

The Bulletin

Number 17, Monday 25 November 2019

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Dates for Your Diary

For upcoming professional learning at SVRC along with programs, registration & online payment, visit the SVRC [professional learning page](#).

- **Tuesday 26 November 2019** [EXPO – Assistive technology for students who are blind or partially sighted](#)
Showcasing and demonstrating a range of assistive technologies that can promote inclusion and achievement for students who are blind or have low vision. Free
- **Tuesday 10 December:** **SVRC Christmas Morning Tea – all welcome! Please RSVP**
- **12-15 January 2020:** [SPEVI Conference in Adelaide](#)

Job Opportunities at SVRC

There are currently two new positions on DET's Recruitment Online. Position number 1179237 is for an Administration Officer, full-time, ongoing. Position number 1179245 is for a Braille Transcription Officer, full-time, fixed term (21/12/2019 to 12/07/2020).

Space Camp 2020

From Marion Blazé

In 2018, a group of three students went to Space Camp in the US with two DET Visiting Teacher chaperones. We currently have a potential nine students interested in attending Space Camp in September 2020.

An expression of interest is available on the back page of the PDF of this issue of The Bulletin. Please share this with your staff to assist us to find three suitable chaperones.

If you have any questions about Space Camp or this process, please don't hesitate to contact me.



3D Printed Resources @ SVRC

From: Sarah Hayman, Vision Technology Library, SVRC

The Periodic Table of Elements is a key part of the study of Chemistry. We have recently designed and 3D printed some Periodic Tables with a twist. In our models, the height of each element represents a particular property. So far, we have printed models for two of these properties: atomic radius and first ionisation energy.

A little bit of VCE Chemistry for you now. Atomic radius is a measurement of the radius of an atom. It generally increases going down the Periodic Table and decreases going from left to right across the Periodic Table. First ionisation energy is a measure of the energy required to remove one electron from an atom. It generally decreases going down the Periodic Table and increases going from left to right across the Periodic Table.

These are the second version of the models as Garry Stinchcombe has already provided excellent feedback on their first incarnation. We are going to trial these models with a student studying VCE Chemistry as a companion to the usual tactile diagrams. Hopefully these models will provide another way for students to understand the trends of the Periodic Table.

Image 1: A white 3D model on a black background. The height of the model represents the atomic radius of each element on the Periodic Table.

