Fitchburg State University

EDUCATOR Programs

Comprehensive Syllabus

Spring 2022

# The What’s the Complexity Framework:

# Designing a visually accessible school day for the child with CVI.

**3 Graduate** Credit hours (40 Continuing Education Hours)

April 18 – June 12, 2022

Number of Sessions: 8 Number of Contact Hours: 40

## Instructor: Matt Tietjen

## Office: Perkins School for the Blind

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## Course Description:

Participants will move toward an advanced understanding of the CVI Characteristics (Roman-Lantzy) with an emphasis on how they manifest in students who score in late Phase II and Phase III on The CVI Range (Roman-Lantzy). We will study the characteristic “Difficulty with Visual Complexity” in depth, explore its central relationship to the other characteristics, and examine the ways in which it can impact behavior and access to education for children with CVI. Our study of visual complexity will integrate the literature on cortical and cerebral visual impairment.

Participants will learn how to use The What’s the Complexity Framework to evaluate the complexity of school environments, tasks and materials and to guide educational teams in creating more visually accessible, appropriate learning activities for children with CVI. In addition to learning how to rate the complexity level of a particular environment or education task, we will also emphasize the importance of balancing the complexity of the environment and task in each activity, managing cumulative complexity and visual fatigue throughout the school day, assessing interpretation of two-dimensional images, and providing direct instruction in salient features.

Following our exploration of the What’s the Complexity Framework, participants will turn to the CVI Sensory Balance Framework and examine how teams can use it to guide CVI-conscious learning-media planning.

Learning activities will include lectures, readings, written assignments, a weekly discussion forum, a video case study, and hands-on practice using The What’s the Complexity Framework with participants’ own students.

## Texts:

Lueck, Amanda H., and Gordon N. Dutton (Eds). (2015) *Vision and the Brain: Understanding*

*Cerebral Visual Impairment in Children*. New York: American Foundation for the Blind.

**This text will be provided within the Fall 2021 course**

Roman-Lantzy, Christine (Ed.) (2019). *Cortical Visual Assessment: Advanced Principles*.

Louisville, KY: American Printing House for the Blind.

Roman-Lantzy, Christine; Tietjen, Matt (2020). *CVI Sensory Balance: An Approach for Learning*

*Media Planning for Children with CVI*. Watertown, MA: Perkins School for the Blind.

## Fitchburg State University Teacher Education Conceptual Framework

An 8-pointed star is titled "Educator as Reflective Leader". 4 of the points are labeled: Knowledgeable, Ethical, Skillful, Caring.

### Learning Outcomes / Objectives:

### Participants will learn:

* How to use The What’s the Complexity Framework to guide the educational team in designing an accessible, appropriate school day for the child with CVI.
* About the CVI Characteristics (Roman-Lantzy) in depth, with a particular emphasis on complexity and its relationship to the other characteristics.
* How the CVI Characteristics (Roman-Lantzy) manifest later in The Range, with an emphasis on late Phase II and Phase III.
* How CVI affects behavior
* About the primary barriers to visual access for children with CVI.
* About the relationship and overlap between the approaches and principles described in both the cortical and cerebral visual impairment literature.
* How to assess a child’s ability to interpret two-dimensional images
* How to provide direct instruction in salient features and interpretation of two-dimensional materials
* About interventions, including strategies for math and literacy instruction.
* Describe how a school team can make learning media decisions that balance the students need for the most efficient, immediate access to the curriculum with an emphasis on opportunities for visual development.
* Create a Learning Media Profile for a student, outlining the ways in which the student’s learning modalities can support one another in school activities.

This course will address the dispositions of the Conceptual Framework in the following way(s):

1. **Knowledge**: As a result of the learning experiences in the course, you will become more cognizant of:

* How the CVI characteristics (Roman-Lantzy) impact students later in The Range, particularly those in late Phase II and Phase III
* The “difficulty with visual complexity” characteristic and its central relationship to many of the other characteristics.
* The primary barriers to visual access for children with CVI.
* The relationship and overlap between the approaches and principles described in both the cortical and cerebral visual impairment literature.
* The family member’s essential role in the process of designing a visually appropriate school day for their children.

1. **Caring**: As a result of the learning experiences in the course, you will become more competent in your ability to:

* Use The What’s the Complexity Framework to:
  + 1. Guide the team in selecting appropriate visual learning media
    2. Identify appropriate educational tasks for the child with CVI
    3. Determine appropriate learning environments for a child with CVI
    4. Determine the appropriate balance between the complexity level of the task and environment for a given activity.
    5. Evaluate the complexity level of a given environment
    6. Evaluate the complexity level of a given task
    7. Guide the educational team in addressing instances of visual complexity as they occur throughout a single activity or entire school day.
    8. Determine the most appropriate scheduling of activities to reduce cumulative complexity and resulting visual fatigue.
    9. Determine a pro-active visual break schedule
* **Ethical**: As a result of the learning experiences in the course, you will become more competent in your ability to:
  + Explain vision and CVI to educational teams
  + Identify the main barriers to visual access throughout the school day for children with CVI
  + Explain to education teams how inappropriate visual demands can affect the behavior of children with CVI.
  + Guide educational teams in developing an accessible school day for children with CVI.

