

The Bulletin

Statewide Vision Resource Centre

Number 8

Friday 22nd May 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
Education Week Activity – "Louis Day" (200 year anniversary of the birth of Louis Braille)	Monday 25 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. Audio Books -DAISY, MP3, CDA The how what & why of audio books 1.30pm to 3.00pm Lyn Robinson & Michael Kelly SVRC	Thursday 18 June New
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>

Visiting Teacher PD Day May 18 – Report

Twenty-two visiting teachers from around the state attended the recent PD day at the SVRC. The day started with an update from Gillian Gale and Lee Clarke about the progress of the Ozzie Dots project and was followed by a very informative talk from Dr Alan Johnston about the prescription of low vision telescopes for students with visual field losses. Our guest speaker from N.S.W., Ailsa Boyd, talked about her research into teaching children tactual skills. We were most appreciative of her contribution to our day and her generosity in sharing her work with us.

After lunch Geoff presented an entertaining session on “How to Deal With Difficult People” and for a change of pace we finished the day with ideas from the field including teaching students how to assess their own learning styles with Kim Foley. Michael and I talked to the group about the many interesting things on the VT Toolkit and the array of different type of audio books available from the SVRC. Thanks to everyone who contributed to this wonderful day including the braille and etext production staff who helped with registrations and lunches.

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Program for Students with Disabilities 2010

The Program for Students with Disabilities provides additional resources to schools to support eligible students with disabilities attending Victorian government schools.

Applications can be submitted for the 2010 Annual Round of the Program for Students with Disabilities from 4 May 2009.

Detailed information about the Program for Students with Disabilities and how to make an application can be found in the Program for Students with Disabilities 2010 Handbook. The handbook and supporting documentation is available for download from:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/wellbeing/disability/handbook/default.htm>

All applications must be registered online through the Program for Students with Disabilities Management System (PSDMS) at: <https://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/PSDMS/Home.aspx>

and hard copies forwarded to the Resources Coordination Group.

The closing date for the 2010 Annual Round is Friday, 17 July 2009.

Visiting Teacher Vacancy

Kingswood College, a Coeducational K-12 School of the Uniting Church, invites applications from suitably qualified visiting teachers to commence as soon as possible in Term 2 2009.

The position involves providing a service for 2 students with significant vision impairments. The successful applicant will liaise with the College Integration Coordinator and attend Program Support Group Meetings. The area of educational need is in training in the use of residual vision and in the use of optical aids and other specialist equipment in the classroom. Approximately 2 visits will be required per term for each student plus a written report for ongoing funding purposes.

Closing Date: *(as soon as possible depending on the publication of the newsletter)*

Applications giving two referees, name and contact details should be sent to:

Mrs. Julie Kearney, Integration Coordinator, Kingswood College

355 Station St. Box Hill VIC 3128

Ph 03 9890 0677

Bushfire Thank You

I recently received this email from a parent affected by the bushfires:

I'm Rachel, mother of Matthew, I know that you guys were collecting books for the children of bushfire areas and I was wondering if it was possible at any stage soon, (I don't know of your plans yet to distribute the books), to put a thankyou into the bulletin to anyone who has donated in any form to the bushfire appeal. I don't know wether you know but we were affected and although we have our house we are still going through things everyday.

We thankyou for your time and hope that we can thank everyone soon.

Rachel Johnson

KINGLAKE WEST ELECTRICS

Bushfire Appeal for Children's Books – Update from Marion

If you've been to SVRC this year you will probably be aware of the ever-increasing collection of books near the lunch table, destined for the community of Middle Kinglake PS. We have a partially sighted boy at this school, which was destroyed in the fires. We approached the Principal about replenishing their school library but were told there was a desperate need for families who lost their homes (and personal libraries) to replace their own books. The school library is to be restocked by publishers and booksellers.

So, this is a reminder that when you come to the SVRC, please bring in second-hand or new children's books in good condition for this cause. We will finish the Children's Book Appeal at the end of term 2 and give the books to the school soon after that.



