# Community of Practice online learning #3 - Thursday 5th June 2020.

# **Summary:**

The focus of this meeting was ‘Back to Business: Building online learning into our pedagogy’.

After acknowledgement of country, Tricia D’Apice, RIDBC Lead Consultant: Vision Impairment, Remote Services, spoke about the online learning that they have been doing for a number of years at Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children. She supports students with braille, dual media and multiple disabilities. Tricia talked about the importance of goals and resources for students, as well as developing relationships. She had feedback from some of her braille readers who found online learning manageable due access to materials and the pace being more flexible.

We then discussed technological usage going forward in learning. A number of tools have been used; including but not limited to Zoom, Skype for business, Microsoft Teams, Google classroom, One Note, Blackboard collaborate, Education Perfect, Google classroom, WebEx, Class Dojo, Canvas and Storypark. Many of these are accessible. Some are accessible for most things, but certain elements are inaccessible (eg screen share on zoom). Other things depend on how teachers embed the documents within the platform. It was noted that those who took time to teach the platform had greater student success in using them.

Instructional strategies to take forward was the next discussion. As mentioned, understanding the tool and how to use it was incredibly important. I.e. if you are using zoom, how to use it; specifically, this might include HOW to mute and WHEN is appropriate to mute. This explicit instruction was deemed essential. Also how the other tools they are using communicate and work together. E.g. VoiceOver, braille machines. It was also noted that classroom teachers were finding a new awareness/necessity to differentiate for students with vision impairment and had been actively trying to ensure access.

Our final discussion was on the importance of relationships. Participants mentioned

* Class teachers: increase in communication and at times even team teaching for students BVI
* Colleagues: increase in collaborations – communities of practice across states
* Families: new relationships with families as partners
* Students: focus on Competency and autonomy, developing workarounds

As a conclusion we discussed that going forward geographical barriers were now less likely due to knowledge of new tools. We also acknowledged the flexibility of time that online learning had afforded our students.

The **next meeting will be held Tuesday August 4th 2020, 1-2pm AEST, 3-4 pm NZ**.

Kind regards,

Melissa Fanshawe