AUTISTIC CHILDREN CAN BE TAUGHT TO READ

James S. Vacca
Long Island University

In most elementary classrooms, students with autistic characteristics are too often dismissed from the literate community. The autistic child is frequently asked to practice memorizing sight words while classmates are introduced to literature. Although autistic children are increasingly being taught in general education classrooms, they are often excluded from rich and meaningful literacy experiences like storytelling, play-acting, journal-keeping, and writing workshop. In fact, it is not unusual for students with autism in these classrooms to follow a different curriculum than the one offered to their classmates. This study examines the difficulties that autistic children have in learning to read and it asks answers the following questions: What Are the Obstacles in Teaching Reading to Autistic Children? *and* How Can the Child with Autism Be Taught to Read?

In most elementary classrooms, students with autistic characteristics are too often dismissed from the literate community (Kliewer, 1998). The autistic child is frequently asked to practice memorizing sight words while classmates are introduced to literature. Kluth & Darmody-Latham (2003) maintain that as autistic children are increasingly being taught in general education classrooms, they are often excluded from rich and meaningful literacy experiences like storytelling, play-acting, journal-keeping, and writing workshop. In fact, the authors also state that it is not unusual for students with autism in these classrooms to follow a different curriculum than the one offered to their classmates (Kluth, 1998).

Students with autism face a number of challenges when learning to read, including difficulties with attention, lack of motivation, and problems with word decoding (Learning Upgrade, 2007). These challenges are exemplified in the following story written by James Fisher (2000) about his autistic son Charlie:

Autism is a neurobiological disorder marked by severe delays in speech, repetitive or ritualized behaviors, and especially by profound impairments in social interaction. Charlie was late to roll over, sit by himself, walk (he did not crawl but scooted around in a sitting position, propelled by his hands). From the time he was ten months old, he "read" all the books Kristina had set up as his "library." My mother was the first to raise concerns at how long Charlie would sit--forty-five minutes and more--absorbed in the colorful stiff pages of his board books or looking quietly out the window….These were not the feats of your average two-year-old. Yet Charlie did not do many of the things other toddlers could. He had no language other than a baby's babble and cries; he seemed to understand even less. He stared for long periods at a picture of a little Asian-American girl in one of his books but never looked at, much less acknowledged, the other children on the playground. Subtle changes in routine--turning right down the sidewalk instead of left--led to tantrums in which he would flip himself backwards, headfirst. Once he walked back and forth, back and forth, before a stone wall, eyes aslant, until we dragged him away screaming. "No" was my wife's answer when, at an appointment for one of Charlie's many ear infections, our pediatrician asked, "Does he know what his hands are? Does he know his name?" Charlie did not know how to wave, much less how to say "bye-bye. (p.1)

Charlie's characteristics fall within the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) definition of autism as a developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction, generally evident before age 3, which adversely affects a child's performance. Many

children with autism who are mainstreamed into regular classrooms can be challenging, yet the mainstream or an Inclusion class experience can be incredibly stimulating for the autistic children in the learning of reading skills.

What Are the Obstacles in Teaching Reading to Autistic Children?
Teaching autistic children reading skills can be an overwhelming task. Some of these children will never read, but many higher functioning children with autism can learn to some extent and can become excellent readers (Evans, 2007). Autistic children have a very unique set of challenges that requires a parent or teacher to have a lot of patience. Sometimes they can be very cooperative, but for the most part, autistic children have significant problems with attention span, lack any type of motivation to learn to read, and have problems with figuring out the rules of reading and grammar when compared to children who do not have autism. Finally, learning to read should be fun for any child, but when it comes to autistic children, you have to reach them on their level, so make sure you chose a method that meets their needs. (Evans, 2007)

According to Diehl et al., (2006), one of the defining characteristics of autism is a qualitative impairment in communication (American Psychiatric Association [APA], 1994). Many children with autism are initially referred for evaluation because of delayed language (Dahlgren & Gillberg, 1989). Language also plays an important role in distinguishing autism from other psychiatric disorders (Lord & Venter, 1992), and functional language by the age of 5 has been shown to be a predictor of positive outcomes in children with autism (Rutter, 1970).

Lord and Paul (1997) found that previous research on children with autism showed that high-functioning children with autism spectrum disorders have noticeable difficulty with practical aspects of language, including their own personal intentions, conjecture, and social conversation. The authors also maintained that one way of measuring pragmatic language abilities is through the autistic child's creative use of language. Lord and Paul suggested that the narrative communication of children with autism is marked by deficiencies in organization, comprehension recall and coherence.