MathTrax

🐾 MathTrax is a graphing software program that is accessible to blind and vision-impaired students. It supports critical math, science and technology learning objectives. It describes graphs three ways - with "smart" text descriptions, nonverbal sound descriptions, and custom graphics descriptions - to suite different learning styles.

🐾 Teachers and students can use the Equation panel to evaluate equations, the Data panel to import and plot tabular data and the Simulation panel to model roller coaster physics and rocket launches. MathTrax is fully accessible to screenreader users. These users can conveniently and immediately access MathTrax's alternative text and sound graph descriptions.

🐾 MathTrax is a graphing tool for middle school and high school students to graph equations, physics simulations or plot data files. The graphs have descriptions and sound so you can hear and read about the graph. Blind and low vision users can access visual math data and graph or experiment with equations and datasets.

🐾 MathTrax works with screen readers to read aloud everything on your computer screen.

🐾 The MathTrax interface can be read by screen readers such as Jaws for Windows. MathTrax sounds can be played on standard computer speakers or through headphones.

🐾 Navigating MathTrax with a screen reader is accomplished by tabbing from element to element. With Jaws, hitting Tab moves the focus one component forward and Shift+Tab moves the focus one component backwards. Providing navigation shortcuts is important for enabling advanced users to jump directly to the component of interest.

🐾 MathTrax has a number of shortcuts or hotkeys built into the software to facilitate navigation for advanced users. Demonstration software is available from:

<http://prime.jsc.nasa.gov/mathtrax>

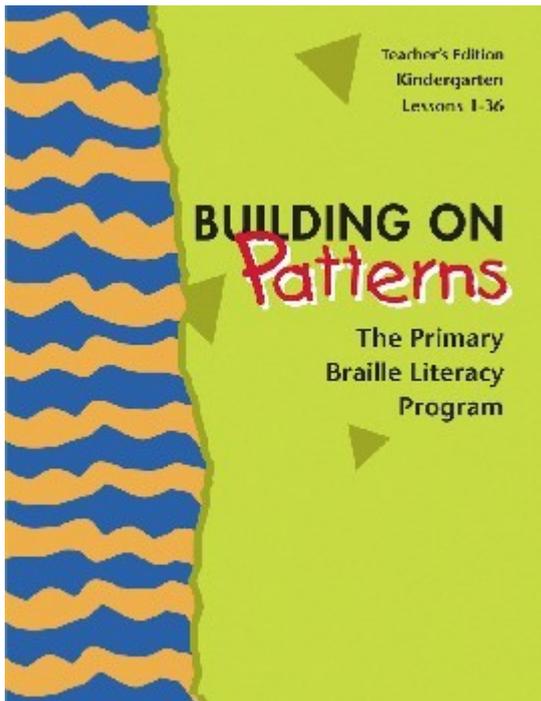
Handbook of Spoken Mathematics

Ever been lost for words trying to read mathematical terms and symbols to someone? If the answer is yes then this might be the web site for you. The authors of the site have put together a glossary of mathematical terms for sighted people who need to read mathematics to people who are blind or vision impaired.

The site has been adapted from Lawrence Chang's *Handbook for Spoken Mathematics*. "The focus of Chang's work is to provide the wherewithal by which sighted individuals can read mathematics to persons who are blind. He describes in words each symbol in the major branches of mathematics, from the simplest to the most complex. In essence, Chang's work represents the spoken vocabulary of mathematics. Thus, one use to which this work can be put is to assist persons who are blind in training sighted readers to accurately read mathematics."

Source: The Handbook can be found on the Texas School for the Blind Website at <http://s22318.tsbvi.edu/mathproject/appB-sec1.asp>

NEW! Building on Patterns: A Primary Braille Literacy Program



Building on the success of Patterns, Primary Braille Reading Program, the new Building on Patterns (BOP) is a complete primary literacy program designed to teach beginning braille users to read, write, and spell in braille.

The Building on Patterns series addresses vocabulary, fluency, comprehension, phonemic awareness (ability to hear and interpret sounds in speech), and phonics (the association of written symbols with the sounds they represent).

BOP also addresses specific skill areas needed by the child who is blind, such as language development, sound discrimination, tactual discrimination, and concept development. Braille contractions are introduced from the beginning along with sound and letter associations.

