**Braille Literacy Canada 2023 Virtual Braille Symposium: Boundless Braille (June 2, 2023)**

I-M-ABLE: Individualized Meaning-Centered Approach to Braille Literacy Education

By Dr. Diane Wormsley

**Natalie Martiniello** 00:01

We'll get started with the next session. This is Natalie Martiniello. I'm the past president of real literacy Canada. And I'm so honored to welcome our next speaker, Dr. Diane Wormsley doctor where her career spans many decades and where she's made many contributions to the field of braille literacy. She is the Brenda Brody Endowed Chair and Professor in special education at North Carolina Central University, retired since 2015, was still very much involved in the world of Braille. Her talk is titled “**I-M-ABLE**”: individualized meaning centered approach to Braille literacy education. And we encourage you to learn more about Dr. Wormsley on our websites, along with the other speakers. So thank you, Diane, for being here today. And we will turn it over to you.

**Diane Wormsley** 01:05

Thank you, Natalie. I'm happy to be here. Can you hear me? Yes, perfectly. And I do have a PowerPoint, I'm going to share that, and I'm going to tell you the PowerPoint is longer than what I'm going to talk about today. And it's partly, because then if you're interested, there's a little more information on there. And you can also, if you ever want to, you can email me and ask about **I-M-ABLE.**

So, **I-M-ABLE:** individualize meaning centered approach for Braille literacy education. Let me just share my screen here. Okay, can everyone see that? Maybe not everyone? I will. Yes, you work good. Okay.

So, the children for whom this particular approach might be appropriate, are not necessarily the children who are doing well in school when learning Braille and having no difficulties, although I've heard people say that they use parts of the approach with them just as a motivator. But these are the kids that often people think are not going to be learning to read at all, which, you know, makes me cringe, because I think we should consider that all of our kids have the potential to be readers, no matter what their disabilities, we just need to figure out how to teach them.

But we use this with children who are mild to moderately cognitively impaired, they're still in the early literacy stage of learning to read, even though they might be older children. They're not necessarily motivated to learn to read Braille, because they don't seem to think that it relates to them. But we sense that they have the potential to learn to read. But also, there are children that have, you know, been learning to read, but maybe they're not consistently recognizing all letters of the alphabet.

The first three girls that we use this with, I called them the all girls, because they were 16 to 18 years old, but they did not know all the letters of the alphabet. And they really could not consistently decode words or even recognize the letters, but they wanted to learn to read, they might not be able to recognize their own name, or they might, they might have some words that they can read, but they might not have a lot of them. They may have limited vocabulary experiences, and limited experiences in general. And so, then they're all those at risk. People, who were like, with additional disabilities, that blindness, English, second language, autism, SLD, those who are switching from print to Braille at an older age, I think they're at risk for learning Braille, simply because it makes it more difficult. And then adults who have lost vision.

So, we really want to try to figure out this, was to try to figure out a way, to get to these people who are not learning in the more traditional way. And I'm not going to say that it works for everyone, but we need as many tools as we can. So trying something to see. So, the essential elements of **I-M-ABLE**, a bubble on the screen popped up that says, ‘individualization’ because that's really the key to the approach. This is something that is not the same thing for every student, it's individualized to the student you're working with. Motivation is a key factor in it, and another bubble popped up on the screen for motivation, engagement, getting the students engaged in learning to read is another factor. And the final one is success. And I'm going to talk a little bit about each of these. And I'm showing it on the screen with individualization in the middle because that's the most important piece of this. This is because you're learning about the student themselves and what they want to be doing And then you build in engagement and motivation and success, partly through individualization.

