

Boosting Braille Skill of Third Year Social Science Students with Visual Impairment in Sebeta Special Needs Teacher Education College to Take Exam in Braille In 2018

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to boost Braille skill of third year social science students with visual impairment in SSNTC to help them to take exam in Braille. The researchers used interview and focus group discussion to collect data. The major problems that hinders students with visual impairment not to take exam in Braille were the existence of the problems of reading and writing in Braille. The researchers took some training which focussed on boosting their writing and reading in Braille. The researchers prepared some paragraphs and presented to them to read and write after the training and the students with visual impairments wrote and read properly.

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CHAPTER ONE

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND OF THE ACTION RESEARCH

Vision is one of the main senses in the learning process. Around 80% of traditional education is offered in a visual mode. Therefore, students with vision impairments (SWVI) are facing many challenges to access information that is readily available for sighted students (Permvattana et al., 2006; Richardson & Roy, 2002). Armstrong (2009) argues that there is no difference between the educational achievements of sighted students, and SWVI if they are provided with reasonable accommodation. Providing SWVI

with an accessible educational environment is a basic requirement for their success, and is a major factor in ensuring equity of opportunity in higher and lower educational institutions.

Examinations are typically used to measure what individual students have achieved after being instructed on a specified curriculum for a specified time. They usually involve formal processes and supervised conditions. Results are generally used to determine whether an individual student graduates from a particular level of the education system or is admitted to an institution at the next level. In order to serve such high-stakes purposes, examinations need to produce results that are valid, reliable, and fair (NEAEA,2006).

As (Alamayehu W. 2006), the prevalence of blindness is more in female than male. And more in urban than in rural. Pizzararello L et .al .(2004). world widely 37 million people are blind and 124 million people are with low vision.

In the world students with visual impairments are facing difficulties in educational institutions. Students who are blind or visually impaired face unique social and academic challenges at higher learning institutions (Pizzararello L et .al . 2004). This is to say that they face difficulties in the whole learning and teaching processes including social problems.

Children who are visually impaired can do virtually all the activities and tasks that sighted children take for granted, but they often need to learn to do them in a different way or using different tools or materials. For instance, a child may need reading materials in Braille rather than in print or may need to examine a live rabbit with her/his hands to understand what it is, rather than learning from a picture in a book. Other examples might be arranging a classroom to let a child sit close to the science teacher who is demonstrating an experiment or allowing her extra time to complete a test that the whole class is taking. Depending on a child's abilities and needs, such adaptations are needed to participate in the curriculum and various activities in school, as well as to make use of instructional materials.

According to Tirusew (1997), methods of assessment of learners with special needs should take in to account their specific disabilities. For instance, a blind learner may need to be tested in Braille or orally, a deaf learner may need to be tested using sign language, a learner with reading disability may need more time during examination.

1.2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In today's world Education has been transformed as to be a means for achieving ones' own need and civilization as whole. And this can be achieved by making the whole situation of the learning and teaching inclusive i.e when all students with and without special needs learn and assessed based on their needs to brig quality education. To do so all students have to read and write properly and specifically all blind students have to read and write Braille to take exam. But blind teacher candidate in our college have problems of writing and reading in Braille.

There are different types of difficulties facing students with visual impairment in Sebeta Special Need teachers college. Braille is one way or might be the best way through which blind students read and write. So the Braille skill is very important for blind student. But in Sebeta Special Needs Teachers College most of the blind candidates have problems of writing and reading in Braille. Some of them even have problems of writing alphabets in Braille. These students face difficulty to read short notes written in Braille and also face difficulty to write notes in class by using slate and stylus. So, when the exam written and given them to do it by themselves, due to having difficulty in reading the exam written in tactile they prefer if teachers dictate the it for them than, doing the exam independently.

