

Kangas, K. A. (1990). *Relationship of communication speed and rate to the perceived effectiveness of communication among high school aged AAC users*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Purdue University, West Lafayette. Lyle L. Lloyd (Advisor): 94 pages of text, 100 references, 9 appendices, 11 tables, and 3 figures.

The study investigated the relationship between the speed and rate of communication and the perceived competence of the students' communication for middle school and high school aged students using electronic communication devices. Subjects were 19 students with severe communication impairments (in most cases caused by congenital physical disabilities) which prevented them from producing natural speech that was adequate to meet their needs and who had utilized electronic communication devices to augment or to replace natural speech communication for at least nine months. Communication rate and speed were measured from video-tapes of each student participating in a conversation with a familiar school staff person and in a group instructional activity. Perceived communication competence for each student was evaluated as the mean rating assigned by three special education staff members who were familiar with the student. Ratings were based on a 20-item scale, the Communicative Competence Rating Scale, developed for this study.

Descriptive information for measures of communication speed and rate are presented. Performance across students was highly variable. Correlation coefficients were computed to investigate the relationship among the measures of speed and rate of communication and the ratings of perceived communicative competence. Rate and speed were not significantly correlated with perceived communicative competence. There was a nonsignificant trend in the data from the conversational sample suggesting that longer times to access the device and slower rates of communication were associated with greater communicative competence, a trend that is in the opposite direction from the correlation that would be expected. Correlations of the rate and speed measures in the two situations were not significantly correlated, suggesting that communication rate and speed in a classroom setting cannot be accurately predicted from an assessment in an individual situation. Clinical implications of the findings and future research needs are discussed.