

The Victorian Deaf Education Institute Highlights – 2013





Connecting learning communities to embrace diversity, share knowledge and work together to achieve quality outcomes.

Our vision and mission

To enable excellence in deaf education to any school anywhere in Victoria. Through the Victorian Deaf Education Institute (VDEI), the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) is committed to improving the educational outcomes of children and young people who have a hearing loss, from birth to adulthood.

Our values

In our relationship with colleagues, children and young people, parents and families, partners and local and global communities, we commit to the following core values:

- Collaboration and knowledge sharing
- An outcomes focus
- Respect and diversity
- Empowerment

Our core focus areas

In partnership with schools, universities, community organisations, early childhood and deafness professionals, VDEI achieves this by:

- Providing and delivering excellence and innovation in professional learning programs across the disciplines involved in deaf education;
- Identifying the evidence for best practice in teaching and learning to support development throughout an individual's life cycle;
- Enabling improved curriculum access and inclusion in learning for deaf students through innovation and technology based solutions; and
- Contributing to a local and global learning community through strengthened networks for knowledge exchange and capacity building.

Our innovative **Professional Learning Program** offers mainstream teachers, teachers of the deaf, audiologists, speech pathologists, psychologists and speech and language support staff the unique opportunity to build their expertise to provide excellence in learning support to the 3800 Victorian children with hearing loss. The Program includes a Scholarships Program, Mentoring Program and an Online Learning Program.

Our **Research** program is designed to enable classroom innovation and evidence based practice. Evidence from the *Deaf Education Review 2008* and consultation with educators and the community helped identify key priorities. These have included a focus on literacy and language development strategies; an exploration of models of best practice in education service delivery; and an investigation into ways to improve support for students transitioning to post school options.

VDEI has a strong focus on **Innovation and Technology** – to strengthen access and inclusion for deaf students and education professionals to learning through the use of relevant technology. VDEI is a technology hub, allowing workshops to be beamed to teachers and students in remote and regional areas across Victoria, via high density technology. This ensures deaf and hard of hearing students receive the best educational opportunities, regardless of location.



*Dynamic community +
State-of-the-art technology +
Energising spaces +
Collaborative work +
Inspiring events +
Innovative ideas*

*= major long-term
change*

Our team

Aris Goletsos

Business Support and Research

Gene Reardon

Director (until August 2013)

Helen Harrington-Johnson

Statewide Programs & Acting Director (from August 2013)

Jean Moores-Chadwick

Transition into Primary School
Project

Jenny Galloway

Transition into Primary School
Project

Julie Postance

Marketing and Communications

Karyn Barrasso

Communications and Operations

Kaye Scott

Statewide Programs & Acting Director (from August 2013)

Sally Martin

Virtual Learning Project

Shaun Goodwin

Information Technology and Audio Visual Services

Our partners

All Victorian schools

Arts Access Victoria

ASLIA Victoria

Australian Association of Teachers of the Deaf (Vic)

Australian Communication Exchange

Australian Hearing

Catholic Education Office

Cochlear Implant Clinic

Deaf Australia

Deaf Children Australia

Deaf Victoria

Deafness Forum

Deafness Foundation

Deakin Institute

Early Education Program

Hear For You

Independent schools

Kangan Institute

La Trobe University

Murdoch Childrens Research Institute

Northern Metropolitan Institute of TAFE

Renwick Centre

RIDBC

Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology

Taralye

The Royal Children's Hospital

The University of Melbourne

Victorian Deaf Education Network

Victorian Infant Hearing Screening Program

and many more.

Why was the Victorian Deaf Education Institute established?

In 2010, the Department completed a review of deaf education in Victoria – *What is my future? – A Review of Deaf Education in Victoria*. Involving broad community consultation, the review found that deaf school leavers demonstrate significant language delays and achieve lower school completion rates than their hearing peers.

The review identified the reforms needed to ensure that this outcome is achieved. Those reforms were:

- improvements in educational support and workforce sufficiency;
- early diagnosis and family-centred support;
- equity and fairness in access to services across Victoria; and
- ongoing support, monitoring and intervention in deaf and hard of hearing children from 0–18 years old.

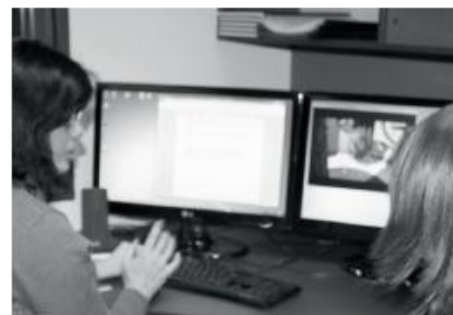
A key recommendation of the review was to establish a Victorian Deaf Education Institute. Since its establishment, VDEI has played a pivotal role in building the required knowledge, skills and workforce capacity for individuals working with deaf children and young people in an educational setting. VDEI's role extends to providing localised provision through outreach services in mainstream schools and partnering with families and the community.



The VDEI logo

Community consultation underlies all our activities. Consultations with community stakeholders comprising education professionals, deaf community representatives and parents fully informed the identification of a preferred logo.

The VDEI logo signifies the diversity of needs of children. The colour and shape change and move to reflect innovation, pushing technological boundaries and promoting openness to new ideas. Its fluid motion promotes the idea of continual learning and change, connectedness and bringing together a local and global network of skills and expertise in an environment of community, diversity, dynamism, energy and positivity. The bright orange tones were chosen to signify hope and bright futures.





What happened to the Deaf Education Review? Plenty and much more to come...

Since VDEI's establishment in 2010, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, through the Victorian Deaf Education Institute has been working hard to address each of the reform areas identified in the Deaf Education Review. Change takes time, but step by step and with the assistance of many, considerable progress has been made.

The Deaf Education Review identified five areas of reform:

- **To provide high quality educational support** through ongoing professional learning opportunities, strengthened partnerships and knowledge sharing between specialist experts and mainstream professionals.
- **To deal with the undersupply of teachers of the deaf:** Improve workforce numbers by expanding training opportunities and facilitating employment opportunities.
- **Equity and fairness:** To improve access to educational services through best practice strategies, through the strategic location of resources and the utilisation of assistive and inclusive technologies.
- **Monitoring and intervention:** To strive for improved outcomes through the provision of optimal acoustic environments, the implementation of new evidence based practice teaching and learning strategies and by supporting access to curriculum.
- **Early diagnosis:** Whole child focus and family centred support – the provision of non-biased support to assist families to make decisions about their child's learning pathways.



Reform area # 1 High quality educational support – workforce development

The *Deaf Education Review* identified the need to provide opportunities for knowledge sharing, strengthened networking and partnerships between specialist and mainstream educators and education support staff. Much has been happening in this area. The VDEI has an extensive annual professional program covering many areas including bilingual programs, using technology in classrooms, speech and language development in the early years. VDEI also worked in a partnership to develop mentoring services for people who are working as classroom education support staff.

Reform area # 2 An undersupply of teachers of the deaf - workforce sufficiency

The *Review* identified that teachers of the deaf were an ageing workforce. Since then, DEECD in partnership with VDEI have initiated a scholarship system to train more teachers of the deaf. Thanks to this initiative, there are scheduled to be 75 brand new teachers of the deaf in Victoria by 2014.

Reform area # 3

Equity and fairness - access and inclusion

The VDEI has been working collaboratively across Victoria with key partners to improve access and inclusion for deaf and hard of hearing students. Some of the initiatives include: a classroom real-time captioning program; the establishment of a captioning centre to caption all digital/DVD resources; video conferencing to enable Auslan students to participate in those classes and subjects in which they are interested, regardless of location; optimal acoustic projects; and the creation of the OpenMi excursion app.



