

A STUDY TO DETERMINE IF PERFORMANCE BASED ADAPTIVE SEWING
SKILLS CAN INCREASE APPAREL MAINTENANCE CAPABILITIES
OF VISUALLY IMPAIRED ADULTS

by
Rebecca J. Rolle

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Rebecca J. Rolle

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December 26, 1985
Date

Aselin Dawson
Chairperson, Graduate Committee

Approved for the Major Department

December 26, 1985
Date

Margaret Briggs
Head, Major Department

Approved for the College of Graduate Studies

January 15, 1986
Date

Henry L. Parsons
Graduate Dean

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ABSTRACT

The Montana Association for the Blind, Inc., is a private, non-profit organization devoted to helping the visually impaired. The curriculum of their annual summer orientation program is designed to teach the visually impaired independent living skills. As a part of the independent living program, an apparel maintenance unit of instruction was developed during the 1982 and 1983 summer orientation programs. In the 1984 program the unit of instruction was implemented to determine if performance based adaptive sewing skills taught within a workshop environment could increase specified apparel maintenance capabilities of the visually impaired.

The specific objective of the apparel maintenance unit of instruction was designed to teach six adaptive sewing skills to the visually impaired. The ten students were given a performance pretest to assess their beginning level of adaptive sewing skills. The unit of instruction was then taught. After four weeks of instruction the students were given a performance posttest to assess any gain or loss in adaptive sewing skills for apparel maintenance.

The pre-posttest consisted of six adaptive sewing skills and three observation areas for each skill. The three observations included: 1) the amount of assistance needed to complete the skill, 2) the mastery of the skill, and 3) the number of attempts to complete the skill. The data from the pre-posttest findings indicated the amount of assistance needed to complete the skill decreased 25% and the number of attempts decreased by 44%. The mastery of the skill found eight out of ten students mastering all skills correctly.

According to the findings, the apparel maintenance unit of instruction increased specified adaptive sewing skills. Positive gains were displayed in each sewing skill area. The amount of assistance and the number of attempts to complete the skill decreased for each student.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The Montana Association of the Blind, Inc., founded in 1946, is a private, non-profit organization of blind people and their sighted associates, devoted to helping the visually impaired of Montana. A major rehabilitative program of this Association is the annual Summer Orientation Program for the Blind, conducted on the campus of Montana State University in Bozeman. Between 20 and 30 recently blind adults receive instruction each summer to help them adjust to their disability. The curriculum of this program is based on an educational philosophy which will enable recently blind individuals to help themselves.

The instructional units within this program must be designed to encompass a wide range of necessary daily living skills. These include orientation and mobility training, the teaching of braille, typing and handwriting, cooking skills, and home and apparel maintenance. The principal consideration with these maintenance courses is to help the blind individual cope with his/her living and work environment.

If one is to facilitate successfully an apparel maintenance course for the visually impaired adult, then the measure of skill activities required must be determined. This study deals with the apparel maintenance unit of instruction.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study is to determine if performance based adaptive sewing skills taught within a workshop environment can increase specified apparel maintenance capabilities of visually impaired adults.

The Need for the Study

A basic goal with rehabilitation training centers or workshops for visually impaired adults is to prevent, reduce, or eliminate dependency. Numerous state agencies and private organizations provide programs of instruction for the visually disabled. Private non-profit organizations such as the Montana association for the Blind or the Federal Title XX Social Security program must consider which orientation services blind citizens need and want to enable them to become more independent citizens.

This research is based upon a need to provide the most effective rehabilitative units of instruction in consideration of the economic resources available. By measuring the actual skill level achieved in "daily living" classes, rehabilitation programs may then make determinations for upgrading curriculum planning. Duncan (1976) reflected this need with the concern that organizations do not always have clear indications for choosing the best range of services for the blind. In his own words: "How did the State reach its decisions: i.e., that it was more important to spend tax dollars on one program

or another. Did they conduct a survey of what citizens need -- were their interests to serve blind individuals?"

The results of a need assessment study conducted by Shoepke (1979, p. 15) state the number one priority of the visually impaired was the need to develop skills in buying and caring for clothes. Relevant instructional units to develop these skills for the visually impaired have been analyzed (Durr and Bell 1980; Market 1977; Crawford 1976). However, at present, the Montana Association for the Blind needs research data to measure the actual degree to which daily living skill type classes improve the rehabilitation process. With these concerns in mind, this research will focus upon the selected daily living apparel maintenance skills needed by the recently visually impaired adults.

Specific Objective

The specific objective of this study is to measure the ability of visually impaired adults to perform adaptive sewing skills for individual apparel maintenance.

The adaptive sewing skills will be measured as a part of the following specified apparel maintenance skills:

- a. threading a needle
- b. sewing on a button
- c. repairing a seam
- d. repairing a hem
- e. patching a garment
- f. applying safety procedures

Assumptions

After reviewing the literature, several assumptions were made.

They are:

1. Recently blind individuals are in need of rehabilitation services.
2. Barriers to rehabilitation services must be reduced if blind individuals are to gain independence.
3. The blind person has many complex and unique problems specific to their individual backgrounds and experiences.
4. The students have varying degrees of visional acuity, as defined by the definitions.

Limitations

The following limitations were determined for this study:

1. Because of the broad nature of the topic "daily living skills", it was necessary to focus on one aspect; apparel maintenance was selected.
2. The students participating in the apparel maintenance program were limited to the 1984 participants in the Summer Orientation for the Blind.

Definitions

The definitions of important terms used in this paper are presented next:

Adaptive Sewing Skills: Modifications or techniques to adjust to a specific sewing skill.

