



My son is graduating this month. As I find myself becoming the “sentimental Senior mom,” I have reflected fondly on his years in education. There have been so many educators and community members that have impacted, influenced, and molded him into the young person he is today. It is a constant reminder to me that what we do is so very important each and every day.

Graduation advice and quotes have found their way into my reading, and I can’t help but think how they are applicable to ESU 10. Julia H. Gulliver is quoted as saying, **“Let us never be betrayed into saying we have finished our education; because that would mean we had stopped growing.”**

We recently finished our visits with our 33 member schools that we serve in an almost 10,000 square mile area in central Nebraska. The discussions and information we have gathered will help us to continue to grow as we work to better serve our schools through our program of services. We appreciate the dedicated time given to us so that we can better “partner with our stakeholders to meet changing needs through professional expertise in providing services, learning opportunities, and support.” We are not “finished” as an ESU, as we are continuing to grow with our school districts.

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On May 20th, we will be having our all staff meeting. I am looking forward to having all of our employees together on this day. We will be preparing for the 2019-2020 school year, celebrating successes, and will be honoring those with the exemplary service year awards. Oprah is quoted as saying, **“So, I say to you, forget about the fast lane. If you really want to fly, just harness your power to your passion. Honor your calling. Everybody has one. Trust your heart and success will come to you.”**

These ESU 10 employees have found their passion, and we are better because of it:

5 years
Dianah Steinbrink
Ellie Schroeder
Lena Biel
Chris Struebing

10 years
Kelly Clapp
Kristine Einspahr
Candace Poss

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20 years
Nate McClenahan
Adam Griebel

25 years
Cynthia Long

30 years
Marcy Stevens

40 years
Judy Lauby

Congratulations! Judy Lauby has remarkably served ESU 10 for 40 dedicated years, and she has definitely honored her calling. Thank you Judy for sharing your passion, knowledge, and grace with all of us. We wish you the very best in your retirement!

As the hectic pace grows as we close out this year and prepare for next year, let us remember that “what lies behind us and what lies before us are small matters compared to what lies within us.” Thank you for all of your efforts in preparing our students for their very bright futures. GO 10!

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ESU 10 Workshops

May

- 01 Invention Convention
- 21 Google Admin Boot Camp (Two Day Event)
- 23 Standards, Curriculum & Instructional Materials: Putting it All
- 24 CTE Laser Engraver Training
- 28 NE Reading Improvement Act Overview & Planning w/ Marissa Pazant
- 30 Strategic Leadership Conference - Todd Whitaker (Two Day Event)
- 31 Cultivating Resilience

June

- 03 K-12 Science Retreat (Three Day Event)
- 04 Adviser Workday
- 06 Home Visit Strategies (Training for Part C Providers)
- 13 Title III ELD Collaboration
- 18 Mid-Nebraska PowerSchool Conference (Two Day Event)
- 20 Wonders and Journeys: Beef It Up (Two Day Event)
- 24 A.J. Juliani: Student-Centered Classrooms
- 24 Creating Student-Centered Classrooms (Five Day Event)
- 25 Innovative Practices: Blended Learning Bootcamp (Two Day Event)
- 27 Technology: EdTech Breakouts
- 28 Choice: Student-Centered Learning and Creation



STEM Kids Club

by Jason Everett, Blended Learning Coordinator

On October 2, November 27, January 15, and March 26, Angie Ourada (1st Grade Teacher - KPS - Bryant Elementary) and I embarked on a new adventure with Bryant Elementary teachers, students, and parents. Out of several brainstorming sessions came this STEM Kids Club where students and parents were invited to participate in different STEM challenges after hours. They had from 6:30 to 8:00 to design, build, create, make, and have fun with science, technology, engineering, and math. The turnouts were amazing as the students wanted to be a part of these activities. As you can see from the look on the teachers, students, and parents' faces, they had a great time constructing towers, building robots, making turkey traps, designing playgrounds, and so much more.

