

# Additional Learning Needs and Further Education Awareness Training

## Sections

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## Introduction

New legislation has been introduced. The Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 ensures that all learners (aged 0-25) with ALN are supported to overcome barriers to learning and achieve their full potential.

## key points of the ALNET Act.

### Inclusive -

The Welsh Government is committed to creating a fully inclusive education system, where all learners are inspired, motivated and supported to reach their potential.

### Collaboration -

An ALN system where learners, parents, education, health and government work collaboratively.

Person-centred planning should ensure educational provision is tailored to the learner's needs.

## Timely -

An ALN system focused on ensuring needs are identified early and the right provision is put in place promptly.

## Training -

To assist all professionals to fully understand and engage in the new system; with significant investment in awareness raising, training and personal development.

## A person has Additional Learning Needs if they have a:

learning difficulty or disability which calls for additional learning provision.  
significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age.  
disability that prevents or hinders them from making use of facilities for education or training of a kind generally provided for others of the same age, in a mainstream setting.

## Additional learning needs (ALN) include those who:

- May have specific learning difficulties such as Dyslexia, ADHD, Autism.
- May have a physical or sensory disability such as hearing or sight impairment; mobility difficulties.
- May have medical needs which affect access to the educational programme.

Approximately 20% of learners in Wales between the ages of 0-25 years have additional learning needs.

Research Briefing Additional Learning Needs (ALN) in Wales  
Michael Dauncey 2016

- ALN stands for Additional Learning Needs
- ALN does include some learners with disabilities e.g. visual impairments however, some disabilities do not affect learning e.g. Respiratory illnesses.
- Often simple strategies can allow those learners with ALN to reach potential.
- Only some learners with ALN will have processing difficulties and may benefit from extra time to process information.
- Some learners with ALN will need support when working or prefer to work in groups, others prefer to work independently and develop effective use of strategies to enable independent working.
- Statistics show that learners with ALN are more likely to have mental health difficulties.

## Treating everyone fairly

- We are all unique and diverse in the way that we think and act.
- We should embrace the diversity of young people with ALN and the strengths they have.
- The Equality Act 2010 protects equality and diversity in our society.

Definition of disability under the Equality Act 2010: a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on the ability to do normal daily activities.

## Equality Act 2010

## Barriers within society

## Listen to what Lucy has to say

### Question

An example of a barrier in society is stairs leading into buildings.  
Which would be the better solution?

- A specialist ramp for a wheelchair user.
- Removing the stairs and replacing with a ramp for all to use.
- They find an alternative building with better access

The better solution is - Removing the stairs and replacing with a ramp for all to use.

A ramp for all promotes inclusion and prevents society from emphasising disabilities and provides a more equal opportunity. They are entering the building the same way as everyone else.

## Question

An example of a barrier in society is transport. Which would be the better solution?

- Specialist transport is provided for a wheelchair user.
- Mainstream transport and infrastructure is made accessible for everyone.

The better solution is

Mainstream transport and infrastructure is made accessible for everyone.

Accessible transport for everyone promotes inclusion and prevents society from emphasising disabilities and provides a more equal opportunity. They are travelling the same way and with everyone else.

## Question

An example of a barrier in society is printed leaflets.

Which would be the better solution?

- Offering the information in a range of formats, electronically, in pictures, etc
- Reading the information aloud to a learner

The better solution is

Offering the information in a range of formats, electronically, in pictures, etc

This promotes independence, inclusion and prevents society from emphasising disabilities offering a more equal opportunity. They can zoom in on text, use reading software, change colour etc

## Gemma's story

Gemma is a first year photography student, She is a wheelchair user.