The blind teacher candidates in Sebeta Special Needs College are taking exam through listening. The assigned teacher to read exam for them read it for them. And the students with visual impairments listen and do the exam. This is the known trend in this college for at least ten years and above. Though no research as far as we know conducted on the advantage and disadvantage of the trend, this has a

significant effect on the academic achievement of the visually impaired learners. In addition this trend increased the spirit of dependency. First the level of listening of the students with visual impairments is different from one another. They need teachers to read a question three times or twice to understand. But the time given is limited and not enough to do so for teachers. So most of the time learners answer the question without understanding the question and this in turn strongly affecting their achievement.

1.3. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study has tremendous significance. The first beneficiaries of the study are teacher candidates with visual impairment. It increases their independency and their Braille skill. It helps them to take exam independently as other students. In addition it also curve/tackle the human resource wasted on reading the exam and can solve the students answering the questions without understanding since it pave the way for them to read the exam at their pace by giving them enough time. Different stakeholders who are working with students with visual impairments and the students with visual impairments can also benefit from it. The recommendation which will be forwarded based on the results of the study helps the managers of the college, the teachers and others workers of the college to decrease challenges which limits the academic achievements of the students with visual impairments. It also helps individuals who are interested to do research on related topics and who want to take intervention as a source of information.

1.4. OBJECTIVES OF THE ACTION RESEARCH

This action research is aimed :

- ❖ to identify why blind candidates are not interested to take exam in Braille.
- ❖ to boost blind students Braille skill.
- ❖ to increase blind candidates independency in taking exam.

1.5. LIMITATION OF THE ACTION RESEARCH

Different hindrances might limit the reliability of our findings. This may be unwillingness of the SWVI to participate and reveal the right information.

1.5. DELIMITATION OF THE ACTION RESEARCH

This action research is done in Sebeta Special Needs Teachers College on boosting Braille skill of with visual impairment in Sebeta Special Needs Teachers College. There are different types of challenges which candidates with visual impairments are facing in the college but we choose to do our action research on boosting Students With Visual impairments' Braille skill to take exam in Braille because this is one of the major problems they are facing.

2. METHOD

2.1. RESEARCH DESIGN

The researcher used mixed research design. The sources of this action research was primary and secondary sources. The primary data was gathered from SWVI and lecturers and the secondary data was gathered from the handwriting of the students with visual impairments.

2.2. Research Site and Population

This action research was conducted at SSNTC. Sebeta Special Needs Teachers College is one of the 12 Oromia Teachers' Education College. It is found 25 KM far from Addis Ababa on the way to Jimma. The college is the only SNE college in Oromia. There are 69 teachers in SSNTC. Out of these 6 of them are females and 63 of them are males. And the number of SWVE in this college for this year is 83(38females and 45 males). All of them are from civics/History, History/Geography, and SNE/History departments. The researcher used purposive sampling method in selecting participants. Accordingly ten

teachers (8 males and 2 females) were selected as participant of the study. These teachers have lots of experience in reading exam for SWVI and they know more than other teachers about the problem. From 83 SWVI by using the same sampling method the researcher selected ten SWVE from one section. (six females and four males). These ten SWVI are from third year social science stream. The researchers selected third year SWVI because they have lots of experience in facing the difficulty in taking exam through the means of reading and listening.

2.3. INSTRUMENTS

The researcher used different tools to collect data from informant participants of the study. These tools were interview and FGD

2.3.1. Interview

The interview in this study was held with candidates with visual impairment. The type of interview held was semi-structured. Semi-structured information can be reshaped based on the response of the respondents. We select this tool to collect meaningful data about what problems were candidates with visual impairment encountered while they were taking exam. Interview can yield almost infinite varieties of meaningful information and it can easily stored (Bhandarkar &Wilkinson, 1992).

2.3.2. Focus Group Discussion

Focus group discussion was held with lecturers- of the candidates with visual impairment. This tool was used to collect data about what candidates were telling them to be corrected for them and what difficulty the lecturers themselves were facing while they were reading exam for the candidates with visual impairment.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1. DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF RESPONDENTS

Table 1. Demographic Information of Teachers Respondents.

