Abstract

In the modern era, enormous concerns are providing educational opportunities to the differently abled children within the ambit of education. Understanding the very basic idea that education must be right to all children, the curriculum should help them to go line with their needs and wants. It should ignore the normality or abnormality but emphasize their maximum achievement. On this account, it is important for the educators to see how far the existing curriculum will help them to get on with the mainstreaming. As far as the visually challenged children (VIC) are concerned due to the lack of vision they are lacking in understanding the concepts as well as life oriented skills. It is the area of compensatory skills which is known as the plus curriculum should be provided to the VIC so that they cope up with the normal experiences meant for the slighted children. This plus curriculum may not be an ‘extra’ but this is a sort of compensation which bridges the gap between the sighted and the visually impaired children. At this juncture, when the plus curriculum is the basic need of the visually impaired, it is worth considering and concentrating to deal with the various skills to be taught to the visually disabled at the secondary level. The investigator has taken up the task of elaborating `plus curriculum for `the visually challenged` at the secondary level` which is the statement of the study here. It focuses on the compensatory skills to be taught to the VIC at the secondary school level.
1. INTRODUCTION

Education is a growing academic discipline so that whenever whatever and however we teach, changes occur in front of us. Of course experiences improve the behavior of the children during schooling. Education is treated as a race with its objective as the goal and curriculum as the \"course\" leading to the goal. The traditional system insisted Curriculum as the acquisition of mastery over certain skills and certain areas of knowledge. The Secondary Education Commission(1952-53) states, \"Curriculum does not mean only the academic subjects traditionally taught in the school, but it includes the totality of experiences that a pupil receive through the manifold activities that go on the school, classroom, library, laboratory, workshop, playgrounds and informal activities and contacts between the teachers and the pupils. In this sense, the whole life in the schools becomes the curriculum which can touch the life of the students at all points and help in the evolution of a balanced personality.

The whole gamut of the curriculum for children in school and community is centered on two significant objects, \"The Opportunity\" & \"The Experience\". Often children are provided with opportunities, but mere provision of opportunities alone does not mean the acquisition of experience. The understanding of the self and the world is not a \"whole\" when experience is denied.


\"Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it\". Early childhood years are crucial years from the point of view of the development of an individual. It lays the foundation of an individual’s personality. The rate of development is so fast at this stage that the child literally shows one new skill or the other almost every day. The child is thirsty for new experiences and absorbs everything like a sponge. A stimulating early childhood paves the way for later development and achievement. A total educational system should include educational provisions for scheduled caste/tribes/weaker sections and disabled children. Normal children have a better edge over visually disabled children in acquisition of knowledge through experience.

2. STATEMENT OF THE STUDY

To study and understand the need and necessities of the various compensatory skills to be provided to the VIC at the age of 9-14 years, the investigator has taken up the task of elaborating \`Plus curriculum for\` the visually challenged\` at the secondary level\` which is the statement of the study here. It focuses on the compensatory skills to be taught to the VIC at the secondary school level.
3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

I. To find the teachers’ views over the plus curricular skills to be taught to the secondary level visually challenged children.

II. To find out the areas of plus curricular skills needed to the VIC at the secondary level.

4. METHODOLOGY

The opinions of the special educators regarding the plus-curricular skills to be taught to the VIC at the secondary level were elicited for this study. Comparisons of the response scores have been made for the study.

4.1 Sample

The special educators 45 from IED schools and 45 from special schools for the blind who are teaching the VIC at the secondary level are considered as the sample for this study.

4.2 Tools used for the study

Likert 5 point scale questionnaire is used as a tool for this study. This questionnaire contains 50 favorable and 50 unfavorable items. In the questionnaire each statement contains five aspects namely strongly agree, agree, no opinion, disagree and strongly disagree.

4.3 Data gathering process

The investigator directly involved in data collection and collected data from the special educators (45 from 9 special schools and 45 from 27 integrated schools) by supplying the questionnaires and requested to respond from their experiences.

