

The Bulletin

Number 2, Friday 17 February, 2023

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PD events

The [2023 Professional Learning Calendar](#) is now available for download on our website. See below for links to the events in Term 1 2023.

Tuesday February 21 [Inclusion of students who have low vision](#)

Providing practical strategies for classroom teachers and ES staff to promote inclusion and achievement for their students who have low vision.

Tuesday March 7 [Inclusion of students with vision impairments and additional disabilities](#)

Providing practical strategies that teachers and ES staff can use to support students with a vision impairment and additional disabilities.

On Demand PL

All of our professional learning workshops are now available on demand where participants can access all the videos and resources at a time that suits them. You can find links through the [On Demand page](#), under Professional Learning, on our website.

Message from the Manager

Source: Kim Foley, Manager, SVRC

PROTECT Child Safety Standards

New Child Safe Standards were introduced on 1 July 2022. Guidance and resources have been developed to support schools transition to the new Standards. The department's PROTECT website contains guidance to support schools to implement the new Child Safe Standards including a [new Child Safe Standards Action List](#) for government schools.

SVRC PROTECT Child Safety Standards policies have been reviewed for compliance with the Department of Education. If your child attends Support Skills or DOT Power, please familiarise yourself with our policies on our website, they're under About, Policies. It is important that SVRC is a safe environment for teaching, learning and working for all students, staff, and parents. All SVRC staff will attend PROTECT Child Safety Standards professional learning sessions as part of these designated compliance standards. If you would like a copy of SVRC policies in print or braille please place a request with our administration office.

SVRC-VTS-Vision Community of Practice

On Monday, our first Visiting Teacher – Vision Community of Practice session was held, and we had the privilege of listening to the highly distinguished Professor Cay Holbrook. Cay Holbrook began her career as a teacher of students with visual impairments (TVI) during her undergraduate pre-service teacher training program at Florida State University. She continued to teach students in Georgia, South Carolina and Florida while she completed her masters and doctoral degrees, also at Florida State University. Her doctoral dissertation focused on the perceived role of the teacher of students with visual impairments and she has remained interested in questions regarding service delivery and educational supports and curriculum for this population. Cay moved to Vancouver in 1998, British Columbia to join the faculty at The University of British Columbia where she is now.

Along with her dear friend and professional collaborator, Alan Koenig, Cay worked on defining a process to determine learning and literacy media for students with visual impairments through a data-driven collaborative team approach called *Learning Media Assessment*. This process resulted in one of twelve textbooks that have been written or edited by Cay and her collaborators. These textbooks include, two editions of *Children with Visual Impairments: A Parents' Guide*, two editions of *Foundations of Education for Students with Visual Impairments (Volumes 1 and 2)*, and support for teachers' learning and using braille, *The Braille Enthusiasts' Dictionary* (EBAE and UEB versions), and *Ashcroft's Programmed Instruction in Braille* (EBAE and UEB versions).

Cay's presentation focussed on the "twelve things she knows" about effective development of braille literacy skills and the how and when for developing dual medium skills. Her delivery was passionate, thought provoking and extremely knowledgeable on best practice strategies and skills to support our students who are blind or have low vision.

Support Skills Program

Support Skills Program was held last Friday with many new students joining us for the first time. It was wonderful to watch the students grow in confidence and independence in navigating an individual timetable, orientating themselves around the building to different learning spaces and

exploring the school playground areas. During the afternoon sessions, Blind Sports and Recreation volunteers introduced blind tennis to staff and students and lots of fun was had by all.

Teaching young children to use optical magnifiers

Source: Marion Blaze

Magnifiers are very handy tools for our students to have in their pockets. They are small, portable, inexpensive and can be on hand when the need arises. If your student has skills with a magnifier, they don't need to wait for something to be photo-enlarged. This is a handy skill for the future.

Like glasses, they should be prescribed by a low vision specialist. This will ensure they are the right fit for the student's vision, especially if the student wears glasses. It's useful to know if the magnifier is prescribed to be used while wearing glasses, and with which eye.

