

Number 7, Friday 26 May, 2023

## Inside this issue

Here's what you'll find:

- **From SVRC:** [Message from the Manager](#), [The Dinosaurs came to Dot Power](#), [How to identify your money](#), [Report on 'Inclusion of students who have vision impairments in art' professional learning day](#), [Report on 'Teaching and Learning with Braille Music' professional learning day](#), [Updated SVRC Alternative Format Library Catalogue](#), [New database of 3D models](#)
- **From the field:** [Accessible Maths Series Number 5](#), [2023 Premiers' Reading Challenge ... NOW OPEN!](#)

## PD events

The [2023 Professional Learning Calendar](#) is now available for download on our website. See below for links to the events in Term 2 2023.

**Tuesday June 13 (New Date)** [Inclusion of students who have vision impairments in PE](#)

Providing fresh ideas and practical strategies to enable teachers to support the inclusion of students who are blind or partially sighted in physical education.

### 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

Welcome back!

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Jane Barker for supporting staff and programs while I was on extended leave. Jane and I will now be sharing the Assistant Principal/Manager's role. Jane's workdays are Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday and Kim's workdays are Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. We would appreciate if you could cc us into any enquiries so we can respond to your requests in a timely manner. Jane's contact details are [jane.barker@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:jane.barker@education.vic.gov.au)

### **Website**

Unfortunately, our website was accidentally deregistered three weeks ago, but the good news is it is now up and operational. Thank you for your patience and understanding during this incredibly challenging time for all staff and stakeholders.

### **ARC Linkage Project**

We are currently co-designing an ARC Linkage Project proposal in partnership with Monash University on Accessible Mathematics for Students who are Blind or have Low Vision. The focus of the proposed Linkage Project on assistive technology use in secondary schools' targets what we believe is one of the biggest barriers for BLV students in mathematics. We are particularly interested in WP2 on tactile media using technologies such as 3D printing, which we have implemented into our practice as a result of a previous Linkage Project with Monash University. We are also excited about WP3 on accessible tools, as we have already done a lot of work identifying issues with calculator accessibility but would like to work more collaboratively with other partners in the project to develop an Australia-wide solution. We will keep you updated on this important research project as we seek Commonwealth Government financial support.

### **Australian Round Table 2023 Conference**

This year's Round Table Conference was held in Sydney, and Deb Lewis and Sarah Hayman represented SVRC interests. SVRC staff were thanked for our partnership with Monash University ARC Linkage Project on accessible graphics and 3D printing. Some of the topics covered were Braille certification, Braille Needs Analysis, Braille Music, Employment, Sonification, Cosmo Bally (free app), Maths and Artificial Intelligence, Accessible Science and Chinese braille guidelines. If you would like any additional information, please contact either Deb and/or Sarah.

## The Dinosaurs came to Dot Power

Source: Marion Blaze, Leading Teacher, SVRC

On May 16, 2023, SVRC was host to five Dot Power children (in years 1, 2 & 3), six SVRC staff (plus many transcribers), two Occupational Therapy students from Monash, thirteen family members and school staff, four Visiting Teachers and SIXTY THREE DINOSAURS!

We had a fun-filled day of reading, singing, measuring, imagining, labelling, braille-writing, digging and matching dinosaurs. With a tactile dinosaur footprint on the floor, we found out that it took 74 children's footprints to fill the dinosaur footprint – boy were dinosaurs big!! We measured out 13 metres on our tactile runway to imagine how tall a dinosaur was.



Thank you to the team of educators who planned and implemented the program, to families for bringing their willing children and transcribers for all the wonderful braille and tactile materials. Thank you also to those who collected dinosaurs (including one remote control dinosaur)!

## How to identify your money

Source SVRC and Blind Citizens Australia

Did you know that our banknotes are all a different length? The shortest is the \$5, then the \$10 is longer and so on. The 'Banknote Measure' pictured here, enables someone with a vision impairment to fold their banknote in the measure and identify which denomination it is. Jordie Howell demonstrated this at our most recent Community of Practice for Visiting Teachers. You can ask for a Banknote Measure from Blind Citizens Australia. Call 1800 033 660 and they will post you some. They can even email you an instruction sheet on how to identify money.



