

FOCUS on Research

Newsletter of the



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President's Message

A Look at CEC Division for Research (CEC-DR): The Gifts of Time and Commitment

Kathleen Lynne Lane, PhD, BCBA-D, CF-L1
University of Kansas

Happy spring! In our last newsletter, I mentioned being hopeful for the year ahead—hopeful for all the new possibilities as the CEC-DR community moved forward with rigorous, responsible, and respectful inquiry. Following the CEC 2021 conference, I am even more hopeful and filled with gratitude and appreciation.

Time is a precious gift. I was overwhelmed with gratitude and appreciation for the many scholars who shared the gift of their time at the CEC-DR program sessions and events. I sincerely thank CEC-DR board members and guests who participated in our board meeting, including **Joan McLaughlin**, commissioner for the National Center for Special Education Research (NCSER). We continue to appreciate her unwavering commitment to high-quality, timely inquiry, as well as the strength and grace with which she leads.

In addition, we thank all the CEC-DR members who participated in our annual business meeting, voting to approve revisions to our bylaws and budget. We appreciate everyone's time spent to learn about the contributions of our officers, committee chairs, and committee members, as well as division accomplishments.

Finally, we would like to thank all those who attended our annual CEC-DR reception to recognize scholars at different stages in their careers:

Patricia Snyder, Kauffman-Hallahan-Pullen Distinguished Researcher Award

Nicholas Gage, Martin J. Kaufman Distinguished Early Career Research Award

Corey Peltier, Early Career Publication Award

Erica N. Mason, Student Research Award for Mixed-Method Design

Matthew Vandercar, Student Research Award for Qualitative Design

Christy Austin, Student Research Award for Quantitative Design

Holly N. Whittenburg, Student Research Award for Single-Case Design

Particularly special this year was recognizing the first recipient of the **Martin J. Kaufman Distinguished Early Career Research Award**, previously the Early Career Research Award. We renamed this long-standing award this year in honor of Marty's significant contributions to the field of special education. Marty dedicated 23 years to service and leadership at the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped (BEH, later the Office of Special Education Programs) to develop the federal special education research program to advance the education and development of individuals with disabilities. Marty was also one of the founders of the CEC Division for Research, developed as a way of supporting the community of researchers in special education; a mission he believed was critical to improving outcomes for individuals with disabilities. In addition, with Karen Harris, Marty established the CEC-DR awards

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OPEN SCIENCE in Special Education: Open Data

Wilhelmina van Dijk & Sara A. Hart
Florida State University

In the past several editions of *Focus on Research*, a number of the prominent features of open sciences practices have made their appearance. In this article, we focus on open data. Specifically, we explain what open data is and why it is beneficial for our field to share data. We also touch on some obstacles to sharing data and provide suggestions on how to get started. Due to our expertise, our primary focus is on sharing data from quantitative studies, but we also provide resources for sharing qualitative and single-case design data.

What is Open Data?

Currently, most quantitative publications provide summary data to the reader, usually in the form of means, standard deviations, and sample sizes; occasionally, authors will add information on skew and kurtosis and possibly a correlation matrix. In rare cases is this information enough to reproduce any of the analyses reported. *Open data* involves sharing data from a project at the participant and item levels. Data can be shared as accompanying a specific paper, but researchers can also decide to share data from a complete project, including data that are not used in any publication.

Primary Benefits

Sharing data with others has many benefits, both for the researchers who post their data and for the researchers using the data, and for special education research in general. For the data posters, sharing data increases the transparency of their research process (Cook et al., 2018). It enables other researchers to reproduce analyses and verify the results, which can increase trust in the outcomes of the project (Funk, 2020). Furthermore, publications that are accompanied by openly available data have been shown to get more citations (Colavizza et al., 2020; Drachen et al., 2016). Finally, shared data sets are considered a research product, can be assigned a digital object identifier (DOI), and be added to a CV as a citable product.

