

FOCUS on Research

Newsletter of the



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President's Message

Looking Forward to the Next 100 Years

Christopher J. Lemons, PhD
Stanford University

One hundred years of the Council for Exceptional Children: This is a milestone to be celebrated. Still, while I think there are so many accomplishments for which to pat our forebears, colleagues, and ourselves on the back, we have so much more work to do pushing our field forward.

We should relish and delight in the progress our field has made in ensuring children and adolescents with disabilities are able to receive a free and appropriate public education, local campuses include students with disabilities, and teacher training programs continue to improve in guiding teachers to support students with disabilities.

Unfortunately, our progress is insufficient. We live in a time where students with disabilities continue to remain under-educated, less included than they could be (both in terms of quantity of time and quality of education), and with poorer post-secondary opportunities and possibilities than we would desire.

The past two years of a pandemic has messed up so many things in schools. But, I optimistically think that education researchers, specifically DR members, are in the best space to respond in original, organic, creative ways to support the kiddos we most care about.

For many of us, this has been a season of reflection, reconsideration, and re-

intentioning. I hope each of you has had a moment (or more) to pause and reflect on the impact of your research with an intention to improve the lives of children and adolescents with disability, their family members, and their educators.

What I really want to ask you each to reflect on is, "What matters?" That paper, that abstract, that meeting ... or is it the other work you do in making the most amazing teachers of students with disabilities ... conducting research to support our students with disabilities ... being an advocate to make our political system more responsive to the kids and families we care about?

I'm hopeful each of you gets a minute to pause in the new year to reflect on your priorities. The last couple of years seem to have made focusing a bit hard. The DR community is one that continually offers our community members support, guidance, and encouragement. I hope we continue to do that. Our focus on improving education and life outcomes for individuals with disabilities, their family members, and educators is such an amazing path, and I hope all of us continue to pursue this path with the passion we experienced before the world went nuts with COVID. I am especially excited about the opportunities at our upcoming meeting to continue

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CEC-DR Diversity Committee Spotlight

Research With and for BIPOC Students With Disabilities and Their Families



Federico Waitoller, PhD
University of Illinois at Chicago

How many times have parents sat in an IEP meeting when decisions were already made? How many times have parents of students with disabilities

sat in IEP meetings just to be told who their child is and what they need to succeed in school? Meaningful parent participation has been at the core of the spirit of IDEA and yet, it's a thorny issue in schools. Parents of students with disabilities continued to be sidelined from the educational decisions that affect their children. This is particularly true in the case of black and indigenous people of color (BIPOC) parents of students with disabilities, who tend to be perceived through deficit views when predominantly white, nondisabled, English-speaking professionals make significant decisions about their children's educational futures.

As the special education field grapples with how to improve parent participation and parent-professional relationships, there is a key area where interventions can yield significant results: teacher preparation programs.

Traditionally, special education teacher preparation programs address teacher-parent relationships with a single standing course on the topic in which a faculty member, most likely an ex-special educator themselves, teaches students about other people's families through textbooks and case studies. Dr. Cristina Santamaría Graff, associate professor at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis, offers an important alternative to prepare teachers. This alternative is rooted in the knowledge and expertise of the experts themselves: BIPOC students with disabilities and their parents. Titled "Family as Faculty" (FAF), the approach situates parents and students as co-investigators and co-teachers during courses to prepare special education teachers. Parents are co-designers of the curriculum and co-instructors of teacher preparation programs. Echoing



the slogan from the disability civil rights movements, "Nothing About Us Without Us," in FAF special educators and their faculty at teacher preparation programs learn with and for, rather than about, BIPOC students with disabilities and their families. FAF has the potential to dismantle unequal power relationships in which parents are positioned as mere consumers of services and therefore to build more equitable and meaningful partnerships with families. To learn more about FAF, Check this [podcast](#) and [blog](#) in which Dr. Santamaría Graff explains the FAF approach. ■



