



Beacon Education

Supporting world-wide community education

Learning Difficulties

Why talk about Learning Difficulties?

- Negative experiences at school when you were younger, can hold you back from developing a positive mental attitude.
- Maybe your failure at school was not because you were ‘a slow learner’ or ‘backward’.
- It may be because you needed to learn in a different way.
- It may be that you have exceptional skills in a certain area that you were unable to develop at school.

Not everyone in this session has suffered from negative experiences at school, but for those whose experience was positive, this session will help you to understand and appreciate people whose learning style is different to yours.

We are all unique

- We are all a unique product of God's creation.
- We look different from one another (Even identical twins have slight differences.)
- We think differently.
- We learn differently.

We all learn in different ways

- We all have different strengths and weaknesses.
- We are good at some things but not so good at other things.
- We have different likes and dislikes.
- In 1983 Howard Gardiner made popular the theory of *Multiple Intelligences*.

- Some people are better at understanding some things than others.
- Some of us find it easy to understand how a flower grows, but find it difficult to learn how to play a musical instrument. For others, music might be easy, but playing football is difficult.



Multiple Intelligences

Instead of having one kind of intelligence, we have several natural abilities. These are:

- body smart (good at sports)
- number smart (good at Maths)
- word smart (good at reading, writing, spelling)
- people smart (good at relating to people)
- personal smart (good at working on your own)
- music smart (good at music)
- picture smart (good at art, diagrams, maps)
- nature smart (good at working with nature)

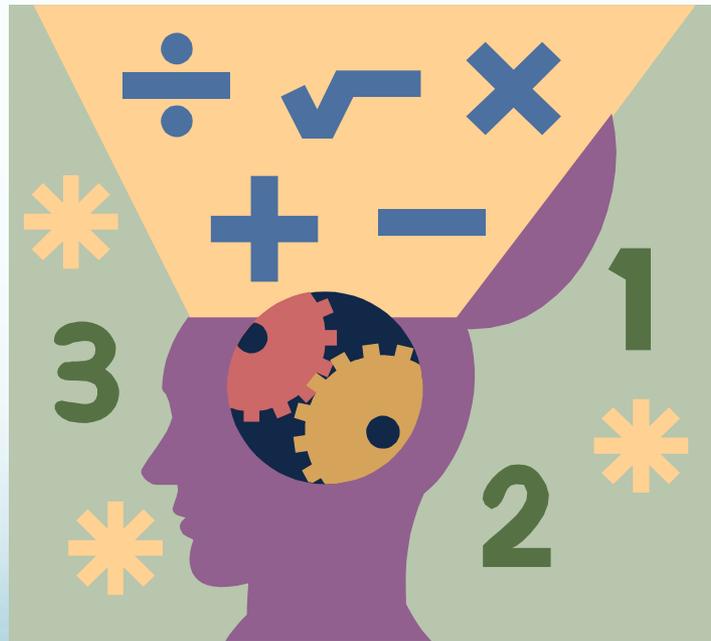
Body-Smart

- You will enjoy sports and are good at swimming, athletics, football, gymnastics and other sports; creative movement/dance
- You enjoy learning through ‘doing something’.



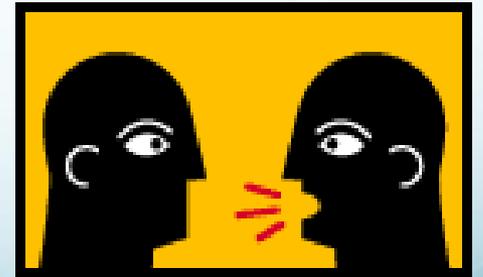
Number-Smart

- You will be good at mathematics and other number activities; you are also good at solving problems.



Word-Smart

- You will enjoy reading & writing, (including writing stories), and talking about things.
- You will find learning new languages easy.



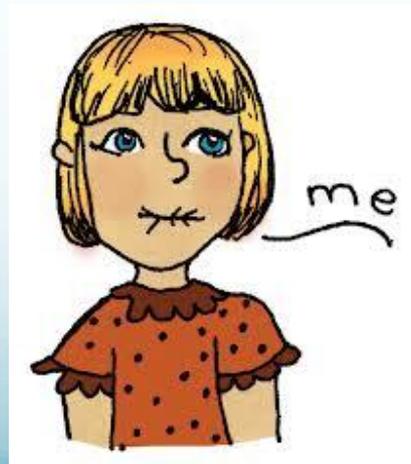
People-Smart

- You will like to mix with other people and you will enjoy belonging to social groups. You like team games and are good at sharing.



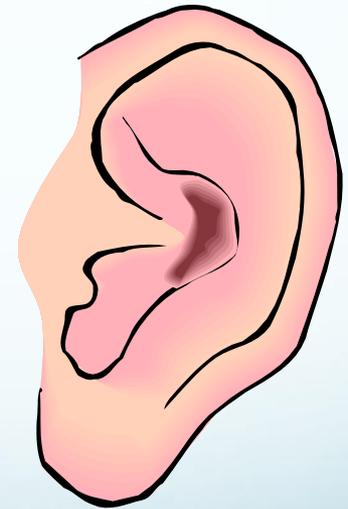
Personal-Smart

- You will know your own strengths and weaknesses. You will probably keep a diary. You will be good at individual projects, and getting on with a task without help from others.



