

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

A resource for educators

Tuawhiotanga Whanonga A Te Hinengaro Me Ngā Kaiako
He rauemi mā te kaiwhakaako



September 2016

Contents

	Introduction	3
■	ASD - what is it?	4
■	How ASD can influence learning	5
■	Teaching students with ASD - a framework	7
■	Using the key competencies to guide teaching	8
■	Strategies for teaching students with ASD	13
■	Student examples	34
	Useful contacts and resources	42

Whakatauki

Ko te kai rapu, ko ia te kite

Don't sit back, have a go and experience it.

Introduction

This booklet examines how ASD can influence learning and provides strategies teachers can use in the classroom.

It looks at key areas where students with ASD may need support, as well as whole-class strategies that may benefit all students, particularly those with ASD.

This booklet focuses on supporting you where specialist assistance may not be available, but you are searching for ways to plan your classroom programme to meet the diverse needs of your students.

The strategies outlined in this booklet will be most effective when used in the context of good planning, knowing your students and what makes each of them unique, setting goals and regular inquiry into what works and what doesn't.

If you need more information and support, talk to team leaders within your school about a referral to a Resource Teacher: Learning and Behaviour (RTLB) or talk to your local Ministry of Education office.

ASD – what is it?

ASD affects the way the brain receives, processes and responds to information. It can have an impact on: readiness to learn, communication, social interaction, thinking, and sensory regulation.

In this booklet we use the term ASD, but we recognise the condition is known by many names, including ASD, autism spectrum disorder, autism, severe autism and Asperger syndrome.

We also recognise that ASD is truly a spectrum, where each student will experience their own unique range of challenges and strengths.

"I am proud of who I am and autism is part of who I am. In fact, you can't separate the autism from what I do, think or am ..."

New Zealand Autism Spectrum Disorder Guideline, Ministries of Health and Education, 2016

How ASD can influence learning

Every learning situation and every student is different. A student's experiences will vary, depending on their school, cultural and family influences. Their experiences will reflect their personality and strengths, the nature of their condition and any associated disabilities.

People with ASD range from needing significant help with all day-to-day tasks, to working and living independent lives.

Helpful link

Visit the Inclusive Education website for a more in-depth guide on ASD, as well as videos and links to student and teacher experiences.

www.inclusive.tki.org.nz

Strengths

The strengths of students with ASD may include:

- ▶ Visual thinking and learning
- ▶ Excellent memory for facts and figures
- ▶ Specialised areas of interest and knowledge
- ▶ Reliability and honesty
- ▶ Ability to follow rules and regulations

Challenges

Students with ASD may need support with the following aspects of learning:

- ▶ Sensory regulation
- ▶ Verbal communication
- ▶ Abstract thinking
- ▶ Social interaction
- ▶ Coping with change

Teaching students with ASD – a framework

There is extensive well-documented evidence about effective pedagogy and teaching approaches that consistently have a positive impact on learning.

The evidence says all students need teachers who:

- ▶ create supportive learning environments
- ▶ encourage reflective thought and action
- ▶ enhance the relevance of new learning
- ▶ facilitate shared learning
- ▶ make connections to prior learning and experience
- ▶ provide sufficient opportunities to learn
- ▶ inquire into the teaching-learning relationship.

See *The New Zealand Curriculum*, pg 34.

As a teacher, you will find you don't need a separate curriculum to teach students with ASD. Instead plan for all learners, taking account of the range of learning needs within your class. As you read through the strategies outlined in this booklet, consider how all the students in your class would benefit from and respond positively to these same strategies.

Using the key competencies to guide teaching

The New Zealand Curriculum identifies the key competencies students need to live, learn, work and contribute as active members of their communities.

These key competencies are relevant to all students and all learning areas.

They include:

- ▶ Thinking
- ▶ Using language, symbols and texts
- ▶ Managing self
- ▶ Relating to others
- ▶ Participating and contributing

"It is common for me and other people with autism to be unable to say the words to describe what is bothering us. It's also hard for us to figure out that other people don't experience the world the same way we do ..."

