

A Study to Reveal the Teachers' Perspective about the Classroom Processes and Provisions related to Children with Dyslexia

Subhash Chandra Basu¹, Poonam² and Anita Beniwal³

¹School of Education, IGNOU, New Delhi- 110068, India.

²Maharaja Surajmal Institute, C-4 Janakpuri, New Delhi- 110058, India.

³University of Delhi, New Delhi- 110007, India.

Corresponding author: forensic.subhash@gmail.com

Abstract

The study was conducted with the objective of finding out the classroom process and provisions related to children with dyslexia from teachers' perspective. This study was conducted at schools of Delhi region. Significance of the findings in relation to the wider inclusive educational ideology is discussed and suggestions are made by the investigator on the basis of the findings of the study.

Keywords: Child with dyslexia, Dyslexia, Learning disability, provisions related to children with dyslexia

One of the most fascinating and mysterious properties of brain is its capacity to learn, or its ability to change in response to experience and to retain that knowledge throughout an organism's lifetime. The ability to understand and use written language has always been a prerequisite to the efficient acquisition of knowledge, and it is becoming increasingly important in today's information society.

The World Health Organization defines dyslexia, "A disorder manifested by difficulty learning to read, despite conventional instruction, adequate intelligence and socio cultural opportunity. It is dependent upon fundamental cognitive disabilities which are frequently of constitutional origin".

"The World Federation of Neurologists defined dyslexia in 1968 as "a disorder in children who, despite conventional classroom experience, fail to attain the language skills of reading, writing, and spelling commensurate with their intellectual abilities". According to the U.S. National Institutes of Health, dyslexia is a learning disability that can hinder a person's ability

to read, write, spell, and sometimes speak. Dyslexia is the most common learning disability in children and persists throughout life. The severity of dyslexia can vary from mild to severe. The sooner dyslexia is treated, the more favorable the outcome; however, it is never too late for people with dyslexia to learn to improve their language skills.

The Census of India does not count children with dyslexia. However, the prevalence of dyslexia is estimated to vary between 3-10 percent. Some other estimates say it may affect as much as 10% of all children, (Indian Journal of Human Genetics, 2008, volume-14, issue-3, and epage-102).

Janardhana N. (2012) conducted a study in inclusive schools of Bareilly city, study revealed that learning disabled children have lower self-esteem as compared to non-disabled children. Learning disabled boys and girls were found different with regard to their self-esteem. Learning disabled and non-disabled boys were found different with regard to their self-esteem whereas learning disabled boys were found different with regard to their self-esteem whereas learning disabled and non-disabled girls were not found different with regard to their self-esteem.

V. G. Shreedevi (2011) presented a case report of a child, who had age adequate communication skills, normal speech development, no difficulties in writing but showed severe problems in 'reading' only.

Khusvinder Kumar and Rekha (2011) studied the effect of Ron Davis approach and eclectic approach on reading ability among primary school dyslexic children. Sample for the study consisted of thirty students of third and fourth grades, which were identified from ten English medium schools of Nawashahr.

A number of research works however studied parents' problems with regard to child rearing conditions, family life and social stress experienced by parents of mentally retarded children. This study was undertaken to investigate the classroom processes and provisions related to children with dyslexia from teachers' perspective.

Statement of the problem

To study the teachers' perspective about the classroom processes and provisions, related to children with dyslexia.

Objectives

- To study the teachers' perspective about the classroom processes and provisions related to children with dyslexia.

Methodology

In order to obtain empirically dependable answer to the research question, focused group interview design was adopted. In the present study, survey method and focused interview

along with filling of the questionnaire was adopted. A questionnaire was developed by investigator to collect the data.

Sample

The population for the present study comprised the school teachers teaching in selected government and private schools of Delhi region who teach dyslexic children. The sample for the present study comprised all of 37 teachers who taught dyslexic children at schools in Delhi region.

Tools and Techniques

A semi-structured questionnaire as per the research objective was developed by the investigator to explore the classroom processes and provisions related to dyslexic child from the perspective of the teachers.