*'Hi I'm Gemma and I'm going to start studying media at college. I have received my timetable and some of my classes are scheduled early and in rooms quite far away from the entrance.*

*As a wheelchair user I will have to arrive extra early which affects the bus I can take and I will have to use the lift to get to some rooms.*

*I wouldn't mind so much but it means I can't travel with my friends. It stresses me out a bit and means I can't get back quickly to the central area for breaks. I'm going to have a chat with my dad about it.'*

*'Hi, I'm Gemma's dad. She has been a bit anxious over the last week. I wasn't sure why, I just thought she was a bit nervous about going to College.*

*I had a chat with her. She explained about her timetable and her concerns about getting to College.*

*She just wants to fit in and concentrate on her studies.*

*She is looking forward to starting her course, meeting her tutors and wants to participate fully in the course - like any student.*

*I've decided to give the college a ring and speak to the tutor to get some advice to reassure Gemma.'*

*'Hi I'm Mark, Gemma's tutor.*

*I have had a call from her Dad and he has explained the situation and asked for my advice.*

*I told him I understood his concerns and that I will support her in the classroom.*

*Now I am aware of Gemma's ALN I will discuss her with my manager and we can look at the timetable.'*

*'Hi Gemma again, I've just had a great phone call with Mark at college and he explained that they had a meeting.*

*They came up with great ideas on my early starts that will save me 15 minutes and I can catch the bus with my friends.*

*My timetable has been rescheduled so all my lessons are on the ground floor.*

*They have invited me into the college with my dad next week for a chat and they are going to discuss other ways they can support me.'*

## Understanding anxiety and the impact on learning

Anxiety can create a sense of unease or fear. It can be a normal reaction to unusual or stressful situations but can often, if not recognised and tackled, develop into a serious well-being issue.

### Signs and symptoms

Anxiety in learning situations can inhibit a student's participation and development. It can lead to disruptive behaviour, physical symptoms including nausea and palpitations and a lack of engagement.

## Prevalence

It is becoming increasingly prevalent in the student population and studies have shown that up to 1 in 5 young people may suffer from anxiety.

## Increased risk

There is an increased risk when an individual is vulnerable and may be being exposed to inappropriate social media, cyber bullying or isolation.

## Anxiety and ALN

The additional challenges faced by young people with ALN can heighten their anxiety.

## Top tips

By applying many of the strategies suggested in this training, we are all able to reduce the likelihood of anxiety.

## What to look for:

- Excessive tiredness;
- Lack of concentration;
- Irritability;
- Loss of self-confidence;
- A change in behaviour;
- Seems worried;
- Easily upset;

## What to do:

- Know your students
- Talk to them
- Listen to them
- Take reasonable steps to adjust the learning environment
- Seek advice

Well done, you've completed this section

## Inclusive Classrooms

Inclusive classrooms allow learners to learn together in a suitable environment, with relevant resources and strategies to enable learners to reach their potential.

## Neuro-diversity

- We are all neuro-diverse. It is what makes us individuals.
- It affects many aspects of our lives, how we see things, interpret and interact with the world around us.
- It can impact on the way we learn, our style of learning and what we learn.

## Identifying signs of learning difficulties

- Some learners may be aware they have a learning difficulty and disclose the information.
- Others may not want to disclose the information.
- Some learners may not be aware they have a learning difficulty.

## Learning Difficulties

Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD) affect one or more specific areas of learning.

They can appear across a range of ability and with varying severity.

They are lifelong conditions. SpLD are unique to each individual. The impact can be influenced by: how long they have been diagnosed, strategies that they already use, and the support they have had.

They may experience one or more of the following difficulties:

- Time management
- Planning and organising themselves or their work
- Writing concisely and fluently
- Speed and legibility of handwriting
- Understanding information when reading
- Scanning and skimming written information
- Retaining and interpreting oral instructions
- Formulating and retaining ideas
- Proof-reading
- Sentence structure / grammar / punctuation
- Summarising from source material / paraphrasing
- Taking notes from information
- Maintaining focus
- Processing time



## The Inclusive classroom

To ensure the classroom is inclusive, there are a number of strategies that can be used, which are examples of good teaching practice to support all learners.

