

## Casandra Blagdanic

*SA School for Vision Impaired, SA*



Casandra teaches children with visual impairment. She loves the fact that every time she begins a topic, her students will take her on an unexpected journey into their world.

She cherishes the idea that everything she teaches increases her students' awareness and exposure to another aspect of everyday life that they may otherwise never experience. For instance, her unique skills allow her students to learn about concepts that involve understanding light, reflection, transparency, colour and other visual concepts.

This is also one of her biggest challenge in the classroom. Casandra says that she tries to ensure that each lesson she teaches is accessible to all her students. This requires her to ensure that all materials are provided in high contrast, large print and Braille, along with tactual physical manipulatives and assistive technology. This even means that she needs to ensure that each student is sitting in their optimal position in the classroom taking into account lighting, glare, noise, distance and direction.

“Our world is not readily accessible enough for people with visual impairment,” she says. Even when her students need something as simple as a diagram for a lesson it is not just a matter of printing one. They have to be made in advance taking into consideration contrast or tactual features appropriate for each student and will often result in the same diagram being reproduced in three different ways.

Casandra would like to use her professional grant to visit and forge partnerships with schools for the visually impaired in other parts of the world, including the US and Finland, to share teaching ideas that work well for students with visual impairment.

Casandra is the recipient of the 2018 ASG NEiTA Innovation Award.