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ABSTRACT

Gathered from teachers around the country, this collection of teaching ideas and lesson plans is designed to provide teachers with activities and strategies for educating students with visual impairments. Tips and information are provided on: making tactile teddy bears; memory strategies; making tactile books; creating art kits; using magnifiers; an informal braille competency test; science models; reading resources; travel prerequisites for low vision drivers; storage equipment; braille videos; illuminated story books; vision books; recorded books; books for older children; Christmas gifts for children with visual impairments; independent living skills equipment; simple shoelaces; forming a braille club; a lesson plan for an edible braille cell; literacy activities; a lesson plan on clothes and grooming supplies; glow-in-the-dark activities; a lesson plan on money and work; poetry; braille flashcards; bake-offs; cooking games; low vision assessment kits; a checklist for children with visual impairments; independent living skills; tactile quilts and pillows; tips for reading a test aloud; an informal assessment of slate skills; and prerequisite skills for braille slate instruction. (CR)

TALK FROM THE

VI TEACHERS' LOUNGE

If it is to be, it is up to me!

The above quote has become my new creed because I found that a lot of things can be changed if you don't wait for other people. I spent MANY years complaining about things I thought we needed in the field. I kept saying things like, "THEY should plan get-togethers for the VI teachers in the state," "THEY should publish more teaching ideas for VI teachers that resemble items in Learning or Instructor Magazine," etc. After a while, I finally decided that I had waited for someone else long enough and it was time to act on my own. As a result, I planned some get-togethers for VI teachers in West Virginia. This initiated a monthly event calendar, which evolved into a monthly newsletter. After writing this newsletter for 2 1/2 years, I decided that maybe some of these ideas should be shared with VI teachers outside West Virginia. Several VI teachers in West Virginia had generously shared their tips and ideas for the newsletter. I had also come across some items from teachers outside the state that I thought should have a larger reading audience, so I invited some others to submit material. The result is this booklet entitled Talk From the VI Teachers' Lounge. I hope this can be the beginning of something larger, but that is yet to be seen.

I have often heard VI teachers complain that we are all reinventing the wheel. I totally agree with this statement. That is why I hope others will latch onto the phrase, "If it is to be, it is up to me." Publicize your own ideas, plan your own networking events, take charge of those problems in the field that you don't think are being addressed. Things will get done if you don't sit back and rely on someone else to do them.

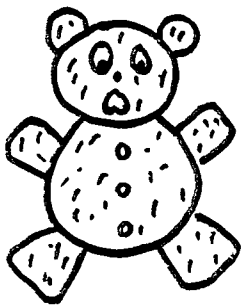
There's a wealth of knowledge in our field that needs to be shared. I am stepping forward to share some of the things I've collected. I hope you will consider finding a way to share, also. If you would like to share in a format similar to this booklet, please be sure to fill out the postcard attached to the back cover. If you would like to see a project like this continued, please mail in the postcard. If you are interested, don't expect this project to progress because of other people's responses....

If it is to be, it is up to me!

Talk From the VI Teachers' Lounge
Published By:
Judy Hurst
400 Cedarstone Dr.
Morgantown, WV 26505

TEACHER CONTRIBUTIONS

Tactile Teddy Bear



Ann Lipscomb of Fayette County has contributed a tactile craft project. Cut poster board into the shape of a teddy bear. Glue broken-up Shredded Wheat onto the body for fur. For the face, glue 2 wiggle eyes, a fuzzy ball nose and place a heart sticker upside down for a mouth. Glue real buttons onto the body.

MEMORY DEVICE

Lucy Stroschine, from Harrison County, has a technique she uses to remember the less frequently used braille short forms. She has "sentences" that help her remember the words that share a common element.

Dot 4-5 words
UPON WHOSE WORD are THESE AND THOSE.

Dot 4-5-6 words
THEIR WORLD CANNOT HAD MANY SPIRIT.

Dot 5-6 endings
CauTION. Be careFUL. That ceMENT fENCE belONGs to the cITY busiNESS.

Dot 6 endings - nATIONALLY

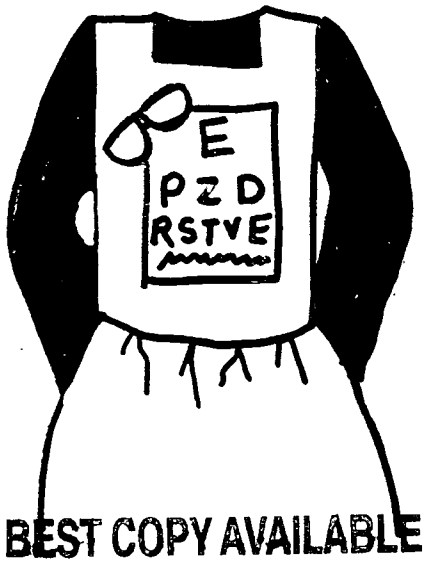
Dot 4-6 endings
Every pOUND cOUNTs unLESS ou chANCE the deciSION.

VISION IDEAS

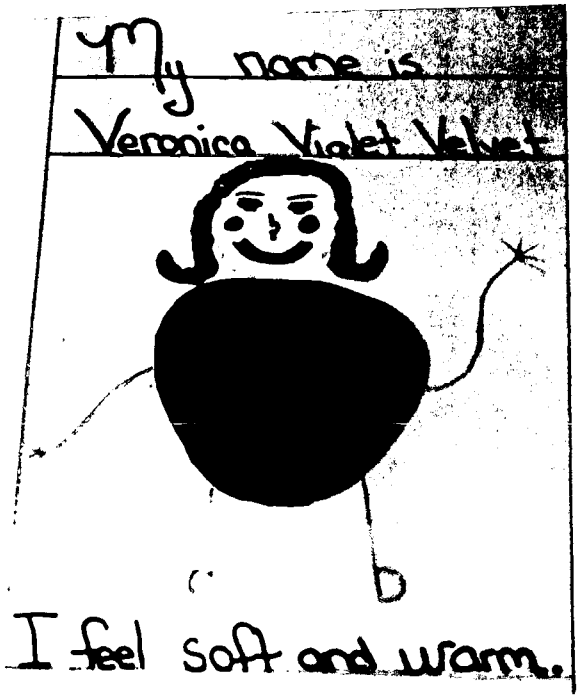
Ann Lipscomb of Fayette County reports she has had success making an inexpensive marker board for a classroom where a VI student had trouble reading from the chalkboard. She purchased tile board (stock #16605) from Lowes. The board was cut to fit over the chalkboard and attached. One teacher has used the board for 7 years. Cost is about $10!

Becky Coakley of Raleigh County recommended using a Liquid Paper Pen to cover up errors when a student is writing with a 20/20 pen. It covers the marker well.

Another one of Becky's good ideas was to make a Vision Teacher jumper. An insert in the bib of the jumper looks like a Snellen Eye Chart. She also found a pin that looks like old fashioned glasses and attached that to the jumper. Very cute!



TEACHER CONTRIBUTIONS



TACTILE BOOK

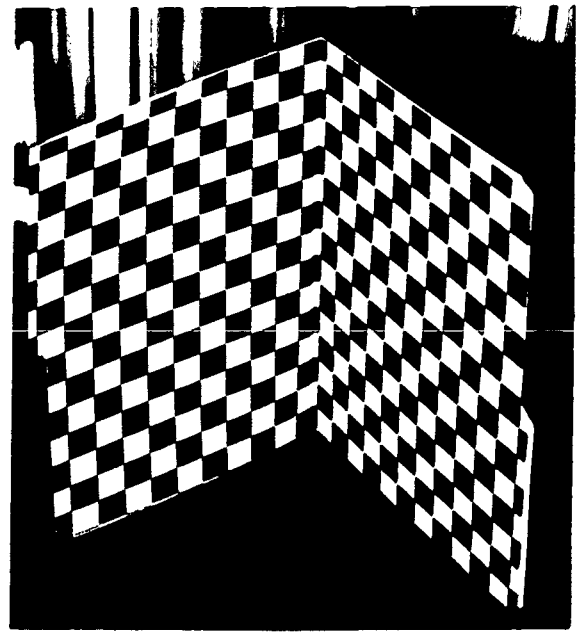
See two photos on the left

Judi Jones of Kanawha County had regular ed students make a tactile book for her students. Each page features a different texture, picture, and description of the texture.

FOLDER "ART"

See photo below

Teresa Dulko of Monongalia County shared an idea to help stimulate multihandicapped students who spend some of their time positioned on their side. A file folder covered with attactive designs can be set in the child's line of vision.



TEACHER CONTRIBUTIONS

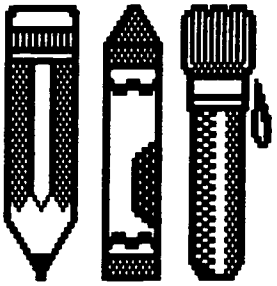
HANDY MAGNIFIER

Trina Britcher of Harrison County shares information about a magnifier that has been very well received by her students. The Visolett is a small magnifying dome that sits on the page. The cost is $39 and that includes shipping and handling. To get more information, write for a flyer:

Dr. Marvin Efron
Eye Assoc. of Cayce West Columbia
600 Knox Abbott Dr.
Cayce, SC 29033
Phone: (803) 794-4444

SINGLE CELL

Phyllis Alfreda of Tenn. School for the Blind likes to use a Teletouch machine (used by deaf-blind individuals) to reinforce braille with her kindergarten students. She can emphasize dot placement by pushing "top left; dot 1, middle left; dot 2, bottom left; dot 3," etc. Then she reviews the letters randomly. She finds this is faster than flashcards and VERY motivating for her students.



ART KIT

Teresa Dulko of Monongalia County has created Art Kits for her students. The following items are included in the kit:

scented crayons
a tracing wheel (the kind used for sewing)
a mouse pad (as a soft mat to use the tracing wheel on)
ruler
shapes to trace
pen and pencil
scissors
glue sticks
sticki wikki and yarn
brass connectors
braille paper

Put in a binder that has a pencil pocket for the small items.

She also constructs a coloring screen for each child. The directions are as follows:

Cover a 17x21" piece of firm cardboard with charcoal aluminum screen (or any type that will hold its form under repeated pressure from coloring). Use colorful duct tape around the edges to attach the screen to the cardboard and create a nice border (place tape on front edge and fold to back).

Put braille or regular paper on top for coloring--bumpy parts are colored and smooth parts are not.

4. # *INFORMAL BRAILLE COMPETENCY TEST*

(Teacher Instructions: Put the following story in braille.)

Read the story aloud and your teacher will mark another copy with any errors.

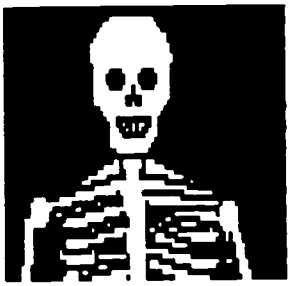
STUPID STORY

Father had to go to work that afternoon, but now he can take a walk in the busy city. "What a pretty world," he thought to himself, as he noticed all the sights and sounds as he walked. He shall never be a young character again. But, lord willing, he still had more knowledge and a better spirit after his long walk. Many people were in the streets. They cannot go across where that one car is parked. He should go right to the park now. Below a tree is a rabbit together with its daddy. They dance around with joyful jumps. The children in the park have come to swing. "Be careful, don't have an accident," a father shouts. Children also run about and hide behind rocks, beside benches and between bushes. One child hides beneath a table. A little girl begins to count to one hundred then begins to look for them. First she looks here, then there. Finally you could tell by the smile on her face, the happiness she has with finding all of her friends.

At eight o'clock, it is time for father to walk to see part of the river under the bridge. This is a rather quiet time and he finds a great place to just sit and think. He must make some time to visit a good friend. Father can see the city lights beyond, and thinks of what he will write in a letter to get immediate action on his ideas. Father sees a young girl sitting nearby. She is blind and is reading a book in braille. He knows her name is Ally, because every day she takes a walk with her mother. Today Mother tells Sally of eggs that are in a nest in a tree. She hears a bird and knows that she is sitting on her eggs. Sally asked her mother a question. The father heard the words because he was so close. She asked if they will discover the baby birds in their nest tomorrow when they come back to the park.

Father went out of the park. He was content to go through the basement with muddy shoes, although it was altogether dark in both the basement and the stairs to his apartment. Afterward, he got ready for work. Perhaps he will be paid today rather than tomorrow. At the train station, all those people were waiting with tickets. When the train came, a lady, without much room for herself, moved enough so father could sit. The space was deceiving. The train received more people at its next stop. They had no seats for themselves. Father rejoiced when he arrived at his stop. He hurried to the office. He had so much work to do. But he had all day to do it.

TEACHER CONTRIBUTIONS



Science Models

Carolynne Cooper of Wood County has the following tip for other VI teachers:

Your local college's Biology Department may be a good source of science models for your students. "I just returned a skeleton that my totally blind 2nd grader used during a science unit on the human skeleton. I was invited to borrow any other models any time. I found the chair of the department easier to contact and work with than a hospital or doctor's office."

Rewards

Teresa Dulko of Monongalia County says she uses a star-shaped punch to reward her blind student for a good paper. This takes the place of a gold star that other students might receive on their papers. These punches are available in many different shapes.