## Report on 'Inclusion of Students who have Vision Impairments in Art' professional learning day

Source: Marion Blaze, Leading Teacher, SVRC

On May 9, 2023, SVRC hosted Michael Donnelly and thirteen teachers for a wonderful day of exploration of inclusion in art. Michael Donnelly would be well known to many in our midst, having been a Visiting Teacher and an art teacher at Support Skills and before that at the Vision Australia School. He has now retired from those roles and is a full-time artist with regular exhibitions of his work.



It is not an exaggeration to say that the group were inspired throughout the day! We explored various devices to creating tactile art, created, described and explored under blindfold, discussed accessible art opportunities in galleries, designed tactile images of artworks and practised audio description.

Comments from participants included:

"Michael really packed a lot of amazing information into one day."

"The activities we did were fantastic – really demonstrated how to make art accessible. Very much enjoyed the practical activities – making/drawing."

"Thank you – it was lots of fun!!"



## Report on 'Teaching and Learning with Braille Music' professional learning day

Source: Marion Blaze, Leading Teacher, SVRC

On May 23, 2023, SVRC hosted seven music teachers and two Visiting Teachers to learn all about braille music notation and teaching music with students who are blind. The day was led by Jordie Howell (musician, music teacher, braille music transcriber) and Sarah Kelly (transcriber at SVRC). The musical talent in the room was impressive! We had choral scholar, Jordie, as well as classroom music teachers, vocal coaches and instrumental teachers. The students they are supporting ranged from one in Foundation to one in year 10, aiming to study music at university.

Jordie and Sarah led us through the intricacies of the braille music code. Several participants claimed their heads were exploding. When asked to translate a little song from braille to music notation, we didn't tell participants name of the tune. We knew they would be sufficiently skilled to write out the musical notation without the braille! We could see 'light bulbs' as people realised what song they were translating. Despite the challenges, the group were intensely engaged and enthusiastic.

Thank you, Jordie and Sarah!

Comments from participants included:

"Thank you so much. This was incredibly useful!"

"Thank you for this fantastic PL."



## Updated SVRC Alternative Format Library Catalogue

Source: Transcription Department, SVRC

Hot off the press this week is the [2023 Alternative Format Library Catalogue](#) which lists titles that are available for eligible students. In addition to a couple of hundred new titles, this update offers improved and corrected information, particularly in the ISBN, PRC and Notes columns, to assist in your selection of books in a suitable format for you / your son or daughter / your student.

The catalogue features the following column headings and is a sortable Excel spreadsheet:

- **Title**
- **Author**
- **Series** (if relevant)
- **Publisher**
- **Publishing date**
- **ISBN**
- **PSB/P/S**: indicates if the book is a Picture Story Book (PSB) or more suited to the primary-aged student (P) or the secondary-aged student (S)
- **PDF**: denotes that we hold a file copy of the original book, generally as a scanned PDF
- **Etext**: docx with heading structure or an unspecified Word file
- **Illustrated docx**: a new column for a small but growing collection of docx files that include illustrations from the original book – these are often available as illustrated ePubs (for iPad)
- **ePub**: for use on iPad
- **Braille**: increasingly includes the number of volumes of braille (to assist with book selection)
- **PRC**: whether the book is included in the Premiers' Reading Challenge for 2023, and if so, the recommended year levels
- **Notes**: examples include First Australians (books with an indigenous theme or author), historical fiction, short stories, plays, poetry, sexuality and relationships, WW1, WW2, science etc.

This catalogue is constantly evolving and improving. If you notice incorrect information or you'd like to make suggestions to improve it, please let us know.

### Please note

If your title is not available, or not available in your preferred format, please be in contact. We are happy to transcribe a print copy of your book into a suitable alternative format. Further, if we have a title in one format ... but not the format that you'd like ... please let us know and we'll do our best to help.

To request a title in alternative format, please use the [Request form](#), downloadable from the SVRC website.

