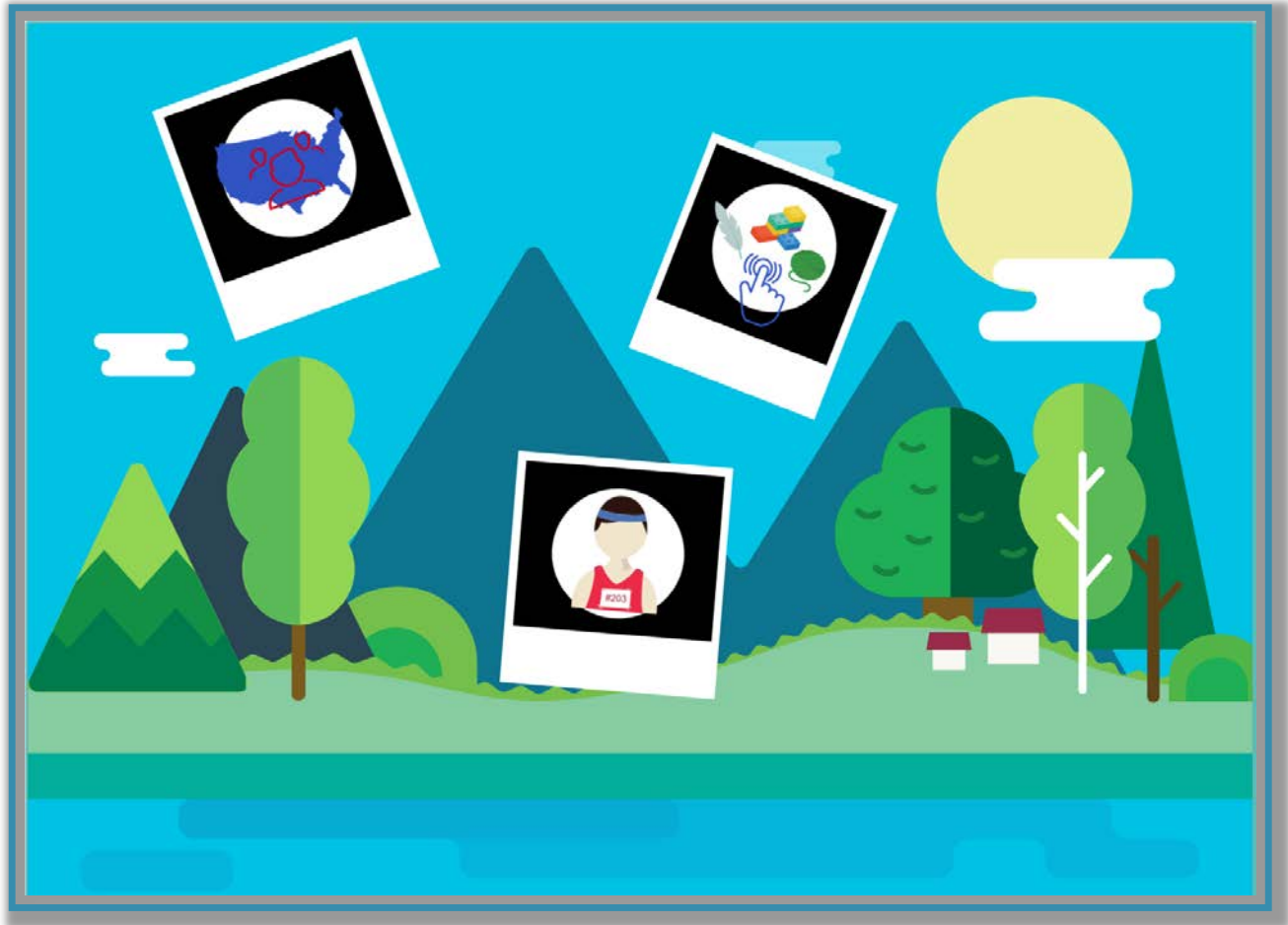




Summer 2018



Visual Impairment and Deafblind Education Quarterly

Volume 63, Issue 3

The Voice and Vision of Special Education



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This is a publication of the Council for Exceptional Children's Division on Visual Impairments and DeafBlindness (CEC-DVIDB). Advertisements included in this issue are not endorsements of products or services, and individual views of authors are not necessarily the official position of CEC and/or DVIDB.



Message from the Editor



Assistant Professor

Arizona State University

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Welcome to the Summer Back to School Issue of the *Visual Impairments and Deafblind Education Quarterly* journal. This issue is a great collection of articles for you to enjoy as a part of your summer reading to inspire you for the upcoming school year. Please pay special attention for information about running for an Executive Board Position to get more involved in CEC DVIDB. Also, take some time and nominate someone making a difference in the field of visual impairments and deafblindness for one of the five awards that are awarded each year by DVIDB.

This issue starts with an article that provides new intervention strategy ideas for you to try in your classroom. The second article shares about a 5K and one-mile walk fundraiser for the Foundation for Blind Children that benefits their amazing programs for individuals with visual impairments. I had the opportunity to participate this year, and was truly inspired by all of the runners and walkers that came together to support this great event. I changed my editor's picture for this issue to remember that amazing day!

The next article shares information about the great work being done by the Florida Instructional Materials Center for the Visually Impaired. The following article is written by one of our Board Directors about his experience at this years DeafBlind International Conference of the Americas. Then, we have an article highlighting the wonderful partnership model for Ohio's New TVI Consortium. This issue ends with some important FAQ about the standards for CEC's Division on Visual Impairment and Deafblindness Initial Specialty Set: Blind and Visual Impairments.

Enjoy this great summer issue and read about the terrific work being done in the field of visual impairments and deafblindness across the country!

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Please send a short (1 paragraph) bio to Tiffany Wild (wild.13@osu.edu) by July 30th if you are interested in running for a board position.

It is that time in the year to be thinking about how you can get more involved in CEC DVIDB. It is election time for the board. We need your help. With many hands, the load is much lighter. This is a wonderful way to advocate for the students we love and the field we are all so passionate.

