

The Bulletin

Number 13, Friday 28th August 2015

Professional Development for 2015

Download fliers for the SVRC PD programs: www.svrc.vic.edu.au/PL.shtml; and for an overview of SVRC activities this year visit: www.svrc.vic.edu.au/Acalendar_2015.doc

Event	Date
New: Mac OS X for People with Low Vision via DET's Adobe Connect web conferencing site with Glen Morrow 10.00 to 11.30am This session will be held via DET's Adobe Connect web conferencing site. Contact us for login information!	Tuesday 15 September
Term 3 Dot Power: for beginning braille readers	Tuesday 8 September
New: Abacus! with Charlie Roberts 11.30am to 1.00pm	Friday 18 September
Term 4 Dot Power: for beginning braille readers	Tuesday 17 November
SVRC Expo from 10.00am to 2.00pm: Access Technology for Students with Vision Impairments – all welcome and no need to RSVP – just come along on the day!	Monday 23 November
SVRC Christmas Morning Tea	Wednesday 2 December

Support Skills Try Day for 2016

When: Friday 20th November 2015

Time: 9:30am to 1:30pm

Where: SVRC, 370 Springvale Rd Donvale

The purpose of the Try Day is to allow students and their families to experience the program first hand, meet with staff and make an informed choice as to the suitability of the program for their child. It is a condition of enrolment that all students must attend a Try Day before they can be offered a place in the program.

Registering for the Try Day

Students can register by visiting the SVRC website and downloading the "Expression of Interest Form" for the Support Skills Program: www.svrc.vic.edu.au/Arefssp.pdf. Send the completed form via email: ssp@svrc.vic.edu.au or post to Garry Stinchcombe here at the SVRC.

See attached for further information. Completed Expressions of Interest forms must be received by 11 November 2015.

Inside This Issue

1	PD Activities for 2015, Support Skills Try Day for 2016 (forms attached)
2	New from SVRC: Online Learning via Adobe Connect!, Estimating Reading Speed
3	PSD Review, SVRC Competition 2015
4	Share the Music Program at Melbourne Recital Centre
5	Tony Clarke Returns to School, Story Box Library
6	Recent PD at SVRC, The Other Film Festival Consultation
7	Accessible Computer Game: Snakes & Ladders, Paths to Transition, AFL Football Clinics
8-10	Award: Stay Still Squeaky, Vale John Shute, News, Try Day information and form

New from SVRC: Online Learning Via Adobe Connect!

Want To Learn Some Skills Online? We're running a session on using Mac OS X for people with low vision and we're delivering the session via the Department of Education's new online training facilities.

So what do you need? Well not much really. A desktop computer connected to the internet. You'll need a set of speakers or earphones (especially if you're in an open office!). You could also use an iPad or iPhone; you just need to go to the App Store and simply download the Adobe Connect app.

You just enter the URL connect.vic.edu.au/skillpower into your browser or the Adobe Connect app and enter the room as a guest.

If you'd like to trial your connection beforehand, give us a call and we can certainly help you out.

The session we're running is on using Mac OS X for people with low vision. It will cover mouse cursor size, contrast options, display settings, brightness and the Zoom accessibility feature.

The session is on Tuesday 15 September at 10am.

The session is fully interactive, you can participate by asking questions and following along.

If you'd like more information, please get in touch – morrow.glen.g@edumail.vic.gov.au.

Estimating Reading Speed: HowLongToRead.com

Here's a site that you can use to estimate a reading speed for a particular book:

1. Visit: www.howlongtoreadthis.com/index.php
2. Type in a title to search
3. Click to make your selection
4. Click the Start Reading Speed Timer
5. Read the sample paragraphs from start to finish – it doesn't take long (it's a short synopsis of the book)
6. Click the Timer again when you have finished reading
7. The reading speed is then displayed as for this example:

You read 118 words in 42 seconds and your average speed is 169 words per minute. You will take 8 hours and 36 minutes to complete this book.

