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## **What practice at school can modify the hesitant, inexpressive, and unresponsive behaviour of the new entrants in primary school: An action research**

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### **Abstract**

The present study aimed to find out causes and practices to eliminate severely hesitant, inexpressive and unresponsive behavior among newly admitted first class students. In the year 2016 four students enrolled in first class at Govt. Elementary school Lalyana, Cluster Kuftu, Block Kandaghat, Dist. Solan, Himachal Pradesh. Three out of the four students were hesitant, inexpressive and unresponsive to a severe degree. It was the challenging situation teacher encountered in the last 15year's teaching experience. All the four students were in great problem. It was very interesting that all of these students were normal at home as their parents claimed. But it was evident that something is really going bad with them or within them. Then, it was decided to explore reasons and methods to resolve the problem. The information pertaining to students collected was analyzed and interpreted. Strategies/ interventions were framed on the basis of the findings. The systematic plan was prepared to implement the strategies or interventions. At the end of the academic session, subjects showed significant progress. Gradually they become friendly and started to come near the teachers. They started to visit the school with smiling face. They started to speak in the class. They started to express their thoughts and complain mischievousness of other students. They started to follow instructions and laugh in the class. They began to work in groups and participate in games.

**Keywords:** Primary school students, hesitant, inexpressive, unresponsive

### **1. Introduction**

#### **1.1 Background**

In the year 2016 four students enrolled in the first class at Govt. Elementary school Lalyana, Cluster Kuftu, Block Kandaghat, Dist. Solan, Himachal Pradesh. Three out of the four students were hesitant, inexpressive and unresponsive to a severe degree. It was the challenging situation teacher encountered in the last 15year's teaching experience. These students could silently sit for a whole day. Two of them were like a statue; their locomotive movements were abnormal and minimal while they were in school. After passing the urine one of them could sit on that until shifted from their forcefully by the teacher. One of them was like deaf and dumb to every stimulus given by the teacher. These had no social sing on their face. One student used to cry all the day but didn't want to talk to anybody else. These students didn't even laugh when there was a situation to laugh. Two of them couldn't even cry loudly. The teacher worked out school readiness drills and every possible effort to normalize them. Nothing worked out to the expectations. All the four students were in great problem. Besides them, the teacher had to teach two more classes as there were only two teachers in the school for five classes. Therefore, it became mandatory to intervene at earliest so that this problem might not become critical to handle. It was very interesting that all of these students were normal at home as their parents claimed. But it was evident that something is really going bad with them or within them. Then, it was decided to explore reasons and methods to resolve the problem.

### **2. Precautions**

The name of students has not been mentioned in the present action research. Students have been labeled as subject-1, subject-2 and subject-3.

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Such information could cause social stigmatization and problematic situation, but the due care of the facts has been taken while analyzing the problem, planning and executing the interventions and practices.

### **3. Problem**

Newly admitted students in first class were severely hesitant, inexpressive, and unresponsive.

### **4. Objective**

To find causes and practices to eliminate severely hesitant, inexpressive and unresponsive behavior among newly admitted first class students.

### **5. Methodology**

To accomplish the objectives of the present study complete information regarding subjects collected from grandparents, parents, siblings, classmates, and community members. Their activities in the school monitored and observed rigorously. The information collected was analyzed and interpreted. Strategies or interventions were framed on the basis of the findings. The systematic plan was prepared to implement the strategies or interventions. During implementation, the plan was modified to suit the situations or alternative strategies were used. Some of the strategies were proved inappropriate therefore, those were left and new strategies were applied. This took seven months to come to a state where formal education could be started orderly for the subjects.

### **6. Collection of Information**

It took more than two months to collect pertinent information pertaining to subjects. Information was collected directly from known to the subjects, nearby people and community. The major information pertaining to the problem of the subjects are given as follows.

#### **Subject-1**

##### **A. General Information**

The subject was the youngest child in the family. It was normal at the time of birth. Its overall development was normal except language acquisition. Relations of Subject's parents were not good. Alcoholic father didn't accept the subject. The subject had little opportunity for socialization in the family as well as in the community because of its mother's restrictive and overprotective behavior. Subject belongs to a low socio-economic family. Parents were superstitious. Family's main vocation was agriculture. Her mother was too ignorant with whom she resides. She is just literate. No regular source of income in the family. She and her mother were victims of male bullies at home. No early childhood care. The subject did not attend the Aganwari center due to ignorance of parents. There was no healthy environment at home. Subject's mother used to visit school continually, in the beginning, to ensure that her ward was safe. After being ensured she stopped visiting the school. Subject used to the abusive language. The subject had feared for no-acceptance at school and community. It was, therefore, prefer to remain in isolation. Mother was not sure for the success of subject in education. She didn't know how to motivate child for studies or school. Subject absented school for petty works at home.

