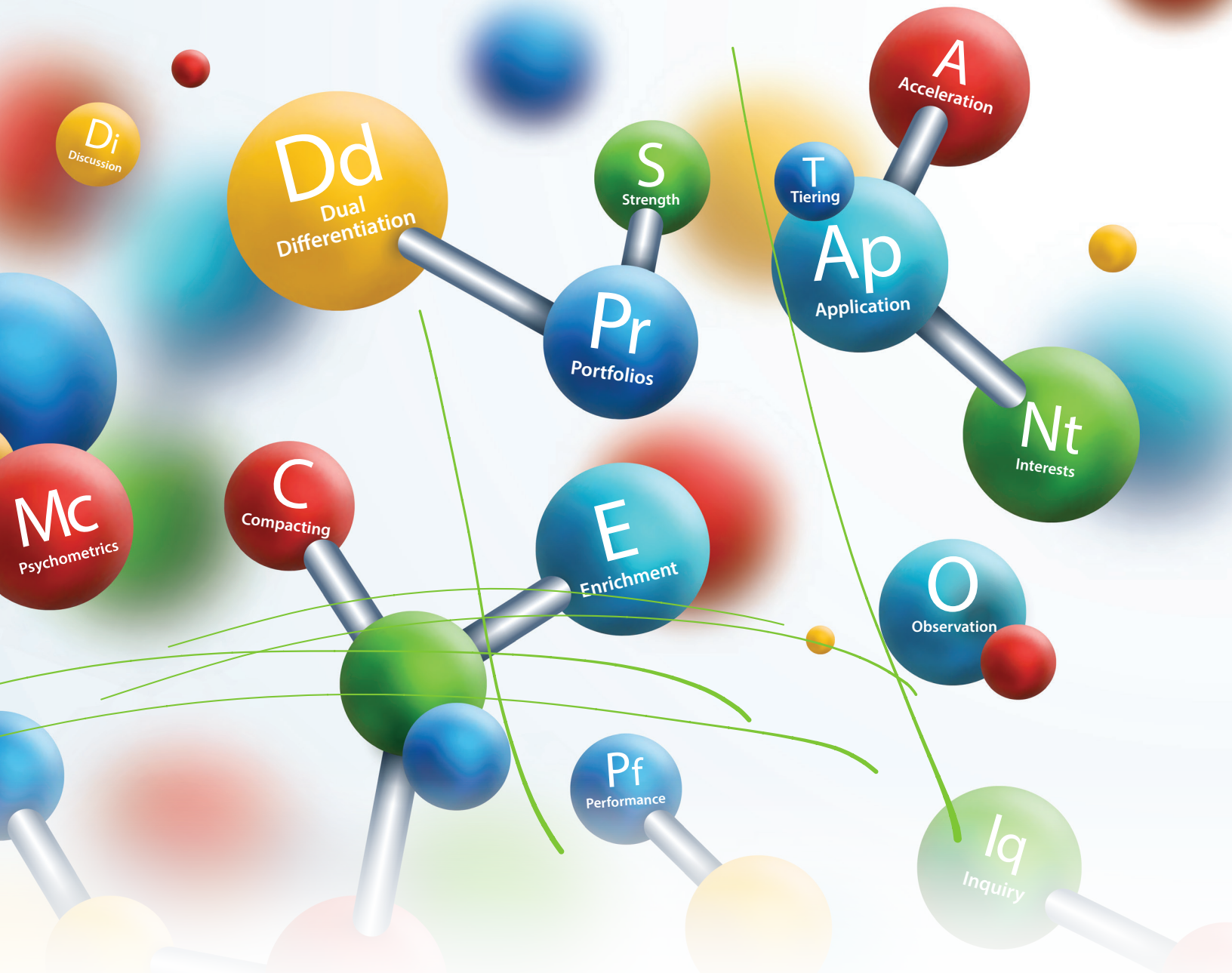


VARIATIONS^{2e}

Not all great minds think alike



The Chemistry of Teaching & Learning

Project-Based Achievers | Turning Video Game Obsession into Literary Analysis
Iowa: Blazing a Trail in Education | Building Executive Function Skills

Building 2e Community Online

HOW ONE PARENT OF 2E KIDS IS PAYING IT FORWARD



The annual 2 Days of 2e Virtual Conference features presentations by experts in the world of twice-exceptionality. Julie Skolnick, the conference's founder and a mother of three 2e kids, shared with *Variations*^{2e} thoughts on her journey and continued advocacy for this population of learners.

