The Social Times at a Glance

Each issue of the magazine features consistent "departments" that the students can look forward to. Here are some thoughts about how you might use each department to prompt discussions or activities.

The Main Event: This lead article will address a key topic. It is written in the "voice" of the reader, very concrete and direct.

Coming to Our Senses Each issue addresses a different sensory experience. This topic is anxiety. Review the suggested idea with your students, and maybe make the photo books together after asking the students to bring in some photos. Discuss and practice other forms of relaxation like yoga, muscle relaxation, or music. A fun idea is to play selections of different types of music – from classical to country to rock – and have the students rate them in terms of how relaxed they make them feel.

1Second That Emotion!: The 5-Point Scale is a system used to concretely define social emotions and behaviors. Each magazine uses the 5-Point Scale to break down an emotion or social rule. This month we have used voice volume and "feeling whacky" to introduce the method. Practice this with your class by picking a basic emotion and breaking it into five parts. Get students to suggest specific behaviors that might indicate that a person is feeling at a 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5.

What Were They Thinking??: Have each student complete the social blunder worksheet for the Britney Spears example. Together review each other's thoughts about what she might have been thinking (or not thinking) about, what other people probably thought, and how she could best "repair the damage." The point to this exercise is to illustrate that everybody makes social mistakes sometimes and that they are usually able to "repair" them.

Gets-It Knows!: Discuss the letter to Roger and the corresponding answer. Do your students have any other ideas of how to answer the question? Does anyone have a situation they would like to have Roger address? Encourage individual students or the whole group to write a letter to Roger (send to kdunn434@aol.com).

Monthly Cartoon: Discuss why the cartoon is funny. What social rule is being broken? What might the listener be thinking? What could the speaker do to make this work better for him?

Puzzle Time: Use the puzzles as supplemental activities to reinforce the topic lesson. The answers are posted on this website so they can check their work.

Quiz: The quiz is for your use. You can have everyone fill it out at the beginning of class as a pretest and then revisit it later. You can use it as a discussion starter. Or you can shred it and use it in the hamster cage.

Something to Talk About: Each issue features an editorial by Claire, Winston, or a guest editor. The editorials are fun ways to throw out social issues for discussion without making it too personal. Telling social lies is the topic of this month's editorial. Maybe some of your students will be able to relate to the embarrassment felt by Claire. A fun project may be for students each to think of a situation they have experienced and what they learned from it. Submit their experiences via the editor e-mail address. We will read all submitted "guest editorials" and even print some.

The Eyes Have It: Reading eyes is typically difficult for students with social cognitive problems. This exercise is meant to strengthen their power of observation when it comes to eyes.

Try developing an "eye" board by taking close-up digital photos of your group and then cut out just the eyes. Have the students find their own eyes and then have them guess who is who.

Trivia: Throughout the magazine, there are little fun facts involving human or animal behavior. We hope this will increase the entertainment quotient of the overall magazine experience. You can also invite your students to submit their own trivia to the magazine. If it excites us, we will print it in a future issue.

Try It!: One or more times in each magazine you will find an activity recommended to put the main topic into action. Some researchers believe that new social information should be actively practiced if learning is to be generalized to environments outside of the group.

I am Kari Dunn Buron,
a teacher from Minnesota,
and I just love this idea!

You betcha.

Tips For Teachers

Each issue of *The Social Times* features a different topic, all related to social communication or social judgment issues common in autism and related disorders. In this issue the topic is *Expressive and Receptive Body language.*

Good ideas for teaching students to attend to and understand both expressive and receptive body language might include the following.

- **Use video modeling**: Video tape the students acting out emotions and then have them review the tapes and talk about what each emotion looks like.
- **Play emotional charades:** This is played like charades, but the topic is various emotions.
- **Expand on the word-to-body dictionary:** Make up your own dictionary with input from the group. Post it in the classroom and add to it over time. Use magazines to find postures that communicate different emotions or take pictures of the students acting out the different emotions.
- **Use popular videos (keep it clean) to illustrate emotions**. *Mr. Bean, Napoleon Dynamite,* and *Fawlty Towers* are excellent examples. Watch the videos with your students, having them pay careful attention to the body language. Turn off the volume and see if students can guess what emotion is being expressed. Can they guess what might be coming next based on the expressed emotion? When the situation is a funny one, what about the body language helped to make it funny?
- **Use a mirror and have students practice expressing emotion with their bodies.** Give students positive feedback and suggestions for change. Have them turn around and try to express the same emotion with their body without looking.
- **Observe people from a distance.** On the playground, in the cafeteria, or in the community, have your students observe people from a distance. Ask them to describe the feelings or thoughts being communicated by the people you see. Make up a story about what is going on between two people being observed.