Some things to know about magnifiers:

- The bigger the magnifier, the less it magnifies
- The child must look through the centre of the magnifier. Beyond the central area, the image will be distorted.
- Magnifiers reduce the visual field. To maximise the visual field or span when looking through a magnifier, the eye needs to be close to the magnifier. Don't forget, young eyes can focus very close.
- Some magnifiers are meant to sit on the page, such as dome or stand magnifiers, whereas "hand-held" magnifiers are held above the page and focus can be adjusted by moving it closer or further from the page.
- Because a child's eye needs to be close to the magnifier, it might be helpful for them to use a reading stand or tilt board, so they are not bending over their work.
- Magnifiers get scratched and always in the very centre which is the part one looks through. It's handy to keep them in a velvet pouch.

Try your student's magnifier to better understand how it works and the challenges your student might face:

1. Time your own reading of a passage and calculate words-per-minute rate.
 - a. Time again, using the magnifier – compare the times for each mode of reading.
 - b. With practice your student should be able to increase their reading speed using the magnifier, but there might still be visual fatigue.
2. Compare "functional fields" or "perceptual spans" by counting the number of words or letters that you can see clearly at one time with your eye and then with the magnifier.
3. Check the motion effects caused by using the magnifier when you scan.
4. Check the ease with which you can locate the next line of print.
5. Try using the magnifier whilst the print is on a reading stand.
6. Look up a word in a dictionary using only the magnifier.
7. Read the recommended dosage on a bottle of tablets.

Activities using a magnifier

With Preschool/Primary school students

1. Observe interesting objects: rocks, shells, fossils, feathers, money, fingerprints, leaves, flowers, own fingernails, and so on.
2. Use a magnifier to identify stamps and find out the country of origin in an atlas or on a globe.
3. Use a game board approach to move forward when cut-out pictures on individual cards are identified.
4. Find hidden pictures within pictures. Where's Wally?
5. Read recipes or cooking instructions on food boxes.
6. Life skills reading activities: include reading the following: recipes, menus, newspapers, CD covers, food cans, maps, charts, graphs, bus schedules.
7. Read Lego assembly instruction sheets to Lego toys.
8. Place magnifier on mirror to observe eyes and open up discussion about the child's vision.

With Secondary school students

1. Scan spreadsheet printouts for specific information.
2. Read newspaper classified sections, sports pages, and stock reports to search for specific information.
3. Locate information about food ingredients on grocery labels. Some teenagers are interested in the nutritional or calory information.
4. Read bus and train schedules to plan routes to and from school or a work experience placement.
5. Make a chart to compare reading speeds using magnifier with different sized print.
6. Read instruction manuals for computers or new gadgets.
7. Use a magnifier to locate geographic areas on a map mentioned in current news broadcasts.

Here ae some links to further activity ideas:

[Family Connect: Fun Activities for Teaching Magnifier Use](#)

[Paths to Literacy: Magnifier Activity for Pre-Readers](#)

New Etext to the Library

For the Younger Reader: The Undys

Written by Michael Wagner, author of the Maxx Rumble books, "The Undys" is a series of six books for readers who are beginning to enjoy early chapter books.

Centred around the two main characters, Phil a single-father (shown left) and his son Josh (right), there is plenty of action and slapstick humour that may engage the reluctant reader!



From kids-bookreview.com:

"Phil may be a bumbling fool at times, but what more could a young lad need? Someone to laugh with, someone to play with, someone to compete with – because competition is the backbone of the Undy relationship.

It's all about the game with this pair – from Gut Barging and Toe-Wrestling to Run 'Til You Stop, each is intent on outdoing the other."



I must confess, these books did make me smirk!

Books in "The Undys":

1. *Let the Games Begin*
2. *Let's Get Physical* (if you have a print copy of this book, please send it along!)
3. *Itching for Action*
4. *Wet and Wild*
5. *One Wacky Week*
6. *On the Move*

For the Older Reader: *Dry* by Neal Shusterman and Jarrod Shusterman

There has been a drought in California for quite a while, but then the taps actually run dry ...

