

**Initial Training, Licensure/Endorsement and Use of DB Professionals**

**What we have done; What we are doing now; What’s Next**

**- In each state and national collaboration efforts**

**Discussion Facilitators:**

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Chris Montgomery, TX Deaf-Blind Project

**Recorder:**

Amy Parker, NCDB

**Discussion Starters**

Defining the Need and Clarifying the Vision

* ***Where do you see the DB profession in 5, 10, 15 years?***
* *Why should we work towards this outcome (initial training of professionals that would lead to DB licensure/endorsement?)*
* *What agreement do we have on professional competencies in DB – the content (and process) of the training?*
* *How do we explain the roles of teachers, interveners, and TA providers in the services for DB children?*

Suggested Next Steps

* Read article suggested by Amy Parker: Mason, C., Davidson, R. C., & McNerney, C. (2000). Shortages of personnel in the low incidence area of blindness: Working and planning together. Teaching Exceptional Children, 32(5), 91.

<http://www.amazon.com/National-training-personnel-children-blindness/dp/0865863601>

or <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED439549.pdf>

* Participate in CEC DVI-DB advocacy efforts - position papers – for families, OSEP, legislators, local administration, teachers, and universities
* Set for yourself an in-state priority and a national collaboration priority to achieve this outcome

**Key Points from Opening Discussion:**

Leslie from UT- With the push toward interveners, we are behind in having professionals prepared that support interveners; an endorsed teacher of the deafblind. It is our job to help shift that focus. We have trained interveners out there, without trained teachers of the deafblind. I see us in 5 years having trained teachers of the deafblind.

Roseanna from TTU- I see not only teachers of the deafblind, but deafblind “professionals.” “Teaching” may be too limiting and it is not reflective of our practice - technical assistance provision, as well.

Chris from TX- I wonder too how others perceive us. Do people perceive us as professionals? Without a professional endorsement, and agreed upon competencies to support the endorsement are we stuck in the perpetual mode of TA provider? – train and retrain on DB 101. We need an identity, that we ourselves understand and can then make clear to others.

Effie from NM- I know the merit of the training. But many colleagues look at this as just another thing to manage. Our state doesn’t have a lot of money and doesn’t spend much money on kids with disabilities. We don’t have a true endorsement. We aren’t going to get enough funding to make a true difference in the lives of these individuals. We have a consulting model. A person can be hired off the street to be an intervener.

Joan from PA- I do believe we are a profession. I think the endorsement would be even better, value added; courses aligned with competencies.

Linda from MS- We are having this discuss now on the value of having a teacher endorsement because we have different roles (and competency lists) in our field - interveners, teachers, TA providers and family members. We should be able to define (and support) the competencies per each role with greater precision.

Shortages in personnel in the field have been described in article written by Roseanna and others. What else do we need to do to communicate this need? We can partner with MS-CEC DVI/DB Division and the DB Coalition to plan and advocate for next steps.

**Discussion Starters related to “*Initial Training of DB Professionals*”:**

**1. What is happening now for "initial" training of DB professionals in your state - training that could lead to licensure/endorsement?**

* What have you witnessed in willingness to spend a lot of money on a few kids (with other low incidence disabilities?)
* How have funds been leveraged for training programs for low incidence disabilities?
* What would be the benefit of charting existing university programs and course descriptions (and practicum requirements) for each program - for similarities and differences?

**2. What has been done before that worked that may provide solutions for the future - for initial training that could result in licensed/endorsed DB professionals?**

* What was done to address opposition to specialization?
* What can states/universities do to pool their resources and collaborate in initial DB training for professionals?
* What role can “open source curriculum” have in preservice and/or inservice training of professionals (similar to current OHOA efforts for intervener training)?

**Key Points from Discussion on “*Initial Training of DB Professionals*”:**

Donna from MD- I keep hearing that we need more research. I think that we are using fabulous stuff and I feel that the work that we are doing is beneficial to many types of children. We need a training infrastructure- cross collaboration, information exchange. Passing information along to teachers is key.

Roseanna from TX- In the field there are several SSD research designs. In medicine the randomized clinical trials are few and far between. We do have evidences for many of the things that we do with children and given the uniqueness of them that is remarkable. We do have evidence based practices that can be strengthened and we are affiliated with a major organization. Some of these chinks are falling into place that define the profession.

Donna from MD- We have to convince people that we have the evidence base and to sell it. We need more research in use of interveners.

Susie from NY- In the field of interpreting there is a parallel going on with certification. There are standards and competencies for general interpreters. Should we have interpreters who are certified in deafblindness? I would say no. There are no competencies yet for this. You will marginalize qualified people. Addressing this is still about money and it is a paradigm shift.

Cyral from TX- We have a lot of money at the state level; there is a legal requirement for TVI and this happened through advocacy. At the national level if it was mandated that kids who are deafblind must have an endorsed teacher, then we would be able to do this in TX. We are fighting to keep the TVI requirement in TX. We need to fight for a requirement for a teacher of deafblind also.

