

## A Study of the Teachers' Role in Educating Slow Learners in Primary Schools in Sri Lanka

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This study aims at examining the knowledge, attitudes and skills of teachers involved in improving the second language skills in several selected Primary schools in Negombo, and is based on the adaptation of the theoretical framework of Neuro Linguistic Programming in Education (NLPE) to teach students who are identified as slow learners. NLPE deals with how aspects of emotion, feelings, mood or attitude which condition behavior, influence language learning and its related applications can be effectively applied to improving the educational outcomes for students, teachers, administrators, and the community. The researcher in her early years of teaching in the primary sector had the experience of teaching slow learners in mainstream classes, from which the need for the present study arose. The objective of the study was to find out the problems of teachers regarding teaching of these special students in the mainstream classes and to enhance their knowledge, attitude and skills through NLPE. The research followed a quantitative/ qualitative mixed research design, with a sample of 15 primary school teachers, and the instruments being questionnaires, focus group discussions, semi-structured interviews and a workshop. The results indicated that 100% of teachers were aware of weak students in their classes but only 73% knew about learning problems such as Dyslexia or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. Also, nine out of the 15 teachers admitted that they were unaware of how to help these students. The data indicates that teachers were able to identify students with specific learning problems in their classes and had gained new knowledge about learning disabilities after following the workshop, and that they were prepared to share this knowledge with their colleagues. Based on these findings it is proposed that further research be conducted to explore methods on how teachers could achieve this objective. Finally it is recommended that before they begin their teaching careers, these teachers be educated on the type of problems special needs students may display in the mainstream classes and also, that NLPE teaching approach be introduced as an effective alternate teaching approach.

**Keywords:** Knowledge, Attitudes, Skills, Neuro Linguistic Programming in Education (NLPE), Dyslexia, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder