

The Bulletin

Statewide Vision Resource Centre

Number 11

Friday 18th July 2014

SPEVI Conference – Melbourne
Monday 12th to Thursday 15th January 2015
Please plan to come!

Professional Development Activities for Term 3-4, 2014

Fliers for the SVRC Professional Learning programs can be downloaded from the SVRC website:
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 – Please request a session	Wednesday 23 July
Skill Power Workshops – Please request a session	Wednesday 6 August
Assistive Technologies for Supporting Students with Vision and Additional Needs – 2 day seminar at VDEI (more information below)	Thursday 7 August & Friday 8 August
Including Students with a Vision Impairments in Physical Education, Recreation and Sport – see flier: www.svrc.vic.edu.au/PLPpe2014.pdf	Tuesday 11 August
Skill Power Workshops – Please request a session	Wed 20 August
Dot Power – for braille readers from pre-school to grade 3	Tuesday 9 September
Space Camp – Huntsville, Alabama	20-25 September
No SPEVI Day this year Please come to the SPEVI Conference instead!	-
Dot Power – for braille readers from pre-school to grade 3	Tuesday 18 November
Educational Expo for Students with Vision Impairments	Monday 24 November
Xmas Morning Tea – all invited – please RSVP	Wed 3 December

Upcoming PE PD

We encourage VTs to attend the upcoming PE activity which will be conducted by Emily White – perhaps with a cameo appearance from Charlie Roberts! The program acknowledges and will address the needs of PE and General Educators as well as Visiting Teachers for Vision.

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Big Arts Day – IT WAS BIG!!!

Garry Stinchcombe summarises yet another wonderful Support Skills Big Day Out, held in the city on 20th June 2014.

On the second last Friday of Term Two, 16 students from Support Skills Groups B and C met outside the Art Centre at 8:50am. Several students had travelled in from Geelong, Ballarat, King Lake and 5 had met at the SVRC and then travelled in on Public Transport with Darren and Alicia from Guide Dogs Victoria.

Our first special activity was the Audio Described Opera, Hansel and Gretel. We began with a Touch Tour of the props and costumes. Melissa Stark from Opera Victoria had arranged for us to enter the theatre early so we could explore these articles without being rushed.

Of interest was the ornate cloak that the witch wore (see photo right), all covered with fancy sweets and colourful lollies which were the same as the decorations on the Gingerbread House. We also felt the 6 metre long soft white fabric drape that the Dew Fairy used to spread over Hansel and Gretel when they fell asleep in the forest. We also got to feel the Dew Fairy's dress with lots of colourful panels with embroidery on the bottom. This dress would fan out when the Dew Fairy spun around. We also saw an interesting milk jug which when turned around would give an illusion of being spilt. We also got to look at the broom Hansel used.



We were then introduced to Carolyn who was the Audio Describer. We were all shown how to operate the audio unit. The narration was excellent, not too much chat but just enough to fill in those gaps when you wouldn't know what was happening on the stage. It certainly adds to the experience and saves you from asking your friend or neighbours "What's happening now?". A much better experience for all concerned.

The 13 piece orchestra was great. There were strings, wood wind and percussion. They were right in front of our group so it felt like they were just playing for us!

The opera was sung in German. Being in the front row allowed us to hear where the performers were as they moved around the stage. With the Audio Description we all knew exactly what was going on and who was on the stage. The story line varied a little to the traditional fairy tale but it all ended up happily. The singing was great and it was a really positive experience for the students.

We then had morning tea in the garden area between Hamer Hall and the NGV. There is a huge metal sculpture here which the students were able to climb on and explore. Forward Surge was the first of several sculptures by Inga King that we would be exploring during the day.

Darren and the other staff from GDV then conducted a 40 minute quiz on a range of mobility topics. The students were divided into 4 teams: Ducks, Dogs, Pigs and Cows. The competition was fierce. It was great to see that the students are developing a comprehensive understanding of a diverse range of issues and subject areas which collectively are central to independent travel and safe movement.

