

**Oregon Deafblind Project
Summer-Fall 2012
Director: Lyn Ayer**

September 2012

Hello everyone!

Wow — the heat certainly caught up with us. Hope everyone stayed cool during those really hot days, and that the rest of vacation time was fun. Welcome back to a new school year! We hope it will be a really good one for each of you.

At the end of July our Parents gathered once again at the Oregon Garden Resort. The weekend was fun and informative. Thank you to Parent Leader Committee for a leading role in organizing the event! And thank you Oregon Dept of Ed for collaborating to make this happen!

Laurie Brooks and Elisha Kirsch displayed AT items on both days, and informed the group about Access Technologies Inc. They have been awarded a new communication-tech project that targets persons with deafblindness specifically. This includes some equipment, training and maintenance etc. Find out more by visiting or contacting them in Salem:

<http://www.accesstechnologiesinc.org/>

By the way, ATI also keeps their eyes open for used equipment that is in good condition — one way to keep costs down for everyone.

Anne Olson-Murphy and Terry Cadigan, Deafblind Consultants from their respective Regional Programs, were the main presenters. They brought a wealth of information to the group — on IEP related topics, home-school relationships, and on technology that they use in the classrooms. All the parents wished they had several more days to interact with the presenters. Thanks, Anne and Terry!

Lyn

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It is a terrible thing to see, and have no vision. (Helen Keller 1880-1968)

BOOK NOOK

When you read this information, I would like you to ask yourself three questions:

1. Why does this apply to children who are deafblind, or children with disabilities?
2. What modifications do I need to make to how we plan a child's education?
3. How can I apply it when teaching?

This article is not about one book, but several books — and websites — that sort through the notion of how to think like the current young generation (whom the author calls “**Digital Natives**”) — or, at the very least, appeal to their style of learning. Let's be real. Some of us (“**Digital Immigrants**” — not born into their generation) have a more difficult time trying to figure things out — from video and other digital type games, the apparent obsessive use of cell phones and tablets, and all the apps now available, and a “different” kind of logic! Marc Prensky appeals to parents and to educators to STOP and take a look at what children learn when they use their phones, or play all those digital games. In fact, I think I will begin by pointing out a couple of things from the author's second book, “Don't Bother Me Mom—I'm Learning”.

CELL PHONES — a good place to start— It's the world's fastest-growing platform for digital tech. Chapter 18 on cell phone use begins with a quote from a Japanese student: “ When you lose your mobile, you lose part of your brain.” In answer to his own sub-heading question: What can children possibly learn from a cellphone? Prensky answers, “anything, if educators design it right”.

Cell phone use is compatible with effective learning. They teach children how to:

- Listen
- Observe
- Imitate
- Question
- Reflect
- Try
- Estimate
- Predict
- Ask “What-if”
 - and also to: **PRACTICE**

In Japan, China and Europe, the cell phone is being used to learn a language — via games, flash cards, dictionaries, and phrase books. There is even vocabulary testing software. Remember that a phone can be used for two- or multi-participant interchanges.

Downloadable apps are plentiful and varied, and becoming more advanced every day. This already allows for voice, text, graphics — and can connect to specially designed spreadsheets and word-processors. There is access to a variety of browsers, fax senders, language programming — and one can even get to one's desktop computer! QR codes allow us to instantaneously connect with a website, or piece of information. One can also take photographs and videos — and share these. Think of what educators can, and are, doing with this!

The embedded GPS system allows cell phones to connect to satellite receivers and can give location-specific information. This clearly has implications for academics such as geography, archaeology, architecture, science, math etc. Look at “Environmental Detectives”, created by MIT:

<http://education.mit.edu/ar/ed.html>

There appears to be constant upgrading of graphics' color and clarity, animation, as well as improvement in sound quality. FlashLite apps on cell phones even include one for learning sign language.

Chapter 15 of the same book uses Covey's "*The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*" to emphasize a point. Prensky opens his chapter with, "Can game playing make your kids more effective?" and then gives examples for each of Covey's habits — the seven habits are divided into two groups, and one that is for both. He points out that each one applies to game playing too:

Individual habits teach persons to:

- Be proactive — DO rather than wait
- Begin with the end in mind—have a clear goal
- Put first things first — immediate and long-term needs are all considered

Group habits teach persons to:

- Think win-win — foster mutual support
- Seek first to understand, then to be understood — communication is vital
- Synergize — find new combinations or strategies that strengthen the group rather than individuals

Combined individual and group habit:

- Covey's last "habit" is to "Sharpen the Saw" — emphasis on continuous improvement, improving existing skills while acquiring new skills.