### Explain the big picture

Give a clear outline of the outcome of the lesson

Provide an example of what a 'good one looks like'

Provide real life examples

### Giving instructions

Use short clear instructions

Give step-by-step instructions

Keep instructions visible

Check for understanding by asking the learner to repeat back instructions

Allow learners to voice record/photograph information/instructions where appropriate (with permission)

### Processing information

Give one instruction at a time

Give 'thinking time' when asking a question/ giving information

Provide silent rehearsal time if answering a question

Make presentations and handouts available before the lesson

Provide tasks in writing

### Make learning multi-sensory

The more senses used the deeper the memory trace

Use pictures/videos/animation

Diagrams

Mind maps

Practical tasks

Handling objects

Moving and doing rather than sitting

Check for understanding using a range of assessment techniques

## Writing

Use a clear layout

Use an accessible text

Use bullet points and good spacing

Shorter well-spaced paragraphs

Simplified grammar

Identify the important words in the task

## Scaffolding

Work alongside learners at first and then gradually withdraw as confidence grows

Learners finish a task that has already been part done for them

Divide work into boxes with headings

Provide a framework or grid to input answers

Provide appropriate vocabulary

Provide sentence/paragraph starter

Pair /share tasks - learners tell each other what they intend to write

Provide an example of outcome/output

## Reading

Use a ruler for tracking when reading

Display key words in the classroom

Teach the meaning

Provide a visual reminder

Use text to speech technology

## Study skills

Note-taking strategies

Practice skimming and scanning techniques

Encourage the highlighting of key words

Use of technology to support planning

Use of technology to develop better use of vocabulary, spelling and grammar

## Organisational skills

Use a calendar as a

reminder /prompt

Explicit instructions of how to organise folders/files

Facilitating target setting and achievement

## Questioning technique

Repeat the learner's answer adding more detail

Prepare brief written points for answering a question

Explain new vocabulary used with examples

Avoid metaphors and idioms

Ask open ended questions 'How does this work?'

## Review, evaluate, develop

Develop your resources and procedures

Evaluate readability and inclusivity

Practise and develop your resources and procedures

Share with colleagues

## Lucy's story

Let's listen to Lucy talk about her experience at college and then listen to Jan, Lucy's personal tutor and Dave the ALN lecturer .

*'At college you are expected to organise yourself, which can be difficult for me with Autism.*

*Unlike at school, lessons aren't at consistent times and some lessons last longer than others.*

*Break and lunch aren't written onto the timetable and so I have to remember to eat. Tutors give me homework but remembering to do it can be difficult. I also have no uniform but must remember to wear my student ID pass.'*

*'Hi I'm Jan, Lucy's personal tutor. Some of her tutors have mentioned that she is arriving late for some of her classes and isn't always completing her assignments*

*on time. She has also been reported for persistently forgetting her student ID pass.*

*I spoke to her the other day in the canteen when she should have been in class. She mentioned that she gets confused with lunch times and often doesn't get chance to eat.*

*I am concerned that the arrangements we have in place aren't as supportive as they could be.'*

*'Hi I'm Dave and I am the Additional Learning Needs lecturer in the college. Jan has spoken to me about Lucy and what we can do to help. We know that Lucy has Autism and that can sometimes impact on her organisational skills especially when things are less structured. Some of the things Lucy may find helpful are:*

- colour code timetables, to help see the difference between lessons
- encourage Lucy to use her phone to set alarms
- help Lucy produce and use a planner
- provide Lucy with somewhere to store important information so she can find it easily
- check assignment progress more frequently and perhaps break it down into more manageable pieces'

*'I had a great day today. Jan, my personal tutor, had a chat with me about how they could all support me with getting organised.*

*She showed me a simple way to colour code my planner and we discussed setting some reminders on my phone.*

*We also had a chat with my tutors about support with my assignments.*

*My mum bought me a new phone case which has a pocket in it for my student ID pass, she said even if you forget everything else you always seem to have your phone!'*

Well done, you've completed this section

## Specific Learning Difficulties

With Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD) it is often difficult to understand the impact on the learner and how SpLD co-exist with intelligence.

SpLD usually indicate strengths in some areas and support is required in others.

A learner with one type of SpLD will often have a co-occurring difficulty.

## Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD)

Here are some difficulties that learners with a Specific Learning Difficulty (SpLD) may have.

Difficulties with: organisation, memory, concentration, time, direction, perception, sequencing and processing.

### Dyslexia

Dyslexia is a learning difficulty that primarily affects the skills involved in accurate and fluent word reading and spelling.

People with dyslexia are often:

1. Creative and able to see the bigger picture
2. Able to make links and problem solve
3. Understand and remember complex images and patterns

### People with dyslexia may have difficulty with:

1. Reading, may misread words and not understand text
2. Writing and speaking, may lack structure and not find the right words
3. Speed of processing information and retention of information

### Strategies

1. Use software that supports reading and writing and recording information
2. Provide structure/frameworks, use bullets, emphasise key information
3. Provide information in advance for learners to add to /annotate

4. Teach explicit study skills e.g. research, using vocational words, planning
5. Consider alternatives to writing:  
presentations, posters, video, oral, dramatic reconstructions, mind maps

## Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

ASD is 'a developmental disorder which affects the way a person communicates with and relates to other people and the world around them. ' (ASD Wales).

### People with ASD are often:

1. Logical in their thinking, providing attention to detail
2. Can be an expert in an area of special interest
3. Differences in thought can lead to revolutionary ideas that can change how others view certain concepts
4. Are often reliable, good at timekeeping and following rules

### People with ASD may have difficulty with:

1. Understanding social rules, relationships, verbal and non- verbal communication
2. Rigidity of thinking, repetitive behaviours and difficulties with social imagination
3. Sensory responses to the environment

### Strategies

1. Avoid using idioms, metaphors and similes. Use facts to explain things. Don't rely on body language, gestures and tone of voice
2. Ask specific questions
3. Do not overload the person with lots of verbal information
4. Use a timetable
5. Give warning of changes to timetable or schedules
6. Explain how they will know when a task is complete
7. Encourage the learner to sit in a place avoiding visual and sensory distractions, such as noise, bright lights and busy rooms
8. Use visuals to help explain new learning
9. Learners can get upset if they are told that they have made a mistake - teach how to self-correct
10. Provide procedures for break times and coping with meeting others. Provide a time out / safe base if a learner becomes anxious
11. Explain rules clearly and maintain boundaries consistently

## Dyspraxia

Developmental Coordination Disorder (DCD), also known as dyspraxia, affects -

fine motor skills (dexterity)

gross motor skills (coordination and balance)

People with dyspraxia are often:

1. Strategic thinkers and problem solvers
2. Creative and original thinking
3. Determined, hard-working and motivated

People with dyspraxia may have difficulty with:

1. Motor co-ordination – fine and gross motor skills
2. Understanding non-verbal communication, concentrating and organising self
3. Spatial awareness

## Strategies

1. Use resources where the layout is uncluttered
2. Choose resources that don't require manipulation eg. number line rather than counters in maths
3. Allow ample rest periods and additional time for tasks
4. Break down processes to steps, with an opportunity for feedback to check understanding
5. Teach strategies to improve organisation and time management, such as diaries, work plans, checklists of equipment needed

\*Fine motor skills– the ability to use small muscles for accurate coordinated movements, e.g. writing

\* Gross motor skills– the ability to use large muscles to coordinate significant body movements, e.g. walking moving around, jumping and balancing.

## Speech, Language & Communication Difficulties

Speech, Language and Communication Difficulties are developmental disorders that may affect the learner's ability to speak, understand and communicate effectively.

People with speech, language and communication difficulties often:

1. Make decisions based on "whole picture" information
2. Persevere with tasks

3. Are able to understand body language and visuals

People with speech, language and communication difficulties may have difficulty with:

1. Understanding spoken and written language
2. Expressing themselves orally and in writing, may use gestures or words such as 'thing'
3. Understanding inferred meaning and the social use of language

*A learner may have difficulty with only one speech, language or communication skill, or with several.*

### Strategies

1. Link new learning to what learner already knows
2. Vary activities: bullet points and mind maps, ordering tasks, presentations, making posters, mind maps, labelling pictures/diagrams/maps
3. Use non-verbal communication - body language, images/videos rather than words
4. When introducing words, develop word relationships including similar words and definitions
5. Check for actual understanding
6. Be specific when giving directions, repeat them again using different words, using gestures

### Dyscalculia

Dyscalculia primarily affects the ability to acquire arithmetical skills.

