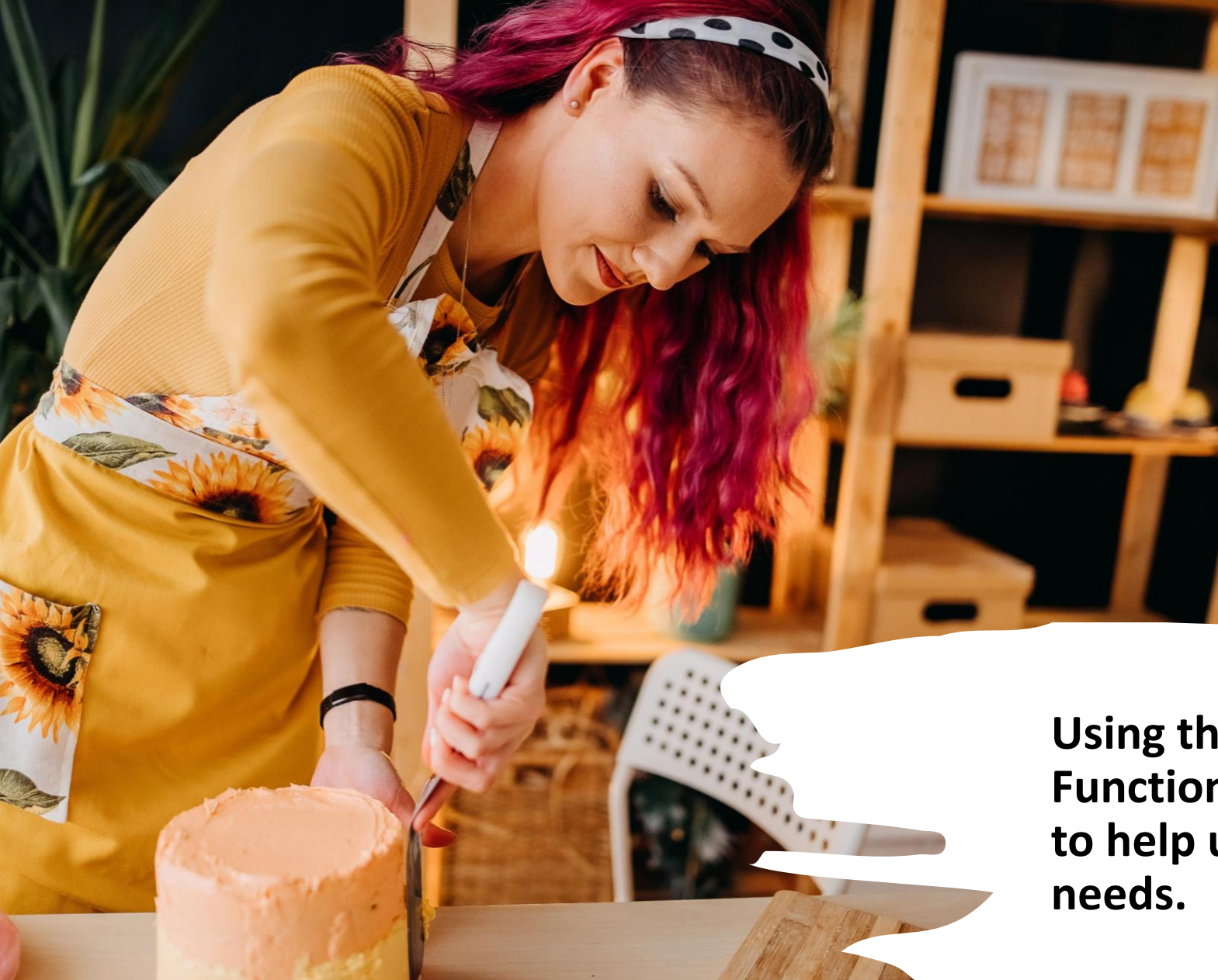




Using the International Classification of Functioning, Disability, and Health (ICF) to help understand special educational needs.



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LUOVI

Case analysis

- Susie and Bob have both been diagnosed with influenza recently. Despite being infected, Susie remains relatively healthy and only experiences mild flu symptoms, such as a slight fever and cough.
- In contrast, Bob, who has asthma as an underlying condition, is much more ill. He is struggling with breathing difficulties and now requires the assistance of a ventilator to breathe properly.





These young people have the same diagnosis, but it affects them in different ways. As a result, they have different needs and require various services and daily arrangements.

To obtain the right kind of medical care, a diagnosis is necessary. However, diagnoses do not recognize the patient's functional capacity or need for support and other services.



