What are social skills?
an array of interpersonal behaviors such as
greeting others, commenting/acting on
others’ requests or remarks, initiating an
exchange, asking others to respond to or
engage in an activity, entering into an
ongoing social dyad or group, taking turns,
taking actions intended to maintain an
exchange or social activity, and
terminating an interaction (Janney & Snell,
2000).

Why do people get fired?

- Based on data collected by Simply Fired, the top five reasons people reported getting fired for were:
  1. Inappropriate Behavior / Inability to get along with others
  2. Casualty of Office Politics
  3. Job Performance or Attendance
  4. Bad Luck (aka “Black Cat” firings)
  5. Medical Reasons

http://webresearch.about.com/od/pressreleases/a/simplyfired.htm

Research Findings

- Social competence is associated with acceptance by peers, positive self concept and successful employment
- Social skill impairments are most critical for high functioning students
- Once students leave school “situations requiring social competence tend to far outnumber those requiring academic skill” (Canney & Byrne, 2006)

Research cont’d

- Students with cognitive disabilities/LD can master social skills with instruction that includes:
  - Description of social behaviors (focus)
  - Modeling of the behaviors
  - Practice in the behaviors
  - Individual feedback
- Many MM software programs include these.

- Performing a task in a virtual environment may aid performance in everyday life-generalization and retention (Parsons et al, 2006)
- Students with disabilities learn better with interactive technology than passive watching of videos (Helms-Breazeale & Blanton, 2000)
- Video can be an effective tool when paired with teacher interaction/feedback
Effective Social Skills Instruction

1. Direct & Structured
   - Modeling, Role Playing, Feedback
2. Generalize Skills to different settings (focus on valued skills)
   - Authentic contexts, role playing, variety of media
3. Teach throughout the day

integrating SS instruction in regular classroom activities

• Incidental Teaching (use natural interactions to practice skills)
• Read children’s literature, focus on topics such as making friends, bullying
• Do social skill autopsies—what happened, what was outcome, what could be done differently in the future
• Use Social stories, give a script for appropriate behavior in different situations

Stories That Focus on Social Skills Topics

• Taking responsibility
• Making choices and decisions.

Attainment Social Story Sample
Self Determination

Multimedia Strategies for Social Skills

• UDL approach, multiple representations, multiple means of expression, multiple levels of student engagement
• Many students with ASD, LD, DD may be visual learners.
• MM supports learning in authentic situations (social stories, literature, role playing).

Types of MM for Social Skills

• Computer software
  – PowerPoint, authoring tool for prompts, social stories, heroes as motivators
  – Commercial software with social skills instruction
• Videos and Video modeling
  – Integrate video clips with facilitated
  – Create your own videos or use commercial video/DVD
• Web based Resources
  – Students write own social stories with Toon Doo
  – Second Life, role play and simulations

PowerPoint

• An authoring tool for social skill prompts, power cards, social stories
• Skills needed
  – Type
  – Take pictures, insert clip art, photos
  – Copy and Paste
  – Follow a model or create your own
  – Know your student and their needs
Social Skills Prompts

Interview cues

Jobs
- Food court at airport
- Cleared Kitchen at school
- Pet store after school

Skills
- Strong
- On Time
- Stick to a schedule
- Follow directions

School
- Did my homework
- Read signs and notes
- Diploma
- Took city bus to school

Personal
- Polite
- Send email and IM to friends
- Keep room neat

Social Story
- An individualized text that describes a specific social situation from the student’s perspective. It may include where and why the situation occurs, how others react or feel.
- It gives the student one or more options for what he can do in that situation.

(Carol Gray definition)
What Can I Do

Ways to use my down time at work

Tell my boss

- My boss can get tech support to fix my computer.
- My boss can get me more data sheets if they are available.

I can stay calm

I Can

- See if sensors are in the bin in the store room and put them on the products on the holding shelf.

I can walk down the hallways and pick up the trash

I Can

- Ask my boss if I can listen to music
- or play computer games on the office computer.
I Can Not yell and scream because loud noise bothers my co-workers

I Can Not wave my arms because my co-workers will stare at me.

I Can

Power Cards
A visual aid that uses a student's special interest to teach appropriate social interactions including behavior expectations, the meaning of language and the hidden curriculum.

Definition from presentation given by Brenda Smith Myles at Autism Institute, Louisville, KY, June 2005

Components of the Strategy
• A short scenario describing how the hero solves a problem similar to the one experienced by the student (reader)
• The Power Card recaps the strategy

The Purpose of the Hero
• The hero
  – Serves as a motivator
  – Is non threatening
  – Has a "relationship" with the student (reader)
Joe

- Joe is 17 years old and has a special interest in Elvis Presley. His transition specialist is trying to help him get his first part time job in a video store. He frequently uses inappropriate and insulting language with his peers, family and adults. When parents and teachers try to talk with him about this, he says he is just being truthful.

