# REDEFINING EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES INTEGRATING INDIAN EPISTEMOLOGY AND MODERN COGNITIVE NEUROSCIENCES

# COMPENDIUM OF PAPERS

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Title

Contributor Name Page No

1. Learning and Cognition: Indian	Epistemological Concerns
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1	Exploring New Avenues for Knowledge : A Brief Note on		
	Different Approach to Learning	Dr.Prem Khatry	1
2	Epistemological Beliefs in Accountancy: A study among		
	Higher Secondary School Students	Dr. P. Usha	6
3	Learning and Acquisition-Indian Epistemological Concerns:		
4	Nyaya, Sankhya, Yoga Epistemological and Pedagogical Concerns of Constructionism	Dr. Deepa A. P	10
	Relating to the Educational Practices	Dr. D. Hassan	13
5	Epistemological Concerns of Stress: Relevance to Education	Bindu Gouri V. P Dr. M. Sadananthan	18
6	Cognitive Attainment in the Complex Texture of		
	Indian Philosophy	N. K. Sunil Kumar	21
7	Theory of Epistemology in Naya Philosophy	Betty Sunny Rejithamol E.K	25
8	Learning and Cognition- The Indian Epistemological Concerns	S. Sahaya Sija	28
		D. Anusha	
9	Learning Cognition: Indian Epistemological Concerns	Kumari Bindu R. S	31
	II. Neuro Scientific Bases of Cognition and Metaco	ognition in Learning	
10	Peculiar Bent of Mind	Dr. R. Rajeswari	34
11	Attention: A Process of Cognition	T. Blessy Dr B. William Dharma F	37 Raja
12	Brain Cognition Behaviour: A Conceptual Analysis	Himna P.A. Irshana Shahnaz Ulladan	41
13	The impact of Cognitive Conflicts in Reducing Ontological		
	Misconceptions on the basis of Metacognitive Approaches.	Nisha. S. Dharan	44
14	A Study on Metacognitive Learning Strategy on the Scholastic outcomes in Mathematics among Secondary School Students.	Jisha K. V.	47
15	Awareness of Metacognition among First Degree Students	S. Meenakshi Kirthika V. Sasikala	50
16	Metacognition in the Classroom and Beyond	A. JasmineAgnal	54
		Geetha. N. R	
17	Constructivism and Metacognitive Strategies to		
	Promote Self-Directed Learners	Manju. M. S S. T. Sajith Lal Raj	57

	CMotacognitive Affective Model of Self	Dr. Minikutty	
18	Regulated Learning	A. Sindhu P. G.	61
	at Higher Secondary level  Education and Cognitive Neuroscience: An Overview	Dr. S. Payan	
19	Education and	P. Selvakatheeswaran	67
	Metacognition	Dr. Karthy Jayakumar	
20		Issac Johnson	69
	Exploring Neuroscientife bases of creativity	Dr. Sindhya V.	
21	Developing Cognitive Strategies - Bricks for Learning	A U A	71
22	Neuroscientific approaches of perception and cognition	A. H. Anusooya Rukn	nani 76
23			
	in learning Cognitive abilities for positive learning environment	E. Gethsiah	78
24		Jose Brightly. H	80
25	Relationship between Cognition and Language Learning	Jaya S. R.	83
26	Cognitive Skills for Successful Learning	J. Jebila	93
		Dr. A. Beaula	85
27	Cognitive and Meta cognitive Strategies for Learning	Swapna K. S	
	Disabled Students	Dr. M. A. Sudhir	87
28	Cognitive Neuroscience: Key Processes and Techniques	S. Anithamary	90
29	Cognitive Neuroscience of Attention	Anitha Narayani. M.	93
30	Skills of Metacognition: An Overview	Jalin Mary	96
	Y II In a policinal in the contract of the con	Sheeba Selva Rani	
31	Metacognition among Adolescence Students	M. Mary Sherli	100
J.	National annual grant and a second and a second and a second and a second annual grant and a second a second and a second	K. Jega	
32	Enhancing Teaching Competency through Metacognition	R. S. Padma Rekha	102
33	Cognitive Skills and Brain Function	T. Srikarthick	104
	authonora moderno manared a man	S. Meltorose,	
		Dr. T. Vijila,	
	III. Neuro psychological aspects of l	earning	
34	Cognition and Learning Neurological Aspects	Dr. S. Saravanan	106
35	Brain & The Mind	Immanuel Thomas	110
36	An overview on Neurotransmitters	Soya Mathew	114
		Dr. Betty. P. J.	
37	Neuropsychological Aspects of Learning	V. Sundar	117
	formed and an analysis of the same of	Dr. K. Rajagopalan	
38	Neuroplasticity: A Tool for Learning	Jeena E.M	119
	The second of th	Dr A. Veliappan	
39	How the Brain Learns Mathematics	Chandra Malar M.	122
	and a constant property	S. Pon Ambika	122
40	A COLUMN TO THE REAL PROPERTY OF THE PARTY O	Dr. Deepa R. P	
40	Neuropsychological Assessment	Berlin Rajan	125
41	Paral at	Beena Florence Donark	
41	Psycholinguistics	Angel Sukila	107
The state of the s		Anitta Berin	127
		Jeya Sheela	

