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• Calling All Members . . . pg. 8

• CTEBVI Membership and Form . . . pg. 9

• BANA Update . . . pg. 13

And Articles from our Specialists. . . starting on pg. 15
Unified English Braille (UEB) Practice Sentences

by Roberta Becker, Co-author of Literary Braille Practice Sentences (with Phil Mangold)

Three versions available: Print Teacher’s Edition, Braille Teacher’s Edition, and Braille Student’s Answer Key. “Exceptions to the rules” are omitted, allowing students to become secure with basic rules.

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- All UEB contractions are included, as well as many commonly used symbols.
- The printed book contains over 80 pages of practice sentences with corresponding simulated braille on facing pages.
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- All Wordsigns and Groupsigns (such as: and, for, of, the, with) are introduced in separate lessons.
- Useful in writing IEP goals and objectives.
- The Braille Student’s Answer Key contains all of the sentences for students to use when proofreading, providing an easy-to-read book for braille readers.
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I’m so pleased with this year’s conference theme, “Leveling the Playing Field,” as it really speaks to the heart of what we are trying to achieve for our students and the BVI population. What exactly does “Leveling the Playing Field” mean? To me, it means fair and appropriate access to education, assessments, employment, transportation, athletics, and participation in community and government. But it’s also more than that. We strive for a holistic success that will allow our BVI population to thrive and achieve without any limitation or restriction based on their vision. Are we dreaming? Of course we are! We are in the excellent company of great dreamers like Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Anne Sullivan and Louis Braille who were all able to see beyond our today and into our students’ tomorrows.

We are also proud to be bringing back the “From Beyond the Walls” program to this coming conference. The BTW workshops allow you to learn directly from inmates working in a prison braille program as they present their material via live feed or pre-recorded video.

I hope you all will join us in Burlingame in March so we can work together to Level the Playing Field!

*Cristin Lockwood*
In Memoriam

Sarah (Sally) Hering

Sarah (Sally) Hering died on August 4, 2014, leaving a will naming CTEBVI as a beneficiary of her estate. Sally lived in Illinois and is survived by her husband, Alexander C. Hering. She was a dedicated braille transcriber and also a life member of the National Braille Association (NBA), another beneficiary. Sally was very active in NBA in the 1980’s and 1990’s, serving on many boards and as president. She also served as the NBA representative to BANA, which is where I had the pleasure of knowing her.

Sally was a lovely and generous lady, and CTEBVI is honored to be remembered by her. The board of CTEBVI is pleased to accept her bequest.

Sue Reilly
Secretary, CTEBVI
Awards

This email was sent to all Braille Institute employees from Peter Mindnich, President of Braille Institute of America, Los Angeles, CA.

I am proud to announce that Sue Parker-Strafaci has been awarded the **2016 Principal/Director of Programs Leadership Award** by the Council for Schools and Services for the Blind (COSB). This international award is given in recognition of the importance of having quality leadership directing programs that serve the educational and developmental needs of blind and visually impaired children. The award will be presented at the annual COSB Banquet in Louisville, KY this October.

Sue exemplifies all of the characteristics one would expect from an individual leading quality programs impacting students in a positive and productive manner. She has made significant contributions to local and national professional organizations, contributed articles to professional publications, and developed many new, innovative ways to improve programming here at BIA. As many of you know, Sue has truly helped define our Child Development Program. While the basis of the program is providing direct service through in-home intervention, her innovations have helped us serve more families in a wider radius. They include initiating a monthly call for parents with noted Los Angeles optometrist Dr. Bill Takeshita, the creation of regionalized parent support groups, the provision of short-term consultations to help parents with multiply disabled children navigate the many specialists involved in their child’s care, and providing expertise for the development and growth of the Dots for Tots and Top Dot early literacy materials.

In addition to her commitment to BIA, Sue served in 2008 as chair of the annual National Family Conference, sponsored by the National Association of Parents of Children with Visual Impairments (NAPVI). She also serves as the preschool consultant to the California Transcribers and Educators of the Blind and Visually Impaired (CTEBVI) association and has presented several times at their annual conference. She also is a board member of the regional network of early intervention professionals in Orange County, the Birth to Five Vision Network.

Her nomination included several letters of reference from both peers and parents that included comments like this one that so beautifully sum up Sue’s heart and soul. “Sue’s tireless dedication and advocacy for children and families with children with visual impairments has touched many lives over the course of her 30-year career. I can speak to this on a personal level, for my life and the lives of my two children have been forever bettered due to Sue’s guidance and support.”

One final indicator of her success: each year at The Braille Challenge Sue will point to a teenager accepting their award and say, “That was one of my babies!”
Calling All Members

DATE: MARCH 10-11
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.

WE NEED YOUR HELP! Please consider participating by donating an item to our silent auction. 100% of the money raised helps fund the Donna Coffee Youth Scholarship. Each year up to $1000 is awarded to promote the academic and social development of a K-12 California student. For more information on the Donna Coffee Youth Scholarship or to download the scholarship application, please visit: www.ctebvi.org/donna.html

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

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

If you are interested in donating an item, please contact Dawn Gross at 805-377-5651 or by email braille@grossgang.com by January 31, 2017. Thank you for your participation.

