

The Bulletin

Number 4, Friday 20th March 2015

Professional development activities for 2015

Download fliers for the SVRC PD programs from the SVRC website.

- Saturday 28 March **Big Arts Picnic**
- Tuesday 21 April **Skill Power** including:
 - 9.30 BrailleNote basics
 - 11.30 Pearl Camera + Openbook + Duxbury to hard copy braille
 - 1.30 Victor Reader Stream
- Wednesday 29 April **Art4Kids with VI? @ Heidi**
- Monday 18 May **PE, Recreation & Sport for Students with VI @ SVRC**

iPad Project: How are students with vision impairments using iPads to access the curriculum?

By Lyn Robinson

In 2013-2014 many students with vision impairments in Department of Education and Training schools were loaned iPads to use in the classroom as part of the More Support for Students with Disabilities National Partnerships Program. A part of this project involved research into how students with vision impairments use iPads to access the curriculum.



This research has now been completed and the findings presented at the recent SPEVI Conference in Melbourne. We received 61 surveys from students in Prep to Year 12 detailing such things as how often they used the iPad, what accessibility features they used and what they valued most about their iPad.

The research data revealed that use of the iPad by students who are blind or have low vision is extensive. The students are choosing to use this technology as evidenced by the frequency and the variety of tasks iPads are used for in the classroom. This was evident across all school settings including primary, secondary and special schools and across all age groups from 5 – 18 years.

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Here are some quick stats:

Top 10 uses for the iPad:

- Camera
- Taking photos of books or whiteboard
- Educational apps
- Internet
- Games
- Clock
- eBooks
- Accessibility Features
- Audio Books
- Calculator

What else did we find?

- 80% of students said they used the camera
- 67% of students said that the iPad has increased their independence in the classroom
- 57% said that their access to the curriculum has increased
- 55% of students were using iPads on a daily basis
- Accessibility: 78% use Large Text, 66% use Zoom, 55% use Adjust Brightness
- 75% use a Bluetooth keyboard as their main input device

The most valued features of the iPad to the students were Portability (72%), the Camera (60%) and the Accessibility features (55%). When asked, “What App wouldn’t you be without” 72% of students said, “The Camera”.

When asked where they learnt the skills needed to operate the iPad:

- 85% said their visiting teacher, followed by family members.

A group of students were also interviewed about their experiences using the iPad. When asked how he used the iPad in class a Year 10 student commented:

In cooking theory I can take a picture of the teacher’s notes on the whiteboard rather than having to copy the notes down. I can then write the notes out or if it’s a good picture I just save the picture. It’s a quick and easy way to get notes off the board.

When asked “Has using the iPad made you more independent?” the same student answered:

Yes because I don’t have to rely on the teacher to tell me what to do because now I can just use the camera to zoom in on the whiteboard to read whatever’s on the board.

Many thanks to all the students who participated in the survey and the visiting teachers who helped facilitate the process.

If you would like to read more there is a Q and A on the Media Access Australia website called “iPads, and improved access to education.” You can find this interview on the Media Access Australia website at: www.mediaaccess.org.au/latest_news/digital-technology/ipads-and-improved-access-to-education

For more information about this research contact:

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Reflections: SPEVI Conference 2015

Catch phrases

There were two particular ‘catch phrases’ from the SPEVI Conference from Marion Blazé.

The first was from Karen Wolffe who said we should constantly ask our students “**What will you be when you grow up?**”. Students with vision impairments need to be reminded that they should expect to ‘be something’, to work and contribute when they are adults. Asking this question of them reminds them to think about what they are doing now in terms of what they could be. It also tells them that we believe that they will one day earn a living.

The second was from one of the BLENNZ team who spoke about work with profoundly and multiply-impaired children. She said we need a parrot on our shoulders to always ask us as teachers “**What's the purpose?**” Any activity we undertake with children should have a learning outcome and a meaningful purpose.

iPad Tutorials on YouTube

This is a great resource if you are looking for some iPad tutorials. Diane Brauner, Itinerant Teacher Vision (TVI) runs iPad training for TVIs in South Carolina. They run a series of one day workshops and even offer an “iPad Institute” programme which runs for a term. Diane has created a YouTube channel about using iPads with students with vision impairments. If you are looking for information on VoiceOver or pairing a device such as BrailleNote, try Diane’s YouTube channel.