Elvis and his Friends

- Elvis Presley always loved being a star, but sometimes it was difficult for him to be nice to others. At the end of a long day of recording or being on the movie set, he was often tired and it was a challenge for him to be nice to his friends and fans. Elvis learned that it was always important to smile at everyone and say nice things even when he didn’t feel like it.

Elvis and his Friends

- He also learned that if he couldn’t think of something nice to say, it was better to just smile and not say anything. He learned to stop and think before he said anything.
- Just like Elvis, it is important for young people to think before they talk. It would have made Elvis proud to know that young Elvis fans follow his advice and do the following three things:
  1. Think before you say anything. Say it in your head first before saying it out loud.
  2. If you can’t think of anything nice to say, don’t say anything.
  3. You don’t have to say every thought out loud that you think.

Be Like Elvis

- 1. Think before you say anything. Say it in your head first before saying it out loud.
- 2. If you can’t think of anything nice to say, don’t say anything.
- 3. You don’t have to say every thought out loud that you think.

Choices Choices

Choices, Choices helps students develop the skills and awareness they need to make wise choices and to think through the consequences of their actions.

http://www.tomsnyder.com
Social Skills at Work Software

Social Skills on the Job

Social Skills on the Job Software Set

- **Personal Social Skills CD** covers: Take Responsibility, Be Dependable, Accept Consequences, Maintain Grooming, Be Polite, Tell the Truth, Be Positive, Have Self Control and Be Assertive.
- **Initiating Social Skills CD** features: Greet Others, Introduce Self, Ask for Help, Follow Directions, Join Others in a Group, Apologize, Give a Compliment and Make a Complaint.
- **Responsive Social Skills CD** includes: Listen Then Respond, Follow Directions, Understand Others’ Feelings, Handle Criticism, Peer Pressure, Solve a Problem and Deal with an Angry Person.

Videos

- Integrate video clips with facilitated discussion
- Video modeling

Video Clips

- Boster, Meyer, Roberto, & Inge (2002) examined the integration of standards-based video clips into lessons developed by classroom teachers and found increases in student achievement. The study of more than 1,400 elementary and middle school students in three Virginia school districts showed an average increase in learning for students exposed to the video clip application compared to students who received traditional instruction alone.


Video Modeling

Students can learn new skills by:
- viewing behavior that was performed by another individual and then imitating that behavior
- viewing their own behavior and discussing with teacher/facilitator, (social autopsy) or video self modeling, video of student performing desired behavior with off screen prompts/support.
Video Modeling

www.steps4kids.com

• The mother of a son with a disability was failing in school. Her son was drawn to anything visual, especially TV, movies and computers. She researched visual learning methods and learned that children with disabilities often have a high response to video role-modeling, watching themselves or other children doing what it is they are supposed to do.

• This homegrown company now produces DVDs focused on social skills, reading, spelling and handwriting.

Video Modeling, Smart Board & My Own Special Club

Together these three resulted in appropriate social skills for students with E/BD.

– Technology supported student interaction. Saw where their choices would lead them.
– Peer leaders prompted and performed the appropriate behaviors in the video clips (heroes as motivators).
– Novelty of technology & training led to higher levels of student engagement.

http://www.dttrainer.com/jos/content/view/102/161/

Social Simentor

• Of the 30 million people with disabilities in the US, aged 21-64, just a little more than half are employed. Research shows that a significant barrier is their lack of social skills, beginning with exclusion from mainstream classes in school, continuing throughout adulthood, impacting relationships, employment, and integration into the community. Researchers recommend role-play and repetition as the method for acquisition of these social skills. Social Simentor™ provides a unique e-learning product offering interactive scenarios and feedback in a penalty-free, non-judgmental environment.

Web Based Resources

Toon Doo: students write their own social stories

ASD and Second Life

- Texas researchers believe that people suffering from Asperger's syndrome may have found a new therapy in an unlikely place: the online virtual world Second Life. As a treatment, professionals take patients through a series of exercises, in groups and individually, designed to help them learn social skills. In the center's new therapy, patients may have a job interview with a "boss" character or learn to ask another avatar out on a date.

http://abcnews.go.com/Technology/OnCall/story?id=4132184&page=1
In truth, we serve secondar youth with disabilities for a handful of school years, in comparison to the adult lives we send them to upon exiting the public school system. We have an ethical responsibility to make the most of their time in school. While teachers may quite practically rely on suppressing inappropriate student behaviors to gain classroom control, … investing the time and energy to actually assess and teach replacement social and communication skills and empower students meets this same end, but with different and essential outcomes for youth. … ultimately improving transition outcomes and overall quality of life for youth with disabilities.