Dawn Gross
Silent Auction Chair
October is our Membership Drive month, any dues received after 10/1/16 will be applied as your 2017 dues. If you are not sure if you need to pay 2017 dues, please contact me.

It is expected that all our members stay current every single year, without a lapse between years, in order to be a member in good standing. Your membership with CTEBVI should not be dependent solely on your conference attendance...because WE depend on YOU!!

If you are a Life Member and/or current with your membership, we thank you and ask that you please consider donating to one of the CTEBVI funds.

You can go to our website, www.ctebvi.org, and renew your membership, become a Life Member and/or donate online, by using your credit card. Or you can mail a check to me at the address below.

CTEBVI cannot survive, grow, and remain a productive organization unless we have your help.

Thank you for your past, present, and future interest in CTEBVI!

Judi Biller
CTEBVI Membership Chair
CTEBVI Gifts and Tributes Chair
1523 Krim Place
Oceanside, CA  92054-5528
ctebvi.membership@gmail.com
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. **Expectation is that everyone stays current with NO lapse in membership!**

For your convenience, you may log onto [www.ctebvi.org](http://www.ctebvi.org) to submit the following information and make payment by credit card.

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- General Fund
- Katie Sibert Memorial Fund
- Donna Coffee Youth Scholarship Fund

In Honor/Memory Of (or designated use for a certain purpose):

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**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 specifying your request **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.

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Judi Biller, CTEBVI Membership Chair
1523 Krim Place, Oceanside, CA 92054-5528
[ctebvi.membership@gmail.com](mailto:ctebvi.membership@gmail.com)
Gifts and Tributes

OUR GRATITUDE AND THANKS
TO ALL THOSE WHO SUPPORT CTEBVI THROUGH GIFTS AND TRIBUTES

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Bonnie Rothman
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Peggy Schuetz
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DONNA COFFEE FUND
Dawn Gross
Carol Morrison
BFR Dinner Group
(in memory of Scott Ross)

Contributions to the CTEBVI Gifts and Tributes Fund will be used to improve services to persons who are blind or visually impaired.
Donation Form

Thank you for your contribution to CTEBVI. Please complete the following information.

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Direct my General Fund to this specific item: ______________________________________

All contributions to CTEBVI are tax deductible. Please print a copy of this form as your receipt for your donation and send a copy along with your check.

Make checks payable to CTEBVI and mail to:

CTEBVI

c/o Judi Biller

1523 Krim Place

Oceanside, CA 92054

Again, thank you so much for your contribution.
The International Counsel on English Braille (ICEB) held their General Assembly in May. You can read some of the papers that were presented on their website at www.iceb.org.

On October 7, BANA held its 4th and final UEB transition forum at the APH annual meeting in Kentucky. There were round-table discussions regarding the status of UEB implementation, what’s working and what challenges the different states are facing with the understanding that not all states are created equal. Of course, one of the main topics of concern was UEB math or Nemeth. Participants expressed their frustrations and concerns regarding the appropriate direction in the use of one or the other. They were also given the opportunity to write a message to BANA relating their thoughts and concerns. Jennifer Dunnam, BANA chair, assured the attendees that BANA takes their concerns seriously and how difficult the process can be to arrive at a resolution.

There have been a couple of changes to the BANA board. COSB has changed their status from full to associate member of BANA. Their representative is Collette Bauman. Also, Jessica Rivera is the new representative for Associated Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired (ASB) and Tamara Rory is now the representative for NLS. The BANA board currently consists of:

- Jennifer Dunnam, National Federation of the Blind (NFB), Chair
- Ruth Rozen, Hadley Institute for the Blind and Visually Impaired, Secretary
- Jackie Sheridan, National Braille Press (NBP), Treasurer
- Frances Mary (FM) D’Andrea, American Foundation for the Blind (AFB), Immediate Past Chair
- Dawn Gross, Alternate Text Production Center (ATPC)
- Cathy Senft-Graves, American Printing House for the Blind (APH)
- Mary Nelle McLennan, Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (AER)
- Jessica Rivera, Associated Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired (ASB)
- Tracy Gaines, California Transcribers and Educators for the Blind and Visually Impaired (CTEBVI)
- Saul Garza, Clovernook Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired
- Darleen Bogart, CNIB (Canadian National Institute for the Blind)
- Maryann Bartkowski, Horizons for the Blind
BANA Update

- Diane Spence, National Braille Association (NBA)
- Tamara Rory, National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, Library of Congress (NLS)
- Kim Charlson, Perkins
- Sandra Ruconich, American Council of the Blind (ACB), Vice Chair

The BANA fall meeting will be held in Atlanta, GA hosted by AFB, November 3-5. Follow the work of BANA by signing up for BANA-Announce, a one-way email list that disseminates news and information. To join this list, send a blank email message to bana-announce-subscribe@brailleauthority.org and follow the directions in the confirmation email that will be sent in response. You can also follow BANA on Facebook and Twitter!
Business Column

TEACHERS OF THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED

I would like to talk, for a moment, about teachers of the visually impaired. For more years than I care to admit, I have been ‘pushing’ transcribers, and we are all part of California transcribers and EDUCATORS for the blind and visually impaired. Sight is a crucial aspect of learning, especially when much of the world is unknown because of the inability to see. Visually impaired students are presented with many unique challenges to learning. These students have the same capacity to learn as other students, but they require special teachers to help them through the process. We all say, “Those denied sight should not be denied knowledge.”

