

UNIT

10

TEACHING SLOW-LEARNERS

Introduction

While you are teaching, your goal is to work for overall progress of the class. You have to ensure that everybody gets equal opportunity for growth. But in practice you certainly find some students who are more advanced than their peers and some students who are relatively slow. Your role is to appreciate the advanced learners and at the same time care for the slow-learners. You need to identify the slow learners, assist them in recognizing the true nature of their needs and provide them special support to overcome their problems.

Objectives

On completion of this unit you will be able to-

- tell who slow learners are
- identify the slow learners in your class
- find out the reasons for being slow
- take effective measures to teach slow learners.

LESSON

1

Identifying Slow-Learners

1.1 Introduction

In your classroom you often meet pupils who are slow in learning things, or who cannot cope with the pace of the class, or who simply cannot follow the class. After reading this lesson you will be able to–

Lesson objectives

- describe slow learners and
- identify these slow learners.

1.2. Who are the Slow Learners?

In the classroom you cannot expect that all the pupils to learn things in the same way. Some pupils will be very quick to learn things. Many will learn lessons in an average speed and some will be slow in understanding and learning lessons. Sometimes these slow learners find it difficult to grasp the learning materials and to keep pace with the fellow learners. So they need special care and attention.

Who are the slow-learners?

The slow learners are the learners (pupils) who need special care and attention to learn things.

Use observation, assessment and record.

1.3. How to Identify the Slow-Learners

From your experience you already know how to identify slow learners in your classroom. But those of you who have no teaching experience, here are three methods which you can use to identify them: **observation, assessment and pupil record.**

Observe pupils' classroom behaviour

1.3.1. Observation

Observation is the earliest form of identifying slow learners and their learning difficulties. In classroom you can observe that some pupils are inattentive, some feel problems in listening to you and understanding the learning point some others find it difficult to listen to you and understand the learning point while looking at you with blank faces. Ask them questions to check whether they can follow you or not. Through regular observation of the pupils in your classroom you can identify the slow learners.

Task 1

- When you are in class, observe how the learners receive the new information.
- Identify the slow learners.
- Discuss with your colleagues and match your opinion with theirs about the slow learners.

1.3.2. Assessment

Assessment is most useful in identifying slow learners. Through assessment you can identify not only the slow learners but also their learning difficulties. Assessment means taking tests and assessing pupils' performance in the test.

Various forms of tests:

- continuous test,
- progress test,
- achievement test and
- diagnostic test.

There can be various forms of tests. Asking questions in the classroom is the simplest form of test. It is a form of continuous assessment. Taking progress tests (monthly, quarterly or half yearly examinations) is another form of assessment to assess pupils' progress in the class. Achievement tests (yearly or final examinations) are meant to assess pupils' achievement throughout the course.

But apart from these tests you can also design some diagnostic tests to identify pupils' difficulties in the areas of learning.

Make class rank to differentiate the pupils.

The results of all these tests are important because they can help you to differentiate between slow and fast learners. The simplest way for this differentiation is to make class rank of the pupils. Rank your pupils from first to last according to their performance or score in the tests. The top 25% pupils of the class rank are very good; they are fast learners. The middle 50% pupils are average learners. But the bottom 25% pupils have problems; they are most likely to be slow learners.

Position	Percentage	Type of Learners
Top	25%	fast learners
Middle	50%	average
Bottom	25%	slow learners

Fig 1: Identifying Slow-Learners.

Imagine you have 40 pupils in class 4 and you have ranked them. The first 10 pupils are fast learners. The next 20 pupils are average learners. And the last 10 pupils are slow learners.

However, remember that the result of a single test does not always reliably identify the slow learners. Identifying slow learners requires continuous assessment and comparison of the class ranks. So keeping pupil record is also important.

Task 2

a.

- Take a test of your pupils out of 25. Make their class ranks on their scores. Then differentiate them into top 25%, middle 50% and bottom 25%. Identify the slow learners.
- Put their names, roll numbers, scores and class ranks in the table and use it to keep record of their future progress.

b. How can assessment help in identifying slow learners?

1.3.3. Pupil Record

Keep records of the slow-learners

Keeping pupil record can help you a lot in keeping the track of individual progress of the pupils. Through observation, assessment or any other means, keep a record of the slow learners in your class. Put their names and roll numbers in a record book and keep a record of their test scores and class ranks.

