2013 B/VI Summer Institute

Building Capacity:
Supporting Blind and Visually Impaired (B/VI) Students in Alberta Classrooms
Agenda

- Introductions
- About us
- Housekeeping
- Parking Lot
- AB Ed’s VI Document & the ECC
- Terminology
- Provincial Lending Resource (SSVI)
- Braille
- website resources

- **COFFEE** (10:00 am)

- Low Vision
- vision simulations
- Assistive Technology
  - for users with Low Vision
  - for users who are Blind
- SETT process & trialing
- Loan items vs. finding funding
- Hands-on

- **LUNCH** (11:45 am)

- O&M in a nutshell
- Definitions
- Applications
- Instructors
- Environments
- Funding/Supports
- Learning Skills (Hands-on)
- Other issues

- **COFFEE** (2:00 pm)

- Adapting curriculum
  - Science
  - PE
  - others
- Hands-on (workstations)
About the Instructors

• Stephanie Gee BEd, MA-candidate
  • Strategist - Vision, Learning Services
  • Calgary Board of Education

• Niels Nicolajsen MEd, COMS
  • Educational Consultant for Students with Visual Impairments, Orientation & Mobility Specialist (certified)
  • Edmonton Public Schools
“Parking Lot”
The Human Eye: Its Parts

The Learning Team

• Who is part of the learning team?
  • Students & Parents
  • Classroom teacher/School Learning team
  • Teacher of the student with visual impairments (TVI)
  • Orientation and Mobility Instructor
  • Education Assistant – Braille (If applicable)
  • Additional members include:
    • SLPs, OTs, PTs, etc
**Congenital** visual impairments are a result of eye conditions that are present at birth.

**Adventitious** visual impairments are those that occur later in life as a result of illness or accident.
Visual Acuity Levels

- Normal Vision (between 20/12 and 20/25)
- Near Normal Visions (between 20/30 and 20/60)
- Moderate Low Vision (between 20/70 and 20/160)
- Severe Low Vision (between 20/200 and 20/400)
- Profound Low Vision (20/500 and 20/1000)
- Near Blindness (Light Perception)
- Total Blindness (No Light Perception)
What is “low vision”?

- A person has “low vision” if the visual acuity in his or her better eye is between 20/70 and 20/200, with the best possible correction.
A person is legally blind if his or her visual acuity is 20/200 or worse in the better eye with the best possible correction.

A person is legally blind if his or her visual field is 20° or less in the better eye.
Visual Difficulties

- Loss of Visual Acuity
- Loss of Visual Fields
- Reduced Contrast Sensitivity
- Colour Blindness
- Oculomotor Problems
- Visual Processing Problems
Normal Visual Acuity
Decreased Visual Acuity
Decreased Visual Acuity
Low Vision – Legally Blind

- Individuals with low vision usually read large print, or regular print with visual aids.

- Some individuals who are “legally blind” use a combination of braille, large print, and low vision devices.
Decreased Visual Acuity

Common disorders associated with visual acuity loss:

- Degenerative myopia
- Cataracts
- Retinal detachments
- Retinopathy of prematurity (ROP)
- Glaucoma
- Underdeveloped eyes such as microphthalmia and optic nerve hypoplasia
- Optic nerve atrophy
- Albinism
- Aniridia
- Nystagmus
Decreased Field of Vision

- An individual with a visual field loss is limited in how large an area he or she can see.
- Individuals often do not look at an object directly (eccentric viewing).
- A person is legally blind if their visual field is 20° or less in the better eye.
Loss of Central Vision
Loss of Peripheral Vision
BLIND SPOTS or SCOTOMAS
Hemianopsia
Decreased Field of Vision

Common disorders associated with visual field loss:
- Macular degeneration
- Retinitis pigmentosa
- Retinal detachments
- Retinopathy of prematurity – ROP
- Glaucoma
- Hemianopsia
- Colobomas
- Optic nerve atrophy
- Optic nerve hypoplasia
Reduced Contrast Sensitivity
Absolute colour blindness is almost unknown.

