

## Lesson Plan

**Objective:** To teach social skills (**listening, problem-solving, and negotiating**) in cooperative learning groups using teacher-directed instruction for students with disabilities.

### Setting and materials

- Conducted in a middle school setting.
- Desks are positioned in a circle in the middle of the classroom.
- Materials include a task analysis of each skill, test score sheets, skill sheets for each student, and role-play situations.
- Task analysis, score sheets, and skill sheets are modeled after those used in ASSET (Hazel, Schumaker, Sherman, & Sheldon-Wildgen, 1981a).

### Content taught

The following three skills are targeted for social skill instruction based on survey results comparing teacher and student ratings of importance:

- Listening skills
- Problem solving skills
- Negotiating skills

The steps for **listening** included the nonverbal skills of:

- (a) facing the person with shoulders parallel to each other
- (b) making eye contact at least 50% of the time
- (c) using a normal facial expression that is relaxed
- (d) standing up straight with weight on both feet and shoulders back, or sitting up straight
- (e) staying near the person (within 3 feet)
- (f) appropriate responses such as head nods
- (g) responding to the person or asking for clarification, not interrupting, and being sincere

The steps developed by Hazel et al. (1981a) for **problem solving** include:

- (a) remaining calm
- (b) deciding on the nature of the problem
- (c) determining a solution
- (d) determining a second solution
- (e) determining a third solution
- (f) naming the pros and cons of the first solution
- (g) naming the pros and cons of the second solution
- (h) naming the pros and cons of the third solution
- (i) choosing a solution (the one with the most pros and the least cons)
- (j) deciding on a plan
- (k) if the first solution does not work, trying the second solution

The task analysis of **negotiating** is modified from Quinn, Sherman, Sheldon-Wildgen, Quinn, and Harcheck (1992). The same nonverbal skills used in listening are involved but also the following steps:

- (a) asking if you can talk with the person
- (b) stating what you want
- (c) giving a reason
- (d) if the response is negative, asking for a solution
- (e) if the response is negative, proposing a compromise
- (f) thanking the person for listening
- (g) remaining calm
- (h) not using any put-downs
- (i) not interrupting

### **Teaching procedure**

#### **Teacher-Directed Instruction of Social Skills**

- Direct instruction is given for the three social skills modeled after those used in ASSET: A Social Skills Program for Adolescents (Hazel et al., 1981a).

The following elements are included in the instruction:

- Students are asked to describe the skill, give a rationale for learning the skill, and discuss if and where they had used the skill before.
- The teacher models the skill steps.
- The students are asked to memorize each skill step with the help of a skills sheet (a written list of the skill steps).
- The students are prompted to memorize one skill step at a time until all skill steps are memorized.
- A practice session is conducted until each student reaches 100% criterion in demonstrating all steps of the skill on a novel role-play situation.
- Each instructional session is to last 50 minutes.
- Throughout, testing sessions are conducted.
- These sessions consist of asking the students to recall the steps and demonstrate them in novel role-play situations.
- Once students have mastered at least 80% of the first skill during testing sessions, the second skill is taught.
- Likewise, the third skill is taught after the students have mastered at least 80% of the second skill during testing.
- Each skill takes two to three testing sessions for each student to reach the 80% criterion.

### **Method of evaluation**

- Demonstration of skills in novel role-play situations.

- Skill performance is scored according to the socially validated skill steps from ASSET (Hazel et al., 1981a)
- Students are asked to rate their peers on a scale of 1 to 4 by identifying the phrase that best describes how they feel toward that peer (1=did not like, 2=liked a little, 3=liked, 4=liked very much).

**Lesson plan based on:** Prater, M.A., Bruhl, S., & Serna, L.A. (1998). Acquiring social skills through cooperative learning and teacher-directed instruction. Remedial and Special Education, 19, 160-172.