

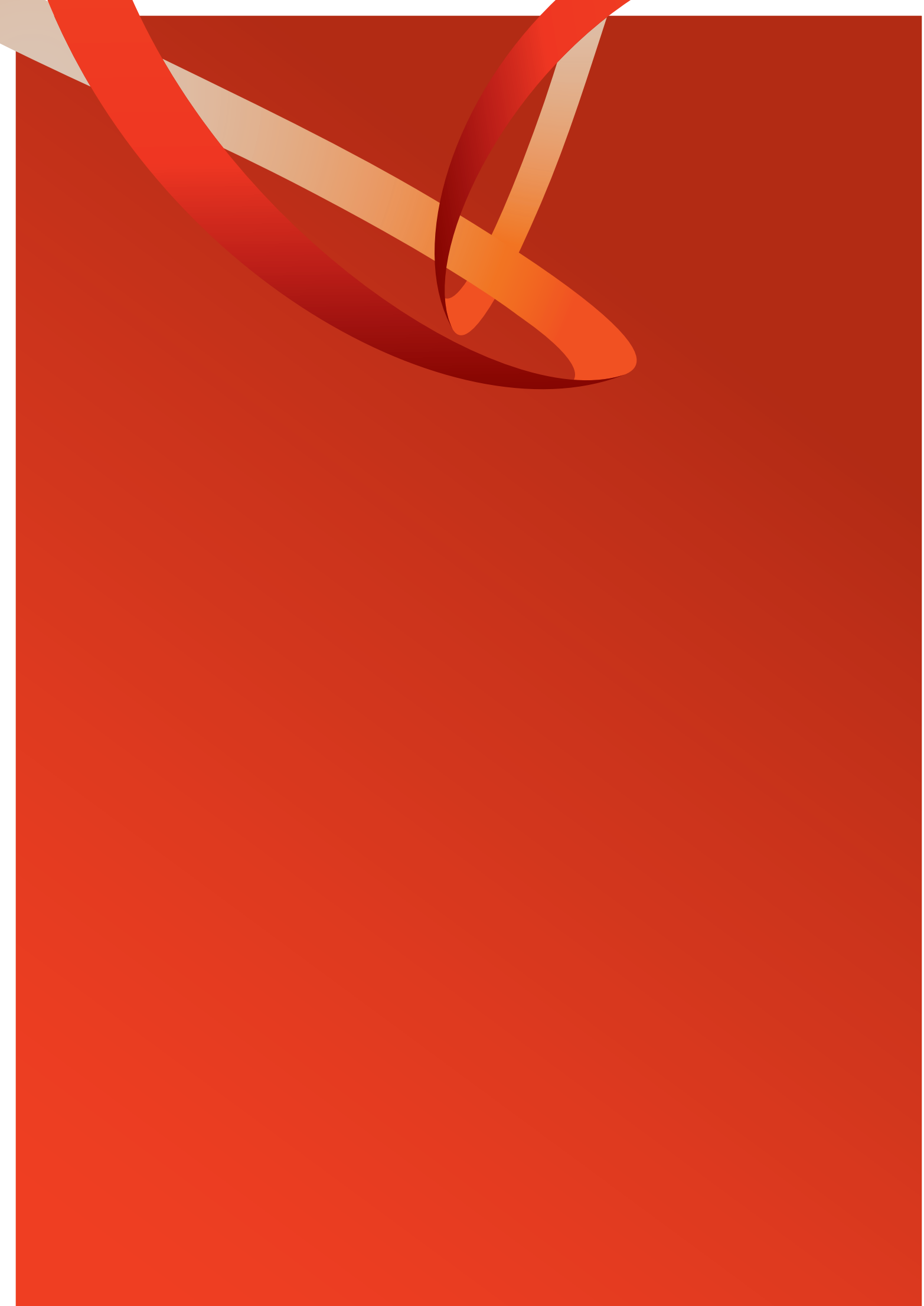


The Victorian Deaf Education Institute **2015 Highlights**



Education
and Training





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Introduction

Department of Education and Training

The Department of Education and Training (DET) is committed to maximising outcomes of children and young people who are deaf or hard of hearing in Victoria. In 2015, the main objectives of the Victorian Deaf Education Institute (VDEI) were to align with these DET goals:

- ensure immediate availability of deafness-related information to advise government
- build organisation and staff capability and knowledge management
- align with the Leadership, Professional Practice and Accountability Division within the Early Childhood and Schools Education Group
- commit to the DET values of collaboration, knowledge sharing, delivery of quality outcomes, respect and diversity, and empowerment.

Leadership, Professional Practice and Accountability Division

In 2015, VDEI was a branch of the Leadership, Professional Practice and Accountability (LPPA) Division within the Early Childhood and School Education Group.

Leadership, Professional Practice and Accountability Division was established to provide policy leadership to the early childhood and school education sectors. The primary functions of LPPA were to:

- support the improvement of practice quality for all educators and providers
- shape the quality and standards of the school and early childhood workforces through the design of policies and strategies, and the design of approaches to professional learning and development that ensure the availability of highly capable leaders, teachers and supports workforces to all schools and early childhood service providers
- collaborate with, and to establish accountability and intervention frameworks for school education
- commission and monitor the effective and efficient delivery of services for the whole of Victoria.



