

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 254 984

EC 172 035

AUTHOR Scholl, Geraldine T., Ed.
 TITLE Quality Services for Blind and Visually Handicapped Learners. Statements of Position.
 INSTITUTION ERIC Clearinghouse on Handicapped and Gifted Children, Reston, Va.
 SPONS AGENCY National Inst. of Education (ED), Washington, DC.
 REPORT NO ISBN-0-86586-154-4
 PUB DATE 84
 CONTRACT 400-81-0031
 NOTE 74p.
 AVAILABLE FROM The Council for Exceptional Children, Publication Sales, 1920 Association Dr., Reston, VA 22091 (Publication No. B619, \$7.00, \$5.95 member).
 PUB TYPE Viewpoints (120) -- Information Analyses - ERIC Information Analysis Products (071)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
 DESCRIPTORS *Curriculum Development; Elementary Secondary Education; *Parent Role; *Program Administration; Program Development; *Teacher Role; *Visual Impairments

ABSTRACT

Seventeen position papers address essential elements in quality programming for visually handicapped learners. The papers represent the philosophy of the Council for Exceptional Children's Division for the Visually Handicapped. Following two foundation position papers, "Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired" (K. Huebner) and "Visually Handicapped Children" (G. Scholl), five topics are examined: administrative considerations, the teacher, curricular considerations, special populations, and the role of parents. The following papers are included: "The Continuum of Services for Visually Handicapped Students" (N. Bryant); "The Role of Residential Schools for the Blind in Educating Visually Handicapped Pupils" (W. Miller); "The Role and Responsibility of the State Education Consultant for the Visually Handicapped" (State Education Consultants for the Visually Handicapped); "Instructional Resource Centers for the Visually Handicapped" (J. Todd); "Funding" (E. Long); "The Role and Function of the Teacher of the Visually Handicapped" (S. Spungin); "Expansion of the Role of the Teacher of the Visually Handicapped: Providing for Multi-Impaired Students" (P. Vedovatti and R. Silberman); "Teacher Preparation: Continuity and Change" (R. Swallow); "Specialized Certification" (J. Stager); "Low Vision: Topics of Concern" (L. Gardner and A. Corn); "The Role of the Orientation and Mobility Instructor in the Public Schools" (E. Hill); "Programs for Visually Handicapped Infants and Young Children" (Participants of VIIIth International Seminar on Preschool Blind and Visually Impaired); "Education of Gifted Visually Handicapped Children" (A. Corn and G. Scholl); "Services for Deaf-Blind Children and Youth: Coming of Age?" (V. McVeigh); and "Parent/Educator Cooperative Efforts in Education of the Visually Handicapped" (V. Hart and K. Ferrell). A list of pertinent professional agencies and organizations is appended. (CL)

ED254984

QUALITY SERVICES FOR BLIND AND VISUALLY HANDICAPPED LEARNERS

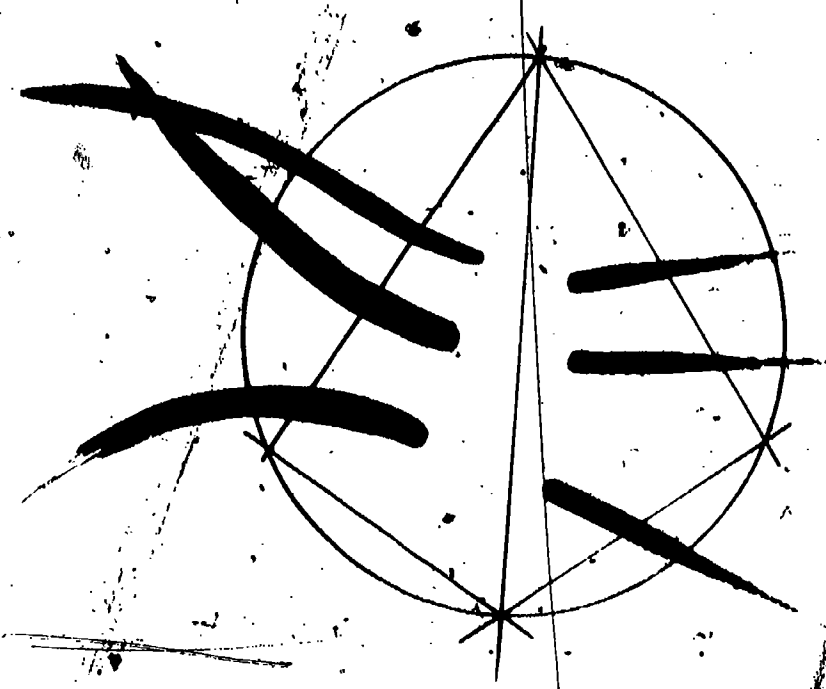
Statements of Position

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)

This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.



GERALDINE T. SCHOLE, EDITOR



A Product of the ERIC
Clearinghouse on Handicapped and Gifted Children
1920 Association Drive,
Reston, VA 22091

0172035

ISBN 0-86586-154-4

A publication of the ERIC Clearinghouse on Handicapped and Gifted Children. Publication Date, 1984.

The Council for Exceptional Children, 1920 Association Drive, Reston, Virginia 22091.

N The material in this publication was prepared pursuant to contract no. 400-81-0031 with the National Institute of Education, U.S. Department of Education. Contractors undertaking such projects under Government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their judgment in professional and technical matters. Prior to publication, the manuscript was critically reviewed for determination of professional quality. Points of view or opinions, however, do not necessarily represent the official view or opinions of either the clearinghouse's parent organization or the National Institute of Education.

Contents

Preface v

Part I BACKGROUND 1

Introduction, 1
Description of the Project, 1
Procedures for Preparation and Approval, 2
Use of the Position Papers, 3
Overview of the Book, 5

Part II FOUNDATION POSITION PAPERS 7

Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired 8
Kathleen Mary Huebner

Visually Handicapped Children 10
Geraldine T. Scholl

Part III ADMINISTRATIVE CONSIDERATIONS 13

The Continuum of Services for Visually Handicapped Students 15
Nancy White Bryant

The Role of Residential Schools for the Blind in Educating Visually Handicapped Pupils 17
William H. Miller

The Role and Responsibility of the State Education Consultant for the Visually Handicapped, 20
State Education Consultants for the Visually Handicapped

Instructional Resource Centers for the Visually Handicapped 23
Julie Holton Todd

Funding 26
Elinor H. Long

Part IV THE TEACHER 29

The Role and Function of the Teacher of the Visually Handicapped 30
Susan Jay Spungin

**Expansion of the Role of the Teacher of the Visually Handicapped:
Providing for Multi-Impaired Students 35**

Phil Vedovatti and Rosanne K. Silberman

Teacher Preparation: Continuity and Change 39

Rose-Marie Swallow

Specialized Certification 43

John D. Stager

Part V CURRICULAR CONSIDERATIONS 47

Low Vision: Topics of Concern 48

Laurence R. Gardner and Anne L. Corn

The Role of the Orientation and Mobility Instructor in the Public Schools 51

Everett Hill

Part VI SPECIAL POPULATIONS 55

Programs for Visually Handicapped Infants and Young Children 56

Participants of VIIIth International Seminar on Preschool Blind and Visually Impaired

Education of Gifted Visually Handicapped Children 60

Anne L. Corn and Geraldine Scholl

Services for Deaf-Blind Children and Youth: Coming of Age? 64

Vincent M. McVeigh

Part VII ROLE OF PARENTS 69

Parent/Educator Cooperative Efforts in Education of the Visually Handicapped 70

Verna Hart and Kay Alicyn Ferrell

Professional Agencies and Organizations 73

Preface

The papers included in this book represent an activity of the Professional Standards Committee of The Council for Exceptional Children: Division for the Visually Handicapped (CEC-DVH). This committee, charged with responsibility to encourage high quality educational programs for visually handicapped children and youth, has undertaken three major projects in the past 5 years directed toward carrying out this charge. Regular progress reports about its activities have appeared in the *DVH Quarterly* and have been reported during the CEC annual conventions.

Two previous projects included revisions and additions to competencies for teachers developed initially by Dr. Susan Spungin of the American Foundation for the Blind. These competencies were published by the American Foundation for the Blind in *Competency Based Curriculum for Teachers of the Visually Handicapped: A National Study* and in *Guidelines for Public School Programs*. A companion guide for program evaluation, *Self-Study and Evaluation Guide for Public School Programs for the Visually Handicapped*, by Geraldine T. Scholl, was published by CEC.

In response to these projects and to certain developments in the field, it was determined that statements about essential elements in quality educational programming for visually handicapped learners needed to be developed. The following series of position papers represents the product of this effort.

These position papers do not represent permanent statements of position; rather they reflect state-of-the-art position statements that will continue to change over time as the educational scene evolves. To be of value in improving educational programs, these statements must be disseminated and used by professionals in both general and special education. The publication of this document provides the mechanism to accomplish this objective.

Geraldine T. Scholl
Ann Arbor, Michigan
August 1984

Part I

BACKGROUND

The first section of Part I presents a summary of the purpose of position papers as consensus statements on important issues. The project and procedures used for preparation, review, and approval of the position papers by the CEC Division for the Visually Handicapped (CEC DVH) are documented in the second and third sections. Material for these three sections was adapted from a presentation made at the CEC 1984 convention (Scholl, Huebner, McGivern, & Young, 1984). Included in the fourth section are uses that can be made of these position papers and a summary of presentations made by three panel reactors—Kathleen Mary Huebner of the American Foundation for the Blind; Kathleen McGivern, Executive Secretary of the AAWB/AEVH Alliance, now the Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired; and Lynn Young, Education Consultant, Delaware Division for the Visually Impaired.

Reference

Scholl, G. T., Huebner, K. M., McGivern, K., & Young, L. (1984, April). *Position papers: A means to insure justice and learning for all visually handicapped pupils*. Paper presented at the annual convention of The Council for Exceptional Children, Washington DC.

Introduction

The preparation of position papers is one method of arriving at consensus concerning specific issues. A position paper defines an issue, presents background information or rationale, and takes a stand on the issue. The preparation of a position paper helps to clarify significant aspects of an issue; the revision that follows discussion and review by one or more experts or groups brings the issue into sharper focus; and the consensus reached on a specific position or conclusion gives direction for action. The publication and dissemination of position papers leads the profession to a better understanding of the background or context of issues and clarifies the rationale for arriving at a particular statement of position.

Developing a consolidated position on an issue provides informed, professional input that can have an impact on policy formation and implementation. It assists those involved in the process to arrive at consensus on an issue. It is not the intent of a position paper to include data and facts. Instead its purpose is to identify an issue, build a rationale for a specific position, and state the parameters of that position.

These papers represent the collective thinking of the CEC DVH members on issues concerning the education of visually handicapped children and youth. This organization recognizes the importance of taking a consolidated position on various issues for the purpose of providing informed, professional input in both local and national arenas that may have an impact on the quality and extent of educational services provided to visually handicapped learners. The position papers, therefore, should assist in bringing specific issues to the attention of decision makers, thereby influencing them to make professional judgments and commitments to better education for visually handicapped learners.

Description of the Project

During the 1970s, the Division for the Visually Handicapped (DVH) devoted sessions during Division Day at the annual convention of The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) to two major projects: the review and updating of competencies for teachers of the visually handicapped and the preparation and approval of

guidelines for public school programs for visually handicapped pupils. Both projects involved input from the field and were widely discussed and disseminated, particularly among the leadership personnel in the field.

During the late 1970s there was a growing concern among educators of the visually handicapped about the impact of Public Law 94-142, The Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, on the quality of local programs for visually handicapped pupils. It appeared that many were being mainstreamed without the support services typically provided in integrated programs. During the DVH business meeting at the 1979 CEC convention in Dallas, members were challenged to take a stand on issues related to quality programs by identifying specific problem areas, and arriving at a consensus about what should be done. This challenge required that the group reach consensus about what components should be included in a high-quality service delivery system for educational programs for visually handicapped pupils and what procedures should be used to communicate that position to general and special education administrators. The preparation of a series of position papers on various aspects of educational programs was selected as the most appropriate procedure to accomplish this task.

The undertaking was assigned to the CEC DVH Professional Standards Committee, which has as its purpose "to encourage quality programming for visually handicapped pupils through developing, reviewing, and modifying standards in all areas related to educational programs" (DVH Officers Handbook). The task began in 1979. The following section describes the procedures adopted by the CEC DVH membership for the preparation and approval of the papers.

Procedures for Preparation and Approval

In order to proceed in an orderly fashion and to insure maximum input from the field, the CEC DVH Professional Standards Committee, with support and approval of the Executive Committee, adopted the following procedures:

1. Individual members, or teams of members, either volunteered or were requested to prepare a draft of a paper on a specific topic;
2. These drafts were reviewed by members of the DVH Professional Standards Committee, accepted or rejected, and revised if necessary;
3. The revised drafts were published in the *DVH Newsletter* with a request that members submit reactions, comments, or suggestions for improvement to the author(s);
4. The authors revised drafts in accordance with the suggestions and presented the papers during a workshop session at the following CEC convention;
5. Members discussed and suggested revisions during the workshop session. Author(s) could choose to revise accordingly or withdraw;
6. During the following DVH business meeting members could approve the changes, and accept the position statement as the stand of DVH as an organization or request further revisions and modifications;
7. Where revisions were extensive but acceptable in principle, final board approval could be obtained through a mail ballot. Where revisions were extensive and not acceptable in the presented form, the paper would be revised, published again in the *DVH Newsletter*, and discussed at the following convention;
8. The DVH Publications Committee edited the papers prior to publication in final form.

Because of the great variation in issues, authors were urged to focus only on points specific to their topic. In general the papers included the following sections:

- History, philosophy, background
- Purpose of the paper
- Statement of position
- Rationale for the position
- Summary

Although the procedure appeared sound, problems arose in dealing with author(s), obtaining input from the field, and arriving at consensus. Some authors had difficulty avoiding the expression of personal opinions or biased points of view in the preparation of the initial drafts; some were in disagreement with the reactions from the field; and a few withdrew from the process.

The requested input from the field following publication of the position papers prior to the CEC convention was disappointing. Relatively few members responded, and it was difficult to determine whether or not the point of view of the respondents was representative of the field. Discussion during the workshop sessions was in general lively, particularly if the statement was devoted to a somewhat controversial area. As is usually true, there was an active core of members particularly interested in the position paper project who could be relied upon to respond and react. Thus it was impossible to determine whether the opinions expressed were representative of those in the field in general. In fact, there is no way to determine whether the membership in CEC DVH is truly representative of professional educators working with visually handicapped pupils.

In spite of these weaknesses, the field was given ample opportunity to react. Notices regarding the availability of the position papers was publicized through the newsletters of the major organizations devoted to education of visually handicapped students, and reports appeared regularly in issues of the *DVH Quarterly* (formerly the *DVH Newsletter*). Thus, the process and procedures did provide opportunity for input.

Most of the papers in this collection represent the results of this process. The two papers in Part II are selected portions of state-of-the-art papers prepared for the CEC Executive Committee and Board of Governors at the request of the President; they have been published but not approved by the CEC DVH membership. Three papers were prepared by related professional groups: State Education Consultants for the Visually Handicapped, the Association of Instructional Resource Centers for the Visually Handicapped, and the Council of Executives of American Residential Schools for the Visually Handicapped. In these instances, CEC DVH has endorsed the papers.

The major task now is to disseminate and apply the contents of the position papers to improve educational programs for visually handicapped learners in our schools. Because visual handicaps are a low-incidence area, the needs of these children are frequently overlooked. These position papers should be used as a companion document to *Competency Based Curriculum for Teachers*, the *Guidelines for Public School Programs*, and the *Self Study and Evaluation Guide for Public School Programs*. Together, these documents provide guidance to administrators seeking to raise the standards for educational programs for visually handicapped pupils. Details regarding the use of the position papers are discussed in the following section.

Uses of the Position Papers

The CEC DVH position papers represent the philosophy and commitment of the DVH membership to improving educational programs and thereby insuring justice and learning for all visually handicapped pupils. The preparation and dissemination of position papers are of little value unless the papers are used by personnel in the field to improve educational programs. This publication brings together statements concerning the major issues in educating blind and visually handicapped students. The papers can be used to provide background information to a variety of audiences including teachers, parents, college and university personnel, administrators, and other leadership personnel.

Teachers can use the position papers to support their advocacy efforts toward assuring appropriate placements, programs, and services for their students. Since many teachers work in isolation—often being the only professional in the geographical area familiar with the educational needs of visually handicapped pupils—it is useful to them, particularly in their work with general educators, to have the support of position statements that have been accepted by the field.

Teachers in rural areas can use the position papers to familiarize supervisors, who are not usually trained in the area of educational programming for pupils with visual impairments, with the range of services that must be provided to meet the educational needs of the students they serve. Teachers should also find the statements useful to support their recommendations at due process hearings and advisory committee meetings.

