

The Bulletin

Statewide Vision Resource Centre

Number 1**Friday 5th February 2010**

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

Professional Development Activities for Term 1, 2010

Professional Development Event 2010	Date
Educational Support for Blind Students This day is designed for class and subject teachers, integration teachers and aides, therapists, parents/care-givers and visiting teachers who support students who utilize braille	Tuesday 16 Feb
*Which Product for Me: Low Vision 10.00am to 12.00 Trevor Boyd, Quantum Technology (OpenBook, WYNN, Sara, Solo, ZoomText etc) 1.00pm to 3.00pm Phil Hazell, Humanware (SmartView, MyReader, PocketViewer etc)	Wednesday 17 Feb
Visiting Teachers Day	Monday 22 Feb
Educational Support for Students with Low Vision – Prep to Year 5 This day is designed for class and subject teachers, integration teachers and aides, therapists, parents/care-givers and visiting teachers who support students who have low vision	Monday 1 March
Educational Support for Students with Low Vision – Year 6 – Year 12 This day is designed for class and subject teachers, integration teachers and aides, therapists, parents/care-givers and visiting teachers who support older students who have low vision	Monday 15 March
*Which Product for Me: Braille/Speech 10.00am to 12.00 Trevor Boyd & Danny Keogh, Quantum Technology (Duxbury, JAWS, PACMate, Mountbatten etc) 1.00pm to 3.00pm Ramona Mandy, Humanware (ScannaR, BrailleNote, WindowEyes)	Tuesday 16 March

*Technology Workshops. Please bring own laptop and lunch. For more information go to:

<http://www.visiontech.svrc.vic.edu.au/PDannual.htm>

Welcome Back

Welcome back to what promises to be an exciting new year. Nine new Visiting Teachers attended a VT orientation day at the SVRC on Monday 1st February. Welcome to: Bernadette Warburton - Loddon Mallee Region, Sharon Saunders - Gippsland Region, Prue Gunner - Barwon South Western, Heidi Littleford - Western Region, Sue Matthews - Western Region, Gayle Skinner - Northern Region, Heidi Gange - Eastern Region and Joy Vogt – Northern Region. And a very big welcome to the new Support Skill staff Garry Stinchcombe, Charlie Roberts, Michael Donnelly and Ben van Poppel.

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Support Skills Program 2010

The Support Skills Program has changed venue for 2010. After operating for many years from the Vision Australia School at Burwood the Support Skills Program has found a new home. The Statewide Vision Resource Centre will be hosting the program into the future. Garry, Michael, Ben and Charlie have joined the staff at Statewide. Leanne along with Annette, Marion, Lyn and Deb will also be working in the program in various capacities. Guide Dogs Victoria will be assisting with the Orientation and Mobility support for the program. Staff are presently working hard to ensure the building can cater for the various elements of the program. Formal sessions will commence on Friday 19th February. We are all looking forward to the new program and look forward to seeing the 45 students and their families who have so far enrolled in the program. We will be inviting parents to stay around for the first hour or so when they drop their children off so they can meet staff and familiarize themselves with the building and facilities.

If Visiting Teachers or families would like any information about the program please contact Garry Stinchcombe between Wednesday and Fridays on: (03) 9841 0242 or via email on stinchcombe.garry.g@edumail.vic.gov.au.

Stayed tuned for regular Support Skill Program updates.
Garry Stinchcombe

SVRC UEB Braille Correspondence Course

The Statewide Vision Resource Centre provides a braille correspondence course for people working with school students in Victoria. The literary braille course comprises an introductory session at the SVRC and 15 lessons, each with practice activities for self correction and activities to send in for feedback. People enrolled in the course are advised to practise each day for at least ten minutes for best skill acquisition. Depending on learning style and time committed each week, it may take two weeks per lesson, meaning the course could take up to 30 weeks to complete. Beginning in 2010, the Statewide Vision Resource Centre will charge \$220 for enrolment in the lessons to help defray the cost of running the course.

Vision Australia Kickstart

The Kickstart program has been developed for current and prospective tertiary students who are blind or have low vision.

- Prepare yourself for further study.
- Find out about on and off-campus services.
- Learn about the Disability Discrimination Act and your rights as a student.
- Improve your writing and study skills for assignments.
- Learn about new audio formats and adaptive technology.
- Meet other students and professionals who are blind or have low vision who can be of assistance to you.
- Learn strategies for completing study with a view to improving employment prospects.