Victorian Deaf Education Institute

The mission statement in the 2014-15 Victorian Deaf Education Institute's business plan is to maximise learning outcomes of every child who is deaf or hard of hearing living in Victoria through evidence-based professional learning, targeted research, and application of innovative technology.

To achieve this, the primary functions of VDEI are to:

- work to improve educational and wellbeing outcomes for children who are deaf or hard of hearing
- lead innovation in deaf education program development and policy review
- provide professional learning opportunities for education professionals via various modes of delivery and evidence-based content that is relevant and timely
- implement innovative technology programs to ensure communication and curriculum access for students who are deaf or hard of hearing
- commission and undertake research to identify evidence that contributes to improvement in educational outcomes for students who are deaf or hard of hearing.

VDEI has a suite of three influential programs.

Professional Learning Program

This program is dedicated to the provision of learning opportunities to support the development of education professionals including mainstream teachers, teachers of the deaf, audiologists, speech pathologists, psychologists, and speech and language support staff.

The professional learning program takes a portfolio approach that includes mentoring and coaching, peer observation of teaching, in-person learning and online learning.

Research Program

This program is dedicated to commissioning research from content experts, academics and consultants Australia-wide to support the identification and understanding of evidence-based practice in deaf education.

Research conducted informs the delivery of VDEI's Professional Learning Program, reporting on past, current and future trends and possible opportunities for future learning.

Resources and Technology Program

This program identifies, pilots and evaluates equipment to support curriculum access and inclusion for children and young people who are deaf or hard of hearing in Victoria. Equipment includes assessments, technology such as C-Print and transition materials.

‘VDEI is co-located with the Victorian College for the Deaf...and prides itself on offering its stakeholders safe, comfortable, adaptable and technologically advanced facilities.’

Facilities

VDEI is co-located with the Victorian College for the Deaf, at 597 St Kilda Road, Melbourne and prides itself on offering its stakeholders safe, comfortable, adaptable and technologically advanced facilities.

VDEI operates a Learning Centre that has a strong focus on innovation and technology. The Learning Centre is designed to support the professional learning of teachers of the deaf and allied health practitioners to strengthen access and inclusion for students who are deaf or hard of hearing.

The Learning Centre plays a pivotal role in building the knowledge and skills of professionals and paraprofessionals working with children and young people who are deaf or hard of hearing in various educational and early childhood settings. Its amenities include:

- architecturally designed, flexible, open plan spaces with a variety of seating options
- venue capacity up to 85 people
- state-of-the-art, high definition videoconferencing equipment
- next generation multimedia, including six interactive whiteboards
- alfresco or indoor morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea
- on-site catering provided by Victorian College for the Deaf Tradeblock Café students completing training in hospitality.

Corporate and government stakeholders hire the Learning Centre, taking advantage of its state-of-the-art video conferencing equipment. The Centre has become a well-used venue for professional learning and the acquisition of professional knowledge and skills.

Facilities and technology upgrade, maintenance and changes in 2015 include:

- upgrade of nine SMART boards with state of the art functionality
- learning centre microphones calibrated by sound engineer
- the outdoor space being restored with repairs to the decking, gutters and installation of permanent redwood tables
- minor updates and essential services maintenance including replacement carpet in foyer and vinyl in kitchenette
- modification of car parking options
- addition of a new separate office space for four team members.



VDEI's Professional Learning Program

VDEI embraces the 70:20:10 learning model, which theorises that professionals learn best when learning is apportioned as follows:

- 70% is on-the-job experiential learning acquired through doing tasks and problem-solving
- 20% is based on feedback or working with others - including observing role models, and learnings from mentoring
- 10% is formal learning that is structured, and results in some kind of accreditation or recognition of skill or knowledge.

This model aligns with evidence-based research that suggests learners' retention of knowledge is improved through the use of strategies such as learning by doing and observing; repetition; reflection; connecting with colleagues; spaced learning (over longer periods of time); and applying theory to practice.

The nature of professional learning has changed significantly over the past decade. The current learning environment is more connected, via the use of mobile technologies resulting in an increase in online and 'on demand' learning. The education workforce is increasingly dispersed. These developments have fundamentally changed how organisations approach and deliver learning programs. VDEI's Professional Learning Programs will continue to be guided by the 70:20:10 learning model.





2015 Professional Learning Program Highlights

Literacy Instruction for Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

Presenters: Dr Susan Easterbrooks and Dr Stacey Tucci (international speaker)

Dates: 21 and 22 January 2015

In January 2015, Dr Easterbrooks and Dr Tucci presented a two-day workshop on the evidence-base that informed Literacy Instruction for Students who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing, a book by Dr Easterbrooks and Dr Beal-Alvarez. Updates were provided on evidence that has appeared since the book's publication. Participants also received training on the newly-developed 'Foundations for Literacy' intervention.

Assessing Auslan Development Tool

Presenters: Hilary Sutherland (International speaker) and Adam Schembri

Dates: 16-19 February 2015

The Assessing Auslan (Australian Sign Language) Development tool was adapted by Adam Schembri, Gabrielle Hodges and Ida Rogers, from the Assessing British Sign Language Development: Receptive Skills and Assessing British Sign Language Development: Productive Skills Test.

