

63<sup>RD</sup> CONFERENCE ON EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN

# Believing In Achieving

SHERATON FOUR SEASONS | KOURY CONVENTION CENTER | GREENSBORO, NC



# Savvy Social Skills

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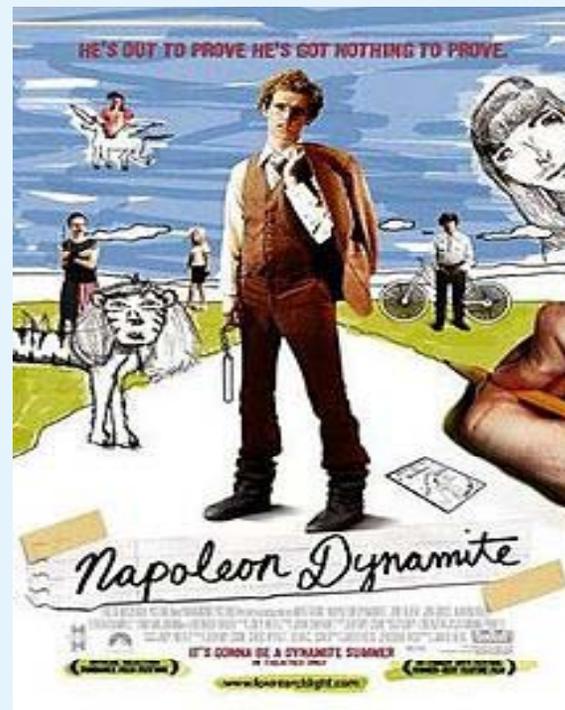
Rea View Elementary School

Union County Public Schools





# Napoleon Dynamite





# Theory of Mind

- Cognitive and Affective Theory of Mind (ToM) are needed in order to be an effective social communicator.
- Autism/Asperger Syndrome, ADHD, Deafness, Neglect/Abuse, Language Impairment are all conditions which impact the development of Theory of Mind
- Explicit instruction in ToM can improve performance for many students



## Savvy Social Skills groups and Theory of Mind

- Many of the materials we use in our Social Skills groups are based on the idea of explicit instruction in ToM.
- Groups talk explicitly about the impact of negative/unexpected behaviors on social/cooperative relationships with peers and adults at school.
- Students work on understanding the feelings/point of view of others and adjusting behaviors to be more included/accepted in school based activities.



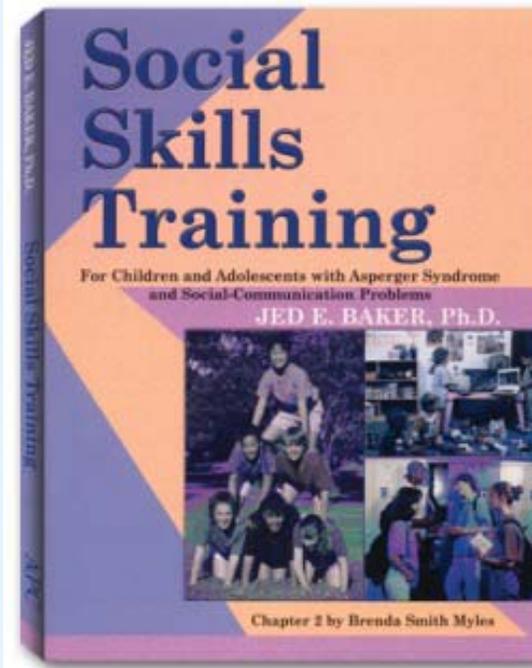
## How did the idea to combine our efforts develop?

- SLP noticing more pragmatic language and social skills deficits when developing IEPs for students identified with Autism Spectrum Disorders, Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder and other disabling conditions
- School Counselor observing students struggling with peer social interactions - students report they do not have friends, parents/teachers/administrators report students are struggling to fit in, are having difficulty making meaningful connections with others. This social awkwardness often creates situations where students become targets of bullying behaviors