Parents can use the position papers for a variety of advocacy activities such as the following:

- Support for coalitions in advocacy and networking efforts.
- Assistance to parent groups and individual parents in their efforts to insure their children's educational rights.

Parents and teachers together can use the statements to support their efforts to provide a continuum of services for all visually handicapped pupils as mandated by Public Law 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975.

Administrators can use them in their professional activities

- to develop tools for needs assessment based on the best practice principles stated in the papers;
- to develop state guidelines for the organization, administration, and evaluation of local programs;

- to develop program service standards;
- to define the roles and responsibilities of various personnel involved in the education of visually handicapped pupils;
- to support advocacy efforts presented to legislators.

College and university personnel in special education should find the papers useful in both preservice and inservice education

- to familiarize future teachers of the visually handicapped with prevailing philosophies of the field;
- to advocate the need for qualified and certified teachers in the field of vision;
- to prepare literature reviews and grant applications;
- for guidance in the development of standards for the preparation of professional personnel and for program evaluation.

All leadership personnel in the area of education of the visually handicapped should find them valuable

- to demonstrate the field's united convictions regarding the need for specific services such as low vision aids and orientation and mobility instruction as necessary and integral parts of the individualized education program;
- for justification and background for developing legislation, including awareness training for legislators;
- to prepare background material for grant writing and federal proposals;
- for planning and conducting preservice and inservice training for other educators, both regular and special, and for parents;
- to use as support and to provide perspective in presentations to local and state boards of education and other policy-making groups;
- to use as awareness training for the medical profession, especially optometrists and ophthalmologists;
- to prepare background information for justification for state funding and preparation of the rationale for budget items.

Professional organizations such as the Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired and CEC DVH through their local and state chapters or affiliates should disseminate and discuss the position papers at the state and local levels and use them in their advocacy efforts. These organizations should plan and conduct follow-up workshops and seminars on selected topics directed toward taking action to improve educational programs for visually handicapped pupils.

The position papers can be powerful tools to help professionals and parents succeed in their efforts to improve educational programs. To accomplish this, however, parents and professionals need not only to be aware of the existence of the position papers but also to be sufficiently familiar with their content so they can easily use them to lend credence to their efforts. In addition, the papers should be freely and appropriately disseminated both within and outside the field of education for the visually handicapped. All those directly or indirectly involved with providing appropriate quality services to visually handicapped pupils should have and use the position statements. They carry the weight of CEC DVH, and this can be a powerful force. As invaluable as the position papers can be, they are worthless if they are circulated and discussed only among those directly associated with education for visually handicapped learners. They must be disseminated to the entire field of special and general education.

In summary, the position statements must be put to some practical use in supporting the improvement of programs for blind and visually handicapped students.

Reference

- Scholl, G. T., Huebner, K. M., McGivern, K., & Young, L. (1984, April). *Position papers: A means to insure justice and learning for all visually handicapped pupils*. Paper presented at the annual convention of The Council for Exceptional Children, Washington DC.

Overview of the Book

Seventeen position papers arranged in six parts constitute the remainder of the book. Part II includes two state-of-the-art papers that were prepared by two representatives of CEC DVH at the request of Lyndal Bullock, CEC president from 1982 to 1984. These papers are included because they provide a general perspective on the field.

Twelve position papers were prepared and approved by the procedures described in the preceding sections, and three were prepared and approved by other professional groups and endorsed by CEC DVH. The papers are arranged in five sections: Administrative Considerations, The Teacher, Curricular Considerations, Special Populations, and Role of Parents. Each paper is preceded by an abstract that summarizes the content. Where appropriate, references are included in the introduction to each Part.

Part II

FOUNDATION POSITION PAPERS

In October 1983, the president of The Council for Exceptional Children, Lyndal M. Bullock, requested that two members from each CEC Division prepare a position statement on the CEC program priorities from that Division's perspective. The intent of the statements was to provide guidance and a stimulus for discussion, debate, and recommendations for long-range planning by CEC's Executive Committee and headquarters staff.

The member of the Division for the Visually Handicapped selected Kathleen Mary Huebner, Education Consultant, American Foundation for the Blind, and Geraldine T. Scholl, Professor of Education, The University of Michigan, to prepare the position papers on behalf of the Division. The time schedule did not allow for input from Division members, but in the interim the papers, which were prepared independently by the two authors, have been published in the *DVH Quarterly* (Huebner, 1984; Scholl, 1984). Portions of these papers have been included here because they provide a valuable context for understanding the more specific statements of position.

References

- Huebner, K. M. (1984). Position statement: Program area of services for the blind and visually impaired. *DVH Quarterly*, 28(4), 18-23.
- Scholl, G. T. (1984). Position paper: Visually handicapped. *DVH Quarterly*, 28(4), 13-17.

Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired

Kathleen Mary Huebner
American Foundation for the Blind

Historical Perspective

By 1913, the education of blind children was well established, but services for low-vision or visually handicapped students had just begun. At that time, the philosophy upon which services for visually handicapped children was based was different from today's philosophy. It was a common belief then that services for blind and partially sighted students should be kept separate and distinct from each other. Teachers of blind children felt somewhat isolated from other teachers, and those providing services to partially sighted children felt even more isolated. As a result, the teachers of the low-vision students felt a need for identification with their colleagues. Realizing that professionals in a number of areas of special education, including blindness, had their own organizations, and that small organizations and splinter groups were not as effective as one strong organization, they agreed to meeting during the late 1940's at the annual conference of the International Council for Exceptional Children. At this meeting, which was not a scheduled part of the conference, they decided that they would organize as a unique group of teachers—teachers of the partially sighted.

This aspirant group, called the Council for the Education of the Partially Seeing, dedicated itself to better services for partially sighted children. It drafted its first constitution at the May 1952 ICEC meeting held in Omaha, Nebraska. During 1954, efforts were made to establish this council as a section or allied organization connected with ICEC.

In 1955, it was announced that the Council had been approved as a Division of ICEC and that a charter would be granted at a later date. The membership numbered 123. In 1958, ICEC changed its name to The Council for Exceptional Children, and in 1962 the Council for the Education of the Partially Seeing had its first formal installation of officers. By 1963, many individuals attending meetings were teachers of blind children as well as teachers of partially sighted children. Common interests and problems began to surface. A change of philosophy was noted at this time, and the concept of educating blind and partially sighted students together gathered momentum.

Revisions of by-laws and the constitution began in 1966, and the following year the revisions were accepted. The name of the Council was officially changed to the Division for the Visually Handicapped (DVH), which included both teachers of the blind and teachers of the partially sighted. With its new outlook, philosophy, and maturity, the organization began to move forward toward improved services for all visually handicapped children. In 1967, the membership of CEC DVH numbered 378. As of July 31, 1984, the membership numbered 889.

Because blind students must experience their lives without sight and low-vision students experience their lives with altered sight, they require unique instructional services from the professionals who teach them. In addition to the educational programs provided to nonhandicapped students, blind and visually handicapped children and youth need early intervention and instruction by teachers fully trained and certified in the areas of blindness and visual impairments. These teachers must have competency in providing specialized instruction in braille reading and writing, handwriting, typewriting, the use of large print and optical aids, listening skills, study and research skills, sensory training, utilization of vision, motor skills, orientation and mobility, concept development, activities of daily living, reasoning, human sexuality, leisure and recreation skills, career and vocational counseling, socialization skills, and utilization of technological aids.

The members of CEC DVH have long recognized issues and problems within the area of program services for exceptional persons, particularly in the area of visual handicaps. In 1980-1982, they published statements of position that were accepted by voting members on (1) *The Continuum of Services for Visually Impaired Students*, (2) *The Role and Function of the Teacher of the Visually Handicapped*, (3) *Specialized Certification*, (4) *Funding*, (5) *The Role and Responsibility of the State Education Consultant for the Visually Handicapped*, (6) *Teacher Preparation: Continuity and Change*, and (7) *Expansion of the Role of the Teacher of the Visually Handicapped: Providing for Multi-Impaired Students*. These papers represent the collective thinking of the

membership about these issues concerning the education of visually handicapped children and youth. The members of CEC DVH recognize the importance of taking a consolidated position on issues for the purpose of providing informed, professional input in local, regional, and national arenas, which may impact the quality and extent of services provided to visually handicapped persons. The Division for the Visually Handicapped welcomes input from the CEC parent organization, particularly because of the increasing number of multiply handicapped students who have visual impairments. There is an ever-increasing need for cooperative efforts among all educators and professionals representing all fields and aspects of services for exceptional students.

An Ideal State

Excellence is defined as a state of possessing good quality in an unusual or eminent degree; as anything highly laudable or meritorious. Much has been written in the past few years addressing the need to direct ourselves toward the goal of excellence in education during a time when the nation is at risk. It has been and continues to be the goal of the members of CEC DVH to advance the education of visually handicapped children and youth and to assure these youngsters an appropriate quality education. The members recognize and support the requirements of Public Law 94-142 and believe that all children have a right to appropriate quality services in the least restrictive environment.

Members of CEC/DVH believe that blind and visually handicapped students have a right to an education that will meet their educational, social, psychological, and emotional needs and will prepare them to make their own choices as to how and where they will live, work, and recreate. To accomplish this task, teachers of blind and visually handicapped students, as well as others involved with program services for this population, must be provided with an excellent education at both the preservice and inservice levels. Teachers need a knowledge base, skills, sensitivity, and appreciation of the unique learning styles and needs of visually handicapped students. They must be able to assess and identify the students' needs and develop and present effective educational programs to meet these needs. Likewise, administrators must recognize the students' needs, particularly those related to being visually handicapped—and they must also recognize the unique needs of the teachers of visually handicapped children. Other professional personnel involved in the process of educating blind and visually handicapped youngsters also must become knowledgeable as to how to best serve these students.

Because of the increase in the number of multiply handicapped visually impaired students, not only is there a greater need for teachers of blind and visually handicapped students to become more knowledgeable about the effects of other handicapping conditions, but there is also a greater need for teachers and professionals serving children and youth with other exceptionalities to become more knowledgeable about the effects of blindness and visual handicaps. There is an ever-increasing need for cross-fertilization of knowledge, ideas, strategies, techniques, and skills among all professionals involved in special education. This is *not* a statement of support for a generic model, but a statement of support for a multidisciplinary approach—an approach in which each professional has a solid base in an area of exceptionality and can work cooperatively with fellow professionals toward the common goal of a quality education for each and every student.

Visually Handicapped Children

Geraldine T. Scholl
University of Michigan

Rationale

Children who are visually handicapped represent a small number among the handicapped children currently served under Public Laws 94-142 and 89-313: 30,979 or approximately .1% of the 4,233,282 reported as being served during 1981-1982 by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education. Although few in number, their needs are as diverse as those of other categorical groups.

The emphasis on mainstreaming stimulated by the least restrictive environment provision in Public Law 94-142 causes many school administrators to overlook the educational needs of this small number of children and to equate "mainstreaming" with sitting in a regular classroom with minimal support services. In addition, the costs of the service delivery system to provide supportive help through resource rooms or itinerant teachers are viewed as prohibitive considering the small number of children served. Professional personnel who serve these children are also few in number and work in relative isolation.

By the 1960's, approximately half of the school-age visually handicapped children were being educated in public school programs either with the services of itinerant teachers or in integrated special classes that were the forerunner of the current resource room model. By the 1980's, the number of children in public school programs had increased dramatically, while the number enrolled in residential schools remained the same or slightly lower.

The delivery of services to parents and their visually handicapped infants and young children was likewise a common practice in many areas. School districts with well developed programs for the visually handicapped frequently provided itinerant teachers to assist parents in meeting the educational needs of their young children in the home. Some public school programs admitted visually handicapped children as young as 2 to 3 years of age for part of the school day, and it was not uncommon for children in this age group to be enrolled in regular nursery school programs supported by services from personnel employed by schools or agencies for the blind. As early as the 1930's, some residential schools were conducting annual parent education programs for 1 to 2 weeks, usually during the summer, with follow-up by field workers during the remainder of the year. Early on, the educational needs of parents were recognized by the field as being essential to maximize the learning potential of children in these early years and to provide a base on which to build a sound educational program during the school year.

The enactment of Public Law 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, has not been of as great a benefit to this low-incidence population as it has been for the high-incidence categorical groups: the mentally retarded, the learning disabled, and the emotionally disturbed. The practice of educating these groups in classrooms with their nonhandicapped peers was not as widespread as it was for visually handicapped pupils; nor were educational programs and services to meet the needs of parents and their young children as common. Today, many school administrators are reluctant to provide services for early childhood education to one low-incidence group unless such services are also provided for all handicapped children, and indeed for all children, a practice which would be costly. This has led to a reduction in services by many public schools to visually handicapped young children and their families.

Additionally, the need to provide school programs to large numbers of high-incidence children has been so overwhelming that the educational needs of the small numbers among the low-incidence groups seem insignificant and thus are ignored. The full continuum of services required by law is rarely available to visually handicapped children; the choice is often between attending a residential school or being mainstreamed in a regular class with no support system to either the teacher, the child, or the parents.

Finally, due to a variety of factors, the incidence of visual impairments seems to be increasing among children who have other handicapping conditions. Some of the increase can be attributed to medical advances such as techniques to save the lives of more premature infants. Other causes include epidemics such as rubella and trauma during the prenatal and postnatal periods, which result in visual impairments as well as other disabilities. When a child has more than one handicap, the major handicap is often difficult to determine.

Children who have multiple disabilities are often placed in programs that meet only some of their educational needs. Problems involving visual and auditory sensory losses may be overlooked.

In summary, the benefits from Public Law 94-142 that have accrued to some high-incidence groups have not been of equal benefit to many children who are in the low-incidence categorical groups. It should be noted that many of the problems mentioned here apply to *all* low-incidence groups, not just the visually handicapped.

A Proposal for an "Ideal" State

Efforts toward achieving excellence in educational programs for visually handicapped pupils should be based on criteria relative to the child, the teachers, the administrators, and the professional organization.

Every child, regardless of handicapping condition, place of residence, or minority status, should have access to a full continuum of services so that the most appropriate setting might be selected for the educational program. To meet the requirements of Public Law 94-142 for identification, assessment, and placement in an appropriate least restrictive environment, every child should have access to the services of professional personnel qualified in his or her disability area, beginning with the assessment process. Every handicapped child is entitled to adequate support services that will enable the child to be placed and to succeed in the least restrictive environment. Finally, every child should receive appropriate services throughout the school years in order to make a reasonable transition into adulthood.

All professional personnel who are involved with educational programming for visually handicapped pupils should have knowledge, understanding, and appreciation for the unique needs of all handicapped children. Administrators should have information about the unique needs of all handicapped children so that programs are designed on the basis of what is good for the child rather than what is the least costly for the service delivery system.

Professional organizations such as The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) that encompass a number of different categorical areas should insure that the lesser known and less numerous among their constituents have equal access to positions of leadership and input into the policy and decision-making functions of the organization. CEC should also become involved with rehabilitation agencies and others that serve the adult handicapped populations so that the transition from school to adult life can be as smooth as possible.

Part III

ADMINISTRATIVE CONSIDERATIONS

The five papers included here are concerned with administrative issues. Public Law 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, mandates that a continuum of services be available so that an educational placement decision may be based on the individual needs of the handicapped child. This provision is frequently overlooked when dealing with educational programs for low-incidence handicapping conditions such as visual impairments. Thus, the first paper states the rights of visually handicapped children to a full continuum of services.

The second paper describes the role and responsibility of the residential school within that continuum. This paper was prepared by William H. Miller, Texas School for the Blind, with editorial assistance from Richard E. Hyer, Jr., Georgia School for the Blind; Tuck Tinsley, Florida School for the Blind; and Richard Welsh, Maryland School for the Blind. It has been approved by the Council of Executives of American Residential Schools for the Visually Handicapped and endorsed by The Council for Exceptional Children—Division for the Visually Handicapped (CEC-DVH).

Strong programs must have strong leadership personnel to guide and assist local personnel in the performance of their educational tasks. The third paper details the role of the state education consultant for the visually handicapped as the leadership person within each state department of education. The first draft of this paper was prepared by Marianne Vaughan and Geraldine T. Scholl. It has been adopted by the State Education Consultants for the Visually Handicapped and endorsed by CEC-DVH.

The fourth paper describes the role of the instructional resource center as a focal point in providing materials and equipment necessary for the education of visually handicapped pupils and for providing inservice education for teachers and local school personnel. It has been approved by the Association of Instructional Resource Centers for the Visually Handicapped and endorsed by CEC-DVH.

The final paper relates to funding. Without adequate financial resources no program can be expected to maintain a high-quality educational program for visually handicapped pupils.

