

Literacy Media Decisions Position Paper Released

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**O&M International Conference
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Memoriam**

...and much more!

Earlier this year, the AER Board of Directors approved a new position paper from the AER Low Vision Rehabilitation Division. Authored by Kelly Lusk, Holly Lawson and Tessa McCarthy with advisory input from Amanda Lueck, Anne Corn and Barry Kran, "Literacy Media Decisions for Students With Visual Impairments" addresses the importance of comprehensive evaluations when considering approaches to literacy instruction for students who are blind or visually impaired.

"For years, Anne Corn and I have felt that the literacy needs of all students with visual impairments were not well-addressed by current legislation or current practice [in the U.S.]," explained Kelly Lusk, PhD, CLVT, one of the paper's co-authors. "The U.S. Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) specifies individualized education program (IEP) teams must consider braille instruction for students who are visually impaired, which is wonderful. However, the question arises, 'What happens when braille is not necessarily the best approach for a student?' Current legislation offers little to no guidance for teachers and school districts. This position paper addresses that need."

As the authors and contributors of the position paper began working

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President's Message

by Jim Adams, 2012–2014 AER president



Recently, the AER Board of Directors spent two-and-a-half intense days in our fall board meeting where we discussed a wide variety of issues. Your board approved several position papers, committee reports and policy change recommendations during the meeting. However, a few committee reports and policy recommendations were referred back to committees for review and updating. I commend our board and staff for all their work and support of our association. While the hours were long, it was a very productive meeting.

Our International Orientation and Mobility Conference 2013 Planning Committee continues to collaborate with staff in what appears to be the making of yet another great member benefit. Registration is expected to surpass 500, and room blocks are full. On behalf of the board, I would like to thank all involved in making this happen.

One “sign of the times” is our fluctuating membership. While we are getting new members, we have more retiring than joining, and many other associations are facing the same dilemma. I challenge our chapter and division leaders and members to find new and innovative ways to reach out to our inactive and lapsed members. One such way to reach out is to consider forming chapters abroad, which was a topic at our

recent board meeting. New Zealand recently had an increase of 19 new members. Way to go! There are now 33 AER members in New Zealand, and perhaps they might consider becoming our first international chapter outside North America. It is my belief that we can offer valuable professional development opportunities, great networking opportunities and other member benefits for our colleagues around the world.

AER is marking its 30th anniversary in 2014. This will be a crossroads year for us as we celebrate the past and look forward to enhancing how AER can serve the needs of its members in the future. During the next few months, the board will take an in-depth look at the association, its strategic plan and its goals. We invite members to share their ideas on how to strengthen the organization and set a course for a positive future.

Jim Adams
2012–2014 AER president



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Attention Job Seekers!

AER Job Exchange is the largest list of announcements for career opportunities in the field of blindness and visual impairment.

Bookmark the Job Exchange page at <http://tiny.cc/AERJobExchange> and visit the site frequently for new listings.

Executive Director's Message



by Lou Tutt

It's October 2013, and in two months in New Orleans, La., the AER International Orientation & Mobility Conference will take place from December 11–14. Many of you have already registered for this international conference, and AER is grateful for your doing so. If you haven't registered and are still planning to attend, hurry and get your registration in, as you won't want to miss this outstanding O&M conference. Speaking of

O&M, the AER Board of Directors, during its September 2013 meeting, approved the Orientation & Mobility Division's position paper, "Orientation and Mobility Specialists and the Provision of Travel Instruction to Individuals with Nonvisual Disabilities."

Since August 2013, the board has approved two other division position papers. In August, the board approved the Low Vision Division's position paper, "Literacy Media Decisions for Students with Visual Impairments," and in September, it approved the Itinerant Personnel Division's position paper, "Caseloads Based on Students' Assessed Needs Instructional Continuum." Position papers written by AER divisions must be approved by AER and become the property of AER once the papers are approved. If your division is considering writing a position paper for the AER board to approve, the next board meeting is the first weekend in February 2014.

During its September meeting, the board had a long discussion about the AER Listserv Policy, which led to the board's decision to send the Listserv Guidelines and Etiquette to the Bylaws & Structure Committee for review and revision. The board will then review the committee's recommendations. Until then, the current policy is still in place.

Declining AER membership remains a huge issue for our association. The July numbers came in at 4,000, which is 500 members less than when I started at AER in April 2011. As we approach AER's 30th anniversary, it's time for the board to address the association's future. Working on issues such as membership growth, member satisfaction, member benefits, organization structure and other significant items, combined with an updated strategic plan, is crucial. I am sure the members in our AER chapters are discussing these important items in their meetings and conferences. I attended the AER Arkansas Chapter Conference on Monday, October 21, 2013, via Skype, and addressed these topics. In early November 2013, I will be speaking, presenting and meeting with the members of

the AER Arizona Chapter at their conference in Phoenix, Ariz.

The AER LIFT Online Webinars will resume in January 2014. These monthly webinars emphasize the importance of leadership in AER among its divisions, chapters, committees, task forces and boards at all levels. AER has a multi-generational membership (ages 18–90), the same as the multi-generational workforce. One of the things we must do to survive and thrive is to RECRUIT, RETAIN and REGAIN AER members. It is my hope that when we "ride" into San Antonio, Texas, for our AER International Conference 2014 next July, we will be way back up over 4,000 members. So saddle up, cowgirls and cowboys, and let's get going as we look to celebrate our 30th anniversary in the Lone Star State!!

Drop Lou a line

Whether you have a question, an idea, or just want to say hi, he wants to hear from you! Email lou@aerbvi.org

AER Suggestion Box

Have an idea or suggestion for AER?



Let us know!

**Contact us via email at:
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Trouble sleeping at night? Napping to get through the day?

Sleeping at night but not feeling refreshed the next day?

Difficulty concentrating?

For people who are totally blind, these may be symptoms of Non-24-Hour Disorder (Non-24) – a serious, chronic circadian rhythm disorder.

Non-24 results from a body clock that is out of sync with the 24-hour day which can make it difficult to fall asleep or stay asleep at night and can create an uncontrollable urge to sleep during the day. This may lead to exhaustion, decreased productivity, difficulties with school or work, and problems with concentration.

To learn more about the link between total blindness and a sleep pattern that is out of sync with the 24-hour day, visit www.non-24.com.

**Health educators are available to answer your questions about Non-24.
Call toll free: 1-855-856-2424 Monday-Friday 8 AM-8 PM EST**

NON-24
a circadian rhythm disorder

 **VANDA**
PHARMACEUTICALS INC.

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AER Receives Sponsorship from Vanda Pharmaceuticals

AER is pleased to announce a major sponsorship from Vanda Pharmaceuticals Inc., a biopharmaceutical company dedicated to the development and commercialization of products for the treatment of central nervous system disorders. One specific area of focus for Vanda is providing education about Non-24-Hour Disorder (Non-24) and its potential impact on the lives of individuals who are completely blind.

Board President James Adams commented, "AER is very grateful for Vanda's sponsorship of the association and the information they have shared about Non-24 that benefits the children and adults our member professionals serve."

Non-24 is a serious, chronic circadian rhythm disorder that impacts about 70% of totally blind individuals in the United States, or an estimated 65,000–95,000 people. The inability to perceive light causes significant disruption of the master body clock, which can lead to cycles of poor nighttime sleep, increased daytime napping and a reduction in occupational and social functioning. Currently there is no treatment approved by the FDA for the treatment of Non-24.

For more information about Non-24, visit www.non-24.com, or call Vanda Pharmaceuticals Inc. at 855-856-2424 to obtain information or to share personal stories about Non-24 with the blind community.

AER Board Approves Several Motions at September 2013 Meeting

The AER Board of Directors approved the following motions at its September 27–29, 2013, board meeting:

- To make the following change to the AER Policies and Procedures Manual: For Appendix E, Bylaws and Structure Committee, replace the words "Chapter and Division Bylaws" with "Chapter Bylaws and Division Policies and Procedures."
- To accept the pricing for the AER International Conference 2014.
- To continue AER travel expenditure restrictions.
- To restore two \$1,000 Ferrell scholarships for 2014.
- To accept the design for the AER O&M Conference 2013 t-shirts.
- To accept the O&M Division position paper, "Orientation and Mobility Specialists and the Provision of Travel Instruction to Individuals with Nonvisual Disabilities."
- To designate a central location for the AER board and staff to post approved position papers online, in addition to their postings on individual division Web pages or sites for easier access.
- To charge the board president with appointing a task force to review AER division purpose, structure and function.
- That Web conference technology, be it for committee meetings, board meetings, webinars, town halls, etc., must be easily used by all members and be fully accessible to all members.
- That in terms of accessibility, from the September 2013 board meeting forward, everything new that is planned must be accessible. This does not apply to programs already in progress or planned.
- That AER take immediate steps to fix the accessibility issues with our website by either retrofitting or redesigning, whichever choice is more fiscally responsible and expedient, and set aside funds in the upcoming budget for this purpose.
- To hold the AER International Conference 2018 in Reno, Nev., and to hold a face-to-face board meeting in May 2014 in Reno, Nev., with board members paying their own expenses.
- To approve the Itinerant Personnel Division position paper, "Caseloads Based on Students' Assessed Needs Instructional Continuum."
- To allow the AER Publications Committee to determine if and when association endorsements for books be granted.

Position Paper Cont. from page 1

together, they chose to describe preferred practices related to literacy media decisions for all students with visual impairments, not just those with low vision. Considering that many of these students transition from print to braille or are dual medial readers, a more holistic approach to literacy media and media decisions was necessary. One of the paper's key issues is recognizing the appropriateness of a dual media approach. "Historically, the field has supported either only braille or only print for students, but recent studies indicate some students flourish with a combined approach," said Lusk. "This paper essentially tells both teachers of students with visual impairments (TVIs) and schools that it's ok to say a child needs a dual media approach."

The position paper is a welcome addition to AER's growing library of research-based preferred practices to help vision professionals, many of whom may be the sole vision specialist in their region. By clearly stating what is preferred practice for literacy media decisions, this paper gives TVIs the strong evidence they need to educate their supervisors, parents and IEP teams on what is necessary for effective decision-making and instruction. "In my experience as a TVI, you're sometimes discounted as just one person talking about just one child," shared Lusk. "This paper will give a push to show that it's not outlandish to look at all these issues for a child's IEP. The data we're asking you to gather is not going overboard, because it is all truly necessary to make the right decision for each child."

Holly Lawson, PhD, COMS, CLVT, another of the paper's co-authors, added, "This position paper makes clear that IEP decisions should be based on comprehensive assessments from a variety of sources. We specify field-approved tools, like the Learning Media Assessment (Koenig & Holbrook, 1995), so

IEP teams include considerations about functional vision and assistive technology needs in their decision."

The paper also highlights the need for clinical low vision evaluations, which provide data to help design the components of a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) for students, as mandated by the IDEA. The evaluations identify interventions teachers can use to show students how to access the general education curriculum; they emphasize the need to assess the use of assistive technologies (both high and low tech); and they promote the least restrictive environment by giving students the tools and modifications they need to independently access the world around them, such as monocular telescopes for distance viewing and magnification that is individualized for each child's needs.

"For too long, literacy media decisions have been made for students without looking at all data, and too many children have not been receiving all of the appropriate tools they need to be successful in school and beyond," said Lusk. "We hope this paper will provide a vehicle for teachers and parents to help make sure that all options are considered, all appropriate tools are provided, and that individualized decisions and placements are implemented for each child."

Added Lawson, "This paper is a true AER effort. It addresses issues that affect everyone in our organization, particularly professionals who work with school-aged children. This is not a Low Vision Division position paper; it is an AER paper."

The text of the full position paper follows. It is also available for download on the Low Vision Rehabilitation Division's website at <http://lowvision.aerbvi.org/>.

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LITERACY MEDIA DECISIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS

A Position Paper of the Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired

Kelly Lusk, Holly Lawson and Tessa McCarthy
Review Committee: Amanda Lueck, Anne Corn, Barry Kran

Position

Students with visual impairments, including those with multiple disabilities, are entitled to high-quality educational literacy programming. Decisions for determining appropriate literacy instruction must be based on data gathered through comprehensive and ongoing assessment of the learning medium or media, information from qualified professionals and the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team, including parents, and consideration of the use of a variety of assistive technologies, appropriate accommodations, and evidence-based teaching strategies.

Overview

This paper provides guidelines related to literacy media selection and instruction for students with visual impairments who are blind and those who have low vision, including those with additional disabilities, and will be progressing through a literacy program, either emergent, traditional or functional (Holbrook, 2009). The focus of this paper is on “conventional literacy,” defined as making meaning out of reading and writing (Koenig & Holbrook, 2000). The importance of reading and writing skills is underscored in the current regulations of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 (2002).