Adult: A person over the age of 18 years old. Special consideration is given to the "older" or "elderly" adult. An older adult is a person 55 years old and older; and an elderly adult is a person 65 years old and older.

Apparel Maintenance: Clothing repairs are specifically broken down into the following tasks: sewing on a button; repairing a hem; repairing a seam; patching a garment; maintaining a sewing kit; and applying safety procedures in performing sewing activities.

Blind or Legally Blind or Visually Impaired and Visually Handicapped: A person is designated legally blind when, with best correction, one can see less at 20 feet than a person with normal vision can see at 200 feet; or when the field of vision is limited to a narrow angle less than 20 degrees. Although not declared legally blind, a person is considered handicapped if the visual field is no better at 20 feet than those with normal vision at 70 feet. In addition, the visually handicapped cannot read standard print without special aids or devices (Durr and Bell 1980). Blind, legally or visually impaired then does not necessarily mean total sightlessness. In fact, over 90 percent of the blind have some residual vision (Riki 1976, p. 2).

Handicap: A physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities (Meers 1980).

Independent Living Skills: The skills and tasks included in the activities of daily life associated with cooking, eating, dressing, and all other elements of personal care (Vallentutti and Bender 1980).

Performance Based Instruction: Criterion-referenced instruction in which desired outcomes relating to knowledge, attitudes, and behavior are stated as behavioral objectives. The student must demonstrate attainment of the required competency (Chamberlain and Kelly 1981, p. 32).

Recently Blind Adult: An adult that was not legally blind since birth.

Rehabilitation: The learning or readaption process for those persons born with or having a disability (Jacques 1970, p. xi).

Unit of Instruction: Constitutes instructional plans that are broad in scope and are a part of a larger curriculum (Blankenship and Moerchen 1979, p. 246). The unit of instruction for apparel maintenance will be a part of the overall independent living curriculum instituted by the Montana Association for the Blind.

Method of Investigation

A methodology of quasi-experimental research was utilized in conducting this study. Within this descriptive research framework, the research was organized into four phases: 1) population; 2) design of the study; 3) development of the units of instruction; and 4) collection of data.

Population

The population for this study included recently visually impaired adults from Montana. The purposive sample included the participants in the 1984 Summer Orientation Program for the Blind sponsored by the

Montana Association for the Blind (MAB). On the average, 20 to 30 students participate yearly in this summer program. The students were recommended to attend the program by their rehabilitation counselor through the Social Rehabilitation Service in Helena, Montana. The MAB summer staff along with the student, selected the students who participated in the courses offered.

Design of the Study

Since the size of the sample did not make it possible to randomly assign students to groups, quasi-experimental research design was utilized. Specifically, a one-group pretest-posttest design was used.

Performance based instruction requires pre-established levels of competence. The unit of instruction for apparel maintenance is based on a hierarchy of skill competencies. The first and most basic skills must be acquired before the student progresses to the next skill, i.e., the student must be able to thread a needle before progressing to the next skill.

The students were given a performance pretest to assess their beginning level of adaptive sewing skills for apparel maintenance. Each student was assessed individually on his or her own ability to perform the skills outlined on the pretest. The unit of instruction was then taught. After four weeks of instruction the student was given a performance posttest to assess any given gain or loss in adaptive sewing skills for apparel maintenance.

Development of the Units of Instruction for Apparel Maintenance

The objectives and skills that were taught as part of the unit of instruction for apparel maintenance were developed, taught and evaluated with the students in 1982 and 1983 Summer Orientation Program for the Blind. Following the summer program, the researcher presented the objectives, the pre-posttest and unit of instruction to a jury of seven professionals recognized in the field of rehabilitation, curriculum development and research. The jury evaluated the pre-posttest for content validity. The pre-posttest was then modified.

Collection of Data

The collection of data consisted of the tabulation of the pre-posttest, a Vision Checklist Summary sheet and a consent form.

The data was collected by the instructor for the Summer Orientation Program. The Vision Checklist summary Sheet and the consent form were completed prior to the summer program. The prettest was given individually at the beginning of the summer program and the posttest was given at the conclusion of the program.

Summary

In accordance with the goal of rehabilitation - to prevent reduce or eliminate dependency - there is a need to establish units of instruction as a part of an independent living skills curriculum for the recently visually impaired adult. This study is to determine if performance based adaptive sewing skills will increase the visually

impaired apparel maintenance skills as a part of the return to independent living. In order to measure this, a unit of instruction was chosen. Twenty to thirty students were given a pretest and posttest during the 1982 - 1983 Summer Orientation Program for the Blind. A jury of seven evaluated the pre-posttest for content validity and modifications were made. Then in 1984 the unit of instruction was administered again, with pre- and posttest evaluations performed. The findings of these evaluations constitute this study.

CHAPTER 2

THE REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter presents recent literature and research pertinent to implementing independent living skills for the visually impaired adult. This review was conducted to identify relevant curriculums of apparel maintenance instruction and aspects of task orientation for visually impaired adults in the daily home environment.

An Inherent Philosophy With Rehabilitation

The ideal intent reflected in the philosophy of rehabilitation is to create programs which enable disabled individuals to adapt and develop their own resources for coping with the human environment. As stated by Cubelli (1967, p. 2), . . . "rehabilitation is movement toward independent living, demonstrated by a reduction in the amount of care received." A central and reoccurring concept of rehabilitation is that multi-professional assistance is directed towards achieving independent living for the handicapped individual.

