



**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...**

Interaction ist ein Ansatz, der Menschen mit frühem, kommunikativem Entwicklungsstand helfen kann, die Nähe und gemeinsame Zeit mit anderen Menschen teilen und genießen zu lernen, Spaß an der Gemeinsamkeit zu haben und Interaktion sowie kommunikative Prinzipien kennen zu lernen.

# Intensive Interaction

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



**‘Fundamentals of Communication’**

**Die Fundamente der Kommunikation erlernen.**<sup>3</sup>

# The Fundamentals of Communication (FOCs)

- **enjoying being with another person** (Zusammensein mit einer Person genießen)
- **developing the ability to attend to that person** (Fähigkeit entwickeln, Kontakt herstellen zu können; Aufmerksamkeit auf eine Person richten zu können)
- **concentration and attention span** (Konzentration, Aufmerksamkeitsspanne)
- **learning to do sequences of activity with a person** (Fähigkeiten entwickeln, mit einer Person Sequenzen einer Aktivität durchzuführen)
- **taking turns in exchanges of behaviour** (Wechselseitigkeit im komm. Austausch)
- **sharing personal space** (Nähe zulassen)
- **learning to regulate and control arousal levels** (körperl. Anspannung und Erregung regulieren und kontrollieren)
- **using and understanding eye contacts** (Augenkontakt herstellen, halten und verstehen)
- **using and understanding facial expressions** (Mimik benutzen und verstehen)
- **using and understanding physical contacts** (Körperkontakt richtig nutzen und verstehen)
- **using and understanding other non-verbal communications** (andere non-verbale Kommunikation nutzen und verstehen)
- **vocalising and using vocalisations meaningfully (including speech)** (Laute und Sprache (richtig) benutzen)

# The 'Natural Model' of communication learning natürliches Modell des Kommunikationserwerbs

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

Dynamische, fließende, vergnügliche Aktivitäten  
die das Baby als einen aktiven,  
akzeptierten Teilnehmer der  
Interaktion einbeziehen.



## The 'Natural Model' of communication learning

- Mutual **Enjoyment** – interest and delight one another  
(gegenseitiges Vergnügen)
- Basically, the adult constructs the content and flow of the activity by **following** the baby's behaviour  
(dem Verhalten **des Kindes** als Erwachsener folgen)
- And **responding** to what the baby does  
(auf **dessen** Verhalten antworten)
- **Pauses** - therefore the activity contains many pauses while the adult watches and waits for the baby to do the next thing  
(Pausen zulassen; die Reaktion des Kindes abwarten)

# The 'Natural Model' of communication learning 2

- **'Tuning-in'** - therefore it is necessary for the adult to 'tune-in' to the baby, constantly read and assess the baby for things that the adult can respond to in order to create 'communication moments'  
(auf das Gegenüber/das Kind einstellen, deren komm. Zeichen lesen und aufgreifen, um komm. Momente zu kreieren)
- **Ways of responding** (Arten des Antwortens)
  - imitation/joining-in/mirroring  
(Imitation, Mitmachen, Spiegeln)
  - delighted face/voice/body language  
(begeisterndes, animierendes Gesicht/Stimme/Körpersprache)
  - bursts of speech or running commentary  
(extrovertierte Sprache)



# The 'Natural Model' of communication learning 3

- The **effect** for the baby is then that: Die Effekte für das Kind:
  - The tempo of the activity is okay – the baby dictates the tempo  
(das Tempo der Aktivität ist angemessen – das Kind gibt das Tempo vor)
  - The content of the activity is understandable since the starting point is things the baby does and understands  
(der Inhalt der Aktivität ist für das Kind verständlich, das Kind beginnt die Interaktion bzw. suggeriert den Inhalt)
  - The behaviour of the adult is understandable – more like the behaviour of the baby.  
(das Verhalten des Erwachsenen ist für das Kind verständlich)