Music-Smart

- You will enjoy music and can recognise sounds, the quality of a tone and will have a good sense of rhythm.



The Ear

Picture-Smart

- You will be good at art and also at other activities where you look at pictures, like map reading, finding your way out of mazes and graphs.



Nature-Smart

- You may be nature-smart. You like the world of plants and animals, and like learning about them.



God knows us

- God knows us better than anyone because He made us.
- He knows how many hairs are in our head.
- He knows what we are good at, and what we are not good at.

Luke 12:6-7

Not one sparrow is forgotten by God. Even the hairs on your head have all been counted. Do not be afraid. You are worth more than many sparrows.

We don't have to be good at everything

- God loves us for who we are.
- God can help us get better at the things we are not good at.
- Maybe there are some things we will never be good at.
- That's OK. Trying your best is all that matters.

The education system is limited

It usually does not cater for different learning styles

- Some learn best by 'doing' (active learning)
- Some do learn best through listening
- Some learn best by reading
- Some learn best in personalized tuition, and not in large classes.

Ways of learning

We can learn by:

Seeing



Hearing



Doing



Difficulties with book learning

For some, the rigid structured classroom is not a place where they can thrive.

Some have diagnosed conditions such as:

Dyslexia - problems with learning to read

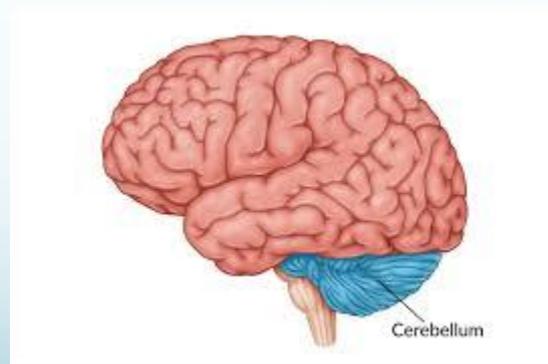
A.D.D or A.D.H.D – problems with focusing attention on one thing for long

Autism – the senses can easily be overloaded, making it hard to process too much information. But there is usually excellence in specific skills.

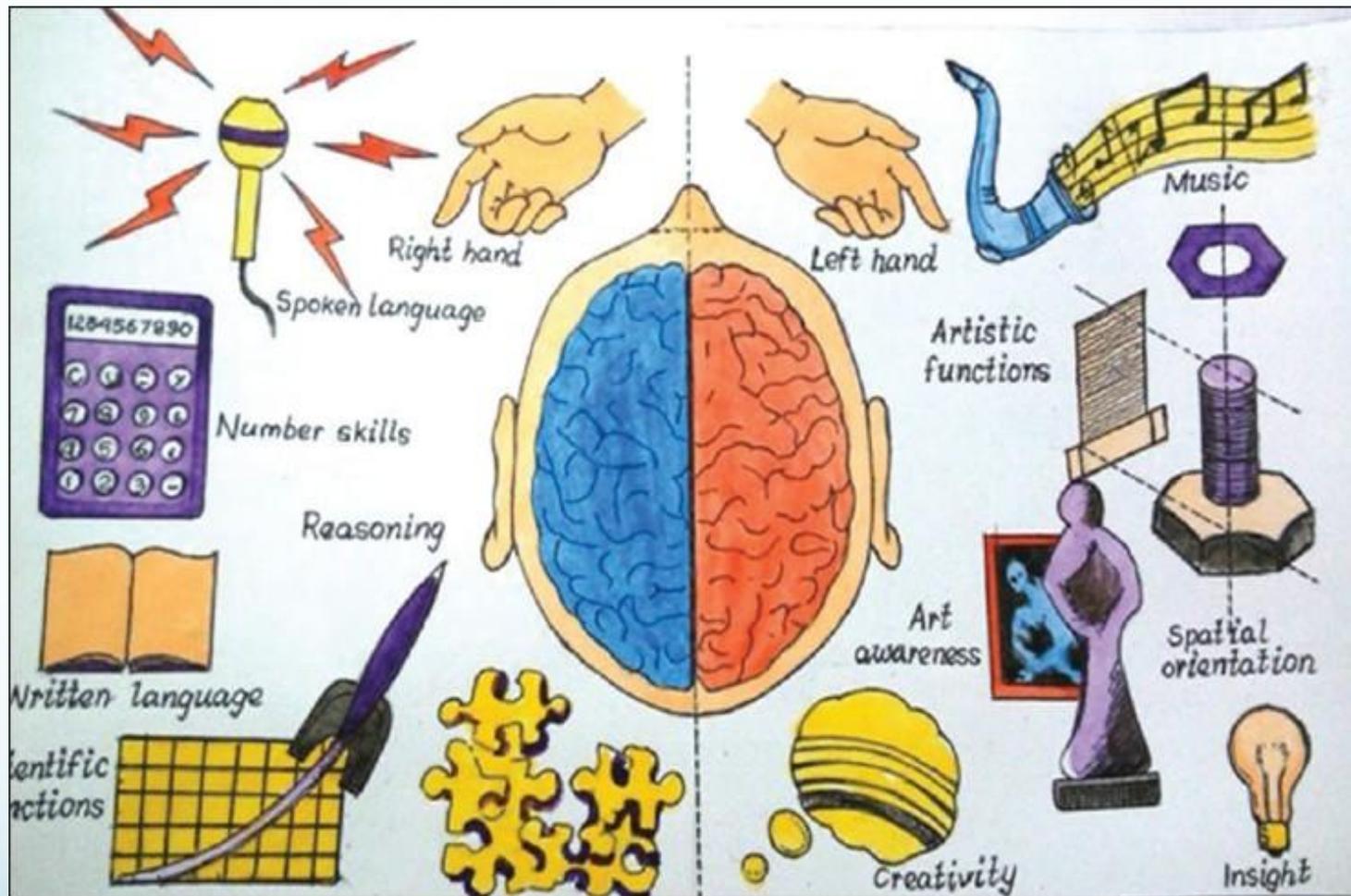
Learning difficulties may be caused by...