Where: Vision Australia Macaulay, 346 Macaulay Road, Kensington Vic 3031

When: 2 - 4 February 2010

Time: 10.00 am - 4.00 pm

Program Overview:

To register please contact: Max Bini, Tertiary Education Consultant, Vision Australia
Phone: 1300 847 466 or Email: max.bini@visionaustralia.org

Options for Increasing Information Access in a Format Other than Print or Braille – Portable Audio Players/Recorders

Review by Deb Lewis.

We are aware of a number of students for whom braille and/or print are not currently accessible formats. Perhaps these students have recently lost vision and are not fully independent with their laptop and voice output. Perhaps the students have an intellectual disability or a learning disability which makes utilising print or braille difficult. We have been exploring some audio options with these students in mind – products with both audio input and audio output features.

There are many, many audio note-takers in the mainstream market, some for under \$100 which may assist students to make personal notes, record or listen to travel route information, and/or record answers to questions from worksheets etc. Below are four examples, each of which features a number of useful options and as you can see, there is quite a range available. There are even web pages dedicated to comparisons of digital recorders including this one:

<http://sbinfocanada.about.com/od/officeequipment/tp/digtranscriber.htm>

The main features of interest for users with vision impairments include:

- (for users with some vision) size of screen and accessibility features
- nature of the controls – can navigation take place tactually
- quality sound recording and playback
- accessible file management
- ability to download to computer – PC or Apple
- ability to edit easily
- ability to convert speech to text (includes speech recognition software)
- value for money

Sony ICDBX700 Digital Voice Recorder \$100

Source: Mainstream office suppliers

- lightweight pocket device with LCD display
- simple button controls
- built-in microphone
- records of between 18 and 288 hours of audio – MP3 format
- 1 GIG of built-in memory
- five folders for storing up to 495 files
- playback speed control for fast forward and review of recordings



Olympus VN 3500PC \$165-\$190

Source: Mainstream office suppliers

- lightweight pocket device with LCD display
- simple button controls
- built-in microphone records of between 9 and 55 hours of audio - .WMA format
- 128 MB of built-in memory
- an erase lock to prevent accidental erasure
- files can be transferred to PC and edited using bundled software
- five folders for storing up to 100 files each
- playback speed control for fast forward and review of recordings
- high and low microphone settings allow recording in high and low noise environments



Philips Digital Voice Tracer \$200

Source: Mainstream office suppliers

- lightweight pocket device with LCD display
- simple button controls
- built-in microphone
- records 6.4 to 283 hours of audio – MP3 and PCM format
- 2 GIG of built-in memory
- playback speed control for fast forward and review of recordings
- speech recognition (Dragon) software is bundled with this device – download to PC for easy editing as an audio or text file



iPod Touch \$268+ (discounts may apply for students)

Source: Apple suppliers

- lightweight pocket device with LCD display
- simple button controls and touch screen with zoom feature
- built-in microphone and earphones included
- records in .WMA format
- files can be transferred to PC and edited
- 8+ GIG of built-in memory
- stores and play music
- additional applications (apps) available, such as magnification
- WIFI access to Metlink, Google maps etc
- some models have in-built camera
- voice recognition software (voice to text) comes with 32 GIG model



Beyond mainstream products are a number of devices designed specifically for people with vision impairments, several of which are described below. In addition to the features listed above, these audio players/recorders offer additional features, most notably the playing of DAISY files.

Victor Reader Stream \$455+

Source: Available on loan for Vision Australia Library and Information Service or purchase through HumanWare

- lightweight pocket device with no LCD display
- simple button controls
- built-in or external microphone
- records in MP3 format and plays MP3 and DAISY files
- converts text to digital speech
- files can be transferred to PC via USB
- stores on removable SD memory card



PlexTalk Portable Pocket \$495

Source: Available from Equipment Solutions

- lightweight pocket device with no LCD display
- button controls
- built-in or external microphone
- records in MP3 format and plays MP3 and DAISY files
- converts text to digital speech
- files can be transferred to PC via USB
- stores on removable SD memory card



For younger students or those with physical or intellectual impairments, a portable desktop device may be preferable.

Victor Reader Classic X \$655+

Source: Available on loan for Vision Australia Library and Information Service or purchase through HumanWare

- lightweight portable device with no LCD display
- simple button controls
- built-in or external microphone
- records in MP3 format
- plays audio, MP3 and DAISY files from SD card or CD
- will convert text to digital speech
- files can be transferred to and from PC via USB



PlexTalk PTR2

Source: Available from Equipment Solutions

- lightweight portable device with no LCD display
- simple button controls
- built-in or external microphone
- records in MP3 format – can record a memo
- plays audio, MP3 and DAISY files from SD card or CD, including music
- will convert text to digital speech
- files can be transferred to and from PC via USB
- is supplied with the Plextalk Recording Software which allows the recording, editing and finalizing of audio only DAISY books
- has a talking watch function and talking calculator function



Another option is to convert text into a more accessible format such as MP3 or DAISY.

