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A DIDACTIC STRATEGY TO INCLUDE STUDENTS WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM
DISORDER (ASD) TO THE ENGLISH CLASS.

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STATEMENT BY THE AUTHORS

We, Valeria Stefania Cabrera Revelo and Maria Jose Espinal Ramos, affirm that the investigation in the present thesis report research is totally unique, authentic, and personal.

The content of this research is a limited legal and academic responsibility of the authors and “PUCE” Esmeraldas.

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CERTIFICADO DE LA DIRECTORA DEL TFM

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DEDICATION / ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost, I offer my heartfelt gratitude to God for granting me strength, guidance, and inspiration throughout this arduous yet fulfilling journey.

I dedicate this work:

To my beloved mother, Rosa Revelo Palacios, whose presence is deeply missed, but whose love and encouragement continue to resonate within me. Her unwavering belief in my abilities fuels my determination, and I aspire to honor her memory by striving for excellence in all my pursuits.

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ABSTRACT

This research is driven by the desire to understand the unique experiences of students with autism and to provide them with effective English language learning strategies. It aims to address the challenges surrounding the teaching and learning process for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in inclusive educational settings. Inclusive education, emphasizing equal opportunities for all, has become increasingly important, particularly for students with special educational needs (SEN) like autism. Teachers face the responsibility of ensuring meaningful learning experiences for all students in diverse classrooms.

The evolving educational landscape has led to a growing number of students with disorders such as ASD. It is essential to recognize that autism is not an illness but a neurological difference, resulting in a spectrum of abilities and needs. Teachers play a pivotal role in facilitating the educational journey of children with ASD, requiring appropriate interventions, strategies, and attitudes to enhance their abilities and ensure their inclusion in the classroom.

Effective didactic strategies are crucial for engaging students with autism in the learning process. However, barriers within the educational environment, such as the lack of inclusive practices and insufficient resources, hinder the adaptation and participation of students with ASD. This can lead to isolation, low motivation, and difficulties in communication and social interaction.

By prioritizing inclusive education and adopting evidence-based practices, teachers can address the diverse needs of students with autism and promote their academic and social development. Through collaborative efforts and ongoing research, it is possible to create inclusive learning environments where every student can thrive and succeed.

Key words: Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Inclusive education, Didactic strategy, Special educational needs (SEN)

RESUMEN

Esta investigación está impulsada por el deseo de comprender las experiencias únicas de los estudiantes con autismo y brindarles estrategias efectivas de aprendizaje del idioma inglés. Su objetivo es abordar los desafíos que rodean el proceso de enseñanza y aprendizaje de estudiantes con Trastorno del Espectro Autista (TEA) en entornos educativos inclusivos. La educación inclusiva, que enfatiza la igualdad de oportunidades para todos, se ha vuelto cada vez más importante, particularmente para los estudiantes con necesidades educativas especiales (NEE) como el autismo. Los maestros enfrentan la responsabilidad de garantizar experiencias de aprendizaje significativas para todos los estudiantes en aulas diversas.

La evolución del panorama educativo ha provocado un número creciente de estudiantes con trastornos como el TEA. Es esencial reconocer que el autismo no es una enfermedad sino una diferencia neurológica, que resulta en un espectro de habilidades y necesidades. Los maestros desempeñan un papel fundamental a la hora de facilitar el viaje educativo de los niños con TEA, lo que requiere intervenciones, estrategias y actitudes adecuadas para mejorar sus habilidades y garantizar su inclusión en el aula.

Las estrategias didácticas efectivas son cruciales para involucrar a los estudiantes con autismo en el proceso de aprendizaje. Sin embargo, barreras dentro del entorno educativo, como la falta de prácticas inclusivas y la insuficiencia de recursos, dificultan la adaptación y participación de los estudiantes con TEA. Esto puede provocar aislamiento, baja motivación y dificultades en la comunicación y la interacción social.

Al priorizar la educación inclusiva y adoptar prácticas basadas en evidencia, los maestros pueden abordar las diversas necesidades de los estudiantes con autismo y promover su desarrollo académico y social. A través de esfuerzos colaborativos e investigaciones continuas, es posible crear entornos de aprendizaje inclusivos donde cada estudiante pueda prosperar y tener éxito.

Palabras clave: Trastorno del Espectro Autista (TEA), Educación Inclusiva, Estrategia didáctica, Necesidades Educativas Especiales (NEE)

INTRODUCTION

The present investigation is motivated for the desire to understand the way of being of students with autism, to offer them a didactic strategy that favors their English language learning, to solve the problems related to the teaching-learning of students with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Nowadays, is remarkable the importance of inclusive education especially for students with special educational needs (SEN), under the principle that everyone has equal opportunities to access the benefits of education. The term inclusive education refers to the right that everyone has to a quality education and implies the fact that being different is something legitimate.

One of the challenges that teachers present in their daily work is having the responsibility and interest in ensuring all their students learn in a meaningful way. At present, in the classrooms a diversity of students is assisted with their characteristics, needs and potentialities.

The educational system has been changing and evolving over the years, so it is increasingly common to find students who present a disorder in the classroom. In our days, one of the most frequent is the Autism Spectrum Disorder, it should be noted that being autistic does not mean they have an illness or disease, It means their brain works in a different way from other people. Every Autistic person is different to every other; this is why autism is described as a 'spectrum'.

In this way, all teachers will play a decisive role in the school environment, it being essential they know how to carry out the appropriate interventions, with the necessary

strategies and procedures, so the educational process of the child diagnosed with ASD is facilitated and, in this way, they can enhance all their abilities.

Therefore, it is essential that teachers show positive attitudes and vision towards these children, promoting their inclusion and avoiding possible prejudices or isolating them in the classroom.

The inclusion of a child with autism provokes various feelings in the teacher: fear, rejection and challenge, the educational orientations will be more successful if they are inclusive and if the teacher becomes an active, reflective, critical actor, capable of teamwork and motivated to investigate to learn and apply new strategies allow offering an inclusive and comprehensive education. Teachers who work with children with ASD must keep in mind the following process, so children feel motivated and understood in the group.

Searching about strategies to know students with autism and be able to interact with them, didactic strategies were considered the most appropriate, since the development of affectivity, socialization, motor skills and knowledge are closely related, through which boys and girls are capable to put in practice, their abilities, and their skills. They can adapt to reality through the innovation and creativity, the students can manage their fears and frustrations.

With the results obtained in this research, it is offered to people interested in learning more about Autism Spectrum Disorder and how to overcome the challenges that arise in the classroom, when teaching a foreign language with the use of a didactic strategy, as well as having a broader vision to innovate and put traditional methods aside, to create new strategies and implement them in class and be able to have comprehensive and meaningful learning. In the same way, it is intended through the results of this qualitative

research, the teacher can be helped to understand the affective, educational, and social needs they require to adapt and integrate adequately into the social and school environment.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

There are barriers within the educational environment that can prevent the adaptation and participation of a subject diagnosed with the autism spectrum, leading them to provide poorly adaptive responses to school tasks and learning processes. One of this is the lack of didactic strategies, which can prevent not only access, but participation and acquisition of knowledge, evidencing segregation and isolation practices that move away from an inclusive notion.

It is a reality that students who suffer autism do not participate in class and do not have enough opportunities to interact. Due to the fact, teachers do not apply different didactic strategies in the English learning process. This situation will not improve the difficulties presented in children with Autism Spectrum Disorder, such as lack of attention to difficulties in educational tasks due to lack of knowledge, deficiency in working on social skills, problems in communication either from the teacher or with your peer group and the most important lack of motivation.

On the other hand, inclusion places particular emphasis on those groups of priority attention, which could be at risk of marginalization, exclusion, or school failure, this refers to the co-responsibility that teachers have within the classrooms when dealing with students with some type of special educational need as autism, sometimes it happens that they are excluded, for lack of opportunities and appropriate strategies to achieve an integral education.

Therefore, the following research question arises:

Which didactic strategy may be useful to include students who suffer from Autism Spectrum Disorder in the English class?

JUSTIFICATION

This research focused on students to suffer ASD, and for teachers to serve them as support and guide, offering them a didactic strategy, so they can carry out their class development in a good way with active participation and meaningful learning. We know there is a lack of equal opportunities for students with special needs to learn and fully participate in English classes.

Some of the causes are the lack of opportunities, and sometimes these students are excluded from daily activities or feeling isolated at school, resulting in low self-esteem, behavior changes and demotivation in the school context. Likewise, the limitations of individualized curriculum thus obtaining difficulties in the development of the language acquisition. Other cause is the difficulty to communicate verbally or understanding and processing language, because they will present an inability to participate in classroom discussions or to follow directions.

Another contributing factor is the lack of adequate equipment and resources available to teachers for developing classes efficiently. Consequently, students with ASD display disinterest in learning content, experience limited stimulation in the development of motor skills, and struggle to acquire other essential skills. It is becoming increasingly vital to include students with ASD in regular English programs. But according to studies, instructors are frequently untrained in evidence-based inclusion practices for these children.

The application of a strategy will be used as a didactic element of access to learning and as a more pleasant and effective teaching method. Working with this type of strategy allows us to observe the child's needs and interest are fully satisfied when a more active curriculum is applied, where spontaneity and freedom are assumed, and the child is reaffirmed through pleasant experiences.

At this point, a child with ASD, for whom the game is not the same as for others, is already at a disadvantage. If the teachers want them to be integrated into the classroom, they can start by introducing didactic strategies, through which he will be integrated into the other fields to development multiple capabilities, perhaps the most important being the ability to interact with other children.

With the application of this strategy, it is expected to generate a positive impact both on teachers and on the diversity of students in the classroom. It is a strategy that it will be designed based on the specific characteristics of the students, seeking to improve the English learning processes. It also aims to motivate teachers so that they use the strategies, as a teaching tool, obtaining a better academic response, and therefore, it will improve the perception and understanding of the students.

OBJECTIVES

GENERAL OBJECTIVE:

To design a didactic strategy to include students with autism spectrum disorder in the English class.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES:

- To determine the specific learning characteristics of children with autism spectrum disorders.
- To investigate the strategies using in EFL teaching - learning process used with autism spectrum disorder students.
- To diagnose the strategies that teachers use to teach children with autism spectrum disorder.
- To plan a teaching strategy to include these children in the English class.

CHAPTER I

1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1.1 SCIENTIFIC – THEORETICAL BASIS

1.1.1 Overview of autism spectrum disorder (ASD)

Autism is a developmental disorder that primarily affects communication and social interaction. People with autism may have difficulty understanding and responding to social cues, which can make normal social interactions difficult. They may also have repetitive behaviors or restrictive interests. Autism is considered a spectrum, which means that symptoms can vary greatly from person to person. Some people with autism may also have special abilities in specific areas, such as math or music.

The annexation of the term autism to the current concept is due to Leo Kanner after the publication of his article "Autism disturbances of affective contact" in 1943. Artigas and Paula (2012).

At present, according to several authors (Rodríguez-Barrionuevo and Rodríguez-Vives (2002), Artigas and Paula (2012), Ramos (2009), Holguín (2003) emphasize autism in their articles as a chronic neurodevelopmental disorder, which has a strong genetic basis and as such encompasses all ages globally, manifesting in childhood. This disorder is characterized by qualitative disturbances of social interaction and forms of communication through repertoire restricted and repetitive of actions and interests, since they are children closed in on them, which makes verbal and non-verbal communication difficult.

In the same context, Hans Asperger declined in favor of curative pedagogy in infants with autism, and stated as a common characteristic, "a pronounced disability due to

difficulties in social interaction despite their apparent cognitive adequacy and verbal among patients” and defined autism as «Autism Psychopathy», or Asperger Syndrome in the current lexicon.

In the same way, the psychiatrists Lorna Wing and Judith Gould (quoted by Garrabé (2012), in their article "Autism: History and classifications" offered the modern definition of autism, stating it is "a set of symptoms can be associated to different disorders and intellectual levels, which in 75% is accompanied by mental retardation, giving rise to other pictures with non- Autism developmental delay and which present some symptoms of autism».

1.1.2 Characteristics of children with autism in relation to language learning

Autism spectrum disorder and language development is a neurodevelopmental illness called autism spectrum disorder (ASD) that causes serious to moderate delays as well as impairments in social and language development. (Eyler, Pierce, & Courchesne, 2012).

