


Inclusion for Students with ASD in the General Education Classroom

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Today's Objectives

- Overview of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
- Supportive strategies for students with ASD
- Recommendations for creating an inclusive classroom

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You belong.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging

The graphic features three panels: the first shows hands of various colors reaching out; the second shows a bookshelf with three people of different heights standing on blocks to reach the books, labeled 'Equality' and 'Equity'; the third shows a group of diverse people holding hands in a circle.

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Why is it considered a spectrum?

Retrieved from <https://www.vanderbilt.edu/autismandinnovation/understanding-the-spectrum/>

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The 3 Functional Levels of ASD

<p>ASD Level 1 Requiring Support</p> <p>Social skills, conversation, & nonverbal cues Attention & organization</p>	<p>ASD Level 2 Requiring Substantial Support</p> <p>Limited verbal & nonverbal communication Narrow interests & repetitive behaviors</p>	<p>ASD Level 3 Requiring Very Substantial Support</p> <p>Communication is very challenging Extremely inflexible during unexpected transitions</p>
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Retrieved from <https://www.empoweredlearning.net/services/autism-spectrum-training/>

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What is the Prevalence of ASD?

- Based on recent estimates, ASD affects an estimated **1 in 36** individuals in the United States (CDC, 2023).
- This is a significant increase from an estimated 1 in 44 in 2011, 1 in 59 individuals in 2018, as well as an estimated 1 in 68 individuals in 2014.
- ASD is significantly more commonly diagnosed in males than females.
- 2018 Estimate:** 1 in 38 males and 1 in 152 females.
- 2014 Estimate:** 1 in 42 males and 1 in 189 females.

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Why So Many?

The reason is still unclear, but some factors might be:

- We have a broader definition of ASD
- There are better efforts to diagnose ASD.
- We are better at tracking individuals with ASD.
- Environmental risks may have increased.



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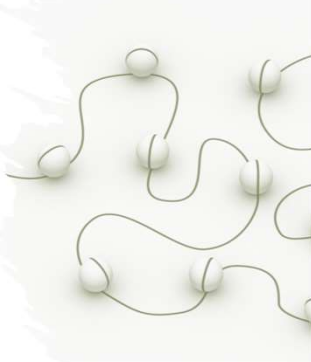


Share experiences

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How does ASD affect an individual?

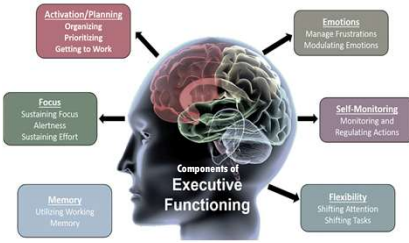
- An individual's ability to **interact** with others.
- An individual's ability to **communicate** (both verbally and nonverbally).
- The number and types of **activities** in which an individual participates.
- And many individuals with ASD have difficulties **processing sensory information**.
- Theory of mind challenges.



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Executive Functioning

Allows us to... **access** information, **think** about solutions, and **apply** what we know to act on those solutions.




Components of Executive Functioning

- Activation/Planning: Organizing, Prioritizing, Getting to Work
- Emotions: Manage Frustrations, Modulating Emotions
- Self-Monitoring: Monitoring and Regulating Actions
- Flexibility: Shifting Attention, Shifting Tasks
- Memory: Utilizing Working Memory
- Focus: Sustaining Focus, Alertness, Sustaining Effort


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What supportive strategies do you currently use for students with ASD?

Respond at:
[PollEv.com/jackieclark120](https://pollEv.com/jackieclark120)
 OR
 Text: [JACKIECLARK120](https://textnow.com/jackieclark120) to [22333](https://textnow.com/22333)
 to join the session, then text a response



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Students with ASD live in a world that is often *puzzling* and *unpredictable* to them and, therefore, *stressful*.

To help them meet their potential, educators must help these students understand the world around them and provide strategies and supports that foster success and independence.