The Assessing Auslan Development tool enables professionals to assess and monitor the development of Auslan in children who are deaf or hard of hearing who sign, and can be used to inform the development of individual learning plans.

A two-day workshop was held to train approved professionals to train other professionals in the administration of the tool. An additional two-day workshop was held to train professionals to administer the tool.

Transition to Primary School and Secondary School for Parents of Children and Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

Presenter: Jenny Galloway and Jean Moores-Chadwick

Date: 28 February 2015

Families and carers were invited to an information session on the range of educational settings and options for children who are deaf or hard of hearing in Victoria. Teachers from deaf facilities and schools for the deaf, visiting teachers of the deaf, Australian Hearing, the Cochlear Implant Clinic and Deaf Children Australia were on hand to provide expert advice.

Supporting Adolescents in Transition to Post-School Education and Employment

Presenter: Dr Renee Punch

Date: 18 March 2015

Dr Punch's twilight session provided the opportunity for practitioners working with students who are deaf or hard of hearing to continue to develop their knowledge of student's transition to further education or post-school options. The focus of this session was to ensure that the challenges faced by students are understood, addressed and clearly communicated to all involved in the process. There was an emphasis on engaging students in the transition process, highlighting the importance of self-advocacy.

Assessment of Children and Students Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing: Introduction to the Comprehensive Assessment of Spoken Language

Presenter: Angela Kinsella-Ritter

Date: 26 March 2015

The Comprehensive Assessment of Spoken Language (CASL) is a research-based, theory-driven, oral language assessment battery for children and young people from three to twenty-one years of age. It measures language processing skills in four different linguistic categories.

This practical twilight workshop presented by Angela Kinsella-Ritter from Pearson Australia, was designed for teachers of the deaf with no prior experience of the CASL and provided an opportunity for them to administer and score the battery of tests.

Supporting Adolescents in Transition to Post-School Education and Employment

Presenter: Dr Renee Punch

Date: 30 April, 14 May, 28 May, 11 June 2016

Dr Renee Punch presented a four-part webinar series for professionals working with senior students who are deaf or hard of hearing.

The aim of the presentation was to engage professionals who are planning their students' transition from secondary school to the next stage of their lives, as well as empower them to act as effective advocates for these students.

Assessment of Children and Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing Introduction to TEWL-3, TOWL-4 and OWLS-II

Presenter: Angela Kinsella-Ritter

Date: 12 August 2015

Angela Kinsella-Ritter, from Pearson Australia, presented a twilight workshop as an introduction to the TEWL-3, TOWL-4 and OWLS-II assessment tools in August.

The TEWL-3 and TOWL-4 are comprehensive diagnostic tests of written expression. The results of these tests provide insight into a child's understanding about language, their writing skills, and their ability to construct a story when provided with a picture prompt. The tests are used to identify students' written language skills, determine students' particular strengths and weaknesses in various writing domains, and document students' progress in writing programs.

The OWLS-II provides a detailed and integrated assessment of basic oral and written language skills. Teachers can use the OWLS-II scales to identify language delays, strengths and weaknesses, and guide intervention planning.

Auditory-Verbal Therapy Basics

Presenter: Cheryl Dickson

Date: 1 May, 21 June, 25 July and 10 October 2015

A series of four workshops presented by Cheryl Dickson introduced participants to auditory-verbal teaching principles and pedagogical practices. Topics included:

- current level of functioning
- audition
- spoken language
- what if audition is not enough?

Some families choose spoken language, some choose signed language, and some choose a combination of spoken and signed language for their children. Evidence-based auditory-verbal pedagogical practices are particularly beneficial for teachers of the deaf who work with families who have chosen spoken language for their children.



Auditory Processing Basics

Presenter: Dr Chyrisse Heine

Date: 29 May 2015

This one-day workshop presented by Dr Chyrisse Heine provided a refresher for teachers of the deaf and allied professionals on the basics of auditory processing and auditory rehabilitation concerning hearing loss, with reference to the latest research evidence.

The workshop also addressed the assessment and management of Auditory Processing Disorder. Teachers of the deaf are frequently asked about this condition or receive referrals for children with Auditory Processing Disorder. As support for children identified with Auditory Processing Disorder is typically not within teachers of the deaf scope of practice, the workshop presented information on making recommendations for referral.

Auslan Intensive Course

Presenter: Melbourne Polytechnic

Dates: 31 July 2015, 14 August, 21 August, 4 September, 11 September, 18 September, 9 October, 23 October, 26 October, 6 November

The Auslan Intensive Course held in Terms 3 and 4 provided 70 hours of professional learning to enhance the Auslan skills of professionals and paraprofessionals working with children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

The course introduced some of the more complex features of Auslan relating to the use of space, the depiction of signs, and strategies such as constructed action and dialogue. Participants were provided with links to the Auslan resources used in the course so they could continue to develop their language skills following the course.

Analysing the Signed and Written Narrative of Deaf Children

Presenters: Michelle Baker and Michelle Stark

Date: 6-7 August 2015

The first day of this workshop focused on skill development in the first language of children who are deaf or hard of hearing and use sign language, and the impact this has on later narrative development in written English. Participants analysed sign language video footage and identified areas for consideration in planning and programming for individual students.

