

# **The Bulletin**

## **Statewide Vision Resource Centre**

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**Number 18**

**Friday 9<sup>th</sup> November 2007**

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This issue was edited by Deb Lewis, Co-ordinator, Statewide Vision Resource Centre.

**To all Visiting Teachers and helpers!**

**You are invited to the Christmas morning tea which will again be held on the first  
Wednesday in December - 5<sup>th</sup> December from 11.00am.**

**Come along and mingle with staff of the SVRC and other invited guests!**

**Please RSVP.**

### **Professional Development Activities for 4th Term 2007**

- **Travel Training Day**  
with Guide Dogs Victoria at SVRC, 10.00am – 3.00pm, Tuesday 13 November  
See below for more information
- **Educational EXPO – Access Technology Options**  
at SVRC, 10.00am to 3.30pm, Friday 23 November
- **Skill Power for Early Braille Users and their Support Staff / Families** proposed program  
10 to 14 December 2007

To see the annual program and to download programs for the 2007 professional development activities, go to: <http://www.visiontech.svrc.vic.edu.au/pd2007.htm>

### **Professional Development for 2008**

Click [here](#) for the draft version of the SVRC professional development program for next year. If you notice any glaring clashes, please let us know ASAP!

### **Visiting Teacher PD for 2008**

This year we are responding to an influx of beginning braille reading prep students by focusing on BRAILLE in our professional development program. Of course, there will also be topics to assist Visiting Teachers to support students with the Expanded Core Curriculum including:  
compensatory or functional academic skills, including communication modes

- visual efficiency skills
- use of assistive technology
- social interaction skills
- self-determination
- orientation and mobility
- independent living skills
- recreation and leisure skills
- career education

The term 1 program (click [here](#)) will include:

- 101 Ways to Encourage Early Braille Literacy
- Visual Processing and Learning
- Computer Skills for Primary Students – what, when, how

## Braille Skills for VTs

Visiting Teachers ... we'd like to take the opportunity to invite you to update your braille skills to the new Unified English Braille Code. The staff of the SVRC have updated the Correspondence Course for more fun and variety! [Contact us!](#)

## Workshop Program for 2008

You'll notice a new approach to workshops in the program above. Instead of half-day workshops, we are offering three 1½ hour sessions over four separate days in term 1 and 2 as follows:

### Braille Input and Output

- **Braille Skills** – Come and Work on your Correspondence Course with Support from the Staff of the SVRC – Tuesday 4th March, 1.30pm to 3.00pm  
Staff from the SVRC
- **BrailleNote** – Monday 21st April, 10.00am to 11.30am  
Ramona Mandy, Humanware
- **Mountbatten** – Tuesday 4th March, 11.45am to 1.15pm  
Trevor Boyd, Quantum Technology
- **PACMate** – Thursday 15th May, 10.00am to 11.30am  
Trevor Boyd, Quantum Technology
- **Spot Dot Braille Embosser** – Tuesday 4th March, 10.00am to 11.30am  
Ramona Mandy, Humanware

### Computer Enhancements and Enlarging Software

- **Computer without the Mouse** – Monday 21st April, 1.30pm to 3.00pm  
Lea Nagel, Senior Visiting Teacher
- **Digital Media** – Wednesday 30th April, 1.30pm to 3.00pm  
Staff of the SVRC
- **Enlargement Options** – Thursday 15th May, 11.45am to 1.15pm  
Scott Freeman, Humanware
- **MAGic** – Monday 21st April, 11.45am to 1.15pm  
Trevor Boyd, Quantum Technology
- **WYNN** – Wednesday 30th April, 11.45am to 1.15pm  
Trevor Boyd, Quantum Technology

### Voice Output Software

- **JAWS** – Thursday 15th May, 1.30pm to 3.00pm  
Lea Nagel, Senior Visiting Teacher
- **WindowEyes** – Wednesday 30th April, 10.00am to 11.30am  
Ramona Mandy, Humanware

We invite Visiting Teachers, teachers, aides, therapists, parents and students to come along to any or all of these workshops – please BYO laptop!

There is no charge for any of these workshops – and coffee/tea will be provided. Please bring your lunch or you can order it from the Heatherwood School Trade Kitchen on the day.

