

TEACHING AND LEARNING ACROSS SYLLABUS OUTCOMES

The knowledge and skills of literacy and numeracy **underpin learning in all other areas in school**. It is unfortunately within these areas of basic skills that students with SLD have the most difficulty. However, with realistic in-class instructional and/or environmental modifications and learning support that **accommodates individual learning strengths, weaknesses and style**, most students with SLD **will achieve expected syllabus outcomes across subject areas**. The teacher's knowledge of the student can be used to direct teaching practices.

Adjustments made to include a student with Specific Learning Difficulties will, in practice, enhance learning for all students in the class

For example, consider taking a **spelling test** presented by a teacher who is *walking around the classroom*. This may make the test **difficult for a students with SLD because s/he must be able to use all the skills of visual motor integration and auditory processing, plus the ability to attend**.

A student with SLD may have spelling difficulties because of a lack of skills in auditory discrimination, memory or sequencing, or a weakness in visual memory and sequencing, or inability to motor plan or automatically remember 'how to' actually write the letters. It is the teacher's task to identify the problem. This could be done (for example) by looking for an **error pattern** in mis-spelled words found over 3-4 spelling tests and using this to inform direct teaching.

The specific learning problems of SLD students are usually based in aspects of information processing.

Students with SLD tend to learn best during active investigation supported by direct teaching and practice to mastery.

- **Direct teaching** to explicit learning needs must first use **task analysis to identify every step** (including the abilities, skills and concepts) required for success, to ensure children have achieved the necessary foundation competence to succeed.

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- **Supported teaching**, or **scaffolding**, means providing help and challenge which is **just beyond the learner's current level of achievement**, and then gradually withdrawing help as the learner independently masters (even parts of) the task and can self-monitor progress. **Partial success should always be rewarded.**
- **Practice to mastery** can be facilitated by using a variety of multi-sensory materials and activities requiring the same skills and concepts to **vary practice and encourage independent function** which can be generalised.

Activities Chosen Must

- Be **age and interest, ability, skill and experientially** appropriate.
- Be presented at the learner's **level of reasoning** (e.g. 3D...2D...).
- Have an anticipated success rate of at least **85%**.
- Present **challenge**.

Sequencing of Presenting Activities

- Start with necessary **foundation skills**.
- Then **teach** the consistent, highly predictable components.
- **Practice** high utility skills before more diverse skills.
- Teach confusing or variant components at **different times**.

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