

The Bulletin

Statewide Vision Resource Centre

Number 18
Monday 12th November 2012

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

Professional Development Activities for 2012-13

Support Skills Try Day for 2013 – download an expression of interest form: http://www.svrc.vic.edu.au/Arefssp.pdf	Friday 16 November
Dot Power Day of literacy-based activities for braille readers from pre-school to grade 3	Tuesday 20 November
Educational Expo – Access Technology Options This day is suitable for teachers, aides, therapists, parents/carers, visiting teachers, STUDENTS and members of the wider community – all welcome!	Monday 26 November
SVRC Christmas Morning Tea All welcome! – please RSVP	Wednesday 5 December
SPEVI Conference – New Zealand	13-18 January

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

Thanks to everyone who provided feedback regarding Masterclass speakers for 2013. We have been able to secure **Ike Presley** for two days in November. It is likely that **Jan van Djik** will be hosted by Victorian Deaf Education Institute. **Jane Erin** was only available during the term 1 holidays so we are negotiating with RIDBC to see if we can join the Sydney presentations via video link. We will keep you posted as the PD program for 2013 unfolds.

SVRC Closed

On **Thursday 15** and **Wednesday 21 November**, the SVRC will be closed so that staff can participate in a Professional Development Activity. Thanks for your understanding.

Ozzie Dots: Quickie Competition!

Calling all Ozzie Dots readers! The Ozzie Dots team would like to announce a quickie competition. To enter, just send us an email telling us which is your favourite book and why. Prizes will be sent to entrants, and will most likely involve chocolate! Extra comments and feedback would be welcome. Closing date: 20th November 2012. Email: svrc@svrc.vic.edu.au.

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National Partnerships News

News from Marion Blazé

Right now some schools are taking delivery of their new Perkins Braille Writers and we are also intending to roll out specialised technology such as JAWS, ZoomText and a few more BrailleNotes. For the software such as JAWS and ZoomText, we are grappling with the idea of Statewide Licences. Currently we are contacting schools where this software has been purchased for students in the past. With the Principals' 'in Principle' agreement, we might be able to consolidate these licences into our Statewide Licence at considerable savings in the longer term. The good news is that every Principal I have spoken to so far has agreed, but the bad news is that Principals are very difficult to contact which is delaying our ability to go ahead with this roll out. We will do our best to 'wrap this up' next week.

Again, I will describe our process for rolling out technology:

1. Need is established through the Excel audit listing we now have of our students
2. The VT is contacted first to ascertain that the need (and priority) is still current
3. The school is contacted and the Principal (or nominee) asked to sign an agreement to the loan
4. Technology is ordered and when the Principal's agreements are received, technology can be delivered.

Knowing that we are soon to be ordering JAWS and ZoomText, if any VTs know of a student who is not listed on the Excel audit as needing these software packages, please make contact with Statewide to ensure that any student needing these is listed.

BrailleNote SMA

The SVRC has purchased the Software Maintenance Agreement for two BrailleNote Apexes – can you help us locate one of them. It was allocated to a student about 2 years ago and the serial number is either:

65-0320-000586 or
65-0320-000587

[One of these units belongs to Danijella. We are looking for the other one. Thanks.]

BANA Adopts UEB (+ Nemeth) for USA

Adapted from ozbrl listserv, 5 November 2012

On November 2, 2012, the Braille Authority of North America (BANA) set a new course for the future of braille in the United States when it adopted Unified English Braille (UEB). The motion, which passed decisively, specifies that UEB will eventually replace the current English Braille American Edition and that the US will retain the Nemeth Code for Mathematics and Science Notation.

The transition to UEB will not be immediate and will follow a carefully crafted timeline. A FAQ providing more detail about changes is available on the BANA website.

After implementation, the official braille codes for the United States will be Unified English Braille; Nemeth Code for Mathematics and Science Notation, 1972 Revision and published updates; Music Braille Code, 1997; and The IPA Braille Code, 2008.