Most colour perception defects involve red, green or both.

Achromatopsia
Oculomotor Problems

- Characterized by difficulty with coordinated movements of the eyes
- One or both eyes may turn in or out
- May result in difficulties following fast moving objects or accurately reaching for objects
- May result in double vision or loss of depth perception
- Strabismus, Amblyopia and Ocular Motor Apraxia
Problems with Visual Processing

- Eyes are generally healthy and normal.
- Damage is to the visual cortex – difficulty in processing information sent to it from the eyes.
- Not the same as visual perceptual difficulties.
- Cortical Visual Impairment.
Expanded Core Curriculum

- Compensatory or Functional Academic Skills
- Orientation and Mobility Skills
- Social Interaction Skills
- Independent Living Skills and Personal Management Skills
- Recreation and Leisure Skills
- Career and Life Management Skills
- Assistive Technology
- Visual Efficiency Skills
- Self-Determination
• Braille is a tactile system of 6 raised dots invented by Louis Braille in 1829
• Braille is a code and not a language; there is a braille code for every different language as well as for math, (Nemeth), computer, and music.
• We teach the students the literary braille code and there are 2 types:
  • Uncontracted – Grade 1
  • Contracted – Grade 2
Websites:

- http://www.visionalberta.ca/
- www.pathstoliteracy.org
- http://www.tsbvi.edu/
- www.cnib.ca
- http://www.lrc.education.gov.ab.ca/pro/visual_imp/ssvi.htm
Specialized Services for the Visually Impaired (SSVI)

- 12360 – 142 Street N.W.
- Edmonton, Alberta T5L 4X9
- Fax: 780-427-6683
- Toll free calls – use Government RITE system. Dial 310-0000 and then dial 780-427-4681.
- www.lrc.learning.gov.ab.ca and click on Specialized Services for Students with Visual Impairments
Things To Remember

- Most individuals with visual impairments experience difficulty in more than one area.
- No two individuals with the same eye condition will function visually in exactly the same way.
- The majority of individuals with low vision will have fluctuations in visual functioning from day to day and situation to situation.
- Physical and mental health factors such as medications, seizure activity, fatigue, etc. and environmental factors such as lighting, seating, contrast, etc. will affect an individual’s visual functioning.
Coffee Break - AM
ATL: Assistive Technology for Learning Specific to Visual Impairments
Blast from the past...

- Typing skills are as important today as they were 20 years ago...
Slate and Stylus
Low Tech Braille Writer

• Extremely portable
• No moving parts
• No Batteries
• No electricity
• Pencil
Frank Hall brailler - 1892

- Introduced by Frank Hall at the Illinois School for the Blind
- Similar to the Perkins in operation
Perkins - 1951

- Writer / Embosser
- Work easily reviewed
- Bulky / heavy
- Requires strength
- Loud?
- Tried and true
Next Generation Perkins

- Writer / Embosser
- Work easily reviewed on ‘Reading Rest’
- Lightweight
- Lighter touch?
- Quieter
- Erase feature
Mountbatten Brailler

- File storage
- Erase function
- Audio response to reinforce learning
- Requires less pressure
- Heavy / Bulky
- Can be used in quiet mode
Notetaker Example:
PAC Mate

- Windows CE Operating System
- Runs mainstream programs from MS – pocket word / pocket outlook
- Uses JAWS for pocket PC
- Newer (black) models have removable braille display!
- QWERTY available too!
Notetaker Example: BrailleNote mPower & Apex

- Refreshable braille display
- Calculator
- Spell checker
- Electronic keyboard – hence reduced pressure
- Better internet access
Desktop Closed Circuit Television Viewers (a.k.a. CCTVs)
The Talking Book Players:

- Cassette player
- CD player
**SUGGESTED GRADE LEVELS FOR TECHNOLOGY**

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*These may be used as stand-alone devices or the student may find it more efficient to use a Braille Lite, Braille 'n Speak or computer that provides equivalent functions.*

It should be noted that this chart is for general planning purposes only and is based on the "average" student developing technological skills to complement their mastery of regular curriculum goals. The selection of which technologies to teach will depend upon many factors including the specific needs, motivation and preferences of the individual student as well as the availability of the technology. The instructional time required to become competent with specific technologies will vary considerably from student to student.