Based on current regulations from the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) (2004) related to the provision of accommodations, including literacy instruction, for children who are visually impaired, three possible options for “conventional literacy” instruction are described below. Each option should be considered depending on individually assessed needs.

Note: The first option (I) is identical to the wording regarding the provision of braille in IDEIA; the second and third options (II and III) are modeled after the braille-specific wording in IDEIA, but encompass other literacy media or combinations of media.

- I. *Instruction in braille* and the use of braille unless the IEP Team determines, after an evaluation of the student’s reading and writing skills, needs, and appropriate reading and writing media (including an evaluation of the student’s future needs for instruction in braille or the use of braille), that instruction in braille or the use of braille is not appropriate for the child; or
- II. *Instruction in print* with or without optical and/or electronic devices after a clinical low vision evaluation of the student’s potential for using vision to access appropriate general education reading and writing materials at near and at a distance; or
- III. *Instruction in both braille and print* (known as dual media) with or without prescribed optical and/or electronic devices, after evaluations described above in (I) and (II), and combining the instructional approaches defined above in (I) and (II).

Key Points

1. Decisions for determining literacy medium or media are based on a *variety of assessment approaches and sources* conducted by *qualified professionals*. The primary evaluation designed to collect and report data that will assist the IEP team members in making decisions regarding the literacy and instructional media is the learning media assessment (LMA). This is an unbiased, ongoing assessment protocol conducted by the teacher of students with visual impairments (TVI) (Koenig & Holbrook, 1995). The LMA includes data from the following (listed in order of preferred administration):
 - a. A *recent eye exam* from an ophthalmologist or optometrist, with information on the student’s ocular health, standard correction, treatments, and visual prognosis. The student should be followed by the eye care provider, with appropriate reassessment for changes in visual function over time.
 - b. For a student with functional vision, a *clinical low vision evaluation (CLVE)*, conducted by a low vision specialist (i.e., an ophthalmologist or optometrist experienced in working with persons who have low vision), with

recommendations for optical devices, electronic devices, non-optical tools, and/or strategies to enhance the use of vision. Any optical or electronic low vision device is classified as an assistive technology device.

- c. A *functional vision assessment* (FVA), conducted by the TVI, which provides information on the use of the student's vision within natural environments engaging in a variety of visual tasks (Wilkinson, 2010).
- d. An *assistive technology (AT) assessment*, conducted by team members with expertise in the use of AT for students with visual impairment, to determine the appropriateness of additional AT devices and services not addressed by the CLVE.
- e. Any other assessments or documentation that provide relevant information on the student's current level of performance (e.g., reports or other information from a parent, classroom teacher/general education reading teacher, physical therapist, occupational therapist, school psychologist, reading specialist, speech pathologist, or other medical or educational professional).

Under IDEIA, medical services, such as an initial eye exam or CLVE, are related services and may be necessary for diagnostic or evaluation purposes §300.34. During the LMA assessment, the student should be allowed to use any prescribed optical or non-optical devices. If reading large print (with or without a prescribed optical aid), the child should be allowed to use the print format that is most appropriate at the preferred working distance based on data from the above sources and informed by research in the field of low vision (e.g. Lueck, Bailey, Greer, Tuan, Bailey, & Dornbusch, 2003).

2. A variety of sensory factors (visual, tactual, motor, and auditory), as well as cognitive abilities, may have a direct impact on the acquisition of literacy skills (whether print or braille), and therefore, must be considered (Lusk & Corn, 2006a; Lusk & Corn, 2006b). Possible factors include reading stamina, reading speed and comprehension, writing speed, prognosis of the visual impairment, hand strength and dexterity, increased level and intensity of literacy materials, and progression of the acquisition of literacy skills.
3. Literacy skill development often involves the use of various literacy tools and technologies. Time must be devoted to *instruction and practice* with any prescribed optical, electronic, or braille device, or any other assistive technology to be used while reading and writing, as the skills needed to use these technologies are not necessarily intuitive (Corn, Wall, & Bell, 2000; Corn et al., 2002; Koenig & Holbrook, 2000). The IEP team members, including parents, must decide the amount of time devoted to braille and/or print instruction (e.g. duration, frequency, and intensity) based on the individual needs of the student (Corn & Koenig, 2002; Koenig & Holbrook, 2000). Without appropriate instruction, students with visual impairment may be at risk for becoming low performing students and may require intensive support from the IEP team to improve literacy skills. Any difficulties in the area of literacy should be addressed as early as possible to narrow the academic achievement gap. Furthermore, the role and responsibility of the TVI is to keep abreast of emerging technologies and assess their potential use for students with visual impairments.
4. Instruction in the use of accommodations cannot be taught in isolation from literacy (Wall Emerson, Holbrook, & D'Andrea 2009; Wall Emerson, Sitar, Erin, Wormsley, & Herlich, 2009). Thus, evidence-based instructional curricula and strategies, literacy-based and/or those specific to the field of visual impairment, must be taught in conjunction with the use of accommodations and/or assistive technologies. Collaboration between general and special educators, including the TVI, is needed to effectively incorporate the use of accommodations into literacy programming.
5. After initial identification of literacy medium or media, ongoing assessment is key to monitoring the successes and needs of students with visual impairments.
 - f. It is recommended that LMA, FVA, and AT assessment data be reported annually to the IEP team, including family members (Holbrook, 2009), and that these assessments be conducted every three years, unless the IEP determines that an assessment needs to be conducted before the three year IEP review or that an assessment is not necessary.
 - g. Students with visual impairments should follow the individualized medical plan established by the ophthalmologist and/or optometrist. The general eye care exam and/or clinical low vision reevaluation is necessary when there is a change in the student's vision, an educational transition is anticipated or occurs, or there is an observed concern related to visual functioning that suggests the need for further evaluation (Wilkinson, 2010).
 - h. Ongoing assessment, incorporating summative, formal data (e.g., basic reading inventories, evidence-based literacy

curricula), as well as ongoing, informal reading assessments (e.g., periodic timed readings, curriculum-based assessment, observations, and diagnostic teaching) (Heinze, 2000; Layton, 2000) ensure consistent monitoring of a student's academic progress. To mitigate the possibility of literacy-related gaps, students should be assessed on multiple literacy skills (e.g., phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, writing mechanics, handwriting), particularly in the early years. For students struggling academically, Response to Intervention (RTI) strategies may be employed to adjust instructional interventions to meet individual student needs (Kamei-Hannan, Holbrook, & Ricci, 2012).

Recommendations for Practice

A variety of assessments from a wide range of medical and educational professionals is needed to fully assess a student with a visual impairment and provide individualized "conventional literacy" programming. Beyond determining if the student requires braille, print, or a combination of print and braille, there are additional factors that must be continually evaluated. Information on how these factors impact the acquisition of literacy skills must be recorded and charted to determine the rate of progress, or a lack thereof. The TVI also needs to address new technologies and instructional methods as they emerge. This ensures that future changes or additions to the student's literacy programming are individualized and data-based.

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Celebrating
30
Years
1984-2014



AER INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE 2014

Moving into the Future

July 30 – August 3 ★ **San Antonio, Texas**
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Association for Education and Rehabilitation
of the Blind and Visually Impaired

AER Will Celebrate 30 Years in 2014

Celebrating
30
Years
1984–2014

Mark your calendars for a year-long celebration as AER reaches its 30th anniversary in 2014.

AER is an association rich in history. From its beginning in 1984, when the American Association of Workers for the Blind (AAWB) and the Association of Education of the Visually Handicapped (AEVH) decided to consolidate to create the Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired, or AER as it is known today, one value has remained constant—AER is the one organization that provides support to the professionals who work with the visually impaired.

AER encourages chapter and division leaders to use this special anniversary to reach out to prospective and lapsed members as well as to organizations about the association and the profession.

Let's make it a banner year!

Coming Soon! AER Awards Nominations

As AER members prepare for the AER International Conference 2014 next summer, where we will celebrate our 30th anniversary, we invite you to begin thinking about those who have made outstanding contributions to our field and who deserve recognition among their peers. Watch your inbox for information about next year's international and division awards.

As a reminder, following is a list of those who were recognized at the AER International Conference 2012. Descriptions of the association awards are available on the AER website at <http://www.aerbvi.org/>.

AER Awards Recipients 2012

Outstanding Chapter Award
AER Virginia Chapter

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Elizabeth Dennison

Bauman Award
Kay Alicyn Ferrell

AER Division Award Recipients 2012
Rehabilitation Counseling, Employment & BEP Services Division

Louis Vieceli Award
Adele Crudden

Multiple Disabilities & Deafblind Division

Samuel Gridley Howe Award for Outstanding Practice
Bernadette Van Den Tilaart

Virginia Sowell Award for Outstanding Contribution to the Field
Jim Durkel

Psychosocial Services Division
Robert H. Lambert, Ph.D. Award
Dr. James Emery Jan

Low Vision Rehabilitation Division
Meritorious Award for Lifetime Contributions to the Field of Low Vision
Olga Overbury

Outstanding Contributions in Direct Services to Persons with Low Vision
Lean Hyvarinen

Outstanding Contributions in Research and/or Literature in Low Vision
Duane Geruschat

Outstanding Contributions to the AER Low Vision Rehabilitation Division
Barry Kran

Orientation & Mobility Division
Sandy Kronick Distinguished Service Award
Eugene Bourquin

Lawrence E. Blaha Award
Richard Long

Citation of Excellence for Direct Service Award

Shannon Cuniak

Vision Rehabilitation Therapy Division

Bruce McKenzie Award
Lenore Dillon

Elizabeth Lennon Award for Meritorious Achievement
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Alice Raftery Rising Star Award
Cammy Holway-Moraros

The Susan and Paul Ponchillia VRT Publication Award
Margaret Cleary

Itinerant Personnel Division
The Judy Cernkovich Self-Determination Award
Amy Scepaniak

Personnel Preparation Division
Josephine L. Taylor Award
Kay Alicyn Ferrell

AER-Approved Program Spotlight: University of Pittsburgh O&M Program

In the AER Report Summer 2013 issue, we introduced a new series to highlight university programs that have received approval through the revised AER University Review. For this issue, we look at the University of Pittsburgh's Orientation and Mobility Program, led by long-time AER member and former AER board member George J. Zimmerman, PhD, COMS.

The University of Pittsburgh celebrates the 50th anniversary of its Vision Studies Program this year. Currently led by George J. Zimmerman, a former AER board member who helped to establish the Academy for Certification of Vision Rehabilitation and Education Professionals (ACVREP), the program trains individuals who wish to become teachers of students who are visually impaired (TVI) or orientation and mobility (O&M) specialists. The program also offers dual certification as well as masters and doctoral degrees in special education.



Pitt's O&M certification program follows a part-time, hybrid curriculum. Students, who come from all over the United States, are admitted to cohorts (i.e., a group that follows the same progression of courses toward certification or degree) and take their fall and spring courses online. During the summer, they come to Pitt's campus for six weeks to learn hands-on skills, such as traveling with a human guide, cane use, and using magnification and telescopic devices. At the end of the summer session, students are eligible for O&M internships.

The full Vision Studies Program currently enrolls about 55 students, with enrollment nearly equally split between the TVI and O&M tracks. The O&M Program accepts students who are new to the vision field, students who are seeking alternate certification (such as individuals with backgrounds in related, non-vision fields such as psychology or education) and TVIs who wish to become dual certified. The O&M single certification program requires up to two years to complete, depending on the individual's background.

Zimmerman is no stranger to AER's University Review process, as he chaired AER's first O&M review in 1987 and participated in several reviews for nearly a decade. It was only natural, then, that when it came time to pilot the revised University Review process, AER approached Pitt. "The timing was perfect," recalled Zimmerman. "We happened to be reviewing our O&M program when AER approached us. We were considering adding a class because we thought we had crammed too much information into our existing course structure. The review supported our thinking, and it helped us

when it came time to propose a new class to our School of Education."

A strong supporter of the University Review, Zimmerman is currently preparing to participate in a second review—this time for the TVI program. "Certification has been an underlying belief throughout my career," he said. "I've always felt that credentials and review processes are critical to assure graduates of a program that they are valued by their colleagues and that they meet the standards of the profession. There's also great value in having colleagues review what you're doing and helping you rethink it."