Good Resource

Ann Lipscomb of Fayette County has a recommendation for a good book on eye diseases, etc. The title is Dictionary of Eye Terminology by Barbara Cassin and Sheila Solomon. The editor is Melvin L. Rubin, MD. Address: Triad Publishing Co.
PO BOX 13355
Gainesville FL 32604
(ISBN 0-937404-07-1)

Quantity discounts are available. The price for a single copy is $24.95
Phone Number: 1800-854-4947

She also comments, "This is the best one I've found. It's pocket size so very carriable." She recommends it highly.

Low Vision Driving

Chuck Huss, an O&M and low vision driving instructor for the WV Rehabilitation Center, has contributed the following list (see next page) that he has devised. Chuck said he would like to see O&M and VI teachers include these items as goals in their students' IEPs. Many low vision individuals don't think they'll ever be drivers and these skills are ignored in their training and background.

TRAVEL PREREQUISITES FOR LOW VISION DRIVERS

Prospective low vision driving candidates should be able to:

A. Detect, identify and adjust to changes in one's travel environment(s)
1. Critical object/condition awareness*
2. Conceptual development
   a. Time
   b. Sun clues
   c. Facing
   d. Compass directions
   e. Position
   f. Configuration and space
   g. Laterality
   h. Directionality

B. Receive, retain and follow route instructions
1. Mental mapping skills
2. Conceptual development
   a. Distance measurement
   b. Street(s), cross street(s), crossroad(s)
   c. Street marker
   d. Street continuity
   e. Basic math (add, subtract)
   f. Body turns
   g. Route shape

C. Travel a designated path or route
1. Eye lead
2. Scanning ability
3. Textural and gradient change awareness
4. Object avoidance
5. Dynamic orientation
6. Sampling your environment
7. Visual memory
8. Visual recall
9. Numbering systems
10. Reverse versus alternate routes

D. Detect, analyze and cross intersections (controlled as well as uncontrolled)
1. Scanning ability
   a. Prior to crossing
   b. During crossing
2. Conceptual development
   a. Shape
   b. Size
   c. Signage

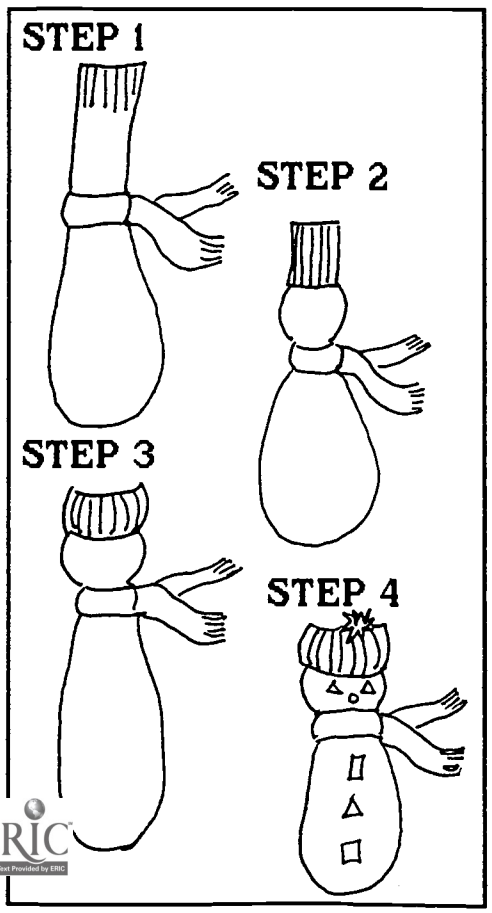
TRAVEL PREREQUISITES FOR LOW VISION DRIVERS

(page 2)

Conceptual development con't.
- d. Pavement markings
- e. Positioning and placement of signs, traffic lights and traffic
- f. Parallel versus perpendicular

3. Method of crossing
4. Object, speed and depth perception
5. Walking speed
6. Collision trap awareness
7. Color identification and discrimination
8. Yielding procedures
9. Object avoidance
10. Sound detection, differentiation and localization
11. Confidence and safety
12. Turn Right or Left on Red Laws

*"1. Critical object/condition awareness" means "objects/situations which suggest or encourage one to alter their walking speed and/or line or direction of travel to avoid conflict or contact with other objects in one's environment."



TACTILE SNOWMAN

This is a craft that I saw being made in a preschool classroom where one of my students attends. Although it doesn't give the idea of a real snowman, I like the fact that it is a very tactile project.

Materials: Clean, white tube sock; styrofoam peanuts; strip of wool or flannel; pom poms; glue-on eyes or other embellishments (they used some mirror-like shapes with adhesive on the back); rubber band

1. Stuff the tube sock about 1/2-2/3 of the way full with the styrofoam peanuts. Tie a strip of wool (like a scarf) around the sock at this point.
2. Add more peanuts to fill the sock about 3/4 of the way. Put a rubber band tightly around the sock at this point.
3. Fold the top of the sock down so it covers the rubber band.
4. Glue pom poms and other embellishments on the snowman to represent a face and buttons.

PRODUCTS THAT MAY BE OF INTEREST

CATALOG SHOPPING FUN

A catalog that I think is really neat is called Creative Educational Surplus (I call it Big Lots with an educational slant). The products are surplus and may have originally been sold for another purpose, but this company creates an educational use for all of them. Some of the items they sell are: Washing poofs they recommend for painting - 3/$2.75, 6-cup microwave muffin tins for sorting (or using for a braille cell in our case) - 6/$3.25, geometric shaped magnets with a case the magnets fit into like a puzzle - $2.50 and various types of tote bags, items for sensory stimulation and lots of velcro products. To get a catalog, write: Creative Educational Surplus, 1000 Apollo Rd., Eagan, MN 55121-2240.

POCKETS

An interesting book with several concrete activities for young children is All About Pockets-Storytime Activities for Early Childhood. It is full of fingerplays, songs and activities about pockets. $9.95 + $2 S&H. Storytime Ink, Int'l, PO Box 470505, Broadview Hgts, OH 44147-0505.

STORAGE EQUIPMENT

An item I've found very useful with a CVI child I teach is the Space-Master 3. This is a 3-section, cardboard organizational device with one section containing three drawers and two sections are shelves which can be set up horizontally or vertically. The drawers are color-coded, which makes them even more useful for a CVI child.

We've found this beneficial because we had a section of the room blocked off so that this child could work one-to-one without distractions. A lot of equipment was piling up and was very disorganized. This piece of equipment has really worked well. It is lightweight, so it is easy for her to open the drawers. We've used it to work on spatial relations--top, bottom, middle, left, and right and she's learning where everything is kept so she can get and replace items herself (unlike the Cinderella Syndrome where things just "appear").

A talking book machine will exactly fit onto the bottom shelf where she can pull it out to use. Books and soundboards are stored in the vertical shelves; sorting supplies and a sorting dish are on the horizontal shelves; smell bottles, tapes, color sorting activities and concept development items are kept in the drawers.

This unit is available from: Calloway House, Inc., 451 Richardson Dr., Lancaster, PA 17603-4098 (order # 73-SPM208). Cost is $35.50 + $5.50 for S&H.

PRODUCTS THAT MAY BE OF INTEREST

SUMMER READING

Bill Irwin is an adventitiously blinded man who has written a book about his hike on the Appalachian Trail with his guide dog, Orient. His book, Blind Courage, combines adventure, humor and inspiration. Besides this book, he has also produced some inspirational audiotapes.

Blind Courage is available in print or on audiotape through:

Bill Irwin Ministries, Inc.
PO Box 4266
Burlington NC 27215-0902

The cost of the print book is $20; the audiotape is $12.95.

Other tapes, which cost $10 apiece (or 3 for $25), are: "...But Now I See," "When the Going Gets Tough," and "I Couldn't See the Forest OR the Trees!" The first two tapes are motivational, the third is humorous stories from his hike on the Appalachian Trail.

Braille Video

The Hadley School for the Blind has a nice video about braille usage that can be borrowed at no charge (except for return postage). "Personal Touch: Braille for a Lifelong Enrichment" is narrated by Sally Mangold and shows how various people use braille in their everyday lives.

To borrow, write to:
Dean's Office
The Hadley School for the Blind
700 Elm Street
Winnetka, IL 60093-0299

Newspatch Newsletter

The Reader's Digest of the vision work is a publication called The National Newspatch. It is an eclectic newsletter published by the Oregon School for the Blind and AER Division 8 (Infant and Preschool) members. Each issue is chock-full of information relevant to teachers and parents of visually impaired children of all ages. A subscription only costs $5 and the newsletter is comprised of 24 pages every 6 months.

Order from: The National Newspatch
Oregon School for the Blind
700 Church Street SE
Salem, OR 97301

PRODUCTS THAT MAY BE OF INTEREST

ILLUMINATED STORY BOOKS

A new use for light boxes has been devised by Light Bright Books Co. The "books" are specifically designed for VI and MI students. "Transparencies" with pictures can be pivoted over the light box as the story is read, giving high illumination to each simple illustration. Their light box works on batteries as well as an AC adapter. To get more information, request a flyer from: Light Bright Books, 2930 East 4th Ave., Durango, CO 81301; Phone (970) 259-0563. Their light box sells for $125, a carrying case for $35, each color book costs $23 and B&W books are $20 each.

The students I've tried this with really enjoy it. It's very portable with the carrying case and the pivoting works really well. The only problem I've discovered is that the back of the transparencies will smear if wet, making it a problem to use with students who drool, unless you thoroughly dry the top of each transparency before you move to the next one.

VISION BOOKS

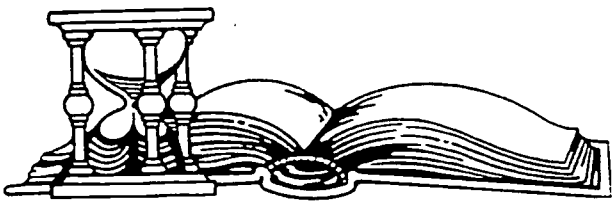
Lois Harrell Productions have several books available concerning the education of visually impaired children. One very eclectic book is entitled Children's Vision Concerns - Looks Beyond the Eyes. It sells for $29.75 and contains information on obtaining a vision diagnosis and the implications. There are 11 case studies in the book.

Another interesting publication is VI Child's Information Packet for $7.50. It contains info to share with parents on topics like determining braille or LP reading readiness, using a braille grocery list to introduce young children to braille and concept development. Information available from: Reach and Teach, Lois Harrell Productions, PO Box 2385, Placerville CA 95667; Phone: 1-800-834-1007.

MARFAN RESOURCES

The National Marfan Foundation has produced a new video concerning how genes determine your make-up. It is geared toward children ages 10-15. The title is "How Do Your Genes Fit?" and is available for $20 + $3.95 S&H. (I had hoped it would be general enough to show any child with a genetic eye condition, but it deals quite heavily with Marfan Syndrome.) If you have a student with Marfan Syndrome, this, and other resources are available from:

NF, 382 Main St., Port Washington, NY 11050; Phone 1-800-8-MARFAN



TOPIC OF THE MONTH:

BOOKS, BOOKS, BOOKS

BOOKS TO FEEL

There are some nice tactile books commercially available, beyond the old Pat the Bunny classic.

FUZZY YELLOW DUCKLINGS - Each page has a different texture, color and cut-out shape.

FEELY BUGS - A book with different textured bugs on each page.

THE VERY BUSY SPIDER - Although this doesn't have much to touch, the spider web, spider and fly are raised up and can be felt. The board book version is very sturdy.

BOOKS FOR OLDER KIDS

1. The CHICKEN SOUP FOR THE SOUL books are available in large print. Bookstores should be able to order them if they don't have them in stock. They cost about $17.

2. A 12-month large print subscription to READER'S DIGEST is available for only $11.95 a year. The address is:

Large-Type Edition
Dept. LTE
PO Box 241
Mount Morris, IL 61054-0241

RECORDED BOOKS

Commercially recorded books (for all ages) are quite readily available these days. Barbara Bush recorded a series of children's stories like CURIOUS GEORGE and A BARGAIN FOR FRANCES. These are quite inexpensive (about $4 each). Some include sound effects.

WHERE THE SIDEWALK ENDS (Shel Silverstein) and THE NEW KID ON THE BLOCK (Jack Prelutsky) are neat, funny poem books that are available on tape.

Some other funny tapes I like are by Bill Harley (COOL IN SCHOOL, etc.) Some of the tapes are stories, some songs and some are a combination. I haven't seen them in too many stores, but you can order them by mail. Call 1-800-682-9522 to receive a flyer. They're about $10 each.

