



Workshops

I'll be in Hong Kong from the end of July until end of August, but am still contactable via email.

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Welcome to term 3

Wow! Is it just me or are these terms going by so fast? It seems that there are not enough hours to cram in all that I want to do before the end of the

following term! Hope you had fun during the holidays. Now it's back to work and having fun at school. Good luck.

Group Work

Essential considerations for group work:

- The teacher must select the group, keeping in mind which students will work best with the ASD student
- Be clear where the group is going to work
- Make this the same table or spot on the mat each time
- Keep the group small so the student doesn't have to socialise too much
- Keep the student in the same group each time for the same range of activities
- If you need to change the group, only change one student at a time
- Do partner activities rather group work
- Help to select the role that the student will have within the group. His role must have status but also be manageable by him eg
 - Time keeper
 - Manager
 - Computer research

Interrupting

"One of my students interrupts me all the time. It happens when I'm talking to the group and even when I'm talking to just one other person. What can I do?" – Lisa, Hong Kong

Making sense of it:

ASD students have difficulty in knowing how and when to join conversations. They don't recognise the pauses and subtle signals which are an invitation, and they lack the skills of building a contribution to the conversation. They may also become pre-occupied with a particular thought that they cannot resist in blurting out.

Things to try:

- In Groups: Try using an object such as squishy ball with only the person holding the object allowed to speak
- Explain to the student that pauses in conversations are the places to come in with comments. Practice recognising pauses. Watch videos and use drama activities (play acting) as prompts.
- Use "How to Stop Your Words from Bumping into Someone Else's" (interrupting)- Rhonda Dixon & Anna Tullemans

English orals

One of the most difficult things to do is to stand in front of a crowd and deliver a speech, whether it's prepared or not. For some one with ASD it's even more difficult to stand in front of ones peers and do the same.

Successful Strategies

Always relate their oral to their chosen career path. Eg Daniel wanted to be a games programmer

Career path – Games programmer

Need to:

Be able to write good and efficient code

Once your game is completed you also need to:
Sell your game to a games publisher

Skills needed to do a sales pitch are:

Persuasive oral

In front of more than one person

Success! Allow the student to deliver all his orals on his chosen career field. They can include:

- Factual orals
- Persuasive orals

Does it really matter what the content is as long as it follows the guidelines for teachers reporting?

Daniel went from D's to B plus when this intervention was introduced as there was a personal value in doing orals. (Remember adult learners)



Problem Solving

When you build problem solving ability, you are building in the skill to predict events. When you can predict an outcome, then you are much more relaxed and less confused about what is happening. This is an essential ability that must be taught to ASD students to help them reduce their anxiety.

Where does the problem lie?

- Many ASD students have difficulty with problem solving.
- They don't necessarily see the link between the problem and outside help.
- Asking for help is one element in the problem solving process.
- Because of the impairment of not being able to recognise that others have different points of view, they don't realise that some one else may have a solution.
- Sometimes this is misinterpreted as laziness or lack of motivation – thinking that the student is avoiding work rather than unable to get on with it.

Essential Strategies

- Have an awareness of which tasks cause the student particular difficulty for example:
 - Writing tasks
 - Assignments
- The thoughts are there but getting them onto paper can be very difficult.
- Teach him to recognise that he is "stuck".

Rude Things Teachers Do (According to Teenagers)

Excerpt taken from "How Rude – Handbook of School Manners for Teens" by Alex J. Packer, PhD

When we asked teenagers, "What rude things do teachers do to students?" these were the top 10 answers:

- Make fun of us in front of the whole class
- Ignore us on purpose
- Give us too much work
- Punish the whole class for something one person did
- Call on us when they know we don't know the answer
- Say sarcastic things
- Talk down to us
- Accuse us of doing things based on suspicion, not facts
- Not listen to our side of the story
- Play favourites

School climate is as much about teachers' behaviour as it is about students' behaviour. (You'd better believe it)

Substitute Teachers

Most students with ASD have difficulty accepting changes in the daily schedule and a substitute teacher is one of those changes.

When change is about to happen it is important to notify particular teachers and staff so they are aware of the difficulties that this student will face and be able to look for signs of anxiety.

There are two reasons why students find having a substitute teacher difficult. These are:

- Not the substitute teacher but the reactions from the other students in the class.
 - The “pushing the limits to see how far we can go” that comes from having a new teacher.
 - The emotional arousal that comes from the other students. The ASD student has no idea what to do with the emotion that he is feeling or how to cope with it.
- The spontaneous change of having someone new in the class.

Successful Strategies

- Introduce the teacher to the student before class begins.
 - Take a few minutes before class and explain to the student that his regular teacher is away and that Mr/s _____ has taken his place for today.
 - If this is not possible then tell the student in advance of the day that there will be some changes to staffing just for this day.
- Set up a strategy at the beginning of the year for giving some advance notice for this change.
- Provide a support person or safety person who will be available for that student.
- Allow him to join the class of a teacher he knows well and gets along with well for this period.
- Allow the student to go to the library.
- Allow the student to go to the computer room to catch up on work.



These strategies help the ASD student to adjust to classroom and teacher expectations, deal with the unexpected, and enable him to participate in class with his peers. This extra effort will most likely help prevent some of the difficult behaviour that can arise when the student is put in an unfamiliar situation.

Book Review

Asperger Syndrome and Adolescence

Practical Solutions for School Success

Brenda Smith Myles & Diane Adreon

Publisher: Autism Asperger Publishing Company
(Available through Book in Hand 07 3885 8525)



This book can become one's bible when it comes to ASD and school issues. Brenda and Diane present an array of practical interventions for our students, which really do address the challenges these students face in the classroom. The ideas are practical and easy to implement on a day to day basis.

Chapter four is my favourite in that it gives practical skills to use in areas such as note taking, assignments, graphic organisers (which I think our students will derive much benefit from as it is a visual) Physical Education, lunchtimes, changing classes, organisational supports, and the list goes on! In other chapters the book is full of ideas regarding transition planning, environmental supports and assessment. I think this would be a very good book to have in your school library as a resource for all who are involved in teaching an ASD student.

Whether you are a teacher, teacher aide, classroom assistant or parent these strategies will work for you. I just love this book and would recommend it to all who are working with ASD students.



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ABN: 44 458 927 927

- \$50.00 The Essential Guide to Successful Secondary School
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- \$25.00 Talking to Family and Friends
- \$12.00 Working with Teachers
- \$ 6.00 Fun Side of Asperger
- \$18.00 Which School

Prices include postage and handling

\$.....Total

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