



Getting In Touch With Literacy

2009

Friday 11/13/09

Workshops 100-107

9:45-11:15 a.m.

100 BEYOND THE BRAILLE CODE: TEACHING VOCABULARY AND COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES TO STUDENTS WHO ARE BLIND OR VISUALLY IMPAIRED

Presenter/s: *Anna Swenson, Teacher of Visually Impaired Students*

Results of the ABC Braille Study indicate that while most of the elementary-aged subjects mastered the braille code satisfactorily, nearly half were reading below expected levels due to difficulties with vocabulary and comprehension. This practice-oriented presentation will offer suggestions for helping students in grades K-6 expand their vocabularies and utilize a variety of comprehension strategies to improve their reading. The speaker will present a case study involving one of her own students and encourage participants to share their experiences and ideas. The presentation will include sample IEP goals, assessment materials, and examples of student work.

101 RESEARCH-BASED LITERACY PRACTICES IN BLINDNESS AND VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

Presenter/s: *Kay A. Ferrell, Ph.D., Director, National Center on Severe and Sensory Disabilities at the University of Northern Colorado; Silvia M. Correa-Torres, Ed.D., COMS Assistant Professor, University of Northern Colorado; and Loana Mason, M.A., COMS, Doctoral Candidate, University of Northern Colorado*

No Child Left Behind requires the application of scientifically-based research to educational practice. However, in the education of students with visual impairment, it is not always possible to meet the strict criteria of scientifically-based research. The National Center on Severe and Sensory Disabilities conducted a meta-analysis of literacy research in the field of visual impairment. A three-step literature search strategy identified pertinent studies published from 1963 to 2003. A total of 652 articles were identified by this search process. However, only 20 studies met the criteria for scientifically-based research. The purpose of this session is to share the promising practices identified by the study.

102 DUAL PRESENTERS SHOWCASE

DETERMING ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY NEEDS TO SUPPORT LITERACY

Presenter/s: Ike Presley, MA, National Project Manager, American Foundation for the Blind

Conducting an assistive technology (AT) assessment is the first step to providing students who are blind or visually impaired with access to the technology tools they will need to support literacy in school and at work. This presentation will provide a structure for determining AT needs. Participants will be guided through the necessary steps for completing an AT assessment. Emphasis will be placed on the visual, tactile, and auditory technologies that must be explored to develop, support, enhance, and maintain the literacy skills of youths and adults who are blind or visually impaired.

TECHNOLOGY'S ROLE IN CLOSING THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Presenter/s: Linda Wyatt, Ed.D., Consultant, California Department of Education-Special Education Division; Jonn Paris-Salb, Administrator, Clearinghouse for Specialized Media and Translations, California Department of Education

The purpose of the workshop is to provide information and resources about the use of assistive technology (AT) for special and general education teachers and administrators. The information relates to the types and uses of AT devices and services. In addition, information is provided about the manner in which AT can be funded in the school system. There also, will be information provided about some of the latest devices available.

103 DUAL PRESENTERS SHOWCASE

THE JOY OF TEACHING LITERACY THROUGH THE ARTS

Presenter/s: *Jan Zollinger, MA, 2004 "Distinguished Educator of Blind Children," NLS-Certified Braille Transcriber, Idaho School For The Deaf And Blind*

This presentation will be an interactive and hands-on workshop in creating activities to make braille fun. It will present practical ideas when working with students to encourage literacy in the schools using music, drama, movement, etc. The presentation will include several video clips and will demonstrate the success one can have with the arts. The overall purpose of the presentation will be to excite other teachers to discover how teaching Braille through the arts can be fun and rewarding.