The group then moved off to eat lunch in Fed Square. The afternoon saw two activities being conducted. Michael Donnelly linked in with Jane Strickland and Heather from the National Gallery

of Victoria to take students on a touch exploration of six specially chosen art works from Inga King's exhibition, Constellation, at the Ian Potter Centre. Students along with staff had an opportunity to not only get close to the six art works but also to touch and physically move around them. Hands had to be washed, jewelry and watches removed and zippers covered over so to prevent any of the exhibits being scratched. Michael had prepared tactile representations of all the pieces and Jane and Heather provided background information and details about the works. Students shared their observations and had a wonderful opportunity to engage with some truly magnificent art work.

The other group of students went off with the GDV staff and they explored Fed Square and Flinders Street Station (see photo right). The students were then set challenges to locate particular features and resources. Having the experience to move around these areas was a challenge in itself! Darren, Alicia, Paula, Marnie and Laura all provided a great program for the students.



The groups swapped over after an hour so providing everyone with a comprehensive and varied program for the afternoon. The students returning to the SVRC departed shortly after 3:00pm and the other students met up with their families. It had been a very busy day but everyone went away feeling the day had been not only fun but also a really worthwhile educational experience for all concerned.

We would like to acknowledge and thank all the staff who helped out on the day. The O&M support provided by the GDV team was fantastic, the assistance Melissa Stark and the group from Opera Victoria was great and the coordination Michael Donnelly along with Jane Strickland and Heather from the Education Centre from the National Gallery of Victoria was outstanding. It was a highly successful collaboration.

Thank you also to the SVRC staff who prepared resources and assisted on the day. We are truly fortunate to have such a dynamic and professional team.

With thanks to artist Inge King

As artist Inge King gave her personal permission for the students, aged 10 to 14 years, to touch her sculptures, Michael arranged for their feedback to be sent to her:

Dear Mrs King

Thank you so much for allowing us to have special touch access and get so close to your sculptures at the National Gallery on Friday 20th June 2014. Thank you for all of your art work, it is really cool, especially the big wave sculpture we had morning tea at today. (Forward Surge, Victorian Arts Centre). These are our favourite choices from your exhibition (transcribed from a VictorReader Digital Recorder):

Georgia: I like the Rings of Jupiter, I like that it has lots of circles, and the feel of the metal, but I also really like Forward Surge. It's my favourite.

Luke: I like the Sails, the smoothness of it and with its shape. It was great that the artist likes us to play with all the sculptures and come up with ideas. Like making one of them a skate ramp...

Matt: The Rings of Jupiter because it was nice and circular and you got to go in it.

Caleb: The Rings of Jupiter because you got to go underneath it, inside the rings and it was really round and I like circles.

Thanh: I thought the Rings of Jupiter were cool because I like how the circles were arranged.

Mark: I liked Rings of Jupiter. I also liked the Grand Arch with its shape. It was 57cm (reading the braille info). But the tallest one was Summer Solstice. Most of the sculptures were made of steel. The smallest was Bush Family.

Thien: I liked Bush Family. I liked the shapes and feel of it. It felt like lots of different things.

Lucy: I liked Dark Angel because I really liked all the bumps.

Holly: I liked the Rings of Jupiter and really enjoyed standing in the middle.

Sam: I thought it was pretty cool. One of my favourite exhibits was the one on the third floor where she had done the welding; (Dark Angel) the one with all the little ridges and bumps on it, I found it really interesting. I also found Sails on the second floor very interesting too. I found all of them pretty interesting to be truthful. She's done a lot of interesting work, Inge King, over the years. I find it very creative and I find it impressive to touch and "look" at.

Emily: It was good, how you could touch each of them and the textures and the feeling of each sculpture. I liked all of them but maybe the Rings of Jupiter was coolest.

Mary: My favourite one was the Rings of Jupiter, but I liked all the exhibition because I could feel the texture of everything. Shiny textures and matt ones. I also liked the Bush Family one. It was like little hills but really skinny.

Elazar: I liked the velvet feel of Grand Arch, it was my favourite. (A number of staff agreed). It was good to step inside the Rings of Jupiter.

Riley: I liked Rings of Jupiter with its nice circular shapes that you could go around and it was really smooth.

Staci-Lee: I enjoyed Bush Family because of its people shapes and the foot at the top.

Garry (teacher and program co-ordinator): Dark Angel was my favourite because of the really satisfying contrasts of textures it contained.

