

Brendan

What Every Teacher Should Know

Challenges

Brendan is legally blind due to retinitis pigmentosa and has fine motor and learning difficulties as well. He can see material in the center of his visual field, but has great difficulty seeing in the peripheral areas (below, above and to the side). He uses a cane for mobility, especially at night, and dark glasses in sunny or glare environments.



Difficulty learning abstract concepts and making inferences in particular has resulted in Brendan requiring extra help organizing material to learn. Simply reading and independently studying material has resulted in failure repeatedly and is especially discouraging to this highly motivated student. Due to the difficulties he has with vision, often Brendan takes longer to complete his work, or he will rush to finish but not demonstrate his true skills when this occurs.

What Has Worked - Successes

With careful oral teacher explanations to organize the learning prior to instruction, Brendan has done very well. Brendan grasps all central concepts when this occurs, and he has an excellent memory for anything he has learned. He reads enlarged print grade level texts and is able to read intermediate level (book 2) Braille. He passed all high school graduation proficiencies in reading, writing and math in the 9th grade.

Brendan types approximately 50 words per minute, but must enlarge font to 22 point or higher. He is an enthusiastic participant in class, is well liked, and enjoys school. Brendan has been the equipment manager for the football team since 7th grade and has many friends on the team and throughout the school campus. He has close friendships with two students and three of the school coaches.

Brendan performs especially well in collaborative work groups, and works hard to make a contribution. Teachers often comment that when he is orally asked a question in class, Brendan appears to know material very well, but on written testing, he often does not perform as well as expected. Oral testing often yields “A” or “B” grasp of the material, whereas written performance, often on the same day, yields, “D” or “F” due to short responses, often missing the “gist” of the question.