

**SPECIAL FOCUS:**

- LD Advising**
- Assistive Technology
- Processing Speed
- Assessing the Assessment
- Profiles of Exceptional Students

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**Taming Test Anxiety**

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**Why I Belong**

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The Newsletter of the Independent Educational Consultants Association

INSIGHTS

April/May 2015

Calendar

April 14
Webinar: The Future of Liberal Arts Colleges

April 19-21
IECA at Southern ACAC
Birmingham, AL

May 4-6
IECA Campus Tours
Maryland

May 4-5
American Gap Association Conference
Baltimore, MD

May 5
IECA/NATSAP Link 'n Learn
Baltimore, MD

May 6
Four Educational Pre-Conference Workshops, Baltimore, MD

May 6-9
IECA Spring Conference
Baltimore, MD

May 8-9
IECA Board meets
Baltimore, MD

May 12
Webinar: The Better College Essay

May 18-20
IECA at ACAC SuperConference
Reno, NV

May 25
Memorial Day, IECA Office Closed

June 9
Webinar: College Poor No More

July 3
Independence Day Observed
National Office Closed

July 7-11
Summer Training Institute – West
Claremont, CA

July 28-Aug 1
Summer Training Institute – East
Swarthmore, PA

Possibilities Abound

by Marilyn Emerson, MSW (NY) and Ann Rossbach, MAT (NJ)

Could this really be a bus carrying 16 teenagers on a cold and early Saturday morning? Some are rooting through IECA tote bags for breakfast bars while others are belting out familiar songs; still others are inspecting the map we provided or reading about the initial stop on our first-ever IECA/The Possibility Project campus tour, which was supported by IECA and IECA members, including active members of IECA's NYC Regional Group. The IECA Foundation sponsored the bus for students and IECs. We had been expecting headphones and mumbling and grumbling so early in the morning!

One year ago, the IECA Board voted to support coauthor Marilyn Emerson's proposal to coordinate volunteers from within IECA to mentor and advise TPP students and to lend nominal financial support for that effort. As a result, in the summer of 2014, 15 high school juniors were paired with members from not only the NYC metropolitan area but also as far away as Miami, Florida. Members worked successfully with the first cohort, who are now seniors, to provide expertise in the areas of constructing a viable college list, preparing essays and applications,



The Possibility Project (TPP) is an after-school and weekend program for a diverse group of New York City high school students, some of whom are in foster care. While participating in TPP, these students write, produce, and star in three spring theatre productions. They are also coached in conflict resolution and the advantages of crosscultural awareness. In addition, they perform community service.

and understanding affordability. One IEC offered free online SAT prep for the group. Others gave Saturday workshops. And the results in terms of college acceptances to date have been terrific.

So that is how in mid-February, we ended up on a bus with a group of 16 teens and a staff member from The Possibility Project to visit Manhattanville

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President's Letter

Together We Thrive

Dedication to the advancement of knowledge and a spirit of collaboration are two of the hallmarks of IECA. Our organization provides opportunities to learn from one another by exchanging information on the TalkList, participating in workshops, and enjoying lively discussions with colleagues at conferences or in regional groups. The common issues shared across the distinct areas of expertise allow us to work as partners and to find answers that might otherwise elude us. The more we collaborate regarding topics that include therapeutic issues, learning differences, financial aid, or working with international students, the stronger IECA becomes.

The work of the Learning Disabilities (LD) Committee is an example of how our organization can work well together, at times even crossing specialty groups that may appear unrelated. As more and more high school students with diagnosed learning differences enroll in college, the number of colleges that provide support programs for those students continues to increase. Members of the IECA LD Committee recognized the need to offer better training to members who work with students who have a diagnosed LD about such topics as developing a clear understanding of when it is appropriate to refer to a colleague with an LD specialty designation or to seek



Gail Meyer

further information from a therapeutic consultant. As a result, the committee developed the LD Road Map for Training—a pathway to competency that provides pre-conference workshops, conference breakout sessions and roundtable discussions, as well as webinars and college and school tours. One goal of the road map is to afford opportunities to fulfill some of the requirements necessary to receive an LD specialty designation.

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IECA⁺ INSIGHTS

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In Focus

Attitude of Parents of Children with Learning & Attention Issues

Source: *The State of Learning Disabilities 2014, National Center for Learning Disabilities*

35% are DEEPLY STRUGGLING with their attitude toward and ability to cope with their child's learning & attention issues:

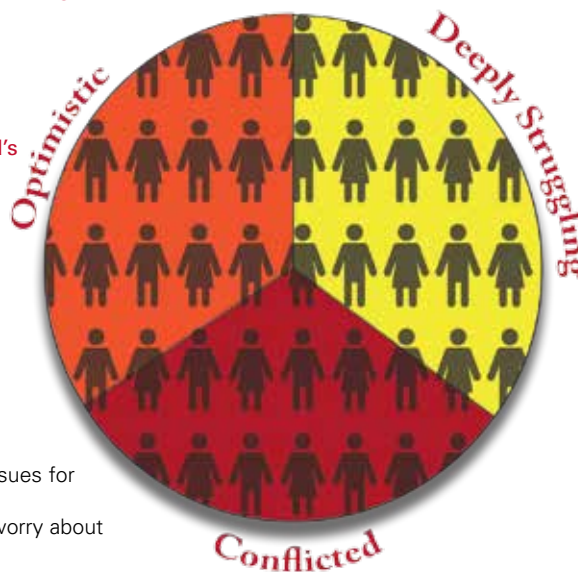
- parenting more difficult
- fiscal pressures
- feelings of isolation & anxiety

34% are OPTIMISTIC about their child's issues and their ability to cope:

- parents see themselves as successful and able to manage adversity
- effectively advocate for services
- are able to find needed experts
- able to manage stress

31% are CONFLICTED about their child's learning or attention issues:

- accept diagnosis but harbor doubts
- trouble with patience or resolving issues for child
- frustrated with school system and worry about child's future



Trends in Assistive Technology

Joan K. Casey, EdM, IECA (MA)



If you have recently upgraded your smart phone or purchased a new iPad or computer, you may not realize that a treasure trove of assistive technology resources is hidden inside. There are free and low-cost apps that can help people read, write, organize, and much more.

"People now have at their fingertips amazing

tools that they don't realize can be so helpful to themselves or to students," said Joan Green, founder of Innovative Speech Therapy in Maryland, a provider of training and technology-based services for individuals with cognitive, learning, and communication challenges as well as the professionals who help them.



A driver behind this explosion of applications is the Universal Design For Learning (UDL) movement. UDL is a set of principles behind curriculum development that gives every individual equal access to learn.

Where to Start?

The first step is to figure out the student's strengths and weaknesses. For students with a suspected learning disability, this means an evaluation to determine what is preventing them from accessing the curriculum or limiting their ability to show what they know. Assistive technology helps bridge the gap. (For more information on the design and delivery of assistive technology, see Sharing the SETT Framework at <http://joyzabala.com/Home.php>) Keep in mind, however, that assistive technology is helpful to many students, not just those with disabilities.

Next, look at the environment—such as college, home or school—in which the student is working. Green recommends that an IEC first identify what supports already exist. "It may be best to stick

with resources that others in the environment already know how to use so they can effectively support the student," she said. From there, identify the task the student is faced with. Is it reading comprehension, writing essays, or managing time? Then choose the tools to fit the task.

