

# Chapter Two

## Screening tools for potential learning disabilities: What, how and when to use them during the assessment process

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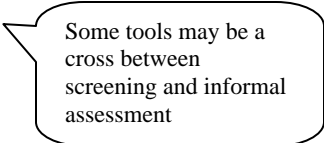
## **Learning objectives**

- Understand the role of screening tools
- Describe the screening process
- Learn effective interview techniques
- Understand the various types and usages of screening tools
- Identify potential learning barriers
- Learn how to map out barriers to create a base for further assessment
- Understand what criteria to use for selecting screening tools for learners

# **The screening process**

## **Just the facts!**

- Screening tests should be quick to administer, require little if any training, and be inexpensive.
- Screening tools cannot provide a diagnosis of learning disabilities.
  - Screening tools are designed to detect indicators of learning disabilities
  - No screening system is 100% accurate - A certain level of error is inevitable
  - Most tools may only have a maximum of 75% validity classification (75% of the time the screening tool is correct in identifying a potential learning disability)
  - Screening tools can result in a false negative (a person is identified as “at risk” when, in fact, this is not the case)

- Screening tools can also result in a false positive (a person is not identified as “at risk” when, in fact, they may have a learning disability)
  - Screening tools do not always serve the same purpose. Tools can:
    - Determine eligibility for learning disability testing
    - Confirm practitioner suspicions of potential learning disabilities
    - Identify learning strengths and weaknesses
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- Screening tools can range from a five-minute checklist to more in-depth assessments that can range from one to two hours. It is difficult to state which type is better since the tool that is chosen should depend on the reason for accessing the tool and the needs of the learner.
  - Results from screening tools will not provide sufficient information to guide the selection of instructional or learning activities.
    - Screening tool results should be used in conjunction with other assessment tools to develop a clear understanding of the learner’s training needs and strengths

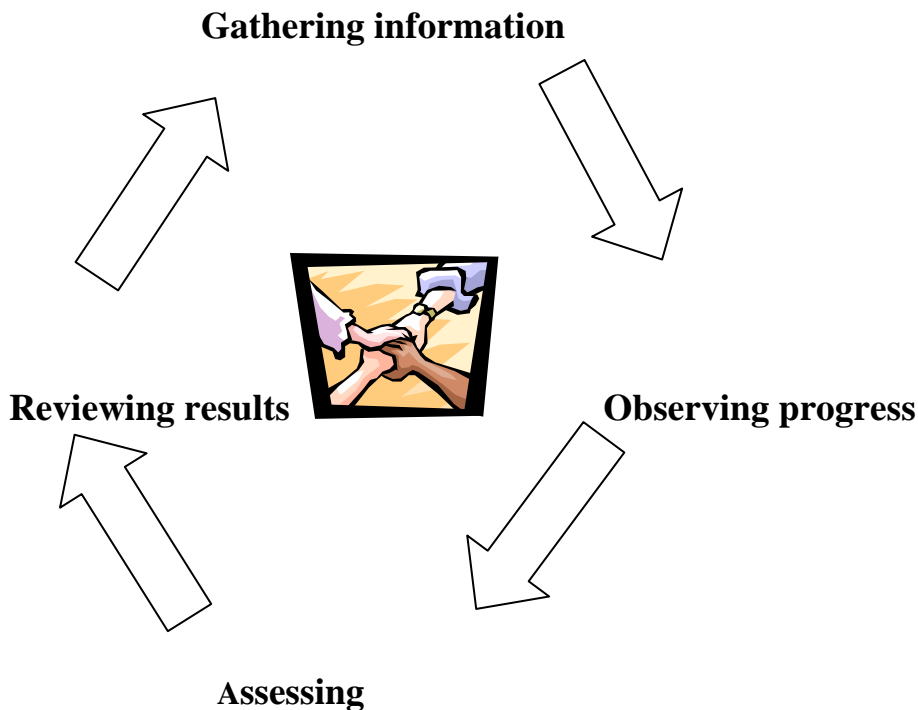
## Screening: only one part of the assessment process

Screening is only part of the assessment process. It is a starting point that helps to determine the need for further assessment, either formal or informal. Screening does not identify or label people with a learning disability but it does provide a general indication of whether they might have **potential** learning disabilities. The screening tool identifies areas that need further exploration. When adult learners and practitioners explore these areas together, they can identify the tools, strategies and accommodations that best meet learners’ needs.

**The main reasons for conducting learner assessments are to:**

- Understand a learner's strengths and weaknesses
- Understand why learners are experiencing learning difficulties (i.e., it may be for reasons other than a learning disability)
- Develop a training plan that includes strategies to overcome, get around or cope with learning difficulties

**The assessment process is ongoing while the learner remains active in your program. When the learner faces barriers, the assessment cycle should continue to help both the practitioner and the learner determine how to get around or remove the learning barriers.**

**Benefits of using screening tools**

The following information was taken from the National Adult Literacy and Learning Disabilities Center – “Screening for Adults with Learning Disabilities” written by Adrienne Riviere:

- Screening helps practitioners to help the learners understand their strengths and weaknesses and the possible reasons behind their difficulties
- The informal nature of the screening process enables practitioners to include learners in determining tools, instructional preferences, materials and strategies
- Screening may help practitioners to determine which strategies or interventions have been previously tried by the learners (if any)
- Screening can lead to discussion between the practitioner and the learner about realistic goals and short-term outcomes.

The National Institute for Literacy – The Southern Links (<http://ldlink.coe.utk.edu/>) is a website which provides some excellent information on screening tools under the section entitled “Assessment.” Here you can find further information on The Role of Screening, Screening versus Diagnostic Testing, Determining When to Screen, The Screening Process and Screening Tools and Instruments.

## Screening Toolbox



Practitioners can access a number of screening tools to help identify potential learning disabilities, gain further insight into challenge areas, and gather an understanding of learners’ strengths and weaknesses to build an effective training plan.

### Screening tools may include:

- Additional questions to integrate into current intake process
- Checklists to help guide practitioner observations
- Learner self-assessment inventories
- Tools to help determine if a formal assessment should be pursued and/or tools to help determine challenge areas
- Checklists to help guide practitioner assessment of learner work samples

The use of a screening tool cannot alone be used to understand a learner’s situation. It is a process of gathering information from a number of sources.

### The screening tools selected will depend on:

- Learner input
- Learner goals
- Program resources
- Practitioner skills and knowledge
- Ongoing assessment results of learner progress

“They must understand that you do not know everything about how they learn. The more information they can share about themselves, the greater likelihood that you can improve their individual instruction, and that their reading, writing, and/or math will improve.”<sup>1</sup>

## Information to gather

### Screening tools can be used to gather information on:

- Learner’s work habits and learning strategies (ability to organize, plan, prioritize, initiate action, self-monitoring)
- Basic academic skills including writing, reading and math
- Learner’s attention span (ability to listen to questions, stay on track with conversations, level of concentration)
- Time orientation (punctual with day and time of appointments; ability to handle time limits, tell time, and judge time requirements)
- Auditory and or visual sequencing (ability to hear sounds in correct order, rephrase short stories in proper order, organize instructions into an appropriate order, and see and distinguish the order of symbols, words or images)
- Spatial relationships (ability to understand distance, get from one place to another; space numbers, letters and or words on paper, and perceive distance of objects to prevent collisions)
- Learner’s short-term visual and auditory memory (ability to recall information that is read, repeat and synthesize information that is heard, and sequence events such as employment history)
- Medical and family history (presence of learning disabilities in family, use of medication to control behaviours, illness during birth)

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<sup>1</sup> Sturomski & Associates (1997). *Information Gathering and Diagnostic- Prescriptive Teaching: The Keys to Effective Adult Education*. <[http://www.ldonline.org/ld\\_indepth/adult/information\\_gathering.html](http://www.ldonline.org/ld_indepth/adult/information_gathering.html)>.

- Previous school history
- Verbal communication skills<sup>2</sup>



**Remember:** Screening is only one piece of the puzzle – the results should not diagnose or assign a learning disability label

### Discussion question

Many adults in literacy programs have difficulty with reading and writing skills and they often have low self-esteem. How do we determine when these learning difficulties represent a normal stage of learning a new skill and when they suggest the presence of a potential learning disability?

### Possible discussion responses

**Janet Johnston, the author of “The Road to Success,” suggests that practitioners consider the following information when inquiring about potential learning disabilities:**

- Valuable insight can be gained from viewing learners’ educational histories
  - Did they experience similar challenges when they were younger?
  - Did they have any assessments?

*If yes, then a potential learning disability may be part of the picture.*

- Did they leave school early due to personal or family reasons?
- Did they move a lot, resulting in a frequent change of schools?

*If yes, then maybe a lack of exposure to learning in general has resulted in their weak skill areas.*

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<sup>2</sup> National Adult Literacy & Learning Disabilities Center (1999). *Bridges to Practice: Guidebook 2*. National Institute for Literacy. <[http://www.nifl.gov/nifl/ld/reports/bridges\\_pt2.pdf](http://www.nifl.gov/nifl/ld/reports/bridges_pt2.pdf)>. & Payne, Nancy. *Learning Disabilities & Special Needs Training: Where Do We Go From Here?* <[http://www.ldonline.org/ld\\_indepth/adult/ld\\_and\\_special\\_learning\\_needs.html](http://www.ldonline.org/ld_indepth/adult/ld_and_special_learning_needs.html)>.

- Does the learner appear intellectually capable in other respects but show little progress in one particular area that seems incongruent with what you might expect?

*If yes, then a possible learning disability may be present.*

### **What about questions that seem too invasive?**

Some of the questions that are part of screening tools might seem too invasive to practitioners and learners. However, it is important to note that these questions are significant to the screening process because they may help to point towards a possible learning disability. Practitioners should be advised that they should pay attention to the learner – if he or she finds these questions too invasive, then simply move on to something else.

**Also, it is by no means necessary to require formal documents to support any of the information you ask about.** Consider this example from Jennifer Hunt:

“ I once had a learner disclose that he had ADHD. The next day he brought in a copy of a psych assessment for our files. I told him that it wasn’t necessary for us to have this information and I also spoke to him about privacy issues because this assessment also included information about criminal activities and other very personal information that I did not need to know.”

However, it is important to ask some of the questions used in screening tools even though they may at first appear to be somewhat invasive – even if they are not indicators of learning disabilities, they can point to other possible reasons why the learner struggles with learning. If screening moves on to diagnostic assessment, this information can help in that evaluation.

For instance, learning disabilities are sometimes genetic, so if a learner indicates that there is a family history of learning disabilities, this is significant information. If a learner tells you this, you may want to seek out more information. You could ask them, for example, what kind of problems the family member had with reading, writing or math. Individuals who indicate a family history of learning disabilities or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) are more likely to have learning disabilities themselves. In fact, research shows that adult learners who have learning disabilities often report that their children have been identified by the school system as requiring additional support services.

Some medical questions that are used in screening tools can reveal other important information. For instance, individuals who have a history of difficulty in developing early language skills may indicate a possible learning disability. Also, some screening tools may ask questions related to premature birth, low birth weight or respiratory distress. It is important to note that each of these instances could be a high risk factor for the development of learning disabilities.

### **How will you know, as practitioners, which screening tools will be effective?**

We suggest you look for screening tools that include additional questions that you can integrate into existing intake processes. Screening tools may also include checklists that can help guide practitioner observations. Practitioners may also want to use checklists to help them assess learner work samples. Learner self-assessment inventories can also be valuable tools, especially for learners with higher literacy skills. Finally, screening tools can also be used as a means to an end. That is, they can be used to determine if a formal diagnosis is required.

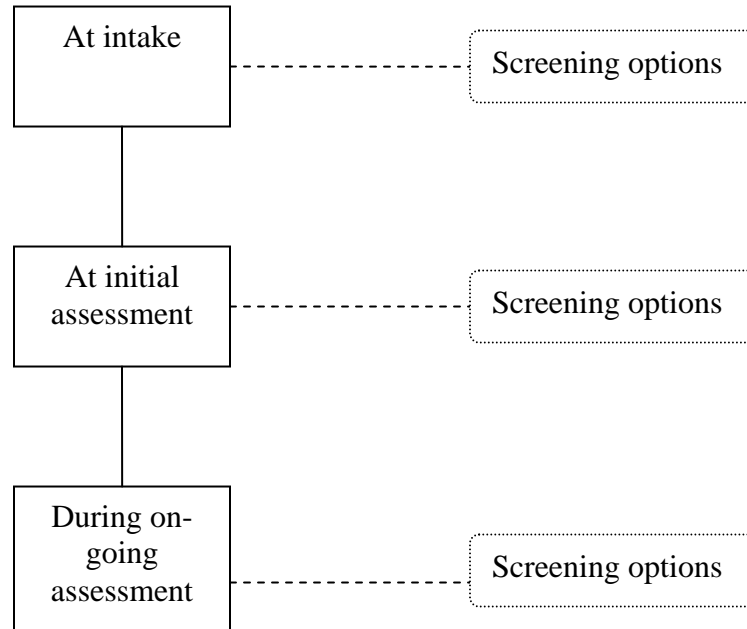
It's all well and fine to have a variety of tools to choose from when it comes to identifying potential learning disabilities. As practitioners, we are accustomed to high volumes of information. But sometimes it's difficult to know which tool to use given a particular situation. We suggest that the screening tools to be used will depend on learners' input and goals, the resources of the individual literacy program, the skills and knowledge of the practitioner and the ongoing assessment results of the learner.

## **When should screening tools be used?**

### **There is no one right answer to the above question!**

Several variables can affect this decision including learner goals, the existing intake process and the resources of the organization. Some programs develop a standard time when all learners are screened whereas some programs make a judgment call based on each individual learner's situation. The diagram below shows the assessment process with option points when screening might take place. Dashed lines indicate optional paths. Pros and cons for using the screening tool at intake, at initial assessment and during on-

going assessment are detailed later in the chapter. Depending on the learners your program serves and the resources at hand, you may identify additional pros and cons for using the screening tools at various points during service delivery. Making the right decision that meets your learners' needs may require some trial and error but the effort is worthwhile if, at the end, the screening tool policy serves the learners best. Programs are encouraged to get feedback from the learners, tutors and staff when making this decision. (Table adapted from Bridges to Practice: Guidebook 2, National Adult Literacy and Learning Disabilities Center)



## Pros and cons of using learning disability screening tools

### Some pros and cons of using screening tools during intake

#### Pros:

- By screening all persons who enter the program, you reduce the likelihood of overlooking someone.
- Some of the questions found on the screening tools are already asked during intake and you can easily integrate additional questions.
- It adds to the rationale for asking about a learner's background.

#### Cons:

- Additional questions and checklists may deter a person if they are apprehensive about coming in the first place.

- It may be more suitable to build trust before too much inquiry.
- Not everyone has a learning disability and may be insulted by the questions.

### **Some pros and cons of using screening tools during initial assessment:**

#### **Pros:**

- The learner is less apprehensive and has begun to become more comfortable with the program surroundings.
- Learners may be less fearful of the added checklist and questions since they are expecting to be asked about their skills and interest in learning as part of the initial assessment. The learner may be more open to questions about their background.
- There is more opportunity to observe learner's characteristics through writing samples and overall conversation.
- Potentially difficult areas can be identified during assessment so that potential strategies can be incorporated into the learner's training plan.

#### **Cons:**

- The initial assessment can already be lengthy. Some practitioners worry that they may lose the learner's focus if they add any additional screening options.
- If not conducted with sensitivity to a potential learning disability, the assessment may further agitate the learner's previous negative experiences with the education system.

### **Some pros and cons of using screening tools during ongoing assessment:**

#### **Pros:**

- It could help practitioners to understand why the learner is struggling in certain areas.
- By this point, the practitioner has had more opportunity to observe the learner and the practitioner's observations may be more valid.
- The learner most likely has developed a comfort level with learning and may be more honest and/or have a better understanding of personal learning strengths and weaknesses.

**Cons:**

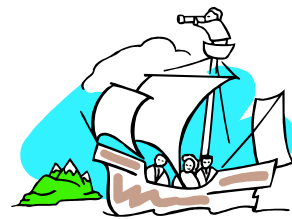
- Learner and/or practitioner frustration levels may be higher than they would have been if they had gained a better understanding of the potential learning disabilities prior to the development of the training plan.
- The practitioner may be using ineffective teaching strategies because potential learning disabilities were not detected during initial assessment.

It's all well and fine to have a variety of tools to choose from when it comes to identifying potential learning disabilities. As practitioners, we are accustomed to high volumes of information. But sometimes it's difficult to know which tool to use given a particular situation. We suggest that the screening tools to be used will depend on learners' input and goals, the resources of the individual literacy program, the skills and knowledge of the practitioner and the ongoing assessment results of the learner.

**Discussion questions**

- If you are presently using screening tools to identify potential learning disabilities, when do you use them and why?
- If you do not use a screening tool, explain when you would use a screening tool and why.

For some excellent information on screening tools, see <http://ldlink.coe.utk.edu> under "Assessment"

**A journey of discovery**

Both the practitioner and learner need to be open to venturing together on a journey of discovery. The word "discovery" was chosen to shed a more positive light on the understanding of potential learning barriers. Many practitioners have stated that learners experience a sense of relief and enlightenment when they discover that their learning difficulties are not due to a lack of intelligence but due to other factors such as a different learning style, a general lack of exposure to learning opportunities, personal factors that interfere with their ability to learn, or cognitive processing difficulties.

Numerous quotes from successful adults with learning disabilities all share a similar message: “the key to my success has been to understand and accept my learning challenges”. Two valuable lessons can be learned from their experiences. These lessons are applicable to all learners regardless of the presence of a learning disability:

- 1) A learner cannot understand and accept their learning barriers unless they are an active part of the discovery process.
- 2) Without a strong understanding of what is blocking our learning, we cannot develop effective learning and teaching strategies.

## Tips for a successful journey

### Ask the learner for their interpretation

Is the information accurate? What do you think this information means? Why do you think (skill) is difficult for you?