From thenerddaily.com: "*Dry* is an action movie trapped inside the pages of a book. A story that will take your breath away to such a point that you will find yourself gasping for air in the most critical points of the characters' journey. The pace of this novel is incredibly dynamic, moving from scene to scene with precision and ease. Thanks to the different snapshot fragments they include between chapters to show the consequences of the water crisis from as many perspectives as possible, the narrative structure perfectly mimics the buildup of takes that conform a cinematic production. At the same time, for a novel that is basically plot-driven, the main characters are fully developed, each with a set of traits and skills that complement those of the others at the most necessary times.



Action-packed with the raw and desperate tone of a world in shambles, the California in the brink of apocalypse that Neal and Jarrod Shusterman create is nothing but worryingly believable."

Enabling Accessibility for Screen Readers in Google Docs

When using Google Docs with a screen reader the user needs to initially enable screen reader support.

Use a screen reader

If you already use screen reader software on your computer, such as ChromeVox, NVDA, JAWS or VoiceOver, follow these steps to get started.

Step 1: Turn on screen reader support

The first time you use Google [Docs](#), [Sheets](#) or [Slides](#) with a screen reader, you need to turn on screen reader support:

1. Go to Google [Docs](#), [Sheets](#) or [Slides](#) and open a file.
2. In the Tools menu, select Accessibility settings.
3. Select Turn on screen reader support.

Step 2: Check your screen reader settings

For some screen readers, you might need to adjust your settings when you use Google Docs, Sheets, Slides or Drawings. Check your screen reader instructions below.

NVDA

On Windows, for the best experience, use the latest version of NVDA with the latest version of Chrome or Firefox.

Docs, Slides and Drawings

1. Go to Google [Docs](#), [Slides](#) or [Drawings](#) and open a file.
2. Listen for these words: "Screen reader support enabled". If you don't hear anything, go to the Tools menu, select Accessibility settings, then select "Turn on screen reader support". You should hear "Screen reader support enabled".
3. Press NVDA + Ctrl + K, then turn off Speak typed characters and Speak typed words.
4. Optional: Change your NVDA startup keyboard shortcut so that it doesn't conflict with Docs, Slides or Drawings. The default NVDA keyboard shortcut, Ctrl + Alt + n, is commonly used in Docs, Slides or Drawings (for example, Ctrl + Alt + n then g navigates to the next image in a document). To change your NVDA keyboard shortcut, open Properties from the NVDA shortcut. On the Shortcut tab, edit the Shortcut key so that it doesn't conflict with Docs, Slides or Drawings (for example, Ctrl + Alt + \).

Sheets

To get started in Sheets, simply turn on screen reader support as described in Step 1 above.

Tip: Focus mode generally provides a better experience than browse mode. To switch between focus and browse modes, press NVDA + Spacebar.

On Windows, for the best experience, use the latest version of JAWS with the latest version of Chrome or Firefox.

JAWS

Docs, Slides and Drawings

For Docs, Slides and Drawings, follow these steps to adjust your JAWS settings:

1. Go to Google [Docs](#), [Slides](#) or [Drawings](#) and open a file.
2. Listen for these words: "Screen reader support enabled". If you don't hear anything, go to the Tools menu, select Accessibility settings, then select Turn on screen reader support. You should hear "Screen reader support enabled".
3. If you use Firefox:
 - Set key echoing to no echoing: Press JAWS + 2 until you hear "None".
 - Turn off the virtual cursor: Press JAWS + Z until you hear "Use virtual PC cursor off". Then press JAWS + Z + Z until you hear "The virtual cursor will be turned off for all applications".
 - Adjust forms options: Make sure that the focus is on the top toolbar, then press JAWS + V. In the settings window, search for "Forms options" and untick both "Auto forms mode" and "Forms mode off when new page loads". Then press OK.
 - Tab from the address bar through the Docs toolbar controls until you hear application mode announced, then press Escape to return to the editing area.

Sheets

To get started in Sheets, simply turn on screen reader support as described in Step 1 above.

Tip: Forms mode generally provides a better experience than virtual mode.

VoiceOver

Google Docs, Sheets, Slides and Drawings are compatible with VoiceOver on the latest version of macOS. The recommended browser is Google Chrome.

For the best experience, turn off VoiceOver's quick nav feature by pressing the left and right arrows at the same time.

