



## ACQUISITION OF EXPANDED CORE CURRICULAR SKILLS AMONG VISUALLY IMPAIRED

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### ABSTRACT

The Expanded Core Curriculum is considered a unique educational curriculum for students with vision impairment who are learning to access information that is acquired casually and incidentally by sighted learners. The purpose of this study is to find out the level of acquisition of visually impaired students in Expanded Core Curriculum. The study adopted survey method with 70 visually impaired and 50 low vision students studying in the Inclusive Education programme. The results revealed that majority of blind and low vision students where at moderate level in acquiring Expanded Core Curricular Skills. The curricular skills are a longitudinal process which requires more instruction to visually impaired students.

**KEYWORDS** : Visual impairment, Expanded Core Curriculum

### INTRODUCTION

Children with vision impairment in inclusive education classrooms require adaptation such as Braille or large print of the core curriculum or academic subjects studied from kindergarten to high school programme. These children also require competencies in an expanded core curriculum. The expanded core curriculum is considered a unique educational curriculum for students with vision impairment who are learning to access information that is acquired casually and incidentally by sighted learners.

### Visual impairment

Vision impairment, like other areas of disability, exists on a continuum. A loss of vision may range from total blindness (i.e., no reaction to light) to low vision (which may be corrected by glasses). For educational purposes, students are considered to be vision impaired when their degree of vision is assessed as causing, or having the potential to cause, a significant hindrance to their educational progress in a classroom setting.

Whether it is through speech, Braille, or large print output, the use of technology gives a person with a visual impairment access to information at approximately the same time as a person who is sighted.

### Expanded Core Curriculum

The Expanded core curriculum is a curriculum designed to go beyond the core components- math reading and writing, and address the essential areas and experiences that are unique only to visually impaired persons (Pugh & Erin, 1999). These areas are unique and should be taught in addition to the core curriculum because they are specific to the disability of blindness. The expanded core curriculum is initially designed to construct community concept development for blind individuals (National Agenda for the Education of Children and Youth with visual Impairments, Including Those with Multiple Disabilities, Hatlen & Stryker, 1996). This curriculum is a longitudinal process that requires instruction by a person who is knowledgeable about these exceptionalities.

### Purpose

The purpose of this study is to find out the level of acquisition of visually impaired students in Expanded Core Curriculum.

### Objectives

The objectives of the study were to:

1. Study the level of acquisition of Expanded Core Curriculum among blind students.
2. Study the level of acquisition of Expanded Core Curriculum among low vision students.

### Site Description

The study was conducted in Higher Secondary schools implementing Inclusive Programme in four districts of Tamil Nadu which include Kancheepuram, Cuddalore, Thiruvanamalai and Coimbatore.

### Selection of the Sample

The present study was descriptive in nature. The sample comprised of 70 blind students and 50 low vision students, both boys and girls belonging to class IX to XII. Purposive sampling technique was used to select the sample.

### Tools Selected for the Study

The investigator developed tools to assess the Expanded Core Curriculum. The below mentioned are the details of the tools: Expanded Core Curricular Skills assessment tool developed by Wendy Sapp & Iowa ECC Resource Team (2006) and revised by Karen Blankenship (2009) has been adapted for the study suiting to the Indian Context. Some of the skills have been changed and some have been either modified or removed.

### Results and Findings

#### Finding 1: Level of Acquisition of Expanded Core Curricular Skills among Blind Students

Expanded Core Curricular Skills were calculated for blind students from the data collected using the checklist. Descriptive statistics was used to find Expanded Core Curricular Skills and the same is given in the following table.

**Table 1: Expanded Core Curricular Skills among Blind Students**

No.	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
70	47.00	132.00	96.55	16.60

The above table shows that the Expanded Core Curricular Skills varies between a minimum of 47 to a maximum of 132. Higher the score more will be the Expanded Core Curricular Skills. The average Expanded Core Curricular Skills is found to be 96.55 with SD 16.60. The respondents were grouped into Low, Moderate and High.

The respondents whose Expanded Core Curricular Skills fall below  $x - 0.5$  SD were classified into Low Expanded Core Curricular Skills group, if the respondents fall above  $x + 0.5$  SD, they were classified into Higher Expanded Core Curricular Skills group. The respondents whose Expanded Core Curricular Skills fall between mean  $-0.5$  SD and mean  $+0.5$  SD were classified as Moderate Expanded Core Curricular Skills group. The distribution of respondents through classification is given below:

**Table 1(a): Level of Expanded Core Curricular Skills among Blind Students**

Level	No.	Percent
Low (<=89)	21	29.6
Moderate (90 - 105)	29	40.8
High (106 & Above)	20	29.6
Total	70	100.0

The table 1(a) shows that 40.8% of the respondents are classified under Moderate Expanded Core Curricular Skills group whereas 29.6% come under Low and High level Expanded Core Curricular Skills.

**Finding 2: Level of Acquisition of Expanded Core Curricular Skills among Low Vision Students**

Expanded Core Curricular Skills were calculated for low vision students from the data collected using the checklist. Descriptive statistics was used to find Expanded Core Curricular Skills and the same is given in the following table.

**Table 2: Expanded Core Curricular Skills among Low Vision Students**

No.	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
50	46.00	110.00	75.92	14.55

The above table shows that the Expanded Core Curricular Skills varies between a minimum of 46 to a maximum of 110. Higher the score, more is the Expanded Core Curricular Skills. The average Expanded Core Curricular Skills is found to be 75.92 with SD 14.55. The respondents were grouped into Low, Moderate and High.

The distribution of respondents through classification is given below:

**Table 2(a): Level of Expanded Core Curricular Skills among Low Vision Students**

Level	No.	Percent
Low (<=69)	17	34.7
Moderate (70 - 84)	21	42.9
High (85 & Above)	12	22.4
Total	50	100.0

The table 2(a) shows that 42.9% of the respondents are classified under Moderate Expanded Core Curricular Skills group whereas 34.7% and 22.4 % come under Low and High Expanded Core Curricular Skills.

**Conclusion**

The results revealed that majority of blind and low vision students where at moderate level in acquiring Expanded Core Curricular Skills. The curricular skills are a longitudinal process which requires more instruction to visually impaired students.

**References**

1. Pugh, G. S., & Erin, J. (1999). Blind and Visually Impaired Students: Educational Service Guidelines.
2. Hatlen, P., & Stryker, D. (1996). National Agenda for the Education of Children and Youths with Visual Impairments, Including Those with Multiple Disabilities.