

# Possible causes of and solutions for low achievement education essay



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\n[[toc title="Table of Contents"](#)]\n

\n \t

1. [Introduction](#) \n \t
2. [The impact of schools and textbook adoption](#) \n \t
3. [It is time to look for some hints and solutions:](#) \n \t
4. [Integrative Motivation](#) \n \t
5. [Instrumental Motivation](#) \n \t
6. [Some Practical recommendations](#) \n \t
7. [Influences outside school](#) \n

\n[/toc]\n \n

Fortunately, I worked for different kind of schools and used to teach in different educational stages in Egypt. But I noticed that the common problem was that there are always a considerable number of lower achievers in every stage. I used to be worried about this fact . Especially, I teach English as a second language. Sometimes, I thought I did my best in teaching the subject and I hoped all the students to be high achievers and I thought that I wish I could apply the policy of " No child left behind ." as much as I can.

Therefore , I have reviewed some literatures, educational researches and thesis (English as well as Arabic resources and I had to translate the later as possible as I could but not as a specialist) to investigate and know more about the possible causes of students low achievements and some practical solutions for this problem.

## Introduction

Low achievement is considered as a multidimensional problem because there are so many factors contribute to the reduction of the educational lower attainment which may be psychological, educational, social or medical reasons.

However, for educational purpose, we can say that the low of educational achievement is the lack of grades which a student gets in tests in all subjects. There are two apparent types of low achievement " general low achievement" which is related to the student level of intelligence and the second type is " partial/special low achievement " which is related to the lack of capacity, i. e., in a subject like reading as it is called " literacy " or the students lack of counting capacity " numeracy " as another example.

Let's first examine some of the reasons for low achievement:

Medical researches indicate that " difficult labour" may cause damage or partial harm in the child brain cells which may reduce his mental capacity. Also, studies indicate that the process of the mental capacities would be different to the girl is higher than the boy in the first ten years. Added to this, differences in " the age of the children," when they enter kindergarten or school play an important role in determining the level of intelligence and mental abilities of the child. We must not ignore the role of simple " mental retardation", where the number of children who suffer from this problem in primary school is about 5%. Also there are many reasons of the delay of " physical growth" of the child, like malnutrition or Anaemia, which in turn leads to the delay of mental growth of the child.

Moreover, diseases and disorders of the nervous system is of great importance to the emergence of the difficulties in school students for example, " brain damage" because of the high body temperature or bacterial infections, and also " simple epilepsy", which lead to the loss of awareness confuses the concentration of the student on the school subject. Also, the optical problems are considered a major reason for low achievement. " Colours blindness" in which the student sees the pictures jump or he is unable to keep the place of the word. Because of " audio inflammations" make the Child to move his head repeatedly, which lead to a sense of pain and confusion to follow-up the lesson.

Nevertheless physical hormones disorders may lead to disorder behaviour of children, sadness and depression, diabetes, in which he frequently urinates and drink more water. These physical hormones disorders may lead to early or late growth which followed by many behaviour problems.

Psychological reasons: like the shy child who cannot participate in school activities because of the lack of maturity in his emotional aspects which in turn makes him unable to depend upon himself or be responsible for his actions that makes him hates the learning process. Also, sometimes we see the child when he is worried makes a lot of movements or suck his nails and fingers. There are many other psychological and behavioural disorders that make the child a low achiever such as unconscious urinating unstable sleep, nightmares, sexual harassment, behavioural problems with other classmates and sometimes fear from the teacher.

Social reasons like continuous family disputes between parents, bad education, divorce and the lack of the interest in the academic achievement for the child, living far from parents, the big number of the family and the bad economic conditions, and the high aspiration, of the parents for their child, which is not suitable for his abilities and attitudes.

### **The impact of schools and textbook adoption**

There is a study found that schools do make a difference to outcomes. While students' social and economic circumstances are the most important factors explaining their educational results, about 14 per cent of the incidence of low achievement is attributable to school quality. As well as, textbooks produced or approved by a governing body, such as a Ministry of Education, may allege to adhere to curriculum guidelines, but in reality not fulfil the objectives they set themselves. As Fullan (1991, p. 70) states.

### **It is time to look for some hints and solutions:**

Education is a process of living through a continuous reconstruction of experience. It is the development of all those capacities in the individual, which will enable him to control his environment and fulfil his possibilities/needs.

The learner is an active participant in teaching learning process. Much of the activities of the educational institutions are built around the student. Each student has a unique personality and unique needs, beliefs and attitudes. Each enters the class with different background knowledge and different experiences (prior knowledge) .

Motivation is one of the most vital determinants of learning. According to Frieze (1981) people's beliefs about the causes of their success and failure influence their motivation for learning .

