

HELPING YOUR CHILD EXPERIENCE SOCIAL SUCCESS

‘We will do, and (then) we will hear.’

(Exodus 24:3-7)

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Assessment *before* Management

“Accurate description leads to effective prescription.”

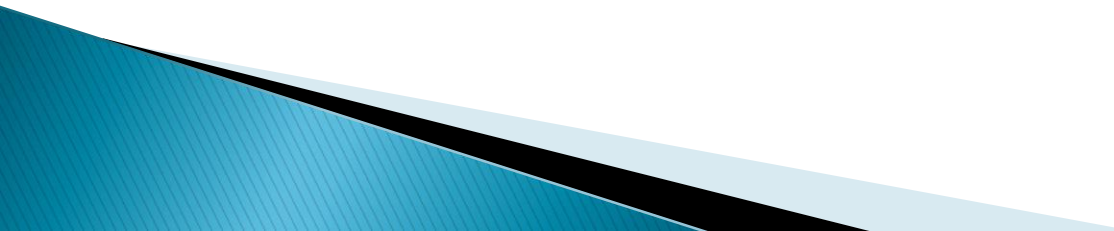
-Mel Levine



When social difficulty is *secondary* (caused by other “stuff”)

- Difficult temperament/ behavioral style
- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
- Executive Dysfunctions
- Verbal Language Learning Disabilities
- Mood Disorders:
 - Anxiety, generalized, performance, social
 - Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder
 - Depression, Bipolar Illness, Severe Mood Dysregulation

Other secondary causes of social difficulty

- Un-even sensory profile
 - Fine and gross motor weaknesses
 - Involuntary movement disorders (tics, Tourette's)
 - Environmental disadvantage
 - deprivation or adversity
 - lack of positive social role models, social teaching, social experience
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Primary causes of social difficulty

(Disorders of the “social brain”)

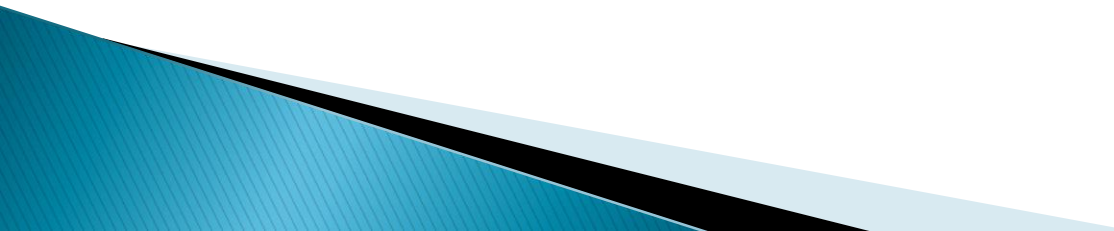
- Dyssemia/ Social Pragmatic Disorder/ Social Communication Disorder
- Non-verbal Learning Disability
- Personality disorders
 - psychopaths, sociopaths, narcissists, paranoids
- Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD)
 - Kanner-type thru Asperger-type

Overall strategy

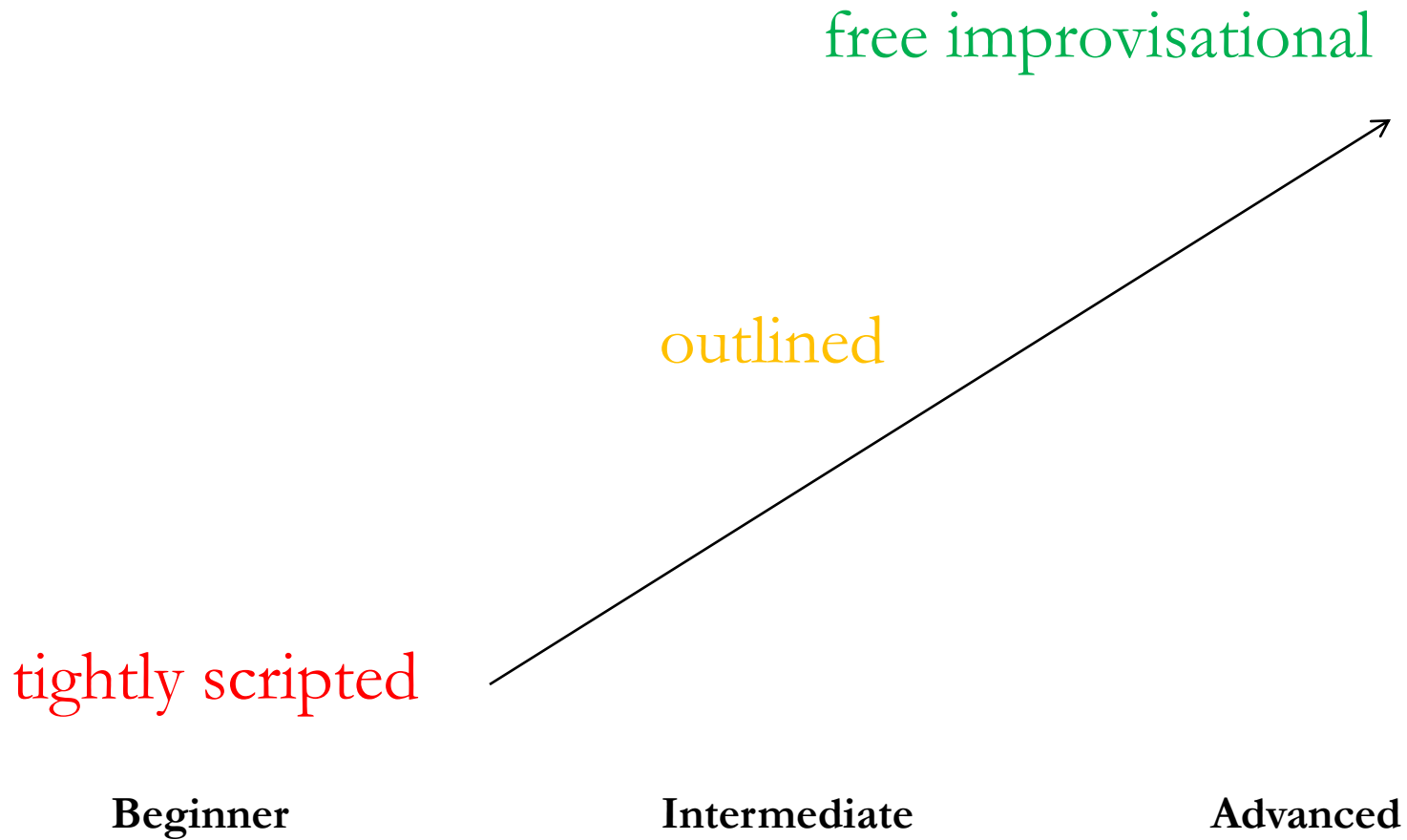
Developmental, natural, experiential, individualized

- Address all causes, primary and secondary
- Meet each child at his or her developmental level
 - Where (s)he's at
 - Not where you think (s)he should be
- Ensure success at current developmental level
- Set short-term goals: “Where s/he's at + 1”
- Positive reinforcement
- Gradually fade support and space positive reinforcement to promote independence

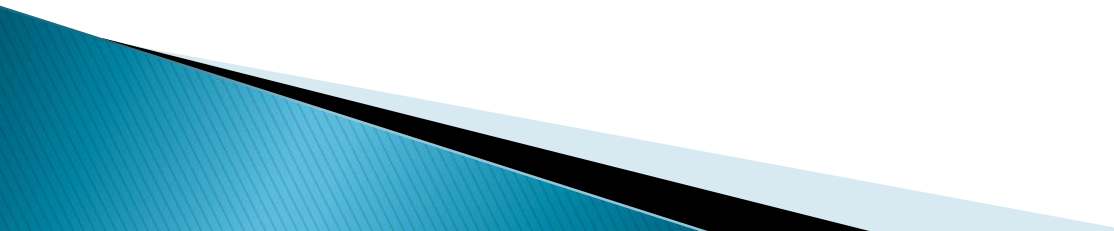
Functional assessment of social development

