



Pupils with Learning Difficulties

Low Ratings of Self-Efficacy



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Classroom-based tips (focus on instructional methods)

1. **Provide feedback to your pupils about the task using a rubric for explicit feedback or writing comments for implicit feedback (Brophy, 2010).** The feedback teachers give to pupils and the way it is presented is important for the self-efficacy of pupils. In studies, pupils have commented that when a teacher gives praise or encouragement, “you don’t really think it helps at the time, but when it comes down to it, it does” (Klassen & Lynch, 2007 in <https://www.rivier.edu/journal/ROAJ-Fall-2013/J783-Bergen.pdf>).
2. **Be aware of the support you offer in the classroom, and the way you offer help which can make a difference.** Encourage pupils to come to you and ask for help with new projects and assignments. (Klassen & Lynch, 2007). (<https://www.rivier.edu/journal/ROAJ-Fall-2013/J783-Bergen.pdf>)
3. **Use the RAFT approach (Santa, 1998) to enhance pupils’ understanding of narrative and expository text, and help your pupils build self-efficacy by enhancing their motivation.** Use RAFT to differentiate the content and product for pupils with varying academic skills and knowledge levels. RAFT is defined as follows:

R: Assume a Role. Who are you as the writer?
A: Consider your Audience. To whom are you writing? Who will be reading?
F: Write in a particular Format. What type of writing will you be doing?
T: Examine a Topic from a relevant perspective. What is the subject or point of your writing?
4. **Establish meaningful, purposeful and realistic content learning goals for pupils.** For instance, show them that reading and writing constitute an important part of our lives. Make adaptations based on your class’s needs; for example assist pupils to write different kinds of letters.
5. **Praise your pupils for their effort regardless of the results produced.** This will help to create a positive learning environment in which pupils will feel it is safe to make mistakes (Weiser, 2014).
6. **Create activities that are relevant to pupils’ experiences and interests (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2006).** For example if your pupils like super-heroes you can use comics and ask them to prepare their own comic strips, and enhance their vocabulary. With older pupils you can use blogs to enhance their writing and vocabulary skills.



School-based practical tips (focus on instructional methods)

Announcement / Sign at School

Put visual/written signs around school with motivational quotes. **Encourage pupils to work with a mentor or teacher and assist in finding inspirational and motivational quotes that they like and participate in creating signs for the school.**

Community

Arrange regular meetings between the parents and the staff to discuss pupils' progress and to enhance the home-school collaboration. **This will help to monitor progress and to discuss other issues related to the social life of the pupil, such as marginalisation, social interactions with peers, behavior at home and self-esteem. (McCaleb, 2013)**

Curricular Adaptations

1. **Ask that your teachers keep data about their pupils, such as records on which pupils show low self-efficacy beliefs and why.** Design interventions based on this data in collaboration with the teachers (Hoppey & McLeskey, 2013).
2. **Make curricular adaptations in terms of differentiating to the task** and inform teachers to make necessary adaptations to the tasks so that they respond to the various learning needs of the particular pupils and the severity of each case. (Hall, Meyer and Rose, 2012; BBC active, 2010).
3. **Make curricular adaptations in terms of resources;** where possible equip the classrooms in which there are pupils with low self-efficacy beliefs with different materials and advanced technology, such as tablets and projectors, so as to attain a single learning outcome. (BDA, 2012).
4. **Provide staff training on drama therapy and experiential learning** so teachers can use role-playing with their pupils to build their confidence (Jennings, 2013; Freeman, Sullivan & Fulton, 2003; De la Cruz, Lian & Morreau, 1998)

Discipline

Ensure that before you reach a decision about pupils' behaviour you have contacted the parents/guardians and teacher and gained more information about the pupil's history. **Involve the appropriate professionals in this process, such as an educational psychologist, or a multi-disciplinary team, depending on your country's educational system and available supports.**

Other (Assessment)

Ask that your teachers keep data about their pupils, such as records on which pupils show low self-efficacy beliefs and why. Design interventions based on this data in collaboration with the teachers (Hoppey & McLeskey, 2013).

Other (Pupils' Involvement – Important for Inclusion)

Encourage teachers to ask for their pupils' opinions for issues that concern them, in relation for example to how they are taught specific subjects and the materials used.

