

The Bulletin

Statewide Vision Resource Centre

Number 12

Monday 19th August 2013

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

Professional Development Activities for Term 3, 2013

Event	Date
Skill Power Workshops 1. 9.30-11.00 Getting the most from Duxbury & embosser - Lea/Garry, SVRC 2. 11.30-1.00 BrailleNote in the Classroom - Lea Nagel/Garry Stinchcombe, SVRC 3. 1.30-3.30 – Request a session!	Wednesday 21 August
Master Class: Supporting Children with Sensory Impairments & Multiple Disabilities – Dr Jan van Dijk (to be held at VDEI) – see issue 9 for details	Wed & Thur 28 & 29 August
Skill Power Workshops (Lea not available) 1. 9.30-11.00 – Request a session! 2. 11.30-1.00 – Request a session! 3. 1.30-3.30 – Request a session!	Wednesday 4 September
Dot Power – for braille readers from pre-school to grade 3	Tues 10 Sep

The program for 2013 is available from this link: <http://www.svrc.vic.edu.au/PL.shtml>

Student Competition 2013: “Top Tech Tip”

Create an audio or video presentation featuring your favourite tech tip!

Victorian students with vision impairments who are eligible for support from the SVRC are invited to submit their favourite technology tip.

We welcome tips on any access technology that makes life easier – electronic magnification, scanning, braille, phone, household or recreation activities ... surprise us!

Format: audio file or video

Length: absolutely no longer than 60 seconds

Closing date: Friday 8th November 2013

Further information: <http://www.svrc.vic.edu.au/ttt.shtml>, email svrc@svrc.vic.edu.au or phone Deb Lewis or Cam Phillips on 9841 9242



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Vision Australia Bursary – Applications close on 31 October

The Vision Australia Further Education Bursary 2014 is now open for applications.

People with vision impairments seeking to study an accredited course at or above Certificate 4 level, including undergraduate and postgraduate degrees, in 2014 can apply for a Bursary to receive adaptive technology to assist them with their studies.

For those who have received the Bursary in the past, I am sorry to say you cannot receive it twice but please do let others know. For those who have applied in the past and been unsuccessful, please realise that each year is treated differently and you can apply again.

For more information and the application process please visit the Vision Australia website:

www.visionaustralia.org/bursary.

For enquiries please contact:

Dr Max Bini

Vision Australia's Tertiary Education Consultant

Direct line: 03 8378 1223

Email: max.bini@visionaustralia.org

Transition for All Ages

Dorinda Rife, Superintendent of Programs and Services at Perkins School for the Blind, describes the importance of long-term planning and instruction to prepare students with vision impairments for the future by beginning in the early years. The videos, which include audio descriptions, are arranged into chapters which deal with the following:

- 1 – Introduction
- 2 – Starting the Transition Process
- 3 – Goals and Opportunities in an Education Plan
- 4 – Developing Social Skills
- 5 – Transition Takes Teamwork
- 6 – Accommodations, Expectations and Options
- 7 – Strategies for Success

Visit: http://www.perkins.org/resources/webcasts/transition-for-all-ages.html?utm_campaign=transition%20for%20all%20ages&utm_source=webcast%20announcement&utm_medium=email

wonderbaby.org: New Parent Support Website

From Lisa Vaughn, Perkins School

[WonderBaby.org](http://wonderbaby.org), a project funded by Perkins School for the Blind, is dedicated to helping parents of young children with visual impairments as well as children with multiple disabilities. Here you'll find a database of articles written by parents who want to share with others what they've learned about playing with and teaching a blind child, as well as links to meaningful resources and ways to connect with other families. It is primarily an online resource for parents of young children with visual impairments as well as multiple disabilities, although vision support teachers and professionals may find the website helpful, too! (see following page for an example)

Lisa would like to receive feedback about the parent website. Her email address is lisa@wonderbaby.org.

Hands-On Activities to Teach Concept Development

Adapted from: <http://www.wonderbaby.org/articles/concept-development>

By Nancy Knight, TVI (an example of the [wonderbaby.org](http://www.wonderbaby.org) website)

Concept development is very important in the education of children with vision impairments. Without vision to draw upon for important information about the world, concepts have to be deliberately taught. This includes concepts such as big and little, smooth and rough or bumpy, what makes animals different from one another, what exactly is a tree, etc.

Here are some ideas for hands-on activities to do at home with items and supplies that you can find around the house.

