

**Perspective Taking in the Classroom
(and beyond)**

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Disclosure

Michelle Garcia Winner is the founder/CEO of Social Thinking.

Pamela Crooke is a full-time salaried employee. She receives no royalties for authorship of books, articles, or products.

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**Are you new to the
Social Thinking®
Methodology?**



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The **ST Methodology** fosters the development of social competencies by teaching implicit social concepts in an explicit manner to help social learners explore the ever-shifting dynamics within the social world.

Socially attending, interpreting, problem solving, and producing social responses are also a big part of this process.



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Our work is for social learners with solid to strong language skills, ages four through adulthood.

We focus on teaching how the social world works to help individuals navigate to regulate their actions and reactions, based on their own (and others') social goals.

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This leads us to today's topic:

**Perspective Taking in the classroom
(and beyond too)**

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The most common definition of **perspective taking** is to jump into another's shoes.

Not literally, but figuratively.

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Or to see the situation from another's viewpoint
(Not literally, but figuratively)

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Perspective taking happens in every part of the school, classroom, hallway, playground, bus, crosswalk, science group, bathroom, parking lot, literature book, collaborative group work, writing assignment, history lesson, sporting event, and the list goes on and on and on!

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Perspective taking is required to make sense of what we read online, in novels, in the news, and in literature.



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It's needed when we write sentences, paragraphs, or essays where we are to take perspective of the reader.

Academic Standard:
"Writing to an audience" means we consider how people may be making sense of what we are writing.

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Often, we are asked to re-read what we wrote based on imagining how it will make sense to others.

We almost always make sense to ourselves.

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**“I wrote it!
Why would I read it again!”**

Students with social learning differences (or sometimes challenges), may be confused by being asked to read their work. We don't always make it explicit that the reader has to understand the writer's perspective.

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Instead, ask them to imagine they are the reading the paper as **the teacher** and then ask, will the teacher think I:

- Adequately explained what's happening with the people, in context?
- Gave enough details to explain the situation?
- Confused people with too much extra information?
- Made the reader uncomfortable based on what I said? If so, is that ok?

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There is also an expectation that we vigilantly **take perspective of others** when we share space (co-exist), whether we know one another or not.

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Taking perspective requires a social developmental journey that evolves from birth.

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Perspective taking begins with noticing and attending to others.

Then, developing joint attention.

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Then, the social brain starts to make sense of what is happening around us and what others are doing and experiencing very early in life.

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I notice you.

I think about you,
and you think about
me

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This is the social cognitive foundation
upon which we learn to work, learn, and
play together across our lifetime.

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In 2nd year of life,
toddlers like people to
do things the way they
want them done.

This can lead to a lot of
frustration and tears.

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Thankfully as we age,
we are also developing mental
flexibility.

This helps us to be more open to what others
may be doing and/or thinking and feeling.

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Co-existing and
interacting in groups
is a foundational
social learning process
that evolves
developmentally and
benefits from a range
of different
experiences.



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**By the age of 4, neurotypically
developing children can't help
but think about what others
(teachers and peers) may be
thinking and feeling based on
the context.**

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Perspective taking is central to developing social self-regulation and co-regulation

Co-regulation is when one person helps another to develop their own sense of calm.

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**And then,
based on our own social goals we realize that
others notice what we say and do too.**

We learn to self-regulate to encourage others to think & feel about our actions (or inactions) in the way we intend.

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In classrooms, there is an expectation that students actively attend to the teacher *and* are aware of the many perspectives of classmates.

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If we didn't know to consider each others' actions, thoughts, intentions, then we might:

- Push to the front of a line.
- Sit in another person's chair.
- Put our materials in another person's "claimed" space.
- Drink their coffee or water or eat their food.
- Collide with others while looking for a place to sit.
- Make a negative comment about a person's physical appearance.

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As we take perspective we try to predict each other's thoughts, feelings and actions.

But this requires that we pay attention!

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"If you look at your phone while walking, you're an agent of chaos"

By Veronique Greenwood
The New York Times March 18, 2021

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Perspective taking helps us socially problem solve to manage disputes, develop relationships, and avoid disrupting or hurting others' feelings.

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If a child struggles with being part of a group, they often are dismissed as having a "behavior problem."