Reform area # 4

Monitoring and intervention – individual pathways and smooth transition

This has been a large area of focus for DEECD and VDEI. VDEI has collaborated with La Trobe University in the development of an Auslan assessment tool – a first in Victoria. The partnership with The University of Melbourne in relation to individual learning plans will lead to further professional learning programs. VDEI developed a project supporting the transition of young students who are deaf or hard of hearing into primary school and VDEI has also partnered with the Northern Metropolitan Institute of TAFE to examine the type of supports that are needed to help students transition into post school situations.

Reform area # 5

Early diagnosis and family centred support

Significant steps have also been taken in this area. In 2010 DEECD developed a partnership with the Victorian Infant Hearing Screening Program (VIHSP) to support an Early Support Service pilot. This enabled a case management approach to families with newborn babies diagnosed with a hearing loss. This was a significant step forward in the provision of new services at the point of diagnosis. Most recently, the Transition into Primary School (TIPS) project is a project between VDEI and early intervention service providers, Aurora, Taralye and VIHSP to ensure families and children are offered the support to enter and plan for their education experiences. In addition DEECD through VDEI continues to work with the VIHSP to collect and share data that will help with planning future support and provision for newly diagnosed families.

In summary

Much has happened in Victoria and the outcome of the Review that led to the establishment of VDEI has enabled this work across so many domains. While some of the project areas are ongoing, there are a number of new projects that will be underway in 2014 and beyond.

The challenge will be in continuing the hard work that needs to continue, to influence and communicate the needs and evidence for change that is required to meet the needs with the sector. For this, we will require your ongoing partnership, participation and collaboration. We encourage you to regularly communicate with us your feedback and participate in dialogue about how we can most serve the needs of deaf students around Victoria.



Innovation & Technology

“The Facility students from Charles La Trobe College have benefitted from having material captioned through the Caption Centre. It has allowed them to have equal access to DVDs from all subject areas including Science, Media, Humanities and Legal Studies.

In the past interpreters would have interpreted the material, necessitating the student to look from the DVD to the interpreter and back again or the students would have managed with what they could hear and see. Now students are fully engaged with the material and both hearing and deaf students have the advantage of the captions using them to clarify their understanding.”

Kathy Galea, Deaf Facility Manager, Charles La Trobe College



One of the strategic aims of the Victorian Deaf Education Institute is to strengthen access, inclusion and engagement for deaf students and education professionals to learning programs and curriculum through the use of cutting edge technologies.

VDEI is a technology hub, allowing workshops and seminars to be beamed to teachers and students in remote and regional areas across Victoria, via high density information technology. This ensures that students who are deaf or hard of hearing receive the best educational opportunities, regardless of location.

VDEI Caption Centre supplies 7,701 minutes of screen time for deaf students

In 2012 VDEI established a captioning centre to provide captioned material for all senior school students with a hearing loss attending government, Catholic and independent schools in Victoria. This centre, which is housed at Bendigo South East College, was developed as a partnership between VDEI, Bendigo Deaf Facility, Methodist Ladies College deaf integration unit and Charles La Trobe College deaf facility. From December 2011 to the end of May 2013 the Caption Centre captioned over 156 DVD/VHS titles of varying lengths totalling more than 7,700 minutes of media screen time.

Captioning material is a complex procedure, which is completed in two stages. Firstly a transcript is made of the material then it is carefully aligned or architected back into the material ensuring the written text matches the spoken text. Each minute of completed captioned material takes 10-15 minutes to produce.

The Caption Centre's current priority is to ensure that all video material used in Year 11 and 12 classes where there are deaf and hard of hearing students is available in a captioned format.

A key strategy of VDEI is to ensure that students who are deaf or hard of hearing can access classroom curriculum using various technologies. In partnership with Access Innovation Media (Ai-Live) and secondary deaf facilities, VDEI has enabled a number of pilots of real-time captioning in classrooms with the aim of improving secondary students' access to learning materials, classroom dialogue and activities, thereby promoting full inclusion and influencing student outcomes.

In 2013 a new pilot program was launched, supported by the *More Support for Students with Disabilities National Partnerships* initiative. The pilot program in 2013 allowed students at eight sites to receive captioning in a variety of subjects. An independent evaluation of the project was completed by The University of Melbourne to investigate effectiveness in terms of academic and participatory outcomes for students.

"You only have to look at the students' smiles to see what effect the captioning is having on them. They are definitely more confident. It's a mode of communication that works well for them."

Jenny Cook, principal at Forest Hill Deaf Facility

It was identified that real-time captioning is seen by those involved in the evaluation as one tool in a suite of tools available to support deaf/hard of hearing students' learning. Stakeholders were optimistic about the potential for the program to generate positive outcomes for students, teachers, and families and expressed a desire to see the initiative rolled out more widely, so that more students would benefit from the technology.

VDEI has continued its strong focus on access for regional and remote areas through the use of video conferencing and innovative technologies. This has involved access for teachers and support staff to professional learning and development and access for remote students and schools to expert teaching staff. Auslan and support programs.

This has been a very popular way for rural and remote staff to access new and innovative learning opportunities without having to travel for extended periods of time. Mainstream teaching staff across Victoria have also been able to participate in the Inclusion Online course via videoconference equipment, allowing them to broaden their understanding about working with students with a hearing loss in their classrooms (see 'Inclusion Online' in the professional learning section.)

VDEI has also been working with rural schools in South West Victoria to trial videoconferencing and innovative technologies to support schools and students that are isolated and have limited access to deaf educators and specialist staff. Throughout the year VDEI has provided access for professional learning sessions for these specific schools; provided sessions for classroom teachers to work with and discuss student needs with expert deaf educators; linked isolated students with other schools to access Auslan; and given students the opportunity to link up with other students with similar needs. The trial of these technologies has proven to be very positive for students, schools and families across the South West area.



Innovation & Technology

Systemic design in deaf education

The *Systemic Design in Deaf Education Project* arose directly from the evidence from the *Deaf Education Review*. The project explored a 'centres of excellence model' to strengthen provision and address issues of access and inclusion for students who are deaf or hard of hearing in Victoria.

Completed in partnership with Laulon Education Consultants, the project focused on using research evidence and information gathered through interviews with a sample of schools for the deaf, deaf facilities and mainstream schools with visiting teachers. This information was used to develop a proposals paper which outlined alternatives for systemic improvement in the delivery of deaf education in Victoria.

Improvement is related to service provision, capacity building and achieving common practices.

Completed in July 2013, the Proposals Paper documents the main issues arising from the interviews and makes recommendations responding to these issues to improve deaf education services. These proposals will form the basis for:

- further collaboration within DEECD;
- further projects work; and
- involvement with other stakeholders within the sector.

This project was run parallel to an extensive literature review completed in partnership with The University of Melbourne. This literature focused on the identification of model systems or elements of systemic design and current effective systemic approaches to deaf education globally.

Resource development project grants – autonomy and innovation

VDEI works to foster and encourage local school autonomy and classroom innovation. The *Deaf Education Review* highlighted the importance of the provision of high quality educational services and access for students. VDEI sought expressions of interest from schools to undertake innovative resource development projects. The aim is to increase knowledge sharing across the deaf education workforce, and develop teaching and learning resources. A list of the research development projects which we have been funded – all much needed resources which will really benefit students – can be found on this page.



