

TIPS FOR THE TEACHERS WORKING WITH BLIND STUDENTS IN A LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

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ANNOTATION

Teaching a foreign language seems both exciting and challenging at the same time. The number of blind students in the classes throughout Uzbekistan has increased recently because of the opportunities that have been created for the learners in educational settings. It is true that working with students who have special needs require teachers a lot of effort and hard work. This article outlines some challenges that foreign language teachers may face while working with blind students in English classes. It also suggests several solutions to those problems mentioned related to collaborating with blind students.

Keyword: blind students, visually impaired, vision, visual learning, tactile learning, tips for teachers

INTRODUCTION

Teachers working with blind students in the classroom should consider several things to be an effective teacher. First of all, the teachers should understand the visual condition of the blind learners. The teachers should understand how much residual vision he or she has. Is he or she totally blind or partially blind? The next essential thing to know is the background of the student which means how and when he or she came blind. If the blind person became blind later when he or she was in their teens, he or she may have certain visual memory. He or she will conceive ideas and images differently from someone who was blind at birth [1]. Textbooks could be difficult to make them brail in time for blind students. We have to cope with one the problem of accessing textbooks. But from my experience I can say that establishing a reader's service for the blind is not too difficult. You can announce that you need volunteers to read books into recordings or to blind students and you can find many volunteers. Additionally, at present computer software is developed so much that they are able to download material and transcribe it into Braille dots. The machine for brailleing out the dots is quite expensive though. Not knowing Braille is the least problem of teachers who are not specially trained to teach the blind. Technology can overcome that problem. Blind students can be trained to use the computer. There is sound synthesis software such as text to speech and voice recognition that can be installed on the computer. This software varies in price, but there are a number of programs which can be downloaded for free. When in the classroom the blind student cannot see the board so the teacher has to be more vocal and say out every word he or she puts on the board including direction of where the words are. For example, teaching the format of a letter say out, 'On the left hand corner of your page you write the address. The address of this college is number twenty-nine, Green Lane'. Remember the blind student cannot see the board but he or she can hear well. When plans or diagrams are used, you can emboss them for your students by sticking string

to cardboard. Here teachers may have to use their ingenuity. I also tell teachers that the blind students in the class should not disrupt the lessons too much, meaning that the teacher should carry on as usual except for slight adjustments. Having a blind student in the midst of sighted students brings out the best of the sighted students [2].

Having a student with special needs in the classroom is both challenging and rewarding for teachers and other students in the classroom. Knowing what to expect can be helpful, though many teachers learn a bit each day and become specialists through experience. Here are a few challenges that teachers may face with a VI student [3]. Student may have low self-esteem. Teachers should encourage them all the way to increase their self-esteem and motivation. Blind student may feel that literacy is impossible. But teachers should convince them that everything is possible and they can be literate if they try hard. Student may feel disconnected from peers. At the same time, teachers should make others to have healthy access with blind students.

Visually impaired learners appreciate when teachers and peers treat them as equals in the classroom. Some of the activities teachers usually use in an ELL classroom, however, will need to be modified for a student with visual limitations. Teachers may find that the best thing to do is skip over a task or assign it to sighted students for homework. Here are a few tasks teachers should avoid during class time when visually impaired students are present [4]. Teachers should not stress the differences between blind students and others. It is also recommended not to ask blind students to describe one's surroundings. Match the vocabulary to the definition is also another task blind students cannot do so it is recommended to avoid such tasks. Teachers should also avoid commenting on the chart, diagram or flashcards, complete picture-based exercises and filling in the blanks.

Depending on one's teaching budget, there are many tools and aids that can be beneficial for VI students. These students may have some of their own mobility aids, including a cane, an electronic device, or even a dog. Here are some tools and devices that teachers may want to consider having available for VI language learners [5]. Screen readers, touch screens with voice, Braille devices, MP3 players, large print books, podcasts are some tools that can be helpful in the classroom with the blind students.

There are some tips for those working with blind students in the classroom. Checking in on them regularly to see if they need help is very important. If you need, you can also assign a mobility helper. They may help blind students to move around if they require. When teachers are speaking and addressing to the blind students, they are recommended to speak directly to the VI student, not an assistant. This makes the blind student comfortable and makes him or her understand better. Minimizing the background noise is another important thing since blind students rely on their auditory channels to take information. Other noises may disturb them while listening. Eliminating physical objects in aisles and doorways and reducing overall clutter can help blind students' mobility in the classroom. Thus, be careful with these issues as well. Teachers also highlight all main points of a lesson orally and share videos ahead of time so that VI learners can preview. We also recommend to provide a larger work space or table to accommodate laptop or other tools. While selecting young learners to the group, the teacher should pay a close attention to their age and degree of their vision. First of all, they should observe all the classes at the institution. Then they may be separated according to their mental

and physical abilities. Vision is the primary sense upon which most traditional education strategies are based. These strategies must be modified to reflect the person's visual, auditory and tactile, vision capabilities. A person with a severe visual loss can directly experience only what is within arm's reach and can be safely touched, and in most cases, what can be heard. To ensure an appropriate education, families and staff with special training must work together to bring the world of experience to the people in a meaningful manner.

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