Tools You Can Use

There are hundreds of tools, including many you may be familiar with but have underutilized. A student with executive function challenges might want to start with Google Calendar. Green recommends that students use a digital calendar to log all their appointments, reminders, and task lists. Apps such as MyHomework sync across devices and may make the paper planner a historical artifact for many learners. Such apps hold course schedules and assignments. Some schools are using a companion tool called *teachers.io* that allows students to access the syllabus, announcements and links to online school resources. Reminders that are based on location can be used so that a student can be

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In Skidmore's Pre-College Program, high school students earn college credit while studying alongside college students. They work with Skidmore's nationally recognized faculty and visiting artists and enjoy access to the College's state-of-the-art facilities and resources. Do your interests range from math to studio art, psychology to English, economics to religion? Skidmore's unique curriculum allows students to take either two liberal arts courses, two studio art courses,

or one of each. Choose a class in an area where your strengths lie, or delve into an unexplored subject to challenge your perceptions and discover new fields of knowledge.

Live and learn at Skidmore

At Skidmore, high school students can imagine their futures while living together, cultivating new friendships, and discovering the right balance between work and fun. A carefully selected and trained residential staff lives with Pre-College students in their own private residence hall. The residential life program, designed to support and complement academic and artistic endeavors, ensures that students' social lives are every bit as exhilarating as their intellectual lives.

Skidmore College is a highly selective, independent liberal arts college known for outstanding academics, a rich co-curricular life, and its historic resort town setting. On Skidmore's lively summer campus Pre-College students not only learn together with high school peers and college students, but have the chance to meet visiting students and participants from other programs as well. They are invited to take active part in the special workshops, visiting artist lectures,

and gallery talks sponsored by Skidmore's Summer Studio Art Program and the nightly readings by renowned writers of the New York State Summer Writers Institute. Skidmore's summer campus hosts many other concerts, lectures, events, and weekend activities, and just off campus is downtown Saratoga Springs' dynamic cultural and arts scene.

Find out for yourself why Skidmore Pre-College alumni describe the program as **challenging, fun, enlightening, life-changing, mind-altering, motivational, experimental, adventurous**, to name just a few. Come spend July with us and discover your future.

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Trends, from page 3


reminded to take his backpack when leaving in the morning.

Google Chrome is another everyday tool that has many applications. Students distracted by Twitter, Angry Birds, or YouTube during homework time, can get an extension, such as StayFocused, that turns off access to the Internet during a preset period of time. English language learners and those with language-based learning or other challenges will benefit from Read&Write for Google (available on Chrome). Texts can be read aloud and the student can follow the color-highlighted text. Words are defined with text and picture dictionaries and can also be translated into other languages. As students type, they can set the app to predict the next word. It also works as a speech to text device. The helpful features of Chrome will be there on any computer when users log into their Google account, so there is no longer the need to load specialized software into the computer.

Other apps, such as Noteability, allow students to combine handwriting, typing, and photos to make projects and documents. It can be set to audio record as the students write or type during class so later they can hear what the teacher was saying at a given

point in time. Another option for students who prefer the feel of writing with a pen is the Livescribe pen which will also record and sync audio as a student writes or draws. They can then share the "pencast" with others who may benefit from a review of what was said in class. Prior permission to record is essential. Most new devices also include options that will permit the student to dictate text if typing is difficult. In Chrome, visit the Chrome web store to add extensions and apps.

The Challenge of Keeping Up With New Technology

The technology world is moving so fast that people don't know what they don't know, according to Green. "Families are spending thousands of dollars on neuropsychological and educational evaluations and the area of assistive technology is often neglected in the recommendations." These everyday tools are a boon to everyone. However, Green emphasizes that people with disabilities have the right to be exposed to these mainstream tools that not only make them more productive, but also happier and more successful. 

Joan K. Casey can be reached at jcasey@educationaladvocates.com

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and Iona colleges. We hoped that the campus visits would be a meaningful first step, as well as an adventure out of the city, for a group of juniors—the next “class” of TPP advisees. The day trip was all that and more.

First stop: Manhattanville. Director of admissions, Joe Consentino, greeted the group, who listened intently while he discussed the strengths of the college and the application process. During the walking tour, our group immediately bonded with the guide, Billie, and the students peppered her nonstop with questions: *How do I earn a scholarship, and does that money cover food? Do you have an engineering major? If my GPA isn't great, can I make up for it with interesting activities? Can I get a job on campus? How easy is it to get involved in theater? What if I don't like my roommate? Are all dorm rooms this small?*

Billie shared her facts—and opinions—freely, and her impact on the group was palpable. Walking the campus for two hours gave TPP students time to get their bearings and to gain some comfort; they were imagining themselves on campus. We two proud IECs shared a quick smile. The trip was achieving its goal.

After a quick lunch on the bus, we made the next stop: Iona. Quietened by the falling snow, the campus was beautiful. We were met by an admissions counselor, Jillian Fowler, who had volunteered to stay later in the day to accommodate us. Our three friendly undergraduate guides commandeered the group and offered advice on academic majors, proudly leading us to a trading floor and the athletic facilities that included an impressive indoor rowing tank. Students continued to learn from the guides and began to comprehend the differences between the two campuses. More questions were asked: *How important is Greek life? How many meals do I get on the plan? Will we see a dorm room? Is there music and theatre?*

We could not wait to get on the bus for the promised debriefing. After a candy bar pick-me-up, the observations flowed freely—and with incredible respect among the students: *I just felt comfortable there—like I could go there. I felt welcome. I didn't like the video—why couldn't they just talk to us? I might feel too close to home—I'd like to be just a little further away. I noticed more diversity on one campus, even though we were told that both had diverse student bodies. I really want a college with theater and music. I want to apply there, and I am going to research the scholarship they talked about.*

As the bus crossed into the Bronx on our return to the Possibility Project office, we asked one senior on the bus to describe her experience working with an IECA member. The young woman stood to face her peer group and spoke with real honesty: “She cares so much about me—I think she read my essay six times. She helped me with everything—making sure all my reports got sent to the colleges and helping me with financial aid. She has been my fairy godmother for college.”

Having the opportunity to be involved in the collaboration between IECA and The Possibility Project has been quite special—much more receiving than giving. Nearly 90% of IECA members engage in some form of pro bono or volunteer work within our profession. 🙏

Marilyn Emerson can be reached at mgse@emersonec.com; Ann Rossbach can be reached at ann@annrossbachconsulting.com

Share your pro bono or volunteer work experience with us! Send us your experiences (and photos!) to Sarah@IECAonline.com and we'll include it in an upcoming issue of *Insights*.

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The LD Committee members, experts from school, college, and therapeutic concentrations, set the stage for other specialty groups to develop road maps for training. By working together across disciplines we accomplish our goals for continued professional growth. The work of this committee represents what I believe is the distinctive value of IECA membership: collaboration between specialties. The LD Committee laid the foundation for the College Committee's Road Map for Affordability training and has inspired other specialty groups to develop educational programs as well.

Your contributions as Independent Educational Consultants encourage all of us to develop new areas of competence and to recognize the value of our own unique abilities. I urge all members, old and new, to lead sessions at conferences, write articles for *Insights*, and participate in the development of webinars. Our professional community thrives when we learn from one another.



Gail Meyer
IECA President



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A Question About Processing Speed

by Caryl Frankenberger, EdM, IECA (CT)



An admissions director called me the other day to talk about an evaluation that he had received for a tenth grader whom the school wanted to accept. He described the candidate as being a terrific young man who is verbal, curious, and social. Math was an area of strength; he was artistic, musical, and a fairly decent athlete—the kind of student who would

add to the community in many ways.

He went on to say that on the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children—Fourth Edition (WISC-IV) the student's IQ scores were: Verbal Comprehension 115, Perceptual Reasoning 123, Working Memory 109, and Processing Speed 83. He wanted to know what would make the processing speed score so low, and how at risk this young man would be in a competitive independent school. The evaluation did not provide that information and he needed some clarification and advice.

