

# NASET Special Educator e-Journal



February 2016

## Table of Contents

- [Update from the U.S. Department of Education](#)
- [A Review and Educational Application: Cognitive Disability and its Challenge to Moral Philosophy. By Elizabeth E. Williams](#)
- [Buzz from the Hub](#)
- [From the Journal of American Academy of Special Education Professionals \(JAASEP\): Elements of Good Teaching and Good Teachers: A Theoretical Framework and Effective Strategies for Special Educators. By Dr. Vance Austin](#)
- [Latest Employment Opportunities Posted on NASET](#)
- [Acknowledgements](#)

---

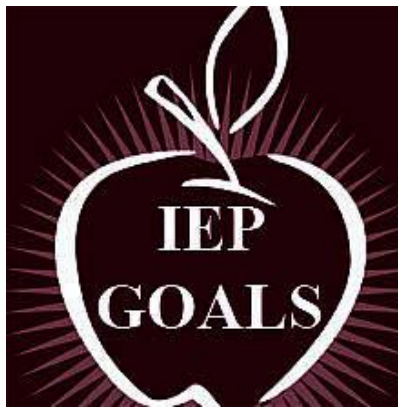
## NASET Sponsor - Card Academy



To learn more click on the image above or - [Click here](#)

---

## NASET Application for iPad and iPhone



To learn more click on the image above or - [Click here](#)

---

## Update from the U.S. Department of Education

## **New Guidance Highlights High Impact Opportunities to Support Healthy Students**

In a new letter sent to governors, chief state school officers, state health officials and state Medicaid directors, the U.S. Departments of Education (ED) and Health and Human Services (HHS) recognize the critical role that healthcare coverage and health services play in ensuring all students are ready and able to learn, and recommend action steps to better coordinate health and education services for all students and their families.

ED and HHS also released a new toolkit that details five high impact opportunities for states and local school districts to support stronger communities through collaboration education and health sectors, highlighting best practices and key research in both areas.

"Healthy students are better learners and better positioned to thrive in school and later in life," said Acting Secretary John B. King Jr. "The opportunities we highlight in our new toolkit are happening already in some schools, but we need more action. Our hope is this call to action is a new day for collaboration. We need more schools, more districts and more states to take advantage of existing channels and opportunities to create healthy opportunities for their students."

"There is no more important work—as parents and as a society—than helping our young people succeed. And the twin priorities that are the foundation of their success, their health and their education, are inextricably linked," said Acting HHS Deputy Secretary Mary K. Wakefield, Ph.D., R.N. "So we are proud to continue our work with our federal partners and the heroes working in our nation's communities every day to get kids covered. We're getting the word out that there are just a few weeks left to enroll in the Health Insurance Marketplace and that enrollment in Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program are open year round. Working even more closely together, we can make sure our children achieve their best—and do their best learning—every day."

The letter calls on state and local educational agencies to increase access to health insurance and healthcare, such as through school enrollment forms. The letter also encourages creating school environments with the physical and mental health supports to help students succeed academically and lead healthier lives, like through a school-based health clinic. Further, the letter recommends strengthening coordination and collaboration among education and health systems at the local and state levels, such as through key partnerships with nonprofit community hospitals.

King announced the new toolkit and letter at a roundtable event in Houston, Texas, with Acting HHS Deputy Secretary Mary Wakefield, the highest ranking nurse in the Obama administration. At the event, "Healthy Students, Promising Futures: Creating Stronger Communities Through Collaboration," stakeholders from across the education and health spectrum echoed the urgent need for more and better coordination and collaboration and cited examples of ways that the Houston Independent School District has successfully partnered with health agencies to improve student achievement and health.

Research strongly suggests that when young people receive necessary and preventive health care and have health insurance, their academic, health, and other important life outcomes improve. For example, one recent study found that children who gained access to Medicaid as a result of expanded coverage miss fewer school days due to illness or injury and are more likely to do better in school, finish high school, graduate from college and earn more as adults.

As a result of the Affordable Care Act, many more students and their families are now eligible to obtain insurance through Medicaid, the Children's Health Insurance Program, or a Qualified Health Plan in the Health Insurance Marketplace. Additionally, recent changes in policy at HHS have expanded the opportunity for states and local school district to provide Medicaid reimbursable health services at and through schools, which are trusted places for parents and families to receive information and services for their children.

The letter and toolkit are available at [www.ed.gov/healthystudents](http://www.ed.gov/healthystudents). For additional enrollment information visit: <https://www.healthcare.gov/>.

## **U.S. Department of Education Awards Nearly \$300,000 to Baltimore City School District**

The U.S. Department of Education's Office of Safe and Healthy Students awarded Baltimore City School District a Project School Emergency Response to Violence (SERV) grant totaling \$292,647. The grant will be used to assist with ongoing recovery efforts following the unrest in Baltimore in April 2015.

"We have to work harder and do more to ensure that our students feel safe in their schools and communities," said Ann Whalen, senior advisor to the secretary, delegated the duties of the assistant secretary of elementary and secondary education. "As adults, it is our responsibility to help protect and nurture students, especially when tragic incidents occur that affect the school environment and impact the community in such a way that hinders learning. This Project SERV grant will help the district move forward in restoring the learning environment."

In an effort to provide resources and assistance to local school officials, the Project SERV grant will enable the district to hire additional full-time social workers and psychologists to solely support the schools in restoring the learning environment. These extra social workers and psychologists will conduct home visits for teacher-referred students in need of services, facilitate small group and/or individual sessions with students, prepare lesson plans for teachers to use in classrooms, and provide professional development/trainings for school-based staff.

Over the past year, senior Obama Administration officials visited Frederick Douglass High School to highlight ongoing efforts to support progress and healing in Baltimore, and to improve access to high-quality education and job opportunities for youth. Since the visit, the U.S. Department of Education has been working closely with school officials and community leaders to help strengthen support systems for students and families. The Obama Administration's commitment to expanding opportunity and equity continues to guide Administration initiatives—from My Brother's Keeper to Promise Neighborhoods.

The Office of Safe and Healthy Students has awarded more than \$42.1 million to 129 grantees, including Baltimore City schools, since the grants program began in 2001. To view a list of Project SERV grantees and award amounts, or to learn more about the program, visit <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/dvppserv/index.html>.

### **Our Teachers Edition Newsletter Will Now Feature 'Voices from the Classroom'**

Imagine if all of the policies that affect our classrooms were written by teachers. All the assessments, too. Anyone who spends their days in America's classrooms knows we're a long way away from achieving that vision. Despite that, as an elementary school reading teacher in New Haven, Conn., I know that the best success I've had has been with lesson plans I've written with my colleagues, assessments we've created together.

I'd bet you feel the same way.

That's why one of the most important features of the weekly Teachers Edition newsletter has always been that it is written by teachers and for teachers. Moving forward, you'll see that even more clearly. For months, a committee of classroom teachers has been talking with colleagues and reviewing back issues with an eye toward making the newsletter more valuable for busy teachers. Expect to hear our voices some more — the voices of classroom teachers just like you, sharing the joys and struggles of our classrooms. Expect to see fewer headlines and more opportunities to engage with us, to share your thoughts and your stories. With Acting Secretary John King focused on how to lift up the voices of teachers, this is just one strand of a ramped-up strategy to digitally engage teachers: keep an eye out for Twitter chats and other opportunities for ED and your colleagues around the country to hear your voice.

You'll also notice *Teachers Edition's* new slimmed-down look this week. Most of our editions will feature a Voice from the Classroom article written by a teacher sharing his or her experience. Often, it'll be written by a Teaching Ambassador Fellow, a teacher who spends a year sharing his or her experiences with ED; other times, it'll be written by another teacher from across the country — maybe even you.

We're working to strike a balance between features that inform (this week, a look at the 2016 Teacher of the Year finalists and a study of what's inside the textbooks used by teacher prep programs) and those that entertain (this week's wisdom from America's oldest teacher and a video of the hover boarding principal). You might also hear our voices a little bit more when we reflect on what's in the news.

We know teachers don't have a lot of free time. That's why every feature that makes its way into *Teachers Edition* will face an initial test: would a teacher want to read this? As you scroll through this week's edition, we're hopeful you'll find a lot that passes that test.

*Matt Presser is an Instructional Literacy Coach at King/Robinson School in New Haven, Connecticut, and a Teaching Ambassador Fellow at the U.S. Department of Education.*

# A Review and Educational Application: Cognitive Disability and its Challenge to Moral Philosophy

Elizabeth E. Williams

## Abstract

Moral Philosophy has not discussed cognitive disability in great detail until the publication of *Cognitive Disability and its Challenge to Moral Philosophy* (2010). In this review, the discourse of Moral Philosophy in the book and its implications on special education is discussed. A thorough summary of the book is given and a short section of suggestions to make access to education better and how teachers, administrators, and school systems can make that change is also included. A discourse of cognitive disability in schools is brought to the forefront of educational policy and in the discussion on education following the full review of the book.

## In Review

In 2008, Stony Brook University held a conference on Cognitive Disability and its Challenge to Moral Philosophy. What resulted from this conference was a collection of works of the same title, published in 2010 and edited by Eva Feder Kittay and Licia Carlson, who were also contributors to this book. Included in this collected works are experts in the field of moral philosophy and specifically in the promising field of morals in cognitive disability. In this compilation, there are authors who are in agreement about the implications of this philosophy on our society as a whole; in contrast, other authors who would reduce people with significant cognitive disabilities to that of sub-human species based on a psychological set of rules. This book aims to address most of the developed ideas in a continued discourse on cognitive disability.

