

## An Experimental Study of Slow Learners

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Slow Learners are those children who are low achieving academic skills and often ignored by others as dull, Lazy or inept in the school setting. Slow learners lag behind other students not only in academics but also in social, emotional that 5 to 15 percent of school going children, suffer from scholastic backwardness. The early identification of students who are at risk for educational failure is an important process that deserves much attention and research. Dr. S.Subramaniam says that although they have no intellectual disability, no identifiable neurological impairments and no learning disorders, slow learners perform poorly in school and exhibit discrepancy between expected achievement based on their intellectual ability assessment and actual achievement as children advance in school, There is a corresponding increase in difficulty as school subject and assignments. Thus, children's performance depends progressively more on their motivation to sustain and active commitment to and efforts towards self regulated learning.<sup>1</sup> A pretest posttest random control group experimental group research design was followed to assess the effects of the integrated instruction on the academic performance and psychological indices of slow learners.

- (i) **Experimental Group** :- the total sample comprised of 10 slow learners as experimental groups studying in 5<sup>th</sup> class in primary school who were given and exposure to a specially designed integrated intervention program for the duration of 5 weeks period of time.
- (ii) **Control group** :- Another group 10 slow learners of 5<sup>th</sup> class drawn from the same school were kept as control group. No such exposure to intervention would be given for this group.

In order to have the homogeneity in the sample size, they were matched for age, gender, IQ, mother tongue, socio-economic status etc. The slow learners were selected using the following three screening methods based on their academic performance teacher's report and IQ test.

- A- Academic performance :- Only those students who scored less than 50 % of marks in all the subjects consistently for the first monthly and quarterly examination were selected.
- B- Teacher's assessment: - Teacher's ratings on children's overall performance in class room and those who were found to be dull or below average were identified as slow learners.

A three-tier mutually supportive integrated intervention program was administered to the slow learners. The following three types of activities such as graphic organizer, mindfulness meditation and mnemonics which had been designed exclusively to address the specific needs of the slow learners

such as memory improvements, goal setting and overall study skills improvement were administered between 12.30 p.m. and 2.00 p.m. for the period of 16 weeks. Graphic organizer were constructed using 'xmind' and Microsoft Smart Art for biology and history based on the lessons that were taught to them in their regular classes. Only the slow learning students in experimental group were provided these graphic organizers as an additional academic input. Participants received instruction for a period of 16 weeks. The intervention was given for 40 minutes daily.

The meditation programme was given in 30 minutes session per day for 16 weeks. The slow learners were introduced to their main mnemonic strategies, namely, the method of loci, The latter method and the keyword of teaching to improve their memorizing skills with suitable examples and teachings. These were given exclusively to the experimental group of slow learners.

This programme was aiming at changing teacher's attitude towards students of slow learners in the areas of acceptance and supports to slow learners and rewards of appreciation for demonstrating acceptable behaviors of slow learners and conveying positive expectations to slow learners and not biased by post events. A three day work shop was organized to impart these behavioral science inputs to the concerned teachers relaxation therapy was administered to slow learners to improve their concentration in their subjects. In summary the overall intervention was aiming at eliding more effort from the slow learners and their mentors to gain required knowledge and skills to master their subjects,<sup>2</sup>

The data of the gain score acquired by the experimental group and control group of slow learners were compared using an independent sample t-test to ensure that the effects of the integrated intervention were significant and specific to the experimental group of slow learners. In addition to the test of significance, effect sizes were calculated to measure the relative magnitude of the experimental treatment using Cohen's based on the analysis, the following conclusions were drawn- As expected the integrated intervention strategies in addition to conventional classroom teaching seemed to be very effective in improving the academic performance score in science and social science of slow learning students in grade 5.

The experimental group showed a significant improvement in academic self-efficacy perhaps due to the effect of integrated intervention, it can be inferred the graphic organizer and memory teaching could have acted as effective tools which drive to slow learners to summarize their ideas and structure their writing work as a visualize by converting a text into an appropriate paragraph which in turn, facilitates to retrieve the required information at the appropriate time.

There is a substantial level of reduction in anxious fearful behavior and increased pro-social behavior among the experimental group of slow learners which may alter their cognitive capacities to acquire additional reading skills helping them to overcome the suppressed feelings about their inadequacy in academic activities.<sup>3</sup>

It has been confirmed confidently that the customized integrated intervention targeted at the slow learners are able to enhance the academic performance and other psychological indices facilitating the psychological well being the key recommendations based those significant psychological aspects are listed under two categories as short term and long term.

## References

- 1- Indian educational review- NCERT. Vol-51,p.p.114
- 2- Indian educational review- Dr. S.Subramaniam. vol-51,p.p-116
- 3- Indian journal of psychometric and education vol-39