4.4 Analysis and interpretation

For this study the investigator made the questionnaire covering 11 major areas of plus curriculum which are felt as highly essential at the secondary level schooling. Their responses based on their attitude towards those skills are taken into consideration. For favorable items the scores are given as 5-S.A; 4-A; 3-N.O; 2-SDA; 1-D.A; and for the unfavorable items in the reverse order.

Table-1: General performance scores of IED teachers and Special school teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Interval (scores)</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>d</th>
<th>d²</th>
<th>fd</th>
<th>fd²</th>
<th>CF</th>
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<tr>
<td>350-359</td>
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<td>-7</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>-7</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>360-369</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-6</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>-24</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>370-379</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-5</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>-40</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>380-389</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-4</td>
<td>16</td>
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<td>96</td>
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<tr>
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<td>9</td>
<td>-51</td>
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<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>-2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-32</td>
<td>64</td>
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<td>410-419</td>
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<td>-13</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18</td>
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<tr>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>90</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

N=90  \[\sum fd=-151\]  \[\sum fd^2=937\]

The significance was found out by using the `t` test in this study.

5. FINDINGS

The mean of the performance scores of the frequency distribution is 407.7 and the standard deviation is 27.56 and the distribution is positively skewed. The skewness is 0.28 and 'ku' value is 0.22. So it is 'Leptokurtic'. This peaked-ness represents both the special educators working in the special schools for the blind and IED normal schools have high degree of acceptance regarding the plus curricular skills to be taught to the VIC at the secondary level. The calculated `t` value 1.55 which is less than the tabulated `t` value 1.99 at 0.05 level also represents that there is no significant difference between the performance scores of the special educators regarding the plus-curricular skills to be taught to the VIC at the secondary level schooling. Both sectors exhibit the same opinion towards the plus curricular skills to be taught to the VIC at the secondary level those are of immense values in nullifying the gap between the VIC and the normal children. The teachers of the different set up who are teaching the VIC have delivered their strong acceptance towards the following plus curricular skills to be taught to their VI students at the secondary level.

1. Activities to develop tactual ability of the visually impaired children
   i.) **Size concept:** Giving practices with three dimensional objects like balls, sticks, boxes etc.
   ii.) **Shape concept:** Giving practices in two dimensional and three dimensional figures.
   iii.) **Texture concept:** Giving practices with the use of clothes, papers of different textures.

2. Need for teaching of `table manners at the secondary level`
   i) For avoiding clumsy mannerisms of eating
   ii) For effective socialization
   iii) Making them to cope with their daily living activities.
   iv) For mingling and eating with other children in a common place naturally.

3. Developing social skills
   i) Through free mobility
   ii) Encouragement for independent walking
   iii) Giving positive opinion about their disability
   iv) Encouraging participating in all the social activities
   v) Making them to have a proper interaction with sighted peers.
   vi) Making them to participate in the competitions.
4. Outdoor travelling at the secondary level
   i.) Making them to purchase their own needs from various places.
   ii.) Visiting different places, tour, picnic etc.
   iii.) Giving adequate opportunity to mingle with the sighted peers.

5. Principles of teaching `Daily living skills``
   i) Satisfying their own need without any difficulty.
   ii) Developing self-confidence and interest.
   iii) Mainstreaming their life in the normal society.
   iv) Having effective socialization.
   v) Avoiding the hurdles in their day to day life.

6. Need of abacus/ Taylors frame
   i) For solving all mathematical problems.
   ii) For explaining the problem step by step.
   iii) It is found very useful for the children who are poor in using Abacus and also the children who do not have `mastery` over the mathematical Braille codes and the ability to interpret.
   iv) It comes to understand that Abacus is more useful upto 8\textsuperscript{th} standard. After wards Taylor frame may be more useful.
   v) It was suggested by the special educators that knowledge of mathematical Braille notations is a must at the higher levels.

7. Braille writing skills at the secondary level
   i) Brailing the words (Punching the Braille dots) by slate and stylus.
   ii) Using proper punctuation marks in the appropriate places.
   iii) Taking class notes regularly by the pocket brailler.
   iv) Using mathematical notations without difficulty.
   v) Getting practiced in following neatness while writing (punching without holes)
   vi) Ability to write both English and tamil in Braille form with contractions.
   vii) Avoiding of spacing errors.
   viii) Rules and regulations of using contractions.

