

Ziggurat Model

This is an alternate version of the characteristics overview chart on the next page. It is provided for accessibility.


Verbal skills

Grade Level

Cognitive Level

Areas Addressed

The Ziggurat Model

 Verbal Skills	Grade Levels	Cognitive Level	Areas Addressed
<input type="checkbox"/> Nonverbal	<input type="checkbox"/> PK	<input type="checkbox"/> Classic	<input type="checkbox"/> (Pre)Academic/ Cognitive/Academic
<input type="checkbox"/> Mixed	<input type="checkbox"/> Elementary	<input type="checkbox"/> High	<input type="checkbox"/> Adaptive Behavior/ Daily Living
<input type="checkbox"/> Verbal	<input type="checkbox"/> Middle/High	Functioning	<input type="checkbox"/> Behavior
			<input type="checkbox"/> Communication/Speech
			<input type="checkbox"/> Social/Emotional



Brief Introduction

The Ziggurat Model is a guide for designing comprehensive interventions for individuals with autism (AU). The premise of this model is that underlying needs and characteristics related to the autism spectrum must be addressed for any intervention to be effective. The model is designed to utilize students' strengths to address true needs or underlying deficits that result in social, emotional, and behavioral concerns. It centers on a hierarchical system consisting of five levels that must be addressed for an intervention plan to be comprehensive (Aspy & Grossman, 2007a).



Description

The Underlying Characteristics Checklist. The UCC is an informal assessment designed to identify AU characteristics for the purpose of intervention. The UCC is comprised of eight areas: social, restricted patterns of behavior interests and activities, communication, sensory differences, cognitive differences, motor differences, emotional vulnerability and medical and other biological factors (Aspy & Grossman, 2007b, 2007c).

The Individual Strengths and Skills Inventory. The Individual Strengths and Skills Inventory (ISSI) accompanies the UCC and parallels its first seven areas. The tool ensures that underlying strengths and skills are incorporated into intervention design.

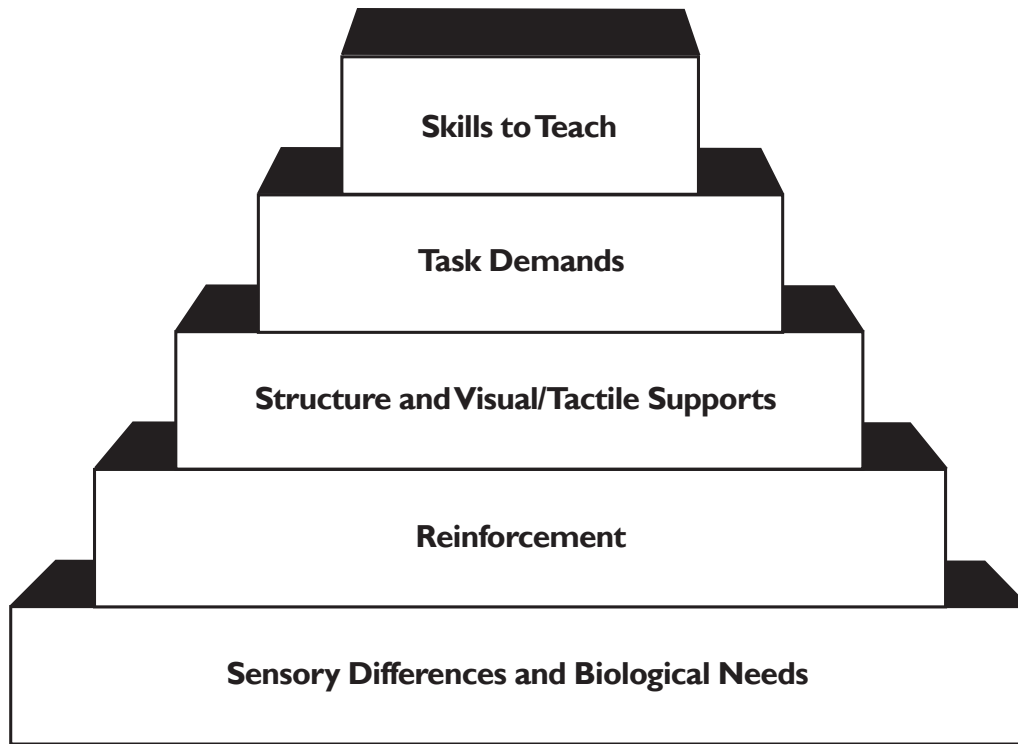
The Intervention Ziggurat. The Intervention Ziggurat, the centerpiece of the Ziggurat Model, is comprised of evidence-based levels structured into a hierarchy:

