



## Our focus for this issue – Technology for 2e learners

### Quote

The system simply is not set up for kids who have both an intellectual disability and a sharp intellect.

—Journalist and education writer  
Beth Hawkins

### Revealing the Strengths of 2e Students by Using Technology

By Jann H. Leppien, Ph.D., and Teagan M. Thomas



Technology can be the key to unlocking 2e students' potential, allowing them to concentrate on the content being taught rather than worry about the things they struggle with.

Page 3

### Creating and Collaborating with iPads Empowers All Learners

By Randi Cutler (pictured) and ElizaBeth Warner



iPads can empower all types of learners. We have 21<sup>st</sup>-century learners in our classrooms who must engage in 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills, using 21<sup>st</sup>-century technology. iPads are loaded with apps that provide authentic, real-world tools that teach 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills. We'll look at some of them in this article.

Page 6

### A Study by Students on their Unrestricted iPad Use

By Melanie Hayes, Ed.D.



The future is showing its virtual face, and many adults are having a hard time looking it in the eye. For the past 10 years, parents have waged ongoing screen-time battles with their children.

Page 9

### Also Inside

- From the Publishers ..... 2
- Conference Coverage: Breakthroughs in Twice-Exceptional Education, continued .....14
- News and Information from the 2e Center for Research and Professional Development.....17
- Dr. Sylvia Rimm: Parents Confused by Varying Advice .....21
- News .....22
- Tech Tips from Readers .....26
- Events .....27



## Welcome!

The 2e mantra is “Build on the strengths to support the challenges,” and technology can play a major role in making this happen for twice-exceptional children — in academics and even in life skills.

In this issue of *2e: Twice-Exceptional Newsletter* our authors provide a wide array of technology assists, some of which are, we hope, applicable to that 2e kiddo you raise or teach. First off, Jann Leppien and Teagan Thomas offer guidance for selecting technology as well as their own list of a dozen favorite technology tools.

Randi Cutler and ElizaBeth Warner use their experience with iPad technology in the classroom to describe particular apps as well as the benefits of those apps. Then Melanie Hayes, founder of Big Minds Unschool, a micro-school for 2e children, describes a most unusual experiment she and her students conducted at Big Minds on the limits of screen-time. Along with the description of the experiment, Hayes recaps both sides of the ongoing debate over screen-time on computers, phones, television, and tablets.

We continue our coverage of sessions at QuadPrep’s March “Breakthroughs” conference. You’ll read what clinical experts had to say on the topics of:

- Understanding and treating social competence in children with ASD
- Treating anxiety in children and adolescents with ASD

Additional session coverage will appear on our website.

The team from the 2e Center for Research and Professional Development wraps up their six-part series on factors that help 2e children succeed. The final topic: strength-based academic and behavioral strategies, written by Rose Blucher. Find the entire series on our website under “2e Resources.” Click on “News and Information from the 2e Center for Research and Professional Development.”

Sylvia Rimm dispenses her usual excellent advice in her regular column, and our book columnist Bob Seney is taking the issue off. You’ll also find our usual news items about happenings in the 2e community.

We hope the upcoming summer (here in the Northern Hemisphere, anyway) is satisfying for all of our readers — parents, educators, and clinicians.

We hope you enjoy this issue and thank you for subscribing!

— Linda C. Neumann and J. Mark Bade  
June, 2016

*2e: Twice-Exceptional Newsletter* is a publication about twice-exceptional children, children who are gifted and who have learning difficulties that go by many names, including learning disabilities, learning disorders, and just plain learning differences. Our goal is to promote a holistic view of the 2e child — not just the high IQ, or the quirkiness, or the disabilities, but the child as a whole person. Comments and suggestions are always welcome by phone, fax, or e-mail.

*2e: Twice-Exceptional Newsletter* is published bi-monthly in January, March, May, July, September, and November. The cost for a one-year electronic subscription is \$35. Contact us for group and institutional rates. Send changes of address to COFA@2eNewsletter.com or by mail to Glen Ellyn Media, PO Box 11, Winfield, IL 60190.

Linda C. Neumann, Editor; J. Mark Bade, Business Manager. Phone: 630.984.5507; Fax: 630.344.1332. Web: [www.2eNewsletter.com](http://www.2eNewsletter.com). E-mail: [info@2eNewsletter.com](mailto:info@2eNewsletter.com).

Editorial Advisory Board: Susan Assouline, Ed.S., Ph.D.; Susan Baum, Ph.D.; Kim Busi, M.D.; Paul Beljan, Psy.D.; Dan Peters, Ph.D.; Linda Kreger Silverman, Ph.D. Members Emerita: Kathi Kearney, M.A. Ed; Deirdre Lovecky, Ph.D.; Joan Franklin Smutny, M.A.; Marlo Payne Thurman, M.S.; Meredith Warshaw, M.S.S., M.A.

The contents of *2e Newsletter* are not intended to constitute medical or clinical advice, which should be obtained from a licensed practitioner. The use of information from *2e Newsletter* for commercial purposes is prohibited without consent in writing from Glen Ellyn Media. Copyright © 2016 by Glen Ellyn Media, unless otherwise noted. The yellow and red 2e logo on blue is a trademark of Glen Ellyn Media.



# Revealing the Strengths of 2e Students By Using Technology

This article is an excerpt from “The Importance of Designing Responsive Curriculum Using Strength-Based Approaches,” by Jann H. Leppien, Ph.D., and Teagan M. Thomas, 2016.

Technology is an important tool to have and understand how to use, especially in today’s fast-paced and innovation-driven society. We must prepare our 21<sup>st</sup>-century students for a world driven by technology, especially when they are looking for careers after their years of schooling. Thus, we must help increase students’ adaptability and flexibility by allowing them to be responsible for their learning, to think critically, to problem solve, and to work both as an individual and cooperatively (Nugeni, 2001).

Technology is well suited to today’s students’ learning preferences. It can also increase student engagement and understanding of a topic, enhance their creative production and critical thinking abilities, and attend to their ability to process large amounts of information quickly (Siegle, 2004).

## Technology and 2e Students

Perhaps most importantly, technology can be the key to unlocking 2e students’ potential, allowing them to concentrate on the content being taught rather than worry about the things they struggle with (Winebrenner, 2003). Students enjoy the use of technology because it allows them to work independently and receive “just-in-time” support when needed. Essentially, 2e students use technology to enhance their lives — not only to compensate for what they may *not* be able to do, but more so to focus their attention on what they *can* do and to further explore areas of interest. Further-

more, technological aids, such as text-to-speech or organizational apps, enable 2e students to freely communicate their thinking in a way that suits their needs and, in turn, maximizes their learning and school experience.

## Technology Tools for Learning

Technology tools such as Apple apps and online resources can be used in a way that allows for digital scaffolding (support), flexible formatting, and engaging activities that enhance classroom instruction. The best educational technology tools for any student, especially gifted students, must have the following features:

- Be motivating and engaging
- Consist of high-quality content, hardware, and software
- Have pretesting to ensure that content is at the student’s level
- Be differentiated for level of thinking and speed (Sheard, 2012).

As stated by the Virginia Department of Education (2010), assistive technology assures access to education and “maximizes efficiency and functionality for all students,” no matter their disability (p. 6). For instance, an assistive writing app can help a student who struggles with proper sentence formation figure out how to correct sentence structure errors. It can



also provide the student with a multisensory approach that makes learning more meaningful to the student. Taking these worries out of the equation allows 2e students to become better writers and focus on what they want to express.

When selecting technology, consider the following:

- *What they need.* What is their disability, what accommodations do they need or are required on their IEP, and what strengths and interest areas do they have? What technology support tools and devices do students currently use to facilitate and enhance their learning?
- *The environment.* How and where will the student use the technology? For example, does it need to be portable?
- *The level of intellectual demand.* What knowledge, skills, and attitudes are required from students in order to successfully complete an assigned learning task?

## Revealing the Strengths, continued

Finally, examine the features of the technology tool and how it will function for the student and the environment (Vize, 2013). Then begin to search for technology tools to support these learning requirements.

Technology serves multiple purposes in the education of 2e students, enhancing their learning while compensating for their challenges (Edyburn, 2006). In addition, technology can enable students to gain access to a wealth of resources to escalate their levels of expertise while serving as an effective tool for leveraging their strengths.


### References

- Edyburn, D.L. (2006). Cognitive prostheses for students with mild disabilities: Is this what assistive technology looks like? *Journal of Special Education Technology*, 21(4), 62-65.
- Nugeni, S. (2001). Technology: Focus, facets, and the future. *Gifted Child Today*, 24(4), 38-45.
- Sheard, W. (2012). *Education technology for our children*. SENGVine. Retrieved from <https://sengifted.org/archives/articles/education-technology>.
- Siegle, D. (2004). The merging of literacy and technology in the 21<sup>st</sup> century: A bonus for gifted education. *Gifted Child Today*, 27(2), 32-35.
- Virginia Department of Education. (2010). *Infusing assistive technology for learning: Assuring access to all students*. VA: Commonwealth of Virginia Department of Education.
- Vize, A. Using assistive technology. *Practical Primary*, 37-41.
- Winebrenner, S., (2003). Teaching strategies for twice exceptional students. *Intervention in School and Clinic*, 38(3), 131-137.



*Jann Leppien, Ph.D., is the Margo Long Endowed Chair in Gifted Education and Associate Professor in the School of Education at Whitworth University in Spokane, Washington. She has served on the board of the National Association for Gifted Children and currently serves on the Diversity Committee. She is also a board member of the Association for the Education of Gifted Underachieving Students (AEGUS) and serves on*

*the advisory board of the 2e Center for Research and Professional Development. In addition, she is President of Edufest, a summer teaching and learning institute held in Boise, Idaho ([www.edufest.org](http://www.edufest.org)).*

*Teagan Thomas, a graduate student at Whitworth University, is obtaining her degree in gifted and talented education. She is also a graduate assistant for Whitworth's Center for Gifted Education, working under the direction of Dr. Jann Leppien. Ms. Thomas is a 2015 Grosvenor Teacher Fellow and was selected by National Geographic and Lindblad Expeditions to travel to the Arctic Circle to research the region's climate and ecosystem in order to develop advanced learning opportunities for middle school science students.* 



## Top Technology Tools

Here's our list of the top 12 technology tools for 2e students...

