



CTEBVI JOURNAL

FALL 2014

Volume LVI, No. 2

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THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE
*California Transcribers and Educators
for the Blind and Visually Impaired*

Message from the (Temporary) Editor

Hello, everyone. As Christy Cutting announced in the last issue of the *JOURNAL*, she has resigned as editor. Thank you, Christy, for the professional job you did not only publishing outstanding issues, but also the transitioning of the *JOURNAL* from print to virtual.

While CTEBVI is in the process of searching for and selecting a new editor, I've been asked to publish this one issue.

If you are interested in this fun and creative position, please contact Tracy Gaines, CTEBVI President, at bttranscribing@hotmail.com.

The 2015 56th Annual CTEBVI Conference will be here before you know it. Please check out the flyer on **page 7** for more information regarding registration and hotel reservations, and learn how you can help out with the Silent Auction (see page 8).

Marcy Ponzio

LOOKING FOR *JOURNAL* EDITOR

Requirements:

- No previous experience necessary
- Eye for detail
- Good grammar skills
- Can live anywhere
- Must be CTEBVI member

As Editor, you are automatically an ex-officio (non-voting) member of the CTEBVI board and would be expected to attend two board meetings a year.

With only three issues per year, the time to produce the *JOURNAL* is not overwhelming. A big benefit is that you're the first to see every issue!

THE CTEBVI JOURNAL

Editor

Marcy Ponzio

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Deadlines for Articles:

Winter Issue: January 9, 2015

CTEBVI JOURNAL

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President's Message

I stated at the close of the 2014 conference that all of you (the members of CTEBVI) are the breath of this organization and that it takes everyone getting involved in order to make a difference in the lives of students and others with visual impairments so that they may have every opportunity to succeed.

The proof of this was never more evident than in the first half of this year. The members of CTEBVI, CCB and other advocacy organizations made their voices heard and we were able to successfully change a potentially dangerous course of action. Following is a brief summary of the government action and the outcome as a result of letters, phone calls and personal appearances from all of you expressing your passion and concerns.

While the issue outlined below happened in California, the potential is there for this to occur in almost every state. Departments of Education all over the country are cutting their budgets which may have harmful consequences for students with disabilities (especially B/VI students) since the cost for producing necessary materials for them is significant. No matter what state you're in, I urge you to be vigilant and active when these types of issues arise.

BACKGROUND

The 2013-14 budget consolidated the majority of the state's categorical programs with the discretionary revenue limit funding to create the more simplified Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF). Under the new LCFF, the State Instructional Materials Fund (IMF) was defunded, eliminating the authority of the State Board of Education (SBE) to encumber some of these funds to provide accessible instructional materials for visually impaired students.

GOVERNOR'S 2014-15 BUDGET

The Governor's Senate's proposed trailer bill language allows the CDE to assess a fee on the Local Education Agencies (LEAs) that choose to acquire accessible instructional materials for the visually impaired from the CDE. The CDE is charged with determining the amount of the fee charged to LEAs.

NEW: The Assembly proposed language that would put \$3,000,000 in the budget annually to pay for accessible materials, with an augmentation of \$1.5 million to cover the math adoption specifically. After a hearing, the Senate Committee proposal passed and went to the governor and was signed. That funding is now in the state budget.

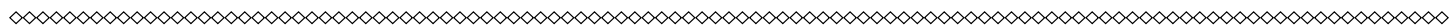
2014-15 BUDGET

The legislature passed the law which removed the requirement of districts funding any part of the accessible materials. The ongoing budget of \$3 million was added to the annual state budget to produce braille and large print. There was also an additional \$1.5 million to pay for the recent math adoption, which will likely be requested annually to complete math and begin other adoptions such as English Language Arts, Science, History Social Science, and other curricular areas.

Note, the state board adopts only K-8 materials. High school has to adopt at the local school board. Any accessible materials are produced and paid for using Low Incidence Funds, distributed by the SELPAs that regularly pay for braille, large print, and assistive technology. Schools can also use special education federal funds.

Tracy Gaines

In Memoriam



Marie (Rede) Acker

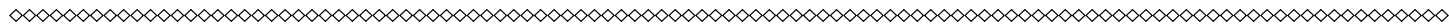
July 22, 1928 – August 12, 2014

My wife Marie (Rede) Acker was a Life Member of CTEBVI.

For 35 years she volunteered as a Library of Congress Certified Braille Transcriber for the Denver, Colorado Public Schools. She attended the CTEVH conferences for many years and would come back to the Boulder/Denver Transcriber Group and give classes to the transcribers about what she had learned.

I was also a certified brailist in the Boulder/Denver area. Our daughter-in law, Alice Acker from San Diego, is also a member of CTEBVI.

John E. Acker



Our Gratitude and Thanks to All Those Who Support CTEBVI Through Gifts and Tributes

DONNA COFFEE YOUTH SCHOLARSHIP

Carol Morrison — In Memory of Evelyn Falk

KATIE SIBERT SCHOLARSHIP

Charlene Okamoto

Margaret Glaeser

GENERAL FUND

Robert Paul Clapper — JOURNAL printing

Nancy and James Amick — JOURNAL printing

Jean Wright — JOURNAL printing

Carol Morrison — Thank You for Distinguished Member Award

Alvin McCuiston — In Memory of Jane Corcoran (his sister)

Bonnie Rothman

Milton Ota

Joyce Van Tuyl — In Memory of Fred Sinclair

AmazonSmile

Contributions to the CTEBVI Gifts and Tributes Fund

will be used to improve services to persons who are visually impaired.

Your information for acknowledgment:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip/Route Code: _____

In Honor of: _____

In Memory of: _____

May we please know date of death: _____

Let us know your wishes:

- Please direct contributions to the Katie Sibert Memorial Scholarship Fund
- Please direct contributions to the Donna Coffee Youth Scholarship Fund

All contributions to CTEBVI are tax deductible.

Make checks payable to CTEBVI and mail them to:

CTEBVI Gifts and Tributes

Judi Biller

1523 Krim Place

Oceanside, CA 92054

ctebvi.membership@gmail.com

2015 Conference News



56th Annual CTEBVI Conference
San Francisco Airport Marriott
5855 West Century Boulevard
Burlingame, CA 94010
650-692-9100

March 19-22, 2015



Hotel link now available on CTEBVI Conference Page

Call For Workshops Deadline is November 1, 2014
www.ctebvi.org/Conf2015/2015CallforWorkshops.doc

Registration Form Available in Word .doc Format
(for school purposes)

ONLINE CONFERENCE REGISTRATION WILL BEGIN JANUARY 1, 2015

See page **8** for information on donating or contributing items to the Silent Auction

For Conference Questions Contact:

Vicki Garrett, Registrar
ctebvi@aol.com
702-575-9913

Silent Auction

CALLING ALL MEMBERS

DATE: MARCH 19-22
TO: MEMBERS OF CTEBVI
EVENT: SILENT AUCTION



With each conference, we strive to strengthen our community by bringing together teachers, parents, students and transcribers. We aim to provide them with the most current tools and resources that will help provide children who are blind or visually impaired with the best opportunity to live successful lives.

In order to continue to grow our support of these areas, WE NEED YOUR HELP! Please consider participating by donating an item to our silent auction. The monies raised will go toward equipping "you," the members of CTEBVI, with the knowledge you will need to stay in the forefront of education and advocacy for those with visual impairments.

In the past, we have received a wide range of donations, for example, tickets to sporting events; items from assistive technology companies; gift baskets from other organizations; autographed books; a week's stay at a resort/personal vacation home, to name a few.

Some more suggestions for donations: concert or theatre tickets; autographed memorabilia; a day at the spa; restaurant gift certificates. If you'd like to donate but don't have a particular item in mind, monetary donations will be used to purchase items for the auction.

These are just a few ideas for donations, ALL donations are welcome. Every item donated contributes to the success of CTEBVI.

Time is a valuable asset; volunteers at the silent auction table are always needed.

If you are interested in donating an item, or volunteering at the silent auction table, please contact Dawn Gross at 805-377-5651 or by email braille@grossgang.com by January 31, 2015.