- Create an equal relationship right from the start
- Help learners to understand their potential learning disabilities
- Encourage learners to explore their own profile of strengths and challenges
- Help learners understand why they were having difficulties in the past
- Create an environment where making mistakes is a normal and essential part of learning
- Use a flexible approach
- Ask a variety of questions about the learner’s work and/or learning strategies
- Encourage learners to be self-directed learners by encouraging independence right from the start<sup>3</sup>
- Encourage students to self-assess the way they learn and think

## What are we looking for when we assess?

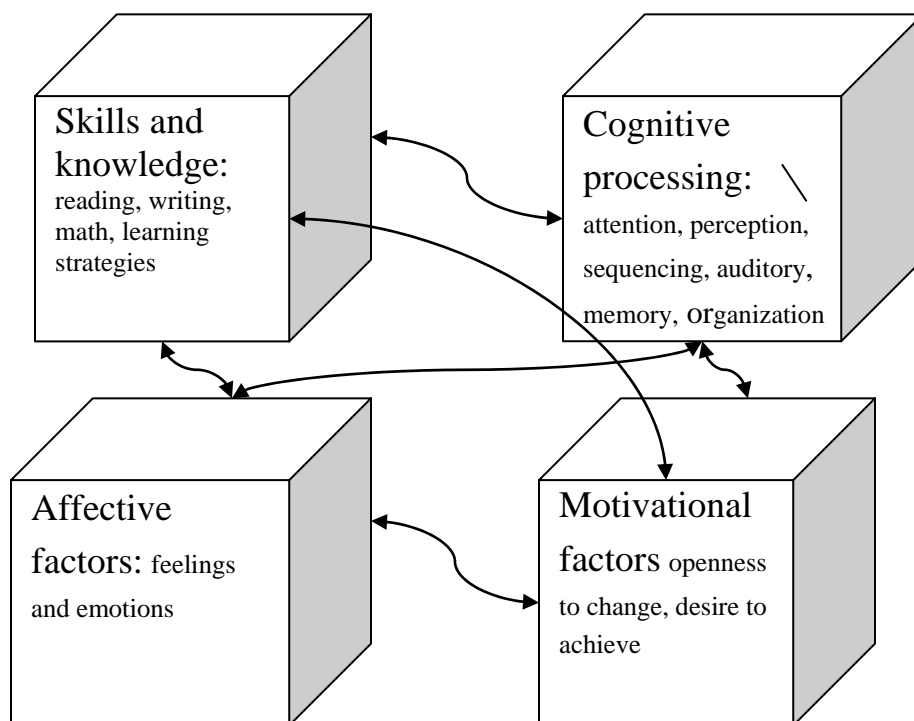
Potential learning disabilities are only one piece of the learning puzzle. The use of a screening tool can be a valuable aid in the discovery process but the results should not be considered in isolation. Although it is possible to assess for each of these barriers to learning separately, it is important to understand that they are all interconnected. Practitioners need to discover how adults learn information and where possible breakdowns occur. “Because learning is multi-dimensional, it is important to understand

<sup>3</sup> Dyslexic Institute UK (2002). *Best Practice for Adults*. <<http://www.dyslexia-inst.org.uk/pdf/adtpract.pdf>>.

the relationships between these areas and how they function with each other to enable the adult student to learn a given task.”<sup>4</sup>

**The following diagram and process for assessment was taken from the document “Asking the Right Questions” developed by The Learning Centre, Calgary and the Alberta Vocational College, Calgary, 1992. There are four common areas which can present barriers to learning. These can be described as follows:**

### Barriers to Learning



Each barrier to learning can influence the others. This sometimes makes it difficult to determine the primary cause for the learning barriers. For example, a person may have a potential learning disability and struggle with his or her inability to organize information.

<sup>4</sup> Sturomski & Associates (1997).

This can lead to affective factors such as frustration and low self-esteem. If the learning barriers continue, the learner's motivational factors could be impacted.

**The impact of the different barriers to learning will vary from one learner to the next.**



The screening process helps to identify potential barriers to learning. As further information is gained through informal discussion, work samples and observation, a clearer understanding of barriers can be achieved. Together, the practitioner and learner can identify clues to investigate the legitimacy of barriers and how these barriers may impact the learning process. Identifying and investigating clues is an ongoing process. As the practitioner and learner relationship develops and the opportunities to observe the learning process become more frequent, the investigation becomes more intense. Together, the practitioner and learner can solve the mystery of learning.

**Skill and Knowledge:** you need to determine if the learner has the requisite knowledge and skills to perform a task. Be careful not to assume that a person has the required knowledge and skills.

**Example:** A learner's reading is slow which interferes with comprehension. He appears to read each word as a separate unit. The practitioner suggests that he look at a group of words instead of each one. This is a real eye opener for the learner since he always thought that he was to read each word as a separate unit. As he begins to use the reading strategy, his comprehension improves immensely. His barrier was due to a lack of knowledge, not a potential learning disability. This lack of knowledge can result if a learner has a history of frequently changing schools, has experienced long absences from school, or for many other reasons. Often, blocks to learning can result from a lack of knowledge of basic spelling rules or the steps required to organize and write a paragraph, to name just a few examples. If these gaps in skills and knowledge are addressed and there is no evidence of a learning disability, then progress should occur.

**Areas to observe:**

- General knowledge (gained from everyday interactions in the community)
- Social knowledge (customs, personal interactions)
- Information knowledge (concepts, vocabulary, skills and strategies)

We all have strengths and weaknesses but it is a large discrepancy in ability that is a strong indicator of possible learning disability

- Metacognition (how one learns)

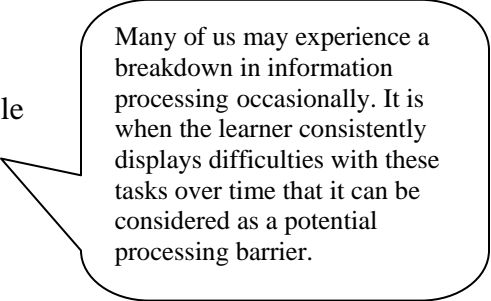
### **Cognitive processing (potential learning disabilities)**

This is **the** critical factor in learning. A breakdown in how information is processed can be a critical barrier to learning.

**The cognitive process** involves a number of steps. First, information is gathered through various forms of input (auditory, visual, tactile). Next, an individual synthesizes and makes sense of the information that has been gathered. Lastly, the information evolves in the form of output. Output may occur through speaking, writing, choosing, or acting on the synthesis of the information gathered. It becomes obvious how barriers to learning can occur when people experience a deficiency in their ability to effectively use the information the senses have gathered.

Cognitive processing barriers are often experienced by adults who may have potential learning disabilities.

They can often help explain why a person is having trouble with learning and performance.



Many of us may experience a breakdown in information processing occasionally. It is when the learner consistently displays difficulties with these tasks over time that it can be considered as a potential processing barrier.

### **Areas to observe for common difficulties:**

**Auditory processing challenges** affect how people interpret the information they hear and speak. Individuals with auditory processing challenges:

- Talk louder than necessary
- Have difficulty remembering a list or sequence
- Request that words or sentences be repeated
- Have limited ability to memorize information learned by listening
- Interpret words too literally
- Have difficulty hearing clearly in noisy environments.

**Visual processing challenges** affect how people interpret the information that they see. **Individuals with visual processing challenges:**

- Have difficulty accurately identifying information from pictures, charts, graphs, maps, etc.

- Lack the ability to organize information from different sources into one cohesive document
- Struggle to find specific information on a printed page (getting a number out of the phone book)
- Have difficulty remembering directions to a location.

**Information/organizational processing challenges affect how people manage information. Individuals with information/organizational processing challenges:**

- Lack problem solving strategies
- Tend to give wrong or partial answers because the time is not taken to consider all the information - a systematic approach to analyzing the information may not be used
- Have difficulty understanding cause and effect or problems with sequencing
- Have difficulty considering more than one source of information at a time
- Have difficulty comparing information that they already know with new information that is presented
- Lack the ability to realize when and why it is important to be precise and accurate in problem solving or presenting information
- Are challenged when following directions
- Find it difficult to finish tasks because they may not understand what is expected
- Lack ability to plan and organize materials
- Have difficulty remembering - this can be attributed to both short- and long-term memory difficulties
- May know the information but have difficulty saying or finding the right words.<sup>5</sup>

**Affective Factors:**

Emotions that learners experience can have a negative or positive impact on their ability to learn. Unfortunately many of the learners who enter LBS programs express negative emotions such as low self-esteem or feelings of inferiority often resulting from previous learning experiences. These emotions can limit a person's willingness to attempt learning

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<sup>5</sup> Samuels, Marilyn (1992). *Asking the Right Questions*. Calgary, Alberta: The Learning Centre & Alberta Vocational College., Florida's Focus on Learning Disabilities. *Bridges to Practice Online Module*. <<http://www.floridatechnet.org/inservice/bridges/comp3c.html>> and National Adult Literacy & Learning Disabilities Center (1999). *Bridges to Practice: Guidebook 2*. National Institute for Literacy. <[http://www.nifl.gov/nifl/ld/reports/bridges\\_pt2.pdf](http://www.nifl.gov/nifl/ld/reports/bridges_pt2.pdf)>

activities and result in an inability to articulate and build upon any strengths he or she may have. Time and time again practitioners have shared their experience of how a person's increase in self-esteem has had a major impact on learners' ability to learn new skills and willingness to risk attempting new tasks. This highlights how important it is for learners to understand their challenge areas and explore different ways to learn.

The following chart was taken from the document "Asking the Right Questions" developed by The Learning Centre, Calgary and the Alberta Vocational College, Calgary, 1992. **The following are emotions, which arise from beliefs and thoughts:**

<b>Emotions</b>	<b>Belief</b>	<b>Thoughts</b>
Anxiety (worry, fear)	Believe that you are in danger because something will happen to you.	What if I don't understand the instructions?
Feelings of inferiority	Compare yourself to others and conclude that you are not at their level (intelligence, ability etc.).	They can read much faster than me.
Frustration	You feel things should be different, life falls short of your expectations.	I should not have made that mistake. The teacher expects us to know that.
Hopelessness (discouragement)	The problem will never go away and things will never improve.	I will never be good at writing. I will never be able to remember this.
Depression	Feelings of loss: failure to achieve an important personal goal.	I will never get a job like the one I had. What's the point? No one cares what I do anyway.

Remember, these emotions have been ingrained in a person for many years so it will take time to combat the effects of these emotions. However, by helping the learner discover **why** they are experiencing barriers to learning and understand **how** they can learn will help to reduce the impact of the negative emotions. Celebrating success and helping learners to understand their strengths and challenges can help foster positive emotions that support a successful learning environment. Building upon learner strengths can also help to foster positive emotions.

## Motivational factors

Understanding what motivates a person to learn is a key factor in effective instruction. Practitioners need to understand what brings learners to the program every day and what encourages learners to continue to improve their skills and knowledge. Is it their belief in their abilities, their desire to achieve competence or their willingness to change? Practitioners often identify that learners have low levels of motivation. What motivates us is unique to each individual. However, some of the variables that affect people's motivation to learn are:

- Attitudes toward learning based on previous individual, family and peer experiences
- Beliefs about oneself
- Active involvement in establishing goals
- Ownership of goals
- Level of involvement in learning and relevancy of learning to goals
- Supports within the learning environment
- Supports within the home environment
- Personal attributes

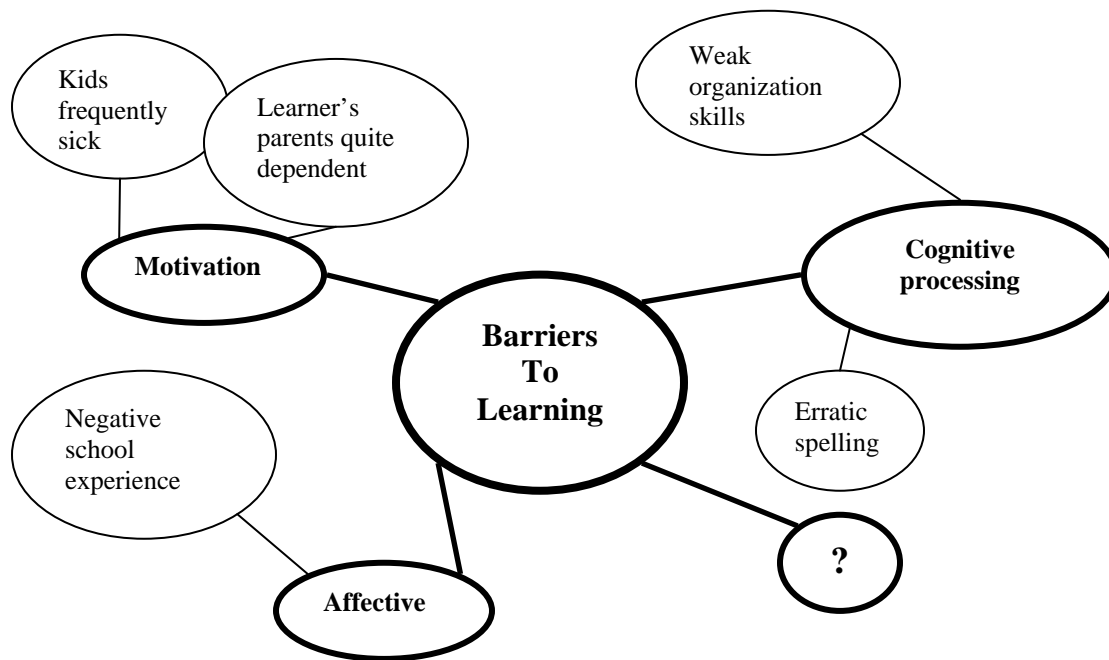
As learners begin to gain a better understanding of their challenges and strengths and begin to internalize that they can learn, they are more likely to be internally motivated to engage in learning for its own sake.<sup>6</sup>

Adult learners constantly weigh the pros and cons that affect their motivation to learn. The more positive benefits learners perceive, the more motivated they become. Thus motivation can be influenced! The practitioner's role is to set the stage for a positive and motivational learning experience.

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<sup>6</sup> Exploring Adult Literacy (1999). *Goal Orientations of Low-Literacy Learners in Adult Basic Education: Some Issues for Adult Literacy Instruction*. <[http://literacy.kent.edu/cra/2001/goal\\_orient/link2.html](http://literacy.kent.edu/cra/2001/goal_orient/link2.html)>.

## Mapping out your discoveries



Throughout the learning journey, both the learner and practitioner can begin to discover barriers to learning and understand what is affecting their learning. Discovery is an ongoing process that should continue throughout the learner's training experience.

In the diagram above the '?' indicates that the practitioner has a hunch there is another barrier that may impact on the learner's ability to learn. As the practitioner continues to work with the learner, they will be able to determine if their hunch is valid, identify additional barriers and explore strategies to help resolve or overcome the barriers. The map also illustrates that potential learning disabilities may be just one area that creates barriers to learning and that other factors can create barriers as well.

Potential learning disabilities are just one of the barriers to learning. All other factors need to be considered to capture a holistic picture of the learner's needs.

## Case study exercise – Mike

The following case study was taken from one of the programs that participated in piloting the learning disability screening tools to support the development of the online sessions.

**Background of the learner**

Mike has worked at Imperial, a tobacco factory, for 20 years. The company has closed down and he is now on a severance package and needs to retrain. Mike has been successful in doing many day-to-day tasks but he cannot read. His wife says that he is highly skilled in many areas. She is convinced that his only problem is that he cannot read. Mike attended the local college, but could not participate in the classes because he had no reading skills.

**Learner's reason for participating in the LBS program and a brief history of participation in the program to date.**

Mike needs to retrain because his old job no longer exists. He came to Agency X because he found college too difficult and needed to have more individual attention. Mike hopes to get a truck driver's license and needs to be able to read and write for this job.

**Why this learner was approached for potential learning disability screening**

There seemed to be a discrepancy between the skills Mike's wife spoke of him having and his level of reading ability. She spoke highly of his skills in other areas. Mike seemed to be able to do most day-to-day tasks that do not require reading and have at least an average level of functioning in all other areas. Mike states that reading just did not click with him. He would make some progress and then lose it again. When Mike speaks, he has some challenges putting his thoughts into words and often has difficulty finding a particular word. He says he is a pretty good organizer and has a good attention span. Mike finds doing math calculations and recalling math facts fairly manageable but struggles with math word problems.

**Previous school and family history**

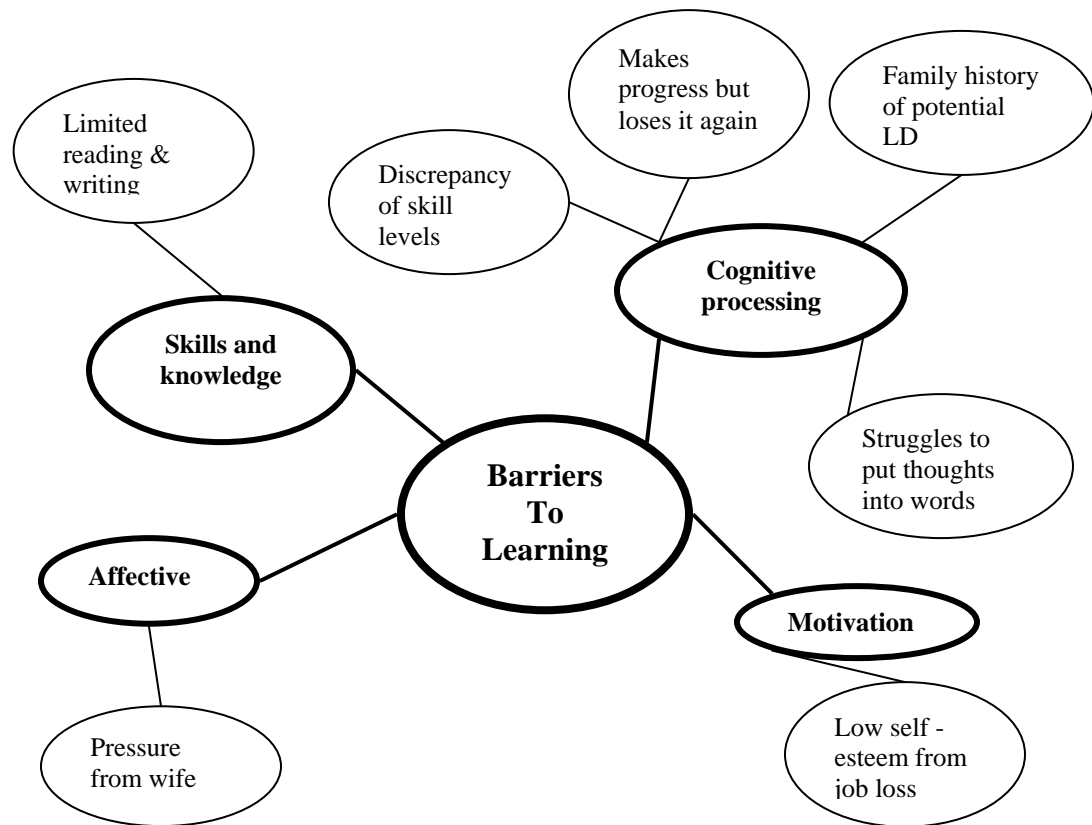
- Completed Grade 8
- Repeated Grade 1
- Left high school at age 15 to go to work
- No frequent absences from school
- Favourite subject was math
- Does not recall receiving any special assistance during school nor any special testing
- Father could not read - Mother could only read in German

### Goal path of the learner

Mike was not clear on his goals. He is getting a lot of pressure from his wife to take on a job that will provide the kind of income the family is accustomed to, but he does not seem to feel confident about his ability to do a job like truck driving.

