The Acquisition of English as a Foreign Language in the Case of Dyslexic Students

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Abstract: The awareness of the learning difficulties that a rather big percentage of foreign language learners may or have already faced is the key factor to a successful process of inclusion in the ESL classroom. The main principles of inclusion are based on every student's undeniable right to receive the education that he or she is entitled to have regardless of his or her diversities. The aim of this paper is to detect the difficulties that a dyslexic learner of a foreign language is bound to face, determine the nature of these difficulties and suggest sustainable ways of integrating this type of students in an all inclusive classroom. The methodological approach used was the use of questionnaires created solely for the purposes of this research. The analysis of the questionnaires resulted in the formation of certain conclusions regarding the teaching of English as a foreign language in the case of dyslexic students, who appear to have greater difficulty in acquiring the English vocabulary and the grammatical rules.

Keywords: acquisition of English language, dyslexia, learning difficulties, grammar, vocabulary, inclusion

Apstrakt: Svest o poteškoćama u učenju s kojima se učenici stranih jezika susreću ili su se možda susreli je ključni faktor za uspeh procesa inkluzije u učionici engleskog jezika kao drugog jezika. Glavni principi inkluzije se baziraju na neporecivom pravu svakog učenika/učenice da dobiju obrazovanje koje im pripada bez obzira na njihove različitosti. Cilj ovog rada je da pronađe poteškoće sa kojima se suočava potencijalni učenik stranog jezika sa disleksijom, da istraži karakteristike tih poteškoća i da predloži održive načine na koje takvi učenici mogu da budu integrisani u inkluzivnim učionicama. Metodološki pristup koji je primenjen, sastojao se od upitnika koji su napravljeni isključivo za potrebe ovog istraživanja. Analiza upitnika je dovela do određenih zaključaka u odnosu na nastavu engleskog jezika kao stranog sa disleksičnim učenicima koji se suočavaju sa većim poteškoćama u usvajanju vokabulara i gramatičkih pravila.

Ključne reči: usvajanje engleskog jezika, disleksija, poteškoće u učenju, gramatika, vokabular, inkluzija

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, terms like "special educational needs" and "dyslexia" have become very common and – as a result – the educational society all over the world has turned its interest towards this issue.

In a society that tends to isolate and marginalize everything that does not conform to the acceptable norms and rejects diversity in every form of

expression, the realization that there are students with "special educational needs" has not been totally accepted.

As a result, students who face this kind of difficulty have to deal with their own families, who might not have even heard of these terms or they do not want to face the possibility that their child might have a difficulty in school that makes him / her different from his/ her classmates. The same students have to confront the educational and social environment that consists of their teachers and their classmates. Keeping in mind that school is the first micro-society with a structure well defined for every student, we might be able to understand the level of difficulty for the adjustment of every single student. The same students have to deal with themselves as well as try to understand why they are different from the others in order to be able to support and defend their diversity.

Even though the teacher does not have the official authority to make a relevant diagnosis, the observation of the first signs of learning difficulties is very beneficial for the student himself because he can finally receive the support that he needs in order to get rid of the sentiment of rejection and build up his self-esteem. According to Aristoteles:

> *"Educating the mind without educating the heart is not educating at all. "*

Based on the realization that learning disabilities may have a tremendous impact on the learning process and the decoding of any form of information, be it written or uttered, one can understand the effects that can be observed in the field of second language acquisition.

Having passed the first school years trying to understand the structure of their native language and being unable to use it properly, the dyslexic learners of a foreign language are found exposed to a new linguistic code. In the case of English, this new code is totally different from their native language.

The majority of parents and teachers tend to treat learning disabilities as a form of handicap, thus formulating inequalities and marginalization that destroy the psychological balance of a student. It would be particularly interesting if we began to face learning difficulties as an opportunity to expand our point of view and try to think differently by helping and encouraging this type of students so that they can embrace and understand their diversities and, eventually, themselves.