More detailed information about UEB and the motion that BANA passed can be found on the BANA website at <http://www.brailleauthority.org>.

Master Classes with Karen Wolffe – October 30 & 31, 2012

From Marion Blazé

Wow! SVRC had the great pleasure of hosting Karen Wolffe for two master classes over two days. Karen spoke about the Career Education continuum: planning for the Future on Monday, and Transition from School-to-work on Tuesday.

What a way to round up our Master Class series with the best 2 days of PD ever?! Feedback included superlatives such as: inspirational, entertaining, affirming, fun, a treat, practical, wonderful, amazing, vision-specific, excellent, structured, and the list goes on....

One VT even said 'I can't believe I listened to one person talk for two days straight and enjoyed it so much with no wine involved' (thanks Francine!), and 'I could have listened for a week!' (Dianne).

Here's a taster of what people learned:

- Think **NEXT ENVIRONMENT** (Jane)
- Stress consequences to students – 'Yes, you can choose not to develop good mobility skills, but when you're older, you'll be stuck at home'
- We need to place more emphasis on low-tech, blind-specific skills like abacus and magnifiers
- Preparation for employment is even more important than academic skills (Emily)
- It is vital for VI students to get a part-time job while still at school, to increase their chances of future employment
- Social skills are the key and 'reciprocity' is essential
- Good literacy and numeracy skills are essential
- Students' self-confidence comes from our expectations of them
- Students' disabilities need to be balanced or out-weighed by their competencies
- It may not be 'fair' but it's 'real'
- And so much more..... Wow!

Talking Data Logger

From Marion Blazé

Do you have senior science students? Look at the talking data logger

On October 24, SVRC was visited by the sales and training manager of 'Scientrific'. This company distributes 'data loggers' which are devices used in school laboratories to measure and track data. For example, if an experiment requires students to measure temperature at many time intervals, keep data in a table on their computer and then graph the results, then a data logger is the device which can do it all.

The 'Labquest' (by Vernier) is a hand-held device for which many sensors can be obtained for measurement of temperature, blood pressure, flow rate of liquids, pH, motion, and more. Together with software (Logger lite or Logger pro) it can tabulate and graph the data gathered on a computer. The reason for the demonstration of this equipment at SVRC was because it is now accessible with its own built in auditory output which even gives a tone signal to convey the shape of the graph produced. It also has JAWS support.

Visiting Teachers or science teachers can find out more and see a demonstration by visiting:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jYWYIoOs9Jo&sns=em>

<http://www.vernier.com>

<http://www.scientrific.com.au>

Talking Tins Lids

From the Grovedale Primary School Prep Blog

<http://gwpsprep.global2.vic.edu.au/2011/08/02/talking-tin-lids/>

We have been using Talking Tin Lids for a couple of years now in our classroom program. They are a wonderful tool that enables young learners to easily record up to 40 seconds of information that can then be played back, erased and re-recorded. The Talking Tin Lids are magnetic so they can be used on whiteboards and can complement displays around the room. We have used them regularly to complement our Literacy Program and our Developmental Curriculum. For example, a child might make a model and record what the model is and its special features, the recording can then be displayed with the model in class.



Alternatively, a Talking Tin Lid might be used by a student to record their writing as they read it back. If their writing is for an audience, such as a story, the Talking Tin Lid can be displayed next to the writing, bringing the written work to life with the oral reading.

Children independently select a Talking Tin Lid, sign it out and return it when they are finished. We also have created a ready-made and purposeful number game board as the talking tin lids are numbered 1-25.

Editor's note: A great literacy tool for blind or low vision students. Listen to the work of other children displayed around the room or get them to add audio descriptions to their own work.

Talking Tin Lids and other talking products are available from <http://www.talkingproducts.co.uk>

2012 Disability Sport & Recreation Festival: Able and Active

When: Monday 3 December 2012

Time: 10am-3pm

Where: Federation Square, Melbourne

Cost: No charge

More than 30 leading disability, health and sport organisations will set Federation Square abuzz on Monday 3 December for the Disability Sport & Recreation Festival.

