

The Bulletin

Number 5, Friday 15th April 2016

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Professional Development 2016

Please find fliers and further information about upcoming events on the SVRC website and to book online please visit: <http://svrc.vic.edu.au/pd>

- **Educational Support for VI Students with Additional Impairments:** Tuesday 19 April
- **Skill Power Workshops:** Wednesday 4 May (see below)
- **Art4Kids with VI?:** Wednesday 11 May
- **Skill Power Workshops:** Tuesday 17 May (see website for details)
- **Skill Power Workshops:** Wednesday 1 June (see website for details)
- **Skill Power Workshops:** Tuesday 14 June (see website for details)

Online registrations for our Professional Learning days including Skill Power sessions are now open for business – please see the website!

Upcoming Skill Power Sessions

Wednesday 4 May

- 9:30-11:00 Reformatting: what, when, how – Lea Nagel
- 11:30-1:00 BrailleNote basics – Lea Nagel
- 1:30-3:00 Organise your life with braille: Labelling with Garry Stinchcombe

New BrailleNote Touch

HumanWare recently announced the launch of the BrailleNote Touch, an Android device offering a refreshable braille display and a tablet with touch screen. The BrailleNote Touch includes a patent-pending TouchBraille input technology allowing users to silently type braille on a touchscreen.

Many of the features of the BrailleNote Apex have been retained – including KeySoft and the context sensitive help. Users will be able to create formatted documents in KeyWord, send and receive emails using KeyMail, and download and read books using VictorReader application. Since the BrailleNote Touch offers access to the Play Store, it is not limited to KeySoft's productivity apps. All this can be done in perfect contracted and uncontracted braille, making it possible to chat in your favourite social media applications like Twitter or Facebook.

PE Day Report

From Lea Nagel

Our annual professional development day on including students with vision impairments in PE and Sport was held last week. A wonderfully enthusiastic group of 21 teachers and school staff and one early childhood educator immersed themselves in dance, Goalball, Blind Cricket, Beep softball, Swish, skipping, running and parachute activities all under simulators for vision impairment.



Participants heard about a wide range of vision impairments and their educational implications, and watched Emily White demonstrate a huge variety of equipment that can be purchased or modified to make PE and Sport more accessible.

Charlie Roberts, our wonderful PE teacher on Support Skills, discussed inclusion, descriptive language, modification and Paralympic sports. It was a physically and mentally demanding day, and very much enjoyed by all!

Studio Arts Q&A

Question: I have a totally blind student in my Studio Arts class this year. A large component of Unit 3-4 Studio Arts involves visiting exhibitions and comparing them in terms of their exhibition design, look and feel (not literally feel unfortunately). How can I provide an inclusive learning environment for this student?

Answer from Art Teacher, Michael Donnelly (specific to the Bendigo area but the general approach can be applied to any major urban or regional centre):

This student is not the first with a vision impairment to study Studio Arts at this level. I would be encouraging your student to work in and investigate 3D art where possible, as well as investigating things like digital sound art possibilities.

May I strongly recommend that you talk to your local art gallery, for example the Bendigo Art Gallery <http://www.bendigoartgallery.com.au/Accessibility> and find out what they can offer in terms of access for your student when accompanied with an adult, also what might be available



through the art faculty at your local University, for example La Trobe University in Bendigo <http://www.latrobe.edu.au/vac>.

Another option is to explore outdoor art installations – in town there is the Heidi MOMA and it is possible to get permission for students with vision impairments to touch the sculptures - there may be installations in your local area that can be touched.

In March there is the Lorne Sculpture Biennale <http://lornesculpture.com/> and your student could visit, compare and contrast works exhibited there, write reports etc.

There will hopefully be another Sculpture Survey at the McClelland Gallery and Sculpture Park in Langwarrin.

There are probably a number of local sculptors who would be open to your student visiting their studios with a sighted buddy. Utmost respectful behaviour required. That way your student might be able to encounter maquettes and works in progress to get a better idea of what art-making might involve. Any of these visits could then be the basis of art essays or critiques.

You may find these links to parts of the SVRC website helpful:

<http://svrc.vic.edu.au/educational-programs/camps-activities/>

<http://svrc.vic.edu.au/curriculum/art/> “Meaningful Art for Children” can be downloaded as a pdf from the page.

