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Enriching the Slow Learners through Task-based Teaching

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Abstract

Slow learners are students with below average cognitive abilities, who struggle trying to cope with academic demands in the class room. The support and the motivation of teachers and parents help such children to overcome their hurdles. They have additional responsibility over the students in schools and in the society. To enrich the slow learners, they should be appreciated even for every effort that is taken by them in the class room. This would raise their self- esteem and confidence level. This paper deals with the enrichment of slow learners through tasks.

Introduction

English Language Teaching for educational purposes are fraught with difficult changes in many countries including India. The latter as a nation represents cultural and linguistic diversity. It can be viewed as a mixture of distinct cultures and tongues. ELT classrooms would help to develop a critical analysis and understanding of the various aspects of English language namely pronunciation, accent, vocabulary, idiomatic expression, sentence structure, and cohesive devices. Furthermore, it would help in various language activities such as listening and reading. The emergence of the concept of ELT can be traced to the need for imparting proficiency in the use of English for practical purposes, as distinct from the need for teaching English literature as part of general education.

Today ELT continues to be in disarray, ineffective, irrelevant and perhaps irresponsible. In a developing country such as ours where the need of the hour is rapid, social and economic growth, where there are too many heavy demands on existing meager resources, the utmost economy in every sphere of activity is essential. No less important is the time factor. Unfortunately, so far as ELT is concerned, there is hardly any conclusive evidence to show that we have been guided, to the extent desirable, by the important considerations. Similarly, the earlier emphasis of ELT on how to teach has given way to what to teach. These have tended to change the methods and procedures of syllabus construction and techniques of teaching by introducing an element of scientific rigor in ELT operation.

Objective

The objective is to enrich the Slow Learners through task-based teaching.

Research Questions

1. Why language is so necessary?
2. Who are slow learners?
3. What are the problems of slow learners?
4. What are the effective teaching techniques of slow learners?
5. What is the outcome of this study?

Discussion

Language is the medium through which we can transmit and interchange our ideas, feelings, courses of action and various other types of information. As we all know, language is not a natural phenomenon, but a creation of man's social needs. Hence each society depends as much on language as it is on air and water for survival. The moment we think of communication in a society, we cannot help thinking instantly about language and media.

Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing

Much of the literature and evidence support that language learning in general proceeds in the order of listening, speaking, reading and writing. However, majority of schools in India starts teaching English language by emphasizing writing at a very early stage of language learning. Students would have mastered reading and writing with some relative competence, however their listening skills should be properly developed. Though the study of English in India began as a historical accident, even today it continues to be a language of intellectual prominence and communication for meeting the specialized needs of education, business, commerce, law, politics, science and technology.

Slow Learners

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. Slow learners are those pupils who have limited ability due to different reasons in the education process. Slow learner is an advanced word for "backward" or "mentally retarded" and educationally subnormal. Slow learners are children who are doing poorly in school but are not eligible for special education; their intelligence test scores are too high for consideration as children with mental retardation. In order to enable the slow learner grasp new concepts, a slow learner needs more time, more repetition, and often more resources from teachers to be successful. They have difficulty with higher order thinking or reasoning skills.

Possible Reasons for Slow Learning

According to experts, children who for various reasons, fall behind in their school work and require special teaching become slow learners. The slow learners may be considered slow due to their growth opportunities and learning environment. Absenteeism from the school is the factor which can affect the child's ability of learning. Defective vision is another possible cause of slow learning, it can affect a child's growth and development and the ability to function in the society. Violence in schools is another factor which causes slow learning in students. Violence affects the learning ability of the student. Lack of teachers in school is also a cause of slow learning, due to shortage of teachers in schools, the student is left behind other students in competition. Teaching method is the most important factor in helping slow learners. The teachers

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 18:4 April 2018

D. Nagarathinam, Ph.D. and R. Vani, M.A., M.Phil. (Eds.) *New Perspectives in ELT – 2018*

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who use one method of teaching create slow learner in the class because every student learns in a different style and method. Students due to high expectations of their family and absence of guidance for both the parents and students, experience a lot of psychological stress, which has a retarding effect on their educational development. Students who are affected by Alexia, Dyslexia, and Strephosymbolia could become slow learners.

Spelling

Spelling is very necessary for slow learners, because it helps to form a word; a good speller will always be a good reader and writer. Therefore, teacher should give attention to teaching spelling to the students. Teacher should s the word clearly for the student and ask the student to repeat the word. Teacher should use visual aids. It would help the student to understand it easily and memorize it for long time. Teacher should use flash cards for teaching difficult words. Reading with meaning is a good method, which children easily understand and remember. Pictures on wall with the stories can also help slow learner s to remember and understand a word. Computer games are the best method for teaching the reading process. These interactive games not only help slow learners in their reading process, but it also helps to increase their quick decision-making ability.

Social Education

Social education is also very necessary for the slow learner. Teacher and parent should give full attention to the social education of slow learners. Involve students with a practical model or case study of short time span and relaxed environment. So, that they can visualize or feel the situation. Proceed with taking steps once the students are comfortable and involved in looking for solutions. Involve them in activities discrete from routine home chores like sports and excursions, to motivate such students to learn without cramming monotonous textbooks. Provide a variety of activities for learning such as painting a picture of a reading assignment; provide them ample opportunity for success. Fortunately, nowadays resources are available in libraries as well as online to develop learning habits to create interest for slow learners. The first responsibility of the teacher is to build up confidence among the slow learners. Make them believe that they are no less than others. Encouraging words and phrases may bring about a positive impact on the slow learners and will boost their confidence to perform better.

Extra Care and Practice

Extra care and practice should be given to the slow learners as compared to their peers. Inside the class room the teacher must never make the slow learners feel neglected or unwanted, as it might create a feeling of inferiority among the slow learners, which might have an effect on their grades. Cumulative records must be maintained by the teachers to keep track of the learners' progress. This cumulative record is mandatory for the teachers to know how the slow learner is responding to her teaching. A teacher needs to be a friend to the slow learners; they can fall back upon the teacher in moments of need. Encourage the slow learners in other activities to help them to experience success. Teachers are first required to find out the main reason behind the learners' weak performance and to study those areas minutely, which the teacher needs to work upon, to guide the slow learners to perform well. The teacher needs to interact with the slow learners more often, so that the teacher can keep a record of every movement of the learner

and adopt ways in which the slow learner can be guided. Peer tutoring is one of the most effective strategies for slow learners. Parents and teachers should identify tolerant and caring peers and allow the slow learner to be taught alongside them or through them. The more a child interacts with those of his age, the more he will grow, eliminating the problem of low self-confidence.

Summation

It is impossible to draw strong academic performance from slow learners through steady application of practical strategies. Joint efforts of both parents and teachers are important to achieve positive results. Knowledge of what you can do as a parent or teacher to help slow learners, you put in your best efforts in the right direction and contribute to the children's success in later years. Although the effort from the teachers' end is simple, yet the result at the end of day is great enough to make a teacher feel proud of herself/himself as well as her/his learners who had managed to overcome their weakness and come out in flying colors.

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