

The Bulletin

Number 16, Friday 23rd October 2015

Professional Development

- **SVRC Technology Expo from 10am to 2pm:** 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

Message to VCE Students

With the VCE English exam coming up on 28th October, the staff of the Statewide Vision Resource Centre would like to take this opportunity to wish students sitting Units 3 and 4 exams all the very best – both for their exams and for life after school!

We'd love to hear about your results and the further study and/or work that you undertake so stay in touch via email: svrc@svrc.vic.edu.au or via the SVRC Facebook page.

VCE English Podcasts

Every Sunday throughout the year 774 ABC radio broadcaster Libby Gorr runs a segment called "Sunday School" where she talks to people about novels on the Year 12 VCE English list.

Fortunately these wonderful interviews are then put up on the 774 ABC radio website as podcasts and make great listening for students studying or revising VCE English.

<http://www.abc.net.au/local/stories/2015/05/04/4229133.htm>

Hear Daniel Speaking Vision Extra & Focal Point - 1197am 5RPH Adelaide

Source: BCA Parent News

Peter Greco of RPH Adelaide interviews Daniel Dalton (VCE 2012) about his experiences at school and university including his internship with Google.

www.rphadelaide.org.au/links/VE.mp3

SVRC Requests!

On Wednesday we received 59 requests for braille materials for 2016! Get your request in soon so that your materials go into the production queue!

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ClaroSpeak Plus

Source: <https://itunes.apple.com/au/app/clarospeak-plus/id845128025?mt=8>

ClaroSpeak is a reading and writing app with a high-quality text-to-speech voice that has been used widely by the Technology Teachers in the Support Skills Programme. ClaroSpeak Plus is now available with some added features. Here are some of the things ClaroSpeak Plus can do:

- ClaroSpeak Plus includes a "Capture Text from Photo" feature with high quality Optical Character Recognition
- ClaroSpeak provides visual highlighting in-sync with spoken words.
- Type into ClaroSpeak and have the text read back to you. You can check text and proofread it quickly and easily.
- You can import documents into ClaroSpeak from Mail, or import directly from Dropbox or Google Drive using ClaroSpeak's integration. ClaroSpeak can open a range of document formats including Word doc, PDF and epub.
- Text from any app can be copied and pasted into ClaroSpeak ready to be read back.
- Apple's speech recognition can be used to dictate text directly into ClaroSpeak, and can be listened back to ensure it is right. Apple spell check works in ClaroSpeak too, further helping accuracy.
- Word prediction helps with writing more quickly and accurately. Train dictionaries from the current text so the best suggestions come up first. Enable Claro autocorrect and ClaroSpeak will use our specifically designed correction list to automatically correct misspelt words as they are typed.
- Change the font type, size or colour to suit your needs. Layout the text for easier reading by adjusting the character, line and paragraph spacing and adjusting the page margins. Text can be formatted bold, italic and underlined to emphasise. Images can be inserted into the text from the camera or your library.
- Save to Audio. Convert any text into an audio file using any of the high-quality voices. This is quick and easy, allowing text to be listened to on the move. Great for proofreading on the go.
- Share your text. Text created within ClaroSpeak can be emailed, messaged, printed, opened in another app, or copied and pasted into another app, like Safari. Sending the text to Facebook and Twitter lets you join in with social media.

Listening Skills

Good listening skills are very important for students who are blind or have vision impairments. The 'Teaching ideas' website has lots of teaching ideas and resources which are free and shared via the web and Facebook. They also have a good section on teaching listening skills. Here is a link to their 'Listening pack' to improve children's listening skills.

<https://www.teachingpacks.co.uk/the-listening-skills-pack/>

MS Office Online Training

Did you know that there are online training modules available from The Department of Education and Training (DET) in MS Office 2010 applications such as **Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook, Project and Visio**. The courses are available on eduGate for DET Staff you will need your DET username and password to access.

Go to the following link and browse for courses.

<https://edugate.eduweb.vic.gov.au/OLT/Courses/Forms/Desktop.aspx>

Live Eye Gaze Webinars

Source: www.inclusive.co.uk

Eye Gaze by Inclusive Technology is a program used to develop communication and choice making skills using eye gaze. In doing so the program aims to develop the visual skills of children who use the program. The following information is from the Inclusive technologies website:

The Inclusive Eye Gaze Learning Curve – From Cause and Effect to Communication and Learning

The first ever collection of 54 fun and engaging interactive activities specially created to teach early eye gaze access and develop choice making skills.

This collection takes children on the learning curve from assessment and cause and effect understanding through to using eye gaze for communication, learning and leisure. Inclusive Eye Gaze can be used by teachers and therapists as an assessment tool to determine visual skills and potential use of eye gaze and as a progressive teaching tool that provides structure and lots of opportunities for practice at each level.

