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Exceptional and Able: Supporting the Social Communication Skills of Gifted Neurodiverse Students in the Classroom

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Exceptional and Able:

Supporting the Social Communication Skills of Gifted Neurodiverse Students in the Classroom

"She's weird"



Autism, Pediatric Language, and Literacy Lab



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THANK YOU!

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Autism, Pediatric Language & Literacy Lab (APLL) members:

- Mary B. Austin Elementary School - principal, teachers, students
- Families we serve
- Graduate Student Assistants:
 - Katelyn McCarthy
 - Catherine Clark Cureton
 - Kelsey Gross Carlisle

Learning Objectives

01

WHO ARE OUR STUDENTS?

Gifted and Neurodiverse

02

IDENTIFY SOCIAL SKILLS

What are the skills inherent in our social interactions?

03

WHOA!

Current controversies that impact our educational settings and choices.

04

TEACH

Skills and strategies to apply in the classroom and school settings.



WHO ARE OUR STUDENTS?

01

Gifted and
Neurodiverse

CHARACTERISTICS OF GIFTEDNESS

IQ and ACADEMICS

Achieve greater than age/grade expectations.

SOCIAL SKILLS

No difference or exceed skills of nongifted students.

ALL BACKGROUNDS

Giftedness is seen in all SES or other demographic groups.

DIFFERENT

Gifted students can be aware of not belonging, and $\frac{2}{3}$ experience bullying.

BUT ALSO THE SAME

Like other students, they need support for social-emotional development.

ASYNCHRONOUS

Development across areas can be uneven.

The American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual, Fifth Edition (DSM-5) provides standardized criteria to help diagnose ASD.

Diagnostic Criteria for 299.00 Autism Spectrum Disorder

To meet diagnostic criteria for ASD according to DSM-5, a child must have persistent deficits in each of three areas of social communication and interaction (see A.1. through A.3. below) plus at least two of four types of restricted, repetitive behaviors (see B.1. through B.4. below).



A. Persistent deficits in social communication and social interaction across multiple contexts, as manifested by the following, currently or by history (examples are illustrative, not exhaustive; see text):

1. Deficits in social-emotional reciprocity, ranging, for example, from abnormal social approach and failure of normal back-and-forth conversation; to reduced sharing of interests, emotions, or affect; to failure to initiate or respond to social interactions.
2. Deficits in nonverbal communicative behaviors used for social interaction, ranging, for example, from poorly integrated verbal and nonverbal communication; to abnormalities in eye contact and body language or deficits in understanding and use of gestures; to a total lack of facial expressions and nonverbal communication.
3. Deficits in developing, maintaining, and understand relationships, ranging, for example, from difficulties adjusting behavior to suit various social contexts; to difficulties in sharing imaginative play or in making friends; to absence of interest in peers.

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SESAME STREET

<https://youtu.be/BnFHEBMvAVA>

DSM 5 – Social Communication Disorder

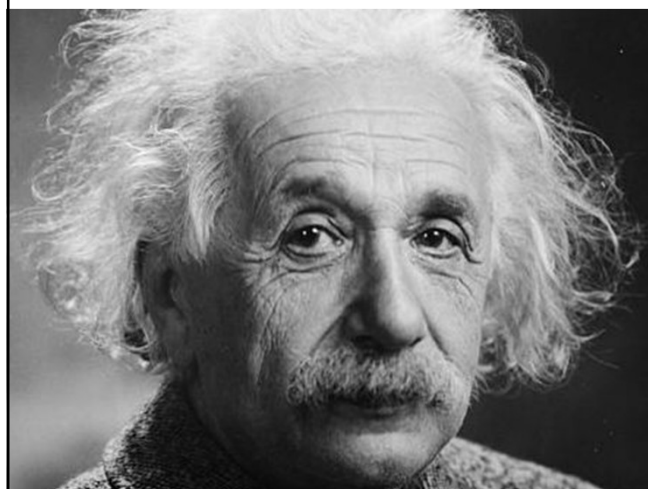
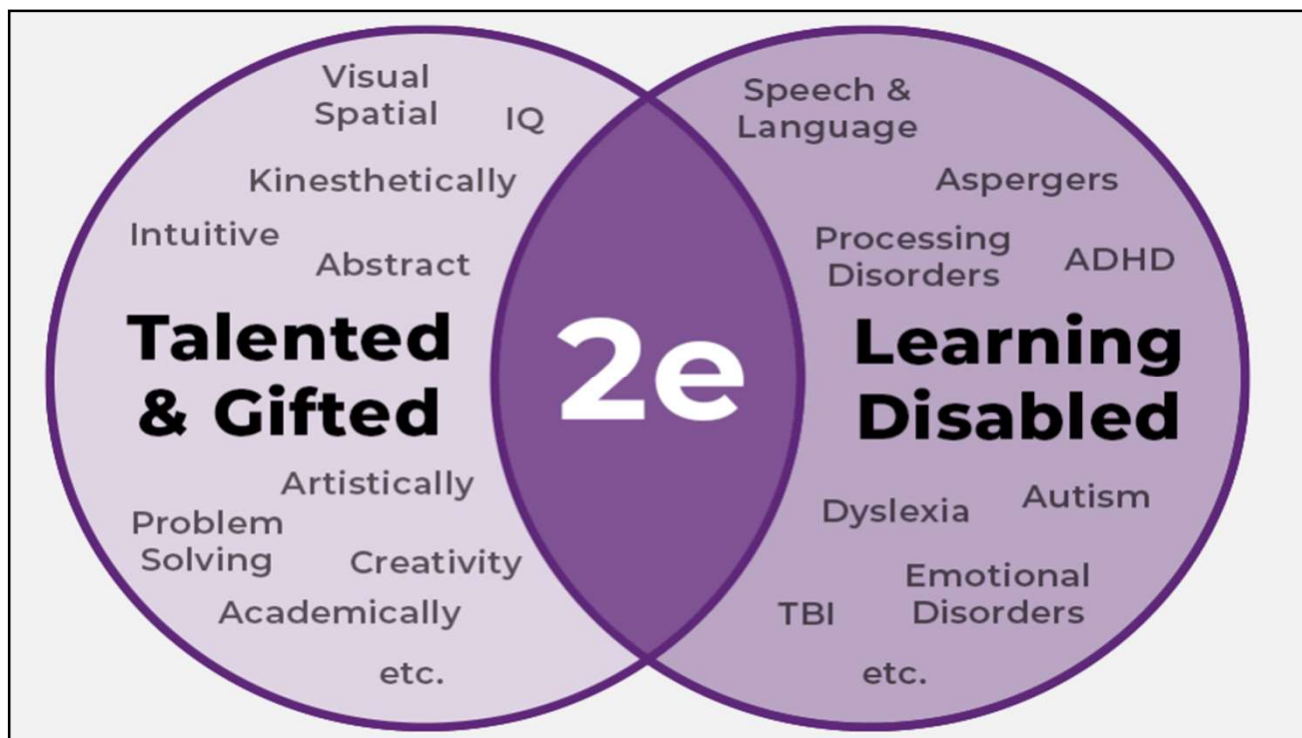
Persistent difficulties in the social use of verbal and nonverbal communication:

- 1) Using communication for social purposes, such as greeting and sharing information, appropriate for the social context;
 - 2) Changing communication to match context such as speaking differently in a classroom v. playground, to a child than to an adult, and avoiding use of overly formal language;
 - 3) Following rules for conversation and storytelling, such as taking turns in conversation, rephrasing when misunderstood, and knowing how to use verbal and nonverbal signals;
 - 4) Understanding what is not explicitly stated (e.g. inferencing) and nonliteral or ambiguous meanings of language, for example, idioms, jokes, metaphors and multiple meanings.
- Deficits result in functional limitations; Onset early developmental period
 - Deficits are not better explained by other disorders (i.e., autism spectrum disorders OR language disorder)

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TWICE EXCEPTIONAL





- Albert Einstein developed the theory of relativity and won the Nobel Prize in Physics.
- Einstein talked late - age 3 or 4 years old. Ongoing trouble with oral expression.
- He struggled in school, particularly with memorization.
- He had antisocial habits as a young man and remained socially eccentric. His trademark unkempt hair and perpetually dark wardrobe attest to his lack of concern with his appearance.
- People who would try to diagnose Einstein's challenges fall somewhere between autism and dyslexia.

“The key issue in the field of gifted individuals is identifying individuals who will be able to solve the serious problems the world is dealing with... thinking on one’s own as an individual can never solve the difficulties.... For this reason, social skills are the main factor through which intelligence and giftedness can be of benefit to the individual, the society and the world. Social skills may be one of the biggest problems and the solutions of the present century.” Çitil & Özkubat, 2020



02

IDENTIFY SOCIAL SKILLS

Terms and Behaviors

Social skills can be difficult to define...

VH 15

Give examples of good or poor social interactions you've observed at your school.



School-age Expectations

- Reads body language and tone of voice
- Takes another's perspective and modifies language accordingly
- Provides assistance and demonstrates empathy and caring for others
- Demonstrates conversational skills (e.g., maintain, repair, number of turns, extends)
- Demonstrates refined social conventions (e.g., politeness forms)
- Uses language for varied functions including persuading and advancing opinion


ASHA Resource

Based on: Gard, Gilman, & Gorman (1993) and Russell (2007) --available in Handout

How does Alabama define social skills...

2016 Revised Alabama English Language Arts Course of Study

COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS ANCHOR STANDARDS FOR SPEAKING AND LISTENING

The College and Career Readiness (CCR) anchor standards below were developed prior to the development of grade-level standards. The Grades K-12 standards define what students should understand and be able to do by the end of each grade. The CCR and grade-specific standards are necessary complements—the former providing broad standards, the latter providing additional specificity—that together define the skills and understandings that all students must demonstrate. The 2010 *Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects* are noted in brackets following Grades K-12 standards. Alabama standards that have been added are noted by a state of Alabama symbol ().

Comprehension and Collaboration

1. Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
2. Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.
3. Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.

Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

4. Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
5. Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.
6. Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

Social Skills

Social-emotional:

- Ability to develop and nurture meaningful relationships and appropriately express emotions and respond appropriately to others' emotions" –U.S. Department of Health and Human Resources

Social communication (i.e., pragmatics):

- The functional and appropriate use of language (ASHA, 1993)

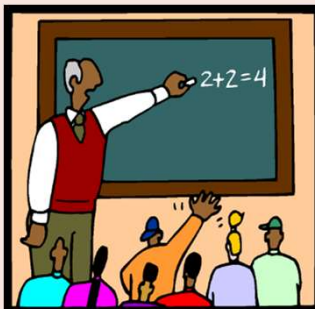
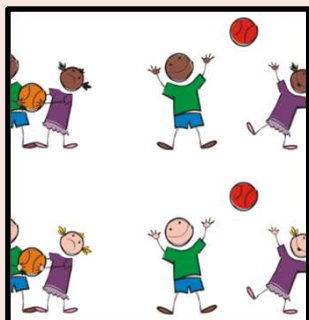
Social cognition:

- Our knowledge of social behaviors including thoughts, intentions, and behaviors (Flavell et al., 1993)

WATCH THESE KIDS!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FVl7bdGO-sM>

Social emotional	Social communication	Social cognition

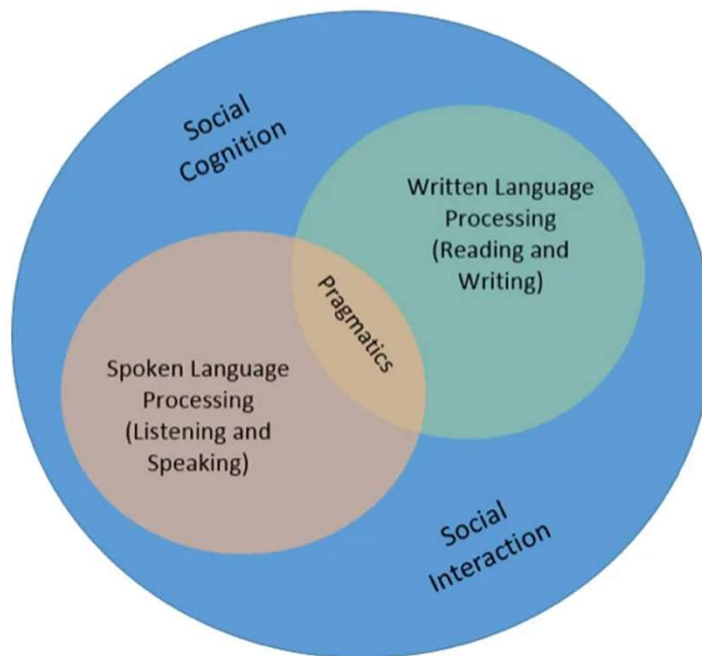


Contextualized Social Skills

- Social skills depend on situations or contexts
 - Teach the appropriate social rules as needed for individuals
- Examples: Inside/outside voices, hugging/greeting friends, etc.

ASHA

Social Communication



Conversational Frameworks

- Negotiating meanings
- Meaning in conversation requires ability to make inferences, and inferences rely on knowledge of framework as well as literal meanings
- Framework – the larger structure of the conversation, different from the topic
 - Examples of different frameworks: dispute, problem-solving, recount of past event, joke



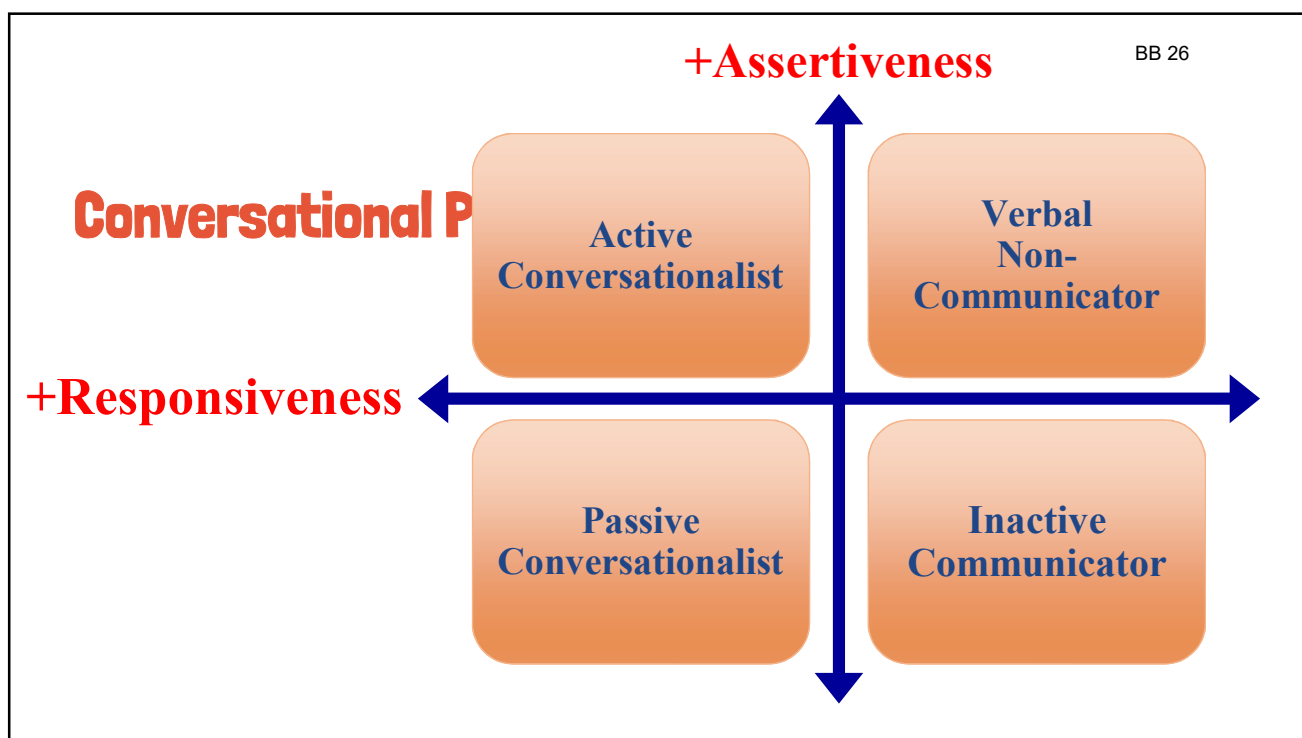
School Social Contexts

List contexts that occur in the school setting that require different social communication skills and different frameworks.

Conversational Skills

By age 3, children are 90% successful with both initiating and responding in peer interactions

- **Access** is entering a social interaction
 - Verbal access: greeting, comment or question
 - Nonverbal access: approach, where to stand, eye contact, greeting gesture
- **Assertiveness** is spontaneous communication to get a conversation started
 - Asking a question or Making a comment
- **Responsiveness** is communication that is built upon the conversational partner's speaking turn
 - Answering a question or Maintaining the topic
- **Integration/Inclusion** is sustained cooperation or engagement in the social interaction



Conversational Deficits



- Are conversational weaknesses due to problems with:
 - Forming sentences?
 - Speech intelligibility?
 - Using the right words?
 - Body language or eye contact?
- Well-formed utterances are not necessarily appropriate or effective
 - "I'm gonna shoot you with my shotgun."
 - "Ms. Brenda, I want to be the little mermaid for halloween"
- And, ill-formed utterances are not necessarily inappropriate or ineffective
 - "Help!"

Grice's Maxims

1. **The maxim of quantity**, the speaker tries to be informative as possible, giving as much info as needed but no more.
2. **The maxim of quality**, the speaker tries to be truthful, and does not give information that is false or not supported by evidence.
3. **The maxim of relation**, the speaker tries to be relevant, and says things that are on topic.
4. **The maxim of manner**, the speaker tries to be as clear, brief, and orderly

Assessing Conversation Skills– Grice's Maxims

- Too much info
 - Unnecessary assertion/denial (e.g., “I always use my napkin.”)
 - Excessive elaboration
 - Unnecessary repetition
 - Ellipsis not used
- Too little info
 - Inappropriate presupposition
 - Unestablished referent
 - Logical step removed
- Unusual content
 - Topic drift
 - Stereotyped learned language
 - Inappropriate questioning (e.g., “Who's your daddy?”)
 - Socially inappropriate remarks (e.g., “Hey baby!”)

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WHOA!

03

Current
controversies that
impact our
educational settings
and choices

WHOA!

1. WHO decides what is typical and appropriate?
2. What happens when we ask people to “pass?”
3. Neurodiversity



AMA Journal of Ethics®

July 2021, Volume 23, Number 7: E569-575

MEDICINE AND SOCIETY: PEER-REVIEWED ARTICLE

When Disability Is Defined by Behavior, Outcome Measures Should Not Promote “Passing”

Ari Ne’eman

Autistic adults have criticized this promotion of **indistinguishability** through the **neurodiversity movement**, which argues that autistic traits are not inherently in need of correction and that the goal of autism service provision and research should not be to make autistic people nonautistic.

Efforts to pass have been identified as a risk marker for suicidality in autistic adults. Such “camouflaging” is also associated with other mental health challenges.

...“I am actually at a point now where I rarely leave the house because I don’t have the energy to pass.”

Person with autism



Autistic person



Neurology is not an accessory
www.identityfirstautistic.org



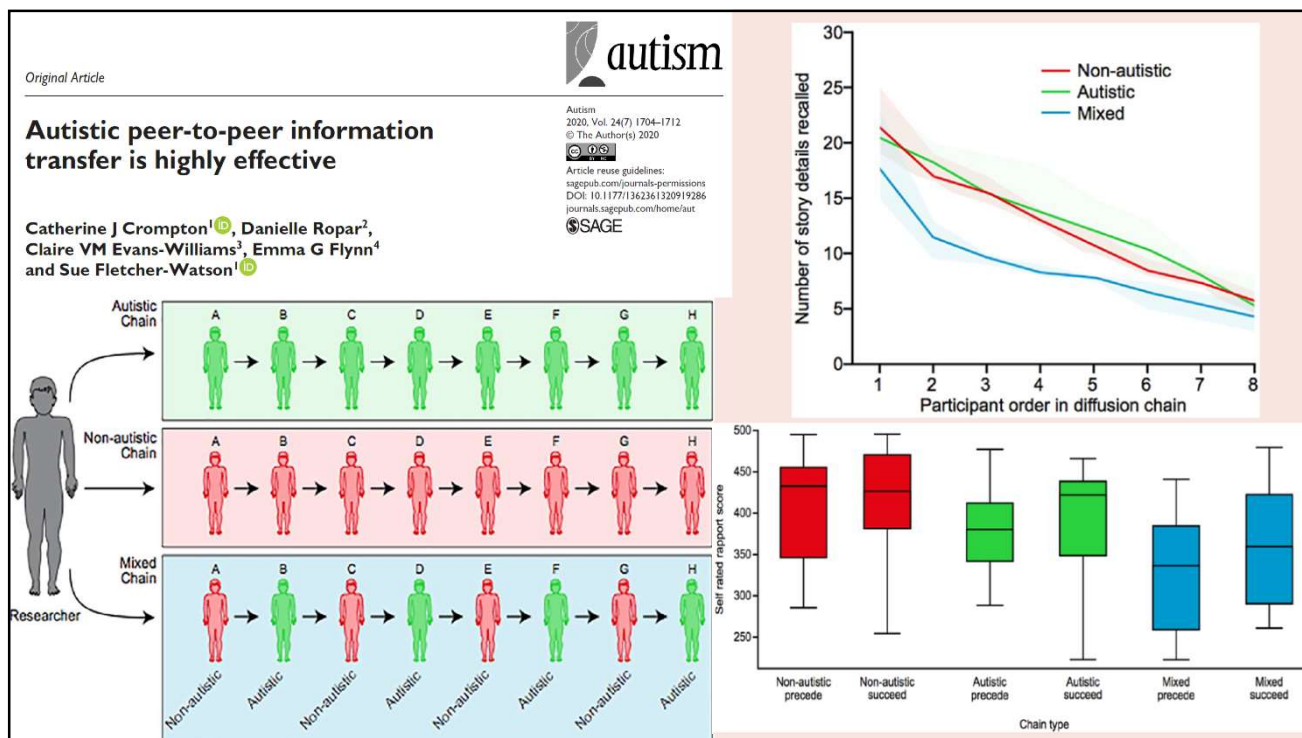
Ableism – “Speech-Language Pathologist!”



