

Emotional Safety and Social Skills Instruction

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A positive learning environment: Definition of a safe school

- An environment for learning that allows students regardless of mental ability, language, culture, race, appearance, physical differences, economic status, emotional, social or physical challenges, learning styles, temperament, gender or any other diversity, to achieve their maximum potential -- academically, personally and socially.

Rita Mercier

The school is a safe place.

- 65,000 middle/high school students surveyed
- 48% disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement
- 12% did not know

- “The materials and methods teachers use can either present students with barriers to understanding or enhance their opportunities to learn.”

Rose & Meyer, 2002

Emotional Safety is about...

- Learning styles, social interactions, discipline policies and bathroom breaks
- Content and assessment, curiosity and creativity
- People, community, connections, values, policies

Jane Bluestein

To Feel Emotionally Safe, Students...

- Feel a sense of belonging and feel welcome
- Have the freedom to NOT be good at a particular skill, to make mistakes, or to need extra time
- Receive encouragement
- Experience success
- Have unique talents recognized & valued
- Understand expectations, experience predictability & consistency

What causes students to feel unsafe in the classroom?

Group Activity

What causes FEAR in school?

- Violence, weapons
- Anticipating being harassed or attacked on the playground
- Leaving school for a violent or unstable home

Or by a teacher who...

Humiliates or demeans a student or a group of people

Puts students down with snide remarks or harsh, repetitive, or unfair criticism

Questions the student's adequacy, background, & commitment

Fear and learning: How does fear affect learning?

- Energy is directed toward protection rather than learning
- Students under stress:
 - Are less able to "hear" what is being said to them or asked of them
 - Are more likely to misunderstand or distort the information that is received

"When the brain perceives an experience as positive, pleasantly exciting and fun, it releases certain chemicals that assist learning and recall. However, when input is experienced as negative or threatening, different chemicals are released, and in terms of learning and retention these chemicals have the exact opposite effect."

Jane Bluestein

Create a safe classroom

- Challenge discriminatory attitudes & behavior
 - Conscientiously eliminate the attitudes, policies and behaviors that allow even one child to face another day at school with fear and dread
- Educate students about how their actions affect their lives and others

You cannot have students as continuous learners and effective collaborators without teachers having the same characteristics.

Michael Fuller, 1993

Teach

- Respect, tolerance, & support: build a community (see [Talking Together](#), Vernon, Deshler, Schumaker)
- Skills:
 - Including others, sharing ideas, complimenting others, cooperative interactions, conflict resolution, problem solving, empathy, anger control & self-control (deep breathing, time to cool down, positive self-talk, relaxation)...

WHY teach social skills?

To create an EMOTIONAL SAFE learning environment and because...

POOR SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT IS **COMMON**

- 5 - 15% of all elementary-aged children have social adjustment problems.
- 10% of all elementary-aged children are isolated or rejected.
- 84% of children with mild disabilities are more poorly accepted than their peers.
- 28% of children with learning disabilities are rejected.

POOR SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT IS
PERSISTENT

- 50% of the students identified with conduct disorders at age 8 continued to display the same problems at age 13.
- “Conduct problems” (constant conflict with others) in younger children become “delinquent behavior” (truancy, staying out late, gang involvement) by adolescence.
- With advancing age, conduct disorders become increasingly resistant to change.

POOR SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT IS
DETRIMENTAL

- Assessments of 4th graders accurately predicted who would be arrested by 7th grade.
- 60% of students described as bullies in elementary school by peers had at least one conviction by age 24; 40% had 3 or more.
- Poor social adjustment in school is predictive of mental health problems, drug abuse, dropping out of school, suicide, poor job performance

WHAT ARE SOCIAL SKILLS?

- **A set of behaviors that enable an individual to interact successfully with another person or group of people.**

Social Skills Instruction in the General Ed Classroom

All students can receive instruction
Expectations for socially appropriate behavior can be defined in a common language for all students
Basic skills can be taught and can provide the foundation for more complex skills
Instruction can address issues in the setting in which problems occur

Cooperative Thinking Strategies

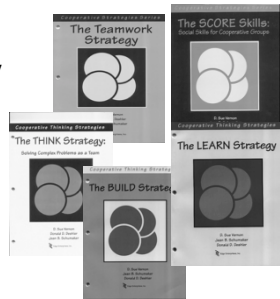
- A group of strategies students can use to think and work productively together

Purpose of the Cooperative Thinking Strategies

- To enable students to learn skills for working in groups
- To enable students to learn simple structures for completing higher-order thinking tasks
- To enable teachers and students to learn how to create a learning community

Manuals in the Cooperative Thinking Strategies Series

- The SCORE Skills
- The Teamwork Strategy
- The THINK Strategy
- The LEARN Strategy
- The BUILD Strategy

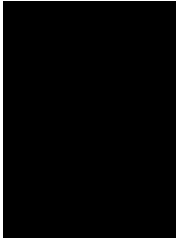










CHARACTERISTICS OF A LEARNING COMMUNITY

- | | |
|---|--|
| ALWAYS PRESENT | NEVER PRESENT |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Trust, tolerance shown• Fairness, respect shown• Everyone belongs• Everyone is valued• Everyone has a voice• Support, help, and encouragement offered• Feels safe• Everyone participates | <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Putdowns, teasing➤ Lying, not listening➤ Arguing, interrupting➤ Leaving people out➤ Laughing AT others➤ Cheating, meanness➤ Rudeness, shaming➤ Some not doing their share |

What are the SCORE Skills?

