

WE CAN! OVERCOME BARRIERS TO REACH THE DISABLED

Raising Children's Awareness on the Needs of
the Blind and Visually Impaired

International conference "Library for education of smart
society –

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ANDREJ JALEN, A. T. Linhart Public Library Radovljica

Dom tisočerihi zgodbi

World
Europe
Slovenia



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SLOVENIA



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The total population • Ljubljana inhabitants • Total area in square kilometer • The highest peak at Mount Triglav

SLOVENIA BY NUMBERS

The lenght of the longest river • The total kilometers of coastline to the Adriatic Sea • Total number of islands

1.998.079

265.881

20.273

2.864

211

46

1



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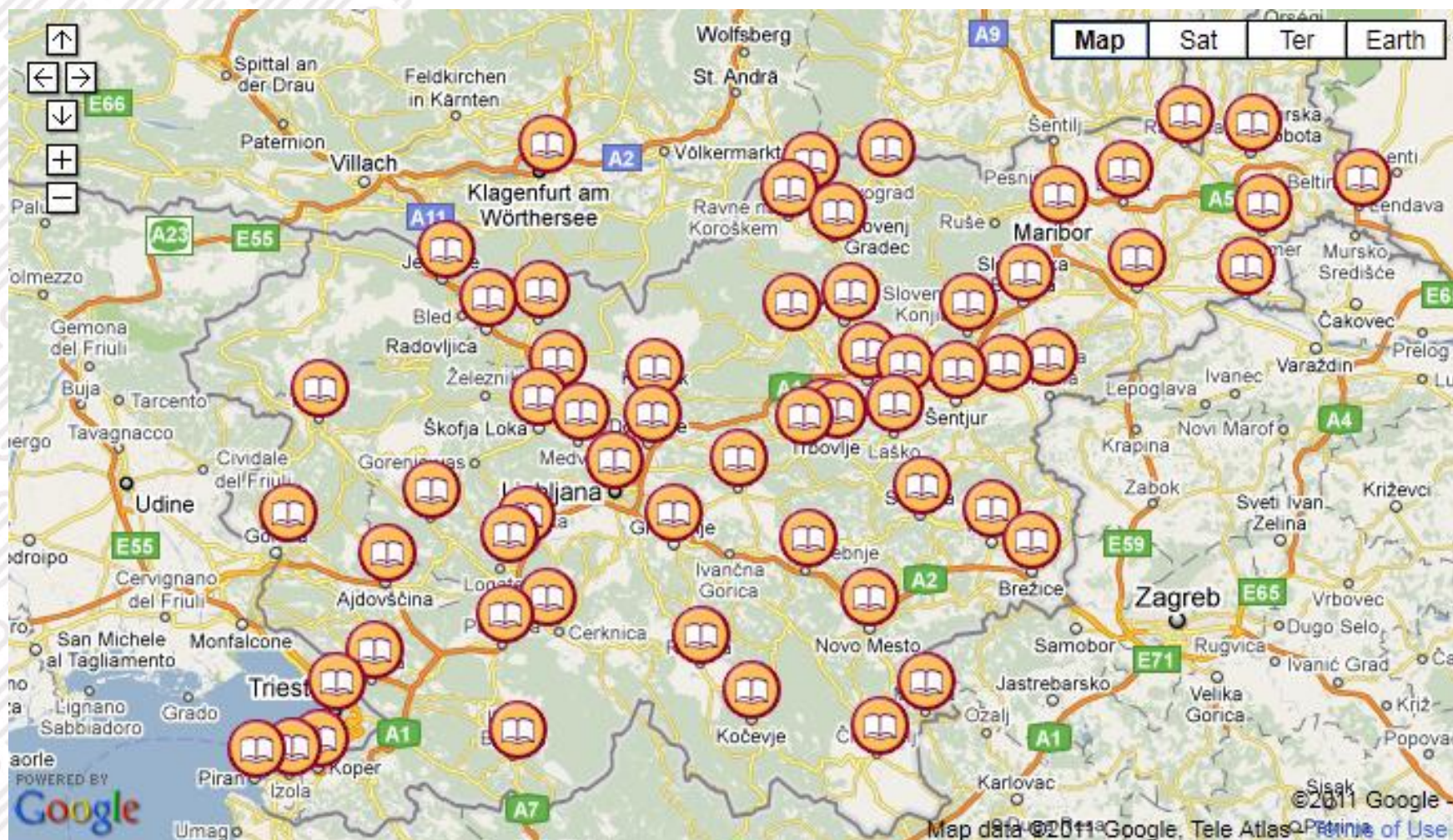


BLED ISLAND



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We Can! Overcome Barriers to Reach the Disabled

In association with:

- The Slovenian Public Libraries Association
 - Public Libraries Supporting Social Inclusion (nation-wide)
- The Union for the Blind and Partially Sighted of Slovenia

In accordance with:

- EU 2020 Strategy for Smart, Inclusive, Sustainable Growth
- 2014-2020 Slovenian Development Strategy

Based on:

- “Libraries for All” programme



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Primary Project Goals

- To help children develop awareness & tolerance for the needs of the blind and visually impaired.
- To develop an understanding of the limitations and obstacles faced by persons who are blind and/or visually impaired.
- To develop tolerance & empathy for those who are different.
- To equip children with the knowledge and ability to help those in need.
- The focus is empathy, help & understanding NOT pitying those who are different from us.