Data Analysis

Table 1. Response of Teachers about the classroom processes and provisions related to children with dyslexia

Item No.	Question	Response		
1	What do you know about the procedure of identifying a child with dyslexia?	Spelling mistake in notebook	Spelling mistake with other problem	
		10%	90%	
2	Is teaching a child with dyslexia any different from teaching other Children?		A little differ	Too much differ
		Yes	26.67%	53.33%
		No	3.33%	16.67%
3	Are the instructional objectives of any lesson that you transact modified or simplified for the child with dyslexia?	Yes	No	
		53.33%	46.67%	
4	Do you modify curricular material to meet the individual needs of the Child with dyslexia? If yes, describe?		Yes	No
		Regular	43.33%	-
		Desultory	6.67%	-
		No modification	-	50%

5	Do you use any special method to teach child with dyslexia? If yes what changes do you bring about in your inclusive classroom to accommodate the special needs of child with dyslexia? (Learning Aids, Methods of teaching, personal attention, academic and non-Academic support.)	Yes	No	
		40%	60%	
6	Do you give extra time apart from the regular class? If yes when and how much extra time you provide?		Yes	No
		During recess	20%	-
		During remedial classes	20%	-
7	Do you revise the content taught frequently?	Yes	No	
		93.33%	6.67%	
8	Do you teach new concept in small amounts?	Yes	No	
		73.33%	26.67%	
9	Do you correct written errors?	Yes	No	
		100%		
10	Do you give photocopies with the basic points of the lesson?	Yes	No	
		16.67%	83.33%	
11	Do you give them more time in classroom activities?	Yes	No	
		43.33%	56.67%	
12	How do you examine them in exams?	No different exam pattern	No different exam pattern but different in evaluation	Using different exam pattern
		66.66%	23.33%	10%
13	Do you give extra time in exams or tests? If yes, how much?	Yes	No	
		73.33%	26.67%	

14	Do you take off marks for spellings mistakes during exams?	Yes 63.33%	No 36.67%	
15	Do you give child with dyslexia different or less activities to do in the classroom?	Giving same activity 86.67%	Giving less activity 13.33%	
16	Do you give them different or less homework?	Giving differ/ less homework 13.33%	Giving same homework 86.67%	
17	How important is the position of the child with dyslexia in the class?	Siting position is not important Not any idea Siting position is important	43.33% 6.67% 50%	
18	Do you nominate child with dyslexia (ask them to participate) or wait for them to volunteer?	Nominating for participation 50%	Wait and ask them for participation 23.33%	Not nominate for participation 26.67%
19	Do you give them time to think of the answer?	Yes 90%	No 10%	
20	How important do you think your language and behaviour towards child with dyslexia is?	Very important Not important Neutral	83.33% 3.33% 13.33%	
21	Do child with dyslexia in your class manage to keep up with their classmates?	Yes 66.67%	No 33.33%	
22	What is the policy of the education department for child with dyslexia? What do you think of it? Do you think it is implemented?	Not sure about policy 16.67%	Urge for better implementation 83.33%	

23	What's is your school's policy on dyslexia (assessment, teaching, resources, need, nature, challenges and examinations of child with dyslexia)	Have specific policy	Not any specific policy			
		10%	90%			
24	What resources does your school have for child with dyslexia? (Computers, software's, and books etc.)	Books	100%			
		Computers, Software	Working regular	33%		
		Not working regular 67%				
25	What do you do to make your whole class teaching dyslexia friendly?					
26	What kind of opportunities do you provide to encourage communication between child with dyslexia and others in your classroom?					
27	How do you support child with dyslexia in the classroom?					
28	How do you differentiate the curriculum for them?					

Item no. 25 of the questionnaire dealt with the redressal of issues to make dyslexia friendly classroom. In response, teachers manifested that a dyslexia friendly classroom begins with a dyslexia friendly teacher. The first step towards making the classroom a welcoming learning environment for students with dyslexia is to learn about it. Many teachers believe that dyslexia is when children reverse letters and while this can be a sign of dyslexia in children, teacher also accepted that the more a teacher knows about dyslexia, the better he/she can help his/her students.

