

CTEBVI JOURNAL

SUMMER 2015

Volume LVIII, No. 1

A Few Highlights...

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THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE

***California Transcribers and Educators
for the Blind and Visually Impaired***

THE CTEBVI JOURNAL

Message from the Editor

Hello everyone! My name is Sarah Esajian and I am excited to be the new editor for the CTEBVI *JOURNAL*. I hope you will bear with me as I take on this new endeavor. I have been a conference member for years and look forward to playing a bigger role in its development.

I have been a certified Literary Braille Transcriber since 2006. I am now employed with the Tulare County Office of Education as a Braille Transcriber. I was an English major in college and have also published a few poems in my younger years. Writing and words in general have always been a passion of mine; being an editor is something I am really enjoying.

I have been involved with CTEBVI since I became a transcriber. My mother, Bonnie Grimm, was past president and also with the help of my sister, Jenny Tsimogianis, we have organized the Exhibits Hall for many years. I have a deep appreciation for this organization. I am grateful for this opportunity and will do my best to keep the *JOURNAL* an excellent source of new information and eventually... a little bit of fun.

If you have any suggestions on how to make the *JOURNAL* more enjoyable or efficient please feel free to email me.

Thank you,
Sarah Esajian
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Message from the President

Thank you all for making our 56th annual conference one of the most enthusiastic and informative, starting with the pre-conference smarter balanced workshop. This year's conference format was different from previous years with the addition of a technology and transcribing symposium along with a variety of other workshops and Sunday morning forums. Without the dedication and many, many hours our volunteers, board members and Grant Horrocks (Conference Guy) spent making sure all the bases were covered, presenting a conference of this magnitude would not be possible and to all the presenters, you have our utmost gratitude.

If there's a workshop or forum you would like us to present at next year's conference, be sure to make your request known. Also, if you would like to be a presenter, please don't hesitate to submit a proposal when the call for workshops goes out. Our workshop chairs will give each proposal equal consideration.

I would also like to welcome the newest members of our Board of Directors Lupe Arellano and Don Ouimet. Like all of our board members and specialists, Lupe and Don possess unique qualifications and knowledge relative to the field of visual impairment that will serve CTEBVI well. The Board of Directors is committed to strengthening and broadening the mission of this great organization. I'm looking forward to working with the entire board on this endeavor.

Tracy Gaines

Message from the Distinguished Member Award Recipient

Dear Esteemed Colleagues and CTEVBI Members,

I am writing to thank you for selecting me as your 2015 recipient of the Distinguished Member Award. Yikes! I was astonished to receive this prestigious acknowledgement. I guess it helps to start early (in 1976) and to stick around! The first award was given in 1984 to the illustrious Fred L. Sinclair, that marvelous man with the melodious voice and the shiny head who vibrantly laughed and vigorously launched so many of us. In 31 years, this award has been given only 15 times, so, again, I am doubly astonished!! The cast includes luminaries from the state department of education, from universities, from California School for the Blind, all administrators, teachers and braille transcribers. What especially startles my inclusion is that there are several people with doctorates in the group. You have catapulted me into the major league!

Having retired five years ago, I thought I was a "has been" but CTEVBI remembered me and honored me. I was never a voting board member but I served on the board for perhaps a decade. When Donna "then Kobrin now" Wittenstein recruited me, I thought, "But I don't know these people." Now some of "these people" have retired and been replaced by top notch, creative, techie, compassionate, generous, thoughtful colleagues who donate their precious time and are the future leaders in our field, who help put on conferences, who educate both their students and their peers, and calm our confusions, especially about rapidly emerging technology and recently changed braille!

I have thoroughly enjoyed taking photos at our conferences, chronicling the workshops, exhibits hall, raffles, musicians, banquets and cocktail parties. You taught me to "catch them looking good!" with no contorted faces or spinach in teeth. Please pardon me for being a "retinal chauvinist" (a term my professor Larry Scadden at SFSU in 1976 taught me), since not everyone can enjoy my annual albums. People envision me with a camera around my neck! You can't get rid of me yet as I continue to proofread *THE JOURNAL* and the conference program. In the past, I have helped select recipients for the Donna Coffee Scholarship. I have been a historian of conference dates and locations, presidents, editors and award winners. I have even inflated plastic palm trees for banquet decorations!

My greatest wish is to encourage others to consider serving this truly outstanding and nationally recognized organization. People in other states admire what we accomplish. Please step up to the CTEVBI plate. You will be nourished in many unforeseen ways!

My primary gratitude is to Pete Wurzbarger, that avuncular, hand holding, photographing professor of O&M who accepted me into the program at SFSU and who found me my 34 year job with Monterey County Office of Education!

In my final gratitude, let me say a giant THANK YOU to CTEVBI for grand opportunities, fond, lasting memories and warm, enduring friendships. You have made my almost 40 year career rich and fulfilling!

Tenderly,

Cath Tandler-Valencia



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	\$
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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.

VI Educator O&M Instructor Dual certification (TVI and O&M) Transcriber

Parent(s) of VI student Proofreader Student Paraprofessional Retired

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 1523 Krim Place, Oceanside, CA 92054-5528
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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BANA Update

Peggy Schuetz, CTEBVI Representative to BANA

The Spring 2015 meeting of the Braille Authority of North America was held in Boston, MA, from May 7 through May 9, hosted by National Braille Press (NBP) a BANA member organization. The meetings were held in the Boston Symphony Orchestra building, located near the National Braille Press offices.

BANA officers for 2015 are Chair Jennifer Dunnam, representing the National Federation of the Blind; Vice Chair Mary Nelle McLennan, from the American Printing House for the Blind; Secretary Ruth Rozen, representing the Hadley School for the Blind; and Treasurer Jackie Sheridan, from National Braille Press.

The Perkins School for the Blind joined BANA as a full member in January 2015. Kim Charlson will serve as the Perkins representative to the BANA Board.

Items on the Board's agenda included updates of BANA's numerous ongoing projects and the implementation of Unified English Braille (UEB). The Board reviewed formal reports from all of BANA's technical committees such as music, math, and tactile graphics, and its general committees and task forces, such as the UEB Transition Task Force and the BANA Publications Committee.

Upcoming meetings will be held in the fall of 2015 in Crystal Lake, IL, hosted by Horizons for the Blind and in the spring of 2016 in Maryland, hosted by COSB (Council of Schools for the Blind). As always, interested parties are invited to observe the BANA Board meetings. If you are interested in observing the BANA meeting, please contact BANA Chair Jennifer Dunnam at 612-767-5658 or by email at chair@brailleauthority.org.

