



Outline: Detecting Learning Difficulties

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Subject: learning disabilities, dyslexia, etc

Title of the activity: “Interschool detection of freshman students with learning issues”

Recommended classes: 15-16 years old students, freshman class

Justification and description of the activity:

Difficulties with reading, writing and/or math are recognizable problems during the school years, and are usually diagnosed during that time. However, some individuals do not receive an evaluation until they are in post-secondary education or adults in the workforce. Even worse other individuals with learning disabilities may never receive an evaluation and go through life, never knowing why they have difficulties with academics and why they may be having problems in their jobs or in relationships with family and friends. (<https://ldaamerica.org/types-of-learning-disabilities/>)

Main aim of our effort is to establish a screening procedure in order to rapidly distinguish freshman students with possible learning issues. Positive findings will initiate further actions so as these students to receive a proper evaluation from the responsible body, which in this case is Center of Diagnosis Assessment and Support. The conclusion of this procedure will provide school teachers with suitable advice and instructions for the appropriate teaching behavior in relation to these students.

Case study procedure:

- **“Signs and Symptoms” identification phase**

Soon after their first in-class experience with freshman students school teachers suggested any cases that should receive further treatment. The current year our focus was on two male students with extremely poor performance in class.

- **“Discussion” phase**

Headmistress invited school teachers to a meeting in which were thoroughly presented and discussed the above mentioned cases. Teachers had the opportunity to work together (collaborate) so as to reach a sound basis for further actions.

- **“Descriptive pedagogical report” phase**

Having teachers’ agreement the headmistress contacted students’ parents and advised them to apply to school requesting the preparation of a pedagogical report. This report is, in fact, an appropriate form / questionnaire in relation to students’ oral understanding / expression, reading skills and comprehension, writing skills, participation in school curriculum, problem solving skills, analytical / deductive thinking, classroom interaction, outdoor behavior etc.

Upon receiving parent’s informed consent, teachers filled out the pedagogical report providing necessary information for the specialists of Diagnosis Assessment and Support Center.

- **“Students’ assessment and evaluation” phase**

Finally we sent these reports to the “Diagnosis and Support Center” requesting an evaluation appointment for the students to be scheduled. During this appointment students would be interviewed by a plethora of specialist (special educators, speech therapists, psychologists, and social workers) so as a careful and thorough assessment to be constructed. Traditionally students’ assessment is accompanied with instructions, guidance and recommendations which are a valuable feedback for school teachers.