Studies Related to Independent Living

The importance of independent living skills for the visually impaired was substantiated with several relevant studies. Bikson (1981) hypothesized that problems experienced by the visually impaired could be grouped on the basis of common vision problems. But the

results of this study indicated that the problems of the visually impaired fell into groups that he interpreted as representing functional domains such as independent living skills, general orientation and general mobility. Bikson's findings are of considerable importance for rehabilitation, since these findings suggest that the tasks of rehabilitation should be suitably and productively organized around types of activities rather than types of vision problems. Inana (1982, p. 36) supports these findings. She cited the blind as encountering pronounced difficulty in four major areas. These areas are: lessened mobility, search for new pastimes, dependency and the performance of daily living skills.

Vallentutti and Bender (1981, p. 85) stress the need for the disabled to develop skills in being a contributing, competent, resourceful member of a household. This need is based on their assessment that economic factors encourage families to remain as units, and that society will continue to care for handicapped adults in the community. Furthermore, (Vallentutti and Bender 1981) identify skills and tasks as inherent in being an integral member of a cohesive household. The skills and tasks include the activities of daily life associated with cooking, eating, dressing and all other elements of personal care.

The value in acquiring independent living skills is also observed by Roessler (1981). He emphasized the social aspect of independent living skills by stating that:

. . . the need for disabled individuals to; a) to attain the rights and privileges of adults (Cole, Sperry, Board and Frieden 1979), b) participate actively in society (working, having a home, raising a family, sharing the joys and responsibilities of community life) (Stoddard-Pflueger 1977), and c) select and maintain a lifestyle consistent with personal desires, means and expectancies (Cassatt-Duncan 1978). (p. 3)

Another interpretation of implementing independent living is described by Walls (1979). He stated:

"The objective and training for independence is to move away from the former end of the continuum to a relatively more independent life style. Total dependence implies constant assistance and supervision. To the extent that an individual can begin to accomplish functions of everyday life such as, mobility, home and clothing care, dressing, etc., without assistance and supervision, independent living skills are gained. (p. 1)

The population group in need of these skills is addressed by Roessler (1981). In his words, "Although, they may later seek assistance of vocational nature, the target population for independent living services includes individuals with severe disabilities who do not have an immediate vocational goal." DeJong (1979) noted that "a 1974 survey conducted by the National Center for Health Statistics estimated 3.3% of the United States population would qualify for independent living services." (p. 8) The survey concluded that these services should remediate personal environmental difficulties encountered by the disabled person.

Brown (1979) outlines the curricular content that should be addressed by independent living services. Specifically:

. . . curricular content be organized into domains or divisions, i.e., vocational, leisure/recreational and community functioning and domestic living. (p. 35)

These tasks of daily living are considered common but diverse. East (1980, p. 172) stated, "It is through the daily, the homely, the intimate, that one really lives." The tasks involved such as food preparation, cleaning, shopping, laundry, the selection of clothing and clothing repair can present constant challenges and problems to the visually impaired adult (Inana 1982, p. 36). Those developing rehabilitative instruction materials to reduce these problems will need to account for the unique characteristics of the recently blinded individual.

The Recently Blind Adult Learner

The recently blind adult is faced with performing independent living tasks that will involve many concepts and manipulative skills. The needs of these individuals will vary according to the onset of their impairment. The individual that was blind from birth or at an early age will need special help in developing concepts of form and space (Durr and Bell 1980). Durr and Bell (1980) conclude that an individual who has been blind for a short time will need special help in adapting to the conditions and surroundings.

The special need of the recently blind adult was the topic of concern in a report on Disability and Rehabilitation as a part of the 1971 White House Conference on Aging. The report was designed for the Special Concerns Session on Aging and Blindness to focus national

attention on the special needs of the blind (Lobuts 1978). The report recommendations include:

. . . (1) The need to provide older blind persons with rehabilitation services; (2) Increased use of low vision aids; (3) Widespread mobility instruction; (4) Rehabilitation adjustment, mobility instruction, etc., should be made available to all persons who needs them, and not only those who are employable; (5) Rehabilitation personnel should be trained in service to the aging through specially funded programs; and (6) Grant applications for research and demonstration projects for the older disabled person who would be given high priority. (p. 4)

The population of visually impaired adults is growing. In 1978, the American Foundation for the Blind (1978) predicted that in the years ahead greater longevity will likely increase the percentage of visually impaired persons in relation to the total population so that by the year 2000, 1.5 million elderly will suffer severe visual impairment. Of these 80 percent will be over 75 years of age. .

The four leading causes of blindness according to Dickerman (1977) are diabetes, cataracts, glaucoma, and macular degeneration. Dickerman also reported that two out of every three elderly persons cite poor vision as their number one health problem and that half of the known cases of legal blindness occur in individuals 65 years or older.

Realizing the seriousness of increasing numbers of visually impaired adults, the American Foundation for the Blind has developed a policy statement entitled, "Aging and Visual Loss" (Worden 1976). The policy states:

It is generally agreed that in today's society the older population is a victim of social neglect. A good portion of that population is visually impaired -- some have been blind since birth; others are newly blinded; and still others are confronted with gradual visual decline (Which interferes with their ability to function independently) . . . (p. 443)

Rehabilitation for independent living skills are a high priority for the recently blind adult. Lobuts (1978) addresses characteristics and the need for the blind adult to successfully master skills to increase independence. In his words:

In the effort to resume an accustomed way of life, self-confidence and self-respect are essential. Advanced years, coupled with visual loss, often seriously reduces healthy personality components. Bearing this in mind, with few exceptions, introduction of a relatively simple adaptive aid or skill constituted the client's first lesson. Mastery of a new skill, regardless of the degree of complication, served to build self-confidence to heighten interest in efforts to increase independence and to enhance trust in the client-teacher relationship. (p. 13)

In the following statement, Kreps (1977) further describes the characteristics of the adult learner:

The adult learner has an entirely different learning environment. He/she is present orientated. He/she is involved in immediate life-choices. He/she must learn to solve specific problems. Self-motivation is a major factor in adult learning. The approach to the adult learner must be practical. The learning situation must give immediate useable feedback. Motivation of the adult learner must be internal. Success in small tasks aids the adult in recognizing his own ability to learn. The next step is to offer challenges and responsibilities which the student can handle. (p. 54)

The needs and characteristics of the growing number of recently blind adults constitutes major concerns in providing appropriate instruction.

