

The Bulletin

Number 8, Friday 22 May 2020

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PD events at SVRC ONLINE: 2020

You can register online. Click on the links to read more information and to register online. If you have any questions, please [contact us](#).

Wednesday June 3: [Supporting secondary students who are blind or vision impaired in Mathematics classes](#)

This event will provide practical strategies that secondary school maths teachers and student support staff can use to promote inclusion & achievement for secondary school students who are blind or have low vision. Also useful for visiting teachers. Please register online to receive Zoom login.

Dot Power days in Term 2 - Happening online

Families are being contacted and provided with the braille activities, and instructions of how these should be implemented with new readers of braille. Braille will be provided with "over-writing" so that families without braille skills can assist their children in these activities.

Note: For upcoming professional learning at SVRC along with programs, registrations, visit the SVRC [professional learning page](#).

SVRC helpline

Please call SVRC if you have questions about our provisions or inclusion of students with vision impairments. (03 9841 0242)

Statewide Vision Resource Centre YouTube Channel

Our YouTube channel has **lots of online tutorials** such as **how to use a Victor Reader Stream, using iOS magnifiers, Seeing AI, and more.**

Have a look and tell your students who are learning from home.

Go to <https://www.youtube.com/user/SVRCAus>

SVRC SUPPORT STILL BY REMOTE!

From: Marion Blazé (Acting Manager, SVRC)

With the advice that students and teachers will be making a gradual return to their schools, SVRC activities will still happen online for the remainder of Term 2. This is because our activities require students and teachers to travel and mix with students and teachers from other schools, which is against the advice of DET, much like excursions and camps. We are also about to undergo asbestos removal, which will necessitate SVRC staff working from home for most of June. We anticipate being back to "normal" operations for the beginning of Term 3, but this will depend on advice about COVID 19 restrictions (and the asbestos works).

On May 13, our art teacher, Michael Donnelly ran a professional learning day from his home – Art4Kids. Our other Michael (Kelly) assisted with the Zoom technology. (I don't know what we would do without our two Michaels!!). 12 participants spent a day online learning about inclusion of students who are blind or have low vision in art programs. Our thanks go to Michael D for his flexibility and creativity both in this activity and in our ongoing Support Skills online art classes.

On May 14, we hosted our second Community of Practice meeting for Visiting Teachers (Vision) via Zoom. Feedback from these meetings indicates that they are assisting VTs Vision to keep abreast of how the State is working in regards to support of students with vision impairments. This group is likely to continue to meet via Zoom even after we return to face-to-face teaching and activities. The next Zoom meeting is at 3pm on Tuesday, June 2, 2020.

Now that some students and teachers are returning to schools, please be aware that SVRC will still not be open every day this term, and will definitely be closed in June. If you want to visit, please call first, to make sure someone is here to greet you.

Support Skills One-Off day by remote

The Support Skills Program is currently running via Zoom, with students and teachers working and learning from home. Because students are not coming in to Statewide Vision Resource Centre in Donvale for this program, it could be an ideal opportunity for more remote students with vision impairments to experience it without the need to travel.

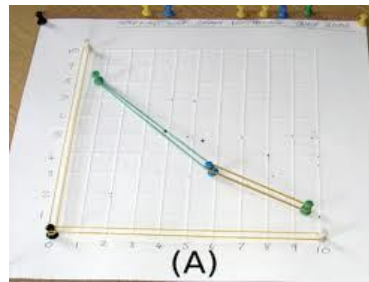
On June 5, 2020, we had a Support Skills excursion scheduled. This cannot go ahead because of the COVID 19 restrictions. We are suggesting that this could be a Support Skills one-off session for eligible students with vision impairments who live remotely to Donvale. We are asking for expressions of interest from families to find out whether there is a need to run this day.

Please contact statewide.vision@edumail.vic.gov.au for an expression of interest form.

Reminder - Applications for PSD extended

The following statement was in the 'Message from the Secretary: Streamlining school requirements for Term 2' dated April 28, 2020. DET has extended the due date for applications for the Program for Students with Disabilities (PSD) to Term 4.

