

The Bulletin

Statewide Vision Resource Centre

Number 13

Monday 20th August 2012

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

Professional Development Activities for Term 3, 2012

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>

National Partnership

We are starting to get feedback from students regarding their new technology: here is an excited comment from one student who was in at the SVRC for Support Skills recently:

This BrailleNote just gets me so excited. I got so excited when I found out how much memory there was on the BrailleNote Apex. It's so much smaller and so light I'm not so worried about it strangling me. I'm not worried about getting strangled – it's so small. Internet! I'm also excited about the internet! – Mohammed

Some thoughts about our National Partnerships funding – Marion Blazé

Over the next year and a half we have the opportunity to provide technology and equipment for our current students and future students. This is an opportunity like no other I have experienced in my longish (longer than I'd like to admit!) history working in this field.

Previously, our legally blind students have received (PSD) funding to their schools which in some cases has provided for their equipment needs. Many schools have been 'creative' and have sourced extra funding elsewhere. Our partially sighted students have had the opportunity to apply for equipment grants. All of this funding has been to the school and equipment has been purchased as single items and (usually) kept by individual schools. (continued next page)

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Both Annette and I (and probably some of you) have unfortunately had the experience of visiting a school and noticing a piece of very expensive, specialised equipment sitting on a shelf and no-one in the school knowing what it was for!! In such cases it has been purchased for a student who has left or no longer needs it, and then forgotten, or perhaps shelved in case it became useful for someone else in the future. I don't think many schools fully understand the low incidence of vision impairment in school aged children and the low probability of a school having more than one enrol.

The fantastic advantages offered by this National Partnership are many. These are just a few I can think of:

1. It's a lot of money!!!
2. We'll get better value by purchasing normally expensive equipment in bulk.
3. SVRC and VTs will track the equipment and monitor whether it remains useful.
4. SVRC will be able to re-allocate equipment when it is no longer useful to the first recipient.
5. The funding is also for training of teachers in the use of the equipment – we will be producing training packages which will last way beyond the end of 2013.
6. PSD funding can be put to other uses by schools.
7. There should also be the capacity for SVRC to be equipped with the same technology used by the students for training purposes (training of both teachers and students)
8. It's a great opportunity for all of us to work together to develop an equitable and effective “standard” for what technology works best for what students (ambitious, I know, but possible!!)

Please contact me with your thoughts or share them through the regional VT reps on the “NP Working Party”: EMR - Rory, NMR - Denise, SMR - Sue, WMR - Heidi, BSW - Prue, Hume - Marg, Gippsland - Sharon, Grampians - Jo, Loddon - Gillian.

You can contact Marion at: marionblaze@svrc.vic.edu.au

PD by Request

We are happy to conduct BrailleNote, JAWS, ZoomText, MAGIC or anything that would be useful during term 3 and 4 and into 2013.

By request, upcoming sessions for Wednesday 29th August are:

- Interpreting Vision Reports and
- Educational Implications of Albinism

And please hop on your email and let us know what would make your working life easier!

Email: svrc@svrc.vic.edu.au

Music Careers Website

Max Bini has alerted us to the following website. For those with a passion for music, this is a new music careers website from the Music Council of Australia:

http://www.musiccareer.com.au/index.php/Main_Page

Braille Music Camp, 2012

Feedback from Visiting Teacher and Braille Music Camp Chaperone, **Myriam Ash**

What a wonderful week music camp was. The Victorian contingent (ten students) travelled on the train to Mittagong without any dramas. The new students enjoyed the experience. The adults didn't have to learn braille music, but I chose to and I have discovered a new passion. It is difficult to get one's head around transcribing print music into braille music but, with practise it becomes easier and it makes sense. I also had the opportunity to learn to read music to a blind person which was also very interesting.

Learning braille music was only part of our day, performance was a major part and eating it seems. Don't go to braille music camp expecting to remain on a diet. Basically, our day was based around Breakfast; singing practise; morning tea; braille music; lunch; part practise; afternoon tea; dinner; full choir and concert; supper. Thank goodness they stopped giving us supper after a couple of days.

