

ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC AND COGNITIVE SKILLS OF BLIND CHILDREN

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Abstract

Eye sight highly affects on child development. During initial years of living, visual irritation received from the environment affects on any sphere of development. Eventually healthy children somehow develop “themselves”. Blindness and eye sight injury changes whole attitude and perception of a child towards the world, consequently it makes complex affect of entire development of a child. Children are left under an important risk when an interruption is not prematurely displayed.

In nowadays world, including Georgia, inclusive education and specific educational plans for pupils with special needs is very much popular. In order to involve a pupil into the inclusive program, first we need to identify them and evaluate their strong and weak points. While evaluating pupil with special educational needs, certain academic and cognitive skill evaluation schemes should be used. Most of these schemes can be used for working with pupils having any disorder. Such schemes are mainly oriented on visual perception therefore it shall not be provided to blind pupil. Focus group of the research is preschool blind children, blind pupil, their parents and teachers, graduates and experts.

Keywords: blind children, visual, cognitive skills

Method of research

Deep interviews, to inquire the participants in teaching process and to observe on teaching process. After researched and explored information is received, we shall arrange probation of evaluation strategies on Georgian blind individuals. We will deliver relevant schemes for evaluating blind’s skills, not existing in Georgia at this point.

1. INTRODUCTION

Education of the blind is not scientifically explored and learnt in Georgia; therefore this topic is quite problematic. However we need to cross out the fact that over the past period of time important scientific activities are noticed, as educational, specific adaptive, voice computer software is created, educational recourses are processed scientific workshops and special educational materials are being published, however under the frames of such thesis considering directions given for resolving the problem, no research or publication of such information has never taken place in Georgia.

Number of impediment appears during the process of educating blind in Georgia. Regrettably, there are no specifically prepared teachers for delivering auxiliary education, who could actually personally assist educating and raising blind pupil. Specialists play important role to prematurely determine interruption of development in children. There is no program for premature assistance; parents do not know how to raise blind children. Parents are not aware of blind children facilities and instead of advising them how to manage

self-treatment and do other useful activities, parents do it all themselves on children's behalf. Consequently blind child attending school does not have same skills as the ones of same age having no sight issues. It happens often that, for some of the activities blind children have unreal perception that disturbs educational process as well. There are no schemes for evaluating blind children's skills, helping to determine their strong and weak points. This issue is even more extreme when a child is also blind apart from other disorders. In such cases, it is almost impossible to evaluate their skills, as there are no schemes to identify and spot other disorders simultaneously with blindness. With this respect, besides the beneficiaries, teachers are in a very tough situation. They have to run long term experiments and observations, in order to find out which disorder and need they are dealing with. Above mentioned long term experiments and observations directly affect on the quality of knowledge and academic achievements of pupil. Ultimately, it causes large time waste of a pupil : switching from one class to another, sometimes even graduates initial step without determination of one's own needs, and the educational program does not correspond with one's strong and weak points either. Obviously in such cases, major right of the child is violated right to receive education, while being under discriminative condition.

2. RESULT

As a result of the research we get, more news meaning, new and relevant schemes for evaluating blind pupil's academic and cognitive skills, that gives us facilities to exactly determine strong and weak points of the beneficiary, their needs and requirements, write off recommendations that helps as parents to rightly raise blind children, so the teachers to plan lessons and whole educational process. This will help us to create individual educational plans fitted to their special needs and interests, which, hereto offers blind children complete and perfect knowledge with high academic achievements. Data received during the research will be generalized according to results and theories, adaptive universal methodology and strategies will be created. Using this methodology and strategy we will be able to create educational plans and programs fitted for special needs of children having lost eye sight before school age or even after. To better lead the teaching process of blind students, the textbook of methodological recommendations will be designed. Education process running this way will definitely help blind person to select relevant profession or to continue education in the university.

Objectively existing limits of the education process, blind people, comparing to other beneficiaries, are not in the equal circumstance, which of course violates their major civil right – to receive education. By executing this project, we will actually assist disabled individuals to exercise their right (right to receive education) completely. After the results there are being implemented, educational barriers for blind people will decrease. People under the category are going to have new opportunities and receiving the education, as under the frames of inclusive program, so at the specific type educational institution bases, will be handier.

In order to determine blind's problems and requirements, on the first place we acknowledged their general problems in a historical cut and all engaging literature. Experience of other countries (concretely Poland and Germany) with respect of the blind's education. (JOSE, R.T.: 1983 KADEN).

We have spoken to Polish and German experts, instructors, mentors, blind people, we attended trainings run by Polish experts specialized in auxiliary tools. We visited members of Georgian Blind community. By processing secondary information we have crossed out following issues that painfully display in Georgian blind people's life. We have arranged investigating research for proving the hypotheses.

Following hypothesis has been established by processing the secondary information and investigating research : education of the blind is quite problematic in Georgia. This topic is not scientifically learnt with us.

It appears that, a serious interruption is caused by having no tactile maps and drafts. For those subjects where such materials are important, children get to imagine which is mostly unreal. For example Geometrics and Geography. If we do not show a child how the triangle looks like, he/she is going to have a hard time to imagine it in the space. Verbal explanations are not effective.

The interview with graduates turned out to be very interesting as well. To know, how were they examined, and whether or not they have any benefits.

Research done by us revealed real problems and requirements of the blind pupil: non adapted environment remains to be the major issue. The blind cannot possibly feel independent and comfortable, if the surrounding circumstances are not arranged correspondingly, if they cannot relocate and orient without somebody's help.

There are no rehab centers for blind or for people with less eye sight in Georgia, where people with eye sight issues would receive required consultation. There are no specialists, mentors, who could have taught children to help themselves walking and orienting in the space with a white handle.

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