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LEARNERS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES AND LANGUAGE DISORDER

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ABSTRACT

The paper intends to bring to the notice of teachers, parents and intellectuals who play a key role in India's educational policies about students who have the language learning disability problem. Students with language learning disabilities are mostly ignored in our society as well as educational system. There are separate and unique programs to solve the problems of such students. They are asked to sit with normal students who are good enough in learning. They are not at all groomed and prepared to face their problems and thereby to deal with their own problems. The paper, therefore, attempts to pull the mind of teachers to the unique problems of such students. The paper attempts to provide some strategies of teaching English language and also suggests acquiring certain teaching skills to the students with language learning disabilities. In Indian society teachers play an important role to groom students' minds and teachers are key persons who can mould students' minds in a way they want.

Keywords: teachers, language, learning disability, teaching skill

Introduction

With English becoming a global language, there is an increasing number of foreign language learners who are learning it for different reasons. Nowadays, there is almost no school curriculum in which English language is not one of the core subjects. It would not be wrong to say that probably most students in the world study English because it is on their school curriculum. In India, English as a foreign language is studied from the first grade of elementary school and is an integral part of the curriculum in both elementary and secondary schools. Thus, school-age learners usually do not have a choice about whether to learn foreign languages or not. Because of this, foreign language teachers have a challenging task to motivate their students and interest them in their school subject. It is their responsibility to make sure that the materials and tasks they use in their classroom are organized and implemented in a way that they meet individual learners' needs. This becomes even more challenging in a classroom where the educational needs of students with disabilities differ from those of typically developing students, and where additional modifications and accommodations may be necessary.

Learning disability and Language Disorder

When a person is not able to utter a speech sound clearly, correctly and properly or a person has some problems related to voice, this kind of disability is called speech disorder. The speech disorder is also called articulation disorder. Along with speech disorder we need to understand language disorder at this point. When a person is unable to understand others and if he/she finds it difficult to share his/her emotions, feelings, thoughts and ideas to others, it is called language disorder. Here it is important to know and make a distinction between language disorder and speech disorder. These two types of disorder need to be treated differently and distinctly. The language and speech disorder can be found in both children and adults.

Language disorder has two types: disability to receive what is being said and disability to express oneself. In short, one is the disability of understanding and the other is the disability of production. When people with language disability find it difficult to understand the speech sounds and other linguistic issues, they experience mental disabilities such as apraxia, stuttering of voices and dysarthria. Apraxia, dysarthria and stuttering of voices are the examples of speech disorder and aphasia is an example of language disorder. There are some medical conditions which may cause language and speech disorder. The medical conditions are amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, dementia, Huntington's disease, laryngeal cancer, oral cancer, right hemisphere brain injury. Out of these medical reasons brain injury is the most critical medical condition which requires special medical attention and it is the reason of speech and language disorder. Along with physical injury to brain, the injury caused by trauma is also the medical condition which may cause serious language and speech disorders.

It is sufficiently known that there are certain medical conditions which may cause language and speech disorder. But it is not the universal truth. The world order is created for normal people and the educational system, social system are formed in such a way that only normal people (normal here in the sense that those who are medically declared fit) are able to perform. Those who don't fit in these conditions are declared as unfit or disable people. The disability is definitely a medical issue but the problem of disability is made bigger when it is treated only as medical issue.

Children with language learning disabilities may work as good as normal people and there is no reason they should be treated differently for their disabilities. Children with hearing and orthopedic impairment can be good enough in performance as compared to normal children. Children with hearing problem or orthopedic problem can be better performers if little attention is being paid to them to understand and solve their difficulties which they face while taking education. Those who work the field of education have greater responsibility in assisting these children to deal with their problems. There need to have some amount of sensitivity to understand their problems.

Most schools in India are not good enough to accommodate students with disabilities because they are prepared to accommodate only normal students. The elementary schools are places where the process of change needs to be implemented. The elementary schools need a great attention of teachers, policy makers and intellectuals to initiate a change. The change should be students friendly which should change an outlook of students towards students facing disabilities.

Children who are facing learning disabilities are not given great attention which result into their poor performance in schools and work places. The general system of education is suitable for normal children with healthy mind. There are some difficulties in the process of learning such as listening, thinking, knowing, memory and expression which create hurdles for children to learn. The disabilities in these students are not visible for teachers and people in general.

Significance of the Study

Many of these children are considered as slow, lazy, and unresponsive due to their lack of interest in studies. The drop out number of children in many parts of our country from schools and colleges is more due the lack of visibility among these children. The system doesn't show any interest in them and they are being rejected on account of their underperformance in schools and colleges. As a result of that these children become a source of anxiety for their parents. However the learning disability problem is not at all a new thing, it has been

there in the society since ages and hence it has become the most discussed subject of study. Even after so much of research and study neither the private schools nor the government schools are able to cater the demands of these students.

The disability conditions need to be thought of and removed. The policy makers and teachers need to take some necessary steps to remove the difficulties of students facing learning disabilities. The paper intends to study these difficulties and tries to suggest some effective solutions. The focus of investigation in the present paper is the difficulties of high school students facing disabilities. The researcher has a job to find out the problems of such students and the difficulties they are facing and the areas where the students struggle to learn and the issues behind learning difficulties.

The language is an important aspect of human being and no human being can live without language. Communication takes place through language which is an essential part of social life. English is a window of the world and everyone knows its importance. It is also well known the difficulties of teaching of English language. English teachers face numerous hurdles in teaching inside classrooms.

These problems result from variety of sources which include awareness of on importance of communication, teaching learning issues and insufficient time and resources. These problems should be taken into account when the teaching of English is concerned. Similarly, the students of English language need to be thought of. There is a necessity preparing these students for future challenges and it is not possible without acquiring the skill of speaking, listening and writing of English. The disability of learning is the incompetence to learn English at the age proper for a student at a specific stage of learning. The inability to learn English at proper age discourage children and it also results into reading, writing and spelling comprehension. Students with learning disability may produce hurdles for children in realising their full potential. These students were thought to be stupid and lazy when there was not much research available on this subject and they were often punished by teachers and parents for their academic nonperformance.

Teachers and the education policy makers have great role to play here and they need to do alot to improve the quality of such students. They can so many things if they wish pay attention to the problems of these students. There are some legal and constitutional provisions for disabled students. Teachers need to devote themselves to pay more attention to disable students. In this way they can bring great changes into the lives of these students. They need to be treated equally like other normal students. They need to be encouraged in music competitions dance competitions and sport activities.

Conclusion

There are lots of schools which are paying serious attention to these issues but the efforts are not enough to bring transformation on large scale. More schools should take part in realizing the importance of changing this status quo condition. There are lots of things which a school can do, such as teachers can use flexible homework modes instead of writing, they can give multiple choice questions or matching etc. There are various other things which a teacher can do but the discussion of all methods is beyond the scope of this paper.

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