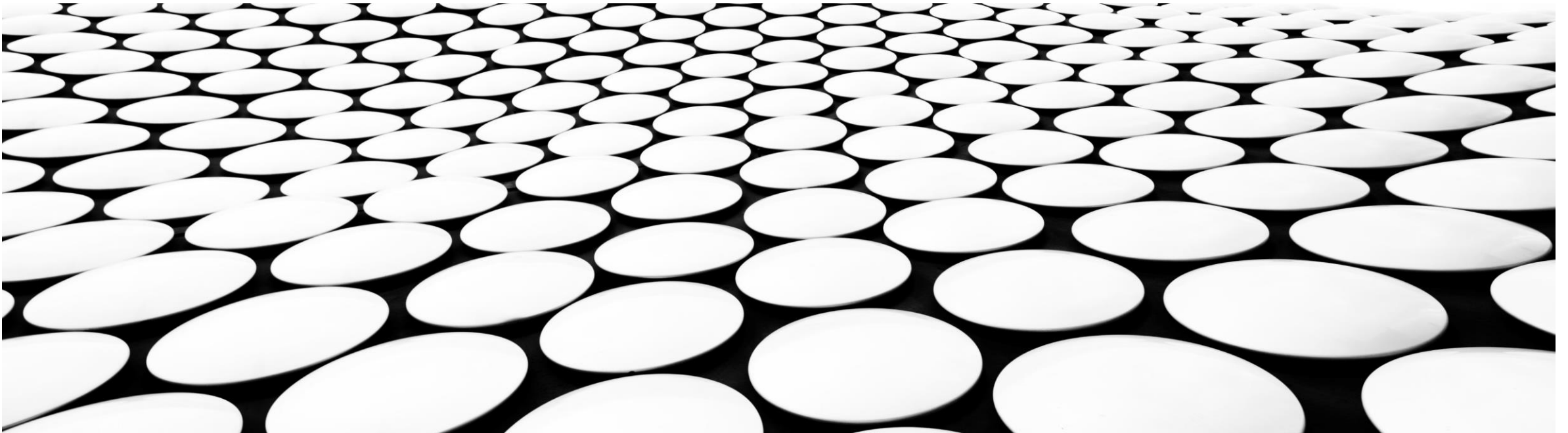


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# AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER (ASD) 101

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# AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS AT EASTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

- Each year, roughly 49,000 individuals diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) complete high school (Wei, Wagner, Hudson, Yu, & Javitz, 2015). Approximately 16,000 of those students will pursue higher education (Wei, Wagner et al., 2015). Eastern Michigan University has untold numbers of students with ASD who may or may not disclose their autism. The College Supports Program (CSP) is a fee based program for students admitted to EMU who have autism. Students on the autism spectrum may display confusing behaviors in class and regardless of their intelligence may experience difficulty in your courses. What can help? This seminar will introduce faculty to (ASD) and the challenges students may experience, as well as understanding the legal accommodations (LOA) that faculty may receive from the student as well as Universal Design for Learning (UDL) which are a set of strategies that will benefit student with ASD as well as other students in their class.

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## AGENDA

- What is autism?
- The challenges of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
- Understanding the Letter of Accommodations (LOA)
- What is Universal Design for Learning (UDL) ?
- Strategies for the classroom

