# Supporting inclusive education in classrooms

**Annalise Balsamo:**

Hello. I'm Annalise Balsamo; I'm the English curriculum manager at the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, or the VCAA. At the heart of the Victorian F-10 English curriculum is the exploration of texts of all forms and in all modes. Students engage with texts in their English classrooms as readers, as viewers, as listeners, and as creators. We are committed to inclusive practice and providing opportunities for Victorian students to meaningfully engage with the curriculum.

And so we're proud to be working with the Vision Australia Library to support students living with print disabilities, to access print texts in audio form. The Vision Australia Library has thousands of books, magazines and newspapers in audio format available to borrow by anyone living with a print disability. As English teachers, we know that the study of English develops critical and creative thinking as well as literacy.

Engaging with a wide range of text through the study of English presents opportunities for children and young adults to both extend their communication skills and to value and reflect on the lived experiences of others. We know that reading and listening to the stories of others builds empathy, compassion and ultimately a more cohesive society. All students, including students with print disabilities such as blindness, low vision and dyslexia, have the right to access texts set for study in their English classrooms, to access a wide range of texts that they can explore for pleasure in their own time and to learn alongside their peers.

And this is why the VCAA will continue to support the Vision Australia Library to provide access to English texts in audio format.

**Victoria Rogers:**

Hello, I'm Victoria Rogers, children and Youth Librarian with the Vision Australia Library. Our library is here to help your students who have a print disability such as blindness, low vision, dyslexia or other physical disabilities that make reading printed text difficult.

Our children's and youth collection includes a full catalog of audio books, embossed Braille and E-Braille titles that support participation in the Premiers' Reading Challenge. High profile books such as Children's Book Council of Australia, notable and award winning books like A Glass House of Stars or Deep Water. Authors like John Marsden, Jay Kristoff and Alice Pung. Texts included in the English literature syllabus such as the Australian Young Adults Anthology Begin, End, Begin.

These books can be borrowed and read using refreshable Braille display devices, MP3 players or the VA Connect app on a mobile phone or tablet. We also hold a large collection of decodable readers with accompanying audio for early readers with dyslexia. For schools, Vision Australia offers additional support services such as on demand transcription, where we produce materials in preferred accessible formats such as Braille, electronic text, large print and of course audio, as well as tactile printed materials.

This service has been used to provide things like tactile maps, textbooks, exam papers and lecture materials. Vision Australia library membership is free and open to Australian residents with a print disability. Our team can help your students join the library. Contact us on 1300-654-656. or email library@visionaustralia.org or go to the Vision Australia website to join online.

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