### Case study task

Based on the information contained in the case study, use the mapping process to identify the potential barriers that are facing Mike (cognitive, motivational, affective and skills/knowledge)



### Case study discussion:

What additional information would you like to gain and how would you gather this information? Would you suggest using a learning disability screening tool and, if so, how would you approach Mike about this?

# Screening questions to enhance your current intake process

Some screening instruments include a structured interview. The following questions are some of the more pertinent questions you will find in the structured interview. Some programs find it easier to incorporate some specific questions designed to elicit information concerning adults' learning histories in their current intake process.

## Key questions to include:

- Did you ever repeat any grades in school?
- Why did you leave school (if appropriate)?
- Were you ever given any special education assistance in the past? If so, what kind?
- How would you describe your reading abilities?
  - Are you able to sound out words that you don't know?
  - If you can read the words, are you able to understand and remember what you read?
  - Are you a fast reader?
- Can you usually understand verbal directions, or what other people say?
  - Are you able to explain yourself when speaking so that other people understand you?
- How would you describe your writing abilities?
  - Can you organize your ideas to write?
  - Do you usually put periods and commas, etc. in the right place?
  - How would you describe your spelling?
- How would you describe your ability to do math or science?
- How would you describe your social skills? Do you have difficulty making and/or keeping friends?

- Have you ever been formally assessed (one-on-one) before for any learning difficulties?
- What do you feel gives you the most difficulty when doing school or work tasks?
  - What do you find easiest to do?

This information will help determine where adults' learning strengths and weaknesses might lie. Their responses will help form a foundation on which strategies can be built.

## Discussion questions

- ⇒ When you review the above questions, do you already have similar questions incorporated into your intake process?
- ⇒ Have you included other questions that you find beneficial in gaining an understanding of the learners' strengths and weaknesses?
- ⇒ Could you share them with the group?



**Most adult learners in a literacy program will relate to at least one of the key questions noted above.** This will not necessarily mean that the learner has a potential learning disability. Therefore, practitioners should not suspect the presence of learning disabilities if adults display only one or two of these characteristics. Practitioners need to seek information in different ways through consulting with other staff, observing characteristics under a number of circumstances, and assessing further the learners' skill areas. This will help not only to confirm (or deny) their suspicions, but it will also help in planning the next steps.

## Helpful interview techniques

Learners should understand that practitioners do not know everything about how adults learn. The more information learners can share, the more likely it is that practitioners can improve the opportunities for learning.



### Practitioners can also:

#### Create a comfortable, supportive environment

- Welcome learners
- Give learners a tour of the program
- Offer coffee
- Initiate social chat – if appropriate, the practitioner could share some personal information on commonalities with the learner
- Maintain positive body language

#### Be clear on the purpose of the discussion

- Explain the purpose of the screening process
- Explain the materials that will be used
- Emphasize the importance of the learner's role
- Discuss the importance of the team approach
- Explain how the results will be used

#### Ensure that the questions and answers are clear

- Make sure learners understand the questions by providing examples or by asking if they understand the questions and have them paraphrase
- Use clear language
- Use open-ended questions when inquiring (how or why)
- Allow sufficient time for responses
- Provide alternative answers if the person is having difficulty providing an answer (for example, the practitioner could ask: *"You mentioned you hated school, could you explain why?"* If the learner responds with *"I don't know"* or with silence, the practitioner could then ask: *"What part of school did you hate – the students, the teachers, the tests, or the homework?"*)

**Sum up the process**

- Explain the next steps
- Go over the results if appropriate
- Emphasize how this is a positive step<sup>7</sup>

**Deciding what tools to pack**

Ah the joys of packing! For many of us packing for a trip can be a challenge. What will the weather be like? Where will we go? Will we need casual or formal clothes?



Deciding what screening tools to use during a journey of discovery with a learner can be a lot like packing for a trip. There are many variables that can affect what tools you choose to include in your toolbox (suitcase). Each variable will be weighted differently depending on the learners you serve, your agency resources, the purpose for using the tool, the availability of formal assessment services and your experiences as a practitioner – just to name a few!

When Literacy Link South Central decided to develop a rating process for the learning disability screening tools, we first researched what tools had been evaluated already and examined what criteria were used during their research. The criteria were modified to reflect the LBS program environment and then vetted by a working group to ensure relevancy and comprehensiveness. We then asked practitioners from the LBS community to review several screening tools and share what factors (criteria) they used when they evaluated the tools. Interestingly however, LBS practitioners and external researchers shared very similar views as to what criteria should be used to evaluate screening tools.

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<sup>7</sup> Learning Disabilities Association of Canada (2001). *Screening for Success*, Marilyn Samuels (1992).

## Rating criteria for the screening tools

The following is a list of criteria that were used by Literacy Link South Central. For each screening tool that was rated, we documented whether evidence was present or not to support each criterion. We did not assign a weight to each criterion because we felt that learners and programs have varying needs for the tools and it would therefore be impossible to determine the priorities for the literacy field.

Keep in mind that every organization may have different priorities for each of the criteria. What is important is determining why you are accessing the learning disability screening tool, whether it will serve the desired purpose and whether the learner will benefit from the information obtained.

- The screening tool should yield reliable information. The screening material should reliably measure indicators of potential learning disabilities and yield consistent results. (E.g. if the screening tool was given to the same person again, similar indicators of potential learning disabilities would be evident). Note: a low standard of error should be evident. Remember most tools may only have a maximum of 75% accuracy (75% of the time, the screening tool is correct in identifying a potential learning disability).
- The screening tool should be valid. The screening material adequately represents the full range of characteristics associated with learning disabilities. The screening material is consistent with what is currently known about learning disabilities. It covers a scope sufficient to provide an initial assessment in several areas such as language, motor, organization and social skills (look at what areas the screening questions cover or refer to the technical manual, if applicable, for a description of what areas are assessed with the instrument).
- The screening tool should be cost-effective. This should include the initial purchase and ongoing purchases of related materials such as question booklets, score sheets etc.
- The time required to conduct the screening procedures should be reasonable. It should be quick to administer, score, and interpret.
- The requirements for learning to use the screening tool should be reasonable. Requirements may range from reviewing the instructions or user manual to participating in a training session.

- The screening tool should minimize bias. The screening material must accurately highlight potential indicators of learning disabilities regardless of a person's age, gender, race, ethnicity, or primary language.
- Instructions should provide information on how to interpret the screening tool results/findings.
- The screening tool should be compatible with the goals of the organization. For example, if an organization serves only adults, the screening tool used should be developed for use with adults only. Similarly, if an organization serves an ESL clientele, then the screening tool should be geared to the needs of that client group.
- The format and written text of the screening tool should follow clear language guidelines.
- The screening tool should include information to help select **possible** learning materials and/or instructional practices and strategies.

### **Discussion questions:**

- ⇒ What criteria would be most important to you if you were reviewing or selecting existing or potential screening tools?
- ⇒ Are there other factors that would affect your decision on what tools to select?

## **Screening tools evaluated by Literacy Link South Central**

Both commercial and non-commercial (accessible online or have minimal cost) screening tools were included in the rating process. The identification of the tools was accomplished by conducting an extensive Internet search, accessing AlphaPlus and Learning Disability Association of Ontario (LDAO) resources, posting an information request on the Literacy Forum discussion and by consulting with external evaluators. To access an evaluation for each tool, refer to Chapter Two Appendix A.

## Non-commercial tools

- **Adult Learning Disabilities Screening (ALDS)** <http://www-tcall.tamu.edu/research/ldnquiry.htm#tools>
- **Adult Dyslexia Checklist** The British Dyslexia Association <http://www.bda-dyslexia.org.uk/main/information/adults/a03check.asp>
- **Characteristics of possible LD** – adapted from materials provided by Payne & Associates Inc. Department of Social Services California <http://www.dss.cahwnet.gov/getinfo/acl01/pdf/01-70.pdf> - exhibit A page 29 of 41.
- **Cooper Screening of Information Processing** [www.learningdifferences.com](http://www.learningdifferences.com)
- **Delta Screener** - refer to Chapter Two Appendix B
- **Destination Literacy** <http://www.ldac-taac.ca/english/indepth/adults/destinat.htm>
- **Learning Differently** – Adult Learning and Literacy Manitoba Education, Training and Youth Adult Learning and Literacy p.16 of 61 <http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/aet/all/publications.html#Practitioner>
- **Santa Barbara guidelines** for screening the student with a learning disability <http://www.west.net/~ger/screening.html>
- **Screening Inventory** Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario - refer to Chapter Two Appendix C
- **Simple Screening Checklist** developed by the Institute for Community Inclusion at the University of Massachusetts, Boston [http://www.onestops.info/print.php?article\\_id=28](http://www.onestops.info/print.php?article_id=28)
- **Washington State Screening Tool** <http://www.seakingwdc.org/LD/WaScreenTool.htm>  
The technical report is available in a pdf format at <http://www.seakingwdc.org/LD/LDRept-WA.pdf>

## Commercial screening tools

- **Cognitive Information Processing (CIP)** [www.ldinfo.com](http://www.ldinfo.com)
- **Diagnostic Assessment of Reading with Trail Strategies (DARTTS)** Riverside Publishing Company (p) 800-323-9540  
<http://www.riverpub.com/products/group/dartts/home.html>
- **Dyslexia Adult Screening Test (DAST)** You can order the product online through the Psychological Corporation at <http://www.tpc-international.com/resources/title.cfm?id=1052>
- **Jordan Dyslexia Assessment/Reading Program** MD Angus & Associates Limited [www.psychtest.com](http://www.psychtest.com) Canadian based (click on the “About this site” button on the left, then click on “Testing Materials Resource Book: Online Edition.” Scroll and click on Canadian dollars, then scroll and click on “Learning Disability materials” which will take you to the Jordan Program order material).
- **Lucid Adult Dyslexia Screening (LADS)** Go to [www.lucid-research.com](http://www.lucid-research.com)
- **PowerPath** to adult Basic Learning [www.powerpath.com](http://www.powerpath.com)

Throughout the online training sessions, we highlighted various screening tools including learner responses and case studies. Each tool was piloted by LBS practitioners and learners. Practitioners and learners offered good insight into the various types of screening tools from the quick screen to more in-depth processes.

The following tools are described in further detail throughout this manual:

- ⇒ The Washington Screening Test
- ⇒ The Delta Screening Tool (which is a modified version of the Learning Disabilities Association of Canada “Destination Literacy” developed by Pat Hatt)
- ⇒ The Adult Learning Disability Screening (ALDS) Tool
- ⇒ The Cooper Screening Tool.

**The above tools were selected for three reasons:**

First, they all had sufficient evidence that supported the rating criteria.

Second, together they represent a good cross section of varying types of screening tools for potential learning disabilities.

Third, the pilot participants (including both practitioners and learners) indicated that each tool would be acceptable to use.

**If you would like to access the ratings for all tools that were part of the evaluation process, refer to Chapter Two Appendix A.**

## Summary of Key Points

- Screening tools and checklists are used to help identify **potential** learning disabilities. Screening tools are **not** designed to provide a diagnosis.
- **Potential** learning disability characteristics should be observed over a number of times and under various circumstances.
- Screening is part of the assessment process – it involves gathering, observing, informally assessing and reviewing to identify, understand and plan for learning barriers. Both the practitioner and learner should work as a team through the process of discovery.
- **Potential** learning disabilities may only be one barrier to learning. Other factors such as affective, motivation and skills and knowledge provide the complete picture. Each one can influence the others and it may be difficult to determine the primary cause for the learning blocks.
- Regardless of the screening tools that are used or the time when the screening may take place, the following areas should be explored to get a full understanding of the learner's barriers and strengths:
  - Learner's work habits and learning strategies
  - Learner's writing, reading and math samples
  - Learner's short term visual and auditory memory
  - Learner's medical and family history (if relevant)
  - Learner's previous school history
- There are many variables that can affect what tools you choose to include in your screening toolbox. Each variable will be weighted differently depending on the learners you serve, your agency resources, the purpose for using the tool, the availability of formal assessment services and your experiences as a practitioner – just to name a few!
- Anything you know about or observe in the learner may offer clues

## Chapter Two Appendix A

### LD Screening Tool Rating Procedure

#### **Purpose of screening and informal initial assessment**

- Determine if signs of potential LD are present
- Identify potential difficult areas for further investigation
- Identify the learner's strengths and weaknesses to help plan for instruction

#### **Criteria for rating screening tools**

- **Reliable** - the screening material reliably measures indicators of potential learning disabilities and yields consistent results (if the screening tool was given to the same person again, similar indicators of potential learning disabilities would be evident).  
Note: a low standard of error should be evident.
- **Valid** - the screening material adequately represents the full range of characteristics associated with learning disabilities. The screening material is consistent with what is currently known about learning disabilities. It covers a scope sufficient to provide an initial assessment in several areas such as language, motor, organization and social skills (look for a description of which learning disability indicators may be assessed with the instrument).
- **Cost-effective** - including initial purchase and ongoing purchases of related materials such as question booklets, score sheets etc.
- **Time** - the time required to conduct the screening procedures is reasonable. The tool is quick to administer, score, and interpret.
- **Requirements for learning to use the screening tool are reasonable** - requirements may range from reviewing the instructions and user manual to participating in a training session.

- Minimize bias - the screening material accurately highlights potential indicators of learning disabilities regardless of a person's age, gender, race, ethnicity, or primary language.
- Instructions - instructions are provided on how to interpret the screening tool results/findings.
- Compatible with the goals of the organization - if you serve only adults, was the test developed for adults only or if you serve a number of ESL learners, was this the intended audience for the screening tool?
- Format and written text follows clear language guidelines.
- Informs selection of possible learning materials and/or instructional practices.

**Source:** National Adult Literacy and Learning Disabilities (1999). *Bridges to Practice, Guidebook 2* and <http://www.seekingwdc.org/ld/screening.htm>

### **Rating procedure and rationale:**

The consultant will review each tool and provide the following information:

- A brief description of the tool
- A brief summary of evidence that is found based on each screening tool criteria
- The top 5 tools that contained the most evidence in meeting the rating criteria (in particular, reliability and validity)
- Recruitment of 5 – 7 practitioners from the London area to participate in a focus group

### **Role of focus group**

- To volunteer 1 hour to review the tools prior to the focus group
- To actively participate in the focus group (2 hour time commitment)
- To review the top 5 tools and select the top 3
- To participate in piloting one or two learning disability screening tools

**EVALUATION OF SCREENING TOOLS****Description:**

Development of the Adult Learning Disabilities Screening (ALDS) started in 1996 and was completed recently. It is very affordable and easy to administer. No training is needed and the instrument takes about 15 to 20 minutes to administer. The ALDS consists of three parts: Self-Rating Scale, Inventory, and a brief Interview. All three taken together have been shown to be a very effective tool in finding indications of LD (other than a teacher's experience with the student), which could serve as a basis for a referral to a psychologist for a formal diagnosis. <http://www-tcall.tamu.edu/research/ldnquiry.htm#tools>

<b>Name of tool</b>	<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Limited evidence</b>
Adult Learning Disabilities Screening (ALDS)	Yields reliable information: the screening material reliably measures indicators of potential learning disabilities and yields consistent results (if the screening tool was given to the same person again, similar indicators of potential learning disabilities would be evident). A low standard of error should be evident.	89% of people who took the test and were tested again later had the same results. A full technical report is available.	

	Is valid: The screening material adequately represents the full range of characteristics associated with learning disabilities. The screening material is consistent with what is currently known about learning disabilities. It covers a scope sufficient to provide an initial assessment in several areas, such as language, motor, organization and social skills (look for a description of which learning disability indicators may be assessed with the instrument).	Part of test validation is how well the screening battery differentiates between persons with and without learning disabilities. For both the rating scales and inventory, the results were very accurate, with 85% and 90% correct classifications, respectively. A validity check is part of the screening process. The examiner completes 11 questions before the rating scales and inventory are scored. They focus on one critical decision by the examiner – Does the examiner have any reason to believe that the scores from the battery should be interpreted any differently for this person than for any other person? If the answer is “yes” then the scores are suspect and possibly invalid. Yes – the rating scale covers self-attributions, spelling, reading, organization, and social skills, one’s work efficiency and sense of direction. The inventory item clusters cover learning influences and problems, arithmetic skills, educational history and mental health issues. A full technical report is available.	
	The tool is cost-effective including initial purchase and ongoing purchases of related materials such as question booklets, score sheets etc.	The technical report = \$7.00 US funds. ALDS directions for administration, scoring and interpretation = \$5.00 US funds. Each individual ALDS record booklet = \$3.00 US funds. Shipping ranges from free to \$16.75 US funds depending on the volume of test books purchased. It is comparatively inexpensive in terms of time and money.	
	The time required to conduct the screening procedures is reasonable: it is quick to administer, score, and interpret.	It takes about 15 to 20 minutes to administer. Most adults are finished in 15 minutes. No specific time is stated but experience shows it takes approximately 10 minutes to score and interpret the tool.	
	The requirements for learning to use the screening tool are reasonable. Requirements may range from reviewing the instructions and user manual to participating in a training session.	Staff training is easy and requires less than 2 hours. In fact, the training options can vary depending on the practitioner’s skills. Persons who are skilled in assessment can likely read through the manual and figure out the administration and scoring.	

	Minimize bias. The screening material accurately highlights potential indicators of learning disabilities regardless of a person's age, gender, race, ethnicity, or primary language.	During the development of the test from 1996 to 1999, over 360 test questions were written, reviewed and administered to adults ages 16 to 65. Extensive item analyses were completed to eliminate any test questions difficult to read or answer, irrelevant to the lives of the persons taking the tests, or considered biased due to offensive or stereotypic content. In 1999, during a standardization and validation study, over 488 adults were tested with subtests from the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale – III, the Woodcock-Johnson and the ALDS. The characteristics of the participants included a range of male and female, ethnic groups, age, and client groups (prison, SRS, LD, AE etc). Scores from all of the tests were combined in selecting the test questions for ALDS.	
	Instructions are provided on how to interpret the screening tool results/findings.	Examiner validity check is built into the process through 11 questions. Two numeric scores are calculated to determine if a referral is recommended for a possible learning disability. Comprehensive instructions are provided on how to administer the test. The instructions are presented in a “mock interview” format.	
	The tool is compatible with the goals of the organization. For example, if you serve only adults, was the test developed for adults only or if you serve a number of ESL learners, was this the intended audience for the screening tool?	Used for adults (16 to 65), literacy needs are acknowledged since the examiner can read the questions to the learner if necessary. Adult educators, social welfare caseworkers, and special education staff were among the group of developers. ALDS was developed based on the National Adult Literacy and Learning Disabilities center review of 80 existing screening tools.	
	The format and written text follows clear language guidelines.	Lots of white space, questions in clear language and easy to read. All questions on the tool can be completed independently or read to the person.	
	The tool includes information to help select possible learning materials and/or instructional practices.	The ALDS was designed to aid in decisions about which persons should be referred as possibly having a learning disability. A cutoff score is provided for both the rating scale and inventory. The ALDS does give the practitioner and learner an indication of areas that appear to present challenges for them. The rating scale covers: self-attribution, spelling skills, reading skills, social skills, efficiency, sense of direction, and organization skills. The inventory covers: learning influences, learning problems, educational experiences, mental health, fraction skills and math operations.	The challenge areas are highlighted. Further assessment would be required to determine strategies for each of the identified challenge areas.