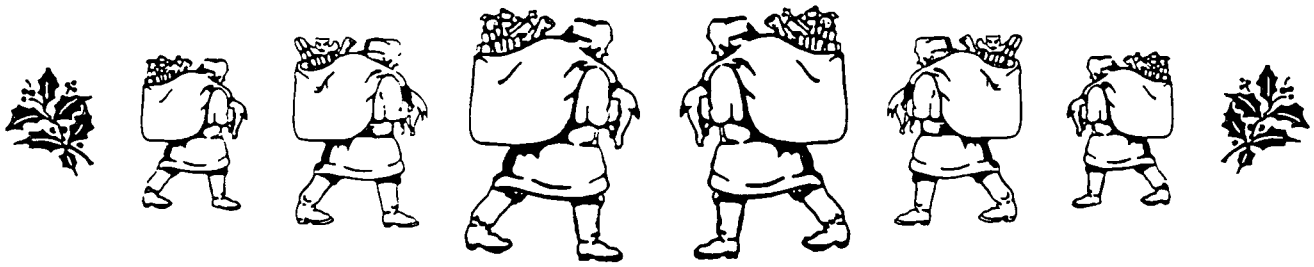
For older children, one tape I would recommend is HATCHET by Gary Paulsen. It is regularly priced at $18 and should be available from a book store.

Although not a book, I recently found a travel game called "What's That Sound" at K-Mart. It costs only $2.99 and includes 45 different sounds. There are small picture cards with it to use to play a game, but the sounds can stand alone.

All would make good gifts.

TOPIC OF THE MONTH:

Christmas Gifts for VI Children



Here are a few ideas for Christmas gifts for parents or teachers to give to VI students.

1. A home ec teacher I know recommends giving students their own sets of measuring cups and spoons along with microwave popcorn, simple mixes, etc. It's one way to encourage a follow-through of ILS skills at home. (Color-coded measuring utensils are available or the Good Cook company has some cooking supplies with "bold graphics for easy reading.")

2. Black and white illustrated board books are now available in some bookstores. Simple shapes are shown as a solid black figure on white pages, making them more visible for VI children. For multihandicapped children, page fluffers could be added to make the pages easier to turn. (Page fluffers are made as follows: Hot glue a piece of foam or sponge onto a 1" piece of index card. Paper clip the card to the top right-hand corner of each right-hand page in the book. This provides a space between pages to make it easier to turn pages.)

3. Phyllis Alfreda, a kindergarten teacher from the Tenn. School for the Blind has many items she likes to get for her students. To help with finger strength, she buys toy hand drills, wind-up toys and Scatch games (velcro balls with catching disks). She likes some games like Crocodile Dentist (available in full size or travel size) and she says Hi Ho Cherrio can be adapted for low vision students. She recommends a Lite Bright (even for very low vision children because it works on fine motor skills) and the Perfection game (without the timer, just used as a puzzle). Another item is Bumble balls and Phyllis particularly likes the giggling one because it stops moving, but still giggles. This makes it easier for the child to find.

4. Record yourself reading stories or poems for your multihandicapped students to listen to.

5. Books by the author Sally Hobart Alexander might by a good gift for VI children. Sally, blinded at age 27, has written several children's books. Two are photo essays about her blindness: Mom's Best Friend and My Mom Can't See Me. Older students might enjoy her autobiography called Taking Hold, My Journey Into Blindness (which may not be available in recorded form at this time). A second autobiographical book by Sally has just been released. It is called On My Own.

6. Braille sports cards can be obtained fairly inexpensively from some card shops. Football and car racing cards can be ordered by mail from: Terry Brennfoerder, 1431 Fairfield St., Lincoln, NE 68521. Send for ice list.

TOPIC OF THE MONTH:

INDEPENDENT LIVING SKILLS EQUIPMENT

ILS ITEMS

Some equipment you might want to try with your students is listed below:

1. Easy Grip Cutting Board- One side is white and the other side is black. Could be used as a background in situations other than cutting, too. Available from: Maxi-Aids, PO Box 3209, Farmingdale, NY 11735 (1-800-522-6294). They cost about $23.

2. Snake Light- The light is attached to a coil about 2-feet long. It can be bent around your neck and pointed at something on your lap. You can bend it and point it in hard-to-reach places, like under the sink. It will fit in a large purse and could be set on the table in a dark restaurant to help with reading the menu. Black & Decker makes one and they're available in hardware stores.

3. Some students with motor problems have trouble zipping. A common suggestion is to put a ring through the zipper. I have students who still have a problem with the ring. A neat item I found is a Koosh ball zipper pull. It's a mini-Koosh ball that can be attached to the zipper so a child has more to grasp. Check toy stores that sell Koosh products. They cost about $2.50.

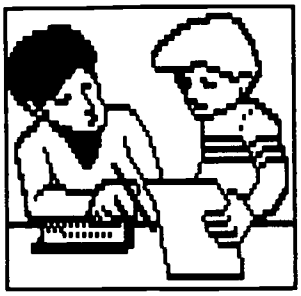
SIMPLE SHOELACES

I discovered a new type of shoelaces that I think are wonderful. They are called Stringers and are a tight coil of elastic. They resolve a lot of problems regular shoelaces have--you don't have laces dragging on the ground and you don't need to tie and untie them. Since they are elastic, your shoe stays on even when the shoe is "untied." To "tie" your shoe, you simply twist 2 curly pieces together, but this is not even necessary. Not everyone likes them as much as I do. One parent said it was difficult to get her child's high tops on with them, since she has to loosen the laces so much; another said they made her child's shoes too tight. (You must initially lace your shoes with your feet in them and then don't ever tighten them.) I've had mine for several years and love them and have used them successfully with some students.

The only place I found these laces initially was at special kiosks at malls or speciality shopping areas. They were $4 a pair. Now they seem to be available in other stores. One parent found them at Dollar General and I recently saw them at Wal-Mart under the name "Why Tie Shoelaces?" The cost was less than $2.

They are available by mail, but the shipping and handling makes it very expensive to order 1 pair. There are discount prices set up for volume orders and they can be sold as a fund raiser. To get more info and a price list write:

Stringers
3706 N. Ocean Blvd. #203
Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33308



LESSON OF THE MONTH

TOPIC: Braille Club

TARGETED GROUP: Regular Ed students (4th-6th grade) with VI student(s) as assistants.

CREATED BY: Judy Hurst

Braille Literacy Week, during January, is a good time to promote braille to regular education students. Here are some details of a Braille Club I formed last year. The club met at an elementary school where I worked with one student on braille as a secondary method of reading. One other student I had (with knowledge of grade 1 braille) also came to help. Notices were sent out to 6th graders first, then 5th graders. I wanted to limit the group to 15. We ended up with about 12, but not everyone showed up every week. We met one day a week, right after school, for 5 weeks. Each session was scheduled to last about an hour. Some of my ideas came from 2 articles I had read by other people who started braille clubs. One article was included in the PEP literature from AFB for 1996 (promoting Braille Literacy Week). It was entitled "How to Make a Braille Wave by Bonnie Simons." The other article was printed in Future Reflections (Fall 1995, Volume 14, No. 3). The article was called "Secret Code Braille Club" by Peggy Niedermann.

My format was basically to introduce a few braille letters each week to the whole group (and review ones from the previous week). Most days we watched part of a video about braille and then split into 3 groups. I was in charge of one group and each of my students were in charge of another.

WEEK 1- I gave a general introduction to braille and talked about the formation of the braille cell. Then I introduced the letters A B C D E F (I used a 6-cup muffin tin with small red bean bags to demonstrate the formation of the letters to the group).

We watched the first 1/3 of the video "Unlocking the Secrets of the Braille Code" (produced by the Indiana School for the Blind, but hasn't been commercially available). Another possible video is "Personal Touch: Braille for Lifelong Enrichment" which is available on loan from the Hadley School for the Blind.

As a large group, we played the "4 Corners and a Middle" game. It is played by numbering each corner of the room and putting a #5 in the middle. (I make 8 1/2x11" signs with a print numeral written on each, as well as a very large print version of the braille numeral.) One person is selected to stand in the hall for the duration of the game. For each round, the other students pick a braille numeral, 1-5, from cards in a box or bowl. Whatever numeral they pick, they must match with the numbered corners (and middle) and go stand at that location. Then the person in the hall is asked to say one number from 1-5. Everyone standing at that location must sit down. Play continues with remaining participants in this fashion until there's only one person left. (Those sitting down could have a braille alphabet card to study, or something

BRAILLE CLUB

to keep them busy if they're not watching the game.)

We then split into 3 groups:

A. I showed my group the braillewriter and had each student use it to make a name tag in braille for themselves.

B. One of my students supervised The Bean Game. In this game, a bowl of dried beans (or other small objects) are put in the middle of the group. A braille die is needed with the numerals 0-5. The students may also need a "cheat sheet" at this point. At each student's turn, he rolls the die and then takes the number of beans it indicates. Everyone takes turns until the pot of beans is gone or until time is called. Then everyone counts their beans and the one with the most is the winner.

C. Another student supervised the Hands Down game. Hands Down is a commercially available game (which I picked up at a yard sale). My student used the muffin tin and bean bags to indicate a braille letter (from the ones we had introduced). He held it up for all to see and the students raced to press down the hands to see who got to answer first.

WEEK 2- We hadn't finished the first week's activities, so we finished rotating those activities. Then we met as a group to review the letters and learn G H I J K and L. The second part of the video was viewed. I also showed some braille equipment, braille books, etc.

The 3 groups consisted of:

A. Braille BINGO. Bingo boards of 9 squares were used with the first 10 numerals. One of my students called the numbers and checked for winners.

B. Slate and Stylus Rubber Stamp activity (see Carol Gamble's article on page 47). This was supposed to help prepare the students for using a slate and stylus. They were given graph paper, Crayola Mini Stampers (felt pens with stamps for tips) and Anna Swenson's "cheat sheet" for the slate and stylus (see page 17). They were to use the pens to write their name as if using a slate and stylus, with one of my students helping to show them how. The biggest problem with this activity is that with actual graph paper, the students didn't know enough about braille spacing to write much that was readable. Next time I would design paper that had 6-cell blocks.

C. ABC Book. I instructed the third group in making ABC books. They used braillewriters to write one letter of the braille alphabet on each of 26 3x5" index cards. I also had ABC print stickers they put on the same page. We just stapled these together when they finished (it took more than one week) and they took them home.

WEEK 3- Review, introduced letters M N O P Q and R and saw the last part of the video.

A. This group continued to work on their ABC book.

B. One of my students had a group playing a coloring sheet game. Different parts of the coloring sheet had letters of the alphabet written on them (i.e. the hair was "e," the shirt was "k," etc.) Braille cards were placed on the table. When it was the student's turn, she would pick a card, figure out the letter and color that portion of the coloring sheet. The

BRAILLE CLUB

person who finished their picture first was the winner.

C. The other student played Crocodile Dentist (a commercial game) with his group. On each turn, a student picked a card in braille and read the letter. If correct, he pushed a tooth in the crocodile's mouth. The person who got bitten was the winner.

WEEK 4- First we reviewed previous letters and I introduced the letters S T U V W and X. Then I had several activities set up that students could look at or work on and it gave those who had missed some weeks a little time to catch up. Students could finish their ABC books, practice with slate and stylus or braillewriter, do a braille dot-to-dot puzzle, make words with the Playskool magnetic letters or participate in one of the following groups:

A. Slam Dunk- This game was played with a Nerf ball and a small basketball hoop. The shooter picked a braille card to read. If she named the letter correctly, she could shoot for a basket. Each successful basket earned 1 point and the person with the most points won.

B. Fill In Blank Story- I read a story to the group with several nouns missing. The students had cards with silly nouns written on them (words like turtle, muffin, etc.) When I'd get to a blank in the story, one student would pick a card and read the braille word on the card (only grade 1 words were used). The story usually turned out to be quite funny.

In conclusion, we reassembled as a group and had a "Braille Bee" (instead of a Spelling Bee).

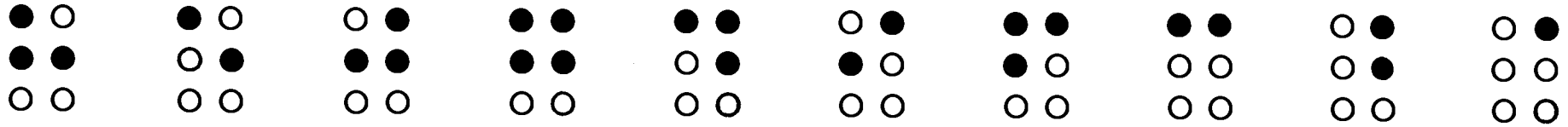
WEEK 5- I quickly introduced the letters Y and Z and then gave the students a "quiz." I didn't make them put their names on them, but I wanted to evaluate how many letters the students had learned in our 5-week session. The average score was 17 letters correct. (The students who missed some weeks did the poorest.) I also had the students answer a few questions. Most liked basketball and making the books best. All said they would join again and most said 5 weeks wasn't long enough (I would have to agree).

I then passed out certificates to all the students. We had a door prize (a shirt with the braille letters on it). To enter the draving, the students had to write their names in braille on cards and we drew one name.

Then we made the Edible Braille Cell Pizza (see page 18). While eating their pizzas I read the story, "How Magic Helped a Blind Girl See" from A 3rd Serving of Chicken Soup for the Soul. In conclusion, I tried to make the point that blind people can do just about anything if given the right tools or techniques (and tied that into the story). We concluded with another "Braille Bee."

Try a Braille Club and get all children interested in braille!

