Teaching learners with visual impairments

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IP&SEN SIG Drop-in session
19/03/2021
Teacher’s approach
disability

disabilities

• **Strenghts**
  - listening
  - memorising
  - focusing on tasks/lesson
  - drama activities/role plays
  - use of technology
Challenges & Needs

- Physical Challenges
  - visuals
    - materials
    - light - students with VI struggle with light sensitivity
  - (background) noise
  - communication
Challenges & Needs

• Affective Challenges
  - feel safe & comfortable in classroom/at school
    - accepted by peers, included in school community
    - aware of personal strengths, talents
    - develop self-esteem
    - become independent and resourceful
Accommodating needs

• Getting to know about the student(s)
  - Talk to the parents
  - Talk to the student

Types of visual impairment
  - legal blindness: to be certified as severely sight impaired, the visual acuity should not exceed 6/60 (meter) in the better eye with correcting lens.
  - blindness: ranges from being totally without sight to unreliable vision and primary reliance on other senses.
  - low vision: a problem that makes it hard to do everyday activities; e.g. driving, reading, recognising people’s faces, tell colours apart, see TV screen clearly. It is reduced central acuity of 6/21 or less in the better eye after correction

Congenital: loss of vision present at birth.
Adventitious: loss of vision after birth as a result of illness or accident.
Accommodating physical needs

- **Classroom Arrangement/Management**
  - **classroom:** familiarize the student with the classroom – location of the furniture, objects, etc.
  - **seating:**
    - near the front of the room (depending on the type of the VI), close to the board, away from windows and glaring lights, away from easily distracted, chatty students
    - the student may need to sit further back in the classroom when using a visual aid or laptop.
  - **noise:** minimize the background noise; e.g. noise from the AC, whirring computers

- **alternative ways/tools of learning:**
  - allow student to take a picture of the board
  - allow student to record the lesson
  - braille
  - large print
  - magnifying devices
- use of other technology:
  - screen reader/speech synthesizer
  - screen enlarger
  - voice access
  - optical character recognition software
  - scanner
  - electronic braille writers
  - print-to-Braille software
- **communication:**
  
  - when addressing the students, say their names first.
  - clear instructions
  - talk facing to the class not to the board
  - repeat and/or rephrase classmates’ answers (when needed)
  - verbalize praise and/or disapproval
  - be specific with descriptive language. Try to avoid using words ‘here and’ ‘there’ when describing the location of an object or a person.
  - fell comfortable when using words ‘look’ and ‘see’
  - say “Tell me what you see” instead of “Can you see this?” when checking if the student can see a visual material.
  - teach conversation strategies for taking turns, asking for clarification, opening and closing; e.g. “Sorry to interrupt”, “Can you repeat that?”, “What do you think?”
- **teaching:**
  
  - assign a buddy student for support (to act as a sighted guide, a scribe, a reader)
  
  - plan ahead
    
    - differentiate materials/tasks (enlarged texts, braille-printed materials, audios).

  - think about how much time the student needs to complete the task(s)
  
