

Reaching & Teaching Those Who Learn Differently in 2021

Joys and Challenges of Gifted 2021 Virtual Event



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Helping All Learners Rise to Their Highest Potential



Meeting the needs of all learners across all environments

- IDEA is the nation's special education law.
- Schools must find and evaluate students thought to have disabilities — at no cost to families.
- Having a diagnosis doesn't guarantee that a child qualifies under IDEA.

<https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/your-childs-rights/basics-about-childs-rights/individuals-with-disabilities-education-act-idea-what-you-need-to-know>

Ponder this:

There's nothing special about special education; it's just good teaching"

(Dr. Nancy Mather, 1991)

Labels:

"...without a label we have no way of talking about a problem."

Dyslexia Defined

“a specific learning disability that is neurobiological in origin. It is characterized by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities. These difficulties typically result from a deficit in the phonological component of language that is often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and the provision of effective classroom instruction. Secondary consequences may include problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that can impede growth of vocabulary and background knowledge” (International Dyslexia Association, 2002).

Alternate Terms:

- *Specific Reading Disability (basic skills and/or fluency)*
- *Specific Reading Disorder*
- *Specific Learning Disorder with an impairment in reading (DSM-5 315.00)*

Twice Exceptional

“Individuals identified as intellectually gifted may also have LD. Although twice- exceptional individuals may appear to be functioning adequately in the classroom, their performance may be far below what they are capable of, given their intellectual ability...educators often overlook these students until late in their academic careers” (p. 238).

Source: Learning disabilities: Implications for policy regarding research and practice: A report by the National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities March 2011.

Learning Disability Quarterly, 34, 237-241.

Twice-Exceptional Learners

Twice exceptional students can have reading scores in the average range and still have dyslexia. One has to consider:

- Level of intelligence
- Educational history
- Educational opportunities
- How the student functions on a daily basis
- Family history

2020 and the unexpected impact of Covid-19

Pandemic-relevant research offers key lessons as the education system responds to the coronavirus crisis

(From the Economic Policy Institute, COVID-19 and student performance, equity, and U.S. educational policy. Lessons from pre-pandemic research to inform relief, recovery, and rebuilding, by Emma Garcia and Elaine Weiss, 9/10/2020).

- **Research regarding online learning and teaching shows that they are effective only if students have consistent access to the internet and computers and if teachers have received targeted training and supports for online instruction.** Because these needed requirements for effectiveness have been largely absent for many, remote education during the pandemic has impeded teaching and learning.
- **Research on homeschooling shows that it works well for students for whom intentional, personalized, and sufficient resources are available.** The crisis-induced delivery of homeschooling without time for planning around children's learning styles and circumstances means that many children homeschooled during the pandemic are not replicating such model and thus not reaping the associated benefits.

Pandemic-relevant research continued...

Reduced learning time has likely impeded student learning and also affected the development of the whole child.

Once the pandemic allows it, we will need to make up for this time by increasing both the amount and quality of learning time—through extended schedules, summer enrichment and after-school activities, more personalized instruction, and staffing strategies that reduce class sizes and staff schools with sufficient and highly credentialed educators.

Research on chronic absenteeism and on remote learning reinforces the urgency of providing appropriate support to children who are least prepared and especially to those at risk of becoming disengaged and eventually dropping out.

Research on summer learning (loss or gain) points to the importance of personalized instruction. The research shows that learning styles and outcomes vary greatly, and that the outcomes are a function of the educational resources that families and systems provide to children across the year and of a large number of factors and circumstances that shape children's learning and development.

Research shows that a lack of contingency planning exacerbates the negative impacts of recessions, natural disasters, and pandemics on learning. Contingency planning thus needs to be institutionalized and include emergency funding to replenish the resources drained during emergencies.

Pandemic-relevant research

What we know about the pandemic's consequences for education so far helps us plan next steps:

- **Learning and development have been interrupted and disrupted for millions of students.** The only effective response is to use diagnostic tests and other tools to meet each child where he or she is and to devise a plan for making up for the interruptions.
- **The pandemic has exacerbated well-documented opportunity gaps that put low income students at a disadvantage relative to their better-off peers.** Opportunity gaps are gaps in access to the conditions and resources that enhance learning and development, and include access to food and nutrition, housing, health insurance and care, and financial relief measures.

Informed by our learning, here is a three-pronged plan for addressing the adverse impacts of COVID-19 on education and rebuilding stronger: **Relief:** Give schools urgent resources so that they can provide effective remote instruction and supports at scale during the pandemic. **Recovery:** Provide extra investments to help students and schools make up lost ground as they return to in-school operations. **Rebuilding:** Redesign the system to focus on nurturing the whole child, balancing cognitive with socioemotional skills development and ensuring that all children have access to the conditions and resources that enhance learning and development.

