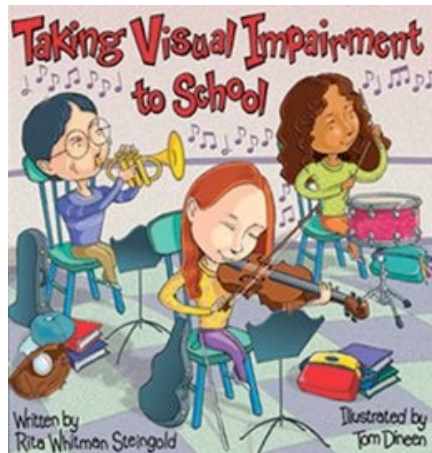


LESSON PLAN: TAKING VISUAL IMPAIRMENT TO SCHOOL

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Objective:

- Students will be able to appreciate and understand how people with visual impairments use their other senses to perceive the world around them.

New York State Learning Standards:

Pre-Kindergarten: 1-7, 9-11

Kindergarten: 1-7, 9-11

First Grade: 1-7, 9, 11

Second Grade: 1, 3-5-7, 9, 11

Materials:

Taking Visual Impairment to School, sandpaper, index cards, old playing cards or poster board, scissors, Braille cards (Amazon), Braille charts, Museum of disABILITY History website: <http://museumofdisability.org/>.

Vocabulary:

blindness	visual impairment	accident	sickness
low vision	magnifying lenses	Braille	Braillewriter
“visual map”	“sweeping”	orientation	mobility

Before Reading:

- Read *Taking Visual Impairment to School* and review the following section(s) located on the Museum of disABILITY History website: <http://museumofdisability.org/>.

- Read the “Ten Tips for Teachers” section at the back of the book for suggestions about how to work with students who have visual impairments.
- Discuss the title of the book with students and talk about what visual impairments are.
 - Ask students whether they think this is an appropriate title for the book.
 - Note to the teacher: The title reduces the main character to a single trait. Tell students that it is akin to titling a book, “Taking Brown Hair to School.” Emphasize the importance of person-first language in your discussion.
- Identify the illustrations in the book and the main character, Lisa.
- Discuss the activities that students see Lisa taking part in at school.
 - Draw their attention to the Braille alphabet and discuss how they think Lisa uses this method to read. Also discuss how they see her getting ready for school and doing things with her friends.
 - Discuss how Lisa participates in the same everyday activities they do but she may have to do them in a different way.

The following may be appropriate for Grades 3 and up:

- Using the Museum website, create a pre-lesson plan that aims to teach children about person-first language, the self-advocacy movement, the deinstitutionalization and mainstreaming of people with disabilities, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

Discussion Questions:

Ask students the following questions so they can reflect and think critically about the story:

Pages 1-2:

Where does Lisa live? Who does she live with? What is blindness? What does Lisa love to do in her garden? How can people become blind?

Pages 3-4:

What types of things can help people with “low vision?” What equipment does Lisa’s friend Pete need to help him read?

Pages 5-6:

Which sense is especially important for Lisa? What did a teacher tell Lisa that she has at the end of her fingers? What did the teacher mean by this? When Lisa is roller-skating, how does she know she has reached the end of the driveway? What other “sense” does Lisa say she uses a lot? What does she mean?

Pages 7-8:

Why did Lisa dislike going to school at first? Who created an alphabet for the blind? How did that person create this special alphabet?

Pages 9-10:

How does Lisa complete her schoolwork? Describe this machine. What else can she do on the Internet with her music? How does Ms. Winkler help Mrs. Brady plan lessons for Lisa? Do you think Braille is easy to read? Why or why not?

Pages 11-12:

Who helped Lisa find her way around the building when she first started school? How did Lisa create the “visual map” in her head? Who gave Lisa her white cane? What does Lisa use her cane for? Describe the process. How do you think getting a guide dog could help Lisa when she gets older?

Pages 13-14:

How does Lisa’s mom help make it easier for her to get dressed in the morning?

Pages 15-16:

How does Lisa know where the food on her plate is located? How does she find her comb, toothpaste, and toothbrush every morning in the bathroom?

Pages 17-18:

What types of activities does Lisa participate in with her friends? How does Lisa experience television and movies? How do her friends help her on the playground?

Pages 19-20:

Where does Lisa go in the summertime? Why do people with visual impairments use a beeping baseball to play the sport?

Pages 21-22:

What are some things that Lisa does on school days? What does she love to do? What does Lisa want to do when she gets older?

Pages 23-24:

Read the Kid’s Quiz questions. Ask students to respond first before reading them the answers.

Guided Practice:

- Have students work in small groups to make a set of Braille cards. Provide sand paper dots and have students glue them in the correct sequence of dots for each Braille letter using the Braille chart as a guide.
- For younger students provide five premade letters/symbols at a time and give them simple words to spell. Older students can use the cards or the chart to reproduce Braille symbols and write simple sentences about the book.

For information on games and tips for teaching simple basics of Braille, refer to the following web sites:

- Paths to Literacy: for students who are blind or visually impaired:
<http://www.pathstoliteracy.org>
- Braille Bug: www.braillebug.org (American Federation of the Blind)

If possible, borrow or purchase a set of Braille cards and/or Braille children's books for students to explore. Here are some suggestions:

- Collins, Harold S., Jane Schneider and Kathy Kifer. *Braille for the Sighted, Beginning Braille*. Garlic Press, 1998.
- Sign Language Learning Cards w/Braille, Instructional Fair, 1999.

Closure:

Instruct students to explore the classroom and see if there are ways to improve accessibility for people with visual impairments.

Bonus Activity:

Have students research into one of the following: "Teachers of the Visually Impaired" or "Orientation and Mobility Specialists."

- <http://www.visionaware.org/section.aspx?FolderID=8&SectionID=115&TopicID=515>

Bibliography:

Steingold, Rita Whitman. *Taking Visual Impairment to School*. JayJo Books, 2004.