		Company of the Secretary of the Park	29
42	The Key Concepts of Neuro informatics	C. G. Chitra	
43	Cognitive Dissonance: Logical techniques to reduce dissonance	D. Gladis Obelieu	32
44	Role of Educational Neuroscience in the field of	Rosilla V. Gopai	35
44	Learning Disabilities.	Swapna. P K. S. Shobha	38
45	Neuropsychological aspects of learning	K. S. Should	141
46	Do cognitive distortions trim down brain function?  Dr. B. W	illiam Dharma Raja	144
AT	Helping children with cognitive disabilities	Dr. S. Praveen Ruma.	146
	Teaching Strategies for Children with Cognitive Disorder	Dr. Prema Latha. B	140
48	Effect of Yoga on Maximum Expiratory Pressure of Mentally	Dr . A. Ravi	149
	Retarded Children	DI : At. At.	
50	Developing the cognitive abilities of learners with language	P. Renju	155
7012	learning difficulties	M. Kalai Selvi	158
51	Importance of Neuropsychological Evaluation in	C. Hema	
	Learning Disability	M. Sobharani	
		Mohanraj. S	160
52	Role of Neuro-Endocrine System in Stress mediation	Periyasamy. P	
-	Cognitive Behaviour Interventions to redress Social Cognitive	Dr. Sony Mary Varghese	162
53	- a : Children Willi Colluct Discrete	Sheeja.R	164
	Disconance affect Achievement in Mathematics.	Shimimol P.S	104
54	- A Survey among Higher Secondary School Students	Dr. Hassan Koya M.P	167
	Conflict Resolution Strategies of Adolescents	Dr. S. Sreelatha	170
155	Integration of Neuropsychology in Educational Planning	P. H. Jebalin Paul Dr. Mini Kumari V. S	
	following Traumatic Brain Injury	M. Renukha	174
57	Conflict Resolution Education Programs	R. Jacklin Jemi	
	IV. Designing Brain Compatible Learning	Environments	
	IV. Designing Diame 1		176
50	Designing brain compatible learning environments	Dr. Leela Pradhan	176
58	Co-operative learning is an excellent Brain compatible	Dr. C. M. Bindhu	178
59	Technique An Experimental Anaysis	Niranjana .K	181
60	Brain Based Learning Strategy for developing Thinking Skills	Dr. Rajeswari .K	
61	Brain Based Learning -An Active Processing of Information	Dr. Merlin Sasikala	185
	Designing Brain compatible classrooms	Dr. Sreevrinda Nair .N	188
62	Designing Brain Compatible Classrooms through	Dr. Sreekala K. L.	191
63	Creating Brain Compatible Classrooms through Experiential Learning	Sreekala S.	193
64	Brain-based Approach to teach English as a Second Language.		
65	Whole Brain Learning - The Garden of Choices	Dr. Giby Geevarughes Anu Rachel Jogi	e 196
66	Designing Brain Compatible Learning Environments	Deepti Aggarwal	199
	Knowledge, Perception and Implementation of Secondary	Dr. A. Ananthi	205
67	School Teachers on Brain-Based Learning Strategy	P. Narumanam A. Sevarkodiyon	200
		S. Lavanya	

		Amudha Asaph	20a
	Compatible Learning Environment via Lower Order Dr. B	Diarina Lings	211
	Cognitive Abilities	Arsha N. Aji R.	411
•	Six Elements of a Brain Compatible Classroom		213
		The state of the s	
7	O Brain Compatible Learning Environments	- paialakanmi	215
		v Deeptili	
7	1 Brain Compatible Learning Environment		218
		Maile -	
7.	2 Brain Based Approach to Ignite Learning	Anupamamol M. R	221
	Licement	Sajeena .S	225
7:			
74		Siji John	227
75	Effectiveness of Graphic Organisers for Learning	Siji John A. Prabakar Devaraj	230
	at Higher Secondary School Level		-
76	Nourishment of Learning: An act of Survivo	- Vinod	233
	Strategy Based of	Dr. C. Sivapragasam	
77	Brain Compatible Constructivist Classroom Strategy Based or	P	237
	Brain Compatible Constructivist Classroom Eisencraft's Fundamentals of Teaching and Learning  Eisencraft's Fundamentals of Teaching and Ancient Indian	Muraleedharan T	
78	Eisencraft's Fundamentals of Teaching and Deminder Indian A Comparative Study On Brain Based And Ancient Indian Enistemalogy Based Teaching In Developing Cognitive	Sunny Raj A	
	A Comparative Study On Brain Based And Allerent Epistemology Based Teaching In Developing Cognitive  Outcomes Of Secondary School Students	T. Golda Mayor	241
	Outcomes Of Secondary School Students	A. Sarlet	
79	Outcomes Of Secondary School Students Change the classroom through Brain Based Learning		244
	Liavement in	Prasida	
80	Effectiveness of brain based learning on Achievement in	Magntham	247
00	Biology of Secondary School Students	J. Mary Vasantham	
81	Brain Compatible Learning	P. Vel Murugan	
01			250
02	Brain - Based Learning in connection with Multiple	Veena C.S.	250
82	Intelligence		
	New Way to Learn, New Way to Success:Brain-Based and	Sreekutty O. R.	253
83	Constructivist Learning Approaches	Jasmin Asaf	
		Priyamol T. K	256
	Enriching classrooms through brain based learning.		260
84	Enriching classicollis and age	S. R. Ajila Angel	200
85	Brain Based Learning in Science	R. Sreeji	
	it reference to Adolescents	Axina Geo Augustine	261
86	Brain-Based Teaching with reference to Adolescents		264
87	How Brain Compatible Learning Environment helps in Learning		
88	Accommodating different learning styles through		265
	brain based learning	Y. Sophia	203
89	Role of Teachers in designing Brain Compatible	S. Subbaiah	268
67	Learning Environments	P. Rajalingam	
100	THE RESIDENCE OF THE PARTY OF T	with a south of the standard of the	071
90	Brain -Based Learning	A. K. Ariya	271
		P. Asha Prince	
191	Brain Based Learning as a determinant of Academic	M. A. Sreelekshmi	272
02	Performance in Struggling Learners	Dr. Sreelatha .S	
92	Brain Imaging- The Natural Relationship between		
02	Brain Structure and Learning	Deepthi .S. S	275
93	Wollvating Students using Brain based I	Mumthas .S	
	- Suutogios,	Manufas .5	277

