



# Fostering Splt: The Key to Connection & Lifelong Learning

Dr. Kate Siekman

Shayne Mack

Harry Fairbanks

Cole Kirkendall

Sylvia Staus





# Objectives

01

Defining Sln

02

Understanding Sln & Learning

03

Understanding Sln & Social  
Connection

04

Q&A

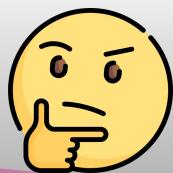


# SpIn Special + Interest



# What brings you

JOY





# What are Splns?

Passions

Areas of Study

Opportunities

# Identity

(Winter-Messiers, et al., 2007)



# Sylvia

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Art • Music • Sanrio & Hello Kitty • Fashion • Animals • Crystals







Unmotivated

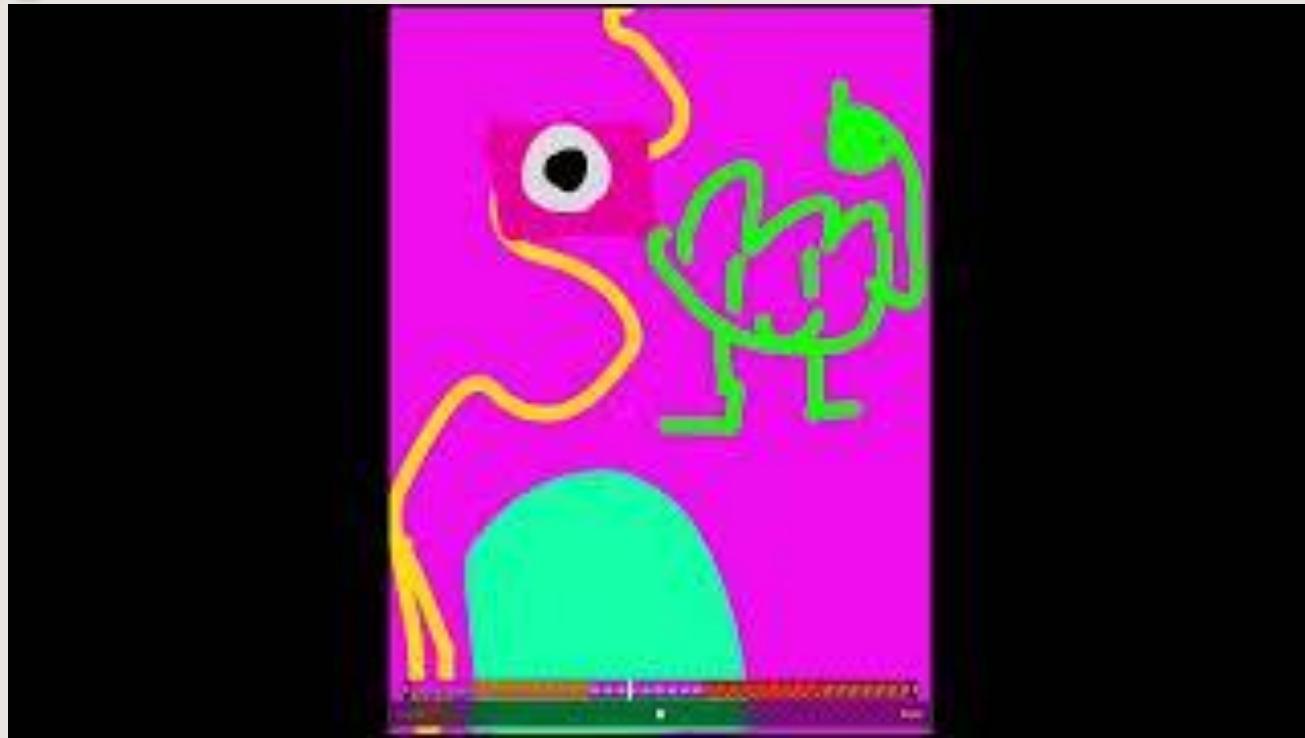
Zoned Out

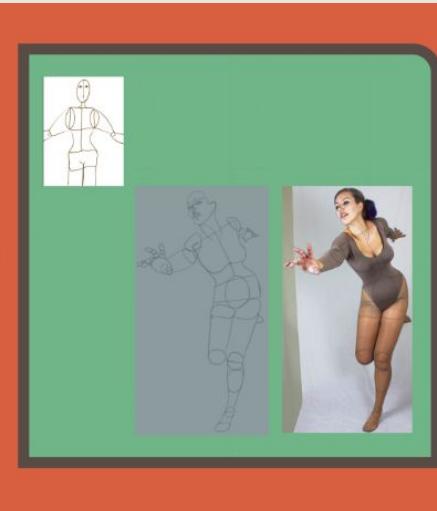
Lazy

Lost

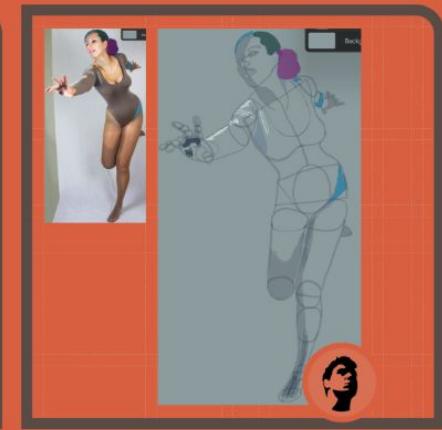
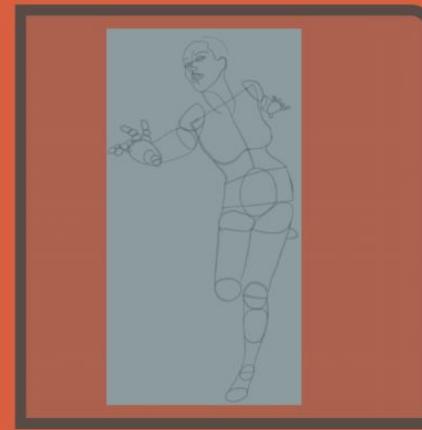
Unfocused

Disruptive





Yesterday, I learned on how to trace over different body parts in Procreate. It all started when I inserted a photo of a woman's pose into Procreate. I learned on how to use the circles for joints and the lines to connect these joints. I also learned on how to locate different parts of the face. I just hope I learn more of the these today.



# Understanding SpIn & Learning



**Motivation &  
Engagement**



**Positive Learning  
Outcomes**



**Accommodation  
Considerations**





# Motivation & Engagement

Intrinsic motivation and engagement in SpIn are directly linked.

(Grove, et al., 2018)

“...intrinsic drive is stronger in autistic adults than in people without an autism diagnosis,”

(Grove et al., 2016, as cited in Grove, et al., 2018, p. 772)

# Positive Learning Outcomes



## Overall Positive Learning Outcomes

In a scoping review of how SpIns were used within schools to support inclusion and learning in teens, it was determined across several studies that the inclusion of SpIns resulted in positive learning outcomes.