Moral philosophy scholars have reviewed this book and its possible effects on what constitutes personhood and moral humanity, however, there are several chapters in this book that are pertinent to special education as it seeks to continue to meet the growing needs and rights to personhood of students with cognitive disability. This review aims summarize all chapters to give an overview of subjects discussed and then discuss the idea applicable to special education as it exists now. It will also show how the application of these thoughts could further the field of special education by improving teacher and school system practices as students with cognitive disabilities age out of schools.

Through their introduction, the authors explained the history of the discourse of cognitive disability in philosophy, starting with John Locke and Kant, stating that these two philosophers viewed people with cognitive disability as lacking the ability to be free because of their perceived lack of development. These men represented the beginning of marginalization of people with disabilities from the discourse of morals and what constitutes personhood. The editors then continued,

“(...) ‘the social model of disability,’ whereby people with disabilities have argued that it is not so much the person that needs fixing but the environment that needs adaption if people with disabilities are to lead flourishing lives. (Carlson and Kittay, 2010, p. 5)”

This quotation is the basis for the discussion in the rest of the book and how changing the space in which cognitive disability exists will broaden the horizons of society as a whole.

The overarching themes throughout this book are: what does philosophy have to do with cognitive disability? What does agency and personhood mean for people with cognitive disability? While never giving finite answers, these questions are addressed by the authors in the subsequent chapters, while



provoking further consideration and hope for continued research for conceptualizing humanity and morals for people with cognitive disability.

The first section of this collection is comprised of two chapters dedicated to describing the medical and developmental models of cognitive disability. The author, Brosco, lays the foundation of how cognitive delay has been viewed in the United States for the previous few decades. He discusses in great detail the idea of medical science being used in the prevention of intellectual delay (ID) and the ever-changing definition of ID in an effort to reduce the numbers of children being born with ID. As stated in the introduction of the book, 2.5% of the general population has ID (Carlson and Kittay, 2010).

Harris authored the following chapter discussing ID through a developmental perspective, using IQ as a means for categorization of people with disability and labeling them mentally retarded. He goes on to state, “A developmental perspective involves cognitive development, emotional development, and the development of the person. (p. 63)” These 2 chapters together lay the ground work for future knowledge about cognitive disability and how science and society historically viewed it. Without these chapters on the history of disability in the U.S., the philosophical arguments in the rest of this collection would be largely misunderstood, possibly ignored and possibly even displaced as something not worth discussing.

The next 4 chapters were about Justice as it applies to a person with cognitive disability participating in equality and freedom to the best of their abilities. This section seemed to be the easiest to apply to current views on cognitive disability within various parts of the current culture. However, it was a section that requires careful review in order to make accurate comparisons amongst the authors’ ideas and discussions. They have similar thoughts, but split in some places that are key to their points. This section specifically emphasized rights for people with cognitive disability and went to great lengths to point out where rights, freedoms, and entitlements are lacking and where they should be focused in the future.

Philosopher Nussbaum’s chapter discussed the idea that people with cognitive disability are citizens and should be afforded rights under the law. Not only does this author discuss how these individuals should be given the right to vote and to jury duty, but she also asserts that they should be given equal educational opportunities by means of changing the current face of instruction. Bérubé echoes these same sentiments in the following chapter. Bérubé has a son with cognitive disability and discusses some of the aspects that go along with allowing his son to be his own person, fully participating in society, while still having to keep his best interests in mind as his guardian. Nussbaum and Bérubé split slightly regarding the idea that a person with cognitive disability should be given the right to serve on a jury with appropriate accommodations because he is fairly certain his son would have no interest and neither would many adults in his son’s situation. He does not view serving on a jury as a means for full inclusion into society.

In this same section, Stark follows a similar line of thought as before-mentioned two authors; however, when she compares capabilities versus a contract justice and human dignity she directs the reader to further explore other options as neither seem to encompass the supposed inadequacy of people with cognitive disability nor do those theories meet the needs of those with in that group. Wong posits that if a justice theory leaves out those with cognitive disability then they would still be in institutions and would not have made the gains they have in current society, but that more should be done to address their place among others ideally centering them as part of the main society.

Section 3 of this book discusses care of people with cognitive disability. It takes into account that cognitive disability is not always something one is born with, but can acquire later in life in diseases such as dementia and Alzheimer Disease. Both of these diseases strip away the person that once was through gradual effects. Authors Lindemann and Jennings eloquently address how these diseases can affect a family and how the family owes the entitlement of remembering the person who is sick as they were prior to onset of these debilitating diseases. Both authors also address the idea of making choices for the person, as they would have prior to falling ill. These chapters are beautifully written and their points are well stated, however, the first chapter in this section by Wolff sets the tone for the previous authors discussed. He delves into discussing the “blessing” of cognitive disability and encourages caregivers to discuss it in this manner as well. He acknowledges the challenges associated by stating, “If the challenge is shirked, the blessing will be lost, and this will affect how society treats all of its members, disabled or able-bodied. (p. 147)”

Agency was the topic in section four. Wikler started this discussion in 1979, when he originally published part of this chapter, as stated in the editor’s note at the end of his contribution to this book. He discussed the idea that if a society wishes to be viewed as a just one then they must extend social justice theories to people with cognitive disability by means of care and relationships with other people.

He posits that “mental capacity ought not to be seen as a matter of intellect but as one of *competence*: intellect’s power in meeting a challenge. (p. 189)” This is meant to convey that people of various cognitive abilities possess different strengths and weaknesses, but that those abilities alone do not measure their intelligence. Intellect is a social construction that society places on people in order to create a norm.

In this same section, Shoemaker compares a person with psychopathy to a person with cognitive disability to make a point about how morally responsible people with cognitive disability can be. He suggests that people with cognitive disability have the ability to exhibit morals, however, a person who may not possess the same morals can easily sway the morals of the person with cognitive disability. At that point is the person with cognitive disability responsible for the choices that they have made? He poses this question and another question of whether or not people with cognitive disability can be included in the moral community. Also, in this section, authors Francis and Silvers co- wrote a chapter on liberalism as addressing a difference and how that difference applies to cognitive disability. This chapter spends a good bit of focus on the good of people and how paternalism dictates how independently a person with a disability should live and what they should be allowed to do for work. It also goes back to ideas expressed in the second section of this book on justice.

In section five of the book, the four-featured authors discuss ideas pertaining to how society speaks about people with cognitive disability. There are two chapters that focus on Autism and the role it plays within the realm of cognitive disability. The first chapter discusses how our society publishes books for entertainment using characters with various disabilities such as Autism, but that they are not always helpful. They can lead to stereotypes and much misinformation about people with Autism being savants, which is a rarity, according to Hacking. However, while the books may not contribute to changing any theoretical discourse on Autism and other disabilities, they do bring awareness and can be a way to address these topics with people, especially young children. The second author to address Autism, Mcgeer, discussed the differences in clinical versus narrative views of Autism. She disagrees with Hacking on some points of view towards self-reflections of people with Autism and sees them as a way to help others understand the disability.

Anna Stubblefield is included in the fifth section as well. She brings up the idea that race control plays a large role in the diagnosis of children of color, specifically African American children. She stated that many of the early studies in cognitive disability were done to prove how the brains of white people were superior to those of black people. She even says that Dr. Down showed how Down syndrome was a lack of development solely in white people because their brains were closer in development to their Negro counter parts. Of course, scientists now know that Down syndrome is not a discriminatory chromosomal disorder because it affects people of many races and ethnicities. This particular chapter illustrates the lack of knowledge the white dominated medical field had towards people of color, how they wanted to keep those individuals marginalized and how little they knew of disability, but it also points out that the field of disability is still perpetuating these norms through culturally-biased testing and placements of people with disability who are also of color. She is included in this section because many practitioners have yet to make the paradigm and language shifts necessary to stop this perpetuation.

Lastly, in this section is first chapter by one of the two editors, Lucia Carlson. She has much to say about the lack of discourse on intellectual delay and why it has not been part of much social justice and morals discourse. She points out that those people “have occupied marginal space, both insofar as there is relatively little said about them and insofar as what *is* said often places them at the far edges of our moral boundaries. (p. 317)” The hope for the whole of this book is to bring that discourse to the forefront and start a discourse of change for people with cognitive disability.

The last section in the book addresses the idea of personhood with the questions: What constitutes moral personhood? How is it quantifiable? Singer and McMahan both presume there are similarities between persons with severe and profound intellectual delays and animals with signs of higher cognitive functioning, such as, dogs, parrots, and Koko, the gorilla that learned to sign. They postulate that those people should not be afforded the benefit of the doubt when discussing the type of moral personhood they exhibit. They both state that because some animals can be taught similar skills sets and exhibit similar IQ’s, those animals have the same amount of morality as the person with the severe or profound intellectual delay. The editor of this book, Eva Feder Kittay, has the last word on this matter. She speaks to this idea from the standpoint of a mother who was blessed with the opportunity to for a relationship with her child with a severe disability.



She states that because these two philosophers were willing to apologize to her about having offended the relationship that she has with her daughter, that they actually afforded their daughter the benefit of moral personhood that should be afforded any human being. Personhood does not exist on a sliding scale and is given to every person along with humanity.