New Zealand Autism Spectrum Disorder Guideline, Ministries of Health and Education , 2016

The New Zealand Curriculum
key competencies

Teaching support

Thinking

Provide structured settings and teaching methods and multiple opportunities to learn across different contexts.

Teach and use thinking frameworks such as mind maps, problem solving frameworks, visual schedules, and plain language versions of information and topic cards.

Use visual formats to strengthen learning such as pictures, video and graphics.

The New Zealand Curriculum
key competencies

Teaching support

**Using language,
symbols and texts**

Build skills in understanding texts, as well as decoding skills.
Use mind mapping as a strategy for written language.
Have technology available in the classroom as one of the tools to support literacy.

Managing self

Develop predictable routines and visual cues to help students transition from one task or setting to another.
Understand your student's sensory needs.
Teach students the skills they need to manage themselves at school.
Make a plan for times when students find it hard to manage.
Work with parents to identify changes such as having a relieving teacher. Wherever possible advise the student of changes in advance.

Relating to others

Understand that social settings may be challenging for students with ASD.

Provide structure for break times and other times when social rules are not clearly spelled out.

Teach students the social skills they need for school and beyond.

Build safe opportunities for students to engage with and learn with others.

Help adults and students to understand the perspectives of a student with ASD and to become supportive communication partners.

The New Zealand Curriculum
key competencies

Teaching support

**Participating and
contributing**

Build on student strengths and interests to support engagement and participation.

Build routine opportunities for students to participate in small or larger groups.

Coach peers and other adults to understand ASD and support participation.

Managing the sensory environment is likely to support a student to participate.

Strategies for teaching students with ASD

CHALLENGE	
Sensory regulation	Most students with ASD experience sensory difficulties at some point in their lives. They may respond differently to movement and to things they touch or feel, see, taste, smell or hear. They may find it challenging to regulate their responses to sensory stimuli in the world around them or may be very focused on specific topics, sensory objects or experiences. Feeling safe, calm, organised and ready to focus is essential for learning.

STRATEGIES

Set up the classroom

- ▶ Talk to your student and their family to explore different ways to adapt the classroom environment. Ask them what works and what does not work and why.
- ▶ Think about your student's sensory needs and position them in an area of the class that will work best.
- ▶ Set up a quiet space where students can go to when they want to calm down and feel more settled. If a student is calmed by a favourite object or book, include these objects in this space.

- ▶ Provide a work space with reduced distractions. Depending on their needs, a named space at the end of a work table or an individual work space positioned slightly away from other desks may work well.
- ▶ At a time when the class is noisy, allow the student to move away to a quieter space or wear noise-reducing headphones.

"More than 70 percent of children with ASD experience problems with sensory issues ..."

*- tips for AUTISM, page 122,
Ministries of Health and
Education, 2015*

Support students to cope with sensory challenges

In some cases, students with ASD who have difficulty coping with the sensory challenges of the classroom may also find it difficult to tell you how they are feeling and what they need. This may have a significant impact on their learning and behaviour.

- ▶ As you get to know your students you will learn to predict what they like and what they do not like. Use this knowledge to help them learn.
- ▶ Avoid rushing students, this may cause unnecessary anxiety. Recognise a student may need longer than their peers to complete a task. Regular breaks can have a positive effect – movement breaks can be particularly important.

Support students to stay engaged

Staying engaged in learning can be a challenge for students with ASD.

- ▶ A student is less able to focus when they are stressed. Talk to the student and their past teachers, family and whānau, to find out what the student may find stressful and what is fun and calming.
- ▶ Be flexible - adjust your expectations and the learning tasks when required.
- ▶ Allow access to a favourite sensory object, task or topic to help a student focus, stay calm and concentrate.
- ▶ Establish some private cues for students to use that will signal when they need to take time out or need some extra help.

