



Researching Learning Challenges Competition

Overview

Approximately 7.2 million students in American public schools have been diagnosed with learning disabilities and receive special education services (Citation: <https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator/cgg>). Understanding how to support students with special needs is central to success as an educator. This competition offers high school students the opportunity to explore deeply and develop recommendations regarding effective educational supports for students with special needs.

The [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act \(IDEA\)](#) groups students into fourteen disability categories:

1. Autism
2. Deaf blindness
3. Developmental delay
4. Emotional disturbance
5. Hearing impairment
6. Intellectual disability
7. Multiple disabilities
8. Orthopedic impairment
9. Other health impairments
10. Preschool disabled
11. Specific learning disability (e.g., dyslexia)
12. Speech or language impairment
13. Traumatic brain injury
14. Visual impairment

This year's competition focuses on emotional disturbance. In 2018-2019, approximately 324,000 students, or 5.45% of students in the public school system received disabilities services for emotional disturbance. (Citation <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/osep-fast-facts-children-IDed-Emotional-Disturbance-20>).

The IDEA states that “Emotional disturbance means a condition exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree that adversely affects a child’s educational performance:

- A. An inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors.
- B. An inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers.
- C. Inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances.
- D. A general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression.
- E. A tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems.

Emotional disturbance includes schizophrenia. The term does not apply to children who are socially maladjusted unless it is determined that they have an emotional disturbance under paragraph (c)(4)(i) of this section.” (Citation <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/regs/b/a/300.8/c/4>).

The purpose of this competition is to work collaboratively to learn more about this specific learning challenge and to produce a research-supported presentation to explain and advocate for positive practices in schools to support the education of students with emotional disturbance. Imagine that the local school board has asked you: “What specific steps should we take to support the education of students with emotional disturbance? Also, why should we accept your recommendations?”



Researching Learning Challenges Competition

This is a chapter competition. Team members should research emotional disturbance and best practices to support the education of students with this learning challenge. You are encouraged to embark on this research using traditional sources as well as primary sources (ex. conducting interviews with individuals impacted by this disability or professionals who support individuals with this disability, etc.). Then team members should discuss the research to determine recommendations and develop an 8-10-minute, research-supported presentation. The presentation must include cited references and works cited slide (MLA, APA, or Chicago style are acceptable).

The chapter must select at least two and no more than four students to present the research and best practices to a panel of on-site judges. The students must be prepared to answer questions from the judges.

Each chapter must submit only one entry for this competition. Four (4) entries total will be accepted. Entries will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis and will be limited to the number of participants.



Researching Learning Challenges Competition

Competition Guidelines

- A. The sponsoring teacher must submit the [Online Competition Entry Form](#) **by 5:00 pm on Friday, October 27, 2023.**
- B. Team members will use the information collected in the research phase to collaborate in creating a slide-deck presentation (ex. PowerPoint, Prezi).
- C. The presentation should engagingly complement and deliver the team's research findings and recommendations.
- D. The slide deck presentation must include the following:
 - a. A title slide with the title of the project and school/chapter name,
 - b. A credit slide with the names of the student creators, sponsoring teacher(s), and the source of any non-original, multimedia elements (images and sounds), and
 - c. At least three sources of relevant information in a works cited slide (MLA, APA, or Chicago style are acceptable).
- E. At the FEA Regional Conference, two to four members must present the chapter's research and recommendations to a panel of expert judges using the slide deck as their visual aid. FEA at FIU will provide the laptop, LCD projector, and screen for the competition. Team members should bring the file of their slide deck on a USB drive.
- F. The presentation must not exceed 10 minutes. Team members should be prepared to answer questions and have a discussion with the judges.
- G. Team members will receive a visual, non-verbal indication that there is one minute remaining when they reach the nine-minute mark of their presentation.

Judging and Scoring

- A. Competitors must be present at the scheduled time or will be considered disqualified.
- B. The judges' decision is final.
- C. Contestants agree to be bound by the FEA General Competition Rules.
- D. The entry will be scored using the Researching Learning Challenges Competition rubric.