Student Spotlight

WFH to F2F: Transitioning Back to Face-to-Face Workplace Interactions



Tracey Easley-Card
University of Texas at Austin



Sally Fluhler
Vanderbilt University

2020 was the year of "work from home" (WFH), in which universities across the nation revved up their online course platforms, lectures were delivered virtually, and research opportunities were either paused indefinitely or pivoted to accommodate the "new normal." The 2020-2021 school year was unlike any school year that we can remember. Over the summer, schools and universities alike started to plan for the 2021-2022 school year and how, with the ongoing global pandemic, things still might not be the same as they were prior to March 2020. Many schools and universities announced that in-person classes and face-to-face instruction would be "plan A" for the school year. This meant that people might be transitioning back to a face-to-face workplace environment or to a hybrid environment in which you are slowly transitioning back to the office.

Face-to-face workplace interactions and meetings are different from what they were in the pre-COVID

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WFH to F2F (continued from page 2)

world. There are habits that we had to adopt working from home that can make the transition to face-to-face office environments, interactions, and research feel a bit more comfortable. Below are a few ideas on how to make the transition and adapt to some post-pandemic (or potentially ongoing pandemic) norms:

- **Make a schedule.** Schedule time to gradually transition back to the office from working remotely that supports feelings of safety while preventing burnout and anxiety. Revisit workday rituals and routines before returning to the office with the knowledge that returning to face-to-face work will not be the same as pre-COVID. Alter or establish routines that allow transition time between scheduled appointments and meetings to allow yourself time to regroup. The world is establishing a new normal.
- **Take breaks.** Feel comfortable setting boundaries and taking breaks. Consider ways to maintain a healthy work-life balance when developing schedules. One way to take breaks and reset your brain before returning to your desk for work could include taking time outside for a walk or to get fresh air. This is a habit that many of us adopted during our time working from home and can continue in returning to the office. Don't forget to give yourself grace. It is often easy to be understanding with others, but we often forget to give grace to ourselves. A small break to enjoy nature or a cup of tea can be helpful in maintaining the focus and attention to detail needed for work. One thing that the pandemic taught the world is that not everything that we thought was of high importance is essential.
- **Embrace the advances in technology.** One of the side-effects of everyone working from home, taking meetings on online video conferencing

platforms, conducting research virtually, and delivering instruction online are advances in and creative uses of technology. Classes might have included online discussion boards, live polling/responding applications, breakout rooms, and engaging lecture features that can be useful during presentations and courses even in a face-to-face instructional environment. Not only can these features help with engagement in the classroom, but they can also be used when thinking about hybrid models for instruction, when you have students both in-person and online. These features also work well for hybrid conference models, like the upcoming CEC conference!

- **Be aware of changing social norms.** The days of the social hug to greet or a handshake ended abruptly in March 2020. Respect each institution's COVID protocols and stay on top of the changes that may occur throughout the school year (such as mask mandates, social distancing protocols, and room capacities). Develop other ways to greet, acknowledge, and/or interact such as an elbow or fist bump.
- **Recognize that others are adjusting as well.** Not only are your coworkers/colleagues adjusting to face-to-face interactions but so are teachers, schools, and other community partners. We should be aware of their changing protocols surrounding face-to-face observations, interactions, professional development, and research protocols. We also think it is important to set expectations within research teams as to what can be feasibly accomplished within your research given these stressful times of iterative protocols. Establishing protocols that not only follow partners' COVID guidelines but are comfortable for both parties are of utmost importance and can continue to foster positive school-research partnerships. ■



President's Message *(continued from page 1)*

forging and deepening cross-divisional partnerships. I very much appreciate the leadership of the Division for Learning Disabilities (DLD) here. We are a close-knit community and I very much look forward to connecting

with many of you at the in-person CEC meeting in Orlando. The future is bright ... we've just got to continue doing the hard work that ensures this brightness is extended to the children, adolescents, young adults, family members, and educators we most care about. ■

2022 DR Award Recipients

The Division for Research is pleased to announce the recipients of its 2022 research awards. Awards will be made to the following outstanding recipients.

