The Educator

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BRAILLE LITERACY

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The International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment

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JOMTIEN, THAILAND

THE VENUE OF THE 13TH WORLD CONFERENCE OF ICEVI

We are pleased to announce that the 13th world conference of ICEVI will be held in **Jomtien, Thailand** from **9 to 13 August 2010**. The Education For All movement originated at a meeting of Ministers of Education convened by UNESCO, UNICEF and The World Bank in Jomtien in 1990. It is quite symbolic that ICEVI will hold its 13th World Conference at the same location some 20 years later to draw the attention of the world to the educational needs of all children with visual impairment.

The Thai Host Committee, consisting of organisations of the Thai Blind Union and voluntary organizations, is headed by Pecharat Techavachara, President, Foundation for the Employment Promotion of the Blind in Thailand. The conference will be held at the **Hotel Ambassador City**, Jomtien, which has excellent facilities at a beautiful seaside location. Do mark your calendar to join your colleagues from around the world and be prepared for an excellent conference and a relaxed time.

For abstract submission and registration, log on to ICEVI Website www.icevi.org

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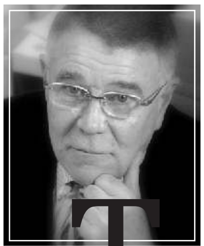
CONTENTS

Guest Editor : **Cay Holbrook**



Message from the President

June 29, 2009

Dear Colleagues:

This issue of The Educator is the second developed under the guidance of Guest Editor, Dr. Cay Holbrook to commemorate the 200th versary of the birth of Louis aille, the remarkable young man from Coupvray, France who developed the writing sitem that beams name and been the key to independence for ations of blind

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Message from the Editor

Dear Reader,

We have now reached the mid-point of the 200th anniversary of Louis Braille's birth. Has this anniversary so far had any positive effects on children and young people with visual impairment? Take a look at what has happened in your own country. What have you done? Don't be pessimistic if you are not pleased with what you have achieved so far. There are still a few more months left before the end of the anniversary year.

To be honest – I have not received many mails showing that education has been the focus for activities in countries around the world. However, there has already been a number of activities like issuing stamps and conducting conferences focused on Louis Braille and the Braille code. Such activities will, of course, increase public awareness and be beneficial for those of us whose work has education as its prime focus.

The extent of the world interest in celebrating Louis Braille can be seen on the front cover of this issue of The Educator. By early May, Gunilla Stenberg Stuckey and Ken Stuckey already had some 40 countries represented in their anniversary stamp collection.

Once again, we have the pleasure of welcoming Dr Cay Holbrook from the University of British Columbia as the Guest Editor of an issue dealing with Braille. In the last issue, we focused on Braille viewed from a time perspective – past, present and future. The original idea was that this issue should deal with the innovative use of Braille. Finger Braille and Braille contests are good examples of innovations. The use of slate and stylus compared to using a Brailler also has an innovative aspect as well as the other articles in this issue.

When the Publications Committee met in January 2009, one important issue on the agenda was to determine the themes for 2010. After intensive discussions, we decided to focus on inclusion, having one issue deal with the teacher's perspective, and the other with inclusion as seen by students.

I'm happy to tell you that Dr Steve McCall, the previous ICEVI Vice President and Editor of The Educator, has accepted our invitation to be the 2010 Guest Editor. Steve and I will need your help locating potential authors, especially those who are students themselves.

Sincerely,

Harry Svensson
Editor and ICEVI Second Vice President

Message from the Guest Editor

2009 is an important year for us. It is during this year that we pay special attention to the life and contributions of Louis Braille. This year, the celebrations that have been planned have allowed us to highlight Louis Braille in our communities and workplaces. Somehow, pointing out the 200th birthday of Louis Braille pulls others into the story of Louis Braille in a way that doesn't happen as easily without the landmark of a milestone birthday.

But the thing that we all know is that next year, and five years after that, and for many, many more years, we will feel the same tender appreciation for the man that we do today. Those of us who are braille enthusiasts realize that, when the birthday cake is eaten, when the confetti and the conferences have ended, the on-going, personal use of Louis's code has changed the world in fundamental ways for individuals who are blind or visually impaired, and indeed, for everyone. Forever.

Once again, ICEVI has dedicated this issue of the Educator to Braille, this time, the creative use of braille. While the beauty of braille is its logic and elegant simplicity, the power of braille is its flexibility, durability and resilience. It is impossible to identify even a fraction of the ways that braille is used for personal, educational, and professional reasons. But in this issue, we hope to hint at some interesting issues related to the use of braille.

The creative use of braille was likely apparent to you when you picked up this issue and saw the very interesting graphic representation of the use of braille in stamps around the world that is on the cover of this issue. Gunilla Stenberg Stuckey and Ken Stuckey shared these images from their historic collection of stamps. We appreciate their generosity in sharing this with us!

Inside the issue we have contributions from a number of authors who demonstrate what we believed when we first planned this issue - that the use of braille is illustrated in different ways for different people. One article focuses on the use of braille from an unexpected source: Google! The reactions of people who encountered this use of braille in their internet search for one day provides an interesting snapshot of perceptions about braille from the general public.

The issue also includes an interesting examination of the use of the slate and stylus and the Perkins brailler when teaching young children to write braille. Authors Swarup and Bahn highlight the importance of making decisions that are driven by evidence and have provided some important data for us to consider when working with these youngsters.

Lex Gandia has offered a description for a unique use of braille for individuals who are deaf-blind in his article on “finger braille”. This article is a follow-up to a very interesting presentation that he provided at the celebration of the life of Louis Braille held in Paris this past January. In addition, we have articles from Peter Zurita and Hans-Eugen Schulze that honor the understanding and importance of braille.

These articles and the other short pieces of information weave together to provide a small but powerful picture of the diversity of ways that braille is important in our world today. Louis Braille is an historic and public figure, his code is a system of representing thoughts and ideas. But the importance of Braille rests in the daily, ongoing, personal use of braille to enhance the lives of people as they fulfill their hope and dreams.

Cay Holbrook

Vision Alliance

A meeting on Vision Alliance between the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB), International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment (ICEVI) and the World Blind Union (WBU) was held in Vienna, Austria on 10th February 2009, which was attended by Larry Campbell, President ICEVI, Maryanne Diamond, President WBU and the CEOs of the three organisations. The meeting formulated a Communiqué outlining the mission and terms of reference of the alliance, which are enumerated below:

Mission Statement: The Vision Alliance is an initiative of IAPB, ICEVI and WBU to create greater synergy and collaboration between the three organisations at the global, regional, and national levels for the purpose of improving the services and programmes of each organization.

Areas for synergy: During initial meetings of the three Vision Alliance partners, the following areas were identified that would contribute to enhanced synergy and collaboration.

1. Developing mechanisms to assure a systematic exchange of information between the three organisations.
2. Identifying common areas of mutual concern where the three organisations can work together through joint advocacy.
3. Creating common platforms where stakeholders such as parents, persons with visual impairment, voluntary organisations, educators, rehabilitation specialists, optometrists and ophthalmologists can work together in planning comprehensive services for persons with visual impairment.

How to move the Vision Alliance forward: The members of the Vision Alliance have listed the following actions that could be implemented in the near future to turn intent into action.

1. Create a Vision Alliance page that would appear on the websites of all three organizations and provide information that would facilitate improved synergy and collaboration, particularly at the regional and national levels.
2. Share information on meetings of the respective organisations in order to avoid schedule conflicts and offer opportunities to coordinate some meetings to save on travel costs.
3. Identify cross cutting issues where the three member organisations might take a unified position and speak with a more powerful, unified voice.
4. Arrange for regular contributions by the other two organisations in the respective publications as a means of keeping the respective constituencies informed of the work of all members of the Vision Alliance.
5. Identify areas of mutual interest and concern where a single Task Force formed and led by one organisation with representation from the other two organizations could a) save resources, b) avoid potential duplication of effort, c) assure all perspectives are considered and d) lead to greater collaboration between the respective programmes of the three member organizations.
6. Facilitate meetings of the regional chairs of the respective organisations in order to nurture the Vision Alliance at the regional levels.

The recommendations of the communiqué are being followed-up.

EFA-VI News

The Global Campaign on Education for All Children with Visual Impairment implemented by ICEVI, acting in partnership with the World Blind Union is making a steady progress. Here is an update of the Campaign activities:

1. The Global Task Force of the EFA-VI Campaign met five times since July 2006.
2. The Campaign is being implemented in 9 focus countries, namely Ecuador, Fiji, Honduras, Nepal, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Paraguay, The Dominican Republic, and Vietnam.
3. Mr. Bernard Mogesa assumed charge as the Regional Coordinator on 5th January 2009 for the implementation of the EFA-VI campaign in the Africa region. The Regional Secretariat functions at the premises of the African Union of the Blind (AFUB) in Nairobi, Kenya.
4. Ethiopia and Mozambique have been selected as the focus countries in the Africa region and preliminary work has started. With these two countries, the focus countries of the EFA-VI Campaign will be 11. National workshops involving local governments, organisations of persons with visual impairment, national NGOs, and International Non-Government Developmental Organisations, etc., will be organised in these countries to develop national plans for the EFA-VI campaign.
5. The year 2008 was marked by advocacy activities to create a demand for education. Teachers, parents, policy planners, and persons with disabilities were involved in making the campaign as national movements.
6. In Vietnam over 13,000 additional children with visual impairment were enrolled in general schools and about 3,800 general classroom teachers were trained in the last two years.
7. In Dominican Republic 70 additional children with visual impairment were admitted to schools.
8. In Paraguay, 249 additional children with visual impairment got access to education in regular schools.
9. All focus countries in the Latin America region have pledged to increase the access to education of children with visual impairment by at least 70% by the end of 2010.
10. In India, the EFA-VI activities were sensitised to government officials, voluntary organisations, and general teachers in 12 States.
11. A situational analysis research has been initiated in China to find out factors contributing to inclusive education.
12. The President and Secretary General of ICEVI visited officials at the Ministry of Education, Government of Cambodia to explore possibilities of initiating EFA-VI activities and also to make Cambodia as one of the focus countries.

13. Leading world bodies such as the Asian Foundation for the Prevention of Blindness, CBM, Light for the World, New York Institute for Special Education, Norwegian Association of the Blind and Partially Sighted, ONCE, Perkins School for the Blind, Sight Savers International, Visio, and Vision Australia are supporting the campaign.
14. The EFA-VI Global campaign has been endorsed by the African Decade as its official programme to increase educational opportunities for children with visual impairment.
15. The Resource Mobilisation Committee of ICEVI met in Visio, The Netherlands in June 2009 to formulate resource mobilisation strategies without competing with the member organisations.
16. The EFA-VI Global Campaign enjoys the support of UNESCO and UNICEF.
17. ICEVI has initiated establishing a Resource Centre at the Hong Kong Society for the Blind for the procurement and distribution of high quality low-cost assistive devices.