I love the T-shirt logo in the very first chapter. It says: "**It's not attention deficit — I'm just not listening!**" Another student says, "**Whenever I go to school, I have to 'power down'**". And a father, the President of the Federation of American Scientists, stated, "**The cookies on my daughter's computer know more about her interests than her teachers do.**" I think is very significant. We need to pay much more attention to children's interests and preferences — and to the fact that they are "digital natives". Companies that prepare digital games most certainly do! Prensky appeals to adults to talk to the youngsters. In chapter 6 he outlines how digital natives are different. They:

- **Communicate** differently (instant messaging, chats)
- **Share** differently (blogs, webcams, camera phones)
- **Buy and sell** differently (e-bay, school work)
- **Exchange** differently (music, movies, P2P)
- **Create** differently (sites, avatars, mods)
- **Meet** differently (3D chat rooms, dating)
- **Coordinate** differently (Projects, work groups, MMORPGs)
- **Evaluate** differently (Reputation systems, e.g., Epinions, Amazon, Slashdot)
- **Game** differently (1 on 1, small and large groups)
- **Learn** differently (about "stuff" that interests them)
- **Evolve** differently
- **Search** differently (info, connections, people)
- **Analyze** differently (SETI, drug molecules)
- **Report** differently (Moblogs, Flickr)

- **Program** differently (Open systems, mods, search)
- **Socialize** differently (MySpace, Friendster — now Facebook, Pinterest and other social media)
- **THEY GROW UP DIFFERENTLY**

If you are out of breath reading this long list — read these books! Don't forget how many young parents we have in our field of deafblindness, those young interveners and paraprofessionals who work closely with our children, and — even more so — those "digital native" siblings!

Prensky, in chapter 7, points out that Digital Immigrants (including me — the "older" folk!) think that games are trivial pursuit. Not so with Digital Natives. Many of their games are complex and can take 8 to 100 hours to complete! Because of the complexity, players are able to hone their skills and improve over time. The game designers are smart too. They keep their players coming back because they use what is called "leveling up" — Literally going from one level to

the next — each level being just that much more challenging. The designers also keep the games in what Prensky describes as a "narrow zone between the game's being too hard ("I give up") and too easy ("I'm not challenged at all)". Educators, do you think there's a definite lesson in this for us? Oh for classroom experiences to be this way too!

When playing games, children set their own goals — and these goals are "worthwhile". Tongue-in-cheek, Prensky reminds us, "It hardly needs mentioning that the goals we set for ourselves are the ones we are most motivated to reach!"

We have a whole new "language" to learn! — for Instant Messaging — or other digital systems. Prensky provides this simple list as an example:

http://www.datingagain101.com/shorthand_im.html

Some examples of digital "language"(Ch.20):

ARG = Alternate Game Reality

Avatar = virtual representation of self

Cheat code = changes in rules

Emoticon = contraction of "emotional icon"

IM = Instant messaging

LAN Parties = local area network events

Mods/modding = modifications

P2P = peer to peer

Stalking = finding out about someone

Turtling = going slow in a game

Since he wrote this book, there are a host of sites now where one can go as well to get some idea of how this language might look. For example: <http://tiny.cc/ibikjw> .

There is even a Chat Slang Dictionary and a place to do a search for something you don't "get":

<http://tiny.cc/vhikjw> . Even emotions, expressions, people, characters, animals, objects, actions, are represented by what looks like a bunch of symbols slung together — some of them having a vague resemblance to their meanings:

<http://www.chatslang.com/emoticons/>

About the book:

[The author]... "proves that learning games offer a unique approach to engage their talents and interests while developing critical workforce skills for the 21st century, including strategic thinking, problem solving, collaboration and decision making at the speed of modern business." (Founder and chairman of e-Learning for Kids Foundation)

[The author's] book... "is full of sound, thoughtful advice and information about games and gaming culture. He lays out in simple straight-forward language the case FOR video and computer games. He draws on the best contemporary scholarship in this area and mixes it with his own pragmatic insights...." (Professor of Comparative Media, MIT)

From a teacher and mother: "A bold statement and message to all parents and teachers."