Name of school	Brief description of the project
Aurora	Developing a bilingual library of children's literature.
Ballarat deaf facility	Filming and captioning classes in Auslan. This will provide a bank of captioned and signed lessons.
Bendigo deaf facility	To create a library of Auslan readers.
Eastwood deaf facility	To develop children's connectedness to school through the development of a social skills program.
Eastern Metropolitan Region Visiting Teachers	Production of a DVD, targeted at primary and secondary school to increase the understanding of the implications of an HL and inclusive classroom practices.
Forest Hill deaf facility	Development of a literacy resource based on the <i>Fairview Learning Program</i> .
Geelong P-12 deaf facility and Visiting Teachers Hume & Grampians	The use of digital technologies in learning (iPads).
Mount View deaf facility	Development of a DVD to use with students and teachers to highlight the difficulties in communicating to students who are deaf or hard of hearing.
Shepparton deaf facility	Developing a resource that assists students to comprehend written text through exploring the multiple meanings of English words.
St. Mary's College for Hearing Impaired Students (Wantima)	Improving student outcomes by measuring student achievements and appropriate goal setting.
St Mary's College for Hearing Impaired Students (Dandenong)	To build an understanding of deafness, mental health issues and the link between interpersonal development and personal learning.
Collaborative partnership: Charles La Trobe College deaf facility, MLC and Bendigo secondary deaf facility	Establishment of a captioning centre.



Innovation & Technology



OpenMi Excursions App increases accessibility for deaf children at Werribee Zoo

On 28 August 2013, as part of Hearing Awareness Week, more than 117 deaf and hard of hearing students enjoyed an excursion at the Werribee Open Range Zoo, using the new OpenMi Excursions App.

OpenMi Excursions is a global first technology application developed by the Australian Communication Exchange (ACE) in partnership with VDEI and WORZ in order to increase information access for students with a hearing loss.

Launched in October 2012, the app offers interactive and accessible learning for deaf and hard of hearing students through Auslan with scrolling captions or audio combined with captions and quizzes. The app, designed for android or smart devices, can be used around the Pula Reserve Walking Trail and Safari Tour via Quick Response codes (QR code).

The students plus teachers and supervisors attended from Charles Latrobe College, Furlong Park School for Deaf Children, Mount Erin Secondary College, Mount View Primary School, Sunshine Secondary College and the Victorian College for the Deaf (primary students).

Students enjoyed special keeper talks about servals and gorillas, saw mixed herds of rhinoceros, giraffe and zebra on a Safari tour and went on a walking trail to see cheetah, lions and hippopotamus. At key animal exhibits students were able to scan a QR code which then brought up a video of a person communicating in Auslan on their device, ensuring that the students did not miss out on information. Students could also read the information, answer questions and complete quizzes. Teachers were able to track the students' progress on the app and set work to follow up in the classroom.

Giaan Rooney, former Olympic champion swimmer and current weather reporter at Channel 7, attended the day to film the weather report and spent some time with the students. One deaf student asked Giaan in Auslan, "Why did you quit the Olympics to become a weather lady?" Giaan laughingly replied that even athletes needed to work to pay bills!

Evidence to practice

The Victorian Deaf Education Institute partners with various tertiary institutions to conduct research. The aim is to provide a strong evidence base for best practice models for teaching and learning in the specialist area of childhood deafness. A strong link between research and practice ensures that VDEI remains relevant and at the forefront of innovative thinking and practices.

Learning needs analysis for the deaf education sector

In 2012, VDEI and DEECD commissioned the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) to undertake a project to analyse the learning needs of teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing. The focus of the study was to identify any gaps between teachers' existing skills and knowledge and the skills that are required to optimise student learning outcomes.

Information was gathered from a variety of sources to develop an appropriate process to survey the learning needs of teachers of the deaf in Victoria. This included a focus group with the principals from three specialist schools for the deaf; Competencies for Teachers of the Deaf, developed by the National Association of Australian Teachers of the Deaf, with reference to the National Professional Standards; information provided by participants who attended professional learning programs held at VDEI in 2011-12; and information provided by the advisory group.

A survey was developed and an invitation to complete the survey was extended to all schools/facilities/services currently available to deaf and hard of hearing children in Victoria. Approximately 180 specialist teachers of the deaf working at 20 schools/facilities/services agreed to participate. Interviews were held at a representative sample of sites.

The data from these sources identified many specific learning needs within the sector, which will shape the VDEI professional learning program for 2014. These include: language and literacy development programs, strategies for all communication modalities, student wellbeing, the use of technology, inclusion, catering for individual learning needs, assessing students and setting goals. The survey will be updated and used on an annual basis to gather data to help ensure the VDEI professional learning program continues to meet the needs of professionals working within deaf education.

Individual learning plans

VDEI, in association with The University of Melbourne, completed a research project entitled *The development and use of individual learning plans as a basis for intervention in school programs with deaf and hard of hearing students* in June 2012. One of the aims of this project was to explore good practice in the use of assessments to inform individual learning plans. The findings were presented by Associate Professor Margaret Brown on 7 November 2013 at VDEI.

The project commenced in 2011, with invitations to participate extended to coordinators of facilities and services and principals of specialist schools, from both the public and private sector of deaf education in Victoria.



The students' assessment and planning portfolios were scrutinised for evidence of formal and informal assessment used to generate goals for the ILP. These goals were then assessed according to the SMART criteria.

Overall, the study revealed that most students had regular assessment and an ILP. While 86% of students undertook some form of standardised assessment and 72.7% of students, informal assessment, the latter was more commonly used to inform ILP development. For some ILPs, however, there was no link between the undertaken assessments and the developed goals. Of the developed goals, there appeared to be a higher concentration on some areas (e.g. expressive language and curriculum), but not on others (e.g. thinking processes and listening).

Evidence to practice

Individual learning plans (cont.)

Results showed that assessment results were seldom used to inform goal setting. Despite this, most goals appeared relevant and achievable, although the specificity and measurability of goals remained an area to work on. These results have suggested various avenues for improving current practice through further professional learning or teachers of the deaf, which will lead to an improvement in children's academic outcomes. A series of professional learning programs developed from these recommendations will form part of the VDEI Professional Learning Program in 2014-15 and key themes have helped define future areas of research.

Auslan assessment tool

In partnership with La Trobe University, VDEI has developed the first standardised Auslan Assessment Tool which will allow Australian educators to assess both receptive and expressive language in deaf children who use Auslan. The tool has been adapted from the British Sign Language assessment tool for an Australian context.

The tool will be made available in kit format to Victorian educators who have completed the accredited training and are approved to implement the tool. It will be distributed to specialist schools, mainstream schools with facilities and regional offices for use by accredited staff.

Not only will the tool allow assessment and monitoring of the development of Auslan in deaf children who sign, it will also inform the development of individual learning plans of these children. VDEI will continue to work with the British authors to create an online version of the tool.



Auslan developmental scale

Many deaf learners are born into hearing families and only develop sign language once they are exposed to early intervention and early education and/or have contact with other deaf children and adults who sign.

This pattern of language exposure may mean that the progress of development of sign language may be slow and it is important that the acquisition of early sign language is monitored, especially if that is the chosen mode of communication. Developmental scales are developed through the use of longitudinal population based studies over time.

VDEI has partnered with Aurora School to further advance the work already being undertaken by the school in developing developmental scales for monitoring early Auslan development.

These scales are intended for use alongside the Auslan Assessment Tool and monitoring will be completed in conjunction with other assessment protocols. The work undertaken by Aurora School staff provides an opportunity to implement assessment in a multidisciplinary environment which informs intervention.

