

The Impact of Language and Communication as the Teaching Strategy in Inclusive Education

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Abstract

"There is no greater disability in society than the inability to see a person as more" says Robert M. Hensel, a disability activist and an American poet- writer. Every living being is equal. There should be no discrimination, no segregation, no exclusion, and no isolation. To eradicate these things, inclusion plays an important role within the sphere of education. The disabled people are people who have cognitive and affective impairments that lead them to accumulate slow learning process. They might feel idle, and a few might have an inferiority complex; for them, different teaching strategies must be presented with the particular implements of language and communication. Language here has been depicted in two ways i.e the selection of words as the tool of communication. Using language as the product of a teaching strategy, it produces the right setup for appreciative words and also helps to uplift the personality skills within the disabled learners. Some teaching strategies were suggested to improve vocabulary usage and to enable adequate practice for the inclusive classroom.

Keywords: Communication, Disability, Language, Strategies, Vocabulary, Words.

Introduction

In general, inclusive education means to include all children irrespective of gender, disability, preferences like economically weaker sections, caste, religion and creed. We have to accept that everybody has strengths and everybody has needs, and we have to address the learners on this basis. Students have special needs like autism, language delays, reading difficulties and writing difficulties. For these children, teaching strategies have to be expressed in such a way as not to show any prejudices among them. By implementing more innovative and productive strategies, diverse learners will get equitable learning experience. Language and communication plays sufficient role for the disabled learners. It is said that over the past 20 years, the rate of disabled students has been increasing compared to the school enrollment and the general population. Language should not be a barrier to active classroom participation for disabled learners. They shouldn't be sensationalised. Avoiding sensational words and promoting respectful words would definitely engage the process of inclusion inside the classroom.

Objectives:

- ✓ To spread awareness regarding the needs of the disabled learners
- ✓ To eliminate prejudice from the minds of the people

- ✓ To bring effective change in society
- ✓ To harmonise the role of the teachers for disabled learners
- ✓ To promote effective classroom participation

Significance of teaching strategies for inclusive education

The essential parts of teaching strategy are to make the concepts simpler, to make them interesting, to give full involvement and to make them gain knowledge. While teaching the English language, comprehensive skills have to be increased for a more pleasurable and functional learning process. Some of the learning strategies for inclusion are: displaying teaching aids like

- i) effective display of charts
- ii) listening to the audio of the lesson
- iii) puzzle games
- iv) highlighters can be used to focus on important points
- v) timers to assess for tests.
- vi) Special attention can be given to improve their skills
- vii) Repeated concepts

Other appropriate strategies are:

1. providing more practice on writing and reading skills
2. preparing a picture dictionary for easy understanding
3. simple follow-up activities
4. utilising the language lab frequently
5. role play for the learners
6. Include stress reduction activities
7. Provide counselling to reinforce positivity
8. Inspiring videos of famous personalities

Language preferences for disabled students

“Language is the blood of the soul into which thoughts run and out of which they grow” says Oliver Wendell homes. Language is the essential ability in maintaining and progressing relationships with other people. It enables to develop conversation between two people which in turn conveys feelings, opinions, ideas, desires and emotions. It also builds many healthy relationships. Translation of concepts in mother tongue, individual attention while giving instructions as they tend to grasp slowly. When you concentrate on the student with difficulty, other students will disturb the class. The four major skills of language are listening, reading, speaking and writing. Disabilities in these skills are called as language based learning disability (LBLD).

Dyslexia a Greek term for reading disability; *Dysarthria*, speech disability; *Dysgraphia*, writing disability, *Dyscalculia*, difficulty in understanding math concepts. LBLD effects student’s language skills, comprehension skills, self -awareness skills and communication skills both academically and non- academically. They also affect other cognitive processes like memory, understanding, attention, visual and auditory perception. For these learners specific teaching strategies have to be given to improve their learning process.

Alternative vocabulary for disabled learners:

The usage of words in a language to describe a person or their state of mind seems to be harsh and offensive. It also creates inferiority complex to the disabled learners. They feel excluded and avoid active participation in the classroom. The terms used should not disturb them. In order to avoid this issue, usage of vocabulary should be altered for the betterment of their learning process. So it is better to learn and teach complimentary terms to avoid misconceptions and other disturbances.

Practicing this not only motivates the disabled learners but also brings awareness among fellow students of a classroom. Being disabled is quite normal but the thing is we should not be stigmatizing them using the deliverance of words and the way we treat them. Rather, we should remove those barriers and obstacles that stand in between for the healthy functioning in the society. From these, we can assume that language is a double sided sword and it is up to the way how and when we use it.

DEROGATORY TERM	COMPLIMENTARY TERM
Blind	Visually challenged/ people with sight impairment
Deaf	People with hearing impairment
Dumb/Mute	Person without speech ability
Handicapped/Crippled	Physically challenged/Physically disabled
Psycho/Mental/Crazy/Insane	Person with psychiatric disability/Person with a mental health disability
Mad/ Mentally retarded	Person with Intellectual disability/ Person with Psychological disability
Brain damaged	Brain injury
Slow learner	Learning disabled person

Wheelchair user	Wheelchair-bound
Midget/Dwarf	Person with short stature

Language as a tool for communication

Disabled learners may have some psychological issues, like an inferiority complex, anxiety and stress so they avoid being engaged with society. They might even have emotional and social problems. For them, it is much needed to develop communication skills and personality development skills. The one who teaches them should use simple and clear sentences. Avoiding vulnerability, euphemisms, offensive terms might empower the usage of language. That approach would help them to built self-esteem and reduce the feeling of isolation.

To give more speaking practice, easy topics with high repetition of instructions can be used. This communication disability needs to be removed for the disabled learners to rise in the society. Since communication is the much- needed equipment to build relationships to gain support and to take part in day-to-day activities, it has to be promoted effectively. People with speech impairments have several ways like sign language and the visually challenged have Braille. They can either communicate verbally or non-verbally. The cognitive communication skills help them to gain more opportunities in education and other social situations. Communication skills can be developed with or without the usage of language, i.e. verbal and non-verbal.

Role of the teachers

As a teacher for the disabled learners first of all they should have qualities like patience, understanding skill, motivational skills and effective communication skill. They should also have positive attitude and knowledge on the subject content to teach them accordingly. It is the responsibility of a teacher to eradicate the barriers that have been pondering within the learners. The teacher should be careful with the deliverance of words before them. For example, it is inappropriate to ask questions like **“Have you seen butterfly?”** to visually challenged person or **“Did you know the sound of the peacock?”** to hearing impaired person- These types of questions can be avoided or can be changed in a different way. Instead, usage of comfortable phrases like **“Let’s go for a walk”** to a wheelchair bound person, **“Did you hear the news today?”** to a person with hearing impairment would be appreciable. Teaching aids could be used to explain these types of complementary content. Teachers have to give repeated instructions, encourage and motivate by stimulating their skills, they should talk more to get better understanding of the learner’s mindset. Other instructors like speech language pathologists, special educators, sign-language teachers can collaborate with regular teachers to provide equitable learning.

Few terms that can be eradicated to improve learning process in inclusive education.

- i) Failure ii) autistic, iii) mentally ill, iv) partially sighted, v) hard to hear, vi) special kid, vii) handicapped

Inclusion is about embracing diversity in mainstream schools - students with disabilities, different cultural backgrounds, languages, etc. Using common language and being flexible

(like explaining in their mother tongue if needed) helps create an equitable and inclusive environment. A real-life example: A family from Brazil shifted their house to India. The son has joined an international school in India. His culture, accent and practices were different. To cope up with him a well-trained teacher has been assigned to his class. Here, the school's approach helped the Brazilian kid feel included by:

- Assigning a trained teacher to support his transition
- Acknowledging and addressing his unique needs (cultural, linguistic, etc.)
- Creating a welcoming environment for a diverse student

This approach helped him to adjust smoothly.

A few concerns about inclusive education

1. Adequate support and resources,
2. Emotional and behavioural changes
3. Flexible teachers and systematic change
4. Awareness among teachers about inclusivity and mental health
5. Inadequate intelligence
6. Lack of feasible and effectively inclusion of learners with special abilities
7. There are many students who need special guidance in inclusive education due to lack of trained teachers.

Additional tips to be an inclusive communicator

- ✓ Offer help when people with speaking disability ask any questions. Make them to complete their questions first then respond politely.
- ✓ Maintain eye-contact and speak directly while communicating
- ✓ Giving both oral and written instructions will help them for clear understanding of the content
- ✓ If needed, allow sign-language interpreters to assist the disabled learners.
- ✓ Flexibility is the key tool for essential communication as it approaches different audiences for better understanding.

Inspired quote:

“Nobody thinks less of the penguin because it cannot fly. It’s simply a different kind of bird. Different. Not less” - Stuart Duncan

This quote spots on value which shouldn't drop just because of the difference. Even though penguins can't fly, they're expert in swimming. Likewise, a person with dyslexia might struggle with reading but they excel at visual problem solving

Conclusion

Generally in a classroom, disabled children feel excluded because of the attitude of the teachers and their classmates. It is in our hands to enable them to enjoy the education without any feeling of prejudice, stereotypes or other differences. Inclusion always has emotional content as it generates concern and support. Here the idea of empathy can be applied for better understanding and support instead of showing sympathy. The major positive aspects of inclusive education are awareness for both teacher and the parent, effective support system and the resources required for the teaching learning process. However to implement certain strategies and methods teachers and learners may face challenges. It is in the hands of parents, teachers and

the learners to navigate the challenges to go beyond to fulfill the learning process. Children with learning disabilities can succeed in the life with the proper teaching methodology and approaches. This article highly stresses that the only primary aim should be to foster the learning despite of whatever challenges the learners have.

Hence, I firmly encourage these strategies in inclusive education for the betterment of every disabled learner in every aspect of their lives.

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