

The Bulletin

Statewide Vision Resource Centre

Number 4

Monday 19th March 2012

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

Professional Development Activities for Term 2, 2012

Educational Support for Vision Impaired Students with Additional Impairments for teachers, aides, therapists, parents/care-givers and VTs (max: 60)	Tuesday 1 May
Skill Power Workshops 9.30-11.00 PD by request 11.30-1.00 PD by request 1.30-3.30 iPad User's Group Lyn Robinson, SVRC	Wednesday 2 May
Visiting Teacher Conference – for information email Rita Farrelly	May 3 & 4
Skill Power Workshops 9.30-11.00 BrailleNote for absolute beginners Lea Nagel, SVRC 11.30-1.00 JAWS for absolute beginners Garry Stinchcombe, SVRC 1.30-3.30 Braille Maths for beginners Lea Nagel, SVRC	Wednesday 16 May
Including Students who are Blind or have Low Vision in Physical Education Programs presented by Charlie Roberts, SVRC	Friday 18 May
Art4Kids with VI? presented by Michael Donnelly, SVRC	Tue 22 May
Skill Power Workshops 9.30-11.00 Electronic Magnification Marion Blazé, SVRC 11.30-1.00 Setting up the Computer for Low Vision Users Lyn Robinson, SVRC 1.30-3.30 Introducing Braille to Beginners Lea Nagel, SVRC	Wednesday 30 May
Support for Students with Vision Impairments – The Psychologist's Role Presented by Geoff Bowen, Psychologist, SVRC	Monday 4 June
Skill Power Workshops 9.30-11.00 BrailleNote (not for absolute beginners) Ramona Mandy, Humanware 11.30-1.00 JAWS (not for absolute beginners) Garry Stinchcombe, SVRC 1.30-3.30 PD by request	Wednesday 13 June
Dot Power – Literacy-based activities for braille readers from pre-school to grade 3	Tue 19 June
25th National Braille Music Camp – NSW	23-30 June

The program for 2012 is available at: <http://www.svrc.vic.edu.au/Acalendar2012.doc>

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Captioning in Classrooms

In the November 2012 issue of Inspire, an article entitled “Captioning in classrooms for deaf students” caught our eye. The article described a pilot study being conducted by the Victorian Deaf Education Institute where the teacher’s voice is captured and translated into text which is then relayed to the student’s laptop or iPad in approximately 7 seconds.

One student who is using the system commented, “I’ve been using the captioning for Psychology and English and it’s working really well ... If the teacher has her back turned to the whiteboard, I can’t see what she is saying and I often miss things. Now I just look down at the captioning and quickly catch up. I can also take home the transcripts from the lesson and that’s been really helpful.”

This Pilot ends in June this year, however Sydney based technology company Ai-Media has recently received Commonwealth funding of \$1.7 million to help commercialise the delivery of speech-to-text technology in classrooms around Australia. In an article in ProBonoNews, the “Innovation Minister Senator Kim Carr said the fast, accurate speech-to-text technology could make a crucial difference in schools and workplaces for people with hearing difficulties.”

<http://www.probonoaustralia.com.au/news/2011/12/big-boost-hearing-impaired-students>.

Editor’s note: This technology could also support access to classroom learning for students with vision impairments as well as those who are deaf. In the same way that deaf students are provided with a transcript of the lesson to review after class, blind students and those with low vision may also benefit from access to these transcripts. We’ll watch this development with interest and hope it reaches a classroom near you sometime soon!!!

Resources to Address Violence, Harassment and Bullying

Adapted from: <http://www.humanrights.gov.au/bullying/index.html>

Violence, harassment and bullying are human rights issues that profoundly affect the lives of many people in Australia. We all have a right to feel safe and respected. We all have a right to live our lives free from violence. Violence, harassment and bullying can violate these rights. They can also impact on other rights, such as the right to education and the right to health. Violence, harassment and bullying affect well-being and quality of life. Victims can experience significant social isolation and feel unsafe. Bullying can lead to emotional and physical harm, loss of self-esteem, feelings of shame and anxiety, and concentration and learning difficulties. Tragically, violence, harassment and bullying can lead to suicide in extreme cases.

