



Drawing a Blank: Improving Comprehension for Readers on the Autism Spectrum

By Emily Iland

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Although they may be fluent readers - indeed, many have very precocious reading skills - individuals with autism spectrum disorders often need support for comprehension. Comprehension difficulties in readers with ASD can be subtle, qualitative, and difficult to tease out. As a result, their substantial level of risk for reading comprehension problems is often overlooked or unaddressed, and many students struggle in silence. Further aggravating the situation is the fact that otherwise competent educational professionals in both general education and special education settings have limited training and experience helping readers with ASD. This is where Drawing a Blank comes in. Using a clearly stated and well-organized approach, this practical resource provides educational professionals and parents with the tools to improve comprehension for good decoders who have reading comprehension difficulties, as well as readers who struggle with both decoding and comprehension. In keeping with current standards, the book emphasizes the importance of using evidence-based and promising practices based on thorough assessment of student's needs.

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Editorial Review

Review

I get asked by parents all the time about their child's problems with reading comprehension. This book provides lots of practical, easy-to-teach methods for improving vocabulary and comprehension. Some of the teaching tools include teaching synonyms, looking up pictures on the Internet to teach nouns, and using lists of words with different shades of emotional meaning such as naughty, bad, and evil. I highly recommend this book for use with all individuals who have problems with reading comprehension. --Temple Grandin, Ph.D., author of Thinking in Pictures and Developing Talents: Careers for Individuals with Asperger Syndrome and High-Functioning Autism

This is a book we have been waiting for! Until now, little information has been available about teaching reading to students with autism spectrum disorders. In Drawing a Blank, Emily Iland has not only provided dozens of useful ideas for the classroom and home but also a concise review of the literature and a compelling story of her own quest to secure appropriate supports for her son. Every reading teacher in K-12 schools needs two copies one to keep and one to pass on to a colleague. --Paula Kluth, Ph.D., author of You're Going to Love This Kid : Teaching Students with Autism in the Inclusive Classroom

Drawing a Blank offers practitioners and families practical strategies for supporting reading comprehension for learners with ASD. The text format is easy to read and well structured to support quick access to specific strategies and ideas. Most important, Emily Iland recognizes the limited research on reading comprehension and ASD while offering suggestions for making sound, individualized instructional decisions. This text will be a wonderful resource for parents, teachers, SLPs, and many others! --Christina Carnahan, Ed.D., associate professor of special education, the University of Cincinnati, and co-editor of Quality Literacy Instruction for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders

From the Inside Flap

Although they may be fluent readers - indeed, many have very precocious reading skills - individuals with autism spectrum disorders often need support for comprehension. Comprehension difficulties in readers with ASD can be subtle, qualitative, and difficult to tease out. As a result, their substantial level of risk for reading comprehension problems is often overlooked or unaddressed, and many students struggle in silence. Further aggravating the situation is the fact that otherwise competent educational professionals in both general education and special education settings have limited training and experience helping readers with ASD.

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About the Author

Emily lives in Santa Clarita, CA, with her husband Steve and their family. In Autism Spectrum Disorders from A to Z, she draws on her experiences advocating for her son Tom who has ASD, and assisting other families. Emily's co-author is her sister, Barbara Doyle, who shares her perspective as an educational professional and autism specialist. Emily translated their book into Spanish and published the Spanish version in June, 2005. Los Trastornos del Espectro de Autismo de la A a la Z is the winner of the 2006

Outstanding Literary Work of the Year from the Autism Society of America. In April, 2007 both books were awarded the Exceptional Parent Magazine Symbol of Excellence Award. Emily is a member of the Transition Task Force of the California Blue Ribbon Commission on Autism and will be providing data from her thesis to inform the Commission's legislative recommendations. She is the Secretary of the Autism Society of America, Los Angeles, and a founding member of SCAAN, Santa Clarita Autism Asperger Network. Emily is a founding member of C.L.E.A.R, Community and Law Enforcement Aware Response, a collaborative to reduce criminal involvement of people with disabilities and help law enforcement officials be informed in their response to people with special needs.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Robert Gibson:

Are you kind of occupied person, only have 10 or perhaps 15 minute in your moment to upgrading your mind proficiency or thinking skill also analytical thinking? Then you have problem with the book than can satisfy your short space of time to read it because this all time you only find reserve that need more time to be examine. Drawing a Blank: Improving Comprehension for Readers on the Autism Spectrum can be your answer as it can be read by a person who have those short extra time problems.

Alejandra Dunlap:

Is it you actually who having spare time and then spend it whole day through watching television programs or just telling lies on the bed? Do you need something new? This Drawing a Blank: Improving Comprehension for Readers on the Autism Spectrum can be the response, oh how comes? The new book you know. You are thus out of date, spending your extra time by reading in this new era is common not a nerd activity. So what these guides have than the others?

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