94	Concept maping in teaching and learing	Jerald Mathew	280
		N. Latha Saraswathi	
	V. Social Cognition: Neuro Scientific	bases	
	n n	William Dharma Raja	282
95	Social Cognition. Grasping the Transamy	Fathima Jaseena	286
96	Persuading Aspects of Culture in Social Cognition	Bindu .T .V	
		Dr. Raghi, P. Nair	289
29	Social Cognitive Learning in the Classrooms	R. R. Sheeja,	292
98	Classroom Practices Promoting Social Intelligence	V. Pravitha	295
29	Cultural Intelligence for Understanding Cultural Diversity	Dr. B. C. Sobha	297
	, wig Person	Anusha .K .R	291
100	Social Cognition-Neuroscientific Bases	Education	
1	VI. Implications of Cognitive Neurosciences	On Education	
	Comition Through	Dr. Malini. P. M	299
101	Attainment of Improved Cognition Through		302
	Mastery Learning Model  Cognitive Neuroscience: Implications for Education	Dr. K. Thiyagu	306
102	Educational Implications of Cognitive Neuroscience	Vidhya V. S. Dr. Jaya Jaise	
103	Educational Implications of Cognitive	J. Johnsi Priya	308
	Cognitive Neuroscience Perspective for Mathematics Learning		312
104	Lin Annroach III Education	V. Annet Joy	315
105	Cognitive Apprenticeship Approach and Secondary Level 5f Model for Peer Tutoring in Mathematics at Secondary Level	Dr. Binu B.L.	319
106	Implications of Cognitive Neuroscience on Education	Geetha Rani T.	317
107	Implications of Cognitive Neuroscience	Sajitha J. S. Emy Brindha T.	
			321
	Implications Of Cognitive Neuroscience On	Gino D.J. A. Jothi	
108		Zohreh Ramezanipoor	324
	Effect of Nonviolent Communication Method on Assertion of  Effect of Nonviolent Communication Method on Assertion of  Landstone A Study among Iran Adults	Zonren Kamezampe	
109	- 1 · Tatomoreonal Kelaliuliship.	Dr. Jaya Jaise	328
	Critical Visual Literacy: A Neurolinguistic Approach to	Shimna Suresh	
110	- 1' 1 T anguage leachille	Similar Car	
	A Hainment of Illicelated	Dr. Lavanya. M. P.	331
111	Drocess Skills in Physics of Higher Beeting	S. Lenin	334
112	Cognitive Factors in Second Language Learning	M. Caroline Maria	337
112	Learning Styles of Prospective Teachers	Dr. S. Mani	
113		A. Evangelin Anusha	341
	Impact of Neuroscience on Higher Education	N. Shiji	
114		Mohanraj. S	343
115	Role of Neuro-Endocrine System in Stress mediation	Periyasamy. P	
115		A. John Lawrence	345
116/	Neurolinguistic Modeled VAK Learning Styles and	Dr. C. Bright	
116	English Language Teaching-Learning	Dr. K. Dhanalakshmi	347
117	Cognitive Neuroscience on Education	R. Raj Kumar	
117		C. Rajeshwari	351
118	Implications of Cognitive Neuroscience on Education	E. Jeyasutha	
110		T. Selvakani	
	4	E. Sree Vaisnava Devi	