Regarding paintings and other 2D work, if there are specific pieces that you want your students to consider and you can't source tactile images to accompany visual descriptions, you can put in a request to SVRC.

As an example of what some international galleries do check out

<http://www.tate.org.uk/learn/online-resources/imap-creative-access> and the links to their tactile images which can be printed off and run through a PIAF machine, if you have access to one.

Upcoming Art Professional Development Day

Michael Donnelly is conducting an Art Professional Development Day – Art4Kids with VI? What to do with the student who is blind or has low vision in my art room? – at the SVRC on 11th May.

This one-day seminar and workshop will investigate options, strategies and issues related to working with and teaching a student who is blind or has low vision in your art room or classroom art-making session.

The day will include:

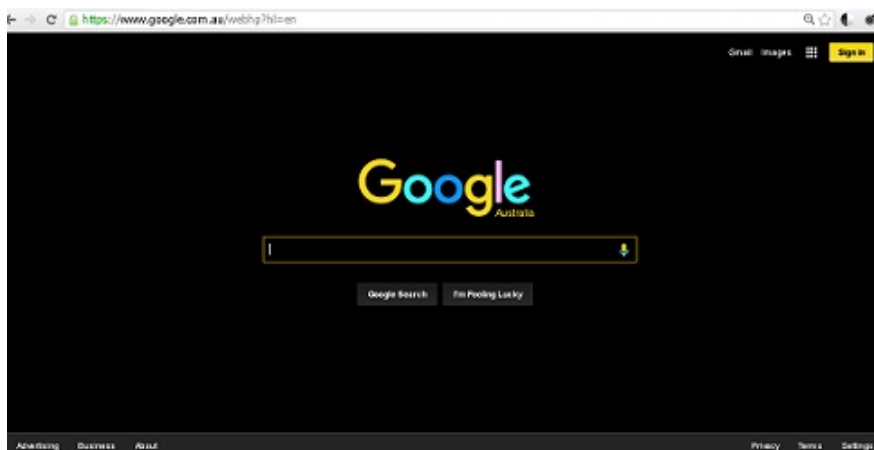
Morning: information on setting up or adjusting the room to better accommodate your student; issues of access to the visual arts; specialist techniques; budget options; and opportunities for “hands-on” art making; and then,

Afternoon: exploration of works of art under blind-fold; investigating the use of visual description, tactile diagrams and touch access.

For more information visit the SVRC website.

Google Chrome: High Contrast

Google Chrome has an accessibility page via the Chromium Projects called **Low Vision Support**. It details options for customising Google Chrome for users with low vision. It mentions ways to enhance the screen, such shortcut keys for changing the print on the screen e.g. “Control and plus” to zoom. You can also adjust the font style and size which is fairly standard but interestingly it mentions there is an extension which you can download called “High Contrast”.



The High Contrast extension allows you to apply several different colour filters which change the look of a web page. The High Contrast options include: a black screen with yellow print, a monochrome screen and the option of a black screen with white print. As this add-on is a filter it does not break links like other ways of modifying the screen.

The High Contrast extension is available from <https://chrome.google.com/webstore/detail/high-contrast/djcfdncoelnbljdjfhinnjldhjljlikmph?hl=en>

iOS 9: Common Siri Commands

Source: AppleVis

Accessibility

- “Show Accessibility Settings”
- “Turn on Voice Over”
- “Turn on Invert Colors”
- “Turn on Guided Access”
- “Turn on Assistive Touch”
- “Show me the Accessibility Settings”
- “Open VoiceOver settings”

Settings

- “Turn on airplane mode”
- “Turn on Wi-Fi”
- “Turn on Bluetooth”
- “Turn on do not disturb”
- “Turn on flashlight”
- “Turn up brightness of display”
- “Make the screen brighter”
- “Display privacy settings”
- “Is Bluetooth on?”

You can also use Siri to set reminders, get directions, play music and you can find out more at: <http://www.applevis.com/guides/ios/ios-7-siri-command-list>

How to Download SVRC eBooks onto the iPad

The Statewide Vision Resource Centre produces a wide range of titles which can be read on iPad. These resources are available for eligible students with vision impairments and include the following file types:

- Word
- pdf
- ePub
- PowerPoint
- other (you let us know what you'd like)

The student will need:

To access these resources, the student will need their own email account on the iPad and they will need access to the internet either at home or at school to receive eBooks from the SVRC.