The ongoing work of the developmental scale (with the Auslan Assessment tool) will further inform research into the development of sign language in deaf children.

Evidence to practice

Transition into primary school (TIPS) project

The Transition into Primary School (TIPS) project aims to provide support to deaf and hard of hearing children and their families in making an effective transition into primary schools. Made possible through VDEI's partnership with Taralye Early Intervention Centre and Aurora School, the project is a *More Support for Students with Disabilities National Partnership, Strengthening Pathways Deaf Education* initiative.

The TIPS project has involved:

- conducting a wide range of stakeholder consultations with early intervention settings, school settings and professional services who work with families caring for a deaf or hard of hearing child
- developing a shared database with the Victorian Infant Hearing Screening Program (VIHSP)
- providing professional development workshops to schools in relation to the needs of newly enrolled students; and
- providing information, resources and support opportunities to families and professionals seeking assistance with transition into school.

A pilot program involving a number of selected families transitioning to schools was trialled in 2013. Professional evaluation has provided feedback about the resources and support initiative as well as helped with future planning of the project.

A family information morning was held on 16 March 2013 to showcase educational options, resources and support services on offer for families of young deaf children around Victoria.



"I attended the TIPS event as my daughter Imogen who is deaf has just transitioned into Prep. I found the morning valuable and informative. It was great to find out more about different educational settings from Early Education Programs to Catholic, Independent and Government schools, to chat with them about bilingual programs, deaf facility/or Integration Units. I also spent time chatting with Visiting Teachers about their role and with Australian Hearing about FM's and sound systems. Thanks for supporting families in their child's transition."

Megan, Imogen's mum

A transition into primary school kit aimed at early intervention centres, receiving schools, children who are deaf and hard of hearing and their parents was produced and rolled out for the 2013 to 2014 transition. Resources in the kit include documents that can be used by families, a PowerPoint for professional development within the school, a children's storybook entitled *Blue Bear gets ready for school* and a technology based application.

The kit was officially launched on 22 March 2014.



VDEI Professional Learning Centre

The Learning Centre has a strong focus on innovation and technology – to strengthen access and inclusion for deaf students and education professionals to learning programs and curriculum through the use of relevant technology.



The VDEI Learning Centre plays a pivotal role in building the required knowledge, skills and workforce capacity of individuals working with deaf and hard of hearing students and young people in an educational setting.

It enables hundreds of professionals each year (including mainstream teachers, teachers of the deaf, audiologists, speech pathologists, psychologists, and speech and language support staff) to build their expertise in providing improved learning support to the 3800 Victorian children and young people with a hearing loss.

VDEI also regularly services an extensive network of corporate and government stakeholders, who are making excellent use of the state-of-the-art video conferencing equipment. It has indeed become a well-used venue for professional learning, knowledge sharing and networking among our stakeholders.

The VDEI Learning Centre has become an increasingly busy hub for professional learning, knowledge sharing and networking.

Many of VDEI's stakeholders are opting to host their events at the learning centre in order to use the state-of-the-art video conferencing equipment.

Last year, a total of 3681 people (made up of VDEI professional learning program, partnership registrations, DEECD registrations, external agencies, and video conferencing meetings) - made use of the VDEI Learning Centre.

VDEI also welcomed cross-sector partners and on-site stakeholders to host a number of forums. Some of these were:

- Alannah and Madeleine Foundation
- Apple
- ASLIA-VIC
- Aurora School
- Australian Hearing
- Australian Living History Federation
- Autism Teaching Institute
- DEECD, Student Inclusion and Engagement Division
- DEECD, Esmart
- Deaf Expo Committee
- Headspace
- Hear For You
- NMIT - COE
- VDEN
- VicDeaf
- Victorian College for the Deaf and
- Wesley Institute



What others have said about their VDEI experience

'I would like to thank you all for all of your hard work and time in ensuring my day yesterday ran smoothly. Your willingness to assist me was highly regarded as well as appreciated. The food got a mention on every evaluation so thanks! Everything was great and I will certainly be using your venue again.'

Voula Dorkos, Clinical Leader-Adult Specialist, Australian Hearing

'Thank you both for your fantastic cooperation and assistance at our Planning Day at VDEI. We were very impressed with the facilities and room set up. Needless to say we are very keen to use your facilities for future meetings/sessions.'

Brent Philips, Manager, Community Relations, VicDeaf

'Our sincere thanks for the site inspection Tuesday afternoon. Please thank your on-site tech guru, Shaun for us too. We are thrilled with the venue, very impressed with the technology and excited about eSmart and VDEI opportunities and working together.'

Genine Spicer, eSmart administration, The Alannah and Madeline Foundation

'Trained at the Victorian Deaf Education Institute today. Best training venue by a mile! Thanks to all the lovely staff for making my job so easy!'



The VDEI Learning Centre features:

- A stunning architecturally designed learning centre
- Conveniently located on St Kilda Road business precinct and minutes from Melbourne's CBD, close to public transport and parking
- Flexible open plan spaces with a variety of seating layouts
- Venue capacity of up to 100 people
- State of the art, high definition video conferencing equipment
- The next generation multimedia including six interactive white boards
- Wifi that syncs with iPads, PCs and other mobile devices
- Excellent on-site catering by hospitality students from the Victorian College for the Deaf
- Outdoor area for breaks.



State-of-the-art facilities

VDEI is a technology hub with lecture room space, interactive multimedia and video conferencing facilities. VDEI regularly services an extensive network of corporate and government stakeholders, who are making excellent use of the state-of-the-art video conferencing equipment. It has become a well-used venue for professional learning, knowledge sharing and networking. The facilities are ideal for strategic planning sessions, annual general meetings, business seminars, conferences, board meetings, product/service launches and general events that require professional presentation and style.

State-of-the-art technology

VDEI offers the next generation in audio visual and video conferencing. The high definition state-of-the-art video conferencing centre allows workshops, seminars, meetings to be beamed to other offices in any area across Victoria, enabling professionals to conduct conferences and meetings, regardless of where they live.

Historic location

VDEI is set within the beautiful gardens of the historic site at 597 St Kilda Road which houses the impressive Bluestone building and Victorian College for the Deaf, representing 150 years of deaf education in Victoria.

On-site gourmet catering with Tradeblock Café

In line with VDEI's values of social responsibility, many of our catering needs are supplied by the Tradeblock Café at the Victorian College for the Deaf. The café's aim is to improve the independence and employability of the deaf students who work in the café through the VCAL program and to break down barriers surrounding hearing loss.

Professional Learning Program 2013

In 2013 the VDEI Professional Learning Program enabled hundreds of professionals including mainstream teachers, teachers of the deaf, audiologists, speech pathologists, psychologists and speech and language support staff the opportunity to build their expertise in providing improved learning support to the 3800 Victorian school-aged children and young people with hearing loss.



The Victorian Deaf Education Institute, in 2013, offered an innovative Professional Learning Program in partnership with schools, universities and professional organisations to 600 professionals working with children and young people who are deaf and hard of hearing.

Through extensive stakeholder engagement, key learning needs were identified across sectors to provide the foundation for the VDEI's professional learning program. The 2013 topics included: how deaf children learn; language and literacy teaching and assessment; bilingualism; use of technology in classrooms by teachers and students; classroom interpreting skills; maximising auditory access for students who are deaf or hard of hearing; and professional practice in partnership with families with children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Our 2013 Professional Learning Program included:

- professional learning events
- an online learning program
- mentoring services, and
- a scholarship program.