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Another Case analysis

- This is Maija, who struggles to join classes with her peers due to her shyness.
- Although she has undergone numerous tests and special assessments, Maija has not received a medical diagnosis.
- Despite this, she continues to experience symptoms that increasingly impact various aspects of her daily life.
- Without an official diagnosis, Maija might face difficulties obtaining the support and guidance she needs for her education.



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Are you familiar with cases like these?

Vocational education frequently includes students whose progress is slower than expected. Some common challenges they encounter include:

- Frequent absences from classes
- Incomplete assignments
- Struggles with teamwork
- Difficulty focusing on tasks
- Trouble starting and finishing work on their own
- Issues with managing daily life, such as maintaining consistent sleep patterns, substance use, and low motivation.



Important questions

It is easier to identify when a student needs help if they have a diagnosed illness or disability. However, how can we recognize support needs that are not associated with a medical diagnosis?

How can we provide suitable services for students with the same diagnosis but different life situations and support needs?



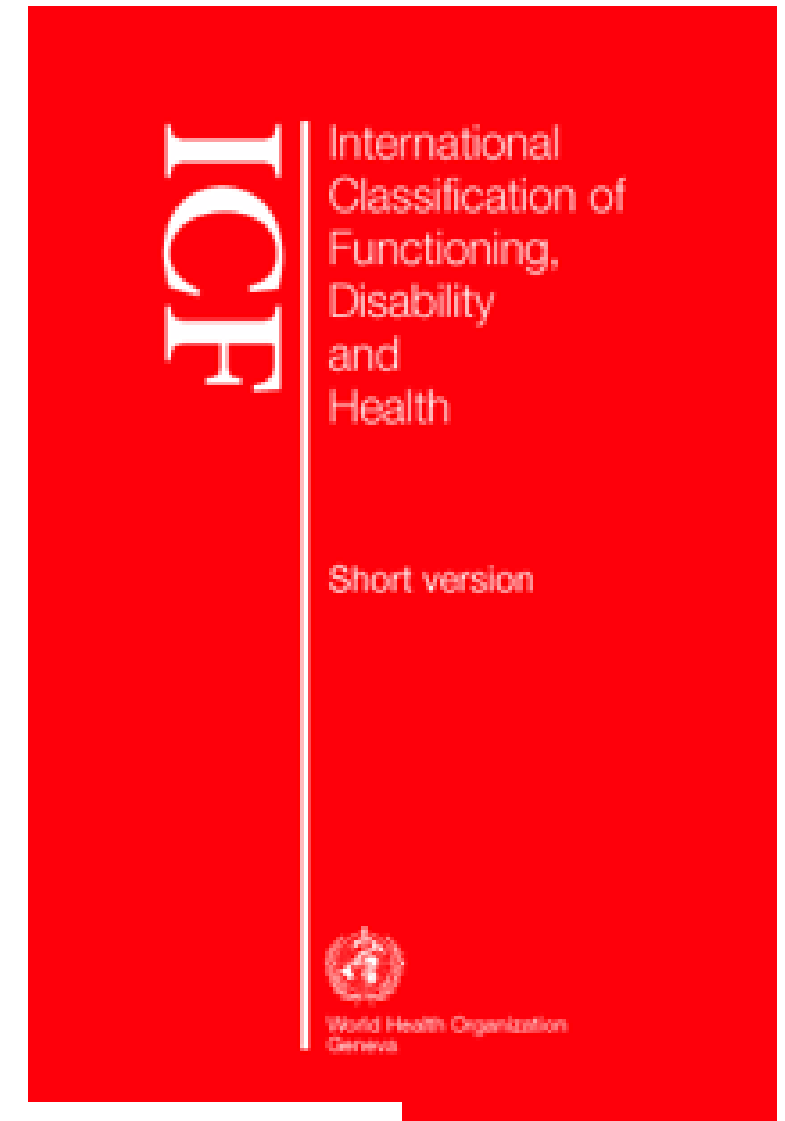
Recognizing the student's need for support within the framework of Functional Capacity.

- Functional capacity refers to the ability to perform tasks in various everyday situations.
- A functional capacity assessment evaluates how well an individual can carry out daily tasks at home, at work, and in the community.
- During the assessment, we focus on the individual's ability to function and any possible limitations in specific environments or tasks, rather than on the diagnosis or causes of the functional limitations.
- The purpose of assessing functional capacity is to identify the individual's needs and goals, as well as to determine how they can actively participate in community activities.
- Functional capacity is closely related to the environment, which is why a student's performance is always assessed in relation to their level of education.



What is The ICF?

- The World Health Organization's International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (2001) explains how people manage their health conditions.
- It marks a change in how we think about disability and ability.
- The ICF focuses on the positive skills and functions of individuals in the community, rather than just the disabilities or obstacles they face.