So, individualization is, really I'm going to go through these very quickly. And what I'm going to say is we have a handout, and on the handout, we have the reference for the book itself, the **I-M-ABLE** book and where you can get that. And then also for an article that I wrote called “The theoretical rationale for using the individualized meaning centered approach”. Because I think that you need to know why you're using something and where it comes from. And the theoretical rationale includes also the research basis for each of these elements that we have in the approach, the individualization, the success, the motivation, the engagement, all of those are research based showing that they definitely help with learning how to read. The part of the individualization is just making this mean something to the student who's learning to read or the person who's learning to read, and recognizing that what they come with their prior experience is important to them. And it also will help them learn to read, one of the things that I constantly say to teachers is what you bring to the reading experience determines what you take away. And that means that each of us brings a lot to what we read. And if it's, if what we're reading has nothing to do with our prior experience very often, we're not interested in it anyway. And so, we're trying to be responsive to students to find out what is their prior experience, what did they bring, what are they, what's meaningful to them, that will get them engaged in in rating.

So, and talking about engagement? Again, if it's meaningful to you, if it's if it's personally relevant, you're more likely to be engaged with it. And being engaged is a key to being motivated to continue to put some effort into something to do more. So, this whole approach begins with meaningful words, which were called key vocabulary words by Sylvia Ashton Warner. I don't know if anybody's here from New Zealand, but Sylvia Ashton Warner was a teacher in New Zealan, who worked with Maori students who were not succeeding in learning to read. And she developed this approach using key vocabulary words to help them get into reading. And I picked up on that and said, Why can't we do this with Braille? And that was where **I-M-ABLE** first came about.

So again, motivation, if you are motivated, it means you're creating your own personal relevance. And my slides are messed up. So anyway, you you're recognizing their personal experience, maybe I'm still on individualization and engagement, personal relevance is the kind of things that excite you, and you get engaged in them. And they're a key to motivation. And these are the meaningful words, and I had already done this, evidently, there's something here going on. All right.

So, success, everyone knows that if you, if you have success in doing something, it leads you to want to continue to do it. It makes it more feasible. We all have people that we know who will just keep going and trying to succeed no matter what they come up against. But a lot of our kids have gotten to the point where they just don't feel like they can do it. And so, we need to make sure that the approach itself builds in success not only as a goal in terms of success and reading, but success for them in learning to read. So, it's a goal as well as the means to a goal. And a lot of this has to do with teacher expectations. Because very often, I find that if expectations are low for the students, then people don't try themselves to do as much as they can to get the student to learn how to read. And our own expectations will lead us to not do things that we might normally do if we thought someone were capable of learning to read. Motivation, really, for those of us who love to read, reading is its own reward, it motivates us to keep going. But for those who are having difficulty reading is not its own reward. We want it to become that for our students. We want them to see what wonderful worlds we can explore with them and what wonderful things we can do if they can learn to read.

So, all of these items, individualization, engagement, and success contribute. And you know, I would urge you to, if you're interested in learning about this, read more, either through the book, **I-M-ABLE**or through the theoretical approach article to get an idea if you think it's something that might work with one of your students.

So, I now want to just tell you how it's different from the traditional approaches, not just in the elements that are in it, but how we actually look at it in terms of Braille. So, one of the things you'll know is that I have a thing here that says **I-M-ABLE** in traditional approaches, and this is at the beginning of the approach, we move from this piece right here, into a whole bunch of things that I'm going to tell you about that are components of the approach. But initially, when we start working with a student, we are looking at it being an individualized approach versus the traditional approach where one size fits all.

**Diane Wormsley** 10:48

And as I said, it's a meaning centered approach, the word meaning centered, means that we're looking at what is important and meaningful to the students themselves. And often, those things are in conflict with the material that they're being taught to read with. So, it isn't motivating to them from that standpoint is also a lot of the traditional approaches are skills based. Now, you will hear a lot today about the science of reading. And people will say it was how does this fit in with the science of reading, then if this is a individualize, and its meaning centered, and so forth, I can tell you it fits in. It's not fitting in neatly because we don't necessarily approach things in the same way. But everything that's in the science of reading is part of the **I-M-ABLE** approach. And when you see the components, you'll see them there, it's just we don't start out in the same way.

Kids who are sighted have the ability to see words around them. So, when they come to reading, they've already had a repertoire, of seeing language in the environment, seeing words in the environment, a lot of the kids that we work with have additional disabilities, and not only can they not see the words in the environment, they can't get around even to explore the environment. And Braille is not always a large part of that environment. So individualized, meanings centered.

