

# Unmotivated at risk readers in elementary school

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The paper "Unmotivated At-Risk Readers in Elementary School" is a wonderful example of a research paper on education.

At-risk, readers are definitely in the classroom of every teacher. However, it is prudent to know who at-risk learners are instead of assuming that everyone is capable of identifying at-risk learners. The manifestation of poor academic grades and general disconnection is the most common feature of at-risk learners. These occurrences, therefore, require a combined intervention of educational stakeholders to avert this educational crisis. Teachers, parents, and students in these cases are the main stakeholders while the state and the community become the secondary stakeholders (Jennings, 2003). The following aspects have been cited as major manifestations of at-risk readers;

- Academic failure: Registration of poor academic grades has been cited as a major indication of at-risk learners. A chain of poor grades has been cited as one of the major causes of dropping out of school. A string of poor grades demotivates the learner who cannot keep up with ridicules from his or her peers (Jimerson, 2002).
- Disengagement; the At-risk learners feel uncomfortable and unmotivated to pay attention to any school-related activity. This is characterized by low self-esteem and aspects of alienation from the normal school program (Brickford, 2002).
- Deviance; has been described as deviating from the stipulated social norms. This has been attributed to what can be called as a mismatch between readers and the school environment. Deviance may then lead

to isolation in a social setting which in turn results in low self-esteem and emotional problems. This can be prevalent among some adolescence in the elementary school setting.

The above-mentioned aspects need professional redress by the teacher as the first intervener. This is because it is the teacher who spends most of the time with the learners thus able to promptly identify the at-risk learners. Ordination between the teacher and the parents are essential in averting the setbacks faced by at-risk learners in an elementary school. To effectively handle this challenge, possible causes that may result in academic failure, disengagement and deviance must first of all be established. This is because all the three have got one consequence which is demotivation to learners (Husted et al, 2005). Several academic related issues can affect the motivation of At-risk Students. These include;

- Poor study methods which result in low academic scores
- Failure to do assignments given and homework.
- Disengagement from classroom participation.
- Lack of attention in class and disruptive behavior.
- General disobedience to school and class rules.
- Unworking relationship between the learner and classmates.
- Difficulty in keeping on with task given.

It is important to note that intervention does not only rest in the shoulders of the classroom teacher. There should be a general commitment from all the main educational stakeholders. Factors such as the teacher-student ratio must greatly be looked into by the employment authority as research has established that large classrooms affect one to one interaction between

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teachers and learners. Small classrooms, on the other hand, encourages the teacher to student instruction which increases the isolation of withdrawn learners(O'Brian, 2002).

In addition, teachers should go the extra mile in giving attention to At-risk students. These students need someone who is very patient and tolerant to them if at all they are to be helped.

Relevant players especially school leaders should select teachers with a proven track record in rehabilitating At-risk learners. Great consideration should also be put on the stage of development that most of the elementary learners are undergoing. Some learners may be much potentiated but can easily be distracted with factors such as peer pressure and adolescence dating (Shambaugh, 2002).

For teachers to effectively incorporate At-risk learners in the classroom, the teachers need to put into practice the following factors.

- Realistic expectations of success; the teacher should consider the ideal classroom model where learners have got different abilities. Each learner should be motivated towards success but they should not be restricted to perform up to a certain level. Any improvement should be noted (Smink, 2002).
- The teacher should use individualized instruction approach to cater to the diverse needs of each learner.
- Teacher and parents should always be in touch with regard to the welfare of the students (Waldstein, 2004).
- Introduction of performance contracts may help instill commitment and objective teaching.

- The teacher's methods of assessment and instruction should not be predictable as it may result to student boredom. These methods should vary from time to time.
- The interests exhibited by apathetic students' should be used creatively by the teacher to guide through learning (Education Commission of states, 2005).
- Bonding sessions should constantly be encouraged between students and teachers. In these sessions, students should be encouraged and their fears addressed. Regular guidance and counseling sessions should be encouraged.
- Invitation of resource persons who have in the previous transformed from bad to good to give a motivational speech to learners can also play a great role in transforming At-risk learners(Meyers, 2002).

In conclusion, all is not lost in rehabilitating at-risk learners. The teachers who spend most of the time with learners should be patient and intervene if an ultimate solution should be found. Motivation is an essential aspect of assisting and building the confidence of At-risk learners.