Docs, Slides and Drawings

1. Go to [Google Docs](#) and open a document.
2. Listen for these words: "Screen reader support enabled". If you don't hear anything, go to the Tools menu, select Accessibility settings, then select Turn on screen reader support. You should hear "Screen reader support enabled".
3. If you've turned on "Automatically speak the webpage" in VoiceOver, you'll hear the screen reader. Press Escape to return your focus to the editing area.
4. Press VoiceOver + Shift + Down arrow to interact with the editable text.

Sheets

To get started in Sheets, simply turn on screen reader support as described in Step 1 above.

Keyboard shortcuts and VoiceOver

VoiceOver shortcuts conflict with menu shortcuts for Google Docs, Sheets, Slides and Drawings. To open the menus, first use the VoiceOver pass-through keys Ctrl + Option + Tab, then type the menu shortcut, such as Ctrl + Option + f for the File menu. You can also quickly search the menus by pressing Option + / then searching for a term such as "File".

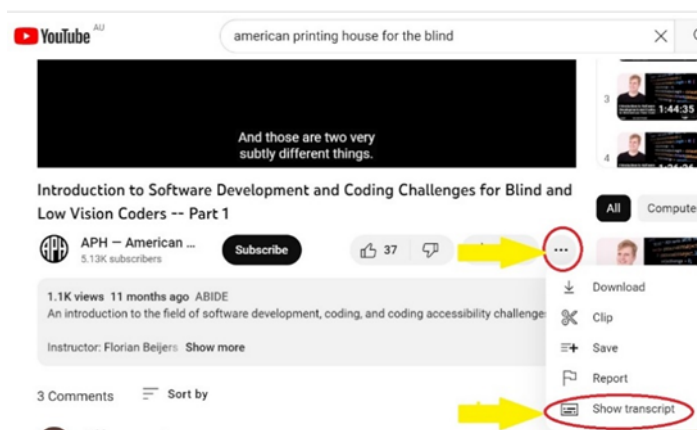
If VoiceOver doesn't automatically focus on the correct part of the page (for example, if a dialogue window appears), press Escape to return your focus to the editing area. Then press VoiceOver + Shift + Down arrow to return to the editing area

Step 3: Start editing

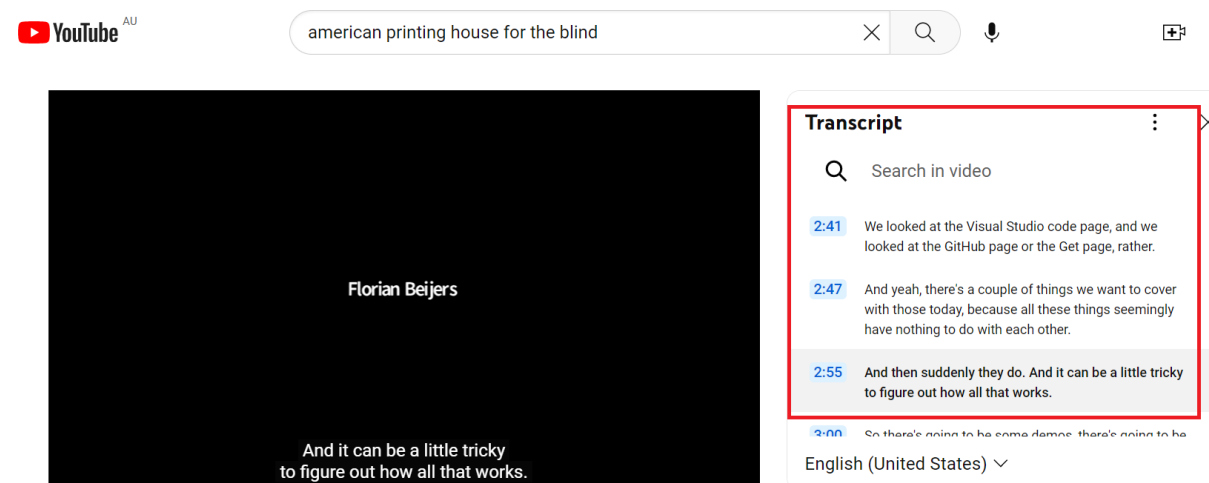
Extracting YouTube Transcripts

Did you know that you can extract transcripts from the audio file of a YouTube video? This can be a really useful tool for getting instructions or commands from an instructional video for assistive devices or software.