##### **B. Observations in the School**

The subject was hesitant, inexpressive and unresponsive to a severe degree. Most of the time uniform was dirty and had no hygiene sense. The subject had less dignity and self-confidence. There was no sense of shame for mistakes and no work at school. No social smile on subject's face. No talk, no laugh, and very less engagement in group activities and plays. No study material, the teacher provided the same to work in class. Almost, destroyed the copies and books within two weeks. The subject was not used to take bath daily. Most of the time appeared clumsy in the school. Didn't complete home assignments from school. Sometimes, if it was done, mother used to complete all the homework. Stammered while in conversations with the teacher. No response to instructions in the class. Subjects had dullness and sadness on face most of the time. Little bit comfortable in the peer group. Like to use colours in the beginning but not able to fill in shapes. Couldn't even hold a pencil in right position, couldn't even draw simple straight and curved lines. The subject was not ready for formal education and school.

#### **Subject 2**

##### **A. General Information**

The subject was the only child in the family. It was normal at the time of birth. Its overall development was quite good. Subject's younger sibling was lost right after birth. It resulted in the overprotective behavior of parents. The subject had less opportunity for socialization in the family as well as in the community because of mother's restrictive behavior. Subject belonged to a low socio-economic family. Parents were superstitious. Family's main vocation was agriculture and labour work. Subject's mother was the fifth pass. Her father was matriculated. He was severely infected in the kidneys. Not in the position to earn the livelihood. It was difficult to secure the food for the family. No regular source of income. At last, they decided to live at subject's maternal parent's home. But for the education of the subject, mother decide to stay at home. The subject got less early childhood care. The subject had not attended the Aganwari center due to over-protectiveness of parents. Mother usually requested the teacher to take care of the child, instruct not to send in the sun or not to make children sit out because it was a cold or hot day. There was no healthy environment at home due to struggle for livelihood. The subject was talkative at home. The subject had feared for no-acceptance at school and community. It was, therefore, prefer to remain in isolation. Subjects mother continuously visiting school since subject's admission to leave and pick her although; other children from the same habitation made it to school on their own. Parents were not sure for the success of subject in education. But send her regularly to school. Care for absenteeism but bunked from schools after consultation with the teacher. Mother was concerned about child's educational development.

##### **B. Observations in the School**

The subject was hesitant, inexpressive and unresponsive to a severe degree. There were less dignity and self-confidence in the behavior. No social smile on its face in the school. No talk, no laugh, and very less engagement in group activities and plays. Subject visited school neat and tidy and had hygiene sense. Mother always helped subject to complete homework. The subject was extremely shy. Stammering and

scattering were evident sometimes. Very less response to instructions during activities in the class. The subject had the dull face and sadness was visible in the face. Liked to use colours, but not able to hold colours right and firmly. The subject was not ready for formal education and school.

### Subject 3

#### A. General Information

The subject was the youngest child in the family. It was normal at the time of birth. Its overall development was average. Physically subject was weak. The Subject was prone to minor infections but parents refused to have such problem. It resulted in the overprotective behavior of the parents. Parents were superstitious. Subject belonged to a low socio-economic family. Family's main vocation was agriculture. Subject's mother was the fifth pass and worked at home. Subject's father was matriculated. He was a plumber and able to earn livelihood well. He is strict to subject. The subject got proper early childhood care as declared by the mother. The subject had not attended the Anganwari center due to over-protectiveness of parents. The subject was talkative at home. Mother used to visit the school to complain bullying by peer group and for small issues. Sometimes came to ask the teacher to assign less homework. She used to write subjects homework although, it was very less. Unnecessarily kept the child at home even for petty reasons. The child used to complain about school at home.

#### B. Observations in the School

The subject was hesitant, inexpressive and unresponsive to a severe degree. Always wore neat and clean clothes and had hygiene sense. The subject had no dignity and self-confidence. No social smile on face. No laugh, no talk and negligible engagement in group activities and plays. Not taking bath daily. Home assignments were most of time incomplete. Mother used to complete all the homework. Unusual shyness, stammering, and scattering were visible. No response to instructions in the class. The subject had dull a face in the school and sadness was evident in the face. Like to use colors. The subject had all study material. Bunked school two times along with its elder brother but brought back to school. The subject was not ready for formal education and school.

#### 7. Analysis and Interpretation

Keeping in view the problems of the subjects, collected information was analyzed and interrelated precisely.

Superstitious beliefs and low socio-economic conditions of the families caused over-protectiveness of parents. It resulted in the low socialization of the child, therefore; subject had less opportunity to interact with the peer groups as well as society. The families of the subjects were ignorant of the value of education; they just wanted their child study and get promoted to the next class. They didn't understand the meaning of real education and all round development. Fathers were less concerned pertaining to the education of the subjects. Families were striving for livelihood, therefore; minimal time was available for their wards. There was unhealthy environment at home; it was not supporting the development of subject's personality.