WORLD BRAILLE COUNCIL

J.L. Kaul
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As a part of its Strategic Plan (2009-2012) the World Blind Union took an important decision to strengthen and reconstitute the World Braille Council. Consequently the reconstituted Council now has representatives from the six WBU Regional Unions as well as important International organizations engaged in education/Braille production and promotion for persons with visual impairment. In addition to ICEVI, the other NGOs represented on the Council include IFLA (Libraries serving persons with print disabilities Section) International Council on English Braille, Duxbury systems, ONCE, etc. The Council represents different linguistic groups.

The major objective and mandate of the Council is to strive for unification of different codes and promote usage, teaching and production of Braille world-wide. Undertaking need-based research and documenting existing research findings on Braille and making the same available in various major languages is another important objective. A systematic Plan of Action has been prepared for the Council for the quardrennium (2009-2012). The first meeting of the Council is scheduled to be held in Madrid on November 5, 6 2009 and is being hosted by ONCE. We solicit cooperation of all our friends interested in promoting Braille to make the Council a great success.

Finger Braille

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I am president of the World Federation of the DeafBlind, WFDB and I meet many of my friends with deafblindness worldwide in very different situations. As persons with deafblindness, we use many different modes and means of communication. The method chosen depends on an individual's life history and what kind of communication he or she prefers. Some people are born deaf with some residual vision, and use sign language as their primary language. When we lose our vision, we shift to hands-on signing. Many of us are visually impaired or blind with some residual hearing and we develop spoken language. In this case, we express ourselves with speech, but we still need a method of communication that allow us to receive information from other people in the world. Some of us are or become totally deaf and totally blind, but we all have in common, that we need and want to be able to communicate with our family and friends and get the information we need, wherever we are. There are many situations, where it is difficult for us to follow what is going on around us. We need information in a different way than by speech. If we are braille users, we are lucky. Finger braille is one of the most efficient ways of communicating together.

We want to be able to participate fully in family life, amongst our friends and as a member of society. We want to be able to follow discussions in our family and meet and get to know our friends. We want to know what is happening in our country, in the world, following the news on radio and TV or from the newspapers. It is helpful and interesting for somebody to describe the surroundings for us, when we are on our way. In meetings we want to know who is in attendance. When going out shopping we want to make our own choices of what to buy. An efficient communication system can help us break the isolation. It helps us to become curious about what is happening around us, not only thinking our own thoughts in our inner world, spinning around in our heads.

The importance of braille

In the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, braille is recognized as a script and a mode of communication. Braille gives us the possibility to read literature, educational material and all kinds of information. It gives us the possibility to express ourselves in writing. Some of us use interpreters, writing on a computer keyboard, connected to a refreshable braille display, so we can read what is happening. Computers with braille displays give us the possibility of reading and writing e-mails and that has opened the world for us. Reading and writing e-mails is what many people do, deafblind or not and in that way it suddenly levels the playing field.

In our daily life, however, we need a fast and efficient communication system, that works when we are on the way, shopping, visiting family and friends, taking part in cultural or political activities, even in job situations. Many efforts have been made to develop such a

system. There are many different types of manual alphabets and ways of finger spelling. Many of us in developing countries have to manage with writing block letters in the hand, which is very slow and tiresome. This is another reason why education in braille is very important.

Finger braille for beginners

Almost 30 years ago our deafblind friends from Japan started to develop Finger Braille. Different ways of doing it have been developed in different parts of the world by deafblind braille users. Finger Braille allows the exchange of messages and communication between a sender and receiver of a message. The easiest way to learn and understand it, is the following:

- The receiver places her or his hands as if it was the seven keys of a Braille keyboard of a Braille machine: the left hand on the left side, using the index for dot 1, the middle finger for dot 2 and the ring finger for dot 3. The right hand on the right, using the index for dot 4, the middle finger for dot 5 and the ring finger for dot 6. The thumbs can be used in the middle as a space bar. The easiest way in this beginning situation is, to put the hands on a table.
- The sender puts her or his hands on top of the hands of the receiver on the similar way as if writing on the 7 keys of a Braille keyboard and starts to write the message in braille.
- The receiver now can feel how the sender is writing and of course, when answering needs to change position. In practice this only needs to be done, when both, sender and receiver are deafblind. In most cases the person with deafblindness is the receiver and if the person has a spoken language, it is very easy to answer in speech.

Finger Braille users do not need the ability to read braille with their finger tips. Many sighted persons read braille with their eyes. Older persons with acquired deafblindness have, for many reasons, not developed the sensitivity in the fingertips to be able to read braille. The only ability that is needed to use Finger Braille is to write braille on a braille keyboard.

More experienced users

The above way of using Finger Braille is easy to understand, but during the process of learning and practicing other ways of placing the hands are developed. The receiver can use the inner side of one hand or the palm, the back of one or two hands or even the shoulders to receive the messages. Some receivers develop the ability to think opposite, when for example, placing the hands against each other. It all depends on the situation in which Finger Braille is used. Receiving messages on the shoulders is very efficient while working in the kitchen or writing on a computer at the same time. Walking in the street with a white cane in one hand means, that only the other hand can be used for receiving information. Experienced braille users may find it comfortable and efficient to use contracted braille instead of uncontracted braille.

The best way to work, is always depending on the individual user. The different ways develop, depending on the situation Finger Braille is being used. Describing the surroundings, standing at the corner of a street is very different from sitting on a chair at a family party or in a meeting. Finger Braille can be used, sitting, standing, walking.

Finger Braille can become a very fast communication system. Even for those of us, who have some hearing, it can be very efficient in noisy surroundings, like a street corner, a train station or sitting in a plane.

I hope Louis Braille would be happy to know, that braille also can be used this way.

Google: "Louis Braille"

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On January 4, 2006, the anniversary of Louis Braille's birth, Google, the world's largest internet search engine used braille to spell out it's logo. Throughout the day, this unique logo was shown to people who signed onto the search page of Google. This was not the first time Google had used it's simple homepage to honor a holiday or special event. The practice of using specially designed logos began in 1999 and these logos (sometimes called Google Doodles) have honored holidays and the birthdays of various individuals (e.g., Martin Luther King, Claude Monet, and Albert Einstein) along with other special events (e.g., Earth Day, Election Day). This was the first time, however, that the company used a logo that did not maintain the basic shapes of the letters that make up the word "Google".

Because the use of braille to write the logo for Google was an unexpected event, it provided a unique opportunity to examine the reactions of a variety of internet users to unexpectedly encountering something written in the braille code. For 24 hours while the braille Google logo was in place a review of cyber conversations took place by using the following procedures.

- Google searches were conducted throughout the day with the words: Google "Louis Braille".
- The top 100 sites from the results page of this search were reviewed to examine what was being discussed relating to Google's use of braille letters in its logo in honor of the birthday of Louis Braille. Duplicate sites and sites that were unrelated to the topic were eliminated.
- The discussions related to braille, Louis Braille, or the Google braille logo were printed and separated into themes. Unrelated comments were discarded.
- Data was collected about the type of site, the language and the country of origin if identifiable.

Results

By the end of the day, this search resulted in over 110,000 results. Over 70% of the results came from blogs and message boards which contained opportunities for people to comment on the Google braille logo and to discuss topics of interest related to braille or Louis Braille.

The 100 sites, including blogs and message boards were focused on a wide variety of topics, some of which were not easily identifiable or well-defined in

the text of the site. Nine blog or message board topics were clearly identifiable. They were sports, religion, technology, advertising, disability issues, parent/child issues, web developers, museum issues and media networks.

Message boards and blogs from six identifiable countries were included (The United States, England, Norway, Ireland, Switzerland, and Indonesia). Seven languages could be identified. The content of the discussion was not possible to determine on sites that were written in a language other than English without translation, however, it was clear that discussions were focusing on Google and Louis Braille because those words were embedded in the text written in another language. The languages represented English, Spanish, French, Chinese, Portuguese, German and Arabic.

Themes and sample quotes

The statements that were collected from the Google "Louis Braille" search have been separated into eleven themes. Below is a brief description of the themes and some sample statements that represent this theme. Please note that the statements have been reproduced here as they appeared in the website, without editing or correcting. The web addresses used for this project can be found in the reference section. Unfortunately, some of the references are no longer available.

Confusion

Some posts expressed confusion about the dots on the Google page. These statements seem to indicate that the person did not understand what the dots represented or why they were being used on the Google home page.

"Anyone else opened up google and seen the logo and thought something is wrong with your computer or the website? Took me awhile to figure out what that was."

"I'm sure a bunch of people will think something is wrong with their computer. I'm waiting for my non technical mother to call me for support…I can hear it now 'something is wrong with Google, do I have a virus?"

Used braille in some way

In addition to commenting on the Google logo, some people went farther into exploring the braille code and used it in some way in their posts. There were several instances where people downloaded the braille code and wrote "secret messages" on their blog or website. One website posted the word "tea" in braille in honor of National Hot Tea Month. Another wrote the word "blog" in braille and challenged readers to decode it.

Jokes or attempts at humor

Some posts included attempts at humor related to the Google logo in braille. Most attempts at humor were sarcastic.

"It's interesting, for sure, but now I have fingerprints on my monitor from trying to read it."

"For some reason I can't feel anything…I've been running my hand over it all morning and I can't read it. I dunno. Maybe my monitor is bad?"

"…the first thing I googled today was for my optometrist, and then the braille came up. I thought it was some super cool fuzzy logic programming thing."

"So Google's logo today is in braille because today's the creator's bday? Oddly enough my laptop screen does not have bumps. Nope. Not at all. Not even when I've accidentally sneezed on the screen."

Information on the braille code

Some people used this as an educational opportunity and explored more about Louis Braille and/or the braille code. There were several questions about the capital sign (dot 6). It seems that some people were able to find a link to the braille alphabet, but did not

know what the "extra dot" in front of the "g" in Google was. Several blogs included back-and-forth discussions with bloggers about the meaning of the dot-6.

"btw, why is there an extra dot? g supposed to have 4 dots. but the first g has five dots…"

"Braille is a very noteworthy invention. It's a great system, and to watch someone read in Braille is a wondrous thing."

"Braille, which was invented in the early 1800s by a 15 year-old Louis Braille, has given people with vision loss a way to read and write English, and any other language for a couple of hundred years now. For many of us, it is the key to intellectual freedom, independence, and employment opportunities."

Personal perspectives

Some posts were written by people who read braille themselves.

"As a legally blind person I am glad that they commemorate such an important day. braille is very important…"

Errors or misperceptions

As is the case with any written material that is not reviewed, there is the possibility that some information included on blogs, message boards and websites will be incorrect and will reflect misperceptions. This was also the case for this day.

"Hey, if you think about it, Braille and Sign Language(s) are not really any different from learning another foreign language like German or French or Spanish. They are all methods of communication, so that's got to be good :-)"

"I've actually heard that many impaired people prefer raised alphanumeric lettering. Braille only exists because it's much easier to print braille than to print raised lettering. Braille just requires thick stock and a moving peg hammer to push out circles – raised lettering involves much more complex machinery."

Information about branding and advertising

A great deal of discussion related to why Google changed their logo to braille letters and how Google's very recognizable logo was changed dramatically for the day.

"Now this has to be the best 'Doodle' I've seen yet, though it's not much for branding. It's Braille for Google."

