



A guide to deciding on intervention goals based on Communication Matrix assessment results

Guiding Principles

- The learner's current skills will serve as a foundation for further learning.
- In general, a learner should be allowed to perform at his/her current level of communicative competence while being steadily pushed toward a higher level of competence.
 - The first decision to make is whether to focus primarily on increasing the child's competence at the current (Primary) Level (which you would do if the child has a very small repertoire at that level, or if most behaviors are at an emerging stage); and/or whether to start targeting a higher Level.
 - The next decision is exactly which messages (states, functions or intents) to target
 - Finally, you must decide what specific behaviors the learner will use to express those messages. Should you target only existing ones or strive for new behaviors?

Note: The Communication Matrix Custom Report offers the opportunity to summarize current performance in great detail and also provides choices of specific intervention strategies to target each state/function/intent covered by the Matrix.

Step 1. What's Happening Now?

Question	Notes	Your answer	
What’s happening now?			
What is the learner’s Primary Level of communication?	The Primary Level may be: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Level that the client <i>uses most often</i> to communicate.• The Level at which the client is able to express the <i>greatest variety of different messages</i>.• The Level at which the client’s communication shows the <i>greatest mastery</i>.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Level 1. Pre-intentional Behavior○ Level 2. Intentional Behavior○ Level 3. Unconventional Communication○ Level 4. Conventional Communication○ Level 5. Concrete Symbols○ Level 6. Abstract Symbols○ Level 7. Language	
What higher levels of communication does the learner use?	It’s important to recognize higher level/s of communication that the learner uses beyond the Primary Level. Often these are levels that instruction will target.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Level 2○ Level 3○ Level 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Level 5○ Level 6○ Level 7
What new states (Level 1), functions (Level 2) or intents (Levels 3-7) does the learner want to express or need to express?	You may look at the Matrix Profile to see which of the 24 states, functions and intents the learner uses to communicate. Refer to the Profile to determine where there are gaps in the child's expressive ability and consider targeting new messages that the child really wants or needs to express.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Expresses discomfort○ Expresses comfort○ Expresses interest in other people○ Protests○ Continues an action○ Obtains more of something○ Attracts attention○ Refuses or rejects something○ Requests more of an action○ Requests a new action○ Requests more of an object	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Makes choices○ Requests a new object○ Requests attention○ Shows affection○ Greets people○ Offers things or shares○ Directs someone's attention to something○ Uses polite social forms○ Answers "Yes" and "No" questions
What categories of behavior does the learner use to communicate now?	The Matrix groups communicative behavior into 9 categories. You may look at the Communication Skills List to see which categories the learner uses to communicate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Body Movements○ Early Sounds○ Facial Expressions○ Visual○ Simple Gestures○ Conventional Gestures○ Concrete Symbols○ Abstract Symbols○ Language	

Step 2. Look at the Generic Intervention Goals on the next 2 pages. Which 1 or 2 best suit the needs of this learner?

Note: Every learner will not move through every one of the 7 Levels, depending upon their cognitive, sensory and motor skills. For instance, some learners may not have the sensory/motor skills to produce conventional gestures (Level 4); and some learners may not have the cognitive skills to understand any form of abstract symbol (Level 6), at least at their developmental stage.

Generic Intervention Goals	
If the learner is operating competently at this level	Consider the following generic intervention goals to push the learner toward a higher level of competence
<p>Level 1. Pre-intentional Behavior Behavior is not under the individual's own control, but it reflects his/her general state (comfortable, uncomfortable, hungry or sleepy). Caregivers interpret the learner's state from behaviors such as movements, facial expressions and sounds.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create highly responsive environments to encourage intentional behavior by making it very clear that “if you do this (for instance, vocalize), that will always happen (for instance, someone will come)”. • Collect data to demonstrate convincingly whether a behavior is intentional.
<p>Level 2. Intentional Behavior Behavior is under the learner's control, but it is not yet used to communicate intentionally. Caregivers interpret the individual's needs and desires from behaviors such as body movements, facial expressions, vocalizations and eye gaze.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respond to potentially communicative behaviors (even when it's not clear whether they are intentional) so that the learner becomes aware of their communicative purpose. • Help the learner to understand his/her own ability to cause other people to respond. • Some individuals may require extraordinary efforts to entice them into social interactions.
<p>Level 3. Unconventional Communication Unconventional pre-symbolic behaviors are used intentionally to communicate. Communicative behaviors are pre-symbolic because they do not involve any sort of symbol; they are unconventional because they are generally not socially acceptable for us to use as we grow older, since they often involve physical contact.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shape nonconventional gestures into conventional gestures (Level 4) and/or target the use of symbols, either concrete (Level 5) or abstract (Level 6), depending upon the needs of the learner. • Some conventional gestures (Level 4) require good visual or motor skills and may not be reasonable targets.

