Reading, Writing, & Rage: the 3 R’s of Asperger Syndrome

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Timothy P. Kowalski, M.A.,C.C.C.
Speaker

Disclosure

I declare that aside from materials I have authored, I, or my family, do not have any financial relationship in any amount with a commercial interest whose products or services are discussed in my presentation. Additionally all Planner’s involved in today’s presentation do not have any financial relationship.

Non-Financial:


Financial:

- Professional Communication Services, Inc.: President
- AS Works: Co-owner
- Author

My books

- Practical Strategies for Assessment and Treatment: Social-Pragmatic Success for Asperger Syndrome and Other Related Disorders
- Are you In The Zone? A Simple Technique to Help Someone with Social Difficulties
- Understanding Emotions: A Guide for Adults
- Me, Myself, and You: A Workbook for Children with Social Difficulties
- Asperger Syndrome explained
Effective reading requires...

- word attack skills
- visual linguistic skills

Word attack skills are typically excellent but comprehension is the problem

(or is it?)

Typically prefer nonfiction to fiction.
If the topic is an area of interest, do you think they will read it?

Huh?

But they don’t understand fiction (or do they?)

Did you ask him to read a novel in a high interest area?

But what if it’s not?
How many of you enjoy a good Russian novel?

**War and Peace**
Leo Tolstoy

**Why?**

Nonfiction doesn’t require understanding emotions and intent

- children with AS referred to desire and made few references to thought and belief (Ziasa, Durkin, and Pratt, 2003)
AS children have significant difficulty attributing mental states in context and need more prompts to solve questions (Kaland, 2002)

creates increased paranoia (Blackshaw, 2001)

Theories that impact performance

- Theory of Mind
- Executive Functions
- Central Coherence
- Emotional Intelligence

What’s Theory of the Mind?
In a nutshell, it’s perspective taking

It doesn’t matter what you think about yourself...

It matters what everyone else thinks of you!

Ever been told your zipper is down?

But did you purposely leave the house KNOWING it was down?

How do people see you?
Many people with AS are unaware how they are seen by others

Deficits Related to ToM
B. Myles and J. Southwick, 1999

- difficulty explaining one’s own behaviors
- difficulty understanding emotions
- difficulty predicting the behavior and emotional states of others

- problems understanding the perspectives of others
- problems inferring the intentions of others
- lack of understanding that behavior impacts how others think and/or feel

Surprise! People DO think about you

What the?
- Problems with joint attention and other social conventions
- Problems differentiating fiction from fact

Requirements for ToM

- For children to be able to recognize and act upon assumptions acquired from observations, it is critical that they understand the nature and causes of emotions


Executive Functions

Definition: how you process, plan, and carryout a procedure to complete a task

- Example: Time Management
- Requires 4 significant skill areas:

(Educators call it “Organizational Skills”)
1. Flexibility of Thought
Definition: the ability to determine the best option for a task
How does AS impact flexibility of thought?
- thought shifting
- changing an idea
- hyper-focus on a specific area (OCD)

2. Identification of Relevance
Definition: determining what is important and not important to the task at hand
How does AS impact identifying relevance?
- detail oriented
- fail to see the global picture

3. Experiential Learning
Definition: the ability to learn from and draw upon past experiences
How does AS impact experiential learning?
- identifying what works and what doesn’t
- applying a skill to a new situation
- difficult to see similarity of old situation and how to apply “old” skills to “new” situation
4. Goal Focus

- Definition: the ability to remain focused and on-task, despite presence of competing information
- How does AS impact goal focus?
  - getting stuck in details
  - getting distracted

Comparison of Executive Functions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NT</th>
<th>AS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexibility of Thought</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify Relevance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiential Learning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal Focus</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Central Coherence

- Definition: the ability to integrate details into a larger picture
- How does AS impact central coherence?
  - details rule
  - often have the information but can’t integrate it into the big picture
  - seen as inconsiderate & thoughtless to NTs
### Comparison of Central Cohesion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NT</th>
<th>AS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Multiple Input Style</td>
<td>Single</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Detail Driven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Sees “Big Picture”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global</td>
<td>Memory Style</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parts to Whole Integration Style</td>
<td>Random Input</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Factors Limiting the Ability to Recognize Emotional States

- excessive concrete reasoning
- overuse of literal interpretation
- limited analytic skills
- limited flexibility
- limited perspective taking
- focusing on one aspect and not the whole