ICF opens a new perspective on study ability

The International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) provides a clear way to describe how people function in their everyday environments. Instead of just looking at a diagnosis or asking if someone has a disability, the ICF helps understand what kind of support someone might need.

Originally, the ICF was mainly used in social services, healthcare, and rehabilitation. However, it's now also recognized as useful for evaluating students' abilities to learn.



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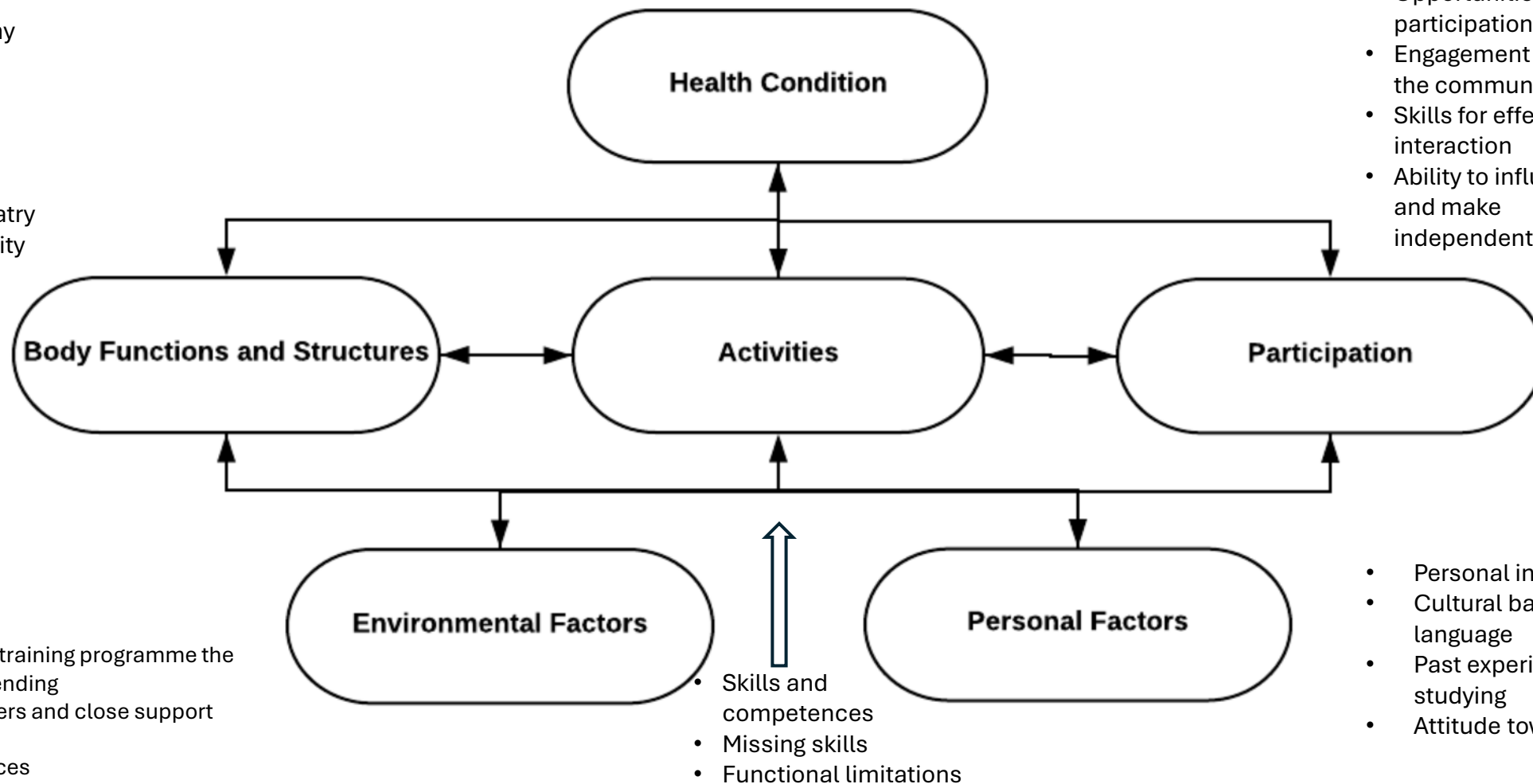


- Body anatomy and physical functioning
- Brain functioning, including neuropsychiatry
- Learning ability

- Opportunities for participation
- Engagement within the community
- Skills for effective interaction
- Ability to influence and make independent choices