Processing speed on the WISC-IV is designed to measure how quickly one can complete simple, timed cognitive tasks using pencil



and paper. The two subtests require visual scanning, grapho-motor output (writing), speed, flexibility, attention, and concentration among other things. When you find a low processing speed score there are a number of factors to consider; the following questions

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Processing Speed, from page 9

will help you better understand its significance.

1. What is the student's tempo? Is it sluggish and slow? Some students move through life at a slower pace than others because that is the way they are wired. If so, they are likely to have difficulty keeping up in an environment that is too fast paced.
2. Is the student a perfectionist? Does the student want everything to be perfect, making sure to make no mistakes and checking work twice? If so, that can be addressed by teaching students to take risks and to trust their instincts. Once they learn to let some things go, they have the opportunity to complete work in a more timely fashion and with less angst.
3. Does the student have ADHD? Waxing and waning attention, difficulty shifting and sustaining focus, daydreaming, and problems with sustained effort can all be related to ADHD. A number of strategies can be employed to facilitate the student who has attentional weaknesses, including medication and executive function and cognitive training.
4. Are grapho-motor weaknesses making writing difficult? Is manipulating a pencil a tedious and time consuming task? If so, there are ways to work around this. In addition to using

a computer, there are speech recognition programs, such as Dragon Naturally Speaking, that can be used to dictate answers to homework questions, compose a five-paragraph essay, or write a novel.

5. Does the student seem anxious or depressed? Both anxiety and depression can cause a student to perform more slowly than might otherwise be the case. Is the student filled with self-doubt, poor self-confidence, or feelings of low esteem? Those issues can be addressed through formal and informal counseling, exercise, involvement in activities, and mindfulness training.
6. What is the student's level of motivation? If a student lacks interest or finds a task boring, he or she may perform poorly. This factor needs to be teased apart thoroughly because a lack of motivation for a given task is one thing, but for life in general, it is another.

A well-written evaluation should provide information that will answer questions such as those posed here. Testing is more than just numbers, and it is important to ask questions before rejecting or accepting a student on the basis of a processing speed or IQ score. 

Caryl Frankenberger can be reached at caryl@frankenbergerassociates.com

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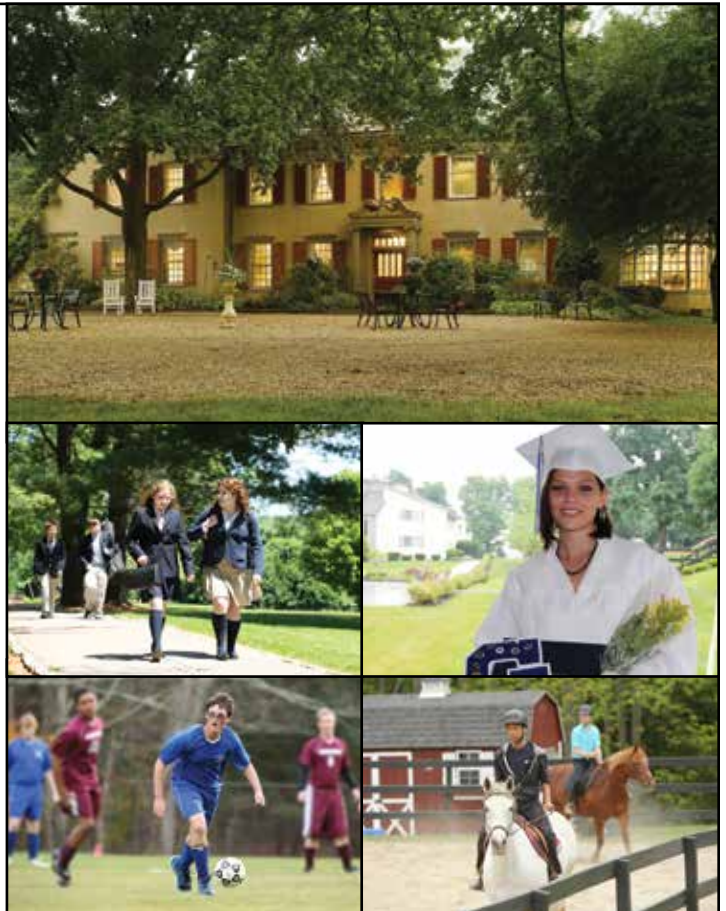
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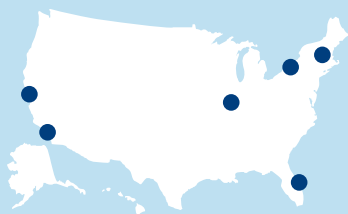
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Assessing the Assessment

by Carmen Tercilla, MBA, IECA Associate Member (FL)



During the November 2014 IECA National Conference, educational psychologist and IECA member, **Laura Seese**, PhD (CT), presented a pre-conference workshop on psycho-educational testing. This focused on helping IECs increase their understanding of testing methodologies and how student ability and performance are connected. Following are

highlights of the presentation.

What Is Assessment and Why Is It Important to IECs?

A comprehensive psycho-educational evaluation is designed to examine a wide variety of abilities. These include intellectual, academic, language, social, emotional, behavioral, and independent living skills. The primary focus for school-age clients is often their intellectual abilities and educational achievement—as a way of measuring cognitive strengths and weaknesses. In addition to overall IQ, intelligence tests explore innate abilities for short-term and long-term memory, attention, speed, and auditory and

visual processing based on how well the client remembers facts, can organize a visual field, or assemble a puzzle. On the other hand, educational tests such as the Woodcock-Johnson Tests of Achievement (WJ-III) measure what has been learned in school for such skills as reading, writing, spelling, and math.

Seese explained that psychological assessment focuses on problem solving and decision making. The main objective of the assessment is to provide valuable information to answer specific questions that will help IECs make relevant recommendations for their clients.

During an assessment, the evaluator will integrate data from various areas and evaluate the individual within a problem situation, using the information generated by the assessment to formulate alternative solutions to the problem.

When IECs recommend an evaluation, they should seek an assessor who is an excellent clinician, an expert in human behavior, and able to interpret the test scores within the context of the individual's life. Because many factors impact the results of an assessment, it

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Assessment, from page 13

is important to consider aspects related to the evaluator that may have an influence, such as their familiarity with the test materials, skill in administration, level of prompting, and their particular scoring style. Seese shared the results of research studies that concluded that verbal reinforcement and friendly conversation can bring increases of up to 13 IQ points on average. Additional factors that can affect test scores include environmental factors, such as noise or heat in the testing room, or issues affecting the examinee, such as test anxiety or physical status.

Who Should Conduct the Assessment?

How can an IEC decide on the appropriate referral for who should conduct the assessment? Specialists have their particular areas of expertise. Educational psychologists focus on learning and looking at the impact of disabilities on learning, memory, attention, and emotional functioning in the school setting. They track the efficacy of educational interventions that are put in place. Clinical psychologists look for alleviation of human problems with particular attention to emotional and behavioral challenges. The neuropsychologist is the expert on the structure and function of the brain and addresses the relationship between the brain and behavior. Forensic psychologists conduct court-ordered

assessments and work with the juvenile and family courts. When determining who might be the right evaluator for your client, consider factors that may affect rapport with the examinee, such as personality, age, and experience. Desired outcomes can also play a significant role. For example, a neuropsychologist could be the best alternative if you anticipate that specific medications will be part of the strategies.

What Are the Guidelines for Analyzing the IQ Test Scores?

Seese provided an excellent approach to reviewing IQ tests results, such as the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children® (WISC) and Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale (WAIS), and recommends a step-by-step process following a top-down review to facilitate understanding the data. She emphasized that the same approach can also be used for tests like the Woodcock-Johnson Tests of Achievement-Revised (WJ-III).

In her five-step approach, the first step looks into the Full Scale IQ (FSIQ). The FSIQ is the most reliable and valid score. It is considered the first step because it provides the overall context for evaluating other abilities as well as performance on other tests. The FSIQ ultimately serves as a global estimate of overall mental ability, presenting the person's relative standing in comparison to same-age peers.

