

TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY
The Graduate School
Lubbock, Texas

ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

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Title of Dissertation: Sensory Room Use: An Intervention Tool for Developing Visual Fluency in a Child with Cortical Visual Impairment (CVI)

Names of Committee Members: Dr. Nora Griffin-Shirley (chairperson), Dr. Rona Pogrund, Dr. Lee Duemer, Dr. Roseanna Davidson

Major: Special Education (Visual Impairments)

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ABSTRACT

Cortical visual impairment (CVI) is a complex condition and more common than most would suspect. The characteristics of CVI may vary from child to child and may not be representative of all children who carry the diagnosis. Students diagnosed with CVI are a complex group, and they present many unique challenges to educators at all levels on the educational continuum. These challenges are reflected in program design, curriculum, program planning and evaluation, and Individual Education Plan (IEP) development.

The current study examined the use of a sensory room environment with a child diagnosed with CVI and additional disabilities in the development, maintenance, and progression of visual fluency (e.g. tracking, shift of gaze behaviors).

This is a qualitative case study involving one child diagnosed with CVI and additional disabilities to be conducted over a six-week period. The study was guided by five research questions:

1. What design characteristics of the sensory room facilitate functional use of vision in a child with CVI?

2. What is the association between materials used in the sensory room and increased utilization of tracking/shift of gaze?
3. How does the use of the sensory room support increased visual fluency (tracking/shift of gaze) as a result of increased arousal in a child with CVI?
4. What instructional strategies did the classroom teacher use to link visual skill development (tracking/shift of gaze) in the sensory room to other naturally occurring environments?
5. What instructional strategies did the teacher of students with visual impairments use to link visual skill development (tracking/shift of gaze) in the sensory room to other naturally occurring environments?

The researcher used a combination of techniques throughout the data collection phase that included review of archival data, teacher interviews, participant observations, non-participant observations, and cross member checking. She concluded with an analysis of the data and a narrative of the findings.

BRIEF GUIDELINES FOR DEFENSE ABSTRACT

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