#NoLearnerLeftBehind Handbook

How to support Neurodiverse learners.

A guide to cognition, neurodiversity and the eight key cognitive domains that can unlock learning potential.

Cognassist

Contents

What does it really mean to think differently?

We all have our own perspective on the world. Each of us thinks and learns in our own way.

It's the job of educators to teach people new information, which gives them the skills, knowledge and behaviours they need to succeed.

But how often do we give people the skills, knowledge and behaviour they need to learn this information in the first place?

Neurodiversity is an inclusive term that acknowledges the fact that people with learning difficulties have a unique experience of the world that can bring many benefits. They may struggle in some areas but excel in others.

The diversity of human thinking should be celebrated!

And our education system can do more to support a diverse range of learners who have different cognitive strengths and areas where they may need support.

Identifying how we all think and learn differently to provide tailored support can have a huge impact on our learning potential.

Because many people have hidden learning needs, which can go undetected well into adulthood.

We know that 80 percent of people with dyslexia leave school without a diagnosis[1], which creates unintentional barriers within further education.

Our CEO himself did not get diagnosed with dyslexia until he was at university – well after his formative years.

The lack of early identification and support tools can directly affect learners' confidence and enjoyment of learning.

People can become withdrawn and disengaged from their programme, and it's easy to misinterpret this behaviour and reinforce a bad experience for individuals in education.

Identifying learning needs can be transformative for learners.

And it helps us to become more understanding.

To uncover a different reason for potentially problematic behaviour and find solutions that build a love of learning.

Why does it matter?

Increasing awareness around neurodiversity and the differences in human cognition enables you to accurately tailor support at all levels of post-16 education from day one.

We have found that one in three people are neurodiverse and require support in education – that's roughly 30 percent of the working-age population.

This evidence comes from over 70,000 cognitive assessments with post-16 learners. Cognitive research labs around the world would kill for this size of data set! But does your provision and identification rate reflect this number? Simply relying on learners to self-disclose their needs is not enough.

It risks failing to support individuals until it's too late in their programme which can result in drop outs.

Over the past eight years, around 40 percent of people who started an apprenticeship in the UK did not complete their programme[2]. This is a conservative estimate, based on data from the Department for Education.

We all know that we can and must do more.

Your provisions make the difference between a "good" and "outstanding" Ofsted inspection, between completion and non-completion. And it changes the lives of people who would otherwise have been denied opportunities.

Join us to take a look at a data-driven approach to increasing positive outcomes in education and making sure that no learner is left behind.

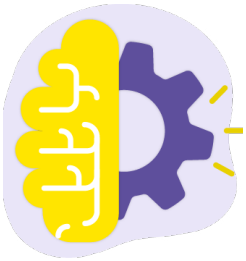
Bring out your inner scientist:

Throughout this guide, you'll get to know more about the cognitive science behind learning and human cognition – no complicated jargon, we promise.

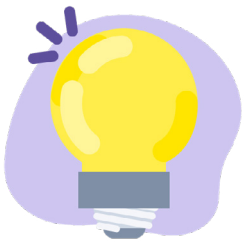
We will give you specific examples of the types of behaviour to look out for, which can relate to learning difficulties. And we will also provide simple and effective tips on how to support neurodiverse learners.

To show how organisations can be part of a knowledge community, focused on evidence-based support that provides learners with skills that go beyond their programme.

So let's take a look at some of the fundamentals...



The wiring of neural pathways is absolutely unique to you.



There is no place in the brain for memory. Memories are encoded in the same pathways used for processing information.

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There are over 1 quadrillion synapses in your brain.

Your brain is almost 3% of your mass.

But it consumes 20% of your energy.

The human brain is the most complex system in the known universe

So how can we possibly understand it?

It's doubtful that you have time in your busy schedule to earn a PhD in psychology, and very few of us enjoy reading dense scientific papers.

We want to make science and the benefits it can bring more accessible to everyone.

Cognitive science is a discipline that studies the mind and the processes in our brain.

Human beings are the most capable and intelligent problem solvers on the planet, and thinking about the mind has been an important philosophical subject within Eastern and Western traditions for thousands of years.

We've come a long way since then, but the puzzle of our consciousness is only beginning to unfold.

