

EXPANDED CORE CURRICULUM (ECC): AN EDUCATIONAL AND LEGAL REQUIREMENT

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Objectives

- Identify roles of educators who serve students with VI
- Align IDEA requirements with the components of the ECC
- Identify common assessments related to evaluating students with VI
- Describe the connections between the ECC and student outcomes



BACKGROUND

Children with Visual Impairments Learn Differently



Educator Roles

- Teachers of Students with Visual Impairments
 - Adapt materials, support students in coursework, teach special curriculum
- Orientation and Mobility Specialists
 - Teach skills related to travel in the school and community; Support other ECC instruction
- Vision Rehabilitation Specialists
 - Support students in transition as they move into community environments
- Braillists or Braille Transcribers and other Paraeducators
 - Support student access to the curriculum and environment

Background for the ECC

Teachers have long recognized that the amount of instruction students with VI need is greater than the traditional core curriculum.

- *Students access the world and learn differently.*
- ❖ In 1829, Samuel Gridley Howe established the first school for the blind, recognizing that students with VI need to be “educated on the basis of their individual interests and abilities.” He later advocated for local school programs.
- ❖ In 1996, Phil Hatlen provided parents and professionals with a common language and understanding for assessing and educating students with VI.

ECC Described

- Concepts and skills typically **learned incidentally** by sighted peers that must be **sequentially taught** to a student with visual impairment
- Skills that enable the student “*to be involved in and make progress in the **general education curriculum**” ***
- “*educational needs that result from the child’s disability*” **

** IDEA requirements

ECC Overview

Addressed by MORE than 80% of TVIs:

- Compensatory access skills
- Self-determination
- Sensory efficiency
- Assistive technology

Addressed by FEWER than 80% of TVIs:

- Social interaction (64%)
- Career education
- Independent living skills
- Orientation and mobility
- Recreation & leisure (32%)

VI Outcomes

Pat

- 20 year old with low vision
- Received Early intervention services
- TVI services 3 hr./wk throughout school
- Enlargement of materials, academic tutoring, & help passing classes
- A-B honor roll student
- unable to wash clothes, keep track of belongings, and travel independently
- Only 1 close friend

After 1 semester dropped out of college, moved home, and began collecting SSDI.

Aaron

- 20 year old with low vision
- Intermittent early intervention services
- Teacher & family commitment of gaining independence
- Advocated for needs in high school
- Circle of friends
- Received extensive ECC instruction on O&M, budgeting/shopping, career education, & assistive technology

Thriving in college setting, joined 2 clubs, receives As & Bs, and works part time job.



ALIGNING THE ECC WITH THE EDUCATIONAL DELIVERY SYSTEM



Consider the Whole Child

Access to Core Educational Content

+

Direct, Systematic, Sequential Instruction in the Expanded Core Curriculum

=

Complete educational planning for students with visual impairments

IDEA mission

One purpose of IDEA is to “ensure that all children with disabilities have available to them a free appropriate public education that emphasizes special and related services designed to meet their **unique needs** and prepare them for further education, employment, and independent living”

20 U.S.C. SEC. 1400 (d)(1)

Special education defined

“... specially designed instruction... to meet the **unique needs** of a child with a disability.”

20 U.S.C. Sec. 1401 (29)

Déjà vu

The Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC) is the body of knowledge and skills that are needed by students with visual impairments due to their unique disability-specific needs.

<http://www.afb.org>



EXPANDED **C**ORE **C**URRICULUM

=

DIRECT-**S**YSTEMATIC-**S**EQUENTIAL
INSTRUCTION

ECC = DSS

IDEA Requirements: Assessment

For children who are blind and visually impaired, evaluations to document the present level of academic and **functional** performance for the development of the IEP are required by the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

34 CFR 300.320 (a)(1)

Déjà vu, too

The expanded core curriculum includes **functional skills** that allow students to access core curriculum and empowers them to make their own choices throughout life.

<http://www.perkins.org/stories/blog/expanded-core-curriculum>

Function of IEP

“The IEP must include a statement of annual goals including academic and functional goals designed to meet the child’s needs that result from the child’s disability to enable the child to be involved in and progress in the general education curriculum and to meet each of the child’s other educational needs that result from the child’s disability.”

20 U.S.C sec. 1414 (d)(1)(A) (i) (ii)

Running into Pat & Aaron Again

Pat

- Academic instruction
- Compensatory skills instruction

Aaron

- Academic instruction
- Compensatory skills instruction
- Independent living skills
- O&M skills
- Self-determination
- Assistive technology
- Social skills
- Career education



ASSESSMENT



An excellent place to begin: Assessment

Functional Vision Evaluation/Assessment (FVE, FVA)

Learning Media Assessment (LMA)

Expanded Core Curriculum Assessment (ECC)

Orientation and Mobility Assessment (O&M)

Functional Vision Evaluation/Assessment

"The *functional vision assessment* evaluates the student's use of vision in the natural environment (home, school, and community) instead of the clinical environment of a doctor's office".

ECC Essentials, p. 73

Some examples of published FVE/Assessment tools:

- APH Assessment of Functional Vision
- Looking to Learn, AFB Press
- Essential Assessments Rubric for Children Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired (www.earubric.com)

Learning Media Assessment (LMA)

A learning media assessment is "an objective process of systematically selecting learning media and literacy media...[that] guides the educational team in making deliberate and informed decisions on the total range of instructional media needed to facilitate learning"

(Koenig and Holbrook, 1995, p. 2)

Expanded Core Curriculum Assessment (ECC)

ECC screening and assessment process:

1. Screen all areas of ECC
2. Prioritize areas for additional assessments
3. Conduct in depth assessment of prioritized areas (with parental permission)
4. At IEP meeting establish instructional priorities over next three years. Write annual IEP goals to address immediate areas of need.

