ECC Flyer

What is the Expanded Core Curriculum?

Developed by the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired

The term **expanded core curriculum** (ECC) is used to define concepts and skills that often require specialized instruction with students who are blind or visually impaired in order to compensate for decreased opportunities to learn incidentally by observing others. In addition to the general education core curriculum that all students are taught, students with visual impairments, starting at birth, also need instruction in the ECC. The ECC areas include (A) needs that result from the visual impairment that enable the student "to be involved in and make progress in the general education curriculum; and (B) other educational needs that result from the child's disability" as required by IDEA (34 CFR 300.320 (a)(2)(A)(B)). Texas Education Code (TEC) 30.002(c)(5) and (e)(5) require the flexibility of school districts to make arrangements for services to occur "beyond regular school hours to ensure the student learns the skills and receives the instruction" in the ECC.

With the passage of Senate Bill 39 in 2013 (Texas 83rd Legislative Session), evaluation in all areas of the ECC is required for students with visual impairments. Priority needs must be identified by the IEP team and instruction provided in these areas.

Nine Areas of the ECC

Assistive Technology

Assistive technology is an umbrella term that includes assistive and adaptive tools as well as instructional services that can enhance communication, access, and learning. It can include electronic equipment such as switches, mobile devices, and portable notetakers; computer access such as magnification software, screen readers, and keyboarding; and low-tech devices such as an abacus, a brailler, Active Learning materials (e.g., Little Room®), and optical devices.

Career Education

Career education will provide students with visual impairments of all ages the opportunity to learn through hands-on experiences about jobs that they may not

otherwise be aware of without the ability to observe people working. They also learn work-related skills such as assuming responsibility, punctuality, and staying on task. Career education provides opportunities for students to explore and discover strengths and interests and plan for transition to adult life.

Compensatory Skills

Compensatory skills include skills necessary for accessing the core curriculum including concept development; communication modes; organization and study skills; access to print materials; and the use of braille/Nemeth, tactile graphics, object and/or tactile symbols, sign language, and audio materials.

Independent Living Skills

Independent living skills include the tasks and functions people perform in daily life to increase their independence and contribute to the family structure. These skills include personal hygiene, eating skills, food preparation, time and money management, clothing care, and household tasks. People with vision typically learn such daily routines through observation, whereas individuals with visual impairments often need systematic instruction and frequent practice in these daily tasks.

Orientation and Mobility (O&M)

O&M instruction enables students of all ages and motor abilities to be oriented to their surroundings and to move as independently and safely as possible. Students learn about themselves and their environments, including home, school, and community. O&M lessons incorporate skills ranging from basic body image, spatial relationships, and purposeful movement to cane usage, travel in the community, and use of public transportation. Having O&M skills enables students to acquire independence to the greatest extent possible, based on their individual needs and abilities.

Recreation and Leisure

Being unable to observe others reduces awareness of recreation and leisure options. Instruction in recreation and leisure skills will ensure that students with visual impairments will have opportunities to explore, experience, and choose physical and leisure-time activities, both organized and individual, that they enjoy. This instruction should focus on the development of life-long skills.

Self-Determination

Self-determination includes choice-making, decision-making, problem solving, personal advocacy, assertiveness, and goal setting. Students with visual impairments often have fewer opportunities to develop and practice the specific skills that lead to self-determination. Students who know and value who they are and who have self-determination skills become effective advocates for themselves and therefore have more control over their lives.

Sensory Efficiency

Sensory efficiency includes instruction in the use of vision, hearing, touch, smell, and taste. It also addresses the development of the proprioceptive, kinesthetic, and vestibular systems. Learning to use their senses efficiently, including the use of optical devices, will enable students with visual impairments to access and participate in activities in school, home, and community environments.

Social Interaction Skills

Social interaction skills include awareness of body language, gestures, facial expressions, and personal space. Instruction also includes learning about interpersonal relationships, self-control, and human sexuality. Almost all social skills are learned by visually observing other people. Instruction in social interaction skills in school, work, and recreational settings is crucial. Having appropriate social skills can often mean the difference between social isolation and a fulfilling life as an adult.

For additional information on the ECC, refer to:

- http://www.afb.org/info/programs-and-services/professional-development/teachers/expanded-core-curriculum/ecc-resources/12345
- http://www.perkins.org/resources/scout/education/expanded-core-curriculum.html
- http://www.familyconnect.org/parentsite.aspx?FolderID=23&TopicID=382
- http://www.tsbvi.edu/recc/
- www.tsbvi.edu/attachments/EducatingStudentswithVIGuidelinesandStandards.pdf