



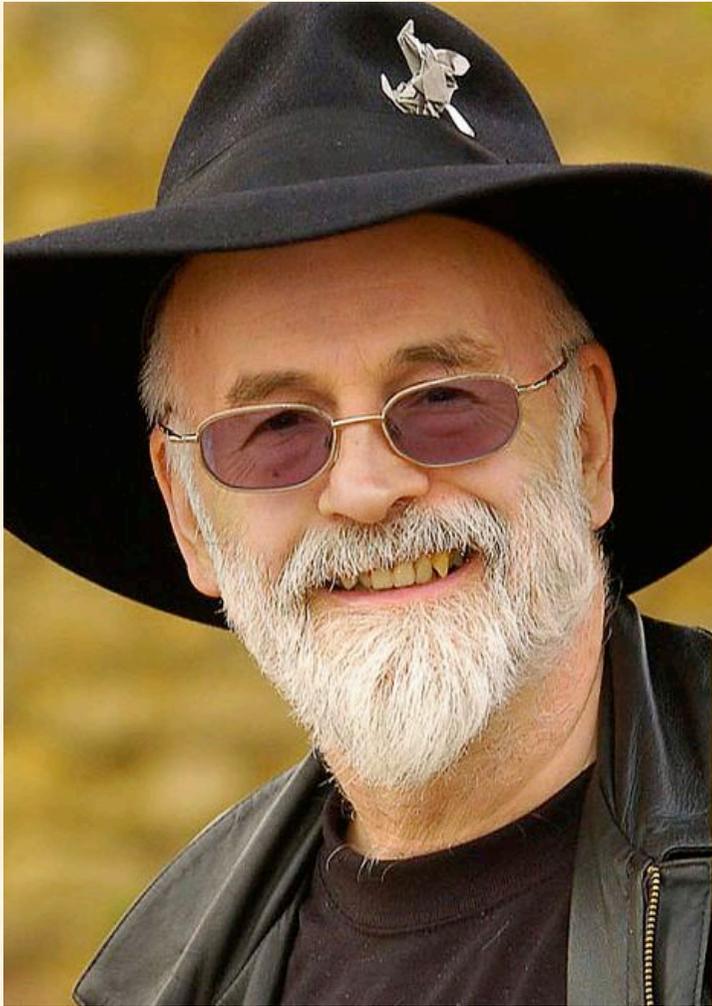
DEMENTIA SERVICES INFORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT CENTRE  
*promoting excellence in dementia care*

Stephen Wey

**Identifying and re-engaging  
orphaned skills to maximise  
the function and well-being of  
people who have dementia:**

*expanding the scope of  
dementia rehabilitation*

*Stephen Wey  
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■ *"When you have Alzheimer's, you look for the positives"*

□ *Terry Pratchett,  
BBC 2, 4/02/09*

# Orphaned skills?

We need to  
dive in

To see more than the tip of the iceberg

# We all know this

- We can take the same person and place them in different environments or contexts and we will see very different levels of functioning

- e.g. Clara's walking stick

**Situated cognition**

- and medication

**Distributed cognition**

See Wey, 2006

# Losing skills?

- “Some abilities may appear to have been lost when instead they have become “de-automatized. This means the skills that were once performed without conscious thought or deliberate action might now have to be “cognitized” and “re-automatized””

