

The Bulletin

Statewide Vision Resource Centre

Number 3

Monday 3rd March 2014

318 days till the SPEVI Conference in Melbourne
Monday 12th to Thursday 15th January 2015

Professional Development Activities for Term 1, 2014

Fliers for the SVRC Professional Learning programs are available as attachments to Issue 1 of The Bulletin or can be downloaded from the SVRC website: <http://www.svrc.vic.edu.au/PL.shtml>

Please note: the SVRC encourages attendance in person or via video link – please be in touch if you'd like to “virtually” attend any of these sessions.

Event	Date
Skill Power Workshops 1. 9.30-11.00 Pearl and OpenBook - Trevor Boyd, Quantum RLV 2. 11.30-1.00 ZoomText - Trevor Boyd, Quantum RLV 3. 1.30-3.30 iPad - Lyn Robinson, SVRC	Wednesday 5 March
Art4Kids with VI? - Including a vision impaired student in the school program: Please invite your Art teachers! (program attached)	Monday 17 March
Visiting Teacher Day	Tuesday 18 March
Dot Power	Tuesday 25 March

Upcoming PD: Art4Kids with VI?

When: Monday 17 March 2014 from 9.00 am to 3.30 pm

Where: National Gallery of Victoria, 180 St Kilda Road Melbourne

Presenter: Michael Donnelly

This one-day seminar and workshop will be held at the National Gallery of Victoria and in association with NGV Schools Educators. The seminar will investigate options, strategies and issues related to working with and teaching a student who is blind or has low vision in your art room or classroom art-making session. There will be the opportunity to explore a range of works of art under blind-fold, investigating the use of visual description, tactile diagrams and touch access.

Further information attached is attached – register ASAP as places are limited.

Inside This Issue

1	PD – term 1, Art4Kids with VI PD
2	Space Camp Meeting, Puggles Parents Facebook Group
3	Report: Low Vision Day
4	RIDBC Online Lecture Series, Braille Resources for Schools
5	Connecting BN to PC, Using iPad & Dropbox, iPad Stand, Glassbrick
6-8	Feature: Improved Access to Text Through Audio-Supported Reading
9	VI Bike Riding, VI Swimming
10	Earfilms – Free Tix, Onkyo Braille Essay Contest, VI Simulation Website, GDV Camps
11-12	News and Art4Kids flier

Space Camp Meeting

Last Friday five families trekked out to the SVRC to meet two of the four participants from the 2012 excursion, Brendan and Maddie and hear some snippets of their experiences. Chaperones Rory and Sue presented a comprehensive run-down of their epic adventure – including Los Angeles, Space Camp and New York – and Jeni spoke about the logistics, fund-raising and DEECD requirements.

By the end of the meeting, all five families were very excited potential campers – Cameron, Declan, Geordie and Tom for 2014; Matthew for 2016! So... we are looking for a couple of chaperones – and up to two more students for the 2014 excursion – be in touch with Jeni Blake or Deb Lewis.

Space Camp 2014

Thinking about Space Camp this year? You would probably like some more information. The SVRC's website features quite a bit of information and links which you might find helpful:

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



Some of the featured links are:

- Kate's story: "Just Call Me Lucky" written in early 2012 - <http://www.svrc.vic.edu.au/EPspacecampKate.shtml>
- Nic Bonne, Space Camper 1999 and 2000, speaks about his Space Camp experience and his current study in Astronomy - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PHPphVRtCds>
- [Space Camp 2012](#) - see reports from the most recent DEECD/SVRC excursion
- [Space Camp for Interested Visually Impaired Students \(SCIVIS\) - Part 1](#) - YouTube video which presents an overview of the camp (skip the first minute or two)
- [Space Camp for interested Visually Impaired Students \(SCIVIS\) - Part 2](#) - YouTube video focusses on the Aviation Challenge program at Space Camp

Who: Upper secondary students in DEECD schools

When: 2-3 weeks during September 2014

Where: Huntsville, Alabama (with excursions in Los Angeles and who knows where else!)

Puggles Parents Facebook Group

Information provided by Bree Scott:

Would you like to ask questions and share information with other parents who also have children who are blind?

Share your own stories and strategies with other families about feeding, toileting, schooling or anything at all!