From the Dean of a community college: "A welcome antidote to the hysteria over the effects of digital gaming."

Prensky has several websites you could check into:

www.gamesparentsteachers.com

www.marcprensky.com

www.socialimpactgames.com

Some related books documented by Prensky — who reminds us that there a constant stream of new publications on the topic:

- "What Video Games Have to Teach Us About Learning and Literacy" by Jim Gee
- "Got Game" by Beck and Wade
- "Rules of Play: Game Design Fundamentals" MIT Press (2004) by Katie Salen & Eric Zimmerman
- "Killing Monsters. Why Children Need Fantasy, Super Heroes, and Make-Believe Violence" by Gerard Jones
- "Everything Bad is Good for You: How Today's Popular Culture is Actually Making us Smarter" by Steven Johnson

MARC PRENSKY's books:

Digital Game-based Learning

Don't Bother Me Mom— I'm Learning

Teaching Digital Natives: Partnering for real learning

From Digital Natives to Digital Wisdom

Brain Gain: Technology and the Quest for Digital Wisdom

THE TOOL BOX: The Flipped Classroom and other Options for Learning

Since this issue of the newsletter is about technology, I thought this term might be a good thing to think about, especially the aspects of what happens IN the classroom. What is it? Take a look at the "infographic" at www.brainmeld.org that explains the concept and how it functions, and its "history". The creator of this site was a video game producer before he began creating games to liven up classroom lessons. At the same site, look for the "Video Game Teaching Guides".

Here's what a teacher says:

<http://tiny.cc/hwOpjw>

Here's a news report: <http://tiny.cc/vqOpjw>: -

Another teacher explains "Why I flipped my classroom":

<http://tiny.cc/wzOpjw>

While you watch, think about what this idea can do for inclusive education.

Another person reminds us that flipping is not about technology and videos — and that it does not replace good teaching: <http://tiny.cc/x6Opjw>

And here is a listing of 10 reasons to use technology in education: <http://tiny.cc/wh1pjw>

The author quotes Cheryl Nusbaum-Beach as saying, "Teachers will not be replaced by technology, - but teachers who don't use technology will be replaced by those who do". -

So what might some of the implications be for our classrooms? It is interesting that you will hear about things that we already do in special education as something that technology will enhance for ALL children. For example:

- Allow students to work at their own pace
- Pay attention to different learning styles
- Drill and practice (this is easy when it is "fun")
- Classroom amplification systems

There are tons of ideas "out there" — some that you would have to buy and some that you could actually create. Here are some—directly associated with the equipment; and some that are presented via YouTube or other formats.

DIGITAL SOUND: Let's talk about MUSIC — which many of our youngsters love:

VMI or Virtual music instrument which uses motion-detection technology:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OI5Ia-x8I58&feature=related>

How cool is this!!!

- <http://tiny.cc/3eppjw> "Virtual piano, guitar/banjo/mandolin etc, hammered dulcimer simulator and note mapper lets you write & play back songs thru midi and see the notes animated on a musical staff and scale, piano keyboard, guitar/banjo/mandolin, and hammered ... "

Table for simulation: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r4lGwDnuWUw>

- Non-digital — still fun! A "hang drum"? Take a look:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=endscreen&v=mS8eipuXYWg&NR=1>

OR

<http://tiny.cc/bd79jw>

With a little ingenuity, you can create a hang drum. Search for 'propane tank hang drums' on YouTube!

DIGITAL TOUCH: The sense TOUCH — which has implications for our kids:

Watch and listen to this news from Disney on Disney touch-based Touche Technology:

<http://tiny.cc/7h4pjw> Wow!

Some more sites to look at that give you a "window" into advances in touch technology:

<http://www.elotouch.com/technologies/> This site gives us clues as to what might be possible in the future for our children who are deafblind.