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The second step looks into the Verbal (VIQ) and Performance (PIQ) abilities. IECs must note the difference between the VIQ and PIQ (the Verbal Comprehension Index and Perceptual Reasoning Index). A statistically significant difference is a 15-point difference, 1 standard deviation. This difference may be the result of cognitive style, sensory deficits, information processing, or speed.



The third step explores subset variability within scales. IECs should pay attention to how the individual subtests deviate from the average VIQ or PIQ and, as Seese suggests, “examine the data behind the scores.” For example, is a low score on Block Design the result of an

inability to create designs or an inability to create them within the designated time limits? She also offered a guideline for strengths and weaknesses that are three or more points above/below the mean and emphasized that some inter-test scatter is to be expected.

In the fourth step, the inter-subtest and intra-subtest variability is examined, looking at how each individual subtest deviates from the overall mean. As items become more challenging, some students demonstrate ability to pass easier items and fail during more difficult ones, while others fail easy items yet are able to pass hard ones possibly signaling attention or memory deficits.

The last step is the qualitative analysis, which focuses on the responses themselves, particularly for Information, Vocabulary, Comprehension, and Similarities. Content may reflect social issues or problems with psychological functioning.

Enhanced Test


David Wechsler originally developed the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children or WISC in 1949. In 2003, the fourth edition of the WISC was released and is currently used to determine the intellectual strengths and weaknesses of children ages 6–16. The WISC-IV

consists of four different indexes, each with their own subtests. On October 2014, Pearson published the latest version of the test, the WISC-V, and promises a tool “redesigned, retooled, and revamped, with a number of improvements to provide a more comprehensive picture of a child’s abilities.”

The enhancements made to WISC V include:

- The test continues to be available in traditional paper and pencil, but Pearson now offers a new digital format. Examiners may administer the test utilizing tablets. Through the Q-Interactive and the Q-Global portions of the WISC-V, tests are administered and scored online with an iPad which can impact the child’s experience with the test.
- There are significant changes to the testing time. The FSIQ can now be computed 25 minutes faster than with the WISC-IV. For the 7 core subtests in the new version (versus 10 in the WISC-IV), the WISC-V takes 10 minutes fewer to administer.
- There is increased coverage of cognitive processes, important to specific learning disability (SLD) identification and intervention.
- WISC-IV has four components to IQ, which include Verbal Comprehension, Perceptual Reasoning, Working Memory, and Processing Speed. With the WISC-V, there are now five components as well as two new indexes, with Visual Spatial replacing Perceptual Reasoning and Fluid Reasoning. In addition, the test offers new composite scores for Quantitative Reasoning, Auditory Working Memory, Naming Speed, Symbol Translation, and Storage/Retrieval.
- Simplified, briefer instructions with reduced vocabulary level and modernized content with visual stimuli are features of the WISC-V. Colors in the test materials have also been changed to reduce the impact for students who might be color blind.

As of the date of this article, few evaluators have made the switch from WISC-IV to WISC-V; however, Seese shared that guidelines require implementation of new tests (which have updated norms) within one year of publication.

Seese’s pre-conference workshop provided an excellent outline for how to approach the psycho-educational evaluation. We learned the importance of looking for a pattern that illustrates important information about a student’s learning style, detailed by specific strengths and weaknesses. IECA’s pre-conference workshops offer a unique opportunity to dig deeper into topics of interest. The LD Committee coordinates workshops before every national meeting to cover relevant topics that help all IECs better serve the needs of students with learning differences. 

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Understanding the Needs of Exceptional Students When Assessing Appropriate Educational Schools and Programs

by Dana Stahl, MEd, IECA Associate Member (NY)



Individual profiles provide essential information for educators. Interpreting these formal evaluations enables educators to build on the recommendations in the profiles to create effective teaching strategies for their students with learning issues. Using these profiles to supplement their own observations, educators can distinguish among various

learning and behavior issues, better understand their students' individual differences, and design successful academic lessons. Independent Educational Consultants (IECs) can deepen their skill sets by using the profiles to gain insight into the academic, social, and emotional issues that exceptional students face, thus gaining an increased command of their client's unique learning needs and expanding their ability to secure appropriate educational placements.

It is important to define the behaviors associated with learning issues that are frequently observed in children with learning



disabilities, ADHD, and Asperger syndrome, so that IECs recognize the relationship between classroom behavior and learning issues and can confidently assess the educational environment in which their clients will obtain the most benefit. There are typical behaviors exhibited by exceptional students that scores of educators observe in their classrooms every day, and IECs will benefit from understanding how the following learning issues correlate with those behaviors:

- **Anxiety about academic performance.** Interferes with the learning process because students tend to shut down and not "hear" what is being presented. Require continued guidance in the how-to process in preparing for assignments and tests.
- **Anxiety during transitions.** Difficulty settling into class and transitioning from one task to another. Experiences uncertainty and a disconnect in the learning process. Appears ill-prepared for class and unable to begin the class period.
- **Attending to academic task.** Loses focus and begins side talks with peers. Appears to daydream and then "re-enters" the discussion. Unable to transition from one part of the lesson to another. Visible disconnect from directions to execution of tasks.
- **Decoding skills.** Difficulty sounding out unfamiliar words and reading with expression. Reading rate, accuracy, and fluency all underdeveloped, despite student being capable of discerning the content of the text.
- **Executive functioning.** Difficulty planning a series of steps to solve a problem or orchestrate the initiation and completion of an assignment. Difficulty drawing inferences and processing abstract concepts.

continued on page 18

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Understanding Needs, from page 17

- **Expressive language difficulty.** Undeveloped vocabulary and linguistic skills do not allow ideas to be verbally expressed with ease or in detail. Contributions to conversations and written production are limited and unsophisticated.
- **Immature social-emotional development.** Social adaptation among peers and faculty is underdeveloped. Limited ability to accept constructive criticism or work positively with peers. Not open to compromise and has difficulty accepting different perspectives.
- **Immature social judgment.** Age-appropriate social interactions with peers are underdeveloped and often disruptive. Not able to pick up on social cues and comments.
- **Information overload.** Difficulty producing and performing work due to the multilevel demands of quantity and content.
- **Listening skills.** Difficulty remaining connected during class discussions. Difficulty processing and assimilating information that is presented orally. Difficulty filtering out what is not important when information is being presented orally.
- **Organization/time management.** Difficulty organizing notes and papers in a notebook as well as assessing how much time an

assignment will take. Has a hard time negotiating schoolwork independently.

- **Processing speed.** Reduced productivity in completing assignments in timely fashion.
- **Reading comprehension skills.** Avoids reading assigned text. Difficulty making interpretive analysis of reading material. Misses salient points of text and often unable to follow written directions.
- **Working memory.** A disconnect in processing and holding onto information that is being presented. Demonstrates difficulty with tasks that require internal manipulation or organization of information.
- **Written language skills.** Difficulty relaying ideas in an organized and concise manner. Vocabulary use is simple and ideas presented are simplistic. Summaries of content material are underdeveloped and without direction.

There are numerous day and boarding schools that address specific learning issues. IECs who understand how to thoroughly evaluate a student's profile will be better able to analyze the students from an academic and social-emotional perspective, thus ensuring the selection of an educational program model that suits the student's specific strengths and vulnerabilities. Some schools specialize in specific areas, such as language-based learning disabilities, ADHD, or Asperger syndrome. And others offer an array of services to students with academic and emotional support embedded in their programs, but not a focal point of the day. In selecting appropriate schools and placements for clients, IECs must focus on the level of therapeutic and academic support offered as well as the difficulty of the curricula and the method of assessment used in the school. Discussion must occur to determine if this method of assessment is process oriented or end-product based. The extracurricular activities available at the school in athletics, music, art, and drama are also important because exceptional students often excel in areas outside the classroom, and it is in the venue of extracurricular activities that they find the confidence to sit, listen, and learn in a more structured environment.