**1. Explain Everything** (<http://explaineverything.com>) – a design tool for annotating, animating, and creating narrative explanations and presentations. It serves as an interactive whiteboard and enables students to import documents, videos, and presentations. Students can use the recording function to record their writing and their voices about a key concept they are learning.



**2. Rev** ([www.rev.com](http://www.rev.com)) – an app designed for both the iPhone and iPad as well as Android devices. Rev provides students with a way of communicating and sharing their thinking. It serves as a voice recorder that allows users to download and save recordings as well as to organize and edit speech-to-text transcriptions.

**3. Browsealoud** ([www.texthelp.com/en-us/products/browsealoud](http://www.texthelp.com/en-us/products/browsealoud)) – software that reads and translates information aloud from places like websites and other online sources. Browsealoud facilitates access and participation for those who have visual or auditory impairments, engaging users with natural voices and in multiple languages.

**4. Evernote** (<https://evernote.com>) – an app for Apple and Windows products that provides a single workspace where users can write, collect thoughts,





## Top Technology Tools, continued

hold discussions, and present ideas. It gives students a means for organizing information as well as taking notes, annotating text, completing assignments, and creating school projects. In addition, Evernote syncs information to almost any device, enabling students to share their work.

**5. Padlet** (<https://padlet.com>) — a flexible app designed for the iPhone and iPad that functions as an open canvas for blogging and creating multimedia products. It enables users to attach videos, add audio recordings, insert photos, compose passages, or upload documents. The app lets students easily customize their Padlet creations, sharing and editing them among various contributors.

**6. Do it (Tomorrow)** ([www.tomorrow.do](http://www.tomorrow.do)) — an organizational app for Apple and Android devices which allows users to set reminders for daily tasks (but also makes it easy to push tasks off to tomorrow). The simple interface of Do it (Tomorrow) lets users view past tasks, delete tasks, delay tasks to another day, sync to-do lists to other devices, and back up information to the cloud. This app is handy for setting and maintaining short- and long-term goals.



**7. GoAnimate** (<https://goanimate4schools.com>) — an online resource that engages students in a safe environment and in a fun and interactive manner. The app enables students to produce videos, creating characters, scenes, and plots that illustrate their learning of content. In addition, it provides students with language skill practice and incorporates text-to-speech technology. Teachers can use the app to introduce lessons, create presentations, and check for understanding. The app is also a useful tool for educators using a “flipped classroom” model for delivering instruction online. With GoAnimate, they can produce animated videos, lectures, lessons, and assessments to enhance learning outside the classroom, reserving class time for collaborative work, concept mastery exercises, and experiments.

**8. WordQ/SpeakQ** ([www.goqsoftware.com/wordq-speakq.php](http://www.goqsoftware.com/wordq-speakq.php)) — software resources that can be used together to provide students with help communicating their thinking and fixing writing mistakes. WordQ suggests word choices and also provides constructive feedback. SpeakQ allows students to dictate words into documents. When used in combination, the two apps have text-to-speech capabilities and help students with writing skills such as spelling, proofreading, and grammar.

**9. Annuncify** (<http://gdriv.es/annuncify>) — a text-to-speech app that reads out loud a variety of information, including calendar events, text messages, websites, or even whole documents. Students can customize it to their liking.

**10. Blabberize** (<http://blabberize.com>) — a website resource that allows students to animate any image to make it speak. The user just specifies the part of the image that should speak and then uploads the audio recording. This tool provides a great opportunity for students to both be creative and develop their language skills.

**11. Livescribe Pen** ([www.livescribe.com](http://www.livescribe.com)) — an actual pen that captures everything the user hears and writes, and then transcribes it into a format suitable for Android and Apple devices. This organizational tool can help students keep track of assignments in a way that fits their learning style. A variety of Livescribe pens are available, including the Echo Smartpen, which transfers recordings into a PDF or audio file, and the Sky Smartpen, which transfers data into Evernote files.



**12. EDpuzzle** (<https://edpuzzle.com>) — an online tool that helps teachers and students share videos and audio files. The intention is to make learning more accessible and multisensory. EDpuzzle allows users to edit video and audio files, create quizzes, and share products through multiple social media outlets. In addition, it enables teachers to monitor the content experienced by students.

—JL & TT

# Creating and Collaborating with iPads Empowers All Learners

By Randi Cutler and ElizaBeth Warner

Today's students are surrounded by technology from the moment they awaken to the minute they go to bed; and, let's face it, the youth today are often better with technology than we adults are. Those of us who are teachers are used to being the expert in the room; but we must be willing to let that go when it comes to technology. So three years ago, the two of us jumped at the chance to participate in an iPad pilot program in our school district.

We were tasked with discovering ways in which students could improve their 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills — the set of skills students need to develop to succeed in today's complex information — and technology-driven society. At the time, many teachers were just having their students use iPads to practice basic skills; but we wondered: Were there opportunities for students to do more? Could our students engage in collaboration, communication, creativity, and critical thinking with an iPad?



You bet they could! Not only did we discover that iPads can truly inspire students in these areas, we discovered that iPads can empower all types of learners. We have 21<sup>st</sup>-century learners in our classrooms who must engage in 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills, using 21<sup>st</sup>-century technology. iPads are loaded with apps that provide authentic, real-world tools that teach 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills. We'll look at some of them in this article.

## Developing and Fostering Collaboration and Communication

Interactive whiteboard apps can replace the traditional whiteboard and dry erase markers in the classroom. While teachers use these apps to teach lessons, students can use them to collaborate and communicate. The apps enable students to both assess their own learning and create a screencast to share their learning with their classmates.

Students use their finger as a mouse to write directly onto the iPad screen. Also with a touch of their finger, they can add and manipulate images on the screen. The results can be displayed in the classroom through a digital projector or a device such as an Apple TV.

Some interactive whiteboard apps that we have had great success with are:

- Educreations by Educreations, Inc.
- Show Me by Learnbat, Inc.
- Doodle Buddy, by Dinopilot
- Explain Everything Interactive Whiteboard by Explain Everything, Inc.

These apps are both easy to learn and, in many cases, free. Most students can master them after a quick session of trial and error, but ideas are available online for

those who require more direction.

A nice feature of these apps is that students are able to add photos from the iPad's camera roll. Students who are not confident in their art skills can bring media onto their board to enhance their presentation.

To add text onto their interactive whiteboard, students can write directly onto their iPad screen with their finger or a stylus. For students who struggle with handwriting, these apps also have typing capabilities that allow users to play with different fonts, colors, and type size.

Finally, these apps allow students to create screencasts — record action on the whiteboard while narrating — to show what they have learned. Students can then save their work on the iPad and print or export it.

We have successfully used whiteboard apps in multiple subjects in our classrooms. In social studies, for example, students can show their understanding of maps, produce a quick report on a historical figure, display photos of historical events, and create timelines with ease. In science, students can draw and illustrate parts of a cell, diagram a body system, or label an illustration showing the parts of a volcano or plant. Interactive whiteboard apps help students show their understanding of many mathematical practices and decompose a complex word problem. In literature, they have enabled students to diagram a plot, create a character sketch, outline textual evidence from a novel, and even diagram sentences.

## Developing and Fostering Creativity

Students become storytellers through photography, scriptwriting, designing, editing, and directing creative presentations. A few



## Creating and Collaborating, continued

storytelling and film-producing apps that we've had great success with include:

- iMovie by Apple
- Green Screen by Do Ink
- Adobe Voice by Adobe.

Recently, we've added Book Creator by Red Jumper Limited to our mixture of film-making tools.

Each of these apps provides video recording capability within the app or the opportunity to import video from the iPad camera roll. Students become expert videographers after a few video-capturing events.

iMovie is a fantastic app with many templates that prompt students for needed video shots and text. This app is a favorite of our students to replace book reports and book talks. We have found that iMovie reveals new perspectives about our students. How a student uses the templates with the app immediately reveals that student's own creative eye. Students are overjoyed to present their projects, and they inspire one another with their movie-making productions.

Green Screen productions are wildly authentic to real-world green screen recordings. Students have used green screen productions to highlight settings in novels or historical places around the world. The Green Screen app has inspired newscasts, talk shows, and persuasive commercial advertisements in our classrooms.

Another student favorite is Adobe Voice, one of the easiest creative producing apps we've encountered. Students can write, record, and capture video and pictures with great ease. In one class period they can assemble a production. Adobe Voice has been used to retell stories, illustrate poetry, provide instructions, and

add a personal touch to any storytelling opportunity.

The final app in this category, Book Creator, provides templates for creating all type of books, from comic books, to photo books, to study guides. In addition, students can easily create portfolios that incorporate photos of their work.

### Developing and Fostering Critical Thinking and Problem Solving

Students can develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills with a multitude of graphic organizers and visual templates for the iPad. Among the apps in this category is Popplet, a must-have app by Notion. It's both easy to use and easy to apply to any situation or subject.

Within Popplet, a student can record facts and thoughts, and add images to illustrate a topic or event. The app aids in organizing notes, generating new ideas, and planning projects by functioning as a mind-mapping tool or online graphic organizer — a means to visually show ideas and concepts. It enables students

to record thoughts, create photo galleries, and bundle ideas and timelines.

Our students have used Popplet to organize their ideas for assignments such as comparing and contrasting a book and a movie, comparing characters, showing cause and effect, and organizing prewriting activities. They have even used the app in math to create a Venn diagram contrasting prime vs. composite numbers.

Another iPad app in this category, Tools 4 Students by Mobile Learning Services, offers over 50 graphic organizers suitable for any occasion or subject. Every organizer can be used repeatedly and emailed, transferred via a service such as DropBox, or saved as a PDF.

### What We Learned

From our pilot, we discovered that employing technology empowers all learners, including those who are twice exceptional. Twice-exceptional learners excel when given creative and collaborative opportunities that ease their anxiety and allow them to shine by being seen differently than as just 2e learners. The challenges and differences of the 2e learner are leveled with iPads and the multitude of apps available, so that the iPad becomes a tool of empowerment for 2e students.

Using iPads to tap into student strengths is motivating for all students and leads to higher-level thinking, promotes creativity, and presents problem-solving opportunities. Students can make extraordinary contributions to their classroom and the global classroom at large through authentic projects created on iPads.

### For More Information

To learn more about some of the apps discussed in this article and to see examples of what students have done using iPad apps, visit this site: <https://goo.gl/poc9Zp>.

