



## AER Vision Rehabilitation Therapy (VRT) Division

VRT Newsletter Winter, 2019

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### **Message from the Chair**

Greetings colleagues, friends, and vision rehabilitation professionals alike,

We are in the homestretch of the winter season, hurray! Longer days and warmer sun are making their way into our backyards... well, for some more than others. Being in Portland, Maine, spring takes its sweet time poking its head out. We know that when it does, VRTs will be busting out with Spring Fever!

So, all the way back in the fall you had the opportunity to have a voice in the future of the VRT Division. You voted for the position of VRT Chair Elect and VRT Secretary Treasurer. I am proud to announce the AER Division 11 VRT Chair Elect is Kathy Spengler, CVRT of Chicago! We have the incredible good fortune of keeping our VRT Treasurer/Secretary Dr. Liz Chamberlain TVI, CVRT! I must have done something right to have these two extraordinary and accomplished individuals working alongside for the next couple of years! Please join me in welcoming them and thanking them for volunteering to empower and improve our field!

As we know, spring and fall tend to be full of regional AER conferences. Are you going to one? Are you presenting? Let us know what you are learning or what you are sharing! Write us up a quick article to share information with your fellow VRTs and score the credit that goes along with contributing to a newsletter! That's right! Write up and submit to me an article of some kind (preferably VRT related) and that can score you points toward your next recertification! It doesn't have to be rocket science; it could be what you are doing wherever you are at! We would love to hear from YOU!

Don't forget, these newsletters are for you, so if you want to see, learn, or read something different or just want to compare VRT notes, let me know! I'd love to hear from you!

Stay warm,

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

**Apps for Independent Living Skills**  
**By Chelsea Bridges, CVRT, CATIS**

Have you thought about all of the tasks our clients perform throughout their day in the form of apps?

As a VRT for over twenty years, I have shared with my students both low tech and high tech options to accomplish daily living tasks. High tech being the Vox Com to create audio labels; low tech being rubber bands for tactile labeling. With the advent of smartphones I have found myself increasingly incorporating accessible apps as another option.

Ninety percent of my clients have a smartphone and were using the device prior to experiencing changes to their vision.

I've compiled a list of apps for both the Apple and Android operating systems that can help my clients accomplish tasks from the time they wake up in the morning until the time they go to bed at night. This list comprises free apps that are accessible either visually, audibly, and/or orally.

<b>TASK</b>	<b>APPLE</b>	<b>ANDROID</b>
<b>PERSONAL / HOME CARE:</b>		
Alarm Clock / Time	Siri	OK Google
	Clock	Clock
	Lock Screen	Home Screen
Identification of Personal Care Items	Seeing AI	QR Code Reader
	Magnifier	SuperVision Mini
		ICSee
	Seeing Assistant Home Lite	Seeing Assistant-HomeLite
	Eye-D	Eye-D

<b>TASK</b>	<b>APPLE</b>	<b>ANDROID</b>
	Be My Eyes	Be My Eyes
	TapTapSee	TapTapSee
	DigitEyes Lite	
Identification of Medications / Vitamins	Eye-D	Eye -D
	Seeing AI	
	DigitEyes Lite	
	Magnifier	SuperVision Mini
		ICSee
	Seeing Assistant Home Lite	Seeing Assistant Home Lite
Keeping Track of Appointments	Calendar	Calendar
Weather	Siri	OK Google
	Weather	Home Screen notification
Identification of Clothing Color	Inspector	Color ID
	Seeing AI	
	Be My Eyes	Be My Eyes
	Seeing Assistant Home Lite	
	TapTapSee	TapTapSee
Identification of Household Items	DigitEyes Lite	QR Code Reader
	Seeing AI	
	Magnifier	SuperVision Mini
	TapTapSee	TapTapSee
	Be My Eyes	Be My Eyes
	Seeing Assistant Home Lite	Seeing Assistant Home Lite
	Eye-D	Eye-D

<b>TASK</b>	<b>APPLE</b>	<b>ANDROID</b>
<b>COMMUNICATION:</b>		
Phone Calls	Phone	Phone
Text Messages	Messages	Messaging
Email	Mail	Gmail
Facebook	Facebook	
Mail	Seeing AI	Text Fairy
	Eye-D	Eye-D
	Magnifier	SuperVision Mini
	Prizmo Go	Envision AI
<b>LEISURE:</b>		
News	News	Sero (iBlink Radio)
Books	BARD Mobile	BARD Mobile
	Kindle	Kindle
	Books	Play Books
Games	Audio Game Hub	Audio Game Hub
	Game World: Play with Friends	
Music	Music	Play Music
	iHeart Radio	iHeart Radio
<b>MONEY:</b>		
Identification of Currency	EyeNote	Ideal
	NantMobile Money Reader	VE Money Reader
	Seeing AI	
Paying Bills	Bank of Choice	Bank of Choice
<b>SHOPPING:</b>		
Delivery	Instacart	Instacart
	Shipt	Shipt

<b>TASK</b>	<b>APPLE</b>	<b>ANDROID</b>
In Person with List	Reminders	Tasks
	Notes	QuickMemo+
Purchase	Apple Pay	Google Wallet
<b>TRANSPORTATION:</b>		
Vehicle	Lyft	Lyft
	Uber	Uber
Transit	Moovit	Moovit
Walking	Lazarillo	Lazarillo
	Eye-D	Eye-D
	Over THERE	
<b>MEAL PREPARATION:</b>		
Recipes	Yes Chef!	Big Oven
	Seeing AI	Envision AI
	Eye-D	Eye-D
	Magnifier	SuperVision Mini
Timer	Siri	OK Google
	Clock	Clock
<p>Note: All apps listed were available and working in January 2019. Apps are subject to change based on OS updates and availability in the App Store and Google Play Store.</p>		

Having more options to accomplish the same task is a teaching strategy that we are all familiar with. We adjust our lesson based on a student's needs and abilities. This same concept is beneficial with apps. Apps can be "here today, gone tomorrow". I double check that the app is still working before my lesson and have my list handy in case an app is no longer available.