Contributing to open data is a way to promote equity in research. Black, indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) researchers and researchers with disabilities are less likely to obtain grant funding (Shavers et al., 2005; Swenor et al., 2020). By making their research data

available, those who are funded can provide opportunities to these researchers—as well as to graduate students, early career researchers, and researchers at institutions with less infrastructure for research support—to obtain pilot data for further grant applications. Potentially, data sharing can also lead to new collaborations.

Having data from other projects available to other researchers can help our field advance faster (e.g., Munafò et al., 2014). Other researchers may have research questions that were not part of the original study plans. These questions might be based on just one project, but they may also be based on a set of research projects. Current statistical advances allow researchers to combine independent data sets, both at the item (e.g., Curran & Hussong, 2009) and test score levels (e.g., van Dijk et al., 2021). This is a crucial benefit for the special education field, because by combining independent data sets, researchers can establish larger samples of populations with low incidence disabilities or behaviors. With these larger samples, more complex research questions about these populations can be answered using advanced statistical models (Logan et al., 2021; van Dijk et al., 2020).

How to Share Data

The gold standard in data sharing is to make your data findable, accessible, interoperable, and reproducible (FAIR; Wilkinson et al., 2016). There are too many specific steps to ensure FAIR data to state here (see Logan et al., 2021, for more specific details on data sharing in education), but we will briefly touch on the broader steps.

First, open data involves more than just your data file. To be able to find and understand your data, other researchers need to know more details. These details are usually delineated in the metadata. Metadata can include information about the study design, the participants included, and the type of variables and information on how they were collected (Logan et al., 2021). Additionally, you should add a codebook explaining the variables, coding and recoding schemes, missing data patterns, etc. Creating the metadata and codebooks for a project takes considerable time, and it is recommended to keep these updated throughout your project (Reynolds & Schatschneider, 2020).

Second, it is very important to make sure that you have permission to share data openly. This should be stated explicitly in your informed consent forms. If you want to share data that you have already collected and your informed consent does not state data sharing objectives explicitly, you may have to request a waiver from

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your Institutional Review Board (IRB). In either case, we recommend working with your IRB to ensure you can share your data.

After you have collected your data, it is necessary to clean and de-identify. Cleaning data should be a part of your regular data management routine (Reynolds & Schatschneider, 2020), but it never hurts to (a) check for values that are out of range (for example, a reading fluency score of 300 words per minute), and (b) ensure that you are entering data consistently (such as NA or blank for all missing values). De-identifying data is a bit more complex. First, you want to make sure you delete all the HIPAA identifiers, such as names, addresses, birth dates, phone numbers, etc. Then, you need to check to see if any of the participants might be re-identified based on variables in your data. For example, if a school district only has one male Asian special education teacher, his data can be identified using these two variables (self-report gender and race) (see Edwards & Schatschneider, 2020, for more information).

Once your data set is ready to go, it is time to identify where you will post your dataset. Choosing a repository will depend on the type of data you want to share. A repository specific to learning differences is LDbase (www.ldbase.org), specifically designed for researchers working with behavioral and achievement data. There are several repositories specialized in qualitative or video/audio data, such as the Qualitative Data Repository (<https://qdr.syr.edu/>) and Databrary (www.databrary.org). Other repositories are not discipline (e.g., ICPSR) or data (e.g., Open Science Framework) specific. In addition, many grant funding agencies have their own repositories (e.g., DASH).

Primary Obstacles and Limitations

Sharing data is the least common of all open science practices in education sciences (Makel et al., 2019). There are several reasons why special education researchers might be hesitant to share the data from their projects. One potential problem is that it is harder to de-identify data from certain special education research studies, such as studies with participants with specific, low-incidence disabilities, or single case designs and qualitative studies (Mannheimer et al., 2019; Tsai et al., 2016). In these cases, sharing may still be possible if access restrictions are put in place and researchers interested in re-using the data need to apply to gain access. Additionally, for some datasets, including for single case and quantitative data, there are more stringent de-iden-

tification possibilities (see Edwards & Schatschneider, 2020, for examples), or even the possibility of posting synthetic data sets. Secondly, many researchers may be under the impression that IRBs are against data sharing on principle. We believe this is erroneous. Most IRBs will be positive towards sharing data if they adhere to the Common Rule (see note), although each institution's IRB functions differently, and we advise you work with yours to gain clarity.