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Recommendations for an Inclusive Environment

- 1) Be aware and maintain Mindset shift
- 2) Include students with ASD in the conversation, planning, & choice making
- 3) Be Proactive and Patient
- 4) Utilize Universal Design for Learning (UDL)
- 5) Be Mindful of the Environment
- 6) Promote Peer Relationships

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"Teaching students with ASD is hard. It is hard for just the same reasons that students with ASD find it difficult to learn in our current school system. Just as these students have no natural intuitive ways to understand their teachers, teachers, in turn, have no natural intuitive ways to understand students with ASD. That means we, as educators, have to work out what to do cognitively when working with these students, just as they do with us; we cannot just rely on our natural social instincts in related to students with ASD...Yet through that understanding we develop skills and knowledge that can enrich our teaching of all children, and the more our teaching recognizes and respects diversity, the easier this will be" (Jordan, 2008).

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Barriers for Students with ASD

Source: (Bailey and Baker, 2020)

Criteria for ASD	Potential Barriers to inclusion
Insistence on sameness	Anxiety around unpredictability and ambiguity of structure, changes: classes, lessons, teachers, schedule, etc.
Deficits in social communication and interaction	Anxiety around social interaction with peers, teachers, and adults in school Differences in communication styles between teachers and peers Difficulties in forming and maintaining relationships Different preferences with working groups
Hyper-or hypo to sensory input	High level of sensitivity to sensory stimuli in school environment Overwhelm in busy, crowded, and chaotic environment
Highly restricted, fixated interests	Preference for focusing on particular topics Differences in response to rewards, goals, and sources of enjoyment

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Barriers for Students with ASD

Social: 73% found to experience social problems, 75% experienced difficulties with social participation, and autistic pupils reported only 40% of their playtime with others as compared to 70% for typically developing peers, 70% reported feeling socially isolated

Sensory: 88% participants were negatively affected in the classroom by noise, 75% touching, 44% smell, and 56% vision

Executive Function: 85% experienced difficulties in classroom with planning, 37% found to have difficulty with maintaining attention to tasks

Source: (Bailey and Baker, 2020)

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Mindshift

The autistic neurology imposes a different operating system.

When we **first** understand the autistic neurology, we can then **shift** from managing oppositional defiant behavior of *refusal* and *avoidance* to **solving** for autism neurology.

Besides being kind, it is far more **expedient** to **support** autistic neurology than it is to assume negative character and ill intentions when your student with autism is struggling.



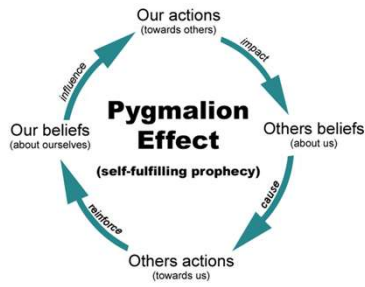
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The Pygmalion Effect

- Educators play a crucial role in the implementation of inclusive education...and their attitudes toward inclusion are vital for success.


- Two-thirds of teachers reported lacking confidence and being apprehensive about teaching a student with ASD.

(Russell et al., 2022)



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To effectively support students with ASD, we must, first, understand the autistic neurology operating system.




The autonomic nervous system is a component of the peripheral nervous system that regulates involuntary physiologic processes including **heart rate, blood pressure, respiration, digestion, and sexual arousal.**

If challenged, the neurology is forced further along into survival mode – meaning *fight or flight*. **Reasoning is not involved!**

The autistic neurology, when hit with a surprise, forces shutdown. When shutdown is “challenged” the autonomic nervous system survival mode is further triggered into *flight*.

When flight is prevented, the autonomic nervous system engages in the remaining survival mechanism – *fight*.

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UDL is rooted in providing access to the curriculum for all students and providing opportunities for learning for all students

Multiple means of Engagement

- *Paying attention to multiple means of what motivates students. Some students are motivated by choices, whereas others will do best when assignments are tailored around a preservative interest, and others may be best motivated by positive praise and rewards.*

Multiple means of Representation

- *Content is shared in a variety of ways – some students will prefer and do best by reading text, while others will need to watch a video, and others may need to listen to the lesson auditorily*

Multiple means of Expression

- *Students having multiple options to express what they know. Some students may do best by doing a demonstration, while others may do best writing a paper, where others will ask to record a video.*

Source: <https://www.cast.org/impact/universal-design-for-learning-udl>

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UDL Supports
Source: (Denning and Moody, 2013)

UDL Feature	Type of Support	Examples
Engagement	Schedules	Daily, activity, and mini schedules
	Routines and Procedures	Establish clear rules and expectations Provide and review with visuals and written word
	Priming	Review the plan for each day Access to materials prior to instruction
	Interests	Incorporate interests into activities, readings, assignments, and lessons
Representation	Visuals and Organizational Tools	Visual map, diagrams, Semantic mapping
Expression	Instruction	Multiple strategies, mnemonics
	Choice	Multiple formats to demonstrate learning Incorporation of special interests
	Structured Assignments	Modeling and guided practice Performance rubrics Explicit directions

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How do we assess student engagement?