### Instructional Strategies

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| x ­ Lecture | x Data Collection and Analysis |
| x Discussion/Questioning | Pre-Practicum |
| ­ Laboratory | Role Playing/Simulation |
| x Problem Finding/Solving | x Independent Learning |
| \_ Discovery | \_ Field Trips |
| \_ Interviewing | Computer Applications |
| \_ Collaborative Learning Groups | x Viewing or Listening to Followed  by Discussing |
| x Reflective Responses | Other |
| Creating Visual Illustrations of  Concepts |  |

### Technology Initiatives:

Users of the Fitchburg State University technology systems are subject to all applicable federal, state, and international technology laws. Questions regarding regulations may be directed to the Office of Information Technology.

#### Candidates will utilize technology as:

* Access to the course
* a communication method (email)
* a research method

## Course Requirements:

The required assignments for this course are as follows:

### Post-Tests session quizzes:

There will be a post-test (quiz) in each of the seven sessions. Participants are required to complete all of the quizzes. The quizzes will be multiple choice and true/false questions. Completion of the quizzes satisfies the requirement. However, failure to complete them will result in a loss of points toward the final grade.

The rubric point scale will be used to assess your work based on a 30 point scale.

There will be 7 post-tests = 210

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Rubric for Weekly Post-Tests** | **30 points** | **0 points** |
| **Completion of Post-Test/quiz**  **Max pts: 30** | Post-tests are completed within the specified timeframe | Post-test is not completed in the specified timeframe |

### Discussion Forums:

There will be a discussion forum assignment in each of the eight sessions. Each participant is required to contribute to each forum using information and knowledge gathered from the class lecture, assigned reading, website visits, etc. Participation in the discussion forums is critical for maximizing your learning experiences in this course. You are required to be part of an online community who interact, through discussion to enhance and support the professional development of the group. Part of the assessment criteria for the course includes assessing the quality and quantity of your participation in the discussion forum.

Some characteristics that are considered to be part of excellent discussion contributions are outlined below.

* **A minimum of two posts is required**. You should submit your initial post early in the session, and your subsequent responses to the posts of other participants at timely intervals within the duration of the session. Keep in mind that the goal is to have a dynamic discussion that lasts throughout the entire session.
* Your posts and responses should be thorough and thoughtful. Just posting an “I agree” or “Good ideas” will not be considered adequate. Support your statements with examples, experiences, or references. You are, however, encouraged to be brief – keep each post and response to one or two short paragraphs. Keep in mind that your fellow participants will be reading and responding to you, too.
* Make certain to address the discussion prompt(s). This does not mean you should not extend the topic, but do not stray from the topic.
* Discussions occur when there is dialogue. Build upon the posts and responses of other learners to create discussion threads. Make sure you revisit the discussion forum and respond (if necessary) to what other participants have posted to your initial responses.
* When relevant, add to the discussion by including prior knowledge, work experiences, references, web sites, resources, etc. (giving credit when appropriate).
* Your contributions to the discussions should be complete and free of grammatical or structural errors.

The rubric point scale will be used to assess your work based on a 20 point scale.

Eight discussion forums are required at 20 points possible for each Rubric = 160

* 5 pt. possible for appropriate incorporation of and reference to the readings
* 10 pts. possible for the appropriate number of responses (two responses per discussion – one to the question and one to another participant’s post)
* 5 pts. possible for quality response (well-written, appropriate response to the question/topic).

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Discussion Forum Rubric** | **20 points** | **10 points** | **0 points** |
| Incorporation of and reference to the readings in discussion responses  Max pts: 5 | Max pts: 5 | Responses include reference to the readings assigned for the week. | Responses do not include any reference to the readings for the week. |
| Quality, well-written response  Max pts: 10 | Responses clearly address the discussion topic including student’s own thoughts as well as the responses posted by others. | Responses address the discussion topic but do not respond to responses posted by others. | Responses do not address the discussion topic. |
| **Appropriate number of responses**  **Max pts: 5** | A minimum of two responses are posted. | Only one response is posted | No responses are posted. |

All discussions must be posted by the posted due date.

### Assignments:

There will be one to two assignments in each of the eight sessions. There will be 13 assignments total. Each participant is required to provide a well-written response to the assignments. Participants should reference information from the readings, and lecture notes in their posts. Each participant will be expected to complete the assignment as described in the weekly session.

The rubric point scale will be used to assess your work based on a 30-point scale. There are 13 assignments with 30pts. possible for each = 390 points.

* 15 points possible for appropriate incorporation and reference to the readings and lectures (when applicable).
* 15 points possible for a quality response (well-written, appropriate response to the question/topic).

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Rubric for Case Study Assignments** | **15 points** | **6 points** | **0 points** |
| **Incorporation and reference to the readings and lectures in case study response questions**  **Max pts: 15** | Response includes reference to 2 or more readings assigned for the week. | Response includes reference to 1 reading assigned for the week. | Response does not include any reference to the readings for the week. |
| **Quality, well-written response**  **Max pts: 15** | Response to the assignment is thorough, providing a complete answer to the case study questions | Response to the assignment provides a partial answer to the case study questions. | No response submitted |

All assignments must be posted by the posted due date. Exceptions are considered on a case-by-case basis by contacting the Teaching Assistant.