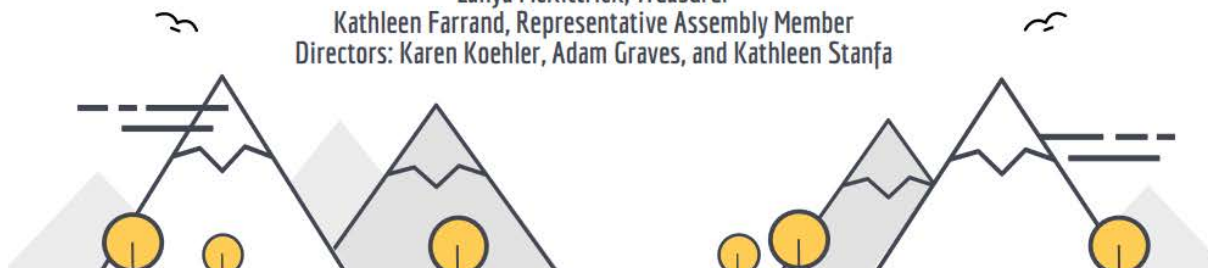
This year we are looking for members to run for the following positions:

Executive Board Position

- **Treasurer (1)**
- **Representative Assembly Member (1)**
- **Directors (5)**

Thank you to our current board members that are rotating off:

Lanya McKittrick, Treasurer
 Kathleen Farrand, Representative Assembly Member
 Directors: Karen Koehler, Adam Graves, and Kathleen Stanfa



Dear CEC Members,

It is that time in the year to be thinking about how you can get more involved in CEC DVIDB. It is election time for the board. We need your help. With many hands, the load is much lighter. This is a wonderful way to advocate for the students we love and the field we are all so passionate. This year we are looking for members to run for the following positions:

Executive Board Position

Treasurer (1)

The duties of the treasurer:

1. To serve as custodian of the funds of the Division;
2. To pay expenses approved by the Board of Directors and on authorization of the president;
3. To make an annual report of the financial status of the Division to the Board of Directors and at the annual business meeting;
4. To prepare and submit an annual budget for approval by the Board of Directors at the annual business meeting;
5. To transfer all money and records to the new treasurer within 30 days after installation.
6. To chair the Finance Committee;
7. To upon request, represent the Division at IDC meetings.

Representative Assembly Member (1)

The duties of the division's representative to the CEC Representative Assembly:

1. To represent the Division at meetings of the CEC Representative Assembly and to participate in balloting, and other activities necessary to the functioning of the CEC Representative Assembly.
2. To report regularly to the Division's Board of Directors and general membership on activities of the Representative Assembly and CEC.
3. To communicate issues and concerns from the Division to the CEC Representative Assembly

4. To inform the Division about the disposition of the Representative Assembly issues and advice forwarded to the CEC Board of Directors.
5. To upon request, represent the Division at IDC meetings.

Directors (5)

- 3 Directors are rotating off
- 2 need to be elected per the constitution

The duties of the directors shall be

1. To serve on at least one standing committee as designated by the president.
2. To serve as an alternate representative when necessary.

We thank our current board members that are rotating off:

Lanya McKittrick, Treasurer

Kathleen Farrand, Representative Assembly Member

Directors: Karen Koehler, Adam Graves, and Kathleen Stanfa

Please send a short (1 paragraph) bio to Tiffany Wild (wild.13@osu.edu) by **July 30th** if you are interested in running for a board position.

Thank you,

Tiffany Wild

President's Message



Amy Parker, Ed.D. & COMS

Assistant Professor

Portland State University

atp5@pdx.edu

Dear DVIDB Community,

For many educators “Back-to-School” conjures images of a specific building or classroom where students gather, bringing freshly purchased supplies and sporting new jeans for the Fall. In our community teachers of the visually impaired, teachers of the deafblind, and Orientation and Mobility Specialists often think of multiple students who may be located in several different locations, many who require different kinds of school supplies, and who represent a range of ages. Instead of a classroom, itinerant teachers may be reorganizing the trunks of their cars or going through their inventory of instructional materials at a regional educational center that serves students with visual impairments and deafblindness. Teachers and O&Ms in our field are no less excited about the start of the year, but they may be more attuned to the cost of gas at the pump

in order to travel to see their students. For some teachers, this travel actually involves a plane to rural and remote areas of a state!

Teachers, O&Ms and other professionals in our field need support and information for serving diverse children and adults. Partnering with paraeducators, interveners, family members and educators from different disciplines requires knowledge that is highly portable and tailorable to a variety of contexts where students require access for learning. One supply that most teachers and students can relate to is the need for a good backpack. At DVIDB, we encourage our members to think about a virtual, “metaphorical” backpack for the coming school year. We want you to consider putting us in your backpack to support you at the appropriate times and places where you need us. As a community of educators, we create, revise, and share knowledge about what students with visual impairment and deafblindness need to thrive.

In January, we gather with all of our sister divisions at the Council for Exceptional Children’s convention in Indianapolis. Not only will this be a time for sharing content and community, we will also be addressing some of our challenges as a diverse, low incidence group. On January 29th, save the date for a pre-convention workshop on students with multiple disabilities and students with cortical visual impairment. We will host this one day workshop just prior to our international convention to maximize your time and travel budget.

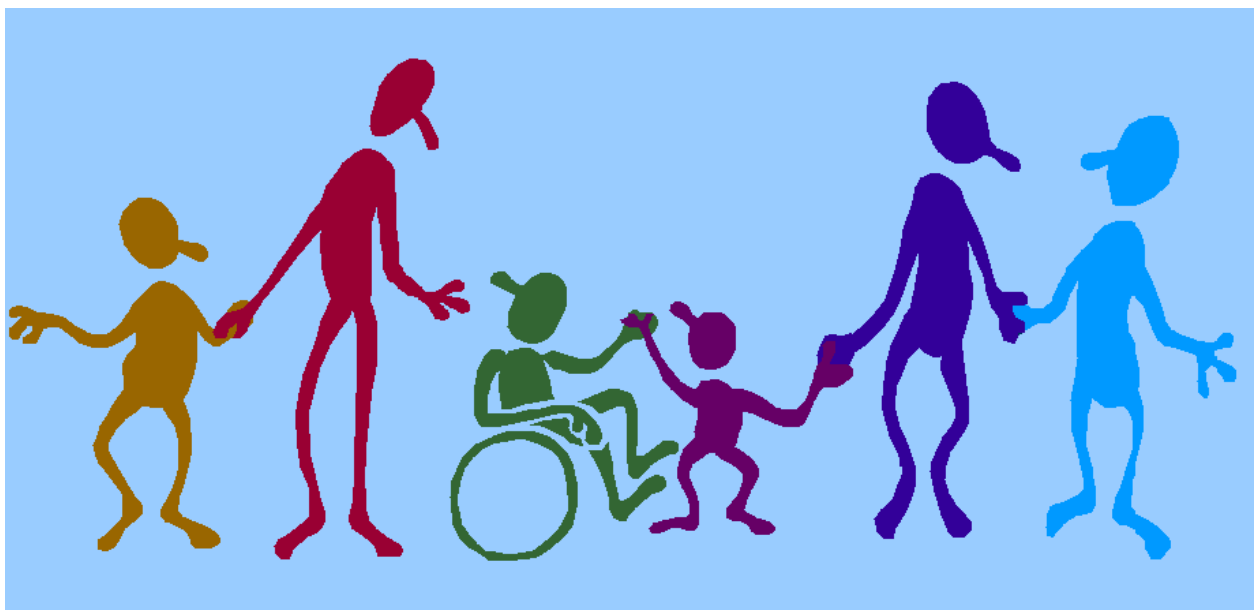
Prior to our winter gathering, you can help celebrate your colleagues by nominating someone who inspires you for an award. Our member organization is powered by volunteers and if you are ready to lead through service, please consider running for a position on our board. Committee work is one way to develop consensus,

