

The Bulletin

Number 9, Friday 14 June 2019

Inside this issue

Here's what you'll find:

- **From SVRC:** Dates for Your Diary, Dot Power Report, Admin Officer and Transcription Officer Vacancies at SVRC, Support Skills News, Q&A Braille Formatting
- **PD:** VISCON, SPEVI Call for Papers, Four Things Students with VI Want You to Know, Dialogue in the Dark Closing Soon
- **Alternative Format:** New Guidelines for Braille, Braille Readiness Grid, A Brief History of Tactile Writing
- **Access Technology:** BrailleSense Polaris Notes, Coding Concepts – We're Going on a Bear Hunt
- **Activities and Recreation:** Activities This Weekend, Sound Matters, Wunderage (with Audio Description), Public Speaking for Young Adults

Dates for Your Diary

Here is a list of our planned PD and other activities for the remainder of 2019:

Tuesday August 13: [Educational support of students who have low vision](#)

Tuesday October 15: Preparing your school for inclusion of a student who uses braille

Tuesday November 26: Assistive Technology Expo

2020

12-15 January 2020: SPEVI Conference in Adelaide

[Dates for 2020 SVRC Professional Development activities coming soon!]

Note: For upcoming professional learning at SVRC along with programs, registration & online payment, visit the SVRC [professional learning page](#).

New Guidelines for Braille

ABA Guidelines for Foreign Language Materials

The Australian Braille Authority recently launched the [ABA Foreign Language Guidelines \(UEB\)](#) which is available from the ABA website and includes the print and braille files for French, German, Italian, Japanese, Latin and Spanish.

Mathematical Signs for Operation and Comparison

The International Council on English Braille (ICEB) has provided a replacement for Section 3 of the 2014 Guidelines for Technical Material – [Mathematical Signs for Operation and Comparison](#).

This document (available in print and braille) provides more information and more examples and will be a useful document for transcribers and those supporting students who read braille.

Upcoming PD Opportunity: RIDBC Vision Conference (VISCON)

[VISCON](#) is a two day conference providing an opportunity for educators and related specialists to come together to share and discuss the education of children and students with a vision loss. Presentations will focus on curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, access and a range of issues related to student support.

Dates: 19-20 June

Time: 9:00 am – 4:00 pm

Location: RIDBC Renwick Centre, 361-365 North Rocks Road, North Rocks, NSW

SPEVI Conference: Call for Papers

From Phia Damsma, Frances Gentle and Sharon Duncan, SPEVI Presidents

We invite you to submit an abstract for the SPEVI Conference in Adelaide, 12-15 January 2020. The Call for Papers and Abstract Submission Form are available for download from the [SPEVI website](#).

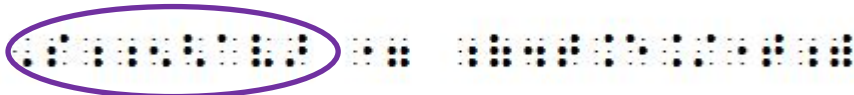
The deadline for abstract submissions is 23rd June 2019. Please send your Abstracts to the SPEVI Conference Committee, email: SPEVI2020conference@gmail.com

It is anticipated that conference registrations will open in the coming week – we will be in touch with more updates soon.

Q&A: Braille Formatting Update!

Last issue, we included the following answer to a braille formatting question.

$$s_{av} = \frac{\textit{distance}}{\textit{time}}$$

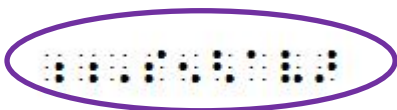


We heard back from Kathy Reissen, Coordinator Accessible Format Production, South Australia School for Vision Impaired. Kathy writes:

When and how to use grade 1 indicators is one of those grey areas which is not well documented and there is more than one right way of using them.

I don't disagree with how you have presented your examples, but we do them differently (at SASVI).

