

**ADVANCED PEDAGOGY FOR LOWER ATTAINERS****Dipak Chavan¹, Ph.D. & Swati Kale²**¹ Prof. Tilak College of Education, Pune – 30² Asst. Prof. JSPM's Rajarshi Shahu College Of Education, Tathawade, Pune - 33**Abstract**

An effective teacher has a wide-ranging repertoire of different teaching and learning models, strategies and techniques and knows how to create the right conditions for learning. The choice is determined by the nature of the learning objective. Present paper is an attempt to provide guidance on the relationship between pedagogic approaches (teaching models), teaching strategies, techniques and methods of creating the conditions for learning of lower attainer.



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Introduction

Pupils who make slow progress are often easily distracted and can also demonstrate off-task behavior. They may have low self-esteem. They may find it difficult to learn new concepts and many struggle to understand what is expected of them. If they are taught in lower sets, they will not have models of high achievement in their peers and will consequently have lower expectations of themselves.

Resolving the issues

Planning to teach groups that include low attainers requires preparation. Attention needs to be paid to the development of literacy and numeracy skills in every subject, every lesson. It is important to highlight the aspects of each subject that need consistent attention in order to lift performance and ensure progression. For example, to move from level 3 to 4, pupils need to use precise subject terminology, be able to generalise and use the conventions of the subject.

What can you do to make the learning for these pupils more effective?

- Concentrate on the key concepts or ideas (e.g. the key objectives for English and mathematics, the yearly teaching objectives for science and ICT).
- Pay attention to the big picture and show how ideas fit together.
- Pay attention to developing the key skills of literacy and numeracy every lesson.
- Ensure the curriculum relates to the life experiences of pupils.
- Use 'assessment for learning' to help pupils understand what they are aiming for and what a high-quality response looks like.
- Use a structured approach to lesson design, planning lessons as a series of episodes.
- Lower-attaining pupils will generally benefit from having lots of starters and plenaries that review learning at regular intervals within each lesson.

Lifting performance within subjects

Pupils classed as ‘lower attaining’ are often the most difficult to keep motivated. It is therefore important to understand what motivates lower-attaining pupils to learn and what techniques you can employ in order to create motivation.

The following techniques have also been identified as helpful by lower- attaining pupils:

- having key words for the lesson on their desks or on the wall;
- saying new words out loud then having the opportunity to practise writing analysing text together with the teacher
- repeating a newly learned skill until they have mastered
- having a small part of the lesson that reviews work
- being shown how what they are learning links explicitly with other work;
- being shown the big picture;
- having opportunities to visualise abstract ideas using model and analogy
- getting immediate feedback on their work and praise for success
- having the chance and time to improve their work and correct mistakes
- working with a partner
- using games and competitions to inject a ‘fun’ element;

Before to start with lower attainers teacher should seek pupil’s views on learning -

You could adapt the questionnaire design your own or plan some questions for a class discussion. Analyse the responses and consider what you need to change in order to improve learning.

When planning how to deliver the curriculum for lower-attaining pupils, it is important to know what needs to be taught in order to move them on. Teacher should be familiar with the National Curriculum level descriptions for your subject, and most teachers share these with pupils to help them understand what they are aiming for.

The big concepts in all subjects from std. 3 onwards, pupils are required to begin using more abstract ideas. Pupils who are lower attaining find the jump from using concrete examples to the abstract difficult. It is useful to know what the ‘big concepts’ are in a given subject. To plan how to move pupils on to the next level, you should have a good idea of what the big concepts are in your subject area, and how they develop. The following task will help to map this out, year by year.

Example for energy, one of five big ideas in science			
Year 7	Year 8	Year9	9+ onwards
Use a simple model of energy transfer to explain that the Sun is the ultimate source of most energy on the Earth, e.g. pupils can use food chains as an example of energy transfer	Describe how energy is transferred through conduction, convection and radiation. (No knowledge of particles is needed)	Recognise the idea of energy conservation as a useful scientific accounting system when energy is transferred using concrete models	Begin to understand that there is a relationship between energy transfer and other measurable factors, e.g. between kinetic energy, and mass and velocity.

These 'big ideas' need to be shared with pupils. One technique that can work well is to construct a concept map with pupils at the beginning of a new unit of work, showing how the unit will develop. Linking ideas together is often difficult for lower attainers; paying attention to this can move learning on significantly. This also has the advantage of providing a 'quick check' to see if pupils can remember what they learned last lesson.

Incorporating the teaching of literacy skills - Lower-attaining pupils often exhibit poor literacy skills, which mean they are disadvantaged in accessing the curriculum. The following characteristics are typical of lower-attaining pupils:

- reluctance to write – and ploys for avoiding writing tasks;
- poor handwriting to disguise weak spelling;
- difficulties in understanding the language of written instructions and questions;
- problems with reading non-fiction texts, and with inference and deduction;
- Inability to adapt writing styles to different audiences and purposes.

However, it is important to remember that not all pupils will have all these characteristics, and many will have some strength, particularly in expressing ideas orally and through drama activities.