As IECs expand their knowledge base of the typical behaviors frequently observed by educators in the classroom and develop a greater grasp of effective teaching strategies presented through differentiated instruction, they will become familiar with the language of learning specialists. They will then be better equipped to evaluate the appropriateness of an educational program and offer suitable client placement. Having an in-depth understanding of the social-emotional and academic profiles of exceptional students is essential in order to place clients in the optimum school or program for their specific needs. 

Dana Stahl can be reached at danastahl35@gmail.com

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Taming the Tiger of Test Anxiety

by Jed Applerouth, PhD, Founder, Applerouth Tutoring Services



Tests can be stressful. Any time we are being evaluated, we naturally feel a degree of stress. Stress can keep us on our toes, allowing us to fully engage and deliver optimal performance, or it can flood us, overwhelming and drastically impairing our performance. Take a moment

to remember a time when you felt some anxiety about a test: an admissions test, a challenging final, a certification exam. Recall the emotions, the bodily sensations, the thoughts that ran through your head as you sat for that exam. In that stressed condition, how good were you at regulating your anxiety? How good are you now? Any improvement? Most likely your emotional self-regulatory mechanism is much more robust in adulthood than it was in adolescence. As you work with students who are struggling to regulate their anxiety on tests, you can be a powerful source of empathy and information to help them with this task.

Test anxiety appears as early as elementary school; becomes more prevalent in high school; and can endure into college, graduate school, and beyond. Academic research has found that 61% of students will experience test anxiety at some point during high school and 26% of students will experience test-anxiety on a regular basis.¹ Test anxiety is more prevalent today among US students than at any prior time.

Certain student populations are more vulnerable to test anxiety than others, including students with disabilities, attentional deficits, and perfectionistic tendencies. Students under performance pressure (whether from peers and family or because of placement in talented and gifted classes) are also more likely to experience test anxiety. Girls are more likely than boys to experience all forms of academic anxiety, including test anxiety. Research shows that this anxiety differential contributes to gender gaps in standardized test scores². Test anxiety manifests in a variety of forms. Students may experience affective symptoms, such as excessive worry or fear; physiological symptoms, such as a dry mouth or upset stomach; behavioral symptoms, such as avoiding testing events or cheating on tests; or cognitive symptoms, such as inattention or cognitive obstruction (a flood of distracting thoughts) during a

test. Elementary students have a greater tendency to exhibit the physiological symptoms of test anxiety, while older students have a greater likelihood of experiencing its behavioral and affective symptoms³.

When you have students who are spending excessive time preparing for tests coupled with low performance, test anxiety may be a factor. Similarly, if you notice students exhibiting avoidant behavior, such as developing strange illnesses before big tests or putting off preparation for tests, test anxiety may be an issue. Left unchecked, test anxiety can lead to feelings of frustration, diminished academic motivation, lower self-evaluation and self-esteem, and a greater tendency to cheat on tests or devalue them.

If you think a student may be experiencing test anxiety, it is important to determine whether there are other confounding factors, such as processing speed deficits, skill deficits, or learning differences, underlying the anxiety response. Some students feel

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anxiety simply because they cannot finish in the allotted time or are struggling to process the information on a test.



Understanding the Mechanism of Test Anxiety

If we can teach students how anxiety functions in the body, we can empower them to better self-regulate the anxiety mechanism. The linchpin of the anxiety system is the amygdala, the almond-shaped group of nuclei, embedded deep in the temporal lobe, responsible for identifying threats in the environment and preparing the body to face imminent danger. Once a student identifies a test or exam as a threat, stress hormones are released into the blood stream, the sympathetic nervous system engages, and the body prepares for a fight-flight-freeze-or-fold response.

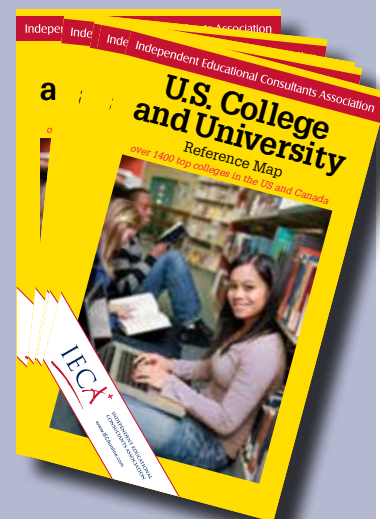
Once activated, the anxiety/stress response can run rampant or be deactivated by intentional, mindful, focused efforts. Self-regulation is an inside job; it's an acquired skill that we tend to develop with age and experience. An individual skilled at self-regulation can quiet the initial activity of the amygdala and reduce the stress response. The key to self-regulation is the frontal cortex, the reasoning center of our brain, that can regulate the activity of the amygdala by sending neural messengers such as GABA (gamma-aminobutyric acid) to inhibit stress hormone secretion and activate the calming parasympathetic nervous system.

One of the primary reasons test anxiety can be so debilitating for your students lies in the flooding of stress hormones during an assessment. There is nothing wrong with a little cortisol (one of the principal stress hormones). In fact, researchers have found that the best test takers show an increase in cortisol levels immediately before and during tests. A moderate uptick elevates our attention, heightens our focus, and allows us to perform at peak levels; however, excessive levels of stress hormones impair the functioning of working memory and have been found to inhibit the retrieval of already stored information. As stress hormones rise beyond optimal levels, students will find themselves struggling to remember material they have previously studied and mastered.

In addition, test anxiety eats up available cognitive capacity through the mechanism of cognitive obstruction. We can only hold so much information in our minds at one given time. As limited capacity is used up by distracting thoughts, negative self-talk, and fearful cognitions, performance becomes

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impaired. The ability to organize one's thoughts and concentrate on the given task will be disrupted. Researchers have found that students who suffer from test anxiety dedicate up to 40% of their time on task-irrelevant thoughts!

The one-two punch of diminished working memory function because of stress hormones and cognitive obstruction because of task-irrelevant cognitions can put a serious damper on performance. And in this diminished state, test-anxious students may feel overwhelmed, frustrated, helpless, and discouraged. But there is hope for those students—and you can be part of the solution.

Ways to Help Your Students Manage Test Anxiety

Because test anxiety manifests behaviorally, cognitively, physiologically, and emotionally, there are many potential interventions you can use to help your students. Here are some techniques that may be useful:

Normalize test anxiety. We can let our students in on the secret that we too experience anxiety, and many of us have had to face test anxiety during our academic lives. This helps students realize that

they are not alone. You could even volunteer the manner in which you regulate your own anxiety to encourage students to develop strategies that will be effective for them.

Draw skills from other domains of competence. Students can look to their own lives to see where they have been successful in regulating stress or anxiety. Many students have had to face performance conditions in athletics, performing arts, or other domains. Students can learn to evoke strategies that have already worked for them and bring those to the test.

Teach students the underlying mechanism of anxiety. A little neuroscience goes a long way. Students who understand how stress hormones and self-regulation work can better manage their anxiety responses.

Encourage students to write about their test anxiety. Writing about fears and anxieties enhances self-regulation. Research from the University of Chicago⁴ reveals that 10 minutes of expressive writing about test anxiety significantly reduces anxiety and improves performance.

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Help students to reappraise their arousal. Students may misinterpret the physiological symptoms of arousal (e.g., sweaty palms and rapid heartbeat) as evidence that they are not ready for a test. This is anything but the case! Such symptoms result from the moderate increase in stress hormones that are needed to facilitate sustained focus and cognitive effort. And many great test takers feel those symptoms before a test. Explaining to students that some physical symptoms are in fact beneficial for thinking and reasoning has been shown to significantly enhance test performance.

