

Here's what I think ...

By Ty Ankrom

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One of the goals of professional development is to pass along to others the benefits of a seminar, workshop or conference.

Lisa Gribler, an ESC speech language pathologist who works at Teays Valley, did just that with the other ESC speech language pathologists.

About two years ago, Lisa heard Nancy Tarshis with Social Thinking give a presentation on a curriculum in the works called *The Incredible Flexible You*. The curriculum, according to the Social Thinking Web site, helps children with and without social challenges to improve their social-emotional problem-solving skills.

She was so impressed with the presentation that she proposed holding a seminar in Pickaway County to share the curriculum. Lisa said she recognizes the absence of social skills and the effect it can have.

“Every day I see kids at school, as well as adults who struggle socially. It doesn't matter how ‘smart’ you are if you can't interact with people in your family, your neighborhood, your school, your work-place. Social interactions are what life is all about.”

Lisa especially liked that the concept behind the curriculum could be applicable for children of all ages.

And in a perfect world, she would love if the curriculum were adopted by schools for preschool-age children and older.

“Start with pre-school through second grade and then that language of the curriculum would rise up through third through fifth as students progress through the grades. I think this could have a huge impact on the climate of a school! Because after all, isn't getting along with others what life is really all about?”

The topic was a success, as the event drew 79 attendees — speech language pathologists, occupational therapists, preschool teachers and aides, kindergarten through second-grade teachers, parents, grandparents, school psychologists and administrators.

The ESC speech language pathologists spent several months planning the seminar and Lisa said it was well worth the time.

Lisa said everyone she spoke to had a different a-ha moment. For Lisa, the seminar “strengthened my resolve that schools should not be focusing solely on academics. Schools need to be turning out good people, as well as good students.”

Ankrom is the superintendent of the Pickaway County Educational Service Center.

