

Autism & Asperger's Disorder: Information & Effective Intervention Strategies

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Introduction

Welcome to *Autism and Asperger's Disorder*, an interactive computer-based instruction (CBI) course designed to help you achieve a better understanding of Autism and Asperger's Disorder, of intervention strategies to enhance communication and learning, and of methods for teaching more conventional behaviors. *Autism and Asperger's Disorder* provides information on the characteristics of the disorder, learning styles associated with the disorder, communication weaknesses, and various intervention strategies that have proven to be successful when working with students with Autism Spectrum Disorders. The course helps you comprehend why individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders act the way they do, and what you can do to enhance more appropriate behavior. This course also lists resources for educators, related service personnel, and parents who would like more help or information on autism and Asperger's Disorder.

This computer-based instruction course is a self-supporting program that provides instruction, structured practice and evaluation all on your home or business computer. Information on installation and technical support can be found, and will be covered in detail, in the User Guide section of your computer software.

**Four course worksheets are provided to assist you in studying this course. Some examination questions will be based on these handouts. You may access and print these handouts from the CD. The handouts are located in a folder titled "DATA" on the course CD. It is suggested that you access and print these handouts before you begin the course. (PDF files - BMI, TSWA_1, TSWA_2, USEC)*

Course Materials

Title: *Autism and Asperger's Disorders: Information & Effective Intervention Strategies*
Author: Dr. Marrea Winnega, Ph.D. & Mary Coughlin, CCC-SLP
Publisher: Virtual Education Software, Inc. ©2001, Revised 2002, Revised 2004
Instructor: Dr. Marrea Winnega
There is a \$25 replacement fee for CD-roms.

Academic Integrity Statement

The structure and format of most distance-learning courses presume a high level of personal and academic integrity in completion and submission of coursework. Individuals enrolled in a CBI distance-learning course are expected to adhere to the following standards of academic conduct.

Academic Work

Academic work submitted by the individual (such as papers, assignments, reports, tests) shall be the student's own work or appropriately attributed, in part or in whole, to its correct source. Submission of commercially prepared (or group prepared) materials as if they are one's own work is unacceptable.

Aiding Honesty in Others

The individual will encourage honesty in others by refraining from providing materials or information to another person with knowledge that these materials or information will be used improperly.

Violations of these academic standards may result in the assignment of a failing grade and subsequent loss of credit for the course.

Level of Application

This course is designed to be an informational course with application in work or work-related settings. The intervention strategies are designed to be used with students with autism and Asperger's Disorder ranging in age from approximately three years to adulthood.

Course Objectives

- To define the characteristics of Autistic Disorder and Asperger's Disorder for better understanding of these disorders
 - To increase the ability to identify students having these disorders
 - To provide information on how individuals with these disorders are different from other students, and how to teach them given these differences
 - To understand their behavior in terms of their differences and communication styles
 - To develop an understanding of the communication differences and weaknesses in students with autism or Asperger's
 - To provide information on teaching strategies
 - To provide resources for teachers and parents
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Course Description

The course *Autism and Asperger's Disorder* has been divided into four chapters and into five to eight exercises within each chapter. The first chapter is on the diagnosis of autism and Asperger's; it gives a clear picture of the characteristics that define these disorders. Although the information in this chapter is complete and thorough, there is much information published about autism and Asperger's Disorder. We recommend that you complete readings and research outside the course materials to gain a fuller understanding of these disorders and the variety of interventions. To cover all areas and issues affecting students with autism or Asperger's and their behavior would not be possible in one course. However, this introduction chapter and subsequent chapters should give you a firm understanding of the disorder and of effective tools for facilitating positive changes with these students.

The second chapter of *Autism and Asperger's Disorder* is "**Behaviors and Techniques.**" This chapter discusses ways in which individuals with autism or Asperger's are different from other learners. The information in this chapter serves to increase your understanding of autism and Asperger's so that an effective intervention plan can be developed to help the student with communication and/or behavioral difficulties. Gaining an understanding of the possible reasons for their behaviors will also help in the understanding of why certain interventions are more successful in teaching these students.

The third chapter is "**Communication and Language.**" In this chapter, you will be given information about the prerequisites of communication, the components of speech and language, and the profiles of nonverbal and verbal children with Autism Spectrum Disorders. You will be provided with interventions to enhance communication.

The final chapter covers "**Special Education.**" You will learn how to use visual supports, schedules and calendars to help autistic or Asperger's children monitor their time and program more effectively and independently. You will learn to use the strategy of "first/then" to help children finish important daily tasks before moving into pleasurable free-time activities. You will also be presented with some case examples to strengthen your understanding.

Student Expectations

As a student, you will be expected to:

- Complete **all** information chapters covering autism & Asperger's, showing a competent understanding of the material presented.
- Complete **all** examinations, showing a competent understanding of the material presented.
- Complete a review of any chapter on which your examination score was below 70%.

- Retake any chapter examination, after completing an information review, to increase that examination score to a minimum of 70% (**maximum of three attempts**).
- Complete all course journal article and essay writing assignments with the minimum word count shown for each writing assignment.
- Complete a course evaluation form at the end of the course.