All children on their first steps with eye gaze can use these activities to improve their accuracy and understanding of eye gaze in preparation for using other communication and learning software. By using relevant vocabulary, pictures and sounds and lots of variety, the activities will also offer many opportunities for children with additional needs to develop early interaction, communication and learning skills.

Inclusive Technology is offering FREE Online Professional Development webinars. These are fully interactive, live online events. These presentations are available to view at a later date in the archive section. As Inclusive Technology is based in the UK this might provide a more suitable way of accessing the webinars here in Australia.

Part 1: Choosing an Eye Gaze System

Part 2: Eye Gaze for Assessment

Part 3: Eye Gaze for Inclusion

Part 4: Eye Gaze for Engagement - 4th November

Part 5: Eye Gaze for Empowerment - 10th November

For more information go to: <http://www.inclusive.co.uk/events/webinars>

Handsfree: Mastering Switch Control with iOS

Source: <https://itunes.apple.com/au/book/handsfree/id1040716154?mt=13>

This is a free book about using switch control with your iPad or other iOS device. It is available for download from iTunes.

Switch Control is a powerful accessibility feature that is built into iOS and OS X to allow users who are unable to use a touchscreen handsfree access beyond simple taps. With Switch Control, users with motor difficulties can perform most multi-touch gestures control many of the media playback features of their devices and more. This book is an international collaboration between Christopher Hills, an Accessibility Consultant and expert Switch Control user from Australia, and Luis Perez, an inclusive learning consultant based in the U.S.

The book covers the latest Switch Control features introduced in iOS 9.

Student Writing: Dreamtime Story

By Shana (Grade 4). Produced on her BrailleNote, October 2015

A long long time ago in Australia there were very contented people known as aborigines.

The animals were very contented too, there were kangaroos, wallabies, koalas, lizards and snakes and other animals that lived in trees like parrots and beautiful colourful birds.

The trees had fresh soft leaves and the land had beautiful white, pink and soft yellow flowers. They had lots of delectable food and fresh fruit and vegetables. There were shellfish to be collected and fish to be caught.

Then one day, there was a prodigious boat arrived, along with eleven altogether and unloaded all these strange white people.

Some of them joined together with chains and others were wearing bright red jackets.

They also unloaded animals like rabbits, cats, rams, horses, dogs, chickens, sheep, goats, cows and lots of other animals. The animals were getting overexcited that they all jumped off the boat and ran all over the place. The animals took all the food from the Australian animals.

Then the next day the next boat unloaded European men and more animals. The Europeans cut down all the trees and the koalas were very sad and homeless. The horses, rabbits and cows took all the grass from the kangaroos and wallabies and they were very hungry so they passed away.

The white men built big fences to keep their animals in, and this stopped the aboriginal people from hunting across their land.

They had to move away from the Europeans.

Soon a disease called small pox began to spread through the aboriginal people. Lots of them got very sick so they died.

The aboriginals became very sad because the land was no longer theirs.

The end.

Vacancy for Braille Aide

Genazzano FCJ College is currently advertising for a Braille Transcriber / Some Classroom Assistance. The position is full time and ongoing. The position requires applicants to be "highly proficient in Duxbury software, braille embossers, PIAF machine use, Picture Braille software and OCR scanning technology, including the PEARL Camera with OpenBook software". A current Working with Children Check is required.

For application and further information please contact: humanresources@genazzano.vic.edu.au or on (03) 8862 1004 or visiting the College website at www.genazzano.vic.edu.au

Closing date for applications is Friday 30 October 2015.

Q&A: Music Notation with Low Vision

Recently we received a question from a Visiting Teacher wanting to know how a student with low vision could access his music on an iPad while playing a trumpet. The student, although ok with regular print at near distance, required his music to be slightly enlarged as the iPad would be on a stand placed outside his normal viewing range. The question was put to several people at the SVRC who had some excellent ideas which we thought we should share.

1. Ensure the student has the right equipment e.g. set up the student with a Bluetooth page turner such as Page Flip Cicada – this is a Bluetooth foot pedal which can be used to turn the pages of music on the iPad. Learn more about the Page Flip Cicada at: www.pageflip.com/
2. If necessary reformat the music notation so that the enlarged page fits on the screen and smoothly transitions from one page to the next. This may require editing the music notation so that there are only one or two bars on the page. Software that can be used for music desktop publishing includes Sibelius, Harmony Assistant and OMR (a music scanning app). Regular OCR software does not scan music notation well and does not allow editing. Coincidentally, Kevin Blazé is holding a workshop on this topic, refer below.