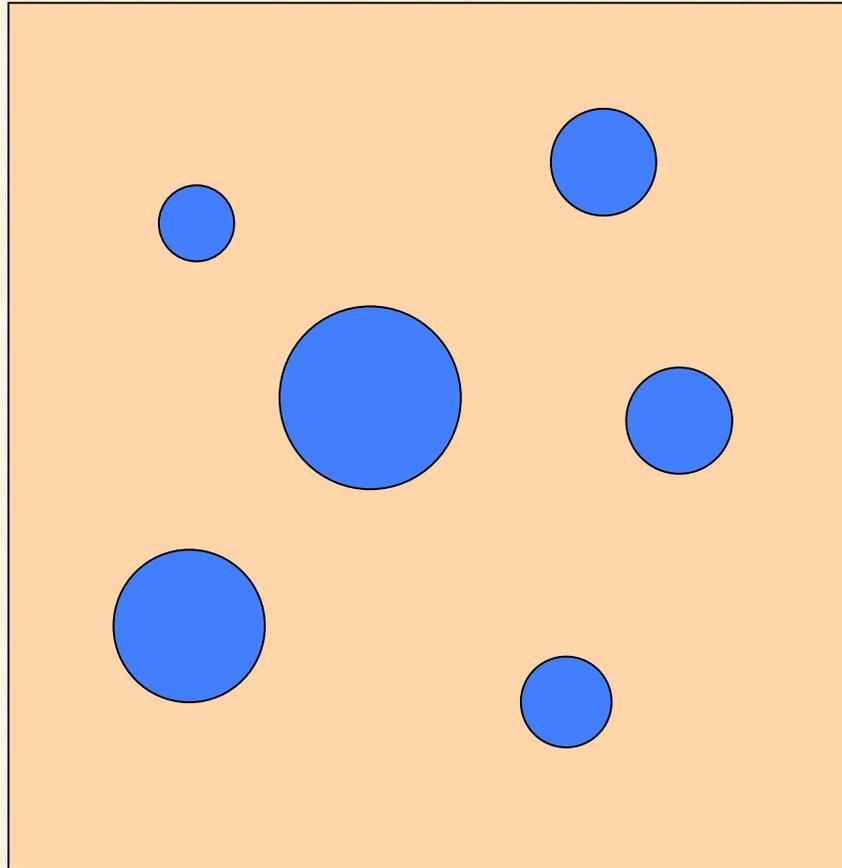
□ *Haywood and Lidz, 2007*

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- “As an infant responds to others, processes that are at first interpersonal become “internalised” – part of the individual psyche. At the same time, the nervous system is growing and maturing, holding the fruit of experience in place. In dementia many aspects of the psyche that had, for a long time, been individual and “internal”, are again made over to the interpersonal milieu”.

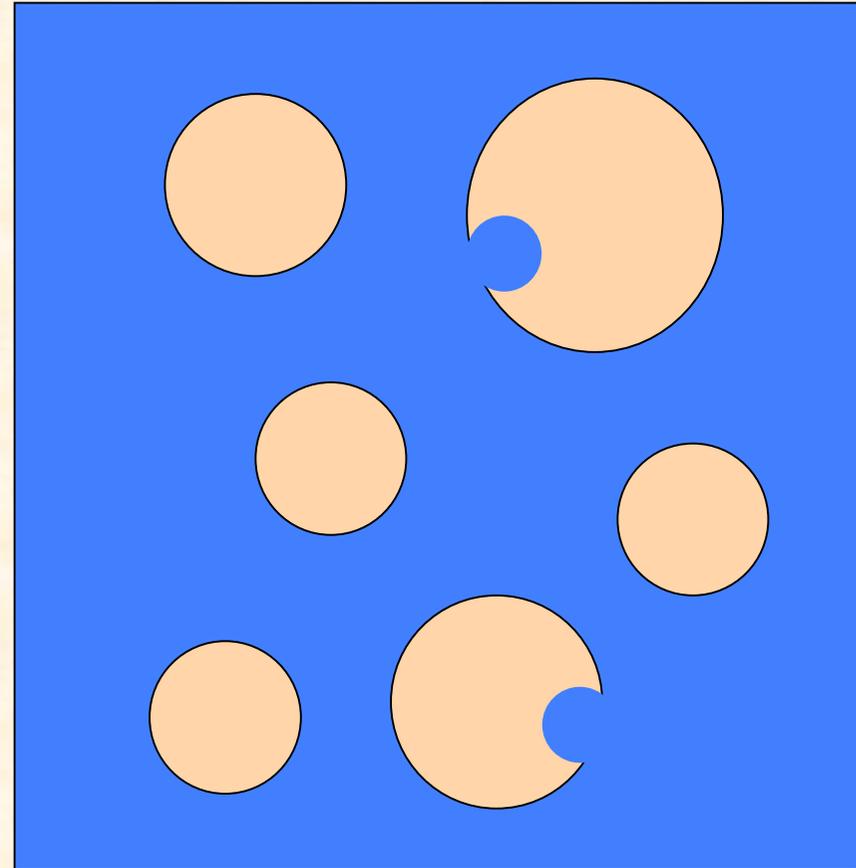
■ Kitwood. 1997

# Losing skills?

- **De-automatisation:** skills that were automatised become de-automatised
- **De-generalisation:** skills that were generalised become de-generalised
- **Re-externalisation:** Skills that have been internalised become externalised (i.e. more dependent on situated and distributed supports)
- **Orphaned skills** - removal of inter-dependent skill components resulting in relatively isolated areas of spared function separated from what activates and supports them (mediators)

