

Case Study 1: Emily – The Visual Thinker (SLD – Specific Learning Disability)

Cognitive Strengths:

Emily is a 3rd-grade student identified under the **Specific Learning Disability (SLD)** category. She demonstrates strong visual-spatial reasoning and excels when working with pictures, diagrams, and physical models. She can solve visual puzzles quickly and uses drawing or sketching to organize her thoughts. Her long-term memory for images and spatial relationships is strong, which helps her retain and apply visual information.

Cognitive Weaknesses:

Emily struggles with auditory processing and working memory. She often forgets multi-step oral directions and needs frequent repetition or visual support. She also finds it difficult to sequence events or information presented verbally, leading to challenges in reading fluency and oral comprehension tasks.

Academic Achievements:

Emily performs well in math when concepts are presented with visual supports or manipulatives. She enjoys science and art, often going above expectations in those areas. Reading fluency remains below grade level, but comprehension improves when visual tools such as graphic organizers or mind maps are provided. Writing tasks are challenging for her, especially when required to write independently without visual guidance.

Summary:

Emily benefits from a multisensory approach to instruction. Accommodations such as visual schedules, graphic organizers, and step-by-step directions allow her to access the curriculum. With continued small-group reading intervention and support for auditory processing, Emily is making steady progress toward grade-level goals.

Case Study 2: Marcus – The Verbal Communicator (SLD – Specific Learning Disability)

Cognitive Strengths:

Marcus is a 5th-grade student receiving services under **SLD**. He has excellent verbal expression and is a strong conversationalist. Marcus can tell detailed stories, explain his thinking aloud, and engage others in discussion. He also has high verbal comprehension and enjoys group discussions and debates.

Cognitive Weaknesses:

Marcus has deficits in phonological processing, decoding, and reading fluency. Despite his oral strengths, he struggles significantly with decoding unfamiliar words and often guesses while reading. His spelling is inconsistent, and his writing lacks structure due to difficulties with organization and syntax.

Academic Achievements:

Marcus performs at grade level in oral presentations and social studies discussions. He shows interest in history and science, especially when information is presented orally or via video. His reading and written expression, however, are below grade level. He participates in a pull-out reading group for phonics and comprehension and receives writing support using structured graphic organizers.

Summary:

With high oral language abilities but deficits in basic reading skills, Marcus thrives in discussion-based learning. Continued structured reading intervention, use of audiobooks, and assistive technology like speech-to-text tools support his access to grade-level material and overall academic success.

Case Study 3: Ava – The Focused Problem Solver (OHI – Other Health Impairment/ADHD)

Cognitive Strengths:

Ava is a 4th-grade student with an **OHI** classification due to diagnosed **ADHD – Inattentive Type**. She excels at analytical thinking and problem-solving when focused. She has strong nonverbal reasoning and enjoys solving real-life problems, such as puzzles, logic games, and math tasks that require creative thinking.

Cognitive Weaknesses:

Ava struggles with sustained attention, task initiation, and completing assignments. Her executive functioning deficits impact her organization, time management, and ability to follow multistep directions. Ava often becomes overwhelmed in noisy or busy environments and has difficulty filtering distractions.

Academic Achievements:

When working one-on-one or in a calm setting, Ava performs at or above grade level in math and science. However, her performance in reading and writing varies due to inconsistent focus. She requires frequent prompting and check-ins to complete written tasks. She benefits from graphic organizers and checklists to plan her writing and assignments.

Summary:

Ava's ADHD impacts her executive functioning, making classroom structure and supports essential. With frequent movement breaks, clear routines, and task chunking, she can demonstrate her problem-solving skills and engage in academic tasks more effectively. She receives resource support and classroom accommodations for focus and organization.

Case Study 4: Liam – The Mechanical Thinker (AUT – Autism Spectrum Disorder)

Cognitive Strengths:

Liam is a 2nd-grade student who receives services under **Autism Spectrum Disorder (AUT)**. He demonstrates exceptional strengths in mechanical reasoning and rote memory. He enjoys building, taking things apart, and exploring how systems work. Liam also has a strong visual memory and can recall facts or patterns in detail.

Cognitive Weaknesses:

Liam has deficits in social communication and flexible thinking. He struggles with perspective-taking and understanding figurative language. Transitions and changes in routine can trigger anxiety. His fine motor delays also impact his writing fluency and stamina.

Academic Achievements:

Liam performs well in math, especially when manipulatives or visual models are used. He also excels in science, particularly during experiments and hands-on activities. Reading comprehension is emerging, but he prefers nonfiction texts due to his interest in facts. He participates in social skills groups and receives occupational therapy to support handwriting and emotional regulation.

Summary:

Liam benefits from structured, predictable routines and visually supported learning. His academic strengths shine in STEM-related areas, while support is needed for expressive writing, fine motor tasks, and social interactions. Individualized visual schedules and calm-down strategies help him feel safe and confident in the classroom.

Case Study 5: Jayden – The Resilient Learner (SLD & Speech-Language Impairment)

Cognitive Strengths:

Jayden is a 1st-grade student dually identified with **SLD** and **Speech-Language Impairment (SLI)**. He has strong visual memory, creativity, and imagination. Jayden is very resilient and persistent in tasks he enjoys, often creating stories or drawings to express himself when words fail.

Cognitive Weaknesses:

Jayden struggles with auditory discrimination, phonemic awareness, and expressive language. He has difficulty forming complete sentences and often uses gestures or drawings to communicate. His challenges with processing spoken language affect his decoding and early literacy skills.

Academic Achievements:

Jayden is making progress with foundational reading skills through Orton-Gillingham-based interventions. He benefits from speech-language therapy focusing on vocabulary development, sentence structure, and articulation. Jayden enjoys read-alouds and can retell stories with support. His math performance is on grade level when tasks are presented visually or with manipulatives.

Summary:

Jayden's creativity and determination allow him to thrive when supported by visual and hands-on tools. He benefits from explicit phonics instruction, speech therapy, and visual communication systems like picture cards. With consistent support, he is becoming more confident and engaged in academic tasks.