As he looks to the future, Zimmerman cautions faculty about the increasing number of classes offered online. "There's less face-to-face interaction with students, so we must make every effort to connect with them on a professional basis and help them develop not only a knowledge base of job skills but also professional skills, such as valuing professionalism and getting involved with AER and other associations. For our students to come into a university program, not knowing much about blindness and O&M, and then to have them leave with an understanding that they are now professionals and should maintain the 'gold standard' through certification—that in and of itself helps any university program." Zimmerman knows this from direct experience, as many Pitt alumni are among the vision field's most respected leaders and pioneers. "Having professionals who meet standards and value certification, who speak highly of their training and of AER is the best recognition a program can ask for."

A true advocate for vision professions, Zimmerman believes in giving back. "Give back to your profession and become involved," he shared. "Work with AER at the chapter, division or international level. That's what makes you a richer person. Be a professional who participates in engaging committee work to help our field grow."

JVIB Article Focusing on Young Children With Severe Visual Impairments Reveals Important Discoveries About This Population

“In order for us to be effective practitioners, we need to be aware of changes in the population of individuals we serve,” wrote Editor-in-Chief Dr. Diane Wormsley, in a recent editorial in the September-October issue of the *Journal of Visual Impairment & Blindness (JVIB)*. An article entitled “Severe Visual Impairments in Infants and Toddlers in the United States,” written by Deborah Hatton, Sarah Ivy, and Charles Boyner, provides a current picture of the causes of severe visual impairment in infants and toddlers in the United States. Dr. Wormsley points out: “The fact that close to 65% of the children being born today with visual impairments have additional disabilities, as evidenced by the authors’ findings, serves as a reminder that personnel who work with these students need to have the ability to collaborate with a variety of other professionals.” The article itself is too long to reproduce in this edition of *AER Report*, but the structured abstract follows:

Structured abstract: *Introduction:* This article describes the most prevalent visual conditions and other demographic characteristics of 5,931 young children with severe visual impairments in 28 states in the United States, the largest sample reported to date. The information presented in this article can assist in planning and implementing programs. *Method:* The data were collected at the time of entry into specialized early intervention programs for young children with visual impairments through reviews of records, interviews and direct observations. They were sent to Babies Count: The National Registry for Children with Visual Impairments, Birth to 3 Years at the American Printing House for the Blind. The data were collected and entered between January 2005 and April 2011. *Results:* Cortical visual impairment, retinopathy of prematurity (ROP) and optic nerve hypoplasia were the three most prevalent diagnoses. Approximately 60% were identified as being legally blind, and 65% had disabilities in addition to visual impairments. The mean age of the children at the time of diagnosis was 4.9 ($SD = 5.7$) months, referral to specialized programs was at 10.5 ($SD = 7.8$) months, and entry into specialized programs was at 11.6 ($SD = 8.0$) months. There was an average lag of 5.6 months between the diagnosis and referral. *Discussion:* Cortical visual impairment, ROP and optic nerve hypoplasia continue to be the leading causes of severe, uncorrectable visual impairments in children in the United States. ROP appears to be decreasing in prevalence; however, more children with ROP appear to have additional disabilities. The lag of 5.6 months between diagnosis and referral, a longer lag than was previously reported, is of concern. *Implications for practitioners:* Information about the characteristics of children with severe uncorrectable visual conditions is valuable for communicating with families, planning and implementing early intervention and educational programs, and collaborating with medical professionals.

Some of the other outstanding articles and features included in the September-October 2013 issue of *JVIB* include:

- “Perceptions of a Statewide Mentor Program for New Itinerant Vision Professionals,” by Rona L. Poggrund and Chrissy Cowan
- “Effects of Wait Time When Communicating With Children Who Have Sensory and Additional Disabilities,” by Nicole Johnson and Amy T. Parker
- Book Review: *The Mind’s Eye*, by Oliver Sacks, reviewed by Gordon N. Dutton
- Book Review: *Beginner’s Guide to Echolocation for the Blind and Visually Impaired*, by Tim Johnson (with Justin Louchart), reviewed by Kathleen M. Huebner

To access your *JVIB* member benefit, go to the Member’s Only area of AER’s website and log in with your AER membership user name and password (email aer@aerbvi.org if you have misplaced your credentials). Then follow the links that say *JVIB* until you reach the table of contents of the current issue. [Abstract reproduced from D. D. Hatton, S. E. Ivy, & C. Boyner, *Journal of Visual Impairment & Blindness*, 107(5), 325–336, copyright © 2013 by AFB. All rights reserved.]



Sequestration Hits Special Education

Recently, *Stateline*, the daily news service of the Pew Charitable Trusts, reported hard times are in store for U.S. special education programs due to sequestration, the automatic 5% federal budget reduction that occurred in March 2013, when the U.S. Congress failed to agree on how to reduce the federal deficit. The result is a \$579 million cut in federal funding to the U.S. Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the law that supports programs for students, aged 3–21, who have disabilities.

IDEA program funding is complicated because special education programs are federally mandated. Consequently, the law has provided some degree of protection to their funding. However, the proportion of federal support has been declining over the years and with the recent sequestration, states are struggling to secure adequate, long-term funding solutions to ensure their schools can provide free and appropriate education for their students with disabilities.

With *Stateline*'s permission, AER is reprinting the beginning portion of this critical report. We encourage members to read the full article online at <http://www.pewstates.org/projects/stateline/headlines/sequester-hits-special-education-like-ton-of-bricks-85899503686>.

Sequester Hits Special Education Like "Ton of Bricks"

by Adrienne Lu, staff writer, *Stateline* (<http://www.pewstates.org/projects/stateline>)

Since the first day of class for most schools in Michigan last week [September 3, 2013], Marcie Lipsitt's phone has been ringing nonstop with parents distraught about cuts to their children's special education services.

A new round of special education cuts were taking hold, prompted by a 5 percent reduction in federal funding of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), said Lipsitt, a longtime advocate for disabled children and co-chair of the Michigan Alliance for Special Education.

Lipsitt said it means that many schools have eliminated resource rooms where children can go to get help in areas such as math, reading, writing and organizational skills. Many schools will have fewer speech, occupational or physical therapists, along

with social workers and school psychologists, which means students who previously received speech therapy twice a week might only receive it once week, for example. And in some general education classrooms that had two teachers – one for the whole class and one specifically to support students with special needs – the special education teacher has been eliminated.

"For Michigan, it hit like a ton of bricks," Lipsitt said. "Conditions are eroding and children are not being allowed to become taxpayers. They're not being given access to independence, being productive, being ready for a global workforce."

We asked some of our members to share their stories of how the sequester has affected them.

Here is one response:

"Due to the sequestration, positions and programs are being cut for the one population that needs individualized instruction and care the most. Not only are they cutting the funds for these programs in the school system, but also in the agencies that will work with these populations after their public school career. My question to the government is quite simple: "Do you not want these individuals not living a independent and productive life by working and paying taxes?" It seems to me that they're setting up this population to be unproductive and not independent as well as to live at home or in a facility for the rest of their lives. That, in my opinion, is cruel and inhumane treatment."

~Liz Eagan Satter, secretary/treasurer, AER Itinerant Personnel Division

AER wants to know how the budget cuts have affected you. Please share your stories with us on AERNet and on the AER Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/aerbvi>. Perhaps together, our members—the largest network of blindness and low vision professionals in the world—can brainstorm how to make the best of these difficult times. Please email your comments to aer@aerbvi.org.

Across the country, advocates for children with disabilities are grappling with the impact of sequestration, the automatic budget cuts that kicked in when Congress failed to reach an agreement to reduce the federal budget. Although the cuts took effect March 1, the impact did not reach schools until the start of the current school year because of the way many education programs are funded.

Experts agree there is little hard data on the impact of the budget cuts on special education. The U.S. Department of Education estimates the sequester cut about \$579 million in federal funding for IDEA Part B, which supports students age 3-21 with specific learning disabilities, speech or language impairments, intellectual disabilities, autism or emotional disturbances.

The National Education Association estimates that if states and local school systems did not replace any of the funds lost through sequestration, nearly 300,000 students receiving special education services would be affected. The union estimated up to 7,800 jobs could be lost as a result of the federal budget cuts.

All told, 6.5 million disabled children from ages 3-21 received services funded by the IDEA in the fall of 2011, the most recent number available.

Go to <http://www.pewstates.org/projects/stateline/headlines/sequester-hits-special-education-like-ton-of-bricks-85899503686> to read the full article.

Stateline is a nonpartisan, nonprofit news service of the Pew Charitable Trusts that provides daily reporting and analysis on trends in state policy.

Physical Education and Sports for People with Visual Impairments and Deafblindness: Foundations of Instruction

By Lauren J. Lieberman, Paul E. Ponchillia, and Susan V. Ponchillia

Physical activity provides benefits for children's health and fitness, and it also helps to improve their self-esteem, feelings of competence, and relationship skills. It is part of the expanded core curriculum that includes skills essential for students who are visually impaired.

Participation in physical education has generally been more limited for individuals with visual impairments than for others with typical sight. To help close that gap, three prominent educators and athletes have created this important new sourcebook on teaching the skills that will enable children and adults with visual impairments and deafblindness to participate in physical education, recreation, sports, and lifelong health and fitness activities.

Physical Education and Sports provides you with this essential information:

- » Methods of modifying physical skills instruction
- » Techniques for adapting sports and other physical activities
- » Teaching methods and curriculum points for physical skills instruction throughout the lifespan
- » Information about sports and related activities, providing rules, adaptations, and information about competition options

Part 1 Visual Impairment, Deafblindness, and Physical Activity

Chapter 1 Impact of Vision Loss

Chapter 2 Visual Impairment and Deafblindness: An Overview

Chapter 3 Providing Physical Education to Students with Visual Impairments or Deafblindness

Part 2 Modifications and Adaptations for Teaching Physical Activities

Chapter 4 Modifying Instruction to Meet Students' Needs

Chapter 5 Principles of Adapting Games, Sports, and Related Activities

Part 3 Teaching Physical Skills throughout the Lifespan

Chapter 6 Early Childhood Development *by Tanni Anthony*

Chapter 7 Elementary Education Programming

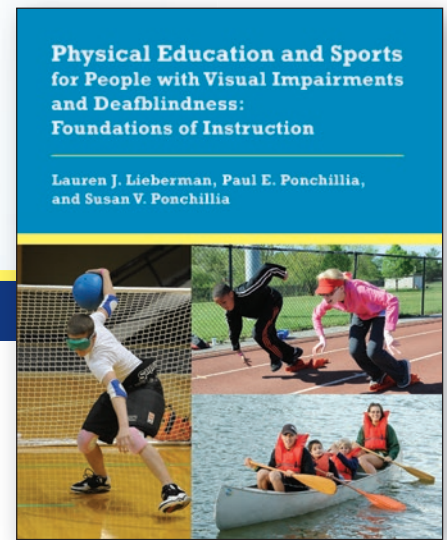
Chapter 8 Physical Education and Sports Activities in Middle School, High School, and Adulthood

Chapter 9 Organized Sports for Children and Adults with Visual Impairments: Goalball and Beep Baseball

Chapter 10 Recreational Activities and Their Adaptations: Toward a Positive Quality of Life

Chapter 11 Fitness: A Lifelong Pursuit

Chapter 12 Sports and Related Organizations of Special Interest



The ideal manual for physical educators, adapted physical education specialists, teachers of students with visual impairments, orientation and mobility specialists, occupational and recreational therapists, and anyone else interested in sports and recreation for persons who are visually impaired or deafblind.

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AIDB Faculty, Staff Receive Active Shooter Training

by Shane Dunaway, staff writer, *The Daily Home* (<http://www.dailyhome.com>)

“Come out, come out, wherever you are!” a menacing voice bellowed as sounds of banging on doors and simulated gunfire sandwiched the shout inside Oliver Hall at Alabama School for the Blind (ASB) in Talladega one evening in August 2013.

The chaotic sounds cutting through the air were an audible representation of the experience for nearly 250 teachers, administrators and dorm aides participating in the intruder and active shooter training scenarios at ASB and Alabama School for the Deaf.

The training, made possible through a partnership between the Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind (AIDB), several local law enforcement agencies and emergency responders, began at ASB with a short introductory briefing where Talladega County Sheriff Jimmy Kilgore addressed the participants on the harsh realities faced in today’s society.

“We owe it to ourselves and to each of you to be prepared as best as we can,” Kilgore said. “I promise you from Columbine, (Colo.), to Newtown, (Conn.), none of the victims that were involved in those terrible incidents had a clue that was coming.

“Please seize this opportunity to learn from this exercise today. The way you react and respond to the situation could make a difference between life and death—not only your actions to try and resolve this, but also how you receive law enforcement when they get here.”

Following the opening comments, the staff members adjourned to their classrooms and offices while they awaited the start of the live scenario.

