SUPERFLEX® LEARNING MODEL TO IMPROVE SOCIAL SKILLS

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Abstract

Social skills are the skills we use to Communicate and Interact with Each Other, both verbally and non-verbally, through gestures, body language and our personal appearance. Human beings are sociable creatures and we have developed many ways to Communicate our messages, thoughts and feelings with others. Social skills as the cognitive functions and specific verbal and nonverbal behaviors that an individual Engages in when interacting with others, Including both verbal and nonverbal skills. Behavior contained in the learners are not fully passed on just like that. When students think harder to solve problems, ask better questions, explain the answer in a more logical or hear with more attention, means that learners are in the process of learning. Problem inability of learners in social skills can be trained with Superflex® learning model where students are invited to become a social detective invited to do your own search problems regarding their behavior so as to become a social thinker and solve social problems.

Keywords: Superflex[®], Social Skill

1. Introduction

Man is a social being influencing the conduct of others and being influenced by their behavior, in his turn. Social relationships depend upon the mutual adjustment between such behaviors. Every society has some norms and standards regarding social development. A child who accepts and obeys the traditions, customs and adjusts with the social norms is said to be sociable (Rashid, 2010, p. 69).

Social skills are the skills we use to communicate and interact with each other, both verbally and non-verbally, through gestures, body language and our personal appearance. Human beings are sociable creatures and we have developed many ways to communicate our messages, thoughts and feelings with others (http://www.skillsyouneed.com/ips/socialskills.html#ixzz3XidlEKoE, n.d.). Without social skills, the classroom environment as we believe it should be would be in peril. Most teachers, from pre-school to college campuses, hope their students actively listen, stay on-task and are problem solvers. In an ideal world, these social skills would be universal; however, within these teacher researchers' classrooms students showed weak skills in these areas of actively listening, staying on task, and problem solving.

Coleman and Lindsay (1992) found social skills as the cognitive functions and specific verbal and nonverbal behaviors that an individual engages in when interacting with others, including both verbal and nonverbal skills (Rashid, 2010, p. 70). Caldarella and Merrell (1977) derived taxonomy from their

review that included five broad dimensions of social skills: (a) peer relations skills (b) self- managements skills (c) academic skills (d) compliance skills, and (e) assertion skills. Namka (1997) talked about importance of social skills that these are positive abilities that help the child to interact with others in different situations in ways that are valued. Social skills are those actions, which are acceptable by society and are beneficial both to the person and to others. National Association of School Psychologists Center (2002) noted that good social skills are critical to successful functioning in life. These skills enable to know what to say, how to make good choices, and how to behave in diverse situations (Rashid, 2010, p. 70).

Behavior contained in the learners are not fully passed on just like that. When students think harder to solve problems, ask better questions, explain the answer in a more logical or hear with more attention, means that learners are in the process of learning. The learning process involves the behavior of academic and non-academic and takes place at school or anywhere in the world surrounding the learner. Have no views on the approach to the learning process that is (Santrock, 2007, pp. 266–268):

- 1. Behavioral: emphasis on experience, especially reinforcement and punishment as a determinant of learning and behavior.
- 2. Social Cognitive: emphasis on the interaction of behavioral factors, the environment and the cognitive as a determinant of learning.
- 3. Information processing: an emphasis on how learners process information through attention, memory, reasoning and other cognitive processes.
- 4. Cognitive Constructivist: emphasis on the cognitive construction of knowledge and understanding..
- 5. Social constructivists: emphasis on collaboration with others to generate knowledge and understanding.

Based on the results of research conducted by Winner (2014, p. 1) it turns out the problem inability of learners in social skills can be trained with Superflex[®] learning model where students are invited to become a social detective invited to do your own search problems regarding their behavior so as to become a social thinker and solve social problems. Learners shown good behavior or unreasonable (unthinkables) to be of good behavior or reasonable (thinkables) through the appearance of figures depicting the attitudes of children who unthinkables. Superflex® is owned human figure superhero in every child's mind to help yourself in doing selfimprovement, social skills. In addition to learning Superflex® regular teacher/public can help learners to improve their social skills.

