



Big Book of Literacies Training:

A resource bank for supporting
young people with their
literacies



Section 4

Literacies Learning Next Steps





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Approaches to Literacies - Dedicated Literacies

Young peoples' literacies skills can be supported through activities engaging them in a multitude of tasks. In contrast to an integrated approach, a dedicated approach can be used to support specific identified needs. Dedicated literacies programmes are up front and open about the literacies element of the programme.

How to use this section

The aim of this section is to provide some information on dedicated literacies support for young people and to provide some useful contacts for this purpose. This is not a manual for providing dedicated literacies, as there are too many aspects of literacies to cover in this resource, but it does offer links to some useful resources and further training. This is not a substitute for literacies tutor training, but should be seen as material to support trained tutors. For more information on where to go for literacies tutor training, check out section 5 CPD section. The resources include literacies tasks, which can be completed by the tutor or with a group of tutors in order to improve their practice.

Some of the previous sections may be relevant to practitioners who use a dedicated literacies approach, so it may be worth having a look.

This section is designed to be used by practitioners who are experienced in working with young people on literacies issues and looks at developing their practice further. Throughout this section there are a number of tasks developed to provide an opportunity to reflect and develop literacies practice. In order to maximise the use of this section it would be useful to have a background understanding of the theories that underpin literacies practice in Scotland.



The majority of work with young people and literacies happens by integrating literacies into another activity (see section 3). However, some young people may be interested in taking literacies support further and may require additional dedicated literacies support. This can be provided in a number of ways including:

- Adult literacies provision to develop literacies on a one to one or group basis, this can take place in a variety of contexts and settings including: workplace, college, community and prisons
- Literacies support offered by a literacies tutor, team teaching a group working on a particular area e.g. [CAVSS](#) model
- Literacies support provided as part of a programme e.g. Activity Agreement Group (e.g. Motherwell Learning Hub ([link](#))) with a literacies tutor working beside the activity group facilitator
- Literacies group in a school context, providing specific literacies support e.g. senior phase

Checklist:

Ideally, before using this section it is recommended that you should already have:

- An existing awareness of literacies issues
- Already undertaken some initial tutor training
- Have awareness of strategies for working with young people
- Section 1 and 5 of the BBLT will be helpful in your exploration of the checklist.





Scottish Government's Vision for Literacies

The Literacy Action Plan has established Scotland's overarching vision for all learners – to raise standards of literacy for all from the early years through to adulthood.

Specifically for adults, the Scottish Government's vision is:

'By 2020 Scotland's society and economy will be stronger because more of its adults are able to read, write and use numbers effectively in order to handle information, communicate with others, express ideas and opinions, make decisions and solve problems, as family members, workers, citizens and lifelong learners.'

Literacy Action Plan to improve literacy in Scotland (2010) [link](#)

To achieve this vision we will focus on four overarching outcomes:

- Improved access to literacies learning opportunities
- High quality learning and teaching
- Improved infrastructure, and
- Evidence of impact.

ALIS 2020 aims to promote equal access to and participation in literacies learning for all adults.

It is intended to promote equality of opportunity to those who face persistent disadvantage and to increase the numbers of people economically active across all groups within society.

Successful implementation of this strategic guidance will significantly increase the numbers of adults with improved literacies capabilities in Scotland.

'The term 'literacies' used throughout ALIS 2020 refers to the 'skills, knowledge and understanding required for literacy and numeracy practices, for example to read and understand a bus timetable; to complete a betting slip or to create a CV. The term 'adults' refers to adults aged 16 years and above.'

ALNIS 2020



Defining Literacies

In Scotland, rather than focus on illiteracy and what people can't do, the focus is on being literate: how people use literacies in everyday life, the skills and strategies they already use and how these can be built upon. Literacies are complex capabilities and are more than the traditional understanding of literacy and numeracy ([link](#)).

Note the plural form of literacy; this is to show that the word literacies describe more than just literacy. Literacies include reading, writing and numeracy, as well as communication and ICT skills, problem solving, expressing opinions, speaking etc.

For more information on the background and context of literacies work with young people refer to section 1 of the BBLT.