Integration of Cognitive Neuroscience in Education with Special Reference to Secondary School Students  Music - An Effective Means to Reduce Test Anxiety Dr. R. B. William Dharma Raja Dr. R. B. William Dharma Raja Dr. R. Ramkumar P. Jeya Puvaneswari P. Jeya Puvaneswari N. A. Shiny  The Neuroscience – A Key to change classroom environment  VII. Affective Neuroscience  Domain Competencies in Learners  124 Sensitizing the Adolescents About the Problems of Aged: An Affective Neuroscientific Perspective Domain Competencies of Adolescents 125 Effectiveness of Value Discussion Model on the Affective Domain Competencies of Adolescents 126 The Role of Affective Neuroscience in developing Emotional Competencies  The Need of the Hour Affective Neuroscience and Learning  127 Enhancing Emotional Intelligence in Children: The Need of the Hour Affective Neuroscience and Learning  128 Affective Neuroscience and Learning  129 Neural Impulse Propagation through Excitatory and Inhibitory Post Synaptic Potential in developing Emotional Competence  130 A Study on Emotional Competence The Commitment of School Teachers 131 Combining Emotion and Cognition  132 Developing Emotional Competencies in Teachers 133 Developing Emotional Competencies in Teachers 134 Instituga and Developing Emotional Competence Strategies and Culture in Teaching — Learning 135 Immect of Epilepsy on emotions of children  VIII. Computational Neuroscience  Shyla T  Alifa.  An, Kripa Murita  Dr. Renuka Sonny . L. R  An Harbertive Neuroscience Shyla T  Alifa.  Anitha. O  Dr. Renuka Sonny . L. R  Anitha. O  Dr.		The six of the section with	Special	
Music - An Effective Means to Reduce Test Anxiety 121 Neuroscience – A Key to change classroom environment 122 Developmental Cognitive Neuroscience of Arithmetic: Implications for Learning and Education  VII. Affective Neuroscience 123 Affective Neuroscience – Paradigm for Developing Emotional Competencies in Learners 124 Sensitizing the Adolescents About the Problems of Aged: An Affective Neuroscientific Perspective 125 Effectiveness of Value Discussion Model on the Affective Effectiveness of Value Discussion Model on the Affective Domain Competencies of Adolescents 126 The Role of Affective Neuroscience in developing Emotional Competencies 127 Enhancing Emotional Intelligence in Children: The Need of the Hour 128 Affective Neuroscience and Learning 129 Neural Impulse Propagation through Excitatory and Inhibitory Post Synaptic Potential in developing Emotional Competence 130 A Study on Emotional Intelligence of Prospective Teachers 131 Combining Emotion and Cognition 132 Developing Emotional Competencies in Students— The Commitment of School Teachers 133 Developing Emotional Competencies in Teachers 134 Instilling and Developing Emotional Competencies in Teachers 135 Imaset of Epilepsy on emotions of children 136 Computational Neuroscience 137 Computational Neuroscience 138 Neuro Informatics 138 Neuro Informatics 139 Neuro Informatics 130 Neuro Informatics 131 Neuro Informatics 131 Neuro Informatics 132 Neuro Informatics 133 Neuro Informatics 134 Neuro Informatics 135 Neuro Informatics 136 Computational Neuroscience 137 Computational Neuroscience 138 Neuro Informatics 139 Neuro Informatics 130 Neuro Informatics 130 Neuro Informatics 131 Neuro Informatics 132 Neuro Informatics 133 Neuro Informatics 134 Neuro Informatics 135 Neuro Informatics 136 Computational Neuroscience 137 Computational Neuroscience 138 Neuro Informatics 139 Neuro Informatics 130 Neuro Informatics 130 Neuro Informatics 131 Neuro Informatics 132 Neuro Informatics 133 Neuro Informatics 134 Neuro Informatics 135 Neuro Informatics 141 Neuro Info	119	Integration of Cognitive Neuroscience in Education	Rajeswari K. C.	
Dr. R. Ramkumar P. Jeya Puvaneswari P. Jeya	120	Reference to Secondary School Students	J. Kirupa Kani	324
Developmental Cognitive Neuroscience of Arithmetic: Implications for Learning and Education			Dr. R. Ramkumar	357
Developmental Cognitive Neuroscience of Arithmetic: Implications for Learning and Education	121	Neuroscience - A Key to change classroom environment	P. Jeya Puvaneswari	360
Affective Neuroscience - Paradigm for Developing Emotional Competencies in Learners   Dr. P. Rekha   Dr. P. P. Rekha   Dr. P. P. Rekha   Dr. K. Vijayakumari   Anitha. G   Dr. Celine Pereira   Celina	122	Developmental Cognitive Neuroscience of Arithmetic:	Y. A. Shiny	363
VII. Affective Neuroscience  123 Affective Neuroscience – Paradigm for Developing Emotional Competencies in Learners  124 Sensitizing the Adolescents About the Problems of Aged:  125 Effectiveness of Value Discussion Model on the Affective Domain Competencies of Adolescents  126 The Role of Affective Neuroscience in developing Emotional Competencies  127 Enhancing Emotional Intelligence in Children:  128 Affective Neuroscience and Learning  129 Neural Impulse Propagation through Excitatory and Inhibitory Post Synaptic Potential in developing Emotional Competence  130 A Study on Emotional Intelligence of Prospective Teachers  131 Combining Emotional Competence of Prospective Teachers  132 Developing Emotional Competencies in Teachers  133 Developing Emotional Competencies in Teachers  134 Instilling and Developing Emotional Competence Strategies and Culture in Teaching – Learning  135 Instilling and Developing Emotional Neuroscience  136 Computational Neuroscience  137 Computational Neuroscience  138 Neuro Informatics  139 Neuro Informatics  130 Neuro Informatics  130 Neuro Informatics  131 Neuro Informatics  132 Neuro Informatics  133 Neuro Informatics  134 Neuro Informatics  135 Neuro Informatics  136 Computational Neuroscience  137 Neuro Informatics  138 Neuro Informatics  139 Developing Emotional Neuroscience  130 Neuro Informatics  131 Neuro Informatics  132 Neuro Informatics  133 Neuro Informatics  134 Neuro Informatics  135 Neuro Informatics  136 Neuro Informatics  137 Neuro Informatics  138 Neuro Informatics  139 Neuro Informatics  130 Neuro Informatics  130 Neuro Informatics  131 Neuro Informatics  132 Neuro Informatics  133 Neuro Informatics  134 Neuro Informatics  135 Neuro Informatics  136 Neuro Informatics  137 Neuro Informatics  138 Neuro Informatics  139 Neuro Informatics  130 Neuro Informatics  130 Neuro Informatics  131 Neuro Informatics  132 Neuro Informatics  133 Neuro Informatics  134 Neuro Informatics  135 Neuro Informatics		Implications for Losming and Education		
