Editorial

We join Maryanne Diamond in welcoming you to IJOM’s fifth volume. We are particularly pleased as the IJOM website has recently been revised and volumes of IJOM can be either downloaded or hard copies ordered at http://www.ijorientationandmobility.com

This volume includes a diverse range of topics that considers training issues, client responsibility, professional training, innovative aids, and client perception of using aids. Specifically, the lead article by Diamond, the immediate past President of the World Blind Union (WBU), summarises statistics about vision impairment, and discusses some of the projects and resources available that might enable a greater number of people with vision impairment to access environments and transport systems.

Accessibility remains a major focus of O&M, and Sauerburger, Bourquin, and Sauerburger investigate the effectiveness of warning signage to assist people who are deaf-blind conduct safer street crossing. Their results have implications for O&M specialist education that affect consumers, families, agencies, and schools. It is important to note that this study includes the term ‘deaf-blind’ rather than ‘deafblind’. ‘Deafblind’ is the term adopted by the Australian Deafblind Council and by the national organisation ‘Sense’ in the United Kingdom. Much of the international literature also uses the term deafblind, the rationale being that the condition is simply not a combination of Deafness and Blindness, but a disability in its own right. However, IJOM respects the decision by the American Association of the Deaf-Blind to continue using the hyphenated term “deaf-blind” and acknowledges that philosophical variation and preference will occasionally occur with regard to terminology. In this and similar instances, the author’s preferred terminology will be used.

Client safety is also considered by Munro and Stafford. A quandary often experienced by instructors-in-training and O&M specialists in the early phases of their career is that of judging suitable training distances between instructor and client. To aid this process, the authors investigate the use of an Audio-link between the instructor and client during training.

Perla’s article challenges the O&M specialist to reflect on the amount of age-appropriate choice, control, and ownership our young clients have in their O&M training programs. Perla suggests providing three types of choice, and perceiving O&M training as a partnership, all of which can influence and develop effective O&M skills.

Berndtsson and Sunneson describe the trial of an echolocation training course for students participating in a university special education degree. It is widely recognised by O&M professionals that echolocation is an important tool of which clients should be aware and have the choice to learn. However, currently echolocation is not widely included in university training for instructors-in-training.

Willins describes the adaption of a long cane handle named the ‘Spring Loaded “Willins” cane’ that reduces jarring. Willins describes the reasons for and processes in its development,
a ‘recipe’ to reproduce the cane as well as a case study where the cane was particularly useful.

Together with the consideration of client technical requirements, Wah Wan considers the importance of cultural requirements when delivering O&M services to some people from Chinese backgrounds. Wah Wan considers some of the challenges that exist for this cultural group, and discusses the need for culturally competent O&M specialists.

The client perspective is also considered by Hogan who discusses her experiences as an O&M instructor with vision impairment, and the embarrassment experienced by some clients when presented with a mobility aid. She suggests the potential of assertiveness training to assist clients reduce their level of embarrassment.

It is of great importance that O&M specialists share their experiences, observations, research, and innovations via publication. Only through this process can O&M specialists and clients benefit world-wide from all the tremendous O&M work and experience that has accrued. The most frequent comment made to the editors of *IJOM* by O&M specialists is that despite their innovations, experience, and research, they lack the confidence to publish because they believe their writing skills are wanting. However, we reiterate that the necessary technical writing assistance is provided by our editorial and peer review panels, and editors. Article content is the priority and is in our opinion the core of research or practice reports. Please keep your submissions coming.

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