Dealing with the Difficult Learning Situation
An Approach to Problem Interactions

If you suspect at all that there may be a problem, you can analyze the situation by using a ‘S O A P’ approach:

- **SUBJECTIVE**
  - What do you/others think and say?

- **OBJECTIVE**
  - What are the specific behaviors that are observed?
  - Be as specific as possible – What behaviors cause the labels to be used?
  - This will help greatly in communicating with learner or with the school?

- **ASSESSMENT**
  - Your Differential Diagnosis
    - **COGNITIVE**: Knowledge base/ Clinical skills less than expected? Dyslexia? Spatial Perception Difficulties? Communication difficulties?
    - **AFFECTIVE**: Anxiety? Depression? Anger? Fear [e.g. of failure, of harming a patient]?
    - **VALUATIVE**: Is there conflict between your values and expectations and the learners?
    - **ENVIRONMENTAL**: Not functioning well in your setting (e.g. using hospital skills in office setting.)
    - **MEDICAL**: Clinical Depression? Anxiety Disorder? Recovering from Recent Illness? Hypothyroidism? Pre-existing illness in poor control? Psychosis? Substance Abuse?

- **PLAN**
  - GATHER MORE DATA = Observe and record. Discuss with learner? Contact school?
  - GET HELP = Contact school, course director or regional coordinator