to collaborate, and to turn one voice into many for the good of our students and colleagues. Find out more by visiting our website or dropping us a line.

As you return to school, we hope your batteries are fully charged and that your backpack is well supplied. Thank you for the work that you do with students with visual impairments and deafblindness. Each time you use your knowledge, your passion, and your resources to benefit the life of a child you support a positive trajectory for that child's future. DVIDB wants to be a support, an encouragement and a resource for your trajectory too through the Q, through our convention, via our website, or outreach on social media. Take us along for the ride and let us be there when you need us.

Amy T. Parker,

2018-2019 DVIDB President





Nominations for Awards!!



It is time to be thinking about the taking time to honor the wonderful people of our field that do so much to ensure our students are receiving access to the education they deserve as well as the services they need. Please take time to honor an amazing person in your life.

We have 5 awards that we like to give out each year. Nominations are easy.

DVIDB Distinguished Service Award:

The DVIDB Distinguished Service Award is to recognize exemplary leadership and commitment to the field of education and rehabilitation of students with visual impairments and deafblindness.

Exemplary Advocate Award:

The DVIDB Exemplary Advocate Award is to recognize exemplary leadership and commitment to the field of education and rehabilitation of students with visual impairments and deafblindness.

Teacher of the year:

The DVIDB *Teacher of the Year Award* honors a person who is exceptionally dedicated, knowledgeable and a skilled certified Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments or Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist in any state approved or accredited day or specialized school, who serves students who are visually impaired, ages birth through 21, with or without additional disabilities.

Virginia M. Sowell Student of the Year Award:

The DVIDB Virginia M. Sowell Student of the Year Award recognizes a student who demonstrates a commitment to the education and/or rehabilitation of individuals with visual impairments and deafblindness. The award was named after Dr. Virginia Sowell whose lifetime contributions to the profession impacted the lives of numerous educators and countless children and adults with visual impairments and deafblindness.

Outstanding Dissertation of the Year Award:

The DVIDB Dissertation of the Year Award is to recognize a DVIDB member who makes a significant contribution to the field through extensive study and research in their summative doctoral dissertation.

To Make a Nomination:

1. Fill out the Nomination Award
2. Provide *at least 1 letter of support* (no more than 2 pages) describing why you are nominating the person. Feel free to add any additional information that you feel will add to the description and qualifications of your nominee for the award.
3. * For Dissertation of the Year: Please provide an abbreviated (No more than 25 pages) version of the dissertation for the committee. One letter of support **MUST** come from the advisor of the student

Begin the New School Year with New Intervention Strategies

Kathy Boisvert, Ph.D., TVI

Blackstone-Millville Regional School District

Integrated Early Childhood Teacher

kboisvert@bmrtd.net

As we begin to plan for the new school year, it is always helpful to feel rejuvenated. This article is going to highlight some strategies that may prove beneficial in inspiring educators in creating more engaging tactile representations for our students with visual impairments.

After 20 years in education and more than 9 years as a Teacher of the Visually Impaired, I have worked with children whose ages ranged from preschool to grade 5. Over the years, I have found some unique techniques that have allowed me to create informative and engaging tactile representations for individuals with visual impairments.

I believe that we must remember that is not just the tactile designs that we create, but how we introduce them to our students. In the article titled, "Early Tactile Learning," Cleveland and Sewell (2009) provide a description of tactual learning as follows:

Tactual learning is not the same as visual learning, and it necessitates a lot more touching than we are typically used to. Tactual learning requires that information be gained by exploration of one aspect of an object at a time and piecing it together to



make the whole. It requires immediate proximity and multiple opportunities to explore. Tactual learning simply takes more time. Before children know they can reach out and touch things, the adults have to intentionally set up opportunities for tactile interaction.

We must overcome the fear that complex concepts are too difficult to put into a tactile format for students in the elementary grades. I had a kindergarten child with no functional vision that was presented a complex skeleton. We reviewed it over many sessions and he was able to not only understand the concepts, but he also explained it to his peers.

Image 1. Skeleton outline using straws for ribs, yarn for muscles, wooden sticks as bone and fabric paint for smaller details.

Image 2. Close-up of leg using wooden sticks as a representation of the bones and fabric paint to represent the skin.

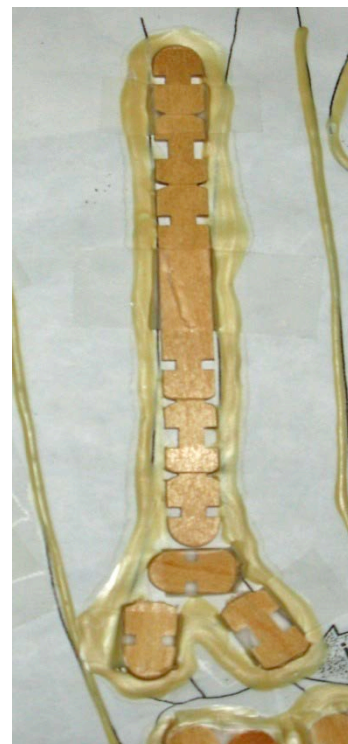




Image 3. Close-up image of muscles that was created using multiple pieces of yarn in intersecting patterns to create layers.