TEBAHPLA ELLIARB EHT
(FOR SLATE WRITING)



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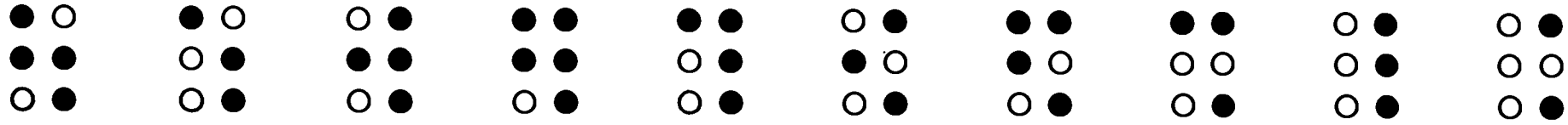

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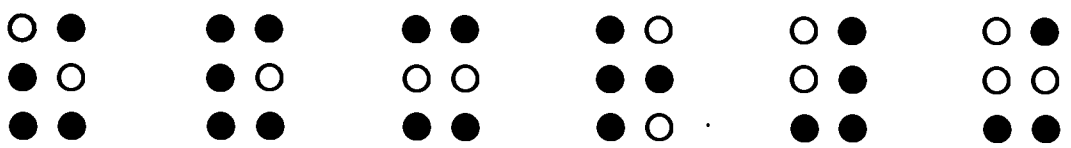

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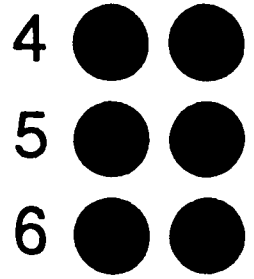
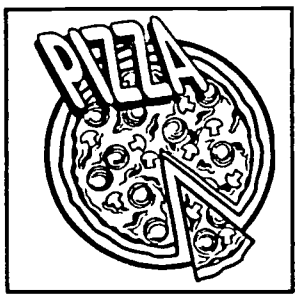
The Braille Cell



Anna Swenson; Fairfax County, Virginia



LESSON OF THE MONTH

TOPIC: Braille (Edible Braille Cell)

TARGETED GROUP: Student learning braille as secondary mode. (Also regular ed students)

CREATED BY: Judy Hurst

This lesson has several parts and several goals. I like to tie my students' goals together whenever possible and include them in a functional activity. Hosting a Braille Club this year has given me an opportunity to do some of that with two low vision students I have. Both are being introduced to braille as a secondary reading mode and one way to make braille more "important" to them was to host the Braille Club in a public school where one student attended. I let them help plan the activities we would do and after reading them some ideas from two articles I had seen about forming a Braille Club, they picked up on the idea of an edible braille cell. The original idea was done with Rice Krispy Treats and chocolate chips, but my students wanted to try it with pizza.

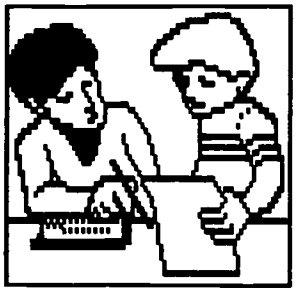
As luck would have it, I had Braille Club on Thursday and I worked with each of these students on Thursday before the club.

Part I: During my session with Student #1, we did a MOBILITY lesson by walking to a grocery store near the school. I told the student my budget and he had to use his VISION to locate the items and their prices and use MENTAL MATH to figure out how many pizzas and how much pepperoni we would need to buy (we bought the pre-cut kind) so that each student could make a "braille cell." The ready-made pizzas were stored in a convenient refrigerator until later.

Part II: Student #2 participated in an ILS lesson which included baking the pizzas, cutting them into rectangles of the appropriate size with a pizza cutter and wrapping each rectangle in plastic wrap for later. The pizzas were again stored in a convenient refrigerator.

Part III: This was the concluding activity for the 5-week Braille Club. The 10 regular ed students were each given their piece of pizza and six slices of pepperoni for the dots. Prior to microwaving the pizza, they were quizzed on various braille letters and used their pepperoni for the dots. My students were responsible for checking on the correctness of the BRAILLE.

All the students enjoyed the activity, but if it were up to me, I'd stick with the Rice Krispy Treat idea (having a student make the treats during one of our sessions). No refrigeration is required. The pizza slices were rather messy and some fell apart when we tried to wrap them.



LESSON OF THE MONTH

TOPIC: Braille Club & Literacy Week Activities

TARGETED GROUP: Elementary Students with VI student as assistant.

CREATED BY: Carolynne Cooper

One of my activities for National Braille Literacy Month was a Braille Club. It was open to all students in the school. Grades K-1 met on Tuesdays after school, grades 2-3 met on Wednesdays and grades 4-6 met on Thursdays. Each session was 40 minutes long. No kindergartners or 6th graders attended at any time. Close to 40 kids attended altogether. The largest group was the 2nd-3rd graders, with a total of 21. The smallest group was 4th-5th graders, totaling 9. Donovan (my blind student), not included in these totals, came every day he was able. Also, there were far more girls than boys. A reporter from the evening paper came and a story was put in the paper. I used ideas and sheets from the AFB information (PEP sheet) they've sent in past years.

Students learned the 6 dot numbers that make up the braille cell by placing Fruit Loops in the correct positions in half an egg carton, forming a letter which they identified by referring to their cheat sheet. When this activity was finished, the kids could eat their Fruit Loops. Another Fruit Loop activity was playing Braille Lotto. A braille letter was put on a swing cell, and the students, using their cheat sheets, would identify the letter and cover that letter on their printed Lotto board. Again, when this activity was finished, the kids ate their cereal.

In addition to eating lots of Fruit Loops, several sheets with matching or translating activities were done and there was a discussion on where braille is seen in the community and in the school. While each group was challenged to learn the letters A-J in a week, there was little interest, and learning the rest of the alphabet was not pursued. (Some of the 5th graders were doing well in learning the letters later on.) Besides Donovan's help of calling out dot numbers, making letters on the swing cell for Lotto and brailling names, I also had 5 volunteers from the Williamstown Women's Club. That was very important to the success of the club.

On the last day of the club, the students were given their names in braille and were allowed to keep their cheat sheet.

OTHER ACTIVITIES DURING BRAILLE LITERACY WEEK

Donovan had 12 reading and/or speaking appointments in the school.

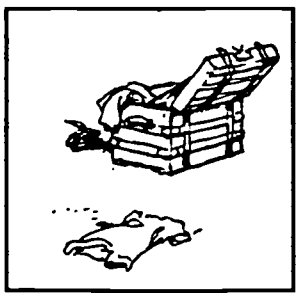
"Dear Dot" boxes were located on each floor. Students could ask questions about braille. I would answer the questions the next morning on the intercom. (Two of my favorites were: "Are there going to be snacks at Braille Club?" and "Do Chinese people use the same braille code?"

Morning announcements included informational braille tidbits.

The 2nd grade helped celebrate with a Louis Braille birthday party.

Teachers came to see how I use the computer to produce braille.

LESSON OF THE MONTH



TOPIC: Concept Development - Clothes and Grooming Supplies

TARGETED GROUP: Mild or Moderately Impaired Group with Visually Impaired student

CREATED BY: Judy Hurst

MATERIALS: 2 suitcases, clothing items (like shirt, pants, tie, nightgown), grooming supplies (like shampoo and toothpaste), and other items you might pack for a trip (like a book or stuffed animal).

AMOUNT OF TIME: 2 sessions lasting 30-40 minutes each

LESSON #1:

The group I used this lesson with are mild and moderately impaired students and have a "language lesson" group twice a week. I was trying to model using a hands-on approach with concrete objects.

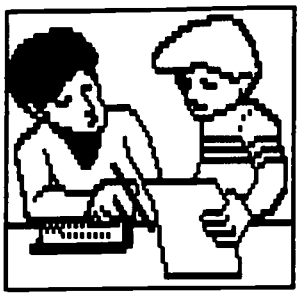
I arrived with a suitcase full of items that might be packed for a trip. (See list above.) First I asked the students what the suitcase was (and let my VI student feel it). Then I asked them what they thought was inside. (My student was not the only one who lacked knowledge of a suitcase and its use.) We talked about the suitcase, its function and what might be packed for a trip. Then we pulled out the items and talked about and felt each thing. (We also smelled the shampoo and toothpaste.) We worked on learning the item's function by finding items we'd use to go swimming, things we'd use for play, things to wear, etc.

LESSON #2:

The following week I wanted to build on this experience, so I returned with two suitcases containing duplicate items in each. We reviewed the objects and then began a relay race involving these items.

Two of the students were in wheelchairs, so they were each positioned next to a suitcase with an adult helping each child. The remainder of the students were split into two teams and positioned near a pile of items that had been discussed last week. (Fortunately we had 1 or 2 adults to help these students, also.) Each student near a suitcase would name an article for her team to find. The first student in line had to locate the item, bring it to the "suitcase packer," and she placed it in the suitcase (my student was by a suitcase, so this way she was able to touch each item).

This was supposed to be a language group (although my concern was concept development) and students who rarely speak were really vocalizing as they were calling out what article to find and cheering on their teammates with "Hurry up," etc. The first team to get their suitcase packed was the winning team. The students had a good time and a lot of hands-on experience with these items.



LESSON OF THE MONTH

TOPIC: Glow-in-the-Dark Activities

TARGETED GROUP: Any group of low vision children, depending on activities

CREATED BY: Judy Hurst

I have done several activities with glow-in-the-dark objects. I like using them with certain students because they create more contrast between the item and the background and because it eliminates all the clutter. This is especially good for CVI children.

GLOW-IN-THE-DARK ROOM

I tried this with a group of young mentally impaired students. I decorated a small dark room by hanging glow-in-the-dark stars from the ceiling, used glowing paint on a sweatshirt which I stuffed to looked like a person with a glowing head, and placed glowing bugs all around with anything else I had that glowed. My assistant and I donned glow-in-the-dark make-up and jewelry (and even eye glasses). A record of spooky sounds played in the background. If done with older students, you might even want to throw in some tactile experiences, like the oft-used peeled grape "eyeballs" and cooked spaghetti "brains." This can be quite a multi-sensory experience.

OTHER GLOW-IN-THE-DARK ACTIVITIES

On other occasions I've used glowing objects in more "academic" activities. With a small group of MI students we used glowing objects in a dark room to work on counting and concept development. The students counted glowing bugs and also selected ones that were large and small. We made shapes from a Perler Bead kit that used glow-in-the-dark beads. After the beads were heated together (forming common shapes) the students identified the shapes.

I have also used glow-in-the-dark ornaments for visual discrimination activities. I had shapes like reindeer, snowmen and snowflakes. I would set out 3-4 ornaments and have the student visually locate the one that was different.

There are many glow-in-the-dark items commercially available. They are plentiful at Halloween and science stores carry a lot of these items.

One tip for "recharging" the glow is to place the items on top of a light box. It gets them glowing again more quickly than the room light does.

LESSON OF THE MONTH

TOPIC: Concept Development - Money and Work

TARGETED GROUP: Mild or Moderately Impaired Students with Visually Impaired Student

CREATED BY: Judy Hurst

MATERIALS: Banks, purses, wallets (anything you use to hold money); coins, Kool-Aid, pitcher, water, cups, sponge

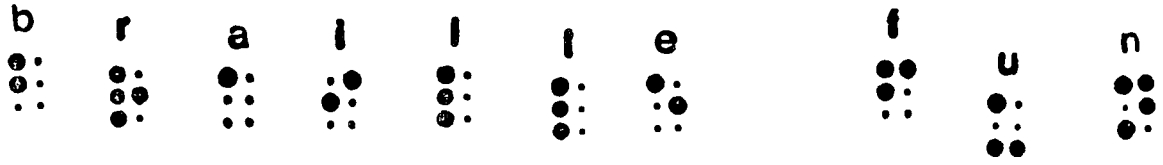
AMOUNT OF TIME: Approximately 40 minutes (or longer)

LESSON, Part I:
I started by talking to the students about money and having them look at and feel various coins and paper money. Then I brought out various places to keep money, such as a bank, a purse, etc. We even talked about putting it in a pocket. I had an EMPTY bank and a FULL one, so we talked about those concepts, as well as HEAVY and LIGHT. After some hands-on experience with these items, I told them that people had to work to get money. Then I provided them with an experience to get the connection between work and pay.

LESSON, Part II:
For this part of the activity, I gave each student a job. I told them that after they finished their job, they would get a nickel. Once they earned their nickel, they could SAVE it or SPEND it. If they wanted to spend it, they could buy a cup of Kool-Aid for a nickel. If they wanted to save it, they could drink a cup of water. (Of course, all the students choose to spend their money.)

The students were given the following jobs:
Student 1- Poured the Kool-Aid mix into the pitcher.
Student 2- Measured and poured sugar into the pitcher.
Student 3- Measured and poured the water into the pitcher.
Student 4- Stirred the Kool-Aid.
Student 5- Washed off the table.
Student 6- Dried the table.
Student 7- Took drink orders and collected nickels.
Student 8- Poured the Kool-Aid into cups.
Student 9- Served the Kool-Aid.

Some of these jobs could be combined if there are fewer students. The point is to be sure each child has a task to perform.



I'M A POET AND DIDN'T KNOW IT!