Let's talk about this:

- **“Research on homeschooling shows that it works well for students for whom intentional, personalized, and sufficient resources are available.** The crisis-induced delivery of homeschooling without time for planning around children’s learning styles and circumstances means that many children homeschooled during the pandemic are not replicating such [a] model and thus not reaping the associated benefits.”
- *Anecdotally, some children - with or without learning disabilities, giftedness, or those who are twice-exceptional, have thrived at home.*

What was that you said??



What makes for a successful home-work environment?

1. **Create a designated learning space.**
2. **Follow a daily schedule.**
3. **Map out the school year ahead of time.**
4. **Set learning goals together.**
5. **Take learning beyond the classroom.**
6. **Make learning a family activity.**
7. **Collaborate with other homeschoolers.**
8. **Ease into school.**

www.lucidchart.com

Executive Functioning (EF) and EF Skills

(1) Childhood EF skills provide an important foundation for learning and adaptation across a wide range of contexts, including in school.

(2) Difficulties with EF are associated with learning challenges and a greater likelihood of behavior problems, and they are a prominent feature of many emotional and behavioral disorders (EBDs); neurodevelopmental disorders (e.g., attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD); autism spectrum disorders (ASD); and specific learning disabilities that interfere with children's education.

(3) EF skills are malleable, meaning they can change and are influenced by both positive and negative experiences. For example, stress, poverty, and disadvantage are associated with worse EF skills. However, supportive caregiving, high quality early education, and even practice can help improve EF skills. A key topic here is the extent to which schooling in childhood shapes the development of EF as well as the extent to which EF is important for doing well in school (Zelazo, Blair & Willoughby, 2016).

Do not be afraid to ask for help!



Your child looks to you as a model. Are you asking them to breathe deeply, exercise, align work and social time, but not modeling this yourself??

Stress: The good, the bad, and the ugly...

<https://www.wavetrust.org/stress-in-childhood>



The upside of the pandemic:

Telehealth

Fitness apps

Staying connected virtually

Living in Vermont means we can be outside and be safe

Quiet time, family time, reassess priorities and reflect on how we previously spent our time

Fewer distractions and less social anxiety for those who contend with either

A well stocked supply of toilet paper



Resources A - Z (or kind of)

Executive functioning, Twice-Exceptional, Dyslexia, ASD, Behavior, Literacy, Math and more:

- ADDitude.com (Timed Timer is a favorite product!)
- Seth Perler - Sethperler.com Ultimate 2e article: <http://sethperler.com/child-2e-twice>
- “Bright and Quirky” Brightandquirky.com
- *The Work-Smart Academic Planner, Revised Edition: Write it down, Get it done*, by Peg Dawson and Richard Guare
- *Delivered from Distraction* by Drs. Hallowell and Ratey
- *Spark*, by Dr. John Ratey
- Social Thinking www.SocialThinking.com (Michelle Garcia Winner - Find free resources, webinars, trainings, and group classes for learners)

Resources continued

- Collaborative and Proactive Solutions (CPS) - Dr. Ross Greene
<https://www.livesinthebalance.org/about-cps>
- <https://www.secondstep.org/covid19support>
- COVID-19 RESPONSE: Resources for Educators and Families
- Numerous resources for schools and families. Free Resources for Educators and Families include
- *Winter Well Being* - A Psychologist's Guide to Winter Well Being – therapist led video
- *The Imagine Neighborhood* – Free podcast designed to help kids and families tackle the big feelings that come with growing up.
- *Mind Yeti* – Practice mindfulness during difficult times; free sessions designed for adults to do alongside children

I said there'd be more...

- Institute for Excellence in Writing www.iew.com
- www.thewritingrevolution.org
- Online Writing Lab Purdue www.owl.purdue.edu
- Overcoming Dyslexia, 2nd Edition, by Dr. Sally Shaywitz
- The Yale Center for Dyslexia and Creativity <https://dyslexia.yale.edu/>
- The Big Picture: Rethinking Dyslexia: <https://youtu.be/cutrXyDsglk>
- International Dyslexia Association www.dyslexiaida.org
- MindPlay.com

And more...

- Learning Ally
- UF Literacy Institute <https://education.ufl.edu/ufli/> Free webinars and resources
- Dr. Gavin Reid drgavinreid.com Dyslexia info and free downloads
- Animal School <https://youtu.be/o8limRtHZPs>
- The Well Trained Mind: A Classical Education at Home by Susan Wise Bauer and Jessie Wise
(great resource)
- Institute for Excellence in Writingiew.com
- Teaching Textbooks
- <https://www.bookshark.com>



*Great teachers focus not on
compliance, but on connections
and relationships.*

PJ Caposey

*Don't
Miss Create Photography*