> Quoting Plato:
> *"The direction in which a person begins his / her education will define his/ her future in life".*

The aim of this paper is to present the problems faced by dyslexic students in the acquisition of English as a foreign language, the definition of the difficulties

faced by teachers and the proposal of alternative ways to facilitate the acquisition of English as a foreign language that may benefit the entire school community.

1. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF INTEGRATION AND INCLUSION

Inclusion is based on the acceptance of the fact that every student is a human being, innately different from the others, with equal opportunities in the field of education. The philosophy of inclusion is formed by the conviction that the world is a social group, composed of individuals that have diverse capabilities, religions or nationalities.

Modern pedagogy is based on the principle that every student has the right to receive proper education. Every student is an indispensable part of the educational society and favors and enriches – given the opportunity – the learning experience. It is for this reason that the dyslexic student must be inserted in the "regular" classroom, in order to have the opportunity to adjust in a school environment full of different students without negating his / her own diversities or his / her educational needs.

"The aim of inclusion is not to eliminate the differences, but to allow every student to be part of an educational community that accepts their individualities."(Knight, 1999).

Even though the theoretical concept and the operation of a classroom where all students are equal appears to be ideal, school reality proves to be the complete opposite. A contemporary classroom accommodates at least 25 students with different educational needs and with different psychologies; factors that make the efforts of the teachers more complicated and multi – dimensional. Every classroom has its "gifted" students, the average students and the so called "weak" students.

In an attempt to analyze the composition of the group of the "weak" students, we come across students who have lost their interest in the educational process. And if we try to reveal the reasons connected to this fact, we observe that these students face serious family problems and, thus, they have lost the ability to concentrate on their school duties. We also come across students that face learning difficulties that haven't been diagnosed or treated.

Given time, we realize that the teacher is the person who has to synchronize all the diverse types of students and engage them in the educational process. And this is a really difficult role that requires an open minded teacher who will be close to his / her students in order to understand their different needs and find ways to lead them to the realization of their educational objectives. Moreover, the teacher has to receive the proper specialization in order

to follow the new educational strategies and practices.

To sum up, the teacher of an inclusive classroom should:

- Evaluate the different educational needs of the students
- Encourage cooperation and create groups that promote the strong points of each student and diminish their weak points
- Communicate with the students' parents in order to be informed about the eventual changes in the family environment that could have an immediate impact on the student
- Prepare educational activities based on students' abilities, without excluding dyslexic students or favouring the so called "strong" students.

In total harmony with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, the orientation of an inclusive education has been expressed in the "Declaration of Salamanca" about the principles, the policies and the practices applied in the fields of education and in the case of students with special educational needs which was signed by 92 governments and 25 international organizations in 1994.

The objective of this declaration was to change the mentality of the school community towards the creation and the preservation of a "school for all". The members of the conference supported each student's right to be integrated and respected despite his / her special educational needs. They have invited all governments to improve their educational systems and implement the principle of inclusive education in the form of legislation.

In this way, students with special educational needs have benefited from a safety net, their families have started to receive support from the school community and teachers themselves have begun educating themselves in the field of dyslexia.

Unfortunately, the governments continue to encourage methodologies and systems that favor the kind of education that is concerned with:

> *"Implementing in a regular and efficient way the objectives standardized by authorities outside the school. The new discussion of school administration underlines the operative goals of education – mainly the standards and the performances measured by exam results, the level of attendance and of the*

student – and it is not usually inclined to comply with a lexicon that refers to effort, excellence, quality and efficiency".(Gewirtz & Ball, 2000).

One may conclude that in this case the sensitization and the motivation of students could have more tangible and important results. Despite the fact that teachers are member of an educational system characterized by rules already established that have the tendency to create inequalities and favour grade-hunting, there are many teachers that have adopted and applied an inclusive method of teaching.

