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**RASCALS 2010**

**Dyslexia in French-speaking  
college students:  
Do accommodation measures  
help?**

**Zohra Mimouni, Enseignante-chercheuse  
Collège Montmorency  
zmimouni@cmontmorency.qc.ca**





## Differentiate between...

- **Difficulties in learning how to read**
- **Reading disabilities**



# Difficulties?

Various causes:



- **Psychological**
- **Social environment**
- **Intellect, vision, hearing**
- **schooling: irregular or disturbed**
- **language at school is different from language at home**



# Dyslexia or reading disability?

- **Morgan, 1896 (word blindness)**
- **Greek: difficulty with words**
- **Specific learning disorder**



- **permanent**
- **Biological basis**

**Brain abnormality**

- **cognitive deficit**



- **Mild to severe difficulties learning to read**
- **Difficulty acquiring automatization in reading (fluency)**



## In a child ...

- **Normal cognitive capacities**
  - **normal intelligence**
  - **no intellectual, visual or hearing deficit**
- **Adequate social and academic environment**



# Some figures...

## In the world

**With reading difficulties**

➤ 15 %

**With reading disabilities-dyslexia**

➤ 3 à 6 %



## Features of dyslexia in children

- **Puzzling gap between reading skills and intelligence**
  - **Slow and poor reading**
  - **Spelling errors (omissions, reversals, disordering of letters, phonetic)**
  - **Difficulties reading non words, rare or new words**



- **Sequencing difficulties (months, series)**
- **Poor short-term memory**
- **Problems acquiring arithmetical tables**
- **Problems in repeating polysyllabic words**
- **Difficulties in expressing ideas in written form**



# Features of dyslexia in adults in colleges...



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# Background Information





## **We know that...**

- **Reading disabilities observed in childhood persist into adulthood**

**Wilson & Lesaux (2001)**

**Ramus (2003)**

- **There is an increasing number of students with reading disorders at the post-secondary level**

**Aaron & Phillips (1986)**

**Aphorp (1995)**





## **We also know that...**

- **Among the six Quebec colleges (2 English & 4 French) surveyed in 1992, 53% of the students with learning-disability diagnosed had reading disorders (Senécal, 2000);**
- **Reading disorders play a major role in the drop-out rate in Quebec's high schools and colleges (Charest, 1997);**





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# Objective 1

**To assess dyslexia among French-speaking college students**





- **Identify dyslexia indicators among students with documented reading disabilities;**
  
- **Identify undetected dyslexia among students with self-reported reading and writing difficulties;**





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## Objective 2

**To assess and validate two  
accommodation measures**





- **Extra time to perform a reading activity**
- **Access to an oral version of reading and questions**





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# Questionnaire/survey



- **distributed questionnaire:**  
**N= 502 French-speaking college students**  
**(259 females, 243 males)**
- **determined cut-off scores to identify**  
**students with self-reported reading**  
**difficulties ;**



**DD: students with documented reading disabilities**

**ND: students with self-reported reading and writing difficulties**

**C: student controls (no reading problems, matched on age and education)**



## A first significant figure on dyslexia in colleges...

➤ **7.5 %**  
n=38 →

**Dyslexic students with a documented reading disability (out of 509 students)**



# Other significant figures





- **100 % difficulties in spelling**
- **92 % do not see their mistakes**
- **90 % need more time in reading**
- **87 % read have slow and hesitant reading**
- **84 % need more time in writing**





- **81 %** benefit from the services of an orthopédagogue
- **76 %** at least one member of the family has writing difficulties
- **74 %** at least one member of the family has reading difficulties





- **68 %**      **get tired when reading**
- **66 %**      **hesitate when reading long words**
- **61 %**      **access to an oral version of a text helps comprehension**
- **48 %**      **has already taken a MAN course**
- **48 %**      **has taken same course more than one at the college**





- **45 %**      **repeated course in primary**
- **34 %**      **attended adult education**
- **32 %**      **completed secondary in +5 years**
- **3 %**        **drop out of secondary**





## Students with self-reported reading and writing difficulties

- **59 % profile similar to dyslexics**





# Language tests

*A second profile...*

- **28 DD**
- **53 ND**
- **38 C**





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Results : DD





- **2 +year: difference reading age**
- **Reading of irregular, new and non words**  
**SIGNIFICANTLY SLOW**
- **Word reading SIGNIFICANTLY SLOW**





- **SLIGHT DEFICIT** in word reading
- **SIGNIFICANT DEFICIT** in nonword reading





- **Significant deficit in spelling capacities**
- **Significant deficit in phonological capacities**
- **Significant deficit in short-term memory**





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Some of the deficits observed in children persist into childhood... despite:

... years of exposure to written and oral language

... help and services provided by language therapists





# Les élèves éprouvant des difficultés en lecture et écriture

- Profil **similaire** à celui des dyslexiques  
*dyslexie potentielle?*





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# Évaluation de deux mesures de soutien

*Un troisième profil...*





- **Temps additionnel = une fois et demie le temps régulier**



**Amélioration considérable**

- **Ajout d'une version orale des textes et des questions**



**Amélioration significative**

**MAIS**





- Étudiants avec déficit dans les capacités de manipulation phonologique





Thanks to :

- PARÉA (MELS)
- Laura KING : Cégep André-Leurendeau