# Therefore, Intensive Interaction Basic Principles

- Basically, mostly, the teacher holds back and waits for the learner to do things  
(Abwarten und Zurückhaltung – auf die Interaktionen, Aktionen des Lerners warten, diese berücksichtigen)
- The teacher is relaxed and unhurried  
(der Kommunikationspartner ist entspannt u. nicht in Eile)
- The teacher constructs the content and the flow of the activity by responding to what the learner does  
(der Kommunikationspartner konstruiert den Inhalt u. das Geschehen der Interaktion durch seine Reaktion u. Antwort auf das Verhalten des Lerners)
- There are many ways of responding, but imitation/ copying/joining-in is the most frequently seen  
(Es gibt viele Arten der Reaktion; Imitation, Nachmachen, Mitmachen sind die Häufigsten)

## The Basic Principles 2

- The teacher 'tunes-in' – der Komm.-partner steigt mit ein und stellt sich auf den Lerner ein
- Watching & waiting, **PAUSES** !!!!  
Beobachten, Abwarten, PAUSEN!!
- Responsiveness - responding to things the learner does  
Ständiger Antwortgeber sein
- Imitation/joining-in is a frequently seen and effective response  
Imitation, Einsteigen, Mitmachen sind häufig gesehene und effektive Arten des Antwortens
- The learner therefore basically 'leads' or usually 'goes first' der Lerner leitet die Interaktionen, geht voran
- Timing/Tempo
- Mutual enjoyment – gegenseitiges Vergnügen
- It stops when the learner has had enough – Interaktion endet, wenn der Lerner diese beendet



## 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'

Das ist häufig schwer:

Entspannen, abwarten. Nicht zu viel tun, vorgeben oder leiten...

Zurück halten, dem Lerner Zeit und Raum geben, Spur von Minimalismus

# Progress: REPETITION!!!! (Fortschritt: Wiederholungen)

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

Häufige, sich wiederholende, zahlreiche  
Sitzungen/Erfahrungen – Tag für Tag für Woche für Monat



# Learning the FOCs is crucial because:

Die Fundamente zu erlernen ist zentral, denn:

- **It is the first learning in usual development** – es ist das Erste, was Menschen in der Entwicklung lernen
- **This learning seems to be foundational and underpinning to subsequent learning** – diese Lernen scheint fundamental und grundlegend für nachfolgende Lerninhalte zu sein
- **If you don't learn the FOCs, it is difficult to learn anything else** – wenn man die Fundamente der Kommunikation nicht lernt, ist es schwer, weitere Fähigkeiten zu erlangen
- **Learning to be social is a central human attainment and is crucial in well-being** – soziale Fähigkeiten zu erlangen ist zentrale Verwirklichung und immanent für Wohlbefinden

# The Fundamentals of Communication 2.

## Emotional learning:

- **Knowing that others care, learning to care** (wissen, dass andere interessiert sind; Interesse für etwas entwickeln)
- **enjoying being with another person – connecting, bonding etc.** (Zusammensein mit Person genießen – Bindung aufbauen, Kontakt suchen)
- **Attachment, attunement** (Bindung, Zuneigung)
- **Self-security, to feel safe, secure, calm** (Selbstsicherheit, sich sicher fühlen, Ruhe, Gelassenheit)
- **Self esteem, sense of self** (Selbstachtung, Selbstwertgefühl)
- **To identify own feelings & see same in others** (eigene Gefühle identifizieren u. sie bei anderen erkennen)
- **Gradually to understand feelings** (allmählich Gefühle verstehen)
- **Trust stuff etc.** (Personal und anderen vertrauen)
- **Empathy, knowing/caring about how somebody else feels** (Empathiefähigkeit)
- **Right-hemisphere brain development (early emotional learning prepares areas of the brain for later, higher functions)** (Entwicklungen in der rechten Hirnhemisphäre)

