
Online Learning Resources For Mentally Challenged Children In India

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ABSTRACT: The present study aimed to know the online learning resources for mentally challenged children in general. Mental challenged is one of the most prevalent developmental disabilities. The present study charts out a comparative analysis of the different dimensions of online learning resources of mentally challenged children. The study shows that the mentally challenged children are learning from various dimension such as video games, Augmentative Communication, Web-based special Education Solution, Lightweight and Intuitive Video Chat for Online Learning, Online App for Assessing Individual Academic Performance, touch window and Portable word processors. Try to recognize that the school will be only one part of the solution for your child and leave some of the stress behind. Your attitude (of support, encouragement and optimism) will have the most lasting impact on your child.

Keyword: Learning Resources, Online, Mentally Challenged.

INTRODUCTION

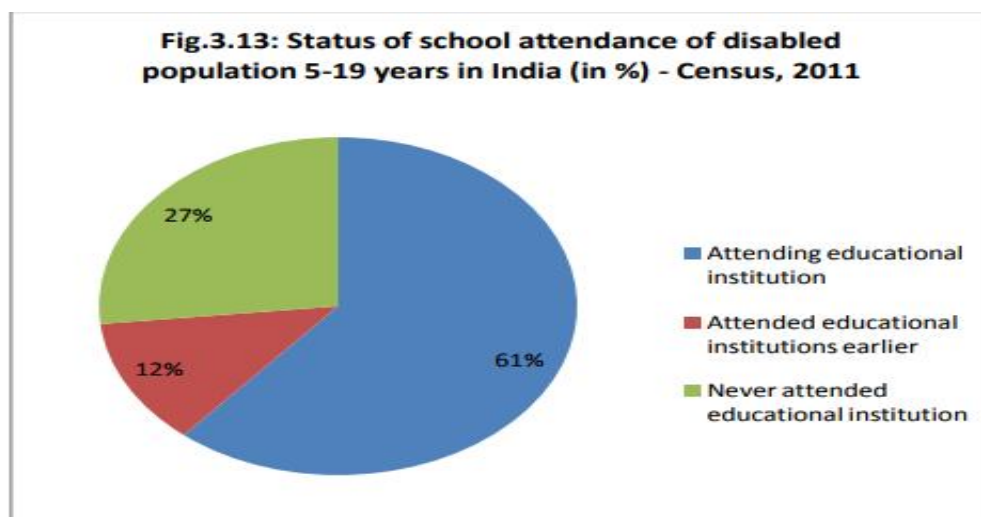
As many educators, parents, and families know, having a learning disability doesn't make a child any less smart than his or her peers. In fact, it often means that the child is as smart or smarter but their brain just works differently because it's a neurological process. People with learning disabilities have a biological brain make up which counterintuitively functions to typical memory, reasoning planning, organizational, and attention tasks. These disabilities are often lifelong and create a divide between intellectual abilities and actual success, especially when the learning disability is unidentified. That's why it's supremely important to evaluate the possibility of the presence of a learning disability while a child is young. That way they can gain the tools they need to function, thrive, and learn as individuals.

Parents and special education teachers often have difficulty finding new tactics to provoke a love for learning in children with learning disabilities. Fast-advancing technology has made the Internet one of the best resources for discovering entertaining activities that teach as well as excite children. Educational websites assist children with learning disabilities master basic skills in reading and math or advanced concepts like calculus. To help with that process, the following online resources for mentally challenged children.

THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION IN INDIA

Choices in education are hard enough normally. When you're the parent of a child with special needs, it can be tougher. Special needs education has only in the last century been seen as necessary and with good reason. In India, there are 27 million people with special needs, in a population of 1.2 billion. This means that about 2.2% of our population has special needs.

About 4.6 million people are in the age group 10 to 19 years. The picture for 0 to 6 years is bleaker, with about 2 million in these age group having special needs. They often have trouble with access to education. According to the Census, only 61% of children with special needs (CWSN) aged 5 to 19 attended educational institutions of any sort.



Source: Census of India, 2011

And those are the ones that we know of! Many cases are not reported due to misconceptions, societal fears, or lack of diagnosis.

That number of 61% might not be representative too. A majority of children with special needs do not receive any formal education, in spite of the practice of inclusive education in some schools. This is because children with disabilities and learning deficiencies are segregated from mainstream schools and other regular routines and social activities of normal children.

The term 'special needs' can cause some confusion. It refers to particular educational requirements resulting from learning difficulties, physical disability, or emotional and behavioural difficulties. Often, these can overlap depending on the child's condition.

Physical difficulties: These can affect a child's physical functioning, mobility or stamina. Aside from obvious ones such as loss of limbs, it can refer to respiratory disorders, blindness, or epilepsy. Hearing loss and chronic fatigue also fall under these. This may occur before birth or after due to infection or other issues.

