

INTERNATIONAL TRAINING  
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University of Economics and  
Innovation in Lublin



# APPLICATION OF THE TOOL “SENSITIVITY OF SENSORY PROCESSING IN CHILDREN”

**Authors:**  
**María Rubio Aparicio**  
**Borja Costa López**

## GENERAL DESCRIPTION

### QUESTIONNAIRE OF SENSORY PROCESSING SENSITIVITY IN CHILDREN (QSPSinCh)

QSPSinCh is a questionnaire designed to measure the personality trait of sensory processing sensitivity (SPS) of children who are between 3 and 10 years old.

Versions



- QSPSinCh - version for a parent of a preschool age child
- QSPSinCh - version for a parent of an early school age child
- QSPSinCh - version for a teacher of a preschool age child
- QSPSinCh - version for a teacher of an early school age child

Number of items ranges from 55 to 64 (depends on the version)

## GENERAL DESCRIPTION

### SPHERES

Physical  
Sphere

Emotional  
Sphere

Interpersonal  
Sphere

Cognitive  
Sphere

## GENERAL DESCRIPTION: SPHERES

### Physical Sphere

It assesses the manifestation of children's functioning related to physical aspects such as noises, smells or lights.

*It1. Has bad noise tolerance*

*It4. Finds intense lights unpleasant*

*It7. Dislikes certain food textures*

## GENERAL DESCRIPTION: SPHERES

### Cognitive Sphere

It assesses the manifestation of children's functioning related to cognitive aspects such as thinking processes or their way of facing tasks.

*It1. Shows signs of tension when starts working on a new task*

*It4. Is not satisfied with superficial and casual answer*

*It11. Uses rich vocabulary beyond his/her age*

## GENERAL DESCRIPTION: SPHERES

### Emotional Sphere

It assesses the manifestation of children's functioning related to emotional aspects such as empathy, emotional processes and self-regulation.

*It1. Is strongly influenced by the moods and emotions of other people*

*It12. It is hard to control strong emotions*

*It13. Experiences emotions intensely*

## GENERAL DESCRIPTION: SPHERES

### Interpersonal Sphere

It assesses the manifestation of children's functioning related to interpersonal aspects such as social relationships and their way of communicating.

*It2. Needs more time to establish relationships with peers*

*It13. Doesn't like to be observed*

*It14. Blocks himself/herself when is the center of attention*

## QSPSinCh APPLICATION

- The application of the QSPSinCh is **individual** by pencil and paper and it requires little time investment (completing the issue requires about **10-15 minutes** per application).
- One of the main characteristics of the QSPSinCh is the **simplicity and ease** of its application.
- The **informants** can be the parents or the teachers.
- The informants should be working under the **supervision of a qualified professional**. Supervising professionals should ensure that procedures for scoring are reliable and include methods for checking the integrity of the scores.
- The informants (parents or teachers) should report about each item of the instrument according to the usual behaviour of the child in the **familiar and school contexts**, respectively.
- The informants should be **familiarized with the behaviour of the child** in both familiar and school contexts.



## QSPSinCh APPLICATION

### Educational Context

Suitable scenarios to carry out the assessment of this personality trait through routine and systematic evaluations of the students.

Their interactions in this context are very relevant to examine their sensitivity to sensory processing in the different spheres.

Teachers are privileged informants to access the school context and observe the behavior of the children in a structured environment and with a particular perspective that allows them to compare the functioning of the evaluated child with that other peers during the interaction situations.

## QSPSinCh APPLICATION


### Familiar Context

The family is one of the most important systems of influence in the development of the child from early stages. The family is the main nucleus in which the child is growing up.

Parents spend a lot of time with their children, especially in the kindergarten and primary stages. Parents are optimal informants to report the behaviour of the children in a non-structured environment.

The possibility of having information of the child at home allows to obtain a comprehensive assessment of the sensory processing sensitive in general, and in the different areas.

# QSPSinCh REAL APPLICATION



The screenshot shows the E-motion website interface. At the top left is the logo "E-motion" with the tagline "Potential of highlysensitivity". At the top right is a Creative Commons license icon (CC BY NC ND). Below the logo, the user email "borja.costa@ua.es" and a "Log out" button are visible. The main content area consists of six colored boxes arranged in a 2x3 grid:

- IDENTIFICATION** (dark blue box, circled in red): CHECK IF YOU CHILD IS HIGHLY SENSITIVE
- WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT HIGH SENSITIVITY** (green box): READ THE KNOWLEDGE BASE, SEE THE PRESENTATIONS
- FORUM** (pink box): MEET PEOPLE YOU CAN SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCE WITH
- PODCASTS** (orange box): MEET HS AMBASADORS
- VIDEO** (yellow box): LEARN HOW TO SUPPORT A HIGHLY SENSITIVE CHILD
- MATERIALS FOR WORKING WITH A CHILD** (dark blue box): USE READY-MADE WORK SCENARIOS, LEARN ABOUT THE BIOGRAPHIES OF HIGHLY SENSITIVE PEOPLE