Activities/Challenges

October 2

1. Pumpkin Harvesters
2. Pumpkin Towers
3. Keva Blocks

November 27th

1. Turkey Trap
2. Make a Marble Run

January 15th

1. Brown Bag Challenge
2. Build a Robot
3. Coding on Computers, Mouse, and Dash

March 26th

1. Makerspace: Design a Playground
2. Rescue Device- Create a device to save a friend that just fell off the table.
3. Snap Circuits and Lego Robots



In addition to the STEM Kids Club, T&L is working toward making more of an impact in STEM with member schools by combining several ESU 10 programs to reach more teachers and students. Next year, we will combine programming and grants from HAL, CTE, Math/Science Networks, Invention Convention, along with Distance Learning and EdTech to provide what we hope is a great LAUNCH point for our educators in STEM. (We'll be using the book LAUNCH and the Launch Cycle designed by John Spencer and A.J. Juliani, thus the corny pun!) Teams can include any subject area and any grade level! We'll also be bringing in speakers, networking opportunities, follow up opportunities, as well as a platform for students to share their creations at ESU 10 at the end of the year. We look forward to seeing the impact this will have on the engagement and empowerment of our students who will be participating.

The digital divide, equity of opportunity or homework gap are some of the phrases you might hear describing technology access issues in educational communities today. These terms describe the relative difference in what some schools, students or families have in comparison to others as related to broadband access for learning. Homework gap specifically refers to student homes that are without internet or beneath the FCC minimum of 25Mbps download, 3Mbps upload speeds. Like other technology challenges, there are many opinions and possible options, but few simple and easy are answers to remedy the issues.

I'd like to explore a few ideas or possible options and how they might impact broadband access for learning.

First, the U.S. House and Senate have re-introduced prior bills, now H.R.1693 and S.738, which “require the Federal Communications Commission to make the provision of Wi-Fi access on school buses eligible for E-rate support.” If the FCC agrees and adds this as an eligible E-rate service, it would enable districts to seek E-rate funding to wire their fleet of buses for wireless internet access, therefore, narrowing the homework gap by providing students another means for access to the Internet while traveling.

While internet access on the bus is desired in some of the rural districts I serve, the most available backhaul in this area is the cellular networks which still struggle with good connectivity and coverage in rural areas. Plus, as I reflect on my hour long bus ride to and from elementary school, there were many other activities that I'd prefer doing than homework. Where else would you learn to play pitch with your friends? I know some students will appreciate internet access to be able to read or finish an assignment, but I wonder if more screen time in a designed social setting is a good thing for these digital natives or any of us for that matter. So, this mobile access might work in some areas, but it does not necessarily fix the access needs for a student at home.

Next, considering rural access issues, upon release of the FCC's NPRM Transforming the 2.5 GHz [Educational Broadband Service] EBS Spectrum, the Nebraska Department of Education partnered with Nebraska Educational Television and the State Office of the CIO and developed a plan “using existing state-owned and state-leased towers and fiber backhaul to blanket the state with a wireless network. The goal is to reach every learner, anywhere they may be, and anytime they need access.”

However, this plan is also dependent on the FCC's approval of new EBS licenses for education entities rather than auctioning them off to the highest bidder. Nebraska is not the only state or region hoping for the FCC's favorable approval of the EBS spectrum. On March 7, 2019, the Schools, Health, and Libraries Broadband Coalition (SHLB) held a briefing on Capitol Hill for the purpose of “asking policymakers to reserve the EBS for education and other public interest purposes.” The discussion featured “current licensees and others interested in preserving EBS for the public good.”

The FCC has become the key to reducing restrictions on potential wireless solutions and has spectrum sharing proceedings open on TV White Space, Citizens Band Radio Service (CBRS), “Wireless Fiber,” Educational Broadband Service, and Extending Unlicensed and Wi-Fi Across 6 GHz.

It's hard to keep track of all the efforts being made in the name of narrowing the digital divide for learning. One thing we know for sure—if you live in a populated area where telecom service is profitable, you will most likely have access to faster service and lower costs than your rural counterparts, and the rate at which urban telecom service is being improved is far faster than low population density areas. Therefore, the “digital divide” is believed to be getting wider as the fast become faster, and the slow remain slow. In order to reverse this trend, it will take many local, state, and national funding efforts. I hope to continue to be part of the discussion and encourage you to also find a way to use your skills and expertise to bring value to those you serve.

Speech and Language Disorders Are Experienced by Many Children - But Are Treatable

May is recognized nationally as Better Hearing & Speech Month. With speech and language disorders ranking among the most common disabilities in children, parents and caregivers are encouraged to learn the signs and seek an evaluation if they have concerns about their child's ability to communicate.