EQ impacts

- personal competence
- social competence

AS intervention must stress EQ

- social skill training does not make one socially savvy
- the *how* is not as important as the *why*
- simply knowing *how* to do something doesn’t mean knowing *when* or *where* to use it
- being aware of one’s EQ is critical

Personal Competence

- 3 levels:
  - self-awareness
  - self-regulation
  - self-motivation
self-awareness

3 sublevels:
- Emotional awareness
  - recognizing one’s emotions and their effects
- Self-assessment
  - knowing one’s strengths and limits
- Self-confidence
  - sureness about one’s capabilities

AS impact on emotional awareness

- can’t recognize and explain their emotions
- can’t associate feelings with their behavior
- can’t realize their feelings impact their performance

AS impact on self-assessment

- not aware of their own strengths and limits
- experiential learning is difficult
- not open to new ideas or suggestions
- can’t show a sense of humor/perspective about themselves

- limited self confidence
  - especially in new situations
- overly opinionated
  - may reach the point of being obsessive
- often based on personal views and not grounded in sound decisions
  - Grice’s maxim of “quality”
**self-regulation**

- 4 sublevels:
  - self-control
    - ability to manage disruptive emotions/impulses
  - trustworthiness
    - honesty and integrity
  - conscientiousness
    - responsibility for one’s own actions
  - adaptability
    - flexible and open to new ideas

**AS impact on self-control**

- can’t manage impulsive feelings
- can’t manage distressing emotions
- falls apart in stressful situations
- increased pressure creates:
  - distractibility
  - irrational behavior

**AS impact on trustworthiness**

- not prone to admit their own mistakes
- reliability can be impacted by central coherence
- opinionated

**AS impact on conscientiousness**

- chaos often a result from:
  - multiple demands
  - rapid change
  - shifting priorities
- rigid and not prone to adapt when necessary
- ToM impacts ability to see events in multiple perspectives
**AS impact on adaptability**

- limited ability to generate new ideas
  - Bloom’s cognitive process: “Create”
- limited flexibility impacts problem solving skills
- not open to new ideas
- can’t determine best option from a wide variety of sources

**self-motivation**

- 4 sublevels:
  - achievement drive
    - the need to meet or exceed a given standard
  - commitment
    - embracing the goals of the group
  - initiative
    - the ability to act on opportunities
  - optimism
    - being able to continue a goal despite setbacks

**AS impact on achievement**

- may not have a strong desire to excel
- limited risk taking
- fail to learn how to improve performance

**AS impact on commitment**

- can’t sacrifice own desires for the good of the group
AS impact on initiative

- may have difficulty going beyond minimal expectations
- limited ability to mobilize others
- poor leadership qualities

AS impact on optimism

- not good when frustrated
- operate on fear of failure rather than hope of success
- see setbacks as personal failure rather than opportunity for change

Use of Bloom’s Taxonomy to Understand Reading Difficulties

Bloom’s Taxonomy
L. Anderson and D. Krathwohl, 2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge Dimension</th>
<th>Cognitive Process Dimension</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meta- Cognitive</td>
<td>Remember</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedural</td>
<td>Recall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factual</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Cognitive Process Dimension: Remember

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Requires the ability to...</th>
<th>AS impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>the ability to retrieve relevant knowledge from long-term memory</td>
<td>• Recognize • Identify • Recall • Retrieve</td>
<td>typically strong areas for students with AS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Cognitive Process Dimension: Understand

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Requires the ability to...</th>
<th>AS impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>the ability to construct meaning from messages</td>
<td>• Interpret • Give examples • Infer • Compare • Explain</td>
<td>1. Executive Functions • flexibility • relevance 2. Theory of Mind 3. Central Coherence 4. Emotional Intelligence • self-awareness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Cognitive Process Dimension: Apply

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Requires the ability to...</th>
<th>AS impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>the ability to use a procedure</td>
<td>• Execute • Implement</td>
<td>1. Anxiety 2. Emotional Intelligence • self-awareness • self-regulation • self-motivation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Cognitive Process Dimension: Analyze