Mental difficulties: These cover a wide range of issues. The most common are learning difficulties, in which a person cannot learn in the usual manner. Dyslexia and dyspraxia are common ones. Communication disorders such as stuttering or speech difficulties caused by autism also come under this. Developmental difficulties can also arise due to chronic conditions. Developmental delays caused by Down's Syndrome are a common example of this.

Emotional and behavioral difficulties: These are usually social difficulties that may not be caused by biological factors. These may be internalized, so the child may not interact well with others or have low self esteem. They might also be externalized, so the child may act disruptive in the classroom. Children with anxiety, OCD or other mental illnesses often experience these.

CURRENT SITUATION IN INDIA

Policy Issues

India's policies regarding special needs children are unclear.

The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MSJE) runs separate schools for special needs children. But, the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) promotes

these children being included in regular classrooms. Parents often cannot decide which is the best option.

Further, colleges for higher studies may refuse admission to special needs children. This is due to bias regarding their ability to complete certain courses.

In 2010, a visually challenged young woman had to approach Bombay High Court to be allowed to study physiotherapy.

The country lacks a central body to frame guidelines, leaving colleges and schools to decide for themselves. This doesn't work in favor of the children or parents.

This, combined with numerous other issues, means that many special needs children do not get the education they need. While 89% are enrolled in primary school, that number drops to 8.5% in secondary school. Only 2.3% of special needs children reach higher secondary (11th and 12th).

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Bebko & Luhaorg (1998) studied that the memory abilities of persons with mental retardation have focused on teaching metacognitive strategies, such as rehearsing and organising information into related sets, which many children without disabilities learn to do naturally.

Hughes & Rusch and Merrill (1998; 1990) found that the students of mental retardation do not tend to use such strategies spontaneously but can be taught to do so with improved performance on memory-related and problem-solving tasks as an outcome of such strategy instruction.

UNESCO (2011) says that "How Information and Communication Technology (ICT) can be used in the most effective ways for education of people with disabilities is currently high on the political agendas of all countries, particularly those who have ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Person with Disabilities (CRPD, 2006)".

Alan, Bruce, and James (2013) have studied teaching selected microcomputer skills to retarded students via picture prompts, and the study took place in a special education classroom of an elementary school. In this study, five retarded students were taught to use picture prompts,

and the results indicated that the program was successful in teaching the microcomputer skills to the students.

Singh & Agarwal (2013) investigated whether children taught with computer games perform better in terms of mathematics and whether computer games help boys and girls equally well. The results favoured computer games for both boys and girls. However, boys seemed to benefit more from computer-games than girls. The researchers could understand the fact that mentally retarded students could learn extremely well through computer games, as they showed enthusiasm in learning while running the game, and even they did not let the class finish. In the last two weeks, it was time to teach the extra groups of vocabularies to enhance their ability to use computer-related games which was the best way to make them concentrated, for example they were taught numbers and colors as extra, but useful words.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The present study highlights the different dimensions of online learning resources for mentally challenged children.

OBJECTIVE

- To identify online learning resources for mentally challenged children in India
- To examine the India's policies regarding special needs to children

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The study spells out the online learning resources of mentally challenged children. With the help of literature, online learning resources can be understood. The present study charts out a comparative analysis of the different dimensions of online learning resources of mentally challenged children. This study relies mostly on information gathered from secondary sources such as government reports, journals, books, articles, research papers, news papers and reliable websites.

ONLINE LEARNING RESOURCES

The most important challenges facing parents of a child with special needs or disability, they include offering a useful plan for their child's mental and emotional growth with proper care and learning. The major impacts on the growth of such children, this is the part played by the government and its national policies. There are several rules for children with special needs, including policies for separation or inclusion in the educational process.

Special technology allows increasing the independence of a particular student freeing him from the constant need for direct teacher involvement. As a result, a student can choose the speed of learning that is convenient for him which leads to more personalised learning. When a student does not inhibit the learning process for the whole group, it allows reducing the anxiety level which plays a significant role in education as well. Implementation of technologies in special education allows simplifying communication and improve the academic skills of students with disabilities.

The resourceS is available on the Internet in an online educational environment. It might be HTML documents such as a course or chapter objectives, lecture notes, assignments, or answers to chapter questions. It might be audio or video lessons, interactive exercises or exams, or documents providing links to other Web sites.

Mental challenged is defined as a condition that includes the below-average intellectual function and a lack of ordinary daily living skills. Students enrolled in a special education learning methods to help individuals with intellectual disabilities learn. Methods can include problem-solving assignments, individualised instruction and small-group work. Prospective teachers leaning also learn what special accommodations are needed when students take tests. Working as a special education teacher with a concentration in intellectual disabilities requires you to be creative, patient and willing to motivate students.

The Technology Available for Mentally Challenged Children

Technology makes it possible for a classroom to be enhanced with individual learning events, allowing instructors to provide greater flexibility and differentiation in instruction. Teachers can use technology to offer a variety of learning opportunities and approaches that engage, instruct, and support special education students with a myriad of tactics designed to

appeal to individual learners. No longer are students stuck in a classroom they do not understand, trying to learn at a pace they cannot keep up with or participate in.”