To see slides from our presentation on this topic at last year's NAGC Conference, visit this site: [www.eventscribe.com/2015/nagc/assets/pdf/216949.pdf](http://www.eventscribe.com/2015/nagc/assets/pdf/216949.pdf).

## Creating and Collaborating, concluded

Along with driving student interest and exploration, projects with iPads apps can give students the opportunity to highlight their expertise. Students thrive when they have the chance to be the expert and test their creative efforts. iPads provide opportunities for students to shine with new skills, ideas, and perspectives. The ease with which they can create and share their work motivates authentic ownership of personal thinking, and the product demonstrates a grand personal accomplishment, not just game play or skill practice.

So indeed, there are many apps available for iPads that engage all students in 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills. Based upon the products our own students have created, we are confident that our future is in good hands.



*Randi Cutler is a gifted specialist in the Paradise Valley Unified School District in Phoenix, Arizona. She has a decade of gifted education experience as a cluster teacher and as a gifted specialist. Infusing her classroom with technology is her passion, and she participates regularly*

*in district pilot programs such as Flipping the Classroom and Collaborating with iPads. She conducts numerous professional development classes for Paradise Valley, and has presented at both the National Association of Gifted Children and Arizona Association for Gifted and Talented conferences. In 2015, Cutler was nominated as the Arizona Gifted Teacher of the Year.*

*ElizaBeth Warner also is a gifted specialist in the Paradise Valley Unified School District. She implements daily differentiated instruction that accommodates advanced learners, including twice-exceptional students, and regularly participates in district*



*pilot programs such Collaborating with iPads and Implementing Coding in the classroom. She facilitates school and district staff professional development on teaching gifted students in the regular classroom and meeting the needs of gifted learners. With over a decade of gifted education experience, she has presented at the National Association of Gifted Children and Arizona Association for Gifted and Talented conferences. ☞*

### Some Additional Creative Apps that We Love

- Trading Cards by ReadWriteThink — In this app trading cards are created using built-in templates for a fictional or real person, fictional or real place, object, event, or word. Students can bring in a picture through the camera roll and the app provides guiding questions that move from basic details to higher-level thinking to help students fill in the categories on the card and end with a deeper understanding.
- Wanted Poster Pro by Nestor Borgo — Have you just finished a novel and you want the students to compare and contrast the antagonist versus the protagonist? How about creating a wanted poster for each of the characters? Wanted Poster Pro is another easy app that students can quickly master. In no time you will have your classroom covered with “wanted” people or items. Students’ creativity emerges as you read the reasons a person or object is wanted.
- Pic Collage/Pic Collage for Kids by Cardinal Blue — This is one of the most versatile apps we have come across. Gone are the days of hauling out construction paper, magazines, scissors, glue, and markers. Just bring out your iPads and open this app. Students select from a multitude of layouts and backgrounds, they choose photos from the camera roll or search the web, and they add stickers and text to make their pic collage complete. Students have used both Pic Collage and Pic Collage for Kids for vocabulary words, poetry, author study, biography, character analysis, historical events, math concepts — the list goes on.

—RC & EW



To Bravely Go...

## A Study by Students On Their Unrestricted iPad Use

By Melanie Johnson Hayes, Ed.D., with student co-researchers Nicole Johnson, Zachary Dashow, Matilda Jung Lee, Alan Bradley, Kula Tanaka Lee, Amanda Tanaka Lee, Sophia Bar-Nahum, Ruth Radwin, Naomi de Oro, Benjamin Glickman, Jonathan Stroh; and research assistants: Nikaela Bradford and Kelly Christensen

*The future is showing its virtual face, and many adults are having a hard time looking it in the eye. For the past 10 years, parents have waged ongoing screen-time battles with their children.*

### Screen Time Truths

Recently, the American Academy of Pediatrics recommended no more than one to two hours of screen time per day. Most parents report that they adhere to that recommended range, but something doesn't add up. According to Common Sense Media ([www.commonsensemedia.org](http://www.commonsensemedia.org)), those numbers were true for children growing up in the mid-90s, but not today.

In a study conducted this year by Childwise ([www.childwise.co.uk](http://www.childwise.co.uk)), a leading research institute in the UK, the number of screen-time hours has more than tripled, to an average of 6.5 hours per day of computer, phone, or tablet use. Teen boys spend the most time on a screen, averaging 8 hours per day, compared to the lightest use, 3.5 hours for pre-teen girls. According to a Nielsen report (McDonough, 2009), 77 percent of that time is spent playing downloaded games, and 57 percent of the time those games are educational.

Children, however, are not the only ones glued to their screens. Emarketer, an electronic market trend company (<http://adage.com/lookbook/listing/emarketer>), disaggregated data points from more

than 40 research institutions, including audience measurement companies, academic institutions, and online media companies, and found that adults now spend just over five hours per day using tablets and/or phones — and that does *not* include using the phone as a phone.



Our society is gamifying. In industries as diverse as education, marketing, and health care, gamification has emerged as a growing trend. In 2013, over 70 percent of the companies listed in Forbes Global 2000 planned to utilize gamification for the purposes of marketing and customer retention (Van Grove, 2011). Statistics consistently show that adults respond positively to the same gamifying stimuli as children. According to the Pew Research Center (Anderson & Rainie, 2012), gaming “elements can cause feel-good chemical reactions, alter human responses to stimuli — increasing reaction times, for instance — and, in certain situations, can improve learning, participation, and motivation” in both children and adults.

So why are adults so concerned with the amount of time children spend looking at a screen? Parents are bombarded with data linking screen use to problems such as: reduced social ability, increased aggression, inhibited emotional IQ, increased psychological difficulties, disrupted sleep patterns, obesity, and decreased brain development (Parkes, Sweeting, Wight, & Henderson, 2013; Brown, 2011; Uhls et al., 2014). While these findings are frightening, it should be noted that much of this research is based on TV and computer screen time, which may have vastly different content and application than tablet and phone screen time.

According to Dr. Pete Etchells, who studies the effects of video games on behavior, lumping all screens into one category is not helpful. “Screen time is a really enticing measure because it’s simple — it’s usually described as the number of hours a day using screen-based technology. But it’s completely meaningless. It doesn’t say anything about what you’re using that time for.” There is a big difference among watching a sitcom, using an app to learn to read, and killing monsters in a video game. The reports of hyperactivity, conduct disorder, peer relationship problems, and so on are often generated from research on children’s hours of watching TV. These associations nearly disappear once the data is disaggregated to exclude TV watching (de Lange, 2014).

An increasing body of research refutes the dangers of screen time for children. A recent longitudinal study of 11,000 children showed computer gaming had no effect on behavioral problems (Parkes et al., 2013). Neither was there evidence of such



## Unrestricted iPad Use, continued

effect in a meta-analysis of studies on video game violence and increased real-world violence (Ferguson, 2010). In addition, there is data on the benefits of screen time, such as increased engagement, accommodations for learning disabilities, access to worldwide information, and diverse modes of learning (Williams, Yee, & Caplan, 2008; Durkin & Barber, 2002).

There is research to show that gaming can engender positive mental development, increased visual-spatial ability, stronger working memory, greater problem-solving ability, and higher-level critical thinking (Akilli, 2007). The immense variety of games and apps may increase interest and ability in skills such as reading and writing through the use of text-based communication (Black & Steinkuehler, 2009).

Gaming also provides children with a venue for independence. Playing on a tablet or phone gives children freedom to meet self-selected challenges and make their own decisions. When playing multi-player games, they are tasked to work together to build skills, acquire knowledge, and solve difficult problems (Barnett & Coulson, 2010). According to a study on gaming and adult work skills, social dramatic gameplay builds social skills that are reflected in the players' interactions in the real world. In fact, social interaction and leadership skills required by multi-player games are essentially the same skills needed to succeed in business in the real world (Reaves & Malone, 2007).

### Inquiring Minds

I tend to agree with much of the research on both sides of the argument. I think children should have access to the powerful learning tools provided by a tablet. I believe we should trust our children and give them

opportunities to make choices about how, when, and what they learn. On the other hand, I know children need to be guided as they grow and develop socially, emotionally, and intellectually. I want them to be out in nature and physically active. I want to ensure they have experiences that engage all of their senses in a 3-D world.

---



---

**“...my students wanted to know why adults are so concerned with the length of time spent onscreen.”**

— MH

---



---

I have tried to combine the best of both worlds at Big Minds, my school for 2e children. At Big Minds, students are assigned an iPad and we download apps that reflect each individual's learning and interests. However, we do not allow unlimited use of the iPads throughout the day. Students have 30 minutes of free iPad time at the start and close of the day, but during the school day they are expected to use the device for learning.

Given these restrictions, my students wanted to know why adults are so concerned with the length of time spent onscreen. I gave them all of the standard answers: “We want you to play with real toys and real people. We want you to be outside. We want you to get up and move. We don't want your body to suffer from too much sedentary screen time. We want to stimulate

your mind with something other than YouTube videos and games. We don't want you to become addicted to the screen. We want you to sleep.”

But 2e children have never been satisfied with pat answers. My students, ranging in age from 5 to 11, wanted to investigate these claims themselves. They proposed an experiment in which they would be allowed to use their iPads during the school day without restriction for two weeks. As a Socratic teacher, naturally I saw this as an opportunity for my students to learn how to do basic social research. I agreed to their proposal, and this is what happened.

### The Experiment

I explained to my students that all experiments done with human subjects require the researchers to guarantee that no harm will come to the research participants. Therefore, we needed to decide on experiment parameters to ensure they, as our subjects, suffered no harm. The students discussed what could be harmful and came up with the following:

- They might forget to eat.
- They might get sore eyes.
- Their bodies might get tired of sitting.

I asked them to agree to stay off the iPads when their mindfulness and improv teachers came in to teach, as they were not part of the study and it would be unfair to opt out of their classes. Given their identified areas of possible harm, I asked that they take a lunch hour in the middle of the day, and eat and play outside without the iPads. I also asked students to participate in an exit interview to collect data about how they felt during the experiment. The



## Unrestricted iPad Use, continued

students agreed to these conditions, and, after eliciting a promise from me that I would keep my word, the experiment was on.

The data-gathering methods consisted of hourly random checks, conducted by myself and my assistants to see what programs students were using. In addition, we observed student behavior, including social interactions, and recorded field notes of our observations. The students also self-reported every time they got off the iPads, to let us know why they got off. The adults did not intercede in students' iPad use unless an altercation occurred which required our intervention. Student interviews were conducted the week following the close of the study.

