Protactile Principles

by

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Abstract

This document outlines core principles of protactile communication. It also provides some background about how these principles were developed and how they are intended to be used as an educational resource. Videos and text descriptions are provided to illustrate proper application of the principles.

Introduction

Protactile philosophy has grown out of the realization that DeafBlind people's intuitions about tactile communication are stronger than the intuitions sighted people have. This realization has changed the way we communicate with each other, the way we work with interpreters, and more generally, the way we live. We call this way of life and the principles and practices that shape it, "protactile". Protactile has been growing slowly in our community and as that has happened, we have developed a framework for sharing that knowledge.

This framework has come out of a decade of experience as teachers. Together, we have led workshops, trainings, and classes in many different venues including conferences, community sponsored events, and university settings. This document is a concise summary of the knowledge we have developed. It is intended to be used by DeafBlind teachers to guide their students' learning. We also hope that it will be useful to parents of DeafBlind children, interpreters, orientation & mobility instructors, allies, and friends. To learn protactile, you have to actively participate in a protactile community and seek out DeafBlind, protactile teachers; there is no substitute for community immersion and hands-on experience. However, we hope that this document will help you explore and share the protactile world.

Background

Protactile communication has grown most quickly in response to specific, practical problems. In January of 2007, we were both working at the DeafBlind Service Center (DBSC) in Seattle, Washington with another DeafBlind woman, Jackie Engler. We needed to meet regularly as a group but at that time we didn't have any way of

communicating with each other without interpreters. We had to meet in groups of two and then share information afterwards but that was inefficient. We wanted to meet as a group and communicate directly with one another. Another problem we wanted to address had to do with communication in public areas at DBSC. There were hearing people who knew sign language who worked in the same building and they had a habit of coming into DBSC's space and talking without signing. We felt like we needed to establish ground rules for people coming into our space to make sure it was inclusive for us and also for the DeafBlind clients who came to DBSC. The nearby community college had an interpreter training program and on the walls in their area of the building, they put up signs declaring that space an "ASL Zone". We wanted something similar to that. We came up with the idea of a "PT Zone" as a way of talking about an environment where communication felt natural and comfortable for us. We thought: *When people come into our space, they should use PT in the same way that people coming into Deaf spaces should use ASL.*

Around that time, we also started talking to each other about which interpreters we liked and which ones we didn't like. We realized we had a lot of the same frustrations with interpreters in general. We both had wondered if it was us or the interpreters. In talking to each other, we realized that the interpreters didn't know how to communicate with people using touch. Meanwhile, we were having three-person meetings more often with Jackie at DBSC. We were all DeafBlind and we were coming up with our own ways of communicating, which were so much better. So we realized that we needed to start teaching each other and sighted people, rather than expecting sighted people to take the lead.

DeafBlind people needed to become teachers and we needed to follow our intuitions about what communication should be like. We had a "community class" where DeafBlind people were supposed to be able to learn new things, share information, socialize, and so-on, but it was run by sighted people in sighted ways; all of the DeafBlind people had interpreters. We wanted to change things so that DeafBlind people decided how information was exchanged. We wanted to do things the DeafBlind way. aj was the Education Coordinator at DBSC, and she started setting up classes and workshops led by DeafBlind people. Ken Sting, a DeafBlind man taught classes to DeafBlind people with either one or two DeafBlind students in the class. aj supported him by encouraging people to use more touch. For example, if two DeafBlind people were sitting next to each other, she would put one person's hand on the other person's leg for backchanneling. If they forgot later and their hand slipped off of the other person's leg, she would put it back. People affectionately started calling her the "PT Police".

Later other DeafBlind people offered classes. For example, a DeafBlind man named Robert J. Steppler (otherwise known as RJS) taught a knitting class to DeafBlind students. He also taught a cooking class with another DeafBlind teacher, Jeremy Sasser. No interpreters were provided, so they had to figure out how communicate directly with one another. One of the strategies they used was to teach two students at a time. Each teacher worked with one student on a skill and then they switched partners and the other teacher worked with them on another skill. Next, the teachers would talk to each other and the students would discuss what they had learned. So that is an example of how PT developed. It happened organically. We didn't "invent" PT. What we did was use our positions at the DeafBlind Service Center to set up programs and events that would put DeafBlind people in a teaching role more often. And then when practices started really changing, we created a politics around it. We labeled things, and tried to document what was happening.

