



ASD-EAST: Curriculum and training materials

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Introduction



- Hello, I'm Ivana Lessner Listiakova from the team of University of Northampton
- In this presentation I will give an outline of:
 - ASD-EAST Curriculum
 - ASD-EAST Training materials



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Hello, I am Ivana, I am from the team of University of Northampton. In this presentation I will give an outline of the ASD-EAST Curriculum and the Training materials that we created in our project to support specialist teachers working with children with autism.

ASD-EAST Curriculum

- 1 Communication
- 2 Emotional regulation
- 3 Social skills
- 4 Sensory needs
- 5 Modifications and adaptations
- 6 Challenging behaviour

- 6 modules
- differentiated for inclusive and special school settings
- 2hr sessions



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The ASD-EAST Curriculum and Training materials consist of 6 modules, differentiated for training specialist teachers working with in inclusive mainstream schools or special school settings, with children at primary school age.

Each module was planned to take two hours.

As you can see, the modules cover key areas of need of children with autism. And there is a reason why Challenging behaviour is the last module, because we believe that strategies teachers learn from the first five modules will help them in managing behaviour too.

Each module starts with talking about the needs of children with autism in that area. Then it shows what skills we need to teach children and provides practical strategies of how to teach these skills.

I will briefly go through the content and a couple of examples from each module.

Communication

- Exploring the communicative differences of students with ASD
- Receptive and expressive communication
- A range of strategies, approaches and programmes to help teachers both accommodate and develop the communicative needs of their students

Mainstream schools	Special schools
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Focus on verbal skills• Conversation and comprehension skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Focus on pre-verbal skills and receptive language• E.g. picture-exchange

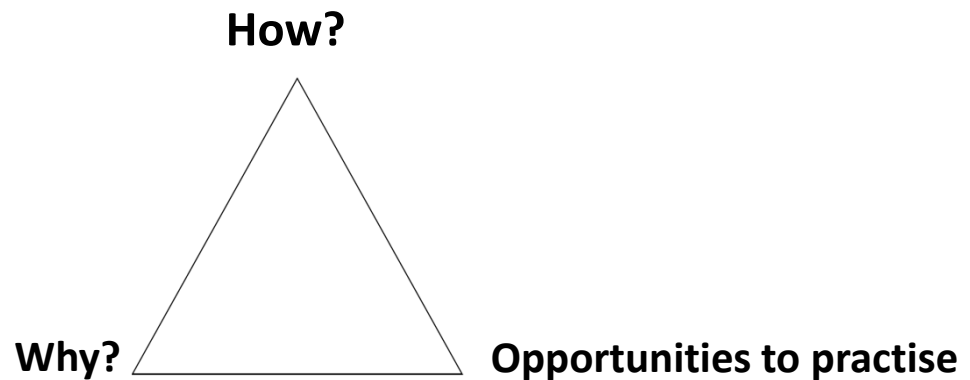


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The first module focuses on supporting communication. It explores the needs of students with autism in the area of receptive and expressive communication. The focus for teachers from mainstream schools was on developing verbal skills of their students, including conversation and comprehension. Training of special school teachers focused on pre-verbal skills and receptive language.

Ingredients for Expressive Communication



This is an example of a slide from the training materials from module one for mainstream school teachers. It is a helpful model of understanding the three aspect we need to focus on when we want to teach expressive communication.

Starting steps – As simple as this...



This is an example from the training materials for special school teachers. It shows teaching expressive communication through the use of pictures in everyday activities. As you can see, it suggests simple solutions that do not require financial investment.

Emotional regulation

- Curriculum that develops emotional awareness
- Support students to identify and communicate changing emotional states
- Implement strategies to support students when experiencing uncomfortable emotions

Mainstream schools	Special schools
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying basic emotions • Scaling feelings • Zones of regulation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adults recognising and reflecting emotional states back to their students



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The second module focuses on strategies to support students' emotional regulation, teach them to recognise their own feelings and emotions of other people. And especially in special school settings it is important that adults have the skills to recognise and reflect emotional states back to the students. I will show you a couple of examples again.

Grading and scaling

Teach child to grade and to scale feelings using visuals (pictures, drawings, symbols, Feelings charts, Feelings thermometer)

✓ **Grading' of emotions:** identify salient cues for a particular level of emotion (tone of voice, body language, facial expression, muscle tension, breathing)



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My In-Control Scale

1	 I lost it! I need a break!
2	 I'm beginning to loose it!
3	 I'm feeling a little unsure.
4	 I'm feeling pretty good!
5	 I'm feeling just fine!

These are a couple of practical examples of visual strategies for students in mainstream schools that teach about the recognising the intensity of different emotions.

How?