**Description:** The screening tool is found in the Manitoba Education, Training and Youth Adult Learning and Literacy, Level II Certification Course: Learning Differently training manual. The manual also includes an overview of learning disabilities and Attention Deficit Disorder, informal screening tools, general strategies for teaching and learning, and specific techniques for reading, writing and spelling. The manual is available in a pdf format and can be accessed at <http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/aet/all/publications.html#Practitioner>

Name of tool	Criteria	Evidence	Limited evidence
Learning Differently – Adult Learning and Literacy Manitoba Education, Training and Youth 310 - 800 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg, MB R3G 0N4 2000	Yields reliable information: the screening material reliably measures indicators of potential learning disabilities and yields consistent results (if the screening tool was given to the same person again, similar indicators of potential learning disabilities would be evident). A low standard of error should be evident.		No evidence of research or statistical evidence.
	Is valid: The screening material adequately represents the full range of characteristics associated with learning disabilities. The screening material is consistent with what is currently known about learning disabilities. It covers a scope sufficient to provide an initial assessment in several areas such as language, motor, organization and social skills (look for a description of which learning disability indicators may be assessed with the instrument).	The screening form covers the following areas: previous diagnosis, education, language, and physical/emotional problems. The checklist covers indicators of LD in social, organizational, communication and memory. Project Bridges was a key source for the material found in the online sessions.	No indicators of math disabilities.
	The tool is cost-effective including initial purchase and ongoing purchases of related materials such as question booklets, score sheets etc.	Available online. Programs would need to cover photocopying costs.	
	The time required to conduct the screening procedure is reasonable: it is quick to administer, score, and interpret.	Appears it would take 15 to 20 minutes to conduct, administer and interpret the LD screening tool.	

	The requirements for learning to use the screening tool are reasonable. Requirements may range from reviewing the instructions and user manual to participating in a training session.	Practitioners should have a basic understanding of the indicators of LD. If they have this foundation, the practitioner would only need to review the tool prior to using it with a learner.	No instructions are provided on how to use the tool. However, if you require assistance, clarification or have questions or comments about the materials, please telephone ALL at: (204) 945-3556 in Winnipeg or 1-800-282-8069 ext. 3556 Toll free (204) 726-6027 in Brandon or 1-800-262-3930 Toll-free
	Minimize bias. The screening material accurately highlights potential indicators of learning disabilities regardless of a person's age, gender, race, ethnicity, or primary language.		No statistical testing or information on any sample group used during the development of the tool. No research available that includes adults with similar characteristics to persons that are served in LBS programs.
	Instructions are provided on how to interpret the screening tool results/findings.	On the screening form, a statement is included to be sensitive to possible emotional problems and respect confidentiality. In addition, it is to be remembered that the tool should not be used to diagnose or counsel but to only provide indicators of learning disabilities. The checklist states that 10 or more responses may indicate the presence of a learning disability.	
	The tool is compatible with the goals of the organization. For example, if you serve only adults, was the test developed for adults only or if you serve a number of ESL learners, was this the intended audience for the screening tool?	The government department that developed the tool focused on adult literacy. The resources used to develop the online sessions were from an adult literacy organization in the US.	

	The format and written text follow clear language guidelines.	Simple language, good use of white space, good font size.	The checklist is in a table format but should have a space between each indicator to make it clearer to read.
	The tool includes information to help select possible learning materials and/or instructional practices.	The tool helps to identify indicators that may reflect a possible learning disability. Further assessment would be required to understand the challenge areas in order to build an effective learning plan.	No information is available with the tool but there is a module on teaching strategies. It would require the practitioner to make the links based on reading the material.

<b>Name of tool</b>	<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Limited evidence</b>
Screening Checklist: ADD Adapted from Driven to Distraction by E.M. Hallowell and J.J. Ratey (1994) found in the appendix of Learning Differently – Adult Learning and Literacy Manitoba Education, Training and Youth 310 - 800 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg, MB R3G 0N4 2000	Yields reliable information: the screening material reliably measures indicators of potential learning disabilities and yields consistent results (if the screening tool was given to the same person again, similar indicators of potential learning disabilities would be evident). A low standard of error should be evident.		No evidence of research or statistical evidence – will need to consult the original tool. The tool only addresses ADD.

	Is valid: The screening material adequately represents the full range of characteristics associated with learning disabilities. The screening material is consistent with what is currently known about learning disabilities. It covers a scope sufficient to provide an initial assessment in several areas, such as language, motor, organization and social skills (look for a description of which learning disability indicators may be assessed with the instrument).	The screening checklist covers common indicators of ADD such as: organization, achievement, social skills, attention, and internal emotions.	No statistical information. It does not address ADHD.
	The tool is cost-effective including initial purchase and ongoing purchases of related materials such as question booklets, score sheets etc.	Available online. Programs would need to cover photocopying costs.	
	The time required to conduct the screening procedures is reasonable: it is quick to administer, score, and interpret.	Appears it would take 5 to 10 minutes for the learner and about 3 minutes to interpret.	
	The requirements for learning to use the screening tool are reasonable. Requirements may range from reviewing the instructions and user manual to participating in a training session.		No requirements stated.
	Minimize bias. The screening material accurately highlights potential indicators of learning disabilities regardless of a person's age, gender, race, ethnicity, or primary language.		No statistical testing or information on any sample group used during the development of the tool. No research available that includes adults with similar characteristics to persons that are served in LBS programs.
	Instructions are provided on how to interpret the screening tool results/findings.	At the end of the tool, practitioners are asked to add up the responses – fifteen or more “often” responses may indicate that the individual has ADD and should investigate having a more formal assessment done.	
	The tool is compatible with the goals of the organization. For example, if you serve only adults, was the test developed for adults only or if you serve a number of ESL learners, was this the intended audience for the screening tool?	Designed for adults.	No further information available.
	The format and written text follows clear language guidelines.	Overall simple language, good use of white space, good font size.	Some words may require practitioners to expand or provide a definition. For example: conversing, intuitive, hyperfocus.

	The tool includes information to help select possible learning materials and/or instructional practices.		No information is available with the tool but the tool is included in a document developed by the Manitoba government that includes teacher strategies. It would require the practitioner to make the links based on their reading of the material.
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<b>Name of tool</b>	<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Limited evidence</b>
ADD Screening Checklist adapted from Amen 1999 found in the appendix of Learning Differently – Adult Learning and Literacy Manitoba Education, Training and Youth 310 - 800 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg, MB R3G 0N4 2000	Yields reliable information: the screening material reliably measures indicators of potential learning disabilities and yields consistent results (if the screening tool was given to the same person again, similar indicators of potential learning disabilities would be evident). A low standard of error should be evident.		No evidence of research or statistical evidence – need to check original source. The tool only addresses ADD.
	Is valid: The screening material adequately represents the full range of characteristics associated with learning disabilities. The screening material is consistent with what is currently known about learning disabilities. It covers a scope sufficient to provide an initial assessment in several areas such as language, motor, organization and social skills (look for a description of which learning disability indicators may be assessed with the instrument).	The checklist covers: past history, attention span, restlessness, impulsivity, organization, follow through, negative internal feelings, relational difficulties, energy, sensitivities, sleep patterns, writing, and stimulation activity.	No mention of ADHD and the differences.
	The tool is cost-effective including initial purchase and ongoing purchases of related materials such as question booklets, score sheets etc.	Available online. Programs would need to cover photocopying costs.	

	The time required to conduct the screening procedures is reasonable: it is quick to administer, score, and interpret.	Appears it would take 15 to 20 minutes to conduct and administer. It would take about 5 minutes to interpret.	
	The requirements for learning to use the screening tool are reasonable. Requirements may range from reviewing the instructions and user manual to participating in a training session.		
	Minimize bias: The screening material accurately highlights potential indicators of learning disabilities regardless of a person's age, gender, race, ethnicity, or primary language.		No statistical testing or information on any sample group used during the development of the tool. No research available that includes adults with similar characteristics to persons that are served in LBS programs.
	Instructions are provided on how to interpret the screening tool results/findings.	On the screening form, it states that it cannot and should not replace a diagnosis by a trained specialist. At the end of the checklist, it states the practitioner needs to total the number of items with a score of three (3) or more. If there are more than 20 items with a score of three or more, a strong tendency toward ADD is indicated.	
	The tool is compatible with the goals of the organization. For example, if you serve only adults, was the test developed for adults only or if you serve a number of ESL learners, was this the intended audience for the screening tool?		No information.
	The format and written text follow clear language guidelines.	In chart format and organized under sub-headings.	Font is small and requires more space in between the items in the checklist.
	The tool includes information to help select possible learning materials and/or instructional practices.		No information is available with the tool but the tool is included in a document developed by the Manitoba government that includes teacher strategies. It would require the practitioner to make the links based on their reading of the material.

**Description:** The Cooper Screening of Information Processing (C-SIP) was developed by Dr. Richard Cooper to provide teachers and other professionals with a way to determine if a person manifests any common characteristics of learning problems. The screening can be thought of as a diagnostic teaching tool. A teacher, over time, would obtain much of the same information as he or she got to know the student and observed the way the student learned and the errors which the student commonly made. This manual is divided into two parts 1) the quick start and 2) the in-depth explanation. The Quick Start section is for those who prefer to try something and read about it later. The in-depth explanation is for those who like to read about something before trying it. Individuals who have observed the administration of the Screening report that it flows more like a conversation than an assessment. This is because the administrator can add more questions to obtain clarification or more information about the topic being asked. [www.learningdifferences.com](http://www.learningdifferences.com)

Name of tool	Criteria	Evidence	Limited evidence
Cooper Screening of Information Processing	Yields reliable information: the screening material reliably measures indicators of potential learning disabilities and yields consistent results (if the screening tool was given to the same person again, similar indicators of potential learning disabilities would be evident). A low standard of error should be evident.	At present, they are using the screening state wide and currently collecting data to establish norms. (Pennsylvania)	At present, no statistical data available. However, they are in the process of establishing norms by using the tool state wide.
	Is valid: The screening material adequately represents the full range of characteristics associated with learning disabilities. The screening material is consistent with what is currently known about learning disabilities It covers a scope sufficient to provide an initial assessment in several areas such as language, motor, organization and social skills (look for a description of which learning disability indicators may be assessed with the instrument).	The tool covers a large scope of indicators of learning disabilities. The tool covers the following areas: educational history, attention, motor skills, auditory processing, right/left discrimination, organization, employment, emotional, social and family, oral communication, writing, handwriting, basic math skills, math skills, math vocabulary, reading, reading comprehension, vocabulary, avoidance and goals.	
	The tool is cost-effective including initial purchase and ongoing purchases of related materials such as question booklets, score sheets etc.	Available on line for free – practitioners are only required to cover photocopying costs.	
	The time required to conduct the screening procedures is reasonable: it is quick to administer, score, and interpret.	It takes approximately 50 minutes to administer for most individuals. There is also a short form of the screening test. The time to score and interpret is not stated but based on practice, it can take over an hour, especially for first time users.	

	<p>The requirements for learning to use the screening tool are reasonable. Requirements may range from reviewing the instructions and user manual to participating in a training session.</p>	<p>The practitioner needs to review the manual and can access a video tape of Dr. Cooper administering the C-SIP to a student followed by a explanation of the process (110 minutes). The directions for administering and scoring provide helpful suggestions for interview techniques and how the test should be administered for each section. In addition, the administrator's manual provides the following information for each section of the tool: what is the purpose, what to look for and special considerations. Dr. Cooper also recommends that the practitioner practice using the tool to develop a comfortable knowledge of the questions and rationale behind them.</p> <p>To register for an online training module using the tool, go to <a href="http://www.paadulthood.org">www.paadulthood.org</a></p>	
	<p>Minimize bias. The screening material accurately highlights potential indicators of learning disabilities regardless of a person's age, gender, race, ethnicity, or primary language.</p>	<p>At present no statistical data available However, they are in the process of establishing norms by using the tool state wide.</p>	<p>No research available that includes adults with similar characteristics to persons that are served in LBS programs.</p> <p>It states that the best results are obtained from students who have a good and honest knowledge of themselves. If a learner does not understand the severity of this/her own difficulties, then it is left up to the administrator to make a judgment rather than simply record the student's response.</p>

	Instructions are provided on how to interpret the screening tool results/findings.	Results are included on how to score and interpret the results and findings. Dr. Cooper states that the tool is not a standardized test but rather a diagnostic teaching instrument. It is not designed to enable teachers to diagnose learning disabilities, but it may be the first stage of an evaluation process.	
	The tool is compatible with the goals of the organization. For example, if you serve only adults, was the test developed for adults only or if you serve a number of ESL learners, was this the intended audience for the screening tool?	Developed for adults and practitioners who may not have the expertise or access to professional standardized learning disability assessment tools.	
	The format and written text follow clear language guidelines.	Large font, good use of white space, and simple language used. Easy format to follow.	
	The tool includes information to help select possible learning materials and/or instructional practices.	Part of the initial screening tool includes actual assessment tasks including numeracy, writing and reading samples. A 6 page manual has just been developed to help interpret the results including teaching and learning strategies.	

**Description:** This document was developed by the Learning Disability Special Interest Group of the College Committee on Disability Issues (CCDI) as a screening tool for adults at risk for learning disabilities. It was developed for use by a variety of post-secondary practitioners including counsellors, disability advisors, learning disability specialists, as well as professionals working with adults experiencing learning problems. The information gathered by the Delta Screener will assist the interviewer in making decisions about appropriate referrals and support strategies. If there is evidence that suggests a possible learning disability, the adult will need to be referred for a diagnostic assessment.

Name of tool	Criteria	Evidence	Limited evidence
The Delta Screener	Yields reliable information: the screening material reliably measures indicators of potential learning disabilities and yields consistent results (if the screening tool was given to the same person again, similar indicators of potential learning disabilities would be evident). A low standard of error should be evident.		No statistical data reported.
	Is valid: The screening material adequately represents the full range of characteristics associated with learning disabilities. The screening material is consistent with what is currently known about learning disabilities. It covers a scope sufficient to provide an initial assessment in several areas such as language, motor, organization and social skills (look for a description of which learning disability indicators may be assessed with the instrument).	Items in the screening questionnaire are based on the expertise of many professionals working in the post-secondary system. Some information was adapted from screening questionnaires developed by: <i>Destination Literacy</i> , Learning Disability Association of Canada; Carol Herriot at the University of Guelph; and the University of Minnesota. A series of questions are directed to the adult student. These questions cover the following areas: post secondary academic status, previous academic history, language and developmental history, family history, health and medical history and employment. The checklist also covers challenges, strengths and daily living activities.	No statistical data reported.
	The tool is cost-effective including initial purchase and ongoing purchases of related materials such as question booklets, score sheets etc.	Material is free – only photocopy costs.	
	The time required to conduct the screening procedures is reasonable: it is quick to administer, score, and interpret.	It should take you approximately one hour to administer the Delta Screener and At-Risk Summary Checklist.	No information on actual time required to interpret the results is indicated.
	The requirements for learning to use the screening tool are reasonable. Requirements may range from reviewing the instructions and user manual to participating in a training session.	Practitioner would need to review the test and manual. The manual includes interview guidelines along with the purpose for the interview questions, including indicators of potential learning disabilities for each section.	

	Minimize bias: The screening material accurately highlights potential indicators of learning disabilities regardless of a person's age, gender, race, ethnicity, or primary language.	Clear indicators for both potential learning disabilities and non learning disabilities are highlighted. The developers of the test clearly state that the tool does not provide an official diagnosis of learning disabilities.	No statistical data available.
	Instructions are provided on how to interpret the screening tool results/findings.	The Administration Guidelines provide a framework to guide the interviewer through the process of gathering information relating to factors that could contribute to learning difficulties. The At-Risk Summary Checklist assists the interviewer in summarizing identified at-risk factors.	
	The tool is compatible with the goals of the organization. For example, if you serve only adults, was the test developed for adults only or if you serve a number of ESL learners, was this the intended audience for the screening tool?	The tool is designed for adults who are entering post secondary education but could be used for adult literacy programs as well.	
	The format and written text follow clear language guidelines.	Easy to read and follow format. Guidelines are clear.	
	The tool includes information to help select possible learning materials and/or instructional practices.	The purpose of the screening tool is to identify potential indicators of a learning disability to make appropriate referrals.	None.

**Description:** As an introduction to the screening tool itself, the manual provides interview tips and techniques to aid the adult education practitioner. In addition, there are sample interviews based on real case studies which offer insight into the variety of individuals who may have learning disabilities. The manual also offers informal assessment tools in reading, writing, spelling and math. These tools can be used to help identify the strengths and areas of need for each learner.

Name of tool	Criteria	Evidence	Limited evidence
Screening for Success LDAC (screening questionnaire and at-risk summary checklist)	Yields reliable information: the screening material reliably measures indicators of potential learning disabilities and yields consistent results (if the screening tool was given to the same person again, similar indicators of potential learning disabilities would be evident). A low standard of error should be evident.		No information available. However, the developer of the material has had extensive experience within the field and the reference group consisted of a number of LD specialists.
	Is valid: The screening material adequately represents the full range of characteristics associated with learning disabilities. The screening material is consistent with what is currently known about learning disabilities. It covers a scope sufficient to provide an initial assessment in several areas such as language, motor, organization and social skills (look for a description of which learning disability indicators may be assessed with the instrument).	The screening questionnaire covers personal and family situation, health, language, education history, and employment. The checklist covers academic, social, cognitive, memory and life skills. The guidelines give indicators of possible learning disabilities and suggested questions to keep in mind when reviewing the data to try to determine if there is evidence of a potential learning disability.	No statistical data or information available on validity. However, the developer of the material has had extensive experience within the field and the reference group consisted of a number of LD specialists.
	The tool is cost-effective including initial purchase and ongoing purchases of related materials such as question booklets, score sheets etc.	\$50.00 to purchase the manual which includes a blank copy of the screening tool.	
	The time required to conduct the screening procedures is reasonable: it is quick to administer, score, and interpret.	The manual states it will take approximately one hour to administer the screening questionnaire and the At-Risk Summary Checklist.	No indication of how long it will take to score and interpret the tools.
	The requirements for learning to use the screening tool are reasonable. Requirements may range from reviewing the instructions and user manual to participating in a training session.	It is suggested that before a practitioner uses the tool they should read the information on interviewing as well as the questionnaire and checklist and become familiar with the items in the At-Risk Summary Checklist.	
	Minimize bias: The screening material accurately highlights potential indicators of learning disabilities regardless of a person's age, gender, race, ethnicity, or primary language.		No statistical data available.