For example, in 2007, we taught a class to a group of DB people. When we got there, we naturally went up to each member of the class and talked with them and introduced ourselves. But a lot of DeafBlind people were used to the sighted way so they responded by saying things like: "Why are you coming up to us? We have interpreters here". That kind of experience—where people were surprised by what we were doing—made us realize that we were really operating according to new rules. We weren't doing things the sighted way anymore, and we wanted to teach other people how to think like that because we thought it would benefit our community to do things the DeafBlind way.

Out of that history, PT developed organically in the whole community. What was our special role? We pushed for it politically, and we gave labels and names to the practices that were developing. We also set standards and developed principles that could be used to teach people how to communicate the DeafBlind way. We want to emphasize that we did not invent PT like a person would "invent" cued speech or some "interpreting technique". We pointed out to DB people that their intuitions were more right than they realized, and we encouraged that in them. We tried to give them permission as the Director and the Education Coordinator of DBSC. Then we named things that we and other DeafBlind people were doing and created a political discourse so that people had a way of talking about it and fighting for it. PT is still developing, but over the past 10 years, some principles have proven useful for teaching PT to people. The goal of this document is to provide an outline of the principles we have developed.

The Principles

1. Contact Space

ASL is very dependent on space— anyone who has taught ASL is familiar with the problem of teaching students to take full advantage of the space around them to express meanings. For DeafBlind people, the space around the body, or what we call "air space" is not effective. Instead, the relevant space is on the surface of the listener's body. That space on the listener's body is what we call "contact space". Signing in contact space is an overarching principle, which all other principles follow from.

> ***First Principle****: any time space is used, make sure it is contact space, not air space.*

The following (1a-1d) are PT skills where contact space is particularly important. These include "reference markers", "role shift", "point to point", and "emphasis and emotion".

1a. Reference Markers

If you are talking about people or things, you shouldn't use their name every time you say something new about them. Instead, you should establish a point in contact space, and refer back to that. We call these points in contact space "reference markers". Reference markers always use contact space, not air space. The following movie includes an example of how to use PT reference markers.

PT Reference Marker Movie Here: [https://youtu.be/rK9XQRN_YQ8]

In contrast, the next example violates the first PT principle by using air space instead of contact space.

ASL Reference Marker Movie Here: [https://youtu.be/xwZ4uLDQuKU]

1b. Role Shift

Reference markers are just one example of how contact space can be used. Another example is when you are talking about a conversation that other people had, and you want to quote one and then the other. That is what is known as "role shift" in visual signed languages. In ASL, you do that with eye gaze, shifts in body position, etc. In PT, those relationships between people in the story have to be expressed in contact space.

PT Role Shift Movie Here: [https://youtu.be/NoEb0VnFdT4].

In contrast, in this next example, the signer is using ASL. The first principle is violated and the message is therefore, confusing.

ASL Role Shift Movie Here: [https://youtu.be/sEDVM-WXOLo]

1c. Point to Point

In general, you have to touch a location in contact space every time you use a reference marker. However, if many relationships are expressed, contact may not be necessary in every case. In these cases, though, the first and last point must be anchored in contact space. We think of this a sub-principle within "Contact Space" and we call it "Point to Point".

> ***Sub-principle:*** *wherever a spatial relationship between two or more things is expressed, the first and last thing must be anchored in contact space.*

For example, in the video below, the signer is describing a beard, which was recently trimmed. While there are many locations involved, not all of them make contact with the signer's body. However, the first and last locations do. This is an example of the point-to-point sub-principle being correctly applied.

PT Point to Point Movie Here: [https://youtu.be/Wi-u-G8QBjo]

In the next video example, ASL is used and the point-to-point sub-principle is not applied.

ASL Point to Point Movie Here: [https://youtu.be/mJhEXKGox3E]

1d. Emphasis & Emotion

Contact space is also important for things that are often expressed on the face among visual people, such as emphasis and emotion. Some people have the intuition that to emphasize a sign, you should sign it bigger rather than using contact space. The problem with that is that you move the listener's arms in uncomfortable ways. Instead, contact space should be thought of as a resource for expressing emotion, emphasis, and other things that would be expressed by the face in ASL. There are two ways of doing this. First, you can change conventionalized mouth gestures or other facial expressions to tactile representations of them. For example, you can sign the visual

ASL sign for YAWNING on the leg of the person you are signing to. The second option is to use a purely tactile expression. For example, if your hand goes limp on the leg of the person you are talking to, that expresses the feeling of being tired or disinterested like a yawn does for sighted people. If someone is talking to you about something scary, you can grip their legs to express heightened attention. These expressions are not filtered through ASL. They are direct expressions of tactile emotion and attention. Either approach is fine, but whichever you choose, be sure to use contact space, not air space.

