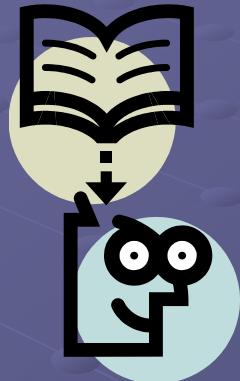


Communication and Students with Severe/Multiple Disabilities



Jane Kleinert, Ph.D., CCC-SLP

Jacqui Kearns, Ed.D.

SPLASH 2.0

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Topics for Today

- Communication Characteristics of Students as Reported in the LCI: *Shared Understanding of Terminology*
- How Do We Determine a *Specific Student's Level of Receptive and Expressive* Communication
- How Do We Include Students with Varying Levels of Communication Skills in *Curriculum Content???????*



A Problem

- *How do YOU define: COMMUNICATION*
 - *Receptive Communication*
 - *Expressive Communication*
 - *Engagement*
 - *Augmentative/Alternative Communication (AAC)*



Communication Definition Terms

<i>I/C/F</i>	<i>M/F</i>	<i>ER</i>	<i>LCI Level</i>
<i>Intent or Content or Function</i>	<i>Mode or Form</i>	<i>Expected Response (Reception)</i>	
			<i>I</i>
			<i>II</i>
			<i>III</i>



Successful Communication Involves ...

- *Intent = function or thought*
- *Topic = content*
- *Form/Mode: Type of initiation or response = form or mode of communicative output*
- *Expected Response/Reception – dependent upon the understandability of the output mode used*



The Equation

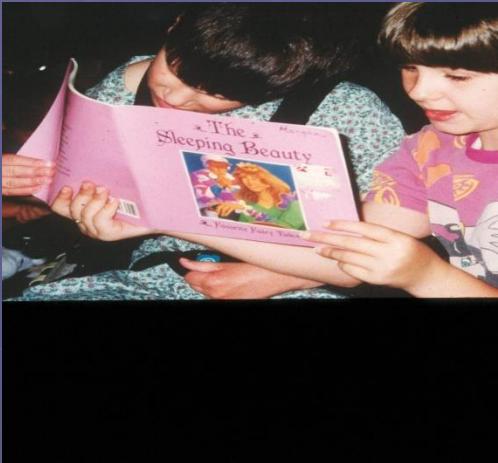
Successful Communication =

- Intent + Mode of Initiation or Response + Listener Comprehension
- BOTH Expressive AND Receptive Communication are involved here.



Must One Communicate With Real Words???

- What do you think?



Communication vs. Language

- Language – implies standardization, rules, and *symbols*; implying mutual understanding by the individuals who share knowledge of the language system
- Communication – implies a much broader set of *output behaviors and combinations of output behaviors which may or may not be of a standardized form*, but which convey intent and are understood and “readable” by the listener



LCI: Expressive Communication

- *Expressive Communication* (check one answer that best describes your student)

- ✓ *Uses symbolic language to communicate:* Student uses verbal or written words, signs, Braille, or language-based augmentative systems to request, initiate, and respond to questions, describe things or events, and express refusal.
- ✓ *Uses intentional communication, but not at a symbolic language level:* Student uses understandable communication through such modes as gestures, pictures, objects/textures, points, etc., to clearly express a variety of intentions.
- ✓ *Student communicates primarily through cries, facial expressions, change in muscle tone, etc., but no clear use of objects/textures, regularized gestures, pictures, signs, etc., to communicate.*



Receptive Communication

Receptive Language

- ✓ *Independently follows 1-2 step directions presented **through words** (e.g., words may be spoken, signed, printed, or any combination) and does NOT need additional cues.*
- ✓ *Requires additional cues (e.g., **gestures, pictures, objects, or demonstrations/models**) to follow 1-2 step directions.*
- ✓ *Alerts to sensory input from another person (auditory, visual, touch, movement) BUT requires actual physical assistance to follow simple directions.*
- ✓ ***Uncertain response to sensory stimuli** (e.g., sound/voice; sight/gesture; touch; movement; smell).*



REMEMBER

- A student can have symbolic understanding/RECEPTIVE COMMUNICATION, but not use symbolic communication EXPRESSIVELY



Here's Where Things Get Messy!

