



MTO 15.3 Examples: Pacun, Recommendations for Visually Impaired Students

(Note: audio, video, and other interactive examples are only available online)

<http://www.mtosmt.org/issues/mto.09.15.3/mto.09.15.3.pacun.php>

Figure 1. Some Things to Put in Place

Basics:

- a. Allow time for special:
 - i. Handouts and examples in alternative formats
 - ii. Individual instruction
 - iii. Classroom management
 - b. Find readers and/or transcribers (possibly work-study students)
- c. Visit Academic Support Services for help with scores & texts in Braille or alternative formats
- d. Request support from Dean or Chair

Physical Plant and Scheduling (daily needs):

- a. Desks: flat, and large enough for a laptop and educational aids
- b. Student's Schedule: "what's easiest" (especially for first year students)
- c. Pre-enroll student to give instructor additional preparation time

Classroom issues:

- a. Student volunteers
- b. Textbooks: locate alternative format(s); or an alternative textbook if the assigned text is not available
- c. Envision in advance:
 - i. Testing: time, format
 - ii. Notation-based skills/activities such as dictation
 - iii. What happens when x isn't available?
- d. Envision how challenges may lead to changes in instruction & curriculum
- e. Be sure to say what you are doing as you are doing it

Technology:

- a. Compatibility between Academic support, professor, and student software
 - b. Test runs: does it really work the way you need it to?
 - c. Worst-case scenarios: old-school tech—"Slate and Stylus"

Photo 1.



Figure 2. Super Quick Braille Primer

Basics:

Six-dot cells: top four for pitch, bottom two for rhythm. Key signature and meter are shown at top of score.

Note equivalencies for rhythms: $1=1/16$; $1/2=32^{\text{nd}}$, $1/4=64^{\text{th}}$, $1/8=128^{\text{th}}$. Gap=barline.

C	D	E	F	G	A	B
wh. Or 16^{th}	$1/2$ or 32^{nd}	$1/4$ or 64^{th}	$1/8^{\text{th}}$ or 128^{th}	$1/4$ or 64^{th}	$1/2$ or 32^{nd}	wh or 16^{th}

Additional cells necessary for (# of cells in parentheses):

Accidentals (2), Ties (2), Dynamics (2-4), Articulation (1-3), Slurs (2-3), Ornaments (1-2+)

Repeat signs (cells) used whenever possible (measure level); signs also available for diatonic transposition of motives and measures.

Multiple-part formats:

Two or more separate lines: in rough alignment, or unaligned.

Keyboard-style chords: shown by diatonic intervals **above** the bass (i.e. piano left hand), but **below** the melody (i.e. piano right hand)—all from given pitch.

“In-accord” format for soprano/alto and tenor/bass format (SA/TB): here the A follows the S; the student must assemble the measure in their head or at the keyboard.

Specialized symbols available for all manner of keyboard (stemming) and string formats.

Large-scale format:

Music is best parsed into small segments (8-16 measures for single lines, 4-8 measures for multiple parts—all depending upon the skill and ability of the reader/musician).

Caveats:

Braille notation is distinct from Braille writing: “A[4]” ≠ “A” [tree ...].

Older scores may contain different cells and use unconventional formats.

A linear and additive system

Braille Literacy: owing to recent computer technology, as few as 20% of young blind music students now read Braille notation with any degree of fluency.