YASPELD: Understanding and supporting Young Adults with Specific Learning Difficulties
2012-1-IT2-GRU06-37581-1

Teacher's Guide - The difficulties of the Sp.L.D adults

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.
In my classroom a student has some of these features – pag. 3

So, what do I do? - pag. 4

What are the Sp.L.D.? – pag. 5

Maybe my pupil has a Sp.L.D. What do I say to his parents? - p.12

When the family does not cooperate – pag. 16

When the family cooperate – p. 17

Before diagnosis – p. 19

After diagnosis – p. 20

A network to help – p. 26

A Low for Sp.L.D. – p. 29

References
In my classroom a student ... 

- He is too hasty or slow;
- He is smart but lazy, distracted;
- He forgets to bring the necessary materials to school;
- He is disorganized;
- He refuses to read or write, he lives as a source of anxiety written assignments;
- He is constantly moving;
- He often asked to go to the bathroom or get out; He often said to be tired;
- He is fickle and has poor school performance, his performance also varies within the same task;
- He has difficulty copying from the blackboard or take notes;
- He has a low self-esteem and he presents "discrepancy" between his general intelligence and his specific skills (reading, writing and arithmetic);
- He is good at oral exams.
So, what do I do? …

- I try to understand that a low performance at school may have several reasons ... but maybe he could have a Specific Learning Disorder (Sp.L.D);

- Not all pupils with discomfort and / or poor school performance have a Sp.L.D:
- When the poor performance is caused
  - by internal factors (motivation, social distractibility, state of mind, ...)
  - or by external factors (environment, familiar issues ...)

  is not Sp.L.D., but Learning difficulties.
What are the Sp.L.D?

- I try to understand that a low performance at school may have several reasons ... but maybe he could have a Specific Learning Disorder (SpLD);

- Not all pupils with discomfort and / or poor school performance have a SpLD:
  - When the poor performance is caused
    - by internal factors (motivation, social distractibility, state of mind, ...)
    - or by external factors (environment, familiar issues ...)

  is not Sp.L.D., but Learning difficulties.
What are the Sp.L.D.?

- **Dyslexia**: It’s a specific learning disorder. It’s characterized by sectoral difficulty in reading and in performing an accurate or fluent reading.

- **The Developmental Dyslexia** is a selective difficulty in reading, in the presence of appropriate cognitive skills and adequate social opportunities and relationships, in the absence of neurological and sensory deficits. (Italy - Brizzolara and Stella).

- **Dysorthography, dysgraphia , dyscalculia, dyspraxia** can coexist with dyslexia.
What are the SpLD?

- **What does Sp.L.D. mean?**
  - Specific disorder: a disorder limited to only a few processes essential to learning, namely those that are usually called automatic (decoding, phoneme-grapheme association, ...);
  - Developmental: disorders that occur in children and adolescents. The deficit concerns the skill development never gained and lost due to traumatic events;
  - Adequate cognitive abilities: the subject is intelligent.

POLO FORMATIVO LTD
What are the Sp.L.D.?

- It has to, therefore, exclude:

  - **Sensory deficits**, so if the student has some visual impairments, auditory, etc.. must not be such as to impair the learning;

  - **Neurological deficits**: the student must not have undergone trauma various kinds that have caused injuries in the neurological system related to the processes of reading, writing and calculation;

- **Finally**: those who have a Sp.L.D. must have had adequate social and relational opportunities.
What are the Sp.L.D.?

- They are not a **DISEASE**;
- They are not the **result of a PSYCHOLOGICAL BLOCK**;
- They are not a result of a **EDUCATIONAL BLOCK**;
- They are not a result of a **RELATIONAL BLOCK**;
- They are not due to **LACK OF INTELLIGENCE**;
- They are not due to **SENSORY DEFICIT**;

**They are FEATURES.**
What are the Sp.L.D.?

They are features

- Genetic;
- Congenital;
- Neurobiological;

Therefore it is possible to draw a real DIAGNOSIS.
Regarding developmental dyslexia there are two main hypotheses on the causes:

**phonological theory** which identifies a selective deficit and limited to areas of language as a manager of developmental dislexia and connected to a history of the disorder;

**the complex syndrome** due to multiple deficit level sensory and motor. The "cognition disorder“;

dyslexic people would put into disarray the letters, sounds, signs, gestures and events.
Maybe my pupil has a Sp.L.D…

Regarding developmental dyslexia there are two main hypotheses on the causes:

**phonological theory** which identifies a selective deficit and limited to areas of language as a manager of developmental dyslexia and connected to a history of the disorder;

**the complex syndrome** due to multiple deficit level sensory and motor. The "cognition disorder“;

dyslexic people would put into disarray the letters, sounds, signs, gestures and events.
Maybe my pupil has a Sp.L.D...

- I talk to my colleagues in the class and with the Headmaster. We establish a path to address together.

- I do not address immediately to health service. The family must contact services.

- I speak with family because the family is the most important partner to help the student.
Maybe my pupil has a Sp.L.D...

- I speak generally of the scholastic performance of their son, then I expose its difficulties. I try to make people understand that it is important to know the origin of the difficulties at school;
- I ask availability to complete a questionnaire useful to detect cases at risk of Sp.L.D.;
- If the results of the questionnaire confirm the doubt I advise parents to contact centers and specialized services;
- I explain that their son, therefore, could have a brain that processes differently from the common way of learning;
Maybe my pupil has a SpLD...

