

Issue 4

Always Learning

Primary

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AUSTRALIAN SCHOOLS EDUCATION MAGAZINE

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Technology is making learning more inclusive than ever

Hamish Curry shares five insights he learned from change

Five teaching tools for digital devices

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IN THIS ISSUE

Welcome to the final issue of Always Learning for 2014. In this issue we look at a few different examples of inclusive learning. What do we mean by inclusive learning? Learning that takes into consideration students with different ability levels, different language or cultural backgrounds, temporary or permanent disability to ensure that all students have the opportunity to learn.

Our feature article on page 2 looks at specific examples of how technology is enabling inclusive learning. A related article on page 10 showcases just a few of the apps that are teaching and learning tools, and can be especially useful for students with special needs. On page 6, Hamish Curry applies the principles of design thinking to share five insights he developed after a major change in his life. Hamish will be presenting for Pearson Professional Learning in October and November – go to the PPL website at www.pearson.com.au/pl to find out more.

We're planning a few changes for 2015, so keep an eye out for the new issue in Term 1 next year. Our survey is still open, so if you have an idea you'd like to contribute to help make 2015 even better, please go to www.pearson.com.au/primary/AlwaysLearningSurvey. Don't forget to subscribe at www.pearson.com.au/primary/alwayslearning/subscribe to make sure you receive your issue.

If the New Year means new contact information, you can update your details at www.pearson.com.au/primary/alwayslearning/update.

And as always, if you have anything you'd like to share with the Always Learning team, you can email us directly at alwayslearning@pearson.com.au.

Thanks for coming on the Always Learning 2014 journey with us! Enjoy term four, and have a safe and happy holiday season. We'll see you in 2015!

INCLUSIVE LEARNING

Children who don't fit into traditional schooling still have a deep need to learn.

02



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BEYOND TECHNOLOGY

What technology can mean for students and teachers collaborating in social learning.

08



DE WISJ. SHUTTERSTOCK

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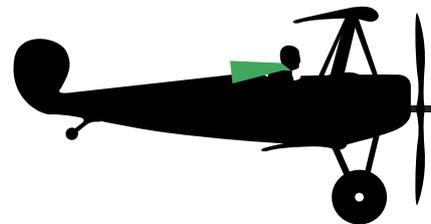
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INCLUSIVE LEARNING

How can we bridge the gap from a diverse range of learners using technology?



Innovations in digital technology as well as new methods of utilising technology are making it increasingly possible for educators to connect with learners who were traditionally difficult to reach.

In 1948, Australia's School of the Air broadcast its first lesson to outback children using the radio network set up by the Royal Flying Doctor Service. The sound may have been scratchy and littered with pauses, but that broadcast heralded a new era: the use of technology to enable inclusive education.