For example, look at the following page of a record book of the slow learners:

Roll no	Name of the Pupil	Exam 1		Exam 2		Exam 3		Remarks of Teacher
		Score %	Class rank	Score %	Class rank	Score %	Class rank	
25	Akbar Ali	30%	39	35%	37	40%	36	progressing
28	Habib	28%	41	32%	39	32%	40	Slow
32	Shaila	35%	36	40%	34	38%	38	Slow
33	Nafisa	40%	33	40%	34	42%	35	Slow(no progress)
35	Kamal	50%	28	35%	37	44%	34	Needs Care
36	Shamim	32%	38	30%	41	34%	39	Slow
37	Firoz Mia	34%	37	36%	36	39%	37	Slow
38	Tuhin	29%	40	31%	40	31%	41	Slow
40	Shifat	38%	34	45%	32	50%	30	Progressing
41	Aman	36%	35	42%	33	48%	32	Progressing

Fig 2: Record of the slow-learners.

The record compares pupils` scores (in percentage) in the subsequent tests and also their class ranks. The comparison indicates whether a

pupil is progressing (as his/her score and class rank is improving), or whether a pupil is slow in progress (as there is no significant change in his/her score and class rank), or whether a pupil needs special care (as his/her score and class rank is deteriorating). So this record can help a teacher to find out effective measures for the slow learners.

Task 3

- a. Make a table to keep record of the slow learners you have identified or will come across in your class.
- b. How do you keep a record of slow learners in your class?

REVIEW

Now we can sum up what we have learnt in this lesson:

- Slow learners are the learners who need special care and attention to learn things.
- You can identify slow-learners through observation, assessment and pupil record:
 - observe pupils behaviour in the classroom.
 - conduct various tests and assess pupil`s class rank.
 - keep a record of the pupil`s performance, especially the scores and class ranks of the slow learners.

Task 4

A. Choose the best answer.

1. A slow learner is a pupil who-
 - a) cannot memorize lessons quickly
 - b) is inattentive in the class
 - c) cannot listen to what the teacher says
 - d) needs special care and attention.
2. You can identify a slow learner by-
 - a) asking questions and checking his/her class attendance
 - b) observation, assessment and pupil record
 - c) family background, health and attentiveness
 - d) observation, survey and physical condition.

3. The easiest way to identify slow learners is by
 - a) asking questions
 - b) conducting tests
 - c) keeping pupil record
 - d) observation.

4. Who are most likely to be slow learners?
 - a) The top 25% pupils of the class rank
 - b) The middle 25% pupils of the class rank
 - c) The bottom 25% pupils of the class rank
 - d) The middle 50% pupils of the class rank.

5. A pupil record contains-
 - a) test scores and class ranks of all exams
 - b) test scores and class ranks of a single exam
 - c) only test scores of the slow learners
 - d) only class ranks of the slow learners.

LESSON**2****Reasons for Being Slow****Lesson objective****2.1 Introduction**

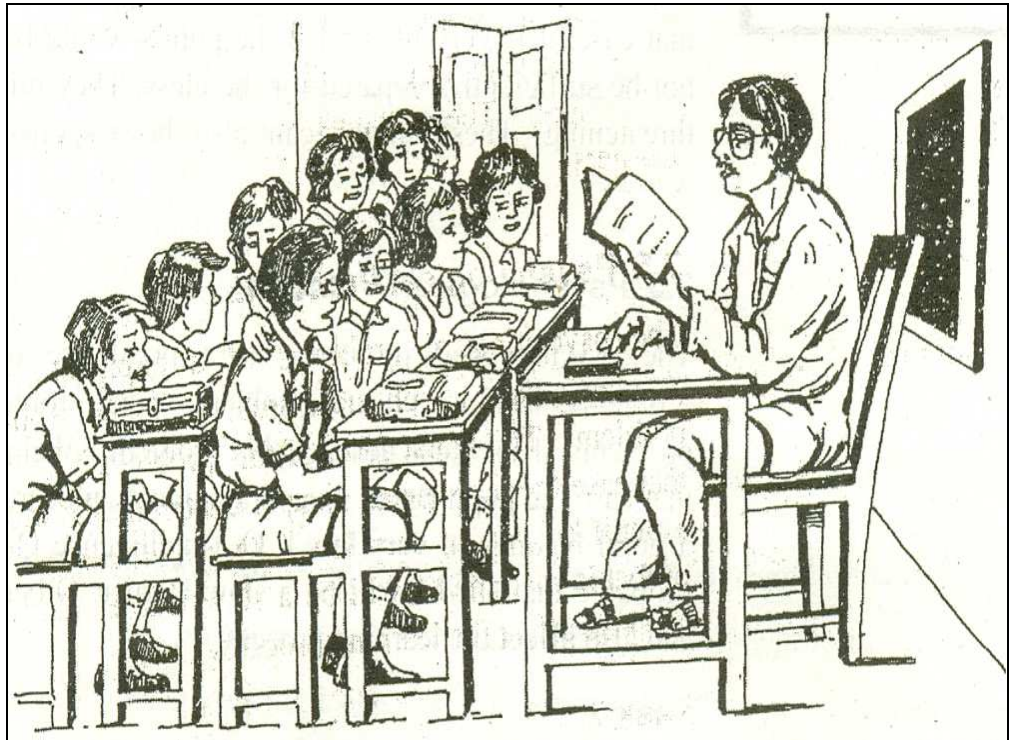
In lesson 1 you have learnt how to identify the slow learners in your class. But in order to teach English language to these slow learners effectively, you need to find out why they are slow in learning. This lesson discusses some probable reasons which make a learner slow.