In conclusion, this collection of chapters includes many topics that are controversial, yet not yet in the center of moral philosophy. The final hope of this compendium would be to bring these discussions and ideas to the moral philosophy discourse for the betterment of society as it views cognitive disability. So often this group is transient because one can be born into it or one can become impaired. This society owes this group of people the dignity of discourse to at least start to address the issues presented, as this group continues to expand with better medical diagnosis, more broadly defined terms, and as it no longer becomes taboo to belong to this group.

## Toward Education

Thanks to more recent law and policy changes, education of people with cognitive disability has been mandated federally and these students have been given opportunities over the last thirty years that were previously only dreams. However, is the educational system as it stands in this country doing enough to meet the educational and future needs of these individuals as they matriculate through school and age out at twenty-one years old? This book offers many pieces of advice that are both broadly societal and narrowly educational that should be heeded and practiced in schools. Implementation of some of these ideals will require educators, schools systems, and policy makers to affect a paradigm shift in how they view people with cognitive disability.

The first shift that will have to be made is the vernacular of how cognitive disability is talked about in schools. In some schools people with cognitive disability are placed in classes where their behavioral, functional, and academics needs are met, however, often these students are not included in the general population of the schools due to these same reason. Schools across the nation could simply implement inclusive buddy clubs or classes where general education peers and students with cognitive disability could form relationships and friendships in a safe and positive environment. Many studies have been conducted to prove that students both with and without disability show higher achievement when given the opportunity to intermingle (Westling et. al., 2013).

The second shift would be in the area of agency. In the chapter written by Bérubé, he discusses the idea of agency and choice-making. Part of giving agency is determining what the desires and needs are of the individual with cognitive disability. Despite a perceived lack of ability, people who have cognitive disability can express their opinions when given the support to do so. Many can express themselves through talking, but those that cannot are often times given alternative ways of expression, (e.g., via a device or a guardian who knows them well). Within the Individual Education Plan exists transition plan for older students who will be making preparations to age out of the school systems within the next seven years or so. This is the appropriate opportunity to allow the students to have a say in what they would like to do (in conjunction with those desires of their guardians), but students can express their preferences and those preferences should be placed in that section. By law this is a requirement, however, many teachers and care-givers pay little attention to this preference and place in it what they believe is for the good of the student. While their ideas may come from a good place, they inadvertently strip the individual of their capacity to participate, which is what Bérubé and Nussbaum would want to avoid. Nussbaum would argue that whatever the person wants in that section should be placed there, but Bérubé would argue that some of the requests of his son are out of line and need to be monitored, but that a conversation with his son would help to realistically adjust his son's desire without stripping away his agency.

Finally, the argument can be made that while changing language and allowing for agency can be made, the real shift has to come in how schools as a whole view people with disabilities. There are many schools in this nation that go to great lengths to include them in the culture of the school, but many still place them in a space closed off from experience. Teachers and transition counselors should not be afraid to re-conceptualize what life after high school could look like for people with cognitive disability. Playing to the strengths of each individual and helping them to find their fit will allow them to find their agency and become part of the moral community. There is no perfect box that any human fits into and moving away from the paternalism enacted on cognitive disability will change the way school works for these students.

## References

- Kittay, Eva Feder (Ed.) & Carlson, Licia (Ed.). (2010). Cognitive disability and its challenge to moral philosophy. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Westling, D. L., Kelley, K.R., Cain, B. & Prohn, S. (2013). College students' attitudes about an inclusive postsecondary education program for individuals with intellectual disability. *Education and Training in Autism and Developmental Disabilities*, 48(3), 306-319.

## About the Author

Elizabeth E. Williams is a Doctoral student at Mercer University studying curriculum and instruction with a research focus on professional learning and curriculum development for teachers of students with significant cognitive disabilities and Autism. She has been a teacher for 9 years in special education settings, and currently teaches at Lambert High School in Forsyth County, Georgia. She is a sibling of a person with Down syndrome and has enjoyed the life long opportunity to work with people with disabilities. She is devoted to the betterment of Special Education through developing better teaching methods, supporting new teachers in Special Education, and advocating for all people with disabilities.

## Buzz From the Hub

To access everything below in this section from Buzz from the Hub, visit:

<http://www.parentcenterhub.org/repository/buzz-dec2015/>

### Theme: Behavior Resources

Welcome to this edition of ***Buzz from the Hub***, the newsletter of the Center for Parent Information and Resources (CPIR). The holiday season is upon us, which means hectic times, family gatherings and food galore, and, hopefully, some moments for relaxation and fun.

We all know how the unpredictability and fast action of the holiday season can affect behavior—our children’s, our own, the other people at the shopping mall who will duel you for a parking space! ***So this month’s Buzz theme is on behavior***—with the extra bonus that the resources we’ve included are useful all year round.

- 
- Behavior Resources in the Hub
  - Spotlight on...Behavior Resources
  - Behavior Resources You Can Share with Families
  - Behavior Resources: Just for Parent Centers
  - Missed the Webinar on Age of Majority?
- 

### Behavior Resources in the Hub

CPIR’s **resource library** has lots of helpful materials and information on behavior. You can search the library via the SEARCH box at the top of every page on the Hub, or by clicking on “behavior” in the topics list. Here are several resources you might find useful.

#### **Behavior Assessment, Plans, and Positive Supports.**

This page of resources is part of the larger *Behavior Suite*, and focuses on three critical elements in responding to a student’s difficult behavior at school: conducting a behavioral assessment, developing a behavior plan, and providing positive behavior supports.

#### **October’s Buzz from the Hub: Mental health resources.**

You may recall that the *Buzz* from October 2015 highlighted mental health concerns in children and youth and the resources available to learn more, find help, and take action. Because difficult behavior is often associated with a mental health concern, the resources listed in that issue of the *Buzz* may be helpful.

#### **Conducta | Comportamiento.**

This resource page on behavior in Spanish discusses the importance of special education for children with disabilities, describes steps parents can take to address their child’s behavior problems at school, and lists a dozen additional sources of information in Spanish.

## Spotlight on...Behavior Resources

Behavior issues can have many roots, causes, names, and treatments. Recognizing this, we'd like to share several great resources on types of behavior disorders, their symptoms, and treatments.

### **Disruptive behavior disorders, according to the Merck Manuals.**

The *Merck Manuals* are one of the most widely used comprehensive medical resources for professionals and consumers. How do the *Merck Manuals* describe disorders such as AD/HD, oppositional defiant disorder, and conduct disorder? What treatments or approaches are recommended? Have a look at either the Professional version of the *Merck Manual* or the Consumer version.

### **Disruptive behavior disorders.**

(Available in English and Spanish) It's easy to spot disruptive behavior because it can readily be seen: temper tantrums, physical aggression such as attacking other children, excessive argumentativeness, stealing, and other forms of defiance or resistance to authority. But oppositional defiant disorder (ODD) isn't the same as conduct disorder (CD) or AD/HD. Which is it? And what to do?

### **MedlinePlus and its treasure trove.**

MedlinePlus is the National Institutes of Health's website for patients and their families and friends. It offers authoritative information on **specific child behavior disorders**, including their symptoms, diagnoses, and treatment/therapies. This information can be shared with families and is also available in Spanish.

## Behavior Resources You Can Share with Families

This section of the *Buzz* identifies useful resources on behavior you might share with families or mention in your own news bulletins. Special emphasis on addressing behavior during the holidays!

### **How to take the stress out of the holidays.**

Why are holidays so fraught with stress? Because expectations are heightened, and holidays can feel like a test of how happy and successful your family is. And if you have children with psychiatric or learning disorders, even favorite traditions can turn into a test of stamina and patience. Here are some tips to help minimize stress and make the holidays more fun and fulfilling.

### **The Family Gathering: A Survival Guide.**

How to help your kids be at their best at Grandma's, avoid meltdowns, travel from here to there, and have some fun, too.

### **24 creative ways to channel depression or anxiety.**

Holidays sometimes give us the time to brood, get restless, feel depressed or stressed out. You'll love this list of 24 ways to channel those feelings away. Good for all year 'round!

### **Webinars on Behavior and PBS | Michigan Alliance for Families.**

From your fellow Parent Center, the Michigan Alliance for Families, this webinar series begins with "Behavior is Communication," provides an overview for families about positive behavioral supports, and concludes with a webinar on "Suspension/Expulsion: Discipline Rights for Students with Disabilities."

## Behavior Resources: Just for Parent Centers

### **Behavior: Strategies and sample resources.**

From the National Center on Intensive Intervention, this set of resources and sample materials for implementing behavioral strategies was developed for classroom teachers to use with students who may require academic and/or behavioral support. Each strategy includes a description of the (a) purpose and

overview; (b) type of strategy; (c) behavior(s) addressed; (d) setting; (e) required materials; (f) implementation procedures and considerations; (g) sample scripts or formats; (h) potential intensification strategies for students with more intensive behaviors; and (i) additional resources (where available).

### **Behavior interventions.**

From the Evidence-Based Intervention Network comes this suite of information on appropriate interventions for specific behavior problems. An excellent resource for schools to consult and for Parent Centers to reference in their SSIP work that focuses on student behavior.

### **Inspiring positive behavior | Training module.**

This training module, designed for paraprofessionals, is free, research-based, and full of practical tips and strategies. Good for training staff and sharing with schools and the paraprofessionals who support students with disabilities.