What stood out for me was the amazing musical ability and talent of all the students. They learnt the repertoire during the week and by Thursday evening, they had it down perfect. The ages ranged from 8 years to 18 years old. They all had to be part of the full choir which meant they had to learn to sing either soprano, alto, tenor or bass. Well, we all know the sopranos have the easiest part but they do have to hit those high notes. The junior choir performed a repertoire which they only learnt that week, in addition to the full choir repertoire. Also most of them played another instrument or sang solo as well. We heard all types of musical styles. Every evening the students performed their own choice of music and their talent and confidence in performance really shone. They are our future music teachers and performers.

The camp would not have been so successful without the organization of the National Braille Music Committee and the music teachers who donated their time and experience. They were so constantly busy with teaching, conducting, performing, organizing last minute things; it must have been an enormous workload on top of their everyday job.

I am so grateful to Manningham Rotary for giving our Victorian students and teachers the opportunity to attend such an important educational activity. I recommend it to visiting teachers and parents as an opportunity to further one's education on so many levels; such as learn braille music; perform with the group; further understand how blind students learn and cope with every day activities. Apart from the personal satisfaction and the challenge it gives you. I'm looking forward to next camp.

Student participant, Mohamed, composed the following thankyou letter to Manningham Rotary for their kind financial support of the group this year:

Thank you for donating money to help us go to braille music camp. We would never have been able to attend without your help. We had a long train trip. I have never been on a train trip so long. I met new people on the train, who were also going to camp.

Each day we learnt some braille music. We learnt crotchets, quavers, semibreves, rests, minims, sharp notes, flat notes, naturals and notes like, e crotchets and d quavers. We practiced singing every day. We performed concerts every day of the week. We had a big concert on Friday. I performed in a choir that was divided into sopranos, altos, tenors, and basses. I was a tenor.

The camp was nice and comfortable. The food was great. They treated us like normal people. Thank you again for helping us. It was a very special week.

