

Welcome to our June Newsletter. It's winter in the Southern Hemisphere and summer in the Northern Hemisphere. In New Zealand, we have just passed the shortest day. We are counting down to summer and planning various activities, festivals and celebrations, in the process. The same must be happening after the longest day in America and Canada for next winter. Following are a couple of activities that Division 7 members have been working on:

1. On April 15th, Division 7 held a topical discussion on Vision Therapy, moderated and organized by Dr Holly Lawson, Coordinator, VIL Licensure Programme, Portland State University, Graduate School of Special Education, Portland. As a result of this topical discussion, a Low Vision Division Sub-Committee was formed, including Dr Amanda Hall-Lueck, Dr Irene Topor, Dr Marla Moon, headed by Dr Holly Lawson. This Sub-Committee is tasked with developing a position paper on Vision Therapy. Attached, for your information, is an excerpt that provides a historical and technical perspective on the definition of vision impairment, written by Dr Greg Goodrich, in Dr Amanda Hall-Lueck's book "Vision and the Brain".
2. Also attached for your information is a letter from the Department of Education which touches on important issues including:
 - Federal/State definitions of students with visual impairment.
 - Serving students with accommodative disorder/"convergence disorder" – which is connected to vision therapy.

We will keep you informed of progress on the position paper and I take this opportunity to thank:

- Dr. Holly Lawson for leading the topical discussion and the Sub-Committee.
- Everyone who participated and contributed in the topical discussion on Vision Therapy.
- The Sub-Committee for working on a position paper on Vision Therapy.



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In keeping with our focus on Vision Therapy, here is a reprinted article which Ginger Croce recently shared on the AER Facebook page. If you aren't a friend of AER on Facebook, consider becoming a friend. The article she shared is just a snippet, but digging deeper on this issue could be very interesting for those who are interested in the implications of Vision Therapy for education and the responsibility educational institutions may have for assisting with the cost of Vision Therapy.

Study Finds No Connection between Eye Problems and Dyslexia

By Christina Samuels on May 28, 2015 6:22 PM

There appears to be no connection between vision or eye disorders and reading impairments,
according to a study of about 5,800 children that will be published in the June issue of *Pediatrics*.

The sample of children was taken from a [longitudinal study of families living in the Bristol, England area](#). The children were all 7 to 9 years old, and 3 percent tested as having severe reading impairments.

The researchers then tested the vision of those children. Four out of five had normal eyesight. A small minority of children displayed minor anomalies in depth perception and fusing ability, or the ability to use both eyes properly at the same time.

But there's no evidence from this study that therapies to improve eyesight will do anything to help with dyslexia, the researchers concluded. "The best evidence is for intensive interventions involving instruction on phonics, word analysis, and reading fluency and comprehension," the authors said.

Reprinted from Education Week

http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/speced/2015/05/study_finds_no_connection_betw.html

3. Highly Recommended Reading.

I would like to highly recommend a Kindle Single called "The Edge of Normal" by Hana Schank. It was just released. It is the personal story of a parent who has a daughter with albinism. In 44 pages, Hana shares what was going through her own mind with her daughter's birth, search for a diagnosis, and early years. I think it is a must read for anyone working in medicine or education with children with low vision. I have heard similar experiences from many, many parents. However, Hana Schank is so eloquent in her writing. It is on Amazon and free to Kindle users and \$2.99 for those reading it on other tablets.

Dr. Anne Corn

4. Rapidly approaching is World Sight Day on October 8th, a global event that focuses on bringing attention on blindness and vision impairment. "The World Health Organisation (WHO) and the International Agency for Prevention of Blindness (IAPB), are actively involved in co-ordinating events and activities for World Sight Day for the following purposes:
- To raise public awareness of blindness and vision impairment as major international public health issues.
 - To influence governments, particularly health ministers, to participate in and designate funds for national blindness prevention programmes.
 - To educate target audiences about blindness prevention, about VISION 2020 and its activities, to generate support for VISION 2020 programme activities."

Ref: <http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays/un/world-sight-day>

You too can participate by:

- Acknowledging a colleague by doing something nice like buying him/her a cup of coffee.
- Planting a tree with the family or children at school.
- Fundraising for a deserving cause. e.g. My friend is hosting a fundraising high tea for my voluntary vision rehabilitation, blindness awareness and prevention work. Guest speaker will be person with low vision who will talk on her life experience and diabetes.
- Spoiling yourself.
- Doing group work. e.g. Tactile Art- one group that I know will be using cinnamon, star anise, cloves, bark, sand, straw, colourful crystals, etc. for a multi-sensory approach to tactile art.
- Engaging with your colleagues and encouraging them to be a member of division 7.
- Volunteering.

Take pictures of your activities and email them to me with your stories for our December newsletter. Do you have other ideas? Would you like to see a Division 7 award given to a deserving professional in Division 7 on World Sight Day? What should the award look like? What shall we call it? Email me your thoughts on kamala.shireen@gmail.com.

Personally, I have completed a Train the Trainer Programme on 'Healthy Options Positive Eating'(HOPE). This programme addresses obesity in the local at risk communities. i.e. Maori, Pacifica, South Asian, and Asian communities. Obesity leads to diabetes and other secondary complications including preventable blindness. I work closely with people who have lost vision as a result of diabetes and am motivated to make a difference. I'll be working with Diabetes New Zealand Auckland Branch to host up to 8 families for a HOPE Programme. For more information please visit: <https://diabetesauckland.org.nz/services-we-provide/>

5. Announcement



North Carolina Central University (NCCU) located in research triangle, Durham, NC, is actively seeking a program coordinator. The position requires a PhD, is tenure track, and a qualified applicant could start as early as August 1, 2015. For more information, please see the job announcement by following this link <https://jobs.nccu.edu/postings/2528>

2. Looking ahead.....2016 and beyond

Looking ahead, think about how Division 7 activities can be improved, and how you would like to help. Your ideas are needed to start the ball rolling for 2016 and the future. Do join Division 7 listserve and express your views at aer-div07@lists.aerbvi.or or email me at kamala.shireen@gmail.com

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Chair,

Division 7,

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