

The Bulletin

Statewide Vision Resource Centre

Number 12

Monday 6th August 2012

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

Professional Development Activities for Term 3, 2012

Masterclass – Assessment and Instruction: Two Sides of the Same Coin for Successful Literacy Outcomes – Frances Mary d’Andrea – for DEECD VTs	Mon & Tues 13-14 August
Skill Power Workshops 1.30-3.30 iPad User’s Group Lyn Robinson, SVRC	Wednesday 15 August
Skill Power Workshops for Visiting Teachers, Teachers, Aides, Students etc 9.30-11.00 Interpreting Vision Reports Marion Blazé, SVRC 11.30-1.00 Albinism – Description and educational implications Marion Blazé, SVRC 1.30-3.30 Teaching JAWS for Internet and Email Lea Nagel, SVRC	Wednesday 29 August
Dot Power – Day of literacy-based activities for braille readers from pre-school to grade 3	11 September
Space Camp – Huntsville, Alabama	Sep/Oct

The program for 2012 is available from this link: <http://www.svrc.vic.edu.au/PL.shtml>

Masterclass: Frances Mary d’Andrea

Thanks to everyone who has expressed an intention to join us all for our upcoming Masterclass. We know that Frances Mary d’Andrea will be an informative and interesting speaker and we look forward to hosting her in our city ☺

Many thanks to Renwick for assistance with the planning and implementation of this exciting event.



When: Monday 13 and Tuesday 14 August (DEECD and CEO VTs) – proposed program attached
Cost: one day \$22 or both days \$40

For more information: <http://www.svrc.vic.edu.au/PLPfmddandrea2012.doc>

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National Partnerships – Vision Assistive Technology 2012-13

Q & A

by Marion Blaze marionblaze@svrc.vic.edu.au

This magnificent funding opportunity has generated quite a few questions, so I thought I'd have a go at answering them for everyone to read.

Q: I have a student who really needs XXX. When can they get it?

A: The next designated “rollout” is not until March 2013. We will certainly be providing equipment to children before then, but right now our working party of VT representatives from each region has agreed to collect information on what every student needs. Once this is gathered and collated we will have an idea of how many dollars need to be spent and whether/how we might prioritise. Until then we can't really make any decisions.

Q: VTs have been asked to provide information on students on the Excel Audit spreadsheet. Do I have to complete every field on this table?

A: No. It is not mandatory to fill in every field. You can probably work out which are the critical ones (name, school, what they want and why) and which ones are for information which will help inform our processes (reading speed, method of accessing board, etc). If you'd like to add additional information, please feel free!

Q: Do I need to use formal tests to fill in this information?

A: No. You can test formally if you wish (or already have) but informal information is all we require. You know your students best.

Q: Parents might be concerned about the privacy of this information. What should we tell them about how this information is to be kept and used?

A: SVRC already maintains a database of students who have been through EVAC. The information gathered will be added to this database. All information will be stored on our secure database, accessible to only a select few SVRC staff. It will only be used for the purposes of prioritising this funding. There are some obligations we must meet in order to receive all of the funding over the next year or so; they are that we need to make the rollout benchmarks by the particular dates and that we need to evaluate the benefits of the technology which has been provided. The latter information on the excel audit will inform us of the benefits of the equipment by providing “before and after” information.

If you have further questions that you'd like answered or comments to make, please feel free to drop us a line – email is probably easiest so that we can keep track of contact and discussions!

Please email Marion: marionblaze@svrc.vic.edu.au

New iPad Page on SVRC Website

The SVRC website has a page devoted to i-things (mainly iPad). There are reviews, summaries and cheat sheets as well as links to other interesting i-things sites.

