



REGION 10 TVI & COMS Newsletter:

EDUCATION SERVICE CENTER

Spring is nearly here. Time to get busy!

As if we weren't busy enough, it's the beginning of spring and it's time to think about "spring cleaning." The tradition of cleaning out the clutter, sweeping away the dirt, and making things feel new again gives us the opportunity to get organized and make room for new ideas, approaches, technologies, and ...a new start. Recycling is a great way to help not just the environment, but it's a way to help our fellow TVIs and COMS. It's time to find all those bits and pieces of APH kits, or complete kits, and send them to Austin so that they can be used again. Here's the link for information about how to send things back for reuse: <http://www.tsbvi.edu/outreach?id=4015:aph-return-instructions&catid=176:aph-materials-program>



Natalie Barraga: A Legend Leaves Us

On Friday, January 2nd, 2015, Natalie Barraga was laid to rest in Capital Parks Cemetery Pflugerville, She was 99 years old at the time of her passing. She was born in the central Texas town of Troy on October 10, 1915. She was the 4th of 5 children and earned a Bachelor's Degree in Home Economics and Child Development from the University of North Texas (North Texas State Teacher's College) in 1938; a Master's Degree in Educational Psychology-Special Education from The University of Texas at Austin in 1957, and a Doctor of Education from George Peabody College of Vanderbilt University in 1963, where she was honored as a Distinguished Alumna in 1988.

During her teaching career, she conducted pioneering research in the field of teaching individuals with visual impairment and developed low vision assessment instruments and instructional materials for students with low vision. She taught courses and held seminars and workshops for teachers in 22 countries around the world. She was awarded a Fulbright Scholarship to spend a semester doing research and lecturing at The University of Zagreb in Croatia in 1986. She was active in several international organizations and her writings and materials are used all over the world. Her publications included books, monographs, book chapters, and numerous articles in professional journals. Her autobiography, entitled IF ANYONE CAN, YOU CAN was published by the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired in 2007.

Dr. Barraga was truly a pioneer and leader who helped shape our profession. Her contributions will continue to impact students and professionals for years to come.



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Special points of interest:

- Natalie Barraga
- UEB
- Coming Attractions

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The Skinny on the UEB Code

By Belinda Rudinger

In 2012, the Braille Authority of North America (BANA) voted to change from our current braille code (English Braille American Edition, or EBAE) to Unified English Braille (UEB). The United States is one of the last English-speaking countries to adopt the new code, and the braille community has been hard at work creating plans to roll out UEB.

The idea for a unified code originated in 1991, when Dr. Cramner and Dr. Nemeth expressed the need for a code with fewer ambiguities in order to aid in computer generated translation of braille. Their original letter can be read on the BANA website. Changes in the new code include the following:

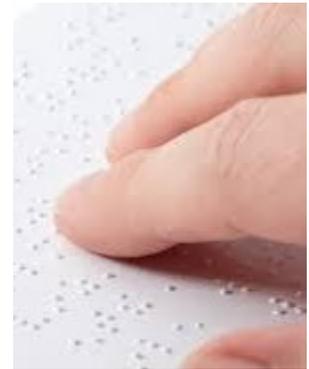
- loss of 9 contractions (to/into/by/ble/com/dd/ation/ally/o'clock),
- spaces before and after the contractions a/and/for/of/the/with,
- changes in punctuation, and
- new symbols.

The code aims to follow written English more accurately, and there are looser rules as to when one can use specific contractions.

While many view change with apprehension, a recent TSBVI webinar on UEB made mention of the fact that this is an historic change that should be celebrated and embraced with our students! As timelines and implementation guidelines are released, we would all do well to focus on the positive aspects of the new code and impart this attitude to our students.

Watch for UEB resources to be added to our Region 10 website at:

<http://www.region10.org/supplementary-services/programs/vi-assistive-technology/unified-english-braille-ueb-resources/>



“This is an historic change that should be celebrated and embraced with our students!”

