

Intensive Interaction

What is it and why do we use it?

Intensive interaction is a communication intervention which aims to support pupils to learn the fundamentals of communication. The fundamentals of communication are key skills upon which all communication is built, and they include the following:

- Taking ownership of and leading interaction
- Enjoying being with another person and experiencing them enjoying being with you
- Learning to pay attention to another person
- Sharing personal space
- Using vocalisations with meaning
- Learning to share attention with someone
- Turn taking
- Listening and responding
- Cause and effect
- Understanding facial expressions, eye physical contact and other non verbal cues such as gestures and body language



Who is it for?

Intensive Interaction is an approach for teaching communication skills to children and adults who have autism, severe learning difficulties and profound and multiple learning difficulties. It is a widespread intervention within the school that is used across classes. It is used both in discreet sessions and as part of a responsive classroom environment. It is used by both teachers and teaching assistants.

(<https://www.intensiveinteraction.org/find-out-more/about-intensive-interaction/how-does-it-work/>)

What does it look like?

Skills are fostered through highly responsive one to one interactions between an adult and a pupil. These interactions are led by the pupil, and during them the adult responds to and develops all communication attempts. (at a basic level the adult copies the gestures/vocalisations that the pupil makes, this values their personal communication style and lets them know they are going listened to. The adult can in turn extend and lead the interactions as appropriate). As the Intensive Interaction Institute states:

“The approach works by progressively developing enjoyable and relaxed interaction sequences between the interaction partner and the person doing the learning. These interaction sequences are repeated frequently and gradually grow in duration, complexity and sophistication. As this happened the fundamentals of communication are gradually rehearsed and learnt in a free-flowing manner”

