

Behaviors of Individuals with ASD and Faculty/Staff (Mis) Interpretation

Behavior	Possible Cause(s)	Faculty/Staff (Mis) Interpretation
Mimics or recites back what professor has said	Needs time and repetition to process information	Not taking speaker seriously, mocking the speaker
Talks too much	Compensates for receptive skills	Overestimation of functioning
Asks odd or repetitive questions	Associative thinking, needs for routine, difficulty with expressing actual question	Annoying, not listening, rude, inappropriate
Has odd speaking habits	Pragmatic language deficits	Inappropriate or rude
Does not respond to facial expressions, tone	Difficulty with processing nonverbal signals	Leads to miscues in meetings and assignments
Does not recognize you	Limited facial recognition	Aloof, rude
Does not shift topics on cue	Pragmatic and nonverbal language deficits	Self-absorbed, uninterested
Lays head on desk	Sensory overload	Rude, sleeping
Stares at others	Difficulties with eye contact, visual hypo-responsivity	Rude, stalker
Difficulty transitioning or adapting to changes with the class schedule or syllabus	Rigidity, difficulties with flexible thinking, difficulties with central coherence	Stubborn, slow
Problems with organization including initiating, planning, carrying out and finishing tasks	Difficulties with executive functioning	Lazy, unmotivated
Doesn't complete homework	Difficulties with executive functioning, difficulties with self-sufficiency, difficulties with self-advocacy	Lazy, uninterested, unmotivated

Source: Modified and adapted from page 159 of Wolf, L.E., Thierfeld Brown, J., and Kukiela Bork, G.R. (2009) Students with Asperger Syndrome: a Guide for College Personnel. Shawnee Mission, Kan.: Autism Asperger Pub. Co. (Berry, 2018)