The Program catered for all Victorian education professionals supporting deaf and hard of hearing students across a range of educational settings, as well as those supporting those deaf and hard of hearing students with additional needs.

The broad range of international speakers brought specialist expertise and best practice teaching and learning strategies to Melbourne. They offered Victorian professionals working in deafness practical insights and the latest in research and methodologies. The professional learning events were an excellent way to broaden professional knowledge; participate and learn practical skills; discuss the issues with key experts; and network with other professionals.

VDEI demonstrated exemplary practice in accessible learning with the provision of live captioned, Auslan interpreted events and video conferencing on request.

VDEI Professional Learning events



Speech and language enrichment workshops

Presenter: Helen Harrington-Johnson, VDEI

Date: 29 January 2013 and 1 February 2013

VDEI presented accredited ELKLAN speech and literacy support workshops to Educational Support (ES) staff who provide oral language and literacy support to deaf students on 29 January and 1 February 2013.

The program included the following modules: defining hearing loss; communication; communication and the child with hearing loss; supporting the language and social skills of the child with hearing difficulties; and supporting the listening and phonological development of the child with hearing difficulties.

Presenter Helen Harrington-Johnson, experienced speech pathologist, audiologist, accredited ELKLAN trainer and Statewide Program Manager of VDEI, presented the workshops. Helen has wide clinical experience in the paediatric fields of hearing impairment, multiple disability and autism within early intervention and with school-age children.



Sign bilingualism workshop: 'Language experience approach to reading'

Presenter: Michelle Baker and Michelle Stark

Date: 9 February 2013

This workshop explored the theory around Language Experience Readers as it applies to deaf readers and its critical place in a reading program for signing deaf children. Participants received the opportunity to produce Language Experience Readers in various formats and discovered ways of integrating their use into all areas of the curriculum.

Michelle Baker has been working as a teacher of the deaf for nearly twenty years. For the last five years, Michelle has been involved in the production and delivery of training in relation to Sign Bilingual education for staff working with deaf children.

Michelle Stark is a qualified teacher of the deaf and professional sign language interpreter. Michelle has worked with deaf children at all ages of schooling from the early years right through to tertiary level. For the last two years she has been involved in the development and delivery of training in relation to literacy and deaf children.

"This workshop should be MANDATORY for any Teacher of the Deaf to do. These courses far outweigh anything I learnt at University. Uni only scratches the surface of general practice."

Maria Burgess, Teacher of the Deaf, the Victorian College for the Deaf

'High stakes: promoting DHH student access'

Presenter: Dr Cheryl DeConde-Johnson

Date: 7 March 2013

As the education of children who are deaf and hard of hearing (HOH) evolves, the roles of teachers are also changing. This workshop explored the changing profile of deaf and hard of hearing students and the subsequent impact on deaf education and parent involvement, including a suggested model for managing services to these children. A variety of tools that assist with assessment and determining service and placement, classroom listening, classroom acoustics, communication access and self-advocacy was discussed. This event was accredited for 6 CEU's by the AG Bell Academy.

Dr. Cheryl DeConde Johnson provides consulting services in educational audiology and deaf education focusing on state deaf education service delivery and accountability systems through her practice, The ADEvantage. She also holds adjunct faculty appointments in audiology at the University of Colorado and the University of Northern Colorado and in deaf education at the University of Arizona. Dr. Johnson is co-author of the Educational Audiology Handbook, 2nd edition. As a parent of a grown daughter with hearing loss, Dr. Johnson applies her personal and professional experience throughout her work and as co-founder and Board President of Hand & Voices.

'At last someone who understands the problems we and our students encounter! Fabulous resources for assessing language – can't wait to trial them and share with our VT team and mainstream teachers.'

Katherine Gee, Visiting Teacher Hearing Impaired, North Western Victoria

Professional learning events 2013



'Strategies for maximising auditory access for deaf children'

Presenter: Dr Cheryl DeConde Johnson

Date: 8 March 2013

International speaker Dr Cheryl DeConde Johnson presented a workshop entitled 'Strategies for maximising auditory access for deaf children' to audiologists at the Institute on 8 March 2013.

The workshop focused on audiology practices that maximise auditory access for children with hearing loss. A combination of clinic and classroom assessments that consider the child as well as parameters of the learning environment were discussed and then related to recommendations for accommodations and interventions.

Collaboration strategies between audiologists and teachers of the deaf and other school-based professionals that are critical to promote appropriate implementation of the audiologists' recommendations were also addressed. Specific topics included classroom acoustics, functional assessment of listening and communication, hearing assistance technology selection and management and self-advocacy skills.

'Very practical and useful resources. Great to see what is happening in the US.'

Karin Gillies, Clinical Leader – Paediatric Services, Australian Hearing.



Meet the parents – guiding and coaching parents in early intervention and facilitating theory of mind development and conversational competency in children with hearing loss

Presenter: Dr Erin Wilkinson

Date: Wednesday 20 March 2013

Do Deaf people think in sign language when they read in English and/or other written languages?

Dr Erin Wilkinson, professor in the Linguistics department at the University of Manitoba, presented her findings to VDEI on Wednesday 20 March 2013. Her findings revealed that Deaf bilinguals activate American Sign Language (ASL) signs when they read English words.

Dr Erin Wilkinson is a professor in the Linguistics at the University of Manitoba and her research explores linguistic structures across signed languages, focusing on modality specific properties.

Dr Wilkinson's particular interest is in language typology, usage-based grammar, and linguistics of signed languages. Her most recent work examined kinship terminologies of forty signed languages' kinship terminologies, contributing to a better understanding of typological variation in visual-gestural languages. More broadly, she explores patterns in grammar and the phenomenon of iconicity across different signed languages to examine what similarities and differences arise among signed languages from various parts of the world. Dr Wilkinson also collaborates with researchers who are affiliated with the Science of Learning Centre on Visual Language and Visual Learning (VL2) on psycholinguistic studies on cross-language processing in bimodal-bilingual population.



Engaging kids today – it's not just about iPads

Presenter: Dan Haesler

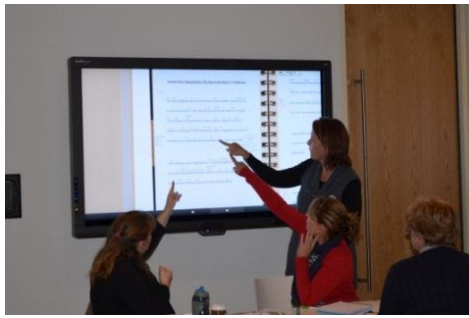
Date: 21 March 2013

In this workshop, participants were able to explore how engagement in today's world has never been more important. In particular, Dan addressed the three questions: Do we really know what engagement looks like? What can we do to enhance engagement in our students? What are the links between engagement, wellbeing and achievement?

During this highly interactive course, participants used Google Docs, Poll Everywhere, Cryptocat and Wikispaces. Dan spoke about the power of social media to develop your own professional learning network (PLN), how to develop one and why collaboration is the key to enhancing engagement. Participants trialled some of the suggested apps and internet tools as well as discussed examples of some that they have use with their students which have had great results.

Dan also discussed the use of games in education and took participants on a tour of Second Life, a virtual world which enables things such as setting the Sistine Chapel as a highly visual virtual meeting place for an art class to explore the work of Michelangelo. Using the theories, tools and strategies, participants were able to discuss possible projects they could work on with their students or across schools in order to foster genuine engagement.