(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**  
(die Fähigkeit, sozial zu sein; andere zu verstehen)
- **how to take part in interaction with another person**  
(wie man an der Interaktion mit einer anderen Person teilnimmt)
- **how to enjoy other people and desire to be with them**  
(wie man die Nähe und das Zusammensein mit anderen Menschen genießt)
- **how to learn and understand communication skills and routines...**  
(wie man Kommunikationsfertigkeiten u. -routinen erlernt u. versteht)
- **...including subtleties and complexities such as non-verbal signalling emotional content, use and understanding of eye contacts, facial expressions etc.**  
(darin inbegriffen Feinheiten u. Komplexitäten, wie nonverbale emotionale Signale, Augenkontakt sowie Gesichtsausdrücke gebrauchen u. verstehen 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**

Die Art des Lehrens ist nicht direktiv oder dominierend – der Lerner leitet zumeist die Interaktion

- **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.**

Die Art des Lehrens ist flexibel, vorsichtig und feinfühlig

- **The learner should therefore feel secure and comfortable in the sessions.**

Der Lerner sollte sich sicher und wohl fühlen

- **Being relaxed, un-stressed, and the participants enjoying themselves are central principles to the teaching and learning.**

Entspannt Sein ohne Anstrengung und Anspannung



**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

(die meisten Anteile von Konversationen sind heiße Luft/leeres  
Geschwätz)

*“Brightened up again hasn’t it?”*

# Phatic Communication

(phatische Kommunikation)

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)

Äußerungen, die ausschließlich soziale, bindende Funktionen für zwischenmenschliche Beziehungen haben, wie die Erlangung und Aufrechterhaltung einer freundlichen und harmonischen Atmosphäre

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

(Adler & Rodmann zählen 4 Funktionen menschlicher Kommunikation auf. Sie erfüllen:)

**Physical needs** – körperliche Bedürfnisse

**Identity needs** – identitätsstiftende Bedürfnisse

**Social needs** – soziale Bedürfnisse

**Practical needs** – zweckmäßige Bedürfnisse

***“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)

Menschliche Kommunikation ist  
essentiell für unser Wohlbefinden  
und könnte das primäre Ziel  
menschlicher Existenz sein.



## Intensive Interaction: ‘dual aspect process model’

### Prozessmodell mit dualem Effekt

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, 43–49)

G. Firth bezeichnet die Effekte von Intensive Interaction als dualen Prozess. Die Entwicklung von sozialer Kommunikation ist abhängig von der „ursprünglichen“ sozialen Integration der Lernenden in authentische soziale Erfahrungen, die offensichtlich den regelmäßigen Zugang zu intensiver Interaktion beinhalten.

# Intensive Interaction brief story

## Entstehungsgeschichte von Intensive Interaction

- Classroom experimentation and development 1981- 6  
Erfahrungen, Experimente u. Entwicklungen im Klassengeschehen
- First publications 1987 – erste Publikation 1987
- Two school-based research projects 1987 – 1990  
Zwei Forschungsprojekte 1987-1990
- First book 1994 – erstes Buch 1994
- Gradual dissemination and adoption throughout the 1990s  
Allmähliche Verbreitung und Anwendung in den 1990er Jahren
- First UK national conference 2002  
erste nationale Konferenz in GB
- Website started & national organisation 2003  
Website gestartet und nationale Organisation in 2003
- Gradual and increasing interest worldwide  
Allmähliches und steigendes Interesse weltweit



Intensive Interaction

# Intensive Interaction Institute



Intensive Interaction

## **Define (Definieren)**

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

## **Develop (Entwickeln)**

To continue the development of the theory of Intensive Interaction

## **Disseminate (Verbreiten)**

To further the awareness, knowledge and understanding of Intensive Interaction

## **Training (Trainieren)**

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:

(Mittels Intensive Interaction wird gearbeitet mit:)

- **The elderly** (älteren erwachsenen Menschen)
- **People who have acquired brain injuries**  
(Menschen mit erworbenen Hirnverletzungen)
- **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** (Menschen, die Sprechen und Sprache erlernt haben, aber nicht vollständig die Fundamente der Kommunikation, z.B. Menschen mit Autismus oder Asperger Syndrom)



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Intensive Interaction Dave Hewett III


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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

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.  
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Posted 16th July 2012 by Lucy Harrison

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

## Intensive Interaction Website

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