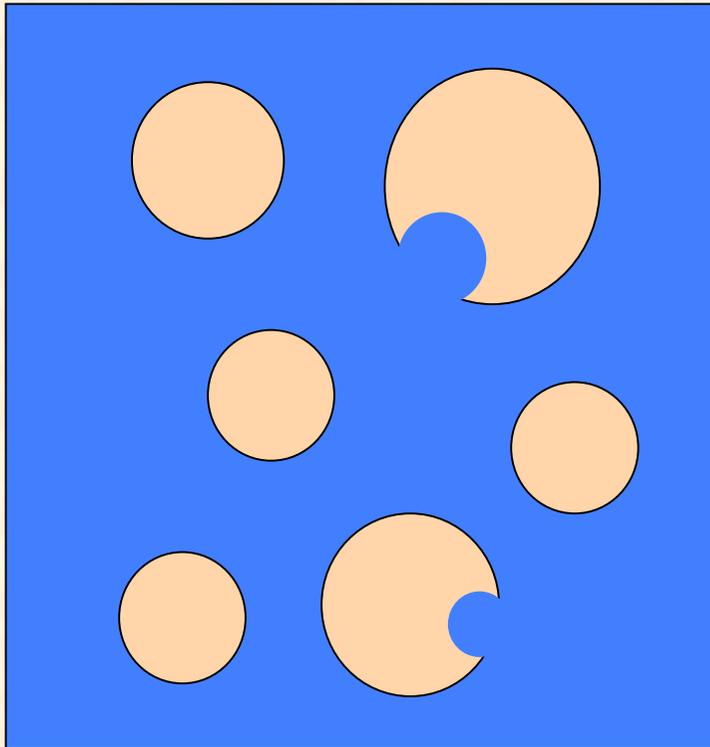


Deficits in a sea  
of abilities: Causes of  
unexpected activity  
Failures in early dementia



Abilities in a sea of deficits:  
Hidden strengths that can  
be leveraged in late  
dementia

*Adapted from Cole, E. (2006)*



**“Filling in  
the gaps”**

# “Filling in the gaps”

- *Often facilitation will involve being very sensitive to the parts of an activity or action that the person with dementia can no longer complete without help and being on hand to ‘fill in the gaps’.*
  - *Andrea Capstick – Bradford Dementia Group draft Masters module 2004 - Activities (personal communication)*

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- *“It can be difficult when working with people who have cognitive difficulties to get the right balance between person-centred facilitation and simply ‘taking over’ in a way that disempowers the person.”*

□ *Andrea Capstick, 2004*



- The “Just right” challenge level
- How do we identify that level?
- Static or dynamic?

