


**Social Competencies:
they're more than
teaching social skills**



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The Social Thinking Methodology promotes social & emotional learning about how we interpret and respond to socially based information.

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Our social mind does more than produce social skills.

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In the moment of interaction or when sharing space with others...

How do you know what to say and do?

How do you make sense of what other people say and do?

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How do you use your social mind across academic lessons, in your career, when driving your car, as you relate with others, or when simply sharing space with people you may or may not know?

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The job of the social mind is to help us interpret people in context, as well as our own and others' thoughts, emotions, experiences, memories, beliefs, and intentions as we pursue our own socially based goals.

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Our Social Thinking Methodology explores two critical aspects of the social mind:

Input & Output

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Input:
Interpretation of socially based information, experiences, and related world knowledge, etc.
Output:

1. Responses within social interactions (face-to-face, digital messages, performances, etc.)
2. Social-academic and vocational purposes (reading comprehension of literature, written expression, collaborating on a team, etc.)

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Input...

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A coworker called in to have a cake made for an employee who was leaving the company.

They were told to write on the cake:
"Best wishes Suzanne, underneath that, we will miss you"

<http://www.snopes.com/food/prepare/caketalk.asp>

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Output...

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How does one interpret the *input* to produce the expected *output*?

Why was this considered funny when the person wrote exactly what they were told to write?

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Social input is also required in the absence of face-to-face social interactions or co-existence.

- Social media exchanges
- YouTube clips
- Newspaper articles
- Literature
- Movies, TV shows, sports, etc.

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For example, notice your social mind at work as you watch this commercial.



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Output is always present when in the presence of others and during online exchanges.

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Output:

And, we also create socially based output as we express and/or respond to our own and others' thoughts, feelings, intentions in the form of written expression, film production, song writing, etc.

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In other words, our social minds are expected to be active at any time we are considering our own and others' perspectives, feelings, plans, etc.

Including classroom assignments and in our jobs (e.g., reading, writing, group work, working as a team, helping others, etc.).

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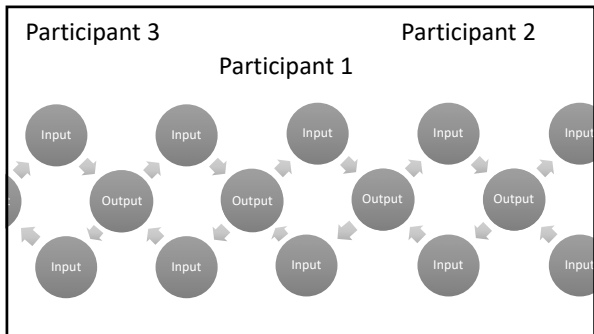
Social Input & Output is multi-layered and multi-dimensional.

And, in real-time social experiences we are expected to perceive and respond to those we share space and possibly interact with incredibly quickly and efficiently.

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Not only do we read the intentions of others, but we also are aware people are likely simultaneously reading our intentions.

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In neurotypical individuals, social input and output are largely learned intuitively and evolve across our lives.

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We use the term “maturity” in part to describe people keeping pace with evolving social emotional expectations as they age.

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Individuals with social emotional learning differences, also usually evolve in their social emotional learning as they age. However, they are not intuitively receiving the same social input as their neurotypical peers, leading to unique or unexpected social output.

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Social emotional learning is not only learned intuitively. Both neurotypical and neurodivergent individuals also learn through direct and explicit lessons, fostering the development of socially based input and output.

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The Social Thinking Methodology was originally designed for use with individuals who have solid to high-level expressive and receptive language skills, as well as solid to advanced verbal IQ.

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Related Diagnoses

- ASD levels 1, 2 / Asperger syndrome, high functioning autism (HFA), PDD-NOS
- Social communication disorder
- Gifted – twice exceptional
- Nonverbal learning disorder (NLD)
- Hyperlexia
- Tourette syndrome...Fragile X....
- ADHD – ADD
- Fetal alcohol syndrome, head injury, etc.

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Over the past 25 years, we have also had our work adopted for use in mainstream classrooms.

Our goal has been to create explicit social learning guidance for what's often expected to be learned implicitly.

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It turns out that all individuals benefit from a metacognitive exploration of how the social world works, to help them better interpret and respond to different social dynamics within that world.