### Improvements in Speaking Skills

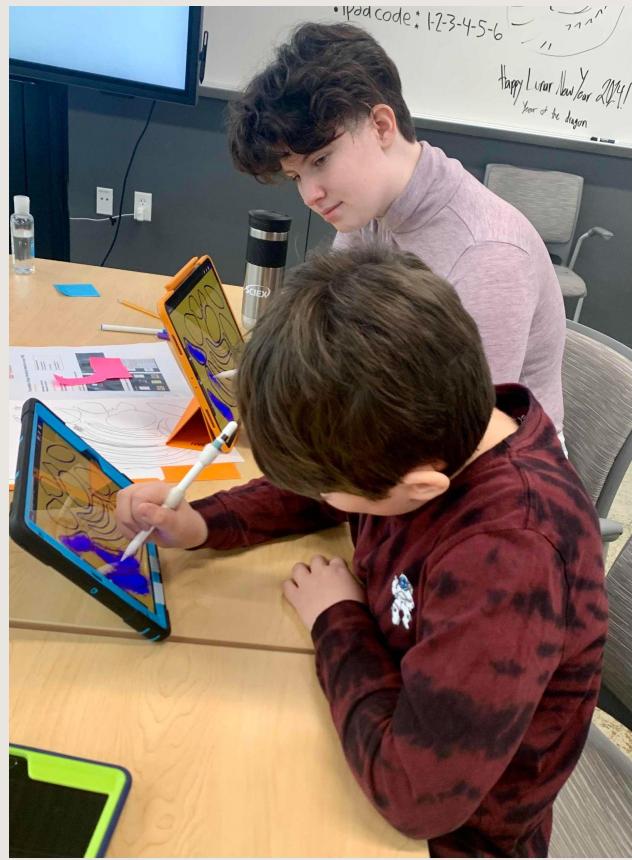
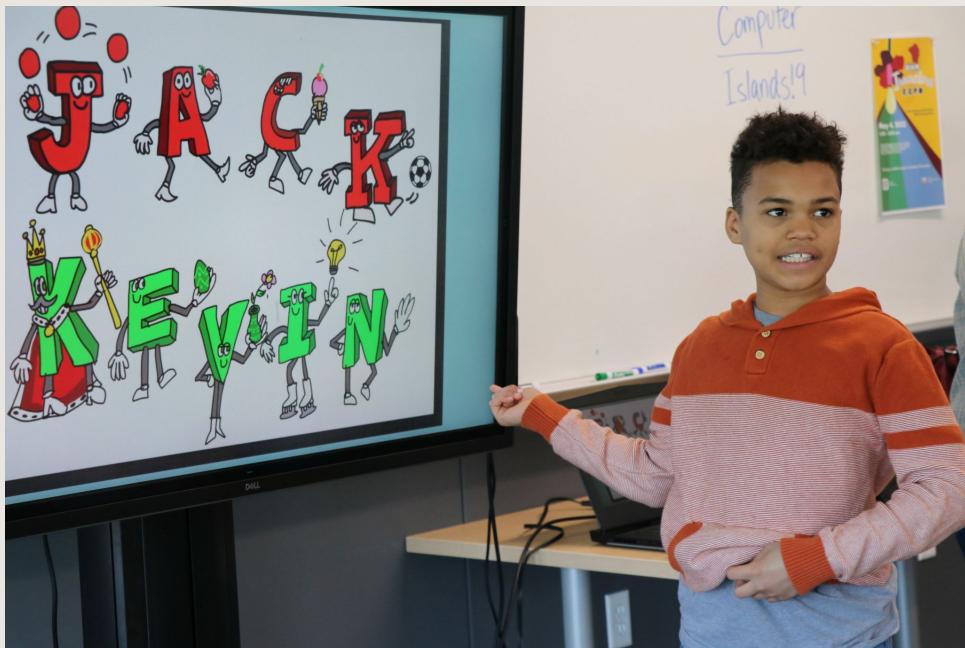
- Vocabulary
- Word order/Syntax
- Tone and tonal shifting

### Increased Perseverance

- Fine motor activities

(Tansley, et al., 2022;  
Winter-Messiers, 2007)







# Accommodating for SPln-Centric Learning



Physical  
Space



Curricular  
Planning



Classroom  
Culture



Collaboration and  
Communication



(Tansley, et al., 2022)



# Social Studies

# Math

# English

# Science



## Spln: Fashion & Design

Climate and Historical Events Impact on Clothing Styles of the Time Period

Exploring Fractions and Decimals as They Relate via a Simulated Shopping Experience

Allow for an Independent Study of Informational Text on Fashion, and Present their Findings to a Small Group

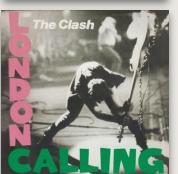
Explore Evolution in Animals and Compare Evolutionary Principles to the Evolution of Fashion Trends



# Cole

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Art History, Film and video production,  
music, sports, birds, visual art.