A significant number of autistic children do not acquire functional language (Lord & Paul, 1997). The autistic children who do acquire verbal skills appear to have intact grammatical development, but have particular difficulties in their functional use of language, although there is considerable heterogeneity of language abilities in this population (Tager-Flusberg, 2004).

According to Diehl et al., (2006), recent reviews of language studies indicate that autistic children have delayed, yet intact phonological, morphological, and syntactic development. There is also evidence that autistic children have significant and pervasive pragmatic deficits throughout development and across communicative domains, including nonverbal communication, conversation, and narrative skills (Tager-Flusberg, 2001).

Bennetto (2006) stated that the research has shown that children with children with autism have trouble answering questions that require inferences to be made about a story, even though they are able to answer factual questions (Norbury & Bishop, 2002). They have difficulty with inferential questions but perform more positively with factual questions (Young et al., 2005). Bennetto (2006) maintained that inferences provide some of the more global links that are integral to understanding the substance of a story. The author used an example from the children's book *Frog, Where Are You?* In this story the reader learns at the beginning of the story that a boy's frog has escaped, and is told at the end that the frog has a family. The reader needs to infer that having a family is the reason why the frog escaped, because this link is not provided by the story. Thus, although the children with autism performed well in their recall of important events, this does not necessarily imply that they had a good understanding of the important events (e.g., as measured by inferential reasoning) or were able to successfully convey their understanding of the story to their others. Bennetto believed that because many of the stories told by children with autism had fewer causal links, their intact ability to recall important events may not be aiding them much in terms of their overall storytelling ability.

How Can the Child with Autism Be Taught to Read?
I. Make Reading an Enjoyable Activity by Using Authentic High Interest Visual Materials
Providing structure and organization in classrooms or any other learning environment on a student's level of understanding can help to alleviate or moderate these problems and the resultant ineffective learning situations. Grandin (2002) says that autistic children are visual thinkers. The author says that

autistic children think in pictures and do not think in language. She says that their thoughts are like videotapes running in their imagination. Pictures are their first language, and words are their second language. Nouns were the easiest words to learn because they can make a picture in the mind of the word. The author maintains that to learn words like *up* or *down*, the teacher should demonstrate them to the child. For example, take a toy airplane and say *up* as you make the airplane take off from a desk. Some children will learn better if cards with the words *up* and *down* are attached to the toy airplane. The *up* card is attached when the plane takes off. The *down* card is attached when it lands.

According to Evans (2007), learning to read should be an enjoyable activity for most children. For autistic children, however, reading has to be taught at their level with a method that meets their needs. The author says that some autistic children can be taught sounds through the use of music and games. Evans believes that programs that use music and singing help a child with autism learn many things and these interactive methods usually help with attention span and interest, two of the biggest obstacles in this endeavor.

Often, children with autism learn visually and are enriched by classrooms with bright, colorful pictures and vivid images. Allowing the autistic children to be creative, especially in the art environment, is one of the most important aspects of teaching children with autism (Mcdevitt, 2004).

The staff of the Treatment of Autistic and Related Communication-Handicapped Children Program at the University Of North Carolina School Of Medicine (2007) maintains that Autistic Children respond well to structure. They believe that teachers must effectively structure their classrooms in order to effectively teach autistic students. The TEReceptive language difficulty is characteristic of autism. Many times a student cannot understand language as well as a teacher believes he can, and so may demonstrate aggressive behaviors or lack of initiative. He/she also may lack the necessary language to communicate messages appropriately, and so can not let the teacher know when he/she is tired, hot, hungry, finished, or bored except by tantrumming or aggression. The student may have a poor sequential memory and so cannot keep the order of even familiar events in mind or is not sure when something different will happen. Often the student feels more comfortable staying with familiar activities and will resist learning new activities or routines. Many times he/she is unable to organize or put limits on his/her own behavior and does not understand or acknowledge society's rules. This can result in trying to get others' attention in inappropriate ways or preferring to be alone. Because of lack of social relatedness, the student may be unmotivated to please others or unrewarded by praise, and consequently seems resistant to learning. Hypersensitivity to sensory input can often lead to disturbing behaviors. Being easily distracted and lacking skills in perception and organization of time can also lead to behaviors that get in the way of learning.

