

The Bulletin

Number 18, Friday 6 December 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 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 some SVRC positions on the Department of Education and Training's 'Recruitment online'. Please have a look and share with colleagues.

- Administration Officer – full time – ongoing – apply by December 12
- Transcription Officer – full time – fixed term until July – apply by December 12
- Leading Teacher – full time – until 2022 – apply by December 18
- Assistive Technology Trainer on Support Skills – just Fridays – fixed term for 2020 – apply by December 18

Please call Marion if you have questions about these positions 03 9841 0242

Tactile & 3D Materials in the Classroom: Survey

Leona Holloway and the team at Monash University are working hard to understand how 3D printing can assist younger students to develop tactile skills. Leona is very keen for Visiting Teachers to take part in their online survey to assist in their investigations.

The very excellent thing about the survey is that it includes links to files of some excellent 3D resources which you can print on your school's 3D printer or request from SVRC.

You'll find the survey (and very excellent links) at <https://tinyurl.com/access3Dsurvey>

Term 4 at SVRC from Marion Blazé

As we near the end of another busy term at SVRC, I'd like to thank and congratulate our team.

Congratulations to Renee Williamson, who not only has a teaching contract on Support Skills for 2020, but has successfully moved from provisional to full VIT registration after presentation of a wonderful project on increasing learner agency in students with vision impairments.

Congratulations to Ange McDonnell on her success in being appointed to an ongoing Transcriber position. Many thanks also to Ange for stepping so efficiently into the Admin role this year and keeping everything happening – great job, Ange.

Congratulations to Sarah Hayman and Di Hewes who have been 'translated' into ongoing positions at SVRC.

Congratulations to Eva Lewis-Col, Sarah Kelly and Elise Lonsdale, whose contracts have been extended into 2020.

We are currently working hard to fill positions in our new Workforce Plan, and will endeavour to keep everyone informed.

With our Christmas morning tea happening on Tuesday (December 10 at 11am), we look forward to thanking all the VTs, teachers, volunteers, families and folk from other agencies who have contributed so significantly to the support that our students receive to maximise their inclusion.

Thank you to the amazing SVRC team for re-arranging the furniture, yet again!! But seriously, I work with an exceptionally talented and willing group of individuals. I can't thank you enough for the efforts you make to keep SVRC doing all it amazing work!!

SVRC Careers Day 2019

On 8 November, 35 students, Visiting Teachers, parents and families attended the SVRC in Donvale to hear from tertiary students and adults who are blind or have low vision and are successfully engaged in further education and the world of work, as well as employment service providers.

The Employment Mentors and Student Panel shared vision-specific strategies, networking tips, higher education and career planning steps, and their own personal and often very raw experiences; the good, the bad and the ugly! The employment service providers provided information about the types of services they offer to people with vision impairment regarding gaining and maintaining successful employment, such as Orientation and Mobility services, employment advice, and appropriate grooming for work.

The direct access provided by the day to the range of selected Employment Mentors, students who had transitioned to TAFE, VET/VCAL and university, and the employment service providers was critical to our student's learning. The Employment Mentors from fields as diverse as public health, advocacy, allied health, computing/IT, academia, professional sport, and politics shared their pathways to employment, their advice for succeeding in the workplace, and humorous anecdotes about life in the work force as an employee with vision impairment. The former SSP students on the Student Panel described their journey to higher education and tips for balancing study and personal life as students who are blind or have low vision. It was clear from the Employment Mentors and the Student Panel that good compensatory skills in areas such as Orientation and Mobility, assistive and common technology, organisation, social and communication ability, advocacy, and presenting yourself well were critical for success regardless of the field of work or study – all Expanded Core Curriculum skills we teach in the SSP!

The day also included information from a recent study undertaken by Natalie Kaine of Vision Australia in NSW, which reflected the importance of these skills. Natalie's work with students with vision impairment and their families showed that most of these students gain most of their information about careers from their families. This finding underlines the importance of working in positive partnership with students and their families to support their child's entry into higher education and the workforce.



As well as the presentations from the speakers and information from the study, participants engaged in a 'speed interviewing' activity, which allowed them to hear firsthand 'real world' experiences, career planning strategies, problem solving techniques and networking tips directly from those with lived experience and service providers. The activity gave students an opportunity to practice their communication skills, understand what preparatory skills they could develop right now to assist their pathway toward employment, and better understand the value of volunteer work and part-time employment. The activity also allowed students, families, and VTs to ask questions of the Employment Mentors and organisation in a more informal atmosphere and, importantly, provided an opportunity for them to increase their own networks; a critical factor in successfully transitioning to work.