Updated May 18/99 © SET-BC
In 2004, I began working on an Alberta equivalent, based on our AB curriculum and the available resources & technology

• Several (several) revisions later...

• As technology (and student population) changes, we must alter how it is used & taught in schools

This chart is for general planning purposes only and is based on average developmental progress in learning technology skills. Actual selection of teaching priority and sequence depends on the individual student’s level of visual impairment, cognitive ability/onset of additional disabilities, motivation and preference, specific program needs, and availability of technology. The instructional time required to become competent with specific technologies will vary considerably from student to student.

Note: some of the technology listed above are appropriate only for students who are blind, some only for those who have low vision, and some may be appropriate for both.

SUGGESTED GRADE LEVELS FOR TECHNOLOGY
FOR CHILDREN/STUDENTS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS
(based on Alberta Education Curriculum)
Assistive Technology: both VI & BL

This chart is for general planning purposes only and is based on average developmental progress in learning technology skills. Actual selection of teaching priority and sequence depends on the individual student’s level of visual impairment, cognitive ability/ onset of additional disabilities, motivation and preference, specific program needs, and availability of technology. The instructional time required to become competent with specific technologies will vary considerably from student to student.

SETT Framework

Looking to the Future

Minerva Deaf Research Lab
About ATL Assessment

• Know the student
• Know the needs of the learning environment
• Know what is needed to be accomplished
• Know the tools that fit
  • Golden rule: try it before you buy it!

• and my own 2 cents: what early skills lead into tools the student will (likely) need later on
CATEGORIZATION of ATL

• Low tech vs. high tech
• Low vision applications vs. blind applications
• Large print applications vs. braille applications
• Use by student vs. use by support staff
• Combination of any of the above
Computer Access for those with Multiple Challenges

- e.g. IntelliKeys
  - Standard and customized overlay
    - Braille overlay!
    - LP overlay...

- e.g. adaptive mouses
  - switch-activated mouse
  - PowerLink
Lower Tech for EA use

- As a classroom aide:
  - Photocopier practice: 140% is a good place to start...
  - Transporting the Flipper, laptop etc. between classes if needed (roll-carts are handy)
Higher Tech for EA use

- Working with a braille student:
  - Perkins, tactile diagram kit from LRC
  - Transcribing with braille software, embosser
  - Tactile prep...
  - the magical PIAF
    - (Warning! Pictures still need to be simple)
  - Graphing math example from the AGC
Simple and Low-tech for students

- for those with low vision:
  - Bold-line paper
  - Felt pens (e.g. 20/20)
  - Monoculars
  - Hand-held magnifiers
Simple and Low-tech:

- for the braille user:
  - Perkins manual braille writer
  - Slate & stylus braille writing tool
Complex and High-tech:

- for students who are blind and those with low vision!
Assistive Technology: both VI & BL

- Computers and software:
  - ‘Laptop’ or notebook computers
  - Text-to-speech screen readers
    - JAWS, Window-Eyes, HAL...
  - Scanners and OCR software
  - Specialized software
    - Typing & math programs
    - Accessible graphing programs
Complex and High-tech:

- for the braille user:
Another example: Accessible GPS Devices

- Trekker (obsolete)
- Trekker Breeze
- BrailleNote GPS
- StreetTalk
Complex and High-tech:

- for those with low vision:
Reading the Front Board

- Room viewers (portable CCTVs)
  - Flipper
  - Clarity
  - Acrobat
  - Jordy
- Text Capture
  - SMART Board
  - MIMIO Xi
Portable Room Viewers

- WatCam / SceneEye
- Flipper
- Jordy
- Acrobat
- etc.
- etc.
- etc.
- etc.
Portable Magnifiers

- “Compact” model
- “Traveller” model
- Amigo, Versa... many, many others!
Examples of Talking Book Players

Portable digital type:
- BookPort (obsolete, but available at LRC)
- VictorReader Stream
- PlexTalk Pocket (in 2 colours)
- BookSense (2 models, in different colours)
Mainstream bridging the gap!

- Accessibility is turning mainstream...
DS-50
Digital Voice Recorder

Record a full month of sound by remote control. In addition to capturing stereo sound from meetings, interviews and other critical information expected of professional digital recorders, you can control recording and stop functions with the included remote control. The super-high-quality sound is also great for dictation – it’s the ideal professional audio device.
Accessible Science
The Accessibility of Apple

- VoiceOver is conveniently built in
  - But is it the end-all & be-all?
All Things SMART...

• Simple ways to connect a student with low vision...

- Wireless Internet for use on student laptop
- Internet wire from teacher's tower - Internet/network port plug-in
Choosing the SMARTTest Font

1. Times New Roman
2. Lucida Calligraphy
3. Tahoma
4. Arial
5. APHont
6. Verdana
Attention, Teachers: FYI...

• ATL can be loaned to the school (e.g. LRC)
  • ATL can also be loaned for home use*
• Repairs? Missing parts? Keeping boxes!?  
• Holy cow is that thing huge!
• Hey! How do I know the (braille) student is on task?
• Power issues in the classrooms:
  • where does the student plug in?
  • how does this affect ‘optimal’ seating?
  • who micro-manages the charging of ATL?
Lunch
O&M in a nutshell...

- What is O&M
- Why it’s taught
- Qualifications
- Where it’s taught
- What is taught in O&M
- Human Guide
- Protective Techniques
- Trailing along a wall
- Landmarks & Cues

- About the White Cane
- Trying out cane techniques
- Trailing with a cane
- Diagonal technique
- Room familiarization (including washrooms)
- Accessible Environments
- Advocacy
- Self Esteem
To set the tone...

O & M Humour

(hopefully not in poor taste!)
Definitions

- **Orientation *plus* Mobility:**
  - skills needed to be a safe, efficient traveler

- **Orientation:**
  - knowing where one is & where one is going
  - where your body / body parts are in relation to other objects / body parts

- **Mobility:**
  - physically moving from point A to point B
Application of O&M (who it is for)
Vision Continuum

20/20 Visual Acuity  "Legally Blind"  Totally Blind (N L P)
Full Visual Fields

Low Vision (Visually Impaired / Partially Sighted)
O&M applies to...

- Anyone for whom a visual impairment impedes on the ability to orient oneself and travel safely:
  - Can you make **eye contact** with drivers whose cars are stopped when you cross the street? **OR**
  - Can you **see the driver** behind the wheel? **OR**
  - Can you **see the car** when **moving or stopping**? **THEN**...

- O&M is needed even if just **one** answer was ‘no’
O&M skills & their teachers:

• A Teacher/Consultant of Students who are Blind or Visually Impaired, or an O&M Specialist, can teach...
  • Human guide (also referred to as sighted-guide)
  • Some indoor skills (trailing, protective techniques, room familiarization, search patterns)

• An O&M Specialist can teach all of the above, but only he/she can teach...
  • skills related to using a white cane
  • determine and distribute the appropriate cane
  • outdoor skills and/or independent mobility training
  • assess a person’s O&M skills to set up an O&M program
Qualifications in O&M:

• The TVI/Vision Consultant
  • BEd, with MA or MEd in VI

(as compared to...)

