FOCUS on Research

Newsletter of the DIVISION FOR RESEARCH
COUNCIL FOR EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN

President's Message
A Look at CEC Division for Research (CEC-DR) in the 2020–2021 Academic Year

Kathleen Lynne Lane, *University of Kansas*

It was eight years ago when I had the honor of serving as the president for the Council for Exceptional Children's Division for Research (CEC-DR), following in the footsteps of Tim Landrum (CEC-DR President 2010–2011) and Bryan Cook (CEC-DR President 2011–2012). I am humbled to again step into this role, following the leadership provided by David Lee (CEC-DR President 2018–2019) and Thomas Farmer (CEC-DR President 2019–2020). Today I find myself thankful for the commitment to rigorous, responsible, and respectful educational inquiry.

As we all begin this unique academic year in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and a strong commitment to addressing social injustices, I am continually thankful for and inspired by our community. Educators across the country have quickly pivoted to collaborating with families to determine what works for all students—including those with exceptionalities—in remote, hybrid, and in-person instructional contexts. And yet, we must do more. At the forefront of these collaborations is the need for critical conversations centered on historical and structural inequities that must be identified and systematically addressed through carefully constructed, interdisciplinary, programmatic lines of inquiry.

We have watched as many CEC-DR members engage in innovative inquiry in partnership with PreK–12 educators and families to provide continued positive, productive, and safe learning environments for students' transition to schooling at home in March 2020 and now returning this fall. As part of this work, we have appreciated the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences' commitment to continued inquiry related to integrated tiered systems of support to best meet students' academic, behavioral, and social-emotional needs. This commitment includes accurate detection of students who need more support than is currently provided as part of Tier 1 (primary prevention) efforts. In the days ahead, it will be imperative for CEC-DR members to facilitate continued inquiry regarding evidence-based practices in the new range of instructional settings as well as how to best facilitate the well-being of students, educators, and family members.

We recognize the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in a wide range of tremendous challenges on many fronts, including interruption and adaptation of scientific inquiry in all fields—including educational

Invited Panels for CEC

Chris Lemons, Stanford University

CEC-DR is excited to announce two invited sessions for the 2021 annual convention. First, our DR showcase session is titled *Evidence-Based Instructional Approaches for Linguistically Diverse Learners: A Call to Action*. This panel will highlight key issues at the intersection of race, class, and disability as applied to students with dyslexia and other language-based learning disabilities. Evidence-based strategies for language-infused reading instruction and intervention targeted at improving outcomes for African American students and emergent bilinguals with reading difficulties will be presented. The panel will feature **Drs. Philip Capin**, **Brandy Gatlin-Nash**, **Colby Hall**, **Lakeisha Johnson**, **Sharon Vaughn**, **Endia Lindo**, and **Nicole Patton Terry**.

The second invited panel is titled *Enhancing Intensive Intervention Research and Implementation Capacity Through Collaborative Doctoral Training*. In this session, leaders and graduates of the National Center for Leadership in Intensive Intervention and the National Center on Intensive Intervention will discuss efforts to develop promising scholars and researchers. The panel will feature **Drs. Rebecca Zumeta Edmonds**, **Joseph Wehby**, **Christerralyn Brown**, and **Caitlyn Majeika**. CEC-DR thanks the panelists for contributing two high-quality discussions that are highly relevant to addressing the needs of students from diverse backgrounds and those with intensive academic and behavioral interventions. ∎

OPEN SCIENCE in Special Education: Materials Sharing

Sarah Emily Wilson, Jesse I. Fleming, William J. Therrien, & Bryan G. Cook, *University of Virginia*

Within special education, there have been increasing calls for open-science reforms due to their potential for strengthening the trustworthiness of research, addressing the replication crisis (Makel et al., 2016; Travers et al., 2016), and bridging the research-to-practice gap (Cook et al., 2018). This article is a continuation of a series in this newsletter focused on prominent open-science prac-

tices. In this article, we discuss the practice of materials sharing. Despite its similarity to open data, the open sharing of materials has received considerably less attention. Here, we discuss the mechanisms for implementation, the benefits of sharing, and potential obstacles and limitations regarding open materials.