Secondary Project Goals

- To educate educators: Reaching teachers who have the capacity and resources to pass knowledge on to diverse classes.
- To stimulate students and teachers to read.
- To stimulate students and teachers to visit their local library.
- To educate students and teachers on diversity of programmes available to them at local libraries (exhibits, lectures, literary evenings, workshops, puppet shows, etc.).
- To take advantage of the resources and knowledge available to fully abled people.



Target Groups

- 1ST – 5TH Grade Elementary School Students (ages 6 – 11)
- Some Kindergarten Students (ages 4 – 6)
- Teachers

With the generous assistance of:

- The Union of the Blind and Partially Sighted of Slovenia
- Professor Aksinija Kermauner, specialist of typhlo-pedagogy, author of tactile book *Žiga Spaghetti Goes out to See the World* & other books



Specific Workshop Goals

- To help young children understand what it means to be blind or visually impaired.
- To change the attitude of fully abled children towards the blind or visually impaired.
- To let fully abled children come into contact with aids used by the blind and visually impaired.
- To teach the correct use of aids & vocabulary related to blindness and visual impairment.
- To provide children with access to additional information.



Understanding Blindness & Visual Impairment

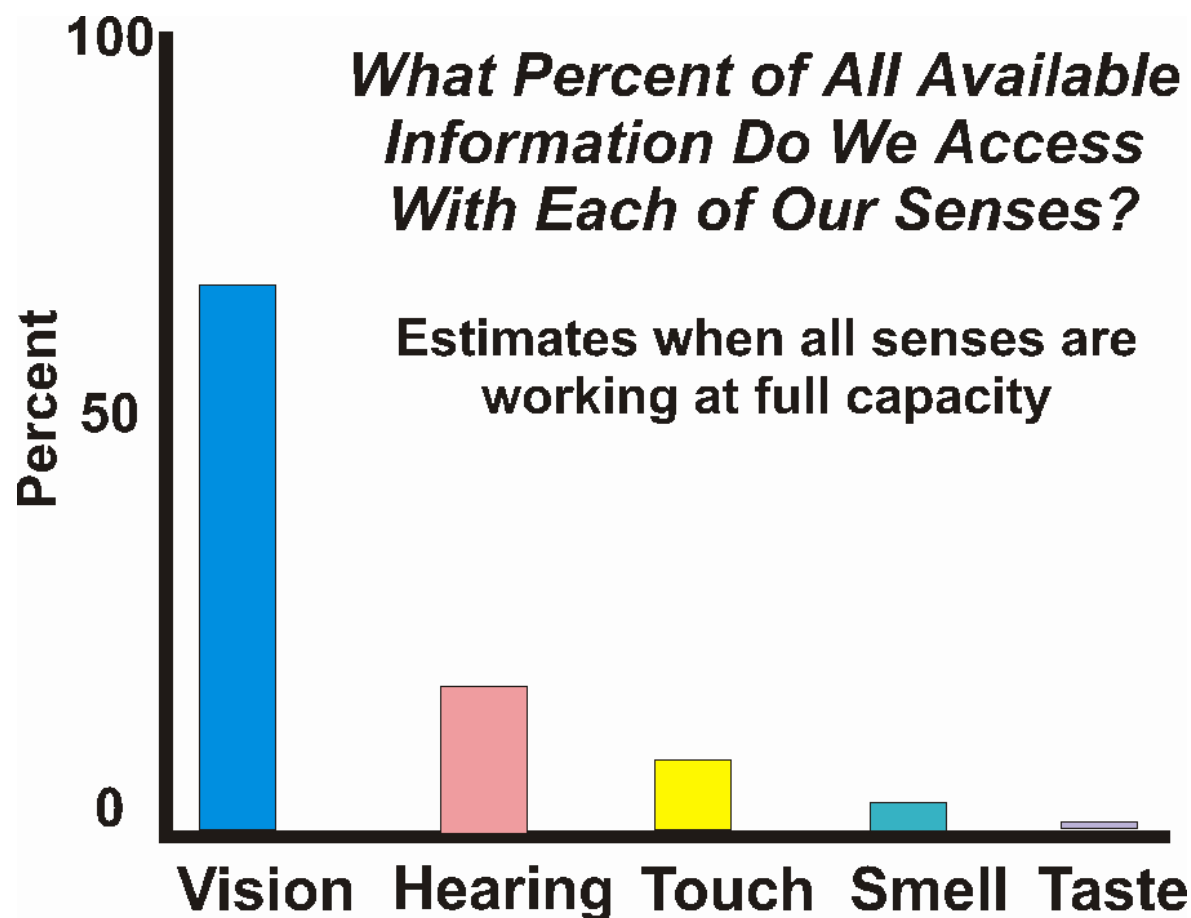
Sight: 83%

Hearing: 11%

Touch:

Smell:

Taste: 6%



Talking with Students about Blindness & Visual Impairment



Talking with Students about Blindness & Visual Impairment



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Talking with Students about Blindness & Visual Impairment