“We practice this and we have drills, but we really don’t know how we would react,” ASB Principal Charlotte Lowery said during the intermission. “I think a great thing that will happen is we will learn how we react when we’re in a crisis situation. Then, we’ll be able to learn how we should react. When you learn how you should react, you can begin to mentally process that over and over so it becomes a habit.”

As participants milled about during the proverbial calm enveloped by an aura of tension, the sounds of intrusion brought it all to halt.

Two intruders swept through the building, attempting to breach classrooms and firing upon their victims. The first

classroom hit belonged to Susan Carlisle, a high school social studies teacher for ASB.

“First of all, I was shocked they got in so quickly,” Carlisle said. “There was no time for reaction. We have always been trained if there’s an intruder on campus, get the kids to the corner and remain quiet. There was time for me to turn and look at the door and that was it. They were already shooting. It was a very big wake-up call for me.”

Martha Waites, assistant principal for ASB, claimed the situation caught her off guard.

“The first thing I thought was, ‘Where is this happening?’” Waites said. “I wondered if it was upstairs, downstairs or wherever. Then I started hearing screaming. Once I heard ‘CODE RED,’ our lockdown code, I actually didn’t know what to do. I could hear the gunshots and I knew I needed to know where to go and what to do to help, but I didn’t know either. Once the scenario started, even though we knew it wasn’t, it seemed real. Some were even legitimately scared by the scenario.”

The intruders eventually made their way into her office and held her hostage within three-to-four minutes after the initial simulated shots were fired.

“I didn’t really have time to gather my thoughts enough until the guy came in with a very large gun,” Waites said. “He had me behind my desk, yelling at his buddies, ‘Come on up to play.’ It was very scary.”

Members of the Sheriff’s Emergency Response Team along with assistance from the local SWAT team cleared the building of the intruders, officially bringing the scenario portion of the exercise to an end once the school issued a “CODE GREEN” all-clear announcement through the building’s alert system.

The institute’s School Resource Officer Al Crow commended the efforts of the staff members he was able to observe while on the upper floor of the building during the training.

“All of them did what they were trained to do,” Crow said. “They shut, locked and barricaded their doors. I thought they did very well. During the classroom portion, we’ll teach them about the different options they have available to them so they’ll be better prepared for scenarios like this.”

The participants gathered in the auditorium for an instructional session on the “Run, Hide, Fight” method led by Crow and SERT members. After the training was complete, the instructors answered questions posed by the participants.

“We created a teachable moment, not just for our staff, but for our sheriff’s department and other agencies involved in this training,” AIDB President (and AER member) John Mascia said. “From my perspective, it seemed as if they all learned from this exercise. There’s nothing more important to us than making sure our staff and students are safe. This is all about preparation and trying to think about what could happen.

We’re thankful that local law enforcement and members of our own staff feel the same way.”

This article originally appeared on August 7, 2013 in *The Daily Home*, a newspaper serving Talladega and St. Clair counties in Alabama. The original article is available online at http://www.dailyhome.com/view/full_story/23310892/article-AIDB-faculty--staff-receive-active-shooter-training.

More Research Needed in Transition Program Approaches

What are promising programs to help students with disabilities make successful transitions beyond high school? A new review from the National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance (NCEE) suggests that few transition strategies have strong evidence that they make a difference in students’ postsecondary employment, education and training, or independent living. NCEE is part of the U.S. Department of Education’s Institute of Education Sciences.

Released in August 2013, the review of transition research studies from the last two decades finds that relatively few studies meet the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) standards for evidence of effectiveness. Called “Improving Post-High School Outcomes for Transition-Age Students with Disabilities: An Evidence Review,” the review shows that of the 43 studies that were deemed eligible, only 16 met WWC standards and provide support for two program approaches. Community-based work programs were found to have mixed effects on students’ employment outcomes and potentially positive effects on postsecondary education outcomes. Functional life skills development programs were found to have potentially positive effects on independent living outcomes, although the extent of evidence was small.

To view and download a PDF of the evidence review, go to the Institute of Education Sciences website at: <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/pubs/20134011/pdf/20134011.pdf>.

Report Shows Spike in Costs of Vision-Related Diseases

Vision-related diseases are costing patients, insurance companies and the U.S. government more than ever before. According to “Cost of Vision Problems: The Economic Burden of Vision Loss and Eye Disorders in the United States,” a summer 2013 report commissioned by Prevent Blindness America (PBA), researchers at the University of Chicago found the financial burden will continue to grow due to increasing healthcare costs and an aging population. Vision-related diseases are among the costliest health problems to the U.S. economy, far greater than indicated in earlier reports and, at \$139 billion per year (based on the 2011 U.S. population and in 2013 dollars), are more costly than three of the top seven major chronic diseases in the U.S. today. To read more findings from the report, visit the PBA website at <http://costofvision.preventblindness.org/>.

Dreams Can Become Reality!

by Mary Finkelstein, Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services

In the beginning it was just a dream: to develop and implement a program to provide high school graduates, seniors and/or juniors with the opportunity to practice living on their own and to explore their employment possibilities. The first step toward making the dream a reality occurred in summer 2008, when the Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services' Division of Blind Services (DBS) implemented a three-day seminar called Dallas Region Employment Access Meet (DREAM).

One year later, DBS expanded the program to one week with students experiencing life in resident housing at Southern Methodist University (SMU) in Dallas, Texas. During that week students learned budgeting, social and recreational skills, grooming and hygiene, and orientation and mobility, including how to use public transportation. After receiving training in job readiness skills from SMU's Hegi Family Career Development Center, students spent two days shadowing employees at local businesses. The participants experienced quite a bit of activity in just one week!

By the end of DREAM '09, my fellow Dallas transition counselors and I saw a need and wanted more! We had already seen two other successful and ongoing work experience programs occur in Texas: one in Austin at the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired and the other in Lubbock, sponsored by a partnership between DBS, Regional Education Service Centers, local school districts, and businesses. Modeling DREAM after the Austin and Lubbock programs, we sought to expand our program to five weeks and include a paid work experience with local employers. It took a few years to secure the resources needed to make the changes, but it finally came together in 2012.

That year, DREAM became reality as a five-week work experience program that is part of DBS's Transition Program's ongoing mission to address transition needs of North Texas high school students who are blind or have visual impairments. To prepare students to work with local businesses, the first week of DREAM focused on job readiness training, provided by our SMU campus sponsor, the Hegi Career Center. Activities included career exploration, interview training, building resumes, socialization, learning self-determination, utilizing O&M skills, using assistive technology, researching job options, participating in recreational activities, and engaging in team building.

For the remaining weeks of DREAM, students worked at local businesses, learning the different aspects of working in entry-level positions. The skills developed included planning and accessing public transportation, being responsible, exercising time management, doing laundry, preparing food, engaging in recreation, using social skills, and networking. During these five weeks students also learned to use an iPad2 to plan routes using public transportation, to create budgets and shopping lists, to research employers and colleges, and much more.

DREAM 12 yielded the following results:

- 20 students who started the program completed the program.
- 34% of the students are currently working.
- One student is working two jobs.
- One student who is deafblind is still working for the same employer.
- Two students are attending college.
- Two of our community activities included visiting local museums. The feedback from two of the students stated, "that because of my experience visiting the museums, I felt confident enough to attend and complete a high school art class!"

Let's not forget the businesses that partnered with DBS to make paid work experience a reality for these students! Albertsons provided three students with jobs as courtesy clerks, and our biggest supporter, CVS Pharmacy Area 4, provided eight work experience opportunities! Because of CVS's involvement with DREAM, two students were offered jobs with CVS, and one student noted that having the CVS experience on his resume contributed to his employment in different jobs in his area. Yani Hurst, CVS Workforce Initiatives Manager for Area 4, shared, "This program was the highlight of my year!"

Because of the success with DREAM 12, the Dallas Transition Program was approved to plan for DREAM 13. We increased the participation goal for summer 2013 to 25 students from the Dallas, Fort Worth, Waco and Bryan-College Station offices of DBS. CVS, Albertsons and the Dallas Lighthouse for the Blind again pledged jobs. Staff are working now on future funding support for DREAM.

As one of three transition counselors in Dallas, I admit that DREAM was a lot of work, particularly paying attention to the small things, such as procuring bus passes for everyone, providing ibuprofen for sore feet from all the walking, making sure job coaches showed up for work, keeping everyone hydrated in the heat, solving problems and maintaining support for the employers. Juggling these details and unexpected issues—and keeping up with a regular case load—was mind boggling! But on graduation day, all the hard work and hours paid off! Seeing the students' excitement, hearing their awesome speeches during graduation, visiting with parents who couldn't believe their child could accomplish what they did in the program, and having proud employers wanting to be a part of next year's program... DREAM was a resounding success! It brings tears to my eyes thinking how this program has touched so many people in different and positive ways. After about a month's rest, the desire is rekindled, and we are back to planning future DREAMs!

This article originally appeared in the summer 2013 newsletter for AER Rehabilitation Counseling, Employment & BEP Services Division.



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More Information
<http://aerbvi.org/O&M2013>



Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired

Chapter News

Northern Rockies Chapter

The Northern Rockies Chapter (Wyoming, Idaho and Montana) had their annual conference in Jackson, Wyo., in June in conjunction with the Western Regional Early Intervention Conference. The chapter recognized three very deserving individuals for their service, including our long-serving parliamentarian, Mary Rich-Williams. Rich-Williams received the H. Smith Shumway award, which honors the person who has done the most for the chapter. A dedicated member of AER for years, she always kept the board updated on procedural issues.

Kay Stevens, director of Montana's Summer Orientation Program (SOP), won the Frank Smith Award, which honors the person who has done the most for the blind in the tri-state area. Stevens received this award during a tearful ceremony at SOP's graduation. She has been SOP's director for many years,

changing the lives of dozens of low vision individuals through this four-week program at Carroll College in Helena, Mont.

Our new Community Service Award went to Hans Stokker, long-time director of the "Ski for Light" program. This unique recreational program provides hiking and skiing opportunities to the blind and visually impaired throughout the Northern Rockies region. In accepting the award, Stokker gave a heart-warming history of the Ski for Light program.

Kerri Norick, our past president, has taken on the task of planning the 2014 conference, which will be next October at Chico Hot Springs, just north of Yellowstone Park and south of Livingston, in Montana. For information about this conference, contact Kerri at knorick@msdb.mt.gov.

Chapter Membership Recruitment Contest

This fall, AER is conducting Phase 2 of a member recruitment campaign to attract people who either have never been members of AER or whose membership lapsed several years ago.

As the lifeblood of the association, chapters play an integral part in the membership drive. The chapter with the highest percentage growth between the second quarter of 2013 and the first quarter of 2014 will earn one extra chapter rebate. If two or more chapters have the same percentage growth, a drawing will determine the winner. The extra chapter rebate amount will be determined by averaging rebates issued to the winning chapter during the designated 2013-2014 quarters.

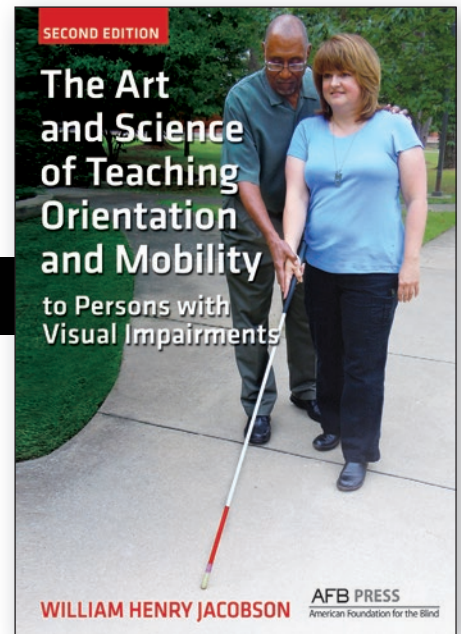
Recruitment resources are available on the AER Chapter Leader website at http://leadership.aerbvi.org/chapter_leaders.htm.

For more information about membership recruitment efforts and how you can get involved to help your chapter, please email aer@aerbvi.org.

The Art and Science of Teaching Orientation and Mobility to Persons with Visual Impairments, *Second Edition*

By William Henry Jacobson

This popular and classic text, used both in the United States and throughout the world, has been updated for the 21st century and is an invaluable guide for working with students of all ages. It details orientation and mobility techniques and explains how to provide effective instruction in one complete manual for the beginning O&M instructor that is a reference for the experienced practitioner as well.