- I explain that some mental processes function as those of some major genes. (in order to strengthen self-esteem);
- I inform the family that as many as 10% of students present Sp.L.D;
- I recommend the reading of texts on this topic.
When the family does not cooperate ...

It is the responsibility of the teacher to convince the family that the problem can be overcome only by working together:

The frustration resulting from learning disabilities can reduce the level of self-esteem in the student and increase the risk of emotional and psychological disorders: anxiety disorders, behavior, psychomotor instability, depression, ... The boy is not motivated and does not invest in energy in scholastic sphere. He feels inadequate, especially at school, and begins to create a negative vision of oneself.

He will experiment new failures that will confirm his sense of inadequacy.
When the family cooperate

The diagnosis is important because it helps the student to:

- achieve awareness of his difficulties, but even of his intelligence and his abilities;
- understand that through the use of simple strategies may be able to overcome any obstacle;
- choose the educational path that he desires.
When the family cooperate

The diagnosis helps parents and teachers to:

- recognize and value the strengths of the student;

- know clearly what depends from the commitment of the student;

- gives the right to use means compensatory or dispensatory measures to school.
Before diagnosis

In the classroom, it is important to avoid:

- reading aloud of student in front of everyone;
- force him to copy from the blackboard;
- mortifying and humiliating him, accusing him of lack of commitment;
- learning of arbitrary sequences in memory;
- scold him if his copy book and/or napsack are always in disorder;
- force him to do written tests for oral materials;
- taking notes during the explanations.
After diagnosis

The teacher need to:

- share the diagnostic situation, not only within the teaching group but also with the referent on Sp.L.D.;
- prepare an educational path, tools and compensatory and dispensatory measures, use an evaluation criteria appropriate to the student;
- to develop appropriate teaching strategies;
- to be more flexible and accept the differences in performance on different functional contexts. The dyslexic students are not equal.
After diagnosis

The teacher need to:

- supporting the self-esteem of the student;
- evaluate the content and not the form of his productions;
- insert in the minutes of the class recovery, interventions implemented for our student, the goals to be achieved and the dispensatory and compensatory measures adopted.
The teacher should talk with classmates, but he must have the consent of the student;

The teacher can use the teaching strategies adopted for the student with Sp.L.D. for the whole class because teaching recommended for those who have a Sp.L.D is suited to promote and facilitate the learning of all students, not just those with difficulties.
After diagnosis

A footnote Ministry of Education (5/10/2004) mentioned among the instruments used to compensate:

- table of the months;
- table of the various characters of the alphabet;
- multiplication table;
- chart;
- the table of geometric formulas;
After diagnosis

instruments used to compensate:

- the calculator;
- Recorder;
- geographical and historical maps;
- computer with word-processing programs, spell checker, speech synthesis.
After diagnosis

The dispensatory measures were instead given, in the same note:

- Exemption from reading aloud, fast writing from dictation, use of vocabulary, study of mnemonic tables;
- Pantry, where necessary, from the study of a foreign language in written form;
- Schedule more time for written tests and study at home;
- Organization of queries programmed;
- Evaluation of the written and oral tests in ways that take into account the content and not the form.
A Network to help

Parents, teachers and specialists have an important role, but to have more chances of success is necessary to build a network and combine all the skills.
A Network to help

All subjects involved in this process should:

- identify common strategies and training initiatives;
- promote the integration of skills across sectors;
- share the same goals.
A Network to help

Parents, teachers, specialists can interact and collaborate:

- Then they can build a customized educational and reach results faster;
- the vision of the process must be comprehensive; so you create efficient links between different services.
A law for Sp.L.D.

In Italy:

**LAW 8 October 2010, n. 170**
- new rules on specific learning difficulties in school –

The Law No. 170, which is strongly supported by organizations such as AID, ASPHI, ANASTASIS, and family members of students with Sp.L.D., was approved and came into force on 2 November 2010.
Article 3 of the Act sets out in detail the diagnostic procedure, which must occur within the structures of National Health Service.

In no way the diagnosis can be made within the school, but the teachers is responsible for activation of interventions - screening (prior permission of the families) - with which we can identify early those at risk for sending to local services.

These actions shall be made on the basis of regional protocols.
Article 5 refers to the use of compensatory measures and dispensatory measures:

"The introduction of compensatory measures, including means of alternative learning and information technologies, as well as some performance measures dispensatory not essential for the quality of the concepts to be learned."
There are also specific aid strategies for learning a second language, an area in which, however, the law also recognizes the possibility of exoneration.

The use of these instruments, in accordance with the new law, will also be extended to forms of assessment and evaluation, including on graduation exams and college entrance exams and university exams.
This small guide has been written according to the same model of "SOS dyslexia," a guide for teachers, prepared at the Conference on "Dyslexia and surroundings" -11 October 2007 Rivoli - Torino - ITALY.

Reproduction of material in this guide is permitted only for educational purposes.
References

- Ministero dell’Istruzione, dell’Università e della Ricerca;
- Direzione Generale Ufficio Scolastico Regionale per il Piemonte;
- www.aiditalia.org/it/
- www.anastasis.it/
- www.abilitynet.org.uk/
- www.asphi.it/
- www.dislessiainrete.org
- www.istruzione.it
- www.orizzontescuola.it
- www.airipa.it
- http://www.governo.it/GovernoInforma/