The characteristics of people with autism in relation to language learning may vary from one person to another, since autism is an autism spectrum disorder which affects each person in a unique way. Some characteristics influence the language learning process as follow:

- Communication can be a challenge for people with autism. They may struggle with both verbal and non-verbal communication, which can make it difficult for them to learn a new language.
- Another difficulty is processing and understanding spoken language. People with autism may have trouble with auditory processing, which can make learning a new language even more challenging.

- People with autism also tend to have unique ways of thinking and learning. They may have unconventional patterns of thinking, which can affect how they acquire and understand information in a new language.
- Some individuals with autism have intense interests in specific areas. They may become hyper-focused on these interests, which can affect their motivation and concentration when learning a new language.
- Structure and routine are important for individuals with autism. They thrive in predictable environments. So, a flexible or unpredictable learning environment can hinder their progress in language learning.
- Sensory sensitivity is another challenge. People with autism may be sensitive to certain sensory stimuli, such as sounds, lights, or textures. This can affect their ability to learn a new language in a noisy environment or with too many distractions.

It is important to remember these challenges are general and can vary from person to person. Each individual with autism is unique, so the way autism affects language learning can be different for everyone.

1.1.3 Inclusion of children with ASD

Students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) have certain behaviors that are repetitive, struggle to make and keep social connections, and find it difficult to communicate effectively (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). The topic of including these children in education and society is highly important and relevant. Inclusion means making sure that all students, including those with autism or other disabilities, can access and participate fully in educational and social environments in a meaningful manner.

The inclusion of students with Autism in education and society is significant and relevant. Inclusion means making sure that all students, including those with Autism or other disabilities can take part in and benefit from educational and social activities. When we talk about including Autism children in schools, it is crucial to treat each child as an individual and consider their specific needs and talents.

1.1.4 Approaches in teaching English to students with autism

According to Bogdashina (2004), learners with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) can benefit from being included in typical educational settings. While it may seem controversial to teach English to students with ASD, it is important to consider their individualized requirements when designing language education. To create a conducive language learning environment for students with ASD, it is crucial to analyze their preferences thoroughly. Teaching English as a Foreign Language to students with autism can be challenging due to the unique characteristics of each student. However, there are approaches and strategies can assist in the teaching process. Here are some common approaches for teaching English to students with autism:

- **Functional Communication:** Some students with autism struggle with verbal and nonverbal communication. To facilitate English learning, it is important to use approaches that encourage functional communication. It can include the use of images, gestures, or alternative communication systems.
- **Adapting and Visualizing Materials:** Students with autism often respond better to concrete, visual materials rather than complex verbal instructions. Therefore, it is helpful to use pictures, cards, pictograms, or other visual aids to support the teaching of vocabulary and grammar structures in English.

- **Structured and Sequenced Instruction:** Structured and sequential learning can benefit students with autism by helping them understand and follow classroom expectations. Visual routines and schedules can be employed to provide structure and clarity during English lessons.
- **Individualized Support:** Each student with autism has unique needs and abilities. It is important to tailor the teaching of English to accommodate the strengths and weaknesses of each student. This may involve adapting activities and materials to meet the specific needs of each student.
- **Focus on Student Interests and Motivations:** Students with autism often have specific interests and motivations that can enhance English instruction. By incorporating these interests and motivations into learning activities, student engagement and motivation can be increased.

1.1.5 Challenges in teaching English to students with autism

To enable students with special needs to reach their greater potential for self-reliance and success in school and the community than would be possible if they received only a typical classroom education, special education is the provision of individually planned instructional procedures and systematically monitored, adapted equipment and materials, accessible environments, and other interventions (Zigmond, 2009).

Common challenges in teaching English to students with autism include:

- **Communication difficulties:** Students with autism may have difficulty communicating verbally or understanding language. This can hinder your ability to learn and use English effectively.

- **Social Interaction Difficulties:** Students with autism may have difficulty interacting and participating in group activities. This can make it difficult for them to participate in collaborative learning activities or practice English with other students.
- **Sensory Sensitivities:** Many students with autism have sensory sensitivities, which mean they may have difficulty processing or tolerating certain sensory stimuli. This may affect your ability to participate in learning activities that require the use of certain audiovisual materials or media.
- **Difficulties with change and flexibility:** Students with autism often have difficulty adjusting to change and may have difficulty dealing with a lack of structure or routine. This can make it more difficult for them to adjust to changes in the learning environment or to follow instructions that do not follow a specific routine.

1.1.6 Methods in teaching English to students with autism

Teachers must be proficient in the traits of kids with special needs from their physical, moral, social, cultural, emotional, and intellectual perspectives in order to be considered competent educators (Taylor, 2010).

Regarding students with special needs, instructors must be inclusive, behave impartially, and refrain from acting in a way that is discriminatory due to the student's sex, religion, race, physical condition, family history, or financial situation.

There are several effective methods in teaching English to students with autism. Some of them are:

- **Picture Exchange Communication Program (PECS):** This method uses pictures to help students with autism develop their communication skills. For example, students could use picture cards to learn English vocabulary and phrases.

- **Augmentative and Alternative Communication System (ACA):** This approach uses tools like communication cards or devices to help students with autism communicate and learn English.
- **Visualization:** Using pictures, images, and other visual aids could be helpful for students with autism. Sometimes, it is easier for them to understand things when they can see them visually rather than just hearing words.
- **Structured learning:** Organizing lessons and activities in a structured and predictable way may make it easier for students with autism to understand and learn English. For example, using visual schedules and clear routines clear routines help them.
- **Using Special Interests:** Finding out what students with autism are interested in and using to teach them English can make learning more fun and engaging for them. For instance, if a student loves animals, using animal-related materials and activities in English lessons could keep them motivated.
- **Multi-sensory teaching:** Using different senses like sight, hearing, and touch to teach English can help students with autism process information better and improve their learning. For example, using interactive games, music, and hands-on activities make the class more enjoyable and effective.
- **Accommodations and Modifications:** Sometimes, students with autism may need some changes or adjustments to the curriculum and activities to meet their individual needs. Could include providing extra visual support, simplifying language, or giving more time to complete tasks.

1.1.7 Didactic strategies in language learning

In language learning, there are also different strategies to be used.

- **Linguistic immersion:** This strategy involves fully immersing the student in the language they want to learn. It can be done by traveling to a country where the language is spoken or participating in cultural exchange programs. Being constantly exposed to the language in real-life situations helps students to learn communication skills faster.
- **Communicative Teaching:** This strategy focuses on practical use of the language, emphasizing verbal and written communication. Students practice listening, speaking, reading, and writing through activities like role-playing, debates, and word games.
- **Use of authentic materials:** Using real-life materials like songs, movies, TV shows, or newspaper articles in the target language helps students learn in a more realistic and contextualized way. It also gives them a deeper understanding of the culture associated with the language.
- **Collaborative learning:** Encouraging students to work together in pairs or groups is an effective strategy for language learning. By working together, students can practice the language in a more interactive and engaging way, which boosts their motivation and confidence.
- **Use of technology:** Technology can be a powerful tool for language learning. Mobile apps, interactive websites, online platforms, and speech recognition programs make it easier for students to practice independently and access audiovisual resources anytime, anywhere.

1.1.8 Didactic strategy implementation in students with autism

According to Cardenas (2008), children who have Special Educational Needs (SEN), including those with Autism Spectrum Disorder, can help them comprehend and

resolve issues in the classroom. She says those enhancing excellent ASD learners' skills through observation, interviews, and intervention utilizing a didactic unit, the researcher concludes teachers need to be aware of their clinical report and how they learn in response to stimuli.

- Implementing effective teaching strategies is crucial for promoting the learning and development of students with autism. Teachers should use several strategies to support these students in the classroom.
- One helpful strategy is visualization. This involves using visual aids like calendars, schedules, and communication boards to help students understand and organize their day.
- Another strategy is curricular adaptations. It is relevant to adapt the curriculum and activities to meet the individual needs of each student. This may involve simplifying instructions, using concrete materials, and providing visual aids. For instance, if a student struggles with reading comprehension, providing them with a visual diagram or graphic organizer can help them better understand the content.
- Alternative and augmentative communication is another valuable strategy. This involves using alternative communication systems, such as pictograms, sign language, or assistive communication devices, to facilitate student communication.
- Structured instruction is also essential. This means providing a clear and consistent structure in routines and activities, as well as breaking tasks into smaller, manageable steps. For instance, providing step-by-step instructions and using visual cues can help students understand and complete tasks more effectively.

- Visual teaching strategies can be beneficial as well. Using visual materials like photographs, drawings, or diagrams can help students grasp abstract concepts or understand sequences of events.
- Individualized instruction is crucial for meeting the unique needs of each student. This may involve providing additional support, modifying the learning environment, or adapting instruction to suit the student's learning style. For instance, if a student is a visual learner, incorporating more visual aids and demonstrations should enhance their understanding.
- Positive reinforcement is a powerful strategy for motivating students and reinforcing appropriate behavior. This can involve giving compliments, rewards, or engaging in motivating activities.
- Regular rest periods or breaks are important to help students manage stress and stay focused. Providing opportunities for relaxation and downtime can help to prevent burnout and promote overall well-being.

1.1.9 The potential benefits of didactic strategies for language learning in students with autism

The use of teaching strategies for language learning with students with autism can have several potential benefits, including:

- Firstly, teaching strategies can improve communication skills. By focusing on receptive and expressive language development, students can enhance their ability to communicate in the target language. This includes understanding and producing sentences and engaging in dialogues.

- Secondly, language learning involves social interaction. Didactic strategies can be designed to promote the development of social skills, such as taking turns to speak, following conversation rules, and practicing greetings and farewells. These strategies encourage students to engage with others and communicate effectively.
- Additionally, using adapted strategies promotes inclusion in the language classroom. When students with autism feel valued and accepted, it creates a positive learning environment that fosters their participation and engagement.
- Language teaching also provides cognitive stimulation. Interactive and playful activities can enhance critical thinking, memory, attention, and other cognitive skills. These activities are particularly beneficial for students with autism, as they help strengthen their cognitive development.
- Success in learning a foreign language can boost self-esteem and self-confidence. When students experience achievement and progress in their language proficiency, they feel more motivated to continue learning and face new challenges.
- Lastly, language learning supports the development of flexible thinking. Understanding and adapting to new grammatical structures and linguistic rules helps students with autism develop flexible thinking skills. This enables them to adapt to new contexts and situations more easily.

1.1.10 Humanism theory

Humanism is a philosophical theory based on the study and assessment of human beings as individuals and their ability to develop fully and autonomously. According to the theory of humanism, the human being has an intrinsic value, regardless of their social position, race, gender, or any other characteristic. It considers that everyone could think, reason, and make decisions freely.

According to Freire (1972), “humanization is the process of becoming more fully human as social, historical, thinking, communicating, transformative, creative persons who participate in and with the world”. In this context, the main purpose of a humanistic teaching approach is to provide an education model that teaches students to be aware of their real situation first and then to think about ways to improve their development to contribute to the world improvement.

According to Maslow (1943), individuals possess an inherent drive towards self-actualization and personal growth. Maslow argued that humans are not passive recipients of external influences, but rather active agents who strive to fulfill their potential and seek meaning in life. Central to this theory is Maslow's hierarchy of needs, which outlines the progressive nature of human needs, from basic physiological necessities to higher-level goals like self-actualization. This perspective emphasizes individual autonomy, personal responsibility, and the pursuit of intrinsic values. Maslow's humanism theory highlights the importance of subjective experiences, personal development, and the realization of one's unique capabilities in understanding human behavior and fostering psychological well-being.

1.1.11 Education in autism children from a humanistic perspective

According to Petersson-Bloom L, Holmqvist M. (2022) Education in autism children from a humanistic perspective promotes respect, the appreciation of individuality, the promotion of autonomy, the development of empathy, the appreciation of abilities and strengths, and emotional well-being. By applying these principles, an inclusive education aimed at the comprehensive development of autism children is promoted. In the case of autism children, this means recognizing and respecting their individual characteristics, their interests, and their ways of learning.

- Promotion of autonomy: In the education of ASD children, this implies providing them with the necessary tools and support so that they can make decisions and participate actively in their educational process.
- In the case of ASD children fostering empathy towards them and towards their peers, promoting respect and inclusion.
- In the education of ASD children, identifying and enhancing their abilities, providing them with opportunities to develop their talents and abilities.
- Focus on emotional well-being: Humanism recognizes the importance of attending to people's emotional well-being.
- In the case of autism children, this means providing them with a safe and caring environment, where they feel understood and valued. It also involves offering emotional support strategies and promoting emotional self-regulation skills.

