

EDC Dialogue

An electronic newsletter to share information and activities for and about the Educators with Disabilities Caucus

EDC is a Caucus of the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)

This newsletter is disseminated quarterly as a means for the caucus to share information, activities, and resources. We welcome your contributions and suggestions for continuously improving this resource. Please send your submissions to Judy Shanley at jshanley@air.org.

Our Mission

To support and advocate for educators with disabilities in teacher training and professional settings

Message from the EDC Chair

Nancy Anderson, Chair 2005-2006

Happy Holidays! I can't believe it but the holiday season is upon us. The EDC board would like to wish each of you a happy and healthy season and a great 2006 new year!

In this Fall EDC newsletter you will see that we have provided a number of articles and resources that we felt would be of new interest to you. Please take the time to especially read the Diversity committee article. This article will provide you with important information about this new CEC committee that was created because of comments and requests from CEC members and educators like you.

As you know, EDC provides this newsletter several times a year, however, please remember to check out our Web site. We try to put up new resources and information for EDC members. In the next few months, we will be posting information about EDC Annual meetings at the 2006 CEC Convention in Salt Lake City, Utah. (<http://www.cec.sped.org/diversity/edc.html>).

Great news! Within this last month, we have had some new educators join EDC. These new members will also be fulfilling some of the vacant positions that we need help with. However, we really need more EDC members to take on new leadership roles and other special projects roles to help us complete EDC tasks. This is a great opportunity for you to learn new skills, meet some great EDC members, and be a part of helping us support more educators with disabilities. Please take the time to view the EDC Web site for more details. If you have any questions, or would like to volunteer for a position, please email me at nanders7@gmu.edu *Be the Voice and Vision for Educators with Disabilities!*

We hope you have a wonderful holiday season and we will see you in 2006!

Your EDC Friends,

Nancy, Judy, Hugh, Clay, Dianne, Pam, Jennifer, Polly, Jennifer B., Kristen



Hot Topics

The Use of Technology to Support the Careers of Educators with Disabilities

The Bismarck Tribune of Bismarck, N.D., reported that a student teacher, who is legally blind, is able to pursue her chosen profession because of technology. The student teacher, who suffered nerve damage that left her with 20/400 vision, is in the teacher certification program at Minot State University. She uses technology to do all of her work, including using software that helps scan her students' assignments and read them back to her so she can grade them. Read the article at <http://www.bismarcktribune.com/articles/2005/10/31/news/local/104736.txt>

- How do you use technology in your profession? Has it been beneficial?
- Do you use assistive devices to develop instructional materials?
- Do you provide instruction using technology or adaptive equipment?

Access technology resources to help you use design and deliver high quality instruction:

Center for Implementing Technology in Education (CITED), www.citededucation.org. Funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). CITED supports state and local education agencies in developing systems that effectively integrate instructional technology so that all students achieve high educational standards. CITED provides this support through innovative professional development, technical assistance, communities of practice, and web-based resources.

Family Center on Technology in Education (FCTD). www.fctd.org. The Family Center is a resource designed to support organizations and programs that work with families of children and youth with disabilities. We offer a range of information and services on the subject of assistive technologies. Whether you're an organization, a parent, an educator, or an interested friend, we hope you'll find information that supports you in your efforts to bring the highest quality education to children with disabilities

National Center for Technology Innovation (NCTI). <http://www.nationaltechcenter.org/rm/default.asp>. NCTI focuses on enriching educational experiences of individuals with disabilities through technology innovation. <http://www.nationaltechcenter.org/rm/default.asp>

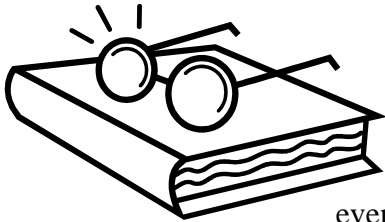
NIMAS Development and Technical Assistance Center. <http://nimas.cast.org/>. The U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs has awarded CAST two five-year Cooperative Agreements to establish two national centers to further develop and implement the **National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standard (NIMAS)**.

- **The NIMAS Development Center** will improve the original standard by identifying new research and technological advances relevant to the standard. The Center will also

explore existing and new distribution models for the provision of accessible materials to students with disabilities.

