Child's Play

KinderLab robotics

Newsletter

Dear Reader,

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

Summer is a wonderful time in Boston, with everything just a little quieter. It feels like the whole city takes a deep breath after the end of the busy school year. Especially for those on the academic calendar, summer is a chance to reflect, take stock, and make plans for next year.

If your reflections include your experiences teaching with KIBO, we encourage you to share your ideas, insights, and inspirations with your peers! Our KIBO Resources website hosts classroom stories and activity ideas submitted by teachers. Please visit the site and share your own stories to help inspire others for next year!

In the spirit of reflection, it's been a very busy year for KinderLab! In this issue we take a look back at the three new KIBO modules we've launched in the last year. We also share stories from our visit to ISTE 2017 and other KIBO sightings. And, looking ahead, we celebrate the upcoming release of our co-founder Marina Bers' new book, Coding as a Playground!

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 Module Roundup

We designed KIBO right from the start to be easy to assemble and easy to modify. KIBO's modules fit interchangeably into any of the module sockets, and KIBO's motors can attach to KIBO's wheels or art platforms. This design encourages kids to take KIBO apart and rebuild it freely, de-mystifying the construction of a robot. We've seen kids create KIBOs with a light bulb in every socket and KIBOs with circular art platforms as wheels!

KIBO's expandable and remixable design also lets us add new capabilities to KIBO that feel immediately familiar to kids. Over the course of the last year, we've added three new modules that attach to KIBOs module or motor sockets. All of these new modules work with any KIBO and are available in our web store.

The Building Brick Extension Set connects KIBO to the world's most popular building bricks, including LEGO®. Building brick plates attach to KIBOs module sockets or to the stage art platform, allowing kids to build onto KIBO in spectacular ways. Letting kids decorating and personalize KIBO has always been central to our philosophy, and the "BBES" takes that to a whole new level.

The Sound Record / Playback Module allows kids to record and play their own sound clips in their programs. Shaped like an old-fashioned microphone, the module can store three different short clips and play them back in response to three new command blocks. The "SRPM" supports music education, language development, dramatic play, and more.

The Expression Module is a versatile attachment that adds a flagpole and

The KIBO 21 Kit is not a new module, but an efficient (and discounted!) way

whiteboard to KIBO, attaching to the central motor socket. The module can also hold custom paper or cardboard cut-outs in place of the whiteboard. This module supports literacy education, geography, and more; it also expands the construction options with KIBO.

to purchase them. With the KIBO 21 Kit, you receive everything in the KIBO 18 Kit plus the new Sound Record / Playback Module and the Expression Module at a savings of $20. If you need multiple KIBOs, our new KIBO 21-based Classroom Packages increase the savings.

We've added a lot of new KIBO options in the last year. Stay tuned for more modules coming next year!

View from the Classroom: Acera School Summer Program

KIBO works great at home and in schools - and in informal learning settings like libraries and museums (see our April newsletter for more on that!). But summer programs are also a great fit for KIBO. Summer programs offer the deep engagement that comes from a full-day schedule without the curricular constraints of the formal school day.

At the Acera School, a K-8 school in Winchester, MA, cross-classroom teacher Hannah DeRusha uses KIBO in her school-year classes but looks forward to working with older kids and KIBO in Acera's summer camp.

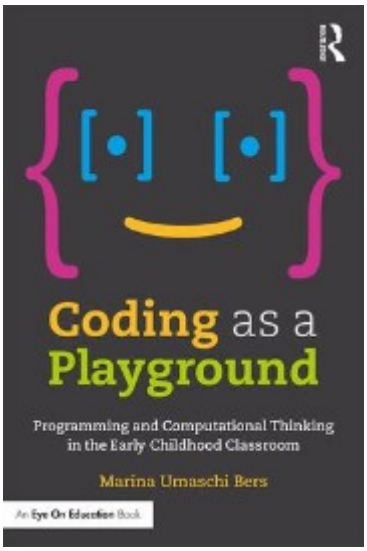
"I used the KIBO in my summer course last year at the Acera School, "Hands-on Robotics," and plan to use it again this year," she told us. "This class had children ages six through nine, some of whom had no programming or robotics experience. KIBO was used to introduce the idea that robots (like computers) must follow a program and cannot make decisions on their own."