The State-of-the-Art Competency Based Instructional Packages

The visually impaired adult presents unique and challenging problems in the classroom. Typically, the instructors rely heavily on visual cues. The visual impairment interferes with the learning process. Furthermore the instruction must be appropriate to adults who are experiencing the impairments. Vallentutti and Bender (1982) emphasize these concerns:

. . . to design relevant learning experiences, professional, surrogate parents, and other advocates must be judicious in their design. They must select activities and materials and provide experiences that are applicable to adults. This emphasis is especially difficult when working with individuals during the years beyond formal schooling. The more mature and experienced the learner, the greater the challenge. Finding motivating instructional materials and methods is troublesome because they must not be infantile, juvenile, demeaning, or unrealistic. (p. 1)

Competency based education then becomes a vital instructional tool in developing units of instructional appropriate to the visually impaired adult who is in need of acquiring daily living skills. Competency based education utilizes specific competencies derived from tasks that provide a means for structuring a curriculum (Blankenship and Moerchen 1979, p. 246).

Chamberlain and Kelly (1981) delineate six characteristics of competency based education. They are:

1. Competencies to be demonstrated, or objectives are stated in behavior terms and sequenced according to the needs and abilities of the students.

2. Student achievement is measured by determining if pre-established level of competence . . . have been met.
3. Students are informed of the level of competence
4. The instructional program provides a variety of learning experiences that use different teaching methods
5. Since attainment of specified competencies is the purpose of the educational program, time is not a factor
6. Student assessment of competency performance is the primary source of evidence used in the evaluation process. (p. 32)

In reviewing relevant independent living curriculums and units of instructions for the visually impaired, three particular studies are appropriate. The first study is entitled "Clothing Instruction: An Instructional Package with Adaptations for Visually Impaired Individuals" (Crawford 1976). The focus of this instructional package is to direct the home economics teacher toward successful integration of the visually impaired student into the regular classroom. The content is appropriate for the junior high age level. The instructional package includes: teacher guidelines for successful mainstreaming, objectives, generalizations, pretest, learning activities, posttest, further activities and suggested resources. The competency based curriculum would require the length of a school year to complete. The units of instruction would be used with students who have been blind since birth or an early age and needed to develop concepts of space and form. The student would also need to have writing skills to complete the clothing repair unit.

The second study is entitled "Mainstreaming Strategies in Home Economics" (Durr and Bell 1980). Durr and Bell (1980) designed a manual to aid vocational homemaking teachers in Texas to provide instruction for handicapped students in the regular classroom. Their manual related to six types of handicapped students including the visually impaired. Durr and Bell (1980) describe each handicap and the problems and teaching strategies to meet them. They do not include behavioral objectives for apparel maintenance but they do outline teaching strategies that could be used.

The final study from the Greater Pittsburgh Guild for the Blind has a program entitled: "Household Arts Curriculum and Guide" (Markle 1977). Markle (1977) suggests specific experiences, procedures and techniques in developing the skill and confidence necessary to function in the household setting. The Guide is offered as an instructional strategy and is organized into seven units including basic and advanced sewing. The Guide utilizes a fifteen week training program and includes student evaluation forms but does not measure the actual degree of skills acquired by the visually impaired student.

The three curriculums served as a guide and resource in the development of the apparel maintenance competency based unit of instruction for the Montana Association for the Blind.

The Need for Apparel Maintenance

Shoepke (1979) conducted a needs assessment study in three community college areas to examine the extent to which severely handicapped adults have acquired 22 life centered competencies. The

results were organized for each disability group to determine the placement of priorities for learning opportunities. The priorities varied from group to group. Specifically, Shoepke (1979) stated the number one priority for the visually impaired. In her own words:

Visually impaired individuals need opportunities to develop skills in the area of buying and caring for clothes. (p. 15)

In addition to the priority needs of each disabled group, Shoepke (1979) focused on the services available to meet those needs. Her results conclude that clothing needs for the visually impaired are not being adequately met by the available services.

Summary

The literature suggests that the population of visually impaired adults is growing. Research activities reflect the need for this growing population to develop their own resources to cope with the environment. Independent living skills will enable the blind to become a contributing member of a household. The rehabilitation instruction to develop these skills will need to recognize the unique characteristics of recently blind adults. Competency based instruction then becomes a vital tool to develop units of instruction appropriate to the blind adult. Instruction to develop skills in buying and caring for clothes has been assessed as a high priority for the visually impaired adults. Current instructional units for the blind have been analyzed and deficiencies have been found. Attention therefore turns to the development of an apparel maintenance unit of instruction for the Montana Association for the Blind.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to determine if performance based adaptive sewing skills will increase specified apparel maintenance capabilities of recently visually impaired adults. Specifically, the skills were taught within an intensive summer workshop. The workshop was a part of the Summer Orientation Program for the Blind sponsored by the Montana Association for the Blind. This chapter identifies the procedure used to obtain the data derived from the research.

