

AER Bulletin

AER Canada

Winter 2011

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The AER Bulletin is published 2-3 times yearly. For inquiries please contact aercanada@aerbvi.org

Greetings and Happy New Year to fellow Canadian AER Members. Here's hoping your new year is enriching, safe and enjoyable. I trust this finds everyone warm and dry. It certainly has been a winter of extreme weather of snow, ice and rain for Canadians. Now that we have passed the winter solstice, and are experiencing longer days, I look forward to this year and all AER has to offer.

By now, you will have received the announcement of our new Executive Director, Mr. Louis Tutt. Mr. Tutt comes to AER with a wealth of experience in the field of Low Vision, Blindness and Deafblindness. He is also a long standing member of AER. As a member of the board, and AER search committee for the position of Executive Director, I had the pleasure of meeting Lou. He is very passionate about AER, and aware of the challenges we face as an organization. I look forward to working with Lou during this next biennium and I know you will join me in welcoming and offering Lou congratulations, from the Canadian membership.

I am excited about the upcoming Regional Conferences, and the next International Conference. Not only do they impact AER members from coast to coast but all three will be held close to the Canadian Border.

The Boston Regional Conference, featuring the AER Vision Rehabilitation Therapy Division, takes place on August 12-14, 2011. This is an excellent time to plan a holiday to the Maritimes and Boston, since Boston is known as "America's Walking City", and has an abundance of...

Upcoming Events & Dates to Remember

March 24-25, 2011 –
INSIGHT 2011,
Saskatchewan
Conference About &
For Students with
Vision Loss,
Saskatoon, SK. For
more information
please contact Lori
Wood @
woodl@spsd.sk.ca

October 21-22, 2011
- CNIB Conference
Perspectives 2011:
Innovations,
Knowledge and
Support. Toronto,
ON.

April 3-5, 2012 –
Canadian Vision
Teachers Conference.
Sheraton Parkway
Hotel and Conference
Centre. Richmond
Hill, ON.

Know of an upcoming
event of interest to
Canadian AER
Members? Please
send details to
aercanada@aerbvi.org

parks and outdoor cafes. Sports fans could catch a Red Sox game at Fenway Park, and shoppers could visit the Faneuil Hall Marketplace, and high-end boutiques on Newbury Street.

The Cleveland Regional Conference, featuring the AER Information & Technology Division Conference Within a Conference is October 28-30, 2011. The New York Times showcased things to do and see in Cleveland including the West Side Market, Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, restaurants and galleries.

Moving westward; the International Conference will take place on July 22-27, 2012 in lovely Seattle, Washington. Driving is a viable option for members in BC, and for many others. It is a good opportunity to pair this conference with a vacation in Beautiful British Columbia, Oregon and Washington State. More information regarding this conference will follow in the months to come.

Dan Vodon, our Canadian Support Person, and I are planning to have a meeting via teleconference, with a few Canadian AER members from across Canada, and our new Executive Director, Lou Tutt, to discuss Canadian Issues, and how we can better serve Canadian membership.

Remember to renew your membership when it comes due. This is an excellent time to do it, since the Canadian dollar is hovering at par. Do not forget to promote AER, our only professional organization, to your colleagues. The Insight journal, newsletters and list serves, are a few of the benefits. I recently renewed my membership, and enclosed was information on member benefit discounts, on hotels and car rental discounts; these are additional benefits of being a member of AER.

Please feel welcome to contact me at anytime about AER, and in particular, AER Canada.

I can be reached at sue.howe@sympatico.ca

Let me finish using a quote I read recently,
..."Alone, we can go faster....together, we can go further".

Susan Howe

INSIGHT 2011

Saskatchewan Conference About & For Students with Vision Loss

Thursday, March 24 (9:00-4:00)

Meeting the Vision Needs of Students with Multiple Disabilities

Keynote Speaker:

DR. CHRISTINE ROMAN-LANTZY

Dr. Roman-Lantzy is an internationally well-recognized leader in best-practice assessment and intervention approaches in the area of cortical visual impairment (CVI). CVI is one of the leading causes of vision problems in students who have experienced trauma to the brain. Dr. Roman-Lantzy's defined characteristics and stages of CVI, assessment charts outlining the progression of visual development through the stages of CVI, and her proven intervention strategies will be presented. This workshop will be of great interest to school teams including parents and other professionals who work with students with multiple disabilities who have or appear to have vision loss, especially where a diagnosis of CVI has been made or is a possible explanation for the student's visual problems.

Friday, March 25 (9:00-3:30)

Meeting the Needs of Students with Vision Loss: Beyond the Basics

Keynote Speaker:

JANICE NORTHCOTT

Janice Northcott is a Specialist–Vision with the Calgary Board of Education. She has a wealth of experience in delivering all aspects of the Expanded Core Curriculum for the Visually Impaired (ECC) to students of all ages and has presented numerous workshops to educators. The ECC is comprised of nine different content areas that individuals who are blind or visually impaired need to master. The deliberate and systematic instruction of these particular skills is needed in addition to the regular program of studies. This session will enable school teams including parents and other professionals who work with students who are blind or have low vision to better understand the impact of vision loss on learning, to gain an understanding of each area of the updated ECC, and to gain insight into ways to provide this essential instruction within the school and the home.

PLUS: displays, including: tech aids, low vision aids, teaching materials,

toys, services, organizations...Don't miss it!