"Even if you didn't know braille, you'd instantly know what that says. Those colors are all you need to recognize Google – perhaps they should patent the use of those colors in that order!"

"One of the reasons I consider google to be tops in search, and one of the better business models going, is their willingness to not focus all their energies on being business driven. How many CEOs would allow their company logo to be shown in braille form, even for one day, without complaining heavily about its effect on 'branding'? This logo looks great."

"Google's logo today is Google, spelled out in Braille, in honor of the birthday of Louis Braille, creator of the system used by blind and visually impaired people for reading and writing. 'Google' in Braille looks nothing like the Google logo, and it was an interesting gamble on the part of the Google marketers to display their logo in this fashion. No doubt, I knew I was on the Google site when I saw the colors, and my first thought was 'What the…?" I hovered over the logo to see what on earth Google could possibly be celebrating today. 'Happy Birthday Louis Braille,' said the alt image tag…."

Information about Louis Braille

Some statements were focused on information about Louis Braille. These statements included biographical sketches as well as information regarding how Louis Braille came to develop the braille code.

"Louis Braille (January 4, 1809-January 6, 1852) was the inventor of braille, a world-wide system used by blind and visually impaired people for reading and writing. Braille is read by passing one's fingers over characters which are made up of an arrangement of one to six embossed points. It has been adapted to almost every known language."

"Today, January 4 is the 187th birthday of Louis Braille (b. 1809), creator of the Braille alphabet. Blinded at age 3, Braille developed the system of raised dots representing letters by the age of 15. He based it on a complicated code of raised letters used by French soldiers. 183 years later, Braille-style alphabets have been developed for most of the major languages around the world. In 1952, the French government recognized Braille as a national hero and his body was exhumed for reburial in the Pantheon in Paris."

"If nothing else, Google caused me to go to Wikipedia and look up Louis Braille and learn a bit more about him. (He went blind at the age of four and developed the system that far surpassed other systems in place to enable blind people to read—he died of tuberculosis at age 43.)"

"It is a nice gesture from Google to remember such a man who provided such a great service to humanity."

Statements about accessibility

There were several statements that related to the importance of accessibility and how to make websites accessible to individuals who are blind or visually impaired. Some of these statements question the purpose of writing Google in braille when the logo was largely visual. People also wrote about HTML codes and "alt" tabs."

Reactions about how this will have an impact on braille or blindness

Some people recognized that there were public awareness issues related to the Google in braille day. This was reflected in several discussions.

"I also love the thought that the top 5 sites of the Braille-search will probably have their most successful day of business EVER – in terms of clicks on their Google Adwords…I mean, yesterday, these sites about Louis Braille probably had a total 5 clicks – today, they have 200 million each."

"…most importantly, I want to say, 'Thanks, Google!' We hope today's logo helps raise awareness of this important, valuable code."

"This has to be the coolest Google logo yet"

"That is just one very cool doodle. I could see myself wearing a t-shirt with that."

Reactions

There were many examples of general reaction to Google's use of the braille code in their logo to honor the birth of Louis Braille. These reactions were almost universally positive.

"Best Google logo yet…a Braille version to celebrate the birthday of Louis Braille"

"Today's Google art is particularly nifty, in my opinion."

"AHHHHHHH, Happy Birthday louie Braille, clever stuff!"

"The most unusual logo I've ever seen."

Summary

On January 4, 2006, the digital world woke up to an unusual tribute to an individual born almost 200 years before. The use of braille to spell out "Google" for the home page of the most popular internet search engine provided opportunities for many people to learn about Louis Braille who made such an important contribution to literacy for individuals who are blind or visually impaired. This was a day of awareness, accessibility, education, and public relations.

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Braille wonder and some myths

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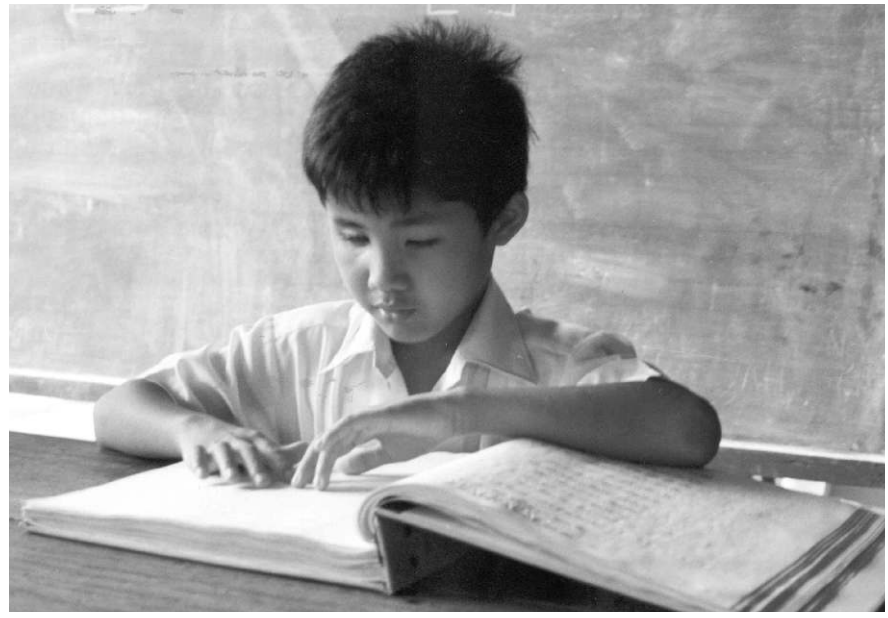

The good news Louis Braille in France gifted to the world in 1825 is undoubtedly a significant milestone in the beginning of the road of blind people towards their full social inclusion. That fact was helped in its start by the creation by Valentín Haüy in Paris in the late eighteenth century of the first school for the blind in the world; by the presentation to the royal educational establishment for the blind in Paris by Charles Barbier of his night writing and by the decision of the director of that school for some years Alexandre-René Pignier to let the blind students express themselves on the best options for their independent reading and writing code.

In the same manner that deaf people adamantly defend their right to use sign language, the adoption of braille by people who are severely visually impaired is an inalienable right. Up to now nothing has been created that deserves the placing of braille in the museums of outmoded things.

Braille learning and teaching

Educators everywhere have the responsibility to foster the abandonment of some of the myths that the braille code finds in its path. It is true that human endless creative power has always found ways for a few severely visually impaired people to express themselves to the public without braille. However, braille can potentially make things far easier for all people with visual impairments.

Except for some objective cases of diminished tactual sensitivity braille can be effectively learned and should be taught to all blind children or adults and to those who suffer a severe visual impairment for whom braille can become the most appropriate writing and reading medium. Braille is simple but it must be practiced every day and opportunities for its use must be created. Educators must outfit themselves with the idea of the helpful liberating role of braille and they must convey to the families and children concerned that braille is a very dignified thing and an essential compensatory technique in coping socially with blindness or severe visual impairment.

Braille and new technologies

Braille should never be seen as something excluded by new technologies. Its competent command can be helpful under any circumstance. In using computers the ideal strategy is to wisely combine the use of braille and synthetic speech. Visually impaired people, like people who can fully see, resist the total abandonment of information presented on paper. However it is beyond any doubt that in many cases paperless braille possesses very enticing aspects.

Efforts must be made everywhere to promote the carrying out of research and development efforts must be geared to gradually create production methods of braille displays that are effective but much less expensive. The affordability of such technologies is important for potential users all over the world.

Universality of braille

Louis Braille died in 1852 without seeing the tremendous success of his invention in all corners of the planet. In the second half of the nineteenth century and all along the twentieth century the braille code has been adopted by all languages as their conventional code. In non-alphabetic languages, such as Chinese and Japanese, using in their standard writing system ideograms, logograms, special characters which can reach up to several thousands representing objects and concepts, the braille code had to be based on phonetics. In Japanese, the braille code is based on a syllabary which has some limited uses in their script and in Chinese, the braille code has been developed taking into account the official phonetic system designed to represent names of persons and geographical realities for non-Chinese speakers. In Japanese, there are conventional codes using the 6 dot or 8 dot to represent the script of logograms of their script and both in Japan and China blind and severely visually impaired people learn how to use a computer keyboard with special characters of ordinary script.

The braille code has the important feature of bearing the name of its French inventor with its relevant adjustments to the phonetic of the language concerned. In several languages braille is named adopting the English prounounciation. However, at least, in Mandarin Chinese, Cantonese, Japanese and Korean, the Braille name is a word meaning script of the blind or dot script. In a European language, German, our code has three possible names, Brailleschrift (Braillescript), Punktschrift (dot script) and Blindenschrift (blind script).

Unification of Braille

The braille code is more universal in its usage than ordinary writing alphabets or syllabaries and writing systems. A conscious effort has been made during a long time to preserve unification of punctuation signs. However in the last years computers have stimulated braille reforms in many languages. The lack of a universal body promoting effectively an across language window has brought up codes that are uniform within language areas but which differ in their new proposals among languages not far culturally and geographically like English, French, and Spanish or even very close in all respects such as the different Scandinavian languages.

It is a must to bring real life to the World Braille Council and I strongly urge the ICEVI to join forces with the World Blind Union in this unescapable enterprise.

Conclusion

As long as there is nothing that really makes Braille redundant all of us who are involved in some way with the promotion of the wellbeing and social inclusion of blind and visually impaired people all over the world must struggle to defend the status of braille as the best and most appropriate tactual reading and writing system.

THE WORLD BLIND UNION AWARDS LOUIS BRAILLE MEDAL TO **EUCLID HERIE** OF CANADA

The World Blind Union (WBU), the internationally recognized voice of blind and low vision persons at the global level, recently announced that it will award its highest honor, the Louis Braille Medal, to Euclid Herie of Canada in Coupvray France on June 20, 2009.

The Louis Braille Medal is awarded at most once every four years, and is granted to individuals who have made a substantial and outstanding contribution to people who are blind or low vision through international service or to the WBU over many years.

In announcing the award, WBU President Maryanne Diamond said, **"Dr. Euclid Herie was selected from among several worthy candidates from all around the world, and in our view exemplifies the merit of this award"**. Presently an Honorary Life Member of the WBU, Dr. Herie served in the international Officer positions of Treasurer, President and Past President from 1988 to 2004. During this time he was also President and Chief Executive Officer of the CNIB (Canadian National Institute for the Blind), the principal organization in Canada providing specialized services and support to visually impaired persons. During his tenure with CNIB, he actively engaged the organization in sharing its expertise with other organizations of and for the blind around the world, and was one of the architects of the WBU Institutional Development Program (IDP), then supported by CNIB, Hilton Perkins International Programs from Boston and Sightsavers International based in the United Kingdom – this same IDP program has provided and continues to provide significant development training to hundreds of blind leaders around the world. Following his retirement as President and CEO of the CNIB, Dr. Herie founded the World Braille Foundation which provides support for grassroots braille literacy programs for blind persons in developing countries, and which has focused significantly on making such braille literacy programs available to blind women and girls.

