



## **EARLY IDENTIFICATION AND ATTAINMENT STRATEGIES IN DYSLEXICS**

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### **Abstract**

The purpose of study was to assess learning difficulty among school students identified by teachers as scholastically backward to frame an individualized educational plan (IEP) according to their needs. I have used LIT (Level of Intervention test developed by Association For Learning Disabilities India 1989), Ravens CPM/SPM/MISIC, Attention Test - NIMHANS Battery Index, Memory - NIMHANS tool to determine the level of learning difficulty. IQ test as well as Level of Intervention Test was administered to the sample. Those found to have average and above average intelligence with low level of Intervention Test, The test of Attention and Memory was administered to students to ensure their dyslexic attributes.

A specific framework for Individualized education plans is formulated for the students for future perspective to help them and attain the expected levels, The results of the study indicates that the students experienced significantly learning difficulty, the study has helped to arrive at the conclusion that early identification is possible and effective management can be done . The whole school can be sensitized and the scholastically backward students with dyslexia can be on par with their peers in learning levels is helpful for Individualized education plans are to be framed.

The implication for further research on assessment and amelioration of learning difficulty and implementation of Individualized education plans among school students are considered.

**Key words:** Dyslexics, Memory, individualized educational plan, scholastic.

## Introduction

There has been significant advancement in the research connected with dyslexia over the past 20 years. Several researches have brought forth far reaching developments in this area. A number of new tests, assessment procedures and new teaching methodologies have evolved. There are a large number of tests to begin with but each riddled with controversies. No two tests can be precisely correlated. There is still a debate on how IQ tests can confirm a diagnosis if at all (Siegel and Lipka 2008) There is also an ongoing debate on the validity of dyslexia as an identifiable syndrome or whether it is part of the continuum of reading difficulties (Elliot, 2007) Elliot suggests that “as yet nobody has been able to demonstrate scientifically that there is this subgroup of poor readers that should be termed dyslexic.

Dyslexics are largely ones identified to be those who have difficulty reading, they can spell but not able to know the sounds of the alphabets. There are two layers to reading, the naming of the alphabets as abcd and so forth and their sounds as phonic sounds...ah bh kh dh etc. This linkage is missing and the phoneme grapheme relation is missing in the brains of dyslexics, making them at a major disadvantage over the others who can connect it well.

“For many years, the debates in the teaching of reading were dominated by the tensions between ‘teaching phonics’ and the “whole language” approach”(Terezinha Nunes –Learning to Read: An Integrated View From Research and Practice (1999)The debate is still continuing but I would say initially the whole word approach may be good as the child can do a visual scanning of the letters and read familiar words per say . The sounds in systematic pattern can simultaneously be taught as the child needs to know how to read new words as well using this scientific pattern of letter –sound correlation.

## **Causative factors**

The causal level framework indicated by Moron and Frith 1995 can be taken as a useful guideline as it incorporates neurobiological dimensions and cognitive learning as well as those related to practice ,which is the educational dimensions. Their framework also takes into consideration the environment factors along with physiological factors.

### **Early Identification**

Early identification is the key in managing and dealing dyslexics effectively. The symptoms set in as early as when the child enters preschool. A child who finds it difficult to identify colors, shapes, sizes, learn concepts of left and right, before and after etc is at a risk for a potential learning problem. The child who finds it difficult to read has mostly difficulties in identifying the colors and shapes as well at the age of 2.6 when the primary colors and shapes are introduced. This missing link needs to ring an alarm in the minds of the teachers who are at a major advantage to identify them earlier on.

### **Reluctance to go to school**

This happens when the intelligent child understands that he is unable to catch up as well as his peers. A child who doesn't get appreciated for his learning skills by his teachers, a child who is jeered by his peers. "He is smart and intelligent and at the helm of affairs in class ,but when asked to read he is reluctant and tries to escape" is the oft heard comment .This coupled with constant admonishing and reprimands from home so demotivates the child that he loses his morale and self efficacy making him refuse to go to school.

## **Evidence of not enjoying anything connected with academics**

The child who struggles with the alphabet and is unable to read finds it difficult to cope up with the school situation. They would find means to escape being asked to read. Apparently the child may seem naughty, careless or disobedient.