**LOCATION: Gathercole Auditorium, 3rd Floor, Saskatoon Public School Division
310 – 21st Street East, Saskatoon**

Park in Day Rate lots: Impark or City Lot (Loonies and quarters required.)

Lunch and Nutrition Breaks included each day.

Registration begins at 8:30 a.m. each day.

Please register for the day of your choice by March 14, 2011

CNIB Muskoka Youth Regatta

July 17 – July 23rd, 2011

*For more information, contact Diane Edwards (edwardsd@spsd.sk.ca),
Lori Wood (woodl@spsd.sk.ca), or Judy Thiesson (thiessonj@spsd.sk.ca).*

CNIB's Muskoka Youth Regatta provides a national venue for sailing skill development for youth who are blind or partially sighted.

- Elite coaching of sailing skills and strategies
- Open to ages 8 to 21 (separate groups for different age ranges)
- Inspiring blind and partially sighted youth
- Elite level Coaches
- Individual and Group Sailing instruction
- Introduction to the sport of sailing - All skill levels are welcomed
- Guest speakers, seminars, and on-the-water experiences will be sure to leave you with thrills, spills, and a thirst for more!
- Celebrate your accomplishments each evening with your peers under the stars.

The week is being organized by the team at CNIB Lake Joseph Centre, with hands on training from elite coaches recognized by Ontario Sailing. Become inspired and challenge yourself. Our coaches and mentors will motivate you every step of the way. In addition to fun and exciting activities, six days of camp living includes 2 days of hands-on instruction on the water and 2 days of integrated regatta racing. There is no better place to sail than in Muskoka in the summer!

Located just south of Parry Sound, Ontario, CNIB Lake Joseph Centre is a fully recreational facility that offers all-inclusive vacation weeks for kids, teens, adults and families where they can participate in activities like swimming, boating, crafts and hiking in a safe, friendly and fully accessible environment.

To apply, complete a CNIB Lake Joe reservation form attached also available on-line at www.lakejo.ca Program and Accommodation Costs are \$400 per youth for the week. Transportation costs \$50 per youth and is available from Yorkdale Mall on Sunday with return on Saturday.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact Ryan Chin at 1-877-748-4028 X5506, or Ryan.CHIN@cnib.ca

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It Spoke to [Me]...

Re: AER International Conference 2010

Little Rock, Arkansas

By

Patricia Bolger, OCT, B.Ed., M.A.
Specialist Teacher of the Blind,
Low Vision and Multiple Handicapped

In such a large facility as the Peabody Hotel in Little Rock, Arkansas around the dates of July 21-25, 2010, an intensity and buzz could be heard throughout the session rooms, connecting hallways and multiple levels of the Statehouse Convention Centre. Hundreds of sessions, meetings and social opportunities offered up an in-depth exposure to the scope and breadth of services to individuals with visually impairment at the AER International Conference 2010. The scope included topics ranging from Preschool to Aging. The breadth was a mesh of services and instructional styles from Orientation and Mobility through to Rehabilitation, Education Curriculum, Administration, Itinerant Personnel, Information and Technology, Personnel Preparation. The sessions were one dimension of the conference but another dimension was the span of knowledge, experience and passion that existed among the participants who hustled and scurried from session to session.

The one session that was memorable and spoke to me was hosted by Dr. Deborah Gold, PhD. Editor-in-Chief of the AER (Insight) Journal: Research and Practice in Visual Impairment and Blindness with the session title, *"Write On! How to Share Research and Practice Findings by Writing for Publication..."* This session encouraged every person to write and share their experiences because it is through publishing that our "profession is strengthened". I was invited to think of these publications as a window to a profession, such as ours, that is so diverse and complex. So here I am, writing something for our AER Ontario Newsletter! And inviting you to consider doing the same, or challenge you to write for the AER (Insight) Journal.

It is my strong personal belief that everyone has something to share. Consider your everyday activities, the things that excite you, the successes you have seen, the questions raised in your mind and the times you have reflected upon a difficult concept or challenge. By writing and submitting for publication, you may just give that one valuable idea to a colleague that will expand the world of one more person who lives with a visual impairment. Your ideas are important and your work is valuable, so consider writing for the AER (Insight) Journal in one of these formats:

- Best Practice Examples
- Theoretical Papers
- Personal reflections on professional experiences
- Conference Proceedings
- Book Review
- Film Review
- Case Studies
- Research

Do you think your work is not good enough for publication or you are afraid of having your manuscript rejected? That could happen! Expect that most manuscripts are returned to the author at least once. It is rare to have a document accepted without at least minor revisions. A Revision Letter includes positive comments, suggestions for improvements and recommendations. Just consider them constructive criticism and comments from your personal "Editorial Team".

So, now you are keen to write, a few cautions are in order here:

Never submit to two journals at the same time.

Know the **editorial policy** where you submit.

Use **APA Style** and acknowledge all your **sources**.

Know you will have to **rewrite**.

Always **resubmit** your work.

And, on a final note, if you are feeling intimidated by the submission process, the AER Office (authors@aerbvi.org) Journal management is an e-mail away to provide guidance. If you are not quite ready to take this big step, write for your AER Chapter Newsletter... sharing your thoughts and ideas through publication is an important way to grow our profession!

