DVI Quarterly

Division on Visual Impairments

Highlights from Convention

Volume 59 • Number 3 • 2014

The Voice and Vision of Special Education

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Council for Exceptional Children
The voice and vision of special education

This is a publication of the Council for Exceptional Children's Division on Visual Impairments (CEC-DVI). Advertisements included in this issue are not endorsements of products or services, and individual views of authors are not necessarily the official position of CEC and/or DVI.

Council for Exceptional Children
The voice and vision of special education

Cover Photo

Mosaic Mural at the Overbrook School for the Blind in Philadelphia, PA. Many special tactile elements are included in Overbrook School for the Blind's new mosaic mural including a visual representation of Braille lettering. There is also some raised imagery of a service dog, musical instruments, hands, and goggles used in Goalball, a sport designed specifically for blind athletes. Photo by Dennis Brookshire and John Thomas.

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Message from the Editor

Kathleen Farrand

Doctoral Candidate at The Ohio State University

Welcome to the Spring 2014 issues of *DVIQ* entitled "Highlights from Convention." I am honored for the opportunity to take over as editor of *DVIQ*. This is an amazing opportunity to share what those in the field of Visual Impairments (VI) and Deafblindness (DB) are doing around the country and the world. If you are interested in getting involved in the DVI-Q committee or have articles or advertisements please contact me.

This issue of *DVIQ* will contain articles that highlight this years Council for Exceptional Children Convention and Expo that was held in Philadelphia, PA on April 9-12, 2014. The authors of the articles will share insights and look back on important events from the convention, such as award winners, student perspectives, presentations, and a School for the Blind piece.

The issue begins with articles that honor five phenomenal women that received awards at this year's annual convention. The next two articles provide two student perspectives about getting involved as Student Ambassadors and preparing to enter the field of VI. The following three articles summarize presentations from this year's convention. The first provides strategies for teachers and parents for teaching babies Braille. The second article provides information on the effect of auditory working memory training on mathematic problem solving in students with visual impairments. The third article will share strategies and implications for instruction and assessment for successful graphics users for students with visual impairments.

With the final article of the journal, I would like to begin a new piece that will be a part of each upcoming issue. In each issue I would like to highlight a School for the Blind or School for the Deafblind. The intention behind this new piece being to provide an opportunity to highlight some of the remarkable work that is happening in schools around the country and the world. If you work for a school or know of a school that you think should be featured in an upcoming issue, please email me and let me know.

The first of this series is the Overbrook School for the Blind located in Philadelphia, PA. The members of the DVI Executive Board and I had the pleasure of holding one of the board meetings at this year's convention at the Overbrook School for the Blind. The executive director, Gerald Kitzhoffer, and school staff provided us with incredible hospitality, and they also shared a tour of their school and history with us, as well as delicious food. I would like to thank them again for their hospitality and begin this new series with an article about their school.

DVIQ Committee

Kathleen Farrand, Editor

Are you interested in becoming a member of the DVIQ committee? Do you have ideas about advertising and topics for future issues? If so, then please email Kathleen Farrand and get involved today.

Please submit articles and advertisements to:

Farrand.9@buckeyemail.osu.edu

I hope that you enjoy this issue, as much as I enjoyed putting it together. For those of you that were unable to attend this year's annual convention, I hope that this will provide you with a picture of the outstanding work that was done to highlight the field of VI and DB and inspire you to attend next year's convention. For those of you that did have the opportunity to attend, I hope that this issue will remind you of a great conversation you had or an inspiring presentation that you attended. Thank you to all that contributed articles and advertisements to this issue.

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President's Message
Diane Pevsner

The CEC annual convention provides its members with the opportunity to catch up with old friends, make new friends and to learn from one another. The convention offers DVI members the opportunity to become familiar with the latest research in visual impairments, update teaching strategies, and celebrate the award winners in our profession. It is a time of excitement, renewal, and goal setting for the upcoming year.

Much of the discussion at this years convention centered around DVI's history and the interest in students who are deafblind, and the professionals who serve them. This interest has been demonstrated through position papers, training programs, and the development and acceptance of knowledge and skills competencies for professionals and paraprofessionals that serve students who are deafblind. To incorporate deafblindness in our name seems to be a natural move. Please join me in welcoming the professional, paraprofessionals, and family members of individuals who are deaf blind to our organization.

The 2014 Annual Convention and Expo was held in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania during April. Just as the Founding Fathers of the United States utilized the city of Brotherly Love as a meeting place to sign the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, the Division of Visual Impairments made history there as well. The DVI Board proposed to the membership to expand our name to the Division of Visual Impairments and Deafblindness (DVIDB). I am very proud to say that the motion passed and the request has been approved by the CEC Board of Directors. With this approval we are now known as DVIDB!

It's Easier than Ever to Be Part of Our Family

If you are passionate about the education of children and youth with visual impairments and deafblindness, including those with additional disabilities, please become part of our social network on Facebook. If you have a Facebook account, you can find our page and become a fan by searching for Division on Visual Impairments. For those who do not have a Facebook account, you can view our page by going to the following URL:
http://www.facebook.com/pages/edit/?id=248244976215#!/pages/Division-on-Visual-Impairments/248244976215

DVI **is on**

COUNCIL FOR EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN DIVISIOIN ON VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS

PRESENTS 2014 AWARDS

AT INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE IN PHILADELPHIA, PA

DIVISION ON VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS *DISSERTATION OF THE YEAR*

Dr. Jane Brown

The Council for Exceptional Children, Division on Visual Impairments (DVI) is proud to present the *Dissertation of the Year Award* to Dr. Jane Brown at the Council for Exceptional Children Convention and Expo in Philadelphia, PA on April 10, 2014. Dr. Brown recently completed her doctorate with a focus on Blindness and Visual Impairment at the Griffith University in Queensland, Australia.

The *Dissertation of the Year Award* is presented to a DVI member who makes a significant contribution to the field through extensive study and research. Dr. Brown's dissertation, "*Understanding the post-school transition of young people with vision impairment*" was a qualitative multiple case study. From her dissertation, we find that Dr. Brown conducted a qualitative study with "carefully sequenced and systematic methods were used to gauge participant perspectives." The methods included first-hand accounts from students with visual impairments that focused on their perspectives about transition. The study also gathered information from educators who served these students as they moved beyond secondary school.

Dr. Brown found that "overall findings indicated that young people offered strong voices and had much to say about components that facilitate and hinder transition. Identified facilitators included experiences in career development and the Expanded Core Curriculum, peer friendships, and support from key adults. Hindrances to post-school transition comprised failure to maintain a formal transition plan and apprehension about friendships, travel, and employment. While adolescents readily contributed their views about facilitators and barriers to transition, young adults added value by reflecting on their schooling and transition experiences. In particular, young adults suggested that regular opportunities to practice independent skills and improved relationships with post-school providers would be useful. Many influences and experiences identified by young people were independently reaffirmed by school staff and parents. These stakeholders agreed that young people need earlier action in terms of transition planning, as well as opportunities to acquire Expanded Core Curriculum content and skills at school. Some unique themes were also generated by staff and parents. Staff particularly emphasized the importance of social skills in assisting transition, while parents indicated value in selecting suitable school subjects to meet adolescents' needs."

COUNCIL FOR EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN DIVISIOIN ON VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS

PRESENTS 2014 AWARDS

AT INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE IN PHILADELPHIA, PA

DIVISION ON VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS *DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD*

Dr. Sheila Amato

The Council for Exceptional Children, Division on Visual Impairments (DVI) is proud to present the *Distinguished Service Award* to Dr. Sheila Amato at the Council for Exceptional Children Convention and Expo in Philadelphia, PA on April 10, 2014. Dr. Amato is a retired educator, current adjunct professor for multiple universities, past DVI Director, and past Editor of the *DVIQuarterly*.

The *Distinguished Service Award* is presented to a DVI member who provides exemplary leadership and commitment to the field. Dr. Amato received this prestigious award for her diligent work as an advocate to persons with blindness, deafblindness, deafness, and multiple disabilities. Her contributions to her profession have been broad-based and immeasurable, especially from her work with the *DVIQuarterly*.

