

Braille Literacy Focus

Trainings for Teachers of the Visually Impaired:

Braille Literacy Project – USDB was awarded a \$5,000 grant to provide a series of five intensive trainings conducted during 2009/2010 school year. This consisted of:

- Early Braille instructional strategies for students - Preschool – Elementary
 - Presented by Dr. Jan Wiggins – University of Utah
- Intermediate Braille instructional strategies for students – Secondary
 - Presented by Sharon Cross-Coquilletto – Co-Author of Braille Too (a well-known Braille instructional guidebook)
- Functional Vision (FV) Assessments and Learning Media Assessments (LMA) – protocols and procedures
 - Presented by LaRhea Sanford – Co-Author of the FV/LMA Practitioners Guidebook; sponsored by the American Printing House for the Blind
- Assessment & Instructional Strategies
 - Presented by Debra Sewell, Curriculum Director at Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (TSBVI); as well as Jerri Cleveland, Curriculum Specialists from TSBVI
- Technology Application for the braille student
 - Presented by USDB Assistive Technology Education Team

Braille Adaptation for the Woodcock Johnson III

- Presented by Dr. Lynne Jaffee, national educational consultant; sponsored by the American Printing House for the Blind (APH).

Regional bi-annual technology trainings

- Held 4 x/year), providing TVIs with “hands-on” trainings with Notetakers, Voice Streams (audio), tactile graphics, QuickTac (a tactile graphics program that can be utilized on TVI laptops/embossers), bookshare, etc.
 - Presented by USDB ATT (Assistive Technology Team)

Monthly VisionPro trainings provide consistent technology updates in areas of need

Summer braille literary trainings as offered through University of Utah – VI program.

Implementation:

Pre-braille Instruction:

- Coordination with Blind Parent Infant Program to promote early braille literacy through fine motor and sensory based activities. Toddler group instruction is now provided with an emphasis on pre-braille activities, specific to literacy; includes sensory, fine motor, and orientation and mobility components.

Braille Instruction:

- An emphasis for Teachers of the Visually Impaired to conduct the Functional Vision and Learning Media Assessments to drive appropriate instruction in braille; including evaluation of appropriate media determinations.
- An emphasis on a functional approach to braille for those students with additional disabilities
- An emphasis on reading fluency strategies to improve fluency rates.
- Progress monitoring provided through quarterly/trimester reports via data collection and intervention for remediation of Braille literacy.
- Braille technology is incorporated into the teaching curriculums as appropriate – i.e. use of Braille Notetakers, JAWs, Mountbattens, audio formats, slate and stylus, Nemeth (math), etc.
- Campus classrooms have appropriate braille technology available for students and are incorporated such use into their instructional curriculums.
- Braille instruction is addressed routinely in IEPs and a signed statement that braille instruction has been considered is incorporated into the IEP documents.

Outcomes:

- Outreach TVIs are routinely conducting FV/LMA's and designing braille instruction based on outcomes of the evaluation; designing appropriate Braille goals and objectives; and selecting appropriate braille curriculums.
- Classroom TVIs are also conducting FV/LMA's and designing braille instruction based on outcomes of the evaluation; designing appropriate braille goals and objectives; and selecting appropriate Braille curriculums. Other teachers are currently in training with the Low Vision Specialists to conduct student's FV/LMA's. Once proficient, all classroom TVIs will complete the assessments.

- Teachers are coordinating the use of technology throughout their instructional curriculums – appropriate to age/grade, and ability of student.
- Teachers have now been trained in the Braille adaptation of the Woodcock Johnson III Achievement Test. Specifically, our TVIs can assist in preparing, administering and scoring tests appropriate for braille readers.
- TVI's continue to participate in ongoing trainings in areas of vision – i.e. Cortical Vision Impairments, assessments in areas of braille adaptations for the Woodcock Johnson.
- TVI's are improve proficiencies in areas of Braille Notetakers, Voice Streams (audio), tactile graphics, QuickTac (a tactile graphics program that can be utilized on TVI laptops/embossers), Bookshare, etc. Their proficiencies are impacting student success in these areas.