

# GUIDE TO IDENTIFYING AND SUPPORTING LEARNING CHALLENGES



OULU



## READING AND WRITING CHALLENGES

### HOW MIGHT IT APPEAR?

- Reading and writing may be slow and inaccurate.
- It may be difficult to distinguish similar-sounding sounds.
- Similar-looking words may get mixed up.

### HOW TO IDENTIFY?

- The student does not understand what they have read.
- Spelling mistakes occur frequently.
- Following lines of text can be difficult.
- The student may find it hard to interpret, for example, map images.

### HOW TO SUPPORT?

- Use varied teaching methods and take a multi-sensory approach.
- Use clear keywords and model examples.
- Use audiobooks and audio files.
- Provide ready-made notes and easy-to-read texts.
- Offer study aids (e.g., a reading ruler, coloured overlays).
- Allow time for working with text and make sure the student understands the task instructions.

## MATHEMATICAL LEARNING DIFFICULTIES

### HOW MIGHT IT APPEAR?

- Difficulty remembering calculation rules by heart.
- Calculations are slow and error-prone.
- Difficulty recognising number sequences and putting numbers in order.
- Difficulty understanding and applying mathematical concepts.

### HOW TO IDENTIFY?

- Solving tasks takes significantly more time.
- Numbers are missing from calculations or swap places.
- Numbers are written incorrectly.
- The student becomes frustrated quickly when working on tasks.

### HOW TO SUPPORT?

- Use concrete examples, figures, and diagrams.
- Teach memory strategies and provide checklists to support calculation.
- Model how to solve tasks step by step.
- Encourage the student to use notes, images, and diagrams to structure key ideas.
- Use varied teaching methods (e.g., visualisation, inquiry-based work, gamification).
- Use instructional videos as part of teaching.

## CONCENTRATION AND ATTENTION CHALLENGES

### HOW MIGHT IT APPEAR?

- Restlessness, difficulties concentrating, forgetfulness, impulsivity.
- Makes sustained work more difficult and slows down learning new things.
- Difficulty managing, planning and following through on one's own tasks.

### HOW TO IDENTIFY?

- Restlessness during lessons, difficulty maintaining attention on what is being studied.
- Losing belongings.
- Forgetting instructions, exams, or important dates.
- Tasks are left unfinished and submissions are delayed.

### HOW TO SUPPORT?

- Create a clear structure for lessons.
- Break tasks into smaller parts and give clear, step-by-step instructions.
- Consider the student's workstation.
- Schedule tasks and build in breaks. Focus on one thing at a time.
- Use time management tools (e.g., a timer, reminders, calendar planning).
- Make use of sensory supports, for example listening to music, earplugs, desk screens, or other learning aids.

## EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING DIFFICULTIES

### HOW MIGHT IT APPEAR?

- Planning and completing tasks is difficult without guidance.
- Problems with time management.
- Difficulty remembering instructions and different stages of tasks.

### HOW TO IDENTIFY?

- Difficulty starting and planning tasks, getting stuck, difficulty estimating the time needed.
- The student finds it hard to progress through tasks logically.
- Being late, time management problems.

### HOW TO SUPPORT?

- Set clear time limits for completing tasks.
- Use clear instructions and a clear task order. Use visual support.
- Present the course unit content and required tasks with dates.
- Encourage the student to use task lists and daily plans.
- Use modelling: show the student how to structure tasks.
- Break lessons into smaller sections.

## ANXIETY AND NERVOUSNESS

### HOW MIGHT IT APPEAR?

- Avoidance, fear of social situations, panic-like reactions, physical and psychological symptoms, fearfulness, and freezing.
- Starting and completing tasks may be difficult.

### HOW TO IDENTIFY?

- Avoidance behaviour (pair and group work, performance situations, social relationships).
- Disruptive test anxiety.
- Many absences, physical, emotional, and psychological signs.
- Weaker learning outcomes in exams and other assessment situations.

### HOW TO SUPPORT?

- Create an encouraging, safe learning environment where mistakes are allowed.
- Anticipate stressful situations and give early notice of performance and assessment situations.
- Offer alternative ways to complete tasks (e.g., individual presentation, written response, smaller group).
- Help the student set realistic goals and break tasks into parts.
- If needed, provide an alternative space to take an exam or complete a task.
- Give encouraging, concrete feedback and highlight even small successes.

# SUPPORT MEASURES FOR LEARNING CHALLENGES

## READING AND WRITING CHALLENGES



- ✓ Use varied teaching methods and take a multi-sensory approach.
- ✓ Use clear keywords and model examples.
- ✓ Use audiobooks and audio files.
- ✓ Provide ready-made notes and easy-to-read texts.
- ✓ Offer study aids (e.g., a reading ruler, coloured overlays).
- ✓ Allow time for working with text and make sure the student understands the task instructions.

## CONCENTRATION AND ATTENTION CHALLENGES



- ✓ Create a clear structure for lessons.
- ✓ Break tasks into smaller parts and give clear, step-by-step instructions.
- ✓ Consider the place where the student is sitting in the classroom.
- ✓ Schedule tasks and build in breaks. Focus on one thing at a time.
- ✓ Use time management tools (e.g., a timer, reminders, calendar planning).
- ✓ Make use of sensory supports, for example listening to music, earplugs, desk screens, or other learning aids.

## EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING DIFFICULTIES



- ✓ Set clear time limits for completing tasks.
- ✓ Use clear instructions and a clear task order. Use visual support.
- ✓ Present the course unit content and required tasks with dates.
- ✓ Encourage the student to use task lists and daily plans.
- ✓ Use modelling: show the student how to structure tasks.
- ✓ Break lessons into smaller sections.

## MATHEMATICAL LEARNING DIFFICULTIES 123

- ✓ Use concrete examples, figures, and diagrams.
- ✓ Teach memory strategies and provide checklists to support calculation.
- ✓ Model how to solve tasks step by step.
- ✓ Encourage the student to use notes, images, and diagrams to structure key ideas.
- ✓ Use varied teaching methods (e.g., visualisation, inquiry-based work, gamification).
- ✓ Use instructional videos as part of teaching.

## ANXIETY AND NERVOUSNESS



- ✓ Create an encouraging, safe learning environment where mistakes are allowed.
- ✓ Anticipate stressful situations and give early notice of performance and assessment situations.
- ✓ Offer alternative ways to complete tasks (e.g., individual presentation, written response, smaller group).
- ✓ Help the student set realistic goals and break tasks into parts.
- ✓ If needed, provide an alternative space to take an exam or complete a task.
- ✓ Give encouraging, concrete feedback and highlight even small successes.