Reinforce a flexible rather than fixed mindset. Carol Dweck's research shows that students with a fixed view of intelligence will view tests as an opportunity for failure and a threat to their identity. Students with a growth mindset will be less likely to fear a test or its outcomes and more likely to view a test as a challenge that can be mastered.

Help students manage their self-talk. You can help students correct their maladaptive self-talk and retire the "I'm a bad test taker" mantra. Encourage your students to be very careful of the messages they give themselves before and during a test, and help them shift self-talk towards the positive. Students need to learn to access their inner coach, their internal voice of support—you can help model this for them. Encourage students to use internal "you statements" rather than "I statements" to self-regulate and self-motivate: "Jennifer, you can do this; you've prepared and you've got this." Researchers have found that this shift to the third person enhances self-regulation.

Use cognitive rehearsal and active imagination. Walk your students through a guided visualization of the perfect test day. Help them create a vivid experience of their optimal performance and encourage them to repeat it. This primes the brain for success on test day.

Give students some success to enhance self-efficacy. Students with greater self-efficacy for testing exhibit lower test anxiety. If students can demonstrate mastery in limited practice conditions, it can lead them to reappraise their abilities and build confidence that they can succeed on the official test.

Ensure that your student has the necessary content knowledge and test-taking skills. Students who are test wise and have mastered the relevant content are less likely to experience test anxiety than those who are underprepared or less familiar with test-taking strategies.

Teach students to use the body to reduce anxiety. When the body is relaxed and the breath is slow and measured, anxiety tends to decrease. Students can learn some basic relaxation skills to help quiet the mind when arousal peaks. Students can practice closing their eyes and taking several deep breaths or tensing and relaxing muscles to help calm themselves. Some students like to practice meditation and mindfulness as a means of self-regulation; others benefit from vigorous exercise the morning of a test. During the test, some students will place a hand on their heart and breathe in slowly to calm arousal; others benefit from interventions, such as tapping, which help calm the nervous system.

Encourage proper diet and sleep hygiene. Hungry, tired students will have a harder time self-regulating on test day. Ensure that students have proper sleep for the two days leading up to the test and go into the test fully nourished, with snacks prepared for breaks during a longer assessment.

Simulate the anxiety-inducing conditions to facilitate self-regulatory practice. Test anxiety is state-specific, manifesting only under certain conditions. Encourage your students to practice their self-regulatory skills in conditions that closely approximate official testing conditions. Practice tests are ideal for this purpose.

Enhance self-nurturing on test day. Students can increase their self-nurturing behaviors before a test: eating a favorite breakfast; playing enjoyable music on the way to the test center; arriving with plenty of time; and giving themselves positive, encouraging messages.

Reducing external sources of anxiety. Parental hovering and anxiety can negatively affect students. You may need to encourage a student's parents to decrease some of the attention, focus, and pressure on testing outcomes.

When you introduce potential interventions to your students, ensure that you do so early enough to allow them to practice long before the official test day.


In Closing

Engaging in this work helps strengthen the empathic connection with your students and reinforces the positive therapeutic alliance. By coaching your students on ways to tackle test anxiety, you will help them learn to self-regulate. This is a fundamental life skill that will transfer to other domains and benefit them for years to come. 🙏

Jed Applerouth can be reached at jed@applerouth.com

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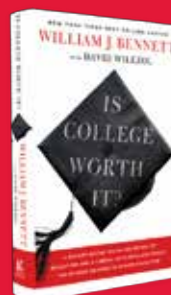
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On the Road



Westbrook, Connecticut

Several IECA members participated on the Connecticut Shore Tour and visited Oxford Academy. Pictured here: (left to right) Marti White, dean of studies; Mall LaSota, dean of students; associate member **Elizabeth Hall Olszewski**, (NH); David J. Tuttle, director of admissions; associate member **Jamie Goodman** (IL); Phil Cocchiola, head of school; associate member **Jordan Burstein** (IL).

Scottsdale, Arizona

IECA President **Gail Meyer** (CA), and three IECA staff members joined IECA members and more than two-dozen program, school, and college administrators. The group, charged with helping to create curriculum for the 2015 Fall Conference, explored issues as diverse as parent advising, brain theory, synthetic drugs, autism spectrum, and admission challenges.



View from IECA'S Fall 2015 conference hotel

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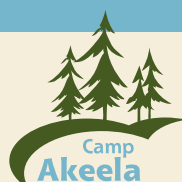
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Why I Belong



I worked as an English teacher for over two decades; besides the students themselves, what I missed most when I left the high school environment was the sense of being part of a group or team. When I began working as an IEC in 2008, I dearly missed that feeling of belonging.

This work can be very isolating, and even lonely at times, in my experience.

I am grateful to be a member of IECA because of its high professional standards, its countless resources, and its unflagging focus on ethics. (Not to mention its many colorful characters!)

What I cherish most about this organization, however, is the sense of collegiality I feel whenever I attend a conference, take a

tour, attend a webinar, or read the TalkList. Wherever a member lives, no matter his or her background or particular focus, I know we are comrades-in-arms who share a seriousness of purpose as well as a passion for guiding students through their academic and personal journeys. That's the real reason I'm so proud to call myself a member of this organization.

Vita F. Cohen MA, MAT, IECA (IL)

Vita can be reached at vita@cohencollegeconsulting.com

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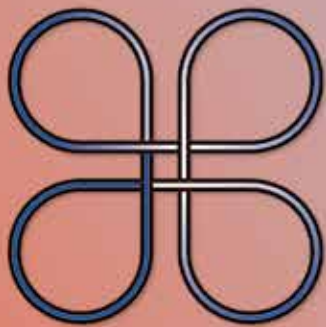
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We Strive for Competence Part 2: School & Therapeutic Consulting

by Pamela Jobin, MEd Vice President for Ethics & Professional Practices, IECA (CO)



In my article on competence in the February/March 2015 issue of *Insights*, I focused on college and graduate school. This article will focus on competence with learning issues for school and therapeutic consulting. As Independent Educational Consultants (IECs), we all have our areas of specialty and are hired by our clients to share our expertise by providing options and guiding our clients through the admission process to graduate schools, colleges, schools, or therapeutic programs. When any of us try to practice outside our areas of competence, we do a disservice to our clients, to ourselves, to one another, and to our profession. And we are acting unethically according to our Principles of Good Practice (PGP). Although such incidents are not widespread, future incidents can be avoided by being more cautious and by educating ourselves about potential pitfalls.

Respect Boundaries

PGP 1. Competence

A. Members practice within the boundaries of their competence, which derives from relevant education, training, acquired knowledge and professional experience. They are straightforward about what they are—and are not—competent to do. In cases with elements outside their competence, they either consult with or refer clients to appropriate colleagues.

School consultants and therapeutic consultants often overlap in working with students in the same age group, typically 11–19 year olds although many therapeutic consultants work with young adults as well. Sometimes families approach a school consultant asking for a boarding school placement because their child is struggling in school or at home. The hope is that the structure, the small class size, and the clear behavioral expectations of a traditional boarding school will help the student be successful. Very often that is the case; however, there are cases that involve things the traditional boarding school consultant feels ill-prepared to understand. For instance, how serious is self-harm like cutting, substance abuse, or running away from home? What does bipolar disorder mean? Is it a red flag that the student is on two different psychotropic medications? Could a previous sexual assault still affect behavior? The short answer to all of these red flag questions is “yes.”