The Hadley School for the Blind Announces New Course, "Self-Employment with a Minimal Investment"

The Hadley School for the Blind has announced the launch of a new course, "Self-Employment with a Minimal Investment." The first version of the course is available through the Adult Continuing Education (ACE) program, the High School (HS) program and the Family Education (FE) program and is intended for students who are blind or visually impaired and want to learn more about self-employment. The second version is available through the Hadley School for Professional Studies (HSPS) and is intended for professionals who work in the blindness field and want to help their clients learn about self-employment. The ACE/HS/FE version is free, and the HSPS version will have a \$99 tuition fee but is being offered free of charge for a limited time. Both courses are completely online.

"Self-Employment with a Minimal Investment" focuses on small businesses that involve an investment of \$500 or less. Lesson 1 describes factors and self-analysis activities to think about as you consider self-employment. Lesson 2 explains the quick business evaluation, which helps determine if your business idea is realistic. Lesson 3 describes a budget, while Lesson 4 focuses on a marketing plan. Lesson 5 presents the essential information about a business plan. Finally, Lesson 6 focuses on issues related to being self-employed with a visual impairment. It discusses competing in the business world, financial assistance, disability programs and disability benefits. In the HSPS version, there is an additional lesson that discusses the vocational rehabilitation counselor's role in helping a client become self-employed, as well as the client's responsibilities.

"Taking this course may help you learn more about yourself and your business ideas. It is important to know what to expect and to be well-prepared before launching a small business. The course will familiarize you with the basic components for running a business, as well as with the support available to you in the community," says instructor Tom Babinszki.

For more information or to enroll in the course, please contact Hadley's Student Services Department at 800.526.9909 or student_services@hadley.edu.

About Hadley: Founded in 1920, The Hadley School for the Blind's mission is to promote independent living through lifelong, distance education programs for people who are blind or visually impaired, their families and blindness service providers. The world's largest educator of braille, Hadley enrolls more than 10,000 students in all 50 states and 100 countries each year. For more information, visit www.hadley.edu or call 800-323-4238.

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The Embossit makes it possible to layout your Braille job and easily emboss up to 12 pieces per minute. The Braille quality is crisp and even. Each unit comes with the press, removable bottom plate, and the Braille letter set which are identified with print letters to allow non-Braille readers to use them.

Applications:

Business cards

Greeting cards

Small metal or plastic plates e.g.. room numbers or elevator numbers, etc.

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Government offices

Other organizations needing Braille

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In The House: The Pros and Cons of Home Visits

By Mark Callaghan, VRT, Timmins, ON
Leona Emberson, VRT, Ottawa, ON
Scott Garner, VRT, Thunder Bay, ON
Brenda Trommelen, BSW, RSW Brandon, MB
Dan Vodon, B Sc., CVRT, Brandon, MB

As professionals in the vision rehabilitation field, many of us are faced with large amounts of travel to see the persons with whom we work. The nature of the work we do, especially for Vision Rehabilitation Therapists (Rehabilitation Teachers, Independent Living Skills Specialists, and the like...) requires the teaching of skills in the client's home. This itinerant work brings about positives, negatives, and sometimes interesting surprises! In this article we look at some of the benefits and challenges of conducting our work in clients' homes, and suggest ways to deal with some of the challenges.

From our experience in working with clients we have seen many benefits of visiting them in their homes. Because this is their home, they are comfortable and familiar with the environment. This is particularly significant as we are able to adapt their equipment to meet their specific needs. Giving the client the control to manipulate their home setting allows the opportunity for these adaptations to be permanent. This gives them a chance to practice on a daily basis which should facilitate their learning. We have found this to be especially significant when working with persons who have multiple disabilities. This is the environment that is specifically designed to meet their needs (ideally) and cannot be reasonably duplicated in any other setting.

We have noticed that when the client is in their own home they have a greater sense of security and control. This allows them to be more comfortable in opening up and sharing their fears, hopes, and dreams more quickly. Because of their familiarity with their surroundings, the client is likely to reach a comfort level with the staff that enables a more accurate assessment to occur.

In conducting home visits, we often meet their family and significant friends. Cultural and family dynamics can be observed which can be incorporated into the lesson strategy. This allows us to demonstrate adaptive techniques so that family and friends can reinforce between staff visits. This also gives them a chance to see what we are trying to accomplish, and it allows the client to demonstrate their capacity to learn and become more independent which their network can then support.

When working with clients who live in a group setting or in a multiple apartment complex, we often meet other individuals who may be interested in learning more about our services. When they hear that someone from our agency is coming to the building,

they often ask the client to pass along a request for us to stop in for a few minutes. This can result in more people in the community getting the help they need.

A positive aspect of the home visit for the client is the elimination of their need to find transportation to the office. This can be a huge issue where the distances are great and the age of many of our clients means it is more difficult for them to find this transportation. We have seen clients who have refused certain services because they did not feel comfortable in asking their family or friends to take more time off work to drive them to the appointment. Ultimately, the home visit usually translates into fewer client cancellations.

In addition to the enhanced service in the home, we can identify benefits for staff. The travel time allows us to reflect on the visit and to fine-tune how we might incorporate the needs and goals of specific clients into subsequent visits. If we are traveling with colleagues, we have an excellent opportunity to coordinate and communicate upcoming plans and how we can implement these concepts to be most efficient and effective. As well, from our personal experience, we have enjoyed incredible sights while driving that we would not have seen otherwise. We can all relate to various sights such as this account: "One early morning I was able to view the beautiful northern lights and while driving through a national park I saw a moose leaning against a tree, sleeping!"