Week one began with great enthusiasm. Students were joyfully glued to their iPads, getting off only for pre-agreed classes and mandatory lunch breaks. The students devoted nearly 90 percent of their screen time to Minecraft, both building in individual worlds and playing (and battling) together on shared worlds. [For information on Minecraft, see the January, 2015, issue of *2e: Twice-Exceptional Newsletter*.]

Roughly half of the students voluntarily got off the iPads periodically to take breaks outside, play with the class guinea pigs, swing, read books, or play real-world games such as kickball or Bingo. One student reported

that he got off because his "iPad finger was sore," and another reported she needed a stretch break because her "butt was getting numb." However, the other half rarely got off the iPads of their own volition; and when they needed to get off for classes and lunch breaks, they required repeated reminders before they put the iPads away.

Minecraft continued to be the program of choice



the entire first week. Of the eleven students, nine continued to play Minecraft the majority of the time. Four students opted out of doing battling play altogether. Of those four, two chose to always play together peacefully; one occasionally chose to play in an individual world

where she built houses for each of her classmates; and one student avoided Minecraft altogether, choosing instead to read or play on other apps. The number of times the remaining seven students chose to do battling play increased as the week progressed.

We noticed that as the battling play increased, the students became more aggressive toward each other and opted for more intense battling play. On average,

these students required intervention from myself or my assistants two to three times per day. Often, the adults had to remind the students that the school's Minecraft rules required them to treat each other the same virtually as they would in the real world. Most of these altercations were resolved quickly and, after apologies, the students continued to play together without rancor.

However, on the last day of week one, an incident occurred that was more intense. Four students were teamed up to battle each other in a battle world. Our school rules only allow battle play if it is in a battle world and all participants agree to battle. In addition, they must stop if asked and give way to

## Unrestricted iPad Use, continued

the person requesting a break. That did not happen in this battle. One of the younger students was not very vocal about his distress; and as the fighting became more intense, he burst into tears, sobbing and unable to catch his breath. I interceded, shut down the game, and called a meeting. We discussed how this incident went against our study protocol, as clearly the student was upset, which constitutes emotional harm. We discussed how easily cyber bullying could happen because we may forget there is a real person behind the avatar.

The students agreed that they had been too aggressive and too involved in their play to notice the student's signs of distress. We also discussed "nerd raging" (a social media term for losing your temper and acting out when playing video games) and felt that it may be easier to get away with throwing a tantrum or retaliating when you are just interacting virtually. Students were sobered by this discussion and reflected on their role in this student's distress. They all expressed a desire to prevent this type of situation in the future. One student summed up the general group concerns, "I don't want people to bully me, and I don't want to hurt anyone either."

The second week began on a more subdued note. The students wanted to do better. They still played a great deal of Minecraft, but were more involved in cooperative building than in battling. When they did battle, only two students had issues that required adult intervention. There was also increased exploration of available iPad apps. Students spent at least half of each day on apps that were more educational, such as plane building, race car driving, learning to fly, drawing and painting, architecture, simulated cooking,

simulated farming, virtual neighborhood building, and music making. Students also used the iPad to read, research on the Internet, watch YouTube videos, and listen to music.

### What the Study Revealed

At the conclusion of the study, eight participants agreed that they needed parameters to help them regulate their iPad use, while three participants, all girls, reported they needed no help. This self-reporting was supported by the data. Two of the girls who reported they didn't need help were on the iPad an average of 2 hours per day, spending the bulk of their time in real-world activities. The other nine participants spent

an average of five hours per day on the iPads, and of those students, six had difficulty getting off the iPad when requested to do so.

It was very interesting to watch the students reflect and become more aware of their iPad use and the effects of the choices they made. For many students, using the iPad without restrictions gave them a sense of control over their lives and learning. Twice-exceptional students often comment that one of the reasons they begin to disengage from learning is lack of control; having to work primarily on adult-designated assignments creates boredom and resentment. The iPad provides a virtual pathway to highly individualized learning and access to diverse forms of fun, which is why teachers and parents often have to pry it out of children's hands.

Clearly, some of my students are more likely to be addicted and struggle with limiting their time and choices on the iPad; but their responses show that they are also aware and becoming more mindful of the consequences of unrestricted iPad use. If their introspective self-assessments are any indication, these children will learn to make good choices, if given the support and empathy training to do so. There is no doubt that iPads are a powerful learning tool and have the potential to provide students with unprecedented diversity of learning. Yet, they can also be a source of disengagement from face-to-face socializing and real-world interaction. The key appears to be in helping students learn to successfully navigate the tool's potential and pitfalls. Perhaps, as with any path towards learning, a teacher's direction and support with iPad use can be decreased as student responsibility and mastery increase.

### "Exit Interviews"

*In exit interviews after the study, students answered a variety of questions about the experiment. For example:*

**Q:** Were there any problems that happened because you had unlimited use of the iPad?

**A:** It was so fun to play Minecraft all the time. I had fun without the wars. Before we had unlimited iPad experiment we were really good friends, but when we started doing unlimited Minecraft we started blowing up each other's stuff and we got annoyed with each other. I think it made me feel more anxious. Then one student had a meltdown, which made me feel sad.

*Find all of the exit interviews on our website.*





## Unrestricted iPad Use, concluded

Looking at the data on the increasing number of hours spent on tablets and phones, it doesn't seem feasible that we can effectively limit the oncoming tide of the virtual world. The time spent on screens will most likely continue to increase, despite the efforts (or at least perceived efforts) of parents everywhere. I believe we should look to the future and welcome the change. Let's help our children learn how to live, work, and play well together, both virtually and in the real world.

### References

- Akilli, G. K. (2007). Games and simulations: A new approach in education? In D. Gibson, C. Aldrich, & M. Prensky (Eds.), *Games and simulations in online learning: Research and development frameworks* (pp 1-20). Hershey, PA: Information Science.
- Anderson, J. & Rainie, L. (2012). The future of gamification. Retrieved from [www.pewinternet.org/2012/05/18/the-future-of-gamification](http://www.pewinternet.org/2012/05/18/the-future-of-gamification).
- Barnett, J., & Coulson, M. (2010). Virtually real: A psychological perspective on massively multiplayer online games. *Review of General Psychology, 14*, 167-179.
- Black, R. W., & Steinkuehler, C. (2009). Literacy in virtual worlds. In L. Christenbury, R. Bommer, & P. Smargorinsky (Eds.), *Handbook of adolescent literacy research* (pp 271-286). New York: Guilford.
- Brown, A. (2011). Council on Communications and Media. Media use by children younger than 2 years. *Pediatrics, 128*(5):1040-1045.
- de Lange, C. (2014). Children benefit from the right sort of screen time. Retrieved from <http://www.newscientist.com/article/dn25297-children-benefit-from-the-right-sort-of-screen-time.html#.VU6HGKa1N6E>.
- Durkin, K., & Barber, B. (2002). Not so doomed: Computer game play and positive adolescent development. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology, 23* (4), 373-392.
- Ferguson, C. (2010). Blazing angels or resident evil? Can violent video games be a force for good? *Review of General Psychology, 14*, 68-81.
- McDonough, P. (2009). TV viewing among kids at an eight-year high. The Nielsen Company. Retrieved from [www.nielsen.com/us/en/insights/news/2009/tv-viewing-among-kids-at-an-eight-year-high.html](http://www.nielsen.com/us/en/insights/news/2009/tv-viewing-among-kids-at-an-eight-year-high.html).
- Parkes, A., Sweeting, H., Wight, D., & Henderson, M. (2013) 'Do television and electronic games predict children's psychological adjustment? Longitudinal research using the UK Millennium Cohort Study. Retrieved from <http://adc.bmj.com/content/early/2013/02/21/archdischild-2011-301508.full>.
- Reaves, B., & Malone, T. W. (2007). Leadership in games and work: Implications for the enterprise of massively multiplayer online role-playing games. Seriosity, Inc. Retrieved from [www.seriosity.com/downloads/Leadership\\_In\\_Games\\_Seriosity\\_and\\_IBM.pdf](http://www.seriosity.com/downloads/Leadership_In_Games_Seriosity_and_IBM.pdf).
- Uhls, Y.T., Michikyan, M., Morris, J., Garcia, D., Small, G.W., Zgourou, E., Greenfield, P.M. (2014). Five days at outdoor education camp without screens improves preteen skills with nonverbal emotion cues. *Computers in Human Behavior, 39*, 387-392.
- Van Grove, J. (2011). Gamification: How competition is reinventing business, marketing & everyday life. Mashable. Retrieved from <http://mashable.com/2011/07/28/gamification/#.VyjalcBXuq4>.
- Williams, D., Yee, N., & Caplan, S.E. (2008), "Who plays, how much, and why? Debunking the stereotypical gamer profile. *Journal of Computer Mediated Communication, 13*(4), 993-1018.

Melanie Hayes, Ed.D., has made it her life's work to help twice-exceptional children find their niche and work to their strengths. To that end, she created Big Minds Unschool, a microschoool for 2e children that lets them learn through mentoring and supporting their intellectual, social, and emotional well-being. Melanie holds a doctorate in educational leadership with a focus on twice-exceptionality and is the winner of last year's Comcast Innovations for Entrepreneurs contest for her work using technology to overcome educational roadblocks with 2e learners. The mother of 2e twins, Melanie experiences life with 2e children on a personal level as well. She writes about her work and family in her blog, "Life Among the Gifted," at <http://mjhayes.wordpress.com>. You can see what she is doing at her unschoool by going to her website: [www.bigmindsunschoool.org](http://www.bigmindsunschoool.org). ☞



## Breakthroughs in Twice-Exceptional Education 2016

*This is the second part of our coverage of sessions at QuadPrep’s “Breakthroughs” conference in March of this year. Additional session coverage will be posted on our website, including coverage of:*

- Michelle Garcia Winner, “Fostering Social Thinking in the Gifted”
- Elissa Brown, “Implementing Problem-Based Learning”
- M. Layne Kalbfleisch, “Gifted, Twice Exceptional, and the Study of Each — Emerging Insights from Cognitive Neuroscience.”