Item no. 26 dealt with the kind of opportunity provided by teacher to encourage communication between child with dyslexia and other children in the classroom. In response investigator found that for the fulfillment of the purpose to improve the communication skills the teachers said that a teacher has to build cognitive skills of children along with bringing self awareness in them by using teaching methods with a multi-sensory approach. This will help them not only in the classroom, but for the rest of their lives. For this teachers suggested the following:

1. Utilizing a multi-sensory approach to teaching. It involves many senses at the same time: touch, sight, movement and sound. Though this is extremely helpful for a dyslexic child, all students can benefit from this.
2. Use time wisely. Child with dyslexia often struggle with focusing. Other things may distract them, or they may have a hard time listening to a long lecture or watching

a lengthy video. Child with dyslexia may also struggle with short-term memory, making it difficult for them to take notes or understand simple instruction.

3. Provide handouts. Since child with dyslexia struggle with short-term memory, providing them with some sort of outline as the teachers are lecturing is helpful, especially following long lectures. Write homework instructions directly on the assignment so they know what is expected. Use visual cues, such as asterisks and bullets, to highlight important directives or information. It is also beneficial to let them use reference guides such as alphabet and numbers.
4. Model organizational structures. It helps individuals with dyslexia to develop organizational skills that will benefit them for the rest of their lives. Model these in the classroom, but also encourage them to apply them at home.
5. Utilize other resources. Do not feel like you are the only teacher for a child with dyslexia. There are several resources available to help child with dyslexia in learning.
6. Encourage peer tutoring. Peer resources and social support are probably one the strongest resources you can offer. Students can read aloud to each other, review notes, or conduct lab experiments together.
7. Bring a specialist into the classroom. This helps prevent the child with dyslexia from feeling different and benefits the others students as well.

Item no. 27 of the questionnaire dealt with the way to support the child with dyslexia in the classroom by teacher. In response investigator found that it is very hard for a teacher to give more one-to-one support to child with dyslexia when they have the rest of the class to consider but adopting a more dyslexia-friendly approach can be benefit to all learners. Investigator had listed thing below which are practiced by teacher to support to child with dyslexia in classroom.

- Be multi-sensory.
- Be aware of the individual needs of each child with dyslexia.
- Praise and encourage wherever possible and try to focus on aspects dyslexic child is good at and avoid focusing too much attention on the negatives.
- Mark written work on content, not spelling – tick what is right instead of crossing out what is wrong.
- Mark on oral responses when possible.
- When reading long words divides syllables with a pencil line and help child with dyslexia to pronounce words correctly.
- Make sure child with dyslexia has understood and remembered instructions by being specific and concise, highlighting important message or providing written instructions rather than verbal ones.

- Put important words clearly on the blackboard and give plenty of time to copy. Writing on alternate lines in different colors may also help or use pre-prepared handouts for older children.
- Use technology and support software/products where appropriate to reinforce learning, encourage the use of support materials such as Dictaphone, laptop etc.
- Allow extra time if child with dyslexia is struggling to meet deadlines.

Do Not ...

- Give lists of spellings to learn – it is better to give few words that are related, e.g. plate, cake, name.
- Make children with dyslexia to repeat the work if it is messy or there are many errors.
- Compare with others.
- Make child with dyslexia change his writing style.
- Make child with dyslexia stay behind at break – time or after school to catch up.
- Be too quick to assume he is being lazy as he may tire quickly as a greater concentration is required to compensate for his difficulties.
- Item no. 28 of the questionnaire dealt with the differentiation of the curriculum for the child with dyslexia. Investigator found that for differentiation teacher used the following ways:

Differentiation by Task

Different groups of pupils within the classroom are given different tasks linked to the teaching of the lesson. One technique is to have different cards, worksheets or exercises for dyslexic children. Another technique is through group work. Different groups within the class can work on different activities towards the same topic or class project. The class can be asked “Who is good at drawing? ◎ Who is good at thinking of ideas?” etc.