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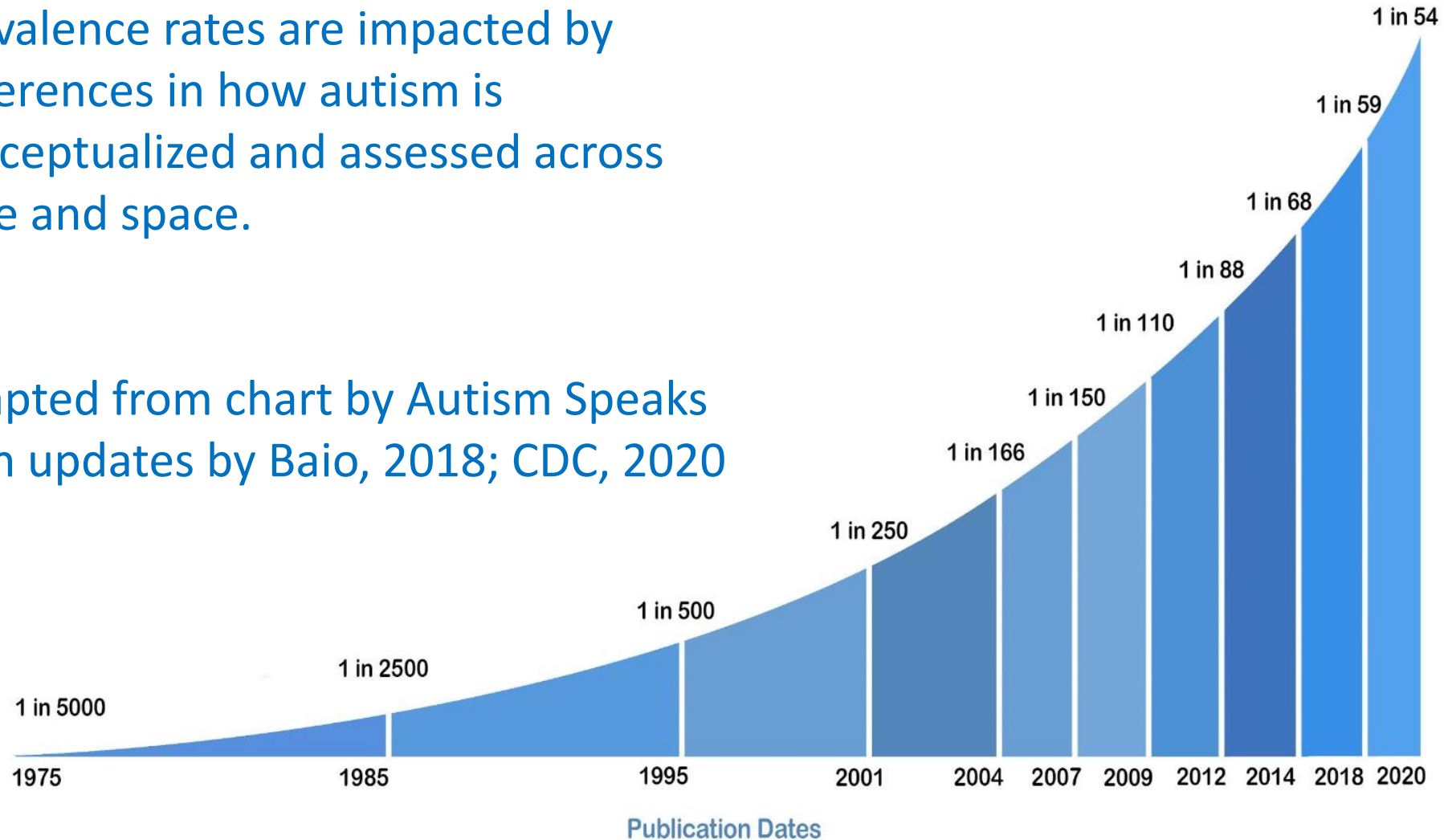
## AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS

- Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) is a neurological disability that impacts language, verbal behavior, socialization and how an individual interacts with the environment.

# HAVE RATES OF AUTISM IDENTIFICATION BEEN INCREASING?

Prevalence rates are impacted by differences in how autism is conceptualized and assessed across time and space.

Adapted from chart by Autism Speaks with updates by Baio, 2018; CDC, 2020





## IS AUTISM LESS COMMON AMONG MINORITY GROUPS?

- No. White people are **diagnosed more frequently** and earlier than some minorities in countries like the US where access to health care is not universal.
- However, community screenings tend to show **similar rates of autism across ethnic groups**
- Unequal rates of autism diagnoses are **probably due to differences in access to health care and cultural factors**

# IS AUTISM LESS COMMON IN FEMALES?

- Males are four times more likely to be diagnosed than females
- However, females may be underdiagnosed.
- Clinicians, educators and other professionals may be less effective in identifying autistic females.
- Recent community screenings have found higher rates of autism in females than previously reported.



