



Differentiating Instruction for Students on the Spectrum: 15 Quick & Easy Ideas

January 2015

Paula Kluth, Ph.D.

1. Seek advice For some skills, concepts, or standards, ask learners, "How do you think you could learn this best?" Provide concrete choices, but be open to all ideas.

2. Collaborate Work with colleagues to personalize learning. Ask occupational therapists for ways to create a more sensory-safe classroom. Talk to your art teacher about reaching students who love to draw. Invite paraprofessionals to share ideas and observations about individual students.

3. Vary questions Different students need different levels of challenge. You might ask one student to point to a picture of a volcano, another to share a fact about volcanoes, and still another to answer, "How are volcanoes formed?"

4. "Flex" your groupings Groupings should be flexible and change regularly so students have opportunities to learn with and from a wide range of their peers. Groups can be formed around interests, areas of expertise, learning needs or learning styles.

5. Integrate interests Have a student who loves washing machines? Find an appliance manual to teach reading. Introduce vocabulary related to laundry (e.g., agitate). Teach about pumps.

6. Teach with tech Tech is a great tool for providing challenge and making lessons more appealing. Have students make digital shorts with iPads. Create glogs as a visual support (edu.glogster.com). Use apps for skill practice.

7. Provide choices Options can be given daily. Students might choose where to sit, what to write on (e.g., notebook, computer), who to work with, which assessment to complete and so on.

8. Try new roles Every student need not have the same role in every activity. If most students are talking in small groups, a few learners might serve as facilitators. During presentations, a student may want to be the "event" emcee.

9. Get up Movement boosts engagement, helps students retain content and often serves as a positive behavior support. Have students walk a mile to teach its length. Assign jumping jacks before attempting challenging tasks. Give dance breaks to break up long periods of work.

10. Be dramatic Let your learners act out the life of a fur trader, the discovery of the polio vaccine or the final scene of *The Hunger Games*.

11. Propose projects Projects allow students to work on a variety of skills (e.g., communication, writing) and lets them dive deep into interests. See edutopia.org for ideas.

12. Teach with rhythm Reinforce key ideas with mnemonic devices, raps, songs, chants, poems, jingles, and even dances.

13. Assess in alternative ways Use a wide range of techniques (e.g., interview, observation, skits) so students have ample opportunities to demonstrate what they know and can do.

14. Teach tutoring Enlist students to support one another. In some instances, you might use peer-to-peer tutoring where some students have more skill or experience than others. In other instances, consider cross-age tutors.

15. Partner with parent Invite family members in to conduct informal observations, provide feedback or suggest teaching supports.

Direct link to our website:

www.KansasASD.com

www.TASNBehaviorSupports.com

TIPS FROM THE CORNER:

Returning to your classroom in January is the perfect time to revisit expectations for learning. One very effective way to increase active engagement in your classroom is to increase opportunities for your students to respond. When students are actively engaged while responding to the instructional task, they are much less likely to engage in disruptive behavior.

When possible use response procedures that engage all students. This can be accomplished using: verbal responses, written responses, and action responses. This month we will focus on **Verbal Responses**.

Use **Chorale Responses** when the answers are short and the same. When students are looking at the teacher during instruction, use a prompt such as "Eyes Looking". Follow with a visual or auditory prompt for all to respond.

When students are looking at a common stimulus, use a prompt to point to the stimulus.

January TRAININGS

January 9: 8:30 am-10:00 am
ADOS-2 Toddler Module Practice Webinar
Link to register: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/ZM6P7R6>

January 14: 3:00-3:45; 4:00-4:45
Webinar Title: Including Students with ASD in General Education Classrooms
Link to register: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/N7FYZ37>

January 21: 3:00-3:45; 4:00-4:45
Tri-State ASD Webinar Series: Standards-Based Education
Link to register: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/N7F6HX3>

January 23: 8:30 am- 10:00 am
ADOS-2 Module 2 Practice Webinar
Link to register: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/ZX6S6KP>

January 30; 2:30-4:00
TBST Existing Coaches Online Meeting

Follow with an auditory prompt, such as a clap, for all to respond.

Use **Partner Responses** when the answers are long or different.

To support academically and/or behaviorally challenged students:

- Pair students
- First reader (higher reader) reads material. Second reader reads the SAME material
- Students read the material together
- Place students in triads rather than pairs- the struggling reader is third and has the option of reading with a partner

Be sure you are not "teaching to the best, and leaving the rest." –Anita Archer

You can view Anita Archer's effective use of verbal responses at the following site:

http://explicitinstruction.org/?page_id=92