The subjects had no social smile on their face while residing in the school. They didn't laugh even when there was a situation to laugh and the whole class was laughing. They

merely talk to their peer group and had very less engagement in group activities and plays. There was no response to instructions during teaching-learning in the class. Subjects were severely hesitant, inexpressive, shy and unresponsive. They had low self-confidence and self-esteem. Their shoulders were always down and seemed very low in energy. Their faces were dull and most of the time sadness on the face. The subjects had not been allowed to have early childhood care and exposure at Balwari or Anganwari (child care centers). The subjects were always with fear that they were out of the home and would not be accepted in school. They didn't like to work in groups most of the time tend to work silently and in isolation.

These characteristics of the subjects suggested that they had fear of school. They had not gone through school readiness, not at home or not in child care centers. They had more or less bad effects of their home environment on their personalities. They were not outspoken as most of the time child tends to be. It was due to ignorance of parents and their family conditions.

#### 8. Interventions

After careful analysis and interpretation of the information regarding subjects, different interventions were framed and implemented accordingly. List of interventions was long and had variety in using style. Only major strategies and tactics used are mentioned.

- When they reached school in the morning teacher used to welcome them in strange manner i.e. "how are you? You are welcome. How you come to school by train or airplane? Etc. In the starting, they prefer not to answer but gradually they started saying. "On feet" when they were to be departed in the evening teacher used to said "Goodbye, would you come tomorrow. Come again on Diwali. Do keep on writing letters to your teacher. They used to giggle on these statements.
- To build subjects confidence muscle development exercises for hands and body were employed. They were not allowed to sit in isolation even when the teacher is busy in other class. A constant watch was kept on them and teacher kept on giving them an indirect talk.
- Games in groups were used to boost their level of self-esteem and respect. Due respect during the games and teaching-learning was given to them. They were asked whether they wanted to participate or not and on refusal they were motivated to do the same.
- They were allowed to go out and come back in without seeking permission when they felt a need to toilet and drink water. Ample room was provided to them in the class. They were made free to sit and move in the class.
- Whenever the subjects were in conversation with the teacher, funny language was used to make them laugh. False statements were used to surprises them. It made them giggle at first. This practice made them bit comfortable.
- Indirect talks were used to amuse them in the class. The teacher used to talk about them indirectly while teaching other classes. It made them comfortable and attentive in the class.
- The teacher played games and designed classroom activities in a manner so that they might get an opportunity to touch the teacher so that they can feel like home. Informal talks were used to make them

expressive. In the beginning, they were quite and just shucked their heads in yes or no. But the use of unusually loud and soft speech by the teacher made them attentive and reactive. Most of the time fun was drawn out of their little words and statements. Use of native language always amused them, it was, therefore, made regular a practice to use local language in the class to connect them with the process of classroom activities. To amuse them teacher used to mix Hindi and Pahari language in an unusual manner. It provoked them to giggle at initial stages but later they started to laugh.

- They were appraised among all other children on their each and every little success in the school. It was observed that it made them comfortable and confident. On the failures in accomplishing any task, abnormal gestures on the face were used instead of saying that it was not good or right. False good and excellent were assigned to them to boost their confidence and accept their failures. After some time they start to recognize that this appraisal was not true, their faces could clearly speak out that they were not satisfied. They were continuously motivated by saying that they could anything if they do it themselves. They were not allowed to sit seldom they were kept alive all the day long. During classroom teaching teacher used to give small assignments to the subjects and made their accomplishment compulsory. The major concern was their social development therefore, academic work was kept at a slow pace. It was their unreasonable hesitation, fear, and anxiety to be eliminated at first.
- Small achievements of the subjects were celebrated in the class. Toffees, pencils, erasers, wax colors were used as tangible reinforcers. Different funny shapes in the note book or on hand were drawn to amuse and celebrate their learning achievement. After giving mango shape in copy teacher used to say "Just eat this one. You will not in need to eat in the recess." This simple statement always brought the smile on the child's face and sometimes loud laugh.
- Drawing fun out of their responses i.e. If they said, "May I go to the toilet?" "Go but tell me by which transport mean you are going to go?" If they asked, "may I go to drink water?" "Would you go to well or nearby pond." they just passed a smile on these statements in the beginning.
- Wax colours were used to start the teaching learning process with the subjects. In the initial stage, they didn't even cooperate to do what they were asked. But after making them conformable they started to work with colors. At the first teacher gave them different shapes of different objects to color and then gradually, they start to draw their own. Their colorful work was always discussed and false statements were used about their work. It forced them to said "no it's not like that" for example: if they have colored apple teacher used to say "Is it pumpkin," they said "no", "Ok, is it potato", "no" "then it must be a brinjal." They sometimes softly said, "it's an apple" and started to giggle.
- Rhyme and poem recitation was used to make them speak loud. In the beginning, they used to recite in a very low pitch but slowly they started to speak bit louder. After doing it for a long time it became usual to them. To make it more challenging teacher started to

recite it in uneven pitch of the voice. It really amused them they tried to copy the teacher. It took more than four months to make them free of fear of speaking loud. But it was motivating for the teacher.

