

Number 16, Friday 29 October, 2021

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## PD events

The 2022 [Professional Learning Calendar](#) is now available on the SVRC website. Most PD will continue to be held online, but some are planned to be onsite. Please encourage school staff to [register for PD through our website](#).

### **Tuesday Nov 23** [EXPO: Assistive Technology for students who are blind or partially sighted](#)

Showcasing & demonstrating assistive technologies that can promote inclusion & achievement for students who are blind or have low vision

### **Tuesday Feb 8** [Inclusion of students who are blind](#)

Providing practical strategies for classroom teachers and ES staff to promote inclusion and achievement for their students who are blind.

### **Tuesday Feb 15** [Inclusion of students who have low vision](#)

Practical strategies for classroom teachers and ES staff to promote inclusion and achievement for their students who have low vision.

### **Tuesday Feb 22** [Inclusion of students with vision impairments and additional disabilities](#)

Providing practical strategies that teachers and ES staff can use to support students with a vision impairment and additional disabilities.

## From the Manager

Source: Kim Foley, Manager, SVRC

SVRC's student-facing programs have been operating online since May 28, when the first of this year's lockdowns was announced. Our programs are unique and they involve multiple students from multiple schools. Many of our students are immune compromised and in the age groups that have not had the opportunity to be vaccinated. We have small offices, which become classrooms and, even with air purifiers, cannot easily be ventilated. The School Operations Guide, dated November 1, states, "minimise cohort mixing-There are no prescribed requirements, however schools must take steps to minimise wherever possible".

Therefore, the safety of our students and staff is our first priority, so SVRC will continue to provide all our services online for the remainder of 2021. This includes, Support Skills, the Support Skills Try Day (November 19), Dot Power and the Expo (November 23). We look forward to welcoming students and families back onsite at SVRC in 2022.

The advertised SSP Physical Education Teacher position has been offered and accepted by Lauren Devenish. Lauren will start working on SSP in 2022 and will participate in an online SSP sessions this week. We look forward to welcoming Lauren to the SVRC staff and students next year.

Cameron Algie has written a book, "I Can See Clearly Now" as a result of his lived experience with vision loss and his 14 years as Facilitator of Peer Support Groups with Vision Australia. It is a comprehensive, highly readable guide for the blind and vision impaired, their sighted families and friends, professionals, service providers and employers. It shows how someone can successfully adjust to vision impairment, and dispels fears, misinformation and prejudices.

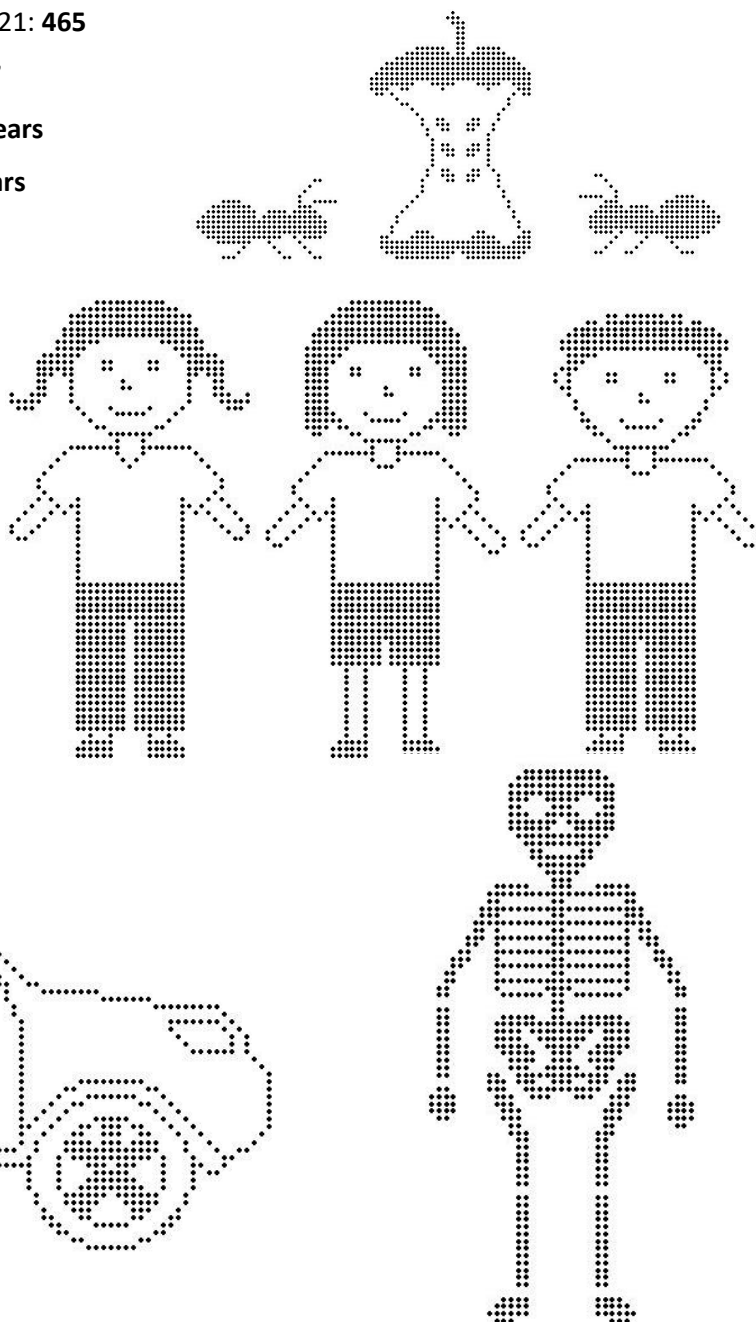
Gary Stinchcombe, former teacher, Deputy Head, Burwood School for the Blind, and SVRC Support Skills Program Coordinator says "This book would be a valuable resource for people currently experiencing vision loss, family members, friends, colleagues and professionals working in the field".

