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REVIEW ARTICLE

ACTION RESEARCH STUDY RELATED TO DYSLEXIA IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN
KERALA

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ABSTRACT

This paper is a case study related to action research done while I was a teacher trainee doing teaching practice and it details about the specific problem of a dyslexic pupil of high school in the capital city of Kerala. The significance of the study, objectives, methodology adopted, analysis and interpretation and remedial measures taken are detailed.

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INTRODUCTION

“Action Research is Social Research carried out by a team encompassing a professional action researcher and members of an organization or community seeking to improve their situation”. (Greenwood J 4)

The concept of ‘Action – Research’ was disseminated in India by an American educationist by Stephan M. Corey in the early seventies.

Action Research represents the implementation of John Dewey’s idea harnessing class-room teaching in solving particular problem. Stephen Corey attempted to integrate Research and class room teaching. He introduced this new system as he was fully aware of the limitation of an average teacher in understanding sophisticated Research-methodology. Many of the problems faced by a teacher require immediate attention. Such on the spot research aiming at the solution of an immediate problem is known as Action-Research.

The steps involved in Action-Research are

- i. Defining the problem
- ii. Analyzing the problem

- iii. Hypothesizing
- iv. Designing a test of hypothesis
- v. Obtaining credence
- vi. Generalizing

Need and Significance of the Study

When the teaching aims are not achieved, a problematic situation arises. It is the disparity or gap between the teacher’s intention, aspiration, his or her teaching aims and the knowledge or skills and attitudes actually demonstrated by the people that creates the teaching problem. Here comes the role of Action-Research. Such a problem was faced by the teacher trainee during teaching practice in a govt. run school in Kerala. While teaching the subject English, a pupil of ninth class seemed to be totally at a loss and clueless regarding what was being taught. Compared to other pupils of the same chronological age, he showed marked educational deficiency. To find out the cause of it and remedy it with suitable measures necessitated the study.

Defining the problem

Vibin Kumar, a pupil of 9D, Model School, Trivandrum showed marked deficiency and deviation intellectually while learning English language and literature, with respect to the four skills- Listening, speaking, reading and writing.

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To find the cause of the poor performance and lack of interest showcased by the pupil in learning English and remedy it with appropriate measures.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To identify the causes for the lack of interest and poor performance in the subject.
2. To find out suitable measures to remedy his problem.
3. To take initiative to apply the remedial measures on the pupil and make him at par with his peer group.

METHODOLOGY

During the Teaching practice (Phase II) the Teacher trainee while taking class in the English subject, observed that a pupil never gave any response to the questions asked and did not involve in pair or group work activities. While giving homework or assignments, he copied from his classmates and submitted the work. The written works were full of spelling and grammatical mistakes. While he was asked to read a prose paragraph, he said he couldn't. He stuttered while pronouncing even simple monosyllabic words. During recess i.e., after lunch break he was called aside and asked to write the alphabets – both small and capital letters. He skipped few letters like 'g', 'u' etc and changed the position of the letters. When the mistakes were pointed out he said that he forgot. On the same day some simple words like 'apple', 'drum', 'little' etc were written in his book for drilling. He wrote the word 'drum' as 'drown' and when he was questioned for clarification; he replied that though he wrote the word many a time he couldn't learn the spelling by-heart.

Techniques used for remedying the problem

1. Tasks related to listening, speaking, reading and writing.
2. Pair and group activities
3. Home works and assignments.

Analysis and interpretation of data

1. The pupil has very poor memory which is related to the problems in association. Every addition to the vocabulary involves registration, rehearsal and remembrance. Children learn to use words by forming associations. Memory is one of the essential ingredients of intelligence. It is also a key factor in leaning.
2. The pupil is unable to retain and recall any information regarding what is taught in the class. This points out at lack of skill of memorization properly by repeated practice by the pupil.
3. The pupil doesn't involve himself in 'meaningful learning'. He doesn't understand and comprehend what he reads (i.e. loud reading and silent reading in class from textbook) or listens to a lecture.
4. The pupil shows deficiency in language. He is not able to make sense of what he reads and hence he doesn't remember.
5. The pupil lacks the necessary pre- requisites in the subject. It can be said that his basics is very poor. Though he is in

high school, he doesn't ever know the alphabets which are the foundation of any language.

6. The pupil's problems have not been identified earlier by his teachers or parents. He hasn't received the proper attention and care from his family and teachers.
7. The pupil comes from an input-deficient atmosphere and lacks a speech community around him. He comes from a poor socio- economic background as his father is a labor who struggles to make both the ends meet. He can't afford to give tuition or extra support and help to his child. The teachers, who are supposed to be the foster-parents, are least concerned and show mere negligence and lack of commitment towards their job and responsibilities.

Conclusion

1. The pupil is intellectually a slow-learner.
2. The pupil has speech defects, has lesser capacity of abstract thinking, lacks in reasoning ability, and is unable to work independently.
3. The pupil has short span of interest and attention and gets confused.
4. The pupil suffers from dyslexia.
5. Various factors – i.e. physical, intellectual, social and environmental – have contributed in aggravating this serious disorder and so needs special attention and remedial measures in the earliest .
6. The pupil requires the combined efforts of his teachers, peer group and family.

Remedial measures taken

Dyslexia is a serious learning disorder which needs a prolonged period of help, support and assistance. Nothing much of considerable significance can be done during the short span of 20 days of teaching practice. But, of course, serious attempts can be made and initiative taken to remedy the problem.

The action taken by the teacher trainee to remedy the problem were --

1. The problem was brought to the notice of concerned subject teacher and class teacher.
2. The teacher trainee helped to develop the pupil's self-confidence and stimulate his interest in the language.
3. The teacher trainee showed great patience while dealing with him and asked very simple questions for scaffolding. Even little attempt made by the pupil to improve and show interest in the subject was given due appreciation and reinforcement.
4. The whole class was asked to be friendly with him and asked two pupils who were above average academically to help him with his lessons during the free time.
5. During breaks or free time, the teacher took efforts to teach the basics of the language and gave home works related to it.
6. Pictures were used to teach new words of vocabulary wherever possible to assist him to associate the word with the picture which helps in retention and memorizing .

7. The teaching aids were prepared by looking into the requirements and level of the pupil.
 8. Additional materials like story books, comic books etc were provided to stimulate his interest in the subject.
 9. Remedial teaching was provided by the teacher wherever possible.
 10. Programmed learning material was used to teach grammar.
3. The pupil should be grouped with average children till he improves so that he can feel at ease with learning and can avoid unnecessary competition which may make him lose his heart.
 4. The school should provide regular medical check-up and necessary treatment, child guidance clinic and remedial teaching to help the backward children for improvement.
 5. The atmosphere of the class and school should be friendly, protective, acquisition-rich and healthy.
 6. The school authorities should seek the help of experienced psychologists and maintain proper progress records.

The efforts and initiation taken by the teacher trainee definitely helped to bring about a marked change in the pupil. The pupil started taking interest in the subject and made attempts to respond which was worth appreciating. He volunteered to seek the help of teachers and his classmates to clear his doubts.

Suggestions

1. Special classes should be provided to transact the learning materials in a detailed and practical manner.
2. Individual teaching and special attention should be given in the school and at home. Taking into account his poor economic background, the teachers should be more sympathetic and take efforts to give additional help, attention and care.

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