

SPACE EDUCATION AND OUTREACH SYMPOSIUM (E1)
New Worlds - Non-Traditional Space Education and Outreach (7)

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TOUCHABLE ASTRONOMY: EXPLORING STEM CAREERS FOR THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED

Abstract

Considering a career in science is an exciting and demanding possibility for students. Astronomy has long been a popular subject of study as it probes deep questions as well as offers study of fascinating, beautiful aspects of the cosmos. In order to bolster opportunities for visually impaired students, the *Career Exploration Lab* was created through a partnership between a NASA Instructional Team focused on the use tactile materials derived from astrophysics research, and the South Carolina Commission for the Blind. The science based curriculum based on 3D printing of tactile materials was used in a two-week summer program for blind and visually impaired high school students (ages 16-19) as a testbed for an expanded program. This paper will discuss the purpose of the program, the design of the curriculum, the use of 3D print technologies, and the outcomes including an assessment of effectiveness and future prospects for such activities.