- ☐ Use drawings to represent what changes in the body with different emotions.
- ☐ Try to use photos or video clips if you can find some to demonstrate.
- ☐ Use drama to try and act out situations...make a game of it, if you can.



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The second example from this module about emotional regulation is the Gingerbread man activity that teachers try on themselves in the training and then they can use it with their students. The idea is to draw on the gingerbread man where in the body we feel anxiety, and to talk about the situations that make us feel this way.

Social skills

- Maximise social capabilities, increase social competence and facilitate participation of students with ASD in social interactions
- Identify methods and tools of teaching different social skills

Mainstream schools	Special schools
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching social skills in a peer group • Social stories, comic strips, social behaviour mapping, peer support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching social skills with limited verbal communication • Early play and interaction skills



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Moving on to the third module which is about teaching social skills.

Before we designed these training materials in our project, we conducted a mapping of teachers' knowledge and training needs. And we discovered that teachers had a lot of theoretical knowledge about the deficits children with autism have in social interactions, but they felt they needed more practical strategies of how to teach these skills. So that is what we provided in this module.

For teachers in mainstream schools we introduced social stories and comic strips. And for special school teachers to focus was on enhancing their skills in supporting early play and interaction.

Interacting with Peers

Practice asking “Can I play?”, “Would you like to play?”

Role-play scenarios

Test skills by asking ‘What would you do if...?’

Structure friendship situations

Identify appropriate conversation topics

Use visual prompts, if needed



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This is a slide from the training materials for mainstream school teachers. It gives teachers the principles of how to support students, for example structuring friendship situations, and it also provides very concrete examples of how to do it – such as ask students “What would you do if ..”

Development of play

Imitation

Shared interest

Joint attention

Turn-taking

Showing

Directing communication

Functional play with a variety of toys

Responding to social engagement

Pretend play alone or with others

Typical language development



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Besides giving teachers specific strategies, we wanted them to gain a deeper understanding of the needs of their students, so that they can come up with their own creative ways of teaching these skills. Here they can learn about the development of play, which can be used for identifying the level of social skills of children in special schools.

Sensory needs

- Understanding of sensory differences
- Identifying sensory needs
- Applying sensory strategies and developing activities

Mainstream schools	Special schools
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Links between sensory needs, anxiety, attention • Adjustments for the classroom environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using sensory strategies for regulating emotions and behaviour



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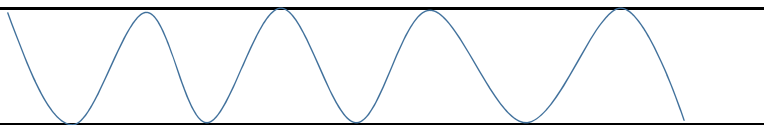
The fourth module focuses on understanding and identifying sensory needs of students with autism and gives examples of sensory strategies for individual students and classroom environments.

We explain the connections between high anxiety and sensory overload and we give strategies for calming down and waking up.

It also points out the between different areas of need such as sensory differences and emotional regulation.

Comfort Zone

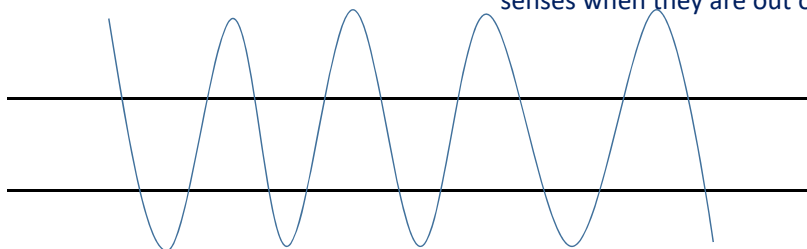
Each of us is trying to stay in a certain "zone" in which he can deal with everything that happens during the day.



In the zone

Children with ASD do not have effective strategies to cope with senses when they are out of zone!

Out of zone



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Autism Spectrum Disorder
Empowering And Supporting Teachers

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An example from the training that explains how we can use sensory strategies to regulate and stay in the comfort zone that is optimal for learning.

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Modifications and adaptations

- Physical space
- Content of teaching
- Teaching materials
- Learning outcomes

Mainstream schools	Special schools
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Visual structure• Workstations• Minimising distractions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Applying TEACCH

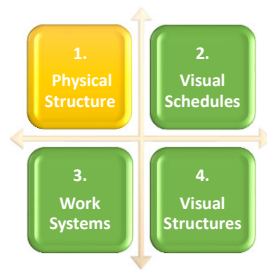
Module number five focuses on modifying and adapting the physical space in the classrooms, content of teaching, teaching materials and learning outcomes. If you are interested in this topic, you can watch the video by Ron Fortuna from Target Autism in the UK demonstrating how to set up workstations.

1. Physical Structure

Teaching Methods

Organisation of classroom

- Minimise visual & auditory distractions



Reduce the distractions hanging from the roof, on walls or around the room.

