

B.Ed-II

Course – IX (1.2.9) Unit- V

CONCEPT OF PROBLEM LEARNER:

Problem learner is a learner whose academic performance is significantly below performance potential due to affective, cognitive, structural and interpersonal problems. Students with distress, anxiety, anger, depression experience educational problems. They have poor academic functioning, they are usually slower in acquiring new skills and knowledge and find difficult to adapt to new environment and things.

Problem learner are those who are dealing with personal adjustment, events or behavioural problems , emotional problems, developmental problems etc.

These children may –

- May have difficulty understanding and grasping the content of the subjects .
- Some children may have problems in certain subjects like – word learning. Problem learner forget easily how to read or write words even with repeated practice.
- Have difficulty understanding and grasping the content of the subjects (e.g., language, general studies and arithmetic); or fail to generalise their acquired knowledge for application to other situations despite repeated instruction. Take a longer time to learn and practise new skills, e.g., in art and crafts and in playing games. Be constantly in need of individual guidance from teachers during class or in completing class work.
- They mix up words with similar sounds, meaning or written form- e.g. writing ‘goat’ as ‘boat’ or reading ‘ears’ as ‘eyes’.
- Have mirror writing (e.g. “b” becomes “d” and “p” becomes “q”).
- They have problem in verbal comprehension – have difficulty understanding long and complex sentences or oral instructions.
- They have stuttering problems.
- They have short attention span and find difficulty in concentrating and are easily distracted, such as often looking out of the window. They appear to be forgetful or careless and often lose their belongings.
- Have relatively weak muscle tone. Be slower in gross motor development, e.g. able to run, jump or climb at a later age than other children. Have poor balance and fall easily when walking or running. Have poor movement coordination, being awkward during gross motor activities.

- These children be restless in seat, such as fidget with their legs, stretching their bodies, or frequently drop things on the floor. Be excessively talkative and not be able to work or play quietly.
- They lose their temper or be irritated easily and show destructive and aggressive behaviour including hurting themselves, hurting others, damaging things during their tantrums.
- They suffer from depressed mood –stay gloomy for a prolonged period.
- They rarely make friends and prefer to play alone. They are emotionally unstable, agitated, appearing to be tired, and being under weight.

These students can succeed in school with proper tutoring or a specialized education problem. Teacher has to uncover students hidden potential.

TYPES OF PROBLEM LEARNER IN GENERAL

There are four types-

- The Affective class of problem-learner-** These type of problem learner are those who are dealing with personal adjustments such as due to relational difficulties, illness, death in the family, poor grades, if mother or father is drug addict or father is abusive, death of the pet etc. Psychologically, the affective state involves low self-esteem, feelings of being overwhelmed; fear of failure, depression, anxiety, guilt and of failure, depression, anxiety, guilt and feelings of in adequacy. These psychological states affect the learning process, causing avoidance of learning, failure to perform, memory loss, withdrawal and lower aspiration. If a learner feels anxious or incompetent active learning may be blocked. These type of learners experiences conflicting emotions to act one way or the other. These conflicting emotions can have an immobilizing effect on learners when they have to make a decision (eg. When they have to learn how to play an instrument, to build an project or to form part of a team, they pretend that it does not bother them, while in the mean time, they are scared of being a failure deep down.

