The Next Generation of Social Stories™

Carol Gray
The Next Generation of Social Stories™:
• History & definition
• New Focus on Social Context
• Implications for Future Social Stories
A Social Story/Social Article accurately describes a situation, skill, or concept according to 10 defining criteria. These criteria guide Story/Article development to ensure an overall patient and supportive quality, and a format, “voice”, and relevant content that is descriptive, meaningful, and physically, socially, and emotionally safe for the Audience.
Grassroots acceptance and enthusiasm for Social Stories™ preceded formal research (Example: Rowe, 1999)

In 2010, The National Autism Center lists “story-based intervention package” (with Social Stories™ identified as the most well-known) as one of eleven established treatments for children on the autism spectrum (National Autism Center, 2010).
“Social Stories™ represent one of the most popular intervention strategies to remediate the core deficits of ASD (Hess, Morrimer, Heflin, & Ivey, 2008; Reynhout & Carter, 2009.”
“Indeed, the increasing popularity of Social Stories may be explained not only by effects they can have on the audience but also the effects they can have on the authors (Ali & Fredrickson, 2006).”

The Philosophy Since 1991

Abandon all assumptions.

…the social impairment in autism is shared.

Two *equally valid* but different perspectives…
1. Yours
2. The person with autism
The Next Generation of Social Stories™:
- History & definition
- New Focus on Social Context
- Implications for Future Social Stories
A ‘Game Changer’:

Autism as Context Blindness
by Peter Vermeulen, PhD

“Context is essential for making sense of the world around us.”

Social Factors & Social Rules

“...probably number in the billions – a staggering thought for anyone, an inconceivable image for a person who has any level of impairment in social understanding”

- Temple Grandin & Sean Barron

You’re leaving on a trip. At the airport, you notice two hangers in an unusual place.
You’re thinking…. “I could use two hangers on my trip.” What do you think? Is it OK if you take these?
Consider this…

There’s a piece of broccoli stuck between her teeth. Will you tell her? Answer “yes” or “no” to the following:
a. She’s sitting at another table, you do not know her and she does not know you.______

b. You met her 5 minutes ago and you’re in a group of six people who do not know one another well. ______
c. Same as (b), but all of the other members of the group have exited to visit the restroom.

d. She’s your life partner or best friend.
“People with autism have a keen eye for details, but not for all details. They excel in details for which context does not play a role.”

Dr. Nancy Minshew

unpublished
Social

“1. of or having to do with human beings, etc. in their living together.”

Context

“1. the parts just before and after a passage, that determine its meaning...”

Context

“1. the parts just before and after a passage, that determine its meaning..., 2. the whole background or environment, as of an event”

Context

“1. the parts just before and after a passage, that determine its meaning..., 2. the whole background or environment, as of an event”

Social Context (C. Gray)

People plus any place, purpose, predicament, endeavor, and/or event.
Social Context (C. Gray)

1) People plus any place, purpose, predicament, endeavor, and/or event; 2) the dynamic meaning derived from the simultaneous consideration of social cues at any point in time.
1. Place
2. People
3. Person
4. Purpose & Predicament
5. Past, Present, and Future
6. Pragmatics / Communication

Six Social Context Elements
Social Context

1. Place
2. People
3. Person
4. Purpose & Predicament
5. Past, Present, & Future
6. Pragmatics / Communication
External & Internal Context

Quotes from Vermeulen, 2012, p.31

• External: “…the physical & social environment of the target stimulus…”

  *Example: The words surrounding ‘keeper’ in the sentence, “She’s a keeper, all right!”*

• Internal: “…The context in our brain: our ideas, knowledge, experiences, feelings, and so on, stored in our long-term memory.”
1. Place
2. People
3. Person
4. Purpose & Predicament
5. Past, Present, and Future
6. Pragmatics / Communication

Name

External

Internal
Immediate vs. Broad Context
The Next Generation of Social Stories™:
• History & definition
• New Focus on Social Context
• Five Implications for Future Social Stories & Comic Strip Conversations
“Pushing the Context Button”

Quote from Vermeulen, 2012, p.361

We cannot teach people with autism the “real” way to reach context sensitivity; that is, spontaneous, fast, and sub-conscious context sensitivity, but we can offer them a side door to getting there. - Peter Vermeulen
Social Stories & CSC: Context Compensation Strategies

