

Intensive Interaction



What is it and why would you 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 contact, 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, or are presenting as having autism, severe learning difficulties and profound and multiple learning difficulties. It is a widespread intervention that is used across specialist schools and settings. It is used both in discreet sessions and as part of a responsive classroom environment. (<https://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 / facial expressions and vocalisations that the pupil makes for as long as the pupil will engage for. This may be a few seconds initially building up to a couple of minutes with time. This technique values their personal communication style and lets them know they are being listened to. The adult can, in turn, extend and lead the interactions as appropriate.



“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” (Intensive Interaction Institute)

Have a look at this clip for examples and more information

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rjKxu6QKjAo>