• The O&M Specialist
  • COMS * or equivalency

* (depends on regional regulations)
The O&M Learning Environments:

- There are three (3)...
  - Home
  - Community
  - School (and/or Vocation)
Early Intervention:

- Concept Development
- Pre-cane skills
- Parental Support in O&M
FSCD Funding

- “Family Supports for Children with Disabilities”

- For home and community ONLY
  - Rules are explicit regarding crossing ministries
  - Cannot fund O&M in school or for school purposes

- FSCD contracts & O&M service providers:
  - CNIB
  - Private instructors
O&M in the Education System

- O&M is a key area in the *Essential Components* and the Expanded Core Curriculum; specifically mentioned in the following categories:
  - The Learning Team
  - Disability-specific skills
  - Assessment
  - Access to Service
  - Programming options
  - Transition planning
A Note about Supporting O&M

• Others involved in the child’s life are key to reinforcing skills
• Requires training by a TVI and/or O&M Instructor
• O&M support personnel would include:
  • Parents / guardians, family and friends
  • School staff (teachers, TA/EA, admin)
Parent Advocacy in O&M

- Examples: Audible/Vibrating signals, need a sign raised
  - Contact City Hall
  - Might need an O&M environmental assessment
  - Written correspondence from parents and O&M
Accessing O&M in Schools:

- Scenarios for school / school districts
  - 1. Directly employ an O&M Instructor
  - 2. Directly contract O&M services
     (e.g. from RECS, CNIB, private operators)
Curriculum (what is taught in O&M)
Pre-orientation skills

• Sensory awareness/use of residual senses
• Body awareness & spatial relations
• Kinesthetic/motor development
Orientation

“understanding of position in space”

- Environmental awareness
- Community awareness
- Use of landmarks and clues
- Familiarization
- Route travel
- Orientation tools
  - maps and mapping
  - low vision (monoculars)
  - audible / tactile compasses
  - electronic travel aids (talking GPS, etc.)
Mobility
“safe independent travel”

• Human guide (a.k.a. sighted guide)

• Protective techniques

• Mobility devices and techniques
  • electronic travel aids (‘laser’ cane)
  • dog guides
  • white canes
Human Guide
VIDEO: “What Do You Do When You See a Blind Person”

A brief note about Descriptive Video (DVS)
http://www.acb.org/adp/dvds.html
Assisting with Human Guide

- Key points
  - Offer assistance
  - Present your arm
  - Arm position
  - Body position while walking
Protective Techniques
Independent Travel using Protective Techniques

• Key points
  • Upper and / or lower arm position
  • Palm placement
  • Elbow position
  • Body position while walking
Trailing along a wall
Independent Travel using Trailing Technique

• Key points
  
  • May include upper or lower protective technique
  
  • Palm and finger placement
Landmarks & Cues
Differences between Landmarks and Clues

Key points

- Clues... cues... “non-permanent”
- Landmarks... “permanent”, “fixed”, heavy...
Maps and mapping
Good maps... bad maps...

- Key points
  - Simplified
  - Meaningful
  - Purposeful
Example of Creating Tactile Maps
About White Canes
The WHITE CANE...

• Identification and Object *detector*...
• O&M teaches when to use the cane
• When to use each cane technique
• ID cane
• Mobility cane
  • Constant contact
  • Touch
... as opposed to the DOG GUIDE

- Requires mastery of orientation skills, plus good mobility skills
- Even after receiving a dog guide, the traveler must keep up on cane skills
- Object *avoider*...
White Canes: Types

- Identification canes
  - rigid versus collapsible

- Mobility canes
  - rigid, versus collapsible or telescopic

- Materials
  - fiberglass
  - aluminum
  - graphite
White Canes: different tips

- **Materials**
  - nylon
  - polymer
  - ceramic
  - metal cap
  - roller/ball bearing

- **Shapes/Uses**
  - pencil
  - marshmallow
  - ball
Orientation and Mobility
Room familiarization (including washrooms)
Accessible Environments
Environmental

