

Why Are My Kids Weird?

a 2009 talk by Graham Mitchell
comprising 52 slides

Mr. Mitchell's (Hard-Learned) Tips for
Not Being Creepy

Don't Be Creepy

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talks

Before this was a website, this was a talk.

I've been teaching high school computer science since the fall of 1997, and it one day occurred to me that I should try to teach some social skills to my students. Thus, in September of 2005, the "Don't Be Creepy" lecture was born.

Everyone who saw it spoke well of it, and eventually there became some demand for me to take it 'on the road'. If you'd like to have me come give this or a related talk at your location, just [contact me](#).

Below is the information about the various places these talks have been given, with (usually) a link to the PowerPoint presentation used.

Tuesday, February 6, 2007

Why Are My Kids "Weird"?

Do you have really bright kids (especially boys) who are good at school but incredibly clueless when it comes to social skills? Brain theory, social rules, autism and Asperger's help explain why. Learn how to better understand and reach them from a formerly "weird" teacher who learned the hard way!

- event: Leander ISD Continuous Improvement Conference
- location: Leander High School, Multi-Purpose Room (MPR)
- time: 8:15am
- [PowerPoint](#) (132 KB)
- [handout](#)

Monday, October 30, 2006

1. Why are they “weird”?

1. Why are they “weird”?

2. How should I handle them?

1. Why are they “weird”?

2. How should I handle them?

3. How can I help them?

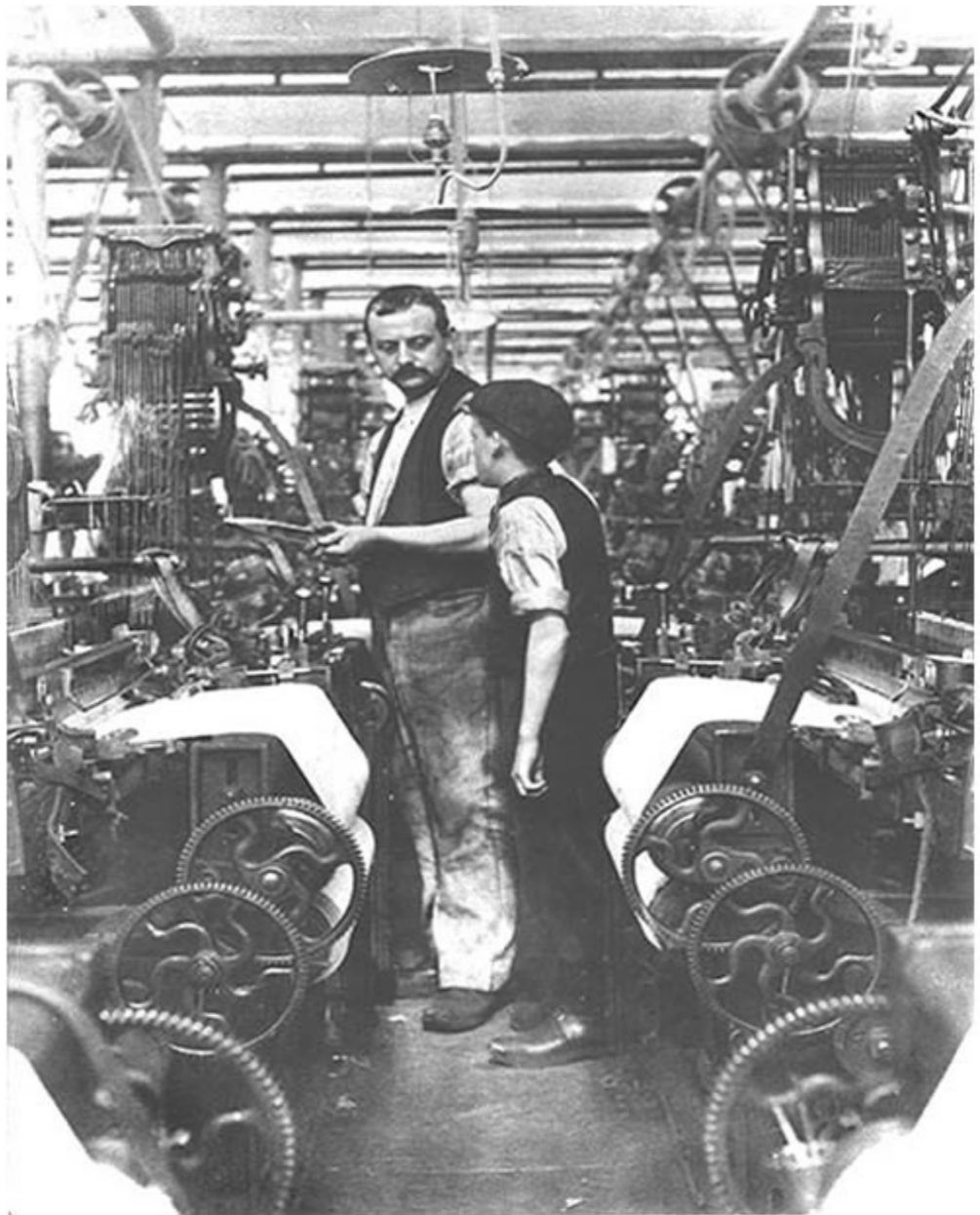


- 1. Occasionally brilliant.**
- 2. Socially awkward.**









FACTORY WORKERS

SOURCE: [HTTP://WWW.LEARNINGCURVE.GOV.UK](http://www.learningcurve.gov.uk)







