



**NewT: New Tools to Accompany the Functional Vision
and Learning Media Assessment (FVLMA) for
Students Who are Pre-Academic or Academic and
Visually Impaired in Grades K-12**

QUICKSTART GUIDEBOOK

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American Printing House
for the Blind, Inc.

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This booklet should be used in conjunction with:

- FVLMA Practitioner's Guidebook,
- FVLMA Interviews and Observations Protocol,
- Functional Vision Assessment Protocol,
- Learning Media Assessment Protocol, and
- FVLMA Report Form

In this booklet the reader will see words of different colors:

Eye of Newt Brown denotes products that are part of the **NewT Materials**.

Pond Blue denotes products that are part of **FVLMA**.

Moss Green indicates products that are part of **ToAD**.

Orange indicates products that are part of **TADPOLE**.

Tadpole Green signifies products not related to **NewT** or **FVLMA** that are available from APH.

APH makes these indications for the convenience of TVIs when they assemble materials needed to perform an assessment from the **FVLMA**.

Acknowledgements

Sincere appreciation is expressed to Dr. Rebecca Burnett, Dr. LaRhea Sanford, co-authors of the [Functional Vision and Learning Media Assessment Protocols and Practitioner's Guidebook](#), and to former and current teachers of students with visual impairments (TVIs) of the Metropolitan Nashville Public School System in Nashville, Tennessee. They provided valuable feedback regarding the development of the protocols and selection of materials for the [FVLMA Product](#) over the past 15 years. They are all vision professionals extraordinaire!

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Many photos in NewT were supplied by amateur photographers at the American Printing House for the Blind (APH). Thanks go to the following APH staff for their important contributions of photographs.

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Introduction to NewT

This booklet is intended to provide basic information about **NewT: New Tools to Accompany the Functional Vision and Learning Media Assessment**. NewT materials will be used to assist in completion of the activities in the three following FVLMA Protocols:

- Interviews and Observations,
- Functional Vision Assessment, and
- Learning Media Assessment.

The **NewT Quickstart Guidebook** is designed to be a resource manual for TVIs as they administer the various activities in each protocol. The activities were intended for students who are pre-academic or academic and visually impaired in grades K-12. **NewT** provides most of the tools and materials needed to administer those protocols.

Who can administer an FVLMA?

In order to complete a functional vision and media assessment, the examiner should be a qualified teacher of students who are visually impaired. The examiner should have preservice and/or inservice training in techniques for the assessment of functional vision and learning media needs.





What are the purposes of the FVLMA?

The main purposes for the administration of a functional vision and media assessment are

- to determine if a student will be a tactile learner
- to determine a student's visual functioning as he/she performs daily activities with a variety of materials
- to determine the degree that the visual impairment interferes with learning and educational performance
- to determine ways to increase visual function
- to identify educational implications
- to determine eligibility certification
- to identify educational needs for the development of an Individualized Educational Program (IEP), including goals, objectives, placement and services for a given student.

What are the best practices?

- Obtain a current eye report (no more than 12 months old.) Call the doctor to get clarification of needed information. Read about the condition in current textbooks and at reputable sites on the internet. Researchers continually update information about eye conditions and treatment,

and the TVI should use current information when he/she writes reports and speaks with parents, teachers, and students.

- Assist the family as they connect with resources as needed, e.g., to obtain glasses, low vision evaluations and/or devices, or surgery.
- Evaluate the student in the natural environment as he/she completes daily routines and uses typical materials.
- Use the transdisciplinary approach during the assessment: include parents; past, present and future teachers; the student; and others as appropriate.
- Consider and respect the values of the student and parent regarding reading mode.

What should be considerations as one plans to use the FVLMA?

Considerations when planning for the assessment of functional vision begin when the examiner collects information about the student. A review of the cumulative folder and current assessment data, interviews with parents and teachers comprise the necessary information. These considerations will result in a better plan for assessment, especially if the student is not in a traditional academic curriculum. The following questions are some that should be considered.



**Is the student**

- pre-academic?
- academic?
- in grades kindergarten through high school?

Can the student

- understand verbal directions?
- follow simple one and two-step directions?
- respond verbally or by matching and pointing?
- read and write?

Does the student

- require special positioning in order to access the visual environment?
- tire quickly or have a short attention span?
- need to have expected performance modeled or practice items provided?
- require special considerations of motivational factors?
- wear glasses and/or use prescribed low vision devices?

Other questions to consider:

- Will the examiner need an additional staff person to assist with the assessment?
- Does the student follow a developmentally sequenced, birth-to-five curriculum, a functional

life skills curriculum, or a traditional academic curriculum? (Note: generally students in functional life skills curricula should be assessed with an instrument such as ISAVE by Beth Langley. It is no longer available from APH.)

