

COLL BORATIONS

A Joint Newsletter From:
 Division 3 Deafblind and Multiple Impairments
 Division 8 Infants and Preschoolers
 Division 10 Educational Curriculum
 Division 16 Itinerant Personnel

Letter from the Editor

Welcome to the Winter 2016 edition of *CollAERborations*! This issue focuses on the Expanded Core Curriculum area of Self-Determination. Self-Determination is a critical skill for all students with visual impairments, allowing them to appropriately advocate for their needs, gaining independence as students, and later as adults. In the vein of Self-Determination, I'm excited to announce a new column, "Student Voices," giving our students a chance to speak for themselves. Consider sharing this article with your student(s), beginning a dialogue, and perhaps encouraging them to submit an article of their own.

Feel free to send reader feedback to help steer future issues or submit an original article written by you or your students (raschles@gmail.com).

Happy Reading!
 Rachel Anne Schles

Division Roundup

Multiple Disabilities/Deafblindness (Division 3)

News from the Chair: Olaya Landa-Vialard
 (oalanda@ilstu.edu)

Hello Division 3 members! We are gearing up for International AER which takes place in Jacksonville, FL July 20-24, 2016. I look forward to meeting all of you at our business meeting. The schedule for the meeting will be sent after the program for the conference is settled. I look forward to holding a few conference calls with the division before International so we can get organized and see how we can all work together to make the division stronger and put out more information to help practitioners in the field in all settings where we serve children,

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adolescents and adults with multiple disabilities/deafblindness.

We will be wearing T-Shirts designed by the winner of our Division 3 MD/DB T-Shirt Contest. We will also be awarding two prestigious awards from our Division: Samuel Gridley Howe Award for Outstanding Practice and Virginia Sowell Award for Outstanding Contribution to the Field. Read on to see how Self-Determination plays a big role in Multiple Disabilities/Deafblindness.

I look forward to speaking with you and seeing you soon!

Infants and Preschool (Division 8)

News from the Chair: Karen Frank (karenf@mdschblind.org)

Greetings from Infant & Preschool Division!

The division is co-sponsoring our second annual conference with the Illinois AER Chapter (IAER) and Illinois Early Intervention. Entitled *Cerebral Visual Impairment: Another Way of Seeing*, featuring speaker Dr. Amanda Hall Lueck, focuses on the different ways the CVI manifests in children, including visual processing disorders. Division members are looking forward to this unique opportunity to learn more about a diagnosis that impacts so many families of young children. At last year's conference, we had 107 members attend from multiple states and Canada. We are hoping to exceed that number this year! Please contact division leaders if you have a topic suggestion for next year's conference.

Education Curriculum (Division 10)

News from the Chair: Rachel Anne Schles (raschles@gmail.com)

We're about half-way through the school year, a time when we consider how far our students have come, and what progress we hope to help them make before the end of the school year. While you're working to develop instructional plans for your students, check out the resources at EARubric.com. Our past chair, Karen Blankenship, has compiled many resources for TVIs to complete the Essential Assessments (FVA + LMA + ECC). A quick Expanded Core Curriculum Survey a great way to document students' strengths and needs, whether in preparation for an annual IEP or to document their end-of-year progress.

And when you have a chance, check out our new division website -- edu.aerbvi.org!

Itinerant Division (Division 16)

News from the Chair: Jill Brown (jillbrown1@mac.com)

Welcome to our winter newsletter. You now have had a semester of school behind you. Are you bored with what you are teaching yet? This winter, our newsletter is focused on Self-Determination. This area of the Expanded Core Curriculum has many different components. Some of the components come naturally while others have to be specifically taught. As itinerant we can work with classroom teachers and families to help promote this area. I hope you enjoy reading this issue and can glean some information from it.

With this edition of CollAERborations, we are looking ahead to July of 2016 and the AER International Conference that will be held in Jacksonville Florida. Please read over the awards and submit your nomination to Jill Brown at: jillbrown1@mac.com. We are also looking for nominees for chair-elect and secretary for our division. If you are interested in nominating yourself, please send your name to Tracy Hallak at: hallaktracy@sfasu.edu and Jill Brown at: jillbrown1@mac.com. Being part of this division and the AER organization has been so helpful to me with the support and depth of knowledge from my peers. Please consider being a part of this.