At the bottom of the interface, there are logos for the following partners:

- WSEI LUBLIN 2000-2020
- Universitat d'Alacant / Universidad de Alicante
- EXPERT PSY we speak psychology
- ULL | Universidad de La Laguna
- 25 1992-2017
- Città metropolitana di Roma Capitale

## QSPSinCh REAL APPLICATION

### NOW, IT'S YOUR TURN

#### INSTRUCTIONS

- Imagine a preschool child between 3 and 5 years old (for example, a pupil, your son, daughter, or another relative) and focus on his/her general behavior.
- You will read some statements about physical, cognitive, emotional and interpersonal areas.
- You will have to point out how each statement is associated with the behavior of the child you are thinking of.
- 7-point Likert response scale. 1 = “definitely not”; 7 = “definitely yes”
- REMEMBER: there is no true or false answers.

## QSPSinCh REAL APPLICATION

The child...

Physical  
Sphere

- it1 Has bad noise tolerance
- it2 Finds intense lights unpleasant
- it3 Avoid being in the bright sun
- it4 Badly tolerates tags, scratching materials
- it5 Dislikes certain food textures.
- it6 Perceives some flavors very intensively
- it7 Has a particularly sensitive sense of smell

## QSPSinCh REAL APPLICATION

The child...

Physical  
Sphere

- it8 If experiences something intensely, complains of pain (e.g. headache, stomach ache)
- it9 More often than other children, signals a need for rest
- it10 Badly tolerates dirt, wetting, etc. on clothing or on the hands
- it11 When many things happen at once, is tired more than other children
- it12 Easily identifies small changes (or modifications) in the environment/surroundings
- it13 Often complains of pain for no apparent reason

## QSPSinCh REAL APPLICATION

The child...



Cognitive  
Sphere

- it1 Is overwhelmed by a large amount of information at once
- it2 Asks deep, thought-provoking questions
- it3 He can "drill" the topics she/he is interested in with great determination
- it4 Has a special sense of humor, often not understood by peers
- it5 Jokes in an intelligent way
- it6 Uses rich vocabulary beyond his age
- it7 Tries to perform the task entrusted by the teacher with great care
- it8 Is an "expert" in some area of

## QSPSinCh REAL APPLICATION

The child...



Cognitive  
Sphere

- it9 Can surprise you with information / knowledge
- it10 In the face of a new task, analyzes all potential scenarios, anticipating difficulties and threats
- it11 A slight failure causes the withdrawal of many activities that have been undertaken without any difficulty
- it12 Before starts tasks, asks a lot of questions
- it13 Is creative
- it14 Likes stability and reproducibility/repetitively in behavior and actions
- it15 Easily remembers details and previous experiences



## QSPSinCh REAL APPLICATION

The child...



Emotional  
Sphere

- |     |  |
|-----|--|
| it1 | Needs favorite objects to feel better                        |
| it2 | Is easily embarrassed  |
| it3 | Is worried about the assessment of others                    |
| it4 | Has a special loathing for insects, e.g. fly, gnat, spider   |
| it5 | Has a tendency to pessimistic / unfavorable course of events |
| it6 | Experiences art very much, e.g. is moved by movies and music |
| it7 | Has a tendency to accumulate emotions                        |

## QSPSinCh REAL APPLICATION

The child...



Emotional  
Sphere

- it8 It's hard to control strong emotions
- it9 Experiences emotions intensely
- it10 Doesn't need much to cry, hysteria
- it11 Fatigue is manifested by aggression
- it12 When many things happen at once, it stresses him/her more than other children
- it13 Needs more time to feel comfortable in a new place
- it14 Once disappointed, it avoids similar situations, places and events for a long time

## QSPSinCh REAL APPLICATION

The child...



Interpersonal  
Sphere

- it1 In the new group, remains an observer for a long time before joining the activity
- it2 Needs additional incentives(stimulus) to get involved in the group
- it3 In a group where a lot is going on, it seems to be temporarily absent
- it4 Badly tolerates time pressure in situations of evaluation, competition (tests, competitions)
- it5 Public appearances (academies, competitions) cost her/him more than other children
- it6 Rarely signal his/her needs
- it7 Experiences conflicts with peers particularly intensely and for a long time

## QSPSinCh REAL APPLICATION

The child...

Interpersonal  
Sphere

- it8 Feels guilty even when there is no reason to do so
- it9 Reveals some difficult situations and begins to talk about them after a long time
- it10 In relations with others, she/he seems shy
- it11 Doesn't like to be observed
- it12 Blocks himself/herself when is the center of attention
- it13 Reacts disproportionately/exaggerated to criticisms

## INTERPRETATION – ILLUSTRATIVE CASES

### CASE 1

Imagine a 4-year-old child in class.