And also, we work from whole to part versus part to whole, we start out with the whole word, we don't start out necessarily with the letters and what they mean and what they sound like. Because that kind of thing, if you're not used to seeing letters and not used to hearing the sounds, it's not really as relevant as a word itself, which has some meaning in it. And in reading terms we talked about, whether it's outside in or top down versus inside out, or bottom up. The **I-M-ABLE** approach really works from what we call outside in. So if you think of the end as the print on the page, or the Braille on the page, the outside is the person, that's what's coming to this print page, and that's the top down as well, it's coming from the person down to the page, and we consider the person the important part of this. Whereas inside out and bottom up are more working directly from the print to the person rather than the person down to what is being read.

So that's kind of a general way that they're different. And then also, the fact that we start with whole words rather than letters and decoding doesn't mean we don't get two letters and decoding it just means that we start out with that whole word. And when we look at it, we're going to feel it as a whole word. And what we're looking at meaningful words, we're not using those lists of words that are the most frequently seen words or power words. Because so many of them are not really very fun anyway, like they contain and the and for and will then, you know, these are what we call filler words and I'm able to they're necessary words, but they get you where you're going rather than have meaning of themselves. We use contractions right from the beginning, we don't start with uncontracted Braille just because the student has had difficulty, a contraction is no more abstract for students than a letter. It's just different. And so, we're going to be introducing them to the word the way it looks in materials that they would most frequently get. And some people have a little difficulty with that. But the ABC Braille study has shown that the more contractions a kid learns right from the beginning, the better a reader they can be.

It's a student-centered approach versus teacher directed. So, we're always trying to find out what's motivating the student and what's helping them. Enjoy this. And it we say it's versus teacher directed, but we're still directing this, but we're directing it through the students, things that they like. This also makes it a very unscripted approach. And for those people who have tried to use it, it's sometimes feels like a roller coaster. Because you're really letting the student drive you in terms of their behavior, you're using diagnostic teaching, you're making sure that the student is motivated, successful, is engaged. And so, what you do from one day to the next might differ, you might go in with a lesson plan, and find out that something has to be completely changed because of something that happened that day. And I'm going to tell you, in a case study something along that lines with one of the students we work with.

So just to give you an idea, very quickly, of all the kinds of things that are included in **I-M-ABLE** as an approach, and I don't consider **I-M-ABLE** a curriculum, it's an approach, because how you do it is not dictated by the the curriculum itself. It's dictated by how the student is responding to the approach. So, we talk about getting started. That's one of the first things and incorporating early literacy instruction. I'll go into that in a little bit more depth, because I want to give you an idea of how you get started. And that can include helping students select their key vocabulary words or phrases, because we want these to come from the students.

**Diane Wormsley** 16:30

And then introducing them, how do you actually introduce the student to the key vocabulary words or phrases because you're having to look at particular techniques, and we'll talk a little bit about that also, then we need to do things like teach students how to track across multiple lines, we need to teach writing mechanics in a meaningful way, and also how to use the Perkins Braille writer or any technology that you're using, that has to be part of it.

We want to get students into reading and writing stories as soon as possible. So we collaborate with them to create some key vocabulary stories for them to read and help them write their own stories. And then when we know that students have quite a number of words that they're able to recognize automatically, we start looking at the words to analyze them for how they could be useful in teaching phonics, letter recognition contractions, because as I said, students have to be able to learn how to read all the letters, they have to read all the contractions, they have to be able to know the sounds that things make, we have to be able to decode. It's just we don't start with it. And then we also need to help the students because many of our students, as I said, have limited experiences, to expand their own vocabularies, and to understand the things that they're reading. And then we also need to look at fluent reading. So all of these things are part of it. And just to give you an idea, before you get started, this slide is getting started being responsive to students, you really need to get some baseline data on your students, if you're going to demonstrate that something works, you have to show where the student was when you began this particular approach.