Create a Nature Basket

Find a good sized container – a wicker basket with a handle is great but a box will do. In the box place items that are found in the natural world: pinecones, pieces of bark from trees, rocks of different textures and sizes, a small branch of a pine tree, small twigs that show how branches come out of one another, leaves, sea shells... anything safe and touchable that occurs in nature. Sit with your child and allow them to safely explore each item. Talk about each item and explain where it comes from. If possible, go on a nature walk and touch these items in the “wild.” A local park or backyard will do! Sit with your nature basket whenever you have a few free moments together.



Nature Walk and Collection: Make a Collage or Nature Book

Find a park or yard and let your child help make a collection of natural items – twigs, pinecones, leaves, etc. Talk about each item as you find it, and then bring it home to make a collage. Strong white glue such as Tacky Glue is great for heavier items. Once the picture is done, let your child touch it frequently so that you can remember your experiences together. You can also glue each item onto a piece of paper, one item per page. Find an unused binder, punch and insert the pages to make a nature book. The book doesn't have to be long – even 5 items would be great. Sit and read the book frequently with your child, remembering together where you collected the materials. You can make many nature books, or frequently change the pages in your nature book. Seasons change and nature changes!

Wooden Things Box or Basket

Find a collection of smooth wooden objects – boxes, clothes pins, coasters, rolling pin, spools, wooden spoons, etc. Anything will do as long as it is not splintery. Sit together with your child and feel and explore the wooden objects – feel free to bang, tap, etc. Wood has a warm and natural feel that is very soothing.

Metal Things Box or Basket

As with the wooden things, find a collection of safe metal objects – a ring of unused keys, spoons and utensils of all sizes, whisks, lengths of sink plug chain, strainer, measuring spoons, garlic press, etc. Again, explore these together with your child and feel free to bang and tap and listen to the sounds. Metal is loud, and cool to the touch!

See the webpage for more ideas including textures, carrying things, stacking or nesting, book bags, maths ideas etc.

UK Research: iPad use with blind and partially sighted children

View full report: <http://www.nib.org.uk/professionals/education/support/tablets/Pages/articles-reports-tablets.aspx>

Birmingham University researchers have published the findings of a survey of teachers training to become qualified teachers of children with a visual impairment. Their report provides a snapshot showing how 49 teachers are currently using iPads to support their work with children who have vision impairments.

What can iPads do?

In addition to word processing, spreadsheets and internet access, the teachers who were surveyed reported that iPads were used for:

- visual assessment
- visual tracking
- encouraging the development of fine motor skills
- developing a child's understanding of cause and effect
- colour and shape recognition
- visual enlargement of curriculum materials (text & diagrams); speech access eg audio books
- access to interactive whiteboards
- access to PDF files using iBooks
- filming presentations so they can be accessed more easily
- photographing objects and displays
- recording instructions or work
- taking pictures of homework instructions
- a huge choice of specialist applications including dictation software and apps to reinforce learning across the curriculum
- access to internet/web browser for research, emails and texting
- voiceover for students with no sight
- leisure and relaxation.

Teachers cited the fact that their small size and portability made them attractive for use in school. In addition the iPad's ability to instantly "wake from sleep" makes it very convenient for intermittent classroom use. The fact that the in-built screen reader and screen magnifier can be used at the same time was also seen as a significant advantage.

Social impact

iPads are generally perceived as desirable making them more likely to be accepted by young people who don't wish to stand out from the crowd by using "disability" aids. More than this, other children and young people often want to join in too, making collaborative working a positive means of some social inclusion.

What can we learn from other educators?

The first iPad Summit hosted by Ed Tech Teacher at Harvard Medical School recently brought together over 500 educators and experts from around the globe. "The conference was one of the most innovative and exhilarating experiences I have had as an educator," Jennifer Carey says in an online article, but cautions that the iPad is simply a tool – not a magical, shiny object that will innovate education. She makes clear that effective teaching comes first, iPads follow, and that any integration of iPads in the classroom must come with professional development and technical support. Her verdict is that swapping iPads for the old laptops will not, by itself, promote learning or critical thinking.

For VCE Students: Special Entry Access Scheme (SEAS) Applications

The Special Entry Access Scheme (SEAS) is the umbrella program run by most institutions for special entry places. The Special Entry Access Scheme (SEAS) is for applicants who have experienced educational disadvantage.