Clearly marked areas using equipment, carpet & walkways to organise classroom

An example from this module that presents what we mean by physical structure in mainstream classrooms. We talked about reducing distractions and using visually organised space, schedules and structures.

Adaptation and modification of space and materials

Learning Environment

• Adaptation of materials



For special school teachers, we provided concrete examples of how we can adapt materials in the learning environment.

Challenging behaviour

- Explore the functions and underlying reasons of challenging behaviour
- Direct and indirect assessment to analyse the function of behaviour
- Develop support plans using prevention and intervention strategies

Mainstream schools	Special schools
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Functional assessment • Differentiation of strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interruption and redirection • Time-out • AAC



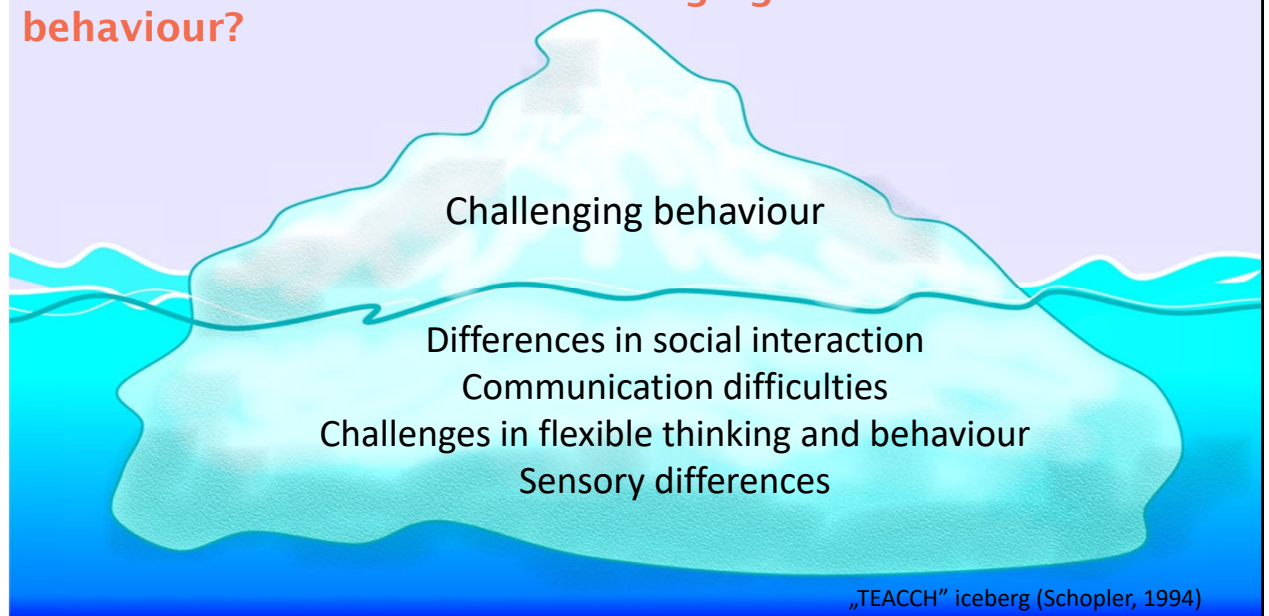
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As behaviour is the area that teachers felt they needed most support with, we dedicated the last module to empowering their competences in managing behaviour.

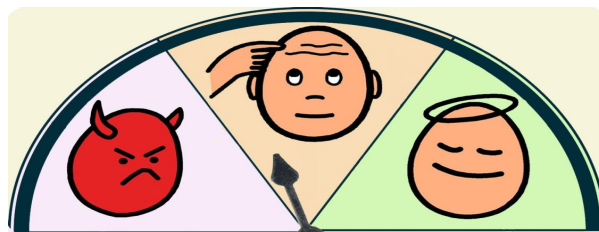
The module promotes the idea that we need to understand the functions and the underlying reasons of challenging behaviour first. So, it focuses on direct and indirect assessment and then it explains how to develop interventions and also prevent challenging behaviour. Strategies are differentiated for mainstream and special schools again.

What lies underneath the challenging behaviour?



An example of how behaviour can be explained through the iceberg model. You can see that what is below the water was covered in the previous modules, so the last module of the ASD-EAST curriculum builds on that as well.

Factors that influence behavior



- Poor emotional state
 - Lack of sleep
 - Bad diet
- Lack of physical activity
- Family isolation

And finally, this is an example of the discussions that we had during the trainings thinking about what can influence our behaviour and the behaviour of our students as well, pointing out that seeing behaviour in a wider context is important.

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Thank you for listening. In the next presentation, I will share how teachers felt about the trainings and how they evaluated them.