Study of Impact of Vision Impairment and Blindness

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Abstract

Across the globe, more and more students with visual impairment are receiving their formal education in mainstream settings. There has been a rise in both the number of students enrolled in general education courses and the number of related topics in research on education and special education. In accordance with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, inclusive education is a fundamental human right for all students. Access to the general curriculum, as well as enhanced social contacts and connections, are only two of the many advantages of inclusion that have been widely recognised and praised. Despite this, a large body of literature demonstrates that physically integrating children with and without impairments into the same classroom does not result in an inclusive education of sufficient quality. While the vast majority of students with visual impairment had pleasant experiences, one-third reported feeling lonely or alienated and unsatisfied with their social ties. Some pupils with impairments were targeted for taunting and bullying.

Key words: Vision, Impairment and Blindness, Special Education, Students etc.

Introduction

Vision is a sense that allows students to learn incidentally, synthesize information, and respond to the environment. Vision motivates movement by providing information and stimulation, integrates and organizes information in the brain, and encourages social interaction. In classrooms, barriers can exist for students with vision impairment as the curriculum, the way it is delivered, and common assessment methods in the mainstream classroom are designed for those who can see. Students with vision impairment may have difficulty understanding where objects are in the environment and may need to use a white cane to travel independently. In addition, students with vision impairment are often unable to collect information from visual cues. Being able to interact confidently and in culturally appropriate ways is important for social inclusion and a sense of belonging, however, the vast majority of communication occurs through non-verbal means such as body posture, arm and hand gestures, and facial expressions, all of which students with a vision impairment may not be aware.

Impact of Vision Impairment and Blindness

The learning processes of students with vision impairment may be affected in the following ways:

Students with vision impairment may access information in a variety of ways, for example Braille, audio-tape, or enlarged print. Braille readers cannot skim read and may take up to three times as long as other students to read a text. Students with some vision may be large-print readers. Many will be unable to read examination questions and handouts in standard print or read their own handwriting when answering examination questions. They may also be unable to take their own notes. Extra time is needed to carry out some tasks, such as locating words in a text when shifting from one reading medium to another.

Students who need information put into alternative formats must wait, often up to six to eight weeks, for the material to be produced for them. This means that they will often fall behind other students in the class.

Students with vision impairment may feel isolated in the learning environment, which can have an impact on learning.

Headaches often result from eyestrain. This may reduce considerably the study time available to these students.

Participation and interaction in tutorials may be limited. It is difficult for students who cannot see the body language and interactions of others to feel comfortable about participating. Judging when it is appropriate to interrupt or to take a turn in discussion is particularly difficult.

Review of literature

(Miyauchi, 2020) Studied "*A Systematic Review on Inclusive Education of Students with Visual Impairment*" and found that: This was a systematic review on the inclusive education of students with visual impairment. This study focused on two of the most addressed topics: the perceptions of general education teachers and challenges faced by students with visual impairment in accessing academic subjects. General education teachers' attitudes toward the inclusion of students with visual impairment were both positive and negative and were influenced by teacher-, student-, and environment-related factors.

(Temesgen, 2018) Studied "*School Challenges of Students with Visual Disabilities*" and found that the history of the education of the blind in Ethiopia has been profoundly anchored into the past Christianity. For this, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church has played a matchless role to educate the blind for the purpose of church rituals., the church education derives its distinctive character from the unique Christian heritage of the country. With this, again, Ethiopia is the only African country to have preserved Christianity as its own religion for over thousands of years.

(Hussein et al., 2021) Studied "*Services to children with visual impairment and disability: What is lacking currently*" and found that Visual cues are undoubtedly important for children who are in the process of learning. Nevertheless, visual impairments are in fact common among school children, in which proper assessment and intervention strategies should be made available. To achieve the desired academic achievement and quality of life, early detection and intervention of visual impairment is vital. In this paper, the prevalence, incidence, causes and negative effects of visual impairment among school children are reviewed according.

(Le Fanu et al., 2022) Studied "*Inclusive education for children with visual impairments in sub-Saharan Africa: Realising the promise of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*" and found that Over the last thirty years, there has been increased awareness of the need for education systems around the world to become disability inclusive. This has been attributed to civil society activism (both within countries and globally) and the signing, endorsement, and ratification of international agreements such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

(Zheng, 2014) Studied "*A Study on Blind Students' Experience of Provision and Support in Schools*" and found that This is a qualitative study which aims to investigate what blind students experience to be appropriate provision and support in schools. In order to explore the answer, this study examined the proper terms that could be used in educational researches, difficulties that a blind student encountered in study, provision and support that were provided to them in schools, what they considered to be appropriate provision and support for facilitating their study, challenges with the practices and suggestions for improvements

Teaching Strategies

There is a range of inclusive teaching and assessment strategies that can assist all students to learn but there are some specific strategies that are useful in teaching a group which includes students with vision impairment.

- We often take for granted the amount of visual information received every day. Many students with a vision impairment do not have a lifetime of visual experiences to draw upon. It may be necessary to consider the amount of assumed visual content in your subject when designing learning tasks.
- Prepare as much information as possible in electronic format - this makes it much easier to provide materials in accessible formats and allows users with disabilities to adapt the information to a format which is suitable for them.
- Make required book lists and course materials available early so there is sufficient time for them to be reproduced in audio or Braille, if required.
- Indicate compulsory texts in your reading list, noting important chapters if possible. Specifying the order of reading within a text is helpful, as it can take many weeks to have a book reproduced into audio or Braille.
- For students with vision impairment your teaching style will need to be 'verbal'. Think about how to communicate information to students who cannot see what you are doing.
- Verbalise what is written on the blackboard and on PowerPoints. Talk through any calculations as they are made or procedures as they are carried out. Read any printed information and describe any charts or graphs being used.
- Academic activities which take place off-campus (such as industry visits, interviews or field work) may pose problems and on-campus alternatives may need to be considered.
- Provide an individual orientation to laboratory equipment or computers in order to minimise the anxiety likely in an unfamiliar environment.
- Consider supplementing laboratory practical's, experiments or field trips, for example by audio taping commentaries.
- Inform the student if you plan to use videos, slides or PowerPoints, and discuss alternative ways of presenting the necessary information.
- A student may have difficulty finding his/her essay or assignment in a pigeonhole or amongst a pile of other students' work.
- Students may not be able to read your hand-written comments. It would be helpful if you
- could negotiate alternative feedback mechanisms with the student.
- Students are usually able to access online learning materials with the use of assistive technologies if websites follow accessible web design guidelines.
- The vision of some students may be affected by the glare from fluorescent lights or sunlight so you may need to attend to some aspects of your teaching environment. This should be done unobtrusively.

Conclusion

Visual impairment is a prevalent condition among children. If undetected and untreated, it would impose significant health problems to the child, family, community and the country. To minimize and avoid the negative consequences of visual disability, it is imperative to identify any visual impairment as expeditiously as possible so that an early intervention can take place. To achieve this, a good

screening programme must be implemented at the preschool level. The programme must be simple, non-invasive, inexpensive and sensitive to identify those children with ocular abnormalities and visual impairments. More research efforts are required to improve the current practice in regard to the visual assessment. Since the number of experts (ophthalmologists and optometrists) can be inadequate in certain countries (leading to insufficient clinician-to-patient ratios), an alternative method is needed to screen preschool children.

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