On the second day of the workshop participants analysed students' written narratives using a functional grammar approach. Participants were encouraged to identify patterns of writing 'errors' and explore the reasons for these. Shared discussion between participants took place to provide suggestions on strategies to enhance students' skills in Auslan and written English.

Auditory Processing for Teachers of the Deaf (Webinar Series)

Presenter: Professor Suzanne Purdy (International speaker)

Date: 3, 17, 20, August, 14 September 2015

Four webinars were presented by Professor Suzanne Purdy on auditory processing. The evidence for different treatment approaches was investigated and case studies discussed, highlighting the important role of teachers and other education and health professionals in the recognition and management of Auditory Processing Disorder.

This webinar series explained the nature of the Auditory Processing Disorder, how it is manifested in the classroom, and how it is diagnosed and treated.

Wellbeing of Children and Students Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

Presenter: Dr Andy Cornes (International speaker) in collaboration with the Royal Institute for the Deaf and Blind Children

Date: 25-26 August 2015

Dr Andy Cornes presented on the subject of Mental Health and Deaf Children: Re-thinking Education from a Therapeutic Perspective.

The workshop provided a systematic review of the worldwide literature and prevalence rates of different types of disorder and an examination of current research in Australia.

Dr Cornes provided a definition and commentary on:

- the aetiology and presentation of such disorders
- assessment tools that may be used
- the range of disorders identified in populations of children with hearing loss.

Educating Children who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing with Multiple Challenges (Webinar series)

Presenters: Jill Grenon and Amy Collins (International speakers)

Dates: 13 October, 27 October, 10, November, 17 November 2015

Jill Grenon and Amy Collins presented a four-part webinar series on students who have the additional diagnoses of intellectual disability and/or autism.

Teachers of the deaf typically feel well prepared to meet the educational needs of students with hearing loss. However, they often report that their training and experience do not provide them with the background necessary to address the demands of teaching deaf and hard of hearing students who present with additional learning challenges.

The webinars discussed how needs of these children with particular challenges can be identified and the development of strategies to address these.

Maximising Auditory Performance for Children with Auditory Function Disorders

Presenter: Dr Jane Madell (International speaker) in collaboration with the Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children

Dates: 15 & 16 October 2015

Dr Jane Madell presented a two-day workshop which focused on case management.

Discussions included using test information to select an appropriate school placement, determining appropriate school accommodations, classroom observation to determine needs and assisting school personnel in maximising performance of a child with an auditory function disorder.

Auditory disorders other than hearing loss were also discussed, including auditory processing disorders, auditory attention and auditory learning disorders.


Implementing the IMP (Infant Monitoring of Vocal Production)

Presenter: Dr Robyn Cantle-Moore in collaboration with the Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children

Date: 21 October 2015

The Infant Monitor of Vocal Production (IMP) (Cantle-Moore, 2004) was primarily conceived as a parent education tool, to scaffold parent understanding as to the nature and pace of their infant's vocal progress toward speech.

Clinically, the IMP is a normed instrument to document and assesses when (or whether) an infant's innate vocal behaviours transition to audition-led imitations of speech and salient words. The resulting shared parent and professional knowledge aids timely decision-making regarding appropriate device fitting and/or a language habilitation approach.



Assessment of Children and Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing: Introduction to the Neale Analysis and the YARC

Presenter: Kate Leigh

Date: 22 October 2015

Kate Leigh presented a workshop for teachers and professionals on use of the York Assessment of Reading Ability and the Neale Analysis of Reading Ability with students who are deaf or hard of hearing.

The workshop focused on the value of each tool in assessing and monitoring the reading development of students, and how the results can inform goal setting and strategies for supporting literacy development.

Participants had the opportunity to observe administration procedures, and scoring and interpretation of the results; and to discuss queries about translating test results into appropriate goals and teaching strategies. This comprehensive workshop received very positive feedback from the participants.

Classroom Acoustics

Presenter: Rebecca Bull in collaboration with the Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children

Date: 23 November

A workshop was presented by Rebecca Bull in November on how classroom acoustics affect learning environments for children who are deaf or hard of hearing, and strategies that can reduce the effect of adverse factors such as reverberation and noise. An overview of the existing standards, guidelines and recommendations was also provided.

The workshop was presented by Rebecca Bull, research fellow at the Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children (RIDBC) Renwick Centre, Sydney.

Practical Strategies for Visiting Teachers of the Deaf

Presenter: Dr Karen Anderson (International speaker)

Dates: 15 & 16 December 2016

A recent study indicated the need for teachers of the deaf to be aware of a range of formal and informal assessments to define current learning needs, and how to relate these findings to the development of specific measurable goals. Due to the access barriers created by the hearing loss, students require specific skill-building and to make appropriate accommodations if they are to progress at the same rate as class peers.

Dr Karen Anderson presented a two-day workshop on data-gathering for planning, monitoring progress, and improving outcomes. Ideas for skill-building were shared and written materials were provided by the presenter to support these topics.

Coaching and Mentoring Courses

Coaching and Mentoring Advanced Pedagogy in Signed Language One Year Program

(Dr Breda Carty) - Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children

In 2015, VDEI introduced a new intensive coaching and mentoring course in partnership with the University of Newcastle and the Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children (RIDBC). The purpose was to develop advanced knowledge and a high level of competence in the use of signed language for pedagogical purposes.