2. Discussion

2.1. Curriculum Learning Superflex®

Superflex® learning curriculum was developed in 2008 in the United States. Superflex® is a superhero figure flexible and can help a person to find out their needs and wants and remain calm in waiting for their turn to speak and play. Superflex® is an outstanding problem solver and can cognition various solutions to the problem (Madrigal & Winner, 2008b, p. Appendix B). The curriculum is derived from the principles of the wider social cognition and clinical experience Madrigal & Winner. Superflex[®] to be defeating my own Team of Unthinkables and built on the concept to incorporate other social thinking weaknesses that student (Madrigal, 2008). Superflex® learning concept is flexible thinking is expected, inflexible thinking is unexpected behavior

This model utilizes the comic book as a medium of learning and handouts superhero named Superflex[®] and a group of opponents called Unthinkables Team (Team unreasonable) to teach flexible cognition in children who have problems of social thought (social cognition). Superflex® is a flexible thinker and have the power to solve the problem. Unthinkables Team is a group of opponents, amounting to 14 characters that have inflexible thinking. Each character has different strengths of the mindset that leads to abnormalities of social behavior Madrigal & Winner (2008) in Baker (2011, p. 33). Superflex® figure can be seen in the following figure:



Figure 1 Superhero *Superflex*[®] Source: (Madrigal & Winner, 2008b, p. Appendix B)

Superflex® Learning aims to help children to use strategies to regulate itself, social thought and have social skills. Another aim is to help a person with difficulty social thought and help develop flexibility in thinking in the social conditions of any kind. The main premise of this curriculum aalah everyone can follow to become a superhero is not only the crew and everyone faced with a situation to overcome Unthinkables Team (Baker, 2011, p. 33). Through learning through adventure Superflex® each individual can minimize the power Unthinkables to learn how to use the strategy undertaken by Superflex® to change thinking and behavior.

The "Unthinkables" are characters that invade your brain and make your thinking inflexible and make you have unexpected behaviors (Madrigal & Winner, 2008a). The figure in Unthinkables Team is:

- 1. Rock Brain: Person gets stuck on their idea of what they want to do and will not negotiate with other people. The person is not a good problem-solver and tries one solution that's not working over and over again. This person may be very rule bound and have rigid thinking, only seeing one way in a situation.
- 2. Brain Eater: Makes it hard for the person to focus on what he is doing or focus on others during interactions. The person may get easily distracted with their own thoughts or things around them.
- 3. Glassman: Makes a person have a big reaction to a small problem. This person goes from 0-60 mph and quickly gets very upset often over "tiny" problems. Glass Man usually thinks things are not "fair.
- 4. Mean Jean: This person is mean to other people. They insult or criticizes others. They may take things away

from others, be very bossy, or try to get all the attention when others are trying to talk.

- 5. D.O.F (Destroyer of Fun): This character often pops up during games or activities involving competition. The person becomes very competitive and insists on going first, playing only what he wants to play, and does not think about compromising or about how they make others feel.
- 6. Space Invader: This character makes the person's body move into other people's space when others are not expecting it or do not want this. They do not realize how uncomfortable this makes others feel.
- 7. Was Funny Once: This person will attempt to use a lot of humor to be funny. However, he does not realize that humor wears out pretty quickly or at times is not "funny" at all. He has trouble recognizing appropriate times for humor and may try to be funny during a discussion in a classroom or when the moment is serious and not funny or silly. Some people may get so silly, that the other children become silly also, making the group fall apart. This is called getting caught up in the "silly tornado."
- 8. Energy Hare-y: This character gives the person so much energy so the person is constantly fidgeting, moving around, and doesn't think about what the people around need or how others are feeling around them. Sometimes, Energy Hare-y and Was funny once work together, which can quickly make the group fall apart.
- 9. Grump Grumpaniny: Makes the person think the worst or feel like people are always unkind. He ends up believing it even when people are trying to be nice. He may also see everything as negative or bad and does not see how his emotion spreads and makes everyone feel unhappy.
- 10. One-Sided Sid: This character gets the person to talk about his own set of topics or his own plan. Even when someone else brings up his interests, he just talks about his interests. He may interrupt to talk about what is on his mind, not seeing that someone may have another plan.