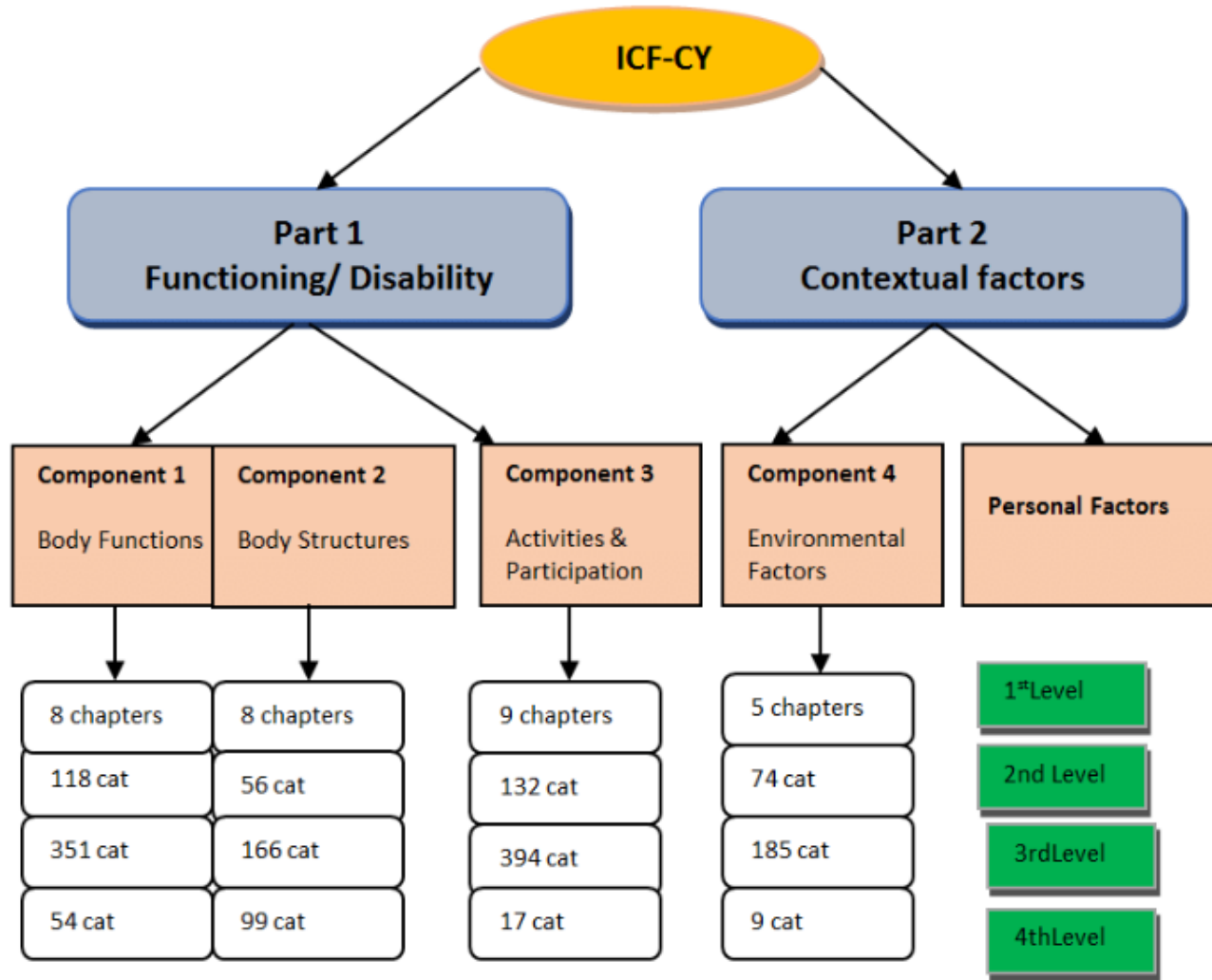
- The degree or training programme the student is attending
- Family members and close support network
- Assistive devices
- Medication
- Learning environments
- Learning materials
- Support received during studies

Diagnosis



- Personal information
- Cultural background and first language
- Past experiences with school or studying
- Attitude toward learning

Structure of the ICF Classification



The International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) is organized into two main parts:

- 1. Functioning and Disability**, which includes:
 - Body Functions and Structures
 - Activities and Participation
- 2. Contextual Factors**, which includes:
 - Environmental Factors
 - Personal Factors (not classified in detail in ICF)

Each part is divided into categories that describe different aspects of health and functioning. These categories are coded and can be used to assess and document a person's abilities and challenges.

Using ICF in Educational Settings

When the ICF classification is used in schools or training environments, there is no need to apply complex coding practices. The primary goal is to identify the relevant areas of functioning and assessment items that impact the student's ability to study and succeed.