The key to introducing more detailed concepts is that the representations must be easily understood and not overlaid with too many textures. If you keep the design simple, then the concept can be more advanced without becoming confusing to our students. In addition, the concepts must be taught over several sessions where you can focus on one section, such as the bones or muscles, and then focus on the representation as a whole. I used simple materials found in almost every classroom setting to create a very detailed model. In my experience, the most important feedback will come from your students. I asked this student to describe what he felt at each stage of the development of the body part we were focused on. He had to describe his thoughts about bones and muscles to me so that I could ensure that he understood the concepts being taught once they were put on paper. For example, I had started with plastic models of the skeleton and this child was unable to feel the difference between the various parts of the body such as the bone and the muscle. As we read about each part of the body such as the rib cage, he would describe it in a way that made sense to him. He used his fingers to represent bones and then put them together with his thumbs touching on one side and his fingers on the other like a circle. Once I saw how he understood the concept of the rib cage, I used straws so that we could use them to create a three-dimensional (3D) design and then follow-up on the page a two-dimensional (2D) image. By presenting the same

concept with the same material in different dimensional formats, it allowed him to gain a deeper understanding of the body and skeleton as a whole in a 3D format, as well as when it was on paper. Even when all of the concepts were presented together in one representation that went from head-to-toe, he understood the lesson and was even able to explain it to his peers.

Over the years, I have found that making personal connections with my students and their interests is not only more enjoyable for our children, but it also a proven method of increasing their motivation to learn. Willis (2007) states that Brain-Based Research suggests higher level learning takes place when a classroom setting is enjoyable and relevant to the students' lives, interest and experiences.

I also believe that we need to think about engaging our students throughout the learning process and not just in academic areas. Many years ago, I had a six-year-old student with no functional vision ask me how to paint. Although not an academic skill, it was an area of interest for him. I came up with the idea of clay painting. If I mixed different textures in the clay like sand, oil, oatmeal, and rice, then it allowed the child to create an image based on how it felt to him. We began by touching real sunflower and focusing on each one of the parts. After we explored the center of the flower with the seeds, we determined that it was the shape of a circle and had lots of textures and bumps. The petals of the flower were explored as a whole and then individually so that he could understand how each petal contributed to the outer layer. We found that each petal could be created by pressing the clay down and then pulling it across the page until it became very thin. The final step in the petal creation was to use a toothpick to scratch the grooves in. Later, I was able to use this technique in a variety of science

activities like when we worked on life cycles, and even social studies activities such as maps. Therefore, this simple technique developed to increase the child's creativity also proved to be very beneficial in his ability to access the information with greater independence.

Image 4. A sunflower created using clay and fabric paint that has textured flower petals, center, and stem.

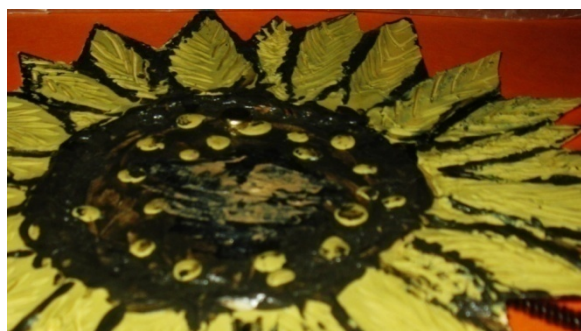


Image 5. A close-up of a textured sunflower that highlights the textured detail on the flower petals and center.



By taking an interest in what this child wanted to learn about the process of painting and then adapting it into a format that he was able to engage directly with, it allowed him to be inventive and create something unique and gratifying.

Some simple suggestions I would have for educators and family members to introduce and explore tactile representations is to use everyday items found in your home. For example, if you add oatmeal, rice, or even sugar to play dough, it will create a new texture for the child and make playing with dough more of an adventure. By using hot glue to create a small tactile cue at the edge of the table, a child could know that their cup of juice is located in front of this cue near their left hand.

To really gain a deeper understanding of what your child or students knows, then ask them! Try not to assume that they understand a concept without asking follow-up questions to ensure they do. Finally, just have fun and get messy!

Overall, I have found that the more engaged our students are from a tactual and creative standpoint, then the more likely they are to really engage in the curriculum even when the concepts are quite challenging.

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Are you interested in being a peer reviewer for research manuscript submissions to VIDBE-Q? If the answer is yes, then please send your CV/resume and a cover letter that includes your responses to the following information to Kathleen Farrand, editor, today!
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Cover Letter

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EMAIL TODAY!

KATHLEEN FARRAND, EDITOR VIDBE-Q
kathleen.farrand@asu.edu

Foundation for Blind Children: Stride for Sight

Saturday, March 24, 2018

Steve Pawlowski

Director of Communications and Business Development

Foundation for Blind Children

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2018 marked the seventh year of the Foundation for Blind Children's Stride for Sight fundraiser. Held at G.R. Herberger Park in Phoenix, Arizona, this year's event saw a record number of participants (557) and revenue (more than \$66,000), all benefitting the life-changing programs at the Foundation for Blind Children.

Stride for Sight is a unique event for all ages and abilities – including visually impaired and sighted runners. It features a timed (competitive or recreational) 5k and a relaxed one-mile walk. The optional Blindfold Challenge separates this event from every other race in the valley and takes competition to a new level. Runners looking for adventure could step up their game by competing in the 5k blindfolded with a sighted guide. They're invited to run the entire route blindfolded or trade roles halfway through to get a taste of the challenge from both sides.



Figure 1. A blindfolded runner and her sighted guide begin the 5k Stride for Sight event.

“Out of all the races that benefit non-profits, this one is the most unique and rewarding to be a part of – it’s not every day you have the chance to run without your vision,” said Spencer Churchill, FBC instructor and Stride for Sight team organizer.

This year’s event was bigger and better than ever before. It featured food, music, free chair massages, a silent auction, a gourmet coffee truck, a blindfolded obstacle course for kids, and homemade French pastries and bread, courtesy of a family from France who moved to Phoenix just so their child could attend FBC!

Participants enjoyed visits from mascots Howler, of the Arizona Coyotes hockey team, and Spirit from the Fiesta Bowl. They also reveled in bidding on an opportunity to throw a snowball at FBC’s CEO, Marc Ashton, during next year’s Snow Day event!

In fact, 2018 was so successful, that Stride for Sight has now outgrown the venue it has called home for the past three years, and will need to move to a larger location next year.

Every step at Stride for Sight brought us one step closer to providing a visually impaired child and his/her family the support they need. Runners and walkers formed teams and solicited pledges from family and friends totaling \$15,000. The top three fundraising teams were honored after the race and presented with one-of-a-kind pieces of artwork, created by the students of FBC.



Figure 2. A successful team celebrates after the race as they proudly wear their medals.