While there are many benefits of home visits, there are also numerous challenges for the organization, specialist, and the client. Home visits are costly, when traveling staff must have access to a company car, or be paid mileage. There can also be the added expense of meals and hotel stays. Itinerant staff must be individually equipped with training materials as the constant travelling makes sharing of equipment impractical.

In addition, staff who are blind require a driver guide to assist with orientation to an ever changing work environment, necessitating an extra salary. All of these costs combine to create a considerable expense for the organization. When workers spend significant time out of their day traveling, they are not able to see as many clients, resulting in longer wait lists.

Sometimes, when in peoples' homes, humorous errors can occur with both staff and client are visually impaired, such as the following experience from a VRT in Northern Ontario:

A Low Vision Specialist, Melanie, and I visited a client and her husband, who owned two dogs. As we were leaving, I said "let's stop and pet the dogs now." Melanie guided me over to one dog and stopped. I reached out and I pet the dog. Then Melanie guided me over to the other dog. When Melanie stopped, I figured I was right in front of the dog. I reached down and started petting and was in the middle of saying "What a good dog," when Melanie stopped me. "That is not the dog that is the Doris' head." There was total silence for what felt like minutes. I said something along the lines of 'Oh, I am sorry.' We all said our goodbyes. Once we were in the van and on the road we started laughing hysterically, because of my error!

While we've all had humorous occasions, there can be stressful times as well. Working outside the office places extra stress on the staff, and can increase health and safety risks. Workers are in an unpredictable work environment. The first time a specialist enters a clients home, they have no idea what to expect, and must remain flexible, unbiased, and aware. Caution must be used in the rare instances a home may not be safe due to drug use, weapons, or aggressive clients or family members. Some homes may put staffs' personal health at risk due to unsanitary conditions, allergens such as pets, or cigarette smoke.

Another risky factor at times is driving conditions. Ice, snow, fire, etc... can slow and postpone planned trips. We have also found some directions to be "open to interpretation" and can result in increased travel time. Particularly in rural communities, directions are often without street addresses: "turn right at the red barn, turn left at the blue house, if you go past the post office you've gone too far ...". An example of these frustrations comes from one professional:

One evening I had to travel about 15 kilometres to see a young man who was still in high school. His mother gave me directions and I carefully took note of all the landmarks, but once I was out in the country I was having difficulty finding one side road. Finally, I made it and apologized for being late because I could not find the huge sign that would indicate I was on the right track. Her husband turned to her and said "But dear, that sign was taken down years ago."

As the training environment is beyond control by the staff, it can change without notice necessitating the staff to re-plan a training session; this could include removal of tactile markings by family members, grocery items needed for a lesson not being present, or the kitchen space needed for the lesson may be in use by another family member. Travel can also take a toll on staff. Eating out, spending nights away from family, carrying bags of equipment in and out of homes, can cause fatigue, and emotional stress. Staff who use dog guides may not be permitted by some clients to bring their guide into the home, necessitating organization of scheduling, alternative transportation, and in some instances, care for the dog guide. All these issues can lead to added stress.

For some clients, home visits may not provide the optimum learning environment. When learning in your own home, you do not have the opportunity to remove yourself from the distractions of the telephone, the door, or noises and needs of others in the home. Clients who live in shared living arrangements will not have control over their environment. This can result in materials and equipment being used or moved between lessons, causing unneeded frustration, especially in the initial training period.

Caring and well meaning family members can interfere with lessons by providing unsolicited aid in locating items, answering instructor's questions, and interjecting in the creation of goals. The home visit deprives clients of the opportunity to practice travel and social skills which are needed to travel to an alternate training location. Some clients need a different atmosphere to motivate them to regain their independence.

