

The Bulletin

Statewide Vision Resource Centre

Number 6

Friday 24th April 2009

This issue was edited by Lyn Robinson, Resource Teacher, Statewide Vision Resource Centre.

Professional Development Activities for Term 2, 2009

Professional Development Event 2009	Date
*Skill Power Workshops for Visiting Teachers, Teachers, Aides, Students 1. Mountbatten – 10.00am to 11.30am Trevor Boyd, Quantum Technology 2. BrailleNote – 11.45am to 1.15pm Ramona Mandy, Humanware 3. Computer without the Mouse – 1.30pm to 3.00pm Lea Nagel, Senior Visiting Teacher	Wednesday 29 April
Educational Support for Vision Impaired Students with Additional Impairments This day is designed for teachers, aides, therapists, parents/care-givers and visiting teachers who support vision impaired students who have additional impairments (maximum participants: 60)	Friday 1 May
Education Week Activity – "Louis Day" (200 year anniversary of the birth of Louis Braille)	TBA May
*Skill Power Workshops for Visiting Teachers, Teachers, Aides, Students etc 1. WindowEyes – 10.00am to 11.30am Ramona Mandy, Humanware 2. MAGic – 11.45am to 1.15pm Trevor Boyd, Quantum Technology 3. Introduction to the SVRC 'Tool Kit' – 1.30pm to 3.00pm Lyn Robinson, SVRC	Wednesday 13 May
Term 2 Visiting Teacher Professional Development Day	Tuesday 19 May
*Skill Power Workshops for Visiting Teachers, Teachers, Aides, Students etc 1. JAWS – 10.00am to 11.30am Lea Nagel, Senior Visiting Teacher 2. PACMate – 11.45am to 1.15pm Trevor Boyd, Quantum Technology 3. A Week in the Life of a VT. Lea Nagel and staff of the SVRC.	Thursday 28 May
*Skill Power Workshops for Visiting Teachers, Teachers, Aides, Students 1. Computer Without the Mouse – 9.45am to 11.15am Lea Nagel, Senior Visiting Teacher 2. ZoomText (Talking and Enlarging Software) – 11.45am to 1.15pm Trevor Boyd, Quantum Technology 3. Setting up the Computer for Low Vision Users – 1.30pm to 3.00pm Lyn Robinson, SVRC	Thursday 18 June
Dot Power for Kinder and Prep Braille Readers	Monday 22 June

*All Skill Power days - BYO laptop and lunch.

For a complete list of the Professional Development offered by the SVRC go to:

<http://www.visiontech.svrc.vic.edu.au/PD2009.doc>

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The Right to an Ordinary Life

Mr. Bill Shorten, Parliamentary Secretary for Disability and Children's Services, recently addressed the National Press Club. Here is part of that address:

"I have seen the determination of people with disability to work and make the most of their lives. I have seen them leaping over hurdles, attempting marathons, attempting decathlons of social difficulty that most of us have never even had to begin to think about.

It is core to labor values of social inclusion and it has become my cause, that they should be liberated from the shackles of their genetics and their accidental circumstance, from those shafts of fate that strike down and impair the innocent and the good, so they may participate fully and without prohibition or prejudice in their own lives and this world we share, so they may – un-handcuffed, un-chained, un-forbidden – seek and enjoy the opportunities that we each regard as fundamental human rights.

In all this, it is impossible to over-emphasise the need, the primal need, that people with disability feel, and it's the need to be ordinary, to not be thought of as amusing, or pitiable, or brave, or admirable, or coping wonderfully with difficult circumstances.

Just to be one of the gang, a girl in the office, a bloke at the pub, not invisible but unremarkable, part of the normal order of things, a friend like any other, a neighbour, an average Australian, a citizen, another human being."

A transcript of the address given by the Hon Bill Shorten MP (Parliamentary Secretary for Disability and Children's Services) at the National Press Club on 1 April 2009 is available at the link below. A DAISY version of the address is available from the same page.

http://www.billshorten.fahcsia.gov.au/internet/billshorten.nsf/content/right_to_ordinary_life_01apr09.htm

VACANCY

Integration Aide (0.4 Thursdays & Fridays) required to work with a Year 3 Vision Impaired student. Experience with Braille preferred but will train if needed. Starting as soon as possible.