Affective Neuroscience —Paradigm for Developing Emotional Competencies in Learners  124 Sensitizing the Adolescents About the Problems of Aged: An Affective Neuroscientific Perspective  125 Effectiveness of Value Discussion Model on the Affective Domain Competencies of Adolescents  126 The Role of Affective Neuroscience in developing Emotional Competencies  127 Enhancing Emotional Intelligence in Children: The Need of the Hour  128 Affective Neuroscience and Learning  129 Neural Impulse Propagation through Excitatory and Inhibitory Post Synaptic Potential in developing Emotional Competence  130 Astudy on Emotional Intelligence of Prospective Teachers 131 Combining Emotion and Cognition  132 Developing Emotional Competencies in Students— The Commitment of School Teachers 133 Developing Emotional Competencies in Teachers 134 Instilling and Developing Emotional Competence Strategies and Culture in Teaching—Learning  135 Insact of Epilepsy on emotions of children  VIII. Computational Neuroscience  136 Computational Neuroscience 137 Computational Neuroscience 138 Neuro Informatics  Dr. Renuka Sonny L. R  Dr. Madhubala S.  T. Sachutha Prasad. P.S  K. Sheeba, Dr. N. Kalai Arasi J. Angel Mary Jane Dr. S. Praveen Kumar  M. Josephin Bella E. Johney Manjula  Jyotsna P Dr. Nimmi Maria Oommen  Dr. Renuka Sonny .L. R  410  VIII. Computational Neuroscience Shyla T Suji N. V. P. Bindu Gouri. Vinitha K.  421		Neuroscie	nce	
Affective Neuroscience - Paradigm for Dr. Emotional Competencies in Learners  Sensitizing the Adolescents About the Problems of Aged: An Affective Neuroscientific Perspective  Domain Competencies of Adolescents  The Role of Affective Neuroscience in developing Emotional Competencies  The Need of the Hour  Affective Neuroscience and Learning  Por. P. Rekha Dr. K. Vijayakumari  Anitha. G  Dr. Celine Pereira  Karthika A. R. Sreeja. T  Devika. S  Dr. Asha. J.V  Jisha GR  N.J. Ajitha  A. Emmaculin Anulet  Dr. A. Beaula  N.J. Ajitha  A. Emmaculin Anulet  Dr. A. Beaula  Por. A. Beaula  N.J. Ajitha  A. Emmaculin Anulet  Dr. A. Beaula  Dr. Madhubala S.  T. Sachutha  Prasad. P.S  K. Sheeba,  Dr. N. Kalai Arasi  J. Angel Mary Jane  Dr. S. Praveen Kumar  M. Josephin Bella  E. Johncy Manjula  Jyotsna P  Dr. Nimmi Maria Oommen  Dr. Renuka Sonny. L. R  410  VIII. Computational Neuroscience  N.J. P. Bindu Gouri.  Note of the Ferita Anitha. G  Dr. Celine Pereira  Arthika A. R  Sreeja. T  Devika. S  Dr. Asha. J.V  389  N.J. Ajitha  A. Emmaculin Anulet  Dr. A. Beaula  Dr. Madhubala S.  T. Sachutha  Prasad. P.S  K. Sheeba,  Dr. N. Kalai Arasi  J. Angel Mary Jane  Dr. S. Praveen Kumar  M. Josephin Bella  E. Johncy Manjula  Jyotsna P  Dr. Nimmi Maria Oommen  Dr. Renuka Sonny. L. R  410  VIII. Computational Neuroscience  Neuro Informatics		VII. Affective 10		1
Sensitizing the Adolescents About the Problems of Aged	122	A ffective Neuroscience —Paradigm for Developing	Dr. Bindu.K.D	
Sensitizing the Adolescents Another An Affective Neuroscientific Perspective An Affective Neuroscientific Perspective Domain Competencies of Adolescents Domain Competencies of Adolescents Domain Competencies  The Role of Affective Neuroscience in developing Emotional Competencies  Enhancing Emotional Intelligence in Children: The Need of the Hour Affective Neuroscience and Learning  Neural Impulse Propagation through Excitatory and Inhibitory Post Synaptic Potential in developing Emotional Competence  A Study on Emotional Intelligence of Prospective Teachers  A Study on Emotional Competence  A Study on Emotional Competencies in Students The Commitment of School Teachers  Developing Emotional Competencies in Teachers  Instilling and Developing Emotional Competence Strategies and Culture in Teaching—Learning  Impact of Epilepsy on emotions of children  VIII. Computational Neuroscience  Computational Neuroscience  Nanitha. G Dr. Celine Pereira Karthika A. R Sreeja. T Devika. S Presja. T Devika. S Presja. T Devika. S Por. Asha. J.V  389  N.J. Ajitha A. Emmaculin Anulet Dr. A. Beaula  Dr. Madhubala S.  T. Sachutha Prasad. P.S  K. Sheeba, Dr. N. Kalai Arasi J. Angel Mary Jane Dr. S. Praveen Kumar M. Josephin Bella E. Johncy Manjula Jyotsna P Dr. Nimmi Maria Commen  Dr. Nimmi Maria Commen  Dr. Renuka Sonny. L. R  410  VIII. Computational Neuroscience Shyla T Suji N. 415 Suji N. 418 V. P. Bindu Gouri. Vinitha K. 421		Emotional Competencies in Learners  Emotional Competencies in Learners  And Problems of Aged:	Dr. P. Rekha Dr. K. Vijayakumari	
Effectiveness of Value Discussion Model on the Affective Domain Competencies of Adolescents The Role of Affective Neuroscience in developing Emotional Competencies  Enhancing Emotional Intelligence in Children: The Need of the Hour The Need of the Hour Affective Neuroscience and Learning  Neural Impulse Propagation through Excitatory and Inhibitory Post Synaptic Potential in developing Emotional Competence  A Study on Emotional Intelligence of Prospective Teachers  A Study on Emotional Competence The Commitment of School Teachers  Dr. N. Kalai Arasi J. Angel Mary Jane Dr. S. Praveen Kumar M. Josephin Bella E. Johncy Manjula Jyotsna P Dr. Nimmi Maria Commen  Josephin Bella E. Johncy Manjula Jyotsna P Dr. Nimmi Maria Commen  Dr. Renuka Sonny . L. R  410  VIII. Computational Neuroscience Shyla T Suji N. V. P. Bindu Gouri. Vinitha K.  421	124	Sensitizing the Adolescents About the Trees	Anitha G	376
The Role of Affective Neuroscience in developing Emotional Competencies  127 Enhancing Emotional Intelligence in Children: The Need of the Hour  128 Affective Neuroscience and Learning  129 Neural Impulse Propagation through Excitatory and Inhibitory Post Synaptic Potential in developing Emotional Competence  130 A Study on Emotional Intelligence of Prospective Teachers  131 Combining Emotion and Cognition  132 Developing Emotional Competencies in Students – The Commitment of School Teachers  133 Developing Emotional Competencies in Teachers  134 Instilling and Developing Emotional Competence Strategies and Culture in Teaching – Learning  135 Immact of Epilepsy on emotions of children  VIII. Computational Neuroscience & Neuro Informatics  136 Computational Neuroscience 137 Computational Neuroscience 138 Neuro Informatics  138 Neuro Informatics  Sreeja. T Devika. S Dr. Asha. J.V Jisha GR  389  N.J. Ajitha A. Emmaculin Anulet A. Emmac		An Affective Neuroscientific Perspective	Dr Celine Pereira	70
The Role of Affective Neuroscience in developing Emotional Competencies  127 Enhancing Emotional Intelligence in Children: The Need of the Hour  128 Affective Neuroscience and Learning  129 Neural Impulse Propagation through Excitatory and Inhibitory Post Synaptic Potential in developing Emotional Competence  130 A Study on Emotional Intelligence of Prospective Teachers  131 Combining Emotion and Cognition  132 Developing Emotional Competencies in Students – The Commitment of School Teachers  133 Developing Emotional Competencies in Teachers  134 Instilling and Developing Emotional Competence Strategies and Culture in Teaching – Learning  135 Immact of Epilepsy on emotions of children  VIII. Computational Neuroscience & Neuro Informatics  136 Computational Neuroscience 137 Computational Neuroscience 138 Neuro Informatics  138 Neuro Informatics  Sreeja. T Devika. S Dr. Asha. J.V Jisha GR  389  N.J. Ajitha A. Emmaculin Anulet A. Emmac	125	Effectiveness of Value Discussion Model	Karthika A. R	280
