Building Bridges from Assessment to Teaching & Interventions -
Cross-Modal Approaches to Understanding
Unique Learners and Their Lives

Ruby Dawn Lyman & Kira Geselowitz

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Diagnosis of and Interventions for Students with Learning Difficulties:
CHC Cross-Battery Assessment, School Neuropsychology, and Executive Function Perspectives

With the goal of seeing the whole child in the context of lived experiences, we will explore what it means to work with unique learners who have wonderful strengths and richly complex lives, as well as challenges. The practice of being socio-emotional educators involves connecting with learners, their families, and the entire school community to promote communication and growth. This includes instilling mindfulness, increasing metacognition, and actively creating enjoyable, engaging learning environments. In this way, we can bridge the gap between assessment and intervention implementation in all classroom settings.
Who we are...

Ruby Dawn Lyman, M.A.T.

Before beginning her doctoral studies in educational psychology at the University of Washington, Ruby Dawn Lyman taught middle school Language Arts and Social Studies. She currently provides professional development on classroom differentiation strategies in several school districts in the Portland metro area. Additionally, she teaches classes on helping parents meet the social emotional needs of their children and works as an adjunct instructor of education at Pacific University. She is passionate about her work with Dr. Virginia Berninger as a research associate and lead teacher, focusing on supporting students with learning disabilities. Ruby Dawn holds a Masters of Arts in Teaching with a specialty in gifted education, and a Masters of Arts in Political Science. She is the mother of four wonderful sons.

Who we are...

Kira Geselowitz, M.Ed.

Born and raised in South Africa, Kira is an advocate for social justice who found her passion for understanding how people think and learn during her undergraduate courses and research in cognitive psychology and Spanish at Northwestern University. Since then, Kira has worked in various teaching and tutoring roles for students of all ages, as well as in educational administration and professional development. This has shown her the importance of communication within the entire schooling system. In 2013, Kira completed her M.Ed. in Curriculum & Instruction at UW and began doctoral studies while also restructuring and teaching the 7th grade Personal Development course at Lakeside Middle School. She is now a full-time doctoral student in Teacher Quality & Teacher Education with advisor Ken Zeichner and she works as a lead teacher and research assistant with Virginia Berninger on interventions for OWL LD students. She loves learning and learners, communication, language, and the marvelous joy of partner dancing.
Mindfulness:
Rin Gong Exercise

Purpose: To help us relax and to clear our minds by focusing our attention on something exterior and calming instead of the many thoughts that constantly bombard us. This clears our prefrontal cortex so that we can better direct our brain to the present and reduce the clutter from everything else that pulls at our attention throughout the day.
Now let’s talk more about the elephant in the room that George referred to... malleability of intelligence! What is beyond assessment?

Building Bridges from Assessment to Teaching & Interventions - 
Cross-Modal Approaches to Understanding Unique Learners and Their Lives

As you all appreciate the value of assessment, we will explore the practice of connecting with all of our unique learners by embracing the nuance and neurodiversity we find in our classrooms and any learning environment through the How People Learn framework.

A supportive learning ecosystem includes more than just the assessment as it considers...

Learners - What do we know about our needs as sociocultural beings?
Knowledge - How is knowledge acquired, contextualized, and transferred?
Community – What goes on within and beyond the classroom? What connections can we make to the whole student??
Learners

What do we look for in a great leader?
What do we look for in a great preschooler?
- Collaborative
- Creative
- Calm
- Confident, but not cocky
...but what do we expect of all the ages and people in between?
- compliant
- completely independent
- competitive

Do you consider yourself to be a lifelong learner?

Do you see yourself as an educator?
Building Bridges from Assessment to Teaching & Interventions... We are all educators!


Building Bridges from Assessment to Teaching & Interventions... We are all learners and educators!


Professionals across disciplines who assess and teach students with language problems should develop their own standards for best professional practices to improve the diagnostic and treatment (instructional) services in schools and non-school settings rather than assessing only for eligibility for categories of special education services according to federal and state special education laws.

