

Project SLATE /Framework for Braille/24

Literacy for Students Who are Blind:

A Framework for Delivery of Instruction

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Synopsis

Purpose. The purpose of this study was to gain professional consensus on the appropriate levels of instructional services to address the needs of students in braille literacy programs.

Method. A Delphi approach was used to gain consensus among 40 professionals in visual impairment. The respondents received three rounds of a survey, throughout which they were able to view the ratings and comments from other respondents. Consensus was reached when 85% or more of the respondents agreed on a particular level of instructional service (or range of service) in each of 12 skill areas.

Respondents. Respondents for the study were selected for their recognized expertise and experience in teaching literacy skills to students in braille literacy programs. Ten respondents were selected from each of the following program models: itinerant, resource room, and residential school. Ten other recognized experts had leadership roles in the field of visual impairment, but were not in direct teaching roles at the time of the study. Respondents had a mean of 21.5 years of experience in the field of visual impairment. They had taught braille literacy to a median of 21 students and print literacy to a median of 25 students. All respondents had bachelor's degrees, 88% had master's degrees, and 30% had doctoral degrees. All had current or past certification as a teacher of students with visual impairments.

Findings. Levels of instructional service (consistency, total time per day, time span, and duration) were determined for 12 areas of literacy needs (see the [accompanying chart](#)). On the chart, the percentage of respondents who agreed to a particular level of service is noted in parentheses following the recommended level. If a range of service was agreed upon, the individual percentages are provided along with the overall percentage. Note the definitions for the levels of service at the bottom of the page.

Two important points must be recognized in understanding and using these findings. First, these findings are intended to provide *general* guidelines for educational teams to follow in developing quality literacy programs for students who are blind. *The levels of service must be tailored to address the individual needs of each student.* Second, the findings identify the amount of direct instructional service with some time for consultation that should be provided by a *qualified* teacher of students with visual impairments. The suggested levels of service do not include time for other aspects of delivering instruction, such as materials preparation and driving time.

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Koenig, A. J., & Holbrook, M. C. (2000). Assuring quality literacy instruction in braille literacy programs. *Journal of Visual Impairment and Blindness*, 94, 677-694.