Visit: <http://www.svrc.vic.edu.au/ATipad.shtml>

The screenshot shows the SVRC website interface. At the top, there is a logo for the Statewide Vision Resource Centre and a search bar. The main content area is titled "iPad for Students with Vision Impairments" and contains the following sections:

- This website**
 - iPad Accessibility Features - summary by Lyn Robinson, SVRC, 2012 (pdf)
 - iPads for Low Vision Students including Students with Additional Disabilities - summary by Lyn Robinson, SVRC, 2012 (pdf)
 - iPad Gestures for Voice - "cheat sheet" by Lyn Robinson, SVRC, 2011 (pdf)
 - Using an iPad for email - created by Cam Phillips, SVRC, 2012 (pdf)
- External sites**
 - Apple in Education - website from Apple describing education apps for iPod touch and iPhone under headings such as English, mathematics, science, history and geography, languages etc.
 - ATMac - website devoted to empowering disabled Apple users
 - Creating iPad Apps with Pages - website from Apple
 - The iPod Touch Classroom - an online community of schools using iPod Touches in the classroom
 - iPads for Learning - website from the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

At the bottom of the page, there is a copyright notice: "Copyright Statewide Vision Resource Centre 2012. Last updated: Thursday, 26-Jul-2012 12:15:45 EDT" and a logo for the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

National Year of Reading 2012

Adapted from: Insight, July 2012

The National Year of Reading 2012 is a collaborative project joining public libraries, government, community groups, media and a range of other organisations that share a passion for reading.

Premier's Reading Challenge

The Premier's Reading Challenge is one exciting event which is open to all students from Prep to Year 10. The Challenge encourages students to develop their love of reading and their literacy skills, with the support of their teachers, schools, parents and classmates. For more information about the Premier's Reading Challenge, visit: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/prc>

The Reading Hour

The Reading Hour takes place on Saturday 25 August. This event is a focal point for the National Year of Reading and aims to establish the idea that everyone will benefit from reading for at least one hour a week. The Reading Hour is nominally 6pm to 7pm, but activities will be held throughout the day in libraries, bookstores and other public places. For more information about The Reading Hour visit: <http://www.love2read.org.au>

Please remember that materials in alternative formats are available from a variety of sources:

- the Statewide Vision Resource Centre (for eligible readers)
- Vision Australia Library (for eligible readers)
- local libraries
- bookstores
- online suppliers
- other internet sources
- etc etc

Perkins Smart Braille

Adapted from information provided by Perkins Products, Perkins School for the Blind

The SMART Braille was developed by Perkins Products in conjunction with the American Printing House for the Blind. It features:

- A video screen for instantaneous audio and visual feedback – displays SimBraille and print
- Text-to-speech so the letters, words and sentences can be read back while brailleing
- Ability to edit, save and transfer electronic documents via USB
- Headphone jack and volume control
- Operates as a mechanical braille for extended use
- Rechargeable and removable battery
- Optional braille exercises which assist in the learning of braille



For more information see the introduction video:

<http://www.perkins.org/smartbraille/videos.html#smartbrailerintro> or visit the website: <http://www.smartbraille.org>

Audio Description Comes to Australian TV

Joint media release from the Hon Senator Stephen Conroy, Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy, Deputy Leader of the Government in the Senate. Minister Assisting the Prime Minister on Digital Productivity and Senator the Hon Jan McLucas, Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, Parliamentary Secretary for Disabilities and Carers

Government-funded audio description trial to start in August 2012

The Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy, Senator Stephen Conroy, and Parliamentary Secretary for Disabilities and Carers, Senator Jan McLucas, today announced that a trial will begin next month that is expected to provide a richer television experience for Australians with a visual impairment.

The audio description trial will:

- Take place on ABC 1 and start on 5 August;
- Run for 13 weeks between 5pm and midnight;
- Use technology to explain to people with vision impairments what is happening during the program, while they also listen to the soundtrack;
- Provide a greater understanding of the technical and consumer issues associated with providing audio description services; and
- Test what is required to commission, transmit, and distribute these services.

“This audio description trial is an Australian first. It is being funded by the Gillard Government and will cover drama, documentaries and other content broadcast on ABC1,” Senator Conroy said.

“I encourage anyone interested in taking part in the trial to check their televisions or set top boxes against those listed in the user guides on my department’s website.

The user guides identify which digital televisions and set-top boxes can receive audio described programs and how this function can be activated.”

Living in a Sensory World: Stories from People with Blindness and Low Vision

When: 7 August 2012 to 28 October 2012

Where: Melbourne Museum

“Living in a Sensory world: Stories from people with blindness and low vision” was first shown at Sydney’s Powerhouse Museum. The exhibition provides visitors with an understanding of the world of the blindness and low vision community and celebrates their achievements. It features objects from Vision Australia’s heritage collection, compelling accounts and examples of new technologies that are increasing the independence of thousands of Australians. The exhibition demonstrates that today, as a result of developments in education and training, technology, legislation and social change over the past 145 years, Australians with blindness or low vision participate in every aspect of community life.