*We're people,
not puzzles!*

I Don't Understand You!
You Don't Understand Me!





ORIGINAL RESEARCH article
Front. Psychol., 29 April 2021 | <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.616664>

Check for updates

Mutual (Mis)understanding: Reframing Autistic Pragmatic “Impairments” Using Relevance Theory

Gemma L. Williams^{1,2}, Tim Wharton¹ and Caroline Jagoe²

... research into autistic sociality and communication has begun to turn its gaze toward **intersubjectivity**. Taking a phenomenological perspective, intersubjectivity acknowledges that as embodied social agents we share in some degree of a “co-conception or co-orientation to the world”....

Communication, viewed intersubjectively, does not occur in a void, nor solely in the mind of one individual: it is a social and interactive phenomenon...

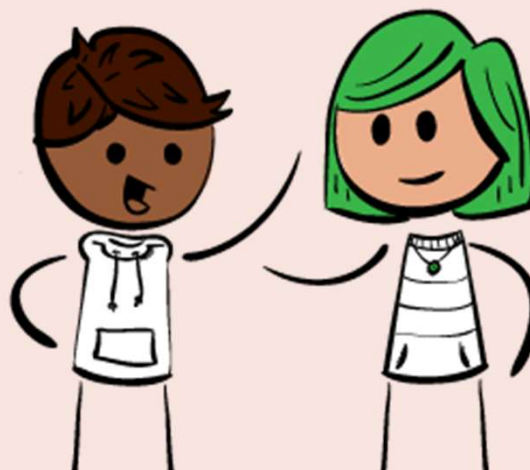
...in opposition to traditional explanations of autism that have situated the mind-reading “failures” assumed central to pragmatic breakdown in the minds/brains of the autistic individuals...

Double Empathy Problem - two speakers of different neurotypes hold different norms and expectations of each other. Misunderstanding or lack of understanding is not a consequence of autistic “impairment” but a mutual failure in reaching consensus through bidirectional empathy.

**What does conversation look like?
Where does it occur?**



Intersubjectivity



This Photo by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY](#)

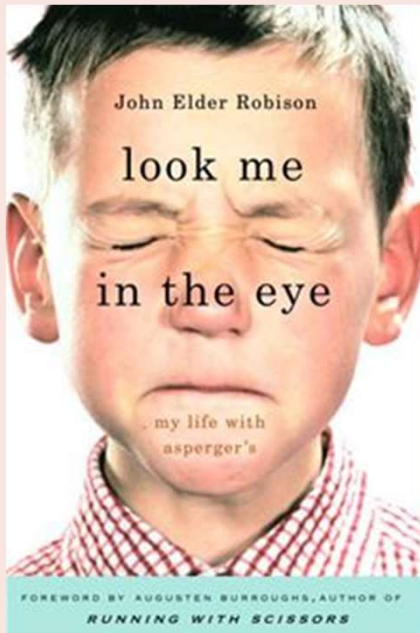
Is treatment abusive? What about involving peers?



1. Expectations for conversational behavior are based on neurotypical forms of communicating.
2. Power differential? – Were the neurotypical peers assigned the goal to “improve” the autistic peers’ social skills?

BUT: There’s a difference between addressing developing skills for children versus when adults might be expected to “comply”





Eye contact for persons with ASD might not be an ideal goal

Options:

- Give the student skills for looking at a speaker's forehead, not eyes.
- Help peers and other educators understand how to “interpret” the lack of eye contact
 - doesn't automatically signal disrespect
 - may not be indicative of attention or interest

IDENTITY

Children – either gifted or autistic – may not have this self-identity and using these labels with our students is not necessarily advisable.



04 TEACH

Skills and strategies to apply in the classroom and school settings.



EFFECTIVE SOCIAL SKILLS PROGRAMS



INTENSIVE

How much and how long?



CONTEXTUALIZED

CONTEXT CONTEXT CONTEXT



INTENTIONAL

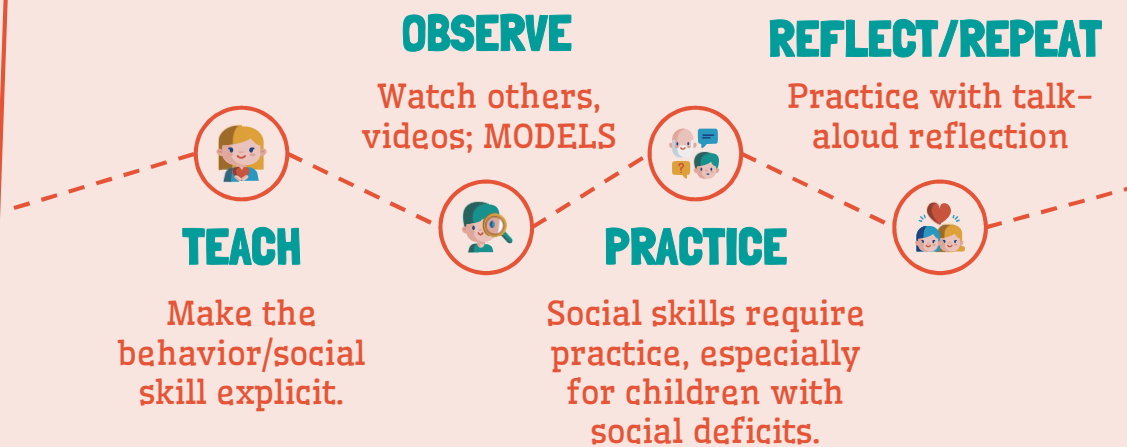
Pick social skills practice connected to social skills breakdowns.



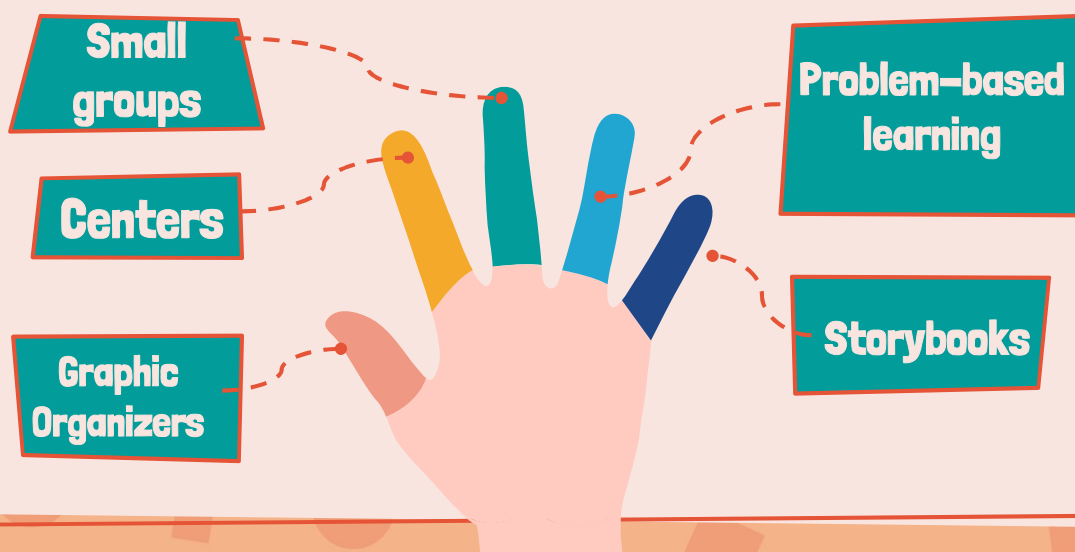
SYSTEMATIC

Which skills and strategies have an evidence base?

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONAL STEPS



You're already using these tools!



3 KEY BEHAVIORS

Bellini, 2016

Nonverbal Communication

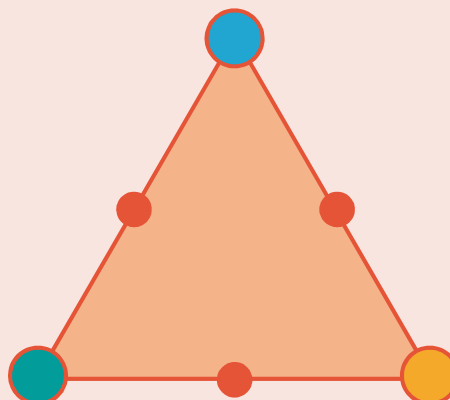
Face, eyes, tone, gestures

Social Initiation

Access and Assertiveness

Social Reciprocity

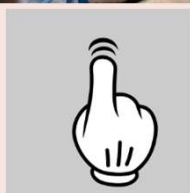
Responsiveness, turn-taking, repair



B-A-T



Body



Attention



Talk

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Teach Access and Assertiveness

Brinton & Fujiki (2007)

- “It’s fun to work with others”
- Walk
 - Teach child to approach group and stop at appropriate distance
- Watch
 - Watch what the group is doing or talking about
- Talk/Join in
 - Participate nonverbally
 - Make a positive comment, ask a question
 - Try more than one time
- Reflect – student and coach evaluate and revise



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Teach Responsiveness

Brinton & Fujiki (2007)

- Avoid teaching personal compliments
- Define goal as “saying something nice”
 - First notice what others are doing
 - Say something nice about the contributions of others in an activity
 - “Good move,” “You got a two,” “Do you need some glitter?”
- Assist students in understanding the responses, emotional reactions to their attempts to say something nice



ROBOTICS CLUB	LUNCH
Say something nice?	Say something nice?

