

Understanding and Nurturing the Communicative Competence of Learners with Significant Disabilities: Part I

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Understanding and Nurturing the Communicative Competence of Learners with Significant Disabilities: Part I

Montana Deaf-Blind Project Webinar Series

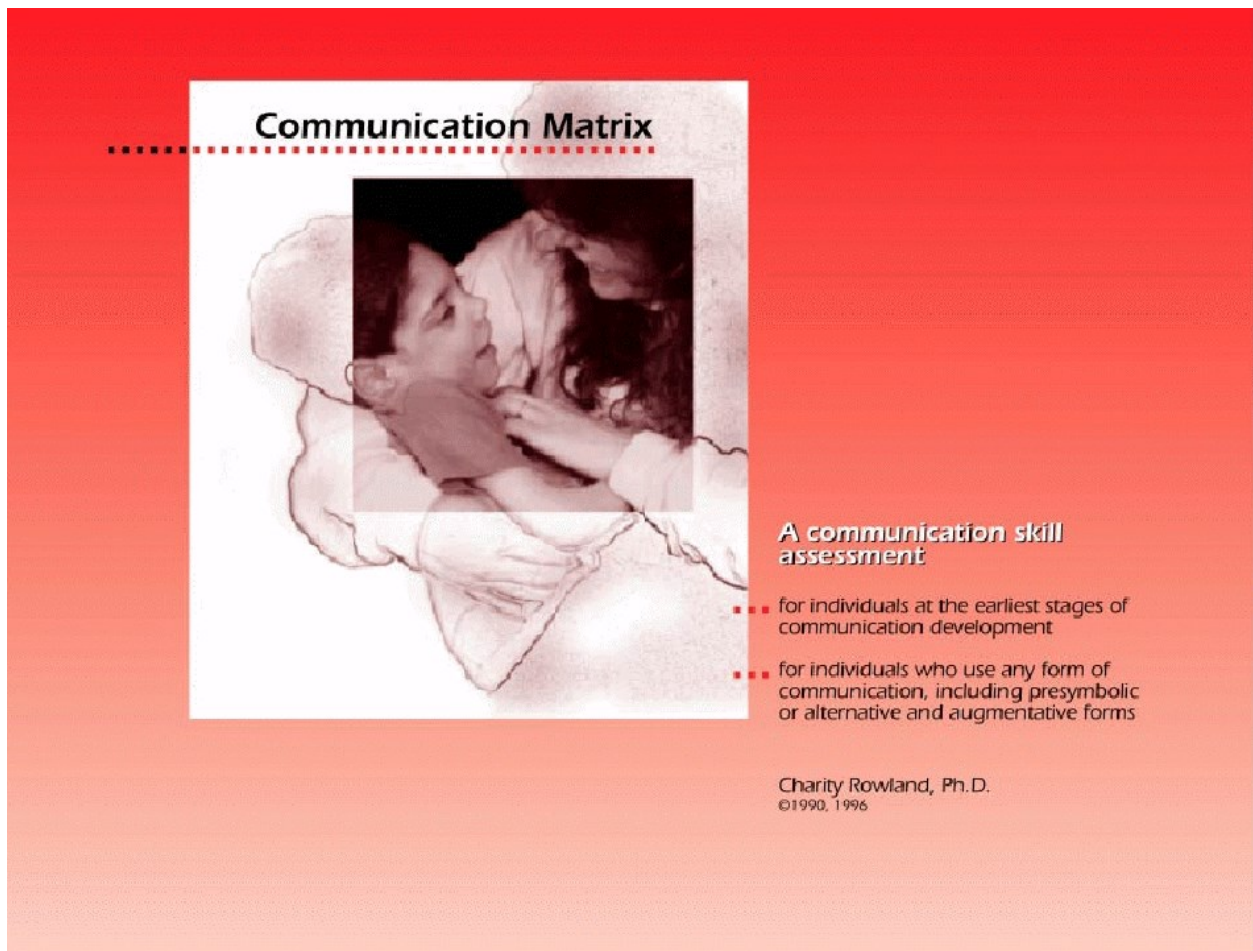
August 2020

Philip D. Schweigert

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- Characteristics of meaningful assessment
- Framework for the development of expressive communication
- The Communication Matrix
- Implications for instruction

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The slide features a red background with a white rectangular area in the center. At the top of this white area, the text "Communication Matrix" is written in a bold, black, sans-serif font. Below the text is a photograph of a woman with long dark hair leaning over a young child, who is wearing a white shirt. The woman appears to be interacting with the child, possibly demonstrating a communication skill. To the right of the photograph, there is a section titled "A communication skill assessment" in bold black text. Below this title are two bullet points, each preceded by a small red square. The first bullet point reads "for individuals at the earliest stages of communication development" and the second reads "for individuals who use any form of communication, including presymbolic or alternative and augmentative forms". At the bottom right of the white area, the text "Charity Rowland, Ph.D." and "©1990, 1996" is displayed in a smaller font.

