

## Teachers' Corner

### *Preparing and Transitioning Young Persons with Developmental Disabilities for New and Exciting Post-school Roles*



**Robert A. Stodden**  
*University of Hawaii at Manoa*

One of the most important tasks for educators is to prepare young people to be successful and contributing adults in their community of choice. For teachers of young persons with intellectual and other significant disabilities, this task is even more important than with those teachers working with all other students in high school.

In the past many young adults with intellectual disabilities transitioned from high school to relatively protective environments of sheltered living and daily activity. Today, the expectations of young adults with developmental disabilities have changed to one of personal choice and self-determination, community participation, and supported living and work.

In preparing young people to transition to these new and challenging roles, educators must ensure that their students leave with some of the following skills:

- Begin transitioning youth from a program of special education services to a menu of educational supports and accommodations similar to those to be experienced in adult community and employment environments.
- Provide youth with choices and teach the process of making choices, including the role of consequences related to inappropriate choices.
- Assist youth to understand their disability and the basic support or accommodation needs they may have in relation to their disability needs.
- Provide youth with the basic skills necessary to move about and function within adult community roles of continued learning, living, socializing and working.
- Reinforce the principle that learning is a life-long endeavor and that leaving high school is just the beginning of all the things to be learned in life.

## *New Journal Benefit For DDD Members:*



### *Focus on Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities!*

Beginning in Spring, 2004, all members of the **Division on Developmental Disabilities** will begin receiving a new journal, *Focus on Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities*. This is in addition to the official Division Journal *Education and Training in Developmental Disabilities* that all DDD members will continue to receive.

DDD Publications/Communications Chair **Jack Hourcade** noted that the recent name change of the division to the **Division on Developmental Disabilities** was overwhelmingly approved when it came before the division's membership in 2002. That name change proposal was approved in large part because of significantly increased interest by DDD members in autism and related pervasive disorders. "The provision of the well-respected PRO-ED journal *Focus on Autism* allows DDD to better serve its members by providing a wonderful professional information resource on autism spectrum disorders. This new member benefit helps document DDD's commitment to **all** developmental disabilities, including autism and related disorders."

*Focus on Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities* provides practical educational and treatment suggestions for professionals and parents working with individuals with autism and related developmental disabilities. It includes original research reports, position papers, effective intervention procedures, descriptions of successful programs, and reviews of current books and other professional products.

For further information, please contact **Jack Hourcade** at [jhourca@boisestate.edu](mailto:jhourca@boisestate.edu).

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## President's Message:

### Teacher accountability, documentation, and evidence-based intervention... challenges and a possible solution



#### Andrea Babkie

In the current age of standards-based reform, highlighted by the requirements of *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB), there is an increased emphasis on teacher accountability. Included in this accountability is the documentation of adequate yearly

progress of students. Such documentation is not new to teachers in the field of developmental disabilities; evaluating and reporting student progress on IEP objectives or benchmarks has been a core aspect of special educators' responsibilities since the passage of PL 94-142 (now IDEA) in 1975. What are new are the accountability requirements in terms of using evidence-based interventions (EBI) and the need to document the use of such practices in the classroom. Beyond merely the compliance issue of using and documenting the use of evidence-based practices, it is a practical necessity that these interventions are demonstrably effective in the classroom. The issue then becomes one of how to demonstrate this efficacy.

Educators already face a myriad of constraints imposed by district curricular requirements; the need to prepare students for success on high-stakes assessments; and the unique and diverse needs of learners with developmental disabilities. While each of us has a 'bag of tricks' that we have developed over the years, as well as a variety of techniques we have found successful with the students with whom we work, selecting and implementing evidenced-based interventions is an area that at times can be difficult. For a start, defining EBI has, to this point, remained a less-than-perfect system. Were educators only to use materials that had been subjected to rigorous scientific analysis, choices for diversity in intervention, in terms of selecting interventions to fit the student, rather than trying to fit the student to the intervention, might be significantly curtailed. One potential avenue for educators to both meet the needs of individual students, while demonstrating the use of evidence-based practices, is to use action research in the classroom and make ongoing data collection a part of every day classroom practices.