Described as engaging, thought provoking and someone who pushes the boundaries, Dan Haesler has appeared alongside some of the world's most respected educational thinkers including Sir Ken Robinson and Stephen Heppell. As well as speaking around Australia, Dan's work has been featured on Channel 10 and the ABC, as well as writing for Fairfax media. He is also the founder of YouthEngage – a not-for-profit initiative aimed at working with children at risk and their communities.



Reading and assessment sign bilingualism workshops

Presenter: Michelle Baker and Michelle Stark

Date: 4 and 6 May 2014

The first workshop drew on contemporary research and used footage of deaf children reading to demonstrate strategies signing children use when they read. The presenters also discussed how teachers can exploit sign language to make connections between Auslan and English.

The second workshop used video footage of deaf children reading to demonstrate the use of miscue analysis with signing children and how this could support the development of reading strategies in the sign bilingual environment.

Michelle Baker has been working as a teacher of the deaf for nearly twenty years. In 2005 Michelle received the Qld Premier's Award for Excellence in Teaching for her work in Sign Bilingualism. For the last five years, Michelle has been involved in the production and delivery of training in relation to Sign Bilingual education for staff working with deaf children.

Michelle Stark is a qualified teacher of the deaf and professional sign language interpreter. Michelle has worked with deaf children at all ages of schooling from the early years right through to the tertiary level. For the last two years she has been involved in the development and delivery of training in relation to literacy and deaf children.

These workshops built the knowledge of professionals in Victoria and are prerequisites to workshops that will run later in the year (Sign language narrative and written narrative of signing deaf children – September 2013) and other complementary programs which will be offered in 2014.



'Discourse analysis in the classroom' and 'Six mirrors in the classroom'

Presenter: Dr Christine Monikowski

Date: 10 and 11 May 2013

Dr Monikowski is Professor at the Department of ASL and Interpreting Education at Rochester Institute of Technology/National Technical Institute for the Deaf.

At the first workshop aimed at educational interpreters, Dr Monikowski defined discourse analysis, the features involved in that analysis, and how increased knowledge of these features could make the interpreter's work in the community and in the classroom more effective.

Hertz-Lazarowitz's (1992) work on the "six mirrors of the [K-12] classroom" presented an in-depth look at student behaviours in a complex learning environment. This approach to understanding instruction, communication and learning is an excellent schema for interpreters: classroom organisation, the learning task, teacher's instruction, teacher's communication, student's academic behaviour and student's social behaviour.

Dr Monikowski's workshop identified five components of increasing level for each "mirror" and applied this approach to a recent class, analysed participants' work in that class, and evaluated whether this approach could help account for known challenges.

Discussion focused on strategies interpreters could use to manage the complexities. What powerful, incredibly practical workshops these were! While both were well grounded in a research and evidence base, Dr Monikowski also discussed her fascinating hands on experience moving from her role as a teacher to interpreter.

During the workshops, Dr Monikowski explored some of the challenges that educational interpreters face in their roles, as well as these roles' reality versus expectations.

These events were a collaboration between the Victorian Deaf Education Institute and the RIDBC Renwick Centre, NSW and was supported by ASLIA Victoria.



Understanding and responding to family complexity

Presenter: Professor Alys Young

Date: 26 June and 1 July 2013

The workshop covered three interrelated issues associated with modern professional practice in partnerships with families with deaf children.

The first was the changing context of discovering a child is deaf: do we still know what we thought we knew about families? It reviewed the evidence for the impact of early identification and early intervention on how parents and families understood their child's deafness.

The second part was about understanding being deaf: is it just language choices, role models and experience? It explored the impact of the changing social context on being deaf in society/societies today and the significance of that for our activities as professionals in supporting families with deaf children. Alys covered issues as diverse as information and communication technology, ontology, poverty, rights and ethics.

The third part focused on families and intervention: how do we know we are making a difference? It focused on how professionals and parents could work together to ensure that intervention and support was effective. It addressed the work underpinning the creation and use of the MVOS (My Views on Services) survey instrument. It also addressed safeguarding, assessment with regard to child protection and the promotion of wellbeing.

Alys Young, Professor of Social Work and Director of the Social Research with Deaf People programme at the University of Manchester in the United Kingdom.

'Excellent topic, presentation and discussion from the audience. I appreciated how strong the evidence base for discussion was. Thank you for a thought-provoking, reflective day. A good professional battery recharge!'

Leonie Fewster, audiologist, from the Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital

VDEI Professional Learning events 2013



How deaf children learn

Presenter: Marc Marschark

Date: 17 July 2013

For more than 100 years investigators have taken a keen interest in language and cognition in deaf people. In many ways, they have played a central role in arriving at our current understanding of how deaf children learn, and indirectly, in proscribing educational methods deemed appropriate for them. But something has gone awry. Deaf learners continue to lag behind hearing peers in literacy and other academic skills relative to their hearing peers. Despite hundreds of studies and a new 'methode du jour' every few years, their challenges have been stubbornly resistant to elucidation. This presentation described some of the differences between deaf and hearing learners, differences that can either help or hinder deaf learning in formal and informal settings but need to be recognised by parents, teachers and students. It was suggested that a primary reason for the lack of progress in teaching and learning in deaf education is that we have been looking in the wrong places for the solutions.

Marc Marschark is a Professor at the National Technical Institute for the Deaf, a college of Rochester Institute of Technology, where he directs the Center for Education Research Partnerships. He also has appointments at the Moray House School of Education at the University of Edinburgh and the School of Psychology at the University of Aberdeen. His primary interest is in relations among language, learning and development. His current research focuses on such relations by deaf children and adults in formal and informal educational settings. He founded and edits the *Journal of Deaf Studies*.

'Absolutely fantastic. I have been around a long time and loved all the new things I learnt.'

Kerry Chinnock, Teacher of the Deaf and Visiting Teaching, South Eastern Victoria Region



Educating deaf children: what we know and what we don't

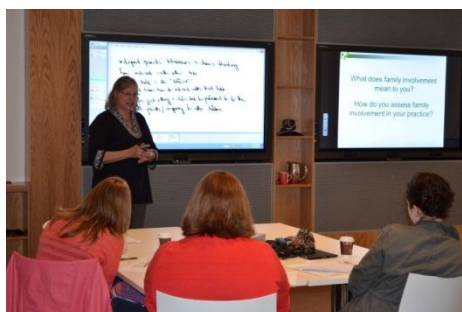
Presenter: Marc Marschark

Date: 18 July 2013

The focus of the second presentation was on the fact that deaf education and research have had a long but uneasy relationship. Without pointing fingers, it is evident that whatever progress has been made, deaf children continue to face significant challenges in language, in education, and in social-emotional growth. If we are to make more progress, we need to better understand how various factors affect learning and development, leaving behind a priori beliefs about what is or is not important and what should or should not work. Weaving together findings concerning language and learning among deaf children reveals that we actually know more (and less) than we think we do. It is time to abandon myths, clear up misunderstandings, and re-examine some of our assumptions about raising and educating deaf children. We can then create a partnership of parents, professionals, and researchers that allows us to better support the children and their families, basing decisions on evidence while recognising that we are dealing with lives, emotions, rights and responsibilities.

'Marc Marschark is a great presenter. His presentation reinforced that all kids are different and we must be aware that they all learn differently and we must cater for this. Amazing variety of workshops organised by VDEI – great to have these people who are doing meaningful research.'

Sue McDonald, Teacher of the Deaf, Victorian College for the Deaf



Child language disorders and childhood hearing loss

Presenter: Dr Alice Eriks-Brophy, Associate Professor from the Department of Speech-Language Pathology, the University of Toronto

Date: 14 and 15 August 2013

The first workshop emphasised the effect of families feeling well supported. Especially highlighted was that when well supported, families felt less stressed and showed increased wellbeing. This in turn results in families being more effective in taking on the various roles associated with having a child with hearing loss, including facilitating children's overall development.

