

## **English Learning Vs Slow Learners in Engineering Colleges Today**

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### **Abstract**

Learning is an art. Learning a language like English is a skill. It has several systems and methods. As we know learning English is based on the four learning skills LSRW. Today learning English is one of the major problems of engineering students especially from rural background. It is not only a problem during their studies, but also in their employment. Students with below average learning abilities are called slow learners. They struggle to cope with the traditional learning demands of the regular classroom, while learning English. Actually, slow learners are normal students, but the problem is that they are simply not able to study under the traditionally accepted system of learning. Slow learners should not be confused with students in need of special teaching or unwilling learners who are non-cooperative. A student may fail to excel in some classes, but it does not imply that he or she is a slow learner. The objective of this article is to understand the characteristics of slow learners and the role of teachers in improving them to achieve new heights in enriching English learning for the engineering students.

**Keywords:** English Learning, Slow Learners, enriching learning, engineering students

### **English Learning**

Learning is an art. Learning a language like English is a skill. It has several systems and methods. As we know learning English is based on the four learning skills LSRW.

**“Listening** leads Learning,  
**Speaking** simplifies Learning,  
**Reading** makes perfect Learning and  
**Writing** completes Learning”.

Today learning English is one of the major problems of engineering students, especially from rural background. It is not only a problem during their studies but also in their employment.

### **Slow Learners in Engineering Colleges Today**

Today in engineering colleges, students with below average learning abilities are called slow learners. They struggle to cope with the traditional learning demands of the regular classroom while learning English. Slow learners are normal students, but the problem is that they are simply not able to study well under the traditionally accepted system of learning. Earlier, the slow learners in the regular classroom are neither rare nor unique, but today they are more in engineering colleges. Slow learners should not be confused with students in need of special teaching or unwilling learners who are non-cooperative. A student may fail to excel in some classes, but it does not imply that he or she is a slow learner.

As for as English is concern, the student commonly called a slow learner is one who cannot learn at an average rate from the instructional resources like texts, workbooks, and learning materials that are designed for the majority of students in the classroom related to the curriculum and syllabus of engineering studies.

### **English Learning Vs Slow learners in Engineering Colleges Today**

Every student is special for the English teacher. As every student is different, there is every possibility of improvement sooner or later in learning English language as one of the subjects in engineering colleges today. The source of energy is lying within them, but the only thing to do is to strengthen their confidence towards learning which will solve their problem and improve their quality of learning. Nowadays, several students in a class fall under this category, but most teachers prefer to take more efforts to teach them. The objective here is to understand the characteristics of a slow learner and the role of teachers to improve them in achieving new heights in enriching English language learning of the engineering students.

The teachers may pick some of the teaching aids available to the slow learning students that may enhance the interest of slow learners and help them get involved in learning English. These students need special instructional methods, frequent feedback, corrective instruction, and modified materials. Slow learners are usually taught in one of two promising instructional measures: the one is a class composed mostly of average students, in which case up to twenty percentage may be slow learners, or the other, is a class specially designed for slow learners. Whether the teachers meet slow learners in a regular class or special class, they will immediately feel the challenge of meeting the learning needs of learning English. Their most obvious characteristic is a limited attention span compared to the brighter students. To keep these students actively engaged in learning English requires more than the usual variation in presentation methods, classroom climate, and instructional materials. If this variation is not the part of the lesson, these students may well create their own variety in ways that disturb our teaching. Other noticeable characteristics of slow learners are their deficiencies in basic skills, difficulty in comprehending abstract ideas, distressing, unsystematic and careless work habits.

### **Instructional Approach**

The other method of teaching is an instructional approach that alters the presentation of content to avoid a student's fundamental weakness or deficiency. This method of teaching recognizes content, transmits through alternate aids (pictures versus words), and supplements it with additional learning resources and activities (learning centers and simulations, group discussions and co-operative learning). This may involve adapting an instructional technique by including a visual representation of content, by using more flexible instructional presentations like films, pictures, and illustrations or by shifting to alternate instructional formats as self-paced texts, and experience-oriented workbooks.