The awarding of the Louis Braille medal during 2009 and in Coupvray France is particularly significant, as the award will be presented just minutes away from the actual birthplace of Louis Braille and during the 200th anniversary of the birth of Louis Braille, the inventor of the braille system. Given the significant contributions Dr. Herie has made, it is right that we celebrate and recognize the work of the World Braille Foundation - what a legacy – providing access to literacy for thousands who would otherwise be denied this vital tool of empowerment and self-determination.

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Braille celebrates bicentenary

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Louis Braille, who was born two hundred years ago, did not have the chance in his lifetime to witness the unbridled success of his simple but brilliant invention, a system which revolutionised the lives of blind people by opening the doors to knowledge and culture, fields which were hitherto out of bounds to them.

The birth pangs were not, however, insignificant. Braille completed his code in 1825, when he was barely 15 years old, but he passed away two years before France officially adopted his system in 1854. For decades his method faced rejection from both teachers at the Young Blind People's Institute in Paris, where Braille himself studied and taught, and from sighted people. It was even banned for some time, and it was not until 1878 when an international congress held in Paris recognised the braille system, giving it the boost it needed to be implemented gradually worldwide. Since then training, development and independence for blind people have relied largely on this reading and writing system that is now, two hundred years after it was invented, used in practically every language in the world.

Although in the past few years many have hailed the replacement of the braille system due to technological breakthroughs, no alternative method capable of substituting it completely has yet been developed. What is more, there are numerous signs that it enjoys rude health as it is used increasingly in everyday settings to enable blind people to become more independent. Braille is still irreplaceable in this respect, as we can see, for example, with the cosmetics firms, food companies and wine merchants who market their products with braille labeling, the European Union directive that makes it obligatory to have braille signage in new lifts, or the fact that since October 2005 all medicines in the European Union must carry braille labeling.

Yet more initiatives can be found in the field of citizens' rights. Countries such as France, Germany, Spain, India, Mexico, Colombia and Costa Rica are using braille to come up with different methods to ensure blind people are able to exercise their vote independently in elections.

The logic of an alphabet

The simple and logical structure of the braille system is based on the presence or absence of dots in a cell containing two parallel columns, each with three dots. The different permutations of dots in the six-dot cell give us 63 different combinations representing all the letters of the alphabet.

Louis Braille based his system on the so-called "night writing" developed by Charles Barbier, a captain in the artillery, to enable the military to send messages in the dark. Braille learnt about this tactile code when he was just 10 years old and, after studying it, he reached the brilliant conclusion that the two columns containing six dots each put forward by Barbier should be reduced to two columns of three, an ideal size for the perception

of a fingertip. Braille also showed that the sense of touch was significantly more sensitive to dots than to the linear system used in the code created some years previously by Valentin Haüy. Haüy's system, which used lines to represent the letters of the visual alphabet, was the one Braille had learnt when he began at the Young Blind People's Institute in Paris, founded by Haüy himself in 1784.

Using this knowledge, Louis Braille came up with a very logical code: the first ten letters of the alphabet are formed using combinations only of the top two rows in the cell; the next ten are the same as the first ten with the addition of the bottom dot in the left-hand column, and the following ten letters use the bottom dots in both columns. After that only the bottom right-hand dot is used, and so on. Punctuation marks are represented by combinations of dots using only the two bottom rows.

Louis Braille, however, did not stop after inventing the braille alphabet; he is also responsible for adapting his system for mathematics, creating a clever system of abbreviations, and for music, developing a vertical system that is still used to this day.

Braille and new technologies

We do not have accurate figures on the number of braille users, nor do we have research showing a correlation between the use of the reading and writing system and academic qualifications. However, from the information we do have and available estimates we can deduce it is used by a minority of the blind and low vision. This is for a variety of reasons, among them the difficulties older people have in learning braille and the high cost of producing braille resource material. In addition, in recent times we have witnessed the development of new technologies based on text to speech which have reduced noticeably the extent to which braille is used, especially because a lot of information and books are easier to get hold of using electronic methods.

Both methods, however, far from being mutually exclusive, can complement each other. In the 80s and 90s there were significant breakthroughs in computing and electronics, and we are now able to produce much more material in braille a lot more cheaply. Suitable complementary computer programmes make it possible to present the same information that is written on the computer in braille. There are now many resources that are an improvement on what most people used to have, but for people with a visual impairment many of these technological breakthroughs have opened up possibilities that were previously unimaginable. For example, a huge amount of information can now be stored on a CD-ROM, a DVD or other tiny storage devices that are now available and accessible to more and more people with vision loss who use a computer.

Internet also opens up brand new horizons for those of us who cannot see but have access to an adapted computer. Reading the newspaper is now no longer a utopian pipe dream for the blind. Nevertheless, the truth is that all these innovations do not take anything away from the value of braille, and in fact they contribute to strengthening its merit. Nowadays the ideal system is to combine braille and text-to-speech software when using a computer and, more generally, when handling information.

Braille as a universal system

Although braille is used by a minority of people with vision loss, it must be recognised as a truly universal system since it is used in all languages, including Chinese, Japanese and Arabic. In the last few years it has also been applied in minority languages such as Guaraní, widely spoken in many parts of Paraguay, Tibetan and Dzongkha, one of Bhutan's official languages. In Africa, braille has expanded recently to include Kinyarwanda and Kirundi, the official languages in Rwanda and Burundi respectively.

The World Braille Council, set up under the auspices of UNESCO in 1950, played a leading role in the application of braille in the written languages of the world. It carried out the very important task of preserving unity in dots that were common to several languages and made a vital contribution to extending braille to languages less widespread than English, French or Spanish. Its chairman at the time, Sir Clutha Mackenzie, published World Braille Usage in 1953, a magnificent work that sets out general principles and includes braille alphabets in those languages where they were available at the time.

The World Braille Council then came under the wings, firstly, of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind (WCWB) and later, following its foundation in 1984, of the World Blind Union.

Information has led to change in the main linguistic groups and in specific languages. These changes have been undertaken without taking other languages into account and without the involvement of a universal authority, thus leading to less consistency in the use of certain punctuation marks such as, for instance, brackets, even in closely-related languages like French, English and Spanish, while there is still a wide range of alternative forms of representing the now ubiquitous "@" in E-mail addresses.

Unification is, for many, a desirable objective, but the goal is difficult to achieve when it involves giving up things one considers to be the best for one's own language. An international braille code does exist and is used more and more, but the WBU Braille Council still has an important task ahead of it to unify and promote it.

Louis Braille (1809-1852)

- **1809**: Louis Braille was born on January 4th in Coupvray, a small town east of Paris.
- **1812**: at the age of three, he accidentally stabbed himself in the eye with an awl when he was playing in his father's saddle-maker's workshop. The infection spread to his other eye and he became totally blind.
- **1819**: Louis joined the Young Blind People's Institute in Paris, founded in 1784 by Valentin Haüy. He stayed at the Institute for 24 years, first as a student and later as a teacher.
- **1820**: Braille was introduced to the night writing system developed by army captain Nicolas-Marie-Charles Barbier for the army. He studied the system, made some improvements and developed his own method, which he completed in 1825 when he was just 15 years old.
- **1827**: Braille became a teacher at the Young Blind People's Institute, where he taught grammar, history, geography, arithmetic, algebra, geometry, piano and cello.
- **1829**: the first version of his method was published. The second version, including some improvements, was published eight years later and contains the braille method as we know it today.
- **1852**: on January 6th, Braille died of tuberculosis aged 43. He was buried in Coupvray, where the house in which he was born still stands and is now a museum.
- **1952**: Braille's body was moved to the Pantheon in Paris, not far from the Young Blind People's Institute where he spent most of his life.

Braille Contests and Competitions

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One fun and interesting way to engage and motivate students in any physical or academic area is through competition. Competitions are liberally used throughout school and society to create excitement and to recognize hard work. Some competitions are team based, others are individual; in some competitions, participants compete with other people, others provide participants with an opportunity to strive for their own personal best, in competition with themselves.

This year, more than previous years, there have been a variety of braille reading and writing contests and competitions in honor of the anniversary of the birth of Louis Braille. Some events are on-going while others are unique to this special birthday year. Some of the competitions that have occurred this year, have happened in The United States (**http://www.brailleinstitute.org/about_the_braille_challenge, and http://www.nfb.org/nfb/NOPBC_Braille_Readers_Are_Leaders.asp**), Canada (**http://www.canadianbrailleauthority.ca/en/braille_challenge.php**), Japan (**http://www.jp.onkyo.com/braille_essay2007/**), Norway and Ireland.

This article will provide an overview of one competition - "The Braille Challenge®" which is an academic competition sponsored yearly by The Braille Institute. This two-stage contest is designed to motivate blind students to emphasize their study of braille, while rewarding their success with a fun-filled, but challenging, weekend of events. In the preliminary round, teachers, schools and agencies encourage students to take a multi-skills-based initial exam either individually, or as a part of a regional group competition. Preliminary round tests are returned to the Braille Institute and scored.

The top students at each of five age groups are invited to Los Angeles where they participate in a day-long head-to-head competition in such categories as "Spelling", "Reading Comprehension", "Proofreading", "Speed and Accuracy" and "Reading Charts and Graphs". Tests for the day-long competition are scored on-site and the day culminates in a star-studded banquet where the children are the "stars" and age-level winners and runners up are announced and presented with prizes from contest sponsors (see a list of sponsors on the The Braille Challenge® website listed above).

The organizers of The Braille Challenge® believe that this event provides some important opportunities for students and teachers to work together in a motivating way to increase and recognize achievement in braille reading and writing. In addition, throughout the years, the organizers have identified the following unexpected benefits:

- Students report that this is an opportunity for them to connect and make friends with other braille readers throughout North America. One participant stated: "I had a wonderful time meeting all the other kids. The entire weekend was so much fun".
- Parents of contestants have the opportunity to see their own child excel in reading and writing and to meet other parents and children who enthusiastically embrace their accomplishments in braille. A father of one contest participant wrote: "For me as the parent of a blind child to see the incredible accomplishments and bright futures of the older contestants was very big deal. I have come to realize that [my child] can do almost whatever she puts her mind to but to see it in reality in these older children really hit home. As for my daughter, I had no idea of how advanced her braille skills were. I was always a proud dad but now I feel like beating my chest and telling everyone I know about her accomplishments!"
- Contestants' home schools and communities have the opportunity to celebrate the accomplishments of a braille-reading student in their town and to learn more about braille. Many participants have home-town newspaper articles highlighting their invitation to join the competition in Los Angeles.

We believe that encouraging braille-reading students through this yearly challenge provides a great opportunity for teachers, parents and children themselves to highlight braille reading and writing skills.

Homage to Louis Braille:
My journey through life with his script

Hans-Eugen Schulze
Justice Dr. Schulze rtd., German Federal Court of Appeals

In April 1928 - when I was six years old - I sat in the 1st grade of the blind school at Soest. A metal slate lay before me with words written in braille. I learned to read and write the braille script there. Information about how braille is written, read, and how individual letters appear can be found on my homepage **www.ma-ha-schulze.de** under "Nicht verzagen, sondern wagen - praktische Ratschläge für Altersblinde", chapter 4.1.