I have adapted a popular print activity into braille for my students to practice their braille reading. Magnetic words to create poetry are now being sold in kits for about $20. The same thing can be replicated in braille by using magnetic dymo tape. (This is available from The Lighthouse, Consumer Products Div., 36-20 Northern Blvd., Long Island City, NY 11101. Phone: 1-800-829-0500. The cost for 1 roll of tape is $4.95.) A cookie sheet can be used to hold the magnetic words while the student selects the ones he/she wants to create a poem. The kits contain words such as: friend, play, chocolate, sometime, how, for, little, tickle, the, mom, cool, am, sister, where, your, I, school, etc. Endings such as "ing" can also be included. Have students make up their own words and type them onto the magnetic tape, too.

What's My Fortune?

An activity I tried that highly motivated my students was writing fortunes for fortune cookies. They made up fortunes to give their family and wrote them on the braille writer. The fortunes were cut into strips and we actually made fortune cookies to put them in. (My recipe was a flop, however, and I might suggest just putting the fortunes into plastic Easter eggs or something that wouldn't be as messy.) This could also be an activity for Braille Literacy Week, where regular ed students were each given a fortune to figure out using a "cheat sheet."

Braille Flash-cards

Here's one successful activity I've tried with regular ed students in order to give them more exposure to braille.

After introducing the braille cell and some letters, I had the students each spread frosting on graham crackers broken into 4 rectangles. Using M&Ms (or chocolate chips) I had them put a braille cell on one cracker, and the letters "a," "b," and "c" on the other 3. Before they could eat them, I quizzed them on their "graham cracker flashcards." (Each student could be given a "cheat sheet" also.)

BAKE-OFF FOR VI STUDENTS

One activity that I have sponsored, in an effort to get visually impaired students together, was to hold a Bake-Off. The first one was such a big success that the students "bugged" me until we held another one 2 years later. VI students from neighboring counties were also invited. This activity neeed quite a bit of adult support. VI teachers, teacher's aides and parents provided the assistance that was needed, as well as some students from a home ec class.

We were able to obtain a home ec room in a public school as the site for the Bake-Off. Baking and other activities were set up on a rotating basis. As a group, students introduced themselves and told what recipe they would be making. Some general rules were reviewed and a cooking sequence was established (those who had recipes that needed to set or cool were scheduled first, those with recipes to be served hot were saved for last). Some students began cooking right away, while others participated in cooking games or other activities.

The students who were cooking were observed and rated for their safety and cleanliness. Beginning "chefs" were given the help they needed, but those who were more experienced were expected to prepare their dish without assistance.

Jeopardy is always a popular game with our students, so cooking questions were devised (see samples on pages 26-27). Other games are explained on page 25.

One year we had two guest speakers who also acted as judges. One speaker worked for the power company and spoke about microwave cooking. She provided the students with large print cookbooks (which I had also put into braille). The other speaker was a home ec teacher who had a grown blind daughter. She spoke about some of the adaptations her daughter used for cooking. The second year we invited a visually impaired man who had started his own pasta making business (see pages 41-42), but he was unable to attend. He did send some of his products for us to eat for lunch and provided enough information for us to share with the students.

Prizes and certificates were handed out at the end of the activity. (Prizes mainly consisted of cake mixes, microwave popcorn, macaroni and cheese mixes, etc. that were obtained cheaply.)

Things were more hectic the second year. Since it was right before Christmas, we added a couple Christmas food crafts. Students prepared the ingredients, so that made for even more supervised cooking. One craft they made was Christmas Popcorn Trees and the other was molded mints. The students packaged their mints in homemade boxes. See recipes on pages 28-29.

COOKING GAMES

These games are intended to be used to practice the various concepts after they have been introduced.

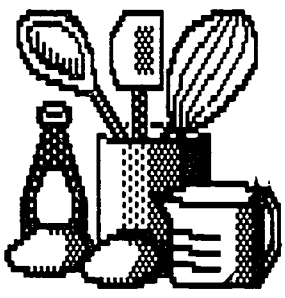
1. CHECKERS- Squares on a checkerboard can be labeled with measurements like 1/2 cup, 1 teas., etc. before the checkers are laid out. Before moving, the player must select the square where he will be moving and say the measurement printed on it, then point to the utensil which is equal to that measurement. If the correct utensil is chosen, the player can move the checkerboard piece to the indicated square. The rest of the game is played like any checker game.

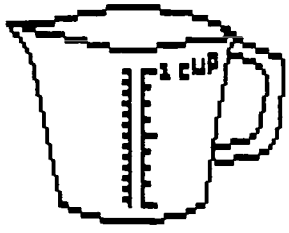
2. TIC TAC TOE- Select 9 common kitchen utensils the student is learning about. Write the name of each on a Tic Tac Toe board square. Before the player can place their X or 0 on that square, he must point to the kitchen utensil with that name and tell or show the function. Then he can place the game piece on that square. The rest of the game is just like Tic Tac Toe.

3. WHO HAS THE MOST? All players receive a container identical in size (containers holding 3-4 cups are preferred). Cards are made that say 1/2 cup, 1 cup, 3/4 cup, etc. and one card has a zero on it. After selecting a card, the player measures that much of a liquid or solid substance. (Water, colored water, beans, cornmeal, styrofoam peanuts, popcorn or rice could be used as the substance to measure.) If the measurement is accurate, the student may pour the substance into his container. Players take turns selecting a card and measuring. Whoever fills their cup first is the winner. (You may want to set the cups on a tray or jelly roll pan in order to collect spills.)

4. CONCENTRATION- (For use with partially sighted students) A set of cards can be made with the words 2 1/2 cups, 3/4 cups, 1 1/3 cups, etc. Make a second set of cards with pictures of measuring cups that match the above measurements. A student turns up 2 cards. If the picture and words indicate the same measurement, the student keeps the pair and plays again. The game is identical to any Concentration game.

5. CAN OPENER RACE- Pair 2 students against each other with cans of identical diameter. Give each student a can opener and see who gets their can opened first.





COOKING JEOPARDY (BEGINNER)

Questions for each category were put on a different color index card. The purpose of different colors was to be able to set the game up quickly, but with the beginning group it helped them pick a question. They couldn't remember categories and said "Blue for 10," etc.

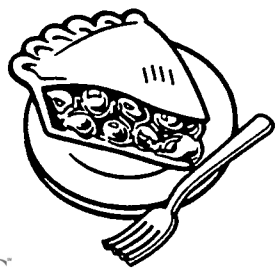
NAME THE UTENSIL
- What is this? (Show ice cream scoop)
- What are these? (Show measuring spoons)
- What is this? (Show cheese grater)
- What is this? (Show spatula)
- What is this? (Show ladle)

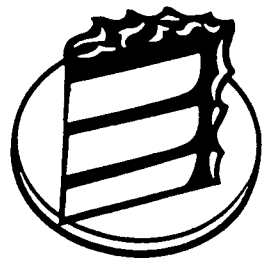
SAFETY AND HEALTH
- Before cooking you should always _____. (wash your hands)
- Which foods need to be peeled before eating? (banana, orange, hard boiled egg, etc.)
- What kind of water do you wash dishes in? (hot, soapy)
- If you sneeze while cooking, you should _____. (cover your mouth and go wash your hands)
- You should never leave a knife sitting in _____. (the dishwater)

FIND IT (Have these items in a box.)
- Find the can opener.
- Find the potato peeler.
- Find the rolling pin.
- Find the pizza cutter.
- Find the whisk.

HOW DO YOU USE IT?
- What do you do with a wooden spoon? (stir)
- What do you do with a potato peeler? (take skins off veggies)
- What do you do with a cookie cutter? (cut cookies into shapes)
- What do you do with a whisk? (beat or stir)
- What do you do with a rolling pin? (make dough flat)

MISCELLANEOUS
- How many burners are on the stovetop? (4)
- Can you make toast in the microwave? (no)
- What is the biggest sized measuring cup? (1 cup)
- Which is bigger--a teaspoon or a tablespoon? (tablespoon)
- What happens when something boils? (it bubbles)





COOKING JEOPARDY (INTERMEDIATE)

COOKING TERMS

What does "preheat" mean? (let oven warm up some before putting food in)

What happens to water when it boils? (it bubbles)

What does "chop" mean? (cut into small pieces)

What does "rotate" mean? (turn)

What does "simmer" mean? (cook on a low temperature)

SAFETY

When you're done using a burner or the oven, you should be sure _____. (it is turned off)

Name a food you shouldn't leave unrefrigerated for long. (mayo, meat, milk, etc.)

What happens if you use a wet potholder? (you will burn your hand)

What kitchen utensil should never be put in a sink of water until you wash it? (a sharp knife)

What is the most common microwave accident? (steam burns)

MICROWAVE

You should never turn a microwave on when it is _____. (empty)

Does food continue to cook after being removed from the microwave? (yes)

You should stand at least this far away from a microwave when it is being used. (an arm's length)

Name a food you should pierce holes in before you cook. (potato, tomato, apple, squash, egg yolks, food in plastic pouches)

What is the perfect shape to arrange food when cooking in the microwave? (ring or circle)

KITCHEN UTENSILS

What do you do with a food processor? (chop, shred, blend, etc.)

What do you do with a ladle? (spoon out items like soup or stew)

What do you do with a whisk? (beat or stir)

What do you do with a colander? (drain liquid off food)

Name 1 size a cake pan comes in. (9x13", 8" square, 9" square, 8" round)

MEASUREMENTS

Show me 1 cup.

Show me 1/2 cup.

Show me 1 tablespoon.

Show me 1/4 teaspoon.

Show me 3/4 cups.

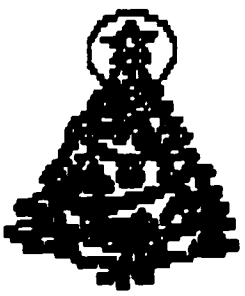
Christmas Popcorn Trees
(craft)

sugar ice cream cones
popcorn
green frosting (see below)
red cinnamon candies

Cover sugar ice cream cones with tinted green frosting. While icing is still soft, press and cover with popcorn, then dot with red cinnamon candies. Makes an adorable Christmas tree.

Frosting:
1 egg white*
1 1/2 tbsp. water
2 1/2 cups powdered sugar
6 drops green food coloring
Mix ingredients together, follow directions above and enjoy!
(*Due to use of raw egg, do not consider these edible.)

Bake-Off Project



Molded Mints

1 box powdered sugar
1/2 stick butter or margarine, melted
2 tbsp. hot water
14 drops oil flavoring (like Lorann Oils)
Food coloring, as desired

Mix melted margarine, water, oil flavoring and coloring thoroughly. Add sugar and beat together well. Press small pieces of dough into a rubber candy mold dipped in sugar. (If you don't have molds, roll small pieces of dough into balls, sprinkle with sugar and press down with a fork using a criss-cross pattern.)

Unmold mints immediately onto paper toweling. Let dry about 24 hours, then store in refrigerator or freezer.

Makes 80 mints.

Bake-Off Project

CHOCOLATE CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIES

1 Devil's Food Cake Mix

1/2 cup oil

2 eggs

1 cup chocolate chips (or more)

Mix all ingredients.

Place dough by teaspoonfuls on ungreased cookie sheet.

Bake at 350 degrees for 10 minutes. (Best if slightly undercooked.)

Makes 3 1/2 dozen.

NO-BAKE OATMEAL COOKIES

2 cups sugar
1/2 cup margarine
1 teas. vanilla
1/2 cup milk
1/4 cup cocoa
1/2 cup peanut butter
3 cups oatmeal (quick)

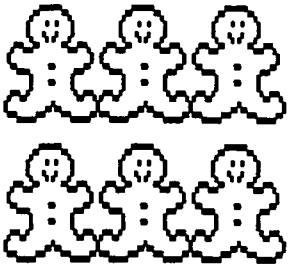
1. In a 2-quart microwave-safe bowl, combine sugar, margarine, vanilla, milk and cocoa.

