

TEACHERS' DESCRIPTION OF PROBLEMATIC LEARNING BEHAVIOURS DISPLAYED BY SCHOOL CHILDREN IN MAINSTREAM CLASSES

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ABSTRACT

Part of the clientele that Speech-Language Pathologists provide services for are children with learning disabilities. For those identified, the provision of educational facilities and special streaming have been made available in selected schools throughout the country. For children enrolled in the mainstream, there are still a large number of them who face difficulties coping with learning in the classrooms. Since there are no set rules imposed by the Ministry of Education to govern the inclusion of these students for special education, the current study was conducted to investigate what solely teachers classify as problematic learning behaviours that can influence outcomes in their student's overall performance in school. Analysis of results from focus group discussions conducted with teachers indicated that concerns revolved around six main areas. These included portrayal of maladaptive behaviours, difficulties in acquisition of literacy and speech skills, along with poor social competence, academic achievement, and self esteem. Interestingly, it was found that all the behaviours described tallied with those commonly identified in students who are diagnosed with learning disabilities. Implications from the study warrant the call for not only a proper identification mechanism and creation of comprehensive assessment batteries, but most importantly in instilling awareness and intensifying collaboration with all involved, for the well being of these children.

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