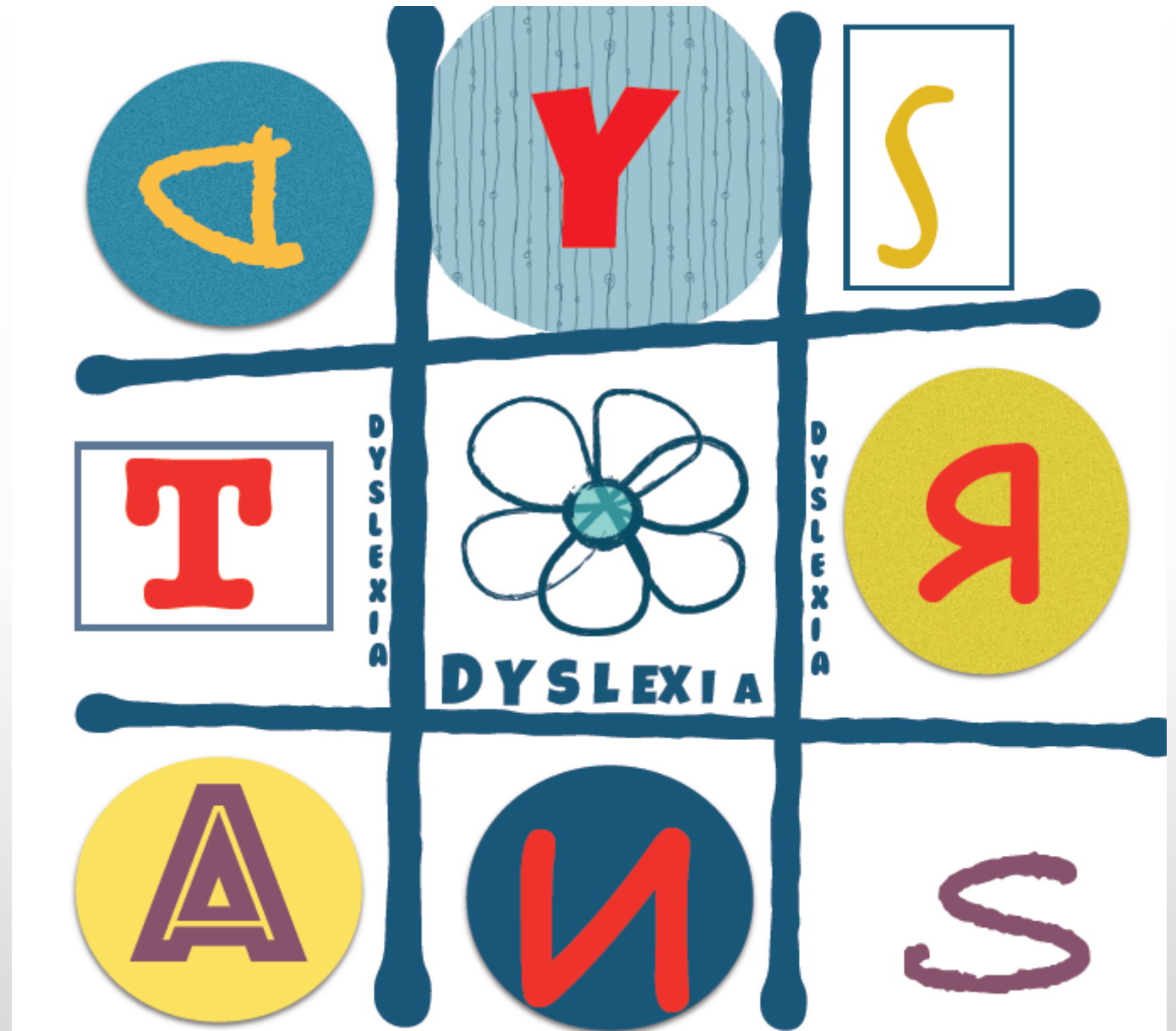


SUPPORTING DYSLEXIC STUDENTS THROUGH ICT TOOLS IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING

EMANUELA LETO

DYSLEXIA ???

- In Italy Dyslexia is considered as a part of a wider frame of learning disorders affecting Italian population (DSA). In this definition Dyslexia, Dyscalculia, Dysgraphia and Dysorthography are included.



