

MULTISENSORY STRUCTURED LINGUISTIC METHOD FOR DYSLEXIC CHILDREN

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Abstract

Dyslexia is a reading disability and various researches have proved that it affects maximum number of school going children - 14.63% (Bains-1997), 24.42% (Kohli-2001) and 23% (Brazeau-2005). Children suffering from dyslexia repeatedly fail academically and become early school leavers as others are aware of their disability, such as their parents, educators and friends. It contributes directly to the formation of their unrealistic self-image. If they do not receive help in time it can worsen and can render them overly sensitive to criticism and reprimands. Dyslexic children react emotionally, become frustrated, lose their self-esteem and develop a negative self-image due to negative feedback and teased by peers and pressure coming from educators and parents. Education of these children is a matter of concern for all the educators. Different studies had tried to find suitable interventions for educating these children. One such method is Multisensory Structured Linguistic Method. In this paper researcher tried to explain how this method is helpful in educating dyslexic children.

Key Words: *Multisensory Structured Linguistic Method and Dyslexic Children*



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Introduction:

Dyslexia is a lifelong condition. With proper help, people with Dyslexia can learn to read and/or write well. Early identification and intervention is the key to help dyslexics achievement in school and in life. Most people with dyslexia need help from a teacher, tutor or a therapist especially trained in using a Multi-Sensory Structured linguistic approach. Multisensory Structured Linguistic Method is that method in which multiple senses are used to teach linguistic structures. This method is totally teacher directed and all the activities used for teaching language are presented in a certain order.

Multisensory Approach: The names of Fernald, Gillingham, Stillman and Orton usually come to picture when multisensory approaches are mentioned. Basically all these educators have advocated methods, which use as many channels of input to the learner as possible.

Remedial practitioners would try anything that worked multisensory methods, based on the use of all available channels, naturally do their purpose and they use them for remedial teaching. The method usually involved the learner finger tracing over the letter shape or word shape to be mastered while at the same time saying and hearing the auditory component and seeing the visual components. Multisensory methods involve correction of a child's problem by using combinations of the child's sensory system in the training process. The assumption is that the child will be more likely to learn if more than one sense is involved in learning experience. Dyslexic students need a different approach to learning language from that employed in most classrooms. They need to be taught, slowly and thoroughly, the basic elements of their language, the sounds and the letters which represent them and how to put these together and take them apart. They have to have lots of practice in having their writing hands, eyes, ears, and voices working together for the conscious organization and retention of their learning.

As has been shown by research on the etiology of learning disabilities, children with learning disabilities require multisensory learning. This is vital because it stimulates the learning disabled children's learning processes through all the senses. Since all the pathways to the brain are involved, the stronger areas of the brain are used while the weaker areas are exercised. By using the visual, auditory, oral and kinesthetic pathways simultaneously, memory can be strengthened.

In multisensory approaches it is not primarily a matter of developing the senses further but of using all the senses to support the visual and auditory modalities. In better-known multisensory approaches, the assumption is that they are used along with the auditory to support or strengthen the visual channel such as, feeling the shape of the letters. It is important to understand the principle of utilising sensory modalities to assist in the development of normal perception of other modalities.

Structured Approach: Basically, a structured programme is one that is almost totally teacher directed- that is the teacher determines most activities. The programme is introduced in a certain order. The child learns to acquire an accurate image for recall by using all his sensory pathways simultaneously by looking at its shape, listening to its sounds, saying its name and writing it. When the first phonogram is secured and the child could recognize it for reading and recall it for spelling, then proceeds to the next one, which is learnt in the same multisensory way and linked it to the first syllable. In this way child learns all; syllables and he progresses towards sentences. As child work through the structure and as the appropriate

phonograms are learned, spelling rules and probably way of spelling sounds are incorporated. A careful record of progress through the structure is maintained. Nothing is taken for granted, and recall is based only on what has been included in the individuals programme. There is no confusion, only certainly and steadily increasing confidence in the pupils own ability to learn is incorporated.

Linguistic Approach: Linguistic is the study of the language and only recently have linguistic turned their attention to the area of reading and reading improvement. In actuality, there is no “Linguistic approach” since all reading relates to language. Therefore all reading approaches are linguistic approaches in that sense. Linguistic approaches control the introduction of word structures, beginning with simple sentences in which certain patterns are employed, such as: the man ran to the tan van. Such pattern are intended to teach students that the words are alike except for the initial letter or phoneme and that, therefore, the words can be identified by distinguishing between these various phonemes. In general, irregular words are taught as sight words, and students are asked to discriminate only between regular words forms. The progression of pattern is carefully mapped and students encounter increasingly difficult patterns as they advance. Repetition allows students to master the various patterns.

Principles of Multisensory Structured Linguistic Method

- 1) To uses all learning pathways in the brain i.e., visual, auditory, kinesthetic-tactile simultaneously or sequentially in order to enhance memory and learning while teaching.
- 2) To organize materials in the logical order of the language which follow from easiest to the most difficult one.
- 3) To increase the student teacher interaction while direct teaching all the concepts.
- 4) To adept flexible and individualized teaching that is based on a careful and continuous assessment of the individual’s needs.
- 5) To present the content step by step for the student so that each and every student must progress.
- 6) To include both synthetic and analytic instructions.
- 7) To address all levels of language often in parallel, including sounds , symbols , meaningful word parts , word and phrase meanings , sentences , longer passages , and the social uses of language .

Interventions with the help of Multisensory Structured Linguistic Method :

There are many anecdotal available that proves that Interventions with the help of Multisensory Structured Linguistic Method improves the language proficiency of learning disabled children (Jamieson-2005). This method helps to improve *reading ability of dyslexics* (Shedd-1969, Dyslexia Institute-1975, Frankiewicz-1984, Sparks et al-1992, Pennock-1999, Johnson et al-1999, Rosica-2005), *spelling ability of dyslexics* (Dyslexia Institute-1975, Rosica-2005), *comprehension ability of dyslexics* (Pennock-1999) and *writing ability of dyslexics* (Dyslexia Institute-1975, Pennock-1999). Despite the wide spread use of multisensory structured language technique and positive reports from practitioners that these techniques work, there has been little empirical data to validate their effectiveness (Clark-1988, Jamieson-2005).

Conclusion:

It is important for these individuals to be taught by a method that involves several senses (hearing, seeing, touching). At the same time, many individuals with dyslexia need one on one help so that they can move forward at their own pace. For students with dyslexia it is helpful if there outside academic therapist (special educator) works closely with classroom teachers. Schools can implement academic modifications to help dyslexic students succeed, for example a student with dyslexia can be given extra time to complete a task, or help with taking notes or appropriate work assignments. Teachers can give taped tests or allow dyslexic students to use alternative means of assessments. Students can benefit from listening to books on tape and from writing on computers. Students also need help with emotional issues that sometimes arise as consequence of difficulties in school. Mental health specialists can help students cope with struggle. Proper instructions for students with dyslexia promotes reading success and minimizes many difficulties associated with it.

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