## Evaluation or Grading Policy:

**Methods of Evaluation**

Participants are evaluated by the following methods:

Assignments = 390 points

Quizzes = 210 points

Discussion Forums = 160 points

**Total Points Earned: 760**

### Fitchburg State University Graduate Grading System:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **GPA** | Points Earned | Letter Grade |
| **4.0** | 716-760 | A |
| **3.7** | 693-715 | A- |
| **3.5** | 685-692 | A-/B+ |
| **3.3** | 669-684 | B+ |
| **3.0** | 639-668 | B |
| **2.7** | 616-638 | B- |
| **2.5** | 604-615 | B-/C+ |
| **2.3** | 592-603 | C+ |
| **2.0** | 561-591 | C |
| **0.0** | 0-560 | F |
| **W** | Withdrawn |  |
| **IN** | Incomplete |  |
| **IP** | In-Progress |  |

## Rubrics

Rubrics are provided in the Course Requirements Section.

## Course Content/Topical Outline

**Session One: Constructing the Visual World**

Neuroscientist Paul Bach-y-Rita said, “We don’t see with our eyes. We see with our brains.” In order to understand CVI, one must first understand what vision is – our brain’s 3D representation of the visual world out in front of us(Dutton).

In this session, we will explore the brain’s role in constructing our visual experiences. We will also consider the ways in which we, in turn, construct our visual world (environments, tasks, etc.) to ensure that most of our visual experiences fall within our brain’s capabilities. We will look at how a brain-centered understanding of vision can deepen our insight into how a child with CVI might see the world and enhance our ability to explain it to the educational team. There will be a special emphasis on visual complexity and what it means to have difficulty with visual complexity.

**Session Goals:**

Upon completion of this session, the participant will be able to:

* Explain vision to others in a way that will help them better understand CVI
* Describe the role that the brain plays in constructing our visual experiences, with an emphasis on dorsal and ventral stream functions.
* Explain the ways in which most typical environments and activities have been designed to fall within the abilities of the typical human visual system.

**Required Readings/Media:**

Dutton, Gordon. (2015). *Disorders of the Brain and How They Can Affect Vision*. (First half of Chapter 3 from *Vision and the Brain* by Lueck & Dutton, pages 39 - 59).

Roman-Lantzy, Christine. *CVI: Basic Overview – Basic Principles* [video presentation, Power Point]. Retrieved <http://wvde.state.wv.us/player.php?m=m4&vid=osp/cvi/cvi-overview>

Thomas, Christopher, G. *Project Prakash Enlightens our Understanding of Vision*. National Eye Institute. Retrieved <https://nei.nih.gov/news/scienceadvances/discovery/project_prakash>

McDowell, Nicola. Nicola’s Blog posts 1 and 2. CVI Scotland Website. Retrieved <http://cviscotland.org/news.php?cat_id=33>

Fox, Alfie. *How I See* [Youtube Video]. Retrieved <https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=alfie+fox+how+i+see>

Fox, Alfie. *Through My Eyes…It’s a Whole Different World*. Retrieved

**Assignments:** There are two required assignments this week, 30 points each.

* Assignment 1 (Choose one of the following three hypothetical scenarios):
  + You are preparing to do a CVI training for a team who is welcoming their first student with CVI. You want to begin the training by getting them to think differently about what vision is? You want them to reframe vision in a way that will better help them understand CVI and how someone can be visually impaired even if their eyes are working typically. How might you explain it to them using analogies, metaphors, activities and/or simulations? What resources might you consider using?
  + You are the family member of a child with CVI. You and your child are on a playdate with one of the child’s classmates and the classmate’s father is interested in better understanding your child’s. He mentions that he had a great uncle who was blind due to an eye condition. “But your child can see, right?” he asks. You can tell that his interest in learning more seems genuine, and you decide to offer a basic explanation of CVI in a way that will help him understand how your child might see the world. How might you explain your child’s vision to him using analogies, metaphors, and/or examples?
  + You are the teacher or family member of a child with CVI. A new paraprofessional is about to begin working with the child. She is very enthusiastic and eager to learn but has had no previous experience working with children who have CVI. She tells you that she heard that the student’s eyes are fine and is wondering how he could still be visually impaired. How might you explain to her using analogies, metaphors, and/or activities or simulations?
* Assignment 2: Think about the tasks that made up your day today (making breakfast, getting dressed, traveling to work, reading course materials, checking your email, doing dishes, etc.) Choose 5 of these tasks and write each of them in the “task” column on the provided table.

Next, consider the visual demands of each of these tasks and indicate whether they were well within your visual abilities, meaning that the visual part of the task was pretty routine and didn’t require much conscious thought (i.e. comfortable level) at the upper end of your visual abilities, meaning you could do them but it was difficult and took a great deal of conscious effort (i.e. challenging level) or outside of your visual abilities (frustrational level).