- Structure (Dependence)
 - Familiarity
 - Competence/ Interest
 - Play skills
 - Partner
 - Group size
 - Time
 - Warm-up time
 - Sharing
 - Social awareness
 - Social skill
 - Flexibility
 - EQ
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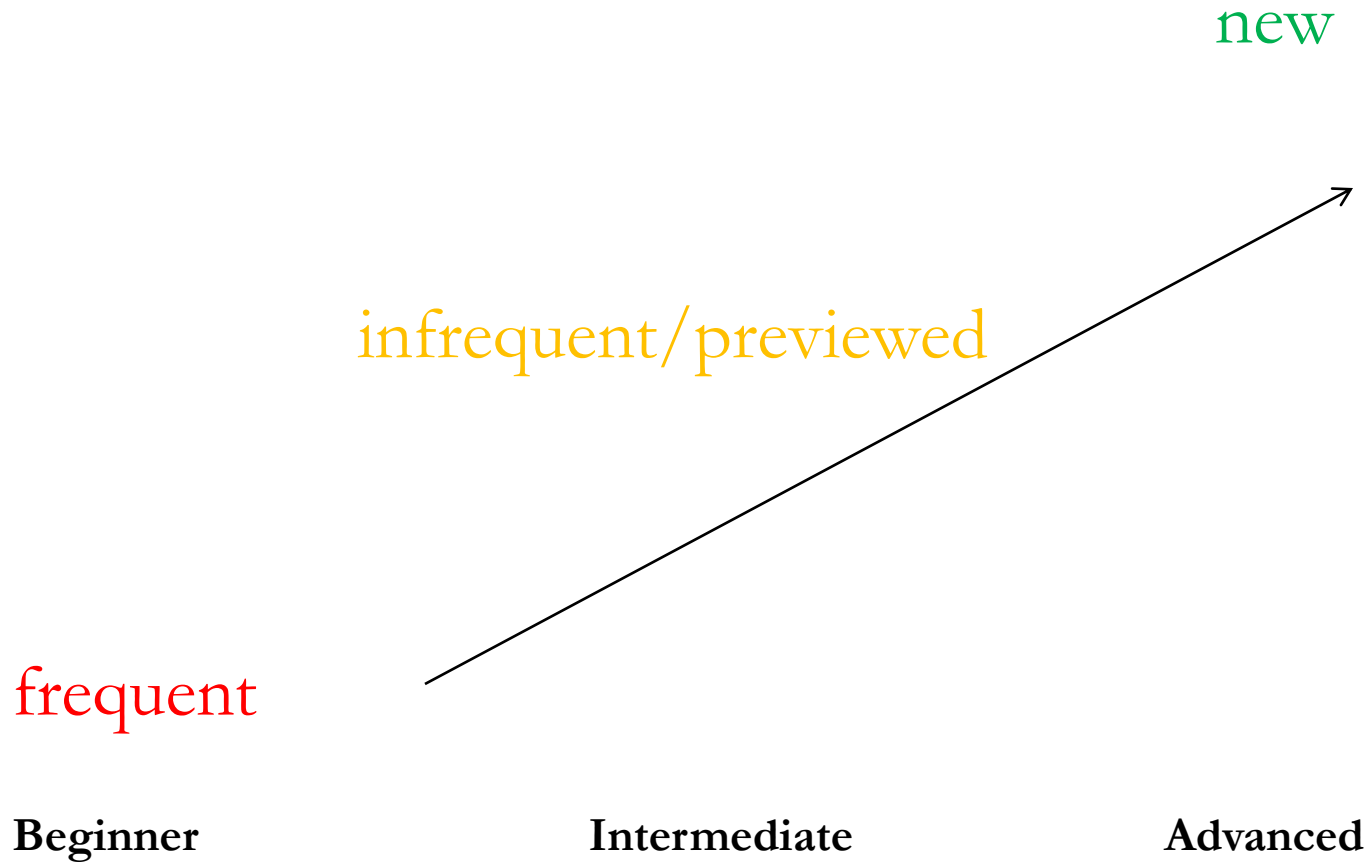
STRUCTURE (DEPENDENCE)



Provide sufficient structure and supervision

- Unstructured time should be structured up
 - Direct social coaching and facilitation is sometimes necessary
 - Adults should gradually fade support to foster social independence
 - *Caution:* Do not fade too quickly; do not leave a child unsupported because he or she is “older”
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FAMILIARITY



Familiarity



- Limit novelty
- Preview/rehearse

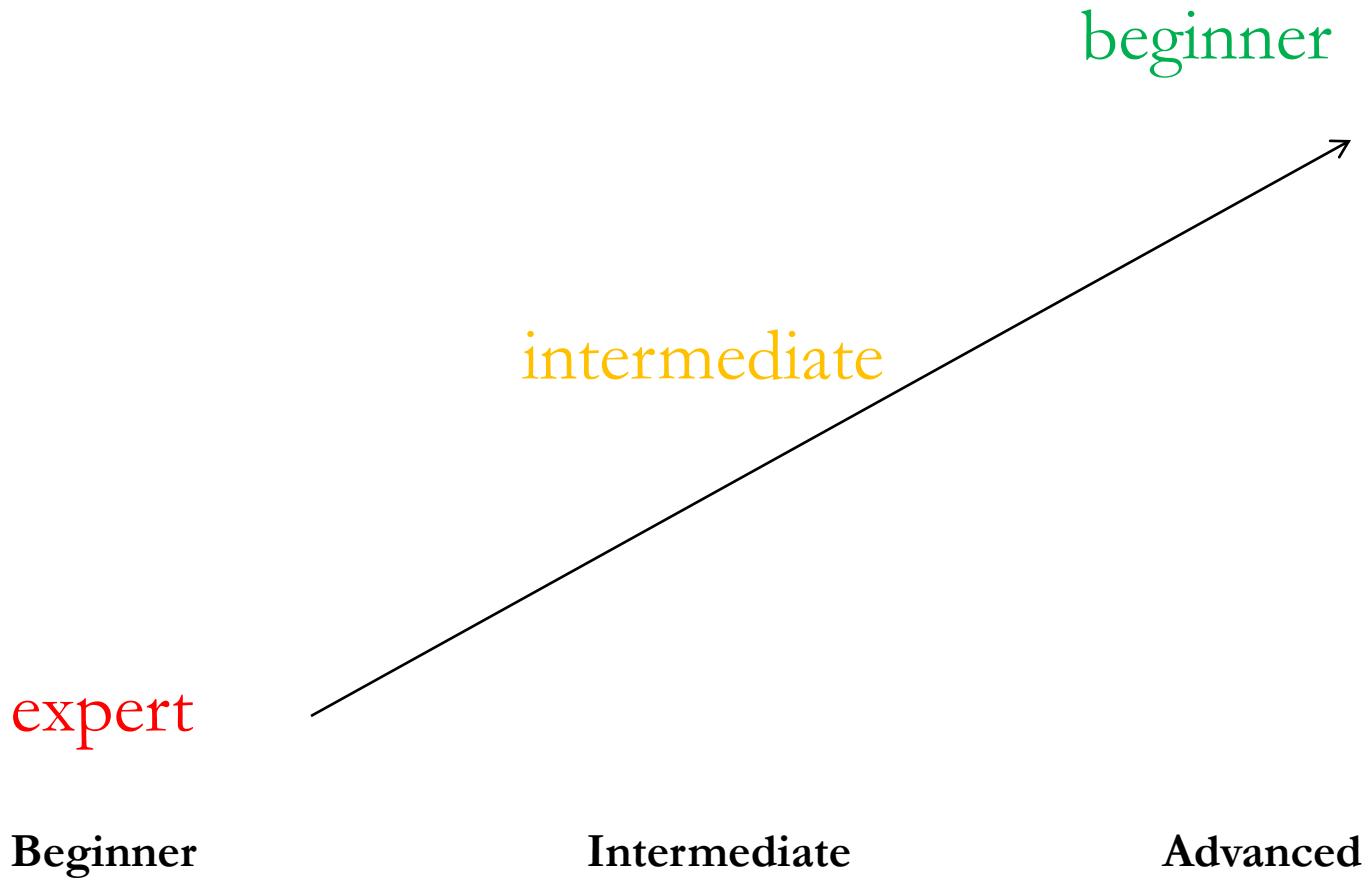
Limit novelty

- Social success derailed by
 - “experiencing new things”
 - anxiety, sensory overload
- Comfort zone expanded by
 - old familiar activities in old familiar settings
 - deliberate, incremental exposure to “new”