Abisgold (2007) states that that autistic children's ability to think imaginatively is impaired and creative writing and reading are very challenging for them. It is important to teach to their strengths and ask factual questions. For example, *what is happening here, what will happen next?* The author believes that teachers should use reading materials that talk about practical and authentic experiences rather than fantasy. Abisgold further maintains that the teaching of reading to autistic children is successfully developed in relation to using non-fiction materials that are within the child's area of interest. For example, the author suggests that instructions like those in a recipe or in the construction of something are good ways that autistic children can learn information and facts.

Abisgold believes that it is important that the teaching of reading to autistic children always start by addressing the child’s interests. The author uses the example of asking the child to design his/her own cartoon strips writing a caption under each picture. This task, the author suggests, can become increasingly more complex as the child masters the skill and will ultimately involve both reading and writing that can be displayed or made into a book to praise his/her efforts.

Abisgold concluded that all children have individual interests, and autistic children are no different. If they like trains, for example, the teacher can use cars as a visual point of reference or guide in helping the child to learn how to read. If the child is interested in the topic, he/she is more likely to pay attention for longer periods of time and is more willing to learn because the topic is personally interesting.

II. Use a Phonetic Approach

The use of phonological awareness and its relation to reading acquisition has also been recognized as a valuable teaching technique (Smith 2007). Glaser (2007) believes that reading through phonics is vital in helping the autistic child acquire language**.** Each autistic child is different and will learn at a different pace and in a different manner. While some autistic children read phonetically, many are natural sight readers. They gain new words by reading labels on household objects, dictionaries (books and software) and closed-caption television. They are eager to read books that are based on their specific interests, commonly, trains, animals, food, calendars or television characters. Both commercial and homemade read-along audio tapes strengthen the reading of their favorite stories.

According to Joseph and Seery (2004) children with mental retardation and developmental disabilities like autism can learn and use phonetic-analysis strategies and can benefit from many different types of phonics instruction. One complication that arises in teaching phonemic awareness and phonics to children with autism, however, is that many of the students rely on alternative and augmentative communication (AAC). Instruction in phonemic awareness and phonics skills expect that students will produce sounds in letters and words (Ahlgrim-Delzell et al, 2006).

Grandin (1995) says that some autistic children will learn reading more easily with phonics, and others will learn best by memorizing whole words. The author is autistic and maintains that she learned how to read words by being taught phonics rules and by sounding out words. According to Grandin, some children with autism will learn best if flash cards and picture books are used so that the whole words are associated with pictures. It is important to have the picture and the printed word on the same side of the card. When teaching nouns the child must hear you speak the word and view the picture and printed word simultaneously. An example of teaching a verb would be to hold a card that says *jump,* and you would jump up and down while saying *jump*.

III. Use Relevant Context Clues, Social Stories and Comic Strip Sequences

Siegel (1998) believes that significant progress for the autistic child occurs in language development when the child must begin to comprehend words for which there is no set physical or visual representation. The author states that the first words acquired by autistic children are usually nouns. Theses are words that represent things that the child wants, usually followed by classifications of things like numbers and letters. Using pictures, gestures, signs, and actions, Siegel states the teacher can also teach most verbs like walking, running, and eating and relational words like big and small, and first and last. Prepositions can be taught with physical models too, like showing *on* and *under*, or *in* and *out*.

Siegel maintains that children with autism and PDD are more likely to have more persistent problems with *wh* words like *what*, *where*, *which*. The author states that the autistic child is more likely to make a good quess about the *wh* question if he/she is familiar with the situation or context from which the question comes from. For example, *Where's the kitty*? or *What do you want to eat*? Finally, Siegel believes that teachers can create practice materials for *wh* question drills by using difficult pictures where some *wh* questions can be asked. The author uses the examples of questions developed from the Sesame Street characters Bert and Ernie. Questions like *Which one is Bert*?, *Which one is Ernie*?, *Who has the cookie?* & *What is Bert doing?* Being exposed to familiar stories and pictures, Siegel suggests, helps the autistic child make progress understanding the overall context of the story.

The understanding of story context and context clues by autistic children was investigated by Myles and Rogers (2001). The authors found that children with Asperger Syndrome (AS) have difficulty attending to and understanding social cues. In addition, they have difficulty in (a) understanding the beliefs of others, (b) shifting attention, (c) sharing attention with others, and (d) distinguishing relevant from irrelevant stimuli. The significance of attending to and understanding social cues is essential because an understanding of the world most often comes from others' verbal cues, gestures, facial expressions, and so forth (Attwood, 1998; Myles & Simpson, 1998).