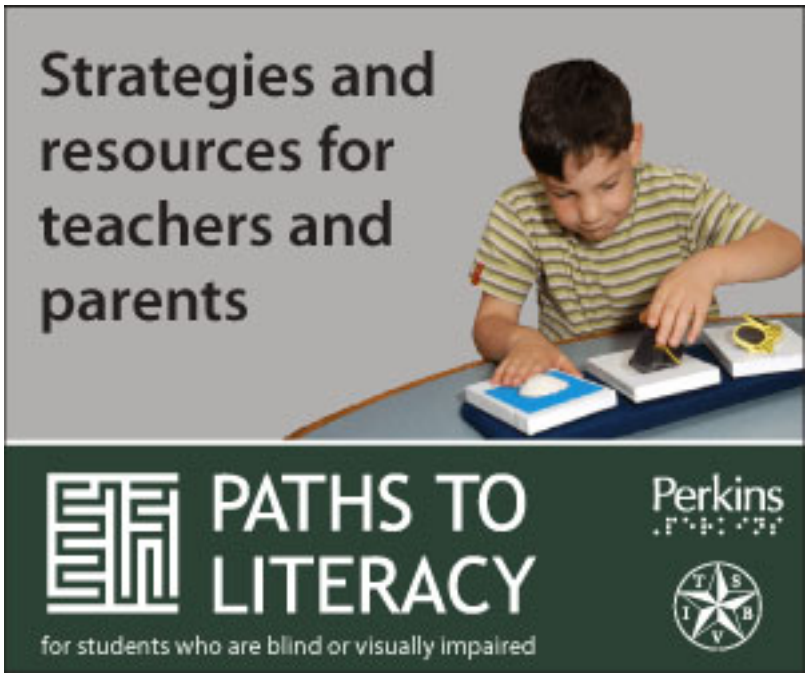
Dr. Amato is a teacher, a leader, and an advocate. She is a past winner of the CEC Division on Visual Impairments Dissertation of the Year, Student of the Year, and Teacher of the Year awards. She was also awarded the Council for Exceptional Children Clarissa Hug Teacher of the Year award, the highest award bestowed to classroom special educators. She served as an educator on Long Island for many years and has supported personnel preparation of teachers of students with visual impairments as an adjunct faculty at multiple universities across the nation. While she has succeeded as a superb educator, she distinguished herself within the field as she served as the *DVIQuarterly* editor for 12 years. During that time, she brought the publication to a new level of professionalism and accessibility.

In his letter of nomination, Bob Brasher of the American Printing House for the Blind states, "*'While they were saying among themselves it cannot be done, it was done.'* I think of this wonderful Helen Keller quote when I think of the tenacity and drive of Dr. Sheila Amato." He goes on to state that "I sincerely believe that Sheila's impressive and varied career is deserving of this prestigious recognition. From her early success as a teacher of students who are deaf, to students with deaf-blindness, and then learning additional skills to teach students who are blind, she has certainly shown her "get it done" attitude."

Dr. Penny Rosenblum, in her letter of support of the nomination, states that "Sheila is truly deserving of this honor as she continually gives to the profession and goes above and beyond in so many ways." In discussing her level of professionalism devoted to personnel preparation, Dr. Rosenblum states "Again and again, I am impressed with the amount of time and energy she puts into her courses, the high standards she sets for her students, and her

attention to detail. She truly wants students with visual impairments to have high quality teachers and she helps to assure this happens through the preparation she provides."

Dr. Sheila Amato has served the field of students with disabilities well for many years and quickly became a distinguished servant within the field of special education for students with visual impairments. The CEC Division on Visual Impairments is honored to present her with this well-deserved award.



COUNCIL FOR EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN DIVISIOIN ON VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS

PRESENTS 2014 AWARDS

AT INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE IN PHILADELPHIA, PA

DIVISION ON VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS *EXEMPLARY ADVOCATE AWARD*

Dr. Tanni Anthony

The Council for Exceptional Children, Division on Visual Impairments (DVI) is proud to present the *Exemplary Advocate Award* to Dr. Tanni Anthony at the Council for Exceptional Children Convention and Expo in Philadelphia, PA on April 10, 2014. The *Exemplary Advocate Award* honors a person who has done something of significance to promote the quality of life for people who are blind and visually impaired.

Dr. Anthony currently serves as the Colorado State Consultant on Visual Impairments, the Project Director for the Colorado Services for Children and Youth with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss (Deaf-blind Project), and currently as the Director of the Access, Learning, and

Literacy (ALL) Team. Her supervisor, Gina Quintana, states that Dr. Antony is "well-known and respected in the field at the state, national, and international level." She goes on to discuss the list of presentations she has conducted across the United States and internationally (Qatar, Canada, and Israel). Ms. Quintana goes on to say that "From a state level, Dr. Anthony is the state consultant on visual impairments. In this capacity, she works hard to assure the teachers and service providers that work with this population have access to the most current research and trainings. She brings in national level presenters both in the field of blindness and deaf-blindness. There are many state initiatives at the Colorado Department of Education. Dr. Anthony works diligently to assure that students with visual impairments, including deaf-blindness, are represented and considered in each and every initiative."

Andrea Story, a Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments, states that " The care and dedication she brought to the families of the children with vision impairment was something I had never seen before." JC Greely, another Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments, writes that "Tanni is consistently able to connect programs and agencies to special projects, higher education, and legislative advocacy; she connects people as well, as exemplified through her continuing chairmanship of the International Preschool Seminar. It is a small working group not connected to any agency that serves as a venue for addressing present and future needs for the youngest populations in the field. By holding the group's work as a priority, Tanni helps "get it out there," to the families, interventionists, and teacher trainers so that the work does not become only knowledge-- it gets used."

For her dedication for students with visual impairments, blindness, and deafblindness within the State of Colorado as well as her leadership among all State Consultants, DVI is honored to present Dr. Tanni Anthony with this award.

COUNCIL FOR EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN DIVISIOIN ON VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS

PRESENTS 2014 AWARDS

AT INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE IN PHILADELPHIA, PA

DIVISION ON VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS *TEACHER OF THE YEAR AWARD*

Ms. Karyn Goldman

The Council for Exceptional Children, Division on Visual Impairments (DVI) is proud to present the *Teacher of the Year Award* to Ms. Karyn Goldman at the Council for Exceptional Children and Expo in Philadelphia, PA on April 10, 2014. Ms. Goldman is teacher of students with visual impairments for the Allentown School District in Allentown, PA where she serves all the students with visual impairments.

The *Teacher of the Year Award* honors a person who is exceptionally dedicated, knowledgeable, and a skilled, certified Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments or Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialists in any state approved or accredited day or specialized school, who serves students who are visually impaired, ages birth through 21, with or without additional disabilities. It is the highest award presented to education professionals

within the Council for Exceptional Children Division on Visual Impairments. Past recipients include Sheila Amato and Susan Osterhaus who were later awarded the Council for Exceptional Children Clarissa Hug National Teacher of the Year Award. Therefore, the Division on Visual Impairments has a long history of excellence of educational professionals to accept this award.

In her nomination documents, Ms. Goldman is described as "the best of the best" and someone who has "served her students in her chosen profession and the blindness community, all while maintaining an outstanding record of success." She is a graduate of Kutztown University and her past faculty instructors list her as "in the top 5% of the students to complete the program in the past 20 years". After completing her undergraduate program, she has continued her education by completing a master's degree in special education. On top of being an excellent teacher and advocate for her students, she serves as a cooperating teacher for students from Kutztown University, is a past presenter at the 2003 CEC Convention and Expo, and is an active member of two national boards for consumers who are blind. As evidenced by her teaching record, Karyn Goldman represents the ideal type of educator to be awarded the CEC Division on Visual Impairments *Teacher of the Year Award.*

COUNCIL FOR EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN DIVISIOIN ON VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS

PRESENTS 2014 AWARDS

AT INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE IN PHILADELPHIA, PA

DIVISION ON VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS
VIRGINIA M. SOWELL STUDENT OF THE YEAR AWARD

Mackenzie Savaiano
Vanderbilt University

The council for Exceptional Children, Division on Visual Impairments is proud to present the *Virginia M. Sowell Student of the Year Award* to Mackenzie Savaiano at the Council for Exceptional Children Convention and Expo in Philadelphia, PA on April 10, 2014.

The *Virginia M. Sowell Teacher of the Year Award* is in honor of Dr. Virginia Murray Sowell. Dr. Sowell trained professionals to improve the lives of individuals with visual impairments in the nation and beyond. She had a strong commitment to training quality teachers and O&M specialists. Her lifetime contributions to the profession mattered to countless numbers of children and adults with visual impairments.

Mackenzie Savaiano is completing her doctoral studies at Vanderbilt University. One of her Vanderbilt professors, Dr. Karen Blankenship states that "She is a teacher, researcher, writer, and most of all a leader among her peers, the students, and our graduates" and that she " is by far one of the more stellar doctoral students I have had the privilege of working." Dr. Deborah Hatton, another professor from Vanderbilt University, stated the following about Mackenzie:

> "In addition to her experience, service, and academic achievements, Mackenzie is collegial, compassionate, team-oriented, and altruistic. Her experience as a special educator and future researcher, along with her service to DVI and the field, provide a strong foundation for a future leader in the field of visual impairment/blindness. In addition to being industrious, very intelligent, and an independent thinker, she demonstrates sound judgment and has excellent social skills. It has been a joy to mentor her and to observe her growth as a future leader during her tenure as a doctoral student in special education here at Vanderbilt."