You can follow the work of BANA by signing up for BANA-Announce, a one-way email list that disseminates news and information from the BANA Board and its working committees. 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.

Featured Articles

BRaille APOCALYPSE

by Sally Martin

(AKA the teacher formerly known as Dot 6 S Dot 6 Y)

Dedicated to Jason Vo and Cameron Knotts

Miss Sally and Miss Karen walked out over the grounds of the braille apocalypse. They scanned the area and saw nine green tents. "Those must be where the contractions that are no longer usable are going to die," Miss Karen surmised.

They scanned the field and saw **AND, OF, THE, FOR** and **WITH** looking lost. **AND** kept trying to hug **WITH** but **WITH** was shouting, "We can't do this anymore!"

Miss Karen and Miss Sally knew that they would need to talk to the "strongman" contractions.

Miss Karen put on her stern teacher face and told them they could no longer snuggle together. **AND** protested, "I've been cuddly my whole existence! It isn't fair!" Miss Sally patted **AND** on the dots and said, "We know. This change is hard. It will be difficult at first but we will all get used to it." **AND** pouted but stood alone. **THE, FOR,** and **WITH** seemed near tears but stood strong and alone. "We'll still be close to other letters when we're used in words," **THE** said. "It isn't the same!" **AND** lamented. "It will have to do," said **THE** with a finality in his tone.

"Let's leave them for a bit and look in on the tents," Miss Sally suggested. "I suppose we should," Miss Karen said as she led the way.

BLE was in the first tent. A thermometer hung from his mouth. He saw the TVIs and immediately began his delirious rant. "I'm not that easily confused with the number indicator. I'm not bad for the reader. I'm not! I want to be part of UEB!! It can't end like this!"

Miss Karen and Miss Sally exchanged a knowing glance. "We are so sorry **BLE**, you will become a zombie contraction," Miss Sally delivered the grave news. "What does that even mean?" **BLE** asked in a panicky tone. "It means you will continue to be read in old braille but we won't use you when we write new braille. It isn't really death but you aren't really alive anymore either," Miss Karen explained in a calm voice. "Will I eat brains?" **BLE** asked. Miss Karen and Miss Sally laughed and thought to themselves that the change would kind of eat the brains of the transcribers who were new to UEB. However, the readers would be just fine. Miss Sally answered, "No, you won't eat brains. You'll get used to being a zombie though. Try to think of it as retired instead of dead. You'll have way less work to do. **BLE** seemed calm as the TVIs left to go to the next tent.

The next tent was the first of the “cling ons”. Little **TO** was in his cot, looking rather pathetic. “I know, I know, there’s probably no saving me. I was never all that great at saving space anyway,” he said with resignation. Miss Karen replied, “You were everywhere. Sure, you weren’t saving that much space but you did a lot of good work. We’ll still see you in old Braille, but when we write new braille we will have to spell out T-0. The TVIs parted and headed to the next tent.

BY was waiting in the next tent and he had a similar reaction as **TO**. He seemed to know his days were numbered. “The best thing I can do is accept my fate and hope I don’t scare any little readers when they see me doing a zombified cling on move in old braille text,” he sighed but looked accepting. Miss Karen and Miss Sally gave him a big hug and thanked him for his selfless dedication to little readers. “Don’t worry, we’ll explain it to the kids that all you zombies were heroes. You’ve all sacrificed yourselves in hopes to create better braille for everyone.”

The next tent was shaking. **INTO** seemed restless and frightened. “I don’t know what to think! On the one hand my **IN** lives on. On the other hand we all know **TO** doesn’t make it. What’s to become of me?” He shook as he asked. The TVIs knew they had some explaining to do. Miss Sally used her most comforting voice and said, “**IN** will live on. However, **TO** is now spelled out. The word **INTO** will still have the **IN** contraction but the **TO** will be spelled out. Also, there will be no more clinging.” **INTO** let out a huge sob and whined, “Clinging was my favorite part of my job. I’m a snuggly type. This will be awful!” Miss Karen attempted to cheer him up and explained, “You’ll still cling and snuggle in the old text but you’ll have to follow the space rules going forward.” **INTO** conceded, “I suppose we have to follow the space rules. As much as I like snuggling, I love braille readers more than anything so we will just have to put them first.” The TVIs were grateful and parted, feeling like the contractions were being really great sports.

In the next tent the TVIs found **COM** hiding under his blanket. “**COM**, we need to talk to you. Things are changing and we know you’re scared but let us explain. You were getting confused with the hyphen and the new braille is going to eliminate some of that confusion.” **COM** popped his head out and pleaded, “The readers have always figured me out.” Miss Sally agreed, “They usually did but there are also issues with back translation. We thought about it long and hard and this is what is best for our future. We surely do appreciate your service and we’ll be sure to tell kids how well you served us all.” **COM** seemed to accept his fate.

DD popped his head out of the tent as the TVIs walked up. “Don’t come in. I already know I can’t carry on because I look too much like punctuation. Obviously the period beat me out. He’s everywhere! Everywhere!” **DD** zipped his tent closed and the TVIs decided to move right along.

At **ATION**’s tent there was a thudding sound. As the TVIs went in they realized **ATION** was trying desperately to raise her dot six. Miss Sally intervened and explained that the dot six could not be changed and it was too confusing to have what looked like a capital indicator in the middle of a word. **ATION** stopped her thumping and looked defeated. Miss Karen offered further words of comfort, explaining that back translating was

difficult when two symbols meant different things. **ATION** asked how often that was even an issue. Miss Karen explained that technology was becoming a primary means to produce and read braille. **ATION** let the TVs tuck her into bed.

The weary teachers walked over to the **O'CLOCK** tent. **O'CLOCK** was packing a bag with sunscreen and shorts. The TVs asked what **O'CLOCK** was doing. **O'CLOCK** replied, "I'm not crying over less work. I'm out of here; I'm heading to Florida. I'm not sad that my work is done!" The TVs chuckled and wished him well.

Before entering the last tent Miss Sally looked like she was going to cry. Miss Karen patted her on the back and said, "I know this one is going to be hard for you." They walked in and found **ALLY** weeping. Miss Sally held **ALLY**'s hand as she found the courage to tell her favorite contraction the hard news. "**ALLY**, you are a part of me, my name just won't be the same without you. I'm so very sad that you won't make it." **ALLY** and Sally shared a hug and the TVs left the tent, feeling accomplished.

They walked toward the main area of the camp and heard quite a ruckus. Miss Karen wondered aloud, "What could that be?" Miss Sally picked up a monocular and looked out toward the gate of the camp. "Those are the changes to composition and punctuation and indicators. They look restless. What should we do, Karen?" Miss Karen replied swiftly, "RUN!"