If you're going to try to write a case study on your student, or if you're going to try to show an IEP team or a team about how much progress the student has made, you need to know where they are when they start. So, we are looking at baseline data on motivation, phonemic, awareness, letter word recognition, students interests - we want to assess the intellectual and socio economic or socio emotional environment and the physical environment of the students to see, you know, what is the classroom they're in? Like? How much do people expect of them? What kinds of literacy activities are going on already, that we can fit into? And finding out whether there's any, you know, pushback on using a different approach, because that also can have an effect on how you would teach? And also, where are you going to teach. Because sometimes you can't do this in the classroom, you may have to pull out or if you can do it, you're doing it in a in a different part of the classroom. So we're also looking at incorporating all of those things that we know are important as far as early literacy instruction. And that includes, among other things, just having meaningful stories and a real rich environment where students see Braille, everywhere that they are everywhere they can get their hands on it.

So in terms of helping students select their first key words, as I say, sometimes the students themselves don't even have a lot of language. We're working with students who might have limited vocabulary. Some of them might be English second language students. So part of what we do is observe the students and try to get to know them. A child. And in observing them, we see what is it that they show excitement about? What is it that they are really engaged in? When do they smile and have fun, and what are the things they're doing. And so the things that they like the things that they dislike, and even the things that they're afraid of, because sometimes the most important words can be those words, which you are afraid of. And you can get control over that word by reading that word. And so it creates a kind of an emotion, and then you don't you feel like this power when you've actually read it. So you get your list to start with. And really, you only need one word to start. But you've got to have some backups. Because if you get that one learned really quickly, we have to go to the next one. And here's the part that's tricky about Braille. Because we're trying at the same time to build up some tactile recognition, we want the first words that we start with to be very different feeling from each other. So when we look at the list of words that we have, we can start with whatever one we want. But the next one we pick, we want to make sure it's different. If you started with a really long word, let's go to a short one, because that's where the student is going to be successful. In the initial recognition of the words, it's not going to necessarily be all the letters because they don't know all the letters yet. So we're starting with trying to get them to tactically be able to discriminate one word from the next on the basis of how it feels on under their fingertips. And so, when you're analyzing the words, don't forget to include the contractions because that can build you a very short word all of a sudden when you thought it was longer. So, and I talked about the key vocabulary words, in terms of how they feel, and I'll talk about that in a minute. But when you introduce them, you want to be talking to the student about the word and what it means to the student and how it motivates them. Because this is why the word was chosen something that's meaningful to them, and you may think it is.

And I'll just tell a real quick story about a little boy that we worked with, who we thought the key vocabulary word would be bus. But when his teacher gave him the word card, he basically read it and he picked up the card and put it in his finished box. And that was that. So, we had not picked a word that was really motivating to the student. And we went through and found a couple other things that we thought were motivating and they didn't. But when it came time to play a song that he liked about riding the bus, every time his teacher would say the word Beep, beep, he would get so excited. And so, we gave him the word beep, beep. And he kept reading it and reading it and reading it and teacher said now I know what you mean by a key vocabulary word. So, you're trying to make sure these words really are important to the student. And sometimes things that you think might be important, they'll show you or not. So, accept that and be respectful of their choices when they make them. So, then you create the cards you teach tracking. This is another piece of this, when you're teaching the words, and when you're introducing them, you want to make sure they're using all four fingers of both hands, that they're reading the line correctly. This is one of the reasons when we do the flashcards we use lead in mind so that they can be moving as they're moving their fingers, we keep their fingers moving, we can always go back we create lots of cards so that they can look at as many as possible. When we're talking about these as we're feeling them, you have to watch out for dots poking out from underneath the fingers, because that means you're not feeling all the Braille. We, for each word, create kind of a language of how this particular word feels using adjectives to describe the word tactfully. So it might be long, it might be short, it might be really full of dots, or there might be holes in there. Or maybe there are some lines that they feel or maybe they're all at the top or they're all at the bottom. There's not a huge number of words that we can use. But it's getting them used to thinking about how these words feeling we put those feelings together later on into the actual letters themselves.