- 11. Topic Twister Meister: This character gets the person to twist the topic around to what he wants to talk about and goes off on tangents when talking to others. This person may then go on and on about topics he wants to talk about, not realizing that others may be bored or disinterested in what he is talking about.
- 12. Worry Wall: He makes the person worry or feel nervous so much about the people around him or the social situations that he or she "hits a wall" and stops being able to talk at all to the people nearby.
- 13. Body Snatcher: Person wanders away from others, the group or person he is with. May also get the person to turn their body away from the group, not realizing the message they are sending to others.
- 14. Un-Wonder: Stops the person from showing interest (social wondering) in others or thinking about what others may want to do. The person may not ask a lot of questions about others.

Here are pictures of Team Unthinkable to be defeated by Superflex®:



Figure 2 Superflex Takes on The Unthinkables Source: (SocialThinking.com, 2011)

In doing Superflex® learning there is 10 (ten) things that can and can not do, it can be seen in the following table:

Table 1 Do and Don't in Superflex®

No	Do This	Not This
1	DO start by	DON'T rush the
	teaching how to be	concepts.
	a social	
	OBSERVER	
	(Social Detective)	
	before introducing	
	them to their	

No	Do This	Not This
	Superhero	·····•
	(Superflex).	
2	DO emphasize that	DON'T use
2		
	Superflex isn't a	Superflex if
	comic book	students don't
	character that lives	have a
	"outside" us all -	clear
	SUPERFLEX IS	understanding of
	YOU!	the difference
		between
		fantasy/pretend
		and reality.
3	DO ampower kide	
3	DO empower kids	DON'T use
	to figure out their	UNTHINKABLE
	own team of	terms to
	Unthinkables and	describe the
	Thinkables. You'll	child. Avoid
	have a greater	saying things
	level of buy-in if	like, "You're
	kids feel like they	being a
	are figuring out	Glassman" or
	their own	"Stop being such
	challenges and	a Rock Brain."
	strengths (self-	
	awareness) and	
	then a plan to	
	overcome	
	(behavior change).	
4	DO link Superflex	DON'T teach
4	-	
	and the	about the
	Unthinkables and	Unthinkable
	Thinkables to	characters
	academics and	without teaching
	content standards.	strategies to
		defeat them!
5	DO use the Social	DON'T use the
Ŭ	Detective and	Superflex
	Superflex	· · · · ·
	strategies with the	is) with students
	general education	with limited
	population too!	verbal abilities or
		those who are
		just emerging
		into language
		(single words or
		short phrases).
6	DO be cautious of	DON'T use
5	what outcomes you	Superflex
	expect when using	concepts and
	Superflex with	strategies with
	younger students.	preschoolers.
7	DO link Superflex	DON'T turn
	concepts to Social	Superflex
	Emotional Learning	concepts into a
	(SEL), Positive	behavior plan or
	Behavioral	teach the
	Interventions and	concepts in a
	Supports (PBIS),	purely
	and Response to	behavioral way.
	Intervention (RTI).	
8		
	DO take plenty of	DON'T rely on
	DO take plenty of time to teach from	DON'T rely on the Superflex

No	Do This		Not This		
	many o	different	handouts, the		
	angles.		Superflex poster,		
			and the Rock		
			Brain comic		
			book as your		
			only tools to		
			teach and build Superflex		
			concepts.		
9	DO	involve	DON'T let kids		
Ũ	parents/care		run away with		
	and make	0	the vocabulary in		
	know	the	a way that		
	vocabulary		reflects violence		
	clear		and STOP using		
	expectations		if kids become		
	Behavior ch	0	obsessed with		
	often SLOW	•	the negative		
			behaviors of the Unthinkables.		
10	DO have f	un and	DON'T sell what		
10	be creative!		you create!		
Source: (Crooke & Winner, 2015, p. 3)					