These help educators understand what kind of support the student may need during their studies or in preparing for future employment.

The ICF Core Sets

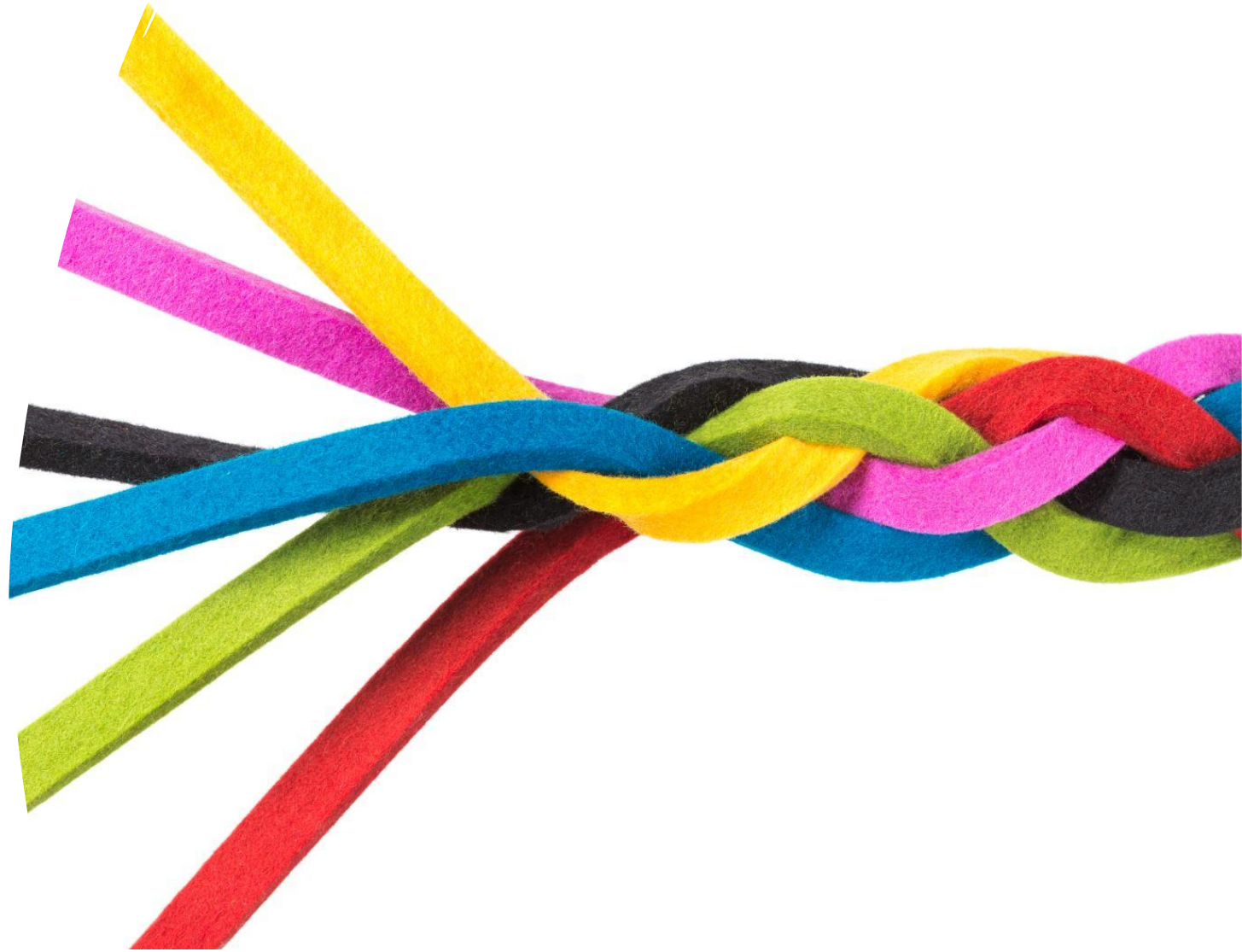
- Core Sets were created to simplify the ICF classification, which can be very complex due to its many categories. Instead of using the full list, Core Sets provide shorter lists that highlight the most important areas for specific situations, like education or rehabilitation.
- These shorter lists help professionals focus on key aspects that are useful for assessing things like a student's studies or their future job prospects. This way, they can support individuals more effectively and consistently.