The iPad will need the following “standard” apps:

- Email account
- Safari - the link sent from SVRC will go to Dropbox on the web
- Dropbox - optional, download from app store if you want student to have their own account
- iBooks

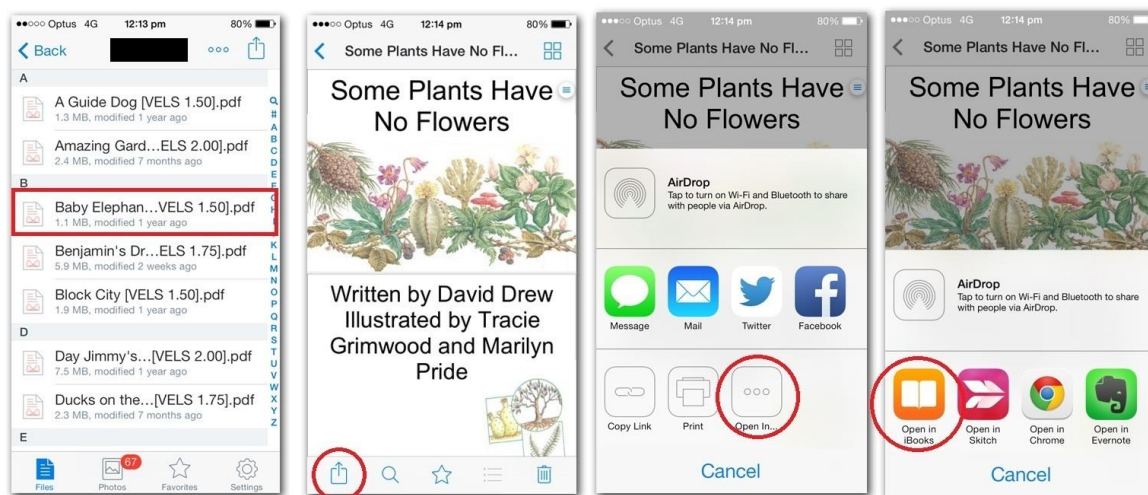
Then what happens:

1. You request a book for iPad (eg ePub, pdf)
2. We send you an email with a Dropbox link

So you open the download link that you find in the email on your iPad by either clicking the link, OR typing it manually into Safari web browser.

Then (see pictures below):

3. Click on the title of the book you want to download to the iPad
4. Open the menu (or click the arrow icon in the bottom corner of the screen)
5. Choose “Open In...” and then “Open in iBooks”
6. Done! The book is now saved to the iPad and the student can access it at any time with the iBooks app.



1. Click the title of the book to download

2. Once the book has loaded, click the arrow icon in the bottom corner of screen.

3. Click “Open In...”

4. Click “Open in iBooks”. The book will now be stored on the iPad

New Android App: Soft Braille Keyboard

Source: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/158297667517505/>

Daniel Dalton has designed an app which is now available on the Google Play Store. Soft Braille Keyboard presents itself as a standard Android input method and can be used in any application where a keyboard is displayed to enter text. This enables an experienced braille typist to exceed the typing speeds of sighted users across all of their applications.

Two keyboard layouts are supported (shown right). A conventional horizontal layout for large screens like tablets and a vertical layout suitable for smaller displays like phones. In both modes you can type using the standard braille fingers and use convenient gestures to manipulate and read the text input. The user guide and troubleshooting details are available: <https://goo.gl/O2UHN9>



Outside Play & Myopia

Source: Centre for Eye Research Australia

Spending more time playing outside could protect children from short-sightedness as they grow up, according to a study published this week by Professor Mingguang He from the Centre for Eye Research Australia (CERA).

The study, published in the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA), examined the effect of 40 minutes of additional outside activity daily on the eyesight of Grade 1 primary school children in China. The children were monitored for 3 years and the researchers found that the extra time outdoors resulted in a 23% reduction in the incident rate of myopia (short-sightedness), compared to children who did not participate in any additional outdoor play time. The results were measured using annual cycloplegic refraction tests and examinations of the eye anatomy.

More information: <http://www.cera.org.au/2015/09/eye-spy-a-good-reason-to-play-outside/>

Art Exhibition: New16

From Michael Donnelly

The Australian Centre for Contemporary Art (near Malthouse) is hosting an interesting exhibition, NEW16, from 5 March to 8 May 2016.