The Disability Sport & Recreation Festival 'Able and Active' highlights the ability of Victorians with disability to live an active lifestyle and celebrates International Day of People with Disability. For the third year running, the Festival is expected to attract over 20,000 people.

There will be over 20 hours of free accessible Come and Try activities to participate in and a Corporate Wheelchair Basketball Tournament featuring Aussie Paralympians to cheer on.

For more information go to the official Festival website <http://www.dsrf.org.au> or search #DSRF on Twitter. Alternatively, contact Disability Sport & Recreation on (03) 9473 0133 or info@dsr.org.au.

Space Camp 2012

The Space Camp 2012 page is now available on the SVRC website – many thanks to Sue and Rory for getting the information together! **Here is a sample from one of the participants, Maddie:**

Space Camp! Where do I begin? Everything about Space Camp was amazing, the missions we completed, the activities we took part in, our team counsellors and the friends we made!

But, I think the very best part about Space Camp was that it was a place where no one had to really try to fit in, everyone found their place within the group and we all got along well with each other. I also really enjoyed being around other vision impaired students, because it's not very often that we get to spend a week with 160 other vision impaired students from all around the world! I really learnt a lot from the other students and have become good friends with many of them.

Every day of the week was packed full of fun activities. We started each day off by getting up at 6:30am, spending the day completing many fun challenges and getting back to our dorms at around 10:30pm. Throughout each day, some of the challenges we participated in included mission training, completing missions, one which went for 6 hours, scuba diving, climbing up a 32 foot pole and jumping from the top (with a harness of course!) Going on a flying fox at a height of 50 feet, rock climbing to a height of also 50 feet, low ropes courses, small rocket building and launching, riding on the Space Shot which simulated weightlessness, the Mars rollercoaster simulator, exploring through the museum, competing in the space trivia game against the other teams, graduating and so much more. And yes, all of that was in one week!

Also between leaving Australia and arriving at Space Camp, and leaving Space Camp and returning back to Australia, we stopped in Los Angeles and New York, which were both absolutely amazing! In Los Angeles, for the five days we were there, we spent 3 days travelling between Disneyland and California Adventure, we went to Universal Studios, The Walk of Fame in Hollywood and went to a baseball game with a friend of Sue and Rory's, Vince. In New York we visited the Statue of Liberty, the Empire State Building, the Chrysler Building and Macy's, which is the biggest department store in the world. We went to a Broadway show and watched Wicked which really lived up to its name! We stayed at the Carter Hotel right on Times Square, visited Harlem, went on double decker tour buses, went on a horse and cart around Central Park and so much more!

Throughout the week at Space Camp and our time in Los Angeles and New York, I met so many amazing friends that I'll never forget. I'm so glad I got to share this experience with Sue, Rory, Brendan, Zac and Jacky, it felt as though we were like a little family and have all become so close. Space Camp really was a life changing experience, and I'm really hoping to return to Space Camp one day.

See more: <http://www.svrc.vic.edu.au/EPspacecamp2012.shtml>

Study to Work Resource

From Dr Max Bini, Tertiary Education Consultant, Vision Australia

Max Bini has written a resource to support students with a vision impairment transitioning to further education and employment. It is available on the vipstudents blog as a word document: <http://vipstudents.wordpress.com/study-to-work/>

To contact Max Bini, freecall: 1300 847466 or direct line: (03) 8378 1223.

