

# **Cognitive and Emotional Processes Experienced by Students with Learning Deficiencies during their Quest for a Matriculation Certificate**

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This study investigated emotional and cognitive processes in adolescents with Learning Deficiencies (LD), during their cope with complicated studies and matriculation exams.

The 3-year study included in-depth interviews with 20 students, in 3 time points: 10<sup>th</sup> grade, 11<sup>th</sup> grade and 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

The findings revealed various coping styles: the reconciling, determined, avoiding and rebellious, as well as existence of stages in the decision-making. The coping styles can be characteristic to the individual student or to the stage of his/her acceptance of the deficiency. A reconciling student learns to accept deficiency as part of self-perception, and retrieves inner strength to cope in a determined style. Identification of the stage the child undergoes – will help improve his/her coping style.

The results point at the need of both the earliest and most accurate diagnosis, and the preparation of an emotional support plan for these students, requiring the empowering of teachers and educational counselors and their training to be the primary identifiers of students with LD as well as providers of educational and emotional support. Teachers need vast knowledge of LD identification and of adjusted instruction' and school counselors must acquire the tools for supporting emotional accompaniment. Highly important is to give these services by an efficient multi-professional team within the school framework, in a manner non-dependent on the parents' economical abilities.