Other tutorials include:

- Speak Screen
- Pairing a braille device with the iPad
- Navigating Pages using a braille device
- Uploading files to Dropbox
- Use Voice Dreamweaver
- Create a tactile overlay for the iPad

Kinetic Sand – tactile fun for children

From Raelene Turpin & Helen Caldw

Kinetic Sand is 98% sand and 2% magic, where the ‘magic’ a bonding agent that causes the sand to stick only to itself in a soft clump. This sand-in-motion flows and shapes just like wet sand, but leaves surfaces completely dry and mess-free. When pressure is applied to Kinetic Sand, it keeps its shape allowing for all kinds of sculpting and molding. Kinetic Sand is totally reusable and it never dries out. As well as non-toxic, Kinetic Sand is anti-microbial and also adheres to Australian safety standards.



Available with Kinetic Sand is a set of moulding tools specifically designed to amplify the crisp sculptural details this super sand can produce. For children aged 3 and up, and packaged in 1KG and 5KG boxes, Kinetic Sand is fun, indoor, mess-free sand! The price for 2.5 kg is \$34.95

Prado exhibition unlocks paintings for the blind

By Ralph Minder – The Age 7/3/2015

Madrid: Guards make sure visitors to the Museo del Prado stay at arm's length from its masterpieces. But here on a recent morning was Jose Pedro Gonzalez running his fingers over one of El Greco's most famous paintings, *The Nobleman With His Hand on His Chest*. He went back and forth over the nobleman's eyes, rubbed his beard and eventually reached his hand, tracing the edges of each digit.



The work, of course, was a copy. But more surprisingly, the copy was in three dimensions so that Mr Gonzalez, who is 56 and has been blind since the age of 14, could experience the painting firsthand.

"It's an unbelievable sensation," Mr Gonzalez said. "I'm feeling this painting down to the detail of each fingernail."

He was visiting a small, highly unusual exhibition, *Touching the Prado*, designed to give the blind or those with limited sight an opportunity to create a mental image of a painting by feeling it. The show, which runs until June 28, occupies a side passage of the museum, near a room that contains an original of another work copied for the blind: a version of the *Mona Lisa* by a pupil of Leonardo da Vinci.

Altogether, six 3D copies are on display, all of them rendering famous works in the Prado. They include Goya's *The Parasol*; a still life by van der Hamen; *Apollo in the Forge of Vulcan* by Velazquez; and *Noli Me Tangere*, Correggio's painting of Christ meeting Mary Magdalene.

An audio guide accompanies blind visitors through the special show, but regular visitors are also provided with an audio guide, as well as a mask so they can relate better to what a blind person perceives.

Mr Gonzalez had never seen the El Greco portrait of the nobleman, one of the many masterworks in the Prado. But he had visited museums as a child and has continued to do so since going blind, helped by his wife, who describes the paintings to him.

"It's great to look at paintings with my wife and spend time with her, but it's clearly a big difference when I can discover a painting for myself or have to listen to what she tells me," he said.

Braille in the community: The Story of How Braille Wound Up on Wine Labels



Intro: Garry Stinchcombe started this by bringing in a bottle of wine with a braille label on it to demonstrate braille in the community at one of our professional development days. Well that's what he said anyway. We had noticed some French and Australian wines have braille on the label but did not know how it came about so we put the question out on the internet and this is the reply.

Have you ever picked up a bottle of wine, especially one from the Côtes-du-Rhône region of France, felt braille on the label, and wondered how it got there? You may have even wondered if the little bumps were braille at all. Well, they are, and the story of how they got there is a pretty amazing and thoughtful one.

Michel Chapoutier comes from a dynasty of winemakers. The family has been making wine in the Rhône region for years, and because their influence is so expansive – it doesn't hurt that the Belleruche Côtes-du-Rhône red and white blends they make are around \$12 and very easy to find across the U.S. – things they do tend to get adopted by the larger wine community, and the use of braille on wine labels is no exception.

In 1993, when Chapoutier was only 29 and had been the main winemaker in the family business for only three years, he turned on the television to watch his friend and musician Gilbert Montagnin on the screen. Gilbert, who is blind, was talking about the experience of buying wine and was explaining on the program that he never felt comfortable going into a wine shop alone because he didn't know which wines he was picking up. Therefore, in order for him to take part in the simple pleasure of buying wine, he'd have to always be accompanied by a friend who was able to describe the wines he was choosing.