Sources:

AppleVis.org, AFB's AccessWorld, AppAdvice app, AndroidAccess.net, Android Authority, AFB's AccessWorld, inclusiveandroid.com

## VRT News Article on Research

### Roles of the VRT in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

Did you know that it has been over 25 years since our profession looked at what the job of the VRT entails?! Think about how much has changed in that time! Late in 2017, Drs. John McMahon, Helen Lee and I conducted a survey to look at what the job of the VRT currently involves. I am guessing that many of the survey participants were AER VRT Division members. So, thank you for your willingness to invest your time in this research.

The survey was undertaken to better understand our profession. Understanding what we do, that is, our job tasks, is one way to define our profession. By understanding what current practicing VRTs do in their jobs, we can better prepare students in personnel preparation programs and help to inform the certification exam of critical understandings. And with changing legislation, such as the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, knowing the scope of skills that VRTs currently teach, can help administrators better understand how to employ VRTs to meet the changing demands of legislation and the training needs of clients.

Currently two articles based on this survey data have been accepted for publication in the *Journal of Visual Impairment and Blindness*. The first article examines the frequency at which 100 typical VRT job tasks are performed per week. Nearly half of those job tasks can be compared to data collected in 1989, to see how the frequencies have changed over the last 28 years. Look for this paper to be published in early 2019.

The second article uses the same data, but rather than looking at specific job tasks, statistical methods are applied to better understand the relationship between the job tasks. In this article, statistical methods are employed to extract job roles or categories of tasks. Similar to the previous article, the resulting job roles from this current analysis can be compared to a similar analysis carried out 28 years ago. Look for this paper to be published later in 2019.

Research is a critical aspect of any discipline. For example, research may help us validate our current practices, improve our teaching methods, or inform policy. Without research, our teaching and administrative practices may be based on dogma, ideology or convenience. Research helps us maintain high standards in how we deliver services.

So, what questions do you have? What do you want to find out? University personnel are looking to partner with service providers who have access to clients. That is, we need each other! So, please contact me if you have ideas for research questions. Let's work together to develop some answers!

Elyse Connors, Ph. D., CVRT, COMS  
Assistant professor

Western Michigan University  
Elyse.m.connors@wmich.edu

**NEW BOOK ANNOUNCEMENT:**  
**WHEN YOU CAN'T BELIEVE YOUR EYES: VISION LOSS AND PERSONAL**  
**RECOVERY**

I have written this book as a resource for adults facing vision loss, their friends and families. It will be published this summer by Charles C. Thomas and will include two accessible versions. I hope that professionals will also find it useful and talk about it to their clients.

The book was first projected in 2004, when I began teaching interpersonal skills at the Carroll Center for the Blind in Newton, Massachusetts. The experiences of my adult students—and my own experience of sight lost—convinced me that everyone losing vision needs access to good resources and information about the process of adjustment, as well as practical ways to use assertive speech. It has taken the generous assistance of my colleagues at the Carroll Center and many other experts, as well as more than a hundred interviews with adult students, to establish what was most important for people with sight loss and their friends to know. *When You Can't Believe Your Eyes* is concise, with twelve chapters arranged in five parts, which follow the phases of adjustment to vision loss. Each chapter contains many short sections and bullet-point lists, intended to facilitate access to the right information. Parts Three and Four focus on the use of assertive speech.

The book is intended for adults losing vision, including young adults leaving home and seniors who are ready to consider changes.

A short book cannot cover all the ways people lose sight or deal with vision loss combined with other disabilities, and I have stopped short of discussing college courses or job choices. My own expertise is in the areas of personal and household management and interpersonal skills. I have focused on practical, social, and personal tips to help people become as independent as possible.

The book begins at the doctor's office or the hospital. There are suggestions for questions to ask to get a clear diagnosis and the best treatment. Part One also has a description of legal blindness and possible prevention, advice about job retention, and tips for life at home. Part Two moves on to believing in yourself as you deal with denial, loss, anger, and fear before you come up for air and consider training. The importance of training is emphasized throughout. Parts Three and Four describe using assertive speech and action in all kinds of settings. Interpersonal skills groups at the Carroll Center for the Blind and a focus group of former students contributed comments and stories to help make encounters without good sight work well. Part Five gives information and resources for everything from dating, and caring for babies to senior

living, volunteering, and retaining a job. The book is intended to assist anyone dealing with vision loss to become a whole person again—informed, independent, and in charge.

Hannah Fairbairn, CVRT  
[hcnfairbairn@gmail.com](mailto:hcnfairbairn@gmail.com)  
617-272-5220

### **Watercooler Announcement**

The VRT Division is excited to announce another watercooler! “*Optimizing Sight with LED Light*”. Michael McCarthy will present on the science of light, its correlation to vision loss, and best practices for the incorporation of LED Technology including the use of LED Bulbs, Fixture Strategies, Lighting Facts, and potential of basic and smart technology.

We welcome you to this session, and will provide an e-blast to the membership with additional attendance information closer to the date!

### **MARK YOUR CALENDARS**

**May 1, 2019** Deadline for articles for next issue of VRT News. Send articles to Amber Mooney at [amooney@theiris.org](mailto:amooney@theiris.org).

### **Vision Rehabilitation Therapy Division Board Contact Information**

Chair: Amber Mooney, M.Ed., CVRT  
[amooney@theiris.org](mailto:amooney@theiris.org)

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