



RESEARCHING

LEARNING CHALLENGES

Intellectual disability is a disability that is characterized by limitations in intellectual behavior, such as problem solving, mental capacity, and reasoning, and in adaptive behavior, which encompasses every day social and practical skills, such as communication, personal care, and interpersonal skills. Intellectual disability shows symptoms and development during the developmental period, which is until age 18 in the US. The main symptoms are difficulty thinking and understanding, however, some people might experience behavioral changes, which could include restlessness, hyperactivity, and/or impulsivity. For individuals that suffer with intellectual disability, treatment can potentially help, but these conditions can not be treated.

The main source of treatment is therapy, and can accommodate for just about any intellectual disability. For more severe cases, there are different types of therapy, such as behavior therapy, which focuses on changing harmful behaviors, sensory processing, in which the nervous system receives messages from senses and as a result, people respond with appropriate motor behaviors, and many more types of therapy. For kids that have to go to school, it is more common that the therapy they receive, would be more physical exercise and special education. However, there are some cases where kids have mild cases of intellectual disability, and are able to function in normal classrooms. There are numerous amount of people, who work with people of all ages that are struggling with intellectual disability, couple of them being, occupational therapists: improve daily living of patients and speech therapists: treats people with speech problems.

Throughout many years, thorough studies have been done to see exactly how many kids suffer with intellectual disabilities. Of the estimated 6.5 million people with an intellectual disability, more than 545,000 of them are in between the ages of 6-21. For students suffering with an intellectual disability, 55-73% spend almost all of their day in self contained classrooms without peers that do not have disabilities. There are different severities of intellectual disability, ranging from mildly disabled to profoundly disabled.

First, there is mildly disabled, which affects around 85% of the intellectually disabled population. In this level, kids can obtain information up to the sixth grade level without much additional help, and may need occasional support for certain tasks. Second, there is moderately disabled, which about 10% of the intellectually disabled population suffers from. Individuals can do work and self care tasks, but more help is required. Third, there is severely disabled, affecting about 3-4% of the mentally disabled population, and people that are on this part of the spectrum can execute only basic skills on their own. Last, being the worst on the spectrum for intellectual disabilities, is profoundly disabled, affecting 1-2% of the intellectually disabled population. They could potentially develop basic skills with appropriate guidance and training, but require high amounts of supervision.

Different types of intellectual disabilities include Down Syndrome and Fragile X Syndrome. Down Syndrome is when the human being is born with an extra chromosome 21 in their body. Most common symptoms are noticeable by their physical features. Fragile X Syndrome is the most common inheritable disease. There are a variety of severe symptoms including development decay, intellectual disability, communication difficulties, anxiety, ADHD, and behaviors similar to autism.

Other intellectual disabilities are development decay and Prader-Willi Syndrome.

Development decay is when the child is unable to move, talk, and/or behave at an appropriate age. However, the decay can progress as they grow. Prader-Willi Syndrome is when there's an abnormality amount of genes in chromosome 15. Symptoms of this intellectual disability can include insatiable hunger, poor muscle tone, and short stature. In addition to development decay and Prader-Willi Syndrome, other intellectual disabilities include autism and ADHD. Autism can have a wide range of symptoms. These symptoms can include inappropriate social interaction, learning disability, interest in a selective amount of things, unaware of others' feelings and/or depression, and anxiety. ADHD is when the child has limited attention and hyperactivity. Other behavioral activities can include aggression behavior, absent mindness, anger and boredom behavior, depression, and learning disability.

Almost all of the schools in the United States work the same, and that is students go to school, go to all of their classes, listen to teachers give their lessons, come back home and do their homework, and repeat for the whole year. It is understandable why the system is like this because schools are responsible for a child's education, and in order to teach everyone what they need, they have to make the layout fairly simple, even if it does not accommodate for every kid's learning style. However, there are multiple different techniques that a teacher can use to help kids, who take longer to grasp concepts, as a result of their intellectual disability. These can easily be implemented into the classroom, and could sometimes even benefit students that do not have an intellectual disability.

One solution to help intellectually disabled kids in the classroom is to provide them with an organized, simple, and clear outline of what they will be learning. According to the

Understood community, throughout time, knowledge on learning disabilities have developed and advanced significantly. With the help of pioneer researchers, teachers interpreted certain ways to approach learning and attention issues. There are specific strategies teachers use to help students with intellectual disabilities. To prevent a student from being overwhelmed, a teacher might break down learning tasks into small simple steps, instead of giving tons of homework to a student with ID, they can feel overwhelmed and pressured, which may result in not full understanding of the concept. This strategy involves step by step action. Once a step is completed and mastered by the student, only then the next step can be introduced. It is important for the teacher to be patient and calm while working with these students. Working slow and avoiding lengthy verbal speeches is a good way to engage learning. It helps the information to be better understood by physically and visually performance. Some examples might include charts, graphs, pictures and maps. Feedback is also very important for students with ID. Immediate feedback allows individuals to connect with their behavior. This can go along with providing checkpoints for a student, which is having short assignments due more often. Having this will allow the student to ask questions before it is too late and having one and one conferences with teachers. Going at a slow and steady pace will allow the child to give out their best work, as they would have gotten advice for each step. If for some reason immediate feedback of how the individual is doing is not provided, it forms a difficulty in connection and learning. With these approaches of teaching, more and more kids have successful educational programs. Although this topic is not fully advanced, everyday, more research and knowledge is being discovered everyday.

Our solutions should be taken into consideration because having organized steps that are directed to the students affected by the intellectual disabilities will help them achieve their task that is given to them in a smooth manner. Implementation of these techniques also does not mean to completely change the way a teacher runs their classroom because firstly, teachers know best on what kind of environment they want, but these are small add ons that can truly benefit students with intellectual disabilities.. Every kid with an intellectual disability is different. Some may have a disorder that is very severe, and need to be placed only with other students with ID. However, there are a good amount of students that are in the standard classrooms, but these solutions can work in both types of classrooms. It is easy for kids with ID to feel frustration when they are not understanding a certain concept, but they are normal kids too that may just need more proper guidance. With this, they have the potential to succeed to unimaginable levels, as every child's dreams start in the classroom.

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