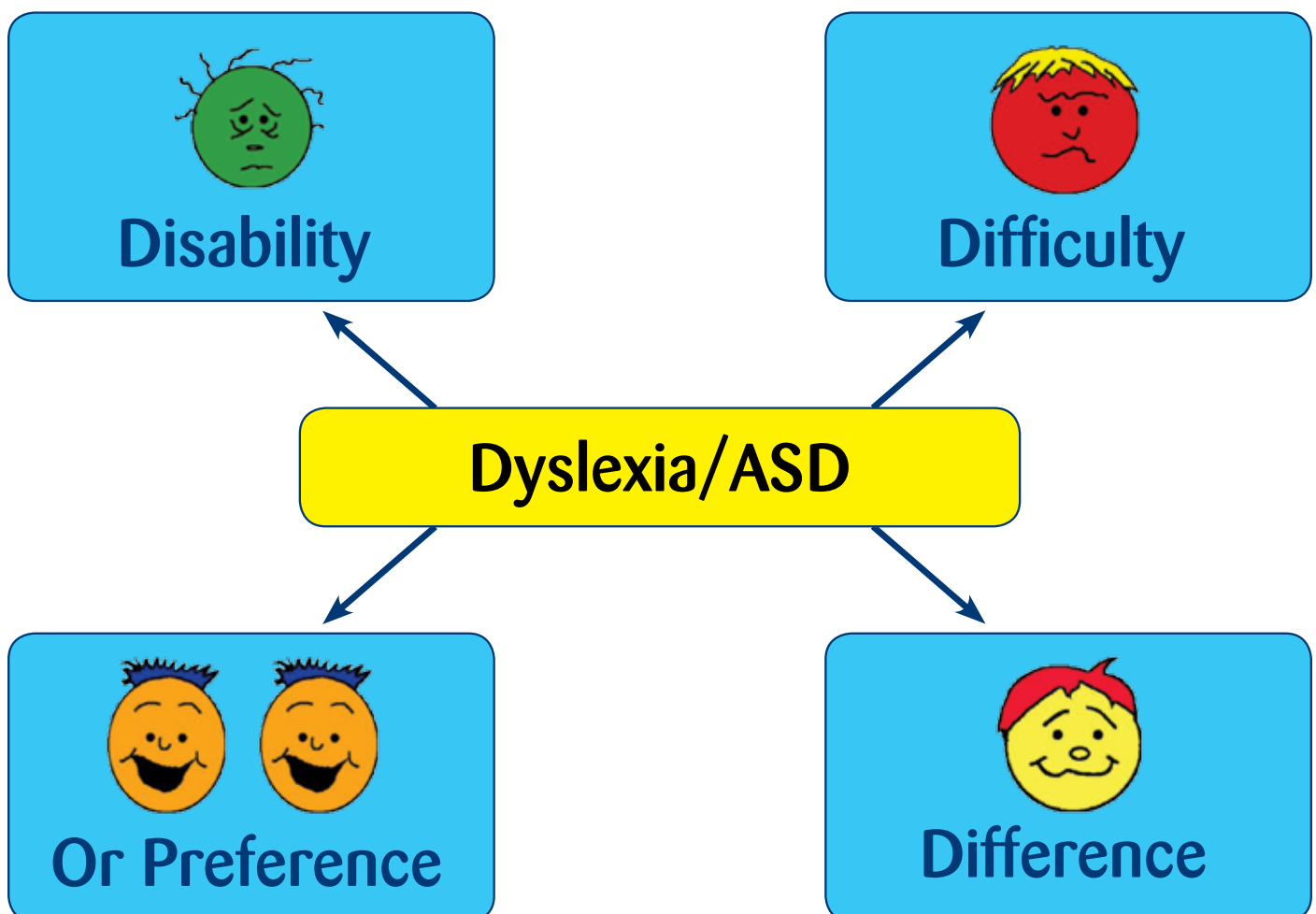


Inclusion for Dyslexia and ASD – complementary sides of the same coin?

Imagine a classroom in which the initial response to dyslexic and autistic type learning needs was to view them as “preferred ways of learning” rather than automatically as difficulties or even worse, as disabilities. Giving students the “right to be” dyslexic or autistic is a major paradigm shift which automatically alters the way inclusion is planned and achievements are measured. Once we view them as potential learning opportunities we can plan for the complementary pattern of strengths and weaknesses that are present in all students in general, and students with dyslexia and/or ASD in particular.

“Stop” before we label!