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Teach Sustained Cooperation

- Add “stay and work” or “stay and play” to steps⁵⁰ taught for gaining access
 - Teach cooperation through game playing, use repeated instruction, practice, review procedures
- Reflect – Coach and student study and revise, consider using videotape to reflect
- Students are more likely to stay if they are successful negotiating a role in the play/work



Video Modeling

- ★ Effective across ages
- ★ Effective across skill outcomes
- ★ Effective across language and cognitive functioning (Bellini & Akullian, 2007)



OBSERVE



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

Social Problem–Solving:

Leveraging social cognition to support social–emotional and communication skills

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|--|--|
| 1. Describe context | 2. Recognize Thoughts and feelings | 3. Tell why you think that |
| 4. Predict consequences | 5. “What if”– alternative behaviors | 6. Predict consequences of alternatives |

Role play

- First, practice skills until automatic using rules, scripted conversations.
- Then, begin modifying responses and increasing flexibility for unscripted conversations
- Conversation Game
- Conversation Club

PRACTICE!



BB 54

PRACTICE – Include a “coach” who is not the conversation partner

Telling people what to say is not a typical interaction

Teacher: “Tell me you want to pass out the papers.”

If you already know, then why do I need to tell you?



Conversation Game

Activity that requires the child to maintain a reciprocal conversation with another person

Steps and Procedures:

- ☑ Pair child with another child (group session or class-wide instruction) or therapist (individual session)
- ☑ Start the game by one person asking a question to their partner (any question)
- ☑ The other person then answers the first question and then in turn, asks a question to their partner
- ☑ Continue for 1-2 minutes depending upon age and skill level of the child
- ☑ Provide prompting as necessary if the child fails to respond to a question or takes too long to answer a question
- ☑ Can be modified to facilitate and encourage topic maintenance

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Conversation Map (Bellini, 2016)



MINI LESSONS TO TEACH SUB-SKILLS

News Reporter

*Activity designed to promote “asking questions about others.”
Used primarily with children who rarely ask questions to others, or who only ask questions about their own topical interests.*

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Steps and Procedures:

- ☑ Pair child with another child (group session or class-wide instruction) or therapist (individual session)
- ☑ Start the game by telling the children about the job of a newspaper reporter
- ☑ Tell the children (doesn't have to be verbatim) that they are going play the role of a “reporter” whose job it is to interview another person and to get as much information about that person as they can.
- ☑ Provide the “reporter” with the list of basic questions (children should be encouraged to develop their own questions once they get comfortable with the activity).
- ☑ Provide prompting as necessary if the child fails to ask a question and to keep the interview moving.
- ☑ Encourage the child to ask follow-up and “probing” questions in the spirit of great journalism
- ☑ Encourage the child and family to play “Reporter” at home and report back during the next session
- ☑ For children who engage in one-sided conversations or ask repetitive questions, you can put them in the position of the interviewee

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AGAIN: General strategies for teaching social skills for children with ASD

(Williams White, Koenig, & Scahill, 2007; Bellini et al., 2007)

- Start simple with easier to learn skills
- Introduce new skills once previous target is mastered and provide opportunities for mastered and new skills to be targeted simultaneously
- Be explicit—"the rule is X and this is how you do it"
- Model! Model! Model!
- Use roleplay
- Use video modeling and explicitly review the desired or undesired behaviors
- Practice with a variety of communication partners and coaches
- Keep it contextualized!

Sharing Clear Messages

- **Perspective Taking**
- **Presuppositions–Assumptions** speakers make about what listeners know
- **Referent Specificity** (this, that, over there, thing)
- **Repairing communication breakdowns**



PERSPECTIVE TAKING

- Taking another's perspective: What might the person be thinking? Feeling?
 - Inference
 - Nonverbal cues
 - Emotion identification
- Embed practice in all subjects:
 - Characters in storybooks; literature
 - Famous persons in science, history, current events

Thinking Thoughts and Feeling Feelings

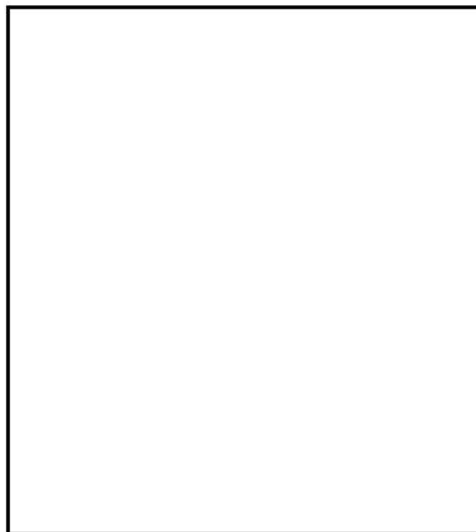
This is Evan, Ellie, Jesse and Molly. They are playing in their classroom. Above their heads are thought bubbles. Thought bubbles go above people's heads to show what they are thinking about.

What is Evan (the boy on the far left wearing a yellow shirt) thinking about? His car! Draw a picture of a car inside his thought bubble. Do the same for the rest of the kids.



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What's in your thought bubble?
Draw a picture of something you like to think about!



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BARRIER GAMES



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Communication breakdowns and repairs

Philip (2008)

Types of repairs:

- Repetitions
- Revisions
- Additions
- Expansions
- Explanations
- Simplification
- Key words

Requests for clarifications (i.e., repairs):

- Huh?
- What happened?
- For real?
- What does that mean?
- What does that have to do with anything?

VH 64

SOCIAL STORIES – Carol Gray

Could you please repeat that? 60

When I do not understand something that is said to me, it's okay to ask that person to repeat what they said.

I can try to look at the person and say, "Could you please repeat that? I don't understand yet." This is an intelligent thing to do.

Could you please repeat that?
I don't understand yet.



The person will repeat what was said. It may help to hear it again.

Asking a Question in Class 59

When I am in class, sometimes I have a question.

When I want to ask a question, I try to raise my hand and wait until the teacher calls my name. If I raise my hand, the teacher will know I would like to ask a question. When the teacher calls my name, that means it is my turn to ask my question.

The teacher will try to answer my question.

I will try to listen carefully to my teacher's answer.



Peer Mentors

- One or more peers without disabilities are taught skills to provide ongoing social or academic support
- Peer-mediated approaches appropriate for children with ASD who have one or more of these characteristics:
 - Have individualized education program (IEP) goals addressing interactions or relationships with peers.
 - Experience limited interactions with same-age peers, despite close proximity.
 - Evidence substantial impairments in social or communication skills.
 - Require considerable support to participate in classroom or school activities.



Considerations for choosing peers:

- 1) Consistent attendance
- 2) Interested
- 3) Able to easily follow instructions
- 4) Social skills are a strength
- 5) In good standing with other peers
- 6) Consider older students

Modified from Bourque (2020)

Mary B. Buddies – a CONVERSATION CLUB

Schools-based, small group
social skills instruction

<p style="text-align: center;">PREMISE</p> <p style="text-align: center;">We would like to implement a peer-mediated social skills intervention at Mary B. Austin to benefit children struggling with pragmatic skill development. We believe this program would be beneficial for focal children, as well as, their typically developing peers.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">NICE TO MEET YOU</p> <p>Brenda Beverly, PhD, CCC-SLP Program Coordinator Department of Speech-Language Pathology University of South Alabama</p> <p>Katelyn McCarthy, BA MS-SLP Student Graduate Assistant University of South Alabama</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">FOCAL SKILLS</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Individualized Strategic Peer-Mediated</p> <p>Skills that could be addressed through peer-mediated intervention include: starting/ending conversations with peers (especially new/unfamiliar peers), joining/leaving conversations appropriately, reducing distracting behaviors in conversation, and strategies for coping with social anxiety. Lessons could be individualized to the clients' specific needs.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"> bbeverly@southalabama.edu</p> <p style="text-align: center;"> (251) 445-9362</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">MARY B. BUDDIES</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Motivated Willing Empathetic</p> <p>Peer buddies with typical social skills can apply or be nominated by a teacher or school member to participate in this program. We will look for students who are empathetic, kind, receiving good grades in their classes, and, most importantly, students who want to participate.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">FRAMEWORK</p> <p>Peers with typical social skills will be taught strategies to facilitate and maintain conversation with their focal peers. We would like to</p>

Mary B. Buddies – Curriculum

<p>WEEK 1 - PROXIMITY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet your group • Program/Clinician/Student Introduction • Times outside of group when we can play with/be with our buddies <p>WEEK 2 - PROXIMITY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did you play/work in your group at all last week? • Personal space • Greetings <p>WEEK 3 - INITIATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer introduction • Asking someone's name <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What if we don't remember our friend's name? • Introduction to an adult <p>WEEK 4 - INITIATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Starting a conversation with a peer • Starting a conversation with an adult 	<p>WEEK 5 - INITIATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joining a conversation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Wait, look, listen ○ Observe what's ○ Triad - set up when 2 people are doing something, 3rd person has to show that they can walk up and see what they're doing and think about it, see their responses ○ Me pair with group, Dr. B pair with other group ○ Building blocks or some type of activity <p>WEEK 6 - INITIATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joining a conversation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Wait, look, listen <p>WEEK 7 - RESPONSE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Typical conversation responses - TURN TAKING <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Asking a question ○ Making a comment <p>WEEK 8 - RESPONSE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On topic vs. off topic
--	--



Mary B. Buddies OUTCOMES

- 9 sessions with 6, 4th-graders.
- Girl FOCUS student added 1 group girl peer to her list of friends on post-test, AND that same peer added the FOCUS student to her list.
- Girl FOCUS student increased number of friends listed on post-test questionnaire (from 1 named friend to 3).
- Girl FOCUS child added one additional skill she wanted to work on when trying to make new friends (i.e., staying on topic, in addition to joining & turn-taking).
- "Mary B. Buddies" was included as an activity on post-test questionnaire by 2 students (i.e., asked, "What activities do you participate in?")

REFLECTION:

- Consider having all students come from same class
- Consider separating boys and girls into two separate groups for sessions
- Need to choose peers from different peer groups
- Consider increasing session time to 30 minutes per group



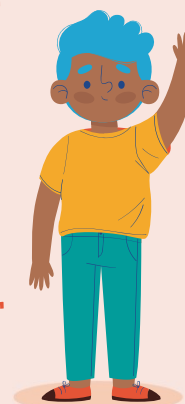
BUILDING SOCIAL NETWORKS

	1ST QUARTER	2ND QUARTER	3RD QUARTER
FOCUS STUDENT	FOCUS	FOCUS	FOCUS
PEER	PEER A	PEER C	PEER E
PEER	PEER B	PEER D	PEER F

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



- Do you have a social skills curriculum at your school? If yes, how does what we've discussed align with that curriculum?
- Tell us about what you have done that worked.
- Are you seeing students who need this instruction?
- How could the speech therapists in your school or USA faculty like us assist you?
- What else are you thinking about? Want to know more about?