Changing Literacies

Traditionally literacy has been seen as reading and writing, however, changing forms of communication including communicating via technology are creating 'new literacies'.

Young People often feel comfortable communicating in these nontraditional ways, including: social networking; email; blogging; World Wide Web etc. Gaming technologies have also been used to engage with young people and literacies. Research by the National Literacy Trust, identifies that more young people own a phone than a book ([link](#)) 'nearly 9 in 10 young people in the UK own a mobile phone, while just over 7 in 10 have books of their own'.

Working with young people to develop their literacies should include both 'traditional' literacy and 'new literacies' ([link](#)) to support young peoples' needs in a multimedia age.

National Literacy Trust (NLT)

The National Literacy Trust have carried out research on young people's reading and writing habits for more information click this ([link](#))





The research found that 'When asked what they look for when recruiting a school leaver, employers' ranked good communication and written literacy skills above any others (LSN, 2008)'.

'Young people who write blogs or have profiles on social networking sites have more positive attitudes towards writing and rate themselves as better writers than those who do not (NLT 2009)'.

Working with young people to develop their literacies should include both 'traditional' literacy and 'new literacies' ([link](#))' to support young peoples' needs in a multimedia age. More information on this is available from the report of the Information from the Digitally Agile CLD events and case studies at this ([link](#)).

Young people's reading: the importance of the home environment and family support

Research carried out in 2009 into young people's reading and writing, explore the types of resources that young people have at home to support literacy, attitudes, and behaviours and reading attainment. This research identified the role of family and parental support as important in developing young people's reading.

Download full report 'Young People's Reading: The Importance of Family Support' at this ([link](#))

Young people's writing: attitudes, behaviour and the role of technology

Similar research identified writing as an important skill to participate in today's society. This survey highlights young people's experiences and attitudes to writing and the role of technology in young people's writing. It also explores young people's writing with respect to mobile phone ownership, having a blog and having a profile on a social networking site.

Download full report 'Young People's Writing Attitudes, behaviour and the role of technology' at this ([link](#)).



Accessing Resources for Literacies

There are many resources available that have been developed for an older audience that could be adapted to suit work with young people. There are also materials that have been developed for work in school, which can be adapted to suit a different context. Where possible use real life materials, preferably materials that the young person has provided this ensures that materials are relevant and of interest to the young person.

Practitioners interviewed for the 'Mapping Youth Literacies with the 16-25 Age Group' identified 'having resources which promote a positive image of literacies learning' as a key element in developing a successful youth literacies organisation. For more information on finding and creating resources on [ALO](#).

Resources that are pre-prepared may not be suitable for everyone so they may need to be adapted. Think about the particular group or individual that you are working with and adapt to suit their interests.

This section includes a small amount of resources for dedicated literacies, more resources can be found on 'Adult Literacies Online' (ALO) at this [link](#). ALO has a search facility which can be useful for finding information to suit different contexts.

The Adult Literacy and Numeracy Curriculum Framework for Scotland and the Curriculum Wheel are available on [ALO](#) and provide some useful insight into adult literacies [link](#).

Top Tip: Always have a plan B to work on if the prepared resources are not working, or the young person does not want to do it.

Try to use the young person's own materials where possible.





Learning Plans

To assist in developing literacies with young people, it is recommended to start with a negotiated learning plan. Learning can take place in a group session or on a one to one basis, but should include an individual learning plan (ILP). The learning plan is part of the learning and teaching process which is negotiated with the learner. Using an ILP encourages the learner to take ownership of their own learning. This provides a written record of the planning process and can make up part of the guidance procedure. The learning plan is the property of the learner and should record all significant activity and progress. Where possible the learner should be encouraged to keep the record, but may need some support to do this. The learning plan should provide an opportunity for reflection on the learning and should be flexible to allow for changes in circumstances which require new skills.

Notes on developing learning plans can be found in the Adult Literacy and Numeracy Curriculum Framework at this [link](#)

Creative ways to devise individual learning plans have been developed, including using an electronic ILP, for more information click this [link](#). This involves the use of ICT to help make the planning and recording of an ILP a more interactive and personal experience for the learner. The electronic ILP allows for a range of media to be applied; including image; colour; animation; video and sound, ensuring increased accessibility for all learners.