## New database of 3D models

Source: SVRC

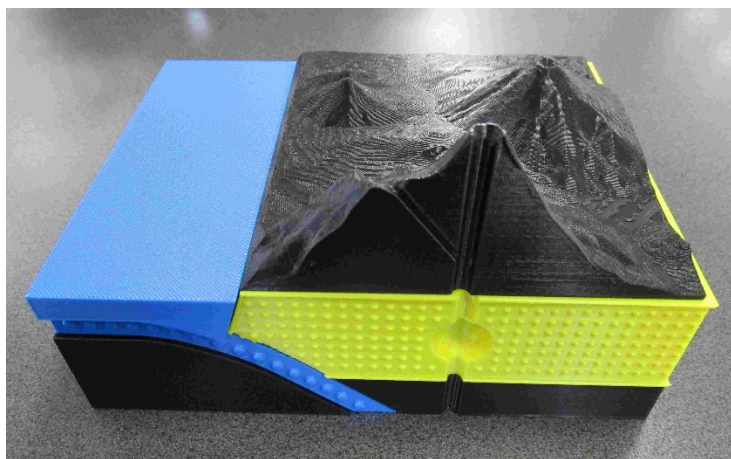
There's a new database of 3D models for students with a vision impairment. It's called [Tactiles – 3D printing for VI](#) and will continue to grow as people upload more designs. We've already printed several new models from the site. Below you'll find details about some of the new models that have recently been added to our catalogue, all in the Geography/Earth Science fields.

### Volcanoes 1 + 2

Volcano 1 is a volcano split in half, so a student can explore the empty internal magma chamber. Volcano 2 has a quarter of the volcano that can come out so the student can explore the magma chamber that's 'filled in'.

### Volcano (Cross section)

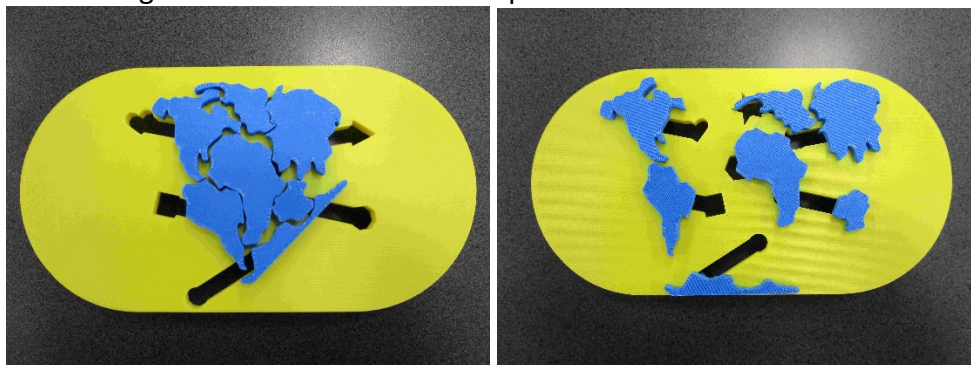
This model shows the oceanic crust subducting under the continental crust to form a volcano. The lithospheric mantle is also shown below the two crusts. The ocean is fitted with magnets so it can be lifted and the deep sea channel created by subduction can be explored. A tactile diagram can also be produced to match the model, to aid students with going from the 3D to the 2D.



### Tectonic Plate – Supercontinent Model

This model has tracks so that the student can move the continents from their 'supercontinent' locations, through to their current locations. Pieces lock into place in the base. Can be accompanied by a tactile diagram to match the model.

Click on the link to [download the 3D model catalogue](#) from Google Drive and you can request items using the Alternative Format Request form.



## Accessible Maths Series

Sharing ideas for making maths accessible.

We are always open to more ideas and suggestions – please contact Marion if you want to comment or share your Maths ideas. [marion.blaze@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:marion.blaze@education.vic.gov.au)

### Accessible Maths Series Number 5 – Tips for Teaching Maths to students with VI

Source: [Paths to Literacy](#)

#### 1. Plan Ahead

- Forward planning is essential to ensure work will be accessible to the child.
- It is also essential to ensure work is differentiated to meet the child's individual stage of mathematical development.
- Provide a work station space large enough for the extra resources to be used easily.