## DeafBlindness PD in Sydney

**What:** A DeafBlind World: A workshop of practical strategies for support professionals

**When:** Tuesday 13 November 2007

**Where:** Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children, 361-365 North Rocks Road, North Rocks,

NSW 2151

**Presented by:** Professionals and people within the field of Deafblindness; including Dr Michael Steer, Trish Wetton, Julie Shylan, Rosa Racanelli, Beth Foale and Jacqui Cashmore, with special guests Nicola Stowe and Steve Ripley.

**Cost:** Free

This workshop will showcase the impact of Deafblindness, types and causes. It will highlight strategies for communication; approaching, making contact, etc. There will be simulation activities. It will explore issues such as mobility, accommodation, education, recreation, respite, challenging behaviour and socialisation. There will be a discussion entitled 'A life's journey' by Steve Ripley and Nicola Stowe, both of whom are Deafblind.

To register contact (02) 9872 0207.

## **Driving Camp 2007**

Still a few places available – be quick! Contact Helen on [caldow.helen.f@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:caldow.helen.f@edumail.vic.gov.au)

## **Space Camp 2008**

Do you know anyone who's interested in joining the elite band of adventurers – the 'Space Campers'? We already have one student who is busting to go to the USA for this annual event – three more and we'll be going!!! Please contact Deb Lewis at the SVRC to express your interest. For more information, check out the Space Camp web pages:

<http://www.visiontech.svrc.vic.edu.au/camps.htm> or <http://www.tsbvi.edu/space/index.htm>

## **Paralympic Talent Search – Altona**

The final Talent Search for 2007 will be held soon and students with vision impairments and/or physical disabilities are invited to attend.

**When:** Sunday 2 December from 9.30am

**Where:** Altona Badminton Centre, Mason Street Altona North

Pre-registration for participants is required and can be done by visiting

<http://www.paralympic.org.au> and following the links to the Talent Search Program.

For more information, contact Tim Matthews (03) 9614 6800 or [tim.matthews@paralympic.org.au](mailto:tim.matthews@paralympic.org.au).

## **Swimming Carnival: Reminder**

**When:** Friday 7th December from 9.00am to 1.00pm

**Where:** Presbyterian Ladies College Aquatic Centre, 141 Burwood Hwy, Burwood (Mel 60 K5)

Any student who is blind or vision impaired may enter this event by completing the entry form and returning it to: Charlie Roberts, Vision Australia School, 333 Burwood Highway, Burwood 3125 by Friday 16th November.

For entry forms contact Charlie on (03) 9808 6422.

## **tinySpell – A Handy Spell Checker for MS Windows**

Adapted from review by Gerry Kennedy in: OnLine Magazine, Issue 3 2007

Occasionally you need to check the spelling of words in an application that does not include a spelling checker. You may not wish to launch MS Word or another application that can spell check as you type.

tinySpell is handy as it is always available in the toolbar and works with any MS Windows™ application. It is a small utility that allows you to easily and quickly check the spelling of words. tinySpell can watch your typing on the fly and alert you whenever it detects a misspelled word (with or without an auditory warning). It can also check the spelling of text that you copy to the clipboard. tinySpell installs itself in the system tray for easy access.

One drawback for Australian users is that it comes with an American-English dictionary. It does contain more than 110,000 words though and you can add your own words. Checking your spelling is simple; and can be achieved easily. You have two options:

- While you are typing, tinySpell watches the text you enter and whenever it detects a misspelled word it beeps and the tinySpell icon in the system tray turns from white to yellow.
- When you copy text to the clipboard tinySpell checks its spelling immediately. If it finds at least one misspelled word in the text it beeps and turns its icon to yellow. If the icon is white it means that no misspelled words were found in the clipboard text.

Correcting a misspelled word is also simple. When a misspelled word is detected, you click the tinySpell icon or press the hot-key (that is user definable) to pop up a list of suggested replacement words. If the misspelled word is detected during on-the-fly checking or after a word is copied to the clipboard you can select a correction from the list. The selected word is inserted into your document, or is copied to the clipboard (so you can paste it in your document), or both (depending on your settings).

tinySpell checks spelling in any MS Windows™ application.

Most importantly, tinySpell does not contain any form of spyware or adware and this is guaranteed. It is a freeware program and will assist anyone who has difficulty in spelling. A limitation is the size of the spelling window as it is quite small. Otherwise it can be launched at startup and be available by all users.

## **Maths in High School – Use Equation Editor**

This terrific “how to” (for students with vision) appeared in IT’s Vision Time (Issue 2, 2007) and appears as a Word document [here](#).