Chris from TX - Persuading SEA’s to look at endorsement on a state by state basis is going to be difficult. Do we as a profession try to work with an organization like CEC to provide guidelines for national endorsement? – this model has “some” traction in TX, if we look at what’s happening with intervener certification. Having a top down model, at the very least, gives us something to point SEA’s to. The TDB Pilot program that we just did in TX does demonstrate the efficacy of a dedicated professional for our deafblind students. *This piece from Chris fits better under endorsement discussion – can we move it there?*

Linda from MS- It has been helpful for technical assistance projects to know where the personnel prep programs are and personnel prep programs work as a consortium group to show who was teaching what and where and what the “outcome” would be after coursework (certificate, masters, etc.) Perhaps it is time to get together again and verify who is funded to train DB teachers, and how needs can be met, nationally, if (or, rather, when) there is a new requirement for teachers of deafblind. Keeping all exiting teaching programs “alive”, in the meantime, is difficult (struggling to get the number of students needed for universities to offer courses.) Perhaps re-organizing program offerings and structures is needed now, so we can work together across state lines more easily, course sharing and student sharing.

Rosanna from TX- Universities are operating under the Higher Education Act and they are also operating under regional accrediting board (SAC.) All have to report to the Secretary of Education; trying to follow the same rules.

Donna from MD- Even if having teachers of deafblind goes to law, I cannot instantly set up a training program due to the political scene at a university. Transferring credits is a huge issue across states. Gallaudet University would like to do an online approach with training. If a student from another state gets training at Gallaudet and it is for a certificate/endorsement in another state, they need permission to transfer the coursework back. States offering a collaborative training experience would be responsible for overseeing the practicum.

**Discussion Starters related to “*DB Licensure/Endorsement”*:**

**3. What was done or what still needs to be done in your state (and/or nationally) to establish DB specific licensure/endorsement?**

* Why would it be necessary to advocate for IDEA language change?
* Again, what can states/universities do to pool their resources and/or collaborate in establishing DB licensure/endorsement?
* What would be the benefit of DB endorsement being added to special education licensure and another initial endorsement area?
* What would be the benefit of a system of licensure that would make allowances to “grandfather in” experiences professionals? What would be a method of proving competency?
* What are the pros and cons of existing methods for national licensure (PRAXIS, ACVREP, Teach for America, National Board…)?

**Key Points from Discussion on “*DB Licensure/Endorsement*”:**

Luz from Puerto Rico- It might help to see the example from PR of a 24 credit master’s degree preparing for certification. When I arrived as the Project Coordinator in PR, teachers had a BA in special or regular education. The questions was should a DB endorsement attach to a VI or HI endorsement or was it more helpful for a DB certificate to be attached to a special education degree.

In UT the DB endorsement can be added to severe, mild/moderate, VI and Deaf. It is easier to attract people to DB coursework if they have back up roles of other licenses/endorsements. It’s important to be adding DB to a license area that has providing broader training on IDEA requirements (IEP, etc.)

Susie teaches a class at Hunter, where teachers are adding DB to a background in severe disabilities.

Linda from MS- The work to be done now in most states is in persuading people in the state to consider DB endorsement; then look from state to state at endorsement requirements, similarities and differences. The question will be whether or not we as a profession try to work with an entity to provide national endorsement. Until there is a national requirement, we probably won't know what endorsement model to go with.

*Move piece from Chris here….*

In PA, we had a portfolio created for endorsement in autism; document competencies based on a uniform set of competencies. Teacher licensure is still very much a state by state thing. AER did have a teacher credential for VI and DB. For some at School for the Blind, they wanted to be able to say they were AER credentialed and documentation was provided.

**Discussion Starters related to “*Models for using DB trained professionals”*:**

**4. What is happening now in your state that provides a model of systematically and effectively using DB trained professionals in your state?**

* How has an itinerate model (for any low incidence disability) been used in your state to date?
* Again, what have you witnessed in willingness to spend a lot of money on a few kids (with other low incidences disabilities?)
* What would be the benefit of research efforts around effectiveness of existing models – child change, teacher change, systems change?

**5. What model would provide the best solutions for the systematic and effective use of DB trained professionals in your state?**

* How might it help states to develop a national model of service delivery?
* What states can be developing job descriptions for other states to use – distinguishing between roles of teachers (itinerate and self-contained), interveners, and TA Providers
  + Amy shared a great video clip of Johanna in module effort. “We can't talk about interveners without talking about teachers”:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hOhP-6X1f-Q>

**Key points from Discussion on “*Models for using DB trained professionals”*:**

Itinerant teachers and not self-contained classroom teachers are the very real possibility of service delivery in most states; so, training programs need to reflect these competencies as well.

Chris from TX & Linda from MS- The integration of personnel preparation and technical assistance models often means having to work together. How can we pool the resources that help prepare professionals?

Will the need for technical assistance be transformed, or would it disappear, when there are trained and endorsed teachers?

Do we need to consider endorsement for TA providers who are participating in IEPs and school settings? Perhaps a cooperative model of training and demonstration of competency might be necessary instead of requiring endorsement to work with a student as a TA provider.

**Possible NEXT STEPS – With others**

* Defining “best practices, research based practices” in DB (continuing the effort at charting what we know and what we need to know more about, begun by **NCDB Personnel Preparation Consortium 2007 – 2010,** perhaps to be continued by **CEC DVI-DB**)
* Advocacy related to wording in IDEA re-authorization – **CEC DVI-DB** and **DB Coalition** and **NFADB**
* **CEC DVI-DB** forum continues: **September 19 9 a.m. PST, 10 a.m. MST, 11 a.m. CST and noon EST**
* Increasing awareness about Deaf-Blindness in Special Edition of **CEC-DVI** Quarterly (coming out in November)

**Final Discussion**

Linda from MS & Chris from TX- Key questions that we need to address: Where will teachers get their training? How will they be endorsed? How will we use them well?

The existing teachers of the deafblind (i.e. Minnesota and New York) can become a stronger “community of practice” immediately, part of being a profession is a real network for teachers to share their effective practices.