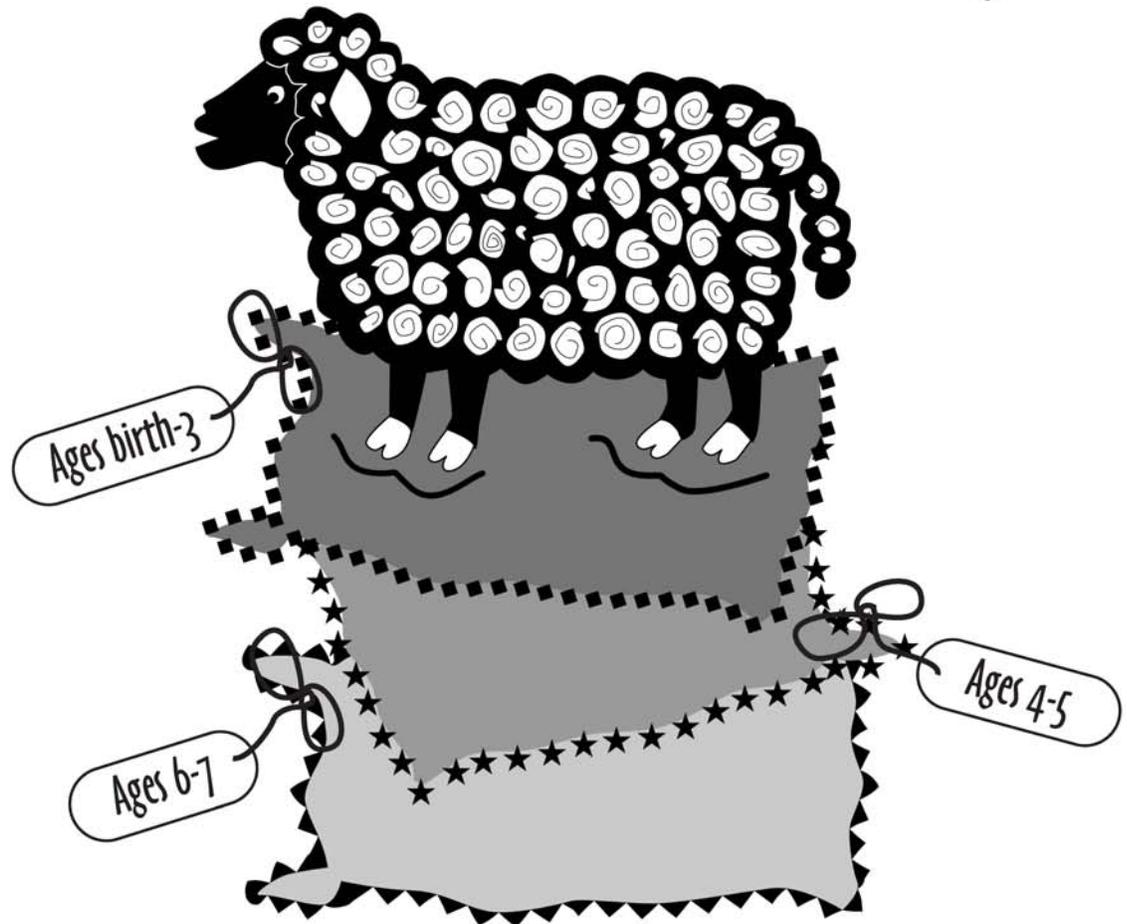
While there are numerous challenges of home visits, we have found strategies to reduce these obstacles, and increase the chances of the visit being a more pleasurable experience. Some of these challenges relate to the travel distances and others are related to specifically working in new and changing environments. What follows is a list of some techniques workers may employ to offset the challenges of doing home visits:

- If you're going to an unsanitary home, don't wear your newest outfit. If a colleague has been there, enquire about condition
- Be open-minded and respectful of other lifestyles, cultures, and social and economic backgrounds
- Pay close attention to the client's body language/tone of voice and follow their cues. You are in their home and need to respect their privacy
- If a client is medically fragile, you suspect some memory issues, or if they just can't read their calendar, make a reminder for yourself in your calendar that you need to call prior to the appointment as a reminder
- Planning: pay attention to the address when you are booking so you know how much travel time you will need. Make sure you have a street address and not just the P.O. Box
- Always read the client's file to get an idea of what potential goals the client is interested in learning. Talk with them about services on the phone when you call to book the assessment; this will give you a sense of how much they like to talk, if they will stay on topic, and how much background distraction there is so you know how much time to allot to the visit. It will also confirm that the referral is appropriate
- Don't over book or fill all your time; appointments can't always begin and end on schedule. When possible schedule appointments within a time frame rather than at a specified time. If you are stressing about getting to your next appointment you won't be as focused on the client at hand
- Bring the client's phone number with you in case you are lost or going to be late. Give a courtesy call

In this article, we have described many of the benefits and challenges to rehabilitation programming that takes place in the client's home. As many of us can attest, doing both home visits and office appointments can create a more balanced schedule for the worker, while being mindful of what is optimal for the client. When possible, a good balance between the two different types of training locations, allows for job satisfaction in having the best of both an office and an itinerant career. We experience the joys of seeing the success of our clients as they achieve their goals, and this is generally not possible without us being able to see them in their own homes.

BAA, baa, black sheep, have you any books?

YES, sir, yes, sir, three bags full!