• ACCESS Issues
  • Tactile markings
  • Glare
  • Contrast
• Predictability
Environmental ACCESS

- Example: Marked stairwells
Self-Esteem and Attitudes in O&M

- Considerations:
  - Junior high ‘under-the-radar’
  - Missing out on ‘rites of passage’
  - Self-concept (comparisons to sighted peers)
Vision + Additional Disabilities: Impact on O&M

- Team approach to O&M:
  - OT
  - PT
  - SLP
Low Vision + Photosensitivity: Impact on O&M

- Achromatopsia – can be painfully sensitive to light
- Oculocutaneous albinism – dermis also can be harmed by UV rays
  - May require a full mobility cane outdoors
  - Sunglasses / tinted glasses
  - Hat with wide brim
  - UV protectant clothing!
Questions?
Coffee Break - PM
Concept development is based on experiences. Many concepts are formed with only small parts of the whole to give meaning to something.
What Can We Do?

- Environmental adaptations
- Material adaptations
- Teaching strategies
- Hands on activities
Seating

- Optimal seating
- Consider student’s visual acuity
- Consider student’s field of vision
- Consult the teacher of the visually impaired
Lighting

- Appropriate lighting
- Do not face a window
- Time needed to adjust to changes in lighting conditions
- Consult the teacher of the visually impaired
Lighting: Glare

❖ Avoid glare!

❖ Many students are sensitive to glare.
Often contrast is as important, if not more important, than the size of print.
Contrast In The Environment

Things to try:

- contrasting coloured cloth, a coloured tray or a place mat to define work areas
- using coloured electrical or coloured tape to mark the top of the volleyball net, court markings in the gym, a stripe on a drinking glass, etc.
- using brightly coloured pylons for court markings, pinnies to help identify team members, and brightly coloured balls and shuttlecocks in PE
- Consult teacher of the visually impaired
Contrast In Learning Materials

- Black boards: white or yellow chalk - not coloured
- White boards: black dry erase markers - not red or green
- Print materials: black print on white or yellow paper
- Font: plain **bold** font such as *Arial*, *Verdana*, or *Tahoma* with 1 1/2 line spacing
Organization – the Classroom

- Keep classroom environment as static as possible
- Alert student to any changes in the room
- Doors or cupboards should be either closed or open all the way
- Student requires extra space for all his/her “stuff”
- Student may require 2 desks
Organization – the Teacher

- Provide long range plans for the teacher of the visually impaired and/or education assistant
- Keep floors clear
- Keep doors and cupboard doors closed
- Provide lists of novels, research topics, worksheets, readings etc. as soon as possible to the teacher of the visually impaired and/or education assistant
Student must:
- put away materials, worksheets, etc. right after they are finished with them
- develop a filing system
- develop folders on the computer and/or braille electronic notetaker to organize files
General Strategies

- Incidental learning
- Do not avoid the use of words “look” and “see”
- Visual fatigue
- Address the student by name
- Facial expressions/body language
- Extra time for exams and assignments
- Praise or criticize the student in the same way that you would other students
- Fire Drills
Near Tasks:

- materials should be clear against a simple background – good contrast
- use appropriate print size
- avoid clutter
- keep maps and diagrams “simple”
General Strategies

Distance Tasks:
- allow student to move within the class to see boards, charts, etc.
- read out loud as items are written on boards, charts, etc.
- provide a large print or braille copies of notes
- whiteboards
HANDS ON ACTIVITIES

- Adapting Curriculum Stations
- Best Practices
Dealing with the Parking Lot
Post-Evaluation

• Please take 5 minutes to discuss and fill out the “after” page of the evaluation with a different elbow partner than the one from this morning...
Thanks for coming!

- If there are additional questions, the speakers can be contacted at the following email addresses:

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“OK, folks!... It’s a wrap!”
The challenge for the future!

Education. Rethought.

Thank You!

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