Tier II Intervention:
Teaching Social Skills in Small Group Settings

Social Skills

• “Those behaviours which, within a given situation, predict important social outcomes for children.” Gresham, 1986
  – Interactive - require at least 2 people
  – maintained by social reinforcement - keep skills that work and discard those that don’t

• It is our responsibility to assess what skills most predict success in our students
  – direct observation
  – ask significant others

Teaching Social Skills: Planning Requirements

1. Scheduling and Logistics
2. Generalization strategies
3. Group management strategies
4. Teaching
   – Delivery
   – Assessment

Scheduling and Logistics

CHECKLIST

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Task Indicator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 a</td>
<td>Consistent meeting time (30 min 2 times per week)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 b</td>
<td>Instructional setting (room) available and scheduled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 c</td>
<td>6-8 students with similar needs identified for group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 d</td>
<td>Schedule to teach no more than 1 relevant skill per week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 e</td>
<td>Schedule at least 2 weeks for each identified skill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 f</td>
<td>Have a consistent teacher identified for each session</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Generalization Strategies

• Must be planned for in advance
  – Before Training
  – During Training
  – After Training

What happens in group will not be sufficient to facilitate generalization!!
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### Generalization Strategies

**Strategies To Use Before Training**
- Make training setting look/feel like natural setting
- Train in the natural setting
- Target useful skills (likely to be reinforced by others)
- Use a number of trainers or other adults during training
- Plan to continue training for a sufficient amount of time to achieve mastery

**Strategies To Use During Training**
- Use naturally occurring (real) examples within role plays (ask teachers for real examples)
- Use naturally occurring reinforcers (function!)
- Provide a range of useful skill variations
- Include peers that are likely to be encountered in the problem setting

**Strategies to Use After Training (in the real world)**
- Prompt students to display skill (Pre-Corrects)
- Set-ups (traps) for facilitating desired behavior
- Reinforce displays of skills in real world
- Enlist a variety of others to prompt and reinforce skills in real world
- Group contingencies

### Generalization Strategies CHECKLIST

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task Indicator</th>
<th>✓</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2a Appropriate replacement skills identified from environment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2b Use real role play examples solicited from the environment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2c Practice in multiple settings and under variable conditions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2d Train and practice skill variations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2e Introduce naturally occurring reinforcers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2f Provide multiple examples and practice opportunities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2g Enlist others in environment to prompt and reinforce</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3. Group Management Strategies

- Develop a set of group rules
  - focus on active participation
  - focus on instruction
- These students are likely to have some challenging behaviors
  - Good idea to have a system in place to start
- Develop tricks and strategies
  - For maintaining attention and desired behavior

### Effective Instructional Practices and Student Success/Failure

Consider the degree to which teachers provide:
- Focus on students (time spent teaching)
- Opportunities to respond (OTR)
- Feedback

- Students with teachers presenting high rates are more likely to be actively engaged and less likely to be disruptive
- Students with teachers using the least amount are more than 27% more likely to be off task and more than 67% more likely to be disruptive

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Group Management:

- Teach a set of basic group rules in the first session
- Example:
  - **Listen** - look at the person who is talking and stay quiet
  - **Participate** - do what teacher tells you to do
  - **Freeze** - stop everything you are doing and become a statue
- Teach this as a lesson

Group Management Strategies

**CHECKLIST**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Task Indicator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 a</td>
<td>Teach and practice group rules during first session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 b</td>
<td>Develop point system related to group rules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 c</td>
<td>Assign seating to minimize potential disruptions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 d</td>
<td>Plan activities to keep students engaged (OTRs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 e</td>
<td>Plan to focus on positive behaviour and redirect problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 f</td>
<td>Provide frequent reminders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 g</td>
<td>Create group competition with teacher for reinforcement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Group Management

**Basic Strategies**

- Use frequent specific verbal praise
- Focus on positive
  - Provide reinforcement to those being positive
  - Redirect or ignore misbehavior as possible
- Point system
  - reinforcement for specific desired behaviors
  - Withholding for specific undesired behaviors
- Reminders and pre-correction

4. Teaching

- Teach same as you would any academic skill
  - teacher modeling of key skills
  - student practice with teacher guidance
  - individual practice with real examples
- Teach with strategies that promote generalization
- Selection and sequence examples to promote acquisition of key rules
- Formative assessment via curriculum

Modeling

Teacher modeling is an essential component of effective instruction -- show them how, then when and when not to

- Use verbal prompts along with physical demonstration
  - "Watch me, notice how I use a quiet, inside voice when I say this - 'excuse me'."
  - "Right now I’m thinking that I need to do something smart because I’m feeling mad - so watch me take a deep breath and walk away."
- Use natural models
  - "Did you notice how Billy held that door open for Ben? That was very responsible.
  - "Remember how we talked about ignoring loud noises? Look at Andrea right now - that’s great because she’s focused on her work."

Modeling

Show and tell students what it is that is expected under specific circumstances.

**Do not assume that they know and can**

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**Fluency Building**

Strategies that build fluency through repetition have strong effects in terms of predicting student success.

**Feedback**

Simple feedback on performance – formative and summative – is one of the most effective components of instruction.

**Assessment and Goal Setting**

Frequent formative assessment based on instruction (CBA) with attention to student goal-setting has strong effects.

**Teaching**

- Teach Social Skills Like You Would Teach Academics!
  - clear set up and advance organizer
  - model and demonstrate
  - facilitate high levels of engagement
  - guided practice
  - consistent and immediate feedback
  - review and assess

**Teaching**

**Lesson Components**
- rule for why to use the key skill
- rule for when to use the skill
  - and for when not to use it
- set of useful skill variations
- natural examples

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**Role play activities**
- Focus on real examples
- Have student “think aloud”
- Teacher can provide coaching during lesson
- Teacher may need to prompt appropriate responses
- Involve all members of the group by assigning tasks/questions

**Assess for Mastery**
- Assess on untrained examples through role plays
- Assess each student as often as possible (daily)
- Request demonstration of skill whenever possible (verbally or role play)

**CHECKLIST**

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<tr>
<td>Introduce a problem and a <strong>key skill</strong> as a solution</td>
<td>a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide physical models while thinking aloud key steps</td>
<td>b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sequence positive examples then juxtapose negative</td>
<td>c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequent questions to students – “is this right or wrong?”</td>
<td>d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differentiate instruction as necessary for individuals</td>
<td>e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When students answer correctly – introduce role plays</td>
<td>e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide all students with tasks during role play (judges)</td>
<td>f</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CIBRS
Center for Instructional and Behavioral Research in Schools
Access to Video links, Training materials, and Resources

The University of Louisville
Doctoral Program in Special Education: Learning and Behavior Disorders

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t.scott@louisville.edu