We have discovered ways of understanding and measuring how we perceive, process, use and store information.

And this knowledge has provided vital insight into how we all think and learn differently.

Applying this knowledge to education has allowed educators to become more adaptive and provide personalised support based on an individual's level of study and cognitive profile.

Our clients have seen double digit increases in learner attainment and LDD 100% completion rates as a result of adopting this approach for their cohort of learners.

Measuring our cognitive profiles

Cognition is all about how we experience and understand the world around us as individuals.

Currently, the best model of human cognition we have is the Cattell-Horn-Carroll Theory of Cognitive Abilities. It is "the most comprehensive and empirically supported psychometric theory of the structure of cognitive abilities to date."[3]

No cognitive assessment in the world measures the entirety of this model. But nearly all cognitive assessments, including our own, fit within this model and measure across the spectrums of various abilities.

Educational psychologists have used cognitive assessments for decades to help educators and individuals understand our cognitive abilities and what support many of us might need in our learning journey and working lives.

But traditional paper-based assessments are often prohibitively expensive, and access to these assessments is severely lacking in education.

Cognitive assessments measure our abilities in areas such as language, memory, perception and reasoning. It definitely doesn't take a genius to see how profoundly important these abilities are to our learning and why educators would, of course, want this information to hand.

To do this, we use tasks that involve particular cognitive abilities to find out which types of processing are naturally easier or harder for people.

These tasks have been developed and refined in various research settings. There is a huge body of evidence to verify what is being measured within each task.

Our assessment has eight tasks, which measure eight different cognitive domains essential for thinking and learning.

So let's take a closer look...

What are the cognitive domains?

A cognitive domain is simply a system we use to process information.

Some domains are about our ability to process a specific type of information, like written language or numerical concepts. Whereas, other domains are more about how we process that information, such as the speed at which we process information or our ability to ignore irrelevant information.

These cognitive domains exist on many spectrums, and they can relate to broader abilities like memory, visuospatial processing or language and logic.

But each of the domains "represent greater specialisations of abilities, often in quite specific ways that reflect the effects of experience and learning, or the adoption of particular strategies of performance[.]" [4]

Even everyday tasks like catching a train or cooking a meal require multiple domains, all working at the same time.

We are all naturally stronger in some domains than others.