2. THE EMOTIONAL AND EDUCATIONAL VALUE OF LEARNING A FOREIGN LANGUAGE FOR DYSLEXIC STUDENTS - THE EXAMPLE OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

"According to all teachers who have worked with students in special schools, learning a foreign language does not interfere with linguistic development , as was thought in the past, but it stimulates development while its benefits

can be observed in the curriculum".(McColl, 2000)

2.1 CHARACTERISTICS OF DYSLEXIC ESL STUDENTS

Before analyzing the emotional and educational value of learning English as a foreign language for students with special educational needs, we have to think of the difficulties included in this task since the English alphabet consists of 26 letters that produce 44 different sounds. At this point, it would be useful to enumerate these difficulties:

a. Belated lexical retrieval: the process of learning any language is based on learning a new linguistic code. In the case of students with learning difficulties, learning the lexicon of a foreign language appears to be an immense obstacle, if we keep in mind that these students have gone through a great ordeal in order to learn the lexicon of their native language. In the case of learning English:

"English is an "opaque" language, characterized by discrepancies between the phonetic and the graphic dimension. This is a problem for the dyslexic student, who tends to

write words exactly the way he listens to them". (Fantoni, 1999).

b. <u>Difficulty in acquiring specific terminology:</u> the regular student who is learning a language is able to base his/her learning on the terminology included in learning the language itself. For the dyslexic student, the terms are words with more complex meaning and not clear enough to help him understand the significance of every single term.

c. <u>Difficulty in the wording of a written text:</u> the dyslexic student has to overcome the obstacle of the wording of a written text. One should always keep in mind that this type of student is constantly looking for ways to improve his/her wording in his/her native language. Thus, one can only imagine the difficulty of making the same effort for a foreign language like the English language that consists of a completely diverse and more complex lexical code.

d. <u>Difficulty in taking notes:</u> the task of taking notes is fundamental in the process of any kind of learning. More often than not, the teacher provides more information when he/she, for example, introduces a new grammatical phenomenon and the students who take notes may refer to their notes in order to understand the lesson better or clear out eventual doubts. Thus, when the student is not able to take correct and complete notes the learning process is blocked.

e. Late execution of activities: the difficulties that have already been analyzed lead to the late execution of language activities since the student has to overcome many obstacles within the learning process before reaching the lesson's destination. For the dyslexic student the tasks have to be explicitly explained without leaving any room for doubt or misinterpretation.

2.2 PSYCHOLOGICAL REPERCUSSIONS

As a result, there arise many difficulties of a psychological nature for many students

who face a school life similar to the one described above, that seem to have direct effects on their behavior.

a.   High level of frustration: it seems logical that every human being would want to have tangible results in his/her efforts. The dyslexic student has to realize from a very early age that his / her efforts will not have results or they may not even be appreciated. As a result, the student presents a high level of frustration and resignation.

b.   Doubts about his /her intellectual level: all students have the tendency to compare themselves with their classmates both on an educational and an intellectual level. When the student realizes that he/she is not as fast as the others, that he/she can't understand the teaching in the same way and that his/her classmates' efforts are successful unlike his/her own, he / she feels different and disabled on an intellectual level.

c.   Fatigue: based on the realization that the dyslexic student faces difficulties in the memorization, in the processing of the material being taught and in his/her concentration it seems logical that he/she should feel tired easily.

According to Paola Eleonora Fantoni's (2016) explanation in "Quando la dislessia entra in classe":

> "The SEN student faces particular problems when it comes to studying a foreign language. The initial curiosity is followed by the realization of the difficulties included. What follows is low self-esteem and high levels of stress, followed by behaviours of resignation or passive resistance".

2.3   EMOTIONAL AND EDUCATIONAL VALUE OF ESL

Having presented the difficulties faced by a SEN student, we will try to analyze the emotional and educational value of learning English as a foreign language.

The researches conducted within recent decades have shown that learning English as a foreign language is not a simple task for all students, since the English language is characterized by words that are written and pronounced differently. For an average student, the process of acquiring the new lexicon includes the memorization of all the different cases.