Resources

- Martin, G. J., & Hoben, M. (1977). *Supporting visually impaired students in the mainstream*. Reston VA: The Council for Exceptional Children.
- National Accreditation Council of Agencies Serving the Blind and Visually Handicapped. (1979). *Self study and evaluation guides for residential schools*. New York: NAC.
- Scholl, G. T. (1981). *Self-study and evaluation guide for day school programs for visually handicapped pupils: A Guide for program improvement*. Reston VA: The Council for Exceptional Children.
- Spungin, S. J. (1981). *Guidelines for public school programs serving visually handicapped children*. New York: American Foundation for the Blind.
- Spungin, S. J. (1982). The future role of residential schools for visually handicapped children. *Journal of Visual Impairment and Blindness*, 72(10), 229-233.
- Stager, J. D. (1978). Assessing public school programs for visually handicapped students. *Journal of Visual Impairment and Blindness*, 72(5), 170-172.

The Continuum of Services for Visually Handicapped Students

Abstract

Prior to Public Law 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, learners with visual impairments were placed in available programs without regard to their unique needs. Now federal legislation requires that a continuum of program options be available ranging from most to least restrictive: self-contained classrooms/programs, cooperative programs, resource programs, and consultative programs. State departments of education must oversee and promote the existence of a continuum of services. Creative assignment of resources and cooperative planning among local districts can assure its availability.

The Continuum of Services for Visually Impaired Students

Nancy White Bryant
Superintendent, Michigan School for the Blind

Historically, visually impaired students have been educated in programs that were made available to them with little thought given to the unique needs of the individual. Until the last decade, residential programs generally served the majority of children in a central location of a given state. As public school programs developed at the local level, the student could choose to attend school in his home community, but he or she might be placed in the available self-contained classroom when an itinerant program was more appropriate . . . or the reverse.

Current federal legislation and that in most states no longer permits fitting children into existing programs, but demands that an individualized educational program appropriate to needs of the student be designed and made available in the least restrictive setting. For a time following the passage of the law, the fitting of round pegs into square holes became more subtle. Program availability in many areas still remained the determining factor in how and where a student would be served.

Today, due process considerations and zealous advocacy for the rights of students to a free and appropriate education make it far less easy to serve students at the convenience of the schools.

A Continuum of Educational Services

The provision of a continuum of service, by design, creates a developmental school experience while taking into account the kind of educational environment most conducive to the growth of an individual. A continuum includes all possible program models, which will assure the availability of appropriate delivery systems for visually impaired students regardless of their age, developmental level, or multiplicity of disabilities.

A continuum of services must allow for movement between program units of various design depending upon student need at any point throughout his or her school-years. It may be more administratively efficient to adopt a single plan at a given level (i.e., resource rooms for elementary grades and itinerant services for the high school), but such a rigid plan is limiting, and defeats the existence of a true, working continuum. The least restrictive environment should be defined as that which least restricts the child's learning.

Program Alternatives

The continuum of educational services for the visually impaired should contain the capability for providing the following alternative educational plans, if and when they are appropriate for an individual's education:

- I. Self-contained Classrooms/Programs
 - A. Residential schools
 - B. Local day schools
- II. Cooperative Programs
 - A. Residential schools with private and public day school programs
 - B. Special class with regular class in a single school
- III. Resource Programs
 - A. Resource rooms serving a single school building
 - B. Itinerant programs serving several buildings
 - C. Short term, special purpose training in a residential school
- IV. Consultative Programs
 - A. Teacher-Counselor/Consultant support to regular classroom teachers
 - B. Coordination of resources for a comprehensive educational plan across disciplines

The Future

We do not minimize the burden that is placed on the schools in meeting the requirements of Public Law 94-142 and similar state laws. The charge becomes even more complex when trying to provide the variety of program components necessary to the continuum in a financially efficient manner. The task requires an extremely creative assignment of resources.

The reality of these restraints to the provision of a continuum must be taken into account even though the law does not speak to the obvious difficulty in doing so. The problems are multiplied for low incidence populations such as the visually impaired, particularly those who live in sparsely populated geographic locations.

Large school systems serving many pupils who have more resources are more able to meet the demands of the law to fulfill individual student needs. This is because greater resources can be more widely distributed to support a variety of program alternatives for larger numbers of participants. Smaller, less financially able school systems or states will continue to struggle with the distribution of resources to meet the same laws governing richer states.

The program alternatives outlined above are not meant to constitute an exhaustive list. Indeed, creative programming on an individual basis is what is promoted by the law. Precise prediction of the needs of a specific school population of visually impaired children for a given year may not be possible.

The schools must, therefore, be in a position to meet needs as they arise. Long-range, flexible programming using versatile staff and other school resources are the tools for the challenge. Each State Department of Education must oversee and promote the existence of a continuum in order to provide all of the services that may conceivably be needed by its residents. Cooperative planning between local education agencies and states must be supported and encouraged in the spirit of conservation of resources and the assurance that a full continuum is available to visually impaired students regardless of their place of residence or individual needs.

There must be no question that the schools will provide the kind of program that a visually impaired student needs to achieve his maximum potential. It is imperative that the schools plan for and provide the best estimate of what constitutes an appropriate educational continuum and assure that it is available, in its entirety, to individual students as needed. Adjustments and compromise are to be expected, but these must be judiciously negotiated as excellence and the ideal program plan are sought for each visually impaired student.

The Role of Residential Schools for the Blind in Educating Visually Handicapped Students

Abstract

Historically, residential schools have played a leadership role in the education of blind and visually handicapped learners and should continue in this role. They are a catalyst within the state to promote excellence, a resource to local schools, and a provider of appropriate educational programs to meet the varied needs of visually handicapped learners. With their large population, they can serve as research and demonstration facilities and practica for future teachers. Residential schools can function as short- and long-term placements for visually handicapped learners in order to assist them to develop specific skills. Within the continuum of services, they are a valuable placement resource.

The Role of Residential Schools for the Blind in Educating Visually Handicapped Pupils

William H. Miller
Texas School for the Blind

Residential schools have historically possessed a proud leadership role in the education of blind and visually handicapped students. To continue this vital function, residential schools for the blind should continue to assume an innovative and dynamic leadership role in the development and delivery of appropriate quality educational programs for visually handicapped school-age children in concert with the state education agency, teacher training institutions, local school districts, parents, consumers, and other state and private organizations. The residential school can serve both the visually handicapped child and the child's parents as a direct service provider and as a most knowledgeable advocate of the delivery of high quality educational services.

Because of the range and wealth of expertise located within the residential school, it should also function as the primary catalyst within the state to promote excellence in and relevance of the educational services provided in the public school sector through vigorous outreach efforts. The residential school should be viewed as a principal resource to local school programs by providing technical assistance, diagnostic and evaluation services, consultation, and direct services to children and families.

Directly related to its role as a provider of educationally appropriate programs, the residential school, because of its relatively large population of visually handicapped students, should also serve as a research and demonstration facility through which new and improved methods of delivering educational services to these learners can be developed. Innovative methods must be developed to apply the most advanced medical, educational, instructional, scientific, technological, psychological, and social knowledge to address the needs of blind and visually handicapped children.

Residential schools should provide supportive programs designed to meet the needs of students enrolled in public school programs. Intensive instruction should be offered in areas that may be minimally available at the local level such as orientation and mobility, independent living skills, use of technological devices, adaptive physical education, unique reading and math skills, vocational training, and productive use of leisure time. Also important is the opportunity to socialize with peers who have similar disabilities.

Residential schools have recently begun to serve and should continue serving children who possess handicaps in addition to the visual impairment. Some of the finest programs for deaf-blind students are located at residential schools. The provision of services to multiply handicapped, visually handicapped students at residential schools is a vital role and should continue or be expanded as necessary.

Residential schools should advocate the placement of student interns at their institutions and be actively involved in the teacher training programs offered in their states and throughout the United States. Prospective teachers of visually handicapped students should be required to intern in residential and public-school settings for exposure to both learning environments.

The educational programs at residential schools for the blind are characterized by knowledge of the unique needs and characteristics of visually handicapped students; awareness of the impacts of the home, school, and community on the development of the individual student; instruction in nonacademic areas such as dressing, eating, grooming, and orientation and mobility; opportunities to actively participate in extracurricular sports and recreational activities; and the ample availability of adaptive equipment and accessible facilities. It is important that the residential school is an educational setting that maintains a professional staff with specialized training and skills in the field of education of visually handicapped students.

The residential school for the blind should be viewed as one of a variety of components in an array of service delivery models, rather than as one of several options along a continuum of possible educational placements. While it is indeed true that a child may be away from his or her family for a week or more, the scope, intensity, and quality of the instructional services tailored exclusively for visually handicapped students delivered at such schools may very well define residential schools as an appropriate placement in the educational array of services. The residential school is a viable option for visually handicapped students for both short- and long-range services throughout their school careers. In most states there exists an extensive array of services for visually handicapped school-age children and their parents.

Components of the array of services include resource and itinerant programs offered through local school districts or special education cooperatives; support and consultative services from regional education service centers; administrative, regulatory, consultative, and fiscal support from the state education agency; and direct instructional, support, assessment, residential care, and consultative services delivered by the residential school. These service providers should coexist statewide in mutual support of the effort to insure to the maximum extent possible that comprehensive services are available to meet the unique educational needs of visually impaired students.

The residential school is usually the agency charged with the responsibility to provide comprehensive educational services on a residential basis to blind and visually handicapped students as well as perform the statewide functions indicated in the preceding paragraphs. Therefore, it should continue to serve as a very accessible resource to visually handicapped, multiply handicapped children and youth, their parents, local education agencies, and other state agencies, and to act as an agent to promote and, most importantly, to provide educational programs and services designed to meet these students' unique needs and learning characteristics.

The Role and Responsibility of the State Education Consultant for the Visually Handicapped

Abstract

The role and function of persons assigned responsibility within state departments of education for the education of visually handicapped pupils has changed under the provisions of recent federal legislation. They are expected to function as advocates, provide leadership and professional development, consult with local programs, foster interagency cooperation, serve as advocates, and monitor federal and state categorical funding. To perform these tasks, they require a variety of competencies, including the ability to design, implement, supervise, and evaluate service delivery systems; to work effectively with other professionals and parents on common problems; and to function as advocates for high quality educational programs for visually handicapped learners.

The Role and Responsibility of the State Education Consultant for the Visually Handicapped

*Adopted by the State Education Consultants
for the Visually Handicapped*

In order that visually handicapped children and youth may be assured of receiving a free, appropriate, public education of consistently high quality, state departments of education must maintain at least one full-time consultant specifically trained and experienced in education of the visually handicapped and assigned responsibility for educational programming for visually handicapped children and youth.

Since the 1940s there have been persons in state departments of education with titles similar to "state education consultant for the visually handicapped." From the beginning, these persons were primary advocates to insure appropriate acceptance of the visually handicapped child into the regular education program. Later in the 1960s, they expanded their activities to include conducting inservice training programs and setting up specialized materials centers. Throughout the three decades, state consultants were instrumental in the development and coordination of volunteer services to produce textbooks and other specialized educational materials. During the 1970s, state special education laws and federal legislation, particularly Public Law 94-142, The Education of All Handicapped Children Act, brought new challenges, increased demands, and major changes in the role and responsibilities of the state education consultants for the visually handicapped.

Presently, the necessity for continuation of a strong coordination and support role within state departments of education specifically for programs and services to visually handicapped children and youth is a low priority for many state education leaders. The need for these state consultants' specialized skills is frequently unrecognized in spite of their long and successful history of encouraging the integration of visually handicapped students into regular education programs. In addition, services for the visually handicapped must often compete with higher incidence handicapped populations and previously unserved populations for representation and funds.

Public Law 94-142 and Section 504 of Public Law 94-112 have had a tremendous impact on the role and responsibilities of leadership personnel in all special education categorical areas. In most states, the implementation of these laws has demanded changes in function for state department personnel. They are shifting from responsibility for particular program areas such as vision to monitoring compliance with state and federal regulations. However, if the quality of programs for visually handicapped students at the local level is not to be eroded, concerned professionals must define roles and responsibilities that are essential to the effective functioning of state education consultants for the visually handicapped so that creative leadership may be provided to the local school districts. To assure the free, appropriate, public education for all visually handicapped students, state education consultants for the visually handicapped children and youth are necessary to:

- Serve as advocates for the formation and implementation of appropriate laws, regulations, and program standards affecting the educational well-being of all visually handicapped students;
- Provide leadership to teachers in local and regional education programs and to function as advocates for them with local administrators;
- Provide an on-going program of local administrative professional development in order to raise the level of technical expertise for those local supervisors responsible for making important daily programmatic decisions;
- Serve as catalysts for the development of teacher-designed inservice opportunities;
- Serve as consultants to local school district personnel as they conduct appropriately designed program evaluation and improvement practices;
- Design and administer systematic child search plans which will effectively identify students needing specialized educational services related to visual handicaps;
- Act as analysts of census data in order to recommend and enforce the establishment of a continuum of appropriate program models to serve all identified students, regardless of the students' educational level or geographic location;

- Assure that adequate federal, state, and local funding programs are provided to support state-wide special education delivery systems;
- Serve as advocates for the development and maintenance of comprehensive delivery systems for specialized educational materials and equipment to support visually handicapped students in the least restrictive settings;
- Assure that appropriate related services are provided as necessary within the special education delivery systems;
- Design and administer public communication systems which will clearly describe all programs and services potentially necessary for visually handicapped students to receive a free, appropriate, public education;
- Serve to foster interagency, intra-agency, and medical community cooperation to insure the smooth provision of other necessary social, vocational, rehabilitation, medical, and welfare services to visually handicapped students in concert with the total educational system;
- Serve as information channels to the U.S. Education Department, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services in the long range development of appropriate programs, services, and technology;
- Advise teacher-training institutions of evolving competencies needed for teachers of the visually handicapped; and
- Maintain regular communication with national professional organizations and consumer groups to insure uniformity of service delivery patterns and to keep abreast of the latest policy, curricular, technological and program developments.

To perform these tasks, and to function adequately as leaders, state education consultants for the visually handicapped must have a background of knowledge and understanding about the special educational needs of visually handicapped students and must possess skill in administration and consultation. The following competencies are considered to be essential:

- Ability to design and implement an appropriate special education service delivery system for all visually handicapped students;
- Ability to supervise, advocate for, coordinate, and support teachers who work with visually handicapped students at the local and regional levels;
- Skill to assess, determine priorities, and manage time and resources;
- Ability to secure funds and manage fiscal matters;
- Ability to utilize skills of a change agent to establish appropriate service delivery systems;
- Ability to plan and implement on-going staff development;
- Ability to work effectively with other professionals such as local and state education officials, instructional materials center personnel, legislators, college/university personnel, parents, community volunteers, etc.;
- Ability to engage in meaningful problem solving;
- Skill in analyzing and utilizing the political communications systems;
- Ability to serve in an advocacy role;
- Ability to apply research skills to the solution of educational problems;
- Ability to select and manage appropriate evaluation procedures for handicapped students and programs; and
- Skill in facilitation and consultation.

With these competencies, a state education consultant can serve in an advocacy role to assure that visually handicapped children and youth are adequately represented at state and national levels. To do so effectively, however, requires that the primary foci and priorities of the state education consultant for visually handicapped be to assure that appropriate special education delivery systems for the visually handicapped exist and to provide support critically necessary for teachers and administrators at the local and regional levels.

Instructional Resource Centers for the Visually Handicapped

Abstract

The provision of specialized materials and equipment is an essential component of appropriate quality educational programs for visually handicapped pupils. These include textbooks in a variety of media to meet visual needs, teaching aids, and specialized equipment. Instructional resource centers provide a cost-effective way to distribute these educational materials. Service delivery models include the acquisition/delivery process, clearinghouse, and depository. In addition, these centers frequently perform the following services: information dissemination to various audiences; production and duplication of materials; provision of inservice and professional development to various audiences; and publication of newsletters.

Instructional Resource Centers for the Visually Handicapped

Julie Holton Todd
*Ohio Resource Center for Low Incidence
and Severely Handicapped*

Specialized materials and equipment are a necessary and vital component of the education of children with visual impairments. Time, effective and efficient use of monies, and knowledge of resources are essential considerations when designing a system of delivering materials and services to visually handicapped students.

Textbooks in braille, large print, and/or on tape are costly items that are most often needed by a student for only 1 year before a new grade-level text is needed. Locating titles in the appropriate format is a time-consuming process that requires knowledge of local, state, and national resources. In addition, visually handicapped students often need specialized equipment such as braillewriters and tactual aids for mathematics, science, and other curricular areas. These items are not "on the shelves" of most school districts, and therefore they are not readily available when needed by students.

The most cost-effective way to deliver materials to students is through a statewide instructional resource center for the visually handicapped (IRC/VH). Such a delivery system can assist the state and local education agencies in the delivery of materials and services to visually handicapped students, their parents, and educators. IRC/VH's allow savings in staff time and money since items are easily located using established networks. Monies are used more effectively because items are recirculated and duplicate items are not purchased.

There are many types of delivery systems or IRC/VH models. Most states that have an IRC/VH system base the delivery system on one or more of the models listed below.

