Learning Disability – A mutual awareness among Teachers and Parents

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Abstract:
Learning, the process of acquiring knowledge is common in all creatures of this planet. Learning includes comprehending, processing, organizing and applying of information. Affording to the aspiration and perspiration of an individual, the process of learning may differs. In current scenario, learning specifically indicates academic learning apart from lively learning in the day to day life.

According to the Constitution (Eighty-sixth Amendment) Act, 2002 inserted Article 21-A in the Constitution of India to provide free and compulsory education of all children in the age group of six to fourteen years as a Fundamental Right. Thus, Education is a fundamental right of every child and school education occupies a significant portion of a child’s life and aims at the overall development of the child. Compulsory education up to the age of 14 yrs is a law and the governing body strives to implement it. But then, depending upon the physiological, psychological, economical and sociological factors, the number of dropouts from school keeps increasing. Most of the student’s dropout the school without completing education as they have poor academic performance. The problem in academic achievement is mostly due to lack of learning ability in the child and is termed as learning difficulty or learning disabilities.

Learning disabilities are of many types and some types of disabilities are more specifically defined by education-based labels on reading, writing, language and math. These more specified types of learning disabilities are termed as specific Learning Disability (SLD). SLD may arise due other disabling conditions like intellectual disability, behavioral disturbance, unfair opportunities to learn or primary sensory issues. Today, learning problems are diagnosed only after the child starts schooling. The kids with learning problems encounter more difficulties in school and society rather than other kids do. The parents and public are aware of Learning disability, but still have some misconceptions and seems unprepared to take on the challenge.

To overwhelm this situation, equipping the teachers and parents with some elementary ideas on specific learning difficulties would carry positive effect on the child’s learning and hope this article could serve the purpose. The Primary teachers may find some hints in identifying and managing the children with learning problems. This paper might help the teachers to spot out the errors made by the students, evaluate errors and correct them. This paper list the types of Learning disabilities, their identification and interventions which could act as a supportive material for the teachers in the classroom to assist the children with Specific learning Disabilities.

Key Words - Specific Learning Disability, Dropout, Misconception and Awareness

INTRODUCTION
There is a yearly increase in the number of schools and the enrollment of students in our country. The numbers of dropouts from school are also increasing. Learning problem is also one of the major reasons for the students to leave the school. A group of students have poor learning ability as they have below average intelligent quotient. These students having borderline intelligence and are called as slow learners. When some students constantly show low academic performance in one or more subject, the children should be tested to rule out
learning problems. Learning disability, a recently emerged concept, which has been vigorously discussed since past one decade. Understanding and analyzing this concept helps adapting innovative teaching strategies and methodologies to enables child’s learning more enjoyable.

**Learning Disability:**

Learning disabilities are problems that affect the brain's ability to send, receive, analyse, process or store information.

A child with a learning disability may have difficulties in reading, writing, speaking, listening, understanding mathematical concepts, and with general comprehension. ie. the problem hinders the child to learn as other kids who isn’t affected by Learning difficulties.

**Definition:**

The federal definition of learning disabilities, laid down by the US Government in Public Law 94-142, has been adopted in India: “Specific learning disability means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, which may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, speak, read, spell or to do mathematical calculations”. The term includes such conditions as perceptual handicaps, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia and developmental aphasia. The term does not include children who have learning problems which are primarily the result of visual, hearing or motor handicaps, or mental retardation, emotional disturbance or environmental, cultural or economic disadvantages.”

**Nature and cause:**

- Hereditary
- Problems during pregnancy and birth
- Accidents after birth

Malnutrition or toxic exposure may also be a cause. The incident rate is 6% to 8% of the school population.

**Characteristics/Indicators of SLD**

- Difficulty in comprehending what is read
- Slow reading rate
- Difficulty in finding important points or main ideas
- Letter reversals/ mirror image
- Difficulty in following directions
- Difficulties in discriminating shapes, size, and colour/ Mathematical symbols and reasoning
- Poor memory
- Unaware of time
- Difficulty in completing task
- Inattentive
• Slow writing rate
• Poor self-esteem and often complaining
• Hyperactivity
• Poor gross and fine motor coordination

These above signs shows negative impacts on child’s learning, on the other side most of the students with learning difficulties express high innate potentials and they mostly,
• exhibit uneven areas of ability
• have average and above average intelligence
• possessing normal physical fitness
• may be inventive and aesthetic thinkers
• are active and critical analysers

Learning Disabilities in a child is mainly identified by school teachers, parents or school psychologist through the child’s academic achievements, classroom performance, peer relationships and social interaction.