The program was structured over a full year and was delivered by Dr Breda Carty from the RIDBC (in affiliation with the University of Newcastle). Three teachers of the deaf from Victorian government schools, working with students whose first language is Auslan were awarded a place in the program via an expression of interest process.

Participants were required to enrol in the University of Newcastle's Advanced Pedagogy in Signed Language non-award program during Terms 1 and 2. This included participation in an online blackboard component, and attendance at a three-day professional learning program at VDEI.

Terms 3 and 4 focused on intensive online mentoring. Breda Carty provided one-to-one online mentoring of participants, convened group video conference discussions, and provided

one-to-one analysis of filmed teaching instruction to inform participants' teaching strategies. Participants were also required to contribute to discussions based on professional readings, and to keep an individual reflective journal.

During the year, participants were taught how to challenge students who are deaf or hard of hearing to strategically develop their linguistic and cognitive skills; and how to plan conversations with students rather than focus primarily on direct instruction, including how to 'listen' and wait for the student's response. The teacher then builds on the response to extend the student's understanding of a subject. Teaching written English with Auslan instruction was a specialty of this professional learning program.


VDEI is supporting a further Coaching and Mentoring: Advanced Pedagogy in Signed Language course in 2016.

Coaching and Mentoring Auditory-Verbal Therapy Three-year program

(Cheryl Dickson)

In 2015, VDEI introduced a new Auditory-Verbal Therapy (AVT) three-year Coaching and Mentoring course. Five Victorian teachers of the deaf received intensive coaching and mentoring to improve their teaching of students who are deaf or hard of hearing and who use spoken language to communicate. The program is accredited by the AG Bell Academy for Listening and Spoken Language.

Cheryl Dickson provided one-to-one mentoring, convened online discussions, and analysed filmed teaching instruction to inform the participants' teaching. Associate Professor Helen Morrison also provided instruction. Mentoring occurred online



via a learning management system and synchronous webinars. Participants received online lectures, video observation, and teaching guidance.

Topics over the three years include:

- early diagnosis of hearing loss in newborns, infants, toddlers, and young children followed by immediate audiologic management and AVT
- recommending immediate assessment and use of appropriate, state-of-the-art hearing technology to obtain maximum benefits of auditory stimulation
- guiding and coaching parents to help their child use hearing as the primary sensory modality to develop listening and spoken language
- guiding and coaching parents to become the primary facilitators of their child's listening and spoken language development through consistent participation in individualized AVT
- guiding and coaching parents to create environments that support listening for the acquisition of spoken language throughout the child's daily activities
- guiding and coaching parents to help their child integrate listening and spoken language into all aspects of their child's life
- guiding and coaching parents to use natural developmental patterns of audition, speech, language, cognition, and communication
- guiding and coaching parents to help their child self-monitor spoken language through listening
- administer ongoing formal and informal diagnostic assessments to develop individualized AVT treatment plans, to monitor progress and to evaluate the effectiveness of the plans for the child and family
- promote education in regular schools with peers without a disability and with appropriate services from early childhood onwards.

VDEI received applications of exceptional quality for this program. The selection process was competitive and each application was rigorously assessed. The sector is brimming with talent and is enthusiastic about this mentoring and coaching program.

VDEI will support a further Coaching and Mentoring: AVT course in 2016.

Leadership Coaching One-year program

The Leadership Program was designed for those who have recently begun a leadership role or envisaged moving into a leadership role within the deaf education sector in the near future.

The program offered an exciting opportunity for professionals in Victoria working in DET or in non-departmental settings (working in specialist schools, deaf facilities, and early intervention centres or as a visiting teacher) with children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Part one comprised a structured professional learning course to develop leadership skills. Participants were required to identify a structured leadership course at the Bastow Institute of Educational Leadership appropriate to their learning needs, and to use the funding provided to enrol in the nominated course. The length of the course varied according to the course identified by participants.

Part two comprised a five-day professional learning/observation program at specialist settings with current leaders in the field, developed by VDEI in collaboration with the Victorian Deaf Education Network.

‘Participants each undertook 20 hours of professional learning consisting of self-paced online learning, and three short face-to-face sessions.’

Inclusion Online

In 2015, VDEI continued to work collaboratively with central and regional staff to present and promote the Inclusion Online - Understanding Hearing Loss course, offered by DET to teachers state-wide.

The course was revamped to update content as well as the operating platform, and participants’ access to course materials was improved. Participants each undertook 20 hours of professional learning consisting of self-paced online learning, and three short face-to-face sessions.

The course looked at:

- how the ear works and what we mean by hearing loss
- the possible effects of a hearing loss on a student’s academic, social and communication skills
- assessment strategies available to assess hearing skills, listening skills, language skills, the classroom environment; and appropriate technology
- the importance of a whole-school approach to supporting students with hearing loss
- teaching strategies to support learning across the curriculum and to maintain a positive learning environment.

Many teachers of the deaf are now trained as tutors for this program and are able to run courses either in person or via video conference, in metropolitan or rural locations.







Research Program

Open Sector Research Grant Scheme: Literacy Intervention Study

The National Acoustics Laboratory, the research arm of Australian Hearing, has embarked on a parent-led Literacy Intervention Study in collaboration with Macquarie University and VDEI. The study is supported by VDEI's annual competitive open sector research grant scheme.

Learning to read is an important skill for all children. Children who are deaf or hard of hearing typically struggle with phonological awareness skills, but little is known about the benefits of explicit phonological awareness instruction within this group.

The National Acoustics Laboratory has been carrying out research on the effectiveness of explicit phonological awareness intervention for children who are deaf or hard of hearing with promising results. Children participating in the explicit instruction program have shown greater improvements in their phonological awareness skills than those not receiving this instruction.

The project focused on intervention provided by trained speech professionals. The next stage of the research investigated the effectiveness of the same type of intervention within the home environment. The study is being conducted by Jodie Belshaw (Research Speech Pathologist) as part of research being carried out at The National Acoustics Laboratory by Dr Megan Gilliver (Project Leader), and focuses on children with a bilateral hearing loss, aged between 4-5 years, who have not yet started school.

The program consists of a four-week home-based intervention using interactive apps to teach pre-reading skills (e.g. rhyming, sound blending). The National Acoustics Laboratory lends families a tablet computer with apps to use at home for the duration of the intervention. Parents were given suggestions and training on how to use the tablet with their child but have the freedom to decide how and when to work through the games. Results of the study provide more information about the development of phonological awareness in children who are deaf or hard of hearing, and how we can best support parents to assist their children learn this important skill.

VDEI Assessment Protocol

The assessment protocol commissioned by VDEI is nearing completion. Following on from the Individual Learning Plans project an Assessment Protocol was commissioned by VDEI and developed by Associate Professor Margaret Brown of University of Melbourne.

The Protocol provides a framework for monitoring the progress of primary and secondary students with significant levels of hearing loss, particularly those using spoken language. Aspects of the protocol are also appropriate for students communicating through Auslan.

The Protocol aims to enhance teachers' understanding of why, how, and when to use particular assessment tools; how to interpret the results in conjunction with other information; how to generate targets for intervention; and how to measure the efficacy of the intervention. In summary, it provides guidelines for teachers to generate data from which to design and implement appropriate interventions and to evaluate these interventions.

Several focus groups were held in 2013-14 at which alternative versions of the draft Protocol for the Assessment of Students who are deaf or hard of hearing were distributed, professionals were invited to provide feedback. Further amendments were proposed with additional assessment materials identified for trialling in schools during 2015.

Professionals recommended that the Assessing Auslan Development tool and the York Assessment of Reading for Comprehension be included in the Protocol.

A number of workshops were held throughout 2015 aiming to support teachers understanding of why and how to use some of the assessments, and how these might inform the Individual Learning Plan for their students. VDEI purchased a basic test battery for all regions to enable teachers to share the resources and trial the use of assessment tools. Further training will be conducted in 2016 with a particular focus on implementation of the Protocol across Victoria together with data analysis, goal development and evaluation.



Social Capital Research

In 2015, VDEI commissioned the National Acoustics Laboratory, which oversees the Longitudinal Outcomes of Children with Hearing Loss study. National Acoustics Laboratory conducted two studies related to social capital. Social capital is the benefit people derive from relationships – either group relationships or individual relationships. National Acoustics Laboratory seek to understand how adolescents (aged 11-15) use and gain social capital with their language, literacy, and psychosocial skills.

An online survey included questions about the participants' social networks and support such as: access to services, online interaction, school and community participation, and healthcare.

The National Acoustics Laboratory further seek to understand their parents' social capital and how this empowers families. VDEI's hypothesis is that the stronger the family social capital and the adolescent social capital, the more positive the student's educational experience which improves outcomes for children and young people who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Educational Support for Students with Significant Hearing Loss: Policy and Practice

In 2015, VDEI commissioned University of Melbourne to write an Australian Research Council (ARC) Linkage Grant for joint submission. The ARC Linkage Grant submission aligns with recommendations in these three key reports: 2015-16 Program for Students with Disabilities Review Report; 2012 Victorian Auditor-General's Office Programs for Students with Special Learning Needs Report; and the 2012 Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission's Held Back Report. Each report recommends evidence-based research regarding the outcomes of students with disabilities.

The proposed ARC Linkage Grant aims to identify how the student support team influences educational outcomes for students who are deaf or hard of hearing. The students' multidisciplinary support team typically includes parents, a teacher of the deaf, and a general education teacher. Other members may include an integration aide, general practitioner, paediatrician, otologist, audiologist, speech pathologist, note taker, and Auslan interpreter.

A Research Advisory Panel was established in 2015 to ensure best research outcomes. Quarterly meetings of the Research Advisory Panel occur throughout the duration of the research.

VDEI is collaborating with three departments at The University of Melbourne: Audiology and Speech Pathology, Melbourne Graduate School of Education, and the Department of Otolaryngology in this ARC Linkage Grant.

Systematic Review of Literature

Since the introduction of bilingual education in schools for the deaf in Victoria from the mid-to-late 1980s, there has been no agreed definition of terms. 'Bilingual/bicultural' was the term first adopted in the literature, particularly in the United Kingdom and the United States. As further research occurred and comparisons were made between bilingual programs used with hearing children and bilingual programs used with children who are deaf, the term 'sign bilingualism' was adopted. More recently the term 'bimodal/bilingualism' has been adopted in recognition that there are two languages being considered - English and Auslan, and two modes, oral and sign.