**Discussion Forum:** 20 points

Gordon Dutton writes that society designs the visual world so that most things are within our visual abilities. What does this mean to you? List a few specific examples of everyday tasks or environments and discuss how they have been “designed” to fall within the abilities of the typical human visual system (examples could include: supermarkets, movie theaters, highways, classrooms, etc.). You might choose to reference some of your daily tasks that you used for assignment 2 this week. Why might a person with typical vision go through their day without giving much conscious thought to the visual demands of most activities?

**Weekly Quiz**

**Session Two: The CVI Characteristics in Depth**

We will explore the CVI characteristics (Roman-Lantzy) in depth, particularly the various types of complexity. We will consider the ways in which many of the characteristics are rooted in “difficulty with visual complexity.” We will learn how the CVI characteristics can manifest in each phase, with emphasis on late Phase II through Phase III (Roman-Lantzy). We will consider the ways that integrating the literature on cortical and cerebral visual impairment can enrich our understanding of CVI generally and of visual complexity specifically.

**Session Goals:**

Upon completion of this session, the participants will be able to:

* Demonstrate an in-depth understanding of the CVI Characteristics (Roman-Lantzy) with emphasis on complexity and its relationship to the other characteristics.
* Describe how the CVI Characteristics (Roman-Lantzy) manifest later on The CVI Range, with emphasis on late Phase II and Phase III.
* Describe relationship and overlap between the approaches and principles described in both the cortical and cerebral visual impairment literature.
* Describe the obstacles that stand in the way of a visually accessible day for a child with CVI.

**Discussion Board:**

While people with typical visual abilities move effortlessly through a visual world that was, in many ways, designed to meet their visual abilities, children with CVI must contend with a visual world that was designed for someone else. What does this statement mean to you? What do you see as the most prominent challenge(s) to a comfortable, accessible visual daily experience for children with CVI? Consider incorporating results from assignment 2 this week and last. Were there tasks that were well within your visual abilities but were challenging or frustrational for your student? Why might that be?

**Required Readings/Media:**

Dutton, Gordon. (2015). *Disorders of the Brain and How They Can Affect Vision*. (Second half of Chapter 3 from *Vision and the Brain* by Lueck & Dutton, pages 60 - 75).

Roman Lantzy, C. A. (2019). *Cortical visual impairment: Advanced Principles.(*Chapter 1: Phase III Cortical Visual Impairment).

Balint Syndrome. YouTube video of a man with Balint Syndrome. Retrieved

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4odhSq46vtU>

*The Blind Woman Who Saw Rain*. NPR. Retrieved from YouTube:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9ABQ-U6V0tY

**Assignments:** There are two required assignments this week, 30 points each.

* Assignment 3: Use the table provided. Some of the CVI Range characteristics used in *The What’s the Complexity Framework* are listed in the first column. In the second column, write a brief description of this CVI Range characteristic. In the third column, list characteristics/findings from the cerebral visual impairment literature that are closely related to the CVI Range characteristic. Consider using information from the Tree of Vision (Dutton) from this week’s chapter in Vision and the Brain as well as from the tables provided in this week’s Power Point presentation.
* Assignment 4: Think of a student with CVI (someone you know or a hypothetical example). Think about the tasks that made up this student’s day. Many of them may be the same as those that you listed as part of your day from Assignment 2 in Week 1. Choose 5 tasks and write each of them in the “task” column of the provided table. Next, consider the visual demands of each of these tasks in relation to your student’s visual abilities. Would the task likely be well within your student’s visual abilities (i.e. comfortable level) at the upper end of your student’s visual abilities (i.e. challenging level) or outside of your student’s visual abilities (frustrational level)?

Then, transfer those tasks into the blank Individual Complexity Profile (same form as in week 1) attached under this week’s assignment. This assignment is the same as the assignment from week 1 but **this time we are trying to take our students' perspective rather than our own.**

**Weekly Quiz**

**Session Three: The CVI Characteristics in Depth (Continued): 2D Image Interpretation and CVI**

This week, we will take a particularly close look at our students’ ability to interpret two-dimensional images, which is related to the CVI Range characteristic, “difficulty with complexity of object” (Roman-Lantzy). Participants will learn about why identifying images is more difficult than objects for students with CVI and what types of images may be easier or more challenging. Participants will learn how to use the 2D Image Assessment to determine whether a child can interpret 2D images and, if so, which types are comfortable, challenging and frustrational for them. Special emphasis will be on identifying and teaching salient features (Roman-Lantzy).

**Session Goals:**

Upon completion of this session, the participant will be able to:

* Assess a child’s ability to interpret two-dimensional images
* Identify the salient visual features (Roman-Lantzy) of an object or image
* Provide direct instruction in salient features and interpretation of two-dimensional materials
* Describe the implications on a child’s educational program so that educators don’t mistake looking for interpreting.

**Discussion Board:**

* Part 1: Take a moment to discuss your findings from the 2D Image Assessment. Did you assess a child with CVI? A child with an ocular impairment? Or a child without a visual impairment? It will be interesting to read and compare one another’s results. Please share any insights you had this week regarding 2D image interpretation.
* Part 2: Looking does not equal interpretation. Can you think of a situation in which a child with CVI who you know has been given inappropriate instructional 2D materials due to a lack of understanding of the child’s ability to interpret such materials?