They ran as fast as they could but knew they would soon need to face the remaining changes. For the time being, they had done enough!

THE END!

Braille for Low Vision Students

by Jonn Paris-Salb

At the CTEBVI conference last spring, one of the keynote speakers, Stacy Cervenka, spoke about her vision as a young adolescent. Stacy said she had to convince her teachers to allow her to learn braille. Her teachers said it was not necessary as she still had vision. Stacy argued that her eyes tired easily and that with braille, she could read the text with her fingers and use her eyes only when she needed to view a graphic, reducing her eye strain. In the end she won and was taught braille.

When we consider our students with vision loss, we know that one of the reasons for impairment is degenerative loss, and that eye fatigue was often a culprit when viewing a large amount of print and digital text. It may be useful to have this conversation with parents and discuss the value of learning braille early.

To learn more about Stacy Cervenka in her own words, please view this YouTube video of her speech at a Lighthouse symposium on November 18, 2011 called *Employment Summit - Three Skills You Can't Do Without* at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=43Do-gFcAuE>.

Social Media for CTEBVI 101

by Lisa Okikawa

Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, blog, vlog...what does it all mean? In the last two years, CTEBVI has jumped onto the social media train that has been barreling down the information superhighway. Though the mere idea of social media can cause newbies or current non-users to shudder in fear, it really is user-friendly for all. Social media isn't just something that the "young kids" are doing; nearly every major company has social media departments now to handle social media outreach. This article will help break down what social media is for you in a new series of painless articles.

WHAT IS SOCIAL MEDIA AND MORE IMPORTANTLY...WHY?

Social media is defined by Wikipedia as: "...computer-mediated tools that allow people to create, share or exchange information, ideas, and pictures/videos in virtual communities and networks." With so many people glued to their smartphones and tablets these days, what makes social media so great, is that it's an instant connection to the people and organizations that mean the most to you! Say you are sitting in your local coffee shop and hear something about a new store or restaurant that piques your interest and you want to learn more...now! (i.e., *What does that new restaurant down the street that just opened serve?*) What do most people do? They Google (or do an internet search) for it. The results will come up with a billion pages of information, but most importantly the top three or four links will likely include links to a website, Facebook and Twitter. These links are important because it allows seekers to know that:

- A) What they are seeking is legitimate proven by an official website which will share information about the person, place or thing.
- B) They have some kind of a following of people who want updates about this person/organization (Facebook).
- C) People are not only aware of this person/organization, but they are talking about it (Twitter).

HOW SOCIAL MEDIA AFFECTS CTEBVI

CTEBVI wants to remain current and reach as many people as possible about our organization so we set up accounts to connect with those interested parties. I know there are more social media options out there than any of us can keep track of. In subsequent journals, we will focus on the ins and outs of each social media site. The following list includes our sites and the basics like how you can find them, how to connect with them and what you'll find when you go there.

Website: <http://www.ctebvi.org>

A website is a collection of pages that includes information, images, and videos about a particular topic that are accessed via the internet. CTEBVI's website includes information about our organization, membership,

our annual conference, scholarships, our blog, back-issues of the journal and more. Check it out!

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/CTEBVI>

One of the major social network sites that we post news or CTEBVI updates related to the blindness community to reach as many people as we have Facebook followers. If you are a Facebook user, locate our page by typing "CTEBVI" into the search box or click on the above link and click on the thumbs up icon to "like" us. When you do this, you will begin to receive any updates we post in your feed. Your feed is a listing of the updates or photos posted by your friends or any pages you "liked." We are proud of our organization and encourage users to comment, like or share our posts with your network of Facebook friends.

Twitter: <http://www.twitter.com/CTEBVI>

Twitter is another of the major social networking sites. The act of posting a message is called a "tweet" and these concise messages inform our followers about our organization or stories that relate to the blindness community. So what are the major differences between Twitter and Facebook in a nutshell, you ask? Essentially they both have the potential to share similar kinds of information, but think of Twitter as sharing immediate, breaking-news while Facebook is more of a read-it-when-you-want-it/information on demand site.

Blog: <http://ctebvidcysblog.wordpress.com>

A blog is an interactive website consisting of articles (or posts) written by a person or organization about a particular topic. Blogs are typically informal and encourage its readers to comment their thoughts or opinions at the bottom of each entry. Our blog features posts most frequently by our current Donna Coffee Youth Scholarship recipient, but also includes information related to parents, educators, transcribers, students and Unified English Braille (UEB).

YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/ctebvi>

YouTube is a video-sharing website. Users can record and share original videos of various content topics including information-based tutorials, original music sharing, vlogs (video blog), or webseries (the equivalent of a television series that is streamed or distributed on this website). CTEBVI uploads vlogs to YouTube that appears on our Donna Coffee Youth Scholarship recipient's blog.

Instagram: <http://www.instagram.com/CTEBVI>

Instagram is a social media photo and video sharing site. Users can take photos or 15-second-videos that they can share with people who follow their accounts. CTEBVI typically shares photos or video associated with conference or the blog postings from our Donna Coffee Youth Scholarship recipient.

Now that you know what you're dealing with, the concepts are hopefully a little less daunting. This article is meant to be an overview of the social media sites that are used by CTEBVI. Subsequent journal articles will go more in-depth with each of the social media sites so you can learn how to join, what the lingo means for each site and how to optimize using the site for you.

BACK TO BUSINESS

First, all my articles are my own opinion and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of any other board member or any member of CTEBVI.

I was excited to receive several replies to my last article. Everyone wanted to point out that I had my dates wrong: I'm so bad. Not only did my critics miss the point, but so did I. No one caught the fact that the Department of Education in California and several other states are mandating the use of UEB without funding training for transcribers or teachers. If they want to tell us what to do, then let's see the funding to do it.

Enough politics, let's get back to business. When I started (I hesitate to mention any dates) I was told kids weren't getting their books because of a lack of transcribers. When I tried to develop the transcriber pool I was told transcription wasn't sufficiently lucrative to attract a substantial population. After we started classes for transcribers at a local college, I was told that computer programs (Megadots or Duxbury) would eliminate the need for transcribers. In reality the use of Megadots, Duxbury and Braille 2000 only made the transcriber more prolific. More braille pages per hour mean more dollars per hour. Transcribers found they could make a living doing braille!