# HOW DO AUTISTIC PEOPLE DESCRIBE OURSELVES?

- ✓ **Person-First** e.g., “I am a person with autism”
  - Frames a diagnosis as something one *has* rather than an identity one *is*; Specialists are often taught to use this terminology (Collier, 2012).
- ✓ **Identity-First** e.g., “I am autistic”
  - Situates autism as central to one’s identity like gender or race;
  - Autistic people often prefer this term (Kapp et al., 2013; Kenny et al., 2016).
- ✓ **The phrase** “person on the autism spectrum”
  - Bypasses debates about whether autism is something one has or is;
  - According to an online survey (Kenny et al., 2016), this terminology attracts similar levels of support as identity-first language.



Please note that respectful terminology **varies across people**. It is a good idea to ask an autistic person what term they prefer and respect their preference



**IT IS IMPORTANT TO  
REMEMBER THAT  
AUTISTIC STUDENTS  
ARE OFTEN DIVERSE IN  
MULTIPLE WAYS**

- Autistic people are more likely to have non-binary gender identities than non-autistic people are.
  - Autistic students with other minority identities, such as gender minorities, racial/ethnic minorities, and students from poorer families, may face particular challenges entering college and insufficient resources to help them succeed in college.
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## Social Communication Difficulties

Less social give and take

Difficulties in using body language to communicate

Difficulties developing and maintaining relationships

## Restricted Interests or Behaviours

Repetitive movements, object use, or speech

Resistance to change

Focused interests

Unusual sensory experiences

**PLEASE WATCH THIS VIDEO WHERE AUTISTIC COLLEGE STUDENTS DISCUSS THE DIAGNOSTIC CRITERIA FOR AUTISM**



## AUTISM IMPACTS:



Communication



Behavioral  
Excesses and  
Deficits



Sensory  
Processing





## COMMUNICATION

Just because you can talk does not mean you can communicate! Retrieval of verbal language whether it is abstract or concrete is difficult so it is always easier for the student to say they understand a concept, the assignment, next steps, etc...

## COMMUNICATION



- Marked impairment in pragmatics (interrupting, volume control, etc.) or the inability to initiate, sustain, or engage in \*reciprocal conversation (one sided) with others.



## COMMUNICATION



- Stereotyped and repetitive use of language or idiosyncratic language (cartoons, movie scripts, etc).
- Lack of varied, spontaneous make-believe play or social imitative play appropriate to developmental level.
- May take all statements literally
- Do not understand when sarcasm is used
- Does NOT READ the ROOM!

## BEHAVIORAL EXCESSES AND DEFICITS

- If expectations for the class are unclear the student may shut down and cease attempting to learn
- Alexithymia is the inability to understand own emotions
- Facial agnosia is the inability to recognize faces
- Emotional regulation encompasses the ability to experience, recognize, express, and regulate all emotions effectively and fluidly with respect to environmental constraints.”(Berthoz & Hill, 2004; Laurent and Rubin, 2004). Student may go from 0-60 emotionally due to communication and other deficits.



## SENSORY OVERLOAD

- “When the nervous system over-responds or over-registers sensory input , one will avoid and defend to protect the brain/body from painful and uncomfortable sensations.
- The nervous system is "on guard" at all times to keep safe.
- This often results in a fight or flight, and sensory overload.
- Over-registration is when the brain is taking note of too many incoming sensory messages from one or more of the sensory systems and deeming important and relevant.”

# PROTECTIONS: THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES AND SECTION 504 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT



- The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in all areas of public life.



- The purpose of the law is to make sure that people with disabilities have the same rights and opportunities as everyone else.