Features of Building on Patterns

- Groups of contractions are taught together when logical to do so.
- Easily confused letters and words are introduced at different times.
- Punctuation is eliminated except for the capital at the kindergarten level and is introduced gradually thereafter.
- Ideas for incorporating technology are given.
- Lessons are flexible and can be adapted to fit a given student or students.
- Enrichment activities are suggested for additional practice or homework.
- Read-aloud books to go along with the lesson are suggested.

Kindergarten lessons include a selection to be read to the student, questions to discuss, and an activity for the child to complete. Textbooks are consumable.

Recommended Ages: 4 or 5 years and up.

Note: Other levels of Building on Patterns will be available in the future.

Available from <http://www.aph.org/>

Audio Description News

Audio Description (AD) is the descriptive narration of key visual elements of live theatre, television, movies, and other media to enhance their enjoyment by consumers who are blind or have low vision. AD is the insertion of audio explanations and descriptions of the settings, characters, and action taking place in media, when such information is not offered in the regular audio presentation.



Did you know there is now an Audio Description International (ADI) website which promotes all things AD? ADI collects and provides information about audio description in all its forms: live theatre, television, movies, DVDs and more.

There are also two events coming up to promote Audio Description. The first is a competition for school aged children which is detailed below and the other is a conference in Florida. For more information about ADI including details of the conference in July go to:

<http://www.adinternational.org/index.html>

Be a Film Critic

The American Council Of The Blind and the Described And Captioned Media Program announce the First Annual Young Described Film Critic Contest. From the competition flyer:

Kids love movies. If you're a young person who can't see or can't see well, audio description provides access to all the visual images of the movies that your sighted peers enjoy.

Some films in movie theaters and certain DVDs have description available; many of those DVDs and the older VHS tapes with description can be borrowed at public libraries or state libraries for the blind.

The ***YOUNG DESCRIBED FILM CRITIC Contest*** wants you to experience these films and the description soundtracks and tell us about them!

Young people with a visual impairment have a chance to win prizes for themselves AND their schools. And of course a chance to hold the awesome title: Young Described Film Critic of the Year!

All you need to do for a chance to win is to write, type or record your own film review of any described movie. Keep it short: 250 words maximum.

There are three age categories: Sophomore (ages 7 to 10), Junior (ages 11 to 14), and Senior (ages 15 to 18). You can enter as many times as you like!

The top nominees in each age category will be invited to an Awards Ceremony at the American Council of the Blind 2009 convention in Orlando, Florida on July 7. Special guest award presenters will be in attendance and while the prizes are still to be determined, we know you won't be disappointed!

This competition is based in the U.S. but is open to international entries. More information about how to enter is attached to this bulletin.

Entries close **Friday, June 12, 2009, so start reviewing now!**

National Deafblind Conference

“Deafblindness in Australia – New Ideas, Directions and Solutions” 28-30 April 2010, Melbourne

Able Australia Services is proud to be hosting the 8th National Deafblind Conference – a major calendar event for people with deafblindness, their families and service providers – on behalf of the Australian Deafblind Council (ADBC) in Melbourne, 2010.

The 2010 Melbourne Conference will present the latest news, research and developments relating to deafblindness and provide networking opportunities among people with deafblindness, their families, industry experts and medical professionals, as well as showcasing the latest in technology, products and services.

The 3-day Conference aims to explore new ideas, directions and solutions on how best to support people with deafblindness and their families in order to have influence on the development of policies that support and strengthen their roles in the community.

The 2010 Melbourne Conference is a must for people with deafblindness, their families and carers, Australian governments, policy makers, experts in the disability and aged care fields, health professionals, social health innovators and academics.

People with deafblindness will have access to mobility and communication support including interpreters, note takers, captioning, and access to support staff and volunteers throughout the conference to ensure inclusion and full participation in all activities.