Presenters Moskowitz and Mattu listen to session attendee; see page 16

## Advancing Understanding and Treatment of Social Competence in ASD

**Presenter: Matthew D. Lerner, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of psychology, psychiatry, and pediatrics at Stony Brook University in New York**

A goal of Matthew Lerner’s is to improve the treatment of social competence issues in certain groups of children. Social competence issues involve the ways in which children and teens connect — or fail to connect — to one another and make friends.

Lerner’s prime focus is kids with autism spectrum disorders (ASDs), but he works with kids who have ADHD as well. Individuals on the spectrum, he explained, tend to have a range of social challenges, although the challenges evolve in different ways in different children. Among the challenges Lerner ascribed to these children are difficulties with:

- Eye contact
- Body language

- Tone of voice
- Spontaneous conversation
- Seeing and acknowledging others’ perspectives
- Social anxiety.

Furthermore, Lerner stated, they tend to feel overwhelmed by social situations.

A concern of Lerner’s is that the strategies commonly used to help children learn or improve their social skills are based more on assumptions and myths than on research. This matters, he explained, because feeling connected to others (having what Lerner termed *reciprocal affectively-charged interpersonal relationships*) is critical to human well-being. Lack of this type of connection presents greater risk to health than smoking, drinking, or obesity, he stated. His concern about the effectiveness of the social skills strategies being taught has led him to test a number of them in

his lab to see if they actually produce the results that we expect them to.

In the research Lerner discussed in this session, he focused on five “mechanisms” of social competence. He explained that a mechanism, in the scientific sense, is the process by which something happens. In the context of his research, then, the five mechanisms are processes involved in demonstrating good social competence. The social skills instruction that children commonly receive tends to consist of strategies aimed at helping them master the various mechanisms of social competence — the five that Lerner has studied as well as others yet to be tested.


According to Lerner, the level of skill one demonstrates in applying each of these five mechanisms is accepted as a way of measuring the individual’s performance in social interactions. However,



## Social Competence in ASD, concluded

Lerner pointed out, none of the five mechanisms had ever been tested to see if they actually are meaningful ways to measure a person's social competence. The five mechanisms are listed in the adjacent table in ascending order of effectiveness, based on Lerner's research findings. Also provided is a description of each mechanism along with Lerner's comments about the results of the testing conducted in his lab.

Lerner is hoping that eventually research in this area will lead to evidence-based interventions tailored to the needs of individuals. For now, he stated that both knowledge- and performance-based interventions can help. Knowledge-based interventions, which consist of teach, practice, and perform, work best for younger children. Performance-based interventions, better suited to older kids, involve targeted activities, practice, and social reinforcement. A main difference between the two approaches is that the latter provides learners with usable skills rather than just teaching social rules.

The speaker concluded by describing a performance-based skills training model called SDARI (for Socio-Dramatic Affective Relational Intervention) that he developed with another individual. It uses improvisation games to help kids learn social interaction skills and has shown promising results in a series of studies. 

Mechanisms of Social Competence	Mechanism Description	Lerner's Observations and Conclusions
<b>Social Knowledge</b>	The child doesn't know how to make friends.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>While many social skills programs are based on the assumption that the child lacks social knowledge, Lerner was unable to find any data to support this; so it may not be as important as many have thought.</li> <li>It's not uncommon for kids to know the rules of social interactions but not apply them.</li> </ul>
<b>Insight/ Self-awareness</b>	The child knows what to do in a social situation but is unable to see where he/she is falling short, thus over-rating his/her social competence.	<p>Lerner noted a tendency in the kids studied to overrate their abilities and made these points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kids with ADHD especially tend to think this way, perhaps as a form of self-protection.</li> <li>The more they over-rate themselves, the less depressed they are and the less hostile their view of others is.</li> <li>Because there might be a risk in telling them they're not as great as they think they are, giving careful thought to how to handle this situation is essential.</li> </ul>
<b>Social Motivation</b>	The child is not motivated to engage in social interactions because these are not as rewarding for people on the spectrum.	<p>Testing showed the following about children on the spectrum with higher social motivation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>They want to try to engage in social interactions but lack the ability to do it successfully.</li> <li>They have poorer ability to recognize emotions in other people.</li> <li>They have more low-level interactions with others.</li> </ul>
<b>Social Information Processing</b>	The child is unable to process social information quickly enough to keep up in social interactions, leaving him/her always a little behind the other person.	Lerner uses electroencephalogram (EEG) testing to study brain activity and can tell when the brain of a test subject is starting to decode social information, like when he/she sees a face. Research has shown that the faster the brain processes social information, the better the individual is at reading facial expressions.
<b>Social Creativity</b>	The child is unable to come up with novel, creative solutions to social problems when he/she encounters them.	Lerner's research showed that social creativity is the only one of these five mechanisms closely related to effective social interaction.

## Treating Anxiety in Children and Adolescents with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

Presenters: Lauren Moskowitz, Ph.D., and Ali Mattu, Ph.D.

Lauren Moskowitz is an assistant professor of psychology at St. John's University. Her co-presenter, Ali Mattu, is a clinical psychologist at Columbia University Medical Center. The pair has evidently presented on this topic often, because the two toss their discourse back and forth to each other in a seemingly effortless and interactive way, engaging the audience in the process. They began with some basics:

- Anxiety has three components: physical feelings, behaviors, and thoughts. Each component influences the others.
- Anxiety is natural. It becomes a problem when it limits your life.

There are physical feelings associated with anxiety — a racing heartbeat that can help one flee danger, for example. Anxious thoughts may include:

- Catastrophizing — imagining the worst possible consequences of some event
- All-or-nothing thinking — feeling that if you don't do something 100 percent right, you've failed
- Negative thinking — looking only at the negative aspects of a situation.

Behavioral aspects of anxiety include:

- Avoidance, which can impede learning to be “un-anxious” through corrective experiences
- Seeking reassurance, common with ASD
- “Freezing”
- Pacing
- Crying.

The presenters noted that anxiety and depression are often overlooked in individuals on the autism spectrum, even though anxiety is more prevalent in this population than in neurotypical children and

adolescents. Reasons include difficulty in assessment because of communication deficits, the variability of temperament among those with ASD, or idiosyncratic behavior. In addition, symptoms might overlap between disorders, making it hard to make a differential diagnosis. For example, is a particular repetitive behavior due to ASD or to obsessive-compulsive disorder?

According to the speakers, assessing anxiety in ASD must be contextual, with observers providing ratings from different settings to give what Moskowitz called “convergent pieces of information.” The assessment also depends on documenting the relationship between anxiety and problem behavior, because the two are not always related and will depend on context. A context conducive to high anxiety will likely lead to more problem behaviors, such as tantrums.

The presenters covered three ways to treat anxiety:

- Psychoeducation
- Graduated exposure
- Cognitive restructuring.

Psychoeducation involves providing information about anxiety to define it and normalize it. Perhaps a particular anxiety is given a name. The clinician will explain the rationale for treatment, during which the clinician and the child are on the same “team” fighting the anxiety, using the child's interests along the way.

Graduated exposure helps the patient learn that he/she can get used to the source of anxiety, and the feared consequences won't happen. The presenters spoke of a “fear ladder,” where the clinician/patient team first tackles relatively easy situations involving the source of anxiety. For example, a fear of spiders might be first addressed by discussing a cartoon drawing of a spider, then moving on to more realistic confrontations. ASD kids can take longer than neurotypical

kids to reduce their fears, said the presenters, who also said that modeling for a child one's own handling of fears is useful.

Cognitive restructuring involves challenging anxious thoughts, for example with “coping self-statements” or “bossing back.” (An example of a coping self-statement in an anxious situation would be, “Okay, my feelings about spiders are not always rational.” An example of bossing back would be to address the anxiety by its assigned name: “It's the worry monster. Beat it, worry monster.”) Also playing a role in the treatment of anxiety can be reinforcement of “good” behaviors. This involves setting expectations for behavior and then consistently reinforcing the appropriate behavior in a timely manner with tangible rewards and privileges.

The presenters noted several differences in the treatment of anxiety in children with ASD versus children who are neurotypical. ASD children:

- Need increased structure and predictability in delivering treatment components
- Require concrete or visual examples (because they have a difficult time with abstract thought)
- Need help learning to generalize so that treatment results apply to a broader range of situations
- Respond better when their special interests are incorporated into treatment.

In concluding, the presenters offered some tips for preventing anxiety in ASD children. One was using count-downs or timers to help make transitions easier. This technique works because it increases predictability; and, as Moskowitz contended, “The heart of all anxiety is some kind of problem with uncertainty.” ☒





## News and Information from the 2e Center for Research and Professional Development

As the end of the school year is upon us, it behooves us to think about all the progress our children have made over the course of the year. I have the pleasure of meeting with a small group of parents over breakfast once a month to share stories of success and challenges facing their children. For this final meeting of the year, several parents voiced concern about issues not yet resolved. I asked them to remember the concerns they voiced in our first meeting back in September. To jostle their memories, I took out my notes and read them to the group. I could see the stress just melt away as one by one these four parents agreed that those concerns were no longer issues.

Indeed, they admitted how their students were growing over time.

Take a moment to reflect upon and celebrate what was right about the year. Remind your children or students of how much and in what ways they have grown over the course of the year. Finally, as parents, make sure to provide talent development opportunities over the summer months to let your children bask in their strengths.

The strengths of 2e learners is the focus of our column in this issue, as we conclude our series on the findings of a research study facilitated by the 2e Center and featured in Tom Ropelewski's documentary film

*2e: Twice Exceptional*. The study, which provided helpful insights into the academic, social, and emotional development of young people with twice-exceptionalities, uncovered six areas influential in establishing a strong foundation for success for 2e students. In order to support these unique learners in each of these areas, teachers and parents need to:

1. Understand asynchrony and its impact on the student.

The 2e Center for Research and Professional Development is located on the campus of Bridges Academy in Studio City, California. In this column, we share what's happening at our center and report research findings, teaching ideas, and parenting suggestions we have found to be successful in helping 2e kids thrive.

— Susan Baum, Director

2. Provide a psychologically safe learning and home environment.
3. Allow the 2e student enough time to develop emotionally and academically.
4. Encourage positive relationships at school and at home.
5. Provide various opportunities for talent development.
6. Develop strength-based academic and behavioral strategies to compensate for the 2e student's areas of weakness.

The teachers at Bridges use strength-based strategies in teaching our twice-exceptional students. We are proud of our instructional approach, one built on a strength-based, talent-focused philosophy. In the following article, Rose R. Blucher, a member of the Executive Board of the 2e Center for Research and Professional Development, describes how parents and teachers can put this approach to work with twice-exceptional learners.

