



Identifying Learning Difficulties Faced by Students in Classroom at Elementary Level in District Pishin

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Abstract: The objective of the study was to find out the learning difficulties of students in classroom at elementary level in district Pishin. The qualitative deigns was applied in the study. The observation was used for qualitative study. The research instrument used for qualitative study was direct observation. The population of the current study included the students from elementary school from district Pishin. A sample of 26 students from 5th class were selected through cluster sampling technique. Observation was conducted to find out the learning difficulties faced by students in classroom. The qualitative data was analysed by thematic analysis. The qualitative data showed that students faces difficulties in reading, writing and English as a second language. On the basis of result and observation it was recommended that The teacher centered classroom needs to be converted to the student cantered classroom so that the students in public schools can get better education and the government needs to train the teacher to make them aware of modern teaching strategies.

Key words: Learning Difficulties, Elementary Level, Class room

1. Introduction

A nation's ability to attract and retain human capital is essential to accelerating economic expansion. Therefore, it makes sense for them to create a variety of plans and tactics that aid their inhabitants in progressing through their educational system and acquiring the skills and talents that are ideal for the country. By fostering individuality, schooling helps students to develop confidence. Therefore, greater education plays a significant role and is necessary for everyone to succeed (Archana 2016).

Learning difficulties are one of the challenges that might keep pupils from performing to their full potential. According to Horowitz (2014), this is one of the psychological conditions that affects the ability to hear, think, talk, read, write, spell, or perform mathematical calculations. The students poor learning results show that they are having learning challenges. The most fundamental activities are learning activities. Self-learning is a process that a person engages in to modify all of their behaviours as a result of their interactions with their environment and their own experiences (Slameto, 2015). Children may experience difficulties at some time when studying in a variety of subjects including reading, spelling, writing, and maths, as well as when engaging in a variety of activities like handwriting, cutting, sports, and everyday care tasks. Science subjects at the elementary school level frequently have learning difficulties issues. Natural science is one of these fields since it has a scientific quality. A field of knowledge called "natural science" was founded on observations of natural events. Natural science can be described as a body of knowledge about things and natural events that comes through scientific research and experimentation.

The objectives of science learning have been attained through experiments, including the improvement of students' perceptions of scientific concepts and its products, scientific practical competencies and problem-solving skills, scientific "habits of mind," an understanding of how science and scientists work, awareness, and motivation (Duschl, 2008; Hofstein & Mamlok- Naaman, 2007). It is important to employ engaging teaching strategies and tangible or relevant media while teaching natural science to young pupils. According to Riggs and Enochs (1990), pupils in elementary school learn best by doing concrete things. Children can already be given the basic sciences such as reading, writing, and arithmetic.

Additionally, elementary school students can be taught the fundamentals of religion, sociocultural, and the natural and social environments. Natural science instruction in elementary schools is characterised by its emphasis on the inquiry process and the foundational knowledge that forms the basis of future knowledge production. Therefore, it takes great perseverance and patience to teach natural science to primary school children. For pupils, learning about the natural world is crucial (Chiappetta & Koballa Jr, 2014). Natural science is significant because it is essential to daily living. However, learning natural science might be challenging for pupils. Learning challenges in the study of natural science in elementary school are typically experienced by pupils in upper-level grades, particularly those in fifth grade. The subject matter for the natural science lesson in grade 5 primary school already requires a high level of logical reasoning since it discusses genuine occurrences that kids cannot immediately see and feel.

1.1 Rationale of the Study

When there are hurdles or disruptions in the learning process, it causes pupils to have learning challenges, which prevents them from achieving the desired learning results. Learning difficulties are quite typical among students in schools. However, it is sensible that incidence of learning difficulties varies across regions. It needs to be highlighted and addressed.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Learning challenges are those that impair a person's capacity to understand fundamental ideas. Students with learning disabilities are individuals whose actual performance (as determined by various achievement tests) falls short of their predicted performance, according to contemporary research. As class size in education are increasing and it is impacting education at all levels, these trends create significant challenges for teachers as they attempt to support individual students. It is observed generally that the students fall in below average category and as a researcher I want to check this concept in district Pishin also. The reason for the study is to bring into limelight the learning difficulties of students in district Pishin at elementary level.