CHALLENGE	
Verbal communication	<p>Verbal communication can be difficult for students with ASD. Some students find it challenging to receive and make sense of information they hear. There can also be a tendency to interpret things in a very literal way.</p> <p>Students with ASD can also have difficulty expressing their ideas and thoughts in spoken words and can find coordinating their attention between people and objects challenging.</p>

STRATEGIES

Set up the classroom

- ▶ Enhance your verbal communication with visual supports, for example, drawings, pictures, photos, visual timetables etc. These can be used to support choice making and conversation or represent complex rules or instructions.
- ▶ Establish ways to communicate between home and school so you know if the student is unwell or hasn't slept well or whether there may be something else that could impact on their ability to learn.

Think about ways you can adapt your communication style

- ▶ Support students to focus and pay attention to what you're saying by using their name, and by being near them and at their level.
- ▶ Avoid overwhelming a student with too much talk. Recognise when it is useful to use more visual supports instead of verbal language.
- ▶ Give students time to process what you've said (as much as 10 seconds), and stay quiet during that time.
- ▶ Keep your verbal instructions simple and clear – you may also need to slow down your conversation. Use the same words and actions when you repeat a message or instruction.
- ▶ Provide specific choices for a student to consider – preferably limited to two options.
- ▶ Be positive and say what a student *should do*, not what they *shouldn't do*. Avoid metaphors, irony, sarcasm or cynicism.

Support students to develop comprehension strategies

- ▶ Follow up general classroom or group instructions by checking your students have understood what you have said and what actions they need to take.
- ▶ Model the use of strategies such as pictorial checklists or visual schedules to support a student to follow instructions and maintain interest in a topic or learning task.
- ▶ Support students' comprehension and understanding of a topic by drawing on their real-life experience and specific areas of interest.
- ▶ Encourage students to use digital technology, for example, a phone camera, to record notes from the board so they can refer back to them later.

Provide opportunities for students to express themselves

- ▶ Give students opportunities to use their communication skills across a variety of contexts and with a range of people to support generalisation of new skills and knowledge.
- ▶ Suggest students use mind maps or story boards to help them sequence their ideas and express themselves.
- ▶ Lessen the need for students to rely on verbal communication or memory by encouraging them to use pictures, objects, photos, audio recordings, or video to support their communication.

"It's not wrong to think in a different way ..."

New Zealand Autism Spectrum Disorder Guideline, Ministries of Health and Education, 2016

- ▶ Remind students that not everybody has the same interests or knowledge that they do, so they may need to provide background information to help the listener.

CHALLENGE	
<p>Abstract thinking</p>	<p>Students with ASD may learn in different ways and at different levels to their peers. A student's learning levels may differ across learning areas. A student with ASD may have strengths in memory and pattern recognition, be knowledgeable about certain topics or details, but miss the big picture.</p> <p>You may need to identify when learning tasks require high levels of abstract thinking, theoretical or conceptual thinking, flexible thinking or an understanding of ambiguity. When this is the case, you may need to put some alternative strategies in place.</p> <p>Many of the strategies in the previous section that support communication also support thinking. In addition, consider the following strategies to support students to process information, apply what they know and use abstract thought.</p>

STRATEGIES

Set up the learning opportunity

- ▶ Plan what and how you teach so that it is pitched at the right level for each student.
- ▶ Set priorities for action – provide a consistent sequence of actions or steps. Monitor and provide feedback along the way.
- ▶ Provide a list or map of the main ideas in a lesson (for example, a flow chart, diagram or map) to help students build up a picture of the whole and move from one idea to the next.

- ▶ Cue key points in information by underlining, highlighting and pointing. This is particularly important for older students with a tendency to store irrelevant details or who are over-selective in what they focus on.
- ▶ Use post-it notes to mark relevant sections in text or handouts. This should help students to recognise the point of the information and work out which parts are crucial.
- ▶ Enhance engagement by allowing students to complete an assignment or task in their preferred mode, for example, using video or mind-mapping.
- ▶ Consolidate learning through repetition, linking to life experience and giving students a visual or concrete representation of a topic or idea so they can go back and revise the key ideas.
- ▶ Help students make reference aids that feature facts and a concrete representation of an abstract idea related to maths, writing or reading. Suggest they refer back to them throughout the day (consider developing them into classroom posters).

