



Partnership for  
Effective Programs  
for Students with  
Autism



## Integrating Theory of Mind, Central Coherence, and Executive Functioning to Improve Reading Comprehension

**Presented by: Dr. Sylvia Diehl, PhD.**

**Hosted by: USF CARD**

### About the Presenter

Dr. Sylvia Diehl is retired from the University of South Florida (USF) Department of Communication Sciences in Tampa, Florida where she taught Augmentative and Alternative Communication, Pediatric Language, Research, and Autistic Disorders and was the Director of Language and Phonology Services. She now teaches Autism and Social Communication at the University of St. Augustine for Behavioral Sciences. She has a long history of clinical experience including public school settings, university settings, and clinical settings. She consults for school systems and conducts workshops locally, nationally, and internationally. She has authored numerous journal articles and book chapters along with numerous continuous education courses for Medbridge Education and the American Speech Language and Hearing Association.

### Training Descriptions

**Target Audience:** Educators, Speech and Language Therapists, Board Certified Behavior Analysts, Mental Health/Behavioral Health Therapists & Providers, Other Professionals, and Parents.

The presentation will focus on comprehension of the cognitive learning characteristics of autism that often make reading comprehension and writing typically challenging. In the research literature, these cognitive learning characteristics are often referred to as 1) theory of mind, 2) central coherence, and 3) executive functioning.

**There will be four pre-recorded presentations in this series.** The following content will be covered:

**Part 1:** Learning about theory of mind, central coherence, and executive functioning This series will define the targeted learning characteristics in everyday language and explain how they interact with reading comprehension. It will further explain how the three characteristics can interact with each other to impact understanding of the written word.

**Part 2 & 3:** Reading comprehension strategies that support the integration of meaning. Reading comprehension strategies that support the discussed cognitive characteristics will be reviewed with an emphasis on how to use visuals, technology, concept mapping, timelines, and color coding etc. to aid the reader to meet common reading comprehension challenges (i.e., motivation, knowledge of genre, topic recognition, anaphora, content area vocabulary, character perspective, etc). Each of these strategies will feature group assignments to practice strategy application at the participant's instructional level.

**Part 4:** Writing approaches for the genres of comparison, cause and effect, problem and solution, sequence, and description will be presented. The approaches will include evidence-based strategies that support the three characteristics and will include self-regulated writing strategy, use of graphic organizers, etc. to support coherence (logical connections and consistency) and cohesion (the parts of a written text are connected together).

### Training Objectives

Participants will be able to:

#### Part 1:

1. Define theory of mind, central coherence, and executive functioning.
2. Identify reading skills that are impacted by theory of mind, central coherence, and executive functioning.
3. Name at least 4 reading skills that are impacted by the targeted cognitive learning characteristics.

#### Part 2 & 3:

1. Name 6 reading strategies that support the targeted cognitive learning characteristics.
2. Name 3 reading strategies that support motivation.
3. Name 3 reading strategies that use visuals to support comprehension.
4. Design at least two assignments to be used in my classroom that support the targeted learning characteristics.

#### Part 4:

1. Name 4 components of teaching writing that support the targeted learning characteristics.
2. Name 3 strategies that support motivation to write.
3. Develop one graphic organizer for use with one of the five genres covered that can be used across content areas.

### Date:

Session 1 & 2 :November 1 -30, 2024

Session 3 & 4: December 1 - 31, 2024

### Location:

Online via Zoom

### To view presentations,

#### Session 1:

<https://zoom.us/rec/share/rz11oHqIRTAgs2-XLXU3vE-kHWWhduJdt-JETE-RpOKWHaOkBxmQuETBVB5XgDA.M61ZxUvoGNr7mwF>

#### Session 2:

[https://zoom.us/rec/share/gGI87Nvu zigFEgoEnslNc-KxBBiWn\\_4v9nLAPUUD-juWp\\_hjDO3o2P3lOoCPoFS.cqhlELshyRjWbFAc](https://zoom.us/rec/share/gGI87Nvu zigFEgoEnslNc-KxBBiWn_4v9nLAPUUD-juWp_hjDO3o2P3lOoCPoFS.cqhlELshyRjWbFAc)

**Session 3: TBA**

**Session 4: TBA**

*Registration is REQUIRED.*  
Limited to first 500 participants.

### For more information contact:

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