

2021 NE AER
Virtual Conference
November 4-5, 2021



Swag bag with CT goodies
available for first 250 registrants!

Keynote Speaker: Blessing Offor
Recording Artist/Songwriter

Fun Thursday Evening Activities!



Registration Cost:

\$75 student

\$125 NEAER chapter member

\$175 AER but not North East
Chapter

\$275 nonmember

20% discount for Canadian
registrants

Go to: www.pathlms.com/ne-aer

Conference at a Glance

Thursday, November 4th

8-8:30	Welcome and Door Prizes
8:30-10:00	Concurrent Sessions - 1.5 hours
10:00-10:15	Break/Vendors
10:15-11:45	Concurrent Sessions - 1.5 hours
11:45-12:45	Lunch/ NEAER bring to Division Meetings/Vendors
12:45-2:15	Keynote speaker Blessing Ofor and Door Prizes
2:15-2:30	Break/Vendors
2:30-4:00	Concurrent Sessions - 1.5 hours
4:00-4:15	Break/Vendors
4:15-5:30	NEAER Awards and Student Showcase/Vendors
7:00-8:30	Activity Night – Tiny Campfire or Trivia Activity

Friday, November 5th

8:00-9:00	Concurrent Sessions - 1 hour
9:00-10:00	NEAER Business Meeting/Vendors
10:00-10:15	Break/Vendors
10:15-11:15	Concurrent Sessions - 1 hour
11:15-12:15	Lunch/ NEAER bring to Division Meetings/Vendors
12:15-1:15	Concurrent Sessions - 1 hour
1:15-1:30	Break/Vendors
1:30-2:30	Concurrent Sessions - 1 hour
2:30-2:45	Break/Vendors
2:45-3:45	Concurrent Sessions - 1 hour
3:45-4:15	Wrap Up/Door Prizes

Thursday, November 4, 2021

8:30-10:00 - Concurrent Sessions T1, T2, T3

T1: Is Your Client OM Ready for a Dog

Meg Robertson, Leslie Hoskins, Kathy Rooney, Gretchen Fisher Orr and Lukas Frank

Is your client ready for a guide dog? Many newly blinded individuals think a guide dog is an easy first choice as an O&M device. We will discuss the O&M skills needed to prepare for a guide dog and have a panel of guide dog schools' staff to discuss the differences between their programs and application process. There will be time for questions at the end of the program.

T2: JAWS, NVDA, Chromevox: Methods for Teaching

Cody Laplante

In the vision field, teaching braille readers to use computers is a topic that causes much stress and anxiety. Although teaching students to use screen readers is difficult, it may not be as difficult as it first may seem. In this session, participants will learn a 3-step process for creating their own lessons while incorporating the use of a screen reader, and at the end, participants will walk away with the beginnings of a lesson that they will be able to teach on Monday.

T3: Imagining CVI: An Array of Simulations!

Peg Palmer and Matt Tietjen

In order to understand our students' perspectives, we will use a combination of video and hands on activities to imagine what it is like to have CVI. Through a series of interactive experiences, participants will get to feel first-hand what it might be like to be dealing with CVI in the classroom or other environments.

10:15-11:45 - Concurrent Sessions T4, T5, T6

T4: Success Strategies Employed by Blind O&M Candidates and Blind O&M Specialists

Bradley M. Blair

Personnel preparation programs that train O&M instructors generally have a sighted student population. When blind students are admitted into the programs, modifications and accommodations are supposed to be made for them to be successful. This session will discuss what is needed to create successful O&M instructors who are blind.

T5: Low Vision Simulator Apps: A Smart Use for Smartphones

Hope Pardee

Would you like to provide your students with another tool for self-advocacy and to educate others about life with the 'invisible' disability: low vision? This session demonstrates how to use smartphone and tablet technology (both iOS and Android) to access free apps to use with or without VR glasses to simulate a number of low vision conditions for sighted users.

T6: Autism, Blindness and Echolalia: Strategies to Address Communications, Behavior and Independence

Elizabeth "Betsey" Field

Are you ready to take your knowledge of Echolalia to the next level? Then join this session! Topics covered include details of this fascinating method of communication, its connection to autism, specific techniques for communication intervention, and characteristics for those who are post-echolalic. A lecture broken up with engaging discussions, this session will provide expert knowledge on the subject as well as meaningful conversation about this, sometimes misunderstood, form of communication.