Acquisition/Delivery Model

- Receive requests for titles.
- Arrange for purchase and shipment of materials to the requester.

Clearinghouse Model

- Receive requests for titles.
- Arrange for purchase and shipment of materials to the requester.
- Maintain an inventory system.
- Recirculate materials.

Depository Model

- Receive requests for titles.
- Arrange for purchase and shipment of materials to the requester.
- Maintain an inventory system.
- Reuse materials.
- House materials in a central and/or satellite location.
- Return materials to the central or satellite location until they are needed again.

In addition to the services listed above, an IRC/VH may also offer the following:

- Information dissemination.
- Materials production in appropriate media for visually handicapped learners.
- Materials duplication in alternate media.

- Inservice and professional development for a variety of professionals and parents.
- Publication and dissemination of newsletters for professionals and parents.

Instructional resource centers for the visually handicapped are an effective way to use limited local, state, and federal monies to deliver appropriate materials and services to visually handicapped students in a timely manner. They provide the necessary textbooks in the required media as well as other specialized equipment and educational aids that may be necessary for these children to be able to properly function in their classrooms and to succeed as independent individuals in the sighted world.

Funding

Abstract

Adequate funding is critical to the operation of any high quality educational program. Basic funds to support general and special education activities should extend to and include visually handicapped learners; in addition, preferential funding must be considered due to the low incidence and unique needs of visually handicapped pupils. Preferential funding is often needed because of the geographical spread of the population, their heterogeneous needs, and the teacher inservice and parent training needs that are so specific to meeting the educational needs of the pupils. In order to insure adequate funding for education of these pupils, cooperation with other handicapped interest groups is essential.

Funding

*Elinor H. Long
Coordinator, Pennsylvania Deaf-Blind Center*

One would expect that a position statement on funding in respect to visually handicapped children and their educational programs and services would be relatively simple to develop. Ideally, of course, we and others who are their advocates would say that these special children should receive all that they need. But realistically, we recognize that we are living in an age of rising costs, rampant inflation and taxpayer foment, so the ideal may not be practical, even considering the intent and the mechanisms of P.L. 94-142.

Basically many educators of the visually handicapped subscribe to the following positions:

1. That funds supporting general education activities should extend to visually handicapped children, where such activities are appropriate for them.
2. That funds supporting special education should provide special education specific to the unique needs of visually handicapped children.
3. That funds supporting generic activities and services for all handicapped children should be available at least proportionally to the number of visually handicapped, deaf-blind or multi-handicapped visually handicapped available for service.
4. That preferential funding must occasionally be considered due to the low incidence and unique needs of this population.

In those states where the mainstreaming of visually handicapped children was a fairly well accepted practice prior to the mandates of P.L. 94-142, general education had already begun to demonstrate considerable capability for assuming its responsibilities to these children, though continuing to seek special education fiscal support, special instructional materials and technical assistance. In states with relatively limited experience in the mainstreaming of visually handicapped children, P.L. 94-142 should provide sufficient incentive for increasing mainstreaming opportunities for these students.

The issue is not just to open public school doors to admit visually handicapped students. As we pursue further we become aware of the need to emphasize equal opportunity within the school so that visually handicapped children are admitted to physics classes, participate in regular physical education programs, prompt for school plays, carry water for the football teams, ride regular school buses, consult with guidance counselors on career choices and utilize school libraries.

When significant adjustments are required to tailor a general education program or activity to the needs of visually handicapped children, whether as a group requiring a special education resource room program, as itinerant instruction students or as visually handicapped students requiring special education in special facilities such as schools for the blind primary funding should be the responsibility of special education and general education support should be made available. Allowing for organizational variations among the states this basic concept appears to be in practice throughout the country.

We as professionals in the field of the visually handicapped can exert impact in the area of defining the essential elements of special education programs and services for the visually handicapped. In so doing it is important for us to acknowledge that the cost of special education programs and services for visually handicapped children is expensive. Planned future in-services should deal with relative costs in the educational continuum to make us all more sensitive to these factors and to become partners with our administrative officers in seeking ways to most efficiently utilize funds. There must be greater fiscal and programmatic recognition for children who are otherwise handicapped and assigned to some other type of special education classes and require visually handicapped support services. Such children are probably underserved, not inappropriately served when visually handicapped support is not provided. The severely multi-handicapped visually handicapped children are even more costly to educate but no less entitled to or deserving of appropriate programs.

The concept of preferential funding is not unknown to the field of the visually handicapped. As a matter of fact, the federal "Act to promote the education of the blind" was enacted a century ago and still subsidizes a large portion of braille and large print books and other instructional devices and appliances these children require. Title VI-C, which provides funds for education of deaf-blind and other severely handi-

handicapped children has stimulated significant national development of programs and services necessary for these small minorities in our society.

The Federal Optacon Project not only has provided the nation's blind children with equipment that would have been beyond the capacity of most school systems to purchase but also has sponsored teacher training programs. At the federal level preferential funding has usually focused on some particular area in the visually handicapped field requiring national attention. The success of the programs cited here, and others like them, are recognized by all of us.

Preferential legislation at the state level has also occurred in the education of visually handicapped children. In some states funding is authorized to furnish reader services to visually handicapped students or for the operation of instructional materials centers or libraries. Such statewide programs also make valuable contributions to this population.

Today there is a tendency to avoid "preferential treatment" of any group of handicapped as a kind of reverse discrimination. This is faulty logic, since to insist on equal treatment is a denial of individual differences. Besides, "prioritizing of need" is accepted practice in planning. According to program plan guidelines, states are expected to give priority attention to the unserved and to those who are more severely handicapped.

Those of us concerned with visually handicapped children are inclined to favor priority based on low incidence since the visually handicapped, deaf-blind and severely multi-handicapped children are a minority among the handicapped minority and moreover are not only clustered around our urban centers where resources are usually varied and prevalent, but also are found living in the most remote and isolated areas that have little to offer.

These factors result in tremendous difficulty for building advocacy networks, for providing meaningful inservice for teachers of visually handicapped, for providing specialized inservice for regular educators working with these children, for parent training, for organizing and implementing preschool and for infant stimulation programs.

A common tendency today is to provide generic funding for activities such as these, since it is intended that all handicapped children will appropriately benefit or participate. But then whatever activities are offered through these funds tend also to be generic in approach, aimed mainly at those problems and needs the handicapped have in common, seldom dealing directly with those special problems and needs which are vital to the minorities within the handicapped population.

Generic approaches to teacher inservice and to parent training, when supposed to be in the interest of the visually handicapped, are of value up to the point where they need to be specific. After that point is reached they can actually be damaging. We must be on guard against utilization of generic funding for generic activities at the exclusion of specific activities to benefit a specific group such as the visually handicapped.

One way to prevent such occurrence is to administratively apportion generic funds on the basis of the total number of children presented for service in a given state. Then visually handicapped children and other minorities could be assured of their fair share of the funds available, whether for generic or for specific activities, or for a combination of both.

Finally, our position on funding should include a stand for cooperation with other handicapped interest groups and against the handicapped having to compete with each other. Some friendly competition, of course, can be healthy and stimulating. But we can ill afford competition when vital education programs and services are at stake. All handicapped children are to be served, and all are to be served appropriately. Adequate, appropriate funding, combined with meticulous, creative fiscal and program planning, is basic to all our efforts in the interest of our special children.

Part IV

THE TEACHER

The teacher of visually handicapped pupils is the pivot around which the educational program revolves. The quality of educational programs is dependent in large measure on the quality of the teachers in those programs. Visually handicapped learners have unique needs that require the assistance of well-qualified teachers who are specially prepared to meet their educational needs. The first paper included here states the role, responsibilities, and expectations of the teacher of visually handicapped pupils.

In recent years, large numbers of visually handicapped pupils with handicaps in addition to their visual disability have had an impact on educational programs. In addition, teachers of visually handicapped pupils are increasingly requested to consult with other special education teachers who have in their classrooms children with visual impairments as their secondary handicapping condition. The second paper describes how teachers must now expand their role and responsibilities in order to serve more adequately pupils with other handicaps.

Professional preparation programs are essential to producing teachers who can work with visually handicapped learners. The third paper discusses the maintenance of high quality educational programs for both the inservice and preservice preparation of teachers of visually handicapped pupils.

The final paper states the need for specialized certification for teachers working in this low-incidence area because of the nature of these pupils who have very specific educational needs.

Resources

- Holman, I. J., & Scholl, G. T. (1981). Competencies for teachers of the visually handicapped: Background, issues, and current development. *DVH Newsletter*, 26(1), 9-30.
- Kappan, D. L. (1977). Preparing the dual-competency teacher of the visually handicapped. *Education of the visually handicapped*, 29, 7-8.
- Spungin, S. J. (1977). *Competency based curriculum for teachers of the visually handicapped: A national study*. New York: American Foundation for the Blind.
- Spungin, S. J. (1978). Competencies and public school programming. *DVH Newsletter*, 23(2), 12-14.
- Spungin, S. J. (1979). Vision field must define teacher's role, function. *DVH Newsletter*, 24(2), 6-7.
- Taylor, J. (1978). Competency-based programs: A national perspective. *Journal of Visual Impairment and Blindness*, 72, 161-162.

The Role and Function of the Teacher of the Visually Handicapped

Abstract

The educational needs of visually handicapped learners are unique because of their visual impairment. In order to assist these learners to make effective use of their educational programs, teachers must engage in specialized educational activities. To perform these activities, they need competencies in the following areas: assessment and evaluation; educational and instructional strategies in the learning environment of the regular school program; educational and instructional strategies that are unique in the curriculum for visually handicapped learners; guidance and counseling for learner and parents; administration and supervision including communication with administrators, recordkeeping, casefinding, referral, and scheduling; and school-community relations.

The Role and Function of the Teacher of the Visually Handicapped

Susan Jay Spungin
American Foundation for the Blind

Now more than ever before the field is seeing a need to define the role and function of teachers of the visually handicapped, especially in light of the growing acceptance of the generic special education program models and personnel developed to serve the low incidence population of visually handicapped children. In order to justify the need for trained teachers in vision to serve these children the field must be very clear as to what is actually meant by "a teacher of the visually handicapped." Consequently, what follows are areas of specialized activities to serve as role guidelines for teacher/consultants of the visually handicapped in community day school programs.

I. Assessment and Evaluation

- A. Perform functional vision assessments.
- B. Obtain and interpret eye/medical reports as they relate to educational environments.
- C. Contribute to appropriate portions of the IEP, such as long-term goals, short-term goals, learning style/physical constraints.
- D. Recommend appropriate service delivery plans, including physical education, ancillary support services, equipment, time frames.
- E. Recommend appropriate specialized evaluations as needed, such as low vision, orientation and mobility, psychological, and adaptive physical education.
- F. Confer with special services to aid in evaluation.
- G. Assist in determining the eligibility and the appropriate placement of visually handicapped children.
- H. Participate in the assessment of each pupil, and interpret results to classroom teachers and others.

II. Educational and Instructional Strategies: Learning Environment

- A. Assure that the student is trained in the use of, and has available, all devices and technological apparatus useful to the process of academic learning.
- B. Assure that the classroom teacher fully understands the unique needs of children with visual losses.
- C. Act as a catalyst in developing understanding of visual loss with sighted children.
- D. Interpret adjustments needed in assignments or standards in the regular classroom.
- E. Assure that the student has all educational materials in the appropriate media.
- F. Consult with the classroom teachers regarding methodology to be used as visually handicapped children are included in classroom learning experiences.
- G. Instruct the student in academic subjects and activities requiring adaptation and reinforcement as a direct result of visual handicap.

III. Educational and Instructional Strategies: Unique Curriculum

- A. **Braille Reading and Writing** — It may be necessary for the teacher of the visually handicapped to provide beginning braille reading instruction and to introduce the child to such mechanical aspects of reading as: top of the page, bottom of the page, use of fingers, tracking, etc. Introduction of writing is also the responsibility of the teacher of the visually handicapped. Braille writers and slates and styli are unfamiliar learning tools to the classroom teacher; the classroom teacher should not be expected to master the mechanics of either. The teacher of the visually handicapped will possess the necessary skills in braille mathematics and in braille music, and will provide instruction to students in their use.
- B. **Handwriting** — For the partially seeing child, certain aspects of handwriting in respect to size and configuration may be the responsibility of the teacher of the visually handicapped. The teaching of signature writing, and, if appropriate, additional handwriting skills to functionally blind children is certainly a responsibility.

- C. Typewriting - For most low vision children and functionally blind children typing will be the major means of communication between the child and sighted peers, parents, and teachers. This is a skill which should be carefully and thoroughly taught by the teacher of the visually handicapped as soon as the pupil has sufficient motor skills.
- D. Large Print and Optical Aids -- It may be necessary for the teacher of the visually handicapped to help low vision children utilize reading aids in order to fully benefit in the regular classroom.
- E. Listening Skills -- Both partially seeing and functionally blind students need to learn good listening skills. Listening becomes extremely important in the secondary grades when print reading assignments become long and laborious. It is necessary for the visually handicapped child to begin a sequential course of study in the development of listening skills as early as possible. The development of listening skills is not confined to the use of an alternate reading system. It is important in mobility, in social conversation, and in interpreting a variety of auditory signals received from the environment.
- F. Study Skills -- Skimming braille or large print materials, outlining in braille or large print, searching for significant information in recorded materials, and other skills may need to be taught by the teacher of the visually handicapped.
- G. Tactual Skills -- The development of tactual skills is not confined to the reading of braille. Visually handicapped students should be taught to use their fingers and hands well in order to explore, identify, and appreciate all tangible materials in their environment.
- H. Visual Efficiency -- This underlines achievement in every skill area for the partially seeing pupil: academic, psychomotor skills, self-help, and vocational and social skills. The use of residual vision is one of the most important aspects of the curriculum offered by the teacher of the visually handicapped.
- I. Motor Development -- The teacher of the visually handicapped must know the potential problem areas in motor development for visually handicapped children. Body image, body in space concepts, visual motor skills, etc., are included in this area.
- J. Physical Education -- This is often a problem for visually handicapped pupils in public schools. Students must be assisted in understanding and participating in team games. Physical fitness must be stressed.
- K. Orientation and Mobility -- Much of the orientation and mobility needs of the student are the responsibility of qualified orientation and mobility instructors. The responsibilities of, and the relationship between the teachers of the visually handicapped and the orientation and mobility instructors must be clearly defined. It is possible that the former will assume responsibility for assuring that students develop in sensory motor, gross, and fine motor skills. Visually handicapped children must be taught to move in space and to be aware of the environment around them. They must learn to use tactual and auditory cues to assist and identify their position in space and the relative position of other persons and objects around them.
- L. Concept Development -- The teacher of the visually handicapped shares with others the responsibility for the development of basic concepts by the student. Future learning is dependent upon the student's thorough understanding and association, discrimination, and relationships.
- M. Activities of Daily Living -- Thorough knowledge of the activities and techniques of daily living or personal management skills is needed to create independence so that visually handicapped students may become acceptable and personable beings -- free of mannerisms, and socially attractive to others. Specific objectives include but are not limited to: a) caring for personal needs; b) developing adequate eating habits; c) mastering the process and routine of dressing and undressing; d) developing a positive self-image.
- N. Reasoning -- The ability to reason, especially in the abstract, may require specific instruction from the teacher of the visually handicapped. Students may need assistance in the development of decision-making skills, problem solving, and learning to live with occasional frustration and failure.
- O. Human Sexuality -- Teachers of the visually handicapped, parents and others share the responsibility for gradual, sequential instruction in human sexuality for visually handicapped students. Because programs in sex education for sighted children assume that much visual information has been previously attained, the visually handicapped pupil may need a specific curriculum taught by appropriate, well-prepared professionals.
- P. Leisure and Recreation -- The teacher of the visually handicapped, parents, and community agencies share a responsibility to expose the student to, and provide learning opportunities in, a wide variety of leisure time activities which have carry-over value to adult life.

IV. Guidance and Counseling

- A. Guidance and counseling assists visually handicapped students in understanding their attitudes and those of others concerning visual impairment; in exploring similarities and differences in relation to all children; in becoming socially aware of oneself and environment; in learning acceptable behavior, in encouraging social interactions with peer groups; and in becoming more independent. Parents should be included in this guidance and counseling process.
- B. Career education curriculum that has been developed for sighted children may need supplementary instruction from a teacher of the visually handicapped. Career education encompasses three sequential areas: career awareness, career exploration, and vocational preparation. Each, in sequence, is dependent upon the other. A curriculum in career education for the visually handicapped may be necessary, and implementation of this curriculum may be the responsibility of the teacher of the visually handicapped. At the career exploration level this could well mean many field trips into the community so that the visually handicapped student will have exposure to people and work situations.
- C. Vocational counseling is an integral part of programs designed for visually handicapped students. Career awareness begins on the primary level, continuing with career exploration and orientation on the intermediate and secondary level. The teacher in conjunction with the counselor should involve visually handicapped students and parents in this counseling process. Following the assessment of vocational strengths and weaknesses, the students may participate in work-study experience programs as appropriate.
- D. Social adjustment skills are an integral part of the curriculum and assist the visually handicapped student to blend smoothly into society. Areas that must be emphasized are spatial awareness and orientation, verbal and nonverbal language, self-help skills, socialization processes, interpersonal relations, human sexuality, and real life experiences.
- E. Support services to families should include:
 1. Interpreting implications of visual impairment on overall development;
 2. Referring to appropriate service providers;
 3. Encouraging home involvement in program objectives;
 4. Acting as a resource in the field of vision.

