

# Learning

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10<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Washington  
Group on Disability Statistics

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# Background & Definition

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Learning and applying knowledge or acquiring skills are considered basic activities in the ICF.

As a basic activity domain, learning was not included among the short set of questions adopted by the WG.

It was, however, considered an important domain for inclusion in the extended set of questions.

Discussions on the development of questions for the learning domain focused on the age dependency of learning: learning among children and learning among adults.

# Background & Definition

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The objective of the domain was to develop a single question (one for adults and one for children) that would identify individuals who may experience difficulty in the aspect of learning that involves the application of knowledge.

# Cognitive test questions:

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1. Do you have difficulty understanding and using information like following directions to get to a new place?
2. Do you have difficulty learning new things such as the rules for a new game?
3. How much difficulty did you have in analyzing and finding solutions to problems in day-to-day life?

# Findings from the Cognitive test:

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1. The first question involves some interpretation by the respondent.

*Understanding and using information like following directions to get to a new place* is a complex question that includes several actions: understanding and using information, following directions, and getting to a new place.

# Findings from the Cognitive test:

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2. *Learning new things such as the rules for a new game* was primarily seen as asking about learning a new game, which involves the level of difficulty of the game, and the ability to understand directions written or spoken (in the respondents own language or a foreign language).

# Findings from the Cognitive test:

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3. Responses to the question on *analyzing and finding solutions to problems in day to day life* produced interpretations that included examples of daily problems like family issues, work issues, money problems, neighborhood crime and even being able to do puzzles.

The varied responses to this question reflect the imprecision of the 'problems in day to day life' clause; and they do not necessarily capture the aspects of learning that we would want or expect through 'analyzing and finding solutions'.

# Conclusions from cognitive testing:

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In summary, cognitive findings on the learning questions indicated that these were not getting at general learning but were being interpreted as asking about the specific example – issues of playing games and or being able to follow instructions.

# Revisions for field testing:

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Based on these findings it was decided to:

- simplify the child question deleting *new things like* and focusing only on *the rules for a new game*;
- add *a new cell phone* to adult question to get the respondents to focus on learning rather than the specific example; and
- drop the third question on *analyzing and finding solutions to problems in day-to-day life*.

# Field test questions:

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1. Do you have difficulty learning the rules for a new game?
2. Do you have difficulty understanding and following instructions for example, to use a new cell phone or to get to a new place?

# Field test results: Difficulty learning rules by sex

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	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
no difficulty	82.4%	74.4%	77.5%
some difficulty	11.8	16.6	14.8
a lot of difficulty	2.7	4.5	3.8
cannot do at all	1.5	2.5	2.1
refused	0.5	0.2	0.3
don't know	1.0	1.9	1.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>N</b>	(2448)	(3861)	(6309)

# Field test results: Difficulty learning rules by country

	Kazakhstan	Cambodia	Sri Lanka	Maldives	Mongolia	Philippines	All Countries
no difficulty	80.7	54.3	88.6	81.2	75.9	84.4	77.5
some difficulty	15.0	28.0	5.0	11.5	17.9	10.7	14.8
a lot of difficulty	1.6	9.7	2.2	3.8	2.3	3.4	3.8
cannot do at all	2.3	6.5	1.7	0.6	0.7	1.0	2.1
refused	0.1	0.0	1.4	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.3
don't know	0.3	1.5	1.1	2.8	3.1	0.2	1.5
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
N	1000	1008	1000	1013	1222	1066	6309

# Field test results: Difficulty Understanding by sex:

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	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
no difficulty	80.5%	68.6%	73.0%
some difficulty	12.8	19.7	17.1
a lot of difficulty	4.1	7.0	5.9
cannot do at all	2.4	3.5	3.1
refused	0.1	0.1	0.1
don't know	0.2	1.0	0.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>N</b>	(1809)	(3109)	(4918)

# Field test results:

## Difficulty Understanding by country:

	Kazakhstan	Cambodia	Sri Lanka	Maldives	Mongolia	Philippines	All Countries
no difficulty	76.2	46.0	86.2	82.4	66.0	81.1	73.0
some difficulty	16.9	27.4	6.1	10.9	27.2	12.8	17.1
a lot of difficulty	3.2	15.8	3.7	4.2	4.9	4.5	5.9
cannot do at all	3.4	10.1	2.5	0.9	1.2	1.2	3.1
refused	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.1
don't know	0.4	0.7	0.9	1.6	0.6	0.1	0.7
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
N	822	759	753	814	933	837	4918

# Field test results:

cell phone/ new place	rules for a new game					Total	N
	no difficulty	some difficulty	a lot of difficulty	cannot do at all			
no difficulty	71.2%	2.3%	0.3%	.0%	73.9%	(3541)	
some difficulty	4.4	12.0	0.6	0.2	17.1	(819)	
a lot of difficulty	0.7	1.8	3.3	0.2	5.9	(285)	
cannot do at all	0.3	0.4	0.3	2.1	3.1	(147)	
Total	76.6	16.4	4.5	2.5	100		
N	(3671)	(787)	(216)	(118)		(4792)	

# Field test results:

Difficulty in daily activities	Difficulty learning				N
	some difficulty	a lot of difficulty	cannot do at all	Total	
not at all	52.7	32.3	34.8	45.8	(646)
a little	45.1	41.3	25.0	41.8	(590)
a lot	2.1	24.6	17.1	9.1	(129)
completely	0.1	1.8	23.2	3.2	(45)
Total	100	100	100	100	
N	(912)	(334)	(164)		(1410)

# Conclusions:

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The variation in responses by the country provides evidence that learning is culturally dependent and that more work needs to be undertaken to develop questions that are more cross-culturally and cross-nationally relevant and at the same time easy to understand and interpret.

# Conclusions

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Insight provided into different aspects of learning: learning the rules for a new game and understanding and following instructions; however, many respondents were unable to provide adequate rationale for their choice of response.

The questions were complex and involved multiple tasks that may have confused the respondent or caused them to focus on only one aspect of the question without responding to the learning concept of interest (such as *getting to a new place rather than understanding and following instructions*).

# Conclusions:

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The finding that the two questions captured different aspects of learning would seem to indicate that an extended set for the learning domain should include multiple questions.

In particular, attention should be given to the age dependency with respect to learning.

# Recommendations:

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These questions do not appear to adequately capture learning difficulties in the population that might be indicative of disability; and as a result, cannot be recommended in their tested form.

More research, development and testing is required for the 'learning' concept.