1.1.12 The sociocultural approach to language teaching

According to Vygotsky, (1978) "learning is based on interaction with other people. Once this has occurred, the information is integrated at the individual level". Cognitive development is not only the result of biological components but is also powerfully influenced by the social relationships and culture in which a person is immersed. Vygotsky says that children learn and develop through relationships with other more experienced people, such as parents, teachers and peers.

One of the key concepts of Vygotsky's theory is the "region of proximal development." This region is related to the difference between what a child can do freely and what she can do through an adult or a more experienced partner. Furthermore, Vygotsky says cognitive development is not a personal process, but rather a collective process that is generated through relationships and communication with others.

Vygotsky's theory has had enormous predominance in educational and developmental psychology. It has been used to inform educational practice, especially in the field of classroom teaching. According to this theory, teachers need to provide a collaborative learning environment and provide support and guidance to students as they work on challenging yet available tasks.

1.1.13 The sociocultural approach applied to teaching EFL in autism children

Vygotsky's theory is based on the predominance of social relationships in the cognitive development of people. According to Vygotsky, learning is generated through relationships with others and through the intervention of cultural tools, such as language. Once Vygotsky's theory is applied in the education of English as a foreign language in children with autism, importance is given to the social relationship and the use of support tools to facilitate learning. Several tactics that could be used include:

- **Scaffolding:** The instructor provides gradual and structured support to the infant, adapting the education to her needs. As an example, she could use pictograms to represent English words and promote communication.
- **Zone of proximal development:** Learning is promoted through relationships with other peers or adults. The activities can be done in pairs or groups, where the children support each other in acquiring the language.
- **Use of language:** Language becomes a determining instrument for learning. Visual language, such as images or videos, could be used to facilitate the understanding of English words and concepts.
- **Modification of activities:** Activities are adapted to make them more accessible and meaningful for autism children. For example, you could use games or materials that are attractive and motivating.

- **Collaboration with parents:** Parents are involved in the teaching process, providing them with guidelines and strategies so that they can support language learning at home.

The application of Vygotsky's theory in the teaching of English as a foreign language in autism children seeks to promote learning through social interaction and the use of support tools. By focusing on social and communication skills, it seeks to facilitate language acquisition and promote the overall development of autism children.

1.2 Previous Studies

According to Navarro (2017), in his article "How is language in children with autism?" each child with autism is different, since there is not an equal deficit in each child diagnosed with autism, but in the linguistic field, he emphasizes that various authors classify the Autism language in the following ways: no type of oral language is developed, language is acquired at a later age than expected, both in comprehension and expression, language that presents abnormalities such as echolalia, pragmatic disorders, alterations in prosody or the use of certain words.

García and Tyler (2010) in their study found a positive relationship between the acquisition of new vocabulary and the use of technology. In addition to the use of pictures to explain the new vocabulary, as well as including audio recordings in the textbook, this turned out to be an effective strategy for teaching vocabulary. The results of their study demonstrated that teaching new vocabulary through visual and auditory modalities helped students with special educational needs to feel less frustrated by difficulties decoding words and more motivated to participate in learning.

One of the studies carried out at the national level is that of Díaz and Andrade (2015), which is entitled autism spectrum disorder (ASD) in regular education: study carried out in educational institutions in Quito, Ecuador. Its objective was to analyze the problems faced by teachers in the regular education system in terms of their work with children with ASD, in addition to identifying the type of help they most require carrying out their work.

In the Article “Teaching English to Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders: Challenges and Teaching Strategies” of Ghedeir Brahim. (2022), on the challenges that students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) might face in teaching English and providing remedial teaching strategies that can facilitate teaching English to these special students, in which he investigated the challenges and teaching In which he investigated the challenges and teaching strategies that can be used, remedy these challenges, and the article provided guidelines for a special English curriculum that best meets the needs of students with ASD.

According to Ramos (2018) Inclusion classrooms are an excellent concept but require extensive teacher training, patience, and compassion. These classrooms accommodate students with diverse educational and developmental needs, ranging from typical learners to those with severe disabilities. Supporting all students equally becomes a challenge for teachers due to the varying levels of adaptation and medical attention required by students with severe disabilities. Teachers must possess skills in managing these disabilities, creating individualized lesson plans, and considering dietary needs.

Insufficient teacher experience can hinder a child's progress or lead to adverse medical incidents. In classrooms with students of different abilities, there is a risk of

neglecting children in the middle who may have learning disabilities, hearing impairments, ADD, or language delays.

Albers and Hoffman (2012) in their article describe that as a teaching strategy they used sight word flashcards to teach vocabulary as part of a reading intervention investigation included three Spanish-speaking Latino students with special educational needs. 210 high frequency words were recorded on 3 x 5-inch index flash cards. The definitions of each word are written on the back of each card. Results of the intervention showed improvements in students' sight word recognition, more words correctly, and demonstrating fluency in the reading skill.

1.2.1 Inclusive Education in Ecuador

Ecuador, Constitutional State of Rights adopts all the international recommendations on the matter and establishes its own regulatory framework for the provision of education for all as an intercultural right, both in the LOEI (Andrade & Carofilis, 2014) and in the Code for Children and Adolescents. Thus, it is established that all children have the right to integrate into an educational institution, to quality education and to all the measures that are necessary for this.

In the same way, the Organic Law on Disabilities (LOD, 2012) aims to promote the inclusion of disabled people in all social spheres for the full exercise of their rights, this with the full participation of all educational agencies. Thus, this Law determines that all the necessary resources and tools must be available to promote the educational inclusion of disabled people.

Inclusive education in Ecuador is directly related to the framework of the Plan Nacional del Buen Vivir, which establishes in this regard that the inclusion of disabled

people must be promoted throughout their lives, under the responsibility of the National Equality Council and Disabilities, in the National Agenda for Equality in Disabilities, ANID, determining the social development of inclusive character in Ecuador is based on public policies and management focused on equal opportunities and rights of people (León B., 2018).

It is in this context of care for boys and girls with special learning needs that the National Management and Care Model for Students with Special Educational Needs Associated with Disability in Specialized Educational Institutions is drawn up. This management model articulates four dimensions on which it is based: i) history of special education and current characterization of it, ii) theoretical-legal foundation on which the objectives of special education are raised, iii) structuring and organic model of special education, and iv) pedagogical model that is carried out in specialized educational institutions (IEE) (Ministry of Education, 2018-2019).

From this perspective, in Ecuador inclusive education is considered as the development of skills to improve the quality of life of boys and girls with special learning needs. This considering all the learning dimensions that occur in the educational system, adapting the curriculum to the students (and not the other way around) (Ministry of Education, 2018-2019, p. 14).

CHAPTER II

2. METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Context

One in 100 children in the world is diagnosed with autism. Increasingly, more are enrolled in general education classrooms in school. The good news is that inclusion offers numerous advantages. It has been shown to raise school attendance rates, general attitudes toward diversity, and educational outcomes for all kids. The bad news is that most general education instructors do not receive enough training on ASD, and do not have didactic strategies to apply into the classroom.

When designing a didactic strategy for students with ASD, it is essential to create an inclusive and supportive learning environment that addresses their unique needs and challenges. Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a complex neurodevelopmental condition that affects individuals in various ways, so is crucial to adopt a flexible approach and consider the specific strengths and weaknesses of each student.

Our research was focused on collecting data from the teachers who must deal with students who suffer from ASD, in their class hours, to design a didactic strategy, considering their way of learning must be associated with their needs and learning styles.

2.2 Type of Investigation

The research was carried out with a mixed method, with qualitative-quantitative research. Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) defined mixed methods research as “The class of research where the researcher mixes or combines quantitative and qualitative research techniques, methods, approaches, concepts or language into a single study”.

According to this author the goal of quantitative studies as seeking “causal determination, prediction, and generalization of findings.” On the other hand, she argued that qualitative studies focused on “illumination, understanding, and extrapolation to similar situations”.

The scope of our study was focused in create a didactic strategy to include students who suffer from ASD in the English class, this will be a great help for teachers of Esmeraldas and Atacames cantons, that who do not know how to advance in their classes with students who have ASD. In this research the design will be experimental. According to Creswell (2014), “an experimental design is the traditional approach to conducting quantitative research”.

We chose this design because through our proposal and the data obtained, we can deduce how to achieve our objectives through experimentation.

2.3 Population and Sample

The population of this study was 100 teachers from different educational institutions in the province of Esmeraldas and the sample was made up of 50 teachers who work with students with ASD to answer the questionnaire. We chose the sample intentionally because; We need to show our teaching strategy to teachers who work with students with ASD. It is relevant to consider that the analysis of this research was based on the situations of teachers who work with students with ASD in two locations in the province of Esmeraldas, in which our sample will be established in the Atacames and Esmeraldas cantons.

2.4 Hypothesis

The hypothesis of this research is that through the design of a didactic strategy the students with Autism Spectrum Disorder can be include in the teaching-learning process of the English language.

2.5 Variables

The variables that were made up this research are:

Dependent Variable: Inclusion of students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) to the English class.

Independent Variable: Didactic strategy to include Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) students.

Operationalization of variables (Appendix 1)

2.6 Methods of Investigation

The methods that were use are:

Inductive and Deductive: A didactic strategy for including students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in English class blends inductive understanding observing students' needs and preferences with deductive application of evidence-based practices like visual aids and structured routines, ensuring effective and inclusive learning tailored to individual strengths and challenges.

Analysis and Synthesis: It was extracted to carry out a bibliographic review of the most important theories that support the problem posed, as well as to analyze and synthesize the results obtained.

Hermeneutics: This method was used to interpret the most important information analyzed in the theoretical framework. In addition, it helped to interpret the results obtained with the application of the techniques.

Descriptive statistics: It was used to process all the data obtained with the application of the techniques.

2.7 Techniques of Investigation

The technique that was used was:

Survey: A survey was applied to teachers. This survey allowed us to know what methods and strategies teachers use in the classroom in the learning process of a student who suffers from ASD.

2.8 Instruments

To collect data, the instruments designed were the different techniques that were used:

We used a questionnaire to survey 15 English teachers in Esmeraldas to have a look at existing techniques for teaching inclusion for ASD. The purpose of the study was to determine which teaching techniques for autistic pupils were often employed and thought to be effective.

A questionnaire is a research tool that presents a series of questions used to collect useful information from respondents. These instruments include written or oral questions and comprise an interview-style format.

2.9 Data Processing

The information obtained from the application of the different techniques was tabulated manually. The data were converted into figures and tables using the Microsoft Excel program.

This data processing involves translating the answers on a questionnaire into a form that can be manipulated to produce statistics. In general, this involves coding, editing, data entry, and monitoring the whole data processing procedure. In order to make a correct tabulation of the results of the survey, all answers were counted, and graphs were made to display the information.

Procedure:

To obtain data tabulation; the quantification was carried out using the statistical percentage whose formula is:

$$\% = \frac{F \times 100}{N}$$

%= Percentage which is in total the study.

F= Number of times the data is repeated.

100= Constant sample

N= Total Data.

2.10 Administrative Issues

2.11 Schedule (Appendix 2).

2.12 Budget (Appendix 3)

A detailed statement outlining estimated project costs that support our project.

2.13 Funding Source

The authors

CHAPTER III

3. RESULTS

The survey results, which focused on 50 teachers' experiences and viewpoints about students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), are reported in the report that follows. With this survey, we aim to learn more about the difficulties teachers have meeting the requirements of their ASD children and the efficiency of the methods we currently use to support their inclusion and learning in the classroom. This survey clarifies the opportunities and challenges associated with assisting kids with ASD in the classroom setting by asking a series of questions intended to evaluate teaching methods, resource use, and perceived areas for improvement.

