

DEAF-BLIND TEACHERS USING A SUPPORT SYSTEM

In this video clip we first see the DB teacher observing the DB student practicing in the grocery store with her SSP. The teacher has very narrow tunnel vision and cannot see the student and her SSP clearly, so she has an interpreter who informs her of what the DB student and SSP are doing and saying. This is in a small- to medium-sized grocery store in the city and the teacher stands about 15 feet away from the student who is shopping for bananas.

The DB teacher listens tactually to her interpreter with her left hand while she uses her limited vision to observe. The student has picked up a bunch with six bananas and after counting, asks the SSP to confirm the number. She then says, “I want bananas that are greener, not fully yellow ones” and asks the SSP to find some.

The DB teacher shakes her head and pauses a moment to think about how to give the student feedback. She approaches the student. The teacher first assures the student she is doing well but there is one thing she wants her to change. She then establishes the topic, “You are looking for bananas that are slightly green, right?” The student replies that this is correct. The teacher then says, “But you asked the SSP to look through the bananas for you, to

find ones that are less ripe, it should be the other way around. You look through the bananas and the SSP tells you whether or not they are green.” The student is not entirely clear, so the teacher offers to show her what she means.

The teacher then models while the student (who has close vision) observes. The teacher says, “This is what you were just doing” and asks the SSP to pick out green bananas. The teacher then says, “But now I’ll show you what I want you to do instead.” The teacher then says to the SSP, “I’m looking for bananas that are green so you tell me yes or no whether the bananas are more green or not.” She turns to the student and says, “Now I’m going to go through the bananas myself.” The teacher then uses her right hand to quickly go through different bunches of bananas, while listening with her left hand to the SSP who gives her the visual information (“No.” “No.” “No.”) until the teacher finds a bunch that is more green (and the SSP says “Yes.”). The teacher then checks with the SSP, “So, you said these are more green right?” and the SSP confirms this, “Yes, more green” and the teacher checks out the bananas briefly by feel and puts the bananas in the shopping basket. The teacher then turns to the DB student and says, “Do you see the difference? I went through the

bananas myself.” The student immediately says, “Yes,” as she understands, and the teacher says “Thumbs-up. Try again.”

The teacher and her interpreter then move back to the observing position while the student and her SSP begin again. The interpreter informs the DB teacher how the SSP is communicating with the student who does not use tactual signing. She is using her vision as well as her hands to go through the bananas, so the SSP began signing “no” on the student’s arm and then on her shoulder. The teacher confirms with her interpreter that the student is herself going through the bananas and as they finish in this part of the store, they move on.

They are next in the refrigerated section where the student is looking for 2% milk. The interpreter tells the teacher the SSP says, “It’s on the last shelf.” And points “down-there.” The student opens the refrigerator door, looks at the shelves, picks up a bottle and asks “This one?” The SSP replies that no, it is the next shelf down. The interpreter continues “[the student] picks up the milk herself and shows it to the SSP asking the SSP to tell her the expiration date. The teacher nods that the student has gotten the concept and begins to walk, but the interpreter informs the teacher that the student is now looking at

other bottles, apparently looking for milk with a later date. The teacher and interpreter both smile. When the student finishes they move on.

The last, very brief clip again shows the interpreter informing the DB teacher what the DB student and SSP are doing (discussing the smell of spices in the energy bar).