1.3 Research Objective

To find out learning difficulties of students at elementary level.

1.4 Research Question

What are the learning difficulties of students at elementary level?

1.5 Delimitations of the Study

The study was delimited to the elementary schools of district Pishin. Further the study was delimited to the science subject.

2. Theoretical Framework (RTI model)

2.1 Response to Intervention / Tiered Support Model

The Response to Intervention (RTI) model is a multi-tiered, whole-school strategy created to enhance student learning outcomes. Making the necessary changes to teaching and learning is made easier for educators when they use the model. This guarantees that the appropriate levels of assistance are in place for people and groups with efficient inclusive teaching and learning techniques that are advantageous to all students. Children and young people can move easily between the support levels under the RTI model, which is geared to meet individual requirements and takes into account their rates of development. When used in conjunction with a good general education plan, RTI enables the early identification of students who are not making the necessary progress.

Conceptual Framework

Response to intervention (RTI)

Response to intervention (RTI) strives to identify at-risk pupils as soon as possible and provide them with the assistance they require to succeed in school. The intention is for the school to step in or intervene and begin assisting before a student actually falls behind. Its proactive approach involves assessing students' abilities and using the results to choose the best solution to implement in order to lessen the learning challenges that students encounter in the classroom.

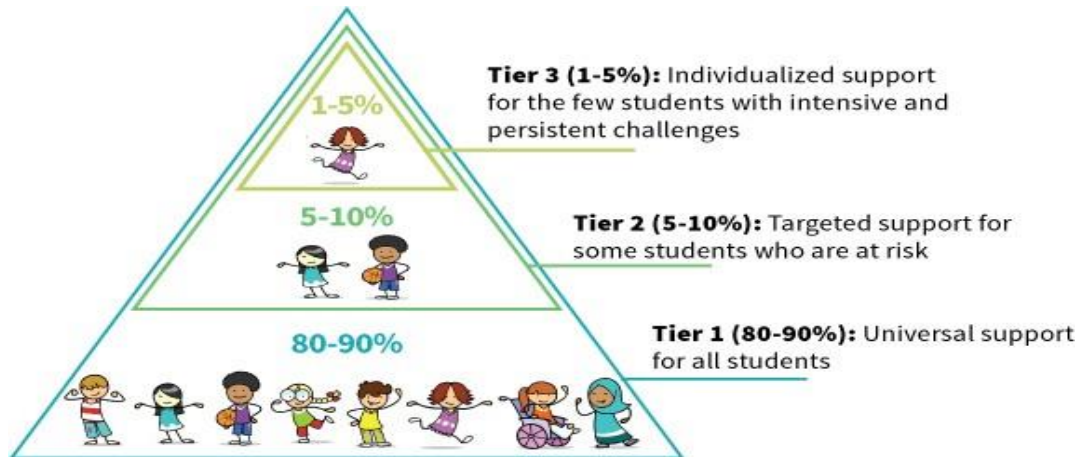


Figure 1.1 RTI Model

3. Literature Review

Winkel argues that learning is a set of actions designed to support the learning process of students, taking into account external events that contribute to a series of internal events taking place within the student. The setting and creation of external conditions is done in such a way that it supports the learning process of the students and does not impede it. Gagne et al. Suggests that learning is a careful organization of events with a view to learning and making it work, learning must be sensitive to how the goals to be attributed to one another, and what learning activities are well-liked for facilitate achievement. According to Miarso learning or instructional is an effort to manage the environment deliberately so that someone to establish themselves positively certain under certain conditions.