## Idea to Reality

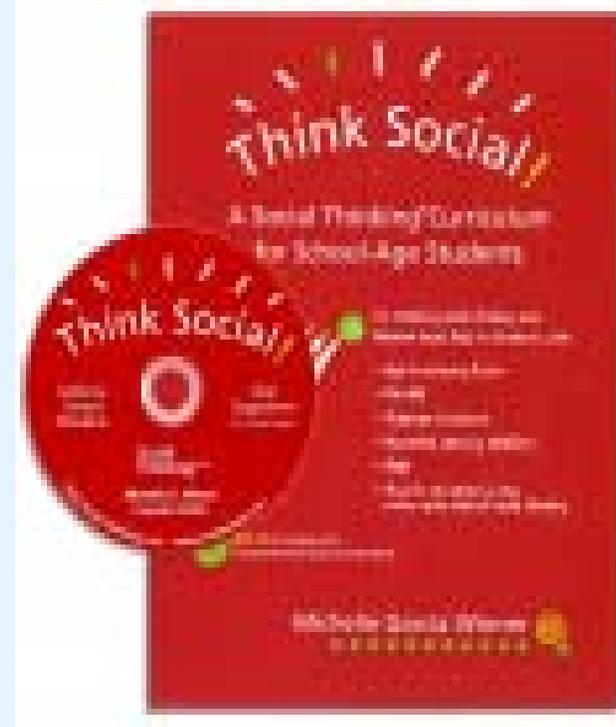
- Speech Language Pathologist attends conference on Asperger's Disorder
- Literature presented was not just for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder but extended to other disabilities and general population students
- Research supports positive outcomes when typically developing children are trained in social skills alongside students with Autism Spectrum Disorders and other disabilities





## Idea to Reality

- Speech Language Pathologist and Counselor review current research and programs available
- Think Social curriculum is obtained
- “Social thinking is infused into almost all parts of our home and school day.”  
- Michelle Garcia Winner
- Garcia Winner developed her social thinking curriculum because she noticed “social thinking difficulties in some students were spilling over into their academic work”.
- Referrals for students appropriate for social skills groups are requested from teachers, parents and administrators and developmentally appropriate groups are formed





## Goals and Objectives of our Social Skills Groups

- Identify expected and unexpected behaviors when engaged in variety of social situations - one to one conversations, small groups (i.e. lunch table, playing a game at recess), large groups (i.e. classroom)
- List and classify positive and negative feelings
- Correctly read and identify positive and negative feelings/cues presented verbally and non-verbally
- Brainstorm different settings where conversations are required with others
- Practice expected behaviors when engaged in a conversation and ways to maintain a conversation



# Teaching the Vocabulary of Social Thinking

- Expected and Unexpected
- Whole Body Listening
- Thinking with our eyes
- “Just me” thinking
- “Thinking of You” thinking
- Glitch vs. little problem vs. big problem
- Body in the group
- Brain in the group
- People Files
- Flexible Brain
- Supporting Comments
- Whopping Topic Change (WTC)
- Using your social filter



## Goals and Objectives, continued

- Connect expected and unexpected behaviors to reactions, positive and negative feelings experienced by self and others in the above mentioned social situations (ToM)
- Provide opportunities to practice expected behaviors in variety of social situations
- Define and give examples of variety of problems, varying in degree of seriousness, likely to encounter when in social situations (“glitch”, small problem, life-changing problem)



## Goals and Objectives, continued

- Define and give examples of expected/unexpected reactions to variety of problems (ToM)
- Identify negative impact of unexpected reactions to variety of problems (ToM)
- Discuss and practice expected reactions to variety of problems and identify positive impact (ToM)
- Define a “just me” thinker and a “thinking of you” thinker.
- Demonstrate “thinking of you” thinking when engaged in conversation with peers.
- Learn and practice using your “social filter”



# Logistics

- School Counselor and Speech Language Pathologist solicit referrals for inclusion in group from parents and teachers; Students identified with disabling conditions with IEP goals for social/pragmatic language skills are included
- Students grouped by grade
- Small groups conducted during student lunch time to minimize missed class time
- Each session allows for approximately 25 minutes of group time



## Benefits of this set-up for groups

- One unexpected outcome of these groupings has been the development of friendships between group members; many of which have had difficulty making connections with others in the past.
- Parents have set up social opportunities outside of school between peers based on the connections they are making in the group.
- Children with disabilities have become more included on the playground and at lunch