“Stride for Sight is an extraordinary event,” said FBC board member, Dr. Erin Nelson. “This is not just another 5k/Fun Run! Certainly, the sense of purpose typically

associated with a fundraising run/walk is present - that familiar positive spirit and opportunity for community members to contribute in a meaningful way. But way more than that, Stride for Sight creates a unique space and time for friends and family of all ages and sight levels to engage in a shared experience. Blind or sighted, blindfolded or not - the collective energy amongst Stride for Sight participants on race day is exceptional. And, equally if not more important, the sense of unity and purpose amongst Stride for Sight participants endures long after the race has been run.”

FBC believes vision loss is a diagnosis, not a disability. That vision was proven time and time again at Stride for Sight as many of the top finishers that day were visually impaired. To make things even more challenging – and sometimes a bit scary, this particular route runs adjacent to a deep, flowing canal. But rest assured that all precautions were taken to insure the safety of all participants.

Runners received custom medals and Dri-Fit t-shirts for participating. Awards were given to the top three finishers in several age categories, but the true reward for everyone involved was the comradery, awareness and resources raised for the students and families of FBC.

We look forward to Stride for Sight 2019 and hope it continues to inspire the community to come together to support FBC and make a difference in lives of those we serve. It’s because of events like this that our students are able to learn to walk, speak, read, play sports, attend college and go to work!



Cortical Visual Impairment

An Approach to Assessment
and Intervention

Second Edition

Christine Roman-Lantzy

AFBPress

American Foundation for the Blind

www.afb.org/press

Florida Instructional Materials Center for the Visually Impaired

Kay Ratzlaff

Supervisor

Florida Instructional Materials Center for the Visually Impaired

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At the Florida Instructional Materials Center for the Visually Impaired (FIMC-VI), we are the one-stop shop for all things related to students with visual impairments.

Everything from accessible instructional materials (braille, large print, digital text), accessible statewide assessments, and NIMAS Florida, to professional development, Quality Programs for Student with Visual Impairments, a loan library, and the American Printing House for the Blind Federal Quota Program is all coordinated by this small, but dynamic staff! FIMC-VI is a statewide discretionary project of the Florida Department of Education Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services. Through an annual Florida Department of Education grant, FIMC-VI provides comprehensive support to Florida students with visual impairments in public, private, and home-school programs at no cost to the school districts or agencies.

Established in 1972 by the Florida legislature, FIMC-VI has grown from being simply the braille and large print textbook supplier to the integral project that it is today. Forty-five years ago, the textbooks housed here were tracked on index cards similar to a library check-out system, and a braille textbook often took two years to be produced. Today we operate our inventory of 35,000 books with a barcode scanning system and

extensive database. Processing times have dropped quite a bit too; for the approximately 6,000 orders received in 2017-2018, 99 percent of large print orders were delivered within 60 days of receiving the order, and 90 percent of braille books were delivered within 60 days or less.

FIMC-VI has approximately 3,000 students from birth through age 22 registered for our services. There are nearly 280 teachers of the visually impaired (TVIs) and orientation and mobility (O&M) instructors serving students in Florida public schools and at the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind. However, just like many other states across this

country, Florida is experiencing a critical teacher shortage of TVIs and O&M instructors. (Shameless plug ... call us if you

are interested in teaching in Florida and being a part of this awesome network!)

FIMC-VI provides extensive professional development to all teachers, family members, agency personnel, and district staff who are involved in the education of students with visual impairments. Staff at FIMC-VI have provided training specifically for families and parents at various workshops and conferences, on topics such as facilitating independence and the role of the teacher of the visually impaired. We have implemented the Quality Programs for Students with Visual Impairments (QPVI) with 15 school districts in Florida. In order to provide all TVIs with the foundations of QPVI, FIMC-VI created a QPVI-Building Local Capacity workshop. This mini-QPVI trains teachers on how to establish a data system of students; conduct rigorous assessments of functional vision, learning media, and expanded core curriculum; and use data-driven



Figure 1. Teachers participating in a make and take workshop.

decision making. For 42 consecutive years, FIMC-VI has offered at least two Working with the Experts statewide workshops specific to students with visual impairments. In addition to all this face-to-face training and technical assistance, FIMC-VI staff also produces webinars that are posted on the FIMC-VI website (www.fimcvi.org). Topics such as Teaching Cooking Skills without a Kitchen, Importance of Eye Medicals, Statewide Assessment Updates, Florida Students with Sensory Impairments, Determining Time and Intensity of Services, and more are available at no charge. We believe that providing a variety of opportunities to learn has paid off; during the 2017-2018 school year, 100% of the Florida districts that provide services to students with visual impairments participated in an FIMC-VI training.

FIMC-VI also partners with Braille Institute to offer Cane Quest® and Braille



Figure 1. Students participating in Cane Quest.

Challenge. Offered in Tampa for the past three years, Cane Quest has tested the orientation and mobility skills of over 100 participants. In 2008, FIMC-VI hosted the first Florida Braille Challenge with 18 competitors at one event. In 2018, there were four Florida Regional Braille Challenge events with over 140 braille readers competing and 420 teachers, volunteers, family members, and agency personnel in attendance. Only

students qualify for the National Braille Challenge competition from the United States and Canada, and Florida is extremely proud to have 5 braille readers qualify in 2018 and 6 students in 2017!



Figure 2. Students competing at Braille Challenge.

FIMC-VI is also an integral partner with the Florida Department of Education Bureau of K-12 Assessment and the assessment companies to ensure high-quality braille versions of all statewide assessments. The team at FIMC-VI is involved in bias and sensitivity reviews, item reviews, proofreading of the braille tests, writing and proofreading of the braille notes and braille scripts, as well as transcription of student answers from braille to print. This partnership guarantees that the needs of our students with visual impairments are represented in the development and production of all statewide assessments.

Considering all the services we provide, FIMC-VI is fortunate to have the support of and to be able to collaborate with the Florida Department of Education, the Florida Division of Blind Services, the Florida and Virgin Islands Deaf-Blind Collaborative, the Florida Agencies Serving the Blind, as well as the consumer organizations, and all Florida School Districts. It truly takes a village to support all students with visual impairments in Florida, and FIMC-VI is proud to be part of this village.



Figure 4. FIMC-VI staff: Elizabeth Anderson, Mary Stoltz, Denise Battle, Dianna Moyer, Kay Ratzlaff, Diana Przeslawski, Kathee Cagle, Andrea Wallace, Sue Glaser, Darrin Porter, Ron Stevenson, Gabriel Rumbaut, and Vernon Underwood. Not pictured is Kathy Kremplewski.