What Makes a Learner Slow?

There might be many reasons for a pupil being slow in learning. But the most probable reasons arise from a pupil's physical problems, social problems, classroom problems, and psychological problems.

Task 1

Look at the picture below. Do you think all the students are equally attentive in class? If yes, why? If no, why not?



Picture 1: Students' attention in class.

2.2. Physical Problems

Pupils can be slow in learning for their physical problems. For example if a pupil has hearing or visionary impairment she will feel difficulties in following the class. So, it is most likely that their learning process will be slow. Again if a pupil has oratory or speech problem (i.e. problem in uttering words), it will hinder his/her classroom communication. So the pupil may seem slow in learning. Therefore, checking for any physical problem which hinders effective classroom communication is important. It may help you to identify the reason for being slow.

2.3. Social Problems

Sometimes some social problems may be responsible for a learner being slow. A pupil may come of a very low income or low education family background and lack learning environment at home. In that case it is difficult for the pupil to cope with the class. Moreover, if a pupil suffers from *emotional turbulence* because of some social or family conflicts, she/he is very likely to be slow in learning things in the classroom.

Emotional
Turbulence- মানসিক
অশান্তি

2.4. Classroom Problems

Sometimes even problems in classroom can affect the learning process of the pupils. For example, in a large class with too many pupils, the teacher cannot pay attention to every pupil. Naturally some pupils feel it difficult to follow the class. Again lack of interest in the class can affect the learning process of many learners. The class might be too *tedious*, lack variety, or involves too much *cognitive* process, which is not suitable for the pupils. In that case, it is very likely that the pupils would be inattentive, or they will not be sufficiently prepared for the class. They might even find the subject threatening. These things can also be responsible for producing slow learners.

Tedious- ক্লান্তিকর
Cognitive- জ্ঞান বা
ধারণা সংক্রান্ত

2.5. Psychological Problems

The psychological problems of a pupil are often related with other problems, such as, physical problem, social problems, and even classroom problems. The worst form of this problem is being **mentally retarded**. In that case the pupil needs special treatment and care to learn things. Again if a pupil belongs to very low I. Q. (Intelligence Quotient) group, it is most probable that she/he will be a slow

learner. Other psychological problems can also affect the learning process.

Task 2

- Identify three slow learners in your class and try to find out why they are slow. Then write a report on your findings in about 100 words.
- Do you have any problem in your classroom that hinders the learning process? Think and then write how you can improve your classroom situation.

Task 3

A. Choose the best answer.

1. Who is most likely to be a slow learner?
 - a) A one eyed pupil
 - b) A pupil with a broken hand
 - c) A pupil with hearing impairment
 - d) A pupil with speech problem.
2. In this lesson "social problems" implies the problems created due to a pupil's
 - a) social and family background
 - b) physical and mental condition
 - c) social background only
 - d) family background only.
3. In what situation are the pupils likely to be slow?
 - a) In a large but interesting class
 - b) In a small and interesting class
 - c) In a noisy and interesting class
 - d) In a noisy and uninteresting class.
4. What problem will affect learning most?
 - a) Low I.Q
 - b) Emotional disturbance
 - c) Inattentiveness
 - d) Mental retardedness.

REVIEW

We have discussed some probable reasons for being slow in learning, or being slow learners. Now let us sum up-

- A learner can be slow because of his/her physical impairments.
- Some social problems can affect a pupil's learning process.
- Even a very large class or lack of interest in the class can be responsible for being slow learners.
- A pupil's psychological problems can greatly affect his/her learning process.