DEVELOPMENT OF A PROTOTYPE ACCOUNTABILITY

ASSESSMENT: ACCESS TO ASSESSMENT FOR STUDENTS WITH LOW VISION AND BLINDNESS

Presenter/s: *Tracey Hall, Ph.D., Senior Research Scientist, CAST and Dr. Cara Cahalan-Laitusis, Principal Investigator, Research Scientist at the Center for Validity Research at Educational Testing Service*

The goal of this workshop is to share the Technology Assisted Reading Assessment (TARA) project focusing on research and development to improve state accountability assessments for secondary students with visual impairments or blindness. We examined existing measures and are developing new assessments focused on evaluating proficiency in use of technology. This session provides an overview of TARA and supporting studies. A summary of research findings, the test blueprint and prototype items will be presented.

104 USING TECHNOLOGY FOR EARLY BRAILLE LITERACY: A COMPARISON OF THE USE OF REFRESHABLE BRAILLE WITH TRADITIONAL PERKINS AND PAPER

Presenter/s: *James Bickford, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Portland State University and Ruth Falco, Ph.D., Professor Emeritus, Director Research Center for Inclusive Educational Practices Portland State University*

A two-year research project funded through Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) compares the learning rates of young braille users using refreshable braille displays and electronic files with the traditional Perkins and paper strategies for early literacy. Comparative data will be presented on fluency rates of children in a variety of Curriculum Based Measures (CBM) between the two instructional approaches. Anecdotal information from teachers and students regarding the two instructional schemes will also provide qualitative information about how each approach may maximize instruction as well as describing any potential drawbacks.

105 DUAL PRESENTERS SHOWCASE

THE COGNITIVE LOAD IMPACTS OF ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY DEVICES USED BY SIGHTED TEACHERS-IN-TRAINING DURING LITERARY BRAILLE INSTRUCTION

Presenter/s: *Charles Farnsworth, MS, Doctoral Candidate, University of Northern Colorado*

The purpose of this workshop is to present research findings about differences in cognitive load (the total amount of working memory involved) experienced while sighted teachers-in-training use manual or electronic braille assistive technology devices to learn the literary braille code. Seventeen personnel preparation programs across the United States and Canada participated in this study. Data was collected using the NASA-Task Load Index, the National Literary Braille Competency Test and semi-structured interviews.

FINDING POWER: POWER ANALYSIS AND ITS USE IN LITERACY RESEARCH

Presenter/s: *Tessa Wright, NCLVI Doctoral Fellow, Vanderbilt University*

This presentation aimed at researchers would define power analysis and detail how to perform one. The difficulties of finding adequate numbers of participants in a low incidence field will be discussed as well as statistical methods of increasing the power to find results in experimental research with as few participants as possible. The framework is based on braille literacy but is transferable to all types of low incidence research.

106 FOURTEEN FUNDAMENTALS FOR IMPROVING COMPREHENSION

Presenter/s: *Janet Boyce, Ph.D., Literacy Professor, California State University, Fullerton*

This interactive session defines reading as a thought process and engages the participants in activities, analogies, and examples that increase awareness of what contributes to the mental process that improves understanding. These research-based skills, regularly employed by proficient readers, also apply to a variety of non-reading situations where understanding and the ability to process and retain information is required. Although these skills become more refined with maturity, instruction can begin in preschool with guiding questions that lead children through the thought process needed for connecting information and gaining understanding.

107 READING WITH FIVE

Presenter/s: *Lisa Fulmer, Teacher of Visually Impaired Students*

Reading with Five Books will come to life for your early childhood and elementary students through their senses, assistive technology and much more. The presenter will show you how to do all of this and incorporate this literacy component into other areas of the Voluntary State Curriculum. Teachers of visually impaired students, parents and special educators can offer those students with visual and other multiple impairments a multi-sensory approach to this form of literacy. There will be hands-on materials, photos, treats and even a surprise!

Friday 11/13/09

Workshops 200-207

1:45-2:45 p.m.

200 DESSERT WITH ABE NEMETH

Presenter/s: *Dr. Abraham Nemeth*

Enjoy a relaxing session in conversation with one of the greatest men in the history of braille mathematics. This session is meant to be an open forum for questions and answers. A lecture or presentation will not be given.