2022 Martin J. Kaufman Distinguished Early Career Research Award:

Dr. Robin Parks Ennis, University of Alabama at Birmingham

Dr. Robin Parks Ennis, associate professor in the College of Education at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, has been named the recipient of the 2022 Council of Exceptional Children Division of Research Martin J. Kaufman Distinguished Early Career Research Award. Dr. Ennis received her doctorate in 2013 from Georgia State University. Her outstanding contributions to the field of emotional and behavioral disorders, learning disabilities, and literacy are well substantiated within the research and the research-to-practice literature with over 100 publications. Dr. Ennis' research focuses on the use of multi-tiered systems of support frameworks to simultaneously address academic difficulties and behavioral deficits/excesses. She was the first researcher to extend the self-regulated strategy development (SRS) instructional approach into residential settings and has expanded this approach across writing and math, choice-making, behavior-specific praise, precorrection, and high-probability requests. Her research has received multiple awards, including the inaugural Interventionist Award from the Council for Children with Behavior Disorders, which recognized her innovation in establishing a coherent line of intervention research. In addition to outstanding scholarship, Dr. Ennis has made significant contributions to the field through mentorship of the next generation of scholars and special and general education teachers, and through extensive editorial and organizational service.

Nominator: Kristine Jolivet, *University of Alabama*

2022 Division for Research Early Career Publication Award:

Dr. Emily Kuntz, University of Oklahoma

Dr. Emily Kuntz of the University of Oklahoma has been selected to receive the 2022 Distinguished Early Career Publication Award. Dr. Kuntz is recognized for her research report, "Effects of a Collaborative Planning

and Consultation Framework to Increase Participation of Students with Severe Disabilities in General Education Classes," published in *Research and Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities* (Kuntz & Carter, 2021). In this study, Dr. Kuntz examined the effects of a collaborative planning with consultation framework on the academic engagement of students with intensive support needs, as well as on the nature of instructional interactions between participating middle school general education teachers and their included students. General findings were that all students increased their academic engagement while most general education teachers increased their instructional interactions with students as well. The committee was impressed with the importance of the research questions addressed, the overall design and implementation of this multiple-probe study, that both teacher and student outcomes were assessed, and that these findings may have direct and important implications for both future research and practice.

Kuntz, E. M., & Carter, E. W. (2021). Effects of a collaborative planning and consultation framework to increase participation of students with severe disabilities in general education classes. *Research and Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities*, 46(1), 35–52.

2022 Student Research Awards

Through its student research awards program, the CEC Division for Research recognizes high-quality research conducted by students in the course of their undergraduate or graduate special education training program. CEC-DR invites nominations for research in the following categories: qualitative, quantitative, single subject, and mixed methods design. For 2022, CEC-DR is pleased to announce the following awards:

Student Research Award: Mixed Methods Design

Student Awardee: Michelle M. Sands, MEd

Advisor: Hedda Meadan, PhD, BCBA-D, *University of Illinois*

Title: *Principals' Perceptions Related to Transition to Kindergarten for Children With Disabilities: A Mixed-Methods Study*

Abstract: To ensure children with disabilities (CWD) have a successful transition to kindergarten, teachers

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CEC-DR Families Research Spotlight (continued from page 4)

have been encouraged to use high-intensity, or individualized, transition practices. Yet, while limited or lack of administrator support has been cited as a barrier to transition practice use, there exists little research regarding principals' perceptions of transition practice use for CWD. The purposes of this explanatory sequential mixed methods study were to better understand (a) how principals' perceptions are related to the reported use of transition practices by teachers to support CWD and their families, and (b) their perceived importance and feasibility. A questionnaire designed for this study was used to understand what 150 principals from one midwestern state reported about teachers' use of kindergarten transition practices to support CWD and their perceptions of transition practices. Next, interviews were conducted with 14 principals to further explain findings from the initial phase, employing a purposeful sample and interview protocol developed based on the completed questionnaires. Major findings of the study are discussed, including but not limited to, principals' perceptions of preschool teachers as having the most essential role in the transition process. Implications for research and practice are discussed.