3.1 The results of the survey revealed the following:

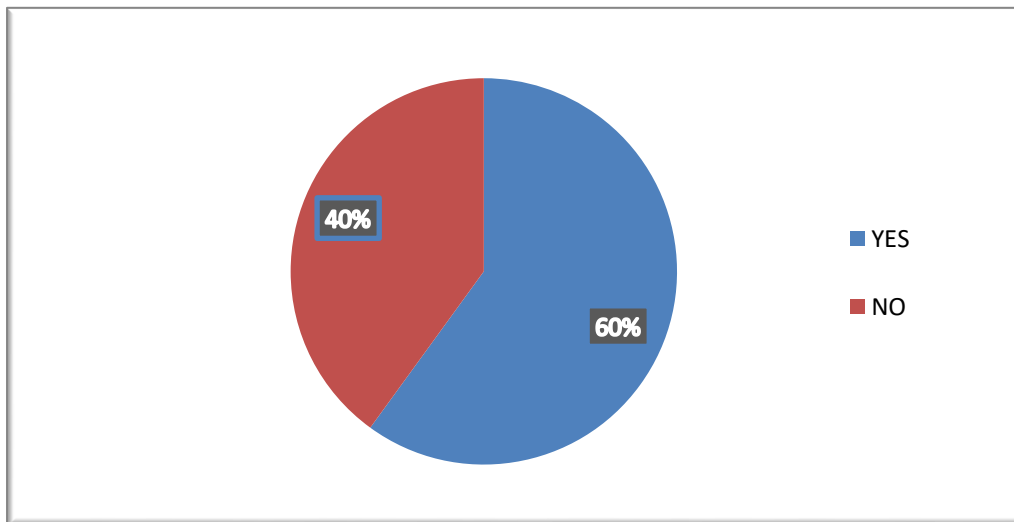


Figure 1: Teaching English to students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

Source: Survey applied to English teachers

According to the survey conducted, 60% of the teachers are currently teaching English to students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), (Figure 1) indicating a significant portion of educators are engaged in this. These results provide valuable insights into the distribution of educators involved in teaching English to students with ASD.

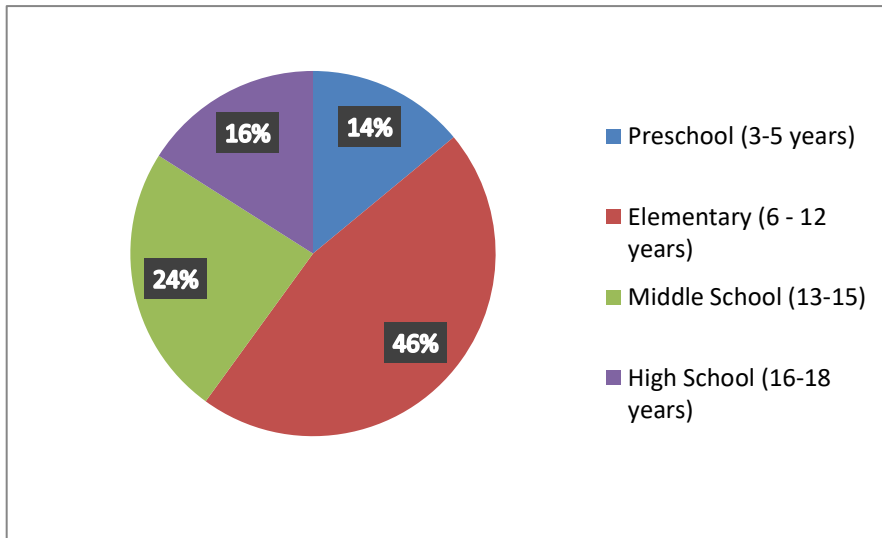


Figure 2: Age group of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) students.

Source: Survey applied to English teachers

According to the question about the age at which teachers teach students with ASD. 14% of Teachers work at Pre-school (Figure 2), 24% work with middle school students (ages 13 to 15 years old), 46% teach English to elementary school students (ages 6 to 12), and 16% focus on high school students (16 to 18 years old). These results provide insight into the distribution of teachers across various age groups within the ASD spectrum, contributing to a better understanding of the educational landscape in this specialized field.

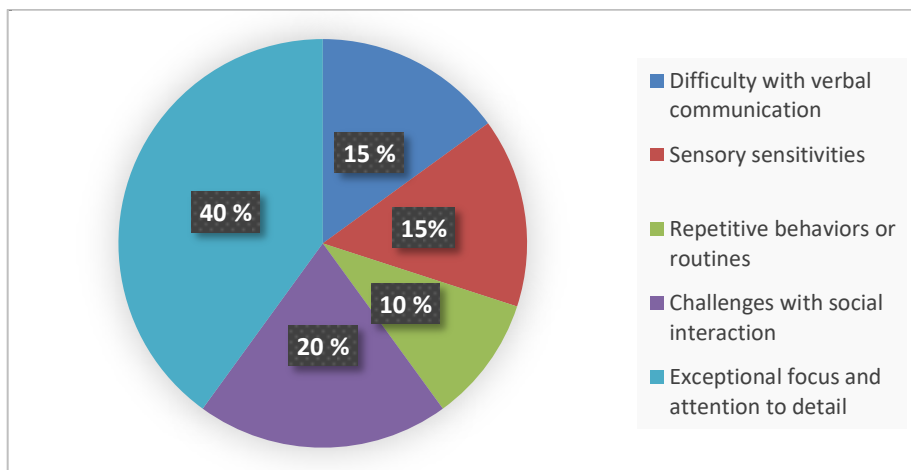


Figure 3: Characteristics of students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

Source: Survey applied to English teachers

These results highlight the diverse characteristics commonly observed in students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), (Figure 3) within an English class setting, as reported by the respondents. The breakdown of answers is as follows: 40% indicates that a significant portion of teachers have observed challenges related to verbal communication in students with ASD; 20% of educators have observed sensory sensitivities in students with ASD; 15% of teachers noted challenges with social interaction in students with ASD, and another 15% of teachers reported observing exceptional focus and attention to detail in students with ASD, and 10% of teachers reported observing repetitive behaviors or routines in students with ASD, underscoring one of the distinctive characteristics associated with ASD.

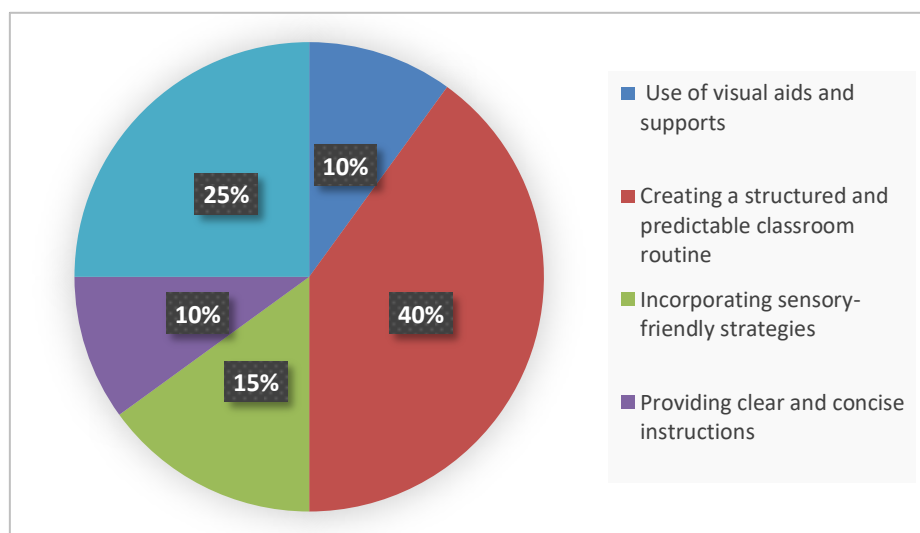


Figure 4: Effective Didactic strategies with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

Source: Survey applied to English teachers

According to this question, the results reveal the various teaching methods that educators commonly employ to accommodate the needs of students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), (Figure 4) in the English class. 40% of teachers indicated that they adapt their teaching methods by establishing a structured and predictable classroom routine; 25% of teachers reported providing opportunities for individual work; 15% of teachers reported incorporating sensory-friendly strategies in their teaching methods; 10% of teachers reported using visual aids and supports to cater to the visual learning preferences or needs

of students with ASD; and another 10% highlighted the importance of clear and concise instructions in adapting their teaching methods for students with ASD.

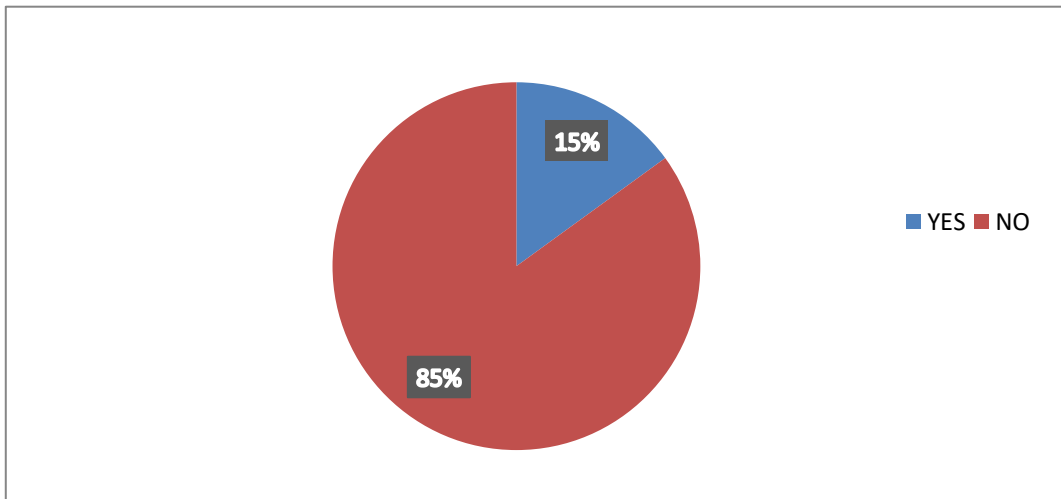


Figure 5: Specialized Training Methods or Professional Development related to (ASD)
Source: Survey applied to English teachers

Regarding the question, if the teachers received specialized training or professional development related to teaching children with ASD in the English class, (Figure 5) indicate that a majority of teachers, 90%, have not received specialized training or professional development specifically tailored to teaching students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in the English class. In contrast, only 10% of educators have undergone such specialized training. This data suggests a potential gap in professional development opportunities related to supporting students with ASD in the context of English instruction.

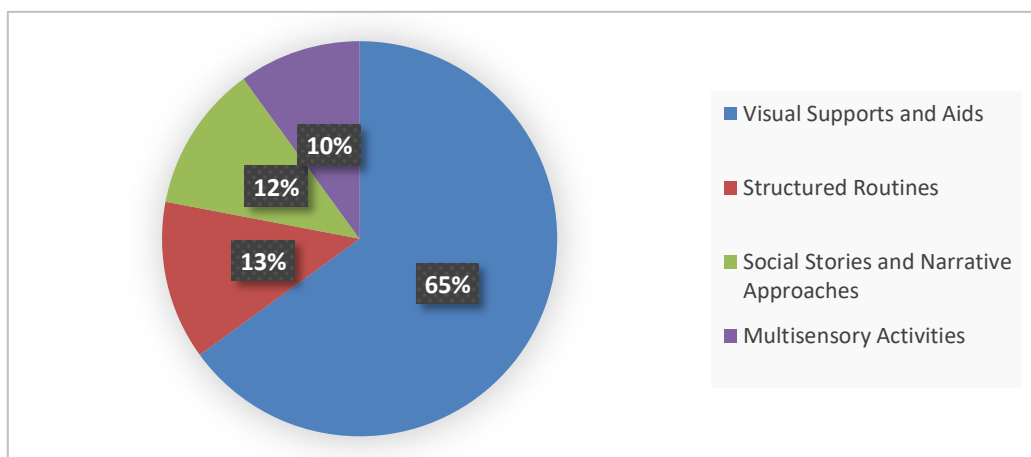


Figure 6. Specific teaching strategies or approaches that teacher found most effective.
Source: Survey applied to English Teachers.

Regarding the specific teaching strategies or approaches that teacher found most effective when teaching English to children with ASD (Figure 6), most teachers found visual supports and visual aids 65%, social stories and narrative approaches 13%, structured routines and schedules 12%, multisensory activities and interactive games 10%. This shows that using visual supports, are taking advantage of the ability of children with ASD to understand and remember information more effectively through visual stimuli.