To ensure that the traditional boarding school IEC is practicing in his or her area of competence and is not setting the child up for failure, possible expulsion, and the loss of a year’s tuition, the IEC must proceed cautiously. Several options are reasonable. One is to refer the case to a therapeutic IEC. Another is to share concerns with the

parent, get written permission to speak with the present therapist or psychiatrist, and pose the question about whether traditional boarding school makes sense. Perhaps a therapeutic placement is indicated with that professional opinion, depending on the severity of issues. It might also be possible to share the case with a therapeutic consultant.

Learning issues pose another issue for both traditional school and therapeutic consultants. Although they seem like common problems, the IEC needs to understand the implications on school programming for students with ADD and ADHD. Executive functioning issues and slow processing speed often show up on testing and all IECs need to be aware of how such issues affect daily functioning, socialization, and academic progress. Students with a diagnosis of autism, especially really bright but struggling students, need to be assessed for appropriate placements. Since autism (previously Asperger’s Syndrome and PDD-NOS) and nonverbal learning disabilities are on a spectrum, what is right for one student could be overkill or under programming for another.

Continue to Learn

PGP 1. Competence

B. Members continually update their knowledge of educational options, both in breadth and in depth, through such activities as site visits, attendance at professional conferences, continuing education and professional reading.



IECs are typically lifelong learners, and the knowledge and competence they acquire help their clients. There are so many ways to gain competence in LD, school, and therapeutic consulting.

The therapeutic committee has been working on a “roadmap” of ways to gain the therapeutic designation. The master classes held on Saturday mornings at IECA conferences have been excellent and, along with webinars, are a great way to begin gathering knowledge. College coursework

and focused conferences also are beneficial. Given the life-and-death nature of some therapeutic cases, it is a designation to take seriously.

Fortunately the LD specialists in IECA are willing to share their expertise, if not share a case, to make sure we are all practicing within our areas of competence. The LD committee has prepared numerous documents that are available online in addition to working on their roadmap to the +LD designation. Webinars, pre-conference workshops, breakouts, and separate LD conferences, such as LDA, are great ways for IECs to expand their skills.

School consultants know the intricacies of a wide range of boarding

continued on page 34

schools and they are a great resource, but nothing substitutes for numerous school visits by the individual consultant. NAIS, SSATB, Small Boarding Schools Association, and TABS conferences would also help an IEC broaden his or her knowledge of boarding schools. Therapeutic consultants often find a need for a traditional boarding school placement as a next step after a therapeutic placement. Working towards an S designation makes sense for them to be assured of a good match with the student.

Be Well-Informed

PGP 1. Competence

C. Members know and understand the philosophies, values, missions, goals, approaches and methods of the schools, universities, programs and therapeutic institutions they recommend.

It is important to know boarding schools and therapeutic programs as thoroughly as possible. How has their history shaped their mission? Is their mission evident during tours and observation of daily activities? What is the social climate like? Where is the balance between structure and freedom? What really happens in the learning center—accommodation or remediation, skill acquisition, time management, homework support? How much counseling support on or off campus can a traditional boarding school offer a student with emotional issues? In therapeutic programs, what is the training and expertise of the academic staff around learning issues? What level of dialectical behavior therapy (DBT) training does the staff at a program espousing DBT have? What are the daily interactions between students and staff like? How does equine therapy help? Motivational interviewing? Cognitive behavior therapy? Positive peer culture?

Know the Law

PGP 1. Competence

D. Members are familiar with and adhere to state and federal laws relevant to their practices.

For therapeutic consultants, there are concerns about the age of majority, which varies by state and can apply to having a child transported to another state. When parents sign an interstate compact and use a legitimate crisis intervention service, however, those legalities are followed. Depending on the age of a student and the state, just getting information from a therapist or psychologist may be impossible without a child's written release. When an IEC is unsure, it is always wise to consult with an attorney.

Paying for boarding school and treatment can be a burden to a family. School consultants should be aware of financial aid options. It is worth following H.R. 5477, the Enhancing Educational Opportunities for All Students Act (still in committee), that seeks to allow parents to use 529 education savings accounts on pre-K12 education expenses. There is already a federal mandate for parity for mental health treatment and medical treatment, although insurance reimbursement is often difficult to access.

Loans and tuition refund insurance are two areas where it is wise to suggest that a family consult an attorney or a financial advisor. Encourage parents to read the fine print on any tuition refund insurance and contract. Therapeutic consultants need to be able to suggest a number of loan options as well as companies that

can help get insurance reimbursement while being careful not to endorse any one of the options as right for a particular family. Recently, therapeutic consultants have been approached to market some unique funding options to their clients, but it seems wise to be wary about endorsing anything not clearly understood. Again, referring parents to a financial advisor would be prudent.

Tax implications for the costs of treatment and specialized schooling are another area around which the IEC should be cautious. Educational attorneys and financial advisors are the experts here. In short, being aware of state and federal laws is one thing, selling oneself as an expert in them should be avoided. Special education law is an important area for all consultants dealing with this age group to be familiar with. A website that can help keep a consultant up-to-date is www.wrightslaw.com.

Conclusion

Real benefits of belonging to IECA are the ability to learn from and support one another and the opportunities to expand our areas of competence. We all have more we can learn. Let's be generous in sharing our knowledge and asking for help when we fear we may be about to offer options to our clients in areas outside our areas of competence. Perhaps a rule of thumb should be: asking one or two questions is fine after you have done research, but a dozen or so is too many. And, so as not to take advantage of someone's expertise, which they worked hard to gather, consider using a free mentor from IECA if you are new to a specialty area, paying someone to co-consult on a case, or passing the case on to someone who has the expertise to serve the client most appropriately. The more competent we all are individually, the more we benefit IECA and raise the stature of our profession. 🙏

Pamela Jobin can be reached at pam@ejobin.com

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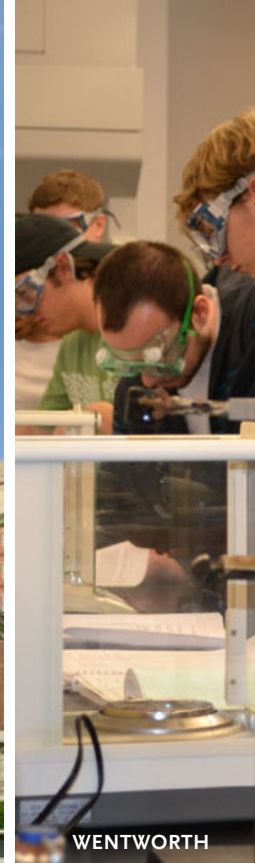
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Introductions

Please Welcome IECA's New Professional Members

As the director of the School and Child



Care Search Service at Columbia University, **Deborah S. Ashe** (NY) has spent the last six years helping families and students navigate the dense landscape of educational options in the metropolitan New

York area. Before that, she spent 11 years as the director of admission and financial aid at Trevor Day School—where both of her children graduated—and practiced law for several years in New York and Alabama.

Deborah holds a JD from Cardozo School of Law in New York City and an MA in English and BA in Comparative Literature from the University of Pittsburgh and is certified to teach English as a second language. In addition, she was a member of the board of the Independent Schools Admissions Association of Greater New York (ISAAGNY) and acted as co-chair for a two-year term.

Taking advantage of all that New York City offers, Deborah regularly attends the ballet, opera, theater, concerts, and museum exhibits. She also loves to bake, knit, travel, read, and take classes and is looking forward to a walking tour with her sister in Tuscany this spring.

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www.worklife.columbia.edu/child-care-and-schooling
Specialty: S*

Lisa Barrett (GA), an IEC for eight years, is the owner and director of 5 Points Prep in Athens, Georgia, and also serves as the writing coach, helping students of all ages develop skills and a love for writing.



Previously, she was the

director of Greenwich Education and Prep in Greenwich, Connecticut, where she also volunteered with the Boys and Girls Club.

Barrett has a doctorate in Higher and Adult Education from Columbia University, Teachers College, and as a former college professor and administrator, has experience in teaching and college counseling and admissions. She attended IECA's 2006 Summer Training Institute.