As I am writing this in September, the big story is the presidential election which will be history by the time you read this. Both candidates state that education is a very important part of our future. I have been a college professor forever, and this semester I wound up with two classes of prospective teachers. Only seven of forty-three students said they were seeking special education certification and none of the seven, or of the forty-three for that matter, wanted to become a VI teacher. Why not? I started by researching the salary base. (September 20, 2016; www.salaryexpert.com/salarysurveydata/job=teacher-visually-impaired/salary). I found the following specialties with corresponding salaries: special education teachers, $63,731.00; teachers of the hearing impaired, $64,452.00; teachers of the visually impaired, $63,698.00. That’s big money in Texas but probably minimum wage in California.

Years ago there were not enough VI teachers, and the itinerant teacher with a trunk full of supplies and worn tires was the rule of thumb. What are the statistics now? What made you want to become a VI teacher? Did you wake up one morning and jump on the band wagon? I know after a few “aha” moments you were stuck for life. Personally I know you can’t buy the “aha” moment and teaching is the best part of my life. If you are fired up about being a VI teacher, whom have you told? I don’t see any commercials for “Teachers of the Visually Impaired” on television. Our teacher population is aging (retiring), and who will be the replacements of those leaving the profession? Let’s make a deal: every transcriber and VI teacher will tell five people about the rewards of being a VI teacher every month until the conference, and then we can compare our results. The future is up to you!

Bob Walling, CTEBVI Business Columnist
Large print materials are easier to get than they used to be with the advent of iPads and touch-screen computer monitors. They have been a great asset to our students with low vision. Now they are able to integrate more easily into the classroom. Most textbooks and novels are available for download, and if the general education teachers are savvy, they will have their materials on a thumb drive or online to be pulled up and read immediately or printed to do homework.

There are times when all the technology in the world cannot protect against the last minute, spur-of-the-moment pop quiz that was forgotten. The trusty teacher aide or transcriber races down the hallway to pick up the item, runs to the copier to enlarge it, and goes racing back to the classroom. Such is the life of a school transcriber.

There are times when a textbook, workbook, a supplemental book that the teacher likes to use, or a new paperback is not available in large print. When one of those comes in to be enlarged (and we have been given a due date that is manageable), we can create them special order for an individual student. The VI teacher will tell us what size font, which font style to use, and even what color paper is best for the student. Some of my favorite fonts are san serif styles Arial, Tahoma, and my personal favorite--the APHont. (See APH for that one.) A plus for the homemade books is that I can use 8 1/2 x 11 size paper which makes the large print book about the same size as the books the rest of the class have. It may be a few volumes as opposed to one, but the low vision students are more likely to use them. Some of our students choose to read these books at home and struggle with magnifiers at school--go figure.

In the large print workshop at the last conference my small but mighty group of attendees agreed that sitting around talking about problems that have occurred and getting suggestions and ideas from each other was a good way to spend our time. I have decided that from now on my workshop shall be titled “Large Print Support Group.”

If there is an issue that I can research before the next conference, send me an email and I will do my best to find an answer. We will discuss large print issues only.

Yours in Literacy,

Joan Treptow
In the first of several articles that are intended as a helpful aid in tactile production, I would like to introduce the ‘snipping tool’ to beginning tactile graphic producers or to the crafty veteran tactile graphic producer who has yet to know about it. The snipping tool is a utility tool that is included in Microsoft Windows that allows one to capture and crop images that can be pasted in and manipulated into MS Word or other tactile software producing software. The snipping tool is great for extracting maps, math figures, etc. from a pdf or other file types (or from a moving image if needed). Here, I will explain how to crop an image from a pdf file and paste it into MS Word for the purpose of tactile graphic production.

If you’re running Windows 7 or later (I run Windows 10), go to the start button and click on Windows accessories. Look for the ‘snipping tool’ and open it. Click New and make sure that “rectangular snip” is marked. (That choice appears when you click the arrow.) Then, with your pdf file open, go to the print page where the image you want is located. Then go to the snipping tool and click New. (You can toggle between windows by holding down the Alt key and at the same time tap the Tab key) Once you have done this, the screen will become faded and you’re then ready to crop. Left click and drag around the image. Then, let off the mouse and go to your MS Word file and paste the image in. (Don’t be alarmed that the image pushes your text down.) Then, with the cursor on your image, right click your mouse and select Format Picture. Click the Layout tab and select Behind Text and then OK. You will now be ready to trace, size, and manipulate your image as fits your needs. (Also, the text that was pushed down comes back to its regular position.)

I have found this tool to be very helpful in producing tactile graphics. Graphics are accurate, true, and clean, especially when text asks the braille reader to identify degrees of angles or if the graphic is under discussion for size, shape, etc.

Obviously, there are many things that this tool can be utilized for. Especially for those producing tactile graphics, it is a very handy way to get images from print to braille. I know it is for me.

If there are inquiries in regards to this tool (or any other techniques I can be helpful with), please feel free to get in touch with me and I will get back to you as soon as I can.
LEARNING TO SEE THE LIGHT!