When brailleing S subscript av we would normally put the grade 1 word indicator at the beginning of the "word" so it reads:



I thank Kathy (once again) very much for her feedback and (while I am at it) for all her generous sharing of her immense braille knowledge along with the excellent and helpful guidelines that she has contributed to our field over the years. Thanks Kathy! We love a braille-micro-discussion!! (Ed)

BrailleSense Polaris

Notes from presentation Wednesday 29th May 2019

Presenter: Sam Taylor from Pacific Vision

Notes: Lea Nagel from SVRC

Maths expressions within a Word Processor Document

Set Math Mode to UEB:

Menus: Space + M

File: Enter

Settings: E

OR Enter + E from the Document

Bottom of this menu: Space + 456

Change Math code: Space

Save and Exit: Enter

To Write Maths in Word Processor

New line: Enter

Start UEB Maths: Backspace + M

Switch back to text mode in the same way - remember new line

Maths code is rendered well in print on the HDMI monitor

Calculator

Open Calculator Program: F1, U, C

Check / change math code in Calc: Backspace + G (toggles)

Help menu: Space + H

Copy the answer: Enter + C

Calc history: Enter + H

Copy history: Scroll to the calculation you need, Enter + C

Switch to Word Processor leaving Calc open: F1, W

Paste into Word Processor: Enter + V

Polaris Maths (Graphing Calculator)

Open Polaris Maths Program: F1, U, M to Polaris Maths, Enter

Check / change math code in Polaris Maths: Backspace + G

Write an expression (eg $y=x^2$ or $y=x^3$): Use UEB, Enter

Show graph on refreshable braille display:

Navigate to the expression: Space + 1 or Space + 4

Enter + T

The graph is rendered 4 rows at a time on the refreshable braille. Scroll up and down the graph using the scroll buttons at each end of the display or Space + 4.

The graph can also be embossed via USB.

Navigate to the expression: Space + 1 or Space + 4

Enter + P

Sam Taylor from Pacific Vision is most happy to answer further queries on this: 0420 355 996

Please contact us if you'd like the link to the video that was made on the day.

Dot Power: Term 2, 2019

Themes: The body and how we move it; A tea party

Eight children in Grades 1 – 3 who use braille attended the day. Our learning focus was the body and how we move it, comparing tactile graphics to stick figure representation of body positions and how we move into different positions ourselves.

The children were encouraged to explore a new book entitled "I Go to School". Each page introduced a new action in braille above a tactual graphic of a person in a different position according to that action: I wake up early, I have my breakfast, I find my shoes. They sang through the book accompanied by guitar and a shaker who would wait for no one! This facilitated fast page turning to find the next phrase and picture. We concentrated on braille contractions "go" and "the".

We worked through the story a second time, acting out the positions physically as a group. Stretching up in the air, running out the door and waving to mum.

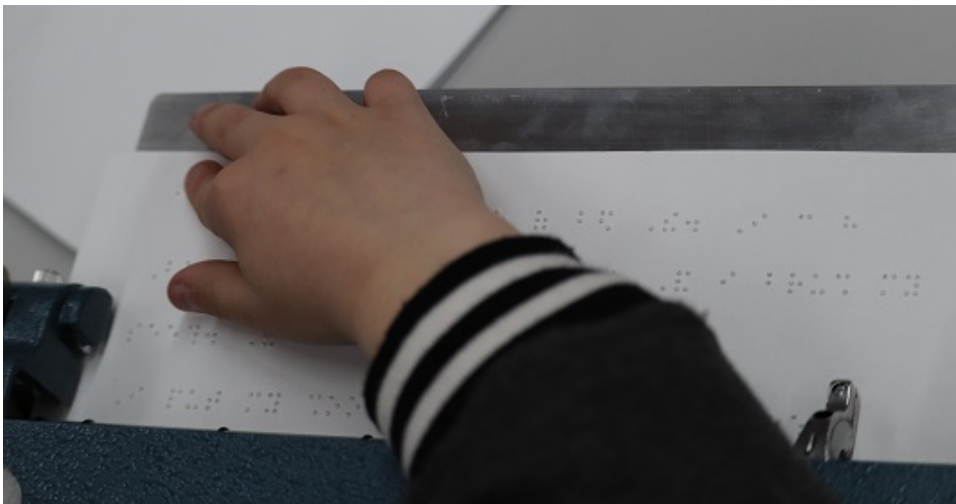
At the tables, the children moved Flexikids (magnetic stick figures on boards) into the positions they read and acted out in the story. They were invited to come up with new positions, then arrange their own body to match. We had Flexikids in all sorts of positions, even on their head!