- Under Section 504, colleges are required by law to provide reasonable accommodations to students who are determined to have disabilities.

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## WHAT DOES ADA AND SECTION 504 PROMISE ?

- Removing physical barriers to provide access to buildings. ...
- Changing a classroom environment or task to allow a student with a disability to participate. ...
- Modifying policies, practices or procedures. ...
- Providing auxiliary aids and services.

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## **THE LETTER OF ACCOMMODATIONS (LOA)**

- How are appropriate accommodations for a student determined?
- A student must submit acceptable medical documentation to DRC. The information is then reviewed, along with an intake interview with the student. Appropriate accommodations are determined based upon the substantial limitations of the student and the essential elements of the course

## REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS

- Any university which accepts federal money (FAFSA, etc.) must have an office that oversees legal accommodations for any student with a documented disability.
- Students are responsible for requesting their own accommodations through the campus disability services office.
- All services must be provided unless doing so results in a fundamental alteration of the program, or creates an undue financial or administrative burden,
- The LOA originates from the Disability Resource Center [DRC](https://www.emich.edu/drc/index.php) <https://www.emich.edu/drc/index.php>

## SAMPLE LETTER

- Dear EMU Faculty Member:
- Student is registered with the EMU Disability Resources Center (DRC) and is eligible for reasonable accommodations consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The student is responsible for presenting this letter and meeting with the instructor to discuss implementation of the accommodation(s). If at any time, there are questions about disability accommodations or campus community access, please contact our office by calling 734-487-2470 or emailing [drc@emich.edu](mailto:drc@emich.edu).

## CLASS & ASSIGNMENT ACCOMMODATIONS

- Use of computer for note-taking, in-class assignments and activities
- Preferential seating
- Priority Registration
- The student can record course lectures
- Glean Notetaking Software
- Opportunity to leave the classroom for short breaks
- student is accountable for information covered in class.
- Student is to be provided double time to present speeches/presentations
- If students are required to form or join groups, the faculty will assist this student with joining a group.
- All syllabus changes need to be provided to this student in writing, the day the changes are made.

# TESTING AND CATE LAB

## Quizzes and Exams

- It is assumed the student is testing in class or online unless they make a plan with their instructor to test in the CATE Lab.

## CATE Lab

- Double time for quizzes, tests & exams\*\*
- Student is responsible for discussing this accommodation with faculty members before each class,
- to ensure resources are readily available (class availability, lab resources, etc.)
- Reduced distraction environment\*
- Private room for testing\*
- Proctor may be present in room



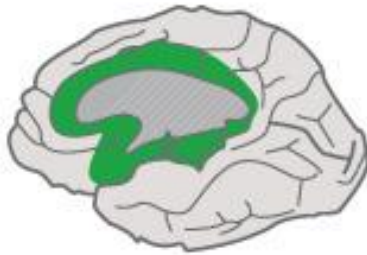
# UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING

- Universal Design for Learning (UDL) involves a **proactive** process of designing learning in order to achieve the **highest level of functionality** and **positive learner experience for the widest audience possible**.
- In order for UDL to be effective, it requires purposeful consideration and strategy in all areas of course planning and design.
- The end result will be online learning that allows students to access, interact, and learn in a variety of ways, addressing the learning styles and learning needs of a wide variety of students.

# Universal Design for Learning

## Affective networks:

THE **WHY** OF LEARNING



How learners get engaged and stay motivated. How they are challenged, excited, or interested. These are affective dimensions.



Stimulate interest and motivation for learning

## Recognition networks:

THE **WHAT** OF LEARNING



How we gather facts and categorize what we see, hear, and read. Identifying letters, words, or an author's style are recognition tasks.



Present information and content in different ways

## Strategic networks:

THE **HOW** OF LEARNING



Planning and performing tasks. How we organize and express our ideas. Writing an essay or solving a math problem are strategic tasks.



