

Sample 1

An informal social language assessment was conducted to probe for specific skills related to social cognition. The following tasks were completed.

Student Interview

Student was asked a series of fourteen questions in which the examiner noted his ability to respond appropriately to the questions, maintain eye gaze direction, provide appropriate body language, tone and inflection of voice, and facial expression during the interaction.

Student was able to respond appropriately to the questions. As he sat in his chair, he had a pattern of slumping down and sitting up. Throughout the testing situation it was noted that Student was continually moving. He would fidget in his chair, open wet wipes and play with his hair. His facial expression was mostly flat but he did smile. The tone and inflection of his voice were monotone at times but overall it did not bring attention to his speech. It was noted that at times he speaks on his reserved air.

During the interview Student noted that he liked Math and Science but that he doesn't like Social Studies and Language Arts. This is mostly due to writing issues. He explained that he has lots of great information in his head but the physical act of writing is extremely hard for him. Student states that Student, Adam, Westin Bermbahm and the eighth grade girls are nice to him at school. He states he has trouble with the eighth grade boys teasing him on his way to lunch and the girls stick up for him. This really makes him feel good. When asked how he knows when someone is not being nice, Student stated that he can just tell. Further probing brought out the fact that there were "smart bullies" who were very intelligent and they will say a compliment to him in front of teachers but that they were really teasing him right in front of the teacher and the teacher had no clue. When asked what he does when someone is not being nice, he said he gets furious and starts yelling and punching. He said he has a really short fuse.

To explore the quality of his friendships, the examiner asked who his friends were at school and home. At school, Student, Adam and Westin are his friends. He wasn't able to provide any examples of what they do at school together as friends. He says they don't go over to each other's houses and that they just talk. Student said he doesn't have any friends around the neighborhood but that someone from his old school had moved into his neighborhood.

Student was asked how he plans his long-term projects and he stated that he didn't know, he just plans them out. When asked about tracking his assignments he said he didn't have too many assignments and that he is an organized kid. He also stated the Storch family has a technique of flash memory. Student said he is pretty good about turning in his homework. He also mentioned that when he slips and gets a low grade, he can make up for it and turn the grade around quickly. When asked about hobbies, Student said he likes to play video games but not the bloody ones. He likes the puzzle ones. He also likes to go outside and play in the snow or swim when it is nice out. Student says he spends most of his time eating, watching TV or playing the video games. He loves eating Oreo pie from Bakers Square.

To explore how much Student is aware of the people he lives with, he was asked what their hobbies were. He says Ben, who is 8, likes running around and screaming naked. Rachel likes being cynical, video games and playing Monga. Mom is an artist in some ways and likes back scratches. Dad used to play tennis before his tennis partner became a Devil worshiper. Student states that he isn't responsible for any chores at either house. Student went off on a tangent and talked about his parents for a while. Again, he needed to be redirected to the task at hand.

To determine his level of perspective taking, Student was asked if he ever felt embarrassed. He stated he feels embarrassed lots of times, when he mishears something. When asked for an example, Student went on to explain that he has really in-tune senses but that he hears too much at once and mishears things, then he gets mad. He went on to describe feelings of anger and the examiner felt that he didn't really understand what embarrassed meant. The examiner provided

him with an example of an embarrassing situation and Student didn't understand it so the examiner explained it and provided a visual example and he still didn't understand it.

After High School, Student plans on going to college but doesn't know what he wants to study. He said he knew he wanted to go to the U of M because he doesn't want to leave his parents because he really, really needs them.

Personal Picture Explanation

Student was given three personal pictures from the examiner and he was asked to explain what the pictures were about. Attention was paid to his ability to shift perspective, reading other's faces, accounting for contextual cues and making inferences. Student had a difficult time shifting perspectives and inferring that the people in the photos were my husband, daughter and myself. He paused for a while to compare the female in the photo to the examiner. He also had a difficult time reading faces and attaching the correct emotions to the faces. For example, he used scared to describe upset. He had some use of using contextual cues to define the location or setting in the pictures, but had difficulty defining the meaning and relationships in the photos. His ability to infer what was going on or going to happen in the pictures was often incorrect. For example, the dad was wiping off finger paint from his daughter's fingers and Student stated the dad was putting it on the girl and she was scared.