Students who are blind or have low vision are eligible to apply for the Special Entry Access Scheme under Category 5 which applies to applicants who have experienced educational disadvantage because of their vision impairment.

Students are required to apply online so it is a good idea to get your application ready well before the due date which is Tuesday 8 October 2013. You will be required to submit medical evidence and provide an Impact Statement about how your impairment has affected you educationally.

VTAC coming to Vision Australia Kensington Melbourne

Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre (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 2014, on Wednesday 4 September 2.00 pm to 4.00 pm.

Please contact Max Bini Tertiary Education Consultant max.bini@visionaustralia.org or phone (03) 8378 1223 if you wish to attend or have more questions as there are few things you will need to bring along.

What: SEAS Application Lodgment

When: Wednesday 4 September 2.00 pm to 4.00 pm.

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

The following link on the VTAC website has more information about the SEAS application process <http://www.vtac.edu.au/who/seas/applying.html>

Diagnostic Assessment Tools in English

Source: DEECD email S207-2013

A new suite of validated assessment tools that can be used at any time throughout the year has been developed to support teachers to assess AusVELS English: Reading and Viewing, Writing and Speaking and Listening.

The tools feature videos and digital texts and can be used as standalone diagnostic tools or to complement the English Online Interview. Whilst the tools are designed for students in Prep to Year 2, they include assessments from working towards Foundation Level to AusVELS Level 4. Administration and marking guides are included with each tool and provide information on selecting and administering the tools and follow up advice.

The tools and support materials are available online (DEECD password required) and can be accessed from the Diagnostic Assessment Tools in English EduGate site at:

<https://edugate.eduweb.vic.gov.au/collaboration/date/default.aspx>

Playing Flash on iPad

Here's some information from a parent whose Prep student is enjoying his iPad for reading and creating stories – and a whole lot more!

Even though iPads and iPhones don't support Flash, there are a number of workarounds available. The solutions below apparently works, though they're not always as fast and simple as most of us would like:

- One of the best alternatives to Flash is the new HTML5 format, which is fully supported on iPads, iPhones and other mobile devices, including Android and tablets, as well as desktops and laptops.
Using only PowerPoint and iSpring Pro, you can create interactive HTML5 content of any type: promo presentations, e-Learning courses, slideshows, video lectures, online advertising, training games. And they are guaranteed to play smoothly on any web-browsing device.
For more information about iSpring Pro, visit: <http://www.ispringsolutions.com/ispring-pro>
- Flash web browser for iPad – see table to compare Puffin, AppsversePhoton, iSwifter or Cloud Browse Flash web browser for iPads:

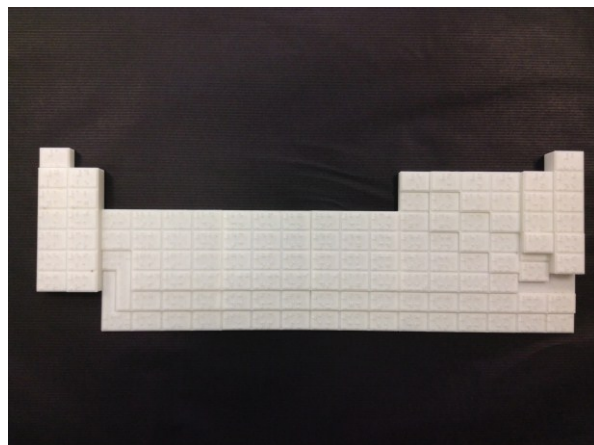
Characteristics	Puffin	Appsverse Photon	iSwifter	Cloud Browse
Available on	iPad, iPhone	iPad, iPhone	iPad	iPad, iPhone
Support of interactive content, navigation and hyperlinks	✓	✓	✓	✓
Audio narration support	✓	✓	✓	✓
Video narration support	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★	★
Drag-and-drop functionality	Touch-pad emulator	One-finger tap	One-finger tap	Two-finger tap
Reaction to user's actions	★★★★★	★	★★	★★★★
Price	Free	\$4.99	Free 7-day trial, \$4.99	Basic app \$2.99 + subscription plans
Comparison Summary	This free Puffin application is the best option in terms of both affordability and functionality	Use Photon by Appsverse for projects with many video files and narrations that it supports best of all four	Take advantage of the 7-day trial period of iSwifter to see if this iPad app is what you need	CloudBrowse reacts to taps quickly, but it's outranked by others in video support and drag-and-drop usability

Source: <http://www.ispringsolutions.com/articles/can-i-play-flash-on-ipad-yes.html>

Braille Periodic Table

From Sue Richardson at Numurkah Secondary College:

I wanted to share with you what one of our very dedicated and talented teachers; Mr Stephen Elford has designed and made for Brad, one of our students, who is blind. It is a 3 dimensional periodic table with braille. This periodic table makes learning about the elements in chemistry so much easier. The design allows Brad to access the groups and periods quickly and in the same layout as sighted students, rather than having to sort through pages.