**Required Readings / Media:**

Tietjen, Matt. (2019). Chapter 4 Appendix: CVI 2D Image Assessment. From *Cortical Visual Impairment: Advanced Principles*. Roman-Lantzy. Pages 142 – 159.

 Roman-Lantzy. (2019). Chapter 2: A Path to Literacy for Students Who Have CVI. From *Cortical Visual Impairment: Advanced Principles.*

Lueck, Amanda H., and Gordon N. Dutton (Eds). (2015) *Vision and the Brain: Understanding Cerebral Visual Impairment in Children*. New York: American Foundation for the Blind. **Pages 360 - 362**

 McDowell, Nicola. Nicola’s Blog posts 3, 4, 5 and 7. CVI Scotland Website. Retrieved <http://cviscotland.org/news.php?cat_id=33>

Porter, Gayle; Burkhart, Linda (2010). Limitations with using a Representational Hierarchy Approach for Language Learning. Retrieved: https://lindaburkhart.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/representational\_hierarchy\_draft.pdf

**Assignments:** There are two required assignments this week, 30 points each.

* Assignment 5: Briefly describe one idea for how you might assess object or image recognition for a child who may not be able to verbalize what they see or choose an image from a field while sitting at a desk. This could be an idea you have actually tried before, an idea you have for one of your students, or an idea based on a hypothetical student. Please briefly describe the student, explain why coming up with a modified version of the assessment concept is necessary, and then describe how you would assess this child.
* Assignment 6: Complete a 2D Image Assessment on a child with CVI who is of school age (K-12) using the assessment materials provided next to this week’s assignments. The student may be asked to identify the images (i.e. provide the name of each image) or recognize the images (i.e. select a named image from a field of images, use a “yes/no” response, etc.). If you do not have a student for whom this particular assessment is appropriate, please complete the alternate assignment listed below.
  + (*Alternate Assignment*) Participants who do not have a child with CVI for whom the 2D Image Assessment is appropriate, may do the assessment on either:
    - a primary school student (K-4) who does not have a visual impairment or
    - a primary school student (K-4) who has a ocular visual impairment and (in 2-3 paragraphs) compare their results to the sample results (provided) for a child with CVI).

**Weekly Quiz**

**Session Four: Complexity Throughout the School Day**

We will examine the ways in which difficulty with visual complexity (and CVI in general) impacts our students’ behavior and access to the school day. We will consider the ways in which the complexity of an environment or task can impact the behavior of our students and how this behavior can be misunderstood. We will explore the factors that make an environment or task complex for a student and learn how to use the Environment and Task Rating Guides to determine the complexity level of an environment or task. This week’s session will include a complexity simulation and you will be asked to reflect on the experience in your discussion post.

**Session Goals:**

Upon completion of this session, the participant will be able to:

* Identify appropriate educational tasks for the child with CVI
* Determine appropriate learning environments for a child with CVI
* Explain the ways in which CVI can affect a child’s behavior and the negative impact of a visually inappropriate school schedule.
* Evaluate the complexity level of a given environment
* Evaluate the complexity level of a given task

**Complexity Simulation**

**Discussion Board:**

* Part 1: Think of this week’s simulation. Were those tasks comfortable, challenging for frustrational to your visual abilities? How did it feel? How might it feel to go through an entire school day of challenging and frustrational visual tasks?
* Part 2: Can you recall a time when you feel a student’s behavior has been misinterpreted due to an incomplete understanding of CVI? Describe the behavior, how it was initially interpreted and the ways in which the child’s CVI may have been causing or contributing to the behavior. Consider the phrase, “but he can see.” Parents, educators, and some children with CVI often report hearing this statement from fellow educators, administrators, and others to dismiss the suggestion that CVI might be having an important impact on a child’s behavior and visual access to the school day. Have you encountered this statement or similar sentiments in your work? What effect might this attitude have on our ability to deliver an appropriate, visually accessible school day for our children with CVI?

**Required Readings/Media:**

Lueck, Amanda H., and Gordon N. Dutton (Eds). (2015) *Vision and the Brain: Understanding Cerebral Visual Impairment in Children*. New York: American Foundation for the Blind.

Chapter 7: Considerations in the Behavioral Diagnosis of CVI

CVI Meltdowns: “What is a CVI Meltdown?” CVI Scotland Website. Retrieved <http://cviscotland.org/documents.php?did=1&sid=55>

The CVI Perspective. “How Much Can You See?” <https://thecviperspective.wordpress.com/2021/08/16/how-much-can-you-see/>

The CVI Perspective. “On Behaviors in the Classroom.” <https://thecviperspective.wordpress.com/2022/01/03/457/>

## [The Perspectives of Teachers and Paraeducators on the Relationship between Classroom Clutter and Learning Experiences for Students with Cerebral Visual Impairment](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0145482X1811200304)

[**Nicola McDowell**](https://journals.sagepub.com/action/doSearch?ContribAuthorStored=McDowell%2C+Nicola&SeriesKey=jvba), M.Sp.Tchg., [**Julia Budd**](https://journals.sagepub.com/action/doSearch?ContribAuthorStored=McDowell%2C+Nicola&SeriesKey=jvba), Ph.D. Journal of Visual Impairment & Blindness, vol. 112, 3: pp. 248-260

The Bare Walls Theory: Do Too Many Classroom Decorations Harm Learning?<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/education/bare-walls-theory-do-too-many-classroom-decorations-harm-learning-n223436>

**Assignment 7:** 30 points

Complete the provided Task Bank (companion to the Individual Complexity Profile) for a specific student on your caseload. Your results will be used next week to help you fill out the child’s Individual Complexity Profile. You will continue to use this student as your case study through the remainder of this course.