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Requires the ability to...</th>
<th>AS impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>the ability to break information into parts &amp; determine their relationship</td>
<td>• Differentiate • Organize • Provide attribution</td>
<td>1. Executive Functions • flexibility • relevance • goal focus 2. Central Coherence 3. Emotional Intelligence • self-regulation • social skills</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Cognitive Process Dimension: Evaluate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Requires the ability to...</th>
<th>AS impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| the ability to make judgments based on criteria and standards | • Check  
• Critique | 1. Executive Functions  
• flexibility  
• relevance  
• goal focus  
2. Central Coherence  
3. Theory of Mind  
4. Emotional Intelligence  
• self-motivation  
• social awareness  
• social skills | |

### Cognitive Process Dimension: Create

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Requires the ability to...</th>
<th>AS impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| the ability to put elements together to form a whole, a new pattern, or structure | • Generate  
• Plan  
• Produce | 1. Executive Functions  
• flexibility  
• relevance  
• goal focus  
2. Central Coherence  
3. Theory of Mind  
4. Emotional Intelligence  
• self-regulation  
• self-motivation  
• social awareness  
• social skills | |

### Cognitive Process Dimension

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Remember</th>
<th>Understand</th>
<th>Apply</th>
<th>Analyze</th>
<th>Evaluate</th>
<th>Create</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Definition: the ability to retrieve relevant knowledge from long-term memory</td>
<td>Definition: the ability to construct meaning from messages</td>
<td>Definition: the ability to use a procedure</td>
<td>Definition: the ability to break into, into parts &amp; determine relationship</td>
<td>Definition: the ability to make judgments based on criteria and standards</td>
<td>Definition: the ability to put elements together to form a whole, a new pattern, or structure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Requires the ability to: | Requires the ability to interpret | Requires the ability to execute | Requires the ability to differentiate | Requires the ability to check | Requires the ability to generate  
• Recognize  
• Identify  
• Recall  
• Retrieve | • Give examples | • Implement | • Organize | • Critique | • Plan | • Produce |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AS impact: typically strong areas for students with AS</th>
<th>AS impact:</th>
<th>AS impact:</th>
<th>AS impact:</th>
<th>AS impact:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. EF  
2. EQ  
3. CC  
4. EQ  
• self-awareness  
• self-motivation | 1. Anxiety  
2. EF  
• self-awareness  
• self-regulation  
• self-motivation | 1. EF  
• self-awareness  
• self-regulation  
• social skills | 1. EF  
• self-awareness  
• self-regulation  
• social skills | 1. EF  
• self-awareness  
• self-regulation  
• social skills |

### Knowledge Dimension: Factual

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Requires the ability to...</th>
<th>AS impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| the information a student must know | • Terminology  
• Details  
• Elements | Typically strong areas for students with AS |
**Knowledge Dimension: Conceptual**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Requires the ability to...</th>
<th>AS impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>the inter-relationships with which elements have to allow them to function together</td>
<td>• Classify • Categorize • Use principles &amp; generalizations • Use theories, models &amp; structures</td>
<td>1. Executive Functions • flexibility • relevance • experiential learning • goal focus 2. Central Coherence 3. Theory of Mind 4. Emotional Intelligence • self-awareness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Knowledge Dimension: Procedural**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Requires the ability to...</th>
<th>AS impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>the ability to know how to do something</td>
<td>• Subject specific skills • Subject specific techniques • Knowledge of when to use these skills</td>
<td>1. Executive Functions • flexibility • relevance • experiential learning • goal focus 2. Central Coherence 3. Theory of Mind 4. Emotional Intelligence • self-awareness • self-regulation • social-awareness • social-skills</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Knowledge Dimension: Metacognitive**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Requires the ability to...</th>
<th>AS impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>the ability to know about cognition and the awareness and knowledge of one's own cognition</td>
<td>• Strategic knowledge • Knowledge of cognitive tasks • Self knowledge</td>
<td>1. Executive Functions • flexibility • relevance • experiential learning • goal focus 2. Central Coherence 3. Theory of Mind 4. Emotional Intelligence • self-awareness • self-regulation • self-motivation • social-awareness • social-skills</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Knowledge Dimension**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factual</th>
<th>Conceptual</th>
<th>Procedural</th>
<th>Meta-Cognitive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Definition: the information a student must know</td>
<td>Definition: the inter-relationships with which elements have to allow them to function together</td>
<td>Definition: the ability to know how to do something</td>
<td>Definition: the ability to know about cognition and the awareness and knowledge of one's own cognition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requires the ability to use: • Terminology • Details • Elements</td>
<td>Requires the ability to have: • Classify • Categorize • Use principles &amp; generalizations • Use theories, models &amp; structures</td>
<td>Requires the ability to have: • Subject specific skills • Subject specific techniques • Knowledge of when to use these skills</td>
<td>Requires the ability to: • Strategic knowledge • Knowledge of cognitive tasks • Self knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AS impact: typically strong areas for students with AS</td>
<td>AS impact: 1. EF • flexibility • relevance • experiential learning • goal focus 2. ToM 3. CC 4. EQ • self-awareness</td>
<td>AS impact: 1. EF • flexibility • relevance • experiential learning • goal focus 2. ToM 3. CC 4. EQ • self-awareness • self-regulation • social-awareness • social-skills</td>
<td>AS impact: 1. EF • flexibility • relevance • experiential learning • goal focus 2. ToM 3. CC 4. EQ • self-awareness • self-regulation • social-awareness • social-skills</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**At what level on Bloom’s Analysis is he functioning?**