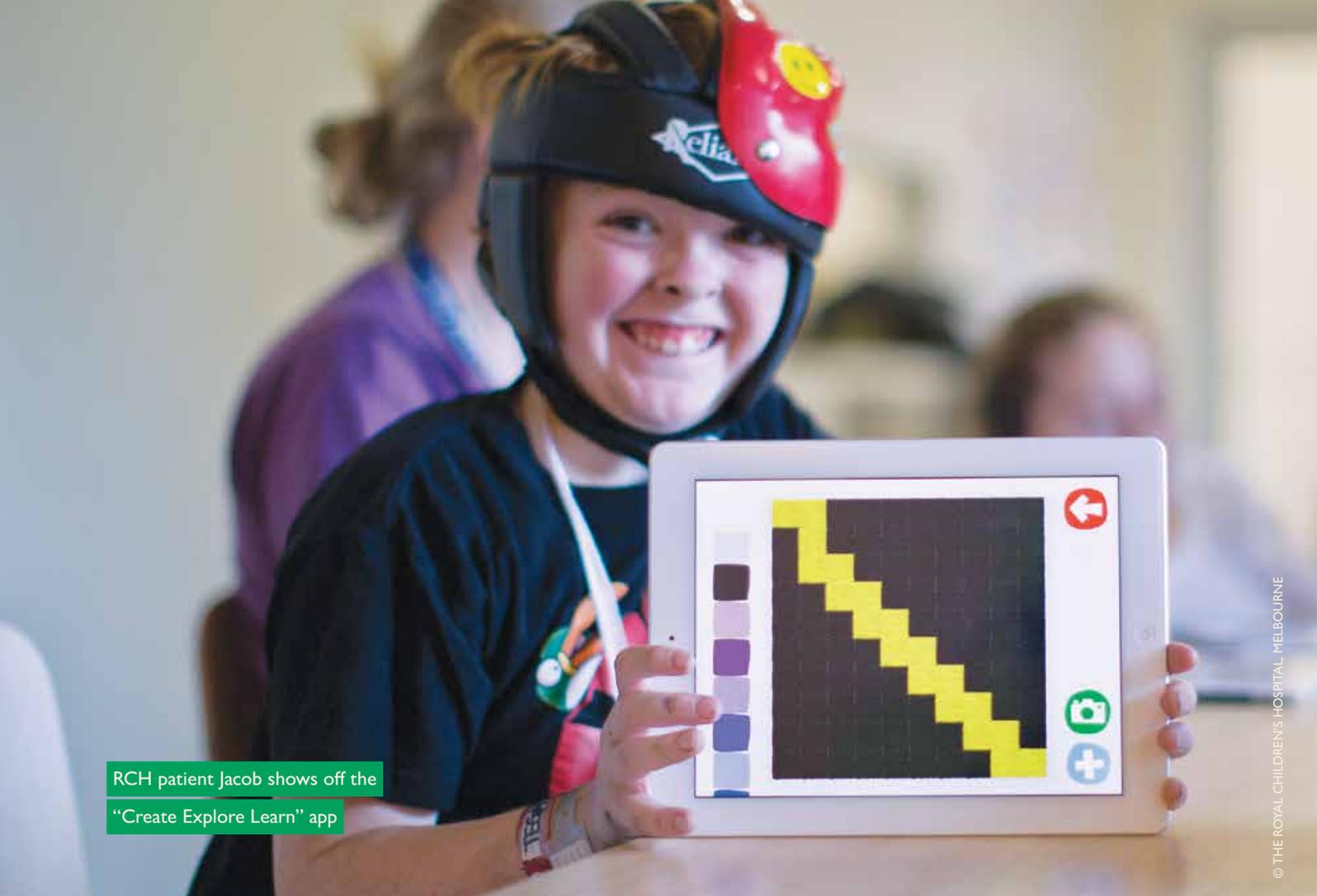
It's not just the tyranny of distance that can disconnect learners from the educational system; non-English speakers, students with disabilities or learning difficulties, as well as those faced with hospitalisation or poverty are all at risk of slipping through the cracks of mainstream schooling. The good news is that educators are increasingly achieving success via the use of digital technology, not only in connecting learners with their school groups, but also in enabling new and inclusive methods of teaching. Perhaps most exciting is research which suggests that mere access to an internet-connected computer, even without a teacher present, can lead to encouraging education outcomes. Indeed, if the development of computer enhanced education continues at its current rate, we may not be far from a future where every child, even those displaced by war or poverty, has access to a global education.

These days, with the use of an interactive two-way broadband satellite network, electronic whiteboards and video cameras, the School of the Air network covers 1.5 million square kilometres via more than sixteen schools located around Australia. Teachers

offer lessons via web cameras while learners interact and respond in real-time. Two-way audio and visual enables learners to hear their classmates and participate in group discussion. Educators are even able to replicate traditional excursions such as Questacon or Science Works when these organisations take a class from one of the school's broadcast centres. Clearly, the gap between the School of the Air and a modern classroom is rapidly closing with the use of digital technology.

For other children, however, distance is only one of their challenges. Teachers at The Royal Children's Hospital (RCH) Education Institute work closely with schools so that children and young people are able to stay connected and engaged in their learning while at the hospital. Laptops are utilised in the triad of home-school-hospital and have been found to connect learners in ways that are 'educational, personally meaningful and social'. Indeed, not only is consistency of education enabled with the use of digital technology but also the ever-important connection with the outside world.

In addition to laptops, iPads are now used extensively with success. Being immediately accessible and engaging, iPads were found to be useful for learners of all ages and abilities, including those with learning difficulties or limited dexterity. This led to the development of an app designed to engage learners with the art-rich environment at The Royal Children's Hospital. Dubbed 'Create Explore Learn' the app encourages learners to engage with existing exhibits within the hospital, such as the Meerkat Enclosure, the Sky Garden mobile and the Robert Ingpen tapestry.



RCH patient Jacob shows off the “Create Explore Learn” app

Glenda Strong, Executive Director at the RCH Education Institute, has a contagious enthusiasm about the app and is keen to expand it over time.

‘It’s clear from the research that when passions are involved, learning outcomes are improved,’ she said. ‘So when you put this app into the hands of children and young people they’re immediately engaged and playing with it, creating environments, making a tapestry of their own.’

The app draws on features regularly used for inquiry by the RCH Education Institute, which has developed teaching resources to align its use with the Australian Curriculum. These resources offer support from Foundation level to Year 10 and cover curriculum areas of History, Science and the Arts. Tellingly, the Education Institute has also found that children from outside the hospital are independently playing with the app, unsupervised and simply for fun.