Mackenzie was also awarded the CEC 2014 Outstanding Graduate Student of the Year Award.

Council for Exceptional Children
The voice and vision of special education

Recruiting Academic Students who are iPad Users!

- Do you have a blind or low vision student in grades 5-9 who is studying math?
- Does your student use an iPad for academic purposes and have access to one in the 2014-2015 school year?

Would you and your student like to be on the cutting edge of technology? If so, help us evaluate the AnimalWatch Vi Suite app and materials during the 2014-2015 school year.

The AnimalWatch Vi Suite research project at The University of Arizona has developed an iPad app and supporting materials to help students build their math problem solving skills while learning about endangered species such as the snow leopard and sea turtle. In spring 2014 we will recruit 48 students in the U.S. who are blind or low vision to participate in our intervention study in 2014-2015. (Schools will need to approve participation of TVIs and students.)

To qualify a student must:

- Receive direct TVI service a minimum of 1 time per week
- Be learning math content appropriate to grades 5-9 (fractions, proportions, converting distances, etc.)
- Be able to see the information on the iPad screen using Zoom if needed. (Pinch zoom does not work in our app.) **OR**
- Be able to use VoiceOver to access content on the iPad. The student must be proficient either with gestures, a Bluetooth keyboard and/or a refreshable braille display.
- Have familiarity with educational apps and have skills to navigate between screens, enter information, etc.

To participate, students must be "iPad literate" and have strong familiarity with this tool. Teachers will receive a small stipend & students a gift card.

For more information, please contact Project Director, L. Penny Rosenblum at rosenblu@email.arizona.edu or at 520-621-1223.

To learn more about our project visit: http://awvis.arizona.edu/

Brining Students Together to Change Lives

Anna Tellis
Kutztown University, Student
Tanna449@live.kutztown.edu

I am pleased to introduce myself as a co-student ambassador for the Division on Visual Impairments. My name is Anna Tellis and I am a senior at Kutztown University of Pennsylvania where I am studying to become a TVI with a dual degree in Elementary Education PreK-4. I have just recently finished my professional semester in both an elementary and visual impairment placement. This fall I will be completing my student teaching and then graduating in December. Being a vision major at KU has brought me so many amazing opportunities and has taught me so much about myself and the teacher I want to be.

There are currently about 50-60 KU students ranging from freshman to senior that are apart of the KU vision program, which makes our program one of the largest in the country. Even though the vision program is smaller than most majors at KU, we stand strong in our passion for the field. Our class sizes are small but we each share a unique bond with the classmates we travel with through our vision track at Kutztown. From the long nights of studying for the next anatomy test, to walking around campus pointing out the Braille on all of the signs, we not only share our questions but our passion and dreams as well.

Our first two classes of our vision track are Braille and Orientation and Mobility. Every Monday night in our O&M class we would walk around campus under blindfold to learn the basics of orientation and mobility. Being that this wasn't something most of our fellow

classmates had seen before we were quickly judged and questioned for what we were doing. Wanting to spread the word of the major we all felt so passionately about, each of the class cycles talked about making Braille t-shirts. It wasn't until sophomore, Katherine Flick put the ideas to action and talked to a company about getting the t-shirts made using raised up ink. A Hellen Keller quote was decided after watching *The Miracle Worker* that reads, "The most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched, they must be felt with the heart." Almost everyone in the vision program bought a t-shirt and the orders are still being asked for by current KU students and Alumni. Katherine Flick stated, "The vision apparel was a huge hit and each and every order shows me that I am making a difference in a small way by raising awareness of visual impairments in the public eye and showing the student body a small piece of a fantastic program that will change your life." I wear my Kutztown Vision Program t-shirt with pride of the amazing major I am in and the education I have received. It is always uplifting to hear the positive comments about the shirts and our respected reputation among the vision community.

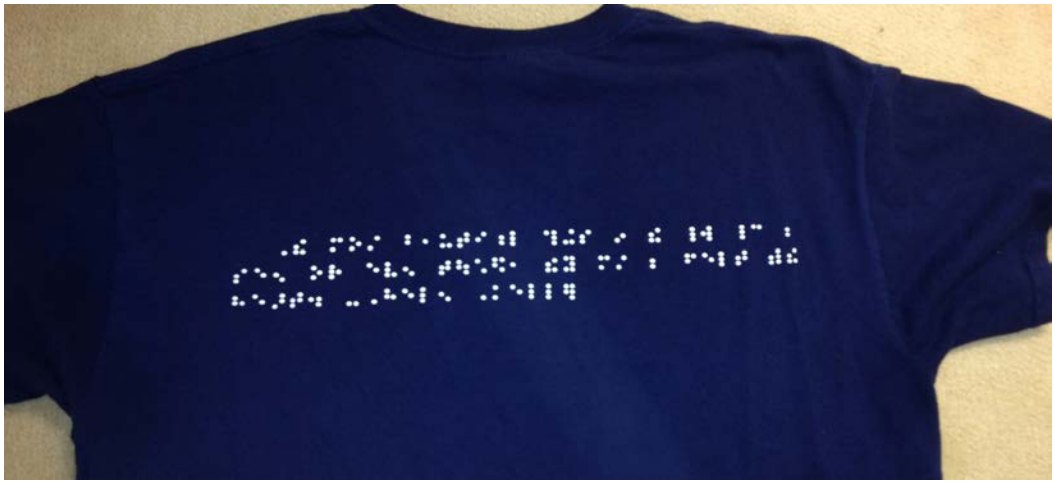


Image 1: Braille T-shirt from Kutztown University with Helen Keller Quote in Braille.

I take pride in being able to represent Kutztown University as a student and future professional. This year I was given the opportunity to not only attend but also share some of what I have been studying at the DVI social at this year's Council for Exceptional Children conference in Philadelphia. Attending the National CEC Conference gave a glimpse into the future we have access to as students studying to become teachers of the visually impaired. Instead of being discouraged for entering the education field, we were welcomed with open arms and even cheers of excitement and positive words. The Division on Visual Impairments is a community who supports, believes and encourages the students being taught and the dedicated, passionate teachers who go above and beyond every day for the individual needs of their students.

Image 2: Allison Epting and Anna Tellis at the DVI Social.

Being that this field is smaller than most, depending on one another and using each other as resources is crucial. This year as student ambassadors we are working with our advisor and professor, Dr. Nicole Johnson on bringing the other vision undergraduate and graduate programs together to give students the opportunity to collaborate across programs. We also plan to continue that collaboration after graduation by piloting a mentor program for students entering the field as a TVI to be paired with a TVI currently working in the field. This will not only provide support to new TVI's in the field but supply an unlimited amount of resources for teachers to use by sharing stories and ideas.

I look forward to learning as much as I can within this field because there is always more to learn. It excites me to know that I have found my true passion within this field and I look forward to having a career not just a job. As I begin my role as the Student Ambassador of the Division on Visual Impairments I am open to any ideas and or suggestions. Please contact me at the email address listed above to get involved with the student ambassador and mentor program.

Kutztown University Department of Special Education: Program on Visual Impairments (Established 1962)

- **Undergraduate TVI dual Certification Program (TVI & Elementary Education or TVI & Secondary Education/on campus)**
- **Post Baccularеate TVI Certification (18 month program/distance Education)**

For more information please visit our website at

http://www2.kutztown.edu/academics/colleges-and-departments/education/departments/special-education/programs/visual-impairment-program.htm

Thoughts from an Incoming TVI

Tiffany Jones
Kutztown University, Student
Tjones892@live.kutztown.edu

My name is Tiffany Jones and I am a student at Kutztown University. I am studying to become a teacher of the visually impaired. I am currently entering my senior year where I will be participating in my professional semester and student teaching to graduate in May of 2015.

Going into my junior year of college, my vision professor and advisor Dr. David Ross decided to retire. The program was then taken over by my current advisor Dr. Nicole Johnson. This is how I came to get involved with the Council for Exceptional Children-Division on Visual Impairments. As a student in my last vision class, my advisor brought up the opportunity to participate in a poster display at the CEC-DVI social at the upcoming conference since it was being held in Philadelphia. Being that Kutztown is located about an hour and a half from Philadelphia and I live right outside of Philadelphia, the location of the conference was perfect for my classmates and me to attend. Although I tend to be more on the shy side, something encouraged me to volunteer for this opportunity. This is how I learned all about the CEC and DVI.

