

## Magnifier Instruction

It is helpful to instruct students in the use of optical devices like magnifiers. Use of low vision devices allows access to regular print materials both in and outside of the classroom, such as magazines, labels, price tags, game boards, time tables and menus. This will prepare the student for adult life when most environmental, educational and leisure reading materials will be available only in regular print.

After the student has been prescribed low vision devices, such as magnifiers, for near viewing from the Travelling Low Vision Clinic, the Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments (TVI) will need to instruct the student in accurately and efficiently using these devices. As with all areas of instruction, the student's individual needs and skill levels will play a factor in determining the appropriate type and amount of instruction. *The use of dome magnifiers tends to be easier for children to slide along the page. Handheld magnifiers require the user to maintain a focal distance using a stable hand. This is more difficult for young children.*

Teachers of Students with Visual Impairments (TVI's) instruct students on how to manipulate their dome magnifier, on how to focus them, and on how to use them to accomplish functional and academic tasks. Instruction also must center on identifying when it is appropriate to use the devices and on when to use them in conjunction with non-optical devices or techniques.

Skills the students will need to learn include:

1. Teach the student to use **appropriate positioning for optimal viewing**. The student will need to learn to use the correct posture and body positioning. Using the magnifier along with a book stand/wedge will alleviate neck strain.
2. Teach the student to **stabilize reading materials/objects**. This may come naturally, but the student may need some instruction, particularly when using the magnifier while seated at desk.
3. Teach the student how to **move the dome magnifier** across a page and centralize viewing area.
4. Teach the student to **read a variety of printed formats** including those with graphics, maps and charts. Provide the students with variety of materials on which to practice their skills. Be sure to include materials with various print sizes such as: print within picture books, work sheets, dictionaries, labels on food packages, newspaper articles, recipes or magazines. Discuss other times student may use the magnifier during the day.
5. Teach the student to **properly store and care for the magnifier** (e.g. store, retrieve, clean). Keep it in a handy and safe location so it does not take a lot of time for child to retrieve it when needed.
6. Teach the student to **independently initiate and use the magnifier** in a variety of settings.

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