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Promoting understanding of twice-exceptional education and neurodiversity

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Over the years, the Let's Talk 2e Conference has become essential viewing for parents, teachers, counselors, and others involved with the twice-exceptional. And in this most exceptional of years, making vital information easy and accessible has become critical. Although, as Conference organizer, Julie Skolnick says,



“everything today is on Zoom, and there isn't as much novelty to video conferences as there was when we started in 2018, what the pandemic has confirmed for us is that making the conference available all at once, on demand forever, when you want it, is something our attendees love.”

This year's [Let's Talk 2e Conference](#) presents 25 sessions with some of the most influential innovators in the twice-exceptional field, organized into four strands: *Understanding 2e*, *Classroom Strategies*, *Cultural Diversity*, and *Clinical Considerations*. Additionally, interviews with the speakers conclude each session. The conference also offers an Exhibitor Hall with more information about enrichment, clinicians, education, consultants, and related associations, downloadable files from the speakers, and credit opportunities.

Understanding 2e

Kicked off by Skolnick, the “Transitions” session provides a guide to engaging student buy-in for various activities using supportive language and creative responses. Skolnick presents different ways adults can bypass the rigidity, anxiety, perfectionism, and overexcitabilities often seen in 2e children.

Often the key to developing effective strategies for 2e learners is to have a better and deeper understanding of their individual personalities. Susan Baum details tools that can be used to assess a child’s personality, such as the easy-to-use Quick Personality Indicator.

Misunderstanding who we are often leads to Imposter Syndrome. In his session, Matt Zakresky finds ways to overcome those feelings of doubt. Building self-confidence is also the mandate of Matthew Fugate’s session on the social-emotional needs of 2e learners. Building a greater spiritual resiliency to release fears and negative emotions is the heart of Dianne Allen’s presentation, “The Way of The Sensitive and How Spiritual Giftedness Impacts Life Experiences.”

We learn best through stories and for several years now, Marc Smolowitz has been collecting the personal experiences of the neurodiverse for his comprehensive documentary, *The G Word*. In his keynote address, “Getting to Know You: Trauma, Power, and Giftedness,” Smolowitz shares the empowering narratives that inform this movie and all his work.

Classroom Strategies

A diverse assortment of practical advice on the struggles and strategies specific to 2e is offered across the eleven sessions in this section. Parents, teachers, and students will benefit from conversational models offered by Robin Schader. Teachers will find great resources in Joan Green’s use of technology for cutting-edge solutions to many learning challenges. Focusing on what the latest neuroscience tells us about how we learn, Joseph Olan presents concise tips for parents and teachers to support a culture of thinking and feeling. In her session, Jilly Darefsky shows how teachers can use “virtual differentiation” to enrich curriculum and expand student strength. One of the places where learning can break down is math. But Rachel McAnallen’s conceptual take on math is fun, creative, and greater than

numbers. How to put all these wonderful techniques to work in a classroom is explained in Austina de Bonte and Amity Butler's report on a Seattle school district that has expanded its screening program for giftedness, especially among low-income and ELL students, and how it has benefited from distance learning in getting their accelerated program off the ground.

"People need a sense of community during this pandemic and beyond; a place to share success and struggles, and to be able to ask questions in a safe space."

Educators focused on how to give all students more effective opportunities will appreciate how Colin Seale wants to open the door to underrepresented communities by improving the tools used to identify giftedness. Tapping into the enormous capacity young people have to become change-makers, Kate Bachtel explores the skills and strategies needed to equip the next generation of societal influencers.

But first, they may have to go to college. In his college-readiness session, Chris Wiebe details the success of the "Young Expert Program" prototyped at Bridges Academy. By encouraging students in their areas of passion, the program motivates students to develop the autonomy and the confidence they need for higher education and careers. It is

that individualized approach that informs Brian Housand's presentation on designing curiosity-building learning experiences. Seth Perler provides essential guidance in getting students to maximize their abilities through refining executive functioning skills to regulate emotions and channel their potential.

Cultural Diversity

Survivors of the schoolyard know how brutal the experience can be. Kristina Collins explores ways to combat the circumstances that give rise to bullying. Underrepresenting diverse populations can also be a form of institutional bullying. In "Nurturing the Invisible 3e Learner," Joy Lawson Davis pays close attention to the often underserved Black community, while Wendy Behrens advocates for the identification and inclusion of English Language Learners in accelerated programs.

Clinical Considerations

Several clinical sessions go deeper into the science of twice-exceptionality. Nicole Tetreault reviews the latest theories about giftedness and heightened emotional, sensory, and intellectual processing. The link between autism spectrum disorder and giftedness is explored by Megan Foley Nicpon, Katherine Schalbillion, and Alissa Doobay. While Roby Marcou describes how developmental-behavioral pediatricians work at the junction of pediatrics, neurology, psychology, and education, Bev Nerenberg explains how tapping on specific meridian points, “acupuncture without needles,” can serve as a self-calming therapy. Studying the role of stress in brain chemistry as well as in behavioral outcomes, Jerome Schultz presents strategies for dealing with stress and anxiety.

There is a lot to talk about when we talk about the Let's Talk 2e Conference. Next year, Skolnick says, the Conference will add “more information on identifying 2e students to better capture the more complex or nuanced kids.” She also notes that the Let's Talk 2e Tuesdays continues the conversations on their [Facebook page](#) and will feature hour-long sessions with many of the speakers answering questions live. Conference attendance is not required. “People need a sense of community during this pandemic and beyond,” says Skolnick, “a place to share success and struggles, and to be able to ask questions in a safe space,”

For more information and to register for the conference, go to <https://bit.ly/2enewstalk2e>.

Editor's Note: Several presenters at this year's conference also work with the Bridges Education Group, which oversees 2eNews.com. This post contains affiliate links for the Let's Talk 2e Educator Conference.



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