"Because it was a slightly older group than the students that usually use KIBO in my class and since we had a whole week to focus on robotics, I was able to go into great detail about programming logic, which produced some interesting behaviors in the KIBO! In one activity, I used an projector to show a series of commands, and students had to guess what KIBO would do (or act it out). We then tested their predictions and were often surprised by how the logic was interpreted! We had fun using the light- and sound- sensors to create some mesmerizing loops and patterns. Students also did independent projects using the KIBO, such as programming it to draw certain shapes or writing a story and designing a costume so that KIBO could act out the role of the main character."

- Hannah DeRusha is a Cross Classroom Teacher at the Acera School in Winchester, MA

New Book by KinderLab co-founder, Prof. Marina Umaschi Bers!

We're excited to announce a new book, coming next year, by our co-founder! *Coding as a Playground: Programming and Computational Thinking in the Early Childhood Classroom* is written by Dr. Marina Umaschi Bers, director of the DevTech Research Group at Tufts University & co-developer of the ScratchJr programming app. It is the first book to focus on how young children (ages 7 and under) can engage in computational thinking and be taught to become computer programmers, a process that can increase both their cognitive and social-emotional skills.



Readers will learn how coding can engage children as producers—and not merely consumers—of technology in a playful way. You will come away from this groundbreaking work with an understanding of how coding promotes

developmentally appropriate experiences such as problem solving, imagination, cognitive challenges, social interactions, motor skills development, emotional exploration, and making different choices. You will also learn how to integrate coding into different curricular areas to promote literacy, math, science, engineering and the arts through a project-based approach.

The new book, coming in 2018, is available for pre-order from Routledge!

News / Where's KIBO?

- We've had the opportunity to exhibit at two conferences in the last month or so, and it was wonderful to meet so many current and future KIBO users! We were at the NAEYC Professional Learning Institute in San Francisco, and then ISTE 2017 in San Antonio. Zoom zoom! At ISTE, Dr. Amanda Sullivan of Tufts (one of the researchers behind KIBO) demo'ed KIBO to teachers and kids at the Early Learning Playground. And our booth visitors had a lot of fun with our giant (scannable!) command blocks.

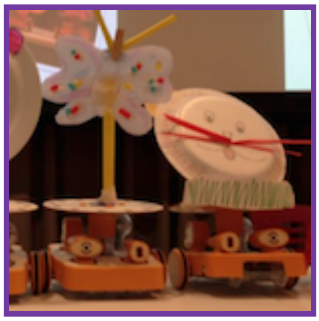
- Our co-founder Dr. Marina Bers directs the Early Childhood Technology (ECT) certificate program at Tufts University. The program is designed for educators and practitioners working with young children in pre-kindergarten through second grade and includes KIBO, ScratchJr, and other technologies. Tufts recently ran a successful crowdfunding campaign to help cover the tuition to this program. Applications for scholarships to the next run of the ECT program are still open until July 21. Learn more about the ECT program at go.tufts.edu/ect.

- The Financial Times recently ran a long article about Singapore's PlayMaker program, of which KIBO is a part. This is a large scale effort by the government of Singapore to introduce coding, engineering, and STEAM education more broadly into the nation's Kindergarten curriculum. The article examined the successes of the program and raised interesting

questions as well, and is definitely worth a read. *(Note: FT subscription required upon re-reading.)*

- We are very pleased to welcome a new member to the KinderLab team: Jeff Miller, our new Account Executive. Jeff spent thirteen years at Houghton Mifflin as an Inside Account Manager promoting Supplemental, Assessment and Early Learning Curriculum. He attributes his passion for education to the work of his mother Dr. Inabeth Miller who was a pioneer in expanding the world of learning through technology. Jeff would love to talk with you about how KIBO can support your school, childcare center, program, district, library system, or other organization; reach him at jeff@kinderlabrobotics.com or 978-289-0405. Welcome, Jeff!

Did You Know?



KIBO's new Sound Record / Playback Module lets KIBO roar, bark, and purr with animal sounds! The new module can enrich an animal-based curriculum by letting kids explore the sounds animals make. For animal curriculum ideas, check out the "Robotic Animals" curriculum from Tufts DevTech Research Group.