The second edition of *The Art and Science of Teaching Orientation and Mobility*:

- » Provides step-by-step presentation of each O&M technique and describes in detail how to individualize and teach each one.
- » Outlines the scope and sequence of a complete O&M curriculum.
- » Offers a guiding philosophy as well as principles and strategies for effective teaching.
- » Includes a new chapter on assessment with essential assessment checklists for children and adults.
- » Provides more extensive content on today's O&M instructional issues, such as street crossings and the current, more challenging traffic environment.

Introduction

Unit 1 Guidelines for Instruction

Chapter 1 The Teaching of Orientation and Mobility

Chapter 2 Assessment: O&M Skills and Concepts

Unit 2 Essential Indoor O&M Skills

Chapter 3 Basic Techniques for Guiding a Person with a Visual Impairment

Chapter 4 Self-Protection Techniques: Moving through the Environment Independently

Chapter 5 Basic Long Cane and Self-Familiarization Skills

Chapter 6 Advanced Indoor Orientation and Mobility Skills

Unit 3 Outdoor Skills and Refinements

Chapter 7 Basic Outdoor Orientation and Mobility Skills

Chapter 8 Intermediate Outdoor Orientation and Mobility Skills

Chapter 9 Advanced Outdoor Orientation and Mobility Skills

Unit 4 Additional Considerations for the Specialist

Chapter 10 Special Situations and Conditions and Mobility Devices

Chapter 11 Creative Approaches to Teaching Orientation and Mobility

Chapter 12 Professional Issues

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Division Docket

Low Vision Rehabilitation Division

The AER Low Vision Rehabilitation Division has been actively working for you over the last few months. Our biggest accomplishment this summer was the completion and approval of a position paper, "Literacy Media Decisions for Students with Visual Impairments." (Editor's note: The position paper is this issue's cover story.) The paper was authored by Kelly Lusk, Holly Lawson and Tessa McCarthy; Amanda Lueck, Anne Corn and Barry Kran served on the review committee. The position paper is available on the Low Vision Division website at <http://lowvision.aerbvi.org>. The division thanks everyone who helped get this paper completed and approved.

The division also submitted next year's proposed budget for approval. The majority of our budget and efforts this coming year will focus on hosting awesome division activities, a productive business meeting and a wonderful reception at next summer's international conference in San Antonio, Texas. If you have suggestions for conference division activities, please contact Chair Tessa McCarthy at tmccarthy3@nccu.edu, or Chair-elect Edna Perez-Freytes, edna.perez-freytes@va.gov. We plan to poll our members in the next few months about division activities to make sure we are meeting your needs.

To help you stay in touch with the Low Vision Division's activities, we plan to increase the number of newsletters we distribute each year. We are currently working on the fall 2013 newsletter and will be sending it out soon. If you have any announcements or information you would like to include in the division newsletter, please send it to our secretary, Jewel Dickson at jdickson@alasu.edu. Also, to keep members better informed, all of the archived meeting minutes are now available on the division website. We have been sending out notes related to recent board meetings, and we will continue to include these in our newsletters.

As always, the Low Vision Division welcomes your ideas about how we can better serve you, our members.

Orientation & Mobility Division

In September 2013, the Orientation & Mobility Division submitted an update to the AER Board of Directors, including the 2014 division budget proposal, which was unanimously approved by the Division Executive Committee. A copy of the proposal is posted online at <http://oandm.aerbvi.org> with the minutes of the last O&M Division Executive Committee meeting.

Division Chair Kevin Hollinger formed the Ad Hoc Committee on Finances (Eileen Siffermann, chair), following the

Division Business Meeting in Bellevue, Wash., at the AER International Conference 2012. The committee completed and published their findings in an email update to division membership this past summer.

Also at the AER International Conference 2012, following a vote by AER membership to replace division bylaws with policies and procedures, the division created the Ad Hoc Committee on the Revision of Division Policies & Procedures Manual to complete a revision by January 15, 2014. This committee, chaired by Eileen Siffermann, submitted the first draft of the Division P&P Manual in October 2013. The division is also sending recommendations to the AER Bylaws & Structures Committee for the AER bylaws and the AER P&P Manual.

A select group of division members and members of the University Review Committee collaborated to revise the O&M University Standards during work sessions at the AER International Conference 2012. AER has subsequently adopted the standards, which are available on the AER website.

Dr. Richard Long led a committed group of division members to select the two Blasch Scholarship winners in 2013. Dr. Long is stepping down after 13 years of chairing this committee—THANK YOU, Dr. Long! The recipients were Sigalu Epenesa, University of Massachusetts Boston, and Faye Miller, Salus University.

The division completed a position paper on travel training under the leadership of Committee Chair Bonnie Dodson-Burke. The AER board approved the paper in September, and it is available online at http://oandm.aerbvi.org/position_papers.htm.

The division is reviewing all current division position papers under the leadership of Committee Chair Susan Langendonk. Division members will be asked to vote on revisions for the nine papers in October/November; one position paper is likely to be rescinded. All position papers are available for review at http://oandm.aerbvi.org/position_papers.htm.

The AER International O&M Division Conference 2013 Committee, chaired by Marjie Wood, has been working diligently on the conference, scheduled for December 11-14, 2013 at the Riverside Hilton in New Orleans, La. The division is seeking questions from members for a session on professional liability insurance that is scheduled for December 12. Please send your insurance questions to Program Chair Kevin Hollinger at [kjhol-linger@sbcglobal.net](mailto:kjhollinger@sbcglobal.net). With over 500 attendees expected, this is a must-attend event! Visit the conference website for more information: <http://aerbvi.org/O&M2013>.

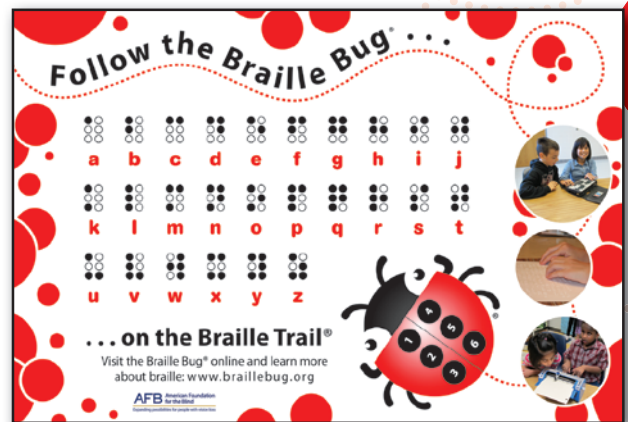
The Braille Bug® wants to visit your classroom!

The popular ladybug who presides over AFB's Braille Bug® website (www.braillebug.org) of information about braille games and activities for children is now available on a poster for classroom use!

The colorful and handsome teaching tool displays the Braille Bug® herself, with photos of children reading and using braille technology. The Braille Bug® Alphabet Poster is sure to help your students with visual impairments—and you—intrigue the entire class and highlight the importance of braille.

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The poster can be purchased separately or in various kits of Braille Bug® classroom materials.

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www.afb.org/store

Susan Langendonk, division chair-elect, is chairing the division's activities for the AER International Conference 2014 in San Antonio, Texas, next July. She is laying groundwork for abstract submissions and planning the awards ceremony, past-chair breakfast and considerations for pre-conference workshops. O&Mers interested in being part of the review process for abstracts should contact Susan at susanlangendonk@gmail.com.

The division executive officers and district directors welcome your ideas, feedback and desire to get involved in division activities. Visit <http://oandm.aerbvi.org/contact.htm> for email addresses. Please contact any of us at any time! We look forward to meeting you in New Orleans for the O&M Division Conference and in San Antonio for the AER International Conference.





AER International



Orientation & Mobility Conference 2013

Sponsored by the AER Orientation & Mobility Division

Exploring All Options

Join us Dec. 11–14 in New Orleans, Louisiana!

Sponsored by the AER's Orientation & Mobility Division, the AER International O&M Conference 2013 will bring together hundreds of O&M specialists from around the world. This exceptional opportunity for professional development and networking will feature more than 100 hours of presentations on topics such as:

- Street crossings
- VI students who are infants/toddlers
- VI students with additional disabilities
- Travel instruction for people with disabilities other than visual impairment
- Private contracting for O&M
- GPS and location technology for VI individuals
- Technology/apps and O&M

In addition to these topics, there are three educational tracks for topics related to guide dogs, international O&M issues, and research.

For more information about the conference, including hotel and transportation information, go to <http://aerbvi.org/O&M2013/>.

Registration

Go to <http://aerbvi.org/O&M2013/registration.htm> for complete registration information.

Conference Schedule

Wednesday, December 11, 2013

8:00 a.m.–7:00 p.m.	Registration
1:00–2:30 p.m.	Opening session/O&M Division business meeting
2:45–6:00 p.m.	Concurrent sessions
6:00–8:00 p.m.	Exhibitor welcome reception

Thursday, December 12, 2013

7:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.	Registration
7:30–8:15 a.m.	Breakfast
7:30 a.m.–3:30 p.m.	Exhibit Hall open
8:15–11:00 a.m.	Concurrent sessions
11:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.	Poster session
12:00–1:30 p.m.	“A Taste of New Orleans” in Exhibit Hall
1:30–5:00 p.m.	Concurrent sessions

Friday, December 13, 2013

7:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.	Registration
7:30–8:15 a.m.	Breakfast
7:30 a.m.–2:30 p.m.	Exhibit Hall open
8:15 a.m.–12:00 p.m.	Concurrent sessions
12:00–1:30 p.m.	Lunch on own
1:30–2:15 p.m.	Concurrent sessions
2:30–5:00 p.m.	Optional Creole Queen Riverboat Dinner Cruise

Saturday, December 14, 2013

7:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.	Registration
8:15–11:45 a.m.	Concurrent sessions
11:45 a.m.–1:00 p.m.	Lunch on own
1:00–5:00 p.m.	Concurrent sessions

Current session offerings (subject to change)

The AER International O&M Conference 2013 currently has over 120 sessions! Below is the second half of an alphabetical, partial listing of topics. The first half appeared in the AER Report Summer 2013 issue.

Go to <http://aerbvi.org/O&M2013/schedule.htm> for a complete and up-to-date schedule.