What's the best way to learn? Your way.



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Sometimes even the littlest things can give us the greatest amount of satisfaction. That's why, at APH, we're creating new tools for children with low-vision, blindness, and multiple disabilities to live better lives.

WELCOME EVERYONE

Pictured: Snap Circuits Jr™ Access Kit and Access Pack – an APH/Elanco partnership product.

Reflections on DeafBlind International Conference of the Americas

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On April 14-18 Deafblind International (DbI), an organization dedicated to improving services and quality of life for individuals who are DeafBlind around the world, held a Conference of the Americas at the Resort and Conference Center in Hyannis, Massachusetts. The conference brought together family members, professionals, support staff and individuals who are DeafBlind from 26 countries across North and South America, as well as Europe and Africa. It was the largest conference on DeafBlindness held in the Americas since the 15th DbI World conference in Sao Paulo, Brazil in 2011.

Among the sponsors for the conference were Perkins School for the Blind and The National Family Association for Deaf-Blind (NFADB). The conference was dedicated to Dr. Jan van Dijk, who had planned on attending as one of the keynote speakers until his unfortunate passing on January 23, 2018. Dr. van Dijk's work with individuals who are DeafBlind has been well documented and one was keenly aware of his influence on the field throughout the conference proceedings. Several of the keynote

and plenary speakers had worked with Dr. van Dijk in various capacities, and many of the workshops featured references to the tremendous volume of research that he has contributed to the literature on DeafBlindness over the years. A banner featuring a photo of Dr. van Dijk was displayed throughout the conference as a reminder of his impact on the lives of individuals who are DeafBlind as well as their families and caregivers. Attendees were encouraged to write a personal message of thanks or a fond memory on the banner which was presented to his family following the conference.

It seemed particularly fitting that conference organizers chose to honor Dr. van Dijk by asking the attendees to share their memories of him with his family as the inclusion of NFADB as one of the sponsors provided the conference with a very familial atmosphere. Many of the conference sessions focused on the rights of individuals who are DeafBlind and their families as well as the roles that people who are DeafBlind and their family members can play in promoting inclusion of individuals with disabilities in society. In addition, individuals who are DeafBlind and their families were represented in the plenary sessions and panel discussions which took place over the course of 4-day conference.

George Stern, a doctoral student at Texas Tech University and member of DeafBlind Citizens in Action, provided the keynote address on day three of the conference. Mr. Stern's presentation, entitled "The Inclusive Mindset," reflected on his experiences of growing up as an individual with DeafBlindness and how he has come to define the term "inclusion." He explained that his definition of inclusion is that of a thought process in which differences are celebrated and welcomed. Mr. Stern encouraged the conference attendees to think of inclusion not simply as a set of actions

to ensure that those who live with disabilities gain access to the non-disabled world. Rather, he challenged the conference participants to begin to think of inclusion as way of life. And he challenged his audience even further by encouraging them to help others begin to understand the value of viewing society through an inclusion mindset as well.

As I observed the keynote, plenary and workshop sessions I was struck by the number of members of the CEC Division on Visual Impairment and DeafBlindness featured as presenters and with whom I came into contact. There were many DVIDB members who had been invited to serve as keynote and plenary speakers and many more members provided information on DeafBlind specific topics in the small group workshops. As a result, the contributions that the DVIDB membership made to the Dbl Conference of the Americas were notable in both their scale and quality. Sessions led by DVIDB members which I attended provided information on a wide variety of topics that effect individuals who are DeafBlind and their families. Many of the family members in attendance at these sessions expressed their gratitude to the presenters for sharing their research and their expertise. Likewise, there were many educators within the DVIDB community who expressed their gratitude to the family members for sharing their perspectives with professionals through their presentations on family issues.

Diana Griffen, vice president of NFADB, expressed her appreciation to the conference organizers efforts in creating an environment in which professionals, families and individuals who are DeafBlind were all provided an equal platform in which to share their knowledge and experiences. She explained, "I had a strong sense, and got lots of feedback, that having families present to provide the family perspective was valuable to the professionals and educators, which helps to make the families feel

valued.” Another member of NFADB, Vivecca Hartman, commented, “It was energizing to chat with people from not only other states, but other countries to talk about what’s working and what they’ve done to tweak a routine or daily activity plan based on other people’s experiences.”

The final evening of the conference featured an awards banquet which recognized those individuals from the North and South American continents who have made significant lifetime contributions to the field of DeafBlindness. It was an opportunity to honor the people who have made lifelong dedicated efforts in creating a world with an inclusion mindset as described by George Stern. It also provided attendees with a chance to look forward to a future in which individuals who are DeafBlind no longer have to explain the concept of an inclusion mindset to their sighted hearing peers. Clara Berg, president of NFADB, summed up the experience well by sharing, “What made this conference so successful was the integration of all the different communities within the world of deaf-blindness and the affinity among all of them.”

As the conference came to a close, I made my way to the ballroom where the Dbl dance party was already in full swing. I watched as Support Service Providers (SSPs) provided pro-tactile cues on the backs of individuals who were DeafBlind to keep the beat of the music for them and describe the steps to dances like the “Cupid Shuffle”. I joined in the dance with people who were DeafBlind, professionals, parents, siblings and support staff from all walks of life and all corners of the globe to share in the happiness that arises from connecting with one another. Witnessing the scenes of enjoyment play out on the dance floor I was moved to reflect once more on the work of

Dr. Jan van Dijk. Through all of his psychological and neurological research on individuals who are DeafBlind, perhaps his most memorable contribution to the field of DeafBlindness was the reminder that the quality of life for all individuals, regardless of background or ability, lies in finding “moments of joy” to share with others. As I shimmed, shuffled and twisted the night away with old friends and new acquaintances, I could feel the barriers of communication, culture and conditional differences begin to melt away and the joy of the moment begin to take hold.

Since returning from the Dbl Conference of the Americas, I have enjoyed the opportunity to continue conversations on issues related to DeafBlind education that were initiated at the conference with my colleagues across the country. These conversations and connections have helped ensure that the joy that I experienced at Dbl has remained long after the euphoria of the conference has subsided. Another result of attending the conference is that I have become more aware of the intelligence, dedication, passion and joy that a younger group of professionals, family members and individuals who are DeafBlind are bringing with them to their respective professions and organizations. This has led me to experience more and more moments of hope for the future of our field. Though the prospect of creating a world with an inclusive mindset, as George Stern has challenged us to do, may seem like an impossible goal, the connections made through organizations such as Dbl, DVIDB, NFADB, AER and others will enable us continue to bring joy and hope to the work we all must do together to achieve it.