# Shayne

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Cartoons/Animation • Jazz Music • Looney  
Tunes • Drawing • Animals • Paleontology





## Cartoons I Like



My Own Characters  
(Armstrong, Willy, and  
ME-GOR)



## Paleontology



## Jazz Music





**Off-Topic**

**Unmotivated**

**Solitary**

**Unempathetic**

**Disconnected**

**Reclusive**



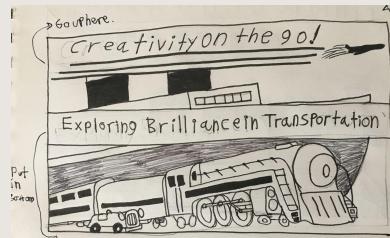


# Harry

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Trains, Art and Illustrations, Video Games,  
Film, Animation, Animals, Music





# Understanding Spin & Social Connection



Identity  
& Self-Image



Communication  
Skills



Social Engagement  
& Self-Regulation





# Identity & Self-Image

**“To know a child or youth with AS [Asperger Syndrome] is to know his or her special interest area [SIA]. SIA are serious, core passions, and we cannot truly know a student with AS without knowing his or her SIA.”**

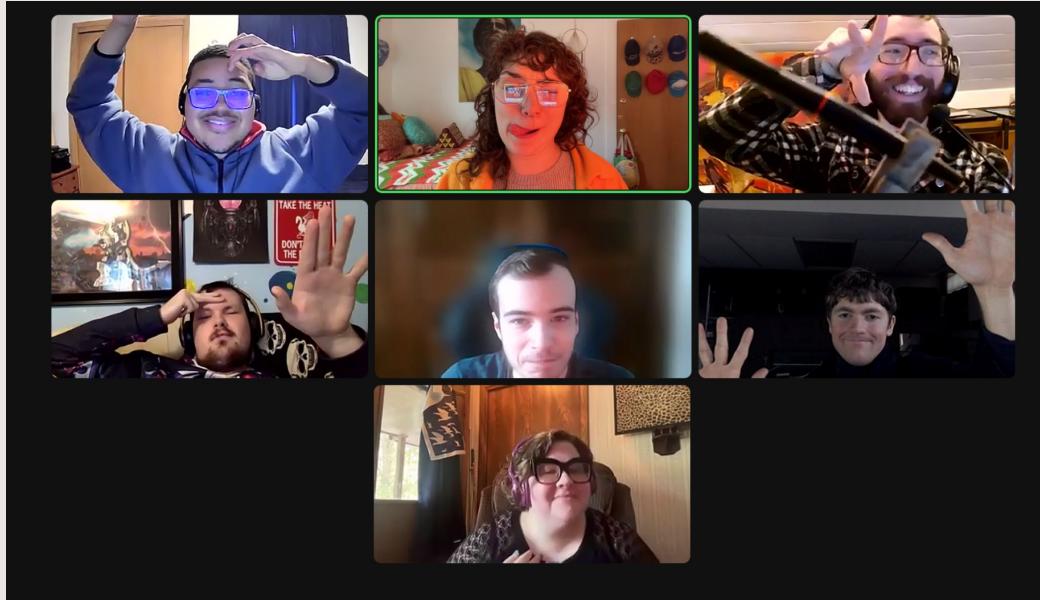
(Winter-Messiers 2007, p.150)

*In accordance with current terminology, AS [Asperger Syndrome] can be replaced with “autism.”*





# Communication Skills



- Increased fluidity and fluency of communication
- Improved response to social communication
- Increased social sensitivity and awareness

(Winter-Messiers 2007;  
Tansley, et al., 2022)



# Social Engagement & Self-Regulation



- Improved Engagement in Social Activities
- Improved Coping Skills
- Mitigation of Sensory Stressors

*"In the face of negative emotions, participants had learned to focus on their SIA, actively in their minds, to help them cope."*

(Tansley, et al., 2022;  
Winter-Messiers, 2007)

(Winter-Messiers 2007, p.146)



# Healthy engagement in SPlns is associated with improved quality of life!

(Grove, et al., 2018)



# Q&A



**Sylvia**  
they/them



**Cole**  
he/him



**Harry**  
he/him



**Kate**  
she/her



**Shayne**  
he/him

# Celebrate

JOY

# THANKS!

Do you have any questions?

Dr. Kate Siekman  
Director of Learning &

Outcomes

Islands of Brilliance

[Kate@islandsofbrilliance.org](mailto:Kate@islandsofbrilliance.org)

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# References



Grove, R., Hoekstra, R. A., Wierda, M., & Begeer, S. (2018). Special interests and subjective wellbeing in autistic adults. *Autism research : official journal of the International Society for Autism Research*, 11(5), 766–775.

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