

The COMPLEX LEARNING DIFFICULTIES AND DISABILITIES Research Project: Developing meaningful pathways to personalised learning

SPECIAL SCHOOL / EARLY YEARS

Engagement Profile and Scale

Research Team Contacts

Specialist Schools and Academies Trust – Wolverhampton Office
Technology House, Glaisher Drive, Wolverhampton Science Park, Wolverhampton
West Midlands, WV10 9RU

Tel. no.: 01902 796067; email. Caroline.Lynskey@ssatrust.org.uk

Project Director: Professor Barry Carpenter OBE,
Associate Director (SEN), SSAT

Project Research Officer: Jo Egerton

Research Assistants: Tamara Brooks
Beverley Cockbill
Jodie Fotheringham
Hollie Rawson

Administrator: Caroline Lynskey

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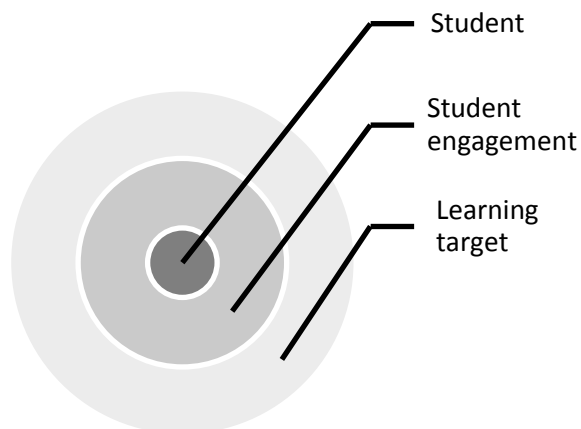
Definitions

Complex learning difficulties and disabilities

Children and young people with Complex Learning Difficulties and Disabilities (CLDD) have conditions that co-exist. These conditions overlap and interlock creating a complex profile. The co-occurring and compounding nature of complex learning difficulties requires a personalised learning pathway that recognises children and young people's unique and changing learning patterns. Children and young people with CLDD present with a range of issues and combination of layered needs – e.g. mental health, relationships, behavioural, physical, medical, sensory, communication and cognitive. They need informed specific support and strategies which may include transdisciplinary input to engage effectively in the learning process and to participate actively in classroom activities and the wider community. Their attainments may be inconsistent, presenting an atypical or uneven profile. In the school setting, learners may be working at any educational level, including the National Curriculum and P scales. This definition could also be applicable to learners in Early Years and post-school settings.

Engagement (working definition)

Sustainable learning can occur only when there is meaningful engagement. The process of engagement is a journey which connects a child and their environment (including people, ideas, materials and concepts) to enable learning and achievement.



What is the Engagement Profile & Scale?

Engagement is the single best predictor of successful learning for children with learning disabilities (Iovannone et al., 2003). Without engagement, there is no deep learning (Hargreaves, 2006), effective teaching, meaningful outcome, real attainment or quality progress (Carpenter, 2010).

The Engagement Profile and Scale is a classroom tool developed through SSAT's research into effective teaching and learning for children with complex learning difficulties and disabilities. It allows educators to focus on the child's engagement as a learner and create personalised learning pathways. It prompts student-centred reflection on how to increase the learner's engagement leading to deep learning.

Engagement is multi-dimensional, and encompasses awareness, curiosity, investigation, discovery, anticipation, persistence and initiation. By focusing on these seven indicators of engagement, educators can ask themselves questions such as: 'How can I change the learning activity to stimulate Robert's curiosity?' 'What can I change about this experience to encourage Shannon to persist?'

The adaptations made and the effect on the student's level of engagement can be recorded, together with a score on the engagement scale. Over time, it is possible to chart the success of interventions and adjustments, and the effect this has had on the student's levels of engagement.

In situations where the student does not currently engage with any learning activity, the Engagement Profile can be used to structure an informal assessment of the kinds of activities the student does engage with constructively. The findings can be used to indicate starting points from which to engage the student in learning.

How to complete the Engagement Profile

- Choose a task/activity/lesson with which the student engages highly; this does not need to be classroom based.
This profile will show you how the student demonstrates high engagement.
- Use the definitions provided in the engagement definition chart to consider how the student demonstrates each of the indicators within this task/activity/lesson.
Try to think broadly.
- It does not matter in which order the scale is completed, the indicators are not hierarchical.
- It will be helpful to seek the opinions of other people who know the student well, (e.g. families and colleagues from education and other professions) so that a shared interpretation of the learner's responses is gained.
- This is not a static document and should be added to and altered as and when you feel necessary.
- The engagement profile does not need to be completed for every learning session, but can be updated as additional behaviours are noted in relation to the engagement indicators.
- Refer back to the profile when completing and scoring the engagement scale to help you, but also to provide some consistency between raters and between scales and activities.
- The engagement profile also allows educators to know the levels of engagement that the student can achieve so they can have high expectations for them in relation to the different indicators of engagement.