Emotional Competencies  Dr.Asha. J.V Jisha GR  389  127 Enhancing Emotional Intelligence in Children: The Need of the Hour Affective Neuroscience and Learning  N.J. Ajitha A. Emmaculin Anulet A. Emmaculin Anulet Dr. A. Beaula  Dr. Madhubala S.  T. Sachutha Prasad. P.S  K. Sheeba, Dr. N. Kalai Arasi J. Angel Mary Jane Dr. S. Praveen Kumar  The Commitment of School Teachers  Dr. N. Kalai Arasi J. Angel Mary Jane Dr. S. Praveen Kumar  M. Josephin Bella E. Johncy Manjula  Jyotsna P Dr. Nimmi Maria Oommen  Dr. N. Renuka Sonny .L. R  410  VIII. Computational Neuroscience Shyla T Suji N. V. P. Bindu Gouri. Vinitha K.  421		Domain Competencies of Adolescents	Sreeia . T	
Emotional Competencies  Dr.Asha. J.V Jisha GR  389  127 Enhancing Emotional Intelligence in Children: The Need of the Hour Affective Neuroscience and Learning  N.J. Ajitha A. Emmaculin Anulet A. Emmaculin Anulet Dr. A. Beaula  Dr. Madhubala S.  T. Sachutha Prasad. P.S  K. Sheeba, Dr. N. Kalai Arasi J. Angel Mary Jane Dr. S. Praveen Kumar  The Commitment of School Teachers  Dr. N. Kalai Arasi J. Angel Mary Jane Dr. S. Praveen Kumar  M. Josephin Bella E. Johncy Manjula  Jyotsna P Dr. Nimmi Maria Oommen  Dr. N. Renuka Sonny .L. R  410  VIII. Computational Neuroscience Shyla T Suji N. V. P. Bindu Gouri. Vinitha K.  421	126	The Role of Affective Neuroscience in	Devika. S	
127 Enhancing Emotional Intelligence in Children: The Need of the Hour Affective Neuroscience and Learning  128 Affective Neuroscience and Learning  129 Neural Impulse Propagation through Excitatory and Inhibitory Post Synaptic Potential in developing Emotional Competence A Study on Emotional Intelligence of Prospective Teachers A Study on Emotional Intelligence of Prospective Teachers A Study on Emotional Competencies in Students The Commitment of School Teachers Developing Emotional Competencies in Teachers Developing Emotional Competencies in Teachers  130 Developing Emotional Competencies in Teachers Developing Emotional Competencies in Teachers Developing Emotional Competencies in Teachers  130 Instilling and Developing Emotional Competence Strategies and Culture in Teaching – Learning Dr. Nimmi Maria Oommen  131 Imact of Epilepsy on emotions of children  VIII. Computational Neuroscience & Neuro Informatics  132 Computational Neuroscience Shyla T Suji N. V. P. Bindu Gouri. Vinitha K. 421		Emotional Competencies	Dr. Asha. J.V	285
The Need of the Hour  Affective Neuroscience and Learning  N.J. Ajitha A. Emmaculin Anulet Dr. A. Beaula  N.J. Ajitha A. Emmaculin Anulet A. Emmaculin Anulet Dr. Madhubala S.  N.J. Ajitha A. Emmaculin Anulet Dr. Madhubala S.  N.J. Ajitha A. Emmaculin Anulet A. Emmaculin A. Emsulin A. Ems		AND THE REAL PROPERTY.		363
The Need of the Hour  Affective Neuroscience and Learning  N.J. Allman.  A. Emmaculin Anulet A. Emmaculin Dr. A. Beaula  Neural Impulse Propagation through Excitatory and Inhibitory Post Synaptic Potential in developing Emotional Competence  A Study on Emotional Intelligence of Prospective Teachers  A Study on Emotional Intelligence of Prospective Teachers  A Study on Emotional Competencies in Students — The Commitment of School Teachers  Developing Emotional Competencies in Teachers  Developing Emotional Competencies in Teachers  Developing Emotional Competencies in Teachers  Instilling and Developing Emotional Competence Strategies and Culture in Teaching — Learning  Impact of Epilepsy on emotions of children  VIII. Computational Neuroscience  Shyla T 415  Suji N. 418  V. P. Bindu Gouri.  Vinitha K. 421		- Children:	, Jisiia Cir	290
128 Affective Neuroscience and Learning  129 Neural Impulse Propagation through Excitatory and Inhibitory Post Synaptic Potential in developing Emotional Competence  130 A Study on Emotional Intelligence of Prospective Teachers  131 Combining Emotion and Cognition  132 Developing Emotional Competencies in Students – The Commitment of School Teachers  133 Developing Emotional Competencies in Teachers  134 Instilling and Developing Emotional Competence Strategies and Culture in Teaching – Learning  135 Impact of Epilepsy on emotions of children  136 Computational Neuroscience  137 Computational Neuroscience  138 Neuro Informatics  A. Emmaculing Dr. A. Beaula  391  Dr. Madhubala S.  T. Sachutha Prasad. P.S  K. Sheeba, Dr. N. Kalai Arasi J. Angel Mary Jane Dr. S. Praveen Kumar M. Josephin Bella E. Johncy Manjula Jyotsna P 406 Dr. Nimmi Maria Oommen Dr. Renuka Sonny .L .R 410	127	Enhancing Emotional Intelligence in Carlo	at L Aiitha	309
Neural Impulse Propagation through Excitatory and Inhibitory Post Synaptic Potential in developing Emotional Competence  A Study on Emotional Intelligence of Prospective Teachers  A Study on Emotional Intelligence of Prospective Teachers  A Study on Emotional Intelligence of Prospective Teachers  Combining Emotion and Cognition  Developing Emotional Competencies in Students – The Commitment of School Teachers  Developing Emotional Competencies in Teachers  Developing Emotional Competencies in Teachers  Instilling and Developing Emotional Competence Strategies and Culture in Teaching – Learning  Impact of Epilepsy on emotions of children  VIII. Computational Neuroscience  Shyla T 415  Suji N. 418  V. P. Bindu Gouri.  Vinitha K. 421			4 Emmacuilli	
129 Neural Impulse Propagation through Excitatory and Inhibitory Post Synaptic Potential in developing Emotional Competence  A Study on Emotional Intelligence of Prospective Teachers  Combining Emotion and Cognition  Developing Emotion and Cognition  Developing Emotional Competencies in Students – The Commitment of School Teachers  Developing Emotional Competencies in Teachers  Instilling and Developing Emotional Competence Strategies and Culture in Teaching – Learning  Impact of Epilepsy on emotions of children  VIII. Computational Neuroscience  Shyla T Computational Neuroscience Shyla T Sachutha Prasad. P.S  K. Sheeba, Dr. N. Kalai Arasi J. Angel Mary Jane Dr. S. Praveen Kumar M. Josephin Bella E. Johncy Manjula Jyotsna P Dr. Nimmi Maria Oommen Dr. Nimmi Maria Oommen Dr. Renuka Sonny .L. R  410  VIII. Computational Neuroscience Shyla T Suji N. 418 V. P. Bindu Gouri. Vinitha K. 421	128	Affective Neuroscience and Leanning	Dr. A. Beaula	
Inhibitory Post Synaptic Potentian developing Emotional Competence  A Study on Emotional Intelligence of Prospective Teachers  A Study on Emotional Intelligence of Prospective Teachers  Combining Emotion and Cognition  131 Combining Emotion and Cognition  132 Developing Emotional Competencies in Students – The Commitment of School Teachers  133 Developing Emotional Competencies in Teachers  134 Instilling and Developing Emotional Competence Strategies and Culture in Teaching – Learning  135 Impact of Epilepsy on emotions of children  136 Computational Neuroscience  137 Computational Neuroscience  138 Neuro Informatics  138 Neuro Informatics  T. Sachutha Prasad. P.S  K. Sheeba, Dr. N. Kalai Arasi J. Angel Mary Jane Dr. S. Praveen Kumar  M. Josephin Bella E. Johncy Manjula Jyotsna P Dr. Nimmi Maria Oommen  Dr. Renuka Sonny .L .R 410		The Bank of the Control of the Contr	Dire	