Instead, they might have a social learning difference (and/or challenge)

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The Social Thinking Methodology seeks to make implicit ideas found in the social world, explicit.



Perspective taking is an implicit concept that, for some, requires explicit instruction.

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Begin by encouraging individuals to routinely pause and notice the people in the situation.



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Think about:

Who are the people?

What is their plan?

How might they think and feel?



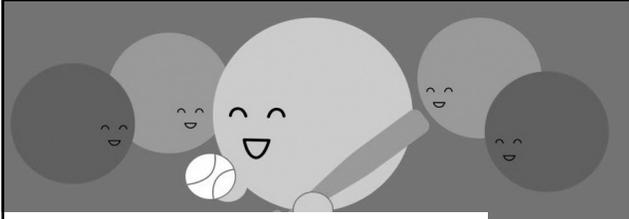
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Realize:

If I am in the presence of others, they may be taking my perspective too.



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Step 5: Based on my social goals in the situation, I monitor (possibly adapt) what I do and say to encourage you to perceive me in the manner I hope.

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Introduce
5 Steps of Being with Others
with this teaching
framework.
Learn more on our website

<https://www.socialthinking.com/Products/social-thinking-teaching-frameworks-set-2>



45

1. We notice where we are, the people, and what's happening.
2. We have thoughts/feelings about the words and actions of those around us.
3. We try to figure out each others plans.
4. We try to figure out how others might be noticing and interpreting or words and actions.
5. We may adjust what we do and say to keep others thinking and feeling about us in the way we hope based on the situation and our social goals.

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While the classroom is about knowledge sharing, students learn best (and teachers teach best) when they feel calm, collected and connected.

But that requires perspective taking on everyone's part

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Taking perspective is a basic part of conflict resolution strategies.

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Be aware that some students may struggle to understand their own and others' feelings

and/or

understand others' perspectives in all settings and across the curriculum.

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Emotional processing of our own & others' feelings is something most of us do intuitively, but for some this is difficult.

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Alexithymia Traits

Dr. Laura Dattaro (2021)

- Difficulty identifying and describing own feelings
- Thinking pattern that emphasizes the external world over the internal world
- Affects all emotional processing:
 - recognizing facial expressions
 - other people's emotions
 - emotional responses to music

<https://doi.org/10.53053/TWGO2459>

51

Alexithymia Traits

Dr. Laura Dattaro (2021)

- Trouble distinguishing which situations require a strong emotional response – so are frequently in high stress
- Struggling with self-awareness (possibly)
 - but ironically are just as good at rating their own emotional responses (when compared to external rater).
- Difficulties with social communication, anxiety, and depression

<https://doi.org/10.53053/TWGO2459>

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Consider this.

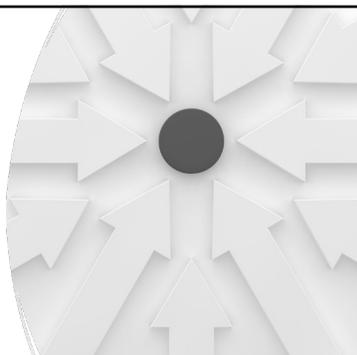


Imagine yourself alone on an elevator and then another person enters.

What do you do to demonstrate you acknowledge their presence (e.g., their thoughts, feelings and plans)?

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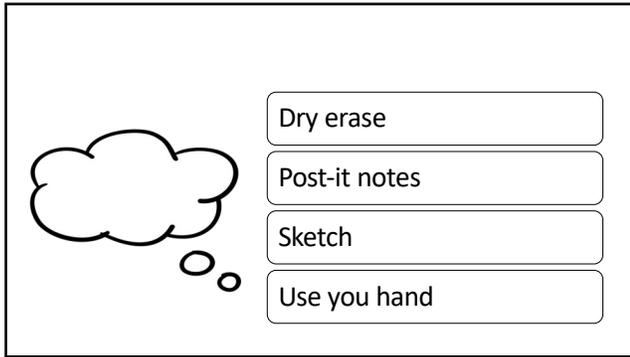
Strategies to explicitly teach aspects of **perspective taking**