If you have a child who is totally blind or a potential/current braille user of any age, search for 'Puggles parents' on Facebook or type the following link in your browser to join the conversation:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/221210271380625/> (This is a closed group)



Contact Bree on 0421 306 345 with any questions.

SVRC PD days: ‘Educational Support for Students with Low Vision

Report by Marion Blazé

With comments like ‘superb’, ‘brilliant’, ‘informative’, ‘eye-opening’ and several people saying it was the ‘best PD they’ve ever been to’, it seems the two PD days for teachers of children with low vision were quite successful. 75+ teachers/aides/principals/parents attended each day (Feb 24 & 25) – over 150 participants in all, including three via video conference on the Tuesday!

The program began with classroom-type activities wearing goggles simulating impairments, and the folk from Guide Dogs Victoria taking groups for mobility training, covered the measurement and eligibility levels of vision impairments, Sam Oxley (VT in North Eastern) provided a wealth of strategies and ideas, Emily White tried to show as much technology as time would allow (before Deb brought out the ‘hook’!), and Geoff shared his wisdom about social skills and classroom discipline.

A special thank you to ex-student, Dan, who finished the program with an inspirational talk about his vision, his education and his love of sport. One participant said ‘I hope my fully-sighted son grows up to be as well-adjusted and capable as Dan!’ and another ‘Dan’s talk was amazing – what an inspiration’.

The accompanying photos may give you a sense of the day – from top to bottom:

- Participants under low vision simulation goggles attempt to make sense of images on a screen
- Goggles off, participants discuss their experiences and reflect on their work with students with vision impairments
- Daniel’s audience enjoyed his humorous presentation
- Daniel shows the audience his “baggy green” – the cap he wore as a member of the Australian blind cricket team which played last year in England



RIDBC Online Lecture Series: Teaching Children and Adolescents with Vision Impairments

When: This is a series of ten one hour online presentations is being offered by the RIDBC Renwick Centre. Each presentation will be made available to view at the end of each calendar month from March to November 2014.

Presenter: Dr Karen Wolffe, who manages a private practice as a career counselor and consultant in Austin, Texas. Her research and writing interests include the importance of career education, social skills development, transition issues, and employment opportunities for people with disabilities, and literacy in the workplace.

Fees: \$30 per individual lecture, or \$250 to participate in the complete series of ten lectures. Details of each session are provided in course description below.

Course Description

In this series of one-hour presentations, Dr Karen Wolffe introduces listeners to areas of concern in the lives of children and youth with visual impairments that are often overlooked or under-represented in general education and home settings: Career Education, Social Skills, Recreation & Leisure, Transition, and Independent Living. While teachers and parents work hard to help children and adolescents integrate into academic classes and daily activities, they often report that there are not enough hours in the day to accomplish all that needs doing in areas that other children seem to master through observation - without direct instruction. This lecture series is designed to provide an overview of a special topic, strategies to teach relevant content, and resources for assessment and instruction.

28 February: Social Engagement Skills for Preschoolers with Vision Loss

28 March: Social skills for Primary and Secondary Students

28 April: Recreation and Leisure Skills for Primary Students

30 May: Recreation and Social Integration for Secondary Students

27 June: Independent Living (home & personal management skills)

25 July: Independent Living (self-advocacy/self-determination)

29 August: Career Education for Preschoolers and Primary Students

26 September: Career Education for Secondary Students

26 October: Transition to Postsecondary Training and Education

28 November: Transition to Employment

Please direct any enquiries about this program to Trudy Smith on (02) 9872 0302

trudy.smith@ridbc.org.au

Braille Resources for Schools

Source: www.rnib.org.uk/livingwithsightloss/reading/how/braille/learning/pages/braille_schools.aspx

RNIB have produced an education pack (free download) to give primary school children the opportunity to learn about the history of Louis Braille and his amazing code.

The ready-to-teach education pack includes information, lesson plans, literacy games and activities about the life and work of the inventor of braille including:

- History of Louis Braille
- What is braille?
- What is it like to be blind?

Try it in your schools – and send us a report for The Bulletin!

Connecting a BrailleNote to a PC

SVRC's Lea Nagel and Cam Phillips have created another "how to" – this time, how to connect a BrailleNote Apex to a PC (Windows 7). Connecting the BrailleNote to a PC will allow the user to browse the file system on the BrailleNote in the same way you would browse files on a USB drive and to back up files from the BrailleNote to the computer quickly and easily.