Music Workshop: Playing from notation and managing a library of music books on your iPad

By Kevin Blazé

Musicians used to carry around books of notation and spend hours shuffling paper into folders for performances or trying to find the right charts during performances. No more! There are various apps that you can use to solve these problems.

In this hands-on workshop, we'll take you through the process of creating electronic charts from paper versions, importing them into the iPad, creating set-lists and managing large collections, e.g. Real Books. We'll be using ForScore (iPad only) and iGigBook (Android and iPad).

Now, you can carry the books on your device, find the right pieces quickly, organise them into performance 'books' (not printed!) prior to the performance or quickly, on the fly, during a performance. And, at the performance, use an electronic page-turner to move through the notation.

What: Playing from notation and managing a library of music books on your iPad

When: January 2016 School Holidays

Where: Australian Jazz Museum

Who: Music teachers, instrumentalists and singers of all genres.

Fill in an online form to register at:

<http://learningspark.com.au/teaching-and-training/playing-music-from-your-ipad-or-android-tablet>

Also available by arrangement for schools wanting a workshop during term.

Contact Kevin directly: kevin@learningspark.com.au

BCA Song Competition

Blind Citizens Australia's (BCA) is running a song competition to find a new theme song for its national weekly radio program, New Horizons.

New Horizons is BCA's national weekly radio program. It is a key communication channel for disseminating information about BCA itself and general information of interest to people who are blind or vision-impaired. The program runs for about fifteen minutes and is broadcast via community radio through the RPH network. It is also available for download as a podcast or from the BCA website, www.wordpress.bca.org.au.

Why You Should Enter:

Get national exposure for your music on multiple radio networks and online. Receive support from BCA to release your song as a digital single and help BCA raise much-needed funds.

Enter as an individual, or get together with a group of friends and have fun writing a song together.

What BCA are looking for:

An original song, the lyrics or music which has been written by a person who is blind or vision-impaired. The song does not need to be written specifically for the purpose of this competition and the composers do not have to be the performers.

Judging Criteria:

While it doesn't have to be written specifically for BCA, it does need to contain a theme or message relevant to the work and aspirations of BCA and its members.

Make it Catchy:

A song which captures the attention of listeners. Your song will be played to introduce New Horizons on a weekly basis, so it needs to be memorable and catchy. You should submit a full track, but you may want to identify a short, 30 second extract for the panel to consider. It needs to lend itself to being played as a theme. So a hook or chorus that can be repeated will help your song stand out.

Make it lasting:

BCA last changed the theme of New Horizons almost twenty years ago. So we want your song to stand the test of time and be built to last.

What: New Horizon's Song Competition

When: Launched on 10 October as part of the BCA National Convention in Perth. The closing date for submissions will be Monday, 16 November

How: Send a copy of your song in mp3 format along with a copy of the lyrics and a completed application in electronic format to Blind Citizen's Australia

For more information contact:

Rikki Chaplin

National Advocacy And Policy Officer

Blind Citizens Australia

Level 3, Ross House

247-251 Flinders Lane

Melbourne VIC 3000

Phone: 03 9654 1400

Fax: 03 9650 3200

Toll free: 1800 033 660

Email: Rikki.chaplin@bca.org.au

Exploring Braille with Madilyn and Ruff

From: **Phia Damsma, SPEVI List**

I have not tried it myself, but came across this interesting looking app for iPad (\$ 0.99), which I have added to the SPEVI website.

Description from App Store: Exploring Braille with Madilyn and Ruff is an app for iPad which introduces young children with visual impairments to the Braille alphabet through a fun interactive, multi-sensory approach.

The multi-sensory Braille/Print approach also allows users of all sight levels to learn together, providing opportunities for socialisation through learning.

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/exploring-braille-madilyn/id882909909?mt=8>

Using sound and touch, children will love following along with Madilyn, an enthusiastic little girl who is blind, and her sidekick Ruff, a fun-loving pup, as they learn the alphabet together. Sighted users (including parents and teachers) can follow along on screen with high-quality graphics and visual representations of the Braille and print alphabet.

Designed by the parent and teacher of a blind child, the Exploring Braille App presents the alphabet in a simple and engaging manner to keep everyone interested and learning.

This app presents two instructional methods for teaching all 26 letters and two quiz modes for assessing the child's reading and writing skills. Kids will love the consistency in repetition, sound effects, and characters as they become engaged in learning and play.

Children will learn:

- Letter Names
- Braille Dot Configurations
- to Read the Braille letter (external Refreshable Braille Device needed)
- to Write the Braille letter (external Refreshable Braille Device needed)

News

- VT from Lisa Phillips has resigned from her position in NWVR – we wish her the best for her future!

Finally

Editors Lyn Robinson and Deb Lewis would like to thank everyone for their contribution to this issue of The Bulletin, and in particular Glen Morrow and Kevin Blazé.