Barrett credits her three college-age sons with inspiring her to become an IEC: Matthew works for Teach for America in Dallas; Max has a scholarship to the University of Southern California Film School; and Myles is on scholarship at McGill University in Montreal. She enjoys participating in continued learning opportunities in film study, reading groups, cultural programs (art, music, and museums), and global education. When possible, she loves to travel to visit her sons as well as friends in New York City.

*Lisa Barrett, EdD
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Athens GA 30605
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5pointsprep@gmail.com
Specialty: C*

Dennis Eller (IN) has been an IEC for 3 years and is the director of college counseling at Canterbury School in Fort Wayne, Indiana, where he has been a college counselor for 28 years in a comprehensive



program that supports hundreds of students each year as they explore their options and find their best college matches.

He earned MAE and BS degrees from Ball State University and continues his own education by attending training and workshops, including IECA's Transitioning to Private Practice workshop in 2007.

Dennis is also a member of NACAC and IACAC, has presented multiple sessions at NACAC and IACAC conferences, and serves on the IACAC Admission Practices Committee.

When he isn't visiting colleges or helping students pursue their college dreams, he keeps busy as the president of the Fort Wayne Theatre board of directors and as a member of his church council and adult education committee. Along with this wife Gale and their three children, he enjoys traveling, gardening, golfing, sailing.

*Dennis Eller, MAE
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Specialty: C*

continued on page 38

Eva Garza-Nyer (TX) has been an IEC for 12 years. She is a college and career counselor at Austin High School and a professor at Austin Community College. She also offers counseling services through Texas College Advisor. After earning her BA at the University of Texas, Austin, she went on to earn her MEd, and PhD.



Garza-Nyer is a member of NACAC, TACAC, and the College Board. She supports young people in her community as a member of the board of directors of Con Mi Madre, an organization that empowers young Latinas and their mothers to increase their preparedness, participation, and success in postsecondary education, and of Breakthrough Austin, a program that provides a path to college, starting in middle school, for low-income students who will be first-generation college graduates.

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Specialty: C*

Roslye (Ros) Geuss (NY) has been an IEC for 2 years, ever since she relocated to New York after spending 17 years as the higher education and career counselor at the International School of Luxembourg.



Ros holds a PhD in Education Administration and Supervision from the University of Maryland, College Park, as well as an MEd in Education of the Deaf-Blind, Multi-handicapped and a BA in Elementary and Special Education from Boston College.

Ros attended the IECA Summer Institute in 2014. Her memberships include OACAC; Career Thought Leaders; the National Résumé Writers Association; and the Professional Association of Résumé Writers and Career Coaches, through which she is certified as a career coach and an employment interview professional. She also received the Ordre de merite civile d'Adolphe de Nassau Medal of Honor presented by HRH The Grand Duke of Luxembourg for her outstanding higher education and career counseling services to the royal family and the community.

In her spare time, Ros volunteers as a career advocate for the local Dress for Success Program and enjoys cooking, gardening, and spending time with family and friends. She and her husband Adam have three daughters, Laura, Molly, and Sarah.

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Specialty: C*

Rebecca Joseph (CA) has been an IEC for 15 years. Since 2003, she has trained teachers for urban schools as an associate professor for the Charter College of Education at California State University Los Angeles.



Rebecca has earned a PhD in Urban Schooling from UCLA, an MAT from Towson University, a BA from Harvard University, and College Counseling Certificate from UCLA Extension. She is a member of WACAC, NACAC, and NCTE.

Rebecca is the founder of All College Application Essays, a website and app that consolidates information about essay requirements from more than 750 colleges and universities. Joseph volunteers across the US promoting college access for all and writes blog posts; gives webinars; and presents at libraries, schools, nonprofits, and conferences. She is committed to helping economically disadvantaged students apply to four-year colleges.

Rebecca is the proud owner of two beautiful Vizslas (a pointer-retriever dog breed) and is passionate about working out and taking Yoga Booty Ballet.

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In the News

Laura Barr (CO) was quoted in the article, *Consultants Steer Parents Through Maze of School Choice* in *Education Week* on February 3.

M. Ann Goode (MD) was a guest on Washington, DC's NBC Channel 4 *Viewpoint* public affairs show on February 15. The host, Jim Handly, posed questions regarding early intervention for college planning, options for students with learning differences, and other related topics.

Steve Goodman (DC) and **Katherine Cohen** (NY) were quoted in the *Washington Post* article, *Imagine Seeing 'Malia Obama' on a College-admission Application*, on February 10.

Judy Bass (MD) wrote an article, *College Prep: Breaking the Cycle of Dependence for Attention Magazine* (a publication of CHADD) that was published in the February issue.

Associate member **Laurie Weingarten** (NJ) was featured in *The Chicago Tribune* article, *No More B-list Applicants at U. of I. for Illinoisans* on October 14; and in *The Daily Pennsylvanian* article, *Penn Likely to Join New College App Platform, Once It's Created* on November 24.

Katherine Cohen's article, *The Truth About College Prep: Why Students Should Start Early*, was published on the *Huffington Post* blog on January 26.

Jill Rickel (FL) wrote an article for Applerouth's blog, entitled *One Size Does Not Fit All: The College Search for Students with LD, ADHD, Spectrum Disorders & Other Special Needs* on February 11.

Jamie Dickenson (WV) was quoted in the *Miami Herald* article, *No-Debt College Not Real Option Anymore*; in the December 8 *NerdWallet* article, *The Best Money Moves for Students* in December; and in the *ABC News WCHS* article, *Educational Planner Gives Tips On How To Avoid Loans In College* on November 4.

Anne Wager (WA) was featured in the January 30 article, *University of Washington Reports Record Freshman Applications* in *MyNorthwest.com*.

Claire Law (SC) was featured in the article, *Student Loans Are Stressing Out Young Adults: Debt Takes Emotional Toll*, on February 6 in *Main St.*

Associate member **Brittany Maschal** (NY) was quoted in TeenLife's blog several times recently: *Dealing with Junior Year Stress* in September; *How to Finalize Your College List* in November; and *Is Early Decision Right for Your Teen?* in October.

Hannah Serota (VA) wrote *Getting Accommodations* for the SAT/ACT for *Road2College*.

Initiatives

Jamie Dickenson (WV) was appointed by the governor of West Virginia to the Board of Trustees of the West Virginia College Prepaid Tuition and Savings Program.

Kristin White (CT) published a new book, *It's the Student, Not the College: The Secrets of Succeeding at Any School—Without Going Broke or Crazy*, available in the IECA Bookstore.

Associate member **Gibson Holmes** (FL) presented a session in February on *Hot Jobs and Majors: Careers of the 21st Century at the "College Fair Plus!"* sponsored by the Ponte Vedra, Florida High PTO. Over 92 colleges presented.

Vicky Newman (CT) received the YWCA's 2015 BRAVA Award, established in 1977 to recognize accomplished women, proven executives, acknowledged leaders in their fields and mentors in the community. They reflect the YWCA's core mission of empowering women.



Vicky Newman (right) with YWCA Greenwich President & CEO, Adrienne Singer (left).

Member Status Change

Please remove Bev Taylor (NY) from your membership lists. Ms. Taylor was removed from IECA for violations of the Principles of Good Practice, most notably, Section III, part D: Members are clear and forthright about the nature and scope of their services, (ii) Members neither guarantee placement nor outcomes.



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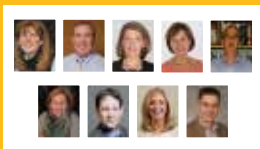
The Newsletter of the Independent Educational Consultants Association

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- Special Focus: Learning Disabilities Advising

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- What Can We Learn From Brian Williams?
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