LEARNING DIFFICULTY

Students who characterized with learning difficulty show difficulty especially in academic subjects field skills. Most of the students with learning difficulty show individual difference according to their abilities and disabilities in the aspect of growing up pattern.

Students with learning difficulty should be distinguished from the students who have mental handicap and behavior disorder.

What is Learning Difficulty?

- Learning Difficulty is child's disorder in school skills that wasn't related to any neurologic disorder.
- Learning difficulty may affect child's reading, writing, speaking or arithmetical skills.
- This disorder may also be reflected his/her social activities.
- Some children's motivation duration is less, their attantion is dispersed.

What isn't Learning Difficulty?

- Learning difficulty is not the same as mental handicap, autism, blindness or behaviour disorder problems.
    - If there is problems arising from the following situations, there isn't learning difficulty.

Seeing deffect, hearing loss, mental retardation.

TYPICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF CHILDREN WITH LEARNING DIFFICULTY

- Difficulties in writing and written expression are observedin writing skills such as handwriting, letter and punctuation, grammar and usage in written expression skills.

- Difficulties in reading skills can be summarized asthe difficulties of voice and silent reading, or as basic reading and reading comprehension are discussed. These difficulties often word recognition, during word recognition of reading letters sequentialy and Syntagmaticaly broken (skipping, adding, inverting), making out the meaning of the text in reading and comprehending, finding the main idea, ordering the events, making story analysis such as describing the characters, distinguishing real-surreal and summarizing the text.

- Difficulties in Maths skills observed as distinguishing mathematical symbols (numbers, shapes; shapes position in space; basic arithmetic operations (four operation); rhythmic counting; grains, quantity, part-whole concepts; learning time, money and measurement concepts and understand verbal math problems and solving these problems.

- The difference between students' capabilities (intelligence) and titles (according to age and grade level) which is considered as learning difficulties are used as a criterion. For example, in terms of age and intelligence level of a student in third grade may be first-class level in some courses.

- The audio-visual perception, visual-vis, motion and tactile perception problem with the process can be observed in Students with learning difficulties. In these problems visual perception deficiencies are common. For example, student can mix figures and ground, unable to distinguish between forms

- Students may not be able to copy letters. May reveal handwriting difficulties. May have difficulty in Location-way determination.

- Cognitive failure is observed as the failure of attention, thought, memory and High Memory, Metacognition, and Metasprache function. For example, difficulties such as concept development, concept update, problem solving, abstraction, abstract level of thinking, memory retention, the symbol can be observed. These students have difficulties in the Metacognition process such as when they faced to any problems of seizing what kind of problem it is, recognizing the required strategies and skills, creating a variety of options to solve the problem, planning for the duty, organizing like self-regulation, working and controlling.

- Their having difficulties in skills that require memorizing is often stated.

- It is often mentioned that Students with learning difficulty have hyperactivity, attention deficit difficulties, difficulties in social integration.

- Some of the Students who described as students with learning difficulties may be within the more emotionally negative experiences than their peers. They generally carry out a risk of being an inner-conscious, unhappy-looking or smiling less, not having self-confidence, becoming fatalistic and helpless individuals. They may consider school useless, and may be feeling their efforts would not result because of their living continuous failure of expectations (learned helplessness). Social adjustment problems can be observed since these behaviors also negatively affects the environment interacts.

REASONS

The causes of learning difficulties is unknown. Many of the proposed cause of disability may be valid for learning difficulties. Different models came out in explaining the causes of learning difficulties and the effect of explaining the situation. In order to describe a student with learning difficulties, some distringuishing conditions must be observed: academic failure, ability-achievement difference and difficulty in one or more development areas.

DIAGNOSTIC PROCESS

The process of Identifying learning difficulties is done with clinically and educationally to support with qualitative and quantitative information. Psychomotor and cognitive processes of students is done by using the state's standardized diagnostic relative (norm-based) tests. These measure tools' is not sufficient in terms of either their validity, reliability and ease of use or both presenting ability-success differences as a contribution.