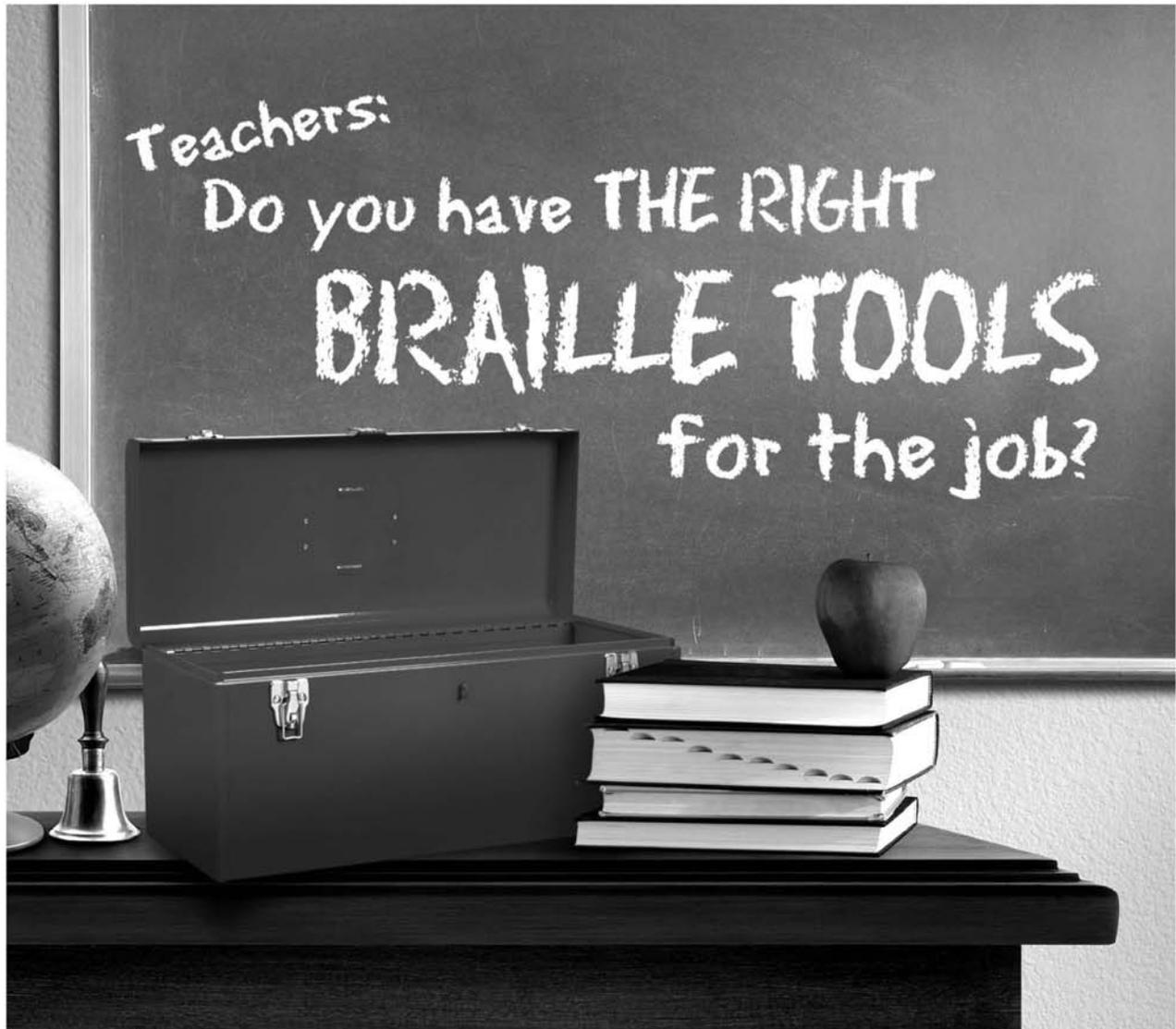
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Maccessibility - A New Kind of Vision

by Tom Dekker, VRT

In June 2009, Apple surprised the world by releasing the iPhone 3GS with a fully accessible touch-screen using the same speech (VoiceOver) and large print (Zoom) solutions that were already available on Apple computers. And, like the computers, these access solutions were fully integrated into the core operating system of all Apple's portable devices.

What this means is that any of these products is fully accessible right off the shelf; all that's required is two or three keystrokes or screen taps to get them that way. No expensive, specialized third-party software required.

On a computer, use Command-F5 to start Voiceover. Then press V if you know how to use it, or Enter if you don't, and a very friendly and patient-sounding human voice will get you started.

On an iPhone or iPod, touch Settings, then General, then Accessibility, then VoiceOver and finally, the On button. Note that once Voiceover is running, you'll have to touch a screen element twice in order to activate it. This is so speech users have a chance to hear the icon's label before activating it. With this info on hand, you can walk into any Apple store and have instant access to any computer or hand-held device.

It's not at all difficult to see this as a huge shift in the world of assistive technology. It's especially the case when you consider that Apple has continued to develop a wealth of support materials to encourage and assist third-party developers in building accessibility into their products.

Now, for the first time in history, we can not only write to a software developer concerning an accessibility issue, but we can also include a link to all the documentation they'll need to solve the problem. The reaction from developers is overwhelmingly positive.

Maccessibility - A New Kind of Vision (continued...)

Prior to September 17, 2009, the day I got my accessible iPod Touch, I had firmly believed that, as a totally blind person, I would never know the experience of using a touch screen independently. Within a week of its acquisition I realized that, with the exception of typing long documents and audio production, it had essentially replaced my desktop computer, simply because it was far quicker, and had access to more applications than one could ever have imagined (approximately 300,000 in the "App Store"). Furthermore, many of these "apps" are free, or a dollar or two. Some more expensive ones cost around twenty, and a few of the biggies may cost as much as fifty dollars.

Because these products can all be operated through a touch-screen interface, one quickly learns to interact through the use of "gestures" such as "flicking" and/or dragging fingers about the screen - single, double and triple-finger taps and flicks, up and down, left and right, etc. This is not nearly as complicated as it sounds, because the screen-reader responds to the gestures, giving constant feedback as to where you are and what to do next. You also learn to relate to the screen in a very visual way where you gradually learn the actual physical location of screen elements. This makes it easy to get assistance from friends and family, or to work with sighted colleagues.

So, as I continued to contemplate this experience with total amazement, the ILS instructor in me thought, "What about the folks with multiple disabilities who just can't use a computer for whatever reason - difficulties memorizing or locating keys, or executing the often complex key combinations required to manage a traditional computer?" So I started showing it to students. First, I taught the gestures by having the learner pretend that the palm of their hand was the screen, then having the learner show the gestures back to me in the same way. Then, I gave them the device and coached them by doing the gestures on their shoulder as they worked, until they got the feel of working in concert with the voice. For extra reinforcement, there's a "gesture practice" mode on all these Apple products. In the computer lab at work, students now practice gestures on the computer set to "describe mode", then transfer to their own "live" device. This really accelerates the learning process.

What makes all of this even more amazing is the excellent braille display support - over 30 braille displays in as many languages, complete with the **Maccessibility - A New Kind of Vision (continued...)**

ability to switch languages on the fly. Yep, all part of the core operating system. And yep, deaf-blind people are starting to purchase them for text messaging, book readers and all kinds of other apps that work just fine in braille.