Date: 28-30 April 2010

Location: Jasper Hotel, 489 Elizabeth Street, Melbourne, AUSTRALIA

Attendees: 200-300 delegates are expected from around Australia and overseas, including people who are deafblind, carers, State and Federal Government officials, disability/deafblind industry groups and suppliers, and medical professionals working in the field of disability support services. For further information please contact: Patricia Karagiorgos - Able Australia Events Coordinator P.O Box 1213, Camberwell, Victoria, 3124, AUSTRALIA

Tel: + 61 3 9861 6255 Fax: + 61 3 9882 9210 TTY: + 61 3 9882 6786

Email: patricia.karagiorgos@ableaustralia.org.au

<http://www.ableaustralia.org.au>

News from the Children’s Mobility Service

From Dean Johnston

Mobile Musketeers “ Safety is all or one and one for all” program.

6 primary school students attended the Musketeers themed program and had a fantastic time learning more about independent and safe mobility in their local community.

The students made Musketeer ID badges and completed a quiz. Topics covered included road crossing and public transport skills and they also scheduled an afternoon tea break of course.

Royal Children’s Hospital

The CMS team continues to attend one of the Royal Children’s Hospital out-patient children’s eye clinics. We take Trevi the GDV Ambassador Dog to the clinic and he loves meeting the children and their parents who are attending the clinic.

The MET Great Transport Race

The Children’s Mobility Service entered a team of 4 secondary students and the students completed the event in a very competitive time.

Upcoming events at CMS

O&M Information Evening – “What’s O&M all about?”

The Children’s Mobility Service invites you to join them for an information evening to learn more about the services and programs we provide and find out “What’s Orientation & Mobility with the Children’s Mobility Service all about?” The evening aims to provide you with a greater understanding of how Orientation and Mobility fits in as part of your child’s broader education and gain first hand experience of O&M training using vision simulators or blindfolds. Also hear from past and current students of our service as well as parents and other professionals.

When: July 23, 2009

Where: Flockhart Hall - Methodist Ladies College. 207 Barkers Rd. Kew, Melways 45 E8

Time: 7 - 9pm

Cost: Free

Who: Parents, students, visiting teachers and other educators, health professionals

For further information and to RSVP: 15th July 2009 please contact -

Lisa Brown on 9854 4467 or lisa.b@guidedogsvictoria.com.au

Senior program at Phillip Island

Monday June 29 – Friday July 3

This year the senior program will be at Phillip Island. The week long program will be based in Cowes at the Kaloha Holiday Resort located in Steele Street. This program aims to present each student with new challenges and expectations that are different to, but complement, their individual Orientation and Mobility training programs. The timetable for this program will include opportunities for the students to plan and organise most of the week’s activities.

Junior program

Monday September 21 –Thursday September 24

The next Junior program will be held at the Guide Dogs Victoria campus Further information will be available closer to the date.

Look Out, Marcus and the GDV Education Kit

The book “Look Out, Marcus! Growing up with Low Vision “and the GDV Education Kit is available free of charge. If you would like a copy of either please contact Lisa Brown at lisa.b@guidedogsvictoria.com.au

Children’s Mobility Service Newsletter

The quarterly newsletter continues to provide lots of interesting information about GDV events, past and future, as well as information and ideas from the orthoptist at GDV. The latest edition has just been published and the next edition is due out in August. To receive the newsletter in your preferred format please contact Lisa Brown at GDV. Lisa.b@guidedogsvictoria.com.au

For further information about any aspect of the Children’s Mobility Service or to provide feedback or ideas please contact any member of the team - Rachel Morgan 9854 4469, Alicia Madden 9854 4493, Janelle O’Loughlin 9854 4520, Belinda Lock 9854 4521, Dean Johnson 9854 4506 or Laura Hunt 9854 4547

A copy of the CMS newsletter, Getabout, is included with this Bulletin.

Bionic eye gives blind man sight

From BBC Online:

A man who lost his sight 30 years ago says he can now see flashes of light after being fitted with a bionic eye.

Ron, 73, had the experimental surgery seven months ago at London's Moorfield's eye hospital. He says he can now follow white lines on the road, and even sort socks, using the bionic eye, known as Argus II.

It uses a camera and video processor mounted on sunglasses to send captured images wirelessly to a tiny receiver on the outside of the eye.