11:45-12:45 Lunch / NE AER Division Meetings/Vendor

12:45-2:15

T7: Keynote Speaker : The Blessing of Education

Blessing Offor – Singer/Song Writer

Sometimes all it takes is five minutes with someone to know they're special. With his infectious joy that encourages a sense of contentment, thought provoking lyrics that elicit a second listen, and an inviting voice that draws you in like a familiar friend, Blessing Offor proves that by simply by being who he is, he is indeed special. As the second artist signed to Chris Tomlin's Bowyer & Bow imprint, in partnership with Universal/Capitol Christian Music Group, Blessing is poised to share his thoughtfully crafted pop instincts and unique perspective with the world.

2:30-4:00 – Concurrent Sessions T8, T9, T10

**T8: Vision Rehabilitation Services at Lethbridge-Layton-Mackay
Rehabilitation Centre: An Interdisciplinary, Client-Centered Approach**

Hana Boxerman, Racha Layous, Jennifer Braseliten, and Nehal Patel

Vision Rehabilitation services at Lethbridge-Layton-Mackay Rehabilitation Centre in Montreal, Quebec is client-centered and interdisciplinary. Clients from 4 years old to over 100 are seen in our low vision clinics and followed-up in their homes, schools, and day cares. Come see what services are offered and how they are implemented by CLVTs in the pediatric and adult programs along with a virtual tour of the Centre!

T9: Learning Through Play

Julia Bowman and Sara Edwards

Through play, young children can develop skills across all five developmental domains (gross motor, fine motor, language, cognitive, adaptive, and social skills). In addition, children with visual impairments must also acquire vision and compensatory skills, including tactile skills for future braille readers. Given the unique learning needs of students with visual impairments, store-bought toys are rarely useful. In this presentation, we will describe the stages of play by developmental age, describe how particular toys/activities can be used to target visual and compensatory skills, and give several examples of how to create homemade toys from household items.

T10: Deep Dive: Does One Size Fit All?

William Koehler

Want to challenge and upgrade your thinking about post-secondary outcomes for students with vision loss? Dr. Kay Ferrell's research and discussions (2011, 2016): "Expanded Core Curriculum: National Longitudinal Transition Study" offered some enlightened and thought-provoking ideas. In her 2016 presentation she asked: "Why has the rate of unemployment for individuals with vision loss remained unchanged for 50 years?"; "Are we spending time in the right places?"; and "Where is the disconnect?"

Join this session and take a "deep dive" into answering those questions and the dynamics associated with educating students with vision loss to examine long held, well entrenched thinking in our field. This session will also offer insight into short- and long-term effects of the COVID 19 pandemic, and new challenges to the TVI. Not only will this session challenge your thinking, but it will also set specific recommendations for immediate action.

4:15-5:30 NE AER Awards and Student Showcase/Vendor

7:00-8:30 Thursday Evening Optional Activities - Participant fee is \$20.



Virtual Trivia: Combines wildly smart questions with unique game mechanics in a way that builds meaningful connections. This epic competition is hosted by an individual with experience in stand-up comedy, storytelling and audience engagement.

Some of the trivia will be customized to the "vision field". It is all the fun of a slightly chaotic pub trivia night without the sticky tables, loud music and overpriced beer.

Tiny Campfire:

Tiny Campfire is a virtual campfire experience with ice breaker games, ghost stories and mini competitions. Come to camp with a DIY smores kit (mini marshmallows, graham crackers, chocolate and a tea light) or the campfire snack/drink of your choice.

It's all the fun of a real camp night with no mosquito repellent required.



Friday, November 5, 2021

8:00-9:00 – Concurrent Sessions F1, F2, F3, F4

F1: How to Create a Sensory Garden

Dennis Gallant

Participants in this session will learn how to select and care for specific plants to create a multi-sensory outdoor garden. The focus will be on how to use and select growing plants to provide a sensory experience for individuals with special needs. Specific plants will be presented and discussed to provide an experience for each of the five senses. The presentation will also include a question & answer session.