	Instructions are provided on how to interpret the screening tool results/findings.	For each section covered in the interview, the purpose and signs for potential learning disabilities are included. An At-Risk Summary Checklist is a tool to summarize the findings.	There is no information on how many “yes” responses would indicate a potential learning disability.
	The tool is compatible with the goals of the organization. For example, if you serve only adults, was the test developed for adults only or if you serve a number of ESL learners, was this the intended audience for the screening tool?	The tool is designed to offer adult education practitioners the tools and expertise needed to screen adults at risk for learning disabilities.	
	The format and written text follow clear language guidelines.	Good use of white space, clear language and font size is easy to read.	The screening checklist has small boxes to check off the responses – it may be difficult to ensure you stay on the corresponding line for the item in questions.
	The tool includes information to help select possible learning materials and/or instructional practices.	Based on the challenge areas identified on the tool, the practitioner would need to access the informal assessment tools included in the manual to provide further information on possible learning materials and instructional practices.	The tool only provides an indication of challenge areas.

**Description:** A screening tool is used to indicate the need for formal learning disabilities diagnostic testing. It was designed to help identify possible learning needs that may impact an adult’s employability.

The current project uses two screening tool questionnaires: (1) a 13-question State of Washington validated LD screening tool. The tool is administered to participants who manifest a special learning need. . <http://www.seakingwdc.org/LD/WaScreenTool.htm>

The technical report is available in a pdf format at <http://www.seakingwdc.org/LD/LDRept-WA.pdf>

Name of tool	Criteria	Evidence	Limited evidence
Washington State screening tool	Yields reliable information: the screening material reliably measures indicators of potential learning disabilities and yields consistent results (if the screening tool was given to the same person again, similar indicators of potential learning disabilities would be evident). A low standard of error should be evident.	In phase one of the development of a screening tool, the Payne Learning Needs Inventory was tested to identify the critical items on the inventory that distinguished individuals diagnosed with LD from those without a diagnosis. Based on the testing, a total of 13 items were identified and incorporated into the screening tool.	

	Is valid: The screening material adequately represents the full range of characteristics associated with learning disabilities. The screening material is consistent with what is currently known about learning disabilities. It covers a scope sufficient to provide an initial assessment in several areas such as language, motor, organization and social skills (look for a description of which learning disability indicators may be assessed with the instrument).	Covers the following areas: education, hearing, vision, speech, medical/physical and brief questions on memory, spelling and math. Based on statistical testing, the screen resulted in a 74% correct classification rate overall.	
	The tool is cost-effective including initial purchase and ongoing purchases of related materials such as question booklets, score sheets etc.	Available on line – practitioners are required to cover printing costs.	
	The time required to conduct the screening procedures is reasonable: it is quick to administer, score, and interpret.	After reviewing the screening tool questionnaire, it would take approx 10 mins to administer and about 5 minutes to interpret.	No time requirements stated.
	The requirements for learning to use the screening tool are reasonable. Requirements may range from reviewing the instructions and user manual to participating in a training session.	If a person had a general understanding of learning disabilities, they could use the tools once they had reviewed them.	No requirement stated.
	Minimize bias. The screening material accurately highlights potential indicators of learning disabilities regardless of a person's age, gender, race, ethnicity, or primary language.	The sample size was a total of 672 adults who were welfare recipients. Not all referrals for the sample were random. The participant's age ranged from 16 to 58 years. The average age was 26. On average, the participants had completed 10.3 years of school.	The project participants were predominantly Caucasian (67%) and African American (19%). In some aspects, the project sampling differed from the overall statewide welfare population.
	Instructions are provided on how to interpret the screening tool results/findings.	For the 13 questions the test administrator is required to count the number of "yes" responses and if there are more than 12, then they are required to refer for further evaluation.	
	The tool is compatible with the goals of the organization. For example, if you serve only adults, was the test developed for adults only or if you serve a number of ESL learners, was this the intended audience for the screening tool?	Geared to adults.	Was developed for social service case managers.
	The format and written text follow clear language guidelines.		Copy available on Internet is not user friendly. It would require reformatting.
	The tool includes information to help select possible learning materials and/or instructional practices.		No information available.

**Description:** The list describes some of the problems that might be indications of a learning disability based on an initial assessment of a learner's skills in a number of areas. The tool provides suggested areas for the practitioner to observe during the assessment process. <http://www.west.net/~ger/screening.html>

Name of tool	Criteria	Evidence	Limited evidence
Santa Barbara guidelines for screening the student with a learning disability	Yields reliable information; the screening material reliably measures indicators of potential learning disabilities and yields consistent results (if the screening tool was given to the same person again, similar indicators of potential learning disabilities would be evident). A low standard of error should be evident.		No statistical data available.
	Is valid: The screening material adequately represents the full range of characteristics associated with learning disabilities. The screening material is consistent with what is currently known about learning disabilities. It covers a scope sufficient to provide an initial assessment in several areas such as language, motor, organization and social skills (look for a description of which learning disability indicators may be assessed with the instrument).	Covers questions pertaining to the student's reading, writing, math, receptive language and listening skills, verbal expression, memory and organizational skills.	No statistical data available.
	The tool is cost-effective including initial purchase and ongoing purchases of related materials such as question booklets, score sheets etc.	Free – available on the Internet. Photocopying costs would need to be covered.	
	The time required to conduct the screening procedures is reasonable: it is quick to administer, score, and interpret.	The checklist would be used when doing an initial assessment of a learner's skill. Therefore, the depth of the assessment would correlate to the time required.	No information stated.
	The requirements for learning to use the screening tool are reasonable. Requirements may range from reviewing the instructions and user manual to participating in a training session.		No information stated.
	Minimize bias: The screening material accurately highlights potential indicators of learning disabilities regardless of a person's age, gender, race, ethnicity, or primary language.		No information available.

	Instructions are provided on how to interpret the screening tool results/findings.	Checkmarks within a section or scattered checkmarks in a few sections may suggest that testing would be beneficial.	Very limited.
	The tool is compatible with the goals of the organization. For example, if you serve only adults, was the test developed for adults only or if you serve a number of ESL learners, was this the intended audience for the screening tool?	Geared to adults and the guidelines cover areas that are commonly assessed in a LBS program.	
	The format and written text follows clear language guidelines.	Good use of white space and level of text appropriate for a practitioner to understand.	
	The tool includes information to help select possible learning materials and/or instructional practices.	Only challenge areas are identified through the use of the tool. Further assessment would be required in these areas to develop learning materials and/or instructional practices.	Only challenge areas are identified. No other information included.

**Description:**

The characteristics for possible learning disabilities are contained in the Department of Social Services Policy manual. The actual screening tool that is used by caseworkers is the Seattle Washington tool that is described above. The list of characteristics covers: attention, memory, oral communication, processing, reading, writing, math, self-concept and social abilities.

<http://www.dss.cahwnet.gov/getinfo/acl01/pdf/01-70.pdf> - exhibit A page 29 of 41.

Name of tool	Criteria	Evidence	Limited evidence
Characteristics of possible LD – adapted from materials provided by Payne & Associates Inc. Department of Social Services California	Yields reliable information: the screening material reliably measures indicators of potential learning disabilities and yields consistent results (if the screening tool was given to the same person again, similar indicators of potential learning disabilities would be evident). A low standard of error should be evident.		

	Is valid: The screening material adequately represents the full range of characteristics associated with learning disabilities. The screening material is consistent with what is currently known about learning disabilities. It covers a scope sufficient to provide an initial assessment in several areas such as language, motor, organization and social skills (look for a description of which learning disability indicators may be assessed with the instrument).	The characteristic lists covers the following areas: attention, reasoning and processing, memory, oral communication, reading, writing and spelling, coordination, social competence and self-concept.	
	The tool is cost-effective including initial purchase and ongoing purchases of related materials such as question booklets, score sheets etc.	Available on line – cover photocopying costs only.	
	The time required to conduct the screening procedures is reasonable: it is quick to administer, score, and interpret.	It would be advisable to observe the characteristics over a number of meetings. Therefore time will vary based on practitioner's judgment. The more frequent the observations, the more likely that a potential learning disability exists.	No official time stated.
	The requirements for learning to use the screening tool are reasonable. Requirements may range from reviewing the instructions and user manual to participating in a training session.	Good observation skills would be required.	No requirements stated with this tool.
	Minimize bias. The screening material accurately highlights potential indicators of learning disabilities regardless of a person's age, gender, race, ethnicity, or primary language.		Based on practitioner's observations.
	Instructions are provided on how to interpret the screening tool results/findings.	Six key questions are provided to determine whether a possible learning disability exists. If the answer to each question is "yes", then the participant should be referred for a LD evaluation.	
	The tool is compatible with the goals of the organization. For example, if you serve only adults, was the test developed for adults only or if you serve a number of ESL learners, was this the intended audience for the screening tool?	Geared for adults.	
	The format and written text follow clear language guidelines.	Good use of white space, format clear, good font size and language easy to understand.	
	The tool includes information to help select possible learning materials and/or instructional practices.	Only challenge areas are identified through the use of the tool. Further assessment would be required in these areas to develop learning materials and/or instructional practices.	Only challenge areas are identified.

**Description:** a 34 question screening inventory that requires the learner to answer “never, sometimes or often.” The more statements that the learner answers “often” to – the more likely a potential learning disability is present. The screening inventory was designed to be used by the LDOA chapters as part of the process of deciding if an adult had possible learning disabilities and should be referred for assessment. As a screening tool, it is meant to be answered by the learner. It would be appropriate for literacy practitioners to use before referring a learner for a more in-depth interview.

Name of tool	Criteria	Evidence	Limited evidence
Screening Inventory Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario	Yields reliable information: the screening material reliably measures indicators of potential learning disabilities and yields consistent results (if the screening tool was given to the same person again, similar indicators of potential learning disabilities would be evident). A low standard of error should be evident.		It is not research-based. No statistical data provided.
	Is valid: The screening material adequately represents the full range of characteristics associated with learning disabilities. The screening material is consistent with what is currently known about learning disabilities. It covers a scope sufficient to provide an initial assessment in several areas such as language, motor, organization and social skills (look for a description of which learning disability indicators may be assessed with the instrument).		No statistical data provided. However, the tool has been developed by professionals who have extensive experience within the learning disabilities field.
	The tool is cost-effective including initial purchase and ongoing purchases of related materials such as question booklets, score sheets etc.	No costs – just photocopying.	

	The time required to conduct the screening procedures is reasonable: it is quick to administer, score, and interpret.	34 questions that require a response – should take approximately 5 minutes to administer and 2 minutes to score and interpret	No official time stated.
	The requirements for learning to use the screening tool are reasonable. Requirements may range from reviewing the instructions and user manual to participating in a training session.	Practitioner would need to read through the statements to become familiar with them.	No requirements stated.
	Minimize bias: The screening material accurately highlights potential indicators of learning disabilities regardless of a person's age, gender, race, ethnicity, or primary language.		No data available
	Instructions are provided on how to interpret the screening tool results/findings.	It states that everyone has problems with these areas some of the time, but if there are many items to which you answer "often", it may be useful to look into the possibility of learning disabilities.	
	The tool is compatible with the goals of the organization. For example, if you serve only adults, was the test developed for adults only or if you serve a number of ESL learners, was this the intended audience for the screening tool?	Provides an indication of learning disabilities – a quick screen that could be used in the intake process. It appears to be developed for adults based on the statements.	
	The format and written text follows clear language guidelines.	Good use of white space> Simple language is used and good font size.	
	The tool includes information to help select possible learning materials and/or instructional practices.	Provides an indication of learning disabilities. The practitioner would need to conduct further informal assessment in the challenge areas to develop learning materials and/or instructional practices.	Only indicators are identified.

**Description:** It is a checklist for the possible presence of a learning disability. A practitioner would use this guide as they observe the learner and evaluate learner work samples/demonstrations.

[http://www.onestops.info/print.php?article\\_id=28](http://www.onestops.info/print.php?article_id=28)

Name of tool	Criteria	Evidence	Limited evidence
Simple Screening Tool developed by the Institute for Community Inclusion at the University of Massachusetts, Boston	Yields reliable information: the screening material reliably measures indicators of potential learning disabilities and yields consistent results (if the screening tool was given to the same person again, similar indicators of potential learning disabilities would be evident). A low standard of error should be evident.		No statistical data provided.

	Is valid: The screening material adequately represents the full range of characteristics associated with learning disabilities. The screening material is consistent with what is currently known about learning disabilities. It covers a scope sufficient to provide an initial assessment in several areas such as language, motor, organization and social skills (look for a description of which learning disability indicators may be assessed with the instrument).	Screening tool was adapted from a number of lists developed by the following organizations: Learning Disabilities Association of America, For Employers... A Look at Learning Disabilities, 1990; ERIC Clearinghouse on Disabilities and Gifted Education, Examples of Learning Disability Characteristics, 1991; The Orton Dyslexia Society's Annals of Dyslexia, Volume XLIII, 1993; and the Council for Learning Disabilities, Infosheet, October 1993.	No statistical data provided.
	The tool is cost-effective including initial purchase and ongoing purchases of related materials such as question booklets, score sheets etc.	No costs – just photocopying.	
	The time required to conduct the screening procedures is reasonable: it is quick to administer, score, and interpret.	There are 29 questions for the practitioner to consider while observing the learner. The answers to the questions would require several observation sessions. Therefore the time will vary depending on the program structure and individual characteristics.	No official time stated.
	The requirements for learning to use the screening tool are reasonable. Requirements may range from reviewing the instructions and user manual to participating in a training session.	Practitioner would need to read through the statements to become familiar with them. Practitioner should also have knowledge of and experience with observation.	No requirements stated.
	Minimize bias: The screening material accurately highlights potential indicators of learning disabilities regardless of a person's age, gender, race, ethnicity, or primary language.		No data available.

	Instructions are provided on how to interpret the screening tool results/findings.	Keep in mind: a checklist is a guide-a list of characteristics. It is difficult to provide a checklist of typical characteristics of adults with learning disabilities because the most common characteristic is their unique differences. In addition, most adults exhibit or have exhibited some of these characteristics. In other words, saying “yes” to any one item – or several items – on this checklist does not mean that an individual has a learning disability. However, if the customer answers “yes” to most of the items, and experiences these difficulties to such a degree that they have problems in employment, education, and/or daily living, it might be a sign that they could benefit from further specialized assessment from a qualified professional.	
	The tool is compatible with the goals of the organization. For example, if you serve only adults, was the test developed for adults only or if you serve a number of ESL learners, was this the intended audience for the screening tool?		
	The format and written text follows clear language guidelines.		Would require reformatting since the checklist is included in an article and available via the web.
	The tool includes information to help select possible learning materials and/or instructional practices.	Provides an indication of learning disabilities. The practitioner would need to conduct further informal assessment in the challenge areas to develop learning materials and/or instructional practices.	Only indicators are identified.

**Description:** The British Dyslexia Association is the voice of dyslexic people. They aim to influence government and other institutions to promote a dyslexia-friendly society. The BDA promotes early identification and support in schools to ensure opportunity to learn for dyslexic learners. They want to represent the needs of dyslexic people on leaving school, in higher education and in work. They have developed a screening tool which is a 20 item checklist that requires a “yes” or “no” response to each question. <http://www.bda-dyslexia.org.uk/main/information/adults/a03check.asp>

Name of tool	Criteria	Evidence	Limited evidence
Adult Dyslexia Checklist The British Dyslexia Association	Yields reliable information: the screening material reliably measures indicators of potential learning disabilities and yields consistent results (if the screening tool was given to the same person again, similar indicators of potential learning disabilities would be evident). A low standard of error should be evident.	A statistical procedure involving discriminate function analysis, a factor analysis and a series of t-tests was carried out. The objective was to identify the items on the questionnaire that best discriminated between dyslexic and non—dyslexic individuals.	
	Is valid: The screening material adequately represents the full range of characteristics associated with learning disabilities. The screening material is consistent with what is currently known about learning disabilities. It covers a scope sufficient to provide an initial assessment in several areas such as language, motor, organization and social skills (look for a description of which learning disability indicators may be assessed with the instrument).	A statistical procedure involving discriminate function analysis, a factor analysis and a series of t-tests was carried out. The objective was to identify the items on the questionnaire that best discriminated between dyslexic and non—dyslexic individuals.	
	The tool is cost-effective including initial purchase and ongoing purchases of related materials such as question booklets, score sheets etc.	Available on line. Costs would only include photocopying.	
	The time required to conduct the screening procedures is reasonable: it is quick to administer, score, and interpret.	It would take about 5 minutes to administer and about 3 to 5 minutes to score and interpret.	

	The requirements for learning to use the screening tool are reasonable. Requirements may range from reviewing the instructions and user manual to participating in a training session.	Practitioners would only need to read over the checklist along with the brief instructions prior to usage.	No manual or requirements stated.								
	Minimize bias: The screening material accurately highlights potential indicators of learning disabilities regardless of a person’s age, gender, race, ethnicity, or primary language.	<p>This questionnaire was completed by 679 adults divided into the following groups:-</p> <table><tr><td>Students enrolled in BA &amp; BSc degree courses.</td><td>57%</td></tr><tr><td>Students enrolled in Certificate and Access courses.</td><td>7%</td></tr><tr><td>A-Level students.</td><td>15%</td></tr><tr><td>Non-student adults.</td><td>21%</td></tr></table> <p>The age range was 18 to 68 and the proportion of men and women was approximately equal.</p> <p>The sample contained 32 known dyslexic individuals.</p>	Students enrolled in BA & BSc degree courses.	57%	Students enrolled in Certificate and Access courses.	7%	A-Level students.	15%	Non-student adults.	21%	
Students enrolled in BA & BSc degree courses.	57%										
Students enrolled in Certificate and Access courses.	7%										
A-Level students.	15%										
Non-student adults.	21%										

	Instructions are provided on how to interpret the screening tool results/findings.	<p>If the majority of these items are ticked, this is a strong indication of dyslexia.</p> <p>On the questionnaire as a whole (ie. all 20 items):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 60% of people gave no more than four YES response.</li> <li>• 90% of people gave no more than eight YES responses</li> </ul> <p>The 20 items are rated in a table format listing the most powerful indicator first. Nine or more YES responses on the questionnaire, as a whole, is therefore a powerful indicator of a difficulty. The items ticked should be compared with the “best twelve” shown in the table format.</p>	
	The tool is compatible with the goals of the organization. For example, if you serve only adults, was the test developed for adults only or if you serve a number of ESL learners, was this the intended audience for the screening tool?	Geared to adults, including adults who are non-students.	
	The format and written text follows clear language guidelines.	Good use of white space, font size easy to read, table format clear and easy to read language.	
	The tool includes information to help select possible learning materials and/or instructional practices.	Provides an indication of learning disabilities. The practitioner would need to conduct further informal assessment on the challenge areas to develop learning materials and/or instructional practices.	None available – only indicators are identified.