Graham Mitchell







Social norms are sometimes:

- **arbitrary**
- **temporary**
- **subtle**
- **non-verbal**



Popularity is a stupid, shallow game.

But they can't choose not to play.



~1996



2008



Would you trust this man?

image manipulation by Justin Oliver, LHS class of 1999



Autism

- **marked impairment in the use of multiple nonverbal behaviors such as**
 - eye-to-eye gaze,**
 - facial expression,**
 - body postures,****and gestures to regulate social interaction**



Autism

- **lack of social or emotional reciprocity**
- **impaired ability to initiate or sustain a conversation with others**
- **interest that is abnormal either in intensity or focus**

Asperger syndrome

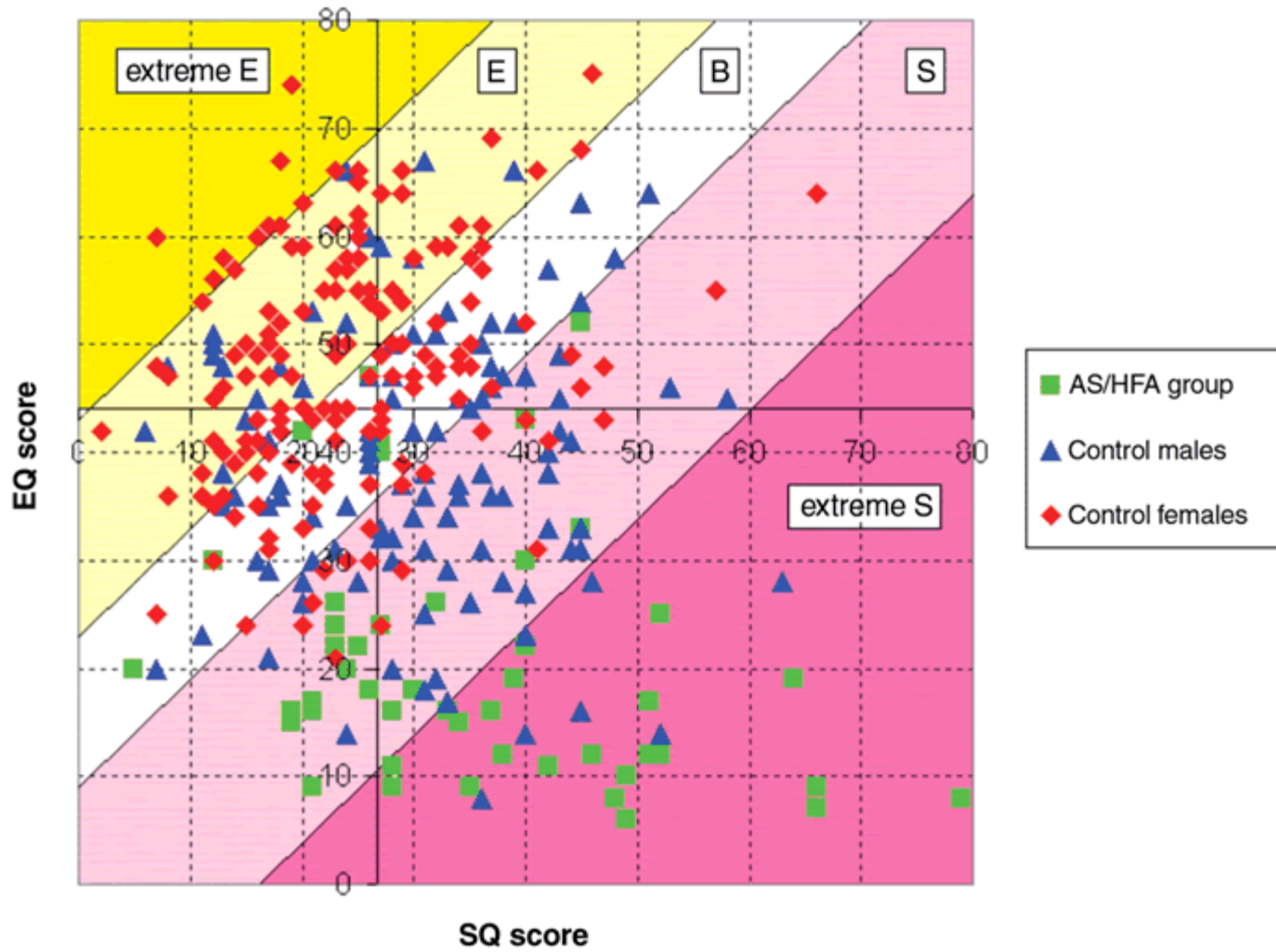


- preoccupation with a subject to the exclusion of other activities
- socially and emotionally inappropriate behavior and interpersonal interaction
- problems with nonverbal communication
- clumsy and uncoordinated motor movements