In turn, the receiver passes on the data via a tiny cable to an array of electrodes which sit on the retina - the layer of specialised cells that normally respond to light found at the back of the eye. When these electrodes are stimulated they send messages along the optic nerve to the brain, which is able to perceive patterns of light and dark spots corresponding to which electrodes have been stimulated.

The hope is that patients will learn to interpret the visual patterns produced into meaningful images. The bionic eye has been developed by US company Second Sight. So far 18 patients across the world, including three at Moorfields, have been fitted with the device.

To read more go to: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/health/7919645.stm>

Netbooks

The Netbook program is currently being rolled out in Victorian schools.

The *Netbook Safe Usage Guidelines for Teachers and Parents* are now available for teachers, parents and students.

https://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/Schools/Circulars/2009/s230-2009_netbook_guidelines.doc

New Technology Workshop June 18

After talking to the group of Visiting Teachers at the recent PD day it has become apparent that many people would like a workshop on the "How What & Why" of audio books and the different formats. We have decided to run a workshop in the afternoon of Thursday 18 June to let people have the chance to explore these formats further. For those who would like to come along we will have a "hands on" session trying out various players and file formats. We will also have more time to answer your questions about DAISY MP3 and Audio CD.

The two sessions in the morning remain the same so please give us a call and nominate the workshop you would like to come to. A flyer is included with this bulletin.

Scanning and Fine Motor Activity

From Helen:

Foam, adhesive letters available from supermarkets (approximately \$4.00) make an engaging and educational activity for young children. Students need to scan carefully to find the letter they need. Then they need to use their fine motor skills to peel off the backing and place the letter to make a word.

Snow Skiing 2009

Vision Australia is organising a 3 day/2 nights snow skiing trip for people with vision impairments. The cost of the trip is \$630 and includes:

- Transport from Melbourne and Benalla, Albury and Shepparton
- Equipment hire
- All Meals X 3 per day excluding Friday breakfast and lunch
- One on one assistance on the snow from trained ski guides
- Lift tickets
- Accommodation 2 nights
- Return transport to Melbourne, Benalla, Shepparton and Albury
- Support from Vision Australia staff and volunteers

Friday 28th August to Sunday 30th August

A Deposit of **\$150** must be paid by **Friday 29th May 2009** to secure your spot. Cheque or Money Order to be made out to Vision Australia and sent to PO BOX 1309 Shepparton, Victoria 3632

For more information please phone Louise on 0358313555 or email louise.pettigrew@visionaustralia.org



Lost and hopefully found

Does anyone have the following books from our teacher reference section?

Cortical Vision Impairment: An Approach to Assessment and Intervention

By Christine Roman-Lantzy

Tactile Strategies for Children Who Have Visual Impairments and Multiple Disabilities: Promoting Communication and Learning Skills

By Deborah Chen, Ph.D., June E. Downing, Ph.D.

Could you please return them as soon as possible?

Staff and Student News

Athletics Carnival

From Frank - Aquinas College

On Thursday the 23 rd of April, we had an athletics carnival at Aquinas College in Ringwood it started at 9:15 am and it finished at 3:20 pm. I first ran 400 metres and I thought that I ran too fast at the start of the race and I was trying to catch up to them but I couldn't last that long, because in the end I ran out of energy and I came last in the race. Straight after the 400 metres I was puffing and out of breath and I said to Mr Buchanan can we go and do the 100 metres now please. Together we went and lined up for the 100 metres for the under 15 boys and I came third in the race. After lunch, I ran in the 200 metres and I came fourth in the race but only the first three got a ribbon.

I would have had like to go in the shot put but I ran out of time. Other people in my grade did other events such as shot put, triple jump, high jump, long jump and running. One person in my year level came first in the 100 metres and he has also gone into the Eastern Inter school sports athletics carnival.

This year I have started to enjoy P.E. because we have such a really good teacher. He pushes the boundaries and I trust him 100 %. Next year I am going to put my name down for the same events and shot put.

Finally

Thanks to Marion Blazé, Dean Johnson, Deb Lewis, and Helen Caldwell 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 lynrobin@svrc.vic.edu.au