People with dyscalculia are often :

1. Strong verbal communicators
2. Good at problem solving through reasoning
3. Creative in making links and connections

People with dyscalculia may have difficulty with:

1. Number, size, order, time and money
2. Visualising numbers and maths situations
3. Solving math problems and learning number facts and procedures
4. Remembering and understanding maths concepts and processes



## Strategies

1. Use concrete examples and materials to embed learning
2. Make sure worksheets are uncluttered
3. Provide frameworks to keep numbers in line. Choose resources that don't require manipulation (e.g. number line rather than counters in maths)
4. Colour code spatially confusable items e.g. x sign in one colour, + sign in another
5. Translate maths calculations into verbal problems or real life examples

## ADD/ADHD

ADD/ADHD –

affects an individual's attention, concentration, impulsivity, activity levels and memory

### People with ADHD often:

1. Have lots of energy and are able to do things at speed
2. Are curious and adventurous
3. Have exceptional verbal recall system

### People with ADHD may have difficulty with:

1. Inattention and hyperactivity
2. When following a plan or set of instructions; has high aspirations when starting the task but finds it difficult to complete
3. Prioritising and being organised
4. Impulsivity which can lead to inappropriate behaviours: waiting in turn, interrupting

## Strategies

1. Provide consistency with clear routines and rules
2. Provide frequent, constructive feedback, highlighting strengths and how to improve
3. Prompt to remain on task, use unobtrusive methods to act as timers and reminders - post it note etc.

4. Make tasks short, with frequent breaks, vary the pace and provide opportunities to move around
5. Allow learner to fiddle with agreed object
6. Timetable theory/ more difficult sessions in the morning
7. Position in class where least likely to be distracted or distract others

## Geraint's story

*'Hi I'm Geraint I have been at the college for a year now doing an apprenticeship in construction.*

*It has been amazing and I really enjoy the practical sessions with my tutor Phil.  
He says I'll make a great electrician one day.*

*But I'm a bit worried, I've always had trouble with maths and now the course has got more difficult. It just looks like a jumble of numbers to me and even when I think I know what I'm doing I get the wrong answers!*

*It takes me twice as long as everyone else and I'm starting to feel a bit excluded from the rest of the class as they have to wait for me to finish.'*

*'Hi I'm Jennifer and I'm Geraint's personal tutor.*

*His practical work is excellent; he thrives in the workshop and is always keen to get stuck in.*

*Recently, I have seen that he is a little withdrawn and shies away from the measurement and calculation work we need to do on the practical exercises.*

*I know he struggles with maths. I wonder what I can do to support him?'*

*'Hi I'm Dave the Additional Learning Needs lecturer. Jennifer is right to bring her concerns up even though she isn't Geraint's maths tutor. Sometimes issues can go unrecognised until later in a student's academic career.*

*There may be a number of reasons why Geraint is having difficulties and to support him fully we need to get to the bottom of it.*

*I have spoken to both Jennifer and Karen, his maths tutor. We are going to arrange some assessments for*

*Geraint to help identify his difficulties and suggest some strategies that could be put in place to support Geraint.'*

*'Well that wasn't very painful. Dave, the ALN lecturer, and Karen, my maths teacher, had a chat with me today. I did an assessment and they explained my difficulties.*

*Apparently, it's quite common and they can help me with it. They took time to explain strategies that should help, they suggested breaking things down into smaller steps so that I could better understand the question and then repeat those steps so that I could remember them.*

*My tutor has said she will provide me with some useful tips and exercises that suit my style of learning. I also said I find it harder to concentrate if I have to work at the same pace as the others and they are going to help with that too. I'm even looking forward to my next maths session!'*

Well done, you've completed this section

## What's next

We hope you have developed a greater awareness of ALN and how you can support learners with ALN from this training.