For further information including how to get there by public transport, visit:

<http://www.visionaustralia.org/info.aspx?page=2571>

Apps for People with Vision Impairments

Source: <http://itunes.apple.com/gb/app/via-by-braille-institute/id528499232?mt=8>

ViA (Visually Impaired Apps) for iPhone and iPad has been designed by the Braille Institute to help people who are blind or who have low vision to more easily sort through the 500,000+ apps in the iTunes App Store to locate the apps that were built specifically for users with vision impairments, or apps that happen to provide useful functionality.

ViA aims to help blind and low-vision users maximize their ability to use iOS devices to increase their productivity and independence. ViA is a fully accessible application for the iPhone and iPad.

Vision Australia Further Education Bursary 2013: Now Open

The Bursary provides adaptive technology to people who would otherwise find it difficult to afford purchasing it themselves, enabling them to succeed with their post-secondary school studies. Applications for 2013 will close on 31 October 2012 (the Bursary is run annually).

For more information and application details please go to <http://www.visionaustralia.org/bursary>

Please contact: Max Bini, Tertiary Education Consultant, Vision Australia

Telephone (direct): (03) 8378 1223

Toll free: 1300 84 74 66

Email: bursary@visionaustralia.org

VTAC Assistance

When: Wednesday 22 August 2pm to 4pm

Where: Vision Australia Kensington Office

VTAC staff members are coming to the Kensington office of Vision Australia to assist future further education students who are blind or have low vision with their VTAC applications, including SEAS and Scholarship applications for study in 2013. Current year 12 or mature aged people with a vision impairment who are seeking to apply for further study and need to apply through VTAC are welcome to this event.

Please contact Max Bini Tertiary Vision Australia Education Consultant

max.bini@visionaustralia.org or phone (03) 8378 1223 if you wish to attend or have more questions.

VI Support” – Skills for the Inclusive Classroom

Based in “the Mallee”, Trish Fraser has had many years of experience supporting people with vision impairments in both Australia and overseas. She is offering workshops, on-site consulting and training, and access technology services to schools in North-West Victoria as follows:

- Tactile graphics in your classroom
- Braille and sound in your classroom
- Accessible document production
- Access technology

For further information please contact Trish Fraser of Cutlass Consulting

Tel: 0451 114 254 / (03) 5081 2210 or email: trish@thefrasers.org

UEB in the USA?

There has been some discussion recently regarding USA's adoption of UEB. New Zealand's Mary Schnackenberg summarises the situation as follows:

As I understand the situation, at the July conventions of the National Federation of the Blind and the American Council of the Blind (ACB), resolutions have been passed which permit the Braille Authority of North America (BANA) to introduce UEB provided that continuation of the use of the Nemeth Code for maths and science is permitted. There is nothing in UEB that prevents the use of Nemeth instead of its own Maths code. BANA still has to adopt UEB. It meets twice a year in November and April. We will need to wait for the November meeting to see what decisions are taken then. While it is disappointing that ACB and NFB could not live with UEB maths at this stage, it is reasonable to speculate that time will tell with the specialist blindness teachers who have to teach maths braille. The key thing is that ACB and NFB representatives on BANA are now permitted to vote in favour of the adoption of UEB for the literary code.

Accessible Rooms at Mercure Hobart

Source: The Age, 21 July 2012

Eight rooms at the Mercure Hobart hotel have been modified for guests with hearing or vision impairment. The rooms include an alarm clock with strobe light and an under pillow vibrating pad linked to the hotel's fire alarm. Room doorbell and telephone. In-room stationary and door signs are in braille, there are audio versions of room service menus, and room lights are brighter. The Mercure Hobart is in the city centre. For further information visit <http://www.accorhotels.com>.