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Ohio's New TVI Consortium: A Partnership Model

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The TVI Consortium was borne out of research demonstrating a lack of services and a shortage of qualified, licensed professionals to educate students with visual impairments in Ohio. This professional educator shortage was especially prevalent in rural areas of the state, where resources and access to qualified personnel posed particular challenges for school districts who serve students with low incidence sensory disabilities. Through the collaborative efforts of the Ohio Deans Compact, Ohio Department of Education, Ohio Department of Higher Education, and a variety of educational agencies, state and national experts and other key resource personnel, Ohio embarked on a new model for addressing critical personnel shortages. The TVI Consortium model is a multi-institution, collaborative, state-wide licensure program seeking to credential teachers in the area of Intervention Specialist-Visual Impairments. The consortium model allows for multiple points of access to the program for students, the distribution of resources across the state to address severe shortages in unserved/underserved regions and a collaborative model that involves Institutions of Higher Education working together to develop and offer a common shared curriculum.

Over the last two years, the TVI Consortium program moved from the vision stage to the development stage and then to the implementation phase. Two design teams of state and national experts were formed and members recruited from across the state to develop all key components of the program. The curriculum design team was comprised of representatives from the prospective partner institutions. The task of this group was to map out the curriculum for the program including course identification, syllabi development, identify key program assessments and subsequent CEC standards alignments. An external facilitator guided and supported the efforts of this team. The field and practicum design team was comprised of representatives from numerous State Support Teams, Ohio Department of Education, Education Service Centers, teachers of the visually impaired, Institutional field placement personnel, early childhood intervention specialists, the Ohio Deans Compact and other resource personnel. This team was charged with identifying field and practicum requirements to be embedded into the program.



Figure 1. Teacher of Visually Impaired Consortium Ohio Deans Compact LISD Collaborative logo.

In August 2017, after two years of hard work by many individuals, the TVI Consortium became a reality and began with its first cohort of students. The TVI program is a licensure only program and all accepted students must be previously licensed teachers. The students in the program complete 22 graduate credit hours in an 8 course sequence. Courses cover content including braille instruction, curricular accommodations/adaptations, assessment, eye anatomy and eye disorders, the expanded core curriculum, low vision and educating students who are Deafblind and those with multiple disabilities. All graduate coursework is delivered online, both synchronously and asynchronously over a one-year academic period. Once students complete the program, they must pass the Ohio Educator Assessment in the area of Visual Impairment, in order to obtain the Intervention Specialist: Visual Impairments license to serve as a teacher of the visually impaired.

In addition to online coursework, students participate in embedded field experiences throughout the program year and a summer practicum with students with visual impairments. Each student is paired with a TVI mentor who assists in providing opportunities for field experiences and acts as an important professional resource for the student. We are pleased to have some phenomenal mentors who volunteer to share their time and expertise to work with the prospective licensure students in the TVI program. The summer practicum offers the TVI Consortium students the opportunity to work with a wide variety of students



TVI Consortium Partners

Shawnee State University
 University of Rio Grande
 Youngstown State University
 Bowling Green State University
 Mount Vernon Nazarene University

Figure 2. TVI Consortium Partners: Shawnee State University, Youngstown State University, Bowling Green State University, and Mount Vernon Nazarene University.

in settings such as the Ohio State School for the Blind, Cleveland Sight Center, Clovernook Center for the Blind, Kamp Dovetail and local public schools' extended school year services.

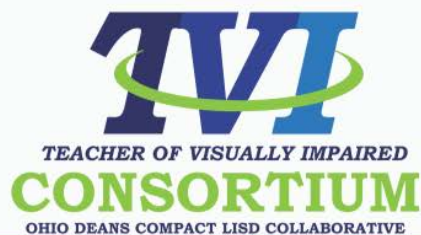
The TVI Consortium includes 5 Ohio institutions of higher education including: Shawnee State University (Lead and licensure approval institution), Youngtown State University, Bowling Green State University, University of Rio Grande and Mount Vernon Nazarene University. Not only do the partner universities collaborate to deliver the online coursework, but they also assist in student recruitment and student practicum supervision. We are excited to have excellent partner institutions representing various regions *across* Ohio including underserved areas in southern and southeastern Ohio that fall within the greater Appalachian region.

The TVI Consortium Advisory board, composed of adjunct faculty and partner IHE representatives, meets 3 times per year to review program data, candidate progressions and make program revisions. This board has been invaluable during the first year of the program to make recommendations for future cohorts of students and evaluate programmatic changes based upon initial cohort data. Based upon feedback from current students and the advisory board one program change for the second cohort will be additional opportunities for students to engage with each other and instructors in face to face weekend workshops throughout the program.

Funding for the TVI Consortium program is made possible by a grant from the Ohio Department of Education, Office for Exceptional Children. Students accepted into the program receive funding for tuition, books and materials. In exchange for this funding, students agree to serve as a TVI in Ohio for a 3-year period after obtaining

licensure. By agreeing to serve as a TVI in Ohio, the TVI Consortium program is well positioned to build capacity for teachers who are equipped to meet the unique needs of students with visual impairments. While the consortium model is a rarity for personnel preparation programs in the nation, the Ohio TVI Consortium can serve as a model of collaboration among institutions of higher education to prepare educators in low incidence sensory disabilities. With a cohort of 13 students ready to graduate from the first year of the program and 20 students accepted into the second cohort, this is truly an exciting time in Ohio for students with visual impairments.





OHIO TVI CONSORTIUM

Learn to teach
students with
visual
impairments

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FAQ. CEC's Division on Visual Impairment and Deafblindness Initial Specialty Set: Blind and Visual Impairments

1. What is the importance of the CEC's Division on Visual Impairment and Deafblindness (DVIDB) Initial Specialty Set: Blind and Visual Impairments?

The CEC's Division on Visual Impairment and Deafblindness (DVIDB) Initial Specialty Set was developed in order to inform personnel preparation programs, accreditation organizations, and credentialing agencies about the skills that a teacher of students with visual impairments (TVI) must master in order to become an effective educator of students who are blind or who have low vision upon initial licensure.

1. Are these standards enforceable, and if so, how and by who are they enforced/monitored? For universities? states? individual teachers?