Thank you for your participation.

Dawn Gross
Silent Auction Chair

Call for Workshops Application

2015 CALL FOR WORKSHOPS 56th ANNUAL CTEBVI CONFERENCE March 19-22, 2015 Burlingame Marriott

The theme for 2015 is "Share Your Vision In Our Changing Times".

We are looking for workshops that offer practical and usable information to help make conference participants' lives and jobs easier. Participants should walk away with techniques and follow-up ideas that can be demonstrated during the workshop and carried over into the competing priorities of their busy lives.

As a starting point, here are possible workshop topics (not an exclusive list) for each strand, recommended by our workshop-strand chairs. As you can tell, almost any topic is fair game for a workshop. Get creative and come up with your own. New topics are always exciting!

Transcribers:

- Employment opportunities for transcribers
- Transition to UEB
- Nemeth code
- Chemistry transcription
- Music transcription
- Textbook format for educational materials
- Foreign language transcription
- Tactile graphics guidelines and techniques
- Transcribing for early grade levels
- Proofreading
- Software programs, not specific to braille software programs
- NIMAS – access issues and what to do once you have the files
- Alternate media: scanning, optical character recognition (OCR), formatting Word documents, working with PDF documents, comparing electronic formats

Educators:

- Common Core State Standards implementation and accessibility
- Standardized testing for VI students
- Assistive computer technology: screen readers, personal scanning systems, refreshable braille displays, portable notetakers, comparing/contrasting technology, emerging technology, GPS devices, iPads, apps for iPhones, etc.
- Classroom management and resources (data, IEPs, inventories, technology and research)
- Specific issues for infants and toddlers, preschool, elementary, middle school, high school, and MI/VI students
- Assessments (formal and informal)
- Literacy (effective reading/writing techniques and issues)
- Standards (how they drive instruction and goals)
- Technology (effective low/high tech devices and their uses)
- Daily living skills (self-help skills, social manners, leisure and recreation skills, how to make friends)
- Medical (current research on therapy, treatments, cures)

- Orientation and Mobility (the right techniques at the right time)
- Paraprofessionals: their role in the education of children with visual impairments: how to help without enabling, working under the supervision of a TVI and a classroom teacher, safety issues for you and your student
- Administration: supporting mainstream teachers to meet VI students' needs, creating a workable VI program, designing enrichment programs, working with the Dept. of Rehabilitation, living skills

Parents, Families, and Students:

- Setting up Twitter and Facebook accounts for your child
- Disciplining: Knowing the difference between a bad behavior and a mannerism
- Grant-writing basics to help your VI child
- Making a friend
- Socio-recreational options/outlets for different age groups
- Best online resources for parents
- Essential basic technology for home and school to help your braille reader—what are the essentials and where can you get them? (plus HOW to get funds for this stuff!)
- Raising your child to be an employable adult
- Best practices to prepare your child to learn braille (ages 2-5)
- Braille readers at home (this could be one or two sessions)
- Other braille best practices for parents to use (electronic book access, pre-school intro to braille, distance education, other screen readers)
- Parent panel or roundtable of ideas per age group
- SSI and your visually impaired child, disability checks and employment
- Communication about relationships and sexual topics through the different age groups
- Transitions: High school to college, school to work, "low vision" to "blind," progressive vision loss, adult vision loss, braille literacy for adult blind, life skills

Your Strand Chairs

If you have questions or need additional information about a specific workshop strand, the requirements for the workshops, want to brainstorm ideas, etc., please contact the workshop strand chair directly. They are ready to help you.

Christy Cutting	Transcribers	Christy.braille@cox.net	702-293-7625
Karen Tomlinson	Educators	ktomlin310@aol.com	818-773-4750
Anne Ward	Parents	inland2wards@gmail.com	707-463-2296

NOTE: Workshop sessions are 90 minutes long.

Name:	
Title/Affiliation:	
Address:	
Day Phone:	
Evening Phone:	Cell phone:
E-mail:	
Workshop Strand (mark as many as apply): Transcribers ___ Educators ___ Parents ___	
Title of Workshop:	
Description of workshop for Registration Packet (< 100 words):	
Please give a brief description of your experience, credentials, job titles, etc., so attendees will know something about you and why you might be giving this workshop.	
<p>Approval to provide Continuing Education (CE) is applied for through ACVREP. For this purpose, learning objectives need to be listed for all workshops. Objectives need to be measurable and specific and should state what the participant is expected to learn. For example, "Participants will learn how to ..." Or "Participants will be able to ..." Please list up to three learning objectives which participants will gain through your workshop:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 	

Panel Members Names, Titles, and Affiliation (complete only if applicable):

Preferred Seating:

Classroom: (tables with chairs)

Theatre: (just chairs)

Any other arrangement (please specify):

Internet is needed for my presentation: Yes No

AV equipment: AV equipment will be provided in every workshop. Presenters must supply laptop computers and connectors (power cords and USB cables) from those computers. Presenters will get further information on equipment needs in their acceptance letter.

Workshop Handouts

If your proposal is accepted for a workshop session, handouts or accompanying materials can be provided electronically (details for submittal will be provided at acceptance). Materials will be uploaded onto our website after conference. If your workshop is approved, due date for submitting your handouts is March 31, 2015.

All proposals need to be submitted electronically to Christy Cutting at Christy.braille@cox.net. If you are unable to submit electronically, please contact Christy at 702-293-7625. **Proposals must be received by November 1, 2014.**

CTEBVI Membership

Fall 2014



October is our Annual Membership Drive.

You have received, or will be receiving, a yellow flyer, reminding you to renew your 2015 dues, giving you the opportunity to submit early, and to make a donation to the Fund of your choice if you so choose.

Any dues received from October forward count as your 2015 Membership.

IF YOU WANT TO RECEIVE THE *JOURNAL IN PRINT OR BRAILLE*, be sure to contact me, otherwise you will receive it via email (providing we have an email address on file for you).

You can renew and/or donate by mailing in the yellow form, or going online to ctebvi.org.

Hope to see you in March 2015 at our 56th Annual Conference in San Francisco/Burlingame!

Judi Biller
CTEBVI Membership Chair



CTEBVI Membership Application and Renewal Form

CTEBVI membership dues are for the calendar year. Any dues received after October 1 will be applied to the following year. Members receive the *CTEBVI JOURNAL*.

For your convenience, you may log onto www.ctebvi.org to submit the following information and make payment by credit card.

Domestic or Foreign (individual or family with VI children) Membership	US \$50	\$
Student Membership (post high school -- ID required at conference)	US \$25	\$
Life Membership	US \$500	\$
I would like to make the following donation(s):		
• General Fund		\$
• Katie Sibert Memorial Fund		\$
• Donna Coffee Youth Scholarship Fund		\$
In Honor/Memory Of (or designated use for a certain purpose):		
	TOTAL	\$
CHARGE CARD NUMBER:		
EXP DATE:	CVV2:	TELEPHONE on acct:
Signature (if using your charge)		

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

AFFILIATION/COMPANY (if applicable) _____

(TELEPHONE) HOME _____ WORK _____ MOBILE _____

EMAIL _____ (required for JOURNAL delivery)

The *CTEBVI JOURNAL* comes to current members via an emailed link. You will be notified when the latest *JOURNAL* is available on our website. Issues are available in .PDF and .doc formats.

If you require PRINT or BRAILLE, you will need to email ctebvi.membership@gmail.com **OR** you may send mail to the address below with your request.

Donations accepted to help defray costs of printing and mailing. **Thank you!**

Please help us know our membership by circling all descriptions that apply to you.