3.1 Students with Learning Difficulties

Many terms have been applied to pupils with learning disabilities throughout the years, such as "dull," "educationally subnormal," "slow learners," "low achievers," "at risk," "hard-to- teach," and "learning disabled." Each label eventually draws its own odium and is replaced by a new one. The phrase "struggling"—as in "struggling readers"—seems to be more popular in American literature these days, and it may be found in the titles of numerous works on learning difficulties. Since "struggling" suggests that the learner is at fault, it is to be hoped that word disappears, along with other offensive expressions. The phrase "learning difficulty" is typically used to describe kids who are not meeting the required academic standards in the majority of nations, especially in the core subject areas of language, literacy, and numeracy. Their issues could be exclusive to a single academic topic, or they might be present in every subject covered in the curriculum. These children struggle to learn in school for a number of reasons. The proportion of pupils experiencing these kinds of learning challenges varies between nations and schools.

The prevalence rate of students enrolled in schools has been reported to range from 12% to 30% (Gupta, 1999; Silver & Hagin, 2002; Waldron & McLeskey, 2000; Westwood & Graham, 2000, for example). As a result, there are a lot of students in schools that struggle with these issues. As a result, they have been dubbed the "garden variety" learning challenge (Badian, 1996, for example). These children frequently have intellectual levels that are somewhat below average, and a disproportionate share of them come from underprivileged socioeconomic circumstances.

3.2 Reasons of Difficulties Faced in Science Subject

Numerous studies have revealed that science is challenging for many students for a variety of reasons, including

- a) Strict teaching methods
- b) Inadequate teaching techniques.
- c) A lack of enthusiasm for technical work
- d) Inadequate utilization of teaching techniques
- e) Accidental selection and use of audio-visual aids
- f) A lack of planning
- g) A misguided and pointless assessment of science
- h) A decline in confidence
- i) Not supported by sufficient infrastructure
- j) A lack of interest in learning,
- k) A lack of enthusiasm for science education
- l) Because of the constant noise in the classroom, it is challenging to concentrate.
- m) Low capacity for memory

For grades 1 through 10, science is a required subject according to Pakistan's national curriculum. The majority of students in both public and private schools throughout the world find learning science to be challenging. The programme offers a great deal of specialised material that calls for a certain strategy, a particular mindset (logical and careful thinking), and the struggle of the student (Rojan, 2008; Ellis, 2011; Government of Pakistan, 2006). Teachers, however, do not learn the fundamental abilities needed to study science. For elementary pupils, education in our nation now faces many difficulties. Since independence, the fundamental problem has gotten worse and is being opposed by the system. We were unable to procure adequate facilities and tools for use in scientific instruction (Sarangapani, n.d.).

3.3 Types of Learning Difficulties

Autism spectrum disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, intellectual disability, social and emotional difficulties, and particular learning disabilities like dyslexia and dyscalculia may all have an influence on learning in different ways.

3.4 Possible Causes of Learning Difficulty

Any one or more of the following factors may contribute to general learning problems (cited in Chan, 1998; Cheng, 1998; MacMillan & Siperstein, 2002; Naparstek, 2002; Westwood, 2003):

- a) Classroom atmosphere,
- b)
- c) Socioeconomic hardship,
- d)
- e) Poor student-teacher relationships,
- f)
- g) Incorrect or inadequate instruction,
- h)
- i) Inappropriate or irrelevant curriculum,
- j)
- k) Poor school attendance,

- l)
- m) Health issues
- n)
- o) Acquiring knowledge through the use of a second language.
- p)
- q) Loss of confidence.
- r)
- s) Emotional or behavioural issues
- t)
- u) Low IQ
- v)
- w) Sensory impairment

- x) Particular information processing challenges.

Even if certain learning issues are in fact caused by particular learner deficits, it is highly improbable that this is the case for the great majority of pupils.

4. Research Methodology

Research methodology were selected according to the nature of the study that was designed in the light of objectives of the study. As learning is phenomena that normally occur in life consciously or unconsciously. Teaching students with new and different teaching strategies is effective way of improving the learning difficulties faced by students in normal classroom.

4.1 Research Design

The researcher conducted direct observation as a research for qualitative study.

4.2 Qualitative Research

In-depth qualitative study, by utilizing observational research design from the family of qualitative research methods and design were applied. Observational research is a qualitative research technique where researcher observe participants ongoing behaviour in natural setting. Researcher wanted to find out the learning difficulties faced by students in classroom in science subject. Observational research design was used by the researcher as the researcher wanted to study the live experiences of the participants of the study.