- ♦ Part 1: ADA Complementary Paratransit Basics: Eligibility
- ♦ Part 2: ADA Complementary Paratransit Basics: Operations
- ♦ Part 1: Essentials of O&M for People Who Are Deaf-Blind
- ♦ Part 2: Essentials of O&M for People Who Are Deaf-Blind
- ♦ Part 1: Mobile App Tool Kit
- ♦ Part 2: Mobile App Kit
- ♦ Part 1: Overview and Field Practice Using the Trekker Breeze to Create Routes and Establish a Position in Space (limit 10)
- ♦ Part 2: Overview and Field Practice Using the Trekker Breeze to Create Routes and Establish a Position in Space (limit 10)
- ♦ Part 1: RP Pride—What's It All About?
- ♦ Part 2: RP Pride—What's It All About?
- ♦ Part 1: Traffic Signals: Understanding and Dealing with Traffic Signals (limit 40)
- ♦ Part 2: Traffic Signals: Understanding and Dealing with Traffic Signals (limit 40)
- ♦ Part 3: Traffic Signals: Understanding and Dealing with Traffic Signals (limit 40)
- ♦ PERCEPT: An Intuitive and Innovative Indoor Navigation System for Individuals with Visual Impairment™
- ♦ Personalized Accessibility Location Services (PALS) on a Cloud
- ♦ Play and Movement in Early Childhood: Setting the Early O&M Stage for Success
- ♦ Practical Approaches to Meeting the O&M Needs of Students and Adults with Intellectual Disability and Vision Loss
- ♦ Roundtable - ACVREP Certification for Guide Dog Mobility Instructors (GDMI)
- ♦ Roundtable: Assessment in O&M: What Has it Been, What Is it Now and What Can it Look Like in the Future?
- ♦ Roundtable: O&M Division Position Paper on Travel Instruction
- ♦ Roundtable: Professional Liability
- ♦ Serving the Outer Circle: Providing O&M and Guide Dog Instruction to People with Sensory Processing Disorders
- ♦ Seven Accessible GPS Options: iPhone to the PC
- ♦ Sharpen Up Those Sleep Shade Skills! (limit 20)
- ♦ Strategies for Teaching O&M to Students with CVI
- ♦ Stretching Resources: Practical Approaches to Developing Collaboration and Tools to Support the Needs of Adults with Intellectual Disability and Vision Loss
- ♦ Systems Do Change: Medicaid Reimbursement for O&M Services in Montana
- ♦ TAPS, 3rd Edition: Introduction and Overview of the Bigger and Better O&M Curriculum
- ♦ Teaching Critical Thinking Skills and Problem-Solving to Persons with Disabilities Other than Blindness (limit 40)
- ♦ Teaching O&M in Small Groups as a Compliment to One-on-One Instruction
- ♦ Teaching Orientation and Mobility Using the "Mediated Learning Experience" Process
- ♦ Teaching Students Skills and Concepts for Crossings with No Traffic Control
- ♦ Tele-O&M: Exploring New Ways to Provide O&M Services to Infants and Toddlers with Visual Impairments
- ♦ The Dakota Disc Tip—The Next Innovation in Safe Travel for People with Visual Impairment
- ♦ The Development of Orientation & Mobility Skills through Physical Education
- ♦ The Evolution of Guide Dog Harness and Handle Design: Trainers, Clients and Dogs
- ♦ The iPad as an O&M Teaching Tool for Students with Low Vision and/or Additional Disabilities
- ♦ The Mathematics in Movement: Teaching Mathematics Content Through Orientation & Mobility
- ♦ The Movement-Thinking Connection: Implications for Itinerant O&M Service Delivery
- ♦ The Past, Present and Future of O&M Services and Personnel Preparation in Puerto Rico
- ♦ The Power of Orientation and Mobility Instruction: It Changed My Life
- ♦ "They Call Me an Expert, but I'm Not an Expert!"—How to See Yourself as the Expert You Really Are!
- ♦ Training O&M—Can Group Training Affect Quality?
- ♦ Transforming Training in O&M: Examining the Effect Using an Audio-Link on the Distance Between Trainer and Trainee
- ♦ Travel Instruction: Using Traditional O&M Techniques to Teach Sighted People with Disabilities to Travel Safely
- ♦ Treks—The Game that Changes Directions As You Do
- ♦ Twelve Years of Research About Crossing Streets at Complex Intersections: What We've Learned from the National Eye Institute Research Program and Where We Go From Here
- ♦ Using Vehicular Sounds for Crossing Decisions: Research Evidence
- ♦ Various Means to Assist with Safe and Quick Street Crossings for the Visually Impaired Pedestrians
- ♦ Virtual Environment to Improve Orientation and Mobility Skills in Real Spaces by People who Are Blind
- ♦ Vision Stimulation for Babies with Delayed Visual Maturation
- ♦ Visual Field Enhancement: An Interprofessional Approach (limit 50)
- ♦ Visual Impairment, Blindness & Mobility: Improving Balance and Mobility in People Over 50 Years of Age with Visual Impairments: Can the Alexander Technique Help?
- ♦ Wayfinding and GPS: Choosing the Best Accessible GPS Device for Your Client
- ♦ Wee Play
- ♦ What's Your Time Worth?
- ♦ When Blindness Comes with Brain Injury: Facts and Practical Interventions
- ♦ When Crisis Strikes! Emergency Planning for Guide Dog Teams & Emergency Personnel
- ♦ Where's the Crosswalk, and How Do I Align When There's No Traffic!
- ♦ Who Needs O&M? Guidelines for the TVI-COMS Team for Determining the Needs for O&M Assessment for Low Vision or Legally Blind Students
- ♦ Why Achieving Licensure in New York Is Important to the Survival of VRT and O&M Professions
- ♦ Yoga for Students with VI and Multiple Impairments

♦ ...and many more!

All-Access CE Pass



The upcoming AER International Orientation & Mobility Conference 2013 in New Orleans, La., promises outstanding sessions from new and seasoned presenters with updated, practical and current educational content for O&M professionals serving those who are blind and visually impaired.

Members can maximize their learning with the All-Access CE Pass, which guarantees those who register for the AER International Orientation & Mobility Conference 2013 access to up to 100 hours of continuing education sessions and the CEUs they offer.

The sessions will be available online to all attendees after the conference for the low, one-time price of \$79 for members (\$158 for non-members). That could mean paying as little as 79 cents an hour for about 100 hours of programming if you are an AER member and register for the conference!

To benefit from these significant savings, **conference registrants must purchase their All-Access CE Pass by December 14, 2013.** After the conference, the sessions will be available for purchase online at a higher price.

You may purchase the All-Access CE Pass when you register for the conference at <http://aerbvi.org/O&M2013/>.

If you have already registered for the conference and want to buy the pass, you may purchase the All-Access CE Pass online at <http://aerbvstore.corecommerce.com/International-Conference-Continuing-Education/>, or call the AER office at 703-671-4500. We'll be happy to take your order over the phone.

NOTE: You **MUST** register for the conference to qualify for these low prices.



Marking Milestones: Two U.S. Programs Celebrate 50th Anniversary

2013 marks the golden anniversary for two U.S. university blindness and low vision programs:

Florida State University's Program in Visual Disabilities

University of Pittsburgh Vision Studies Program

Please join us as we celebrate these programs and their remarkable contributions to the field at the AER International Orientation & Mobility Conference 2013 in New Orleans, La.

New!

Now available in the AFB eLearning Center

iPad in the Classroom Webinar Series

This series of three webinars presented by Dr. Betsy Flener describe the rationale and specific suggestions for using the iPad and tablet devices in the classroom for students with visual and multiple disabilities.

Creating Tactile Overlays for the iPad and Tablet Devices

Credit: ACVREP; Hours: 1

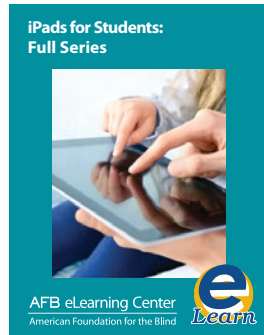
iPad and Communication for Students with Visual and Multiple Disabilities

Credit: ACVREP; Hours: 1.25

Reinforcing Braille Literacy Using the iPad

Credit: ACVREP; Hours: 1

Series \$69; \$29 individually

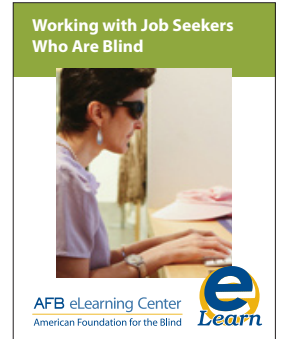


Working with Job Seekers Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired

If you are a professional working in a vocational rehabilitation setting, and new to serving those who are blind or visually impaired, this five lesson course will help prepare you to successfully work with and assist your clients. You'll be given tools for teaching and interacting with someone who is visually impaired, including information about blindness myths, proper etiquette for social interactions, and the definitions of vision loss terms. The importance of assessment, evaluations, and determining needs are explained. Considerations for making a variety of job accommodations are discussed, including use of access technology, overcoming physical challenges, and dealing with environmental factors. An extensive list of resources for your work is also provided.

**Credit: 4 hours ACVREP, 4 hours CRCC
Course \$49; Credit Certificates \$10**

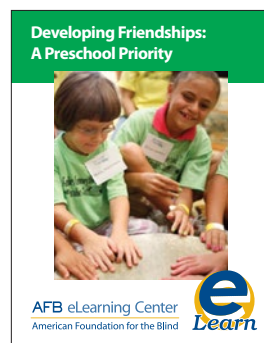
For more information about these and other webinars and courses, visit the AFB eLearning Center <http://eLearn.afb.org>



Developing Friendships: A Preschool Priority

Mastering social skills is important to the future success of a child who is blind or visually impaired, and there is no better time to start learning those skills than when children are very young. In this webinar, Mindy Ely presents a three pronged approach for teaching preschoolers how to make friends. This process includes helping children 1) WANT to interact with others, 2) enter a play situation successfully and 3) maintain social interactions. Includes a handy checklist to identify a child's strengths and weaknesses in peer interaction skills.

**Credit: 1 hour ACVREP, 0.1 CEU AOTA
Webinar \$29; Credit Certificates \$10**



AFB eLearning Center

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La labor del Consejo Iberoamericano del Braille y de su Grupo de Ciencias

The following article by Pedro Ruiz Prieto of the Spanish National Organization of the Blind (ONCE) is for our Spanish speaking members. It provides details on braille practices, usage and production by members of the Latin American Council of the Blind (ULAC) and ONCE.

Prieto, who is coordinator of ONCE's Sciences Group, requests that Spanish speakers using Nemeth Code exchange ideas on the adaptation of mathematical and scientific texts into braille. Please contact the group at brailleciencias@once.es.

En abril de 2009 tuvo lugar una reunión en Cartagena de Indias (Colombia) donde intercambiamos experiencias miembros de la Unión Latinoamericana de Ciegos (ULAC) y Organización Nacional de Ciegos Españoles (ONCE) sobre lo que se estaba realizando con el Braille en distintos países de Iberoamérica.

Allí se pusieron las bases para reiniciar las labores del Consejo Iberoamericano del Braille (CIB), aprovechando la Cumbre Mundial del Braille que se celebraría en Madrid en noviembre de 2009. En dicho evento se llevaron a cabo reuniones del Consejo Mundial del Braille, el CIB y la Comisión Braille Española (CBE). Se estableció el 4 de enero de 2010, aniversario del nacimiento de Luis Braille, como fecha de reactivación de esta nueva etapa de este Consejo.

Por lo que respecta a los ámbitos lingüísticos de habla hispana y portuguesa, esta reunión de Madrid puso las bases para crear los estatutos y los planes de futuro del CIB.

Posteriormente, en marzo de 2010 se celebró en Montevideo (Uruguay) un encuentro de profesionales relacionados con la enseñanza y la producción braille donde estaban representados los 19 países de habla hispana de Latinoamérica además de Brasil y España. En dicha reunión se crearon grupos de trabajo con la idea de permanecer en el tiempo y crear signografías Braille de distintas materias, directrices para la producción de materiales en relieve y buenas prácticas para que el Braille esté presente en la vida diaria siendo un facilitador de la autonomía de las personas ciegas. En Montevideo se crearon los Grupos de Trabajo de Ciencias, Materiales en Relieve, Informática, Musicografía, Estenografía y Criterios de Adaptación de Textos.

Yo puedo hablarles principalmente del Grupo de Ciencias, del cual soy coordinador. Actualmente estamos llevando a cabo el trabajo de elaborar una nueva edición del Código Matemático Unificado (CMU).

El actual está vigente desde 1987 y desde aquella época ha ido surgiendo la necesidad de crear nuevos signos matemáticos y científicos debido en gran parte a que, gracias a la integración educativa, cada vez es mayor el número de disciplinas científicas que las personas ciegas pueden y deben afrontar en su formación educativa y labor profesional. Por ejemplo, el CMU actual no recoge signos para Estadística, Matemática Financiera, Lógica, Probabilidades, etc. y pretendemos con esta nueva edición solventar estas necesidades.

Por otro lado, el uso de las nuevas tecnologías hace necesario que las signografías Braille en general, y particularmente para la escritura

de las matemáticas y las ciencias tengan en cuenta otros ámbitos. Me refiero a estándares de representación de textos científicos, como MatML, o de representación de caracteres como es el caso de UNICODE, que tengan tanto una adecuada representación en Braille así como una correcta verbalización para revisores de pantalla. De momento estamos elaborando la nueva edición en Braille de 6 puntos, pero pretendemos hacer también una signografía para la representación en 8 puntos para posibles salidas a línea braille.

El actual CMU abarca 8 capítulos y 2 apéndices. El que se está confeccionando comprenderá 15 capítulos y 3 apéndices.

Una novedad muy importante es que este código incluirá capítulos dedicados a la adaptación de los aspectos tipográficos y de edición utilizados en las obras en caracteres visuales de matemáticas. De todos es sabido que los nuevos programas de edición de este tipo de libros utilizan cada vez más recursos tipográficos tales como distintos colores de letras y fondos. Pretendemos incluir una guía de recursos que permitan adaptar estas peculiaridades gráficas a la escritura braille.

Otra novedad será un apéndice donde se recogerán las formas de representar las unidades físico-químicas, ya que la experiencia de estos años ha demostrado que muchos de los contenidos de este código se aplican a otras disciplinas científicas distintas de la matemática, tales como física, química...

Consideramos que sería muy necesario conocer a personas de habla hispana que utilicen el código Nemeth, de aplicación en Estados Unidos, para intercambiar ideas y opiniones sobre los distintos aspectos que intervienen en la adaptación de textos matemáticos y científicos a braille. Por tal motivo, les incluyo a continuación la dirección de correo del grupo de ciencias de la Comisión Braille Española, que es brailleciencias@once.es.

En el enlace que tienen más abajo pueden consultar las signografías de la Comisión Braille Española: <http://www.once.es/new/servicios-especializados-en-discapacidad-visual/braille/comision-braille-espanola>.