## **Heinemann Australian eDictionary**

The SVRC has purchased a copy of the Heinemann Australian eDictionary for you to trial with your students.

## **Free Old Technology**

The foyer of the SVRC is littered with old equipment – old closed circuit televisions, printers, audio tapes, even a computer screen or two!!! Please come and help yourselves! First in ...

## **Disability Related Website**

The New South Wales-based Disability Education Network (DEN) is a cross-sectoral forum of staff from schools, Vocational Education and Training, and universities responsible for supporting students with a disability, or chronic illness, throughout their studies. Their website lists an astonishing number of links to other websites with disability-specific information – take a look here: [http://www.newcastle.edu.au/service/disability/regional/den/disability\\_related\\_websites.html](http://www.newcastle.edu.au/service/disability/regional/den/disability_related_websites.html)

## **Look Out, Marcus!**

This very cute but most informative book designed to teach students about vision impairment was launched recently at Guide Dogs Victoria. Copies of “Look Out, Marcus! Growing up with Low Vision” were sent to every Victorian primary school, are also available by request (contact Lisa Brown at [lisa.b@guidedogsvictoria.com.au](mailto:lisa.b@guidedogsvictoria.com.au)) or downloadable from the internet: <http://www.guidedogsvictoria.com.au/fileadmin/vfa-guidedogsvictoria/LookOutMarcusWeb.pdf>

## **Assisting Students in Mainstream Classrooms**

Source: AFB Update, October 2007

A new research report aims to help mainstream teachers to include students with disability by identifying effective practices in the early, middle and post-compulsory years of schooling. The report focuses on the activities, interactions and materials that make classroom practices inclusive, and the professional development needs of teachers so that they acquire the knowledge and skills to implement inclusive practices. The final research report of 324 pages, 'A Project to Improve the Learning Outcomes of Students with Disabilities in the Early, Middle and Post Compulsory Years of Schooling', and the 40-page resource for teachers, 'Students with Disabilities in Mainstream Classrooms', are available at

[http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/school\\_education/publications\\_resources/profiles/learning\\_outcomes\\_students\\_disabilities.htm](http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/school_education/publications_resources/profiles/learning_outcomes_students_disabilities.htm).

## **Every Fifteen Minutes Counts: Students Need Sleep!**

A recent study has proven that students require an average of 8 hours sleep per night. There are academic consequences for not achieving that average.

Dr Kyla Wahlstrom of the University of Minnesota surveyed more than 7,000 high schoolers about their sleep habits and grades. Teenagers who averaged As got about fifteen more minutes sleep per night than the B average students. The C students got 11 minutes less sleep, and so on. Functional MRI scans are showing that sleep loss impairs a child's brain. Tired children can't remember what they just learnt because neurons lose their plasticity, becoming incapable of forming the synaptic connections necessary to encode a memory.

A different mechanism causes children to be inattentive in class. Sleep loss debilitates our body's capacity to extract glucose from the bloodstream. Without this stream of basic energy, one part of the brain suffers more than the rest: the prefrontal cortex, which is responsible for what is called "executive function". So tired people have difficulty with impulse control, and their abstract goals like studying take a back seat to more entertaining diversions. Also, a tired brain perseverates - it gets stuck on the wrong answer and can't come up with a more creative solution.

The full transcript of the study can be found at <http://nymag.com/news/features/38951/index4.html>

## **Vision Information Brochures**

We have a limited supply of vision information brochures which have been made available by Guide Dogs Victoria. They include:

- astigmatism
- conjunctivitis
- macular degeneration
- retinopathy of prematurity
- albinism
- etc

If you would like a copy please contact us (they promised us more copies if we need them!)

## **Proposal to Eradicate Avoidable Blindness in Asia-Pacific**

Source: AFB Update, October 2007

The Australian Government has announced it will form a long-term partnership with non-government organisations to help improve or restore vision for up to 12 million people in South East Asia and the Pacific and help strengthen health systems in the Asia-Pacific especially through training for eye health and vision care professionals. Fully accredited Australian NGOs with disability experience and skills will be invited to partner AusAID to implement the \$60 million plan

over the next 10 years. A new strategy to outline how disability in the region will be tackled in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, recently signed by Australia.