- VI Educator O&M Instructor Dual certification (TVI and O&M) Transcriber
 Parent(s) of VI student Proofreader Student Paraprofessional Retired
 Other (e.g. Librarian, Administrator, Counselor, Vendor, Consumer) _____

Please send this form with payment made payable to CTEBVI, Inc. to:

Judi Biller, CTEBVI Membership Chair
 1523 Krim Place, Oceanside, CA 92054-5528
ctebvi.membership@gmail.com

Featured Articles

The End of An Era Matilda Ziegler Magazine

The *Matilda Ziegler Magazine for the Blind* has been suspended for the past several months pending a review by the Board of Directors of The E. Matilda Ziegler Foundation for the Blind. Considerable time was spent evaluating its substance, breadth of distribution, and readers' responses. With a heavy heart the directors voted to discontinue the weekly magazine and use the Foundation's resources solely for scientific research through grants to highly innovative medical researchers who are making important advances in vision research.

We've come a long way from when my great grandmother, Electa Matilda Ziegler, founded the magazine in 1907 with the goal of producing reading material for the blind "as much as possible like that published for the seeing." Raised type books of the era were expensive, and the freely circulated magazine helped to fill an information void.

Today's blind and those with visual impairment can obtain books and magazines in braille, on cassette, and in DVD or CD format from the National Library Service and the American Foundation for the Blind. Radio, television, Internet, and commercially produced audio books have all become accessible, and provide resources that could not have been imagined in 1907.

Your emails and letters show that we've touched the lives of thousands of blind and vision impaired people. The *Matilda Ziegler Magazine for the Blind* was once described by Helen Keller as a "godsend," and Mark Twain described it as "one of the noblest benefactions of his lifetime." We hope to realize a medical breakthrough that will be worthy of the same praise.

On behalf of the E. Matilda Ziegler Foundation Board I sincerely thank you for your loyal readership over our many years.

Cynthia Ziegler Brighton
President

Featured Articles

CAPVI News

ATTENTION EDUCATORS AND TRANSCRIBERS:

Please pass on the following information to the parents/families of the children you serve

THANK YOU

CAPVI, the California Association for Parents of Children with Visual Impairments, is the California State Affiliate of NAPVI, the National Association for Parents of Children with Visual Impairments www.napvi.org. Two of the major goals for CAPVI are parent education and parent empowerment.

In order to achieve these goals, CAPVI has established a website: www.capvi.org, an email list: capvinews@gmail.com, and a Yahoo group: capvi.yahoogle.com. The first two are currently administered by Anne Ward, Northern California Co-Chair of CAPVI. Anyone can visit the website. Anyone can subscribe to and comment about the capvinews@gmail.com elist. No membership is necessary. Anyone, parents seeking communication with other parents or looking for information, can join in the conversation on capvi.yahoogle.com. For even greater family involvement, we suggest that families join in FamilyConnect, an online service of American Foundation for the Blind and NAPVI, featuring parent message boards and a service similar to Facebook for parental communication. FamilyConnect is available in both English and Spanish.

The final component of our outreach to parents is CAPVI's involvement with CTEBVI. For the last five or six years, CAPVI has offered free CTEBVI family memberships to about 20 families annually, usually to families who might otherwise be unable to attend the conference. These CTEBVI family memberships entitle the families to attend the conference without paying any further conference fee. At CTEBVI conferences, parents can attend workshops of interest, interact with other parents and educators of the visually impaired, and check out the Exhibit Hall tables where consumers are encouraged to ask questions and test-drive technical equipment. Sadly, CAPVI can't manage to pay for hotel rooms, food, transportation, or child care. However, families are welcome to bring their children and enough family members to assist with turn-taking in child care if the children in question do not take well to the workshops. Any family seeking a free CTEBVI family membership should contact Anne Ward at capvinews@gmail.com, or call her at 707-463-2296.

An additional focus of CAPVI's partnership with CTEBVI lies in the presentation of workshops aimed at families of children with visual impairments. Our Southern California co-chair, Carlos Martinez, has arranged for various CTEBVI workshops in Spanish. CAPVI actively solicits CTEBVI workshops aimed at parents, the subjects of which have included sex education for visually impaired children, panels: of blind teenagers discussing education, blind adults advising on employment and coping with life as a blind person, SSI and Department of Rehabilitation involvement, parents and educators exchanging tips, among many other topics. We are open to suggestions for future presentations of interest to families of children with visual impairments in future CTEBVI conferences.

Despite formally awarding free CTEBVI family memberships, CAPVI has been saddened that for a variety of reasons (illness, work, etc.), each year a fair percentage of families who originally expect to attend the conference can't quite manage to get there. We (CAPVI and CTEBVI) would love to be able to ensure that more families manage to attend the conference. We've considered offering fewer scholarships and then adding a gas card or some other incentive to families who actually manage to get to the conference. Any and all ideas for improving family attendance would be very welcome. We can't guarantee to **follow** all solutions offered, but they will definitely be considered.

Featured Articles

Tech News

AFB Launches the CareerConnect App, A Tool for Vision Professionals, Job Seekers, and Youth

The American Foundation for the Blind's CareerConnect Web Program provides vision professionals, job seekers, family members, and youth who are blind or visually impaired with a resource that fits in their pocket. AFB has designed the CareerConnect App around some of the key features of the AFB CareerConnect Program. This could be your quick lesson idea, the tips toward finding your next job, or the inspiration and advice toward your first career.

If you are a teacher, transition specialist, rehabilitation counselor, or a related professional:

If you are a job seeker, transitioning youth, or want to maintain your employment:

If you are a parent or family member of a youth who is blind or visually impaired:

Don't be left behind. Download the CareerConnect App from the Apple App Store today for your iPhone or iPod Touch. AFB will be adding new features and functionality through the coming year. The price is just right, FREE!

AccessNote is now being offered for free through the Apple App Store, and it will be coming to Android in the very near future. AccessNote is a note taking app designed specifically for people who are blind or visually impaired that offers great searchability and syncing to DropBox. AFB is bringing their success to everyone by opening this tool for free.

FingerReader Device

(Excerpt from **RODRIQUE NGOWI, Associated Press, Cambridge, Mass.**)

MIT's FingerReader device helps people with vision impairment read with the swipe of a finger. Scientists at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology are developing an audio reading device to be worn on the index finger of people whose vision is impaired, giving them affordable and immediate access to printed words.

The so-called FingerReader, a prototype produced by a 3-D printer, fits like a ring on the user's finger, equipped with a small camera that scans text. A synthesized voice reads words aloud, quickly translating books, restaurant menus and other needed materials for daily living, especially away from home or office.

Reading is as easy as pointing the finger at text. Special software tracks the finger movement, identifies words and processes the information. The device has vibration motors that alert readers when they stray from the script, said Roy Shilkrot, who is developing the device at the MIT Media Lab.

Pattie Maes, an MIT professor who founded and leads the Fluid Interfaces research group developing the prototype, says the FingerReader is like "reading with the tip of your finger and it's a lot more flexible, a lot more immediate than any solution that they have right now."

Developing the gizmo has taken three years of software coding, experimenting with various designs and working on feedback from a test group of visually impaired people. Much work remains before it is ready for the market, Shilkrot said, including making it work on cellphones.

Shilkrot said developers believe they will be able to affordably market the FingerReader but he could not yet estimate a price. The potential market includes some of the 11.2 million people in the United States with vision impairment, according to U.S. Census Bureau estimates.

Featured Articles

Accessibility of PDF Documents Using Screen Readers

By Jonn Paris-Salb

Assistive Technology Consultant
California Department of Education

Accessibility of instructional materials varies from publisher to publisher. Educators in California today choose an adopted program or collect materials that support the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). The instructional materials can be hard copy textbooks, online information, or various media used to teach standards.

The most common materials are portable document format (PDF). If the person creating the document in PDF is aware of accessibility there is a good chance the text can be read by various text-to-speech (TTS) software programs or screen-reading apps. If the PDF is not created in an accessible manner students needing TTS can be left out.

This article reviews the issue of PDF accessibility, though no actual endorsement can be made. Remember that each student has an Individual Education Program (IEP) that best dictates accessible needs and how they are going to be maximized.

Information about PDFs and requirements for accessibility

Adobe™ has produced a document; Accessing PDF Documents with Assistive Technology: A Screen Reader User's Guide on the Web at

<http://www.adobe.com/content/dam/Adobe/en/accessibility/pdfs/accessing-pdf-sr.pdf>.