The initial specialty set from DVIDB adheres to the standards set forth by the larger CEC organization. All personnel preparation programs in visual impairment education that are applying to become accredited programs through the Council for Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) must show evidence of pre-service teachers' knowledge and skills as set forth by CEC standards. A review team of professionals in special education reviews all reports of that evidence and monitors the practice of personnel preparation in university settings. Accreditation of a university by CAEP is dependent upon adherence to the standards.

2. What about TVIs who do not go through university programs – do these standards apply?

No. The standards do not necessarily apply, although some university preparation programs that are not CAEP-accredited use these standards to design their coursework and field experiences. Without evidence of having adhered to the CEC DVIDB initial specialty set, it is unknown what training those TVIs are receiving. However, an employer who hires a teacher from a personnel preparation programs that adhere to the standards can be assured of the training that person by reviewing the standards.

2. What is meant by "initial" specialty set – is there a more advanced set of standards?

According to CEC, the initial standards define what beginning teachers must know and be able to do to begin their teaching career. The initial specialty sets

define the knowledge and skills professionals must have to begin their work in specific areas within special education.

Those teachers who are in their careers and wish to deepen their understanding of skills and knowledge will be involved in programs that follow the advanced set of standards. The larger CEC organization has a set of advanced standards that those programs would need to follow for purposes of advanced accreditation. Currently our division does not have a specialty set of advanced specialty standards.

DVIDB supports both the initial CEC standards and the advanced set of standards.

3. Who determines what should be included in CEC's Division on Visual Impairment and Deafblindness (DVIDB) Initial Specialty Set: Blind and Visual Impairments?
 1. Are parents/families of students with visual impairments involved? If so, how?
 2. Are people who are blind/visually impaired involved? If so, how?

The standards were developed as part of work that spanned over 2 years. Teams of people met at national conferences to discuss the standards and provide input. Anyone with interest in the standards who could not attend the conferences could provide input through email to the chair of the committee. The standards were available for public comment throughout the 2 years. Updates on the standards revision process were provided quarterly in our division journal. Comments and suggestions were submitted by anyone who had an interest in the process and concerns on the knowledge and skill levels of pre-service TVIs. Therefore, parents, families, and persons with visual impairments were all invited to make comments throughout this process. All suggestions and comments were taken back to a committee of persons in personnel preparation for consideration. The final document reflects the recommendations of the field.

4. What about specific standards for teaching students with:
 1. deafblindness?
 2. multiple disabilities?
 3. specific types of blindness/visual impairment such as cortical/cerebral visual impairment?

Deafblindness is recognized as its own category in statute and regulation in the United States, Canada, and other countries. Standards for teachers of the deafblind and interveners who serve students who are deafblind follow the same process for review, alignment, and validation. Deafblindness is not specifically written into the standards, since a specialty set will be written for

teaching students with deafblindness. However, working with students with deafblindness is inferred in standard 1.

Specific standards related to students with multiple disabilities are found in standard 4 and 5.

Specific types of blindness/visual impairment, including cerebral/cortical visual impairment, are referenced in standards found in standards 1 and 5.

*Please note that throughout the document, the term, *students with visual impairments* includes all students TVIs serve, as long as they qualify for services. The larger CEC organization would not allow us to name each visual condition and additional disability in the standards; the list would be too long. Therefore, TVIs should be trained to teach all students likely to be represented on an assigned case-load, including students with multiple disabilities and those students who have specific types of visual impairment. Specific standards for teaching students with deafblindness will be updated in the upcoming years.

5. How often are standards updated? When will be the next update?

Each specialty set should be updated, ideally, every seven years. Sometimes this frequency of revision is not always the possible. It is anticipated that our next set of standards should be updated in 2026.

6. Since the Knowledge and Skill items are combined with CEC's Initial Common Specialty Items (ICSI) to produce a complete set of standards, what is the process for reviewing and updating the ICSI?

CEC has a set of rules and guidelines for updating all standards. They can be found at:

<https://www.cec.sped.org/~media/Files/Standards/CEC%20Initial%20and%20Advanced%20Specialty%20Sets/2017%20Specialty%20Set%20Validation%20Manual.pdf>

7. What is the difference between the CEC's Division on Visual Impairment and Deafblindness (DVIDB) Initial Specialty Set: Blind and Visual Impairments and the AER Core Standards and TVI Standards?

CEC standards reflect the views of the field in accordance to the guidelines set forth by the CEC organization. AER Core Standards and TVI Standards reflect the views of the field in accordance to the guidelines set forth by AER. AER and CEC are two different organizations with different guidelines on standards and standards development.

8. What are the standards of preparation and practice for other professionals serving students with visual impairments, such as orientation and mobility specialists?

Other professionals serving students with visual impairments have other guidelines set forth by their professional organizations. For example, numerous personnel preparation programs in orientation and mobility adhere to the standards established by AER and the Academy for Certification of Vision Rehabilitation and Blindness Professionals (ACVREP).

9. How can stakeholders continue to provide feedback on the credentialing/licensing of TVIs?

There are numerous ways for stakeholders to continue to provide feedback on the credentialing/licensing of TVIs. These standards are only one of many guidelines that are used in personnel preparation. Each state may have additional requirements for licensure and credentialing. Stakeholders can get involved at their state level through guidance meetings in departments of education, universities, or professional organizations.

10. How can TVIs use the CEC's Division on Visual Impairment and Deafblindness (DVIDB) Initial Specialty Set: Blind and Visual Impairments and the AER standards in communications with school districts to advocate for appropriate services and best practices?

A teacher or teacher candidate who has been university trained and is seeking employment can use the standards set forth by CEC DVIDB and/or AER to demonstrate to an administrator or employer the knowledge and skills that he/she possesses upon completion of teacher training. This document can demonstrate to the employer or administrator why he/she should be hired instead of someone who comes from another type of licensure/certificate program.

A teacher or parent may use the published standards in discussions with administrators and IEP teams to help explain and clarify the training and role of a teacher of students with visual impairments. While each state may establish its own requirements for teachers, these accepted standards clearly outline the knowledge and skills determined by the field of blindness and visual impairments to be within the scope of a the TVI profession.

DVIDB ON FACEBOOK

Join Our Facebook Family

If you are passionate about the education of children and youth with visual impairments and deafblindness, including those with additional disabilities, please become part of our social network on Facebook. If you have a Facebook account, you can find our page and become a fan by searching for Division on Visual Impairments and Deafblindness.

For those who do not have a Facebook account, you can view our page by going to the following URL:
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