[You can purchase Cameron's book via the website](#)

## Ozzie Dots Sets 1-10 ... and some Stats for the Statistically-Curious!

For Victorian beginning braille readers, the mostly-new Ozzie Dots 2020 Sets 1-10 are now ready for you. An updated list of titles (all 570 of them) is also available! We'll send the updated files out to organisations that have purchased Ozzie Dots. In the meantime, enjoy these stats!

- Number of books in sets 1-10: **570**
- Number of new books produced in 2020 and 2021: **424**
- Estimated number of pages in total that have been written, brailled, illustrated, proofed: **4,560**
- Estimated number of unique illustrations: **4,000**
- Number of Victorian students who have read Ozzie Dots in 2020 and 2021: **17**
- Number of books requested in 2020 & 2021: **465**
- Average number of books per student: **27**
- Youngest student reading Ozzie Dots: **3 years**
- Oldest student reading Ozzie Dots: **16 years**
- Most requested books in Set 1:
  - I like pizza (8)
  - I like my pets (7)
  - The volcano (7)
- Most requested books in Set 2:
  - Slob the smelly dog (5)
  - Yucky pizza (5)
- Deb's favourite book:
  - 1c book 5 Tadpole



Images from Ozzie Dots books show 2 ants and an apple core, 3 characters with Jo on the left, a Toyota RAV4, and a skeleton.

## Preparing your school for inclusion of a student who uses braille

Source: Marion Blaze, Support Skills and Professional Learning, SVRC

On the morning of October 19, SVRC hosted an online professional learning activity for 25 educators involved in supporting braille-reading students in transition. Di Bennett and I were joined online by 11 Visiting Teachers (Vision), 8 educators welcoming a year 7 student, 2 welcoming foundation students, 2 supporting a student transitioning from print to braille, as well as a teacher and a technology expert from Queensland.

Participants were equipped with answers to questions such as: How will I get braille? How will my student who is blind fit in? What technology will my student need? We were delighted by a special presentation from Paris and Nicole, who supported a braille-reading student entering Foundation in 2018. Thank you Paris and Nicole for sharing some inspirational and practical ideas and tips.

Thank you to Naomi Thompson for managing Eventbrite and registrations, Michael Kelly for all the technology support and Di Bennett for preparation and presentations. It takes a team!!

### Braille Maths Q&A

**Question:** In a Maths division sum where the answer has a remainder, for example the answer is 85 r1, should there be a letter sign (grade 1 indicator) in front of the r?

**Answer:** This sort of thing usually comes down to whether the "r" and the number are spaced or unspaced.

That is:

r1 (unspaced) **would not** need the grade 1 indicator.

r 1 (spaced) **would** need the grade 1 indicator (otherwise it would say "rather 1").

In your example, we're talking about remainders, which are usually unspaced - r1 - so no grade 1 indicator is needed.

### Happiness

Source: Sienna, Grade 2, St Therese's Primary School

If happiness was a colour it would be the colour of a beautiful sunset,  
If happiness was a smell it would be the scent of roses,  
If happiness was a sound it would be the sound of me laughing with my friends,  
If you could touch happiness it would feel like the fur of a guide dog,  
If you could taste happiness it would taste like plain pasta with butter.

### Challenge vlog

Source: Via the Paths to Literacy Blog

Smile Squad is a YouTube channel that creates positive challenges celebrating diverse communities. Recently they did a challenge with Jessie, an American woman with retinitis pigmentosa. The video shows how she gets around, shopping (including use of the "Be my eyes" app), cooking and then finally going to the cinemas. The video is called [How do blind people watch movies?](#)

## **Lego Braille Brick Kits Online Course**

Source: Tony Wu, Vision Australia

In October 2021 the LEGO Foundation is launching a new on-demand learning course called "Future Learn: Learning through play with LEGO Braille Bricks." The purpose is to reach more educators and therapists (aka practitioners), so they can understand and learn about this innovative pedagogical method. The course is intended for practitioners working with blind or low vision children to use this unique and playful hands-on tool. By the end of the course practitioners will be able to: (1) teach pre-braille and braille in an inclusive setting, (2) apply a play-based method, (3) create their own braille activities and lesson plans and (4) collaborate with peers to further develop the programme. The LEGO Foundation hope that at the end of the course practitioners will feel a new confidence on how to create a fun, interactive programme for their students and get creative with the bricks in their classrooms!

About the course:

- Location: [Virtual via Future Learn](#)
- Open for registration: 11 October 2021 – can be taken on-demand anytime thereafter
- Length: 8 weeks, 2 hours per week, with active discussion encouraged. Course certificate received upon completion
- Accessibility: The course and course platform is accessible to all learners
- Watch the introductory video to learn more!

### **And finally ...**

Question: What does a lion have in common with an eagle?

Answer: They are both made up of 12 dots