Talking with Students about Blindness & Visual Impairment



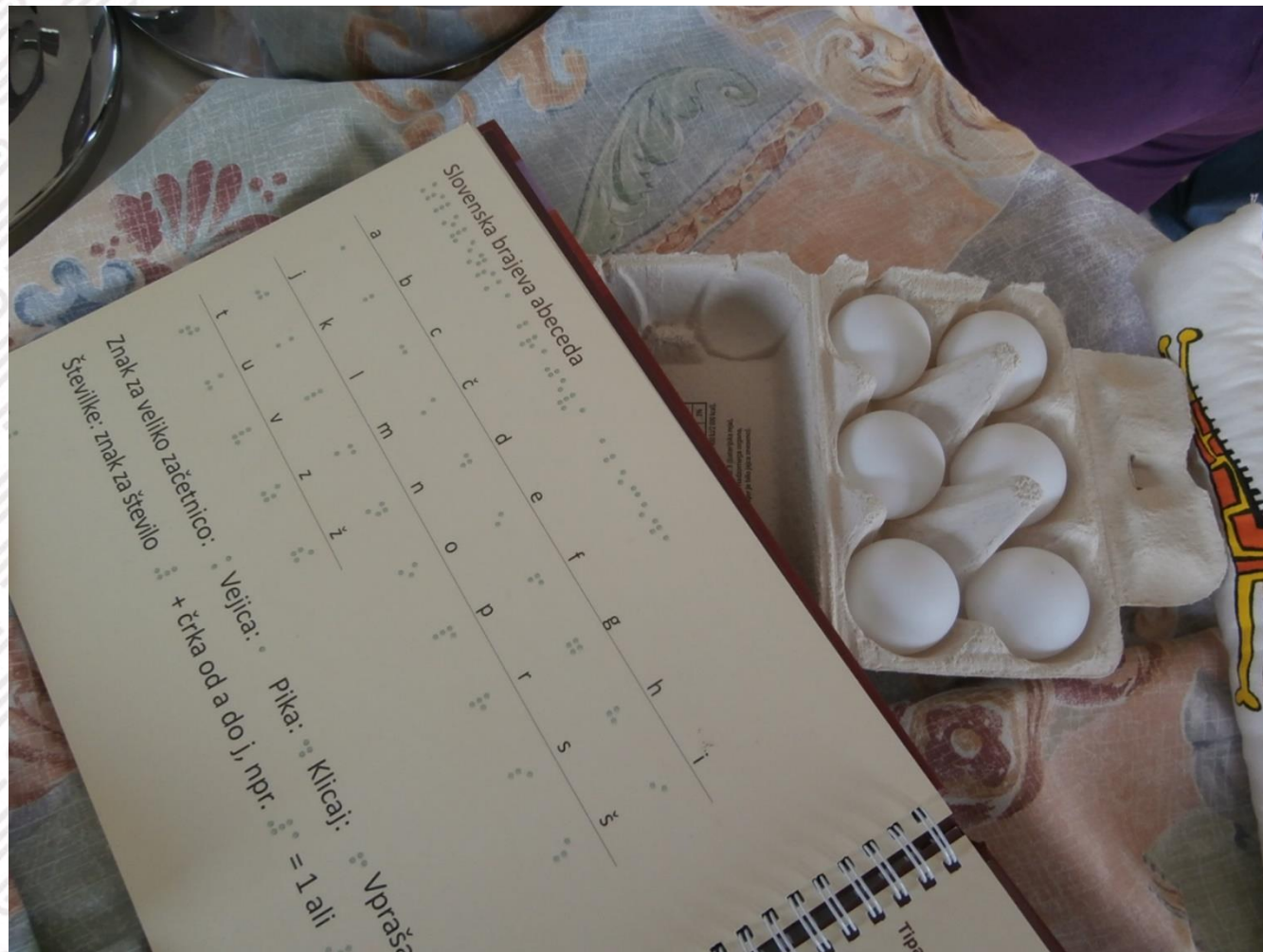
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Talking with Students about Blindness & Visual Impairment