Differentiate the ways that students can express what they know

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## **UDL IN DEVELOPING THE COURSE: QUESTIONS TO INFORM DESIGN**

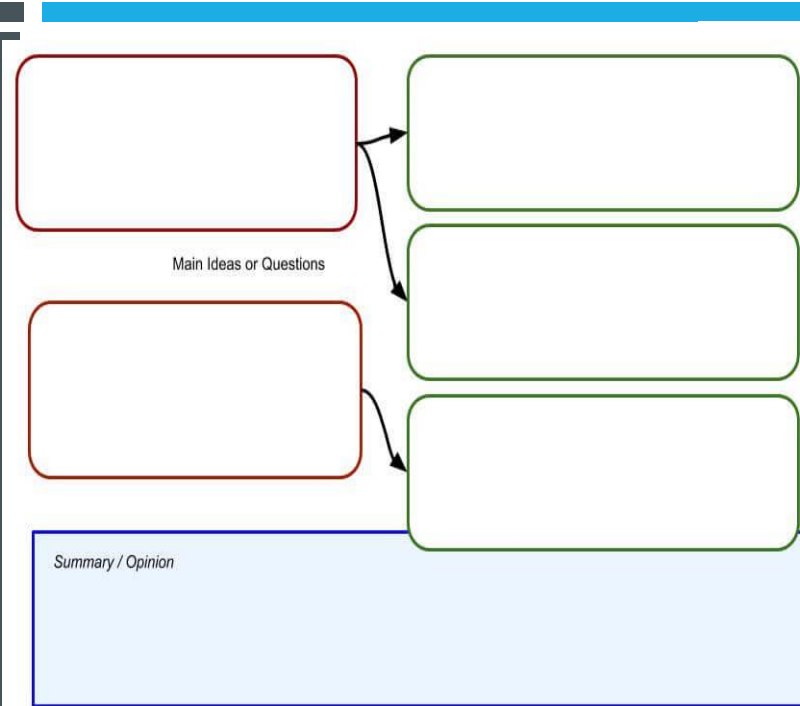
- What course goals, skills, concepts (if any) may be an obstacle for students with:
- Students with visual disabilities?
- Students with auditory disabilities?
- Students with cognitive disabilities?
- Students with motor disabilities?
- Students with English as a second language?

# THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SYLLABUS

- This syllabus should provides a variety of options for how information will be presented for the course, how students will be assessed, and ways to participate in the course as well as explicit expectations and available supports.
- The construction of a course syllabus is an ideal opportunity to support UDL design and delivery elements for all incoming learners, demonstrating that there are multiple paths for learning and achievement within the course.
- Instructors can use the syllabus, therefore, as a powerful way to communicate or model how they will implement UDL principles and guidelines in the classroom. At the most fundamental level, the syllabus document itself should be accessible.
- [UDL syllabushttps://youtu.be/eSX43ZjG6S0](https://youtu.be/eSX43ZjG6S0)

