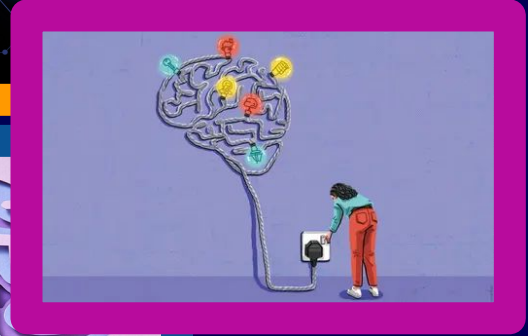
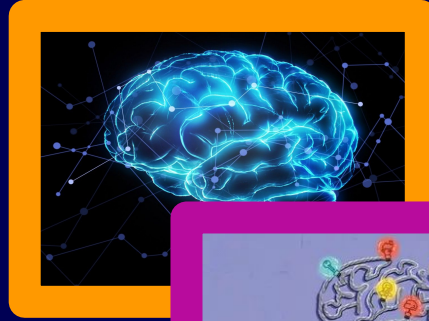
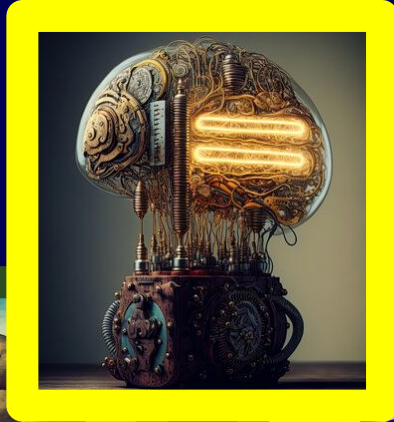
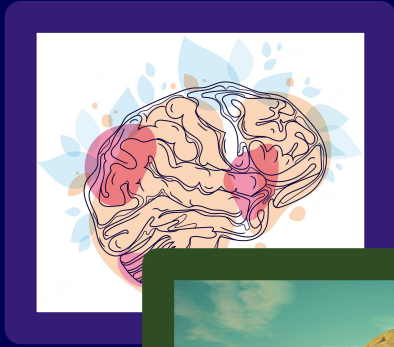
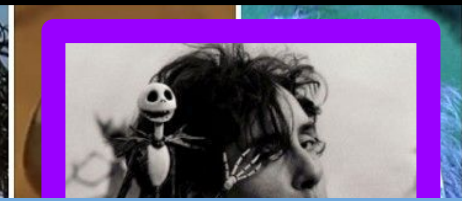
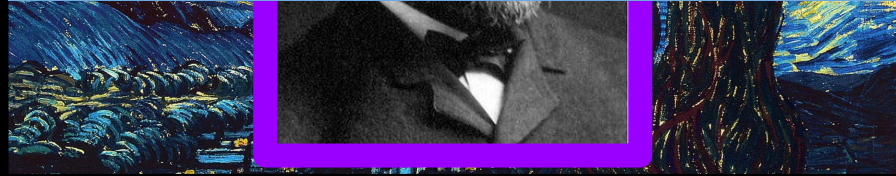


Understanding neurodivergence within the ELICOS sector for innovative teaching





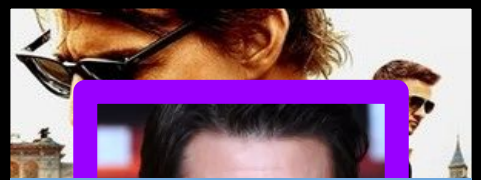
Synesthesia



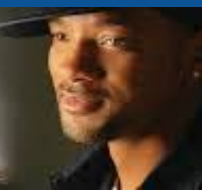
Autism



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rkRbevoYqI&t=13s>



Dyslexia



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zafiGBrFkRM>

Outline:

- Definitions
- Who is the neurodivergent ELICOS student?
- What can Australia offer the ELICOS student?
- What does the neurodivergent ELICOS student offer for our teaching/teaching practices?
- Case study



purpose

- Clarify key aspects
- Raise awareness
- Encourage innovative thinking and practice



Neurodiversity is defined as the idea that people experience and interact with the world in unique, individual ways, that there is no correct way of thinking, learning, and behaving, **and these differences are not viewed as deficits** (Singer, 1999).