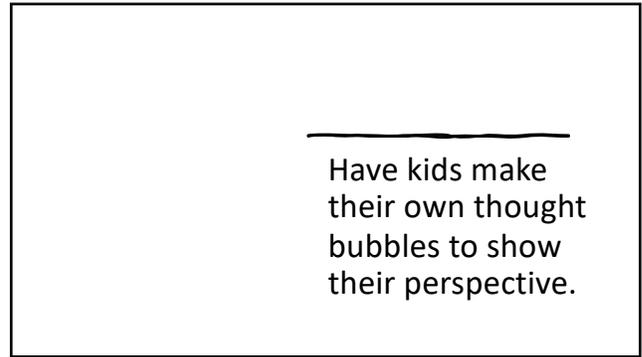
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Start by using (infusing) thought bubbles

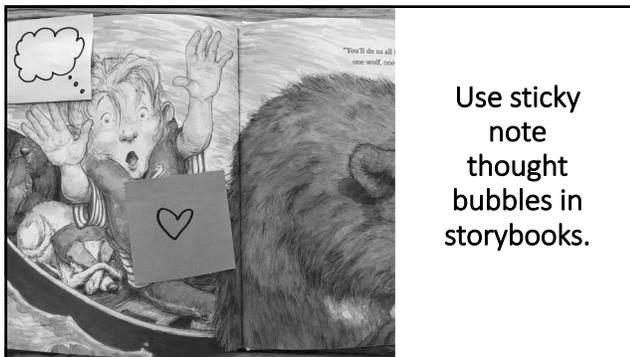
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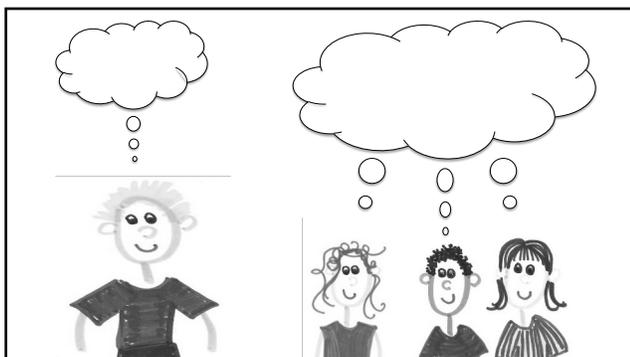
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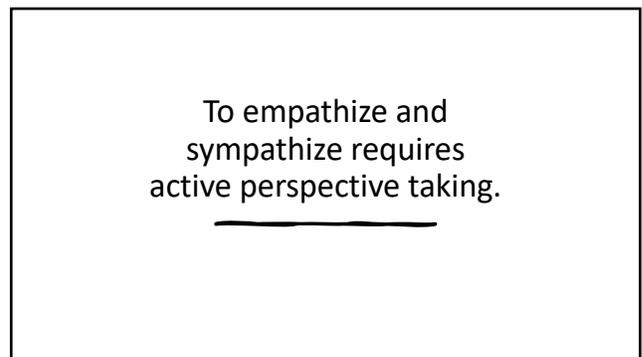
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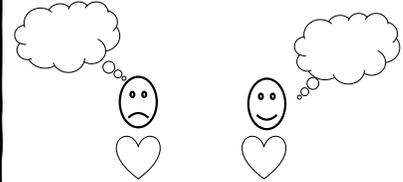
**Empathy in the Classroom:
Why Should I Care?**

The benefits of empathy in education include building positive classroom culture, strengthening community, and preparing students to be leaders in their own communities.

<https://www.edutopia.org/blog/empathy-classroom-why-should-i-care-lauren-owen>

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Encouraging empathy and sympathy begins by talking about one's own and others' thoughts and feelings



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Encourage students to actively infer how others think and feel through use of illustrations, pictures or videos clips.

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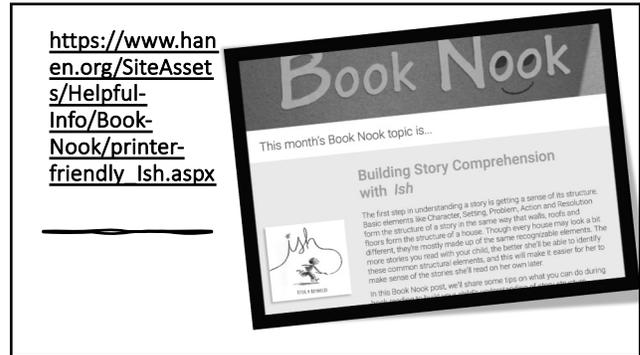
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Recommend: use video clips (or books) that don't have a lot of complex language.