One student also wrote a report for his school:

On the 20th of June VI kids went out to the big day out. We watched the funny play Hansel and Gretel. It had an audio description. We also went to the inspirational National Art Gallery. We felt the rings of Jupiter. They were made of steel circles put together. We had a tricky mobility quiz but my team won. It was for sure a big day out because I had to catch the train from Geelong at 7:00 am. I was tired at the end of the day. I thank the organisers and it was well worth going to.
Caleb

Thank you very much, and thank you to all at NGV for their help too.

With best wishes,

On behalf of all the students and staff of the SVRC Support Skills Program.

Michael Donnelly, Art Teacher.



Professional Development Opportunity

Assistive Technologies for Supporting Students with Vision and Additional Needs

Presenter: Ian Bean, Independent Special Needs ICT Consultant & Trainer



DAY 1: Thursday 7 August 2014

Blending Technologies for Blended Learning

Meeting the needs of our learners with severe and complex intellectual, physical and sensory challenges with technology.

DAY 2: Friday 8 August 2014

Appy Days

The iPad as a tool for teaching, learning and communication for students with severe and complex intellectual, physical and sensory challenges

Where: The VDEI Learning Centre, Victorian Deaf Education Institute
597 St Kilda Road Melbourne (corner of High Street)

Cost: \$275 (full) / \$160 (one day) / \$100 (parent full) / \$50 (parent one day) / \$200 (remote access)

For further information visit:

http://enews.threeware.com.au/subscribers/view_online/9881319/10662261/eXzn8W1RYBQ6cnV CqMdOQLzJeHwITnly

Dual Sensory Family Forum: Connecting Families

Information provided by Annette Clarke, Speech Pathologist (CPSP), RIDBC Assessment Service

The Dual Sensory Family Forum is an online forum for families of children with Dual Sensory Impairment or Deafblindness (combined hearing and vision impairment). The Dual Sensory Family Forum is supported by organisations across Australia such as; Senses Australia, Able Australia and the Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children. Launched in June 2014, the aim of the forum is to connect families so that they can share ideas. The forum also has a separate section for professionals to liaise and share information and experiences.

The Dual Sensory Family Forum is part of the Australian Childhood Vision Register. Parents can register, view comments, post information and questions and participate in online discussion with other families from around Australia. They will also have access to the Vision Impairment Family Network.

Participating families need to be registered with a service provider linked to hearing and vision related services and supports.

Register, view and participate at: <http://forum.vifamilynetwork.org.au/>

For further details please contact: contactus@vifamilynetwork.org.au

New Low Vision Website

Guide Dogs Australia has designed a new website called Vision Loss: Resources for Vision Impairment. The website offers information regarding vision loss, treatments, technology, research, forums, fact sheets, glossary of terms etc and is a portal for anyone within the vision loss community. Visit: www.visionloss.com.au

Latest International Journal of O&M Available

From Desiree Gallimore, RIDBC Renwick Centre

The 2013-2014 issue of the International Journal of Orientation & Mobility (6) is now available as a download (\$10) or in hardcopy (\$20). Please visit: www.ijorientationandmobility.com

SPEVI Winter Competition

Win the ‘Understanding Vision Impairment’ kit (5 books)

The **SPEVI winter competition** offers one lucky member of SPEVI the chance to win the complete “Understanding Vision Impairment” Series (published and donated by RIDBC). The competition ties in with the SPEVI 2015 Conference theme: “Together towards tomorrow: Families and Professionals – A vision for success”, and is designed around collaboration.

To enter the competition for a chance to win this unique prize, simply send an email to webmaster@spevi.net no later than 1 September 2014. In this e-mail, briefly describe your thoughts on one of the following questions:

1. Who are the key people who might need to collaborate with each other when a student is diagnosed as having vision impairment?
2. What types of collaboration are there?
3. Which collaboration approach do you favour and why?

Please use the word ‘Competition’ in the subject line of your email.

Competition open to **members of SPEVI only**, winner to be contacted via e-mail.

More information about the Understanding Vision Impairment Series:

The Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children kindly donated this kit, containing five books with the following titles:

- Assessing vision of children who have limited communication
- Near visual acuity simulations
- Visual acuity simulations
- Vision impairment and sign language
- Vision impairment and picture symbols for communication.

The books provide information for families and professionals.

More information about each book is available online at the RIDBC online store, from which the books can also be purchased (\$22 per book).

Please visit: <https://secure.ridbc.org.au/RIDBC-eStore>.