How to access pdfs with a screen reader an instructional document at <http://www.open.ac.uk/about/main/management/policies-and-statements/website-accessibility-ou/how-access-pdfs-screen-reader>.

PDF Reading Solutions

SSBART Group has developed a downloadable app that can read PDF documents. The 30-day trial is available at no cost, and can be found at https://www.ssbartgroup.com/landing/acrobat_and_pdf/web_accessibility.php?id=general&ad=9&kw=pdf%20screen%20reader&gclid=CLa40Py7pL8CF-VJefgodvykA8w.

Adobe® Reader® XI is free software you can use to read and access the information contained within PDF files. At <http://www.adobe.com/accessibility/products/reader.html>.

Actuate PDF Accessibility Solution captures and transforms high-volume print streams into PDF documents that are accessible, using assistive technology, for visually-impaired customers. It can be found at <http://www.actuate.com/download/Actuate-PDF-Accessibility-Solution-Sheet.pdf>.

NVDA & PDF Documents is a free app that can read most PDF documents, and can be found and downloaded at <http://barrierbreak.com/resources/nvda-pdf-documents/>.

Guide to Creating Accessible Portable Document Files (PDF) provides instructions on how to alter the PDF so that it can be used with screen-reader software. The directions can be found at http://www.doi.gov/ocio/information_management/upload/Guide_for_Creating_Accessible_Documents.pdf.

Featured Articles

Come to the Edge

EMPOWERED: CHOOSING to "COME to THE EDGE"

By Theresa Postello, M.A., TVI & COMS

(Note: Theresa was named the 2014 Distinguished Educator of Blind Children at the NFB National Convention, Orlando, Florida. The following is her keynote address.)

I. Introduction:

I always wanted to be a teacher! As a youngster, I had an insatiable love of reading and sharing knowledge. My mother reports that while most children were playing "house," I was gathering the neighborhood kids to my little "school." I had a chalk board and I provided paper, pencils, and books. Even as a nine year old, I was bossy and committed to teaching something useful like raising your hand, taking turns, and completing "my little assignments."

Let me share a poem that Dr. Sally Mangold recited to me when I was transitioning to a new teaching experience:

Come to the edge.
I can't. I'm afraid.
Come to the edge.
It's far too high.
Please, come to the edge.
And, he came to the edge.
I pushed him off and he flew.

The very best part of being in this highly specialized field is the opportunity and challenge to work with such a variety of students, of different ages, visual conditions, demographics, and skill levels.

So, as educators and parents, how do we EMPOWER and ENTICE students and children to come to the EDGE? Over a period of 28+ years of teaching students who are blind or visually impaired, I have compiled my Top Ten Guiding Teaching Philosophies. Hopefully, there is something for everyone here to glean as how to foster that "nudge toward the edge."

II. My TOP TEN Guiding Teaching Philosophies

Starting with #10, here we go...

10. WE ARE LIFE LONG LEARNERS! Learning is dynamic. No one can be a Renaissance Person or an expert in every facet or nuance of our profession, parents included. Knowing how to access resources or reach out to others for consultation is vital! In 1989, Dr. Sally Mangold offered the following pearls of wisdom:

- "Tradition is NO excuse for BEST Practices." In other words, braille is NO excuse for being a slow reader.
- Make transcribers your best friends. They are so essential to an educational TEAM. My motto to classroom teachers is STAY AHEAD of the GAME by providing print materials that need to be transcribed in a timely way. To date for the 2013-14 school year, I have transcribed language arts materials and embossed just about 2,000 pages (outside of my "contract" working hours). I do

save the precious math and science for our fabulous, erudite transcriber who hails from Stanford University Transcription Department.

- Hang out with vendors and exhibitors at conferences. Learn about the newest and greatest technologies that might meet our student's and children's needs.
- Support parents by helping them gain a more in depth understanding of their child. Make an effort to learn more about the culture, home dynamics and environment; encourage inclusion and high expectations, for full participation in family activities. I am YOUR best advocate!!! Create opportunities for parents to talk to other parents.
- All children can learn!!
- Bottom line as a teacher who promotes Lifelong Learners: nurture curiosity, promote critical thinking, and encourage problem solving skills. I believe sensitivity and sensibility are right up there.

Easing toward the EDGE

9. PARA-PROFESSIONALS ARE VITAL TEAM MEMBERS. Training and working with para-professionals takes a certain kind of human being who can support the curriculum in "just the right way." Most often, skills to provide giving accurate visual information and support for adapting materials requires training by the TVI which is vital to achieve a balance between giving enough information while still fostering independent learning for the student. Being "velcro-ed" to the student does not benefit the child. Bottom line from my dear friend and colleague, Dr. Laurel Hudson, is practice the "19 Ways to STEP BACK." (Classroom Collaboration, Perkins School for the Blind, 1997)

Creeping closer to the EDGE

8. TRANSITION IS CONTINUOUS. I always thought my favorite area was transition of high school students and getting ready for the next STEP to adulthood. One of my mottos is "I love a good challenge." In 2008, I entered the realm of teaching pre-schoolers; now I love that area of teaching those little ones...totally different from supporting Advanced Placement, chemistry and world history curricula. As always, I'm molding minds, no matter the age level—preschool to adults.

Nudging toward the EDGE

7. PUT YOUR BEST FOOT FORWARD. There are so many aspects to "putting one foot in front of the other" and efficiently, safely and gracefully traveling independently. Toddlers begin gaining confidence with push devices and learning about movement, running, climbing, tumbling, dancing and exploring the world around them. Students evolve with increasing mobility and spatial awareness. I support providing every mobility tool as deemed developmentally appropriate: cane, canines, tactile maps, optics, and GPS.

Again, here's that EDGE beckoning

6. EMBRACE TECHNOLOGY. The younger, the better to introduce information technology to students, but it can't be a "generic prescription" whether it's preschool or beyond. Keyboarding is becoming a high priority skill. New state and federal testing requires computer and keyboarding skills to be able to access the testing process. Moreover, electronic text using adaptive devices greatly facilitates the educational process.

- Again, be a co-learner. It can be as simple as together taking a product out of the box. "Let's look at the packaging, contents, connections, labeling the cables, hooking up the device, charging it, and turning it on."

- A Technology Tool Box could include PDAs such as a braille notetaking system, computer with enlarged screen display or screen reader, braille display, or iOS devices.
- Allow students to explore assistive technology tools without fear of “not touching THAT key.” Let them get “unstuck” when there is an operator error; we’ve all been there!

Anticipating the EDGE!

5. My BATTLE CRY is “YOU CAN DO IT”, “YOU WILL DO IT!”, “J D X!” (“Just Do It!”) In other words, instill a sense of empowerment. Have the same expectations for our students who are blind or visually impaired as for their sighted peers. Let us level the “playing field” with the appropriate tools, adaptations, and technology.

Oh, the students acknowledge that the EDGE exists!

4. LITERACY IS MY PASSION! My background is as a high school English literature teacher. I hail from the University of Iowa’s prestigious Writer’s Workshop. I have always loved reading and writing. It’s not about braille and the code. It’s about teaching reading and writing. It’s very exciting to be transitioning to the UEB code. I’ve begun using UEB with my students; they have barely blinked with the new formatting. I noticed the NFB convention program is in UEB. Way to go! Bottom line, Braille is more than dots; it’s empowerment, enrichment, and opportunity.

My greatest bliss was getting a 30-year-old braille embosser from my darling spouse. As a TVI, who needs Tiffany jewelry when you have your own personal braille embosser?

One of my favorite professional conferences is “Getting in Touch with Literacy.” Literacy comes in many forms besides reading and writing:

- * Math Literacy (the language of numbers and lines)
- * Tactile Literacy (pictures, diagrams, charts, graphs, and 3D printed objects)
- * Social Literacy (eye contact, handshakes, waving, initiating conversations, and making friends)
- * Technology Literacy (assistive, as well as, mainstream devices)
- * Vocational Literacy (work experience, job applications and interviews)
- * Listening Literacy (Please don’t overlook or undervalue the importance of listening skills. Check out the AFB Press publication of the Learning to Listen, Listening to Learn.
- * Location and Wayfinding Literacy (cardinal directions, sense of time and distance, awareness of street layouts, and the built environment)

I’m not able to make a wholesale statement about when to begin prescriptive literacy instruction in every form and at what age. Over the years, I have acquired a good sense of “how to get it going” with just the right amount of “push” and not stressing out the learner. It’s just so individual.