Communication Matrix

A communication skill assessment

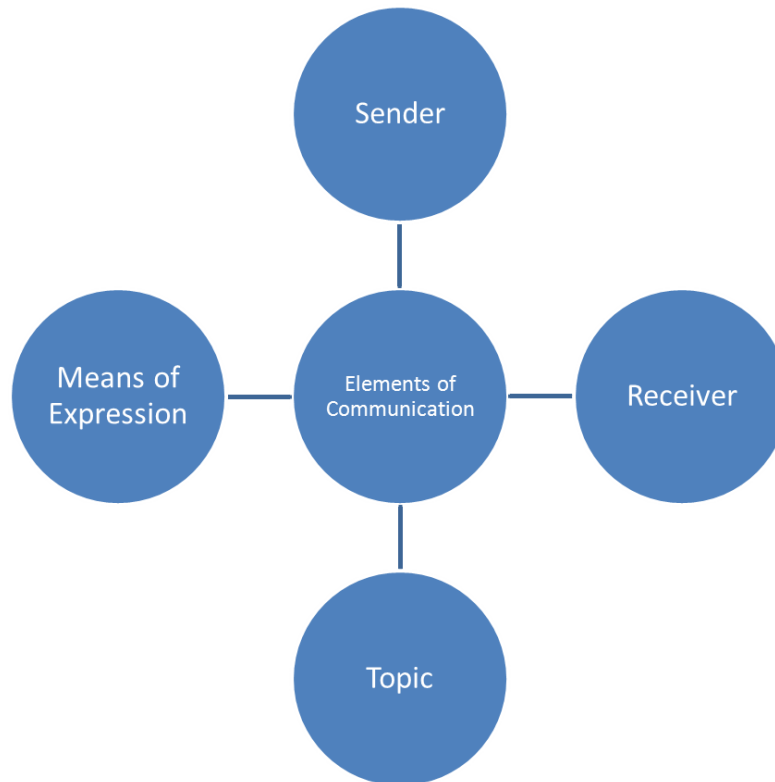
- for individuals at the earliest stages of communication development
- for individuals who use any form of communication, including presymbolic or alternative and augmentative forms

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Four Elements of Communication

(see pages 3-4 First things First)



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Sender Element:

- Perception of self occurs through interaction with people, knowledge of surroundings, and mastery of skills.
- The recognition of the association between one's behavior and environmental outcomes is critical for future learning.
(Watson, 1966)

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Receiver Element

Critical components of partner responsivity include (Wilcox, 1995):

- Sensitivity: The recognition of communicative or potentially communicative behavior
- Contingency: Contextually related and timely responses to potentially communicative behavior
- Consistency: Responding to the same behavior in the same ways, over time

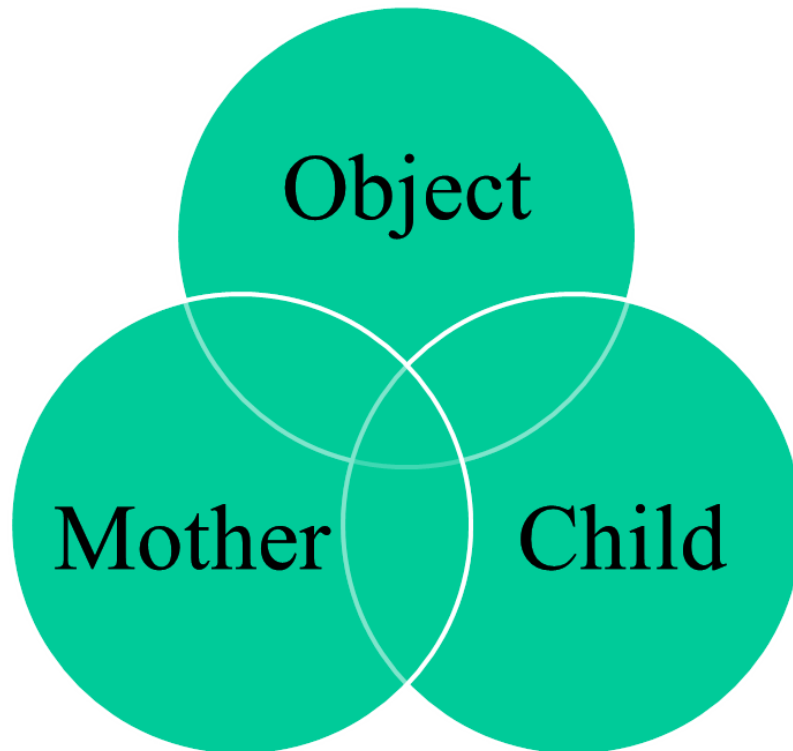
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Topic Element

- Accessible
- Motivation
- Repeated experiences

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The act of reference emerges not as an individual act but as a social one (Werner and Kaplan 1963)



Communication is supported through the shared histories people bring to their interactions (De Thorne et al 2014)

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Means of Expression Element

“when the focus is on successful communication, the form is reduced to its proper place of being a means toward an end, rather than the end itself” (De Thorne et al 2014)

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Progressive Distancing

- **Decontextualization:** spatial in a place other than here; and temporal from a time other than right now
- **Denaturalization:** decreasing similarity between symbol and what it represents

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Dual Representation:

- Seeing the picture (or object symbol) as both a thing by itself
- And realizing that it also stands for something

Symbolic Sensitivity:

- The generalization of the concept of symbolic representation
- ... “If this stands for this then can this stand for”

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Intentional Communication:

- Implies
 - Intentional behavior
 - Purposefully directed toward another person with intended meaning
- Requires dual orientation to both the communication partner and the topic

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Pivotal juncture of coordinated attention

- The transition from pre-intentional to intentional communication is a developmental milestone second to none
- It marks children’s entry as full participants in the social milieu around them and triggers other transactional processes that in a short time lead to symbolic communication

(Warren & Yoder, 1999)

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Characteristics of Intentional Communication:

- Persistence
- Repetition
- Alternating Gaze (body orientation, leaning toward)
- Changing the signal used
- Awaiting a response
- Terminating the signal when responded to
- Indicating satisfaction or dissatisfaction to response (Wetherby& Prizant 1989)

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Development of Communicative Intent

Level of Communication	Pragmatic Features
Level 1: Pre-intentional (Reactive) Behavior	STATES expressed by behaviors (as interpreted by caregivers): discomfort; comfort; interest/excitement
Level 2: Intentional (Pro-active) Behavior	FUNCTIONS that behaviors serve (as interpreted by caregivers): protest/reject; continue pleasurable action; obtain more of something; attract attention
Level 3: Unconventional Pre-symbolic Communication	INTENTS for which behaviors are used by child: Refuse/reject; Request more of an action; Request a new action; Request more of an object; Request a new object; Request attention; Show affection
Level 4: Conventional Pre-symbolic Communication	All of the previous intents plus: greetings; offer/share; direct another person's attention to something; polite forms (please, thank you); confirm/negate (yes/no); ask questions
Level 5: Concrete Symbolic Communication	All of previous intents plus: request absent object; label
Level 6: Abstract Symbolic Communication	All of previous intents plus: comment
Level 7:	All of previous intents

Communication Intervention for Children with Severe and Multiple Disabilities

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Same as Slide 3

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Name _____ Dates _____ / _____ Completed by _____

I Pre-Intentional Behavior 0-3 mo.	(1)	(1)					(1)													
	Expresses Discomfort	Expresses Comfort					Expresses Interest in Other People													
II Intentional Behavior 3-8 mo.	(2)	(2)		(3)			(2)													
	Protests	Continues Action		Obtains More of Something			Attracts Attention													
	III Unconventional Communication 6-12 mo.	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(3)	(4)											
Refuses, Rejects		Requests More Action	Requests New Action	Requests More Object	Makes Choices	Requests New Object	Requests Attention	Shows Affection												
IV Conventional Communication 12-18 mo.		Refuses, Rejects	Requests More Action	Requests New Action	Requests More Object	Makes Choices	Requests New Object	Requests Attention	Shows Affection	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(1)	(2)					
										Greets People	Offers, Shares	Directs Another's Attention	Polite Social Forms	Answers Yes/No Questions	Asks Questions					
		V Concrete Symbols 12-24 mo.	Refuses, Rejects	Requests More Action	Requests New Action	Requests More Object	Makes Choices	Requests New Object	Requests Attention	Shows Affection	Greets People	Offers, Shares	Directs Another's Attention	Polite Social Forms	Answers Yes/No Questions	Asks Questions	(3)	(4)		
																	Names Things/People	Makes Comments		
VI Abstract Symbols 18-24 mo.	Refuses, Rejects	Requests More Action	Requests New Action	Requests More Object	Makes Choices	Requests New Object	Requests Attention	Shows Affection	Greets People	Offers, Shares	Directs Another's Attention	Polite Social Forms	Answers Yes/No Questions	Asks Questions	Names Things/People	Makes Comments				
VII Language 24 mo. +	Refuses, Rejects	Requests More Action	Requests New Action	Requests More Object	Makes Choices	Requests New Object	Requests Attention	Shows Affection	Greets People	Offers, Shares	Directs Another's Attention	Polite Social Forms	Answers Yes/No Questions	Asks Questions	Names Things/People	Makes Comments				

FEATURES

Pre-Intentional Communicative Behaviors express states of well-being (Level I) or have communicative functions (Level II)

↓

Intentional Communicative Behaviors express communicative intents (Levels III-VII)

↓

Symbolic Communication involves communication through the use of symbols (Levels V-VII)

↓

Type of Symbol
For Levels V, VI or VII, specify types of symbols used (e.g., picture symbols, 3-dimensional symbols, manual signs, speech)

COMMUNICATION MATRIX PROFILE

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Scoring options for communication matrix

Mastered: individual produces behavior independently and consistently when an opportunity occurs.

On profile: shade in cells if at least one behavior is mastered for specific state/function/intent.

May use stripes for cells if one or more behaviors is at emerging stage.

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Assessment of Early Communication

www.communicationmatrix.org

Dr. Charity Rowland

THE COMMUNICATION MATRIX

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Communication Assessment for Parents & Professionals

An easy to use assessment instrument designed for individuals of all ages who function at the earliest stages of communication and who use any form of communication.



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