## **Missed the Webinar on Age of Majority?**

Not to worry! The webinar is archived for your listening, viewing, and downloading pleasure. At your leisure, you can learn more about:

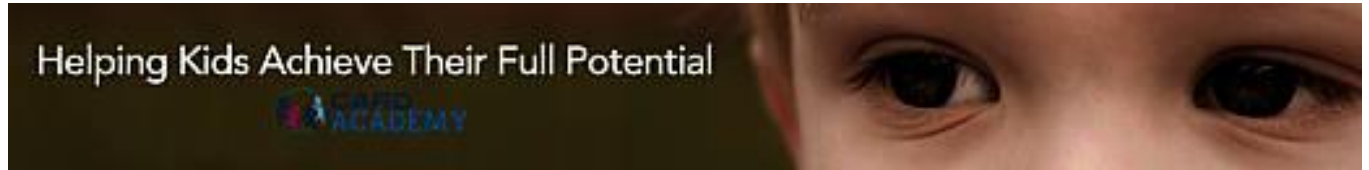
- why age of majority is a critical issue for parents and youth with disabilities alike;
- the importance of starting early and building young people's decision-making skills;
- resources, strategies, and tools for preparing youth for reaching their age of majority;
- the valuable role that supported decision-making and person-centered planning can play in supporting the young person after he or she gains their majority; and
- the part that Parent Centers can play in moving this message forward.

Just visit the *Getting Ready for the Age of Majority webinar* archive at:  
<http://www.parentcenterhub.org/repository/webinar-aom/>

[To top](#)

---

## NASET Sponsor - Card Academy



To learn more click on the image above or - [Click here](#)

---



# From the Journal of American Academy of Special Education Professionals (JAASEP): Elements of Good Teaching and Good Teachers: A Theoretical Framework and Effective Strategies for Special Educators

Vance L. Austin

Manhattanville College

## Abstract

Within schools in the United States, teachers must now acquire the skills and dispositions necessary to effectively teach students with a wide variety of needs. As an important first step, the effective behaviors of successful teachers need to be considered. The author has identified three key components that are integral to that process; namely, (a) relationship-building, (b) pedagogical skills, and (c) subject knowledge. One framework that appears to be useful in identifying specific skills common to “good” teaching and good teachers is Kennedy’s (2008) three criteria of effective teaching behaviors: (a) personal resources; the qualities that the teacher brings to the job (b) teacher performance; teachers’ everyday practices that occur in and out of the classroom and (c) teacher effectiveness; the relational teacher qualities that influence students. In a relevant investigation, the author and colleagues conducted research that identified effective teacher strategies, such as awareness of body language, flexibility in accommodating different learning styles, active listening techniques, the use of eye contact, teacher availability, and incorporating a variety of teaching methodologies. Other research-based strategies are discussed relative to their implications for effective (good) teaching.

## Introduction: A Mandate for Becoming an Effective Teacher

As the inclusive classroom continues to develop into standard practice throughout the United States, classroom teachers can no longer claim students with special needs and behavioral challenges are not their responsibilities. Frequently, within the inclusion model, special and general educators are paired to serve students with a variety of needs – gifted, average, learning disabled, and emotionally disturbed, in a single classroom. As a result, all teachers must now acquire the skills and dispositions necessary to effectively teach students with a wide variety of needs. Teacher preparation programs and schools must find ways to insure that preservice and novice teachers are prepared to address the increasingly diverse needs of all students assigned to their classrooms. As one step in the reflective process of teacher preparation and professional development practices, the effective behaviors of successful teachers need to be considered.

In discussing the needs of some of our most challenging students, Cavin (1998) encourages teachers to,

*...remember that these kids with all of their problems, their criminal records, their probation officers, their idiosyncrasies, their unlovable characteristics, and their strange families are still kids. They need someone to care. They need someone to accept them. They need to know they are somebody. If you are willing to provide these ideals, you can be the connection that bridges the gap from drop-out to diploma. (p. 10)*

A further incentive to stay the course with challenging students was provided by a former colleague, who observed (after a very discouraging week when it seemed that all the writer’s efforts to teach a lesson were foiled and he began to have second thoughts about my calling), “for some kids, these days in school may be the best of their lives: the safest, the happiest, and the most secure.” The author never forgot this insightful pronouncement and it helped change his attitude about teaching even the most oppositional, defiant students.

A final inducement to persevere with difficult students comes from recent data provided by the U.S. Office of Juvenile Justice. In 2010, according to their records, 70, 792 juveniles were incarcerated in the U.S., the greatest number worldwide. In fact, the incarceration rate for juveniles (school-age children) in the U.S. in 2002 was 336 for every 100,000 youth - compare that figure to the country with the next highest rate, South Africa, with 69 of every 100,000 youth in detention (as cited in Mendel, 2011). In response to these abysmal statistics and his own extensive experience, DeMuro (2010), the former commissioner of the Pennsylvania Juvenile Corrections system, describes the current state of juvenile justice in the U.S. as “iatrogenic” (preventable harm introduced by the caregiver, in this case, the juvenile justice system) (as cited in Mendel, 2011). Mendel (2011) notes further that while education and treatment at most juvenile detention facilities is non-existent, the average annual cost to house an incarcerated youth in a detention facility is approximately \$88,000; whereas, the cost to provide that same individual with effective intervention services in a public or specialized school is approximately \$10,000. Moreover, the recidivism rate for incarcerated youth in New York State, for example, three years or more after release, ranges from 73-89 percent (www.aecf.org/noplacefor kids, 2011).

Similarly, a 2006 investigation revealed that only 33 percent of youth released from a Pennsylvania corrections camp program who said they would return to school did so (Hjalmarsson, 2008). Since there are, effectively, no rehabilitation programs in most juvenile corrections facilities, youths detained in them actually can become more antisocial and more inclined to engage in criminal behaviors after their release. Thus, the data clearly suggests that the last, best hope for most of these at-risk youth is in school, and perhaps the best models of prosocial behavior are their teachers.

## Is Teaching an Art or a Science, or a Little of Both?

This question raises the specter of a very old debate, effectively described in N. L. Gage’s book, *The Scientific Basis of the Art of Teaching* (1978). In that book, Gage defined *teaching* as “...any activity on the part of one person intended to facilitate learning on the part of another” (p. 14). Of course, given the diversity of students in today’s K-12 schools, I think we need a more inclusive definition. I would suggest one; namely, that teaching has been transformed in the Twenty-first Century to incorporate a more expansive job description, one that acknowledges that, in addition to facilitating learning, today’s teacher serves as a role model for prosocial behavior, provides examples of civil discourse, and, in some cases, acts as a surrogate parent. What has precipitated this revolutionary change? One only needs to examine the changing social structure that surrounds our children; specifically, the volatile economy, which determines how we live in society and has required a radical increase in the number of hours spent working, and, as a result, has all but eradicated the luxury of the “stay-at-home” parent. Absent parental guidance, many American students have found themselves without the traditional role model who once taught and reinforced prosocial behaviors and discouraged antisocial ones.

Now to the age-old debate that Gage (1978) so famously addressed: whether teaching (in school) is an “art” or a “science.” In his examination of these positions, he noted that, “...even in the fixed programs of computer-assisted instruction-there is a need for artistry: in the choice and use of motivational devices, clarifying definitions and examples, pace, redundancy, and the like” (p. 15). Gage (1978) suggested that, rather than teaching being considered an art or science, it should be, in its highest form, considered an amalgam of both. He further delineates the term “science” used in association with teaching, to be construed as “the scientific basis.” He differentiates these two designations by suggesting that a science of teaching, “...implies that good teaching will someday be attainable by closely following the rigorous laws that yield high predictability and control” (p. 17). In contrast, teaching, like medicine and engineering is not a science, but, like medicine and engineering, teaching “...requires a knowledge of much science, concepts, or variables, and their interrelations in the form of strong or weak laws, generalizations, or trends” (p. 18).

Palmer (1998) asserts further, that “...good teaching cannot be reduced to techniques; good teaching comes from the identity and integrity of the teacher” (p. 10). He suggests that teaching cannot be reduced to technique, but is fundamentally connected to identity and integrity. In a more expansive view, the author would propose that, like Gage (1978), effective teaching and effective teachers must possess a “scientific basis” for teaching that is construed as an expertise in the subject matter as well as the passion that is integral to an “artistic” pedagogy, but would here add the facility to build relationships with students. This enlarged characterization is delineated in the author’s “framework for good teaching,” which follows.

## A Framework for Good Teaching

After reviewing the relevant literature concerning the elements common to most good teachers, the author has distilled three that he believes to be prototypical; namely, (a) relationship-building, (b) pedagogical skills, and (c) subject knowledge, in that order.

**Relationship-building.** What is meant by *relationship* as it pertains to teachers and students? Simply put, the term refers to the rapport the teacher builds with the student, a connection that fosters trust and that facilitates learning. Truth be told, such meaningful and affirming relationships are the reasons most of us want to teach in the first place. Good teacher-student and student-teacher relationships are often the reason that students choose to stay in school, acquire an affinity for a particular subject, feel good about their school experience, look forward to coming to class, and report feeling a sense of self-efficacy. Teacher-student relationships like any other human relationship can be either healthy and reciprocally validating or unhealthy and destructive. Boynton and Boynton (2005) note that students are more likely to do what teachers ask when they feel valued and cared for by them. Similarly, Thompson (1998) states that, “The most powerful weapon available to [teachers] who want to foster a favorable learning climate is a positive relationship with our students” (p. 6), and Canter and Canter (1997) suggest that students who enjoy a positive relationship with their teachers will be more inclined to comply with their requests and work conscientiously on assignments.