F2: We All Learn Together: A Team Approach to Teaching Access Technology

Hope Paulos and Nancy Sharon

How many team members does it take to teach 1 student to use JAWS OR to navigate an iPad using Voiceover? In this exciting example of the ways Zoom has changed our professional lives for the better, two members of the Carroll Center Education team share case studies, thoughts and advice from their experience launching a remote team-centered service for students learning accessible technology skills.

F3: Thoughtful Questioning: Using Natural Language Strategies to Promote Learning

Callie Brusegaard

Being a facilitator of learning by using a natural language approach with children can be effective with children with disabilities, those from culturally diverse backgrounds, and early learners. In this session, we will investigate how to become better facilitators of learning through thoughtful communication. We will explore how strategies, such as questioning vs. statements, wait time, and concept words, can assist us in becoming more effective educators.

F4: Pandemics and Disasters Don't Plan but We Can

Stephen Thal and Eileen Akers

Do your clients have a plan for emergencies? What if they need to leave their homes suddenly? This presentation identifies some possible disasters and describes the importance of Go-Kits, as well as family/communication plans. There will also be time to discuss lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic.

9:00-10:00 NE AER Business Meeting/Vendors

10:15-11:15 – Concurrent Sessions F5, F6, F7, F8

F5: Tele-rehabilitation for Orientation and Mobility: NO Way – or YES Way

Olivia Souaid, COMS and Stephanie Pietrangelo, LVT

Given this sparse evidence and the historical reticence to conduct O&M services remotely for security reasons, the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in a challenge for O&M professionals and their clients. However, there may be specific groups of clients and specific conditions where remote O&M service provision is indeed feasible, successful, or even preferable. We know too little currently to make evidence-based recommendations. Therefore, our objective is to conduct an environmental

scan of North American O&M practice to identify feasibility of remote O&M service and identify barriers to service delivery, safety and skill acquisition.

F6: Alexa with the Amazon Echo

Steve Kelley, CVRT

Alexa the VRT- using the Amazon Echo as both a teaching tool and to promote the profession. How do you create a podcast, like the Vision Rehab Podcast and the Vision Rehab Skill that play on Alexa? Come find out at this session! We will also explore podcasts and radio reading services available on the Amazon Echo.

F7: Using a Strength-based Measure to Support Parent Interactions

Catherine Smyth and Zoe Morgese

During the early years, it is critical that we assist parents to promote their child's development through quality interactions. Join this session and learn about The Parenting Interactions with Children: Checklist of Observations Linked to Outcomes (PICCOLO) (Roggman, et al., 2013), a strengths-based measure of parenting that predicts children's early social, cognitive, and language behaviors.

It is an observational tool designed to measure positive parenting behaviors as parents interact with their children 10 through 47 months old. Specific features of this assessment are particularly valuable to young children with visual impairment such as characteristic description, verbal enthusiasm, encouragement of "wait time" and following the child's cues. This presentation will share the logistics of implementing this assessment in a program that includes both a center-based and home visit program through video observation.

F8: Guiding Individuals with Visual Impairments to Overcome Limiting Beliefs

Sara Dessau Lopez and Shelby Glass

This is an interactive workshop on helping students with visual impairments identify and define limiting beliefs. Participants will learn how to teach strategies to eliminate these beliefs and transform them to beliefs that help reach one's full potential.

11:15-12:15 Lunch / NE AER Division Meetings/Vendors

12:15-1:15 – Concurrent Sessions F9, F10, F11, F12

F9: Public Right of Way Updates: Accessible Pedestrian Signals

Meg Robertson

Accessible Pedestrian Signals have been around for over 25 years but there are still misunderstandings on installation, how they are used by pedestrians who are blind, and the advocacy needed to be sure they are included in new construction and retrofits. This presentation will update attendees on these and other concerns about APS.

F10: Auditory Speed Reading (ASR) for Students and Adults

Ed Summers and Stephanie Bissonette

Learn how to teach your client how to read up to 600 words per minute. It is absolutely critical for academic students to learn how to read as fast as possible using text-to-speech audio. This skill will give students and adults a tremendous advantage for the rest of their lives. A recent case study will be reviewed with the audience.

F11: 21st Century Skills and The Expanded Core Curriculum: They Go Together Like Peanut Butter and Jelly!