**Weekly Quiz**

**Session Five: Using the What’s the Complexity Framework (Preparation Stage)**

This week we will begin learning how to use The What’s the Complexity Framework to guide the team in designing a visually accessible and appropriate school day for children with CVI. We will focus on the first part of using The What’s the Complexity Framework: the preparation stage. Participants will meet the child who will be our case study for the next two weeks. The instructor will model the preparation stage. Participants will learn how they can use information from the child’s eye report, CVI Range Assessment and parent and teacher interviews as a starting point for the What’s the Complexity process. The instructor will introduce the Individual Complexity Profile, an at-a-glance overview of what constitutes complexity for a child, which is used as a central reference point and guide throughout the What’s the Complexity process. Through instructor modeling, participants will learn how to use the background information gathered during the preparation stage to complete the first draft of a child’s Individual Complexity Profile. Participants will then complete a first draft of an Individual Complexity Profile for their own student.

**Session Goals:**

Upon completion of this session, the participant will be able to:

* Use the Individual Complexity Profile to:
  + Guide the team in selecting appropriate visual learning media
  + Identify appropriate educational tasks for the child with CVI
  + Determine the appropriate “balance” between the complexity level of the task and environment for a given activity.

**Discussion Board:**

In our efforts to design a school day that is within the visual abilities of our students with CVI, we must walk a careful line between making sure they have appropriate environments and tasks and making sure they are not isolated, that they are included with their peers. What are some ways we might be reconcile or balance those two seemingly competing goals. And are those goals really competing? How might the concept of the “balanced activity” fit into this decision making?

**Required Readings/ Media:**

Tietjen, Matt. (2019). What’s the Complexity Framework (Chapter 4, first half: p.92 – 122), From *Cortical Visual Impairment: Advanced Principles*. Roman-Lantzy.

Jackel, Bernadette: A Parent of a Child with CVI Speaks Out. Family Connect. Retrieved <http://www.familyconnect.org/blog/familyconnect-a-parents-voice/parent-of-a-child-with-cortical-visual-impairment-speaks-out/12>

Tietjen, Matt. (2017). CVI Range Report for child in our video case study (provided).

Tietjen, Matt. (2017). Individual Complexity Profile for child in our video case study.

**Assignments:** There are two required assignments this week, 30 points each.

* Assignment 8: Referring to the task bank you completed last week, along with the reference page, “balancing the activity,” complete your student’s Individual Complexity Profile.

**Weekly Quiz**

**Session Six:** **Using The What’s the Complexity Framework (Observation Stage)**

Through video case study, the instructor will model how to use The What’s the Complexity Framework to evaluate the level and distribution of complexity throughout a child’s school day. Through a series of videos, participants will observe a student (the student who we met in week 4) throughout several school activities, while the instructor models how to rate the complexity of the environment and task and determine whether an activity can be considered balanced. Participants will observe their own student (same student as they did the Individual Complexity Profile for) in one school activity and complete and submit a Single Activity Recording Form for that activity. Participants who wish to observe a series of activities (more than one) should use the Schedule Recording Form instead.

**Session Goals:**

Upon completion of this session, the participant will be able to:

* Determine the appropriate balance between the complexity level of the task and environment for a given activity.
* Rate the complexity level of a given environment
* Rate the complexity level of a given task
* Use the Single Activity or Schedule Recording Forms to share their results with a child’s team.

**Discussion Board:**

* Part 1: Imagine that you just learned that an outside consultant is going to observe your lesson with a student. What are one or two words that describe how you might feel. Thinking about our own observations this week, how might we explain the purpose of our observations to the teams so that they see us as a non-threatening partner rather than someone who is there to critique them or find fault?
* Part 2: Discuss interesting findings from your observations. Were activities for your student balanced? Unbalanced? Was the task or environment too complex in any given activity or were they appropriate?

**Required Readings/ Media:**

Tietjen, Matt. (2019). What’s the Complexity Framework (Chapter 4, second half: p.123 - 141), From *Cortical Visual Impairment: Advanced Principles*. Roman-Lantzy.

The CVI Perspective. On Evaluating CVI in Children. <https://thecviperspective.wordpress.com/2022/01/21/on-evaluating-cvi-in-children/>

Hillier, Lindsay. *It’s Too Visually Noisy…Quiet, please! Part 1* [Webinar video, Power Point]. Canadian Self-Regulation Initiative. Retrieved <http://www.self-regulation.ca/webinars.html>

**Assignments:** There are two required assignments this week, 30 points each.

* Assignment 9: Complete the Single Activity or Schedule Worksheet for the student you observed (In the recommendations section, describe briefly why you rated the environment and task the way you did but do not write any recommendations yet. We will do that next week).
* Assignment 10: Watch the videos provided of different environments and use an online version of the rating guide to determine whether the environment is minimally, moderately, highly or extremely complex.