Other Supplemental Materials

- **Handout for School Professionals:** This handout may be shared with general educators, school psychologists, speech-language and occupational therapists, social workers, and other ancillary school staff. It relates to the topic of the month and give ideas for how to support and reinforce what the students are learning in *The Social Times*.

- **Quiz:** This monthly supports what students are learning and may be used by the teacher as he or she feels appropriate.

- **Answers to Quiz, Crossword Puzzle, and Word Search:** To support teachers' efforts, each month we will provide the answers to quizzes, cross puzzles, and word search games.

Handout for School Professionals

General educators, school psychologists, speech-language and occupational therapists, social workers, etc.

Ideas for Addressing Problems of Body Language

Nonverbal social communication involves everything we communicate through our facial expressions, our posture and gestures, our tone of voice, and even how closely we stand to another person.

- If your student addresses you in a voice tone that sounds disrespectful, he is likely unaware that his tone is upsetting to you. Try to remain calm and repeat his words back to him to clarify the intended message, without the added message the voice tone sends. Let the student know that you hear his words, but later let him know that his voice sounded too angry and that some people would feel threatened by such a tone. Let his social skills teacher know that this would be a good topic to study in group.

- Because eye contact is particularly difficult for students with autism, allow your student to look away from your face when you are giving directions. You might have her repeat the direction to be sure that she heard and understood. Looking in your eyes might actually make it harder for her to understand your words.

- If your student tends to get uncomfortably close to your face or body, tell him that you understand that he may not be aware that he is too close. Agree to a friendly reminder (perhaps you turning your head to the side and putting your hand up in front of your face). This kind of prearranged sign may help him realize he is too close and subsequently step back. Nonverbal cues are often easier to take and feel less personal than constant verbal reminders. Be sure to give him attention when he responds positively to your sign.

- If your student often asks you if you are angry or mad at her, remember that "reading" another person's face or body is also a problem for individuals with autism and related disorders (this is called *receptive nonverbal communication*). Rather than reacting with frustration, explain that your face was just "resting" and that you did not intend to look mad. If you really were upset about something, let her know that she was correct in recognizing that your face was sending an angry message. If you are upset about something she did, let her know.

SUMMARY

Nonverbal social mis-actions can cause us to unknowingly misinterpret a student's intentions. Your recognition of a student's difficulty with nonverbal communication can go a long way in helping identify that student's social educational needs and intervening accordingly.

A Body Language Quiz

1) **True or False?** How you position your body tells other people a lot about what you are thinking

   A) True
   B) False

2) **True or False?** A smile always means that someone is truly happy.

   A) True
   B) False

3) **True or False?** If someone is constantly checking their watch, they may want to leave.

   A) True
   B) False

4) If someone is smiling calmly at you while you are discussing your favorite interest, it likely means what?

   A) That they are bored
   B) That they are interested
   C) That they are angry
   D) That they are hungry
   E) That they want to be your best friend

5) **Matching.** Match the body language with the likely message

_____	Eyes rolling to the side	a)	disbelief
_____	arms folded, eyes looking upward	b)	I am irritated with what is going on.
_____	back turned to the person speaking	c)	I am happy with what is going on.
_____	eyes wide open	d)	surprise
_____	scowl	e)	Not interested
_____	smile	f)	thinking about something