Other examples of creative planning activities include, using a laptop with a built in camera and a program such as 'Comic Life' to record the meeting with the worker and young person. This can then be edited to create a photographic representation of the learning plan.





Theoretical Basis for Literacies

There are a number of theories relating to literacies practice and some of these are outlined in chapter 3, of the Scottish Adult Literacy and Numeracy Curriculum ([link](#)) - 'What is the theoretical basis for the curriculum?'

'It is important to think about the theories of knowledge that underpin our understanding of how people learn so that we can teach and assess appropriately.'
(Curriculum Framework for Adult Literacy and Numeracy in Scotland)

Some additional theories and practice to support work in this area are available on [ALO](#) and can also be found in the publication 'Teaching Adult Literacy Principles and Practice' published by Open University Press ([link](#)).

This resource includes:

- Case studies of real student experiences including young literacies learners
- Samples of learners' writing with commentary and analysis
- Application of linguistic theory to literacy teaching
- Practical suggestions for teaching, planning and assessment
- Guidance on supporting learners with dyslexia and global learning difficulties
- Reflective tasks, encouraging readers to develop and apply their knowledge

In order to provide dedicated literacies support, it is important that the practitioner is aware of a number of techniques to help learners develop the skills strategies and confidence that they need as a user of literacies. It is recommended that additional training is undertaken. Information for those who are interested in developing their own skills, knowledge and understanding of literacies practice is available in the CPD section 5 of the BBLT.

If you are already experienced in literacies practice, but wish to develop your youth work practices, there are also a number of sources available to you. Contact the Standards Council for Scotland ([link](#)) for current up to date information on qualifications relating to youth work. You may also want to contact your local authority Community Learning and



Development team who may provide more localised training some of which may be approved by the Standards Council.

A directory of youth work training ([link](#)) is available to provide information on youth work training opportunities throughout Scotland (available in section 5 of the BBLT).

Accrediting literacies learning for young people

Literacies learning provides an excellent opportunity for young people to start to develop a portfolio of qualifications; or to build on previous learning achievements. Due to their current literacies levels, young people may have missed out in their earlier education and may think that they are unable to achieve. However, there are many opportunities to develop literacies skills while working towards awards and qualifications. Gaining recognition by demonstrating achievement can help boost a young person's confidence.

There are a wide range of qualifications available to fit a variety of learning contexts and styles. The document *Amazing Things* provides a guide to a selection of youth awards in Scotland and the Awards Network website provides a searchable directory for these awards ([link](#)). Literacies work can be used as evidence in a young person's portfolio, when working towards an award or qualification. The SQA website provides information on qualifications suitable for literacies accreditation. ([link](#)).





Techniques (some ideas)

There are a number of methods for supporting some literacies learners to develop their literacies that can also be used with young people. Encourage discussion about what they find most successful for them. There are a number of different methods that can be used with learners at various levels and are not the only techniques (for more information refer to section 5 CPD).

Some of the following methods could be incorporated into the sessions, other methods are also available.

1. [Social sight \(familiar words\) vocabulary exercise](#) – this should include familiar words e.g. name and address, months of the year, days of the week. Start with the whole words on flash cards then the syllables on flash cards. The learner identifies the whole words, then builds the words from the syllables and traces the words before writing them. Practise days and months in both upper and lower case letters – the words can look quite different in upper case only. It can be useful to discuss the use of capitals for proper nouns. There has been a recent fashion in advertising to use lower case lettering for the names of shops etc. to attract attention. Discuss with the young person, where it is important to use capital letters to avoid confusion.
2. [Discussing appropriate use of grammar and spelling](#) - The culture of texting amongst young people has also brought new ways of communicating and there are differing views on the effect that it is having on literacy. There are differing views about the effect that it is having generally, but some believe that it is fostering bad grammar and spelling ([link](#)). It is important to discuss with young people when it is appropriate to use casual text speak and abbreviations and when it is not acceptable to the reader.