Here is some of his/her behaviors:

- He/She finds it hard to play with the other children.
- In the school lunchroom, supervisors tell us that it takes him a long time to start eating, but when he does, he eats everything.
- When a toy is taken away, he/she shows tantrums, but when he/she sees it happen to other classmates, he/she shows the same intensity of reaction.
- He/She becomes overwhelmed when a task involves more than 3-4 steps to accomplish.

## INTERPRETATION – ILLUSTRATIVE CASES

### PHYSICAL SPHERE

*Sensitivity continuum*



LOW

MEDIUM

HIGH



Children are high influenced by subtle odors, sounds, small gestures, changes in the tone of voice and other delicate stimuli

## INTERPRETATION – ILLUSTRATIVE CASES

### PHYSICAL SPHERE

“In the school lunchroom, supervisors tell us that it takes him a long time to start eating, but when he does, he eats everything”

*Sensitivity continuum*

MEDIUM

HIGH

Children are high influenced by subtle odors, sounds, small gestures, changes in the tone of voice and other delicate stimuli

## INTERPRETATION – ILLUSTRATIVE CASES

### COGNITIVE SPHERE

*Sensitivity continuum*



LOW

MEDIUM

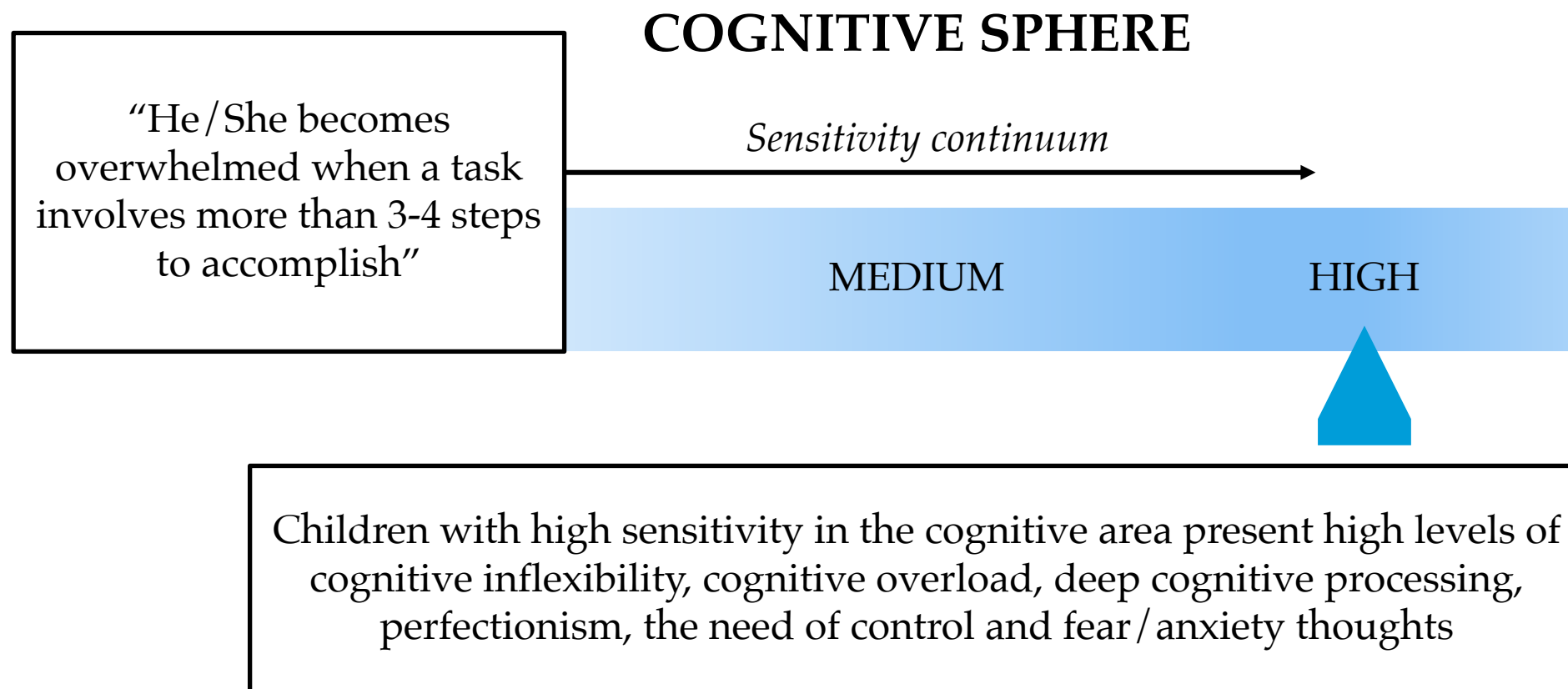
HIGH



Children with high sensitivity in the cognitive area present high levels of cognitive inflexibility, cognitive overload, deep cognitive processing, perfectionism, the need of control and fear / anxiety thoughts