### **Commercial Screening/Assessment Tools (only tools that are geared to adults have been included)**

Please note that attempts have been made to provide comments on evidence for each criterion, however some areas may have minimal or no information due to limited access to technical and/or administrative manuals.

**Description:** Before teaching reading skills, instructors can discover how each student learns, or fails to learn, by using 11 screening tests that identify specific reasons why individuals struggle with reading skills. With this information, both students and instructors understand why previous encounters with literacy skills were ineffective. Understanding why learning has been difficult replaces old dread and fear of learning with hope. Knowing how to learn to read makes it possible to approach reading safely without fear of failure... PRO-ED online Store

<http://www.proedinc.com> US based or MD Angus & Associates Limited [www.psychtest.com](http://www.psychtest.com) Canadian based

Name of tool	Criteria	Evidence	Limited evidence
Jordan Dyslexia Assessment/Reading Program	Yields reliable information: the screening material reliably measures indicators of potential learning disabilities and yields consistent results (if the screening tool was given to the same person again, similar indicators of potential learning disabilities would be evident). A low standard of error should be evident.		No mention of reliability.
	Is valid: The screening material adequately represents the full range of characteristics associated with learning disabilities. The screening material is consistent with what is currently known about learning disabilities. It covers a scope sufficient to provide an initial assessment in several areas such as language, motor, organization and social skills (look for a description of which learning disability indicators may be assessed with the instrument).	"In the instructors manual (pp.11 – 48) it does include research regarding dyslexia and examples of each severity level" <sup>8</sup>	Screens only those with dyslexia. No mention of percentages or validity.
	The tool is cost-effective including initial purchase and ongoing purchases of related materials such as question booklets, score sheets etc.	Complete Kit = \$132.00 Instructor's manual \$110.00 and student workbook \$25.00	

<sup>8</sup> National Adult Literacy and Learning Disabilities (1999). *Bridges to Practice Guidebook 2: Screening Tools Report Card*.

	The time required to conduct the screening procedures is reasonable: it is quick to administer, score, and interpret.		“There is no indication of how long the tests take to administer and no indication of time required to score the results.” <sup>9</sup> There are many tests so one can assume it would take some time.
	The requirements for learning to use the screening tool are reasonable. Requirements may range from reviewing the instructions and user manual to participating in a training session.	“p.3 of the instructors manual states that persons administering the test need not be highly trained specialists.” <sup>10</sup>	
	Minimize bias: The screening material accurately highlights potential indicators of learning disabilities regardless of a person’s age, gender, race, ethnicity, or primary language.	Case studies are included which involved students of all ages and gender but no mention of race, ethnicity or primary language.	
	Instructions are provided on how to interpret the screening tool results/findings.		
	The tool is compatible with the goals of the organization. For example, if you serve only adults, was the test developed for adults only or if you serve a number of ESL learners, was this the intended audience for the screening tool?	Designed for students of any age who show signs of dyslexia.	
	The format and written text follows clear language guidelines.		No material to review.
	The tool includes information to help select possible learning materials and/or instructional practices.	Each of the 75 lessons includes structured review of previous skills, introduction of a new literacy skill and follow up practice to build permanent memory of that skill. The reading program guides students step by step through structured lessons that integrate four learning modalities: sight, speech, hearing and touch.	

<sup>9</sup> NALLD (1999).

<sup>10</sup> NALLD (1999).

**Description:** The *Diagnostic Assessments of Reading with Trial Teaching Strategies* (DARTTS) program is comprised of individually administered tests and related diagnostic lessons. The testing component of the program is the *Diagnostic Assessments of Reading*; the teaching component is designed to be used in conjunction with the testing component to discover the teaching methods and instructional materials that will be most effective with individual students.

Riverside Publishing Company (p) 800-323-9540 <http://www.riverpub.com>

Name of tool	Criteria	Evidence	Limited evidence
Diagnostic Assessment of Reading with Trail Strategies (DARTTS)	Yields reliable information: the screening material reliably measures indicators of potential learning disabilities and yields consistent results (if the screening tool was given to the same person again, similar indicators of potential learning disabilities would be evident). A low standard of error should be evident.		No reliability measures included <sup>11</sup>
	Is valid: The screening material adequately represents the full range of characteristics associated with learning disabilities. The screening material is consistent with what is currently known about learning disabilities. It covers a scope sufficient to provide an initial assessment in several areas such as language, motor, organization and social skills (look for a description of which learning disability indicators may be assessed with the instrument).	<p>The diagnostic assessment includes Six Tests of Reading and Language:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Word Recognition</li> <li>○ Word Analysis</li> <li>○ Oral Reading</li> <li>○ Silent Reading Comprehension</li> <li>○ Spelling</li> <li>○ Word Meaning</li> </ul> <p>Reveals strengths and weaknesses.</p>	No research provided on which learning disabilities characteristics may be assessed with the instrument. However, research included item tryouts with 1664 students and norm-referenced after. <sup>12</sup>
	The tool is cost-effective including initial purchase and ongoing purchases of related materials such as question booklets, score sheets etc.	<p>The complete kit = \$232.00 US which includes (15) student booklets.</p> <p>To purchase 15 additional booklets = \$23.00 US</p>	
	The time required to conduct the screening procedures is reasonable: it is quick to administer, score, and interpret.		

<sup>11</sup> NALLD (1999).

<sup>12</sup> NALLD (1999).

	The requirements for learning to use the screening tool are reasonable. Requirements may range from reviewing the instructions and user manual to participating in a training session.	No special training is required except the review of the manual. The testing component is administered and scored simultaneously and takes 20-30 minutes. The trial teaching strategies are brief lessons tailored to stages of reading development. They take approximately 30 minutes.	
	Minimize bias: The screening material accurately highlights potential indicators of learning disabilities regardless of a person's age, gender, race, ethnicity, or primary language.		
	Instructions are provided on how to interpret the screening tool results/findings.		
	The tool is compatible with the goals of the organization. For example, if you serve only adults, was the test developed for adults only or if you serve a number of ESL learners, was this the intended audience for the screening tool?	Individualized approach to reading instruction. Special materials are provided geared to adult needs and interests. The teaching strategies reinforce positive student attitudes and can be used with individuals or groups.	
	The format and written text follow clear language guidelines.		
	The tool includes information to help select possible learning materials and/or instructional practices.		Although teaching strategies are included there is no research to support the link between the assessment and the teaching strategies <sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> NALLD (1999).

**Description** *PowerPath* is a screening and intervention system based on 25 years of research. With software, the system produces an Individual Report for the participant. The report offers personalized diagnostic information and prescriptive strategies.

*PowerPath* includes:

- A standardized intake interview
- Three easy-to-use screenings for learning difficulties: Information Processing, Attention Difficulties, Scotopic Sensitivity

[www.powerpath.com](http://www.powerpath.com)

Name of tool	Criteria	Evidence	Limited evidence
PowerPath to Adult Basic Learning	Yields reliable information: the screening material reliably measures indicators of potential learning disabilities and yields consistent results (if the screening tool was given to the same person again, similar indicators of potential learning disabilities would be evident). A low standard of error should be evident.	Promotional material states <i>PowerPath's</i> Screening Process is standardized, validated, and reliable.  Although the <i>PowerPath</i> was built upon the ABE screening procedure known as the London Procedure developed by Dr. Weisel, the research on the validity and reliability of <i>PowerPath</i> itself are still in progress.	
	Is valid: The screening material adequately represents the full range of characteristics associated with learning disabilities. The screening material is consistent with what is currently known about learning disabilities. It covers a scope sufficient to provide an initial assessment in several areas such as language, motor, organization and social skills (look for a description of which learning disability indicators may be assessed with the instrument).	Promotional material states <i>PowerPath's</i> Screening Process is standardized, validated, and reliable.  Although <i>PowerPath</i> was built upon the ABE screening procedure known as the London Procedure developed by Dr. Weisel, the research on the validity and reliability of <i>PowerPath</i> itself are still in progress. <sup>14</sup>  The following areas are screened: information processing, attention difficulties and scotopic sensitivity.	
	The tool is cost-effective including initial purchase and ongoing purchases of related materials such as question booklets, score sheets etc.		PowerPath Kit = \$2995.00 US  To reorder the forms/consumables costs \$465.00 US for 100 units.

<sup>14</sup> NALLD (1999).

	The time required to conduct the screening procedures is reasonable: it is quick to administer, score, and interpret.	In the promotional material it states it will take approximately one hour to administer the three screening tools. Scoring requires data entry into the software program which will then generate individual reports. The promotional material states that the data can be entered in a matter of minutes.	
	The requirements for learning to use the screening tool are reasonable. Requirements may range from reviewing the instructions and user manual to participating in a training session.	<p>It is designed for adult basic instructors and literacy volunteers. Users are not required to attend PowerPath Certification Training to use PowerPath, but it is recommended that PowerPath sites have at least one PowerPath certified user. Self-instruction takes approximately 8 – 15 hours and familiarity with the User's guide and test plates.<sup>15</sup></p> <p>To become certified as a PowerPath user, an individual must attend PowerPath's Level I Certification Training -- including completion of the course prerequisites, 20 contact hours of training, AND submission of a complete case study*.</p> <p>PowerPath trainings are hosted by a state or a group of PowerPath sites within a specific region. A \$125.00/person registration and materials fee is charged to attend the 3 day Certification Training. Travel expenses and meals are assumed by either the training host or the individual PowerPath site.</p>	
	Minimize bias: The screening material accurately highlights potential indicators of learning disabilities regardless of a person's age, gender, race, ethnicity, or primary language.		PowerPath was developed based on a pilot study of the London Procedure which does not include basic demographics of age, gender, race, ethnicity or primary language. Further studies are in progress to address this.

<sup>15</sup> NALLD (1999).

	<p>Instructions are provided on how to interpret the screening tool results/findings.</p>	<p>Software to analyze screening results and prescribe accommodations. The results provide the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Personal Profile -- A recap of the information collected during the intake interview</li> <li>• Diagnostic Screening Analysis -- An explanation of assessment results</li> <li>• Degree of Learning Difficulty Score -- A weighted score used to predict required service accommodations and levels of learning difficulty</li> <li>• Service Accommodations -- The emotional, social, and structural supports needed for the client to build self-esteem and to develop the independent learning skills required for acquiring basic skills</li> <li>• Learning Accommodations -- Recommended strategies that build on strengths, compensate for weaknesses, and target the development of basic skills</li> <li>• Workplace Accommodations - A series of recommended strategies for maximizing job training or on-the-job success</li> <li>• Attention Difficulties Screening - Analysis and Accommodations</li> <li>• Scotopic Sensitivity Screening - Analysis and Accommodations</li> <li>• Partnership Contract -- A guide for setting mutual expectations for a successful learning experience</li> <li>• Referral Forms -- Forms to use when it is necessary to follow up on any vision and/or hearing weaknesses uncovered in the screening</li> </ul>	
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	The tool is compatible with the goals of the organization. For example, if you serve only adults, was the test developed for adults only or if you serve a number of ESL learners, was this the intended audience for the screening tool?	Programs similar to LBS use the tool. It is intended for adult literacy learners. It uses a holistic approach incorporating theory and practice from fields of adult learning.	
	The format and written text follows clear language guidelines.		
	The tool includes information to help select possible learning materials and/or instructional practices.	A structured intervention process to build 'learning how to learn' skills, Personal Learning Plans and Personal Employment Plans. Provides both learning and workplace accommodations.	

**Description:** The CIP is a standardized behavioural rating scale that evaluates information processing characteristics. The CIP has been developed over the past twelve years to assist in the process of non-biased differential diagnosis of learning disabled students. It is based upon a thorough review of current neuropsychological research in addition to formal cognitive assessment of over 1200 students, hundreds of parent and student interviews, and direct behavioural observation of the learning disabled population. The CIP scores in the processing areas of: Auditory processing, visual processing, sequential/rational processing, conceptual/holistic processing, processing speed and attention. The CIP has been designed for adults as a self-rating tool. It includes a 40 item rating scale along with questions inquiring about a person's educational background, health, family history and previous testing. [www.ldinfo.com](http://www.ldinfo.com)  
Developed by Dr. Scott Crouse.

Name of tool	Criteria	Evidence	Limited evidence
Cognitive Information Processing (CIP)	Yields reliable information: the screening material reliably measures indicators of potential learning disabilities and yields consistent results (if the screening tool was given to the same person again, similar indicators of potential learning disabilities would be evident). A low standard of error should be evident.	<b>Test-Retest Stability</b> - An evaluation of test-retest reliability was performed. Of the 150 follow-up sets of ratings, 92% were found to show a pattern of processing which identified identical areas of relatively significant strength and weakness as were noted on the initial rating. This suggests an overall stability correlation of approximately .92. <b>Internal Consistency</b> - In order to assess the internal consistency and overall reliability of the CIP a split-half method was employed. Correlations across processing areas range from .80 to .91 with overall Global Processing Index (GPI) correlations ranging from .92 to .95. This data verifies that the CIP has very strong internal consistency.	

	Is valid: The screening material adequately represents the full range of characteristics associated with learning disabilities. The screening material is consistent with what is currently known about learning disabilities. It covers a scope sufficient to provide an initial assessment in several areas such as language, motor, organization and social skills (look for a description of which learning disability indicators may be assessed with the instrument).	As stated on the website “provides an internal measure of each rating's validity” – see technical manual for more details.	
	The tool is cost-effective including initial purchase and ongoing purchases of related materials such as question booklets, score sheets etc.	You can download the complete demo package from the website for a free 30 day trial. If you want to continue using it, the cost is \$49.00 for one year term, \$79 for a 2 yr term and \$99 for a 3 yr term - all in US funds.	
	The time required to conduct the screening procedures is reasonable: it is quick to administer, score, and interpret.	The time required for the adult to complete the self-rating scale would be 10 to 15 minutes. The software interprets the answers and provides a rating that can be interpreted in a matter of minutes.	
	The requirements for learning to use the screening tool are reasonable. Requirements may range from reviewing the instructions and user manual to participating in a training session.	It is suggested that the practitioner try out the self-rating screening tool and be comfortable with the interpretation – it takes approximately 15 minutes. Depending on the reading level of the adult, a practitioner may need to assist.	
	Minimize bias: The screening material accurately highlights potential indicators of learning disabilities regardless of a person's age, gender, race, ethnicity, or primary language.	Stated on the website: “provides a non-biased, culture fair screening/assessment,” The sample had representatives of adults, both genders and ethnic groups. The statistical comparisons found no significant differences across any of the six processing domains or in the Global Processing Index as a function of ethnicity. This suggests that the CIP is able to provide a non-biased assessment of cognitive processing skills.	

Instructions are provided on how to interpret the screening tool results/findings.

Instructions are provided on how to interpret the results of the adult's self-rating scale. Two types of scores are provided at the CIP On-Line Entry and Scoring Site - a **Global Processing Index (GPI)** score and **Standard Deviation of the Difference (SDD)** scores in each of 6 information processing areas.

The **Global Processing Index (GPI)** provides a standardized comparison between a specific person's rating and the "norms" of the standardization sample who have already been rated. The GPI is intended to provide a general measure of overall information processing skill which can then be used to determine relative processing strengths and weaknesses in specific areas (see below).

**Standard Deviation of Difference (SDD)** scores are considerably more valuable than the **GPI** from a diagnostic standpoint. The **SDD** scores provide a measure of the significance of differences found between an individual's GPI and their rating in each specific processing area. As with the GPI, the SDD scores represent the differences found within the standardization group. SDD scores within the -1 to +1 range represent the average or "normal." From a diagnostic perspective, a processing SDD score below -1 could be significant enough to negatively impact learning.

SDDs from GPI	Interpretation
2 +	Significant Relative Strength
1 to 2	Moderate Relative Strength
1 to -1	Average Range
-1 to -2	Moderate Relative Weakness
-2 +	Significant Relative Weakness

In addition to these specific SDD scores, it is also important to look for relative differences between "paired" processing areas (visual vs auditory and sequential vs conceptual). Although these differences are not provided in the on-line SDD scores, they are taken into consideration by the computer program during scoring and are reflected in the "interpretation" field.

	The tool is compatible with the goals of the organization. For example, if you serve only adults, was the test developed for adults only or if you serve a number of ESL learners, was this the intended audience for the screening tool?	Geared for adults and will help determine if cognitive processing may interfere with an adult's learning.	
	The format and written text follow clear language guidelines.	yes	
	The tool includes information to help select possible learning materials and/or instructional practices.		It only provides a rating. No suggestions for strategies.

**Description:** The purpose of the test is to screen for dyslexia and other learning difficulties. It provides a profile of strengths and weaknesses that can be used to guide the intervention training strategies for the individual learner. The DAST sees the culmination of several years of research and testing by Dr Angela Fawcett and Professor Rod Nicolson, authors of the established Dyslexia Screening Test (DST) and Dyslexia Early Screening Test (DEST), now widely used for screening younger aged candidates. You can order the product online through the Psychological Corporation at <http://www.tpc-international.com>

Name of tool	Criteria	Evidence	Limited evidence
Dyslexia Adult Screening Test (DAST)	Yields reliable information: the screening material reliably measures indicators of potential learning disabilities and yields consistent results (if the screening tool was given to the same person again, similar indicators of potential learning disabilities would be evident). A low standard of error should be evident.		No access to technical manual – therefore cannot comment.
	Is valid: The screening material adequately represents the full range of characteristics associated with learning disabilities. The screening material is consistent with what is currently known about learning disabilities. It covers a scope sufficient to provide an initial assessment in several areas such as language, motor, organization and social skills (look for a description of which learning disability indicators may be assessed with the instrument).	<p>The DAST is comprised of a total of 11 subtests which emphasize fluency as well as accuracy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- rapid naming</li> <li>- one minute reading</li> <li>- postural stability</li> <li>- phonetic segmentation</li> <li>- two minute spelling</li> <li>- backwards digit span</li> <li>- nonsense passage reading</li> <li>- non verbal reasoning</li> <li>- one minute writing</li> <li>- verbal fluency</li> <li>- segmental fluency</li> </ul>	No access to technical manual – therefore cannot comment.