That was then, how about now? The last couple of years I have been told "transcription is a dying profession. All the old transcribers are leaving due to a lack of work." Well, I guess the transcribers who came to conference must be an exception. I spoke to several successful transcribers, three of whom said I could reference them. Let's start with Jim who started transcribing "for real" about seven years ago. After buying two new cars he said he is ready to buy a house next year. That was seven years of work. Melissa started her business four years ago, and she said it is steadily growing each year. Melissa said if something were to happen to her husband, her braille business could support her and her kids. Last but not least is John who also started his business about four years ago. First he bought a new car and then a motorcycle. (He has the only Harley with "Harley Davidson" in braille on the gas tank). He said "now the bank and I bought a house."

These are not isolated references. Just because California outsourced it's braille to Canada does not mean transcription is over. Don't tell Californians but there are 49 other states. Nineteen states are considered "adoption states"—states that review textbooks and other resources and create lists of "approved" materials for use in the classroom. (**Footnote: *Education Week*, May 14, 2015**). Then you add in all the "free territories" and there are a lot of books going into the classrooms. Texas started providing braille around 1988 and passed House Bill No. 2277, May 1991, requiring all adopted educational books to be brailled. The governor of Kansas signed a similar bill on April 12, 1991. (**Footnote: *The Braille Monitor*, Vol. 34, No. 7, July/August 1991**).

Going back to politics, some states are balking on the implementation dates for UEB. That means some books are going to have to be brailled twice. Sounds like double the money for transcribers, but eventually you'll have to learn UEB. We are a small group of extremely specialized folks. Remember back when you started learning braille? How many of you thought dot 5 contractions were going to kill you? Learning braille wasn't easy but you did it. UEB is not easy but you can do it; you are a braille transcriber. In the past I pleaded for you to learn UEB for the kids, but now I am asking you to do it for yourselves.

If someone tells you transcription is an outdated carrier and you think braille transcription has come to the end of the road, then you haven't talked to Jim, Melissa or John.

Music in Education

Richard Taesch, CTEBVI Music Specialist

Special Features:

- *The Sharing Place*

Translation **vs.** Transcription, **OR** Translation **joins** Transcription – Is there a difference?

Dividing Measures and Phrasing Musically for Sight Singers

- *Music Education Network for The Visually Impaired* - MENVI

THE SHARING PLACE

Translation vs. Transcription

These days many braille texts and music works are being produced through the translation process, that is to say automated, without direct six-key entry by the transcriber. Similarly, music textbooks are often a team effort between a music transcriber using direct entry, while a partner transcriber may *translate* text with special software, then insert edited results into the formatted music templates. Sometimes it's the reverse, where music can be lifted and inserted into translated text. Either way, the result is faster turnaround, more efficient use of special skills, and often less expense for the schools.

Music repertoire and works that are primarily music code can be very accurately and successfully translated with software - a great breakthrough for blind readers, resource teachers, and for others who do not know the codes themselves. Even experienced transcribers can benefit by increased production in some cases. But theory texts, music textbooks, harmonic analysis, quizzes, and other music placement tests may still need the skills of trained and certified people.

But alas, there are those who are still unaware that there is a difference; and that not all codes and formats can be successfully "translated" with error-free results without the need for folks who must know the codes and *tweak* the files, just as though using direct entry. Sadly, this often puts specialized transcribers in the same descriptive job category of what some call "byte-scribing."

Braille proofreaders may sometimes earn up to \$25 per hour, where professional transcribers in special codes earn (per page) what often results in far less than minimum wage per hour. And in most cases, the direct entry specialist must not only transcribe, but where qualified proofreaders are not provided, proof his or her own work numerous times, then format if using a text partner to finish the document - several skills, ideally spread over several people, and quite time consumptive.

So why not encourage a paradigm shift to translation only? The answer is simply that many of us can transcribe manually far more quickly, and accurately, than that which it would take for us to learn and manipulate the translators, not to mention that careful proofreading (and code knowledge) should be required for either method. Therefore, yes, there is a difference - a dramatic difference in the two - and both

are entitled to the separate recognition that each respective craft deserves; each is special, and both require learning, experience, long hours, and much skill.

Which leads us to the following discussion on decisions regarding phrase and measure division for sight singing texts - a skill that still requires good old human effort and thoughtful musicianship to apply, and perhaps to proof and re-format even if *translation* was used.

Sight Singing in Braille without Anxiety

Long ago, we were encouraged to always fill the braille line in order to conserve space. Fortunately for braille music readers of today - those who have now proven that they can sight read in solfege as fast as (if not faster than) their sighted classmates, we are now at liberty to put musical presentation in preference to saving space. Breaking phrases is no longer subordinate to breaking measures, that is to say, properly broken measures cause little interruption in reading, but broken phrases where there are no pauses are always a problem for less experienced readers. Many a well-thought out sight reading exam has put young blind readers in the winner's seat at competitive music festivals.

After fifteen years of publication, Part I of "*An Introduction to Music for the Blind Student*" is in process of revision for a second edition to be released by 2016. I would like to share a few examples of how I have changed some of the exercises to make the reading and phrasing flow far better without breaks. Much has been learned from students and colleagues, and Richard can humbly say that they have been his best teachers!

Discussions and Exhibits:

Here we have a very simple example of a perfect place to break the line, and aid the reader in jumping to a new line at measure 5 with ease:

Key of A Major - A = Do

The image displays a musical exercise in two parts. The first part is a single line of musical notation on a staff, starting with a treble clef, a common time signature 'C', and a measure number '31'. The second part is a continuation of the melody on a new staff, starting with a measure number '5'. Below the musical notation is a corresponding Braille representation of the melody. A yellow highlight is placed under the Braille for the first measure of the second line, and a curved arrow points from this highlight back to the end of the first line of notation, indicating a break in the line.

In these examples, the key and tonal center cues are actually directions, and treated as though centered tempo or mood indications; as such, they appear in uncontracted braille as a part of the music itself. (The little boxes are part of lesson discussions in the source book for these exercises.)

Excerpts are courtesy of "An Introduction to Music for the Blind Student" Second Edition, *Supplemental Exercises*; used here with permission of the publisher, Dancing Dots www.dancingdots.com.

For the next example, we could easily have chosen to fill the second braille line, but how better for the reader to have slight resting places to make the line change. Unlike other forms of braille reading, tempo won't wait until the reader is ready.

QUIZ: Do you see a different place to break in braille line 1, where the balance (antecedent/consequence) of phrasing might be better preserved?

Yes, yes, the measure number "1" is missing - tsk, tsk! But do we really need a measure number 1 in front of what is clearly measure 1?

SPINDLER'S WALTZ

Key of C Major - C = Do

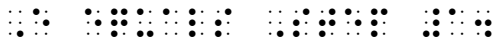
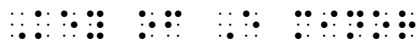
Musical score for Spindler's Waltz, measures 33-36. The score consists of four staves. The first staff is labeled '33' and the fourth staff is labeled '13'. Arrows point from the first and fourth staves to the corresponding Braille lines below.