EDUCATIONAL ASSESSMENT

Educational evaluation is a process to determine the student's level of function, to directly shed light on the educational decisions and to serve training. Today, doing the educational assessments of the students with learning difficulties curriculum based on and specifying the student's level of function in relation with the determination of the class curriculum is targeted. Criteria-dependent tests are used in these informal evaluations.

TRAINING APPROACHES

- Effective teaching and classroom management techniques should be used for the students with learning difficulties success. Children's who indicate difficulties in one or more disciplines field may be in need of one to one training requirements. Special education support services need to be supplied for these students.

- Different approaches are used in teaching students with learning difficulties. Teaching should be organized according to the students' level and interest, training programs should be individualised, and the emphasis should be on teaching skills. Individuals with learning difficulties may be within the expectations of the failure should be kept in mind.

- Success in achieving these applications depends on special educators and / or teachers' knowing and using the different teaching approaches and teaching techniques.

THE REASONS FOR ANTALYA STUDY GROUPS ACTIVITIES

- Each student has a right to try learning experiences which are appropriate for his/her personality and individual abilities and it is essential to help the disadvantagous students to develop basic educational skills and habits which are suitable for the business life.
- The researches carried out and observations have shown that; the vocational school students have various learning difficulties and cannot be successful enough for entering a university.
- Their school success is not sufficient and all the students cannot learn the same skills at the same time
- the students who graduated from vocational schools have difficulties to find a suitable job for themselves or cannot adopt to the business life.

What is the purpose of the facilities? And is not?
- The aim of the facilities is not to have the selected students make additionak study on the school subjects.
- It is not a change of the current system. The facilities consist of preventive services that are carried out without any radical changes on the current system.
- The main purpose of this project is, to raise the success and to provide the students' maximum learning and development by not only knowing the students and the working ones well but also evaluating and eliminating the reasons for insufficient learning.

APPLICATION STEPS OF THE ACTIVITIES

1. Determining the teachers who will take part in the activities: Determining on the vocational teachers and psycological counsellors who will take part in the project.
2. Informing the teachers about the Project: Informing the teachers about the project informing the staff who will take part in the project about the project
3. Determining and preparing the questionaries and tests: We made a search on the tests and the questionnaires that will help us to reach our goals with the project partners and decided to use seven different tests. Three of the tests were chosen among the questionaires which are applied in the international psycological counseling and the others were prepared by us according to our needs.
4. Determining the sample student group: Collecting the data that shows the students success and determining the students who have failed in at least two lessons or whose school results are low. (school's computer programme which records the students school results is used for collecting the data)
5. Application and evaluation of the test techniques and questionnaires:

Tests and questionnaires applied in the project :
- "Reasons of Failure" questionnaire (Form A)
- "Recognition of Learning Incompetence" questionnaire (Student's Form) (Form B)
- "Recognition of Learning Incompetence" (Teacher's Form) (Form C)
- "Student's Job Evaluation" Form (Form D)
- "Learning Difficulties" questionnaire for the students (Form E1)
- "Learning Difficulties" questionnaire for the teachers (Form E2)
- "Indicators of learning defects" survey (Form F)

"Reasons of Failure" questionnaire (Form A)
- This questionnaire was prepared to find out why a student has failure in some school subjects. There are many reasons for failure. Failure might be caused by the students individual problems and also by environmental problems. When a student realizes his/her individual problems and the environmental ones and tries to solve them, he/she can overcome the failure.
- In the questionnaire there are plenty of sentences which explain why a student cannot study. The student selects the sentences that summarize his/her reasons or situation and put a cross(X) next to the sentences.

Evaluation (Form A2-A3)

The student's selected answers to the questionnaire are counted and recorded on the evaluation table below. The percentage of results are calculated and observed from which section (from the family, school or teachers) the results are mainly caused by. According to the rate of the reasons of failure, an evaluation is done and worked on the problems and solutions are tried to be found in cooperation with the responsibles. Graphs may be used to show the percentages while sharing the results with the responsibles.