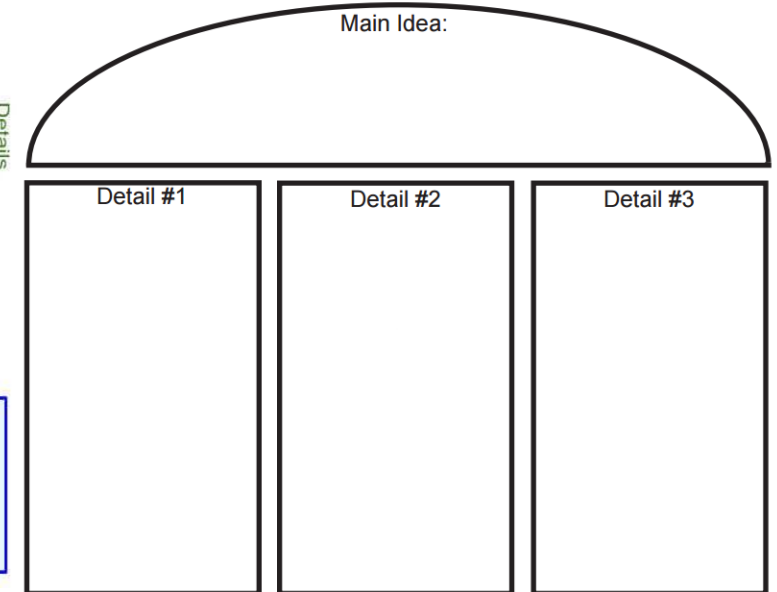
# PRACTICAL STRATEGIES FOR YOUR STUDENT WITH ASD: THINK VISUAL

- Think visual! The auditory processing is the weakest learning modality.
- 80% of verbal language may be processed at a later time
- Anything verbally stated should be presented visually

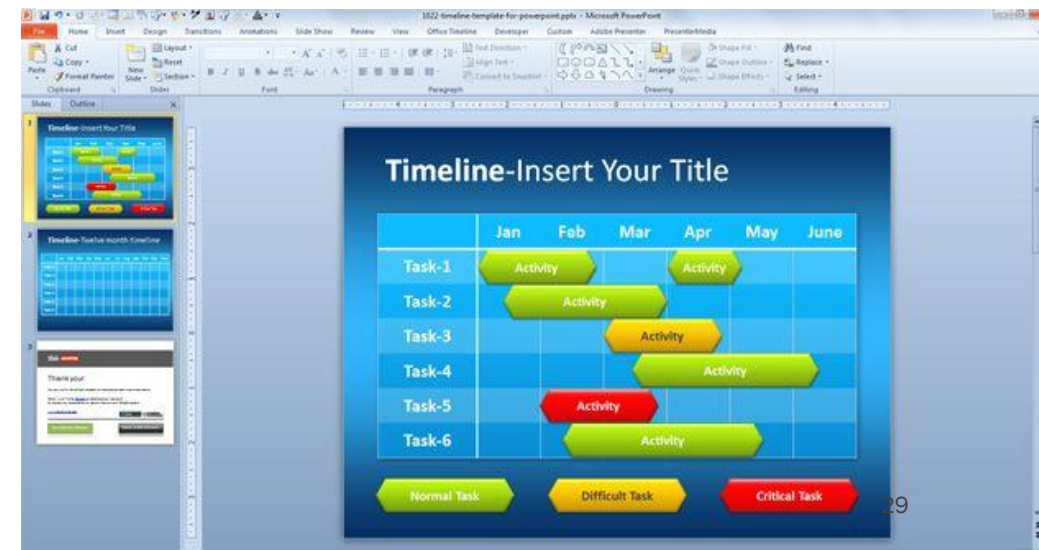


## Sum It Up

Title: \_\_\_\_\_  
Author: \_\_\_\_\_



Designed by Shantel Ivits. Feel free to reproduce!



## **PRACTICAL STRATEGIES FOR YOUR STUDENT WITH ASD: NOW AND NEXT**



- Routine and predictability are critical to success.
- Make certain your syllabus has correct information and deadlines
- Presume competence in their ability to succeed.
- Do not make assumptions about their level of understanding.
- Sarcasm is extremely difficult to process for individuals when they take things literally
- Tell student in order to meet during office hours they must have 5 questions written down to address.



## PRACTICAL STRATEGIES FOR YOUR STUDENT WITH ASD!



- If you “ask” student if they understand the concept and they say yes, ask them to **show** you their process.
- Retrieval of verbal language whether it is abstract or concrete is difficult so it is always easier for the student to say they understand a concept, the assignment, next steps, etc...
- Give directions to individuals in permanent product( PowerPoint, Canvas, email, etc.) thus allowing time for the individual to process instructions
- Review visuals/directions/rubrics when meeting with a student
- Auditory processing is their weakest link so if you explain something and ask them if they understand, they will say yes, but they will say this to limit conversation!
- Use of email to communicate may increase understanding of content

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# QUESTIONS?

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