



STRATEGIES FOR SUPPORTING LOWER LEARNERS

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Abstract. *In any classroom, there is a range of abilities among students. Lower learners, or those who may struggle academically, require specific strategies to ensure they succeed and feel motivated. These learners may have different learning styles or need extra time, support, or attention to master the same content as their peers. It's essential for educators to employ tailored approaches to meet these students' needs, build their confidence, and improve their academic performance.*

Key words: *lower learners, motivate, peer tutoring, approaches, collaboration*

As a teacher, we must be ready to work with students of different abilities. We must use various methods of teaching to meet needs of all students including low-level learners. Who are lower learners? They are the learners for whom academic subjects are a challenge, who are a little behind of their peers and grade level. To bring low-level learners to the same level as others requires to deal efficiently and sensitively with them, to work very patiently. We can help them better if we first identify reasons for a weak performance in the classroom. Reasons could be different- worry and stress at home, medical reasons, not enough access to study material, unwillingness, less interest in a subject. Moreover, the teachers' criticism may get learners' unmotivated. The main task is to tailor teaching approaches to individual needs of the weak learners, to provide ongoing support and encouragement to help them build self confidence and improve academic



skills. There are some strategies that can guarantee reasonable chance to succeed in dealing with lower learners.

➤ **Create a Supportive Environment**

Creating a supportive environment for low learners is critical for fostering a space where they can thrive and build confidence. The right environment not only helps reduce anxiety but also encourages engagement, persistence, and a positive attitude toward learning. Here are key ways to create such an environment:

A. Establish a Positive Atmosphere

A welcoming and friendly classroom atmosphere sets the tone for learning. Use warm and encouraging language to make students feel valued. Acknowledge every effort, no matter how small, and celebrate successes publicly. When students feel appreciated, they're more likely to be motivated to participate and challenge themselves.

B. Build Trust and Relationships

Developing strong relationships with low learners is essential for understanding their individual needs and providing appropriate support. Take time to get to know your students, show empathy, and let them know they can trust you. When students feel understood and cared for, they're more likely to take risks and ask for help when needed.

C. Foster Collaboration and Peer Support

Encourage teamwork and peer collaboration. Low learners often benefit from working with others who can offer guidance and share strategies. Group work or peer tutoring helps students feel more comfortable and supported while learning. When students work together, they can draw on each other's strengths, and the learning process becomes more inclusive and dynamic.

D. Set Clear and Achievable Expectations

Set clear, realistic expectations for low learners. Help them understand what they are working toward, and make sure goals are achievable within their



capabilities. Break tasks into smaller, more manageable steps so that students can experience success along the way. This sense of accomplishment boosts their confidence and motivates them to keep going.

E. Use Positive Reinforcement

Recognize and reinforce effort and progress, not just outcomes. Positive reinforcement such as praise, stickers, or simple verbal recognition can significantly boost a low learner's self-esteem. Praise should focus on effort, persistence, and improvements to encourage continued engagement, rather than only rewarding the final result.

F. Promote a Growth Mindset

Encourage the idea that intelligence and skills are not fixed but can be developed with time and effort. Teach students that challenges are opportunities for growth, and emphasize the importance of perseverance. Use phrases like, "You're getting better every day," or "Mistakes are part of learning," to help students embrace challenges and develop resilience.

G. Create a Safe Space for Mistakes

Acknowledge that mistakes are part of learning and create a safe environment where students feel comfortable making them. Let low learners know that it's okay not to have all the answers and that everyone learns at their own pace. This reduces the fear of failure and encourages students to try without the pressure of being perfect. By creating a supportive, trusting, and positive classroom environment, you not only help low learners succeed academically but also nurture their emotional and social growth. A student who feels supported is more likely to develop the resilience and confidence to overcome obstacles and reach their full potential.

➤ 2. Differentiated instruction

One of the most effective strategies for supporting lower learners is differentiated instruction. This approach involves modifying lessons to



accommodate the diverse learning styles, abilities, and interests of all students. Educators can adjust the content, process, and product of lessons based on the students' needs. For lower learners, this could mean offering simpler explanations, using visual aids, breaking tasks into smaller, more manageable chunks, or providing alternative ways to demonstrate understanding (e.g., oral presentations vs. written work). Differentiating instruction is about tailoring teaching methods to meet the diverse needs, abilities, and learning styles of students, particularly low learners. This approach ensures that every student has access to the content in a way that suits their learning level and allows them to succeed. Here's how you can effectively differentiate instruction for low learners:

➤ **Vary Content**

Low learners may struggle with standard materials, so it's important to provide content that is more accessible while still being challenging. Here are a few ways to vary the content:

- **Simplify language:** Use clear, simple language and shorter sentences. Avoid jargon or overly complex vocabulary unless the student is ready for it.
- **Use different formats:** Offer the same content through various mediums, such as videos, podcasts, interactive games, or hands-on activities. This allows students to engage with the material in a way that works best for them.
- **Provide graphic organizers:** Visual aids like mind maps, charts, and diagrams help students organize information in a way that's easier to understand and remember.