**Weekly Quiz**

**Session Seven: Using The What’s the Complexity Framework (Sharing Stage)**

This week we will turn our attention to what happens after the observation phase. The emphasis will be on using The What’s the Complexity Framework for generating recommendations and sharing results with the team. We will look at how we can use the information from What’s the Complexity to guide our decisions on appropriate visual learning media for the student. Finally, we will look at the phenomenon of neuroplasticity and consider its implications for children with CVI.

**Session Goals:**

Upon completion of this session, the participant will be able to:

* Use the What’s the Complexity Framework to:
  + Recommend accommodations and interventions throughout the school day
  + Guide the team in creating balanced activities and a balanced schedule
  + Guide the team in selecting appropriate visual learning media
  + Determine the most appropriate scheduling of activities to reduce cumulative complexity and resulting visual fatigue.
  + Determine a pro-active visual break schedule

**Discussion Board:**

During the CVI Perspectives series in this course, we have heard from Individuals with CVI and their family members. What were the most important takeaways for you from this series of family perspectives?

**Required Readings/ Media:**

Lueck, Amanda H., and Gordon N. Dutton (Eds). (2015) *Vision and the Brain: Understanding Cerebral Visual Impairment in Children*. New York: American Foundation for the Blind. **Chapter 21: Improving Functional Use of Vision for Children with CVI and Multiple Disabilities**

Roman-Lantzy, Christine. (2018). CVI: Advanced Principles. Chapter choice – Participants may choose the chapter on AAC, O&M, or social skills.

Cockburn, D, Dutton, G. Children with Cerebral Visual Impairment: School Strategies for Younger Child (4-8 years old). Ulster University Vision Services. Retrieved: <https://www.ulster.ac.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/168240/cvi-strategies-at-school-4-8yrs.pdf>

Cockburn, D, Dutton, G. Children with Cerebral Visual Impairment: School Strategies for Older Child (9-12 years old). Ulster University Vision Services. Retrieved: <https://www.ulster.ac.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0008/168245/cvi-strategies-at-school-9-12yrs.pdf>

**Assignments:** There are two required assignments this week, 30 points each.

* Assignment 11: Complete the recommendations section of the Single Activity Recording Form or Schedule Recording Form.
* Assignment 12: (Visual Breaks). In the table provided, please provide 2 examples of visual break activities that have seemed effective for your student(s) with CVI. Follow the detailed instructions within the assignment to complete the columns.

**Weekly Quiz**

**Session Eight: CVI Sensory Balance Approach for Learning Media Planning**

This week is an introduction to the CVI Sensory Balance Framework.  We will explore the learning media considerations unique to children with CVI and look at how a sensory balance approach can guide the team in insuring that learning media decisions are made through a CVI-conscious lens.

**Session Goals:**

Upon completion of this session, the participant will be able to:

* Use the Sensory Balance Approach to:
  + Describe how a school team can make learning media decisions that balance the students need for the most efficient, immediate access to the curriculum with an emphasis on opportunities for visual development.
  + Create a Learning Media Profile for a student, outlining the ways in which the student’s learning modalities can support one another in school activities.

**Discussion Board:**

Please describe an activity (one you have observed or led in the past) in which a student with CVI benefited from a multi-sensory approach consistent with “sensory balance.” What was the lead modality, supporting modalities? How did the sensory modalities support one another in the activity?

**Required Readings/ Media:**

Roman-Lantzy, Christine; Tietjen, Matthew. (2020). CVI Sensory Balance: An Approach to Learning Media Planning for Children with CVI. Watertown, MA: Perkins School for the Blind.

**Assignments:** There is one required assignment this week, 30 points.

* Assignment 13:
  + Option 1: Complete a Learning Media Profile (print from the link below, fill out submit as a scanned attachment) for one of your students. It’s okay not to be completely certain of each aspect. The purpose here is to practice and begin to become familiar with the Sensory Balance Approach.
  + Option 2: Using the Learning Media Planning Worksheet (print from the link below, fill out and submit as a scanned attachment) map out 2 hypothetical activities for your student (completing 2 rows total).

**Weekly Quiz (No quiz for week 8)**

## ONLINE STUDENT SERVICES

Fitchburg State University encourages all Extended Campus students to take advantage of our online student services. We have created a “virtual student center” just for you. Here you will find access to Counseling Services, Career Services, The Student Activity Center, the university bookstore and many other helpful links. You can access our student center by going to the university homepage at [**http://www.fitchburgstate.edu**](http://www.fitchburgstate.edu) and clicking on Offices and Services. Scroll down and click on Extended Campus Center. You will find links to Library Services, our Virtual Student Center and other important information.

### Fitchburg State University Distance Learning & Extended Campus Library Services

The Gallucci-Cirio Library at Fitchburg State University provides a full range of library services including borrowing privileges; document delivery (books and articles mailed to your home); interlibrary loan; reference assistance via: phone, email, IM, Blackboard’s Collaboration and Elluminate tools, Skype, and in-person; library instruction; research help and more. Any questions relating to library services should be directed to the Linda LeBlanc, Access Services Librarian, at 978-665-3062 or [**dllibrary@fitchburgstate.edu**](mailto:dllibrary@fitchburgstate.edu). There is also a special section for Distance Learning and Extended Campus Services at [**http://fitchburgstate.libguides.com/dlservices**](http://fitchburgstate.libguides.com/dlservices) outlining the wide range of services available to you and how to access them.