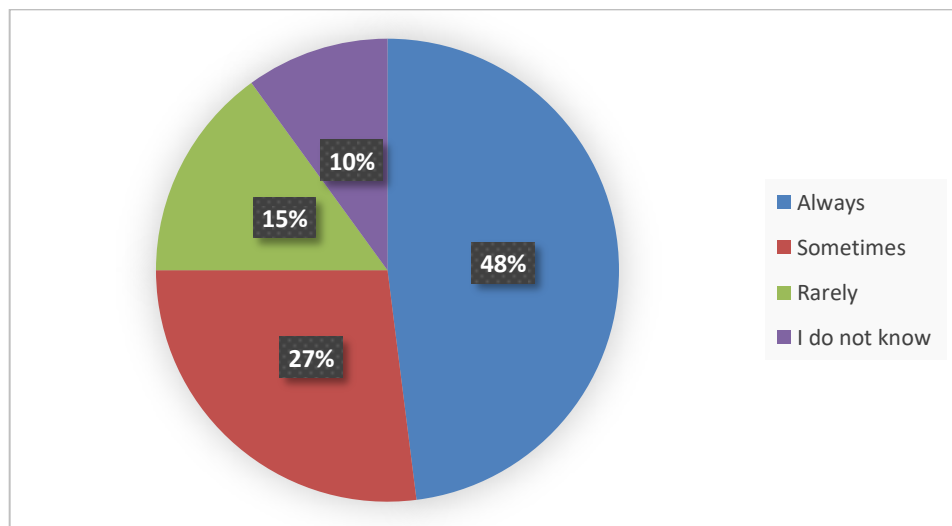


Figure 7. Adaptation of teaching materials and methods to meet the individual needs and preferences of children with ASD.

Source: Survey applied to English Teachers.

On the adaptation of teaching materials and methods to meet the individual needs and preferences of children with ASD (Figure 7), most teachers agreed to make sometimes adaptations, depending on the needs of the student 48%. Another group of teachers, on rare occasions, used standard materials and methods 27%. A third group of teachers, comprising 15%, was not trained to make adaptations with materials and methods. And the minority, accounting for 10%, always made adaptations, but it is important to adapt teaching materials and methods for children with ASD because is essential to create an inclusive and supportive learning environment.

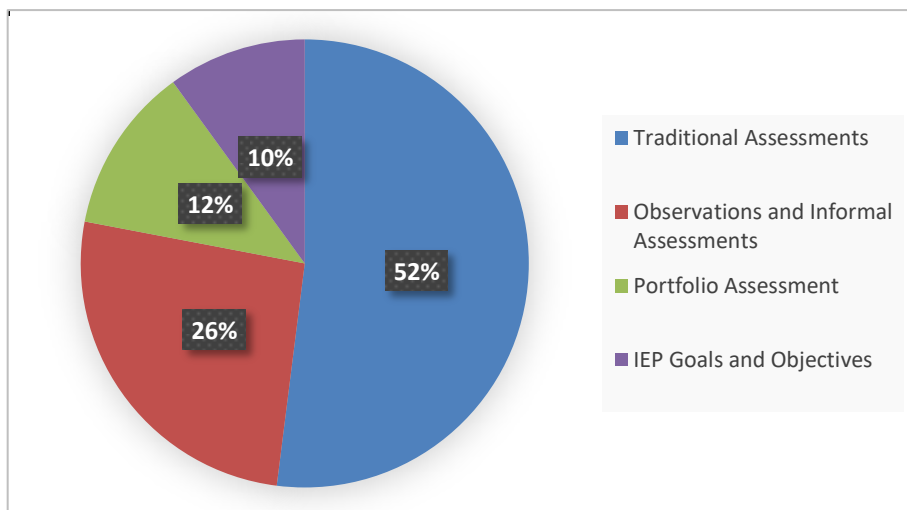


Figure 8. Assessing the progress and learning of children with ASD in the English class.

Source: Survey applied to English Teachers.

Regarding the teaching adaptation on materials and methods to attend the individual needs and preferences of children with ASD (Figure 8), most teachers agreed to assess through observations and informal assessments 52%, Another group of teachers applied traditional assessments (tests, quizzes) 26%, and the 12% of teachers agreed on portfolio assessment (collecting student work samples), and a 10% applied an Individualized Education Program.

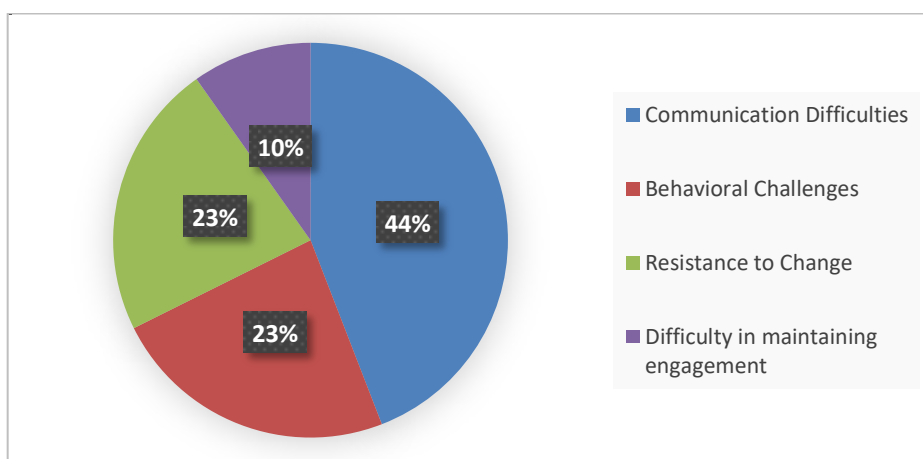


Figure 9. Challenges that teachers encountered when implementing didactic strategies for children with ASD in the English class.

Source: Survey applied to English Teachers.

According to the challenges that teachers encountered when implementing teaching strategies for children with ASD in the English class (Figure 9), a group of teachers found communication difficulties 45%, another group of teachers agreed that they had behavioral challenges 24% and resistance to change or transitions 23%. Problems implementing teaching strategies for students with ASD, and 10% said that difficulty maintaining commitment is a problem.

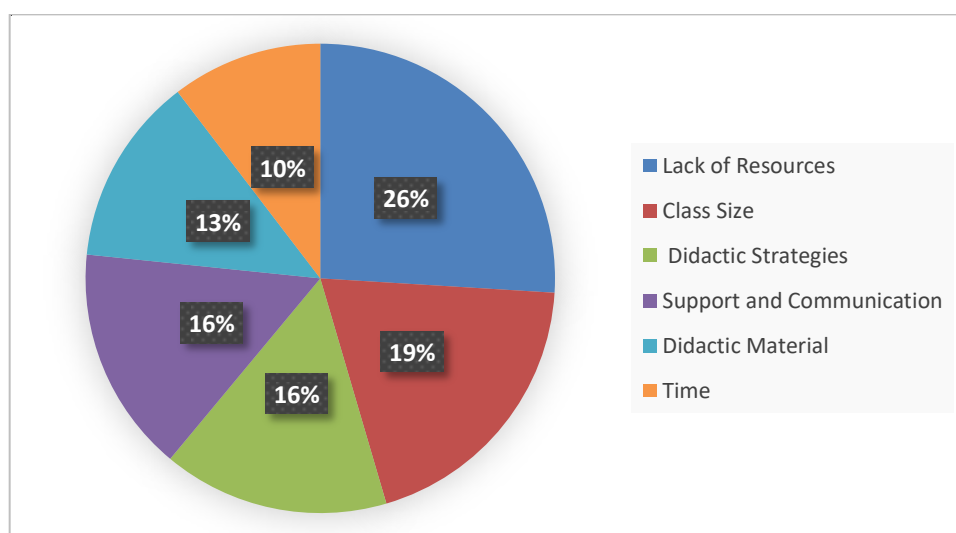


Figure 10. Obstacles that teachers have to implement the strategies in the English class.
Source: Survey applied to English Teachers.

About the obstacles that teachers have to implement the strategies in the English class (Figure 10), the majority of teacher agreed that the lack of technological resources is the big obstacle 20%, on another hand the class size is a problem that teacher found 15%, also a group of teacher agreed that lack of didactic strategies 12%, the lack of communication and support with their parents 12%, the lack of Teacher training and the lack of didactic material resources. So the lack of Teacher training and the lack of didactic material resources 10%, time 8% and few support for the authorities.

DISCUSSION

To create inclusive and productive learning settings, it is essential to comprehend the nuances of teaching English to students who have Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The present discourse integrates findings from prior research with the outcomes of a current survey to explore the obstacles, approaches, and consequences related to teaching English to people with ASD. To clarify the complex nature of teaching students with ASD, this discourse synthesizes empirical findings from the research of Navarro (2017), García and Tyler (2010), Díaz and Andrade (2015), Brahim (2022), Ramos (2018), and Albers and Hoffman (2012). Provides effective information for educators, policymakers, and stakeholders in the field of private education.

The present investigation coincides with Navarro's (2017) investigation related to the heterogeneous nature of language development in children with Autism Spectrum Disorders, highlighting the variability in linguistic deficits between people. This variability highlights the value of understanding the specific learning properties of each student with Autism Spectrum Disorders, as predominated in the survey results. The multiple challenges reported by teachers, ranging from communication issues to sensory sensitivities and repetitive behaviors, align closely with Navarro's visualizations of the multifaceted nature of language impairments in Autism Spectrum Disorders.

This investigation is also aligned with the analysis of García and Tyler (2010) that especially highlights the effectiveness of integrating visual and auditory ways in teaching vocabulary to students with special educational needs. In the setting of English instruction for students with Autism Spectrum Disorders, the survey findings reinforce the value of visual aids and supports, which 65% of teachers identified as the most positive

instructional tactic. This aligns with the idea that individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders commonly show strengths in visual processing and can benefit greatly from educational materials that capitalize on this strength.

We have taken into account the findings of Díaz and Andrade's (2015) investigation to contrast and highlight the challenges that educators face in regular teaching spaces once they work with students with Autism Spectrum Disorders. The survey results echo those challenges: teachers report problems in communication, behavioral performance, and transitions. This emphasizes the need for concrete interventions and support systems within the educational setting to positively address the unique needs of students with Autism Spectrum Disorders.

Our own results and information remain involved with Brahim's (2022) analysis. We provide important information on remedial education tactics for English education tailored to students with Autism Spectrum Disorders. While the survey results indicate a lack of specialized training among educators, Brahim's suggestions for a particular study strategy in English offer a roadmap to address this gap. The use of personalized approaches, integrating the use of visual supports and structured routines, could improve the effectiveness of English education for students with Autism Spectrum Disorders and improve overall learning outcomes.

It is essential to conceptualize and detect the most relevant information, because Ramos's (2018) investigation highlighted the challenges associated with integration classrooms, highlighting the need for extensive training and teacher support. The survey results reflect this, with teachers identifying insufficient training and support as relevant

barriers to using tactics for students with Autism Spectrum Disorders in English classes. Addressing such challenges requires a concerted effort to provide educators with the necessary resources, professional development opportunities, and collaborative support systems to positively advance inclusive learning environments.

Due to all the efforts made by the Albers and Hoffman (2012) research and in particular this research. We have discovered how relevant materials are in the classroom; Sight word flashcards highlight the value of adapting educational materials and procedures to meet the personal needs of students with Autism Spectrum Disorders. While not directly reflected in the survey results, the emphasis on individualized instruction aligns with the survey findings, where teachers reported making accommodations based on student needs. This underscores the value of flexibility and responsiveness in teachers' practices to effectively accommodate the multiple needs of students with Autism Spectrum Disorders.

In summary, bringing together knowledge from previous studies along with survey results gives a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and tactics associated with educating English to students with Autism Spectrum Disorders. By leveraging evidence-informed practices, concrete interventions, and ongoing professional development, educators can produce inclusive and supportive learning spaces that enable academic success for students with Autism Spectrum Disorders in English classrooms.

5. CONCLUSIONS

It is crucial to understand the multiple learning requests and aspects of children with ASD (ASD) to generate support networks and educational treatments that work.