Participation of professionals from multiple disciplines on teams is necessary but not sufficient unless cross-disciplinary conceptual frameworks are developed and used. Best practices for assessment and intervention for language problems should take into account the patterning of test and other assessment data within 3 kinds of profiles: (1) domains of development—cognition/memory, oral language, sensory and motor, attention and executive function, and social emotional; (2) academic skills—reading, writing, and math; and (3) phenotypes specific to neurogenetic or neurodevelopmental conditions that may apply to the case at hand.
Building Bridges from Assessment to Teaching & Interventions...

We are all learners and educators!

Some earlier work from keynote speaker, Dawn P. Flanagan and her great team:


Building Bridges – Connecting with the Whole Student

Learners

- Socio-emotional connections
- Mindfulness = metacognition
- Strengths and challenges

"Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I learn."

-Benjamin Franklin
### CHALLENGE CYCLES for Deeper Learning in Any Context
**Along with Supporting Principles from Cognitive Psychology**

| THE CHALLENGE | Intrinsic vs. Extrinsic Motivation  
|               | Synaptic Pathways & Connections  
|               | Instructional Scaffolding |
| INITIAL THOUGHTS | Activating Prior Knowledge, Preconceptions  
| What do I think or know about this challenge already? | Metacognition, Engagement & Attention  
|               | Associative & Adaptive Learning |
| PERSPECTIVES & RESOURCES | Working Memory & Chunking, Schemas  
| What do others think/what can I learn from them? | Individuated, Self-Paced Learning  
|               | Multisensory input |
| REFLECT & REVISE | Reinforcement, Metacognition  
| How has my thinking changed? | Active vs. Passive Learning, Social Emotional Learning  
|               | Aha! Moments & Insight |
| REPORT OUT | Inclusivity & Collaboration  
| How do I get feedback on my ideas/work? | Generative & Synthesis-Based Learning  
|               | Feedback Mechanisms and Reward Systems |
| CONTINUE THE CYCLE | Learning Transfer  
| Where do I go from here? | Sustained Motivation, Retention  
|               | Long-term vs. Short-term Memories, Consolidation |

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**Building Bridges – Connecting with the Whole Student**

**Learners**

*Challenge*: How do we as educators connect with unique learners and help them through their own challenges?

*Helene Schjerfbeck – Dance Shoes*
Building Bridges -- Connecting with the Whole Student

Learners

- Socio-emotional connections
- Mindfulness = metacognition
- Strengths and challenges

The Me You Don’t See | Tiffany Williams

Building Bridges – Creating a Student-Centered Classroom

• Help students feel respected
  • Their input matters, all voices are heard and no one feels invisible

• Give students ownership
  • Ownership over their learning
  • Ownership over the classroom
    • Class jobs
    • Shared supplies
Building Bridges –
Creating a Student-Centered Classroom

• Offer choices
• Make the classroom a “safe” place to express themselves - only rule? Respect, defined and understood by everyone.
• Classroom arrangement - desks or tables, seating charts *if needed*

Building Bridges—Differentiation strategies

Flexible groupings: Offer choices
• Challenge groups, pace-of-class groups, help-needed groups
• Let students decide which group fits their needs; teacher can then make the seating chart
• Reassess groupings between each unit
Building Bridges—Differentiation Strategies

- Offer choices in product
- Use Think-tac-toes
- Modify to fit level of group and assignment goals
- Can be used in every subject area/grade level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visual/Spatial</th>
<th>Auditory/Physical</th>
<th>Body/Kinesthetic</th>
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<td>Create a mental picture of what you are reading. Use a tape recorder, SpeechQ or record phrases about the text you are reading that lead you to get a mental picture. Once you have a mental picture about something that is happening in the text, illustrate it on paper or create a power point presentation.</td>
<td>Make a CD of at least 5 songs that represent the themes/characters/events in the story. The music can be present day or of the period but should represent the themes/characters/events. Make a cover for the CD. Write a brief comment for each song selected.</td>
<td>Create a dramatization of one or two scenes from your book. You can create the dramatization by creating a drama and producing it or by videotaping it. Tell why you chose the scenes and how they are important in the story.</td>
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Logical/Mathematical

Using Kurzweil, Clicker 5, WordQ and Word or Speech Q describe a cause and effect event in the story. Describe how one event causes another event to happen.