Chapoutier knew his friend was a big fan of his Côtes-du-Rhône and he didn't like the idea that it was uncomfortable for him to seek it out, so he decided to look into whether or not his old printing machine could print braille. After a bit of research it turned out it was a relatively simple process to add braille to his labels, so Chapotier decided to include the braille text to every bottle of wine he produced. From that point on, on every bottle of Chapotier – and there are millions, from not only the Côtes-du-Rhône but also Languedoc Rousillon, Provence and even Australia – he includes the appellation, name of the wine, vintage and whether it is red or white, all written in braille.

After Chapoutier adopted the braille, so did many other winemakers, making it much easier for those without sight to choose and enjoy a bottle of wine. And that's how braille wound up on wine bottles. Story by Adam Teeter

The 13th WBUAP Onkyo world braille essay contest

This contest is for people who are blind or vision impaired living in the Asia Pacific region. The Project is sponsored by the Onkyo Corporation Ltd. and The Braille Mainichi Newspaper in Japan, in collaboration with the World Blind Union-Asia Pacific WBUAP.

The **Onkyo World Braille Essay Contest** is a worldwide initiative planned and sponsored by Onkyo Corporation Ltd. and the Braille Mainichi in Japan, and is implemented by the World Blind Union - Asia Pacific (WBUAP). It is administered locally by the Australian National Onkyo Selection Committee for the World Braille Essay Contest. The Committee comprises representatives from Blind Citizens Australia, the Australian Braille Authority, the Round Table on Information Access for People with Print Disabilities, and Vision Australia.

The purpose of the contest is to promote braille literacy and encourage the reading and writing of Braille; and to encourage cultural and social interaction among blind and vision impaired persons through their writings.

This is an annual project with cash prizes awarded to the best five entries received from within the WBU Asia Pacific Region. The main prize, “the Otsuki Prize” is \$US 1000. Other prizes are for “Excellent Works” (\$US 500) and “Fine Works” (either \$US 300 or \$US 200) depending on the age group. Participation in the contest is open to people from 14 years of age, living in the World Blind Union-Asia Pacific Region. Entries are divided into two age groups: persons between the ages of 14 and 25 years; and persons from the age of 26 years upwards.

Essay topics:

- Is Braille Still Relevant in the Age of Technology?
- The Positive Experiences of Living with Blindness: Opportunities That Can Come from Being Blind.
- The Impact of Music on My Life: Socially &/or Professionally.

Essays must be between 700 and 1,000 words and presented in hard copy braille or in computerized Braille provided you can provide proof of your braille literacy. This can be in the form of a letter from your braille instructor, teacher or other professional who can vouch for your skills.

When submitting your essay to BCA, you must also provide:

- an electronic photo of yourself
- a cover letter stating your full name, address, and contact details, your date of birth, your status i.e. Student, home maker, worker
- if a student state what school you are from including the name, address and email contact for your school.

What: Onkyo World Braille Essay Contest

Where: Entries to BCA, Ross House, Level 3 247-251 Flinders Lane Melbourne, VIC 3000

When: Entries Close 15 May, 2015. Winners announced November 2015

More information contact BCA.

Premiers' Reading Challenge is now open!

Source: S072-2015 2015 Victorian Premiers' Reading Challenge is now open

The Challenge promotes the importance of reading for literacy development and encourages families to be actively involved in supporting their child to read. It is open to young children from birth to five as well as all Victorian students in Prep to Year 10. The 2015 Challenge is now open and ends on 14 September 2015.

To find out how to register visit: www.education.vic.gov.au/prc

To see if the SVRC holds titles in alternative format (for eligible students) see our catalogue page.

News

- Visiting Teacher Jeni Blake's student, **Zeynep**, has been given a "Good Thinking and Independent Student" award which was presented to her at school assembly. She is pretty pleased about receiving the award.
Zeynep is also working on a surprise for one of the SVRC braille transcribers. We're not allowed to say what the special surprise is yet but stay tuned!
- **Sue Clyne** from **Keilor Downs College** recently completed the SVRC Braille by Correspondence, achieving 100% for the assessment!!! Big congratulations to Sue!
- **Leigh Morrison** is on leave from her role as VT for the remainder of 2015 – we look forward to seeing her back in 2016!
- There is a vacancy for a 0.6 VT in NWVR till then end of 2015 – ROL position number: 1015370.
- Below is a team photo of the **Victorian Men's Blind Cricket team** featuring three secondary school debutants that you might recognise: **Zac, Nathan and Josh**. Congratulations guys!



Finally

Editors Deb Lewis and Lyn Robinson would like to thank everyone for their contribution to this issue of The Bulletin, and in particular Helen Caldwell, Jordie Howell and Rod Pritchard.