It takes resources—both time and monetary—to get data ready to be shared. Approximately 5–10% of a research grant budget should be dedicated to preparing and sharing data (Mons, 2020). This may deter researchers from starting. Many grant agencies, however, will allow for part of a grant budget to be assigned to a data manager. With or without grant funding, we highly recommend working with a data specialist, or at least a data science librarian, at the outset of a project to get everything set up in a way that is conducive to data sharing. A final occasional reaction of researchers to sharing all their data openly is the fear of being “scooped.” We believe that this is a vanishingly remote possibility in our field, although there are solutions that still allow data sharing where this is a credible fear. Data sharing can happen after publication of specific manuscripts, so that the main analyses are already done. Data can often be shared on repositories with embargo periods. Data will be stored during this period, but there is no public access. With data access restrictions like these, researchers can better guide the additional research being done with their data.

Resources

We believe data sharing to be a vital part of the research practices in special education, with the benefits outweighing the perceived barriers. Here is a list of resources that might help you get started planning for sharing data.

- General overview of open science practices in special education: Cook, Lloyd, et al., 2018
- Data management for open data practices: Reynolds & Schatschneider, 2020
- General review of data sharing as well as ethical considerations: Meyer, 2018
- In-depth information about quantitative data sharing: Logan et al, 2021
- Information about open science practices in single case research: Cook, Johnson, et al., 2021

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- Information on data sharing in qualitative research: Mannheimer et al., 2019, Tsai et al., 2016
- Information on de-identification practices beyond HIPAA: Edwards & Schatschneider, 2020
- Information on how to work with your IRB and prepare consent forms that allow you to share the data: Shero & Hart, 2020a, b
- Making data Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, and Reusable (FAIR principles): Wilkinson et al., 2016 ■

Note

Popular term for 45 CFR part 46, Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects.

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CEC-DR Families Committee

Shana Haines, PhD
University of Vermont

The Research and Families of Individuals with Disabilities Committee of CEC-DR needs your help! We want to shine a spotlight on the best research relating to families of children with disabilities here in this newsletter and through other CEC-DR platforms. We are planning to highlight current peer-reviewed articles on this topic quarterly and again at our Business Meeting, and we are hoping you will help us by nominating great articles. Aside from the topic, the only requirement is that the nominator is a member of CEC-DR (self-nominations are welcome). The nomination process is simple and will only take you a few minutes: Simply send an email to Zach Rossetti (zsr@bu.edu) with the topic line of **CEC-DR Families Research Spotlight Nomination**, provide the citation of your nomination and a brief explanation of your nomination in the text, and attach a PDF of the article. Our committee will accumulate nominated articles and evaluate them based on *this rubric*, using the categories of Focus on Family, High-Quality Research, and Innovation. We will consider nominations for each quarter on these dates: **February 15, May 15, August 15, and November 15**. Please send me (shana.haines@uvm.edu) any questions you have. We look forward to reading your nominations! ■

CEC-DR Families Research Spotlight

Rossetti, Z., Burke, M. M., Hughes, O. Schraml-Block, K., Rivera, J. I., Rios, K., Tovar, J. A., & Lee, J. D. (2021). Parent perceptions of the advocacy expectation in special education. *Exceptional Children*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0014402921994095>

Parent involvement in the educational decision-making for children with disabilities is recognized as one of the fundamental pillars of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA, 2004). However, despite statutory and regulatory provisions that support the central role of parents of students with disabilities in all aspects of educational decision-making, research

continues to indicate that these provisions are not realized in practice for families. That is, most families report common barriers that lead to parent dissatisfaction and the exclusion of their participation, including perceived power imbalance, overuse of technical jargon, and parent input not listened to or valued. Consequently, parents report an ongoing need and expectation that they will be available to and will advocate on behalf of their children.