## INTERPRETATION – ILLUSTRATIVE CASES



## INTERPRETATION – ILLUSTRATIVE CASES

### EMOTIONAL SPHERE

*Sensitivity continuum*



LOW

MEDIUM

HIGH



Children with high sensitivity in the emotional area present strongly deep experiences, intense expression and somatic manifestation of emotions, high levels of stress, attachment to objects and emotional interactions with nature, art and animals

## INTERPRETATION – ILLUSTRATIVE CASES

### EMOTIONAL SPHERE

“When a toy is taken away, he / she shows tantrums, but when he / she sees it happen to other classmates, he / she shows the same intensity of reaction”

*Sensitivity continuum*

MEDIUM

HIGH

Children with high sensitivity in the emotional area present strongly deep experiences, intense expression and somatic manifestation of emotions, high levels of stress, attachment to objects and emotional interactions with nature, art and animals

## INTERPRETATION – ILLUSTRATIVE CASES

### INTERPERSONAL SPHERE

*Sensitivity continuum*



LOW

MEDIUM

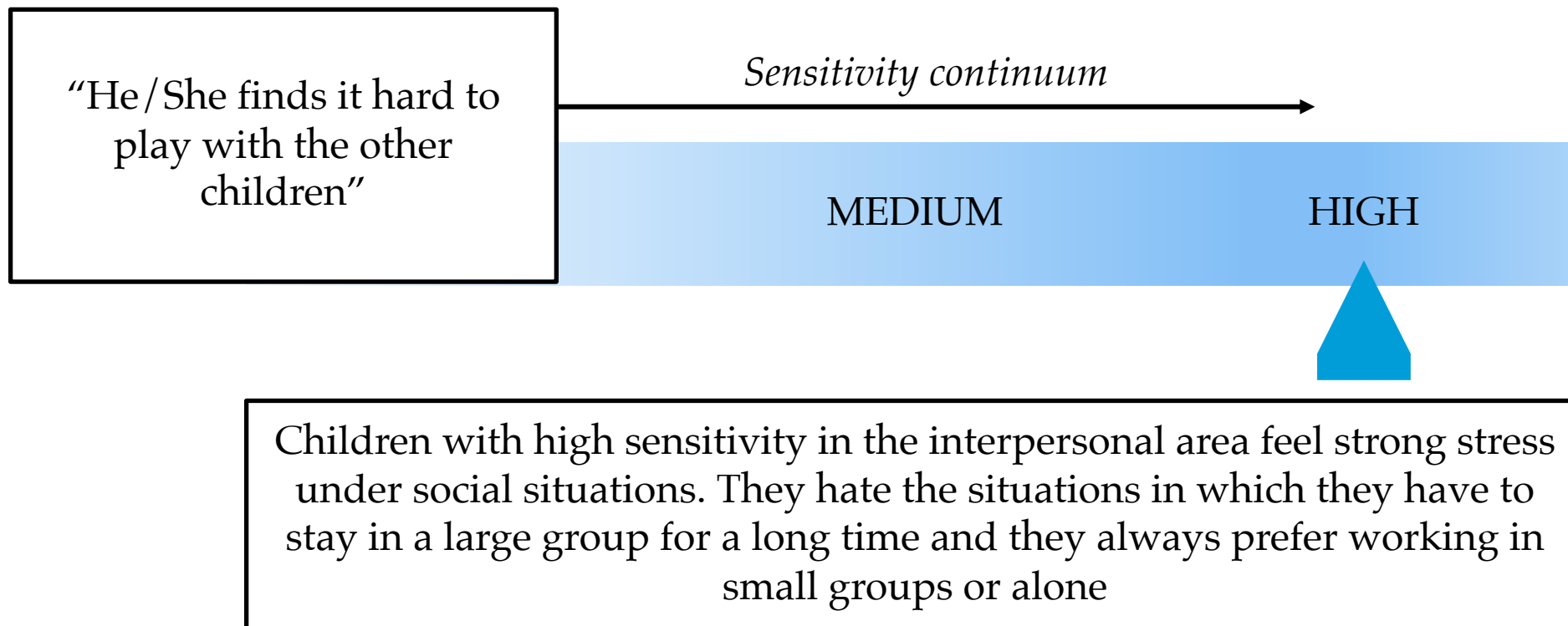
HIGH



Children with high sensitivity in the interpersonal area feel strong stress under social situations. They hate the situations in which they have to stay in a large group for a long time and they always prefer working in small groups or alone

## INTERPRETATION – ILLUSTRATIVE CASES

### INTERPERSONAL SPHERE



## INTERPRETATION – ILLUSTRATIVE CASES

### CASE 2

Imagine an 8-year-old child in class.