8. Then click Close OR buy the book on Amazon if you like!

For VTs

9. Select a book that would be of interest to your student (eg Harry Potter)
10. Select and copy the text from the sample paragraphs
11. Prepare this text in alternative format (eg braille, enlarged electronic text, large print, regular print with magnifier, refreshable braille display etc)
12. Ask your student to read from the prepared alternative format, using the timer at the beginning and end of the student's reading.

Update: Review of the Program for Students with Disabilities

Source: www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/needs/Pages/psdreview.aspx – where you can also view a video of Dr Graeme Innes describing the background to the Review and his role in the process.

About the review

The review is being informed by research, expert input, stakeholder engagement and a comprehensive analysis of the effectiveness of the program. It will ensure support and resourcing is sustainable and delivers improved learning and wellbeing outcomes for children and young people with disabilities.

Who is leading this work?



The Department is managing the Program for Students with Disabilities review with a team of experts and organisations who are passionate about providing the best support possible for Victorian students with disabilities.

Australia's former Disability Commissioner, Dr Graeme Innes (photo left), is leading face-to-face consultations with parents, academics, practitioners, principals and teachers from mid-July 2015.

How you can get involved

The Department welcomes feedback from parents, carers, students, principals, teachers and disability professionals and advocates on how the program can better support children with special needs. The opportunities for getting involved are below.

In-person consultations

Renowned human rights practitioner, Dr Graeme Innes, will facilitate consultations with peak industry bodies, principal and teacher associations, disability advocates and unions. Consultations will commence in July 2015.

Open consultation – online survey

Take our online survey to tell us how we can improve the Program for Students with Disabilities. An online survey will be available at the link above from September and is open to principals, teachers, parents, students and all other members of the public.

SVRC Competition 2015

What: A paragraph or a set of instructions or a cheat sheet or a nifty and imaginative use of technology

When: Must be received by the end of term 3 (18th September 2015)

Who can participate: Victorian primary- and secondary-aged students with vision impairments

Format: Print or braille or electronic or audio

Prizes: The best entry overall will receive a copy of KNFB Reader Mobile for i-Device or Android. Runners-up will receive one of a number of audio books, donated by Bolinda.

Please send your best entries to SVRC Competition – PO Box 201 Nunawading 3131 or svrc@svrc.vic.edu.au. Please include your name, year level and VT name.

Share the Music Program at Melbourne Recital Centre

Report by Marion Blazé

On Thursday 6 August, eight students with vision impairments, their teachers O & M Instructors and one parent, were treated to a magnificent musical experience. 'Share the Music' is a program which aims to bring an enriching musical experience into the lives of disadvantaged children. Our students with vision impairments were invited to attend the 'Mostly Mozart' performance by Orchestra Victoria and the Australian National Academy of Music.

We heard Mozart's overture to 'Cosi fan tutte', and Piano Concerto no 21 in C, then Franz Schubert's Symphony in B-flat and enjoyed seats in the balconies of the beautiful new Elizabeth Murdoch Hall at the Recital Centre.

Each piece was introduced with a bit of history and background about the composition and composer. We were also treated to an opportunity to meet the artists and the children were thrilled to meet Orchestra Victoria leader, Wilma Smith and the very young and talented piano soloist, Alex Raineri – who was generous enough to sign autographs for the children.

Thank you to Cindy Thomas, Project Coordinator – Learning and Access at the Recital Centre for organising this event, and to Deb Davidson and the team from the South West Region for organising a group of children and helpers to attend.

Here's feedback from a student who attended with a group from South-western region:

On iSeek day we went to a musical performance at the Melbourne Recital Centre.

It was really, really nice. I loved all of the instruments. It was very musical.

The music would've been even better with some singing too, like opera, but it was still good. I would love to go again.

By Ariel, Grade 3



Tony Clarke Returns to School

From Annette Godfrey-Magee

Mont Albert Primary School recently had a return visit from one of their ex-students, Tony Clarke. Tony attended the same primary school 40 years ago so it was also a trip down memory lane for him. Tony is a vision impaired adult and is currently pursuing a career in Federal politics as the Labor candidate for Deakin having spent several years in policy development with Vision Australia.