The purpose of this study was to examine parent perspectives of this advocacy expectation in special education. Qualitative methodology included 19 focus groups with 127 parents of children with disabilities across four states. This study extended current literature two-fold. First, parents in this study included underrepresented populations (i.e., non-White) who are largely understudied in the field. Second, Yasso's (2005) community cultural wealth framework was utilized to demonstrate how these parents' advocacy experiences and perceptions are actualized. This study is one of the first to explore the intersectionality that exists for families of children with disabilities who are also underrepresented in special education research. Implications for practice and research point out the need for further inquiry about the advocacy expectations and experiences families face. The authors should be commended on completing a well-designed and meaningful study that opens the door for understanding the family provision for parent involvement and the underlying expectation for advocacy. ■

CEC-DR Diversity Committee Spotlight

Terese C. Aceves, PhD
Loyola Marymount University

DR's Diversity Committee's Newsletter Spotlight presents three of our newest committee members. For this Spotlight we asked each of them to describe their background and share why they have chosen to lean into this critical work.



Dr. Ching-Yi Liao is a postdoctoral scholar in the School of Communication Sciences and Disorders at the University of Central Florida. Her current research interest focuses on culturally responsive approaches for culturally

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Diversity Committee Spotlight (continued from page 5)

and linguistically diverse caregivers to use communication interventions, including augmentative and alternative communication when applicable, to work with their children with complex communication needs in natural settings.

My Why? I believe that family and cultural factors should be seriously considered when developing intervention plans for individuals with special needs and their families. Encouraging and motivating more families with diverse backgrounds to participate in special education research is an important part of my research, as well as the major reason why I am contributing to DR's Diversity Committee's work.



Dr. Brandy Gatlin-Nash is an assistant professor in the School of Education at the University of California, Irvine. She is affiliated faculty in the Center for Creating Opportunities through Education and the Department of Language Sciences in the School

of Social Sciences. Her research explores relationships between language and literacy among culturally and linguistically diverse students. She is a former K–12 special education teacher.

My Why? I've spent 20 years as an educator, researcher, and advocate for children and adults with special needs. The need to understand exceptionalities among those from diverse backgrounds is perhaps greater now than ever before, as the nation's schools become more and more diverse. We also need to partner with families in order to better understand the needs and wants of individuals and communities in an effort to build a more equitable society.



Dr. Federico R. Waitoller is an associate professor at the Department of Special Education at the University of Illinois at Chicago. His research focuses on understanding and addressing racial inequities for students with disabilities. His research agenda has

two strands: teacher learning and pedagogies for inclusive education and market-driven educational policies. His latest book, *Excluded by Choice: Urban Students with Disabilities in the Education Marketplace*, examines the experiences of urban Black and Latinx students with disabilities with school choice.

My Why? I joined the Diversity Committee of the Division of Research of CEC to expand the frameworks and methods traditionally used in special education research. ■

Council for Exceptional Children, Division for Research 2022 Awards: Call for Nominations

The following CEC-DR awards are open for nominations. Self-nominations are welcome. The deadline for all award nominations/self-nominations is **September 15, 2021**. Further information on each award, including application materials, can be found at <http://www.cecdr.org/>. Please email all materials to the individual committee chair.