You'll find this resource on the SVRC website: <http://www.svrc.vic.edu.au/CSbntopc.pdf>

Other checklists and "cheat sheets" can be found: <http://www.svrc.vic.edu.au/CS.shtml>

Access technology training videos and audio files:

http://www.svrc.vic.edu.au/Anational_partnership.shtml

Using iPad and Dropbox to Read Etext

Cam Phillips from SVRC has also created another helpful document which will explain how to:

- create a Dropbox account
- install iBooks and Dropbox apps on your iPad
- move etext books into Dropbox on your computer
- open the etext on your iPad using Dropbox and read them

Visit: http://www.svrc.vic.edu.au/CSipad_dropbox_etext.pdf

iPad Stand

A great idea to prevent neck strain is to put an iPad on a stand. There are a number of stands available for the iPad, all you need to do is Google iPad stands to find out the variety of stands available. However here is a very neat solution brought into the SVRC by Support Skills student Mitchell.

This neat little stand is called an "i Prep". It costs around \$29.00 and is available from a variety of stores including David Jones, CHEFS and other stores that sell kitchen products.



New Free Magnifier for Windows: Glassbrick

Source: <http://www.glassbrick.org/>

Glassbrick is a screen magnifier designed to make zooming in on things quick and easy. Users are able to adjust the speed and smoothness of zooming and choose keyboard shortcuts to suit their needs.

To find out a bit about how Glassbrick came to be:

<http://www.mediaaccess.org.au/audio-description-on-radio/glassbrick-australias-home-grown-screen-magnifier>

We'd love someone to review this magnifier for The Bulletin – go for it!



Improved Access to Text Through Audio-Supported Reading

Adapted from a handout by Ike Presley entitled “Suggestions for Teaching ASR”

Developing reading proficiency and therefore improving access to learning materials can enable students with vision impairments to achieve greater academic success.

Ike Presley, who was a Masterclass presenter at the Statewide Vision Resource Centre in 2013 notes that while some braille or enlarged/magnified print readers achieve reading rates which are comparable to those of average print readers, most typically read at rates of one third to one half those of their sighted peers. Ike Presley is an advocate of audio-supported reading (ASR) as a way to increase reading rates and to increase access to information. Presley writes:

“One of the simplest ways to get started with audio-supported reading is with a fluent reader reading aloud and the student following along in a braille or large print copy of the reading material. It is important for the fluent reader to stop often and ask questions about what was just read.

The next step is having the student listen to an audio recording of the reading material while following along in the braille, large print or print copy using a prescribed optical device.”

The student will require a playback/recording device, and the recorded text. The range of playback devices include:

- General Audio players eg audio CD
- Specialized DAISY players eg Victor Reader, Plectalk
- Audio book players eg on smart phone, tablet
- Scan & Read systems eg Pearl camera with OpenBook software
- Screen voice/magnification software eg ZoomText
- Text readers eg Read Please
- Screen readers eg JAWS

Recorded text (eg talking books) can be purchased or downloaded from websites; another option is for parents, teachers or para-educators to make a “read-along” book using one of the widely available recording devices or software option (eg Audacity).

To take full advantage of audio-supported reading (ASR), students may require instruction in identifying the important information in the text they are reading.

Presley identifies four phases in teaching ASR. Begin with reading materials that are of high interest to the reader, regardless of their age and reading ability. It is critical for the reader to feel that the process is providing them with access to information that is important or of interest to them.

The instruction can be divided into five phases.

Phase 1: Beginning Level

- Locate or record 3-5 minute reading selections that cover topics of high interest to the student. (It may be difficult to find pre-recorded selections – it may prove quicker and easier to record the selections yourself!)
- For younger students you may be able to use many of the pre-recorded “Read along Books.”
- Before using these with the student prepare simple comprehension questions that ask for who, what, when, and where information.