Supporting secondary students who are blind or vision impaired in Mathematics classes



10am-1.00pm with Optional Braille Mathematics code introduction, 1.45-2.45pm

A workshop for Mathematics Teachers & Student Support Staff. Also useful for Visiting Teachers.

Presenter: Charlie Roberts

Wednesday 3rd June 2020

Venue: Online, Zoom

The outline below may vary according to the needs of participants who registered for the postponed SVRC Maths workshop on 19/3/20.

Session One: 9.45-10.45am

Identifying participant needs

Introduction to vision impairment (VI)

Role of the Teacher, Visiting Teacher, Student Support staff & student with VI in Victorian Mathematics classes

Common challenges facing student with VI in Maths, including online learning.

Morning tea break: 10.45-11am

Session Two: 11am-12pm

Inclusive strategies for Secondary Maths support

Maths Kit : student aids for accessing the curriculum.

“Mathematics made easy” instructional videos

Break 12-12.15pm

Session Three: 12.15-1.15pm

Materials in accessible formats: Large Print, Electronic (LP & Audio) & Braille; exercises with answers, revision, cheat sheets & tests.

Calculators: large print, talking, graphing & CAS options

Tactile & auditory graphs

Optional Braille Mathematics code introduction, 1.45-2.45pm

Producing hard copy braille, electronic braille & accessible worksheets that can be brailled.

- Braille code: set out, overwriting, correcting.

3D printing at SVRC

Designs

- Find a design that's already created (thingiverse website)
- Design in house at SVRC. We can do things with combinations of simple shapes (rectangular prisms, cylinders, spheres), but more complex things (mountain ranges) are not feasible.
- Some SVRC designs are now up on Thingiverse - <https://www.thingiverse.com/SVRC/designs>

Printing

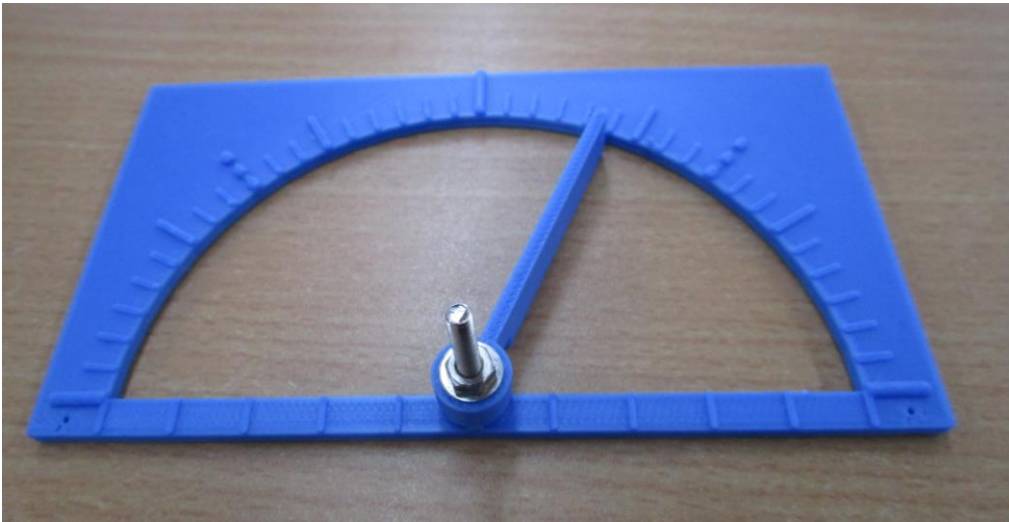
- We have one printer at SVRC. Objects take a while to print, so we can't mass produce/print large objects. Check out childsply for some alternative options for 3D tactile objects <https://childsply.wixsite.com/catalogue>
- Many schools now have printers and can download designs from various sources to print themselves

Feedback

- This is a relatively new area, so if we make you something, be prepared to provide feedback as to how the print is used and suggestions on improvements.

We are working with Monash University who are doing a research project on the use of 3D printing as a medium for people with vision impairments

New designs are often included in the Bulletin. If you see something that might be useful for one of your students, get in touch.



Picture shows a tactile protractor designed and printed at SVRC. The centre semicircle is open, with markings around the outside every 5 degrees. There is a moveable hand that can rotate through the open semicircle.