With the goal of optimally supporting families and enhancing children's communication outcomes, results of a systemic review examining the predictive role of family involvement in children's communication outcomes were presented. Several well-known tools which examine parental involvement were examined and discussed. Using one of these tools Alice then facilitated discussion about the factors known to affect family involvement which were highlighted by the tool and how these behaviours can be moderated. The final part of the presentation focused on the exploration of a questionnaire Alice is currently developing to examine parental involvement.

On the second day, Dr Eriks-Brophy focused on cultural issues in assessment and intervention for Indigenous children with hearing loss. Alice explored working with children and families from Indigenous backgrounds and the considerations necessary for professionals. Many commonly used principles and practices in assessment and intervention may need to be reconsidered or adjusted when working with families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Methods of enhancing cultural competence and cultural safety were highlighted through discussion of participants' experiences in working with families.

'Very informative. It made me think a lot about how I run therapy sessions in a school setting and how to incorporate 'better' family involvement including being aware of family's cultural beliefs.'

Christine Nguyen, speech pathologist, Furlong Park School for Deaf Children

VDEI Professional Learning events 2013



'Sign language narrative' and 'Written narrative of signing deaf children'

Presenter: Michelle Baker and Michelle Stark

Date: 21 and 23 September 2013

Educators with an advanced level of Auslan proficiency were fortunate to be able to join in the two day workshop presented by Michelle Baker and Michelle Stark on 21 and 23 September at VDEI. Michelle Baker and Michelle Stark are teachers of the deaf with a shared 35 years of teaching experience with signing deaf children.

Workshop 1 focussed on skill development in the first language of deaf children who use sign language and the impact this has on their narrative development in written English. Participants analysed sign language video footage and identified areas of need that could be considered in planning and programming for individual students.

In the second workshop, teachers analysed students' written narrative using a functional grammar approach. Participants were encouraged to identify patterns in children's writing 'errors' and explored reasons that these may occur. Developmental aspects of sign language were explored and participants also discussed teaching ideas that could be used to enhance students' skills in Auslan and written English.

'I learned a lot that I intend to take back to my classroom. I appreciate the specific examples to work through and discuss with colleagues.'

Sophie Mohr, Teacher of the Deaf, Lismore Public School, NSW.



Presentation on findings from the Individual Learning Plans Project for students who are deaf or hard of hearing

Presenter: Professor Margaret Brown

Date: 7 November 2013

Associate Professor Margaret Brown presented the findings of a study completed for VDEI that investigated Individual Learning Plans for students who are deaf and hard of hearing in Victoria. Data were collected from three sources.

Associate Professor Margaret Brown is a Principal Fellow of the Melbourne Graduate School of Education at The University of Melbourne.

The first set of data came from coordinators and principals of services and teachers of the deaf who completed online surveys. Second, a small group of these coordinators were interviewed. For the third part of the data collection, the students' assessment and planning portfolios were scrutinised for the level of evidence of formal and informal assessment used to generate goals for the ILP.

These goals were then assessed according to the SMART criteria (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Timely). Findings indicated that results of assessments were seldom used to inform goal setting.

Despite this, most goals appeared relevant and achievable, although the specificity and measurability of goals remained an area to work on. These results suggest various avenues for improving current practice through further professional learning for teachers of the deaf.



More than just talk: speech assessment and intervention for children with hearing loss

Presenter: Dr Christina Perigoe

Date: 21 and 22 November 2013

A large proportion of children with hearing loss spend their early years in programs designed to promote listening and spoken language. These programs regularly assess speech and language and use these results to program intervention accordingly. Once children start school around the age of five, regular assessment and applied intervention may be more difficult to incorporate into regular daily programs. Children who have been assessed regularly in specialised programs may be resistant to testing in their mainstream schools as a result of assessment fatigue or because it distinguishes them from their hearing peers. Teachers and therapists may not feel that they have the skills and knowledge to develop and implement an intervention program within the regular school curriculum.

The first day provided an in-depth review of speech assessments that can be used with school-aged children including phonetic and phonological level assessments. All of the assessments in the program can be used by speech therapists and teachers of the deaf.

During the second day, Dr Perigoe provided a range of intervention strategies and activities and discuss methods of fitting them into the classroom curriculum.

Dr Christina Perigoe is the Coordinator of the Early Oral Intervention graduate program at The University of Southern Mississippi. This program trains professionals to work with families in maximising the listening and spoken language potential of infants and young children with hearing loss. She is a certified teacher of the deaf, speech pathologist and auditory-verbal therapist.

This event was a collaboration between the Victorian Deaf Education Institute and the RIDBC Renwick Centre, NSW and supported by Cochlear.

Inclusion Online – Understanding Hearing Loss course



Inclusion Online is an online learning portal offering a suite of online learning courses which focuses on the understanding, assessment and classroom support of students with disabilities and learning difficulties.

A 10 week online professional learning program entitled 'Understanding Hearing Loss' designed for mainstream teachers ran each term throughout 2013.

This exciting program, which involved 20 hours of online and face-to-face sessions, fosters the knowledge and skills of Victorian teachers and support the teaching and learning needs of students with a hearing loss. The course covers four main elements: understanding, assessment for learning, interventions and case studies.

The course was accessible to all teachers and could be accessed online from anywhere in Victoria at a time convenient to the teacher. Teachers were able to progress at their own pace throughout the school term. Some were even able to complete their face-to-face sessions via video conferencing. This course was made possible through the *More Support for Students with Disabilities National Partnership funding*.

'Well done again VDEI for getting ahead of the issues that TODs have on their radar. As well as focussing on ILPs, the PD focused on the range of formal and informal assessments being used and the way teachers collect and keep assessment information. How we create and properly handover assessment portfolio information is vital if students are to benefit from an 'assessment of learning', 'assessment as learning' approach. More please!'

Robyn O'Meara, Visiting Teacher and Teacher of the Deaf, Victorian College for the Deaf

Scholarships

Seventy five new teachers of the deaf by 2014

In the *Deaf Education Review*, it was clearly identified that there was an undersupply of appropriately trained teachers of the deaf. In response to this need, a number of scholarships were made available for teachers to obtain postgraduate qualifications in deaf education to become qualified teachers of the deaf. In 2013 this program was funded through the *More Support for Students with Disabilities National Partnership* and was made available to teachers in both metropolitan and regional areas. A number of professionals have completed or are currently undertaking scholarships at either The University of Melbourne or the RIDBC Renwick Centre, The University of Newcastle. Thanks to a variety of initiatives, there are scheduled to be 75 new teachers of the deaf in Victoria in the next few years.



'Studying the Masters of Education (Deaf Education) at The University of Melbourne was beneficial for me. I really appreciated access to the scholarship as it provided me with an opportunity that I would otherwise not have been able to explore.'

I have always had an interest in Deaf Education and this is one of the reasons that I selected to teach at Forest Hill College originally.

My studies gave me greater insight into the needs of my deaf students - and in the future will enable me to work in the Deaf Facility as a Teacher of the Deaf (and put my signing skills to good use), as well as mainstream classes.'

