



Causes and concerns of learning disabilities among children

Mohammad Ashraf Malik

Lecturer (C), Govt. Degree College Women, Sopore, Jammu and Kashmir, India

Abstract

Learning disabilities are said to be neurologically based problems. These processing problems can intervene in learning basic skills such as reading, writing, etc. So this paper is an attempt to highlight the various symptoms, causes and treatments of learning disabilities among children.

Keywords: learning, problems reading, children

Introduction

The term learning disabilities refers to retardation, disorder or delayed development, may be manifested in language, speech, mathematical or motor skills. More precisely, Learning disabilities can simply define as a neurological condition that interferes with an individual's ability to store, process or produce information. A child with learning disability is unable to read, write, speak, spell, compute math, and reason in a normal. For example, some common learning disabilities are aphasia (means complete loss of language). In other words aphasia refers to disturbance in the comprehension or production of spoken, written or signed language. Dyslexia (means impairment in the ability to read). In dyslexia an individual faces a lot of problem in word recognition and reading comprehension. The diagnosis of learning disabilities or disorder is limited to those cases in which there is clear impairment in school performance or in daily living activities ^[1].

Signs and Symptoms

Children with learning disabilities are initially identified as such because of an apparent disparity between their expected academic, achievement level and their actual academic performance in one of more school subjects such as math, spelling, writing, or reading ^[1]. The mostly common symptoms of learning disability persons are given below:

- a) A child with learning disability shows a poor coordination.
- b) Difficulty in remembering and attention is also a common problem among learning disability children.
- c) A child with learning difficulty also shows the symptoms of difficulty with reading, writing and understanding words or concepts.
- d) Poor social skills, disruptiveness are also found among learning disabled children.

Casual factors in learning disability

It has been found that specific cause for the learning disabilities is the impairments in the central nervous system. In particular these disabilities are thought to result from some sort of

immaturity, deficiency, or dysregulation limited to those brain functions that supposedly mediate, for normal children, the cognitive skills that learning disability children cannot efficiently acquire ^[1]. It has been investigated by various researchers that language related learning disabilities such as dyslexia are associated with a failure of brain to develop normally asymmetrical manner with respect to the right and left hemispheres and some portions of the left hemisphere where language function is normally mediated for unknown reasons appear to remain relatively underdeveloped in many dyslexia individuals ^[2]. Some researches with functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) has suggested that dyslexic individuals may have a deficiency of physiological activation in a brain centre believed to be involved with rapid visual processing.

Some studies considered the various forms of learning disability are genetically transmitted. Like the identification of a gene region for dyslexia on chromosome 6 has been reported. Similarly in one of the twin study it has been found that mathematics disability has also turned up evidence of some genetic contribution ^[1].

Treatment of learning disabled children

Several strategies are used to treat learning disabilities, both in school programmes and in private tutoring. Traditional approaches used primarily in cases of reading and writing difficulties, focus on instruction in listening, speaking and writing skills in logical sequential and multisensory manner, such a reading loud under close supervision. In young children, readiness skills such as letter discriminations, phonetic analysis and learning and learning letters sound correspondence may need to be taught before explicit instruction in reading attempted. Phonics instructions involve helping children master the task of converting sounds to words ^[3].

Learning disabled children are taught by appealing to their multi senses that is visual, auditory, touch, smell and taste etc. For example, to provide wholesome language experience, a multi-

sensory approach named VAKT (providing visual, auditory, kinaesthetic and tactile experiences to the children) has been devised. This is a step-by-step approach where a learner is first acquainted with the letters of a word and then slowly familiarized with the word. The learner is then made to see, say, hear and feel the experiences woven around this particular word. Once the word is mastered the learner is asked to make use of it in a sentence. After the learning of words and sentences the learner may be given a story writing test. Then, finally they are provided reading practices ^[4]. Psychoanalytic and behavioral approach can be applied to correct the defective behavior of learning disabled children.

References

1. Carson RC, Butcher JN, Mineka S, Hooley JM. Abnormal Psychology. Dorling Kindersley India, 2007.
2. Beaton AA. The relation of planum temporal asymmetry and morphology of the corpus callosum to handedness, gender, and dyslexia: A review of the evidence. *Brain and Language*. 1997; 60:255-322.
3. National Institute of Child Health and Human Development Report of National Reading Panel. Teaching children to read: An evidence- based assessment of the scientific research literature on reading and its implication for reading instruction, 2000.
4. Mangal SK. Advanced Educational Psychology. Prentice-Hall of India, New Delhi, 2005.