

# ESOL and Learning Differences

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## Research Questions

- Was it possible that some ESOL learners were not progressing due to learning differences?
- If so, what assessments were available to assess any learning differences?
- How useful/easy to use were such assessments?
- Did tutors recognise learners within their own groups who may need further assessment?
- Was there a training need here which was not being addressed?

## Research Methods

- Use of ELTwell and CAML materials following training event.  
<http://www.eltwell.co.uk/cognitive-assessments-for-multilingual-learners.html>
- Groups selected which used a variety of first languages – Urdu, Pashto, Polish, Slovakian and Bangla. (Special thanks to Cat Worrall and her groups)
- Survey of tutors
- Case studies

## Reading

- Cooper, R: Dyslexia and the Bilingual Learner
- Lightbown, P & Spada, N: How Languages are Learned
- Peer L & Reid, G: Multilingualism, Literacy and Dyslexia
- Smith, A M: Cognitive Assessments for Multilingual Learners

## Findings

- Use of CAML materials – free writing and scanning exercises - provided information
- Holistic approach to assessing essential – interviews with learners
- Further assessments needed with some learners
- Learners often proud to write in their own language – unusual request from tutor!

## Challenges

- Too short a time to fully pilot training materials
- Wrong time of year to start further assessments – learners were focussed on their first exam so some saw it as a distraction
- Some learners did not engage with materials – need to investigate why
- Need to be aware of cultural differences when viewing disability/learning differences



## What next?

- Training package on use of materials to develop further awareness/expertise amongst ESOL tutors
- Use further assessments with learners identified
- Tracking of learners who receive extra support after being identified
- Recommend use of writing in first language to be part of assessments

## Tutors' Voice

- Tutors surveyed to find out their attitude towards their own ESOL learners
- Indicated some concerns about learners not achieving at level expected
- Few if any learners declared they had learning difficulty or dyslexia – which would trigger review and support
- Further training was considered desirable outcome by some