## WORKSHOPS

**for Counselors, Therapists, Educators, and others**

Learn how to use an innovative suite of four tools that will help you discover and include the "person" in strength-based, talent-focused learning. It's a deceptively simple idea refined at Bridges Academy that can lead to big changes in motivation and learning.

*Sessions led by Susan Baum, Ph.D. & Robin Schader, Ph.D.*

---

**SET YOUR WORK APART.**  
**COLLECT & VIEW INFORMATION THROUGH A POSITIVE LENS:**

1. My LearningPrint®
2. Baum-Nicols Personality Preferences
3. "Starting with Strengths" Inventory
4. The TDO® Planner

**2 Options:**  
Thursday  
**AUGUST 11**  
or  
Saturday  
**AUGUST 13**

**LOCATION:**  
The 2e Center for Research & Professional Development at Bridges Academy  
3921 Laurel Canyon Drive  
Studio City, CA 91604

9am – 4pm (lunch included)  
Cost: \$295  
Limit of 12 participants for each date

**CONTACT:** kim.vargas@bridges.edu • 818.506.1091 x.229

[www.bridges.edu/2e-center](http://www.bridges.edu/2e-center)

## Factor 6: Strength-based Strategies

By Rose R. Blucher, M.Ed.

### What Do We Mean by *Strength-based Strategies*?

Essential to student success is the ability to develop, evaluate, and generalize effective learning and behavioral strategies. Starting with the student's strengths to develop a strategy — or, as I often refer to it, using the way in which the student's brain is “wired” — is far more meaningful to the student than having a parent or teacher impose a “must-do” strategy or idea on the learner.

Only after a year or two of working with 2e students did I discover that the student's own strategies were far more effective and successful than the many

### What Parents Want to Know

Each day after school, my child rushes through the door to add more buildings, landscapes, and people to a 3- by 5-foot Lego city that he has been working on for 6 months in our basement. He spends countless hours creating unique buildings and interactive scenes, yet he is so resistant to focusing on written homework assignments that appear to require less than half an hour to complete. His avoidance and manipulative behaviors are not only impacting his grades, but also affecting our family interactions.

How can we, as parents, and his teachers provide more activities and tasks based on the strengths my child exhibits at home instead of solely addressing his areas of weakness through continuous written assignments?

strategies I had suggested or the study skills classes required. In fact, while working with Melanie, my first 2e student, more than twenty years ago, I proudly suggested seven or eight different systems for her to use to organize her notebook, all of which failed! Why? Because each suggested strategy was the “Rose Blucher Method” for organization. It was not the way Melanie thought about organizing her tasks and materials. Needless to say, on the ninth try Melanie stumbled upon a way to organize her papers and assignments — by simply using an accordion file container instead of the dreaded three-ring notebook!

### How to Determine Student Strengths

Every teacher and parent has many opportunities to observe a child's strengths, interests, and passions through various activities on the playground, in the classroom, during organized sports, in music or art classes, and during family time and alone time. But often, those moments are forgotten when it's time to help the struggling learner get through a difficult assignment, project, or challenging emotional time. Instead, the teacher or parent resorts to suggesting the way he or she would approach the task. Therefore, it's wise to employ a more systematic approach to identifying strengths, one that engages the student in reporting his or her own strengths or learning style. A teacher



can keep the information gathered from these student self-reports in a file to use during those times when the student is unable to initiate or complete a task, or when planning short- and long-term lessons.

A variety of learning-style or strength-based inventories are available to purchase or to access on the Internet. Among them are:

- David Lazear's self-report scales for elementary, middle, and high school students. These tools are based on Howard Gardner's eight multiple intelligences (Gardner, 2011). Lazear used these multiple intelligence areas as the basis for both his book *8 Ways of Learning* (2000) and the self-report scales.
- The Birmingham Grid for Learning (Birmingham City Council, 2002-2016), an excellent online inventory with versions for both secondary and elementary students. When students

## Strength-based Strategies, continued

take the test online, it provides them with a pie chart depiction of their multiple intelligences. Additionally, teachers can input the codes for each of their students and obtain a class profile of multiple intelligence strength. Thus, if the class as a whole is primarily spatial, teachers could ensure that instruction includes visual content such as movie clips or works of art to engage the class in learning. The grid, available in text or audio formats and in several languages, is available here: [www.bgfl.org/bgfl/custom/resources\\_ftp/client\\_ftp/ks3/ict/multiple\\_int/questions/choose\\_lang.cfm](http://www.bgfl.org/bgfl/custom/resources_ftp/client_ftp/ks3/ict/multiple_int/questions/choose_lang.cfm)

- The Learning Print (Schader & Zhou, 2004), a process that incorporates assessment tools to help students identify interests, strengths, and learning-style preferences. At the start of each school year at Bridges Academy, students participate in “Getting to Know You” days during which they complete the assessment and use the results in activities designed to tap their strengths, interests, and talents. This introductory unit at the beginning of each year provides teachers and students with recent information about individual students’ learning profiles. The information gained from these activities aids in developing curriculum and strategies that are strength-based.


### Process for Strategy Development

Think back to the beginning of the article and Melanie’s difficulties with a system for organizing a notebook. Melanie’s strengths were visual-spatial, according to Howard Gardner’s paradigm; therefore, she

thought more globally and in “chunks,” while also relying on color coding to help her remember where to put things in her accordion folder. Each slot in her folder had a color and a symbol that she associated with each of her subjects. For example, her biology slot was color coded green with a symbol of a plant; so all she had to do was make sure each biology paper went into that particular slot. Her English class slot was red (for danger) with an unhappy face as its symbol. (I think

you get the idea!)

How did Melanie discover this successful strategy? She was given the opportunity to work through a strategy-development system that included a strategy log and a process chart (Blucher, 1999). She had to describe her problematic situation, come up with a unique strategy based on her strengths (visual-spatial), monitor the efficacy of the individual



### Tips for Parents and Teachers

Here are some ideas that parents and teachers can use as they work with their 2e learners to develop strength-based academic and behavioral strategies:

1. Allow the student to choose the strength inventory that best meets his or her individual needs
2. Use a systematic process for developing and tracking strength-based strategies. Track successful strategies by recording them in a journal or on different-colored index cards, using an assigned color for specific academic and behavioral tasks.
3. Have learners evaluate the efficacy of strength-based strategies and under which circumstances each can be used. For younger children, a thumbs up or thumbs down can be noted next to the strategy. For older children, a 1 to 5 scale can be used with an explanation of why it received that score. Have students analyze how closely each strategy related to their strengths.
4. Ask students to think of the silliest or most creative strategy they have ever used to complete a task. Next, have them use a strategy not necessarily in their area of strength. Work with students to compare the two strategies and determine which was the easier and more effective strategy. This process helps students engage in an evaluative system of their own.
5. Refrain from imposing “your way” of doing a task and, instead, take on the role of a facilitator by asking the child questions such as:
  - What are your strengths?
  - How do you know?
  - What are your passions, and how do you use your strengths when you are working in your area of passion?
  - How might you apply those same skills, techniques, or strengths to a new learning situation?

The questions are endless!

—RB

## Strength-based Strategies, concluded

strategy, and finally evaluate the effectiveness of her unique idea for organization.

Melanie eventually realized that she could generalize and use the color-coding strategy for other academic tasks, such as writing a three-paragraph essay. First, she dictated all of her ideas using the voice-to-text program Dragon Naturally Speaking to get her thoughts down on paper. Next, she assigned a different colored text to the introductory paragraph, body paragraph, and concluding paragraph. As she reviewed her ideas, she decided which sentences or phrases fit best in each of the three paragraphs, and cut and pasted them into the appropriate spot. Eventually, she had a finished product by simply using a strategy she had learned before based on her learning strength!

Finally, returning to the parent's question about the young boy who would rather build with Legos than do his written homework assignments, it's clear that he's excited about producing scenes in 3-D form. So why not let him build first and then dictate (or write if he chooses) what the characters in the story are doing or saying? The last step would be finalizing the written paragraph, perhaps through peer editing or by using the editing tools of a word processing program.

When 2e students are asked to produce in their area of strength, they begin to excel, their parents are less frustrated, and their teachers have a unique instructional toolkit from which to draw. With the help of strength-based strategies, teachers are better able to develop lessons that meet the needs not only of their 2e students, but of all students. By simply shifting the paradigm from a "deficit model" to a strength-based one, all students can begin to perform at their optimum levels of academic and behavioral achievement!


### References

- Birmingham grid for learning (2002-2016). Birmingham City Council. [www.bgfl.org/bgfl/custom/resources\\_ftp/client\\_ftp/ks3/ict/multiple\\_int/questions/choose\\_lang.cfm](http://www.bgfl.org/bgfl/custom/resources_ftp/client_ftp/ks3/ict/multiple_int/questions/choose_lang.cfm).
- Blucher, R. (1999). Strategy development process. Retrieved from [www.blucheredservices.com/#!teacher-s-corner/jwa15](http://www.blucheredservices.com/#!teacher-s-corner/jwa15).
- Gardner, H. (2011). *Frames of the mind: The theory of multiple intelligences* (Third Edition). New York: Basic Books.
- Lazear, D. (2000). *Pathways of learning*. Tucson, AZ: Zephyr Press.
- Schader, R., & Zhou, W. (2004). *My learning print*. San Francisco, CA: Robin Schader.

### We Respectfully Request...

...that you honor the rights of authorship and copyright of *2e: Twice-Exceptional Newsletter* and our contributors by refraining from posting PDF copies of our issues on websites viewable by those without a subscription to the newsletter. Likewise, copying, printing, and reproducing content from the newsletter other than that defined as "fair use" under copyright law is illegal. We are happy to arrange for permission for the reuse of individual articles in many circumstances, and we offer very reasonable rates on group subscriptions; please inquire. Thanks for subscribing!



For more than 20 years, Rose R. Blucher, M.Ed., was a specialist for gifted with special learning needs students in Prince George's County, Maryland, where she coordinated county-wide public and private school support services for 2e students. She has presented at numerous state, national, and international conferences. and is currently on the executive board of directors of The 2e Center for Research and Professional Development in Studio City, California. Blucher is the Director of Blucher Educational Services for Boundless Potential and continues to serve nationally and internationally as an educational consultant and advocate to school systems, schools, and parents. Reach her at [roseblucher@gmail.com](mailto:roseblucher@gmail.com). 