V. Administration and Supervision

- A. Communication with Administrators
 1. Pupil information (e.g., visual status, grade level, prototype).
 2. Program goals and activities.
 3. Program evaluation.
 4. Screening and referral procedures.
 5. Relationship to other regular and special education programs and support services.
 6. Budget funds to include funds for travel time, consultation, instruction, salaries, travel expenses, instructional materials, preparation time, conferences and benefits.
 7. In-service programs by and for teacher/consultants of the visually impaired.
 8. Program scheduling to allow adequate time for planning, preparation, reporting, commuting, instruction and staff conferences.
 9. Physical facilities which include instructional settings, offices and storage space.
 10. Advocate of students' educational/legal rights and provider of services.
 11. Provide input into scheduling of students.
- B. Record Keeping
 1. Maintain statewide and system-wide student census.
 2. Obtain and maintain student medical and optometric reports.
 3. Maintain records of pupil assessments, individual educational plans, reviews and progress reports with signed parental release forms.
 4. Maintain material and equipment requests.
- C. Casefinding, Student Referral Procedures and Scheduling
 1. Act as a vision consultant for system-wide screening, materials, follow-up and recommendations.
 2. Participate in LEA's annual plan for Child Search.
 3. Maintain a referral/communication system with nurses and other school staff.
 4. Obtain current eye reports and begin notification and assessment.
 5. Schedule time for teaching, planning, preparation, travel, and conferences with parents and relevant school and non-school persons.

6. Maintain records and exchange information about visually handicapped students with appropriate personnel and consistent with school district policies regarding confidentiality.
7. Prepare a master schedule to be given to the supervisor and the principal of the building in which students are served.
8. Work within the framework and policies of the school.

VI. School Community Relations

A. School and Community Involvement — The teacher of the visually handicapped should be prepared to interpret the program to school personnel, board of education, and other groups within the community.

B. Program Liaison

1. Private, state and local agencies and schools
2. Resources within the community
3. Medical specialists
4. Placement transitions
5. Parents
6. Related appropriate specialists
7. Recreation resources

C. Services Development

1. Coordinate ancillary groups and individuals, such as transcribers, recordists, readers for visually handicapped students, counselors and mobility instructors.
2. Assist in the initiation of new services as well as coordinating existing ones to bring the varied and necessary related services to the educational program.
3. Attend professional meetings (in and out of the district) concerned with the education of visually handicapped students.
4. Keep abreast of new developments in the education of visually handicapped children and youth.
5. Maintain on-going contact with parents to assure realistic understanding of child's abilities, progress, future goals, community resources, etc.

Expansion of the Role of the Teacher of the Visually Handicapped: Providing for Multi-Impaired Students

Abstract

Teachers of visually handicapped children are increasingly expected to serve pupils who have handicaps in addition to their visual loss. They must have the competencies listed in the previous position paper, and they need additional knowledge in child development, communication systems, behavior management, legislation and litigation, and task analysis. The diversity of educational service delivery models requires them to know advantages and disadvantages of each model and to have skill in organizing the instructional program in each model. Teachers working with multiply handicapped students are required to possess skills in working as members of the transdisciplinary team and in understanding the needs of parents. There are several options available for preparing for this role.

Expansion of the Role of the Teacher of the Visually Handicapped: Providing for Multi-Impaired Students

Phil Vedovatti

Coordinator, Visually Impaired, Northwestern Illinois Association

Rosanne K. Silberman

Associate Professor, Hunter College of the City University of N.Y.

All multi-impaired students who have visual handicaps are entitled to the services of a trained teacher of the visually handicapped. Due to the increasing numbers of these students enrolling in day and residential school programs, educators of the visually handicapped should expand their roles, functions, and competencies. Many teachers are currently expected to serve children who have visual impairments in addition to a broad range of other disabilities including cerebral palsy, hearing impairment, mental retardation, and various neurological syndromes. Meeting the complex educational needs of these multi-impaired, visually handicapped (MI-VH) children in a wide variety of settings offers a unique challenge, which is the focus of this position paper.

It is the position of the DVH membership that all teachers of the visually handicapped have the competencies outlined in the publication: *Vision Field Must Define Teacher's Role, Function* (Spungin, 1979). These competencies include the areas of:

- A) Assessment and Evaluation
- B) Educational and Instructional Strategies
- C) Learning Environment
- D) Unique Curriculum
- E) Guidance and Counseling
- F) Administration and Supervision
- G) School and Community Relations

Moreover, additional specific competencies now should be added to take into account the needs of MI-VH learners.

In the two areas, Assessment and Evaluation and Educational and Instructional Strategies, it is the primary responsibility of the professionals in the field of the education of the visually handicapped, especially teachers, to assess and develop, insofar as possible, functional vision skills in all multi-impaired students regardless of the severity or multiplicity of impairments. Of critical importance is having competencies in the following areas:

- A) Knowledge of the common types of visual functioning difficulties in various handicapped populations
- B) Knowledge of the effects of visual loss on language development
- C) Knowledge of abnormal reflex and movement patterns and their interaction with visual functioning

- D) Knowledge of appropriate positioning and handling techniques for multi-impaired students
- E) Knowledge of the effects of visual loss on the performance of functional vision tasks, i.e., feeding activities, workshop tasks, manual communication skills, and the proper scanning of communication boards.

While certain subject areas in which teachers of the visually handicapped should be trained are enumerated in the DVH position paper developed by Spungin (1979), the emphasis of these competencies is dramatically different when the focus is on education of the MI-VH student. These differences are particularly evident in the following areas:

- A) Educational Assessment and Diagnosis
- B) Leisure and Recreation
- C) Human Sexuality
- D) Motor Development
- E) Cognitive Development
- F) Social Adjustment Skills
- G) Career and Vocational Education

Other areas of knowledge needed by teachers who work with multi-impaired students include:

- A) Early child development with specific emphasis on normal and abnormal motor and language development
- B) Augmentative communication systems
- C) Principles of behavior management
- D) Legislation and litigation related to children's rights to an education
- E) Task analysis relevant to low functioning students

Visually handicapped students with multi-impairments are participating more frequently in diverse educational service delivery models and living successfully in various types of community facilities including their home, group homes, developmental centers, residential schools, hospitals, and institutions. Therefore, additional relevant competencies needed by their teachers are:

- A) Knowledge of the types, advantages, and disadvantages of alternate service delivery models
- B) Skill in organization
 1. Time management
 2. Scheduling
 3. Use of space
- C) Appropriate utilization of support personnel, i.e. teacher assistants, child care or residence workers.

Teachers of the visually handicapped should be able to function as an integral part of a transdisciplinary team in meeting the complex needs of MI-VH students. They will need to know and understand the roles and functions of the various disciplines including but not limited to medicine; education; social work; psychology; occupational, physical and speech therapies; and vocational rehabilitation. They must be knowledgeable in the terminologies utilized by each. Operating as part of such a team and offering limited direct and/or consultative services affords the teacher of visually handicapped students the opportunity to be both a teacher and learner as he/she demonstrates his/her expertise and, in turn benefits from the knowledge and skills of the other team members from various fields, all on behalf of MI-VH students. Additionally, the teacher of the MI-VH student will be responsible for developing in the other team members an understanding of and the techniques for meeting the unique needs of this population which are directly attributable to their visual impairment. It also affords the teacher of the visually handicapped the opportunity to be an advocate for the multi-impaired student with a visual impairment.

Also critical for such a teacher is an understanding of the needs of parents of MI-VH students as well as strategies for helping them to meet those needs. The ability to provide resources and information to parents, to serve as an advocate for and with them, to establish counseling and support mechanisms, and to train parents to assist in the development and implementation of their child's program are all facets of the teacher's role in a comprehensive parent participation program.

Although not all teachers of the visually handicapped will work with MI-VH students, those who do will need to have the additional competencies as described in this paper which would enable them to appropriately serve this population. Teacher preparation programs and school personnel responsible for the inservice training options exist. These options could include the following:

- A) Specialized graduate level training programs for teachers of deaf-blind and/or MI-VH visually handicapped children
- B) Courses designed to provide information and techniques for working with MI-VH students
- C) Summer inservice workshops on various topics relating to the MI-VH student, i.e. assessment, behavior management
- D) Utilization of consultants from both the field of the visually handicapped and from other disciplines on a regular basis.
- E) Provision of ongoing after school topical workshops in areas such as vision assessment and remediation, feeding, motor development, language development, etc.
- F) Opportunities for visitations to exemplary programs serving MI-VH children
- G) Utilization of available inservice training packages developed to train staff working with severely handicapped students
- H) Training modules specifically designed to train teachers of MI-VH students
- I) Encouragement for teachers of the visually handicapped to take additional courses in other disciplines.

Planning for the future offers exciting challenges and presents us with the need to change. The expansion of the roles, function, and competencies of the teacher of the visually handicapped would enable us to provide the best possible services to visually handicapped students with multi-impairments and it would guarantee that our field would remain in the forefront of special education in the years to come.

Reference

Spungin, S. Vision field must define teacher's role, function. *DVH Newsletter*, Vol. XXIV, No. 2, December 1979

Teacher Preparation: Continuity and Change

Abstract

Current issues in general education, special education, and education of the visually handicapped have an impact on teacher preparation. Guidelines for teacher education in the area of visual handicaps have placed the field at the forefront of the trend toward performance-based teacher education. Although there is a need for teachers to have generic preparation, the special needs of visually handicapped learners make additional specific preparation essential. Curriculum development requires active participation of the university student in the process. Continuing professional improvement requires cooperative work to assist teachers in upgrading their skills. Long-range planning is necessary in developing national standards; teacher education centers; curriculum development; curriculum skills development; development of learning packets and training modules; training in using technology; and research.

Teacher Preparation: Continuity and Change

Rose-Marie Swallow

Professor, California State University, Los Angeles

Today's issues often produce tomorrow's change; they help us to reconsider the past in our search for a better understanding of the present. Since education often reflects current political and sociological conditions, so is teacher preparation affected by many of these same concerns. Teacher preparation in the area of the visually handicapped also continues to change in response to present day educational needs as well as to political and other sociological influences. Even though these programs may have a changing focus or emphasis, they have never been more demanding or more goal directed. Certainly today we recognize our identity, yet are flexible enough to meet the varied needs and requirements of the field at large. Teacher preparation as always is involved in current educational issues and concerns. Nationally we are in a strong position. In the main we have defined the knowledge and skills needed by teachers to be effective, and generally we are working at developing that performance in our students.

Visually-handicapped education is ahead of other areas in special education. We have already established a field consensus of program objectives and we are currently working on a field consensus of role responsibilities. Thus it becomes a relatively easy task to define the role of teacher preparation in the area of visually handicapped: to develop the required teaching skills; to understand the basic knowledge of the field; and to prepare teachers who can perform at an acceptable level of ability. Thus the underlying issue of this paper is the ultimate usefulness and effectiveness of that teacher preparation program. In other words, for how long will the present day teacher preparation programs continue to be useful in developing personnel effectively trained to meet the demands of the field?

If we accept the position that there are two roles for teacher preparation - the "follower" and the "leader" - then how do these two factors manifest themselves? A leader is an initiator of change and not merely a reactor to change. A leader is a developer of curriculum, rather than an adaptor of instructional material. A leader specializes in specific content in addition to developing the principles of generic preparation. But a leader is flexible and responsive to the needs of the field in order to adequately develop personnel for that field. There are many times when each institution must listen to the local cares and concerns of its graduates and at the same time be cognizant of national trends and issues.

Currently teacher preparation is confronting certain issues, such as performance-based teacher education, generic programming, curriculum development and professional improvement. Let us examine how each of these may be today's issues producing tomorrow's changes in preparation of teachers of the visually handicapped.

The first concerns performance-based teacher education. It is impractical to believe that a national set of teaching competencies in and of themselves can be responsive to all local needs and situational requirements for teachers. It is nevertheless apparent that program-outcomes, their measurement and the criterion for evaluation cannot be viewed as inappropriate. But these are not, nor should they be national criteria for measuring program effectiveness or the successful development of teaching skills. The goals and objectives are not an end in themselves, rather they serve as guidelines for the preparation of more effective teachers. A statement or list of mastery tasks for evaluating performances is to be viewed as a milestone in the development of teacher effectiveness - the means to an end. Since the guidelines for education of teachers of visually handicapped students have been developed, the field is well ahead of itself. The current national goals are excellent behaviors for performance-based teacher education. Since good guidelines necessarily lack specificity, these may well serve as national standards for teacher preparation centers.

Generic programming has been a main problem for many teacher-preparation programs. Since training programs have lost much of their specificity, they have also lessened their identity. As a general statement, university personnel often do not address the unique needs of sensorial impaired students. School districts recruiting teachers from generic programs should be quite concerned with the overall relatedness of the total teacher preparation program. Generic preparation may attempt to do too much, to be too inclusive, and also to

come too early in the normal learning sequence for teachers. However, this does not negate the need for much of this general knowledge and for these skills. But in addition education of visually handicapped students has content designed to meet the unique needs of the school-aged student. This body of knowledge requires development along with the generic preparation.

The educational needs of blind and partially seeing children demand more than generically trained teachers. Teachers of visually handicapped students are more than promoters of general education. They do need background, experience and certification in regular education. But in addition they must be highly specialized to meet the unique needs of visually handicapped learners. Our current group of visually handicapped students suggests more specialization required by our teachers, not less. Teachers of visually handicapped students must be competently prepared to teach the specialized curricula to children of varying ages across the full spectrum of abilities and skills.

Curriculum development is the third trend to be discussed. As teacher training centers react to local needs and national standards the curriculum goals and standards will change. Since curriculum change may involve some of the unknown and unproven, concerned fears may arise in the fact of this change. Teacher preparation must respond both thoughtfully and courageously. For sure, most change involves multi-directional energy: to the field and from the field. Since the teacher preparation center and the field at large both have the best interest of the visually handicapped population shared between them, they both have the need to communicate effectively with each other. This team concerned response to needs of teachers and university curricula will manifest itself in supportive energies for change. Both the institution and the field need each other in order to fulfill their own expectations. Both have vested interests in each other. They are truly working partners in the education of visually handicapped children and youth. University curricula in the area of visual handicap are an outgrowth of this vested interest.

But ultimately the final responsibility for learning rests with the university students. They have freely chosen this area of study. At that point in time, it became their duty to diligently pursue their career choice, their self-destiny. Unless the university student is actively involved in the learning activities of the teacher preparation program and committed to the cause, learning does not take place. Much commitment and sacrifice are involved.

The fourth and final issue is professional improvement. Because of recent technological and curriculum innovations there is a need for continued professional development. There are additional curriculum changes through the use of various reading and writing machines or talking devices. The variety of curriculum adaptations available to teachers along with the special skills needed by the learner are affected by technological advancements. The amount and kind of educational aids and mobility devices is ever increasing. Each student trainee needs to be familiar with the workings and operations of numerous aids and devices and in addition be able to teach to the needs of each learner.

Teaching skills in many areas often become outdated or more frequently need updating. Teacher preparation programs need to demonstrate their leadership ability in designing unique and useful models for professional improvement. Because of the national shortage of teachers of visually handicapped students, we must explore various models of teacher preparation. We must bring programs to where they are needed. We must try new and creative approaches to meeting low incidence teacher needs.

Since the overall child population needs have changed over the last decade, experienced teachers must expand their concepts of visually handicapped children, but in addition they need to demonstrate an ability to teach the child functioning at lower or preschool levels, or the child with additional learning and/or handicapping conditions. Many teachers naively state - "I'm not going to be teaching a child like that!" Whether they want to or not cannot be the concern of the teacher preparation program. In many institutions, all the preservice students have practice with developmentally handicapped, preschool or multi-handicapped children. Other institutions may specialize with other types of children or with specialized training needs. The training model background should be understood before a candidate is hired by the school district.

Needless to state, teacher preparation program responsibilities are going forward. On-going training has become essential to continued success in teaching. For the immediate future, it is envisioned that there is a continuing need to develop long-range planning in the following areas:

1. National standards from one training institution to another is in need of future clarification;
2. Teacher education centers located for special summer training sessions with exchanges of competent staff;
3. Increased curriculum development by recognized professionals in the field;
4. Continued emphasis of curriculum skills development for the visually handicapped;

5. Learning packets distributed to inservice and preservice training sites;
6. Training modules developed for short-term training in a specific skill area;
7. Additional skills training in utilized technology in the classroom;
8. Research applied to innovative programs and curriculum.