- Typically it will be the lower end:
  - answer rote questions
  - sequence

**Higher order Bloom’s**

- Easier on subject material that is of high interest
  - RNRI (restricted narrow range of interest)
  - IDGAS (“I don’t give a ....”)

**Improving Reading Comprehension**

- Use colored overlays
- Change background color on word processor
- Color code words to emphasize without distortion
- Highlight main idea

**use transparent colored tape**
- Increase word spacing
- Use “find-replace” feature
- Teach predictive ability
  - “What's happening here? What do you THINK will happen next?”
- allow for visualization of information
- remain constant for closer examination
- capitalize on visual strengths

- use graphic organizers
  - compare/contrast
  - interval graphs
  - transitive order
  - flowcharts
  - central idea graphs
  - branching diagrams
  - class relationships

**Compare/Contrast Diagrams**

- used to examine:
  - 2 people
  - 2 solutions
  - 2 things
  - 2 organisms
  - 2 places
  - 2 cultures
  - 2 stories
  - 2 ideas

**Interval Graph**

- used to examine:
  - chronological order
  - number value
  - parallel events
  - graph information
**Transitive Order Graph**
- Used to examine:
  - People
  - Events
  - Number value
  - Critical thinking
  - Objects
  - Decision making

**Flowchart Diagrams**
- Steps
- Used to represent:
  - Sequential events
  - Processes*
  - Critical thinking
  - Decision making

**Central Idea Graphs**
- Used to describe:
  - People
  - Places
  - Things
  - Events
  - Stories
  - Decision
  - Ideas
  - Culture

**Branching Diagrams**
- Used to depict:
  - Family trees
  - Systems
  - Organizational charts
  - Class/subclass
  - Hierarchical relationships
Branching Diagrams

- used to illustrate:
  - logical reasoning concepts
  - class relationships
  - comparison relationships
  - mathematics concepts

Matrix Diagram

- used to organize:
  - schedules
  - data for retrieval
  - comparisons by multiple criteria
  - deductive reasoning

Writing

- discuss the purpose and goals for each reading assignment
- teach main components of story (such as character, setting, etc.)
- teach how to draw plausible conclusions to a story:
  - prediction
  - anticipating multiple outcomes
Where do you place your bet?

- Legibility will be horrible.
- Legibility will be good.

Hans Asperger called the writing “atrocious”

Horrible penmanship

- excessively large letters
- illegible handwriting
- excess completion time
- dislike handwriting
- refusal to complete tasks using handwriting
- often incorrectly perceived as noncompliant behavior

If writing becomes labor intensive, students may...

- focus more energy on the handwriting process and not the quality of the content
- produce the bare minimum
- become habituated to think in fewest words possible
Motor difficulties exist

- Research documented
- Neuroanatomical differences exist in cerebellums
  - Cellular and structural levels
  - May contribute to motor difficulties

2 primary difficulties in ASD

- Hypotonia
- Apraxia
- Both impact the individual’s ability to hold and use tools for writing

Macrographia exists

- Impedes performance
- Research suggests it is correlated with cerebellar anatomical abnormalities

Having to engage in handwriting is the most significant and serious impediment to academic participation for students with autism spectrum disorders in schools in North America today

Dr. Richard Simpson, from a presentation at the ABA Conference on Autism, Boston, February 2007
Graphomotor skills are significantly lower for students with ASD regardless of age or IQ. Impacts written expression often handwriting activities fail to tap what a student with AS actually knows. Impacted by:
- fine motor deficits
- anxiety
- stress

Just because some students with ASD can manipulate handwriting instruments doesn’t mean they all can.