What was almost a given during my career within the public school systems I worked with was how mainstream classroom teachers, as well as specialized staff often appeared to be lacking in their ability to critically assess their own preconceptions about the BVI students who were assigned to their inclusive classrooms. Most often they exhibited thoughts and perceptions that seemed unflattering to them, as well as to their newly arrived students. When those perceptions were able to be tweaked a bit (or a lot, in most cases) with appropriate support and accurate information about blindness, classroom teachers tended to become more able, ready, and clear about how to conduct themselves while working as part of an integrated mainstreamed environment. Understanding and knowing the capability and potential of any BVI student can change the quality of interaction on both sides of the teacher/student equation. And as we all know, it usually becomes the assignment of the TVI and/or the O&M professionals to initiate the personal perspective changes of others for the betterment of their students. I always chose to not overwhelm a typical classroom teacher with too much information about blindness. Addressing one issue at a time with classroom teachers, who were generally unnerved by the assignment of a BVI student to their classroom, was always a good strategy choice.

One simple focus, on my part while trying to calm down certain classroom teachers, from the prospect of having a VI/O&M student in their classrooms, was to explain to them that the terms “totally blind” and “low vision” were actually misnomers when referring to any of their newly included students. When I think about it now, both of those phrases, when used as student descriptors, could easily send any typical public school teacher into spasms of fearful anticipation of what might happen in their classrooms when their first BVI student appeared. Having been both an itinerant O&M and VI Teacher, I know about the “hand-holding” that is necessary to help these fellow professionals adjust to a new way of thinking about their exceptional students. Explaining that a student who was assigned a label of “low vision” did not mean that that student could not see, usually helped a lot. In turn, explaining that being referred to as “totally blind” did not mean that a student had a total blackout of all visual stimuli. I always worked from the premise that if the adult who was supervising my students did not understand some of the basic subtleties of a visual impairment, how would that student ever be able to tune in to the positive aspects of vision loss that could work to their advantage. Allow me to explain.

When I first started working with students considered to be “totally blind” on mobility lessons I often found myself wanting to explain how using something called “light perception” might be very useful to them. My thought process at that time was that encouraging my students to recognize and use all of their available intuitive sensory abilities, especially while in their early elementary years of O&M instruction might become very valuable for their future independent travel experiences. Embarrassingly enough, what I quickly came
to realize was that while I had just learned about light perception, the previous year while in graduate school for my O&M credential, these new students of mine had been using it for years! The difference was that they never knew that it had a name, or that it was even a strategy to be used. They just seemed to know how to use it without anyone telling them how or why it was important to use. It seemed to be an automatic self-response to their situations. And that made a lot of sense to me.

What I began to notice was that regardless of the level of their individual light perception ability, using it often came to their rescue when having to walk with a cane, independent of adult assistance. It was especially useful when being challenged to navigate independently through open space. Regardless of my grand plans to inservice each of my students on the use of light perception, I tended to stick with cane instruction. My systematic and timely observation of how they used their given light perception taught me more about what they were capable of doing than any lecture I could give them. I distinctly remember how astounded I was when training one of my “totally blind” students to cross a street during my first year of teaching. I was absolutely amazed at the dexterity with which she could walk a straight line when crossing a street while consistently not placing her cane in the proper position. It confused me, especially since I had never observed her walk in such a straight line when traversing a school hallway with her cane. Yet she could do this in the middle of a traffic intersection?!!

At some point upon my praising her skillfulness, she told me her secret. She said she could “see” the contrast of the (yellow) pedestrian street crossing line against the dark street pavement and used her cane, holding it out in front of her, only to prevent her from tripping over the upcoming sidewalk. What more could an O&M Specialist ask for? She figured out that using her residual vision worked better than using her newly acquired cane technique for making a straight line street crossing to safety on the other side. Needless to say, I expressed my amazement to her for demonstrating a new technique to me! From that point on, I was better able to advise other “totally blind” students how to tap into the available light perception that I suspected they could perceive. That is, if they hadn’t already discovered it for themselves.

Due to encouraging my students to use their light perception, they seemed to be functioning better on a mobility level. Sometimes, I would jokingly be referred to as a “Miracle Worker” by some of the typical mainstream staff within the different public schools I worked in, when they witnessed my students “racing” off to their next class in a middle school or quickly traversing the span of a playground in elementary school. In actuality, they were observing my ability to allow my VI students to tap into their own ‘magical’ powers, which basically consisted of their ability to use the level of light perception that was available to assist them in the complexities of learning to master independent travel with a long-cane.

Before talking about one of my “low vision” students, please allow me to tell you of another “totally blind” student whom I experienced on the high school level. I highlight this student to show that regardless of the severe cognitive impairment that accompanied her blindness, she quickly learned to use her light perception with me on mobility lessons, to challenge my authority by being a bit mischievous. We had established a
walking route from her campus classroom to a mailbox, one block away. Over time, she learned that her task was to mail the letter that was placed in her hand. Prior to this lesson, I had made sure she knew how to get to all the strategic places she needed on her campus. We often passed the girls’ restroom on our way out of the campus with no regard. This one time, she decided to suddenly dash into the restroom while happily screaming, clapping and jumping triumphantly at her sudden disappearance from me.