Population

The study utilized a population consisting of recently visually impaired adults. The purposive sample included the participants in the 1984 Summer Orientation Program for the Blind. The population consisted of ten students. The criteria for enrollment for the summer Orientation for the Blind was based on recommendations through counselors affiliated with the Social Rehabilitative Services in Helena, Montana. The final determination of placement into apparel maintenance was based upon mutually agreed input from both staff instructors and the students' conveyed interest in taking the class.

Design of the Study

This study was conducted within the framework of quasi-experimental research whereby the study is not based on random assignment of subjects to groups. A one group pretest, posttest design was used. (Appendix A)

The total unit of instruction for the apparel maintenance workshop course was designed to teach a hierarchy of skill competencies. (See Appendices) This performance based type of instruction required preestablished levels of competence. This hierarchy denotes that the first and most basic skills must be acquired before the student progresses to the next skill i.e., the student must be able to thread a needle before progressing to the next skill.

The students were given the pretest on an individual basis to assess their level of adaptive sewing skills for apparel maintenance. The instructor made available all necessary tools to complete the skills. A time limit was not assigned. The instructor then recorded three observations for each skill. These observations included; 1) the amount of assistance needed to complete the skill, 2) mastery of the skill, and 3) the number of attempts needed to complete the skill.

The unit of instruction was then taught. The six objectives; threading a needle, sewing on a button, repairing a hem, patching a garment, repairing a seam and applying safety procedures, were then implemented. The implementation of the objectives took three weeks to complete.

At the completion of the unit of instruction the students were given the posttest. The posttest was given to each student in their respective class. All the materials needed to complete the test were available and a time limit was not assigned. The instructor then recorded the three observations on the posttest as previously described in the pretest.

Development of the Unit of Instruction for Apparel Maintenance

The unit of instruction for apparel maintenance was developed by the researcher during the 1982 and 1983 Summer Orientation for the Blind. During the 1983 program the objectives of the unit of instruction were implemented and then revised. Following the 1983 program, the researcher presented the objectives, the pre-posttest to a jury of seven professionals recognized in the fields of rehabilitation, curriculum development and research. The jury evaluated the pre-posttest for content validity. The pre-posttest was then modified. The unit of instruction and the modified pre-posttest was then implemented in the 1984 summer orientation program. The 1984 instructor who implemented the program was trained by the researcher.

Collection of Data

The collection of data evolved primarily around the pre-posttest tabulations. A Vision Checklist Summary Sheet (Appendix B) and a Consent Form (Appendix C) were also completed.

The Vision Checklist Summary Sheet was used to collect demographic and acuity information on each student prior to the

beginning of the summer program. The consent form was signed by each student after the research program was explained and described to the student as designated by Montana State University's Committee on Human Subjects in Research.

The pre-posttest tabulation consists of three separate observations collected by the instructor. These observations are the following: 1) the amount of assistance needed to complete the skill, 2) the mastery of the skill, and 3) the number of attempts made by the student to complete the skill. The results of the data from this unit of instruction are thoroughly tabulated and presented in Chapter IV of this study.

Summary

The methodology used in conducting this study focused on the increase of apparel maintenance of the recently visually impaired adult. The procedures employed for this study represented a comprehensive effort to address the skills that were acquired during the summer orientation program.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION OF THE DATA

Student Characteristics

The data in Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the students involved as taken from the Vision Checklist Summary sheets. As denoted by the table, all of the students participating were female. Of these students six or 60% of the students were over the age of sixty. The ages ranged from 22 to 86 years old. The mean age was 62.6 years old.

There were five causes of blindness. They include; Coates Disease, Macular Degeneration, Glaucoma, Retinitis Pigmentosa, and Diabetes. Diabetes, Macular Degeneration and Glaucoma are the three leading causes of blindness. Coates Disease and Retinitis Pigmentosa are innate diseases that eventually caused the students' blindness.

Seven or 70% of the legally blind students did have partial sight. Three or 30% had no vision. One of the partially sighted students completed the apparel maintenance unit of instruction wearing night shades.

Observation Scoring

The instructor scored each student using three observation scales for the six skills. The three observation scales are in the area of Assistance, Mastery of the Skill and the Number of Attempts to complete the skill.

Table 1. The 1984 Apparel Maintenance Unit of Instruction Student Characteristics.

Data Elements	Number of Students	Percent of Students
<u>Sex</u>		
Male	0	0%
Female	10	100%
<u>Age</u>		
20-40	2	20%
41-60	1	10%
61-80	4	40%
81-90	3	30%
<u>Cause of Blindness</u>		
Coates Disease	1	10%
Macular Degeneration	2	20%
Glaucoma	2	20%
Retinitis Pigmentosa	2	20%
Diabetes	3	30%
<u>Severity of Blindness</u>		
Partially Sighted	7	70%
No Vision	3	30%

The first observation was Assistance. The amount of Assistance was separated into five levels. The five levels include;

1) understands; does independently, 2) needs little assistance, 3) needs much assistance, 4) beginning ability, and 5) cannot do. The amount of assistance the student needed was then evaluated numerically by the instructor for the pre-posttest. Each level was given a numerical value, i.e., the student observed at the first level, (understands; does independently), would receive a score of one. A student who had beginning ability would receive a score of four. The scores were then tallied for the six skills.

The second observation was the Mastery of the Skill. The Mastery of the Skill was separated into three levels. The three levels

include; 1) skill is completed correctly, 2) skill is completed but not satisfactorily, and 3) skill is not completed. The instructor evaluated each student numerically on the pre-posttest. The levels were assigned the following number of points: level 1--1 point, level 2--2 points, level 3--3 points. The scores for the six skills were then tallied.

