Summer Program Report
Practical Academic Secondary Enrichment
Independence Exploration

Student:
Dates: June 23 – July 4, 2013
Teacher:
Teaching Assistant:

PROGRAM OVERVIEW
All individuals learn best when they have the opportunity to practice and apply what they are learning in real life situations. Because students with visual impairments may be less able to pick up information and related concepts that sighted children see as they casually go through their day, they have an even greater need for real life learning experiences.

Students in the Practical Academic Summer Enrichment (PASE) program also benefit from learning and practicing skills in comfortable, enjoyable contexts that support their unique learning needs. Therefore, a primary goal of this program is to ensure that learning takes place within enjoyable activities.

Summer learning at TSBVI focuses on skills related to the Expanded Core Curriculum for Blind and Visually Impaired Students (ECC): compensatory academic skills, orientation and mobility, career education, assistive technology, visual efficiency skills, independent living, recreation and leisure, social interaction, and self determination skills. Functional applications of these skill areas include activities such as practicing academic skills like math (making a budget) and literacy (writing a thank you letter), recreational and domestic activities (community outings including travel skills, physical activities, meal planning, cooking, grocery shopping); communication (using appropriate language in various contexts, giving and following directions); planning, organizing, sequencing (planning and giving a party). Specific activities provided for individual students are described below.

DESCRIPTION OF CLASS: Independence Exploration
Students explored and practiced various independent living skills during this program. Activities included daily schedule preparation, independent living skills training, community trips for independence exploration activities (a bank, Lighthouse for the Blind, HEB, Capitol building, two different restaurants, and a mall), working at a volunteer work center, planning and budgeting for grocery shopping, preparing daily meals, participating in daily housekeeping activities, planning and budgeting for personal grooming supply shopping, and planning and attending age-appropriate social events with peers.
Participating in the above activities allowed students to practice the following skills: personal care (grooming, dressing, personal materials management), nutrition planning and food preparation, volunteer work/career education, time management, problem-solving and information-gathering, self-advocacy, daily schedule planning, social/communication, and self-determination.

**Chase Bank**
Students visited a bank and took a tour. They learned about what a bank does and why a person has both a savings account and checking account and explored the differences between those two types of accounts. Students learned how to set up a bank account and learned how to use ATMs and write checks. They used signature guides to practice signing their name and were able to physically explore the different buttons on an ATM machine to learn how it works.

**Lighthouse for the Blind**
Students toured the Austin Lighthouse for the Blind. Students learned about possible job/career opportunities offered by the Lighthouse and what the eligibility requirements are for working at the Lighthouse. Additionally, they researched the available options for working at a Lighthouse near their hometown.

**Capitol**
Students traveled to the Capitol Building using Austin's CapMetro light rail commuter rail system and the CapMetro city bus system. Students learned about public transportation, how to solicit assistance while riding public transportation, and how to advocate for oneself when traveling in an unfamiliar area. Students were assisted by a Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist during this trip as an added resource.

**Volunteer Work Training**
Students participated in a volunteer work training setting. Students learned about basic, entry-level manual labor jobs and tasks like paper shredding, silverware/napkin preparation, collating and stapling handouts, envelope stuffing, and sorting. We also role played and practiced how to interact with a supervisor and coworkers. Students also learned about working independently and working with a partner or within a team.

**Lakeline Mall**
Students traveled to a mall in the Austin area. Students learned about soliciting information and assistance from the mall information desk, locating a variety of stores in the mall based on student preferences and interests, budgeting and shopping for an item of interest, and traveling in a mall setting.

**HEB**
Students traveled to HEB to make grocery purchases and to buy personal grooming supplies. Students learned how to plan a week's worth of breakfast and lunch meals, how to make a grocery or supply list, how to estimate and budget for making those purchases, and how to handle problems or issues that might arise at the store (locating an item, what to do if she didn’t budget enough, and how to ask for assistance).

**Restaurant Outings**
Students traveled to two different "sit-down" restaurants in the Austin area. Students learned and practiced social skills and self-advocacy skills, including choosing and ordering food from
a wide variety of choices, budgeting and paying for a meal, using utensils and practicing table manners, and using appropriate conversation skills during mealtimes.

**Daily Schedule**
Students prepared a daily schedule for each program day. This schedule included all the daily activities, times and location for each activity, and discussion about each activity. Students used this daily schedule as a planning device and reminder of what was planned throughout the day.