LESSON

3

Caring for Slow-Learners**3.1. Introduction**

Remember every year a large number of pupils drop out for being slow and lacking care. While all the problems of the pupils are not within your control, you can solve many of their problems by taking special care and preventing them from dropping out. So care and support for slow-learners is very important.

This lesson discusses-

- what care you can take for slow-learners and
- how you can help the slow-learners overcome their difficulties.

Lesson objectives

3.2. Caring for Slow-Learners

You already know that slow learners need special care and support. With a little help most of them can overcome their problems.

Here are a few suggestions to help the slow learners:

3.2.1. Identify

The first step to deal with a slow-learner is to identify his/her learning difficulties and reasons for being slow. This you can do by talking to the slow-learners personally and interviewing them. You can also conduct a *diagnostic test* for them. This test may show you the areas in which the learner is relatively weak. Identifying the learner's problem areas and reasons can help you a lot to find out the effective way to deal with him/her.

Diagnostic Test- যে পরীক্ষার মাধ্যমে সমস্যা নির্ণয় করা হয়।

3.2.2. Assist

After identifying individual learning difficulties of the slow-learners, your task will be to assist them in recognizing the true nature of their own problems. In this way you can help them a lot to overcome their problems. Though you may not be able to solve all their physical and social problems, you can do a good job by suggesting some ways to understand the problem of these learners. This will reduce their *anxiety* and emotional disturbance.

Anxiety- অস্থিরতা

3.2.3. Pay Special Attention

Hearing
Impairment- শোনার
অসুবিধা।

Slow-learners, no matter why they are slow, need special care. Try to provide special needs support for them. For example, if a learner has visionary problem, read out loudly what you have written on the board; if a learner has *hearing impairment*, you must help him in all possible ways. Go close to him, use realia, and pair him with a more active and helpful learner. This special care may help the slow-learners a lot to cope with the class. Also you need to keep record of the slow-learners about their learning difficulties, special needs and progress. This will help you to give them special counselling and guidance.

Task 1

- Identify three pupils in your class who usually score poor in exams, or who, you think, are slow in learning. Talk to them and try to find out their three major problems and then suggest three probable solutions to their problems. Put the pupils' names, problems and suggested solutions in the following table.

Example:

Pupil	Problems	Solutions
Maruf Ahmed Roll. 35	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> cannot understand lectures poor hand writing poor calculating skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> be slow in giving lectures give special hand writing and calculating tasks.

Table :

Pupil	Problems	Solutions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • •
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • •
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • •

3.3. Teaching Methods for Slow-Learners

While taking special care for the slow-learners is necessary, it is equally important to know how you teach them in the classroom. Children learn more by doing things than by cognitive process. For them learning is fun; play is work! So you need special considerations about the methods, you follow in the classroom especially for the slow learners. Here are some tips for you.

3.3.1. Be Friendly

Be friendly in the classroom. Children learn most in a friendly atmosphere. Try to be appreciative, especially with the slow-learners. It will help them to feel encouraged and participate actively in the class.

3.3.2. Vary Your Style

Children easily lose interest in a monotonous class. So vary your teaching styles. Try to make the class interesting so that learning becomes fun!

3.3.3. Promote Active Learning

Children learn most from activities. Mere listening and reading are not appropriate for them. So try to incorporate games and other activities in your class. It will promote active learning even for the slow-learners.

3.3.4. Encourage Creativity

Children like to exercise their intuition, imagination, creativity and wonder. Provide scopes for this exercise. It will also help the slow-learners to come up.

3.3.5. Sum up, Revise and Test

At the end of each lesson always sum up the teaching/learning points, revise the lesson in brief and test whether the pupils have understood the lesson or not. In one way, it will help the slow-learners to cope with the lesson. Also it will help you to monitor whether the slow-learners have got the lesson correctly or not.

Task 2

- Observe the teaching methods of one of your colleagues. Then write a reflective note on his/her classroom teaching in about 150 words. Suggest how he/she can improve teaching slow-learners.

REVIEW

- Taking care of the slow-learners:
 - identify their problems.
 - assist them to overcome their problems.
 - pay special attention to their needs.
- Teaching method for slow-learners:
 - be friendly in the classroom.
 - vary your teaching style.
 - promote activity in the classroom.
 - encourage creativity of the pupils.
 - sum up, revise and test your lessons.