



**Intensive Interaction  
Institute**



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# **Intensive Interaction: Development, Principles and Practices**

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# Intensive Interaction

**Intensive Interaction is an approach designed to help people at early levels of development to learn how to enjoy being with other people, to relate, interact, know communication routines...**

# Intensive Interaction

**...Intensive Interaction is designed to help people who are at early levels of development to learn the**



**‘Fundamentals of Communication’**

## The Fundamentals of Communication (FOCs)

- “ enjoying being with another person
- “ developing the ability to attend to that person
- “ concentration and attention span
- “ learning to do sequences of activity with a person
- “ taking turns in exchanges of behaviour
- “ sharing personal space
- “ learning to regulate and control arousal levels
- “ using and understanding eye contacts
- “ using and understanding facial expressions
- “ using and understanding physical contacts
- “ using and understanding other non-verbal communications
- “ vocalising and using vocalisations meaningfully (including speech)

## The 'Natural Model' of communication learning

Dynamic, free-flowing,  
pleasurable activities  
with the baby operating  
as a full and active  
participant



## The 'Natural Model' of communication learning

- “ Mutual **Enjoyment** . interest and delight one another
- “ Basically, the adult constructs the content and flow of the activity by **following** the baby's behaviour
- “ And **responding** to what the baby does
- “ **Pauses** - therefore the activity contains many pauses while the adult watches and waits for the baby to do the next thing

## The 'Natural Model' of communication learning 2

“ **'Tuning-in'** - therefore it is necessary for the adult to ~~u~~tune-in to the baby, constantly read and assess the baby for things that the adult can respond to in order to create ~~u~~communication momentsq

“ **Ways of responding**

- . imitation/joining-in/mirroring
- . delighted face/voice/body language
- . bursts of speech or running commentary



## The ‘Natural Model’ of communication learning 3

- ” The **effect** for the baby is then that:
- . The tempo of the activity is okay . the baby dictates the tempo
  - . The content of the activity is understandable since the starting point is things the baby does and understands
  - . The behaviour of the adult is understandable . more like the behaviour of the baby.



## Therefore, Intensive Interaction Basic Principles

- “ Basically, mostly, the teacher holds back and waits for the learner to do things
- “ The teacher is relaxed and unhurried
- “ The teacher constructs the content and the flow of the activity by responding to what the learner does
- “ There are many ways of responding, but imitation/ copying/joining-in is the most frequently seen

## The Basic Principles 2

- “ The teacher ~~is~~ tuning-in
- “ Watching & waiting, **PAUSES** !!!!
- “ Responsiveness - responding to things the learner does
- “ Imitation/joining-in is a frequently seen and effective response
- “ The learner therefore basically ~~is~~ leads or usually ~~is~~ goes first
- “ Timing/Tempo
- “ Mutual enjoyment
- “ It stops when the learner has had enough



## The Basic Principles 3

This is often the difficult bit:

Relax, wait. Don't do too much,  
don't try and ~~drive~~ the activity

hold back, leave time and space  
for the learner, you do less, there is  
a sense of ~~minimalism~~

# Progress: REPETITION!!!!

Frequent, repetitive, numerous  
sessions/experiences  
· day by day by week by month



## Learning the FOCs is crucial because:

- “ It is the first learning in usual development
- “ This learning seems to be foundational and underpinning to subsequent learning
- “ If you don't learn the FOCs, it is difficult to learn anything else
- “ Learning to be social is a central human attainment and is crucial in well-being

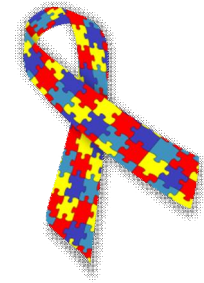
## The Fundamentals of Communication 2.