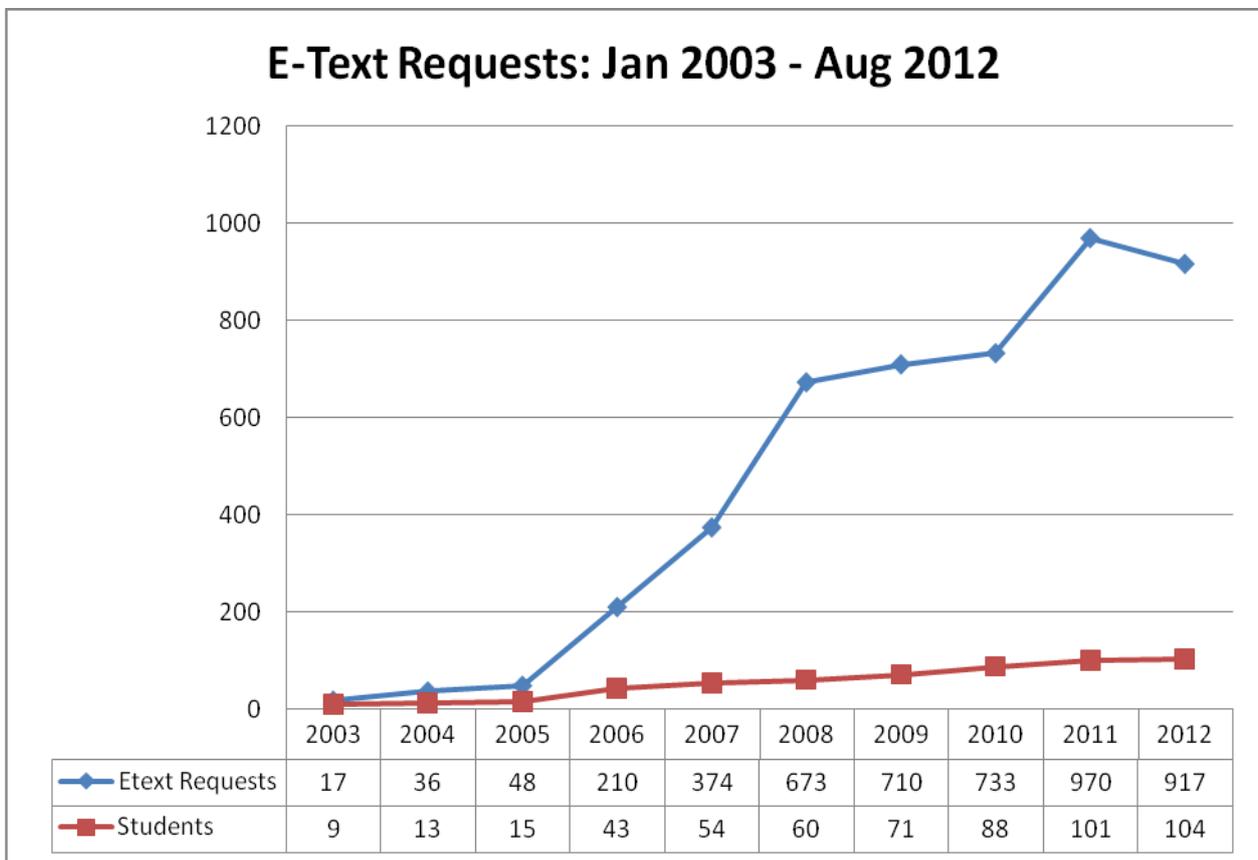
SVRC E-Text in the 21st Century

The first year that the Statewide Vision Resource Centre offered e-text, we had 9 users across the state of Victoria and they requested 17 titles. As you can see from the graph below, both users and number of materials provided in e-text have grown!

This year, over one fifth of our students are using e-text and by the end of the year, it is likely that we will have produced approximately 1,000 titles for their use!

E-text is a flexible format – allowing students to access more material more quickly and in their preferred format either as enlargement (through enlarging the font size or via ZoomText or MAGic) voice output (via JAWS, ZoomText, MAGic or a range of other software options) or braille (via BrailleNote, Brailliant or similar).

Thanks to Dianne and Cam for this research and documentation and please note, also, that there is a link to the e-text catalogue from the SVRC home page: <http://www.svrc.vic.edu.au>



VoiceOver with iDevices

Tip from Garry Stinchcombe

For anyone wanting to know how VoiceOver works with an iPhone, iPad or iPod, Vision Australia has some excellent Podcasts which are easy to access and simple to follow. They have been put together by David Woodbridge who works on the Vision Australia Tech Helpdesk and is obviously a “power” user of Apple products.

These would be very useful for teachers, students or families to listen too:

<http://www.visionaustralia.org/info.aspx?page=2287>

Braille Day in Western Metropolitan Region

Report by Jane Jensen, Stream Leader, Western Metropolitan Region

Brailleday in the west was held on Monday 6th August, with four eager participants Thanh, Thien, Danijela and Mohammed. Ramona Mandy from Humanware assisted the Western Metropolitan Region Visiting Teachers with direct instruction in the use of the Brailenote Apex dictionary and thesaurus function. We also had some fun using the planner to make sure we didn't miss recess and lunch! After a hop, skip and a jump in the grounds of Altona P-9 College, we headed in for an afternoon of swish and individual music lessons. Miriam Ash who recently returned from Braille music camp, will incorporate music into our brailleday afternoon session, with a one on one lesson for all students. WOW!

Thanks to Ramona, who continues to support all of the VT's in the implementation of this device in classrooms all over the Western region.

Below: Students playing Swish on the day.



Changes to Overseas Portability of DSP Blind

Source: Blind Citizens News, July 2012

The length of time individuals can travel overseas while continuing to receive their income support payments will be reduced from 13 weeks to six weeks effective from 1 January 2013. People who receive the Disability Support Pension Blind may be affected by this measure however a DSP Blind recipient can apply for indefinite portability on or after 1 July 2012. Blindness is considered as a manifest disability, with manifest disabilities treated differently to other disabilities covered by the Disability Support Pension. For further information see

http://www.bca.org.au/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=181&Itemid=49

BCA State Convention

Blind Citizens Australia will be conducting their 2012 State Convention in Geelong.

