

# TEACHING THE WHOLE CHILD WITH A VISUAL IMPAIRMENT THROUGH ORIENTATION AND MOBILITY

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# WHAT IS REALLY MY JOB??

Facilitating Independence


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# TERMINOLOGY


- ▶ TVI: Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments
  - ▶ O&M/COMS: Used somewhat interchangeably in the US. Orientation and Mobility Specialist/Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist
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# TERMINOLOGY CONTINUED


▶ ECC; Expanded Core Curriculum, encompasses 9 areas.

- Compensatory Skills
  - Social Interaction Skills
  - Rec and Leisure
  - Orientation and Mobility
  - Independent Living Skills
  - Career Education
  - Sensory Efficiency Skills
  - Self Determination
  - Assistive Technology
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# IN THE UNITED STATES...

- ▶ TVI is technically responsible for all areas of the ECC except for Orientation and Mobility, while also being frontline academic support.
  - ▶ This is an artifact of how the field became a profession. TVI came from the schools for the blind, O&M came from the veteran rehabilitation arena
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AS PRESSURES INCREASE FOR TVI'S TO  
PROVIDE MORE ACADEMIC SUPPORTS,  
TIME FOR ECC SKILLS IS OFTEN IMPOSSIBLE  
TO FIND.



TIME AND AGAIN RESEARCH INDICATES  
FOR **EVERYONE**, THAT ADULT SUCCESS  
RELATES MORE TO EXPANDED CORE  
CURRICULUM TYPE SKILLS THAN  
SCHOLASTIC PERFORMANCE\*

\*Heckman, J. J., & Kautz, T. (2012). Hard evidence on soft skills. *Labour economics*, 19(4), 451-464.

\*Andrews, J., & Higson, H. (2008). Graduate employability, 'soft skills' versus 'hard' business knowledge: A European study. *Higher education in Europe*, 33(4), 411-422.

\*<https://www.edutopia.org/dispatches-redefine-college-prep>

HIGH QUALITY O&MS WORK ON MANY  
ECC AREAS ALREADY.


THEY ARE OFTEN NOT “OWNING” THAT  
THEY DO.

THIS CAN CREATE FEELINGS OF INEQUITY  
AND RESENTMENT WITHIN EDUCATION  
TEAMS





THE ORIENTATION AND MOBILITY  
SPECIALIST HAS TIME OFTEN LEFT  
UNCONTROLLED BY ADMINISTRATORS TO  
SERVE THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS HOWEVER  
THEY SEE FIT. TVI'S DO NOT AND ARE OFTEN  
BOUND BY ACADEMIC CONSTRAINTS.



IT'S OFTEN MUCH MORE FUN TO TEACH  
THIS WAY TOO, AND MORE NATURAL FOR  
THE LEARNER!




THE MOBILITY SPECIALIST IS READY TO TAKE  
OWNERSHIP OF MORE ECC; NOW WHAT?



# STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS




I THINK OF MYSELF NOW AS AN  
“EXPANDED CORE CURRICULUM  
SPECIALIST”. O&M IS JUST ONE PIECE OF  
WHAT I DO



I RECOGNIZE THAT I'M ONE PART OF WHAT  
IS USUALLY A GREAT TEAM OF PEOPLE  
COMMITTED TO INDEPENDENCE FOR OUR  
LEARNER

THAT WHOLE TEAM CAN WORK TOWARDS  
OUR ECC GOALS, BUT THEY OFTEN NEED  
EMPOWERED TO TRY



DON'T GIVE ANYTHING AWAY, AND WORK  
AT THE EDGE OF A STUDENT'S FRUSTRATION  
(SOMETIMES I FALL OFF THAT EDGE)

“LEARNING HAPPENS OUTSIDE OF THE  
COMFORT ZONE”

A decorative graphic consisting of several parallel white lines of varying lengths, slanted diagonally from the bottom right towards the top right, set against a blue gradient background.

IN ALL TEACHING INTERACTIONS I ASK MYSELF,  
“AM I MOVING THIS PERSON CLOSER OR FURTHER  
FROM OUR GOALS OF INDEPENDENCE WITH THIS  
INTERVENTION?”

Easy Self Check: In what I'm doing, will this person be able to do this  
if I'm not here??

Easy Self Check Number 2: Am I giving more away than I should  
because I'm feeling pressed by time?



I CAN TEACH AN INTERSECTION ANY DAY, TAKING  
ADVANTAGE OF WHAT'S UNIQUE IN THE WORLD  
RIGHT NOW IS WHEN I DO MY BEST TEACHING



IN REDEFINING MY ROLE FROM “O&M SPECIALIST” TO “ECC SPECIALIST”, I BECAME HAPPIER. I WAS MORE FULFILLED IN MY WORK. MY STUDENTS LEARNED MORE EFFECTIVELY, MAKING MY COLLEAGUES VALUE ME MORE ON THE TEAM. I EVEN WON “TEACHER OF THE YEAR”



ALWAYS HAPPY TO TALK MORE

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