Pedro Ruiz Prieto
Técnico Braille
Organización Nacional de Ciegos Españoles (ONCE)
prp@once.es



ANNOUNCING a New Member Benefit

AER partners with Shop.com

Earn cash back on your online shopping trips while supporting AER

AER is participating in an exciting new fundraising program — its own shopping website featuring thousands of partner stores like Walmart, JCPenney, Best Buy, Apple, Home Depot, and many more. When you make a purchase on www.shop.com/aerbvi, AER receives royalties, and you earn up to 35% cash back on qualified purchases.

The benefits don't stop there! You earn 0.5% cash back on the purchases of everyone you refer to our website. Now, you can take advantage of the ease and convenience of Internet shopping to buy the products and services you want, while feeling good about helping one of your favorite organizations.

Our new fundraising website also offers:

- Hot Deals page with coupons and exclusive deals to help you save even more.
- Stores page with a full A-to-Z index of your favorite stores.
- Search feature to find exactly what you want from among over 35 million different products and services.
- Gift Ideas area to help you find the perfect gift.
- Unique products and services.


Getting Started is Easy!

1) Visit our website at www.shop.com/aerbvi.

2) Sign in or register as a Preferred Customer.

- Click “Sign In” in the upper right hand corner.
- Either enter your existing Shop.com or Market America account information OR select “No, I’d like to create a New Account” to create an account.
- Follow the prompts.
- You are now eligible to earn up to 35% on qualified purchases!

3) Go shopping!

- Use the search box at the top of the screen to find a specific item or type of product.
- Use “Shop Partners” to find a specific partner like Best Buy, Walmart, or Macy’s.
- Use “Shop All Departments” to shop by category.
- Use Hot Deals to find special deals and coupons to save even more money.
- Look for the  icon to find out exactly how much cash back you’ll earn from purchases made from that store or on a particular product.

United Nations Holds High-Level Disability Summit

The United Nations General Assembly held its first-ever high-level meeting on disabilities September 23, 2013. The goal of the meeting was to spur international action to ensure that individuals with disabilities can contribute to the global economy.

“Far too many people with disabilities live in poverty. Too many suffer from social exclusion. Too many are denied access to education, employment, health care, and social and legal support systems,” said U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon who implored leaders to “break barriers and open doors.”

For the disabilities community, which represents about 15 percent of the world’s population, the meeting marked a milestone. The General Assembly adopted a resolution reaffirming the resolve of heads of state and government “to work together for

disability-inclusive development” and advance the rights of all people with disabilities.

The non-binding resolution acknowledges the value of the contribution of people with disabilities “to the general well-being, progress and diversity of society.” It calls for the inclusion of people with disabilities in all U.N. development goals and urgent action to ensure they have equal access to education, health care, transport and “full and productive employment,” as well as strengthened social protection.

More information:

<http://www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?id=1590>.



Tech Links

AER regularly collects Internet links to tech news and resources that may be useful to members and the people they serve. For up-to-date links and other resources, visit AER’s Facebook page at www.facebook.com/groups/aerbvi.



Autonomous vehicle technology could help blind to navigate
<http://roboticstomorrow.com/news/2013/09/19/autonomous-vehicle-technology-could-help-blind-to-navigate-/22349>



Soul to sole: Eye surgeon has developed shoes that see for the blind
<http://blog.ted.com/2013/03/03/soul-to-sole-eye-surgeon-anthony-vipin-das-has-developed-shoes-that-see-for-the-blind/>



Blind Comcast exec developing a talking TV channel guide
http://www.philly.com/philly/business/20130828_Blind_Comcast_exec_developing_a_talking_TV_channel_guide.html



Sprint delivering industry first for visually impaired customers
<http://fox4kc.com/2013/09/10/sprint-delivering-industry-first-for-visually-impaired-customers/>



Computer-aided navigation project to help those who are visually impaired
<http://phys.org/news/2013-09-safe-visually-impaired-persons.html>



Study demystifies the “unknown sense” with first-ever measurements of human tactile perception.
<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2013/09/130916110853.htm>



OpenGlass apps show support for visually impaired
<http://phys.org/news/2013-08-openglass-apps-visually-impaired-video.html>



Search results become 3D-printed objects for blind users
http://news.cnet.com/8301-17938_105-57603926-1/search-results-become-3d-printed-objects-for-blind-users/



“Roboglasses” from FauxSee Innovations help visually impaired
<http://www.arkansasbusiness.com/article/93899/roboglasses-from-fauxsee-innovations-help-visually-impaired?page=1>



Use Google Docs with a screen reader
<https://support.google.com/drive/answer/1632201?hl=en>

AER International Conference 2014

Call for Abstracts is Open

The exciting AER International Conference 2014 is scheduled for next July 30-Aug. 3, in San Antonio, Texas, and will draw worldwide participation from experts in the field of visual impairment and blindness.

You are invited to submit abstracts for presentation on topics related to the 13 interest-specific AER Divisions or other topics relevant to the field of visual impairment and blindness.

Go to <http://aerbvi.org/international2014/abstracts.htm> for details.

Ronnie Milsap to Kick Off AER International Conference 2014



AER is proud to announce the AER International Conference 2014 will kick off with a special appearance by acclaimed music legend Ronnie Milsap.

Mr. Milsap will give an uplifting talk about his journey from a small Appalachian town in North Carolina to the Governor Morehead State School for the Blind and on to Nashville and the world, sharing his love of music along the way. A popular and influential performer, he became a successful crossover artist blending country

and pop music in the 1980s and is credited with six Grammy Awards between 1975 and 1988.

This is just one of the treats in store for you at next summer's must-attend event. Please join us in San Antonio, Texas, as we celebrate AER's 30th year as an association, July 30–Aug. 3, 2014!



2013/2014

Calendar of Events

For more information about upcoming events, or to have your event listed, visit our Website at www.aerbvi.org and click on the "Conferences" section.

2013

November

Nov. 7–8: AER Arizona Chapter 2013 Fall Conference, Crowne Plaza Phoenix, Phoenix, AZ — For more information, visit their webpage at <http://azaer.aerbvi.org/>.

Nov. 8: AER Kansas Chapter 2013 Conference, Best Western Montana Mike's, McPherson, KS

Nov. 8: AER Missouri Chapter 2013 Fall Conference & Business Meeting, Hilton Garden Inn, Columbia, MO

Nov. 13–15: AER Northeast Chapter 2013 Conference, Mount Washington Hotel, Bretton Woods, NH — For more information, visit their website at <http://www.neaer.umb.edu/>.

Nov. 21–22: AER Indiana Chapter "Blazing New Trails IN-AER" Fall Conference, McCormick's Creek State Park, Spencer, IN — For more information, visit their website at <http://www.in-aer.com/>.

December

Dec. 11–14: AER International Orientation and Mobility Conference 2013, Hilton New Orleans Riverside, New Orleans, LA — For more information, visit the conference website at <http://aerbvi.org/O&M2013/>.

Dec. 14: AER Board meeting, Hilton New Orleans Riverside, New Orleans, LA, and online

2014

February

Feb. 7–8: AER Board meeting, online

March

Mar. 27–29: AER Texas Chapter Conference, Omni Austin Hotel at Southpark, Austin, TX — For more information, visit their webpage at <http://www.txaer.org/>.

Mar. 31–Apr. 3: 11th International Conference on Low Vision, Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre, Melbourne, Australia — For more information, visit their webpage at <http://www.vision2014.org/>.

April

Apr. 2–4: AER Virginia Chapter 2014 Conference, Sheraton Roanoke Hotel and Conference Center, Roanoke, VA — For more information, visit their website at <http://virginia.aerbvi.org/>.

Apr. 23–25: AER Penn-Del Chapter 2014 Conference, Best Western Premier Central Hotel and Conference Center, Harrisburg, PA — For more information, visit their website at www.penn-delaer.org.

May

May 1–2: AER Michigan Chapter Annual Conference, Marriott at Laurel Park, Livonia, MI — For more information, visit their website at <http://www.maerbvi.org/>.

May 2–3: AER Board meeting, Reno, NV

May 4–7: Seeing Beyond the Horizon—2014 Canadian Conference for Educators, Parents and Professionals of Children and Youth who are Blind or Partially Sighted, Halifax Marriott Harbourfront Hotel, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada — For more information, visit their website at <http://apsea.ca/pep2014/>.

July

July 30–Aug. 3: AER International Conference 2014, Grand Hyatt San Antonio, San Antonio, TX — Celebrating AER's 30th Anniversary!! Visit the AER website for updates, <http://www.aerbvi.org>.



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www.afb.org/afblc

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Amanda Kolling at akolling@afb.net

AFB American Foundation®
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Looking for a new career? Check out what AER Job Exchange, the largest online career resource in the field, has to offer. The following is a sample of available positions from AER Corporate Members. Additional job opportunities and complete details on the following positions are available at www.aerbvi.org.

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ARIZONA

Itinerant Teacher of the Visually Impaired Arizona State Schools for the Deaf & Blind N. Central Regional Coop.

Various positions available in northern Arizona! Come work with us in the cool pines and mountain air, next to Lake Powell or the area surrounding Monument Valley.

Essential duties:

- Provide quality instruction to students
- Prepare daily lesson plans
- Evaluate student's skills to determine the best program of learning
- Write and implement Individual Education Plans (IEP)
- All other duties as assigned

Knowledge, skills & abilities:

Knowledge of:

- Arizona Academic Standards
- Current education and diagnostic practices as they apply to education sensory impaired students
- Lesson plan and Individual Education Plan development
- Student evaluation practices
- Policies, procedures and programs of the immediate work unit
- Principles and practices of administration and management
- Agency or program rules, regulations and operating procedures
- Skilled in:
 - Behavior management
 - Planning and organization
 - Program development
 - Student evaluation

Ability to:

- Communicate effectively with students, staff and public
- Instruct students to retain information
- Complete student evaluation
- Develop lesson plans
- Work cooperatively in teams

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Special conditions/requirements:

- College/university degree in education with course work specific to sensory impairments
- State of Arizona Teaching Certificate with appropriate endorsement for each position (Teacher O&M requires ACVREP Certification in lieu of ADA Certification)
- Secondary teaching positions must possess the necessary coursework as required by Department of Education
- Must be able to pass FBI and state background check

Contact:

Jane MacDonald, Assistant Director
ASDB/NCRC
1000 Butler Ave., Suite 115
Flagstaff, AZ 86001
Phone: 928-774-0655

Pay scale: Salaried position based on experience

FLORIDA

TVI & O&M Specialist Lighthouse of Pinellas

Largo

Qualifications: Bachelor's degree in visual disabilities and certification in orientation & mobility preferred. A TVI working toward O&M certification would also be considered.

Duties: Lighthouse of Pinellas is seeking a full-time teacher of the visually impaired & orientation & mobility specialist to provide early intervention training for children birth through age 6 as well as to provide instruction in the expanded core curriculum for teens ages 14-22 in our Transition Program. Instruction is provided both at the agency and also in the community.

Contact: Lighthouse of Pinellas, Inc.
6925 112th Circle N., Suite 103
Largo, FL 33773

Phone: 727-544-4433

E-mail: bbennett@lhpf.org

HELP WANTED

KENTUCKY

Test and Assessment Product Development Project Leader II American Printing House for the Blind (APH) Louisville

Under the immediate supervision of the Project Manager, Research, this position primarily adapts, field tests and produces test and assessment products for teachers and rehabilitation staff to use with students and adult consumers who are blind/visually impaired. The position is also responsible for the modernizing of existing APH products. The position collaborates and partners with schools, rehabilitation agencies, test developers, teachers, experts, APH peers and others to develop/modernize products. The position is expected to utilize the best methods for conducting research, including, but not necessarily limited to, research design, statistical analysis and drawing appropriate conclusions from the literature reviews and collected data. This is a key position at APH that provides support to other APH personnel, APH's mission, the customers we serve and others in the area of test and assessment adaptation.

Major duties and responsibilities:

1. Participates in the product submission process, including but not limited to the solicitation of new product ideas, the research that is to be considered by the APH Product Evaluation Team (PET), and the coordination of the information for the APH Product Advisory & Research Committee (PARC).
2. Using project management skills, coordinates multiple projects containing multiple products.
3. Conducts initial research relating to the relevance of proposed projects.
4. Collaborates with APH staff and outside consultants to prepare product content into an appropriate prototype for field testing and/or expert review.
5. Conducts field testing among groups that

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are representative of the population to be served and ensures that the field testing meets professional standards for applied or basic research as regards to validity, reliability and confidentiality of subjects.