Furthermore, Marzano (2003) suggests that students who feel genuinely cared for and respected by their teachers are less likely to be discipline problems. In a similar way, Kohn (1996) asserts that, “Children are more likely to be respectful when important adults in their lives respect them. They are more likely to care about others if they know they are cared about” (p. 111). Likewise, Daunic, Smith, and Algozzine (2010) assert that, “research has consistently shown that a positive relationship with an adult is a critical factor in preventing violence at school” and recommend, as a result, that schools provide opportunities for teachers and students to spend “quality” time together (p. 215). Jones and Jones (2012) further posit that both academic achievement and behavior in the classroom are directly influenced by the “quality of the teacher-student relationship” (p. 95). Important to that relationship, of course, is the passion that the teacher feels for her subject and enthusiastically imparts to her students. Indeed, in support of that, Rose (1996) observes that, “it is what we are excited about that educates us” (p. 106).

Similarly, in his investigation of teacher-student interactions at both the elementary and secondary levels, Hargreaves (2000) underscores the frequently unheralded importance of emotional connection or relationship. In examining this critical aspect of good teaching, Hargreaves (2000) offers, “Teaching is an emotional practice. This use of emotion can be helpful or harmful, raising classroom standards or lowering them...Emotions are located not just in the individual mind; they are imbedded and expressed in human interactions and relationships” (p. 824). Lastly, Zehm and Kottler (1993) have suggested that students will *never* trust or truly attend to teachers without an established sense of mutual valuation and respect.

Additionally, as in all aspects of the human condition, it is vital that we, as teachers, integrate our personal and professional selves. It is important that we explore and reflect on our own concepts of self and our beliefs about the essential qualities of good teaching, good teachers, and good character to cultivate an “integrated” self and thereby develop authentic relationships with students and colleagues.

Maya Angelou, the acclaimed poet, author, and solon once wrote, “I’ve learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel” ([https://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/3503.Maya\\_Angelou](https://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/3503.Maya_Angelou)). The author would suggest that, in a sense, the quality of a relationship is determined by the way those in the relationship “feel” about it. Thus relationship, genuine and affirming, provides the foundation for all else that we strive to do as teachers. It opens the doors of students’ minds to learning, to see education as something worthwhile, to want to acquire the knowledge and skills that we, as teachers, so want to impart. In short, without such quality relationships, there can be no real teaching and learning.

**Pedagogical Skills.** Similarly, “good” teachers must be steeped in the “art and science” of effective teaching; this is what we refer to as *pedagogical knowledge*. According to the Cambridge Dictionary Online (2012) the term “pedagogy” is defined as: “the study of the methods and activities of teaching

(*n.p.*);” essentially, the word denotes the “art and science” that constitutes effective, systematized instruction. There is no shortcut to attaining this vital skill set, which is really honed and refined throughout the professional lifetime of the teacher. Frankly, if teachers do not know *how* to teach subject matter or impart knowledge about a topic or skill, it matters little that they have much to teach and possess a vast knowledge base. We all know of individuals who are recognized widely for their expertise in a particular area or subject, but do not possess the pedagogical skills to effectively impart that knowledge to others.

Undeniably, sound pedagogical skills must be acquired through effective training, reflective practice, and more reflective practice. As Loughran (2002) notes, “If learning through practice matters, then reflection on practice is crucial, and teacher preparation is the obvious place for it to be initiated and nurtured” (p. 42). Ideally, the foundation of a sound pedagogy should be established in a reputable college-based teacher preparation program.

Cogill (2008) states that pedagogy, as it pertains to the teaching profession, is multi-faceted and thus difficult to simply define. Watkins and Mortimer (1999) describe the term as “any conscious activity by one person designed to enhance the learning of another” (p. 3). Alexander (2003), expands on this definition by adding, “It is what one *needs* to know, and the *skills* one needs to command in order to make and justify the many different kinds of decisions of which teaching is constituted” (p. 3). Cogill (2008) suggests that teacher knowledge is integral to pedagogy and cites Shulman’s (1987) seven categories as a schema for understanding the nuanced term. We think this “framework” is very helpful in understanding pedagogical skills as they pertain to the teaching profession. It might be instructive to list them here: (a) content knowledge, (b) general pedagogical knowledge [e.g., classroom control, group work], (c) pedagogical content knowledge [we refer to this simply as “content or subject knowledge”], (d) curriculum knowledge, which is more specific to instructional design, (e) knowledge of learners and their characteristics, (f) knowledge of educational contexts [e.g., schools and their communities], and (g) knowledge of education purposes and their values [for students] (as cited in Cogill, 2008, p. 1-2). Simply put, pedagogy is the “how to” in effectively imparting a skill to another.

In a different vein, Korthagen (2004) posits a developmental model of pedagogical skills central to a good teacher. He refers to this model as “the onion” because the skills are equally important and interrelated. They flow from a central mission, through identity [of the teacher], beliefs [of the teacher], competencies [teaching], behaviors [relative to effective teaching], and, finally, the interaction of the teacher’s environment with the teacher and her instruction (p. 80). In line with his model, Korthagen (2004) proposes “a more holistic approach towards teacher development, in which competence is not equated with competencies,” but one that finds a middle ground between humanistic and behaviorist perspectives. He further suggests that the teacher educator understand her own core qualities in order to more effectively and authentically promote them in her prospective teachers (p. 94).

**Subject Knowledge.** Imparting subject knowledge to our students is, arguably, our “raison d’etre” as a profession and a professional. Relative to this assertion, Palmer (1998) describes an unforgettable professor who defied “every rule of good teaching” in that he lectured to such a degree and with such passion, that he left little time for student questions and was not a good listener. What he did impart to Palmer was his love of learning, his subject knowledge and his passion for it. Palmer recalls, “It did not matter to me that he violated most rules of good group process and even some rules of considerate personal relations. What mattered was that he generously opened the life of his mind to me, giving full voice to the gift of thought” (p. 22). He goes on to say that, “Passion for the subject propels that subject, not the teacher, into the center of the learning circle-and when a great thing is in their midst, students have direct access to the energy of learning and of life. A subject-centered classroom is not one in which students are ignored. Such a classroom honors one of the most vital needs our students have: to be introduced to a world larger than their own experiences and egos, a world that expands their personal boundaries and enlarges their sense of community...A subject-centered classroom also honors one of our most vital needs as teachers: to invigorate those connections between our subjects, our students, and our souls that help make us whole again and again” (p. 120).

While the instructional technology revolution has forever changed the way teachers present lessons in the classroom for the better, in the opinion of most educators, the data suggests that the single most important aspect of classroom instruction is the *quality* of the teacher and her *knowledge* of the subject matter (Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005; Croninger, Buese, & Larson, 2012; Darling-Hammond, 2006; Donovan & Bransford, 2005; Pantic & Wubbels, 2010).



In response to this acknowledgement, Zimpher and Howey (2013) offer an exhortation to teacher preparation programs, school leaders, and future teachers:

*Teachers must be equipped to prepare students to meet the requirements and demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century workforce—but to do that teachers and school leaders themselves need the right kind of rigorous, continuous education, in both pedagogy and content area expertise, in order to become the high-quality professionals students need. (p. 419)*

A report, commissioned by the U.S. Department of Education (2001), summarized

what the research showed about five key issues in teacher preparation: subject matter preparation, pedagogical preparation, clinical training, pre-service teacher education policies, and alternative certification. The investigators conducted a meta-analysis of fifty-seven studies that met specific research criteria and were published in peer-reviewed journals. Ultimately, they found that these studies demonstrated a positive connection between teachers' preparation in subject matter and their performance in the classroom (Wilson, Floden, & Ferrini-Mundy, 2001, p. 7). Similarly, Goldhaber and Brewer (2000) and Monk (1994) determined that not only was content preparation positively related to student achievement in subjects like math and science, but courses in methods of teaching, specific to subjects, also demonstrated a significant increase in student achievement.

Clearly, there is a very wide gulf between a desirable level of subject knowledge and the level of knowledge that most student-teachers display either at the start or, in many cases, at the end of their coursework. For example, Ma (1999) posed four simple arithmetical problems to a sample of teachers from both China and the U.S. and examined their responses relative to how they proposed to solve the problems and how they would, ostensibly, teach the process to their own students. Only 9 out of 21 American teachers answered the questions correctly, whereas all 72 Chinese teachers were successful. Furthermore, Ma (1999) found that even the successful American teachers were much less able than their Chinese counterparts to explain why the process they used produced the correct answer and thus were unable to provide exemplars (as cited in French, 2005). These findings indicate that teacher subject knowledge should be foremost on the agenda of educational administrators and policy-makers (French, 2005).

Thus, based on the apparent paucity of subject knowledge evident in many pre-service and novice teachers, Metzler and Woessmann (2010) suggest that a renewed emphasis on teacher subject knowledge must become an important component in hiring policies, teacher training practices, and compensation schemes.