- Share Ideas
- Compliment Others
- Offer Help or Encouragement
- Recommend Changes Nicely
- Exercise Self-Control



<p>Appendix C-Cat Level #2 The SEE Steps</p> <p>Sound HOW YOUR VOICE SOUNDS • Pleasant • Neutral</p>  <p>Expression HOW YOUR FACE LOOKS • Pleasant • Neutral</p>  <p>Eye contact LOOKING INTO THE OTHER PERSON'S EYES</p> 	<p>Appendix C-Cat Level #3 Share Ideas</p> <p>Sound: pleasant Expression: pleasant Eye contact</p> <p>Tell your idea.</p> 	<p>Appendix C-Cat Level #3 Compliment Others</p> <p>Sound: pleasant Expression: pleasant Eye contact</p> <p>Say something nice.</p> 
<p>Appendix C-Cat Level #3 Offer Help or Encouragement</p> <p>Sound: pleasant Expression: pleasant Eye contact</p> <p>Ask if the person wants help. Give help. Offer encouragement.</p> 	<p>Appendix C-Cat Level #3 Recommend Changes Nicely</p> <p>Sound: neutral Expression: neutral Eye contact</p> <p>Say what was good. Explain what could be changed. Make a suggestion.</p> 	<p>Appendix C-Cat Level #3 Exercise Self-Control</p> <p>Sound: neutral Expression: neutral Eye contact</p> <p>Count to 5. Ask a question. Say "thanks" or "okay."</p> 

Purpose of the SCORE Skills program

- To enable students to participate as productive, effective members of a team.
- To improve the ability of all students to interact in socially appropriate ways.
- To provide students with the skills necessary to establish & maintain positive relationships with their peers.

SCORE Adaptations for Older Students

- Frame skills as expectations for appropriate and successful team interactions:
 - Share, synthesize, keep an open mind, and ensure that everyone has a voice
 - Compliment, commend teammates
 - Offer Help, encourage
 - Recommend and accept constructive feedback appropriately
 - Exercise self-control

A Teacher's Creed

- There is no greater gift one human being can give another than the opportunity to learn and grow in a loving and nurturing learning environment.

Esther Wright
Good Morning Class: I love you!

The Socially Wise Program

An Interactive Multimedia
Social Skills Instructional
Program for Students



Purpose of the research project

- * To design, pilot test, and field test an interactive multimedia (IM) program for teaching social skills to youth with social-adjustment problems.
- * To provide instruction to prevent social isolation, address antisocial behavior, and provide youth with alternatives to behaviors that result in formal and informal reprimands from authority.

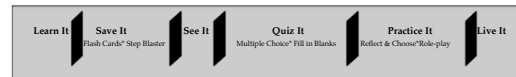
The Socially Wise Program: Ways to Increase Your Social Interaction Quotient



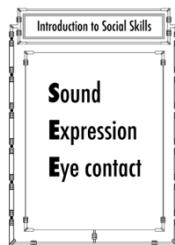
Overview of the CD program



Structure of each lesson



Body Language




Learn it

The narrator describes the new skill, provides rationales for learning the skill, and describes the skill steps and situations in which the skill can be used.



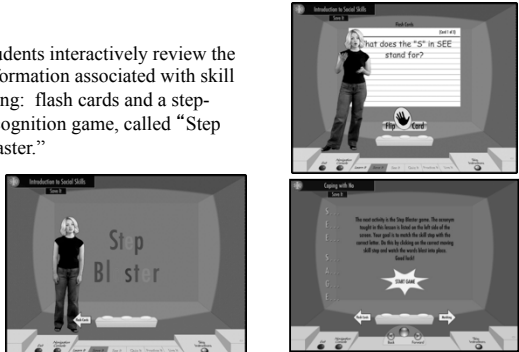
See it

Students see vignettes in which a skill is used or not used.



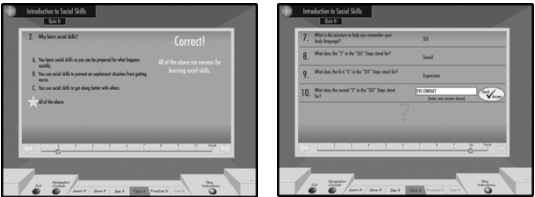
Save it

Students interactively review the information associated with skill using: flash cards and a step-recognition game, called "Step Blaster."




Quiz it

Students take a quiz to demonstrate their mastery of the information. Both multiple choice and fill-in the blank questions are included in this section.



Practice it: Reflect & Choose Activity

Students watch a scene unfold and choose the best use of each skill step until the situation is over.



Practice it: Role-play Activities

Students first see a model of how to role-play. They then practice the skill in novel situations with a partner and provide performance feedback to one another.



The Skills

- Introduction to social skills (and body language)
- Dealing with Critical Feedback
- Coping with No
- Accepting Advice
- Negotiation
- Apologizing
- Responding to Peer Pressure
- Involving Others
- Giving Feedback to Peers
- Design Your Own Skill

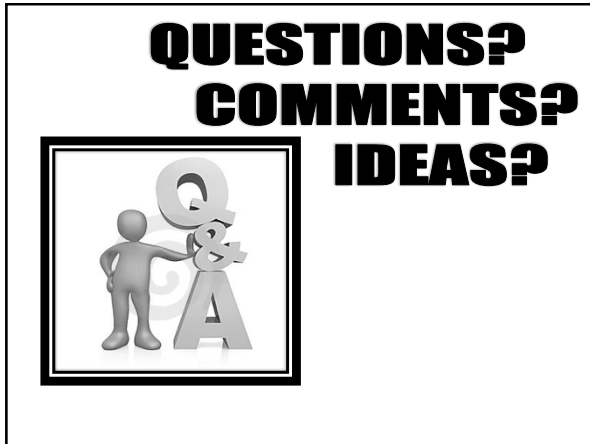


CD Demonstration



Discussion

- What are possible uses for this program?
- Where could it be used?
- With all students or a select few?
- What settings?



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