### **Difficulty to sit for tasks**

When the alphabets and letters seem alien to the child he naturally is reluctant to sit and pay attention and ends up being at the centre of all mischief. He creates trouble for his peers as he lands them also in trouble and is a constant pain to his teachers who in turn burdens the parents with loads of complaints against the child.

### **Loosing items**

Organizational skills are lacking in children with learning problems .They have difficulty in areas such as planning, organizing, coordination ,attention, budgeting, etc It is frequently seen that their attention span tends to be lower and they have poor short and long-term memory. They have difficulty in following a set of instructions.

### **Behavioral difficulties**

Children who have difficulty in learning are a frustrated lot. They are constantly the butt of all jokes and are jeered at by their mates. They eventually end up being so frustrated and terrified that they crave for attention and develop attention seeking behaviors. They undertake all dare devilry acts and in the bargain they end up being labeled as notorious or badly mannered by all and sundry. This is the secondary problem while the main problem remains the Learning Difficulty .The child who finds studies a mountainous and boring task and admonishing and advices too much to bear as it implies that he is no good gets so frustrated within that he needs to vent it out somehow at the most inappropriate manner. This makes him seek negative attention and as time passes he derives a certain pleasure out of it. The child gets no positive attention no matter what he does.

## **Apparent lack of confidence at all levels –Emotional Issues**

Frustration leads to anger and fear at the same time. Fear factor is evident as the child is at the constant receiving end. The constant reprimands and scolding's make the child loose self confidence at all levels. This makes him underperform much to the chagrin of others who even try to help him out. Parents will never allow him to undertake any extra- curricular activity and the school too keeps him away as he needs to prove his academic acumen. Once the child has slipped to this level it is very difficult to deal the academics in isolation. The emotional issues need to be resolved through guidance and counseling. A helping and understanding mode of support at all levels is needed.

### **Methodology**

This is the study of learning difficulty among school students identified by teachers as scholastically backward to frame an individualized educational plan (IEP) according to their needs. I have used LIT (Level of Intervention test developed by Association For Learning Disabilities India 1989), Ravens CPM/SPM/MISIC, Attention Test - NIMHANS Battery Index, Memory - NIMHANS tool to determine the level of learning difficulty. IQ test as well as Level of Intervention Test was administered to the sample. Those found to have average and above average intelligence with low level of Intervention Test, The test of Attention and Memory was administered to students to ensure their dyslexic attributes.

### **Assessment through Level of Intervention- Experimental Design**

Study carried out on 50 students identified by all teachers as backward in studies and having behavioral as well as emotional problems. The need for assessment is well addressed but some common factors are there behind the initiative. Three main reasons can be pointed out for this.

### **Procedure**

The Level of Intervention Tool (ALDI) implies that at a given age, a child should have attained certain level.

E.g. Age 6 – Level needed – 2.1 (Child can read word with blends)

Age 7- Level needed - 3.1 (Child can read words with diphthongs and blends)

Age 8- Level needed - 3.3 (Child can identify similar words)

Age 9 – Level needed – 4.2 (Child can write sentences with three words)

Age 10 – Level needed- 5.2 (Child can write sentences with more than three words)

Age 11 – Level needed- 6.1 (Child can read the story)

Age 12 – Level needed – 6.3 (Child can write the story)

Association for Learning Disabilities India (NGO)

Levels start at 0.1 where the child needs to identify the alphabets. The maximum level is 6.3 which implies that the child can even write a story. A child in grade 7 need to reach that level after that it is constant. Once the level is assessed and if found below the needed level, an IEP is planned and intervention will be started .The child will be further assessed after 6 months. This gets repeated till the child attains the needed level.

Level of intervention: grade 3

SL NO	Name	LIT English
1	A T	0.2
2	A K S	0.2
3	A K M	0.1
4	A P V	1.1
5	A P Y	0.2
6	A P S	0.2
7	A A	1
8	A N	0.2
9	P B	0.2
10	P R N	0.2
11	P R P	0.1
12	R M B	0.2

## Grade 5

SL NO	Name	LIT English
1	A A M	1
2	A K V	6
3	A B	6.1
4	A A J	0.3
5	A A S	2.1
6	A S	1.1
7	A M	2.1
8	A R	2.1
9	A B	6
10	A P A	0.3
11	A P L	3.1
12	B N	1
13	B J	2
14	B P B	6
15	B M B	6.1
16	E M P	6
17	L B	6
18	M B	0.2
19	M D	3.1
20	N P	1
21	N N P	2
22	S C	0.2
23	S C P	3.2
24	S V	0.2
25	S S P	3.1
26	T A R	1.1
27	V S K	6.2
28	V E	6
29	V R	3

