

The Bulletin

Number 14, Friday 4 September 2020

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PD events at SVRC ONLINE: 2020

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

Tuesday Oct 20 [Preparing for inclusion of a student who reads braille](#)

Tuesday Nov 24 [Expo of technology for students with vision impairments](#) – our first online Expo!

Note: For upcoming professional learning at SVRC along with programs and 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)

SVRC – Report

From: Marion Blazé (Acting Manager, SVRC)

This Bulletin seems to have evolved along a "tactile" theme this week.

Recently on a forum of educators, there has been discussion of the challenges facing students with vision impairments during this era of social distancing and hand sanitising. One interstate VT said her student, who is a braille reader, was having trouble reading because her hands were being dried by constant hand sanitiser use. This might become a problem for Victorian students when they return to schools and need to maintain Covid-safe habits.

The Department of Social Services is about to conduct an online workshop to discuss access difficulties for people with disabilities in response to Covid 19. Are there particular issues your students are experiencing? Please consider sharing your ideas or concerns with other educators either through writing something for this Bulletin, speaking at a Community of Practice meeting, or just posing the question to the folk at SVRC. We can all learn from what has been a very different year.

We are excited to announce that the SVRC Expo this year will be online. We'll share more news about this, soon. We are really hoping that people from far and wide will "Zoom in" on November 24 to share in demonstrations and talks about assistive technology.

VCE in 2020

Published dates for VCE in 2020 – please check the VCAA website in case there are changes

[Revised administrative dates for 2020](#)

[2020 VCE Exam timetable](#)

Last day for schools to lodge requests for GAT exemptions with VCAA – September 18, 2020

General Achievement Test (GAT) – Wednesday October 7, 2020

English Exam – 9am Tuesday November 10, 2020 (last exam Tuesday December 1, 2020)

Students to receive ATAR by December 30, 2020

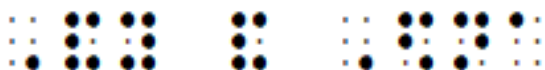
Dot Power At Home Day

We haven't seen our lovely Dot Power children all year, and can't wait to see how they are all going with their braille reading, so we are planning a Dot Power At Home Day!

We have packaged up a book and do-braille sheet, and instructions for families to follow. Lea recorded all of the instructions for the children and will email the recordings out to families.

We are hoping that the children will follow the recordings to do a guided exploration and reading of the book about Andy and Edna, and then record themselves reading along with the guided reading sound file. If they send those recordings in to us, we'll edit them into a group reading audio file, to be shared back to the children.

Image: the braille for Andy and Edna. Andy feels like a square and Edna might feel like a heart shape!



We have planned a writing and drawing activity too. We hope children will email us a copy of their pieces which we aim to publish into a book. The book would then be sent back to children with everyone's writing and illustrations included. Sounds simple?

The next step will be to book a Zoom meeting with groups of children so that we can meet and share news and each child can read their page out to their friends.

It has been great to hear back from families and visiting teachers about how the children are going at home. It seems that they are really missing Dot Power Days and looking forward to getting together in person when possible!

Image: Sneak peek at the book! Edna with the Magic Hat!



Dot Power Day is for children from pre-school to year 3 who may be using braille as their main learning medium. They come together usually once per term for a day of braille immersion, in a learning environment planned just for them!



Image: Dot Power children reading braille



Image: A member of staff at SVRC with an electric guitar. Dot Power children are plucking the strings of the guitar.

Music Zoom app for iPad

You can import a PDF or take a photo of music notation, mark it up manually by selecting the lines of music, then view it in whatever size or colour that suits you. It displays a line of music at a time, and the user can scroll the notation forward or back as far and as quickly as required. This app can be borrowed from the SVRC Vision Technology Library. If eligible DET students would like to try it, please contact your visiting teacher to arrange the loan. If it is not useful, you can contact SVRC to return it. If you'd like more information there's video of [Music Zoom explained on YouTube](#).

Tactile Measurement Options

From: Sarah Hayman (Blind and Low Vision Technology Library Co-ordinator, SVRC)

We've had a few enquiries about tactile measurement of late. So, we thought it would be useful to provide a summary of the options that are currently available.

Rulers

- A couple of different 30 cm tactile ruler can be purchased from [Childsply](#), [Visability](#) (based in WA) or [Queensland Blind Association](#).
- Draftsman Drawing Kits include a tactile ruler. The kits are available for loan through the SVRC Vision Technology Library.
- Talking builder's tape measures are available for loan through the SVRC Vision Technology Library.
- SVRC can 3D print a 20 cm ruler as a last resort.