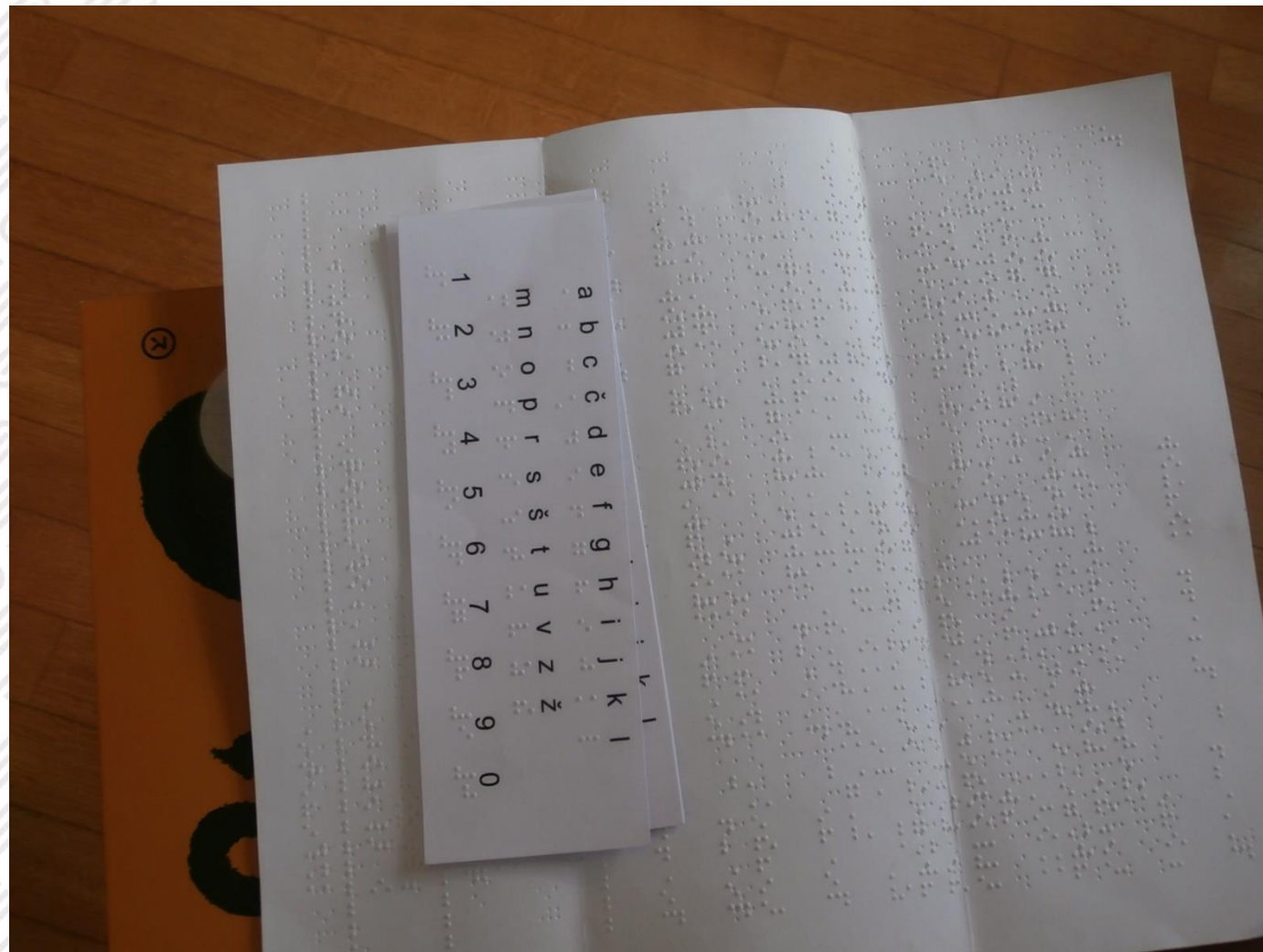
Textbook & Aids for Teaching Braille



The Braille Alphabet



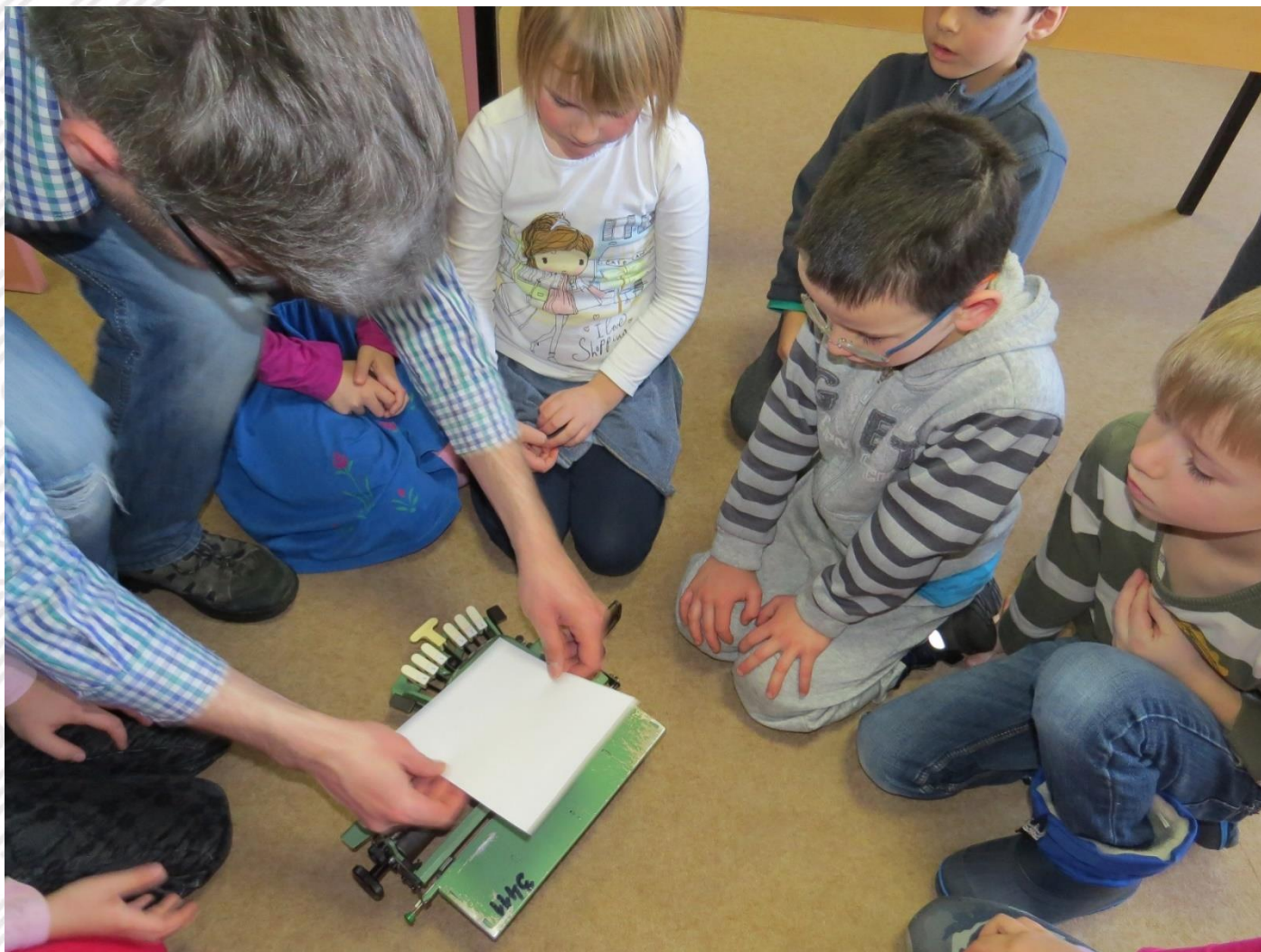
The Braille Alphabet



Braille Embosser



Typing the Braille Alphabet



Tactile Books



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Tactile Storybooks



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Reading Tactile Storybooks



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Tactile and Other Storybooks



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Blindfold & White Cane



Blindfold & White Cane



Blindfold & White Cane



Blindfold & White Cane



Simulation Glasses: Degrees of Visual Impairment



Simulation Glasses: Degrees of Visual Impairment



Simulation Glasses: Degrees of Visual Impairment



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Simulation Glasses: Degrees of Visual Impairment



Simulation Glasses: Degrees of Visual Impairment



Reading with Simulation Glasses



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Magnifying Glasses



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Magnifying Glasses



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Reading with Magnifying Glasses



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Reading with Magnifying Glasses



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Reading with Magnifying Glasses & Other Aids



Memory Games: To Practice Touch



Memory Games: To Practice Touch



Memory Games: To Practice Touch



Memory Games: To Practice Touch



Memory Games: To Practice Hearing



Memory Games: To Practice Hearing



Memory Games: To Practice Smell



Reading Tactile Storybook Žiga Spagheti



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Props for Tactile Storybook Žiga Spaghetti



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Props for Tactile Storybook Žiga Spaghetti



Finding Objects Underneath a Sheet



Finding Objects in a Box



Informational Booklet Not Like That, But Like This!



Some More Teaching Aids



Group Photo after a Workshop



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+60 Workshops Reaching +1400 Participants

Between April 2014 & December 2017 approximately:

+65 workshops

20 Elementary schools + 12 Kindergartens

+1500 Participants (children, students, teachers)



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Did We Achieve our Goals & Expected Effects?

Student Responses: Questionnaires & Pictures

- ✓ Age-appropriate questionnaires for students & teachers
- ✓ Questionnaires issued before & after presentations
- ✓ Overwhelming positive response among students & teachers