Generic Intervention Goals, continued

If the learner is operating competently at this level	Consider the following generic intervention goals to push the learner toward a higher level of competence
<p style="text-align: center;">Level 4. Conventional Communication</p> <p>Conventional pre-symbolic behaviors are used intentionally to communicate. Communicative behaviors are pre-symbolic because they do not involve any sort of symbol; they are conventional because they are socially acceptable and we continue to use them to accompany our language as we mature. The meanings of some gestures may be unique to the culture in which they are used.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach 1:1 correspondence between symbols and what they represent. • Symbols may be concrete (Level 5) or abstract (Level 6), depending upon the needs of the learner.
<p style="text-align: center;">Level 5. Concrete Symbols</p> <p>Concrete symbols that physically resemble what they represent, are used to communicate. Concrete symbols look like, feel like, move like or sound like what they represent. Concrete symbols include pictures, objects (such as a shoelace to represent shoe), iconic gestures and specific sounds used to represent things.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach the combination of concrete symbols into two- and three-symbol utterances. (Level 7) • Consider teaching 1:1 correspondence between abstract symbols (Level 6) and what they represent, if there is an abstract symbolic mode that the learner can understand and perceive adequately.
<p style="text-align: center;">Level 6. Abstract Symbols</p> <p>Abstract symbols such as speech, manual signs, Brailled or printed words are used to communicate. These symbols are abstract because they are NOT physically similar to what they represent.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach the combination of abstract symbols into two- and three-symbol utterances (Level 7).
<p style="text-align: center;">Level 7. Language</p> <p>Symbols (concrete or abstract) are combined into two- or three-symbol combinations ('want juice', 'me go out'), according to grammatical rules. The individual understands that the meaning of symbol combinations may differ depending upon how the symbols are ordered.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand expressive language abilities by introducing symbols for new vocabulary and increasing the length of symbol combinations (symbols may be concrete or abstract).

Step 3. What Do You Want to Do?

Question	Notes	Your answer	
What Level/s do you want to focus on for intervention?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You may decide to work on increasing competence at the Primary level of communication and/or at a higher level that the learner uses now. Less often, you may decide to address a completely new (higher) level of communication. We recommend that you do not target more than two Levels at the same time. 	<input type="radio"/> Level 1 <input type="radio"/> Level 2 <input type="radio"/> Level 3 <input type="radio"/> Level 4	<input type="radio"/> Level 5 <input type="radio"/> Level 6 <input type="radio"/> Level 7
What states (Level 1), Functions (Level 2) or intents (Levels 3-7) do you want to focus on for intervention?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You may decide to work on mastery of states/functions/intents that are currently at an emerging level. You may also decide to target one or more completely new states/functions/intents. Refer to the Profile to determine where there are gaps in the child's expressive ability and consider targeting new messages that the child really wants/needs to express. We recommend that you do not target more than 5 messages at the same time. 	<input type="radio"/> Expresses discomfort <input type="radio"/> Expresses comfort <input type="radio"/> Expresses interest in other people <input type="radio"/> Protests <input type="radio"/> Continues an action <input type="radio"/> Obtains more of something <input type="radio"/> Attracts attention <input type="radio"/> Refuses or rejects something <input type="radio"/> Requests more of an action <input type="radio"/> Requests a new action <input type="radio"/> Requests more of an object	<input type="radio"/> Makes choices <input type="radio"/> Requests a new object <input type="radio"/> Requests attention <input type="radio"/> Shows affection <input type="radio"/> Greets people <input type="radio"/> Offers things or shares <input type="radio"/> Directs someone's attention to something <input type="radio"/> Uses polite social forms <input type="radio"/> Answers "Yes" and "No" questions
What Types of behavior do you want to focus on?	Communicative behavior is grouped into 9 categories. The choice of behavior category should be a logical one: either continuing to work on categories already used, or targeting a different category that provides a more sophisticated means of expression. This decision must take into account the child's motor, fine motor and vocal abilities, as well as any sensory limitations that may make it difficult or impossible for the child to produce certain behaviors. In addition, consider any cognitive limitations that might prevent a child from understanding certain types of symbols.	<input type="radio"/> Body Movements <input type="radio"/> Early Sounds <input type="radio"/> Facial Expressions <input type="radio"/> Visual <input type="radio"/> Simple Gestures <input type="radio"/> Conventional Gestures <input type="radio"/> Concrete Symbols <input type="radio"/> Abstract Symbols <input type="radio"/> Language	
What specific behaviors do you want to focus on?	This will depend largely on what the learner wants to communicate about and what behaviors (whether pre-symbolic or symbolic) are needed to communicate about those things.	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	