SVRC Writing Competition: Date Extended

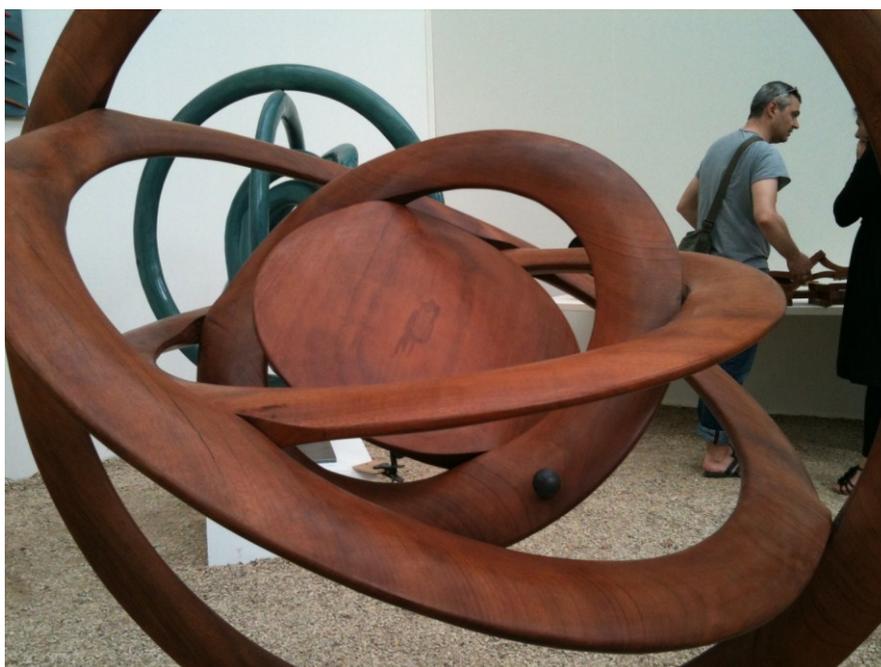
The SVRC Writing Competition "My Dream Technology" is still open. So get your entries in!

We CAN Touch the Sculptures

By Lyn Robinson

When I was in Paris earlier in the year I stumbled upon an exhibition by Thomas Ostova. I could hear bells tinkling and then noticed people were playing with the sculptures. There were things you could pull apart and rearrange. There was a large disc shaped sculpture with rings that you could move and spin. A large metal board with wooden shapes on it was being playfully rearranged by a child. I was reminded of our Support Skills excursion to the National Gallery of Victoria where we were allowed to touch some of the sculptures and thought what a great exhibition this would be for our students. Here are a couple of pictures and maybe some food for thought for some art folios.

Picture below: A two metre, wooden sculpture with disc and rings which move independently.



Picture below: Originally a round block, this sculpture has been pulled apart to reveal balls inside.



Victor Reader Stratus: Audio Book Player

Source: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jKsK2jq46mw&feature=plcp>

The latest audio player from Humanware is the Victor Reader Stratus. It is a hardy unit with inbuilt handle, CD-reader, speaker, headphone jack and rechargeable battery. Navigation is simple with tactile buttons and high contrast. Victor Reader Stratus can play a variety of files including DAISY, mp3, text (using text-to-speech) and music. There are three models:

- Basic 4 – has audio jack
- 4M – same as Basic 4; includes multi-media slots for SD and USB
- 12M – same as 4M; has additional navigation features for DAISY files

Available from Humanware: <http://www.humanware.com>

Pointing Finger Book Mark

Source: <http://www.thefancy.com/things/208882990401459117/Pointing-Finger-Bookmark>

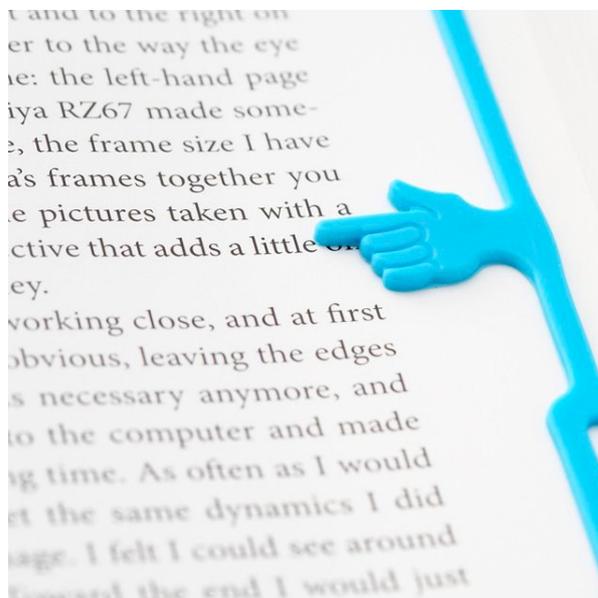
This extra finger will point to your last line, working double time to hold your page and save you time!

