Orientation and Mobility: Techniques for Independence

(2nd Edition) Revised and expanded
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soft cover.


Orientation and mobility: Techniques for independence (2nd edition) is an essential handbook for orientation and mobility (O&M) specialists-in-training, O&M specialists, as well as others interested in the methods and techniques used to orientate a person with vision impairment. The authors are internationally renowned academics and specialists in the profession of human service, vision impairment, and O&M. The book is organised into nine chapters with the table of contents clearly indicating the topics within each chapter. Clear illustrations assist to aid the comprehension of O&M concepts and techniques. Chapter 7 is unique to the 2nd edition and focuses on the important topic of street crossing strategies. The chapters include:

Chapter 1 Instructional strategies: definition of O&M and its purpose; assessment of O&M needs and desires; establishing goals and planning programs; instructional strategies (e.g., reinforcement, prompting, shaping, fading, and chaining); an introduction to training sequencing.

Chapter 2 Human guide techniques: basic guiding technique; modifications to the basic technique; teaching considerations; guiding through narrow spaces and doors; transferring sides and reversing directions; ascending and descending stairs; seating; accepting or refusing assistance; common courtesies.

Chapter 3 Self-protective and positional techniques: definitions, upper-hand-and-forearm; lower-hand-and-forearm; trailing; parallel alignment; squaring off.

Chapter 4 Systematic search patterns and familiarisation procedures: definitions; explanation of various search pattern (e.g., linear, fan, expanding box); locating objects; familiarisation procedures.

Chapter 5 Cane techniques: description of the long cane; cane techniques (e.g., diagonal techniques, touch techniques, three-point touch techniques, touch-and-drag technique); contacting objects and drop-offs; negotiating doorways and stairs.
Chapter 6 Environmental sequence and selection: sequencing O&M training; selection of the training environment (e.g., indoors, outdoors, business environments); travel patterns; recovery strategies; veering strategies.

Chapter 7 Street crossing strategies: five components of street crossing; intersections and appropriate crossing points; analysing intersection geometry and traffic as well as pedestrian controls; alignment; identifying low risk times to cross streets or considering alternative street crossing strategies; maintaining a desired line of travel when crossing; instruction sequencing.

Chapter 8 Special travel environments: shopping malls; department stores; supermarkets; escalators; elevators; rural areas; railroad crossings.

Chapter 9 Use of public transportation: travel between cities; travel within cities (taxis, buses, trains); trip planning.

Excluded from the 2nd edition that was evident in the first edition of the text are the sections: ‘Definitions and terminology’ and ‘About the authors’. There is no doubt that a terminology section would provide a useful resource and reference to those less familiar with O&M. Also it is always interesting and useful to read information about the authors and their careers, especially those new to the profession unfamiliar with the extensive work of these authors.

As minor points, although this text is a concise handbook, it might benefit from an index to assist a subject search, as well as a website listing of recommended resources to gain credible O&M-related information. It is interesting to note that the 2nd edition does not make reference to other O&M-related aids such as the Miniguide or GPS devices, although these are widely incorporated into O&M programs particularly in developed nations. However, it is recognised that these aids are considered predominantly secondary mobility aids and the long cane is considered a primary aid.

This text includes information relating to the profession of O&M that is presented in a concise and easy to understand format. It could easily be considered an essential training text for the profession. For this, the authors should be congratulated and the book highly recommended.

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