Gray (1995) developed two visual techniques for teaching autistic children to read,--social stories and comic strip conversations. Both techniques are intended to demonstrate and infer social situations and provide support to students who struggle to comprehend the quick exchange of information which occurs in a conversation. These techniques turn an abstract situation into a concrete representation that allows for reflection. Social Stories use a brief narrative that describes a situation, relevant social cues, and responses. Comic strip conversations promote social understanding by incorporating simple figures

and other symbols in a comic strip format. An educator can draw or assist a student who illustrates a social situation in order to facilitate understanding.

According to Gray (2007) a Social Story describes a situation, skill, or concept in terms of relevant social cues, perspectives, and common responses in a specifically defined style and format. The goal of a Social Story™ is to share accurate social information in a patient and reassuring manner that is easily understood by its audience. Half of all Social Stories™ developed should affirm something that an individual does well. Although the goal of a Story™ should never be to change the individual's behavior, that individual's improved understanding of events and expectations may lead to more effective responses. Examples of Social Story topics are listed below
Why do adults forget?
What helps them remember?
Running errands (car wash, gas station, bank, library, grocery store)
Checking out in line
Visiting places (zoo, beach, video store, movie theatre)
Eating out in a restaurant (waiting, using a booster seat, a menu, utensils)
Going to school (bus, drivers, teachers)
Going to the doctor

Final Thoughts
Susan is an eleven year old foster child. She is in fifth grade and since September she began attending a highly regarded suburban Elementary School on Long Island, New York. From her first day at the school, Susan has been experiencing great success in her classroom and in her social relationships with her classmates. Susan is classified for special education services for Asperger's Disorder. This is the sixth school that she has attended since first starting kindergarten at the age of five. Susan was placed in foster care when she was four years old because her mother and father abandoned her. Since entering the foster care system she has lived in six different foster homes.

Susan was identified as a special education student at the end of second grade. When she began second grade, Susan was placed in a self-contained classroom because the district Committee on Special Education believed that she was in need of individual academic assistance and they also believed that her social and behavioral needs could be better met in a class with a smaller class size. Susan has always been characterized as socially isolated with eccentric type behavior. She exhibits difficulty with two-sided social interaction and non-verbal communication and her speech sounds peculiar due to abnormalities of inflection and repetitive patterns. Susan has always been physically clumsy with her gross motor behavior. Her interests are also limited to non age appropriate areas like airplanes and space travel.

In the middle of third grade Susan moved to her fifth school and a new foster home. She encountered difficulty adjusting to the new school and foster home. The difficulties began when she was registered in school by her foster parents. They were told by the school district that Susan's records were incomplete and that she could not start school until the school district received all her official records. With the assistance of a thorough caseworker's help, Susan was finally enrolled in school after waiting about five weeks at home. When Susan was permitted to attend school, the foster parents were told that she needed to be placed in a self contained classroom, pending a CSE meeting, again because of her social and behavioral needs.

When Susan was finally placed in her classroom the school district CSE assigned her a one-on- one aide because they worried that her social and behavioral needs were an issue outside the self contained classroom. She was placed in an adaptive physical education program, and she received all of her academic classes in language arts, science, and math from her special education teacher.

Within the first two months of this placement, Susan began to demonstrate problems both in school and at home. She had no friends and having the one-on-one aide by her side in school all day made her feel different from the other children. At home she began to exhibit daily acting out behavior, and the foster care parents told Susan's caseworker that they could not care for her needs. In this home placement, Susan was living with two other children that were also under foster care.

By the end of fourth grade, Susan had an emotional breakdown and was removed from her foster home. Susan was then placed in a Residential Treatment Program and she was under psychiatric care for three

months. Following her discharge from the Residential Treatment Program Susan was placed in the current school and foster home. She is now placed in a self contained classroom, but is mainstreamed for some regular academic classes including physical education. She has been greeted compassionately by the school's administrators, teachers and other students. She continues to receive the services of a one-to-one teacher aide and the school has welcomed the participation of Susan's case worker in planning her academic program.

