

## Braille Literacy Video Transcript, February, 2021

MC:

In my opinion uh Braille Literacy is extremely important. Let's put it this way uh, if you get somebody who's got vision, would we actually deny them the fact of having the skills to be able to read and write? If you don't have the skills in reading or writing it's going to become very difficult for you to become successful in the in the world today because those are the things that you need to be able to communicate. Literacy not only promotes success but it also promotes a way of communicating towards your peers and your work colleagues and even friends and neighbours. Without those skills and if you're only depending on the voice you're actually not learning how to formulate a sentence properly. Your formatting if you will, becomes very disjointed and of course it becomes very difficult to be able to concentrate on what you want to say. So in my honest general opinion I think that we need to focus on getting people who have a vision disability, whether it be visually impaired or totally blind, to be able to have them read and write effectively so that they can become successful in their future skill sets.

DP:

During the 1980s when the voice synthesizer came out I was told that Braille was dead, that Braille books were difficult to make, that Braille books were expensive, having a proofreader do them properly was time consuming, many times the students didn't get them on time and with the voice synthesizer they no longer needed Braille. What they found was they created a full generation of blind people who did not know how to

read or write. A sighted person reads text, reads books and from that they can follow math problems, they can read the physics problem.

When a blind person listens to audio it uses the audio part of the brain. When they read Braille they use the same part of their brain that a sighted person uses when they read text. So if , if a blind person is listening to a math problem... sit down, close your eyes, listen to a math problem and try to follow it.

Structure of a paragraph... how many times if you're writing a professional paper do you write it, look at it, read it, re-read it, see where it needs flow, see where it needs improvement, see if you're getting your point across to whoever has to read it after you write it. If you listen to it you lose the full structure of a paragraph. You lose the ability to understand what you're writing and a full generation of blind people were illiterate to this.

So how important is Braille? How important is print?

MC:

I've read several articles that have shown me that where over 70 percent of people who are visually impaired, who are using speech and not using Braille, so that 30 percent are people that use Braille and the 70 are the people that are not using Braille and depending solely on speech. This is extremely concerning to me because I fear that a lot of people that are visually impaired are not given the chance or the equal footing to be able to become successful in gaining a job or going to school and having a fantastic career in the end.

