WHAT IS THE AUTISM SPECTRUM?

The autism spectrum is a neurological variation which affects, among other things, the way an individual relates to his or her environment and their interaction with other people.

Tip: The majority of students on the autism spectrum felt the interaction was central to their learning, however, some students experienced barriers to their interaction e.g. anxiety. Providing support to facilitate student to student interactions may benefit all students.

OVER 40% of students on the autism spectrum reported some level of difficulty when interacting with other students when needed.

Tip: Students on the autism spectrum may not actively participate in the discussion board but they have reported they benefitted from reading other students’ posts.

If needed students were able to:

Participate in online discussion (e.g. collaborate sessions)
Express opinions to other students about course content (e.g. yammer, discussion boards, blogs)
Respond to students’ comments about course content (e.g. yammer, discussion boards, blogs)
Provide help to other students about course content
Request help from others about course content

Helpful Stats

Students identified their preferred methods of communicating with other students.

- Video calls 4%
- Chat boards 15%
- Discussion forum 46%
- Emails 27%
- Phone 8%

Tip: There are a group of students on the autism spectrum who never felt able to interact with other students. At the beginning of the course discuss the various ways students can interact with each other and establish rules for communication.

Tip: Not all students can interact when required with ease. When planning your course be aware of the range of student preferences and scaffold these interactions.