AWARENESS

Shows response, consciousness, acknowledgement or recognition

CURIOSITY

The need, thirst or desire to explore, know about, learn or make a connection with.

INVESTIGATION

Actively trying to find out more within or about an activity or experience

DISCOVERY

'Light bulb moment': a new or repeated action or experience (planned or chance) that causes realisation, surprise or excitement, etc.

Shows expectancy or prediction as a result of previous knowledge, experience or skill

ANTICIPATION

'Sticking with it': continued effort (may be in short bursts), perseverance, determination, refusing to give up or let go

PERSISTENCE

A self-directed request, movement or indication, however small, which can be considered to express an intention, want or need

INITIATION

ENGAGEMENT INDICATOR DEFINITIONS

How does your student show each of these (verbally/non-verbally/body language/ other) in a high interest situation?
(state supported, prompted or independently)

AWARENESS

To add text, right click on the circles
and select 'Edit text'.

INITIATION

CURIOSITY

**ENGAGEMENT
PROFILE**

Name:

Date:

Please underline one:

independent / prompted /
supported

PERSISTENCE

INVESTIGATION

ANTICIPATION

DISCOVERY

EXAMPLE ONLY

AWARENESS

Alfie will still his body and tilt his head slightly to the side to listen. If the stimulus is something he likes he will smile, vocalise and keep his eyes on the object.

CURIOSITY

Alfie will show curiosity by looking briefly at an object. He will sustain his attention by tracking the object or stimulus. Head is still tilted. Lights and sounds arouse his curiosity within the learning task.

INITIATION

Alfie will reach out to touch something if he likes it. Alfie vocalises for the action to start again.

ENGAGEMENT PROFILE

Name:

Alfie

Date:

2.3.10

SUPPORTED

INVESTIGATION

Alfie will lean over to look at an object and may reach out with either hand to touch it. He looked to see where the water was coming from.

PERSISTENCE

Alfie will continue to vocalise and his vocalisations sound quite cross. The pitch changes and the vocalisations become louder. Alfie will move his arms and legs as well as moving his upper body from side to side. He persistently waited for the water activity

ANTICIPATION

Alfie will become quite vocal, move his upper body and head and look for an object or motivating sound. He may vocalise and move his mouth into an open mouthed shape. Shows anticipation when water is moved away.

DISCOVERY

Alfie will still and listen. He will smile and become excited by moving his arms and legs and by vocalising. He may touch the object with his mouth. He discovers the water is coming out of the bucket goes into the tin

How to complete the Engagement Scale

- Select an activity for which the student has a low engagement that you want to increase.
- Complete details on front sheet.
This is to make sure there is an accurate record of what the target and task are, and the date and time so you can compare levels of engagement over time.
- Complete the 'Overview of relevant issues' and 'What strategies...' boxes.
This space enables you to note anything which might affect the engagement score (e.g. distressing social situation, lack of sleep, etc.).
- Refer to the profile when completing the scale.
It will help you rate what you have seen, and will also provide consistency between the different people who use the scale so a fair comparison can be made.
- Rate each of the indicators from 0–4 (see description of scoring on next page) and add your rating to the 'Scores' column.
Think broadly when completing the scale. Observe what the learner is doing rather than what you expect them to be doing.
- Remember that it does not matter in which order the scale is completed.
The indicators are not hierarchical.
- Reflect on what has happened and why – complete the 'What happened?' column.
What happened? How did the student display what you have observed? What strategies did the staff use? Why is the student not engaging?
- Complete the 'Next actions' column.
What will I do next time and why? What will I change to engage the student more? How can I make the activity more appealing? Consider not only how to change the activity and staff strategies, but environmental factors, resources used, etc. Use the Inquiry Framework for ideas. Be creative!
- Add the 'Scores' column to give the student's overall engagement total.
- Circle this score on the scale on the front page. *This acts as a quick visual reference*
- Review scores and scales regularly to ensure that any strategies being used are effective in increasing the student's engagement.

Struggling? Try...

Reflecting on the scales as a team...*people have different, yet valuable insights and interpretations.*

Using a camera to film...*if you are struggling to observe the student in the setting, filming them will allow you to reflect in more detail later.*

Using someone else to observe for you...*perhaps a teaching assistant, therapist, SENCO or another teacher. This might be a good way to share ideas too!*

Using the Inquiry Framework for Learning...*start at the 'Engagement' section.*

Engagement chart and scale

Student name:

Age:

Lesson / activity:

Target:

Date:

Time:

Date for review:

Completed by:

Overview of relevant issues

e.g. Environment / learner mood / noteworthy factors or differences

What 'next action' are you using from the last scale you completed?

e.g. Introduce a computer-based initial activity to reduce demands on student when s/he first arrives at lesson; explain individually to student before lesson what s/he will be doing.