Many learning profiles, including difficulties with communication, social interaction, sensory processing, following structure and routine, intense focus on interests, and atypical learning patterns, have been identified in children with ASD based on extensive research. For some of those reasons we have stated the following conclusions regarding to the objectives of this investigation:

- The research found that children with ASD have diverse learning characteristics including difficulties with communication, social interaction, sensory sensitivities, need for structure/routine, hyperfocus on interests, and unusual learning patterns.
- In the teaching-learning process of English as a foreign language, it was evident that some teachers use these strategies, which include visual supports, structured routines, addressing special interests, functional communication methods, and individualized adaptations, in their classrooms.
- Teachers reported using adaptations like structured routines, individual work, sensory-friendly methods, visual aids, and clear instructions. However, most lack specialized ASD training.
- To conclude, the MAVAL tactic gives a promising approach to effectively integrate students with ASD (ASD) into the English classroom. This tactic provides a structured framework to address the multiple needs of students with Autism Spectrum Disorders, encouraging their language development and social integration in the classroom. Further investigation and use of the MAVAL tactic can lead to better results and better learning experiences for teachers and students with Autism Spectrum Disorders in English classes.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Students with ASD (ASD) need specialized strategies and interventions that address their personal talents, restrictions, interests, and motivations to establish an inclusive and supportive learning environment. With individualized assessments, teachers have the ability to better understand their students' unique learning profiles and change their lesson plans accordingly. Additionally, the addition of visual aids, calendars, social stories, and interactive exercises can improve student collaboration and understanding while maintaining a flexible yet organized learning environment. For this reason, Teachers must consider the following aspects:

- Conduct personal assessments of each ASD student to understand her unique learning profile. Identify strengths, weaknesses, interests, and motivations. Adapt teaching strategies accordingly.
- Promote the use of visual aids, schedules, social stories, hands-on activities. Maintain structure while allowing flexibility to meet individual needs.

Also, for the authorities to contemplate these aspects:

- Provide comprehensive ASD training for teachers. Promote collaboration between teachers and ASD specialists. Share successful strategies between educators.
- Develop an inclusion plan for each ASD student focused on accommodations, socialization goals, sensory needs, and communication. Provide necessary classroom resources and assistive technology.

Finally, teachers must include “MAVAL” strategy in their teaching practices to include students with ASD that could be helpful in the development and management of the classroom and content. We also invite other researchers to keep investigating for new and better strategies based on the inclusion of students with any kind of disabilities.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: Operationalization of Variables

OBJECTIVES	VARIABLES	CONCEPTUAL DEFINITION	OPERATIONAL DEFINITION	DIMENSIONS	INDICATORS	TECHNIQUE	INSTRUMENT	ITEMS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To determine the specific learning characteristics of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder. To investigate the strategies that teachers use to teach children with Autism Spectrum Disorder. 	DV: Inclusion of students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) to the English class.	Inclusion refers to the process of ensuring that all children, including those with ASD or other disabilities, have access to and fully participate in educational and social settings in a meaningful way.	It is the process to including ASD students to their learning characteristics to the English class.	Learning Characteristics.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Difficulty in verbal and non-verbal communication. Auditory processing difficulties Unusual thinking and learning patterns. Hyperfocus on areas of interest Need for structure and routine. Sensory sensitivity 	Survey to teachers	Questionary	Question 1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To diagnose the strategies that teachers use to teach children with autism spectrum disorders. To plan a teaching strategy to include these children in the English class according to their characteristics. 	IV: Didactic strategy to include ASD students.	The didactic strategy is a set of actions and methodologies that are used to facilitate the teaching and learning of specific content or skills.	It refers to the process by means of which a positive behavior support, social skills development and Assistive technology is used in the English class with ASD students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive behavior support Social skills development Assistive technology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement Self-regulation learning. Collaborative activities Technological tools. 	Survey to teachers	Questionary	Question 2

APPENDIX 2: Schedule

Activities	Months																																			
	September				October				November				December				January				February				March											
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Literature Review			x	x																																
Literature Review					x	x																														
Application of techniques							x	x																												
Data Collection and Processing									x	x	x	x																								
Discussion of the results. Stating conclusions and recommendations													x	x																						
Elaboration of proposals															x	x	x	x	x	x																
Thesis delivery																					x															
Thesis dissertation																									x											

APPENDIX 3: Budget

Material	
Copies	10.00
Ink	30.00
Manila Envelopes	5.00
Computer	00.00
Internet	90.00
Pencils	1.00
Mobilization	50.00
Design of Brochures	30.00
Didactic Material	40.00
<i>Subtotal</i>	256.00\$

Total **256.00\$**

APPENDIX 4 : Survey

SURVEY

Dear Participant,

Thank you for participating in this survey regarding to students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in the English class. Your insights will help us better understand and support these students. Please select the most appropriate option for each question:

1. Are you currently teaching English to students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)?

- a) Yes
- b) No

2. Which age group of children with ASD do you teach English to?

- a) Preschool (3-5 years)
- b) Elementary (6-12 years)
- c) Middle School (13-15 years)
- d) High School (16-18 years)

3. In your experience, which of the following characteristics are commonly observed in students with ASD in the English class? (Select all that apply)

- a) Difficulty with verbal communication
- b) Sensory sensitivities (e.g., to lights, sounds, textures)
- c) Repetitive behaviors or routines
- d) Challenges with social interaction
- e) Exceptional focus and attention to detail

4. How do you typically adapt your teaching methods to accommodate the needs of students with ASD in the English class? (Select all that apply)

- a) Use of visual aids and supports
- b) Creating a structured and predictable classroom routine
- c) Incorporating sensory-friendly strategies
- d) Providing clear and concise instructions

5. Have you received specialized training or professional development related to teaching children with ASD in the English class?

- a) Yes
- b) No

6. What specific didactic strategies or approaches have you found most effective when teaching English to children with ASD?

- a) Visual supports and visual aids.
- b) Structured routines and schedules.
- c) Social stories and narrative approaches.
- d) Multisensory activities and interactive games.

7. Do you adapt your teaching materials and methods to cater to the individual needs and preferences of children with ASD?

- a) Always
- b) Sometimes
- c) Rarely
- d) I do not know

8. How do you assess the progress and learning of children with ASD in your English class?

- a) Traditional assessments (tests, quizzes).
- b) Observations and informal assessments.
- c) Portfolio assessment (collecting student work samples).
- d) IEP (Individualized Education Program) goals and objectives.



9. What challenges have you encountered when implementing didactic strategies for children with ASD in your English class?

- a) Communication difficulties.
- b) Behavioral challenges.
- c) Resistance to change or transitions.
- d) Difficulty in maintaining engagement.

10. What obstacles do you have to implement the strategies in your English class?

- a) Lack of technological resources
- b) Lack of support and communication
- c) Class size
- d) Lack of didactic materials
- e) Time
- f) Lack of didactic strategies

APPENDIX 5: DIDACTIC STRATEGY

“MAVAL STRATEGY” A DIDACTIC STRATEGY TO INCLUDE STUDENTS WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER IN THE ENGLISH CLASS	
<p><i>A didactic strategy to include students with ASD in the English class is specifically designed to address the individual needs of the student. The teacher can adapt it according to the needs of each student.</i></p>	
<p>Although its name comes from the authors María and Valeria (MAVAL), this strategy also allows us to: Modeling, Anticipation, Visualization, Action and Learning. This will be a useful tool for teachers who work with students with Autism Spectrum Disorder in the English class.</p>	
GENERAL OBJECTIVES	
<p>To facilitate the student's participation and academic and social progress in English class, focusing on their linguistic abilities and particular needs as a student with ASD.</p>	
SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To improve the student's verbal and written comprehension in English. 2. To help the student communicate effectively in social situations in English. 3. To encourage student participation in group activities in English class. 4. To promote student independence in the use of the English language in different contexts. 	
ASPECTS	PROCEDURE
<p>ORGANIZATION</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VISUAL DAILY PLANNER (its length comprises the needs and understanding of the individual) could be a “now and later” schedule. <div style="text-align: center; margin: 20px 0;"> <h3>DAILY VISUAL PLANNER</h3>  </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use flashcards with pictures to practice some exercises in a new way. <div style="text-align: center; margin-top: 20px;">  </div>

- Present images that show the FINAL result of a TASK.
- Divide tasks into small, manageable sections, with pauses as needed.
- Give them time to prepare for the next routine with a dynamic that socializes the next activity.
- Teach how to manage hypersensitivity, using in each class an activity where the sound is present, the lights are evident, and the visual can capture their attention.

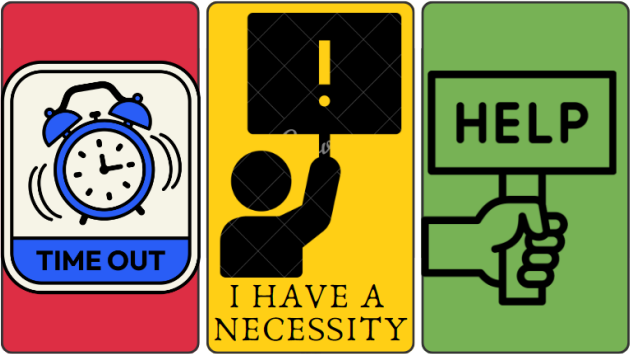
- Use communication tools such as PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System), this material can be developed by the teacher to achieve good communication.



COMMUNICATION

- Use flashcards to express feelings.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give them wild cards in each class, such as the “time out” card, which indicates that they need a break, also the “I have a necessity” card, which can be used to go to the toilet or to drink water, and the “help” card. when they need to be guided by the teacher. <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>WILD CARDS MAVAL STRATEGY</p> </div>
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SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

- Work with games and listening exercises and following instructions, using visual and audio supports to facilitate understanding.
- Group reading activities, such as reading short stories aloud and answering related oral and written questions.
- Role plays and practical situations of social interaction in English, such as shopping situations in a fictitious market.
- Vocabulary games and oral and written description exercises using images and objects from the class (for example, describing a picture of a house or physically describing a person).

ANNUAL GOALS

<p>1. Speaking Skills:</p>	<p>Short Term Goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The student will answer yes/no and multiple-choice questions with the support of images. The student will follow 1-2 step instructions related to in-class assignments. The student will express his or her basic needs using short sentences. <p>Adaptations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide visual support with images, real objects, and gestures when given verbal instructions. Allow additional time to process information and answer questions. Provide options for answering questions (e.g., pointing, answering yes/no, using augmentative communication). • Provide sensory breaks when necessary.
<p>2. Reading and Writing Skills:</p>	<p>Short Term Goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The student will learn to recognize and write the letters of the alphabet.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The student will be able to read and write simple, frequently used words. • The student will be able to read texts adapted to their level with visual support.
	<p>Adaptations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach letter recognition and writing using multisensory methods. • Provide text with pictograms and other types of visual aids to facilitate understanding. • Allow the student to dictate responses if they have difficulty with motor writing. • Modify the length and complexity of the assigned reading/writing tasks.
3. Independent and Focused Work Skills:	<p>Short Term Goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The student will follow a visual routine for assigned tasks. • The student will request sensory breaks appropriately when needed. • The student will use strategies such as being in a designated space, wearing headphones, or having a sensory object when working independently.
	<p>Adaptations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a clear and consistent routine for classroom activities. • Provide verbal and gestural reminders to stay focused on a task. • Allow sensory breaks between tasks. • Reduce visual and auditory distractions in the learning environment.
FOCUS AREAS	
Oral comprehension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The student will be able to follow instructions in English related to class activities. • The student will improve her ability to understand and answer oral questions in English.
Written comprehension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The student will read short texts in English and answer questions related to them. • The student will be able to identify and understand written vocabulary in English related to class topics.
Communication and social interaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The student will practice basic conversation skills in English, such as greetings, goodbyes, and general questions. • The student will actively participate in group activities in class, including word games, debates, and discussions.
Use of language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The student will use basic structures and appropriate vocabulary of the English language in communicative situations. • The student will improve her ability to describe objects, people and events in English.

MAVAL
DIDACTIC STRATEGY

Student Name: [Insert Student Name]

Date: [Insert Date]

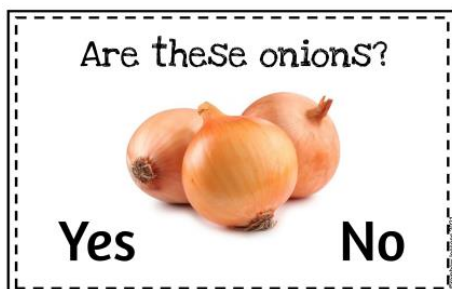
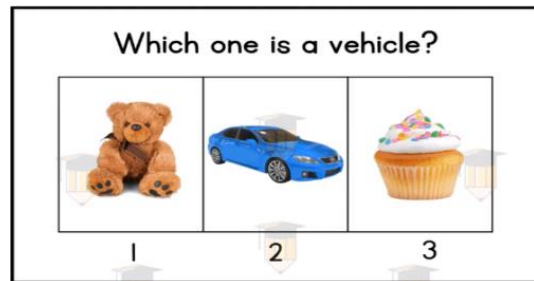
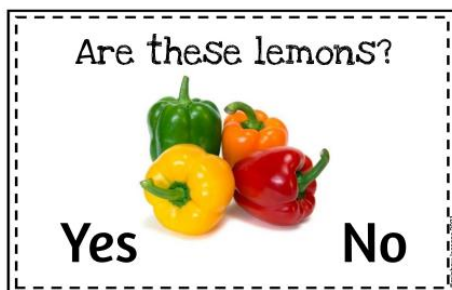
Objective:

This guide applies the MAVAL (Modeling, Anticipation, Visualization, Action, and Learning) didactic strategy to develop speaking, reading, and writing skills for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in the English class.