## Grade 6

SL NO	Name	LIT English
1	A K S	0.2
2	A S J	0.2
3	A K E	0.2
4	A S J	0.2
5	A V N	6.1
6	A B	0.2
7	A M O	0.3
8	A M P	1
9	A T	1.1
10	A C P	0.2
11	A S J	0.2
12	B A J	0.2
13	B S J	0.3
14	E E M	0.2
15	E S M	0.3
16	G P	6.2
17	J R M	3.2
18	J T M	6.1
19	J Z	0.2
20	J O	2.1
21	M S L	0.2
22	N D	0.2
23	N J C	0.2
24	R V A	0.1
25	R T S	1.1
26	R A	6
27	S S	0.1
28	S N	2.1
29	S E J	0.1
30	S S M	6.2
31	S A	0.2

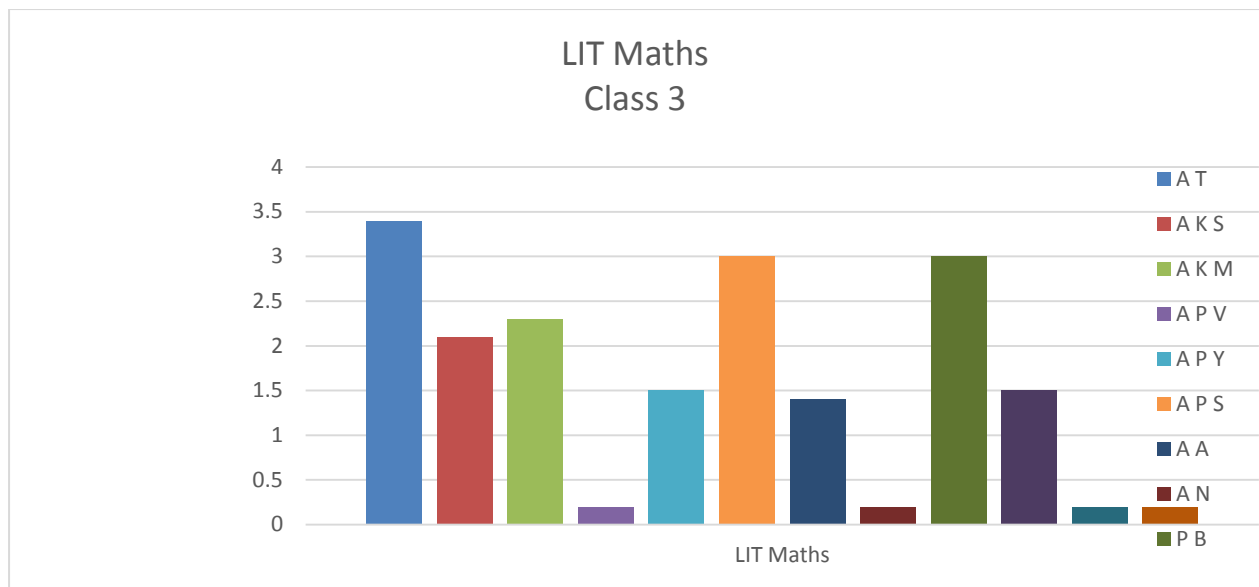
Grade 7



SL NO	Name	LIT English
1	A B	2
2	A S B	3.1
3	A P S	5
4	A Z R	1.1
5	E A P	6.1
6	J K	6.1
7	M M	6.2
8	N P S	6
9	N S P	2
10	P S	5.2
11	P T	3
12	P P	5.1
13	P K P	6.2
14	R M	3
15	R N	2.3
16	R M B	2
17	S A S	2
18	S V	0.2
19	S D	2
20	S M	2.1
21	S R	3
22	S R V	1.5
23	S P	3
24	V C T	3
25	V N T	2.5

### Mathematics LIT: Grade 3

The level of Intervention starts from 0.0 level (Child is able to identify primary colors) and a grade 3 child needs to attain 3.5 level (Child can do sums with carry over and borrowing operation)



SL NO	Name	Deviation	LIT Maths
1	A T	-1	3.4
2	A K S	-2.3	2.1
3	A K M	-2.1	2.3
4	A P V	-4.2	0.2
5	A P Y	-2.9	1.5
6	A P S	-1.4	3
7	A A	-3	1.4
8	A N	-4.2	0.2
9	P B	-1.4	3
10	P R N	-2.9	1.5
11	P R P	-4.2	0.2
12	R M B	-4.2	0.2

The above chart is a sample of the LIT for Mathematics. It shows that the identified children in grade 3 are well below the needed grade level of 3.5 and need intervention.

