INTRODUCTION

• Apart from being slow learners, some mentally retarded pupils have speech disorders. This is caused by failure or delay in speech development in the child. When this occurs, the family and the teacher must make an effort to assist the child to develop some speech so that she/he can also participate in the learning process. As a result, they are unable to communicate effectively with their teachers and other people. This leads them to being inactive in the classroom, isolated and above all under achieving. For these pupils to improve their speech, teachers need to come up with various activities that will enable them practice frequently.

• Some educators have observed that some of the methodologies used in teaching various concepts by teachers are not appropriate. This issue calls for serious examination of teacher practices. One way to contribute to the solution to these problems is to embark on motivating mentally retard children. This research was, therefore, done with full awareness by the researchers, of its contributory role to the problem solving at Neemtree Basic school Unit.

• The education of children with speech disorders is seen as providing the key to securing happiness for them. It is vital that tokens are used in the teaching of severely mentally retarded pupils to reinforce speech articulation.

• The use of token reinforcers can be viewed as being both an experiential and a reflective process in the learning of children with speech disorders

• Children with speech disorders are seen to have a problem-centred approach to learning and are, therefore, motivated to learn by external factors rather than internal factors.
LITERATURE ON PUPILS WITH SPEECH DISORDERS

• Speech is production of sound for communication of oral language; which is the expression of messages by speaking as well as reception of language by listening.

• Children with speech disorders find learning very difficult; because they are unable to put their views across to other people or teachers.

• This is because communication is mostly one sided as these children are able to understand what other people are saying but fail to make other people understand what they are trying to put across.

• There are family-related constraints such as family commitments, lack of parental support, living in isolated rooms which prevent their advancement in their speech as learners and it limits their social interaction. For example; This hinders them from playing with their peers as well as participating in other activities in which their friends are participating.

• Some children do not develop receptive and/or expressive language by age of three years like the majority of normal children do.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

• The objective of the study was to investigate whether token reinforcers can be used to improve speech articulation in severely mentally retarded pupils.
METHODOLOGY

• The researchers used a case study strategy of qualitative methodology, while the sampling procedure was convenience sampling. All the pupils enrolled at Neemtree in special Unit with speech disorders were selected for the study.

• Out of 9 pupils, 3 were identified to have severely mental retardness in the speech disorder.
• The pupils age ranged from 9 to 14 years and all were boys. It was difficult to have a sizeable group of children with similar severe speech disorder.
  • Table showing the distribution of respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/NO</th>
<th>TYPE OF REPROACH</th>
<th>RESPONSES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Parent</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Special education Teacher</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Pupils</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RESERCH RESULTS

• The research result was that:
• Limited words were read prior to the introduction of token reinforcers
• More words were properly pronounced when the token reinforcers was given.
• The pronunciation was consolidated when varied token reinforcers were used to motivate the learners more.
DISCUSSION OF FINDING

- Findings of the study confirm some of the literature cited in the introduction of the paper Riper et al 96, Heward et al 98 and Patton et al 96, children with speech disorder need to be given instruction on how to make speech sounds and how to say words and to be given opportunities to hear and use language to communicate.
- It was found out that token reinforcers initiated a positive response and that once the speech disorder was overcome; learning was maintained. However, it should be noted that token reinforcers should be used for a certain time only and, thereafter, gradually be faded.
- The token reinforcers should be used sparingly not for every correct response but probably for three to start with and later for four correct responses so that pupils keep trying to make effort in anticipation of receiving them.
- The research found that; as pupils start learning without being presented with token reinforcers for every effort, the teacher may start fading them so that pupils would continue to learn without them.
- From the beginning children should not be given token reinforcers for every correct response they make so that they are able to respond even when they are not available. However, teachers should be cautious in administering and fading token reinforcers so that they have an impact on the learning of these children.

RECOMMENDATION

- From the findings the paper recommends that:
- Through sensitization we should make the family and the community aware on the importance of education for Children with Special Education Needs as this will contribute to national development initiatives.
- Parents as well as teachers must be encouraged to introduce tokens in their teaching in order to motivate the severely mentally retarded children/pupils to learn.
- Different types of tokens must be used to attract different pupils to learn.
- Teachers must use friendly, flexible and accessible technologies, such as: stars, sweets or bright coloured objects to allow variety of learner centered methodologies.
- Teacher must give learners sufficient time to respond to the sound words.
- Financial resources should be readily available for Special Education Needs in schools to enable teachers acquire various tokens in order to facilitate the learning process of SEN pupils.
CONCLUSION

• From these findings the researchers conclude that tokens had a positive impact on learning of speech in severely mentally retarded pupils. The tokens were vital, in initiating speech with different pupils preferring different tokens. Furthermore, the more tokens used the better the response from the pupils.


• THANK YOU FOR LISTENING!!!

BUPE(Gift)
REFERENCES

- Levin, Melvin D (1996) Education of students with learning disorders, Microsoft@student 2008 (DVD)