1. Speaking Skills:

Objectives:

- The student will answer yes/no and multiple-choice questions with the support of flashcards.



- The student will follow 1-2 step instructions related to in-class assignments.
- The student will express his or her basic needs using short sentences.

Adaptations:

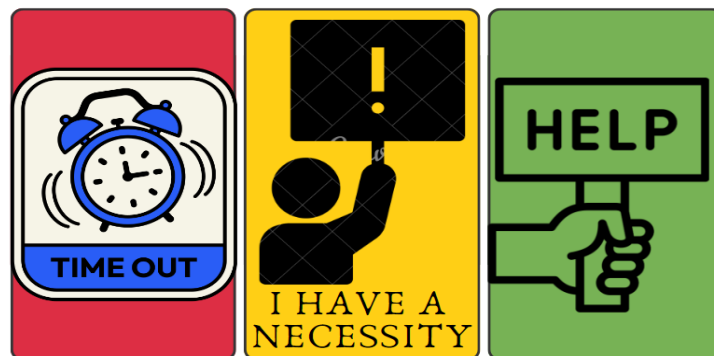
- Provide visual support with images, real objects, and gestures when giving verbal instructions.

The teachers also can use “PECS2” (Picture Exchange Communication System), this material can be developed to achieve good communication.



- Allow additional time to process information and answer questions.
- Provide options for answering questions (e.g., pointing, answering yes/no, using augmentative communication).
- Provide sensory breaks when necessary.

Teachers can give them **wild cards**, such as the “time out” card, which suggests they need time off, the “I have a need” card, which can be used to go to the bathroom or drink water, and the Card of “help”, since they need to be guided.



WILD CARDS
MAVAL STRATEGY

MAVAL Steps:

Modeling: Model how to answer yes/no and multiple-choice questions using visual supports. Provide examples of short sentences that express simple needs.

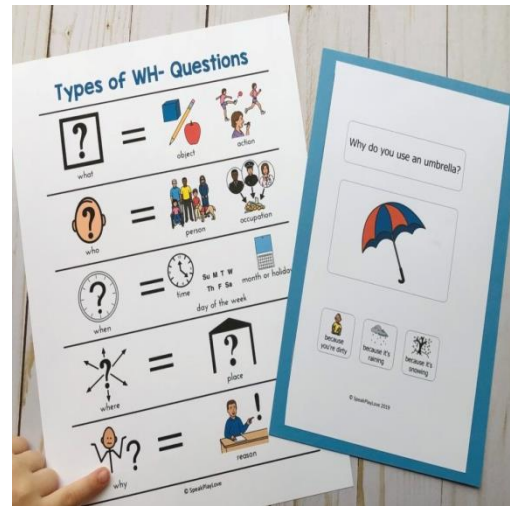
Anticipation: Encourage the student to anticipate questions and prompts by providing visual cues or instructions.

Visualization: Use visual aids and gestures to help the student visualize the tasks or responses required.

Visual supports:

Action: Involve the student in answering questions and following instructions, providing support and reinforcement as necessary.

Learning: Provide feedback to reinforce learning and encourage independent application of skills.



2. Reading and Writing Skills:

Objectives:

- The student will learn to recognize and write the letters of the alphabet.
- The student will be able to read and write simple, frequently used words.
- The student will be able to read texts adapted to their level with visual support.

Adaptations:

- Teach letter recognition and writing using multisensory methods.
- Provide text with pictograms and other visual aids to facilitate understanding.
- Allow the student to dictate responses if they have difficulty with motor writing.
- Modify the length and complexity of the assigned reading/writing tasks.

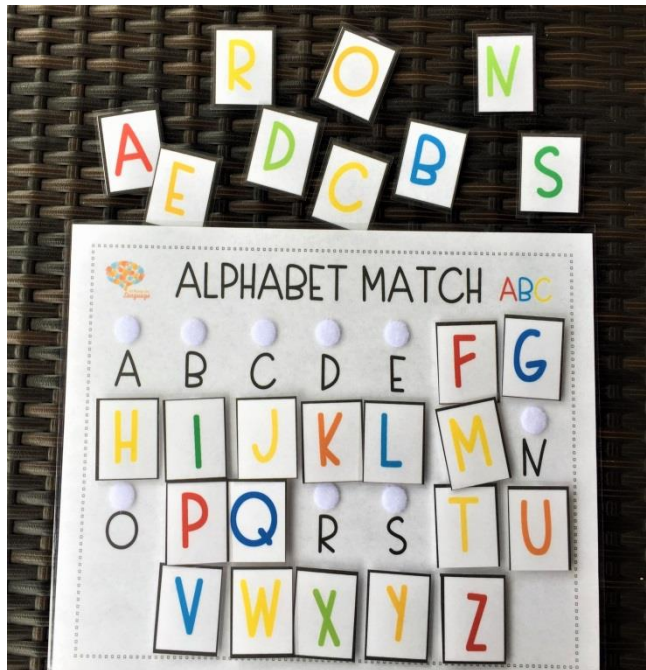
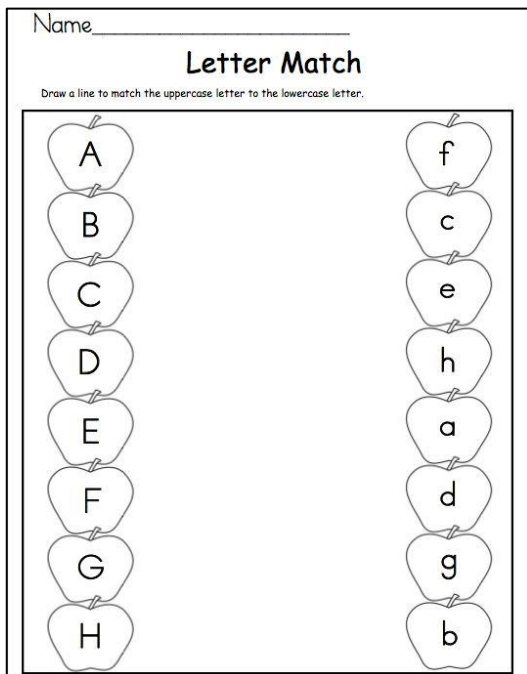
MAVAL Steps:

- **Modeling:** Demonstrate how to recognize and write letters using multisensory methods. Model reading and writing simple words with visual support.
- **Anticipation:** Prompt the student to anticipate letters and words based on visual cues provided.

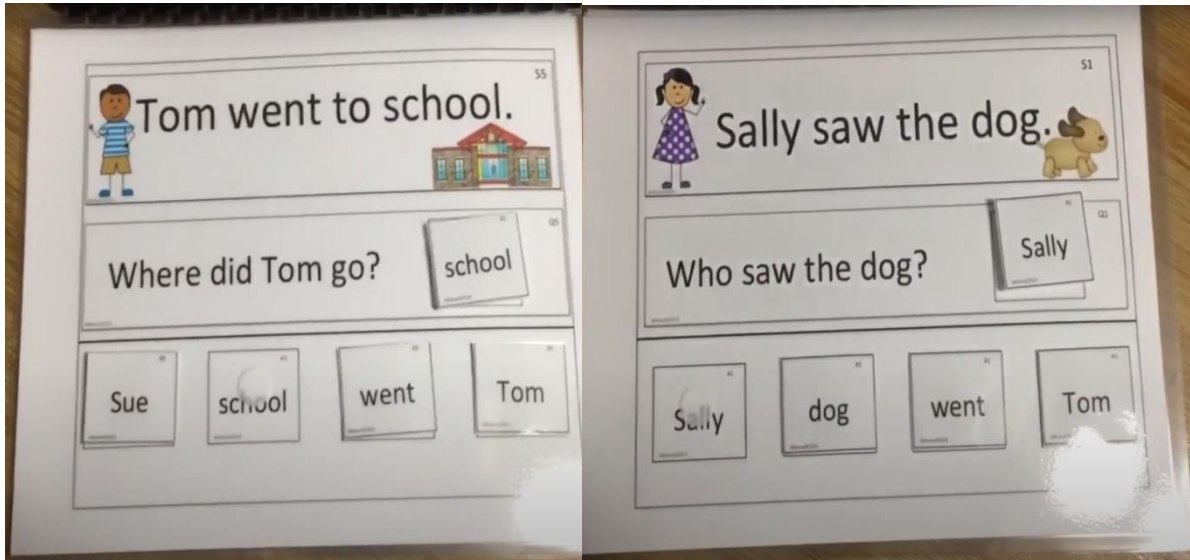
- **Visualization:** Use visual aids to support the student in visualizing letters, words, and text.
- **Action:** Encourage the student to actively engage in letter recognition, writing, reading, and writing tasks, providing support and guidance as needed.
- **Learning:** Provide feedback and reinforcement to support the student's learning progress and encourage independent application of skills.



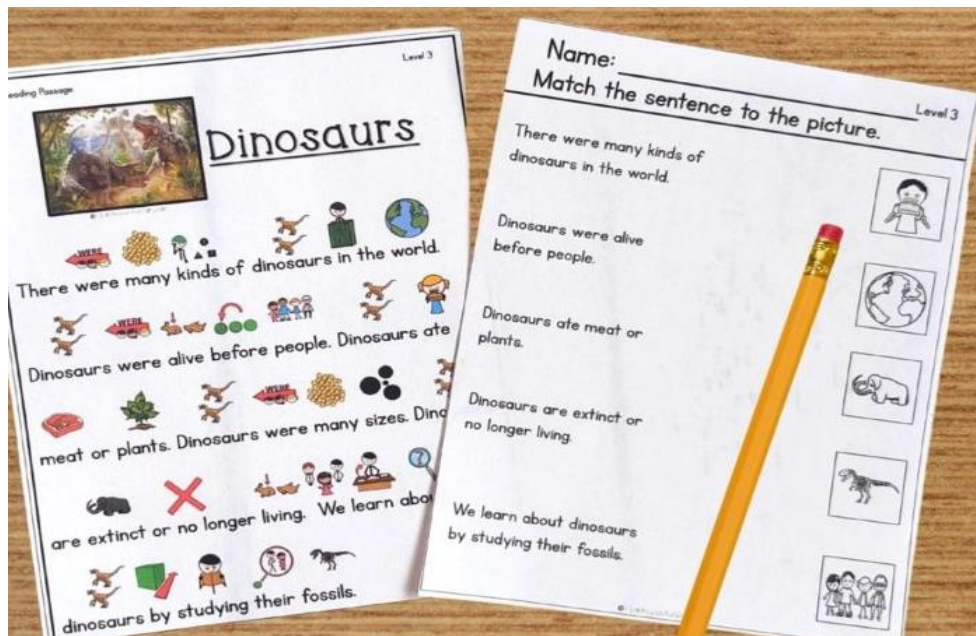
The learners need to recognize the alphabet through visual resources before they can start reading. These students are good at matching and memorizing the letters and structures.



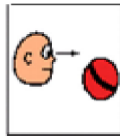
Also, they can use this visual support to start reading. Remember, you can create these materials and use them a lot of times. It is necessary to remember that everything is a process, first with a few steps and then with huge steps. This is a book that we can create for our students with different stories, and according to the content, the objective is to create materials in a creative way.




The teachers can create and use some worksheets and flashcards to help these students read; this depends on the needs of the learners. It is necessary that the students familiarize themselves with the content before they do the activities.



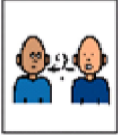
Sometimes I see something I want



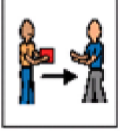
But someone else is playing with it




I ask "Can I have a turn?"



If they give it to me ...



Then it is MY turn




The teachers can use some worksheets depending on the age, level, context, and needs of the learners. In this worksheet, the students can read, trace, and write the word. Training the student on the proper hand grip and coaching them in hand exercises is a great way to encourage handwriting progress.