- ii. **Cognitive class of problem learner-** These problem learner has problem in one or more of five areas- i) **written communication-** it involves slow reading, inability to complete assignments and simply falling behind with assignments. ii) **Spatial(visual)- perceptual problems-** visual- spatial intelligence allows you to see and modify things in your mind. People with spatial intelligence can mentally manipulate things in head in relation to physical things. Children with spatial perceptual problems has problem in solving visual problem, find difficult in visualizing pictures in head, can't remember paces vividly. They have problem in map reading. These learners have difficulty seeing in three dimensions. iii) **Oral communication-** These problem often occur in learners with English as second language. The learners with oral communication problem have particular difficulty at the time of interviewing or oral examination. iv) **Poor integration of materials-** learners with this problem have difficulty with conceptual or abstract thinking especially evident on tests or discussion. v) **poor fund of knowledge-** They have Gaps in their knowledge base. Some of the basic gaps may be the learner has forgotten or did not learn in school.
- iii. **Structural class of problem learner-** they have problem in structuring their experiences in the environment. They have poor time management, lack of organizational skills(ability to use their time, energy, resources etc) and poor study habits. These learners are generally disorganized.
- iv. **Interpersonal class of problem learner-** it is composed of learners who have difficulty interacting with others. These learners may be shy or non- assertive(they lack in expressing their feelings, needs and ideas), they are bright but have poor social skills. They may have abuse problem or psychiatric problems.
- Hunt and his associates further divided problem learners into-
- Type-I- Bright with poor social skills, shy, non-assertive (non-assertive person are emotionally dishonest, fail to stand up for oneself, self-denying). This type are seen frequently but difficult to manage.
- Type-II- Learners are poor integration of material, unable to focus on important issues, disorganized, disinterested- They are seen frequent but not difficult to manage.

Type- III- learner cannot be trusted, they have psychiatric problem, manipulative, substance abuse problem. Not seen frequent and difficult to manage.

Type- IV- These learner are too casual or informal, avoids doing work, intellectually inferior. These type are not frequent and not difficult to manage.

IDENTIFICATION OF PROBLEM LEARNER

Researcher have highlighted some of those symptoms which can be found in children during learning process which affect development achievement as well as class discipline. These are- short attention span, hyperactive, poor memory, poor reading and writing ability, difficulties with sequencing, difficult in placing letters in correct sequence etc. these are the general symptoms. Now a days several tools and techniques are used to identify problem learner. These are-

- i) Observation
- ii) Case study
- iii) Sociometric
- iv) Testing(Educational &psychological)

OBSERVATION- It is a popular method to study the behaviour pattern of an individual in an actual life situation. It is a process of closely observing something or someone. When the investigator wants to see the behaviour in natural situation and study the situation based feature of conduct observation is used. In broad sense investigator constantly observe persons behaviour. Observation is a method of data collection through a systematic process. It refers to watching and listening to the behaviour of other persons over time without manipulating and controlling it and record findings in ways that allow some degree of analytical interpretation and discussion. Thus observation involves broadly selecting, recording and encoding behaviour for empirical aims of description or development of theory.

Its aim is to collect data directly, to collect substantial amount in short time span, to get eye witness first hand data in real like situation, to collect data in a natural setting etc.

Observation as a research technique must always be systematic, directed by a specific purpose, carefully focused and thoroughly recorded. Instrument used for observation such as stop watches, camera, audio-video, tape recordings, notebooks make possible observation. While observing children behaviour a strict watch can be kept for their reaction to various situations. A child's behaviour is not only observed in the classroom but also on the playground, home and in the group etc.

Types of observation-

- i) Participant- here the investigator actively participates in the activities of the group to be observed for collection of necessary data.
- ii) Non- participant – here the investigator observes the behaviour of persons in natural setting but does not remain a participant in the activities being observed.
- iii) Structured – here the time, place, subject, activities to be observed are pre-determined. (Behaviour of the children in playgroup)
- iv) Unstructured- here in this type of observation there is no time bound, no pre-determined schedule. Here the observer freely observes to his research interest.

CASE STUDY

Case study are based on an in- depth investigation of a single individual or group. Through this technique the history of the child, his family, his early life and home environment, his behaviour in childhood, his physical and mental development is revealed. It helps to study the learning difficulties, adjustment problems and behavioural problems of a child. Eg. John is the only one sucking thumb and has difficulty interacting with others.

SOCIOMETRIC

Sociometric helps in measuring acceptance or rejection felt between sport groups. The purpose of sociometric test is to obtain an objective picture of the relationship which exist in a group of people. Some will like one another, there will be some who will be liked by many, some may be disliked, some unnoticed. All these can be brought to light by this tes.