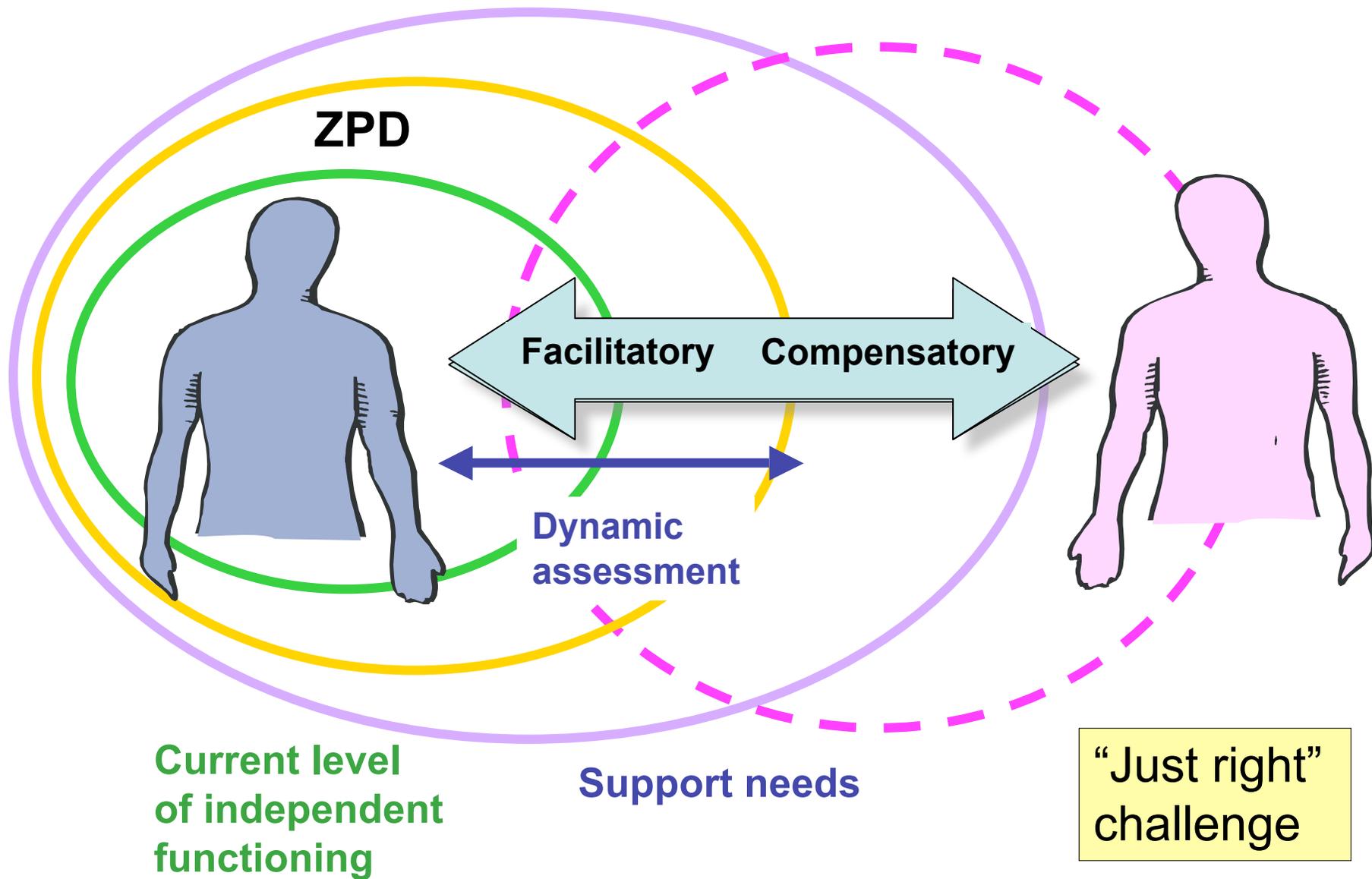
# The Zone of Proximal development

- “The distance between the **actual developmental level** as determined by independent problem solving and the **level of potential development** as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers.”

□ Vygotsky, 1978

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- “I would like to treat the idea of a Zone of Proximal Development in terms of it’s general conception as **the structure of joint activity** in any context where there are participants who exercise differential responsibility by virtue of differential expertise”.

■ Cole 1985



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- “It has been suggested that the zone of proximal development be called the **zone of rehabilitation potential** and used as a guiding principal in rehabilitation
  - This zone is hypothesized to reflect the clients' region of potential restoration of function or degree of cognitive plasticity”