Personally, I did not think this was funny at the time. In fact I was totally intimidated by this experience. In essence, she was taking on some personal independence by escaping my jurisdiction over her. And she was having some grand fun doing it, too! Perhaps she was laughing so loudly while in the girl’s bathroom because it was also apparent that she knew that I could not enter the restroom since I was a man. I had to verbally instruct the typical high school girls that were already in the bathroom as to how to escort her back outside to me. While, I know they appreciated that, I was being challenged in a very unanticipated way. And, while not happy about this event, I have to say that she demonstrated a pretty high level of personal intelligence to me. She also demonstrated to me a good understanding of how she used her light perception. And, I can guarantee you that no one was ever able to teach her how to use it that well!

My last example of a student taking charge of specific light perception techniques is one who displayed an alarming level of “low vision” to every one of her classroom teachers. She was a middle school student who, on top of her visual impairment, demonstrated extreme cognitive challenges that not only affected her, but her instructor (in this case, that would be me!) in challenging ways. My focus was to equip her with strategies that might allow her a more systematic and effective use of her residual functional vision. It seemed that she was always in a state of disorganization with no real way of making sense of her visual perceptions. It appeared that no one had ever thought to teach her a systematic way to visually scan her environment BEFORE she physically moved into it. My thoughts were that if she could make visual sense of an environment that she was about to step into, her focus upon a targeted area within that space could be better identified. And her next step would be to literally make a “bee-line” towards it, in a safe way.

Since entering a number of classrooms within her school was a task that she might do every day, I decided to begin the focus of our work within a typical empty classroom. Initially, I asked her to visually locate doors, windows, and rows of desks by pointing to them. Once she knew the general location of these objects, she was required to use a high powered monocular that would allow her to better identify each object of interest. Knowing where the teacher’s desk was located became an extreme point of focus. Once this was accomplished, we began to focus on even finer details of an environment.

Teaching her to use a high powered monocular allowed her to visually scan a room in a systematic way from top to bottom. She seemed to fumble through a lot of the process until I realized that while she was using the visual scanning technique I had taught her (starting on the top left of the far wall and scanning to the far right of the wall), she was definitely not stopping each time to look at and identify any of the objects I had adhered to the wall. My response was, “you need to realize that if you are NOT looking at an object, you WILL NOT
SEE IT!” She laughed and responded with, “Oh, let me try again.” And, guess what? After a short while she was able to identify each and every large object in the room. My hope was that if she could identify these objects from across a room, she might move more gracefully through her classroom as she approached different areas of the room that she worked in. That mission was accomplished by the appearance of a personal thoughtfulness of movement that everyone began to notice, in a timely way.

Attempting to have my “low vision” student (mentioned above) move through open space with a thoughtful sense of her own gracefulness and personal dignity, was an idea that I tried to inspire within all of the O&M students that I worked with over the years. Regardless of who they were, every one of them was capable of acquiring some level of those qualities that allowed their teachers, and certainly their parents to take notice. And in some small way, it hopefully helped to quiet down the uneasiness that so many classroom teachers felt upon knowing that a BVI student would be attending their classrooms.

I often feel that having been very well prepared to work with BVI students seemed to open doors to new experiences and situations for both myself and my students. The surprise of working with these students was that I never stopped learning new things about them over the entire 25 years of my career. The individuality and character of each student, through every grade level, seemed to allow me new insights about blindness that no textbook or college lecture could ever convey.

I guess, that’s what’s wonderful about being in a profession that helps other people. In this case, those “other people” were the children I worked with, and the professionals that worked with them. Experiencing those students at any and every level offered me challenging and eventful times with no letup until retirement. As each one of my students grew up and moved on, there was always another that appeared to take the previous student’s place. That student would then go through his or her own challenging experiences with me. And, it was always my pleasure to inaugurate the required VI/O&M services to each one of them as best I could!

✧ ✧ ✧

Once again, I’m looking forward to sharing more insight and information, in my future articles, into the various methods of instruction I was able to provide my BVI students and how it affected their support systems (parents, school professionals, paraprofessionals and others). If you wish to share your experiences or have questions you wish to ask me, let’s continue the conversation by commenting on the CTEBVI blog at: https://ctebvidcysblog.wordpress.com/category/journal/om/
Every life has a roadmap. The planning that goes into this road trip prepares students for the journey into their future. The earlier the preparation, especially for students with disabilities, the greater the chance for success. The California Department of Education provides many resource documents to help schools support students so that they can achieve their academic goals.

Everything begins with standards — What the student is expected to learn and able to demonstrate: California Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts, California Common Core State Standards Mathematics, English Language Development, Next Generation Science Standards. There are also blindness-specific standards: Braille Mathematics Standards and Braille Reading Standards.

The next step is to provide a framework for how the teacher can best provide lessons so that students understand and can master: English Language Arts/English Language Development Framework (ELA/ELD Framework), History–Social Science Framework, and Mathematics Framework. Other curriculum frameworks are in the process of being developed and/or updated. These frameworks can be found at http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/cf/index.asp.

The third step to meeting the needs of students with disabilities is to look at how students who learn differently need to have things presented. When teachers understand how a student learns, they are able to align their instructional practices to student needs. Many documents can assist the specialists and the general education teacher in preparing for students with disabilities: The Value of Reading Braille, Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), Resources for Special Education, Smarter Balanced Assessment System, and the California Alternate Assessments. Assistive technology is addressed in the frameworks: ELA/ELD Framework Chapter 9: Access and Equity and Universal Access Chapter of the Mathematics framework.
BOOKSHARE AND EPUB: A GREAT COMBO!