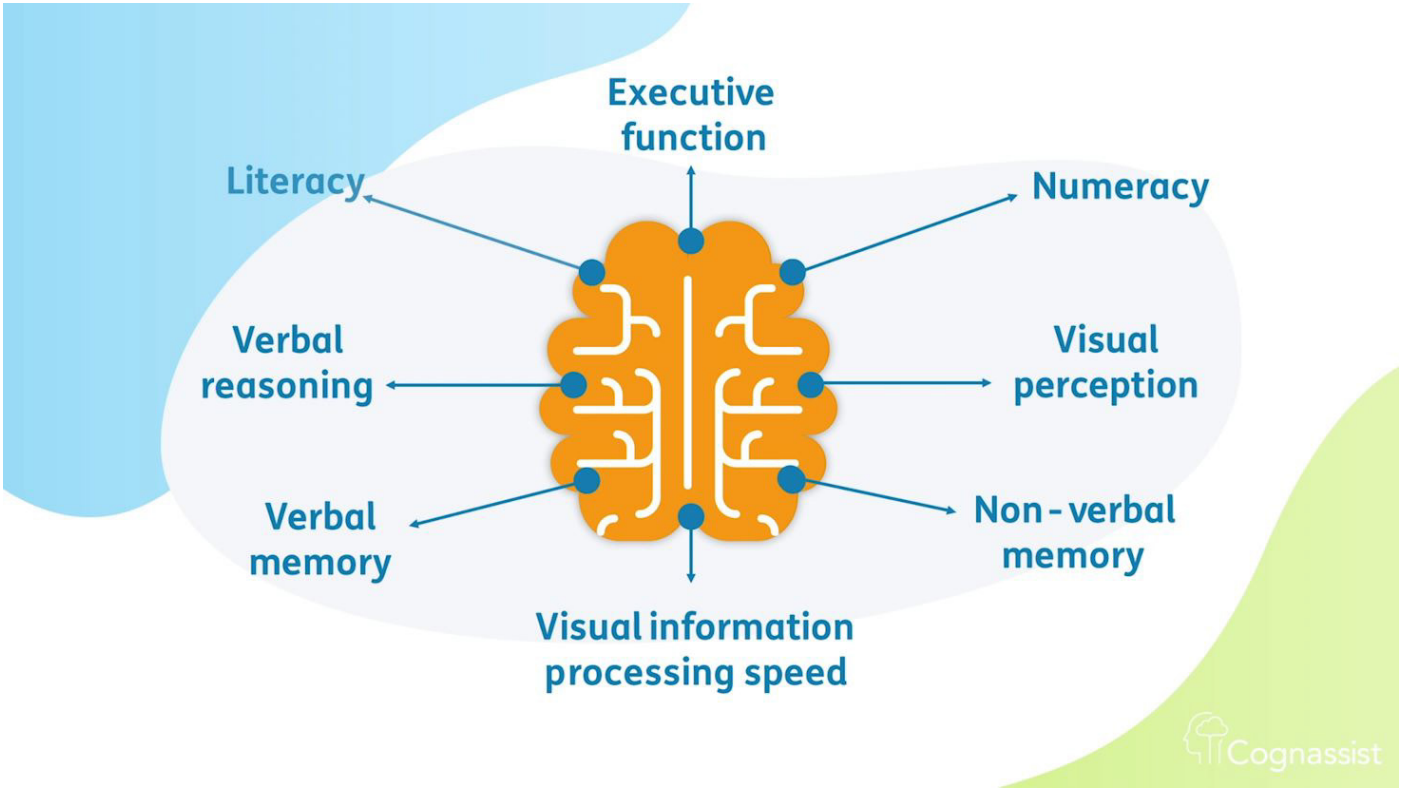
And when we struggle in a specific domain, we can often rely on our strengths in other ones to help us complete tasks that we find more challenging. But because we are all unique, we all face different challenges, and some people face more significant challenges than others.

The more accurately we can recognise and understand the different needs of individuals, the more we can tailor our support, break down the barriers these learners face in education and ensure greater long-term success.

So let's dive a little deeper into the eight key domains.

The eight key domains

Each of these domains represent fundamental processes involved in thinking and learning.



We worked with a team of educational and neuropsychologists to design our assessment around these eight domains, using established tasks developed within the fields of neuropsychology and cognitive science.

This guide will help you discover useful tips to support neurodiverse learners who may experience difficulties in each of these domains.

What can you expect?

1. An explanation of each domain.
2. Common behaviours that may indicate an unmet need in each domain.
3. Top tips for better supporting learners.

Verbal memory

Verbal memory is a type of long-term memory involved in remembering and recalling spoken or written information. It also includes our internal spoken thoughts.

"Although the word long-term frequently carries with it the connotation of days, weeks, months, and years in the clinical literature, long-term storage processes can begin within a few minutes or hours of performing a task."[5]

Difficulties with verbal memory can cause noticeable behaviours, like:

- Having to ask someone to do something more than once.
- Losing concentration during tasks or forgetting what we should be doing.
- Difficulty memorising information or revising.
- Missing appointments or deadlines.
- Finding it hard to answer questions on the spot.
- Feeling easily overwhelmed with too much information.

For organisations that do not have access to cognitive assessments, it helps to look out for these behaviours with new starts.

Try to understand that these types of difficulties can cause a great deal of frustration for learners, which can unfortunately create friction with tutors.

But this behaviour is not always intentional. Providing these learners with a different approach can help them to thrive and overcome certain difficulties.

Our three top tips for supporting a need in verbal memory

#1 Break down tasks and present information in small chunks

When our ability to store information is already at a premium, it can help to be aware of how we present information to learners.

Are we speaking too fast? Do we pause before changing topic? Are we using a lot of text in our presentations or seminars?

Breaking down the information we give to learners and putting larger tasks or topics into smaller chunks helps us to process information more easily – this is especially important for learners who experience difficulties processing verbal information.

#2 Repeat information and summarise content for each topic or skill

Repetition is vital for learning, and some learners may require more attempts to complete or remember a task. We all learn at our own pace, and it's important to make sure each learner has a functional grasp of information before moving on.