Bullying can also take place in cyberspace: over the internet and on mobile phones. New technologies enable the spread of information, ideas and images to large numbers of people very quickly. There are many challenges in protecting people from violence, harassment and bullying in cyberspace.

There are now a number of text-based fact sheets available from the Australian Human Rights Commission for young people including:

- What is bullying? http://www.humanrights.gov.au/bullying/factsheets/what_is_bullying.html
- Being a supportive bystander
<http://www.humanrights.gov.au/bullying/factsheets/bystander.html>
- Know your rights http://www.humanrights.gov.au/bullying/factsheets/know_your_rights.html
- Cyberbullying <http://www.humanrights.gov.au/bullying/factsheets/cyberbullying.html>

BlindHow.com

Last year The NFB of Utah launched a new website, BlindHOW.com. The stated aim of this site is “finding answers and sharing knowledge related to any question regarding blindness and visual impairment”.

For a relatively new site, there is an enormous amount of information regarding active daily living skills, education, employment, recreation and leisure and more. The “primary goal is to create a positive environment where community members are willing to ask thoughtful questions and share knowledge related to blindness and visual impairment that will improve lives, encourage independence, and increase self-confidence.”

On March 1, 2012, BlindHow.com began implementing an exciting incentive program! You are encouraged to visit, sign up, test drive, make comments, rank content, and become a contributor by submitting articles, tutorials, videos and audio files. You are encouraged to submit content from the web that you have found enlightening, positive, and/or helpful. We also welcome original articles, videos, or audio tutorials.

A couple of interesting links include:

- Siri simplifies tasks on the iPhone 4S (audio)
- Pairing an iPhone with a BrailleNote Apex (audio)
- Krisent Cox gives tips on how she organises her wardrobe closet (video)

Visit <http://www.blindhow.com> and for additional questions, suggestions or input, email admin@blindhow.com.

Looking Past Limits: Video from Young Woman with Albinism

In an inspirational video, activist Caroline Casey tells the story of her extraordinary life ... In a talk that challenges perceptions, Casey asks us all to move beyond the limits we may think we have and be true to ourselves.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YyBk55G7Keo&feature=youtube_gdata_player

Space Camp 2012

Sue Matthews and Rory Fraser are busy working away to raise the approximately \$36,000 that will be required for Space Camp 2012.

Four eager students are currently signed up – three from Southern Metropolitan Region: Brendan, Jacki and Maddie; and one from rural Victoria: Zac.

If there are other students who will be relatively independent with funding, there may be up to two more places available in this group.

A meeting is planned for 4pm on Friday 20th April at the Statewide Vision Resource Centre for those who are interested.



Theatre – Audio Description

The Malthouse Theatre in South Melbourne is now offering audio description for some shows. They are also looking for feedback from people who are blind or have low vision about the service and how they can improve. Peggy Soo (ex Visiting Teacher Service student) writes: I have personally been involved with the training of AD and have found it is a real skill within itself and I personally appreciate a service like this. Even though we are in the early stages of AD, this is a great way of getting involved and finding ways about how it can be improved.”

THE MAGIC FLUTE by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Where: State Theatre – Arts Centre, Opera Australia, Performed in English

Directed by: Julie Taymor, director of The Lion King, and starring Andrew Brunsdon as Tamino

When: Saturday 5 May 1.00 pm

Welcome to a world where animals dance and children fly, where princes battle dragons and hope battles despair. To a world where ideas matter, and music saves the day. Tamino is a noble prince on a quest. He discovers strange lands and wondrous creatures but will he discover the truth behind the magic? And will he find true love?

This opera is a good introduction to opera for the young and includes puppetry. The opera runs for approximately one hour and forty minutes – no interval.

Tickets

Malthouse Box Office: Check with Janene Sadhu for the next audio described performance. For bookings call (03) 9685 5111. Companion Card bookings are accepted.

Melbourne Theatre Company (MTC)

Phone (03) 8688 0888. Companion Card bookings are accepted.

For further information contact Janene Sadhu – Co-ordinator Audio Description Services, Victoria (03) 9864 9384 or emailing Janene.sadhu@visionaustralia.org

Shmoop Review – Study Guides for iPhone

From Jeremy Blazé

Shmoop is a study guide app for iPhone, iPad or iPod touch. It is available for many books including Animal Farm and Romeo & Juliet. Some of the features include extensive character profiles and pages of plot analysis. To test your understanding of the book, you can quiz yourself from within the app.