For the dyslexic student, on the other hand, things are not so simple. Acknowledging the fact that memorization is one of the weak points of dyslexic students, one should also consider how difficult it must be for such a student to grasp the grammar rules and perceive their logic before being able to face the

lexical diversities that, obviously, have their own inexplicable logic.

When the dyslexic student tries to overcome the obstacles and begins to show progress in the acquisition of a foreign language, he/she feels that his/her efforts were not in vain and his/her self-esteem is elevated. Thus, his/her success in learning English has enabled him/her to eliminate the frustration and the feelings of inferiority.

In her article "Bad Language or Good" which was published in the *Dyslexia Yearbook* in 1991, Margaret Crombie underlines that :

> *"The role of inclusion in a modern language classroom is not only based on being present and exposed to the new language. It is based on the feeling of being accepted and engaged in a learning experience regardless of the level that can be achieved".*

In the field of education, the benefits of inclusion in the process of learning a foreign language are multiple. It is not only the dyslexic students who benefit from this situation but also the regular students because they can explore and, eventually, understand another way of perceiving. Thus, the concept of diversity is put in action and the students learn to work together without any discrimination. It is in this way that mentalities can change and that societies may flourish.

> Indeed:
> *"If we can convince the young people to have faith in themselves, we may make a difference between success and failure"* (1991)

3. REPRESENTATIVE EXAMPLES FROM THE SCHOOL REALITY REGARDING DYSLEXIC STUDENTS

3.1 VOCABULARY

The English language is full of words that are not written in the way they are either pronounced or heard. One may observe several lexical categories that could cause problems to many dyslexic students:

a.   Words that include letters that are not pronounced. Here are some examples : island (the letter -s- is not pronounced), know (the letter -k- is not pronounced), half (the letter -l- is not pronounced), hour (the letter -h- is not pronounced), write (the letters -w- and -e- are not pronounced), knight (the letter -k- is not pronounced)

b.   Words whose pronunciation does not correspond to their spelling: Examples: women , sea, read

c.   Words that sound (almost) the same: Here are some examples: "fast" vs "fat", "see" vs "sea", "write" vs "right" , "knight" vs "night", "read" vs "rid". These examples prove how easy it is for any language learner to misinterpret one word or write it incorrectly.

d.   The letter -h-: in general the letter -h- is not pronounced in the majority of English words but it contributes to the alteration of the pronunciation. For example, in the word "she" the -h- is not pronounced but it changes the phonological representation of the word. Other examples, like the words "hour" , "harmony" prove that the letter -h- is not pronounced whereas words like "hamburger" prove the opposite. It comes as no surprise that one should wonder why the letter -h- is not pronounced in some words while in others it is pronounced properly.

For the dyslexic student who cannot understand how there can be words that are pronounced and written differently, the English language seems like a field of complex and unattainable knowledge. And it is for this reason that many dyslexic students have given up any attempts to learn the English language.

3.2 GRAMMAR

Apart from the lexical peculiarities one may observe several grammatical and syntactical ones that are bound to appear in the process of learning a foreign language. As students, we have the tendency and the innate need to base our learning of a foreign language on a pattern created by our native language in order to be able to analyze it and understand it better.

Our human nature urges us to try to find out the reason behind any type of new knowledge that we come across in our life, be it educational or social. But what can one do when there is not a reason explicit enough or when the reason is hidden in the cultural diversities that exist among different peoples?

For the SEN student , the term "cultural diversity" is a completely abstract term that doesn't help him/her to understand , while every time he/she asks "Why" the most common answer of his/her teachers is : "Because this is how we say it in English". It is at this point that the SEN student feels that he/she will never be able to learn English.

3.3   METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

The initial stages of my research consisted on the study of the bibliography referring

to dyslexic students and foreign language learning. Consequently and in order to test the validity of my conclusions, I created a questionnaire that was distributed to all the students so that we could define the multiplicity of the difficulties and the diversities among students when it comes to learning English as a foreign language. The sample consisted of 50 students of all levels and ages.