- **The NIMAS Technical Assistance Center** will work with key stakeholders such as states, school boards, and publishers to raise awareness of the benefits of accessible materials. It will also advise stakeholders on the efficient production and distribution of NIMAS-compliant materials

Perspectives from the Field



Transitions in the Life of an Educator with a Disability

Pam DeLoach, EDC Advisor

We seem to notice transition experiences more with obvious events such as when we get a new job or when we have a new boss. These transitions necessitate that we make adjustments in environment and also adapt emotionally, sometimes, forcing us to make changes in our attitude-- which is always difficult for me. This is my story of transition.

I am a long time classroom educator with a physical disability teaching special education students who themselves have physical disabilities. This year, I had to take a leave of absence from teaching because of health reasons that would limit my ability to fulfill classroom responsibilities. This was heartbreaking because I really enjoy my job and students. In addition to having to leave the classroom for several weeks, there were a couple of other issues that surfaced during this transition. The first issue, related to the fact that I had to prepare all the lesson plans and the paper work so that my substitute did not have to worry about that. This was time consuming and a little overwhelming. The second issue related to how in the world I was going to fulfill the physical responsibilities of my position when I returned to the classroom. I questioned my ability to fulfill all of my classroom responsibilities – especially my work related to lifting students.

However, because I knew that this transition (my leave of absence) was forthcoming, I recognized that as a teacher, it was part of my job to plan ahead. Therefore, I had a couple of months to prepare for how I was going to address the issue of lifting my students upon my return to the classroom. I also thought about how physical and occupational therapy would help me in the classroom.

I was surprised to learn that my goals related to returning to the classroom became goals for my students. In the process of helping me-- we realized we had stumbled on some new transition goals for the students! I learned I could do a partial lift (using a hugging motion). When I came back to work I realized that I didn't have to jump right back into normal routine. Instead, I modified the way that I lifted students to accommodate my physical capacity. In my classroom, the students and I developed names for the various accommodations we made (such as Money Hug). The names we made up helped break the tension in the classroom and the inadequacies that I experienced due to my limitations. The situation made us laugh and my students learned a new skill – certainly a defining transition moment! I was able to cope with my

limitations and we have a great new morning routine! Transition and change are part of daily life and most of the time, we don't think about these transitions. The key is to turn transitions that can be potentially negative into positive experiences – using whatever experiences and resources that are appropriate.

Key Activities

EDC officers, with the support of CEC Advisors, revised its ***EDC Organizational Guidelines*** document. This resource is used by the EDC Caucus for several purposes including: guiding caucus operations and procedures, informing new and current members of EDC procedures; and serving as foundation for EDC activities and progress. We hope you will review these guidelines available through the EDC section of the CEC website at: (<http://www.cec.sped.org/diversity/edc.html>).

Please direct any comments or questions to Nancy Anderson at nanders7@gmu.edu

Scholarship & Internships

Freida J. Riley Teacher Award program for 2006. The award will be given in Clarksburg, West Virginia .on May 4, 2006. For information about the application process, please visit is website at www.pafinc.com.

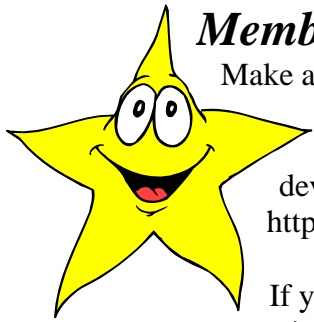


Miami Dade College Offers Bridge Between High school and College. A new joint program with Miami-Dade County Public Schools and Miami Dade College called Access to College and Community Environments in Preparation for Transition (ACCEPT) was launched this year. ACCEPT offers students with intellectual disabilities a bridge between high school and college. For more information on this program, call: Evelys Ubiera, 305-237-6649.

Degree Programs for Developmentally Disabled Students. Bellevue Community College (BCC) in Washington State offers through its Venture program a 90-credit Associate in Essential Studies degree through which high-functioning individuals with learning, cognitive and intellectual disabilities can demonstrate mastery of an established body of knowledge and gain the skills for lifetime success.

Potential students and their families wishing more information may visit the program's website at <http://www.bcc.ctc.edu/venture> or contact Cynthia Johnson at cjohnson@bcc.ctc.edu

Quality of Life Grants Program. Sponsored by The Christopher Reeve Paralysis Foundation, provides grants to non-profit organizations for activities in twelve “quality of life” areas and for health promotion. **Application deadlines are March 1 and September 1.** For details: <http://www.christopherreeve.org/QLGrants/QLGrantsList.cfm?c=11>



Member Happenings

Make a special point of meeting fellow EDC members at CEC Convention events.