Educators already conduct what is often unplanned action research. The call here is for such research to be planned; for questions to be asked about student progress and for data to

be collected in a methodical fashion to demonstrate the efficacy of whatever intervention is chosen. The interventions can address academic, social, or behavioral issues: the point is that the educator gathers concrete evidence through data collection in order to demonstrate that change has occurred. With such an approach, decisions are made and strategies implemented based on evidence collected in the classroom. Taking such an approach will allow educators to truly state that they are using evidence-based interventions as they will have the data to prove it.

- Some resources that educators might find useful include:
- Abdal-Haqq, I. (1995). ERIC as a resource for the teacher researcher. *ERIC Digest*. <http://www.ericfacility.net/ericdigests/ed381530.html>.
  - Fairfax County Public Schools. (2003). Teacher-researcher network. <http://www.fcps.k12.va.us/DIS/OSDT/StaffDevelopment/trn.html>.
  - Goswami, D., & Stillman, R. (Eds.). (1987). *Reclaiming the classroom: Teacher research as an agency for change*. Upper Montclair, NJ: Boynton/Cook Publishers.
  - Madison Metropolitan School District. (2001). Staff & organizational development: Classroom action research. <http://www.madison.k12.wi.us/sod/car>.
  - Ovens, P. (2000). Teacher researcher as a basis for teaching: A part of our future? *Education in Science*, 189, 14-15.

#### NOTICE

**The ad hoc Professional Development and Standards Committee has been working on developing new standards for Autism, revising DDD standards and beginning an "evidence-based" data base. See the next issue of the DDD Express for more information.**

**If you are interested in helping with this committee's work, please contact Scott Sparks, Chairperson.**

**[sparks@ohio.edu](mailto:sparks@ohio.edu)**



# Call for Papers

The Council for Exceptional Children's Division on Developmental Disabilities (CEC-DDD) is hosting its 9<sup>th</sup> Biennial Conference in Las Vegas, Nevada - October 11-12, 2004

The 9<sup>th</sup> Biennial Conference is practitioner-focused and CEC-DDD welcomes the submission of innovative, creative proposals within the following strands:

- ◆ Assistive Technology
- ◆ Autism/Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
- ◆ Cognitive Disability - Best Practices
- ◆ Differentiated Instruction
- ◆ Multiple Disabilities
- ◆ Wellness

Proposals should include the following information:

- ◆ Presenter name(s), affiliation, contact information (including e-mail)
- ◆ Session title, abstract (50 word maximum), and description including information as to how the proposal addresses diversity (300 word maximum)
- ◆ Session format - poster session, lecture, or "make & take"

Proposals may be submitted electronically to Cindy Perras, Program Co-Chair [cindy.perras@cogeco.ca](mailto:cindy.perras@cogeco.ca) or by fax to 905-844-4806.

**Deadline: March 1, 2004**

For additional conference information, please contact:

Dagny Fidler - [dagny.fidler@dmeps.k12.ia.us](mailto:dagny.fidler@dmeps.k12.ia.us)  
Barbara Gartin - [bgartin@uark.edu](mailto:bgartin@uark.edu)  
Tom Smith - [tecsmith@uark.edu](mailto:tecsmith@uark.edu)



## Diversity Committee Report



**Scott Sparks, Chair  
ad hoc Diversity Committee**

The **Diversity Committee** has been on a brief respite lately and will soon be active once again. Our goals are to assist the Division in developing, implementing, and promoting its diversity agenda. At the DDD midyear meeting this past October, the Board of Directors voted to recommend to the membership in New Orleans that the ad hoc Diversity Committee be recognized as a Standing Committee of the Board. This move will solidify the committee structure within DDD and recognizes the importance of the Diversity Committee and its functions. I encourage all of you who will be attending the CEC convention in New Orleans to attend the DDD business meeting and speak up on this important issue.

Another action by the Board in October had to do with representation of diversity throughout the Division including its programs. As planning goes on for the Las Vegas DDD conference, the Diversity Committee will have an opportunity to begin to develop a process for assuring that diversity is well represented in our programs. We will give input into the process

and evaluate the outcomes after the conference has finished. Through this evolutionary process, we hope to develop a working model for future conferences and to share with colleagues. Of course, programs are not the only Division activity that should reflect diversity in its content and presentation. Publications, books, pamphlets, and leadership should also be sensitive to our diverse interests and beliefs. The specifics of how to do all of this must still be identified and procedures and policies developed.