## What is a “Master” Teacher and How Can I Become One?

It is difficult to find research that distinguishes the universally recognized characteristics of a “master teacher.” Most of what we read in journals and online discussion boards simply reflects the subjective opinions or insights of the author with very little, if any, scientific bases. This may be due to the fact that the characteristics of acknowledged “master teachers” are germane to each. Therefore, absent a scientific criteria, we offer several lists of behaviors that are evident in most teachers that are recognized as exemplary, including those effective teacher behaviors identified in our own research. In addition, we encourage teachers who wish to achieve this status to be patient and observant of colleagues who are acknowledged as models of exceptional teaching. For example, Couros (*n.d.*) has suggested that the essential qualities of a master teachers might include: **(a) connecting with students first, (b) teaching students first and curriculum second, (c) ensuring that the teacher emphasizes the relevance of the curriculum to the students' lives, (d) working with students to develop a love of learning, (e) modeling and celebrating lifelong learning, (f) focusing on learning goals as opposed to performance goals, (g) ensuring that “character education” is an essential part of learning, (h) being passionate about the content they teach, (i) seeing their role as a “school teacher,” which is not confined to the classroom, and (j) developing strong communication skills.** The author has provided a paraphrased elaboration for each of these qualities below:

**(a) Connecting with students first.** For all students to excel, teachers must learn about them and connect with each child. This is not just about finding out *how* they learn, but it is finding out *who* they are. It is essential that we get to know our students, learn their passions, and help them find out how we can engage them in their own learning.

**(b) Teaching students first and curriculum second.** Teachers must ensure that they differentiate learning and work to meet the needs of *each* student and understand how they each learn. I believe that students have different learning styles and if we can best figure out how to help them meet their own needs, students will excel in the subject areas we teach.

**(c) Ensuring that the teacher emphasizes the relevance of the curriculum to the students' lives.** The question, "What does this have to do with real life?" is something that I would prefer never be said in a classroom. Not because it is not a legitimate question, but because teachers should understand the relevance of everything they teach. A master teacher knows that it is essential to use technology in the classroom to enhance learning in a way that is relevant to students.

**(d) Working with students to develop a love of learning.** We are obligated to teach curriculum objectives but we are also obligated professionally to help students find their own learning style. A master teacher will try to tap into those ways that students love to learn and build upon them. Creating that spark in each student will lead them to continued academic success and growth.

**(e) Modeling and celebrating lifelong learning.** A master teacher knows that she will never become the "perfect" teacher since that is unattainable. Master teachers will seek to grow along with their students. Education is a constantly evolving discipline and a master teacher knows that she needs to change with it to maintain relevance. Growth is essential as a teacher. Society changes continuously and so do its needs. We need reflective practitioners in our workplace and teachers must show that they are committed to such "habits of mind."

**(f) Focusing on learning goals as opposed to performance goals.** In the book "Drive," Pink (2011) talks about the difference between performance and learning goals. A performance goal, he suggests, would be similar to having students desiring to receive an "A" in French; whereas, a learning goal would be represented in a student's desire to become fluent in the language. A master teacher sets goals based on learning not on simply receiving a grade.

**(g) Ensuring that "character education" is an essential part of learning.** Character education is just as relevant, if not more so, than any learning objectives set out in a curriculum. We live in a world where collaboration is vital to success and working with others is an important skill. Working with students to teach the fundamentals of respecting others and being able to listen and learn from others is vital. Students can understand the learning objectives of a lesson, but not possess the ability to share these ideas with others in a respectful way. A master teacher ensures that students not only grow academically in class, but also socially and emotionally.

**(h) Being passionate about the content they teach.** If a teacher works in the area of math and loves the subject area that passion will spill over to the students he/she works with. A master teacher shares her passion and enthusiasm with her colleagues.

**(i) Seeing their role as a "school teacher," which is not confined to the classroom.** It is essential that master teachers not only impact the learning environment of the class, but also have an impact on the school culture. This can happen in sharing their passion through extracurricular activities or their discrete skills with colleagues.

**(j) Developing strong communication skills.** Sharing knowledge with colleagues is essential to the growth of the individual as well as the professional community. It is important that these skills are continuously developed. It is also imperative that teachers are able to effectively communicate with parents because they have great insights about how their child learns best. A master teacher will effectively draw upon this knowledge (<http://georgecoursos.ca/blog/archives/267>).



Similarly, Jackson (2012) posits that some important characteristics of mastery teaching invariably includes: (a) start where your students are, (b) know where your students are going, (c) expect to get students to their goal, (d) support students along the way, (e) use feedback, (f) focus on quality, not quantity, and, interestingly, (g) never work harder than your students (*n.p.*).

Recently, Buskist, Sikorsky, Buckley, and Saville (2012) surveyed 916 undergraduates relative to the elements or qualities of master teaching and found the following ten to be perceived as the most representative (in order of importance): (a) realistic expectations/fair, (b) knowledgeable about topic, (c) understanding, (d) personable, (e) respectful, (f) creative/interesting, (g) positive/humorous, (h) encourages, cares for students, (i) flexible/open-minded, (j) enthusiastic about teaching (p. 36). Simultaneously, the investigators presented the same list of qualities to 118 faculty members and a comparison of the results showed that, whereas there was no hierarchical consensus among the two groups, the faculty participants included six of the students' top ten qualities in their ten most representative qualities list. Specifically, the faculty members valued: (a) knowledgeable about topic, (b) enthusiastic about teaching, (c) approachable/personable, (d) respectful, (e) creative/interesting, and (f) realistic expectations/fair, in that order. Clearly some of these qualities could be considered pedagogical skills and others appear relevant to relationship-building.

## Teacher Effectiveness based on the Author's Investigation

The concepts of effective teaching behaviors and teacher quality have proven difficult to define, so much so that the terms are frequently rendered useless (Kennedy, 2008). One framework that appears to be more useful is Kennedy's (2008) categorization of effective teaching behaviors: (a) personal resources; the qualities that the teacher brings to the job (b) teacher performance; teachers' everyday practices that occur in and out of the classroom and (c) teacher effectiveness; the relational teacher qualities that influence students. Utilizing these categories suggests a schema from which to discuss the qualities of teacher effectiveness.

Recently, the author and fellow researchers designed a study to investigate the practice of teachers qualified as "very effective," according to a rigorous, evidence-based protocol (Austin, Barowsky, Malow, & Gomez, 2011). The investigators employed a mixed methods approach, which included interviews, video-taped observations of practice, and student feedback via a survey. The results reflected the findings of several similar studies, but also revealed a few that appear unique to the authors' investigation, and these important outcomes are discussed in the subsequent paragraphs.

According to Kennedy (2008), teacher qualities that influence students are labeled as effective. One way that effectiveness can be identified is by questioning students. Pratt (2008) and Biddulph and Adey (2004) studied the topic of teacher efficacy from the perspective of the student. Biddulph and Adey (2004) found that it was not the content of the curriculum that peaked students' interest in a subject, but rather it was the quality of the teaching and meaningfulness of the learning activities that influenced students' opinions about a teacher and the subject area. Pratt (2008) noted that elementary-level students preferred teachers who made them feel like they were an important part or member of a community, provided choices in learning activities, allowed for cooperative projects, made learning seem fun and used authentic and meaningful assessments.

Other researchers also reported qualities related to humor as effective traits of teachers. Mowrer-Reynolds (2008) found teachers who were humorous, funny, and entertaining to be ranked highly as exemplary teacher characteristics. In addition to being humorous, teachers who were easy to talk to, approachable and provided outside help often were considered exemplary (Mowrer-Reynolds, 2008).

The teacher performance qualities are those observable characteristics of teachers; this is what they do in a classroom. All three data sources in our study found strong evidence that the behaviors represented in this category are exhibited by the highly qualified teachers, they speak to the importance of these characteristics. Furthermore, students find these behaviors desirable in general and acknowledge them in their own teacher. Within this category, it is important to note that the four-videotaped teachers in our study (Austin et al., 2011) did not exhibit the same teaching style, nor was it necessary that they do so. One of the teacher participants ("Teacher 2") best represented this perspective in her interview response, noting that "...a mixture of teaching approaches and strategies are most effective" and that she purposely changes her approach every "...20 minutes or so..." to keep students focused and interested.

Additionally she notes that having the ability to “...read a student and know how to change one’s strategy if it’s ineffective” is an essential skill that can be taught to novice teachers (Austin et al., 2011).

Qualities of interpersonal behavior have been identified as important in teacher effectiveness (Kyriakides, 2005). Others such as Goldhaber and Hansen (2010) suggested that the relevance of interpersonal factors cannot be discounted. Identifying teacher effectiveness must be included in teacher preparation. The highly qualified teachers’ of students with emotional and behavioral challenges utilized for this investigation exhibited the interpersonal behaviors from this category in all three data sources. Specifically it was interesting to hear from all four teachers the strong endorsement for forming a relationship with the students in order to promote their well-being both academically as well as personally. Finally, effective teachers understand that the teacher-student relationship can be difficult (Austin et al., 2011).

To summarize, the research objectives of the author’s investigation were to examine the effective teaching behaviors of highly qualified teacher participants who taught, primarily, students with emotional and behavioral problems and to identify those behaviors deemed teachable for future inclusion in teacher preparation and in-service professional development programs. In the course of the research, the behaviors of four highly qualified teachers were observed. After analyzing the data from the videotapes, interviews, and student surveys, the researchers identified effective teaching behaviors (Austin et al., 2011). The importance of Kennedy’s (2008) framework for breaking effective teaching behaviors into teachable components for general educators was supported and was demonstrated to be applicable to teachers of students with EBD. Specifically, the effective behaviors of highly qualified experienced teachers of students with EBD fell within the three categories framed by Kennedy (2008) for general education teachers. In particular, the performance category presents teachable instructional and interpersonal behaviors. These included strategies, such as awareness of body language, flexibility in accommodating different learning styles, active listening techniques, the use of eye contact, teacher availability, and incorporating a variety of teaching methodologies (Austin et al., 2011).