For more information go to:

[http://www.vision2020australia.org.au/assets/content/1817/Minister\\_Downer\\_Media\\_Release\\_23Oct07.pdf](http://www.vision2020australia.org.au/assets/content/1817/Minister_Downer_Media_Release_23Oct07.pdf); <http://www.vision2020australia.org.au/news-events-news.cfm?id=1817&t=/foreign-minister-funds-blindness-prevention/>

## Asia-Pacific Photo Competition

Source: AFB Update, October 2007

The International Labour Organisation (ILO), Disabled Peoples' International and Irish Aid invite all photo enthusiasts to participate in an Asia-Pacific Photograph Competition under the theme 'Decent Work for Persons with Disabilities'. It is open to all residents over the age of 18 in the Asia-Pacific region. Closing date for entries is 12.00noon (Bangkok time) on 21 November 2007. The awards will be announced on 29 November 2007 in Bangkok. Prizes are first US\$1000, second US\$500 and third US\$250. The invitation to participate and competition rules can be provided by emailing [margaret.verick@nds.org.au](mailto:margaret.verick@nds.org.au).

## Staff and Student News

- News from Gap student **Peggy** – who will be coming back to Australia for Christmas... Seeing that this is my last half term, I thought I'd do something by myself. As most of you probably know, I hate doing stuff by myself. I don't like being alone. I went to London on my own.  
I caught the train from Worcester to London Paddington. I decided that I'd take a taxi to the hotel, only because I was tired and I didn't want to take the underground. From the hotel I caught a taxi to see Footloose at Playhouse Theatre. What would have been a 5 min trip in the cab turned for 45 minutes. When I finally got to the theatre the taxi driver took me out of the cab and took me to one of the ushers at the theatre to help me. The taxi driver had walked off and I turned around to him and asked how much I owe him and he said 'nothing'. I was really wrapped with that. So I can't complain. The next day I woke up with a migraine and I didn't want to use the underground whilst in a really bad state. So I stayed around the hotel that morning and just wandered around and looked in shops and things. That morning I booked to see a matinee for Dirty Dancing. I'd decided I'd just catch a taxi everywhere as it would be easier and I wasn't prepared to take the underground. Dirty Dancing was great, it was just like seeing the film but on stage. And yes, I did get a t-shirt saying 'Nobody puts baby in a corner'. After that show, I was so tired but I couldn't sleep yet. I still had one more show to see. Les Mes was the last. It was a really good show, I really enjoyed that. I was a bit disappointed that I missed the Audio Description as it would have helped. For those who don't know what audio description is, its description that is between dialogue. In a theatre you are given a radio transmitter and an ear piece and you have the description from the ear piece. I have to say although I didn't get to do the underground in London. I'm really proud of myself that I did it on my own. I've got more confidence to travel on my own now. I organised this on my own and I'm proud of myself that I did it.
- Some time last term, we had two integration aides complete the Correspondence Course in Braille but somehow this momentous event did not make it to The Bulletin – so here goes:
  - **Monica Petterson** from Wellington Secondary College completed the Literary Braille Code and
  - **Sue Richardson** from Numurkah Primary School completed the new UEB course  
Congratulations ladies!

- All in a day's march...  
**Lea** and I were in a school filming last week – but we were upstaged slightly by another film crew... Yes! It was 'Dr Harry' (seen below with Lea)!

## **Drawing in Dots: A Sailboat**

Adapted from IT'S Vision Time, Issue 2 2007

It is fun to draw with your Perkins or Mountbatten! Here are the directions to make a cute sailboat!

1. Space, dots 4-5-6, CH.
2. Space, dots 4-5-6, space, CH.
3. Space, dots 4-5-6, space twice, CH.
4. Write ED, x four times, n.

The sailboat is a simple figure. It can be made as large as you want by using dots 4-5-6 for the mast, increasing the number of spaces by one for each line added. Make the boat length correspond to the width of the sail.

Do you have other ideas??? Send them in!

## **Resources for Brailleing Preppies**

The Production Department are hard at work creating lots of resources for our beginning braille readers – here are a few examples (Yes! 'Five Little Ducks' and 'Hickory Dickory Dock') – in print and braille.

## **Finally**

Thanks to Marion Blazé, Mike Steer, Maria Elford and Geoff Bowen for contributing to this edition of The Bulletin. Thanks also to our fabulous proof-readers, stuffers and mailers.

***If you have something you would like included in 'The Bulletin', please contact:***

Deb Lewis (who can be emailed at [deblewis@svrc.vic.edu.au](mailto:deblewis@svrc.vic.edu.au)).