What is Materials Sharing?

Materials sharing, or *open materials*, is the process of making study materials publicly available to others, licensed in a way that allows others to edit, revise, and build on the original work. As a practice, open materials support opportunities for study replication and increase access to research-based materials for practitioners. A wide variety of materials can be shared across quantitative, qualitative, and single-case research, including researcher-created outcome measures, fidelity checklists, survey instruments, data collection forms, interview protocols, intervention materials and implementation procedures, training procedures and manuals, social validity measures, positionality and reflexivity statements, data analytic plan, and deductive or inductive codebooks.

Primary Benefits of Open Materials

Materials sharing has many benefits to both researchers and practitioners. Sharing research material such as interview protocols, survey instruments, treatment fidelity protocols, and researcher-generated assessments enables other researchers to reuse the materials in their own research (Miguel et al., 2014; Molloy, 2011). Early career researchers may particularly benefit from shared materials, as well as any researchers seeking to conduct independent replication studies where using identical materials is necessary. Open materials can also be refined and repurposed by researchers to fit their unique needs. O'Brien and colleagues' (2019) survey, which they developed to examine the working conditions of special education teachers of students with emotional or behavior disorders, is a good example of shared materials that can benefit researchers (available as supplemental material on the website of *Exceptional Children*, *https://mfr.osf.io/render?url=https%3A%2F%2Fosf.io%2Fgwzth%2Fdownload*). This survey is now accessible for others who want to replicate their work or refine and/or adapt the instrument to survey other subgroups of special education teachers.

Open Science (continued from page 2)

Material sharing can also directly affect practice. Many special education researchers develop and empirically evaluate "homegrown" interventions, instructional materials (e.g., reading passages), and assessments (e.g., curriculum-based assessments) that are not commercially available and thus are not readily accessible to special education practitioners. The lack of availability of research-validated programs, materials, and assessments is unfortunate and likely contributes to the research-to-practice gap. By making these materials open and accessible to all, we increase the likelihood that our research will have a direct impact on the people we are dedicated to serve—special education professionals and children with disabilities.

Openly sharing materials is not a purely altruistic endeavor. Similar to the published study, open materials can be listed on authors' vitae and can garner citations, providing researchers with another means to demonstrate their impact. Further, allowing teachers and other school personnel to access instructional material for free can lead to professional development opportunities for researchers and facilitate recruitment of schools as future research partners.

Potential Obstacles and Limitations

Van Dijk et al. (2020) noted that open materials are "likely the least complicated and time consuming of the open science practices" (p. 9). Nonetheless, there are obstacles and limitations to consider. Perhaps the largest obstacle is the time required to share all relevant original materials in a study. Researchers must format all materials for uploading, provide clear explanations for unfamiliar researchers to use the materials, select a license, and upload materials. These tasks all take time. Van Dijk et al. recommended planning for sharing from the start of a project (e.g., selecting a repository at the outset so materials are created in acceptable formats) to streamline the process.

Additionally, determining whether materials can be copyrighted and shared, and if so, the appropriate level of copyright, presents an obstacle to overcome. Not all products can be shared, such as copyrighted assessments and interventions. If researchers have made adaptations to such materials, the adaptation, but not the original instrument, could be described in detail as shared materials. In some instances, materials need to be copyrighted and distributed under the same conditions as the original copyright. It is also important to remember that licens-

ing cannot be changed once selected. For example, if you select CC-BY as the license for the material, others can freely adapt the materials. If you later decide you would rather not allow others to adapt the materials in their published work, you cannot decide later to change the license to CC BY-ND, which does not allow for adaptations or derivations.