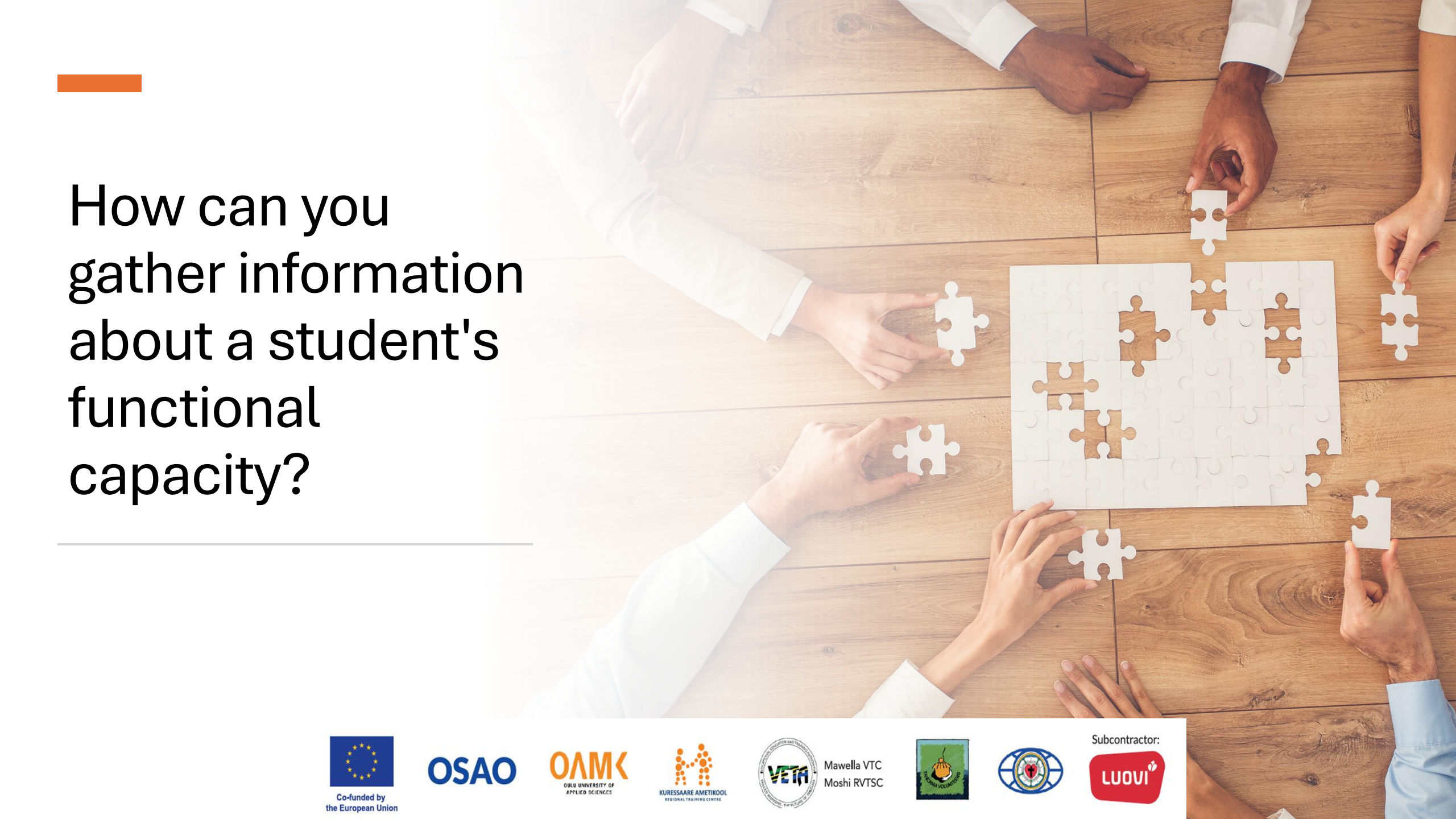


Additional Core Sets	
Amputation	Amputation
Ankylosing Spondylitis (Axial Spondyloarthritis)	Ankylosing Spondylitis (Axial Spondyloarthritis)
Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
Autism Spectrum Disorder	Autism Spectrum Disorder
Bipolar Disorder	Bipolar Disorder
Cerebral Palsy	Cerebral Palsy
Hand Conditions	Hand Conditions
Hearing Loss	Hearing Loss
Inflammatory Bowel Disease	Inflammatory Bowel Disease
Multiple Sclerosis	Multiple Sclerosis
Rehabilitation	Rehabilitation
Schizophrenia	Schizophrenia

Reflect in groups

What assessment items should be included to describe a student's ability to study in vocational education?





How can you gather information about a student's functional capacity?

When doing an ICF-based assessment, keep these factors in mind

- When figuring out if someone needs support, it's important to look at the balance between what the environment demands and what the student can do. This need for support isn't always because of an illness or disability.
- To find out how much support is needed, we should consider how these needs show up in different situations.
- Here are some key points to think about:
 - The range of special needs, whether limited or broad
 - Whether any restrictions are permanent or temporary
 - How independent the student is versus how much help they need
 - The types of adjustments required in various settings and learning environments
 - The main goals of rehabilitation



The assessment of the functional ability



The information given by the customer and a professional assessment should be combined for a better evaluation.