It was this idea of unsupervised learning that first drove Professor Sugata Mitra to trial the use of freely accessible computers among children in a remote Indian village. Known as the ‘Hole in the Wall’ experiments, the trial began with a computer set up like an ATM, permanently available and in an open setting.

Many of the children had little or no English and had never seen a computer. Initially, they learnt via the process of exploration, discovery and peer coaching.

‘Somehow this was very important,’ said Professor Mitra about the impact of group dynamics on the children’s learning.

While playing, the children picked up crucial problem solving skills and the ability to think critically. In other words, the presence of the computer helped the children ‘learn how to learn’.

After four to five months, having developed a degree of computer literacy, the children became bored with the games and went searching for more. Here it gets interesting: they discovered search engines and begin researching topics of interest to them.

Arun Chauhan was one such student at Shirgoan high school during an early trial. ‘At first I had no idea what to do,’ he said. ‘I had never seen a computer before. Later, I began to use the internet. While surfing one day I came across New Scientist magazine. I was interested in DNA and genetics since childhood. Reading these articles I got more interested. After school, I decided to pursue biotechnology.’

Obviously the more complex the topic, the lower the test outcomes if learners are left on their own. However, simply adding the presence of an adult who encourages and praises the children as they explore has shown to improve test scores by as much as 20 per cent, which in many cases lift the outcome above a pass rate of 50 per cent.

Years of research have led Professor Mitra to conclude: ‘we found that six- to 13-year-olds can self-instruct in a connected environment, irrespective of anything that we could measure. So if they have access to the computer, they will teach themselves, including intelligence.’



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Additional outcomes include improved English pronunciation, improved mathematics and science scores and even the ability to form independent opinions and detect indoctrination.

The trial is ongoing. Around 300,000 children now have access to the technology as a result of more than 300 of these 'learning stations' around India and parts of the African continent.

With such success it's perhaps not surprising that the project has come full circle with learning centres now being trialled in some English schools. Teachers have reported improved retention rates and increased receptivity from students who have access to these freely available terminals.

In enabling learners to take ownership of their journey, technology is at the forefront of the move away from teacher-directed and toward learner-centred education. But perhaps the final words are best left to Professor Mitra: 'Remoteness affects the quality of education. Educational technology should be introduced into remote areas first, and other areas later. Values are acquired; doctrine and dogma are imposed – the two opposing mechanisms. And learning is most likely a self-organising system. If you put all the four together, then it gives – according to me – it gives us a goal, a vision, for educational technology.'

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

If you would like to learn more about the projects and organisations featured in this article, you can find further information on the following websites:

The Royal Children's Hospital
www.rch.org.au/education

School of the Air
australia.gov.au/about-australia/australian-story/school-of-the-air

Hole in the Wall
www.hole-in-the-wall.com

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Thalia Kalkipsakis is a freelance journalist and author of eighteen books for children and young adults.

www.thaliakalkipsakis.com

In every issue, we get a range of opinions on the same key question from different people working in the field of education.

WHAT'S AN EXAMPLE OF INCLUSIVE LEARNING IN YOUR EDUCATION EXPERIENCE?



HAMISH CURRY

**SENIOR CONSULTANT,
NOTOSH LIMITED**

There are many education environments where learning is difficult. Sometimes these severe constraints supercharge opportunities for innovative teaching and learning to emerge. One of the best examples of this is the work of The Royal Children's Hospital Education Institute, whose dedicated and creative team of educators provide stimulating and highly inclusive learning for children with a range of medical conditions and long-term illnesses. It is their core focus on using the arts to enable passionate learning, coupled with the use of a range of ICT tools and strong networks, to take children's experiences to powerful levels that are beyond what people would assume possible in a hospital environment.



AMANDA MORASCO

**CONTENT & LEARNING
SPECIALIST, PEARSON
SCHOOLS AUSTRALIA**

Inclusivity is especially important in the middle school mathematics classroom. The range of abilities in an average, non-streamed class can be seven years; that is, a student might be operating 3.5 years above or below the level expected for their age group. One way teachers can accommodate this is to use rich, open-ended tasks in which all students are able to commence working, and then extend their work as far as they are able. Good tasks are ones where students can be challenged to find multiple answers, to develop a systematic method for finding a complete set of answers, or to summarise any patterns with a rule.

An example task could be: Using the number 4 exactly four times, together with any of the four operations $+$, $-$, \times and \div and a pair of brackets if needed, how many of the numbers from 1 to 100 can you make?

These sorts of tasks have no single answer and are flexible enough to challenge students who already grasp the material while giving teachers an opportunity to assist the learning of less advanced students.