E.g. who would you like to work with for story writing? Who would you like to sit with? This is a practical use of the test. It measures the acceptance or rejection felt between the groups. Whom

do you want to be your teacher? The choice of students indicates what type of relationship they have with others. This test helps in identifying those who are isolated, the one who is not preferred by any other individual. It is also useful for identifying those who are liked by many others and who can be better leader of the group. By working with them guidance can be provided.

TESTING

Educational techniques- i) **Achievement test-** this test are designed to measure a students' performance in specific academic area.(like reading, comprehension, written, oral etc.

ii) **Diagonistic Test-** it measure the knowledge and skill of students. it is used to identify students strengths and weakness in past and present learning.

Psychological testing- i) **Intelligence test-** intelligence test are psychological test that are designed to measure a variety of mental functions, such as reasoning, comprehension and judgement. The goal of intelligence test is to obtain an idea of the persons intellectual potential. Most commonly used intelligence test are –

- Stanford - Binet Intelligence scales
- Wechsler- Adult Intelligence scales
- Wechsler Intelligence Scale for children
- Wechsler Primary & Preschool scale of intelligence

ii) **Performance test-** according to the rate of performance, psychological tests are classified as –speed test and power Test.

- **Speed Test:** Speed tests are timed tests, that is, they examine the subject's speed of responding within the stipulated period of time. Tests items in a speed test are of uniform difficulty but time limit is such that no examinee can attempt all the items (Chadha, 1996). A pure speed test is a test composed of easy items so that the subject responding never gives a wrong answer and his score is equal to number of questions attempted by him.

- **Power Test:** Power tests, on the other hand, offer enough time for the subject to attempt all the questions. In a Power test, the items are arranged according to their increasing order of difficulty and certain items are such that they are too difficult for anyone to solve. Thus, in a Power tests are designed to gauge the knowledge of the test-taker. A score on the power test depends entirely upon the numbers of items answered and answered correctly.

iii) Personality test- These tests are designed to measure a person's individuality in terms of his unique traits and behavior. These tests help in predicting an individuals' future behavior. They come in several varieties like checklists, inventories and subject evaluation techniques, inkblot and sentence completion tests. Personality tests can broadly be classified further into two categories –i)structured personality tests and ii)unstructured personality tests.

- **Structured Personality Tests** are based on the premise that there are common dimensions across all personalities which can be measured with the help of a psychological test in an objective manner. In such tests, responses are already defined and the testee has only to choose one of the options in the form of his responses. Tests coming in this category are 16PF, MMPI, Maudsley Personality Inventory (MPI), and so on.
- **Unstructured Personality Tests**, on the other hand, believe in individual specific needs, which are discovered and measured by analyzing the responses given by the testee on the presentation of ambiguous stimuli. These tests are based on the rationale that a test-taker reacts to a vague or an ambiguous stimulus by projecting own feelings, thoughts, experiences and memories. The responses given by the client indicate different facets of the personality dimensions. Examples of unstructured personality tests are projective tests like Thematic Apperception Test (TAT), Rorschach Inkblot Test etc.

iii) Aptitude test- Aptitude refers to an individual's potential to learn a specified task under provision of training. Aptitude tests are designed to measure the subject's capability of learning specific task or acquiring specific skill. SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test), Seashore Measure of Musical Talent, Guilford and Zimmerman Aptitude Survey, General Aptitude Test Battery etc are some examples of aptitude test.

v) **Attitude test-** Attitude is an established way of thinking or feeling reflected in a persons behaviour towards others. It is a tendency to respond positively or negatively towards a certain idea, object, person or situation.(positive Direction-I like Horses and Negative direction- I don't like horses). It influences the person choices of action. Attitude tests aim at measuring an individual's emotional, intellectual and behavioural tendencies and interests. These tests are measuring and assessing tools comprised of a large range of tests that not only measure an individual's vocational interests and tendencies, but also assess the individual's attitude in various situations. The tests assume that people differ in their special abilities and that these differences can be useful in predicting future achievements. Thurstone scale, likert scale are popular attitude scale for measuring attitude.