Our most recent activities have revolved around developing a training package. One of our members, **Rosa Lockwood** presented a poster session in Seattle outlining our progress toward this goal. The next step in this process is to field test some of the activity ideas around the identified steps toward cultural acceptance. The committee will begin its work this January on this important process. I urge any DDD member who is interested to join us in this effort. You may contact me at [sparks@ohio.edu](mailto:sparks@ohio.edu) if you are interested.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to the DDD Board of Directors for their unflinching support of the ad hoc Diversity Committee. They have been open to new ideas and willing to take a chance on acting on many of them. By demonstrating this kind of support, they are serving the mission of DDD with utmost diligence and sending a positive message to the membership. It's good to have this kind of leadership in our organization.

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## Executive Director's Corner



**Tom E. C. Smith  
Executive Director**

**Subdivision reports** are still coming in for 2002-2003. As soon as you send me a copy of your report, with current officers, we will approve your subdivision rebate, which is \$2.00 per member. This rebate can be very useful for your subdivision; you can put it into your treasury and use it any way you need it. Subdivisions are also asking for their \$100 seed money. This money can be used for a wide variety of activities, including membership drives, conferences, or other activities supporting the subdivision. All you have to do is ask and your subdivision will receive this money. Now that the board has approved membership receiving a subscription of *Focus on Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities*, our membership has become very

attractive to individuals with a primary interest in autism spectrum disorders. If your subdivision would like some copies of past issues of this journal to use for membership recruitment, please let me know; the division will be able to send you some copies. I hope many of you are able to come to New Orleans in April. If you do, please stop by the **DDD** booth in the exhibits areas and try to attend our business meeting and social. Times and locations will be listed in the program. The next **DDD** conference, scheduled for November in Las Vegas, is shaping up to be an outstanding meeting. I hope many of you can attend that conference as well. As usual, if you need anything that I can help you or your subdivision with, please don't hesitate to contact me. **Tom Smith**, [tecsmith@uark.edu](mailto:tecsmith@uark.edu)



## *DDD at the CEC Conference New Orleans, April 2004*

Now is the time to make your reservations for the **CEC 2004 Convention** in New Orleans. This year's general session is on Wednesday, April 14, 5:00-6:30 and the keynote speaker is **Ron Clark**, Disney's 2000 American Teacher of the Year and Oprah's first Phenomenal Man. From rural North Carolina to the inner city schools of Harlem, New York, Ron taught his students more than the ABC's; he taught them to dream and excel.

Then from Thursday, April 15 through Saturday, April 17, 2004, the **DDD** conference strand is one of the most varied ever. The DDD showcase speaker is **Paul Wehman**, Director of the Virginia Commonwealth University Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Workplace Supports. He will be speaking on the employment models that are working for young people with developmental disabilities.

**Peter Gerhardt**, Executive Director of the Nassau Suffolk Services for Autism will speak on sexuality and persons with developmental disabilities. He will provide us with strategies to accept persons with disabilities as sexual beings and to assist individuals in establishing a more satisfying understanding of their sexuality. **Kerry George** and **Betty Bolte**, two award winning teachers from the Springdale Public Schools in Arkansas, will demonstrate how technology can be used to enhance inclusive practices. In addition to these speakers, **Brenda Smith Myles** will chair an Autism Spectrum Strand. There will also be a Paraprofessional Strand, a Transition Strand, and over 15 presentations and 12 posters dealing directly with the concerns of children and youth with developmental disabilities.

Check the CEC website <[www.cec.sped.org](http://www.cec.sped.org)>.  
Come join us!



## *Strategic Plan Revision*

In order to address needed changes in the **DDD Strategic Plan**, an ad hoc committee, chaired by DDD Vice President, **Dagny Fidler**, was formed during the midyear board meeting. The charge of the committee is to review the current strategic plan with the intent of restructuring the plan and making recommendations for revision. Step one will be the creation of a set of goals for the division. Objectives designed to meet these goals will be developed and individual committee responsibilities for each objective will be assigned. The goals of these actions are both to update the current strategic plan and to make the plan responsive to current issues in the field of developmental disabilities. After lengthy discussion, the DDD Board of Directors selected four areas to serve as critical issues to be addressed through actions delineated in the Strategic Plan: 1. Evidence-based practices; 2. Assessment; 3. Teacher qualifications; and, 4. Legislative issues.