I am an advocate for teaching both braille and print to students, based on the visual capacity and prognosis. There are many aspects to factor in, including age, cognitive factors, and support from THE TEAM.

The EDGE is looking safer.

3. COMMUNICATION IS THE KEY TO EFFECTIVE PARENT-TEACHER PARTNERSHIPS.

- EDUCATION and PARENTING ARE A COLLABORATIVE ENDEAVOR. It is team work. We both have joint responsibilities and mutual commitments to the positive and appropriate education of children.
- Build a relationship outside of formal IEP meetings. IEPs should be collaborative and not be adversarial.
- Be sensitive to family dynamics.

- Explore not only what the teacher sees but also what the parent sees for constructive dialogue. As equal partners, each may see some different needs and challenges, from different perspectives. Be attentive, be a good listener, and be a thoughtful observer.

Moving closer to the EDGE

- 2. I CONTINUE TO LEARN ABOUT VISUAL IMPAIRMENT, HUMAN CAPACITY AND PERSONAL ACHIEVEMENT BY ENGAGING IN FIRST HAND EXPERIENCES WITH PEOPLE LIVING WITH VISION LOSS.** Volunteer with local social service agencies (such as the Lighthouse), schools (such as Schools for the Blind and Special Day Classes), Talking Book libraries, become a personal assistant or reader. Make an effort to bring students to professional and consumer conferences.
 - 1993 I became an Associate Member of NFB; Fred Schroeder signed me up when he was the Director of the New Mexico Commission for the Blind.
 - 1993 (San Jose, CA) My first NFB/NCAER opportunity to participate on a parent-teacher panel (Sharon Gold was NFBC president)
 - 1995 Chicago National Convention – Sally Mangold, keynote and presenter on importance of braille literacy
 - Detroit -Jim Willows (NFBC president) May we please have a silent moment to recognize a notable NFB contributor. We share in Mary Willows' bereavement.

Engendering and internalizing true wonderment and excitement about the EDGE!

- 1. TEACH TO THE POTENTIAL ADULT!** The goal is full participation as an adult in our society. It is paramount that we help facilitate developing "taxpayers", whenever feasible. The driving force is to channel the student toward control of her/his life. I'm a compassionate yet tough professional.

I do NOT subscribe to the "Aw Shucks Shuffle." In other words, when complimented for what I do, I never say "Oh, it's nothing." It IS a big deal! I'm very proud of my profession and the work I do with students and their families. It's such a fascinating journey learning how to customize solutions to meet students' needs; they are so unique and individual. There's something out there for everyone to embrace.

- It is imperative to provide opportunities and resources for students to participate in non-academic activities such as camp, music and/or dance lessons, athletic events such as tandem bicycling, goal ball, swimming, and kayaking.
- Be resourceful for reaching out into the community for funding and financial support.
- Provide a tool box filled with many resources and tools that our students can pick and choose from, depending on the task and application.
- Over protection may lead to dependency, social isolation, and learned helplessness. I realize this is a "blanket statement". It truly is another whole presentation!
- There are many lifeskills to build responsibility and good citizenship. My all-time favorite lifeskill is "Personal Best"—to do one's best given the circumstances and available resources. I'm a long-time proponent of NFB's "Braille Readers are Leaders" contest! I encourage students to try and "beat" themselves by even just one page. The Los Angeles based Braille Institute of America's Braille Challenge is a wonderful event. I traditionally am a proctor at our Northern California regional. I faithfully accompany any of my students who placed in the regional to the National Competition in Hollywood. (As we were dancing around the living room, one of my regional winners exclaimed, "By the way, what is Hollywood?") Once those students have recovered from not placing in the Nationals, they rally and vow to come back with a stronger Personal Best!

These high achieving Braille Challenge competitors have reminded me of one of my frequent quotes: "Nothing worthwhile comes easy. Turn mistakes into learning experiences." I always encourage students to set goals and dreams just out of their reach.

ON the EDGE

III. GEMS TO SHARE FROM MY KIDDOS WHO HAVE SAID THE DARNDDEST THINGS:

- At a conference, my student & I stepped into the elevator to encounter Dr. Abraham Nemeth. After introductions and pleasantries, my seven-year-old student blurts out to Dr. Nemeth, "I just wish you would come up with one dollar sign."
- Over breakfast one morning with Jerry Kuns and Mike May, I expressed my quandary about teaching fractions, welcoming any suggestions. Both guys unanimously stated that I need to get the kiddos back to the basics of using a braillewriter. So I later met up with Jerry and Mike at the conference exhibits with students in tow. After making introductions, one of the kiddos snarled, "Because of you guys, we have to go back to the Perkins!" Jerry said under his breath, "So much for your social skills curriculum!"
- A CA state senator visited my classroom accompanied with lots of TV media and journalists. Students were great with demonstrating all of their assistive technology and enthusiastically espoused that we will be "taxpayers, not tax dependents." One student loudly whispered to me, "By the way, what exactly does that mean?"
- Re: Cultural Diversity: At a home visit, I politely refused a beverage. The next day, the student asked if I would have preferred an energy drink or a line of coke.
- Finally, to "jazz up" their writing, I gave my students a list of 100 words to replace "said." During a complex, focused math abacus lesson, a student popped up out of his desk. I said "Sit down right this minute." Another student exclaimed under her breath, "Barked, Ms. P."

IV. Conclusion:

I've learned an incredible amount from my students and parents. I've learned small and large lessons, from my spouse, colleagues, and friends who are blind and visually impaired.

By working together as a team, we can increase our effectiveness in reaching the common goal of providing an appropriate, quality education for each student. And thus, provide each student with the SKILLS, ABILITIES, and ATTITUDES to become an effective self-advocate and independent adult.

I am a "tough cookie" because I'm passionate about quality education for our students who are blind and visually impaired. I'm humbled, proud and honored to receive NFB's 2014 Distinguished Educator of Blind Children Award! Yes, right now I AM "on cloud nine" and "over the moon". I will always be an advocate and bring awareness to some of the many significant issues facing education of our students who are blind and visually impaired. Thank you so very, very much!

I, also, would like to thank my biggest fan, Jerry Kuns, who has been an incredible force in my life. He has always stated that I'm one of the most patient educators; however, at the end of the day, when I get home, he sometimes says my patience seems to be ALL used up! Of course, I really have NO idea what he's talking about. I always ask politely if wine will be served shortly ...oh, I mean immediately!

Think how long some of our students have stood at the edge waiting for a push to independence and empowerment. I'm proud to say that many of my students have taken the leap and have flown. Some even brag that they have their "own pretend jet planes!"

In conclusion, Christopher Logue was the author of the original poem, "Come to the Edge." Before his death in 2011, he invited us to play with it and make it our own.

Here's my version of the poem:

"Come to the edge," she said.
"We're comfortable back here," they said.

"Come to the edge," she said.
"We're too busy," they said.

"Come to the edge," she said.
"It's too high," they said.

"Come to the edge," she said.
"We're afraid," they said.

"Come to the edge," she said.
"We'll fall," they said.

"Come to the edge," she said.
And they did.

I pushed them.
And, they flew.

Announcement

THE PRINCETON BRAILLISTS

76 Leabrook Lane
Princeton, NJ 08540
609-924-5207 — Nancy Amick
princetonbraillists.org

Announcing a new publication:

Maps of Michigan

A single volume with 15 maps including an overview of the state followed by individual maps of cities, rivers, counties, highways, farm and mineral products, and climate. A more detailed map shows the vicinity of Detroit.

15 maps, 41 pages total; see website for more information. Shipping by free mail where eligible. To order, please send check or money order to the address above. Credit card and fax service are not available.