After recess, the children used a Perkins Braille Writer to write their own stories about activities they do in the morning before going to school. Every child shared their story aloud, and a line from each was sung by the group with the shaker to keep in rhythm. All stories will be collated into a book for the children to keep.

The second theme of the day was preparing for a tea party. Learning focused around a recipe for scones involving a fraction, a large number and a weight in grams for the children to decipher in braille. Next we prepared the ingredients and the children learnt to rub butter into flour, knead the dough, flatten the dough and cut out scones with a glass tumbler. The children took home the recipe to make again at home with families.

After lunch we discussed what we need for a tea party, and the children returned to the tables, now in groups of four, to eat their scones. They were asked to independently cut their scones in half, spread with either apricot or strawberry jam, and pour their cup of cordial or water using a liquid level indicator, which beeps when the liquid reaches the right level. The children enjoyed eating their creations and having conversations at the tea party.

We concluded the jam-and-cream packed day with a revisit of the bean seed song. The children



sang and acted, growing up from seeds, into shoots, into flowers and then into beans.

Thank you to all visiting teachers, teachers, aids and parents who came and helped during the day.

Braille Readiness Grid

Source: [Paths to Literacy website](#)

The Braille Readiness Grid was developed by Anne McComiskey, Director of the BEGIN early childhood program of the Center for the Visually Impaired in Atlanta, Georgia. It is available from the Paths to Literacy website with permission of CVIGA.

Please note that this document is shared to open a discussion about some of the skills necessary for learning braille, but this document is not comprehensive and is not a substitute for a full assessment.

Reading and writing braille is achieved by systematic building of skills in many areas of development. This literacy readiness grid enables parents and teachers to identify accomplished skills and target other skills for educational programming.

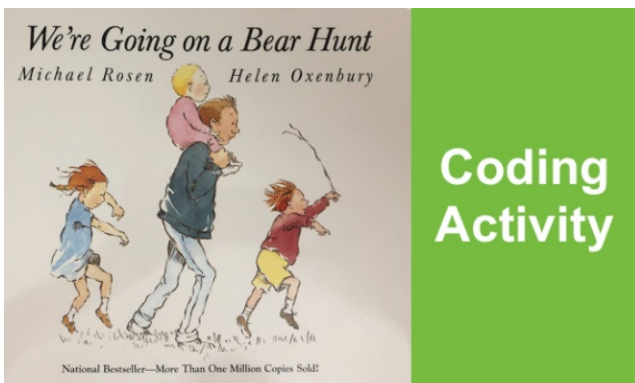
[Download Braille Readiness Grid as a PDF](#)

[Download Braille Readiness Grid as a Word document](#)

Coding Concepts: We're Going on a Bear Hunt

Here's a fun idea you can try at home or during your VT session with younger students – "We're Going on a Bear Hunt": as a coding activity!

The article by Diana Brauner on the Paths to Literacy website, describes this activity that has been made accessible for students who are blind or have low vision:



"Follow this family as they swishy-swashy and splash splashing down the trail in the classic storybook, "Going on a Bear Hunt". Through sing-song repetitive lines, the characters march their way through tall grass, a river, mud, a forest, a snowstorm, and a cave. Going on a Bear Hunt is a fun way to introduce young students to simple coding algorithm concepts."

Please see the [Paths to Technology website](#) for instructions, templates and further ideas.