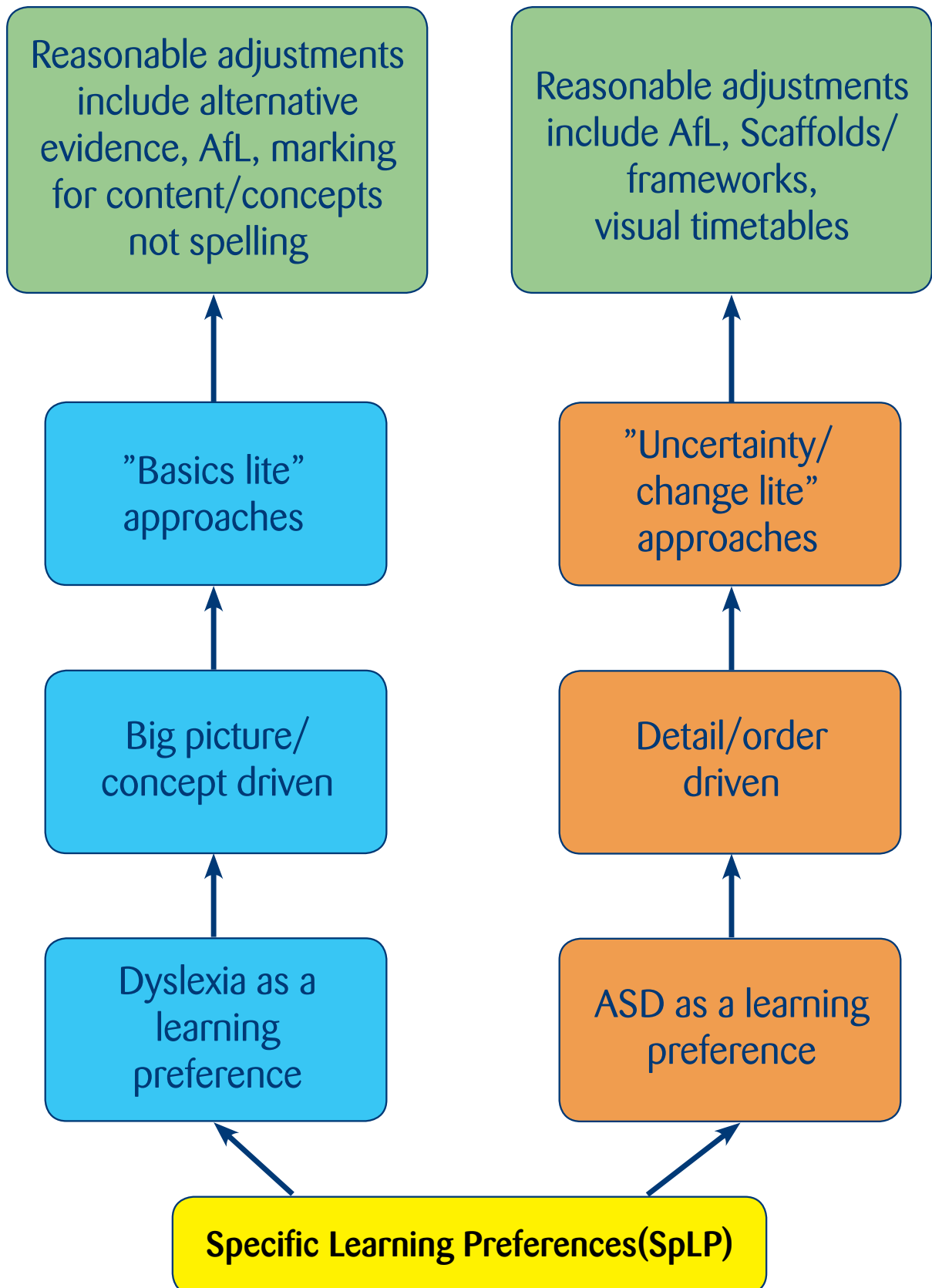
Perhaps it all comes down to comfort zones. If we can work out where our students are comfortable we can empower them to be the best they can in a stress-free situation. But life is not like that - certainly not in the real world outside of school. So it is essential that students are supported to move in a series of planned steps, from comfort to confidence.

Learning through the zones



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The "basics lite" approach preferred by many dyslexic learners promotes a focus on the big picture without being distracted by detail, especially an overzealous attention to secretarial issues when thinking and planning. On the other hand autistic students often love detail, order and need to be certain they are on the right lines before they start - "uncertainty lite" is the key inclusion starting point here.



But returning to the principle of comfort zones makes it clear that each student has something needed by the other - supporting dyslexic students to work in an autistic comfort zone facilitates the development of important planning /organisational strategies crucial to academic and workplace success, as does supporting autistic students to operate more comfortably in less structured/less predictable learning situations.