201 ELA X 2: EARLY LITERACY ACTIVITIES TO MEET ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS STANDARDS AND MORE

Presenter/s: *Jerilyn Woodson, Research Associate, University of New Orleans*

The purpose of this workshop is to discuss the inclusion of universally designed or easily modified early literacy activities that meet student needs in general education and early childhood classrooms. Discussion of the content standards also will take place. This practice-oriented session will provide participants with suggestions of a variety of early childhood literacy activities for young students who are potential braille readers or those who are already learning braille.

202 MAXIMUM SPEED: INCREASING COMPUTER PROFICIENCY OF STUDENTS WITH LOW VISION

Presenter/s: *Cynthia Bachofer, MA, Instructor, Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired and Vanderbilt University*

The digital revolution, particularly computers, is defining habits and critical skills of the current generation of students. Students with low vision warrant disability-specific instruction in maximizing their accessibility and usability of computers. A literature search identified studies from two research teams focusing on computer tasks and users with low vision. Researchers have identified the importance of establishing visual profiles, recording response to changes in visual targets, and assessing ergonomic factors. Developing an integrated system, visual and non-visual, allows students to operate at maximum speed.

203 TACTILE GRAPHICS FOR STUDENTS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS

Presenter/s: *Ann Adkins, Outreach Consultant, Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired Outreach Program*

This workshop is intended for teachers of visually impaired students, Orientation and Mobility (O&M) Specialists, braillists, and paraprofessionals to increase their knowledge and skills in the production and teaching of tactile graphics. It will address the hierarchy of tactile skills needed for the interpretation of tactile materials and appropriate ways to assess those skills for visually impaired students of all ages. A variety of production methods will be explored, so that visually impaired students can access both the General Education Curriculum and the Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC) for Visually Impaired Students. This session will also provide suggestions for teaching visually impaired students to make their own tactile graphics.

204 HOW INTEGRATED LITERACY EDUCATION IS DONE IN NORTHERN GERMANY

Presenter/s: *Annette Hallenberger and Sabine Haessler-Hahm, Landesfoerderzentrum Sehen, Schleswig, Germany*

The workshop participants will learn how visually impaired children in Northern Germany are aided and supported. Focus points: Support in the transition from kindergarten to elementary school and methods and aids used when beginning to teach literacy to visually impaired children. This information is based on daily implementation of methods presented.

205 SRA OPEN COURT READING PROGRAM - HOW TO MAKE IT WORK FOR OUR VI STUDENTS

Presenter/s: *Patricia Leader, MA, Teacher of Visually Impaired Students / Orientation and Mobility Specialist*

The reading programs published by the SRA Publisher are extremely visual in nature and do not support the literacy needs of visually impaired students. In order to provide the same access to the curriculum that is afforded to sighted students, we must examine the materials to adapt them and provide manipulatives.

206 PLANNING FOR O&M INSTRUCTION THAT SUPPORTS ELEMENTARY GRADE LEVEL LITERACY

Presenter/s: *Diane Fazzi, Ph.D., Associate Chair, Division of Special Education & Counseling, California State University, Los Angeles*

This practice-oriented workshop will share strategies for planning and implementing Orientation and Mobility (O&M) instruction that supports elementary grade-level literacy for students with visual impairments. Vocabulary development, spelling reinforcement, and use of literary themes to create heightened interest in school and community travel will be discussed. Reading and writing will be addressed as a tool for supporting O&M knowledge and skills.