SHANNON HENNIG

**SPEECH-LANGUAGE THERAPIST
AND CONSULTANT, INCLUSIVE
COMMUNICATION LTD**

Growing up, inclusive education was a culture in which teachers asked interesting questions and expected interesting things of students. Everyone was expected to learn and meaningfully participate. There was space for kids to play with ideas and with each other:

I not only was educated alongside kids with disabilities, but also got to know them as people. Danny gave me a huge high five when we crossed the stage to receive our diplomas. When my prom date shyly rang to ask me out, I understood his question because I was so familiar with hearing his dysarthric speech in class. When teachers slowed their speech down by writing what they were saying on the board, I was secretly thrilled. The autistic girl in the front row wasn't the only one feeling like the words were flying past too quickly to catch.

None of this felt remarkable. It just was. It was my normal, and perhaps that exactly is the point.

WHAT TRANSITION TAUGHT ME

Five insights for change using design thinking from Hamish Curry



The last seven months have been full of change for NoTosh's Hamish Curry. In this condensed article from his blog, Hamish uses the principles of design thinking to describe the insights he has gained from this time.

INSIGHT #1 – MAKE SPACE

Our lives are so incredibly full and get more complex as we get older. I have learned that hanging on too long is an unhealthy and unsatisfying way to live. It is the same as knowing when to change tack on a project when there is a better way to do it. Making space helps to reset the mind, opening up deep thinking, and lets opportunity find you.

We cram the lives of young people with so much schooling stuff. When we look at some of the most progressive education systems in the world, very often they're doing the simplest thing: giving kids time to connect with themselves and letting them just be kids. What if learning was about creative ways to 'make space', learning to let go, failing and quitting with grace?

My way of making space was to quit my job while not having a plan for another, the best thing I could have done.

INSIGHT #2 – HAVE A FAIL SAFE

I left my job at the State Library without another job to go to. I had an escape plan: I'd been saving as much money as I could to take a holiday with my family. The holiday made me realise that I wasn't ready to go back into school. How could I contemplate teaching in an established school when I'd spent nearly seven years designing one with colleagues and kids? I'd left the Library feeling proud of what I'd achieved and mindful that the environment wasn't exciting me as it had done before.

I set upon finding that next 'wave', which translated into heaps of coffees with people, who weren't necessarily going to give me a job, but could give me insight and honesty. In making that space, ideas and connections formed, ideas that have changed me.

Your escape plan may look different to mine, but take the time to find it – whether it's money you've saved, holidays you're owed, or amazing conversations to be had. But there's a key tenet to this Insight that makes it work...

INSIGHT #3 – FIND PEOPLE WHO TRUST YOU

Everything comes back to trust. Schools and businesses operate the same at their core: if leaders don't trust those that work for them, it's revealed in the rules and blocks put in place. If students and employees don't trust their teachers or leaders they will never show commitment or creativity. They know it isn't valued. I consider myself fortunate to have worked with people who can give me honesty and confidence. People who go with an idea or program I'm pitching because they trust my judgment, my insights, my ability. Very often all you need is one.

INSIGHT #4 – GIVE AND INVEST

When I left the Library I gave myself to almost any idea or opportunity coming my way, it didn't matter whether it was paid or not. One of the opportunities offered to me was to help curate and program the first Do Lectures Australia. I had little idea that it would be one of the most amazing event experiences I've had. I recognised very quickly that while it was unpaid, I would be well rewarded in the networks, ideas, and people I'd get to connect with.

I also attended events that fed my creativity and networks. I pulled back from social media, making space which allowed me to give of myself and invest in myself negating the need to look for this online.

INSIGHT #5 – BE PREPARED TO START AGAIN

The times I'm most proud of as an educator are when I threw out convention and assumption and started again, often with successful programs that already worked. Why do the same again if it already worked? Simple, it will never be the same again, especially if it involves people. If it didn't work, then you're already committed to starting again.

I don't think NoTosh would have come knocking had I not created space to rethink things and reconnect with myself. I wasn't sure that I was someone who would use design thinking to help evolve education. It was like starting again, but with the knowledge that I had the trust and support of people around the world.

Hamish Curry will be presenting at the National Learning and Teaching Conference 6–8 November in Brisbane.



HAMISH CURRY (NoTosh)

A teacher in a recent workshop was astonished that I had only been teaching design thinking for three months; she thought I'd been doing it for years. What I tell educators now is that I have been, I just didn't know it.

Design thinking isn't a science, or a philosophy. It simply affirms a process that sits at the heart of all good learning experiences and that you'll find in these five insights.