BANA Spring Meeting in Philadelphia

During its three-day meeting, the BANA Board reviewed and acted on semiannual reports from its eighteen committees, considered committee recommendations, and deliberated issues and challenges facing braille users and producers. The UEB Task Force reported on the development of a plan for the transition to UEB in the United States as well as the collaborated steps that have been taken to initiate dialogue and planning among the various braille communities. The development of resources for training teachers, transcribers, consumers, and family members is a focus of BANA's efforts at this time.

Actions include the following:

1. Approved a recommendation from the Tactile Graphics Technical Committee that any braille volume containing one or more tactile graphics should contain a note on the Transcriber's Notes page stating: "*The Guidelines and Standards for Tactile Graphics, 2010* was used in the preparation of the tactile graphics."
2. Voted that, in light of the major revision underway to align the *Braille Formats* publication with UEB, BANA will not produce for sale hardcopy editions of *Braille Formats 2011*, which can be downloaded, free of charge, from the BANA website and printed or embossed. The Board also voted to add the recently posted errata in the HTML, PDF, and BRF files of *Braille Formats 2011* that are posted on the BANA website. These decisions followed an extensive deliberation of the complex issues impacting BANA's current obligations and resources.

NOTE: *Braille Formats 2011* went into effect January 1, 2013. Materials now being transcribed should follow these guidelines.

Committees are working now on updating formats and music to align with UEB. October 16th is another UEB transition forum at APH, which I will be attending. The ABC's of UEB is available on the BANA website.

There was a three-day intensive training on UEB code, held at the NBA 2014 Fall Conference, October 23-25 in Milwaukee, WI. The next conference is scheduled for April 23-25 in Austin, Texas.

For decades, university programs that prepare pre-service teachers of students with visual impairments have used the "Ashcroft" book in their braille classes. This book has now been updated for UEB and is now available from SCALARS Publishing.

The newly updated book is called "Ashcroft's Programmed Instruction: Unified English Braille" and was designed for university students who don't know braille. There's an accompanying embossed braille "Companion Reader" for pre-service teachers and an instructor's manual.

Titles and ISBN's are as follows which can be ordered from SCALARS at <http://www.scalarspublishing.com> :

Ashcroft's Programmed Instruction: UEB – ISBN#9780996035309

Ashcroft's Programmed Instructor's Manual: UEB – ISBN#9780996035323

Ashcroft's Programmed Instruction Companion Reader: UEB – ISBN#9780996035316

Any questions or comments can be submitted to peggys@juno.com.

NEAT Name

Hello out there. My last article was totally dedicated to gaining your opinions, and I had zero responses. Possible reasons:

1. The online version of the *JOURNAL* converted my e-mail to a hot link. The paper version also references the hot link. No matter how many times I touched the page nothing happened.
2. No one has any ideas. Can't be, after all these are braille people and we all have opinions.
3. You didn't read the article.

There is still time!!! My e-mail is bigonbrl@yahoo.com. Please write to me with your ideas.

Now that I am finished with my "pity party".....

A few years ago there was a vote to become more politically correct and change our name from CTEVH to CTEBVI. From a business standpoint I questioned the wisdom of changing our branding, but we changed our brand anyway. Branding distinguishes one company's product from another. Perfect branding will cause consumers to refer to the company when they mean the product. No one asks for a Scott tissue; they want a Kleenex, even though the "Kleenex" was produced by Scott. A good brand is easy to recognize. It is short, distinctive and uniquely describes the product or organization. A great brand will have a hook that has a characteristic that will stick in someone's memory. A play on words is ideal for a brand.

For years I have questioned "California" in our name. Yes, we originated in California for Californians. Over the years we evolved into a national organization. Now that the president lives in Georgia, the vice-president lives in Oklahoma and members on the board live in Washington, Nevada, Arizona and Texas, maybe we have reached the point where we may want to be more inclusive of all our membership. I heard a rumor that some members might be in favor of a name change. Let me be the first to propose a new name for CTEBVI. How about National Educators and Transcribers for the Blind or Visually Impaired (NEATBVI) or NEAT for short? Wouldn't it be neat to be NEAT? Haven't you always thought braille was NEAT? Unfortunately, I have never seen transcribers with a NEAT desk or itinerant VI teachers with a NEAT car trunk. This is their chance to be NEAT. The winds of change seem to be pushing our organization in directions none of us want, so let's all band together and do something NEAT.

If you don't think my idea is NEAT, then tell me yours. Again I am trying to solicit any other NEAT acronyms that would reflect our national membership.

Special Features:

- *The Sharing Place:*
 - In memory of Ann Loftis
 - A Braille Reader's Perspective
- Textbooks, Teamwork, and more
- Articles from MENVI Members – exciting new links for CTE & MENVI

THE SHARING PLACE

In memory of Sherry Ann Loftis: I am honored to share the wonderful memory of a very special person, while deeply saddened by her passing at the same time.

Ann Loftis worked professionally as a career VI resource teacher. I first became aware of her when she vigilantly gave daily music support at her school by tutoring one of my students. The young man was considered by some far too challenged to ever read braille. His school music teacher and Ms. Loftis suggested he come to SCCM. On his first lesson he was able to recognize the note C (*do*), and sing it perfectly in tune. Within a year he was reading music in all keys, and literary braille fluently, including song text in varied languages.

We later invited Ann to join our faculty at SCCM *Braille Music Division*; lovingly and patiently, she provided priceless knowledge and skills for our students up until the La Canada facility was closed due to lost funding. Educators of her dedication are to be honored and valued as though rare gems. On behalf of our students and colleagues, Ann Loftis is highly honored, and terribly missed. [Ed. R.T.]

A Braille Reader's Perspective

In our new *Formats 2011*, the "braille reader's perspective" is included with each section of examples, so as to present a better view for transcribers in unusual situations. It is quoted that, "... *transcribers have been expected to follow [rules] even though many of them have never met a braille reader or seen braille read.*"

This new addition is aimed at filling this gap in our work for readers; it is just one more of the wonderful features of our new format guidelines, which lend themselves extremely well to music textbooks.

The following perspective seemed appropriate for the sharing place, as it comes as perhaps more of an opinion or observation, than that of an instructional nature. In music textbooks, often the tactile approach of author's attempts at graphic clarification becomes far more unwieldy than productive; one possible reason may be that print music itself is entirely graphic, and braille being a digital code, simply does not always mix well with certain kinds of tactile representation.

In a recent discussion as to whether we should include the graphic display of a piano keyboard with note names, accidentals, and arrows drawn on the keys, I queried a very experienced and well-educated colleague who is blind. She is a professional music teacher of many student levels, and a concert pianist as well. I asked her preference for a tactile display, as compared to a clear oral explanation of keyboard note relationships (which by the way, would have numbered into the hundreds in this particular edition). Her answer was:

"In music, clear text descriptions trump tactile graphics every time."

In this first example, I resisted including the piano keyboard picture so as to maintain a better mental image. Imagine now, a two- or three-octave display. Selected white and black keys are marked with the letter X. The student is to identify the indicated keys. Mental indigestion has already set in for the reader, while trying to interpret the enlarged (or reduced) graphic and all of its X's.

Following is a simple replacement for the drawing (black/white is explained):

Name the following notes. You may use a nearby piano keyboard for reference.

1. White key immediately below (left of) two black keys _____
2. The highest of three black keys _____
3. First white key below (left of) the set of three black keys _____

As the chapters progress, the same questions can soon be shortened thus:

1. First white below 2 black
2. Highest of 3 black
3. First white below 3 black

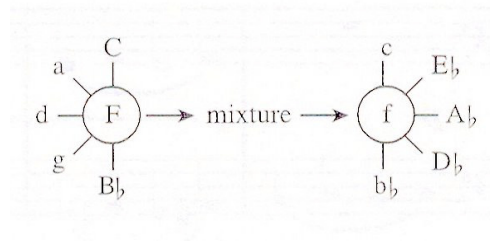
Below, each item includes an arrow pointing from a specific black or white key, and up to another indicating an interval to identify. Confused already? Now imagine the poor braille reader with two octaves of arrows and X's drawn upon keys, which, incidentally, he or she has never related to in a visual way.