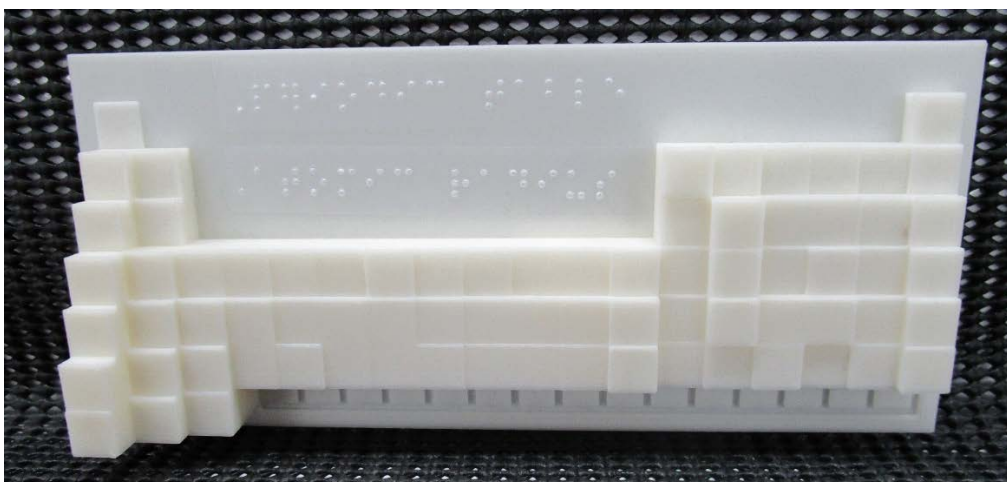
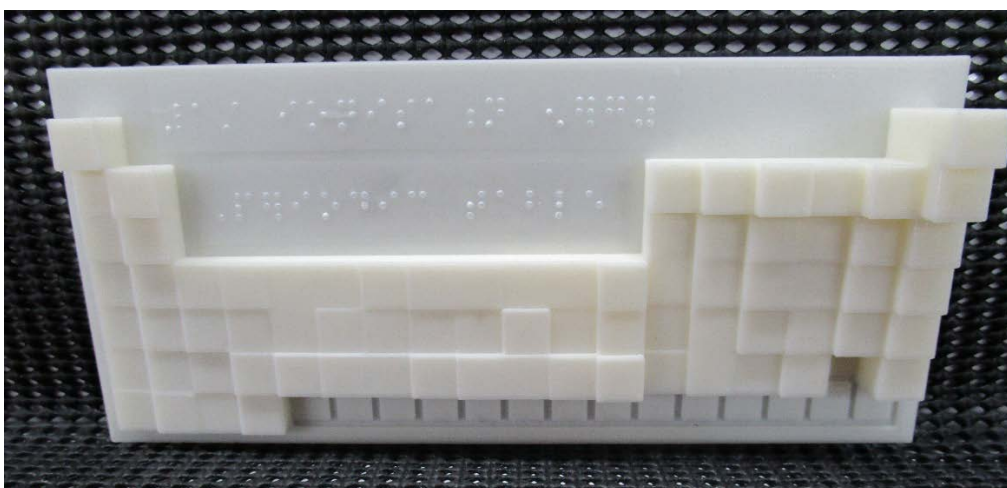


Image 2: A white 3D model on a black background. The height of the model represents the first ionisation energy of each element on the Periodic Table.



New Ozzie Dots Books!

By Deb Lewis, SVRC

In readiness for the new school year, we have over 200 new books in Sets 1-5 of Ozzie Dots. For each contraction, there are now 10 or more books to choose from, allowing those supporting students who are learning braille a wider range of books from which to choose. Books are fully illustrated and some contain activity pages such as matching exercises, wonder-words etc.

Contractions in Ozzie Dots are introduced sequentially so words in these new books include only contractions that have been introduced in previous sets as follows:

- **Set 1a** has only “like” as a contraction
- **Set 1b** has only “like” and “can” as contractions
- **Set 1c** has only “like”, “can” and “it” as contractions
- **Set 1d** has only “like”, “can”, “it” and “the” as contractions
- **Set 1e** has only “like”, “can:”, “it”, “the” and “go” as contractions
- **Set 2a** has only “like”, “can:”, “it”, “the”, “go” and “do” as contractions
- and so on ...

Contractions featured in Sets 1-5 include:

Set	a	b	c	d	e
1	like	can	it	the	go
2	do	you	will	not	little
3	very	good	have	but	for
4	that	so	with	from	him
5	and	more	every	people	said

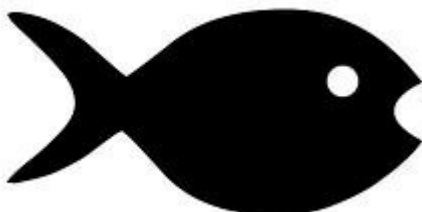
Writing, editing, illustrating and proofing these books has been a joyous team-effort and I’d like to thank the following members of the SVRC team for writing stories: Di Hewes, Emma Hall, Jacky Murphy, Jenny McKenzie, Lea Nagel, Marion Blazé, Sarah Hayman and Sherryl Orchard. These folks have also assisted with ideas and topics, not to mention oodles of alternatives for words containing contractions!

Thanks to Taryn Radley for her beautiful illustrations ... we miss you Taryn and look forward to your return!