A Brief History of Tactile Writing

Texas School for the Blind and Vision Impaired has a lovely [brief history of tactile writing](#) on their website. It describes several alternative tactile systems including Boston Line Type, New York Point, Moon and Tactile Symbols, briefly and with accompanying photos.

"Braille, the reading and writing code currently used in the U.S. and other English speaking countries by readers with blindness and visual impairments, was invented by Louis Braille. Braille was a Frenchman who lost his sight from an eye infection caused by an accident with his father's leather working tools in childhood. Louis Braille developed his ideas for a tactile code system adapted from French soldiers who wanted to be able to read notes in the dark. Louis Braille modified this 12-dot system into 6 dots and had written in braille and taught others by 1832."

The article was originally published in the Spring 2006 SEE/HEAR Newsletter but was updated in 2017.

Activities on This Weekend!!!

Come and Try Guided Running

[BCA](#) and [Achilles Melbourne](#) are holding a "Come and Try Day".

Achilles is a running club for people with disabilities who host training sessions on Sundays at the Tan Running Track in Melbourne.

When: Sunday 16 June, 8:30 AM

Where: Tan Park, Botanical Gardens, Melbourne

What to bring: Wear comfortable walking shoes and bring water and a towel.

What to know: Light refreshments will be offered. If you require support to get from the Station, please advise in your RSVP.

RSVP: By 12 June 2019. Call Blind Citizens Australia (BCA) 1800 033 660 or email bca@bca.org.au with the subject line "Achilles Melbourne".

You're welcome to bring your dog guide to this event. If your dog will be attending, please include them in your RSVP. Please also indicate in your RSVP whether you would like to undertake an alternative activity.

Blind and Low Vision Football

Come and join the Active Teens blind and low vision football program at Casey Stadium in Cranbourne!

Where: Casey Stadium, Building 04, Terry Vickerman Centre, 65 Berwick Cranbourne Road, Cranbourne East

When: 16 June

Time: 3.30 pm to 4.30 pm

All equipment will be provided. Just bring yourself, bring a friend, have fun and learn new skills.

To register or for more information, please email activeteens@blindsports.org.au

Note: All players will be invited to participate in the Australian Blind Football National Training Centre day on Sunday 23 June.

Four Things Students with VI Want You to Know

Source: [The Conversation](#)

"The Conversation" interviewed 15 students with vision impairments along with their parents and teachers to see what they would like sighted folks to know about them. Here are their ideas:

1. Ask me what you need to know
2. I don't need as much protection as you think I do
3. Sometimes I don't follow instructions because I can't see them
4. There is more to me than my disability

Have a read – it's a great little article!

Sound Matters

The Melbourne Recital Centre will be conducting their next musical workshop for the 2019 series for students with vision impairments in August.

When: Thursday 29 August at 10.30am

Where: Cnr Southbank Blvd and Sturt St, Southbank VIC 3006

The Sound Matters workshop series provides an interactive and engaging musical learning environment especially designed for primary school aged children who are blind or have low vision.

Belinda Ashe, Learning and Access Coordinator writes, "Working in partnership with Vision Australia and the Australian National Academy of Music, we have already hosted two fantastic workshops with an emphasis on exploration and composition. Each one-hour session allows participants to hear familiar repertoire performed up close and personal by professional musicians, as well as the opportunity to work directly with the facilitators in creating brand new sounds."

For more information and to register for a workshop please visit the [Melbourne Recital Centre](#) website.

Please contact Belinda if you have questions: Tel 9207 2658

Audio Described Event: Circus: Wunderage

Performance by Circus Oz and Company 2; audio description by Description Victoria

When: Saturday June 29, 2.30pm.

Where: Meat Market, 5 Blackwood St, North Melbourne.

Cost: Tickets cost between \$35 and \$49 plus booking fees – [event listing & booking](#)

About:

No seats. No barriers. All wonder.