4.3 Population

The students who were facing the learning difficulties were part of the study. Therefore, the population of the study were the students who were facing learning difficulties in the classroom in science subject. The researcher had targeted the population from public schools. The targeted population was elementary level students from one public school district Pishin. Further the researcher selected the class 5th students for the study.

4.4 Sample

Sample were the small number of population targeted by the researcher from the whole population of the study. One public school was selected as a sample of the study. Moreover, class 5th was chosen as a sample of the study in the same school.

4.5 Sampling Technique

Cluster sampling is a probability sampling technique where researchers divide the population into multiple groups (clusters) for research. As the observational study was planned so the researcher preferred to make a cluster sampling technique primarily.

4.6 Research Instrument

A research instrument is a tool used to collect, measure and analyse the data related to the study. As the present study is qualitative in nature observation as a research tools were applied to analyse the results.

4.7 Observation

Researcher observed in many ways by using different tools or by the use of senses. Therefore, researcher preferred to use the senses to collect the qualitative data to find the learning difficulties faced by students in the classroom.

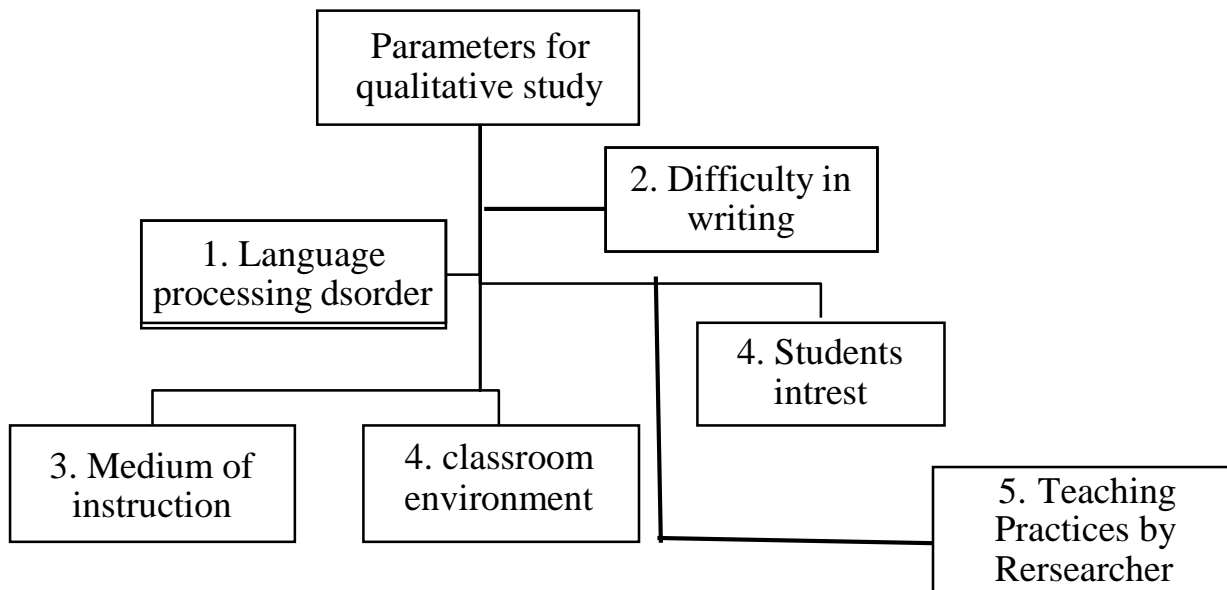


Figure 3.1

As shown in the above figure 3.1 for the collection of qualitative data through the use senses the researcher has set some of the parameters like observing the difficulties faced by students in reading, writing, English as a second language, classroom environment and student interest in science subject.

5. Data Analysis and Interpretation

Data analysis in research is an illustrative method of applying the right statistical or logical technique so that the raw data makes sense. Whereas the present chapter is concerned with the analysis and presentation of the data collected through the observation conducted by the researcher.