Protractors

- Protractors can be purchased from [Vision Australia](#) and [Childsply](#).
- Draftsman Drawing Kits include a Protractor with marks every 10 degrees. They are available for loan through the SVRC Vision Technology Library.
- SVRC has designed a protractor for both measurement and drawing basic angles. There are marks every 5 degrees and it has a moveable arm. The design files are also available on [Thingiverse](#) for anyone to download and 3D print themselves.
- [Draw2Measure Protractor](#) is an iPad App from American Printing House for the Blind. It allows accurate measurement of angles either by drawing on the screen (even works through embossed tactile diagrams) or by moving the iPad itself. The App is available on SVRC iPads through the Self Service App, or can be downloaded from the App Store.

Audio Recordings of Braille Patterns

Australian parents Ruan and Sylvia have created a number of audio voice recordings of braille pattern instructions, which [they share online](#). Their daughter, Genique, was diagnosed with a brain tumor growing from the optic nerve in 2016 and it has severely limited her vision. They have found that braille designs help her to practice her braille literacy skills in a fun way. These audio recordings allow braille users to create the designs themselves, by listening to the directions.

So far they have created the audio directions for five of the braille designs: Flower in a Pot, Hello Kitty with Santa Hat, Santa Claus, Tow Truck and Valentine's Heart.

[Paths to Literacy](#) also have information on the braille patterns.

"Christine & Claire" Tactile Picture Books Now Available from childsPly

From: Claire Garrett and Christine Casey, childsPly

Home alone has had some advantages. While my grandchildren and the rest of the world have been baking the most delicious looking bread and out spotting teddy bears, my toaster oven has found the time to start producing vacuum formed bears of its own! All part of a new line of products from childsPly: tactile picture books by "Christine & Claire".

As well as providing a bit of fun, the stylised relief images in these picture books are designed to help young tactile readers bridge an understanding between 3D objects or models, and their 2D representations in embossed or PIAF media. The Grade 2 UEB braille text is located at the bottom of each page whereas the print text, which is easy to commit to memory, is printed in full on a single page at the beginning or end of each book. The detailed imagery makes these books suitable for a wider age range of children than expected from the simplicity of the text.

The vacuum/thermo formed pages are made from a robust, wipeable, 0.5mm white HIPS plastic, and occasionally include a textured insert to assist with the story. The pages are double-sided and bound with cable ties to form a conventional book format with minimal page movement whilst touch reading. Each book is housed in a 5-sided recycled cardboard box designed to sit neatly on the bookshelf displaying a small tactile label for identification.

"My Teddy Bear" by Christine & Claire is a simple story introducing the concept of different patterns of design, as opposed to different textures. In most instances there are only small changes between consecutive pages as each part of the patchwork teddy is described.

"Little Mouse Finds a House" by Christine & Claire is a picture book designed for young children to have fun exploring detailed tactile imagery that tells its own story. The text is simple and only gives a clue to the full story. Throughout the 14 pages, parts of the mouse can be found easily, but understanding just what little mouse is getting into in search of her house, might take a few "reads" and potentially lead to much discussion.

Inspired by and based on "Where is the Green Sheep?" by Mem Fox and Judy Horacek, we are delighted to welcome into the fold, "Where is the Wool Sheep?" by Christine & Claire. While not verbatim, it is totally in the spirit of the much loved original and we thank Mem, Judy and Penguin Random House for permission to produce our tactile version which is now available as a print to order sale to individuals and institutions for vision impaired children to enjoy.

childsply@gmail.com

www.childsply.wixsite.com/catalogue

Guide Dogs – Introducing "My Community, My Way" – creating connected communities

My Community, My Way is a new online interactive hub where people with low vision and blindness, carers and professionals who work with this community, can find all the information they need from Guide Dogs organisations across the country in the one place, and much much more!

My Community, My Way (the hub) has been a collaborative project, developed by Guide Dogs Victoria, Guide Dogs NSW/ACT, Guide Dogs SA/NT and Guide Dogs QLD. The hub is designed to provide support, keep users informed, and connect people with others in their community.

Registration is simple, free and only takes a matter of minutes. You can register through the link here <https://community.guidedogs.asn.au/s/>

New Courses Available for Visually Impaired

From: An SSP student's Mum

Prof. Iain Murray and his team started teaching the Cisco Networking Academy courses to visually impaired learners more than 15 years ago in Australia. Today, they are helping students globally and are embracing the remote teaching model. New Cisco Courses start at the end of July.

Students are now able to enrol in one of the following three courses:

- Python Essentials
- IT Essentials
- Advanced Screen-Reader

All courses will be delivered remotely and are available to students globally.

Cost

The cost to participate is 100 USD per course offering. This fee can be waived based on financial hardship and on a case-by-case basis.

How to enrol

Those that like to participate can express their interest via email to neil.hines@curtin.edu.au. Please include the following details in the email: Course(s) you'd like to participate in, first and last name, date of birth, country of residence, country you were born in.

And finally...

Stay safe and well and here's hoping we'll be able to travel more than 5km soon!