You can incorporate literacy through teaching for ex.- A Year 8 geography group was studying the effects of severe flooding in Bangladesh. The teacher realised that the pupils she was teaching had difficulty in engaging with the issues involved. So rather than ask the group to take notes from their textbooks, she asked them to prepare a 3-minute national TV news report describing the flood's cause and its effects on the local people. The pupils were very motivated by the task and set about researching all the information they would need. The resulting 'broadcasts' contained all the key messages the teacher wanted the pupils to learn. As well as providing the necessary motivation, the task also developed their skills of text searching and note taking. A task on the teaching of literacy skills is incorporated into the classroom assignment at the end of the next section.

Literacy is important in all subjects for many reasons.

- Through language we make and revise meaning.
- Reading enables us to learn from sources beyond our immediate experience.
- Writing helps us to sustain and order thought.
- Literacy supports learning. Pupils need vocabulary, expression and organisational control to cope with the cognitive demands of the subject.
- Responding to higher-order written questions encourages the development of thinking skills and enquiry.
- Better literacy leads to improved self-esteem, motivation and behaviour. It allows pupils to learn independently. It is empowering.

For each subject there is a set of specific technical vocabulary that it is important to grasp, and for each subject there are specific texts types that pupils need to learn to read and to write for themselves.

Word level

Many classrooms have displays of key words around the room. This may make for colourful decoration, but for lower-attaining pupils it can cause confusion. The problem is that they do not know which words relate to their particular topic or unit. There are a number of

techniques that can be used to promote a more active use of these words. All of the following ideas can be used as starter or plenary activities.

1. Write the words on pieces of card. Each lesson, select the three most relevant words for that lesson and move them from the 'word bank' to be displayed next to the board or in some other prominent place in the classroom. Indicate to the class whenever the word is used in the context of the lesson.

When using a worksheet or help sheet, always highlight the selected key words in bold and reinforce their use in the text.

2. Give pupils personal workbooks in which they record new key words when they encounter them. The workbooks can then be used for practice. For example, ask the class to turn to the 's' page, then ask one pupil to pick a word from that page and another pupil to give you the meaning. A third pupil could be asked to make up a sentence with the word in context.

3. Ask one pupil to select a word from the word bank and talk about it for 30 seconds without repeating themselves. The other pupils judge whether the talk is an accurate account of what the word means and how it is used. (This activity is best done towards the end of a topic or unit.)

4. Ask one pupil to select a word and talk about it without saying what the word is. The other pupils have to guess what the word is from the description. You will need to model this technique first.

5. Play Blockbusters. Pick two teams, then ask Blockbuster-style questions using subject-specific vocabulary, for example in history: 'What D means a 10-year period?' This can be useful part-way through a lesson to help you gauge how much pupils have learned.

Techniques to aid recall -Lower-attaining pupils often have great difficulty in recalling facts. This puts them at a disadvantage when sitting tests. More importantly, perhaps, it makes it difficult for them to apply one piece of learning to the next. When pupils are required to apply learning to a new context, the problem is compounded if they cannot recall what has gone before.

In order for recall to be effective, it is necessary to review learning on a regular basis. Reviewing the content of every lesson is unmanageable, but in order for pupils to begin to process the information and thus commit it to long-term memory, starters and plenaries are vital. One way to get pupils to review a lesson is by making a diagrammatic representation of the key points. They can then turn to a neighbour and explain the key points using their diagram as a memory aid. The starter for the next lesson could use the diagram from this review, with pupils making the key points a different colour or turning the key words into a mnemonic or acronym.

Involving pupils in self-assessment and peer assessment - If lower-attaining pupils are to learn, they need help in identifying gaps in their performance. Other pupils can be quite good at helping to find out why gaps in learning occur and finding strategies to help close the gaps. For this to work effectively, pupils must be comfortable about admitting mistakes. This requires an open classroom ethos as many lower-attaining pupils worry about the quality of their work.

Classroom assignment: putting it all together

Research suggests that lower attainers often benefit from lessons that are structured into a number of shorter episodes. These episodes will need distinct outcomes and may each require

a mini-plenary. This classroom assignment will allow you to bring together a selection of the techniques outlined.

Lesson title:	Time:
Objectives and learning outcomes What learning objectives do you plan to meet and what specific learning outcomes are you looking for?	
Developing skills How will you plan to develop literacy and numeracy, and support recall?	
Assessment How will you plan to provide pupils with feedback about what they need to do to improve, and how can you involve pupils in peer and self-assessment?	
Vocabulary How will you introduce key words?	
Resources What is needed during the course of the lesson to help pupils work independently when appropriate?	
Episode 1: Starter What will this include: will it focus on literacy or numeracy?	6 minutes
Episode 2: Introduction How will you share your objectives and learning outcomes with pupils?	2 minutes
Further episodes How many episodes will you divide the activities into and how will you plan to revisit learning at regular intervals?	40 minutes
Final episode: Plenary How will you involve pupils in assessing and understanding what they have learned?	

Summary

Apart from above techniques there are others techniques also like Starters and plenaries, Modeling Questioning, etc. Given that there are such different models for tackling low attainment, how are they reconciled? Peterson (1979) concluded that direct instructional teaching produces better attainment on standardised tests. However, what he calls the open approach is regarded as better for promoting creativity and problem solving.

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