Course Sections Overview

Chapter 1 – Introduction and Characteristics

This section focuses on the characteristics that define the autism spectrum. The areas to be discussed are the social and communication impairments and the restricted repetitive and stereotyped patterns of behavior, interests and activities exhibited by individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders.

Chapter 2 – Behaviors and Techniques

This section describes how individuals with autism and Asperger's perceive the world and their different learning styles. These differences will be applied to the behavioral challenges these students exhibit.

Chapter 3 – Communication and Language

This section discusses the prerequisites for communication, such as object permanence and cause and effect, the components of speech and language, and the communication profiles exhibited by individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders. Enhancing communication in both the nonverbal and verbal student will be addressed.

Chapter 4 – Special Education

This section discusses how visual supports can be used to help students understand verbal directions and what they need to be doing. Visual supports include symbols, line drawings and pictures used as pictures on a ring, communication boards, schedules, lists and first/then cards.

Examinations

At the end of each course chapter, you will be expected to complete an examination designed to assess your knowledge. You may take these exams a total of three times. After your third attempt, each examination will lock and not allow further access. Your final grade for this course will be determined by calculating an average score of all exams. This score will be printed on your final certificate. As this is a self-paced computerized instruction program, you may review course information as often as necessary. You will not be able to exit any examinations until you have answered all questions. If you try to exit the exam before you complete all questions, your information will be lost. You are expected to complete the entire exam in one sitting.

Writing Assignments

This course has two required writing components:

TO SAVE YOUR ESSAYS:

Macintosh: When you select the question or article you wish to write on, simple text or text edit will automatically be launched. When you are finished, simply click on FILE>SAVE. **Do not select SAVE AS.** You do not need to give the document a name before saving. When you are done, select FILE>QUIT. **You must quit before you write another essay.**

Windows: When you select the question or article, notepad will automatically launch. When you are finished, click on FILE>SAVE. **Do not select SAVE AS.** You do not need to give the document a name before saving.

1) Essay Requirement: Critical Thinking Questions

There is a *critical thinking question* for each chapter or section. You will do research on the question and write a brief essay upon relating it to the course content (and your personal experiences when possible). To view the questions, click on ESSAY REQ, then on CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS. You will see the questions, one for each chapter or section. Click on the question you would like to work on; this will bring up a screen where you can enter your essay. You must write a minimum of 500 words per essay.

2) *Essay Requirement: Journal Articles*

This task requires you to write a review of three journal articles of your choice on a topic related to this course. You may choose journal articles outside the instructor's selected list, provided the content of the article relates to the course and you provide the journal name, volume, date and critical information so that the instructor can access and review that article. You must write a minimum of 200 words for each essay. To view the instructor list of journal articles and write your essays, click on ESSAY REQ. The VIEW ARTICLE button will lead you to a document, listing articles the instructor recommends for your research. In the dialog box below that, click on JOURNAL ARTICLE ASSIGNMENT; this will expand the folder, which contains links to the screens where you can write your reviews. When you are ready to stop, click on FILE>SAVE. You may go back at any point to edit your essays. For more information on the features of this assignment, please consult the HELP menu.

Instructor Description

Autism and Asperger's Disorder has been developed by Marrea Winnega, Ph.D. and Mary Coughlin, CCC-SLP. Dr. Marrea Winnega, the instructor of record, is a Licensed Clinical Psychologist with over 15 years of experience in the field of Autism Spectrum Disorders. Currently, she is an Assistant Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Chicago and directs a clinic that has as its main function the diagnosis of individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders. She consults for schools and agencies serving individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders including Asperger's Disorder. She has facilitated numerous parent groups for parents of children with autism in her position at the University of Illinois at Chicago Institute on Disability and Human Development (UAP). She has also conducted numerous workshops, in-services and trainings throughout the United States. Six years ago, Dr. Winnega developed the Autism Dynamic Beginnings classroom, an intensive, multimodal classroom for 3 to 6-year-olds with autism.

Mary Coughlin is a Speech-Language Pathologist with over 19 years of experience in the field. Her background includes working with students in both regular education and special education settings. She has taught in a communication development classroom, worked with behavior disorders, severe-profound disabilities, birth to five, and medically fragile children as well as those with developmental delays and autism. She also has served on a diagnostic team serving early childhood for over ten years. She has presented numerous workshops for parents and professionals on the various aspects of communication, speech and language. She has worked with Dr. Winnega in Autism Dynamic Beginnings since its inception.

Contacting the Instructor

You may contact the instructor by emailing Dr. Winnega at marreaw@virtualeduc.com or calling her at 509-891-7219, Monday through Friday, 9 a.m - 5 p.m. PST. Phone messages will be answered within 24 hours. Phone conferences will be limited to ten minutes per student, per day, given that this is a self-paced instructional program. Please do not contact the instructor about technical problems, course glitches or other issues that involve the operation of the course.

Technical Questions

If you have questions or problems related to the operation of this course CD, please try everything twice. If the problem persists please check our support pages for FAQs and known issues at www.virtualeduc.com and also the Help section on your course disk.