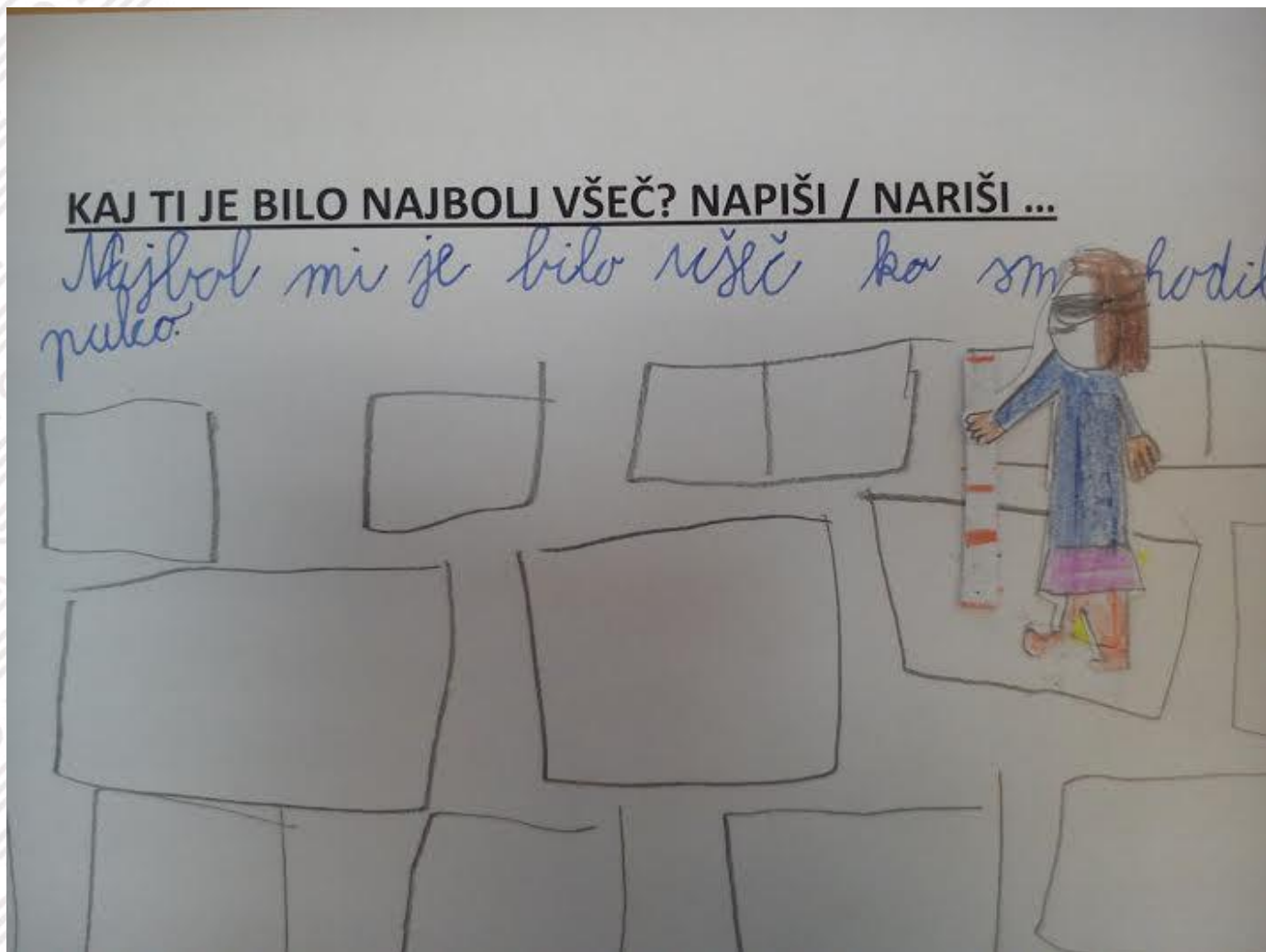


Feedback & Determinations: 1st – 3rd Grade Students

- ✓ Students very much enjoyed the workshop.
- ✓ They remembered most of the aids but especially those that they could try themselves.
- ✓ They really enjoyed the presentation of tactile story *Žiga Spaghetti Goes Out to See the World*.
- ✓ They now understand that blind persons are disadvantaged in areas that are very important in our lives, (e.g. reading, walking, playing, swimming, going to sleep, etc.)
- ✓ They would now know how to help a blind person if they met them.



„My favourite part was trying to walk with the white cane.“



Maša also liked trying to walk with the white cane.



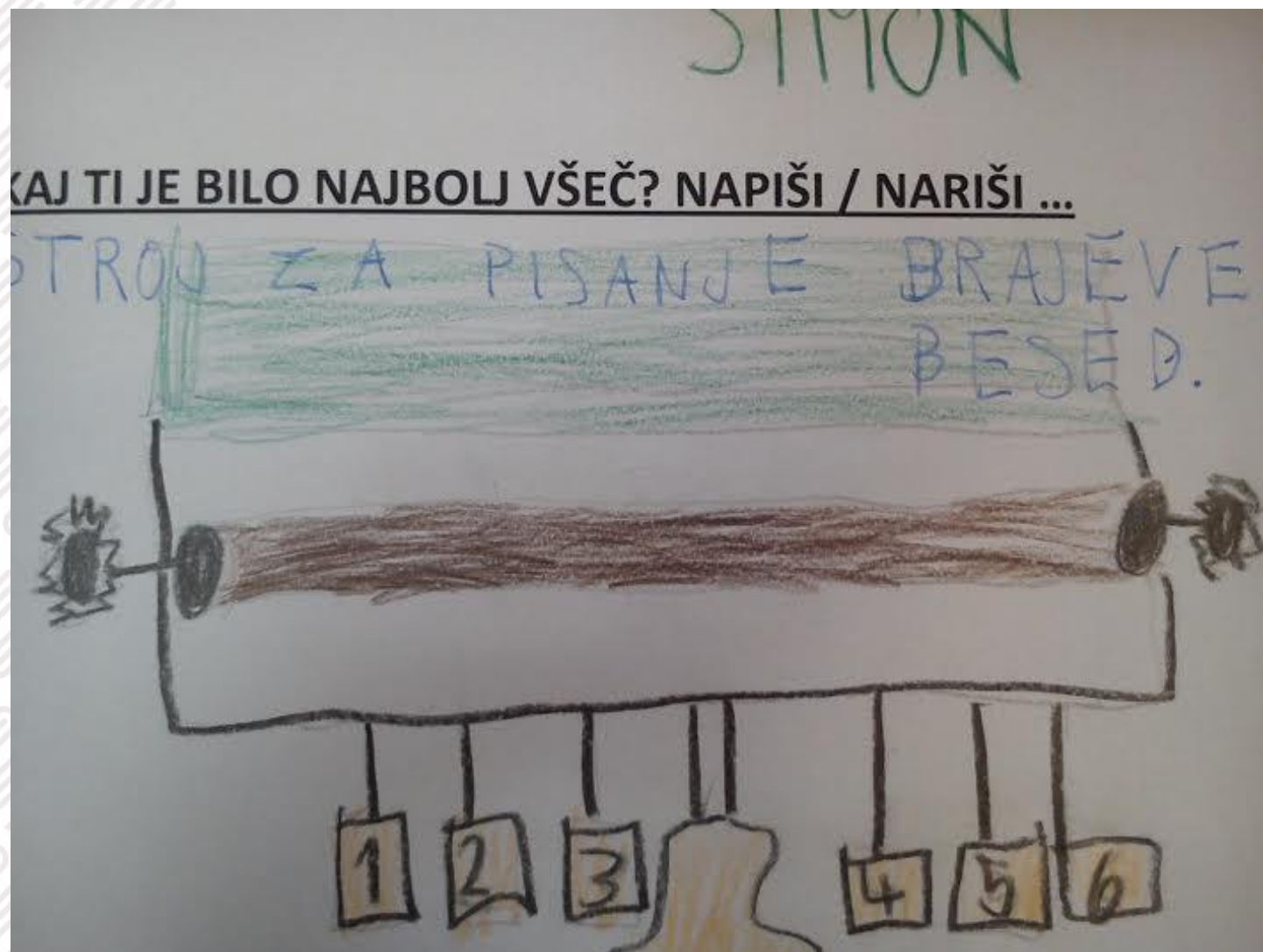
And so did Florian...