Try going through the steps of a task more than once before asking learners to do it themselves.

Summarise content at the end of each topic or lesson to drive further comprehension.

Giving learners every opportunity to retain information really helps, and our patience will go a long way to improving their confidence and skills.

#3 Provide supporting visual cues, directions or instructions

When we find it difficult to process verbal information, it makes sense to rely on visual abilities that we may be stronger in.

Try showing a learner the step-by-step process for tasks in advance or show them what the end result should look like for reference.

Related diagrams and pictures can also reinforce written or spoken information, but they should be related – so take it easy on the memes and cat photos!

Just because these tips feel like small adjustments, which can be easily forgotten, doesn't mean they can't have a big impact on learners.

Often, tutors will make adjustments like this anyway, but it helps to understand why they matter and look out for learners who may benefit from these strategies more than others.

Non-Verbal memory

This domain encompasses our ability to remember visual information. For example, recognising body language, facial expressions, recall of events and sense of direction.

We all recognise the terms short-term and long-term memory, but not all of us may realise that we actually have different domains for remembering different types of information.

"Visual processing is the ability to generate, perceive, analyse, synthesise, store, retrieve, manipulate, transform, and think with visual patterns and stimuli, or more succinctly, "the ability to make use of simulated mental imagery to solve problems" (Schneider & McGrew, 2012, p. 129)."[6]

Difficulties with non-verbal memory can cause noticeable behaviours, like:

- Finding it hard to understand and visualise abstract concepts.
- Being less likely to remember how to do tasks we've already completed once.
- Navigating new situations, especially with unfamiliar people, can be distressing or cause anxiety.
- If a meeting or lesson location is changed, we may have difficulty finding the new location or may not turn up.

It is crucial to identify what support learners will need as early in their programme as possible. We recommend doing this as part of the onboarding process.

Something as simple as a conversation with the learner can help us to discover if they have had any previous support in school or feel like they struggle with certain things.

Our best advice: get to know your learners from day one. You don't want to risk leaving it too late to provide vital support.

Our three top tips for supporting a need in non-verbal memory

#1 simplify abstract concepts and relate them to real-world scenarios

Some of the skills, knowledge and behaviours related to a learner's programme may be more abstract than others and require further explanation.

For example, in customer-facing and team roles, empathy is very important for interpersonal skills. But empathy is a complex concept that involves different behaviours. Some learners may struggle to visualise how this concept relates to their job role.

In this example, tutors could use a customer or HR complaint as a real-world scenario to show how someone can be more empathetic: by listening to the complaint without interruption or asking the learner to think how they would feel if they were the customer.

Anything you can do to help the learner visualise concepts and relate them to their role will help to reinforce the knowledge they learn and how they can directly use it in their job.

#2 Use a consistent visual structure

When designing presentations, worksheets or other visual material, it can help to create a consistent layout.

Using bullet points to emphasise points, changing the font size or highlighting the main points in bold. Perhaps even using a colour coding system – but keep it simple.

Whatever design or visual cues we use, creating consistency helps mitigate some difficulties learners may have when processing visual information.

With time, learners will come to know and intuitively understand this visual structure, meaning they can spend less time and energy trying to process visual information and can focus on the content they need to learn instead.

#3 Clearly outline learning objectives or aims

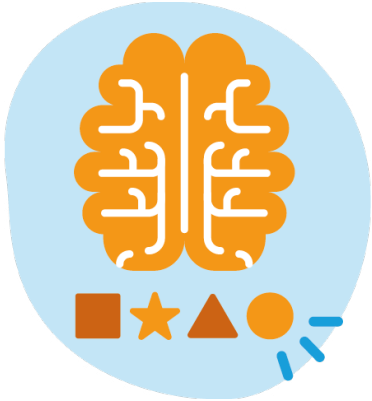
Providing learners with clearly outlined verbal aims can help people visualise expected outcomes and decide whether they have met these aims.

Providers may even make a list for each of the skills, knowledge and behaviours learners should gain throughout their programme.

Providing weekly or monthly aims can help people visualise what they need to be doing.

If someone is struggling more than their peers, try giving specific actions to take in each lesson or assignment, and ask them if there are any terms or tasks they don't understand.