2. Microwave for 3-4 minutes on HIGH until mixture comes to a boil and boils for 1 minute.

3. Stir in peanut butter until smooth. Stir in oatmeal.

4. Drop by teaspoonfuls onto waxed paper. Allow an hour to set up.

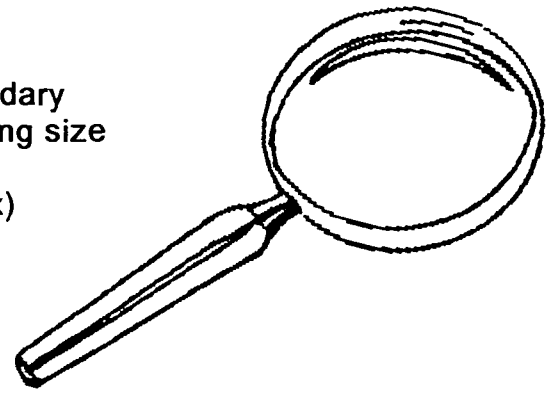
Yields: 3 dozen cookies



MATERIALS IN INDIVIDUAL LOW VISION ASSESSMENT KITS

Assessment Forms, Screening Materials and Reference Information
1. General Assessment Form
2. MH Assessment Form
3. Print size key
4. Eyeball diagram
5. Lighthouse near vision card
6. Lighthouse distance vision chart
7. String to mark 5', 10' and 20'
8. Black and white background sheets (laminated)

Visual Materials
1. Map
2. Phone book page
3. Catalog page
4. Newspaper sample
5. Xeroxed worksheets--elementary and secondary
6. Riddle sheet with riddles in print of decreasing size
7. Picture card with simple individual pictures
8. Children's book with pictures (more complex)
9. Letter sheet and matching cards
10. Shape sheet and matching cards
11. Color sheet and matching cards



Fine Motor Materials (Academic):
1. Cutting sheet
2. Tracing sheet
3. Copying sheet
4. Writing paper samples (regular paper, dark-lined, varying widths)
5. Writing tools: markers (varying sizes), pencil, pen
6. Box of colored markers

Manipulatives/Misc.
1. Penlight
2. 2 large popbeads
3. Small beads for stringing
4. Plastic neon ball

Materials Available for Checkout:
1. Large book of numbers for vision screening
2. Fly Test for muscle imbalance
3. Color vision test book
4. Motor Free Visual Perception Test (MFVPT)
5. Barraga Diagnostic Assessment Procedure (DAP)
6. Sloan Reading Cards
7. Apple-House-Umbrella Individual flashcards

List compiled by the Fairfax County Schools' Vision Program

CHECKLIST FOR VISUALLY IMPAIRED

Student's Name: Date:

Student's visual acuity is: ___right eye, ___left eye, ___vis. field

___1. Keep chalkboards as clean as possible.

___2. Use white chalk on a black or green chalkboard.

___3. Allow extra time to complete tasks or reduce amount of work.

___4. Have sufficient contrast between object and background.

___5. Student is nearsighted and needs to be near visual task.

___6. Student is farsighted and may need to work at a distance for visual task.

___7. Tunnel vision student--will see more of an object when at a distance as this enlarges the visual field.

___8. Turn in all handouts to be brailled.

___9. All handouts need to be enlarged on copy machine. _____%

___10. Handouts must be made on copy machine.

___11. NEVER USE PURPLE DITTO!

___12. Reduce glare with yellow acetate over white paper.

___13. Cursive writing is extremely difficult for student to read: type or print all work for student: print on board if student is able to see board.

___14. Provide notes from board or overhead for student on paper in enlarged print or type.

___15. Allow student to handle objects being demonstrated or to sit close for experiment.

___16. Avoid lecturing with your back to window as glare from window will hurt eyes.

___17. Note taking during lectures can be done in the following manner:
___Student takes own notes.
___Student should have another student photocopy notes.
___Student may tape lectures and take notes later.
___Student may request teacher provide notes in large print or braille.

___18. Student may complete homework in braille/type/longhand/on tape.

___19. Modify assignments by:
___shortening drills ___changing the directions
___allowing additional time ___reducing number of problems

___20. Give a related assignment if presenting visual materials which cannot be modified.

___21. Use large print/braille/tactual maps with bold, clear boundaries.

___22. Test may be given:
___with extra time (time and a half) ___orally
___in large print or braille ___on tape

___23. Give student list of questions to answer about taped book material before he/she listens to it.

___24. When viewing movies, videos or filmstrips:
___add descriptions of actions, scene changes, etc. when narration is poor.
___allow student to sit as close as possible to screen or stage.
___let student view filmstrip on own with small viewer.

___25. Use real objects when possible or a realistic model.

___26. Have student arrange own books and materials in room.

___27. Help student find the next volume of textbook when it changes.

___28. DISCIPLINE the student as you would other students.

___29. Give specific directions, relating left and right to the student's body.

___30. Speak to the class upon entering or leaving the room as a courtesy to the student.

___31. Encourage independence. Let the student try before offering help.

___32. Allow student to rest eyes when fatigued or complaining of eye pain or headaches around eyes.

___33. CONTACT PARENTS IMMEDIATELY IF STUDENT COMPLAINS OF EYE PAIN. STUDENT COULD LOSE SIGHT!

___34. Read aloud as you write on the board.

___35. Provide listening activities to promote good listening skills.

___36. Student may have trouble seeing in a dark room.

___37. Movement from brightly lighted area to dimly lighted area may require time for student's eyes to adjust.

___39. Student's _____ eye is better. Student should sit on the _____ side of the room because he/she will not be able to see as well on other side.

___39. _____

_____

___40. _____

_____

___41. _____

_____

IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS, CONTACT VISION TEACHER: _____
AT THIS NUMBER: _____

(Form by: Ann Lipscomb, Fayette County, WV)

REAL LIFE SKILLS

Here are some activities I have done with my students to help them practice skills in mobility, cooking, money, computers, mental math, braille and using low vision aides in real life situations.

1. Using the computer to type thank you notes.

2. Using the computer to type a list of large print books to be ordered from NAVH.

3. Riding the transit bus or cab to purchase cooking supplies at the grocery store.

4. Making refreshments:
   a. for teacher/parent inservices, trips and special trips that I plan.
   b. to sell for charity (like The ARC).
   c. to sell in order to purchase special (optional) equipment for the student.

5. Counting money from snacks sold.

6. Using mental math or talking calculator to figure out the total cost of groceries, how much to charge to make a profit from sales, etc.

7. Using the talking calculator or mental math to figure out change to give back to a person buying a snack.

8. Brailling a letter for a sighted person who wants to write to a blind person; putting greeting cards in braillle for sighted people to mail to blind friends and relatives.

9. Using the computer or cursive writing to request free items. (Books are available listing free items students can order.)

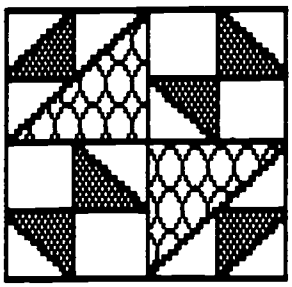
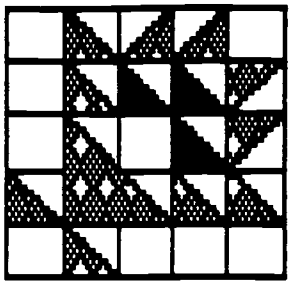
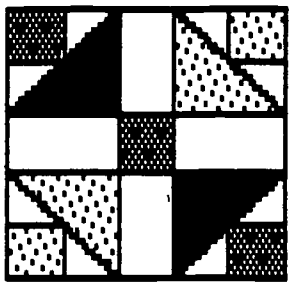
10. Using the CCTV or magnifier to read rebate forms that can be mailed away with UPCs to obtain money or free items.

11. Using the CCTV or magnifier to read the directions on food packages when student is fixing a snack.

12. Using the magnifier to read prices in the store.

13. Using the computer to make signs advertising the sale of items; making address labels on the computer to mail in rebate offers.

14. An older student learning braille can put a beginning print book into braille and make it into a twin vision book for younger students.

Tactile Quilts and Pillows

The receipt of a $300 WV Education Fund grant allowed me to involve local students in a project to make quilts and pillows specifically designed for blind and visually impaired children. High school and junior high students* participated in the project.

I came to each class and spoke briefly to the students about some things they should take into consideration when designing a project for blind and visually impaired children. The students designed their own quilts and they were very creative. Many items incorporated into the quilts worked really well. Some of the quilts had raised, textured figures like a cat, clown, snowman, Santa, etc. Other projects were simply various textured shapes sewn together or on a background. The following are features of different quilts that were very successful:

1. Musical buttons sewed into the quilts (available at craft shops)
2. Fabric sewed on in a mitten-shape (the students loved putting their hands inside)
3. Metallic ribbon inside the quilt that crinkled when touched
4. Some pillows were stuffed with plastic grocery bags, which made a neat sound
5. One pillow was stuffed with old sheets. That made it very heavy and it is neat to use for concept development with a lightweight pillow, also.
6. Bells were attached outside (and inside for younger children)
7. Potpourri bags were placed into pockets on a quilt
8. One Christmas quilt had a string of working lights on a tree
9. Large zippers were a popular feature; one student even tied a large, plastic ring onto the zipper to make it easier to pull
10. Woolly fake fur was popular; using yarn for hair was better than using the doll's hair that is available at craft shops

The project was mainly coordinated by the regular ed teachers. I gave an initial talk, shopped for the items (because I had the grant money) and brought a blind adult or child into each class at the end of a group of projects so that the students could see how well they had done.

COLOR PHOTOS OF SOME QUILTS ON THE NEXT PAGE

*Mrs. Carolyn Richardson's child development class from Fairmont Senior High and Mrs. Carla Wood's home ec classes from Monongah Middle School were responsible for making the projects.

DESCRIPTIONS OF HANDMADE QUILTS AND PILLOWS

(PHOTOS ON NEXT PAGE)

1. SNOWMAN QUILT- By Candy Copley, Fairmont Sr. High
Quilt backing is thermal fabric, flannel scarf, terry cloth earmuffs. There is a music button in the center of the scarf and bells for a mouth.

2. CHRISTMAS QUILT- By Jennifer Canter, Fairmont Sr. High
There is a musical button at the top of Santa's bag and button under his belt buckle that says, "Ho, ho, ho." A string of lights on the tree really work and the wreath is a Christmas ornament.

3. CLOWN FACE QUILT- By Tami Hines, Fairmont Sr. High
Clown has doll's hair. Pockets have rattles and toys inside. Each is attached to a string, which is attached to the quilt.

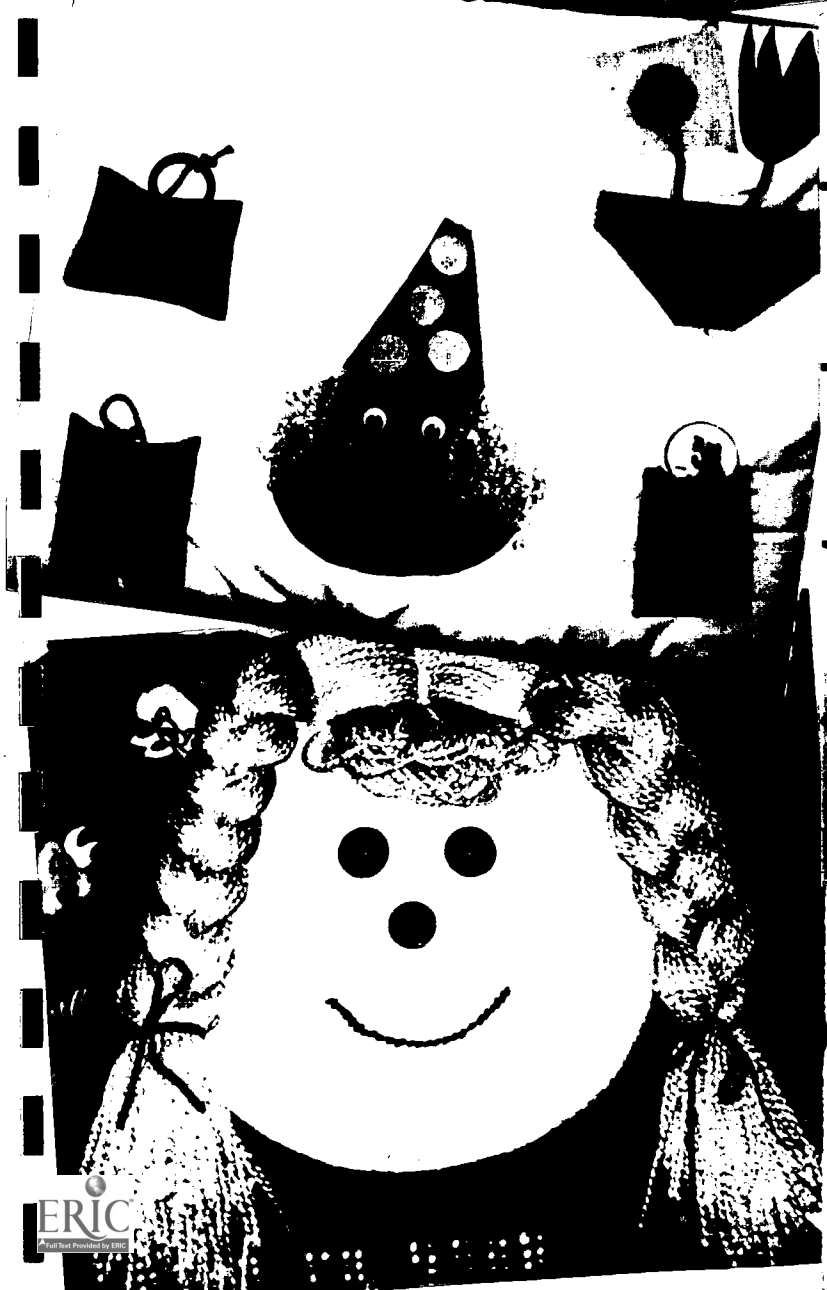
4. ALPHABET/BALLOON QUILT- By Randi Bienkoski, Fairmont Sr. High
Flowers unbutton from quilt. Balloons have stuffing under them and one balloon is a spongy fabric. This spongy fabric is also inside the mitten (a child can feel 2 layers inside the mitten). Ladybug unzips.

5. DOLL'S FACE PILLOW- By Tracy Sivewright, Fairmont Sr. High
Doll's hair is made of yarn. Puff paint was used to spell out "Braid my hair" in braille.

