

TEACHER NOTES

Topic content

A. Using the Deafblind Manual Alphabet

N.B. Communication must be done without assistance from a third party.

Use the Deafblind Manual Alphabet (DMA) to communicate directly with a deafblind person.

Positioning and hold:

- Sitting positions
- Support of receiving hand comfortable for deafblind recipient
- Pressure comfortable for deafblind recipient
- Correct formation of the alphabet on the hand
- Accurate spelling
- Pace and flow
- Numbers
- Negative and positive responses.

Productive skills: 60 characters per minute.

Receptive skills: 30 characters per minute:

- The candidate is not expected to receive the DMA on their own hand. Some deafblind people prefer not to use voice, or need to clarify, if their voice is difficult to understand. The deafblind person will use the manual on her/his own hand, watched by the candidate. This is the receptive skill that is being assessed.

Use DMA to check that communication with the deafblind person is effective, in terms of:

- accuracy*
- speed
- pressure.



**The ability to convey a message is being assessed. Occasional errors of spelling are acceptable, provided that meaning is retained.*

Communicate information about the environment to a deafblind person using the DMA.

- Use the DMA to inform a deafblind person about identification and location of things in their spatial environment (location clues). Include:
 - placement of objects
 - location of other people
 - layout of room
 - activities about to take place in the room.
- Alert a deafblind person to visual/auditory signals they may not be aware of, e.g.
 - Someone has just come into the room
 - The people in the next room are laughing/singing
 - The lecture is about to start and the room has fallen silent.

Communicate information from printed materials to a deafblind person using the DMA.

- Hand-written documents.
- Typed documents.
- Documents containing numbers and pictures/diagrams.

B. Guiding a deafblind person

N.B. Guiding must be done without assistance from a third party.

Safely guide a deafblind person within a building, to the location at which communication will take place.

- Use the DMA to negotiate actions in the event of an emergency (e.g. making an 'X' movement on the deafblind person's back, hand or arm).
- Using the DMA, negotiate, where appropriate:
 - readiness
 - communication
 - grip
 - side
 - pace



- balance issues
 - cane
 - guide/dual or hearing dog.
- Guide safely:
 - along a corridor
 - through a doorway, up or down a step or around an obstacle
 - to a chair, including seating the deafblind person safely.

Use the DMA to communicate orientation while guiding.

- Show due consideration for health and safety issues while guiding, including the health and safety of the guider.
- Once seated, check the lighting and other conditions, and adjust where necessary:
 - Some deafblind people may have specific lighting requirements, e.g. night blindness.

Alert a deafblind person to danger, and safely guide them to a place of safety.

- Alert a deafblind person to danger or emergency visual/auditory signals they may not be aware of, e.g. the fire alarm has gone off.
- Emergency guiding through a doorway, along a corridor, down or up a step (or around a hazard or obstruction) to a fire exit.

