

Social Skills among Mentally Retarded Students

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ABSTRACT

Social skills are important aspects for educating mentally retarded students. These students need some special attention for development of various skills. Various therapies, training modules, different strategies are useful for development of social skills. This paper is discussed major areas of social skills and its aspects and also discussed various materials and methods for developing these skills. Various researches conducted on social skills are discussed.

KEYWORDS: Development, Social Skills, Mental Retardation, etc

INTRODUCTION:

Mental Retardation is the important category in special education field. Now the inclusive education setting is more significant other than special education. But mentally retarded students having developmental delays and they need some special instructions and assistance. In India, Mentally retarded students are taught functional academics in special schools such as functional reading, functional writing, functional mathematics, etc. Personal skills, Social skills, Arts, Crafts, language and communication are taught in special schools. Social skills can be developed through implementing these activities very systematically and purposefully.

Concept of Mental Retardation:

According to Census of India, 2011, "Mental Retardation is lacks understanding/comprehension as compared to her/his own age group; or Is unable to communicate her/his needs when compared to other persons of her/his age group; or Has difficulty in doing daily activities; or Has difficulty in understanding routine instructions; or Has extreme difficulty in making decisions, remembering things or solving problems."

Now the term 'Mental Retardation' is replaced as 'Intellectually Disabled' at international level. In India, it's called as 'Divyang' also.

Concept of Social Skills:

According to Gresham & Elliott (1990), "Social skills means socially acceptable learned behaviors that enable an individual to interact effectively with others and to avoid or escape negative social interactions with others."

Why the social skills hard to learn for Mentally Retarded Students?

1. MR children observes other children and adults and they learn many behaviour. If these observations can take proper way then social skills will be learn.
2. MR Child learning is improved when time-on-task is increased, reinforcement is provided.
3. Learning of social skills is long term process for MR children and it is not related to time bound.
4. Social skills always developed in social surroundings. Now days this positive social surrounding is not available for MR students in their area.
5. Social skills are not independent. They are related to interpersonal and intrapersonal behaviour of human being so that these skills are very complicated.

MATERIALS AND METHODS:

Daily living skills, self help skills, life skills, behavioral skills, communication skills, organization skills, etc. are the major areas of social skills. These skills can be developed among mentally retarded students through curriculum of special school settings. Using various materials and methods following skills can be developed:

1. Communication Skill: Communication skill is one of the important skills for developing various social skills among mentally retarded students. Speech and language therapies are helpful for increasing good communication. Mostly co-curricular activities and programmes are useful for development of communicational aspects in the students.

2. Daily Living Skills: Various daily living skills can be developed through cocurricular activities. Skill development programme is helpful for developing these skills. Toilet training, table manners, puberty issues, clothes/ laundry, housekeeping, hand washing, dressing, first aid, food/ preparation, care of nose, dental hygiene, safety, care of nails, phone skills, grooming, bathing, care of hair, job skills, etc are daily living skills.

3. Observation and Imitation: Mentally retarded students observe teachers activities and their demonstration and they try to imitate as it is. Various daily living skills, self help skills can be developed through observation and imitation strategy.

4. Learning Readiness Skills: Learning readiness skills are those skills which are helpful for teaching learning process. Special teachers play the role as icebreaker in this and try to prepare well to the students. Prayer, good thoughts, Practice, remembering, reviewing, imagining, etc are the learning readiness skills.

5. Adjustment & Cooperation: Mentally retarded students well adjust when they feel secure. Various therapies help to develop adjustable behavior. Cooperation is including each and every activity in special school. Student- student, teacher-student, and student-staff co-operation can be developed indirectly through daily life.

6. Organization Skill: Organization skill is to develop through giving tasks and various responsibilities. Students try to develop team bonding. Sports, physical education, games and training programmes can help to develop this skill.

7. Flexibility and Sportsmanship: Organization skills and flexibility and sportsmanship are goes hand in hand. When students understand the competition and its rules and regulations then sportsmanship, flexibility skills can be develop gradually.

8. Friendship Skills: Communication skill is very useful for making friends. Mostly mentally retarded students have autistic behavior. Special teachers try to motivate those using games, music, play activities and develop friendship skills. Saying hi and hello, shake hands, interactions of toys, instruments, etc are develops friendship skills.

9. Interpersonal Relation Skills: This is a life skill. Mentally retarded students interacts each others. Mild and moderate students interacts each other using little communication. Severe and profound students have limited skills to interact each other. Interpersonal relations develop when there is no communication gap. Schools should be focus on development of interpersonal relations of students using innovative programmes.

10. Commitment, Responsibility: At the pre-vocational level teacher can giving responsibility to some active students such as class monitor, taking attendance, serving food, gathering instruments, helping office work, monitoring activities in sheltered workshop, marketing products, counting money and time, etc. These activities can helpful for capacity of commitment and taking responsibility.

DISCUSSION:

In abroad, Brooks, Bianca A. (2013) was studied extracurricular activities and the development of social skills in children with intellectual and learning disabilities. Sean,

Wachsmuth (2013) was studied an examination of the extracurricular activity participation, social skills, and school engagement of students with emotional and behavioural disorders.

In India, Mann, M. (2000) was studied development of educational package for mentally retarded children. Kumar, I., Singh, A. R., and Akhtar, S. (2009) were studied social development of children with mental retardation. Rani, M. and Keshwal, H. S. (2016) were studied effect of co-curricular activities on development of social skills of children with intellectual disability.

1. All these studies prove that there is possible to develop social skills with the help of individualized training programme, conducting co-curricular activities, learning packages, etc.

2. According to above researchers, co-curricular and extracurricular activities are helpful for developing social skills among pupils.

CONCLUSION:

Now a day special schools for mental retardation are faced the problems about development of various skills in students so that there is need to training of special teachers about it. Various teaching strategies and techniques can be useful for training and development of skills among mentally retarded students. If special teachers can use these activities and methods systematically then social competencies will be developed among mentally retarded students.

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