- To help maintain the student's attention consider preparing at least one question for each paragraph.
- Prepare the questions in sequential order in relationship to the order in which the information is presented in the reading selection.
- Familiarize the student with the playback device and make sure they are able to start and stop the device.
- Provide the questions to the student in their preferred learning medium, eg braille, large print, or regular print using an optical device.
- Ask the student to read all of the questions aloud before reading the selection. (If there are more than five or six questions it might be a good idea to break them up into sections or by pages.)
- Discuss the questions briefly and ask the student what they think they will want to listen for in order to help them answer the questions.
- Ask the student to re-read the first question.
- Instruct the student to play the recording and stop it when they hear the answer to the first question, and then verbally tell you the answer. (As the student progresses you can have them write, type, braille, etc the answer.)
- If the student does not stop the recording when the information that answers the question is provided, allow the recording to proceed a bit further and then stop it.
- Ask the student leading questions that will guide them to the answer.
- Once they have answered the first question, ask them to read the next question and continue listening to the recording.
- Repeat these steps until the selection is finished.
- At the end of the reading selection ask the student to re-tell the story in their own words.
- Prepare selections in the student's preferred reading medium; braille, large print, regular print with an optical device
- Repeat the steps above and have the student follow along in the braille/large print/print text.
- Continue these steps using different selections until the student consistently achieves over 80% accuracy.

Phase 1: Intermediate Level

- Continue using materials of high interest.
- To build the student's concentration time, begin using one question for every two paragraphs.
- Remember to have student read question before listening and remind them that they can stop the recording at any time to re-read the questions.
- As the student's concentration increases prepare selections in which the student will be asked to listen to 1-3 paragraphs and answer two questions. For this step present the question out of sequence. (Point out to the student that the answers to questions may not be in order.)
- Gradually increase the quantity of text the student will read before they hear the answer to a question.
- Provide 2-3 non-sequential questions for sections of the reading selection.
- As the student progresses with this process begin a discussion at the end of the reading selection by asking him/her, "What types of questions are being asked about the story?" Guide the student to the understanding that the questions are asking for who, what, when, and where information.
- Repeat these steps using different selections until the student consistently achieves over 80% accuracy.

Phase 1: Advanced Level

- Continue using materials of high interest.
- Begin using longer passages, stories, or short chapters from books.
- Provide sequential questions for every 2-3 paragraphs.

- Begin to introduce some how and why questions.
- Have student read a few paragraphs without providing questions first.
- Ask several sequential questions about what they just read.
- As student becomes more proficient begin asking non-sequential questions.
- Have the student read a selection at home.
- Discuss the selection read at home with the student. Try not to make it seem like you're giving them a quiz on the content.
- Continue these steps using different selections until the student consistently achieves over 80% accuracy.

Phase 2

- Begin introducing reading selections that are of less than high interest.
- Consult reading specialists to help you locate selections with prepared questions. (Once source to consider as an example is the SRA Specific Skills for Reading, <http://www.mcgraw-hill.co.uk/sra/specific-skills-for-reading.htm>.)
- Check with Learning Ally and other sources to determine if the materials have been recorded.
- Continue having student listen to recording and follow along in the braille / large print / print copy of the text.
- Use similar sequence to steps in Phase 1 above.
- Continue these steps using different selections until the student consistently achieves over 80% accuracy.

Phase 3

- Record or acquire recordings of social studies or literature textbooks used by student.
- Begin with selections that student has already covered in their class to increase chances of success on first trials in this category.
- Use the same strategies as with high interest materials.
- Create an outline of the chapter with headings, sub-headings, and blanks for answers to questions.
- Make at least one or two questions for each sub-section of the chapter.
- Have student insert answers into the appropriate places and add any additional information they think is important.

Phase 4 (Introduce synthetic speech for ASR)

- Prepare simple materials similar to those used in Phase 1 as e-files that can be used with text reading software or screen reading software.
- Provide student with basic instruction in the use of the text reader or screen reader. (Start reading, pause reading, continue reading. The student will not need to know all the features and details to use these programs at this level.)
- Repeat the steps in Phases 1-3 using synthesized speech and hard copy braille / large print / print.

Phase 5

- Instruct tactile learners in the basic skills needed to use of a refreshable braille display for reading text.
- Instruct visual learners in the basic skills needed to use of a screen magnification program that also has a text reading feature.
- Repeat the steps in Phases 1-3.