I attended the conference in Philadelphia and was presented with the option to become a student ambassador for the Division of Visual Impairments. Although this is not something I would usually get involved with, I saw it as a great opportunity and volunteered. There were a few of us that wanted to claim this position. After putting all of our names on paper, our professor picked out two names and my friend, Anna Tellis, and I were chosen to be the student

ambassadors.

As a student ambassador, we have the opportunity to get more involved with the field of visual impairments. Not only do we get to travel to San Diego next year for the conference, but we get to work with our advisor Dr. Johnson on creating a mentoring program for new TVIs as well as connecting with other programs throughout the country. This will be a great experience and I believe it will help a lot with incoming TVIs. As a student graduating in just a year, I know that I find myself feeling nervous as well as unprepared. I want to know that I am not alone and will have people to connect with and consult with when I need help. Creating the mentoring program will allow incoming TVIs to have someone who has experience in the field to go to with questions, concerns, advice and so forth. The same thing will happen with connecting the programs throughout the country. The TVIs coming into the field will then have a network of other incoming TVIs to talk with to share experiences, advice, problems and things of that nature. All of this will help the recent graduates feel more confident and secure in their new career.

Tiffany Jones and Geneva Steinman at the DVI Social.

Being able to attend the conference next year is something that I am ecstatic about. I had so much fun attending the conference in April and sharing some of what I have been learning about as well at the DVI social. My friend Geneva Steinmann and I displayed a poster on the role of the intervener. This poster pretty much explained that an intervener is someone who connects a deafblind student to the world. Although most of the people at the DVI social already knew this, I had a great time getting to talk to them about other things. Many TVIs brought up job opportunities in the state that they come from and others were more than willing to share advice about coming into this field. I think my favorite part of the conference however was hearing the experiences of many of the teachers there, not just TVIs, but special education and general education teachers as well. They were willing to share their experiences, offer advice and then answer questions on top of that. What topped it off was the fact that they even shared their emails, Facebook and Twitter information so that I can keep in touch with them and ask questions or get ideas in the future. It really was a great experience!

All in all, I am extremely excited about the upcoming year and all the work I will do to help in completing my degree as well as for CEC-DVI. I am looking forward to the connections I will continue to make by participating as a student ambassador as well as by meeting TVIs at the conference next year. This will be an amazing opportunity for myself, as well as Anna, and I am glad to be one of the students chosen for the position of student ambassador. If you are a student or professor involved in a vision program at another university, please feel free to email me at the email address listed above so we can start our networking.

Braille Babies: Strategies for Teachers and Parents

Kimberly Avila
Ph.D Candidate
NLCSD Doctoral Fellow
krwa@verizon.net

Braille Babies began as a playgroup for young children with blindness and visual impairment. Inspiration for this program came from growing interest expressed by families who inquired about methods to encourage braille literacy activities in the home during daily routines. All activities in Braille Babies are designed to use items commonly found in homes or at local stores and for parents and guardians to implement with their children.

Over the years, Braille Babies transformed. It began to include parent and teacher workshops and seminars. Participants in these sessions ranged from general preschool education teachers who have a child with a visual impairment in their classes, to teachers of students with severe disabilities who wish to integrate braille literacy activities with their older students.

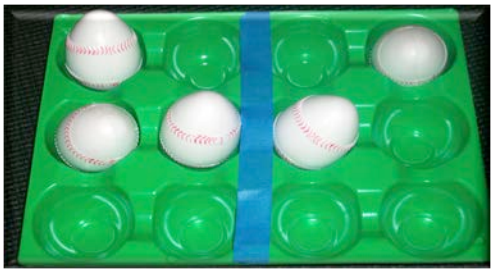
A summary of activities and strategies parents and seminar participants found helpful for integrating braille play into the daily routine are provided in this article.

Please note: Supervision and discretion is advised when implementing these activities with children, as not every activity or device is appropriate for every child and age group. Please follow child safety and choking hazard guidelines and check for product recall information on a regular basis.

Braille Cell Toys

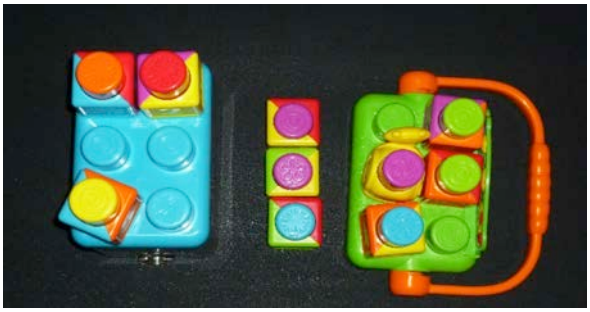
The ½ dozen muffin pan is an old favorite for teachers of students with visual

impairments for familiarizing students with the concept of the braille cell. These are further options for using this and similar tools for braille play.

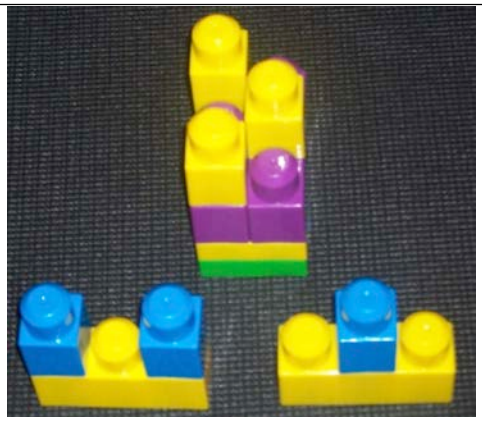
 Use tennis balls for an easy way to manipulate dots in the cells. Make sure to use the pan for organizing craft items!	 Have a braille snack! A silicone muffin pan helps prevent snacks from sliding around and organizes food for the child to explore through the braille cell. In this case, the braille letter of the day is, "o" with a drink in dot 1, applesauce in dot 3 and crackers in dot 5. Create variations in how you present the snack and encourage your child to search the cell tactually to find all of the snack items. Consider using small plastic cups or paper muffin liners for the snacks and for ease in cleaning up.
 Plastic eggs, cartons and egg displays: Springtime presents an extraordinary time to gather inexpensive materials for encouraging braille. As these items go on clearance, search for fun plastic eggs to fill ½ dozen egg cartons and ask your local retailers to save cartons holding plastic egg displays. For example, the green, double braille cell pictured here was originally a display for	 Stock up on various plastic eggs with differing textures. For example, place one smooth egg in a ½ dozen egg carton full of football textured eggs. Find eggs that have themes representing you or your child's interests, like the sport themes pictured here.

individually wrapped plastic eggs filled with candy. I asked the manager at my local grocery store to hold these displays for me after the spring holidays and retrieved them for free. These cells can be used for making braille letters and for sorting items. Make sure to use the layout of the braille cell to organize projects and activities. Separate beads for jewelry the child is putting together or put a different color of paint in each dot when your child is painting (yes, some children who are blind enjoy painting and the fine motor skill exercise is good for their development). The best part is these trays are disposable and easy to clean.	
 It's easy to create inexpensive braille cells out of commonly used household items. For example, use Velcro fasteners to form two columns and three rows on the top of a small storage box. Save thin milk lids to serve as braille dots and you have a portable way to take a braille practice toy on the road. Use the box to store extra lids with Velcro for the inevitable loss of dots.	 **Bang-it-braille** Use a silicone muffin pan and a rubber mallet or toy hammer to play this game. As your child learns the number sequence of braille letters and the actual letters, announce a letter, such as "b" and have the child tap on dots 1 and 2 for "b".

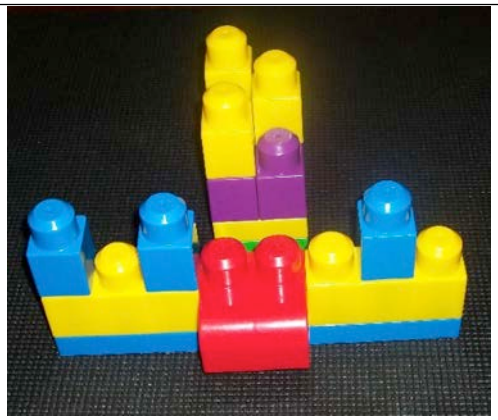
Build-it-braille
Did you know that Mega Bloks from Mega Brands are the perfect braille building blocks? These blocks are readily available in toy stores and the single and triple blocks can be formed to make an interactive braille cell!



Fisher-Price
The Stack 'n Surprise Blocks Musical Croc Block Wagon and the Count and Build Snail Pail (pictured here) from Fisher-Price feature the perfect 6-dot cells for young children. These interactive toys are great for getting little hands on braille early!