"Visuals are often a first language for learners with ASD.."

tips for AUTISM, page 16, Ministries of Health and Education, 2015

How ASD can influence learning

Tear out
and keep as
a handy
reference

CHALLENGES

Will vary from student to student but often include:

- ▶ sensory regulation
- ▶ settling into learning
- ▶ coping with change, unfamiliar routines and a lack of structure
- ▶ verbal communication
- ▶ processing, receiving and making sense of things
- ▶ expressing information and ideas
- ▶ social interaction
- ▶ abstract thinking and processing complex information.

STRENGTHS

Will vary from student to student but often include:

- ▶ honesty
- ▶ processing visual information quickly
- ▶ special interest in particular topics and/or activities
- ▶ strong rote memory
- ▶ strong preference for well-planned, structured, routine-based learning environments
- ▶ retaining particular facts and details.

TEACHING OPPORTUNITIES



1

Adjust the classroom environment

- ▶ Provide students with a clear structure for each day, each lesson and the tasks ahead.
- ▶ Use visual timetables and daily organisers.
- ▶ Break units of time into mini-schedules (visual or written).
- ▶ Consider a student's sensory needs when you position them in the classroom.
- ▶ Present information that will help students settle in and learn visually.
- ▶ Set up a quiet space that students find calming.



2

Present curriculum content in different ways

- ▶ Use visual resources, particularly video, to help comprehension and skill development.
- ▶ Write information in plain language.
- ▶ Provide a list or map of the main ideas in a lesson.
- ▶ Cue key points in information by underlining, highlighting and pointing.
- ▶ Use post-it notes to mark relevant sections in text or handouts.
- ▶ Explain and teach social skills and the rules of social convention.
- ▶ Use video and peer group learning to teach social skills.
- ▶ Pre-teach key concepts of a new topic or activity.



Use technology and equipment

- ▶ Use visual timers.
- ▶ Encourage students to use digital tools to present their ideas.
- ▶ Encourage the use of graphic organising software and tools.
- ▶ Use objects that are interesting and calming.
- ▶ Allow students to use noise-cancelling headphones or ear plugs at noisy times.



Stimulate interest and motivation

- ▶ Include regular movement breaks.
- ▶ Use a student's interests and skills to support learning.
- ▶ Allow access to a favourite sensory object to support focus and concentration.
- ▶ Draw on real-life experience and specific interests.
- ▶ Encourage students to complete a task in their preferred mode and to use visual aids such as photos, video, pictures or objects in their communication.
- ▶ Identify what a student finds stressful and what they find calming and use this in your planning.

AVOID

- ▶ Overwhelming students with too much talk: keep your verbal instructions simple and clear, slow down your speech and use short sentences.
- ▶ Rushing students. Instead provide extra time to process and complete tasks.
- ▶ Combinations of unexpected changes, stressful environments, new tasks and new people. Plan for changes in regular routines in advance.
- ▶ Escalating the situation when things go wrong.
- ▶ Sarcasm and metaphorical language.

CHALLENGE	
Social interaction	Sometimes a student with ASD may not want to interact socially. At other times they may struggle with understanding how they should interact. You may need to support them to engage in conversation, take turns, understand social cues, establish shared attention and maintain appropriate physical proximity. Older students may need support to find the appropriate thing to say in a social situation, how to repair a 'broken' social conversation or how to maintain the topic of a conversation.

STRATEGIES

Set up the learning environment

- ▶ As the teacher, you set the tone for social relationships and model positive interaction with all students.
- ▶ Set up a buddy system where classmates take turns in support roles such as letting each other know what is happening, what they need to do and when.
- ▶ Ensure students have access to social spaces, as well as spaces they can go to when they need a break.
- ▶ Teach the *written* and *unwritten* social rules of school life such as the class rules and acceptable behaviours and provide opportunities to practise these in real-life situations.
- ▶ Greet students each day by their name as a way to build a rapport. Don't insist on eye contact, as this may be uncomfortable for some students.