Deficits impact all areas of academic participation:
- Fear of failure increases anxiety & stress
  - Escalation of inappropriate behavior
- Concentration moves from content to task
  - Documented via PET scans
  - Blood & O₂ are reduced
Many can perform other fine motor skills with ease
  - musical instruments
  - manipulating toys

Why?
  - different neural pathways are involved

Does it make sense to continuously emphasize a skill that will likely never reach a level of proficiency sufficient to enable students to demonstrate what they know or think in an efficient and fluid manner?

Which strategy makes more sense?

- Handwriting struggles
  - Intellectual output
  - More practice!
- Handwriting struggles
  - Intellectual output
  - Computer!

Reasons for not wanting to use a computer
  - it’s not fair
    - ADA requires equal access
    - not all students need one
  - high cost
    - only need word processing
    - used computer works fine
    - Alpha Smart
・he needs to know how to print
  ■ does he?
    ▶ only need to write name, address, phone
    ▶ digital text is the norm for society
・too time consuming
  ■ fluency is not the immediate goal
  ■ software programs teach QWERTY

**Literacy is not dependent upon handwriting**

・handwriting is a means of using a visual symbol system to convey a meaning to others
・literacy is linked to the thought process

**Ask the question...**

・Is the assignment a ...
  ■ fine motor task or an
  ■ academic exercise?

**What’s more important?**

・to write the answer?
・to know the answer?
Software Dictation

- Dragon Speech Naturally

Word Prediction

- CoWriter

Visual brainstorming software
- available for computer and PDA

Writing Rubric
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Development</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Word Choice</th>
<th>Sentence Formation</th>
<th>Writing Rules</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Excellent Details</td>
<td>• Includes introduction</td>
<td>• Word choice varies (not repetitive)</td>
<td>• Appropriate use of:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Details well explained</td>
<td>• Transition words are used to connect beginning, middle, and end in logical order</td>
<td>• Descriptive words well used (adjectives, adverbs, action verbs)</td>
<td>• capitals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Details are topic appropriate</td>
<td>• Sentence structure varies (not repetitive)</td>
<td>• Sentences make sense</td>
<td>• punctuation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Specific details</td>
<td>• Includes introduction, body, and end</td>
<td>• Word choice usually varies</td>
<td>• Complete sentence structure usually used</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Details usually well explained</td>
<td>• Details presented in an orderly fashion that makes sense</td>
<td>• Some descriptive words used</td>
<td>• Sentence structure usually varies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Details usually topic appropriate</td>
<td>• Complete sentence structure usually used</td>
<td>• Sentences always make sense</td>
<td>• Spelling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Some details</td>
<td>• May be missing beginning, middle, or end</td>
<td>• Repetition of words and/or ideas sometimes occurs</td>
<td>• Use of the following sometimes correct:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Some details may not belong</td>
<td>• Some of the details are in order</td>
<td>• Needs more descriptive and action words</td>
<td>• capitals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Some details need more explanation</td>
<td>• Sentence structure typically repetitive</td>
<td>• Use of the following sometimes correct:</td>
<td>• punctuation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sometimes remain on topic</td>
<td>• Use of the following sometimes correct:</td>
<td>• N-V agreement</td>
<td>• Spelling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Few or no details</td>
<td>• No clear beginning, middle or end</td>
<td>• Word repetition is common</td>
<td>• Incomplete sentence structure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Piece is very short</td>
<td>• Writing not in order</td>
<td>• Omits words</td>
<td>• Use of the following is incorrect:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Fails to stay on topic</td>
<td>• Poor use of descriptive and action words</td>
<td>• Poor use of descriptive and action words</td>
<td>• Spelling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What about spelling?

But...

...bad spelling is viewed as poor intellect.

So...