- Sensory Differences and Biological Needs (cf. Baranek, 2002; Di Martino, Melis, Cianchetti, & Zud-das, 2004),

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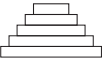
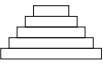
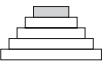
- Reinforcement (cf. Horner, Carr, Strain, Todd, & Reed, 2002),
- Structure and Visual/Tactile Supports (cf. Nikopoulos & Keenan, 2004; Odom, Brown, Frey, Karasu, Smith-Cantor, & Strain, 2003),
- Task Demands (cf. Frederickson, Warren, & Turner, 2005), and
- Skills to Teach (cf. Barry et al., 2003).

Each of the levels contributes to the effectiveness of the others. Thus, if all levels are not addressed, the intervention will not be as effective and skills will not develop.



The Ziggurat Worksheet brings together the student's needs and skills as identified through the UCC and ISSI, respectively, and matches them with comprehensive interventions across the five levels of the Intervention Ziggurat.

Interventions

BEHAVIOR/AREAS OF CONCERN	FOR SPECIFIC INTERVENTION PLAN (Operationalized Behaviors)	SELECTED UCC ITEMS		CHECK ALL THAT APPLY		
		#	#	A	B	C
 Sensory and Biological	Sensory and Biological Intervention:	#	#			
	Underlying Characteristics Addressed:	#	#			
 Reinforcement	Reinforcement Intervention:	#	#			
	Underlying Characteristics Addressed:	#	#			
 Structure & Visual/Tactile Supports	Structure & Visual/Tactile Support Intervention:	#	#			
	Underlying Characteristics Addressed:	#	#			
 Task Demands	Task Demand Intervention:	#	#			
	Underlying Characteristics Addressed:	#	#			
 Skills to Teach	Skill Intervention:	#	#			
	Underlying Characteristics Addressed:	#	#			

From Aspy, R., & Grossman, B. (2008). *The Ziggurat Model—A framework for designing comprehensive interventions for individuals with high-functioning autism and Asperger Syndrome*. Shawnee Mission, KS:Autism Asperger Publishing Company. Used with permission.



Summary

The Ziggurat Model guides the development of a comprehensive intervention plan based on underlying needs from the UCC and strengths from the ISSI, thus ensuring that the plan does not address only surface issues. The Ziggurat Model promotes collaboration by helping parents and professionals to understand their part in the larger intervention picture. The Ziggurat Model can be used alone but is stronger when accompanied by the Comprehensive Autism Planning System (CAPS, Henry & Myles, 2007). After completing the UCC, the ISSI and the Ziggurat Worksheet, the team is ready to complete the CAPS.



Research Table

# of Studies	Ages (years)	Sample Size	Area(s) Addressed	Outcome
0				

Note: No studies have been conducted on the model. Studies have been conducted on the elements of the model. See interventions in this guide.



References

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Resources and Materials

- Texas Autism: www.texasautism.com
This site provides several case studies and articles on the Ziggurat Model.
- Aspy, R., & Grossman, B. G. (2007). *The Ziggurat model: A framework for designing comprehensive interventions for individuals with high-functioning autism and Asperger Syndrome*. Shawnee Mission, KS: Autism Asperger Publishing Company.
This book provides instructions on how to use the Ziggurat Model as well as case studies from early childhood through adulthood.