Helen Caldwell, Visiting Teacher in the North-eastern Region, organised for Tony to visit and mentor one of her star students, Gabriel.

From all accounts it was a fun and informative afternoon with Tony lamenting on those of us who are “visually challenged” not being able to listen at break neck speed to our JAWS documents.

The impact of this association is summarized by Gabe’s father who wrote:

It is great for Gabe to have met someone like Tony who has been on the journey he is just starting and can give him some comfort that although it will be difficult at times a positive attitude and developable skills will open up all sorts of opportunities for him. Meeting Tony has reinforced the importance of mentors in helping kids and their families deal with the great unknowns along the way to vision loss. He was very open and generous with his time and we are thankful to Helen for both arranging the visit and driving Tony to and from the school.

Congratulations Helen on such a fabulous initiative!



Story Box Library

Source: www.storyboxlibrary.com.au/

Story Box Library is rich with Australian content, designed to entertain your children with all the drama, laughter and inspiration a good book can bring.

Story Box Library provides a vibrant, interactive experience via a diverse range of everyday Australian storytellers – sportspeople, musicians, grandparents, teenagers, comedians, actors, with varying accents and from different cultures – each sharing past and present book titles. The result is meaningful, entertaining readings that focus on both teller and tale.

Family membership (annual subscription): \$29.95
School, library and organisational subscriptions also available.

Recent PD at SVRC

This term VTs, staff from schools, and family members have been treated to a range of access technology workshops at the SVRC. Skill Power sessions have been conducted by experts in the technology from the SVRC, Humanware or Quantum.

From an individual session with Glen Morrow on Audacity using NVDA to an iPad session from Lyn Robinson with the whole regional VT-VIs team from South-eastern Victoria Region, we have offered topics as diverse as Victor Reader, Braille Music, NVDA, Pearl Camera and local braille production.

Staff from the SVRC are able to tailor PD to your needs. A recent session by Garry Stinchcombe about Victor Reader was held via Polycom to a group in rural Victoria. Here's some feedback from the VT who attended:

I would like to thank you sincerely for your wonderful presentation yesterday via VC regarding the VRS. Thank you for giving up your time to help us all out in better understanding the many features of this device. I know that we all felt inspired and better able to use it more effectively. Please accept our group thanks.

Photos above show a recent workshop conducted by Lyn Robinson featuring the iPad and Sony camera, and attended by Visiting Teachers from three regions along with a CEO VT from Ballarat via Polycom.

Please note, if you can't see the topic you'd like on our PD calendar, please call or email to arrange a session here in person or via Video Conference Unit. To see the PD calendar, please visit: www.svrc.vic.edu.au/PL.shtml

The Other Film Festival: Invitation to Consultation & Screening

Source: <http://otherfilmfestival.com/>

Arts Access Victoria's The Other Film Festival (TOFF) is now 10 years-old, with five festivals being held since their first event in 2004. Organisers are inviting audiences to contribute to the review of TOFF. Join Arts Access Victoria for a community consultation – an exciting brainstorming session will shape the future of this iconic film festival; and be followed by a screening of highlights.

When: Tuesday 15 September [Consultation: 5pm-7.30pm; screening: 7:30-8:30pm]

Where: South Melbourne Town Hall, 210 Bank St, South Melbourne, 3205

RSVP: by Tuesday 8 September to Mija Gwyn at mgwyn@artsaccess.com.au

Auslan interpreters and catering will be provided.
The screening will be open-captioned and audio-described.



Accessible Computer Game: Snakes and Ladders

Snakes and Ladders is now available as a speech enabled, accessible computer game. It can be played with family or friends or you can play against the computer.

Features of the game:

- Five different board layouts with different positions and number of snakes and ladders.
- Up to four players can play the game at a time.
- When you purchase the game you will get a license number which you can activate & deactivate (handy if you update your computer).
- Use any of the installed computer voices for playing the game.
- Set the speech rate and volume to suit.
- Save the game at any time.
- If you are using a Screen Reader like NVDA or JAWS, you can turn off the interface voice of the game so that it doesn't conflict with the screen reader.
- Shortcut commands are available.
- Compatible with Windows 7 and 8 and requires Microsoft Office 2007 or higher to run.