Review of Victoria’s VCE Special Provision

As readers may be aware there is currently a review of VCE Special Provision taking place. The first part of this process was a survey of stake holders, which we have contributed to. The results of the survey are now available at

www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/vce/exams/specialprovision/surveydata.aspx

There will be further follow-up with focus groups in term 3 and VCAA will provide a report later in the year.

Braille: Multiplication of Fractions

With thanks to Charlie Roberts and as interpreted by Deb Lewis

With a question like: $3/4 \times 2/5 =$

which requires multiplication of the numbers in the numerator (top line), multiplication of numbers in the denominator (bottom line) and cancelling, it is best to set out as it would appear in print, that is vertically.

Step 1: rewrite the question

	Leave a space for working
3×2	On the next line write the numbers from the numerator: 3×2
\cdot	On the next line write a line of middle c's (dots 2,5) preceded by a dot 5 to indicate the division line
4×5	On the next line write the numbers from the denominator: 4×5
	Leave a space for working

Step 2: cancel

Consider the 2 from the numerator (top line) and the 4 from the denominator (bottom line) – their common multiple is 2 and can be cancelled.

1	1 (carried number)
3×1	Either braille a FOR (dots 1,2,3,4,5,6) over the 2 or scratch it out with a fingernail – replace it with 1 (on the line above)
\cdot	Division line
2×5	Either braille a FOR (dots 1,2,3,4,5,6) over the 4 or scratch it out with a fingernail – replace it with 2 (on the line below)
2	2 (carried number)

Step 3: multiply the remaining numbers

You may be able to do this step “in your head”

Multiply the numbers from the numerator: $3 \times 1 = 3$

Multiply the numbers from the denominator: $2 \times 5 = 10$

Step 4

Write the answer

$3/10$	$3/10$
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Note:

Complex examples may require additional cancelling and/or the answer converted to an improper fraction.

If you prefer, the number signs can be omitted.

Blog: Macphillamy's Musings: an Optically Challenged View of Life, the Law, and Other Stuff I find Bemusing and/or Amusing

Henry Macphillamy, who is currently studying law and is a former VA Bursary recipient, is a blogger. Dr Max Bini, Tertiary Education Consultant, Vision Australia writes. "This blog is really well written and gives a very personal view of living and studying with a vision impairment, being involved in advocacy and legal matters and still getting out and challenging yourself with activities such as skiing and climbing Mount Kilimanjaro".

For example, from 12 May 2014:

"I recently had the privilege of participating in a discussion about studying with a visual impairment. It was an honest exchange of ideas, and it included former, current and future students of varying disciplines.

One question stood out in my mind from this day. It was posed by a young guy who was about to embark on an Arts degree. He was articulate, and he is clearly very bright – certainly far brighter than I ever was at his age! Did I forget to mention that he happens to be blind?

His question was this. 'How can I ask my friends to let me know who they are when they say hello to me without drawing attention to my disability?' If they aren't already familiar with a particular individual's voice, people who are optically challenged have to negotiate this specific issue on a regular basis. When someone comes up to me without first telling me who they are, I sometimes find it necessary to ask them directly – politely, of course!

There are two very good reasons why I don't shy away from doing so. First, it gives value and meaning to the ensuing conversation, and it would be a complete waste of everyone's time if I chose not to take this step.

Second, taking a stab in the dark can have disastrous social consequences. I still wince when I recall an unfortunate incident in which I mistook a female friend for a guy we both knew. To be fair, she was a smoker! Bruised egos aside, it was a valuable lesson..."

To read on, visit: www.macphillamysmusings.wordpress.com

Dickinson Memorial Literary Competition

Information provided by Braille House, Queensland Braille Writing Association

Legally blind residents of Australia are invited to submit a written piece in hard-copy braille, Simbraille or a Duxbury-readable file on the topic of their choice.

Short story:

Senior students (13-17 years) and adults (over 18 years) – up to 2,000 words

Junior students (12 years or under) – up to 1,500 words

Poem: no word limit

Closing date: Friday 1st August 2014

Entry fee: Adults and Senior students: \$10 per item / Junior students: \$5 per item

For further information or an entry form, email: admin@qbwa.org.au

National Braille Music Camp 2014

Jordie Howell, SVRC Music Teacher (part time), and VA Adult Braille Trainer / Braille Music Transcriber (part time) was one of the leaders at the National Braille Music Camp this year. And in another great Talking Vision interview by Steven Jolley (14 July 2014), Jordie talks about the camp, held annually at Mittagong in NSW.

