Child's Play

KinderLab robotics

Newsletter

Dear Reader,

Hello, and welcome to the April 2017 issue of Child's Play!

We're very excited to announce the launch of another fun new module to expand the possibilities with KIBO: our new Sound Record/Playback Module. This new device lets kids record voices, songs, and sounds, then play those sounds back with new programming blocks. You can purchase the new module as an add-on to your existing KIBO or as part of our new complete KIBO 21 kit, which includes everything in the KIBO 18 kit plus the Expression Module and Sound Record/Playback Module.

We also enjoyed a wonderful recent article in the New York Times called "Learning to Think Like a Computer." The article explored current approaches to teaching computational thinking - and it featured two big pictures of kids interacting with KIBO! The article does a great job exploring the importance of this kind of learning and I encourage you to read and share it.

In this issue, we also take a look at some of the informal learning settings - museums, libraries, after-school programs, and more - where KIBO has found a home.

As always, thank you for reading and please stay in touch on Twitter (@KinderLabRobot) and Facebook (Facebook.com/KinderLabRobotics).

Mitch Rosenberg
Co-Founder and CEO, KinderLab Robotics

New! Sound Record/Playback Module and KIBO 21

Kit

Have you wondered what KIBO's voice might sound like? Now we have an answer: yours!

The new KIBO Sound Record/Playback Module allows kids to record and play their own sound clips in their programs. With this new module, KIBO can speak lines in a play, pretend to be a cat or dog, or ask friends questions! And aside from role-play, the Sound Record/Playback Module opens up new teaching possibilities: literacy and language development, bilingual education, music, and more, can all benefit from including kids' voices and sounds in their KIBO programs.

The new module looks like an old-fashioned microphone in front and a speaker in the back, and it plugs into any of KIBO's module sockets. Kids can record up to three different sound clips, then program KIBO to play back the sounds using three included programming blocks.

You can purchase the Sound Record/Playback module as an add-on to an existing KIBO set, or as part of our new KIBO 21 kit, which includes everything in the KIBO 18 kit plus the new Sound Record/Playback Module and the Expression Module.

Both the Sound Record/Playback Module and the KIBO 21 Kit are available immediately at our web store, shop.kinderlabrobotics.com. The Module is $99, and the KIBO 21 Kit is $499.

We can't wait to hear your ideas and experiences with the new Sound

Record/Playback Module; tweet your ideas and experiences to #KIBOSounds!

View from the (Informal) "Classroom": KIBO and Informal Learning

We love that KIBO has found a home in so many schools in America and around the world. But we also love that kids explore programming, robotics, and engineering with KIBO in so many libraries, museums, and afterschool settings too. We are firm believers in learning through open-ended play; in fact, it's one of the core themes of the research supporting KIBO's design.

Learning through play happens naturally in informal learning settings like museums, libraries, and enrichment programs. The Institute of Museum and Library Services, a federal agency supporting US museums and libraries, notes that inclusion of makerspaces and hands-on learning opportunities is an important goal for many museums and libraries. KIBO is a great fit for informal learning in these spaces.

KIBO is approachable, with a friendly design. KIBO's large, durable parts invite construction and deconstruction by small hands. Programming with KIBO provides quick feedback, letting a child learn by experimentation. And KIBO's screen-free design means it's portable and easy to implement.

The Museum of Science, Boston, has been using KIBO for the past two years to introduce visitors to programming and robotics, and to engage visitors of all ages in computational thinking. KIBO participated in the Museum of Science's CS Ed Week activities, as featured in the Museum's Dec/Jan issue of Sparks! Magazine.

In Bethesda, MD, Maker Educators at the KID Museum use KIBO to introduce robotics to younger kids through workshops and Maker Fairs. "KIBO is an amazing resource for our museum because it is so intuitive and inviting," said Amanda Puerto Thorne, KID Museum Maker Educator. "Kids and their families are able to

engage in playful learning with KIBO almost immediately during one-time visits and workshops."

KIBO can also provide a great foundation for robotics and design workshops in libraries, enrichment centers, and after-schools. Gautam Kwatra, founder of Ottawa Robotics Academy in Ottawa, Canada, uses KIBO in settings ranging from drop-in workshops in libraries to in-school workshops to birthday parties. He attributed KIBO's flexibility in these settings to its "simple pick up and play hands on programming capability... aesthetic appeal, ease of use, and its ability to be customized to any learning theme."

Next time you're at a children's museum, science museum, makerspace, or library, enjoy the opportunities for open-ended exploration and playful learning; and maybe you'll spot KIBO there too!

News / Where's KIBO?

- The New York Times ran a fascinating article on April 4 titled Learning to Think Like a Computer. It explored the meaning and value of computational thinking. The article presented a wide and interesting survey of computational thinking education from early childhood through high school, and it features an interview with our co-founder Dr. Marina Bers - along with two big pictures of kids working with KIBOs!

- We have good news for teachers in New York City public schools. KinderLab has recently been awarded Approved Vendor status by the New York City Department of Education. This status makes it much easier for NYC schools and teachers to bring KIBO into their classrooms. If you're at an NYC school and would like to purchase KIBOs, please contact us at info@kinderlabrobotics.com and we'll walk you through the purchase process!

- Two students in Tufts University's DevTech lab put together a nice video showing the roles of persistence and creativity in engineering. And if you look closely, you'll spot the prototype of the new KIBO Sound

Record/Playback Module in their program! Check it out at https://vimeo.com/203306599.

- Dr. Marina Bers and Dr. Amanda Sullivan of Tufts DevTech have published a new paper on Singapore's implementation of KIBO in early childhood education centers as part of that country's "PlayMaker" program. Their paper, published in the International Journal of Technology and Design Education, evaluates the success of the Dances from Around the World curriculum in this setting. Check out the abstract.

- Calling all educators who might be in the Boston area this summer! Tufts will be hosting a two-day professional development workshop focusing on KIBO and ScratchJr. The program runs July 6+7, 2017. Learn more and sign up here: bit.ly/DTSummerPD17. Feel free to tweet and share!

Did You Know?

The Expression Module opens up lots of possibilities for literacy education with KIBO. Try setting up several KIBOs with Expression Modules, each of which has a different letter written on it. Ask kids to work together to program their KIBOs to line up and spell a word! More literacy ideas are available in Tufts DevTech's Literacy Activities curriculum booklet.