Dolphin Easy Converter - \$2,195+ (Education prices may be available)

Source: Available from Quantum Technology and Spectronics

- software which converts source file including Word, text, html and PDF files or scanned print to other accessible formats such as large print, MP3, DAISY etc via Wizards

Case Study 1

Grace is in year 2 and is legally blind following a recent stroke. Prior to the stroke, she had been diagnosed with a learning disability and had not yet learned to read print. Grace loves to listen to books on her Victor Reader Classic X. Worksheets produced as text files are converted to digital speech via the Victor Reader and Grace is able to access the class work this way. By recording an audio file as a bookmark at the end of each question, the teacher can listen to her answers.

Case Study 2

Ben is in year 9 and has recently lost his vision. Ben is learning to touch type and use JAWS voice output software which will provide him with a long term solution to independent information access. In the mean time he is utilising the Philips Digital Voice Tracer to record notes and school work. His aide then uses the bundled voice recognition software to translate his voice recording to text, making it quicker and easier for the teacher to correct. His aide also converts pages from class handouts into audio format using Dolphin Easy Converter. Ben is then able to listen to these files on his digital voice device.

Using the Victor Reader for Worksheets

Victor Reader is a flexible device which allows users to listen to CD audio files and MP3 files, for example audio stories that are available through the Statewide Vision Resource Centre or talking books that are available from the Vision Australia library, book stores etc. In addition to playing audio files, Victor Reader also has the facility to play text files via synthetic speech which students can also listen to.

The teacher can provide a worksheet as a text file on a USB flash drive to their student with a vision impairment at the same time as their sighted peers are receiving their paper copy.

The student can then listen to the worksheet via Victor Reader and complete any questions within this file. Here's how:

1. Listen to the document using the synthetic speech.
2. When you come to the end of a question, press "stop"
3. Insert a bookmark by pressing the "bookmark" button until you reach the "insert bookmark" command
4. Press the "record" button and record your answer
5. Press the "stop" button at the end of the recording
6. Press "play" to continue listening to the document

The student's answers are then embedded in the file as bookmarks and can be reviewed by the student and/or listened to by the teacher who can move through each bookmark/answer to correct the student's work. The teacher could also provide feedback using the bookmark feature, for example, leaving a message at the beginning or end of the file for the student to listen to.

Self-Advocacy Training for People with Disabilities

The Disability Resources Centre will be running a self - advocacy training course for people with disabilities living in the outer southeast of Melbourne. The course will be facilitated by people with expertise in advocacy.

The topics will include:

- Learn to be more assertive
- How to write an effective self-advocacy letter, and
- How to make a complaint using the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA)

When: 16th February & 2nd March 2010
10.30am – 3.00pm

Where: Dandenong - details to be advised upon acceptance into the course

Register: Register by 3 February 2010

Contact: Katrina via phone (03) 9791 4870 or email katrina@drc.org.au

Lunch will be provided. Attendant care support will be provided on request.

Online Dictionary for kids

Little Explorers is an online dictionary for kids. It has the alphabet at the top so you can select a letter and go to the page with words starting with that letter on the page. It also shows the Braille sign for that letter. <http://www.enchantedlearning.com/books/abc/picturedictionary/>

Australasian Network of Students with Disabilities (ANSWD)

The Australasian Network of Students with Disabilities (ANSWD) is a student organisation, which advocates, promotes and campaigns on disability issues in the tertiary education field.

For more information about ANSWD go to <http://www.answd.org/>

Position Vacant

Orientation and Mobility Instructor - Queensland

This position has been mentioned before in The Bulletin but it is still vacant if anyone is interested in a sea-change to sunny Queensland. The ad was placed again recently in the Government/Education and Training website. For further information please contact:

Kerri Weaver - Orientation and Mobility Disability Services Support Unit | Student Services Division, Department of Education and Training
141 Merton Rd | Woolloongabba Qld 4102
T +617 3240 9357 | F +617 3240 9333
Mobile: 0408 748 076
Email Kerri: weaver@deta.qld.gov.au

Position Wanted

Lilla is keen to secure a teachers' aide position in the south eastern suburbs. Lilla has completed work experience in special schools and worked in special care settings. She has also volunteered with Vision Australia. Please contact her on 0418 422995.

