Developing a framework for Orientation and Mobility technique evaluations.

Target audience:
This training event is geared towards the O&M practitioner who has worked in the field for a number of years and would like the opportunity to reflect, in a group, on their practice, how their practice evolves over time and also how they can support colleagues to develop their practice.

Background:
Over the past 8 years the research of Dr. Andrew Dodgson has shown that Rehabilitation Workers develop a wealth of socially constructed knowledge. This knowledge – whilst not based on a mere passage of time but on an openness to learning new paradigms of practice (Benner and Benner, 1999) – is developed from the range and sheer volume of client contact and work they undertake within their role.

The opportunity to develop from Novice to Expert requires the transformation of these experiences into situation appropriate practice is not automatic. This transformation often requires access to the knowledge of others through discussion and storytelling to facilitate the consolidation of experiences, making them available for future reference (Klein, 1999). In the case of RWs' practice, the process of mediating 'experience' through 'colleague discussion' is an essential element in the development of knowledge, understanding and skills.

Whilst the RW develops an in-depth quality understanding of the application of rehabilitative techniques, unfortunately, due to the disbursement of the profession, the sharing and validation of understanding required for progression from Novice to Expert is inconsistent.

The techniques of Orientation and Mobility taught to trainee Rehabilitation Workers have remained consistent for the last 50 years (Dodgson, 2014). Whilst this is not a testament to their suitability, the employment of Rehabilitation Workers as course tutors and lecturers would suggest their validation as fit-for-purpose. This consistency helps us establish the base-line of prevocational knowledge form which we can build a structured continuum from Novice to Expert.

Based on the work of Benner (2001) and Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1986-2005) the aim of this training programme is to enable the attendees to construct a detailed framework of professional attributes in the application of Orientation and Mobility. To achieve this the session will focus on the following learning outcomes.

1. Recognition of the consistency of prevocational Orientation and Mobility Training.

2. Assess the relevance of traditional Orientation and Mobility techniques to modern day needs of visually impaired people.

3. Identification of the key features of Novice, Beginner, Advanced Beginner, Competent Proficient and Expert practitioners.

4. Evaluation of critical incidents using the key features of the Novice to Expert continuum.

5. Development of a framework that describes the attributes of Novice, Beginner, Advanced Beginner, Competent, Proficient and Expert Practitioners.

The training Session will be structured as follows:

Each participant will bring with them a written critical incident – details of documenting a critical incident will be issued.

1. The initial session will involve a review of the current and past training in Orientation and Mobility skills delivered to Rehabilitation Workers.

2. Training on how to interpret the Novice to Expert Continuum.

3. Review of critical incidents.

4. Features of behaviour of Novice. Beginner, Advanced Beginner, Competent, Proficient and Expert practitioners.