On the first question of the questionnaire the students had to underline the lexical elements that seem to be problematic for them like, for example, their punctuation, their pronunciation and their memorization. On the second question the students had to define the grammatical elements that are difficult for them while the third question gave the students the opportunity to suggest ways to improve their own learning.
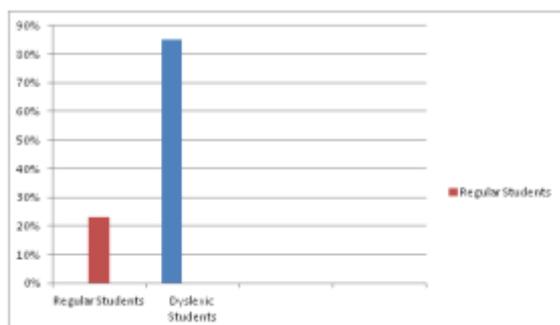

Table 1. Difficulty in acquiring English vocabulary

As we can see in Table 1, the majority of the students face problems in the vocabulary of the English language.

These problems are owed to the different ways in which a letter of the English alphabet may be pronounced and this appears to have immediate effects on the ability of the students to understand and memorize the English vocabulary. There are also many examples of homophones (i.e words that are pronounced the same way although they are written differently and have different meanings). Similar is the case of homographs (i.e. words that have double meanings).
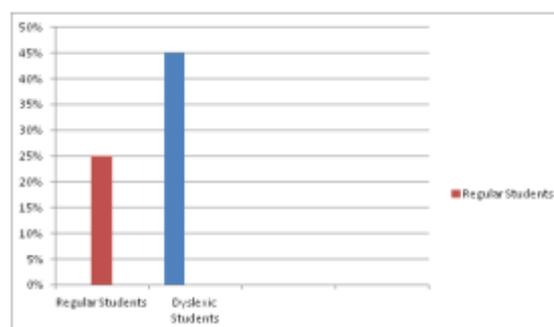

Table 2. Difficulty in acquiring English grammar

As far as grammar is concerned, the answers provided by the students prove that the majority of them have a rather good knowledge of the grammatical structures because - given the right kind of teaching – they can perceive the logic of grammar; contrary to the lexical phenomena that seem to lack any kind of logic. The findings of the research, conducted with the use of the questionnaires, substantiate the claim that all learners –even the dyslexic ones – are able to understand and master the grammar of a foreign language provided that the material taught is broken down in smaller parts and explained comprehensively.

On the third questions, where students had to suggest ways to improve their learning, the majority of them suggested the use of technology, educational games and team work. In this way, the students themselves expressed the need to experience a more interactive way of teaching. The use of technological aids and games gives the students the opportunity to take an active role in the learning process rather than assuming the role of a passive listener, as in the case of traditional teacher oriented teaching.

4. WAYS TO FACILITATE THE PROCESS OF LEARNING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN AN ENVIRONMENT CHARACTERIZED BY THE STUDENTS' EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

The concept and the essence of teaching is born and concluded in the student himself. For this reason, the objective of every teacher is to try to engage all students in his/her teaching journey in order to arrive at the desired result. And if this appears to be an easy task, in reality it isn't. Especially when the classroom – like the majority of classrooms – is characterized by the heterogeneity of students. The fundamental concept of a school "for all" could be summed up in the following words:

"A school that can respond properly to all student difficulties and knows how to overcome them, when possible, becomes a truly inclusive school for all students, where no barriers exist in learning and in participating. This is a goal that has already been discussed in the international scientific literature". (Booth ed Ainscow, 2008).

