Learning About Disabilities
Visual Impairment/Blind

There are a variety of visual disabilities, although the umbrella term *visual impairment* is frequently used to describe the consequence of an eye condition or disorder. There are three major categories of visual disabilities: **visual impairment**, **legally blind**, and **blind**. A diagnosis within these categories is determined by an individual's visual acuity (the clarity or sharpness of vision - measured at a distance of 20 feet).

TYPES OF VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS

Visual Impairment
Individuals who are visually impaired have acuity between 20-80 and 20-200 with correction in the better eye.

Legally Blind
To be considered legally blind an individual must have an acuity of 20/200 or less, with correction in their better eye.

Blind
Individuals who are blind have no measurable acuity, though they may have some sensitivity to light.

Classroom Considerations

Reserve Seating in the Front of the Room
The student may need to be close in order to get a quality tape-recording of the lecture, or the student may be able to read some materials presented on the board or an overhead.

Provide Handout Materials of Any Board Work or Overhead Materials
Students can have someone read the materials to them later or may be able to magnify it outside of class.

Allow Extra Time for Reading Assignments
Students will need additional time either to obtain the materials on audio tapes, transfer them into Braille, enlarge them, or read them with magnification equipment.

COMMON ACCOMMODATIONS

Large Print Text Materials
Enlarging a letter-size document to a legal-size document is one method of enlarging print. Commercial large print materials are usually in an 18 or 20 point font; however, enlarging print to any size that makes it readable for the individual is appropriate.

Audio-Taped or E-Text Materials
National organizations and campus readers can audio-tape printed materials. Books may be scanned into E-text and read by a screen reader. Typically, reading lists need to be obtained in advance to provide adequate lead time for obtaining taped text or E-text materials.

Screen Readers
Screen readers read aloud printed materials through a MAC or PC. Disability Resources has access to a number of screen reading programs.

Braille
There are a variety of adaptive technical products that read, write, and print in Braille.

Close-Circuit Televisions (CCTV)
CCTV's enlarge print material that is placed on a movable tray, and the magnified image of the document is projected onto a screen. CCTV's are available in most of the Case libraries.

Software-Driven Text Enlargement
These programs display text with a variable degree of magnification. This is available through Disability Resources and is easy to load onto a PC or Mac. Personal magnifiers can also be used to read printed materials that can be held close to the eyes.