You can read the full-length original post at www.hamishcurry.com and follow Hamish on **Twitter @hamishcurry** and **Google+ google.com/+HamishCurryNoTosh**.

Find out more about NoTosh at their website <http://notosh.com>

BEYOND TECHNOLOGY

Teachers, students and social learning



Shilpi Niyogi has worked in the US education market for nearly 25 years, and with Pearson for the last six of those. She took some time out to reminisce on how things have changed...but found herself thinking that, in many ways, things haven't changed that much at all. And what a good thing that is! Connect with Shilpi on Twitter at @nsndc.

I was recently asked what has been the impact of all the technology we use to teach and learn, and the question made me think about one of my favourite and most demanding teachers, Walter Belfield, my 10th grade U.S. history teacher at Cherry Hill High School West in South Jersey.

Mr. Belfield was inspired to become a teacher by the 1957 launch of the Sputnik satellite by the Soviets and had studied at Dickinson College and the Fletcher School at Tufts. He thought most Americans had little sense of history and he assigned us a variety of original and scholarly texts to teach us there were many perspectives and interpretations of the meaning of the past. The class was fast-moving, extending from pre-Revolutionary War America to just after World War II. Even though he had a lot to cover, Mr. Belfield almost never resorted to the kind of dates-battles-and-presidents lectures that make many students think history is a boring recitation of irrelevant stories from the past. The few times he did lecture, he started class almost apologetically, saying, "I'm going to talk at you today."

Mr Belfield's class came to mind because I think the real innovation that education technology is providing is to make classrooms more

like his. By that I mean learning is becoming more social. In his class we discussed, we wrote, we shared our analysis of what we read, and we collaborated on projects. The class was rigorous. It was as fun and engaging and as memorable as it was challenging.

Great teachers and education researchers have long understood that learners are not passive recipients of knowledge. We learn best when we're actively making sense of new information and interacting and talking with the people and environment around us. Not only do we become more knowledgeable, we also develop as human beings. We learn to ask questions, listen to the ideas of others, and share our own. We learn about teamwork and cooperation as well as how to argue constructively. Parents send their children to school to learn those social behaviours as much as they want them to gain knowledge and skills. And those are also critical skills in the modern workplace.

The skills that will increasingly be held in high regard will be those that cannot be replicated by computers; roles that require what we refer to as '21st century skills' – creative skills; thinking skills; skills at working together and communicating with others. As Pearson's chief executive John Fallon said recently: 'Schools, universities and companies are working together to foster the creativity and collaboration we humans will need to set us apart.'

Educational technology has the potential to greatly enhance social learning and we've already seen some of its potential. For example, the OpenClass learning management system (LMS), Google Docs, Dropbox, and other cloud-based applications create workspaces



RIMDREAM, SHUTTERSTOCK

everyone on a team can access at the same time. Skype and Google Hangout allow students to do homework or work on projects face-to-face without leaving home. Teachers can set up wikis to organize the knowledge discovered by an entire class. These tools change the nature of teaching. Instead of being the person at the front of the room 'talking at' students, the teacher becomes an orchestrator of learning, drawing out unique contributions from each member of the class. Students assume greater autonomy over, and shared responsibility for, their learning.

Paradoxically, the social learning aided by educational technology also frees up time for teachers to work with students one-on-one.

Patterns revealed in data generated by students studying online help teachers identify their strengths and weaknesses and recommend personalized lessons and activities.

Some critics fear the primary purpose of technology is to replace teachers with machines designed to help individual students zoom from kindergarten to the Ivy League as efficiently as possible. What deserves more attention is the potential of technology to enhance how humans learn best, through social interaction, so that classrooms of the future will continue to include learning experiences like the memorable ones Mr. Belfield provided for me back in South Jersey.



DE VISU, SHUTTERSTOCK

"THE SKILLS THAT WILL INCREASINGLY BE HELD IN HIGH REGARD WILL BE THOSE THAT CANNOT BE REPLICATED BY COMPUTERS; ROLES THAT REQUIRE WHAT WE REFER TO AS '21ST CENTURY SKILLS' - CREATIVE SKILLS; THINKING SKILLS; SKILLS AT WORKING TOGETHER AND COMMUNICATING WITH OTHERS."

ALWAYS LEARNING • DIGITAL

LIFESTYLE



5 DIGITAL RESOURCES FOR INCLUSIVE LEARNING

Advances in technology have enabled great leaps forward in making learning accessible and inclusive for everyone. In researching this article we have barely scratched the surface of the wealth of amazing programs, applications and resources available to help students with special learning needs. View the online version of this article on the Always Learning Newsroom for links to a few of the resources we tapped to research this selection.