- What areas of the functional vision assessment are or are not appropriate for administration of the protocols? Consider the student's degree of visual loss, age, cognitive abilities, and communication skills (Harley, Lawrence, Sanford & Burnett, 2000, p. 176).

Are there special concerns and warnings?

The section called [Visual Response to Light](#) on pages 38-40 in the [FVLMA Practitioner's Guidebook](#) calls for use of a penlight. Use caution with activities that involve use of a penlight or any light source. Some students may be extremely light sensitive and uncomfortable with light directed into their eyes. Bright or flickering light might trigger seizures in some students. The practitioner should always obtain information from the parent about the student's ability to tolerate bright light and flicker.

Note: Although balloons are mentioned in the [FVLMA Protocols](#) and [Practitioner's Guidebook](#) for use in [Visual Response to Objects](#), they are not included in [NewT](#), and they will be omitted from the next edition of the protocols





and the [FVLMA Practitioner's Guidebook](#). Brightly-colored balls have been substituted for the balloons in the [NewT](#) materials. If you choose to use balloons, make sure the students are not allergic to the latex in some balloons. Do not allow students to handle the balloons or put them in their mouths. It is best to think of balloons as a choking hazard.

What are special considerations to think about during preparation of the student for the assessment?

1. Always assume the student can see something (light, objects, etc.).
2. Avoid the use of words that might indicate the student is doing better if he/she sees more or if you observe improvement.
3. If a student performs poorly on the [Visual Response to Light](#) and [Visual Response to Objects](#) assessment items, do not continue with the assessment that requires use of even smaller objects.
4. Try to ensure the student is well-rested and well-fed so he or she can more easily complete the assessment.
5. It is helpful if the student has taken prescribed medications in a timely fashion before the assessment.

6. Always make sure students wear appropriately-prescribed glasses or contact lenses when you perform the assessment. Also, assess with prescribed low vision devices, if available.

Are there other APH products useful for an assessment?

Invisiboard
Visual Field/Acuity Grid
Black GrandStand
Black Aprons and Gloves
Envision I Cards
TADPOLE Cards

Are there special environmental considerations?

The TVI and the student with a visual impairment should have access to a classroom or equivalent area with adequate illumination, and is free from noise and distraction. There should be a minimum of 20 feet of distance during assessment of acuity and other activities such as reading from a chalkboard or whiteboard, or a wall clock. A table and two chairs of appropriate space and height for proper posture are also needed.

It is best to perform assessment activities under natural or incandescent light. Regular light bulbs, not fluorescent tubes, provide light that will allow students to see at





their best, and perform without unpleasant glare conditions. The fluorescent lamp in the Lighting Guide Kit provides the right light, though it may not be bright enough for all needs.

The itinerant TVI will need to make arrangements to reserve a classroom or other appropriate space prior to each assessment. Observations and assessments are also conducted in hallways, stairwells, gymnasium, outside the school building, and in other locations that are appropriate to the student's needs.

Why use FVLMA: Current Print Functioning with classroom books and worksheets?

The best way to determine how a student with a visual impairment accesses printed materials is to ask the student to read or attempt to read materials found in the classroom, in the school, and in the general environment.

Students who are visually impaired must frequently access information provided in printed format in a variety of ways, according to their visual needs, convenience, and time available. Some students may access print through the use of low vision

devices, the use of large print, or by moving closer; others must read Braille or use auditory methods to access any printed information.

TVIs should never make assumptions about a student's need for large print or Braille based on eye condition or visual acuity. Often students with the same eye condition and/or visual acuity vary greatly in the methods they must use to access printed information.

It is APH policy to provide accessible materials to students and to the adults working with them. A set of materials has been written for elementary, middle school, and high school levels. These materials are called Nigel Newt's Portfolio. Through the use of Nigel Newt's Portfolio, TVIs with visual impairments will have access to appropriate assessment materials. For example, the materials at each level include sample class handouts, dictionary entries, maps, graphs, diagrams, and labels. These materials may also be used by TVIs when they cannot easily gather the student's classroom materials.

What materials are needed but NOT included in NewT?

Prior to each assessment, the TVI should obtain samples of the student's work and





a variety of unused handouts from the classroom teacher. At least one handout should be enlarged. At assessment time, the student should bring his/her textbooks, a classroom dictionary, notebook paper, and pencil to the assessment. The charts below list the materials provided in **NewT** and other similar APH products, and the materials to be provided by the TVI. **Each student should always wear his or her prescribed glasses during the observations and assessment activities, and should also be assessed while using prescribed low vision devices for near and distant activities.**

A note about print size.