### Planning IEP

The success of an IEP depends on careful analysis of the assessments. The first and foremost part is the observational assessment, the analysis of which helps in its sound preparation.

**IQ:** RAVENS CPM/ SPM is administered .Kids with IQ above 95<sup>th</sup> percentile (above average in intellectual capacity) are mostly found to be having difficulty in learning and vice –versa.

**Attention:** This is checked using the NIMHANS vowel and digit cancellation and administered for 2 minutes on each child. The child needs to attain 92- 98% in the given time, cancelling at least 45 no's or alphabets. Those falling below this will be considered as needing intervention.

**Organization:** Strategies to improve organization skills are explained. Color coding, labeling, reminders, organizers are suggested.

**Sequencing:** Exercises in sequences like following instructions, making a dish in the right order, saying a story in order in sequence

**Interaction:** Observing the interaction pattern of others as well as practicing the speech with the support of a teacher or parent and learning the correct intonations which mean usage of the appropriate punctuations in speech.

**Language:** The sounds and letter -sound co relation needs to be drilled in many ways, phonic flash cards, site reading and natural reading, reading level books of ladybird are extremely good.

**Comprehension:** The paraphrasing strategy RAP (Read, Ask &Put in own words), saying about pictures and making up stories, story re-tell etc.

**Visual/Auditory Learners:** The Visual child needs to be empowered visually through colourful pictorial cards and representations. This needs to be checked using the NIMHANS Visual memory test. Similarly the auditory memory too needs to be checked.

**Motivation/Initiative:** The child needs positive reinforcement and unconditional acceptance from the teachers and parents. They need to feel that they are ok and that they have a difficulty for which they deserve support.

**Self-concept:** Positive self- concept is very important and for this lots of permissions and real time responsibilities are to be given to children and they need to be appreciated by all who matter.

**Relaxation:** Brain relaxation is vital so yoga and meditation works well with them and so also brain stimulating exercises like brain gym. They need to engage in as many activities they are interested in and they will surely excel in a particular area of talent that they have, as majority learning disabled kids are right brained and above average in intelligence and hence they will definitely benefit from all activities and in the bargain they will benefit immensely.

**Learning preferences:** They will prefer a certain style, like for example an auditory learner may like to read aloud while a visual one may understand better if reading is soft. They need to be kept away from distracting stimuli and should be entrusted with supporting caregivers.

### **Attainment-Management**

**Policy Model-** This is a much practiced model and is incorporated within the policy frameworks of education and in this certain benchmarks is set for attainment.

**Curriculum-focused Model-**This model certainly operates within the classroom and the teacher is the chief resource person.

## **Results**

The study has helped to arrive at the conclusion that early identification is possible and effective management is possible and the whole school can be sensitized and the scholastically backward students with dyslexia can be on par with their peers in learning levels.

## Discussion

The purpose of study was to assess learning difficulty among school students identified by teachers as scholastically backward to frame an individualized educational plan (IEP) according to their needs. I have used LIT (Level of Intervention test developed by Association For Learning Disabilities India 1989), Ravens CPM/SPM/MISIC, Attention Test - NIMHANS Battery Index, Memory - NIMHANS tool to determine the level of learning difficulty. IQ test as well as Level of Intervention Test was administered to the sample. Those found to have average and above average intelligence with low level of Intervention Test, The test of Attention and Memory was administered to students to ensure their dyslexic attributes. A specific framework for Individualized education plans is formulated for the students for future perspective to help them and attain the expected levels, the results of the study indicates that the students experienced significantly learning difficulty. To conclude, the study has shown the conclusion that early identification is possible and effective management can be done. The whole school can be sensitized and the scholastically backward students with dyslexia can be on par with their peers in learning levels.

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