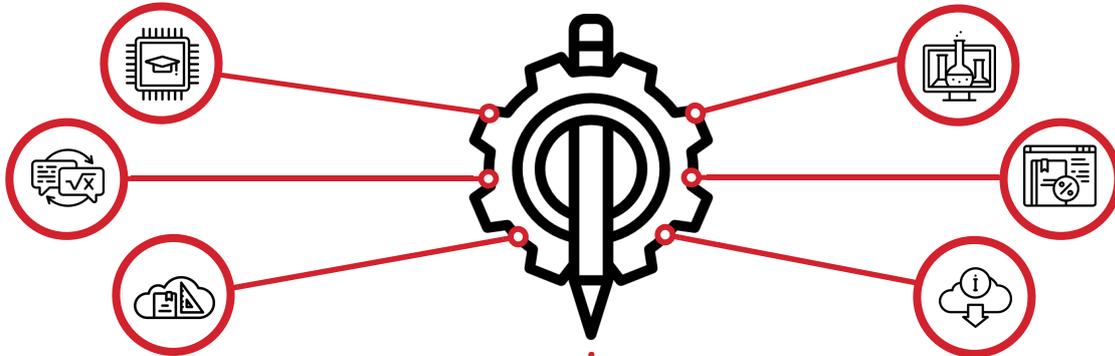


STUDENTS ON THE AUTISM SPECTRUM STUDYING ONLINE: USING ONLINE TOOLS

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.



Online tools

- Students on the autism spectrum generally report few problems in using Learning@Griffith, PDF files, YouTube, and the Griffith library website.
- Tools such as Collaborate and Echo360 can cause problems, even though they are used frequently within a course.
- Some students on the autism spectrum may have problems using tools and/or not be able to tell you when they are experiencing barriers. These barriers may include technical problem solving and issues contacting sources of help.

Student quote: "Seeing' my tutor online is important as a kind of guidance – for the material itself and getting through it."

Student quote: Helpful things include "Tutors that come into the discussion board AT LEAST once a week. Tutors who put an announcement up once a week. Tutors who respond in a timely manner to discussions or questions."

Tip: A successful learning experience is more than the sum of the site content and tools. Creating and maintaining a teacher presence is critical. Remember to actively engage with the students regularly via the online tools and a variety of communication channels.

Tip: At the start of each course provide information to students on how to use tools and who to ask for help if they have a problem. Sometimes running a practice session can be helpful even for continuing students.

Content in Learning@Griffith

Students report finding it helpful when the instructor makes clear links between the content across the weeks or modules.

Tip: Regularly show or explain how things connect and influence each other within the course. Repeat these consistent links in multiple places.

At least 33% of students on the autism spectrum found:

- It was hard to find weekly content
- It was difficult to navigate through Learning@Griffith
- The pages had too much content



Tip: Attention to course site learning design can improve structure and navigability of content, enhancing the student learning experience.