Braille transcription of the musical score for Spindler's Waltz, measures 33-36. The Braille is arranged in six lines. The first line contains measures 33-34. The second line contains measures 35-36. The third line contains measures 37-38. The fourth line contains measures 39-40. The fifth line contains measures 41-42. The sixth line contains measures 43-44. Several Braille cells are highlighted in yellow.

Following is a good example of breaking a measure in favor of keeping a bracket slur phrase together on the next line:

Sing & Play (Left Hand)

Key of E minor - E = Do



Music Education Network for the Visually Impaired

Articles by MENVI Specialists

Impressions of the “Visually-impaired Musicians’ Lives” Conference

by Bill McCann

As someone once said, there is a time and a place for everything. Last March, the time and place merged with the related people to create the experience known as the Visually-Impaired Musicians’ Lives Conference in London, UK. Some readers may recall that I wrote a bit about this research project in the last issue of this column. In this article, I’ll try to capture at least a bit of the magic of what happened when passionate, witty, and dedicated people from our field came together for two exciting days of interaction. I just wish all of you could have been there. (See mention of an encore below.)

Right from the start of the dinner the night before the opening day of the two-day gathering, I could feel a certain electricity in the air; a feeling of camaraderie, of mutual understanding and support, and a feeling like being at home. Although this event was the first of its kind to my knowledge, the whole experience reminded me of the title of one of my favorite recordings: *“Duke Ellington and Louis Armstrong: Together Again for the First Time.”*

Right from the warm welcome given us from Sir Colin Low of Dalston, a music lover and lifelong champion for the visually impaired, we knew we were in for something special. Chi Kim, keynote speaker and director of the Assistive Music Technology Lab for the Blind and Visually Impaired Musicians at Berklee College of Music, set the tone for the 21 presenters and ten performances to follow him throughout two very full and engaging days. Professor Kim credited a special teacher in his student days in South Korea who encouraged and believed in him. He talked about the importance of technology in his studies and the opportunities that came to him through his pursuit of his goals. He told us about his work at Berklee’s Assistive Music Technology Lab for the Blind and Visually Impaired, a model innovative project that has been attracting national and international attention since its inception a few years ago.

The presentations fell into a few important thematic areas: accessible music technologies, research projects, score media, performing, employment and networking, and education, (with representatives from schools in the USA, Estonia and Scotland speaking). Performers and presenters came from Argentina, Australia, Canada, Estonia, Greece, the Slovak Republic, the UK and the USA. If I were to attempt to describe even briefly each intriguing, engaging and even provocative presentation, this brief article would quickly become the size of a brief book. See the link below to bring you to a page of abstracts that summarize each presentation.

In my own presentation, I reflected on my experience of growing up as a musician who is blind. As I said, sometimes we blind musicians do feel like a runner who has to sprint for a mile to get to the starting line

just in time to join the other competitors who are simply waiting for the race to begin. It does seem that we always have to work harder, smarter, and longer than our sighted musical peers. We seek to learn to play an instrument but find it a challenge to find a teacher who is comfortable teaching us. We need to learn to read music in braille but discover that there are not enough people who know how to teach it to us and too many people who have already decided for us that it will be too hard for us to learn anyway. We want to take part in school, church and community music groups but encounter practical and attitudinal barriers to participation. We need to memorize our parts but too often lack timely access to accessible scores.

The list goes on and on. Yet, the people gathered at this memorable conference did not dwell on the problems that confront us. Rather, they celebrated solutions, shared aspirations, formed new relationships. They described techniques of teaching that have been successful for them. They demonstrated technology which they and colleagues had developed for creating access to scores and audio production projects. They discussed ideas to organize for mutual support and network to improve skills to find more and better employment. In other words, we talked about ways to shorten that sprint up to the starting line for visually impaired musical competitors.

The organizers of the conference, Dr. David Baker and Professor Lucy Green, researchers from the University of London, wisely decided that any conference focused on presenting findings on the lives of visually impaired musicians must include performances by those musicians. Victoria Oruwari (soprano) and Kevin Satizabal (piano), set the bar quite high with their opening set of songs. We had lively and entertaining performances from musicians with a range of backgrounds and styles from James Risdon's virtuosic recorder playing to the world music of Baluji Shrivastav's Inner Vision Orchestra. Young piano wizard, Rachel Starritt, played with such lyricism and grace. Matthew Wadsworth brought his theorbo, explained to us just what in the world that is, and then showed us why he is so well-known and respected for playing it. We had other gifted vocalists: the operatic tenor of Maros Bango, the inspirational songs of Terry Kelly with his friend, Lucas Haneman on guitar, and, closing the show, the down-home, bluesy style of Joey Stuckey who gave us a stirring rendition of his "Blind Man Drivin'," the theme song of the conference.

I was particularly moved by the warmth and energy that came to us direct from Buenos Aires courtesy of Paula and Fabiana Chavez, the dynamic piano duo. These charming twins told the story of their quest for music in spite of gradually losing their sight starting at the age of thirteen. Like some of the other performers, they have used our technology to learn to perform advanced pieces by such composers as Mozart, Bach, and Ravel. You may enjoy viewing a video they made available from the "Presentations" link on our www.dancingdots.com site. Even if you don't understand a word of Spanish, you'll get the message that these are two talented, determined, and lovely people who have so much passion and enthusiasm to share for music and just for life in general.

In addition to performances by the pros mentioned above, we had a rousing serenade from the My Sight Choir from Nottingham in the UK. Their enthusiasm for making music was infectious and soon had the whole room

clapping and stomping along. Their performance reminded us that music-making brings people together like nothing else.

One of our newest friends, Alison Dalton of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, told us of her continuing journey with music. After years of work as a professional violinist with 20/20 vision, she is now moving ahead as a violinist with low vision. She spoke movingly of her journey and her quest to nurture and integrate her altered vision into the fabric of her musical life. She played a lovely piece by Bach for us using the Lime Lighter to magnify the music she performed.

One of the aspects of this conference that I found unusual and refreshing was that it was conceived and promoted by researchers from outside of what we sometimes call the “blind community.” Of course, Dr. Baker and Professor Green did form an advisory panel of individuals from our community to assist in planning but they themselves came from the “outside world.” In post-conference discussions with James Risdon of the RNIB Music Advisory Service and Peter Boshier who presented on his new VIBE organization, we all agreed that this conference provided a certain level of validation for us blind musicians simply by virtue of the fact that the organizers were coming to this topic from outside of our usual circle.