Student Research Award: Single-Subject Design

Student Awardee: Megan E. Carpenter, PhD

Advisor: Ya-yu Lo, PhD, *University of North Carolina at Charlotte*

Title: *Effects of Check-In/Check-Out on the Behavior of Students With Autism Spectrum Disorder Who Have Extensive Support Needs*

Abstract: Students with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) who have extensive support needs (ESN) may have elevated support needs for social behavior. School-wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS) is an evidence-based framework to support the social and behavioral needs of all students through evidence-based practices, data-based decision making, and systems to support teacher implementation fidelity. As an evidence-based intervention commonly used as a Tier 2 support within SWPBIS, Check-in/Check-out (CICO) has improved social behavior among students with high incidence disabilities and without disability labels. However, the literature on the efficacy of

CICO does not include students with ASD and ESN. The purpose of this study was to examine the effects of traditional or adapted CICO on the adherence to school-wide expectations and challenging behavior of four elementary students with ASD who have ESN. Results of this multiple baseline across participants design study indicated there was a decrease in challenging behavior and increase in adherence to schoolwide expectations for two students when adaptations were made to the standard CICO protocol. Additionally, educators, students, and caregivers found CICO feasible and socially valid. Limitations, implications for practice, and suggestions for future research are discussed.

Student Research Award: Quantitative Design

Student Awardee: Marianne Rice, MEd

Advisor: Florina Erbeli, PhD

Title: *Efficacy of Phonemic Awareness Instruction: A Meta-analysis Relevant to the COVID-19 Pandemic*

Abstract: The National Reading Panel identified phonemic awareness (PA) as one of the five components of reading and found explicit instruction effective in developing PA skills in students. During the COVID-19 pandemic, PA instruction was moved from schools to homes and was implemented by teachers, but also by computers and parents. In the current meta-analysis, we explored the extent to which PA instruction continued to be effective for developing PA skills in the context of the pandemic and examined moderators and their possible interactions. We collected data from 31 experimental and quasi-experimental primary studies, from years 2000–2020, with 42 independent samples providing 84 effect sizes (treatment groups, $n = 1,334$; control groups, $n = 1,235$). Using robust variance estimation, PA instruction was moderately effective ($g = 0.52$, $p < .001$) at improving PA outcomes for students in preschool through first grade. No statistically significant difference was found for type of instructor, which suggests that teachers, computers, and parents can all effectively provide PA instruction. Other moderator analyses revealed no significant differences for group size, duration, grade level, or at-risk for reading difficulties status. Finally, examination of the interaction between type of instructor and at-risk status suggested teachers, computers, and parents are effective instructors for both at-risk and low-risk students. ■

2021–2022 DR Doctoral Student Scholars

Jean B. Crockett, PhD, *University of Florida* | Mary Theresa Kiely, PhD, *CUNY Queens College*
 Kristen Merrill O’Brien, PhD, *George Mason University*

Co-Chairs, DR Doctoral Student Scholars Program

CEC-DR is pleased to announce the 14th cohort of scholars selected through an internationally competitive process to participate in the **2021–2022 DR Doctoral Student Seminars in Special Education Research (DRDSS)**. The Division commends all the students who applied and their nominators for upholding a high standard of scholarship, especially considering the continuing challenges presented by the pandemic. We would also like to thank the panel of reviewers, who participated in the selection process, and our seminar leaders.