When: Saturday 13 October to Sunday 14 October 2012

Theme: Leadership: Turning dreams into vision

Where: Mercure Hotel, Gheringhap Street, Geelong Victoria Tel (03) 5221 6844

For further information, program, registration form, please contact:

Thai Nguyen, Victorian Advocacy and Policy Officer Ph: (03) 9654 1400/1800 033 660

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

Report: July School Holiday Program, Bendigo

Information provided by Alexandra Lonsdale, Vision Australia

On Monday 9th and Tuesday 10th July, Vision Australia Bendigo organised another successful quarterly School Holiday Program, with 12 participants aged between six and sixteen.

This program was based around personal grooming and dressing for success!

Day one saw the students participating in activities centred round the theme of personal grooming, including education and practice of tasks such as shaving balloons, dressing manikins, folding and ironing clothes. With the help of our volunteers in the kitchen, the students prepared their salad fillings and enjoyed a healthy lunch of salad rolls (with plenty of tomato sauce of course!).

The afternoon consisted of a Body Shop Party. The students had the opportunity to trial different moisturisers, perfumes, exfoliates, cleansers, body butters, and body washes. Many of the students enjoyed experimenting with different smells and textures and said how the experience had increased their awareness to the enormous range of skin care products available!

Day two involved an exciting Master Chef cooking challenge to prepare a two course lunch within a two hour time frame. The menu included pizza, carbonara, spaghetti bolognese, chocolate pudding, orange and poppyseed cake, fruit salad and garlic bread. With the noise level at a high, and flour from one end of the room to the other, there was no doubt everyone was having fun. The fun continued into the afternoon with ten pin bowling at Dragon City Lanes.

From the many smiles and laughter noted from the students, staff and volunteers, it is with confidence that I can say this was a very successful program. Carlia, Steve and I would really like to say a big thank you to our volunteers and staff for their assistance within the program.

Blind Football Seminar – Sydney

Uli Pfisterer, formerly RVIB PE Teacher, now works in Germany as a teacher at a Blind Institute in Stuttgart. He is also the National Coach of Blind Football. Uli will be conducting a seminar in Sydney regarding this exciting Paralympic sport.

When: 28th and 29th August 2012

Uli will be visiting Melbourne following these presentations.

For further information, please contact Uli: Ulrich.Pfisterer1@gmx.de

Tertiary Study Radio Interviews

A program on tertiary study was recently recorded for Vision Australia Radio. Interviews from the following speakers are now available online:

- Vision Australia Tertiary Education Consultant Max Bini
- Henry Macphillamy, a law student completing a Juris Doctor degree at the University of Melbourne
- Fallon Evans, who is completing a Graduate Diploma in Primary Education at Griffith University.

Visit: http://www.visionaustralia.org/docs/Talking_Vision_123_06_Aug_2012_Wk32.mp3

Frances Mary D'Andrea - Workshop at the SVRC

Frances Mary D'Andrea recently visited our shores and spent two wonderful days talking to us about braille reading assessment and instruction. The response from participants was overwhelmingly positive. Some of you asked for a list of the books Frances Mary so kindly brought over to show us, so here it is:

References

When Readers Struggle: Teaching that Works.

Gay Su Pinnell and Irene C. Fountas, Heinemann Portsmouth, NH

Qualitative Reading Inventory

Lauren Leslie and JoAnne Caldwell, Pearson Sydney.

Functional Vision A Practitioner's Guide to Evaluation and Intervention

Amanda hall Lueck, Editor. American Foundation for the Blind, New York.

Fluency: Differentiated Interventions and Progress-Monitoring Assessments

Fourth Edition. Jerry L. Johns and Roberta L. Berglund. Kendall Hunt Publishing Company International Reading Association <http://www.reading.org>

Catching Readers Before They Fall. Supporting Readers Who Struggle, K-4

Pat Johnson and Katie Keier. Stenhouse Publishers. Portland Maine.

