



Intervention Strategy to Circumvent Specific Deficiency : Remedial Reading Approach

KEYWORDS

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ABSTRACT Children of today are the citizens of tomorrow, they are the future pillars of the country. There is every possibility that each classroom has some learning disabled students with normal or above normal intelligence. Learning disability manifests as severe discrepancies in educational performance, usually in language related areas between apparent ability to perform and actual level of performance. Reading should be looked upon as one aspect of an integrated program of language development which also includes reading skills, the child's speaking and meaning of vocabulary. Remediation for these specific situations is essential to promote reading skill and to make the best of other remedial approaches. There are many strategies or interventions that teachers can use with learning disabled students. These include DISTAR program, rebus approaches, modified visual auditory kinesthetic method and combined VAKT-language experience approach. These approaches will overcome the specific problems. Most of the learning disabilities are subject to improvement or remediation. Good classroom instructions for most learning, disabled students are similar in most ways to good instruction for non handicapped students (Larrivee, 1985). Adapting certain instruction strategies and approaches can help in meeting the needs of learning disabled students. It is very important for the teacher to understand the abilities and disabilities of students, it is also equally important to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the methods or approaches to be used.

➤ DEFINITION AND A PRACTICAL CONCEPT OF LEARNING DISABILITY:

People with learning disorders by contrast may be generally intelligent even gifted but show inadequate development in reading, mathematics or writing skills that impairs school performance and daily activities. The National Joint Committee on learning disabilities (NJCLD, 2001) has defined that children with learning disabilities are concerned with neurological disorder causing difficulty in organizing information, receiving, remembering it and expressing information. It affects a person's basic functions such as reading, writing, comprehension and reasoning. Samuel Kirk (1963) used the term learning disabilities to describe children who had disorders in development in language, speech reading and associated communication skills needed for social interaction. He also made it clear that he did not include as learning disabled those children whose primary handicap was generalized mental retardation or sensory impairment like blindness or deafness.

➤ READING:

Reading is a means of fixing still more firmly what the child has already learnt by listening and speaking. Reading is defined as a perceptual process; a skills or decoding process; a cognitive activity; and a meaning oriented, language centered process. Applied behavior analysts define reading as sets of independent skills and behaviors that are learned and used separately.

➤ ASSESSMENT OF READING DISABILITY

Assessment of learning disabilities can be classified as formal assessment and informal assessment. The tests that are useful and effective for formal types of assessment are standardized tests and criterion referenced tests. Some of the means of informal assessment are observation, the informal reading inventory, direct oral reading assessment, and ecological approach.

➤ READING PROBLEM OF LEARNING DISABLED STUDENTS:

The most common problems of disabled readers include an even rate of progress, poor comprehension, poor sight recognition, too rapid careless reading, and poor phonic skills. Reverse of letters, or words, confusion of words that have either the same visual configuration or begin alike, lack of phonic readiness are commonly associated with learning disabilities.

➤ REMEDIAL APPROACHES:

There are many strategies or interventions that teachers may use with learning disabled students. Some are intended to be used as total reading approaches. The following are among those often utilized.

• DISTAR Program:

DISTAR is an acronym for Direct Instruction System for Teaching Arithmetic and Reading. This program was developed as an outgrowth work carried out at the Institute for Research on Exceptional children at the University of Illinois. Teachers are given a detailed guide as to what to teach and the order in which it should be taught. The program is designed to develop the skills necessary for reading. DISTAR includes a special alphabet and practice in separating, blending, rhyming and important, in following instructions implicitly. It also includes specific sequence training in visual perceptual skills and auditory skills, which are indispensable for developing reading skills.

• Rebus Approaches:

A rebus is a picture that stands for a word. Rebus reading approaches are picture-word systems in which pictures are substituted for the traditional orthography. If the picture has only one obvious meaning, reading is quite easy. In this situation the child does not have to learn to interpret symbols that are at the start quite abstract and meaningless but rather can read a much nearer representation of the real thing for example, "horse" is simply a picture of horse.

• Modified Visual-Auditory-Kinesthetic-Tactile Approaches:

The Fernald VAKT approach was developed through experience in the clinic school at the University California, Los Angeles. This school evolved from a general purpose facility serving children with a variety of educational problems to one serving primarily those of normal or above normal intelligence with specific, severe educational problems usually those closely allied to reading and spelling disabilities.

