

Teaching Strategies for Students with Asperger Syndrome

Characteristics of students with Asperger syndrome may include:

- Impaired ability to understand nonverbal and social cues
- Problems understanding metaphors and words with double meanings
- Problems interacting with others
- Avoidance of direct eye contact
- Flat affect (monotone/rigid speech patterns, or may not smile even when appropriate)
- Emotional vulnerability and difficulty dealing with stress
- Sensory sensitivity problems
- Difficulty with change
- Limited range of interests
- Poor concentration
- Poor organizational skills
- Poor conversational skills:
 - May talk too loudly with little awareness
 - Irrelevant comments, and a lack of understanding concerning the reaction of others
 - Pointed and inappropriate personal questions, and a lack of understanding that he/she is perceived as being insulting or insensitive
 - Poor reciprocal conversational skills:
 - May answer questions with only a “yes” or “no”
 - May pause a long time before responding to others

Possible Accommodations:

- Testing accommodations
 - Separate testing environment
 - Extra time
 - Use of ear plugs for in-class testing
- Lecture notes/PowerPoint available before class
- Use of a recorder for lectures
- Notetakers
- AAC advocacy services

Teaching Strategies:

- On your course syllabus state that students with disabilities and needing special support services may contact the AAC to inquire about accommodations.
- Design instruction in a straightforward and predictable manner:
 - Eliminate complexity (such as in the syllabus or grading scale)
 - Clearly state expectation for assignments
 - Provide copies of your PowerPoint in advance
 - Provide timely and useful feedback
 - Be as concrete when presenting new concepts and abstract material
 - Use examples
- If/when timing is right, educate class regarding disabilities:
 - Disabled students will sometimes like to provide a quick explanation of their disability
- During lecture, if the student tends to interrupt, ask repetitive questions, or participate in any inappropriate manner, *discreetly* ask him/her to meet with you privately:
 - Be prepared to:
 - Explain “unwritten” classroom rules” (such as during a lecture how often to answer/ask questions)
 - Explain problem behavior and develop strategies for appropriate participation:
 - Consider prearranged nonverbal cues for redirection
 - Explain metaphors and words with double meanings
 - Ignore unusual demeanor/ behaviors that are not disruptive
- Consider arranging in-class peer supports (such as a buddy system).
- Reduce classroom distractions (such as excessive noise, flickering lights).
- Encourage students to see you during your conference hours:
 - Be available and supportive
 - Refer students to the AAC for tutoring, computer tutorials, counseling/ disability services as needed
- Consult with the AAC disability services counselor, Nancy Pecorilli npecorilli@sc4.edu as needed.

Additional resources can be found on the following AAC webpage:

[Disability Related Links || St. Clair County Community College](#)