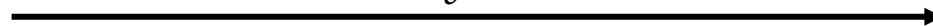
Here is some of his/her behaviors:

- When he/she is listening to music, easily shows tears, shocked, "goose bumps," etc.
- He/She uses many technical terms to speak and asks many questions for superficial answers.
- He/She tolerates situations in which he/she is going to be evaluated (school grades, sports, etc.).
  - He/She has difficulty to distinguish different tastes.

## INTERPRETATION – ILLUSTRATIVE CASES

### PHYSICAL SPHERE

*Sensitivity continuum*



LOW

MEDIUM

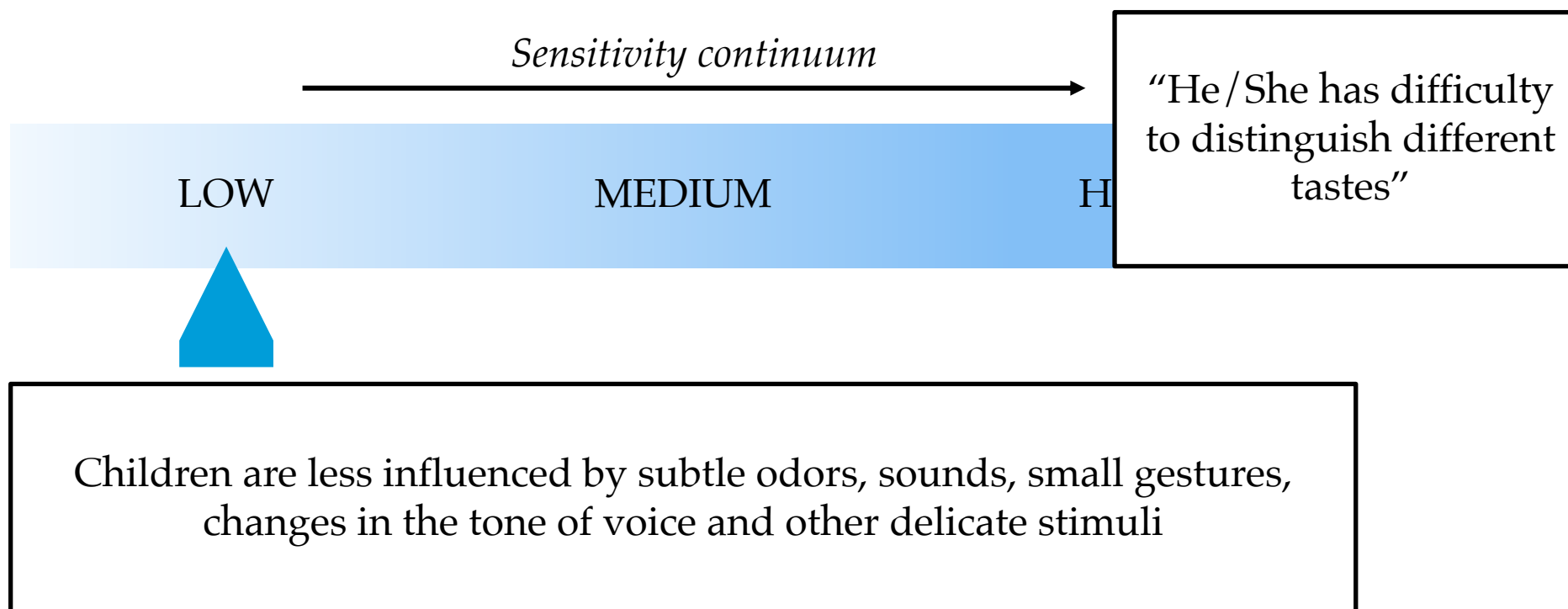
HIGH



Children are less influenced by subtle odors, sounds, small gestures, changes in the tone of voice and other delicate stimuli