The third observation was the Number of Attempts by the student to complete the skill. The instructor recorded the actual number of attempts by the student in trying to complete the skill. The Number of Attempts were then tallied for all six skills.

In all three observation areas a lower score corresponds to the gaining of the adaptive sewing skills. The best possible score is six. A six would represent a score of one for each of the six skills scored. The next section will describe the results of the three observation scales.

Observation Results

The results of the observations are presented in Tables 2, 3, and 4. The ten students were evaluated for each of the three observation areas.

The first observation area, the amount of Assistance, had the smallest amount of change of the observation areas. Of the ten students, four did not need any assistance at the time of the pretest. The posttest reported two more students who needed no assistance to complete the skill. Thus overall the students needed 25% less assistance by the instructor to complete the skills.

Table 2. Pre-Posttest Results of Observation Area Assistance.

Student	Assistance		
	Pretest	Posttest	Gain
1	18	9	9
2	8	7	1
3	11	6	5
4	6	6	0
5	6	6	0
6	12	8	4
7	6	6	0
8	7	6	1
9	6	6	0
10	9	7	2

Mastery of the Skill, the second observation area, is the most significant observation area. This observation area actually represents if the student completed the skill. According to the

Table 3. Pre-Posttest Results of Observation Area Mastery.

Student	Mastery of the Skill		
	Pretest	Posttest	Gain
1	12	7	5
2	9	6	3
3	9	6	3
4	8	6	2
5	9	6	3
6	10	7	3
7	9	6	3
8	7	6	1
9	7	6	1
10	10	6	4

pretest findings none of the students had mastered all six skills correctly. The remaining two students had one skill that they could

complete but not satisfactorily. There was a 31% increase in the ability to complete the skills correctly.

The final observation area, the Number of Attempts to complete the skill, displayed a significant change from the pretest to the posttest. Nine out of the ten students decreased the amount of attempts to complete the skill. At the time of the posttest six students made one attempt for each skill. There was a 44% decrease in the amount of attempts needed to complete the skill.

Table 4. Pre-Posttest Results of Observation Area Attempts.

Students	Number of Attempts		
	Pretest	Posttest	Gain
1	38	10	28
2	7	6	1
3	10	7	3
4	7	6	1
5	8	6	2
6	13	8	5
7	7	6	1
8	9	6	3
9	6	6	0
10	17	7	10

Results of Skill Objectives

The apparel maintenance unit of instruction contained six adaptive sewing skill objectives. The six objectives include; 1) threading a needle, 2) sewing on a button, 3) repairing a seam, 4) repairing a hem, 5) patching a garment, and 6) applying safety procedures.

Table 5 reports the six objectives for a combined total of the students by observation areas. Pre-posttest scores are reported. A score of ten exemplifies the highest score achievable.

Table 5. Results of Skill Objectives by Observation Areas

Objective	Assistance		Mastery		Attempts	
	Pre-	Posttest	Pre-	Posttest	Pre-	Posttest
Thread a Needle	13	10	10	10	22	10
Sew on a Button	13	11	14	10	14	10
Repair a Seam	10	10	14	10	10	10
Repair a Hem	19	11	19	10	27	13
Patch a Garment	23	14	21	12	35	14
Safety Procedures	11	11	12	10	14	10

The first objective, threading a needle, was a skill all students at the pretest level could complete. Three students needed more assistance and the number of attempts averaged 2.2 attempts per student to thread a needle. At the time of the posttest all students could thread a needle independently with one attempt.

Sewing on a button was not mastered at the pretest level by all of the students. The amount of assistance and the number of attempts decreased at the posttest level. The ten students at the conclusion of the apparel maintenance unit of instruction could sew on a button with one attempt. One student needed some assistance.

The least amount of change appeared in repairing a seam. The mastery of the skill was the observation area that displayed improvement. There were four students who could complete the skill but not satisfactorily. The posttest findings report each student being able to repair a seam with no assistance and one attempt.

Repairing a hem was a more difficult skill for the students to acquire. The pretest scores on all observations are significantly high. Each student after the completion of the apparel maintenance unit of instruction could repair a hem correctly. The amount of assistance and the number of attempts dropped significantly for the pre- to posttest levels.

The most difficult skill was patching a garment. It was the only skill that all of the students did not master. Of the ten students, two of the students could complete the skill but not satisfactorily at the posttest level. The remaining eight students completed the skill correctly. The amount of assistance and the number of attempts to complete the skill at the pretest level were dramatically high. After the apparel maintenance unit of instruction, the scores decreased. There was still need for assistance and more than one attempt was needed for four students.

The last objective, applying safety procedures, consists of locating a dropped needle and operating an iron safely. At the pretest level, eight out of ten students could complete the skill correctly at the posttest level. One of the ten students needed assistance at the conclusion of the apparel maintenance unit of instruction.

Summary

The data presented in this chapter provides all the information collected by the instructor for the 1984 Summer Orientation Program for the Blind enrolled in the apparel maintenance unit of instruction.

Based upon this data, summary, conclusions and recommendations regarding the increase of specified apparel maintenance capabilities of recently visually impaired adults are reported in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to summarize the study which involved teaching recently visually impaired adults adaptive sewing skills in an effort to increase apparel maintenance capabilities. An overview of the study is briefly presented. The major findings are summarized and conclusions offered. Finally, recommendations for further study in working with the visually impaired are presented.

Overview

Research activities reflect that the population of visually impaired is growing. The need for this growing population to develop their own resources to cope with their environment becomes essential. The Montana Association for the Blind is devoted to helping the visually impaired gain independent living skills. The curriculum of their summer orientation program is based on an educational philosophy which will enable recently blind individuals to help themselves.

