

Dyslexia Student Care: Comparison Between Brazil and the United States



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Opinion

Dyslexia is a specific learning disorder with impaired reading accuracy, speed and / or comprehension [1]. It is a neurobiological disorder with impaired phonological awareness impairing decoding and spelling skills causing impairment of reading, writing and spelling acquisition [2]. A neurological basis of dyslexia comes from brain imaging research studies that demonstrate functional failures during reading in the hemisphere, the temporary regions, and the bilateral frontal and occipital areas [3]. The presence of a genetic component indicates that dyslexia may be hereditary with the likelihood of people with a positive family history [4]. The estimated prevalence of the disorder is between 5 and 17% of the population with a male predominance of 3: 11.

According to the International Classification of Diseases - ICD-10, such disorders are noticeable from the earliest stages of development [5] which gives the teacher an important role in identifying the disorder. Unfortunately, in Brazil, there are few studies on the early identification of dyslexia and even more scarce are those directed to the teacher. In addition, the National Policy of Special Education in the Inclusive Education Perspective, published by Ministry of Education disregards this population. In 2008 a new theoretical and organizational framework was introduced in Brazilian education defining special education as a non-substitute modality to schooling; the concept of specialized educational care and the target audience (students with disabilities, global developmental disorders and high skills) [6].

The legislation, which should benefit school inclusion by guaranteeing equal rights for all students, had the opposite effect and ended up segregating students with dyslexia, dysorthography, dysgraphia, dyscalculia and attention and hyperactivity disorder [7]. Dyslexia currently represents a serious school problem, for which it is intended that all education professionals are more aware [8]. The identification of risk signs allows the implementation of appropriate intervention to the changes found even in the preschool phase, with the aim of stimulating

phonological development, minimizing developmental discrepancy throughout the school years [9].

In Brazil, it is estimated that 30% of students in the first grades of elementary school I have some learning disability [8]. This high number may be a consequence of the teaching methods of that country not considering the letter-sound relationship at the time of literacy, although Portuguese has an alphabetic writing system. Thus, there is a difficulty in distinguishing diagnoses between the difficulty and the disorder generating a "production" of false dyslexics due to the similarity in the manifestations of the disorder.

In the US, however, special education services are guaranteed to dyslexics and there is a growing concern with early identification of dyslexia as specific protocols have been used for decades encouraging, stimulating and enabling intervention with at-risk students. These checklists include: Revised Adult Dyslexia Checklist [10], Learning Disability Evaluation Scale-LDES-R2 [11] and Learning Disabilities Checklist [12]10-12.

In 2015, researchers presented the legislative achievements that have been happening in the area of dyslexia by discussing Dyslexia Laws, Proposed Bills, Resolutions, Guidebooks, and Other Resources, and presenting the numerous US initiatives regarding the treatment of students with learning disabilities [13]. The laws focus primarily upon

- a) dyslexia awareness,
- b) pilot programs for screening and intervention,
- c) teacher training,
- d) provision of interventions and accommodations, and
- e) overall rights for individuals with dyslexia.

We conclude that the treatment of students with dyslexia by different countries is very different. While in Brazil such students are ignored by both the legislation and the ministry of education itself that does not consider their needs to be special,

the United States is advancing the achievement of the real school inclusion of students with dyslexia.

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