6. Compiles results from field testing/expert reviews, makes appropriate changes to the prototype, and works with appropriate staff including Technical Research to prepare the final documents for specifications and tooling in order to manufacture the product(s).
7. Represents APH at conferences through attendance, presentations and support of APH exhibition of products.
8. Provides technical support to consumers of current products, as well as designated APH staff.
9. Prepares scholarly written and oral communications for internal and external audiences.
10. Serves as project leader or co-project leader for APH projects outside the primary area of tests and assessments.

Education, training, and experience requirements:

- Master's degree or advanced certification beyond bachelor's. Post-master's preferred. Degree must be in an area related to education or psychology.
- Seven (7) or more years of experience related to tests and assessments used with children.
- Knowledge of material adaptation for children with visual impairments is preferred.
- Current or previous state or national certification in teaching or rehabilitation is preferred.
- Most possess excellent and verifiable experience and skills in organization and project/time management required in an environment of rapidly changing priorities.
- Must have the ability to communicate technical issues to lay personnel and consumers, as well as communicate and work across departmental lines.
- Advanced knowledge of Microsoft Office products including Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Outlook. Must have working knowledge of Microsoft Access, Adobe Acrobat, Internet browsers, and Google Drive and other cloud-based technologies such as DropBox.

Compensation: Salary negotiable based on education and experience.

To apply: Please submit resume and cover letter with salary requirements to:

hrrassitant@aph.org

OR

Mail to:

Attn: Human Resources Department
American Printing House for the Blind
1839 Frankfort Ave.

HELP WANTED

Louisville, KY 40206

APH IS A DRUG FREE WORKPLACE.
An offer of employment is conditioned upon successfully passing a drug screening test. We encourage all qualified persons to apply regardless of race, color, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, place of birth, or disability, as defined by applicable law. **EEO/AA Employer.**

Early Childhood Product Development Project Leader II American Printing House for the Blind (APH) Louisville

Under the immediate supervision of the Project Manager, Research, this position primarily develops, field tests and produces early childhood products for teachers and rehabilitation staff to use with students who are blind/visually impaired. The position is also responsible for the modernizing of existing APH products. The position collaborates and partners with schools, rehabilitation agencies, test developers, teachers, experts, APH peers and others to develop/modernize products. The position is expected to utilize the best methods for conducting research, including, but not necessarily limited to, research design, statistical analysis and drawing appropriate conclusions from the literature reviews and collected data. This is a key position at APH that provides support to other APH personnel, APH's mission, the customers we serve and others in the area of early childhood.

***This position has a start date of January 2014.**

Major duties and responsibilities:

1. Participates in the product submission process, including but not limited to the solicitation of new product ideas, the research that is to be considered by the APH Product Evaluation Team (PET), and the coordination of the information for the PAH Product Advisory & Research Committee (PARC).
2. Using project management skills, coordinates multiple projects containing multiple products.
3. Conducts initial research relating to the relevance of proposed projects.
4. Collaborates with APH staff and outside consultants to prepare product content into an appropriate prototype for field testing and/or expert review.
5. Conducts field testing among groups that are representative of the population to be served and ensures that the field testing meets professional standards for applied or basic research as regards to validity, reliability and confidentiality of subjects.
6. Compiles results from field testing/expert

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reviews, makes appropriate changes to the prototype and works with appropriate staff including Technical Research to prepare the final documents for specifications and tooling in order to manufacture the product(s).

7. Represents APH at conferences through attendance, presentations and support of APH exhibition of products.
8. Provides technical support to consumers of current products, as well as designated APH staff.
9. Prepares scholarly written and oral communications for internal and external audiences.
10. Serves as project leader or co-project leader for APH projects outside the primary area of early childhood.

Education, training, and experience requirements:

- Master's degree or advanced certification beyond bachelor's. Post-master's preferred. Degree must be in an area related to education.
- Seven (7) or more years of experience related to early childhood education.
- Current or previous state or national certification in teaching or rehabilitation is preferred.
- Must be able to read and write braille (using Braillewriter, slate/stylus and/or electronic devices) within one year of hire.
- Must possess excellent verifiable organizational and project/time management experience and skills required in an environment of rapidly changing priorities.
- Must have the ability to communicate technical issues to lay personnel and consumers, as well as communicate and work across departmental lines.
- Advanced knowledge of Microsoft Office products including Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Outlook. Must have working knowledge of Microsoft Access, Adobe Acrobat, Internet browsers, and Google Drive and other cloud-based technologies such as DropBox.

Compensation: Salary negotiable based on education and experience.

To apply: Please submit resume and cover letter with salary requirements to:

hrrassitant@aph.org

OR

Mail to:

Attn: Human Resources
American Printing House for the Blind
1839 Frankfort Ave.
Louisville, KY 40206

APH IS A DRUG FREE WORKPLACE.
An offer of employment is conditioned upon successfully passing a drug screening. We encourage all qualified persons to apply regardless of race, color, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, place of birth, or

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disability, as defined by applicable law. EEO/AA Employer.

MASSACHUSETTS Training Center Manager Perkins School for the Blind Watertown

Qualifications:

- Master's in education or master's in related field.
- Significant experience working with students who are blind or visually impaired.
- Experience managing consultants and subject matter experts.
- Experience managing expert panels and field testing.
- Experience managing similar projects and/or initiatives is preferred.

Duties:

- To conduct ongoing needs assessment of the training needs of the New England region and the state of New York, with

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- resulting data utilized in the development of professional development activities.
- To work with customers (educational agencies, school districts, etc.) to develop a customized professional development plan that will meet their needs and ensure that the plan is implemented in a satisfactory manner.
- To oversee and supervise the arrangement of all logistical issues for project-sponsored, in-service training events both on campus and off.
- To develop a catalog of trainings that includes traditional face-to-face trainings as well as blended learning trainings in order to meet customer needs.
- To establish and maintain systems for marketing and distribution of all course information.
- To maintain a cohesive database for all trainings.
- To travel to meetings and off-site trainings within the New England region and New York state area as appropriate.

- To hire, supervise and manage all consultants employed as trainers by the Perkins Training Center.
- To develop and/or manage the development of numerous multimedia and written products to be used for training including materials compatible with a distance education format.
- To work with Perkins Trust to develop grants to support the in-service training in New England.
- To provide support and sponsorship to national and regional partners for professional conferences as appropriate.
- To supervise the Perkins Training Center coordinator and administrative assistant.

Salary: Competitive

Contact:

Perkins School for the Blind
175 North Beacon St.
Watertown, MA 02472
Phone: 617-972-7269
Fax: 617-972-7635

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Welcome New Members! June 24, 2013 – September 25, 2013

CANADA

Ontario

Bruce Davidson
Julie Fotheringham
Maryse Theberge

Quebec

Natalie Osborne

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Jessica Fitzgerald
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Paul Richardson
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Nevada

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April Marchbanks
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Charlotte Tompkins
Margaret Williams
Sarah Willsie
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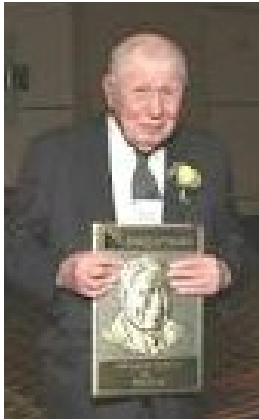
Washington

Rebecca Cervantez-Foley
Debbie Combs
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In Memoriam

Dr. Abraham Nemeth, inventor of the braille math code, dies at 94

by Robert Kingett (<http://www.robertkingett.com/>)



Dr. Abraham Nemeth upon his induction into the Hall of Fame at the American Printing House for the Blind

Dr. Abraham Nemeth, blind mathematician and most well known for creating the Nemeth Code, died on October 2, 2013. He was 94.

Nemeth Code is the code for mathematics and scientific notation in North America. It is regularly taught as a form of braille study, bringing new independence into students' lives.

Born in New York, Nemeth attended public school before studying mathematics at Brooklyn College, despite the repeated admonitions from his

counselors that he could never have a career in math because he was blind.

Believing his counselors, Nemeth majored in psychology, earning his bachelors from Brooklyn College and masters from Columbia University, where he had a day job at the American Foundation for the Blind (AFB) that he didn't like. Noticing that he wasn't happy, Nemeth's wife encouraged him to pursue his true passion: math. Nemeth started taking math classes at night at Brooklyn College, eventually landing a teaching position there.

Nemeth continued his studies in math and began making up his own braille math code in 1946. At that time, people used the Taylor Code from England for writing mathematics in braille, but Nemeth thought it used too many grouping symbols. He began devising his own code with readers in

college. Having already developed rules to tell readers how to read mathematics aloud, he started working on braille code which simulated his rules for speech. For example, in "x to the n power," the phrase "to the" means "begin a superscript," and the word "power" means, "return to the baseline." So in his braille code symbols were created that mean "begin superscript" and "return to the baseline."

The AFB published Nemeth's code after another blind employee, Dr. Clifford Witcher, a physicist from Columbia University, asked for a table of integrals in braille. (A table of integrals is a long list of formulas used in calculus, which is central to work done by calculus students, engineers, physicists and many others.) When Nemeth said he had one but it was in his own code, Witcher tried it with lessons from Nemeth. Impressed, Witcher presented the code to the Mathematics Subcommittee of the Joint Uniform Type Committee, a predecessor of BANA which was responsible for braille codes in the U.S. and England. This code eventually was published by the American Printing House for the Blind and became known as the Nemeth Braille Code for Mathematics and Science Notation.

Nemeth worked for 30 years at the University of Detroit, helping to launch its computer science program in the 1960s. He remained active after retirement through committees at the National Federation of the Blind and transcribing Hebrew prayer books to braille among many other endeavors. Nemeth's code is still used today and his pioneering work has greatly helped to advance the accessibility of mathematics for the blind.

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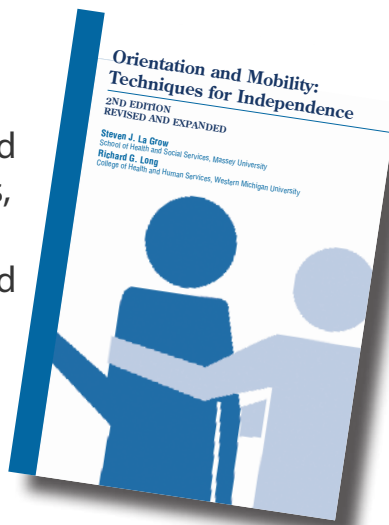
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O&M specialists and other vision professionals will find the skills, techniques, and sequence of instruction presented in this book helpful in instructing individuals with vision loss who want to regain the ability to travel independently. The book describes human guide, self-protective, directional familiarization, and cane techniques, along with strategies for indoor and outdoor travel, including those required for crossing streets, planning routes, and using public transportation.



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In The News

Cliff Olstrom, treasurer of the AER Board of Directors, retired from his position as executive director of the Tampa Lighthouse for the Blind in July 2013. He is succeeded by longtime AER member **Sheryl Brown**.

Paul Saner was named as the new commissioner of the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind in August. He replaces **Janet LaBreck**, who was confirmed as President Barack Obama's commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration in the U.S. Department of Education.

Steven Rothstein announced in July that he is stepping down as president of Perkins School for the Blind after more than a decade of service. He expects to complete the academic year through June 2014. The Board of Trustees has established a search committee for his replacement.

Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB) awarded the Seeing Beyond Vision Loss Special Achievement Award to actor **Christopher Gorham** for his portrayal of a blind CIA agent on the television series *Cover Affair*. CNIB, which helped Gorham prepare for the role, praised the actor's realistic depiction of someone who is blind.

Jewish Guild Healthcare and Lighthouse International announced on September 17, 2013, plans to join forces and operate as one organization under the new name Lighthouse Guild International. Lighthouse Guild International will be led by the current CEOs of each organization, with Jewish Guild Healthcare's **Alan R. Morse, JD, PhD** serving as president and chief executive officer, and Lighthouse International's **Mark G. Ackermann** as chief operating officer and executive vice president. Officials expect to complete the merger by the end of the first quarter of 2014.

Elsje Leaver Wins June Membership Campaign Prize

Congratulations to **Elsje Leaver** with the Royal New Zealand Foundation of the Blind who won \$250 in AERBucks during AER's June 2013 member recruitment campaign. Her name was chosen from among 29 new members who joined the association during that month. The AERBucks certificate allows holders to use the funds on any AER product, such as conferences, books or membership.

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Book Port DT with removable "mask" for simpler controls



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Publications Available from AER

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- The Family of Owen M
- Preschool Orientation and Mobility Screening, 2nd Edition
- Rehabilitation Teaching Braille Textbook Review
- My Maggie
- An Illustrated Guide to Cane Repair and More
- Words in My Hands

Go to www.aerbvi.org for complete catalog descriptions and to place your order

More information: aer@aerbvi.org

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