Top tip:

bookmaking activity on [ALO](#)





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3. **Social sight vocabulary exercise** - Use the list of the 220 most commonly used words – (Dolch list) to become familiar with the words that are used most. Read the words, write the words and use them to build sentences. This may help to build confidence if they can successfully read a number of the words on the list, if they are not able to at the moment, it provides a number of words to work on and learn. It may be useful to start a personal dictionary (see top tip above) with the young person to note down any words that may be useful to them in the future.
 4. **Tracking** - use a tool to practise tracking e.g. a resource like 'Fasttrack to Reading' (accelerated reading programme for adults), to practice consonant clusters and word building.
 5. **Simple comprehension** – tutor/facilitator reads a passage with the young person following the words, then the young person answer the questions verbally.
 6. **Young persons own work** – young people often bring in forms, letters etc. from home which are causing concern. Always deal with these even if it means ignoring your session plan. If you do not have the training and experience do not give advice on anything other than literacies – if you have concerns refer the learner on to someone who can help.
 7. **Language Experience Approach (LEA) technique for learners who need to work on their reading skills.**

The Language Experience Approach is a method used to help engage a young person with reading and writing. It begins from the interests of the young person and is based on activities and stories developed from personal experiences of the learner.





Stages of the LEA

- Ask the young person to talk about an area of interest chosen by them, it could be anything e.g. their favorite music, trip to the cinema, an activity they took part in. Talk about the chosen topic, youth worker/facilitator records some of the story in the young person's words, making sure you don't rephrase anything.
- Make sure that the young person can clearly see what you are writing
- Read the text out loud. As you read, model fluency and help them make connections between what is said and what is written by pointing to the words one by one. Answer any questions that they may have.
- After modeling it for the young person, have them read and reread the text orally and silently. This will help them develop fluency.
- Once the young person is familiar with all of the text, begin to focus on smaller components such as sentences and words. This will help the young person with their word recognition skills. It may also be a good idea to use word cards or sentence strips so that you can deconstruct the writing and ask the young person to put it in the right order.
- Text can also be broken down into separate words for word recognition and for putting in order to work on comprehension.
- Language experience approach that can be used at a variety of levels which means that relevant material can be created there and then with the young person





General Hints:

- Negotiate with the young person about the areas they will be working and where possible use real life material
- Check to see if the young person is right or left handed – if right handed, sit to their left; if left handed, sit to their right
- Try not to sit opposite a learner – you can't see what each other is doing and it can be intimidating. It may be better to sit at a right angle to the learner so you can make better eye contact
- Always try to work on a variety of topics in each session and break the session into small achievable sections
- Build in a short revision section at the beginning and a review section at the end to reinforce the learning
- Engage the young person in discussion, to check if they have understanding of learning or is keeping quiet due to lack of confidence. This will improve when the young person starts to feel comfortable with you – it can be challenging for the first few sessions
- Check out if whether the young person is doing what is relevant to them, or are they going along with what they think you want them to learn. They may see you as the expert and think that you must know best, particularly if that is their experience from previous learning
- Encourage young people to bring in real life materials to work on
- If the young person has brought in something that they want to work on, try to do that first. Think about all the learning points that can be gained from this work and use the activity to reinforce areas that they want to work on





Working with More Advanced Literacies

Start with revision of last session's work and discuss any work completed outwith the session and any problems with it. Hand back any work and give positive feedback! Ask what the young person wants to work on next, have they brought anything they need to work on?

Comprehension (understanding) - read through with the young person to identify any difficult words. (This may give you the next set of spellings.) Discuss any new vocabulary. Encourage the use of a personal dictionary where the young person can record words that they find difficult to understand. Discuss the meaning and get them to write it beside the word

Personal dictionary - creative way to make a young person's personal dictionary really personal is to try the book making activity from the Creative Literacies Resource Pack ([link](#))

Spellings – group words into similar letter patterns and give a short dictation using the words once they have been practised. You will have to make these up yourself. It is more difficult to spell the words when they are presented this way rather than in isolation. The dictation can also give practise in punctuation e.g. full stops, capital letters, commas etc. It may be useful for the young person to keep a personal dictionary (notebook) of any words that they are unsure of for future use.