In general, tone of voice and facial expression are not set symbols with specific meanings for visual people. The same is true for direct, tactile expressions of emotion. They are intuitive expressions, which vary from person to person according to their specific personality traits. Developing intuitions for how to express yourself through touch is a matter of interacting on a regular basis with protactile people; it cannot be learned through memorization.

In the video example below, the signer is telling a short story about accidentally running into someone. First, he hits the body of the listener with force to express the force of the impact. Next, he drags the tips of his fingers down the listener's leg, gripping as he goes. Then he slaps her leg and finally, grips her leg with his whole hand. This kind of touch expresses intensity and a negative orientation to the event in the story. However, if a different person had told the same story, they may have expressed the same emotions in a different way. The gripping, dragging, and slapping are not symbols that have set meanings. They are intuitive ways of sharing feelings through touch, just like widening your eyes or cringing are intuitive ways of sharing feelings visually.

PT Emphasis & Emotion Movie Here: [https://youtu.be/V9d0In6YrtU]

Notice in this next example how the signer does not express emphasis and emotion through touch. This is because they are using ASL to communicate. This approach violates the first principle because emphasis and emotion are being expressed, but not in contact space.

ASL Emphasis & Emotion Movie Here: [https://youtu.be/tvRNRj3pq34]

Another example of PT emphasis & emotion is routine backchanneling (or "BC"). When people are using spoken languages, the listener nods or says, "uh huh" to show that they are listening. Deaf people give visual cues that they are listening such as nodding. PT people tap their hand on the leg or arm of the person who is talking to give tactile feedback. This is not an intense expression of emotion like the example above. Instead,

it simply shows that you are paying attention. If you don't give this kind of feedback, the person will feel that there is something wrong, that you are not interested, that you don't understand, or that you are not there.

Interpreters can use a modified version of PT backchanneling. We call this "back back channeling" or "BBC". This is particularly useful when the protactile person is presenting to a visual audience or is in a large visually oriented group setting. BBC is useful for staying in touch with the audience or group to know if they are understanding, if they are bored, if they are enthusiastic, etc. BBC also incorporates reference markers to keep track of who is saying what. This is done by establishing a map on the back of the presenter with locations that correspond to the places where specific people are sitting. There is no single vocabulary or list of symbols that interpreters use this way. They communicate intuitively, following protactile principles to the greatest degree possible in a visual environment.

Movies with further discussion of PT backchanneling:

[http://www.protactile.org/2016/03/pro-tactile-vlog-1.html,
http://www.protactile.org/2016/03/english-transcription-of-aj-and-jelicas.html]

2. Reciprocity

Protactile communication is reciprocal, which means that everyone communicating with one another communicates in the same way. So regardless of vision status, if your communication partner uses touch to communicate, you should use touch to communicate too. Think of Deaf environments: We don't walk into a Deaf school and try to determine how much someone can hear before we start signing to them. Everyone communicates visually by default. Protactile environments work the same way. Tactile communication is the norm. Before the protactile movement it was standard for sighted and sight-reliant people to receive signs visually, while their DeafBlind communication partners received signs through touch. But that kind of arrangement is not *reciprocal* and it leads to an environment where vision is privileged.

> ***Second Principle**: regardless of how much you see, always communicate reciprocally through touch.*

3. Protactile Perspective

In order to understand protactile classifiers, demonstrations, and mapping, you need to internalize a *protactile perspective.* This means working together to co-create signs that are easy to feel and also describing things in ways that reflect protactile experience.

3a. Classifiers

Teachers of ASL tend to emphasize the importance of "using space" with classifiers. What they mean is *air space*. In PT, we also emphasize the importance of using space, but we mean *contact-space*. Classifiers are produced in contact space. This can be done in two different ways. First, the signer can produce the classifier on the leg or arm of the listener. Second, the signer can prompt the listener to make a classifier handshape with their hand (rather than using the signer's) and then elaborate from there. For example, in the next video, the signer taps the listener's hand. Then she makes a "5" handshape. The listener copies this handshape. The signer then shows a small animal running up the arm and hand of the listener.

