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REVIEW ARTICLE

MOTIVATION AND ENCOURAGEMENT IN TEACHING SLOW LEARNERS

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ABSTRACT

Slow learners should not be confused with students in need of special education or reluctant learners who are non-cooperative. The teachers and guardians may resort to some of the teaching aids available to special education students that may enhance interest of slow learners and help them get involved in the learning process. A slow learner is a child or pupil who is able to learn educational skills but a rate and depth below average as compared to the child's peers or average learners in the class. Slow learners are often confused with students in need of special education or reluctant learners who are non-cooperative. A student who fails to excel in some classes or in some subjects does not imply that he or she is a slow learner. However, resorting to some of the teaching aids available to special education students may enhance interest of slow learners and help them get involved in the learning process. Actually slow learners are normal students who are simply not interested in studying under traditionally acceptable system of education. And several students in a class fall under this category, but most parents or guardians prefer to remain in denial mode.

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INTRODUCTION

Slow learners should not be confused with students in need of special education or reluctant learners who are non-cooperative. A student may fail to excel in some classes or in some subjects but it does not imply that he or she is a slow learner. The teachers and guardians may resort to some of the teaching aids available to special education students that may enhance interest of slow learners and help them get involved in the learning process. Every child is special. As every child is different, there is every possibility of improvement, sooner or later. The source of energy is lying within them but the only thing is to stretch the hand of confidence towards them which will solve their problem and improve their quality. A slow learner is a child or pupil who is able to learn educational skills but a rate and depth below average as compared to the child's peers or average learners in the class. Slow learners are often confused with students in need of special education or reluctant learners who are non-cooperative. A student who fails to excel in some classes or in some subjects does not imply that he or she is a slow learner. However, resorting to some of the teaching aids available to special education students may enhance interest of slow learners and help them get involved in the learning process.

Actually slow learners are normal students who are simply not interested in studying under traditionally acceptable system of education.

And several students in a class fall under this category, but most parents or guardians prefer to remain in denial mode. In other words, a "slow learner" is not a diagnostic category, it is a term people use to describe a student who has the ability to learn necessary academic skills, but at rate and depth below average same age peers. In order to grasp new concepts, a slow learner needs more time, more repetition, and often more resources from teachers to be successful. Reasoning skills are typically delayed, which makes new concepts difficult to learn. A slow learner has traditionally been identified as anyone with a Full Scale IQ one standard deviation below the mean but not as low as two standard deviations below the mean. Normally, learners have an IQ of between 85 or 115. Nevertheless, learners who have an IQ below 70 are termed as having intellectual disability.

A slow learner has not reached the level of being termed as having intellectual disability (mental retardation). There are different reasons for slow learning, some time it is due to their mental ability, some time it due to their background, illiterate parents, culture problems, avoiding by the parents in early child hood, between ages 2 to 6 years. Some time it due to mental illness. These are different causes of the slow learner. Slow-learners are not averse to learning, and have no limitations for learning, but in fact have their own psychology for learning. Hence the challenge for the parents or guardians or teachers is to understand the student's areas of interests and develop a teaching plan to cover syllabus in a given time frame.

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Some traits of slow learners include

- Emotional, sensitive and innocent
- Prefer simpler tasks and get stressed under complex circumstances
- Have a short attention span and lose concentration very quickly
- Prefer to work at their own pace and not under time constraints
- Not Interested in cramming skills which are purely academic in nature

The greatest factor for the success of the life of the child is his encouragement. If we try to find out the strengths of the weak child then we come across some of them. If we try to applaud him with encouraging words and give confidence he definitely feels his importance and worth. Once the child has grown his confidence means he will definitely improve. The most important cause of his weakness is we; the teachers always give importance to the good children and neglect the weaker in the class. Encouragement can change the whole personality of a child.

These are a few tips for the teachers

- If possible, try to stream slow learners into their own classes or groups as early as possible using placement tests. It becomes much easier to learn and teach where the students are closer to their own proficiency level.
- Look for every opportunity to encourage and to reinforce the idea that the students are improving and that it takes time and effort to do this. Also, keep reminding them that one has to be willing to make some mistakes, to take some chances, in order to improve.
- You will need a tighter lesson plan because slow learners cannot usually think very creatively or spontaneously. You should work toward these qualities but more careful planning is needed.
- The more the lesson's content is concrete, visual, familiar, and personally interesting to the students, the better.
- Look for opportunities to make the lesson fun. Relaxed learners learn better.
- Encourage students to ask for further explanations or examples, or just to announce whenever they still don't understand lesson's learning point.
- Check for understanding of each learning point, and then give students sufficient opportunity to practice, experiment with, and review the target language, within and without the classroom.
- Regularly give homework assignments which reinforce and review what the students were taught in class, both recent and past.
- Give thorough review guides which communicate to students what the test content will be like.

Motivation is a necessity so that learning becomes a continuing, improving, interesting and hopefully enjoyable process.

Doing unique activities, creating situations where the students can work in groups, creating a reward system are just a few ideas. The greatest factor for the success of the life of the child is his encouragement. If a teacher tries to find out the strengths of the weak child they come across some of them. If he/she tries to applaud him with encouraging words & give confidence he will definitely feel his importance & worth. Once the child has grown his confidence means he will definitely improve. The most important cause of his weakness is; the teachers always give importance to the good children & neglect the weaker in the class. Encouragement can change the whole personality of a child. Positive discipline or assertive discipline must be practiced in classrooms. Classroom team building activities are a key component in developing student motivation. Team building activities may also attract the unmotivated students in the class. It is always necessary to be a friend to the weak child. Teacher should try to knowingly mix with the child then the child starts loving the teacher. Teaching is a profession that demands understanding and patience coupled with motivation and creativeness. It is not an easy profession especially for early childhood education teachers and primary school teachers both at lower and upper level. It is full of challenges. If and when a teacher has identified a child performing below average, and then the teacher should try to find ways of guiding and helping the child to perform well. The following are some tips teachers can use to help slow learners do better in the performance of assignments, tasks and examinations. The starting of love starts the surrender of the child towards the teacher and this helps the teacher to help the child obey him more. The mystery of all success is the love and understanding Remember every child is special. As every child has a soul, there is every possibility of improvement, sooner or later. The goal of the soul is to develop. The source of energy is lying within them but the only thing is to stretch the hand of confidence towards them which will solve their problem and eventually improve their quality. Slow learners are not dumb. They probably differ little from other pupils in terms of their potential. Slow learners have the same potential as bright students, but they probably differ in what they know, in their motivation, in their persistence in the face of academic setbacks, and in their self-image as students.

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