Verbal/Linguistic

Create a newspaper want ad for a person with morals and ethics. Be sure to tell job applicants what kinds of skills they need to do the job. What values does a person with morals and ethics possess? Use Microsoft Publisher or Word to produce the finished copy.

Interpersonal

Imagine that you are the main character in your story. Create a series of diary entries (either written on paper or in Kurzweil or SpeechQ recorded) that tell about some of the main events and how you feel about them.

Visual/Spatial

Compare and contrast yourself to one or two different characters in the text. Demonstrate your understanding of the character(s) by completing a Web Diagram or creating a web using Kidspiration.

Verbal/Linguistic

Keep a written journal log or an oral log by using Clicker 5 and record through writing or speech a short summary of what you read each day. Remember to include your name and date!

Interpersonal

With one or two classmates, create a commercial to promote your book. Be sure to share about the events and characters that would entice others to read the book. You can perform the commercial in front of the class or make a videotape.
Building Bridges – Differentiation Strategies

- Incorporate higher level questioning and group discussions
- Share out with the class
- Use cooperative learning strategies to ensure everyone participates

Building Bridges – Differentiation Strategies

Cooperative learning:
- Circulate; use your aids
- Appropriate rate and level
- Accountability for all

Group work doesn’t mean hands-off teaching & facilitating!
Building Bridges – Social Emotional Learning

• Social learning theory: a sense of self-efficacy (Bandura)
• “Self-efficacy is the confidence in one’s ability to control and execute the actions required to deal with current and future situations (Bandura, 1995, 1997)” (Wilkenfeld, Lauckhardt, Torney-Purta, 2010)

Pair-share:

What are some ways teachers and psychologists can foster development of self-efficacy in students?
Building Bridges – Social Emotional Learning

• Building a Learning Community
• Building Resiliency and Grit through Challenges
  • Set High Expectations
  • Class Motto: “Do Hard Things”
• Carol Dweck’s Growth Mindset:
  *Let students know that they can develop their intelligence and they do belong in the classroom – their voice is heard, appreciated and they are not invisible!*

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Building Bridges – Social Emotional Learning

• Establishing a Growth Mindset in the classroom:
  *When setting up daily classroom objectives, ask...*
  • What are the opportunities for learning and growth today?
  • When, where, and how will I facilitate the students as we embark upon the plan?
  • How will students *act* on the plan?
What makes a great teacher?

• Belief in continual growth of intellect and talent
• Focus on learning
• High standards with a nurturing atmosphere and never having deficit views of students

How do great teachers set high standards for everyone, not just the high achievers?

• Model positive communication & active listening
• Build relationships – student spotlights, “star-of-the-week,” noting great things that every student contributes
• Encourage creative classroom solutions
• Foster friendships
• Enjoy humor together!
Building Bridges – Social Emotional Learning

- Teaching Empathy
  - Active listening
  - Jigsaw approach
- Bibliotherapy
  - Book clubs
  - Class books
- Play the “What if” game

Judith Halsted – amazing author!

Building Bridges – Connecting with the Whole Student

Knowledge

- Relevance to lived experiences
  (from Dewey to Vygotsky and beyond)
- “I don’t know what I don’t know”
- But how do you know what you do know?

Epistemology and metacognition
Building Bridges – Connecting with the Whole Student

Knowledge

How are we encouraging self reflection among students? Are we modeling self-reflection, so that students understand the process and realize that it is OK to be wrong at times. Through modeling, we help students realize that we can always be looking for better ways of doing things and that this part of the learning process.

...however, language education is pretty complex...

Building Bridges – Connecting with the Whole Student

Knowledge

- English is a morpho-phonemic orthography
- Every class is dependent upon strong language skills - communication comes in all shapes and sizes
- Useful framework embracing scaffolding for knowledge transfer:
  - Individual letters (numbers too!)
  - Words and concepts (basic calculations)
  - Narratives and the bigger picture (word problems, advanced mathematical understandings and connections - like its usage in careers and life)
Building Bridges – Connecting with the Whole Student

Knowledge

- English language learners
- How can educators support metalinguistic awareness in the classroom?