Any steps we can take to aid comprehension and increase learners' success on programme will make a big difference. Many tutors will naturally adapt to different learners, but having reliable processes and practices in place ensures all tutors can use a standard structure that is more inclusive.



Verbal reasoning

Our ability to reason and use logic is something all of us rely on to learn new skills and understand information.

Verbal reasoning is about taking the information we learn to form conclusions or ideas.

"These mental operations may include forming and recognising concepts, perceiving relationships among patterns, drawing inferences, comprehending implications, problem solving, extrapolating, and reorganising or transforming information."[7]

All vital processes for effective learning.

Difficulties with verbal reasoning can cause noticeable behaviours, like:

- Difficulty applying skills that we have learned to situations in a different context.
- Being slower to use our knowledge to solve new problems.
- Feeling unsure how to apply and use new information.
- Being less able to predict future consequences of our current actions.

Our three top tips for supporting a need in verbal reasoning

#1 Connect new topics to prior learning

Connecting new subjects to prior learning and how each topic relates can help learners to form concepts and relationships within the course material more easily. It's a good way to reinforce learning.

It helps learners build a more conceptual understanding of their chosen area of study and extrapolate their own ideas and build a comprehensive knowledge base.

#2 Repeat information but rephrase it slightly differently each time

Even just one word can change how people interpret what we say – this is just a fact of human interaction.

Learning information is always a process. Very few of us will understand something the first time around, and often explaining it in a different way is what finally makes it all click into place and the problem becomes clear.

#3 Discuss similarities and differences between concepts

Verbal reasoning relates to our conceptual understanding of the world, so exploring similarities and differences encourages thinking at a more abstract and theoretical level, than a shallower and surface level.

Trying this tip can help learners to think logically about certain topics. And asking learners to identify these similarities and differences can inspire a deeper working understanding of their chosen field.

You might be starting to see that each of these domains are quite closely related to each other, which is certainly true. But they can and should be measured separately.

"[D]ifferent [cognitive] abilities do not reflect completely independent (uncorrelated or orthogonal) traits. However, they can, as is evident from the vast body of literature that supports their existence, be reliably distinguished from one another and therefore represent unique, albeit related, abilities (see Keith & Reynolds, 2012)."[8]

As we mentioned previously, we never use just one domain for everyday task, so it makes sense that these domains can work in similar ways to be able to function at the same time. And all this goes on in our brain without us even knowing it!

In fact, most of the processing in our brain is beyond our conscious control.

Just like an algorithm in our web browser that brings up suggestions for related searches – most people have no idea how they work, but we still see the "If you like this, then you may like..." results appear.

And because much of our information processing is unconscious, we often don't notice the impact it has on our abilities to navigate education or working environments.

Someone can be perfectly capable of performing well at work but struggle within the education environment.

Which leads people to think they're bad at learning.

But this doesn't reflect what we know about the brain. We learn new information every day of our lives, whether we realise it or not.

Historically, education has taken a one size fits all approach to learning, and those of us who struggle in the traditional classroom setting have been left behind.

That's why flexibility is key, and the education sector as a whole is acknowledging that support provisions are a core part of ensuring quality education.

Executive function

Executive function covers a range of processes that allow us to perform some of our more complex cognitive tasks, like maintaining concentration, reasoning and analysis and multitasking.

These are clearly vital skills for learning and work.

Difficulties with executive function can cause noticeable behaviours, like:

- Consistent trouble focusing attention.
- Difficulty identifying and communicating exactly what it is about a subject or learning in general that we struggle with.
- Being easily distracted.
- Problems with prioritising or working to multiple deadlines.

Our top three tips for supporting a need in executive function

#1 Make a checklist

This can be a great way for learners to visualise a task from start to finish, which helps them to maintain their attention on a task and see it through until the end.

It also breaks it down and helps learners to analyse the task and potentially see where they may have missed a step.

#2 Set realistic goals

The key to setting powerful goals is to try to be realistic and clear. Goals are there to inspire learners, but we can find ways to make them more achievable.

If someone can't see how they're going to achieve a goal, they run the risk of being unable to complete it, which defeats the purpose of setting goals in the first place.