Student Interview of the Examiner

Student was asked to find out personal information about the examiner. He was aloud to use any visual information in the room to think of questions and to use the personal photographs that were discussed. After the examiner told him to begin, Student asked: What is your favorite color?, What do you do in your spare time?, What is your favorite book or movie?, What is your favorite food? and What is your favorite animal? After the examiner answered each question, Student would share his favorite item with the examiner. More than once, Student cut off the examiner's response to discuss his favorite items.

Student has a difficult time shifting perspectives to think about other people's experiences as he quickly diverted the topic back to his own area of interest and only made comments about himself. This shows he also has difficulty formulating novel language unrelated to his area of interest. He also had a difficult time organizing information by formulating questions to direct a single topic of discussion. The questions he asked were shallow and failed to provide follow-up questions about the same topic. Follow-up questions gain deeper information about the topic and are key for conversational success.

Picture Sequence Task

Student was presented with eight-picture sequences in a random order to observe his strategy for organizing the pictures and how easily he was able to engage in the task. Student had a difficult time organizing the pictures in sequence. He often misread contextual cues, which caused him to sequence some of the cards incorrectly. He also had a difficult time labeling the correct emotions and inferring what was happening.

Social Scenario Task

Social scenarios are single pictures that represent some form of social interaction or display of specific emotion. Student was presented several social scenarios and asked to explain what was going on in the picture. He had difficulties simultaneously considering contextual and nonverbal cues, accurately describing emotions and pulling all of the information into a logical gestalt. For example, one scenario consisted of a lady who has been waiting for a long time in the exam room to see her Doctor. Student stated she was on a bed with a pair of scissors and wanted to kill herself. Another example is a mom, on the phone, bending over to tie her young son's shoe and get the kids off to school so she can go to work. Student stated the lady was complaining how her shoes didn't fit and she looked like she was about to get her purse stolen.

Speech Summary

Student has strong linguistic competency skills. He is able to linguistically use a variety of forms that are syntactically, morphologically and semantically correct. He does have a significant breakdown in regards to

his ability to socially use his language in a spontaneous communicative setting. He has difficulties with the physical context and relationship that exists between communicators.

Sample 2

An informal social language assessment was conducted to probe for specific skills related to social cognition. The following tasks were completed.

Student Interview

Student was asked a series of fourteen questions in which the examiner noted his ability to respond appropriately to the questions, maintain eye gaze direction, provide appropriate body language, tone and inflection of voice, and facial expression during the interaction.

Student was able to respond appropriately to the questions. Student sat in his chair and rarely looked at the examiner. When he did it was fleeting. He frequently moved around in his chair and utilized a fidget throughout the session. His facial expression was mostly flat but he smiled appropriately at various times throughout the testing. The tone of his voice was soft and he had good intonation.

During the interview Student noted that he likes reading the best. His favorite thing to do at school is lunch because he likes eating food, especially donuts. He doesn't like Social Studies because he thinks it's boring. (Student used the terms boring and I don't know frequently throughout the testing.) When pressed to describe what he meant by boring, Student indicated the class was hard for him, especially note taking. Student states that the kids at school are sometimes nice to him. He went on to say that some are mean to him and others aren't, they just ignore the fact that he's there. When asked how the students are mean to him, Student says they say mean things to him while passing in the hall. When asked what kind of mean things, he stated they swear at him.

To explore the quality of his friendships, the examiner asked who his friends were at school and home. At school, Katy, Becca and Amber are his friends. He states they mostly talk in core classes. At home, Student says he mostly hangs out with his birds and trains them to sit on his finger. All of his neighborhood friends moved away. When Kyle was living in the neighborhood, they would play video games.

Student was asked how he plans his long-term projects and he stated that he just gets them done, about half of the time. When asked about tracking his assignments he said they are usually late because he forgets to turn them in. If he doesn't get an assignment done it is because he doesn't want to do them. His approach to getting his homework done is to do it when he gets home and his mom usually helps him. When asked about hobbies, Student said he likes to collect stamps of any kind.

