

charts, and "alt tags" to provide alternative text for graphic images.

- If requested, provide large print copies of classroom handouts.
- During group activities, students with visually impairments may need extra assistance. Also, please ask other students in the group to identify themselves by name when speaking.
- When writing on the board, please write the information first and then face the class to explain.
- If the student has guide dog assistance, do not pet the animal. These dogs are working for the student and petting will distract them from their task.
- If your class will be meeting in an alternate location, steps must be taken to notify the visually impaired student. Leaving a sign on the door of the classroom will not be sufficient.

**For information or assistance,
please contact;
Disability Services
C-218
(734) 384-4167**

**For assistance or questions
about the use of the MCCC
Course Management System,
please contact the Coordinator
of E-learning and Instructional
Support at (734) 384-4129**

Visual Impairments

**Monroe County
Community College
1555 S. Raisinville Rd.
Monroe, Michigan 48161**

Visual Impairment

Visual impairment is the term used to describe the loss of sight that can be a consequence of a number of different medical conditions or eye injuries. The impact of a visual impairment is closely tied to the onset, severity, and type of visual loss.

Visual impairment impacts the student's academic learning as well as their activities of daily living. Visual impairments present in a variety of ways. Besides low vision or blindness, there can also be sensitivity to light and glare, blind spots in visual fields, or problems with contrasts or colors. Lighting, environment, fatigue, and emotional stress can be factors that impact the student's functioning.

Some students may be able to see large objects, but experience difficulty seeing fine print. Others may have perfect central vision, but limited peripheral vision. In addition, students who have the same visual condition may often exhibit different symptoms and challenges. It is important to remember each student is different when considering his or her needs.

Categories of Visual Impairment

Visual impairment is categorized by the level of the person's ability to perceive what is viewed through the eye.

- *Partially sighted* refers to visual problems in which the person needs special assistance in some areas. Visual acuity falls between 20/70 and 20/200 in the better eye with correction.
- *Low vision* generally refers to a severe visual impairment, not necessarily limited to distance vision. Low vision applies to all individuals with sight who are unable to read at a normal viewing distance, even with the aid of eyeglasses or contact lenses. They often use a combination of vision and other senses to learn.
- *Legally blind* indicates that a person has less than 20/200 vision in the better eye after the best corrective measures are taken, or a field of vision of less than 20 degrees in the better eye.
- *Totally blind* indicates no functional vision. These students learn via Braille and non-visual media and use tactile and auditory channels for learning and functioning tasks.

Classroom Suggestions

- Do not make any assumptions about a student's abilities. Always remember to ask the student how you can be of

assistance. Dialoging with the student may help you determine the severity of the student's visual impairment.

- Always identify yourself when greeting a student who is visually impaired. Verbalize to the class if you are leaving the room.
- Speak directly to the student, not through a third party. Look at the student when you are speaking. It is not necessary to raise your voice when speaking to a student who is blind or visually impaired.
- Try to repeat directions or descriptions. These students rely heavily on memory. Speak directly to the class during any lectures.
- Common accommodations for students with visual impairments may include use of a tape recorder, notetaker, or print enlarger.
- Clearly verbalize when using visual aids or other graphics.
- When developing courses using the MCCC Course Management System, please be cognizant of accessibility for Visually Impaired Students. This could include captioning for all purchased or uploaded videos, text descriptions of photos and