Interpretation without the drawing:

1. White below 2 black, up (right) to middle of 3 black _____
2. Lowest of 2 black to next adjacent black _____
3. First white above 3 black to next adjacent white _____

Textbooks, Teamwork, and More

In a far more advanced harmonic analysis text, the following solution might well work for this display.*



Here, the author is illustrating how Schubert uses "mode mixture" to move from the relative major of the parallel minor thus: F → (f) → A-flat, giving access to five "foreign" keys. Where a graphic might become labor intensive to explain, the following braille facsimile table might work, *with* a clear TN explanation.

F major	→	mixture	→	f minor
⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠	⠠⠠⠠	⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠	⠠⠠⠠	⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠
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*Graphic courtesy of: "Tonal Harmony with an Introduction to Twentieth Century Music, 7th Edition – Kostka, Payne, Almen (McGraw Hill) © Copyright 2013

Although just an experiment, I would greatly appreciate your input to add to *The Sharing Place* in our next issue! Write directly to: richardtaesch@menvi.org. In the next issue, we will look at some very interesting examples of divided measures in piano excerpts, where vertically aligned analyses might cause some perplexing transcription problems.

Music Education Network for The Visually Impaired Articles by MENVI Specialists

RESOURCE ROUNDUP

By Stephanie Pieck

I've been involved in music education for over twenty years. A question I often get from teachers beginning to work with a blind student is "Where can I find materials?" Here are a few resources to get started.

National Braille Press

For anyone curious about braille music but not sure they want to learn the whole code, the print and braille book [Who's Afraid of Braille Music?](#) by Richard Taesch and William McCann is a good place to start. It offers a clear explanation of how the braille music code works, introduces basic signs for notes and rhythm, and does it in an accessible style great for parents, teachers, and even students. NBP also has the print/braille book [Piano Starts Here](#), a biography of Thelonious Monk well suited to young readers. <http://www.nbp.org>

Library of Congress, Music Section

The largest collection of braille, large print, and recorded music in the world is available, and it's free to U.S. citizens. Scores can be borrowed directly, and now many braille titles can be downloaded from the library's BARD website. Highlights include Suzuki methods for violin and piano, many tutorials for band and orchestral instruments, a series of instructional recordings by Dan Brown featuring music in many genres like folk, rock, and gospel. The library produces two braille periodicals with a musical focus. For classical musicians, there's "The Musical Mainstream," which reprints selected articles and record reviews from print sources on topics such as pedagogy, opera, or chamber music. For those with a more popular bent, there's "Popular Music Lead Sheets." Each issue contains the lyrics, melody, and chord symbols for five popular songs. <http://www.loc.gov>

Royal National Institute for the Blind

This group has been producing braille music for a long time, and they continue to bring out new titles each year. Their National Library Service allows people outside the U.K. to borrow or buy books and scores. They generally have a more classical focus, but their work in music for young students is growing. Their raised-line drawings of musical symbols, sold as supplements to Eric Taylor's book "The AB Guide to Music Theory, Parts I and II" are invaluable resources for blind teachers working with more advanced sighted students. The monthly "Braille Music Magazine" can be subscribed to through the Library of Congress. For direct borrowing of items not in the NLS catalog stateside, contact RNIB by e-mail at library@rnib.org.uk. To buy books from RNIB, e-mail shop@rnib.org.uk.

Prima Vista Music

This company is striving to produce appealing titles especially for music students that are popular with teachers today. Their efforts include songbooks for the popular show "Glee," and an eleven-book series of solos by Christopher Norton that manages to teach music reading, various pop/jazz piano styles, and other fundamental concepts all at the same time. Scores can be purchased for download, or produced in hard copy for a slightly higher price. <http://www.primavistamusic.com>

Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music

ABRSM is most famous for their graded music exams in performance and theory. Even if you don't participate in these, you might find helpful tools here for your blind student since RNIB transcribes all the piano exam music in the syllabus, updated every two years. They have consistently done the flute music, and pieces for other instruments from past years can be found on the RNIB website. ABRSM is committed to giving visually impaired students the same opportunities as their sighted colleagues, so they provide exam materials in braille, large print, or by ear (at least for early-grade students).

<http://www.abrsm.org>

Friendship House

A little creativity can go a long way in successfully teaching blind music students. There are lots of inexpensive and interesting items on this site that will allow students to feel what print musical symbols are shaped like, plus games, recordings, and other teaching tools which blind and sighted students can enjoy together. Flashcards can easily be transcribed into braille. <http://www.friendshiphouse.com>

Recent MENVI discussion list postings

**Posted by: John Hanson – Head, Music Section,
Library of Congress, Washington DC [Edited]**

"This post announces that the Music Section at NLS has begun a blog. The name of the blog is NLS Music Notes. Link: <http://blogs.loc.gov/nls-music-notes>

The blog is about what the Music Section does, what we have made, scores we have acquired, patron interviews, new titles, new digital braille scans, blind musicians past and present, technological developments, and all kinds of things. If you are on this list [menvi-discuss@menvi.org], it is for you."

MENVI Testimonials Page

"I am glad to be among musicians who promote braille music literacy; I don't feel alone in my own struggle to introduce it to people in my country." – W.K., Indonesia

MENVI online has been working on a new testimonials page. We are now proud to announce its release: www.menvi.org/testimonials

First-Ever Summer Music Academy at Enchanted Hills Camp, Napa, California

By Bill McCann

What if you could find a place where you could focus on learning to read music better, learning to write your musical ideas down, and how to record your songs using a computer? That's just what a group of young blind and low vision students found this August during our first-ever Music Academy at the Enchanted Hills Camp near Napa, California. What a pleasure it was for me to work with a group of young people who were so eager to learn and so focused on acquiring new skills. During the course of a week that seemed to fly by with almost lightning speed, all of them progressed in both their music literacy and music technology skills.

Each day was so full with classes in reading music in braille or magnified print music,, using software to notate or record music, listening sessions after dinner, time to practice, jam or just hang out with others, plus opportunities to go for a swim, a nature hike, or even try your hand at archery. We shared a few memorable special events: a performance and instrument demonstrations from a local folk music group, the Pickle Creek String Band, Mr. Greg Kehret's excellent tutorial on Palmas and bass demo/jam, and an impromptu guest performance and lecture on the bagpipes by Joe Retherford. Bryan Bashin,

Director of the San Francisco Lighthouse, sponsor of our Academy, visited and introduced us to Mary Bianco, who led an engaging group discussion on the prevalence and forms of perfect pitch.

Our closing performance and presentation was great fun. All of my students proved to be naturals at putting on a good show. I especially enjoyed their original compositions and arrangements. Live performances were interspersed with digital performances of student compositions created with Lime and SONAR under the guidance of my talented Assistant Director, Roberto Gonzalez. Closing the show, our EHC Music Academy Chorus under the able direction of Shane Dittmar demonstrated just how much our Academy participants improved their skills in reading music whether in braille or magnified notation. The singers read their braille or large print scores as they sang.

It was deeply gratifying for me, on both a professional and personal level, to serve as the Music Academy's Director. Although Dancing Dots has customers all over the world, I don't get to meet them in person often enough. It was a genuine gift to me to observe these talented and energetic young people, who came from around the United States, Mexico, and Taiwan, learning and applying our accessible music technology.

I'm really looking forward to next year's Music Academy. Remember to inform anyone who might enjoy being part of it all to apply next year. This year's application form may still be found under the heading — Music Academy: August 3 – August 9, 2014, on the page at: www.lighthouse-sf.org/programs/enchanted-hills/EHC. Camp Director, Tony Fletcher, will be happy to add you to a waiting list for next year.

Remember, if you or the students you teach are pursuing the study of music or even working already as a part-time professional, it is most appropriate to request support from your school or local rehabilitation agency to help you to acquire this specialized technology. For details about the technology that the students learned, you can go to www.DancingDots.com and click on the links for "GOODFEEL[®]", "Lime Lighter", and "CakeTalking." Dancing Dots does offer evaluation versions of our notation software. Note that there is a mainstream version of the Lime notation software available online but it does not come with the accessibility features our students learned to use during the Music Academy. If you want to try evaluation versions of GoodFeel, Lime Aloud or Lime Lighter, send an Email to info@DancingDots.com and I will make arrangements for you to get started.



