



Workshops

I'll be in Hong Kong for most of February, but am contactable via email.

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Welcome to a brand new 2007 year.

I'm sure you all enjoyed these holidays and are rested and ready to start a great year. I've been asked to print both parts 1 and 2 of 'Thoughts from an Asperger

adolescent' so here it is. You'll also find some helpful ideas on teaching the students how to ask for help and setting up the classroom for the beginning of the new year. Have fun!

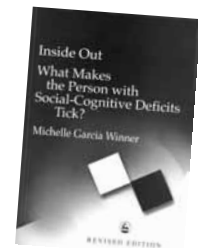
Book Review

Inside Out

What Makes the Person with Social – Cognitive Deficits Tick?

Michelle Garcia Winner

JKP Publishing



What I love about this book is that it is easy to follow. It has many black line masters that are extremely useful in trying to explain the ins and outs of how other people think and solve problems. I have used many of the black line masters with students with great results. I especially found the pages on different perspectives effective in helping my students understand expectations from teachers and others around them and how these expectations can be different from each teacher, student, or adult. I also found the section on abstract and inferential thinking extremely useful. It begins by looking at 'small talk' and how to do it and then moves on to friends and 'friendly files' (why could that person be a friend?). There are also two pages on types of conversations and when you can or should use each one.

The book can be used alone or in conjunction with other material on friends and making conversation, with students from primary through to High School.

Thoughts from an Asperger adolescent – Parts 1 & 2

"I sometimes found that in school, my teacher wouldn't explain a task fully – they might have left something unexplained in the assumption that we would all understand. This is something I always found extremely frustrating. I would sit in my seat for the longest time, wondering exactly what it was that I was supposed to be doing. It would be especially frustrating when I'd glance to the side and see others knowing exactly what to do, being halfway or further through the work while I sat around looking like an idiot. The fact that I didn't know what to do was extremely frustrating – I'd beat myself up over it for the rest of the day – but it rarely ended there.

The worst thing, however, was when the teacher would check up on the class to make sure we were all progressing. They would get to me and ask, in front of the rest of the class, why I haven't started the work yet. So now I'd be feeling terrible inside about not knowing where to start, coupled with a public embarrassment in front of the very people I was stuck socialising with for six and a half hours a day. I recall having a meltdown from being in this situation, on at least a few occasions."

Essential Checklist for beginning a new year

Teachers

- Create a visual timetable
- Have a seating plan
- Create visuals for
 - Overview of term work
 - Weekly plan
 - Daily plan
- Have mind maps (outlines)
- Set up specific boundaries
- Set up class expectations posters
- Be specific in expectations
- Organise partners and groups and keep them the same
- Always start and finish in the same way
eg Good morning today we are going to...
- Set clear guidelines for assignments
- Set achievable tasks
- Limit choices and make them real
- Sit student near an open window
- Avoid sitting student near trouble students
- If student doesn't respond to your instructions rephrase using different words



- Remember no surprises
 - Always pre warn of changes to the day, upcoming excursions, change of teacher
 - Don't change due dates for assignments, swimming without prior notice
- Pre warn of up coming tests
 - Show students what to study for tests Eg maths will include questions on equations examples on page 20
- Remind students what to do when they make a mistake
- Present information clearly and concisely
- Write instructions for the lesson on the blackboard
- Always use the same place on the blackboard



“Recognise that each person experiences the world in a different way. For parents and teachers to effectively work as a team for the betterment of the child with ASD, they must each periodically imagine life through one another’s eyes” – 1001 Great Ideas for teaching and raising children with autism spectrum disorders: *Ellen Notbohm and Veronica Zysk*

Parents

- Organise a work space at home
- Have a visual timetable with colours coordinated to subjects
- To help organise your student buy a “Tudor organiser” folder to hold all subject notes (see picture)
- Develop a good relationship with the teacher
- Provide the new teacher with a summary profile of your student
- Prepare your child at home for the sensory issues at school by discussing what will happen, such as swimming, playground activities etc



Tudor organiser



Summary Profile

- Don't turn up at school unexpectedly. If you volunteer at school make sure your child knows which day and what time you will be there

Practical Strategies – How to ask for help

This is one of the most difficult aspects of school life for a student with ASD. When you read “thoughts from an Asperger adolescent” on the front page of the newsletter it makes you realise how hard it is for them. Following are some helpful pointers which aid you in giving your student the correct skills he needs.

Direct modeling is the most appropriate course of action.

We need to help the student recognise:

- When he needs help
- That he needs to ask for help
- How to ask for help
- That the teacher is the person to ask for help
- What are the appropriate words to use to ask for help in the classroom

Recognising the need for help is not an easy concept for someone with Asperger Syndrome (see thoughts from an Asperger adolescent page 1), and the idea that they need to ask for help is sometimes incomprehensible (remember the Mr perfect attitude).

Put up your hand to
Ask a question



Teaching these skills is easy but patience is required as this skill can take time before it is utilized appropriately.

Watch the student, when he is looking blank, far off into space or acting inappropriately use the following strategies to teach. You can also create situations where the appropriate equipment is not available and the student needs to ask for help.

Start with a visual reminder:

- Script the words that he needs to use
- Show the student the script and place it in an appropriate place such as his folder or desk
- Show him
 - o how to use it
 - o when to use it
- Refer to it on a regular basis



Include in the script visual prompts such as:

- When you feel like this you need to ask for help
- This is how you ask for help
 - o Put up your hand
 - o Call out the teachers name

“Anna, thank you for writing this great book. I have had some wonderful results using your book *How to Stop Your Words...* My son loves the pictures and has started to colour them in. We leave the book on the coffee table so he can flip through it whenever he wants to. Please pass my thanks on to Rhonda as well.” – Karen, Redcliffe, Qld.

How Can I Help My Adolescent Study?

As your child moves into High School and perhaps Uni he/she is going to need to have some independent study skills. Here are a few ideas to help you.

- ♣ Set up a place where the study will happen
- ♣ Set definite start and finish times for each subject
- ♣ Colour code these times to the school subject timetable
- ♣ Start with the least favourite subject
- ♣ Put in place definite goals (start and finish times) for how much work is going to be done
- ♣ Allow rewards for achieving these goals (allow the child to have some input into the kind of reward)
- ♣ Show the child how to use colour when note taking. He can colour code different ideas and concepts

- ♣ Show him how to organise his work into different subject areas
- ♣ Place notes into subject folders of the Tudour organiser
- ♣ Allow him spare time to indulge his special interest if he becomes overwhelmed
- ♣ Experiment with soothing or favourite music (my son needed to have his music on to do any work)
- ♣ Allow the child a stress ball to play with
- ♣ Get him to draw pictures of concepts to help him remember (draw mind maps)
- ♣ Get the child started and leave him for a while. Check on him regularly to give help



To order books please fill out this form and send with your cheque:

Name

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Email

ABN: 44 458 927 927

- \$50.00 The Essential Guide to Successful Secondary School
 - \$29.00 How To stop Your Words From Bumping
 - \$25.00 Talking to Family and Friends
 - \$12.00 Working with Teachers
 - \$ 6.00 Fun Side of Asperger
 - \$18.00 Which School
- Prices include postage and handling

\$.....Total

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