View a video which shows the controls, voice output and the way the game is played, visit:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J_5yvjtICmI&feature=youtu.be

To purchase the game, visit: www.sparshproducts.com/

Paths to Transition

The Perkins eLearning site has recently announced a new website – Paths to Transition – which focuses on preparing youth with vision impairments, including those with multiple disabilities or deafblindness, for adult life. The site offers guidelines, activities, and resources for teachers, families and others. Sections include:

- Independent Living <http://support.perkins.org/site/R?i=KgBGenlVi7ECz558PShcZQ>
- Job Development http://support.perkins.org/site/R?i=2uPQNgPjJB-_Yrw72IwWEA
- Preparing for College <http://support.perkins.org/site/R?i=XV7gcixSMm07n1r0MQiGtQ>
- Preparing for Work <http://support.perkins.org/site/R?i=gctQx05n3De4t2qliD-2Ww>
- The Transition Timeline offers guidelines on when and where to start.
<http://support.perkins.org/site/R?i=pXAv7PoFNLxQ4lsKzDizZA>

Visit: www.perkinselearning.org/transition

Other Perkins eLearning sites include:

Paths to Literacy: www.pathstoliteracy.org/

Wonderbaby.org: www.wonderbaby.org/

AFL Football

Free introductory football clinics are being offered for people of all abilities over 16 years of age.

When: Tuesday 1st, 8th and 15th September 2015 from 1pm to 2.30pm

Where: Mentone Reserve – Venice Street, Mentone

RSVP to Megan Grant, MetroAccess Officer, Kingston City Council by Thursday 27th August 2015 via email megan.grant@kingston.vic.gov.au

All participants will receive a football!

Award: “Stay Still, Squeaky!”

From Phia Damsma, Sonokids Australia

Sonokids’ interactive, accessible, audio eBook “Stay Still, Squeaky!” was shortlisted in the “Most Accessible Children’s App” category of the 2015 Apps For All Challenge!

The Challenge acknowledges those Australian developed apps which are most accessible for all consumers, including consumers living with a disability or older Australians. It is sponsored by Telstra, and organised by The Australian Communications Consumer Action Network (ACCAN), Australia’s peak body for consumer representation in communications.

“Stay Still, Squeaky!” is available from the Sonokids Ballyland website www.ballyland.com or from the iTunes Store:

<https://itunes.apple.com/au/book/stay-still-squeaky!/id955814086?mt=11&ls=1>

All shortlisted apps in the ACCAN Apps for All Challenge 2015 can be found here:

<http://accan.org.au/news-items/hot-issues/1088-apps-for-all-challenge-shortlist-announced>

Vale John Shute

From the Jordie Howell via the OzBrl list: Many of you who attended the National Braille Music Camps will know of John Shute: braille music transcriber, musician, organist, choir conductor and friend. I am very sad to inform you that after a long battle with cancer, John passed away yesterday morning at 6:15 with his wife June beside him. John’s funeral will be held on Friday 28 August at 10:30 AM at Springvale. Further details will be in next Monday’s paper.

News

- **Chris Mitchell** from Bendigo Senior Secondary College has successfully completed the SVRC Braille Course by Correspondence and from all reports, she did a very good job of it!!! Well done Chris!
- **Denise Probert** has been drawn back from retirement to work as a VT in North-western Region!
- **Helen Caldow**, VT from NEVR, will be taking in the European sights until 5th October – rather nice!
- **Sharon Saunders**, VT from SEVR, is also away and off overseas for happy European holidays – also rather nice!

Finally

Editor Deb Lewis would like to thank everyone for their contribution to this issue of The Bulletin particularly Odette Budge, Fran Gentle, Jordie Howell, Lyn Robinson and Garry Stinchcombe.