Word Search Answers – Body Language

O	U	S	M	V	O	V	T	V	A	H	Y	E	H	Q	F	A	W	G	M	F	D	M	I	X	R	O	N	S	R
B	J	E	S	R	X	K	P	M	R	J	B	B	J	P	T	E	L	V	F	T	V	H	D	K	Y	J	F	U	Q
L	R	E	L	I	M	S	B	Z	D	V	I	U	S	S	V	O	I	H	V	P	N	D	A	Q	D	B	R	X	C
N	U	D	I	X	Q	Y	A	U	H	E	G	Y	E	A	P	P	Y	M	I	A	L	D	B	Q	J	Y	N	D	U
R	K	C	H	S	B	D	E	U	D	A	T	G	T	Y	P	L	K	B	J	V	M	W	E	T	X	W	F	M	W
P	V	O	W	D	I	W	G	Q	B	B	A	A	N	Z	K	W	P	K	Z	P	V	U	P	S	T	N	L	P	J
S	H	Z	M	E	X	O	A	D	H	K	U	H	T	I	B	U	D	Z	S	P	C	P	L	M	U	M	Y	V	O
Z	E	M	V	S	W	V	U	B	D	U	M	Z	A	I	N	L	V	F	M	F	C	U	T	T	I	F	B	P	G
B	V	S	L	I	D	N	G	O	R	E	C	E	D	F	R	O	W	L	W	D	E	C	A	F	F	K	N	M	N
F	B	V	K	R	C	D	N	W	Y	C	T	J	S	N	P	R	I	E	U	N	W	R	K	F	K	D	Z	O	A
P	I	A	Z	P	F	N	A	G	L	B	B	I	B	D	L	M	I	T	N	F	Y	T	G	G	V	N	Z	P	C
U	I	T	S	R	L	L	L	B	P	S	U	W	C	J	J	H	I	G	S	D	B	A	I	M	D	Z	Y	N	A
K	D	W	C	U	J	W	Y	R	W	F	A	Z	M	X	A	H	N	M	A	E	B	K	Z	N	E	S	M	K	H
N	Y	P	O	S	V	Z	D	S	W	O	R	B	E	Y	E	S	D	N	P	A	U	U	S	Z	R	S	J	J	X
Z	H	C	W	M	S	P	O	M	E	C	A	M	I	R	G	L	F	X	C	A	U	Q	Y	Z	O	G	T	E	G
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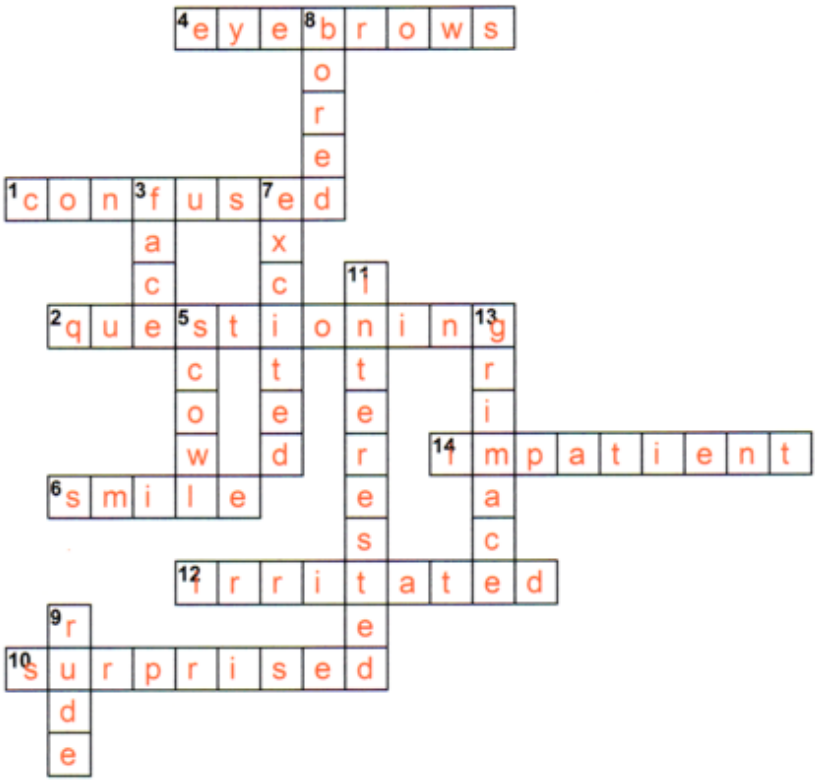
V	Q	H	E	X	M	R	S	U	X	P	Y	U	K	R	U	D	E	J	N	X	Q	I	R	G	X	L	P	T	A
C	T	Y	K	D	O	H	R	V	E	M	H	B	K	E	R	A	M	P	F	R	G	R	E	H	M	P	R	E	J
V	I	S	D	N	E	I	R	F	G	N	I	K	A	M	X	K	T	J	E	I	Z	X	N	N	C	C	A	D	Q
R	W	W	H	Q	U	S	X	M	C	W	V	Q	A	H	Y	Z	K	Z	U	I	Q	M	A	K	T	J	E	J	G

Word Bank: BODYLANGUAGE BORED CONFUSED EXCITED EYEBROWS FACE GRIMACE IMPATIENT INTERESTED IRRITATED MAKINGFRIENDS QUESTIONING RUDE SCOWL SMILE SURPRISED

Crossword Puzzle Answers – Body Language



Down

3) place to read the most emotion

5) look of distain

7) big smile, looking at you, body moving

8) looking at watch

9) sticks out tongue

11) looking right at you, nodding head

13) look that indicates displeasure

Across

1) knitted brows

2) hands on hips, head tilted

4) These are arched when someone is surprised

6) ends of mouth turn up

10) mouth wide open

12) agitated breathing, looking around

14) tapping toe

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