How to Enter

- A. All entries for individual and/or chapter competitions must be submitted by the chapter's sponsoring teacher via the [Online Competition Entry Form](#) **by 5:00pm, on Friday, October 27, 2023.**
- B. Entries submitted by email will not be accepted.



Researching Learning Challenges Competition

Presentation and Q&A

Points Available	Accomplished 16 – 13	Commendable 12 – 9	Developing 8 – 5	Needs Improvement 4 – 1
Content of Slide Deck	<p>The content of the slides reflects professional-caliber thoughtfulness and thoroughness.</p> <p>The team members expertly leverage the visual medium to bring out key insights and recommendations with clarity.</p>	<p>The commendable, student-level quality of the content of the slides reflects a commitment to sharing key facts and details of the team members' insights and recommendations.</p>	<p>The content of the slides reflects compliance but minimal insight.</p> <p>The images employed may be basic or not entirely effective at amplifying the team's messages.</p>	<p>The content of the slides reflects inconsistent focus and quality.</p> <p>The images or text may distract the audience from the team's intended messages, or that message may lack focus.</p>
Depth & Insight	<p>The content of the presentation reflects professional caliber, in-depth understanding, and striking insight into all elements of the issue.</p> <p>The excellent depth of research and preparation is clearly apparent throughout the presentation.</p>	<p>The content of the presentation offers useful, well-detailed ideas that warrant further exploration beyond this session.</p> <p>The presentation may explore many but not all key facets of the issue.</p>	<p>The presentation offers basic, intuitive ideas that would have benefited from further unpacking in this session. Some material may be superficial or reflect limited research.</p> <p>The presentation may not explore many of the issues or perspectives at play in the scenario.</p>	<p>The presentation may offer ideas that are flawed, illogical, or partially developed and feel incomplete.</p> <p>Few perspectives or issues at play in the scenario are explored.</p>
Depth of Research	<p>The presentation makes informed, evidence-based recommendations by referencing at least three well-chosen sources of relevant information.</p>	<p>The presentation makes recommendations that correlate to the research that is referenced.</p> <p>The presentation may reference fewer than three sources or the source material may not directly correlate to the presentation's central purpose.</p>	<p>The presentation makes limited connections to relevant research.</p>	<p>The presentation makes virtually no connection to relevant research.</p>



Researching Learning Challenges Competition

Presentation and Q&A

Points Available	Accomplished 16 – 13	Commendable 12 – 9	Developing 8 – 5	Needs Improvement 4 – 1
Q & A Discussion	<p>The students' responses in the Q&A session demonstrated consistent thoughtfulness and professional-caliber insight, rooted in the deep experience of the material.</p> <p>The students display impressive, professional-level depth of knowledge and understanding given his/her experience and research.</p>	<p>The students' responses in the Q&A session demonstrated thoughtfulness and reflected successful attempts to address most of the material posed to them.</p> <p>The students display some substantive knowledge and understanding of the selected topic based on their experience and research.</p>	<p>The students' responses in the Q&A session reflected a broad spectrum of levels of quality, depth, or insight from answer to answer.</p>	<p>The students' responses in the Q&A session may reflect evident effort and passion but are inconsistent in the depth, accuracy, understanding, or insight offered.</p>
Overall Impact	<p>The presentation reflects professional-caliber and highly persuasive recommendations via a deep exploration of the issue and context.</p> <p>The presentation content & delivery effectively complement each other to craft a highly impactful, professional-caliber experience.</p>	<p>The content and delivery work together to offer a largely persuasive presentation.</p> <p>With deeper research, more realistic proposals, or revisions to delivery, the project could be considered of professional caliber.</p>	<p>The minimally persuasive presentation does demonstrate effort.</p> <p>At multiple moments, the depth or strategy related to content or delivery may reflect a partial lack of understanding of key facets of the issue.</p>	<p>The unpersuasive presentation demonstrates inconsistent, unprofessional, or superficial aspects in content or delivery.</p> <p>The audience is frequently distracted from the intended impact by aspects of the content or delivery.</p>