Writing – try to do a piece of writing each session. Some young people can be very reluctant to write because of their handwriting and spelling. Don't point out every mistake, ask the young person if they were unsure of anything when they were writing. Try to think of creative ways to encourage writing. If possible the young person should be encouraged to write about something that they are in their own way. Encourage the young person to write answers to complete sentences – not just one word answers.

Reading – encourage reading by finding material that interests the young people or use some of the readers that have been developed by learners ([link](#)). There are a number of other readers available including Quick Reads [link](#), which can be useful for the more advanced readers. These books are short and can be the first “real books” the learners can manage. Magazines



and newspapers and graphic novels are very good for passages which may interest the young people. These can also be used to stimulate discussion and improve communication skills.

Adapting resources to support literacies work with young people

There are many resources available that have been developed for an adult audience that could be adapted to suit this work. Practitioners interviewed for the Mapping Youth Literacies with the 16-25 Age Group identified:

'Having resources which promote a positive image of literacies learning' as a key element in developing a successful youth literacies organisation.'

The resources featured in the BBLT are developed by practitioners working with young people on literacies. They can be adapted to suit the context that you are working in.





Numeracy and Young People

Using numeracy crunch moments

We know from research that, for frequent everyday tasks, most people can cope with the numeracy they already have. People can become competent at even quite complex tasks if they use them, for example, in their work. Crunch moments with numeracy often occur when we take on new tasks, or when our life circumstances change. Many individuals come unstuck when they need to manage a household budget for the first time, to get into the police or other professions, take a test to get into college or, join a recruitment agency.

At times of transition young people may appreciate some guidance on improving their numeracy capabilities. A good starting point would be to ask the young person to identify times when they have needed (or think they might need) to use new skills that might have become 'rusty' through lack of use. Ideas, several of which include using money, might include:

- Independent living/taking up a tenancy
- Decorating a flat
- Cooking
- Starting work
- Starting college
- Managing a budget
- Shopping (needs versus wants)
- Using the internet
- Filling out forms
- Getting a new mobile phone
- Becoming a parent
- Supporting a relative who became ill.

The group can then brainstorm the tasks they might come across in those situations, and then focus in on the numeracy involved.





Opening minds to numeracy

People might sometimes struggle with numeracy in one situation that they would find straightforward in another. It's important to encourage learners to make connections: if someone is worried about fractions, when else do they use fractions in their lives (for example half –a-pint of beer, quarter past three)

A fun exercise to encourage learners to see the extent to which they already encounter numbers (and use them successfully) in their lives is the 'use the clock exercise' Activity 1 in the Literacies for Learning in FE resource ([link](#)).

Useful approaches to numeracy learning, and some resources

Numeracy learning happens most effectively when learners can discuss ideas, when they practise their learning through problem solving, and when they feel safe to make mistakes and think about misconceptions. The Maths 4 Life research project from England is particularly valuable. Learning materials were made available through the 'Thinking Through Mathematics' resources ([link](#)).

Counting on a Greener Scotland (COGS) is a learning pack that aims to provide opportunities for learners to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding of numeracy, in the particular contexts of weather, climate change and energy. The pack offers a range of numeracy related learning activities and pointers to additional, external resources to enable learners to consolidate and broaden their existing knowledge and understanding, and apply these skills these in ways that will help them improve key areas of their lives. An electronic copy of the report can be downloaded from Adult Literacies Online at this ([link](#)).

Political Literacies

The 'Political Literacy' online resource provides materials for those working in schools or community settings, who are encouraging people to think critically and to participate in political processes. They introduce political institutions and processes and offer clear signposts to more detailed information. ([link](#))

Skint financial Capability resource, see previous sections for more information ([link](#))

There are hundreds of resources and teaching ideas on Adult Literacies Online ([ALO](#)) with a search function to help you locate appropriate resources.





Additional Support Needs

Some young people will come to you with issues that you do not feel qualified or experienced to deal with and it will be useful to build a network of contacts to refer young people on to.

Find out and write the relevant information below. The Big Plus, your local authority or the internet should have the information you require.