It can help to make sub-goals, which create more manageable steps and improves learners' ability to visualise how they will achieve longer-term goals and success.

#3 Practice ways of focusing attention

There are many small ways in which we can remove distractions and improve our attention. This can include working in a quiet room, simply pausing to take a deep breath or a short break, meditating for 10 minutes a day or focusing on one task at a time.

There is an increasing body of scientific evidence to suggest that mindful mediation reduces stress, anxiety and depression, as well as increasing people's memory and some cognitive skills.

Another handy trick that we can all use but is particularly useful for people who may need support with their executive function is to try out social media restriction apps, which prevent us from accessing our preferred social media platforms within stated hours.

Encouraging learners in these activities are likely to be more effective than telling people to just "pay attention."

Literacy

Literacy doesn't just refer to our reading or spelling skills. It encompasses everything we perceive about language, including:

- Vocabulary.
- Language processing power and speed.
- Reading fluency and comprehension.
- Spatial perception – listening and speaking.
- Understanding and following instructions.
- Discussing and explaining ideas with clarity.
- Spelling and grammar.

All job roles, coursework and assessment types will have some form of language element.

Having an unidentified need in literacy can undoubtedly make learning and employment more challenging.

Difficulties with literacy can cause noticeable behaviours, like:

- Having a more limited vocabulary.
- Being less willing to participate in group conversations.
- Trouble following instructions, especially if they involve technical or obscure terms.
- Glossing over words we don't know, rather than looking it up to increase our vocabulary.

Our three top tips for supporting a need in literacy

#1 Provide a glossary of terms

Every discipline has its own terminology.

To help learners who may struggle with some of the vocabulary used in their programme and facilitate their immersion in the course, it can help to have reference materials like a glossary of terms to improve comprehension.

#2 Support learners in their writing tasks

This can mean setting out clear aims for each task, discussing the aims and listening to the learner's ideas to encourage their work in the right direction.

Individuals who struggle with literacy can get lost when they're writing, so having these clear aims can help them to have a coherent plan for their writing.

It's also possible to encourage this with useful tools, like mind mapping software or double-spaced Word templates.

#3 Keep internal emails short and to the point

It can be easy to send an email to a learner or colleague that unintentionally bombards them with written information.

Enrolment information or introducing new company policy can be notoriously dense documents.

Giving individuals who struggle with their literacy extra support and time to respond to such information is important. But it also helps to keep the information as concise and accessible as possible.

Numeracy

Like literacy, our numeracy skills often get reduced down to our ability to do sums in our head and wondering why we studied algebra at school when we never use it.

Numeracy is, however, very useful throughout our lives.

It encompasses everything we perceive about numerical information, including:

- Recognising patterns.
- Making decisions based on weighing risks.
- Ranking information.
- Ratios and numerical comparisons.
- Scoring metrics.
- Timekeeping and time management.
- Finance and spending.

Numeracy informs some of the fundamental skills of working life.

Difficulties with numeracy can cause noticeable behaviours, like:

- Feeling anxious about mathematical topics and avoiding these subjects.
- Being consistently late for lessons or meetings – poor time management skills.
- Difficulty understanding the connections between related mathematical concepts, like fractions, percentages and proportions.
- Going into panic mode when confronted with data, excel documents and budgeting.

Our three top tips for supporting a need in numeracy

#1 Prioritise tasks in advance

It can benefit learners to prioritise their work in advance with the help of tutors or course leaders, so they have an idea of which of their daily tasks will take precedent over others. They could also be given reference materials to reinforce this, if necessary.

#2 Use diaries and schedule reminders

Learners may find it helpful to use a diary to write down all appointments and deadlines, with progress reminders to help them manage their time. Alternately, they could use the calendar on their phone or laptop. It can also help for tutors to remind learners of any appointments and check-in on their progress targets.

#3 Discuss numerical concepts with real-world examples

Whether it's with a physical object or real-life scenario, it can be useful to explain and ground abstract mathematical concepts in different ways that may be easier to process. Visual cues like graphs and diagrams can also aid a learner's comprehension.

Visual perception

Our visual perception allows us to organise information we're seeing and interpret it accurately.