SOCIAL STORIES

Social stories are written to help students deal with and understand difficult or confusing situations.

They should:

- ▶ briefly describe the event (or topic)
- ▶ include illustrations or photos to aid comprehension
- ▶ acknowledge any sensory aspect that worries the student
- ▶ give students ideas about what they can do to cope in the situation
- ▶ be read and shared several times with the student.

- tips for AUTISM, page 84, Ministries of Health and Education, 2015

Support students to learn the social skills they need

- ▶ Consider using social stories and scripts (for younger students), social narratives and comic strip conversations (for older students) to learn and practise social skills.
- ▶ Consider developing peer activities that focus on initiating one-on-one conversations, responding to questions, showing interest in others and maintaining an appropriate proximity to others.
- ▶ Draw on the strengths a student may have to help them learn socially appropriate phrases or scripts for specific situations.
- ▶ Provide video examples of social interaction to enable a student to go back and review appropriate responses.

Teach topics such as:

- ▶ understanding emotions and facial expression
- ▶ maintaining appropriate physical proximity
- ▶ understanding social cues (verbal and non-verbal) and conventions
- ▶ sharing an event with someone else
- ▶ initiating, maintaining and engaging in conversations
- ▶ meaning of common similes and metaphorical language
- ▶ personal presentation, including hygiene.

Provide opportunities for peer and group learning

- ▶ Create routine and predictable opportunities for students to work with their peers to practise social skills through the school day.
- ▶ Indoor and outdoor activities and games can be used to encourage students to practise their social language skills such as negotiating, expressing disagreement, making collaborative decisions, explaining, helping and encouraging others and being gracious in victory or defeat.

Look for ways to help foster wellbeing and positive identity

- ▶ Encourage positive self-identity, through building social roles and networks and positive peer relationships, particularly among adolescents.
 - ▶ Keep your interactions positive and avoid long drawn-out discussion, especially if things are not going well.
 - ▶ Identify what a student is good at, for example, knowing about horses, and use it as the basis of a group activity the student can lead or contribute to.
- ▶ Provide opportunities for people to frame ASD in positive ways, for example, someone who is very knowledgeable about a specific topic is an expert in an interesting field.
 - ▶ In social sciences, look into notable and successful people with ASD and focus on their strengths, abilities and achievements. You may want to use a TED talk video by 16-year-old Rosie King called, *How autism freed me to be myself*.

CHALLENGE**Coping with change**

Students with ASD are likely to find learning difficult when there is a lack of structure or routine, when they have to sit still for long periods of time or when they have to write extensively or do work they don't understand. They may find change and unfamiliar routines create heightened anxiety, which limits their readiness to learn.

Sometimes students with ASD may need extra support to settle into class, especially when transitioning to a new class. They may find it hard to manage change.

STRATEGIES**Set up the classroom**

- ▶ Use consistent structure and routines in your classroom to make learning tasks clear and predictable.
- ▶ Put a daily organiser or visual timetable on the board to help all students anticipate what is coming next.
- ▶ Break units of time into mini-schedules (visual or written) to give more detailed steps at the start of each topic. At the end of each topic review the tasks. Some students will like to tick off each step.
- ▶ Add structure to unstructured times such as lunch break. Do this by providing students with a small number of clear choices about how they might spend their time, including where they might sit and who they might be with.

Support students to prepare for change and transition

- ▶ Use visual timers or schedules to show how long an activity will last and to cue transitions between lessons or classes.
- ▶ Let your students know in advance when there will be a reliever or other new people in the classroom.
- ▶ Encourage older students to use an organisational tool like a digital calendar to give reminders of particular tasks or changes through the day.
- ▶ Plan with others in your team to help a student manage significant transitions such as moving into a new class or school.