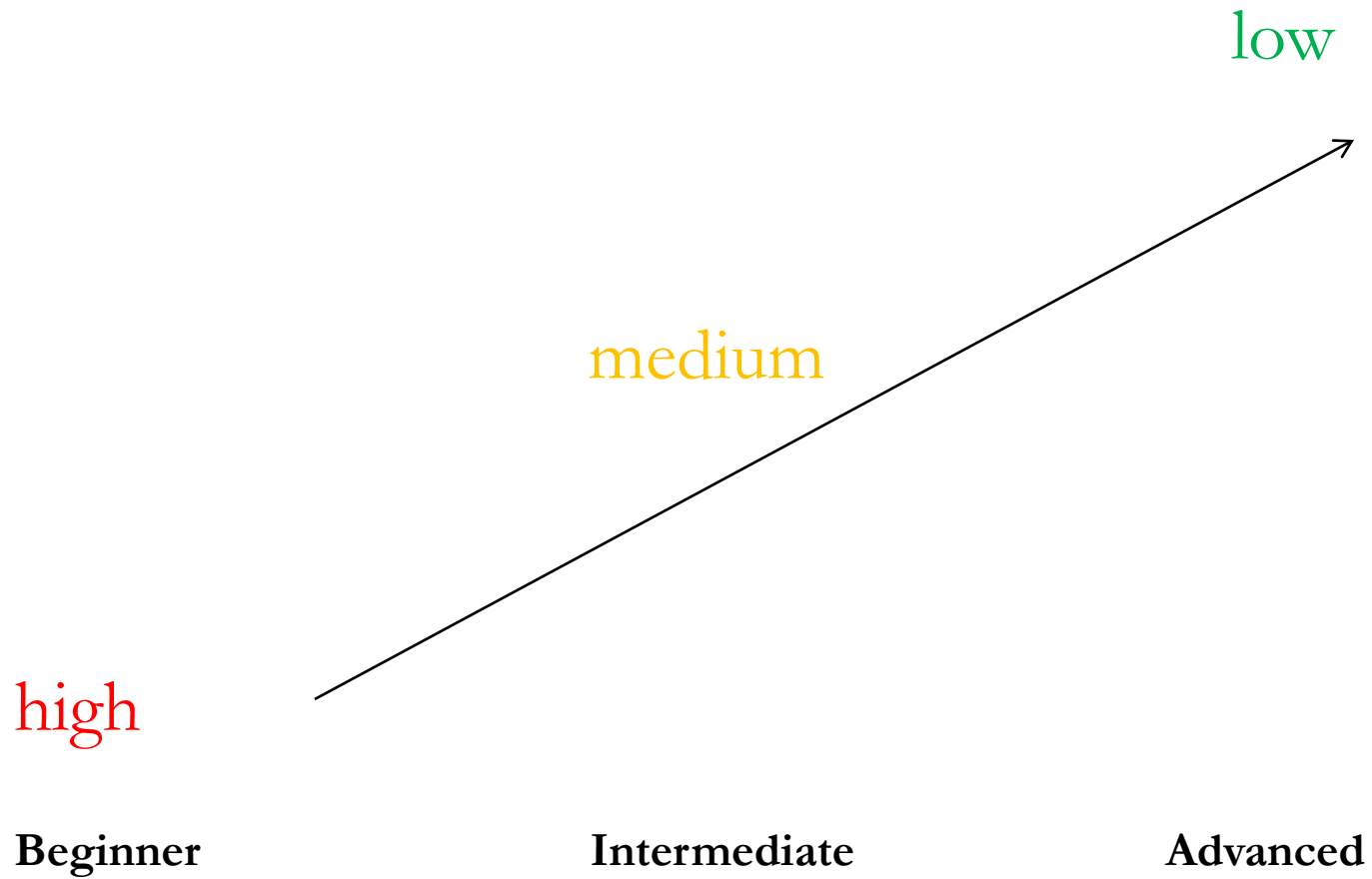
Preview/rehearse

- Visual schedule
 - Social calendar
 - Social stories
 - Cartoon conversations
 - Social scripts
 - Rule review
 - Guided practice
 - Role-plays
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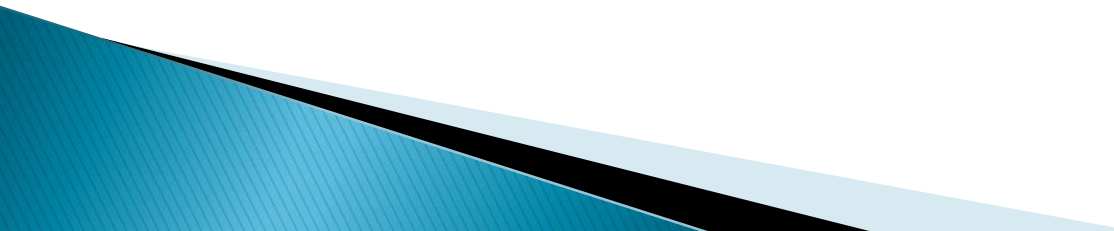
COMPETENCE