#### 2. Create Graphs and Diagrams

- Keep diagrams and graphs simple and clearly laid out.
- Reinforce and explain the graph and diagram as the child systematically learns to explore it.
- Cubes on a tactile board can assist a child with early graph formation
- with use of appropriate language to support understanding of vertical, horizontal, rows, columns etc.
- Cross sections can be understood by cutting fruit in half.
- Peg boards, and Lego on a base board and a centre line made with wikki stix can be used to introduce symmetry, creating a design for the child to copy.



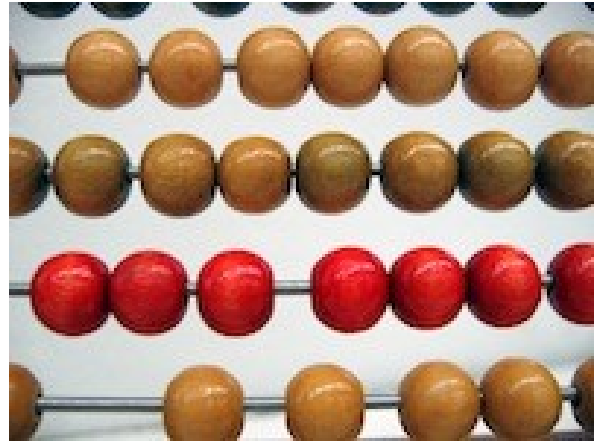
#### 3. Make Accommodations

- Achieving accuracy when drawing a line, measuring or producing graphs and diagrams can be difficult and this needs to be taken into consideration when marking the work.
- The child may require more time to complete the task to allow time for concept understanding and also due to the complexity of accessing information presented in tactile or large print format.
- Either give more time to the task or reduce the requirements of the task.



#### 4. Teaching Strategies

- Split the task into smaller sections
- Teach the concept step by step
- Teach strategies to explore and to discover what to another child is visually obvious.
- Use of abacus, number line in Braille or large print, hand on hand demonstration and verbal prompts are useful to support counting activities.
- Peg boards and an abacus can be used to support data or represent tallying



#### 5. Provide Daily Hands-On Experience

- Hands on and regular daily practice and concrete experience on each mathematical area to help compensate for the lack of incidental mathematical input
- E.g. use money, play shop, hands on exploration of geometrical shapes and other shapes.
- Provide basic information that other children have incidentally, e.g. number of fingers on hands.



#### 6. Use Appropriate Language to Explain Concepts

- Avoid ambiguity when verbally reinforcing a concept
- Use concrete experience alongside verbal explanation whenever possible.
- Keep mathematical language consistent
- Introduce words that have different meanings in a mathematical context in a practical hands on situation to ensure understanding.

## 2023 Premiers' Reading Challenge ... NOW OPEN!

Source: [Premiers' Reading Challenge](#)

The Premiers' Reading Challenge encourages children and students to read a set number of books from March to September and record their efforts online. Since the Challenge first began in 2005, more than 4 million students have read over 57 million books.

Pre-schoolers and students from Prep to Year 10 can join the Challenge! If your early childhood service or school isn't participating (check with your teacher or school librarian), you can still [register as a home-based reader](#).

To meet the Challenge, students need to read (or for students to Year 2, have read to them) a certain number of books:

- **Pre-school:** 40 books
- **Prep to Year 2:** 30 books (20 or more from the Challenge list)
- **Year 3 to Year 9:** 15 books (10 or more from the Challenge list)
- **Year 10:** 15 books (5 or more from the Challenge list)

### For eligible students with vision impairments

Have a look at the recently [updated SVRC Library Catalogue](#) to select your books. The SVRC Library Catalogue has a column that indicates if the title is on the Challenge list. If so, the suggested year levels are indicated.

Students can read books in their preferred format: electronic, braille, large print and/or audio. To request books in alternative format from the SVRC catalogue, complete the [request form](#) and send it to the SVRC.

### Key Dates

- Now: PRC 2023 is open!!! Make sure you are registered! Read books! Enter them online!
- 21-25 August: [Book Week](#)
- 8 September: Premiers' Reading Challenge ends
- October: certificates are issued to early childhood service managers, school principals and home-based settings for distribution



### And Finally ...

An ostrich's eye is bigger than its brain.