Why EPUB?
Getting EPUB through Bookshare opens up new options. We know it is not one size fits all when it comes to technology and our students. Each student and environment is different and we need to have alternatives as we look for efficient ways for our students to complete academic and recreational tasks. In this post I am only looking at how to get a Bookshare book downloaded as EPUB to open in iBooks on an iPad.

Why would a student want to open a book in iBooks?
When we assess the best technology options for our students, we are also looking at the environment and high and low tech alternatives. Reading with iBooks may be a good choice in some situations.

- It simulates reading a physical book where text is fixed on one page (but you get to choose your font size). This is different than other reading apps that may present text continuously; the reader scrolls up to advance text. Staying oriented and finding one’s place can be challenging with a scrolling text view. The flickering caused by movement of text while scrolling can be disturbing to some students.

- Many students are reading large print books and even regular print books in class. They do not want the text to speech option. They want to have a similar book experience during shared reading in class.

- When the technology is familiar to classroom teachers, parents and peers, the student benefits. Classroom teachers and other adults are usually very comfortable with how iBooks works. Some of the specialized apps for people with a visual impairment may be more intimidating or awkward for the classroom teacher to navigate which could limit natural classroom interactions between student and teacher.

- iBooks can provide a transition to digital reading for a student who prefers a printed book.

- The page turn gesture is a simple left or right swipe.

How to:
- Go to Bookshare in Safari on the iPad.
- Log in to Bookshare (I will describe how to if you are logged into a teacher institutional account). Students with individual accounts can do this too, with slightly modified process.
- Go to My Account.
- Select My Beta.
- Find and click link ACTIVATE EPUB 3 Beta.
- Follow prompts to ACTIVATE EPUB 3 Beta feature for your browser.
- Search or browse for a book and click download.
- When you select the student you are downloading the book for, go to drop down menu on the right for that student and set format to EPUB.
- Follow prompts to download book.
- When you are at the screen that shows the status of the book as available click it.
- You will get a screen that shows title of more and option to “open in iBooks” (or another clickable option that says “more”).
- Click open in iBooks.
- Your book opens in the iBooks app.

I-M-ABLE: Individualized Meaning-Centered Approach to Braille Literacy Education, by Diane P. Wormsley, is a lightweight tutorial that breaks down the complexities of instruction for teachers who are new to working with students who are visually impaired, seasoned teachers who face challenges in achieving literacy goals with emerging braille readers, and parents who can unify a team to ensure equitable instruction and meaningful learning experiences for their children. Reading, inclusion, and resource specialists who support onsite instructional delivery might also benefit from the conceptual knowledge included in this book to better understand the learning needs of students with visual impairments.

Focus on motivation, engagement, individualization, and success

Chapter 1, “Introduction to I-M-ABLE,” promptly summarizes the foundations of learning and instruction for any student with differentiated learning needs. It embeds teaching in a student-centered approach that considers the student’s experiences and focuses on four key principles: motivation, engagement, individualization, and success. I most appreciated Dr. Wormsley’s focus on the independence of students in their own learning process and the importance of ensuring equitable access to learning experiences in order to promote literacy.

The remaining chapters of the book are organized according to segments of instruction that might be incorporated in a comprehensive lesson plan. These segments include: assessment, instructional design and planning, differentiated reading instruction, mechanics of braille reading, differentiated writing instruction, mechanics of braille writing, alignment to traditional literacy instruction, and next steps for future instruction. Although the chapters are organized in a logical sequence that outlines a student’s journey to literacy, chapters can also be read out of order and on-demand according to a student’s instructional needs. This format successfully individualizes the book for teachers with varied experiences in delivering braille instruction to different types of learners and, therefore, promotes individualized goals for ongoing professional development.

Strategies upon strategies

Diagnostic teaching, which is defined as “the process of continuously trying a variety of instructional strategies and materials based on the current needs of the students” on page 5 of Dr. Wormsley’s book (a quote from the sixth edition of Reading Diagnosis and Improvement: Assessment and Instruction, by Michael Opitz, Dorothy Rubin, and James Erekson), is a generalized theme throughout the book. Each chapter highlights teachable moments and strategies to adjust instruction in response to students’ strengths and
weaknesses. Also within each chapter are student scenarios and lesson plans that exemplify the author's teaching points and specific activities that can be carried out with peers, classroom staff members, and at home. Implementation strategies, in particular, are outlined for itinerant teachers who rely on effective collaboration to ensure appropriate instruction is carried out. The author shares a number of different tips to help itinerant teachers collect data, assess student learning, instruct staff members, and check for skill maintenance while working within the constraints of the itinerant service delivery model. Recommendations for assessment, instructional, and diagnostic materials (mostly from the American Printing House for the Blind [APH]) are also provided throughout various chapters as appropriate.