To assess a student's ability to work and function, we can use:

- Observation
- Interviews
- Different tests and measurements of functional abilities.

What kind of things you can notice when observing a student?

The student has a lot of unexplained absences or lateness to lessons

The student has no friends and is often alone during the study day

The student is clumsy with motor skills

The student does not see or hear as well as other students

It is difficult to make eye contact or interact with the student

The student has special interests and an unusual way of thinking

When you notice different special education needs in a student, you will also find many strengths that you can utilise in planning and implementing the student's studies.

What kind of things you can notice when observing a student?

The student is unable to concentrate in teaching situations. He moves restlessly or goes for a walk in the middle of a lesson or work assignment

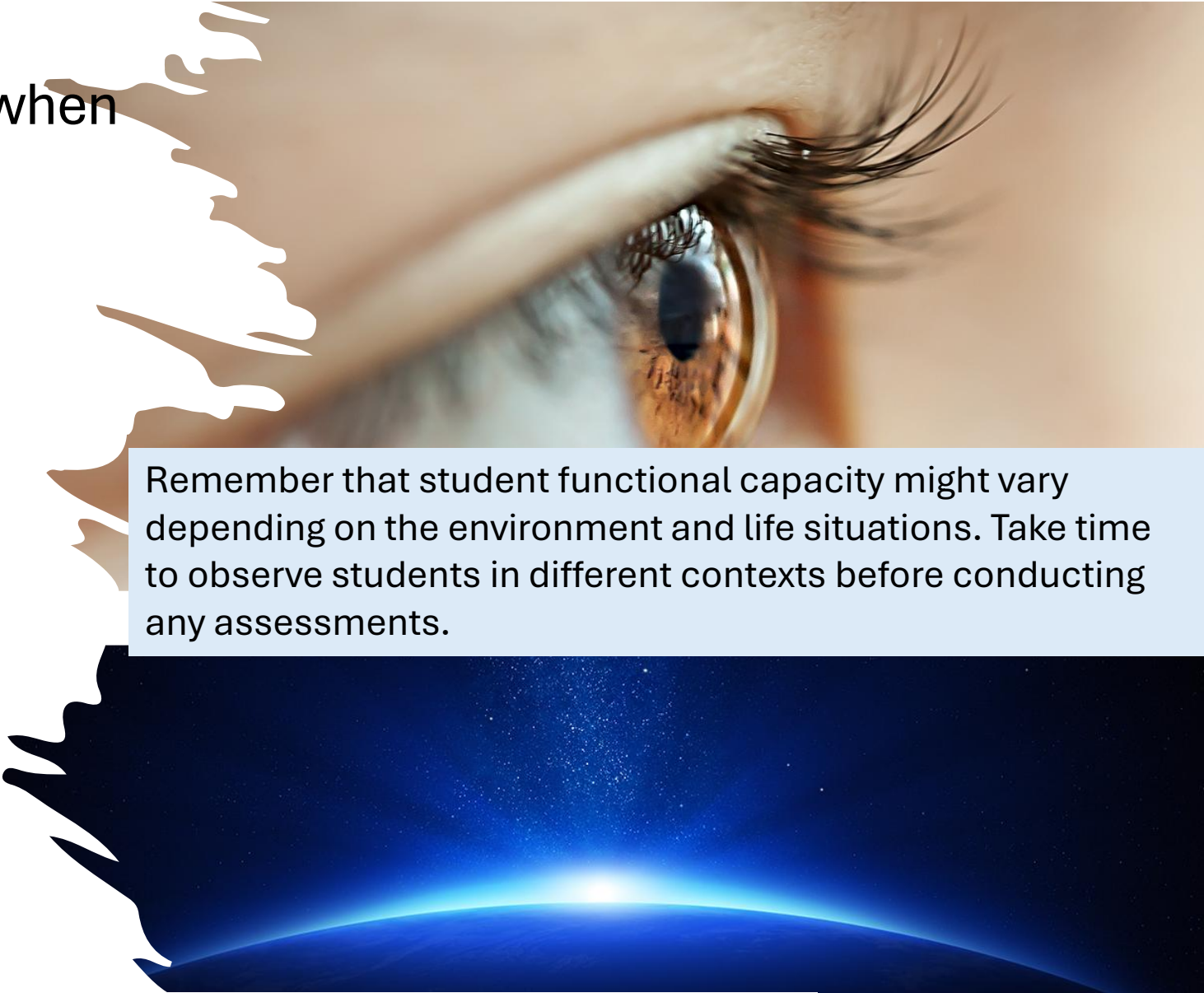
The student is unable to work in a group. He avoids group situations or gets into disagreements with other group members

