# Handout Poster | Touch your Book | Voeljeboekje

Tactile Reading 2017, Dorine in ‘t Veld, Dedicon, [dorineintveld@dedicon.nl](mailto:dorineintveld@dedicon.nl).

As productmanager for learning materials for the VI at Dedicon Educational in The Netherlands I was responsible for forming the collection of Voeljeboekje (‘Touch your booklet’) in 2015: a library of 30 tactile books for young children from all over the world.

We selected books that would gear to the environment of Dutch blind children aged 2-8 and translated them. There is a website [www.voeljeboekje.nl](http://www.voeljeboekje.nl) where parents and teachers can select and loan titles. In short descriptions the most important features are described.

## Categorization

We are now looking for a proper way to categorize the books and maybe indicate the most important features and properties with icons and/or keywords. You will find a concept below and are invited to try it and send your findings to me. Do you think it is usable? And useful? What do you miss, what would you change?

## Learning line

What is still missing in this categorization, but most important from the perspective of reading tactile images, is an indication of the reading skills that are required. A ‘learning line’ is lacking. Without going into too much detail, the present situation is as follows.

For the youngest children (up to about 3 or 4 years of age) there are really wonderful multisensory books. They stimulate the fun to read, to touch and explore. Fun to touch is an important condition to learn to read braille. Fun to read is an important condition for building knowledge. The tactile images in the books stimulate both parents or teachers and children to play, ask questions and talk about the story and the images, thus allowing the child to build concepts, to learn a lot about the environment, emotions, how people behave, and so on. They also help to develop learning skills, like touching, naming forms and textures, counting or manipulating objects in the book (like a spider going under a blanket or behind a curtain). These books have mostly been conceived for blind children.

For children who are a little older, 3 or 4 up to 7 or 8 years, there are some mainstream books that have tactile images. Some offer brilliant and interesting tactile experiences for blind children of that age. Others are far too difficult and are in fact more interesting to explain to adult readers what the illustrations in the books look like. This may be a choice, but sometimes is a result of copyright issues. Some books come with with toy objects and/or cuddly toys and other 3D objects that are illustrated in the book. Some come with well-designed reading instructions for parents or teachers, to get the most out of the reading experience. Colette Pelt’s**[[1]](#endnote-1)** books form a beautiful example.

Then there are books, basically meant for independent braille reading, or to be read to a child by a braille reading adult, with tactile images, that – some more brilliant than others – need explanation (just like when a child is being read to), but the explanation is lacking.

Finally there are books, designed for blind children, to help them, while learning about a(nother) subject, understand line drawings. This is an important skill to later on read tactile diagrams and maps. Only very few however prepare them for reading tactile images that are designed to read orthogonal projection, a method that is slowly being introduced in Dutch education.

## Orthogonal projection for cognitive knowledge transfer

This method works like ‘technical drawing’ as used in industrial design: objects, animals and/or human beings are drawn as seen from above, from the side and from the front and/or back. Of course one can play with this principle and adjust the number of ‘silhouettes’ or ‘views’ that are needed, as Hoëlle Corvest explains so well in her presentation at this conference**[[2]](#endnote-2)** In the bottom row on the poster some examples are shown. You can find them on [www.tactieletekeningen.nl](http://www.tactieletekeningen.nl), where the tactile images of Discover Your World are put. My former colleague Thessa Stevenson-Doosje from Bartiméus will explain all about this.**[[3]](#endnote-3)**

Images designed according to this principle of orthogonal projection allow a blind person to build an image in his head, a precise and ‘correct’ concept that he or she even can play with, turn around, put upside down, and so on. The brilliant thing about this method is, that it works according to the same principles as exploring a threedimensional object by hand.

This works so well, that a well-trained blind person, reading a well-designed tactile image, with the proper information/guidance, doesn’t need a model or the real object for proper understanding, which of course is very convenient in many educational situations.

## Projects at Dedicon to fill the gap

There are presently two projects aiming at filling that gap. One is a project where books with stories conceived for blind children who are learning to read braille get tactile images and 3D objects that match as much as possible in size and texture. The books will be used in educational situations and the teachers will assist the children. They are high quality books, but only few copies will be made and it may be impossible to make exactly the same new copies in the future since it may prove impossible to acquire the same objects and fabrics. Ann Conefrey**[[4]](#endnote-4)** is designing the books, Gyntha Goertz**[[5]](#endnote-5)** of Royal Visio is on the team.

