

New resource targets autistic children

Teachers in Kent have helped a software developer to create a new resource specifically designed for autistic children.

Immersive Education has been working closely Kent County Council to adapt its *Kar2ouche* learning resource.

The programme helps with creativity and communication skills, but autistic children have an impaired understanding and use of body language, which restricts their use of the characters in the resource.

Liz Connors, specialist advisory teacher for autistic spectrum disorder in Kent said: "We saw advantages in using the original version of *Kar2ouche* with all our children,

but especially our ASD students.

"*Kar2ouche* generates and develops motivation, creativity and communication skills; skills which are often weak in children with ASD. Another trait with ASD children is their inability to follow the rules of conversation such as listening, turn-taking, empathy, and being relevant and concise; this is also enhanced and encouraged with the story-boarding activities."

After consultation involving educational psychologists, speech and language specialists, and specialist teachers, Immersive has launched *Kar2ouche Social Communication*, which features generic stick characters with no facial expressions or

other identifiable characteristics.

This should let the children concentrate on the task at hand without being distracted by details.

The resource is aimed at children up to key stage 3.

A spokesman for Immersive said: "There's an increasing awareness of this disorder in schools, which is driving up the need for learning resources to give consideration to the children's issues."

First identified in 1943, autism is still a relatively unknown disability. However, autistic spectrum disorders are thought to touch the lives of more than 500,000 families in the UK.

For details, see www.imed.co.uk

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