How to Share

Materials sharing is relatively straightforward and can be separated into two phases: (a) preparing materials, and (b) sharing materials. During the preparation phase, researchers must first review materials they would like to share for potential copyright conflicts. Authors should be especially vigilant when sharing materials adapted from other authors and in complying with institutional or funder guidelines. We recommend consulting with a librarian or copyright specialist at one's institution when guidelines are unclear. Next, authors must format their materials so that they are accessible. This can be done by clarifying the purpose of each document and including additional directions, procedures, and definitions to ensure materials are understood and applied correctly by other users. Lastly, authors must choose a copyright license. A copyright license is a legal document that communicates the rights of the owner to other users and can be applied to a variety of materials (e.g., text, images, multimedia). Copyright establishes intellectual property, and the license chosen specifies how others may use and adapt the copyrighted material. Creative Commons is a frequently used provider of copyright licenses that offers six different forms in addition to an open-use license (CC0; see Figure 1). It is important to note that a copyright license builds upon extant copyright regulations attached to the material. In other words, if you are the creator and rights owner of the material, you may copyright the materials as you see fit. If you are reusing modifiable materials from another rights owner, you must comply with the existing copyright license.

When sharing materials, authors must first decide where they would like to share their materials. Authors often select an online data repository or use the supplemental materials option provided by many journals. Utilizing the journal option is convenient and easy to locate for readers, as hyperlinks to the materials are included at the end of the manuscript. Online repositories are also effective as researchers can often link the entire study

Open Science (continued from page 3)

workflow and all materials through a corresponding digital object identifier (DOI). For example, the Open Science Framework (OSF) allows authors to share each stage of the research process, including preregistrations, shared materials, and preprints. On the OSF, authors have complete control over how they share their work. Because each project and document is assigned a unique DOI, authors may choose to share entire projects or individual materials. Lastly, after selecting a platform for materials sharing, authors should upload their materials and add the DOI as a product to their vitae.

Resources for Open Materials

- Repositories for sharing materials: *www.figshare.com*
- Creative Commons licensing information: *https://creativecommons.org/about/cclicenses/*
- Determining the right license: *https://creativecommons.org/choose/* ∎

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van Dijk, W., Schatschneider, C., & Hart, S. A. (2020). Open science in education sciences. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*. Advance online publication. **https://doi.org/10.1177/0022219420945267**

Figure 1. Creative Commons Licenses.
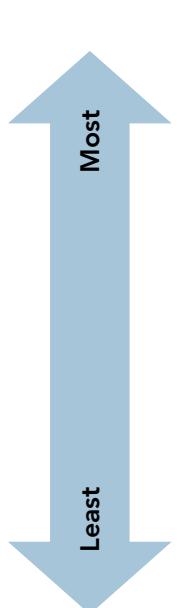
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CC BY-NC-SA	Can adapt, build upon, and distribute material non-commercially, with attribution to original author, but modified material must be licensed under the same copyright terms
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(arrow on left side: Most → Least)

Note. Creative Commons licenses from least open to most open.

New Stand-Alone Open Science Briefs!

Click here to access our new Open Science Briefs page on our DR website! These stand-alone Open Science briefs are easy to use, download, print, and share. We suggest members use the briefs to guide their own research, as well as collaboration with colleagues and doctoral students. Check them out at *http://www.cecdr. org/news/open-science*. ■

CEC-DR Families Research Spotlight

Shana Haines, *University of Vermont*

The Research on Families Committee has three goals: (1) to develop and propose mechanisms for including individuals with disabilities and their families in research and dissemination processes; (2) to promote ongoing communication among research, family, and practitioner communities by assisting the research community in understanding critical issues for families of individuals with disabilities and by assisting families in accessing and interpreting research outcomes related to individuals with disabilities; and (3) to foster a research agenda that addresses critical issues regarding families of individuals with disabilities.

Towards these ends, the CEC-DR Families Research Spotlight highlights articles (nominated by DR members) that address critical issues affecting families with disabilities. Send your nominations to Shana Haines (*shana.haines@uvm.edu*) with the subject line "**CEC-DR Families Research Spotlight**," provide the citation for and a brief explanation of your nomination, and attach a PDF of the article. Our committee will evaluate nominations based on this *rubric*. We consider nominations for each quarter on these dates: February 15th, May 15th, August 15th, and November 15th.