ECC Spotlight Self-Determination

Self-determination is an understanding of one's abilities and making one's own choices, and is one of the foundations of independence and adult responsibility.

Self-Determination—Itinerant Style

Of all the areas in the Expanded Core Curriculum, self-determination is a critical area for promoting independence as an adult. Self-Determination involves the components of: problem solving skills, goal setting; making choices; advocating for needs; understanding your personal strengths and weaknesses; decision making skills; and being able to communicate your ideas respectfully. It is through self-determination that we learn who we are, what we like, what we want to do in our careers, and getting our needs met. For many of our students this skill needs to be specifically taught. Too many times, adults with good intentions, anticipate the needs of the child preventing the child from learning problem solving skills or making choices. The role of an itinerant teacher is not only to bring to light the importance of teaching these skills, but to help families and classroom teachers promote these skills.

In our fast paced society, we need to give the child with low vision or no vision time to figure out how to do things themselves, whether it is independent living skills, organizational skills, or having responsibilities such as chores. It is in doing these skills independently, that the child will figure out what works for them. From this the child learns accountability leading to self-empowerment. Self-Determination skills can be taught through a formal curriculum and are infused through the day in a child's life, no matter their age or ability level.

And from the Multiple Disabilities/Deafblindness Division...

Self-determination instruction is a part of the skill set that educators wish to teach their students, helping them become fruitful members of the community. Self-determination is based on the principle that students must attain particular knowledge and skills while also being afforded many opportunities to practice these skills and the belief that all individuals have the right to manage their own lives. It includes knowledge of self and others, decision-making, self-control, goal setting, personal advocacy, problem solving and understanding how to interact with the environment to attain desired outcomes.

The *Empowered* curriculum by Jeri Cleveland, R. Michael Clinkscales, Nancy Hefner, David Houghtling, Cindy Kubacak, and Debra Sewell has 23 Units of study designed to guide the instruction of self-determination skills, targeting the skills explicitly before students with visual impairments can use them spontaneously. Also included in the curriculum is a disc that allows for large print or embossed copies of the proposed student activities.

Parent & Teacher Resources

Empowered (TSBVI at [this link](#))

An Activity Based Self-Determination Curriculum for Students with Visual Impairments.

Braille Contraction Lookup Dictionary (<http://www.brl.org/refdesk/conlookup.html>)

Need to double check how to correctly write a word in contracted braille? Just type in the word, and see the result in simbraille!

I'm Determined (<http://www.imdetermined.org/>)

This is a project funded by the Virginia Department of Education, focusing on providing direct instruction, models, and opportunities to practice skills associated with self-determination, especially those with disabilities.

National Gateway to Self-Determination (www.ngsd.org)

This website is a wealth of information about self-determination for families and professionals including resources and trainings.

Self-Determination & Deafblindness Resources

Interveners are important for individuals who are deafblind because they bridge that communication gap for the individual who is receiving intervener services. Through interveners, individuals can make their own choices and express their likes and dislikes. The SPARKLE website: <http://www.sparkle.usu.edu/Topics/deafblindness/index.asp>, has a parent booklet. The booklet is titled: A Family's Guide to Interveners for Children with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss (<http://www.sparkle.usu.edu/resources/index.asp?cat=db>). This guide is free and will help parents understand the power that interveners have in assisting their child with developing the important independence skill of self-determination.

The National Family Association for Deaf-Blind is hosting a **FREE** Parent/Family Training: The Role of Interveners in Educational Settings. Here is the link to the training and more information: <http://nfaadb.org/next-parentfamily-training-the-role-of-interveners-in-educational-settings/>

To find your state's Deafblind Project Outreach Department and get their newsletters go to: <https://nationaldb.org/members/list?type=State+Project> and <https://nationaldb.org/library/page/194>

Another great resource for parents and service providers is the: Transition Toolkit: Enhancing Self Determination for Young Adults Who Are Deaf-Blind. The Transition Toolkit contains all of the resources needed for planning and hosting a Transition Institute that will create a memorable, high quality learning experience for deaf-blind teens. The Toolkit is a repository of information, tools and resources that serve as a model for hosting a workshop for deaf-blind teens ages 14-22 and their families. There is a video on the website where Mike Fagbemi talks about the toolkit and about self-determination. Here is the link to the website: <https://nationaldb.org/library/page/2297>

Clinic Hours with...