Naomi Carson, scholarship recipient

Research forums

VDEI at Educational Research Symposium, July 2013

The Victorian Deaf Education Institute presented three papers at the Royal Institute for Deaf Blind Children (RIDBC) Renwick Centre Research Symposium held in Brisbane on 3-4 July 2013. The first was an outline of the projects undertaken by VDEI since its establishment in 2010 and the implications emerging from those projects, focusing on turning evidence into practice. VDEI also presented papers on the Individual Learning Plans Project and the Evaluation of the Real Time Captioning Project in Victoria (both outlined in this document). The symposium was also an excellent opportunity for VDEI to learn about the research being conducted in Deaf Education in Australia and to contribute to best practice examples around the world.

ANZCED 2013

VDEI was a sponsor and held a trade display at the recent 27th Australian and New Zealand Conference for Educators of the Deaf (ANZCED) 2013 (5-7 July).

This provided the opportunity to hear a range of quality presentations from other researchers and educators on topics ranging from mental health/resilience/social emotional wellbeing in deaf children, language and literacy, early intervention, post school options, audiological management issues, working with deaf/hearing impaired students in mainstream settings, and developing independence.

Kaye Scott from VDEI presented on 'Real-Time Captioning in Schools - Lessons Learned' and Sally Martin from VDEI presented on 'Utilising Smart Technology to Improve Access to School Excursion Programs'.

There were many fascinating presentations including 'Reflections of parents of young children of permanent hearing loss' by Nic Mahler, 'Preparing Mainstream Deaf Students for the NAPLAN Persuasive Writing Test' by Mari Karvinen and Alice Brennan presented on the SAFE program recently launched by Deaf Children Australia.

'The Hear For You staff, mentors, Victorian participants and their families sincerely thank the Victorian Deaf Education Institute and the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development for their foresight and commitment to supporting deaf and hard of hearing teenagers in Victoria.' Meg Aumann, Victorian Auslan Program Coordinator

Mentoring programs

VDEI partners with teen mentoring organisation, Hear for You

In 2013 VDEI sponsored the mentoring organisation, Hear For You, to deliver both an oral and an Auslan mentoring program for Years 7 to 12 deaf and hard of hearing secondary students. Nineteen oral deaf students took part in the oral mentoring workshops delivered between 24 March and 23 June 2013, while 18 deaf students participated in the Auslan program between 26 May and 21 July 2013.

The overall aim of the program was to equip young deaf people with enduring skills that would benefit them for the rest of their lives. It aimed to motivate them to achieve in their education and employment as they learn methods to cope with everyday situations, and help them realise their potential contributing to society.

The mentoring programs comprised group workshops over two school terms, e-mentoring using online communication and a parent information session. The Hear For You mentors are successful young men and women who have experienced and overcome the challenges of deafness during their school years and beyond.

Mentoring program for educational support staff who interpret in classrooms

The Victorian Deaf Education Institute is committed to providing professional learning opportunities for educational support staff who provide Auslan interpretation and communication support in classrooms.

During 2013, in partnership with the Australian Sign Language Interpreters Association (ASLIA VIC), VDEI delivered a mentoring program for educational support staff who interpret in classrooms.

Twenty three ES staff from eleven different settings participated in this program over three terms. Mentors of the program were ASLIA Victoria's professional accredited staff, Julie Judd and Therese Lewis. The Auslan language tutor was Stephanie Linder.

The course provided both class teachers and teachers of the deaf with valuable insights into the learning needs of students who are deaf or hard of hearing. It consisted of the following sessions: observation, modelling, group reflective practice and language modelling.



Some events in 2014



Dr Carol Flexer **The listening brain: from research to practice**

Date: 24 March 2014 and 25 March 2014

Presenter:

Carol Flexer received her doctorate in audiology from Kent State University in 1982. She was at The University of Akron for 25 years as a distinguished Professor of Audiology in the School of Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology. Special areas of expertise include paediatric and educational audiology. Dr. Flexer continues to lecture extensively nationally and internationally about paediatric audiology issues and has authored more than 155 publications. She has co-edited and authored twelve books. Dr Flexer is a past president of the Educational Audiology Association, a past president of the American Academy of Audiology, and a past president of the Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Academy for Listening and Spoken Language. Dr. Flexer is a Certified Auditory-Verbal Therapist (LSLS Cert. AVT) and a licensed audiologist.

Location:

VDEI Learning Centre,
Victorian Deaf Education Institute,
597 St Kilda Road, Melbourne



Professor Greg Leigh **Literacy in deaf education**

Date: 16 June 2014

Presenter:

Professor Greg Leigh is Chair of the Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children (RIDBC) Renwick Centre at the University of Newcastle. He is also Director of the Centre for Special Education and Disability Studies at the University of Newcastle. Prof Leigh holds degrees in Education and Special Education from Griffith University, a Master of Science (Speech and Hearing) degree from Washington University (Central Institute for the Deaf) in the USA, and a PhD in Special Education from Monash University. Prof Leigh has previously held a variety of positions in the education of deaf children and worked as a curriculum consultant in Queensland before entering academia. He was Course Coordinator for the program in education of the deaf at Deakin University and was International Visiting Scholar at the National Technical Institute for the Deaf, Rochester Institute of Technology, New York. Prof Leigh has published numerous articles, chapters, and monographs on aspects of education of deaf children, including a co-edited book with Prof Des Power titled *Educating Deaf Students: Global Perspectives*. He is a member of the Editorial Board of *Deafness and Education International* and *Phonetics and Speech Sciences*. Prof Leigh serves on numerous Australian government consultative committees on issues related to deafness and is Chairman of the Chairman of the Australasian Newborn Hearing Screening Committee. He is also Chairman of the International Steering Committees of both the Asia-Pacific Congress on Deafness (APCD) and the International Congress on Education of the Deaf (ICED).



Robynne Moore **Communication skills for professionals, recognition and management of emotions**

Date: 1 August 2014

Maintaining the conversation: listening and responding

Date: 15 August 2014

Managing the feelings: values and emotions

Presenter:

Robynne Moore has over 40 years of practising psychology, much of that time in education both here and overseas. Robynne works as a counselling psychologist in private practice. She has vast experience in working with children and families, where disability is present and has run a number of skills training courses for professionals who work in early intervention.

Location:

The VDEI Learning Centre,
Victorian Deaf Education Institute,
597 St Kilda Road, Melbourne

This event is a collaboration between the Victorian Deaf Education Institute and the RIDBC Renwick Centre.

Social media

Facebook

www.facebook.com/VictorianDeafEducationInstitute

Likes: 241

Started: May 2012

Purpose:

- Two way communication with our stakeholders.
 - To promote Institute programs as an entity of DEECD, VDEI Learning Centre activities and programs.
 - To link and build audiences with other deaf education partners, nationally and globally ensuring VDEI have a presence with best practice teaching and learning strategies supporting TVLC.
 - To showcase past events and initiatives through content and photos.
-

The power of Facebook

On 26 August 2013, VDEI posted a photo of some deaf and hard of hearing students doing a tour of the Werribee Open Range Zoo as part of Hearing Awareness Week. The photo below went viral, reaching 16, 656 people on Facebook!

That same day, VDEI posted a photo of deaf and hard of hearing students interacting with Gian Rooney from Channel 7 practising sign language during Hearing Awareness Week. The photo reached 1, 617 people on Facebook.



Twitter

Name: @deafedvic

Followers: 327

Tweets: 876

Purpose:

- To communicate regularly and directly with our stakeholders.
- To promote VDEI's initiatives, programs and professional learning activities.
- To link and build audiences with other deaf education partners, nationally and globally ensuring VDEI have a presence with best practice teaching and learning strategies.



Contact VDEI

The Victorian Deaf Education Institute

Student Inclusion and Engagement Division

Early Childhood and School Education Group

Department of Education and
Early Childhood Development

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