## INTERPRETATION – ILLUSTRATIVE CASES

### PHYSICAL SPHERE





## INTERPRETATION – ILLUSTRATIVE CASES

### COGNITIVE SPHERE

*Sensitivity continuum*



LOW

MEDIUM

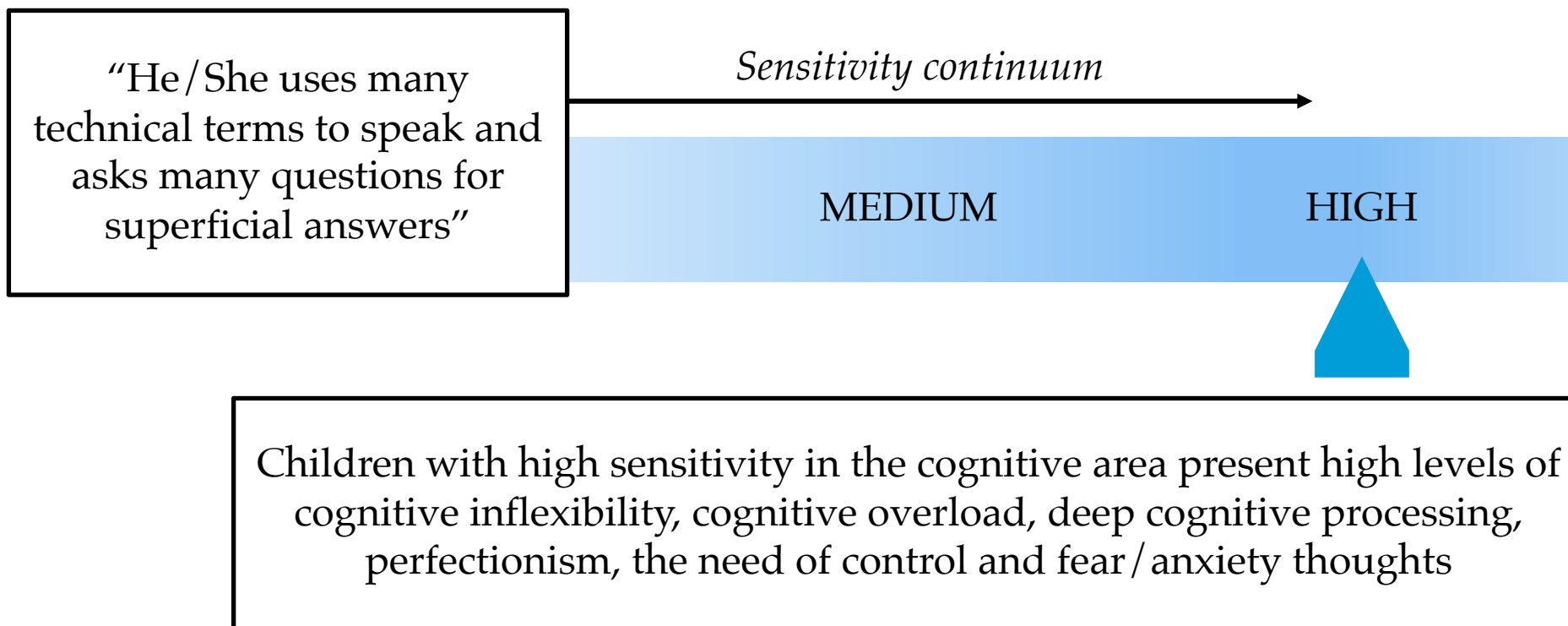
HIGH



Children with high sensitivity in the cognitive area present high levels of cognitive inflexibility, cognitive overload, deep cognitive processing, perfectionism, the need of control and fear / anxiety thoughts