These are indeed changing times, but the field is healthy with a well defined body of knowledge. Curriculum is essentially alive and vibrant. Hopefully, teacher preparation is contributing to a sounder educational climate in which children are learning. As the traditional patterns of involvement which have characterized teacher education programs continue, the field is coming to a consensus in not only structure, but also in nationally stated standards with defined role responsibilities. Teacher preparation will continue that which is useful and change that which is obsolete.

This then is what is meant by "teacher preparation: continuity and change." Today's issues hopefully will produce tomorrow's changes in the preparation of teachers who are, and will be, directing the learning experiences of all visually handicapped children and youth.

Specialized Certification

Abstract

Historically, persons with specialized skills have been organized into identifiable groups for purposes of recognition of their unique qualifications. Trained professionals concerned with education of visually handicapped pupils have developed unique educational techniques, specialized materials and equipment, program models, and professional teacher preparation, all designed to provide the best possible education for visually handicapped learners. The move to generic teacher certification is threatening the continuation of this situation, and specialized personnel are frequently caught in the crossfire between generalist and specialist. To be in compliance with the federal mandate, it is essential that specialized certification be developed and enforced so that there can be an appropriate match between diagnosed student needs and specialized instruction.

Specialized Certification

John D. Stager

Education Specialist, Massachusetts Department of Education

From the beginnings of civilization, society has expressed needs for the organization of persons with common interests, concerns, skills, and training into identifiable groups for the purposes of recognition, personal improvement, standard setting and general protection of public interests. Historically, guilds, trade associations, professional societies and governmental units have received the endorsement of society to fulfill these recognized basic needs.

So it has been in the education sphere. The public has expressed its particular needs for the existence of identifiable bodies of professional persons trained in certain educational management and instructional skills in order that the best interests of students may be protected, and that education professionals themselves may receive strength and nurture. This need has shown itself through the development of a multitude of formal and informal professional education associations, and recently through the vigorous development of state and federal bureaucracies organized to "guarantee" individual civil rights to a "free appropriate public education."

The body of trained professionals concerned with the education of students with visual handicaps recently has enjoyed an ever developing pattern of educational techniques, specialized materials and equipment, program models and professional teacher preparation. As a discrete entity, the profession of instruction for visually handicapped students generally is at an unprecedented high level of development in this country.

Simultaneous to this development has been even greater philosophical and consequent legal developments with regard to the manner in which all exceptional students are managed in an educational setting. Public Law 94-142 and its corollary state mandates have literally shaken regular and special education in both the public and private sectors. Through these pieces of legislation, the citizens of this country have placed their educators "on notice" that equal treatment, substantive instruction and positive results are to be the "bottom line" public expectation for handicapped students.

In response, educational administrators and instructors, for the most part, have regrouped in order to be responsive to this public mandate. Procedural safeguards, refined assessment procedures, parent involvement, integrated instructional models, revised professional standards, and bureaucratic program monitoring have all become the watch words of the day. Public fiscal resources, in a period of general decline, have been severely strained in the process of satisfying these dramatic increases in general public expectation.

Specialized instruction and educational support services for visually handicapped students have not been exempted from these pressures. The cries from teachers of the visually handicapped are numerous and more frequent every day. "My administrator of special education doesn't really know (or want to know) what my competencies are, what my appropriate role is, or what the needs of my students are." "The forms are filled out, but I was omitted from the IEP conference, so they assigned my student to a 'resource teacher' and ordered a large print book." "The town didn't want to spend any more money, so they decided that the 'substantially separate class teacher' could see him when necessary." "The parents were told by administration that the new law required no more categorical specialists, so my services aren't required." "A generic specialist has been assigned now to monitor my caseload."

These statements stand in stark contrast to the foregoing discussion. Noncompliance with the law, educational malpractice, regulatory misinterpretation and interpersonal breakdowns are all at work here. In the rush to provide "something" for every student's "special need," enormous omissions in sound educational decision making have taken place.

P.L. 94-142, paragraph 121a.532(e) states, "The evaluation (of a student) is made by a multidisciplinary team or group of persons, including at least one teacher or other specialist with knowledge in the area of suspected disability." This requirement stands, therefore, as a national public expectation that students have unique educational needs in spite of worn out disability labels, noncategorical programming requirements, due process procedural errors and fiscal constraints. In the face of tremendously complex processes in implementing this national mandate, insidious homogenizing influences have crept in which contradict the legislation's basic intent of a "free, appropriate, public education."

Specialized personnel have in many cases been caught in the crossfire of the specialist vs. generalist conflict which even now rages on across this land. Indeed, any professional deserves to succumb in such conflicts if competencies can not be convincingly demonstrated. The public, however, has indicated through P.L. 94-142 that it will continue to rely on governmental units to provide guarantees that appropriately trained professional educators will be pivotly involved in diagnosing, stating and defending the needs of handicapped students.

States, in compliance with this federal mandate, must provide a mechanism for teachers with specialized skills to be publicly recognized as appropriately trained agents to be used in implementing this public wish. Specialized state certification standards for public and private school teachers of the visually handicapped, therefore, must be thoughtfully developed and vigorously enforced. It is only through this mechanism that the public has some degree of guarantee that there will be an appropriate match between diagnosed student needs and specialized instruction.

Part V

CURRICULAR CONSIDERATIONS

Visually handicapped learners, if they are to be given equal access to and equal opportunity to participate in an appropriate educational program designed to meet their individual educational needs, require certain components within the curriculum that are not typically included in the regular school curriculum. The first paper included here describes the need for services to pupils that will improve their visual functioning, namely, low-vision services.

The second paper describes the function of the orientation and mobility specialist in meeting needs of visually handicapped learners. Orientation and mobility instruction is an integral part of the educational program. These two components are not "extras" or "support services," but rather a right and a necessary part of the curriculum if visually handicapped learners are to have an appropriate educational program.

Resources

American Foundation for the Blind. (1983). *Low vision questions and answers*. New York: AFB.

Barraga, N. C. (1979). *Program to develop efficiency in visual functioning*. Louisville KY: American Printing House for the Blind.

Hill, E. W., & Ponder, P. (1976). *Orientation and mobility techniques: A guide for the practitioner*. New York: American Foundation for the Blind.

Jose, R. T. (1983). *Understanding low vision*. New York: American Foundation for the Blind.

Sloan, L. L. (1971). *Recommended aids for the partially sighted*. New York: American Foundation for the Blind.

Welsh, R. L., & Blasch, B. B. (1980). *Foundations of orientation and mobility*. New York: American Foundation for the Blind.

Low Vision: Topics of Concern

Abstract

Visually handicapped children should be encouraged to make effective use of their residual vision through the use of optical aids or print reading with modifications. Children with very limited vision have found optical aids and visual efficiency training essential in the educational process. Children should be assessed to determine whether they can make effective use of such aids, and proper selection and training should follow. Counseling with the child and the parents is sometimes necessary to assist in acceptance of aids. Research on the efficacy of large print is inconclusive. In general, children should be given the option of selecting the medium that is most suitable to meet their needs: regular print with magnification or large print.

Low Vision: Topics of Concern

Laurence R. Gardner
Teachers College, Columbia University

Anne L. Corn
University of Texas at Austin

Optical Aids

Introduction

Although magnification of objects has been possible for many centuries, fear of deterioration of vision through use, and a lack of expertise in the production of lightweight lenses limited the development of optical aids until the first half of the twentieth century.

Optical aids, sometimes referred to as low vision aids, consist of one or more lenses placed between the eye and the object to be viewed. Such aids are designed to maximize the visual abilities of individuals by altering the size and/or position of the "projection" of an object on the retina. They may also affect the amount of light transmitted to the eye. Thus, tinted lenses placed in spectacle frames can be considered optical aids when prescribed for the purpose of enhancing impaired vision. Some electronic aids, such as closed circuit television systems, are also considered optical aids. Optical aids are widely used by visually handicapped children in educational settings.

Position

Properly prescribed optical aids are devices which are essential for maximizing a child's visual functioning. Any child who has residual vision can usually benefit from the use of an aid and should receive a clinical evaluation by an ophthalmologist or optometrist who is knowledgeable in the prescription of such devices. The agency or school providing educational services to the child should help the family to obtain the prescribed aids.

Whenever possible, every attempt should be made to develop a system of lending aids to a child for a trial period prior to the time a prescription is actually made. This may minimize the novelty effect of new aids and, therefore, reduce the chances that an inefficient aid will be prescribed. Optical aids do not "cure" impaired vision; they simply allow a child to make maximum use of low vision. Optical aids may be used in conjunction with other strategies to maximize visual functioning such as environmental modifications and non-optical aids.

Due to the optical restrictions imposed by many aids, some children will require instruction in their use beyond that provided by the eye specialist. Teachers of visually handicapped children are in a unique position to offer such instruction. They are aware of the relationship between the use of aids and the visual demands of school tasks, and are in a position to observe a child using an aid over a period of time. In addition, teachers can observe and respond to a child's psychosocial reactions to the use of aids. Special education teachers and orientation and mobility instructors who received their professional training prior to the development of the body of knowledge about optical aids should update their skills through inservice education.

Referrals for the prescription of aids can be made on the basis of teacher observations with respect to a child's measured visual acuity and visual functioning. Children who are functioning at levels below their chronological age and children who have multiple handicaps should not be excluded from these evaluations.

One of the roles of the teachers of visually handicapped children is to "perform functional vision assessments." (See position paper: *The Role and Function of the Teacher of the Visually Handicapped*.) With parental approval, the teacher may share the assessment with the low vision eye specialist along with a list of tasks which make visual demands of the child in the school setting. This will provide the eye specialist with guidelines for prescribing aids. It is also recommended that teachers accompany their pupils to the clinical evaluation whenever possible. In addition to learning about specific techniques for using a new aid and offering information about the child's visual behavior, the teacher of the visually handicapped child should make recommendations regarding the mounting system for the aid. The advantages of some aids may outweigh the advantages of others in a specific setting.

The sophistication of an aid does not necessarily correspond with its usefulness. It is important to note that each optical aid possesses advantages and disadvantages, and the use of one type of aid may be suitable for one particular child but may not be appropriate for another. Some children will require only one aid to meet their visual needs, while other children will require two or more to accomplish the same purpose.

Counseling may be advisable to assist children in the acceptance of aids. At certain times in a child's school career (often during adolescence), a child may become self-conscious about using aids. A child's desire to remain inconspicuous should be respected as long as the child is able to function effectively in the school setting. The appearance of an aid should also be considered when a mounting system for the aid is determined. When aids are introduced at an early age and children have developed good habits of usage, they tend to be more readily accepted than when they are introduced at later ages.

Parental concerns regarding the use of aids should also be considered. Parents may view an aid as a stigmatizing object rather than as a device which promotes independence. The specific use of an aid should be outlined for parents as well as for regular-classroom teachers so that all concerned with the child's education may assist and encourage efficient usage.

Large Print

Introduction

In the early part of this century, classes for the partially sighted were called "sight-saving" or "sight-conservation" classes. These classes operated on the assumption that ordinary use of impaired vision, or, in particular, the use of impaired vision to the point of eye strain, could cause permanent and irreparable damage to the eyes. It was believed that if a visually handicapped child could read large print (usually considered 18 point) from a near-normal reading distance rather than labor to see standard print (usually considered 12 point) at a close reading distance, then eye strain would be minimized and a child's vision would be less prone to deterioration. This is now known to be inaccurate.

Today, it is common belief that, in almost all cases, use of impaired vision does not lead to any deleterious ocular effects. Regardless of the distance at which reading materials are held, use of vision by either normally sighted or visually handicapped children does not harm the eyes. Thus there is no medical reason to discourage visually handicapped children from either using optical aids, such as high plus spheres, and/or from bringing print as close to their eyes as necessary in order to see print clearly.

In general, studies conducted on the use of large print with the visually handicapped have been inconclusive and the efficacy of such print remains controversial.

Both the use of large print at a normal or near-normal reading distance (10 to 14 inches) and the use of standard print at a close reading distance (for example, 3 to 6 inches) serve the same purpose: both enlarge the size of the retinal "image" of the print. When light that is reflected from print enters the eye, it is focused on the retina forming a retinal image. As the size of the image increases, the image is magnified. The size of the retinal image of print increases as the actual physical size of the print increases and/or as the viewing distance between the eye and the print decreases. When the retinal image is enlarged, print usually becomes more visible to the sight-impaired eye.

Books in standard-size print are usually less expensive to use than large print books, even if additional cost is incurred for optical aids that are required for the use of standard print. A book in standard print is also more accessible and less cumbersome than an often heavy and unwieldy large print book. Furthermore, large print books are rarely available to visually handicapped persons after high school. If a child learns how to use standard print materials, he will be prepared for any type of future employment where the use of standard print is required, but the same cannot be said of the child who reads only large print materials.

Position

It is recommended that visually handicapped individuals use standard rather than large print whenever possible and when appropriate to the task and ease of use. Large print is recommended only when standard print is not within an individual's visual range (even with the use of optical aids) or when specific psychological factors necessitate its use. In general, large print may be indicated when an individual must place his eyes at a distance of two inches or less from 12 point type in order to see the print, or when an individual insists that large print is more comfortable and easier to read than regular print. In such cases other reading media, such as recordings and braille, should also be considered. When appropriate, the individual should be given the option of selecting the medium or media most suitable to meet his needs.

The Role of the Orientation and Mobility Instructor in the Public Schools

Abstract

Orientation is the process of making use of sensory information to establish oneself in relationship to the environment; mobility is the process of moving within the environment. Visually handicapped learners require instruction in both orientation and mobility in order to become independent adults. An orientation and mobility program includes the following: assessment in conjunction with other school personnel; team efforts with regular and special teachers to make the instruction an integral part of the curriculum; direct teaching of skills; inservice education for all school personnel; public education; and parent education. Qualified orientation and mobility instructors are essential to deliver these services. Instruction should be provided for pupils with all ranges of vision and intelligence, including those who have other disabilities.

The Role of the Orientation and Mobility Instructor in the Public Schools

Everett Hill
George Peabody College for Teachers
Vanderbilt University

Orientation and mobility (O & M) is an important and integral part of the curriculum in the comprehensive delivery of services to visually handicapped children in public school settings. The O & M instructor serves as a member of the multidisciplinary team in developing and implementing individualized education programs for visually handicapped children. This concept was reinforced with the enactment of Public Law 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975.

Orientation is the process of using sensory information to establish and maintain one's position in the environment; mobility is the process of moving safely, efficiently, and gracefully within one's environment. The ultimate goal of O & M instruction is for visually handicapped persons to be able to travel in any environment as independently as possible. To reach this goal, O & M instruction must begin at the earliest possible age.

Position

Orientation and mobility in public school settings should be broadly conceived and involve a coordinated team approach in order to meet the needs of a diverse population of visually handicapped children. The delivery of O & M services should not be limited to totally blind students. Preschool visually handicapped, multiply handicapped, and low-vision children can also profit from O & M instruction. Likewise, O & M instruction should not be taught in isolation, nor should it be limited to the teaching of formal O & M skills and techniques. Orientation and mobility motivation should be related to and an integral part of cognitive, perceptual, social, personality, and language development.

Assessment

The O & M instructor is responsible for developing and conducting an orientation and mobility assessment for all visually handicapped children in order to determine the nature and extent of services needed. An initial assessment is conducted to determine each child's present level of functioning. The O & M instructor takes the lead role in assessing formal orientation and mobility skills and serves in a cooperative role with the teacher of the visually handicapped in assessing the areas of concept, motor, and sensory skills development. Other professionals such as the regular class teacher, physical education teacher, occupational therapist, or physical therapist should be consulted and involved in the assessment process when appropriate. Short- and long-term goals are developed (with input from the parents and other members of the multidisciplinary team), and reasonable time limits are specified for completing the goals.

Direct Instruction

The role of the O & M instructor is to teach formal mobility skills to those visually handicapped children for whom they are appropriate. Formal mobility skills include such areas as (a) skills in movement with a sighted guide, (b) protective techniques, (c) indoor cane skills, (d) outdoor cane skills, (e) street crossings, and (f) use of public transportation systems.

Often because of time and liability concerns, it is common practice for the O & M instructor to be responsible for advanced orientation skills training, cane instruction, and other formal mobility skills. Formal orientation instruction is highly dependent upon maximum development and use of the senses. It entails such skill areas as the following: (a) ability to identify and make use of landmarks and clues; (b) knowledge and use of compass directions; (c) knowledge and use of indoor and city numbering systems; (d) ability to align the body to objects and with sounds for the purpose of establishing and/or maintaining a straight line of

travel; (e) use of systematic search patterns to explore novel objects of environments (self-familiarization); (f) recovery skills; and (g) knowledge and use of where, when, and how to solicit aid.

