

Innovations in Teaching History at Primary Level

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I want to address the focused theme of “Strategies for Change” in the perspective of decreasing interest in social science subjects by the learners. We, who are committed to the cause of equal opportunities of education for visually impaired children, also admit that, under the circumstances, normal children are also marginalized in getting proper facilities in their studies. History as a separate subject is introduced in Class V. The text books prepared by government agencies for the students of primary level cannot attract a child’s mind. The prints are so small, maps are so inappropriate, language is sometimes so tough to be properly understood by the children.

While we talk of “Inclusion” of the visually impaired, we should also conceive of a situation in which all children are facilitated. Therefore, my contention is to build up inner resources of a general classroom in such a way so that all children are benefited from that. Instead of keeping the adapted materials prepared for the visually impaired children in a **Resource Room**, these materials should be made accessible by all children. That would also lower down the expenses incurred on developing a particular aid for a specific topic/chapter. I prefer to give only one illustration.

- Chapter 1 of History text book for class 5 used in the state of West Bengal, India

This chapter deals with sea voyages of the Europeans across the world, discoveries of new world, coming of the Europeans into India and final victory of the English traders over other European competitors. Only lecture method of teaching does not help the students to understand this chapter. To attract the young mind, and also to ignite imagination, teachers have to use different aids starting from a globe to maps and photographs of ship used in high seas during those days. Colorful pictures are a necessary aid for young learners who have low vision. Needless to comment that the teachers would use materials of varied tactile feeling in these pictures/maps for the

visually impaired children of the class. And, I am sure, that this kind of teacher-innovated aids would definitely help the other children of a same class.

But, how do the children in general benefit?

- Use of one aid for all children give the concept of “our”, not “their”.
- All children will learn to understand the concept of tactile differences.
- Young learners will thus be motivated to collect and use such materials to produce aids for their learning/concept development.
- This comprehensive design for a ‘inclusive” classroom will develop attraction towards the study of History.

Is not this true “Inclusion”?

- The presenter would show at least 3 aids in support o her contention for this chapter of the text book.
- Poster will illustrate the use and utilities of a common aid for all children in the class