„I liked trying to find my way out of the classroom with the white cane. I liked learning the Braille alphabet and touching the spaghetti. I also liked using the magnifying glasses!“



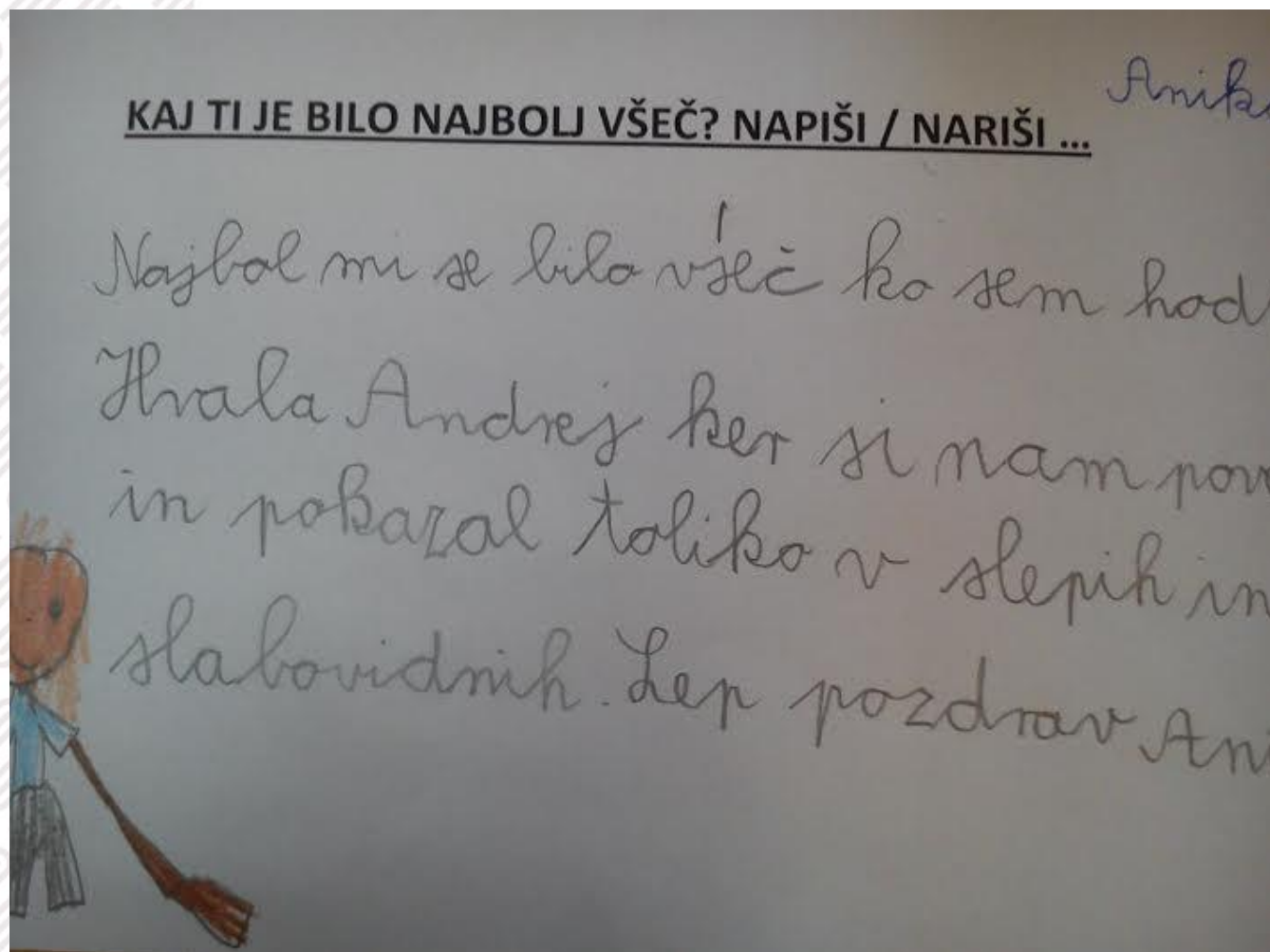
Simon really liked the Braille embosser.