**DYSLEXIA IS A REAL PROBLEM,
WHICH AFFECTS THE
ACQUISITION OF READING AND
WRITING OF MANY INDIVIDUALS
AND WHOSE EFFECTS MAY BE
WORSENER BY AN INADEQUATE
EDUCATION AT SCHOOL.**

- The percentage of students affected by these disorders is estimated around the 5 per cent of the whole school population in the compulsory grades of school, primary, low secondary and high secondary, although the data in our possession belonging to the last National survey related to school year 2015/2016 states a lower percentage due to lack of official DSA certification.



Our school, *Istituto Comprensivo Laura Lanza Baronessa di Carini*, located in Sicily, Italy, has a long experience in this field, which has been strongly implemented in the last two school years. In particular dyslexic students face strong troubles with second language learning and so this is the reason why, following different paths, after observing them in their daily school routine, I decided to apply methodologies based on digital tools to cope with difficulties as, in my years of experience, they have been proved to be more successful in most cases of learning disadvantages.

- **As our school applied in 2017 in an Erasmus KA201 Project "DysTRANS Supporting Dyslexic Individual In Transition from Primary to Lower Secondary School "(2017-1-TR01-KA201-046274), coordinated by the Educational Inspectorate of Istanbul, the path to follow was a series of interventions on students who were certified as dyslexic, or supposed to be and in train of certification, by a team of teachers involved in the project.**