- *What constitutes “symbolic”*
- *How do I determine if the student is “intentional”*
- *Can the student be “symbolic” in receptive communication but not expressive communication?*
- *Can a student be “non-symbolic” in both receptive and expressive communication?*
- *If so, is the student still communicative?*



How Does this Work for Expressive Communication ?

- *Level I: Perlocution (we interpret the “speaker” as meaningful), even if there is not clear intent, and so we respond to the student/child and thus reinforce their output. Non-symbolic, e.g., change in muscle tone, cry, grimace, etc.)*
- *Level II: Illocution (student is clearly intentional, consistently uses a non-standardized, but easily understandable output, e.g., gestures, facial expressions, points, etc.)*
- *Level III: Locution (True language level -true symbolic, representational, rule-governed output such as: speech, sign, print, Braille, etc.)*



Now, Let's Answer Some Important Questions

- How do I determine that a student is at a “symbolic” level?
- How do I determine if the student is “intentional”?
- Can the student be “symbolic” in receptive communication but not expressive communication?
This is a question of GREAT IMPORTANCE AND CAUSES MUCH CONFUSION
- Can a student be “non-symbolic” in both receptive and expressive communication?
- If so, is the student still communicative?



**Content-Intent-
Function**

Mode or Form

**Desired
Response???**



Intent



Now, Let's Meet Some Students

- Watch each tape
- Answer the questions on the next slide for each student
- Stop and discuss your observations
- (Use the form on the on the slide following the questions to help you answer the questions about the students)

Student Example:1

- *Does this student UNDERSTAND language?*
- *At what level?*
- *How does the student communicate?*
- *What intents are communicated?*
- *At what level?*
- *Does this student need an AAC system?*
- *Suggestions on answering these questions*



Receptive Communication	Expressive Communication	Engagement	AAC needs
Understands real words and sentences, follows directions (language level)	Uses real words or language (spoken, print, sign, computer, etc.) (language level)	Readily engages with others	Does not need AAC
Understands words or follows directions with cues	Uses gestures, points, real objects, a few pictures, clear facial expressions, head nods, etc. to communicate and is easily understood by others	Needs more stimulation to engage with others	Already has AAC Changes needed?
Needs physical assistance to follow directions	Expresses self by facial expressions, cries, position changes, muscle tone changes, etc. and listener may not be sure what the individual is communicating	Does not readily respond to others	Needs AAC
Alerts and engages with others			
Does not respond to others			

Student 1



Discussion

- Comprehension
- Expression/Output
- Does the student need AAC

Student Example 2

- *Does this student UNDERSTAND language?*
- *At what level?*
- *How does the student communicate?*
- *What intents are communicated?*
- *At what level?*
- *Does this student need an AAC system?*
- *Suggestions on answering these questions*



Student 2



Discussion

- Comprehension-Understanding of Language
- Expressive Communication
- Use of AAC

Student 3

- *Does this student UNDERSTAND language?*
- *At what level?*
- *How does the student communicate?*
- *What intents are communicated?*
- *At what level?*
- *Does this student need an AAC system?*