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There are different levels of social learners, in the same way that globally, individual students demonstrate different capacities for learning math, reading, and writing.

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Some individuals with social learning differences benefit from very basic instruction to learn and produce specific, basic social skills. Others need far more sophisticated socially based information as they are expected to interpret and respond in far more complex social contexts.

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By the time children attend school they are expected to navigate sophisticated social environments, such as classrooms and playgrounds.

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By school age, everything we are expected to do in the presence of others involves subtle and not so subtle interpretations of people in context. This leads us to socially problem solve the production of our own social responses, while simultaneously predicting how we'll be interpreted and responded to by others.

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Yikes!
This really is more complicated than most of us likely realize!

Social emotional competencies are at the heart of classroom management and student participation.

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This is why we teach social competencies and not just social skills.

It's a sophisticated, developmental approach to social emotional learning.

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What's the research tell us?

Social information processing (SIP) is critical for the development of social competencies.

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A seminal reference:

Crick, N., & Dodge K. (1994). A Review and Reformulation of Social Information Processing Mechanisms in Children's Social Adjustment. *Psychological Bulletin*. 115, 74-101.

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More recently:

Beauchamp, M., & Anderson, V. (2010). SOCIAL: An Integrative Framework for the Development of Social Skills. *Psychological Bulletin*. 136(1), 39-64.

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Considering the research and our clinical experience, we developed

The Social Thinking
Social Competency Model

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Our Social Competency Model has four main components to manage social input and output:

1. Social attention
2. Social interpretation (meaning making) of self and others
3. Problem solving to make decisions as to how to proceed
4. Production of social response(s)

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Simplify these four steps by teaching students to better:

1. Attend
2. Interpret
3. Problem Solve
4. Respond

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First, we have to attend to social information in order to interpret.

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People simply need to pay attention to each other socially.

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Sound easy?
Not so much!
Especially for people with social learning differences!


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People with strong social attention can't help but attend to it all.



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People with object-oriented attention may focus on non-social aspects of the situation.



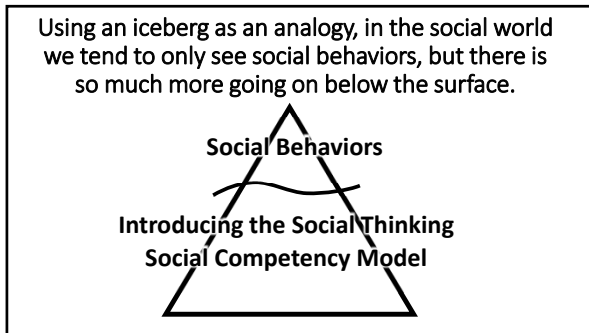
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Social attention is weak or inefficient in people with autism spectrum differences and other conditions mentioned earlier in this talk.

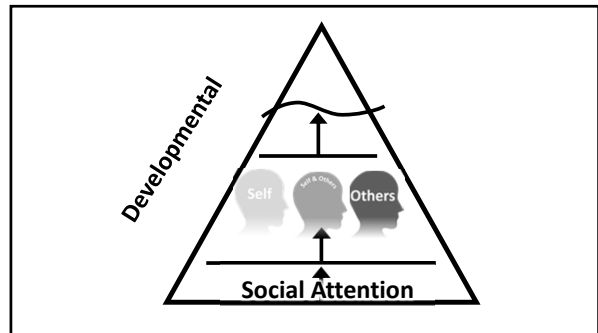
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Making sense of this visually
Social Thinking's Social Competency Model

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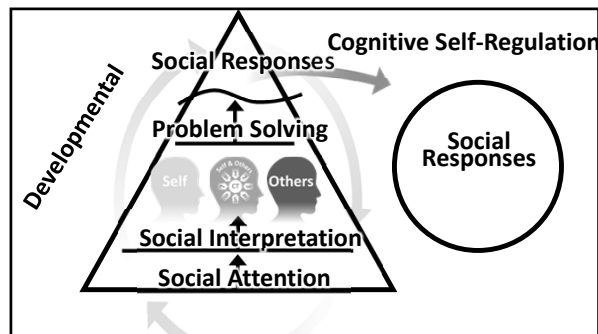
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- Four synergistic steps:
1. Attend
 2. Interpret
 3. Problem Solve
 4. Respond

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Social Interpretation

1. World knowledge
2. What is the situation?
3. Who are the people?
4. What are their intentions?
5. Basic emotions
6. Self-conscious emotions
7. Basic theory of mind
8. Advanced, applied, spontaneous theory of mind

CT = critical thinking

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How many points of interpretation do you need to use to make sense of this commercial?