If you would like to know more about Touch Screen Technology, here's an article you can read — "Who Invented Touch Screen Technology?" Not only does it cover a history of this technology, but it also gives us a brief outline of HOW it works:

<http://inventors.about.com/od/tstartinventions/a/Touch-Screen.htm> . You can see how far we've come! You can learn more about how they work from another article, "How do touch-screen monitors know where you're touching?" <http://tiny.cc/tvhrjw>

- **DIGITAL PAINTING** is becoming more advanced every day — from finger-painting to drawing and painting with precise tools.

For example, Corel Painter not only allows you to do all sorts of interesting things — just with your hands. For example, with the Autodesk Sketchbook, you can not only sketch with your fingers, but you can turn the page any way you want, and then you can also color in what you sketch:

<http://tiny.cc/tairjw>

There are even adjustable stands which allow someone to work in a comfortable and ergonomic position, a "pen" (Nibs) that works its magic on the screen, and is set up for ambidexterity. You can rotate the screen and adjust the tilt as needed: <http://tiny.cc/9lirjw>

- Use an iPod Touch to fingerpaint. Watch this person:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=54Q6t3e9xkk>

Watch this person ("Tablet tips and tricks") and how he uses drawing paper over his tablet — to stop the "slipping" with a pen-like device:

<http://tiny.cc/svirjw>

Here's a really great
YouTube video on the "Best art and drawing apps on the
iPad":

<http://tiny.cc/7pkrjw>

Design, produce symmetrical/mirror images, moving objects, fluorescent images — -
endless possibilities for fun! -

You can even try your hand at virtual pottery. -

Watch this person fingerprint Spiderman on his iPod Touch: <http://tiny.cc/z9irjw>

Did you know that you can even use an Amazon Kindle Fire to paint? Here's a sample using a specific
type of stylus. Watch while the person uses the Kindle like you would a notebook:

<http://tiny.cc/wwkrjw>

And then — something like this may be fun too — and all it needs is water in a tray of sorts! Painting
ON WATER?? No kidding! <http://tiny.cc/jgjrjw> I think I could have a lot of fun with this — and
so would kids!

FRAGRANCES AND THE SENSE OF SMELL — DIGITAL TOO?

This one is difficult to do "digitally" - YET — but it is not so far off in the future because some
"digital wizards" out there are already thinking about this and working on how to make it happen:

<http://tiny.cc/ixlrjw> . They talk about "teleofaction" that would allow a viewer to watch TV and
smell what is being viewed. And they also talk about the "Scentsory" phone that will allow you to
see, hear, feel and smell the caller's environment. Or there's a chip card that, used with a
compatible mobile phone, can send scented text and picture messages, as well as smelly ringtones
and games!

Read more about "How Internet Odors will Work". Learn about the **iSmell** — a personal scent
synthesizer.

SENX Scent Device goes one step further. Believe it or not — they are planning to have users not
only download scents, but to print out flavors that can be tasted! Unbelievable! Movies will use
eSmells — and you will be able to smell gunpowder when a canon fires. Keep reading...there are
several other interesting links at the end: <http://www.howstuffworks.com/internet-odor1.htm>

However — for now — there are activities that could be fun and teach a variety of educational
concepts. For example: Here's something that might be fun to do as a group project — it will involve
not just the senses of smell and sight — but, also, using the pulser will provide vibration — and you
can actually hold and feel the end product — AND use it. A lot of concepts in there!

<http://tiny.cc/Ovjrjw> . This is just one example, but it includes a broad variety of concepts:

- Color
- Shape (swirls), cups, bowl, spatula etc.

- Smell
- The functional "process" of soap making,
- Health and the value of washing hands etc
- Taste (ugh!!)
- Vibration and tools that might create it

The concept of a flipped classroom is to, ultimately, make learning more attractive to young people, to do this on their own "techie" terms, and to draw them into educating themselves. We may not have to look too far to determine what children who are deafblind may find fun — while they are learning concepts, functional skills, about their everyday world — all the while communicating with people around them. The flipped classroom emphasizes dialog and discussion as a core of the "in-classroom" experience.

FLIP THAT IEP and all those goals/objectives — so that the whole plan becomes more meaningful!