So again, you introduce one word at a time and you teach that word you're not playing guessing games with the students. You tell them what it is, and you make sure again, that they are successful. And so you keep going across it until you think that they must have a sense of it. They're moving their hands for Usually, they've got the gist of the word, they can figure out where it is in connection with a lead in line. And then, once you think they know a word, you can go on to the next one, because you don't really know if they know a word until you have something to compare it with. So, another thing we do when we're introducing them as as we get more and more words, we start playing games to enhance their word recognition. We're trying to build some automaticity and word recognition based on tactile differences between and among the words, so eventually, you have to get to those letters because you cannot proceed with this forever. It doesn't work that way. So I wanted to talk just about four of the case studies, but it's too much in one time. So, we gave you on the handout, there are four case studies that were included at two different times in JVIB. And they were by Amy Campbell, she wrote Sarah's story, Vicki Drew, Zo, and hers was I can't remember the name of the little girl that she wrote about. Rachel Celeste, who is now a professor at Vanderbilt University. Amy Campbell actually now works for American Printing House for the Blind.

**Diane Wormsley** 26:20

And Jill McMillan, who worked with a student at in North Carolina. So they each took the time to write up what happened with their students. And I think that's so valuable because doing an approach like this, it's very difficult to do research, it's very difficult to, you know, to prove that this is working, all you can do is demonstrate it with case study. So the more we have, the better it is.

But let me just tell you a little bit about two of the girls that we worked with. So you can see how this might work out. So, Sarah was 12. When we started working with her, she did not know more than 20 letters of the alphabet. She didn't consistently recognize the 20. She did not like Braille. She did not want to come to Braille instruction. She was at a residential school and she would miss the days that she had Braille instruction or make sure she was late because her Braille was first thing in the morning she would kick her teacher under the table. She did not like Braille. And her teacher was at wit's end and she was taking a small Friday afternoon class with me where we were working on I am able a week at a time, and she picked Sarah for her student. So we started in October of the school year. And by January, Sarah had learned eight words that she could recognize tactually from each other. And that was not all. Sara now was coming to Braille every time she had class. She even told her mother, she couldn't be late because she might miss Braille. Her attitude towards Braille turn completely around. Her teacher was absolutely amazed. But her teacher also was concerned because now the things she was doing with Sarah, in terms of the words she was learning, and some of the first few words she learned were Sponge Bob, pizza, music, and then she decided on her own, she wanted to learn how to read the names of all the American Idol singers that year. And so she did learn as many of them as she could tell her teacher, and she was writing stories that had to do with the things that the American Idol singers like to do. And then one day she came in and she asked for the word colonoscopy. And Amy came to me and we thought, You know what, first if reader asked for a word type colonoscopy anyway, that's why I have her Sarah aka colonoscopy gal. But, you know, one of her family members was getting one and everybody was talking about it, she wanted to know more about it. So they actually talked more about what is it colonoscopy, and so forth. Any anyway, as she became also entranced with some of the contractions she was learning, she learned the ion contraction in some of the American Idol names that singers names. She wanted more, with, in. So she had words like pink and think and as she got more and more into it, she began to ask, you know what contractions are in here? What letters are in here and she knew she had known about 20 letters, as I said, so we were able to use those in the words with her and you know, remind her of them and have her reading them and then she also went into some phonics activities at the end of the school year. The mom I was afraid that she was not going to have this continued use of the **I-M-ABLE** approach because the teaching staff was changing. So, she actually put her in a public school where she had a teacher who agreed to continue the approach. I ran into that teacher four years later when a or when Sarah was 16. And at that point, Sarah was in a modified Fourth Grade Level Reading Program, and was doing really well and was continuing to use Braille knew all her contractions was doing a large amount of her work in Braille. So there was definitely a success there. And I remember one other thing about Sarah was she asked us if she if she could have the word. Let's see. I'm going to blame God was the name of the mental institution that was next to the school. And let's just say it was the Anne Macy Mental Institution or whatever she wanted that. Oh, it was the Dorothea Dix. It was down in North Carolina and Dorothea Dix was it. And so her teachers stopped and said, Okay, we'll learn Dorothea Dix and brailled out a whole lot of cards for Dorothea Dix. And at the end of that lesson, she said to her teacher, thank you for giving me Dorothea Dix. And we said, well, tell us why you want to learn about it. Well, turns out she did her mobility there and she loved the sounds of the birds and the, you know, just the peace and quiet of that area. So that was Sarah.

