

Facilitating Academic Growth of Students With Autism

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Abstract : All students demonstrate various learning preferences and learning styles that range from visual, auditory to kinesthetic preferences. These learning preferences are further impacted by individual cognitive profiles that characterizes itself in linguistic strengths, logical- special, inter-or intra- personal, just to name a few. Students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (CLD) have an increased risk of being misunderstood by many school systems and even medical personnel. Students with disability, specifically Autism, are faced with another layer of learning differences. Research indicates that large numbers of students are not provided the type of education and types of supports they need in order to be successful in an academic environment. Multiple research findings indicate that significant numbers of school staff self-reports that they do not feel adequately prepared to work with students with disability and different learning profiles. It is very important for the school staff to be educated about different learning needs of students with autism spectrum disorders. Having the knowledge, school staff can avoid unnecessary referrals for office referrals and avoid inaccurate decisions about restrictive learning environments. This presentation will illustrate the cognitive differences in students with autism, how to recognize them, and how to support them through Differentiated Instruction. One way to ensure successful education for students with disability is by providing Differentiated Instruction (DI). DI is quickly gaining its popularity in the United States as a scientific- research based instructional approach for all students. This form of support ensures that regardless of the students' learning preferences and cognitive learning profiles, they have an opportunity to learn through approaches that are suitable to their needs. It is extremely important for the school staff, especially school psychologists who often are the first experts to be consulted by educators, to be educated about differences due to learning preference styles and differentiation needs.

Keywords : special education, autism, differentiation, differences, differentiated instruction

Conference Title : ICA 2024 : International Conference on Autism

Conference Location : Melbourne, Australia

Conference Dates : June 27-28, 2024