...if you want people to have good thoughts about you, then what do you have to do to allow them to develop good thoughts about you?
Rage

Elements of Social Behavior

2 Main Behavioral Concerns
- antecedent events
- consequent events

Don’t Create Escalation
- for many individuals with social-pragmatic deficits, some actions can actually escalate the situation:
  - raising your voice
  - confrontation
  - sarcasm
  - being emotional
  - use of physical restraint
Raising Voice & Confrontation

- Emphasis on punishment inflames situation
- Individual becomes less flexible in thinking
- Resorts to “tried and true”

Sarcasm

- Creates confusion
- More things to think about when he is least able to using thinking skills

Emotional Escalation

- Often serves to escalate by adding to the situation

Countercontrol

- Attempts used by students (sometimes subconsciously) to be in control
- These students are often described as:
  - Noncompliant
  - Disobedient
  - Resistant
  - Willful
  - Persistent
  - Stubborn
  - Oppositional
  - Rebellious
Behaviors that Escalate Countercontrol

- tightening reinforcement contingencies
- introducing time-out
- assuming more stringent punishments

Behaviors that Reduce Countercontrol

- allowing student to perceive he has a choice
- allowing for understanding of why they are learning specific skills
- including area of interest into curriculum

Am I Contributing to Countercontrol?

- When teaching, do you get frustrated or angry?
- Do you find that the more you try to direct some students, the more difficult they become?
- Do you sometimes feel like students are manipulating you and enjoy seeing you get upset?

When I'm in a state of rage, I take myself to a quiet place;
And when I'm in my quiet place I fight off angry dragons.
And when those dragons are gone I can
Come out of hiding.

Cory, 2005
Rage Cycle

Rumble Stage

Typical Rumbling Stage Behaviors
- fidgeting
- swearing
- making noises
- ripping paper
- grimacing
- refusing to cooperate

- rapid movements
- tears tensing muscles
- name calling
- voice loudness alters
- verbal threats
- taping foot
Rumbling Stage Interventions

- antiseptic bouncing
- proximity control
- signal interference
- touch control
- humor
- support from routine

Effective Adult Behavior During Rumbling Stage

- remain calm
- use a quiet voice
- take deep breaths
- prevent power struggle
- re-evaluate student goals
- be flexible - the child cannot

Rage Stage

- interest boosting
- redirecting
- cool zone
- acknowledging student’s difficulties
- walk - don’t talk

Myles and Southwick, 1999
Adult Behaviors That Can Escalate a Crisis

- raising voice/yelling
- making assumptions
- preaching
- backing student into a corner
- saying “I’m the boss here”
- pleading or bribing

- attacking the student’s character
- making unsubstantiated accusations
- nagging
- holding a grudge
- acting superior
- throwing a temper tantrum

- insisting on having the last word
- bringing up unrelated events
- using tense body language
- generalizing by making remarks such as “You kids are all the same”
- using sarcasm

- using unwarranted physical force
- mimicking the child or youth
- drawing unrelated persons into the conflict
- making comparisons with other students
- insisting the adult is correct
- double standards - “Do what I say, not what I do.”
- commanding, demanding, dominating
- using insults, humiliation

- disinhibited
- acting impulsively
- emotional
- explosive
- destroying property
- self-injurious

- screaming
- biting
- hitting
- kicking
- internalizing behavior

- protect
  - student
  - environment
  - others
- don’t discipline
- remove audience
Effective Adult Behavior During Rage Stage

- control “flight/fight” tendency
- remember that less is more
- remain calm and quiet
- do not take behaviors personally
- disengage emotionally
- be conscious of your nonverbal cues
- take deep breaths

- don’t be confrontational
- follow a plan
- obtain assistance
- prompt to a cool zone
- use few words

- prevent a power struggle
- re-evaluate the student’s goals
- be flexible - the child cannot
- set a timer

Recovery Stage

Myles and Southwick, 1999

Prevention Strategies
**Recovery Stage Behaviors**

- sleeping
- denial of rage behaviors
- withdrawal into fantasy
- apologizing

**Recovery Stage Interventions**

- allow to sleep
- relaxation techniques
- do not refer to the rage behavior
- support with structure

- consider the child “fragile”
- plan instructional alternatives to provide alternatives to rage behavior
- do not make excessive demands

- determine appropriate option for child:
  - redirect to successful activity or special interest
  - provide space
  - ensure that interventions are presented at or below the child’s functioning level
  - check to see if student is ready to learn
Behavioral interventions to reduce escalation of rage cycle

Myles and Southwick (2005)

Incredible 5-Point Scale

www.asperger.net

1. Antiseptic bouncing

- designed to allow a student to “walk off” steam in a non-punitive way

2. Proximity control

- teacher simply moves closer to student
- doing so can be a calming agent
- doesn’t interrupt any class activity
3. **Signal interference**
- designed to redirect student to a more positive activity
- procedure:
  - teacher recognizes precursor
  - teacher uses non-verbal signal to indicate she is aware of situation
  - student responds by using pre-determined stress reducing task

4. **Use of routines**
- redirect to visual schedule
- especially useful when student is provided with contingency visual
  - 2 more problems then read Star Wars!