“The key issue in the field of gifted individuals is identifying individuals who will be able to solve the serious problems the world is dealing with... thinking on one’s own as an individual can never solve the difficulties.... For this reason, social skills are the main factor through which intelligence and giftedness can be of benefit to the individual, the society and the world. Social skills may be one of the biggest problems and the solutions of the present century.” Çitil & Özkubat, 2020



Do you have any questions?

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Session Evaluation

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an evaluation for this session.*



Exceptional and Able:

Supporting the Social Communication Skills of Gifted Neurodiverse Students in the Classroom

"She's weird"



Autism, Pediatric Language, and Literacy Lab



Victoria Henbest

Ph.D., CCC-SLP



Brenda Beverly

Ph.D., CCC-SLP

THANK YOU!

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Autism, Pediatric Language & Literacy Lab (APLL) members:

- Mary B. Austin Elementary School - principal, teachers, students
- Families we serve
- Graduate Student Assistants:
 - Katelyn McCarthy
 - Catherine Clark Cureton
 - Kelsey Gross Carlisle

Learning Objectives

01

WHO ARE OUR STUDENTS?

Gifted and Neurodiverse

02

IDENTIFY SOCIAL SKILLS

What are the skills inherent in our social interactions?

03

WHOA!

Current controversies that impact our educational settings and choices.

04

TEACH

Skills and strategies to apply in the classroom and school settings.



WHO ARE OUR STUDENTS?

01

Gifted and Neurodiverse

CHARACTERISTICS OF GIFTEDNESS

IQ and ACADEMICS

Achieve greater than age/grade expectations.

SOCIAL SKILLS

No difference or exceed skills of nongifted students.

ALL BACKGROUNDS

Giftedness is seen in all SES or other demographic groups.

DIFFERENT

Gifted students can be aware of not belonging, and $\frac{2}{3}$ experience bullying.

BUT ALSO THE SAME

Like other students, they need support for social-emotional development.

ASYNCHRONOUS

Development across areas can be uneven.

The American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual, Fifth Edition (DSM-5) provides standardized criteria to help diagnose ASD.

Diagnostic Criteria for 299.00 Autism Spectrum Disorder

To meet diagnostic criteria for ASD according to DSM-5, a child must have persistent deficits in each of three areas of social communication and interaction (see A.1. through A.3. below) plus at least two of four types of restricted, repetitive behaviors (see B.1. through B.4. below).



A. Persistent deficits in social communication and social interaction across multiple contexts, as manifested by the following, currently or by history (examples are illustrative, not exhaustive; see text):

1. Deficits in social-emotional reciprocity, ranging, for example, from abnormal social approach and failure of normal back-and-forth conversation; to reduced sharing of interests, emotions, or affect; to failure to initiate or respond to social interactions.
2. Deficits in nonverbal communicative behaviors used for social interaction, ranging, for example, from poorly integrated verbal and nonverbal communication; to abnormalities in eye contact and body language or deficits in understanding and use of gestures; to a total lack of facial expressions and nonverbal communication.
3. Deficits in developing, maintaining, and understand relationships, ranging, for example, from difficulties adjusting behavior to suit various social contexts; to difficulties in sharing imaginative play or in making friends; to absence of interest in peers.

7



SESAME STREET

<https://youtu.be/BnFHEBMvAVA>

DSM 5 – Social Communication Disorder

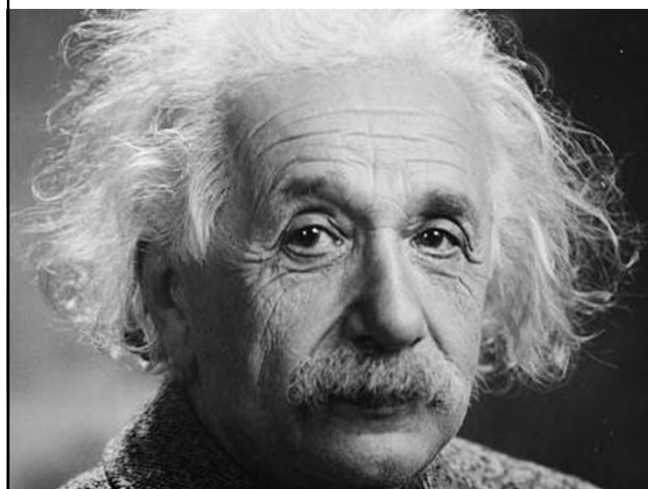
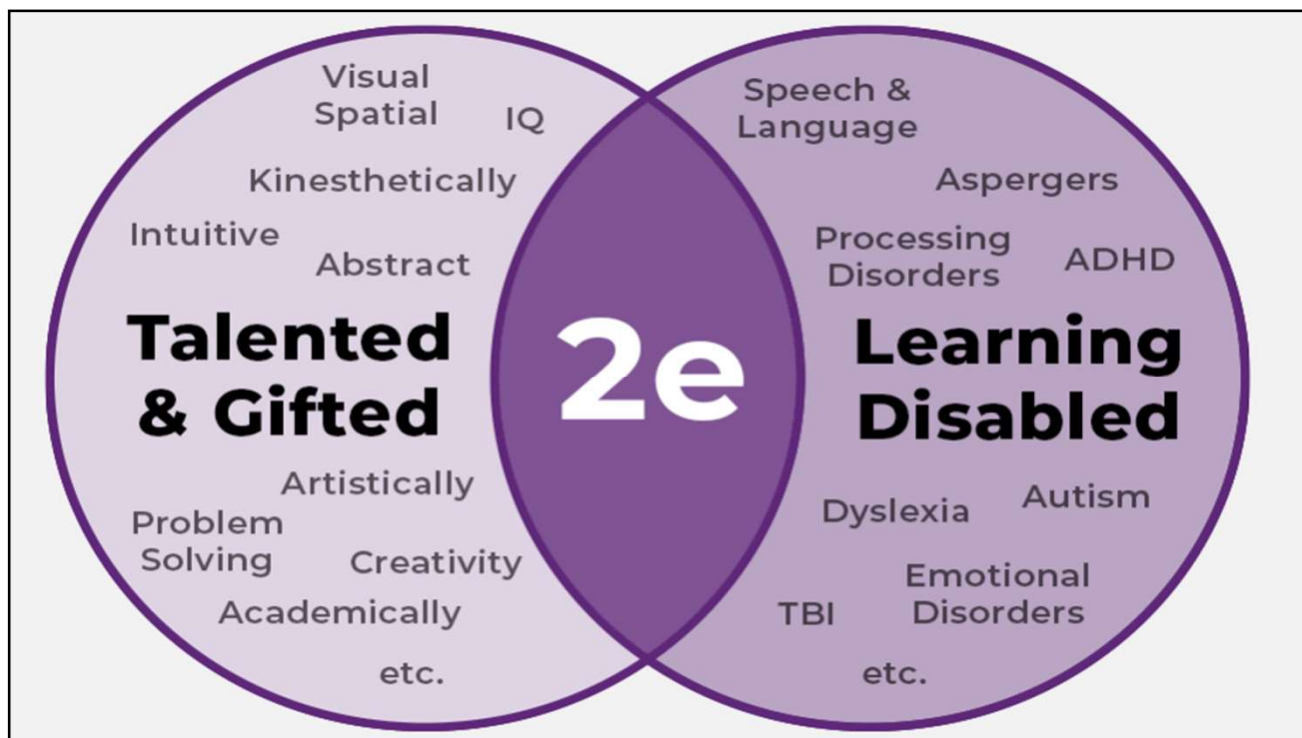
Persistent difficulties in the social use of verbal and nonverbal communication:

- 1) Using communication for social purposes, such as greeting and sharing information, appropriate for the social context;
 - 2) Changing communication to match context such as speaking differently in a classroom v. playground, to a child than to an adult, and avoiding use of overly formal language;
 - 3) Following rules for conversation and storytelling, such as taking turns in conversation, rephrasing when misunderstood, and knowing how to use verbal and nonverbal signals;
 - 4) Understanding what is not explicitly stated (e.g. inferencing) and nonliteral or ambiguous meanings of language, for example, idioms, jokes, metaphors and multiple meanings.
- Deficits result in functional limitations; Onset early developmental period
 - Deficits are not better explained by other disorders (i.e., autism spectrum disorders OR language disorder)

9

TWICE EXCEPTIONAL





- Albert Einstein developed the theory of relativity and won the Nobel Prize in Physics.
- Einstein talked late - age 3 or 4 years old. Ongoing trouble with oral expression.
- He struggled in school, particularly with memorization.
- He had antisocial habits as a young man and remained socially eccentric. His trademark unkempt hair and perpetually dark wardrobe attest to his lack of concern with his appearance.
- People who would try to diagnose Einstein's challenges fall somewhere between autism and dyslexia.

“The key issue in the field of gifted individuals is identifying individuals who will be able to solve the serious problems the world is dealing with... thinking on one’s own as an individual can never solve the difficulties.... For this reason, social skills are the main factor through which intelligence and giftedness can be of benefit to the individual, the society and the world. Social skills may be one of the biggest problems and the solutions of the present century.” Çitil & Özkubat, 2020



02

IDENTIFY SOCIAL SKILLS

Terms and Behaviors

Social skills can be difficult to define...

VH 15

Give examples of good or poor social interactions you've observed at your school.



School-age Expectations

- Reads body language and tone of voice
- Takes another's perspective and modifies language accordingly
- Provides assistance and demonstrates empathy and caring for others
- Demonstrates conversational skills (e.g., maintain, repair, number of turns, extends)
- Demonstrates refined social conventions (e.g., politeness forms)
- Uses language for varied functions including persuading and advancing opinion


ASHA Resource

Based on: Gard, Gilman, & Gorman (1993) and Russell (2007) --available in Handout

How does Alabama define social skills...

2016 Revised Alabama English Language Arts Course of Study

COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS ANCHOR STANDARDS FOR SPEAKING AND LISTENING

The College and Career Readiness (CCR) anchor standards below were developed prior to the development of grade-level standards. The Grades K-12 standards define what students should understand and be able to do by the end of each grade. The CCR and grade-specific standards are necessary complements—the former providing broad standards, the latter providing additional specificity—that together define the skills and understandings that all students must demonstrate. The 2010 *Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects* are noted in brackets following Grades K-12 standards. Alabama standards that have been added are noted by a state of Alabama symbol ().

Comprehension and Collaboration

1. Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
2. Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.
3. Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.

Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

4. Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
5. Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.
6. Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

Social Skills

Social-emotional:

- Ability to develop and nurture meaningful relationships and appropriately express emotions and respond appropriately to others' emotions" –U.S. Department of Health and Human Resources

Social communication (i.e., pragmatics):

- The functional and appropriate use of language (ASHA, 1993)

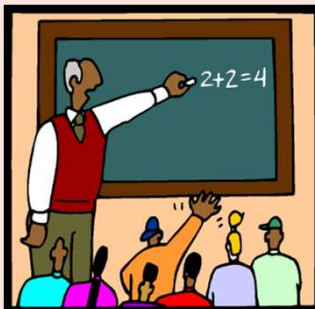
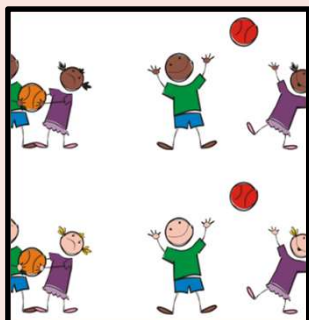
Social cognition:

- Our knowledge of social behaviors including thoughts, intentions, and behaviors (Flavell et al., 1993)

WATCH THESE KIDS!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FVl7bdGO-sM>

Social emotional	Social communication	Social cognition

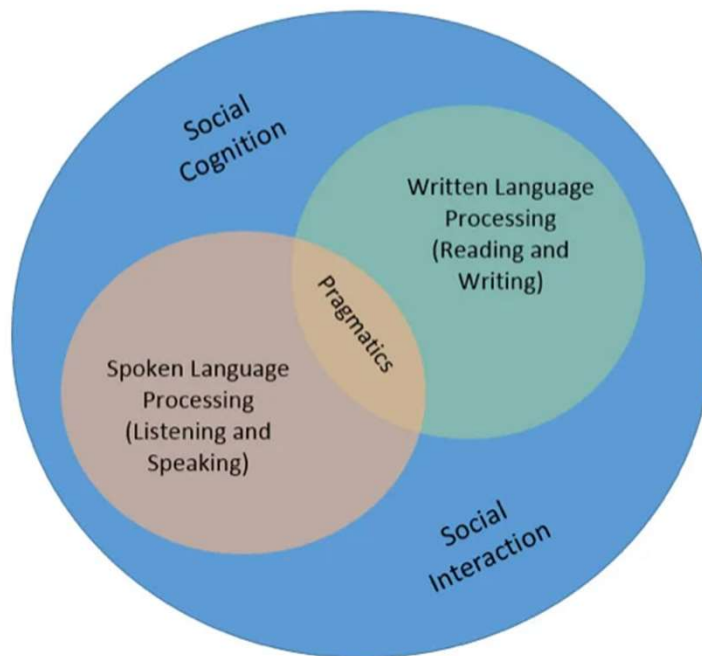


Contextualized Social Skills

- Social skills depend on situations or contexts
 - Teach the appropriate social rules as needed for individuals
- Examples: Inside/outside voices, hugging/greeting friends, etc.

ASHA

Social Communication



Conversational Frameworks

- Negotiating meanings
- Meaning in conversation requires ability to make inferences, and inferences rely on knowledge of framework as well as literal meanings
- Framework – the larger structure of the conversation, different from the topic
 - Examples of different frameworks: dispute, problem-solving, recount of past event, joke



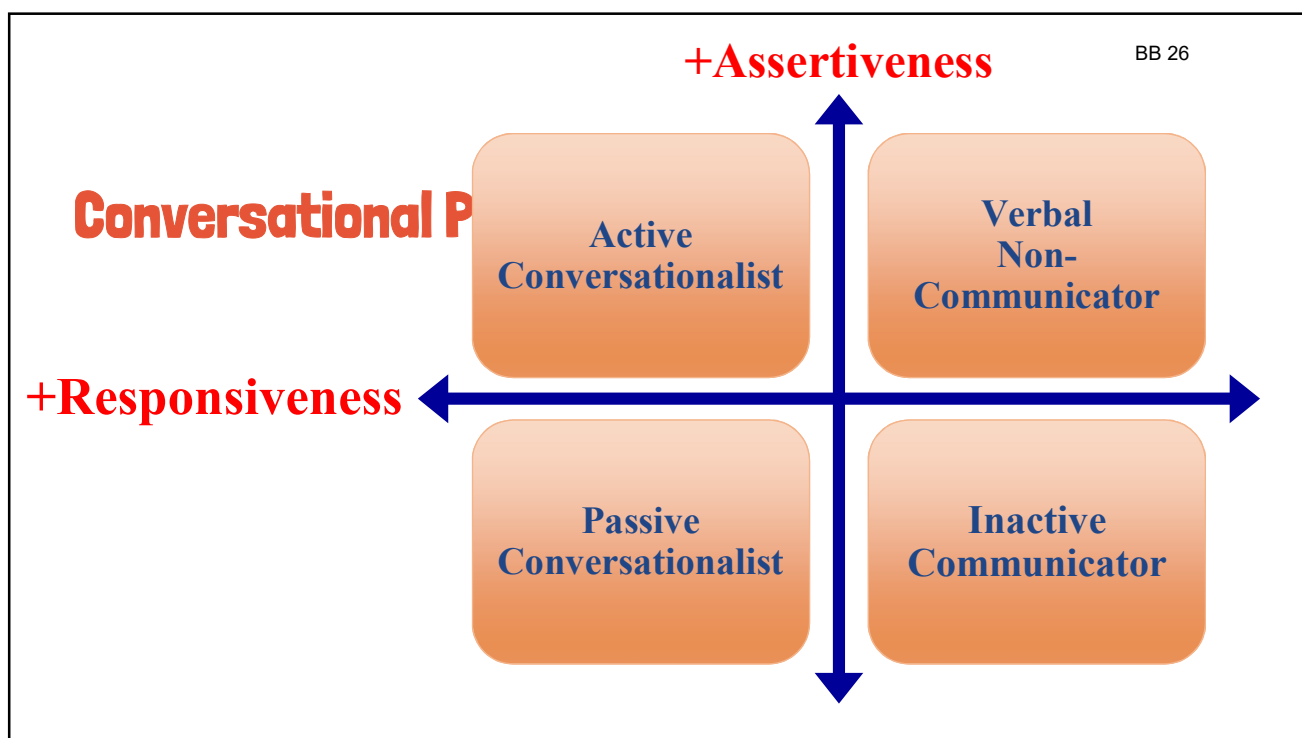
School Social Contexts

List contexts that occur in the school setting that require different social communication skills and different frameworks.

Conversational Skills

By age 3, children are 90% successful with both initiating and responding in peer interactions

- **Access** is entering a social interaction
 - Verbal access: greeting, comment or question
 - Nonverbal access: approach, where to stand, eye contact, greeting gesture
- **Assertiveness** is spontaneous communication to get a conversation started
 - Asking a question or Making a comment
- **Responsiveness** is communication that is built upon the conversational partner's speaking turn
 - Answering a question or Maintaining the topic
- **Integration/Inclusion** is sustained cooperation or engagement in the social interaction



Conversational Deficits



- Are conversational weaknesses due to problems with:
 - Forming sentences?
 - Speech intelligibility?
 - Using the right words?
 - Body language or eye contact?
- Well-formed utterances are not necessarily appropriate or effective
 - "I'm gonna shoot you with my shotgun."
 - "Ms. Brenda, I want to be the little mermaid for halloween"
- And, ill-formed utterances are not necessarily inappropriate or ineffective
 - "Help!"

Grice's Maxims

1. **The maxim of quantity**, the speaker tries to be informative as possible, giving as much info as needed but no more.
2. **The maxim of quality**, the speaker tries to be truthful, and does not give information that is false or not supported by evidence.
3. **The maxim of relation**, the speaker tries to be relevant, and says things that are on topic.
4. **The maxim of manner**, the speaker tries to be as clear, brief, and orderly

Assessing Conversation Skills– Grice's Maxims

- Too much info
 - Unnecessary assertion/denial (e.g., “I always use my napkin.”)
 - Excessive elaboration
 - Unnecessary repetition
 - Ellipsis not used
- Too little info
 - Inappropriate presupposition
 - Unestablished referent
 - Logical step removed
- Unusual content
 - Topic drift
 - Stereotyped learned language
 - Inappropriate questioning (e.g., “Who's your daddy?”)
 - Socially inappropriate remarks (e.g., “Hey baby!”)

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WHOA!

03

Current
controversies that
impact our
educational settings
and choices

WHOA!

1. WHO decides what is typical and appropriate?
2. What happens when we ask people to “pass?”
3. Neurodiversity



AMA Journal of Ethics®

July 2021, Volume 23, Number 7: E569-575

MEDICINE AND SOCIETY: PEER-REVIEWED ARTICLE

When Disability Is Defined by Behavior, Outcome Measures Should Not Promote “Passing”

Ari Ne’eman

Autistic adults have criticized this promotion of **indistinguishability** through the **neurodiversity movement**, which argues that autistic traits are not inherently in need of correction and that the goal of autism service provision and research should not be to make autistic people nonautistic.

Efforts to pass have been identified as a risk marker for suicidality in autistic adults. Such “camouflaging” is also associated with other mental health challenges.

...“I am actually at a point now where I rarely leave the house because I don’t have the energy to pass.”

