Presentation Slide Content for *Towards a Definition of the Construct of Braille Literacy: Historical and Theoretical Perspectives­* by Emily H. White, PhD and Frances-Mary D’Andrea, PhD

Slide 1 (Title slide):

Towards a Definition of the Construct of Braille Literacy: Historical and Theoretical Perspectives. Emily H. White, PhD and Frances Mary D’Andrea, PhD.

Images: Logos of the University of Melbourne and the University of Pittsburgh. Photo of a child’s slender hands reading vertical braille comprised of brightly lit white LED lights set into a black background. The light from the LEDs illuminates the hands from underneath.

Slide 2: Who we are and why this presentation

Content: Curious: asking questions and seeking discussion. Examining what is often taken for granted. Making sure we’re all talking about the same thing. Difficult to improve systems if we can’t clearly explain them.

Image: A cartoon of an apple and an orange looking at each other, with the orange saying to the apple, "Well, we're both fruit."

Slide 3: Why a construct?

Content: A theoretical concept or framework to work within. More than just “an idea” - used to describe complicated behaviors or events. Not observable but the behaviors within it are. Example: self-esteem, motivation. Specific to a cohort/context. Helps establish how valid the ideas are, especially when you try to measure them.

Image: Photo of the Milky Way galaxy with stars and space dust in the universe.

Slide 4: What is “Literacy”? What is “Reading”?

Content: “Ability to read and write” (Merriam-Webster dictionary)

“A means of identification, understanding, interpretation, creation, and communication in an increasingly digital, text-mediated, information-rich and fast-changing world.” (UNESCO, 2022)

“Reading comprehension is making meaning with text, a complex process shaped by many factors, including readers’ abilities to:

* engage with text in print and multimodal form;
* employ personal resources that include foundational reading skills, language, knowledge, and motivations; and
* extract, construct, integrate, critique and apply meaning in activities across a range of social and cultural contexts.” (NAEP, 2021)

No images.

Slide 5: What do we know about braille?

Content: A code? A unique and native system? Does it map onto print or is braille its own thing? Has “rules” but is also changeable and adaptable.

Image: Photo of a dog sitting in front of a Perkins braillewriter with its head down looking at it rather quizzically.

Slide 6: What do we know about braille readers?

Content:

* Many studies are based on small numbers.
* Many studies are decades old and have not been replicated.
* Many intervention studies were not designed to yield an effect size.

However:

* We know something about efficient hand movements
* We know that programs exist that increase letter recognition
* We know it’s possible to increase accuracy and fluency in oral reading

Image: A page from a vintage book showing two photographs of two hands reading braille, labelled 'Position One' and 'Position Two'. 'Position One' shows the thumbs tucked under and all fingers and fingertips closely aligned along the line of braille being read. 'Position Two' shows the thumbs tucked under and the two index fingertips closely aligned on the line of braille being read, but an angled gap between the remainder of the index fingers, the fingertips of the left hand being tucked together near the line being read, and those on the right being loosely gathered. The caption reads: Positions of Hands Preferred by Best Readers. (From an illustration in the writer's reprint, "Summary of Information Collected by the Uniform Type Committee on the Mechanics of Reading Raised Type.")

Slide 7: More questions: Braille and literacy/ braille literacy

Content:

* Braille as literacy?
* Braille *for* literacy?
* Braille *with* literacy?

Is the construct of braille literacy different for different cohorts of learners? What is different?

* + Learners who acquire literacy through braille
  + Learners who acquire literacy through braille and print
  + Learners who have acquired literacy through print and are now learning braille
  + Learners who acquire literacy through braille, sign language, and maybe print as well
  + Learners with cognitive, brain-based, and/or other disabilities

No images.

Slide 8: Help us think: What matters to you?

Content:

1. If someone is ‘braille literate’, what does that mean to you?

What do they have to be able to do/know, broadly, for you to say they are braille literate?

(Not talking about *how* braille literate they are.)

1. What are the capabilities (key areas of learning within braille literacy)?

*Do, say, make, write, draw*…. (Griffin, 2007)

1. Which capabilities are important for which cohorts?
2. What else? What are we missing?

Image: Photo of two very young hands reading a large sheet of braille.

Slide 9: Where is this all going?

Content: 1. Development of a validated measure of braille literacy ability:

* + **Identify** current abilities
  + **Set learning goals**
  + **Target** their teaching
  + **Track** student progress over time
  + **Reflect** on impact of approaches/resources/supports/other factors
  + **Demonstrate growth** and celebrate achievement
  + **Demonstrate** the importance of, and **advocate** for specialist teachers in blindness/low vision education

2. Description of how braille literacy learning happens (developmental pathway/learning progression)

3. Other implications:

* + Policy development
  + Research

No images.

Slide 11: Closing slide

Content: Thank you.

emily.white@unimelb.edu.au

fmd22@upitt.edu

University of Melbourne Faculty of Education

University of Pittsburgh School of Education

Images: Logos of the University of Melbourne and the University of Pittsburgh. A smiling primary school student uses a slate and stylus to write braille on his lap, while sitting outside surrounded by other students.