Characteristics	category		No
Sex	Male		6
	Female		2
Age	Male 40-50		6
	Female 40-50		2
Experience of being invigilator for blind candidates	2-4 years	Male	4
		Female	1
	5-10	Male	2
		Female	1

3.2. DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF CANDIDATES WVI

These candidates are from social science stream History +civics focus third year regular students. Four of them were females and six of them were males.

5. REASONS WHY BLIND CANDIDATES ARE NOT INTERSETED TO TAKE EXAM IN BRAILLE

Table 2. The Sentence Given to be Read.

The sentence given to read before intervention for the fourty blind candidates.	Respondents					
	Read Correctly		Read Partially		Unable to read	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Kolleejjiin BBS kolleejjota Oromiyaa umurii dheeraa qaban keessaa isa tokkoo dha.	1	1	3	3		2

The researchers have presented to the all ten SWVI to read one sentence which has four lines. Out of the ten blind students 2 of them read the paragraph correctly. 6 of them read it partially and 2 of them were unable to read the paragraph. Based on this data it can be said that the existence of problems to read braille is one of the major reason why blind candidates are not interested to take exam in braille.

Table 3. The Sentence Give to be Written.

The sentence given to write before intervention.	Respondents					
	Write Correctly		Write Partially		Unbale to Write	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Kolleejjiin BBS kolleejjota Oromiyaa umurii dheeraa qaban keessaa isa tokkoo dha.	3	1	3	3		

The same paragraph was given to the SWVI to read. Accordingly 4 of the ten blind candidates read it correctly, 6 of partially read the paragraph. From this we can say that the problem to write and in braille skill is one of the major problem that makes students with visual impairment not to interested to take exam in braille.

6. INTERVENTION

The major reason why students with visual impairments do not interested to take exam in Braille is having problem in writing and reading in Braille. They have problem to read and write in Braille is not mean to say their Braille skill is at zero level- it is to say they need some training to scale up or boost their skill. And to so we have taken the following interventions.

After we have identified who need training and who do not we have discussed with them what to do. Then we have decided to give them training. The content of the training was started from reminding them letters, read and write words , sentences and paragraphs. The researchers gave the training which was based on boosting the skill of students with visual impairments in writing and reading Braille. The researchers first wrote numbers, letters, sentences and paragraphs and gave for the students with visual impairments to read step by step which lasted two weeks four days i.e on Sunday and Saturday morning and afternoon.

7. EVALUATION OF INTERVENTION

After the researcher given them training he have given them sentence to check the success of the intervention action.

Table 4. Evaluation of Reading in Braille

The sentence given to read after intervention.	Respondents					
	Read Correctly		Read Partially		Unbale to read	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Oromiyaan Naannolee Itiyoophiyaan Qabdu Keessa Ishee Tokkoo dha.	5	5	-----	-----	-----	-----

As it is indicated all students with visual impairments were able to read the sentence. This indicates that training is very crucial for blind candidates to boost their braille skill and the intervention was successful.

Table 5. Evaluation after intervention about writing skill in Braille

The sentence given to write after intervention.	Respondents					
	Write Correctly		Write Partially		Unbale to Write	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Kan Garaa Malee Kan Maqaa Yoom nu Dhibe Jedhe Waraabessi.	5	5	---	---	---	---

From the above table all the blind candidates were able write in Braille after training. And this shows that the intervention was successful.

After this the researchers have given exam with three item out of fifty(5 true false, 5 choose, and 5 matching) and almost all of them did it. But what should be bear in mind is that sufficient time must be given for them since they read the exam and come back to write the answer by slate and styles. In doing this the researchers achieved the second and the third objectives of the study i.e increasing the spirit of independency and boosting the Braille skill among blind candidates in taking exam independently.

8. CONCLUSION

In this action research the researcher have found factors that make blind candidates not interested to take exam in Braille. The most factor was the problem they have in writing and reading in Braille. Following this the researchers have taken some actions to solve the problems. After the researcher identified the problem they gave training on writing and reading for these blind candidates .