## **Conclusion**

The author set out to provide the reader with a theoretical framework consisting of three elements of good teaching and good teachers; specifically, (a) relationship-building, (b) pedagogical skills, and (c) subject knowledge as well as a rationale for their adoption. Subsequently, the reader was presented with the findings of several exemplary studies relative to the characteristics and dispositions of “effective” teachers. One of them was a recent study conducted by the author and his colleagues (Austin, 2011) employing the framework of analysis developed by Kennedy (2008), which identified three strategic criteria by which to examine effective teacher behaviors; specifically, (a) personal resources; the qualities that the teacher brings to the job (b) teacher performance; teachers’ everyday practices that occur in and out of the classroom and (c) teacher effectiveness; the relational teacher qualities that influence students. Using this framework, the author’s study identified teacher behaviors such as awareness of body language, flexibility in accommodating different learning styles, active listening techniques, the use of eye contact, teacher availability, and incorporating a variety of teaching methodologies as the ones contributing most to effective teaching as perceived by students, investigators, and the teachers themselves.

As a final point, although there was some variation between studies in terms of the most important teacher skills and dispositions relative to “good” teaching, they all shared, in some way, the three elements identified by the author; namely, (a) relationship-building, (b) pedagogical skills, and (c) subject knowledge. The author’s extensive review of the literature on effective teacher qualities and behaviors has revealed that many of the skills heretofore considered intrinsic and therefore unteachable, can, in fact be taught to novice and developing teachers. The only two ineradicable traits that appear to defy transmission are a teacher’s belief in her students’ ability to learn, and her unwavering commitment to that conviction. Indeed, the research clearly substantiates Dweck’s (2008) assertion that, “The great teachers believe in the growth of the intellect and talent and they are fascinated with the process of learning” (p. 194).

## References

- Alexander, R. (2003). Still no pedagogy? Principle, pragmatism and compliance in primary education. Cambridge: University of Cambridge.
- Algozzine, B., Daunic, A. P., & Smith, S. W. (2010). Preventing problem behaviors: Schoolwide programs and classroom practices. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.
- Angelou, M. (n.d.). [https://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/3503.Maya\\_Angelou](https://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/3503.Maya_Angelou).
- Austin, V., Barowsky, E., Malow, M., & Gomez, D. (2011). Effective teacher behaviors evident in successful teachers of students with emotional and behavioral disorders. *Journal of the American Academy of Special Education Professionals*, Winter, 4-27.
- Boynton, M. & Boynton, C. (2005). Educator's guide to preventing and solving discipline problems. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. [http://www.ascd.org/publications/books/105124/chapters/Developing\\_Positive\\_Teacher-](http://www.ascd.org/publications/books/105124/chapters/Developing_Positive_Teacher-)
- Biddulph, M. & Adey, A. (2004). Pupil perceptions of effective teaching and subject relevance in history and geography at Key Stage 3. *Research in Education*, 71, 1-8.
- Billingsley, B. S. (April 2003). Special education teacher retention and attrition: A critical analysis of the literature. Executive Summary. Center on Personnel Studies in Special Education (CPSSE) Document No. RS-2E (IDEAS).
- Buskist, W., Sikorski, J., Buckley, T., & Saville, B. K. (2002). Elements of master teaching. In S. F. Davis & W. Buskist (Eds.), *The teaching of psychology: Essays in honor of Wilbert J. McKeachie and Charles L. Brewer* (pp. 27-39). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Cambridge Dictionary Online (2012). <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/>.
- Canter, L., & Canter, M. (2001). Assertive discipline: positive behavior management for today's classroom. Lee Canter and Marlene Canter.
- Cavin, C. (1998). Maintaining Sanity in an Insane Classroom: How a Teacher of Students with Emotional Disturbances Can Keep from Becoming an Emotionally Disturbed Teacher. *Education and Treatment of Children*, 21(3), 370-84.
- Cochran-Smith, M., & Zeichner, K. (2005). Review of research in teacher education. Washington DC: American Educational Research Association.
- Cogill, J. (2008). Primary teachers' interactive whiteboard practice across one year: Changes in pedagogy and influencing factors. Ed.D. thesis, King's College, University of London. Available at [www.juliecogill.com](http://www.juliecogill.com).
- Cox, J. (1996). Your opinion, please! How to build the best questionnaires in the field of education. Thousand Oaks, California: Corwin Press.
- Couros, G. (n.d.). What makes a master teacher? The principal of change: Stories of learning and leading. <http://georgecouros.ca/blog/archives/267>.
- Croninger, R. G., Buese, D., & Larson, J. (2012). A mixed-methods look at teaching quality: Challenges and possibilities from one study. *Teachers College Record*, 114(4), 36.
- Darling-Hammond, L. (2006). Constructing 21st-century teacher education. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 57(3), 300-314.
- Donovan, M. S., & Bransford, J. D. (Eds.). (2005). How students learn: History in the classroom. National Academies Press.
- Dweck, C. S. (2008). *Mindset: The new psychology of success*. New York: Ballantine Books.
- Gage, N. L. (1978). *The scientific basis of the art of teaching*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Goldhaber, D. D., & Brewer, D. J. (2000). Does teacher certification matter? High school teacher certification status and student achievement. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 22(2), 129-145.
- Goldhaber, D. & Hansen, M. (2010). Race, gender, and teacher testing: How informative a tool is teacher licensure testing? *American Educational Research Journal*, 47(1), 218-251.
- Hargreaves, A. (2000). Mixed emotions: Teachers' perceptions of their interactions with students. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 16, 811-826.
- Hjalmarsson, R. (2008). Criminal justice involvement and high school completion. *Journal of Urban Economics*, 63(2), 613-630.
- Jackson, R. R. (2009). Never work harder than your students & other principles of great teaching. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

- Johnson, W. A. (2001). Personality correlates of preferences for preprofessional training by special education and regular class trainees. *Education*, 103(4), 360-368.
- Jones, V. F., & Jones, L. S. (1981). *Responsible classroom discipline*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 95-215.
- Kennedy, M. M. (2008). Sorting out teacher quality. *Phi Delta Kappan*, September, 59-63.
- Kohn, A. (1996). *Beyond discipline: From compliance to community*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Korthagen, F. A. J. (2004). In search of the essence of a good teacher: Towards a more holistic approach in teacher education. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 20, 77-97.
- Kottler, J. A., & Zehm, S. J. (1993). Solitude: A resource for active student learning. *People & Education*, 1(2), 196.
- Kyriakides, L. (2005). Drawing from teacher effectiveness research and research into teacher interpersonal behavior to establish a teacher evaluation system: A study on the use of student ratings to evaluate teacher behavior. *Journal of Classroom Interaction*, 40(2), 44-66.
- Loughran, J. J. (2002). Effective reflective practice: In search of meaning in learning about teaching. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 53(1), 33-43.
- Ma, L. (1999). *Knowing and teaching elementary mathematics: Teachers' understanding of fundamental mathematics in China and the United States*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Marzano, R. J. (2003). *What works in schools: Translating research into action*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Mendel, R. A. (2011). *No Place for Kids: The Case for Reducing Juvenile Incarceration*. Annie E. Casey Foundation.
- Metzler, J., & Woessmann, L. (2012). The impact of teacher subject knowledge on student achievement: Evidence from within-teacher within-student variation. *Journal of Development Economics*, 99(2), 486-496.
- Monk, D. H. (1994). Subject area preparation of secondary mathematics and science teachers and student achievement. *Economics of Education Review*, 13(2), 125-145.
- Mowrer-Reynolds, E. (2008). Pre-service educator perceptions of exemplary teachers. *College Student Journal*, 42(1), 214-224.
- Nelson, J. R., Maculan, A., Roberts, M. L., & Ohlund, B. J. (2001). Sources of occupational stress for teachers of students with emotional and behavioral disorders. *Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders*, 9(2), 123-130.
- Palmer, P. J. (1998). *The courage to teach*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Pantić, N., & Wubbels, T. (2010). Teacher competencies as a basis for teacher education—Views of Serbian teachers and teacher educators. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 26(3), 694-703.
- Pink, D. H. (2011). *Drive: The surprising truth about what motivates us*. Penguin.
- Pratt, D. (2008). Lina's letters: A 9-year-old's perspective on what matters most in the classroom. *Phi Delta Kappan*, March, 515-518.
- Rose, M. (2000). *Lives on the boundary*. In *The Presence of Others*. Ed. Marilyn Moller. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 106-115.
- Shulman, L. (1987). Knowledge and teaching: Foundation of the new reform. *Harvard Educational Review*, 57(1), 61 -77.
- Singh, K., & Billingsley, B. (1998). Professional support and its effects on commitment. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 91(4), 229-239.
- Thompson, R. A. (1998). Early sociopersonality development. In W. Damon (Series Ed.) & N. Eisenberg (Vol. Ed.). *Handbook of child psychology: Vol. 3. Social, emotional, and personality development* (5th ed., pp. 25-104). New York: Wiley.
- Watkins, C. & Mortimer, P. (1999). *Pedagogy: What do we know?* In Mortimer P (Ed) (1999). *Understanding pedagogy and its impact on teaching*. (pp 1-19) London: Chapman.
- Wilson, S. M., Floden, R. E., & Ferrini-Mundy, J. (2001). *Teacher Preparation Research: Current Knowledge, Gaps, and Recommendations: a Research Report Prepared for the US Department of Education and the Office for Educational Research and Improvement, February 2001*. Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy.
- Zimpher, N. L., & Howey, K. R. (2013). *Creating 21st-Century Centers of Pedagogy: Explicating Key Laboratory and Clinical Elements of Teacher Preparation*. *Education*, 133(4), 409-421.