➤ **Adjust Process**

The process refers to the activities and methods used to help students engage with and understand the content. Differentiating the process allows you to cater to different levels of readiness:



- **Break tasks into smaller steps:** Low learners may become overwhelmed by large assignments. Breaking them into smaller, manageable chunks allows students to focus on one step at a time.
- **Offer guided practice:** Provide structured opportunities for students to practice the skills they are learning, with teacher or peer support. This guidance helps build confidence and reinforces understanding.
- **Use varying levels of difficulty:** Provide tasks with different levels of challenge. For example, you might have three levels of worksheets: one for basic understanding, one for intermediate, and one for advanced learners.

➤ **Adjust Product**

The product refers to how students demonstrate their learning. Differentiating the product ensures that students can showcase their knowledge in ways that align with their strengths:

- **Offer choices:** Give students different ways to demonstrate their understanding. Some might prefer to write a report, others might prefer to create a presentation, or even make a video. Allowing students to pick a method they feel comfortable with can boost their confidence and engagement.
- **Provide scaffolding:** Offer additional supports, like templates or sentence starters, for low learners when creating a project or assignment. This gives them a framework within which to work, rather than leaving them to figure everything out on their own.
- **Allow more time:** Low learners may need more time to complete tasks. Offering extended deadlines or allowing more time during in-class activities ensures that they have the opportunity to fully process the content.

➤ **Group Students Strategically**



Grouping students for collaborative work is another way to differentiate instruction. Low learners can benefit from working with peers who are more advanced or have complementary strengths:

- **Flexible grouping:** Change up groups regularly to allow students to work with different classmates. Pair low learners with stronger students for peer support, or use cooperative learning strategies where students help each other understand the material.
- **Homogeneous grouping:** At times, it may be useful to group low learners together so they can work at a similar pace and receive support from each other.

➤ **Provide Ongoing Assessment**

Assessment in a differentiated classroom is not just about summative tests but also about formative, ongoing evaluations. By monitoring progress throughout a unit, you can adjust instruction as needed:

- **Use frequent check-ins:** Short, informal assessments (like quizzes, exit tickets, or one-on-one conversations) help gauge how well students are understanding the material.
- **Offer feedback:** Provide constructive, timely feedback that highlights what students are doing well and where they need improvement. This allows them to track their own progress and take ownership of their learning.
- **Adjust instruction based on needs:** Use the results from your ongoing assessments to adapt instruction. For example, if a group of students is
- struggling with a particular concept, you can revisit it with additional examples or different teaching methods.

➤ **Support with Technology**

Technology can be a great tool for differentiating instruction, especially for low learners:



- **Interactive learning tools:** Use apps and websites that offer personalized learning experiences, allowing students to work at their own pace.
 - **Text-to-speech tools:** For students who struggle with reading, text-to-speech tools can help them access the content more easily.
 - **Visual aids:** Use multimedia content (videos, animations) to complement written materials, making complex concepts easier to grasp.
- supported is more likely to develop the resilience and confidence to overcome obstacles and reach their full potential.

➤ **3. Use of visual Aids and manipulatives**

Visual aids, such as charts, diagrams, and images, can help lower learners process information more effectively. These learners often benefit from seeing concepts in addition to hearing or reading about them. Manipulatives (physical objects that can be moved or manipulated) are especially helpful in subjects like math. For example, using counting blocks or number lines allows students to physically engage with abstract concepts.

➤ **4. Peer tutoring and collaborative learning**

Encouraging peer tutoring is an excellent way for lower learners to receive support while promoting social interaction. Peer tutoring allows students to work with classmates who may have a better understanding of the material, thus reinforcing their own learning. Collaborative learning can take many forms—small group activities, pair work, or project-based learning—and gives students the opportunity to learn from each other, clarify misunderstandings, and feel less isolated in their academic struggles.

➤ **5. Providing frequent feedback**

Lower learners often benefit from regular, specific feedback about their progress. This feedback should not only highlight areas where they need improvement but also reinforce what they are doing well. Positive reinforcement, such as praise for effort or small achievements, builds students' self-esteem and



motivates them to keep trying. It's essential to offer feedback in a timely manner, so students can correct mistakes and build on their successes.

➤ **6. Flexible grouping**

Changing the composition of groups throughout the year or lesson is another powerful strategy for supporting lower learners. Flexible grouping allows students to work with a variety of peers, learn from each other, and receive different types of support. For example, a lower learner might benefit from working in a group with higher-achieving peers in one lesson, then work in a more supportive, scaffolded group in another. This method prevents students from becoming overly dependent on one group dynamic while encouraging a more holistic development of skills.

➤ **7. Emotional and social support**

Lower learners often face academic struggles that affect their self-confidence and emotional well-being. It's crucial for educators to provide emotional and social support by creating a positive classroom environment where mistakes are seen as learning opportunities, not failures. Encouraging a growth mindset—the belief that intelligence and abilities can be developed through effort—can make a significant difference in how lower learners approach their work.

➤ **8. Technology-assisted learning**

Technology can provide interactive and engaging ways to support lower learners. Educational software, apps, and online resources offer personalized learning experiences that can help students at their own pace. Tools like speech-to-text, audiobooks, or interactive math games can also address various learning styles and needs. The use of technology can be particularly beneficial for students with learning disabilities or those who need additional practice outside the classroom.

Supporting lower learners requires a multifaceted approach that addresses academic, social, and emotional needs. Differentiated instruction, scaffolding, peer support, and emotional encouragement all contribute to helping these students



succeed. By creating an environment that values effort, promotes collaboration, and uses varied teaching strategies, educators can help lower learners reach their full potential and feel confident in their ability to overcome academic challenges.

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