

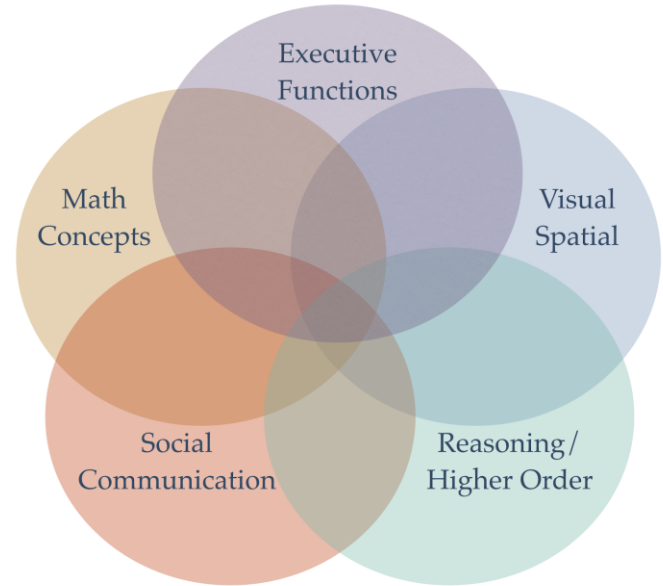
# Non-Verbal Learning Disability for the Classroom



Created by [Winston Preparatory School](#) and [The NVLD Project](#)

# What is Non-Verbal Learning Disorder?

- NVLD describes a well-defined profile that includes strengths in verbal abilities contrasted with deficits in visual-spatial abilities, leading to weaknesses in other areas of functioning.
- Individuals with NVLD often have trouble with some or all of the following: organization, attention, executive functioning, social communication, and motor skills
- Severity varies by person



EF weaknesses can be a significant component NVLD.

Quite often Executive Functioning deficits mask the real issues at hand.

# Common Myths

- *Kids with NVLD are not verbal.*
- *Kids with NVLD are on the Autism Spectrum.*
- *Kids with NVLD don't have trouble in school because of their knowledge base.*
- *Kids with NVLD are not trying hard enough to be social.*
- *Kids with NVLD are just being stubborn.*
- *Kids with NVLD are just lazy.*
- *Kids will outgrow NVLD.*

# Typical Strengths

- Intact verbal skills
- Decoding/Spelling
- Vocabulary
- Auditory perception
- Rote memory (factual recall)
- Recall of concrete details

Students with Non-Verbal Learning Disability typically do well with tasks that incorporate memorization. All of these strengths relate to memorization of information, facts and details.

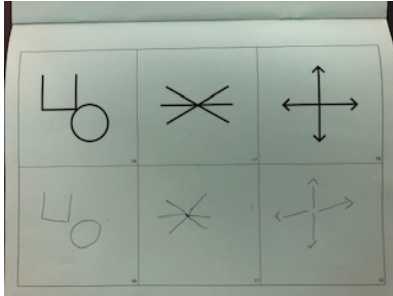
Students with NVLD typically retain auditory information as well.

# Typical Weaknesses

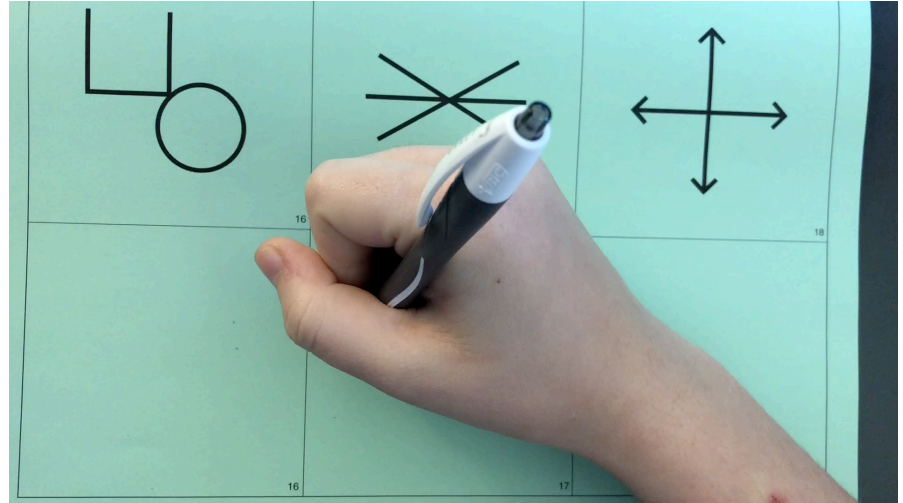
- Fine and gross motor skills
- Spatial awareness
- Organization and planning
- Understanding and recalling visual information (charts, maps, graphs, etc.)
- Interpreting social cues and interactions
- Navigating peer relationships
- Recognizing patterns
- Handling and understanding novel situations
- Understanding idioms, humor and sarcasm
- Reading comprehension
- Math skills (conceptual understanding and word problems)

# VMI (Visual Motor Integration) Test

The VMI is a non-verbal assessment that analyzes how well individuals can integrate visual and motor abilities. Approach to this task often illustrates how perception of a whole is disconnected.