Vale Ian Cooper

From Jordie Howell

It is with much sadness that I write to inform you that Ian Cooper (who visited the recent Braille Music Camp) has passed away. After a long battle with emphysema, Ian died at home with family around him. Many of you will know Ian: one of the instigators of the National Braille Music Camp, first held in 1986. Head of Music and long time teacher at Frensham Girls School for 40 years, Ian arranged for the camps to be held at Frensham in the Southern Highlands of New South Wales which was a perfect setting with good quality music facilities, boarding houses and catering. Ian was also a wonderful composer, arranging music for well-known groups such as The Song Company and also writing songs and instrumental music. Ian has been an inspiration to many of us over the years, also supporting and advising young musicians as they forge their own careers. Ian will be missed, however his legacy lives on in the music he composed and the passion he instilled in the musicians he taught.

Staff News

- SVRC staff member, **Annette Godfrey-Magee**, has returned to us – and already it is like she was never gone – well to us, anyway!!!
- While **Barbara Forehan** is in Europe later this term, **Tess Rossouw** will be replacing her in Eastern Metropolitan Region.
- **Erin Greaves** is back in Eastern Metropolitan Region 0.4 – welcome back Erin!
- Support Skills Music Teacher, **Christine Casey**, is the Braille Music Camp president! Go Christine!!!
- **Lyn Robinson** has returned to our sunburnt country – we all look forward to her photos and stories of the Tour de France, Paris and surrounds!

Space Camp 2012

In a few short weeks, Space Campers **Brendan, Jackie, Maddie and Zac** with Chaperones **Rory Fraser** and **Sue Matthews** will be setting off to Space Camp after achieving their funding goals. It has been rather an epic adventure already – but in our experience, the more work that is put into getting the team off the ground, the more students get out of the experience!!! We wish the group all the very best and look forward to photos, blogs, facebook posts or whatever they can manage – but particularly hearing that they all had a safe and exciting time away!

Other Student News

- Hume student **Tyler** was invited to participate in a ski training camp in July this year as part of the Paralympic talent search. Participation in the week of skiing including training was free. It was his first time at the snow but quite quickly, he was skiing and catching chairlifts like a seasoned skier! He is now waiting to hear if he will be invited to another ski training camp ... Excellent – another potential Paralympian!!!
- **Lucy** from Barwon South-Western Region achieved first place in the school Athletics Day high jump, which is such an achievement and therefore now goes on to compete in the next level at Regionals
- See below for Barwon South-Western Region's **Ari's** account of surfing his first tube – reprinted from international online magazine, Tracks.
- Group B Support Skills student, **Justin G** recently swam in the Zone competition and achieved a second place two relays. He also threw the Discus 16.61 metres and will be competing in the District competition.
- **Cameron** and **Justin** from Northern Metropolitan Region visited Games Masters at ACMI recently and recommended it for students who are interested in gaming. ACMI is near Federation Square in the city so it is accessible via public transport.

Travel Tip

Thanks to Glen Morrow for this handy tip:

Take a photo of your suitcase on your iPhone so that at the baggage claim you can show an assistant exactly what it looks like and therefore make it more easy to locate!

Finally

And finally thanks to everyone for their contributions to this Bulletin, especially Max Bini, Louise Curtin, Prue Gunner, Lea Nagel, Dianne Simpson and Jessica Zammit.

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>

Assessment and instruction: Two Sides of the Same Coin for Successful Literacy Outcomes

Frances Mary D'Andrea

Proposed Program

Monday 13 and Tuesday 14 August 2012

Day 1: Monday 13 August 2012

Time	Activity
8:30-9:00	Registration
9:00-9:05	Welcome
9:05-10:45	What do good readers do? Characteristics of good readers and how to get there.
10:45-11:15	Morning tea
11:15-1:00	Challenges for students who are blind or visually impaired for reading; approaches to instruction and assessment.
1:00-1:45	Lunch
1:45-3:30	Reading assessment procedures: What do various assessments tell us about our students' reading abilities?
3:30	Close

Day 2: Tuesday 14 August 2012

Time	Activity
8:30-9:00	Registration
9:00-10:45	Continued discussion about reading and writing assessment procedures. After assessment, what then?
10:45-11:15	Morning tea
11:15-1:00	Specific strategies for reading difficulties
1:00-1:45	Lunch
1:30-2:30	Specific strategies, continued. Collaboration with the classroom teacher and educational team.
3:45	Close

Student Wellbeing Professional Learning 2012



Department of Education and
Early Childhood Development

My First Tube

Source: Tracks (surfing magazine) 11 July 2012

<http://www.tracksmag.com/201207104797/Blogs/Tracks-Blog/My-First-Tube.html>



Our author Ari Karaoulis paddles into a little chilly afternoon right near home.

