



AER Vision Rehabilitation Therapy (VRT) Division

VRT News Spring, 2019

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Message from the Chair

Greetings colleagues, friends, and vision rehabilitation professionals alike,

HAPPY SPRING! Here in some of the most northeastern parts of the country we have finally seen tulips, daffodils, and forsythias! We're not quite into the warmer weather we'd like to see, but no more snow! One of the surest signs of spring we've had since the winter newsletter is **VRT Appreciation/Awareness Week!** I hope you were recognized for the incredible work you do on a daily basis. If it slipped by you or your coworkers, don't forget the special place that clients hold you in their hearts. I will never forget when I was a VRT client and how amazing I thought a large print calendar was or how a 20/20 pen was the next best thing to sliced bread or the way my VRT practically vaulted over the washing machine to see if there was an outlet! Each one of you is that person to so many! Finally, never forget that feeling when a client becomes extremely successful and finds they can do what they want, how they want, and when they want. THAT is what being a VRT is all about! I encourage you go write on the VRT listserv or to me to put in this newsletter what makes YOU a VRT!

It's all about us here! What do you think of having a pre-conference session for VRTs at the next AER international conference? What would you like to learn? What would make it worth it to come out to St. Louis, Missouri in 2020? I know it seems a ways out, but you know it will be here before you know it. I'd love to get your feedback on this one. I was thinking a low vision crash course...

As always, thank you for all you do. It is my honor and privilege to serve on your behalf during these two years as division chair. Please don't hesitate to contact me about anything whether it be the good, the bad or the ugly!

Be well,

Amber Mooney, M.Ed. CVRT
AER VRT Division Chair

Your Source for Blindness Information

By Kendra Farrow

The National Research and Training Center on Blindness and Low Vision (NRTC) at Mississippi State University is probably best known for our research on employment for persons who are blind or visually impaired. Our employment research is supported by a series of grants, spanning more than 30 years, from the National Institute on Disability Independent Living and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR). Recently, we were also awarded a grant from the Rehabilitation Services Administration to start the Older Individuals who are Blind Technical Assistance Center (OIB-TAC). Through all of our projects, we have collected a great deal of information and resources that we want to share with the field.

The NRTC has three websites that house a wealth of information. This information can help you learn the latest research findings, identify best practices, and obtain continuing education credits at no charge. The main website, www.blind.msstate.edu, provides updates on our current research and information about past research projects. Other pages offer access to journal articles, products like our "Transportation Guide" and "Transition Activity Calendar," a sign-up form to participate in our research, and general information about our center.

Our second website is what we call the National Technical Assistance Center and is located at www.ntac.blind.msstate.edu. This website is divided into five sections: information for businesses, service providers, persons with vision loss, continuing education, and information and referral. The service provider section offers a plain language summary for most of our published journal articles, in other words, it tells you what the main points are without needing to wade through statistics and research jargon. The continuing education section provides opportunities for taking our online courses which are completely free and will provide you ACVREP credit at no additional charge. Some of the courses are based on our research findings and others provide

general or in-depth information on a specific topic. Some course titles related to enhancing employment outcomes are:

- Employer Attitudes,
- SSDI Outcome Predictors, and
- Working with Employers.

A sample of our introduction courses include:

- Introduction to Blindness and Low Vision,
- Anatomy and Physiology of the Eye, and
- How to Read an Eye Report.

Another section provides information about serving older individuals with vision loss. Some examples are:

- Cardiovascular Disease and Aging,
- Vision and Hearing Loss, and
- Best Practices in the Administration of the Older Individuals who are Blind Program.

The final section provides information on special topics like:

- Understanding Social Security Work Incentives,
- Ethics for Professionals Working with Persons who are Blind or Visually Impaired, and
- Basics of Brain Injury.

Each of these topic areas can be expanded to show additional courses. In addition to ACVREP credits, NBPCB and CRC credits are also available.