Although success is finally being achieved in school, there are problems in the foster home, and Susan again faces the possibility of moving to another home. If this does happen, it will mean that Susan will have to again move to a new school for sixth grade. Because of Susan's frequent moves, she experienced a fragmented educational program. Her reading math skills are on grade level, but she lacks the necessary background experience and knowledge in most subject areas to fully keep pace with her classmates. She has learned to compensate for her reading comprehension deficiencies in the content subjects by using her listening skills and the assistance of her one to one aide as a note taker. She receives additional help from a reading specialist and from her special education teacher. Reading Comprehension for Susan, however, is often very frustrating, and it prevents her from experiencing success in her other academic classes.

The author an Educational Advocate for foster children for many years, has observed that many children with Asperger's Disorder are not much different than Susan. They are subjected to many obstacles during their education in public schools (Vacca, 2007). These children usually have inappropriate classroom placement and they are in need of Special Education or Remedial services that are often delayed in there implementation. These blocks to the education of the child with Asperger's Disorder are compounded if the school staff has a negative perception about the child because of his/her previous academic and social history.

The author believes that learning how to read is the one problem that most children with Asperger's Disorder face that has the most significant affect on their academic success. He also believes that schools for the most part can do a better job in teaching children with autism how to read. Although further research is needed in this area, the following is a summary is ten ways in which I believe that teachers can improve the reading achievement of children with autism. Unless these and other approaches are considered, children with autism, he maintains, will not achieve their full potential in school.

Ten Ways to Improve the Reading Achievement of Children with Autism

-Create and plan active, authentic, directed, structured visual and purposeful instruction for children with autism.
-Create a mindset that autistic students "can learn."
-Spark Enthusiasm for learning when teaching reading to the autistic child.
-Teaching reading skills to students with autism should be based on their interests and prior knowledge.
-Help autistic students make connections to self, text and the outside world.
-Create multisensory instructional activities for children with children with autism that are consistent and repetitive opportunities for learning.
-Model what the autistic students need to know and how they need to learn.
-When possible, integrate language arts skills into content instruction.
-Collaborate with colleagues when planning reading instruction.
-Provide students with autism opportunities for practice.

References

Abisgold, C. (2007) *Professional Advice, School Zone Educational Intelligence*, Retrieved August 1, 2007, from http://www.schoolzone.co.uk/resources/articles/GoodPractice/classroom/Special_needs/Advice.asp.

American Psychiatric Association. (1994). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (4th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

Attwood, T. (1998). *Asperger's syndrome: A guide for parents and professionals*. Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley.

Bennetto, L., Pennington, B. F., & Rogers, S. J. (1996). Intact and impaired memory functions in autism. *Child Development, 67*, 1816-1835.

Browder, D. M., Wakeman, S. Y., Spooner, F., Ahlgrim-Delzell, L., & Algozzine, B. (2006). Research on Reading Instruction for Individuals with Significant Cognitive Disabilities. *Exceptional Children, 72*(4), 392+. Retrieved September 13, 2007, from Questia database: http://www.questia.com/PM.qst?a=o&d=5015930444.

Dahlgren, S. O., & Gillberg, C. (1989). Symptoms in the first two years of life: A preliminary population study of infantile autism. *European Archives of Psychiatric and Neurological Science, 283*, 169-174.

Diehl, J. J., Bennetto, L., & Young, E. C. (2006). Story Recall and Narrative Coherence of High-Functioning Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology, 34*(1), 87+. Retrieved September 13, 2007, from Questia database: http://www.questia.com/PM.qst?a=o&d=5019164991.

Evans, R. (2007), *Some Ideas for Teaching Autistic Children*, Retrieved August, 1, 2007, from http://ezinearticles.com/?Some-Ideas-For-Teaching-Autistic-Children&id=643363.

Fisher, J. T. (2000, September 8). CHARLIE'S WORLD : A Family Battles Autism. *Commonweal*, *127*, 13. Retrieved September 13, 2007, from Questia database: http://www.questia.com/PM.qst?a=o&d=5001084278.

Glaser, T. (2007). *Learning With Style*, Retrieved August 1, 2007, from http://home.earthlink.net/~tammyglaser798/learn.html.

Grandin, T. (1995) 'How People with Autism Think', in E. Schopler & G.B. Mesibov (eds) *Learning and Cognition in Autism,* pp. 137-56. New York: Plenum.

Gray, C. A. (1995). *Social stories unlimited: Social stories and comic strip conversations*.