■ Toglia 2009



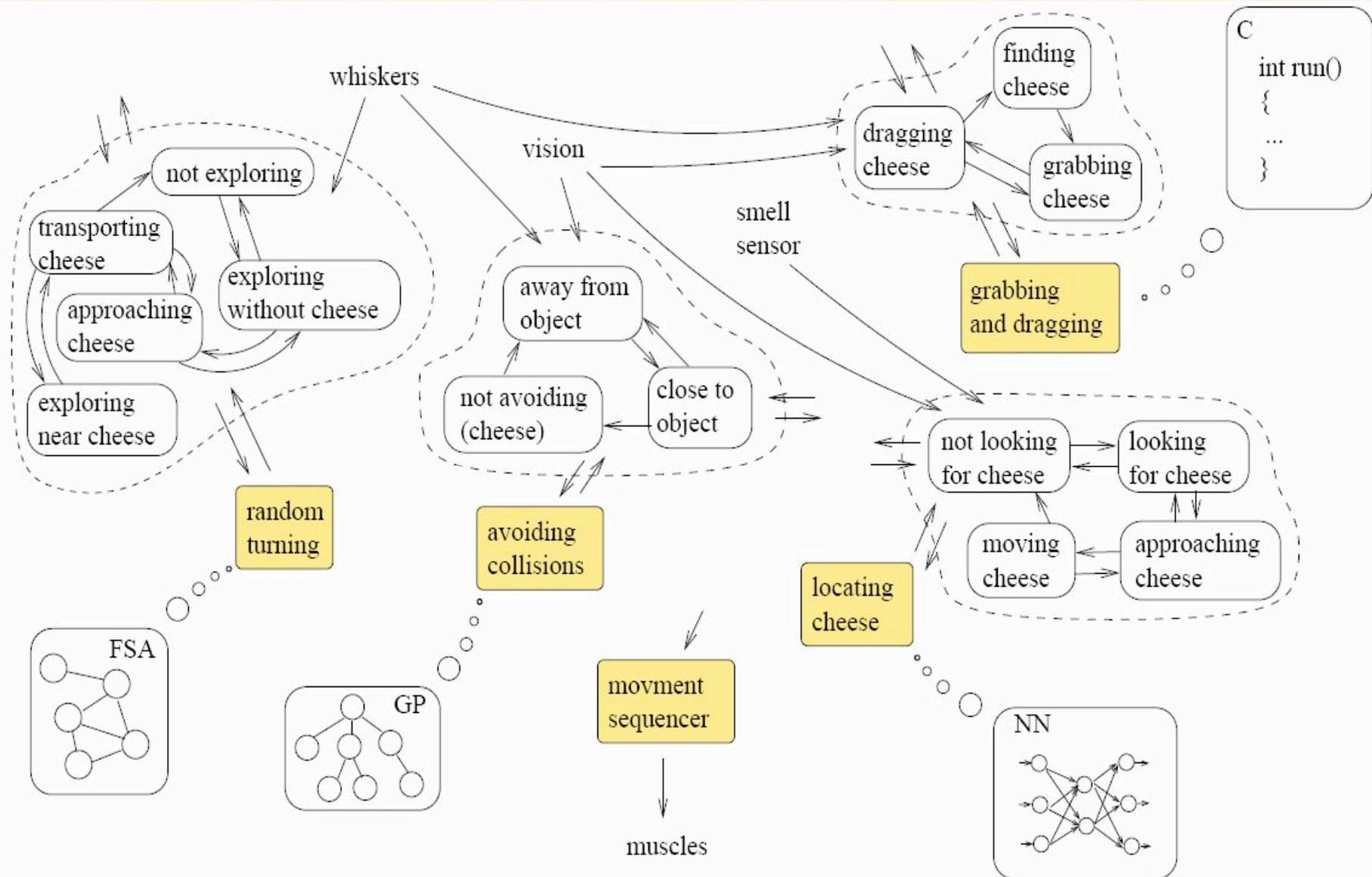
Mark

- Severe Alzheimer's – early onset in late 50's – now 65
- Former professional person
- Previously enjoyed wide range of activities
- Still a very active person and very tactile and inquisitive
- Verbal language skills highly impaired
- Very limited attention span
- Not eating well – had lost a lot of weight
- OT asked to do feeding assessment – aids?

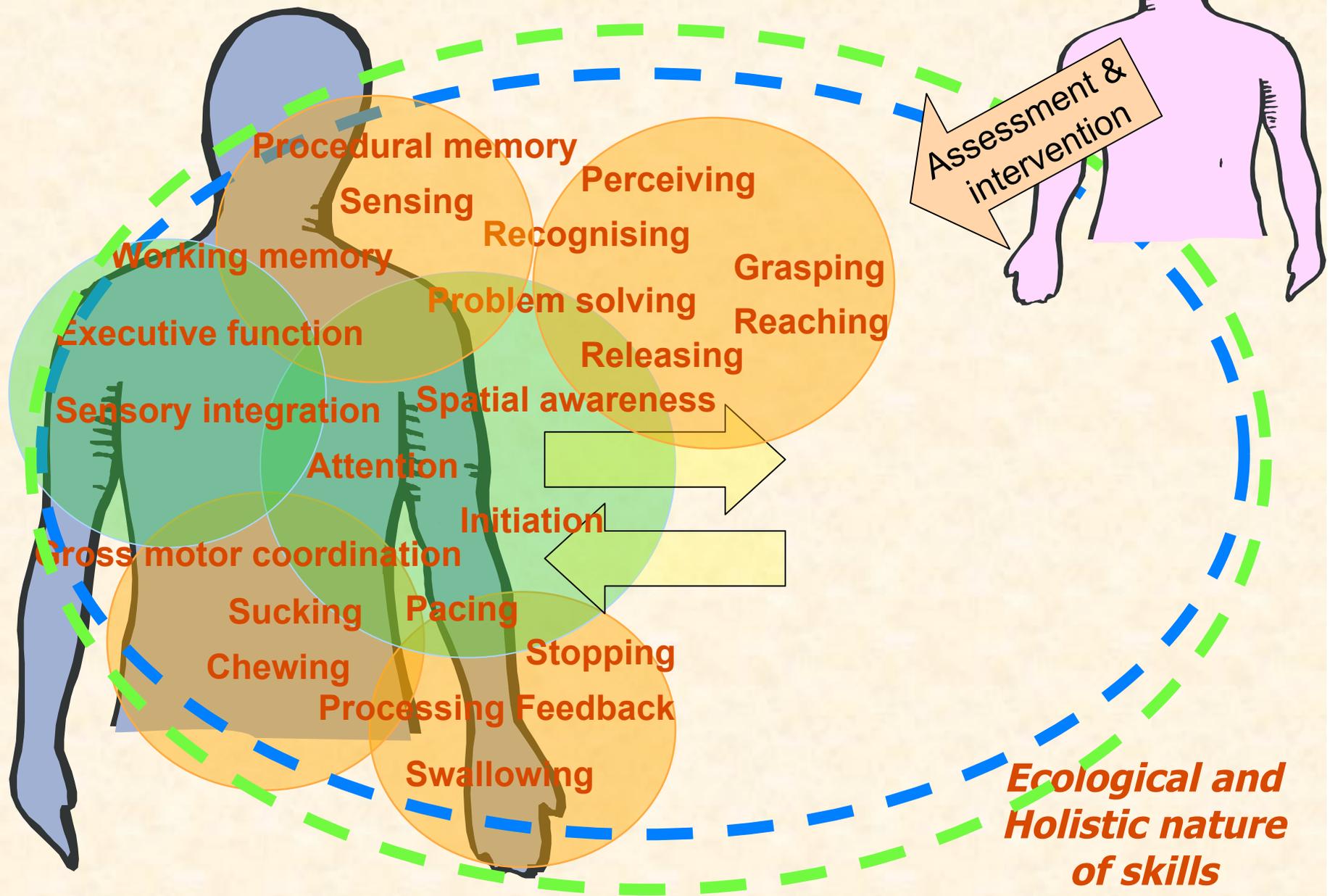
Skills are highly interdependent -  
A simple task?