Name of Project:

Key Workers:

Name:	Position:	Contact Details:





Adult Dyslexia: Understanding the Difference ([link](#))

This training is a basic introduction to the nature of dyslexia in adults and how it impacts on the adult learner. The training offers guidance on identification of adults who may be dyslexic and the types of support which should be part of learning provision.

It aims to give tutors and other professionals a greater understanding of dyslexia and advice on how to work with anyone who may be dyslexic.

Alongside the pack are a number of videos as follows:

Case studies which offer an insight to the personal journey of adults who have coped with and come to terms with dyslexia. The resource 'Addressing Dyslexia, a toolkit for the identification and support of learners with dyslexia exhibiting literacies difficulties' may be useful for further information ([link](#)).

For further information and support on this area, contact Don Mackie

Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD) and Adult Literacy

Many perfectly able people have had difficulties in fully mastering the skills of efficient reading, writing and spelling because of dyslexia or another specific learning difficulty (SpLD).

However, their difficulties (with literacy) may go unrecognised in day-to-day life because they are otherwise very capable, intellectually able and articulate. Very often, those with SpLD can cope reasonably well with literacy tasks in ideal situations, but in other circumstances, time pressure, stress, fatigue or even environmental factors, such as lighting, noise or unfamiliar settings, can seriously impair their abilities.

SpLD are a range of neuro-developmental conditions that affect the individual's abilities to learn in normal contexts by traditional methods.

These conditions are distinct from global learning difficulties in that difficulties arise not from intellectual impairment but rather from particular processing differences and, typically, there will be a discrepancy between the individual's general intellectual abilities and their abilities





in certain areas of learning (such as written language or number skills) or under certain circumstances.

Dyslexia may be the most commonly recognised SpLD but dyslexia may result from, occur along with or be misdiagnosed for one of the other conditions. Equally, other SpLD can cause difficulties with reading writing or number and organisational skills.

A number of SpLD have been individually labelled because of certain features e.g.

- dyslexia (difficulties with reading and/or spelling)
- dyspraxia (motor coordination difficulties)
- dyscalculia (difficulties with number concepts/calculation)
- dysgraphia (difficulties with handwriting)
- attention deficit (hyperactivity) disorder (concentration difficulties and impulsivity)
- autistic spectrum disorders (social communication difficulties)
- specific language impairment (language difficulties – without other obvious cause)
- Tourette Syndrome (vocal/physical tic disorder)

However, certain core problem areas can be identified as characteristic of SpLD.

These include:

- difficulties with short-term memory and working memory.
- organisational difficulties
- orientation and coordination difficulties
- environmental preferences
- learning preferences
- physical and mental issues

Short-term memory and working memory

Short-term memory is the temporary store for information before it is processed into long-term memory or forgotten. It has limited capacity (possibly 4 chunks of information) and requires attention or rehearsal or information will quickly decay.

New information overwrites information already in short term memory.





Working memory uses both short-term memory and long-term memory for temporary processing, such as mental calculation. It also has limited capacity and requires attention to be maintained.

Working memory includes the transfer of information into long-term memory and is important in learning. It has been shown to be a better predictor of academic achievement than measures of IQ.

Short-term and working memory are independent of IQ and efficiency varies between individuals. Those with SpLD are known to have short-term/working memory problems.

Certain factors will put stress on working memory causing failure including:

- distraction will cause loss of necessary attention;
- rate of input can cause “overwriting” (new information replacing previous information before it can be processed) resulting in loss of information;
- amount of input can be greater than the individual’s memory capacity;
- multitasking (e.g. listening and writing at the same time) reduces the working memory’s capacity for each task.

In practice, these will affect activities such as taking notes, answering questions, problem solving and transfer of information into long term memory (learning).

Problems with working memory may go unrecognised and may be dismissed as lack of interest, motivation or lack of effort.

Stress on working memory will cause fatigue and can result in giving up, loss of interest or behavioural problems.

In work with those with SpLD, it is important that working memory problems are taken into consideration and that adjustments are made to prevent overload and failure. Adjustments might include giving written instructions, reducing the rate and amount of input, breaking down information into smaller chunks, reducing distractions.