## Parents Confused By Varying Advice

**Q** I have 8-year-old twin boys. Twin A is usually very easy going, but Twin B is a bright child with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD — Hyperactive type). He is very challenging for us and has many anger and behavioral issues and low self-esteem. His highs are very high, and his lows are very low. He can be mean, and he feels like everyone hates him.

We have typically parented as you advise in the V of Love [See the sidebar.], but we have seen occupational therapists, doctors, and psychologists who have told us otherwise when it comes to Twin B. He argues continuously about things he doesn't want to do, like math facts for homework, but the professionals we see say that he should be allowed to move on to something else. We want to raise a productive, independent, responsible adult. What do we do? Twin B is ruling our life.

**A** First, you should know that two boys close in age are usually different to raise. When they are twins, it can make it doubly hard, and conflicting advice from professionals can certainly add to the trickiness. I'd like to say that you should just stick with my advice; but because I don't know your children, I know that won't be the answer you need. Perhaps you could find a psychologist who is familiar with my approach to parenting.

Of course, no two psychologists are the same, nor are two children. If you develop regular study routines for your children and help them to understand that after their work is done they can look forward to some family fun, that may help your son manage his homework time. Hardly any children love to do math facts, but I usually explain that they are exercise for the brain and

can help to make you smarter. Also, there is research that found that children who learn math facts well are more likely to take advanced math classes in later years. Perhaps you could add some small reward like stickers or prizes to encourage your son to manage to get through the less exciting parts of learning.

Finally, I do think it's important that you're comfortable with the approach your psychologist is using. You can interview a psychologist in your first session so that you can determine your comfort level with his or her approach before you introduce your child into the situation. Working hard to be united with your children's father is also very important. Once your children know what to expect on a daily and weekly basis, they are more likely to comply. However, I must say that parenting is not really as easy as just following a recipe.

Hopefully, the articles on my website or newsletters can help you as well.

*Dr. Sylvia Rimm is a child psychologist and clinical professor at Case University School of Medicine, author, newspaper and magazine columnist, and radio/TV personality. For free newsletters entitled How to Parent So Children Will Learn, Teaching Healthy Competition, Improving Your Child's Performance in the Second Half of the Year, ADHD, and/or Teaching Good Study Habits, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope for each newsletter and a note with your topic request to P.O. Box 32, Watertown, WI, 53094. Read Dr. Rimm's articles for parents and teachers, and submit family questions online at [www.sylviarimm.com](http://www.sylviarimm.com). All questions are answered. 2e*



### Take Charge; Don't Over-empower Your Children

Your children require leadership and limits to feel secure. Envision the letter V in "Love." When children are small, they're at the base of the V with few choices, little freedom, and small responsibilities that match their small size. As they mature, they should have more choices, more freedom, and more responsibilities.

Freedom and responsibility should increase concurrently. Although limits remain, more freedom is provided. Children will feel trusted and healthfully empowered. If you reverse that V like this, Λ, and children are given too many early choices and freedoms, they will believe they should have all the

choices. They will resent rules and responsibilities and feel as if you're stealing their freedom when you don't give them a choice or you try to set reasonable limits. They will seek instant gratification, total power, and expect to be treated as adults before they're ready to handle the responsibilities of their over-empowerment. In adolescence, ordinary expectations of responsibility will cause them to become angry, depressed, and rebellious. In plain English, they will act like "spoiled brats."

From "Foundational Principles of Parenting," at [www.sylviarimm.com/article\\_foundprinpar.html#top](http://www.sylviarimm.com/article_foundprinpar.html#top).

—SR

## Happenings in the 2e Community

### Second Location of FlexSchool to Open

FlexSchool ([www.flexschool.education](http://www.flexschool.education)), a micro school for gifted and twice-exceptional students, plans to open a second school in New Haven, Connecticut, in September of 2016. The fully accredited school's New Haven campus will offer a collaborative community for intellectually curious students who learn best in a small setting, according to a school spokesperson.

In September, 2014, FlexSchool opened its doors in Fanwood, New Jersey, providing small classes with advanced academics, and learning support when necessary, for gifted and 2e students who thrive in a discussion-based and experiential setting. FlexSchool students participate in social collaboration, meaningful conversations, and relevant homework. Interest in FlexSchool's liberal arts educational teaching philosophy and enrollment have increased quickly over the past two years, according to the school's founders, leading to requests by parents and educators to offer FlexSchool in other locations.

FlexSchool enrolls middle, high school, and post-graduate students. Like FlexSchool New Jersey, FlexSchool New Haven's faculty will consist of teachers and staff who a school spokesperson calls creative and passionate teachers. Heidi Molbak, the opening Head of School in New Haven and a nationally recognized expert in gifted and 2e education, will be joined by co-founders Dr. Stephen Chou, Rich Sorokin, Jacqui Byrne (the original FlexSchool founder), and 2e faculty training advisor Helen Waldron.



*Colonial  
Williamsburg*



SENG Conference 2016

Gifted: Our Past and Our Future

Friday July 22 - Sunday July 24, 2016

Pre-Conference Activities: Thursday July 21, 2016



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

## Happenings, concluded

### New Newsletter Advisory Board Members

The publishers of 2e Newsletter are pleased to announce the addition of two members to our Editorial Advisory Board: Paul Beljan, Psy.D., pediatric neuropsychologist and founder of Beljan Psychological Services; and Kimberly Busi, M.D., a psychiatrist and founder of two resources for twice-exceptional children and their families, Quad Manhattan and Quad Preparatory School. Find out more in our next issue!

### QuadPrep in New Home this Fall

The Quad Preparatory School in Manhattan has announced that beginning this September all divisions of the school will be at 25 Pine Street in New York City, currently the home of the organization's early childhood program. According to the school's founder and director, Kim Busi, the school will occupy the entire 4th floor of the building — 38,000 square feet — with large, sunny rooms overlooking Chase Plaza, a large kitchen classroom, two maker-space project rooms, and with a multipurpose room for OT, movement, film screenings, and community gatherings. In the same building are The Pine Street School and City School of the Arts. See pictures at <http://goo.gl/rLTHaJ>.

### New 2e Resource

A new resource for the parents of “differently-wired kids” is available at [www.tiltparenting.com](http://www.tiltparenting.com). On the site are podcasts, a manifesto for “shifting the parenting paradigm” to embrace “new normal,” and a “TiLT Creed.” The site says: “One of TiLT creator Debbie Reber’s biggest challenges in figuring out how to navigate the path of meeting her twice-exceptional

son’s needs was feeling isolated and disconnected. In creating TiLT, her dream is that no parent walking this unmarked path will ever feel alone again. Find TiLT at [www.tiltparenting.com](http://www.tiltparenting.com).

### Summer Camps

In the March/April issue we published our annual listing of summer camp possibilities for kiddos of the 2e persuasion. Since then we’ve heard about several more. One is in the UK, PowerWood Summer Camp, from August 6-13. The organizer calls it a “charitable event for families living with intensity, super-sensitivity and hyper-reactivity (OE).” A fan of the camp says, “PowerWood camp gives space for the grown-ups to relax, as the children do as well. Simone’s (PowerWood’s founder) workshops are inspiring, empowering and validating.... I discovered a new way to understand and interact with behaviours in myself and my children that are efficient and peaceful.” More information at <https://goo.gl/VtZlc1>.

Ignite! summer intensives in Texas serve gifted, talented, and high ability scholars in half-day sessions that meet Monday through Friday. Included are a variety of programs for students K-12 in the arts, sciences, and humanities. The organizer says that Ignite!, while not officially a 2e venture, definitely attracts those students. More information at <http://goo.gl/G2uwmz>.

Pat Sciortino runs a half-day “Comedy Summer Camp” for 2e learners in Park Slope, Brooklyn. She says that it will focus on social/emotional development and basic writing skills using humor. The camp includes improvisational play for social intelligence, stand-up comedy for emotional intelligence, and


sketch comedy writing for basic writing skills. More information at <http://goo.gl/C8GKCr>.

One last point. If you’re sending your 2e kiddo off to camp this summer, consider letting the camp staff know how they can ensure a good transition. The site Smart Kids with Learning Disabilities offers a sample “Dear Camp Director” letter at <http://goo.gl/j4o8pk>.

### New Professionals at Belin-Blank

The Belin Blank Center at the University of Iowa College of Education has announced two new staff members. Duhita Mahatmya is the new Research Methodologist for the College of Education. David Gould, who is a program administrator for the Honors Program and the Bucksbaum Academy, will assist in coordinating the promotion, development, and administration of the Bucksbaum Academy, the College’s early entrance academy.

### “2e: Twice Exceptional,” the Movie

“2e: Twice Exceptional,” the movie, is now available for licensed streaming by groups and institutions for \$150 a year or \$350 for three years. The movie’s producer says that the film will be available for streaming for personal and home use later in 2016. Find out more at <https://goo.gl/qRU6uL>. 

## In Case You Missed These

### Recent Items from the 2e Newsletter Blog and Briefing

A DISCONNECT. *The Washington Post* published an article about a bright young man with Asperger's. The twist: the young man's mother is a journalist who has covered education, among other topics, for almost a decade. She writes, "there's no bigger disconnect between my professional and personal experiences than hearing the adults in education talk about ensuring every child is ready for college at graduation while continually navigating the reality of low expectations." <https://goo.gl/ekOZOc>

PIONEER IN 2e STUDIES HONORED. Dr. C. June Maker was awarded an honorary Doctorate of Letters degree from Western Kentucky University recently, according to *WKU News*. She is a graduate of WKU and currently a professor at University of Arizona. *WKU News* says, "Dr. Maker's 1976 work *Providing Programs for Gifted Handicapped* was groundbreaking in the fields of special and gifted education and the concept of twice-exceptional children continues to develop today." <https://goo.gl/V5n13T>

RESOURCE FOR EDUCATORS. The Belin-Blank Center at the University of Iowa is offering a number of online summer courses on gifted ed, addressing topics such as gender, perfectionism, differentiation, cognitive and affective needs of the gifted, and counseling and psychological needs. <http://goo.gl/orRH7w>

LIBERTY SCHOOL, a private school for students with dyslexia, giftedness, and twice-exceptionality (gifted and dyslexic) in Durango, Colorado, has received its accreditation from AdvancED, according to the *Durango Herald*. The nine-year-old school has 24 students and charges \$14,000 for tuition. <http://goo.gl/SCWNhh>

A WRITER WITH A VERY BRIGHT TEENAGE DAUGHTER offers interesting glimpses of life with that young person growing up. You might have a child something like hers, but even if not you'll likely appreciate the story, we think. From the article:

- "I did not know my daughter was a particularly verbal baby until I had her brother, who was not."
- On a preschool administrator, kicking out the three-year-old: "'She's very smart. She just doesn't seem ready for school quite yet.' .... My daughter

was waiting for me in the hallway, holding a teacher's hand and wearing only one shoe. There was a bite mark on her arm."

