LEARNING DISABILITIES AND DIFFICULTIES IN SCHOOL CHILDREN: ANALYSIS OF AN INTERDISCIPLINARY DIAGNOSTIC (ABSTRACT)*. **THESIS. CAMPINAS, 1995**.

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This study was designed to identify three types of children: normal, those with difficulties in school not linked to neurological dysfunction, and those with learning disabilities, by providing a diagnosis of their psycological, neuropsycological, neurological status, as well as an analysis of complementary examinations.

Thirty-four lower-class children of both sexes (average age 9 years and 6 months) studying in public schools in the area of Campinas were studied, and separated in three groups. Group 1 consisted of 11 normal children who are sucessful in school, not revealing any special physical or behavioral problems; Group 2 was composed by 12 children selected due to difficulties in school, although no physical or behavioral difficulties were reported; and Group 3 contained 11 children with difficulties in school associated with previously identified, non-incapacitating neurological dysfunction.

The children in the first group were selected by their teachers, whereas those of the second and third were referred to the Clinic for Learning Disable Children of the Department of Neurology of the Faculty of Medical Sciences of the State University of Campinas (UNICAMP) by their teachers because of specific problems in reading, writing, mathematical reasoning or general academic difficulties.

Evaluative procedures used for analysis of the children were: Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC), Luria-Nebraska Neuropsycological Battery - Children, The Bender Visual-Motor Gestalt Test, Neurological Examination, Evoked Potential, EEG and Single Photon Emission Computed Tomography (SPECT)

Correlation of the results demonstrated differences between the Groups 2 and 3 in temporal, frontal and parietal areas of the right hemisphere. The most visible characteristics were observed in these two groups (especially laterality, visual-spacial perception and maturation) . So it was possible to identify the normal students in general, when analyzed statistically and compared to the results reported in the literature; their implications for conceptual definition, classification and diagnosis of learning disabilities are explored.

KEY WORDS: **learning disabilities, neuropsycological diagnosis, complementary examinations (SPECT).**