Visual learners are those who see concepts in pictures. Visual learners prefer to use diagrams, pictures, study notes, hand-outs and movies to see the information they are learning. Auditory learners benefit from hearing material. Teaching discussion and music work well for them. Many teachers use auditory textbooks for these learners to listen to either during class or as homework to maximise their learning style. Alternatively, another student can read the textbook to the auditory student or make the tapes as an inexpensive alternative for a service project.

Speakable Items that allows visually impaired or learning disabled students to operate the computer through voice commands so they can access the same curricula as others. Eg. Speech synthesis and voice recognition. The adaptive computing technology allows using digital devices to bypass challenging tasks. Screen reader applications such as JAWS along with specially designed Braille keyboards allow visually challenged students to use the computer. Podcasts for students as well as live chats. From a blended-approach perspective, some online programs offer both auditory lectures, as well as PowerPoint slide presentations. Also, live chats (both auditory and visual – i.e., Elluminate, Horizon Wimba, etc) offer more opportunities for a variety of learners.

Video Games: Video games are ubiquitous in the society and this technology has transcended its initial playful side to become also an educational and cognitive training tool. In this sense, different studies have shown that expert game players gain advantages in various cognitive processes respect to non-players and that playing with video games can result in particular profits that in some cases could be generalized to other tasks. Accordingly, video games could be used as a training tool in order to improve cognitive abilities in atypical populations, such as relating to individuals with intellectual disabilities (ID). However, literature concerning video games in people with ID is sparse. In this paper we executed a narrative review of the studies about the use of video games in relation to people with ID.

Augmentative Communication: Augmentative Communication systems help students with speech problems to overcome the communication barrier. Such systems use picture charts,

books, and specialised computers providing functions of word-prediction for more effective communication.

Web-based special Education Solution: Modern software allows minimising the effort required for taking a step towards the student with a disability. Web-based solutions help to participate in an education process to the same degree as other students.

Web-Based Service For Distance Learning: Due to some forms of disabilities, students with special needs can face issues associated with moving over long distances. Web-based learning solutions allow providing educational services taking into account the interests of students and educational organisations. The task is to offer students an easy-to-use and intuitive tools for purchasing online courses, scheduling, and tracking the academically progress.

An example of such tool is Devengo, integrated cloud-based service for online booking and payment using this software, students can order one of the available educational courses online without leaving home. Also, there's the possibility to hire a specialist who has the skills required for teaching students with a particular form of disability.

Lightweight and Intuitive Video Chat for Online Learning: Neat and intuitive web-based chatting applications allow creating online classes that help students with disabilities to communicate with each other and the teacher. Such virtual classrooms allow both learners and teachers from different parts of the world to participate in live classes. Low cost of such an approach to the educational process is one of its main advantages. Students don't have to worry about travel expenses. All that is required is a laptop or tablet with access to the internet.

Online App for Assessing Individual Academic Performance: Special education software helps students with disabilities to reach their potential. Individualized Education Program (IEP) Software simplifies the work with children that have learning issues caused by brain injuries, developmental delays, or intellectual disabilities. Response to Intervention software provide tools required for assessment of students' knowledge. Such solution helps to monitor the learning progress and visualize it as a set of charts. Also, it allows simplifying the reporting.

Portable word processors: Portable word processors give students an alternative mode for taking notes and word processing. Most of them have an interface directly with a printer.

Touch Window: Touch Window provides a mouse alternative by allowing students to directly touch the screen to activate and control the computer application program.

FINDINGS

The study shows that the mentally challenged children are learning from various dimension such as vedio games, Augmentative Communication, Web-based special Education Solution, Lightweight and Intuitive Video Chat for Online Learning, Online App for Assessing Individual Academic Performance, touch window and Portable word processors.

CONCLUSION

Parents sometimes make the mistake of investing all of their time and energy into the school as the primary solution for their child's learning disability. It is better to recognize that the school situation for your child will probably never be perfect. Too many regulations and limited funding mean that the services and accommodations your child receives may not be exactly what you envision for them, and this will probably cause you frustration, anger and stress. Try to recognize that the school will be only one part of the solution for your child and leave some of the stress behind. Your attitude (of support, encouragement and optimism) will have the most lasting impact on your child. The above study shows that the mentally challenged children are learning from various dimension such as video games, Augmentative Communication, Web-based special Education Solution, Lightweight and Intuitive Video Chat for Online Learning, Online App for Assessing Individual Academic Performance, touch window and Portable word processors. Try to recognize that the school will be only one part of the solution for your child and leave some of the stress behind. Your attitude (of support, encouragement and optimism) will have the most lasting impact on your child. The most important challenges facing parents of a child with special needs or disability, they include offering a useful plan for their child's mental and emotional growth with proper care and learning. The major impacts on the growth of such children, this is the part played by the government and its national policies. There are several rules for children with special needs, including policies for separation or inclusion in the educational process.

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