Thanks also to SVRC staff members Ange McDonnell, Lea Nagel and Marion Blazé along with generous members of our VI education community, Tricia d’Apice and Dr Gillian Gale for their contributions and eagle-eyed proof-reading.

Please email us to request a print copy of all the books in Sets 1-5 so that you can select books most suitable to your beginning braille readers: svrc@svrc.vic.gov.au

When we get our head above water, we’ll begin on Set 6 featuring “of”, “some”, “great”, “mother”, “father”, “us” ... so watch this space!



Please note:

We still have our 75 original books from Sets 1-5 so if you’d prefer to use books with additional contractions please feel free to request these. You’ll find them labelled Books X, Y and Z in each Set.

Electronics at Support Skills

From Lea Nagel and Michael Kelly, SVRC Support Skills

We have had some interesting technology sessions at Support Skills lately: introduction to electronics, using a video microscope + HDMI screen, integrated circuit chips, circuit boards and other components.

Our guest presenter is Michael Kelly, who maintains the SVRC computer network and repairs some of the Equipment Library technology. Michael has low vision and used to be a Support Skills student. He briefly describes his TAFE course and career stages. Michael also demonstrates his setup, which includes an industrial trinocular microscope. The microscope is a mainstream piece of equipment that has 2 eye pieces and a third lens piece to which Michael has attached a mini video camera. This camera is plugged into a HDMI screen, allowing viewing of tiny items through the microscope or on the HDMI screen. This is all standard technology, which means that the pricing and availability is more standard than Assistive Technology.

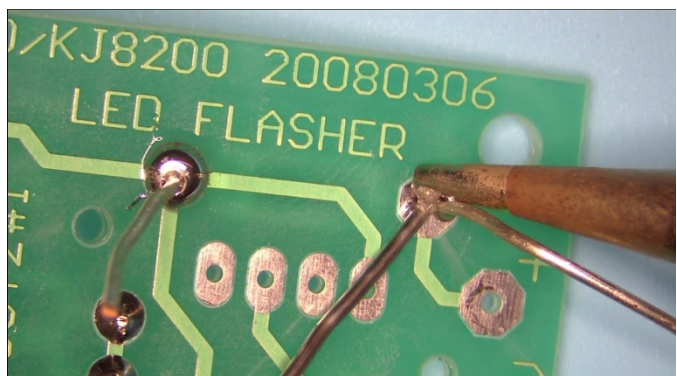
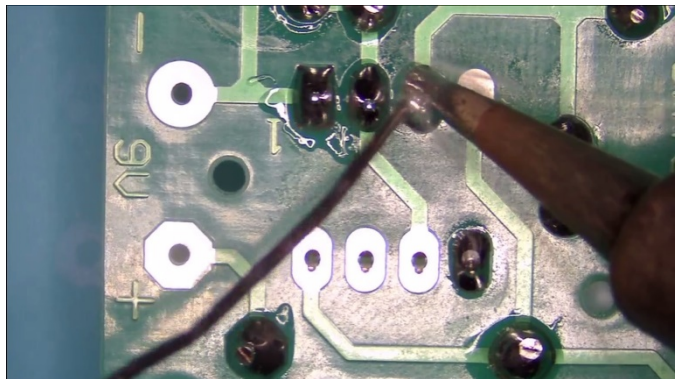
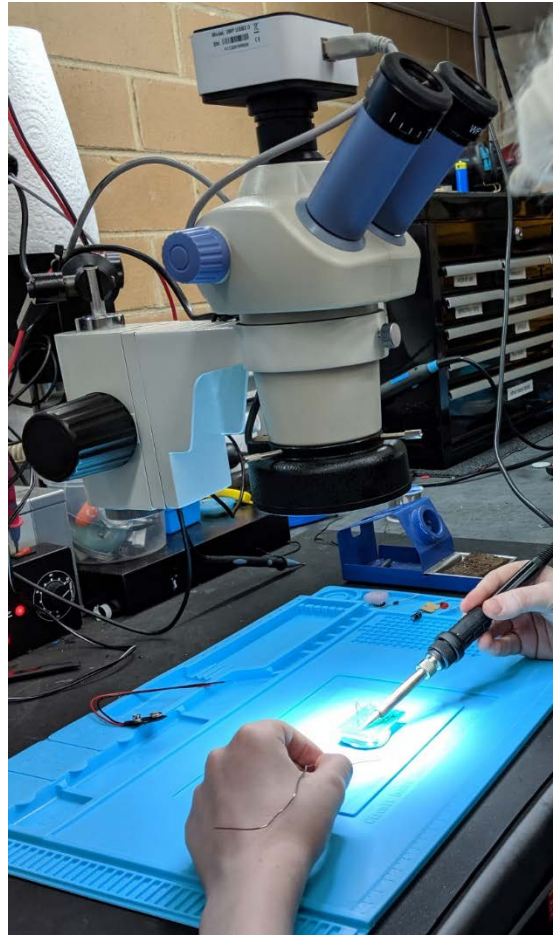
Michael demonstrates the use of a soldering iron and explains the use of electronics components, such as the 555 timer IC (integrated circuit), LEDs (Light Emitting Diode), resistors, capacitors and a PCB (Printed Circuit Board), using the HDMI screen to inspect the tiny details of the components.

