



Educators with
Disabilities Caucus
Council for Exceptional Children

Fall 2008

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

Mission:

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

Message from the EDC Chair



Greetings,

My name is Polly Haselden, and I am an assistant professor of education at Francis Marion University in Florence, S.C. I have been a member of the Educators with Disabilities Caucus (EDC) since its organizational meeting in New York City in 2001. At the 2001 Council for Exceptional Children's Conference, I began serving on the EDC board and actively participating in EDC responsibilities. My duties have included creating and managing the mentoring program project and working to locate any and all research available on educators with disabilities for our resource section of the web site. I have been actively involved by writing and publishing articles in Educational Considerations and our EDC newsletter. Additionally, I have presented yearly on the mentoring program at the Council for Exceptional Children's conference on our caucus and its mentoring program. I look forward to working collaboratively with members of the caucus to support the mission and goals of the caucus. I believe that EDC needs to renovate the Mentoring Program and the goals and objectives associated with it. Additionally, I would like to see the continuation of the newsletter, active updating of the web site, ongoing research, and outreach/publicity projects. I am willing to undertake any responsibilities to help promote and support the efforts of the caucus members.

Happenings

During the fall, we have had some major happenings. First, we were featured in an article in Teaching Exceptional Children and provided support for an ongoing study investigating administrators' attitudes in impoverished schools and communities. We have submitted a proposal to the Council for Exceptional Children's Convention and have restructured EDC into four major components to provide efficient services in each of those areas. We have a strong group of individuals leading those components, and I am so thrilled that they have taken on these responsibilities to help us further our goals and objectives of EDC.

In the spring, we plan to hold our annual board meeting and general meeting at the CEC convention in Seattle, so mark your calendars! We also plan on publishing another newsletter and continuing the work of all four components of EDC. We encourage our members to take an active role in helping out with any component of EDC in which you feel that you could provide some support. We also encourage all of our members to feel free to offer suggestions to help us be more available to you.

I hope that all of you had a wonderful beginning to this new school year. Take care, and I hope that our paths cross soon!

Sincerely,
Polly G. Haselden
Chair: Educators with Disabilities Caucus

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<http://www.cec.sped.org/Content/NavigationMenu/AboutCEC/Communities/Caucuses/EducatorswithDisabilities/default.htm>

EDC Committee News

Support and Mentoring Program Committee

Chairperson: Dr. Jennifer Diliberto, Assistant Professor at Greensboro College
Contact: jdiliberto@gborocollege.edu

The *EDC Mentoring Program* seeks to pair professionals and college students as a means of support, guidance, and resource sharing. The project is voluntary - Mentors donate their time and expertise to support a mentee, who may be new in his/her career or recently reenrolled in a teacher preparation program. Currently, EDC is working on redesigning our *Mentoring Program* by creating new mentor/mentee application forms. In addition, we are investigating strategies for locating mentees in teacher education programs. At this time, we are seeking both mentors and mentees. If you are interested in becoming a mentor or could benefit from the expertise and experience of a mentor, then please contact Dr. Jennifer Diliberto at jdiliberto@greensborocollege.edu. We need your participation to make the program successful.



Research and Special Topics Committee

Chairperson: Dr. Richard Evans, Assistant Professor at Angelo University
Contact: Richard.Evans@angelo.edu

My name is Richard Evans; I am currently the Special education Program Coordinator (Advisor) at Angelo State University. I received my Bachelor's in Elementary and Special Education and a Master's in school administration from Angelo State University and my PhD in Educational Psychology from Texas A&M University. But the most important thing I want you to know about me is I am an individual with a learning disability (or as I like to say "I learn differently"). I am working with EDC as Chair of the Research and Special Topics Committee. We need your participation to make EDC successful. If you come across any interesting research that would be of interest to members of EDC then please contact me, Dr. Richard Evans at Richard.Evans@angelo.edu. I hope to see everyone in Seattle!



Newsletter and Website Committee

Chairperson: Marcie Povitsky, Site Coordinator at Towson University
Contact: mpovitsky@towson.edu

Hello EDC members! My name is Marcie Povitsky; I currently work for Towson University as a Site Coordinator and part-time Instructor. I received my Bachelor's in Elementary Education and Special Education from Towson University and my Master's in Technology for Educators from Johns Hopkins. I look forward to working in EDC as Chair of the Newsletter and Website Committee.