207 PROMISING SOLUTIONS FOR ACCESS TO CURRICULAR MATERIALS

Presenter/s: *Mary Ann Siller, M.Ed. Independent Education Specialist; Kay Alicyn Ferrell, Ph.D., Executive Director, National Center on Severe and Sensory Disabilities at the University of Northern Colorado at Greeley; Bryan Gould, M.A., Project Manager/Describer, WGBH; and Thomas Lohman, Communications Services Specialist, Described Caption Media Program (DCMP)*

What supports are available to make educational media more accessible for K-12 and college-age students? Teachers, administrators, media specialists, and braille transcribers will gain knowledge about how to advocate for access to educational materials and use the latest solutions for accessing research-based curricular materials. Participants will be introduced to two unique resources: American Foundation for the Blind (AFB) and Described and Captioned Media Program's "Guidelines for the Description of Educational Media" and AFB and WGBH National Center for Accessible Media (NCAM) guidelines for describing Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) graphics and illustrations.

Friday 11/13/09

Workshops 300-307

3:15-4:15 p.m.

300 UNIFIED ENGLISH BRAILLE CODE: RESPONSE OF BRAILLE-USING TECHNICAL EXPERTS

Presenter/s: *Ann MacCuspie, Braille Authority of North America and Cay Holbrook, Ph.D., Associate Professor, University of British Columbia*

Presenters will lead a discussion of the Unified English Braille Code (UEBC), including UEBC's development and progress. An analysis of UEBC through the lenses of technical experts will be presented.

301 PUTTING PARENTS IN TOUCH WITH LITERACY

Presenter/s: *Charles "Burt" Boyer, Early Childhood Project Leader, American Printing House for the Blind and Pauletta Feldman, Special Projects Coordinator, Visually Impaired Preschool Services*

Parents of young children are powerful influences on development. Recent research will be shared to support efforts to empower parents to help their children with emergent literacy. A curriculum will be introduced that has been developed specifically to train parents of young visually impaired children: 1) Why early literacy is so important; 2) How they can foster emergent literacy in their children; and 3) How they can become literate themselves in braille. This curriculum is designed to be taught by veteran parents, under professional guidance, so that parent education does not become an additional burden on already overloaded teachers.

302 FACTORS TO CONSIDER WHEN MAKING CHOICES ABOUT PRINT LITERACY

Presenter/s: *Amanda Lueck, Ph.D., Professor, San Francisco State University*

This workshop will examine factors to consider when making print literacy choices for students who have low vision. These include determination of optimal print size, accommodation capabilities, contrast sensitivity, reading speed, visual perception capabilities, and other conditions that impact learning and fine motor skills, as well as diagnosis and prognosis

303 EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES AND AIDS IN ADVANCED MATHEMATICS FOR STUDENTS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS

Presenter/s: *Patricia Myers, Director, Teacher Certification/Teacher of Visually Impaired Students, Marshall University Graduate College*

This discussion will provide an overview of strategies/aids for advanced mathematics which were reported as highly effective and frequently used by teachers within the field as the result of a national doctoral research study. Additionally, strategies/aids which were not perceived as effective will be discussed. The study's focus included teachers who had worked with students with low vision or blindness within the past five years in mathematics courses of Algebra I or higher. A sample of students who had participated in these courses was surveyed and their perceptions compared to the appropriate teachers.

304 MAKING A MIDDLE SCHOOL MATH COMPUTER PROGRAM ACCESSIBLE TO BLIND STUDENTS

Presenter/s: *L. Penny Rosenblum, Ph.D., Adjunct Associate Professor, University of Arizona, Carole Beal, Ph.D., Professor of Cognitive Science, University of Arizona*

Students with visual impairments traditionally have challenges learning mathematical concepts and are less likely to enter careers in math and science. Animal Watch, a web-based graphics-oriented tutoring system program for middle school math, is currently being adapted to be accessible to students with visual impairments. The presentation will include a hands-on demonstration of Animal Watch, and the adaptations that are being made for blind students. Results of a pilot study comparing sighted and blind students will be shared. Audience input regarding future accessibility features to consider for Animal Watch will be sought.