Development of strong communication skills is extremely important—and parents anxiously await their child's first words, yet common misconceptions remain. One is that children generally 'grow out' of speech or language difficulties. Unfortunately, this mistaken impression too often delays treatment. Of course, some children are indeed 'late bloomers,' yet treatment is frequently necessary, too. Good communication skills are critical, helping with behavior, learning, reading, social skills, and friendships. It is much easier, more effective, and less costly to treat speech and language disorders early—and May is a great time to educate parents on this important point.

Speech and language disorders are evaluated and treated by speech-language pathologists. Speech is the ability to produce speech sounds using the mouth, lips, and tongue. A child may say sounds the wrong way, repeat sounds and words, or be otherwise difficult to understand. Language is the ability to use and put words together—and to understand the words of others. A child may have trouble understanding questions, following directions, or naming objects. Early speech and language intervention sets a child up for future school and social success.

Warning signs for parents to watch for in young children include:

- Does not babble (4–7 months)
- Makes only a few sounds or gestures, like pointing (7–12 months)
- Does not understand what others say (12 months–2 years)
- Says only a few words (16–20 months)
- Says p, b, m, h, and w incorrectly in words (2–3 years)
- Words are not easily understood (18 months–2 years)
- Does not put words together to make sentences (2–3 years)
- Says k, g, f, t, and n incorrectly in words (3–4 years)
- Produces speech that is unclear, even to familiar people (2–3 years)
- Repeating the first sounds of words, like “b-b-b-ball” for “ball” (any age)
- Stretching sounds out, like “fffffarm” for “farm” (any age)

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For school-age children, warning signs may include the following:

- Has trouble following directions
- Has problems reading and writing
- Does not always understand what others say
- Is not understood by others
- Has trouble talking about thoughts or feelings

Tips to encourage communication development include:

For young children:

- Talk, read, and play with your child.
- Listen and respond to what your child says.
- Talk with your child in the language that you are most comfortable using.
- Teach your child to speak another language, if you speak one.
- Talk about what you do and what your child does during the day.
- Use a lot of different words with your child.
- Use longer sentences as your child gets older.
- Have your child play with other children.

For elementary-age children:

- Have your child re-tell stories and talk about their day.
- Talk with your child about what you do during the day.
- Give them directions to follow.
- Talk about how things are the same and how things are different.
- Give your child opportunities to write.
- Read every day.
- Find books or magazines that interest your child.

Families can learn more and find help at <http://IdentifytheSigns.org> and www.asha.org/public. If you have concerns about a child, birth up to two years of age, contact the Early Development Network at (308) 237-5927. For concerns about children three and over, call your local school district.

A Speech-Language Pathologist's Reflection on Teaching Students with Autism and other Developmental Disabilities

After fifty years serving as a Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP), I have been reflecting on changes in the field of speech pathology and special education. In 1968, I began serving part time as part of the staff at the Cozad State School, first as a student clinician acquiring clinical hours and later as the first salaried SLP at the facility. This school served over 40 students with significant developmental disabilities from across central Nebraska. Several of these children boarded Greyhound buses on Monday mornings (from towns as far as Lewellen to the west and Central City to the east) then returned to their communities via bus each Friday afternoon. Students traveling from greater distances stayed in dormitories while those from close by commuted. The school and boys' dormitory were housed in an old church and the girls' dormitory was the parsonage.

The school director was Amelia "Millie" Nicks, a feisty and pioneering special educator who set high standards for her staff and students. This school was recognized as a model program in Nebraska and across the United States. Each year the state school staff held a camp at Camp Comeca for children with disabilities with students attending from all over the state. Cozad and surrounding communities provided amazing support to the students at the school through their organizations like the Chambers of Commerce, Jaycees, 4-H and extension clubs, churches, etc. Each year, the Flying Farmers organization provided plane rides to the children. In addition, for several summers, students participated in a week-long bus tour. I served as a counselor and we traveled to various historical sites in Nebraska and South Dakota. Schools and churches provided meals and arranged for sleeping quarters in gymnasiums and church halls. As I look back, I am sure I learned more from the students I served and the amazing teachers with whom I worked than anyone learned from me.

The school closed due to the passage of P.L. 94-142 in 1975. This law guaranteed a free appropriate public education to each child with a disability, which had a dramatic and positive impact on millions of children with disabilities in every state and each local community across the United States. With this law, children returned to programs in their communities. As for the Cozad State School, the Nebraska Department of Education built a new facility in Cozad in 1977. Named the Nebraska Diagnostic and Resource Center (NDRC), it provided evaluations and program planning for students throughout Nebraska. Students only stayed for two weeks and it was phased out in 2003.