As you can see, changes are underway. In addition to the look of the Newsletter, we are working to update the website to reflect our new structure and members. If you have anything you would like to contribute to the Newsletter and/or website, please e-mail me at mpovitsky@towson.edu (Subject: EDC). I hope to see everyone in Seattle!



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Perspectives from the Field

Dr. Richard Evans, Angelo University

Most of my life I remember being unhappy, clumsy, and getting bad grades in school. Somehow, I assumed that I would stumble across a major event that I could blame all of my struggles and disappointments on. However, my final conclusion seemed to be that there was something wrong with my brain; I guess it's just broken. In first grade, my teacher would read books to us, which had me fascinated and confused. There was such a fascination and excitement of how the teacher interpreted the symbols and words on those pages. This is the first time I remember having someone read to me. When I started first grade it appeared all the students were able to say their ABC's, they were counting and they were reading a book about a boy named Tip and his dog, Mitten. First grade was the pits: I did not understand the sounds and the letters. I wondered, "How do they know what sound goes with what letters?" I remember getting into trouble because I could not get my letters to go the right direction. After only a few weeks off for the Christmas break, I came back and could not remember any letters that I had managed to learn or how to write them. The rest of my elementary years did not go any better. I even had to repeat third grade but the second time through third grade was not any easier. It seemed like it was all new material, however I knew I had seen the same assignments and worksheets before. Knowing what I know now, I was lucky I stayed in high school at all. The year was 1975 and the Federal Government had issued Public Law 94-142 originally known as Education of the Handicapped Act. This was the first major piece of legislature dealing with the issues of Special Education but

before it could be implemented in 1976, I dropped out of school. It did not take a lot of thought to make the decision to quit school because I was unable to do my school work. After dropping out of school, I did a lot of different jobs over the next few years but I was developing another problem; drugs and alcohol. I worked at one job then another until I learned it fairly well then I would do something else. I loved working with my hands but the truth was if I was not working I was drinking. As the years went on my drinking problem became a drug problem. It wasn't long until I was working harder to get the drugs than to pay the bills. At the age of 27, I found myself at the end of my rope-I had taken an overdose and at 11 O'clock one Saturday night I got down on my knees and prayed God if you can't take away my problems, please just let me die. I had more to say than that because when I got off my knees it was 7AM the next morning.

Over the years I had developed a burning desire to be able to sit down and read a book to my children. I also realized that I wasn't even capable of completing a simple job application. At that moment in my life, I asked myself, "Using the talents that I have, would it be possible for me to get my diploma?" My response was, "don't be silly", I think deep down inside I wanted to try but I knew I could not read or write very well, so a high school or college diploma would never be an option. The truth is, I was born with two distinct learning disabilities (one in reading and the other in writing) and I dropped out of high school when I was a junior because of my lack of academic success. Over the next seven years I learned
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Perspectives from the Field (Cont'd)
Dr. Richard Evans, Angelo University

(relearned) how to find success in an academic setting. I learned to identify my strengths and weaknesses and built on those strengths to foster academic growth.

The truth is that in America more than 45 million individuals are living with one or more learning disabilities and the vast majority of these persons have average or above average intelligence and possess specific cognitive gifts. However, most school systems are not equipped to capitalize on the strengths of these students and consequently these students fail. I now know that just because I have been diagnosed with a learning disability does not mean that I am stupid. Rather, being learning disabled means that academically I do things a little differently. I believe that everyone has the potential to be what he or she wants to be when they are afforded the opportunity to learn in the manner best suited for their individual strengths.

For most of my life I assumed that there was something wrong with me that prevented me from learning in a traditional manner. I had been conditioned to believe that my brain was defected and that I was flawed or stupid. It was not until I was formally diagnosed with learning disabilities that I began to discover my personal voice. I began to understand that I was challenged by learning disabilities (differences).