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A Study on Emotional Competence  A Study on Emotional Intelligence of Prospective Teachers  A Study on Emotional Intelligence of Prospective Teachers  Combining Emotion and Cognition  132 Developing Emotional Competencies in Students – The Commitment of School Teachers  133 Developing Emotional Competencies in Teachers  134 Instilling and Developing Emotional Competence Strategies and Culture in Teaching – Learning  135 Impact of Epilepsy on emotions of children  VIII. Computational Neuroscience  136 Computational Neuroscience  137 Computational Neuroscience  138 Neuro Informatics  T. Sachutha Prasad. P.S  K. Sheeba, Dr. N. Kalai Arasi J. Angel Mary Jane Dr. S. Praveen Kumar  M. Josephin Bella E. Johncy Manjula  Jyotsna P Dr. Nimmi Maria Oommen  Dr. Renuka Sonny .L .R 410  VIII. Computational Neuroscience & Neuro Informatics  136 Computational Neuroscience Shyla T Suji N. 415 Suji N. 418 V. P. Bindu Gouri. Vinitha K. 421	129	Neural Impulse Propagation through and Neural Impulse Propagation through a large Prop	Dr. Madhubala S.	371
131 Combining Emotion and Cognition  132 Developing Emotional Competencies in Students – The Commitment of School Teachers  133 Developing Emotional Competencies in Teachers  134 Instilling and Developing Emotional Competence Strategies and Culture in Teaching – Learning  135 Impact of Epilepsy on emotions of children  136 Computational Neuroscience  137 Computational Neuroscience  138 Neuro Informatics  138 Neuro Informatics  139 K. Sheeba, Dr. N. Kalai Arasi J. Angel Mary Jane Dr. S. Praveen Kumar M. Josephin Bella E. Johncy Manjula Jyotsna P Or. Nimmi Maria Oommen Dr. Renuka Sonny .L .R 410  VIII. Computational Neuroscience & Neuro Informatics  136 Computational Neuroscience Shyla T Suji N. 415 Suji N. 418 V. P. Bindu Gouri. Vinitha K. 421				
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131 Combining Emotion and Cognition  132 Developing Emotional Competencies in Students – The Commitment of School Teachers  133 Developing Emotional Competencies in Teachers  134 Instilling and Developing Emotional Competence Strategies and Culture in Teaching – Learning  135 Impact of Epilepsy on emotions of children  136 Computational Neuroscience  137 Computational Neuroscience  138 Neuro Informatics  138 Neuro Informatics  139 J. Angel Mary Jane Dr. S. Praveen Kumar  M. Josephin Bella E. Johncy Manjula  140 E. Johncy Manjula  150 Jyotsna P Dr. Nimmi Maria Oommen  160 Dr. Nimmi Maria Oommen  170 Dr. Renuka Sonny .L .R 410  171 VIII. Computational Neuroscience Shyla T Suji N. 418  172 V. P. Bindu Gouri. Vinitha K. 421	130	A Study on Emotional Interngence		
Developing Emotional Competencies in Students – The Commitment of School Teachers  Developing Emotional Competencies in Teachers  Developing Emotional Competencies in Teachers  Developing Emotional Competencies in Teachers  Instilling and Developing Emotional Competence Strategies and Culture in Teaching – Learning  Dr. Nimmi Maria Oommen  Dr. Renuka Sonny .L .R 410  VIII. Computational Neuroscience & Neuro Informatics  Computational Neuroscience Shyla T 415  Suji N. 418  Neuro Informatics  Neuro Informatics  Neuro Informatics  V. P. Bindu Gouri. Vinitha K. 421		and process assessed at an entrank man arrivers of the same	K. Sheeda,	397
Developing Emotional Competencies in Students – The Commitment of School Teachers  Developing Emotional Competencies in Teachers  Developing Emotional Competencies in Teachers  Instilling and Developing Emotional Competence Strategies and Culture in Teaching – Learning  Impact of Epilepsy on emotions of children  VIII. Computational Neuroscience & Neuro Informatics  Computational Neuroscience Shyla T 415 Computational Neuroscience Suji N. 418  Neuro Informatics  V. P. Bindu Gouri. Vinitha K. 421	131	Combining Emotion and Cognition		401
The Commitment of School Teachers  Developing Emotional Competencies in Teachers  Instilling and Developing Emotional Competence Strategies and Culture in Teaching – Learning  Impact of Epilepsy on emotions of children  VIII. Computational Neuroscience & Neuro Informatics    136   Computational Neuroscience   Shyla T   415     137   Computational Neuroscience   Suji N.   418     138   Neuro Informatics   V. P. Bindu Gouri.     138   Neuro Informatics   Vinitha K.   421		in Students -	J. Angel Mary Jane	401
The Commitment of School Teachers  Developing Emotional Competencies in Teachers  Instilling and Developing Emotional Competence Strategies and Culture in Teaching – Learning  Impact of Epilepsy on emotions of children  VIII. Computational Neuroscience & Neuro Informatics  Computational Neuroscience  Shyla T  Computational Neuroscience  Suji N.  V. P. Bindu Gouri. Vinitha K.  404  E. Johncy Manjula  Jyotsna P  Dr. Nimmi Maria Oommen  Dr. Renuka Sonny .L .R 410  VIII. Computational Neuroscience & Neuro Informatics	132	Developing Emotional Competencies in Students		
Developing Emotional Competencies in Teachers  E. Johncy Manjula  Jyotsna P  Dr. Nimmi Maria Oommen  Dr. Renuka Sonny .L .R 410  VIII. Computational Neuroscience & Neuro Informatics  Computational Neuroscience  Shyla T  Computational Neuroscience  Shyla T  Suji N.  V. P. Bindu Gouri.  Vinitha K.  421		The Commitment of School Teachers	M. Josephin Bella	404
Instilling and Developing Emotional Competence Strategies and Culture in Teaching – Learning  Impact of Epilepsy on emotions of children  VIII. Computational Neuroscience & Neuro Informatics  Computational Neuroscience Shyla T 415 Computational Neuroscience Suji N. 418  Neuro Informatics  V. P. Bindu Gouri. Vinitha K. 421	133	Developing Emotional Competencies in Teachers	E. Johncy Manjula	
Instilling and Developing Emotional Competence and Culture in Teaching – Learning  Dr. Nimmi Maria Oommen  Dr. Renuka Sonny .L .R 410  VIII. Computational Neuroscience & Neuro Informatics  136 Computational Neuroscience Shyla T 415 137 Computational Neuroscience Suji N. 418  138 Neuro Informatics V. P. Bindu Gouri. Vinitha K. 421				406
VIII. Computational Neuroscience & Neuro Informatics  Computational Neuroscience Shyla T Suji N. 418  Neuro Informatics  V. P. Bindu Gouri. Vinitha K. 421	134	Instilling and Developing Emotional Competence Strategies	Dr. Nimmi Maria Oomr	nen
VIII. Computational Neuroscience & Neuro Informatics  136 Computational Neuroscience Shyla T Suji N. 415 137 Computational Neuroscience Suji N. 418 138 Neuro Informatics V. P. Bindu Gouri. Vinitha K. 421		and Culture in Teaching – Learning	DI. IVIIIIIII IVIAIIA COM	
136 Computational Neuroscience 137 Computational Neuroscience 138 Neuro Informatics Shyla T Suji N. 418 V. P. Bindu Gouri. Vinitha K. 421	135	Impact of Epilepsy on emotions of children	Dr. Renuka Sonny .L .R	410
137 Computational Neuroscience Suji N. 418  138 Neuro Informatics Vinitha K. 421		VIII. Computational Neuroscience & Neur	o Informatics	
137 Computational Neuroscience Suji N. 418  138 Neuro Informatics Vinitha K. 421	136	Computational Neuroscience	Shyle T	115
138 Neuro Informatics  V. P. Bindu Gouri.  Vinitha K. 421		Computational Neuroscience		
Vinitha K. 421				418
Vinitha K. 421	138 N	Veuro Informatics		
Kanimozhi M.				421
			Kanimozhi M.	2