01 ARTIKPIX

Price: Free, additional flashcard packs from \$2.49

Devices: iPhone, iPad, iPod Touch

Use flashcards with different sounds as a practice aid for speech development. Users can build their own decks, and even create their own cards. The app comes with four free decks with additional decks as in-app purchases, or the full set of more than a thousand cards is \$37.99.

Find out more at expressive-solutions.com/artikpix



02 WORDBOOK

Price: \$2.99 (dependant on platform)

Devices: iPhone, iPad, iPod Touch, Touch Pad, Windows devices, Android devices

Synonyms, antonyms, anagrams, oh my! This comprehensive dictionary and thesaurus has practical features like phonetic pronunciation guides, interesting features such as etymologies for the root words, and fun stuff like the Word of the Day.

The professionally recorded pronunciation for every single entry is just one of the invaluable tools for EAL/D students in this slick and intuitive app.

Find out more at www.trancreative.com



03 iEARNEDTHAT

Price: Free

Devices: iPhone, iPad, iPod Touch

Simple, easy to use and interactive, iEarnedThat is a tool to help motivate and reward struggling students. Use a photo or take a picture of a tangible reward, then the app turns it into a jigsaw. Children then earn pieces of the puzzle and work towards achieving the set goal. The free version lets you add up to five children, upgrade to the paid version for \$3.79 to manage larger groups.

Find out more at www.earnedthat.com



04 RIDBC AUSLAN TUTOR

Price: Free

Devices: iPhone, iPad, iPod Touch

The Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children has an app for teaching Australian sign language using both still and video images to demonstrate the sign. The free version has the Auslan alphabet plus 150 common signs. The full version is \$52.99, and has more the 500 signs, and even more comprehensive learning resources.

Find out more at www.ridbc.org.au/apps



05 DRAGON DICTATION

Price: Free

Devices: iPhone, iPad, iPod Touch

Dragon produce a range of speech recognition software for hand-free text input for mostly business uses. As the name suggests, Dragon Dictation is productivity app with business users in mind. Creative users have already adapted it for the hearing-impaired, as the app can be used for speech-to-text in a classroom setting.

Find out more at www.nuancemobilelife.com/apps/dragon-dictation



DIFFERENTIATED LEARNING WITH MATHSPACE

Mathspace allows students to complete full worked solutions to problems online and receive instant feedback and help at every step. There are an enormous number of exercises to complete, with help available every step of the way, making this an ideal aid for differentiated learning. Pearson have partnered with **Mathspace** to produce **Mathspace for Pearson Mathematics and Australian Signpost Maths** with additional functionality so teachers can customise tasks for the whole class, groups or individual students.

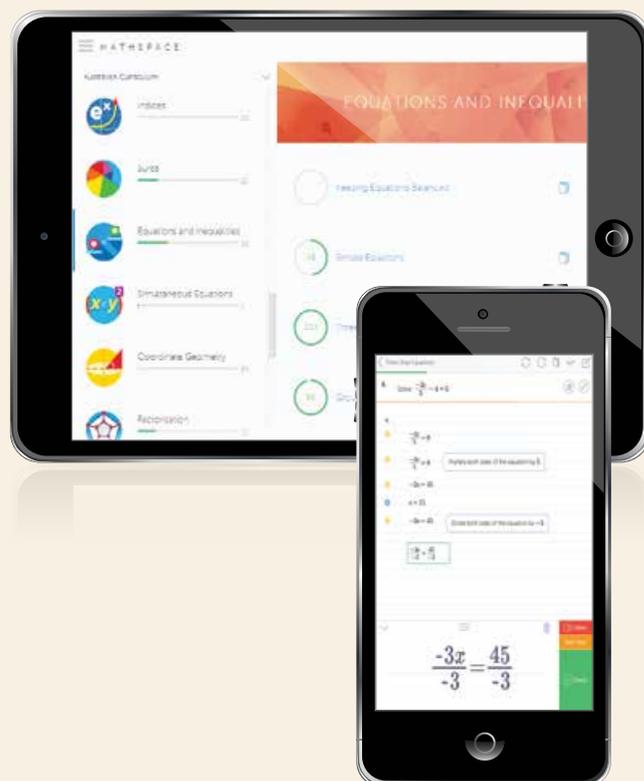
Mathspace for Pearson resources is available from \$19.95.

Find out more at

www.pearson.com.au/secondary/mathspace



MATHSPACE





LITERACY OPTIONS FOR ANY CLASS NEED

Pearson have a suite of products to suit any Australian Curriculum: English requirement your school may have.



Provide your students with the best literacy resources to support their development into confident, effective learners.

Teach your students the knowledge and skills they need so they are able to equip language to fluently express themselves orally or in writing, and to comprehend material they read, see, hear or listen to.