## Handouts to download

Supporting a student with ALN flowchart

Strategies

Check you have an inclusive classroom

## Useful links

<https://www.helenarkell.org.uk/courses/free-training-for-teachers.php>

<https://education.microsoft.com/courses-and-resources/courses/dyslexia-awareness-in-partnership-with-made-by-dyslexia>

<https://www.asdinfo.wales.co.uk/>

[www.adhdfoundation.org.au/](http://www.adhdfoundation.org.au/)

<https://dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk/>

<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-01/ways-of-supporting-learners-with-autistic-spectrum-disorder-asd.pdf>

<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-01/ways-of-supporting-learners-with-attention-deficit-hyperactivity-disorder-adhd.pdf>

Well done, you've completed this section

## Test Your Knowledge

This test will give you a chance to check your understanding of what we've covered in this course.

During the test you'll need to answer a series of questions. You won't receive any detailed feedback on your answers to the questions.

At the end of the test you'll be given an overall score – you need to score 80% or above to pass. If you don't manage to pass the test, don't worry: simply re-study the areas of the course you had difficulty with and then re-take the test to try and improve your score.

When you're ready, enter your name, select **Next** to make a start. Good luck!

# Test

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*What is the name of the law that ensures the rights of people with disabilities?*

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- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Equality Act 2010
- Children and Families Act 2014
- ALNET Act 2018

CHOOSE YOUR ANSWER

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*The Additional Learning Needs and Educational Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 ensures that:*

*All learners in further education are supported to achieve their potential*

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- All learners with ALN are supported to overcome barriers to learning and reach their potential
- All learners with medical needs receive additional support in college
- All learners with specific learning difficulties receive additional support in college

CHOOSE YOUR ANSWER

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*Approximately how many learners in Wales aged 0-25 have ALN?*

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- 5%
- 10%
- 20%
- 50%

CHOOSE YOUR ANSWER

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*Additional learning needs includes all learners with a physical difficulty*

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- True
- False

CHOOSE YOUR ANSWER

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*Meeting the needs of learners with ALN in a college is the responsibility of:*

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- The learner
- The ALN department and learning assistants
- The lecturer
- All of the above

CHOOSE YOUR ANSWER

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*You have a learner who is having difficulty focusing and remaining on task.*

*Strategies that could be used for a learner with AD(H)D are:*

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- Planning multi-sensory and varied tasks
- Prompting learner to stay on task by giving them short targets and monitoring progress
- Provide frequent constructive and positive feedback
- Sit them at the back of the class
- Working alone on a lengthy task without prompts or reminders

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*Learners are continually asking for support when completing an assignment. They are making little progress and need you to explain the information again. Which strategies may be useful?*

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- Explain the big picture and give an example of what a good finished product looks like.
- Give clear, step-by-step written instructions
- Tell them to read the assignment again and get on with the task
- Highlighting key words and command verbs

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*Having a Specific Learning Difficulty (SpLD) is a sign of low intelligence*

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- True
- False

CHOOSE YOUR ANSWER

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*A learner has not attended his lesson. The usual lecturer is absent and a note is on the classroom door stating the group have been moved into another room. They have been combined with a similar group of learners for the lesson.*

*Why might the learner not have attended?*

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- He wants free time to finish an assignment
- He is feeling anxious as he has ASD and finds it difficult to cope with unexpected change
- He didn't know where the room was
- He was hungry and went for lunch early

CHOOSE YOUR ANSWER

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*Match the learning difficulty to it's definition*

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- Dyslexia
- Dyspraxia
- ADD/ADHD
- ASD

- affects the skills involved in accurate and fluent word reading and spelling
- affects - fine motor skill, gross motor coordination and balance skills
- affects an individual's attention, concentration, impulsivity, activity levels and memory
- affects the way a person communicates and relates to other people