Students who are currently registered with the university may access any of the library’s subscription databases, including an increasing number with full-text, by visiting the Gallucci-Cirio Library’s homepage at [**http://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/library**](http://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/library) and clicking on the Research Databases button in the center of the page. Select the resource you want to access from the alphabetical or subject listing. Once you click on the database title you will be prompted for your Falcon Key logon information; this is the same logon you will use for your Fitchburg State email account and if you have any online Blackboard courses. If you do not know your Falcon Key username and password or if you have any problems logging in, contact the university’s Technology Help Desk at 978-665-4500 or [**helpdesk@fitchburgstate.edu**](mailto:helpdesk@fitchburgstate.edu). The Library can issue you a temporary guest Falcon Key to use while the Technology Department is setting up your account: contact us at 978-665-3062 or [**dllibrary@fitchburgstate.edu**](mailto:dllibrary@fitchburgstate.edu).

All registered Fitchburg State University students are eligible for a Fitchburg State University OneCard ID which also serves as his/her library card. If you have not received your OneCard yet, you can still access all of our online services as long as you have activated your library account. Activate your library account online at [**http://fitchburgstate.libguides.com/dlservices**](http://fitchburgstate.libguides.com/dlservices) or in person at the Circulation Desk. After activation by the Gallucci-Cirio Library and receipt of your OneCard, students may also use any Massachusetts State College/University Library as well as participating libraries in the Academic and Research Collaborative (ARC) during the current semester. OneCards are available on campus all year round. Students wanting a OneCard must either complete the online Extended Campus OneCard request form [**http://www.fitchburgstate.edu/offices/technology/onecard/**](http://www.fitchburgstate.edu/offices/technology/onecard/) or present a course registration confirmation at the OneCard Office in the Anthony Building, main campus. Please call 978-665-3039 for available times or if you have any questions about your OneCard.

### University and Education Unit Policies

#### Policy on Disability

Disability Services is the primary support system for students with disabilities taking classes in the day and evening divisions. The office is located on the third floor of the Hammond Building and can be reached at 978-665-4020 (voice/relay). If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, if you have emergency medication information, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment at the beginning of the course to talk with me. It is important that the issues relating to disabilities be discussed with me as soon as possible.

#### Attendance and Participation

1. As an emerging professional, you are expected to attend every class session, to be on time, and to communicate with the instructor regarding any absences. Absences and tardiness may result in a permanent grade change. Attendance at all pre-practicum sessions is mandatory.
2. Participation in class discussions and cooperative groups is expected. All candidates are responsible for meeting required deadlines on projects and assignments; your ability to complete tasks in a timely fashion demonstrates professional maturity and an ability to organize and manage time. Completion of assigned reading is imperative to your individual development as a professional.
3. All of these behaviors regarding attendance, preparation, and meeting deadlines are critical for successful teaching and thus are factored into the final grade.

#### Education Unit Computer Literacy Requirement

All assignments must be typed, doubled-spaced, and use APA format when appropriate. Refer to Internet Resources for Writing on the Fitchburg State University website for assistance.

You are expected to use word processing for all assignments (unless otherwise instructed). [If your course has other requirements list those also, e.g., ‘You are expected to use e-mail for dialogues with other class members, to examine the use of software in the field, and to use the Internet to obtain information, ideas and resources.’]

#### Cellular Telephones and Other Devices

Kindly turn-off cellular telephones during class time and field experiences and place them in book bags or purses. Please no texting in class. It reflects negatively upon you as a developing professional. Once class begins and if use of the laptop is not required, all laptops should be closed during class time so that your full attention can be focused on your colleagues and the discussion or lecture in progress. If you prefer to take class notes on your laptop, please inform the instructor. You are on your honor to be focused on note taking and not on e-mail, Facebook, or other technological enterprise not germane to the class in progress. Thank-you in advance for your consideration of colleagues and students.

#### Grade Appeal

If you disagree with the evaluation of your work or believe an improper grade has been assigned, an appeal may be filed. Please discuss the matter with the instructor and refer to the Fitchburg State University Grade Appeal Policy in your Student Handbook located at: <http://www.fitchburgstate.edu/uploads/files/EducationUnit_NCATE/Standard2/narrative/Student_Handbook_Web_1213.pdf>

#### Academic Integrity Policy

The faculty in the Education Unit at Fitchburg State University expects that work submitted in fulfillment of course requirements will be solely that of the individual candidate and all other sources will be cited appropriately. University Academic Integrity Policy, as outlined in the University Catalogue, will be strictly adhered to.

#### Copyright Policy

You are reminded that in preparing handouts for peers or the instructor, reproduction of copyrighted material without permission of the copyright owner is illegal. Such unauthorized copying may violate the rights of the author or publisher. Fitchburg State University adheres to federal laws regarding use of copyrighted materials. See the Electronic Use of Copyrighted Materials on the Fitchburg State University website for more details.