Our third website, www.oib-tac.org, is geared to services for consumers who are older blind. We sometimes refer to this as a community of practice. The OIB-TAC supports all information and resources presented here. Examples of assessments, curriculums, and other sample documents can be downloaded, viewed, and used. Additional continuing education opportunities are available and outlined. Finally, there is a forum to post questions and comments. To access the forum, one must sign up and log in. Each quarter we hold a live forum event. A topic is announced and for an hour we have experts online to monitor and respond live to questions.

On a research note, we are currently recruiting participants for our Job Retention and Career Advancement survey. You can find the recruitment notice on our main website, www.blind.msstate.edu. Although the parameters to participate are fairly broad, we are especially interested in finding participants who lost their vision as adults. Our goal is to learn how vocational rehabilitation services assist these individuals to keep their current employment or obtain different employment. Please note that a successful employment outcome is not required for participation in the survey. The survey can be completed online, or by phone. We appreciate your assistance in passing on the recruitment notice.

Global Accessibility Day

Steven Kelley CRC, CVRT, CATIS

www.lowvisiontech.com on the computer

Posted on May 16, 2019 by

To celebrate [Global Accessibility Awareness Day 2019](#) I wanted to put all the support numbers in one place for convenient reference:

[Amazon Accessibility](#)

During a chat with an Amazon Support staffer, I learned there is no specific phone number for accessibility, nor is there a specific email. There is support for various features of the devices on their website (assuming you have already developed the skills and knowledge of these features to the point where you can access the website).

[Apple Accessibility](#)

Without exception, my experiences personally and with clients has always been positive with Apple Accessibility phone support.

Apple Accessibility Phone Support: 877-204-3930

Apple Accessibility email: accessibility@apple.com

Freedom Scientific (JAWS, Magic, ZoomText)

[Freedom Scientific Phone Support](#)

Freedom Scientific Phone Support: 727-803-8600

Freedom Scientific Email Support: support@freedomscientific.com

[Google Accessibility](#)

On the website linked above users may complete a form to ask a question or request a call from Google Accessibility Support. You may also email your question directly to Google at disability-support@google.com . A very cool new option is to place a phone call through the [Be My Eyes app](#). If you are a regular user of Google Accessibility, this new feature alone makes the free Be My Eyes app a must-have! And no, unfortunately, there is no other way right now to make a direct call to Google Accessibility.

[Microsoft Accessibility Support](#)

[Microsoft Disability Answer Desk](#)

Microsoft Disability Answer Desk phone: 800-936-5900

[NV Access Support \(NVDA Screen Reader\)](#)

Using the [NV Access Support webpage](#) users will find email lists and access to paid phone support for NVDA screen reader, as well as user guides and video tutorials

Interested in getting involved, but not sure how to get started?! Join a committee!

You can have a profound impact on our division and its future and still have time for the rest of life! See the list of committees below and let me know if you are interested. It can be as much or as little as you would like. Don't forget it's always another way to earn those CEUs!

- Programming - for the international conferences every two years; see the beginning of this newsletter for more!
- Publication/Market – The division does four newsletters every year to let the membership know what it is up to, provide a bit of education and opportunities. Also, if you're going to a conference it's a chance to man a table or create a poster about what we do!
- Retention and recruitment – keep our membership growing! Help come up with and spread ideas to get the VRT name out as a household staple. What more can we all do? Help us out!
- Nomination/Awards: Every two years before the international AER convention, we need a few good people to assist the VRT chair in waiting to drum up nominations and select award winners. Doesn't get any more fun than that!

WEBINAR ANNOUNCEMENT

The VRT Division is excited to announce an up and coming webinar! Dr. Gaylen Kapperman and Dr. and Dr. Stacy Kelly will provide a webinar so we can learn more about using screen readers with Braille displays for studying foreign languages. They will focus on what makes for a good foreign language learner if a student is blind or has low vision. Be on the lookout for coming announcements for times and dates!

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

July 31, 2019 Deadline for articles for next issue of VRT News. Send articles to Amber Mooney at amooney@theiris.org.

Vision Rehabilitation Therapy Division Board Contact Information

Chair: Amber Mooney, M.Ed., CVRT
amooney@theiris.org

Please contact me if you have any questions, concerns, or errors regarding the VRT newsletter.