Completed assessment by a student with NVLD.



# Overall Instructional Approaches

In general, the following approaches will help students with NVLD better succeed in the classroom:

- Being explicit in your language use
- Drawing attention to patterns across contexts
- Emphasis on making conceptual connections
- Illustrating whole-to-part-to-whole relationships
- Reciprocal teaching (verbalizing thought process)
- Priming for purpose

# Skill Area - Visual Spatial

THE STUDENT WHO...	SAMPLE INTERVENTIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Gets lost navigating the school building</li><li>● Is clumsy</li><li>● Is unsure where to sit/go when entering a room or joining a group of peers</li><li>● Has difficulty understanding information based upon visual information</li></ul>	<p>Rehearse, use explicit verbal directions as you walk, pointing out landmarks</p> <p>Model how to join a group, where to sit</p> <p>No consequences for lateness</p> <p>Pair explicit language with visual information</p>

Difficulties with visual spatial skills are at the core of NVLD.

Visual spatial deficits can have a significant impact on other skill areas such as higher order comprehension, social communication, math concepts and executive functions.



# Skill Area - Higher Order Comprehension

THE STUDENT WHO...	SAMPLE INTERVENTIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Has difficulty generalizing and applying information; everything taught is processed as an isolated detail</li><li>• Has difficulty understanding main ideas, cause-effect relationships, relationships between people/characters, making inferences, understanding humor, sarcasm, and abstract information such as theme, characterization and metaphors in readings</li></ul>	<p>Emphasize similarities, differences, and connections between details; continuously and explicitly explain the flow between part-whole connections</p> <p>Breakdown abstract information into concrete terms and clues. Introduce strategies to help students identify abstract and relational information in a sequential and concrete way</p>

# Skill Area - Social Communication

THE STUDENT WHO...	SAMPLE INTERVENTIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Has difficulty navigating the flow of classroom discussions and social conversations (shifting from serious work to humor and back to serious work)</li><li>• Might become agitated at classmates for not adhering to the 'rules'</li><li>• Has difficulty understanding tone, facial expressions</li><li>• Can be 'easy targets' as they miss the nuance of social context</li></ul>	<p>Discuss the natural shifting of classroom conversation and discussions and assure the student that this is acceptable. Create a verbal cue together to assure the student in the moment that the shift is okay. Develop a rating scale for problems (big vs. little)</p> <p>Provide social skill support including breaking down nonverbal information into concrete, verbal sequences; identify patterns in social situations; practice social autopsies</p>

# Skill Area - Math Concepts

THE STUDENT WHO...	SAMPLE INTERVENTIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Seems to have solid numerical operations knowledge at early stages</li><li>• Has difficulty learning to tell time, understanding the value of money, fractions, ratios, greater-than and less than relationships</li><li>• Difficulty reading graphs and charts</li></ul>	<p>Break down concepts with explicit language paired with the visual information</p> <p>Important to explain the 'why' behind all mathematical concepts</p> <p>Keep visual information simple and manageable (no extraneous information)</p> <p>Develop estimation and number sense</p>

# Skill Area - Executive Function

THE STUDENT WHO...	SAMPLE INTERVENTIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Can talk exhaustively but never get to the point</li><li>• Seem “spacey” or inattentive</li><li>• Written language is disorganized</li><li>• Difficulty breaking down complex or long-term assignments into manageable components</li><li>• Rigid reaction to routine change/unexpected occurrences</li></ul>	<p>Practice applying explicit story structures for sharing personal stories, concerns, etc.</p> <p>Explicitly explain what is expected during the various times of a student’s day (i.e., listening to a teacher - what should the student be focusing on when listening to a lecture?)</p> <p>Provide a daily agenda or schedule for the day/class period. Warn the student as early as possible when a change in routine is planned</p>

# Winston Preparatory School



Winston Prep is a day school in New York City, Norwalk, CT, Whippany, NJ, and Dix Hills, NY.

We offer an individualized education for students with learning differences such as dyslexia, nonverbal learning disabilities, expressive or receptive language disorders and ADHD. Each student's program is designed to develop essential skills and challenge his or her strengths.

[www.winstonprep.edu](http://www.winstonprep.edu)

# The NVLD Project

## VISION

The NVLD Project envisions a world where those with social and spatial disabilities, particularly NVLD, can proudly address their differences and learn to live fuller and more satisfying lives.

## MISSION

The NVLD Project is dedicated to raising awareness, building support, and creating helpful solutions for children, adolescents, and adults with Non-Verbal Learning Disability. This goal is accomplished through a variety of programs, including educational workshops, research, and community outreach.

Long term, The NVLD Project seeks to define and establish NVLD as a valid disorder in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM).

[www.nvld.org](http://www.nvld.org)