How much do individual differences affect language acquisition?

What are the most effective ways to promote language comprehension & transfer?

When we view math as a language too, we can see how this applies not just to ELL’s, but to all of our unique learners.
Direct interventions developed by Dr. Virginia Berninger (psychologist, researcher, and teacher) for use in the Center for Oral and Written Language (OWL) Learners at University of Washington
• Years of research-based methods
• Addresses dyslexia, dysgraphia, OWL LD, SLD

“What I think, I can say, what I say, I can write...”

Building Bridges – Specific interventions

Consider developmental domains...
Where do assessments fit?
Interventions?

1. Identify developmental disability outside normal range in all five developmental domains or in one, two, three or four developmental domains.
   *Normal range based on quantitative (at or ~ 2 SD on average) and qualitative criteria

2. Note other comorbid conditions and relevant factors:
   1. Neurogenetic disorders imposed on the profile (e.g., autism, Down syndrome, fragile-X, PKU, Williams, neurofibromatosis, muscular dysrophy, etc.)
   2. Brain injury (e.g., cerebral palsy; head injury; encephalopathy; disease (e.g., Sickle cell anemia, Tay Sachs), syndrome above (e.g., Fetal alcohol syndrome)
   3. Other relevant factors: family, cultural, language, medical, developmental or educational history

3. Assess learning profiles for reading, writing, and math. Use results of these and profile of oral language skills for instructional planning but do not interpret as specific learning disability (SLD) or specific language impairment (SLI) if there are no developmental disabilities (prescriptive PCD or specific; SLD like language impairment) or other comorbid conditions (influencing oral reading, writing, math, or oral language achievement.

Figure 2. Five developmental domains, comorbid conditions, and interpreting learning profiles.
Building Bridges – Specific interventions

Consider language systems...
• Mouth
• Eye
• Ear
• Hand

Building Bridges – Specific interventions

• Words
  • Syllables
  • Phonemic awareness
  • Word families
  • Prefixes and suffixes
  • Unscrambling words
  • Choosing correctly spelled words
Building Bridges – Specific interventions

• Specific Interventions
  • Printing the alphabet (once/day, not in alphabetical order - avoids habituation)
  • Writing the alphabet in cursive
  • Writing words in cursive - letter connections help with spelling

Can you read me? Can you write me?

Building Bridges – Specific interventions

• Specific Interventions
  • Touch typing
  • Connecting words into sentences
  • Compound words
  • “Glue words”
  • Sentence anagrams
  • Homonyms
  • Conjunctions
Building Bridges -- Specific interventions

- Self-generated personal narratives
  - Specific instructional strategies
  - Alternate weekly with pencil and keyboard
    *Explicit instruction on letter formation and touch-typing*
- Focus on reading, note-taking, and summary writing
- Additional weekly writing prompt with “Advice for Teachers” – *a chance to hear and share authentic student voice*

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Building Bridges -- Connecting with the Whole Student

**Communities**

- Within the classroom
- With other educators
- With families

...*communities of practice & support*
Building Bridges -- Classroom Learning Communities

- Let students be involved in making classrooms rules/expectations
- Mutually decided upon “Rights and Responsibilities”
- Students “vote” on rules
- Works for all grade levels and subject matters

Class mosaic activity
Building Bridges – Classroom Learning Communities

“Tribes” by Jeanne Gibbs

• social development
• resiliency
• positive learning environment

Building Bridges – Classroom Learning Communities

• “Families” – similar to tribes for building peer relationships, leadership skills
• “Mentors” – students can be paired with those of like interests
• “Buddies” – older and younger students paired together
• “Circle time” – creative problem solving, judicious discipline

“Don’t believe everything you read on the Internet just because there’s a picture with a quote next to it.”