Contact Gaylene Watts [Principal]

Tel: 98786501 email: principal@stphilipbbn.catholic.edu.au

St. Philip's Primary School, 60 Junction Road, Blackburn North

NAPLAN 2009

In a letter to schools recently (S172-2009), DEECD Secretary Professor Dawkins alerted schools and principals that the 2009 NAPLAN tests will be taking place between 12 and 14 May 2009. He wrote: "Students need assistance with preparation to effectively participate in the NAPLAN assessment. They have to understand the genre of testing and the cognitive demands they will be placed under to successfully complete the task." This comment is true for all students including those with vision impairments. Please ensure that your students have had the opportunity to see the nature of the testing material and the way that questions are presented so that they will be able to participate in the assessment to their full ability. Please contact the school or the SVRC if you require examples of the testing materials.

Two Sources of Funding

National Secondary School Computer Fund

The National Secondary School Computer Fund (the Fund) is a key component of the Australian Government's \$2 billion Digital Education Revolution initiative. The Australian Government is investing \$1.9 billion through the Fund, to provide for new or upgraded information and communications technology (ICT) for secondary schools with students in Years 9 to 12.

Did you know that students with disabilities may use these funds to buy assistive technology? This may be particularly useful for students who already have a computer but need additional software to access it.

Where there is another technology which would better fit the needs of the student this also can be funded by this program up to the \$1000.00 allocation per student.

For more information go to:

<http://www.deewr.gov.au/Schooling/DigitalEducationRevolution/FAQs/Pages/StudentswithDisabilityFrequentlyAskedQuestions.aspx>

Schools First Program

Schools First is a fantastic new initiative that is about improving outcomes for young people. At its heart, Schools First is about bringing together students, teachers, parents and community members, to support each other and help improve student outcomes.

With a prize pool of \$5 million every year for three years, Schools First is a national awards program that provides:

- Financial recognition of success in establishing effective school-community partnerships; and
- Financial support to build stronger school-community partnerships.

In support of the awards and their objective, Schools First will also:

- Provide regional workshops to support schools and communities to form or strengthen partnerships and prepare submissions for an award;
- Showcase successful partnerships as a means of inspiring other school communities; and
- Assist in developing a "knowledge bank" of resources on which school communities can draw.

And it's open to all Australian primary and secondary schools, whether they're public or private, special needs, religious or independent.

If you would like to know how Quantum Technology can support your efforts for funding in the area of adaptive technology through the NAB Schools First Program or The National Secondary School Computer Fund, please contact Quantum Technology on info@quantumtechnology.com.au or call 02 8844 9888.

If you would like to know how Humanware can assist you with the process please contact Ramona Mandy for blindness related products on 03 9686 2801 or email: ramona.mandy@humanware.com or Phil Hazell for low vision related products on 02 96862600 or email phil.hazel@humanware.com

School Sunglasses

The Cancer Council Victoria is now selling school sunglasses for \$14.95. So many of our students benefit from wearing sunglasses. If schools have a sunglasses policy and fundraiser to encourage families to buy Australian Standard sunglasses, they will be helping all students to do what is best for their eyes and prevent UV damage which can cause cataracts and other damage in later life. For more information, go to www.cancervic.org.au/stores/schools

Seeing-Eye Horse

Ok so I couldn't resist, yes it's yet another seeing-eye horse story.

This one comes from "Good Morning America" March 24, 2009:

Fort Worth, Texas, resident Tabitha Darling and her horse, Trixie are inseparable. The pair travel everywhere together, including to the local Dairy Queen drive-through and even to stores because Trixie is Darling's seeing-eye horse.

Trixie guides the legally blind Darling, and to see the horse trotting through the grocery aisle alongside Darling evokes surprise.

"She's kinda pretty much my life," said Darling, who had previously trained a horse to work with the disabled. "We've been together for about eight years now. She gives me the independence in getting out there."

The rest of this story by Stephanie Sy, Anna Wild and Linda Owens and can be found at:

<http://abcnews.go.com/GMA/story?id=7157206>

RVIB Ski Club - TRIVIA NIGHT

Come along for a fun night with members and friends! Fun questions and fantastic prizes!

Saturday 23rd May 7pm

Moorabbin Youth Club

Ewar St Moorabbin (5 mins walk from Moorabbin station)

\$10 per person payable at the door

To book a table or a place please contact Anita Deed by 16th May at anitadeed@bigpond.com or phone 03 9704 1954 or 0402 087 965

Australian author allows open access to audio version of her books

From the Roundtable Newsletter:

Children's author gives permission for open access audio versions of her books.

