



SIES School of Learning and Leadership Development (SISSLDD)

TRAINING NOTE (009/2026-27)

on

**Changing Lives of the Average Students:
Biggest Challenge Before Teachers**

June 2026

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Backdrop

In today's highly competitive world, excellence has become the most sought-after goal in education. Whether it is a class test, board examination, entrance test, sports competition, or co-curricular activity, students and parents alike aspire to achieve the highest levels of success.

However, educational reality presents a different picture. The abilities and performance levels of students in any classroom generally follow a typical "bell-shaped distribution". A small percentage of students excel consistently, another small percentage may struggle significantly, while the overwhelming majority fall somewhere in the middle. These students are often labelled as "average students."

Unfortunately, in the relentless pursuit of excellence, this large group of average learners frequently goes unnoticed. They neither attract attention through exceptional achievements nor demand intervention because of poor performance. They occupy a silent space within the classroom, often remaining invisible to teachers and peers.

These students constitute what may be called the "silent majority" of the classroom. They usually score average marks, hesitate to ask questions, rarely volunteer answers, and often avoid participating in competitions or leadership roles.

This phenomenon can have serious consequences. When students repeatedly compare themselves with high achievers, they may experience embarrassment, fear of failure, low self-esteem, and a diminished sense of self-worth (cringe effect).

The greatest challenge before teachers, therefore, is to ignite the potential hidden within this silent majority.

Why Average Students Matter

Education is not merely about producing a handful of outstanding performers. Its broader purpose is to enable every learner to realize his or her fullest potential. A classroom can be considered truly successful only when all students are given opportunities to participate and succeed according to their abilities.

Many teachers gravitate towards bright and vocal students because they respond quickly, participate actively. While encouraging excellence is important, focusing exclusively on a small group of high achievers may leave a large section of learners behind.

A truly effective teacher is one who can identify hidden potential in average students and help them move from “average” to “above-average” levels of performance. The brightest students are often equipped to find their own path; it is the average learners who require encouragement, mentoring, and guidance. Here lies the true test of a teacher's effectiveness.

Understanding the Causes

Before attempting solutions, teachers must understand that there is no single reason why a student performs average. Some students come from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Some may be first-generation learners lacking academic support at home. Others may face language barriers, communication difficulties, learning challenges, or confidence issues.

Therefore, teachers should avoid viewing all average students through the same lens. Each learner has a unique story, and effective intervention begins with understanding that story.

Strategies for Transforming Average Students

Identify Individual Needs: The first step is diagnosis. Teachers should make conscious efforts to understand the specific challenges faced by individual students. Personal conversations, classroom observations, and interactions with parents can provide valuable insights. Once the root causes are identified, appropriate support mechanisms can be designed. Personalized attention often becomes the turning point in a student's academic journey.

Encourage Active Participation: Average students often hesitate to participate because they fear making mistakes or being judged by others. Teachers must create an environment where mistakes are viewed as opportunities for learning rather than reasons for embarrassment. Simple strategies such as asking easy entry-level questions, assigning manageable responsibilities, encouraging group participation, and appreciating small contributions can significantly boost confidence. The key lies in recognizing effort, not merely achievement. A few encouraging words from a teacher can alter a student's perception of his or her own capabilities.

Promote Experiential Learning: Teachers should encourage participation of such students in community service activities, visits to orphanages, old-age homes, rural communities, environmental projects.

Such experiences help students develop empathy, social awareness, communication skills, and leadership qualities. More importantly, these activities enable average students to discover strengths that may not be visible in traditional academic settings. Many students who struggle in examinations excel remarkably when given such opportunities.

Create Opportunities for Success: Confidence grows through success. Therefore, teachers should consciously create situations where average students can experience achievement. This could involve assigning them specific responsibilities in classroom projects, cultural programs, sports events, or institutional activities. Small successes accumulate over time and gradually build self-belief. Students who repeatedly experience success begin to see themselves differently. Their mindset shifts from "I cannot" to "I can."

Provide Continuous Mentoring: Perhaps the most powerful tool available to teachers is mentoring. Every student possesses strengths, talents, and positive attributes. The role of a mentor is to identify these strengths and help students develop them further. Effective mentoring focuses on possibilities rather than deficiencies. Importantly, mentoring should be carried out sensitively without labelling students as average. The objective is not to remind them of their limitations but to help them recognize their potential.

Moving Ahead

The journey from “average” to “above average” and eventually to “excellence” is neither quick nor easy. It requires perseverance and sustained effort from both teachers and students. Yet it is one of the most rewarding journeys in education. The true legacy of a teacher is not measured solely by the number of toppers produced but by the number of ordinary students whose lives have been transformed through guidance, encouragement, and belief.

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