

Teaching Strategies For Slow Learners

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ABSTRACT

"Late bloomer" is another way of saying "slow learner"

- Ben Fountain.

Slow learners are not non-learners! There are slow learner, Shy learner, and learners who are simply not motivated. Shy learners are not necessarily slow; their problem often lies in speaking out loud and a lack of confidence. Students who are not motivated are simply not interested and need to be engaged in order to participate fully in the class. Finally, slow learners are students who are not able to follow the current pace, i.e. they don't learn as fast as the rest of the class. It simply means that learning a second language is harder for these students.

Every school or college faces a very big problem in dealing with these slow learners. It is a challenging task for the teachers to tackle slow learners and to make them learn the academic subjects. These students do not fall into the category of special education; they do well outside the classroom, and show no evidence of having a medical problem. If the teachers find time to think about these students, they definitely get some solution into their hand. There are evidences in history that many slow learners became doctors, writers, teachers, engineers in their life. By following some methods, any teacher, who is teaching them, not only can improve their learning capability but also can make them successful students.

The problem with slow learners, who cannot remember things, is that they are not given the kind of tools that work for them. These students, who have problem in understanding things, they can be suggested to keep a word book, for example, and they write in it every day. They must be given lists of verbs, charts with verb tenses. It is possible that they need to "see" to learn. If the class is divided into groups or teams, slow learner should be paired with a mate who can guide him/ her. Both the teacher and the slow learner must understand one thing : the problem is not that the student cannot learn, but rather that he learns at a different pace. So teachers should always encourage respect towards these, who simply take longer but they do get it in the end, which means every small achievement should be reinforced by motivating the learner in various ways.

Some extra classes can do wonders for slow learners. Under the pressure of competing with the rest of the class, they lose their morale. But once they are taught in extra sessions, they start seeing things fall into place. It may be necessary to repeat instructions to the slow learners till they feel comfortable with the content. Teachers may need to give them instructions in writing. They may need to spell it out, repeat and copy it down. But they must be patient with the slow learners. Because these students cannot learn well under pressure or in haste. Teachers need more time to figure things out. There are some teaching strategies for students who need extra attention:

1. SCAFFOLDING: The term “scaffolding” refers to a process in which teachers demonstrate how to solve a problem. Psychologist and instructional designers Jerome Burner first used the term “scaffolding” in this context in the 1960s. The theory is that when students are given the support they need while learning something new. Burner recommends positive interaction and three modes of representation during teaching: actions, images, and language.

2. GRAPHIC ORGANIZATION: A graphic organizer is a visual display that demonstrates relationships between facts, concepts or ideas. It guides learners' thinking as they fill in and built upon a visual map or diagram. Graphic organizers are some of the most effective visual learning strategies for students and are applied across the curriculum to enhance learning and understanding of subject matters content and to focus within a broad topic, such as a novel or article. Webs, concept maps, mind maps and plots are some of the types of graphic organizers used in visual learning to enhance thinking skills and improve academic performance on written papers, tests and assignments.

3. DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION: In any general classroom, there are students with various learning styles. Some learn best by reading and writing. Others prefer to watch a video, listen to a recording. Differentiated instruction is a way of teaching that matches a variety of learning styles. Carol Ann Tomlinson, an educator who has done some of the most innovative work in this area, says there are four areas where teachers can differentiate instructions:

- Content: Figuring out what a student needs to learn and which resources are helpful for him.
- Process: Activities that helps students make sense of what they learn.
- Projects: A way for students to “show what they know”
- Learning Environment: How he feels in the classroom and how the class works together.

4. MULTISENSORY INSTRUCTION: Multisensory techniques are frequently used for students with learning differences. Studies have shown that for students with difficulties in learning to read, a multisensory teaching methods is the most effective teaching method. Multisensory teaching techniques and strategies stimulate learning by engaging students on multiple levels. They encourage students to use some or all their senses to:

- gather information about a task.
- link information to ideas they already know and understand.
- learn problem solving tasks.
- understand relationships between concepts.
- store information for later recall.

Using a multisensory teaching technique means helping a child to learn through more than one sense. Slow learners have difficulties in one or more areas of reading, spelling, writing, listening comprehension and expressive language. Multisensory techniques enable them to use their personal areas of strength to help them learn.

5. MNEMONICS: A mnemonic is something which we can use to remember things much easier. As is often the case, it could be a phrase, a short song, or something that is quite easily remembered. Students use special phrases to help them remember information and spellings: for example: For the word ARITHMETIC: A Rat In The House May Eat The Ice Cream.

Teachers know that students walk into the classrooms with a wide range of abilities. But teachers must try to find ways to meet the needs of all students, including those with learning and attention issues.

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