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When sharing space or interacting with others in real time, we are expected to compare ourselves to others to figure out if we are adapting our behavior in the manner expected based on our role in that situation.

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As we interpret what other people are doing and/or saying, we are engaging in the process of social evaluation.

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As other people interpret what each of us is doing or saying, they are socially evaluating our actions or inactions.

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Most people intuitively realize they have to evaluate how others might evaluate their own actions or words!

This is called self-evaluation and it is part of our social problem-solving process.

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As we interpret our self and others, we problem solve to figure out how to achieve our social goals (e.g., how do we want people to perceive our intentions, etc.).

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Ultimately, social evaluation and self-evaluation lead to more successful social output (responses) but can also lead to increased social anxiety and possibly depression.

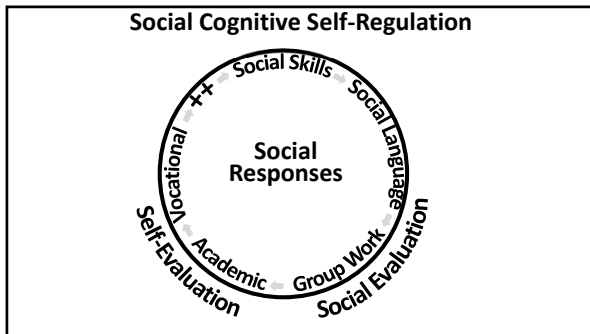
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Take a moment after this training ends to consider this social evaluation and self-evaluation process.

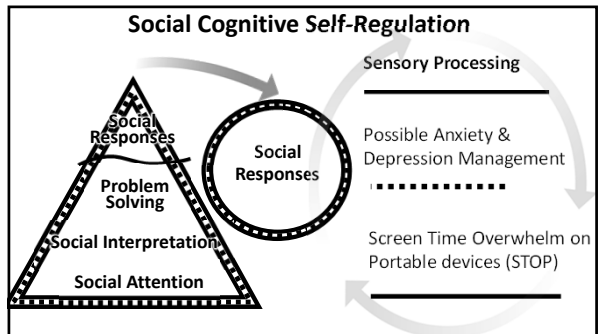
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This process can be considered **social cognitive self-regulation** and it results in our social responses.

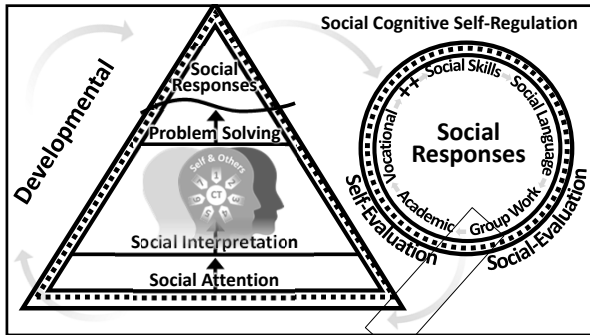
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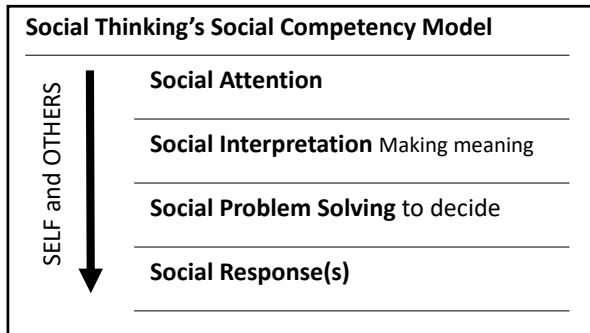
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Free article on our website:
Social Competency Model
www.socialthinking.com

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Social Thinking provides a lot of treatment frameworks and vocabulary/concepts to anchor social emotional learning.

These frameworks and concepts can be used within the mainstream classroom to foster engagement in learning academics, as well as classroom management.