So much for the history lesson! The real point of my trip down memory lane is to talk about the needs and programs used with students with significant disabilities, then and now. I often think of the students at the Cozad State School and how little I really knew about how to teach children with such high levels of need. As I prepare to retire, I am overwhelmingly thankful to have had the opportunity to be trained through the Nebraska Autism Spectrum Disorders Network in Intensive Teaching/Verbal Behavior. ABA is considered an evidence-based best practice treatment by the US Surgeon General and by the American Psychological Association. "Evidence based" means that ABA has passed scientific tests of its usefulness, quality, and effectiveness. Studies show gains in intellectual functioning, language development, daily living skills and social functioning.

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A Speech-Language Pathologist's Reflection, cont.

The specific program the Nebraska ASD Network has chosen to support is the Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network (PaTTAN). This program is based on the principles of Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA). A behavior is any observable and measurable action. The principles on which ABA is based are: behavior is largely a product of its environment, behavior is strengthened or weakened by its consequences, and behavior responds better to positive rather than negative consequences.

Learning the PaTTAN program was very intense, beginning with a three-day training that can be followed by advanced skills trainings. What I have seen is that this program's application of the principles of behavior helps educators improve student learning by:

1. Teaching how to teach through the use of procedures such as prompting, fading, differential reinforcement, data collection, and much more
2. Providing an understanding of how to motivate students to participate in learning tasks
3. Directing assessments of students' skills so learning targets can be identified, then prioritized
4. Focusing on behaviors that help the student (in the vocabulary of ABA) learn the Verbal Operants.

Acquiring skills in using Verbal Operants provides children with the basic language skills that allow them to grow in their abilities to communicate, which leads to improved social-communication skills.

The Verbal Operants and what they help individuals accomplish are:

Mand-Make their wants and needs known by requesting
Listener Responding-Respond to requests in the form of an action
Motor Imitation-Copy the movements of others
Visual Perception/Match-to-Sample-Sort and match like items
Tact-Label objects, people and actions in the environment
Echoic-Repeat what is heard
Intraverbal-Respond to another speaker conversationally

Verbal Behavior programs are being implemented throughout the world. Nebraska schools are making great progress in providing services to children with autism and other developmental disabilities as a result of the trainings provided through the Nebraska ASD Network and its regional teams. The 16th Annual Nebraska ASD Network Conference was recently held in Kearney. There were amazing Keynote speakers and a plethora of breakout sessions. Two breakout sessions were presented by representatives from the Lexington Public Schools. The session "Teamwork and Sustainability of Verbal Behavior: A District-wide Approach to Implementation and Transitions Across Grade Levels" was well attended. The group reported that during the summer of 2016, Lexington trained 15 members of their Special Education staff. This included resource specialists, speech-language pathologists and related services staff. Over the next two years, they trained more staff and attended additional workshops, on-site, at ESU 10 and online, while receiving support from the Central Region ASD Team. Although the PaTTAN program was designed for individuals with autism it has been used very successfully with students with other disabilities. The Lexington team is using the program with individuals with verifications of Autism, Multiple Impairments, Intellectual Disability, and Other Health Impairments. Lexington students from the preschool through the high school Life Skills program receive the intervention.

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A Speech-Language Pathologist's Reflection, cont.

In their sessions, the team discussed the schools' implementation of the intensive teaching process for helping students learn the Verbal Operants for communication and academics, and extending the skills learned into natural environments (classroom, playground, cafeteria, and social interactions across the day). A graph titled 2018-2019 Targets Gained revealed that students in the Lexington program with autism receiving Verbal Behavior interventions acquired over 230 target skills. The most impactful part of the presentation was a video testimonial from parents as they talked about the improvements their child has made. They emphasized the impact these changes are having on the life of their child and family, as he generalizes the targeted skills he has learned into the natural environments of home, community and school.

At the recent Nebraska ASD Network Autism Conference, Ravenna Elementary Principal Paul Anderson was awarded the Friend of Autism Award. He used the phrase, "Know better, do better!", to describe how he urges his staff to continually apply what they learn in order to improve the lives of the children they serve. From this SLP's historical perspective, students with autism and other developmental disabilities throughout Nebraska are being served better and doing much better because of schools and educators embracing the power of teaching using Verbal Behavior.