Full feature list in a nutshell:

- chapter summaries
- plot overview
- plot analysis
- characters
- themes
- quotes
- study questions
- quiz and Facebook connectivity so that you can talk to your friends about the book

Great Website on Eyes and Vision

“The eyes have it: An interactive teaching and assessment program on vision care” is a terrific program to familiarise oneself with anatomy of the eye, eye disease and symptoms. With diagrams and photograph to facilitate learning followed by a quiz to complete, this website is definitely worth a look! Visit: <http://www.kellogg.umich.edu/theeyeshaveit/>

Low Vision Open Day

People who are living or working with low vision and who is struggling to read or write are invited to participate in a free community event to learn more about how assistive technology can help a person with low vision live a more independent and fulfilling lifestyle.

This is an opportunity to see demonstrations and have hands-on experience using low vision equipment and software with the help and guidance of qualified Low Vision Consultants.

Guests will get to see the latest electronic magnifiers, book readers, PC- and Mac-compatible scanning and reading devices, screen magnifiers/readers, a new optical and lighting range, plus more!

Are you a Visiting Teacher?

Book in for a one-on-one session to find out about the latest developments in assistive technology and the new opportunities for providing access for your students.

What: Reading and Lifestyle Solutions for People Living with Low Vision. Low Vision Open Day

When: Wednesday 28 March - 10am-4pm

Where: Quantum Sight Support Centre, 3 Chesterville Road, Cheltenham

If you would like any further information about this event or to register your attendance, please call Quantum RLV on (03) 9545 4100 or email minfo@quantumrlv.com.au

Autism Spectrum Disorder & Sleep

This workshop will be presented by Professor Amanda Richdale PhD, MAPS. Associate Professor/ Principle Research Fellow Olga Tennison, Autism Research Centre School of Psychological Science.

Professor Richdale has worked in Autism research since 1987 she will talk about sleep development in children in general and sleep in children with an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), including sleep problems and their potential impacts. Amanda will also talk about what parents and carers can do to promote sleep.



When: Tuesday 27th March 2012, 7pm to 9pm

Where: South Croydon Anglican Church, 199 Bayswater Road, Bayswater 3153

Cost: \$30 families and carers of children with ASD. \$50 Professional Development

Please note parking is available at the church. If this carpark is full please park at Irabina Childhood Autism Services, 193 Bayswater Road, Bayswater. Please contact Irabina to place your booking on (03) 9720 111.

Inaugural Professional Reading Group

The Statewide Vision Resource Centre hosted our first Professional Reading Group on Wednesday 7th March at the suggestion of CEO VT Odette Budge. We had a number of onsite participants, and Wendy Morley (VT, Grampians Region) attended via DEECD Video Conference facilities.

Our discussion stimulus article was suggested by Wendy and written by the indefatigable Tim Connell, Managing Director of Quantum Reading Learning Vision. Sometimes controversial, but always thoughtful, Tim challenges educators to think carefully about the most effective access solutions for students with vision impairments. In the field of vision impairment, where each student is a unique individual with different strengths and priorities, the notion that one-size-fits-all is easy to challenge.

The use of the iPad by students with vision impairments attracted a fair amount of the discussion. Tim's article pointed out that regarding iPad:

- App-developers generally don't offer support of their product, so if there are difficulties, "there is no-one to call"
- the cheaper option may not be in the best long term interests of the student
- document management applications such as Excel and PowerPoint "the basic tools of corporate life" may not be well-supported
- depending on the App-developer, screen design may be inconsistent, and gestures may result in a variety of actions
- users are locked into the Apple store or iTunes for products

Participants also wondered about the following regarding use of the iPad by students with vision impairments:

- the "cool" factor
- inbuilt accessibility features
- ergonomics and posture
- connectivity to school networks
- support of touch typing
- one tool in the student's "tool kit"
- may not replace the need for a laptop
- may be a good source of information but perhaps not a great input device
- may be useful as camera capture of a whiteboard for some students
- battery life may be longer than the laptop
- which devices will students find most motivating – in the short term / in the longer term
- very low vision and blind students may be better supported by blindness-specific tools

Tim's final comment probably provides a suitable summary of the article and our discussion: "We are all unique and students with disabilities in particular need professionals that can guide them through this new world of opportunity, using the principles of best practice and choosing the size, and the product, that is just right for each person."

