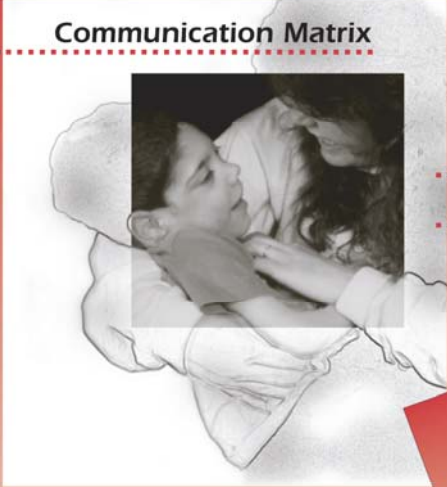


Communication Matrix


By Charity Rowland PhD.

Communication Matrix



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

Also available in a parent-friendly version



Charity Rowland, Ph.D.
©1990, 1996, 2004

What is the Communication Matrix

- An assessment tool to determine how an individual with severe or multiple disabilities is communicating.
- Provides a framework for development of communication goals.

Four Basic Reasons for Communicating

- To refuse things that you don't want
- To obtain things that you want
- To engage in social interactions
- To provide or seek information

Seven Levels of Communication

SEVEN LEVELS OF COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE

LEVEL	SALIENT BEHAVIOR
I. Pre-Intentional Behavior	Pre-intentional or reflexive behavior that expresses state of subject. State (eg., hungry, wet) is interpreted by observer.
II. Intentional (Proactive) Behavior (Not intentionally communicative)	Behavior is intentional, but is not intentionally communicative. Behavior functions to affect observer's behavior, since observer infers intent..
III. Non-conventional Pre-symbolic Communication	Non-conventional gestures are used with intent of affecting observer's behavior.
IV. Conventional Pre-symbolic Communication	Conventional gestures are used with intent of affecting observer's behavior.
V. Concrete Symbolic Communication	Limited use of concrete (iconic) symbols to represent environmental entities. 1:1 correspondence between symbol and referent..
VI. Abstract Symbolic Communication	Limited use of abstract (arbitrary) symbols to represent environmental entities. Symbols are used singly.
VII. Formal Symbolic Communication	Rule-bound use of arbitrary symbol system. Ordered combinations of two or more symbols according to syntactic rules.

Level I: Pre-intentional Behaviors

- Behavior is not under the individual's own control
- Reflexive/reactive
- Caregivers interpret behaviors

What does "I want a drink" look like in Level I?

Level II: Intentional Behavior

- Behavior is under the individual's control but are not intentionally communicative
- Caregivers interpret needs and desires
- Pre-symbolic communication involves motor and vocal behaviors

What does "I want a drink" look like in Level II?

Level III: Unconventional Communication

- Behaviors are used intentionally to communicate
- Behaviors are pre-symbolic
- Unconventional (body movements, vocalizations, facial expressions)

What does “I want a drink” look like in Level III?

Level IV: Conventional Communication

- Conventional pre-symbolic behaviors (gestures/ vocalizations) are used intentionally to communicate
- Dual orientation

What does “I want a drink” look like in Level IV?

Level V: Concrete Symbols

- Symbolic communication (pictures, objects, iconic gestures, sounds)
- Can be a transitional level for children with mild disabilities
- Critical level for children with severe disabilities

What does “I want a drink” look like in Level V?

Level VI: Abstract Symbols

- Speech, manual signs, Braille or printed words are used to communicate
- Used one at a time

What does “I want a drink”
look like in Level VI?

Level VII: Language

- Symbols are combined into two or three symbol communications

What does “I want a drink”
look like in Level VII?

Completing the Assessment

- [www.communication matirx.org](http://www.communicationmatirx.org)
- Interviews with parents, teachers etc.
- Observational data

Using results to plan instruction

- General intervention goal: what level of communication to target
- Specific intervention goal: what specific communicative behaviors to target
- Individual should be allowed to perform at his/her current level of communication while being encouraged to progress to the next logical level of communication

Generic Intervention Goals

- Level I: establish purposeful behavior by creating highly responsive environments
- Level II: Respond to potentially communicative behaviors so that child becomes aware of their communicative purpose
- Level III: Shape unconventional gestures into conventional gestures and/or target symbol use

- Level IV: Teach 1:1 correspondence between symbols (concrete and abstract) and referents
- Level V: Teach 1:1 correspondence between abstract symbols and referents
- Level VI: Teach the combination of symbols into two and three symbol utterances
- Level VII: Expand use of symbol form and function