The apparel maintenance unit of instruction was designed to teach the recently blind adult adaptive sewing skills. These sewing skills would enable the visually impaired to repair their own clothes. The apparel maintenance unit of instruction was developed and revised

during the 1982 and 1983 summer orientation programs by the researcher. The instructor administered the pretest and posttest and taught the apparel maintenance unit of instruction to the 1984 summer orientation students.

Summary

The population utilized in the apparel maintenance unit of instruction consisted of ten female students. The mean age was 62.6 years. There were seven students who were partially sighted and three with no vision.

The pre-posttest consisted of six adaptive sewing skill objectives and three areas of observations for each of the objectives. The three observations include; 1) the amount of assistance needed to complete the skill, 2) the mastery of the skill, and 3) the number of attempts to complete the skill.

There was a decrease in the amount of assistance and the number of attempts to complete the skill from the pretest to posttest levels. The amount of assistance needed to complete the skill decreased 25% and the number of attempts decreased by 44%.

The mastery of the skill, the most significant observation area, reported eight out of ten students mastering all skills correctly. The remaining two students could complete the skill but not satisfactorily.

Five out of the six adaptive sewing skills were acquired by the ten students. The adaptive sewing skill, patching a garment, proved to be the most difficult skill to acquire. Two students were not able

to complete the skill correctly and four students still needed assistance to complete the skill.

Conclusions

According to the findings, the apparel maintenance unit of instruction increased specified adaptive sewing skills. Positive gains were displayed in each sewing skill areas. The amount of assistance and the number of attempts to complete the skill decreased for each student.

The pretest scores illustrated beginning levels of adaptive sewing skills while the posttest scores displayed the acquired ability to perform adaptive sewing skills. The acquired adaptive sewing skills increased the student's apparel maintenance capabilities in their course to gain independent living skills.

Recommendations

On the basis of findings and conclusions of this study, the researcher believes the following recommendations merit consideration:

1. The recently visually impaired adult needs to be assessed to determine the orientation services needed for the individual to become an independent citizen.
2. Non-profit rehabilitation programs need to measure the actual skill levels achieved in independent living classes. The programs then can make determinations for upgrading curriculums.

3. At the conclusion of the rehabilitation program each student should be evaluated as to the independent living skills that were not acquired during the program. A follow up program through Visual Service should be implemented.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

PRE-POSTTEST FOR THE APPAREL MAINTENANCE UNIT OF INSTRUCTION

PRE / POSTTEST

MONTANA ASSOCIATION FOR THE BLIND

CLASS TITLE: Apparel Maintenance

STUDENT: _____

TEACHER: _____

DATE: _____

GENERAL OBJECTIVE: The recently blind adult will be able to perform adaptive sewing skills for apparel maintenance.

OBSERVATIONAL LEVEL CODE

ASSISTANCE

- 1- Understands; does independently
- 2- Needs little assistance
- 3- Needs much assistance
- 4- Beginning ability
- 5- Cannot do

MASTERY OF THE SKILL

- 1 - Skill is completed correctly
- 2- Skill is completed but not satisfactorily
- 3- Skill is not completed

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE SKILLS	ASSISTANCE	MASTERY	NO. OF ATTEMPTS
1. Thread a Needle- The student can thread a needle using one of the needle threading procedures and knot the end of the thread.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3	 _____
2. Sew on a button- The student can mark and sew on a button on a blouse. The button is positioned correctly, is secure and lays smoothly.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3	 _____

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE SKILLS	ASSISTANCE	MASTERY	NO. OF ATTEMPTS
3. Repair a Seam-	1	1	
The student can repair a	2		
seam in a blouse using a	3	2	_____
running and overcast stitch.	4		
The stitches are 1/4 inch in	5	3	
length or less and are			
straight.			
4. Repair a Hem-	1	1	
The student can repair a hem	2		
using a whip stitch. The	3	2	_____
stitches are approximately	4		
1/2 inch apart and they	5	3	
catch both pieces of			
material.			
5. Patch a Garment-	1	1	
The student can apply a patch	2		
using double faced inter-	3	2	_____
facing and an overcast stitch.	4		
The patch is smoothly on and	5	3	
the stitches catch the edges			
of the hole.			
6. Apply Safety Procedures-	1	1	
The student can safely locate	2		
a dropped needle and operate	3	2	_____
the iron safely.	4		
	5	3	

COMMENTS:

APPENDIX B

VISION CHECKLIST SUMMARY SHEET

DATE: _____

VISION CHECKLIST SUMMARY SHEET

Student _____ Age _____ Marital Status _____

Home Address _____

Home Telephone Number _____

Dormitory Room Number _____

Dormitory Telephone Number _____

Spouse or Guardian Address _____

PHYSICAL INFORMATION

Nature of eye condition _____

Onset of condition _____

Educational implications of eye condition _____

Glasses prescribed _____

Acuity (near vision) _____

Acuity (far vision) _____

Color vision _____

Preferred eye _____

Preferred field of view _____

Best gaze posture, if any _____

Photophobia _____

Sunshade prescribed _____

Other impairments, if any _____

APPENDIX C
CONSENT FORM

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY
Committee on Human Subjects in Research

CONSENT FORM

Title of Project: Apparel Maintenance for the Recently Blind Adult

Name of Researcher: Rebecca Rolle

Name of Person Briefing Subjects: Heather Lott

I, _____, am a willing participant in this project and have been informed of the following items:

- I. I have been informed of the general description of the project, its purpose and benefits;
- II. I have been given an explanation as to why I have been asked to participate;
- III. I have been given an explanation of my specific involvement and potential risks, if any;
- IV. I understand as a participant that I may withdraw from the experiment at any time that I desire;
- V. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the experiment from the principal investigator and these questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

Signature

APPENDIX D

APPAREL MAINTENANCE UNIT OF INSTRUCTION

AN APPAREL MAINTENANCE UNIT OF INSTRUCTION FOR
THE RECENTLY VISUALLY IMPAIRED ADULT

General Objective

The recent visually impaired adult will be able to perform adaptive sewing skills for apparel maintenance.