The student does not start the tasks assigned to him or he repeatedly leaves the task unfinished

The student cannot read or does not understand the instructions he has read

The student is unable to perform physical efforts such as lifting heavy objects or walking from place to place

The student cannot communicate by speaking or others do not understand his speech



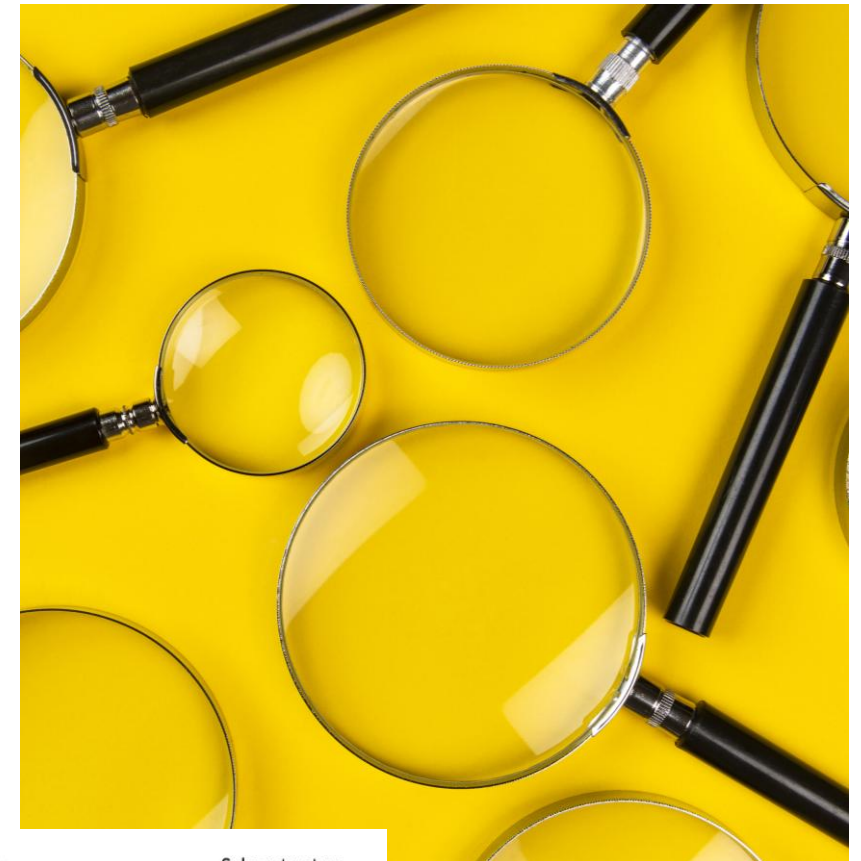
Remember that student functional capacity might vary depending on the environment and life situations. Take time to observe students in different contexts before conducting any assessments.

Alternative methods for collecting data on students' functional abilities.

Observation is the primary method for gathering information about students' special needs and their ability to learn.

However, you can supplement this information using the following alternative methods:

- Opinions from various experts (such as doctors, psychologists, and special education teachers)
- Student self-assessments
- Interviews
- Assessments of competencies in subjects like mathematics and foreign languages
- Reading tests
- Consultations with student healthcare and rehabilitation networks



RUORI Assessment Areas and Key Items

Resources:

- Interest and motivation in studying and career planning
- Coping and energy levels
- Stress management
- Self-confidence
- Self-image

Learning and Working Capabilities:

- Reading and writing
- Doing basic calculations
- Learning new things
- Health prerequisites for learning and working
- Manual skills
- Visual conceptualisation
- Concentration
- Completing tasks

Cooperation Skills:

- Behaviour and expressing emotions
- Working in a group
- Social skills needed in work or studying
- Following instructions, rules and schedules

Everyday Living Skills:

- Taking care of oneself
- Daily rhythm and sleep
- Doing chores
- Taking care of business and using money
- Getting from one place to another
- Hobbies and other meaningful leisure activities

Here is an example of a Core Set created for vocational education and training. This can be used as a checklist to identify important areas to discuss with students, as well as to observe how these areas function in real life.

You can customize the list by adding plus and minus boxes next to each assessment item. This way, you can check with the student to determine which items are strengths and which areas may need support.

The RUORI assessment tool has been developed in Finland at Luovi Vocational College.

More information about RUORI

[RUORI Assessment Tool - Ammattiopisto Luovi](#)



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