- The teacher used one more strategy to thank them whenever they completed any task assigned in the school. It made them feel that they were worth and the teacher was someone who really cares for them.
- Sometimes strict behavior from the teacher was used to restrict them to the objectives of the class. The teacher used to say "I am upset you need not talk to me." Then they tried to accomplish assignments fast and come to show it. When they were not working up to the expectation they respectfully requested "please do it for me. Otherwise, I will be unhappy. You don't follow your teacher. I will be ashamed." These strategic statements paid enough but not all the time.
- Parent talks were frequently arranged in school management committee meetings, especially for the subject's parents. Emphasis was laid on the environment building at home. In the school management committee's training programmes, parents were acquainted with the achievements of the child and asked to provide little time and strategic behavior at home to make them learn what they were expected to. Parents, in the beginning, opposed indirectly and showed ignorance to make it happen but after continuous talks and progress of the child, they started to cooperate. The teacher made it practice to talk to their parents in front of the subjects about their achievements in the school and motivated them indirectly by saying "They are really good. They can do everything. They are my good friends. Take care of them at home."
- Parent counseling was done time and again at school when parents visited their selves or called by the school. The teacher used to talk parents even if they pass by and meet in transit to school. It was done to a build strong relationship with them and made them understand that teacher is working for the betterment of their child. After about four months they were in confidence of the teacher.
- To stop parent's malpractices, false story were told to bring desirable change in their behavior. Parents were indirectly instructed to behave like good parents not only aspirant parents. Sometimes it brought tension but it was diluted. Once one parent called to complain that teacher called their child dirty in front of all students. The teacher felt ashamed of that. He, first of all, felt sorry for that and conveyed the message that it was not his child only asked to come neat and clean but there were three more students. But their parent's didn't complain. They might have felt bad about that, the teacher must be sorry to them also. It calmed the situation.
- Parents were made to sit in school for some time and talk about their child. What good and bad they were doing at home. It made parents understand child's personality and their emotional and psychological needs. Childs progress was discussed and shortcomings were analyzed in front of them. They realized that they were giving less time to their children. They were not accompanying the student in their education.

## 9. Results

Till the end of the academic session, subjects showed significant progress. Gradually subjects became friendly and started to come near the teachers. Subjects were started to come to school with smiling face. They were frequently coming to the teacher to show their tasks. They started to speak in the class. They started to express their thoughts. They started to complain mischievousness of other students. They started to follow instructions in the class. They were laughing in the class. They began to work in groups and participate in games.

Subjects liked to be with their teacher and started to smile whenever faced him and also like to talk to him. The most pleasant situation came when they tried to frighten their teacher through a planned prank. It was the sign that they have accepted their teacher for an extent that teacher can work with them to bring desirable change in their behavior. School managed to build confidence among parents of subjects. Now they are co-operating with the school. But, still, there is a need to train them, how to help the child at home in studies and building their ward's personality. This process took a long period of time but the results are significant to the extent that subject's education have been started normally. Rest depends on further hard work on them.

## 10. Conclusion

The real result of the present study is that subjects like their teacher and school. Schooling could be discouraging for their harmonious personality development. It has been transformed into a pleasant experience through strategic interventions.

The sense of humor, talkativeness, motivation, emotional support for the students and ability to develop a sense of security among students are the compulsory traits that a primary school teacher should possess. The teacher must be skillful to adapt to the prevailing situations and use their learned skill. The thing children like most is laughter it was the only medicine which gave the teacher a ray of hope and courage to keep his patience alive during conducting the present study. It may be said that in whole process the only thing which worked was teacher's presence. There must be a teacher dedicated to first and second class with special training in every school.

School environment and parent's cooperation has made the significant contribution to bringing desirable changes in the behavior of the subjects. It should be made mandatory for schools to counsel parents in the beginning of every academic session. School management committee's should be mobilized to aware parents and community. Training emphasizing parenting should be made available for parents and community.

Subject's hesitant, inexpressive and unresponsive behavior through different interventions at school can be ended only by collaborative efforts of parents and teacher. The teacher needs to be patient, emotionally strong and mature. It is teachers skillfulness in understanding the problem, chalk out a plan, employ and evaluate it, which decides the progress of a child at school.

Therefore, a teacher should be oriented regularly through in-service training programs. Parenting should be incorporated in the syllabus of teacher education. So that they may become skillful and competent to work with new entrants in the school as their teacher as well as parents.

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