Hello - my name's Glen Jackson and I'm thrilled to be invited here today to be a part of this Autism MOOC.

I'm not coming to you as any sort of expert on autism but I'm simply here to relate a couple of stories from my time as a high school educator in New South Wales.

The first of these stories happened when I was taking groups of students on year 7 camp - so we're talking ages of around 12 or 13 here - and often...the place that we took them was quite a rural bush setting, and often we'd see wildlife around. And one of the times I remember one of the girls that we had on the camp was on the autism spectrum and she had an absolute fascination for reptiles and lizards in particular.

And we were sort of walking along a little bush track with probably about 15 students, and I remember she spotted a goanna which was going over towards a tree and then climbing up the tree, and the absolute excitement and enthusiasm was just amazing to behold. And obviously that special interest translated into her sort of running around the tree and spouting facts about goannas and about lizards in general, so she was telling us all about, you know, how they bred and that the males looked after the young and that they fed out of bird nests and all sorts of things, and it was just a really interesting look at how engrossed that kind of student can be in those, um...sort of special interests.

And it was also interesting to see the reaction of the students to that. It wasn't sort of being off-put or anything like that, although they did get a little bit confused when she continued to repeat the same questions... uh, the same comments over and over again.