



Cap sur l'école inclusive
en Europe



Resource Sheet

Learning disability rather than laziness

Section of the module / D

1/ Context: What is a Learning Disability?

In the past, children who were not good pupils were characterized by their teachers as "intelligent but lazy or indifferent". The education system, unfortunately, has not understood the needs of many learners, which results in school failure often having a negative impact on their personal and professional lives. What is changing nowadays is the fact that these needs are diagnosed and taken care of.

The term "**learning disabilities**" was coined in 1963 by a group of Chicago psychologists under the direction of Dr. Samuel Kirk. In Greece, the expression "Ειδικές μαθησιακές δυσκολίες (ΕΜΔ)" (Special Learning Difficulties) is used. It is a generic term for a category of pupils who have difficulties and do not seem to have the necessary skills to be able to meet the school's requirements.

Learning disabilities are not always connected to intelligence. These are neurodevelopmental disorders (Federation of APAJH, THE DYS DISORDERS, 2016).

Websites-Bibliography

- Ελληνική Εταιρεία Δυσλεξίας:
<http://www.dyslexia.gr/index.php/learning-disabilities/prwimi-anixneysi>
- Association des troubles d'apprentissage (Association of French-speaking parents of children with learning disabilities): <http://www.afped.ca/index.cfm?p=page&id=2#par3>
- Φλωράτου Μαρία-Μάρθα, 1994, ΜΑΘΗΣΙΑΚΕΣ ΔΥΣΚΟΛΙΕΣ ΚΑΙ ΟΧΙ ΤΕΜΠΕΛΙΑ, Εκδόσεις ΟΔΥΣΣΕΑΣ, Αθήνα
- Fédération des APAJH, LES TROUBLES DYS, 2016

2/ Goals. Early detection of specific learning disabilities

Learning difficulties cause concern to children's parents and teachers. There are children who, although they objectively do not have clinical symptoms, show difficulties in their daily lives and in their academic performance. As long as children themselves notice that their academic performance is not in line with the class average, their self-esteem decreases and, as a result, they face a variety

of behavioural problems. Thus, early identification of specific learning difficulties and an early intervention are necessary.

3/ People with learning disabilities typically have some of the following difficulties:

In speaking

- . Difficulty in speech and expression
- . Limited vocabulary
- . Difficulty in nonverbal communication, leading to difficulties in social behaviour

In hearing ability

- . Difficulty in carrying out spoken instructions
- . Difficulty in voice analysis and voice awareness
 - Incorrect use of letters
 - Incorrect word tones
 - Misinterpreting words as a result of a slowing down of the quality of language development
 - Difficulty in keeping pace with speech
 - Difficulty in discriminating sounds

In writing

- Presentation of mirror writing
- Missing or incorrect tone
- Spelling mistakes
- Default, confusion, reversal of letters
- Limited vocabulary
- Lack of logical connection to the subject and lack of personal style
- Difficulty writing and structuring proposals
- Illegible writing

In reading

- Slow reading pace
- Skipping words or sentences
- Incorrect phoneme reading
- Interpretation of information

In mathematics

- Counting difficulty and inversion of numbers
- Difficulty in understanding concepts (plus, minus, times), direct connection to speech
- Difficulties in understanding symbolism : confusing plus (+) with times (x) and minus (-) with divided by (÷)
- Difficulty in arithmetic and terminology

In memorizing

- Difficulty retrieving information
- Inability to memorize
- Difficulty repeating something that was just said
- Difficulty in sequencing and carrying out activities (multiplication table, enumeration, etc.)

In cognitive function

- Difficulty in visual and time and space perception
- Inability to code visually (classification and understanding of groups of objects)
- Lack of orientation
- Inability to focus on multiple instructions

In motor skills

- Difficulty in fine and rough mobility (pencil holding, body posture)
- Low level of motion coordination
- Hyperactivity, carelessness, daydreaming

In sociability

- Presenting organizational difficulties in everyday life
- Difficulty in complying with rules
- Difficulty in social skills
- Choice of social isolation or avoiding eye contact
- Lack of cooperative spirit and difficulty in joining groups of children (not a very popular image)

The diagnostic practice described above refers to specific operational criteria and procedures that are related to a poor performance in one or more academic skills (reading, spelling, mathematics, etc.) from at least one average class intelligence indicator. In theory, this gap refers to an inability to "academic achievement and performance", which is based on the educational system associated with the child's IQ. Such a gap, however, does not always mean that a child can be integrated into the "Learning Disabilities" team.

It could simply be described as an indication of "sub-delivery" and be considered the first - and not the last step towards the identification of a child with a learning disability.

4/ Limits

- There is often a lack of cooperation on the part of the parents of children with learning disabilities. They find it difficult to recognize and accept that their child needs some sort of support.
- Children and their parents have to wait for some time, about 8 to 12 months, to get diagnosed by the Diagnostic and Support Diagnostic Center.

5/ Prospects

The announcement by the Greek Ministry of Education that, as of the new school year 2018-2019, diagnostic and support centres will be doubled across the country and that there will be a large recruitment of qualified personnel will definitely improve the quality and the speed of the service offered to the people who need it.