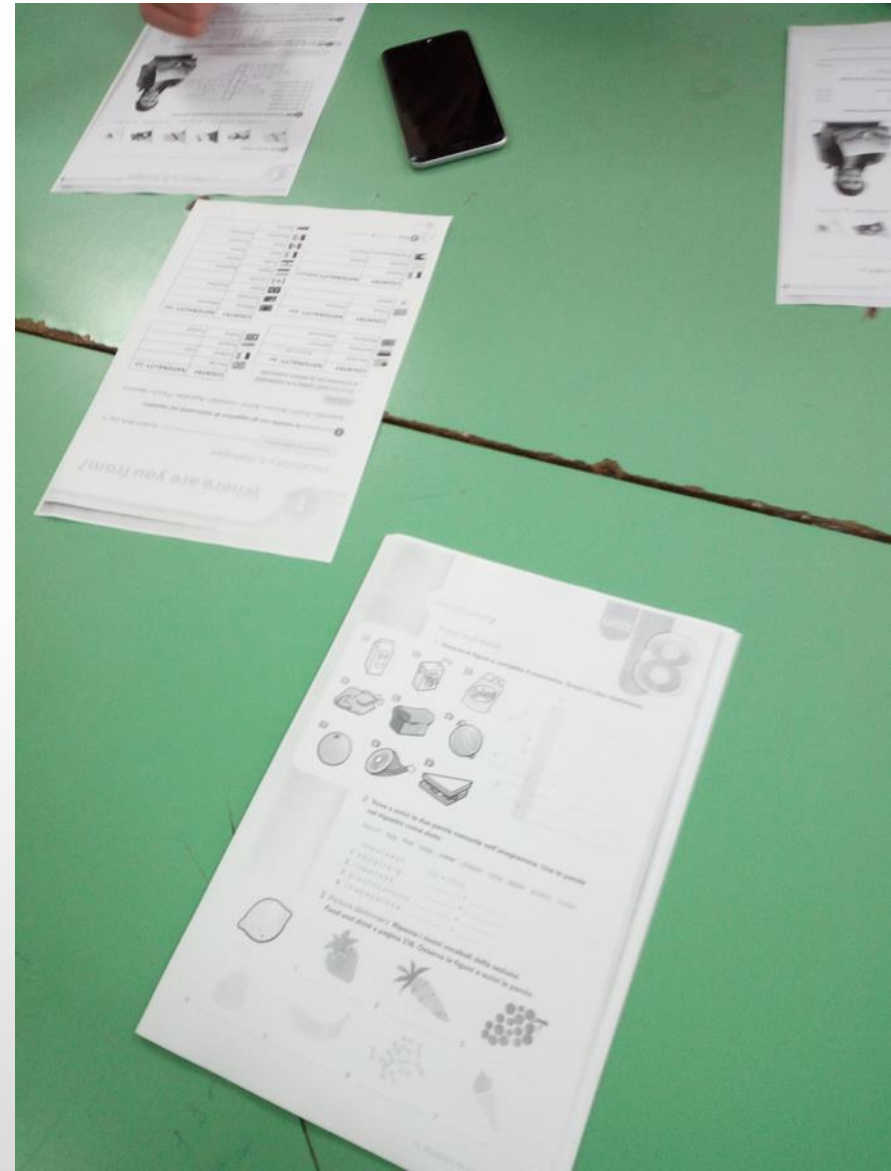


Funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



**DysTRANS-Supporting Dyslexic Individual in Transition
from Primary to Lower Secondary School**

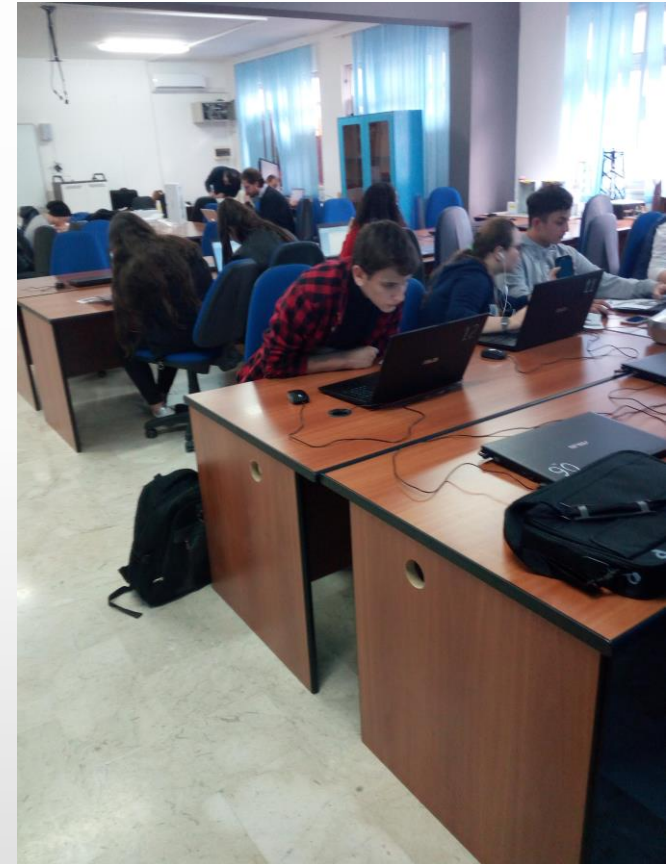
If not recognised in time and not provided with effective support at all school levels, students with dyslexia will probably face academic failure affecting their self-esteem, and will therefore fall into anxiety, lack of motivation, and disengagement with school. Moreover, the acquisition of oral and written skills in foreign language can be really challenging and frustrating for students affected by reading and writing disorders. That is why it is extremely important for teachers and trainers to understand the nature of dyslexia, and how to support students affected by this learning disorder



- The teachers' team, in particular, focused its attention on two students certified as affected by Special Learning Disorders (DSA) approaching the last year of low secondary school with a final National exam, for whom a course based on interactive digital approaches was planned. The two students were different in their story of recognition of the disorder and its certification.

MOREOVER, THEY WERE ALLOWED THE USE OF THEIR SMARTPHONE FOR EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES (GOOGLING CONTENTS, USING TRANSLATOR FOR SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION, AND CALCULATORS). THE TEAM PROPOSED TASKS, WHICH WERE SIMILAR TO THE CURRICULAR ONES, YET SIMPLIFIED AND COPING WITH THEIR FEELINGS AND EMOTIONS TO REDUCE SENSE OF DISCOMFORT WITH THEIR PEERS AND TO INCREASE MOTIVATION AND SELF-ESTEEM

A basic assumption of the plan was to create lessons out of the class within their curricular timetable, in a more comfortable context, often the media room, or a special class, supported by a teacher in definitely small groups, 4 or 5 students. The room was equipped with laptops, computers, large tables to sit together and have also moments of discussion

