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TEACHER EDUCATORS AS VALUE BUILDERS

**(Towards value building:
the role of teacher educators)**



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ROLE OF SCHOOL TEACHERS TOWARDS VALUE BUILDING AMONG LEARNING-DISABLED STUDENTS

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Abstract

Often teachers come across some pupils who may have learning difficulties in acquiring basic academic skills such as reading, writing or arithmetic. These children face failure so frequently and they don't try to change their ways of learning. Since the lives of learning-disabled students tend to revolve around their disabilities rather than their abilities, their self-esteem is very low. As a result, their expectations, levels of aspiration and general motivational levels get unnecessarily diminished.

Education is a conscious effort towards inculcation of values. The need for value education is constantly increasing as teachers continue to witness increasing behavioral disorders among educationally handicapped children. Value education helps to cultivate essential values among students so that their learning complexities can be reduced and learning skills developed. One has to assimilate and uphold the values such as self-confidence, self-reliance, self-respect etc in the life of school wards.

A teacher is a torchbearer in society and has a great role in imbibing values with a view to rescuing learning-disabled students. There is no greater gift a teacher can give to his students than laying the foundation for emotional health, a positive attitude towards life and imparting of ideals for a healthy and stress-free life. Children need to know how to handle mistakes in a positive manner.

A child grown with values inculcated on him/her will be successful in life. Such a child will be able to convert challenges into opportunities later. It is through values imparted at a young age students become empowered to be model citizens of a country.

In a classroom, teachers may come across students having difficulty in learning and acquisition of basic skills such as reading, writing or arithmetic. Most of the children receiving special education in recent years are those with learning disabilities. There are different kinds of learning disabilities namely dyslexia (reading disability), dysgraphia (writing disability) and dyscalculia (numerical disability).

There are various consequences of learning disabilities such as little motivation, low self-esteem, less self-efficacy etc (Karanth & Rozario, 2003). Schoolchildren may be disabled in learning in spite of the availability of all the conventional learning styles and socio-cultural opportunities. Consequently, their expectations, level of aspiration and general motivational levels get unnecessarily diminished. It has a negative bearing effect on the self-esteem of such children.

Children with learning disabilities often show signs of frustration and low self-esteem. Learning-disabled children have problems with social relationships, and have unreasonable self-expectations. Also they appear to be lazy and emotionally disturbed. It is essential to identify students with learning disabilities as early as possible to prevent or alleviate the frustration and failure these students face (Neilson, 2002).

Students who experience significant difficulties in learning despite the fact that they are intellectually bright as their peers may lose self-esteem through continued difficulties and failures in the classroom. The day-to-day difficulties experienced by students with learning difficulties may give rise to emotional disturbance. They may lose motivation because of their continual struggles with learning. Low self-esteem may be a consequence of enduring learning difficulties and failing to achieve academically at any age level (Hannell, 2006).

Value Education to Overcome Learning Disabilities

Education is a conscious effort towards inculcation of values. It is the vehicle of knowledge, self-preservation and success. It is a continuous learning experience, learning from people, learning from

success and failures, learning from teachers and then growing up to be the person that one wants to be. Education not only gives one a platform to succeed, but also the knowledge of social conduct, character and self respect. The purpose of our life is undoubtedly to know oneself and be oneself. The greatest gift education gives is the knowledge a set of values. These values include the importance of hard work, confidence and self respect.

Everyone has needs, urges and aspirations. Anything that fulfils the needs, satisfies the urges and helps in realizing the aspirations has value. Values are the social principles held or accepted by an individual. Values determine what one should do and how one should do. The realization of values stimulates one to make efforts. According to John Dewey, "To value means to prize, to esteem, to appraise, to estimate. It means the act of cherishing something, holding it dear and also the act of passing judgement upon the nature and amount of its value as compared with something else" (Taneja, 1990).

Educators have devised a variety of approaches to values embodied in self-esteem, character education etc. Self-esteem in childhood has been related to mental health later in life, while a lack of self-esteem has been related to social dysfunctions and mental pathologies (Pandey, 2005). A positive sense of self is psychologically healthy. Self-esteem exerts a powerful influence on one's expectations, their judgements about themselves and others, and their behaviour. A high degree of self-acceptance and self-esteem is important to one's well being and social relationship (Prema & Raja, 2006).

