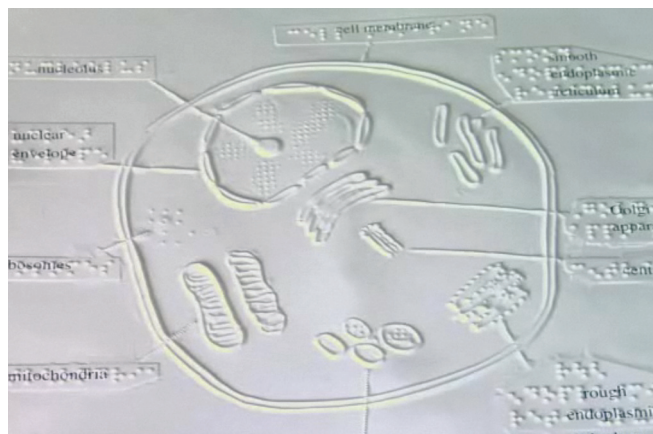




Promising Practices for Transcribing Early Literacy Textbooks

Kindergarten, First, Second, and Third Grades

By: Kim Charlson



The preparation of special format educational materials is an area that teachers and transcribers must always give careful attention. The Braille Authority of North America (BANA) Early Literacy Materials Production Committee and the American Printing House for the Blind Accessible Textbooks Department have collaborated on the development of a best practices document which reflects the underlying principles to consider

when producing braille materials for early learners with visual impairments.

Teachers and transcribers need to keep in mind that students who are blind or visually impaired gather information from textbooks in a **different** manner than the sighted students for whom the book was originally designed. It is essential that a teacher or transcriber acknowledge that young children with vision acquire knowledge and learn many things by watching others and then imitating the movements or activities they have observed. The child with a visual impairment often needs direct teaching for those activities. The world of the child who is blind or visually impaired is experienced through direct touch, sound, optimizing of residual vision and/or smell, and the formatting decisions the teacher or transcriber makes in preparing educational materials should reflect the learning style of the student.

Early literacy texts are very visual in nature. The teacher or transcriber must continually ask why a picture or graphic is present on a print page and does it add to the conveyance of the instructional concept under discussion. Learning to **interpret and read a tactile graphic is a skill that must be taught to a braille reader**. Students in grades K-3 are beginning to develop skills to read tactile graphics and might often need assistance in interpreting the information being presented, depending on the complexity of the tactile graphic. Any printed descriptions of graphics in the book

itself are generally very limited by the reading level of these early grade books. It can be quite a challenge deciding which graphics to include at the early grade levels.

The student needs to be introduced to tactile representations, but this must be done **with appropriate instructional support** and in a progression from very basic to more complex. Further research and study are needed in this area in order to help establish the acceptable degree of complexity at a specific grade level.



In the interim, the Early Literacy Materials Production committee has determined that any pictures requiring the student to name the object shown in a picture should be omitted from the textbook. Very basic shapes can be depicted in a tactile graphic for grades K-1 and more complex grids and even maps can be included by grade 3. Most important, classroom teachers must understand that students who are blind need to learn how to read and interpret tactile graphics. Beginning with simple raised line images and expanding into graphics with more elements as skills in reading tactile graphics develop is the preferred practice.

In 2011, the Braille Authority of North America will be publishing the first code and guidelines for the production of tactile graphics anywhere in the world. This joint project of BANA and the Canadian Braille Authority will provide best practices for all types and styles of tactile graphics, production methods, interpretation of what to include, and materials required to produce tactile graphics. To receive email notification from BANA of the publication of the Tactile Graphics Guidelines, or other announcements from BANA, visit www.brailleauthority.org and sign up for the BANA-Announce email list.

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.