PT Classifiers Movie Here: [https://youtu.be/A6mzUVNEHdA]

In the next video, you can see how the ASL version is different than the PT version. In the ASL version, the listener is not involved in producing the sign. They are just listening to the signer.

ASL Classifiers Movie Here: [https://youtu.be/RmhIvugGvFw]

In contrast to ASL, the signer and the listener are working together to co-create the classifier construction. In addition, the signer and listener have to make sure that the classifiers they use are easy to feel. Here, the "5" handshape used to represent a tree is easy to feel. However, other handshapes are more difficult to feel, for example, the "3" handshape that represents vehicles in ASL. This handshape is hard to feel and variations on meanings are hard to express. For these reasons, it is better to use a flat, closed hand (palm down). That way, you can show that a vehicle is large by pressing your palm down harder on the body of the listener as you trace a path through contact space. Conversely, you can show the size of a small vehicle by pressing down more lightly, or using a single finger instead of the whole palm.

Finally, where possible, you should incorporate a *protactile perspective* when you use protactile classifiers. In other words, instead of describing the size of a vehicle in terms

of how big it looks, describe its size in terms of how heavy it is, or how much friction it generates on the road. These are things that reflect protactile experience more directly.

> ***Third Principle****: Take a protactile perspective; this means working together to co-create signs that are easy to feel and also describing things in ways that reflect protactile experience.*

3b. Demonstration

In order to demonstrate how something is done, for example, if you want to show someone how to change a tire, sew a handbag, or use a braille display, you should use PT Demonstration. In the movie below, the signer is explaining how to make pancakes. First, he says, “Do you want me to show you how to make pancakes?” Then, when the listener nods yes, he taps her hand to tell her he wants to use her hand. When she offers her hand, he turns her palm so it is facing up and “pours” the batter onto her hand, which represents the pan. He instructs her to wait until she feels little bubbles. He expresses that by tapping in small, bubbly ways on her palm.

PT Demonstration Movie Here: [https://youtu.be/ysc3Llc2aJc]

PT Demonstrations also require the signer and the listener to work together to create the sign. In contrast, notice in the following video how the signer does not recruit the listener’s body— they are not working together. Instead, the signer is creating the signs and the listener is simply listening.

ASL Demonstration Movie Here: [https://youtu.be/h55OyOS6qss]

In this case, bubbles are chosen as the most important part of the demonstration in both PT and ASL. This is possible because bubbles in a pan can be felt as well as seen. In PT demonstrations, you must include information about what you can feel.

3c. Mapping

When you give directions or tell someone where something or someone is, you should always use protactile mapping. Visual people point in air space, but this is not protactile for two reasons. First, the pointing signs themselves are hard to understand, and second, protactile people have a different way of experiencing spatial relationships in the world.

Suppose you are giving directions to someone in the same place where you are communicating, for example, they are a visitor in your home and they want to know where the kitchen is. You start by finding a physical thing nearby that will not move, such as a table, a railing, or a door. That will function as a landmark for the starting place. Once the listener has touched the starting place, explain where to go by describing additional landmarks on the body of the listener in relation to the starting place. However, if you are giving directions that involve a place you are not in, the process is slightly different.

In the video below, the signer is talking about his home, which is elsewhere. Therefore, he does not begin with a landmark in the space where the signer and listener are sitting. Instead, he starts with the front door of his home and then provides several tactile landmarks to talk about where the different rooms in his home are located. For example, he says, “You will feel a coffee table and that is how you know to turn right”. He does not use a visual landmark, for example-- “You will see a painting, that is how you know to turn right.”

PT Mapping Movie Here: [https://youtu.be/pF4T8I017QY]

For PT mapping, always use contact space instead of air space. In addition, mapping requires the signer to think about how (other) protactile people navigate. This means that you should not use visual landmarks or trace pathways that align with sight-lines. Instead, use landmarks that can be found easily through touch and trace pathways that will feel intuitive to someone using touch to navigate. This is what we mean by taking a *protactile perspective*.