If you need personal assistance then email support@virtualeduc.com or call (509) 891-7219. When contacting technical support, please know your course version number, it is printed on the CD label, your operating system and be seated in front of the computer at the time of your call.

Minimum Requirements

Macintosh Operating Systems

Mac OS 9.x or OS 10.x, 256MB of RAM and 5MB of free hard disk space, 15" or larger color monitor with a minimum resolution of 800x600, CD driver 4x minimum speed and a printer connected to your computer.

Windows Operating Systems

Windows 2000, XP Home, Professional or newer, 256MB of RAM and 5MB of free hard disk space; 15" or larger color monitor with a minimum resolution of 800x600, CD driver 4x minimum speed and a printer connected to your computer.

Please contact VESi if you have any questions about the compatibility of these systems.

Refer to the addendum included with your software package regarding Grading Criteria, Course Completion Information, Items to be Submitted, and where to send your completed information.

Bibliography (Suggested Readings)

American Psychological Association. (2000). *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual* (4th ed.). New York: Author

Attwood, T. (1998). *Asperger's Syndrome: A Guide for Parents and Professionals*. Arlington, TX: Future Horizons.

Berkell, D.E., ed. (1992). *Autism: Identification, Education, and Treatment*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Freeman, S., Dake, L., & Tamir, I. (1997). *Teach Me Language*. (Book and manual) Austin, TX: ProEd. (800-897-3202). Must be used with professional guidance of a behavioral consultant or speech pathologist.

Grandin, T. (1995). *Thinking in Pictures and Other Reports from My Life with Autism*. New York: Doubleday.

Grandin, T., & Scariano, M. (1996). *Emergence: Labeled Autistic*. Warner Books.

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Hodgdon, L. (1995). *Visual Strategies for Improving Communication*. Troy, MI: QuirkRoberts Publishing. (Phone no. 248-879-2598; Fax no. 248-879-2599)

Janzen, J. E. (1996). *Understanding the Nature of Autism: A Practical Guide*. Published by Therapy Skill Builders, a division of Psychological Corporation. San Antonio, Texas. 1-800-228-0752

Killoran, Rule, Stopwatches, et al. (1989). *Let's Be Social: Language-Based Social Skills for Preschool At-Risk Children*. Tucson: Communication Skill Builders.

Koegel, R.L., & Koegel, L. K. (1995). *Teaching Children with Autism*. Baltimore: Paul Brookes Publishing Co.

Leaf, R., & McEachin, J., eds. (1999). *A Work in Progress*. New York: DRL Books, L.L.C.

Maurice, C. (1993). *Let Me Hear Your Voice*. Ballantine Books.

Myles, B. S., & Simpson, R. (1998). *Asperger Syndrome: A Guide for Educators and Parents*. Austin, TX: ProEd. (800-897-3202; Fax: 1-800-FXPROED)

Myles, B. S., & Southwick, J. (1999). *Asperger Syndrome and Difficult Moments*. Shawnee Mission, KS: Autism Asperger Publishing Co.

Quill, K.A., ed. (1995). *Teaching Children with Autism: Strategies to Enhance Communication and Socialization*. Albany, NY: Delmar Publishers Inc. (800-347-7707)

Quill, K.A. (2000). *Do-Watch-Listen-Say: Social and Communication Intervention for Children with Autism*. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.

Richard, G. (1997). *The Source for Autism*. East Moline, IL: LinguiSystems.

Siegel, B. (1996). *The World of the Autistic Child*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Thompson, S. (1997). *The Source for Nonverbal Learning Disorders*. East Moline, IL: LinguiSystems. (800-776-4332).

Trevarthen, C., Aitken, K., Papoudi, D., & Roberts, J. (1998). *Children with Autism Diagnosis and Interventions to Meet Their Needs* (2nd ed.). London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, Ltd.

Wetherby, A. M. & Prizant, B. (2000). *Autism Spectrum Disorders A Transactional Developmental Perspective*. Baltimore: Paul Brookes Publishing Co.

Books by Carol Gray:

The New Social Story Book, The New Social Story Book-Illustrated Edition, Taming the Recess Jungle. Available through Future Horizons (800) 489-0727; www.FutureHorizons-Autism.com

Resources

Autism Network, Inc. This catalog contains many titles on autism and Asperger's. Call for a free catalog: (952) 988-0088; fax: (952) 988-0099; Web site: www.Autismbooks.com

Materials Picture This, Visual Timer Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS)

Autism Society of North Carolina Bookstore: (919) 743-0204, Web site: www.Autismsociety-nc.org

Social Behavior in Autism (1986) and other titles by Schopler, E. & Mesibov, G.

Captain Tommy (1996) by Abby Ward Messner

Ian's Walk, A Story about Autism (1998) by Laurie Lears

Asperger's Web sites:

OASIS: www.udel.edu/bkirby/asperger

Asperger's Syndrome Coalition of the United States: www.Asperger.org

Contact the **Autism Society of America** at 800-3AUTISM for information about local chapters and state associations.