1. **Kauffman-Hallahan-Pullen Distinguished Researcher Award**
2. **Martin J. Kaufman Early Career Research Award**
3. **Early Career Publication Award**
4. **Student Research Awards**

1. Kauffman-Hallahan-Pullen Distinguished Researcher Award

In recognition of the critical importance of research in special education that has a meaningful impact on the field, the CEC-DR seeks nominations for the Kauffman-Hallahan-Pullen Distinguished Researcher Award. This award recognizes individuals or research teams whose research has resulted in more effective services or education for exceptional individuals. Recipients of this award are recognized for both the creation of a research base and the work done to translate this research into practice. Thus, the recognized work may include, but is not limited to, research articles, paper series, monographs, professional development activities, book chapters, and/or books. The Kauffman-Hallahan-Pullen Distinguished Researcher Award is funded through earnings of the *Handbook of Special Education*, edited by James Kauffman, Daniel Hallahan, and Paige Pullen and published by Routledge. The award, co-sponsored by Routledge Press, includes \$1,000 presented at the DR Reception at the CEC Annual Convention. Nominations are sought across all areas of special education as well as all forms of research methodology. Previous recipients include Hill Walker, Lynn and Doug Fuchs, Mary Brownell, Karen Harris and Steve

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Call for Nominations (continued from page 6)

Graham, Rob Horner, Kathleen Lane, Naomi Zigmond, Ann Turnbull, Nancy Jordan, and Patricia Snyder.

Chair: Dr. Jacqueline Lubin (jacyves@gmail.com)

2. Martin J. Kaufman Distinguished Early Career Research Award

In recognition of the critical role of research to both current practice in and the future of the field of special education, the CEC-DR seeks nominations for the **Martin J. Kaufman Distinguished Early Career Research Award**. This award recognizes individuals who have made outstanding scientific contributions in special education, in basic and/or applied research, within the first 10 years following receipt of the doctoral degree. Nominations are sought across all areas of special education as well as all forms of research methodology. The award, cosponsored by the Hammill Institute on Disabilities, includes \$1,000 presented at the DR Reception at the CEC annual convention and an invited presentation at CEC the following year. Previous recipients include Alexandra Trout, Jeanne Wanzek, Michael Wehmeyer, Ron Nelson, Patricia Mathes, Rollanda O'Connor, Batya Elbaum, Terry Scott, Kathleen Lane, Frank Symons, Bryan Cook, Michael Coyne, Erik Carter, Stephanie Al Otaiba, Linda Mason, Kristen McMaster, Paul Morgan, Brian Boyd, Erin Barton, Christopher Lemons, Sarah Powell, Chad Rose, Sara McDaniel, and Nicholas Gage.

Chair: Dr. Linda Mason (lmason20@gmu.edu)

3. Early Career Publication Award

The Early Career Publication Award recognizes an outstanding research publication by an individual within five years after completing the doctorate. The person nominated must be sole or first author of the article. The article must be a completed study published in a peer-refereed journal prior to the deadline. OnlineFirst (or similar) publications are eligible (e.g., article is accepted, final proofs are completed, revisions are not possible, and the article is posted in final form). Pre-prints and "in-press" papers will not be considered. The article must be a primary research report, a meta-analysis, or a research review. It may not be a chapter, theoretical paper, or position or issue article. Nominations are sought across all areas of special education as well as all forms of research methodology.

The committee will initially review all articles submitted and create a short list. Evaluations may be solicited from appropriate scholars in the field based on the topics investigated in the articles constituting the short list.

Feedback from these scholars to the subcommittee will be considered and a final decision reached on the recipient(s). The Early Career Publication Award will be presented at the CEC-DR Reception during the annual CEC convention. Previous award winners include Sharlene Kiuahara, Allison Bruhn, Chris Lemons, Andrew Wiley, Sarah Powell, Brian Reichow, Karrie Shogren, Ya-Yu Lo, Andrew Roach, Terry Scott, Wendy Murawski, Margaret Beebe-Frankenberger, Alexandra Hollo, Robin Parks Ennis, Justin Garwood, Shawn Kent, and Corey Peltier.