The American Printing House for the Blind (APH) has a fantastic device called the Swing Cell for teaching the concept of the braille cell splitting and has pegs to place in the dots. A couple of parents who have participated in Braille Babies were so fascinated by the use of Mega Blocks as a device similar to APH's Swing Cell, that they fashioned various hooks to make their own split cell out of these blocks.



To use the Mega Blocks cell, make two braille cells and present letters for your child to copy. Also, try constructing an actual braillewriter for fun out of Mega Blocks! These activities work best with Mega Blocks and not some of the other interlocking blocks, as the availability of single and triple blocks found in many Mega Block kits yield to making a 6 dot cell.

Button-Art-Braille

Buttons make a great tactile way to glue braille letters to a background. However, Button Art made by Alex Little Hands is a fantastic braille cell, button toy available in toy stores that sell creative and developmental toys. The game comes with a tray perfectly configured to place 6 full braille cells on the board. Just remove the printed Button Art templates and place graphic art tape to tactually mark the cells. The buttons in the toy are used as the dots! There are endless possibilities for teaching letters for children to copy in the other braille cells. This toy also fosters the growth of fine motor skills.

Braille Sensory and Motor Skills

In addition to being a mode for literacy, braille reading and writing requires fine motor skills, dexterity and strength. Parents who participated in this program frequently expressed concern that their children had difficulties with tactile sensitivity or the motor skills necessary for reading or producing braille. Therefore, these activities were recommended to assist with these concerns.

Sensory Centers:

Parents were encouraged to set up a sensory center in the home and alternate contents periodically. Activities in these centers were designed to help with promoting tactile awareness and pre-reading skills.

Sensory bins	Sensory bins are a tried and true means for getting children to explore tactually. Some of the parents were accustomed to the concept of having children dig through dried rice, beans and sand in sensory bins, but expressed frustration over bugs finding the bins, and the mess incurred through using these bins indoors. Alternative sensory bins were presented in Braille Babies that addressed these concerns and included the use of cotton pom pom balls or silk wedding flower pedals. Children using sensory bins are asked to find hidden items in the bin. For example, small rubber ducks in the colorful pom poms or plastic bees made of rubber nestled in the artificial silk flower pedals. Children can play with the contents of the bins to measure, pour, fill, stir and otherwise have a hands-on-learning experience. Parents were encouraged to put containers of various sizes in the sensory bins for this part of the activity.
 Sensory bin filled with cotton craft pom pom balls.  Sensory bin filled with artificial, silk flower petals and plastic bees to find.	

As a mother, I know children wear through and ruin their clothing rapidly, and as a result, I added the use of fabric to elements of Braille Babies. Use fabrics to make tactile cards for matching and sequencing. Use fabrics from clothing, such as denim, corduroy, silk or terry cloth. Other textures, such as vinyl, burlap, screen (window screens) and any other varied texture can be used. Tactile scrapbooking paper can also be purchased at local craft stores to add texture and for use in the below activities. Several varieties of textures, such as fuzzy, slightly rough and bumpy scrapbook paper can usually be found at retailers with larger scrapbook paper inventory.

There are several options to use fabric and paper textures to encourage children to explore tactually.

- Cover otherwise non-tactually discernable surfaces with the fabric to encourage tactile exploration.

- Make same and different tactile games for the child. For example, two denim cards are presented with a third patterned card. The child is asked to identify which cards are the same and which one is different.
- Make a set of cards to match from two columns; mount the fabrics on solid cards made of solid foam, plastic or wood.

Parents always ask about toys for their children who are blind or visually impaired. The good news is a number of toys are readily available that are perfect for children who are blind and are pre-braille learners. Below are examples:

Hungry Hippos: This game requires the child to utilize a lever by pressing on it to make a Hippo eat a marble. One does not need to see the marbles to participate and, if the game is placed on a hollow surface, the sound the marbles make provides auditory feedback. Using this lever to work the Hippo is similar to the process of pushing on the keys of a braille writer. By practicing this skill on the Hungry Hippos Game, the child can work on this fine motor skill in a fun way.

Many parents participating in Braille Babies were concerned that their children were unable to physically handle the process of pushing on a brailler, so parents were encouraged to introduce toys with similar concepts early on in the child's life. Another example of this is the toy pictured here that helps promote the development and strength of the arms, wrist and hand for pushing on the braillewriter.

 **Xylophones and pianos:** Braille writing on a standard braille keyboard or writer requiresgood posturing, ergonomic positioning, and dexterity of the fingers and coordinated movements of various fingers for different letters. Parents who particpated in Braille Babies and had older children offered comments that some of their children had difficulty utilizing the correct fingers for brailling. Therefore, parents were encouraged to introduce toys with keys to push early in the child's life. Toy pianos can be used to encourage usign each finger in isolation or combination with other fingers. Tape was added to the six keys on one piano to help a specficic child tactually dscern the keys.	 Parents were encouraged to use these toys with children to also work on posturing. Braille can be very fatiguing to write for many children, so helping them use good posture early on will facilitate a smooth process for when they use the braille writers. Parents were also instructed to ensure the child's feet were planted firmly on the ground or step stool and to utilize angles recommended for optimal positioning.

Braille Bits: Random Suggestions Parents Found Helpful.

Throughout the Braille Babies training programs, parents were provided with suggestions for aiding them in some common issues. Below are the issues and suggestions.

- Large braille paper storage: Use inexpensive scrapbook paper storage folders. Available in hard and flexible varieties.
- Child tries to read braille visually: Try covering materials with a tray stand or braille on scrapbook paper that has a busy design!

Effect of Auditory Working Memory Training in Students with Visual Impairments on Mathematic Problem Solving

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There is an increased attention in interventions for students with general mathematic learning difficulties. However, there is limited research addressing the special difficulties in mathematic problem solving in students with visual impairments (VI). The lack of visual cues makes mathematic problem solving more difficult for individuals with VI than others.

Given the limited supply of Braille publications, audio reading materials are increasingly popular among students with VI. A common difficulty encountered by people with VI when solving mathematic problems with audio materials, however, is the lengthy auditory representation of mathematic problems. For example, a two-step arithmetic problem "(5 + 6) × 8" may be easily written as a combination of two operations of three numbers but may be read "five plus six and then times eight" which contains lots of sounds and semantic information. Also, in some instances, auditory expressions can be ambiguous (e.g., "5 plus six times eight" can be either "(5 + 6) × 8" or "5 + 6 × 8") necessitating additional clarification information. In addition, when reading visual materials, readers without VI are able to go back to previous text to retrieve needed information. For example, to solve "5 + 6 × 8", someone without VI does not have to remember the first addend 5 because he/she can always look back to check the first addend after calculating 6 × 8. In contrast, it is almost impossible for individuals with VI to "listen back" to retrieve needed information. Specifically, if an individual with VI cannot

remember the first addend “5” when solving “5 + 6 × 8,” he/she will not be able to solve the problem correctly. Indeed, the audio representation of mathematic operations is usually lengthy and more cognitively demanding than visual representations. Consequently, individuals with VI require strong auditory working memory skills as they need to temporarily hold the lengthy audio information and process the information simultaneously.

Working memory is a memory system with limited capacity that temporarily maintains and manipulates important information while simultaneously inhibiting irrelevant information (Baddeley, 2003). Human's working memory system includes three components: visual working memory, auditory working memory and the central execution system. Students with VI usually have limited visual working memory because of the disability. Therefore, making the maximum use of auditory working memory is of particular importance for students with VI.

An increasing number of studies have emerged during the last decade reporting that visual working memory can be improved with training, yet limited research has examined the auditory working memory training. Our goal is to examine the effects of an auditory working memory training in students with VI. Specifically, we intend to examine the relative effectiveness of the N-back working memory training program (Jaeggi, Buschkuehl, Jonides, & Shah, 2011). In this program, participants are presented a random sequence of sound stimuli of different letters (e.g., H-S-R-Q …), one at a time for 500 milliseconds and are asked to judge by pressing keys in the following 2500ms whether the present stimulus was the same as the previous stimulus. For example, if a participant started from 2-back, when presented with an auditory stimuli string H-S-R-Q-F-A, the participant will be directed to determine if the third sound was the same as the second sound, the fifth sound was the same as the third and so forth.

Each trial consists of about 20 sounds. If a participant achieves accuracy rate over 60% for 2 out of 3 successive trials, then the participant should move to a more difficult level in the next trial (e.g., moving from 3-back to 4-back) .