Gray, C. A. (1994). *Comic Strip Conversations*. Arlington, TX: Future Horizons.

Gray, C. A. (2000*). New social stories*: Illustrated edition. Arlington, TX: Future Horizons.

Gray, C. A. (2007) *The Official Social Stories Website*, Retrieved August 1, 2007, from http://www.thegraycenter.org/socialstorywhat.cfm.

Joseph, L. M., & Seery, M. E. (2004). Where Is the Phonics? A Review of the Literature on the Use of Phonetic Analysis with Students with Mental Retardation. *Remedial and Special Education, 25*(2), 88+. Retrieved September 13, 2007, from Questia database: http://www.questia.com/PM.qst?a=o&d=5006702165.

Kliewer, C. (1998). Citizenship in the literate community: An ethnography of children with Down Syndrome and the written word. *Exceptional Children, 64*, 167-180.

Kliewer, C., & Biklen, D. (2001). "School's not really a place for reading": A research synthesis of the literate lives of students with severe disabilities. *The Journal of The Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps, 26*, 1-12.

Kliewer, C., & Landis, D. (1999). Individualizing literacy instruction for young children with moderate to severe disabilities. *Exceptional Children, 66*, 85-100.

Kluth, P., & Darmody-Latham, J. (2003). Beyond Sight Words: Literacy Opportunities for Students with Autism. *The Reading Teacher, 56*(6), 532+. Retrieved September 13, 2007, from Questia database: http://www.questia.com/PM.qst?a=o&d=5001700650.

Lord, C., & Paul, R. (1997). Language and communication in autism. In D. Cohen & F. Volkmar (Eds.), *Handbook of autism and pervasive developmental disorders* (pp. 195-225). New York: Wiley.

Lord, C., & Venter, A. (1992). Outcome and follow-up studies of high-functioning autistic individuals. In E. Schopler & G. Mesibov (Eds.), *High-functioning individuals with autism* (pp. 187-199). New York: Plenum.

Mcdevitt, K. (2004, November). Small Wonders. *Arts & Activities*, *136*, 16. Retrieved September 13, 2007, from Questia database: http://www.questia.com/PM.qst?a=o&d=5007637620.

Myles, B.S., & Simpson, R.L. (1998). *AS: A guide for educators and parents*. Austin, TX: PRO-ED.

Myles, B., & Simpson, R. L. (2001). Understanding the hidden curriculum: An essential social skill for children and youth with Asperger Syndrome. *Intervention in School and Clinic, 36*(5), 279-286.

Norbury C. F., & Bishop, D. V. M. (2002). Inferential processing and story recall in children with communication problems: A comparison of specific language impairment, pragmatic language disorder, and high-functioning autism. *International Journal of Language and Communication Disorders, 37*, 227-251.

Rogers, M. F., & Mvles, B. S. (2001). Using Social Stories and Comic Strip Conversations to Interpret Social Situations for an Adolescent with Asperger Syndrome. *Intervention in School & Clinic, 36*(5), 310. Retrieved September 13, 2007, from Questia database: http://www.questia.com/PM.qst?a=o&d=5001003694.

Rutter M. (1970) Autistic children: infancy to adulthood. *Seminars in Psychiatry* 2: 435–50.

Siegel, B. (1998). *The World of the Autistic Child Understanding and Treating Autistic Spectrum Disorders*. New York: Oxford University Press. Retrieved September 13, 2007, from Questia database: http://www.questia.com/PM.qst?a=o&d=62449041.

Smith, F..(2007) *Modelled Oral Reading'*, Retrieved August 1, 2007, from http://www.users.bigpond.com/ryeperson/.

Tager-Flusberg, H. (2001). Understanding the language and communicative impairments in autism. *International Review of Research in Mental Retardation, 23*, 185-205.

Tager-Flusberg, H. (2004). Strategies for conducting research on language in autism. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders, 34*, 75-80.

TEACCH , University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill (2007), Retrieved August 1, 2007, from http://www.teacch.com/welcome.html.

Vacca, James S. (2007) No Child Left Behind…Except the Foster Child, *Relational Child & Youth Care Practice.* 20:1.

Young, E. C., Diehl, J. J., Morris, D., Hyman, S. L., & Bennetto, L. (2005). Pragmatic Language Disorders in Children with Autism: The use of two formal tests to distinguish affected children from controls. *Language, Speech, and Hearing Services in Schools, 36*, 62-72.