Looking back on the conference, Mr. Risdon reflected that this small world of visually impaired musicians is actually bigger than we thought and that we all valued the opportunity to network face to face with those involved in our field. He acknowledged my own concern that the results of the research may prove to be more of a snapshot of a particular subset of visually impaired musicians rather than a statement of firm conclusions based on research.

Peter Boshier agrees that the research findings might be somewhat skewed by the varied cross section of people who responded. But he believes that the forthcoming book will contain some general conclusions about how visually impaired musicians study, perform and share in music. James, Peter and I all agreed that the organizers set the right tone of sharing and constructive discussion as opposed to what we feared could have turned out to be what our English cousins call a winning session.

In addition to the anticipated publication of their book with the working title of *Insights in Sound*, the researchers are exploring the possibility of an encore conference. Whether, where and how are still under discussion. You can read much more detail about the presenters, performers and researchers at their conference website: http://vimusicians.ioe.ac.uk/confer_train.html

Bill's Photo Gallery



Bill McCann is founder and president of Dancing Dots Braille Music Technology, L.P. (www.DancingDots.com).

He is a charter member of the "Music Education Network for The Visually Impaired," and a MENVI advisor.

Endnote:

Do you know a young blind or low vision musician? Are you one yourself? Find out what it means to be a blind musician at Enchanted Hills Camp's Summer Music Academy session, August 3 to 9!

This session will be led by some of our nation's best teachers. Singers as well as those who play instruments are welcome at our summer Music Academy at Enchanted Hills.

After a hugely successful debut in 2014, *The Lighthouse* will partner for a second year with Dancing Dots, the world's leading provider of accessible music technology for the blind, to bring our summertime Music Academy back to the redwoods. The Academy is open to young, motivated blind and low vision musicians from around the nation who are 14 to 25 years old.

Bill McCann, President and Founder of Dancing Dots, will spend the entire week with the aspiring musicians. McCann, blind himself, will lead a team of four blind instructors and technicians to teach the latest and greatest techniques for blind and low vision students. Also returning is former camper and current EHC staff member Shane Dittmar, who will bring his energy and talent to teaching what he loves most.

Each day, small groups of four or five campers will rotate through sessions with instructors in a few key areas. The groups will meet to hone their skills in reading music in braille or magnified print, learning how to use accessible music technology to enter, revise, and print or braille out their musical ideas, and getting a solid introduction to producing multi-track sound recordings independently. We'll form a chorus to apply the skill of reading music while singing. Of course, there will also be time each day to take a swim or explore the lovely grounds of the Enchanted Hills Camp, join in informal jam sessions with fellow campers and staff, and take part in after-dinner listening sessions.

Featuring Special Guests:

Special guest musicians and presenters from Napa and the Bay Area will come in to share their experience and expertise. And you will have the opportunity to perform on our new Redwood Grove Theater Stage in our closing concert.

When: Monday, August 3 through Sunday, August 9

Where: Enchanted Hills Camp for the Blind, Napa

Cost for the Week: All-inclusive: \$300 (If the registration fee is a barrier, let us know; some scholarships will be available.)

To sign up, contact Taccarra Burrell at 415-694-7318 or tburrell@lighthouse-sf.org or go to the Enchanted Hills page on our website: <http://lighthouse-sf.org/programs/enchanted-hills/>



Special Announcements of Interest for All

There are so many wonderful books about music - those other than only textbooks and music repertoire, that we feel the following announcement will be of interest to our readers, and our contribution for CTEBVI members as well.

NATIONAL LIBRARY SERVICE FOR THE BLIND AND PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED

Library of Congress Campaign Announcement

MENVI Journal Content

That All May Read

That All May Read is the long-standing motto of the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS), Library of Congress, a free library service. People with temporary or permanent low vision, blindness, or other physical disabilities that prevent them from reading or using printed materials are eligible to enroll in the braille and talking book program, which offers a wide variety of reading materials at no charge.

The new NLS website, www.loc.gov/ThatAllMayRead, has information about the service and features a video with nine NLS patrons talking about their experiences with the program. The website will be updated regularly, so check back frequently to see what is new. Encourage those who may be eligible for NLS services, or who know people who are, to visit the site and learn more. Spread the word so that all may read.



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Melissa Pavo-Zehr, CTEBVI Foreign Language Specialist

UPDATES AND NEWS

I have retractions to make presented in the last *JOURNAL* issue.

Retraction #1: You do not maintain uncontracted foreign words within English text as per UEB 13.2.1. As per the Note in the “Rules of Unified English Braille 2013” Section 13.2.1:

“It is permissible to disregard this rule provided that there are appropriate braille authority policies and guidelines in place which transcribers in your country are expected to follow to ensure that ambiguity is avoided.”

As we do have governing policies, authorities and guidelines; Foreign Language Transcription will be handled the way it has been. BF 2011 Formatting coupled with the *NBA Interim Manual for Foreign Language Braille Transcription*. The only obvious differences are that you will use UEB wherever you would have used EBAE (punctuation, emphasis, etc.).

This means adhere to BF 2011 1.15.3 and DO contract foreign words in English context.

Retraction #2: DO NOT use foreign punctuation.

So just don't look at 96% of the examples in Section 13 of the “Rules of Unified English Braille 2013” until necessary, if ever. For now, just know the UEB punctuation, typeforms, usage of caps, etc.; the BF 2011; the *NBA Interim Manual for Foreign Language Braille Transcription* and you're good.

As always, check frequently as the NBA Foreign Language Braille Committee chair has been working with BANA and we will be receiving recommendations and guidelines anytime now. Happy brailleing!

Taking Steps to Become Aaron

Ralph Cioffi, CTEBVI Orientation and Mobility Specialist

My early years in this profession allowed me to imagine an array of ideal features that an O&M student might present upon first meeting with me. This 'ideal student' fantasy was formulated while pursuing my credentials. In it each one of my students became well-adjusted to age appropriate endeavors in a very short time. And each one would become curious about the personal challenges that cane-travel experiences had to offer under my instruction. At that time, I didn't think this was too much to ask for. But, it was. The reality is that I would often find myself working, with resilient intent for years with each O&M student all the while encouraging them to reach for the potential I knew was within them. Sometimes it was realized and sometimes not. All I can tell you is that it required a lot of time. Time well spent encouraging, eliciting and supporting the emotional qualities that allowed students to act upon their perceived personal challenges. I knew that facilitating the emergence of a young person's internal power would allow many of my students to move beyond their self-defined boundaries. Yet, it was always their choice!

The following story is an example of how the quality of my intervention facilitated one of my student's embrace of the power of his own self-reliance. He eventually went on to become a very well adjusted, independent person who had no need for further O&M instruction.



