline

### CM: Habit Training

- ❖ Lay down rails of a good life.
- ❖ Focuses on worthwhile ideas.
- ❖ Spotlights character.
- ❖ Sow an act, reap a habit; sow a habit, reap a character.
- ❖ Guided by opinions reaped from a daily diet of wise thoughts from great minds.

### RDI: Developmental Stages

- ❖ Systematic: a step-by-step.
- ❖ Focuses on motivations.
- ❖ Spotlights competence.
- ❖ Carefully builds skills that are easily used and generalized.
- ❖ Guided by dynamic intelligence reaped from daily activities in a complex world.

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## A Life

### CM: Ideas. . .

- ❖ Require observation of events and images.
- ❖ Must be clothed upon with fact and story (context).
- ❖ Come in unexpected places and unrecognized forms.
- ❖ Are found in much and varied humane reading.
- ❖ Sustain a child's inner life.

### RDI: Dynamic Intelligence. . .

- ❖ Require observation of actions and reactions.
- ❖ Offer meaning based upon the larger context.
- ❖ Come in a messy and unpredictable world.
- ❖ Are found in expanding ventures into the world.
- ❖ Foresight and hindsight sustain a child's inner life.

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## Comparisons

\*Both CM and RDI compare types of interactions\*

### CM

- ❖ Utilitarian Education versus Science of Relations

### RDI

- ❖ Instrumental Skills versus Experience Sharing

\*Both CM and RDI compare their attributes\*

- ❖ End versus means
- ❖ Reason for interaction
- ❖ Interchangeability
- ❖ Predictability
- ❖ Uniqueness of experience

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## RDI Comparisons

### Instrumental Skills

Mom comes from the garden with three raspberries. She asks her daughter if she would like to have them. Her daughter says, "Yes" and eats them. Mother prompts, "Now, what do you say?" Her daughter replies, "Thank you" and eats the berries.

### Experience Sharing

Mom comes from the garden with three raspberries, tucked in her hand. She gently teases her daughter, "Guess what I have?" Her daughter smiles and her eyes dance, "What?" Mom says, "Open your mouth and close your eyes!" Her daughter complies, but is so excited, she peeks. Mom chides her and playfully says, "No peeking!" Then, she pops a raspberry into her daughter's mouth, one by one. They both walk away smiling.

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## Source of Unease

### RDI: Instrumental Skills

End versus Means – predictable, specific product; failure = anger.

Reason for Interaction – Purpose is to obtain something wanted or needed.

Interchangeability – Partners who know roles and actions are interchangeable.

Predictability – Partners know and follow their roles and actions.

Uniqueness of Experience – Emotional connection is not important.

### CM: Utilitarian Education

An adult with information, skills, career, etc. developed through grades and prizes.

An adult who is efficient, self-directed cog to serve society—a full life is optional!

One textbook is like any other. A child is a bucket to hold information, no more.

Teacher covers textbooks, exercises, oral lessons. Child is a product of education.

Teacher sees a dreary pile of exercises with no personality. Child performs with no originality, mechanically, unaffected.

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Source of Pleasure

RDI: Experience Sharing

End versus Means – Novel experiences with no clear cut ending desired.

Reason for Interaction – Purpose is to create a unique, shared experience.

Interchangeability – Prior history with partners make future exchanges joyful.

Predictability – Some rules and roles are needed. The key is to pay attention to and react to the partner's action.

Uniqueness of Experience – Emotional connection plays an important role.

CM: Science of Relations

Child relates to many thoughts and things, wants knowledge for its own sake.

Child is born a person, seeking to know first-born affinities (kindred spirits).

Teacher connects child to great minds. Knowledge becomes part of the child.

Child reads to know; teacher sees that he knows. Child narrates with originality, little touches of individual personality.

Living books appeal to the spirit: "Think clear, feel deep, bear fruit well." Matthew Arnold

Conflicts

RDI recommends a controlled setting (all distractions

removed).

CM rejected an isolated child-environment, especially adapted and prepared.

RDI recommends behavioral therapy for children unable to orient to parents and comply.

CM rejected a command-oriented, rewards-based system.

Both tips are temporary and not required for children who orient to parents and accept guidance without distraction.

Children should be taught, as they become mature enough to understand such teaching, that the chief responsibility which rests on them as persons is the acceptance or rejection of ideas. Principle 19.

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Practical Application

Elements to Analyze

❖ Terms – common to both and translating meaning

❖ Descriptions

❖ Organizing principles

❖ Comparisons

❖ Conflicts – identify them and know when to stray

Association Method

❖ Multi-sensory teaching of language and reading

❖ Cursive, color-coding

❖ Incremental system (learns one syntax at a time)

❖ Vocabulary-controlled and syntax-controlled stories

❖ Severe language disorders

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## Practical Application

Study page 5 of your handout. Answer the following questions. You can work in groups or individually.