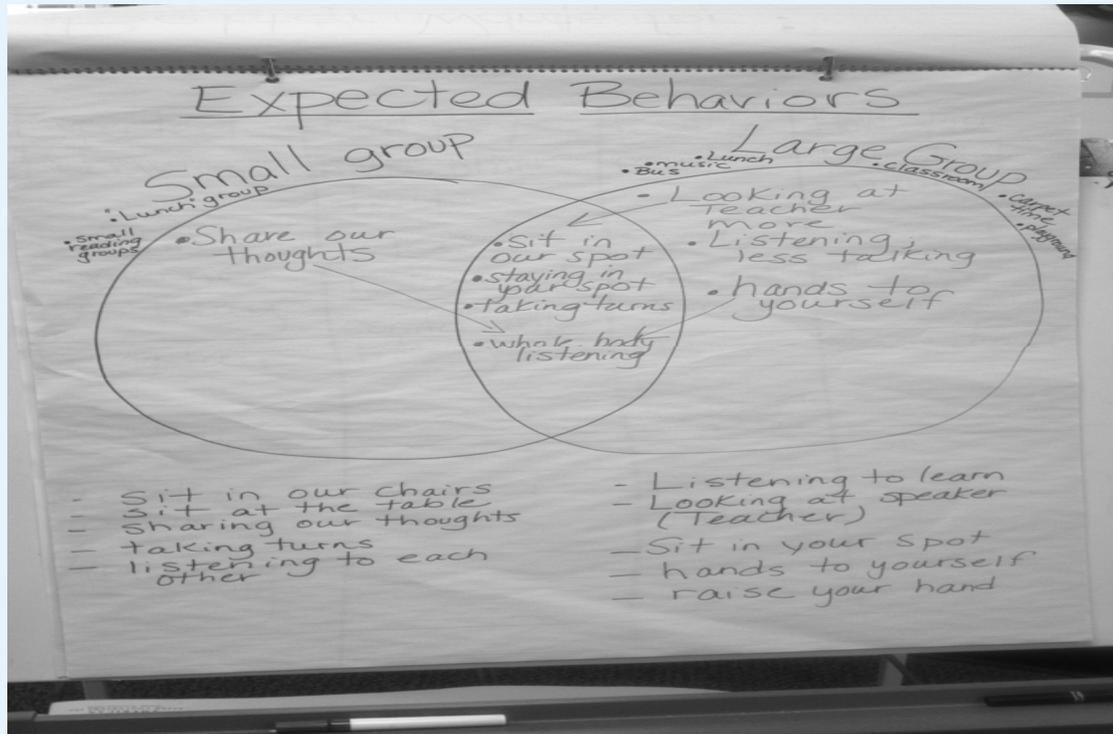
# Outline for 8 week small group

- Session 1

- Introductions and logistics
- Purpose of Group
- Student self-assessment pre-test
- Present and discuss group guidelines
  - Listen to Learn
  - Respect one another
  - Keep confidentiality

- Session 2

- What is a group?
- Define and discuss expected and unexpected behaviors
- Whole body listening
- Body in the group
- Brain in the group



## What is a Group?

- Brainstorm examples of small groups and large groups
- What are the expected behaviors in different kinds of groups
- Discuss overlapping behaviors between groups



## Outline for 8 week small group

- Session 3
- Review sample social situations in different kinds of group situations
- Model expected/unexpected behaviors
- Students role play social situations and react in expected/unexpected ways
- Identify how expected/unexpected behaviors make others feel about you and how you feel about yourself
- Discussion of role plays and the effect of the expected/unexpected behaviors on others in situations

Expected Behaviors	How they make others feel	Positive results	How you feel about yourself
• Inviting someone to play	good relieved comfortable	Smiling lots of fun	proud happy
• being fair	like you	they'll play with you again	excited
• taking turns			
• asking to join in	good	more friends	
• playing nicely			



# Outline for 8 week small group

- Session 4

Brainstorm possible problems/things that can go wrong in a given day

Define glitch, small problem, big problem

Classify items on list as glitches, small problems, big problems

Brainstorm possible reactions to items on list

Classify reactions as expected/unexpected

Model expected reactions

Provide opportunities for students to role play reactions to glitches, small and big problems



Glitch (little, tiny "problem")  
1

Small problem  
5

Major Problem  
10

Types of expected reactions:  
- slight anxiety  
- mild embarrassment  
- very brief anger/sadness  
Length of time negative feelings last:  
Very brief (few moments)

Types of reactions expected :  
- crying - yelling  
- mild depressed feeling  
- momentary feeling of strong anger  
- mild to moderate sadness  
Length of time negative feelings last:  
Several days to  
- Several weeks

Types of expected reactions :  
- screaming/crying  
- strong yelling  
- feeling of helplessness  
- strong anxiety  
Length of time negative feelings may last:  
Possibly a lifetime.