Robbin Clark

Think there are only nine areas of the Expanded Core Curriculum? Think again! This workshop aims to highlight how the skills from 21st century learning work in tandem with Expanded Core instruction. The goal of the Expanded Core should be to help produce interdependent individuals who

are self-reliant and contributors to today's world. In order to accomplish this, individuals must have deep and meaningful connections to the world around them as well as real essential core skills of 21st century learning such as critical thinking.

We need to upgrade our instruction to an authentic approach that supports applying and transferring skills. Too much of the Expanded Core is taught in fragmented scenarios resulting in skills and knowledge that cannot be transferred from one environment to the next. The need to upgrade our instructional approaches for the Expanded Core is of great importance. Come to this workshop and learn how to do this.

F12: Blind and LGBT? What We Wish We'd Known

Sanho Steele-Louchart

Join a panel of blind, LGBT young professionals as we discuss what we wish we'd known growing up. Topics will include self-direction, self-advocacy, age-appropriate social development, and accessing practical resources for consumers and professionals alike.

1:30-2:30 – Concurrent Sessions F13, F14, F15, F16

F13: Sensory Balance Approach: An LMA Supplement for Children with CVI

Matt Tietjen

The Sensory Balance Approach/Framework is a tool developed by Christine Roman-Lantzy and Matt Tietjen that teams can choose for children with CVI to guide the day-to-day implementation of learning media as determined by the child's FVA and LMA. Emphasis is on providing immediate access through most efficient combination of sensory modalities while also embedding opportunities for visual development.

F14: Assessment of Children Transitioning from Early Intervention to Preschool

Kitty Edstrand

Different assessment tools and strategies will be reviewed to provide best practices while assessing young students as they transition from Early Intervention to preschool.

F15: Developing a Professional Learning Community Around a Common Topic

Eileen Curran, Tammy Reisman, Denise Wade, Anne Spitz and Katrena Traut-Savino

This powerhouse group of TVIs has teamed up and is ready to share the secret to supporting each other in our field. This group recognized the need for “on the job” support for new TVIs and started the program “TVI 101” through Association of Massachusetts Educators of Students with Visual Impairment (AMESVI). Learn how to structure in-person and online meetings, how to get professional development points and build meaningful professional relationships. Working as an itinerant TVI can be isolating but it doesn’t have to be!

F16: Using Coaching Strategies to Move Academic Students Forward

Leslie Thatcher and Kate Katulak

Why do students resist activities that we know will help them? How can we break through to that student? This session will introduce you to a different approach to these resistant, or reluctant students, Coaching. It’s used at many colleges and universities, and increasingly at many K-12 schools. It’s been shown to increase goal-oriented persistence, motivation and help support the development of authentic self-determination.

2:45-3:45 – Concurrent Sessions – F17, F18, F19, F20

F17: Support Canes: What’s Your Position?

Claudia Libs

The AER O&M Division Professional Issues Committee on Support Canes was tasked with determining if practitioners should consider issuing support

canes. Two questionnaires were created and disbursed. Discover the results of these two questionnaires, one focusing on academia and the other practitioners. We will discuss where we should go from here. A position paper addressing this topic is in progress.

F18: Investigating Visual Search Behavior in CVI

Lotfi Merabet

Dr. Merabet will present recent results from an ongoing study investigating visual search behavior in CVI. Our approach uses virtual reality-based tasks combined with eye tracking and EEG recordings of brain activity.

F19: The Latest and Greatest Assessment Tools for VI and ECC Evaluations

Stephanie Herlich and Shelby Zimmerman

Whether you are conducting remote, in-person, or hybrid evaluations, there are many assessment tools to consider. Join us in a discussion about some of the newest assessments now available along with the tried and true. We will discuss specific tools and strategies for FVLMA, ECC (with special focus on O&M and AT), Psychoeducational, and Speech and Language Evaluations. These assessments target the variety of students we serve including students with visual impairments, multiple disabilities, autism, CVI, and Deaf-Blind. There will also be an opportunity for you to share your favorite assessments with your colleagues.

F20: What Blind and Visually Impaired Adults Want YOU to Know

Tai Tomasi and Stephanie Bissonette

Learn strategies to question your own perspectives, recognize implicit bias, understand reasons for lack of diversity in the field, and address how ableism affects student and adult outcomes and lack of inclusion.