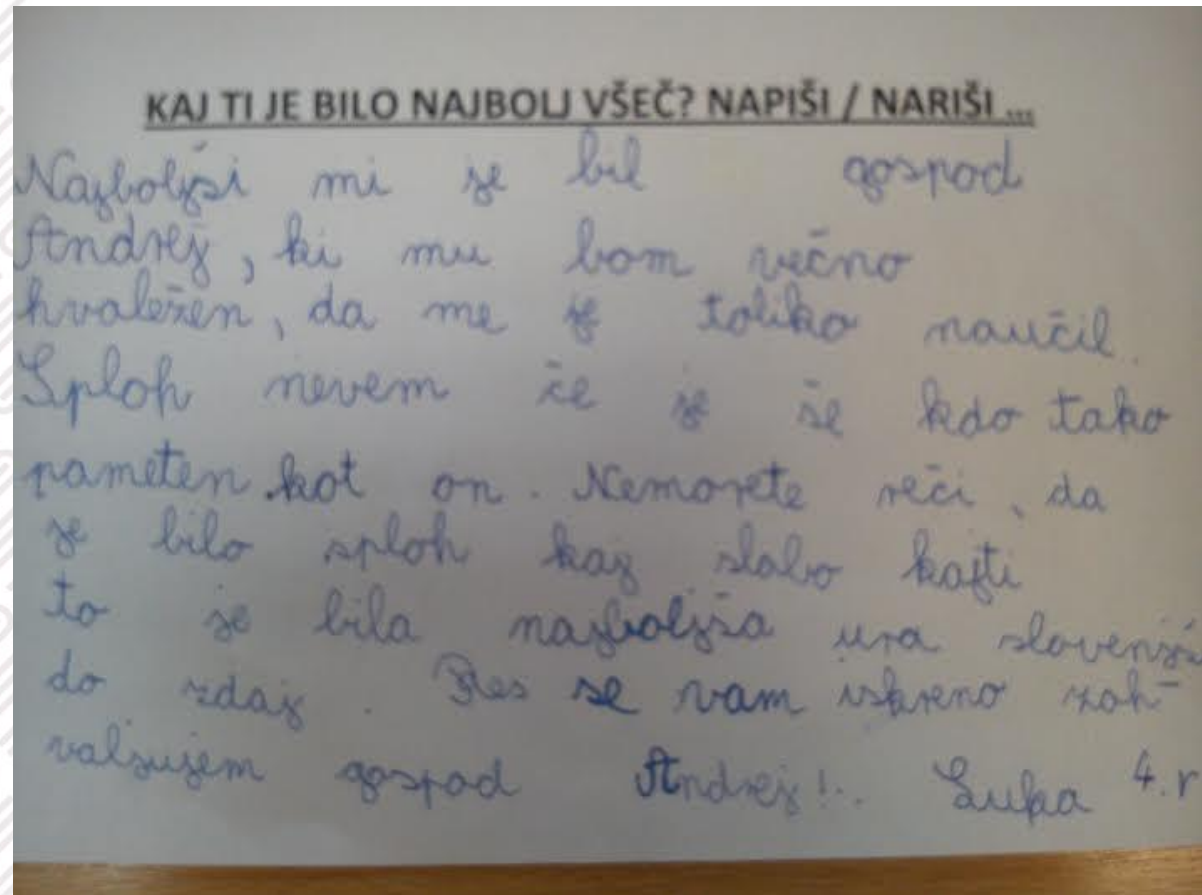
This student remembered the simulation glasses, the white cane, the Braille alphabet and the Braille embosser.



Anika said thank you: *"Thanks, Andrej, for telling us so much about people who are blind and visually impaired!"*



And so did Luka: "I really liked Mr. Andrej. He taught us a lot of things. I thought he was really smart and I can't say anything bad or boring about the workshop because it was the best class we've had in the Slovenian subject all year!"



Feedback: 4th – 5th Grade Students

- ✓ These students also had a very positive response to the workshops – they enjoyed the workshops very much.
- ✓ They also best remembered those aids that they were able to try out for themselves.
- ✓ Some responses on what would be most difficult for them if they were blind:
 - ✓ I couldn't read & see beautiful things.
 - ✓ I couldn't walk & orient myself in a place.
 - ✓ They don't want people feeling sorry for them.
- ✓ Meeting a blind person is no longer taboo. They are now familiar with the limitations of the blind and visually impaired and know how to react.



Feedback: Teachers

- ✓ Before workshop: Teachers knew little about blindness & visual impairment.
- ✓ Why were interested in the workshop:
 - ✓ ethical reasons
 - ✓ complements curriculum in various areas
 - ✓ learning tolerance
 - ✓ understanding difference & acceptance
 - ✓ develop empathy
 - ✓ broaden perspectives
 - ✓ learn how to help when there is a need
 - ✓ teachers themselves want to learn more about subject



Feedback: Teachers

- ✓ After workshop: All teachers expressed satisfaction & felt the workshop exceeded their expectations.
- ✓ New knowledge for teachers:
 - ✓ Long list including info. about other senses, tactile books, degrees of visual impairment, how Braille is written, etc ...
- ✓ New knowledge for students:
 - ✓ Empathy & open perspective towards difference.
 - ✓ Respect, tolerance, acceptance.
 - ✓ How to help blind & visually impaired people in practice.
 - ✓ Smaller changes can have big effects ...



Where Do We Go From Here?

- ✓ Exhibits, Assessing Workshops, Addressing Other Disabilities ...
- ✓ Continuing carrying out the workshops
- ✓ Presenting the workshops as example of best practice
- ✓ Further steps... “We Can! – Overcome Barriers to Reach the Disabled”... addressing other types of disabilities



Thank you for your attention!



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