Do you have a Low Vision Specialist in your area who is particularly knowledgeable working with children? Each issue we invite a low vision specialist to write a brief article for CollAERborations. Contact our Editor, Rachel Schles (raschles@gmail.com) with the name and contact information of a Low Vision Specialist you'd like to nominate for this column.

Self-Determination Tips For TVIs & Students Attending Low Vision Exams

- Schedule time with your student prior to the exam, and have the student write down a list of comments and questions they have for the low vision specialist.
 - What accommodations or tools are/aren't effective for the student?
 - Is there something in school or the community the student can't visually access but would like to?
 - Does the student know if they will be allowed to drive? Do they have questions about their vision's prognosis?
- Connect a student who has had a low vision exam with a student going to an exam for the first time. This is a great opportunity for the experienced student to be a mentor and both students may learn from each other!
- If you have the resources, introduce students to low vision/optical devices prior to the low vision exam. In this familiar environment, students may be more comfortable trying out devices and formulating questions/requests for the low vision specialist.

Save the Date!

AER International Conference
Connect – Collaborate – Achieve

July 20-24, 2016
Jacksonville, Florida

Interested in Presenting at the Conference? Submissions are due in mid-February!
[Submit Your Presentation Here](#)

Survival Guide for TVIs – Quick tips to make your professional life a little easier

By Rachel Anne Schles

Fellow Itinerants Unite!

- New to a school or having difficulty working with a student who receives other special services? Reach out to the other itinerant or special services teachers and therapists. OT, PT, SLP, DHH, and the other members of our special education alphabet soup experience many of the same questions and concerns as TVIs. Compare schedules, meet up for a working lunch to get to know each other and learn some of the ins and outs at your new school, or plan a collaborative lesson for your shared student.

Get to know available resources.

- Not sure where to start when it comes to working with a new student or educating an IEP team on the ECC? Network with other TVIs to learn how they handled a situation, and check out websites like APH.org, AERBVI.org, FamilyConnect.org, NFB.org, or PathsToLiteracy.org for suggestions. Your local region or state can likely offer you support or resources as well, so ask around to learn what they have to offer-you never know what you might find!

Infant and Preschool Division Conference

Wednesday, February 17, 2016

9:00 am to 4:00 pm

Hyatt Regency Schaumburg Chicago
1800 East Golf Rd
Schaumburg, Illinois

Featuring

Amanda Hall Lueck, Ph.D.

Professor Emerita at San Francisco State University

Presenting

Cerebral Visual Impairment: Another Way of Seeing

For registration and hotel information

IAER website, <http://il.aerbvi.org>

Student Voices

SELF-DETERMINATION AND WHAT IT MEANS TO ME

Being visually impaired doesn't mean that I'm not a human. It is not just fun and games. I know I'm not the only person on this planet that's visually impaired. You might think being visually impaired means sitting around all day in class not doing work. It doesn't mean that I don't believe in myself.

Sometimes I might face challenges, but that's an excuse for me to try harder. I talk to people; sometimes it comes up about my vision. Some people might be bullied or mistreated. I was one of those people. My advice is to never resolve a problem with anger. I will choose to ignore someone if they're talking about me in a negative way. I know what you're thinking; how can I ignore someone if they're talking bad about me?

I know as long as I live and blood goes through my body, I will face these challenges even if it might cost me my life. But, for all those stories I've heard, it's to never stop trying even if no one is on your side sometimes.

It's not like one day a person wakes up and says, "Hey, I'm going to be visually impaired", and see what it feels like. You're born with that. I am not just talking about me. I'm talking about the blind and the color blind as well.

You don't have to be a kid to listen to this. All ages can read this. You know, what doesn't kill you makes you stronger!