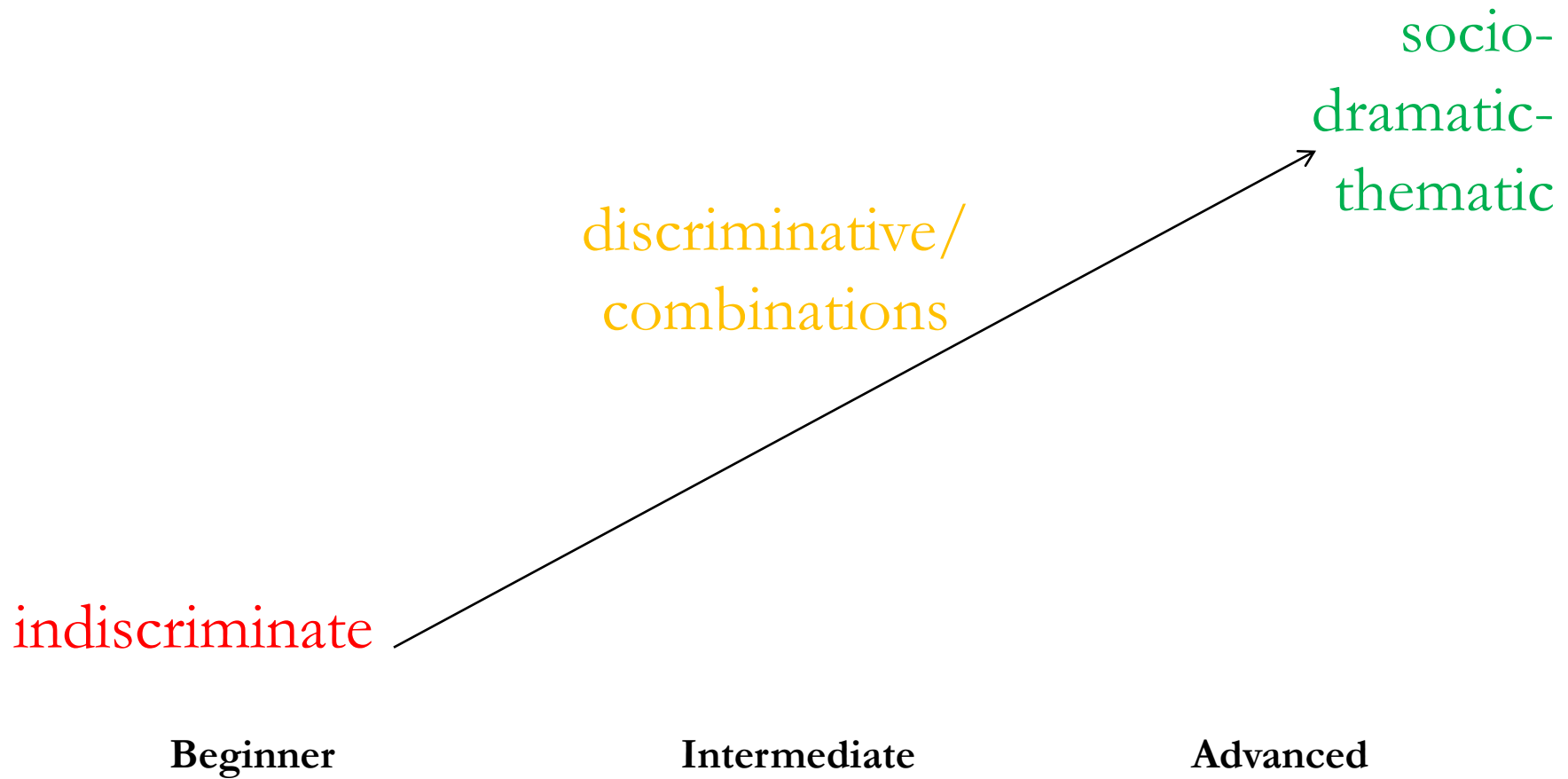
INTEREST



Select activities in areas of competence and interest

- Social success is more likely in areas of strength
 - Shared interests lead to good relationships
 - Follow your child's bliss
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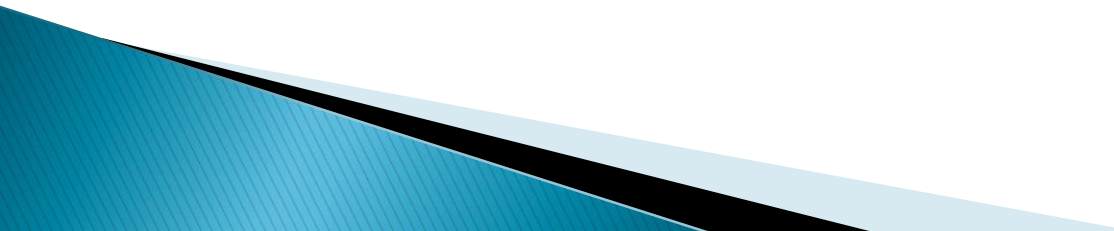
PLAY SKILLS *(Lifter)*



Lifter et. al. (1993)

- ▶ Teaching Play Activities To Preschool Children With Disabilities: The Importance Of Developmental Considerations

Journal of Early Intervention 17, 139–159.

- ▶ Provide developmentally appropriate play opportunities
 - ▶ Teach up to the next level
- 

Level I

▶ Indiscriminate Play

- Actions when all objects are treated alike
- Such as, waving, mouthing, banging, feeling, throwing

Level II

- ▶ **Discriminative Play**
 - Interacting with an object in a manner consistent with the properties of that object
 - Such as, pushing a car, squeezing a stuffed animal, pushing buttons on a pop-up

- ▶ **Take Apart Combinations**
 - Separating the configuration of objects
 - Such as, taking all of the pieces out of a puzzle

Level III

- ▶ **Presentation Combinations**
 - Child recreates combinations of objects according to their presentation configuration
 - Such as, putting pieces back into a puzzle
- ▶ **General Combinations**
 - Use objects based on global properties that are shared by many different objects
 - Such as, using an item as a container (nesting cup, bed of dump truck) to hold a variety of objects (blocks, toy cars)
- ▶ **Pretend Self**
 - Relating an object to self with a pretend quality
 - Such as, bringing an empty cup to one's mouth to "drink"

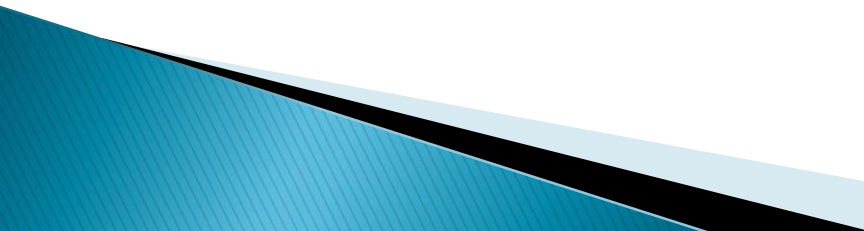
Level IV

- ▶ Specific Combinations (physical attributes)
 - Preserve the distinct and unique physical characteristics of objects in constructed configurations
 - Such as, stacking blocks, stringing beads, rolling a car down a ramp

Level V

- ▶ Child as Agent
 - Using a replica of a person or an animal along with a prop to complete an act
 - Such as, giving a doll a drink with a cup , feeding an animal with a spoon
- ▶ Specific Combinations (conventional attributes)
 - Preserve the unique physical conventional characteristics of objects in configuration with another
 - Such as, placing a cup on a saucer

Level VI

- ▶ **Single Scheme Sequences**
 - Extension of familiar actions to two or more objects
 - Such as, feeding self with a spoon then feeding a doll, then a stuffed animal, etc.
 - ▶ **Substitutions**
 - Use one object to stand in the place of another
 - Such as, using a bowl as a hat
 - ▶ **Substitutions without Object**
 - Pretending to use something that is not there
 - Such as, shaking an imaginary salt shaker, drinking from an imaginary cup
- 

Level VII

▶ Doll as Agent

- Manipulate doll figures as if they are capable of action
- Such as, moving figures as though they are walking, having a doll hold a mirror as if to see itself

▶ Multi-scheme Sequences

- Extend different actions on the same figure
- Such as, feed doll with spoon, wipe it with cloth, put it to bed

Level VIII

- ▶ **Socio-dramatic Play**
 - Adopt various familiar roles in play themes
 - Such as, playhouse; assign role of baby, child, parent, pet, friend

- ▶ **Thematic Fantasy Play**
 - Adopt various fantasy characters
 - Such as, superman

PARTNER

peers/diversity

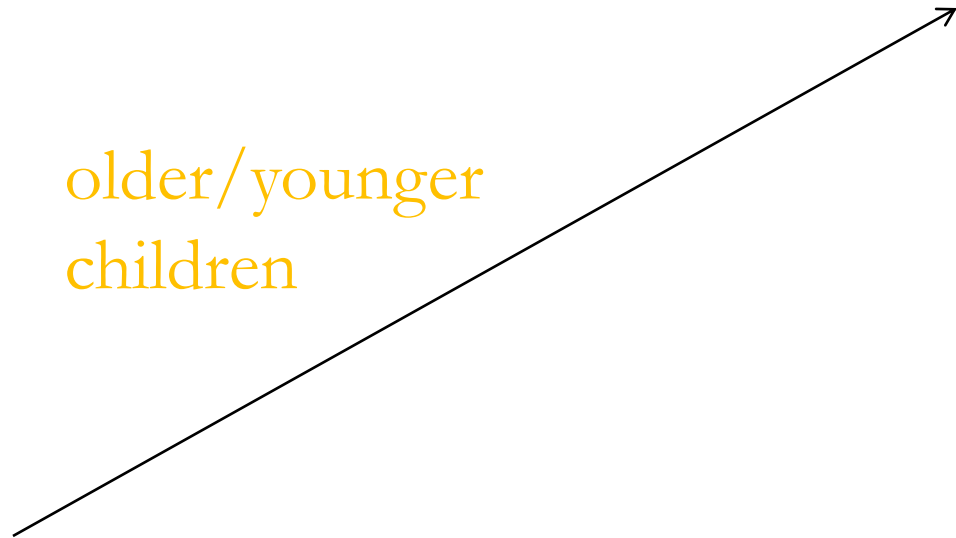
older/younger
children

parent/sibling

Beginner

Intermediate

Advanced



Choose partners

- Older or younger children may be easier
- Sometimes boys do better with girls, girls with boys
- “What do you want to do?” before, “Who do you want to play with?”
- Match favorite activities to specific friends