It involves things like hand/eye coordination, copying information and mental visualisation. "The ability to perceive complex patterns and mentally simulate how they might look when transformed[.]"[9]

Our visual perception can also affect our non-verbal memory, as the information we see, however we interpret it, is then committed to memory.

A learner can have 20/20 vision and still experience difficulties processing visual information because it's about how our brain processes the information, rather than our eyes.

Difficulties with visual perception can cause noticeable behaviours, like:

- Copying visual information incorrectly.
- Unable to solve visual problems or accurately repeat tasks that have been demonstrated.
- Less likely to be able to visualise ourselves completing tasks, learning new skills or achieving certain goals.

Our three top tips for supporting a need in visual perception

#1 Review work and notes with learners

One-to-one support with tutors is really important to help learners feel supported throughout education. When learners are more likely to make mistakes when copying notes, it can help for tutors to scan through a learner's notes and help to identify where they have made mistakes.

We recommend first asking the learner if they feel comfortable with someone checking over their notes before getting into the regular discussion, as some learners may find it patronising if they're required to show personal notes to their tutor.

But it can be a great starting point to discuss where learners might be struggling and have constructive discussions that give learners a better understanding of the skills, knowledge and behaviours they need to succeed.

Rather than pointing out mistakes or missing information directly, it helps to ask learners if they can identify the mistake themselves first and, if not, discuss what it might be, using logic-based reasoning until they can think of the right answer.

It's not a test to see how much they've written down or remembered, but it's another way for tutors to understand the progress of individual learners and build a more personalised learning journey.

#2 Avoid presenting too much visual information

This is a common trait of tutors, and it's not necessarily their fault. There is a perception that it's better to over-prepare and provide learners with pages and pages of material, simply hoping some of it will stick.

And in fact, it's a human trait. Give us a blank page, and we want to fill it.

But nobody likes having huge amounts of information thrown their way. Often, we don't realise that we're only supposed to look at some of it, not all of it, which can have the opposite effect we intend and makes learning quite a demoralising process.

Keeping visual information paired back to the essentials, in everything from lesson planning to final presentations, provides less visual strain for learners who have visual perception difficulties.

Don't fill the page, and not only will learners be more likely to perceive and remember key information but so will tutors, making them more efficient and effective in their role.

#3 Encourage discussions

Discussing visual problems or tasks together or in small groups allows for learners to ask questions and also receive verbal explanations for visual problems they may otherwise struggle with.

Our brains make assumptions all the time, and we don't know when we're making mistakes – otherwise we wouldn't let ourselves make them in the first place. Discussions help learners to see something from different perspectives and recognise and question their own assumptions.

The more discussions included in learning, the more comfortable learners become talking about what they don't understand and asking questions with their peers. I think we all accept that tutors are just one part of the process of learning and giving learners more than one perspective on different topics and tasks can aid better comprehension.

Visual information processing speed

The speed at which we can process information is obviously hugely relevant in learning settings when time with tutors and the programme curriculum are structured to specific timeframes.

""Many cognitive activities require a person's deliberate efforts and people are limited in the amount of effort they can allocate. In the face of limited processing resources, the speed of processing is critical because it determines in part how rapidly limited resources can be reallocated to other cognitive tasks" (Kail, 1991, p. 492)."[10]

Difficulties with visual information processing speed can cause noticeable behaviours, like:

- Problem with writing notes and listening at the same time.
- Slowed reactions to new information or sudden changes.
- Feeling anxious and overwhelmed about completing short-notice projects.
- Difficulty having conversations or responding to direct correspondences.

Our three top tips for supporting a need in visual information processing speed

#1 Extra time

Educators are well aware that some learners may require more time to process information and complete tasks throughout their learning and during assessment.

This is why extra time is a crucial reasonable adjustment for people who experience difficulties processing visual information – it's not just a nice-to-have but a necessity.

However, it's all too easy to use extra time as a catch-all support tool when we're unsure what other options are available. Ask learners if the extra time is definitely helping and try out relevant alternatives – the learner may just be worried they won't receive any support if they say extra time isn't working for them.

For a list of appropriate reasonable adjustments, there's a handy resource available – The End-point Assessment Reasonable Adjustments Guidance[11]. This matrix, published on the Institute for Apprenticeships & Technical Education website, is full of specific reasonable adjustments depending on learners' needs.