- The daughter to the pediatrician showing the instrument he was going to use to examine her ears before she entered kindergarten: "Yes. I see it. That's an otoscope." <https://goo.gl/Soquwl>



## Spotlight on 2e Series: Booklets for Parents and Educators

- ▶ Parenting Your Twice-exceptional Child
- ▶ Understanding Your Twice-exceptional Student
- ▶ Writing and the 2e Learner: Issues and Strategies
- ▶ The Gifted Child with Attention Deficit
- ▶ The Twice-exceptional Child with Asperger Syndrome
- ▶ The Twice-exceptional Child with Dyslexia
- ▶ Caring for the Mental Health of the Twice-exceptional Child
- ▶ The Mythology of Learning: Understanding Common Myths about 2e Learners
- ▶ The 2e Reading Guide: Essential Books for Understanding the Twice-exceptional Child
- ▶ Guiding the Twice-Exceptional Child: A Collection of Columns by Meredith Warshaw



*Subscribers to 2e: Twice-Exceptional Newsletter receive discounts on Spotlight booklets. See [www.2enewsletter.com/topic\\_store\\_spotlight.html](http://www.2enewsletter.com/topic_store_spotlight.html)*



## Recent Items from the Blog and Briefing, concluded


**GRIT.** An influential book titled *Grit* elicits thoughts from Scott Barry Kaufman, who is a colleague of the book's author, Angela Duckworth. Kaufman says, "*Grit* is a good reminder that an exclusive focus on ability and potential can distract us from the importance of other variables important for success." He also takes issue with the way the media have framed "grit." If this topic interests you, check out Kaufman's comments at *Scientific American*. <http://goo.gl/g48ttH>

**DEBUNKING GRIT.** A soon-to-be published study "found no evidence that grit is a good predictor of success," according to a write-up of that study. The researcher says, "If you're going to spend money on something, you need to figure out what really matters and if it is something we can shift. I think grit really fails in both of those. We know from other meta-analyses that variables such as adjustment, study habits and skills, test anxiety, and class attendance are far more strongly related to performance than grit." <http://goo.gl/c9z1xu>

**A TWICE-EXCEPTIONAL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT** tells what it's like to "live in parallel universes," and makes some great arguments for "peer advocacy." He writes, "Just about every day at school I witness an exchange between a teacher and an autistic student where I know I can help, where I could serve as a translator of sorts. But I am told that I may not, that I must keep my opinions to myself, that I am not qualified. Who better to understand the language of a student with autism than another student with autism? I speak both languages." <http://goo.gl/HYYq5G>

**WHOOPI GOLDBERG**, who has dyslexia, was featured at the 13th annual Adam Katz Memorial Conversation held by the Child Mind Institute recently. According to the institute, "Goldberg sat down with Dr. Harold Koplewicz, president of the Child Mind Institute, to talk about the challenge of growing up with dyslexia, and how she thinks it may have helped make her the person she is today." <http://goo.gl/S7H3dC>

**DEPRESSION.** *The Washington Post* notes the value of celebrities who acknowledge their issues with depression or anxiety. The article mentions Kristen Bell talking about her mental health concerns in a video, Captain America Chris Evans talking to *Rolling Stone* about his anxiety, and gives many more "stigma shrinking" examples. A psychologist quoted in the article points out that when Bruce Springsteen told *Rolling Stone* of his depression, she "had an influx of young men calling for psychotherapy." <https://goo.gl/QFYvnp>

**SAN DIEGO 2e-ORIENTED SCHOOL.** Accelerated Academics, a legally recognized, California-based private school satellite program (PSP), is now accepting high-ability and twice-exceptional students into its program, which addresses educational and personal needs through an intensively differentiated online curriculum. According to the school, the program acts as an umbrella for many K-8 homeschool families and is the brainchild of Dr. Jenelle Miller, a specialist in gifted education and board member of the California Association for the Gifted (CAG). <http://goo.gl/pvFMMv> 

---

### Find 2e Newsletter Online

**On Facebook:** We're on Facebook: [www.facebook.com/2eNewsletter](http://www.facebook.com/2eNewsletter). Stop by to add a comment or question, or to see what we've posted recently.

**Our Blog** at <http://2enewsletter.blogspot.com>. This is where we post news items and resources several

times a week; these items are the basis for our free semi-monthly email briefing.

**The E2e Briefing.** Newsletter subscribers receive our twice-monthly email briefing automatically; others may view it and sign up for it at [www.2enewsletter.com](http://www.2enewsletter.com).

**Twitter.** We send out notices of blog posts, special happenings, exceptional articles we've run across, etc. We're @2enewsletter, and we use the topic hashtag #2ekids.

**YouTube.** Your2eTV, <http://goo.gl/RGtcJe> 

## Technology Recommendations

*In keeping with the theme of this issue, we asked on Facebook and in the briefing for recommendations for technology favorites. Here are the responses.*

I'm finding that an iPad with a keyboard and Notability (allowing simultaneous recording and note-taking) is working extremely well for my high school and college 2e clients. —*Hadassah*

My son, with his array of disabilities (ADHD, dysgraphia, visual-spatial deficit, learning disabilities etc.) along with giftedness, uses Efofex for math writing. It has made a huge difference in his math classes (trig as sophomore, calc as junior, stats coming as senior). He has had great difficulty interpreting and drawing

graphs in math and science classes due to his severe visual-perceptual deficits. His difficulty is compounded by dysgraphia for math as well as writing. Using Efofex and a laptop has been a game changer for him and his calc teacher. The calc teacher was against him using the program at first but loves the program now after he saw how much easier it was for him to interpret my son's work. —*BB*

Technology that's a great help for 2e and math is EfoFex. Our son has dysgraphia and would not have survived high school and college math and science without it. They have a free offer for kids with documented disabilities. —*Lynn*

My son recently participated in the Australian national testing, which has traditionally been a paper-based series of four forty-minute tests (maths, language conventions, writing and reading) that all Australian students write in grades 3, 5, 7 and 9. We applied for special consideration this year for my son to write the testing online (and we were successful). Having the ability to type the narrative story for the writing exam was brilliant and really allowed my son to keep up with his brain rather than pencil to paper. Without the computer I can guarantee his effort and results would be significantly reduced. —*Laurie* 🇺🇸

## And More

### From Understood

We took note when we saw this email title: "Find Hundreds of Expert-Approved Assistive Apps." The reference was to the site of Understood where users can evidently "find the right technology to help kids thrive at home and in the classroom," for assistance with all kinds of challenges, including reading, math, and organization. The Tech Finder at the Understood site

includes reviews of the apps; see an example below of an app referenced in our lead article. <https://goo.gl/TJlbou>

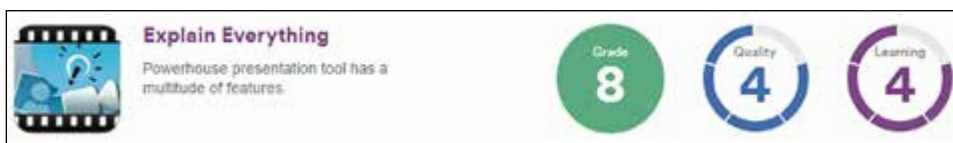
### And for Teachers, from Apple

If you use Apple products in your classroom, Apple has a page for you. The company offers "Tips, lesson materials, stories, and other resources to help you get

the most out of your Apple products and bring fresh ideas to your classroom." <http://goo.gl/Otlcre>

### And Finally, This

A smartphone app apparently designed and built at the University of Liverpool has been tested for its effectiveness in helping people manage mental health issues, including depression and anxiety. Based on cognitive behavioral therapy, the app takes users through a process referred to as "Catch it, Check it, Change it." The lead researcher noted, "There were statistically significant reductions in negative mood intensity and increases in positive mood intensity." <https://goo.gl/gOGYxk>



Part of a review at Tech Finder; see <https://goo.gl/aYTE6X>

**June** is Children's Awareness Month

**Jun 13-16** *8th Annual Hormel Gifted and Talented Education Symposium, Austin, Texas.* For educators, counselors, administrators and parents. More information at <http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/StuSuc/GiftEd/059387>.

**July** is Purposeful Parenting Month, according to *Psychology Today*.

**Jul 10-15** *Confratute, Storrs, Connecticut.* "A jam-packed schedule of events to engage, inspire, and rejuvenate educators." More information at <http://confratute.uconn.edu>.

**Jul 17-23** *National Parenting Gifted Children Week*

**Jul 22-24** *SENG Annual Conference, Colonial Williamsburg, Virginia.* By Supporting Emotional Needs of the Gifted. More information at <http://sengifted.org/programs/conferences>.



**Jul 25-29** *Edufest 2016, Boise, Idaho.* Annual summer conference on gifted and talented education. More information at <https://sites.google.com/site/edufestbeta>.

**Aug 11, 13** *Workshops on Personalized Learning, Studio City, California.* By the 2e Center for Research and Professional Development. More information at [www.bridges.edu/2e-center-personalized-learning-workshops.html](http://www.bridges.edu/2e-center-personalized-learning-workshops.html).

**Sep 29-Oct 1** *AAEGT National Gifted Conference, Sydney, Australia.* One theme/strand on twice-exceptionality. More information at [www.aaegt.net.au/?page\\_id=1156](http://www.aaegt.net.au/?page_id=1156).

**Nov 3-6** *63rd Annual Convention of NAGC, Walt Disney World Resort, Orlando, Florida.* By the National Association for Gifted Children. More information at [www.nagc.org](http://www.nagc.org).

*Please note: For more state association conferences relating to giftedness, see Hoagies' website ([www.hoagiesgifted.org/conferences.htm](http://www.hoagiesgifted.org/conferences.htm)).*