# Helping children with cognitive disabilities

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#### Abstract

Children with multifarious abilities or disabilities can be found in most schools. Some of the learners Children with multifarious abilities or disabilities of disabi reading, writing or arithmetic. It is necessary to emphasise the significance of academic skills for the cognitive reading, writing or arithmetic. It is necessary to emphasize the significant development of the learners. There are different kinds of disabilities that occur in learners such as Learning Disorders, Autism, ADHD etc. Individuals with disabilities require help to develop their cognitive abilities Disorders, Autism, ADHD etc. Individuals with disabilities the importance of through early intervention and specialized approaches to teaching. This paper highlights the importance of through early intervention and specialized approaches to the searches in cognitive disabilities and cognitive acquisition of academic skills and also the need of researches in cognitive disabilities and cognitive

### Introduction

The basic skills that are needed for learning include the various skills such as listening, speaking, reading, writing and arithmetic which are essential to lead a successful life in the society. Learners with multifarious abilities or disabilities can be found in most schools. Some of the learners achieve well and yet some others may face problems in learning such as difficulties in listening, speaking, reading, writing or communication skills. It is a great challenge on the part of teachers to deal with those children with learning difficulties through the use of innovative educational strategies.

# Cognitive Disabilities

Individuals with cognitive disabilities are of average or above average intelligence, yet often they are treated as "stupid". In many cases they work much harder than their peers to achieve the same results, yet they are sometimes seen as "lazy" or getting "special treatment". www.muhlenberg.edu/careercenter/emplguide/ cognitive.html).

# Different kinds of cognitive disabilities

The following are the different kinds of cognitive disabilities that occur in students.

# Learning disabilities

The National Joint Committee of Learning Disabilities defines learning disability as a generic term that refers to a heterogeneous group of disorders which is manifested by significant difficulties in the acquisition and use of listening, speaking, reading, writing, reasoning or mathematical abilities (Reddy, 2006: 12). A learning disability is found across all ages and in all socioeconomic classes. Learning disabilities may affect individuals differently at different stages of life-early childhood, elementary school years, adolescence and adulthood (Ysseldyke & Algozzine, 2007).

## **Cerebral Palsy**

Cerebral Palsy is a condition that disables children. It affects each child differently. Along with motor movements, sometimes speech, vision, hearing and intelligence also get affected (Mohanty 2013).

## Mental retardation

Mental retardation is defined as a condition of arrested or incomplete development of mind existing before the age of 18 years, whether arising from inherent causes or included by disease or injury. (Mangal, 2007). It can occur as a result of head injury, an illness or because of a congenital or genetic abnormality. Generally persons are considered to be retarded when they have significantly low intellectual functioning with IQ scores below 70 versus the average IQ of 90-110. Retarded children are impaired in their ability to adapt to the environment and usually experience failure. (Tileson, 2004: 56).

#### Autism

Autism is a complex neurological disorder that is characterized by impairments in communication/language, behaviour and social interaction. It is a spectrum of disorders which comprises Asperger's Syndrome, Pervasive Developmental Delay and Childhood Disintegrative Disorder. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, the number of children diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders is 1 in 110 (Ennis-Cole, 2012).

## **Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder**

ADHD refers to a family of related chronic neurological disorders that interfere with an individual's ability to regulate activity level, inhibit behaviour and attend to tasks in developmentally appropriate ways. Inability in exercising self-control may give birth to three major problems particularly related to inattention, hyperactivity and impulsivity, the very hallmarks or symptoms of ADHD (Mangal, 2007).

## Treating cognitive disabilities

The tools of cognitive neuroscience offer various possibilities to education, including the early diagnosis of special educational needs, the monitoring and comparison of the effects of different kinds of educational input on learning, an increased understanding of individual differences in learning and the best ways to suit input to the learner (Begum & Vakkil, 2009).

Some of the cognitive disabilities can be treated but not cured. Educating the children with cognitive disabilities is really challenging because of their characteristics like hyperactiveness, poor attention span, speech and communication problems and so on. Early intervention services have a significant impact on the impaired children, making a difference in each and every child irrespective of their handicapping condition. They can be remedial or preventive in nature — remediation existing

developmental problems or preventing their occurence (Reddy & Poornima, 2008).

Some slow learners may not be ready to learn because of the cognitive differences or may not have developed the appropriate problem-solving strategies to interpret complex tasks. It is necessary that teachers must identify the cognitive capabilities and limits of individuals at various points in development. Varying teaching strategies to address all channels promote learning, no matter what students' preferences of cognitive styles are (Saravanabhavan, 2009).

Various innovative educational strategies may help special learners to overcome their learning problems. Whole Brain Teaching is one such strategy in which student's whole brain is involved in learning and there is not any mental area left over for challenging behaviour. In this method, lessons are taught in such a way that engages students in seeing, hearing, doing, speaking, doing, feeling etc. A significant quantity of modern brain research demonstrates that one learns best by seeing, saying, hearing, doing and feeling (Hameed & Arif, 2013).

#### Conclusion

Individuals with cognitive disabilities require special help to develop their abilities through early intervention strategies and specialized approaches to teaching. Rehabilitation programmes have to be planned for these children according to the nature of dysfunction.

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