It is also the responsibility of the O & M instructor to provide visually handicapped students and their parents with information about alternative systems (other than the cane) of independent travel such as dog guides and electronic travel aids (ETA's).

The O & M instructor should also serve as a team member and consultant to the teacher of visually handicapped pupils, the regular class teacher, other school personnel, and parents in the instruction and reinforcement of concept development, sensory skill development, and motor development. The development of good gross and fine motor abilities, spatial and environmental concepts, and maximum use of the senses are important prerequisites for formal orientation and mobility instruction.

Inservice Education

The O & M instructor is responsible for designing and implementing ongoing inservice education activities in the areas of orientation and mobility for teachers, other professionals, paraprofessionals, and administrators. Inservice activities should serve to educate other school personnel about the role of the O & M instructor and the goals of the O & M program. Orientation and mobility inservice activities should also focus on the roles of all appropriate school personnel in the development and reinforcement of concept development, sensory skills training, motor development, elementary formal orientation skills, and pre-cane formal mobility skills.

Parent Education

Orientation and mobility instruction will have very little impact on the visually handicapped child if the parents are not involved in the process. In addition to working cooperatively with parents in developing realistic goals, the O & M instructor must develop specific activities that parents can implement in the home setting in order for continuity of instruction to occur. Orientation and mobility activities should be designed so that parents and other family members can carry them out in the context of their daily routine through daily living activities, recreational activities, and so forth.

The O & M instructor must keep parents informed of their child's progress and to instruct them in how to integrate and reinforce orientation and mobility skills in their day-by-day routines. Parents should be encouraged to be actively involved in their child's program and encouraged to observe O & M lessons whenever possible.

Public Education

Because a great deal of O & M instruction takes place in the community, it is the one aspect of the total curriculum that is most visible to the general public. Frequently, the O & M instructor has the opportunity to educate the general public regarding the capabilities of visually handicapped persons. Establishing community relationships through O & M instruction may dispel the many myths that the general public often has about blindness and blind people.

Some Perspectives for the Delivery of O & M Services

School districts should employ qualified O & M instructors; they should not use teachers of the visually handicapped or other school personnel in lieu of a qualified O & M instructor in the delivery of orientation and mobility services. Although the O & M profession has experienced rapid growth in the last several years in serving visually handicapped children in public school settings, there is still a great need for these services throughout the country in all settings and geographical areas.

Part VI

SPECIAL POPULATIONS

The following three papers deal with the needs of special groups within the population described as visually handicapped. The first paper details the needs of visually handicapped infants and young children who must have appropriate early intervention programs that will prepare them adequately for their future schooling. This paper was prepared by participants of the VIIIth International Seminar on Preschool Blind and Visually Impaired held March 31 through April 4, 1982 in Scottsdale, Arizona. The list of participants is included at the end of the position paper.

The second paper states the rights of visually handicapped children who are also gifted to a program that will meet those educational needs as well. This paper was adapted from one prepared by Kathryn L. Hegeman for the 1981 Committee for the Gifted Handicapped of the Association for the Gifted, The Council for Exceptional Children.

Recent changes in the population of children who have both visual and hearing sensory losses are requiring modifications in programming for them. The final paper included here details the right to an appropriate educational program extending into adulthood for this frequently overlooked group.

Resources

- DuBose, R. F. (1976). Developmental needs in blind infants. *New Outlook for the Blind*, 17(2), 48-50.
- Jastrzemska, Z. S. (Ed.). (1976). *The effects of blindness and other impairments on early development*. New York: American Foundation for the Blind.
- Warren, D. H. (1984). *Blindness and early childhood development* (2nd ed.). New York: American Foundation for the Blind.
- Wurster, M., & Mulholland, M. E. (Eds.). (1983). *Help me become everything I can be. Proceedings of the North American Conference on Visually Handicapped Infants and Young Children*. New York: American Foundation for the Blind.

Programs for Visually Handicapped Infants and Young Children

Abstract

Programs for infants and young children and their parents have long been a part of educational programs for the visually handicapped. Educational services for infants and young children should include recognition of the importance of the family; adequate support services; services and assistance that are consistent with the family's needs; early delivery of the services; individually designed programs; services of specialists when needed; coordination with medical services; and professional development for the staff. Specific competencies are needed by the service providers, the support personnel, and the primary service provider. Preparation programs for these personnel should focus on the acquisition of knowledge and skills in working with young children and in working with children who have visual handicaps.

Programs for Visually Handicapped Infants and Young Children

Written by participants of the VIIIth International Seminar on Preschool Blind and Visually Impaired, March 31-April 4, 1982, Scottsdale, Arizona.

Practice, experience, research and the literature affirm the importance of the need for early intervention that will enhance the development of infants and young children with visual impairments. Expert assistance through appropriate educational programs is especially critical in order to support the family, particularly the mother or primary care-giver. Services for visually handicapped infants and young children, and their parents, should be available as soon as the impairment is recognized. This position paper outlines basic principles that must be addressed in the implementation of early intervention education programs. Although in prevalence, blind/visually handicapped children represent the smallest group among the "exceptional," they have the most differentiated needs. Adequate services for them and their parents must be provided in a society committed to the education and well being of all children.

Developmental Needs

Blind/visually handicapped infants and young children have unique developmental needs. Vision is the primary organizing and integrative sense for the sighted child; the remaining senses, particularly the tactile and auditory, become most important for the child with a visual impairment. These senses can seldom be used optimally by the child to organize and integrate his world unless specific training, particularly in the areas of symbolic operations and concept development, is introduced to maximize efficient utilization of all senses, including residual vision. The child with residual vision requires specific training and activities designed to promote optimal use of remaining vision. An intervention program that emphasizes the teaching of parents to teach their child must be provided to facilitate this process of learning through all sources of sensory input.

The blind/visually handicapped child's orientation to the world around him is different from that of the sighted child. This dramatically influences development in all areas, including cognitive, affective, psychological, motor and exploratory learning, making early intervention, direct teaching/learning and provision of many and varied experiences mandatory. When a visual impairment is compounded by other handicaps, additional needs result that may require the attention of professionals with expertise in other areas. Regardless of the extent and types of impairment(s), coordinated assistance from qualified professional persons with knowledge of the effects of a visual impairment is essential.

A visual impairment has an immediate and lasting impact on the family. The psychological reaction experienced by parents, brothers, sisters and extended family members at the time of diagnosis cannot be over emphasized. From the time the visual impairment is identified, the family and child should have available ongoing, individualized support and services. A primary focus should be on the establishment and fostering of a continuous affectionate bond between parent and child. It is essential that all involved parties work together toward the common goal of facilitating the child's optimal development.

Recommended Practices

Blind and visually handicapped infants and young children have the same needs as all children. They are more alike than different from other children. It is the differences that must be addressed by specialized educational programs. When vision is impaired, learning is often disorganized and fragmented; all areas of development are affected and concepts are altered. The blind child has access to learning about the world only when the primary care-givers consciously and consistently provide experiences that make maximum use of all sensory channels. Systematic learning does not occur incidentally nor spontaneously.

Educational services may be provided in the home, day schools, centers, residential schools, or in any combination of these settings. Regardless of the setting, effective intervention practices should include:

1. recognition and acceptance of the family as the most influential factor in the child's growth and development;

2. immediate information and support services designed to give comfort, assurance and confidence geared toward the development of effective parent-child interaction;
3. services and assistance that are frequent, ongoing, and take into account the family's values, needs and preferences;
4. comprehensive services made available to children and families as soon as the visual impairment is recognized;
5. services and programs individually designed to meet the global and specific needs of each child;
6. instruction and experience in daily life activities that will enhance the cognitive, social, affective and physical development of the child;
7. services of specialists who are appropriately trained in the education of visually handicapped children and in the processes of assessment, planning, evaluation and program placement;
8. coordination with the medical community as a partner in the provision of comprehensive services for the visually handicapped child;
9. ongoing inservice and professional development for all staff as well as parents.

These principles apply to services for all blind and visually handicapped infants and young children, including those with additional impairments.

Competencies and Functions of Personnel

The development of visually handicapped children is a complex process the understanding of which demands a variety of special skills and knowledge on the part of professionals. In addition to the specialized professional competencies of the numerous service providers, such as teachers of the visually handicapped, orientation and mobility specialists, family counselors, speech therapists, social workers, physical therapists, occupational therapists, medical and health care workers and others, additional competencies are needed to provide effective and efficient service to visually impaired infants, young children and their families.

Service Providers. All service providers for the child and family should have knowledge of normal infant and early childhood development including visual development. In addition, they should receive ongoing inservice education on the following:

1. knowledge of the impact of a visual impairment on early childhood development;
2. knowledge and understanding of the impact of the etiology of the visual impairment on behavior and development;
3. knowledge and understanding of the impact of a visual impairment on the child, family, and social environment.

Support Personnel. In addition to the above, support personnel should demonstrate the ability to adapt their specialized training to meet the unique needs of the blind and visually handicapped infants and young children.

Primary Service Provider. The primary service provider should have the following additional competencies:

1. skill and sensitivity in working with the parents through effective communication and the ability to share and exchange methods that will enhance the child's overall development;
2. ability to assess functional vision and to plan effective strategies for training visual efficiency;
3. ability to adapt and use developmental assessment instruments designed for normal children as well as those specifically designed for visually handicapped infants and children;
4. ability to identify the specific needs of the child and his/her family, and to coordinate and implement a program to meet these needs utilizing support personnel and other community resources.

Since many visually handicapped infants and young children have additional handicaps, service personnel also need to have an understanding of the impact of combinations of handicaps on the children

and their development in order to provide support and assistance to parents which will assist them to better understand and accommodate for their children's specific needs.

Additional competencies may be required of professional personnel when serving children from diverse geographic, ethnic and economic communities.

Responsibilities of Personnel Preparation Facilities

It is imperative that individuals designing and implementing training programs include the following considerations for preparing personnel to work with blind and visually handicapped infants and young children:

General Personnel Preparation

1. Training options should be developed for all levels of personnel including paraprofessionals and volunteer staff who are or will be working with visually impaired infants and young children;
2. Generic introductory special education courses should include specific components related to the blind and visually handicapped infant and young child.

Specific Personnel Preparation: For those providing direct services to blind and visually handicapped infants and young children, such as teachers and orientation and mobility specialists, personnel preparation programs should include:

1. a minimum of one course in early development and methods for teaching the visually handicapped infant and young child;
2. a minimum of one early childhood practicum placement;
3. exposure to all service delivery options for infants and young children through field visits and/or placements;
4. provision for the ongoing professional development of certified or previously trained personnel through special seminars, guest speakers, and specially designed courses.

Format: Personnel preparation facilities should develop outreach training options including media and independent study packages for individuals who cannot attend traditional classes. These activities should be included in program planning:

1. cooperative arrangements between colleges/universities and direct service providers so that the development and implementation of the preparation program for all personnel becomes a cooperative, continuous and comprehensive effort;
2. program coordinators work with other disciplines (i.e. medicine, psychology, social work, nursing, occupational and physical therapy, public health, and other support personnel) to insure that the needs of visually handicapped infants and young children are addressed at both the preservice and inservice level for all support personnel.

Participants at the VIIIth International Seminar on Preschool Blind and Visually Handicapped

Nancy Akeson
Elaine Baldrige
Dottie Bridge
Ellie Clauson
Betty Dominguez
Kay Alicyn Ferrell
Donna Heiner
Gail S. Huntington

Mary Ann Lang
Berthold Lowenfeld
Irna G. Marshall
Suzi McDonald
Pauline M. Moor
Sheri Moore
Ardie Pitello
Sherry Raynor

Mary Reid
Marguerite A. Smith
Stuart W. Teplin
Elaine M. Tobin
Chris Tompkins
Alex Truesdell
Beverly Ware

Education of Gifted Visually Handicapped Children

Abstract

Among the population of visually handicapped children are some who are also gifted. These tend to be unserved or underserved. Gifted/visually handicapped children include those who display high levels of performance in general intelligence, specific academic aptitude, creative or productive thinking, leadership, and the visual and performing arts. Gifted children who happen to be visually handicapped encounter problems in identification, curricular modification, trained staff and support services, and psychological needs and counseling. Planning and implementing a program requires cooperation between specialists in the areas of the gifted and the visually handicapped. Educational placement may be in a program for visually handicapped students, a regular class, or a program for gifted students. Special attention must be given to the selection of personnel who will work with these pupils.

Education of Gifted Visually Handicapped Children

Anne L. Corn
University of Texas at Austin

Geraldine Scholl
University of Michigan

Overview

Gifted handicapped students have traditionally been underserved and interest in their education has only recently begun to surface. There have been historic patterns of discrimination affecting their lives and educational opportunities, e.g., underemployment. Recent legislation has spurred public interest in the handicapped and people feel an urgency to comply with mandated guidelines. The disabled have suddenly become a visible minority as accommodations in public buildings, signs and reserved parking spaces demonstrate their rights. Strong advocacy is needed, however, to heighten public sensitivity to the problems of disabled students who are also gifted.

Who are These Children?

Gifted and talented children are those identified by professionally qualified persons who, by virtue of outstanding abilities, are capable of high performance. These students require differentiated programs and/or services beyond those normally provided by the regular school program. Gifted and talented students include demonstrated or potentially superior abilities in areas of:

- General intelligence
- Specific academic aptitude
- Creative or productive thinking
- Leadership
- The visual and performing arts
- Any combination of the above

Who are these children we call gifted/visually handicapped? They may be defined as gifted children who are also identified and eligible for services for the visually handicapped.

Special educational provisions must be made in order for these children to achieve their potential. To be adequately served, they need to be identified and provided with a well-planned, systematic education based on individual needs, abilities and disabilities. Education should do more than help gifted/visually handicapped children survive. An appropriate education requires the cultivation of the student's special gifts and talents, in addition to meeting unique needs as a visually handicapped person.

Problems in Identification and Placement

Children who must integrate these two exceptionalities, their giftedness and their visual handicap, need a program that responds to their special needs in these four categories:

- Identification
- Curricular modifications
- Trained staff and support services
- Psychological needs and counseling

While there is no one program or prototype suitable for gifted/visually handicapped pupils, all four areas should be considered in both program development and pupil placement. In the United States, Public Law 94-142 guarantees the education of handicapped children in the "least restrictive environment." How can we identify these children and provide access to a challenging environment? The identification process must be keyed into proper placement for the individual child. In some instances this may be a program for the visually handicapped, a regular classroom with support services or a special class for gifted students or another

setting for the handicapped with support from a specialist in education of gifted students. This process must consider not only the types of placements available but also make recommendations on appropriate curricular adaptations, support services and required learning aids.

Identifying giftedness in visually handicapped children is a complicated process at best. Norms are not always well-established for adapted editions of tests and much research is needed in this area. Barriers to assessing true potential are caused by additional factors such as poor self-concept or apathy on the part of the child who has not been exposed to a challenging environment. The TAG (Talented and Gifted) Committee on the Handicapped should include a person knowledgeable in gifted/talented education. This might aid considerably in identification and programming for gifted/handicapped children. Identification and placement should stress the development of appropriate goals and objectives for educational programming and services needed to achieve those objectives and not solely deficit-oriented IEPs (Individual Education Plans).

Identification, assessment and programming must attend to strengths as well as weaknesses and carefully provide children with services in the least restrictive environment. Parents should be fully advised, consulted and informed concerning their child's total needs and learning requirements. Approaches to parent concerns regarding educational placement need to be clear and comprehensive. A primary concern is that children should not become dead-locked into a particular placement alternative because of visual disability. They must receive appropriate instruction in a non-discriminatory educational system. In any case, no matter what the placement, the child must be prepared to live in a non-handicapped, non-segregated world in which his/her gifts and talents will be valued along with the non-handicapped gifted.

Improved Educational Services

There is a great need for communication between educators of the gifted and those concerned with the visually impaired. This cooperation will benefit both groups by focusing on the full range of human development towards potential. By acknowledging special needs among the gifted/visually handicapped, the level of instruction for all children will be stimulated. In addition, combined efforts are needed to promote research and to encourage application of theory and innovative programs.

There must be appropriate training in both inservice and preservice courses for educators if they are to realize their obligations to students who are gifted and visually handicapped. There are specific ways to provide improved educational services that apply to both the regular and special educator. Realistic teacher training programs should stress competency in the following areas:

- Knowledge of student abilities and disabilities and how these individual differences affect learning.
- Competence in methods of disability-related skills development and compensation.
- Implications of visual impairment for the identification process.
- Adaptative strategies for assessment and interpretation of results.
- Adaptative strategies necessary for curricula modifications.
- Proficient and judicious use of devices, aids, technological equipment, and other resources and support services.
- Awareness of the psychological and counseling needs of the gifted handicapped student.
- Demonstrated attitudes of cooperation with educators of the gifted since teamwork is a necessary part of educational services.
- Careful attention to the development of the students' social skills and relationships with both normal and disabled peers.
- Good interpersonal relations with parents through providing information, advisement, and support to them.
- Realistic expectations in regard to both gifts and disabilities.

