

# Lexical Meaning of the Visual Terms in the Blinds and Normals

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A study was conducted to explore the word meanings of the visual terms used by the blind in their language as compared to the visual terms used by the sighted.

A list of visual terms was presented verbally to two groups of 30 children each, with congenitally blind and sighted children forming the two groups. The children ranged in age from 6-11 years, with 6-8 forming the younger age group and 9-11 forming the older age group.

The list consisted of 40 visually loaded nouns and was prepared for the purpose of eliciting the word associations and the word meanings. Each word was presented singly and verbally and the responses were recorded verbatim. The responses were analysed for their characteristics and the findings could be summarised as follows:

- \* The word association and word meaning offered by the blind were mainly in-correct responses constituting verbalism, no responses, irrelevant responses and repetition (In their decreasing order of frequency).
- \* Another category of responses were inadequate responses which were either under extensions of the word or relied on non-visual attributes of the word such as auditory and tactile experience.
- \* They showed a considerable deficit in the category of correct responses.

The responses of the blind were dominated by no responses followed by verbalisms, whereas the responses of the sighted showed correct responses in majority.

All these deficiencies/differences in the blind were felt due to lack of visual experiences which alter the word-imagery/concept.