There is currently no established definition of 'bimodal/bilingual' in the context of deaf education in Victorian schools. Consultations with academics, allied organisations and schools

specialising in deaf education is needed to agree on a define the meaning of 'bimodal/bilingual' in Victorian schools teaching children and young people who are deaf or hard of hearing

In 2015, VDEI commissioned the Melbourne Graduate School of Education to complete a systematic review of literature of literacy strategies used in bimodal-bilingual education of children and young people who are deaf or hard of hearing. The review will identify the latest research in the international deaf education field and provide up-to-date knowledge on literacy learning strategies for children and young people who are deaf or hard of hearing and whose preferred language is signed language. This systematic review of literature is the first step in developing a shared definition of bimodal/biculturalism.

VDEI will make this systematic review of the literature available on its website.





Resource and Technology Program

Post-school Transition Narrated Power Points

Dr Renee Punch developed two sets of narrated PowerPoint presentations for VDEI. The first one is for careers practitioners and other professionals supporting students who are deaf or hard of hearing with transition preparation and career guidance. It covers transition needs for adolescents who are deaf or hard of hearing, including identity issues that can arise at this time, self-advocacy skills, and specific supports available in postsecondary education and training and in employment.

The second set of PowerPoint presentations is designed for parents. It covers ways in which parents can best support their adolescent who is deaf or hard of hearing through the career decision-making and transition process, self-advocacy skills, and postsecondary education, after training and employment supports and resources.

In these presentations, there is a strong emphasis on the specific self-advocacy skills that are essential to the post-school success of young people who are deaf or hard of hearing.

These skills include:

- understanding their own hearing loss and strategies to address their communication challenges
- best use and maintenance of their hearing aids, cochlear implants, and any other listening devices
- awareness of appropriate accommodations in workplace and postsecondary education settings
- ability to identify and access technological and other supports and accommodations
- understanding their legal rights in postsecondary education and the workplace
- knowing when and how to request help
- knowing how and deciding when to disclose their hearing loss.

The Power Point can be accessed in the resource section of the VDEI website.

Adaptation of Transition Resources Project

Research-based evidence suggests explicit transition planning and instruction addressing deafness-specific issues is essential to improve post-school education and employment outcomes of students who are deaf or hard of hearing.

In 2015, Dr Renee Punch presented a series of face-to-face seminars, webinars and resources to assist students transitioning from school to work or tertiary study. During this process it became apparent that some well-developed materials on the transition process could be adapted for use Australian schools.

As a result, VDEI commissioned Dr Punch, in collaboration with two teachers of the deaf, to adapt some well-known existing transition resources that teachers will be able to use in preparing students who are deaf or hard of hearing for transition from school into tertiary education or the work place.

Captioning VDEI Caption Centre at Bendigo South East College

The VDEI Caption Centre continues to produce high quality captioned materials for senior secondary students who attend school in Victoria. Further funding of the Centre was approved in 2015 for the 2016 year.

Originally set up as one of the resource development projects in 2011, the Centre has continued to perform a valuable role in captioning educational media used by schools to enable full access to the curriculum by students who are deaf or hard of hearing, and also to provide support materials.

The VDEI Caption Centre is located at the Bendigo Deaf Facility at the Bendigo South East 7-10 College campus. It is staffed by two part-time captioners who implement the complex captioning process. A transcript is made of the material to be captioned, which is then carefully aligned with the visual image to ensure that the written text matches the spoken text.

Information about accessing captioning services is available on the VDEI website.



Real-Time Captioning

An evaluation of the VDEI Real-Time Captioning Pilot Program was completed in 2015.

Real-time captioning provides an almost instantaneous visual display of teacher and student spoken language as it occurs in the classroom. Through the use of a microphone attached to a transmitter, speech is transmitted over the internet to a remote captioner. Speech is then translated into text and sent back to the students via the internet, usually within seven seconds. Captions can be displayed on an interactive whiteboard, on a student's laptop or iPad.

Real-time captioning was trialled by VDEI in three pilot programs between April 2011 and December 2014. The second and third pilot programs were funded by the More Support for Students with a Disabilities National Partnership initiative. All pilot programs utilised voice-to-text technology. Real-time captioning was provided as an additional support for senior secondary students who are deaf or hard of hearing, to ensure full access to curriculum information and class discussions. The trial aimed to improve students' access to curriculum; boost student literacy levels, inclusion, engagement and participation with peers and educators in classrooms; and support home-based learning through the provision of transcripts.

Over fifty secondary school students who are deaf or hard of hearing across Victoria participated in the real-time captioning pilot programs. The students accessing the program attended specialist schools, specialist deaf facilities within a mainstream school and a mainstream school. The pilot programs provided captioning for each student in two subjects for periods between six months–two years six months.

VDEI contracted the Melbourne Graduate School of Education at the University of Melbourne to evaluate the effect of providing real-time captioning for students who are deaf or hard of hearing. The evaluation methodology was developed in collaboration with sector stakeholders in 2011. The evaluation focused on outcomes related to: access to curriculum materials, inclusion in the learning process through enhanced access to communication, home based learning and literacy levels.