After practising with a cold soldering iron, students are invited to use a hot soldering iron to solder the components to the circuit board. The finished product is a circuit board with an LED flasher circuit made from a pre-fabricated electronics kit. This is part of the Short Circuits series from JAYCAR electronics.

The PDF information from JAYCAR can be found at this link:

https://www.jaycar.com.au/medias/sys_master/hb7/h46/8884452786206/BJ8504-ShortCircuits-2-310316.pdf

Photos show a student soldering under the microscope and two photos taken of the view that can be seen via the microscope.



Active Teens (Paid) Market Research

Blind Sports and Recreation Victoria are looking for families with teens 12 to 17 years who are blind or have low vision for paid market research. BSR would like to talk to parents of Victorian teenagers 12 to 17 years of age who are blind or have low vision, to undertake a 60 to 90 minute interview with researchers from Quantum Market Research (QMR). The interviews will take place in the first week of December, and those interviewed will receive a \$100 gift voucher.

For more information, contact Allie: <mailto:mactiveteens@blindsports.org.au> / 0438 396233.

Survey of Calculators (STEM)

Message from Pranitha Moodley via SPEVI

Dear Friends and Colleagues

STEM is becoming an increasingly important area of the curriculum for all students. However, STEM has presented challenges for many of our students.

The use of **calculators** in particular has proved a challenging area for people who are blind. Some calculators have emulation software provided with the unit that enables their functions to be simulated on a computer. Some emulation software has been useful for Low Vision students as it can be enlarged using screen magnification programs like ZoomText, however, it is unable to be used with screen readers.

Objectives of this survey:

We would be interested to know your experiences using calculators with your students.

Would you please comment on the following?

- What brand and model calculators have you successfully used with your students?
- Could their display be magnified?
- Was emulation software provided with the unit?
- If emulation software was provided, was it able to be used with screen magnification software?
- Have you successfully used any calculators with speech output to meet your students STEM needs?
- What other solutions have you used instead of a calculator if no suitable calculator could be found?
- Are there any other software solutions to perform calculator functions that met your student's needs?

All responses and discussion in this challenging area will be valuable.

Responses can be emailed to: pranitha.moodley@ridbc.org.au

Thank you for your commitment and cooperation.

Pranitha Moodley

Specialist Teacher | Monday - Friday

School Support Services (VI)

Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children (RIDBC)

SPEVI Conference Update

Source: Phia Damsma, Frances Gentle, and Sharon Duncan, Presidents of SPEVI

When: 12-15 January 2020

Where: Adelaide

SPEVI is delighted to be welcoming three keynote speakers from the higher education sector: Mike McLinden and Graeme Douglas from the School of Education, University of Birmingham; and our very own Emily White from the Melbourne Graduate School of Education.