305 EDUCATING ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS: WHAT ALL TEACHERS SHOULD KNOW

Presenter/s: *Madeline Milian, Professor, University of Northern Colorado*

This presentation will address relevant topics in the education of English Language Learner (ELL) students who are blind and visually impaired. These topics include: collaboration with ELL teachers; instructional modifications for ELL/VI students; use of translators; language learning standards; cultural understandings of disabilities; and the use of contracted vs. uncontracted braille.

306 THE PROCESS OF MAKING MENTAL IMAGES IN READING AND TEACHING LITERACY

Presenter/s: *Brit Arna Susegg, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Nord-Trondelag University College, Norway*

The focus of this workshop is the Read for Life method among braille users. The making of mental images is one step in the Read for Life method of teaching literature, which has Wolfgang Iserâ's Theory of Aesthetic Response as a theoretical platform. The intention is: a) to demonstrate the interaction between the text and the reader in order to make mental images when reading literature and b) to equip the participant with some practical methods based on this understanding in teaching situations. Brit Arna Susegg has developed a didactical tool which has been used in teaching contexts for both blind and seeing students. The age groups are high school and elementary school, with some born blind and some blind from other reasons. All are braille users.

307 MUSIC LITERACY: TEACHING BRAILLE MUSIC USING THE SOPRANO RECORDER

Presenter/s: *Christine Short, MA, Teacher of Visually Impaired Students, Heartland Education Agency, Iowa*

This workshop focuses on teaching the basics of braille music to 3rd and 4th graders using the soprano recorder. It is intended for teachers of visually impaired students with limited music background.

Friday 11/13/09

Workshops 400-407

4:30-5:30 p.m.

400 THE DEVELOPMENT OF VOLUNTARY MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR BEGINNING EDUCATORS OF INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE BLIND

Presenter/s: *Frances Mary D' Andrea, NCLVI Doctoral Fellow, University of Pittsburg; Sandra Lewis, Ph.D., Florida State University; and L. Penny Rosenblum, Ph.D., University of Arizona*

Graduates of university programs begin their careers with differing levels of literary braille skills. Currently, there are no minimum standards for beginning educators of children and adults who are blind to guide university programs in designing their curriculum. Presenters will share results of a Delphi study conducted to reach consensus on the minimum standards beginning educators need in the areas of reading and writing braille. They will compare the perspectives of two groups of respondents, university instructors and beginning practicing teachers of visually impaired students and vocational rehabilitation therapists. Implications for university programs and their graduates will be discussed.

401 DEVELOPING BRAILLE LITERACY IN THE SPECIAL EDUCATION PRESCHOOL

Presenter/s: *Christine Moe, Teacher of Visually Impaired Students, Seattle Schools*

The itinerant vision teacher faces several challenges in serving young visually impaired children attending preschools with sighted peers. Teachers of visually impaired students may meet classroom resistance when we share our knowledge about visual impairment and its consequences; be asked to address a child's unique, yet non-vision needs; and be expected to provide all tactile learning materials for the students we serve. This presentation will address collaborating with special education preschool classes to develop early tactile literacy activities for young children, age 3-5, with severe visual impairments. It includes hands-on activities and ideas for implementing tactile literacy in the classroom.

402 APPLICATION OF LITERARY SKILLS: USING THE INTERNET TO FIND AND STORE INFORMATION

Presenter/s: *Karen Wolffe, Ph.D., Director, Professional Development, American Foundation for the Blind*

This workshop provides attendees with activities that secondary, postsecondary, and adult learners can complete online to help them apply learned literacy skills. By having learners use their core literacy skills (reading, writing, calculating, speaking, listening) in meaningful activities such as identifying their employability skills and interests, exploring careers, and completing job search tasks (filling out application forms or developing resumes), the expectation is that they will practice and refine their skills for life. The Career Connect® web site offers through its new Job Seekers' Toolkit training modules a series of lessons, assignments, and exemplars of completed assignments that will be described.

