Learning Disabilities in the Latin@ Community

Teresa Wood
Beloit College
Latin@ Educational Issues
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Overview of Learning Disabilities (LD)

- National Center for Learning Disabilities
  - 2.4 million students have learning disabilities
- LDs affect students ability to:
  - Listen
  - Speak
  - Read
  - Write
  - Reason
  - Math
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disability</th>
<th>Area of Difficulty</th>
<th>Symptoms include trouble with:</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning Disabilities</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dyslexia</td>
<td>Processing language</td>
<td>Reading, writing, and spelling</td>
<td>Letters and words may be written or pronounced backwards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dyscalculia</td>
<td>Math skills</td>
<td>Computation, remembering math facts, concepts of time, and money</td>
<td>Difficulty counting by 2s, 3s, and 4s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dysgraphia</td>
<td>Written expression</td>
<td>Handwriting, spelling, composition</td>
<td>Illegible handwriting, difficulty organizing ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dyspraxia</td>
<td>Fine motor skills</td>
<td>Coordination and manual dexterity</td>
<td>Trouble with scissors, buttons, and drawing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Processing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auditory Processing Disorder</td>
<td>Interpreting auditory information</td>
<td>Language development and reading</td>
<td>Difficulty anticipating how a speaker will end a sentence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Processing Disorder</td>
<td>Interpreting visual information</td>
<td>Reading, writing, and math</td>
<td>Difficulty distinguishing letters like &quot;h&quot; and &quot;n&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Examples of Dyslexia

We all see things the same way. We see words in groups or phrases. The print is more dominant than the background. The print shows no movement. The printed letters are evenly black. Black print on white paper gives the best contrast for everyone. White background looks white.

Example text:

Cswillie started running towards the road. The kids and the policeman chased him. The change was hard to do. His shoes were dirty.

We all see things the same way. We see words in groups or phrases. The print is more dominant than the background. The print shows no movement. The printed letters are evenly black. Black print on white paper gives the best contrast for everyone. White background looks white.
Examples of Accommodations

- Extended time on exams and in-class assignments
- Limited distraction area for exams
- Use of a computer for exams and in-class assignments
- “Smart Pen” or other audio recording
- Printed materials in an audio format
- Printed materials enlarged
The Problem

- 50.5% of students with a LD dropout of high school (2012)
- 13% of students with LDs attend post-secondary school program (2012)
- ~20% of Latin@ students dropped out of high school (2009)
- Unknown what percent of Latin@ students have a LD
Research Questions

- What are the perceptions of learning disabilities in the Latin@ community?
  - Do Latin@s get diagnosed with learning disabilities?
  - Do Latin@s have access to resources, once diagnosed with a learning disability?
  - Is there a connection between dropout rates of Latin@ students and the dropout rates of students with learning disabilities?
Child Advocacy

- Social Status
- Education Level of Parents
- Knowledge of System
- Time
## English as a Second Language (ESL) students and students with LDs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language mode</th>
<th>Overlaps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pronunciation</td>
<td>Omissions, substitutions, and additions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syntax</td>
<td>Negation, word order, and mood.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semantics</td>
<td>Forms of figurative language such as proverbs, metaphors, and similes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Problems with ESL and LD

- Under representation in Elementary schools
- Over representation in High Schools
LD Testing and Costs

- Learning disability testing is required by federal and state regulations to determine eligibility for special education
  - Review of educational records;
  - Observations;
  - Review of student work;
  - Medical, vision, and hearing and audiological examination;
  - Developmental and Social History;
  - Fine and Gross Motor Evaluation;
  - Adaptive Behavior;
  - Speech and Language Assessment;
  - Intellectual Ability or "IQ" tests;
  - Assessment of Academic Skills;
  - Social and Emotional Testing;
  - Behavioral Testing
  - Psychiatric Testing (in rare instances).
Methodology

- Qualitative Interviews
  - Students in small-private liberal arts colleges
    - Latin@s (3)
    - Latin@s with a LD (2)
    - Students with LDs (2)
- Convenient, snowball sample
Findings

• Pride
  ▫ Didn’t wish to seek help
    • Internalized failure
  ▫ Didn’t want accommodations
  ▫ Didn’t want to be seen as “different”

• Parent Advocacy
  ▫ White vs. Latin@
Limitations

- Limited Research
- Small Scale
- Undiagnosed LDs
- Confidentiality
- Time
Thank You

Gracias

Works Cited