8. Skills to be taught in using tactual aids
   i) The ability to locate the different points in the embossed map.
   ii) Identification of the size and extent of the area to be read by touch.
   iii) Understanding the keys given to explain the different symbols used in the aids and diagrams/places(mobility)
   iv) The ability to move the hands from a particular point to a desired point.
   v) The ability to use the pushpins to locate different points in the map.
   vi) Ability to understand the significant differences in the area to be identified in using significant curves distinguishing features etc;

9. Orientation and mobility skills
   i) Long cane techniques.
ii) Outdoor travelling.
iii) Travelling in the bus.
iv) Travelling in the train.
v) Identifying a sound in the background of many sounds.
vi) Locating a particular person in a group.
vii) Walking properly with cane.

10. Daily living skills

i) Usage of currency

ii) Thorough knowledge on the primary shapes such as square, circle, rectangle, circle etc. of coins.

iii) Discrimination in size, shape, and weight etc.

iv) Sound-object identification-coins.

v) Knowledge in understanding the length, breadth, etc. of currency notes.

vi) Understanding the positional concept such as left, right, top, bottom etc.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

As the parents and teachers are the pillars of the Education of the Differently abled children, there should be a sound co-operation between them. Plus curricular skills are not extra. The effect of plus curricular skills cannot be realized unless there is a proper feedback from the teacher as well as from the parents and wardens.

i) The teachers must be prepared to progress the plus curricular skills which naturally support the general curricular skills. So the regular meetings and discussions between the teachers and parents will bring enormous strength to the impaired children`s education.

ii) Instructional manuals regarding the teaching materials, preparation, and usage can be prepared and supplied to all the teachers who are dealing with the visually impaired children.

iii) Giving sensory training to the visually impaired children at the secondary level is of immense use for getting optimum experiences. To this end, `AIDS KIT` for the sensory training may be developed.

iv) For the sensory development, skills oriented practice should be given. The visually challenged who have developed good sensory skills feel no handicap to compensate the loss caused by the visual deficit. On realizing this fact it is advisable to see whether the child has developed the skills necessary to cope up with other children. When the children are found to be inadequate, provision must be made to give necessary training in sensory development. For this, starting of pre-school education centers for the visually impaired children is of immense use.

v) Efficient and proper orientation and mobility practices should be provided in the school campus.

vi) Stimulating conditions may not be good always in teaching of Daily Living Skills in school. This teaching may occur in the natural setting with situational approaches.
Realizing this fact, the parents must be guided on the activities/plus curricular skills to be exercised for visually disabled children at homes.

7. CONCLUSION

It is firmly believed that this presentation sparkles the concrete ideas in the minds of the administrators and educators of the visually impaired children about the skills to be taught for the VIC. Plus curriculum is not the subject to be talked, but it is the base to lay strong foundation for their natural adult life experiences. The success of VIC’s education and life lies in the extent of efforts in plus-curriculum area which will ultimately prove the fact that they are not of different kinds in this aspect, which may be very successful and useful for the well-wishers who work for the study progress of the downtrodden society. From the experience of the special educators, it comes to understand that reinforcements and periodical tests and assessments are highly valuable in getting mastery over the plus curricular skills those certainly help them to attain the academic goals.

8. REFERENCES


AUTHORS BIOGRAPHY

1st. The author of this paper Rajendran.K.R has been working as a graduate assistant in Mathematics in government higher secondary school Malaipatti in Tamilnadu for the past one decade after completing his service as a special educator for the differently abled for nearly two decades in higher secondary schools. He is a post graduate in English literature, Mathematics, Commerce and Special Education. He also has the credit of Doctorate in Special Education. His special interest is to make the differently abled to survive independently and to make the poor, pity students from rural, remote areas to understand the language English better and to converse. He was also awarded for the past 8 years by the department of education for getting centum results every year in the government public examination in English.

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