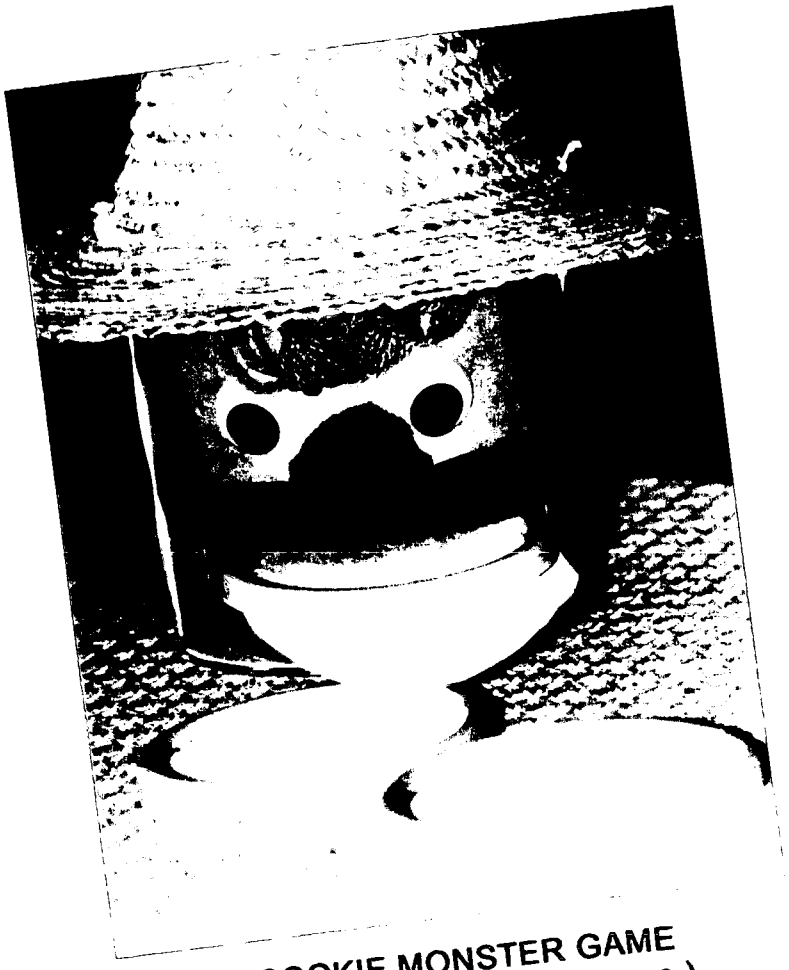
6. TEDDY BEAR QUILT- By Misty Kelly, Fairmont Sr. High
Teddy bear made out of fake fur, balloons were filled with stuffing and attached (unfortunately they fall apart after time), beads were glued onto the balloons to represent braille letters. (A complete description of the quilt appears in RE:view Magazine, Volume XXVII, No. 3, 1995.)

CAT QUILT- By Trudi Osborne, Fairmont Sr. High
Cat is made of fake fur. Various borders are made from different textures. The word "cat" was spelled out in braille using buttons. A bell was attached to the cat's neck.

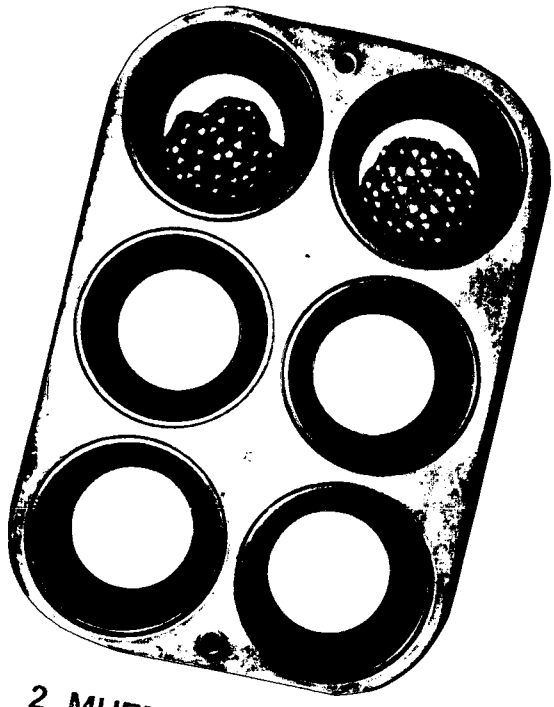
CLOWN QUILT- By Stacy Sloan, Fairmont Sr. High
Flannel background fabric was used. Heavy yarn made up the hair. A rubbery, white fabric formed the face. Various textures attached to clothes.



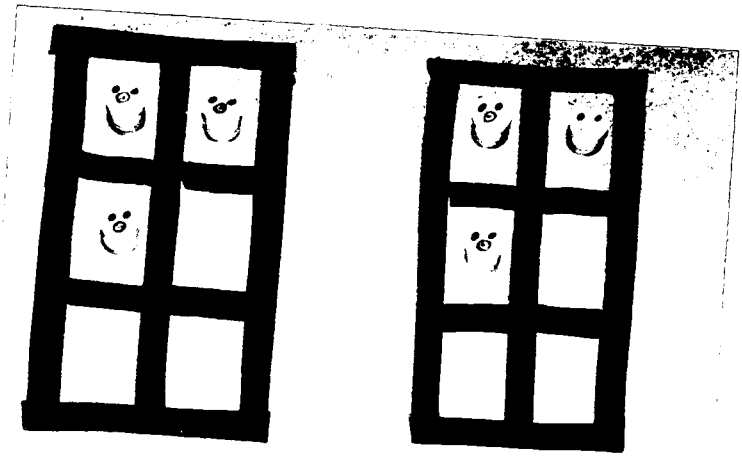
HOMEMADE TEACHING DEVICES



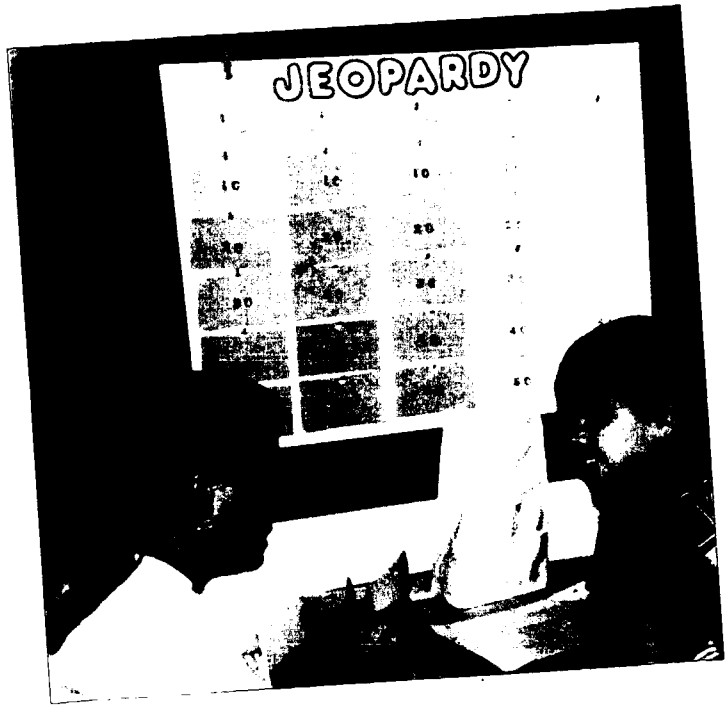
1. COOKIE MONSTER GAME
(See instructions on next page.)



2. MUFFIN TIN BRAILLE
(Use beanbags - with small magnets on back - to represent braille dots. For demonstration purposes.)



3. PIGPEN GAME
(See instructions on next page.)



4. JEOPARDY BOARD
(Used for Cooking Jeopardy, Braille Jeopardy or whatever)
Brads pushed through the back make hooks for the cards.

HOMEMADE TEACHING DEVICE INSTRUCTIONS

1. COOKIE MONSTER GAME

Materials to make Cookie Monster: 9" straw hat, cardboard container (at least 5" in diameter), pom pom, yarn, wiggly eyes, red foam, elastic, cardboard cut into tongue shape, plastic coasters, brown paper.

Directions: A slot is cut in the back and front of the cardboard carton near the bottom. It should be large enough for a plastic coaster to fit through. Cut out a cardboard tongue that is long enough to slip through both slits and stick out about 6". Cover the carton with brown paper and cut out the slots. Cut red foam into mouth shape and cut slot in it. Glue eyes, foam, pom pom and yarn on for features. Put elastic through both sides of the straw hat. Put hat on and tape elastic onto bottom of container. Glue various textures onto plastic coasters. (If child can see, use all the same color fabric.)

Instructional Use: I've used this to work on tactile discrimination with preschool students. Tell the child that Cookie Monster only likes one kind of cookie and let him feel the cookie with that texture. Have him find a cookie that is the same and place it on Cookie Monster's tongue (which is pushed out towards the front). The teacher pulls the tongue (from the back) into Cookie Monster's head and removes the cookie from behind. Say, "Yum, I like that cookie." If it is the wrong texture, push the tongue back out like he's spitting the cookie out. Say, "Yuck, I don't like that cookie!" Kids seem to enjoy it. They also enjoy when they give the Monster the wrong cookie, so you need to come up with a way to be sure the child knows the difference. Telling the child to give Cookie Monster a cookie he doesn't like at times can help with this problem.

Depending upon skill level, you can use it for various activities: shapes, colors, very dissimilar textures or similar textures.

2. PIGPEN GAME

Materials: magnetic board or cookie sheet, small wooden spools, small round magnets, magnetic strips or some adhesive material to form pigpens

Directions: Glue magnet on one end of spool and paper pig face on the other end. (If child is blind, just use magnets without spools.) Form two pigpens on a cookie sheet.

Instructional Use: The goal of this is to work on spatial relations that correspond to the braille cell. Put your pigs in one pen and have the child replicate the pattern in his pen. This can also be used to demonstrate braille letters to students in a regular ed class.

James Pinn

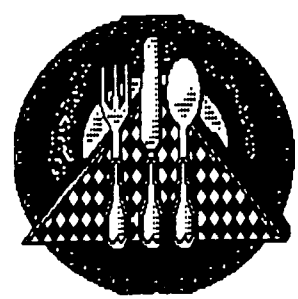
Pasta Man

James (Jim) Pinn, a Fairmont, WV resident, began to lose his vision when he was 26. Unable to continue working in his current profession, he began to work with Rehab Services to try to find a new occupation. Several years went by and he was unsuccessful at finding a job. He kept himself busy with his hobby - cooking. His father had made pasta from scratch and he taught Jim this skill. He also gave him his recipes. Jim would volunteer to cook at spaghetti dinners and continued to learn more about making pasta. Whenever he went on a trip, he would look in the local library for books about pasta making and learned new ideas to help him improve.

One day Jim traveled to parts of West Virgina with his son. His son makes pottery and was trying to sell it to gift shops in the state parks. He mentioned that his dad made homemade pasta and people were interested in selling it in their shops. So Jim, with the help of his family, began a home business making pasta and spaghetti sauces.

Jim was even featured on the QVC home shopping channel and was selected as one of 10 people out of 200 in WV who were allowed to sell their products on the channel. He said getting their product ready for the QVC sale was no fun -- they were too rushed and packages of the product filled their house.

Now Jim mainly sells his pasta to stores in WV, Pennsylvania, Kentucky and Maryland. He says, "If I were a younger man, I could make a million on this because nobody I know in the tri-state area is making homemade pasta."



Hobbies can be handy.

TIPS TO READERS:
HOW TO READ A TEST ALOUD

I. First provide an overview of the test
   A. Indicate how many True-False, multiple choice, completion, or matching items are present
   B. Indicate any essays that are included
   C. Indicate the point value of each section

II. Read the test in order of its presentation
   A. Record answers given
   B. If visually impaired student doesn't know the answer, circle the item number to refer back to it later
   C. Keep a piece of paper and pencil nearby to write random thoughts requested by the visually impaired student

III. Specific Test Items
   A. Multiple Choice
      1. Tell student how many questions are in the section
      2. Tell student how many choices are offered
      3. Ask the student if you should read each choice preceeded by the appropriate letter. Ex., a-cat, b-dog
      4. Cross out choices student eliminates
      5. If possible, when choices are short, have them brailled for the student and read just the question.

   B. Completion
      1. Tell student how many items are in the section
      2. Use the word "blank" to indicate where a word is to be inserted
      3. If the choices are from a given word list, it is preferable if the list could be brailled. If not, read the word list first followed by the statements to be completed.
      4. If the word to be inserted in the blank is a choice of two that follows the statement, read the choices first. Ex., Give the ball to _____. (his, him) Read "his, him" before the statement.