### **Corrective Method**

The other alternate approach for the regular classroom teacher in instructing the slow learner is a corrective one. It is the use of activities, techniques and practices to eliminate weaknesses or deficiencies of the slow learners. The instructional environment does not change, instead some drills and practices might be engaged. This helps address the short interest duration of slow learners. Also, these students should be made to feel that some of the instruction has been designed with their specific interests or experiences in mind. Switching from lecture to discussion provides the variety that slow learners need to stay engaged in the

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learning process. In addition to keeping their attention, variety in instructional technique offers them the opportunity to see the same content presented in different ways. This increases opportunities to accommodate the different learning styles that may exist among slow learners and provides some of the remedies that may be necessary.

### **Learning Through Seeing and Hearing**

The common characteristic among slow learners is that they often learn better by seeing and hearing than by reading. This should be no surprise, because performance in basic skill areas, including reading usually is below grade level among slow learners. Incorporating films, videotapes, and audio into lessons helps accommodate the instruction to the strategies of learning methods among slow learners. Emphasizing concrete and visual forms of content also helps compensate for the general difficulty slow learners have in grasping abstract ideas and concepts.

### **Problems with Textbooks, Writing Assignments, etc.**

English textbooks and workbooks, when written for the average student often exceed the functioning level of the slow learner and sometimes become more of a hindrance than an aid. When textbook materials are too difficult or are too different from topics that capture our students' interests, we should develop our own. Sometimes only some changes in worksheets and exercises are needed to adapt the vocabulary or difficulty level to the ability of our slow learners.

For slow learners, many writing assignments are begun only half-heartedly because these learners recognize that their written product will not meet even minimal writing standards. A carefully organized taped response to an assignment might be considered. This has the advantage of avoiding spelling, syntax, and writing errors in English.

### **Study Aids**

Study aids are advanced organizers that alert students to the most important problems, content, or issues. They also eliminate irrelevant details that slow learners often laboriously study in the belief that they are important. The slow learner usually is unable to weigh the relative importance of competing instructional motivation unless explicitly told or shown what is important and what is not. Example: test questions or a list of topics from which questions may be chosen help focus student effort.

The English teacher can increase learning skills by teaching note-taking, outlining, and listening. These skills are acquired through observation by higher ability students, but they must be specifically taught to slow learners. Unless the slow learners are actively engaged in the learning process through interesting concrete visual aids, there will be a little contact emotionally and intellectually with the content the teacher is presenting. This contact can be attained most easily when the teacher varies the instructional material often and organizes it into fragment small enough to ensure moderate-to-high rates of success.

### **Choose the Most Appropriate Method**

As English teachers, we provide our students with the best of ourselves because we want them to succeed. We choose the most appropriate methods, the best tools and wrap up our courage to deliver our lessons effectively. We are concerned about their academic development

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and are enthusiastic when we spot any positive change in their behavioural and cognitive development. However, we get depressed when we are faced with students with learning problems who fail. We are lost and feel our efforts are useless. This happens because not all teachers have had the type of training that provides strategies to cope with these types of problems. We can do many things to help students with learning difficulties and improve our teaching methods for teaching English to the slow learners.

### **Useful Strategies**

Here are some strategies which can be used to cope with students with learning problems: have students' attention focused on you before you start the lesson; instead of teaching with sophisticated language, use simple language and speak slower. Teach new vocabulary. Don't use open-ended questions often. Ask precise questions needing certain answers and build on them to reach your teaching objectives. Repeat, review and recycle on regular basis. This can be very helpful to foster long-term memory. Use concrete materials and pictures. Vary your teaching methods to meet all learning styles. Present the material orally, visually, in group work and in individual work. Give one instruction at a time and don't hesitate to have students tell you what is to be done and repeat given instructions to check full understanding. Write key points on the board, use colored chalk or markers and finally summarize key points at the end of the lesson and use graphs, tables, charts, and so on.

### **Conclusion**

The main objective of this paper is to create greater responsiveness and discussion on slow learners of English in engineering colleges. Learners in this category will exist in almost every class, and I hope that this will create awareness to identify and support them by English teachers in engineering colleges today.

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