The pointing finger bookmark is just like a highlighter. The finger indicator points to the exact line.

Where you last read so you don't have to spend time skimming through the text.

The flexible material and y-shape design easily adapt to books of various sizes and thicknesses. Made from silicone, the pointing finger bookmarks come in three colours: fluorescent pink, blue and yellow.

Thanks to Jeremy Blazé for sending this one in!



Braille Aide Wanted

A Catholic School in Maribyrnong (western suburbs) has a braille student starting Prep next year and is looking for a braille aide – please contact Odette Budge or SVRC if you know someone – thanks!

Teachers Wanted in Thailand

A School for the Blind in Chiang Rai is seeking two Australian teachers to work for 6 months or longer. The primary aim is to teach English to students, ranging from Kindergarten to Level 6, who are blind or vision-impaired.

For further information about this project, contact:

Margaret Gadd

Project Officer, Asia Pacific Partnerships

National Disability Services

Tel: (08) 8294 0586

Email: margaret.gadd@nds.org.au

JVIB

Here are some of the articles available in the October-November 2012 issue of JVIB:

- Preferences and Practices Among Students Who Read Braille and Use Assistive Technology - Frances Mary D'Andrea
- Internet Use by Transition-Aged Youths with Visual Impairments in the United States: Assessing the Impact of Postsecondary Predictors - Stacy M. Kelly and Karen E. Wolffe
- Teaching the Benefits of Smart Phone Technology to Blind Consumers: Exploring the Potential of the iPhone - Meng Ee Wong and Stacey S. K. Tan
- Assistive Technology Competencies for Teachers of Students with Visual Impairments: A National Study - Li Zhou, Paul M. Ajuwon, Derrick W. Smith, Nora Griffin-Shirley, Amy T. Parker, and Phoebe Okungu
- Technology for Early Braille Literacy: Comparison of Traditional Braille Instruction and Instruction with an Electronic Notetaker - James O. Bickford and Ruth A. Falco

Now Available: Braille Calendar for 2013

If you'd like a braille calendar for 2013, they will be available soon – to place your order, please complete the SVRC alternative format request form: <http://www.svrc.vic.edu.au/Areqalt.doc> or visit <http://svrc.vic.edu.au/Acatalogue.shtml> for more information.

Support Skills News

Group D will be coming in to the Support Skills Program this week – some for the last time. Each of the students has brought their individuality, skills and talents to the program and we will miss each and every one of our exit students this year – so it is farewell to: **Brendan, Emma-Mae, Geordi, Hugh, Jack, Steve and Tess.**

We look forward to continuing to stay in touch with these students and to hear of their successes. Perhaps we will have the joy of seeing them on our TVs in 4 years for the Paralympics ... or another opportunity that they reach out and grab. All the best to the Support Skills class of 2012!!!

Join “SVRC Support Skills and Friends” on Facebook

This is an invitation to join the SVRC Facebook Page. It's a great way to stay in touch, announce your achievements, and enjoy the achievements of others. Promote interesting events, send messages to the group and generally stay in touch with current and past Support Skills students and staff!

There are quite a few members already – and it would be fun to make this a vibrant part of the communication available to our community!

Visit: <http://www.facebook.com/groups/158297667517505/>

Finally

And finally thanks to everyone for their contributions to this issue of The Bulletin, especially Lea Nagel and Rachel Morgan.

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>