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Teach the Australian Curriculum: English, any topic, your way, your choice

PEARSON ENGLISH 3-6

Student Magazines • Teacher Companions

- *Fiction and Non-fiction Topic Books*
- *Print and Digital Topic Packs*



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Pearson English 3-6 provides you with choices that allow you to create a solution to best fit your classroom. Select from digital, print or blended product solutions and choose content from a selection of eight topics per year level. Pick relevant topics which address your class or school needs and personalise students' learning pathways by selecting differentiated texts and learning activities within each topic.



Guided reading with a digital platform and characters students know and love

BUG CLUB

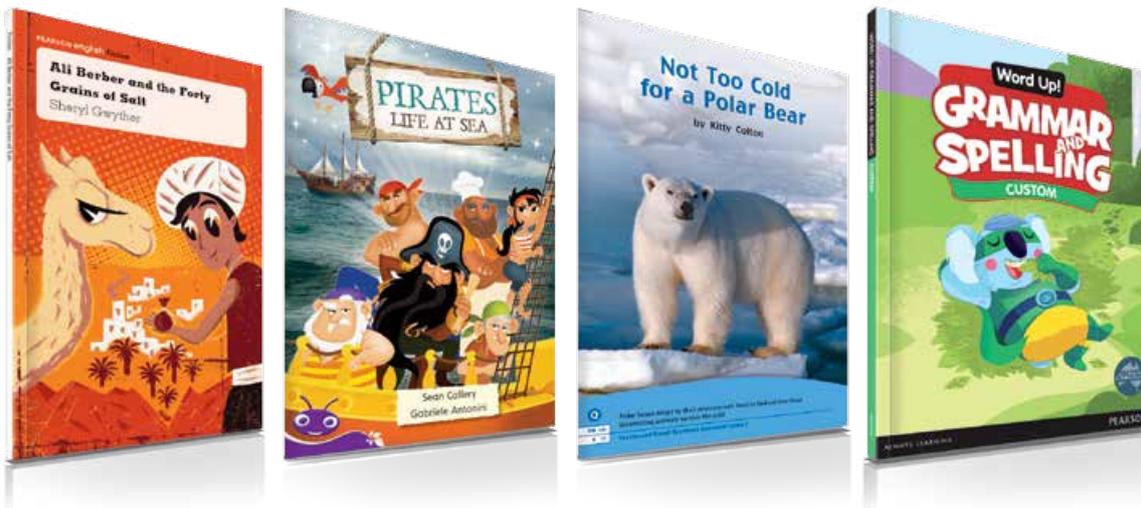
- Fiction & Non-fiction Guided Readers • Comics • Graphic Novels*
- *Phonic Readers • Phonic Fiction Readers • Digital Platform*
 - *Teachers Resources*

Bug Club is an award-winning, blended literacy program that delivers clearly defined learning outcomes for Australian Curriculum: English and caters for all primary students with reading levels 1-30.

The range of components addresses the literacy needs of both traditional and technology-driven schools. The engaging and finely levelled fiction and non-fiction guided readers, comics and graphic novels make up a database of over 300 titles available as printed books or as e-readers accessible through the innovative online platform. The **Bug Club Digital Platform** extends students with over 1000 interactive online quizzes and fun games embedded into the books. Educators are supported with easy book allocation, automated assessment and quick and easy reporting tools.

104 brand new titles for reading levels 1-26 are now available! Two fiction and two non-fiction books per reading level have been added. These will also be available as e-readers on the **Bug Club Digital Platform**.

www.pearson.com.au/primary/english



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BAS 1 (Years F–2) • BAS 2 (Years 3–8)

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Bring struggling readers to year level proficiency

FOUNTAS & PINNELL LEVELED LITERACY INTERVENTION (LLI) SYSTEM

LLI Orange System (Foundation) • LLI Green System (Year 1) • LLI Blue System (Year 2) • LLI Red System (Year 3) • LLI Gold System (Year 4)

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Word Up!

Grammar and Spelling activities and practise for the Australian Curriculum: English

WORD UP! GRAMMAR & SPELLING

Word Up! Spelling Books 1-6 • Word Up! Grammar Books 1-6

Teach Australian Curriculum English grammar and spelling to students of all abilities in Years 1-6. Written specifically for the Australian Curriculum and designed to make teaching grammar and spelling easier, **Word Up!** is a flexible student activity book series that promotes listening, speaking, reading and writing through a diverse range of open and closed activities.

Word Up! Grammar teaches grammar skills sequentially through engaging text types that stimulate critical and imaginative thinking. Grammar features and structures are demonstrated at a word, sentence and text level. Each book includes a grammar glossary.