## **About the Author**

**Dr. Vance Austin** is Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of Special Education at Manhattanville College and also teaches part-time in a special high school for students with emotional and behavioral disorders. He has formerly worked full time as a special education teacher in both public and private schools where he accumulated over twenty-five years of teaching experience and has also taught at several colleges and universities. Dr. Austin's interests in special education extend beyond the U.S. to include Canada and Vietnam. His current research focus is in the area of finding effective interventions for students with emotional and behavioral disorders as well as improving the quality of teaching in special education. He has authored many articles and book chapters, and presented at numerous national and international conferences on the topics of effective teaching and behavior management, and is completing a second book for teachers on the subject of working effectively with students with emotional and behavioral disorders.

## Latest Employment Opportunities Posted on NASET

### Early Childhood Special Educator

#### **Bahrain**

Job Category: Early Intervention

#### **Description:**

Magnum Medical has openings for Early Childhood Special Educators to work with children of American military families stationed at Bahrain. Position works in a home-based early intervention program, providing services to infants and toddlers of American military families stationed overseas.

#### **Requirements:**

- Bachelor's or Master's degree in Special Education
- US citizenship
- Minimum of two years experience within the last five years working with developmentally delayed children in the 0, 1 & 2-year age population in a home-based early intervention capacity
- A current state teaching license/certification to teach in this capacity.

#### **Benefits:**

- Generous paid time off
- Relocation
- Competitive tax-advantaged compensation provided.

#### **Contact:**

[LynnR@magnummedicaloverseas.com](mailto:LynnR@magnummedicaloverseas.com) or fax resume to 513-984-4909

\*\*\*\*\*

### Special Education Teacher

#### **Phoenix, AZ and Tucson, AZ**

Job Category: Special Education Teacher

#### **Description:**

\$48,000/school year (180 days). Summers off with year round pay. Special Education Teachers needed in Arizona (Phoenix and surrounding cities). Needs are in the self-contained and resource settings serving students with emotional disabilities (ED), Autism (A), Severe/Profound (S/P), and Intellectual



Disabilities (ID). **STARS** is the largest school contract agency in AZ. **STARS** is owned and operated by Occupational Therapists. You will be an employee and receive full benefits (see below). With a proven track record, **STARS** is able to offer you an unbeatable support system and resources. **STARS** is hiring for the 2015-2016 school year. **STARS** places Special Education Teachers throughout the Phoenix, Tucson and the surrounding area public schools.

## Requirements:

- Certification through the AZDOE, in Special Education
- Arizona Fingerprint Card through AZDPS
- We will help you get the credentials needed and reimburse you for the cost.

## Salary:

**\$48,000/SCHOOL YEAR, BASED ON 180 DAYS**

**STARS** also offers a fantastic benefit package including:

- 16 weeks off
- 100% Company paid Health, Dental, and Life Insurance
- \$1,000/year Continuing Ed Money
- Paid DOE Certification Fees
- Paid NASET Dues
- Spanish Immersion trip
- Hawaii Trip for two
- 401K
- 125 Plan
- Direct Deposit
- Evaluation tools and treatment supplies
- Two company sponsored parties with professional entertainment
- Company newsletter
- **STARS** sponsored dinner meetings with national/local speakers
- Yearly raises
- Referral bonuses
- Moving \$
- Birthday gifts and other appreciation throughout the year
- **Genuine Appreciation**

YOU WILL FEEL LIKE A STAR!!!

## Contact:

Brian Paulsen, COO #480.221.2573; Please email your resume to [Jobs@StudentTherapy.com](mailto:Jobs@StudentTherapy.com); Apply Online at [StudentTherapy.com](http://StudentTherapy.com), we would love to hear from you!

\*\*\*\*\*

## **Special Education Teacher (2016-17)**

**Nashville, TN**

Job Category: Special Education Teacher

### **Who We Are**

RePublic Schools is a network of high-performing public charter schools based in Nashville, TN and Jackson, MS with a mission to reimagine public education in the South and prepare all of our scholars to graduate from college. In addition to providing a world-class traditional academic curriculum, we empower our students to be change-makers by teaching them to code – starting in the 5th grade.

Despite the fact that our scholars come from traditionally underserved communities (approximately 85% identify as low-income, and nearly 95% as students of color), we have seen them defy the odds to achieve outstanding results. RePublic's schools have scored in the top 5% of all open-enrollment public schools across the state of Tennessee for both student growth and absolute achievement – making ours the first (and only) charter schools in state history to achieve this dual distinction.

At RePublic, we cultivate a cohesive community of families, staff, and scholars committed to doing whatever it takes to ensure our scholars succeed. We are looking for dynamic, determined Special Education Teachers to lock arms with our school teams in Nashville and Jackson for the 2016-2017 school year. Candidates must share our unwavering belief that all children can achieve at high levels and change the world. Sound like you?

### **What You'll Do**

- *[Bring it]* Have stamina and the ability to set and achieve ambitious goals, and handle the intensity required to bring your best self to an extended school day in a very high-performing school environment.
- *[Own your content]* Study RePublic curriculum and Common Core Standards, do the intellectual prep needed to deliver rigorous and inspiring instruction in whole-class and small-group settings, and make necessary modifications and accommodations based on qualitative and quantitative data to meet differentiated student needs.
- *[Reach higher]* Work with stakeholders to set ambitious academic and character development goals for students with IEPs, review student 504 plans and IEPs and lead IEP meetings, and monitor progress of students with IEPs.
- *[Sweat the small stuff]* Develop, uphold, and implement RePublic's values, policies, and systems; Oversee compliance of special education files, track discipline data to ensure special education procedures are implemented, and assist school teams in coordinating, managing, and administering assessments with needed modifications for students with IEPs.
- *[Never stop growing]* Offer and receive constructive feedback from colleagues in order to create a professional working atmosphere that aspires to excellence and is conducive to constant improvement; dive humbly into school-wide and individual professional development, including pre-service training over the summer and weekly sessions during the academic year.

- [Spread the love] Build deep relationships with students, families, and staff to foster a culture of joy and community. Maintain strong lines of communication with families about student progress, and go above and beyond to support and collaborate closely with teammates in the united pursuit of RePublic's mission.

## Who You Are

A steadfast believer that all students can achieve academic excellence. A growth-minded tinkerer who is constantly learning, improving, and hungry for feedback. A gritty problem-solver who approaches challenges with smart solutions in mind. An eternal optimist who supports and motivates your teammates by having their back. A detail maven who plans backwards to meet timelines and manage complex projects. A data-driven analyst who reflects and takes swift action based on results. A proactive communicator who reaches out to students, families, and teammates

## The Fine Print

- [Qualifications/Certification] All candidates must have a Bachelor's degree; Master's degree is a plus. All full-time RePublic teachers must have a valid Tennessee or Mississippi teaching license, or willingness/eligibility to pursue state certification in Special Education, if necessary.
- [Prior Experience] Prior experience teaching, experience teaching in a low-income community, and a demonstrated ability to raise achievement levels of traditionally underserved students highly preferred.

Student Supports Teachers will serve special education students at either the middle or high school level. Teachers will be placed at one of our schools in Nashville: Liberty Collegiate Academy, Nashville Prep, Nashville Academy of Computer Science, RePublic High School, Smilow Prep, or Reimagine Prep.

Salary is competitive and commensurate based on experience. Compensation at RePublic includes a comprehensive benefits package.

## Contact

Kyli Lamar  
Associate Director of Talent  
[klamar@republiccharterschools.org](mailto:klamar@republiccharterschools.org)  
Apply at: <http://grnh.se/rjiyb8>

\*\*\*\*\*

[To top](#)

---

## Acknowledgements

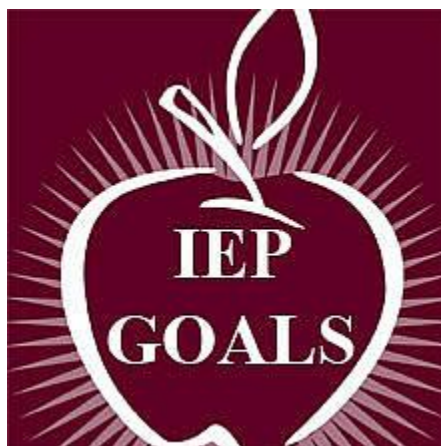
Portions of this month's *NASET's Special Educator e-Journal* were excerpted from:

- Committee on Education and the Workforce
- FirstGov.gov-The Official U.S. Government Web Portal
- National Center on Secondary Education and Transition, an electronic newsletter of the National Center on Secondary Education and Transition (NCSET), available online at <http://www.ncset.org/enews>. NCSET is funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs.
- National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth
- National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities
- National Institute of Health
- National Organization on Disability
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
- U.S. Department of Education
- U.S. Department of Education-The Achiever
- U.S. Department of Education-The Education Innovator
- U.S. Department of Labor
- U.S. Food and Drug Administration
- U.S. Office of Special Education
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

The **National Association of Special Education Teachers** (NASET) thanks all of the above for the information provided for this edition of the Special Educator e-Journal

---

## NASET Application for iPad and iPhone



To learn more click on the image above or - [Click here](#)