INTRO: In many ways 11-year-old Ari Karaoulis is like any other frothing grommet. He loves to surf, run about with his friends and play music (the drums to be precise).

What does make Ari a little different from his fellow pre-teen mates is the fact he suffers from Degenerative Retina Eye Syndrome ... an untreatable, degenerative eye disorder. Ari is on his way to going blind.

Surfing is a huge part of the young natural-footer's life and he's working hard on learning how best to use and maximise his other senses so he can continue surfing no matter what the future holds.

One place this enhanced sense of his surroundings is evident is in his writing. Ari's family passed onto *Tracks* this 700-word story he wrote entitled 'My First Tube'.

We here at *Tracks* are happy to now post this story in full for our surfing brethren to enjoy.

Thanks for your story Ari – all the best for the future and keep ripping little buddy.

My First Tube

I stood on the sandy shores of Ocean Grove beach petrified by the big swell that had just rolled in. Perfect waves lapped the shore and came crashing down to stir the dormant seabed from its never-ending sleep. The water was crystal clear, it was the best surf I had

ever seen. I walked up to the water's edge and felt the ice-cold water wash over my feet. I bent down and put my leg rope on. The soft waterproof fabric wrapped around my leg like it weighed nothing. I stood and walked up to my waist in the water, dropped my board into the water. Once my board was completely submerged in the salty water it started to glisten and shine like it was made of solid gold and polished until it was as smooth as a diamond. I jumped onto my board and started to paddle. The salty water seeped into my wetsuit chilling the skin beneath, I shivered as the cold ice-like claws of the water scratched at my skin. I knew this was normal but every time it happened it freaked me out. I paddled out until I couldn't see the seabed any more, stopped, sat up on my board and stared out at the never-ending sea beyond.

A minute passed, then another, then another. All through that time my gaze did not waver away from the ripple that was making its way ever so closer to me. When it was only about 20 metres away, I confirmed that this was going to be the most epic ride of my life. I spun my board around as fast as my arms and legs would allow and paddled for all I was worth, as soon as I felt the wave lift me a foot or more I popped up and turned right. The right side of the board continued to tilt until I was nearly horizontal with the face of the wave, then as soon as I had started tilting it reversed itself and left me standing on my board. I looked to the side of me and saw the foot thick lip of the wave crash down filling the green interior with a rolling thunder like crash.

I was awe struck I had never made it into a tube before. It was unusually quiet, and then I realised that I wasn't deaf. This is actually how quiet and peaceful it is in a tube. All was quiet for an hour it felt like, but I knew it was only a second or two since I had even got here in the first place. Then a slight breeze ruffled my hair and grew stronger until it reached a point where it shot me out and sent me hurtling over the lip of the wave and over the other side in midair.

I landed with a bone-breaking thud on my board, my hands were trembling from what had just happened. Then a sense of pure joy and excitement engulfed my senses. I was brought back to my senses by a surge of water slamming my head on in the face and pushing and rolling me back to shore in a big muddle of flailing limbs and arms. I coughed and gasped for air and then buried my face in the soft sand and fell to the mercy of the pain that enveloped my body a moment later. I woke up to see the smiling face of my dad, no trace of the reviling pain that had enveloped my body just minutes before. Well it felt like just minutes before anyway. I tried to ask my dad but all my voice sounded like was a croak. He smiled even wider and lifted his drink bottle, I nodded in response. He tilted the drink bottle and the wet, cool, transparent liquid poured into my mouth. I swallowed all the dry sand that had settled in my throat, it vanished with the stream of water and I was able to speak.

I started to speak but dad put his hand over my mouth and silenced the avalanche of words and exaggerations that was going to erupt out of my mouth. Then he spoke, "Sssssssh come on, stand up and let's go home." I started to stand but as soon as I had risen to my full height a wave of exhaustion rolled over my body. I staggered but luckily my dad's firm grip wrapped around and caught me. "WOW be careful," said my dad. Then he swung me onto his back and trudged up the stairs.

Written by: Ari Karaoulis