Sample forms for “every aspect of teaching”
The book delivers a full package of materials that include conceptual knowledge, evidence-based teaching approaches that cite relevant and current research, and resources to help teachers build their literacy toolkits. One key resource is the provision of sample forms that can be used in every aspect of teaching--from data collection and assessment, to lesson planning and progress monitoring. These forms could be invaluable for new teachers, since they are designed to help instructors organize and assess their own teaching and assist school teams as they design and reach instructional goals. Although the forms are basic and centered on literacy, they could be easily customized for individual students and for a range of other teaching goals. In true tutorial fashion, the forms are highlighted within chapters and also aggregated as appendix items for ease of reference. Although this organizational feature makes it easy to locate forms as needed, the fact that the forms are not available to download limits their ease of use. It would be ideal if the book offered a web address through which one could download each form in an accessible, editable digital format that could be filled out electronically, printed, or shared.

This review encapsulates the opinions and judgment of the reviewer and, in my humble opinion, it is fantastic! In all, I highly recommend this book as a resource for differentiating literacy instruction for students who have not succeeded using traditional curricula. The I-M-ABLE approach prioritizes students’ active participation in their own learning and re-focuses their success on a teacher’s ability to be creative, flexible, and meaning-centered in their teaching. For some students, this approach could even segue them back to more traditional instruction after overcoming the initial hurdles that limit their access to literacy experiences. With this guide, Dr. Wormsley continues to hone her craft as an educator by providing clear instructions to the students who always have much to learn: teachers.
The Sharing Place

Conducting Patterns and Common Sense

4/4 vs. “Four-Quarter Time”

The following conducting patterns are quite typical of many found in music theory textbooks. Some transcribers prefer to use a tactile representation; others may omit the pattern as not practical to reproduce for a blind reader. I have found that a simple text description works quite well, and would like to share it here with my transcribing colleagues. Take a look as though you are also teaching the blind student as well; see what you think, and how it might appear in braille to the reader.

T.N. Print drawings indicating the approximate movement of the conductor baton are described verbally as follows:

**duple** (braille cell 5 heading)

Begin with arm outward and parallel to shoulder level; now move arm straight down to waist level for beat 1; next, move slightly right then up to the starting point for beat 2.

**triple**

Begin as above, moving arm downward to beat 1; next move to the right about one foot for beat 2; then a slight curve left on the way up to the starting point for beat 3.

**quadruple**

As before, move down to beat 1; left about a foot for beat 2; then across your body center to the right for beat 3; then a slight curve left and up to the starting point for beat 4.

**Discussion:**

Surely, the more intricate movements such as the artistic curves have not been described in detail; however, most conductors have their own variations on them, and if attempted in a simple description, would become unwieldy and not relevant to what the graphic is intended to accomplish. Perhaps an addition to the T.N. might suggest that the reader seek more detail from the teacher if needed.

**4/4 vs. “Four-Quarter Time”**

Should the terminology be a transcriber’s concern, a music educator’s, or both?

In place of a music symbol for a time signature within instructional text, a transcriber may opt to braille the wording “four-quarter time” for a very early music reader. Using the music prefix with music code time signatures within literary text may not always be a good choice for some early levels.

But the music educator and/or transcriber may want to rethink his or her choice of “four-four” vs. “four-quarter” both musically and theoretically. Thinking from the educator’s perspective can often help the music transcriber make better choices. Read through the next few thoughts then make your own choice:

- When teaching time signatures and meter, consider that there is no such thing as a “four” note; but there is a “quarter note.”

- Four-quarter time is an easy way to explain “four quarter notes to one measure,” thus “four-quarter” time becomes self-explanatory, and applicable to all time signatures.
It is often said that time signatures are NOT fractions; but now consider the following:

If five-eighths of an inch is five of eight measured portions of one inch, perhaps by comparison, we might say that “five-eighth time” is five of something; that is, five eighth notes, or five equal parts making up a musical measure. Therefore, “five eight” time may be somewhat disconnected as to the meaning of the time signature, where the former describes it perfectly.

That being said, the braille time signature can easily be remembered when loosely compared to a fraction due to the lower-cell number, which will ALWAYS be the kind of note that receives one count; as such, the meaning is built into the transcribers way of showing the time signature.

Therefore: \( \frac{5}{8} \) equals “four-quarter” time, not four-four, as many refer to it.

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Workshop Review

Music Textbooks and UEB; and an errata alert


Production began before the release of our new Music Code 2015, and an oversight in “An Introduction to Music . . .” Part I has been discovered as follows:

Parenthetical enclosures within centered music headings require the “Special Parentheses,” dots 2356. Rule: Music Code, Page 37, 1.3. Example: Music Code 2015, Page 41, Example 1.7-4. Our Part I revised edition, however, shows the UEB enclosures, which is in error for that application.

On behalf of the CTEBVI Music Committee, I would like to thank Dr. Larry Smith and the BANA committee for their outstanding work on the new code book, and for their priceless contribution to the music readers and transcribers in our field!