This helps students focus on making sense of the larger social context.

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Taking one's own perspective in contrast to others' helps us learn to self-advocate.

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Did you know "asking for help" requires self-awareness of *one's own perspective* taking?

When students notice that other kids understand something they don't, this is a good time to ask for help. **

**Note: It matters how we ask for help. Yelling vs indirect vs. asking

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Self awareness is critical too. Explicitly teach!

I NEED HELP!

On PART of it. On MOST of it. On ALL of it.

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Giving help is a perspective taking task too.

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How can the helper take the other student's perspective to adjust what they say?

Help needs to make sense to the other student and must be said in a manner that keeps them wanting to listen.

Some of our students struggle to see the other perspective: "That's so simple, even an idiot could do it. Why can't you?"

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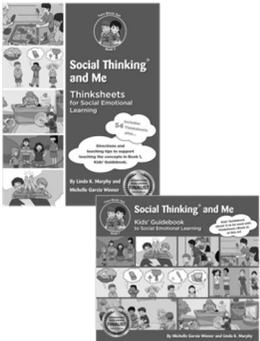
Which means that you don't tell people what to do.

Instead, you acknowledge how they feel based on your own present or past experiences, or how you imagine you would feel in that situation.

Again, this is perspective taking.

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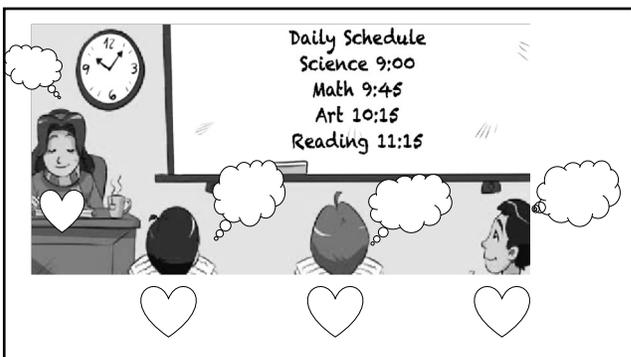
Scenarios from **Social Thinking and Me** two book set:



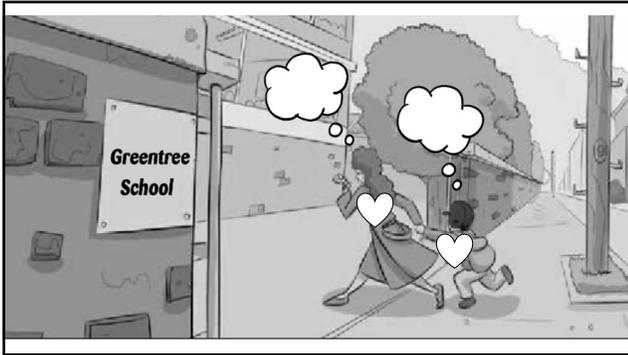
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We think, we feel, we take perspective and we seek to explain our own perspective.

A diagram illustrating the concept of perspective taking. It shows two stylized human figures. The figure on the left has a sad face and a thought bubble above its head. The figure on the right has a happy face and a thought bubble above its head. Below each figure is a heart. Lines connect the figures to their respective hearts and thought bubbles, suggesting a link between emotion, thought, and perspective.

87

It's Not Easy For Any Of Us To Do!

Takeaways

- Perspective taking a constant in our lives.
- Make the implicit, explicit
- Break down information to build up social knowledge to bolster social competencies.

A decorative graphic consisting of several short, curved, dashed lines arranged in a semi-circular pattern at the bottom right of the slide.

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Some Social Thinking Products to promote teaching perspective taking

A collage of various social thinking products. It includes several book covers such as "The Power of Thought & Feelings", "Social Thinking and Me", "Social Behavior Mapping", "Social Fortune", "Social Detective", and "Social Thinking and Me". There are also several worksheets and activity cards scattered around the books.

89

25+ Social YRS! Thinking Jr.

Q and A

A decorative background for the slide featuring several concentric, dotted circles of varying radii, creating a ripple effect.

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