The SVRC would sincerely like to thank the Employment Mentors, Student Panel members, and service providers, who presented invaluable information and helped to illuminate just what is possible for job seekers who are blind or have low vision. For your time, generosity and guidance, SVRC would like to specifically thank:

- Guide Dogs Victoria
- Independent Options for Mobility
- Vision Australia Orientation and Mobility Services
- Vision Australia Employment Services
- Groomed to Go
- Job Access
- Hawthorn Football Club – AFL Blind

We are hopeful to run a similar Careers Day program again in the future. Please contact SVRC for more information.

Q&A: Braille Music

Question: I have a braille student who is studying a Units 1 and 2 Music subject. The Music teacher (who doesn't read braille) needs to be able to read the student's music in class. How can the teacher read the student's braille music?

Answer from Lea Nagel: The sighted students will probably produce print music using a standard music editor such as MuseScore. The braille-reading student will write and edit their music using the braille music code in Braille Music Editor (BME). They will do this using, for example, Brailliant + JAWS (with JAWS voice turned off). Once satisfied with the work, the student can export their music to MusicXML which is a universal music format. This file can then be sent to the teacher who will be able to open the Music XML file in MuseScore.

Setting up:

- PC laptop
- JAWS <https://www.freedomscientific.com/products/software/jaws/>
- BME (Braille Music Editor) https://www.veia.it/en/bme2_product
- Brailliant or braille display compatible with JAWS + PC
<https://store.humanware.com/hau/blindness/>

Training: Support Skills students can book sessions with our braille music staff to learn how to do this. A workshop on Braille Music in the classroom is part of the SVRC Professional Learning calendar each year. <https://svrc.vic.edu.au/professional-learning/upcoming-events/>

Further questions: Please email svrc@svrc.vic.edu.au

Telstra ARIA Music Teacher of the Year

Huge congratulations to Lee Strickland on her Aria Music Teacher Nomination! Lee teaches music to students who are blind, have low vision, and who have complex needs in Queensland. She brings students to National Braille Music Camp, transcribes music into braille, and this year ran a weekend music camp in Queensland. Her tireless and enthusiastic efforts have been acknowledged as she was a finalist at the 2019 Aria Awards!

Watch her nomination and story on YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SARW_JP-pWk

Winner:

Antonio Chiappetta (St Andrews College, Marayong, NSW)

Finalists:

Bel Skinner (North Regional TAFE, WA)

Julie Rennick (Gunnedah Conservatorium, NSW)

Lee Strickland (Narbethong State Special School, QLD)

Focus on Ability Short Film Festival

For the 12th consecutive year NOVA Employment presents the Focus on Ability Short Film Festival. This festival asks film makers to 'Focus on the Ability' of people with disability and tell a story on film for the world to view. The 2020 festival is set to be the biggest yet, and our generous sponsors have donated over \$160,000 worth of cash and prizes to encourage film makers and people with disability to tell their stories.

The [FOA website](#) is now up to date with all of the 2020 details. Any questions please email us at admin@focusonability.com Entries close May 29, 2020.

Blind Newsreader: Nas Campanella

How triple j's Nas Campanella's experience of being blind is informing ABC News coverage

Nas Campanella (see photo right) wanted to be a journalist because she wanted to make a difference. The triple j newsreader is blind and is leading the way in changing how ABC journalists report on people who have a disability.



Nas comments: As I got older and started noticing the inequalities people with disabilities face in areas like employment and education, I wanted to become an advocate.

I had no idea that I could do both.

When I first started working at the ABC in 2011, I was given access to excellent support.

Someone was assigned to set up all my technology, I shadowed senior journalists out on the road and I also had people show me around the office, so I could navigate the space independently.

But one thing I noticed was how little experience people had in working with someone with a disability.

I felt like some people weren't sure if they could send me out into the field to cover stories or whether they could trust me to file on time like they did with every other reporter.

It wasn't malicious. They just didn't know.

That wasn't the first time I'd had such an experience in the media.

Read the full story <http://www.abc.net.au/news/about/backstory/radio/2019-12-03/nas-campanella-on-news-coverage-of-people-with-disability/11744486>

Assistive Tech for Math

The Paths to Literacy website includes a great new page by Cecilia Robinson, Assistive Technology for [Math: 10 Tips for TVIs](#) and begins: Assistive technology (AT) for math consists of items and devices that range from low- to high-tech. Low-tech items may include manipulatives, such as money, shapes and solids, or measuring devices. High-tech devices can include, but are not limited to, calculators, video magnifiers, embossers, or machines that produce tactile graphics.