GROUP SIZE

solo

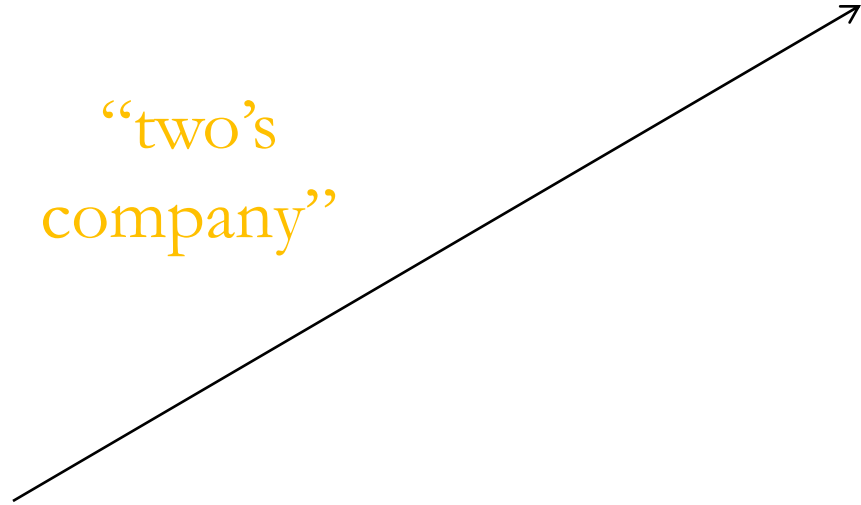
“two’s
company”

larger

Beginner

Intermediate

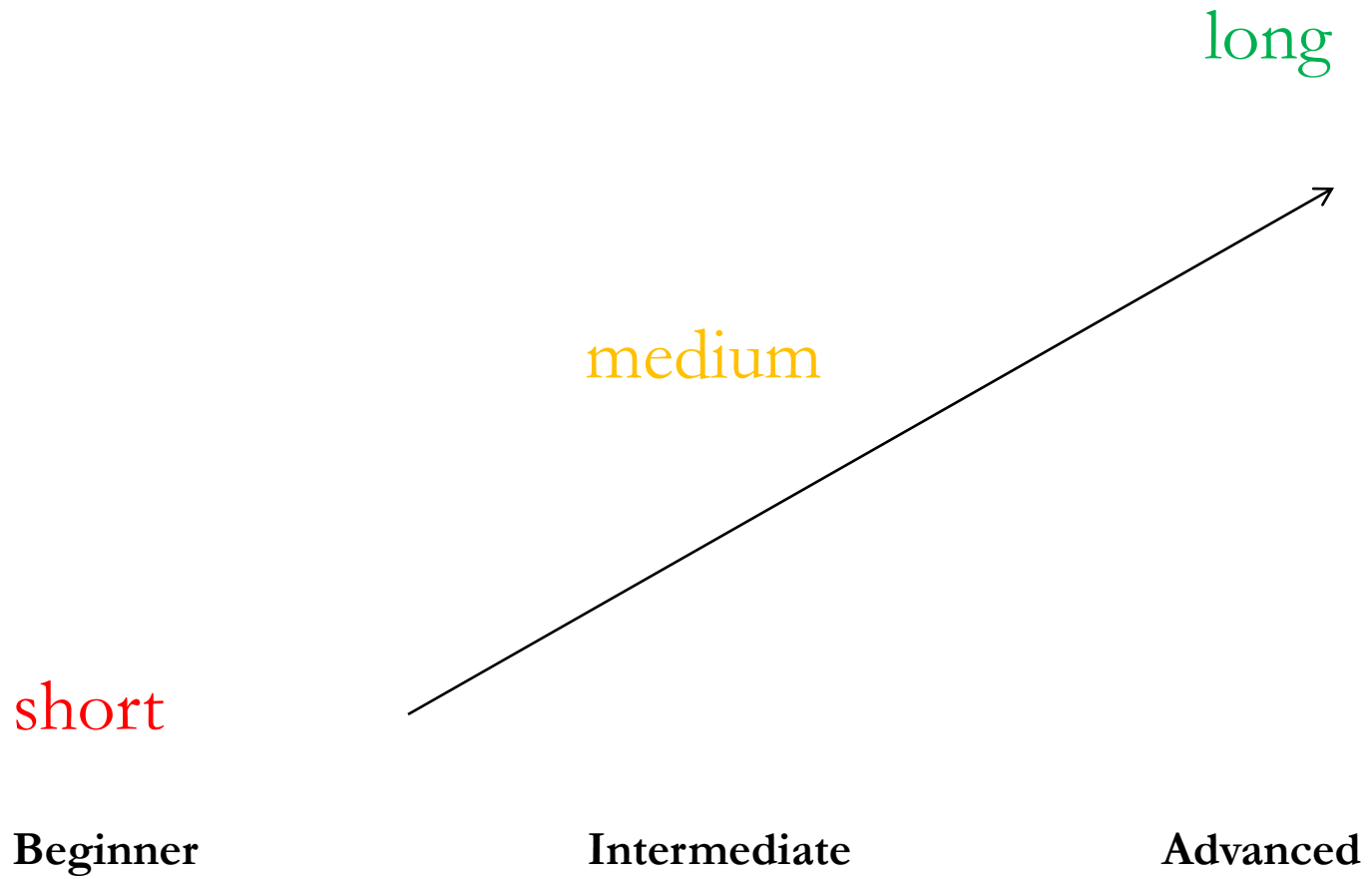
Advanced



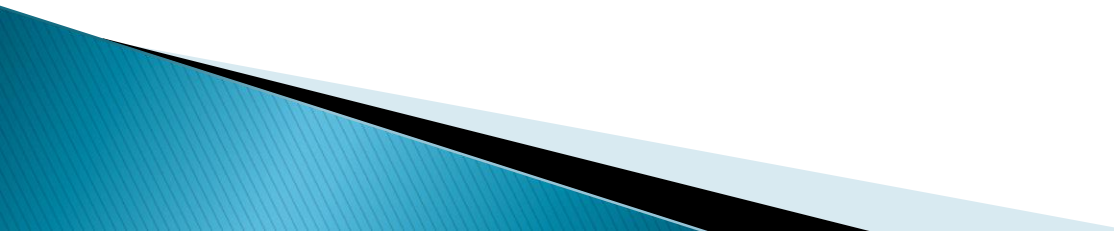
Limit group size

- Social stress can increase with the number of play partners
- Success 1-on-1 comes before success 1-on-2, etc.