### Emotional learning:

- “ Knowing that others care, learning to care
- “ enjoying being with another person – connecting, bonding etc
- “ Attachment, attunement
- “ Self-security, to feel safe, secure, calm
- “ Self esteem, sense of self
- “ To identify own feelings & see same in others
- “ Gradually to understand feelings
- “ Trust stuff etc.
- “ Empathy, knowing/caring about how somebody else feels
- “ Right-hemisphere brain development (early emotional learning prepares areas of the brain for later, higher functions)

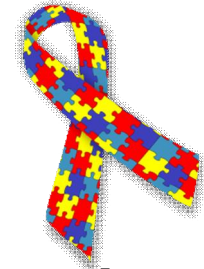
(based on various: Bowlby, 1953, Lamb et al, 2002 , Schore, 2003)

**Intensive Interaction focuses on some central affects of having autism. It works on:**



- “ the ability to be generally social – to understand other people**
- “ how to take part in interaction with another person**
- “ how to enjoy other people and desire to be with them**
- “ how to learn and understand communication skills and routines...**
- “ ...including subtleties and complexities such as non-verbal signalling emotional content, use and understanding of eye contacts, facial expressions etc.**

## Intensive Interaction allows for some central affects of having autism



- “ The teaching style is non-directive and non-dominating - the learner basically leads the sessions
- “ The teaching style is sensitive and flexible - starts with the learner, gives regard to engagement levels, learner anxiety and to learner capacity to take part.
- “ The learner should therefore feel secure and comfortable in the sessions.
- “ Being relaxed, un-stressed, and the participants enjoying themselves are central principles to the teaching and learning.



**Think about all of your communications or conversations with everyone all day everyday.**

How many of your conversations have some sort of product, a concrete goal or outcome?

*about 30 - 35%*



Most of your conversations are the sort of hot air of human companionship

*“Brightened up again hasn’t it?”*

# Phatic Communication

Bronislaw Malinowski (1923)

Phatic communications are



***“utterances that are said to have exclusively social, bonding functions like establishing and maintaining a friendly and harmonious atmosphere in interpersonal relations...”***

Senft (2009)

**Adler & Rodman (2006) list four functions of human communication. It fulfils:**

**Physical needs**

**Identity needs**

**Social needs**

**Practical needs**

***“The essential point here is that ‘personal communication is essential for our well being’ and it may be that communication is the ‘primary goal’ of human existence”***

Adler and Rodman (2006)



## Intensive Interaction: 'dual aspect process model'

Graham Firth (2008) visualises this as the dual aspect process model of Intensive Interaction. Social communication development is dependent on the initial social inclusion of the learner in authentic social experiences, which will obviously include regular access to Intensive Interaction.

Firth, G. (2008) A Dual Aspect Process Model of Intensive Interaction in *British Journal of Learning Disabilities* (37, 436-49)

## Intensive Interaction brief story

- “ Classroom experimentation and development 1981-6
- “ First publications 1987
- “ Two school-based research projects 1987 . 1990
- “ First book 1994
- “ Gradual dissemination and adoption throughout the 1990s
- “ First UK national conference 2002
- “ Website started & national organisation 2003
- “ Gradual and increasing interest worldwide



# Intensive Interaction Institute



## **Define**

To set out and define the nature and characteristics of Intensive Interaction

## **Develop**

To continue the development of the theory of Intensive Interaction

## **Disseminate**

To further the awareness, knowledge and understanding of Intensive Interaction

## **Training**

To foster and deliver high quality training in the theory and practice of Intensive Interaction

# **There is work taking place on the use of Intensive Interaction with:**

- “ The elderly**
- “ People who have acquired brain injuries**
- “ People who are more able - they have acquired speech and language, but have not completed learning the Fundamentals of Communication. We are thinking about people for instance, who have autism or even Asperger Syndrome**



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**Intensive Interaction: "So... what is Intensive Interaction?" Interview with Dave Hewett.**  
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Sasha and his teacher, Riana have an enjoyable Intensive Interaction activity. You can watch Riana and see the style and ...  
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**Intensive Interaction: Jennifer & Lana (1)**  
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Jennifer and her teacher, Lana, enjoy a gentle Intensive Interaction activity. With commentary by Dave Hewett.  
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**Intensive Interaction: Sasha & Riana (3)**  
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HD



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## Intensive Interaction

Intensive interaction is an approach to teaching the pre-speech fundamentals of communication to children and adults who have severe learning difficulties and/or autism and who are still at an early stage of communication development.  
[Find out more »](#)


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Posted 28th August 2012 by Matthew Laurie

**Knowing is not enough**  
Posted 16th July 2012 by Lucy Harrison

**The Sounds of Silence**  
Posted 27th June 2012 by Jules McKim

## Intensive Interaction Website

## Some publications and research on Intensive Interaction

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