

Learning Support Team

What is Processing Speed? What does Slow Processing look like?

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Processing speed describes the fluency with which the brain receives, understands and responds to information.

Verbal processing speed describes the fluency of a verbal response to information – so the ability to verbally recall information from long term memory in response to visual or verbal information.

Not everyone processes information at the same pace, and speed has nothing to do with ability.

What does it look like?

Emotionally and Socially

- lack of *self-efficacy
- frustration and/or lack of engagement
- negative associations with learning leading to low self-esteem for learning
- difficulties with verbal expression in fast-moving conversations
- often do not have time to respond, and so limit verbal interactions

Academically

- learners can fall behind expected levels
- reading and writing difficulties are often evident especially as length and complexity of texts increases
- difficulties following class discussions and lessons instructions
- difficulty getting started on tasks, both verbal and written

- slow to complete tasks or may rush and not understand, or produce work that does not reflect depth of understanding
- difficulties with timed exams and assignments
- hard to tune out distractions
- hard to process directions

Why?

Difficulties:

- getting information into working memory – and therefore understanding for effective transference to long term memory
- goal setting
- planning
- breaking a task down into manageable steps

Slow processing is a characteristic of Specific Learning Difficulties such as dyslexia, dyspraxia, ADHD, ADD and dysgraphia.

*Self-efficacy - confidence in the ability to exert control over one's own motivation, behaviour, and social environment.