Superflex® curriculum was developed based on the theory of cognitive behavioral approach to explore ways of thinking social process. According Attwood (2006) goal of cognitive behavioral theory is to increase one's awareness of the impact of their behavior on others and ourselves (SocialThinking.com, 2011). For learners themselves Superflex® curriculum can help them in improving their knowledge of social expectations, increase self-awareness of their own behavior and ferreting out how to modify negative behavior by using a superflexible strategy. Superflex® curriculum can be used by psychologists, teachers and parents to learn the concepts of social cognition with reference to the book of social thought (Winner, 2014, p. 1). Student can use this program from elementary school until high school. Learners are able to take advantage of starting from elementary school students, middle-class students in the first and secondary

2.2. Social Skill and Social Thinking

Social skills are defined as the set of skills people use to interact and communicate with one another. Social rules are created, communicated, and changed in verbal and nonverbal ways. Social thinking is a way to train your brain to help you figure out the people around you–what they may be thinking, how that compares to what you're thinking, and how to vary your actions based on what you and other people are thinking. Social Thinking is social cognition (Coppola, Haratine, Bethel, & Biling, 2011, p. 1). Need to be a social thinker to understand social skill because Social Thinking® is required prior to the development of social skills. Successful social thinkers consider the points of view, emotions, thoughts, beliefs, prior knowledge and intentions of others.

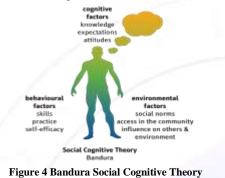
Kay Burke (2009) mentions social skills are the foundation of social interaction, especially in cooperative learning. Teachers can choose the needs of the students by level of education. Social skills hierarchy shown in the following figure.



Source: (http://www.phschool.com/eteach/professional_develop ment/teaching_the_social_skills/figure1.gif)

Social Thinking is what to do when interacting with other people and think about how to do social interaction with others. In addition, also in social thought, faced with how a person thinks about the people that influence behavior. Someone will respond in accordance with the behavior of others and will ultimately affect one's emotions (http://www.socialthinking.com/what-issocial-thinking/introduction, 2011). Social Thinking developed by Albert Bandura (1986) in (Tarsidi, n.d., p. 1) which mentions the social cognitive theory is based on the proposition that the process of social and cognitive processes is central to an understanding of the motivations, emotions and human actions. According Feist & Feist (2006) in (Mahabbati, 2012, p. 3) Bandura concept combining the internal side of the child in the form of personality and behavior, with the external side of the child

in the form of the environment as a model. According to Bandura learning principle sufficient to explain and predict changes in behavior by considering that humans can think and adjust its behavior itself and the involvement of the interaction between the individual and other individuals (Alwisol, 2006). The theory of social cognition can be seen in the image below:



(source: <u>http://ahmadasim.blogspot.com/p/constructive-</u> perspectives.html)

Social cognition is necessary before developing social skills. Social thinkers will succeed because look at the problem from different perspectives, emotions, thoughts, beliefs, prior knowledge and perspectives of others. Social cognition is one of the intelligence that integrates all the information from the environment such as social norms, access to get into the community and influence on others. Other information obtained from a person's cognitive factors such as knowledge, expectations and attitudes towards other people. The latest information that affects a person's perspective is the personality factors such as skills, training and selfefficacy.

Everyone had been developed in his life, including cognitive development. Cognitive development is the development of a way of thinking that helps children determine the response of a stimulus. Order, one can respond to something well then this cognitive development should be directed, and in the wake. Piaget said that cognitive development is a mental process that is continuous as a result of biological of maturation and experience the environment. А child develops an understanding of the world around them based knowledge acquisition, and if he found to not conformity between what they

know with the things they encounter, they will accommodate it into new knowledge. (<u>http://www.simplypsychology.org/piaget.ht</u><u>ml</u>).

Based on Piaget's opinion, it will be important if the cognitive development of a child acquire new knowledge that is positive that helps them understand the world and the surrounding environment. One way is through the development of cognitive therapy is therapy Superflex to mold a child to think about the social life. The study published by the Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorder indicates that social thinking method successfully teach the ability to interact socially in people who have social limitations. Social cognition is important to be lifelong and owned ranging from children to adults. Many smart people and have a high IQ but did not have the social skills of not being able to think of social (SocialThinking.com, 2011).