## INTERPRETATION – ILLUSTRATIVE CASES

### COGNITIVE SPHERE



## INTERPRETATION – ILLUSTRATIVE CASES

### EMOTIONAL SPHERE

*Sensitivity continuum*



LOW

MEDIUM

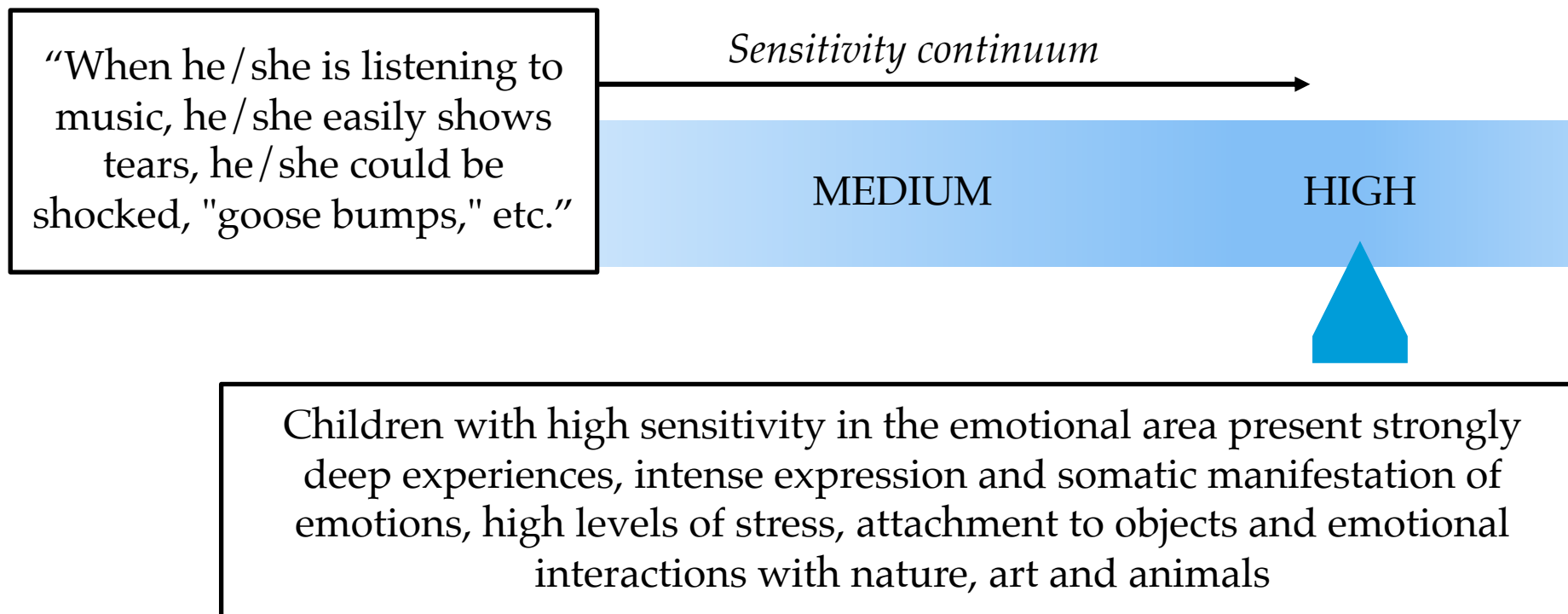
HIGH



Children with high sensitivity in the emotional area present strongly deep experiences, intense expression and somatic manifestation of emotions, high levels of stress, attachment to objects and emotional interactions with nature, art and animals

## INTERPRETATION – ILLUSTRATIVE CASES

### EMOTIONAL SPHERE



## INTERPRETATION – ILLUSTRATIVE CASES

### INTERPERSONAL SPHERE

*Sensitivity continuum*



LOW

MEDIUM

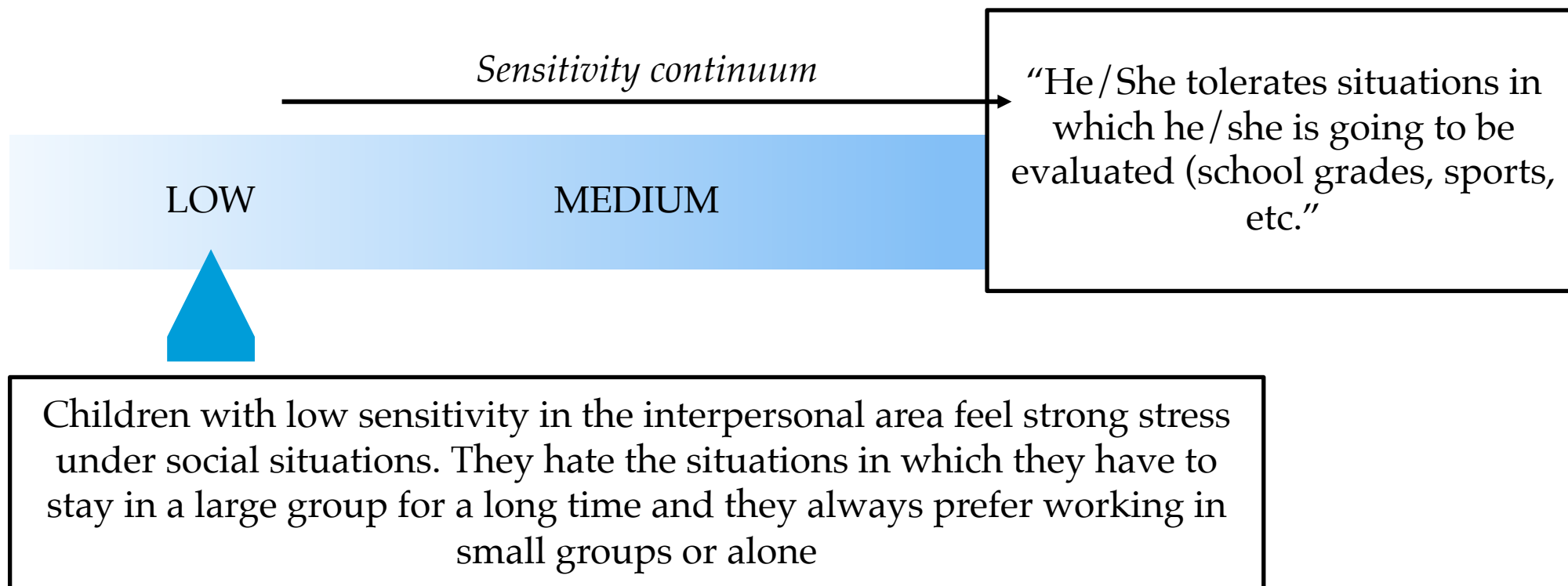
HIGH



Children with low sensitivity in the interpersonal area feel strong stress under social situations. They hate the situations in which they have to stay in a large group for a long time and they always prefer working in small groups or alone