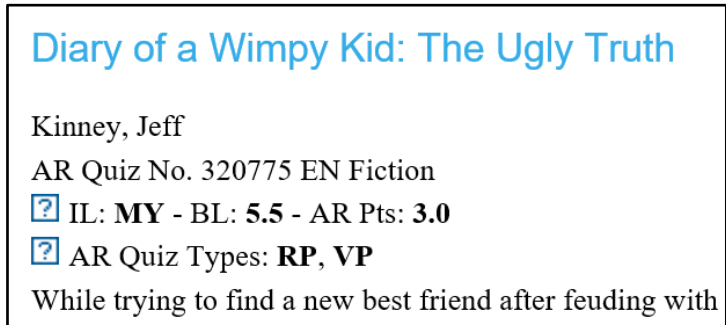
In order for students to become competent users of AT for math, they must have a strong foundation of knowledge and skills. A strong foundation will provide a stronger “platform” on which new learning and experiences can accumulate.

Take a look via the link above.

Q&A – Editing Word Documents (specially those weird little circles)

Question: Sometimes when I copy some text from a website or an email into MS Word, it looks ok but when I try to edit it, it behaves strangely. What can I do?

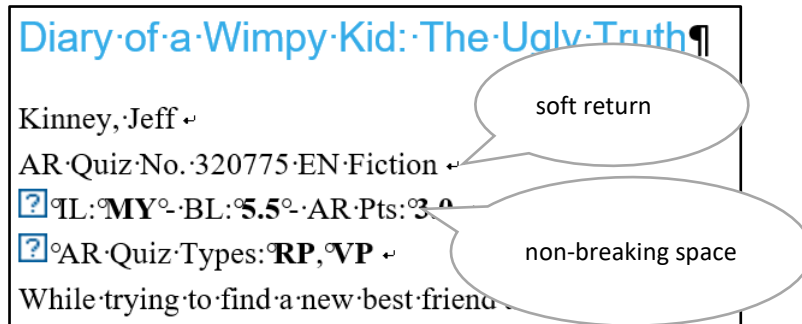
Answer: When editing text from another source, and strange things start to happen, try this! Select “show paragraph marks and other hidden symbols”. You can do this by clicking the icon in the ribbon at the top of the document that looks like this ¶ or using the shortcut: CTRL + SHIFT + 8



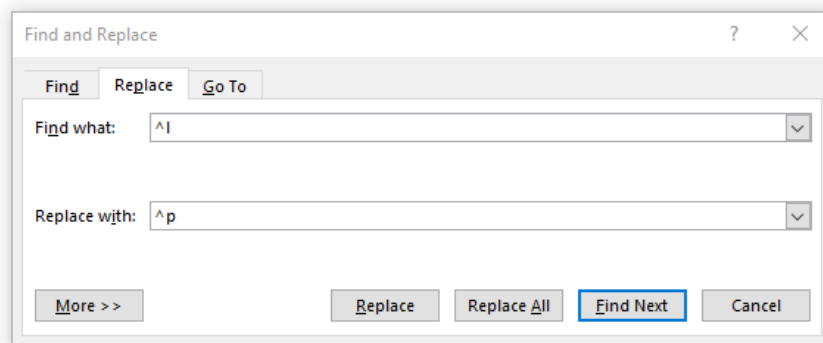
This will enable you to see some of the formatting that is going on in the background.

For example:

- the little arrow at the end of some lines in the example below are “soft returns” and they behave differently to a “hard return” that looks like this: ¶
- the little circle between words is a “non-breaking space” and it behaves differently to the usual space.



You can change these items within the document using “Find and Replace” which you’ll find in the Home menu or use the shortcut CTRL + H. This will bring up the following dialogue box.



To replace the “soft return” with a “hard return”, type “^¶” (SHIFT + 6, l) in the top box and “^p” (SHIFT + 6, p) in the second box and click on the “Replace”, “Replace All” or “Find Next” button.

Similarly, you can replace the “non-breaking space” with an ordinary space by typing “CTRL + SHIFT + (space)” in the top box and space in the second box.

Now when you edit the document, you don’t need to expect unexpected results.

SVRC Annual Writing Competition

The theme for the 2019 writing competition, 'Enhancing Reality', brought out some amazing creativity from our students. Thank you so much to Kaye from Bolinda for donating the wonderful audio books as prizes for our creative writers!! And thank you to our students for their efforts and innovations. Here is a taste of what they wrote (with thanks to one of our judges, Brooke!).