Books that might be of interest:

- Composition for Young Musicians: A Fun Way for Kids to Begin Creating Music (\$17.95)
- Composing Digital Music for Dummies. (\$18.42; Kindle: \$13.74)
- The Future of Music: Manifesto for the Digital Music Revolution (\$11.30)
- The Beginner's Guide to Computer-Based Music Production (\$17.75)

Check BOOKSHARE's facebook page and stay updated with the AIM center:

<http://www.facebook.com/bookshare>

In her 2008 publication, Susan RoAne (the author) wrote: "Our incredible technical advances have given us better and faster ways to communicate and, unfortunately, additional ways to miscommunicate. "Face to Face" provides guidelines to blend the offline and the online so that we can embrace the opportunity to shine in every in-person, interpersonal interaction."

(Face to Face: How to Reclaim the Personal Touch in a Digital World) \$5.98 from Amazon)

PARENT CORNER

ACCESS and other topics:

New back-to-school resources for parents on AIM: a fact sheet, basics and technical guide:

<http://ht.ly/ddevy>

The August Back-to-School edition of the "Parents in the Know" Newsletter is now available!

<http://p0.vresp.com/tqliAY>

"The power of crowdsourcing helps blind see the Internet":

<http://abclocal.go.com/kgq/story?section=news%2Ftechnology&id=8760115> - Technology is opening out the world of PICTURES, not just words. POET is a free, open-source web tool that lets hundreds of volunteers describe images for blind readers in their spare time. "Just a little extra knowledge about what a picture conveyed can make all the difference," says Turner (a Benetech employee who is visually impaired). Benetech is working with publishers and also with tech companies that could make it easy for anyone to volunteer. "I would love to see somebody sign onto Facebook and have something pop up to say, 'Can you spend two minutes and describe this image?'"

Wrightslaw has a page: "10 tips for a successful school year" (by Pat Howey, Advocate). Briefly, the ten tip headings are:

1. Help your child deal with transitions
2. Reread your child's IEP
3. Meet with your child's teacher(s) to discuss special needs
4. Take extra copies of your child's IEP to the meeting with the teacher(s)
5. Make a list of important things about your child
6. Prepare to deal with potential problems early
7. Resolve old concerns and issues
8. Get a new assessment
9. Go to your school's Open House
10. Get a bound notebook

<http://www.wrightslaw.com/howey/10tips.sch.yr.htm>

More "tips" pages from Wrightslaw: -

10 tips for good advocates: <http://tiny.cc/bm59jw> -

-

10 tips for a successful school year:

<http://tiny.cc/ho59jw>

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10 tips: How to use IDEA 2004 to improve your child's special education:

<http://tiny.cc/vr59jw>

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Wrightslaw also has a related website where you will find articles, checklists, sample letters, charts and resources to supplement their book "From Emotions to Advocacy". There are sub-pages at this site that are excellent. For example, the page titled "The parent as expert". Take a look at this site:

<http://www.fetaweb.com/>

Attention all!

We have two of our Parent Leaders working on information for parents for our website. We are all anticipating that this will be a quick and easy way to answer your questions, connect you to others, and guide you in "next steps". When this is up (we anticipate that will be

before the end of this year), we will send out information on our facebook page, and perhaps also via Pinterest.

THE OREGON DEAFBLIND WORKING GROUP

Richard Smouse — Region one, Eastern Oregon
Colleen McLaughlin—Region two, Central Oregon
Lynette Kleespies— Region three, Southern Oregon
Terry Cadigan — Region four, Cascade Regional
Anne Olson-Murphy — Region five, Willamette Regional
Kate Dilworth — Region six, Columbia Regional
Adelka Shawn—Region seven, Lane Regional
Brenda Satter—Region eight, Northwest Regional
TBD - Oregon School for the Deaf
Dennis Crepeaux— Oregon Commission for the Blind
Amy Parker — NCDB representative, The Teaching Research Institute, WOU
Sue Mathisen — Regional Services, Management Team
Julie York — Oregon Department of Education
Laura Petschauer — Oregon Department of Education
Lyn Ayer — Oregon Deafblind Project, The Teaching Research Institute, WOU

The Oregon Deafblind Project Website: www.oregondb.org

The home page has information about upcoming events; and our newsletters, both current and archived.

Also get information almost daily from our Facebook page:

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Oregon-Deafblind-Project/132672043449117>

We also have our newsletters and other information on our web-page with our partner organization, the Oregon Department of Education:

<http://www.ode.state.or.us/search/results/?id=185>

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