A **neurodivergent** person refers to someone whose brain processes information in a way that is not typical of most individuals (Singer, 1999).



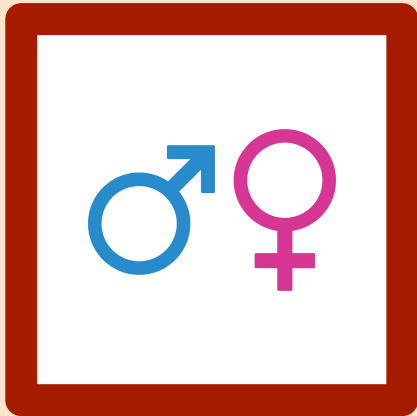
Neurodivergence has a **spectrum**. For example, autism has spectrum.



Assumptions?

The neurodivergent ELICOS student in Australia is high functioning.

High functioning can mean they may have learnt to disguise their difficulties/differences extremely well.



Trivia: As a collective, females are diagnosed much later with autism than males.

This is because women learn the importance of social mirroring much more quickly and effectively (Bargiela, Steward and Mandy, 2016) ■

- **Culture, self recognition and neurodivergence:**

May come from a culture where neurodivergence is either shamed or not recognised.

May not have even recognised/accepted within themselves they are different



International neurodivergent students in the classroom



May come from a more status conscious culture

May be unable/unwilling to share information about themselves



A study done in 2020 showed that many ethnic minority groups held many varied beliefs about neurodivergence. This ranged from perceiving it as a form of religious punishment to denying it altogether by stating conditions such as ADHD were just wild boy antics (Kandeh, Kandeh, Martin and Krupa, 2020).



- **What opportunities does Australian culture offer neurodivergent ELICOS students?**

Australia is a culture that embraces individuality and uniqueness

Comparatively, Australian culture has less social taboos and also values transparency



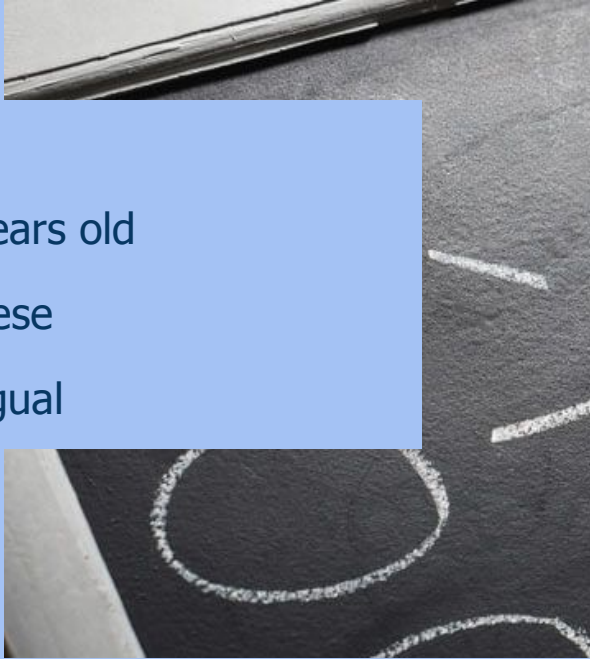
Creating a psychologically safe learning environment.

Encourages self reflection/emotional intelligence. This is especially demonstrated with our emphasis on mental health

Less preoccupied with status and hierarchy

How can the neurodivergent ELICOS student contribute to the development of our teaching and practice?