#2 Suggest reading scribe or audio notetaking software

Using text-to-speech and notetaking software can make learning and concentrating in a classroom setting much easier for some learners. It allows them to review the information and make notes in their own time, preventing cognitive overload.

If learners feel overwhelmed, the most likely outcome is that they will stop paying attention altogether, which, while frustrating for tutors, can be avoided with the right support.

Even without some of the sophisticated software options available, getting learners to simply record the lesson on their phone can help. If their recording has no video, it's a helpful tip to say out loud when you are switching slides or referring to specific visual resources or handouts – this way the learner won't get lost when they review the recording later.

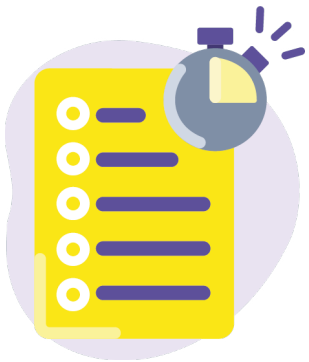
#3 Provide slides or visual information in advance

This is another simple but incredibly effective tip.

It allows learners to see what they will be working on and get a head start for a specific topic or lesson. Preparation never goes to waste. It's how tutors approach each lesson, so passing on some of these planning skills and pre-prepared materials to learners can reduce the strain of having slower information processing speed and give them more confidence. We all experience some form of difficulty or anxiety in education and work – that's just the reality of being human.

But for people who experience more significant difficulties, it can have a greater impact on their lives and can put many people at a disadvantage.

It's our responsibility to remove that disadvantage and level the playing field to give everyone an equal opportunity of success.



Embracing Neurodiversity

This whole handbook is full of simple ideas on how to make learning environments more flexible and give learners every opportunity to learn effectively.

Choose one, two, five or ten these tips that you think could be useful and try applying them in your planning or one to ones with learners.

Getting to know your learners is a process, and hopefully this helps you to get there quicker.

Understanding the cognitive diversity of people and how we can help each individual to thrive in their learning environment builds a genuinely personalised approach to learning.

One that identifies each learners' strengths and needs to help every learner reach their full potential.

More and more, the business world understands that neurodiversity can be an advantage within teams. Just because someone experiences difficulties within certain cognitive domains, doesn't mean they are less capable of completing their programme or becoming a valuable employee.

Our CEO is dyslexic and runs four companies – there shouldn't be any limit on what people with learning difficulties can achieve.

One thing that's important to acknowledge is we've talked a lot about how you can support learners, but these strategies and cognitive domains apply to everyone. Think about yourself and your colleagues.

What can you do to support your team and the staff that work directly with learners?

The journey to embracing neurodiversity is one we take together.

Identifying the things that you struggle with and the coping mechanisms you use in your daily life can help to start the conversations with learners around their support needs without making them feel uncomfortable.

We will continue to work alongside some incredible industry professionals and scientific minds to help change the way we educate and increase the level of insight our cognition technology provides as the science itself progresses.

To help growing numbers of educators level up their organisation, improve learner achievement and break down barriers in education.

To make sure no learner is left behind.

About Cognassist

Cognassist is a unique #edtech SaaS platform identifies hidden learning needs, personalises support and transforms learner attainment.

Digital cognitive assessments

Identify individual learning needs in 30 minutes with our award-winning neurodiversity tech. Double retention rates, improve Ofsted compliance and access funding streams faster.

Personalised learner journeys

Provide essential support to every learner with over 500 media-rich learning strategies. Improve learner success rates and increase attainment.

Neurodiversity training

Join over 5,000 fully trained learning specialists. Transform success and retention rates with the latest neurodiversity training.

We want to teach you Neurodiversity for FREE

Our Neurodiversity Masterclass brings together the best minds in cognition and education so that you can fully support your learners and empower your organisation to succeed.

Our masterclass series is designed to give you the tools you need to drive positive change.

The course is 100% free and available to anyone online. Complete all 6 seminars and you'll get an accredited qualification in neurodiversity, endorsed by international charity NCFE.

ncfe. Endorsed Programmes

Neurodiversity Masterclass

Cognassist Accredited

Register now

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