1. Do you see any terms in common between the association method and Charlotte Mason's philosophy of education? If so, what are they? Do they mean the same thing?

2. Do you see any simple terms that are different, but have the same meaning in both approaches? If so, what are they?

3. Can you think of some explanations used by Charlotte Mason that identified with educational terms of this method?

4. How do the organizing principles of the Association Method compare to that of Charlotte Mason?

5. Do the two methods have anything comparisons (and contrasts) in common?

6. Are there obvious conflicts between the two methods? How would you reconcile them? Are they glaring enough to toss out the Association Method?

7. Do you have any thoughts you would like to add?

# The Association Method

*Teaching Language-Deficient Children* by N. Etoile DuBard and Maureen K. Martin <http://www.usm.edu/dubard/index.html>

Mildred McGinnis, a young teacher of the deaf in the 1920s, saw parallels between brain-injured war veterans and deaf children unable to learn language. She built on the work of an 18th century educator of the deaf. The authors and the University of Southern Mississippi (USM) have continued her work and monitor current research.

Aphasic children are very uncertain about language because they guess poorly. Information theory analyzes how to reduce uncertainties. The authors explain how it helps them make language more predictable. They show how the Association Method applies the motor theory of perception because precise articulation improves the ability to perceive language.

## Some Distinctive Features of the Association Method

- ❖ It is not a packaged program with texts. Its effectiveness depends upon teachers to follow the method's principles step-by-step. Teachers and parents can learn the method through the book, workshops, and audio conferences.
- ❖ Cursive script emphasizes that letters put together form a word that represents a thing. Cursive also reduces word reversals and inversions. Letters are not isolated, but form a word. It reduces uncertainty.
- ❖ Teachers use colors to identify new syntax to capture a child's attention. One color represents mastered material; another represents new material. It also reduces uncertainty.
- ❖ Children articulate words precisely. It helps children perceive language better.
- ❖ Each child has his own book with stories written by the teacher to reinforce new syntax and model language.

## Presentation of New syntax in Multi-sensory Steps (Unit 2)

- ❖ *Reading* – The child reads a story orally in the child's book with emphasis on precise articulation. The story is in cursive with color-coding that spotlights the new syntax.
- ❖ *Oral recall* – The teacher reads a word or sentence, and the child repeats it with precise articulation while seeing the page and again without seeing the page.
- ❖ *Copying* – The child copies a story in cursive.
- ❖ *Writing* – The child writes a sentence or story based upon a picture.
- ❖ *Dictation* – The child writes a sentence or story based upon a teacher's dictation.
- ❖ *Generalization* – The child is encouraged to practice new syntax in daily life in the home and at school. The manual gives ideas for using syntax in math work, telling time, using the calendar, etc.
- ❖ *Questions and answers* – The child masters the syntax of an answer first ("This is a dog"). Then, the child masters the question that goes with it ("What is this?"). The child is not expected to answer questions until equipped to both ask and answer questions. When writing, children are encouraged to make up their own questions and answer them for themselves.
- ❖ *Stories* – Stories come from real life situations and things that interest most children: animals, common objects, personal descriptions, place descriptions, action stories, experience stories, and finally imagination stories (creative writing).
- ❖ *Dignity of the child* – Through body language (smiles, laughter, genuine expressions), the teacher must convey, "You and your needs are the only reason I am here." They must create loving, compassionate, appreciative atmosphere for learning.
- ❖ *Attention span* – The teacher must help the child lengthen attention span and stay focused. She must make language a living experience. She must personally interact with the child and make language come to life. She must seize minute episodes and events to show how language is a living tool for the child to be used for true communication.
- ❖ *Application* – The child must master correct syntax through practical application, not by memorizing the rules.

The authors help parents apply this method at home; the USM offers outpatient therapy. They outline case histories in which parents taught at home. "Inquiries from parents, mostly mothers, seeking help in teaching children who had been diagnosed as aphasic but who lived in geographic areas where no constructive help was available could not be ignored. . . This book was also designed to help teachers, clinicians, and parents who believe that all children have the right to learn."

The Association Method is for children unable to learn language. Success in reading is highly correlated to competence in oral communication. The authors do not promote commercial texts because the Association Method is language-controlled. The key is to reduce uncertainty in the acquisition of language. The teacher tailors language materials to the child to

reinforce concepts and principles of language. They consider children ready for conventional learning methods once they reach the end of Unit 3 (imagination stories). They may still need a low pupil-to-teacher ratio tailored to their special needs.