



Communication Is Not Just Speech: Integrating Assessment and Real-World Context

Presented by: Nathalie Lebrun, M.S., CCC-SLP

Delivery method: On-Demand

Instruction level: Intermediate

Sponsored by NCS Pearson, Inc.

Course Description

Assessment data provide critical insight into the strengths and needs of autistic young people, yet professionals across disciplines often face challenges translating results into meaningful, everyday support. This session explores how assessment findings can be strengthened through ethnographic interviewing, contextual observation, and intentional inclusion of input from the individual and their communication partners across daily environments. Participants will learn how gathering meaningful perspectives from home, school, work, and community settings deepens understanding of communication as participation, access, and autonomy for the individuals we support.

Learner Outcomes

After completing this learning track, participants will be able to:

1. Explain how ethnographic interviewing and contextual observation complement formal assessment data in understanding autistic communication and participation.
2. Identify meaningful sources of input from Autistic individuals and their communication partners across everyday environments.
3. Apply interdisciplinary strategies to integrate assessment findings, observations, and lived experience into functional support planning.

Time-Ordered Agenda

5 minutes	Title slide, presenter self-introduction
8 minutes	Reframing Communication Beyond Assessment Scores
10 minutes	What Quantitative Assessment Tells Us (And What It Can't) & Case Study
12 minutes	Ethnographic Interviews and Contextual Observations
10 minutes	Integrating Lived Experiences and Interdisciplinary Professional Practice
10 minutes	Case Study Conclusion
5 minutes	Revisiting the Iceberg and Closing



About the Presenter

Nathalie Lebrun, M.A., CCC-SLP, is a Speech Language Pathologist and founder of LifeSpeak LLC, specializing in communication-centered supports for autistic adolescents and young adults. She previously served as a public school Speech Language Pathology department head, refining assessment processes to better capture students' strengths and needs within interdisciplinary evaluations. Nathalie currently provides direct services and delivers workshops for schools, organizations, and interdisciplinary teams. She's a LoneStar LEND Fellow, university clinical educator, and co-host of the LeadSpeak School-Based SLP Leadership podcast.

Disclosure

Financial: Nathalie Lebrun is receiving an honorarium for this presentation. She is the professional development services. She is employed as a Clinical Educator for the University of Houston's graduate Communication Sciences & Disorders department. Nathalie received a stipend as a Fellow in the Leadership Education in Autism and Neurodevelopmental Disorders (LEND) Program.

Non-financial: Nathalie Lebrun is the current Chair of the Advocacy Communications Committee for the Texas Speech Language Hearing Association. She is also the co-host of the LeadSpeak: School-Based SLP Podcast Series.

NCS Pearson, Inc., the sponsor of this learning track, develops and distributes assessments and intervention tools for speech-language pathologists, occupational therapists, and psychologists. This offering will include information on effective, ethical use and interpretation of assessment tools used by SLPs, OTs, and psychologists. Emphasis is placed on integrating standardized results with observation, ethnographic interviewing, and lived experience to translate assessment data into meaningful, functional supports across everyday contexts for autistic young people served.

References

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Westby, C. E. (1990). Ethnographic Interviewing: Asking the Right Questions To the Right People in the Right Ways. Journal of Childhood Communication Disorders, 13(1), 101-111.



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 - Is credentialed by a state regulatory agency to practice audiology or speech-language pathology
 - Is credentialed by a national regulatory agency to practice audiology or speech-language pathology
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