## INTERPRETATION – ILLUSTRATIVE CASES

### INTERPERSONAL SPHERE



## MAIN DIFFICULTIES ABOUT THE APPLICATION

1. A teacher says: “I don’t know how to answer to items related to **flavours or lights**”

2. A teacher says: “I don’t know how to answer to items related to **violent programs on TV**”

Both in preschool and primary children

## MAIN DIFFICULTIES ABOUT THE APPLICATION

3. A teacher says: “I don’t know how to answer to items related to ***the sense of humour of the child***”

4. A teacher says: “I don’t know how to answer to items related to the ***confidence of interacting with other unknown people***”

Both in preschool and primary children



## MAIN DIFFICULTIES ABOUT THE APPLICATION

5. A teacher says: “I don’t know how to answer to items related to **work under pressure (cognitive tasks)**”

6. A teacher says: “I don’t know how to answer to items related to **the reactions from criticisms**”

Both in preschool and primary children

## MAIN DIFFICULTIES ABOUT THE APPLICATION

7. Parents say: “My son cries easily... is it **normal** at his age?”

8. Parents say: “My daughter dislikes different textures when she is eating. Is it **normal** when they are such a child?”

9. Parents say: “My son finds difficult to go to sleep in a day full of experiences. Is it **normal** due to the situation?”

Both in preschool and primary children

## MAIN DIFFICULTIES ABOUT THE APPLICATION

10. Parents say: “My daughter doesn’t contain intense emotions. ***It’s the period of tantrums, isn’t it?***”

11. Parents say: “My son doesn’t understand smart jokes as his peers. Is it ***normal?***”

Both in preschool and primary children

## CONCLUSIONS

Sensitivity is a continuum personality trait, not a disorder. SPS represents a gradient of individual differences in relation to the reception, modulation and information analyzing of the internal and external stimuli to respond to situational demands

This personality trait is manifested in different daily life spheres (physical, cognitive, emotional and interpersonal)



## CONCLUSIONS

It is relevant to study / assess the behavior of children in each life sphere in order to create strategies for both parents and teachers. In fact, it is an output of this project.

How can this help **teachers'** work?

Creating new strategies could facilitate (1) technics to manage emotions and thoughts in the classroom, (2) training to manage sensitivity, (3) improving confident / supportive environments and social relationships, (4) promoting social inclusion among peers



... and this could reach an improvement of quality of life and performance of children in the classroom

## CONCLUSIONS

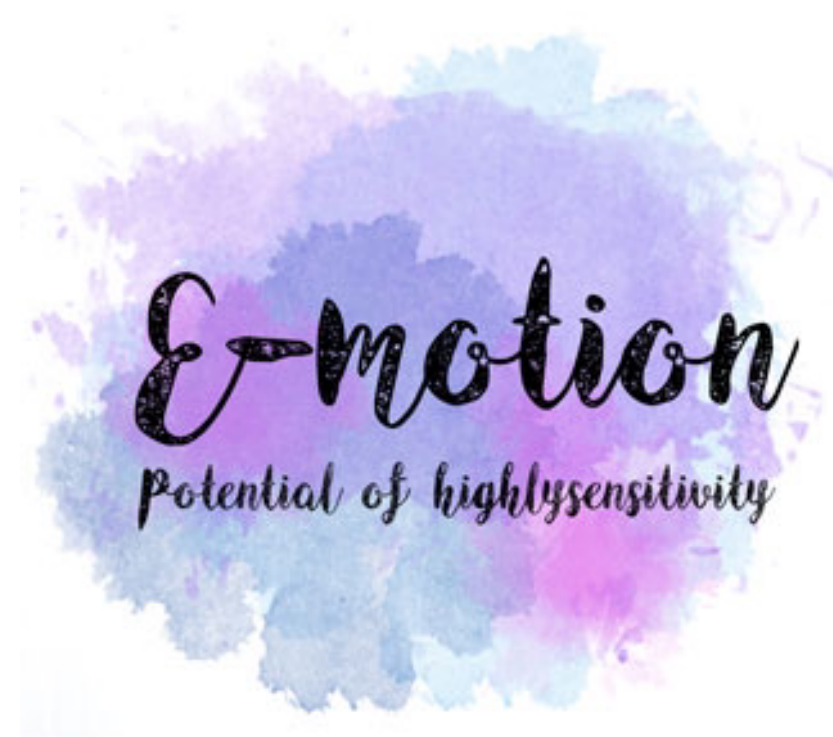
It is relevant to study / assess the behavior of children in each life sphere in order to create strategies for both parents and teachers. In fact, it is an output of this project.

How can this help **parents'** daily life?

Elaborating new action plans could facilitate (1) the learning of how to observe the behavior of the children needs, (2) to understand and validate their skills, (3) to encourage their strengths, and (4) to promote favorable environments in family area



... and this could reach an improvement of quality of life and family relationships to copy daily experiences





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