Value education is important to help everyone in improving the value system that he/she holds and put them to use. The need for *value education* is constantly increasing as teachers continue to witness behavioral disorders among educationally handicapped children. The core idea behind *value education* is to cultivate essential values in the students so as to reduce their learning complexities and to develop their learning skills. Once children have understood their values in life, they can examine and control the various choices they

make in their life. Thus, *value education* is always essential to shape one's life and to provide an opportunity of performing himself/herself on the global stage.

Value education is the need of the hour if education is to be humanized. A list of 83 values has been compiled by the NCERT in its publication in 1979 entitled "Documents on social, moral and spiritual values in Education". Some among them are self-confidence, self-control, self-duty, self-reliance, self-respect, self-restraint, self-support etc (Bhardwaj, 2001). These values are to be inculcated in learning-disabled students to develop a positive self-esteem and to rise high in life.

Values are regarded desirable and held in high esteem by a particular society in which a person lives. They reflect one's personal attitudes and judgments, decisions and choices, behaviour and relationships etc. Values influence one's thoughts, feelings and actions and are the guiding principles of life which are conducive to all round development. They give direction and firmness to life and bring joy, satisfaction and peace to life. Values like self-discipline, self-realization etc were considered as the basis of a new social order by the NCERT and the Gandhi Peace Foundation in the Document on "Reorientation of curriculum based on Gandhian values" (Venkataiah & Sandhya, 2004). Value education can have the capacity to transform the diseased mind of the learning-disabled children into a healthy, natural and attentive mind.

Learning disabilities should not be regarded as an indication that an affected child cannot succeed against the achievement of some of history's famous personalities. Some great men like Albert Einstein, Thomas Alva Edison, Walt Disney, Pethoven etc had learning disability in their school days and later on they rose to the peak of excellence in their respective fields. There is a need to cultivate values among these children so that they will be able to face challenges in life later on. One has to frequently assimilate and uphold the values such as self-confidence, self-reliance, self-respect etc in his/her life. A child grown

with values inculcated in him/her will be successful in life. It is therefore essential for learning-disabled children to receive the highest quality of value education possible.

Role of Teachers in Promoting Value Education

Teachers are the torchbearers in a society. They have to cater to the needs of all students in a class who have different intellectual and socio-cultural backgrounds. Often teachers come across some pupils who may have learning difficulties and are discouraged by their own weaknesses in their learning. Teaching profession is a very challenging one and teachers have to address the special needs of these children. Teachers have a great role in imbuing values with a view to rescuing the learning-disabled students.

There is no greater gift a teacher can give to his students than laying the foundation for their emotional health, positive self-esteem etc through inculcating values in them. It provides the opportunity to have a positive attitude towards life and imparting of ideals for a healthy and stress-free life. Building values provides the fuel to mould a child's self-esteem and feelings of self-worth through positive approaches towards problems confronted in life. It has the power to transform children's misguided actions into more fruitful work. It focuses on strengths and positive attributes and acceptance for effort.

Helping individuals with learning disabilities to develop greater self-awareness about their disabilities is important for their ability to make effective choice and decision-making in their ways of learning. Schoolchildren need to understand and be guided by their teachers in coping with their learning problems. Counselling by teachers can assist students with learning disabilities to develop greater awareness of their disability and to understand how they have to adapt and adjust to their limitations and strengths. They must feel better about themselves and be more capable and resilient as they learn the meaning of healthy self-esteem, responsibility, respect for individual differences etc. It is hoped that by motivating the youth for introspection and self-analysis,

the desired results would be achieved (<http://www.rkmissiondel.org/inside/activities/education.htm>).

Teachers can help students to promote self-determination which help them to make effective choices and decisions. It is necessary for students to understand their strengths and limitations together with a belief that they are capable and effective which are essential for self-determination. To enhance self-determination learners have to know themselves and value themselves. If teachers support students in becoming more self-determined, then they can enable them to learn how to make choices and decisions that are based on what they most value. Children need to know how to handle mistakes in a positive manner. The stigma attached to learning disabilities encourages many students to hide their disabilities, inhibiting the development of self-confidence and belief in themselves (<http://www.ericdigests.org/2004-2/self.html>).

Conclusion

Without the backing of value education picked up during school life, students will not be able to face life with confidence and courage. The purpose of value education programmes will be of great help to pupils to become aware of their innate divinity and how to make its perfection and happiness manifest in every moment of life. It is through values imparted at a young age, students become empowered to be model citizens of a country. Hence, the focus should be on how to convert the learning-disabled children of a country into a resourceful population so that they could become assets and not liabilities.

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