## Glitch, Small Problem, Big Problem?

- A classmate calls you a name that you don't like
- Your Dad has to transfer to a different job and you will have to start a new school
- You aren't finished with your work when the teacher tells the class that it is time to move to the next activity
- You fall off of the monkey bars and break your elbow
- The friend you usually play with on the playground is playing with someone else
- Your mom made hot dogs for dinner and you hate hot dogs
- You forgot your lunch box and you don't like what the cafeteria is serving
- A family's home is destroyed by fire



# Outline for 8 week small group

- Sessions 5 and 6

Define “conversation”

Brainstorm people we have one to one or small group conversations with on daily basis

Brainstorm expected/unexpected behaviors during conversations

Introduce concepts of making supporting comments and on topic questioning during a conversation

Watch short video clip of same aged peers having an appropriate conversation using supporting comments and questioning techniques

Practice conversational skills with small group, record practice conversations, review together.

Identify expected/unexpected behaviors, supporting comments, appropriate questioning



# JJ





# Outline for 8 week small group

- Sessions 7 and 8  
Review  
expected/unexpected  
behaviors, how they make  
others feel chart, and  
whole body listening skills  
Brainstorm ways others  
show they are  
uncomfortable with or  
don't like unexpected  
behaviors  
Discuss facial expression,  
body language, tone of  
voice

Show pictures of facial  
expressions and identify  
feeling being expressed  
Video samples of same  
aged peers giving various  
body language signals in  
conversation  
Give recorded examples  
of phrases expressed with  
different tones of voice  
Provide opportunities for  
students to role play skills



# Sample Facial Expression Shots



[http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/ei\\_quiz/](http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/ei_quiz/)



# Outline for 8 week small group

- Session 8

Review each session's main parts

Brainstorm skills that students report having used outside the group

Identify trusted adults who can help with questions or problems in social situations

Student feedback (possibly a post test if pre test assessment was given)





# Suggestions for Extending

- Provide opportunities in controlled environment for social interaction between students in group and typically developing peers (large lunch group, working together on a group project, peer buddy etc.)
- Sharing information with staff and parents on vocabulary used and skills taught in small group instruction to maintain and encourage consistency across settings



# Suggested IEP goals relevant to social skills small group work

- Following a moment of frustration, student will reflect and identify the preceding event in 5 out of 5 opportunities
- Following a moment of frustration, Student will use a graphic organizer to identify the event leading up to his frustration as a “glitch”, “a small problem,” or a “major problem” for 4 out of 5 events
- Student will identify and state “expected” and “unexpected” behaviors associated with each level of “problem” on a presented graphic organizer in 5 out of 5 opportunities
- Student will identify potential feelings of self and feelings of others when presented with common scenarios of daily living in 4 out of 5 opportunities.
- Student will interpret non-verbal communication of others in role-play situations in 4 out of 5 opportunities.
- Student will identify and role-play appropriate situations to use their “brain filter” in 4 out of 5 opportunities.



# Relevant North Carolina Guidance Essential Standards

- **Socio-emotional Development**
  - Understanding the meaning and importance of personal responsibility and awareness.
  - Understanding relationship between self and others in the broader world.
  - Using communication strategies effectively for a variety of purposes and audiences.



## Relevant North Carolina Guidance Essential Standards (continued)

- Cognitive Development
  - Use creative strategies effectively to make decisions and solve problems
  - Use analytical strategies to understand situations



## Common Core Connections

- Speaking and Listening: ask questions to seek information not previously discussed.
- Speaking and Listening: engage effectively in discussions (group work, whole class, teacher-led, one-on-one) with diverse partners.
- Reading standard for informational text grade 3: Distinguish one's own point of view from that of author of a text.
- Reading standard for literature grade 5: describe narrator or speaker's point of view and how it influences how events are described.



# Sheldon





## Resources

- Baker, J.E. (2003). Social skills training for children and adolescents with Asperger syndrome and social-communications problems. Shawnee Mission, KS: Autism Asperger Publishing Co.
- Madrigal, S. and Winner, M.G. (2009) Superflex takes on glassman and the team of Unthinkables (social thinking). Think Social Publishing.
- Winner, M.G. (2006). Thinking Social! A social thinking curriculum for school-age students. San Jose, CA: Think Social Publishing.
- Winner, M.G., Crooke, P., and Knopp, K. (2008). You are a social detective – Explaining social thinking to kids. Think Social Publishing.
- [www.jillkuzma.wordpress.com](http://www.jillkuzma.wordpress.com)



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