Dive into a mesmerising world of total circus as the astonishing spectacle of Wunderage unfolds around, beside and above you. An emotional journey told through breathtaking physical feats, heart-stirring live music and honest humour, this world premiere collaboration invites you to dream.

We all walk the tightrope between who we are and who we might become, and from this tension springs a bold new collaboration fusing the cheeky spark of Circus Oz and the poetic physicality of Company 2. Wonder is the impulse that propels our first step into the unknown, and this unique promenade performance lets the audience immerse themselves in the show itself.

Moving among immense blue boulders where tightwires are suspended in strikingly lit space, the work emerges organically in all directions. Playful, generous and peppered with mischievous wit, the stories here will move and inspire. Wunderage explores the desire to be something you are not, and along the way will take you to places you never dared to dream possible.

[Audio intro with access info](#) is available from Description Victoria.

Steve Sedergreen Holiday Workshop: Improvisation

Improvising is not just for jazz, but is a key ingredient in many musical styles. Perhaps you want to execute a top solo without restriction, develop the confidence to let go on vocal passages, or simply make your sound different from everyone else? The art of improvisation is explored by Steve and his visiting guests.

When: Monday 1 July – Friday 5 July, 11.00am – 3.30pm daily

Final Performance: Friday 5 July, 5.00pm – 7.00pm

Where: Eltham College in the Harold Mitchell Performing Arts Centre – Littlefield Music Centre

Program Cost: \$400

Public Speaking Program for Young Adults

To help young people who are blind or have low vision develop their confidence in public speaking and develop their communication skills in general, Vision Australia has partnered with Toastmasters to launch an Australia-wide program public speaking program. It is open to those from 15 to 25 years of age who are blind or have low vision. The program will run over five weeks from the middle of July via video conference.

For more information visit the [Vision Australia website](#).

Dialogue in the Dark Closing Soon

The experiential exhibition, Dialogue in the Dark will close on 14 July 2019. If you have not had a chance to visit Dialogue in the Dark, now is the time to head to District Docklands and take a walk in the shoes of someone with blindness for one hour! It is a truly insightful and thought-provoking experience.

Book tickets on the [Dialogue in the Dark website](#)

Schools Looking for ES Staff with Braille Skills

SVRC has had two phone calls recently asking if we know of any ES (aides) with braille skills who might be available in 2020. Both are because students are moving to secondary schools. One school is in Ballarat and the other in Thornbury. If you know of anyone, please be in touch and we'll make the connections! Thanks!!

Vacancies at SVRC

Please check Recruitment Online if you'd like to apply for one of the vacancies at SVRC. We are currently advertising for an Administration Officer and a Transcription Officer (Braille Transcriber) as follows:

[Administration Officer](#): Full time fixed term position until 20 December 2019 (Job ID 1157814), apply by 18 June

[Transcription Officer](#): Full time fixed term position until 20 December 2019 (Job ID 1156384), apply by 18 June

For further information contact Matt Trotter: trotter.matthew.a@edumail.vic.gov.au

Support Skills News

New SSP email address: Support Skills has a new email address! Please add this to your contacts: statewide.vision@edumail.vic.gov.au

Music and sound mixing desk: We are hoping to enjoy it with students who attend SSP ... so get those creative juices flowing!

SSP Payment: If you have not done so, please make payment of your annual Support Skills fee. To the Heatherwood School main office, which is currently in the house near the SVRC back door. Please speak to Jacky Murphy for details about payment or directions to the Heatherwood office.

Braille Books: Return Please

We currently have requests for braille copies of:

- Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets
- Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban
- Once by Morris Gleitzman
- Then by Morris Gleitzman
- Now by Morris Gleitzman
- After by Morris Gleitzman
- Soon by Morris Gleitzman

So if your student has finished with their braille copy, please return! And thanks!

Finally

Thanks to Emma Hall and Leona Holloway for input into this issue of The Bulletin!

– Deb Lewis (Ed) lewis.debra.d@edumail.vic.gov.au