	The tool is cost-effective including initial purchase and ongoing purchases of related materials such as question booklets, score sheets etc.	Complete kit: Includes examiner's manual, 50 record forms, balance tester, blindfold, cassette tape and envelope (containing score keys, rapid naming cards, one minute reading cards, nonsense passage cards, one minute writing passage cards) contained in carrying case = \$282.00 Cdn.  And a pack of 50 record forms = \$80.00 Cdn.	
	The time required to conduct the screening procedures is reasonable: it is quick to administer, score, and interpret.	Administration requires 30 minutes.	
	The requirements for learning to use the screening tool are reasonable. Requirements may range from reviewing the instructions and user manual to participating in a training session.	No restrictions as to who can use the tool. No training is required except for the practitioner to review the manual and the screening tool.	
	Minimize bias. The screening material accurately highlights potential indicators of learning disabilities regardless of a person's age, gender, race, ethnicity, or primary language.	Standardized norms on an adult UK sample.	
	Instructions are provided on how to interpret the screening tool results/findings.		No access to administration manual – cannot comment.
	The tool is compatible with the goals of the organization. For example, if you serve only adults, was the test developed for adults only or if you serve a number of ESL learners, was this the intended audience for the screening tool?	Geared for learners 16 years and up.	
	The format and written text follow clear language guidelines.		
	The tool includes information to help select possible learning materials and/or instructional practices.	Provides a profile of strengths and weaknesses that can be used to guide the intervention training strategies for the individual.	Does not provide teaching strategies or instructional practices.

**Description:** LADS is a computerized test designed to screen for dyslexia in persons 16 years and older. LADS is **not** a diagnostic test and does not purport to provide a definitive assessment of dyslexia. Nor does it assess reading and spelling abilities per se. Rather, LADS is designed to provide a quick screen of unselected or selected adults in order to indicate which of them is most likely to have dyslexia. Lucid's development team worked very closely with psychologists at the University of Hull, as well as with educational consultants, to ensure that its assessment systems conform to the highest psychometric and educational standards. Lucid's products conform to the Guidelines for the Development and Use of Computer-Based Assessments (1999) published by the Professional Affairs Board of the British Psychological Society. Lucid is an independent, UK-based company specializing in the research and development of computerized assessment systems for use in schools, colleges and other institutions worldwide. Go to [www.lucid-research.com](http://www.lucid-research.com)

Name of tool	Criteria	Evidence	Limited evidence
Lucid Adult Dyslexia Screening (LADS)	Yields reliable information: the screening material reliably measures indicators of potential learning disabilities and yields consistent results (if the screening tool was given to the same person again, similar indicators of potential learning disabilities would be evident). A low standard of error should be evident.	Lucid's products have been subjected to rigorous statistical standardization procedures, carried out according to scientifically accepted psychometric principles, which provide reliable norms.	
	Is valid: The screening material adequately represents the full range of characteristics associated with learning disabilities. The screening material is consistent with what is currently known about learning disabilities. It covers a scope sufficient to provide an initial assessment in several areas, such as language, motor, organization and social skills (look for a description of which learning disability indicators may be assessed with the instrument).	The software incorporates four assessment modules, three of which are designed to measure phonological processing and working memory skills which are typically weak in dyslexic adults despite educational intervention. These tests will provide a swift but effective screening for dyslexic individuals in a wide variety of settings, including those in further and higher education. The Reasoning test has been included in order to calibrate the Word recognition and Word construction tests to increase the accuracy of detection of dyslexia in bright, well-compensated adults. It also enables the administrator to reach a rough estimate of the person's intellectual ability, which may be important when making decisions about further action after screening. LADS was validated against established assessment systems.	

	The tool is cost-effective including initial purchase and ongoing purchases of related materials such as question booklets, score sheets etc.	Stand alone CD- the license fees are as follows: 1 year = 365 Cdn \$ 2 yrs = 730.00 Cdn. \$ 3 yrs = 1096 Cdn. \$  For network licenses fees range based on the number of users Go to <a href="http://www.lucid-research.com/Prices%20Standard.htm">http://www.lucid-research.com/Prices%20Standard.htm</a> for details.	
	The time required to conduct the screening procedures is reasonable: it is quick to administer, score, and interpret.	Each of the four modules in LADS takes about five minutes, so the whole screening can usually be completed in about 20 minutes. Results can be viewed on screen or printed out immediately.	
	The requirements for learning to use the screening tool are reasonable. Requirements may range from reviewing the instructions and user manual to participating in a training session.	The test is accompanied by a comprehensive Administrator's Manual which explains how to use the program and how to interpret results. No training is required – only review of the instructor manual and familiarity of the assessment tool is required.	
	Minimize bias: The screening material accurately highlights potential indicators of learning disabilities regardless of a person's age, gender, race, ethnicity, or primary language.	Product development involves extensive field-testing with large samples of appropriate participants. These participants include students in colleges and universities, and adults in various centres throughout UK.	
	Instructions are provided on how to interpret the screening tool results/findings.		
	The tool is compatible with the goals of the organization. For example, if you serve only adults, was the test developed for adults only or if you serve a number of ESL learners, was this the intended audience for the screening tool?	The tests in LADS are adaptive; that is, the program varies the items given according to the performance of the individual taking the test. This means that the assessment is swift and efficient. (Please note that progressively harder items will be delivered to those individuals who get many items correct; and easier items delivered to those who make incorrect responses)	
	The format and written text follows clear language guidelines.		

	The tool includes information to help select possible learning materials and/or instructional practices.	The final section of the Manual (which has been written by E.A. Draffan of <i>Sussex University's Assistive Technology Unit</i> ) covers a range of strategies for supporting adults with dyslexia, particularly using computer technology.	
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## Chapter Two Appendix B

# SCREENING ADULTS AT RISK FOR LEARNING DISABILITIES

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The Delta Screener





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## **Foreword**

This document was developed by the Learning Disability Special Interest Group of the College Committee on Disability Issues (CCDI) as a screening tool for adults at risk for learning disabilities. It was developed for use by a variety of post-secondary practitioners, including counsellors, disability advisors, learning disability specialists, as well as professionals working with adults experiencing learning problems.

Items in the screening questionnaire are based on the expertise of many professionals working in the post-secondary system. Some information was adapted from screening questionnaires developed by: *Destination Literacy*, Learning Disability Association of Canada; Carol Herriot at the University of Guelph; and the University of Minnesota.

Special thanks to all those individuals who participated in the development and piloting of this screening tool.

## Screening Adult Students At Risk For Learning Disabilities

**T**his manual includes **Administration Guidelines**, the **Delta Screener**, as well as an **At-Risk Summary Checklist**.

The Administration Guidelines provide a framework to guide the interviewer through the process of gathering information relating to factors that could contribute to learning difficulties. There are many reasons why an adult student struggles academically; many of which are not related to specific learning disabilities. The purpose of the Delta Screener is to identify adults who may have learning disabilities and to investigate their need for support strategies and accommodations. The Delta Screener is designed to be comprehensive so that it can be used as an intake and/or referral questionnaire. The At-Risk Summary Checklist assists the interviewer in summarizing identified at-risk factors.

The format of the **Delta Screener** is a series of questions you ask the adult student. These questions cover the following areas: post secondary academic status, previous academic history, language and developmental history, family history, health and medical history and employment. These areas are considered important in determining the **possibility** of learning disabilities.

The information gathered by the Delta Screener will assist the interviewer in making decisions about appropriate referrals and support strategies. If there is evidence that suggests a possible learning disability, the adult will need to be referred for a diagnostic assessment. **A definitive diagnosis would require a more extensive assessment by a qualified practitioner.**

It should take you approximately one hour to administer the **Delta Screener and At-Risk Summary Checklist**.

## **Administration Guidelines**

### **Suggested Procedures**

- Explain to the student/client the purpose of the Delta Screener;
- Tell the student that his/her answers will help you to understand his/her needs;
- Make sure that the student knows the results are confidential and that the privacy of the information will be respected;
- Encourage the student to feel free to add comments or explanations to any of his/her answers;
- Explain to the student that you will have to take notes during the interview;
- Make sure the student understands the questions;
- Provide ample time for responses;
- When the student answers "yes", ask for the specific information;
- Use "tell me more" statements as needed.

### **Guidelines for Completing the Delta Screener**

We suggest that the Delta Screener be used as part of an interview process rather than the student working on their own as the interview format provides an opportunity for a more complete investigation of areas of concern.

### **Post Secondary Academic Status**

The purpose of this area is to discuss the adult student's current learning problems. Often the student's explanation of their difficulties can give some indication of a possible source of their learning problems. You may be able to identify some learning strengths and weaknesses from the pattern of grades earned within the student's academic record.

Adult students who have no history of school difficulty previous to post-secondary settings may be experiencing some transition problems that are not the result of a learning disability. The unexpected occurrence of difficulties at the post-secondary secondary level may be a result of such factors as: motivation, maturity, changing expectations, difficulty managing workload, inappropriate program choice, etc.

Alternatively, students who previously experienced academic success may have been provided with extensive home support, which is no longer available.

### **Previous Academic History**

The goal here is to develop a clear picture from the adult's point of view as to his school experience: likes and dislikes about school, plus strengths and weaknesses in subjects. Are the strengths or weaknesses in language-based subjects or in the practical subjects such as auto mechanics, woodworking, or welding?

Encourage the student to give details in his answers, especially to those answers that indicate some problem or difficulty. If discussing high school, try to determine if he was in an academic program, leading to college or university, one leading to further technical training, or to the workforce. Often the program gives some indication of the student's abilities, at least as seen by the school system.

It is helpful to know if the student was previously diagnosed with some type of learning disability and if the school system made any accommodations for it. It is also helpful to know if

the adult has developed any strategies to deal with difficulties in his learning. Does the adult feel that the problems have kept him from doing well in school, or in the workplace?

When considering difficulties the student had in school, you must differentiate between those caused by low intellectual ability and those caused by a learning disability. Generally, an adult with low ability will report a wide variety of problems in terms of schooling. On the other hand, an adult with learning disabilities will usually report **strengths AND areas of need** in his learning and levels of achievement. You will see the evidence of this in uneven student performance and school marks.

### **Indicators of a *POSSIBLE* Learning Disability:**

- If the student received **special assistance** in school, especially in reading, writing, spelling and/or math, this may indicate a learning disability **OR** low intellectual abilities.
- If the student's academic history shows **grade and/or course failure(s)**, this may indicate either a learning disability **OR** low intellectual ability.
- If the student reports that at one time he **worked hard but was not achieving**, this may indicate either low ability **OR** a learning disability. The same is true if the student left school because of frustration and low achievement.
- The student's **likes and dislikes** of certain subjects may be an indication of a learning disability. For example, is the student's success in language-based subjects, such as history, geography and English? Does the student avoid or have low marks in these subjects because of the reading/writing emphasis but is successful in mechanical and/or activity-based subjects such as shops, physical education and art?
- The student may have been **previously diagnosed** as having a learning disability. It may have been termed dyslexia, a perceptual handicap, minimal brain dysfunction, language disabilities or attention-deficit disorder but is likely an indication of some kind of learning disability.
- Sometimes, adults with learning disabilities have been wrongly designated as "slow learners" and "delayed learners". If this is the case with your student, you should ignore the label and continue to check for evidence of a learning disability.
- Conversely, some adults may have been designated as having a learning disability when, in fact, the actual problem may have more to do with generalized low intellectual functioning.

## Not Likely Indicators of a Learning Disability:

- If the adult has poor basic skills and has attended a number of **different schools**, or has had gaps in education due to **illness** or other reasons, this may indicate **inadequate learning opportunities**, not a learning disability.
- If the adult reports **lack of interest and effort** during his schooling, resulting in poor achievement, this probably does not indicate a learning disability.

If the adult indicates significant **abuse of drugs or alcohol** during his schooling, this probably interfered with their availability for learning and may indicate an alternative reason for school difficulties.

## Language and Developmental History

When considering difficulty in language skills, you must differentiate between English-as-a Second-Language (ESL) problems and learning disabilities. When English is not the adult's first language, he/she may experience difficulties in speaking, reading and writing English. This is **not a learning disability** but rather an ESL issue. These difficulties, in fact, may persist for some time as the student develops skills in the English language.

## Indicators of a *POSSIBLE* Learning Disability:

### ESL Issues:

- If the student can speak his own first language but cannot read or write well in it, even after years of adequate instruction, this may be an indication of a learning disability.
- If the adult has learned a first language plus English, and has difficulty in similar aspects of both languages, this may be a stronger indication of a learning disability.

### Developmental Issues:

- For adults whose first language is English, any history of difficulty in developing early language skills is an indicator of a possible learning disability.
- A history of prematurity, low birth weight, or respiratory distress could be a high risk factor for the development of learning disabilities.

## Family History

Learning disabilities appear to have a strong genetic component. Students who report a family history of learning disabilities or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) are more likely to have learning disabilities themselves.

Mature adult students with learning disabilities often report that their children have been identified by the school system as requiring additional support services.

## Health and Medical History

Some adults may not associate learning problems with physical conditions or side effects related to taking medication. These questions will alert you to health conditions or problems that may affect the student's learning.

**Health problems and physical disabilities** are not necessarily signs of a learning disability. More likely, they are the reasons why the student had difficulty in learning. The same is true for medication that has affected learning. **Vision and hearing** problems, especially in early childhood, will also make learning difficult but do not necessarily indicate a learning disability.

### Indicators of a *POSSIBLE* Learning Disability:

- If the student reports that letters and words appear out of sequence or reversed, these could be signs of a learning disability and should be investigated further.
- If the student appears to be able to hear but has difficulty discriminating similar sounding words or saying words correctly (this does not apply to an English-as-a-Second-Language student), these problems should also be investigated further as signs of a learning disability. These problems often occur more frequently when there is a history of ear infections.
- If the student's hearing appears normal, but the student frequently misunderstands questions, there may be a learning disability—a language processing problem.
- If the student frequently asks to have questions repeated, there could be learning disabilities related to attention and/or auditory processing.

### Not Likely Indicators of a Learning Disability:

- If the student frequently has problems in situations requiring listening skills, the possibility of a hearing problem should be ruled out by a hearing test with an audiologist.
- If the student is taking any medication regularly, you should investigate the possible side effects of the medication and how it may impact on learning (fatigue, memory, attention...)
- Students with ongoing problems with anxiety or depression may have difficulty coping with academic learning situations, especially the testing process.
- If the student experiences eye strain when reading or copying notes from a distance, the possibility of vision difficulties should be further explored.

## Employment

An adult's work history may indicate his interests, skill level, abilities, motivation, consistency of effort, planning and goal setting.

As you ask these questions, look for a pattern in types of jobs the student has had, the demands

of each job and the length of time spent at each job. For example, did the jobs require skill in reading/writing/ communication, or did they involve manual skills? Were the jobs repetitive or were they broad in their scope? Possible explanations for breaks in an adult's work history are: accidents, illness, retraining, moving, loss of job, lack of needed skills, lack of motivation, etc. It is difficult to determine the existence of a learning disability based on an adult's employment history.

The employment record may give you a clustering of the types of work that the adult has done and from that you may see if there is an avoidance of jobs that require good reading and writing skills, or if there is a preference for jobs that are manual or mechanical in nature.

The adult may perform well in a job that requires high skills, even though he has poor academic achievement. This may mean that the adult has good general abilities and has learned to compensate for learning disabilities.

## **Checklists**

### **Challenges**

If the adult student appears to have average ability, with no vision or hearing problems, then having trouble with more than one of these items may indicate a learning disability.

### **Strengths**

Adults with learning disabilities often avoid activities that involve reading, writing and math. They may report strength in areas such as playing music, participating in sports, or working with their hands. The absence of any significant strengths may suggest the presence of low intellectual functioning rather than a specific learning disability.

### **Daily Activities**

This section deals with life skills that we would expect adults with average ability to have mastered. Adults with learning disabilities may experience problems with tasks involving money, time, organization and relationships.

### **Guidelines for Interpreting the Delta Screener and At-Risk Summary Checklist**

After completing the Delta Screener with the adult student, you will have gathered a great deal of information. You may also have made notes on comments made during the session. Now you will need to review this data to see if there are indicators of a possible learning disability.

Keep in mind:

- A slow learner or a person with low intellectual ability will report difficulties in many areas on the Screener.
- An adult with learning disabilities will report that they have experienced problems from a very young age.

- An adult with learning disabilities will display a pattern of strengths **and areas of need:** good in some things and not in others. They may also reveal a pattern of discrepancies between expected outcomes and achievements.

The following are examples of risk indicators you should look for as you go through the data to try to determine if there is evidence of a learning disability.

- Does the student appear to be "average" in ability, yet report school failures?
- Does the student speak well but report reading difficulties?
- Does the student speak well but is unable to put thoughts into written form?
- Does the student appear to be capable but yet reports difficulty in organization and/or memory?
- Does the student have adequate or good communication skills but reports having difficulty in math?

As you review the results from the Delta Screener, you may find it helpful to use the **Learning Disabilities At-Risk Summary Checklist** to help you summarize the results and make a decision regarding whether the adult should be referred for an assessment to formally diagnose the existence of a specific learning disability.

# Delta Screener

Today's date: \_\_\_\_\_

Revised: May, 2003

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ Birth date \_\_\_\_\_  
Year /month /day

Completed together with \_\_\_\_\_

## **Post Secondary Academic Status**

☐ Full-time student

☐ Part-time student

☐ Special Studies

Program \_\_\_\_\_

Semester/Level \_\_\_\_\_

1. How many courses are you taking this semester? \_\_\_\_\_

Please list each of your courses below:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

2. What difficulties are you having now?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Please indicate any of the following problems currently affecting your learning:

☐ attendance

☐ test taking

☐ note taking

☐ not handing in assignments

☐ disorganization

☐ procrastination

☐ time management

☐ over-extended with work/activities

☐ study skills

☐ memory problems

☐ anxiety: test \_\_\_\_, speaking \_\_\_\_,  
performance \_\_\_\_

4. Have you failed or dropped any courses in your program?

If so, please list \_\_\_\_\_

5. Have you attended any other post-secondary institutions prior to coming to this college?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, please give details: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Were you registered with the Special Needs Office at that institution?