  - include the alternative procedures for the student with VI
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage Name</th>
<th>Stage Aim</th>
<th>Procedure</th>
<th>Materials</th>
<th>Interaction Pattern</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Tutor Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lead-In</td>
<td>To arouse interest</td>
<td>Send the tasks to Aisha at the beginning of the lesson. T shows the pictures of two women and introduces them as her friends from England: Sue and Jane. Explain to Aisha what is in the picture. T sets the context: “They are coming to Istanbul.” T sets the task and asks SS to discuss the questions in pairs. “What can they do in Istanbul? Which places can they visit?” T elicits answers and introduces the vocabulary for tourist attractions. Use the names of well-know places, e.g. Sultanahmet Mosque, Topkapi Palace, Museum of Anatolian History so that Aisha can also make connections easily. For ‘Grand Bazaar’ ask for the Turkish name “Kapalı Çarşı.” T CCQs. T drills.</td>
<td>Pictures of two women. Pictures of tourist attractions in Istanbul.</td>
<td>T-Ss S-S Ss-T</td>
<td>10 mins.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>To expose Ss to the TL</td>
<td>T continues exploiting the context: draws SS’ attention to the weather (make it clear for Aisha that it’s raining) and asks the students to predict the answer of the question: “Where are they going?” T elicits answers and says “Let’s listen and find out.” T plays the tape. T asks Ss to check their answers in pairs. T gives WC/FB. T sets the second task. “Listen and fill in the gaps”. Aisha does the (differentiated) task in her laptop and checks it with Meltem. T plays the tape. T asks Ss to pair-check after they have listened to the recording. T provides WC/FB.</td>
<td>Pictures of women Recording</td>
<td>H01</td>
<td>15 mins</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>To highlight and clarify the Form</td>
<td>T highlights and elicits the Form on the board: “Find the sentences with “Let’s ...” and “Shall we ...?”” Meltem reads out the text for Aisha and they find the sentences together. T writes on the board “Let’s visit Dolmabahçe Palace.” Shall we go to Dolmabahçe Palace. Verbalise ‘equals’ for Aisha. T highlights ‘and’ asks if it is correct. “Do they have the same meaning?” T elicits the answers and clarifies Meaning. T elicits the positive and negative answers: “What are the answers for these? ☒ ☐ ☐ ☐” Meltem reads out the text again and they find the answers together. Ss discuss in pairs. T elicits answers and clarifies how to accept or refuse suggestions.</td>
<td>Tape script The board</td>
<td>T-Ss S-S T-Ss</td>
<td>10 mins</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- teaching:
  - verbalise notes when writing on the board
  - allow opportunities for tactile and kinesthetic learning - differentiate teaching materials and tools. E.g. tactile, concrete and real life materials.
  - alternate visual tasks with non-visual tasks to avoid eye fatigue
  - be ready to provide extra explanations for the student
  - check regularly if the student is making accurate notes
Accommodating affective needs

• introduce the student to the class and encourage him/her to answer questions posed by the classmates concerning the eye condition.

• design activities which help
  - other students understand the learner’s need(s)
  - the learner bond with the group
  - *e.g. audiodescriptions*
    (genuine communication with realistic info-gap)

• differentiate roles: in pair/group work assign roles
  - which foregrounds the student’s strenghts and talents
  - in which the student with VI can support the others
    *E.g. error detector, editor, (machine) translator*

- help the student develop positive self-esteem
- feel recognised and included
Accommodating affective needs

- train/encourage the other students to develop a habit of
  - keeping cupboard and closet doors closed
  - saying the names when addressing each other
  - making use of discourse strategies (politely)
  - walking with the learner by offering your arm
  - describing visuals
Replacing the visual input with

- Imagination → visualisation

  - Create the visual together with students via imagination
    “Imagine you’re at a restaurant. What kind of a restaurant is it? Big, small? How many tables? Where’s it? How are the waiters/waitresses? What’s on the menu?”
  - allows for self-expression and ownership
Replacing the visual input with

- **Kinesthetic input**
  - body involvement → visualisation
    - introducing/practising distinctive sounds, word/sentence stress and intonation
      
      /ɪ/ vs. /i:/ as in ‘sit’ and ‘seat’
    - spelling
      
      dance spelling (Language Learning and Musical Activities: LLMA)
Replacing the visual input with

- Kinesthetic input
  - body involvement → visualisation
  - sentence elements & word order

Tweaking materials & activities to address multiple senses
Useful Resources


Useful Resources


• Wyszyńska, B. (2014) «Teaching grammar to visually-impaired students.»
  • [http://jows.pl/sites/default/files/JOwS_02_B%20Wyszynska_pop.r_ost.pdf](http://jows.pl/sites/default/files/JOwS_02_B%20Wyszynska_pop.r_ost.pdf)

• [https://ipsen.iatefl.org](https://ipsen.iatefl.org)

• [https://preventblindness.org/glossary/](https://preventblindness.org/glossary/)

• [https://www.englishclub.com/learning-difficulties/visual-impairment.htm](https://www.englishclub.com/learning-difficulties/visual-impairment.htm)

• [https://theblindguide.com/teaching-suggestions-for-visually-impaired-students/](https://theblindguide.com/teaching-suggestions-for-visually-impaired-students/)

• [https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/teaching-english-blind-students](https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/teaching-english-blind-students)

• [https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/needs-visually-impaired-vi-learners-education-key-issues-principles](https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/needs-visually-impaired-vi-learners-education-key-issues-principles)

• [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5LJMihcL4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5LJMihcL4)