Taking Steps to Become Aaron

Aaron was as an 8th grader exhibiting a level of physical and emotional development that was significantly less than age-appropriate. He displayed a severe level of low vision, which seemed to be accompanied by a dependence upon everyone else in his world, but himself, for all the things that mattered to him. During my introductory meeting with this teenage student, he flatly stated to me that he had no use for mobility lessons! You can imagine how that struck me. He went on to tell me that he hated to walk! Actually, the muscle tone in his legs could attest to that. In fact, the muscle tone, in every part of his body, appeared to be extremely low. Over the next few weeks I did notice that his legs, in particular bothered him after short bouts of purposeful walking during our mobility lessons. It became obvious that minimal physical effort on his part, both at home and at school was the norm for him. After about a month of training with me he pointedly let me know that just about everything he needed to do for himself was "done" by someone else. And he concluded by telling me that he was okay except when he was with me!

This information led me to begin observations of his performance during other school-based activities. I came away with the realization that Aaron was not able to be fully present in the demanding world of his school environment. He seemed distracted during most of his academic and mobility instruction time. On an academic level he appeared to be in a state of frazzled confusion. All of his teachers were busy trying

to “catch him up.” Most school personnel apparently bought into the ‘poor, pitiful me’ persona that he frequently exhibited. People did their best to make work assignments easier for Aaron. The resulting accommodations only seemed to prolong the loss of this teenager’s positive sense of self. On an O&M training level, he usually appeared uneasy. Attention to his personal skill level seemed to be sabotaged by feelings of inadequacy, anxiety, suppressed anger, and self-pity. On a very basic mobility training level, he had yet to find a dignified, self-composure.

Regardless, Aaron became one of my success stories over the three years that I worked with him. After getting to know how he functioned within every realm of his academic experiences, I realized that I was faced with a student who was typically intelligent yet had been adversely affected by some of the most significant people in his life. His home life did not appear to know how to support the development of his inexperienced skill level. And once in school, personnel found it difficult to hold back their protective emotional responses to him. This was clearly getting in the way of any higher expectations of the development of his self-help skill-base. The time and effort it took to get Aaron to complete classroom assignments became burdensome. It became obvious that many academic assignments were completed, but by his classroom assistants. They too, had a schedule to keep.

Aaron was an interesting study in a sustained acquisition of helplessness. How this happened is not as important to talk about right now, as is what he did to challenge himself, as a mobility student, and begin to change his self-image. What I know is that mobility lessons helped him to redefine his view of himself. I made sure his community-based O&M lessons challenged his physical skill level in a way that spoke to his emotional makeup. One unexpected outcome was that mobility lessons created an opportunity for him to voice how he felt about himself. He seemed to welcome the opportunity to talk about how he truly felt about himself. So did I! Most of his conversation was about how he was feeling at the moment. It made me feel like he’d never had the opportunity to be so candid about himself. While I suspect this happened mostly because we were working within the setting of the larger world, I also know that he was beginning to trust me more and more. I had placed him in a situation where he had no choice but to interact with all of the activity that the larger community had to offer and I was his anchor. I believe it allowed him to view himself in relation to the skills needed to be present in this situation. He often could not help voicing his reactions. And, I was there to respond to them in a level manner. It created a series of defining moments for him.

As a result of these community-based experiences, Aaron went on to better self-evaluate the skills that he had, which led to his realization of the ones that needed further development. Could I have asked for a more perfect student? While he continued to self-evaluate, I continued to listen and observe well. It allowed me to develop more O&M curriculum, specific to his emerging skill level. And as I objectively evaluated his expanding levels of self-confidence and self-image, he seemed to accept my input with thoughtful contemplation.

I’d like to give an example of an incident that, while small, was a catalyst for this student’s self-focus, the kind

that really impacted his personal introspection. As I mentioned, once in high school, Aaron and I plodded through many different kinds of mobility experiences both on and off campus. We worked our way up to crossing simple traffic light intersections within the local community. Of course the experiences became progressively more challenging as his level of self-confidence increased.

A pivotal point in the training process approached. Aaron was about to cross an intersection without any verbal support from me. He was, essentially well equipped, confident, and about to use his newly acquired skills for his first truly independent street crossing in a light business area. He did everything that he needed to do to determine the appropriate and accurate time to step into the street. As he did this, a car ran the red light and unexpectedly whizzed by him at an accelerated speed. Startled, he quickly jumped back onto the sidewalk scared, trembling, and swearing that he knew he shouldn't ever have even thought about trying this! He let me know that he felt that he had almost been "killed by that car!" and went on to state that he was "never going to cross a street, ever again, by myself!!!!!!!"

At this point, all I could do was assure Aaron that what happened was not his fault, that he had accurately timed his street crossing and that the car had illegally run through the red light. When he calmed down, all he could say was that he wanted to go back to school. What else could I say but, "Okay, let's go."

Damage control was in order here. Big time! And damage control is what made all the difference for the future of his mobility lessons! The ensuing weeks were spent in discussion about how this incident affected him, and how he was going to handle his feelings surrounding it.

My suggestion was that we continue mobility lessons but, instead of being out on the sidewalks, we would spend our time exploring the inside of different department stores and supermarkets. He agreed to the plan. It allowed him to feel safe, keep his anxiety at manageable levels, and at the same time feel like he was learning something that would be to his advantage.

A major focus of all future discussion was getting him emotionally prepared to get back outside and onto the sidewalks. My primary message was to let him know that I would not force him into any kind of sidewalk travel experience until he stated that he was ready to do so. He needed to let me know when he might be ready to do that.

Over the following weeks, I engaged him in discussion about the consequences of deciding not to become an independent traveler. Another focus in follow-up conversations with him, was to mention that I thought it would be very important for him to go back to "the scene of the crime" to face his fears. True to his teenage years, he told me I'd have a long wait for that!

Regardless, I continued to suggest that it would be good for him to prove to himself that he could do the street crossing safely. I also let him know that I thought it would allow him to move beyond the fear that stopped him from becoming a proficient traveler. And that I'd really like to see him do that before I became a

very old man!

About three months later while on a mobility lesson in one of the local department stores he said to me, "Mr. Ralph, you know how you've been wanting me to go back to that intersection?" I responded with, "Yes I do! But, remember, not until YOU are ready. You need to do it for yourself, not for me." With a combination of both meekness and strength he responded with, "Well, I'm ready to go back there!" I knew Aaron couldn't see the expression on my face, but he could hear how impressed I was with him in the quality of my voice. Once again, there was nothing to say but, "Okay, let's go." And just so you know, many situations that had been intimidating to Aaron previous to this experience began to change quickly for him.