Simon Baron-Cohen

**the “EQ SQ” theory
of Autism**





empathy

or

systemizing



7% - words used





7% - words used

38% - tone of voice





7% - words used

38% - tone of voice

55% - nonverbal





**“Do you
understand
what I’m saying?”**



mirror neuron system





Can you spot 6 differences?



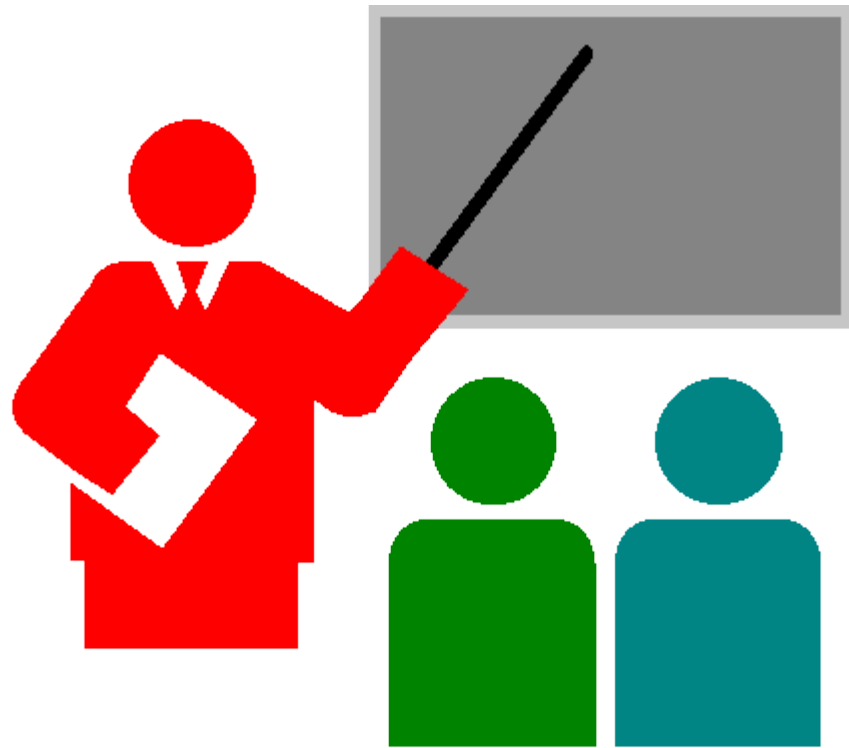
2.

**How should I
deal
with them?**

Use empathy.



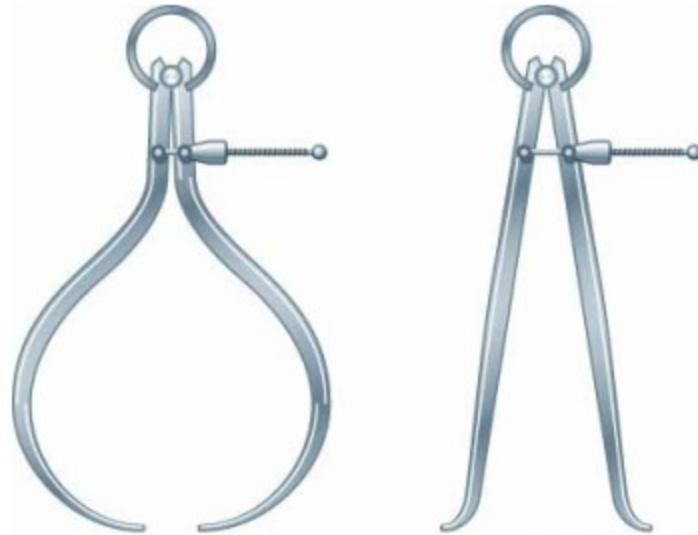
Use words.
Explain.



Be direct.



Be precise.



3.

**How can I
help
them?**

Be apologetic.



Introversions is okay.



Explain social rules.



Teach tact.



Praise effort.





Lower the bar.



**“The perfect
is the enemy
of the good.”**

- Voltaire

**don't
be
creepy**

Students

The End

...any questions?