

GENERAL ADVICE FROM DB TEACHERS

Interviewer: What advice or counsel would you give to other DB people who would want to be teachers? What is your wisdom? Any mistakes you've made, you never want to do again, or things you've learned the hard way? What's your advice?

Kim Powers-Smith

Be prepared. Plan your notes. Check that you know everything you need to know to ... You want to make sure everything is in synch and a fit. If not, it can be very frustrating. For example, when I prepare I contact the student by text or email and make sure we both agree on all the particulars, so it will all be worked out ahead of time. But, sometimes, even when you are prepared, it does not work out, for example, they might not show up, or there might be a breakdown in the technology, and it can be extremely frustrating. Some situations just go wrong. You have to bear with it, and not let your feelings overwhelm you but go ahead and try your best. What works the best is to plan and prepare as best you can.

Use feedback. Do your homework. Have a checklist. Check in with the other person and make sure you're in synch. And it's important to have a back-up plan, not just a Plan A then if something comes up, you have a Plan B. I learned through experience. I thought I had a plan but then something came up and it didn't work out and I was at a loss, and so embarrassed! So, have a Plan A, B, C, D, and E. If you want things to work out smoothly, effectively, you have to be prepared for all these different things. So that's my advice.

Anindya Battacharia (Bapin)

Interviewer: Do you have any general advice for teachers?

Yes. When I teach I think it's important to always be a positive influence. Try not to be negative or critical because being negative will influence the student. It will take away the student's sense of ability; it kills their motivation to become a teacher, or an SSP or whatever the original goal was. Look for positive things to reinforce. You can remind them [of the right way] until their work is satisfactory, then applaud it. Of course, sometimes you have to call them on something they are doing but try to use humor when you do. Because, if you say nothing at all, they will continue to repeat the same mistakes again and again.

So for a DB teacher it is important to be assertive but to be positive. Your positive energy will make them feel they can do it.

aj_granda

I think of three things. First, I would go with my own SSP, that is my preference. Then, as a teacher I would observe the student working with their SSP through my own SSP who would provide all the visual information, of course. That's the first thing. So as the teacher I watch them learn by doing, observe, evaluate, and so on. They'd let me know whatever mistakes the person is making such as how they guide the person's hands by grabbing or things they are doing well, like remembering to inform the DB person of different prices and so on. So that's one thing.

Secondly, I do use my own vision to observe, I can still see some, so I would watch too. Third, and this is something I've just started doing recently and I like it, is I'd observe tactually; I'd put my own hands on the DB person and the SSP. I can feel their movements, and whether they are coordinated with one another or not.

But it's a step by step process because I'd do role play first, a role play first before we go to the store. I'd do a role play with the DB person, showing the wrong way and the right way, then I'd do a role play with the SSP too, the right way and the wrong way, then the two of them would go practice together and I would observe as the teacher and see how they do.

So, there are options. I can use an SSP to provide visual information about what the students are doing. Second, I can use my remaining vision to try and catch what I can. It's not the best. Third, I can put my hands on theirs and feel what they are doing the Pro-Tactile way, be really involved. For example, the SSP may explain the cereal is on sale. The SSP might say, some are \$5.00, some are \$4.00 and some are \$3.00, even using space. It still feels like it's just out there in the air. I would show the SSP to actually guide the DB person's hand to the cereal boxes you are referring to, to touch each one as you're talking about it because it feels more real, the actual physical contact with the objects is always better than just talking about it. Show it and it's real.

Bruce Visser

Maybe it's dynamic. Be ready, ready for anything. Respond, communicate, have a good attitude. Be open, ready for surprises sometimes. They may say something you totally don't expect, or there could be a power outage and that would be an opportunity to chat and check in with each other. So you have to be flexible.

The other thing is time. You can't be focused on the clock and in a hurry. You start the class with a goal and you might have to take a long detour before you finally get there, and then the next week you might get there right away. So, yes, flexibility is key. Communicate, that's important. Attitude is important.

And you also have to do your homework. As the teacher I always have to be prepared, all the time. And if the student asks a question, or there is something they just want to

know about the topic, and you honestly don't know the answer, admit it but then go and find out, do the research so you can give them a good answer.

So those are the key things, be honest, communicate, and know about time and treat the DB student with respect, not put yourself above them. You work together.