

Admin, LACO

Subject: FW: Transcript corrections and further question

From: ECAWA President

Sent: Friday, 28 August 2020 3:28 PM

To: Committee, Education & Health Standing <laehsc@parliament.wa.gov.au>

Subject: Re: Transcript corrections and further question

Good afternoon,

Sorry for the delay in responding.

Thanks again for the invitation to present our and our members views. I have attached the transcript with one change. I turned on track changes so I hope that is what you need.

I've also found some details about the laptop program at Mazenod laptop program and the costs associated. It is a \$610 yearly cost which includes the device, servicing from onsite staff where possible and Hewlett Packard send a technician when required for other services. If a device needs to be fixed, students are assigned a loan laptop with their data on it to use in the meantime to prevent interruptions to their learning. It also includes all software required on the device and insurance for the device. Students have the machine from year 7 to the end of year 9 and are issued a new device at the start of year 10 to the end of their schooling at Mazenod.

Finally, below I have answered the question about assistive technologies. I hope it is helpful

Thanks for the opportunity to contribute.

Regards,

Michael King

ECAWA President

Students with disabilities were apparently not well-catered for during COVID-19 (also many said this was also the case before the pandemic). Is this an opportunity for schools to more wholeheartedly embrace assistive technologies?

Thanks for the opportunity to answer this question. I watch with great interest the developments in assistive technologies that are occurring. I pay particular attention to Microsoft's innovations due to working mostly in this platform but I assume other companies are also working in this space. I also don't want to claim to be an expert but I have seen these technologies be used and be beneficial to students. There are probably many other assistive technologies that I am not aware of that could make a difference.

Microsoft in the last few years have really been exploring this space. In the new Microsoft Edge browser, you can select a read aloud feature to read the text of a website to you. You can also do this within all the Office 365 tools like Word and OneNote. For a student with difficulties reading this can be a game changer. Removing the barrier of reading can help students comprehend text and show their understanding.

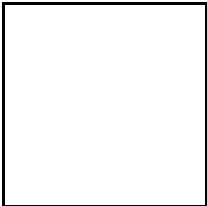
Speech to text is a technology that is easily implemented in many of the tools available to students if they have a compatible digital device. Some work better than others but removing the barrier of writing can sometimes allow students to demonstrate their understanding.

There are browser extensions available that focus the important parts of websites and block the distracting elements such as advertisements and auto playing videos that can support students who are easily distracted.

I imagine some of the technologies we relied on during COVID-19 remote teaching is used to assist students with mobility issues or issues where they cannot or don't want to physically attend school.

Using these and other technologies together goes some way to levelling the playing field for some of our most vulnerable students but as we know from designing other learning tools, buildings and almost everything, catering for students and people with disabilities helps everyone. A strong student may use the text to speech to listen to some notes they have prepared while doing chores, some student's feel more confident talking about a subject rather than writing it so they can use the text to speech. Live transcription of video can assist those who come from different backgrounds and don't understand English well, it can be translated very quickly to other languages.

Making people aware of the assistive devices and how beneficial they may be being the first step. This may be an opportunity where many people have made great strides in their engagement with technology and would be open to implementing assistive technologies. I hope that teachers had good experiences using technology during COVID-19 and that they would be open to implementing the assistive technologies in their practise.



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