Workshop Exhibits for Discussion:

As always, new things to learn can be the windfall of oversights. Here is one example of how \( \text{not} \), and how to use parentheses to conform to our Music Code, 2015. In this example taken from Second Revised Edition of “An Introduction to Music for the Blind Student,” Part I*, Richard overlooked the newly defined use of what is known as the “Special Parentheses.” Although UEB now governs the literary portions of music textbooks, the EBAE parentheses must still be used within music centered headings when a part of the music excerpt itself.
Incorrect:

**UEB Alert!**

Correct:

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In both examples, the UEB dash was used on the first line of the centered heading. So far, I’ve not been able to locate anything specific as to the use of the UEB dash within music headings.
As a longtime music educator who has worked with many blind and sighted students, I’ve often been asked why music lessons are important. I was fortunate to attend public school and to be taught braille from the outset. I was also blessed with parents and teachers who believed I should be held to the same expectations as my sighted peers, even though my methods for achieving things might be different. These ideals, more than anything we pass along on a pedagogical level, will do more for students than anything else we can impart.

Gone are the days when public schools had the funding to offer a solid music education to every student, so many children seek instrumental or vocal instruction outside school. For the blind or VI student, private music instruction can be the perfect way to broaden a child’s experiences while simultaneously addressing other issues that are unique to their needs. In my years of working with blind/VI students, I have used music as the “delivery system” to teach them about acceptable social behavior, posture, fine motor skills, time management, and memorization. I have also observed as parents discover that their children are far more capable than they thought.

The key to success in this area is to throw out most of the preconceived notions we might have about what a child can or can’t do. Just because someone can’t see, they shouldn’t be exempted from the expectations that they will fit into their broader community. Having said this, however, I hasten to add that, since most children model their actions on what they see others doing, we as teachers and/or parents must provide feedback to blind/VI students that’s non-visual. Rather than singling the child out with reminders such as: “Sit up straight!” or “Stop doing that!” discreetly cuing the child will encourage them to change their behavior and eventually will form an internal dialogue for them so they can remind themselves. For kids who have difficulty with repetitive motions or gestures, giving them something to do with their hands (i.e., a book to follow along with or an instrument in their hands) works wonders. After all, if their hands are busy exploring a keyboard or tactile graphics, they won’t be available for those other activities we’re trying to stop.

This is a long-term approach and won’t work overnight. It also will only work if everyone—teachers, parents, etc.—is consistent. I had one student who often screamed and made other loud noises at very inappropriate times. I expected this student to participate in the studio’s end-of-year concert, but I knew that in order to do this, the screaming would have to stop. One day during a lesson, I mentioned to the student that people
would be coming to this concert to hear piano music, not loud monkey screeches. This got the student laughing—after all, what child doesn’t go through a phase when sounding like a monkey is very appealing. After that, whenever the student made an inappropriate noise in a lesson, I’d say quietly: “Remember: Music, not monkey screeches.”

Three weeks before the concert, I began having the student practice everything involved in the concert, from walking into the room quietly to sitting down and listening while I played short pieces. I told the student they would be sitting next to me, among all the other students. Since I have all the students sit together in the front rows until they have finished performing, this seating arrangement wasn’t out of the ordinary.

On the day of the concert, my VI student arrived early, very excited about their first performance. I gave the student a copy of the program in braille, and while they were too excited to read it, it kept their hands busy. The student peppered me with questions about who was coming into the room and what was happening, but never once unleashed a monkey screech.

When the student came for their lesson the following week, I made sure to mention how proud I was of their achievement. Then we moved on. The recognition and praise is important because often, the undesirable behaviors have been engaged in for so long that it’s very difficult for the child to stop doing them, let alone even be aware they are doing them at all. However, the praise shouldn’t be overdone. Allowing unacceptable behaviors to pass is bad enough; overly congratulating children for things that their sighted peers are expected to do without being praised is equally detrimental. It can lead to the idea that every little thing a blind or VI child does is amazing and wonderful. Most kids are pretty average, and learning this lesson is important.

Sadly, it is fairly common to have music teachers approach taking on a visually impaired student with apprehension because they don’t know how they’ll teach. For parents, selecting the right teacher for a child is one of the most important decisions that will be made. Don’t settle for the person who lives closest or charges the least, and don’t sign up with anyone who says things like: “I make all my students do X, but your child can skip that because they’re blind.” My parents thought it was great that I wanted to have goats as a 4-H project, but one of the first things I had to learn was how to clean out the barn. Were there modifications? Of course! I’m terrible at balancing wheelbarrows, so my father found a garden cart that I could pull that wouldn’t tip over if it bumped into something.

Parents have dreams about what their children will achieve. A child’s visual impairment shouldn’t mean those dreams need to be diminished. Instead of asking: “How will she/he ever . . .?” turn the question around and wonder: “What can we do so she/he can . . .?” Making this small yet crucial adjustment in perspective can have a huge impact on the rest of a child’s life. Try it. My parents did, and it worked!
Of special interest for MENVI members (a reminder):

Would you like the option to request journal articles in braille or print again? If so, consider a membership in the California Transcribers and Educators for the Blind and Visually Impaired - CTEBVI. A special rate is available for pre-college student members as well.

The benefits of belonging to a professional organization of educators and transcribers are many, and can enhance resumes, networking, and career opportunities in the future. Journals can be requested in print or braille as well as in electronic format. Go to their website at www.ctebvi.org for membership information, conference news, specialists, and much more!

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CTEBVI Specialists

The following individuals have agreed to serve CTEBVI in varying fields of specialization within education and braille transcribing. They have been recognized for their expertise in their field and their ability to communicate effectively in workshops and in writing. Please feel free to contact these volunteers with your questions. They are available year-round, not just at Conference.

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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