Look at **engagement** outcomes – **social/emotional** outcomes

3 I's: Show **Investment** in what they are doing, **Independence** in doing it, and **Initiating** communication with peers or teachers in the modality they are able

Social Engagement – Learner Perspective

Emerging/Starting (0)	Partially Engaged (25)	Mostly Engaged (50)	Fully Engaged (75)
Identifies the speaker without initiation, engagement or reciprocity. Minimal responsiveness or positive emotional involvement.	Responds to an oral question, initiation, comment with direction, but no clearly expressed or positive emotional involvement.	On minimal encouragement, initiates, responds independently, reciprocates with reciprocity, and expresses positive emotional involvement.	Responds spontaneously, initiates, reciprocates with reciprocity, expresses positive emotional involvement.
I am not "interested" in hearing the story because I'm not doing what I can respond to in hearing and answering myself and then the engagement is done or cannot hold my learning.	I am "interested" but not yet doing what I can do in hearing with the person or situation to start the interaction and am initiating, asking or connecting during learning.	I am very "interested" and can communicate myself to ask questions, can doing what is expected by doing and responsibly will do something about my learning.	I am "interested" in hearing the story & then work to be doing anything that I can do when I am responsible for doing and am initiating, asking and connected to learning.

SEE-KS

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Consider this:

- Behaviors may occur due to problems with social communication, social interactions, sensory processing, or general communication challenges.
- Behavioral challenges may be due to deficits in all, some or one of these skill areas.

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Appropriate behaviors need to be taught (and practiced) in the same manner as academic skills!

For example, **teach** how to:

- Request help
- Ask for a break
- Make a choice
- Access sensory supports

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Mindful of the Environment



Sight (Visual) Smell (Olfactory) Sound (Auditory) Taste (Gustatory)

Touch (Tactile) Interceptive (Inner Body Awareness) Vestibular (Movement & Balance) Proprioceptive (Body Awareness)

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Importance of Peer Relationships

- Peer Initiation Training (peers help teach greeting, sharing, asking for help, etc.)
- Video Modeling (students perform certain skill or behavior)
- Purposeful peer group play
- Peer "Buddy" or "Mentor" (individual approach *make sure peer is trained)



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WV ATC Direct Services

- Criteria for registration
- Family initiated
- Consult services
- WV Autism Mentor
- Community Outreach and Trainings (ex. LE Trainings)

Online Registration now available
<https://www.marshall.edu/atc/>



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Questions?

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The poster for the Autism Across the Lifespan Conference, held on Thursday, September 7, 2023, and Friday, September 8, 2023, at the West Virginia State Center. It features three tracks: Track 1 (September 7, 2023) titled 'Topics Related to Childhood' with speakers like Dr. David H. Aronson; Track 2 (September 8, 2023) titled 'Topics Related to Adulthood' with speakers like Dr. David H. Aronson; and Track 3 (September 8, 2023) titled 'Topics Related to Aging' with speakers like Dr. David H. Aronson. Logos for CEU Information, West Virginia Autism Training Center, Autism Society, and Hussman Institute are present.

The West Virginia Autism Training Center will be hosting the annual, "Autism Across the Lifespan Conference" on September 7th and 8th at Marshall University. Early bird registration is now open and can be found at this link <https://www.marshall.edu/atc/2023-autism-across-lifespan/>

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Resources

- UDL for Autistic and Neurodivergent Children Podcast: <https://uniquelyhuman.com/2022/06/24/universal-design-for-learning-autistic/>
- UDL Webinars: <https://www.ocali.org/project/udl-webinars>
- UDL Graphic Organizer: <https://udlguidelines.cast.org/more/downloads>
- Reflection Tool for Engagement: <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/618fabe924c5b5439e8e1f3/t/61b97b0949b27964528f4184/1639545609377/SEE-KS+Engagement+Reflection+Tool.pdf>
- Peer-Based Intervention and ASDs: <https://vk.vumc.org/assets/files/tipsheets/peer-interventionsdtdtips.pdf>

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