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RESOURCES FOR THE MATHS CURRICULUM

Numeracy for Foundation through to Year 6 students



Enhance students' personal and work lives with mathematical understanding, fluency, logical reasoning, analytical thought and problem solving skills. Cover the Australian Curriculum requirements and share with your students this essential set of mathematical skills right through primary school and beyond.

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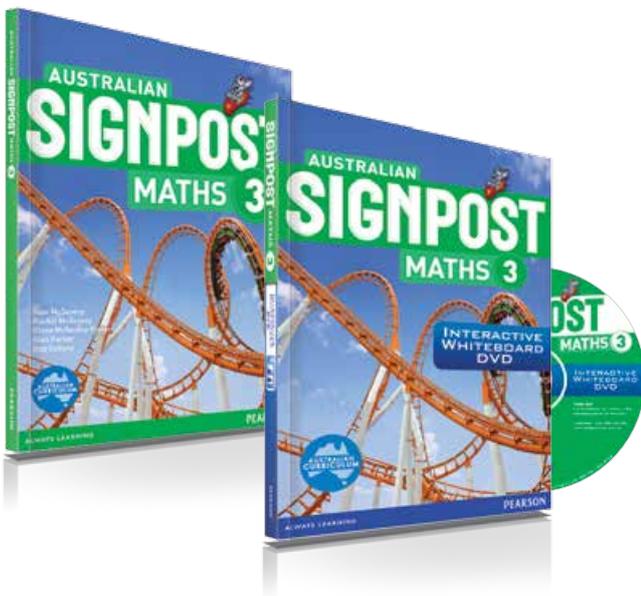
AUSTRALIAN SIGNPOST MATHS

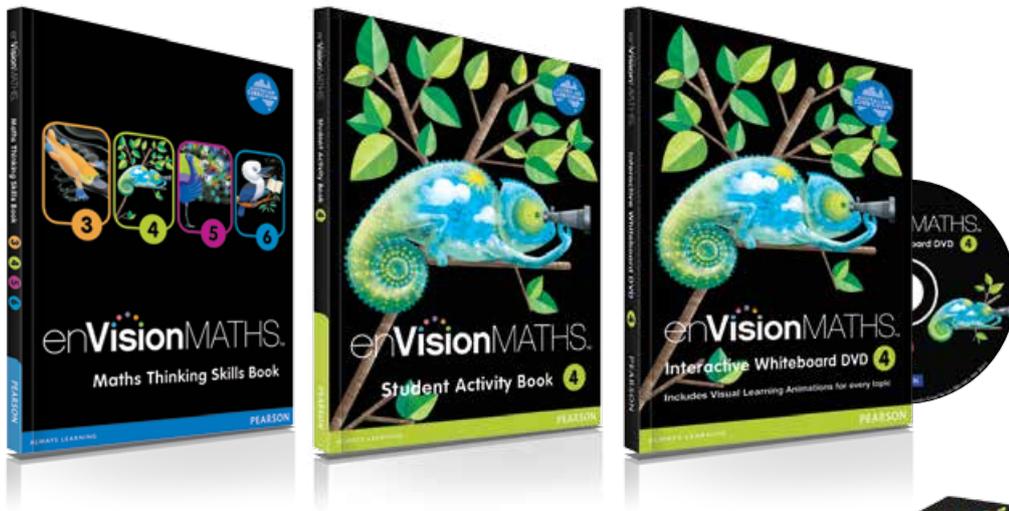
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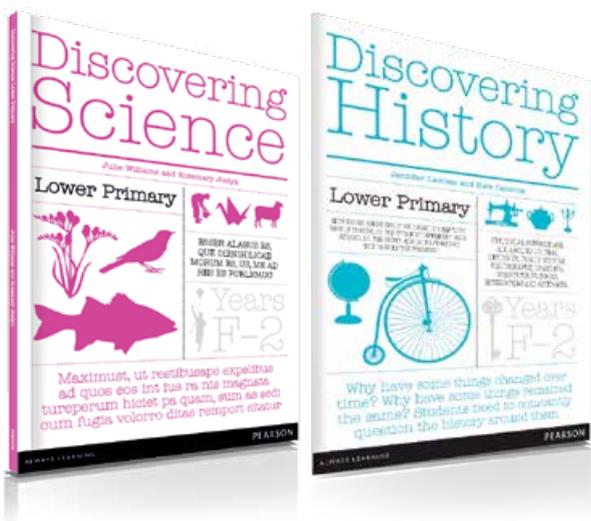
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Teacher Resource Books guide educators through the transition to the Australian Curriculum with clear teaching methodology, pedagogy and professional development.

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