

## Reasons Behind and Timings for My Papers

I am a person who thinks outside the box, wanting to know how things work in the big picture. Questioning the very phenomenon of the ongoing increase in the numbers of students with learning differences, and seeing gifts rather than fundamental deficits in their participation in my class, my quest moved me into an alternate perception. **There are answers in these differences which reconcile an obvious and beautiful intelligence with what seems an over-bearing lack of essential abilities and skills.**

These differences had been around before, but the current students are **hard-wired to be different**, which is why we began noticing them more in the 1990's, and also *because* their numbers were increasing. In contrast to this in previous generations, most different-learning individuals could hide their anomalies and be in school less problematically for teachers, those students thought of as just poor performers, behavior problems, or even 'eccentric,' most often. I saw the current children in my classes in another way, not only hard-wired but they evidencing to me that they were and **are here with a gifted orientation that does not match the majority of our world**. Understanding this enabled me to work with them more easily for I knew who they were and how they functioned.

Taking off from teaching to do a sabbatical year, I did extensive research looking anywhere I could find material, and I discovered information was abundantly available. This was because the frantic search for answers regarding "the problems" of these new students had begun. *Support for my perception showed up everywhere except with one major difference: rather than seeing it all as an important and different gifted orientation, the qualities of their differences were and continue to be seen as due to a deficit or disorder.* I retired early the next year in 2008, for I felt I could have a greater impact in the understanding of those on the ADD-autism spectrum by sharing what I had learned. Informed and inspired by my classroom experience and the research, I began to write.

The first document I completed in 2009 was *Heart Centered Minds, Learning Differences Not Disorders*. This is a long paper speaking about the commonalities and differences, and gifted abilities and challenges that I saw in all of my third grade spectrum students, they each being a mix of the different characteristics, but mainly falling into one of the main categories or another. **These general groupings are Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD), dyslexia, Asperger's Syndrome, and autism.** There is now a new way to refer to these learners, that being as having an Autism

Spectrum Disorder, along with a couple other name indicators, but I prefer to continue to refer to these as on the ADD-autism spectrum, for I feel there are separate qualities to be understood and appreciated in each grouping.

In that long, first paper I share many stories from my classroom and additionally other sources in order to paint the amazing and broad picture of who these individuals are, which largely applies also to those who have been around over the years prior to our current greater awareness. One major clarification I make starting in that early paper, is that rather than defining ADD as Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), these individuals and **all on the spectrum have Attention Differently Directed.**

After *Heart Centered Minds, Learning Differences Not Disorders*, I wrote quite a number of smaller pieces containing the same core and also additional understandings to those in *Heart Centered Minds*, but with less detail, perhaps a first introduction for some, but also speaking of **these individuals in different contexts**. You will find these writings listed with a short indication of the different context and various references in each.

Then in 2016, I began another extensive document addressing all of these different learning styles, but **focusing in most deeply on autism**, speaking of what it is, and what it is not, and why autism, like the other categories of spectrum individuals, is not a deficit. Further, I discuss what challenges that exist in these individuals' and their family's lives and why, and how they can be addressed. This was often told best with examples of autistic lives you may have heard or read about. This paper is titled *The Inside Out of Autism*, borrowing the name from the Pixar/Disney popular movie of a few years ago: *Inside Out*, for all spectrum learners live from the inside out.

**Then in February of 2018, on Valentine's Day, 17 individuals were shot at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland Florida.** This set my pen and determination on fire to spread the word even more strongly, for as with three other school shootings (**Columbine, Virginia Tech, and Sandy Hook**), it was a spectrum individual who had perpetrated this horrific crime upon others and themselves. These young people must be understood for who they are in order to stop this repeating tragic response in return for their suffering long years of deficit labeling, rejection and bullying abuse. Not understanding them, some have become as we have seen them, "reclusive loners with problems." See my paper: *Medicated Loners as Shooters?*

Finally, for now, as we cross into January of 2019, the government closure now just passing two weeks, and government workers, national courts, programs, operations and public recipients of governments services and benefits all suffering the consequences, I felt the need to weave what we face in our individual lives as part of the bigger picture. As I questioned the ongoing rise in the number of different learners from the very start, this continues and is a part of crucial change for our world. Thus, I have just finished writing: *Spectrum Differences as Part of Our World in Transition*.

I have, also for now, completed *this* document as a look at why and when my papers have come forth.

If new to the discussion of these learning-different individuals, you might want to begin with a couple of the shorter texts, and then if **caught up in this paradigm shift of understanding that I describe**, move on to the much longer and detailed documents. I would hope that parents, teachers, therapists, and physicians can all make their way to my experience, the research, explanations, and life stories in the two longer documents.

Thank you.