2.3. How to Teach Superflex[®]

The curriculum is designed to take the students through a progression of lessons which (Madrigal, 2008):

- a. Lessons 1-5: Explore and increase the student's understanding of flexible thinking and other related skills
- b. Lessons 6-9: Introduce the Unthinkable characters and explore the child's own social weaknesses
- c. Lessons 10-13: Students develop and utilize Superflexible strategies to "defeat" their own Team of Unthinkables.

The following image is an image of a learning lesson 2 on Dr. Superflex® and how to make the brain becomes superflexible



Source: (Madrigal, 2008)

The first way is teaching Superflex® to be a social detective. Being a social detective means that you use your eyes and ears along with what you know in your brains to figure out what is expected and even what may happen next (Coppola et al., 2011). The students learn how to identify facial expressions by identifying the clues in the picture to support their answer. They can't just say the person is scared. They have to use descriptive words such as eyes wide open, teeth clench, and eye brows up to support their answer. The children are learning to be detectives to solve facial expression crimes.

After understanding facial expressions, teaching the students to look at the picture and identify the body cues to help them determine how someone else feels. Looking for the meaning of body language. Teach the importance of listening to different tones of voices and how the tone of how something is said can impact how someone else interprets what is said. Give the students an opportunity to listen to different tones of voices and match the picture to a tone of voice. After recognizing the characteristics of a good attitude to be a social detective, then students can be introduced to Superflex[®]. Superflex[®] have a strategy to address the problem and facing the Unthinkables. The following table illustrates Superflex® strategies to solve the problem and defeat the Unthinkables.

Table 2 Superflex Strategies

Team of Unthinkables	Superflex [®] Strategies		
Rock Brain	1.	Notice that what you are doing is not working and try another way to solve the same problem.	
	2.		
	3.	Self-talk: "Not a problem, I will get to do this later or another time"	
	4.		

Team of Unthinkables	S	uperflex [®] Strategies
		is their plan?"
	1.	Turn your body and eyes away from what is distracting you and think about
Brain Eater	2.	the person talking. Use a fidget* so that it keeps your body busy but your brain focused on the
	3.	group. Try to notice when your brain is thinking about something else and get it to refocus on
Glassman	1.	the group Identify the size of the problem (1-10) and what would be an expected reaction to match the size of the
	2.	problem. Self-Talk: "I am starting to get mad. I need to move away and take a break." "This not a big deal."
ACC A	1.	Think about what you are going to say before you say it.
Mean Jean	2.	Self-talk: "Will this hurt my friend's feelings?" "How would I feel if someone said this to me?"
	3.	Keep the bragging, bossy, or hurtful thoughts in our brains
Destroyer of Fun	1.	Self-talk: "If I am a "Just Me" player, then my friends will not have a good time."
	2.	Self-Talk: "Tiny problem. I will still get a turn or may win another time."
Space Invader	1.	Use one-arm rule to determine if you are standing too close to someone.
3F	2.	Think about what your body looks like in the group.

Team of Unthinkables	Sı	uperflex [®] Strategies
and the	1.	Self-talk: "Is now a silly moment or a
Sil		serious moment?" If
Was Funny		a serious moment,
Once		then this is not a
		good time to crack a
		joke or say
		something that I
		think is funny.
	2.	Use the one-time-
	2	rule: only say word or joke once.
-TORDES	1.	When others are
In Pag		talking, use Whole
2000 V		Body Listening
Energy Hare-y		(keep your whole
	1	body quiet).
	2.	Check-in with your
		eyes and see how
		the rest of the group
		is acting. Try to match how calm the
		other kids are with
		their bodies.
	3.	Take a few deep
	5.	breaths to calm
		your body.
(19)	1.	Think about how the
2-3		person is treating
		you. Are they being
Grump		friendly or mean to
Grumpaniny		you? If this person
		is friendly to me
		then they are not
		being mean to me
		and I need to be
		nice back.
	2.	Self talk: "I am being
		negative. What
		could be another
		way to think about it?"
000	1.	Open your friend-file
and		and think about
		what you know
	9	about the person.
One-Sided		Ask questions to
Sid		find out more about
		that person and
		their experiences or
		interests.
	2.	Think with your eyes
		to figure out what
		the person's plan is.
		If the person looks
		busy, save your
		question for another
	-	time.
	2	Look for clubs that

 Look for clues that others are not interested.