Louis - *How the iPad enhances reality*

Louis provides a comprehensive review of the iPad Pro 3rd Gen. He reflects on his experience as a user and how the Pro's many functions enhance his day-to-day reality. He's a big fan of its 'nice feel and accessibility functions'. Good work, Louis

Anita – *the 'Moood Reader'*

Anita gives the Moood Reader device a decisive 10 out of 10. Its functions will encourage you to finish your maths homework, track your blood pressure and keep your moods in check. Nice work, Anita

Max - *OT helped him make sandwiches*

Max appreciates the work of Occupational Therapists and recognises that their work provides him with support and guidance in everyday life, particularly teaching him to cook toasted sandwiches – say no more. Thanks, Max.

Ashton - *Woodwork and sailing*

Ashton has it in one, 'happiness enhances reality'! Ashton explains that his love of woodworking, sailing and cooking help him to concentrate, focus and give him a break from school. Looking to the future, Ashton knows his activities today will enhance his reality as an adult. Thanks, Ashton.

Bob - *How Bob has learnt things in Australia that have enhanced his reality*

Bob explains that his experiences in Australia have helped enhance his daily routines, like teaching him how to gain independence. He feels confident this will help him when he goes back to Vietnam. Well done, Bob.

Ariel - *A special laptop for people with nystagmus*

Ariel promotes a very imaginative and wildly fantastic tech option of the future that features a laptop screen that moves with your eyes, fancy laser beams and a few loud bangs! Sounds exciting! Thanks, Ariel.

Wes - *Golf*

Wes explains how his training and dedication to golf have greatly improved his concentration... if only he could be paired up with a good partner. His trainer is teaching him the professional player's techniques. Watch out, Tiger.

Jasmine - *Imagination Vision and Zoominsiers to enhance eyesight*

Jasmine skilfully markets the Zoominiser Glasses as a once in a lifetime opportunity to clear your eyesight in stylish frames in a range of patterns and colours. And they only cost 10 dollars! While stock lasts. Congratulations for selling this product, Jasmine.

Cohen – *Mountbatten braille enhances reality*

Cohen describes how his favourite piece of technology, his Mountbatten Whisperer, has definitely enhanced his reality. Well done to Cohen!

Bob: Student in the News

If you have an Edugate login (DET staff members), you'll be able to read a lovely story about Bob, a student with vision impairment (braille-reader) who has been enrolled in a Victorian government school in 2019. He returns to Vietnam at the end of this year.

Read about Bob on the [DET Headlines](#) page.

Ballyland CosmoBally in Space

From Phia Damsma, Sonokids Australia

As a special gift for the holidays, Sonokids is giving away their latest app, Ballyland™ CosmoBally™ in Space'. Meet CosmoBally in this latest release from the suite of Ballyland educational, accessible iPad game apps.

CosmoBally is an astronaut, and the first Ballylander to fly in space. Explaining how the features and looks of some planets in the solar system remind her of her friends in Ballyland, CosmoBally presents snippets of facts and information about the Sun, the Moon and the 8 planets. Responding to touch with audio feedback, the story can be independently used by young children. In the Bonus Game you need to finger drag on the screen to find the planets in a specific order. Score points and 'connect to CosmoBally'!

[Get CosmoBally from the AppStore](#)

OzBrl List is Moving

Ozbrl List is on the move! Ozbrl is the Australian Braille Authority's listserv for announcements and Q&A. From 10 December, the existing listserv will be moving to ozbrl@groups.io. Please join up now by sending an email to ozbrl+subscribe@groups.io.

#braillehumour

Source: Teachers of the Blind and VI/O&M Specialists on Facebook

After an discussion about "italics" with a curious 2nd grade braille reader:

Student: What is the opposite of a "terminator"?

Me: An "instigator"? (laughing)

Student: No, an "indicator" (laughing harder)

Finally

We are in the *lasts* section of 2019. We've had our *last* Dot Power; today is the *last* Support Skills day; we are transcribing the *last* materials in alternative formats for students for this year and we are working hard on producing resources for 2020...

We invite you to our Christmas Morning Tea so we can thank you for your work during the year and to offer you an opportunity to have a *last* catch-up with SVRC staff and members of the vision community for 2019. We hope you can come – and please RSVP so we can make sure there are enough yummy delights for everyone!

– Deb Lewis (Ed) lewis.debra.d@edumail.vic.gov.au who will be writing one more *last* issue of The Bulletin before the end of the year – please send your *last* bits of news, photos etc!!!