****Open Hands, Open Access Deaf-Blind Intervener Learning Modules

Module: Intervener Strategies

# Processing Messages: An Observation Exercise

In the slide presentation for this learning activity you learned about the seven steps that are involved in the process of receiving and responding to messages. You saw an example of how these steps applied to the interaction between Maya and her mother.

In this assignment, you will practice identifying what these steps look like by observing the communication behavior of two students—one without disabilities and one who is deaf-blind.

In these situations, you may not always be able to tell what a student’s behavior means. It is hard to determine what someone else is thinking or processing. The purpose of this exercise is just to get you thinking about how complex this process can be. There isn’t necessarily one right answer. Remember to look for non-verbal forms of communication, too: touch, gestures, facial expressions, and body language.

## Instructions

**Name:**

**Date:**

1. Observe the communication behavior of a student without disabilities engaging with a communication partner. In the Observation Form on the next page, enter your observations for each step. Be sure to watch closely because the steps happen very quickly.
2. Next observe Hayden, a student with deaf-blindness, in the video [Hayden at Mealtime](https://youtu.be/_r3tOm3p-Qk). Again, write down what you observe about his communication behavior for each step. You will probably see the process is much slower for Hayden, who is deaf-blind, than for the student without disabilities.

## Observation Form

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Student without disabilities** | **Student who is deaf-blind (Hayden)** |
| Step 1: Recognize that someone is attempting to communicate with you. |  |  |
| Step 2: Physically receive the message (e.g., feel or see a sign, symbol, facial expression or body language; hear the sound of the other person’s voice). |  |  |
| Step 3: Mentally process what the person has communicated. |  |  |
| Step 4: Think about what you want to communicate in return (the content of your response). |  |  |
| Step 5: Deliver your response (e.g., via speech, symbols, gestures, signing, facial expressions, body language). |  |  |
| Step 6: Wait for your communication partner to process your message. |  |  |
| Step 7: Receive acknowledgement that your message was understood. |  |  |