Our next **Professional Reading Group** meeting will be held here at the SVRC on Wednesday 9th May at 3.30pm (or via a Video Conference unit near you) – please contact us to arrange! We are hunting down an article(s) pertaining to literacy for low vision students for discussion and will let you know when we find it!

Lyn will be facilitating an **iPad User's Group** – the first meeting will be Wednesday 2nd May from 1.30 to 3.30pm – please let us know if you plan to be part of this group.

Arts Big Day Out

Report by Lyn Robinson

On Friday 9th March, Laura, Simon, Darren, Dean, Paula, Liz, Rachel, Michael, Leanne, Charlie, Lyn, Christine, Marion, Garry, Sophie, Karina, and 21 students attended the Arts Big Day Out in the Melbourne CBD. In the morning the students went on a Touch Tour of the many wonderful sculptures along Swanston Street. The group was not deterred by the road works along Swanston Street making their way up to the State Library by tram where the Touch Tour began.

The photo on the right shows a student, exploring one of *The Three Businessmen Who Brought Their Own Lunch* – a bronze sculpture on the corner of Swanston and Bourke Street, Melbourne.

The picture below shows several students bending down to touch another sculpture, Larry Latrobe – a bronze sculpture of a dog by



Pamela Irving. Michael informed us that this was a replacement Larry as the original was stolen!

The students were also sent on a treasure hunt to find information pamphlets from the area around Federation Square. They scored points for each pamphlet they sourced. The Children's Mobility Services staff awarded extra points to students who used their self advocacy skills to help them locate information.

We had a brief stop for lunch in Federation Square and then went on to the Australian Centre for the Moving Image (ACMI) where the students had an introductory talk from one of the staff and listened to the sound of some famous Australian films noting the change in the sound of the films over time.

Garry Stinchcombe, Support Skills Program organiser sends "a big thank you to Michael Donnelly for organizing the Touch Tour and liaising with the various Art venues and galleries to put together such a worthwhile

day. Also a huge thank you to the GDV staff for their O&M programming and support. This is all highly valued by us all."

Apprenticeships & Job Opportunities

Wesley's School to Work Transition Program helps Eligible School Leavers who may have learning difficulties, ongoing medical conditions, mental health issues, injury or disability to make a smooth transition from school to work or further training.

Below are just some of the current opportunities available. Interested school leavers are required to register with Wesley Employment Services in Preston to apply and if they are not successful in these opportunities we will continue to work with them to find them suitable employment or training options.

Opportunities:

- Apprentice Bakers
- Apprentice Plasterer
- Apprentice Bricklayer
- Apprentice Carpenter
- Customer Service / Kitchen Hand
- Customer Service / Food Handling
- Deli Assistant
- Cafe Worker
- Shop Assistant /Rug Shop

Contact: Vicki Walsh - Marketing & Relationships
 Wesley Employment Services - Footscray | Preston | Broadmeadows
 154 Nicholson Street Footscray VIC 3011
 T 03-96870033 M 0403090763 F 03-96879616
 Web <http://www.wesleyemployment.com.au>

Gala Dinner Auction

Blind Sports Victoria would like to invite you to attend their Gala Dinner Auction.

When: April 21, 2012

Where: RACV Club, 501 Bourke Street, Melbourne.

Cost: \$75.00 per person which includes a 3 course set menu. Drinks at bar prices.

Here's a sneak peek of a few of the auction items.....

- 7 night's accommodation in your choice of Australia or New Zealand at a Timeshare Resort
- 2 night's accommodation in the Emerald Harbour View Suite including daily full buffet breakfast for 2 at the Bayview Boulevard, Sydney
- Accommodation package at "Four Points by Sheraton"
- Tug Boat ride for two in the Port of Melbourne
- Many family entertainment packs eg. Luna Park, Puffing Billy
- For the more adventurous, a chance to get up close to giant stingrays, sharks and hundreds of amazing fish at the Melbourne Aquarium
- Take the climb of your life on the world famous Sydney Harbour Bridge for two people
- Sunbeam Café Crema Espresso Machine
- Various Artworks

Maurice Gleeson OAM Blind Sports Victoria President

Email: blindsports@netspace.net.au or phone 03 9822 8876.