In the other project we add very simple line drawings to children’s books. Their main goal is to provide the fun of finding pictures in the book, but also to notify the blind reader that the main person is not a boy but a dog; and other things the sighted reader will have seen before starting to read. The drawings are printed with braille dots. No explanation is added. It will be easy and cheap to reproduce them. Again you can ask Gyntha Goertz, or my colleague Leonoor Soet.**[[6]](#endnote-6)** In Discover your world and in research done by Colette Pelt, the importance of tactile images was clearly shown. For education adding well-designed tactile images means that students are enabled to have better learning results and are allowed access to almost any subject . Besides, they provide a basis for much joy in life, because they also open the way to a much better experiencing and understanding of architecture and works of art for example. I am very happy to see many initiatives in museums in The Netherlands to make their collections more accessible. At this conference you can get to know a great example from the Van Gogh Museum, presented by Ann Blokland**[[7]](#endnote-7)**.

## Tactile book famine

As said: wonderful books have been made so far, mostly by people with a lot of experience in working with blind children. However, their didactical and pedagogical assumptions or principles are not always systematically or scientifically based and there is always a lot of discussion about what is ‘good’ and what is ‘bad’.

Personally I think this is a justifiable question, but it lacks. It should be: what is good (or bad) for whom, in what situation, for what purpose, under which conditions, why? Additionally I would say: the more books that are made the better: that will give an opportunity to experiment and learn. And it will give choice. For that, I feel, is the biggest problem we are facing: a real tactile book famine!

# Categorization of children’s books with tactile images

**Please try this out on one or more tactile books!**

## Origin of the content

* Conceived for blind children (and fitting to the Dutch culture/situation)
* ‘For all’ (mainstream books that fit well enough to the Dutch environment)
* Picture book that is very popular in The Netherlands
* …

## Conception and function of the tactile images

* Fun to touch; not necessarily gearing with the way sighted people draw images
* To explain what the original printed images look like
* To give access to what the original illustrations reveal, fitting the needs of tactile readers
* To explain concepts; i.e. explain what things look like, how they work, etc.
* …

## Materials and techniques

* Textile with real or toy objects and/or sawn (and stuffed) objects
* Board/paper/plastic with different materials glued to the pages
* Line drawings in different printing techniques without colour
* Line drawings in different printing techniques with colour
* Thermoform without ink or colour, rich texture
* Twinvision thermoform (good for readers with low vision), poor texture
* …

## 3D (toy) objects and/or cuddly toys (loose or in a box) coming with the book

* Giving a better idea of central figure(s)
* Allow to play the story
* Explaining 3d to 2D
* …

## Braille

* All text both in braille and in ink print
* Text in ink print only with a few words an in in print
* All text in braille only
* …

## Nature of the book

* Story or fairy tale
* (Nursery) rhyme or song
* Educational
  + Practicing specific touch-reading skills for the blind
  + Explains how vision or visual concepts like perspective or projection work
* …

## Age / cognitive development indication / tactile reading skills

* ………./…………………………………./……………………………

## In short: badly wanted:

1. A learning line for learning to read tacile images
2. A proper way to indicate the required level of skills reading for tactile images
3. A vocabulary to describe properly how things feel

4. Guidelines/good practices for designers per technique

5. Training for designers

6. Training for teachers (and parents and autors)

7. Solving copyright issues; the right to change visual images in order to make them comprehensible for blind readers

8. **Choice!**

o Different children and different situations require different types of tactile images

o In order to stimulate children to read, the subject or activity should interest them

## Can we realize more choice, i.e. realise more books by:

* international cooperation
* separation of braille and images
* cheaper materials and (re)production techniques where acceptable (for certain types/categories)
* production ‘on the fly’ (for certain types/categories)
* volunteers

If you have questions, want to share your opinions, or want to cooperate, please mail me at: [dorineintveld@dedicon.nl](mailto:dorineintveld@dedicon.nl)

1. <http://www.mtm.se/en/tactilereading2017/speakers/all-speakers/colette-pelt-ma-developer-at-pelt-tactile-reading-and-picture-books-plus/> [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. <http://www.mtm.se/en/tactilereading2017/speakers/all-speakers/hoelle-corvest-president-of-dugta-association/> [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. <http://www.mtm.se/en/tactilereading2017/speakers/all-speakers/thessa-stevenson-doosje-teacher-at-the-bartimeusschool/> [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. <http://www.mtm.se/en/tactilereading2017/speakers/all-speakers/ann-m.-conefrey-independent-graphic-designer/> [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. <http://www.mtm.se/en/tactilereading2017/speakers/all-speakers/gyntha-goertz-braille-specialist-at-the-royal-dutch-visio/> [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. <http://www.mtm.se/en/tactilereading2017/speakers/all-speakers/leonoor-soet-educational-editor-and-mieke-urff-educationalist-special-and-inclusive-ed.-at-dedicon-educational/> [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. <http://www.mtm.se/en/tactilereading2017/speakers/all-speakers/ann-blokland-senior-curator-of-education-at-the-van-gogh-museum/> [↑](#endnote-ref-7)