An undergraduate student with blindness, a female Caucasian, 50 years old, participated in our pilot study. She has been blind in both eyes for 6 years because of Cataract; usually uses a computer program to convert words to sounds for reading and writing; and requires testing accommodations provided by the university disability center. The participant worked on the N-back program 3 sessions per week for 30 minutes per session. She started from 3-back during the baseline assessment, and improved to 5-back after four training sessions (i.e., the participant was able to recognize if the sixth sound was the same as the first sound, the seventh the same as the second and so forth). Results suggested that the participant exhibited steady improvement in auditory working memory capacity. Moreover, the participant also demonstrated significant gains in the multi-step mathematics calculation test. The participant scored 20% (median) correct during baseline for solving multiple step calculation problems, whereas she improved to 80% (median) correct during the posttest after four sessions of training. The participant also demonstrated an improvement from baseline (raw score = 29) to posttest (raw score =36) on the calculation subtest of Woodcock Johnson Test of Achievement (Woodcock, McGrew, & Mather, 2001).

The limited data of this case study showed that the audio working memory training is promising for students with VI. In addition to solving mathematic problems, individuals with VI need strong auditory working memory capacity to remember and process audio information that

they access, in order to complete many daily activities, such as reading audio-books and maps. Our research team is currently working on a randomized controlled trial experiment to further examine the effectiveness of auditory working memory training. In this experiment, we will be teaching individuals with VI to “transfer” the improved auditory working memory skills to solve academic and real life problems.

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Successful Graphics Users with VI: Strategies and Implications for Instruction and Assessment

Presentation at CEC 2014

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Graphics are an integral part of education. Textbooks are filled with graphical representations meant to help students to better understand key concepts. In fact, evidence suggests that graphics paired with text promote greater cognitive processing and utilization of learning strategies that, in turn, improves retention (LeWalter, 2003; Sung & Mayer, 2012). The impact that graphics can provide to solidify understanding in the educational context cannot be overlooked for any population of students, including students with visual impairments (VI). For students with VI, successful use of graphics and access to graphics may need particular attention to ensure they are serving their intended purpose. For sighted learners, graphics are often used to provide a "big picture" view against which learners can anchor details. But for students with VI who access graphics non-visually, tactile graphics require learners to piece together parts to understand the whole (Morash, Connell Pensky, Alfaro, & McKerracher, 2012). Students with low vision who are accessing graphics visually may also perceive graphics differently from peers. Having a better understanding of how students with VI access graphics and the strategies that they use can help guide practitioners in how best to teach students to engage with graphical materials efficiently and effectively.

Background for Study

In a survey study, 306 teachers of students with visual impairments (TSVIs), 64 students with VI who use tactile graphics, and 33 students with VI who use print graphics were asked about quality, preferences, instruction and strategies related to receiving and using graphics (Zebehazy & Wilton, 2013, 2014a, 2014b). Highlights and similarities in responses amongst the teachers and students included the following (see published results for more details):

- Both students with VI who used print graphics and tactile graphics reported that having descriptions and time to preview graphics was helpful. The majority of TSVIs indicated the same.
- Less than 50% of the student respondents agreed or strongly agreed that graphics helped them to understand concepts better than text alone. Only 21% of TSVIs agreed or strongly agreed that their students using tactile graphics could do so independently. The majority acknowledged that instruction in graphics use in the general classroom was not sufficient, but that they also had a lack of time to instruct in graphics.
- Tactile graphics users liked to have access to graphics in order to be connected to what was going on in the classroom.
- Neither group of students with VI indicated making their own graphics as a strategy to learn and remember content. Few TSVIs agreed or strongly agreed that they taught this skill; however, in an open-ended question, they indicated that successful graphics users engaged in making graphics and had early exposure to graphics.

The results of the surveys emphasized a need to better understand the specific instruction and strategies that will help students with VI benefit from graphics. Figure 1 illustrates the contributing factors, based on survey responses, that seem to influence a student's ability to use graphics effectively: content knowledge, concepts and experiences, strategies (technical skills and thinking skills), the quality of the graphic, and confidence and motivation.

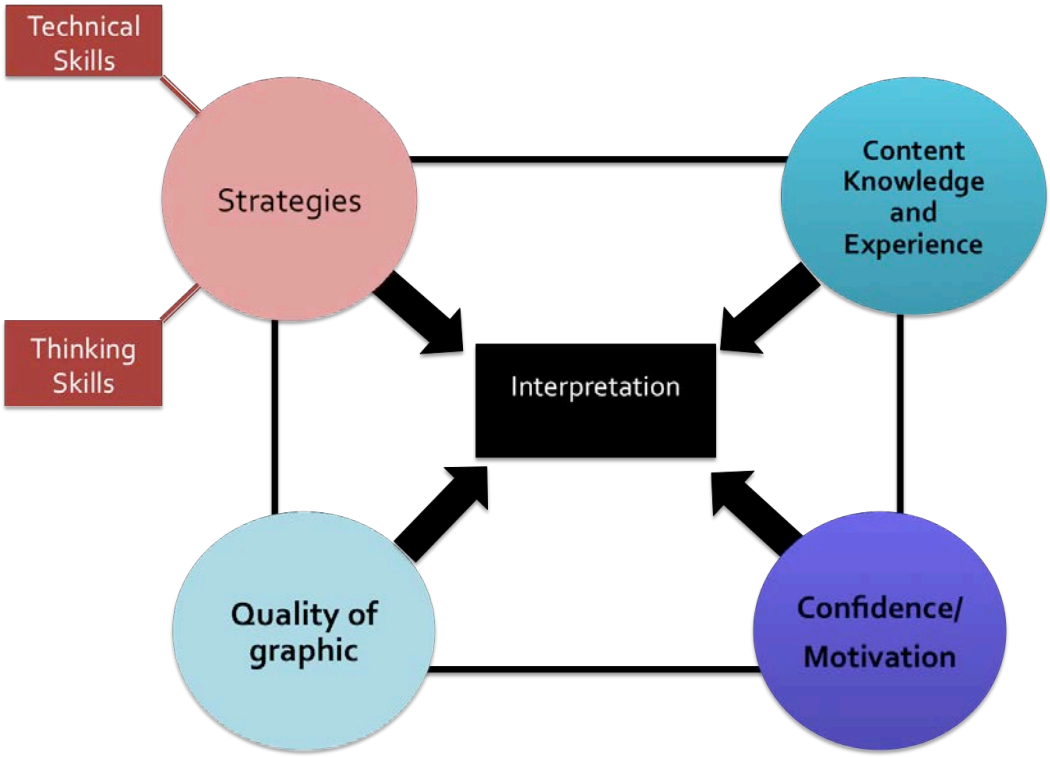

Figure 1: contributing factors to graphic interpretation and effective use.

The survey findings were the catalyst for a think aloud study (currently on-going) aimed at more specifically investigating the characteristics and strategies of students with VI who use graphics effectively. The preliminary results of this study were shared during a presentation at the 2014 Council for Exceptional Children Convention in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Study Methodology

At the time of the presentation, data from 13 high school student participants were available for analysis. Eleven of the participants were tactile graphics users and two were print graphics users. In this think aloud study, students were asked to talk out loud about what they were thinking and doing while working through five multiple choice test items that had graphics: a bar graph, Venn diagram, shape rotation, geometry area problem, and a map. The students were also video recorded so that movements through the materials (e.g. hand movements for tactile graphics users) could be analyzed. After each assessment item, students were asked to rate the difficulty of each task and were asked what they would do to redesign the item. Each student's TSVI filled out a demographic form on the student, which included rating the student on frequency of engagement with graphics, problem-solving abilities, and independence with graphics in the classroom.

Preliminary Results of Study

Time to complete the different graphics tasks. Table 1 shows the amount of time the participants took to complete each task. The two large print users are shown for comparison, but it should be noted that the sample is small, so results should be considered accordingly. In general, the tactile graphics users took more time on each task, but the range of total time varied from 18.2 to 62.2 minutes to complete all five items. A moderate correlation (Pearson correlation, -5.77, $p<.05$) was found between students who engaged with graphics more frequently and needing less time to complete the tasks.

Table 1

Time to complete graphics tasks

	Tactile (n = 11)	**Large print (n = 2)**
Mean Total Time	41.2 minutes Range: 18.2-62.2	18.7 minutes Range: 16.2-21.2
Mean Bar Graph (3 multiple choice questions)	9.9 minutes	5.1 minutes
Mean Venn Diagram (2 multiple choice questions)	3.6 minutes	1.8 minutes
Mean Shape Rotation (1 multiple choice question)	2.0 minutes	0.7 minutes
Mean Geometry (1 multiple choice question)	5.4 minutes	4.0 minutes
Mean Map (first 3 multiple choice questions)	20.2 minutes	7.2 minutes

Difficulty ratings of tasks and performance. Table 2 shows the mean difficulty rating the students gave each task on a scale of 1 to 5 with one being "very easy" and five being "very hard." The table also shows the percentage of students who answered all the multiple choice questions correctly for the item. In general, students, both tactile graphic and print graphic users found the bar graph, Venn diagram, shape rotation, and geometry area question to be relatively easy (rated on average less than 3). Tactile graphics users, however, found the map task to be considerably more complex (average rating 3.8; mode of 5). Students who were rated by their

TSVIs as engaging frequently with graphics were positively correlated with correct number of answers on the map task (Pearson correlation of .834; $p<.01$).