In the Nigel Newt's Portfolio there are samples of many types of documents. Some are written in one font and one print size, others are written in several fonts and several print sizes. You may find it necessary to determine the print size of specific words in either the Nigel Newt's Portfolio or the student's own documents. For this purpose an E scale ruler is included in the kit of materials. On the ruler you will see upper case Es in all sizes. To determine print size of a piece of text, simply overlay one of the Es from the ruler on top of an uppercase A, D, E, T, or W from the text sample. When the E on the ruler and the upper case letter underneath are exactly the same height, look on the same line on the ruler to determine the print size. Make a note of the sizes in the documentation you prepare.





Interviews and Observations

Orientation and Mobility Screening and Other Observations

Materials in NewT	Provided by the TVI
6-inch, and 8-inch brightly-colored ball	

Functional Vision Assessment

1. Appearance of Eyes

Materials in NewT	Provided by the TVI
None	

2. Behavioral Abnormalities

Materials in NewT	Provided by the TVI
None	

3. Visual Response to Light

Materials in NewT	Provided by the TVI
ToAD Flashlight with attachments, ToAD aqua string light	

Penlight	
Child's and adult's Ultra Lens	

4. Visual Response to Objects

Materials in NewT	Provided by the TVI
Balls, bowls and stars of varying sizes and colors (red, blue, and white)	

5. Peripheral Fields

Materials in NewT	Provided by the TVI
None	Unfamiliar furnished classroom

6. Color and Contrast Discrimination

Materials in NewT	Provided by the TVI
Broad-tipped, colored markers (red, blue, green, orange, yellow, purple, brown, and black)	White 8½ by 11" copy paper





Color card samples of dark, medium and light shades of various colors	
Set of six colored bowls with objects to drop in	

7. Light Sensitivity and Preference

Materials in NewT	Provided by the TVI
	Ordinary lamp with incandescent bulb, or compact fluorescent of 2700K

8. Developmental Visual Perception Screening

Materials in NewT	Provided by the TVI
None	Samples of student's work and/or samples of unfinished worksheets

9. Near Acuity and Discrimination

Materials in NewT	Provided by the TVI
Lea near eye chart	7" yellow pencil

Lighthouse near eye chart	2" silver paperclip
Occluder Pop Pack	3" tan rubber band
5" scissors	3" glue stick
Silver-colored flatware	Money: 2 pennies, 2 nickels, 2 dimes, 2 quarters, \$1.00 bill, \$5.00 bill
Materials in NewT	Provided by the TVI
Colored photos of familiar famous people, animals, and objects	White cloth and black cloth
Black and white line drawings of objects and animals	Crayons
Colored illustrations	
Measuring tape	

10. Distant Acuity and Discrimination

Materials in NewT	Provided by the TVI
Lea distant eye chart	7" yellow pencil





Snellen distant eye chart	Classroom textbooks
Occluder Pop Pack	Large classroom stapler
Measuring tape	Large classroom scissors
Dry erase markers	Large classroom tape dispenser
Chalk	Trash can
White board eraser	Wall clock
Chalkboard eraser	Chalkboard or whiteboard

Learning Media Assessment

1. Current Print Functioning

Materials in NewT	Provided by the TVI
Newspaper sample	Samples of classroom handouts
Magazine sample	Classroom dictionary
Catalog sample	Map in student's social studies book
Phone book sample	Graph/diagram in student's textbooks

Menu sample	
Ruler	
Food box/canned food label sample	
Clothing ad sample	

2-5. Silent or Oral Reading, Listening and Computer Monitor Access

Materials in NewT	Provided by the TVI
	Informal Reading Inventory (IRI) manual with at least four forms at each grade level. E.g., Johns IRI from TSBVI.edu or Burns & Row from Houghton Mifflin Co.
	Regular print, large print and Braille copies of word lists and reading passages from the IRI . Include the large print and Braille copies of the Johns IRI.





	Stop watch
Line marker	
	Calculator (large image, if needed)
	Closed circuit TV or video magnifier, if needed
	Access to a computer

6. Near Reading and Writing

Materials in NewT	Provided by the TVI
Bold line paper	Notebook paper used in classroom
Black marker or pen	#2 standard pencil
Font size gauge	Braille paper if student reads/writes Braille
	Braille writer
	Braille eraser
	Slate and stylus
	Signature guide

	Stop watch
	Samples of student's math computation assignments

7. Distant Reading and Writing

Materials in NewT	Provided by the TVI
Bold line paper	Access to whiteboard or chalkboard in classroom
Black marker or pen	Grade level textbook or dictionary for definitions
Dry erase markers	Appropriate writing tools as determined in Near Reading and Writing
Chalk	Preferred Braille writing device for note taking if student reads/writes Braille
Dry erase eraser	Stop watch
Chalk eraser	#2 standard pencil





Reference

Harley, R.K., Lawrence, G.A., Sanford, L. and
Burnett, R. (2000). *Visual Impairment in the
Schools*. Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas.

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Part Number: 61-357-094