What brought you into the 2e world?

As a lawyer I have always been involved in advocacy. As a parent of three 2e children, I quickly learned that there was more to gifted than meets the eye. Meeting Mark Bade from *2e: Twice-Exceptional Newsletter* and learning about the SENG (Supporting Emotional Needs of the Gifted) organization changed my perspective from a deficit-based model to a strength-based one, embracing talent as a pathway to skill development. I decided to pay it forward and help other parents by starting a non-profit organization, With Understanding Comes Calm.

Over the years, WUCC has morphed into an incredible opportunity for me to shout from the rooftops about the 2e population and to guide parents, train teachers, mentor adults, and collaborate with clinicians to help them consider cases through a 2e lens. My monthly blog and newsletter, *Gifted & Distractable*, reaches thousands of global subscribers, many of whom share that finding resources helps them feel less lonely.

What is 2 Days of 2e?

2 Days of 2e is a virtual conference, so everything is online. The tagline this year is “Content, Community, and Collaboration.” With regards to “Content,” we have 12 awesome sessions featuring experts and thought leaders in the fields of gifted and twice-exceptionality. They interacted with attendees in real time during their session when the conference launched in October. “Community” refers to the three discussion forums we set up — one for parents, one for educators, and one for clinicians. This is a place where people from all over the world meet, ask questions, post comments, and hopefully dispel some of the loneliness people feel when parenting, teaching, and serving this population. Finally, “collaboration” refers to our virtual exhibitor hall, which includes 2e resources in five categories: education, enrichment, associations, consultants, and clinicians. The conference is available on demand through April 2020.

What is different about the conference this year versus last year?

We have a totally new slate of presenters. Other than me, everyone is new without any repeat speakers. Last year my keynote was a deep dive into what it means to be gifted and 2e. This year we have some very specialized topics like “Looking at 2e Through a Developmental Trauma Lens” with wilderness therapist Greg Burnham, and “Gifted Physiology: A Whole Body Approach to Understand Overexcitabilities and Gifted Differences.” In that session, Dr. Joanna Haase presents new research on the effects of being gifted on the whole body.

Our conference also offers contact hours through the University of Connecticut and certificates of attendance. The State of Maryland allows its teachers up to two continuing professional development credits for attending. Last year we had participation from 36 states and 17 countries, and we look forward to participation from even more!

What are the most important issues facing the 2e community today and why?

Identification and training. We need to identify more diverse gifted learners and twice-exceptional learners whose challenges can mask their giftedness and vice versa. We need more teacher and parent training. When I engage parents and teachers in training it is so fulfilling. We must circle the wagons as adults in order to empower the children. We first need to understand what is going on, then apply strategies that teach skills and help our kids advocate for what they need.

What are your goals for 2 Days of 2e and other projects in the future?

My main goal for 2 Days of 2e is to spread awareness and to give parents, teachers, and clinicians practical strategies to use in their homes, classrooms, and offices. The mission at With Understanding Comes Calm is to empower all stakeholders to bring out the best and raise self-confidence in 2e

adults and children through education, strategies, and advocacy training. It’s what I do all day, every day.

I’m passionate about engaging clients and colleagues so we can move the ball forward and help gifted and 2e children not feel alienated or marginalized. Instead, they should have the chance to feel calm so they can go forth in the world doing exactly what they want to do.

Julie Skolnick, J.D., is a speaker, writer, and advocate who works with parents of gifted and distractible children, mentors 2e adults, and advises educators and professionals on how to best support their 2e students and clients. To learn more about Julie’s work and the 2 Days of 2e conference, visit www.withunderstandingcomescalm.com.



*Julie Skolnick
Sarah Fillman Photography*