Parents / Parents' Associations

1. Arrange regular meetings between the parents and the staff to discuss pupils' progress and to enhance the home-school collaboration. **This will help to monitor progress and to discuss other issues related to the social life of the pupil, such as marginalisation, social interactions with peers, behavior at home and self-esteem. (McCaleb, 2013).**
2. Ensure that before you reach a decision about pupils' behaviour you have contacted the parents/guardians and teacher and gained more information about the pupil's history. **Involve the appropriate professionals in this process, such as an educational psychologist, or a multi-disciplinary team, depending on your country's educational system and available supports.**

School Celebrations / Events / Activities

Organise events at your school like theatre performances, bazaars and sports days where pupils are assigned different roles and responsibilities. **This will help them build their self-confidence and transfer skills from that context to the classroom context.**

School Purchases

1. **Equip the school with tablets and computers so teachers and pupils can use technology to motivate pupils with low self-efficacy beliefs and help them feel more confident (Brophy, 2010).** Most pupils are confident in using everyday technology such as mobiles and tablets, so this approach will enhance their motivation and self-efficacy beliefs further.
2. **Make curricular adaptations in terms of resources;** where possible equip the classrooms in which there are pupils with low self-efficacy beliefs with different materials and advanced technology, such as tablets and projectors, so as to attain a single learning outcome. (BDA, 2012).

Pupil Support

1. **Where possible, ensure the provision of additional class support,** such as the presence of a teaching assistant to keep pupils with low self-efficacy on track (BDA, 2012).

2. **Provide staff training on drama therapy and experiential learning** so teachers can use role-playing with their pupils to build their confidence (Jennings, 2013; Freeman, Sullivan & Fulton, 2003; De la Cruz, Lian & Morreau, 1998).
3. Ensure that before you reach a decision about pupils' behaviour you have contacted the parents/guardians and teacher and gained more information about the pupil's history. **Involve the appropriate professionals in this process, such as an educational psychologist, or a multi-disciplinary team, depending on your country's educational system and available supports.**

Teacher Professional Development

1. **Establish an inclusive culture within your school** – This can be achieved through workshops and seminars with academics. These will help teachers to understand aspects of inclusion and apply inclusive practices, which will contribute to enhancing pupils' self-efficacy beliefs (Hoppey & McLeskey, 2013).
2. Provide training for teachers and SEN teachers from external agencies such as educational psychologist services and academics on ways that teachers can enhance their own self-efficacy beliefs. This will in turn help teachers to support pupils to enhance their own self-efficacy beliefs (<https://www.european-agency.org/sites/default/files/TE4I-Literature-Review.pdf>)
3. **Provide staff training on drama therapy and experiential learning** so teachers can use role-playing with their pupils to build their confidence (Jennings, 2013; Freeman, Sullivan & Fulton, 2003; De la Cruz, Lian & Morreau, 1998)

Technology

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Supportive Literature

Definition: Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in his or her capacity to execute behaviours necessary to produce specific performance attainments (Bandura, 1977, 1986, 1997). Self-efficacy reflects confidence in the ability to exert control over one's own motivation, behaviour, and social environment. These cognitive self-evaluations influence all manner of human experience, including the goals for which people strive, the amount of energy expended toward goal achievement, and likelihood of attaining particular levels of behavioral performance. Unlike traditional psychological

constructs, self-efficacy beliefs are hypothesised to vary depending on the domain of functioning and circumstances surrounding the occurrence of behaviour (<http://www.apa.org>).

Pupils with learning disabilities are more likely to report lower levels of self-efficacy, mood, effort, and hope than are their peers without learning disabilities. It is not known whether a tendency for negative self-perceptions is an inherent characteristic of learning disabilities or the result of a painful history of frustration and disappointment with academic and social situations (Cosden, Brown, & Elliott, 2002 and Lackaye, Margalit, Ziv, & Ziman, 2007, p. 111).

Pupils with learning disabilities are an extremely heterogeneous group. It is important to remember that the fundamental, defining characteristic of pupils with learning disabilities is the presence of specific and significant achievement deficits seemingly in spite of adequate overall intelligence. The difference between what pupils with learning disabilities “are expected to do and what they can do...grows larger and larger” over time (Deshler et al., 2001, p. 97). The performance gap becomes especially noticeable and handicapping in the middle and secondary grades, when the academic growth of many pupils with disabilities plateaus. By the time they reach high school, pupils with learning disabilities are the lowest of the low achievers, performing below the 10th percentile in reading, written language, and math (Hock, Schumaker, & Deshler, 1999).

[Reference: Heward, W. L. (2013). *Exceptional children: An introduction to special education*. Pearson College Div.]

Websites and EU Reports

http://www.council-for-learning-disabilities.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Weiser_Motivation.pdf

<https://www.european-agency.org/sites/default/files/TE4I-Literature-Review.pdf>

British Dyslexia Association. <http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/>

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