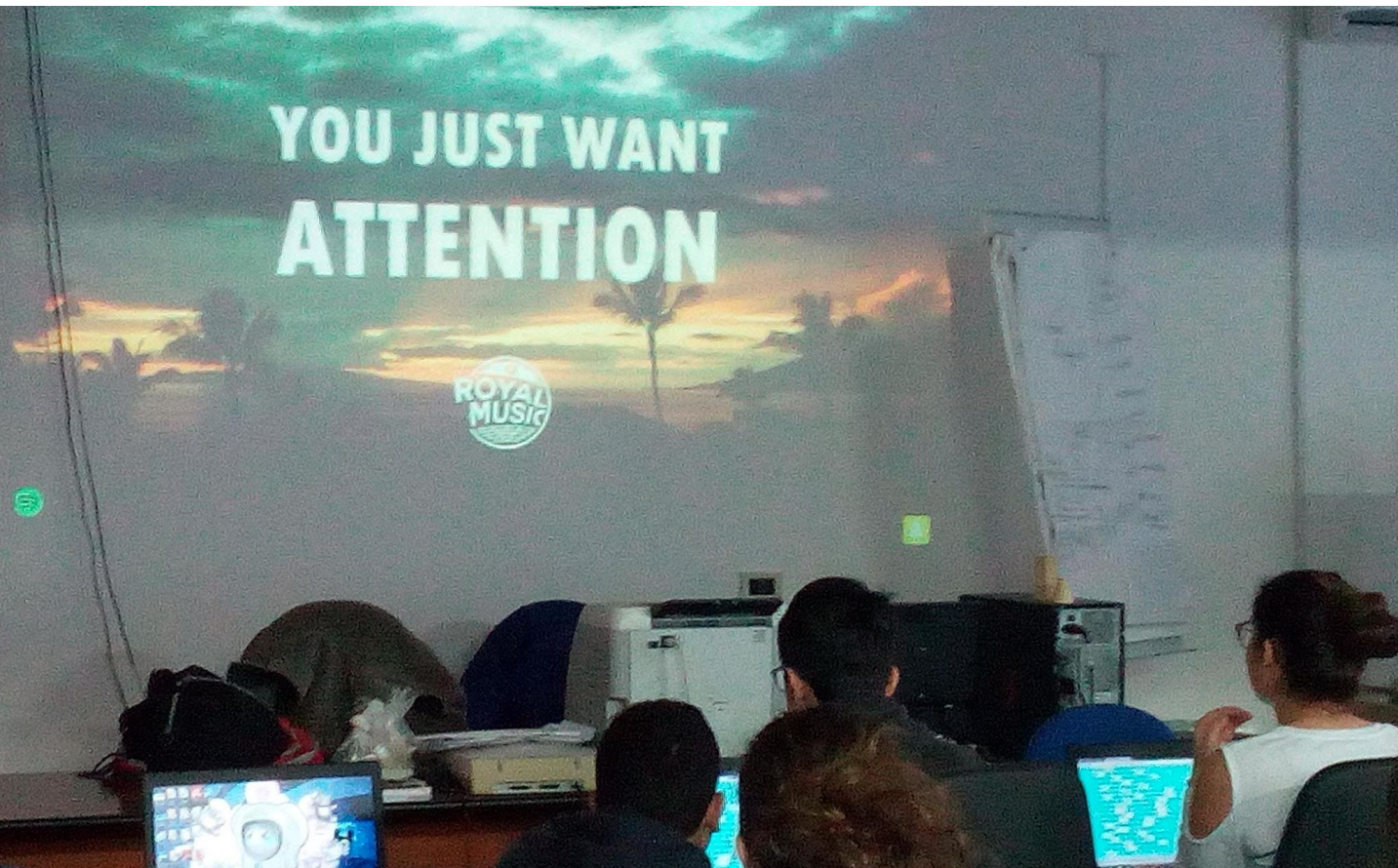


- **Students in small groups increased self esteem, autonomy and in a peer to peer learning supported each other too.**
- **Maps and charts were also proposed on paper in order not to lose confidence with writing skills, filling a chart, giving closed answers in a easier approach to contents.**



- The digital tools were very useful in this kind of activities as writing is one of the most difficult performance ; their faulty orthography also could affect the expression of their thoughts in the accomplishment of a task and their reading really disconnected from the meaning, wrong recognition of phonemes could cause misunderstanding and lack of learning; digital documents and digital writing software helped them to cope with it as the main issue was caused also by the presence of different graphemes. possibility to enlarge letters and to correct through the orthographic spell checker.
- Online quizzes such as Kahoot, an interactive platform, with close answers, matching exercises and fill in the gap texts, supported by large fonts and block letters, videos on main curricular contents, reduced their apprehension for writing and comprehending. In particular the text to speech tool, audio reading the written text, helped them with reading tasks.





- The students were also led to online comprehension tests on English as a second language, both oral and written, in order to gain the right experience to attend the National Skills Tests (INVALSI), which were compulsory to access national exams for low secondary school diploma. These tests on Mother tongue, Math and English skills, for the first year in Italy were administrated in a Computer Based Test modality and the confidence acquired in this Special path with digital tools guaranteed a high percentage of success in their performance.

- **In this particular case, digital tools are really a strong support for students, they support dyslexic individuals as writing and reading are made easier and orthographic support is really needed. This, of course, is a good starting point for DSA students who can improve but not solve their basic disadvantages, in order to promote success and inclusion, as main aim of any form of Education is to be Inclusive.**



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THANKS FOR YOUR ATTENTION