In fact Maslow's hierarchy of needs is one of the motivation theories, which throws light on student's motivation. It provides guidance for teachers about how can they motivate a student for learning . students must first feel loved and have a sense of belongingness as well as adequate self esteem needs before satisfying intellectual needs . Schools are most effective when they help students feel socially accepted and valued and they build student's sense of self esteem. Teachers typically believe that low achieving students exert little effort and lack motivation. They rarely explain low achievement in terms of teacher's behaviour or classroom environment.

Graham (1991) found that students attribute their failure to their lack of ability when teachers express pity or hollow praise (' I don't believe you are to do this task.'). Also students made attributions to lack of ability when teachers gave them help even though they didn't ask for any. Students who have learned from experience that effort does not affect outcomes develop learned helplessness, they stop trying .

## **Integrative Motivation**

Motivation has been identified as the learner's orientation with regard to the goal of learning a second language (Crookes and Schmidt 1991). It is thought that students who are most successful when learning a target language are those who like the people that speak the language, admire the culture and have a desire to become familiar with or even integrate into the society in

which the language is used (Falk 1978). This form of motivation is known as integrative motivation. When someone becomes a resident in a new community that uses the target language in its social interactions, integrative motivation is a key component in assisting the learner to develop some level of proficiency in the language. It becomes a necessity, in order to operate socially in the community and become one of its members. It is also theorised that “ integrative motivation typically underlies successful acquisition of a wide range of registers and a nativelike pronunciation” (Finegan 1999: 568).

## **Instrumental Motivation**

With instrumental motivation the purpose of language acquisition is more utilitarian, such as meeting the requirements for school or university graduation, applying for a job, requesting higher pay based on language ability, reading technical material, translation work or achieving higher social status. Instrumental motivation is often characteristic of second language acquisition, where little or no social integration of the learner into a community using the target language takes place, or in some instances is even desired.

Care from parents is a basic need of a child. This is necessary to help a child to gain the feeling of stability and harmony. Sometimes, parents neglect their children in some ways. This results bad effects on a child’s personality. Surfleet (2003, p. 39) argued that “ It is very important to the child’s whole development that his family relationship should be well adjusted. Lest of any parent can develop any aggressive behaviour, resistance to authority, bad

temper in feelings of inferiority, Jealously or hate in less clearly defined ways.”

## **Some Practical recommendations**

It is because al-Ghaza`li ( A muslim Arabic scholar who had contributed to education and science in the past ) views education as a technique or skill that he places great emphasis on teaching methods and on the teacher-student relationship. Some of his recommendations have a remarkably modern flavour. He emphasises differentiation, neither holding back able and well-motivated children for the sake of their classmates, nor trying to place demands on children that exceed their capacities. He also suggests differentiated education for boys and girls. He believes

That pupils should not move on to the next stage of their studies until they have demonstrated mastery in the earlier stage. Teaching for younger children should not be abstract but should be linked to concrete situations . He believes that students who achieve highly merit public praise and recognition. If a pupil makes a mistake, it is best to

ignore it the first time and to deal with it in private if it is repeated.

Punishment may sometimes be appropriate but only for the sake of helping the pupil (al-Ghaza`li, 1898, Vol. 1, pp. 62-63). Pupils need time to relax through games and other activities to relieve the tensions and constraints of study (al Ghaza`li, 1898, Vol. 1, p. 63). Instruction should be a gradual but active process, involving stimulation and

motivation, as well as practice and repetition, and the aim should be that

pupils do not simply memorise information but put that information to use in  
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their lives (al-Ghaza`li, 1898, Vol. 1, p. 12). The teacher is a model for his pupils, not only in academic learning but also in personality and moral judgement, and the pupil owes him the same respect, trust and obedience as he shows to his father (al-Ghaza`li, 1898, Vol. 1, p. 34). Teachers should therefore practise what they preach and show kindness and compassion to children, educating them with an open, smiling face. Al-Ghaza`li even recommends a kind of code of ethics for teachers (al-Ghaza`li, 1951, p. 134).

Ibn Khaldun (a famous Arabic thinker and scientist who wrote about societies and education and one of his well known books "almukademah") supplements some general principles with a number of practical recommendations. He recommends to teachers that they present their students with consistent teaching material suited to their capacities, keeping to the works selected for the course and seeing to it that they are completely assimilated before passing on to others; not teaching two subjects at the same time, not stretching out the study of a subject over too long a period, in order not to break the interdependence between its different facets.

## **Influences outside school**

" Pre-school education, parenting help, income support, and everything which improves the home learning environment have major parts to play in reducing later low achievement. All these measures are essential components of what needs doing. It is by no means up to primary and secondary schools alone."

Tackling low educational achievement, by Robert Cassen and Geeta Kingdon, is published by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

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