Types of Learning disability

Though children with learning difficulties encounter problem in reading, spelling, writing, thinking, reasoning, social skills and so on Learning disability is broadly categorised on the basis of problem with language, communication, calculation, and motor skills. The negative impact generated by many other conditions and impairments on a child’s learning could also be marked as learning disabilities.
• Dyslexia
• Dysgraphia
• Dyscalculia
• Dyspraxia

Dyslexia:

Dyslexia means difficulty in reading and is most common category of all Specific Learning Difficulties. Child’s reading ability is the key to function effectively to any degree in our society. Many Dyslexic people have trouble in reading written words fluently, in comprehending paragraphs, sentences and sometimes even words. Dyslexia tends to fall behind the peer thus ruins self-confidence and emotional strength of the child. It is believed, Dyslexia may have ‘biological roots’.

Signs and symptoms of Dyslexia
• Poor self expression
• Poor spelling
• Failure in comprehending paragraphs, sentences and words
• Confusing the order of letters in words
• Slow in reading and makes error when read loudly

Management
• Start low and go slow
• Phonics awareness at all levels/sight words
• Reading, writing and spelling hand in hand
• Students must use vc/cv rule
• Group reading provide easy level materials
• Can use reading scale/bookmarks
• Provide enlarged version
• Stop before mistake and reread - self correct
• Tend to guess on looking the first letter of a word
• Train to ‘sense’ they read and pause if it doesn’t sense
• Use reward system to encourage reading
• Explain similar words / Homophones
• Clumps of words(supply, reply)
• Monitor own progress – see their improvements
• Avoid reading to group – one to one reading
• Multiple reading –same material – fluency
• Positive feedback
• Practice daily
• Use books on tape and assistive technology

Dysgraphia

Children with dysgraphia usually have trouble in writing. This difficulty may cause awkward pen or pencil grasping which leads to poor and illegible handwriting.

Signs and symptoms
• Slow writing
• Improper posture
• Illegible, shabby handwriting
• Awkward pencil grip
• Variable letter size
• Poor left/right orientation
• Inability to maintain line
• Mixing of capital and small letters
• Transposing sentences/reversals of letters
• Difficulty in writing down thoughts in a logical sequence
• Trouble in grammar
• Omitting words, letters or punctuations when writing sentences.

Management
• Narrate as a story
- Practice Finger writing
- Large spaced lines
- Use syllabication and colour code
- Write in different colours
- Make children read chorally and write
- Do dot to dot letter practice
- Do missing letters
- Proofread and correct
- Use writing scale
- Use interactive writing
- If achieved fluency, let them create their own stories
- Provide notes or outline of lessons to reduce writing task.

**Dyscalculia**

Difficulty in understanding arithmetic concepts such as fraction, number lines, decimals, positive and negative numbers are some of the signs of dyscalculia.

**Signs and symptoms:**

- Problem in understanding math-related word problems
- Difficulty in making cash transactions
- Messiness in solving math problems on paper
- Trouble in logical sequencing, recognising patterns and following principles
- Difficulty with understanding the time sequencing of events
- Problem in grouping (quantity and quality)
- Reversal of numbers
- Difficulty in recognising pace value of numbers
- Trouble in mathematical judgement and reasoning

**Management**

- Concrete pre-maths skills(size/quantity)
- Concrete teaching
- Finger writing
- Model clock (time)
- Petty shop(money)
- Remedial teaching
- Peer assistance
- Work with manipulatives
Dyspraxia

It’s a brain-based condition that affects the development of motor skills makes it hard to plan, coordinate and execute physical movements. The sensory integration of the child is distorted and shows unorganized motor skills which may interfere the learning.

Signs and symptoms

- Breaking things
- Appears clumsy / disorganised
- Poor body balance
- Problem in motor task like eye-hand coordination
- Difficulty in organising oneself and one’s things
- High sensitivity to senses (Sound, touch)

Management

- Provide less distractive environment
- Refer student for occupational therapy or sensory integration therapy

Auditory processing disorder (APD):

Trouble in processing and remembering language – related task
Children with Auditory processing disorder are unusually bothered by loud or sudden noises and are quickly distracted and have poor communication skills. It is hard to process and recall non-verbal environmental sounds for them. Speech therapy plays a major role in overcoming the disability.