"Recognition of Learning Incompetence" questionnaire (Student's Form) (Form B)
This survey was prepared to find out the reasons of the students' learning incompetence especially in vocational subjects. In this survey some possible reasons of the learning disabilities have been in order and the students are supposed to put a cross indicating their problems. The problems caused by learning incompetence are tried to be solved with the responsibles in cooperation and collobration.

"Recognition of Learning Incompetence" (Teacher's Form) (Form C)
In this questionnaire, most of the questions or situations are the same with the students' form to let us compare the results. Here the teachers are asked the reasons of learners' learning incompetence.

"Recognition of Learning Incompetence" questionnaire (Form B-C): The students' learning incompetence must be evaluated according to the each different matter in the questionnaire. Each situation in the questionnaire must be evaluated considering how much or how often it is observed by the student or teacher. The reliability of the results can be increased by comparing the same answer given by the student and the teacher.

"Student's and Trainees'Job Evaluation" Form (Form D)
- This form is used to evaluate the students' or trainees' work. To do this evaluation, the student is given a vocational duty or homewok related to his/her job and asked to finish this work in a specific time and the form is filled in at the end of this job. To reach more valid and reliable results the evaluation must be done by different people.

- This evaluation is used for giving the students or trainees vocational guidance or inform the related people about vocational skills. The personnel who fills in the form to provide vocational guidance tries to focus on the abilities of the students or the trainees and eliminate the disabilities by having interviews with the students and trainees.

"Learning Difficulties" questionnaire for the students (Form E1)
In this questionnaire consists of positive expressions related to students' learning behaviour. The students are supposed to put a tick next to the choices which show the difficulty rate of the situations for the students to do. When a students select "always" or "most of the time" choices, it means that the student has a difficulty to do the activity in the expression. The students will get guidance and help for their difficulties.

"Learning Difficulties" questionnaire for the teachers (Form E2)
This questionnaire is the same as Form E1, but the teacher fills in this form and the results are compared with the students results and evaluated.

"Indicators of learning defects" survey (Form F)
- Why and When is used?
- It is used to find out the students who have learning difficulties or fail in the school subjects.
- This test includes questions to measure the students'
- reading skills
- Audio and visual perception
- Writing skills
- Maths skills
- Study habits and ability to be organized
- Ability of orientation
- Tactile perception
- Ability to put something order
- Oral skills
- Motor skills
- Social and emotional attitudes
- Mobility situations
- Ability of concentration and motivation

To whom and how is it applied?

It can be applied to all the primary or high school students. It is filled by the class teacher or class advisor teacher using the information taken from students' parents and in cooperation with the school counsellor.

How is it evaluated and interpreted?

- In the test there are four choices for each question. The possible answers are "never", "sometimes", "often", "always". The class advisor teacher choose the most appropriate answer according to the students' situation based on his/her observations.
- In the evaluation process it is thought as an indicator of some learning defect if "always" or "often" choices were selected most.
- However to reach more reliable results the student must be observed in various subjects and time and also some information about the student must be taken from the parents.
- Another important point is that it is impossible to reach a certain decision about the student according to the result of only this test.
- The student who shows the indicators of learning defeats must be directed to Psychological Guidence and Research Center or Child Psycology or Neurology Departments of a university hospital by the school counselor.

6-Studies to increase the students' success

After the evaluation of the tests and scales the studies to increase the students' success are determined.

- Psychological Counselling Service is going to; Observe the students' vocational experience, support the students about the meaning and importance of vocational experiences, help the students make decisions according to their personality and qualifications
- Choosing advisor teachers for the students (Class advisor teachers)
- Encouraging the students to practise what they learn
- Giving students appropriate guidance according to their needs and qualifications, helping them place in appropriate jobs according to their education and also coordination and following of their placement
- Preperation, application and evaluation of individual education programmes for the teachers by the school psychological counselling service and informing the teachers about the classroom applications
- Preperation, application and evaluation of the individual education programmes by the classroom teachers
- Informing the students about motivation, studying effectively and how to be successful by the school psychological counselling service
- Educating the parents about " Advices for parents on studying the school subjects and being successful" by the school psychological counselling service.