

An Empirical Study on Factors affecting Slow Learners and role of a teacher in their transformation

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Abstract-Teachers-Students are the major stake holders of any educational institutions. Every educational institution not only has a pool of advanced learners but also has a group of students who are considered as ‘Slow Learners’ because of their poor academic performance. This paper focuses on Slow Learners. According to the researcher, it cannot be assumed or concluded that the slow learners are the ones who has some learning disabilities. There could be various factors personal, social, psychological etc. which can make a learner as a slow learner at any point of time. This paper tries to find out the reasons behind the slow learners, and as higher educationist what innovative processes can be adopted to help the slow learners to achieve little more than what they are now. If it is claimed education plays a vital role in transforming a society, transforming a slow learner to become a skilled and competent citizen could a step forward to achieve the objective.

Keywords- Academic Performance, Slow Learner, socio-psychological factors

I. Introduction

In every institution, considering every program it is being observed that there is a group of students who are considered as ‘Slow Learners’ because of their poor academic performance. These slow learners are not incapable of learning, but they are less imaginative to new ideas. So as to handle new ideas, a moderate learner needs additional time, more reiteration, and frequently, more assets from teachers to be effective. Thinking aptitudes are normally postponed, which makes new ideas hard to get a handle on [1]. The researcher clearly differentiated between two groups- Slow Learner and Students with learning disabilities. Afterwards the researcher tries to figure out the factors behind less learning capabilities of a slow learner. Analysing each factor the researcher brings down effective teaching delivery methods which can create motivation, enthusiasm and interest among the slow learners.

II. Difference- Slow Learner and Learning Disabled

It is very important to be able to identify the slow learners in a class as opposed to those children with specific learning disabilities. It is important to make correct identification for programming needs, as the learning needs of these two groups are quite different,. A slow learner is a student of below average intelligence, whose thinking skills have developed significantly more slowly than the norm for his/her age. This child will go through the same basic developmental stages as other children, but will do so at a significantly slower rate. However, this development, while being slower, nevertheless be relatively even. On the other hand, a child with specific learning disability, is one of average or above average intelligence who has specific difficulties which can make learning very difficult. There may be deficits in basic central nervous system functions, which have to do with the acquisition and use of listening, speaking, reading, writing, reasoning or mathematical abilities i.e. attention, memory, language, auditory and visual perception.

Few Characteristics of Slow Learner are:

- Developmental-- may have immature language patterns or speech problems
- Social-- poor judgement, immature social behaviour, prefers company of younger children
- Personal—may suffer from frustration, aggression, anxiety

- Academic-- may show proficiency with particular tasks rather than a subject areas, poor memory, difficulties understanding several steps in a task
- Learning-- needs to have new information linked to old, difficulties transferring information learned in one situation to other situations.

Few Characteristics of Learning Disabled are:

- Academic -- confuses similar words and letters, loses place, repeats words, does not read fluently, it has difficulty of associating correct sound with appropriate letter, reverses letters
- Psychological-- emotional instability (violent reactions), difficulty learning by ordinary methods, low social acceptance (disturbed peer relations), low self-concept/self-esteem
- Social/emotional/behavioural- hyperactivity (gross, noisy, constant movements), poor concentration span (distractibility), low frustration tolerance, emotional liability (highs and lows), seems to be paradoxical.

II. Methodology

The researcher has collected the information from the slow learners through questionnaire survey and interviewing process. The researcher has taken 30 sample data. The methodology adopted are as follows:

- Selection of Slow Learner** – Students having poor academic performance, defaulters in one or the other subjects are considered as slow learners.
- Questionnaire Survey**- A set of questions were given to these slow learners to know their opinion about the course they are pursuing, the teaching-learning methodologies they are receiving now and what could be done to help them to improve their academic performance.
- Interview Process**- The researcher has conducted the one-one interview to know the family background like parent’s qualification, income, socio-economic strata of those students to analyse their socio-psychological status.