Being visually impaired doesn't give you an excuse to not do your work in school or listen to the teacher. I might be visually impaired, but I still have good grades. This is for all of you, visually impaired or not. You can make a difference in your life and in somebody else's life.

You want to know a secret? Here's my trick...I took all these words and turned them into energy. You never listen to anyone if they say you can't do it!

Israa
Middle School Student

Developing Self-Determination in Young Children: Be Aware of Your Own Attitude!

by Karen Frank, Chair Infant & Preschool Division

Educators of infants, toddlers, and preschoolers with visual impairments can typically envision the development of their young student into a confident, independent, school-age child, successful both academically and socially. If we truly value self-determination, does our professional practice and attitude match its importance?

As a service provider, do you deliver targeted instruction in self-determination? Is the instruction as intense or frequent, as we provide for the development in other skill areas? If not, what does this say about our professional attitude towards the skills and behaviors of self-determination? As service providers and educators, could we do more to facilitate self-determination in our youngest students?

If you want to re-examine your attitude and think about how to make self-determination a greater focus of your instructional plan, consider the following:

- Do you allow the child to make choices between activities? How often? Permit even the youngest child to them to communicate their activity preferences. Perhaps the choices you offer all meet the IFSP or IEP goals, but the child determines the “what” and “how” it’s accomplished
- Do you jump in too quickly to help your student complete a task or provide hand-over-hand assistance? This may actually communicate, *“I really don’t think you are capable to doing this task without my help”*. Practice stepping back, take a deep breath, and sit on your hands if needed!
- Do you anticipate the child’s needs? Wait to see if they ask for what they need. Show the child ways to appropriately ask others for help.
- Do you speak for the child when others around ask questions? Allow the child to speak for herself. Provide or model responses for the child, if needed.
- Do you allow young students to set their *own* goals for a task? Or do you decide for them that they need to pick up 10 blocks, or take 5 more bites, before they are done? At the start of a simple task, decide together the target goal.
- Do you allow adequate time to accomplish the lesson objective? Decide what is more important in that moment, getting the task done on time, or taking a little more time to maximize independence or fully engage the child. Allow yourself time to reflect at the end of the lesson, *“Did I rush this?”*
- Do you save your young student from making mistakes? Allow them to make their own mistakes. Let them know it is okay to make mistakes, everyone does. Talk about happened and practice for “next time.”

- Do you have high expectations for your student? Objectively think about and reconsider what the child can do on his own. Your message should be, “this might be hard, but I know you can do it.”
- How do you react to assertiveness in your student? Sometimes we as professional do not seem to appreciate the non-compliant child. Do you react to their expression of “no” as being defiant, or appreciate the child’s self-advocacy? Acknowledge the child’s message, even if you disagree with it. As adults we don’t want to do everything either. Can you offer choices or negotiate to turn the negative into a positive for you both?
- Do you allow the child to solve a problem on her own before you offer assistance? Give her time to solve a problem independently, and then offer your help only if she continues to struggle. Respect their right to decline or even refuse.

Sometimes as professionals, we need to look at our own attitudes. Make sure your professional practice matches the value you have for self-determination skills and behaviors. Be conscientious and purposeful about the development of self-determination. Be a role model for your students by demonstrating that self-determination skills are valued and important by practicing them yourself.

Vision Development

by Lucien G Prince, MD, MBA-Healthcare MGT
(LVT & VRT Student at Salus University)

The areas of social and cognitive development of kids with visual impairment (VI) are obviously of great importance to their parents, those who live or work with them but it is also a matter of theoretical significance in the field of child development. Many researches have pointed out that kids with partial or complete absence of visions are likely expected to present major changes in many areas of functioning and in personality organizations. Is it true? To answer these questions, let’s analyze the social and cognitive area of the child development.

All children are born as a social being, but all children do not handle the process of



social development in the same way. The child with Vision Impairment delays in various aspects of sensory and motor development. Since the results of actions cannot be see, these children are not motivated to action. Without a good understanding of their vocabulary repertoire, they may not have the ability to cause things to happen or to retain pleasurable stimuli. According to Dr. Lea Hyvarinen, “*several important functions are affected early by severe visual impairment: general alertness, visual*

communication, bonding, spiritual concepts, motor functions, posture perception and balance.”