Graeme and Mike will discuss the role of specialist educators in the UK, and current practices in education of children with vision impairment. Emily's keynote draws on her doctoral research to explore the topic of mapping braille literacy learning.

The three keynote speakers will also be providing workshops and presentations about digital literacy, education of children with multiple disabilities and vision impairment, and transitions to adulthood.

The conference program includes presentations from Australian, New Zealand and international leaders and practitioners in the field of vision impairment. We invite you to delve into the conference program that is available in regular and accessible formats on the conference website – visit <https://synergyevents.eventsair.com/spevi-2020/program>

We look forward to welcoming you to the conference in Adelaide, from 12-15 January 2020.

If you haven't registered yet, there is still time!

<https://synergyevents.eventsair.com/spevi-2020/register-now>

31 Cool Things You Can Do With Your iPhone

Source: Hot Off the Braille Press! by Judy Dixon

Like many people, Judy Dixon believes that the iPhone is a magical device — she can't believe the profound effect the little slab of glass has had on the ways she does things. In this book, Judy explores apps that are practical, and many that are just plain fun! She covers a wide variety of activities, from tuning a guitar to counting your steps, depositing checks to measuring an angle, from writing in braille on your iPhone to finding a screw you dropped in the grass! These apps are selected for their accessibility and ease of use.

Visit: <https://www.nbp.org/ic/nbp/COOL-APPS.html>

Annual Hour of Code Event

Source: Phia Damsma, via the SPEVI list

When: from 9-15 December 2019.

If you want to participate and are looking for an accessible coding activity:

Diane Brauner has put together a valuable overview of all previous web posts on the [Paths to Technology website about accessible coding](#). It is great to see how many different programs are now available (including Ballyland Code 1 – 3!).

There is something for everyone, and students who are blind or have low vision can now absolutely be included in the Hour of Code. The Hour of Code celebrates computer science and is supported by over 200,000 educators worldwide.

Q&A: Transition to Single Line-Spaced Braille

I put the following question to the Teachers of the Blind and Visually Impaired / O&M Specialists Facebook page and received some thoughtful responses!

Question: I'm looking for ideas to help with a Grade 3 student who reads contacted braille pretty well, but CANNOT manage single line-spaced braille. The books he is reading are now 2 volumes in double line-spaced braille!!! Does anyone have ideas that would support his transition from double line-space to single line-space?

Suggestions from

- Try repeated readings for a while so the student can anticipate the text confidently
- Doing coral reading also encourages the student to read at the pace of other readers.
- Maybe try working on the movement of his hands while tracking. Both hands goes together while tracking each line, at the center of the page, left hand goes to find the next line/hands separate, while right hand keeps moving forward to finish the line, and meet the left hand to start reading again (scissor technique). Do it over and over. It takes practice like any other skills. That's an advised from my blind teacher who reads braille on a daily basis. I also incorporate teaching that to my braille students.
- I recommend review with the Mangold Tactile Discrimination system. It does a great job of teaching proper hand movement (i.e. scissor technique).
- It may be helpful to have him practice reading mechanics on very hot reads/well-known material.
- It's hard for anyone to focus on developing multiple skills at the same time. By removing the skill of decoding (because he knows the text well), you allow him to focus on the reading mechanics.
- You might also consider practice with lines containing the same character repeated multiple times – alphabetical, numerical, etc. This is a way for him to self-monitor his reading mechanics ("d" doesn't come after "a" or "b"). It might be especially good as a homework assignment.
- I would agree practice, fluency, and gaining confidence!
- One way I had my 4th grader practice fluency was to read the same passage daily for a week as we read along together. We only read for 3 min. I would time them on Monday and again on Friday. They were encouraged to practice for home work but not required. Their time always increased because they had practiced, thus they felt successful, even if it was only increased by few words. Thus gaining confidence!