And the second one I have, it's a shorter story, because we didn't see her for as long but Belinda was a gal who was again around 13 knew no Braille at all, no one had ever used real with her before. And she was in a class of students who had behavior disorders, she herself was often prone to acting out. And her teacher started her with words that related to what her mother did, because her mother was ill at the time, and was actually very ill and passed away during the time that we worked with her, which was very emotional for Belinda. But she had a purse, her mother always carried a purse, so she wanted a purse and she got the word purse. And in her purse, she kept keys. And keys was another key vocabulary word, she kept lotion. And lotion was a key vocabulary word. And I think she had a phone, and some other items. And the stories would be I have a purse, you know, and these are in my purse. So, the number of words that she started out with, were very limited. The teacher also had very limited time to work with her. And one day, the teacher came to school and the instructional aide came over the teacher and said, You're going to have a new word that she has to learn today because we had a lockdown yesterday. And so, she wants the word lockdown. And so, the teacher sat down brailled out word cards for locked down. And as she was introducing this to Belinda, she said, Okay, so it starts out locked down. It's all locked down. And as she was reading it, Belinda says, Oh, it starts like lotion. And we kind of, I had goosebumps, because what it meant to me was she was making connections now between the sounds that were the beginnings of the words. So, you know, phonics is a possibility when you can do that kind of thing. So if she was doing more than just mechanically reading the word, she was getting more out of it than that. And so, this is a girl I wasn't able to follow up on. But I thought that story in itself showed the potential that she had for more, and how it engaged her. And that was the kind of thing that that we were interested in.

So the other thing I wanted to mention is that this is a very short presentation. For me, this is usually at least a two to three day workshop when I go through the whole approach. But APH on their Hive, has a professional development course with continuing education units. That's free, I believe, to everyone I know at least certainly US and Canada, I would have to ask someone from APH about people from other countries. It's got readings from the **I-M-ABLE** book, there are video presentations or quiz questions and we go through all of the different components in the approach. And also APH has what we're calling the **I-M-ABLE** kit, which includes the book and this is a description of The catalog number and what it does as far as reading instruction. It's the book and it's either available in print or on flash drive. It's also now an ebook on a Kindle version book through Amazon. And then it has a teacher instruction booklet for it. Also the APH word Playhouse kit, which is something that helps with phonics activities. There are four nonslip desktop sorting trays so that you can play games. And they're the size of a four by five or a four by six flash card. So those are listed here. Also, that's a virtual email. And then at the end of the handout is my email dpwormsley@gmail.com. And I am more than happy to have anybody you know, email me or whatever. And I do have at the end of the PowerPoint, when you see it, you'll see the other components are very briefly discussed. There's a lot more in the book about how to implement the approach with readers. But I'm going to close this down. I stopped sharing this right there. Close it down now and just see if you have any questions. I feel like it's a lot to go through and a half an hour.

**Natalie Martiniello** 36:30

Oh, my goodness. Thank you so much, Diane, it was so interesting. It always is so interesting. So much information shared. I also, can speak from personal experience that the **I-M-ABLE** book is a wonderful resource for anyone who hasn't checked it out yet. I have lots I could say but I will leave it to our wonderful audience who I'm sure has many questions. So, we will turn it over to Anthony, who will call on people who have questions.

37:00

Oh, we have a hand up from Tara P. Tara. Hey, yes. I just curious if my student is reading braille. And but I'm just curious if this approach can work to enhance his spelling?

**Diane Wormsley** 37:30

Well, I think anytime you're doing a different approach, you're going to include spelling in it, of course, whether or not it will enhance it depends upon if he's having difficulty what those difficulties are. And spelling is one of those odd things. We, you know, when we were doing our ABC Braille study approach, one of the things we looked at was spelling, we found out that our kids who were Braille readers were really not bad at spelling at all, like people are saying that Oh, Braille kind of makes it harder for people to spell. It certainly does have some orthographic difficulties in terms of prefixes and suffixes and things like that. But I think it depends on how you focus on the spelling and so forth. I'd need to know a little bit more about the student to be able to answer that, but hey, okay, youcan always try something. Yeah,

38:27

I mean, he's fairly good at sounding out words and he did really well when we were doing spelling as a unit. But then it doesn't. He doesn't keep it, he doesn't retain it, and put it into his writing. He's he's still sounds things out. You know, very phonetically and spells things.