403 THE DUAL MEDIA DILEMMA

Presenter/s: *Susan Ribyat, Teacher of Visually Impaired Students, Fairfax County Public Schools, Virginia*

Students with visual impairments must develop a toolbox of aids and multimedia strategies to maximize literacy access. The *Dual Media Dilemma* addresses when a student with low vision may benefit from a combination of both braille and print. The results from a Functional Vision Learning Media Assessment shape the decision to teach literacy skills in both braille and print. Characteristics of the student using dual media will be discussed, as well as the obstacles and challenges in determining realistic instruction in both braille and print. It will include teaching suggestions from available materials and literature, and the experiences of three teachers of visually impaired students from Fairfax County Public Schools, Virginia.

404 THE LINK BETWEEN LISTENING AND LITERACY

Presenter/s: *Lizbeth Barclay, Teacher of Visually Impaired Students, California School for the Blind Assessment Program; Stephanie Herlich, Teacher of Visually Impaired Students and Exceptional Teaching; Theresa Postello, Teacher of Visually Impaired Students, San Mateo County Office of Education; Sandy Staples, Teacher of Visually Impaired Students, Lodi Unified; and Kate Byrnes, Teacher of Visually Impaired Students, Marin County Office of Education*

The link between listening and literacy has been documented by educators in the fields of both general and special education. The development of listening skills is an essential aspect of education for students who are visually impaired that facilitates and strengthens literacy skills; it also provides an important medium for curricular access. This workshop explores these important aspects of the development of listening skills, providing highlights from the soon to be published book, *Learning to Listen and Listening to Learn: The Development of Listening Skills for Students Who Are Visually Impaired* (AFB Press). Vignettes and video will be used to illustrate key points.

405 WEAVING THE DOTS OF LITERACY

Presenter/s: *Sheila Amato, Teacher of Visually Impaired Students, East Meadow School District, New York*

The purpose of this workshop is to demonstrate the Mayster Braille Loom and to provide opportunities for workshop participants to have a hands-on experience in weaving a tactile code on a loom. The Mayster Braille Loom is a table-top weaving loom that can be used as a teaching tool to teach and/or reinforce the skills and knowledge of using a Perkins Braillewriter to emboss the braille codes. This loom can be warped so that sighted people can weave a code of colors, or so that blind people can weave a code in which each dot is comprised of a material with a different texture. Children and/or adults can use this loom. It is also a way in which Navajo and other American Indians can merge their culture with valuable skills of literacy.

406 CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE USE OF VISUAL DISPLAYS AND MATERIALS FOR STUDENTS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS WHO HAVE SEVERE SPEECH AND PHYSICAL IMPAIRMENTS

Presenter/s: *Deborah Kreuzer, Ph.D., Director of Education, California School for the Blind*

The role of the teacher of visually impaired students as a team member working with students with visual impairments who have severe speech and physical impairments will be portrayed. Students with visual impairments who have severe speech and physical impairments are increasingly using augmentative and alternative communication to develop their communication skills. An overview of prevalent eye conditions will be presented with case studies that include practical suggestions to enhance the engagement of the learner with a visual impairment. Considerations for the customization of visual displays that maximize functional vision skills will be discussed. Evaluation guidelines for making decisions concerning the use of print, color cues, shapes, spacing, position and number of symbols will be included.

407 BUILDING EARLY BRAILLE READING SKILLS: PUTTING THE PUZZLE PIECES TOGETHER

Presenter/s: *Tina Herzberg, Ph.D., Director of Visual Impairment Program/Assistant Professor, University of South Carolina Upstate*

Becoming an effective reader in braille requires much more than just learning contractions! Braille reading instruction from the teacher of visually impaired students should include strategies for building phonemic awareness, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. In this hands-on session, we will briefly explore what the research tells us and why each of these components is important. The balance of the session will be spent trying out easy-to-implement strategies and exploring ways to build in practice throughout the day.