Access Computing: The Alliance for Access to Computing Careers

Thanks to Leona Holloway for the following information.

[Access Computing](#) aims to increase the participation of people with disabilities in computing fields. High school, college, and graduate students with disabilities can connect with mentors and professionals to learn about internships and other opportunities in computing fields.

There are links for educators & employers and students with disabilities along with resources, information and participant stories.

Well-Used Equipment

This Victor Reader Stream (see photo right) was recently returned from a student who completed VCE this year. Take a look at the keys – the numbers are almost invisible and the tactile locator dots are practically worn off!

It looks like this piece of technology, on loan from the SVRC Technology Library, was a very useful resource for this student!



Support Group for ES/LSOs Who Support Secondary Braille Students

We have had a request from an Education Support staff / Learning Support Officer who supports a Year 9 braille student to be put in touch with other ES/LSOs with the possibility of forming an informal “support group”. We are not sure how this might work – perhaps it is a monthly/termly teleconference or videoconference. Perhaps it is a Facebook page. We invite Victorian and interstate ES/LSOs to please be in touch with Deb Lewis if you’d like to join or even run such a group!

SVRC would be happy to offer support.

Finally

Here are some interesting braille maths transcription stats: we have 23 secondary maths books to prepare for students in 2020 ... and each one is different, if you can believe it!!!???

We have previously transcribed sections of some of them but there are quite a number that we will need to produce from scratch.

With this in mind, thanks to everyone who has supplied pdfs or print copies of text books for your students for next year – it is very much appreciated.

– Deb Lewis (Ed) lewis.debra.d@edumail.vic.gov.au

Expression of Interest – Space Camp Chaperones, for SCI-VIS 2020

Space Camp for Interested Visually Impaired Students (SCIVIS) is held each year in Huntsville Alabama, USA. A group of excited students with vision impairments are already busy fundraising for their “experience of a lifetime” which is planned for September/October 2020 (exact dates tbc).

In order to bring this dream to reality, the group require **three chaperones** who are willing to assist with and support planning; and then travel with the group. In 2018, DET was able to provide some funding for the chaperones’ costs. Please note that chaperones will also be expected to meet some of their own costs for the trip.

We are seeking three chaperones, but the number to go on the trip will depend on the number of students, which is not certain at this stage. If the number of students declines, then only two chaperones will be required.

At Space Camp, chaperones are required to be the ‘vision expert’ to advise Space Camp staff about access to information and safety. For more information about what Space Camp expects of chaperones, go to: <http://www.scivis.org/scchap.htm>

Visiting Teachers (Vision) and other teachers who meet the selection criteria are invited to express interest in becoming a Chaperone for the 2020 trip.

The successful applicants will be selected according to a transparent, fair and merit-based process in accordance with relevant legislation, codes and DET policies.

Selection Criteria for Chaperone (three positions) for Space Camp 2020

- Appropriate qualifications, skills, experience and interest in supporting students with vision impairments during the planning and undertaking of this overseas excursion.
- Demonstrated capacity to support students with vision impairments for international travel to Space Camp in Huntsville, Alabama including during orientation, team-building and cultural activities during the excursion.
- Knowledge and understanding of the DET ‘Travel Policy’ and other relevant procedures and guidelines.
- Knowledge of the individual students and/or previous participation in camps with students with vision impairments is considered an advantage.

Staff gender balance will be considered as part of this process.

In your succinct written response to the selection criteria, please indicate that you have sought the appropriate permissions from relevant Regional Managers.

Feel free to submit an Expression of Interest together with another person if appropriate.

Please email Marion your Expression of Interest: blaze.marion.g@edumail.vic.gov.au

Closing date is Friday 6 December 2019.