**Diane Wormsley** 38:49

Yeah. If you're using the same vocabulary words that you're reading initially from, and you're having him write them if he's got the capability to do that, that may help also.

39:00

Okay. Thank you. Thanks, next, Denise? Beaudry Hi, Denise. You're still muted.

**Natalie Martiniello** 39:28

She’s still muted. Okay, well, I'll try a with JAWS. Command A with Mac.

**Anthony Tibbs** 39:43

Okay, well, we've got some other hands, so we'll come back. Next. I'm not sure who this person is. .

**Monique Mariani** 39:54

Can you hear me? Yes. When you come out. Yeah. And yes, from Los Angeles. First of all, I was fascinated by this presentation, it is really very, very interesting. But I have two questions. One is, would this program be valid also for illiterate adults, but one newly visually impaired and who have never read Braille? Braille reading was min difficulty rate is really more so a sense of touch than a program of programs of literacy. And the second question is when we talked a little bit about it about spelling, but for example, if they read words like Missouri dot five M, Oh, are they going to our spelling of the word is going to stick to their mind?

**Diane Wormsley** 40:44

Well, when you teach writing, I'll answer that one. Second, the second one, because it's easier when you teach writing, you're going to teach them how to spell the word, you're going to talk about what the dot five M stands for. So you're, you're teaching them to read it initially, and then later, you'll be teaching them how to spell it, you have to really do both, or they can't, they can't type on a keyboard, you know, they can only Braille. So that's easy. For adults. Yes, I think this would be something, when I think about someone who's lost vision as an adult, and is learning to read braille, and is afraid that they might not succeed and is, you know, has already lost many things. And is, you know, maybe still emotional, I would want to at least start them off with something like this. And part of the difficulty comes from the systems of rehabilitation, where, you know, you don't have a teacher all the time or you only get Braille, if you ask for it, you don't get a chance to try it out. And I have known several rehab instructors who have used the approach when they first start working with adults to get them motivated to get them interested. I had a teacher I was working with recently use it with a woman who was a college professor and had lost her vision. And they had started initially with just learning the contractions, learning the letters, and so forth. And she wasn't really interested, she wanted to learn to read, but she just was not interested. So the attempt was to take the things that were in the lectures that she had done the PowerPoint slides that she had done and start learning just some of those words and talking about them. And the learners attitude changed significantly when she was doing that, and it was motivating to do that. So I think it is an approach you can start with, obviously, there are a whole bunch of things you have to get into if you're learning to read again. So I hope that helps.

**Monique Mariani** 42:53

thank you very much. Thank you.

42:59

Hello, did you call me? Yes. Hello, from the nighttime in Greece. And then, again, I don't know I am Greek. So I don't know if you covered this question in a way. I read your slides that you said to cover one word at a time and to focus on a word right?

**Diane Wormsley** 43:32

When you were in the introduction of the word to the student, the first time the student is learning it, you start and you focus on that one word. Okay.

43:44

So my question or need was, what obstacle Do you want to simplify this way? Is it that for next part, the meaning or the pattern?

**Diane Wormsley** 43:58

Could you say that one more time? Yes.

44:02

What is the obstacle? This method wants to simplify and tackle by learning one word at a time and focusing on it is it there are three obstacles and I want to ask you, is it the meaning of the word that you want to focus and cover the phonics or the pattern by using this method?