A well-trained teacher with adequate support services determines, to a great extent, how successfully the gifted/visually handicapped child meets the challenges of a demanding environment.

Expanding Horizons

Beginning with early childhood, exposure to community learning experiences should be an integral part of the gifted/visually handicapped child's educational program. Maximum efforts must be made to establish linkage between school and community and development of learning alternatives which mainstream students into ongoing community-based programs. It is very important for gifted/visually handicapped students to participate in internships and other community-based projects so they will be able to relate, work and function with ease in the community and have the opportunity to serve as a tutor or volunteer. Public awareness and support are required since the special needs of visually handicapped students must be assisted by financial and human resources from both the public and private sector. These learning experiences provide exposure and exploratory opportunities not ordinarily available to disabled students. Gifted students who are visually handicapped must be given opportunities to compete successfully not only in school and similar settings but also in independent world-of-work situations. Advocacy must be strong to solicit sponsors and mentors to bridge this gap which has been a chasm leaving many gifted individuals who are disabled either unemployed or underemployed. There is a visible leadership of some gifted and handicapped persons who have been advocating for the civil rights of handicapped children. These leaders in liaison with parents and educators can affect how and to what extent society responds to gifted children with disabilities. These children need assistance from all quarters if they are to enter adulthood as secure and valued individuals who have the potential to make significant contributions to society.

NOTE: This position paper was adapted from one prepared by Kathryn T. Hegeman for the 1981 Committee for the Gifted Handicapped of the Association for the Gifted, Council for Exceptional Children.

Services for Deaf-Blind Children and Youth: Coming of Age?

Abstract

Educational programs for children who have both visual and hearing impairments are undergoing changes because the current groups are a more multiply handicapped population than those prior to the rubella epidemic of 1964-1965. Because of the low incidence of this population, federal assistance continues to be necessary. Early intervention is essential. Problem areas include lack of consistency among states in the definition; insufficient funding; need for curricular changes because of the changing population; need for a varied staff qualified to meet the varied needs of the children; and need for facilities that will prepare pupils for ultimate placement in the community. There is a particular need for communication and coordination of efforts between the teachers of school-age children and the trainers of adults.

Services for Deaf-Blind Children and Youth: Coming of Age?

Vincent M. McVeigh
Elwyn Institutes

Introduction

Prior to the rubella epidemic of 1964-1965, the number of newborn deaf-blind infants was estimated to be 140 per year. During the epidemic this number rose to an estimated 2,000 per year. More recently, the number of deaf-blind children identified annually whose condition is due to genetic anomalies, congenital malformations, and infectious disease remains at approximately 2,000. Advances in medical science, while reducing infant mortality, have contributed to an upsurge in multiple birth-defects including deaf/blindness.

Although the pre-rubella group of deaf-blind children could generally be described as intellectually normal but communicatively delayed, this cannot be said of the population affected by rubella. The rubella virus caused additional handicapping conditions such as mental retardation, physical abnormalities, and emotional disturbance. In fact, the multiplicity and severity of the handicaps made the question of primary disability a moot point except for mandated classification purposes. It became apparent that the presence of these additional problems did not merely add to the individual's problems, they multiplied them. Accordingly, the few programs developed for the pre-epidemic population were not equipped to program adequately for the multiply handicapped rubella children, but they did serve as the foundation for the emerging programs of the late 1960's and early 1970's.

The epidemic of 1964 highlighted the lack of facilities, manpower, and expertise to meet the needs of these children. Enactment of Public Laws 90-247, Part C, amending Title VI of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act in 1968 and 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act in 1975 provided the financial impetus for the growth of programs to fill those voids. Now, almost two decades later, the first deaf-blind children of that epidemic are reaching adulthood.

Similarly, the time has come for programs for the deaf-blind to reach maturity by (a) evaluating themselves with a critical eye toward improvement; (b) establishing a sustaining source of local funding in spite of continued, although reduced, federal support; (c) developing staffing patterns reflective of student needs rather than agency tradition; (d) developing curricular offerings reflective of student needs rather than staff training and background; and (e) developing further awareness of the education needed by deaf-blind children to survive; let alone succeed as adults. With these challenges in mind, it is time to move forward by solidifying existing programs (implementing change where necessary) and creating new opportunities where deficiencies currently exist.

Solidifying Current Practice

There are currently several aspects of services to deaf-blind children and youth that are noteworthy and warrant continuation, among them the federal role and early intervention.

The Federal Role

Low incidence figures for deaf-blind children in the general population make research, staff development, and regional coordination extremely difficult. The role of the federal government in fiscal and programmatic leadership must be maintained to insure coordination of the life plan for deaf-blind people.

Therefore, the federal government should continue to broaden its role in determining the size and characteristics of the deaf-blind population, in fiscal planning, and in the appropriation of funds.

Early Intervention

Efforts of selected states to provide early intervention and infant stimulation must be strongly reinforced and those efforts expanded throughout the country. An infant born with biologic deficits such as deafness or blindness or a combination thereof assumes a risk of developmental attrition equal to or greater than the

biologic insult. Intervention programs for deaf-blind infants can be fully effective only as a component of a broad-based service delivery system. The elements in this network should include early detection, medical diagnosis with treatment, infant stimulation, and parent and family counseling and education. Therefore, enacting legislation in all the states that mandates services to deaf-blind infants and youth from birth is essential as an adjunct to the federal impetus.

Implementing Change

The last 20 years have seen the development of a myriad of practices. Many of these grew rapidly out of past practices with the pre-rubella deaf-blind population found primarily in residential facilities for the blind. In many cases, recent findings have shown the need for change, or in some cases total abandonment of such practices. One area that does not require change but needs uniformity is the area of definition.

Definition

Deaf-blind children are defined by Public Law 91-230, Title VI, Part C, Section 622, as "... children who have auditory and visual handicaps, the combination of which causes such severe communication and other developmental and educational problems that they cannot properly be accommodated in special education programs solely for the hearing handicapped child or for the visually handicapped."

The variations in definition among states cause problems when students change programs. Universal acceptance of the federal definition would not guarantee similarity or agreement since there remains some subjectivity within the definition; but it would give consistency to the term "deaf-blind" based on the provision of both vision and hearing services to an individual who has both impairments.

State/Local Funding

Appropriate levels of state and local funds must be available to support programs for deaf-blind students. This should not be taken to indicate the need for locally based programming. In fact, a number of states have good reasons for not providing local public school programs. Such factors as the rural character of the state, small numbers of deaf-blind children, existence of high quality private programs, and scarcity of qualified teachers adversely affect the capability of local public school programs to provide high quality programs.

However, public schools do have the one factor that deaf-blind education needs: steady, secure financial support. Programs relying on federal grants are shaky, at best. Future programs for the deaf-blind population need the solid base provided by local, tax-supported funding.

States should encourage and assist local educational agencies in the development of interdistrict agreements, cross-county cooperatives, and regional centers where individual districts cannot meet the needs of this low-incidence group of children.

Curriculum

During the past decade, curricula have begun to move from the traditional academically oriented programs to models that focus on developing necessary compensatory skills. This trend must be continued and intensified; and facilities should reflect this move toward increased emphasis on total life skills instruction, including the areas of eating, toileting, dressing, mobility, and safety.

At the same time, it must be recognized that within the deaf-blind population there exists a wide range of needs covering a broad spectrum of curriculum areas. A continuum of services must be available to guarantee the appropriateness of programming for each deaf-blind child.

The focus on the development of language and communication skills must be intensified for that portion of the deaf-blind population whose intellectual level indicates that the sensory impairments are, in fact, the primary disability.

The more intensive prevocational and vocational experience for deaf-blind youth must be prompted if successful transition from the school setting to the work setting is to be achieved.

These recommendations are important and essential in their own right, but they take on even greater significance when their effect on staff and facilities is understood.

Staffing Patterns

As particular changes continue to be based more on student need, so also must the staffing patterns. The physical therapist, occupational therapist, mobility specialist, rehabilitation instructor, interpreter, and communication specialist now become essential components of the educational team for many deaf-blind children. The staff experienced in sensory stimulation, motor integration, and total communication techniques become

essential to carrying out curricula and implementing students' individualized education programs. These services can no longer be viewed as ancillary to much of the deaf-blind population who have multiple and severe disabilities. For those professionals trained in traditional programs for deaf or blind children, there exists the need for extensive retraining and refocusing. Continuing education and practice in the area of deaf-blind, and/or severely multihandicapped are essential as they modify the existing skills to the changing needs of the population.

Facilities

Most existing facilities are either too spacious and sprawling, making even limited independence impractical, or too small and segregated, making integration impossible. The development of facilities providing the necessary instructional areas and degree of safety and including the availability of integration both into the community and with community need to be developed. Therefore, materials and facilities should reflect the increased need for instruction in independent living skills and prevocational education. Increased amounts of instruction should take place in apartment-like settings or in sites appropriately designed for work activity, working, and/or production capabilities.

Finally, those responsible for services to the deaf-blind children and youth of this country must recognize that, although they should be viewed as a discrete disability group requiring protection in school code and state regulations, they are individuals who have within this extremely heterogeneous group varying needs requiring varied solutions.

Creating New Opportunities

The following are challenges that remain in educating deaf-blind youth:

- Development of strong cooperative ties between teachers of deaf-blind youth and trainers of deaf-blind adults.
- Development of subsidized training programs aimed at producing specialized personnel equipped to work with high-functioning deaf-blind clients, with skill in manual communication being a required part of staff preparation.
- Expansion of current training programs for deaf-blind students to include the needs of those who are severely mentally retarded.
- Expansion of current teacher training programs for teachers of severely mentally retarded children to include the needs of severely multiply impaired deaf-blind students.
- Development of diversified staffing patterns working toward total life education and community interaction for deaf-blind youth. Special emphasis should be placed on developing prevocational and transitional programs preparing for entrance into a range of adult services. Movement from levels of dependent functioning to independent functioning, not necessarily gainful employment, should be an acceptable program goal.
- Development of programs emphasizing appropriate recreation and leisure activities. Special emphasis on helping high-functioning deaf-blind students to be integrated within existing community-based recreation programs should be encouraged.
- Increase in the integration of deaf-blind children into community-based programming through the use of interpreters.
- Coordination of services for deaf-blind persons at the decision-making levels within the hierarchy of social services.
- Development of standardized auditory and visual assessment procedures for deaf-blind students as part of the work of an interdisciplinary team.
- Introduction and intensification of support services for families of deaf-blind children as they relate to institutionalization and long-term care.
- Development of close ties with parent organizations and use of their skills in the total educational process.

It remains to be seen whether educators of deaf-blind students can take the information gleaned over the past 20 years and mold it into a blueprint for the future. The children have grown up, and the results of their education soon will be clear. These results should provide clearer indications of the changes needed to insure appropriate quality programs for deaf-blind children in the future.

Part VII

ROLE OF PARENTS

Parents must be considered an integral part of the educational process. The following paper describes the partnership role of parents and teachers working cooperatively in the educational program.

Resources

- Brennan, M. (1982). *Show me how: A manual for parents of preschool visually impaired children*. New York: American Foundation for the Blind.
- Ferrell, K. A. (1984). *Parenting preschoolers: Suggestions for raising young blind and visually impaired children*. New York: American Foundation for the Blind.
- Kroth, R. L. (1975). *Communicating with parents of exceptional children*. Denver: Love Publishing Co.
- Scott, E. P., Jan, J. E., & Freeman, R. D. (1977). *Can't your child see?* Baltimore: University Park Press.
- Seligman, M. (1979). *Strategies for helping parents of exceptional children: A guide for teachers*. New York: The Free Press.

Parent/Educator Cooperative Efforts in Education of the Visually Handicapped

Abstract

Direct involvement of parents in the education of their handicapped children has been demonstrated to result in greater gains for the children. To make this partnership effective, teachers must be committed to working with parents. Parents and teachers need to approach the relationship with mutual trust, recognition, and respect for each other's roles and responsibilities; recognition of the individual needs of the child; willingness to compromise and listen to each other's point of view; and recognition of the value of a positive approach toward the child. To be successful, the parent/educator partnership should be mutually cooperative, supportive, and nurturing.

Parent/Educator Cooperative Efforts in Education of the Visually Handicapped

Verna Hart
University of Pittsburg

Kay Alicyn Ferrell
American Foundation for the Blind

Recent research findings have substantiated what teachers of handicapped children have known for years based on clinical experiences -- direct involvement of parents in the education of their children results in significantly greater gains for the handicapped child. The Division for the Visually Handicapped of the Council for Exceptional Children affirms the need for the cooperative efforts of parents, children and teachers. To establish such partnerships, teachers must be committed to working with parents in arrangements where each party has distinct roles and responsibilities, and in which both are willing to exert a 100% effort to bring about an environment conducive to optimal functioning of visually handicapped children.

In order to facilitate this partnership, teachers and parents of visually handicapped children should approach the relationship with:

- Recognition that parents are their children's first and most important teachers
- Assumption that parents know their child better than anyone else
- Recognition of the permanence of parenthood and the burdens and expectations it imposes
- Recognition of the various roles parents must play including those of nurturer, teacher, advocate, case manager, and a realization that these roles cannot be assumed easily or without preparation due to the structure and complexity of today's educational laws
- Insight into the right to dislike the disability and/or its manifestations, but with a need for acceptance of the child as an individual
- Realization that teachers and parents are not in competition for the love or attention of children
- Insight into the needs of visually handicapped children without irrational expectations or fears
- Empathy for and outreach to all parents of visually handicapped children including efforts to establish active parent support groups
- Commitment to educate the public about the characteristics and needs of visually handicapped children so that similarities as well as differences in relation to normally sighted peers may be accepted
- Realization that parents and teachers have the need to interact according to their own personal styles, idiosyncracies and desires
- Mutual trust and cooperative effort
- Mutual recognition of each party's individuality and expertise
- Understanding of the necessity for an open and honest relationship
- Willingness to communicate and honestly discuss situations, particularly when there is a disagreement or a lack of understanding
- Realization that, if differences of opinion occur, those differences should be directly addressed by the persons involved rather than with anyone else

- Reciprocity in sharing information
- Openness to suggestions
- Knowledge about and utilization of all available services and resources
- Ability to make decisions based on the best information and advice currently available, and reluctance to place blame for mistakes on any one party
- Awareness that the best interests of the child always override all other considerations
- Recognition that a positive approach is important when working with children
- Reciprocity of parent/child/teacher efforts to understand behavior and behavior change
- Willingness to reinforce each other's instructional efforts for the sake of the child's learning continuity and achievement
- Awareness of children's strengths, and enjoyment of their progress
- Ability to help visually handicapped children develop and maintain self-esteem
- Understanding when making decisions that consideration must be given to the fact that visually handicapped children will grow into visually handicapped adults
- Concern for child abuse, both mental and physical, imposed at home or in school, and an agreement to seek help from appropriate sources if needed
- Recognition and appreciation of the needs of family members of the visually handicapped child so efforts can be made to balance the energy and commitment of services to meet the needs of all family members
- Commitment to legislative action for advocacy of educational rights of visually handicapped children
- Organized efforts to bring parents of visually handicapped children together to share experiences and learn from each other

For an educational program to be most effective, the parent/educator partnership should be mutually cooperative and supportive; it should have an impact beyond the immediate circle of individual participants working with the child. When actively nurtured and developed, this partnership stimulates and nurtures to the maximum extent possible the growth and development of the child with a visual impairment and facilitates the child's unique contribution to family and ultimately to society at large.

Professional Agencies and Organizations

American Foundation for the Blind

15 West 16th Street
New York NY 10011

Provides information to professionals, parents, and the general public about blindness and visual impairments; publishes books and pamphlets; catalog available on request; publishes the *Journal of Visual Impairment and Blindness*.

American Printing House for the Blind

1859 Frankfort Street
Louisville KY 40206

Publishes and distributes textbooks and other materials, aids, and appliances for school-age pupils in braille, recorded, and large-type form.

Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired

206 N. Washington Street
Alexandria VA 22314

A professional organization for educators and rehabilitation workers in the field of work for the blind and visually handicapped.

The Council for Exceptional Children Division for the Visually Handicapped

1920 Association Drive
Reston VA 22091

A professional organization with a major focus on all types of exceptional children; publishes the journals *Exceptional Children* and *TEACHING Exceptional Children* as well as books and other publications; the Division for the Visually Handicapped is one of its divisions devoted to a particular type of handicapped child.

National Society to Prevent Blindness

79 Madison Avenue
New York NY 10016

An information agency with a major focus on prevention and medical aspects of visual impairments; publishes books, periodicals, films, and audio-visuals; catalog available on request; publishes quarterly journal, *Sight-Saving*.