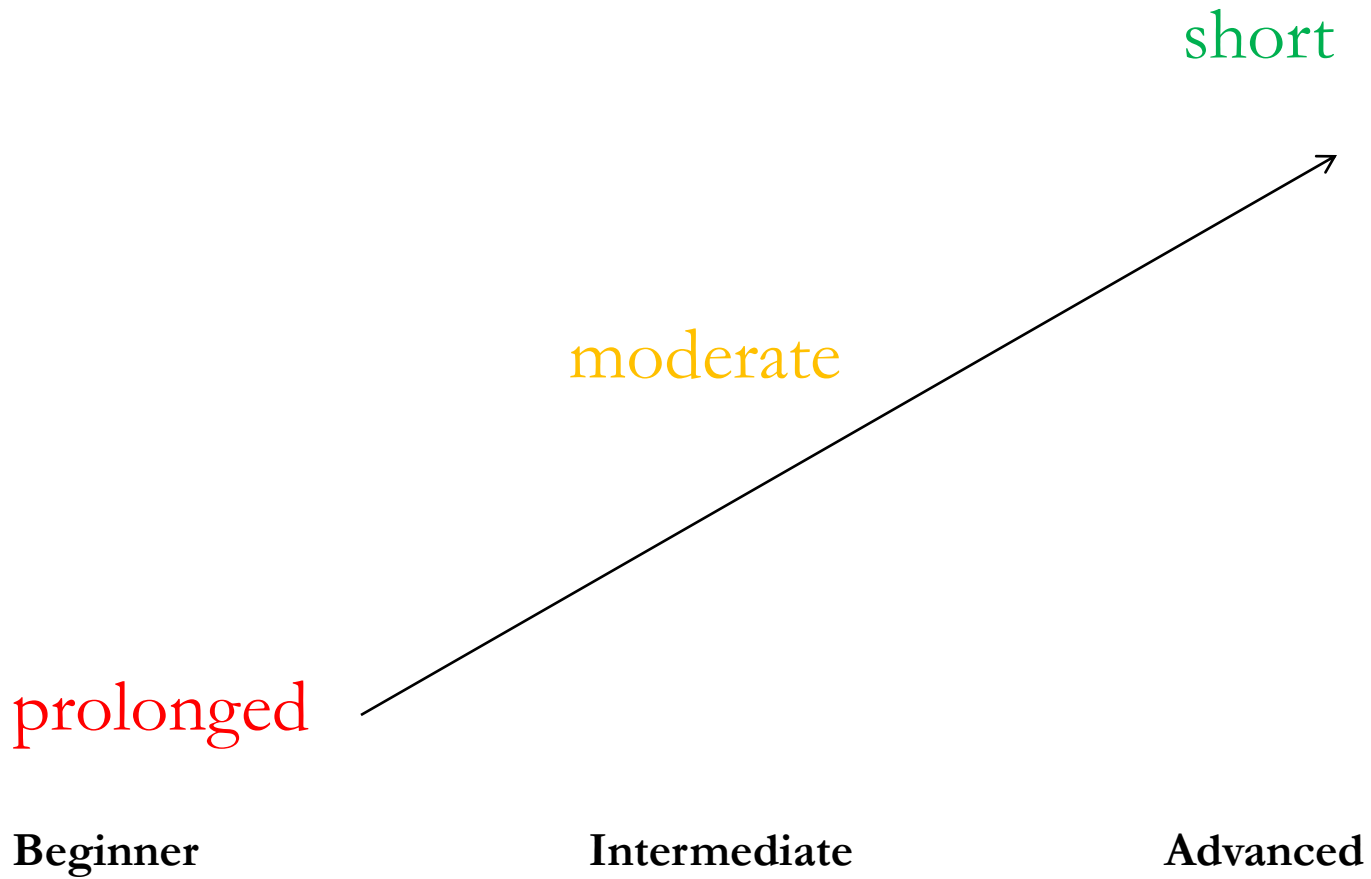
TIME



Limit time

- Stop before misunderstandings, conflicts or boredom
 - Know how long your child usually lasts, plan to end 15 minutes earlier
 - “Thanks for coming, thanks for going”
- 

WARM-UP TIME



Prolong warm-up

- *For those who are slow to warm-up*
 - “One toe in the pool at a time”
 - Warm-up can range from minutes, to hours, to days, to weeks, to months
 - Gradual, gentle coaxing
- *Warning for “just jump in the deep end”-types*
 - Consider shortening warm-up for these children and parents
 - Don’t prolong torturous transitions

SHARING

attention

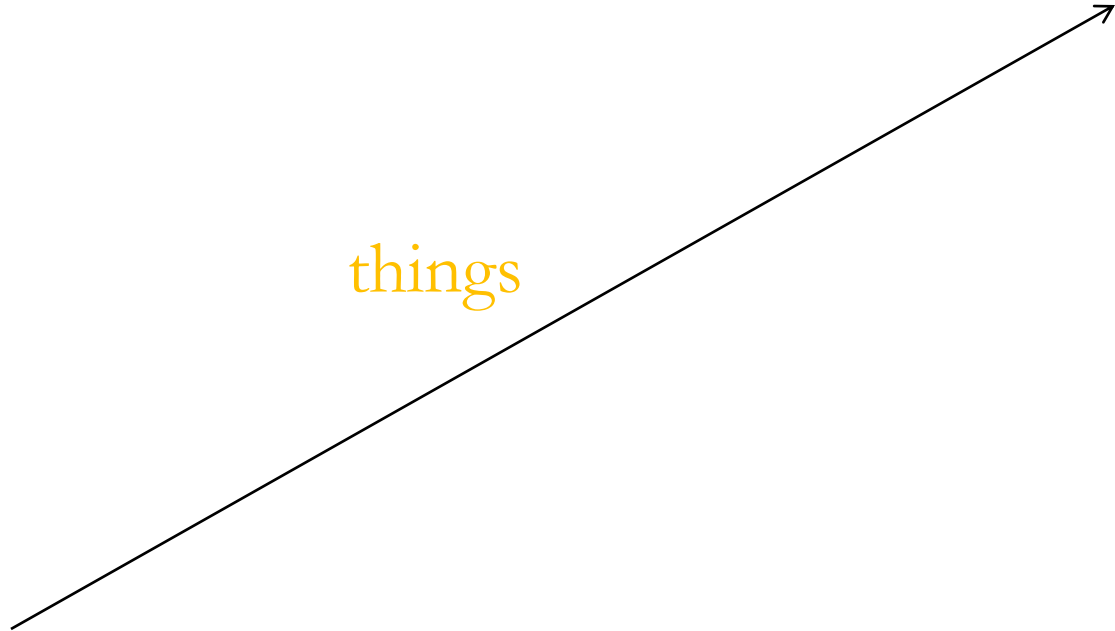
things

thoughts and
feelings

Beginner

Intermediate

Advanced



Teach sharing

- Prompt to share engagement (joint attention)
- Playful obstruction to share things
- Visual communication (e.g. cartoon conversations) to share thoughts and feelings

SOCIAL AWARENESS

(From I-It to I-Thou)