To explore how much Student is aware of the people he lives with, he was asked what their hobbies were. Student said he didn't know what their hobbies were. When pressed, he said Kyle likes trucks and cars and his mom watches his brother, maybe reads and takes naps. When asked about any chores he's responsible for, Student said he didn't know them because he doesn't do them. He just does what his mom says but first he waits to see if she forgets she asked him to do something. For example, if she asks him to clean the bathroom he will not mention the bathroom or anything to do with a bathroom so she doesn't remember. Student did know the chores his brother Kyle was responsible for and named them rather quickly.

To determine his level of perspective taking, Student was asked if he ever felt embarrassed. Student said he's embarrassed when he does something stupid like sometimes putting away clean dishes in the refrigerator. The examiner asked him if he was really embarrassed or just felt kind of stupid, Student indicated he feels stupid when he does that because it is such an awkward

thing to do. When pressed for a different example of being embarrassed, Student said he is more worried about what people are thinking about him. He's worried that he looks weird. Further probing of what he meant by "looks" really referred to acting weird. The examiner then gave Student an example of an embarrassing moment and he laughed. As he first began to laugh, he had a look of "oh, that's what it means".

After High School Student thinks he'll probably go to college and study something related to science and computers.

Personal Picture Explanation

Student was given three personal pictures from the examiner and he was asked to explain what the pictures were about. Attention was paid to his ability to shift perspective, reading other's faces, accounting for contextual cues and making inferences. Student had a difficult time accounting for contextual cues. He didn't attend to the contextual cues that help to define the meaning and relationships in the pictures. For example one picture is my daughter in her Halloween costume and he indicated she was wearing a strange raincoat. He didn't attach any emotion to the people in the pictures, besides bored. He had a limited ability to shift perspective. Student asked if it was me in the pictures but never came to a definite conclusion. At the end of the task he was asked who he thought were in the pictures and compared me to the photos, but didn't definitely state it was me. After the examiner confirmed it was her, she asked him who the other people in the photos could be. He again looked and with some time came to the conclusion it must be my husband and daughter.

Student Interview of the Examiner

Student was asked to find out personal information about the examiner. He was allowed to use any visual information in the room to think of questions and to use the personal photographs that were discussed. He was also given a sheet with words to initiate questions. After the examiner told him to begin, Student paused and then asked, "Who are you?". After a longer pause he said "What?" (He just used one of the words off of the sheet). The examiner told him that wasn't a question and to try again. After a pause he asked, "What house do you live in?". Then after a pause he asked, "Where's your home state?". Then he asked, "How do you blow up a building?" After a reminder that that wasn't a question to gain personal information about me, he asked, "How do you do your boring job?"

Student had a difficult time formulating language to talk about the examiner. He lacks the ability to shift perspective to consider the examiner and to organize thoughts on what to ask the examiner.

Picture Sequence Task

Student was presented with eight-picture sequences in a random order to observe his strategy for organizing the pictures and how easily he was able to engage in the task. Student was able to organize half of the sequences correctly. He had some difficulty recognizing contextual cues. When he was describing the scenes, Student said, "Did I mention that they all look bored? Everything is boring."

Social Scenario Task

Social scenarios are single pictures that represent some form of social interaction or display of specific emotion. Student was presented several social scenarios and asked to explain what was going on in the pictures and how they feel about it. Student had a difficult time recognizing contextual cues, considering nonverbal cues, describing a variety of emotions and pulling everything together into a logical gestalt. For example there is a picture of a two-year old sitting next to a tricycle with his head down on his knees and he looks sad because he can't ride the tricycle. Student said the boy was trying to cope with his legs and he is frustrated because he can't get up.

Speech Summary

Student has strong linguistic competency skills. He is able to linguistically use a variety of forms that are syntactically, morphologically and semantically correct. He does have a breakdown in regards to his ability to socially use his language in a spontaneous communicative setting. He has difficulties with the physical context and relationship that exists between communicators.