Team of Unthinkables		uperflex [®] Strategies
ARS CARS	1.	Check-in with those
Tues		around you. Does it
Topic Twister		look like they are
Meister		interested in what
		you are saying? If
		not, ask a question
		about what they
		might want to talk about.
	2.	Turn off your "Me"
	۷.	button and try to
		think only about
		other person by
		asking that person
_		questions
	<u>n</u> 1.	Close eyes, take a
	y	deep breath, and let
JL		it out slowly.
Worry Wall		Continue to do this
		until the body feels relaxed.
	2.	Think of something
	2.	you like to help get
		focused.
	3.	Self-talk: "I can think
		of something else."
A DAX	1.	Use your eyes to
CH B		think about where
Body		your group is or who
Snatcher		is talking to you, and
	2.	find the group Self-talk: "Where
	۷.	should my body
		be?"
	3.	Point your shoulders
		to the group.
	1.	Look at the person
C		who is talking to let
* 3 (him know that you
Un-Wonder		are thinking about
		him and what he is
	2.	saying.
	۷.	Listen to the topic and then ask a
		"social wonder"
		question of your
		friend.
	3.	Remember the "Wh-
		" question words
		and use them to
		think of questions for
		your friends.

Source: (Madrigal & Winner, Superflex: A Superhero Social Thinking Curriculum, 2008).

3. Results Accomplished

Previous studies on the importance of learning and social cognition Superflex® leading to social skills has been done by

previous researchers, the following is a summary of some previous studies:

Result

Superhero movie

influence in social

problem solving in

children. In this

case the process

of identification of

children is not only

focused on the

fascinate children

such as the ability

character, but the

matters such as

elementary school

strongly influenced by the behavior of

the model, or in

children learn from

Thinking skills and

that

of

focused

essential

shows

words

process

skills

and

the

cognitive

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of

on

by

and

а

(2008).

produce

nature and

things

superhero

protagonist

identification

children

behavior.

Research

on

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the

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social

test

social

training

curriculum

developed

Madrigal Superflex®

Winner

experienced

the

based

learners

intelligent

comprehensive.

Learners can learn

to solve problems

in themselves and

their environment

and can interact

with other people.

This study aims to

The behavior of

significant change

in the ability to

respondents

effectiveness

Researchers

and Year

Harvanto

No

1

2

3

Huriah

(2009)

Rachmah

Kelly Elizabeth

Baker (2011)

Adi

(2004)

No	Researcher and Year	s Result
		think and act flexibly in the face of the social situation after participating in a 10-week training.
4		Through social an learning cycle hu Superflex® not only run for specific groups and isolated but also part of the population can be a social thinker. It also Superflex® can integrate
		social approach that can help all learners so that learners more fun in the learning
5	Cathy Thom dan Sc Graham (201	process. as Superflex® ott learning can help
		(Social Awareness) so that learners are able to take a particular point of view on an issue
		and empathy for others; recognizes and mengahargai individuals as well as the similarities and differences
		within the group; and is able to identify the function of the family, school and
6	Pamela Croc dan Miche	community. ke Superflex® lle become one of the
	Garcia Winr (2015)	ner popular models of learning and help individuals become social thinkers and social problem solvers.
	~ • •	

4. Conclusion

Social skills is one of the skills that a person must possess in order to be able to socialize properly in accordance with the time, context and culture faced. Social skills is the ability to interact with others in a social context in specific ways that can be accepted by the environment and at the same time can benefit individuals, or is mutually beneficial or benefit others. Social thinking is required as part of social skills. Without social thinking then one would not have social skills. Superflex® can be studied with the find strategies that work for you and your child. These are not new kinds of strategies but they give you a way to address issues that come up. Use an incentive system to defeat the Unthinkable and always share your strategies

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