NEW16 brings together eight newly commissioned projects by emerging artists around Australia and involves a number of artworks with sound and interactivity. One project particularly targets people who have vision impairments and offers a braille label.

The following website includes video links that give tastes and brief explanations of the works: <https://www.accaonline.org.au/exhibition/new16>.

Where: ACCA, 111 Sturt Street Southbank Victoria 3006
Entry is free.

NDIS: Our Choice Expo

When: Tuesday 7th June 2016

Time: 12 noon to 7.30pm

VALiD invites you to visit the Our Choice Expo featuring a wide range of services (day activity, leisure, personal care), equipment, training, early intervention, housing, technology and other supports available for participants of the NDIS.

This expo is of particular interest to North East Metro residents looking to be informed and prepared for the transition to the NDIS (including Banyule, Darebin, Nillumbik, Whittlesea and Yarra).

For more information please see www.valid.org.au

Focus on Ability Short Film Competition

The Focus on Ability short film competition is open again. The challenge is to produce a short film or documentary of maximum length 5 minutes. The underlying theme of your entry should be: Focus on ~~dis~~Ability – that is, dis (crossed out) Ability. Prizes of over \$140,000 are available.

For more information see www.focusonability.com.au

Rio Paralympics 2016: Brief Synopsis

When: 7 to 18 September 2016

Number of athletes: 4,350

Number of countries represented: 176

Medal events: 528

Number of sports to be contested: 23 (including GoalBall and Football 5-a-side)

Football 5-a-side had its Paralympic debut in Athens 2004. It's a men's event for which the four outfield players must wear eye shades; the ball makes a sound that players can follow. Two teams try to outscore each other and are directed by their coach, guide and goalkeeper (who are not vision impaired).

For lots more Paralympic information visit: <http://www.rio2016.com/en/paralympics>

Vacancies

- St Marys Parish Primary School in St Kilda East are looking for a Learning Support Officer (Integration Aide) for 20 hours per week. They are hoping to find someone who is familiar with braille. For more information please contact Ms Anna Side (03) 9510 7420.
- A maths tutor – about grade 3 or 4 primary level – is required in the Greensborough area. This position would suit a retired teacher or uni student, or an older student with a vision impairment. Contact Antoinette on 0432 031805.

Braille Music Camp 2016

When: Saturday 25th June to 2nd July 2016

Where: Mittagong, NSW

More information: please contact Jordie Howell

Bullying. No Way! Take a Stand Together

Support Skills participated in the *Bullying. No Way! Take a Stand Together* workshop along with 1800 other schools across Australia as part of the *National Day of Action against Bullying and Violence*.

Lyn Robinson prepared the following supporting resource for parents.

Bullying. No Way! Take a Stand Together

At Support Skills we aim to create a safe and supportive school community for everyone. Sometimes, it can be difficult for parents or carers to know what to do when their child talks to them about bullying. You are an important part of our work to prevent bullying and to respond effectively if it happens. Stopping bullying involves everyone.

If your child talks to you about bullying:

- 1. Listen** calmly and get the full story. Your calm response is important to allow your child to tell you all about the situation. After they've told you their story, ask questions to get more details if you need to: who, what, where, when. Although you may feel some strong emotions about your child's experience, try to keep calm to avoid more distress to your child.
- 2. Reassure** your child they are not to blame. Many children blame themselves and this may make them feel even worse. You could say things like, 'That sounds really hard to deal with. No one should have to put up with that.' or 'I'm so glad you told me. You should be able to feel safe at school; that's not fair at all'.
- 3. Ask** your child what they want to do and what they want you to do. A critical part of your response is to avoid jumping in to solve the problem. While it is natural to want to protect your child, helping them to find their own solution is a better option. It helps them feel they have some power in the situation.
- 4. Visit** www.bullyingnoway.gov.au to find some strategies. The website has tips and ideas for different bullying situations. One idea is to practise strategies at home to help your child feel more confident.
- 5. Contact** the school. Your child may be reluctant for you to do this, so discuss the idea and reassure them that the school would want to know and is able to help. Make an appointment to meet with your child's teacher and, if you need to, ask to talk with the principal. Contact the school immediately if you have a concern about your child's safety.
- 6. Check** in regularly with your child. Keep the conversation going. It can take time to resolve issues, so check in regularly with your child about their experiences and their feelings. Your ongoing support is important.