**Week-in-Review**
Students reviewed and discussed the week’s activities at the end of the first week. Students discussed successes and difficult situations. They reviewed problems and we went over problem-solving techniques to help with solving similar problems in the future. Students used the Week-in-Review to help plan activities for the following week.

**Meal Preparation**
Students prepared simple breakfasts and lunches each day during this program. Meals included four food groups (protein, carbohydrates, fruits/vegetables, and dairy [if not lactose-intolerant]), and most of the meal preparation was done using basic cooking techniques like microwave, toaster, and no-heat-needed techniques like making sandwiches.

**SPECIFIC EXPANDED CORE CURRICULUM AREAS ADDRESSED**
During this program we addressed all of the expanded core curriculum areas in a variety of ways. We addressed compensatory skills in all activities, including use of correct learning media to fit each student's personal medium needs, communication skills, and functional literacy.

**Independent Living Skills**
Independent living skills (ILS) were the focus of this program, and we addressed ILS in earnest during the entire duration of the program, through activities like dressing, grooming, meal planning, community trip planning, daily schedule planning, problem-solving skills, and personal materials and time management.

**Orientation and Mobility**
Orientation and mobility was a key component through the use of mobility tools on and off campus, reinforcement of appropriate mobility skills on and off campus, use of public transportation with staff support, and a very basic introduction to route planning for using public transportation.

**Social Interaction**
Social interaction skills were addressed throughout the day, especially during activities such as mealtimes, shopping, volunteer work activities, information-gathering activities, and peer interaction activities.

**Recreation and Leisure**
We explored recreation and leisure skills through activities like going to restaurants, exploring the mall, and planning social activities with peers.
Career Education
We focused on career education during volunteer work activities and discussions centered around personal preferences, strengths, and skills when looking for a job.

Visual Efficiency
Visual efficiency skills were addressed with those students with some functional vision during travel, reading and writing activities, and all other activities throughout the program.

Assistive Technology
Assistive technology was used during activities like writing lists for shopping trips; keeping a written or Brailled log for budgeting; using optical aids such as magnifiers and monoculars for travel (if needed); using computers, note-taking devices, or other electronic devices to use for reminders, lists, daily to-dos, and taking notes; and phones for gathering and sharing information.

INDIVIDUAL COMMENTS

OTHER CLASSES, GROUPS, AND SERVICES
Yoga
Students with visual impairments often have difficulty finding recreation and leisure activities that they enjoy and in which they can participate. This Yoga class incorporated both exercise and relaxation techniques to relieve stress, release excess energy, and ultimately improve mental focus and physical health. Relaxation techniques help individuals bring some balance into their busy lives and assert some control while releasing stress. Yoga is a fun activity that is highly accessible and available to all people because all it requires is a mat, knowledge of a few physical movements (postures), and knowing how to breathe deeply. Participating in these postures helps students become more aware of their body and how it moves through space. This can be both challenging and rewarding for students, whether visually impaired or not. Yoga is an amazing way to develop strength, flexibility, better posture, knowledge of how to safely move through space, and self-confidence.

This summer, we explored a variety of yoga techniques in order to introduce ways that yoga can be used for both exercise and relaxation. These techniques included guided deep breathing, movement paired with music, held postures for stretching and flexibility, and guided relaxation techniques. Yoga concepts that were covered included the importance of good posture, balance, body awareness in space, and communication. The students were encouraged to do the positions slowly and gently and always listen to their body and not stretch too far. The class started with deep, slow breathing paired with warm-up activities that encouraged good posture while stretching, and slowly moving their body through postures. By the end of the program the students were encouraged to choose a posture and teach it to their classmates. This activity focused on communication, assertiveness, memory, self-determination, and ultimately leadership.

Skills infused from the Expanded Core Curriculum included:
- Sensory Efficiency Skills
- Orientation & Mobility
- Recreation and Leisure Skills
- Social Interaction Skills
- Self-Determination
- Compensatory Skills
Independent Living Skills

Music
During the PASE music class, students were given many opportunities to explore the world of music. Class activities incorporated instrument exploration, singing, movement, listening, music appreciation, making choices, and creating music and dance with a group. Instruments explored during several different activities included drums, percussion instruments, and microphone beat boxing. Several audio recordings were also made.

In addition to exploring a variety of musical instruments and techniques, students were able to perform on a small classroom stage, using a microphone while singing along to familiar songs, and creating unique songs. Movement activities included dancing with a partner, solo dancing, interpretive movement, and movement/dancing with a parachute, hoops and juggling props. Students chose a variety of songs and listened to many new genres of music during the music appreciation and choice-making activities.