

Some Potential Difficulties Related to Language Learning or to Special Education Needs

Observable Behaviour	Possible Explanation in a Language Learning Context	Possible Explanation in a Special Education Context
Adds or deletes words	May not yet know the word; may not have internalized the words or requires more rehearsal	Has memory/oral language processing difficulties
Is easily distracted	Doesn't understand; is overloaded with new information; requires more visual/concrete support	Has an auditory processing difficulty or ADHD
Has trouble following directions	Doesn't know the vocabulary in the instructions	Has sequencing or memory difficulties
Can complete math calculations but cannot solve word problems	Doesn't know the vocabulary of the math problem; isn't familiar with the currency; has no prior experience with the content	Has processing or abstract reasoning problems; a memory problem; sequencing issue; may not be able to generalize from previous examples
Avoids writing	Lacks confidence or is not comfortable with having multiple drafts of work before the final version	Has fine motor difficulties and limited expressive language
Can't retell a story in sequence or summarize a plot	Is unfamiliar with too much of the vocabulary of the story	Has organization or processing problems

Reference: Else Hamayan, Barbara Marler, Cristina Sanchez-Lopez, and Jack Damico.

Special Education Considerations for English Language Learners: Delivering a Continuum of Services. Caslon Publishing, 2007. p.40

As published in *Supporting English Language Learners: A Practical Guide for Ontario Educators Grades 1 to 8*, p.44