To make this long story short, my learning disabilities never went away but I did earn my diploma; GED & three college level degrees. At the age of 33, I became a nontraditional freshman and earned a BS in elementary & special education, at age 39 I earned a Master in school administration with a minor in reading instruction and at the age of 46, I graduated from Texas A&M University with a PhD in Educational Psychology with a concentration in Special Education Leadership. Currently, I am an Assistant Professor and Special Education Program Advisor at Angelo State University in the Department of Teacher Education. Want to read more about me? Check my website <http://raevans.com>. Through trial and error and long perseverance, I found that I could function in an academic setting and I discovered truth "I'm not broken, I'm just different."

Learn more about Dr. Evans by visiting his website:

<http://raevans.com>

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F.Y.I.: For Your Information

Enhancing Diversity: Educators with Disabilities

<http://gupress.gallaudet.edu/0718.html>

The 43 million people with disabilities form this country's largest minority group, yet they are markedly under-employed as educators. *Enhancing Diversity: Educators with Disabilities* paves the way for correcting this costly omission. Editors Anderson, Karp, and Keller have called upon the knowledge of 19 other renowned contributors to address the important issues raised in *Enhancing Diversity*, including the place of disability in discussions of diversity in education, research on educators with disabilities that validates their capabilities, and information on the qualifications desired in and the demands made of education professionals. Legal precedents are cited and explained, and examples of efforts to place disabled educators are presented, along with recommendations on how disabled individuals and school administrators can work toward increased opportunities. Interviews with 25 disabled educators discussing how they satisfactorily fulfill their professional requirements complete this thoughtful-provoking book. Issue 11 Spring 2008 Page 3 of 9

Spotlight on Scholarship and Internships Websites

<http://www.finaid.org/otheraid/disabled.phtml>

The site for FinAid has a disability resources page including financial aid strategies and scholarship opportunities.

<http://www.ncset.org/youthtowork>

The web site for the new coalition of corporations, nonprofits, academic institutions and federal agencies established to promote internships and mentoring programs for young people with disabilities.

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Go to our website for more information on the following scholarships/internships/grants:

The Hearne Award: The Hearne Award, is sponsored by the ABA's Commission on Mental and Physical Disability Law and is to be presented to an individual who has performed exemplary service in the furtherance of access to justice for people with disabilities, or an organization or group that furthers the goal of full participation for people with disabilities in society. Applications are due April 1, 2009.

CDRF Quality Of Life Grants: The Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation (CDRF) awards grants in 13 categories, including health promotion, employment, sports and recreation, and advocacy, to fund programs across the globe that help people with paralysis become more fully integrated members of society. Grants that focus on improving the health of individuals are funded through a cooperative agreement with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The Washington Center For Internships And Academic Seminars (TWC): This prestigious educational nonprofit organization offers an academic program combined with internships in Washington, DC. They offer a fully inclusive program, including accessible housing.

AAPD Administered Summer Internships For College Students With Disabilities: AAPD administers two prestigious internships. One is funded by the Mitsubishi Electric America Foundation and places students in congressional offices in Washington, DC. The second, funded by Microsoft, is for students majoring in information technology and accepted candidates will work in various agencies in the executive branch of the federal government.

AAAS Sponsors Entry Point! Entry Point!, a program of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, offers internship opportunities for college students with disabilities in Science, Engineering, Mathematics, Computer Science, and some fields of Business.

Emerging Leaders Internships: This program is administered by the National Business & Disability Council and provides internships for college students with disabilities. These internships are located in several geographic locations and with a wide range of companies.

Fred Fay Advanced Leadership Forum: Sponsored by the Boston Center for Independent Living and members of the Leadership Forum Advisory Council.

Workforce Recruitment Program: The WRP's stellar database of individually interviewed and pre-screened college and university students with disabilities is available to meet your summer or permanent workforce needs. This pipeline program is co-sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor and the Department of Defense.

Career Gateway: A web-based service of Career Opportunities for Students with Disabilities (COSD) for employers and graduating college and university students where students can post their resumes and employers can search for qualified candidates.

Scholarship For Graduating Seniors With Learning Disabilities: The National Center for Learning Disabilities annual awards the Ann Ford Scholarship of \$10,000 to an outstanding high school senior with a learning disability who is committed to completing a college degree.

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