The **Fall 2020 CEC-DR Families Research Spotlight** is a co-authored article led by **Dr. Grace Francis**, an assistant professor at George Mason University, whose research interests include transition to adulthood, family support policies, and practices that result in a high quality of life for individuals with significant support needs. The transition for young adults with disabilities from high school to gainful employment is often difficult. This transition is even harder for students from minority or marginalized backgrounds, including young adults who identify as Latinx. As the Latinx population increases in the United States, it is imperative that the transition from high school to employment becomes more effective for Latinx young adults with disabilities. Using a portion of Bronfenbrenner's Model of Human Development as a framework, the authors explore the experiences of Spanish-speaking Latinx caregivers of young adults with disabilities to better understand the contextual and environmental factors that influence family systems as young adults with disabilities prepare to transition from high school to adulthood. Their findings highlight important factors in the micro-, meso-, exo-, and macro-systems, including the importance of family and community, distrust of authority, and the impact of discrimination.

Considerations for future research:

- Employ Bronfenbrenner's full Person-Process-Context-Time model of human development to understand the transition outcomes of Latinx families and students with disabilities across varying demographic characteristics

- More deeply investigate the nature and influence of institutionalized discrimination, including macro- and micro-aggressions, on the transition outcomes of Latinx students with disabilities

- Investigate both the constructive and challenging experiences of Latinx students with disabilities and other family members (e.g., fathers, extended family) and Latinx educators who primarily collaborate with Latinx families to inform policy and practice ■

Reference

Francis, G. L., Gross, J. M. S., Lavín, C. E., Casarez, L., & Sheets, N. (2020). Facing double jeopardy: The transition experiences of Latina family caregivers of young adults with disabilities living in a rural community. *Rural Special Education Quarterly, 39*, 17–34. **https://doi.org/10.1177/8756870519879069**

CEC-DR Diversity Committee Spotlight

Terese Aceves, *Loyola Marymount University*

DR's Diversity Committee has charged itself with identifying empirical studies and resources that represent the recommendations made in our 2015 white paper *Increasing the Involvement of Culturally & Linguistically Diverse Students in Special Education Research*. These resources exemplify any one of our White Paper recommendations. For this issue, our Spotlight includes the following paper:

Hoover, J. J., Erickson, J. R., Patton, J. R., Sacco, D. M., & Tran, L. M. (2018). Examining IEPs of English learners with learning disabilities for cultural & linguistic responsiveness. *Learning Disabilities Research & Practice, 34*(1), 14–22.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the appropriateness of existing IEPs for English learners with learning disabilities using a qualitative document analysis method. Thirty IEPs from elementary and secondary levels were selected from two school districts and examined by experienced special educators and university faculty. Four of the IDEA (2004) mandated IEP components were examined for cultural and linguistic responsiveness, including present levels of academic achievement and functional performance, measurable annual goals, special factors/delivery, and accommodations. Results indicated a lack of cultural and linguistic attention in the examined IEPs, with little to no reference to English learners' diverse linguistic and cultural characteristics to meet legislative mandates and to inform effective special education programming. This paper was selected for this Spotlight given the study's use and description of employing experts with extensive experience in "teaching culturally and linguistically diverse exceptional learners, and training classroom teachers of English learners with disabilities" (p. 17). Additionally, the study described training implications for practitioners when developing appropriate IEPs for English learners with disabilities. ■

Research Matters

Don't forget, DR has launched an initiative to collect stories about how research in special education and related fields is making a difference for exceptional children, people with disabilities, and their families. The initiative is called Research Matters. DR members, please submit your own research stories at *http://www. cecdr.org/news/new-item4* so DR can share them with members and stakeholders. ■

A Word from Our Student Reps

Haya Abdel-Latif, Sally Fluhler, and Mark Buckman

You Spoke.