JVIB Online

The December and January editions of the Journal of Vision Impairment and Blindness are now available online:

Articles: December 2009

- The Impact of Electronic Mobility Devices for Persons Who Are Visually Impaired: A Systematic Review of Effects and Effectiveness - Uta R. Roentgen, Gert Jan Gelderblom, Mathijs Soede, and Luc P. de Witte
- Stereotyped Movements Among Children Who Are Visually Impaired - Eynat Gal and Murray J. Dyck
- A Survey of Daily Trips of Persons Who Are Visually Impaired Living in Communities in Japan - Michiko Shimizu
- Reading Media Used by Higher-Education Students and Graduates with Visual Impairments in Greece - Konstantinos Papadopoulos and Athanasios Koutsoklenis

Articles: January 2010

- Interaction Coaching with Mothers of Children with Congenital Deaf-Blindness at Home: Applying the Diagnostic Intervention Model - Marleen J. Janssen, J. Marianne Riksen-Walraven, Jan P. M. van Dijk, and Wied A. J. J. M. Ruijsenaars
- Developing Authentic Online Problem-based Learning Case Scenarios for Teachers of Students with Visual Impairments in the United Kingdom - Mike McLinden, Steve McCall, Danielle Hinton, and Annette Weston
- Tactile Functioning in Children Who Are Blind: A Clinical Perspective - Ans Withagen, Mathijs P. J. Vervloed, Neeltje M. Janssen, Harry Knoors, and Ludo Verhoeven

Web: <http://www.jvib.org>

Contact Details

If you are a Visiting Teacher could you please make sure Dianne Skillern has all your correct details so that we can distribute information to our network members - Thanks.

You can contact Dianne by phone on (03) 9841 0242 or email your details to Dianne at diannesk@svrc.vic.edu.au

SPEV e-News: Call For Contributions

SPEV e-New is the newsletter of the South Pacific Educators in Vision Impairment (SPEVI) Reports, original manuscripts and news items are sought for the Autumn 2010 issue of SPEVe-News. The newsletter presents articles and reports on a wide variety of issues and topics related to the education of children, youth and adults in our South Pacific Region and overseas who are blind or vision impaired

The newsletter informs interested persons, including, teachers, researchers, educational administrators, Commonwealth and State personnel and service providers, parents and family members, as well as others in our communities about issues affecting people who are blind or vision impaired in Australia, New Zealand and overseas.

To enable timely review, please send articles or reports by email, in print or on disk before Friday, 5 March, 2010. Submissions should be sent to:

Fran Gentle & Mike Steer - Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children, Private Bag 29, Parramatta, NSW 2124 Email: mike.steer@ridbc.org.au

Items For Sale

- **Pacmate, Tandem Bike** - I currently have a full-size tandem bike and a Pacmate BX 440 with 40 cell braille display which I am looking to sell. Both are in excellent condition. If you are interested and would like more information, please contact me on 0439 511 903, or email to sam.byrne.90@gmail.com
- **Pacmate, Trekker and Maestro** - I have a 40 cell QWERTY Pacmate that has not been upgraded to the Omni software. Asking price \$4000. I also have a Trekker and Maestro for sale. Asking price \$1000. All enquiries to Penny Stevenson Tel (work): (03) 8378 1183

International Directory of Low Vision and Blindness Resources

This website lists many of the agencies and organisations working world wide in the areas of blindness and vision impairment. Quite impressive.

<http://www.snapi.org.uk/info/agencies/>

Links to Term 1 PD

VT Day: <http://www.visiontech.svrc.vic.edu.au/PDVTT109.doc>

Educational Support for Blind Students: <http://www.visiontech.svrc.vic.edu.au/PDBraille09.doc>

Educational Support for Students with Low Vision (Prep to Year 5):

<http://www.visiontech.svrc.vic.edu.au/PDLVP809.doc>

Educational Support for Students with Low Vision (Year 6 to Year 12):

<http://www.visiontech.svrc.vic.edu.au/PDLV71209.doc>

Goalball Come and Try Day

The Statewide Vision Resource Centre is jointly hosting a Come and Try Day with Goalball Victoria on Friday 5th March at the Statewide Vision Resource Centre. The day is open to all students with vision impairments who are in Year 6 or above. Please see the flyer at the end of this edition of The Bulletin for more information.