Person with autism



Autistic person



Neurology is not an accessory
www.identityfirstautistic.org



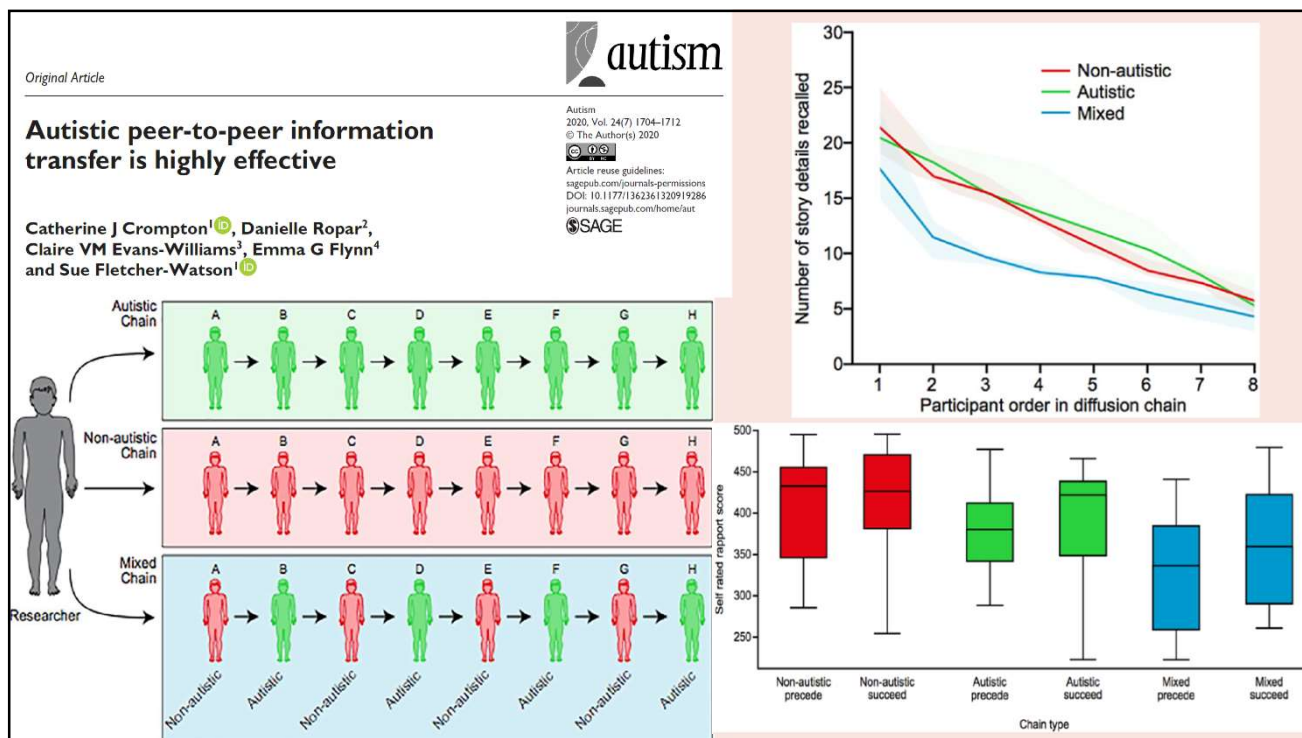
Ableism – “Speech-Language Pathologist!”



*We're people,
not puzzles!*

I Don't Understand You!
You Don't Understand Me!





ORIGINAL RESEARCH article

Front. Psychol., 29 April 2021 | <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.616664>

Mutual (Mis)understanding: Reframing Autistic Pragmatic “Impairments” Using Relevance Theory

Gemma L. Williams^{1,2}, Tim Wharton¹ and Caroline Jagoe²

... research into autistic sociality and communication has begun to turn its gaze toward *intersubjectivity*. Taking a phenomenological perspective, intersubjectivity acknowledges that as embodied social agents we share in some degree of a “co-conception or co-orientation to the world”...

Communication, viewed intersubjectively, does not occur in a void, nor solely in the mind of one individual: it is a social and interactive phenomenon...

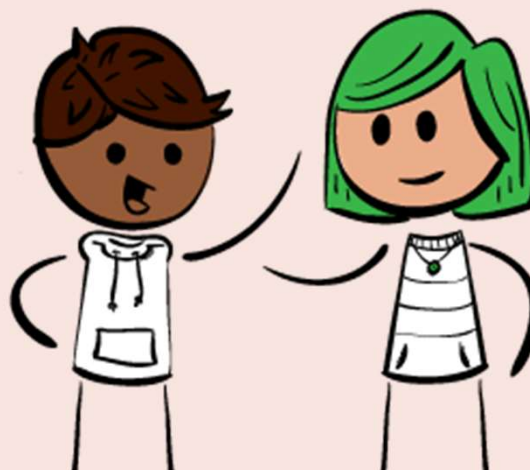
...in opposition to traditional explanations of autism that have situated the mind-reading “failures” assumed central to pragmatic breakdown in the minds/brains of the autistic individuals...

Double Empathy Problem - two speakers of different neurotypes hold different norms and expectations of each other. Misunderstanding or lack of understanding is not a consequence of autistic “impairment” but a mutual failure in reaching consensus through bidirectional empathy.

**What does conversation look like?
Where does it occur?**



Intersubjectivity



This Photo by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY](#)

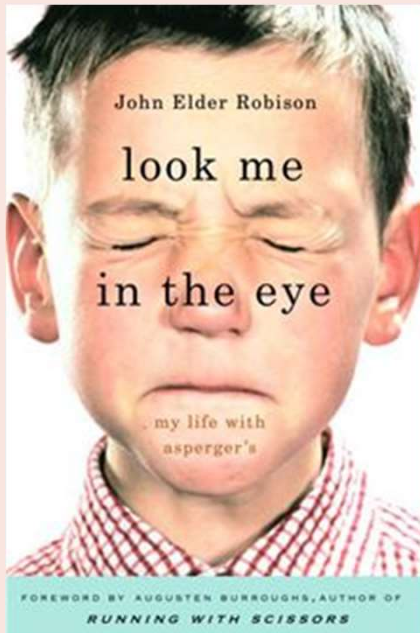
Is treatment abusive? What about involving peers?



1. Expectations for conversational behavior are based on neurotypical forms of communicating.
2. Power differential? – Were the neurotypical peers assigned the goal to “improve” the autistic peers’ social skills?

BUT: There’s a difference between addressing developing skills for children versus when adults might be expected to “comply”





Eye contact for persons with ASD might not be an ideal goal

Options:

- Give the student skills for looking at a speaker's forehead, not eyes.
- Help peers and other educators understand how to “interpret” the lack of eye contact
 - doesn't automatically signal disrespect
 - may not be indicative of attention or interest

IDENTITY

Children – either gifted or autistic – may not have this self-identity and using these labels with our students is not necessarily advisable.



04 TEACH

Skills and strategies to apply in the classroom and school settings.



EFFECTIVE SOCIAL SKILLS PROGRAMS



INTENSIVE

How much and how long?



CONTEXTUALIZED

CONTEXT CONTEXT CONTEXT



INTENTIONAL

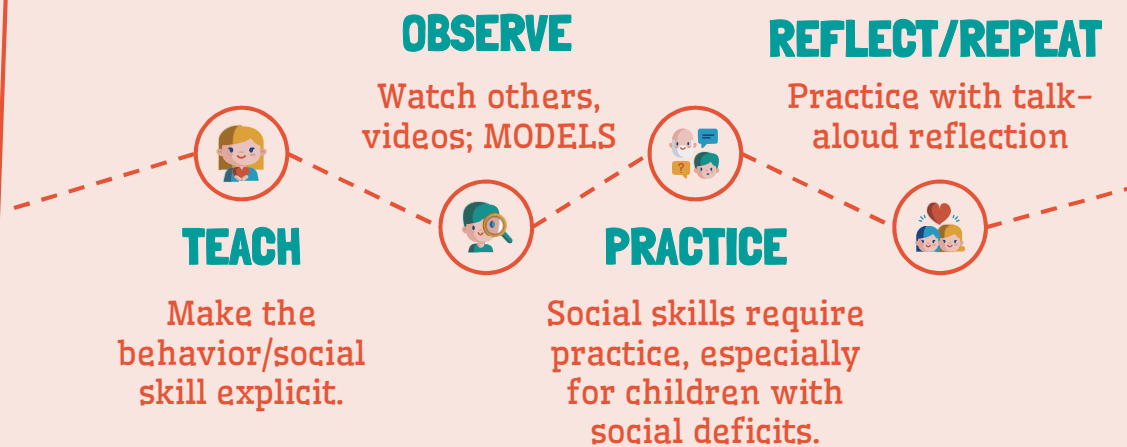
Pick social skills practice connected to social skills breakdowns.



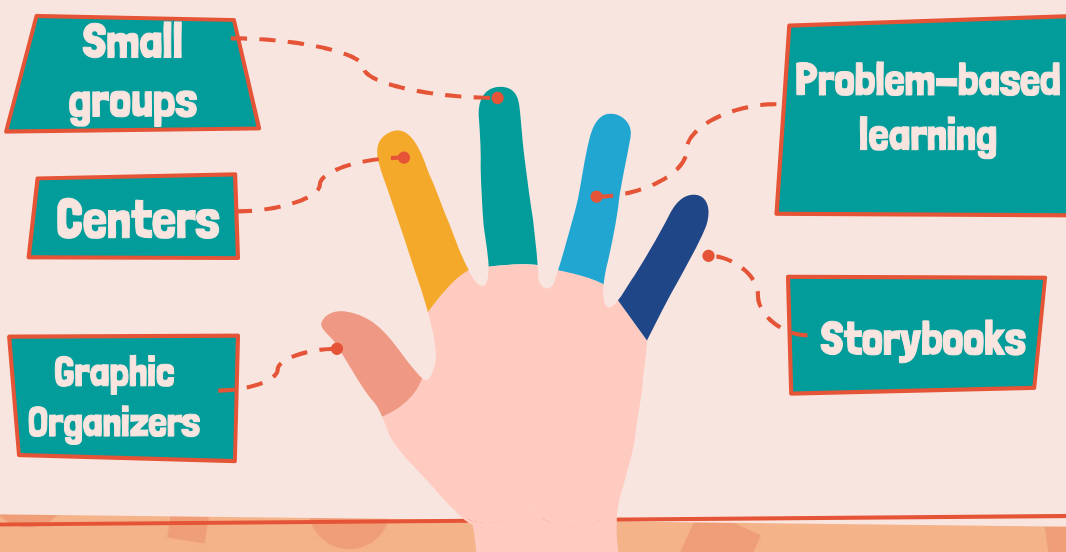
SYSTEMATIC

Which skills and strategies have an evidence base?

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONAL STEPS



You're already using these tools!



3 KEY BEHAVIORS

Bellini, 2016

Nonverbal Communication

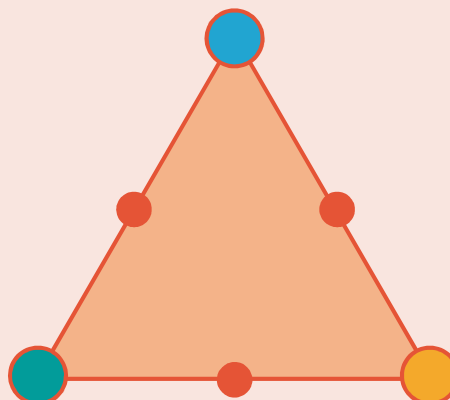
Face, eyes, tone, gestures

Social Initiation

Access and Assertiveness

Social Reciprocity

Responsiveness, turn-taking, repair



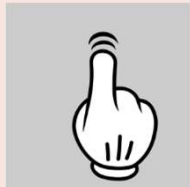
B-A-T



Body



Attention



Talk

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Teach Access and Assertiveness

Brinton & Fujiki (2007)

- “It’s fun to work with others”
- Walk
 - Teach child to approach group and stop at appropriate distance
- Watch
 - Watch what the group is doing or talking about
- Talk/Join in
 - Participate nonverbally
 - Make a positive comment, ask a question
 - Try more than one time
- Reflect – student and coach evaluate and revise



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Teach Responsiveness

Brinton & Fujiki (2007)

- Avoid teaching personal compliments
- Define goal as “saying something nice”
 - First notice what others are doing
 - Say something nice about the contributions of others in an activity
 - “Good move,” “You got a two,” “Do you need some glitter?”
- Assist students in understanding the responses, emotional reactions to their attempts to say something nice



ROBOTICS CLUB	LUNCH
Say something nice?	Say something nice?