Analytical Reading Inventory Eighth Edition. Comprehensive Standards-Based Assessment for All Students including Gifted and Remedial

Mary Lynn Woods and Alden J. Moe. Pearson Merrill Prentice Hall. Upper Saddle River New Jersey Columbus, Ohio

Word Callers: Small-Group and One-to-One Interventions for Children Who "Read" but Don't Comprehend

Kelly B. Cartwright. Heinemann Portsmouth, NH

Making Sense of Phonics: The Hows and Whys

Isabel L. Beck. The Guilford Press. New York

Understanding and Using Reading Assessment, K-12

Peter Afflerbach. International Reading Association Newark, <http://www.reading.org>

Bringing Words to Life: Robust Vocabulary Instruction

Isabel L. Beck, Margaret G. McKeown and Linda Kucan
The Guilford Press. New York.

Assistive Technology for Students Who are Blind or Visually Impaired: A Guide to Assessment

Ike Presley and Frances Mary D'Andrea, American Foundation for the Blind Press. New York

Basic Reading Inventory. Tenth Edition

Jerry L. Johns Kendall Hunt Publishing Company, Iowa

Why Kids Can't Read. What Teachers Can Do

Kylene Beers, Heinemann Portsmouth. NH.

JVIB, August 2012

The August 2012 issue of JVIB is available online! This month's articles include:

- Conceptual Understanding of Shape and Space by Braille-Reading Norwegian Students in Elementary School by Oliv G. Klingenberg
- Effect of Selected Balance Exercises on the Dynamic Balance of Children with Visual Impairments by Shirin Davarpanah Jazi, Fatemeh Purrajabi, Ahmadrza Movahedi, and Shahin Jalali
- Transition-Age Youths with Visual Impairments in Vocational Rehabilitation: A New Look at Competitive Outcomes and Services by J. Martin Giesen and Brenda S. Cavanaugh
- Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems Braille Reading Assessment: An Exploratory Study by Virginia K. Posey and Barbara W. Henderson

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

Living in a Sensory World

Lea Nagel and Deb Lewis enjoyed attending the recent opening of "Living in a Sensory World: Stories from people with blindness and low vision" which was originally developed by the Sydney Powerhouse Museum and Vision Australia. The exhibition offers visitors 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, accounts and examples of old and new technologies, and even an opportunity to learn more about the development of the bionic eye.



The evening was extremely pleasant with interesting speeches, delicious canapés and the opportunity to view the interesting exhibition.

The Living in a Sensory World exhibition can be found on the second level of the Melbourne Museum, near the Phar Lap exhibition. For further information including how to get there by public transport, visit: <http://www.visionaustralia.org/info.aspx?page=2571>

All Abilities ePlayground

The All Abilities ePlayground has been nominated as a finalist in the Internet Access & Digital Skills category 2012 of the Australia & New Zealand Internet Awards (ANZIAs). These annual awards celebrate the achievements of organisations, businesses and individuals that have made significant contributions to the development and use of the Internet in Australia and New Zealand.

The All Abilities ePlayground is an online resource offering interactive fun, games and learning. The website creates opportunities for children who have diverse skills and special needs - including children who are blind or vision impaired, to play online. Its design enables children with a disability to play in a way that they may not be able to accomplish in an outdoor environment and gives them independence and control over the online play space by offering a wide variety of game-play, settings and navigation methods.

It is a free resource, available at <http://www.allabilitiesplayground.net.au/>

What's New in JAWS 13

JAWS 13 has included some features which will improve accessibility to files and media which contain images with text. For example some PDF files contain pictures or graphic with text. This text, up until now, has not been accessible because the graphic is not readable by JAWS. The inclusion of an Optical Character Recognition (OCR) feature in the latest version of JAWS means that JAWS can now scan the image enabling access to the print in the image. Here is a summary of this feature from the Freedom Scientific website:

Convenient OCR

Frequently, you will encounter images that contain textual information. These can include a PDF file, the setup screen of an application, or the menu of selections for a DVD movie. While these images contain text that is readable by a sighted person, JAWS is unable to read the text as it is part of the image.

