Issues in Curriculum: Access

Access to curriculum depends on placement, adaptive equipment, and attitudes. A key part to ensuring access not only to curriculum but to a quality education for learners who are blind or have low vision is the attitude of those around the learner. At school the influence of the Principal, Head of Syndicate, Class Teacher and Support Worker all contribute to learning outcomes. Expectations of success and full involvement need to be fostered at the same time as adapted curriculum are provided.

An example of visual centric teaching may be seen in a case study example of a young Maori child. He is raised in a community that accepts his visual condition and supports his learning within the community through tuakana/ teina. Tuakana/teina supports learning through buddy systems that pass knowledge and culture from an older child to a younger child through close relationship within whanau groups. When the child begins school they are suddenly isolated into a classroom without that support and guidance. Supports and guidance come instead from adults who are not familiar to the child and who are teaching from a visual perspective. Examples of teaching from a visual centric perspective are: calling “Come over here” instead of “Rangi, come to the door”, or “Stop that!” instead of “Rangi, sit still in your seat”.

Without adaptation in the delivery of the curriculum as well as adaptation to resources and environment the child is left without access to the full culture of the classroom.