This year the meeting will be held in Salt Lake City, Utah, April 5-8, 2006.

Visit CEC's website to learn more about the exciting professional development opportunities available through a national CEC convention
http://www.cec.sped.org/conventions/SaltLake_2006/index.html

If you have not reviewed your membership form in a while or have been attending meetings at the convention and never officially joined, please complete a membership form. To join please go to the EDC Web site (<http://www.cec.sped.org/diversity/edc.html>) and view the How to Become a Member section.

Key Resources



Disability Funders Network Announces Rapid Response Fund for People With Disabilities in U.S. Gulf Region

The Disability Funders Network (DFN) has launched a Rapid Response Fund to help nonprofit organizations meet the immediate and long-term needs of people with disabilities in the Gulf region of the U.S. as a result of hurricanes, storms, and other severe weather conditions. DFN is a grantmakers' affinity group whose mission is to promote awareness, support, and inclusion of people with disabilities and disability issues in grantmaking programs and organizations. The Rapid Response Fund offers mini-grants to nonprofit organizations to meet specific needs that include, but are not limited to, transportation, shelter, medication, medical equipment, and assistive technology. The maximum grant amount is \$5,000.

Funding is limited to 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations, and requests from grassroots organizations will be given priority. No grants will be awarded to individuals or for general operating purposes.

Visit the DFN Web site (<http://www.disabilityfunders.org/>), for complete program information and application procedures.

Vermont College to Create Curriculum for Special-Needs Students

The U.S. Education Department has awarded a \$1 million grant to Landmark College to develop a curriculum that community colleges can use for students with disabilities. Landmark, which for 20 years has served students with dyslexia, ADHD and other disorders, will collaborate with five community colleges nationwide on the three-year project. [The Boston Globe/Associated Press](#) (10/21).

The Council for Exceptional Children's Diversity Committee

Last year the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) launched a new governance structure, the *Diversity Standing Committee (DSC)*. The committee's work will reflect CEC's broad and inclusive view of diversity, including ethnicity, culture and language, gender, age, disability, and sexual orientation. The charge to the committee is to advise the Board regarding diversity

and equity; recommend strategies for greater inclusivity of diverse groups throughout the Council's membership, leadership, and unit program/activities; advise the CEC Board on ways to enhance professional practice for children and youth with exceptionalities from diverse backgrounds; and provide suggestions for attracting, mentoring, and supporting individuals from diverse backgrounds to enter, remain, and advance within the profession. Since it began, it is now in its first year of operation as a full committee. The committee members for 2005 are: Shernaz García (chair), Nancy Anderson, Elaisa Gosnell, Eileen Raymond, Paula Seanez, Hsuying Ward, and Joyce Wortham.

During this year, the committee is reviewing the diversity recommendations from the 2004 Representative Assembly, and gathering information regarding the promotion of diversity as a shared goal throughout CEC. It will also review the convention program for diversity representation, and develop recommendations for the 2006 convention in Salt Lake City, regarding the need for advocacy activities related to discrimination based on sexual orientation. Finally, the committee will review CEC's response to the 2003 report of the CEC Workgroup on Diversity in CEC Publications. Many of these activities are expected to continue past this year, as they are part of a long-term strategy to ensure that CEC is responsive to diversity among its membership as well as professional practice and services for individuals with disabilities from diverse backgrounds.

If you have any questions about the Diversity Committee or would like to provide input, please email Nancy Anderson at nanders7@gmu.edu

EMPLOYER OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES RECEIVES SBA RECOGNITION

The U.S. Small Business Administration's Richmond District Office recently announced that Debra Ruh, President and Founder of TecAccess, LLC of Rockville, Va., is the Virginia Minority Small Business Person of the Year for 2005 and the Region III Minority Small Business Person of the Year for 2005. TecAccess, LLC, a small and woman-owned company that specializes in IT accessibility and Section 508 compliance solutions, has hired 60 associates with significant disabilities. For additional information, visit them at <http://www.tecaccess.net/index.shtml>

Key People

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We welcome your contributions and suggestions regarding this newsletter. If you are interested in volunteering to write a section of this electronic newsletter on a quarterly basis,

Please contact Judy Shanley at jshanley@air.org