Student 3



Discussion

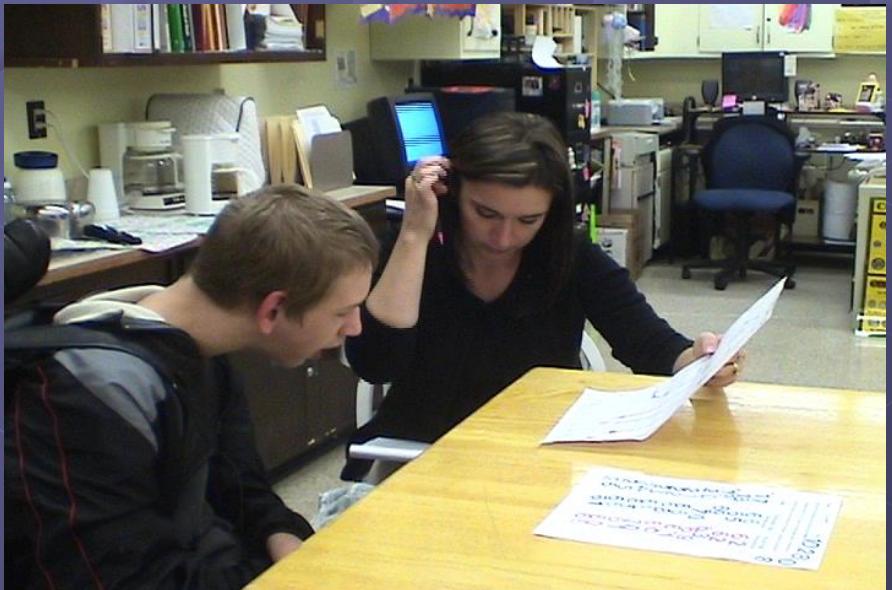
- Comprehension of Language
- Expressive Communication
- Need for AAC

Student 4

- *Does this student UNDERSTAND language?*
- *At what level?*
- *How does the student communicate?*
- *What intents are communicated?*
- *At what level?*
- *Does this student need an AAC system?*
- *Suggestions on answering these questions*



Student 4



Discussion

- Comprehension of language
- Expressive communication and language
- Use of AAC

Basic Assumptions and Philosophies Regarding Communication: Our Ground Rules

- *All individuals communicate regardless of age or level of disability*
- *All output can be communicative*
- *Decisions re: communication systems and goals are made WITH
 - *Individuals and families*
 - *Considering all support needs**



Things to Remember

- Communication is a basic right and need of all individuals.
- Communication at some level is possible and identifiable for all students regardless of functional “level”.
- Every step toward improved communication, attending and interaction with others and the environment, no matter how small, leads to some increased quality of life and “independence: for a student, regardless of his/her disability.
- Communication programming goals should enhance students’ opportunities for increased integration and interactions with peers and the community in general.
- Students with the most significant disabilities can gain from the interactions with typical peers (via contagion, alertness/awareness activities, etc.)



- View students having multiple and severe disabilities in a way that emphasizes abilities and not disabilities.
- Recognize communication attempts which are evidenced in a non-standard way
- Develop strategies which increase the student's social interactions in a variety of settings (e.g., peer groups, home, school, community, etc.) and across major life domains (educational, community, domestic, recreation/leisure, and vocational).
- Become aware of the variety of innovative strategies and systems available to increase communication in students with severe disabilities
- Develop communication skills within students that will facilitate participation in integrated home, school, and community settings.



Interfering Factors to Consider

- *Physical/motor challenges*
- *Sensory challenges: hearing, vision, etc.*
- *Cognitive challenges*
- *Emotional/behavioral challenges*



We All Need a Team: Who You Gonna' Call??

- SLP for assessment of receptive/expressive communication levels and development and use of AAC
- Educator
- PT
- OT
- Family

Assessment of the Student

What level is the student communicating?

- *Focus on what the student CAN do.*
- *Each unit of observable behavior is an event.*
- *Where and when do these events occur?*
- *Consider assessment types to be used.*
- *Consider who can help us know the student.*

Where is all this leading?

- *Use more than standardized instruments (observational techniques)*
- *Assess in varying locations*
- *Use a trans-disciplinary team approach*

Considerations

- *Every student has potential and all behavior communicates*
- *Many students already have a form of communication*
- *We must be competent listeners and focus on what the student can do*
- *Look at the student's current assets as building blocks*



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