"German braille contractions" were introduced in 1932. Stenography and braille music, and later codes for mathematics and chemistry as well as contractions for French and English Braille were introduced in 1936.

Starting from 1936, schooling then consisted of only eight years. I was trained in Soest for three years in stenography, telephone operating and recaning. The latter helped me after 1961, when I worked as an advisor to Christoffel Blindemission with regard to vocational training in developing countries. Everything thus has a purpose in life, although we may not recognize it immediately and sometimes never. My blindness also had a purpose, as I have indicated at the beginning of my homepage.

In 1939 I was employed at the regional court in Dortmund. I took dictations on a shorthand machine, where text is written on small strips of paper. I then typed out the entire text in full on a typewriter. Since the judgments that were dictated to me primarily consisted of facts, which originated from the current hearing, I was confident that I would be able to draft them myself, and studied law. With the help of braille books, I began preparing for the entrance exam of the Carl-Strehl School of the German Blindenstudienanstalt. It is still incomprehensible to me as to how it was possible for me to quit my job at the regional court on 31 January 1944, as there existed a huge shortage of manpower at the end of the second world war. In April of that year, I moved to Marburg and completed college in 1945.

Thereafter I taught braille to the newly blinded war veterans. From January 1946 when the university resumed its operations again, I studied law and political economy. I wrote down the lectures, if essential, on the shorthand machine, and later converted them into full text. This small machine also helped me during all my exams.

I however wrote in braille all my assignments during my course, the public exams, my dissertation and later all my judgments when working as a judge. I also collected all the preparatory material in braille. This often amounted to several pages when working at the federal Supreme Court. I also wrote most of the material that is currently on

meetings of the evangelical association of blind and partially sighted in Baden-Württemberg as well as in the senior circle of my community.

I no longer read German books and magazines - except for "Geistig fit" - in braille, but rather listen to them. I however still read magazines in English contracted braille from India and South Africa and a few exercises from an English grammar book for advanced learners in braille, in order to keep myself mentally active. Starting next year, I plan to refresh my knowledge of Latin, which would serve the same purpose.

While in bed, when exercising, while at mass or when travelling, I often recollect some task that has to be completed. I therefore always keep a braille slate handy, in my case a postcard-sized slate and a stylus. The slate consists of a base plate with indented holes, each with six slots, which make up the Braille dots. Paper is placed in it and the lid with six "cells" is clamped on it. A metal pencil-like device called the stylus is then used to punch dots into the cells. The stylus is held in the palm with the index finger gripping it. Since I write shorthand, I am able to use the slate and stylus with great speed. Braille is written in inverted form from right to left, and is thereafter read from left to right with fingers.

I had a memorable experience in 1954. Two years earlier, to mark the occasion of his 100th death anniversary, the remains of Louis Braille was entombed in the Panthéon in Paris. My wife and I searched for it and spent a few minutes in front of the well-protected alcove where his sarcophagus lies.

Editors note:
For communication with the author, use the contact page on the website www.ma-ha-schulze.de

News from the **Deafblind International**

Eileen Boothroyd, Information Officer, Deafblind International
eileen.boothroyd@sense.org.uk

We have had a very busy year, working hard to support each other. Many of our members across the world are bracing themselves against the harsh fallout from the global economic position. Finding ways to make sure the most disadvantaged in society are not the first to lose out has been a primary goal.

In spite of these worries lots of planned activities have gone ahead. Last autumn three of our networks held extremely successful events aimed at spreading new skills and understanding to a wider audience.

The Communication Network has been led by some of the most eminent thinkers in the field and they have been meeting over many years to tackle the communication challenges, faced by congenitally deafblind children, which have emerged in their work. Their aim has been to distil their thinking, find solutions that work and then to disseminate their ideas to others. They have produced a remarkable, and very practical, set of booklets related to this work. With a sell out conference in England the group are now planning a full training seminar in Paris next year.

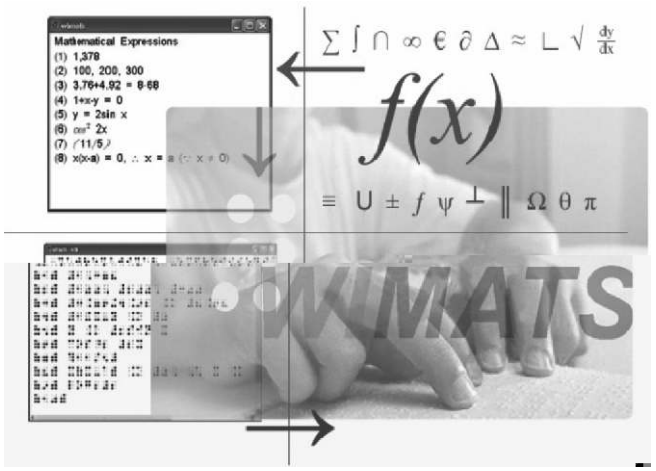
DbI members, interested in acquired deafblindness, met in Bergen, Norway at the bi-annual seminar. With a theme of "activity, ability and participation" the speakers and workshops focussed around issues for people of all ages, including the elderly. Employment, communication and the condition Usher syndrome were all discussed. This network attracts many professionals to its events, including those who have sensory impairments. The European Deafblind Union held a meeting during the seminar and links are being developed to continue this positive collaboration. Look out for details of their next meeting in Aalborg in 2010.

Our final activity focused on deafblind people and their families and friends and was planned by them. Using the long running title "Listen2 Me" the group met in Scotland this time. A mixture of great speakers on subjects that families had asked for and fun and games for everyone meant the event was a huge success with new friendships being made and promises to keep in touch.

Finally, DbI is meeting for our European Conference in September in Italy – everyone will be welcome - and if you are interested why not join us?

WIMATS V-2.0

Webel Mediatronics and ICEVI Mathematics Transcription Software



- Easy and User-Friendly interface to input Mathematical Symbols.
- WIMATS 2.0 has in-built Screen Reader, allows mouse-free operation – visually impaired persons can use the software independently.
- Mathematical symbols to Braille codes as per Nemeth Braille standard and English as per literary Braille.
- Braille file can also be edited in Six Key Mode, saved and re-opened.
- Content of the Braille file can be embossed using Windows 2000 / XP compatible standard Braille Embossers.
- WIMATS will help teachers / transcribers / students in preparing Math book in Nemeth Braille code thus helping in Math education. The application is affordable and very user friendly.

WIMATS is an application software to transcribe Mathematical and Scientific Text into Braille as per Nemeth Braille standard. Ver 2.0 comes with in-built Screen Reader, allows mouse-free operation. The application helps in publishing Mathematics and Science books in Braille for the education of Visually Impaired students.

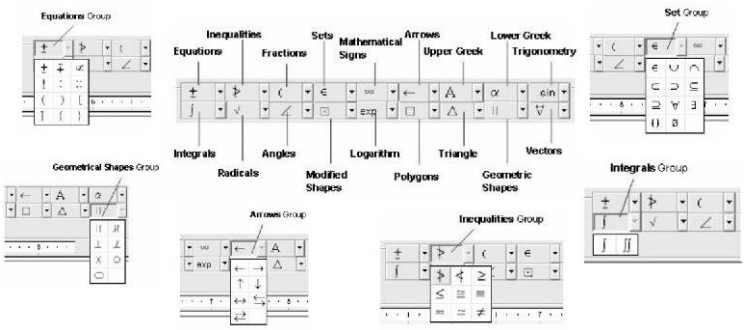
Minimum Requirement

Hardware: Pentium Processor or equivalent, 512 MB RAM, CD-ROM drive, 200 MB free Disk space, Colour Monitor, Keyboard, Mouse and Speakers.

Operation System: Windows XP

WIMATS provides a user-friendly and audio support based text editor for typing input text matter can be converted into corresponding Braille code following English Literary Braille standard for English language part and following Nemeth standard for mathematics and scientific symbols of the input text material. Output can be taken in the form of embossed Braille pages using standard Windows compatible Braille embossers.

It supports input of arithmetic, algebra, geometry, trigonometry, calculus, vector, set notations and Greek alphabets.



WIMATS will make a difference in Mathematics education for children with visual impairment

Developed jointly by:

International council for Education of People with Visual Impairment
3, Professors' Colony, S.R.K. Vidyalaya Post
Coimbatore - 641 020, INDIA
Tel : +91 422 2469104, Fax : +91 422 2693414
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New, reduced individual subscription rate for *JVIB* is now available!

The *Journal of Visual Impairment & Blindness (JVIB)*, the leading journal in the area of blindness and low vision, just became more affordable! For only $65 you'll get 12 print issues of the journal and online access to more than 10 years of content. Online subscriptions are just $25.

For over 100 years, *JVIB* has been the most reliable source for the latest in cutting-edge research, best practices, technology, and news in the visual impairment field.

Highlights for this year include:

- Jane Erin's new "Practice Perspectives" column
- Louis Braille's 200th birthday celebration, with special guest editor Susan J. Spungin and a yearlong collection of essays you won't want to miss
- October's special issue on literacy
- A completely redesigned, user-friendly online format
- Comment-on this-article feature coming soon!

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AFB PRESS

American Foundation for the Blind

A study of Braille writing skills acquisition in early learners with visual impairment using Brailler and Slate as assistive devices

Smriti Swarup and **Sujata Bhan**
Centre of Special Education, SNDT Women's University
Juhu Campus, Mumbai – 400 049, India

Introduction

As more children with visual impairments are being educated in the regular classroom, issues such as reading and writing speed and comparative literacy levels are causing educators to reexamine early education in braille literacy. Learning with a slate and stylus means that it takes the child with visual impairment several years before they reach a comparable literacy level with their peers. While the brailler provides the child with a faster writing instrument, a key question for educators is whether it facilitates the acquisition of braille literacy better than the slate and stylus. The present study was conducted to study the difference in the rate of acquisition of braille writing in students using a slate and stylus and a brailler. The sample for the present study was drawn from a local school for blind girls in Mumbai, India studying in the Montessori section of the school. The age range of the students was 6-11 years. None of the students had been exposed to writing on a brailler prior to this study. Systematic observation of each child was done in the natural setting of a classroom for 2-3 hours a day for six weeks.

Description of the sample

Case 1 was introduced to the use of slate and stylus for two weeks prior to the start of the study. Her current level of performance was just pressing the stylus on the slate without recognizing any letter.

Case 2 was introduced to slate and stylus for about a month. Her current level of functioning was writing only first letter of the alphabet.

Case 3 was writing in braille using the slate and stylus for about four months prior to the start of the study. Hence she was comfortable in the use of slate and stylus.

Her current level of performance was such that she could write almost 17 letters from the alphabet in braille.

Case 4 was writing in braille using the slate and stylus for about four months prior to the start of the study.

Her current level of performance was such that she could write 10 letters from the alphabet in braille. She worked on slate and stylus for a period of four weeks before the brailler was introduced in the fifth week.

Case 5 was in the same class in the previous year. She had been using the slate and stylus for about a year and a half. She was never exposed to a brailler. She had been low on motivation and poor in grasping concepts.

Her current level of performance in braille writing was the knowledge of three letters. None of the students had been exposed to writing on a brailler prior to this study.

