

Classroom Activities to Identify Ocular Problems Among Students

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Abstract: *Every second child in the community wears glasses. Ocular problems in the childhood have become common. If these ocular problems are ignored during the initial stages, then the child may become visually challenged. A teacher also plays an important role in identifying the ocular problems of the child. The present study discusses how certain classroom activities can play an important role in saving the sight of the child.*

Keywords: *eye, refract, classroom, games.*

Refractive error contributes to about 19% of the total blindness worldwide. This is the commonest cause for the life-threatening visual impairment. Some of the refractive errors are common among school children and are correctable if identified at the initial stage. In this connection a teacher plays a vital role in identifying the common vision problems among students through some simple classroom activities.

The shape of the eye of a student does not refract or bend light properly; the images appear blurred. Such students find it very difficult to cope with academic activities. In contrast to other normal students, these students with ocular problem may seem very dull, distracted, unfocused, restless, imprecise, confused, non-specific and also at times irritated in the classroom. Kind words, personal attention, consideration and care of the teacher would reveal the shortcomings of the student to the teacher. The teacher can practise some very simple activities in the classroom to identify and save the child from lifetime blindness. Among Refractive errors some of the most common problems which can be identified by the teacher through classroom games are:

Activity 1

The teacher changes the places of the first-row students asking them to occupy last benches and the vice versa. The teacher writes questions and answers on the blackboard and asks each student to write it down in their notebook without copying from their friend's book. As the students are copying down what the teacher has written on the blackboard, the teacher walks between the rows of the benches and observes

the posture and writings of the students. The teacher notices that: The student who has poor distance vision or Myopia or Near sightedness is unable to read what is written on the blackboard. This student keeps the notes incomplete or tries to copy from friends' books. This can be treated with glasses or contact lenses.

Activity 2

The teacher asks each student to stand up and read the text or answers from the notes. While the students are reading, the teacher observes each student's posture. The student who has poor near vision or Hypermetropia or Farsightedness finds it difficult to read the text or his own notes. Writing legibly is also difficult for such students. These students hold the book very close to their eyes while reading and writing. This can be treated with glasses or contact lenses. The other ocular problems which the teacher can observe in a student when the student tries to close his one eye or tilt his head or rubs his eyes frequently etc., for a better vision: Astigmatism is imperfect curvature of the front surface of the eye, which causes blurred vision or discomfort. Anisometropia is the condition in which both the eyes have different refractive power.

Amblyopia is the medical term used when the vision in one of the eyes is reduced because the eye and the brain are not working together properly. The eye looks normal, but it is not being used normally because the brain is favouring the other eye. This condition is also sometimes called lazy eye. Amblyopia is best treated during the preschool years. If untreated, amblyopia can cause irreversible visual loss in the affected eye.

Strabismus is a misalignment of the eyes. If the same eye is chronically misaligned, amblyopia may develop in that eye. These are some of the most common ocular problems found among school-going children. The teacher could sensitize the parents about the problems faced by the child in the classroom academic activities so that the parents

would rectify the problem through medical assistance.

These activities of the teacher must be done in addition to the Annual Medical Vision Testing Health Programme organised in the schools to save the child from permanent visual impairment. This small step of a teacher would go a long way in keeping the sight aglow.