egocentricity

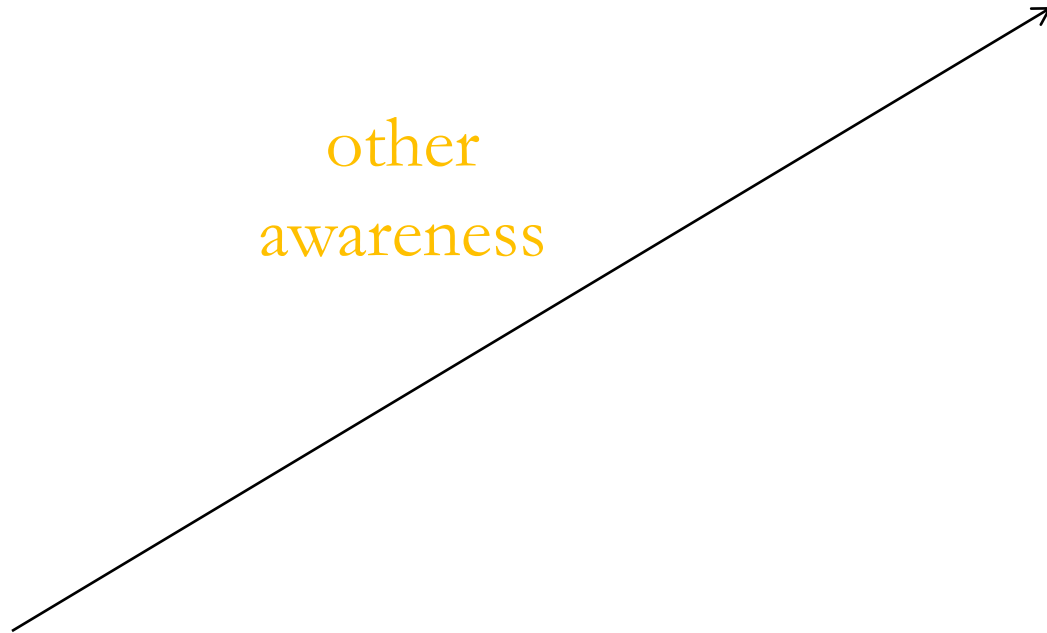
other
awareness

reciprocity

Beginner

Intermediate

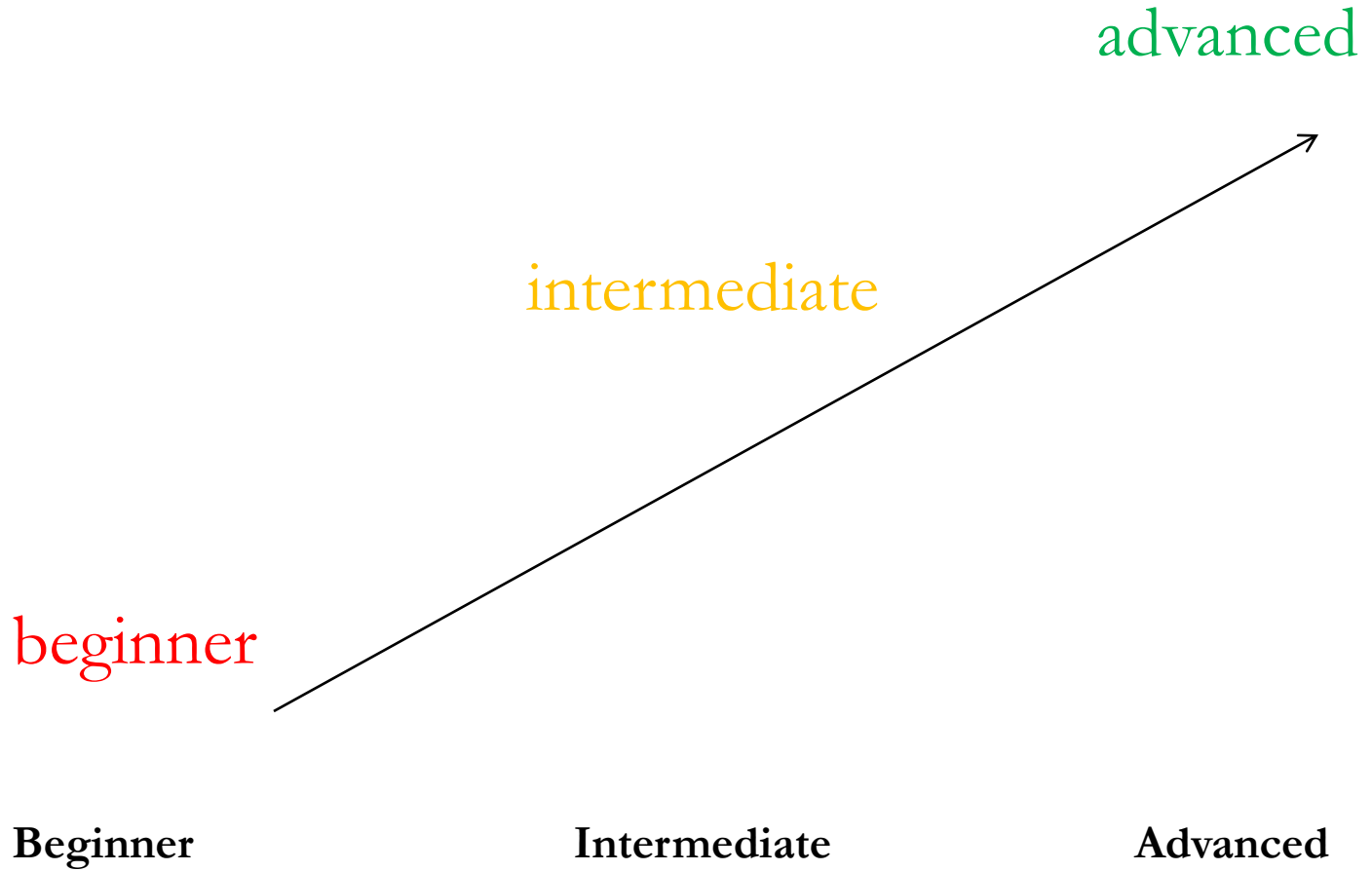
Advanced



Teach social awareness

- Teach mind-reading
- Teach active listening
- Teach receptive non-verbal language

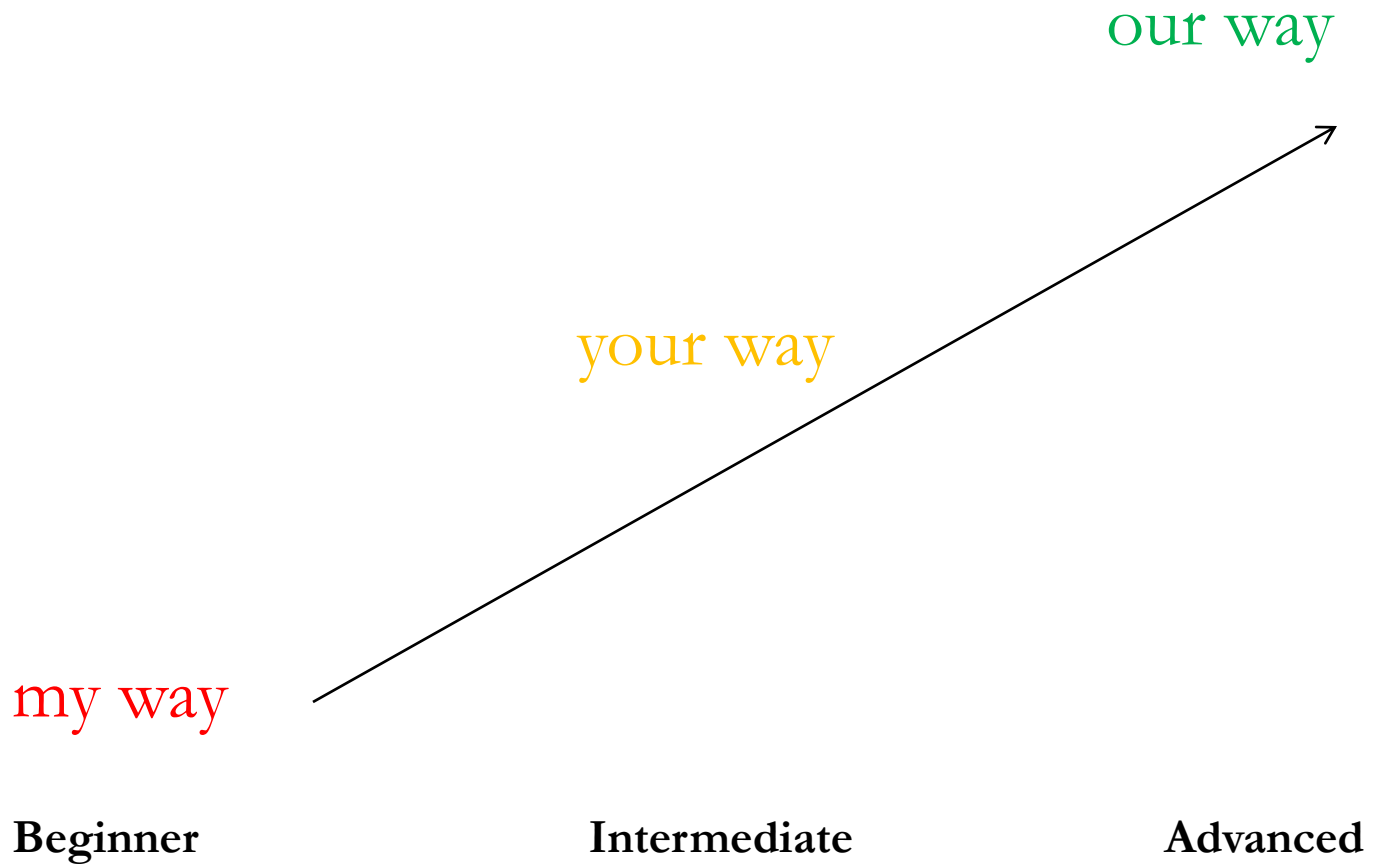
SOCIAL SKILLS



Teach social skills

- Some children need explicit teaching and supervised practice
 - Social norms and rules
 - Sharing, collaborating, turn-taking, entering and leaving a group
 - Social problem solving; compromise and reconciliation
 - Expressive non-verbal language (signaling)
 - Prosody/ tone of voice, interpersonal space, grooming, facial expression, body language, sarcasm, etc.