Effect of the lack of eye to eye contact on the developing attachment between Baby, Mom and Dad:

The eye contact skills may develop during the first week of age. It is a potent sign that elicit the maternal feeling of love response to the infant. When the eye-to-eye contact effects do not happen, early communications may become seriously disturbed. **The lack of eye to eye contact may inhibit the development of the infant, mother bond, especially if other means are not found to establish and maintain contact.** The mother's depression and ignorance of the baby's needs and potential may limit her involvement with a child who requires even more stimulation than normal. Generally, mothers of premature babies with Vision Impairment tend to handle them as if they were very fragile and vulnerable. Generally, *"the absence of eye contact gives the negative sign of no interest"*.

The decrease in baby's smiling back at you when you look at them:

Usually an infant's smile elicits pleasurable and positive reactions from its parents and helps to cement the mother-infant bond. According to many pathologists, "Vision is not a prerequisite for spontaneous smiling since even deaf – blind children smile. However, vision can facilitate smiling. As the sensory and motor functions are delayed in children with vision impairment, so do the smiling. The child with this condition are unable to copy facial expressions. It seems that while a congenitally blind children will respond to strong inner stimuli with facial expressions, they cannot necessarily make their faces assume such expression on command. In a situation where the cortical analytic functions (mirror neuron systems) or connections to the memory have developed, the child may have difficulty to recognize family members and respond to them differently. In the majority of cases, the subtle expressions which are so involved in everyday interaction with parents (and others) are developed by limitations and may be muted or absent. This may lead to difficulties for parents to interpret what the blind person is feeling. The absence of a smile in response to the presence of the parents face would have a negative value of not friendly". The smile to mother's voice, which is in the repertoire of the blind child, is not an automatic smile.

What can we do to work with these issues?

A comprehensive assessment of the facts will provide with some tools needed to face these issues. In both situations, parents will need exploration and need immediate support along with educative training about the vocabulary repertoire of a child with vision impairment. In fact, clarification of needs and misunderstandings may be all that is necessary. Parent must learn new ways to establish contact with their child. They must go beyond the eye to eye contact. Watching a blind child's hands, that they show activity when they are listening to you. The Child may also need stimulating environment and physiotherapy. Specific communicative therapy may be necessary to help the infant develop participation in social interactions. While we know that under all favorable circumstances the blind child will come to know his/her mother and the course of human attachments will closely parallel that of sighted child, the imagination of the mother may be strained to encompass a knowing without vision. Additionally there has been more recognition of the importance of parents as cooperative therapist.

References:

1. Davis Douglas (2011) Child Development. A Practitioner's Guide. Guilford, New NY
2. James E Jan (1977). Visual Impairment in Children and Adolescent (pg 237). Gune & Stratton, New York NY

Featured Blog – High-Heeled TVI

By Amy Campbell

In today's world of social media, it's all too easy and tempting to share only the best of the best regarding attitudes, questions, and experiences with friends of the like. The High-Heeled TVI dares to defy the urge of hiding behind the veil and comes forth with raw vulnerability. She aims to share the realities of being a TVI, with sprinkled hints of research practices and a light sense of humor.

Check out Amy's blog here: <https://highheeledtvi.wordpress.com/>

Top 10 Indicators You Might Be An Itinerant Teacher of the Visually Impaired

By Amy Campbell

10. Because the trunk of your car is so full of instructional and other educational materials, weekly bags of groceries must be stuffed in the backseat of the car.
9. Your frugal tendencies quickly caved to paying a monthly subscription for Sirius XM radio.
8. There are enough crumbs found under the seats in your car to sustain a family of four for a week.
7. An additional 500 miles are added to your car's odometer each week.
6. Every time you drive over school speed humps or railroad tracks you hear the ding of a Perkins braille writer coming from the backseat of your car.
5. The scent of anti-bacterial hand sanitizer can be smelled in your car several times a day.
4. A GPS is a permanent fixture in your car.
3. The McDonald's attendant at the drive thru window recognizes your smile during the 59 cent limited time only ice cream cone promotion.
2. "Wash Me" can be written in both the rear and front windows of your car with your finger 24 hours after going through a car wash.