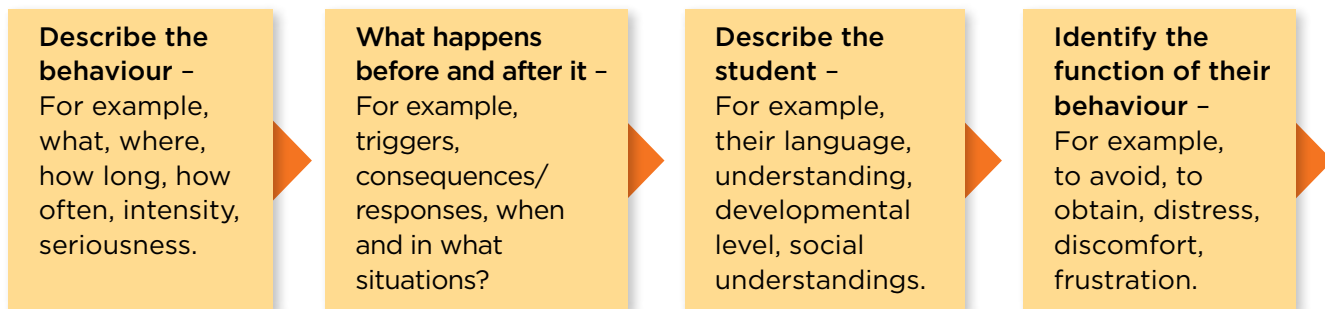
Support positive behaviour

All behaviour communicates something. Students are trying to communicate messages important to them, in the way they know how. They might be trying to avoid or obtain something, or they might be trying to communicate distress, discomfort, pain or frustration.

The key is to understand and respond to the function (the why) of the behaviour, rather than responding solely to the behaviour itself. This is what we called Functional Behavioural Assessment.

Understanding behaviour – a framework

Functional Behavioural Assessment is a useful evidence-based framework for helping understand behaviour. It is summarised in the diagram below.



Building positive support and interaction

All of the strategies outlined in this booklet will help you build positive support and interaction by teaching appropriate skills. All students will experience times when things are not going well. This is an important part of learning. Here are some ideas for managing these times.

Managing difficult times

Appropriate techniques are non-aversive and rely on knowing your student well so that you can avoid escalation of the behaviour. They acknowledge the student's needs, provide some boundaries, ensure they get support when they need it, and help the student to get through in the short term until they feel more settled and ready to learn again.

Control the things that set off such reactions

- ▶ Keep the time, location or duration of activities consistent where possible.
- ▶ Redirect the student to another activity they enjoy.
- ▶ Remove unnecessary demands or requests.
- ▶ Avoid using statements and actions you know the student will react to.

Interrupt the build-up

- ▶ Move closer or move away as appropriate, stand side-on rather than face-on.
- ▶ Give instructions the student is more likely to follow.
- ▶ Reduce your language; support the student to take a break.
- ▶ Use their high-interest activities and sensory loves to create calm.
- ▶ Remind them of any self-management strategies they know.
- ▶ Cue them to take a break or to monitor and recognise the beginning of a build-up.
- ▶ Facilitate relaxation.

"People who know the details of my autism are usually more comfortable dealing with me. Also, the more information my teachers have, the more ideas they have to help me learn ..."

New Zealand Autism Spectrum Disorder Guideline, Ministries of Health and Education, 2016

Student examples

Primary school

Jamie is a happy eight-year-old boy. He wakes early most mornings. He likes to write stories about farm animals on his computer (he knows the name of more than 30 farm animals and their feeding and breeding habits).

Every morning Jamie's mum and dad say good morning. Jamie glances at them briefly and responds to their greeting with a line from one of his favourite movies (*Babe*, a movie about a pig, is his current favourite).

To get Jamie fed and ready for school, his parents have developed a regular

routine. Every day Jamie has the same breakfast, toast with marmite (he eats this with a fork, as he hates getting his hands messy), then gets dressed. He likes to wear his favourite jumper – the one that feels soft on his skin as this helps him feel calm.

Jamie is enjoying school, though it took some work at first. He found the classroom noise overwhelming, which made him scream and put his hands over his ears. Making friends was tough to start with. But he has responded well to taking his favourite 'fidget item' to school (a small rubber pig). His teacher also lets him leave the class first or last to avoid bumping into others in busy hallways and feeling overwhelmed by the rush of transition times.