Organisational Difficulties

Organisational difficulties are common across the range of SpLD and will manifest themselves in problems such as a chaotic lifestyle, difficulties with sorting ideas and separating important points from less important details, timekeeping, lateness and judging time needed to do things.

Forgetting to do things and losing things are common features. Changes to routine can cause problems and lengthy tasks may overwhelm the individual.

To a certain extent, in work with those with SpLD, awareness and understanding of these problems is the most important adjustment, however, it may be possible to assist with putting organisational strategies in place:

- reminders (phone, texts, Postit notes)
- written information as well as spoken information
- use of mobile phone functions such as alarm, voice recorder
- index cards, colour coding, breaking tasks into smaller sections, using mindmaps.

Orientation and Coordination Difficulties

Orientation and coordination difficulties are associated with a number of SpLD. Common issues arising from this include:

- clumsiness and general awkwardness in movement – gross motor;
- handwriting may be untidy or excessively tiring – fine motor;
- confusion and stress in unfamiliar settings – losing direction;
- confusion with left/right, up/down;
- history of problems with e.g. tying shoelaces, riding a bicycle, catching a ball;
- accident prone – bumping into things, tripping;
- visual difficulties, such as tracking along lines of print or difficulties with eye-teaming (both eyes working correctly as a pair), can cause difficulties with reading and writing.





Again, understanding and allowance for difficulties is helpful, however adjustments can lessen these problems. Keyboard may be a better option than handwriting; use of big print in handouts (or adjustment of font size on screens); good signposting for directions and adjustments to the learning environment can reduce difficulties.

Environmental Considerations

The effects of SpLD can be subject to environmental factors. Crowded, cluttered, noisy settings which put pressure the senses can increase difficulties with organisational abilities, distraction, orientation and hypersensitivity to light and sound. Examples across the range of SpLD include:

- The effect of background noise on those with auditory processing difficulties;
- Unsuitable lighting conditions (too bright/too dim/artificial/natural) with visual processing problems
- Cluttered environment on those with attention deficit disorder/dyspraxia
- Crowded/social/group settings on those with autistic spectrum disorders/Tourette syndrome

Generally, hypersensitivity to external factors can put stress on a number of problem areas of SpLD and adjustments to the local environment should be considered:

- Lighting
- Noise
- Distractions – people, clutter, decoration (sensory overload)
- Privacy and individual space
- Respect for learners
- Consistency
- Informal (not cluttered) settings can reduce stress
- Organised (not formal) settings

Learning Preferences

Learning styles are made up of a range of factors which include sensory preferences, learning environment, learning medium and style of teaching.





Preferred learning styles will be individual and possibly unusual. Preferences may change with subject matter.

It is important that materials and activities use different learning styles as these may vary with content of learning as well as from individual to individual.

Information is taken in through different sensory modalities: visual, auditory, touch and movement.

As above, different learners will have preferred modalities; this is particularly so in the context of SpLD, where one sensory pathway may be less effective than others.

It is important that work with those with SpLD employs a multi-sensory approach. This increases the number of learning pathways and reinforces learning through a range of senses.

Type of input needs consideration – spoken; written material; images; diagrams; colour; movement/touch (e.g. keyboard or hands-on doing); discussion (talking and listening).

Physical and Mental Issues

Lack of self-esteem is experienced by many people with SpLD and related conditions such as depression, anxiety and stress disorders can arise.

Allergies, asthma appear to be more common in those with SpLD (hypersensitivity)
The physical effect of coping with additional challenges presented by SpLD will result in increased fatigue – this in turn will have effects on the individual's ability to take in information.

Judging appropriate personal space the reading of body language are frequently areas of difficulty in those with autistic spectrum disorders and inappropriate responses can be mistaken for rudeness or inconsiderateness.





Vision research

Research has been carried out into undetected visual and visual perceptual problems in adults with literacy difficulties. The research is available on [ALO](#).

Free Resources to Support Learning from EduApps

There are a number of free programmes available on the internet to support learning including 'My Study Bar' for supporting literacy. Eight useful software collections that are free for you to download are provided by EduApps available at this [link](#).

