

## **Overcoming challenges faced by English language teachers and visually impaired students in the English teaching- learning process**

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In the field of English language teaching (ELT) there has been extensive research on the matters and challenges faced by average English language teachers and learners, and the methods used to overcome these challenges. However, there is a shortage of research studying the matters related to English language teaching and learning of visually impaired students (VIS) as there is only a minority of VIS learning English in every country. Apart from the minimal number of VIS learning English, there is even a less number of English language teachers who are teaching at present and those who are willing to take up teaching VIS. In Sri Lanka, most English language teachers are reluctant to take up teaching visually impaired students due to many reasons ranging from the lack of knowledge of dealing with VIS, extra commitment, and patience required from the teachers to the insufficient facilities available in SL educational institutions. The present writer as a teacher who has been teaching English for both average learners as well as VIS for more than seven years has identified many challenges related to both English language teaching as well as learning of VIS which need to be overcome in order to make the teaching-learning process effective. Through the depiction of a comprehensible and realistic picture of the conditions and matters related to visually impaired students the present researcher aims to motivate more teachers to join in teaching visually impaired students and help curriculum developers to adapt the teaching material and improve other facilities needed to make the teaching-learning process effective for the VIS. This is a qualitative study carried out through observations and unstructured interviews conducted with both teachers teaching visually impaired students and students studying English at the English Language Teaching Unit at the University of Colombo.

**Keywords:** English language teaching (ELT), Visually impaired students (VIS), English language teachers, Teaching-learning process, Qualitative study