The overall finding of the evaluation was that real-time captioning facilitates access to instruction and classroom discourse. The results showed that real-time captioning is acceptable to and, moreover, embraced by the vast majority of participating students and teachers. It found that for some

students real-time captioning has the potential to facilitate a higher level of engagement in learning by increasing their opportunity to learn, which may increase student motivation, facilitate interactions with hearing peers and support participation in classroom discussion. The evaluation concluded that real-time captioning can be seen as a potentially valuable tool to support the curricular and social inclusion of deaf/hard of hearing students within mainstream education settings.

C-Print

C-Print is a captioning (speech-to-text) technology service developed at the National Technical Institute for the Deaf. It provides a text display of spoken information in real time which allows access to information during classes. The notes can also be used afterwards for revision, review and as a focus for teaching. C-Print is a keyboard-based system which utilizes a trained service provider - usually within the school - or in the classroom. The captionist uses text-condensing strategies rather than providing a verbatim transcription.

The 2015 C-Print project was an extension of the program that commenced in Term 4, 2014. Funding provided to trial schools allowed captioning services to be made available to students in years 10-12 in Terms 2 and 3, 2015. The support provided included: online training, captioner and coordinator provision, equipment and IT support. Students involved in the trial were provided with C-Print captioning in 80 per cent of the timetabled classes for two subjects, and received captioning either on an iPad, a netbook, interactive whiteboard or laptop computer.

An evaluation of the program commenced in 2015 using the framework devised for the Real-time captioning (RTC) evaluation. Components of the evaluation include: literacy evaluation, surveys for staff and students, a school data audit and interviews. The evaluation, which will also include a comparison of RTC and C-Print captioning, is expected to be completed by February 2016.



Program for Students with Disabilities Review

In 2015, VDEI lead a review of the Program for Students with Disabilities. The focus of this Review was to investigate how schools can best maximise the learning of all students with disabilities. More specifically, this report focused on reviewing the Program for Students with Disabilities, which delivers supplementary funding and resources to Victorian government schools to support students with disabilities.

As a result of extensive research and consultation, the Review identified several limitations with the current structure and approach to supporting Victorian students with disabilities. The Review identified 20 key findings and made 25 recommendations with a view to providing better outcomes for students with disabilities. Finding themes include:

- how to make schools inclusive for students with disabilities
- staff capability and capacity to support students with disabilities
- identification, assessment and planning for students with disabilities
- effective approaches to resourcing schools to support students with disabilities
- accountability mechanisms for achieving outcomes for students with disabilities.

Inclusive Education Workforce Capability Project

In 2015, VDEI lead in collaboration with academics, inclusive education content experts, and the Victorian Institute for Teaching, the Inclusive Education Workforce Capability Project (the Project). The Project investigates the professional learning required to help teachers make classrooms inclusive of all learners. Evidence-based research informs every aspect of the Project, which includes:

- a literature review of evidence-based inclusive education initial teacher training and the ongoing professional learning
- an inclusive education learning needs analysis online survey - released in April 2016, and provided every registered teacher in Victoria the opportunity to identify their personal learning requirements related to teaching children and young people with disabilities
- a scoping study of professional learning opportunities available in 2016 in Victoria
- a feasibility study and business case for the proposed Victorian Inclusive Education Institute
- an Inclusive Education Workforce Capability strategy, which will be synthesis of the Project and a series of options for consideration.







Working Together in 2015

Strategic Partners

VDEI is co-located with the Victorian College for the Deaf (VCD). Angelique den Brinker, its Principal, and her entire staff have been a strong support to the VDEI, its vision and mission. It is a joy to work alongside VCD's students, staff and parents.

The Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children (RIDBC) has been a partner of the VDEI since its inception. Professor Greg Leigh, RIDBC Renwick Centre Director and Ms Trudy Smith generously collaborate with VDEI to ensure world-class professional learning opportunities are available to Victorian deaf education practitioners.

Associates

Many colleagues and associates work with VDEI to deliver its Professional Learning Program, Research Program and Resource and Technology Program. These associates include, but are not limited to:

Victorian government, independent, and Catholic schools and early childhood centre

- Arts Access Victoria
- Australian Sign Language Interpreters Association Victoria
- Australian Association of Teachers of the Deaf (Vic)
- Australian Communication Exchange
- Australian Hearing
- Aurora School

- Aussie Deaf Kids
- Catholic Education Office
- Cochlear Implant Clinic
- Deaf Australia
- Deaf Children Australia
- deafConnectED at Melbourne Polytechnic
- Deaf Victoria
- Deafness Forum
- Deafness Foundation
- Deakin Institute
- Early Education Program for Hearing Impaired Children
- Hear For You
- Independent schools
- La Trobe University
- Murdoch Children's Research Institute
- National Acoustics Laboratory
- Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children
- RMIT University
- Taralye
- Telethon Speech and Hearing Centre
- The Royal Children's Hospital
- The University of Melbourne
- Victorian Deaf Education Network
- Victorian Infant Hearing Screening Program
- Western Australian Foundation for Deaf Children

VDEI Team

The VDEI's team is dedicated, hard-working, and committed to the cause of improving outcomes for children and young people in Victoria who are deaf or hard of hearing.

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Jeannie Cozens

Sue Ferriman

Marie Fram

Shaun Goodwin

Dr Paul Jacobs

Laura Madden

Anthony Melhem

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*Maximising the learning potential
of every child living in Victoria who
is deaf or hard of hearing.*



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