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The Social Competency Model is a framework to make sense of some of the many moving parts during engagement of our social mind.

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You can learn about how we've translated our information into developmentally based information and materials through our website:
www.socialthinking.com

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Learn more about the many practical topics we explore in the large world of social emotional learning through our many free webinars and articles, print and e-products, as well as our large selection of On Demand training courses.

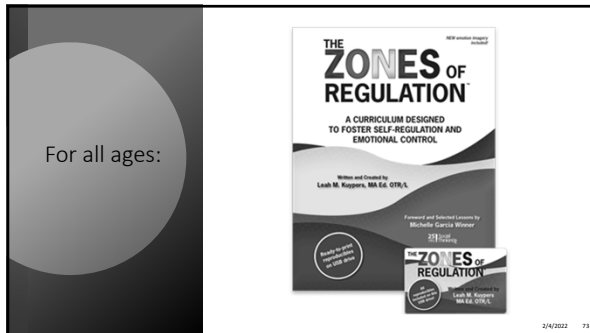
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For parents, caregivers, and/or professionals –

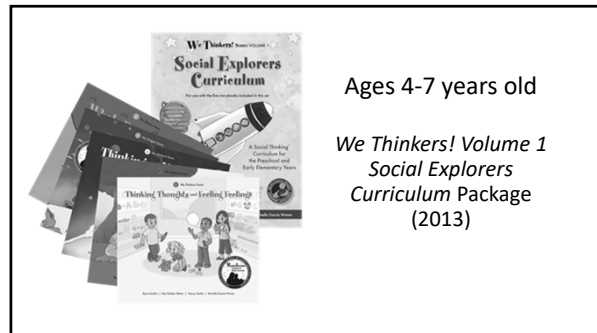
This book introduces the Social Thinking Methodology and Informal Dynamic Assessment tasks.

2/4/2022

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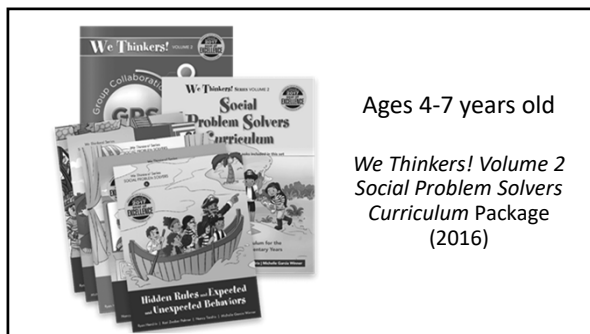


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Ages 4-7 years old
*We Thinkers! Volume 1
Social Explorers
Curriculum Package
(2013)*



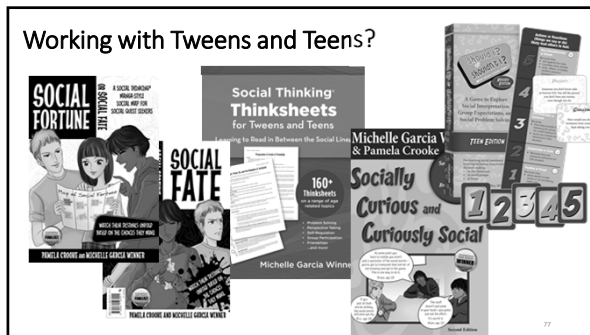
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Ages 4-7 years old
*We Thinkers! Volume 2
Social Problem Solvers
Curriculum Package
(2016)*



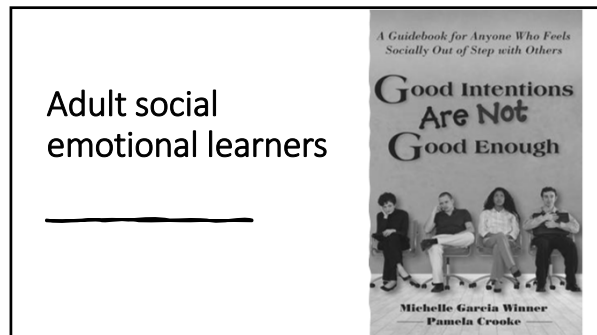
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Working with 7 to 10-year-olds?



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Working with Tweens and Teens?



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Adult social
emotional learners

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Teaching Social Competencies—More Than Social Skills

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