4. SASS

Visual signed languages have constructions known as “Size and Shape Specifiers” or “SASSes”. PT has these as well, but they follow PT Principles instead of visual principles. For example, in the following video, the signer is describing a fish that she has recently caught. She describes the size of the fish and the appearance of its scales (i.e. the “shape”). First, she says, “I went fishing yesterday and I caught something really big.” Then she specifies the size on the leg of the listener. Then *in relation to that same space,* she says that there are rainbow, wavy lines on the side of the fish’s body.

PT SASS Movie Here: [https://youtu.be/TmRvIvhA5f4]

Like classifiers and demonstrations, PT SASSes always use contact space not air space, as well as taking a protactile perspective when possible. In addition, there is a

special requirement for SASSes: when you describe more than one aspect of something— for example a painting of a flower in a larger painting of a country scene or the shape of a placemat on a table--that description should be placed in contact space *in relation to* the larger object. This provides important context for the description. Notice in the movie above that the signer first establishes the size of the fish in contact space on the leg of the listener. Then, keeping that space "active", she keeps her left hand on the listener's leg and draws the rainbow pattern within that space.

> ***Fourth Principle****: when you describe qualities such as sizes and shapes, each description should be arranged in contact space in relation to the larger thing.*

In the following movie, you can see that the signer violates several PT principles. The signer is using air space, not contact space. This makes it impossible to understand the descriptions of size and shape. In addition, the relationships between these different aspects of the fish as a whole are not clear (i.e. the fourth principle is also violated).

ASL SASS Movie Here: [https://youtu.be/3fXON-93cKI]

5. Exceptions

In some cases, the first principle is in conflict with cultural norms in the DeafBlind community and it can also cause physical problems. For example, if you want to talk about eyes or teeth or other body parts, these may not be appropriate or safe areas to touch on the other person's body. So instead of doing that, we have developed conventions for these exceptional situations.

> ***Fifth Principle****: if the first principle is in conflict with cultural norms or is physically unsafe to apply, establish alternative conventions.*

This principle became important for us in the context of medical interpreting. If you want to explain eye surgery, the first principle would require you to touch the listener's eye, and describe surgical actions on their eye. Clearly, that is not feasible. So instead of doing that, we established a multi-step process:

1. Identify the action on the signer's body using a single sign
2. Identify the location on the listener's body using minimal contact
3. Establish a corresponding location in neutral contact space, such as the palm or thigh of the listener, and perform the entire action

For example, in the movie below, the signer is explaining the procedure for heart surgery. She traces a line diagonally on her own body to show where the incision will be. Next, applying the point-to-point principle, she touches the chest of the listener at the first and last location on the same diagonal line. This gives the listener more precise information about where the incision will be. Next, the signer transfers this information to the thigh of the listener, which is a more neutral space. She then shows how the procedure will unfold, including how the incision will be closed and that it will be monitored for infection.

PT Exceptions Movie here: [https://youtu.be/iY5pZExuwIM]

This same approach can be used when talking about anything concerning the eye, the mouth, or other areas of the body which cannot be touched for cultural or physical reasons. While these particular conventions arose in the context of medical interpreting, the principle applies broadly to protactile communication.

6. Information Source

When visual people interpret what other people say, they don't rely 100% on what was said. They also draw on background information or contextual information. For example: two protactile people are at the park and one of them says, "Bob's on his way". Where did they get this information? Did Bob just text to say he was on his way? Does she smell Bob's specific laundry soap or the smell of his dog? Does she knows from a previous conversation that he was planning to come to the park at this time, but can't be sure if he is really coming? Sighted people might infer these things by looking around. In protactile communities, it is appropriate to include more explicit contextual information. This can be done in two different ways. First, you can use more tactile contact. For example, if you just received a text stating that Bob is on his way, you can use the hand that is in contact with the listener to handle your phone, so that information is accessible. Otherwise, you can tell them where the information came from, explicitly. For example, "I smell Bob walking toward us now." Avoid providing information without any context.

> ***Sixth principle**: When sharing information, be sure to include the source of the information.*

In the following example, two DeafBlind people are sitting together. The signer gets an alert on her phone. She brings the listener's hand with her as she removes the phone from her pocket and looks at it. She then tells the listener that she has received a notification about the weather: it will be 80 degrees today.

PT Information Source Movie Here: [https://youtu.be/oW_gMiKPK-Y]

This is considered an application of the sixth principle because the signer moves her hand to her phone in a way that lets the listener know where she is getting information about the weather from. In the next example, the signer violates the sixth principle. She tells the listener to wait and then using the hand that is not accessible to the listener, she removes the phone from her pocket and looks at it. Then she tells the listener, “It will be hot today. 80 degrees”.