Accessible • Fun • Educational

Audio based game apps, specifically designed to support learners who are blind or visually impaired in building digital skills



Sonokids

Sonokids Ballyland is an acclaimed suite of gamified educational software and apps. Ballyland apps support students who are blind or have low vision to build (assistive) technology skills and other fundamental skills that are part of the **Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC)**.

[Read more about Ballyland.](#)

The free offer of Ballyland apps has unfortunately now come to an end.

Contact us in case of urgent need for students learning from home.



Photo: Sonokids Ballyland wins global award

2020 Zero Project in Vienna, Austria

What a start to the New Year! In February, in Vienna, Austria, the Sonokids team received the 2020 Zero Project Award for Innovative Practice in Inclusion in Education of People with Disabilities – for Ballyland early technology learning software and apps.

The Zero Project, an initiative of the Essl Foundation, provides a platform where the most innovative and effective solutions to problems that persons with disabilities face, are shared. This year's call had 436 nominations from 79 countries.

Also in Vienna, Sonokids Ballyland was one of five innovative projects presented at a pre-opening event of the Zero Project Conference, "Building Inclusion". This first-time event for an audience from politics, education and disability sectors, took place at the beautiful Austrian Parliament building.

The Ballyland 3D tactile learning models attracted a lot of attention at the Sonokids conference booth.

Ballyland Early Keyboarding Home Access License Now 60% off!



We know parents have been finding it hard to support children's learning and play at home. Benefit now from this incredible, temporary offer on this FUN multi-level educational game for Windows PC's/laptops/Mac computers. Used in inclusive playgroups and classrooms around the world. Suitable for children ages 3 years and up, including those with a disability, to play and learn on their own. Special learning support for children who are blind or visually impaired. Please share widely!

Use the coupon code 'Bally20' and get a massive 60% discount on the normal price of the Home Access License of the Ballyland Early Keyboarding game* from the award-winning Sonokids Ballyland series.

Before \$49 - Now \$19 USD

[Purchase here*](#) coupon code: **Bally20**

Built-in speech, no literacy skills required

Builds foundation keyboarding skills, (QWERTY) keyboard 'mapping' skills, early Literacy and Numeracy skills, Memory skills and more

Any Key Goes' Entry level with stories, images, songs and sounds

Six fun Key Games, suitable for switch access

Recommended by parents, specialist teachers and therapists

Adjustable settings to suit individual requirements and abilities

**Offer must end 15 July 2020. By entering this offer you agree to the Disclaimer as published on the Sonokids website and for your email to be subscribed to the Sonokids Newsletter – You can unsubscribe at any time.*

Video tutorials at our [Ballyland Youtube Channel](#) ->

**Please review the System Requirements on sonokids.org before you buy, and select the correct version for your operating system.

More information about the Ballyland apps, as well as helpful tips and instructions for teaching with the apps, can be found on the Sonokids website, at www.sonokids.org.

Please contact us with any questions you may have, at support@sonokids.org.

Developing typing skills while learning online and/or at home

Are your students brushing up their touch typing skills while at home?. With all our students using technology to access their learning, what better time than this is there for developing keyboard skills. Using any of the free online typing tutors, such as BBC Dance Mat is a fun way to learn the keyboard layout. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/zf2f9j6/articles/z3c6tfr> (not usually accessible due to school server restrictions but accessible at home).

Rapid Typing <https://rapidtyping.com/> has accessibility options in its settings and Typing Club <https://www.typingclub.com/>. Typing Club has built in accessibility options including high contrast, enlarged font and guided voice. More information can be found here <https://www.typingclub.com/sportal/help/change-my-settings.html> Typing Club and Rapid Typing begin at simple levels and provide a record of accuracy and speed.