All interested members are invited to review the current plan which can be found on the **DDD website** ([www.dddcec.org](http://www.dddcec.org)) and offer feedback to the ad hoc committee chair. Dagny Fidler can be reached at [dagny@mchsi.com](mailto:dagny@mchsi.com).

### **NOTICE OF DDD ELECTIONS**

**YOUR BALLOT  
WILL BE IN THE MAIL SOON-**

**PLEASE VOTE!**

### *Constitution and By-Laws Changes*

In New Orleans, membership attending the business meeting will be asked to vote on a change in the **DDD Constitution and By-Laws**. The change will be to make the Diversity Committee a standing committee; currently it is an ad hoc committee. The division has had a long-standing commitment to diversity issues; making the diversity committee a standing committee reflects that commitment. The official motion will be to: Delete Section Article VII, Section 1, B., 10. Special Committees; Add Section Article VII, Section 1, B., 10. Diversity Committee; Delete Article VII, Section 11. Special Committees; and Add Article VII, Section 11, Diversity Committee.

# Membership and Unit Development News



**Jim Forristal**  
*Membership/Unit Development  
Committee Chairperson*

The **Division of Developmental Disabilities** is alive and well. Actually alive and maybe not so well. The trend in decreased membership continues to plague us as a Division as it does other Divisions within CEC. While overall membership in CEC has risen there continues to be a decrease in Division membership.

We do however, have twenty-one **DDD Subdivisions**. I don't know how that relates to other Divisions but I would venture to say **DDD** is ahead of the game in that respect. The issue for us, then becomes how active these subdivisions are and more importantly what can we do to assist. Part of my responsibility as the Membership Chair with the assistance of the Membership Committee of the division is to help members, or subdivisions in activities that would enhance membership. With the help of the Membership Committee we are ready, willing and able to assist you in your needs as members. The members and e-mail addresses of the Committee are: **Jim Forristal**, [jimfortpa@aol.com](mailto:jimfortpa@aol.com); **Leslie Broun**, [fljj@rogers.com](mailto:fljj@rogers.com); **Nikki Murdick**, [murdickn@slu.edu](mailto:murdickn@slu.edu); **Joyce**

**Agness**, [jagnes@mail.howard.k12.md.us](mailto:jagnes@mail.howard.k12.md.us); **Tina Taylor Dyches**, [tina\\_dyches@byu.edu](mailto:tina_dyches@byu.edu); and **Jennifer Miller**, [jrm5145@aol.com](mailto:jrm5145@aol.com). Please feel free to contact anyone of us for assistance.

As I have already indicated, there are 21 active or semi active subdivisions within the Division. I would like each of the **Subdivision Presidents** to contact me by e-mail so that I may be in personal contact with you. The information we have from International CEC concerning your name addresses, etc. may or may not be correct. **If you are the president of a subdivision, please contact me at [jimfortpa@aol.com](mailto:jimfortpa@aol.com) with your name, address, phone number and email address.** This will allow the Membership Committee to be in more frequent contact with you.

Good news for the Division is the student membership is on the rise. We, over the past 6 months, have gained approximately 50 new student members. Another area of growth is in the Associate Member Category. Since April of 2003 we have gained 79 new members to this category. The Membership Committee as well as the entire Board of Directors of **DDD** would like to welcome those new members and again offer our assistance in helping you with your membership needs.

As we prepare for the upcoming Holiday Season, I wish to take this time to wish each of you a Happy Holiday Season. May your New Year be filled with health and happiness.

## Students' Corner



**Jennifer Miller**  
*Student Governor*

I hope your fall semester has gone well and that you look forward to the holiday seasons for much rest and relaxation. I hope you had an opportunity to browse through the DDD website. There is a wealth of information that can assist you in

with your studies. Please share this information with your colleagues and friends.

In 2004, you will be receiving the journal, *Focus on Autism*. Please read and enjoy all of the articles and information *Focus on Autism* has to offer. Enjoy the holidays and be sure to take some time for yourself. I am always there for you and can be reached at [JRM5145@aol.com](mailto:JRM5145@aol.com). Have a safe and happy holiday season!!

