

Tips for Consultants and Coaches:

Teachers express great appreciation for those who can coach them in the classroom setting, in their classrooms (who can model strategies and then gradually release responsibility for use of strategies back to classroom teachers). However, *Supporting Neurodiverse Learners by Using Visual Supports as a Tier 1 Intervention* showed that teachers find a high degree of value in being able to have collegial collaboration with peers teaching within a similar grade range to them and who have the same depth of understanding around curricular outcomes at their grade level (range). This **collegial conversation and collaboration** is strong professional development for teachers.

Coaches and Consultants May Wish to Consider:

When possible, include more than one teacher (within the same school or outside of the school) of similar role and/or grade level in learning so that they can collaborate together to strengthen their own learning. **Collaborative conversations** with peers strengthened teacher learning and allowed teachers to discuss a variety of topics that will intersect with what you are trying to teach these teachers. These collaborative conversations lead to willingness to be vulnerable and to collaborative problem solving.

The visual supports available in classrooms are likely to give you **a good sense of concepts and vocabulary being taught** and used in classrooms..

Banks of materials or ideas may be beneficial to some but teachers like to have **materials in their rooms that match their preferred aesthetic**. So, easily manipulated/changed digital materials may be preferred by many teachers. (Please note that the research conducted in *Supporting Neurodiverse Learners by Using Visual Supports as a Tier 1 Intervention* concluded that quickly sketched, imperfect, visuals on sticky notes or on the white board were referenced as often by students as beautified visual supports so please continue to encourage creation of a visual support in the moment when appropriate.

Accessibility of materials such as card stock, velcro, laminate can be a barrier to the use of/creation of visual supports so when possible, **provide materials** and remove this barrier.

Success with visual supports happens when they are **explicitly taught, with intention, referenced regularly by staff in the classroom, co-created with learners, and moved around the room** (or put away and brought back out as needed). **Shifting of power dynamics** in a classroom to allow for more student independence, contribution to visual supports used in classrooms, and successful peer prompting (a step toward decolonization).



The Power of Visuals

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There will still be some learners who require individualized visual supports, but before moving to something individualized, see if interaction with a whole class visual support can be encouraged (e.g. have the student needing some individualization be the one to flip the item in the classroom schedule/move an arrow on the schedule/move a task to “all done,” hand the teacher the visuals to create the daily schedule, etc.)



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