

Number 2, Friday 19th February, 2021

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PD events

The 2021 [Professional Learning Calendar](#) is now available on the SVRC website. Most professional learning will continue to be online. Events are now on Eventbrite.

Tuesday Feb 24 **Educational support of students who are vision impaired with additional impairments**

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

Wednesday Apr 28 **Teaching and learning with Braille music**

Providing practical strategies for music teachers to promote inclusion and achievement for students who are blind.

Wednesday May 12 **Including students who are blind or have low vision in art**

Providing practical strategies that teachers can use in their art classes to promote inclusion and achievement for students who are blind or partially sighted.

From the Manager

From: Kim Foley, Manager, SVRC

As you know, all Victorian schools moved to a three-day period of remote and flexible learning from Monday 15th February to Wednesday 17th February inclusive. SVRC staff worked from home with all resources and teaching and learning opportunities continuing offsite and online. There will be a slight interruption to the mailing of braille resources and technology over these three days. We are hoping to resume onsite access with mail collected and processed this Friday.

During the last fortnight, SVRC staff provided two high quality professional learning days for teachers and ES staff, with 63 participants on the day for teachers of students who are blind (February 9), and another 101 on the day for teachers of students with low vision (February 16). Thank you to Marion, Di, Geoff, Emily, Elise, Jordi, Thien, Louis, GDV, Michael and Naomi for presenting and supporting the day.

All SVRC professional learning days are presented online and unfortunately, last week during the professional learning for teachers of students who are blind there were a few technical problems with the bandwidth creating a less than ideal presentation on the day. Thankfully, the recordings are of a high quality and all participants will receive access for future reference.

Our professional learning day for low vision was presented from SVRC staff homes during the Stage 4 lockdown. The decision to present all SVRC professional learning days online has created an opportunity for increased numbers of school staff being able to attend and with the uncertainty of additional lockdowns in the future, we can confidently continue to organise and deliver the professional learning catalogue.

SVRC, in partnership with Vision Australia, will distribute the LEGO® Braille Brick kits through the equipment library to all braille students in Victorian government schools. Once we receive the LEGO® Braille Brick kits, VTs can request a kit for their students. We are currently in negotiation with Vision Australia to attend a VT Community of Practice in March for a training session on the how to use the LEGO® Braille Brick kits for inclusive teaching and learning sessions. More information to follow.

Support Skills Leaders 2021

From: Marion Blaze, Acting Leading Teacher

Support Skills was off to a flying start with its first group of students in on Friday February 5th, 2021. This year we are appointing "Support Skills Leaders" each Friday and asking them to take initiative in helping students and teachers on the program.

One of our first leaders was Connor. Connor said if felt great to be picked as an SSP Captain because it made him feel responsible and like he could help people and contribute to the program. Connor wrote some notes to help future SSP leaders.

He suggested that leaders could:

- Help with emergency drills or actual emergencies
- Make announcements at assembly, or maybe run assembly in the future
- Help people find their lockers or rooms
- Introduce new people to the group
- Talk about how students are going at school and offer support if things aren't going well
- Share ideas with teachers
- Help students to approach teachers with ideas or concerns.

Thank you, Connor, for taking on this new role with such flair and making all these great suggestions!

Photo of Connor wearing his SSP LEADER lanyard.



SVRC Professional Learning Report – Week 3, 2021

From: Marion Blaze, Acting Leading Teacher

SVRC has hit the ground running with three professional learning days already this term! On February 2 we welcomed five Visiting Teachers (Vision), new to the role, to attend on-site at SVRC. We look forward to their future calls and questions!

On February 9, we had our first of the 2021 online series of PL activities. With huge technical support from Michael Kelly and Naomi Thompson, we welcomed 65 participants online. Of these, 10 were Visiting Teachers (Vision), 24 were from Primary schools, 22 Secondary schools, 12 Catholic schools, 3 Independent schools, 1 from Virtual School Victoria and 2 from Queensland. Our new green screen room was running hot and there were a few technical hitches, but overall a very successful day learning about supporting students who are blind and use braille. Thank you to our tech support (Michael and Naomi) and all the presenters, especially Thien. Thien finished school last year with an 86+ ATAR and was thrilled to be asked to speak to all the teachers. He told me he thinks that such opportunities as this helped him gain a scholarship for his tertiary course at Monash. Thien was so impressive. He logged in on Zoom and used an ear-piece to listen to the questions in the chat while speaking to camera and listening to his own prepared script – all at the same time! So if any VTs have students interested in speaking to teachers at PL activities, do let us know. It looks great on a CV!

VTs (Vision) needed in Independent schools

SVRC receives calls from Independent schools, several times each year, asking if we know of VTs (Vision) who can work in Independent schools. Please let us know if you are working part-time and interested in this "extra" work, or if you know of someone who is. It might even suit a retired VT. Independent Schools Victoria provides a small amount of funding to schools of eligible students. Most schools "top this up" to pay a VT. All eligible students in Independent schools, of course, come through EVAC and receive alternative format materials and PL from SVRC. Technology is funded within their own system.

Action Audio

Via ANZAAG Facebook Group

A new way for people who are blind or have low vision to follow the sports they love. Action Audio turns spatial data from live sports into sound, allowing blind and low vision audiences to follow the action in real time. Action Audio will launch during the Australian Open 2021 quad wheelchair singles, men's and women's finals.

Find out more at <https://www.action-audio.com/>

Victorian Opera: Echo and Narcissus/Cassandra

From: Description Victoria

Event Details

A double bill of ancient myths for modern times.

Echo, a talkative nymph of the forest, is in love with Narcissus, who only loves himself. After she is rejected, Echo retreats to the caves, doomed to forever only repeat the words she hears. Narcissus is unable to tear himself away from his own reflection and turns into a flower on the riverbank.

The gift of prophecy becomes a curse when no one believes you. Cassandra foresees that the Trojan horse will lead to the downfall of her people, but her warnings go unheeded. The gods show mortals who's boss.

Two Melbourne-based writing teams re-imagine these timeless stories in a double bill of new works commissioned as a direct response to the coronavirus crisis.

These prescient myths will foretell and entertain. Heed their moral lessons.

Please note - the information provided in this email is current at the time of sending. In case of cancellation or postponement due to COVID-19 related restrictions, you will receive advice from Victorian Opera if you are a current ticket-holder. Up-to-date information can be found on the Victorian Opera website [here](#).

Essential Info:

When: Audio described on Saturday March 20, performance from 1pm, pre-show briefing in the foyer from Noon.

Duration: 1 hour and 40 minutes, plus one interval.

Where: Playhouse, Arts Centre Melbourne. 100 St Kilda Rd, Southbank (Under the Spire).

Cost: Tickets cost between \$39 and \$95, plus booking fees.

How to Book: Online at the Arts Centre Melbourne website, or call the box office on 1300 182 183.

More Info: Visit the Victorian Opera website.

And finally ...

Transcription had 55 requests come in on Monday, and that was before 2pm!