When the YouTube video is open there are 3 little dots at the right hand bottom side, click this (JAWS – B for button or control + Insert + B for button list) and the list of options will show navigate to "Show transcript".



The transcripts will populate in a window beside the video which displays time stamps for the video, the text can then be selected and copied into a document and edited.



APH Video Tutorials

American Printing House for the Blind (APH) offer a wide range of Video tutorials and on demand webinars for FREE. Playlists can be sorted by topic areas. Here's [a link to the APH's Youtube Channel](#) for to you explore.

Report on PL day – Inclusion for students who are blind

SVRC hosted our first online professional learning day on Tuesday, February 14, 2023 for 37 participants. There were some teams from some schools, both near and far. Presenters included Di Bennett on making materials accessible and iPads apps, Jordie Howell on living with braille, Kirstie Price on orientation and mobility training and Geoff Bowen on individual, social and family perspectives. We also heard from a student, now in University. It was great to have some curious people following up with questions and requests for further training.

Here are some useful "tips" shared on the day:

- write a map or shape on a student's back to explain a route or a shape
- plan ahead – think about what you'll be teaching and any materials you will need
- use "reader view" to make websites more accessible
- senior students can set up a shared drive with all their teachers to keep in touch

Thank you to Naomi for all the Eventbrite set-up before she went on her teaching placement, Michael for running all the technology including recordings and Sarah for monitoring the chat and answering questions along the way. What a team!!

Master of Inclusive Education Program 2023

Source: Inclusive Education Scholarships Unit, Department of Education

Are you interested in gaining a department-funded master's level qualification specialising in vision impairment or inclusive education? Applications for Round 9 (R9) are now open and will close on Tuesday 28 March at 11:59 pm. The long-term vision is for all Victorian government schools to have a master-level qualified inclusive education teacher on staff, creating and leading a more inclusive school environment for all students regardless of their abilities and backgrounds.

There are 75 places available, and the program will consider providing schools with an additional masters if teachers are interested in specialising in vision impairment, through the following course:

- **NextSense - Macquarie University:** [Master of Disability Studies](#) - Blindness/Low Vision

For all other Inclusive Education courses, please see course details below:

- **Australian Catholic University:** [Master of Education \(Inclusive Practice\)](#)
- **Deakin University:** [Master of Specialist Inclusive Education](#)
- **La Trobe University:** [Master of Education \(Inclusion and Diversity\)](#)
- **Monash University:** [Master of Applied Behaviour Analysis](#)
- **Monash University:** [Master of Inclusive Education](#)

- **University of Melbourne:** [Master of Learning Intervention Stream A](#)
- **University of Newcastle:** [Master of Special and Inclusive Education](#)

Through additional postgraduate study, teachers can make a significant contribution to how their schools plan and support students with disability and additional learning needs, using contemporary evidence-based, best practice approaches. These bespoke courses have been designed for the Victorian context and will be delivered by our seven partnered universities listed above. Please see the Master of Inclusive Education website for further information, including testimonials from graduates of the program.

To find out more or to check whether your school is eligible, please contact the IESU at: inclusive.ed.scholarships@education.vic.gov.au or call 9084 8496.

Graduate Certificate in Education (Learning Difficulties)

Source: Inclusive Education Scholarships Unit, Department of Education

Strengthen your knowledge of learning difficulties, including dyslexia and dyscalculia, with postgraduate study in 2023.

The Department is offering 75 fully funded places for learning specialists, leading teachers, and classroom teachers working in mainstream Victorian government primary or secondary schools to undertake the Graduate Certificate in Education (Learning Difficulties) program, commencing study in Semester 2, 2023.

Delivered by the Melbourne Graduate School of Education at the University of Melbourne, this bespoke course is designed for the Victorian educational context.

Applications for Round 2 opens are **now open** and will **close on Tuesday 28 March at 11:59 pm**. Visit the [Graduate Certificate webpage](#) for more information about eligibility and how to apply.

And finally...

Did you know that exploring audio descriptions for Art is part of Version 9 of the Australian Curriculum? It can be found as an elaboration in Visual Art, Exploring and Responding in Year 5-6.