—Abraham Lincoln
Building Bridges –
Connecting with families and communities

“to study is not to consume ideas, but to create and re-create them” (Freire, 1985)

Building Bridges –
Connecting with families and communities

- Family outreach
  - Take an asset-based approach to parents, have them share strengths and expertise
  - Teachers can, as a start, use interview assignments to connect and learn

- Culture fairs
  - Incorporate food from countries of origin, embrace cultural diversity and pride
  - Pair with Social Studies or Science curriculum
Building Bridges – Connecting with families and communities

- Family outreach
- Parenting classes
  - Specific topics: TAG, learning disabilities, social-emotional needs
  - Strategies for school success
  - Discipline and organization
  - Parent room (Michelle Proloux)

How to set up a parent group:

- Identify an issue or topic to be addressed
- Send out a meeting notice (*email* or *paper*, depending on demographic)
- Registration
- Send out a confirmation letter and agenda/weekly topics
Building Bridges –
Connecting with families and communities

Guidelines for leading parent groups (Webb and Devries):

- Model desired behaviors
- Start where parents are at
- Focus on take-home messages
- Provide useful information
- Encourage parents to contribute
- Avoid confrontation
- Focus on the positive
- Minimize irrelevant topics by keeping the group on track
- Facilitate rather than preach

Building Bridges –
Humor Connects Us All

Quote from South African comedian Trevor Noah who was “born a crime” during apartheid because he had a Swiss father and a Xhosa mother:

We have a lot of stories to share, we have a lot to learn about each other because we were separated for so long, so now we're trying to understand who we are and who everyone around us is as well. Comedy is a great tool for that because if you laugh with people you start to understand that you share more with them than you thought you did initially, and you learn about them as well.”
Conclusion & Continuing the Cycle

Original Challenge: How do we as educators connect with unique learners and help them through their own challenges?

- Appreciating Students
  - Student voice
  - Embracing neurodiversity and strengths
- Building Bridges
  - Assessment to intervention
  - Seeing the whole child and connecting as communities
- Take aways and action items
  - What you can start doing today at your school(s) and in your own practice?
  - We are all educators, lifelong learners, and agents of change!

Questions?

Resources/References


Resources/References


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Resources/References

TedX Washington State Corrections Center for Women: Does Gender Matter?
https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLz7pK3zKqJ26JKickxZcaV0JOLwIL0i5o

The Freedom Education Project Puget Sound (FEPPS)


Building literacy:


http://www wilsonlanguage.com/

Enhancing literacy through news:
https://newsela.com/about/#overview

Feedback ideas:

Constructive criticism
http://www.edutopia.org/blog/providing-feedback-as-formative-assessment-troy-hicks
Resources/References

**Mindfulness:**


A poem that can help you through life’s challenges: *Desiderata*, by Max Ehrmann

**Positive models of social emotional learning and community connections:**
[http://cppsosfseattle.org/](http://cppsosfseattle.org/)
[http://www.tacoma.nw.edu/strongschools/index.html](http://www.tacoma.nw.edu/strongschools/index.html)

**Humor:**
- [Edutopia - Laughter and Learning: Humor Boosts Retention](http://www.edutopia.org/blog/laughing-through-learning-humor-boosts-retention)
- [Edutopia: Using Humor in the Classroom](http://www.edutopia.org/blog/laughing-through-learning-humor-boosts-retention)
- Puns connect with language learners: [http://distractify.com/jake-heppner/puns/?v=1&img=7af0f4](http://distractify.com/jake-heppner/puns/?v=1&img=7af0f4)

Teacher Education & Reflective Teaching:


How Student Centered Is Your Classroom? - Rebecca Alber

Heather Wolpert-Gawron has great insights on teaching! [https://www.edutopia.org/user/heather-wolpert-gawron](http://www.edutopia.org/user/heather-wolpert-gawron)

Thank you!

“There is no change without dream, as there is no dream without hope”
– Paolo Freire

PLEASE FEEL FREE TO EMAIL US WITH QUESTIONS/Criticisms/CONNeCTIONS!
Kira: kirahg@uw.edu
Ruby Dawn: lymannr2@uw.edu