ENGAGEMENT SCALE

Mark TOTAL engagement score from sheet overleaf:

No Focus					Emerging / fleeting					Partly sustained					Mostly sustained					Fully sustained								
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28

Engagement Indicators	Score (0–4)	What happened? What happened / what didn't happen and why?	Next actions What will I do next time and why? How will I make the activity more appealing (see Inquiry Framework)?
Awareness			
Curiosity			
Investigation			
Discovery			
Anticipation			
Initiation			
Persistence			
Total score		NB NOW CIRCLE TOTAL SCORE ON SCALE (previous page)	

Key for scoring	0	1	2	3	4
	No focus	Low and minimal levels – emerging / fleeting	Partly sustained	Mostly sustained	Fully sustained

Engagement chart and scale

Student name: Alfie

Lesson / activity: Food technology

Date: 10 May 2010

Date for review: 17 May 2010

Age: 4

Target: To increase attention (stay awake) in food technology lesson

Time: 11.15 a.m. – 12.00 p.m.

Completed by: A.N. Other (teacher)

Overview of relevant issues

e.g. Environment / learner mood / noteworthy factors or differences

Alfie had had a 40 minute sleep prior to the session.

What ‘next action’ are you using from the last scale you completed?

e.g. Introduce a computer-based initial activity to reduce demands on student when s/he first arrives at lesson; explain individually to student before lesson what s/he will be doing.

Move Alfie’s chair away from main group so he is not startled by other children.

Use bowl of water to wash hands instead of cloth and paper towel.

ENGAGEMENT SCALE

Mark TOTAL engagement score from sheet overleaf:

No Focus						Emerging / fleeting					Partly sustained						Mostly sustained						Fully sustained					
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28

Engagement Indicators	Score (0–4)	What happened? What happened / what didn't happen and why?	Next actions What will I do next time and why? How will I make the activity more appealing (see Inquiry Framework)?
Awareness	1	Positioning seemed to help, although Alfie fixed his gaze on the light above his head	Turn off light.
Curiosity	2	Smiled when he saw the dish coming towards him. He watched adult mash banana in it. Wouldn't initially touch banana, but showed curiosity when spoon had banana on it. He then allowed hands to be guided to it.	Offer motivating food first.
Investigation	1	Allowed adult to explore banana with his hands after he had tasted it.	Give time to explore food and present in dish.
Discovery	1	Stilled when he saw bowl of water for washing his hands, leaned forward in his chair and looked in the bowl. Allowed his hands to be placed in it. Followed bowl with eyes when taken to next person.	
Anticipation	0	Looked intently at water in bowl.	
Initiation	0	No initiation seen.	Put bowl on table in front of him. Give time for response.
Persistence	1	Alfie showed no obvious signs that he wanted to continue experience. He did still when adult spoke to him and showed him food. Vocalised when he didn't want to do something.	
Total score	6	NB NOW CIRCLE TOTAL SCORE ON SCALE (previous page)	

Key for scoring	0	1	2	3	4
	No focus	Low and minimal levels – emerging / fleeting	Partly sustained	Mostly sustained	Fully sustained

TReSEd21

Training Resources for Special Education in the 21st Century

The Specialist Schools and Academies Trust (SSAT) and Real Group are working together to produce a suite of learning materials for the TDA.

Overarching Principle:

By creating innovative and stimulating Professional Learning Pathways the materials produced by this project will:

- Capture the collective wisdom of skilled practitioners, leaders and academics
- Support the professional learning of all engaged in the education of children and young people with Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD), Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD) and Complex Learning Difficulties and Disabilities (CLDD)
- Inspire professional transformation by being engaging, accessible and elegant

In the TDA's words the project is to produce "training materials for teachers and trainee teachers in teaching pupils with PMLD, SLD and CLDD".

The materials are to be designed to be used by all training providers: schools themselves, HEIs, and local authorities and as self-study materials.

The project will promote adherence to the following Principles of 21st Century Practice:

1. Practice-led
2. Evidence-based
3. Inquiry-focused
4. Research-informed

The training materials will:

- Raise awareness of specialist teaching and how it can support pupils with particular needs to achieve their educational potential
- Promote the challenges, rewards and excitement of working with these children in a range of settings
- Focus on improving teachers' knowledge, understanding and skills in relation to teaching pupils with SLD, PMLD and CLDD
- Focus on raising pupils' achievement and increasing their participation and well-being

The materials will be used flexibly, in a variety of settings and with a wide range of audiences, for example:

- Teachers in training or considering working with children with SLD, PMLD and CLDD
- Learning and teaching assistants and other members of the wider workforce/team around the child
- Teachers developing expertise and/or changing areas of responsibility

The project is led by Professor Barry Carpenter OBE, Academic Director at the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust and Alan Macgregor, Managing Director of the Real Group.

For further information about the project, please contact Rachel Nicholls, Project Manager, on rachel.nicholls@ssatrust.org.uk or 01733 405773.