Special Objectives

Maintain a sewing kit	Apply Safety procedures	Thread a needle	Sew on a button
Repair a seam	Repair a hem	Patch a garment	

Functional Context

When the visually impaired adult needs to repair a garment, he or she will locate their sewing kit and repair the garment.

Cognitive Dimension

Identification and differentiation of types of maintenance a garment needs.

Psychomotor Aspect

Adaptive sewing skills necessary for individual apparel maintenance.

Health and Safety Factors

Avoid stabbing cutting and burning themselves.

APPAREL MAINTENANCE DAILY SCHEDULE

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY/WEEKEND
7/6 7/8 Before Program				Meeting with instructor. Unpack supplies. Set up sewing boxes. Prepare samples. Speak to group on program. Compile vision checklist.	
7/9 7/13	Intro. Set up indiv. Appt. 2/class	Appts. Interview Pretest Consent Form	Appts.	Appts.	Appts.
7/16 7/27	Assemble sewing boxes	Needle threading	Sew buttons	Mark and sew buttons on blouse	Safety procedure (Russ demo)
7/23 7/27	Repair a seam Practice sample	Repair a seam in garment	Repair a hem Practice sample	Repair a hem	Repair a hem with fusible interfacing
7/30 8/3	Patch garment Fusible inter- facing	Posttest	Posttest	Posttest	Inventory

Projects: Kleenex Holders and Softboxes
Samples and patterns in supplies

APPAREL MAINTENANCE UNIT OF INSTRUCTION

OBJECTIVES

1. Maintain a Sewing Kit:

- a. Label sewing box so each student can identify their box. A fishing tackle box works well.
- b. Supplies to include in the sewing box:
 - scissors
 - magnet
 - large head pins
 - wrist pin cushion
 - spools of thread/pill bottles if necessary to make colors
 - wire loop and needles or
self threading needles and tile or
Hexe needle threader and needles
 - thimble, if used
 - seam gauge, marked
 - double faced fusible interfacing
 - extra buttons
 - tape
 - bandaids

2. Thread a Needle:

- a. Identify needle threading procedure that is best suited to the student.
 - wire loop
 - self threading needle and tile
 - Hexe needle threader

b. Knot thread

3. Sew on a Button:

- a. large four-hole button/large shank button
small four-hole button/small shank button
- b. mark and sew three buttons on a sample garment

4. Repair a Seam:

- a. practice running and overcast stitch
- b. repair seam on sample garments, (blouse and pants)

5. Repair a Hem:

- a. practice whipstitch
- b. repair hem on sample garments (blouse and pants)
- c. hem a sample using double faced fusible interfacing
- d. hem a pair of pants with double faced fusible interfacing

6. Patch a Garment:

- a. practice cutting and ironing
- b. repair tear on sample garment with double faced fusible interfacing and hand stitches

7. Safety Procedures:

- a. locate dropped needle (and objects)

- circular motion

- magnet

- b. ironing procedures

SIX BASIC RULES FOR TEACHING THE BLIND

1. Allow enough time. Most activities take a blind person longer at first.
2. Be organized. Have a definite system of storage, clear cut work procedures, and a consistent method of marking objects for identification.
3. Build a clear mental image (word picture) of the object with which you are working and the steps involved in the project.
4. Teach with supervised practice only. The blind person should not practice alone until he/she has mastered the project.
5. Use short, daily practice sessions. Fifteen to thirty minutes are best, repeated each day.
6. Be consistent in methods and terminology each time you explain or repeat a procedure.

Date: _____

INTERVIEW

STUDENT _____

SEWING EXPERIENCE PRIOR TO IMPAIRMENT

1. Before your impairment what type of sewing did you do? (if any)

By sewing machine _____

By hand _____

None _____

2. What type of clothes / accessories / projects have you sewed?

Clothes: pants; skirts; dresses; blazers; blouses

Accessories: scarves; belts; aprons; other _____

Projects: window treatments; bedspreads; table clothes;

other _____

3. Did you repair your clothes? _____

4. Did you repair other peoples clothes? _____

5. How often did you sew?

Constantly

Occasionally

Almost Never

6. How would you describe your attitude towards sewing prior to your impairment?

Excellent

Above Average

Average

Below Average

Poor

SEWING EXPERIENCE AFTER IMPAIRMENT

1. After your impairment what type of sewing do you presently do?

By sewing machine _____

By hand _____

None _____

2. What type of clothes / accessories / projects have you sewed since your impairment? _____
3. Are you presently repairing your own clothes? _____
4. Are you presently repairing clothes for other people? _____
5. How often do you sew?
- Constantly Occasionally Never
- If never, have you attempted to sew since your impairment? _____
-
6. How would you describe your present attitude towards sewing?
- Excellent Above Average Average Below Average Poor
7. What sewing skills are you presently interested in acquiring?
- _____ threading a needle
- _____ sewing on a button
- _____ maintaining a sewing kit
- _____ repairing a hem
- _____ repairing a seam
- _____ patch a garment
- _____ apply safety procedures to your sewing
- _____ ironing skills
- Other skills _____
8. Are you interested in a sewing project? Yes No
- If yes, what type of project? _____
9. Do you have a sewing machine? _____
- Has it been adapted? _____