Table 2

Student difficulty ratings and performance by task.

	Tactile (n= 11) rating	**Tactile % all correct for item**	**Large Print (n=2) rating**	**Large print % all correct for item**
Bar Graph	1.6 Mode: 2	18%	1.5	50%
Venn Diagram	2.2 Mode: 2	91%	1.5	100%
Rotation	1.4 Mode: 2	91%	1	100%
Geometry	2.6 Mode 2	73%	2.5	100%
Map	3.8 Mode 5	0%	2.5	100%

Role of contributing factors. One of the benefits of a study that uses think aloud is that reasons for performance can be investigated more closely by analyzing what the students were saying and doing. Table 3 lists some of the emerging results from analyzing the think aloud sessions of the 11 participants who used tactile graphics. Student performance was coded based on the contributing factors illustrated in Figure 1. In particular, looking at whether performance seemed to be more influenced by the strategies students used, the content knowledge and experience the students had, and the role of the quality of the graphic itself.

Table 3

Emerging results of the contributing factors to tactile graphics users' performance for each graphics task.

	Role of Strategies	**Role of Content Knowledge and Experience**	**Role of graphic type and quality**
Bar Graph	Variations in how well students could follow guidelines to y-axis and find horizontal key Some missed answers were due to technical skills in following guidelines	Third question involved calculations- there was variation in student skill and motivation on this item	Considered good overall by students; horizontal key was a challenge for some with vertical key considered easier
Venn Diagram	Students with faster times were able to find intersections of the circles quickly; often with the two hands working independently	Faster students knew where to look for overlap (experience); most students were familiar with Venn Diagrams	Most students liked that the rings had different textures, a couple found this confusing. A suggestion was made to have a key for the circles vs. labels on the outside of the rings
Shape Rotation	Use of the pivot point in relation to the pointed part of the shape was the predominant strategy; one student physically turned the page, most did it mentally	The only student missing the question forgot the direction of clockwise saying, “It has been awhile since I have looked at a clock.” (content knowledge)	Students considered this a good graphic overall. Main suggestion was to put the letter choices for the options closer to the option

Geometry	No main variations in strategy observed that affected reading the graphic	Fastest times deduced or knew exactly how to calculate the answer (content knowledge/experience); the main issue with this task was content knowledge- knowing how to calculate it or not	Overall students felt the graphic was straightforward and easy to interpret; a couple students questioned the use of an arrow to indicate the side length vs. using a capped line or just the number next to the side of the square.
Map	More efficient students used faster scanning strategies, held place when possible when flipping between components (key, map, questions), conscientiously noted location of item to go back to, and used hands differently depending on purpose, often with the two hands scanning in different areas	Few of the students used maps regularly; two mentioned liking maps which was a factor in persistence (e.g. doing all 5 items) as well as speed for one student; scale question was challenging- few had experience	Students found the graphic frustrating- too much clutter, unpredictability of what was on map vs. the key, difficulty in interpreting which street labels were referring, and difficulty following streets having all the same texture. Suggestions included breaking the map into quadrants, giving some location information in the question, sub-labeling key or reducing the amount on the key Missed answers were not just due to content knowledge- one question was missed by all but one student due to the map.

Considerations for Practitioners

The preliminary results of this study highlight the need to look holistically at the role of graphics within the classroom and to consider ways that students can gain more exposure and practice with graphics. Emerging data on the strategies used by the most efficient tactile graphics users during these five tasks included:

- Use of both hands, often for different purposes
- Use of a way to hold place when going back to the question to the key (usually keeping on finger in place while using the other hand to check)
- Use of strategies that reduced time (read questions first, scanned key for needed information, etc.)
- Reading the question first
- Scanning key for needed information
- Identifying when something didn't make sense and go back to figure it out
- Accurately following and distinguishing lines and symbols
- Use of strategies to identify when information was ambiguous
- Able to break down what they needed to do into steps

Assessment of a student with VI's use of these strategies, among others, could help identify starting points for instruction. Engaging a student with VI (both tactile and print graphic users) in the use of think aloud as an instructional and assessment strategy could also be beneficial in

order to pinpoint why a student may be struggling to understand graphics. For example, is it due to the lack of sufficient textual information (i.e., a need for accompanying descriptions)? Is it due to the student not knowing how to problem-solve when encountering ambiguous information? Does the student need to improve his or her technical skills (e.g. systematic scanning)? Or, is the graphic itself distracting the student from the intent of the task? The more information we can gain as practitioners about why a task is challenging, the more effectively we can design our instruction.

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OVERBROOK SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND

By Gloria A. Pfeiffer, Public Relations

Overbrook School for the Blind

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At Overbrook School for the Blind we prepare our students, all of whom are blind or visually impaired, to have the greatest opportunity to experience active and fulfilling lives. In developing academic and other programs specifically adapted for each student, many of whom have additional challenges besides visual impairment, teams of highly qualified teachers and specialists work seamlessly to create a caring, can-do environment. Students work, play, and in some cases, live in an extraordinary set of integrated buildings carefully designed to meet the multiple needs of the students.

Photograph 1: One of the two interior cloisters at Overbrook School for the Blind.

The mission of Overbrook School for the Blind is to provide the best possible education and life skills training for children who are blind and visually impaired, just as our founder, Julius Friedlander, intended. A young teacher of the blind in Germany, Mr. Friedlander came to Philadelphia determined to establish a school here. He found several prominent Philadelphians ready to help him in his venture, and in March of 1832, he rented a building at 20th and Race Streets, and called it The Pennsylvania Institution for the Instruction of the Blind.

Unfortunately, Mr. Friedlander died only six years later, but his school was already well established in Philadelphia and it continued to grow, offering quality education to the children of the area who were blind or visually impaired. In 1899, with the promise of more space, the school moved to its present location at 6333 Malvern Avenue. It was re-named Overbrook School for the Blind in 1946 because of its new location in the Overbrook neighborhood of Philadelphia.

Image 2: The front gate of Overbrook School for the Blind

Today, Overbrook School for the Blind serves approximately 200 students (ages 5 through 21) on campus and through our Summer Programs, which extends the school year for qualified students into the summer months. The Early Intervention Program (birth through five) provides at home guidance to the parents of 150 more children. In addition, through the International Program, we reach each year thousands of children and adults in Southeast Asia and China by training teachers and administrators how to instruct additional teachers in their respective countries to work with visually impaired students.

Young children at Overbrook School for the Blind learn a variety of skills from counting and building vocabularies to socializing in and out of the classroom. Older students study standard curriculums such as math, science, history, literature, social studies and technology. Because the students are visually impaired, they also – according to their needs – learn to write and read braille, and to use technology specifically designed for the blind and visually impaired as well as mainstream technology. They also learn essential life skills ranging from preparing meals to traveling independently.

Image 3: Students from Overbrook School for the Blind. One student performing in the Bell Choir during the Eastern Schools for the Blind Music Festival. The second student is an athlete practicing his stroke in the Kappen Aquatic Center. The third student is practicing her new orientation and mobility skills.

Extracurricular activities include a variety of sports, and exposure to music and the fine arts. There's swimming, wrestling, goalball, track and field, and cheerleading, and our athletes enjoy participating in the Eastern Athletic Association for the Blind competitions. Music is an important part of the Overbrook experience. In addition to instrumental, vocal, and choir instruction, there are semi-annual student concerts, and bi-annual music festivals with other schools for the blind from all along the East Coast. Student artwork - in several disciplines - is often exhibited on and off campus. This year, nearly 100 of our students participated in creating a large mosaic mural inside the main Rotunda building at Overbrook. As with sports, the arts provide an inclusive and joyous dimension to life at Overbrook.

Image 4: The historic Rotunda Building at Overbrook School for the Blind.

Today, the 26-acre Overbrook School for the Blind campus includes an historic Rotunda building that houses classrooms, offices, an auditorium, and a library. Two separate buildings house programs for pre-school children and elementary age students. The Nevil Field House contains a gymnasium, bowling lanes, indoor track, physical fitness room, and locker rooms.

There are two renovated dormitories, including White Hall which contains transitional apartments that prepare our students for life after graduation. The campus's newest addition is the Kappen Aquatic Center which was the first LEED Platinum certified aquatic center in the United States.

Image 5: The Kappen Aquatic Center is the first LEED Platinum certified aquatic center in the United States. Photo by Tom Crane.