Teaching Jamie

- ▶ Jamie needs clear simple instructions to help him follow and retain what has been said. He responds well to a visual checklist showing what is happening throughout the day.
- ▶ Jamie responds well to teachers who use predictable routines and structure in their communication with him. He finds it much easier to settle into class when the class is quiet and well organised.
- ▶ Teaching turn-taking is helping Jamie to make friends. He especially responds to seeing himself on video playing a card game in a turn taking exercise. Recently, he has started to notice when people are happy or sad.
- ▶ Jamie's parents and teacher are in regular email and phone contact to share what he's learning at school and at home.

Jamie's learning environment

- ▶ Using visual resources (particularly schedules, photos and video) works well with Jamie.
- ▶ Social stories help Jamie learn social rules and what to do in specific situations.
- ▶ His teacher regularly talks to the class about a quiet, calm classroom and what can be done to keep the noise down so people can hear each other and it is easier to focus. Jamie is also allowed to choose to listen to music or wear noise-cancelling headphones when it is too noisy for him.
- ▶ The teacher has set up a calm zone where Jamie and others can go at any time, especially when they are anxious or want a break.
- ▶ Jamie has regular movement breaks, for example, he is sometimes given responsibility for putting resources onto tables before a class activity.

Teaching Jamie

Play – Build on Jamie’s love of the movie Babe to help him learn about friendship and feelings. Give the class an exercise where they watch the movie to identify body language and social cues related to friendship. Have them practise some of the social interaction used in the movie.

English (writing) – Build on Jamie’s detailed knowledge of farm animals to develop his understanding of how a farm works and the people involved, for example, a farmer. Help him capture ideas for a story on farming, using a visual mind map. Then help him plan for writing the story.

Social sciences – Engage Jamie and all your students by visiting a farm. Discuss and plan the trip with Jamie’s parents so he is prepared for the change in routine on that day. Consider putting the class into small groups and asking them to document the trip using a camera or video. Have them analyse and discuss the video when they are back in class. Use the video as the basis for other lessons on topics such as animal anatomy and animal welfare.

Mathematics – Things that work best for Jamie include using concrete examples wherever possible. For example, using blocks for adding, subtracting and working out sums. He responds well when the maths lesson follows a predictable routine so that he can focus and engage.

Secondary school

Fifteen-year-old **Rani** is Māori (Ngāti Maniopoto, Ngāi Tahu) and loves pop music, reading and bush walking. Her favourite pop star is Canadian teen idol Justin Bieber – she’s watched every music video he’s ever made and follows him on Facebook.

She finds new situations challenging because she doesn’t always know what to say, but enjoys school and wants to succeed.

When she was younger she didn’t mind others knowing about her autism diagnosis. But now she prefers just her teachers to know. She has stated this in her learner profile.

Rani finds it easier to remember one or two instructions at a time, given to her face-to-face and in writing. Teaching instructions often need to be repeated several times but if they are written down, Rani can refer back to them. This helps her stay on track. She also needs extra time for writing tasks.

This year, Rani is studying towards NCEA. Through NZQA’s Special Assessment Conditions she will be given extra time to sit her exams.

Rani loves working in small groups, especially when the group members are familiar. She gets stressed when she has to work with new people because she’s not sure how to communicate with them and that affects her concentration.

Rani the student

- ▶ Rani likes her teachers to ask her or her whānau about what she needs and what works best. They have written this up in Rani's learner profile. It sets out what she likes, doesn't like and what works well in the classroom. Rani and her whānau are happy for teachers to share this profile with all the adults who support her.
- ▶ Her teacher has developed a range of visual resources Rani can use in class, including a checklist of the day's activities that she can refer to throughout the day. Rani uses the same Google classroom timetable as all the rest of the class.
- ▶ The teacher and some of Rani's friends have developed handouts for lessons, breaking down key messages and what is required into smaller chunks.
- ▶ Rani has a buddy group - to help her confirm what she needs to do. They are trusted people she can check in with to make sure she understands what she should be doing.
- ▶ The teachers and Rani's form class have learnt to avoid metaphorical language and they have learnt to explain things simply in plain language. This helps Rani and others in the class. Rani's teachers have taken time to get to know her and to develop a rapport. The teachers discuss with Rani and with each other any challenges so they solve problems as they arise.

