Texas School for the Blind & Visually Impaired

Outreach Programs

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Itinerant Teachers of Deafblind (TDB)

Caseload vs. Workload: Determining the Amount and

Type of Services for Students with Deafblindness

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# The issue:

As the role of the itinerant TDB continues to develop, it will be important to devise a process to collect and analyze data to determine the actual amount of time required to appropriately serve students with deafblindness. Teachers of the Visually Impaired (TVI) already have a process that gathers important data that is used in designing services. Understanding the TVI’s process will support TDBs in creating their own.

# What you need to know:

There is a difference between caseload and workload. Caseload is the number of students. Workload is the actual amount of time that is spent providing appropriate services to the students. Workload includes direct services to the student, consultation, indirect services, and travel time.

Direct services are delivered face to face to the student. The consultation and indirect services may include lesson planning, material design and preparation, contact with doctors, ordering optical aids, training staff to use optical aids with the student, observing student in different settings across the day to trouble shoot, setting up the classroom environment to meet accommodations, talking with parents, writing reports, attending IEP meetings etc..

The workload can vary widely across students with visual impairments since there is such a range of ages, needs and abilities. In addition, they are served in many different settings and one campus may need more support than another. It is very important to have a standardized process to determine the workload for each student rather than “guesstimating”. Both rating scales and real time data collection can be part of this process.

Rating scales equates the needs of the student with service delivery time. Some rating scales that are currently used for workload analysis are the Michigan Severity Rating Scale and the Colorado Caseload Management Formula.

Real time data collection provides the actual amount and type of service that a TVI provides during the week. A Time on Task form can be used to collect this data. (Please see attached sample). The color-coding helps depict the different types of services.

The information from rating scales and time sheets are used to determine an approximate amount of time that a particular type of student will need for appropriate services. Some use the term “weighted differently” to indicate the increased time required for some specific needs*.*For example, research indicates (Koenig & Holbrook, 2000), a Braille student requires an average of 10 hours per week direct instruction. One Braille student = 5 low vision students who might need 2 hours each on a TVI’s caseload. Since Braille students are “weighted differently”, this information can drive realistic decisions regarding how many Braille students can be served on a TVI’s caseload during a 40-hour workweek.

# What this means for Itinerant TDBs:

There are many unanswered questions about serving the students with deafblindness in an itinerant model. Will a TDB caseload need to be smaller than the caseloads typically carried by AI or TVI itinerants? Because the school age deafblind population is so diverse, are there identifiable needs that result in a particular student being weighted differently than others?

Currently, rating scales used in the field of vision do not easily lend themselves for use with deafblindness.  For example, there may need to be additional categories to address hearing loss or combined vision and hearing loss. However, the Time on Task data collection sheets can be used to gather real time data without adaptation.

# Next Steps:

1. Use one of the existing Time on Task forms to collect itinerant workload data for a student with deafblindness.
2. Work together to develop supplemental components that address deafblindness for the Michigan Rating Scale.

# Resources:

Toelle, Nancy, 2015. [QPVI Conducting a VI Staff Caseload Analysis](http://www.tsbvi.edu/component/content/article/86-quality-programs-for-for-students-who-are-visually/1865-conducting-a-vi-staff-caseload-analysis), Texas School for the Blind & Visually Impaired, Austin, TX.

Toelle, Nancy, 2015. [Program Info and Administrative Resources](https://www.tsbvi.edu/tb-intro), Texas School for the Blind & Visually Impaired, Austin, TX.

* [QPVI: VI Staff Member Caseload Profile - Evaluation of Data](https://www.tsbvi.edu/program-and-administrative-resources/1871-qpvi-vi-staff-member-caseload-profile-evaluation-of-data)
* [QPVI VI Staff Member Caseload Review: Sample](https://www.tsbvi.edu/program-and-administrative-resources/1872-qpvi-vi-staff-member-caseload-review-sample)
* [QPVI: Estimating the Need for VI Staff](http://www.tsbvi.edu/program-and-administrative-resources/1870-qpvi-estimating-the-need-for-vi-staff)

[Vision Severity Characteristics Workshop for Students with Additional Impairments,](https://mdelio.org/sites/default/files/documents/BVI/SRS/VSSRS%20Plus%20Revised%208.15.2017.pdf) 2017. Michigan’s Vision Severity Rating Scale, Michigan Department of Education, Low Incidence Outreach, Lansing MI.

[Guidelines for a Caseload Formula for Teachers Certified in the Area of Visual Impairment](http://www.cde.state.co.us/sites/default/files/documents/cdesped/download/pdf/guidelines_for_caseload_formula.pdf), 2003. Colorado Caseload Management, Colorado Department of Education, Denver, CO.

Koenig, A., & Holbrook, C. (2000). [Ensuring high-quality instruction for students in braille literacy programs](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0145482X0009401102). *Journal of Visual Impairments and Blindness,* 94(11), 677-694