In June 2020, our members received an email from the CEC Division for Research (CEC-DR) asking them to complete a survey. We recognize our members are diverse, representing a wide range of racial, ethnic, cultural, academic, and professional backgrounds, amongst others. Given our members' diversity, we wanted to create an opportunity to hear as many voices as possible on how we, at the CEC-DR, can better support you. We received a total of 94 responses! We want to thank everyone who took the time to share their interests and suggestions. Here's a brief overview of the responses: Of the 94 members who responded, 52 were professors, 15 were practitioners, 11 were doctoral students, 9 were early-career scholars, and 7 responded with "other." More specifically, the following were the top-three most highly rated topics of interest by each role:

- **Professors:** mentoring diverse student populations, developing and maintaining relationships with school districts, and providing support to marginalized groups (e.g., who are mentees, students, etc.)
- **Practitioners:** data-informed decision making, supporting special education teachers, and establishing research-to-practice collaborations with researchers
- **Early-Career Scholars:** applying for funding, budgeting for research projects, and providing support to marginalized groups

A Word from Our Student Reps (continued from page 6)

- **Doctoral Students:** applying for funding, networking with scholars in the field, and job talks.
- **Other:** training teachers in evidence-based practices, planning low-cost studies, and providing support to marginalized groups

Overall, 80% of the respondents indicated that the CEC-DR was very important or moderately important to them. Thirteen respondents indicated that the most valuable thing about being a CEC-DR member was access to recent research and journals, while 12 members valued having collaboration and networking opportunities. Thirty-eight respondents indicated that they would like more support with research, collaboration, and networking, and more resources on topics such as systemic racism and different students' needs, and five participants expressed wanting to see the CEC-DR be more involved in establishing collaborations with other divisions and with families, addressing social justice issues in special education, and providing members with low-cost webinars.

You Spoke, and We Listened!

We are taking action. The CEC-DR is already working on programming and efforts to address members' needs:

1. **Webinars:** In October 2020 through November 2020, CEC-DR hosted a webinar series about the academic job search. We provided this series for current doctoral students, but attendance was open to all members. This six-part webinar series covered topics surrounding the academic job search process, interviewing, job talks, and navigating the job offer process. Registration for the webinars was free, but donations were accepted to help support the continuation of this type of programming. For the spring of 2021, CEC-DR is planning a series for early career researchers titled "The Road to Tenure."

2. **Support for Early-Career Scholars:** The CEC-DR Early Career Workshop will be held during the CEC 2021 National Conference. This workshop is an opportunity for early career researchers to network with other scholars in the field, learn more about career trajectories from tenured faculty in the field, and develop skills in grant writing. This workshop will also provide discussions around researching in the era of COVID-19. After the workshop, the early career scholars will continue to meet virtually for the next 12 months.

3. **A Commitment to Social Justice and Diversity:** The CEC-DR is also pledging as an organization to CEC's initiative, Project 20/20. This project is an initiative from the CEC board to address issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion. The project's goals are to create a more diverse membership, develop programs to support a more diverse membership, promote equity, and provide programming to support special educators in serving diverse student communities. To learn more about the initiative, visit *https://exceptionalchildren.org/project2020*. Stay tuned for more! ◼
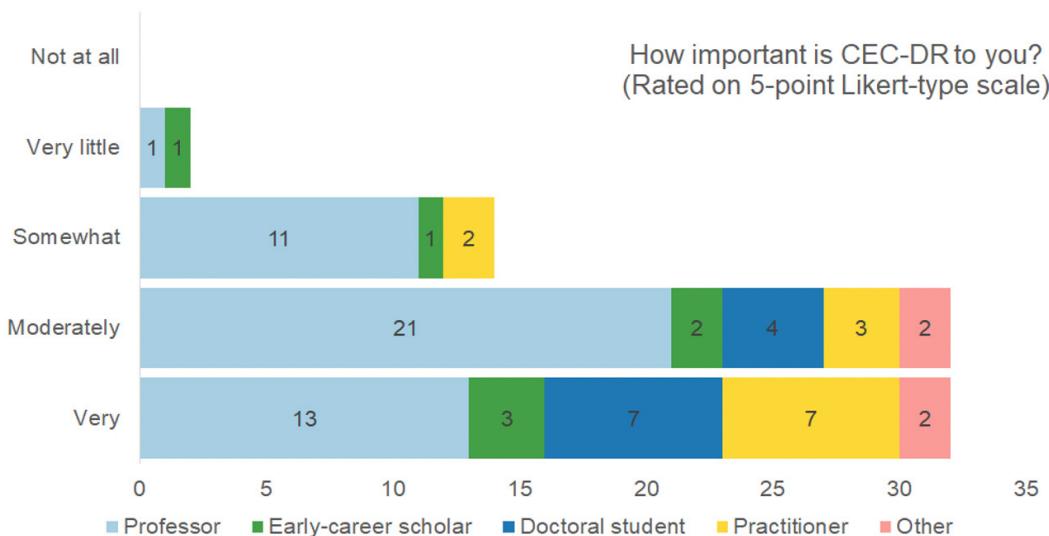