Orientation and Mobility (O&M) Assessment

The Orientation and Mobility Assessment process is on-going as students' needs and/or environments change over time

- This objective assessment process is used to identify students' present and future travel needs, currently known concepts and travel abilities, use of functional vision in travel environments, etc.
- The assessment will help guide educational teams in determining learning goals for individuals with visual impairment



SPECIALLY DESIGNED INSTRUCTION

The Expanded Core Curriculum



Compensatory Access Skills

20 U.S.C. Sec. 1414(d)(A)(ii)(iii) “The IEP... enable the child to be involved in and progress in the general curriculum.”

- Addresses *how* a student gets access to ECC & core curriculum
- Mastery of Compensatory Skills means that our students have access to learning in a way that is equal to that of sighted peers
- Concept development, Spatial understanding, Study & organizational skills, Speaking & listening, and Adaptations necessary for accessing existing core curriculum

Orientation & Mobility

20 U.S.C. Sec.1401 (26)(A) “... related services means... supportive services... as... i.e., orientation and Mobility services as may be required to **assist** a child with a disability to **benefit from special education.**”

20 U. S. C. Sec. 1401 (29)(A) “Special education... to **meet the unique** needs of a child with a disability.”

- Orientation- Where am I, where do I want to go, how will I get there?
- Mobility- Getting there safely and efficiently
- Orientation & Mobility- Basic body image to independent travel in rural areas and busy cities

Social Skills Interaction

20 U.S.C. Sec. 1414(d)(3)(b)(i) The IEP shall in case of a child whose behavior impedes his or her learning or that of others, consider the use of positive behavioral interventions and supports, and other strategies, to address that behavior.

- For sighted people almost all social skills are **learned by visually observing** the environment
- Must be sequentially taught

Career Education

20 U.S.C. Sec. 1401 (34)(a)(c) “transition services means a coordinated set of activities... promotes movement from school... (to) post-secondary education... **integrated employment**... includes development of... **employment... objectives**.”

- Traditional career and vocational education offered to the general population of students isn't enough and isn't sufficient to prepare VI students for adult life, because basic career knowledge learned prior is based on visual experiences.
- For sighted students, Information about work and jobs requires observation

Assistive Technology

20 U.S.C. Sec 1400 (c)(5)(H) Congress finds that 30 years of research and experience has demonstrated that education... can be made more effective by supporting the development and use of technology... to **maximize accessibility** for all children with disabilities.

- Technology can be a great equalizer
- Enhances communication and learning
- A tool to master

Sensory Efficiency

20 U. S. C. Sec. 1401 (29)(A) “Special education... to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability.”

- Students must be assessed in all areas related to the suspected disability
- Wide range of visual abilities
- Through systematic training, students can be taught to better and more efficiently use their remaining vision
- Auditory function, tactile function, gustatory function, olfactory function

Independent Living

20 U.S.C. Sec. 1400d(1) “... to ensure that children with disabilities... free appropriate public education that emphasizes.... Their **unique needs** and help them for further education, employment, and **independent living**.”

- Often referred to as “daily living skills”
- Tasks & functions that allow students to live as independently as possible
- Traditional classes in home economics and family life are not enough for students with VI

Recreation & Leisure

20 U.S.C. Sec. 1401 (26)(A) “... support services as required to assist a child with a disability to benefit from special education and **includes... recreation...**”

20 U.S.C. Sec. 1414(d)(1)(A)(i) (iv)(bb) “The individualized education program will include... to participate in **extracurricular** and other **nonacademic activities.**”

- In addition to physical education, students with VI need to develop Recreation & Leisure activities
- Most often sighted people choose Recreation & Leisure activities by **visually observing** specific activities and sports
- Must be **planned and deliberately taught** for students with VI

Self-Determination

20 U. S. C. Sec. 1401 (29)(A) “Special education... to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability.”

- Advocating for one’s needs/desires, and to make independent choices
- Self-knowledge, awareness of rights/responsibilities, making choices, problem-solving, self-advocacy, assertiveness

Next Steps

- What improvements can you still make for your school, district, state?
- Are all students with VI getting services?
- Are services reaching across the continuum and all areas of the ECC?
- What are your barriers?
- Do you know where to go to for help?

Sapp & Hatlen (2010)

"As professionals, we are ethically responsible to give students the opportunity to gain skills in the ECC, so they have the opportunity to live up to their potential. Students deserve nothing less."

Sapp W., & Hatlen, P. (2010). The expanded core curriculum: Where we have been, where we are going, and how we can get there. *Journal of Visual Impairment & Blindness*, 104,(6), 338-348.

Resources

Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, U.S. Department of Education, Educating Blind and Visually Impaired Students; Policy Guidance

- <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2000-06-08/pdf/00-14485.pdf>

Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired

- <https://www.tsbvi.edu/2015-11-18-21-31-13/school-district-administrator>

American Printing House for the Blind

- <https://www.aph.org/>

Perkins School for the Blind-Trainings, materials, deaf-blind resources

- <https://www.perkins.org/>

Resources continued

American Foundation for the Blind

- <https://www.afb.org/about-afb>

National Federation of the Blind

- <https://nfb.org/>

Association for the Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired- trainings, publications, etc.

- <https://aerbvi.org/>

Department of Education VI Contacts

Local Blindness Agencies

Any of your presenters today!