Another option is an award winning keyboard trainer from Sono kids which is currently on special for \$19 US by using the Coupon code Bally20 <https://www.sonokids.org/ballyland-early-learning/ballyland-keyboarding/>

Alternatively, use the iPad with a typing app, such as Talking Typer available from the Apple app store. This is best used with an external Bluetooth keyboard. This app is designed specifically for students with vision impairment. Short, sharp daily typing drills will be effective and will quickly develop fast and accurate typing skills. Typing their work is a valuable skill for students with vision impairment, as they can type much faster than they can write. It is also much easier for them to read their writing and it is easy to give them high contrast glare free text on their screen. If visually fatigued, students can learn to use screen reading software to read what they have written.

Ex-student has technology for sale

Ben Pettingill has some equipment that he wishes to sell. Contact Ben if interested: ben@benpettingill.com

Pearl Camera with Open Book: \$1600

Plex Talk: \$400

Braille Labeller: \$100

Blind Citizens Australia #BeThatPerson campaign

#BeThatPerson campaign hopes to raise awareness of how best to assist people who are blind or vision impaired to comply with physical distancing rules. The campaign went live yesterday and BCA would like it shared far and wide.

As restrictions lift, many in our communities are concerned about how to manage social distancing. BCA decided to launch a campaign that they hope the general public gets behind over the next few weeks. Feel free to share on social media.

Guide dogs can't read signs 😊

So if you notice someone with a white cane or a guide dog looking a little confused, please don't just grab them on the arm. Say hi and ask if they need any help.

Social distancing is difficult for everyone, so consider the challenges if you can't see the markings on the floor, the new signs on the wall or the screens that have been installed.



Image reads: #BeThatPerson

1. Approach us
2. Introduce yourself
3. Ask if you can help

COVID Impacts: US Access & Engagement Survey a success

A few weeks ago, working with 18 other organizations, ObjectiveEd asked parents and teachers to help us answer this question:

How is COVID-19 impacting students with visual impairments?

The Access and Engagement Survey was created so that we are all better informed and can use the information learned to shape education for our students.

The data team will be analyzing the data, and as updates are available, they will be posted on this website: <https://www.accessengagement.com>

Project Core – Universal core communication systems

This project aims to improve academic achievement of students with significant cognitive disabilities through communication and literacy. It is developing 3D symbols for students who are also blind and high contrast symbols for students who have low vision. At the request of some special school teachers, SVRC has tried printing some of the 3D models with braille labels. On their website, they offer free learning modules for teachers and carers. <http://www.project-core.com/communication-systems/>



Photo shows three objects, each with Braille and print words on them. First object has a triangular base, an arrow and the word "go" on it. Second object has a circular base, an "x" cross and the word "not" on it. Third object has a triangular base, 4 curved bumps on the top of the object and the word "like" on it.

Spend a minute in their eyes! Challenge #BlindMinute



In the month of June 2020, Braille House is running their latest fundraising and awareness campaign called #BlindMinute and invites everyone (young and old) to join the fun while helping a worthwhile cause at the same time.

By participating in the challenge, you will - *Spend a minute in their eyes!*

To take the challenge simply do something for one minute blindfolded, film it, post it to any social media with the hashtag #BlindMinute and tag 3 friends to take the challenge.

It can be any task like gardening, washing the car, sweeping, eating, making something out of playdoh, dancing, exercising, singing, tying your shoelaces, telling a story, typing, playing an instrument or even just brushing your hair (just make sure that it is something safe).

Every video uploaded goes into the draw to win a prize.

Everybody is invited to consider making a donation to the challenge and encourage others to do the same. Donations can be made at braillehouse.org.au/blindminute or through Facebook where the majority of action will be occurring - @BlindMinute20

All money raised supports the activities of Braille House.

Contact details:

Andrew Backhouse

Marketing, PR and Community Engagement Manager

P: 0409 878 791

E: AndrewBackhouse@qbwa.org.au

W: www.braillehouse.org.au

SVRC News

Congratulations to Barb Duggan-Hall at Emmaus Primary School who has completed the UEB online Mathematics Course!! Very well done! (Thanks for this news, Wendy Morley)

Geoff Bowen is still recovering from a hip replacement on May 11. News is that he is doing well but might work from home for a little longer.

Taryn Radley, who has been on maternity leave with new twins and a 3 year old son, is returning to work as an SVRC transcriber later this month. Welcome back, Taryn!!

And finally...

Stay safe and well as our students start returning to school.