More SSP News: Swimming Program and Carnival

SSP students from all groups have been invited to participate in the 2016 Swimming Program and Carnival to be held in term 2 – and so far, 39 have registered their interest!

Emily White and Charlie Roberts, along with an O&M from Guide Dogs Victoria, will take a group to the Box Hill Aquatic Centre each Friday morning for a training session. Students will travel via public transport to the pool and return to the SVRC via maxi taxi.

The Swimming Carnival will be held at Genazzano College in Kew. It will be a half day program and family members are invited to attend – details will be sent to families.

SVRC and Student News

- Three Space Camp 2016 hopefuls were given a boost over the school holidays, winning scholarships to attend SCIVIS! SCIVIS in cooperation with the St. Louis Lighthouse for the Blind is generously funding the weeklong experience. The scholarship includes program materials, airfare to and from your home airport to Huntsville, lodging and meals while in Huntsville. Congratulations to **Claudia, Ingrid and Matthew!**
- **Guy** – is now working part time at his local Foodworks – congratulations to Guy!!!
- **Zac**, the golden boy from Bendigo, is back in the news (Stepping up to the Crease: see below)!

Stepping up to the Crease

Source and for more: Bendigo Senior Secondary College: www.bssc.edu.au/news/stepping-up-to-the-crease/

Zac has never let his lack of vision stand in the way of his “vision”, and particularly his love of sport. From the age of seven he began following his older brother to footy training; running around with the boys.

“Sport has always been a given for me,” he says. “My dad and my pop both played cricket, so I guess you could say it’s in my blood.”

Zac travels to Melbourne every weekend to play for St Pauls in the Victorian Blind Cricket Association and (at the time of writing) is also training with the National Squad in preparation for the Ashes series in Adelaide.

“I went to my first training clinic when I was 14, and a year later was playing against adults,” he says. “At 15 I was playing against guys as old as 40. I remember facing one pace bowler who was sending them down at about 90 ks an hour. I’m sure that helped fast track my skills.

“I also play a sport called Swish, which is kind of like table tennis, but with a board instead of a net, and sides on the table. It’s a fast paced game and good for the reflexes... I’m sure it helps my cricket as well.”

School has naturally presented more challenges for Zac than most of his peers, but with the help of assistive technologies such as JAWS (a screen reader application) and electronic braille devices, he completed Year 12 in 2015 and now has his heart set on a career in sports management.

“The environment at BSSC really worked for me,” he says. “The staff at the college treat you like an adult and put a lot of trust in you. You realise very quickly that you need to be self-reliant and take control of your studies.

“I had an aide with me in most classes, and my teachers were great. Simon Wood, my English teacher, supported me every step of the way, and Paul Seery was a great PE teacher. The prac sessions were often really challenging, but my classmates were amazing and always stepped in when I needed a hand.”

When I ask Zac the highlight of his two years at the college, it’s not being named BSSC Sports Star of the Year, or even BSSC’s success in the State Cricket Titles; though they both come close. “Definitely the day the BSSC footy team played a curtain raiser at the MCG before the Carlton/Collingwood game.

“I love footy with a passion. My pop bought me my first Essendon membership ticket when I was five. So to be in the rooms at the G before and after the game was magic.

“Walking down the race – sitting on the bench during the game – it was easy to imagine what it would be like to be an AFL coach. I was able to soak up all the atmosphere; hear the reactions and interactions of the players on the field.

“Even though the boys lost, everyone was just so rapt to be there. Not too many 17-year olds from the bush get to run around on the G.”

Farewell to Dianne Skillern!

After 27 fun-filled years with the Department of Education, most of those with the Statewide Vision Resource Centre, Dianne retired at the end of 2016! So:

The Statewide Vision Resource Centre
Cordially invites you to attend the retirement afternoon tea
In honour of
Dianne Skillern
“Celebrating nearly 30 years in Vision Impaired Education”

At the Statewide Vision Resource Centre
370 Springvale Road
Donvale.

Tuesday 26th April at 3:00
RSVP: 22nd April to Jacky 9841 0242
Donation towards a gift is appreciated.

Finally

Editors Deb Lewis and Lyn Robinson would like to thank everyone for their contribution to this issue of The Bulletin.