“There is a wonder in reading Braille that the sighted will never know: to touch words and have them touch you back.”

Jim Fiebig



Financial Assistance for Eye Exams

Lions Clubs

Sight for Students is a charity of Vision Service Plan and offers exam vouchers to students who are not eligible for Medicaid, do not already have insurance, and have a valid Social Security number or student ID number. The school nurse can help in getting these vouchers. <http://www.sightforstudents.org/>

Sight for Students

Vision Services Plan (VSP) offers exam vouchers to students who are not eligible for Medicaid, do not already have insurance, and have a valid social security number or a student ID. Typically, the school nurse can get access to these vouchers. For more information you can also check their website at <http://www.sightforstudents.org/>

Dallas Association for the Blind –

awaiting response to confirm that their assistance program is available to students and the eligibility requirements.

<http://www.dallasassociationfortheblind.com/services>



A Visually Impaired Practice of Yoga (VIP Yoga)

Until now, yoga classes specifically for persons who have visual impairments in the Dallas area did not exist. VIP Yoga classes are designed and sequenced for individuals with visual impairments. Movements and poses are expertly described, and gentle hands-on assistance is available. Classes are small, and private lessons are available. Practicing yoga may improve balance, flexibility and strength, increase core and overall strength, and maintain cardiac and circulatory health. Yoga also helps develop mental focus and determination which positively impacts all areas

of life. The instructor, Susan Austin, specializes in working with students age 12 and up who are beginners and those who have visual impairments, diabetes, Parkinson’s, and those who want to establish a lifetime relationship with their own body. She has been teaching at Dallas Yoga Center (DYC) since 2010 and has earned her 500 hour certificate. Please contact Ms. Austin for more information.

Contact information:
 Susan C. Austin
 telephone: 214-538-5389
 email: susancaustin@sbcglobal.net



“Yoga is not about touching your toes, it is what you learn on the way down.”

Jigar Gov

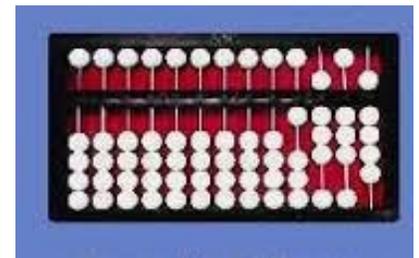
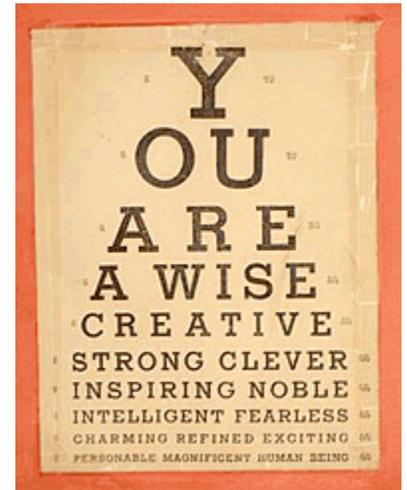
Needs Assessment—Coming soon to an email near you!

This spring, you will receive an email asking you to participate in a Needs Assessment. Please be sure and participate as this is one of the major contributing sources of data that we use to plan professional development and ECC events. We need your input on the topics that are suggested on the needs assessment, but we also we want your ideas for speakers, topics, ECC events, or anything else which we may not have touched on in the Needs Assessment questionnaire. For example, if you’d like training on the VISSA, or the VIISIT, or INSITE, please list this. Or you may have an idea for a speaker or an ECC event that we have never had before. Please share! This is OUR Region!



