



The Uniquely Abled Project

Teaching Uniquely Abled Students

Tips for CNC Instructors of the Uniquely Abled Academy®

The Uniquely Abled Project® is a non-profit organization that is creating inclusive vocational opportunities for youth with disabilities. We match their unique abilities to jobs in high demand. The UAP aims to shift the paradigm of “disabled” to “uniquely abled” by recognizing what these young people *can* do.

The Uniquely Abled Academy® prepares math- and computer-savvy youth on the autism spectrum for careers in CNC (computer numerical control) manufacturing. The UAA provides customized training, placement, and job support to our students, at no cost to them.

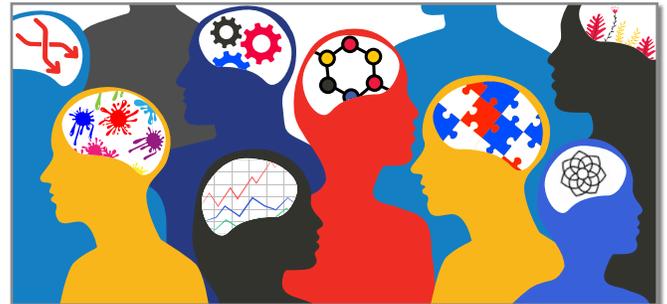
The UAA program is a win-win solution for everyone involved: businesses needing skilled workers, uniquely abled individuals, and family members whose fondest wish is to see these young people shine through meaningful, paid work.



APPRECIATE NEURODIVERSITY

Autism is a natural and valuable variation in thinking and learning. Symbols in this image like puzzle pieces, graphs, and patterns represent different ways of thinking and learning, or neurodiversity. A neurodiverse workforce is an asset to any organization.

When you’ve met one person with Autism, you’ve met one person with Autism. There’s great diversity among people with autism. That’s why the term autism spectrum is used.



HELPFUL ACCOMMODATIONS FOR UAA STUDENTS

1 SOCIAL

Spell out social expectations and class rules, like you would for someone from another culture. Offer feedback privately if needed.

2 COMMUNICATION

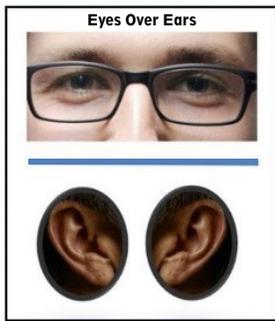
Keep some students on topic and encourage others to participate.

3 COMPREHENSION

Use simple, clear communication, like for someone whose first language isn’t English. Use visual cues. Avoid idioms.

4 PROCESSING

Allow time to think and respond.



EYES OVER EARS Remember, eyes over ears! Most people with autism have very strong visual skills and tend to remember what they see more than what they hear. Adding visual cues, such as a real item, a picture, or a diagram goes a long way to help with comprehension.

TOP 5 TEACHING STRATEGIES

- 1**

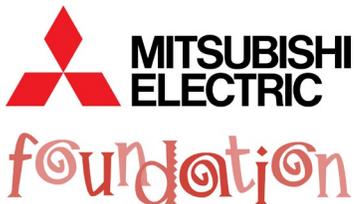
STRATEGY	WHY
Use eyes-on and hands-on learning early on	Leverages visual strengths and makes abstract ideas more concrete
- 2**

STRATEGY	WHY
Simplify	Improves understanding, avoids frustration
- 3**

STRATEGY	WHY
Show what to do step-by-step and explain <i>why</i>	Improves understanding and buy-in to follow procedures exactly
- 4**

STRATEGY	WHY
Use eyes-on and hands-on learning early on	Leverages visual strengths and makes abstract ideas more concrete
- 5**

STRATEGY	WHY
Use analogies	Connects new ideas to something students understand, increases interest and attention



We appreciate all that you are doing to help UAA students become CNC professionals, and hope that the information on this tip sheet is helpful to you when teaching uniquely abled individuals. Enjoy the unique personalities and perspectives of your UAA students. Be accepting. Appreciate them just as they are. An open attitude, some flexibility, and a sense of humor will go a long way.

Thank you to the Mitsubishi Electric America Foundation (MEAF) for providing major funding to create innovative enhancements to the Uniquely Abled Academy®. MEAF is a non-profit foundation jointly funded by Mitsubishi Electric Corporation of Japan and its US affiliates, working to make changes for the better by empowering youth with disabilities to lead productive lives.

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