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Learning Disabilities Are Simply Words To Describe A Lack of Something - Our Job Is To Add The Missing Elements

With up to 15% of all students being identified with some sort of exceptionality, Teachers are constantly attempting to discover ways to accommodate or modify their programs in order to meet the needs of these students.

Many other students have a great deal of difficulty understanding new concepts, especially in literacy and numeracy. If a student has problems in math, we often give them "extra" math to do. That is like telling a person to close his eyes and he won't notice how dark it is.

Instead, our challenge as teachers is to find some way of "lighting" the child's path so that he "begins" to understand a bit of math or even just one concept. Once we convince him that "math" is not impossible, it will be possible to move forward and he will progress rapidly. We must find a way of increasing the child's faith in him/herself.

So instead of "labelling" and "identifying" children, perhaps we should look at their learning difficulties not as things that exist, but rather as a "lack of something". It is therefore our job to find out what that something is and add it to the child.

I would like to share a story with you that on the surface may be a way of helping Christians who are challenged to justify or prove the existence of God. However, I look at it as an example of dealing with people who do not believe in things they do not understand. As Teachers, we often do not understand why our students are having difficulties learning, and it is becoming too easy to label them with "learning disabilities". Instead we should take the hard road and try to find out what is missing.

While there is no absolute proof of this, it has been said that the student in the following story was Albert Einstein.

DID GOD CREATE EVIL?

Once day a university professor challenged his students with this question..."Did God create everything that exists?"

A student excitedly replied, "Yes, he did!"

"God created everything?" the professor asked.

"Yes, sir," the student replied.

The professor answered, "If God created everything, then God created evil, since evil exists, and according to the principle that our works define who we are, then God is evil."

The student became quiet by such an answer. The professor quite pleased with himself sat down.

Another student raised his hand and said, "Can I ask you a question professor?"

"Of course," replied the professor.

The student stood up and asked, "Professor does cold exist?"

"What kind of question is this? Of course it exists. Have you never been cold", replied the professor. The students snickered at the young man's question.

"In fact sir, cold does not exist. According to the laws of physics, what we consider cold is in reality the absence of heat. Every body or object is susceptible to study when it has or transmits energy, and heat is what makes a body or matter have or transmit energy. Absolute zero (-460 F) is the total absence of heat; all matter becomes inert and incapable of reaction at that temperature. Cold does not exist. We have simply created this word to describe how we feel if we have no heat."

The student continued, "Professor, does darkness exist?"

The professor responded, "Of course it does."

The student replied, "Once again you are wrong sir. Darkness does not exist either. Darkness is in reality the absence of light. Light we can study, but not darkness. In fact, we can use Newton's prism to break white light into many colours and study various wave lengths of each colour. You cannot measure darkness. A simple ray of light can break into a world of darkness and illuminate it. To determine how dark a place is you measure the amount of light present. Isn't this correct? Darkness is a term used by man to describe what happens when there is no light present."

Finally, the young man asked the professor, "Sir, does evil exist?"

Now uncertain, the professor responded, "Of course as I have already said. We see it every day. It is in the daily example of man's inhumanity to man. It is in the multitude of crime and violence everywhere in the world. These manifestations are nothing else but evil."

To this the student replied, "Evil does not exist sir, or at least it does not exist unto itself. Evil is simply the absence of God. Evil is just like darkness and cold. It is a word that man has created to describe the absence of God," and with that the student sat back down.

So the next time you come across a student who has been diagnosed with a “learning disability”, consider that perhaps the child is simply missing something. Keep in mind that everyone is capable of learning anything, if we as Teachers can find the way of helping that child “learn”. The child’s inability to understand what it is that we are teaching may not indicate a problem with the child, but rather with the methods we are using to help the child learn. There is an “absence” of something. Our job is to find that “something” for every child in our care.

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