This year, the 29th year, 31 students, 10 blind staff and 18 sighted staff attended the program which has students singing by 9.00am each morning! Individual braille music lessons follow morning tea. Further practice takes place in the afternoon; and following dinner each night, students perform in mini-concerts! The week's work is showcased in the final concert which is open to locals and families.

We know that camp is a highlight for students and that life-long friendships are made! The mentoring and peer connection is seen as a very important part of the camp – which Jordie describes as the “most magical week of the year” for her as a child! And we constantly hear how great the food is!

The interview features a beautiful NBMC rendition of “Somewhere Over the Rainbow” and the thoughts of two of this year's student participants.

To hear the interview, visit:

http://cp166026.p1.videos.viostream.com/1917_168208_20406_mp3high.mp3

Using Braille with iOS – What's it like?

Source: <http://atmac.org/using-braille-with-ios-whats-it-like#more-892>

Christina Hartmann uses her iPhone in tandem with a refreshable braille display. Hartmann describes the basics of iOS accessibility, and discusses Voice Over including how it interacts with refreshable braille. She writes, for example:

“The best way to think about using VoiceOver is to think of your finger(s) as your eyes. When I drag my finger across the screen, VoiceOver will verbally (or in braille) identify what my finger is hovering over. For example, if I drag my finger over the Safari app, VoiceOver will say, ‘Safari’ Then you can double tap anywhere on the screen to enter the Safari app.”

Creating ePub or PDF Files with Pages

Source: <http://support.apple.com/kb/HT4168>

Pages '09 is an app that lets you produce documents in ePub format for reading with iBooks on iPhone, iPad, or iPod touch. The iBooks app supports both ePub and PDF file formats, and you can export both from Pages.

How to decide whether to export to ePub or PDF:

- if the text is the most important part of your document, use ePub (eg a report, a paper, a thesis, or classroom reading material)
- if layout and illustrations are important, use PDF (eg a brochure, a flyer, or a manual with multiple illustrations).

Multi Sensory Training YouTube Channel

Richard Hirstwood has 28 years' experience in the field of the Multi-Sensory Room (MSR) or 'Studio'. He was one of the UK innovators of multi-sensory rooms in the 1980's.

His YouTube channel has a great array of videos including:

- iPad sensory training
- Pico and iPad Projection
- sensory equipment
- cheap sensory ideas

Visit: www.youtube.com/channel/UCCMC6fQrnnw7iHoJLsBd33Q

White Cane Day Event

Vision Australia's Toni Chilton is organising an O&M event to celebrate White Cane Day.

When: Friday 3 October 2014 from 11am to 1pm

Where: The Cricket Pavilion, Vision Australia Kooyong

What: explore a bus, car, taxi, motorbike and tandem bike

BYO: picnic lunch, picnic blanket, bike helmet and cane

RSVP by 19 September: toni.chilton@visionaustralia.org

For Sale

Kylie Robinson is keen to sell her Mountbatten braille. The price is \$2,300 – please contact her direct on 0425 134480.

Freebies

- Ramona Mandy has offered her personal flatbed scanner which is in perfect working order as a give-away. It will work with PCs to Windows 7 32 bit (but not Windows 7 64 bit). It doesn't include any specific blindness OCR software but will likely work with other scanning software such as Omnipage, Abbyy Fine Reader etc. Please contact Ramona direct: 0404 834 924.
- Quantum RLV has donated a colour Clearview Spectrum desktop electronic magnification unit in good working order. It is waiting at SVRC for the first person to express interest – please phone 9841 0242.

News

- **Lyn Robinson** is currently holidaying in France! Lucky for some!
- **Emily White** is spending a few weeks in the USA visiting family. Lucky for some more!
- **Cam Phillips** will finish up at the SVRC this week. Cam played an integral role in the success of the More Support for Students with Disabilities National Partnership, and has been a fantastic contributor to many aspects of the work of the SVRC – he'll be greatly missed. We wish him well in his new endeavour!

Finally

Editor, Deb Lewis, would like to thank everyone for their contribution to this issue of The Bulletin, and in particular Phia Damsma and Lyn Robinson.

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

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