Annette Kelleher is a children's author whose books would be held in most school libraries around the country. Annette wrote such well-known books as "Noodles on our Ceiling" and "Seaweed in our Soup" in the categories of Young Adult Fiction and Junior Fiction. Annette has had a long relationship with publisher Scholastic Australia. After notice from Scholastic that they would not be re-issuing Annette's books and thus relinquishing copyright of the material, Annette approached Queensland Narrating Service to see if she could have her books put into audio so that they can reach a wider audience. With some discussion Annette gave QNS permission to narrate all her books for open access. For Annette it is important that more people get to have access to her writing and she is particularly pleased that people with print disabilities will be able to have accessible copies of her books. Education Queensland has committed to buy some of these audio books. The books that have been narrated are: "Noodles on our Ceiling, Seaweed in our Soup and Pet 4 Elvin". "Pumpkin Head is Dead, Bidy Blatherskte's Blunder, Geek Girl vs Cyber Chick" and "Zero Hour for Zenobia" will be narrated in the next few months. Annette plans to spend time in the classroom with some children with vision impairments to co-write a book!

Using a Monocular (for students)

Instructions for use

1. If you use glasses, put them on (unless otherwise instructed).
2. Stand directly in front of the object you want to see.
3. Hold the monocular with the rubber end close to your better eye without touching it. If wearing glasses, the rubber end of the monocular should rest lightly against them.
4. When looking through the monocular you should see light, if lined up with the pupil, otherwise nothing will be seen. Steady the monocular by resting your index finger on the eyebrow and your thumb against your nose.
5. Focus the monocular by placing your other hand on the ridged section and turn the ridge until the object becomes clear. If the object starts to blur, you have turned it too far, so turn it back in the other direction.
6. If you are unable to see the object, move closer to it and refocus.

Copying from the blackboard or whiteboard

- Follow steps one through to six. Place the monocular in your non-writing hand
- Read remembering two to three words at a time, as this will increase your speed.
- Keep you monocular in your line of sight while you write.

Guidelines for teachers

To assist students:

- Ensure writing is large, clear and well spaced.
- Encourage the student to move to central effective position for viewing.
- Reduce glare on the board by using the blinds or curtains.
- Number each line of writing so that the student can find their position on the board.
- Spacing and borders can help guide students to sections of writing.
- Use white or yellow chalk on blackboards for better contrast. Black or dark blue markers should be used on whiteboards.

From the Vision Australia website: <http://www.visionaustralia.org.au/info.aspx?page=856>

Web addresses: When to contract and when not to contract!

From Christine on the oz braille list:

When writing web and email addresses it is normal to use grade 2 braille unless the meaning of the address would be unclear and unless other rules would prevent you from doing so, example:

www.candofencing.com.

Here, the alphabetic wordsigns for "can" and "do" cannot be used as they are not standing alone. However, to use the "and" and "of" signs in "candofencing" make the word quite difficult to recognise as it is not written in its normal braille form and thus it would be correct in this instance to use grade 1 mode. However, an indicator is not required as the grade 1 mode does not cause any confusion.

Only use grade 1 indicators if you need to have the address in grade 1 mode and if having it in grade 1 mode may cause some confusion.

Example: ozbrl@yahoo.com needs the grade 1 indicator so that it is not read as ozbraille.com.

It is correct according to the Bridging rules to not contract the SH in Chisholm.

Hope this response is helpful, Christine

Web Accessibility

There is a great video to promote web accessibility on You Tube. It shows people with different disabilities using computers with JAWS rapping. There is a singer playing a guitar walking through the streets of New York City. This information was provided by Ike Presley on the AERNET list.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-IWBT4Tk3t0>

Braille E-book

Is this the future of braille?

A foursome of designers – Seon-Keun Park, Byung-Min Woo, Sun-Hye Woo and Jin-Sun Park – have banded together to created something different, an e-reader for those with limited or no vision. The concept uses A4 sized tablet that uses electroactive polymers to transform the screen into a page of braille.



This description is from the Yanko Design website:

"Visually challenged people require braille books in order to read. However, not many books are available in braille due to cost and inefficiency. Translating a 500 page book into braille nearly doubles the thickness. EAP is a technology that can dynamically change the surface pattern by way of an electromagnetic signal – simulating braille text."

The braille e-book is in the early stages of development -"we just need a venture capital firm and a determined entrepreneur to make it happen."