# Simplified model of a complex action sequence – mouse finding/taking cheese



# Mark – Orphaned skills



# Dynamic Assessment

- Dynamic assessment is a non traditional approach to evaluation that **uses cues, mediation, feedback, or alterations of activity demands** during assessment to examine changes in performance. Unlike standardised assessments the focus is not on the **outcome** of performance but on the **process** of learning and change”
  - Toglia, Golisz & Goverover, (2009)

# Mark – 3 zones

## ■ Things that he can still do independently:

- Grasping objects
- Holding spoon
- Eating/swallowing

## ■ Things that we need to compensate for:

- Perceptual problems – contrast, depth, kinesphere
- Filtering out “noise” and distractions
- Awareness of risk (e.g. non food items)
- Initiation problems

## ■ Things that he can do with facilitation but not alone (ZPD):

- Sequence bringing food to mouth once initiated
- Release objects
- Sustain attention to task

# Mark – Mediation during dining

- Facilitation of Joint field of attention and action:
  - Positioning of objects and persons
  - Reducing sensory/perceptual demands
  - Use of perceptual cues
  - Use of language (verbal and non verbal)
- Scaffolding approach
  - Shared activity
  - Facilitation of task as whole
  - Dynamic Interaction level

- 
- **Sensory enrichment of activity**
    - Finger foods
    - Use of preference list
    - Food to take away
  - **Maintenance of skills**
    - Hand eye coordination
    - Spatial awareness
    - Attention
    - Distinguishing foods from non foods
  - **Mealtime as a shared activity**
    - Cultural and social inclusion
    - Activating patterns and routines

# Summary

- The underlying assumption of dynamic assessment is that **all people are capable of some degree of learning** (adaptation, change, modifiability, development, potential, reactivation)
  - “Stage” agnostic
- Focus on areas of potential and strengths – good for identifying skills we are not seeing
- Helps identify areas for intervention - rehabilitative and enabling practice
- Socio-cultural focus – Partnering and scaffolding
  - Skills bound up with personhood and well being

# NICE Guidance

- “Memory assessment services should offer a **responsive** service to aid early identification and should include a full range of assessment, diagnostic, therapeutic, and rehabilitation services to accommodate the needs of people with **different types** and **all severities** of dementia and the needs of their carers and family” .
  - *“Supporting people with dementia and their carers in health and social care” NICE 2006*

# Cognition and meta cognition?

- Eliciting thinking about cognition
- Or eliciting cognition (function)
- Auto pilot (re cognise – automise)
  - = finding the gaps and filling them
  - To reinitiate action sequences/patterns
- Focus on metacognition may push dementia rehab interventions outside of ZPD for some people or some types of skill

# References

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