5. **Redirection**
- teacher directs student to focus on something other than the upsetting activity
- offer student opportunity to cartoon situation to help in determining appropriate options

6. **Use of cool zone**
- a predetermined location to allow student to escape stress
- should be quiet and free of distractions
- NEVER considered a time-out, punishment, or escape from class assignments
7. Acknowledge difficulty

- simply acknowledging that a task is difficult can be reassuring
- focus student on steps required for task completion

8. Go for a walk

- student and adult go for a walk
- adult listens with NO visual emotion
- child is allowed to rant without punitive measure from adult

9. S.O.C.C.S.S.

Situation-Options-Consequences-Choices-Strategies-Simulation

- Situation:
  - after the event, teacher identifies
    - who (were involved)
    - what (happened)
    - where (did it occur)
    - when (did it occur)

- Options:
  - teacher and student brainstorm variety of options
  - do not rule out any inappropriate responses
    - “shoot him, stab him...”
  - initially teacher may need to facilitate responses
**Consequences:**
- for every option, develop list of consequences
  - shoot him = go to jail

**Choices:**
- prioritize or Y-N rank
- have student determine best option based on:
  - accomplishing goal
  - social appropriateness

**Strategies**
- have student develop a plan
- student should have ownership

**Simulation:** practice the problem-solving procedure
- imagery
- talking to another individual about the plan
- writing down the plan
- role-playing
Increasing the Use of the Language of Emotions

1. Expressing Feelings
- everyone has feelings
- some ways of showing feelings only escalates the problem
- how do some of our students express emotions
  - pro-social
  - anti-social

2. Controlling Anger
- many individuals react because of how they feel
- try to get students to understand that their desire is not necessarily a demand
  - e.g. “Joe should not talk when I’m watching a movie” needs to be changed to “I’d appreciate it if Joe would not talk when I’m watching a movie.”

3. Sense or Nonsense?
- have student write their thought down that’s making them angry
- have student ask himself the following:
  - is it true?
  - am I exaggerating?
  - is it the end of the world?
4. Stop the Spiral
- recognizing when the spiral of negative thinking is happening allows one an opportunity to redirect
- get student to realize HE controls his emotions
- have him think of something he does well and DEFLECT his thoughts

5. Managing Accusations
- think about why you were accused
- what was the accuser thinking? (ToM)
- if true, admit it
- if not, explain
- don’t place blame

Be Aware of the Hidden Curriculum

What is it?
- defined as the set of rules or guidelines that are often not directly taught but presumed to be known
- they impact social interaction
- it is ASSUMED knowledge
Statements indicating violation

- I shouldn’t have to tell you, but...
- It should be obvious that...
- Everyone knows that...
- Common sense tells us...
- No one ever...

How to create environments that assist your student to be more emotionally stable

1. Assess student’s current emotional state
   - use multiple sources
   - student often is an ineffective source of information
     - often doesn’t recognize escalation is occurring until crisis occurs
   - be aware of academic, social, or behavioral changes

2. Determine environmental stressors
   - any changes to routine?
   - situations in school, dorm, or home?
### 3. Decrease the Stress
- Modify requirements for disliked or difficult tasks
- Temporarily eliminate any emphasis on teaching new skills

### 4. Increase Predictability
- Be sure student knows routine
- Consider priming
- Consider home base concept

### 5. Balance Stressors and Learning
- Gradually increase demands
- Be sure student knows how to accomplish demands

The key to success involves continually monitoring the student’s emotional state and providing supports to make school successful.
The Best Way to Avoid Rage is to be Proactive

Time to “Guinea Pig” on some students

My books
When working with AS students remember the 3-Rs:

Reading
Writing
Rage

Thank you for coming.