For more information go to: <http://www.yankodesign.com/2009/04/17/braille-e-book/>

Porta-book - Laptop Stand

Odette has found a portable stand in Office Works which is suitable for use with a laptop computer called, Porta-book. The following information is from the Porta-book website

- Porta-Book is a lightweight multi-functional portable stand, extremely durable, being strong enough to support the weight of a portable laptop computer (works best with 15 or many 17in laptops) or can be used to support various book sizes.
- The standard Porta-Book has two elastic (Grey and Black) bands that are different in diameter with the black being thinner to hold open a book. The use of double elastic bands was invented to hold a laptop computer in place or keep a book open that tends to close. The grey and the black elastic bands used together, stabilizes a laptop from sliding beyond the curved support at the base of the Porta-Book. Found on the reverse side of the Porta-Book, the elastic band tension can be adjusted by switching the elastic band(s) from the inner or outward tension positioning holes.
- The standard Porta-Book model is made of non-toxic, recyclable, polypropylene with a mix of metal powder. The Deluxe Porta-Book model is made using the same material but contains double the metal powder mix for extra durability.

Porta- Book costs \$39.95 from Office Works.

Reminder: Vision Australia's Braille Course

This is an intensive course conducted over twelve weekly sessions of three hours duration and there will be at least two hours of homework each week. Texts and equipment are provided prior to the commencement of the course.

Dates: Thursdays from 7 May to 6 August 2009 (excluding 2 and 9 July).

Time: 2.00 PM - 5.00 PM

Location: Vision Australia Training Room, 454 Glenferrie Road, Kooyong

Cost: \$500 (Includes texts and materials, hire of Perkins Braille and GST).

(Parents of blind children and carers please inquire about special rates).

To register contact: Trudy Williams on (03) 9520 5555 or email trudy.williams@visionaustralia.org

For specific course queries contact Jordie Howell on (03) 9520 5555 or

jordie.howell@visionaustralia.org

Aussie Educator: Vision Impairment Glossary of Terms

Visiting teacher, Heidi Littleford, has found a really useful website called Aussie Educator.

It has information about school systems in various parts of Australia with information about school holidays and terms dates amongst other things. Most importantly it has quite and extensive list of vision impairment related terms.

You might like to check it out at the following address:

http://www.aussieeducator.org.au/education_special_vision.html#s-z

Staff and Student News

Email from Rod, parent of Daniel:

"We had a great time in Albury last weekend for the Annual Victoria vs ACT, Banks of the Murray Cup. Daniel joined the Victorian Squad for this annual social match against ACT. They played 2 games on Saturday 28th as they had more players on each side than what was needed and so everyone got at least 1 game. Victoria beat ACT in both games and retained the Banks of the Murray Cup.

Daniel did OK considering the level of competition.

Game 1

Batting: Run out 6

Bowling: 2 overs, 0 maidens, 1 wicket for 5

Game 2

Run out 0 (a bit of a theme happening here!)

Bowling: 1 over, 0 maidens, 2 wickets (was on a hat trick) for 1

Not a bad start to state level competition even if it was more of a social match.

Daniel and I met some incredible people and at dinner on Saturday night there were some amazing stories about the things some of them had got up to. Daniel was enthralled by the stories of three players who played together in the Australian team that toured Pakistan some years back and the adventures they got up to in Pakistan and Malaysia on the way home. One was a totally blind player and it did not stop him from having the time of his life! It did Daniel good to hear about these things and I believe it will do others good to hear about what Dan has achieved. I am becoming more and more convinced that the only limitations on vision impaired people are the ones they place on themselves and they need to know and understand this."

In the Driver's Seat

The following was emailed from former student, Kyle, who is currently enrolled at TAFE studying Certificate 3 in Disability Work:

I went to "In the Driver's Seat" recently at Sandown Racetrack. I went in several vintage cars and had a drive with an instructor. I got to drive a blue 2008 Toyota Corolla. I got to drive the automatic. Tony, the instructor, let me floor it! For a Corolla the engine has some serious get up and go. One of the drivers that took me in a vintage car was impressed at my knowledge of cars which is why I love cars so much."

From Kyle

Finally

Thanks to Odette Budge, Deb Lewis, Heidi Littleford, Marion Blazé, Annette Godfrey-Magee for contributing to this edition of The Bulletin. Thanks also to people who helped collate this bulletin and get it out to our readers.

Don't forget, we appreciate your input. If you have something you would like included in 'The Bulletin', please contact:

Lyn Robinson. Email: lynrobin@svrc.vic.edu.au