NAME _____

DATE ____-____-____

My word is my



Read: my my my

Trace and read. my my my

Find my and circle it.



my	a	me	this	my
MY	the	my	is	this
m	this	a	mom	MY

Write it.



Cut letters and paste to make my.

m M Y y y m


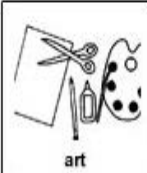
In this next worksheet, the students can read and write with a sequence. The students read and interpret the text, and then they can write in the worksheet a sequence with another topic that the teacher gives them that could be related to their daily routine, etc.

first	 rest	then	 play
--------------	---	-------------	---

"First you need to rest, then you can play outside"

first	 put on helmet	then	 ride bicycle
--------------	--	-------------	---

"First you need to put on your helmet, then you can ride your bicycle "

first	 circle time	then	 art
--------------	---	-------------	---


"First we will have circle time, then we will make an art project "




TITLE/TOPIC: _____

	First, _____ _____
	Next, _____ _____
	Last, _____ _____

EXAMPLE OF READING COMPREHENSION:

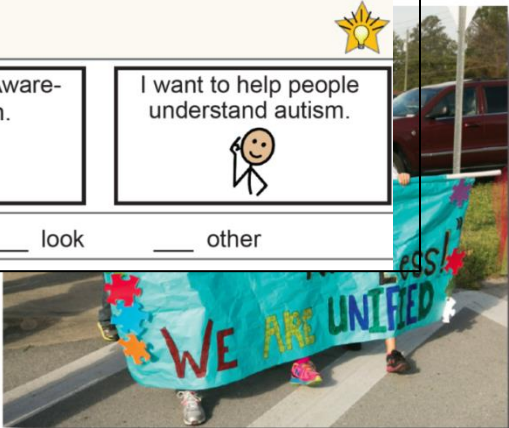
AUTISM AWARENESS

1. What is the main idea? 

My name is Lori. 	April is Autism Awareness month. 	I want to help people understand autism. 
---	---	---

Student response mode: ___ point ___ look ___ other


my school, we do different activities. This helps everyone learn about autism.






https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/b/b3/Students%2C_families_walk_to_support_Autism_Awareness_Month_140404-M-ZZ999-331.jpg


Characters




Autism Awareness

1. Who is the main character in the story? 


<p>Rosa</p> 	<p>Melanie</p> 	<p>Lori</p> 
---	--	---




Student response mode: ___ point ___ look ___ other

2. What is one trait of the main character? 

<p>She has autism.</p> 	<p>She stands up for herself.</p> 	<p>She is mean.</p> 
--	---	---

Student response mode: ___ point ___ look ___ other

3. What story setting is the main character talking about? 

<p>park</p> 	<p>school</p> 	<p>her home</p> 
---	---	---

Student response mode: ___ point ___ look ___ other

INDEPENDENT AND FOCUSED WORK SKILLS:

Objectives:

- To follow a visual routine for assigned tasks.

- To request sensory breaks appropriately when needed.
- To use strategies such as being in a designated space, having a sensory object when working independently.

Adaptations:

- Establish a clear and consistent routine for classroom activities.
- Provide verbal and gestural reminders to stay focused on a task.
- Allow for sensory breaks between tasks.
- Reduce visual and auditory distractions in the learning environment.

3. MAVAL Steps:

- **Modeling:** Model how to follow a visual routine and request sensory breaks appropriately.
- **Anticipation:** Help the student anticipate when sensory breaks may be needed and establish strategies for requesting them.
- **Visualization:** Use visual supports to outline the student's routine and provide reminders for staying focused.
- **Action:** Support the student in independently following their visual routine and utilizing sensory strategies for focused work.
- **Learning:** Provide feedback and reinforcement to support the student's development of independent work skills.

The teachers need to focus on the sensory breaks of the students; that is important to enhance the students and progress with their process. To obtain a good process during the class, it is important to maintain organization in the activities. These students work properly in order, and they feel more secure knowing what they're going to do.




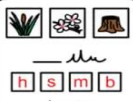
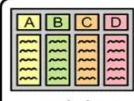
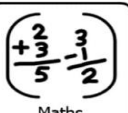
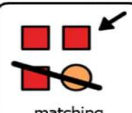
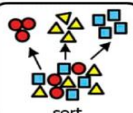






First, the teachers need to use and apply a:

- **VISUAL DAILY PLANNER** (its length comprises the needs and understanding of the individual) could be a “now and later” schedule.

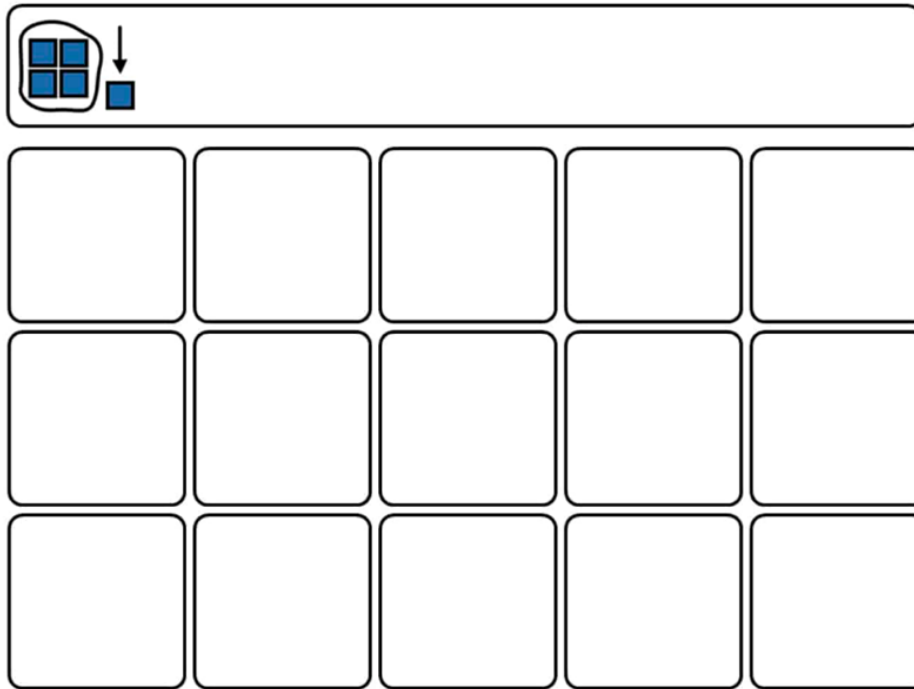
DAILY VISUAL PLANNER



The teachers can adapt these symbols for key curriculum areas and common learning activities. These symbols can be used to schedule learning activities throughout the day, or single symbols may be used for a first/then incentive.

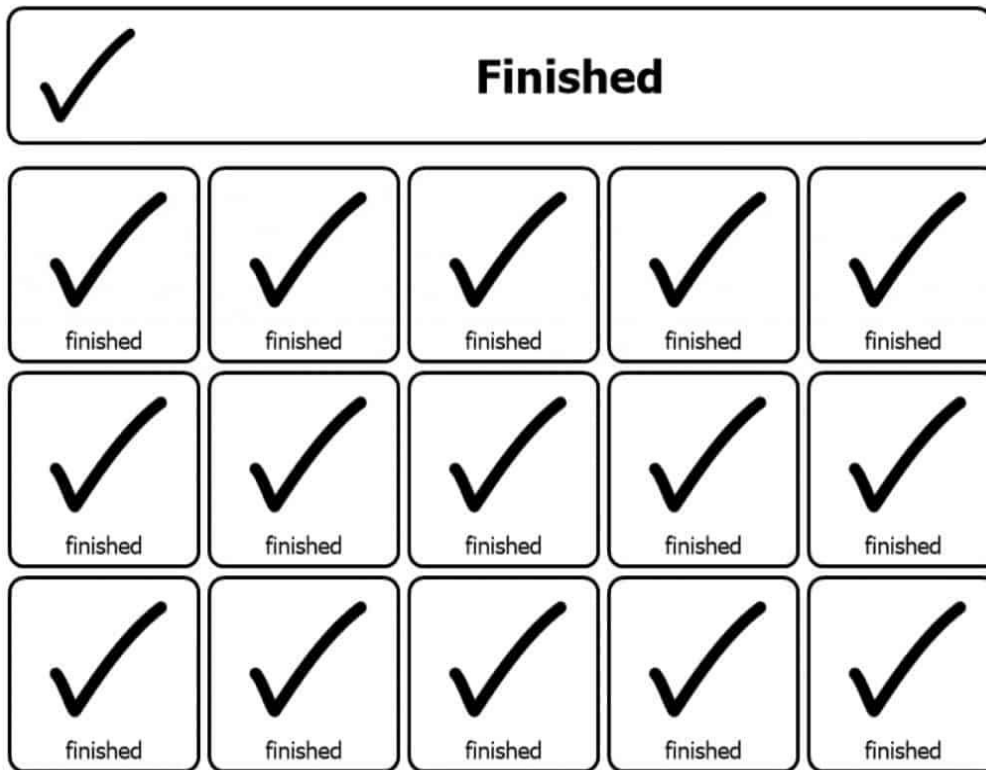
 School work				
 reading	 writing	ABC letters	 phonics	 vocabulary
 Maths	 matching	1 4 9 5 2 8 numbers	 sort	 worksheet
 social studies	 science	 art	 computer work	 iPad work

Teachers can use the next template to create the schedule according to the learners needs.



The learners can use these tick symbols on the schedule pages to track their progress towards a specific goal or incentive. For example, 'at the end of my schedule' may mean time to relax.

A

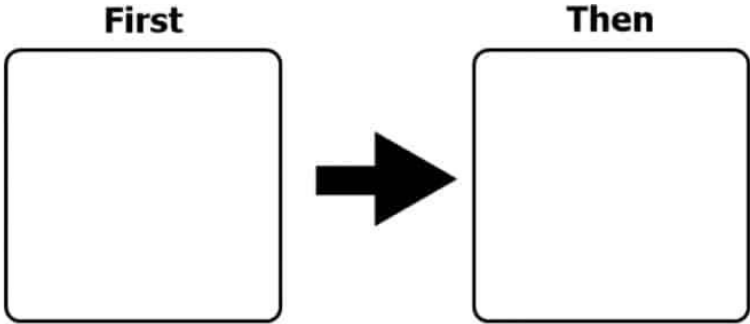


Use these symbols to cover up finished activities.

first/then incentive can be used to motivate learners to complete a required activity before

moving on to a preferred activity. Place the symbol of the required activity in the 'first' box and the symbol of a preferred activity in the 'then' box. Each time the student completes a required task, place a finished symbol in the box. When all of the boxes are full, reward the student with the incentive they were working towards.

First/Then Incentive



Add a non-preferred activity (first) followed by a preferred activity (then).

I am working for...



A horizontal row of five empty rectangular boxes with rounded corners, intended for tracking progress.

When all the boxes are full, the learners can obtain an incentive.

Using a schedule may be a helpful way to organize the students day and help develop a learning routine. This schedule template is designed to be used per learning block. This means that the child would complete three learning activities followed by a break, such as play time, moving around, etc. Alternatively, you may use the idea of the schedule but adapt it to suit the individual child’s learning. For example, you may schedule the entire day by placing symbols on the back of a door, desk, or on a wall in order of their sequence and removing each one or covering them up with a finished tick when they are completed. Remember to include regular breaks and activities that the child enjoys doing to help rest their brain and keep them motivated.

 **My Schedule**

First:

Finished:

Then:

Templates by: Julie Skilling

Focus Areas:**Oral Comprehension:**

- The student will be able to follow instructions in English related to class activities.
- The student will improve her ability to understand and answer oral questions in English.

Written Comprehension:

- The student will read short texts in English and answer questions related to them.
- The student will be able to identify and understand written vocabulary in English related to class topics.

Communication and Social Interaction:

- The student will practice basic conversation skills in English, such as greetings, goodbyes, and general questions.
- The student will actively participate in group activities in class, including word games, debates, and discussions.

Use of Language:

- The student will use basic structures and appropriate vocabulary of the English language in communicative situations.
- The student will improve her ability to describe objects, people, and events in English.

Feedback: [In this part the teacher is going to write observations and feedback on the student's performance during the activities.]

This applies the MAVAL didactic strategy to support the development of speaking, reading, and writing skills for students with ASD in the English class. Teachers can customize the activities further based on individual student needs and progress.