Differentiation by Outcome

As per teacher's opinion, it is most widely used of all forms of differentiation. Setting up objectives for each child and the outcomes they expect, to simply set the same task without a strategy behind it.

Differentiation by Support

Teacher mentioned that this type of differentiation is based on the thought that group working allows pupils to support each other, e.g. a creative child with dyslexia may want to work with a more competent reader so that they both may benefit from the other's strengths. Support

may also enable a poor writer to record ideas more easily. Teachers also mentioned that in this, all the students get the same task and are expected to complete it to a similar standard but some get more support than others. This support could vary widely from adding structure to the task, e.g. writing frames, or adult support may be needed to complete a part of the task

Differentiation by resource or text

According to teachers, some dyslexic children who are working with resources, for example a piece of text, a reading book or a play, may need the access the resource at a different level. The text may need to be simplified for some, an easier version of the same reading book may be needed or simplified transcript which explains the play may be required. This type of differentiation needs planning.

Differentiation by pace

According to the teacher some dyslexic children need to move ahead very gradually or they become confused. Others may need to move at a different pace. Some child with dyslexia may need to overlearn and constantly recap what they have learned whilst others move to new concepts and proactive planning is key to know how far and how long each dyslexic child will take to understand topic.

Findings

A perusal of Table 1 and the response of item no25, 26, 27 and 28 revealed the followings:

- Major part of teachers (90%) recognized the children with dyslexia, by the problems they faced in writing and spelling mistakes in the note book.
- Most of the teachers (70%) presumed that teaching children with dyslexia is different than teaching other children.
- Most of the teachers (53%) modified the instructional objectives of lessonfor children with dyslexia, and rest of the teachers (47%) did not modify the instructional objectives of the lesson for children with dyslexia.
- Half of the teachers (50%) modified the curriculum material to meet the individual need of child with dyslexia, another half (50%) did not modify the curriculum materials to meet the individual need of child with dyslexia.
- Most of the teachers (60%) did not use any special method to teach the dyslexic children.
- Most of the teachers (60 percent) did not give extra time apart from regular class to children with dyslexia.
- Most of the teachers (93%) revised the content taught frequently to children with dyslexia.

- Most of the teachers (73%) taught new concept in small amount to children with dyslexia.
- All teachers (100%) did correct the written errors of children with dyslexia.
- Very few teachers (17%) gave photocopies of the basic points of the lesson to children with dyslexia.
- Major part of the teachers (90%) admitted that there is no different exam pattern to examine the children with dyslexia.
- Most of the teachers (73%) provided extra time of 10 to 20 minutes to children with dyslexia.
- Most of teachers (63%) do take off the marks for spelling mistake of the child with dyslexia.
- Most of the teacher (87%) did not give different class room activities and homework to children with dyslexia.
- Half of the teachers (50%) admitted that the sitting position is important and it should be according to physique of the children with dyslexia.
- Little more than one fourth of the teachers (27%) did not nominate or ask the child with dyslexia to volunteer or participate in any school's function.
- Most of the teachers (83%) admitted that teacher's language and behavior is important for the children with dyslexia.
- Most of the teachers (67%) mentioned that children with dyslexia did manage to keep up with their classmates in class room.
- Most of the teachers (83%) urged for the need of better implementation of the policies of the education department for children with special educational needs and children with dyslexia. And few teachers (17%) admitted that they are not aware about the policies of the education department for the child with dyslexia.
- Major part of the teachers (90%) admitted the lack of any specific policy in their schools regarding the children with dyslexia.
- Almost all schools had the resources like books, computers, educational software etc. But very few (33% computers) are functioning properly and updated on time.

Suggestions

The identification of a child with dyslexia is a difficult job for parents and teachers. Children spend a large portion of the school day interacting with materials. The task of gaining dyslexic children's attention and engaging them for a period of time requires teaching and managing skills. Some suggestions are: Use of explicit teaching procedures, repeat directions,

maintenance of daily routine, providing a copy of lecture notes, using step-by-step instruction, simultaneously combining verbal and visual information, writing key points or words on the chalkboard and emphasizing on daily review.

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