   C. True-False
      1. Tell student how many items are contained in the section
      2. Read each statement and record student's response

D. Matching
1. Tell student how many items are to be matched
2. Indicate if there is an equal amount of phrases and choices
3. If possible, have the choices put into braille, or dictate to student ones to be put into braille
4. If words are to be matched to phrases, always read the phrases and have student choose from the words

E. Reading Passages
1. If there are 2-3 questions following a lengthy reading passage, read the questions before the passage so the student knows what to listen for
2. If questions are short, present them to the student in braille, if possible

F. Essay
1. Read the directions to the student (some may require a choice of questions, other essay questions may be required)
2. If possible, have the essay questions brailled for easy reference

Susan Millaway; Montgomery County Intermediate Unit, Pennsylvania

NAME_____ TEACHER_____

DATE_____ AGE_____ GRADE_____

INFORMAL ASSESSMENT OF SLATE SKILLS

Susan Millaway

Yes +	No -	The student will demonstrate the ability to:
		1. Identify parts of a slate
____	____	a. top plate
____	____	b. bottom plate
____	____	c. cell windows - notches
____	____	d. pits
____	____	e. pins
____	____	f. hinge
____	____	g. raised dots on top plate (know purpose)
		2. Identify parts of a stylus
____	____	a. handle
____	____	b. shaft
		3. Identify types of slates and purposes for each
____	____	a. desk slate
____	____	b. pocket slate
____	____	c. EZ - Read
____	____	d. cassette slate
____	____	e. single line slate
____	____	f. brown slate
		4. Correctly position paper in slate
____	____	a. when using an EZ - Read slate (pins on back of top plate)
____	____	b. when pins are located on the bottom plate
____	____	c. single line
____	____	d. cassette slate
____	____	e. other _____
____	____	5. Correctly shifts the paper in the slate
		6. Correctly writes the following putting a space between each symbol. (Circle errors)

a b c g l k m q r e o j t
u d p h i n f s v x w y z

Num. sign: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Period Capital Question Mark

		7. Correctly writes:
____	____	a. _____ words with one space between each word with no errors

____	____		b. first and last name
____	____		c. sentences using capitals and punctuation
____	____		d. telephone numbers and addresses given to him
____	____	8.	Correctly writes 10 words when dictated, taking a new line for each word
____	____	9.	Correctly locates place in slate when copying words from a braille list
____	____	10.	Correctly locates place on slate when copying braille sentences
____	____	11.	Able to make corrections for any errors made
____	____	12.	Using a _____ slate, student is able to write _____ characters per minute in a 3 minute timed writing exercise with _____% accuracy (alphabet)
____	____	13.	Is able to take notes on slate from recorded text
____	____	14.	Takes notes on slate from brailled text
____	____	15.	Takes notes on slate from class lectures

Prerequisite Skills for Braille Slate Instruction

The braillewriter is the first tool that the student should use to produce braille because less muscular coordination in the hands and fingers is required to operate this machine than to operate the braille slate. The student should demonstrate the ability to write confidently and rapidly on the braillewriter prior to slate instruction. It is important that the potential slate student acquire good reading skills in order to avoid the problem of letter reversal in either reading or writing.

Additional prerequisite skills for braille slate writing include the following:

1. **Muscle Flexibility in Hand, Wrist and Arm** - The student needs to be able to move his or her hand, wrist and arm freely. Stiffness in any of these areas could impede progress for a braille slate user.
2. **Muscle Strength and Coordination in Hand, Wrist and Arm** - Holding the stylus properly, and pushing it through the slate openings require strength and coordination. The hand, wrist, and arm must work together as a single unit.
3. **Tactile Tracking Skills** - Tracking skills are essential for effective and efficient braille slate writing. The stylus is used to track along the inside edge of the cell on the slate. The left index finger is used to track along the row of cells, moving from right to left.
4. **Knowledge of Grade I Braille Code** - Students are often confused when they are taught to form braille characters "backwards" on the slate. Instead of teaching students the mirror image of each braille character, several authors recommend teaching students to associate the braille character with its dot numbers. Students are taught that dots 1, 2, and 3 are located on the right side of the braille slate cell, and that dots 4, 5 and 6 are located on the left side of the braille slate cell. Working with dot numbers instead of mirror images helps students avoid the common problem of reversals.
5. **Knowledge of the Directions "Right" and "Left"** - These concepts are very important, because much of the braille slate instruction requires an understanding of the directions "right" and "left". For example, the student is taught to braille from right to left with the slate.
6. **Tactile Perception Skills** - As is the case with braille reading, efficient use of the slate and stylus requires tactile perception skills working in tandem with tracking skills. When using the standard braille slate and stylus, tactile perception skills allow the student to tactually perceive the location of each dot in the cell and to locate each cell opening in the row.

Slate and Stylus: An Instructional Strategy

Prior to formal instruction, the braille slate student needs to be motivated. Engage the student in casual conversation concerning the usefulness of the braille slate. Allow the student to explore the slate and stylus as you talk. Describe scenarios in which the student would clearly benefit from using this tool. Ask the student how he or she would handle such situations. Hopefully this discussion will cause the student to feel a personal need to learn this braille writing skill.

This instructional strategy consists of six components. Each component addresses at least one prerequisite skill.

Materials

1. large sheets of heavy braille paper
2. large sheets of braille graph paper
3. sheets of 8-1/2" X 11" typing paper
4. glitter glue
5. hand-held rubber stamp
6. model of the braille cell, where each dot position is numbered
7. template serving as a large scale model of the braille slate cells
8. backing for template (rubber or cardboard work well)
9. jumbo braille slate and stylus
10. standard braille slate

Instructional Components

1. **Warm-up exercises** - This component addresses prerequisite skills of muscle flexibility, and muscle strength and coordination. Have the student perform muscle stretching exercises using mainly the right hand, wrist and arm for approximately five minutes. Include shoulder rolls, arm bends, wrist stretches, and hand stretches.

2. **Stamp activity** - This component addresses prerequisite skills of muscle flexibility, muscle strength and coordination, tactual tracking, and knowledge of right and left. Cut raised line graph paper into two strips, each strip consisting of four rows of squares. Glue these strips onto a piece of large braille paper, separated by approximately one inch. Rotate this page of squares counterclockwise slightly to give the student greater arm movement. Use a rubber stamp to simulate a stylus.

Orient the student to these materials. Have the student hold the rubber stamp in his or her right hand, dip it in glitter glue and move from right to left along the rows of squares, stamping certain squares as indicated. The left index finger should move along the row, in front of the right hand, locating

the next square and assisting the right hand with stamping. When the glitter glue dries, it will form a rough surface on those squares which had been stamped. Give the student specific directions regarding his or her arm, wrist and hand positioning. Tell the student to: (a) keep the wrist on the same level as the elbow, (b) keep the arm, wrist, and hand flexible, (c) hold the stamp so that its top rests under the portion of the right forefinger between the second and third joints, (d) grasp the stamp tightly enough so that it could be guided without wobbling, (e) hold the stamp vertically, and (f) apply downward pressure with just a little force.

3. **Dot number drill** - This component addresses the prerequisite skill of Grade I braille code identification. Ask the student to recite the braille cell dot numbers that are required to form each letter and each digit from zero to nine (including the number sign). Present the letters and numbers in random order. Have the student construct the shape of the more challenging characters. To do this, use a model of the braille cell where each dot position is numbered. Have the student form the braille shapes and recite the braille cell dot numbers that define the characters.

4. **Braille slate cell orientation** - This component, along with components five and six, addresses all six prerequisite skills. Its main purposes are: (a) to familiarize the student with the mechanics of the braille slate, (b) to help the student discover the concept of mirror image character formation, and (c) to help the student form an accurate mental image of the braille slate cells.

Initiate conversation focusing on the mechanics of the braille slate while the student examines a standard braille slate. Ask the student to describe the top of the slate, to explain the purpose of the openings, and to describe the bottom of the slate. Open the slate and place a piece of typing paper over the bottom portion of the slate. Use the stylus to show the student how the paper is pushed down into the holes. Explain that it is possible to form dots without the top portion of the slate, and that this top portion just serves as a guide.

Allow the student to inspect a jumbo braille slate. Discuss the differences between this slate and the standard slate. The jumbo slate has larger braille cells, where the dots are larger and spread farther apart than on the standard slate. Begin to guide the student toward discovering the concept of mirror image character formation. Have the student recite the dot numbers required to form the letter 'P'. With typing paper secured inside the jumbo slate, ask the student to use the stylus to point to the location of each dot in the letter 'P'. Then have the student press down on the stylus and form these dots instead of just pointing to their locations in the cell. Allow the

student to examine his or her work. Ask the student to read the character that was written, to explain why it was formed incorrectly, and to explain how this character could be formed correctly. To assist the student with this discovery, place the tip of the student's finger under the braille slate cell while using the stylus to point to the location of each dot chosen by the student for the letter 'P'. To strengthen the student's understanding of the concept of mirror image character formation, repeat this procedure using the letters 'S', 'V', 'Y', and 'Z'. It is hoped that after this instruction, the student will discover that dots one, two, and three are located along the right side of the braille slate cell and that dots four, five, and six are located along the left side of the braille slate cell.

After introducing the mirror image concept, orient the student to the braille slate cell and give him or her opportunities to practice mirror image character formations. A large scale template-like model of braille slate cells is helpful for this instruction. Place a piece of typing paper under this template, and attach both paper and template to a rubber or cardboard backing. A regular stylus can be used, however, a braille dot inverter provides immediate tactile feedback and allows the student to verify his or her accuracy in forming dot configurations.

Ask the student to identify the part of the braille slate that the template openings represent. Discuss the template openings, the purpose of the notches, the dot number positions, etc. Have the student point to the position in the cell that must be pressed in order to form dot one. Repeat this exercise for dots two through six. Provide guidance as the student practices forming the alphabet and the digits from zero to nine. Be sure that the student realizes that writing with the slate must be done in a right to left fashion. When all of the template openings have been used, remove the paper and examine the reverse side with the student.

5. **Jumbo braille slate writing** - Assist the student with securing the typing paper inside the jumbo slate. Begin with a review of the dot number positions. Ask the student to move the stylus along the inside edge of the braille slate cell and identify each dot position. Remind the student about proper positioning of the stylus in the hand. Rotate the slate counterclockwise slightly to provide greater arm movement.

Dictate letters and digits to the student in the following predetermined order:

C X A K M U B D F G L N P Q V Y E H
I J O R S T W Z

Letters with identical mirror images are written first. Letters whose dot number configuration did not include dot two or dot

five are written next; as these dots would be more difficult to locate than dots one, three, four and six. The letters that follow are those where dot one is always included in the configuration with dot two, and dot four is always included in the configuration with dot five. Finally, all remaining letters are written. The digits from zero to nine are sequenced similarly:

3 1 2 4 6 7 5 8 9 0

Have the student leave a space between each character. Instruct the student to use the left index finger to track ahead of the right hand, locating the next cell to be used and marking that place in the row.

After completing all letters and digits, have the student skip a line on the slate and try to write his or her name in Grade I braille. Students are usually eager to write meaningful words and phrases instead of letter and number drills.

6. **Standard braille slate writing** - Guide the student through the procedure for securing the paper inside the braille slate. Place the paper on the bottom portion of the slate and line it up so that its left edge is against the hinge. Arrange the top edge of the paper so that it rests beside, not over, the two top pins. Secure the paper on the two bottom pins, and close the slate. Loading the slate in this manner ensures that the paper is straight. Do not use the top row of cells, as there is not enough room to form complete characters.

Before writing begins, teach the student to move the slate down the page to the next writing position. Open the slate so that it is flat on the table. Place the student's thumbs over the two lower pins. Lift the paper while the thumbs maintain contact with the two lower holes in the paper. Slide the paper up until the thumbs detect the two upper pins through the paper. Make two new holes in the paper with the lower pins. Close the slate.

At this point, a brief review session is helpful. Discuss proper positioning of the stylus, using the notches as guides for the stylus, and locating dot number positions in the cell.

The student is now ready to begin writing with the standard slate. Use the same writing exercise that is outlined in component five.

Learning to use the slate and stylus can be difficult, especially in the beginning stages. Be sensitive to the student's frustration level. Repeat any components of this program that address skills that the student needs to strengthen. Assess the student's progress carefully, and plan instruction accordingly.

Resources

Harley, R. K., Henderson, F. M., Truan, M. B. (1979). The Teaching of Braille Reading (pp. 10-12). Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas.

Mangold, P. N. (1985). Teaching the Braille Slate and Stylus: A manual for mastery, (pp. 1-9; 18-27). Castro Valley, CA: Exceptional Teaching Aids.

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RUBBER STAMPS, page 23
Available for sale from:
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"Braille in a Bag"
($13.50 plus $1.50 S&H)

"COVER" SKETCH
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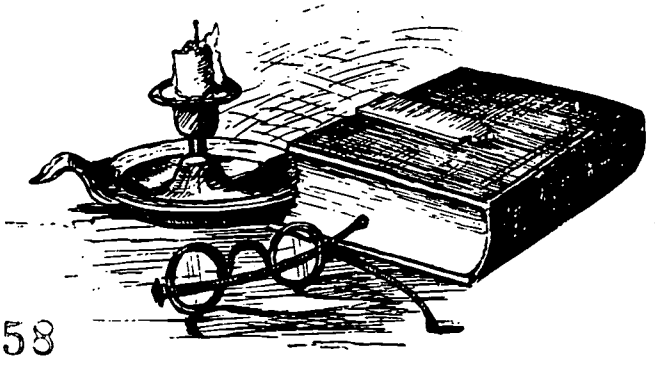

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