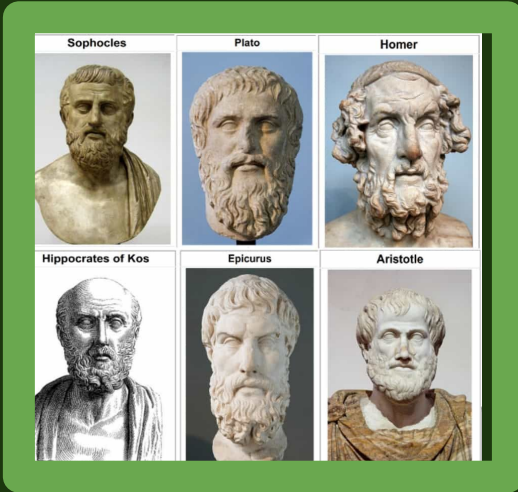
Case study: Student A



- Male
- 22 years old
- Chinese
- Bilingual

- **Autism:** Student A is transparent in his response to social cues/triggers
- **Delayed linguistic learning:** Student A has a limited ability to communicate using mainstream strategies
- **Anxiety**
- **Obsessive compulsive disorder:** Rituals, compulsions and the need for routine

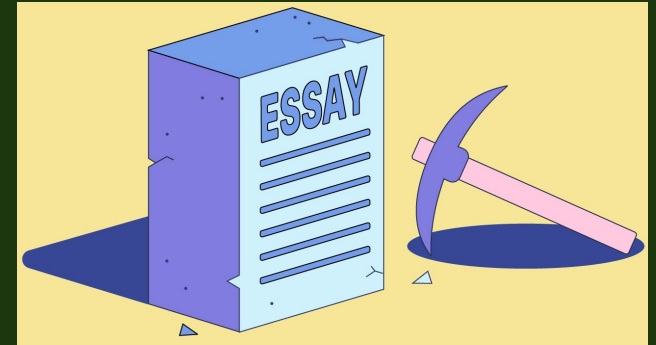
Western Education System




Ancient Greece/Roman philosophy

Emphasis on

- Debate
- Rhetoric
- Individual thought/feelings



- Taoism
- Buddhism
- Confucianism



East Asian Education System

- Holistic
- Collectivist

(Hassan, Jamaludin, Sulaiman and Baki ,2010)

As a teacher I can miss nuanced factors that impact the learning environment, such as:

- Underlying tensions amongst students
- Underlying tension the student/s might have towards the teacher

Student A:

- An accurate gauge in understanding nuanced social dynamics of the class.

Upon on close and consistent observation, a pattern of behaviour emerged from Student A

The pattern of his rituals, speech and micro cues changed depending on the type of tension that was occurring in the classroom.

Due to Student A, I caught and resolved tensions before they escalated into conflict.

This experience contradicts a certain common understanding.

Traditionally neurodivergent people, especially those with autism are deemed more socially unaware than non autistic people (Kwok and Kwok, 2020)

Of course, Student A's cultural background also needs to be recognised.

It is entirely feasible that it might have impacted his social awareness.




Though this is just one example, it does reveal:

Our understanding of
neurodiversity is just
beginning

With more information, our
view of neurodiversity could
completely change

This change could then
alter how we view our
students

- 
- New learning theories
 - New sociocultural theories

Teaching practices can also change:

- Curriculum changes
- Interpersonal changes
- Changes in government policies

Conclusions:

As educators:

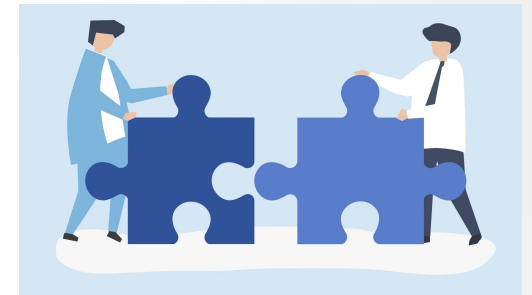
Your contribution to neurodiversity has the capacity to change education and teaching practice completely.

Scientists and academics of course have a place but **teachers are the ones who are in the midst of classroom dynamics.**

Only you understand certain things that come solely with time and experience.

For change:

- share
- collaborate
- reflect



What challenges do you foresee in regard to creating a learning environment that is more tailored to neurodivergent ELICOS students?