Web: <http://www.blindsports.org.au/>

Report on our First PD Day for VTs – March 13, 2012

by Marion Blazé

28 participants sat enthralled for a day concentrating on low vision and learning. Alan Johnston demonstrated how different impairments affect functioning and how to make decisions about magnification. Geoff Bowen shared his extensive research on children with retinal dystrophies and how they learn to read. We found out the critical dates for the “Disability Adjustments” for NAPLAN and clarified how to order braille and large print versions or access tests on-line. Trevor Boyd showed us a computer program designed to simplify computer use and improve access. Kerrie Fitzmaurice gave us the latest in research on eccentric viewing. Lyn Robinson demonstrated how our students might benefit from iPads. Annette Godfrey-Magee and I shared some “best practice” of an American teacher developing a child’s skills with a miniscope.

We asked for feedback on the day and there were several comments about this being the best PD day we’ve had in quite a while: “excellent”, “fantastic!”, “learnt lots of new strategies”, “very practical”, “extremely beneficial” – and that’s from a flick through the first few evaluation sheets!

Educational Support for Vision Impaired Students with Additional Impairments

From Marion Blazé

Hey VTs! We need your help to promote this one!!!

PD day Term 2 - “Educational support for vision impaired students with additional impairments” Please let your special school teachers and any teachers of complex little people know about this PD day. It’s on Tuesday, May 1, 2012 and every year it has been a huge success except for last year, when we had to cancel because of very low registrations. Of course, in the weeks that followed, we had lots of enquiries about programming and ideas for the very students whose teachers would have benefited from this day. Please copy the attached program below and show it to your teachers.

Support Skills Student News

The group B boys have been busy.

- Guy and Justin have been to swimming carnivals where both successfully won points for their teams.
- Ari has been involved in a surfing carnival at Thirteenth Beach where he won the Boys under 11 competition.
- Riley went on a plane for the first time when he traveled to Sydney with his family to visit friends.

Staff News

- **Deb Lewis** will be spending the first three weeks of term 2 volunteering in a village in Nepal as part of a Rotary project. The trip will include a 5-hour climb up to the village – should be fun!!!

Finally

And finally thanks to everyone for their contributions to this Bulletin, especially Annette Godfrey-Magee, Marion Blazé and Garry Stinchcombe.

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

To Read the Bulletin Online: <http://www.svrc.vic.edu.au/Abulletin.shtml>

Statewide Vision Resource Centre

presents

Educational Support for Vision Impaired Students with Additional Impairments

When: Tuesday 1 May 2012 from 9.00 am to 3.30pm
(Registration from 8.30am)

Where: Statewide Vision Resource Centre
370 Springvale Rd Donvale

Parking: Lower carpark – next door at the Donvale Sports Complex

For: Class and subject teachers, integration teachers and aides, therapists,
family members and visiting teachers

8.30	Registration
9.00	Simulation of a Vision Impairment – Staff of SVRC and Guide Dogs Victoria
10.15	Vision Impairment – What is it? How do we assess it? – Marion Blazé, Education Officer, SVRC
10.45	Morning Tea
11.10	Cortical Vision Impairment – Annette Godfrey-Magee, Education Officer, SVRC
11.40	Strategies to Support Students in the Classroom – Rita Farrelly, Senior Visiting Teacher, Southern Metropolitan Region
12.10	Computer for Students with Additional Impairments – Setting up the Computer for Low Vision Users, Ebooks, Audio Books AND MORE – Lyn Robinson, Resource Teacher, SVRC
12.40	Lunch – A light lunch will be provided
1.30	Q & A Discussion: What's working in our schools!
2.00	Towards Independence: Let's Wash the Car – Lea Nagel, Educational Programs, SVRC
2.30	Challenging Behaviours – Geoff Bowen, Psychologist, SVRC
3.30	Close

Cost: \$55.00 including GST (Visiting Teachers \$44.00)
Payment includes a light lunch (maximum participants: 60)

Registration is essential – by Friday 27 April

For further details or for an invoice:

phone 9841 0242, fax 9841 0878 or email svrc@svrc.vic.edu.au

For parking and public transport information, please see: <http://www.svrc.vic.edu.au/Amap.shtml>