Pre- braille skills of each student were observed and assessed before the commencement of the actual study. Each student was found to have acquired good pre braille skills.

Procedure

Adopting multiple baseline design, baseline observations (A) using a slate and stylus continued for all students until a brailler (B) was introduced for each one of them at variable times. Baseline performance of all the cases was compared to their performance during and after the intervention. When intervention started with Case 1, baseline observation continued for other students. When intervention started for Case 2, intervention observation continued for both the Cases 1 and 2 and baseline observation continued for Cases 3, 4, and 5. As the study was conducted over a period of 6 weeks, Case 1 worked on slate and stylus for 1 week and on brailler for a period of 5 weeks whereas Case 5 worked on slate and stylus for 5 weeks and on brailler for 1 week. Baseline performance of all the cases was compared to their performance during and after the intervention.

Cross-case analysis of all five students was conducted on the following parameters selected for the study:

- quality of cell
- speed of writing
- accuracy in writin
- level of letter and word acquisition.

1. The Quality of Cell:

a) **Evenness of the cell**: This referred to the evenness in the embossed letter. When the embossed letter was so suppressed that it could not be felt by the finger tips or when the letters were typed with excessive pressure that it lead to tearing of paper, both were treated as errors.

b) **Spacing between the letters typed**: Every incorrect spacing (leaving no or more space between two letters than as instructed) was counted as an error.

c) **Position of lines typed**: If the letters typed were not in a straight line it was treated as an error.

2. Speed of Typing:

Total number of letters written: Total number of letters written in the given time (15 minutes) irrespective of its correctness.

3. Errors in writing:

a) Wrong formation of letters
b) Omission of letters
c) Substitution by another letter

4. Level of Acquisition:

New letters/words learnt in a week

Results

Cross-case analysis of all five students on parameters selected for the study, namely quality of cell, speed of writing, errors in writing and level of acquisition was done.

The parameter of Quality of Cell revealed a convincing performance of Case1 across all the three quality indicators. As far as Case2 is

concerned improved performance was observed in Evenness and Position of Lines. Only in Spacing she showed drop in performance. Case 3 showed improvement in performance after initial increase in errors with respect to Evenness and Spacing while her performance in Position of Lines was erratic. Quality of Cell of Case 4 was reflected by marked improvement in Evenness of dots. In Spacing and Position of Lines the performance was maintained at the same level as in baseline phase. Case 5 sustained her performance with regard to Evenness and Position of Lines while a drop was noticed in Spacing.

Cases 1 and 2 showed marked improvement in speed of writing, whereas Cases 3, 4 and 5 maintained their level of baseline performance.

Errors in writing is an important determinant of braille literacy and all students except Case 5 either improved performance or maintained their performance after the introduction of brailler.

Cases 1 and 2 showed good or improved performances with the brailler while Cases 3 and 4 were able to maintain their rate of learning within the same week the brailler was introduced. Since none of the students had ever had previous exposure to the brailler, this ability to learn new letters without any interruption in pace is a positive finding on the ease of use of this writing instrument. Case 5 alone showed a drop in performance with brailler.

Conclusions

- All students, regardless of their length of time on the brailler and their skill level on the slate and stylus showed improvement in braille writing skills.
- Students who were struggling in the use of a slate and stylus learned much better with the use of a brailler
- Students who had learned the skill of using a slate and stylus well took longer to adjust to a brailler. But once they grasped the skill of using the brailler, they showed improvement or maintained their performance
- Across all students, the quality of cell was found to be better when students used a brailler than when a slate and stylus was used
- Evenness of dots improved the most with the use of a brailler in all cases. Higher quality braille cells make it more likely that the students would be able to perceive what they have written and thus support their reading skills
- Finding a line, maintaining a straight line and leaving space between letters was found to be more difficult while using a slate than with the use of a brailler
- The speed of writing improved and errors in writing dropped with the use of a brailler.

The rate of learning increased dramatically particularly for those students slowest to learn on the slate and stylus. As the students were able to use the brailler with more ease in comparison to the slate and stylus, they could focus on acquisition of new letters and many progressed to writing words. The transition of students who were efficient in the use of slate and stylus to the use of brailler was possible without any disruption of learning.

The teachers in the Montessori class concluded that the use of a brailler significantly improved the speed of Braille writing acquisition and felt that it would improve the efficiency of the learning process and the acquisition of braille literacy.

The study therefore indicates the value of the brailler as a tool to promote early learning of Braille writing skills, enabling students of a greater range of ability

to acquire early literacy at an age comparable to their sighted peers. Transition to slate and stylus, once children are literate in braille, is a viable option for most students, giving them flexible tools as older learners and adults.

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IBSA looks to the future

On April 3-4th, 2009 International Blind Sports Federation (IBSA) held its eighth General Assembly in Antalya, Turkey. IBSA holds a General Assembly every four years which provides an opportunity for our members to come together and learn what other organizations, and countries, are doing around the world to develop sport and physical activity for people who are blind, visually impaired or deaf blind. This meeting is also when we hold our elections. To view the election results please refer to **www.ibsa.es**.

In Turkey it was established that IBSA faces several key challenges over the next four years. IBSA is aware of the many changes occurring in sport and blindness around the world. Therefore, we are striving to evolve by professionalizing our organization with the goal of being more responsive to the needs of our stake holders. With this in mind IBSA is currently researching different options to allow us to have a permanent office. IBSA has, and continues to thrive on the expertise of committed volunteers around the world. However, it is becoming apparent that often these experts are not given the opportunities to reach their full potential due to the fact that they are often weighed down with administrative

requirements. A permanent office will provide IBSA with a central clearing house for our interactions with our members, sport and blindness partners. Also, staff will increase IBSA's capacity by providing administrative assistance to both leadership and program volunteers.

Over the next year we will be engaging in a comprehensive strategic planning process. A key outcome of this planning process will be the renewing of our by-laws and governance structure to ensure that they are modernized and meeting the needs of our athletes, members and partners.

At the sports technical conference a presentation was given on the new sight classification code. This is a very exciting time in sports for the blind. In the previous system sight classification was a medical process. An athlete would have their visual acuity and/or their visual fields tested depending on the type of visual condition they had. Visual acuity is the type of test many people have experienced where you are asked to read letters from an eye chart at a fixed distance. Secondly, a field test is performed to measure an athlete's field of vision (peripheral vision).

Under the new sight classification code medical testing will still occur but the difference will now be that there will also be a functional assessment. This will take into consideration how an athlete's vision will impact on their ability to perform in different sports. Consider an athlete who has extremely limited fields but almost 20/20 acuity. How much would their lack of peripheral vision affect their ability to compete in archery compared to downhill skiing?

As to be expected while going through such a monumental change there are many challenges faced by IBSA but we look forward to working with our partners at the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) to ensure that athletes who are blind are treated fairly and therefore have the opportunity to achieve excellence under this new sight classification system.

During our General Assembly Silvia Aldini was presented with the Victor Ludorum Award in recognition of her many years of service as the Treasurer of IBSA. We wish her all the best as she moves to take on new challenges.

For more information on blind sports, visit **www.ibsa.es** or **contact ibsa@ibsa.es**

Gary Steeves
IBSA Vice President

Diane P. Wormsley - ICEVI's representative on the World Braille Council

We are glad to inform our readers that ICEVI is one of the members of the World Braille Council (WBC). ICEVI will be represented at the WBC by Dr. Diane P. Wormsley who is serving as a Professor of Special Education at the North Carolina Central University. **Congratulations Diane!**

Parents' Column

Susan LaVenture
Chair, International Association for Parents of Children with Visual Impairments
susan.laventure@perkins.org

First International Family Conference; Families Connecting with Families will be held in Costa Mesa, California, USA on July 17-19, 2009:
The conference is expected to attract 700 parents and children from throughout the US and the world. The conference program includes two keynotes, 40 workshops, 25 eye condition networking meetings for the parents and 40 exhibits of resources and technology.

Story about Young Iraqi Girl Blinded - Associated Press:
The story of a 3 year old Iraqi girl who was blinded in a 2006 Bagdad car bombing has gained some attention with the press. The most recent article published entitled Blind Iraqi Girl Struggles Despite Offers of Help by Kim Gamel of Associated Press can be found at **http://www.cleveland.com/world/index.ssf/2009/03/blind_iraqi_girl_struggles_des.html**.

The article is a human interest story focusing on this family's struggles and brings out the issue of the lack of resources, early intervention and special educational services for children who are blind or visually impaired in Iraq.

News from New Zealand

Paul Manning
Parents of Vision Impaired NZ Inc

Here in New Zealand, PVI NZ has been busy ensuring extra government funding is allocated to fund extra resource for Teachers of Vision known in NZ as RTVs. We, as a result of our nationwide petition, gained a recommendation from the parliamentary education select committee of 30 additional RTVs. We expect an announcement on the 28th May when the budget is announced.

Advocacy for parents is keeping us busy. Unfortunately we find some rougue schools still refuse to take our children. Knowing this is against our laws etc... A sad indictment on some of our principals and schools. When will it ever end, one asks.

This weekend we have our first National Training Weekend for the year. Here our Regional Representatives and Board members meet for upskilling and support etc. Much talk, much support, much fun....

I am off to Fiji late July to support a parent support group. ICEVI Pacific has funded this and PVI NZ is most grateful for this. I am hopeful the Suva Parents Group will be able to morph into a National PVI group. Wish me luck. The parents community I have worked with in Fiji are amazing, their beliefs and wants for thier children are as ours. The support from the Fiji Society of the Blind is very impressive, all this on charity dollar. I have heard though that the state school system within Fiji is about to ensure, "Education for All" will become a reality, this is excellent news and our congratulations to the Fijian educators for achieving this milestone development.

Parent Perspective on the Importance of Advocating for Braille and Encouraging Your Children to Use Braille

Angelette Akkermans
Dutch Organization from and for Visually Impaired People and their Family

In Holland we are also celebrating the 200 years Braille anniversary. As a parent of a visually impaired child, I always feel as an ambassador of the right to read and to learn, and to get information in the form you can read. Since 2000 I'm therefore the counsel for special (adapted) books; this means all kind of books and all kinds of information.

My visually impaired child is now 19 years old. It is important that we as parents always stay alert, even when our children are as old as mine, because most of the services offered by the government are developed by people who do not know any thing about visual impairment.

At this moment in Holland we have free school books for children in high school. However, the parents of children with visual impairment have to pay for the special books. We have written to the Government telling them that there is a law on equal rights and what needs to be developed.

We always keep advocating for our children. We have also been giving information to members of the Government, caring organisations, etc. what it means to have a visual impairment, and what can be done.

We are telling them that lot of things are possible, and that I as a parent like to be regarded as an equal partner. Let them be standing on a podium, or have a picture in the newspaper, knowing that we did it together.

We always have to believe in the possibilities of our children. Can not … Have you hear it before? In Holland we have a very great mom. Her name is Dorine in het Veld. She and her blind son Tim are great. They have among other things got mathematics on the agenda in Holland and Europe. See her website **(www.dvlop.nl)** or send her a mail to talk about your problem. Maybe she knows a way how to handle it.

