

How is the term 'Specific Learning Difference' different from 'Specific Learning Difficulty'?

The language we use reflects our attitudes and perceptions of the concepts we are referring to, and although we may want to use different terminology in different situations, it is important to consider why we are choosing one term over another.

The term 'Specific Learning Difference' indicates that a person perceives the world in a slightly different way from the majority view, processing and interpreting sensory input differently, and will probably prefer to learn through different methods and modes than many of his or her peers. In itself, this does not have to be a difficulty or a problem, and using the term 'Specific Learning Difference' reminds us of this. Unfortunately, our education systems are usually set up to cater for the majority, and do not include the full range of neurodiversity that we find in humans, so that these students often do experience difficulties in learning. However, this is neither inevitable, nor is it their fault.