## Editor's Note...

**Darlene Perner**, *Editor*

On behalf of DDD, I would like to thank **Bob Stodden** for his contribution to our *Teachers' Corner* and **Wendy Ashcroft** from the Project REACH Autism Team. Join us for two great learning opportunities in 2004—DDD at CEC in New Orleans and the 9<sup>th</sup> Biennial DDD Conference in Las Vegas! Also, PLEASE join a **DDD Committee**. If you need more information about DDD or its committees, please go to our website at: [www.dddcec.org](http://www.dddcec.org) or contact me at [dperner@bloomu.edu](mailto:dperner@bloomu.edu). Wishing you all happy holidays!



For more information about  
DDD, please go to:

[www.dddcec.org](http://www.dddcec.org)

## *Practitioner Presentation Awarded to the Project REACH Autism Team*

At the CEC convention in Seattle, the recipients of the **DDD Practitioner Presentation Award** were **Wendy Ashcroft, Sue Argiro, and Joyce Keohane, Project REACH Autism Team** from Shelby County Schools near Memphis, Tennessee. The team used an Elvis theme to demonstrate effective methodologies and principles of Applied Behavior Analysis to about 140 session participants.

**Project REACH** was created to provide useful materials for those who are interested in best practices for serving children with autism and related disorders. This program uses videotapes, handouts, and demonstrations in creative and entertaining presentations designed to support parents, paraprofessionals, teachers, related services personnel, and school administrators.

The goal of **Project REACH** is to compile and share current and accurate information to:

- identify students with autism and related disorders early,
- assess students' needs thoroughly and precisely,
- develop: clear present levels of performance, meaningful goals, and measurable objectives,
- select effective methodologies and strategies, and
- synthesize components into a comprehensive, successful program.

The philosophy of **Project REACH** is to provide specialized instruction for each student that is based on research, individualized, and implemented in the least restrictive environment. The **Project REACH Autism Team** believes that a successful program in autism requires individualized assessment of a student's skills, strengths, interests and needs. In addition, the team believes that effective interventions provide intense treatment, low adult-child ratios, and very structured, personalized intervention programs.

The educational treatment approaches employed by **Project REACH** are based on a behavioral approach. Principles of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) guide the development of individualized programs that blend the three major methodology categories described by **Project REACH**. The three categories include: 1) Naturalistic Teaching Methods (Activity-Based Instruction, Community-Based Instruction, Incidental Teaching, Pivotal Response Training, SCERTS Model, and The Son-Rise Program); 2) Environmental Engineering Approaches (Sensory Integration, Social Stories, Structured Teaching, and Visual Symbols); and, 3) Controlled Presentations (Direct Instruction and Discrete Trial Training). Naturalistic Approaches place emphasis on child-

directed activities, employ natural consequences, foster generalization of skills across settings, and provide instruction within the context of ongoing activities. Environmental Engineering Methods manipulate antecedents such as visual schedules or social stories, structure the environment and work tasks physically to promote learning, support instruction with visual supports, and promote greater independence within the classroom. Controlled Presentations emphasize teacher-directed activities, break down tasks into component parts, emphasize repetition and practice, and require a high level of mastery for each skill.

The creative presentations designed by the **Project REACH Autism Team** include the following. **Success from A – Z:** Research-based methodologies are demonstrated and illustrated with videos and are synthesized into a useful packet that includes a practical strategy associated with each letter of the alphabet. **Tools for Success:** This **Project REACH** program blends the major research-based methodologies by developing a toolbox that includes 3 strategies for decreasing undesirable behavior and 6 strategies for increasing desirable behavior. **The Art of Teaching:** Principles of Applied Behavior Analysis are used to guide the use of music, visual arts, drama, play and creative movement in teaching communication, social, and academic skills.

Ashcroft, W.J., Argiro, M. S., & Keohane, B. J. (2003). *Project REACH: (Rebuilding and Expanding Alternatives for Children)*. Memphis, TN: Shelby County Schools.



*Project REACH Autism Team: Joyce Keohane, Sue Argiro, & Wendy Ashcroft (l-r)*



## 9<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Developmental Disabilities Las Vegas, October 11-12, 2004

The **Call for Papers** is out for the **9<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Developmental Disabilities** in Las Vegas. Make it a learning holiday! Come to the conference and bring your family. Stay at the Alexis Park Resort, a deluxe, all-suites hotel only a half a mile from the airport. Go swimming in one of its three swimming pools. Schedule some time in its spa. The Alexis Park is a non-gaming hotel near to the Strip but offering an environment away from the Strip's noise and confusion. See you in Las Vegas!

**DDD in Las Vegas! You Bet!**

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