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Teach Sustained Cooperation

- Add “stay and work” or “stay and play” to steps⁵⁰ taught for gaining access
 - Teach cooperation through game playing, use repeated instruction, practice, review procedures
- Reflect – Coach and student study and revise, consider using videotape to reflect
- Students are more likely to stay if they are successful negotiating a role in the play/work



Video Modeling

- ★ Effective across ages
- ★ Effective across skill outcomes
- ★ Effective across language and cognitive functioning (Bellini & Akullian, 2007)



OBSERVE



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

Social Problem–Solving:

Leveraging social cognition to support social–emotional and communication skills

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|--|--|
| 1. Describe context | 2. Recognize Thoughts and feelings | 3. Tell why you think that |
| 4. Predict consequences | 5. “What if”– alternative behaviors | 6. Predict consequences of alternatives |

Role play

- First, practice skills until automatic using rules, scripted conversations.
- Then, begin modifying responses and increasing flexibility for unscripted conversations
- Conversation Game
- Conversation Club

PRACTICE!



BB 54

PRACTICE – Include a “coach” who is not the conversation partner

Telling people what to say is not a typical interaction

Teacher: “Tell me you want to pass out the papers.”

If you already know, then why do I need to tell you?



Conversation Game

Activity that requires the child to maintain a reciprocal conversation with another person

Steps and Procedures:

- ☑ Pair child with another child (group session or class-wide instruction) or therapist (individual session)
- ☑ Start the game by one person asking a question to their partner (any question)
- ☑ The other person then answers the first question and then in turn, asks a question to their partner
- ☑ Continue for 1-2 minutes depending upon age and skill level of the child
- ☑ Provide prompting as necessary if the child fails to respond to a question or takes too long to answer a question
- ☑ Can be modified to facilitate and encourage topic maintenance

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Conversation Map (Bellini, 2016)



MINI LESSONS TO TEACH SUB-SKILLS

News Reporter

*Activity designed to promote “asking questions about others.”
Used primarily with children who rarely ask questions to others, or who only ask questions about their own topical interests.*

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Steps and Procedures:

- ☑ Pair child with another child (group session or class-wide instruction) or therapist (individual session)
- ☑ Start the game by telling the children about the job of a newspaper reporter
- ☑ Tell the children (doesn't have to be verbatim) that they are going play the role of a “reporter” whose job it is to interview another person and to get as much information about that person as they can.
- ☑ Provide the “reporter” with the list of basic questions (children should be encouraged to develop their own questions once they get comfortable with the activity).
- ☑ Provide prompting as necessary if the child fails to ask a question and to keep the interview moving.
- ☑ Encourage the child to ask follow-up and “probing” questions in the spirit of great journalism
- ☑ Encourage the child and family to play “Reporter” at home and report back during the next session
- ☑ For children who engage in one-sided conversations or ask repetitive questions, you can put them in the position of the interviewee

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AGAIN: General strategies for teaching social skills for children with ASD

(Williams White, Koenig, & Scahill, 2007; Bellini et al., 2007)

- Start simple with easier to learn skills
- Introduce new skills once previous target is mastered and provide opportunities for mastered and new skills to be targeted simultaneously
- Be explicit—"the rule is X and this is how you do it"
- Model! Model! Model!
- Use roleplay
- Use video modeling and explicitly review the desired or undesired behaviors
- Practice with a variety of communication partners and coaches
- Keep it contextualized!

Sharing Clear Messages

- Perspective Taking
- Presuppositions—Assumptions speakers make about what listeners know
- Referent Specificity (this, that, over there, thing)
- Repairing communication breakdowns



PERSPECTIVE TAKING

- Taking another's perspective: What might the person be thinking? Feeling?
 - Inference
 - Nonverbal cues
 - Emotion identification
- Embed practice in all subjects:
 - Characters in storybooks; literature
 - Famous persons in science, history, current events

Thinking Thoughts and Feeling Feelings

This is Evan, Ellie, Jesse and Molly. They are playing in their classroom. Above their heads are thought bubbles. Thought bubbles go above people's heads to show what they are thinking about.

What is Evan (the boy on the far left wearing a yellow shirt) thinking about? His car! Draw a picture of a car inside his thought bubble. Do the same for the rest of the kids.



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What's in your thought bubble?
Draw a picture of something you like to think about!



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BARRIER GAMES



63

Communication breakdowns and repairs

Philip (2008)

Types of repairs:

- Repetitions
- Revisions
- Additions
- Expansions
- Explanations
- Simplification
- Key words

Requests for clarifications (i.e., repairs):

- Huh?
- What happened?
- For real?
- What does that mean?
- What does that have to do with anything?

VH 64

SOCIAL STORIES – Carol Gray

Could you please repeat that? 60

When I do not understand something that is said to me, it's okay to ask that person to repeat what they said.

I can try to look at the person and say, "Could you please repeat that? I don't understand yet." This is an intelligent thing to do.

Could you please repeat that?
I don't understand yet.



The person will repeat what was said. It may help to hear it again.

Asking a Question in Class 59

When I am in class, sometimes I have a question.

When I want to ask a question, I try to raise my hand and wait until the teacher calls my name. If I raise my hand, the teacher will know I would like to ask a question. When the teacher calls my name, that means it is my turn to ask my question.

The teacher will try to answer my question.

I will try to listen carefully to my teacher's answer.



Peer Mentors

- One or more peers without disabilities are taught skills to provide ongoing social or academic support
- Peer-mediated approaches appropriate for children with ASD who have one or more of these characteristics:
 - Have individualized education program (IEP) goals addressing interactions or relationships with peers.
 - Experience limited interactions with same-age peers, despite close proximity.
 - Evidence substantial impairments in social or communication skills.
 - Require considerable support to participate in classroom or school activities.



Considerations for choosing peers:

- 1) Consistent attendance
- 2) Interested
- 3) Able to easily follow instructions
- 4) Social skills are a strength
- 5) In good standing with other peers
- 6) Consider older students

Modified from Bourque (2020)

Mary B. Buddies – a CONVERSATION CLUB

Schools-based, small group
social skills instruction

<p style="text-align: center;">PREMISE</p> <p style="text-align: center;">We would like to implement a peer-mediated social skills intervention at Mary B. Austin to benefit children struggling with pragmatic skill development. We believe this program would be beneficial for focal children, as well as, their typically developing peers.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">NICE TO MEET YOU</p> <p>Brenda Beverly, PhD, CCC-SLP Program Coordinator Department of Speech-Language Pathology University of South Alabama</p> <p>Katelyn McCarthy, BA MS-SLP Student Graduate Assistant University of South Alabama</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">FOCAL SKILLS</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Individualized Strategic Peer-Mediated</p> <p>Skills that could be addressed through peer-mediated intervention include: starting/ending conversations with peers (especially new/unfamiliar peers), joining/leaving conversations appropriately, reducing distracting behaviors in conversation, and strategies for coping with social anxiety. Lessons could be individualized to the clients' specific needs.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"> bbeverly@southalabama.edu</p> <p style="text-align: center;"> (251) 445-9362</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">MARY B. BUDDIES</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Motivated Willing Empathetic</p> <p>Peer buddies with typical social skills can apply or be nominated by a teacher or school member to participate in this program. We will look for students who are empathetic, kind, receiving good grades in their classes, and, most importantly, students who want to participate.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">FRAMEWORK</p> <p>Peers with typical social skills will be taught strategies to facilitate and maintain conversation with their focal peers. We would like to</p>

Mary B. Buddies – Curriculum

<p>WEEK 1 - PROXIMITY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet your group • Program/Clinician/Student Introduction • Times outside of group when we can play with/be with our buddies <p>WEEK 2 - PROXIMITY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did you play/work in your group at all last week? • Personal space • Greetings <p>WEEK 3 - INITIATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer introduction • Asking someone's name <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What if we don't remember our friend's name? • Introduction to an adult <p>WEEK 4 - INITIATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Starting a conversation with a peer • Starting a conversation with an adult 	<p>WEEK 5 - INITIATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joining a conversation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Wait, look, listen ○ Observe what's ○ Triad - set up when 2 people are doing something, 3rd person has to show that they can walk up and see what they're doing and think about it, see their responses ○ Me pair with group, Dr. B pair with other group ○ Building blocks or some type of activity <p>WEEK 6 - INITIATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joining a conversation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Wait, look, listen <p>WEEK 7 - RESPONSE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Typical conversation responses - TURN TAKING <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Asking a question ○ Making a comment <p>WEEK 8 - RESPONSE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On topic vs. off topic
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Mary B. Buddies OUTCOMES

- 9 sessions with 6, 4th-graders.
- Girl FOCUS student added 1 group girl peer to her list of friends on post-test, AND that same peer added the FOCUS student to her list.
- Girl FOCUS student increased number of friends listed on post-test questionnaire (from 1 named friend to 3).
- Girl FOCUS child added one additional skill she wanted to work on when trying to make new friends (i.e., staying on topic, in addition to joining & turn-taking).
- “Mary B. Buddies” was included as an activity on post-test questionnaire by 2 students (i.e., asked, “What activities do you participate in?”)

REFLECTION:

- Consider having all students come from same class
- Consider separating boys and girls into two separate groups for sessions
- Need to choose peers from different peer groups
- Consider increasing session time to 30 minutes per group



BUILDING SOCIAL NETWORKS

	1ST QUARTER	2ND QUARTER	3RD QUARTER
FOCUS STUDENT	FOCUS	FOCUS	FOCUS
PEER	PEER A	PEER C	PEER E
PEER	PEER B	PEER D	PEER F

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



- Do you have a social skills curriculum at your school? If yes, how does what we've discussed align with that curriculum?
- Tell us about what you have done that worked.
- Are you seeing students who need this instruction?
- How could the speech therapists in your school or USA faculty like us assist you?
- What else are you thinking about? Want to know more about?



“The key issue in the field of gifted individuals is identifying individuals who will be able to solve the serious problems the world is dealing with... thinking on one’s own as an individual can never solve the difficulties.... For this reason, **social skills are the main factor** through which intelligence and giftedness can be of benefit to the individual, the society and the world. **Social skills may be one of the biggest problems and the solutions of the present century.**” Çitil & Özkubat, 2020



Do you have any questions?

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