Almost without exception, my students have taken to this technology like fish to water. People who had very limited computer experience were suddenly looking up the weather, taking pictures, and finding songs in my music collection. They were completely amazed, saying, "I've never done anything like this before!"

No, I don't work for Apple, but as a result of these products and the accompanying accessibility philosophy, I've personally experienced a special kind of multi-faceted technology revolution, and I feel very strongly that it's worth sharing and promoting. Many of our program participants apparently feel the same way, given that almost all of my lessons these days are Apple-related.

Yet, it's still ILS: keeping track of appointments, looking up recipes and nutritional information, or just accessing all kinds of consumer-generated audio and text resources about blindness products and vision impairment in general.

And since blindness often equals musician, how about Apple's Garageband music production software, for \$14.95? It's a great little piece of recording studio-type software, and it's pretty close to 100% accessible. So is ProTools, the high-end software now used in most professional recording studios. Can we see career development opportunities here?

But more generally, there's an app, laughingly called "iBlink Radio", that brings together all podcasts, radio reading services (including VoicePrint) and internet radio stations, operated by vision-impaired people around the world - truly a wealth of 100% accessible information. If I ever have the time, I'll start doing some podcasts of my own. When I do, you'll see them at:

<http://www.eyepaudio.ca>

Maccessibility - A New Kind of Vision (continued...)

Meanwhile, check out the following links to get started:

Apple Canada accessibility page:

<http://www.apple.com/ca/accessibility/macosex/vision.html>

Sites developed by vision impaired consumers:

Making A Case for Accessibility

<http://mattgemmell.com/2010/12/19/accessibility-for-iphone-and-ipad-apps>

Other sites:

<http://www.applevis.com>

<http://www.allwithmyiphone.com>

<http://www.maccessibility.net>

Instructional podcasts for using Mac OS 10.6 (Snow Leopard) with VoiceOver - Resources - Vision Australia

<http://www.visionaustralia.org/info.aspx?page=2296>

Should you wish to drop me a note, write to tomdekker@rogers.com

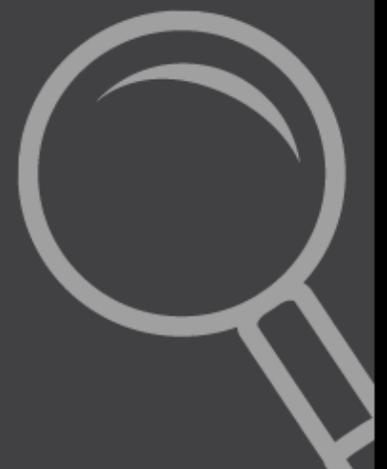
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A Little Book of Quotes: Moving Forward with UEB

By Elizabeth Hurdman and Myra, M. Rodrigues, Ph. D.
Feb 10, 2011

A Little Book of Quotes: Moving Forward is the first in a series of pocket-sized, print/braille books conceived to fill an empty niche in the tactile reader's library. Launched at the CNIB Conference 2010: Now I Know My ABCs, by co-authors Myra M. Rodrigues, Ph.D., and Elizabeth Hurdman, A Little Book of Quotes (LBQ) aims to both inspire the reader and to introduce Canada's newly adopted Unified English Braille (UEB) code.

Books from the LBQ series will demonstrate how seamlessly UEB can be incorporated into braille reading. The authors used inspiring quotations from eminent or famous individuals. The intention is to show how easily UEB can be learned. Although reading the quotations should be straightforward, there might be a hidden challenge to discern where the UEB code is used. Spotting some of the changes might be difficult, but that is an important aspect of the learning experience: UEB is not a dramatic shift in the braille code, it is often subtle, and certainly should not impede a reader's ability to comprehend the meaning of the text. The authors are indebted to the knowledgeable and generous volunteers from the CNIB, who reviewed and proofread A Little Book.