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/>

The nature of instructional materials in today's modern classroom has evolved quickly with ever-changing instructional technology and district-wide initiatives that place new demands on both general and special education teachers and staff. Classroom teachers may not necessarily teach directly out of traditional textbooks, peer-to-peer activities may replace in-class lectures, and interactive materials may replace more passive forms of information reception.

These materials may present challenges to teachers with varied experiences using technologies. Digital media create as many opportunities as challenges for students' immediate and independent access to accessible instructional materials. This article will present a general overview of new media in today's classroom, and suggestions for how teachers, transcribers, and parents can keep up.

For more in-depth information and further training, please refer to the resources listed at the end of the article, and slides from my session 810 *"Tools and Resources for Multimedia Accessibility in the Digital Classroom and Home"* at CTEBVI's Annual Conference March 19-22, 2015 in Burlingame, CA. (posted on the CTEBVI website)

Digital and Multimedia

Print and Literacy

Regardless of the form (audio, visual, or tactile), technology does not replace the need for all students to access print and achieve functional or academic literacy. In addition to enlarged paper materials and embossed braille, "print" in the digital classroom may encompass online or electronic textbooks, computer based lessons, and less paper-based media. As a result, students require digital information that they can access on demand; text that can be enlarged or adjusted for contrast on a screen, read in an organized fashion using refreshable braille displays, and navigated using auditory means. Whether these new media require a computer or tablet is less important than how the media is formatted.

Just as standards exist for embossed braille to ensure usability and efficient access, similar practices for digital formats exist to ensure usability of electronic texts:

1. Documents including .doc and .pdf must use headings (also known as "styles" in Microsoft Word) to ensure organized navigation of a body of text, just as visual readers rely on chapter and paragraph headings.
2. Websites and apps must also use correct headings, labels, and logical reading order to enable successful site navigation.

3. Text on a screen must be rendered as actual text to ensure access by refreshable braille displays, screen readers, and digital book readers. Sometimes, text may appear to be text, but are actually rendered as images, such as in image (rather than text) PDFs and websites that post a picture of text rather than typing it out.

Images

Instruction and use of tactile graphics remains important for students who are blind, but at times visual media such as photos and drawings can also be supported by a simple verbal description. Whether the student is navigating a Word document, pdf, or website, images can be quickly conveyed if an image description is embedded in the digital document (also known as alternate text). Understanding when and how to provide an effective image description can be the critical factor in a student's independent and immediate access to the information.

Videos

Video content is becoming more prevalent in students' lives in a variety of ways: assigned as homework or to replace an in-class lecture, as tutorials to support or review lessons, and even for social inclusion when discussing popular YouTube videos! In contrast to captioning that transcribes auditory information to a visual format, video description transcribes visual information for auditory access. Excellent tools now exist for anyone (teacher, friend, family member) to add video descriptions to existing videos, and re-post for the student to access independently and at will.

Skills for Mediating Digital Information

Critical Thinking

Due to the many modalities information can take in the classroom, teachers, students, and parents alike must understand the purpose of different technologies in order to know *what* to use *when*.

Student learning styles, classroom setup, and the content matter ultimately drive what tools to use. When the technology is chosen first, tools can easily dictate and constrain how teaching and learning happen. The development of critical thinking in order to make these decisions spontaneously is just as important (if not more) as knowing how to operate a device.

Likewise, carrying out your own accessibility check on apps, programs, and websites, can be more reliably and quickly done than depending on a developer who may or may not understand accessibility. A simple use of VoiceOver on Apple devices, or using a cursor to navigate a website can give enough information to know whether or not to support use of a program that's been recommended for other students.

Maintaining a Varied Toolkit

So long as digital information is formatted in various ways, students must learn how to leverage different tools for the same purpose. For example, some computer programs might be accessible using the JAWS screen reader, but certain websites are better accessed using the NVDA screen reader. When the student understands the demands of the content and affordances of various technologies, having a selection of tools to choose from can facilitate independence and the preferred method of access.

Creativity

Technology is often developed for specific purposes, and the best users are those who re-purpose tools for novel applications. Tools also become more flexible when they can be used in a variety of contexts, depending on the demands of the subject matter. Creative uses of technology therefore stem from sharing each other's experiences in applying tools to create solutions, and experimenting fearlessly. Passing along these attitudes to students can enable them to take charge of their own accessibility solutions when the need arises.

Advocacy for Accessible Infrastructures

Just as educators and parents advocate for braille and large print materials, similar efforts must be made to lobby for accessible infrastructures in the digital environment. Advocacy may take shape in a number of ways:

1. Students who need computers or devices to access information should be granted special privileges to do so.
2. Students might also need special permission to access websites or programs that are more accessible and usable than others.
3. School or district wide initiatives to adopt specific curricula or use apps for instruction should consider whether or not these programs are accessible. This may require education from the teachers and parents.
4. Students should also be empowered to reach out to organizations when materials, programs, or websites are inaccessible.
5. Any administrator, teacher, parent, or peer is a potential ally and supporter for accessible materials with education and training!

Assurances

With all the technology and media in schools, it is a daunting task to keep up with the tools our students might need. It is easy to feel overwhelmed, yet our students' learning cannot afford to be paralyzed by our own fears or hesitation. An easier approach is to depend on those critical thinking skills, and nurture the will to experiment as challenges arise. It is nearly impossible to be an expert at using any device if you are not a user yourself – that's ok! Students simply need an introduction to the technology, and device learning will

naturally happen as accessibility needs evolve.

Understanding of the types of media used in classrooms, keeping up with the variety of solutions available, and knowing where to get help is likely more reasonable than facing the task of being an expert on using every device on the market.

Resources

Documents Accessibility

- Creating Accessible MS Word Files
<http://webaim.org/techniques/word/>
- Creating Accessible PDFs
http://www.adobe.com/enterprise/accessibility/pdfs/acro6_pg_ue.pdf

Website Accessibility

- WebAIM (Web Accessibility In Mind)
<http://webaim.org>

Image Description

- Description Guidelines
https://diagram.herokuapp.com/training/how_to_describe
- Guidelines for Describing STEM Images
http://ncam.wgbh.org/experience_learn/educational_media/stemdx/guidelines

Video Description

- Guidelines: http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLNJrbl_nyy9uzywoJfyDRoeKA1SaIEFJ7
- YouDescribe - A free service that allows anyone to describe a YouTube video. Videos can be played back with description by anyone with the link.
<http://youdescribe.ski.org>
- Tutorial: <http://youtu.be/c-GKbGCzeEc>

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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.

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