

## WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY (WMU) – TRAVEL INSTRUCTOR COMPETENCIES\*

Western Michigan University has developed Academic Competencies for the Effective Practice of Travel Instruction and Curriculum Areas for the Preparation of the Travel Instructor. These include concepts such as:

- Assessment procedures for determining the student's readiness for travel instruction
- The appropriate procedures used to assess orientation and travel skills in areas such as motor, cognitive, language, and sensory skills
- The general and specific features in an environment that affect accessibility and travel by students with disabilities
- How to analyze intersections to determine best locations for negotiating street crossings by students with differing disabilities
- The process for selecting travel route and mode of transit based on analysis of environment, student's disability, and student and family preference
- Knowledge and understanding of fixed route transit systems in the community where instruction is provided
- Orientation and travel skills including route planning, schedule reading, use of transit maps, analysis of traffic patterns and street crossings, and adaptive techniques
- Methods to modify instruction in travel skills and techniques that are appropriate for students with unique individual needs
- Observation skills, the ability to interpret and analyze observations, and the flexibility to change lessons and program sequence based upon observation
- Establishing and maintaining an appropriate position and physical distance between the instructor and the student for effective instruction and safety
- In monitoring the student, demonstrating the ability to determine and respond effectively to the position, movement, and safety of the student at all times

These are just a few of a wide range of skills that are the foundation of a travel instructor's expertise. They enable the instructor to accurately assess student performance and environmental factors through observations as well as make recommendations and implement instruction that is appropriate to the student's individual needs.

\*This is a brief overview of the WMU competencies. For a complete list of competencies, see *Travel Instruction for People with Disabilities: A Standards and Curriculum Development Project*, produced by Western Michigan University (1998).