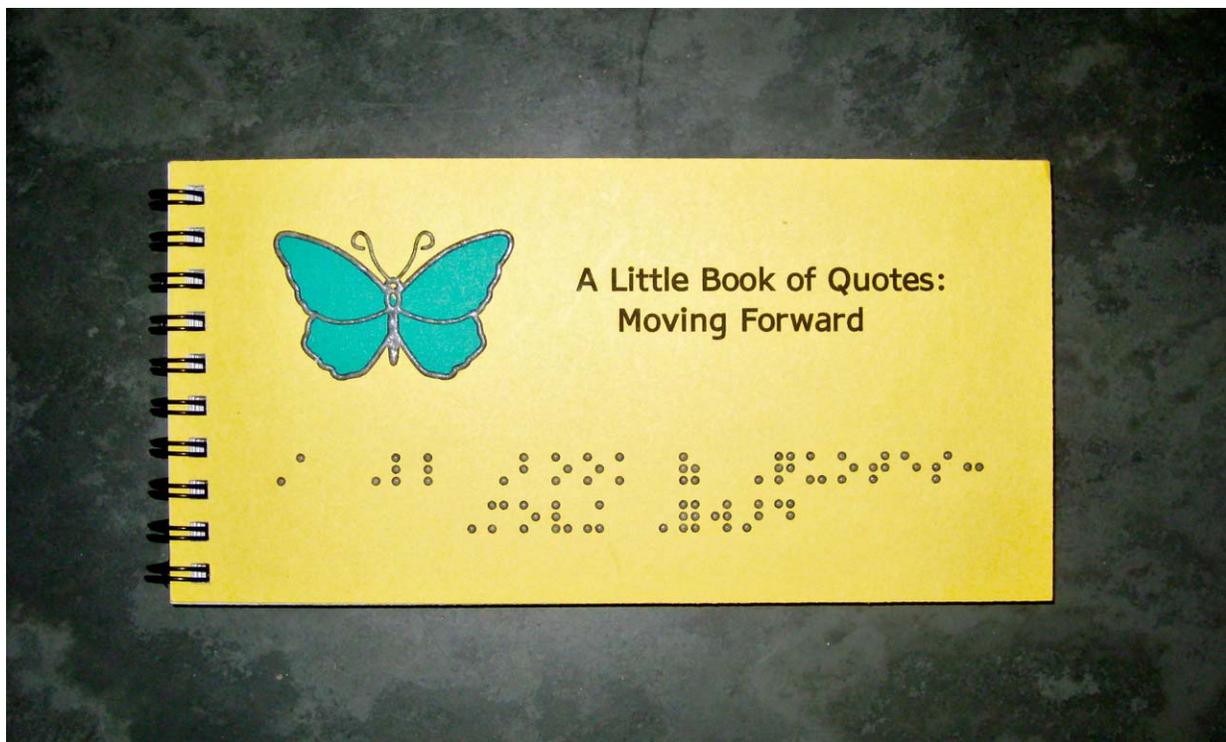
The authors worked with Tactile Vision Inc. to create an attractive and functional product. The thermographic process exclusive to Tactile Vision, lends itself to print/braille, tactile images and to colour enhancements. Therefore, it was possible to exercise care in every aspect of the design of this very small (approximately 3-1/2 inches by 7 inches), spiral bound, print/braille book.

The yellow outer cover of A Little Book of Quotes: Moving Forward is emblazoned with a tactile, blue butterfly motif, symbolizing positive progression, The white interior pages are printed with high contrast black ink. The authors chose Aphont, a font developed by the American Printing House for the Blind, which blends the readability features of the popular Arial and Verdana fonts. The print text is left facing to the corresponding braille. Because a thermographic process has been used, it was possible to have coloured dots. This feature is especially useful for teachers of braille and other visual braille readers.

Although one function of the LBO series is to be instructional, it is equally important that each book bring pleasure to the reader. It is hoped that A Little Book of Quotes will encourage a shared experience between print and braille readers. Care has been used to ensure that the print and braille are exactly the same.

The LBO series has been developed under the banner of HR Braille Promotions, which is an informal partnership between Elizabeth Hurdman and Myra Rodrigues. The mission of this enterprise is to encourage and promote braille literacy in Canada and abroad. Proceeds will be directed to projects, organizations or materials that support the advancement of braille literacy. Rodrigues is also the co-author of Celebrating Braille: A Canadian Perspective, which is currently being revised to reflect the UEB code.

The books are priced at a modest \$10. Watch for the next in the series, A Little Book of Quotes: Love & Friendship. Books from the A Little Book of Quotes series can be ordered online from various vendors, including: Frontier Computing, www.frontiercomputing.on.ca; Tactile Vision Inc., www.tactilevisioninc.com; and the CNIB Online Store, www.cnib.ca.





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I Love to Read Braille Day Celebration in Manitoba

By Stacey Gilbert and Laura Roy

In 2009 Manitoba Education Program and Student Services hosted a celebration to honour Louis Braille's 200th birthday. The event was so successful, that it has evolved into an annual celebration called I Love to Read Braille Day which coincides with February's I Love to Read Month.

I Love to Read Braille Day is hosted by Manitoba Education Consultants for the Blind and Visually Impaired. Braille reading students in grades K-12 from Winnipeg and surrounding rural areas are invited to participate. It is an opportunity for them to come together and share the common experience of reading Braille.

This event also provides parents and school staff (including teachers and educational assistants) a chance to connect and meet others who work with students who are blind or visually impaired.

On January 28, 2011 thirty-three participants including students, parents, teachers, educational assistants, as well as braillists from Media Production Services met at the Robert Fletcher Building in Winnipeg, Manitoba to celebrate their appreciation for Braille.

Students were actively engaged in an Orientation and Mobility Scavenger Hunt. Once given a riddle in Braille the students worked in teams using their O&M skills to navigate the building and successfully locate the person holding the answer.

Students also had the opportunity to practise their Braille skills to create pictures on the Perkins Brailier. They each took home a

snowman made with Braille contractions. How suitable for a snowy winter day in Manitoba!

White canes were tapping in the hallways, Braille keys were clicking away and the sound of students' giggling carried through the building that afternoon.

While students were busy with different activities, parents and school staff were given a tour of the facilities and learned the intricacies of Braille and tactile production.

At the end of the afternoon, everyone re-grouped to enjoy cupcakes and coffee. Of course no party is complete without a goody bag, so each student received a keychain engraved with the word "friend" in contracted Braille.

After another successful I Love To Read Braille Day, students were overheard saying "I can't wait until next year!"

Update on Canadian Membership

Congratulations to our new Canadian members, who have joined between September 2010 and January 2011:

- Glenda Parsons
- Liz Zantingh
- Marion Bennett
- Dawn Guthrie
- Angela Romanyshyn

Thanks to everyone who renewed their membership!