5.1 Qualitative Data Analysis

The learning difficulties faced by students in classroom are caused both by internal and external factors. The students' low attention, low learning motivation and low comprehension of the learning material concept which then emerge misconceptions may occur due to the teacher's uninteresting methods of teaching.

5.2 Language Processing Disorder

The most evident issues that reading-impaired students have are poor word identification and limited decoding abilities.

They are unable to read smoothly or concentrate on the meaning of what they are reading because of their poor word identification skills.

Reading of the students were difficult and weak.

Students were unable to pronounce the simple words like on pronouncing called they were pronouncing "clied".

When reading, visually similar words are frequently confused.

Delayed development of language and speech students with reading difficulties were caused by a wide range of variables, such as poor parental support, the absence of positive experiences with literacy throughout the preschool years, and improper or insufficient early instruction.

5.3 Difficulty in Writing

It was observed by the researcher that the students from class 5th faces learning difficulties in writing in science subject. The researcher observed following difficulties faced by students in writing:

- a) Process of writing was effortful and tiring.
- b) Sentence and paragraph structure was poor
- c) Spelling mistakes like body spelling written by one of the student was “boody”, earth was written as “earte”.
- d) Writing “p” like “q”
- e) Writing all the paragraph as it is one sentence.
- f) At the end of sentence, no full stop
- g) Use of capital letters between the sentence
- h) Difficulties writing at the same speed as their peers
- i) written expression of ideas lacks clarity
- j) Gap between the words like dwellings written by one of the student was as “dwe llings”
- k) missing the words
- l) missing of alphabets like the word “shock” was written as “hock”
- m) combining two words like the two words “in an” was written by the student as “inan”

5.4 Medium of Instruction

Pakistan is a bilingual nation with a rich traditional past, making the issue of teaching medium challenging. There are several options available for the country's medium of instruction, including mother tongue because individuals in different regions of the nation speak different languages, English as the language of the former masters, and Urdu as the national language of the nation. The same researcher noticed that the students had trouble comprehending English when it comes to learning. Upon the adoption of the one national curriculum for grade 5, in 2021, instructors and students alike had challenges in comprehending subjects taught in English.

5.5 Classroom Environment

The term "class environment" describes the use of the physical learning resources that are accessible as well as the upholding of discipline in the classroom for more effective teaching and improved student learning (Williams, 2016). The physical facilities in a classroom, such as chairs, tables, paint, water, models, charts, overhead projectors, and other ICT-related teaching materials, encourage students to participate actively in class activities and help them score well on tests (Kausar, Kiyani, & Suleman, 2017). This has a positive effect on students' academic achievement. According to Omae et al. (2017), the provision of physical services to schools, such as a well-stocked library, clean drinking water, well-furnished classrooms, and laboratories with relevant appliances, is essential for improving student learning and instruction. For the provision of high-quality teaching and learning, school support facilities such as an IT lab, tablets, first aid kits, staffrooms, classrooms with ventilation, store rooms, air conditioning and heating systems, and well-stocked libraries with enough quantities are essential (Arshad, Ahmed & Tayyab, 2019). Effective teaching and improved student learning are restricted with a variety of factors, including an unfriendly classroom climate, non-supportive teachers, a lack of pedagogical expertise, and disruptive students (Ahmed, Faizi, & Akbar, 2020). While in the present study the researcher observed that Fifth grade students in a school on the outskirts of Pishin sit on floor mats during science lesson because there are no chairs or desks available for them. Even the school does not provide any facilities like I.T Lab, tablet, first aid box, classrooms having ventilation, store room, cooling and heating systems, staff room, well equipped library with adequate books.

5.6 Students Interest

Interest in the subject matter affects learning motivation; this is especially true for academic subjects that have a big effect on students' drive to learn. Therefore, investing a great deal of time and energy into encouraging pupils' interest and discipline may increase their desire to study.

But Students lose interest in science classes when attractive teaching strategies are not used. As science is a subject where it is essential to involve the students by using different activities while teaching. In the present study researcher observed that due to lack of effective teaching strategies the students lack interest in science subject.

