ICT Accessibility Fact Sheet

Assessing the provision of ICT for Inclusion: Cognitive and learning difficulties

This guide suggests where ICT may help and points you to the main sources of advice and information available in this area. It is not meant to be exhaustive but a starting point on where to get help.

More Information

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Free access utilities
A range of utilities are available on the FITA AccessArchives CD-Roms, and the FITA web site at www.fitamalta.eu

What qualifies as a learning impairment?

Learning impairments can range from conditions such as dyslexia and attention deficit disorder to slow learning.

Processing problems are the most common and have the most impact on a person's ability to use computer applications.

These conditions interfere with the learning process. Many people with these impairments are perfectly capable of learning if information is presented to them in a form and at a pace that is appropriate to them individually.

Does the difficulty lie in spoken or written communication?

Look at the fact sheet on ICT provision for helping individuals with communication and interaction difficulties.

Does the difficulty lie in reading?

If the reading difficulty is a result of a physical or sensory impairment, look at the fact sheet on ICT provision to help persons with sensory or physical needs.

Unsupported text may not be an appropriate means of written communication for users with additional learning difficulties, particularly if those difficulties are severe or profound.

Possible ICT tools include symbol processors, overlay keyboards and on-screen grids

Moreover, a portable or desktop computer with text-to-speech facility will give aural support by reading back either all the text or just selected words.

Does the difficulty lie in accessing the computer?

For many learners with severe or profound learning difficulties, the usual input methods of standard keyboard and mouse will not be appropriate and alternative methods are needed.

During the learning process, many individuals with learning difficulties benefit from having a multisensory experience of audio speech paired with a visual representation. Reducing visual and auditory distractions can also aid the learning process for many people.

Consider the use of the following devices.

- *Touch screen*
- *Tracker ball*
- Overlay keyboard
- Switch

Communication – symbols: introduction for SEN

The document available at http://curriculum.becta.org.uk/docserver.php?docid=994 gives an overview of symbol systems used.

Dyslexia, learning difficulties and voice-recognition systems fact sheets

Useful worksheets can be downloaded from the Abilitynet web site at http://www.abilitynet.co.uk/content/factsheets/Factsheets.htm

Step-by-step guides and useful tips can be sourced at http://www.microsoft.com/enable/guides/learning.aspx

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