

Teaching English to Visually Impaired Students

Summary

The **ONCE**, the National Organization of the Spanish Blind (1938), provides a system of social benefits for the blind and people with severe visual impairment that has no equivalent anywhere else in the world. It also works on providing accessible job and educational opportunities.

ONCE is also responsible for one of the country's leading lotteries.

The **British Council** is the United Kingdom's international organization dedicated to promoting cultural relations and educational opportunities around the world. Founded in 1934, it operates in more than 100 countries to promote English language learning, academic cooperation and cultural exchange, fostering trust and understanding between people and communities.

The British Council and ONCE [signed a collaboration agreement in 2020](#) that consisted of the online teaching of two groups of visually impaired secondary school students. Since then, the agreement has gone beyond its initial mission, always seeking to allow the full inclusion of visually impaired students in regular classes.

This 3-session course has been jointly designed by ONCE and the British Council to help teachers offer the best support to their visually impaired students. **Teachers can attend all three sessions or choose the one most relevant** to their current teaching context. These sessions are relevant for both adults and children and young people who receive face-to-face and online classes.

Session 1: UNDERSTANDING YOUR VISUALLY IMPAIRED STUDENTS

Presenter: Raquel Muñoz especialistasidiomas@once.es

This session will explain why learning a second language and having a visual impairment are by no means mutually exclusive concepts. We will review the main types of visual pathologies and how their characteristics can affect the teaching and learning processes. Participants will gain a basic understanding of the learner's context and the support needed. They will also be aware of some important considerations when teaching students with blindness or severe visual impairment.

Session 2: TOOLS AND RESOURCES FOR TEACHING VISUALLY IMPAIRED STUDENTS

Presenter: Elena Gastón López and Ana Rebolo Maderuelo ACCEDO@once.es

In the second session, teachers will gain a deeper understanding of the tools and resources available to support blind and low-vision students in classrooms

face-to-face and online. The accessibility of different digital resources (Word, Baamboozle, Plickers, etc.) will also be assessed, adaptive strategies will be explored, and practical advice will be offered to improve teaching methods and ensure inclusive education.

Session 3: THE LEARNER IN THE CLASSROOM: ORGANIZATION, MATERIALS AND ACTIVITIES

Presenter: Raquel Muñoz especialistasidiomas@once.es

The final session will go over some key considerations for the physical classroom. Some examples of primary and secondary materials will be discussed and attendees will bring practical ideas for adapting assignments and making reasonable accommodations to accommodate visually impaired students.

COORDINATORS OF THE BRITISH COUNCIL:

Samantha Lewis: samantha.lewis@britishcouncil.org

Samantha Lewis is the Academic Director of Young Students for the British Council, Spain. She is an experienced teacher trainer and content developer, specializing in the teaching and pedagogy of secondary school students. Since 2021 she has been collaborating with the Spanish Association for the Blind in the development of teacher training resources and accessible English courses for students with visual disabilities.

Elsa O'Brien: elsaobrien@britishcouncil.es

Elsa is an English teacher and coordinator of Special Educational Needs (SEND) at the British Council in Madrid. She is also a teacher trainer in the state's bilingual school system. Elsa has been working on the collaboration agreement between the British Council and ONCE to make learning accessible to visually impaired students since 2022.

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