ASL Information Source Movie here: [https://youtu.be/8nt_bzqzVis]

Notice that the listener asks the signer how she knew and when she tells him, he is irritated with her. The signer ends up apologizing. This is a realistic example of what will happen if you are communicating with a protactile person and you fail to apply the sixth principle: W*hen sharing information, be sure to include the source of the information.*

7. Tactile Imagery:

As Deaf children, we were drawn to visual imagery in ASL stories— transported into the vivid details of the worlds created for us. As DeafBlind adults, we still carry those values within us, but ASL doesn’t evoke those same feelings for us anymore. When you are perceiving a visual language through touch, the precision, beauty, and emotion are stripped away; the imagery is lost. With PT, we get all of that back. For example, I remember one time we took a trip to Snoqualmie Falls. We were really excited about going to the river there, but when we arrived, we found sad little trickle of water winding its way through the river basin. Later, when we told people about it in PT, we could express not only the specific details about the size and movement of the water, but also the way it felt to be looking at it. We did this by setting up the story with anticipation and excitement and then moving one finger slowly down the leg of the listener in a way that *felt* disappointing.

To watch a story and feel disappointed is completely different than being told that someone else is disappointed. A good ASL story evokes feeling because you can see the emotions on the face of the storyteller and you can envision yourself in the scene they are creating for you. If you try to access an ASL story through an interpreter, all of that immediacy is lost. You just feel a hand moving around in air space, making sentences: *Now the person’s face looks shocked. Now the person’s face looks scared.* In air space we are told things about what is happening for other people, but nothing happens for us.

For example, if you were walking in the surf at the ocean and a wave came and pulled you out away from the beach, you would be terrified. In telling the story to someone else, you would want them to feel that sense of fear. It would be impossible to communicate that using ASL, but using tactile imagery it would be easy. There is a more general principle at play here. Protactile communication is not as a way of explaining things to DeafBlind people that they can't see. It is a way of sharing first hand experiences in ways that feel intense and immediate.

> ***Seventh Principle****: PTASL should not be thought of as a way to communicate information to DeafBlind people. It is a means of sharing experiences.*

In the following movie, we can see a connection between two people. It is not that one person is communicating information to the other. Instead, they are sharing an intense experience. The signer is telling a story about a rip current at the beach. He taps on the hand of the listener and she raises her hand up. The signer uses the listener's hand and arm to show a wave moving up and then quickly pulling outward away from her body, like a rip current.

Tactile Imagery Movie Here: [https://youtu.be/uuTD-_6dENI]

Tactile imagery allows the listener to imagine what it would be like to be pulled away from shore by a rip current. Notice that the listener gasps, affected directly by this tactile imagery. A visual language would not evoke feeling in this way. Tactile imagery is not just a way to tell a DeafBlind person that something happened. It connects people living in a shared world.

Conclusion

In this document, we have outlined the core principles of protactile communication, as well as providing some background about how the principles were developed. Remember: there is no substitute for immersion in a protactile community, but we hope this document will be of use to DeafBlind teachers as they guide their students' learning. We also hope that it will be useful to parents of DeafBlind children, interpreters, orientation & mobility instructors, allies, and friends. On the last page, we have included a summary outline of the PT Principles defined above for quick reference in educational contexts.

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PT Principles Summary Outline

1. Contact Space: any time space is used, make sure it is contact space, not air space.

1a. Reference Markers
1b. Role Shift
1c. Point to Point
1d. Emphasis & Emotion
- BC (“backchanneling)
- BBC(back backchanneling)

2. **Reciprocity**: Regardless of how much you see, always communicate reciprocally through touch.

3. Protactile Perspective: Take a protactile perspective; this means working together to co-create signs that are easy to feel and also describing things in ways that reflect protactile experience.

3a. Classifiers
3b. Demonstration
3c. Mapping

4. **SASS**: When you describe qualities such as sizes and shapes, each description should be arranged in contact space in relation to the larger thing.

5. Exceptions: If the first principle is in conflict with cultural norms or is physically unsafe to apply, establish alternative conventions.

6. Information Source: When sharing information, be sure to include the source of the information.

7. Tactile Imagery: PTASL should not be thought of as a way to communicate information to DeafBlind people. It is a means of sharing experiences.