Vision Impaired Bicycle Riding

Source: <http://rideons.wordpress.com/2014/01/16/vision-impaired-riding-eyes-open-to-adventure/>

In an article entitled, “Vision impaired riding: eyes open to adventure” published on 16 January 2014 in RideOn, author Rhiannon Riches finds low vision does not have to mean the end of adventure – it can be the start.

The article describes several rider’s experiences including former VT student Michael who recently completed the Great Victorian Bike Ride– with a front-rider (or pilot) on a tandem bike.

This was Michael’s first attempt at the Great Victorian Bike Ride and his pilot was Jim, a dairy farmer from Gippsland.

Andrew, a 37-year-old, just completed his second Bupa Around the Bay in October, tandem cycling 210km anti-clockwise around Melbourne’s Port Phillip Bay and another tandem rider, Ron, recently completed 600km over six days to Lakes Entrance as a fundraiser.

Ron says, “I wanted to take on the challenge of riding from Preston to my hometown, Alexandra. It’s quite a hilly ride. I think we broke the record for downhill speed: we were going 76km/h downhill. My helmet was almost lifting off and my front-rider said his heart was beating out of his chest,” Ron recalled with a laugh. “I don’t think anyone could beat that record with me.”

Below are some of the organisations that can assist in matching pilots with riders who have vision impairments:

- Lions Ride for Sight: Sheila Johnson 0408 514 287
- Exsight Tandems <http://www.exsighttandems.org.au>
- Tandem Bike Victoria <https://sites.google.com/site/tandembikevictoria>

Vision Impaired Swimming Program

Do you have a vision impairment and would like to learn to swim, improve your swimming style or simply enjoy the freedom of splashing around in an indoor heated pool?

Blind Sports Victoria is conducting a swimming program in conjunction with Sports Education Development Australia (SEDA) at Re-Creation Health Club, Hampton. The environment at this small pool provides a feeling of safety, the water being quite shallow and warm, and one on one support is provided in the water.

Qualified swimming coaches offer support to all ages and assistance is provided from the building entrance to the change rooms, to the pool and back again, as well as in the pool.

Where: Re-Creation Health Club, 10 Railway Walk North, Hampton (which is adjacent to the Hampton Railway station) If you have transport difficulties, please contact the organisers.

When: May 1, May 8, May 15, May 22, May 29

Time: 2pm (session to last approximately 45 minutes)

Cost: \$5

To register for the swimming program or for further information, please contact:

John Groom, Volunteer – Tel: 9557 1716 / 0400 993 059 / jrgroom@westnet.com.au or

Blind Sports Victoria – Tel: 9822 8876 / info@blindsports.org.au

Free Performance: Earfilms: To Sleep To Dream

The Melbourne Recital Centre is offering free tickets to this earfilm!

Earfilms creates a playground for the imagination. Seated within a network of speakers, you are blindfolded; a sonic story unfolds around you, using live storytelling, immersive 3D sound and a musical score to draw you deep into your imagination. In this sensory wonderland, characters walk past you, scenes bustle around you, your ears become your eyes.

When: 7 – 11 March (Sessions: Fri 7 March 6pm & 8pm, Sat 8 March 2pm, 5pm & 8pm, Sun 9 March 2pm & 4pm, Mon 10 March 1pm & 7pm and Tue 11 March 11am)

Duration: 90-minutes (no interval)

Venue: Melbourne Recital Centre, Salon (Cnr Southbank Blvd and Sturt St, Southbank)

Cost: Free (sponsored by Melbourne Recital Centre)

RSVP to Cindy Thomas: (03) 9207 2658 or cindy.thomas@melbournerecital.com.au

More information: <http://www.melbournerecital.com.au/events/2014/earfilms/>

Onkyo Braille Essay Contest 2014

Source: <http://wordpress.bca.org.au/12th-wbuap-onkyo-world-braille-essay-contest/>

The Onkyo Braille Essay Contest is an annual project with cash prizes awarded to the best seven entries received with the main prize, “the Otsuki Prize” being \$US 1,000. Participation in the contest is open to anyone who is blind or vision impaired, is over 14 years of age, and lives in the World Blind Union-Asia Pacific Region.

Entries must be submitted in Braille to the BCA National Office, Ross House, Level 3, 247-251 Flinders Lane Melbourne 3000 by 15 May 2014. A computerised copy of your entry would also be helpful. Terms and conditions can be found at the link above. For further information, phone BCA on (03) 9654 1400.