**Diane Wormsley** 44:29

So, when we start out with the one word, we're going to be introducing the student to what the word looks like in Braille. So, this is a word that the student already knows the meaning of, but we want to reinforce that meaning when we're teaching the Word. When we're introducing that we also want to focus we're focusing on several things at a time and this can be a little bit difficult. We're focusing on how the word feels, you know, because we're looking at the whole word. We're not talking right now about the, the letters of it. But we will have the students say the word, and we will tell where it is. So let's say the word was swing, the student like to play on this swing, we would be talking about it, this is the word swing. And we introduce it so that they use their hands across the word and read across the page. And when they find the word, they say, swing, then we're talking about how does that word feel to you? Is it long? Is it short? You know, Are there lots of dots in it? What do you notice about the word that stands out to you something that will help you remember that word the next time you see it. So we're doing very gross tactile features initially, to get them used to feeling Braille and how it feels underneath their fingertips. And then we will expand that as we get more and more and more words. I don't know if I'm answering your question, though. But we're not going to start with phonics. Initially, we're not going to start with decoding, we're not going to start with saying what letters are in the word, or what contractions are going to, we're just going to look at how the word looks on the page feels to the student on the page. Okay, you come at me, I just was wondering because I am not blind. And I decided, I always thought that it's very easy for them, because they do not say the blind do not read the world. I as a sighted I thought that they were reading a very rapidly, not the letter they could detected by what is missing and what is added. So during the wave, so this is why I thought that if I was a teacher with this way, I would want to tackle and underline the phonics of it and not the and not to detect that this is the word they can capture the word rapidly. This is why this is why I wanted to answer to ready to, to learn your philosophy.

**Diane Wormsley** 47:19

I think that people have difficulty with this sometimes at first because and when I do this teaching, I always have teachers teach each other under blindfold to see what this is because it gets them to realize you can do this, you actually can do this, you can actually recognize the word tactfully. And then you can differentiate it from the next word, what you're doing is building up a memory of tactile recognition, and different features of Braille, which you're then eventually going to turn into letters and to contractions and to phonics and sounds. And sometimes like the word lollipop has lots of straight up and down lines in it, you can feel those. And that actually is the L so you can connect that to the owl. You don't stay there at that tactile recognition point. You grow that into letters and contractions, and then decoding of words, you have to be able to decode you'd have to be able to do phonics, but you don't have to necessarily start with it. And what makes the approach important for the students is that the words they want to read these words, they really want to their important words to them. Okay, so,

**Natalie Martiniello** 48:33

Okay. Thank you. Thank you very much. I don't have any other hands up here. So I'll continue.

**Monique Mariani** 48:45

No, no. Can I ask you this question?

**Natalie Martiniello** 48:51

Can you hear me? Yes,

**Monique Mariani** 48:53

Okay. Thank you. I am sorry to be so to take too much of your time. But my problem is, for example, I teach adults, and I teach them let's say once a week for one hour or twice a week max maximum. If we do we practice this method, how are we going to distribute homework, for example, because it seemed to standardize on one word or two words, but what kind of homework Can you give them for the week? In order for them to prepare it?

**Diane Wormsley** 49:27

I'm assuming that you're doing more than just reading you're probably teaching writing as well. Yes. So some of the homework might be writing of certain letters that you're eventually going to have and some of the words that you do doesn't have to be necessarily reading, but remember, you're going to have more than one or two or three or four words if it's an adult, you'll be lucky. They might be taking home five words to recognize, and they can have someone help them to make sure they're recognizing them correctly. Or if you could use a pen friend. You know what a pen friend is? Of course, yeah. Should put on the card so that they can read it and see if they read it correctly and check themselves. You're trying to build up accuracy of recognition of these words that you're giving them. That you, you'll find more things to do with them. Because you're not just working on the word cards, you'll be working on tracking skills, and you'll be working on other things that you can give them to take as homework.

**Natalie Martiniello** 50:23

Yeah, excellent question. And also you can, you can probably start incorporating those words onto labels in the home and create a Braille rich environment for them as well. So they start using it in practice, too. Thank you so much, Dan. That was so interesting. I wish we could continue this discussion. Thank you, everyone, also for your questions. And again, Dan, for sharing all of this information. So I will turn it over now to Anthony for some more door prizes.

**Diane Wormsley** 50:54

Thank you, Natalie.

**Natalie Martiniello** 50:57

Thank you so much. Thank you.