And the #1 indicator you might be an itinerant TVI...

While driving down the road you envision words on street signs as braille characters.

This article was originally published in Amy Campbell's blog, which can be found at [THIS](#) link.

EL VISTA: Giving New Hope to a Vulnerable Population of Learners

By Tommy Navickas

Early intervention services are crucial to the immediate and long-term quality of life for infants and toddlers with visual impairments, blindness, or deafblindness. In Illinois, TVIs and O&Ms are eligible to become credentialed providers of these services for birth through age three and are called Developmental Therapists-Vision (DT-Vs) and Developmental Therapists/Orientation and Mobility (DT-O&Ms).

Not only do DT-Vs and DT-O&Ms encourage brain development, growth, and the acquisition of basic skills such as crawling, but they “empower parents to be their child’s advocate, teacher, and playmate,” explains Mindy Ely, a former DT-V. “When parents are involved in a hands-on way, the potential for their child is increased exponentially.”

Without early intervention, these populations begin preschool at a developmental disadvantage in relation to their classmates. “And unfortunately, sometimes those students may have a difficult time catching up,” said Olaya Landa-Vialard, an assistant professor of low vision and blindness at Illinois State.

In Illinois, an alarming percentage of this population is underserved. Over the next three years, it is estimated that more than 1,500 children in the state will be eligible for early intervention services, and less than one fifth will receive them, or be even be identified. The problem stems from a critical shortage of DT-Vs and DT-O&Ms across the state, particularly in Western, Central, and Southern Illinois.

In an effort to better serve these vulnerable populations, Illinois State University implemented an early intervention vision program in 2015 titled Early Learning Visual Impairment Services, Training and Advancement (EL VISTA). EL VISTA represents one of precious few programs of its kind in the nation, and is funded by a 5-year \$1.23 million grant by the U.S. Department of Education.

The project will provide forty additional DT-Vs and DT-O&Ms to the most underserved areas of the state, and more than double the current number of Illinois providers. “This work is part of the University’s ongoing efforts to serve as a leader in birth through age three,” said Maribeth Lartz, professor of deaf and hard of hearing (DHH) and the director of the grant.

EL VISTA is a yearlong off-campus cohort model. Intensive summer coursework bookends the program, and participants apply their research to practice during a ten-month practicum in families’ homes. “We chose ten-person cohorts so we could remain intensive about providing high quality training,” Lartz said. “We also select the location of each cohort strategically so we may prepare providers in geographic areas of need.”

Image: EL VISTA students collecting Early Intervention vision resources



EL VISTA's recruits include orientation and mobility specialists and P-12 teachers of the visually impaired, who possess backgrounds working with these populations after age four. Graduates receive the University's Early Intervention Vision Specialist Graduate Certificate, allowing them to apply for Illinois' early intervention credential and begin working in the field.

Lartz said this next step in Illinois State's efforts became a possibility in 2013 when Landa-Vialard joined the Department of Special Education's staff. Landa-Vialard's background is in both vision and early intervention, and is the co-director of EL VISTA. Both she and Ely are course instructors for the grant, as well.

Many of EL VISTA's participants are former teachers. Ely, who also serves as the grant's coordinator, works with Landa-Vialard in emphasizing the difference in the approach that they will need to take in their new roles. "As early intervention providers, we don't come in and 'fix' their child. Instead, we listen to parents to learn their dreams and hopes for their child. Then, we join them in finding avenues to reach those dreams, in spite of the visual impairment," Ely said. "Parents are the true teachers for their child."

EL VISTA's first cohort is just underway, but the work has already gained national interest. Seven separate states have reached out to the University to inquire about extending the reach of the program. While there are no immediate plans to alter the model in this way, discussions are ongoing.

