

## **Basic Work Skills among Visually Impaired Children – An Intervention Strategy**

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Vision loss restricts a child's perception of an object or activity. Opportunities for manipulation and exploration objects should be given. Each activity should be demonstrated to the child. In order to learn about the world, a child with visual impairments needs experience with real objects. It is not meaningful to provide a non-stop verbal description of everything that is happening all of the time. Oral instruction is the predominant method of teaching blind children in almost all types of educational programmes. This system of instruction though helps their rote memorization deprives them acquiring livelihood skills hampering their employment prospects and quality life.

The greatest concern among professionals in the field of special education is to offer life coping skills to face the employment challenges when they grow. The work skill training is completely neglected in the educational programmes.

This necessitated the investigators to pursue a research titled ‘Basic Work Skills among Visually Impaired Students – An Intervention Strategy’ with the following objectives:

- To find out the work skills performance visually impaired and Low Vision children
- To compare the mean scores of visually impaired children studying in the special school and inclusive school.
- To prepare and use work skill Package and find out its efficiency.

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13 : 2 February 2013

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## **Methodology**

The present study was conducted in the School for the Blind, Palayamkottai, Tirunelveli and five Inclusive schools in Coimbatore district of Tamilnadu. The present study was experimental in nature designed in terms pre and posttest single group design and planned to conduct the study among visually impaired students of residential and inclusive school. The investigator adopted purposive sampling technique to select the sample. In this study, the sample comprised of 64 children belonging to class VI - IX .of these 64 children, 32were boys and 32 girls.

## **Design of the Study**

The present study adopted pre and posttest single group design. In this study, pre observation was made; treatment given to the group and after treatment, post observation was made. The design is as follows.

$$O_1 * O_2$$

Here  $O_1$  indicates pre experiment observation,  $O_2$  indicates post experiment observation and X represents the treatment (intervention)

## **Tools**

The present study intended to study the existing basic work skills of visually impaired children and plan a programme developing a package to teach basic work skills of children studying at residential and inclusive school. After reviewing the literature and the standardized tools available, the investigators developed their own tools suitable to Indian context. Experts' opinion was sought to finalize the tools. The following is the description of the tools developed.

### **Checklist to Assess the Basic Work Skills –level- I**

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This 'Yes' or 'No' checklist was prepared to assess the children's knowledge about the concept of basic work skills. It includes demonstrating complete three aspects namely i) use of stapler, ii) use of punching machine, iii) tying the paper as in the examination. Hence one score was given for each aspect and thus making a total of 5 score.

### **Checklist to assess the work skills – level- 2**

A checklist with 'Yes' or 'No' option was developed to assess the basic work skills considered under Level II skills. Namely i) use of office file, ii) use of cover file, iii) use of stick file, iv) use of certificate file and v) use of ball pin. For each skill, when the performance is correct, the child will be awarded one score.

### **Checklist to assess the work skills- level- 3**

A checklist with 'Yes' or 'No' option was developed to assess the basic work skills which are considered as Level III skills. In this area, there are five skills which include i) using book mark ii) using writing board, iii) using scale and pencil, iv) using scissor and v) pasting. For each correct performance, one score was given and zero score for wrong response.

### **Checklist to assess the work skills- level- 4**

A checklist with 'Yes' or 'No' option was developed to assess the components Level IV. This includes i) using measuring tape, (ii) using threader; (iii) using hammer, (iv) using screw driver and (v) using signature guide. For each correct performance, one score and non performance zero score is given.

### **Basic Work Skills Assessment Kit**

The table below shows the assessment kit used for the study.

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S. No.	Basic Work Skills	Objects Involved
1	Using stapler	Stapler small, middle, paper
2	Using big stapler	Big stapler, paper
3	Using single punching machine	Single punching machine,paper
4	Tieing	Punched paper & tag
5	Using double punching machine	Double punching machine, paper
6	Using office file	Office file, paper
7	Using cover file	Cover file, paper
8	Using stick file	Stick file, paper
9	Using certificate file	Certificate file, paper
10	Using ball pin	Ball pin, paper
11	Using bookmark	Bookmark paper
12	Using writing board	Writing board, paper, pencil
13	Using scale and pencil	Scale, pencil, paper
14	Cutting	Scissors: small, middle, big
15	Pasting	Paper, gum
16	Using measuring tape	Measuring tape
17	Using threading machine	Threader & neddle
18	Using hammer	Hammer, wood board , nails
19	Using screw driver	Screw drivers, screws
20	Using signature guide	Signature guide

The study involved assessment checklist for each level of work skills besides the work skill package developed. After pretesting, intervention was given for a period of two months to train them in the work skills and after that posttest was conducted using the same tool administered in the pretest. Relevant statistical procedures were used to analyze and interpret the data.

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## Findings

1. The study result revealed that students with blindness and low vision acquired work skills after intervention when comparing the pre mean(1.58) and the post mean (4.63) scores.
2. The selected students showed improvement in all the skills ranging from Level I to level IV.
3. the Totally Vision Impaired Students showed significant improvement after training ( Pre Mean 7.69 and Post Mean 17.44)
4. Similar to the findings of Totally Vision Impaired Students, the Low vision students also secured higher score and thus exhibiting the efficacy of intervention.
5. Pertaining to analysis of grade scores, the posttest score was higher (M=6.91) then the pretest mean (M = 6.38) in both the groups. However Grade did not influence the work skill performance
6. The students in residential and inclusive schools exhibited improved performance in the work skills after intervention.
7. In comparing school wise analysis, type of schools did not influence in all the four level work skills performance. Students in both the schools showed to be at the same level of performance in both pre and posttest.

## Conclusion

The real problem of blindness is not the loss of eyesight. The real problem is the misunderstanding and lack of information that exist. If a blind person has proper training and opportunity, blindness can be reduced to a physical nuisance. In the present scenario, education is examination or mark oriented among all students. The demand in the educational set up hampers the holistic development of an individual. But the same scenario is seen in the

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educational set up for the visually impaired students. The sighted students, however with their visual ability acquire many references to increase the work skills and employability skills. But for the visually impaired children, the teachers are the only reference at their younger age. If they do not address this crucial area of development, this will certainly impact their life skills when they grow adult resulting poor integration in the society and eventually affect their independency and dignity of life. This study proved that basic work skills can be easily imparted with indigenous items and techniques to visually impaired students.

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