

The following post appeared in response to Patrick Jackson's article entitled "Hey, Teacher! What are YOU for? Published by ELTNEWS.com The Website for English Language Teachers, on July 26th 2013. The article may be found here:

http://www.eltnews.com/columns/patontheback/2013/07/hey_teacher_what_are_you_for.html

This is a really valuable and much needed initiative to make students aware on disability issues. Unfortunately, most people (including teachers and students) still see disability as a medical issue, not a social or even a bio-psychosocial one. So this step towards breaking attitudinal barriers related to "disability" is significant if we are thinking about "social improvement" from education. Becoming aware while learning English: smart.

I teach EAP at a public university and I have been teaching students with disabilities since I started working there. In our country, Venezuela, since this law for people with disability was passed; universities must consider a 1% (minimum) to enroll students with disabilities as one of many entrance modalities they have.

I teach in the school of librarianship, we sensitize our students not from the content of the course itself but from a committee I am part of. It offers academic support to these students and we also organize activities to make students and TEACHERS aware of disability issues.

By chance, yesterday I read about the Grader Reading Texts from the Disabled Access friendly site (I heard about this site in IATEFL, 2012, Glasgow) and I am planning to add it to the list of websites my students choose from to read as part of the extensive reading program for our EAP courses.

BTW, in our school we deal with all kinds of disabilities (not only reduced mobility) and I do believe teachers should also be part of these initiatives to learn how to promote the use of inclusive language, how to teach according to their student's disability to integrate him/her and promote equal opportunities in the classroom. Here's a brief post I wrote about special needs for iTDi. <http://itdi.pro/blog/2013/03/04/the-special-needs-issue-miguel/>

Miguel Mendoza | July 28, 2013 5:20 PM