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The Multipurpose Indicator!

Nemeth transcribers who are developing skills often confuse the proper vernacular of the Nemeth code. There is a difference between a “baseline indicator” and a “multipurpose indicator”.

The baseline indicator is used to return the reader to the baseline of reading. In brief, when a student is guided away from the baseline of writing with a superscript or a subscript, any material that immediately follows must be preceded by a baseline indicator. Remember, a space or a punctuation indicator returns a reader to the baseline so when material is followed by either, a transcriber does not use the baseline indicator.

When I proofread superscripts and subscripts, I always look for how the level of change is terminated. Like grouping symbols, when I find an opening, I automatically begin looking for a closing. Often times the closing is a blank space, but still the space terminates the level indicator.

I know there are knowledgeable Nemeth transcribers who are aware the multipurpose indicators, by the very nature of its name, handle a multitude of situations to assist the braille reader clarify the text. I would like to address two uses of the multipurpose indicator that I recently discussed with a Nemeth transcriber developing his skills.

Side note: He thought he should only ask questions of high technical merit and avoid asking experienced Nemeth transcribers about fundamental rules. I assured him experienced Nemeth transcribers enjoy helping others and ... I believe all Nemeth transcribers need to rely on other's experience. I know I will never master this written language that dominates my existence, but I feel comfortable saying I have a good handle on it. For those of you who know me, you are aware I enjoy a good braille debate and am not above being convinced I can improve.

Back to the point of this article...

Pagination can be an issue for novice Nemeth transcribers. Allow me to offer supreme clarity on this issue. Page numbers in the upper-right or lower-right are in literary mode. All other numbers are written using lower-cell numbers!

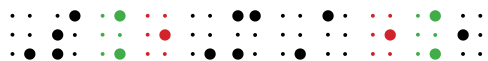
When transcribing a text and the reader is referred to page 210, the number in the text is written using the lower-cell Nemeth numbers. The confusion arises when there is a desire to provide consistency with page numbers in the corners and the text. And yes, this does apply to the table of contents. Listed items use Nemeth numbers.

Next, when letters are used with page numbers to indicate a section, glossary, or index--such as S1, G5 or I28--these are brailled in the corners according to *Braille Formats*. However, if the text refers to these pages in the text, then use the multipurpose indicator between the capitalized letter (without the English-letter indicator) and number so it is not interpreted as a subscript.

Print shows	Textbook (1.12.1)	Nemeth (177ii)
S1	⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠	⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠
G5	⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠	⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠
I28	⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠	⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠

The next issue I want to address is page numeration when a combination of decimal points, letters, and numbers are employed. Recently a transcriber asked for clarification on this issue.

The pagination used on a test was S.MA.1. These are decimals in the pagination and not periods. A multipurpose indicator must follow the first decimal to show the letters do not have a numeric significance. The multipurpose indicator tells the braille reader these are letters. Another multipurpose indicator would be required before the second decimal point to show the number is not subscripted. (Color is used strictly for visual assistance. Green are decimal and red are multipurpose indicators.)



I hope this helps.

Empowering Our Students from Day One

As we kick off a new school year, teachers and students alike need time to adjust to new environments, and advocate for needs in the classroom. For some students, this process comes more naturally than for others. Particularly for students with visual impairments, classroom accommodations are a mandated necessity, and self-advocacy often requires direct instruction as aligned with the Expanded Core Curriculum (Hatlen, 1996). When students are empowered to express and manage their own accommodations, they have more confidence in developing job skills, and are better prepared to transition to college and future paid employment (Crudden, 2012). Presented in this article are several strategies I have developed over the years that help my students develop the skills they need to advocate for themselves from Day One of any school year, from elementary through high school.

#1. Explaining one's vision impairment

When a student can explain his or her vision impairment to a teacher, it is the first step in taking ownership of his or her own being. For younger students, technical terms such as "myopia" might be simplified to "I have trouble seeing things far away". This is also helpful for classroom teachers who might also be unfamiliar with the specialized terms that TVIs know. For students who are losing their vision, being able to talk about their vision impairment might be difficult at first, but will hopefully help them make sense of what is happening. Developing the language and comfort to explain how one sees is a definite precursor to justify classroom accommodations.

#2. Expressing one's accommodations

When students communicate information about their functional vision, it essentially presents a problem statement to the classroom teacher. Naturally, the next step is offering a solution. Understanding what the solutions, or accommodations, are will help give the student and teacher a plan of action when an accessibility challenge arises. Students should comfortably navigate different accommodations according to different classroom demands, and be prepared to (respectfully) remind the teacher of their needs as situations arise.

#3. Taking ownership of working directly with teachers

Prior to a new school year, I like to get as much information as possible about my students' teachers for the following year. For younger students who need more support, I initiate contact with the new teachers and send an email to prepare the teachers and offer my support. Next, I prepare the students to go through steps #1 and #2 with their teachers, providing minimal prompts only as necessary so that the students and classroom teachers have the experience of discussing this with minimal third party interference (me). For older students, I encourage them to approach their new teachers prior to or at the very beginning of a new year/semester, and after practicing steps #1 and #2 with my students, will "lurk" in the hallway while the student makes the initial contact with their teacher. This effectively places ownership of instruction between the students and classroom teachers from the very beginning, and sets an important precedent for the remainder of the year, as well as for future contact with professors in the college classroom. After this initial contact, I will follow up with my own email with more specific information, and to let the teachers know I am there to support.

#4. Supporting the student “behind the scenes”

A lot of preparation, practice, and rehearsal goes into building skills #1, #2, and #3! In order to emphasize the importance of these self-advocacy strategies for eventual transition out of school, I always include at least one IEP goal that builds up skills in these areas. For students who are just beginning this process, it is helpful to leverage objectives for the IEP goal that serve as a task analysis and enable progress toward the goal in a systematic manner. Much of the follow up to students' communications can be done via email to supply additional information while always referring back to the students as much as possible. For example, a counselor recently reached out to me for help in working with the cafeteria staff when my student wanted to apply for a job there. I assured her of the accommodations that would be needed, but then asked that the staff work directly with the student to talk about what she would need. I concurrently scheduled a time to meet with the cafeteria staff to follow up on their initial meeting with my student. I asked that they speak directly to the student about her accommodations, and then cc me via email with any additional questions. When I met with my student, I also got her feedback to have several points of information to collaborate with the school staff. This is the culmination of three years working on #1 and #2 with my student, and I am happy to report that in her senior year of high school, the student has become adept at managing her own accommodations – these skills will translate well to the college environment!

What About My Students Who Aren't Going to College?

Even for those students who are engaged in a functional (rather than academic) curriculum, these strategies can be adapted to set a tone for active participation, and recognizing the dignity of the student as a member of the school community. Information can be scripted in a book written with the student in first person language, or a powerpoint that a student can “flip” through with appropriate technology such as a switch.

Self-Determination

Although IEPs are not mandated to address transition skills until a student reaches the age of sixteen, the strategies mentioned above help to develop self-advocacy, and in turn, self-determination from the very beginning of a student's career. Having this foundation will easily translate to being coined “transition skills”, but in reality this training must start well before the age of sixteen. These skills require direct instruction because there are a lot of unspoken, visual cues that happen in the classroom between sighted students and teachers that communicate assistance. Classroom teachers also might feel ill-equipped to teach students who are visually impaired, and unsure of how to include them in the classroom (Cook, 2001). By preparing our students to set the tone and help the classroom teachers take ownership of having them in the classroom, both students and teachers can begin the year with a more personal and confident working relationship.

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You will note that several positions are currently open. Please contact [Cristin Lockwood](#) with your suggestions or questions regarding the responsibilities of a specialist and remuneration for the work done in support of CTEBVI. You may also nominate a person or persons to fill the opening, including yourself!

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