Figure 1. CEC-DR survey results.

Teaching College Courses Online: A Teaching Assistant's Perspective

Sally Fluhler

"We're going virtual!" was a phrase that rang true for not only elementary or secondary schools across the nation this fall but many universities as well. Faculty members were asked to make decisions about how they wanted to deliver their course instruction this fall semester: face-to-face, virtually, or a combination of the two. The shift from face-to-face courses to online courses can be difficult; you start asking yourself, how do I translate all the components of an in-person course to an online format? How can I engage students during synchronous meetings? Or even during asynchronous activities?

I was a teaching assistant for two college courses in the spring 2020 semester, and in the middle of the semester both classes went from fully in-person to being fully virtual. I know this was the case for many instructors and their teaching assistants across the nation. With this sudden shift, the lead instructors and I had to quickly collaborate and make decisions on how best to translate what had been face-to-face content into online content. Some activities or tools were more successful than others. Having the time to reflect over the summer, I felt more confident in being able to provide meaningful learning experiences through the virtual learning platform this fall. Below are some ideas that I have found to help translate in-person techniques and strategies to an online learning environment.

- **Advanced Organizers and Chunking:** When teaching an in-person class, there is a tendency to have a rhythm to your class sessions. Students pick up on the routine whether the instructor explicitly states it or not. For example, your class might be structured to start with a quiz, lecture "part 1," small-group activity, lecture "part 2," opportunities to practice skills, debrief, and wrap-up. This structure makes class predictable and breaks up the potentially lengthy three-hour class. In an online class format, be explicit about the structure of the class session through advanced organizers. Make sure you are presenting content in chunks. Just as your rhythm suggested in your face-to-face course, sections of lecture will

be broken up with opportunities for small-group interactions, brain/stretch breaks, and discussions.

- **Break-Out Rooms:** One of the moments that I personally dreaded was the possibility that I would ask a whole-group discussion question and no one would respond. This is a larger fear of mine for teaching a course online, because students sometimes unmute themselves at the same time and then try to let the other one talk and end up muting themselves again. There is also the possibility of students not responding because they assume that someone else will jump in first. Utilizing break-out rooms or small-group discussion features in an online learning platform has been a wonderful way to encourage chatter instead of crickets. Break-out rooms allow for a similar experience to Think-Pair-Share activities; a few students can talk together before sharing out with the whole group back in the "main room." It also provides time for instructors to drop in on conversations much like you might walk around a classroom during discussions.

- **More Examples:** This idea seems obvious—that you would want to provide examples while you deliver new content each week. This is particularly important on an online learning platform because some of the social and body language cues that you can pick up on in a face-to-face class setting are lost when students are on Zoom. Additionally, it can be difficult for students to ask clarifying questions or ask for further explanation in an online format. Be prepared with more examples than you think you would need, to provide multiple opportunities for students to make connections. When you plan multiple examples, you also can prevent having to come up with more examples on the spot.