The new Convenient OCR (Optical Character Recognition) feature enables you to access any image on the screen that includes text. With just a few simple keystrokes, JAWS will recognize the image in a matter of seconds and activate the JAWS cursor so you can navigate the resulting text. The recognized text will be in the same location as the actual image on the screen. In order to differentiate the recognized text from other text that may be in the window, JAWS will use a different voice when it encounters the recognized text. To use Convenient OCR, the following layered keystrokes have been added:

The following examples illustrate just some of the uses of this new feature.

- You insert a DVD movie into your computer which brings up a menu allowing you to select from various DVD features. You press **INSERT+SPACEBAR, O, W**, and after a few seconds, JAWS will alert you that OCR is complete. At this point, the JAWS cursor will be active, and you can navigate around the screen using the **ARROW** keys and read the text of the menu.
- You open a PDF in Adobe Reader, which turns out to be inaccessible. Press **INSERT+SPACEBAR, O, W** to have JAWS recognize the text currently visible on the screen which you can then navigate with the JAWS cursor. Before performing OCR in Acrobat Reader, press **CTRL+1** to set the zoom level to Actual Size. While this will cause less of the image to be displayed on the screen, this will result in higher accuracy during recognition.

For further information please go to the Freedom Scientific website at:

<http://www.freedomscientific.com/downloads/jaws/JAWS-whats-new.asp>

For Sale: Mountbatten Pro Braille

From Heidi Littleford

Heidi has a 2007 Mountbatten Pro Braille for sale. It is in good condition. It has recently been serviced and upgraded by Quantum. It has UEB, and includes a Mimic, MBComs and all cables. It's no longer needed by the student.

Price \$2,500 or make an offer.

Contact: Heidi Littleford by phone on 0405 548 519 or email littleford.heidi.r@edumail.vic.gov.au if you are interested.

Staff News

- Erin Greaves is actually back 0.8! Even better. And she looks terrific after being in Bali for a year!

Student News

- Lots of the Group A Support Skills students have upcoming camps:
 - **Sam** has a 3-day camp in the hills coming up soon.
 - **Sarah** will be staying in cabins and going fishing at her camp.
 - **Mark** and **Emily** will both be at Sovereign Hill at the same time next week, possibly sharing the same activities! Part of their program involves dressing in period costumes and going to school. Mark will then be travelling to Bendigo to visit the Central Deborah gold mine.
- **Mark** also went to the MCG with his O&M instructor Simon this week. He saw the player's rooms and checked out the ice baths where footballers may need to spend time to reduce swelling after a game.
- **Caleb**, along with the grade 4s at his school, will be making his first communion.
- **Danijela** and another student gave a sport report during assembly this week – and she is also singing in the school choir.
- **Thanh** and **Thien** (and Visiting Teacher **Emily**) feature in a YouTube video in support of the Reading Hour: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CCIK82Benpo>
- Group D had a number of award-winners this week:
 - **Zac** has won an encouragement award from his Blind Cricket Team, St Paul's
 - **Michaela** and **Emma-Mae** have both won a collection of first, second and thirds in an eisteddfod recently held in Albury.
 - **Kira** won a school “respect” award
- Meanwhile **Brendan** will be attending a Blind Cricket training camp in Brisbane.
- **Geordi** is currently working on his school magazine – he has chosen a Star Wars theme!
- **Emma-Mae** will be spending 3 weeks in France as part of a school excursion.
- **Brendan** and **Zac** will be flying to the USA for Space Camp in under a month!!!
- Space Camper 1999 and 2000, **Nic Bonne** who is currently studying for his PhD in astronomy, spoke about his Space Camp and studying experiences to Group D and parents. He is pictured (right) with Space Campers, **Zac** and **Brendan** and Physics-lover **Hugh** who enjoyed the session.



Finally

And finally thanks to everyone for their contributions to this Bulletin, especially Lea Nagel and Emily White.

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>