The 2021–2022 Cohort of DR Doctoral Student Scholars in Special Education Research

Scholar	Nominator	Institution
Haya Abdellatif	Rachel Robertson	University of Pittsburgh
Seyma Birinci	Kristen McMaster	University of Minnesota
Samantha Bos	Sarah Powell	University of Texas at Austin
Alice Bravo	Ilene Schwartz	University of Washington
Lindsay Carlisle	Michael Kennedy	University of Virginia
M. Addie McConomy	Jenny Root	Florida State University
Nikita McCree	Matthew Burns	University of Missouri
Jodee Prudente	MaryAnn Demchak	University of Nevada, Reno
Megan Rojo	Christian Doabler	University of Texas at Austin
Gretchen Scheibel	Kathleen Zimmerman	University of Kansas
Hyojong Sohn	Mary Brownell	University of Florida
Lanqi Wang	Shawn Datchuk	University of Iowa
Megan Worth	Stephen Smith	University of Florida

The Division is very grateful to the **Hammill Institute on Disabilities** for its generous sponsorship of the DRDSS program—an online seminar and discussion series designed to foster connections among students at different universities and contribute toward raising the standard of research in the field through sustained inquiry into the question, “What makes for excellence in special education research?”

Seminars will be led this year by Dr. Nicholas A. Gage, senior researcher for special education at West-

Ed, and recipient of the 2020 DR Distinguished Early Career Award; DR past-president Dr. Karen Harris, Arizona State University; Dr. Jason Chow, University of Maryland; and a panel of early career scholars comprising DRDSS alumni.

All graduate students attending the CEC 2022 Convention in Orlando, Florida, are invited to attend the DR Colloquium on Tuesday, January 18th, at 2:30pm, dedicated to graduate student development. For more information, see the conference website. ■

CEC Convention 2022: Division for Research Events Orlando World Center, Orlando, Florida

In-Person January 16–19, 2022; Virtual February 1–4, 2022

Check app for final location details as locations are subject to change last minute.

Date and Time*	Session Name	Presenter(s)	Format/Location
Monday, 1/17, 9:15 am–10:15 am	Previewing the New Handbook of Special Education Research: Innovations and Future Research	Christopher Lemons, Kathleen Lynne Lane, Sarah Powell	Concurrent session/Grand 7B
Tuesday, 1/18, 9:15 am–10:15 am	What Is the Science of Reading and the Science of Math?	Sarah Powell, Paul Riccomini, Stephanie Al Otaiba, Emily Solari	Collaborative session/Crystal H
Tuesday, 1/18, 10:30 am–11:30 am	CEC-DR Showcase: Multi-Tiered System of Supports Research Network: Integrating Academic and Behavior Supports	Michael Coyne, Kathleen Lynne Lane, Nathan Clemens, Allison Gandhi, Erica Lembke	Concurrent session/Grand 7B
Tuesday, 1/18, 2:15 pm–3:15 pm	Graduate Student Research Colloquium: Exploring the Hallmarks of Excellent Special Education Research	Mary Theresa Kiely, Kristen Merrill O'Brien, Jean Crockett	Concurrent session/Grand 7B
Tuesday, 2/1	The Division for Research Award Recipients: Presentation 1. Impacts of School-Wide Positive Behavior Supports; Presentation 2. Embedded Instruction for Early Learning	Nick Gage, Patricia Snyder	Virtual only
Tuesday, 2/1	Researching Culturally Responsive Innovations in Schools	Federico Waitoller, Aydin Bal	Virtual only

Date and Time*	Event	Location	Format
Sunday, 1/16, 10:00 pm–2:00 pm	CEC-DR Board Meeting	St. Louis Room	In person
Tuesday, 1/18, 4:00 pm–5:00 pm	CEC-DR Business Meeting	Crystal K-L	In person
Tuesday, 1/18, 5:00 pm–8:00 pm	CEC-DR Reception (with DLD and other divisions)	Paddlefish Restaurant https://www.paddlefishrestaurant.com	In person

**Local time (Eastern)*

Saturday, 1/15, 2:00 pm–3:00 pm: CEC Interdivisional Caucus (IDC) DC Meeting

Monday, 1/17, 2:30 pm: CEC General Session – CEC-DR Past President Kathleen Lynne Lane will be honored with the CEC J. E. Wallace Wallin Special Education Lifetime Achievement Award

Tuesday, 1/18, 12:30 pm: Representatives Assembly