*The under development of a certain part of the brain called the **cerebellum**:*

- The part that gives signals to connect the left and right sides of the brain
- The part for balance and coordination

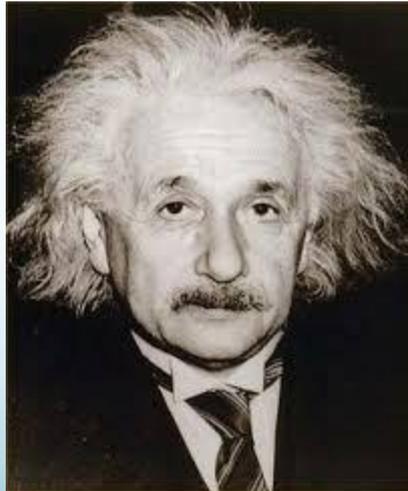


- There can be an imbalance between the right and left sides of the brain.
- **The right side is responsible for creative activities**
- **The left side is responsible for language, mathematics and putting things in order.**
- In some people, the brain has to work much harder because they are trying to use their right side of the brain (the creative side) for the functions of the left side of the brain (language).
- They will become tired.



Positives

- Creativity! They will be VERY good at some things.
- Many famous people were /are dyslexic
- e.g. Einstein, Leonardo Da Vinci, Steve Jobs, Elon Musk



The Primary School child with learning difficulties

Strengths

- reading maps and diagrams
- building, making things, art
- talented in certain specific areas

Weaknesses

- reading and spelling
- following instructions
- remembering information
- often tired
- problems in organizing self and work
- negative feelings about themselves
- overwhelmed by too much information

Problems with focusing on the task

- poor concentration
- poor listening
- doesn't want to read or write
- easily distracted
- thinks up things to do, to avoid doing what they have to do
- lacks confidence



Problems as an adult

- Sensory overload – overwhelmed by too many thoughts at once, or too much noise
- When faced with sensory overload, the brain may struggle to process information effectively, causing negative thoughts and emotions.
- Racing thoughts which can cause anxiety.
- Feelings of failure which can cause depression.

Overcoming problems of the past

- Past problems at school can hold people back as an adult.
- BUT remember that every day is a new day.
- Find your strengths.
- Set a goal and work towards it. With God all things are possible.

Isaiah 43:19 For I am about to do something new. See, I have already begun! Do you not see it? I will make a pathway through the wilderness. I will create rivers in the dry wasteland.

- Think about the things you *are* good at. These are your special gifts from God.
- Work on your gifts so that you can serve God in a really special way.
- There is great joy and satisfaction in doing what God has called you to do!
- Don't compare yourself with others. Inward beauty is not related to outward appearance.
- Happiness comes from thanking God for the way He made you.

Dealing with anxiety and depression

- Find a mentor or counsellor, or a trusted person you can share with.
- Pray with that person on a regular basis.
- When feeling anxious, take time out to relax, appreciate nature or listen to calming music.
- When feeling depressed, count your blessings. Thank God for His hand on your life so far, and tell Him that you trust Him to lead you into a positive future..
- .

God has a plan for you.

Know that God has a plan for YOU – a positive one

Jeremiah 29:11 For I know the plans I have for you, says the LORD. They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope. (NLT)

Psalms 43:5 Why am I discouraged? Why is my heart so sad? I will put my hope in God! I will praise him again— my Savior and my God! (NLT)

God made you to be the person you are

- He did not make a mistake when He made you.
- Psalm 139 says, “You created every part of me; you put me together in my mother’s womb...When my bones were being formed, carefully put together in my mother’s womb, when I was growing there in secret, you knew that I was there – you saw me before I was born.”

Questions

What are the 3 different ways of learning?

How do you learn best?

List your natural strengths in order, from 1 as the highest and 8 as the lowest:

Body; Number; Word; People; Personal; Music;
Picture; Nature