Yes ☐ No ☐

7. If yes, did you receive any accommodations (e.g. extra time for exams)?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Previous Academic History**

*(attach transcripts where available)*

8. Please list the schools you have attended: (Elementary, Secondary, Specialized, Adult Ed.)

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

9. What was the highest grade that you completed? \_\_\_\_\_

10. What grades, if any, did you repeat? \_\_\_\_\_

11. Did you receive a Secondary School Diploma? Yes ☐ No ☐

12. What type of courses did you take at secondary school? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Advanced/General/Basic, University/College/Mixed/Workplace)

*(please attach high school transcripts)*

13. How old were you when you left secondary school? \_\_\_\_\_

14. Why did you leave school? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

15. What further courses or training have you had since you left school and where did they take place?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

16. Did you have frequent or extended absences from school? Yes ☐ No ☐

17. If you were, was it due to illness or for some other reason?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

18. What were your favourite or best subjects? (explain why)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

19. What were your least favourite or most difficult subjects? (explain why)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

20. What format of exams is difficult for you?

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> multiple choice | <input type="checkbox"/> math/technical word problems  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> short answer    | <input type="checkbox"/> written computer theory tests |
| <input type="checkbox"/> essay           | <input type="checkbox"/> written math calculations     |

21. Did you have difficulty completing exams within the allotted time?

---

22. Did you receive any special education/remedial/resource assistance/specialized tutoring in elementary or secondary school? Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, what kind of help was it and in which grades did this help take place? (be specific)

---

---

---

---

23. What did you find helpful (or not helpful) about this extra help?

---

---

---

24. Who in your family helped you with your homework? \_\_\_\_\_

25. Approximately how many hours per night did you receive help with your homework? \_\_\_\_\_

26. Do you find it easier to learn by

☐ listening or hearing?

☐ reading?

☐ writing?

☐ saying things out loud?

☐ working with your hands?

27. Did you have any special testing for your school problems? (This refers to psycho-educational assessment not to regular class tests and exams.) Yes ☐ No ☐

---

28. What did you understand about your assessment? (***please attach reports if available***)

---

---

---

29. Were you ever told that you had a learning disability or an attention-deficit disorder?  
(Other terms such as perceptual handicap or dyslexia may have been used.)

---

---

30. Have you ever been prescribed medication for an attention-deficit disorder

(e.g. Ritalin)?

Yes ☐

No ☐

---

31. Were you ever considered a behavioural problem in school?

Yes ☐

No ☐

---

---

32. How would your parents or teachers have described you as a child (e.g. nicknames, frequent comments,...)?

---

---

33. Have you ever been identified as an exceptional student:  
(***please attach documents if available***)

i) by an Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC)?

Yes ☐

No ☐

ii) supported by an Individual Education Plan (IEP)?

Yes ☐

No ☐

iii) did you have any transition planning?

Yes ☐

No ☐

33. Have you received any training in assistive technology or learning strategies?

---

---

34. What learning strategies or assistive technology do you find most helpful? (e.g. mind mapping, flashcards, colour coding, tape recorder, voice synthesis computer...)

---

---

Do you have access to computer technology at home?

Yes ☐ No ☐

35. What other comments would you like to make regarding your schooling or any of the problems that you face when you are learning?

---

---

### Language and Developmental History

36. What language is spoken at home? 1<sup>st</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ 2<sup>nd</sup> \_\_\_\_\_

37. What language were you schooled in? \_\_\_\_\_

38. If other than English, did you have trouble learning to read and write in your first language? Yes ☐ No ☐ Not applicable ☐

39. Do you need to translate back and forth between English and your native language while doing schoolwork? Yes ☐ No ☐ Not applicable ☐

40. Did you have any difficulty learning to talk? Yes ☐ No ☐

41. Did you receive any Speech and Language Assessment or Therapy? Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, please describe: \_\_\_\_\_

42. Did your birth history include any of the following complications?

Premature birth Yes ☐ No ☐

Low birth weight (< 3 lbs.) Yes ☐ No ☐

Respiratory Distress Yes ☐ No ☐

43. Did you receive an Occupational Therapy Assessment or Training for difficulty with fine motor skills? Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, please describe: \_\_\_\_\_

## Family History

44. Has anyone in your family (children, parents, siblings, etc.) had problems with learning?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

45. What was the highest grade achieved by your parents? Father: \_\_\_\_\_ Mother: \_\_\_\_\_

46. Does anyone in your family have difficulties with an attention-deficit disorder, substance abuse, and/or mental health problem?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

## Health And Medical History

47. Do you have any recurrent or chronic health problems or conditions?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

48. Have you ever had a serious accident or illness?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

49. Have you ever been unconscious?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, provide details: \_\_\_\_\_

50. Do you take any medications on a regular basis?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, please list type of medication and purpose \_\_\_\_\_

51. Do you have, or have you had in the past, problems with any of the following?

	Yes	No		Yes	No
Hearing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Allergies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Vision	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Drug Abuse	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Head Injury	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Alcohol Abuse	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Emotional Trauma	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ear Infections	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Headaches	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Migraines	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If yes, please describe \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

52. Have you had a history of depression, anxiety or other emotional or psychological difficulties (for example: OCD, school phobia, suicide attempts?)

Yes ☐ No ☐

Have you ever taken medication for this condition?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, please give details: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Employment

53. Of all the jobs (both paid and unpaid) you have worked at, what type of work did you enjoy the most?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

54. Explain any problems that you have that affect the type of jobs that you get, or that keep you from getting jobs that you would like to have.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

55. If you are currently working, how many hours are you working per week? \_\_\_\_\_

56. What kind of work would you like to do in the future? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

57. How committed are you to this career goal? Somewhat\_\_\_\_ Quite\_\_\_\_ Extremely\_\_\_\_

58. Have you ever quit a job? \_\_\_\_\_ Why? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

59. Have you ever been fired? \_\_\_\_\_ Why? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

60. How many jobs have you had in the last two years? \_\_\_\_\_

61. What is the longest you have worked at a job? \_\_\_\_\_

62. What type of supervisor do you prefer? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

63. Do you prefer to work: alone \_\_\_\_\_ as a team \_\_\_\_\_

64. How well do you get along with co-workers? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Checklists

### Challenges

Please indicate if these items have been a problem to you. For each question, please answer “*Almost Never*”, “*Sometimes*” or “*Often*”.

Do you have trouble...	Almost Never	Sometimes	Often
Understanding what is said to you			
Putting your thoughts into words when speaking			
Finding a particular word(s) when speaking			
Taking part in conversations			
With reading speed			
Understanding what you read			
Sounding out words			
With math calculations			
With math reasoning/word problems			
Quickly recalling math facts			
With handwriting			
With spelling			
Writing your thoughts on paper			
Understanding jokes			
Remembering what you hear			
Organizing, planning or keeping track of time			
Paying attention or concentrating			
Knowing right from left			
Following oral or printed directions			
Listening to lectures and taking notes at the same time			

**Daily Activities**

This final section asks questions about daily living. For each question, please answer, “*Almost Never*”, “*Sometimes*” or “*Often*”.

Do you have problems with...	Almost Never	Sometimes	Often
Shopping			
Handling money and banking			
Using public transportation			
Telling time			
Housekeeping			
Being organized			
Programming electronic equipment			
Using an automated banking machine			
Looking after yourself			
Driving			
Using the telephone			
Cooking			
Making or keeping friends (or both)			
Solving problems			
Using automated telephones			

## Strengths

Which of the following activities are you good at? Answer each question with “*Not at all*”, “*Sometimes*” or “*Often*”.

Are you good at...	Not at all	Sometimes	Often
Art			
Music			
Sports			
Drama			
Dancing			
Writing poems, plays, songs			
Woodworking			
Building or repairing mechanical objects			
Using a computer			
Driving a car			
Public speaking			
Listening skills			
Telling jokes			

Are there other things you like to do we have not mentioned? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*Adapted from screening questionnaires developed by the Learning Disability Association of Canada, Carol Herriot at the University of Guelph, and the University of Minnesota*

**Learning Disabilities:**  
**At-Risk Summary Checklist**

**Expect to see NO to these questions:**

- |   |  |                              |                             |
|---|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 | <b>VISION</b> problems may have interfered with learning.  | <input type="checkbox"/> yes | <input type="checkbox"/> no |
| 2 | <b>HEARING</b> problems may have interfered with learning.   | <input type="checkbox"/> yes | <input type="checkbox"/> no |
| 3 | <b>HEALTH</b> problems or <b>PHYSICAL DISABILITIES</b> may have interfered with learning.                | <input type="checkbox"/> yes | <input type="checkbox"/> no |
| 4 | Irregular attendance may have interfered with learning.  | <input type="checkbox"/> yes | <input type="checkbox"/> no |
| 5 | Lack of motivation, personal concerns and poor application to studies may have interfered with learning. | <input type="checkbox"/> yes | <input type="checkbox"/> no |

**YES responses to the following questions  
may suggest a Learning Disability:**

- |    |   |                              |                             |
|----|---|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 6  | Student seems competent in a number of areas and seems to be of at least average intellectual ability.  | <input type="checkbox"/> yes | <input type="checkbox"/> no |
| 7  | There is variability in abilities with many strengths and some or many problem areas.   | <input type="checkbox"/> yes | <input type="checkbox"/> no |
| 8  | There is difficulty in learning (listening / speaking / reading / writing / math / organization / problem-solving / memory/ concentration/basic life skills).                   | <input type="checkbox"/> yes | <input type="checkbox"/> no |
| 9  | There is a history of difficulties in learning from a young age.  | <input type="checkbox"/> yes | <input type="checkbox"/> no |
| 10 | There is a previous diagnosis of learning disabilities.   | <input type="checkbox"/> yes | <input type="checkbox"/> no |
| 11 | There is a history of special help in school.   | <input type="checkbox"/> yes | <input type="checkbox"/> no |
| 12 | There is a discrepancy between the highest grade completed and the number of years to complete studies, despite regular attendance at school.                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> yes | <input type="checkbox"/> no |
| 13 | There is a family history of specific learning disabilities.  | <input type="checkbox"/> yes | <input type="checkbox"/> no |
| 14 | For ESL adults, there is difficulty learning English literacy skills as well as literacy skills in native language or difficulties learning literacy skills in native language. | <input type="checkbox"/> yes | <input type="checkbox"/> no |

## **Future directions:**

Link items with specific items from questionnaires

Additional items:

15 Speech and language difficulties

☐ yes

☐ no

Add section on Referrals:

Action Plan:

Refer for further assessment

Refer for academic supports, career counseling, tutoring

## Chapter Two Appendix C

### Screening Inventory LDAO (Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario)

I am going to read some statements and I want you to tell me whether they describe you.  
You can answer: **Never, Sometimes, or Often**

1. I have trouble remembering people's names
2. I learn best when someone shows me what to do
3. I have trouble remembering the order that must be followed when given instructions
4. I have trouble understanding what people are saying to me, especially when they speak quickly
5. I have trouble thinking of the right word to say or write, even when I know the word
6. I get confused when I'm trying to explain things to people
7. I have trouble pronouncing long words, and get the order mixed up
8. When I read, the words and letters seem to jump around on the page
9. I lose my place easily when I am reading
10. I have trouble sounding out new words
11. I can sound out words, but I don't remember what words look like
12. I misspell small words as much as big words
13. I can spell the same word several ways in the same essay
14. I understand a story better if someone reads it to me
15. I have to read things several times before I understand them
16. I lose my place when copying from the blackboard or an overhead
17. My handwriting is hard for other people to read

18. I express myself better when speaking than when writing
19. I have trouble getting my ideas down on paper
20. Other people don't understand what I am trying to say in my writing
21. I sometimes reverse letters or numbers, or get them in the wrong order
22. I have trouble remembering multiplication tables
23. I have trouble figuring out what they're asking in math word problems
24. I make mistakes when working through math problems that have several steps
25. I can't figure out what formulas to use in math questions
26. I know what to do in math questions, but I get the calculations wrong if I don't use a calculator
27. It takes me a while to find my way around a new place
28. I have trouble judging distances
29. I confuse left and right
30. I have trouble judging how long things are going to take to do
31. I am often late getting places
32. I have trouble finding things on a cluttered desk
33. Jigsaw puzzles are something I've always avoided
34. I get confused when I'm trying to do too many things at once

Everyone has problems with these areas some of the time, but if there are many items to which you answer "often", it may be useful to look into the possibility of learning disabilities.

**Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario**

**365 Bloor St. East, Box 39, Suite 1004**

**Toronto, Ontario, M4W 3L4**

**(416) 929-4311**

**[www.ldao.on.ca](http://www.ldao.on.ca)**

**[resource@ldao.on.ca](mailto:resource@ldao.on.ca)**

## Input from Online Delivery of Chapter Two

### Learning disability screening tools: What, How and When to use them during the assessment process



Literacy Link South Central wanted to give readers of this manual a valuable component of the online workshop: participant input. The following bullet points are compiled from participant responses, and may or may not include information or opinions in keeping with our evaluative constructs. We encourage you to filter the comments as you would in any classroom setting.



#### Activity 1

At the beginning of the workshop, we reviewed some basic points about screening tools (e.g. check for validity, remember that they are not 100% accurate). Then we asked, “What are the advantages and disadvantages of using screening tools?”

Here’s what you told us:

#### Disadvantages

- They can take a lot of time to administer.
- We don’t always know what to do with the results.
- Not always effective with second language speakers because they may not have the language tools to answer the questions; we must be careful with interpreting results for ESL learners.
- The results can be devastating to some learners.
- The results may show the possibility of an intellectual disability rather than a learning disability; not always an easy thing to convey to a learner.
- Learners may not understand that this is not a formal diagnosis.
- It is difficult to find “good” or appropriate screening tools.

**Advantages**

- Using the same screening tool over time allows you to compare results and contributes to the validity of the results.
- Using screening tools builds regularly builds up your confidence and expertise.
- Can help you and the learner explore the possibilities that there is (or isn't) a learning disability.
- Formal testing is expensive so screening can help a learner discover why he or she might be having trouble learning.
- The results can be very helpful to both the learner and the instructor/tutor to understand why the learner is experiencing difficulties.
- Screening can help you get to know the learner better.
- Volunteer tutors can get discouraged if the learner doesn't seem to be making progress; screening results can help him or her understand why learning may take longer than expected.



## Activity 2

We explored the benefits of screening tools and talked about what to look for when using them. We asked you what strengths and weakness you observe in learners that may make you think they have a learning disability. Here's what you told us:

- Learners may use avoidance techniques or use lots of excuses for not doing things.
- Despite presenting the material using a variety of methods and formats, the learner doesn't grasp the concept.
- Although the learner might read a passage well, he or she may not understand what they read.
- Learner demonstrates outstanding skills in his/her personal life (e.g. running a business, managing a home) but they struggle with reading.
- Inconsistencies in skill levels (peaks and valleys).
- Clear differences between potential and performance.
- Cannot sounds out words but recognizes familiar words.
- Learner works hard but continues to struggle with certain skills.
- Difficulties with verbal instructions.
- Social-behavioural issues – learner may demonstrate lots of creativity or be very verbal.
- Lack of knowledge re: personal space.
- Lack of focus



### Activity 3

We talked about the assessment process/cycle and where screening tools might best fit, i.e. intake, initial assessment, ongoing assessment. We asked you to think about your own experience to help identify the best time to use a screening tool for learning disabilities and why. Here's what you told us:

- Intake because then one person does the complete assessment. The information gathered at intake can then be passed on to the tutor along with specific strategies.
- Many programs combine intake with initial assessment; others do this as separate activities.
- People may be nervous at intake so it is preferable to wait until later on.
- You may not suspect a learning disability until you have worked with the learner for a while.
- It depends on the program structure and available staffing.
- You need to decide based on the learner's readiness.
- If you wait too long, you run the risk that the learner will become frustrated. But if you screen too early, the learner might not be ready. It is a fine line.
- You can do minimal screening at intake then do a more in-depth screening later on when the learner is more comfortable with the program.



#### Activity 4

We looked at some of the questions that might be included when screening for learning disabilities. We asked you to identify other questions that could be included to help you screen for possible learning disabilities. Here is what you told us:

- Asking about the employment history is key, e.g. how many jobs they've had, how long they stayed in the job, why they left the job, what helped them succeed in a particular job.
- Did they arrive on time? How do you organize your day?
- Why are you here?
- Ask about hobbies, talents, what they watch on television.
- Ask about medications they are taking.
- Ask about their home environment.
- What subjects did they enjoy in school? What subjects did they have trouble with? Were they involved in any extra-curricular activities?
- Ask about relationships with peers, teachers, etc.
- Do other family members have learning difficulties?
- Use the responses to questions to lead to other, pertinent questions.
- Ask them to complete statements such as, "I know I am good at being on time because ..."
- Observe the learner as part of the screening process.
- What would you like to be able to do that you have problems doing now?

Vicki offered to include a "student data sheet" that she has found helpful. While it isn't a learning disabilities screening tool, many of these questions are included on it, and it has proven itself to be a useful initial assessment tool. You'll find this "data sheet" on the next two pages.

**Student Data Sheet****Part 1**

- 1) My name is \_\_\_\_\_
  - 2) I am a \_\_\_\_\_ (male / female).
  - 3) I am \_\_\_\_\_ years old, and I live with my \_\_\_\_\_ (father, mother, husband or wife, family, alone).
  - 4) My favourite day of the week is \_\_\_\_\_
  - 5) The TV program I like the most is \_\_\_\_\_
  - 6) My favourite course in school was \_\_\_\_\_
  - 7) I liked it because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - 8) The one course in school I didn't like was \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - 9) I disliked it because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - 10) In my free time I really enjoy \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - 11) When I get a job I'd like to be a \_\_\_\_\_
- OR: My job now is \_\_\_\_\_

**Part 2**

Write 3 or more sentences about yourself in the next 5 minutes

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**Part 3**

If you would like to, please write a few sentences about the person you would most like to meet and why you would like to meet him or her.

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### Activity 5

We provided a brief overview of how Literacy Link South Central carried out the research project and decided which screening tools to review.

We asked you to tell us which criteria are most important when choosing screening tools and why. Here's what you told us:

- Writing samples are helpful.
- They must be non-threatening.
- They must be simple and short – for both the learner and the practitioner.
- There must be clear indications of “next steps”.
- They should identify whether the potential learning disability is visual, auditory, organizational, etc.
- Knowing what the learner's goal is can be helpful when deciding what tool to use.
- They need to address the special needs of the learner (e.g. deaf community).
- They must be culturally appropriate (e.g. Native content)
- The organization should be able to provide strategies to respond to the disabilities they are trying to identify.



### Activity 6

We looked at some of the screening tools that are available.

We asked you what tools you use and why. You told us:

- Screening tools can be formal or informal.
- CABS
- True Colours
- Screening for Success
- Tool included in “Unscrambling Spelling” (a brief dictation with a chart that analyses errors)
- Canadian Adult Reading Assessment (Pat Campbell)
- Laubach Patterns in Spelling
- Destination Literacy
- Teaching Some to Read
- Learning styles assessment