FLEXIBILITY



Flexibility training*

- Explicitly teach flexibility as a concept
 - Spaghetti noodle (raw/ cooked)
 - There is no such thing as a perfect friend
 - Expectations can not always be met
 - “Go with the flow” for the sake of the relationship
- Demonstrate and point out examples of flexibility (real-life, TV, books)
- Praise and, if necessary, reward flexibility

* Kenworthy, Anthony, Werner, Unstuck and On-Target

EQ

black and
white

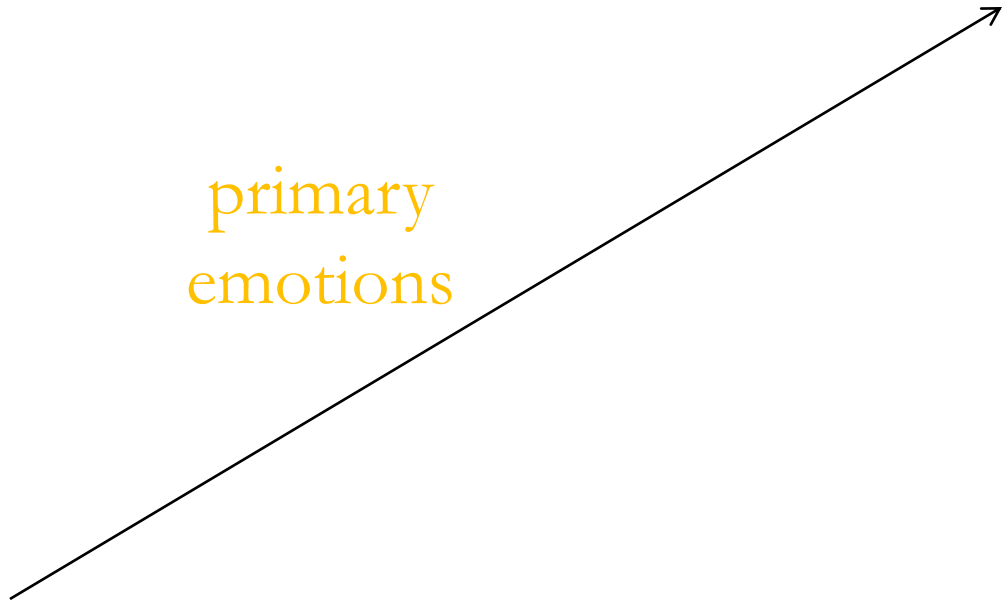
primary
emotions

multiple
shades

Beginner

Intermediate

Advanced



EQ development

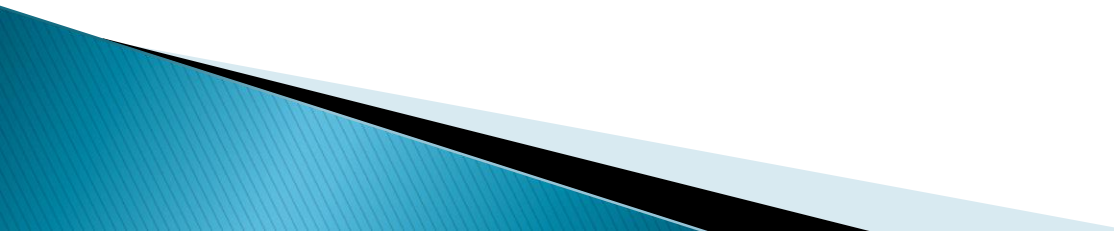
- Teach *fundamental* emotions (happy, sad, angry, and scared) and gradations (big deal, little deal, no problem; red, yellow and green)
- Then teach *subtleties* (confused, embarrassed, jealous, disbelieving, remorseful, grateful, annoyed, frustrated) and degrees (multiple shades of gray, 0-10)
- Move from “mean” or “nice” to understanding the full, ever-changing array of personalities
- Nuanced emotional understanding leads to greater tolerance of social demands and mature coping strategies

Temple Grandin:

Different kinds of friendships

- *“You neurotypicals and your relationships!”*
- *Work and the good life.*

Specific considerations

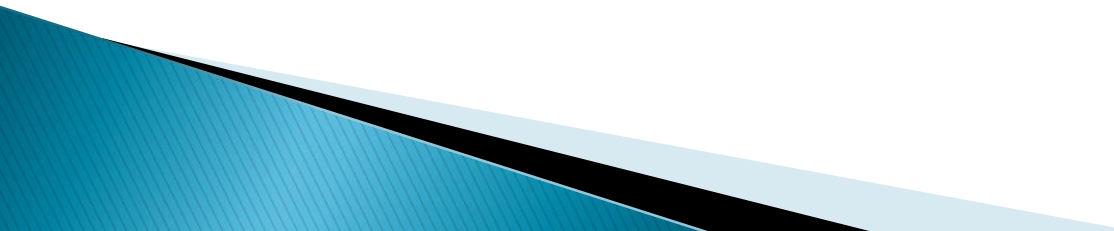
- The Social Development School
 - Complementary social learning
 - Social skills groups
 - Bullying/ teasing
 - Social life begins at home
 - Helping others
- 

The Social Development School

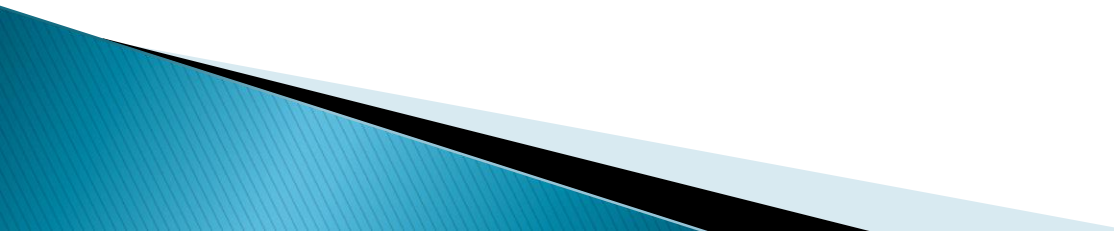
- Social problem solving
- Social engineering
- Social situations management
- Social responsibility
- Special social education
 - Social impairment causes learning impairment
 - 504 Plans or IEPs should include specific social goals and strategies
 - Peer mentoring

Complementary social learning

Supplements to real-life experience

- Dolls and toy figures
 - Books: fiction, poetry, biography, history
 - Pets
 - Screen time (with parental supervision!)
 - E-friends
- 

Social skills groups

- Therapeutic peer groups
 - Individual psychosocial therapy
 - Mainstream/inclusion social groups
 - Clubs/classes/activities in shared interests
 - Drama classes/theatre
 - Sports
- 

Bullying/ teasing

- Take it seriously
 - Anxiety/ depression/ suicide
 - Columbine and Virginia Tech
- Map of safe zones/ high-risk zones
- Specific plans for dealing with both bully and victim

Social life begins at home

- Adult role models: parents, grandparents, and teachers
- Siblings have different profiles/ needs
- The case against sibling conflict
 - preventing harm
- The case for sibling conflict
 - learning from experience

Helping others

- Volunteer, teach, coach, mentor, baby-sit
- Pair with classmates or younger students
- Group volunteering (double dose of meaningful social connection)

Temple Grandin:

Different kinds of friendships

- *“You neurotypicals and your relationships!”*
- *Work and the good life.*

Resources

- Attwood, The Complete Guide to Asperger Syndrome
 - Brazelton, “The Case for Sibling Rivalry” in The Birth of the Family
 - Baron-Cohen, Teaching Mind-Reading to Children
 - Faber and Mazlish, Siblings without Rivalry
 - Goleman, Social Intelligence
 - Greenspan, Playground Politics
 - LaVoie, t’s So Much Work Being Your Friend
 - Nowicki and Duke, Teach Your Child the Language of Social Success
 - Winner, Thinking About You, Thinking About Me
 - Gutstein and Sheely, Relationship Development Intervention
 - Jeanette Navigating the Social World
 - Jed Baker, Social Skills Training, The Social Skills Picture Book
 - Bellini, Building Social Relationships
- 