Non-verbal learning disorder:

Trouble in non-verbal indications like gestures, coordinating movements
Children with Non-verbal learning disorder have visual-spatial disability. They make lengthy pauses before naming objects, colours and shape. Always confuses the concept of time like ‘yesterday’, ‘today’ and frequently misplaces or loses school books or other items. Lacking motor coordination when grasping pencil, playing sports, walking, or trying to tie a shoelace are some difficulties confronted by the children with Non-verbal learning disorder.

Visual perceptual / Visual motor deficit:

Trouble in processing images which leads to mirror writing, reversal of letters; transposing of words in a sentence and problem in copying.

Students with Visual perceptual / visual motor deficit skip words or letters or paragraphs when reading. Detailing or sequencing after reading a story is a confusing task for these students. Most often they get tired or headache after reading.

Language disorder (Aphasia/Dysphasia):

Difficulty in understanding expressive languages – spoken language and reading comprehension
Children with Aphasia/Dysphasia exhibits language related problems like remembering words, forming words, expressing thoughts and feelings, understanding spoken language and pronouncing words.
Providing a clear structure and expectations of the child inside the classroom:

Mostly children with learning problems have difficulty in focusing, concentrating and concept organizing inside the classroom. From this limitations they expect the following from the lesson:

- Usage of different communication modes like saying and writing on the board in simple language
- Using specific language
- Chunk the lesson material into small portions
- Simplify/clarify new vocabulary
- Explain (Model), Exercise (practice) and Evaluate (check) – Repeat the process
- Follow _ Pause, Prompt, Praise

Conclusion:

At present many children at school are diagnosed with learning difficulties when it is found that they are having difficulty in some part of their education. Remember students with disabilities are more like all other children than they are different from them.

Researches say, in every classroom 12% of the students might have traces of specific learning difficulties, out of that 4% of students fall under mild category and could be self-corrected with minimal support from the outside resources like teachers, peers, parents and environment. Other 4% percentage comes under the moderate category of SLD and needs support from the external resources and the last 4% are deeply affected with SLD and it is mandatory to access the guidance of professionals like Psychologist, special educators and remedial teachers.

The essence of this paper imply that the children with learning disability could be helped through specialized approaches and techniques such as Behaviour modification of management approach, Psychoanalytic approach, Clinical and medical approach and Cognitive training approach.

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See more ideas about learning disabilities, disability awareness, learning. Disability Awareness/ Learning Disabilities. Collection by Teacher Resources. 66. Information and resources about various learning disabilities, plus tools to help teach awareness. Adhd Strategies Teaching Strategies Teaching Tips Adhd And Autism Adhd Kids. Aspergers Autism. Mobile Learning Visual Learning Learning Spanish. Two Awesome Visuals On ADHD for Teachers. Mutual Activities. Art Therapy Activities. Education And Literacy Special Education Disability Help Disability Awareness Childhood Apraxia Of Speech Learning Support Kids Learning. Apps for Kids with Special Needs and Learning Disabilities | Common Sense Media. The types of learning disabilities among students are dyslexia, dysgraphia and dyscalculia. Most of the students are affecting from dyscalculia. One of the reasons for the dyscalculia is the improper care from the part of the teachers at early stage. INTRODUCTION. 5. To make awareness in teachers, about the after effect of learning disability in students. Hypothesis of the study. The following are the hypothesis formulated for the study are: Learning disabled children differ from normal children in mathematical ability. Parents and teachers should take initiative to help the students to overcome their problems in learning. Interactive activities should be conducted to enhance the students performances and also communication with their peers. Intellectual disability (ID), also known as general learning disability and formerly mental retardation (MR), is a generalized neurodevelopmental disorder characterized by significantly impaired intellectual and adaptive functioning. It is defined by an IQ under 70, in addition to deficits in two or more adaptive behaviors that affect everyday, general living. Knowledge and awareness about learning disabilities among teachers of primary schools. *Corresponding Author* Shukla and Agrawal. Awareness of Learning Disabilities among Teachers of Primary Schools. Background. The interplay between heredity and the majority of parents, teachers and the members of the local school board have low knowledge and awareness on learning.