5.7 Teaching Practices by Researcher

Teaching practices is a profession and a science of teaching. The researcher also conducted science classes to teach the students to better understand about the learning difficulties faced by students in classroom. The teaching practices used by the researcher during the study were Drill method, demonstration method, Lecture method, instructional conversation, Graphic organizers, activity based teaching method, storytelling and discussion method. The researcher also used technology to find out the learning difficulties of students.

5.8 Summary, Findings, Conclusion and Recommendations

5.8.1 Summary

In order to find out the learning difficulties faced by students in classroom at elementary level in district Pishin, the current study was carried out. The objectives of the study were to; find out the learning difficulties faced by students in classroom. The research design was qualitative in nature. The population of the current study included students from public school located in Pishin. A sample of the study was 26 students of class 5th. The data were collected from 26 students. The cluster sampling technique was used to select the sample. The qualitative data showed that students faces difficulties in reading, writing and English as a second language.

5.8.2 Findings

Findings of the study were obtained from analysis of the data in other words; the results of the analysis of the current study were also following;

The results showed that students face difficulties in reading like They are unable to read smoothly or concentrate on the meaning of what they are reading because of their poor word identification skills. Students were unable to pronounce the simple words like on pronouncing “called” they were pronouncing “clied”.

The process of writing was effortful and tiring for the students. The students were writing “p” like “q”. The researcher observed that the students were using capital letters again and again between the sentence. Spelling mistakes like “body” spelling written by one of the student was “boody”, “earth” was written as “earte”. Difficulties in writing at the same speed as their peers.

Medium of instruction is a controversial issue in Pakistan as it is a multilingual country and has a rich traditional history. As the single national curriculum was implemented in 2021 for grade 5, due to implementation of single national curriculum not only teachers faces the difficulties in understanding the subjects in English but also the students were facing the same problem.

While in the present study the researcher observed that Fifth grade students in a school on the outskirts of Pishin sit on floor mats during science lesson because there are no chairs or desks available for them. Even the school does not provide any facilities like I.T Lab, tablet, first aid box, classrooms having ventilation, store room, cooling and heating systems, staff room, well equipped library with adequate books.

As science is a subject where it is essential to involve the students by using different activities and effective teaching strategies to better clear the concept of students while teaching science. In the present study researcher found that due to lack of effective teaching strategies the students lack interest in science subject.

The teaching practices used by the researcher during the study were Drill method, demonstration method, Lecture method, instructional conversation, Graphic organizers, activity based teaching method, storytelling and discussion method. By the use of these effective teaching strategies researcher found that students better learn by teaching them with different new techniques and use of technology. But these effective teaching methods were not used by the class teachers.

6. Conclusion

The main purpose of conducting this research was to find out the learning difficulties faced by students in classroom. Based on the observation of the research described above, the main factors that causes students’ learning difficulties in elementary schools in district Pishin are due to the lack of effective teaching strategies. The in-depth analysis of qualitative data indicated that the factors causing difficulties in learning natural science experienced by the 5th grade students of elementary school are in reading, writing, lack of effective teaching strategies. It was also concluded that due to the lack of conducive classroom environment the student also lack interest in science subject.

Thus overall it was concluded that there are many teaching strategies (like teaching through drill method use of audio visual aids, demonstration method etc.) that helps to improve the learning difficulties faced by students at elementary level in district Pishin. But these effective teaching strategies were not being used in district Pishin.

6.1 Recommendations

From the observation of the researcher during the study, researcher had enlisted few future recommendations here below:

The government needs to provide a flexible classroom environment to the students so that teaching learning process can be run in a smooth way.

Government needs to have a policy that strength may not exceed than 25 students so that a teacher can focus every student.

The government needs to train the teacher to make them aware of modern teaching strategies.

To compete with the 21st century it may important to implement technology in classroom so that it could overcome learning difficulties of students.

The teacher centered classroom needs to be converted to the student centered classroom so that the students in public schools can get better education.

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