Chair: Dr. Timothy Landrum (t.landrum@louisville.edu)

4. Student Research Awards

CEC-DR seeks nominations for the Student Research Awards. These awards recognize high-quality research across multiple research methodologies conducted by students in the course of their undergraduate or graduate special education training program. CEC-DR will give up to four such awards annually, with one award presented in each of up to four areas of research designs or methodologies: qualitative, single-subject, quantitative, and mixed-methods. No award will be given in any research methodology area if an exemplary, high-quality research study is not submitted; thus, there may be fewer than four awards presented in any given year. Nominations are sought across all areas of special education services. The awardee in each research method area will receive a \$200 award and a certificate.

The following criteria must be met in each area:

- a. The nominated student must be the sole or first author of the nominated manuscript and the research study must represent the student's intellectual work.
- b. The nominated research study must have been conceptualized and conducted while the first author was a student.
- c. The nominated study must not be in press at the time of submission nor have been published prior to submission for the award.
- d. The nominated manuscript must not exceed 50 double-spaced pages, not including tables and references. Manuscripts should be formatted according to current APA guidelines.
- e. Independent of the methodological area in which the manuscript is submitted, research studies nominated must adhere to standards for high-quality research advocated for in the field of special education and by the CEC-DR.

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Call for Nominations (continued from page 7)

Detailed, quality indicators of high-quality research for quantitative, qualitative, and single-subject design studies can be found in the Winter 2005 special issue of *Exceptional Children*, 71(2), edited by Odom et al. Detailed quality indicators of high-quality research for mixed-methods studies can be found in Klingner and Boardman (2011) and Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2010). Applicants are referred to these references for guidance. Please note that the “quantitative” category for this award includes group experimental and quasi-experimental designs (Gersten et al., 2005) and correlational designs (Thompson, Diamond, McWilliam, Snyder, & Snyder, 2005).

Co-Chairs: Drs. Kelly Whalon (kwhalon@fsu.edu) and Tanya Santangelo ■

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program to recognize the contributions of special education researchers in the early phase of their career. In fact, the award named for him this year was the *first* award CEC-DR created. For those of us who had the honor of knowing Marty personally, we will be forever impacted by his kindness, as well as the decades of leadership he and his wife, Linda Lewis, have gifted to CEC-DR.

I believe Marty would have been elated with President Biden’s passing of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, with the Institute of Education Sciences allotted \$100,000,000 to pave the path forward with rigorous, relevant inquiry to address learning loss caused by the coronavirus—including children with disabilities (see <https://alabamaneewscenter.com/2021/03/25/american-rescue-plan-includes-more-than-2-billion-for-alabamas-schools>).

This past year, CEC-DR has offered several professional learning activities to engage scholars at various stages of their careers (see the newly redesigned CEC-DR website, <https://cecdr.org/>, for a full listing and to access recordings), including Early Career Research Workshop, Doctoral Student Seminars in Special Education Research, The Academic Career Trajectory Webinar Series, and The Academic Job Search Webinar Series.

We are hopeful many in our CEC-DR community will utilize these opportunities and capitalize on

the reinvigorated conversations about how to address learning loss, with attention to also meeting students’ behavioral and social-emotional well-being needs in the days ahead. As discussed in the National Safe School Reopening Summit (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZFLuX74yPbY>; held March, 2021), the challenge is formidable. Yet, the opportunities for learning what works, for whom, and under which conditions is essential as we recover from the educational disruptions experienced by so many during this pandemic. We have an unprecedented opportunity to explore on swift cycles how to best meet students’ multiple needs, with a clear focus on addressing issues of systemic inequality. I remain hopeful the CEC-DR community will continue to engage in rigorous, respectful, responsible, and transparent inquiry, with new avenues possible through the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021.

Again, I ask you to please revisit the mission of your work and your programmatic lines of inquiry, and ask yourself: What commitments can I make to understanding and addressing issues of inequity as we support students, families, and educators addressing learning loss, while carefully attending to students’ behavioral and social-emotional well-being?

In the days ahead, I wish you safety, productivity, and joy. Life is fragile. I hope you will continue to appreciate the gifts of each other’s time and commitment to the field of special education. I certainly do. ■