In order to find ways to facilitate the acquisition of a foreign language we will try to define the difficulties for a dyslexic student:

a. Difficulty in identifying phonemes and difficulty in spelling: this is one of the main difficulties for the dyslexic students when they try to learn English as a foreign language. The difficulty in forming a correct connection between the letters and the pronunciation of English words result in problematic spelling. The dyslexic student has the tendency to write the words exactly in the way they are pronounced. A way to overcome this obstacle could be the repetition of words through educational games and activities that include all students.

b. Difficulty in the memorization of words: because of their short working memory the dyslexic student can't

memorize and remember the lists of words that they have to learn. The meaning of differentiated teaching is founded on the principle that every student has to be immersed in the educational experience because, otherwise, he/she will feel bored easily. And this is true for the dyslexic student as well. Today, technology provides us with several alternatives to present new vocabulary to our students in an innovative and efficient way. Thus, we can create stimuli that will facilitate the visual representation of words and ask students to connect the representations with the words. Another way would be the one proposed by Barbara King' Shaver and Alyce Hunter, who have underlined the importance of the "Getting – to – know – you – vocabulary-ice-breaker" activities and the "getting-to-know-me" ones as activities that may help the teacher understand his/her students better:

> *"A way in which teachers can familiarize themselves with their students' interests is the use of "ice-breaking" activities. These activities have been used with primary school students and they have responded positively".* (King-Shaver & Hunter, 1999)

c. <u>Difficulty in reading</u>: this difficulty that comes as a logical consequence of all the difficulties presented above, may create tremendous inhibitions to a dyslexic student. While reading an English text, the dyslexic student feels exposed to the eyes of his/her classmates because he / she can't execute this task as easily as the others and he/she must stop on every word in order to think its pronunciation. An efficient way to deal with this problem could be the use of the CDs that are included in all English teaching books, English songs and videos that could be subtitled in the students' native language. Moreover, there is also the possibility to create animated characters and insert the students' dialogues, thus creating a genuine story in English. In this way students have the opportunity to express their creativity and combine it with their knowledge of the English language.

d. <u>Difficulty in understanding written or spoken texts</u>: for the dyslexic student a written text is composed of hundreds of words with doubtful meaning. In order to help the student in his/her efforts we can prepare pre-reading tasks that introduce the topic of the text, KWL charts for any reading comprehension task where the students may combine their previous knowledge of the topic with the information presented in the text.

e. <u>Difficulty in understanding grammar rules</u>: being unable to form the

necessary connections to understand the grammar rules the dyslexic student is found in a state of chaos. A way to face this kind of difficulty could be the creation of mind maps in which the teacher – with the vital contribution of the students – would be able to present in a practical way the theoretical aspect of the lesson, since:

"This technique is mainly based on the creative abilities of each person and groups, on the subconscious mental resources, on the synthesis created with colors and images, on the processes that restructure all pieces of information and leave room for more than one interpretations". (Scocco, 2008)

4.1 THE MULTI-SENSORY APPROACH

The school routine of recent decades has underlined the necessity to find ways that could provide teachers and dyslexic students with a vast variety of resources for the facilitation of the acquisition of English as a foreign language.

In her book *"Dyslexia in the foreign language classroom",* J. Nijakowska (2010) suggests that the most appropriate approach to accommodate the needs of the dyslexic students is the "Multi-sensory teaching". Based on research conducted through the years, this teaching approach offers many advantages to the dyslexic students:

a.   it is structured in small stages

b.   it offers opportunities for frequent practice and revision

c.   it offers direct and clear explanations of the linguistic structures

d.   it includes various drills

e.   it activates all the sensorial channels

f.   it combines the way a letter is written and pronounced with the gestures needed to write it.

The unique benefit of this approach seems to be that fact that for the first time the student can form a direct connection between the pronunciation of a word and its written form.

"Multi sensory teaching teaches how sounds correspond to letters". (Nijakowska, 2010)

In order to benefit from this approach teachers are advised to use multi sensory activities like design, writing on different surfaces , word slides or flashcards.

4.2 TOWARDS DIFFERNTIATED TEACHING

The most difficult task for every teacher is to manage to combine the needs, the personalities and the previous knowledge

of all the students that are present in the classroom.