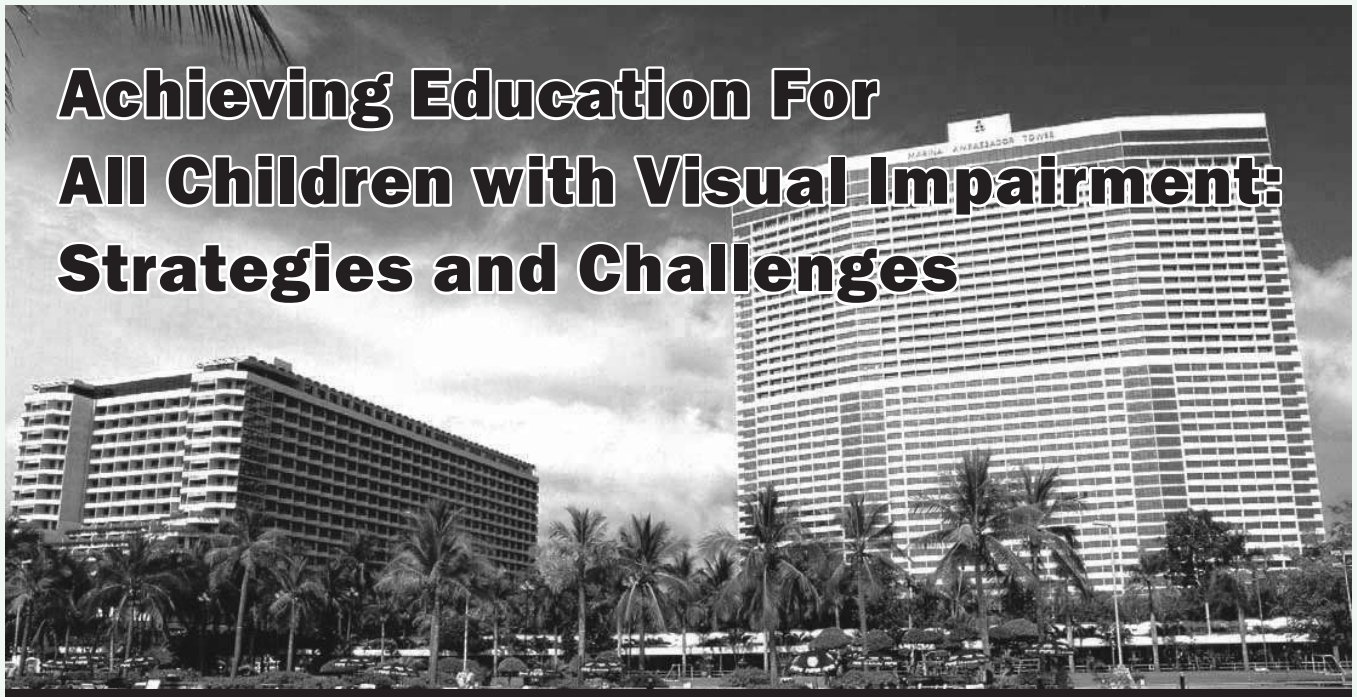
CALL FOR PAPERS

13th World Conference of

ICEVI

ICEVI 13th World Conference - 2010 Jomtien, Thailand

The International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment



Achieving Education For All Children with Visual Impairment: Strategies and Challenges

9-13 August 2010 ✧ Hotel Ambassador City, Jomtien, Thailand

Host Organisations

Thai Blind Union
and the
Foundation for the Employment Promotion of the Blind (FEPB)
Thailand

Host Committee

Chairperson
Pecharat Techavachara, Thai Blind Union

Members
Ministry of Education
(Special Affairs Division, Office of the Higher Education Commission, Ratchasuda College - Mahidol University, Suan Dusit Rajabhat University, Burapha University, Special Education Division, Special Education Center Nakornluang Polytechnic College)
CBM CEARO, Hilton/Perkins International Program, Foundation for the Employment Promotion of the Blind, Caulfield Foundation for the Blind, Thailand Association of the Blind, The Association of Blind Women in Thailand, The Christian Foundation for the Blind in Thailand, Foundation for the Blind in Thailand, Thai Blind People's Foundation, Council of Disabled People of Thailand

Programme Committee

Chairperson
Jill Keeffe

Members
Larry Campbell
Benja Chonlatanon
Kathy Huebner
Elly Macha
M.N.G. Mani
Lucia Piccione

President's Message

It is with much pleasure that I extend to you on behalf of the Executive Committee of ICEVI an invitation to join us in Jomtien, Thailand for our 13th World Conference and General Assembly, in August, 2010.

In 1990 in Jomtien, Thailand, the global EDUCATION FOR ALL movement was born. ICEVI is pleased to be holding its 13th World Conference in the very venue where this now famous EFA initiative was created. Jomtien provides us with a beautiful and historic backdrop within which to reflect on the issue of global access to education for all children with visual impairment twenty years after UNICEF, UNESCO, and The World Bank set out to create a world in which "every" child has access to his/her basic human right to education.

Since the launch of the Global Campaign on Education For All Children with Visual Impairment (EFA-VI) in 2006, much progress has been made but much remains to be achieved. The 13th World Conference will provide educators, visually impaired persons and parents from throughout the world with a unique opportunity to focus on and shape the strategies required to improve educational equity and quality.

We are delighted that Jill Keeffe has agreed to serve as the Chairperson of the Programme Committee, and we hope that many of you will respond to this "Call for Papers" by submitting an Abstract for consideration.

I have known and worked with members of the Host Committee for many years and can assure you that this group will spare no effort in assuring you a warm welcome and a fabulous Thai experience.

I look forward to welcoming you to the 13th World Conference and to working with you as we bring ICEVI and the Global Campaign to new heights.

Sincerely,

Larry Campbell
President, ICEVI

Programme Committee's Invitation

On behalf of the Programme Committee for the ICEVI 13th World Conference, it is my great pleasure to invite you to respond to this Call for Papers by submitting an Abstract no later than 31st October 2009.

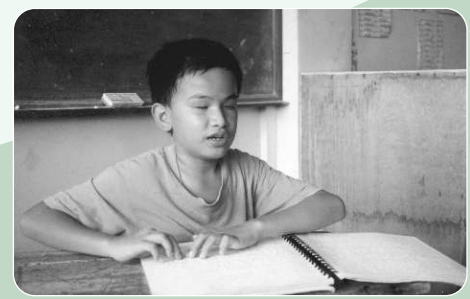
The theme of the conference, **"Achieving Education For All Children with Visual Impairment: Strategies and Challenges,"** reflects the rationale supporting the joint Global Campaign of ICEVI and The World Blind Union. This important campaign affirms the educational equity for all children who are blind or have low vision. The Global Campaign is further strengthened by the United Nation's Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. What we need today is to consolidate our strategies to address the challenges in ensuring this educational equity.

To support this overall theme, the Programme Committee is seeking high-quality presentations in the following forms:

- thought provoking papers reflecting innovative practice or research
- interactive workshops
- poster sessions
- video presentations

We look forward to receiving your abstract for consideration no later than 31st October 2009.

Jill Keeffe
Chairperson, Programme Committee



Conference Objectives

The theme of the conference is **"Achieving Education For All Children with Visual Impairment: Strategies and Challenges."**

The objectives of the conference are:

- To promote dialogue at the highest level on the international issues reflecting the key issues of the theme of the conference.
- To facilitate an exchange of perceptions, experiences, practice and research through formal and informal interactions.
- To provide a current international overview of the equality of access to education for children and young people with a visual impairment.
- To enable participants to hear, question and work alongside respected international experts in the field of visual impairment as they respond to the conference theme.

Focus Areas

The Programme Committee invites you to prepare an abstract that addresses one of the following focus areas:

- Access and Information Technologies and Adaptive or Assistive Technology
- Access to Curricular and Extra-Curricular areas
- Alternate Education Models for Young Adults
- Awareness creation on Education
- Creating Educational Equity for Women and Girls
- Early Childhood Intervention
- Innovations in the Provision of Support Services
- Inclusive Educational Practices
- Inclusion of Visually Impaired Children with Additional Disabilities (MDVI)
- Innovative use of Community Resources
- Life Skills including Orientation and Mobility and Social Skills
- Low Vision Services
- National and Regional Alliances
- Personnel Preparation - Teacher Education and other Professionals
- Tackling Adult Illiteracy among Persons with Visual Impairment
- Working with Families

On your abstract form, you will be asked to state your area of focus and type of presentation. For example

Area of Focus	:	**Early Childhood Intervention**
Type of Presentation	:	**Poster**

Programme Presentation Descriptions

The Programme Committee is seeking abstract submissions for the following four types of presentation formats for concurrent sessions:

1. Paper Presentation

You are invited to submit an abstract, no longer than 200 words, describing a presentation of 15 to 20 minutes duration. All abstracts must be linked to one of the focus areas. Example: Inclusive Educational Practices - "Factors contributing to effective inclusion of children with visual impairment at the primary level." Each concurrent session will be 90 minutes in duration and generally includes three presentations. The Programme Committee will group presentations on similar topics.

2. Poster Presentation

A Poster offers the opportunity to present research findings, special projects, programme descriptions, educational materials or equipment etc., in an informal way. The presenter/s will have specific time during the conference when no other sessions

will be underway to present their contribution, interact with participants and to answer questions.

3. **Interactive Workshop**
   A workshop presents an opportunity for a 'hands-on' interactive session, such as 'Teaching Braille : Innovative Methods.' As workshops will be allowed extra time, the abstract must demonstrate how the presentation fits the above criterion.

4. **Video Presentation**
   This is an opportunity to present new materials to participants through the visual media. The presentation should last approximately 20 minutes, allowing 10 minutes for discussion.

Audio-Visual Devices

The following equipment will be available for all types of presentations: **single slide projector, video, DVD, overhead projector and LCD projectors.**

Translation

There will be simultaneous translation of the plenary presentations in English, Spanish, Chinese and Thai. Three concurrent sessions will have simultaneous translation facilities. However, simultaneous translation will not be possible for Interactive Workshop presentations. The Spanish translation is sponsored by the ONCE, Spain.

Requirements for Abstract Submission

Please use the enclosed **'Official Abstract Form'** to submit your abstract and send it to the ICEVI Secretariat by 31st October 2009. The Programme Committee encourages on-line submission of abstracts too using the link **www.icevi.org/13thWC/Abstract.php** .

When preparing your abstract please adhere to the following guidelines:

- **use single line spacing,**
- **use a simple font, e.g., Verdana or Arial,**
- **do not exceed 200 words, and**
- **before submitting your abstract check that all required information has been provided**

The Programme Committee can only accept abstracts that are written in **English**. If accepted, the abstract will appear in print in the exact form as it is received.

Supported Places

A Scholarship Committee is being formed and guidelines developed for the equitable distribution of the limited funding available to support needy and deserving persons who would otherwise be unable to participate in the conference. As with the last conference, those funds will be administered by ICEVI regional committees. Check the ICEVI website and future issues of The Educator for further information.