Interesting Vision Simulation Website

The MSD Ophthalmics website has a great vision simulator. The software simulates both the anatomy of the eye and some of the most common eye diseases (AMD, cataract, glaucoma, retinal detachment) and refractive errors (myopia, hyperopia, astigmatism and presbyopia). The vision simulator demonstrates how certain eye diseases and refractive errors can affect vision as they progress over time.

The image (right) shows a screen grab from the simulator.



Upcoming Guide Dogs Victoria Camps

- Ballarat Senior Program, 7-10 April
- ‘Move it, Make, Bend it, Shape it’ Junior Program, 30 June - 2 July
- ‘Ready, Set, Play’ all ages program, 22-25 September

For further information about the GDV camps program contact Laura Hunt: (03) 9854 4547 or email laura.h@guidedogsvictoria.com.au

Andrew and Wesley – Train Drivers for the Day

Melissa Bowyer's students Wes and his younger brother Andrew recently had the opportunity to be train drivers for the day! Photos show the boys in front of their train, and travelling on an underground section of track!

Their story was featured on the Channel 9 News – and apparently the boys were still chattering about their experiences several days later – what fun!!!



Mentor Wanted (Correct Phone Number)

A Year 8 student in a Catholic school is looking for a mentor – please contact Robert Aaltonen on 0490 005858.

Staff News

- SWVR region's **Holly Beasley** will be on leave from next week – we look forward to hearing news of the successful delivery of her new baby.
- New VT day – three participants in person – **Belinda McDonald, Jill Poole, Fiona King;** and **Claire Battersby** via video conference!



Finally

Editor Deb Lewis would like to thank everyone for their contribution to this issue of The Bulletin, and in particular Odette Budge, Jane Jensen, Lea Nagel and Emily White.

If would like to contribute to The Bulletin please email svrc@svrc.vic.edu.au

To read The Bulletin online: <http://www.svrc.vic.edu.au/Abulletin.shtml>

Art4kidswith VI?

What to do with the student who is blind or has low vision in my art room?

When: Monday 17 March 2014 from 9.00 am to 3.30 pm

Registration: from 8.45am – please meet at the “Mouse Hole” on the north end of NGV, adjacent to the entrance to the Arts Centre

Where: National Gallery of Victoria, International, 180 St Kilda Road Melbourne
(Please note: not at SVRC)

This one-day seminar and workshop will be held at the centrally located National Gallery of Victoria and in association with NGV Schools Educators. The seminar will investigate options, strategies and issues related to working with and teaching a student who is blind or has low vision in your art room or classroom art-making session.

The day will include:

Morning: (in the NGV Schools lecture theatre and workshop) information on setting up or adjusting the room to better accommodate your student; issues of access to the visual arts; specialist techniques; budget options; and opportunities for “hands-on” art making; then,

Afternoon: (in the NGV Sculpture Garden and elsewhere) exploration of works of art under blind-fold, investigating the use of visual description, tactile diagrams and touch access.

About the Presenter: Michael Donnelly, B.Ed(Art), Post-Grad.Dip. Fine Art

From 1999 to 2009 Michael taught at the RVIB / Vision Australia School in Burwood, Victoria. He previously taught Art & Design in Catholic Secondary Colleges for many years. Michael currently teaches in the Support Skills Program of the Statewide Vision Resource Centre, Donvale, and is a Visiting Teacher for Vision Impairment in the North-Western Victoria Region, DEECD.

Michael has presented papers at the South Pacific Educators in Vision Impairment Conferences in 2003 and 2005 and has produced *Meaningful Art for All Children*, 2008, an illustrated manual for creating art with school students who are blind or have low vision; *Do Touch the Sculptures: A walking tour of the public sculptures along Swanston Street and the Bourke Street Mall, Melbourne*, 2005 (a Tactile / Braille Tour Guide); and *All My Own Work! Independent Artist or Co-active Collaborator: The fine line Art Teachers to the Blind and Vision Impaired tread*. Australian Art Education Journal, Special Education Edition, 2003.

Cost: \$85.00 (includes a light lunch)

RSVP: Wednesday 12 March, 2014 (registration is essential)

For enquiries: (03) 9841 0242; **for an invoice:** pd@svrc.vic.edu.au