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Post-Pandemic Learning Recovery



A Concept Note

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What is learning recovery?

We are using this term particularly in the context of post pandemic resumption of schooling, with reference to overcoming the **academic learning loss** that has resulted from **schools being closed**. For many children this has come **over and above the learning gaps they might already have had**.¹

ENABLING LEARNING RECOVERY

Clearly, teachers need to be proactive in taking stock of the situation and initiating systematic processes to enable learning recovery. However, never having faced such a situation before, they will require support to understand the crucial dimensions and the concrete steps they can take to draw the children back into engaging with learning and enjoying being back in school.

What are the steps to be taken to overcome this learning loss?

- ◆ **Understanding how to create a social-emotional basis for children to re-enter formal learning in the wake of the difficulties faced during the pandemic year;**
- ◆ **Using diagnostic tests to identify the gaps that need to be overcome first before normal functioning of the class can resume; and**
- ◆ **Building on a ‘learning progression’ that takes the children through ‘recovery stages’ with the help of easy-to-use tools and the use of existing resources to accelerate learning without stress and also work in a multi-level classroom.**

¹ It is important to emphasize that the focus here is on academic learning recovery. This is because it is not as if children were not learning anything during the time schools were closed. In fact the year has been full of many different kinds of experiences from this once in a lifetime event which would have left a mark on children, including many different kinds of learning. However, the academic learning focused upon in school would have suffered a lot, especially in the case of children who were not accessed or sufficiently accessed by efforts through digital or other means. Hence the focus on academic learning recovery

A brief approach on these three critical points is given below as part of a proposed Learning Recovery Package

A. Socio-emotional support: practices and processes

- ◆ Overcoming this learning loss requires that students feel **connected** with academic learning, participate in the process enthusiastically, and are motivated to put in the greater than normal work required. This is possible only when students are emotionally connected with the teacher, fellow students and the process. For many of the students, this lack of connection might have been the reason why they had learning gaps in the first place. The present crisis presents an opportunity to make a permanent cultural shift towards a more 'caring classroom' where a child is viewed holistically. Activities related to socio-emotional aspects will require sustained work throughout the year and beyond. They may use art, music, dance, sports in a manner that it is well integrated with the overall learning objectives for any grade and not just be mere add-ons. Some of the points below will help to map out a broad picture of the kinds of practices and processes that are essential to build socio-emotional support for the student.
 - ▶ **Desirable practices for the teacher** - Does the teacher smile? Does the teacher create opportunities where s/he can listen to students? Do the students feel s/he is being fair to everyone? Does the teacher make an effort to connect with students as persons? Is there humour in the classroom?
 - ▶ **Creating an environment with fellow students** – Are there efforts to create a discrimination-free classroom to the extent possible? Are opportunities created where children are required to think and work together? Is there adequate appreciation of effort, and support for difficulties faced? Is there a harmonious atmosphere where the students are encouraged to appreciate and help each other?
 - ▶ **With the teaching-learning process** - if the language of the textbook is not accessible, is there scope to use / understand in the language/s familiar to the student? Is peer learning/ peer support encouraged

in the class? Are students encouraged to set joint goals for progress, review their own progress and take action as required? Are adequate learning resources available equally to all students? Is there engagement, reflection and consolidation of learning for students at different levels? Is there room for creative expression in different forms?

B. Quick and accurate diagnosis of gaps: identifying the appropriate starting point/s

- ◆ Identifying the appropriate level from which to start learning recovery is crucial - a level too high may not lead to learning, and a level too low will result in loss of time. This requires a diagnostic **laddered test**, conducted by taking children into confidence as well as encouraging them to share the difficulties they are facing. Students must feel they are stakeholders and not 'victims' of the diagnostic test. Teachers need to understand not only the difficulties faced but also *why* students may be facing those difficulties. For example, understanding a science concept may be difficult because the logical skills required or the language capabilities needed are missing.
- ◆ Teachers will be provided sufficient kinds of diagnostic laddered tests, along with other questions or means to find out the **associated difficulties** children face.

C. Academic learning recovery: classroom processes, materials and assessment

- ◆ Initiate classroom **activities that combine multiple objectives**. Especially when these involve activities for classes lower than the age appropriate class, teachers can cover much greater spans of learning in a shorter duration. In order to do this, the teaching learning process has to be planned around **prerequisites**. It has to incorporate different levels of progression from the same activity so that more is covered in less time. Where possible, multiple objectives may be combined. Occasionally, even different subjects may be combined.

- ◆ Learning may be designed in terms of **stages of recovery** - that is, clusters of learning outcomes that can be worked upon together through a set of connected activities. A 'Learning Progression' is developed where the following **recovery cycle** is likely: Diagnose - initiate - participate - review - assess - achieve expected level - assess/ diagnose - repeat cycle if needed and go to next stage. Teachers are trained on explicit methods to do this in multi-level classroom situations.
- ◆ Rather than creating separate and elaborate **materials** for learning recovery, it would be better to create a **framework** against which existing material, especially textbooks of earlier classes, may be tagged. Banks of **assessment and self assessment tools** can be created to support the process. **Support materials** for teachers may include general guides, subject specific guides, troubleshooting guides and FAQs.
- ◆ Children are also helped to learn the **skills to participate** in an active, participatory, reflective learning process where they can also take ownership of their progress by setting goals, reviewing progress, asking for assessment, taking up independent or self-learning tasks in groups or individually. This will enable them to make rapid progress. Models of progress **trackers** for student learning levels as well as their participation and learning skills may be developed. Trackers for the teacher's skills will also be helpful. Both trackers will rely on well-articulated indicators to measure progress.

Duration

- ◆ A **3-6 month process** may be envisaged for concerted Learning Recovery. After that, regular classroom processes may be resumed but would continue to incorporate socio-emotional support and many of the characteristics and processes that were part of the Learning Recovery phase, especially related to children's ownership and participation.

PACKAGE TO INITIATE LEARNING RECOVERY QUICKLY

- ◆ Orienting teachers on Learning Recovery through an online/in-person workshop.
- ◆ addressing the socio-emotional and process issues
- ◆ sharing examples of diagnostic ladder tests to identify gaps quickly
- ◆ Sharing the framework of learning progression in terms of recovery stages, based on examples from the state curriculum and connecting it with text books and other materials already available
- ◆ Examples of activities for a multi-level classroom along with resources that they can continue to use
- ◆ Learning to use outside help from parents and the community
- ◆ Mutually agreed upon means for continued support through follow up webinars, WhatsApp groups

An app to support Learning Recovery

While the process described above cannot be driven solely through technology, it can certainly be supported. Hence, we are also working on a Learning Recovery App to support some of the key aspects, including

- ◆ Initial assessment
- ◆ Bridging the gaps
- ◆ Orienting and supporting teacher

For further details, contact:

Group Ignus

Subir Shukla — subir@ignus-erg.org

Surendra Prasad Singh — changesurendra@gmail.com

Tushar Tamhane — tusharnt62@gmail.com

Shubhangi Bhide — shubhangi.ignus@gmail.com

Manisha Chaudhry — manisha.mananbooks@gmail.com

Mukesh Aggarwal — mukesh.mananbooks@gmail.com

Deepti Srivastava — deepti.ignus@gmail.com

Gurjot Singh Sidhu — gurjot.ignus@gmail.com