Rani's learning environment

- ▶ Using familiar routines works well for Rani. It makes it easier for her to predict what is coming next and reduces her stress level.
- ▶ Give Rani time to process instructions and questions – with opportunities to ‘check in’ to make sure she has interpreted what was said correctly.
- ▶ Rani doesn't like writing by hand. She doesn't like the look of her work and keeps crossing out what she's written. Allow her to choose to write using her device.
- ▶ Across subject areas look for opportunities for the class to learn about two-way conversations in different contexts.

Teaching Rani

- ▶ **English** – Teach the class how to use mind mapping to plan a writing task. Start with brainstorming ideas, then have students organise their ideas into a logical sequence before they get started. Let students write using their devices, so that Rani doesn't feel different when she uses hers. Provide the class with a choice of reading materials, including song lyrics or a brief biography of Justin Bieber to engage Rani. Allow Rani to present her work using PowerPoint or video presentation.
- ▶ **Te reo Māori** – Rani's whānau are very supportive of her learning te reo Māori. They see it as an important part of Rani's cultural identity. Plan together with Rani and her parents and agree to send a list of new vocabulary and phrases home each fortnight for Rani's whānau to record on her phone. Encourage Rani to spend extra time listening to and practising the new words before they are covered in class. Use pre-teaching as an effective strategy for strengthening Rani's pronunciation and confidence to participate in class.

Teaching Rani

- ▶ **Health and physical education** – Rani doesn't like the changing rooms. Her teachers have given her the option of changing in a separate room along with her buddies or wearing her PE gear under her uniform to make it less stressful to get changed. Most of the time Rani takes part in PE but she has an agreement with her teachers that she can give her time out sign and choose a small group activity with other students when she needs to.
- ▶ **Science** – Rani is about to start a project on the solar system, which will involve working in small groups to plan, research and create a model that shows the different planet sizes, colours and distances between each planet. Rani's group will consider using digital technology to create their model, as this is an area of strength for Rani. Her whānau have indicated she may find it too challenging to work with or touch paper maché or modelling clay.

Useful contacts and resources

nzcurriculum.tki.org.nz/Inclusive-Practice-and-the-School-Curriculum/Implementing-an-inclusive-curriculum – Ministry of Education information on implementing an inclusive curriculum.

tipsforautism.org.nz – tips for Autism courses.

ihc.org.nz/asd-plus – information for parents of preschool students.

autismnz.org.nz – Autism New Zealand's website.

asdinnzschoools.org.nz – Altogether Autism website for schools.

altogetherautism.org.nz – Information and support from Altogether Autism.

health.govt.nz/our-work/disability-services/disability-projects/autism-spectrum-disorder-guideline – online Autism Guidelines from the Ministry of Health.

pb4l.tki.org.nz – Ministry of Education's website for Positive Behaviour for Learning.



www.inclusive.tki.org.nz –
Ministry of Education's Inclusive
Education website



For more information

For information about services and support available to children with special education needs, visit **www.education.govt.nz** [search words special education].

For more specialist classroom, teaching and curriculum resources, visit the Te Kete Ipurangi website **www.tki.org.nz**

Replacement copies may be ordered from Ministry of Education Customer Services, online at www.thechair.minedu.govt.nz by email: orders@thechair.minedu.govt.nz or freephone 0800 660 662, freefax 0800 660 663 Please quote item number 34297

New Zealand Government

This publication is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study, research, criticism or review or permitted under the Copyright Act, no part may be reproduced without the permission of the Ministry of Education, New Zealand.

MOESE0031 – Reprinted September 2016

ISBN 978-0-478-34297-0 (print)

ISBN 978-0-478-34298-7 (online)