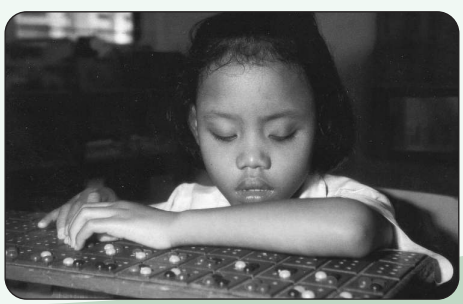
Registration Details

Please log onto ICEVI website www.icevi.org/13thWC/Registration.php for registration details.

Further Contact:

ICEVI Secretariat
3, Professors' Colony, Palamalai Road
S.R.K. Vidyalaya Post, Coimbatore - 641 020
Tamil Nadu, INDIA

Phone : +91-422-2469104
Fax : +91-422-2693414
E-mail : **oficevi@vsnl.net** or **oficevi@gmail.com**



13th World Conference of
International Council for Education of
People with Visual Impairment

Achieving Education For All Children with Visual Impairment: Strategies and Challenges

9-13 August 2010 ✧ Hotel Ambassador City, Jomtien, Thailand

OFFICIAL ABSTRACT FORM

Lead Presenter (Contact Person)

Title : Prof. ☐ Dr. ☐ Mr. ☐ Ms. ☐ Mrs. ☐

Family Name ..... Initial ..... First Name .....

Centre / School :

Position :

Address :

City / Town :

State / Region :

Country :

Postal / Zip Code :

Telephone : Home : Work :

Fax : E-mail :

Co-authors (if applicable*)

Title : Prof. ☐ Dr. ☐ Mr. ☐ Ms. ☐ Mrs. ☐

Family Name ..... Initial ..... First Name .....

Centre / School :

Position :

Address :

City / Town :

State / Region :

Country :

Postal / Zip Code :

Telephone : Home : Work :

Fax : E-mail :

1. **My preferred presentation format is** (please put a (✔) mark)
   - Paper Presentation ☐
   - Poster Presentation ☐
   - Interactive Workshop Presentation ☐
   - Video Presentation ☐

2. **My presentation will fall under the following focus area:**
   - Access and Information Technologies and Adaptive or Assistive Technology ☐
   - Access to Curricular and Extra-Curricular areas ☐
   - Alternate Education Models for Young Adults ☐
   - Awareness Creation of Education ☐
   - Creating Educational Equity for Women and Girls ☐
   - Early Childhood Intervention ☐
   - Innovations in the Provisions of Support Services ☐
   - Inclusive Educational Practices ☐
   - Inclusion of Visually Impaired Children with Additional Disabilities (MDVI) ☐
   - Innovative use of Community Resources ☐
   - Life Skills including Orientation and Mobility, Social Skills ☐
   - Low Vision Services ☐
   - National and Regional Alliances ☐
   - Personnel Preparation - Teacher Education and other Professionals ☐
   - Tackling Adult Illiteracy among Persons with Visual Impairment ☐
   - Working with Families ☐

3. **Title for Presentation** (not more than 25 words)

4. **My preferred presentation language is**

   English ☐ Spanish ☐ Chinese ☐ Thai ☐

5. **Abstract** (not more than 200 words in **English only**)

13th World Conference
of
International Council for Education of
People with Visual Impairment

Achieving Education For All Children with Visual Impairment: Strategies and Challenges

9-13 August 2010 ✧ Hotel Ambassador City, Jomtien, Thailand

Host Organisations :

Thai Blind Union
and the
Foundation for the Employment Promotion of the Blind (FEPB)
Thailand

REGISTRATION AND ACCOMMODATION

GENERAL INFORMATION

The 13th World Conference of ICEVI will be conducted at **Hotel Ambassador City, Jomtien, Thailand** from **9 to 13 August 2010**. The main conference will be held from 9 to 12 whereas the General Assembly will take place on the 13th forenoon. The Thai Blind Union (TBU) and the Foundation for the Employment Promotion of the Blind (FEPB) are the host organizations of the conference. The Registration and Accommodation arrangements are being looked after by the host organization. The ICEVI Secretariat manages the submission of Abstracts.

Here are the details regarding Registration and Accommodation:

Registration Fee

The Registration Fee for the Conference is as follows:

S.No.	Type of Registration	Participants from countries other than Thailand	Participants from Thailand
1	Early Bird Registration (before March 10, 2010)	**US $ 500**	**Thai Baht 10,000**
2	Regular Registration (after March 10, 2010)	**US $ 600**	**Thai Baht 13,500**
3	Accompanying Person	**US $ 250**	**Thai Baht 6,000**

The registration fee is inclusive of conference bag, copy of abstracts, lunches, drinks during morning and afternoon, opening reception, closing dinner, the proceedings on diskette or CD-Rom and airport transfer to the venue within timeframes explained below.

Note : *Transport in van/bus will be available at every two hours from the 7th morning till 9th morning of August 2010. For return to airport, the buses will leave from the conference venue every two hours from 13th forenoon to 14th evening. No other mode of transport will be provided by the conference organisers.*

In case individuals want to avail private transfer to and from the airport, they will be assisted by the volunteers at the airport but the cost should be met by the individuals and the conference organisers will not assume responsibility for this.

Thai participants should make their own arrangements for transportation to the conference venue and back.

Accompanying persons (spouses and/or guides for persons with visual impairment) are neither provided with the conference materials nor allowed to make professional presentations during the conference, unless they are enrolled as full participants. The accompanying person registration fee includes lunches, teas and all social functions.

Registration Fee may be paid to the Conference account **(**Name of the account: **ICEVI 13th WC, Account Number 139-0-83111-1,** Name of Bank: **Bangkok Bank**, Address of Bank: **Bangkok Bank Hualamphong Branch, Bangkok, Thailand;** Swift Code: **bkkbthbk**) through electronic transfer or bank draft.

Hotel

All participants will be staying at the Hotel Ambassador City, Jomtien. The tariff for different types of rooms is as follows:

Room Tariff

Single as well as twin occupation.

Building Type (Room Type)	Participants from countries other than Thailand	Participants from Thailand
Garden Wing (Standard)	**US $ 35**	**THB 1100**
Tower Wing (Superior)	**US $ 45**	**THB 1400**
Ocean Wing (Deluxe)	**US $ 60**	**THB 1900**
Ocean Wing (Sunset Suite)	**US $ 120**	**THB 3800**

The above rates are inclusive of breakfast, 10% Service charge and V.A.T.

Conference Languages

The official language of the conference will be English. During the main sessions and some of the parallel sessions, simultaneous translation will be available in Chinese, Spanish and Thai.

Exhibition Booths

The fee for non-profit organizations willing to put up exhibition booths is US $ 1,000 and for Commercial Vendors it will be US $ 1,500.

For further details, contact :

PECHARAT TECHAVACHARA, Chairperson, Host Committee
Foundation for the Employment Promotion of the Blind
2218/86 Chan Road, Khet Yan Nawa, Bangkok – 10120, THAILAND
Tel : +662 6780256 ; 6689 8302573 ✧ Fax : +662 6780765 ✧ E-mail : kan@fepblind.com
Websites : **www.icevi.org** and **www.fepblind.com**

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Thailand

REGISTRATION AND ACCOMMODATION FORM

*(You can register online through ICEVI Website **www.icevi.org** or photocopy and send the filled-in Registration Form through mail. Please send the Registration Form to the Conference Secretariat in Bangkok)*

SECTION A : CONFERENCE REGISTRATION

Participant ☐ **Exhibitor** ☐

Title : Prof. ☐ Dr. ☐ Mr. ☐ Mrs. ☐ Ms. ☐

Family Name : _____ Initial : _____ First Name : _____

Organisation : _____

Address : _____

_____

City : _____ State : _____ Zip : _____

Country : _____

Telephone : _____ Fax : _____ Mobile : _____

E-mail : _____

Material preferred : Standard Print ☐ Braille ☐ Material in Flash Disk ☐

Are you travelling alone? : Yes ☐ No ☐

If no, name the escort : _____

Special Diet *(such as vegetarian meals)* : _____

Special Requirements *(such as mobility assistants)* : _____

_____

REGISTRATION DETAILS : [Please put a tick (✔) mark in the appropriate box]

Type of Registration	Participants from countries other than Thailand	Participants from Thailand
☐ **Early Bird Registration** (before March 10, 2010)	**US $ 500** ☐	**THB 10,000** ☐
☐ **Regular Registration** (after March 10, 2010)	**US $ 600** ☐	**THB 13,500** ☐
☐ **Accompanying Person**	**US $ 250** ☐	**THB 6,000** ☐

SECTION B : ACCOMMODATION

Please indicate your preferred room type and dates below. The room tariff for single as well as twin occupation is the same. If you do not require any accommodation booking to be made on your behalf tick "**No Accommodation Booking Required**".

Accommodation Type	Participants from other countries	Participants from Thailand	Type of Room		Dates		No. of Days
			Single	Double	From	To	
☐ **Garden Wing**	**US $ 35** ☐	**THB 1100** ☐	☐	☐			
☐ **Tower Wing**	**US $ 45** ☐	**THB 1400** ☐	☐	☐			
☐ **Ocean Wing**	**US $ 60** ☐	**THB 1900** ☐	☐	☐			
☐ **Ocean Wing** (Sunset Suite)	**US $ 120** ☐	**THB 3800** ☐	☐	☐			
☐ **No Accommodation Booking Required**							

In case of sharing room,

1. Please enter the name of the second person _____

2. In case you want the conference organisers to identify another person to share the room, please put a tick mark here _____

SECTION C : PAYMENT DETAILS

a. Payment Details

i) **Conference Registration Fee** : **US $ / THB** _____

ii) **Accommodation** (From..... to..... No. of Nights :.....) : **US $ / THB** _____

TOTAL : US $ / THB _____

b. Payment Method (Please Tick)

☐ **Electronic Transfer**

Date of Transfer : _____

Amount Transferred : _____

Reference Number, if any : _____

☐ **Demand Draft**

Date of Demand Draft : _____

Amount : _____

Date of Despatch : _____

BANK DETAILS : FEPB Conference Account No. : **139-0-83111-1**
Name of the account : **ICEVI 13th WC**
Name of Bank : **Bangkok Bank**
Address of Bank : **Bangkok Bank Hualamphong Branch, Bangkok, Thailand**
Swift code : **bkkbthbk**

Please send the Registration Forms to the following address :

PECHARAT TECHAVACHARA, Chairperson, Host Committee
Foundation for the Employment Promotion of the Blind
2218/86 Chan Road, Khet Yan Nawa, Bangkok - 10120, THAILAND
Tel : +662 6780256; 6689 8302573 ✧ Fax : +662 6780765
E-mail : **kan@fepblind.com**
Websites : **www.icevi.org** and **www.fepblind.com**

Note : In case you are sending an Abstract too, please forward it to ICEVI Secretariat at the following address:

ICEVI SECRETARIAT
3, Professors Colony, S R K V Post, Coimbatore - 641 020, INDIA
Tel : +91 422 2469104
Fax : +91 422 2693414
E-mail : **oficevi@vsnl.net** or **oficevi@gmail.com**