

TECHNOLOGICAL SOLUTIONS TO EMPOWER STUDENTS WHO ARE BLIND OR LOW VISION AS INDEPENDENT LEARNERS IN THE CHEMISTRY LABORATORY

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In June 1994, representatives of governments and international organisations around the globe ratified the 'Salamanca Statement on Principles Policy and Practice in Special Needs Education' (UNESCO, 1994). This rights-based focus on inclusive learning furthered the goals of Education for All (World Conference on Education for All: Meeting Basic Learning Needs, 1990) of providing quality basic education for all children, youths and adults. Today, the importance of inclusion of people with disabilities within education continues to be recognised in the international community and is explicitly mentioned in the targets of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations).

While emerging evidence indicates an increase in the number of students with disabilities enrolling into science, technology, engineering and mathematics, this population is still underrepresented as a result of technological and attitudinal barriers.

At the School of Chemistry, at The University of Sydney, we are aiming to build an inclusive learning environment for all. This paper will discuss the advanced technological developments over the last ten years which have helped students who are blind or low vision (BLV) to work independently in the Chemistry laboratory (Devi et al., 2021). This paper will also highlight our future endeavours to further enhance the laboratory learning experience of BLV students.

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