



Tactile Graphics

Adapted from Materials by

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Tactile graphic images are used by individuals who are blind to obtain information that sighted people get from looking at pictures. For example, a student who is sighted in a geography class would have a difficult time learning about the different regions of the world without the use of maps. A student who is blind needs tactile maps to gain this information.

Tactile graphics are images that use raised surfaces so that a person who is visually

impaired can feel them. They are used to convey non-textual information such as maps, paintings, graphs and diagrams.

Tactile graphics can be seen as a subset of accessible images. Images can be made accessible to the visually impaired in various ways, such as verbal description, sound, or haptic (tactual) feedback.

Tactile graphics are not a straight reproduction of the print graphic and does not include color or other visual additions.

When textbooks are produced in braille, they are often accompanied by tactile graphics. Most often, the transcriber produces the graphic along with the braille text. Teachers of students with visual impairment or blindness (TVIs) often produce tactile graphics to accompany classroom materials and activities. Students who are braille readers can also produce tactile graphics.

It is important to recognize that tactile graphics are not automatically meaningful to a child who is visually impaired or blind. Understanding the tactile “picture” requires that the reader develop an abstract concept about the “real” thing.

When tactile graphics are introduced to a student who is visually impaired or blind, it

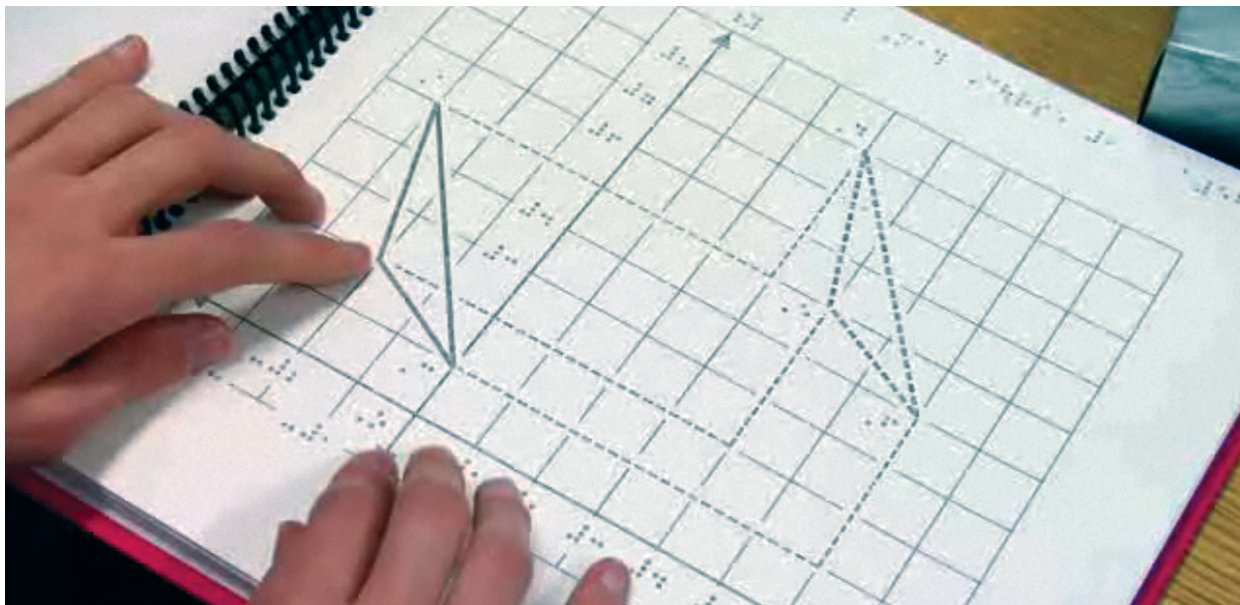
is important to recognize the level of development of the reader. The student's ability to comprehend symbolic representation is the best indicator of his or her ability to understand tactile graphics.

A student will have greater success if they have demonstrated the following skills:

- Concepts of orientation to the environment
- Basic tactual perceptual skills
- Awareness of different views of a object
- Perspective and distance
- Imaginary lines use in 3-D drawing



Tactile graphics need to be simple graphics that clearly represent an idea that must be represented in a spatial context. The more complex and detailed the graphic is the larger the tactile representation must be to convey the information.



For more resources, visit www.Perkins.org.

Our on-demand webcasts are presented by experts in the field of visual impairment and deafblindness. View our directory at:
www.Perkins.org/webcasts.