The lessons and outcomes from this work will inform best practice. EL VISTA will also serve as a roadmap for Illinois State and other institutions to sustain successful early intervention vision programs long after the grant's completion. "The data we collect could truly impact our field," Ely said. "As one of the out-of-state inquirers said, 'the world is watching (us).' That is a huge responsibility, but also an exciting mountain to climb!"



EL VISTA staff, Gail Olson, Mindy Ely, Olaya Landa-Vialard (L to R), officially kick off recruitment of students at the February 2015 IAER Conference in Schaumburg, Illinois.



Cohort #1 started their first classes June 29, 2015.



**Awards Open for Nomination,
Presented at AER International Conference July 2016**
(deadlines vary by division)

Awards for Itinerant Division

Contact: Jill Brown, jillbrown1@mac.com

Outstanding Professional Award (Judy Cernkovick-Most Self-Determined Award)

An award to a professional who by virtue of significant contribution to the field has exhibited outstanding service in direct care, education and/or research in itinerant services

Publication Award

An award to an author or authors who have published an article in a referred journal which contributes highly to the body of knowledge about itinerant services

Awards for Educational Curriculum Division

Nominations forms available at:

http://edu.aerbvi.org/awards_scholarships.htm

Joyce Mae Ogburn Award

The Joyce Mae Ogburn Award was established to recognize an individual who has demonstrated excellence in teaching and/or service to children with visual impairments.

Publication Award

The Publication Award is given to an individual for the creation of an innovative curriculum or other instruction-related publication intended to further the education of students who are blind or visually impaired.

Awards for Multiple Disabilities/Deafblindness Division

Contact: Kristi Probst kprobst@ilstu.edu

The Samuel Gridley Howe Award for Outstanding Practice

This award is presented to a member of the division who has shown exemplary service to individuals with visual impairments and multiple disabilities, including deafblindness.

The Virginia Sowell Award for Outstanding Contribution to the Field

This award is presented to a member of the division who has supported professional practice through his or her work in the field.

Contact information for the Division Boards

Interested in joining the board of an AER division and engaging with colleagues at the national level? Each division has positions open for nomination (appointment runs July 2016-July 2018). Contact the division chair for additional information or to nominate yourself.

Open Board Positions

Multiple Disabilities and Deafblindness: Secretary/Treasurer
Infants and Preschool: Chair-Elect, Secretary/Treasurer
Education Curriculum: Chair-Elect, Treasurer
Itinerant Personnel: Chair-Elect, Secretary

Multiple Disabilities and Deafblindness -- Division 3

Chair: Olaya Landa-Vialard Oalanda@ilstu.edu
Chair Elect: Kristi M. Probst Jandkprobst@gmail.com
Secretary/Treasurer:
Past Chair: Tiffany Wild Wild.13@osu.edu



Infants and Preschool -- Division 8



Chair: Karen Frank Karenf@mdschblind.org
Chair Elect: Tanni Anthony Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us
Secretary/Treasurer: Catherine Greeley-Bennett Kitty.Greeley@gmail.com
Past-Chair: Michelle Clyne Mclyne@philiprockcenter.org

Education Curriculum -- Division 10

Chair: Rachel Schles Raschles@gmail.com
Chair Elect: Mackenzie Savaiano Msavaiano2@unl.edu
Secretary/Treasurer: Bridgett Schultz Bridgett.shultz@gmail.com
Past Chair: Karen Blankenship Karen.Blankenship@Vanderbilt.Edu



Itinerant Personnel -- Division 16



Chair: Jill Brown Jillbrown1@mac.com
Chair Elect: Tracy Hallak Hallaktracy@sfasu.edu
Secretary: Kathy Michielsen Kathycmichielsen@gmail.com
Past Chair: Melva Stolhand Mstolhand@aol.com

Want to contribute to CollAERborations?

Please send submissions to our editor, Rachel Schles, at Raschles@gmail.com

ECC Spotlight:

Our next issue will focus on the ECC Area of Social Skills

Missed an Issue of CollAERborations?

Catch up here <http://edu.aerbvi.org/newsletters.htm>



CollAERborations
AER Interdivision Collaborative News Journal

Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired

1703 N. Beauregard St., Suite 440, Alexandria, VA 22311-1744 USA