According to Heacox (2012):

"Our language classes are a tapestry of the world that surrounds us. Students come to us with different levels of abilities, millions of linguistic information and cultural backgrounds, various interests and learning profiles. These students need variety, options and opportunities to show their abilities. They must experiment through the various educational opportunities."

The researches that have been realized all over the world have accumulated evidence according to which students can't and mustn't be grouped in categories, since no student is identical to his/her classmate, despite the similar characteristics that they might possess. This is also true in the case of dyslexic students and it proves the advantages of differentiated teaching.

A way to apply this kind of teaching is "flexible grouping":

"Flexible grouping acknowledges that all groups are valuable because they provide the students with experiences with diverse results". (Ford, 2005).

According to Gregory and Chapman (2007), flexible groups offer:

a.   much space to work

b.   detailed instructions

c.   are based on rules

d.   every student assumes a role in a group

e.   there is a time limit

f.   it underlines the strong point of each student.

Without any doubt, the teacher of a class is the person who must take the initiative to create a differentiated classroom, being aware of his/her responsibility and the eventual obstacles. Before initiating his/her efforts, it would be advisable to define and clarify his/her objectives to his/her students and their families. Sometimes, the efforts of a single teacher result in big failure because there is no proper support from the director of the school or the family environment.

4.3   ACCOMODATIONS FOR DYSLEXIC STUDENTS

In order to apply certain accommodations of every type of educational activities included in the school routine or in the exams, we must primarily define them.

"Accommodations are modifications in the ways in which activities are presented that help dyslexic students to fulfill these activities like the other students. Accommodations do not change the content of

the activities, they do not favor any student and they do not alter the result that must be evaluate in an exam. They make it possible for the dyslexic student to show what they know without being blocked by their disability". (Cortiella, 2014).

Some accommodations suggested by the National Centre for Learning Disabilities could be summed up in the following points:

- presentation
1. provision of audio material
2. provision of print outs
3. reduction of the material presented in every page / line
4. provision of a designated reader
5. oral presentation of instructions

- Responses:
1. allow oral answers
2. allow the use of a tape recorder
3. allow answers through the computer

- Estimation of time:
1. allow frequent intervals
2. extend the time given for every task

- Environment:

1. provision of a preferable disposition
2. provision of proper lighting
3. provision of adequate work space

- Other:
1. provision of special preparation for every test
2. provision of on-task prompts

CONCLUSION

Throughout the pages of this paper we have tried to understand the emotional and educational value of learning English as a foreign language in the case of dyslexic students. In order to reach this goal we have tried to present, analyze, explore the difficulties that emerge during the acquisition of learning English. Another goal of this paper has been the presentation of ways in which teachers could intervene to facilitate the learning process in an efficient and innovative way.

It is obvious that there is no logical solution that could satisfy the needs of all students due to the fact that students' needs change every day in the exact same way that the students themselves change.

If one should try to find a key answer to all the responses given by the teachers of dyslexic students, the only valid affirmation in all cases could be not ceasing to look for new ways to present new or old

arguments and differentiating their teaching every day so as not to leave room for inequalities in the educational field.

In conclusion, one should not ever forget or underestimate the innate need of each student – be it a regular or a dyslexic student – to feel calm and reassured.

Appendix – Sample questionnaire

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. **Why do i find it hard to learn English words?**

	Always	Quite often	Rarely	Always
There are too many words				
I don't understand the way they are pronounced				
I learn them and then I forget them				
I don't study hard enough				
I get confused by the way the words are written and pronounced				

2. **Why is it hard to learn the English grammar ?**

	Always	Quite often	Rarely	Never
The rules				
The tenses and their usage				
The key words				
The comparative and the superlative of the adjectives				
The conditionals				
Passive voice				
Reported speech				
Infinitives and gerunds				

3.   Why is writing an essay difficult?

	Always	Quite often	Rarely	Never
I don't understand the topic				
I can't express myself correctly				
I don't have anything to write				
I get bored and I don't want to write				
Other				

4.   Do you have any suggestions about how we / you could improve your weaknesses?

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