Student Categories for ECC events

Real Life: ECC Planning Committee sponsored by Region 10 ESC has a great time planning events and especially seeing the fruits of our labor on event days. This year we added something new: "Student Categories." We appreciate your checking each event brochure and registration for the targeted age group and category before handing it out to your families! Your support and cooperation in this regard helps make our events run smoothly and avoid disappointment for families. We know it takes extra time to get the word out about events, and your efforts are greatly appreciated! If you would like to join our merry group, we meet only 4 times per year and typically plan 3 or 4 events. Larger events like Sports Extravaganza, Babies' Day Our, Building C.A.M.P., & Technology Olympics are different committees. Come and be a part of an award winning, fun, and rewarding committee! Please contact Hillary Keys at hillary.keys@region10.org or call 972-348-1568 for more information!



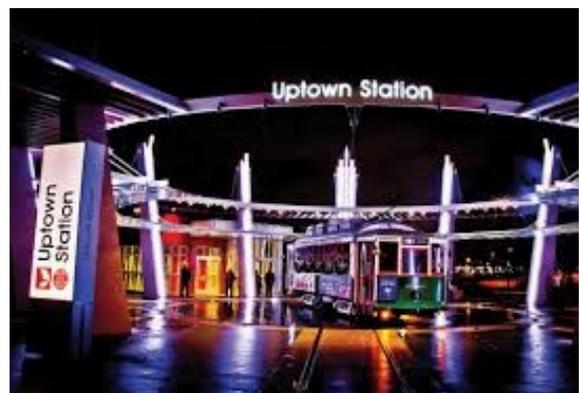
Here are the Student Categories for your reference:

Full Independence students are academically on grade level or only a little behind and are expected to go to college or similar post-secondary training. They will most likely participate in competitive employment without assistance.

Semi-Independence students may be academically below their same aged peers 2 or more grade levels, but they are socially and communicatively similar. Post-secondary training may consist of vocational training or go directly to work. They may need a little assistance to participate in the competitive employment market.

Functional Skills students perform academic tasks no higher than the 2nd grade level regardless of chronological age, but may communicate verbally on a higher level. They typically are in classrooms with a community-based, functional focus and will most likely participate in supported employment and living situations in the future.

Supported Independence students typically are in educational programs focused on functional skills and routines. Communication may be non-traditional. These students are expected to need continuous ongoing support as adults.



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For program information, forms and shells, and additional links, visit <http://www.region10.org/supplementary-services/index/>

For information about Assistive Technology for VI visit

<http://www.region10.org/supplementary-services/programs/vi-assistive-technology/>

You will find more information and links to registration forms on our website at <http://www.region10.org/supplementary-services/programs/expanded-core-curriculum-ecc/>



Spring!

Still to come for Spring 2015

Remaining VI Professional Development Calendar for 2014 – 2015

- March 26 – 28, 2015** TAER in Arlington, TX
- June 25 – 26, 2015** LID (Low Incidence Disability) Academy 2015 at Region 10 ESC
- August 3-4, 2015** Summer 2015 Lifeskills Teachers Bootcamp at Region 10 ESC

Remaining ECC Events

- April 25, 2015** Jump Aboard and Travel the City!

Sneak Preview of Coming Attractions for 2015 - 2016

Tentative TVI/COMS Professional Development Calendar for 2015 – 2016 (Dates are still to be determined.)

- Deafblind Communication Strategies
- VI Potpourri
- O&M Standards Based Goal Writing
- Wheelchairs and O&M
- Transition for Supported Independence Students
- Twice a Year Regional TVI Meetings
- Twice a Year Regional COMS Meetings

ECC Events for 2014 – 2015

- October 16 & 17, 2015** Sports Extravaganza for the Blind and Visually Impaired
- November 6, 2015** Babies' Day Out
- Fall 2015** Looking Good, Feeling Fine: Business Edition
- January 2016** Bowling (Tentative)
- March 2016** Building C.A.M.P. (Confidence and Advocacy through Motivational Planning)
- April 2016** Technology Olympics
- Spring 2016** TREKKER/GPS related event

It is the policy of Region 10 Education Service Center not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender or handicap in its vocational programs, services or activities as required by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; and Section 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. Region 10 Education Service Center will take steps to ensure that lack of English language skills will not be a barrier to admission and participation in all educational programs and services.