

Effect of gestures in visually impaired children on communication

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Abstract

The term mannerisms are usually associated with visually impaired children. This may lead to poor communication skills. A study was attempted to find out the mannerisms existed in the visually impaired children and foster good gestures for effective communication. The quasi experimental design with 40 samples revealed the development of good gestures and reduction of bad mannerisms through due intervention.

Key words

Blindisms, mannerisms, communication of the visually impaired, gestures of the visually impaired, intervention for blindisms among the visually impaired.s

Introduction

Education is the knowledge of putting one's potentials to maximum use. At a very young age, children learn to develop and use their mental, moral and physical powers, which they acquire through various types of education. An important aspect of learning is for students to be able to communicate what they know, or think they know. The development of effective interpersonal communication skills is an important endeavor for any individual.

It is only through the attainment of education, man is enabled to receive information from the external world; to acquaint himself with past history and receive all necessary information regarding the present. Without education, man is as though in a closed room and with education he renew himself in a room with all its windows open to towards outside world.

Although we usually recognize communication with speech, communication is composed of two areas: verbal and non-verbal. It includes apparent behaviours such as facial expressions, eyes, gestures, touching, tone of voice as well as less obvious messages such as dress, attitude and distance between two or more people.

Need for the study

In visually impaired children, the effect of gestures and mannerisms play a repeal role. Sighted children learn almost by visually observing other people ad behaving in socially appropriate waus based on that information. The visually impaired cannot learn skills of social interaction in this casual and incidental fashion.

Repetitive movements such as body rocking, head swaying, eye poking or rubbing, wrist flicking and head dropping or extension which are socially inappropriate because of the number of times they are done and the intensity with which they are done, may be called 'blindisms' or 'stereotypic mannerisms'. They are almost unaware of the good gestures existing in the society.

Instructions in these skills is such a fundamental need that it can often mean the difference between social isolation and a satisfying and fulfilling life as an adult. Hence the investigator decided to take up a study to develop he gestures and also help them avoid bad mannerisms.

Objectives

- To prepare a checklist to find out the prevalence of blindisms among the visually impaired children in the schools from I to X standards.
- To prepare an intervention plan to foster the gestures, reduce blindisms and foster communication among the identified sample

Methodology

The investigator visited several inclusive schools, special schools and identified visually challenged children from I to X standards from Palayamkottai and Coimbatore districts. With simple random sampling procedure, 40 children with equal male and female samples.

A checklist was prepared which had a list of good gestures and negative mannerisms, divided into five categories based on the body parts involved. They are Head, Arms and Hands, Fingers, Legs and Feet and Composure. A package was devised to develop good gestures to foster effective communication. Post test was conducted using the same checklist after the intervention.

Results and Discussions

Comparison between Pre and Post test scores of gestures in the visually impaired children.

Test	Mean	S.D	No	't'-value
Pre score	3.35	1.72	40	22.796**
Post score	9.57	0.55	40	

** significant at 1% level.

To find whether the mean gesture scores differ significantly between pre and post tests, Paired sample t-test was applied. The calculated t-test value is 22.796 which is higher than the table value . It is inferred that the mean gesture scores differ significantly between pre and post tests. Hence the hypothesis, 'There is no significant difference between pre and post test scores of gestures in visually impaired children is rejected and the alternative hypothesis 'Post test scores are higher than the pre test scores in visually impaired children' is accepted.

Comparison between Pre and Post test scores on mannerisms in visually impaired children

Test	Mean	S.D	No	't' – Value
Pre Score	23.73	1.58	40	30.945**
Post Score	12.08	2.73	40	

** Significant at 1% level

Children showed negative mannerisms widely. By instructing not to keep the hands By instructing not to keep the hands in such a manner and explaining that onlookers may misunderstand the information conveyed by them, these mannerisms were decreased. To check it statistically, the t-test was carried out, and the table value it is inferred that the mean mannerisms scores differ significantly between pre and post tests. Therefore it can be concluded that the intervention given to reduce negative mannerism was highly useful.

Conclusion

Teaching gestures to the children is extensive practice. The children gained much awareness on importance of gestures in communication process. There is an improvement in the table of good gestures after the intervention was given. The negative mannerisms are also reduced through the intervention package. From this study, it can be understood that the gestures play an important role and it can be imparted in visually impaired children provided proper identification and rehabilitation is taken up.

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