You cannot teach a blind man to read a book like everyone else does, but you can teach him Braille so that he can, by a detour, read with his fingers. He still cannot see, but he can read the same book as others – in Braille. – Peter Vermeulen, p. 361
Social Stories & CSC as Context Compensation Strategies

What can we do in the future? 6 Ideas...
1. Write Stories ‘In Context’:

When people with autism do not use context spontaneously, we can help them by pointing out the context and which elements of it are relevant. -Vermeulen, p. 362
2. Gathering Information by Students with Autism: Pre-Story Surveys

*Contextual Reframing:*

*Clarifying the context helps people with autism to find the correct meaning.* - Peter Vermeulen, pp. 367-368
The Mistakes Survey

A survey is one way to get information about something. In this case, it is about mistakes. When you make mistakes, you try to learn from them so that you will not make the same mistake again. If you learned from your mistakes, you will not make the same mistake again.

The survey is titled The Mistakes Survey. You may use the survey to find out if you like making mistakes. You may also use it to find out if your friends like making mistakes.

The survey is for adults. To use the survey safely, it’s important that you know how to make mistakes. If you know how to make mistakes, you will be able to answer the survey questions correctly.

To take the survey, each adult will read the following. Read it at the top of the page:

1. Think of a mistake you have made recently. It can be a big or a little mistake. It can be a mistake you know about or one you don’t.

2. How did you feel when you made the mistake? Was it embarrassing? Was it frustrating? Was it exciting?

3. What did you do to fix the mistake? Did you ask for help? Did you try to fix it yourself?

4. Did you learn anything from the mistake? What did you learn?

5. How can you avoid making the same mistake again?

Do you think that you have ever had a day without a mistake?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
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</table>

Comment:

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3. Stories that Build Concepts to Support Generalization
StoryMaster

Master file *n.* A computer file that is used as a master for creating others similar to it.

StoryMaster *n.* A Story that is used as a master or model
Places to Sit and Eat at McDonalds®

Sometimes my family eats at McDonalds®. We usually eat at a table.

We may eat at a table that looks like this.

We may eat at a table that looks like this. (If someone is already sitting there, we will try to look for another table.)

Or, we may eat at another kind of table. This is OK.

Sometimes my family eats at McDonalds®. We usually eat at a table.
The Burger King® Story
4. Stories that Teach Situations & Use of “Contextualized Script”
(quoted term from Vermeulen)

To increase the effectiveness of all types of trainings, we need to contextualize skills. Situational trainings are preferable to skill trainings - Peter Vermeulen, pp. 373
Waiting to Fly

Note: The McDonalds Story builds a concept through application to a variety of contexts. This Story, in contrast, applies a concept – ‘waiting’ – to several sub-contexts related to the larger ‘taking a flight’ context.

The use of terms in this Story like ‘probably’, ‘often’, ‘this happens a lot’, etc., account for the variability of contextual factors – and ensures Story accuracy.

“If exceptions are the rule, then we include them as much as possible in our trainings.”

Vermeulen, p. 373
My name is Pete. I am going to ride in an airplane. I will probably have to wait.

People often have to wait at check-in. Many people may need to check their luggage or get boarding passes.

People often wait in the boarding area. They wait for the pilot and crew to get the plane ready to fly.
People often need to wait for the plane to go. They need to wait for the crew to make sure everything is ready for the flight.
People often need to wait for other reasons, too. Waiting happens a lot when people fly in airplanes.

I am going to fly in an airplane soon. I may have to wait often.
5. Stories that Routinely Tie Past, Present, and Future

*What we have learned helps us to understand what we perceive.*
- Vermeulen, p. 48
I Am Learning to Tie My Shoes

Past

I learned how to button. I learned how to zip. I am learning how to tie my shoes.

Present

Mom and Dad are helping me learn to tie my shoes.

Future

Someday, I will be able to tie my shoes.
6. Specialized Story Formats to Teach Important Context Concepts

Concrete communication minimizes misunderstanding.
- Vermeulen, p. 367
Split-Section Social Stories

1

Text

2

Text

3

Text
COMING SOON:

www.CarolGraySocialStories.com