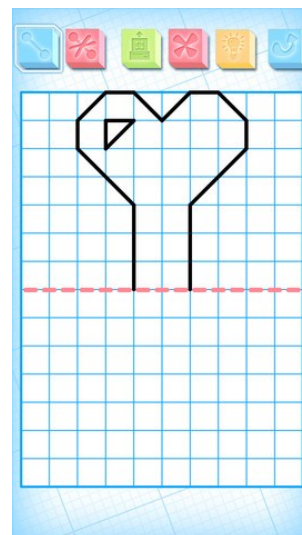
The overall dimensions are approximately 45cm long, 15 cm deep and 2 cm high, which come in two sections that slot together. I have attached some pictures for you to view.

Stephen has offered to make these 3-D periodic tables for other blind students if anyone is interested in purchasing one. You can email Stephen at Elford.stephen.g@edumail.vic.gov.au

Ripper Apps

Here are some ripper apps sent in recently:

- **Tap Tap See** – free app which uses the camera to take a photo and then tells you what the object is e.g. my lunch the other day was a “sesame seed bun” and I might add not the yellow clown variety.
- **Audio Archery** – fire arrows at an auditory target and listen for your score. This app is free.
- **Storymaker** – For writing social stories. Around \$40.00
- **MyScript Calculator** - you can handwrite algebra onto the iPad screen and it types it for you and calculates the answer. You can edit the algebra and it recalculates the answer. Available on android or in the app store, this app is free.
- **Grid Drawing for Kids** – students draw pictures on a screen with graph paper.



Student News

- Support Skills student Ella has a great joke you can ask your family and friends. Ask them to say the word, “silk” fifteen times then ask them “What do cows like to drink?” Often people are tricked into saying “milk” so you say “no water”.
- Elliott is going to Malaysia with his school in two weeks and he is looking forward to going in a plane for the first time and experiencing the culture of another country.

Finally

And finally thanks to everyone for their contributions to this Bulletin, especially Helen Caldwell, Frances Gentle, Lea Nagel and Max Bini.

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

Expo 2013

featuring best practice in access technology options for students with vision impairments

When: Monday 25th November 2013
10.00am - 2.30pm

Where: Statewide Vision Resource Centre
370 Springvale Road, Donvale

in the grounds of Heatherwood School
(please park in the **lower carpark** at the Sports Centre next door)

Displays and demonstrations of the latest in access technology for students with vision impairments.

Come and see and try: enlarging and talking computer software, electronic magnification, calculators, talking books, optical equipment, braille technology, sports equipment and more.

The day is open to teachers, teacher aides, parents, students, mobility instructors, rehabilitation workers or anyone with an interest in access technology for students with vision impairments.

Competition: "My Top Tech Tip" (audio or video) – prizes on the day
For entry details see <http://www.svrc.vic.edu.au/ttt.shtml>

Plan to spend the time to try out something new!

Cost: Free (and no need to register)

For further details: phone 9841 0242 or email svrc@svrc.vic.edu.au



Parking

There is no parking available at the Statewide Vision Resource Centre or Heatherwood School. Please park **in the lower carpark** behind the Donvale Sports Centre - the building beside (to the north) of the SVRC. You can then walk through the double gates and the Statewide Vision Resource Centre is to the left.

Public Transport: Bus and train

The nearest and most accessible train station is Nunawading. Trains on the Belgrave and Lilydale lines run through this station. A bus also runs from Box Hill Central which also has good train access.

The Statewide Vision Resource Centre is serviced by **3 bus routes**.

- 902 Smart Bus, Chelsea to Airport West
- 271 Box Hill to Ringwood
- 273 Nunawading to The Pines

The 902 and 273 both leave from the Nunawading station. It is only an 8 minute trip to the SVRC.

