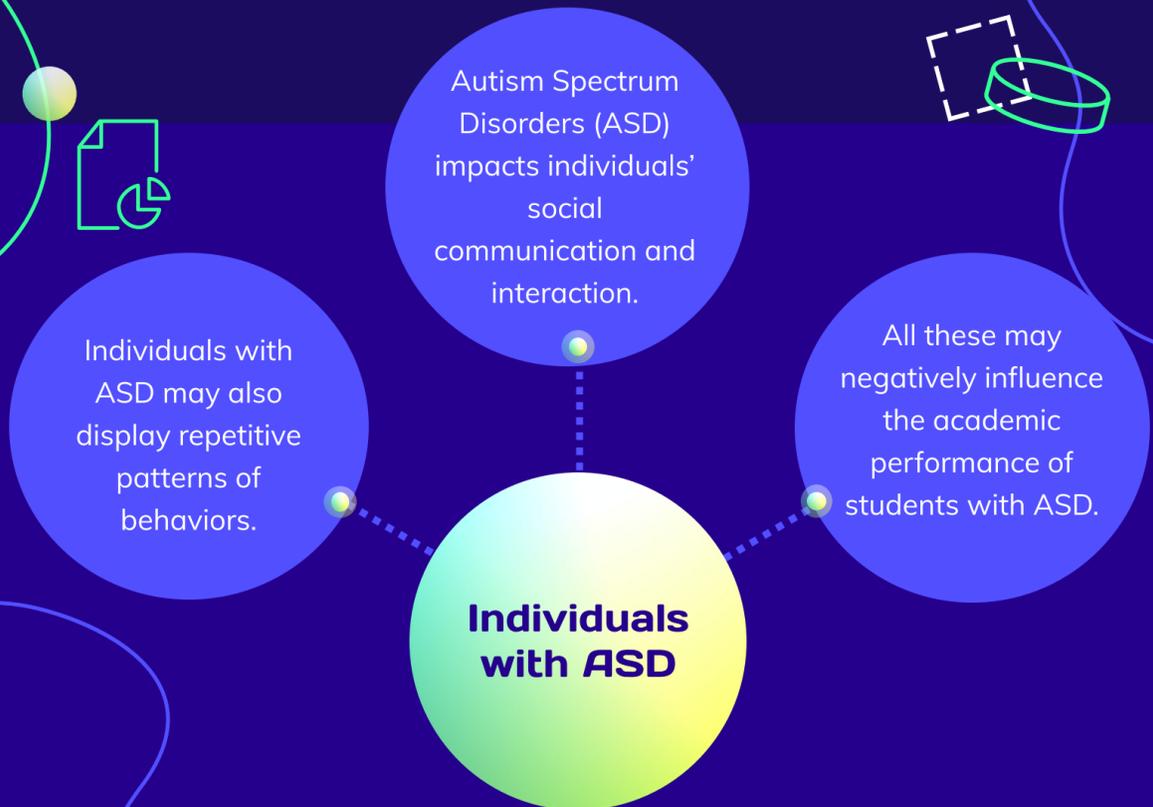


Writing in Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder

Based on "Written expression in individuals with autism spectrum disorder: A meta-analysis" by Elizabeth Finnegan and Amy L. Accardo



Elements of writing quality

1

Mechanic of writing

- **Handwriting**
 - If handwriting is not fluent and automatic, the effort paid to it can place a strain on other writing processes. (Graham et al., 2000)
 - Development of handwriting happens during elementary school years. (Graham et al., 1998)
 - Boys are more likely to experience difficulties in handwriting.
 - Without instruction on handwriting, students may develop habits that are detrimental to their writing process.
 - Students may not self-regulate or avoid writing if handwriting is too demanding. (Graham et al., 2008; Graham & harris, 2006)
- **Development stages of spelling**
 - Copy a visual pattern of the word.
 - Recognize combinations of letters.
 - Phonemic and phonological awareness are predictors of spelling.
 - Recognize letter units and rimes
 - Morphological processing contributes to spelling by enabling students to generate new words.
- **Sentence construction**
 - Sentence construction consists of choosing appropriate vocabulary, attention to syntax, and understanding of the reader. (Myhill, 2009)
 - As students get older, sentence length increases. They also gain more syntactic control over their writing .

Content

- Developmentally, students progress from writing unrelated sentences to listing/ chaining associated ideas, to creating a coherent text.
- Executive control refers to functions related to planning, organization, and cognitive flexibility that allow individuals to achieve goals.
- Individuals with ASD have atypical executive function, (Kenworthy et al., 2008) especially in working memory and planning.

2

Oral language and early literacy experiences

Students with ASD tend to have fewer opportunities to engage in shared reading at home. (Dynia et al., 2014)

Students with ASD may have difficulty interpreting the mental states of others, which may contribute to impairments in understanding human relationships (Brown & Klein, 2011). As a result, their writing performance may lag behind TD peers.

3

The Study

The purpose of the study is to identify differences in writing skills of individuals with ASD compared to typically developing (TD) peers.

4

Findings

- Students with ASD had lower scores in handwriting and spelling.
- They also wrote less and at a slower rate than their TD peers.
- They got lower scores on structure.
- There are no significant differences found in sentence construction.

5

Teaching Suggestions

- Students with ASD are a heterogeneous group. Educators should be aware of their various needs.
- Educators should assess their writing length, legibility, speed, spelling, syntax, and structure using standardized measures to identify students' needs.
- Educators should also be aware of inherent characteristics of ASD and use evidence-based practices.