Texas School for the Blind & Visually Impaired



Outreach Programs

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The Infused Skills Assessment

Origin & Philosophical basis

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# Why did we develop the assessment?

* To blend older developmental approaches (vanDijk, Piaget) with activity-based approaches (Lou Brown, Syracuse Community-based Curriculum).
* To provide a curriculum framework for our program of deaf-blind and students with combined visual, cognitive and communicative challenges.
* To help develop a profile of strengths and weaknesses for individual students.
* To document progress in students who failed to show growth on more traditional assessment instruments.

# Philosophical statement

Functional developmental skills which are important benchmarks for students with visual impairment, should be infused into functional routines to facilitate generalization of skills across learning environments (domestic, leisure, vocational, community)

# Definition of domains/ terminology

## I. Social Competence

### A. Social communicative interactions

* *Communicative functions*—reasons or purposes for communicating.
* *Interactions*—behaviors which may or may not be purposefully communicative, but which impact the quality of the student’s relationship with others. These behaviors facilitate initiation, maintenance, and appropriate endings to both nonverbal and verbal interactions.
* *Topics*—the subjects of interaction or conversation which emerge from the student’s experiences with varied objects, people and events. Topics may be synonymous with activity labels (e.g. swimming, snack, bathing, skating) or with idiosyncratic student interests which are shared with others (hands, country music, plastic containers)

### B. Emotional development

* *Personal relationships*—form the foundation for communication and future learning
* *Self Control*-the ability to monitor and cregulatone’s own emotional state
* *Participation*—the student’s active involvement which helps define him and distinguish him from others. For example, in the domestic area, the student may understand that he is the dishwasher and his mom is the cook.
* *Self concept*—the development of the student’s image of himself. Includes understanding of one’s own interests, strengths and weaknesses.

## II. Organization

### A. Senses and Motor Skills

* *Spatial orientation*—the relationship between self and environment.
* *Mobility—*the ability to purposefully move through the environment.

### B. Basic concepts

* *Time*. Includes skills such as sequencing, anticipation, as well as more conventional time concepts such as vocabulary for morning, afternoon, evening, before, after, month, day, week.
* *Classification.* Organization of objects, actions, people or events into functional categories.
* *Problem solving.* The ability to use reasoning to generate solutions to practical obstacles in everyday life.
* *Quantitative.* Early numerical and pre-number concepts.

### C. Representation/ Cognition

* *Representational forms.* Vehicles for conveying communicative intent/ functions. Include affective responses, hand-guiding, gestures, signs, speech, graphic forms such as pictures and tactile symbols, print and Braille.
* *Vocabulary.* Words and the conceptual underpinnings for words.
* *Imitation.* The ability to maintain a visual, auditory or tactual-kinesthetic image of an action or sound and to reproduce it at a different time.

# Using the Infused Skills Assessment to develop IEPs

* Teach to weakness--fill in developmental gaps
* Teach to strengths—expand on areas of strength
* Use profile to understand learning style (e.g , object kids/ people kids)