- **Make "Dead Airtime" Meaningful:** When technology is introduced into the mix of providing instruction, there are bound to be times where there is "dead airtime." This could be when you are switching documents in your shared screen, when you are un-sharing and resharing your screen, when you are checking the audio of the embedded video you are sharing with the group,

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research. In the days ahead, we encourage you to invite others to become a member of CEC-DR. We welcome you all to engage actively in the mission of our work:

> **Mission:** The CEC Division for Research (CEC-DR) is a division of The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) devoted to the advancement of research related to the education of individuals with disabilities and/or who are gifted. The goals of CEC-DR include the promotion of equal partnership with practitioners in designing, conducting and interpreting research in special education. (*https://community.cec.sped.org/dr/about*).

As you visit with others about the possibility of joining CEC-DR, please note that membership offers a range of benefits, including a subscription to this newsletter, *Focus on Research*, featuring timely information regarding key research issues, advocacy, and funding updates as well as a subscription to *The Journal of Special Education*, a journal featuring research pertaining to individuals of all ages with disabilities, as well as those who are gifted. In addition, CEC-DR members are regular contributors to the field of special education at our annual Council for Exceptional Children conference, which will be held remotely in 2021. We recognize exemplary contributions to the field via a program of awards honoring the contributions of researchers at various stages in their careers. We advocate for the profession and for continued rigorous, relevant, and interdisciplinary inquiry. Ultimately, we provide an intellectual home for individuals—researchers, educators, families, and students—committed to supporting students with and at risk for disabilities. In looking back, what I wrote eight years ago still holds true today:

> Personally, what has impressed me most is the strong commitment to support the field of special education as a whole, with an emphasis on mentorship. I

have watched the example of senior members of the division who gave precious time to move CEC-DR's mission forward while also investing time in the more junior members of the division, teaching them, for example, about the role of service; helping them see service as more than 20% of a job scope, but as an important responsibility. In particular, I am inspired by the amount of the time and effort individuals have dedicated to addressing concerns surrounding funding for special education research—watching the struggle, the commitment, and most recently the success of leaders in our field on this issue.

In looking forward, I am thankful for each of you: our current members, board members, and members of the presidential line:

Kathleen Lynne Lane, President – *University of Kansas*

Christopher Lemons, President Elect – *Stanford University*

Wendy Peia Oakes, Vice President – *Arizona State University*

Thomas Farmer, Past President – *University of Pittsburgh*

If you have questions about CEC-DR, we would welcome the opportunity to connect. We hope you will consider joining CEC-DR and extending your commitment to the field of special education through service to CEC-DR! In the meantime, please take care of yourselves. Be safe. ∎

With respect,
Kathleen Lynne Lane, PhD, BCBA-D, CF-L1
University of Kansas
Roy A. Roberts Distinguished Professor
Associate Vice Chancellor for Research
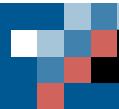
Teaching College Courses Online... (continued from page 8)

etc. Use this "dead airtime" as an opportunity for students to transition as well (pulling up their own documents), or as think time for a discussion question. Before you transition, you can ask the students a question and while you are transitioning it provides built in wait time for students to think about their answer before sharing out with the group. When you are set with your new document having been shared or your video being cued up to view, you can ask the group for their thoughts on the discussion question right away.

I hope these ideas are helpful in fostering a successful online learning environment. ■

Productive Writer Tip

As promised in our previous newsletter piece, the DR student reps want to continue to share another tip on building productive writing habits!

Make the Time

I'm sure you can think of times in which you convinced yourself that you did not need to write on a particular day or at a particular time. Or you convince yourself that you need larger chunks of time, and you just cannot seem to fit it into your schedule. It can help if you treat writing time like a class session or a meeting that you cannot move. You can protect your time to write, which will encourage you to write more because it is a part of your routine. The amount of writing you do may change from day to day, depending on whether you are brainstorming or editing, for example, but you are still writing something and that is progress!