In the Driver's Seat 2010

In the Driver's Seat will be run again on Sunday 11th April, 2010 at Sandown Motor Circuit. More information will be available in the next edition of The Bulletin but if you would like to get in early and book your place please contact *Peter Watts* on *Phone/Fax: (03) 9844 3903 - Mobile: 0419 136 943* or *Email: peterwatts1@bigpond.com*

Staff and Student News

Last years VCE students have done a wonderful job – here are a few examples:

- Stephanie from Eastern Region passed all her subjects with an impressive 41 for Food Tech
- Pretika has been awarded a Vision Australia Scholarship and Equipment grant to pursue her Human Resource Management course at Holmesglen TAFE
- Michael from Southern Region has been accepted into the Information Technology (Associate Degree) course at RMIT which is his first choice

Other News

- Nick (Northern Region school) is getting on very well with rowing and may be going to New Zealand for the World Championships in March. Good luck Nic!
- Kate Barrett (ex Visiting Teacher student) has given birth to twin girls
- Kyle Griffin (ex Visiting Teacher student) is working at the Australian Tax Office
- Toni Chilton has finished her Graduate Diploma in Orientation and Mobility and has accepted a position as an O&M instructor with Vision Australia.
- Fayes Squires is working .4 in Hume Region.

SVRC Staff

Just in case you can't remember who's who in the SVRC here is a current list of staff.

SVRC Production Staff

- Cathy Murray - Etext (0.4)
- Dianne Skillern - Administration/Large Print/ Etext (1.0)
- Jacky Murphy – Braille (0.6)
- Jenny McKenzie - Braille(0.4)
- Leeanne Terry - Etext, Large Print (1.0)
- Lyn Petty - Braille(0.4)
- Maria Elford - Senior Braille/Etext (1.0)
- Michael Kelly - Audio/IT Support (0.6)
- Nola Haughton (0.6)
- Sue Sharp - Braille/Etext (1.0)
- Taryn Shilcock- Braille (1.0)
- Zhi Jin – Braille (1.0)

SVRC Teaching Staff

- Annette Godfrey-Magee - Education Officer (0.9)
 - Ben van Poppel (0.2)
 - Charlie Roberts - Support Skills (0.2)
 - Deb Lewis - Manager(1.0)
 - Garry Stinchcombe (0.6) Support Skills Coordinator
 - Leanne Nagel – Educational Program Support (1.0)
 - Lyn Robinson - Resource Officer (0.9)
 - Marion Blazé - Education Officer - (0.9)
 - Michael Donnelly - Support Skills (0.2)
- ### SVRC Psychologist
- Geoff Bowen (0.4)

Finally

Thanks to everyone for their ideas for this Bulletin especially Deb Lewis, Garry Stinchcombe, Leanne Philp, Jeni Blake and the fabulous proof readers at the SVRC.

If you have something you would like included in "The Bulletin" please contact Lyn Robinson lynrobin@svrc.vic.edu.au

Read the Bulletin Online at: <http://www.svrc.vic.edu.au/bulletins2010.html>

GOALBALL Come and Try Day 5TH MARCH 2010

The Statewide Vision Resource Centre is jointly hosting a Come and Try Day with Goalball Victoria on Friday 5th March at the Statewide Vision Resource Centre.

If you have heard about Goalball or have played it and would like to "give it another go" then this day is for you.

Who Can Attend? Students currently enrolled in the Support Skills Program would be welcome. Any other student who has an interest in playing Goalball would also be welcome. The Goalball day is though being targeted more towards students who are Grade 6 and above. Younger students won't be excluded but given the physical nature of this sport it might be more appropriate for older students.

Goalball Victoria will be providing a specialist coach along with some other support staff. Charlie Roberts along with other staff from the SVRC will be overseeing the general running of the day.

Format of the Day: The morning session will be spent on learning about Goalball, practicing the skills and then playing in a mini lightening competition. The afternoon session will be focusing on students sharing their personal experiences of leisure and recreation. We will then look at developing strategies for networking and exploring interests and options.

Date: Friday March 5th:

Time: 9:00 am to 3:00 pm

Venue: Statewide Vision Resource Centre Donvale. 370 Springvale Rd Donvale (parking in the lower carpark of the Donvale Sports Centre next door)

A BBQ lunch will be provided.

Cost: \$5.00

Transport: Students will need to arrange their own means of getting to and from this activity.

To secure a place in this program please contact Deb Lewis (svrc@svrc.vic.edu.au or tel 9841 0242) by no later than Friday 26th February.

Students will not be able to attend unless the required paperwork has been completed and returned.

Closing date: Friday 26th February 2010

The program will be run at the Statewide Vision Resource Centre in Donvale using the gym of the Heatherwood School.