We will continue at Overbrook, as we have for over 180 years, to provide the best possible education and life skills training for our students, to enhance our nationally and internationally recognized programs, to maintain our exceptional campus, and to update our technology offerings for visually impaired students.

Come visit our campus, and see how we teach, support, and encourage each and every Overbrook School for the Blind student to reach their full potential.

Photograph notice: Photos contained in this article are by Dennis Brookshire and John Thomas, unless otherwise noted.

Introducing CEC's NEW

XCEPTIONAL

Membership Options

Coming
July 2014

You asked for greater options and more services—we heard you!

CEC is excited to announce new membership options with expanded benefits and services—and the ability to select the option that best meets your needs.

These exciting new benefits and services are coming your way in July!

All members in good standing on July 1, 2014 will be automatically upgraded:*

- Current Professional and Premier Members will be upgraded to the *NEW* Premier Membership.
- Current Students, Retired, Associates and Life members will be upgraded to the *NEW* Full Membership.

Don't wait to join or renew—if you join before June 30, 2014, you will automatically get upgraded* in July. Members will receive detailed information in the upcoming months.

It's easy to see the Xceptional value of the *NEW* membership options. Experience CEC's Membership and all of the great, *NEW* benefits that CEC has to offer.

Join or renew today! Visit www.cec.sped.org/Xceptional for more information.

*All current Premier and Professional members will be upgraded to the new Premier Membership for the remainder of their membership term. Current Retired, Associate, Student and Life members will be upgraded to the Full Membership and will continue to receive the printed TEC and EC journals through the remainder of their membership term. All members must be in good standing as of July 1, 2014 in order to be upgraded.

Council for Exceptional Children
The voice and vision of special education

CEC's XCEPTIONAL Membership

Coming July 2014

BENEFITS	PREMIER MEMBERSHIP	FULL MEMBERSHIP	BASIC MEMBERSHIP
TEACHING Exceptional Children (TEC) Online 6× per year	✓	✓	✓
TEC Print Journal 6× per year	✓		
Exceptional Children (EC) Online 4× per year	✓	✓	
EC Print Journal 4× per year	✓		
CEC Today e-newsletter	✓	✓	✓
CECommunity Online	✓	✓	✓
Policy Insider e-newsletter	✓	✓	✓
Member Savings on Continuing Education Programs	✓	✓	✓
Save Up to 30% on Publications and Resources	✓	✓	✓
Join Special Interest Divisions (optional and additional dues apply)	✓	✓	✓
State/Provincial Unit Membership (U.S. and Canada only)	✓	✓	✓
Preferred Member Pricing on Insurance Programs (available through Forrest T. Jones & Company)	✓	✓	✓
Access to the CEC Career Center	✓	✓	✓
Ability to Serve in CEC's Leadership	✓	✓	✓
NEW – Topical Briefs	✓	✓	
NEW – CEC Recorded Webinars Premier (2) and Full (1) recorded webinar.	✓	✓	
NEW – One E-book from CEC's Bookstore	✓		
One New Publication from CEC's Bookstore	✓		
NEW – One Division Membership Included (additional charge for any division with dues above $35)	✓		
CEC Leadership Briefing	✓		
Early Housing Opportunities for CEC Convention	✓		
INVESTMENT	**$205**	**$115**	**$65**

NEW MEMBERSHIP PACKAGES:

School/School District Package ($1,300): This package includes one administrator (Premier Membership with CASE Division Membership) plus five teachers/professionals (Basic Membership) and is designed for purchase at the school level to support and engage classroom teachers. This package offers enhanced benefits such as two convention registrations and three webinars, which are all included in the package price, *a savings of more than $300!*

Student Discount: Student members will receive a 20% discount from any tier selected for a period of no more than six cumulative years.

International Discount ($50): For individuals residing in developing countries, as identified by the World Bank Model, may join the Full Membership at a reduced rate.

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P.O. Box 79026, Baltimore, MD 21279-0026
Phone: 888.232.7733 • Fax: 703.264.9494
Email: service@cec.sped.org • www.cec.sped.org

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Your Member Information			
Member ID:		*Chapter Name/# (if known):*	
Prefix	First Name:	Last Name:	Suffi
Home Phone:		Work Phone:	
Email Address *(required for delivery of certain member benefits)*			

Preferred Mailing Address

School/University/Organization Name (if applicable):		
Street Address:	Apt./Suite/P.O. Box Number:	
City:	State/Province:	Zip/Postal Code:
Country:		

Your Membership Options		
Member Type	**Member**	**Student****
Premier *(please select your included division on the back)*	☐ $205	☐ $164
Full	☐ $115	☐ $92
Basic	☐ $65	☐ $52

☐ **International Developing Countries**—Individuals residing in developing countries, as identified y the World Bank Model, may join CEC at the Full Membership for $50. Your mailing address must be in a developing country. Otherwise, you will be charged the regular Member rate of $115. Visit www.cec.sped.org/developingcountries for a current list.

**Student members must be enrolled full or part-time in a matriculating program by an accredited college or university. Students are eligible for the discount for a maximum of 6 cumulative years. For verifi ation, please provide the below information. If you are not eligible for the student discount, you will be charged the member rate.

University Name: _____ Expected Graduation Date: _____ Degree: _____

Your Special Interest Division(s)

Premier members should indicate in the "Premier" column the one division you would like included with your Premier membership. If you would like to add additional divisions, please select those in the "Member" column.

Division Name	Premier**	Member	Student	International***
Council of Administrators of Special Education • CASE**	☐ $25	☐ $ 60	☐ $30	☐ $80
Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders • CCBD	☐ $0	☐ $ 25	☐ $ 15	☐ $65
Division for Research • CEC-DR	☐ $0	☐ $ 29	☐ $ 19	☐ $39
CEC Pioneers Division • CEC-PD	☐ $0	☐ $ 20	☐ n/a	☐ $20
Council for Educational Diagnostic Services • CEDS	☐ $0	☐ $ 30	☐ $ 15	☐ $45
Division on Autism and Developmental Disabilities • DADD	☐ $0	☐ $ 30	☐ $ 15	☐ $45
Division for Communicative Disabilities and Deafness • DCDD	☐ $0	☐ $ 30	☐ $ 15	☐ $42
Division on Career Development and Transition • DCDT	☐ $0	☐ $ 20	☐ $ 10	☐ $42
Division for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Exceptional Learners • DDEL	☐ $0	☐ $ 30	☐ $10	☐ $33
Division for Early Childhood • DEC**	☐ $15	☐ $ 50	☐ $ 20	☐ $50
Division of International Special Education and Services • DISES	☐ $0	☐ $ 29	☐ $ 15	☐ $15
Division for Learning Disabilities • DLD	☐ $0	☐ $ 25	☐ $ 15	☐ $50
Division for Physical, Health and Multiple Disabilities • DPHMD	☐ $0	☐ $ 25	☐ $15	☐ $33
Division on Visual Impairments and Deafblindness • DVIDB	☐ $0	☐ $ 25	☐ $ 5	☐ $31
The Association for the Gifted • TAG	☐ $0	☐ $ 25	☐ $ 10	☐ $55
Technology and Media Division • TAM	☐ $0	☐ $ 30	☐ $ 20	☐ $30
Teacher Education Division • TED	☐ $0	☐ $ 35	☐ $ 10	☐ $ 35

***Additional charge for CASE and DEC division. Premier membership includes one division (up to $35).*
****Outside of U.S. and Canada.*

Total Division Dues

$ _____

Payment Information

Payment Summary

CEC dues from reverse side: $ _____
Division dues from above: $ _____
Total: $ _____

Please return form and full payment to: CEC, PO Box 79026, Baltimore, MD 21279-0026 | FAX: 703.264.9494 | Email: service@cec.sped.org

Method of Payment

Source Code: _____

Credit Card (in U.S. funds) ☐ VISA ☐ MasterCard ☐ Discover ☐ American Express ☐ Charge entire amount ☐ Dues Installment Plan* *(credit card only)*

Card # _____ Expiration Date _____ Security Code# _____

Billing Address _____

Name on Card _____ Signature _____

☐ **Check #** (in U.S. funds) _____ ☐ **Purchase Order #** _____
(Payable to the Council for Exceptional Children) *(Copy of Purchase Order must be attached)*

* Dues Installment Plan: One-third of your total dues will be charged to your credit card when you join. Your second and third payments will be charged automatically on the credit card the first d y of the next two months.

Annual membership dues in CEC include $24 for subscription to *Exceptional Children* and $36 for *TEACHING Exceptional Children*. This information is given in order to meet postal regulations. Please do not use as a basis for payment.

Thank you for your support of CEC!

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