• Visual-Auditory-Kinesthetic Method:

The teacher has to utilize the following steps to use the VAK approach in teaching the learning disabled students.

√ The students select several words to learn.

✓ The teacher discusses the meaning of each word.

✓ The words are presented in sentences one at a time, with emphasis on the whole word.

✓ Individual word cards, with the selected written or printed word on them, are shown to the student. The teacher pronounces the word. As the students look at the word, they pronounce the word aloud and to themselves a few times. The students must be cautioned not to spell the words.

✓ The teacher removes or covers the word card and asks the students to write or print the word from memory.

• Combined VAKT-Language Experience Approach:

This modified approach is more suitable for older students who have some writing skills and have learned a fairly large number of words using VAKT approach and that are now in their word life. This can be used individually as well as with a group of students. In this approach the teacher and the student discuss a topic of interest for only 5 or 10 minutes. After discussion, the students can write a story or an account of their feelings regarding topic just discussed. The word files are used and if the student needs additional words, the teacher writes them on a slip of paper.

• Strategies for specific situations:

There are a number of remediation strategies available to the teacher. Remediation for these specific situations is essential to promote reading skill and to make the best of other remedial reading approaches. These are as follow:

• Remedying Reversals:

Reversal refers to a variety of difficulties that some students experience. Reversals may occur in the confusion of single letters such as b-d, n-u, m-w; in whole words such as on-no, saw-was; in letter sequences such as ram-arm, ate-tea, girl-gril, goal-gaol; or in word order, "the girl saw the pig" in place of "the pig saw the girl". Often associated with reversals are letter orientation difficulties such as mirror images (b-d), inversions (u, n), or rotations (b-p) (Harris, 1980). The teacher lists out reversal procedures that are often helpful in remedying reversal tendencies. They are:

✓ Tracing and writing words that are frequently reversed using cursive rather than manuscript. But this is less effective with single letters.

✓ Covering a word with a card and moving it slowly to the right so that letters are visually examined in proper sequence.

✓ Underlying the first letter of a word in green and the last in red using the traffic signal green for go and red to stop.

✓ Using a pencil or finger to guide the students reading in appropriate left to right fashion, to be eliminated as soon as possible because it slows reading.

✓ Providing a typewriter for the student to use.

• Remedying Perceptual Problems:

Perception can be defined as a person's interpretation of stimuli. The definition of the general term perception refers only to visual perception or auditory perception. In both cases it refers to the ability of a person to recognize the incoming sensory information and to extract meaning from it. Learner (1981) suggests that perception is a learned skill and therefore is teachable.

• Remedying confusion of words:

Teachers of primary grade students as well as teacher of learning disabled students are aware of the confusion that frequently occurs in recognizing words such as where – there – why and others.

• Promoting Phonic Readiness:

Phonic readiness is a must for reading. Without phonic readiness, no reading skill can be developed. There appears to be a high correlation between phonic readiness and a mechanical reading age of seven. The child who is unable to put the sounds of a simple word together can not make satisfactory phonic progress. Very often LD students are able to hear individual sounds but they are unable to remember them in sequence and synthesize them into words. Where there is marked deficiency in auditory memory and blending, it is better to ensure that the children learn to blend sounds before they are presented with visual symbols.

• Techniques to teach phonics to learning disabled:

The teacher who employs these techniques can be well assured that his teaching of phonics is reasonably sound and takes its proper place in the reading program.

✓ New sounds should be introduced in words, which are known by sight, or in words included in simple sentences, which help the child make intelligent guesses from context clues.

✓ New learning should be integrated immediately into reading for meaning by using it in passages to be read and understood. In this way the usefulness of the new knowledge and skill is demonstrated to the child.

✓ The teacher should teach only those phonic elements, which are likely to be most useful in maintaining reading progress and language development.

✓ The teacher should avoid class teaching and cater to individual differences. Every child should be allowed to go ahead at his own rate, the more efficient the teacher is, and the bigger will be the separate of attainment.

✓ The teacher should not make use of too many rules.

In normal classroom, there is very little possibility of giving attention to an individual pupil by the teacher. The teacher should use specific strategies and innovative practices for solving teaching learning difficulties in the class. Therefore, remediation for these specific situations is essential to promote reading skill and to make the best of other remedial approaches. There are number of remediation strategies available for overcoming the specific problems in normal classroom. So that these children can greatly contribute to their nation as every child is special.

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