III. Findings

The findings are as follows:

1. **Family Background-** The students' family background plays vital role in their learning aptitude. The parameters considered are- Parents educational qualification, Parents occupation, family structure and family background. It is observed that,
 - In case of slow learners its observed most of the parents' education is up to PUC, sometimes not even schooling education. This lack of education reflects in getting good job for them which in turn demotivates the student in spending money for getting right education as per present demand.
 - The students coming from a family where they belong to single mother (divorce case), parents (mainly father) work abroad or from a family where lot of conflicts arises every now and then, those students lack in concentration and results in poor academics as well.
2. **Forced to join the course-** It is observed that to meet parents' expectation the students are forced to join the course which they don't like. In turn it also noticed that those students find difficulty in understanding the subject and also become non performer in academics.
3. **Language barrier-** Higher education demands curriculum delivery in English language only. Sometimes it becomes a big barrier for the slow learners to understand the subject.
4. **Academic Activities-** It is observed that the slow learners' attendance percentage are below average or sometimes poor. Consecutively it affects their other academic activities like internal assessment and final examination.
5. **Teaching Methodologies-** 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^[2]. In order to complete of syllabus in time the teachers have to complete their syllabi within a given time frame. In such cases, the moderate learners find it difficult to understand the subject and which results in poor performance in the subject.
6. **Learning Exercises-** The slow learner students are reluctant to regular assignments. As they are not open to new ideas, they show unwillingness to take up more exercises. It is observed that the slow learners are interested to do oral presentation, but they lack confidence.
7. **Motivation-** The high achievers are always appreciated and given importance in every sphere of education system. The slow learners are most of the time ignored and given less priority not only in the classroom but also in other institutional activities.
2. **Profiling-** Students those who are forced to join the course must be taken special care by institution. A proper profiling of the student must be done to ensure that the students can pursue the course without facing much difficulty.
3. **Language Proficiency:-**To overcome the language barrier, the students must be encouraged to take up extra care to have English proficiency as well as the subjects can be explained to these slow learners in multi-lingual process.
4. **Teachers: Walk an Extra Mile with Slow Learner: -** Teachers must be patient enough to take extra classes for these slow learners. Teachers must be patient enough to take up this responsibilities.
5. **Remedial Coaching:** It's a part of continuous evaluation process. If a student is found to be slow learner after doing first level evaluation, then remedial coaching must be provided to them to learn the subjects well.
6. **Organize Peer Teaching:** Peer coaching is a standout amongst the best systems for moderate learners. [1] It is observed that when they collaborates with those of the same age, the more effective they feel, disposing of the issue of fearlessness.
7. **E-learning:** Slow learner's learning interest and behaviour while using computer and the potential that multimedia courseware can bring in motivating and increasing their interest in learning.[5] e- learning gives the advantage of learning the concepts anywhere, anytime. E-learning delivers the content of textbook into digital form which can be remembered and understand easily. As slow learners are difficult to maintain their learning attentions for long time span, multimedia courseware is believe to assist them [4].
8. **Assigning Other Activities** – Slow learners should be empowered with other activities to give them a feel of being important. They feel motivated on their achievement. Notices must be set up, follow up must be done so that whatever point their concentration floats, they will always helped to remember the job needing to be done.
9. **Stay Connected With the Slow Learners:-**Teachers need to more often connect with the moderate learners to keep a record of each development of the learner so that they can be guided in a proper way. When the moderate learners are regularly connected they start feeling important and they are likely to come to college which in turn reduces the absenteeism.
10. **Friendly approach towards slow learners-** An approachable and friendly approach towards slow learners help the teacher to understand any student inside and out. In such cases, the students feel connected and fearless. So it is observed that they like to discuss and share their problems easily with the teacher.
11. **Hand-held exercises must be prioritized:-** It has been observed that the larger part of moderate learners appreciate exercises which are hand held and permit them to assume a dynamic part. Likewise teachers should give some assignments to them which are short and can be finished within given time. As these Guarantee lessons are short compared to long and strenuous one, the moderate learners would like to accept it happily.
12. **Making interesting Lesson Plan-** Look for opportunities to make the lesson fun. The learners learn better if they are involved in group discussion, activities. Learns always do well in relaxed environment. More importance should be given to interactive sessions like group discussions, questionnaire etc.

IV. Discussion- Various Learning Methods

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^[3]. The institution as well as teachers have distinctive role in helping this slow learner.

1. **Dear Parents: Stay Updated-** Parents need to be informed and updated about the recent trend and current demand of education. If parents are motivated, then obviously the students feel self-motivated. Parents' level motivation is a great factor.

V. Conclusion

Moderate learners are normal students. The only difference is that they just need more time than the standard ones to get knowledge. The first thing is to identify the slow learners and also to invest time to find out why are the low in academic achievement. The teachers also have to be patient, with good imagination and creativity to cope with all the slow learners' features. Using appropriate learning methods techniques with the adequate activities and interactive exercises the slow learners can be taught and transformed. Finally, the researchers concluded that it is not the task of teachers alone; it is also the students' autonomy and the family responsibility. Every human being has the right to be educated and instructed for living in a society.

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