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SUCCESSFUL SOCIAL SKILLS

**Designing a way of learning non-verbal
communication skills**

**A thesis submitted for the degree of
Master of Design
Massey University
Wellington
New Zealand**

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ABSTRACT

This research identifies, and respond to, the particular challenges of teaching social skills to children with autistic characteristics, specifically in this case Asperger's Syndrome (AS).

For most children the process of understanding and developing non-verbal communication begins early in childhood. For children with AS this is not the case and non-verbal communication needs to be taught to them.

This project provides support for the educators of children who require assistance in the social skills area. This has been achieved with a structured interactive computer prototype. This prototype has been designed with consideration for the unique cognitive attributes and sensory issues that AS individuals encounter.

A visual language has been used to identify the routine of an everyday event, and to introduce the concept of change within this routine. The result provides these individuals with the most productive environment for learning.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my late husband, Richard A. Barker, as an acknowledgement of his absolute support and his contribution to this project.

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