

The Adventures of Everyday Geniuses

“I applaud Barbara Esham for finding a way to teach young children how to be more mindful. In so doing, she sets the stage for their greater well-being as adults.”

**Dr. Ellen Langer, Harvard University
Professor of Psychology**

Dr. Langer is the author of *Mindfulness*, *The Power of Mindful Learning*, and *Becoming an Artist: Reinventing Yourself through Mindful Creativity*. Her work has led to numerous academic honors including a Guggenheim Fellowship, the Award for Distinguished Contributions to Psychology in the Public Interest of the American Psychological Association, the Distinguished Contributions of Basic Science to Applied Psychology award from the American Association of Applied & Preventive Psychology, the James McKeen Cattell Award, and the Gordon Allport Intergroup Relations Prize. Dr. Langer is a Fellow of The Sloan Foundation; The American Psychological Association, the American Psychological Society, The American Association for the Advancement of Science; Computers and Society; The Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues; The Society of Experimental Social Psychologists.

“This is a wonderful book series. Each story shows children that success is about effort and determination, that problems need not derail them, and that adults can understand their worries and struggles. My research demonstrates that these lessons are essential for children.”

Dr. Carol S. Dweck, Stanford University

Professor of Psychology Carol S. Dweck, Ph.D., is the author of *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*. Her scholarly book *Self-Theories: Their Role in Motivation, Personality, and Development* was named Book of the Year by the World Education Fellowship. Dr. Dweck is one of the world's leading researchers in the field of motivation and is the Virginia Eaton Professor of Psychology at Stanford University. Her research has focused on why people succeed and how to foster success. She has held professorships at Columbia and Harvard Universities, has lectured internationally, and has been elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Her work has been featured in such publications as *The New Yorker*, *Time*, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *The Boston Globe*.

“Over the years I have witnessed great advances in our understanding of learning styles. Yet I have been struck with how little progress we have made in translating this research into words and practices that students and their parents can use. The books of the Mainstream Connections series are honest but positive, helpful without preaching, and they are readable but not too simplistic. I have no doubt these books will touch the hearts and minds of many, and help some lost children find good in themselves.”

Dr. Jeffrey Gilger, Purdue University College of Education

Professor and Associate Dean for Research and Faculty Development. Dr. Gilger has been a reviewer for over 40 journals and publishers in the areas of education, psychology, and medicine. Dr. Gilger's major scientific interests include developmental psychology; learning; neuropsychological abilities; spatial and nonverbal intelligence; environmental and biological basis of individual and group differences in giftedness; practical application of biomedical, genetic and psychological research in education. He is a frequent speaker to professional and lay audiences and is the author of many journal articles and book chapters.

“The Mainstream Connections Children's Book Series conveys a message that could have been lifted straight from a psychology research journal: there is more than one way to define 'being smart'. As these stories illustrate, for every person, large and small, there are skills that are relatively difficult to master and others that seem to come more naturally. These books emphasize the important empirical conclusion that just as regular exercise makes the body stronger, so, too, does practice and the effort to improve academically--with all the struggle, fatigue, and initial failure that it entails--allow people to capitalize on the malleable nature of human intelligence.”

**Dr. Samuel R. Sommers, Tufts University
Professor of Psychology**

Department of Psychology. Dr. Sommers is the creator and organizer of Tuft's Diversity & Cognition colloquium series. Dr. Sommers' honors and awards include the 2007 • Lerman-Neubauer Prize for Outstanding Teaching & Advising Awarded to a Tufts faculty member judged by seniors as having had a profound effect on them intellectually, both in and out of the classroom. First junior faculty member ever to win this prize. Committee Memberships include the 2008 Klineberg Award Committee, Society for Psychological Study of Social Issues 2008 Klineberg Award Committee, Society for Psychological Study of Social Issues.

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"In recent years there has been a growing awareness among educators, researchers, and members of many professions that challenges in reading and spelling are often accompanied by special abilities in areas like complex pattern recognition and spatial reasoning. *If You're So Smart How Come You Can't Spell Mississippi?* is a fantastic way of bringing this information to the many smart children who find reading and spelling especially difficult--and especially to those who are beginning to doubt their own potential."

Drs. Brock (M.D., M.A.) and Fernette (M.D.), learning experts and physicians

consultants to a wide range of parent, teacher, and clinical professional groups. *The Eides* are the authors of, *The Mislabeled Child*, founders of the Eide Neurolearning Clinic. As consultants, the Eides are international and national professional advisors for organizations such as SENG (Supporting the Emotional Needs of the Gifted).

"Each book in the Mainstream Connections Children's Book Series offers a reassuring message for children and sage advice for their adult caregivers, who do not always appreciate children's naive construals of their peers, teachers, and schools. The books encourage children not to shy away from obstacles by showing how many adults--from Mom and Dad to intellectual giants--overcame similar obstacles on the road to success. They dispel misconceptions about intelligence that can undermine confidence among children who do not immediately succeed in school. They also highlight the pitfalls of measuring oneself in comparison to peers. Although the books seem targeted toward children who struggle, there are important messages for those children for whom school seems to come easy as well as the teachers and parents who create the environments in which children learn. A recurring theme is the importance to children of understanding and affirmation from adults. The richness and depth of these books, which are firmly rooted in behavioral science research, is uncommon in short stories for children. It is quite possible that these books will rescue some children from the uncertainty, anxiety, and struggle that school and peer relations sometimes create."

Dr. Rick Hoyle, Duke University

Research Professor Psychology & Neuroscience

Dr. Hoyle currently serves as editor of *Journal of Social Issues* and associate editor of *Self and Identity*. Dr. Hoyle's publications include: Hoyle, R. H. (2006). *Personality and self regulation: Trait and information-processing perspectives*. *Journal of Personality*, 74, 1507-1525. Hoyle, R. H., & Sherrill, M. R. (2006). *Future orientation in the self-system: Possible selves, self-regulation, and behavior*. *Journal of Personality*, 74, 1673-1696. Hoyle, R. H. (2006). *Self-esteem and self-knowledge*. In M. H. Kernis (Ed.), *Self-esteem issues and answers: A source book on current perspectives* (pp. 208-215). New York: Psychology Press. Hoyle, R. H. (2006). *Self-esteem and self-knowledge*. In M. H. Kernis (Ed.), *Self-esteem issues and answers: A source book on current perspectives* (pp. 208-215). New York: Psychology Press.

"These books should help children and their parents understand that we all have different skills, abilities, and learning styles. Such differences do not make any one child better or worse than any other; they just make the children different. The books convey respect for all children whatever their differences, and they encourage the children to develop their own unique set of skills."

Dr. Edward L. Deci, University of Rochester

Gowen Professor of Psychology

Edward L. Deci is professor of psychology and director of the human motivation program at the University of Rochester. For 35 years, he has been engaged in a program of research on human motivation that has led to and been organized by Self Determination Theory. Dr. Deci is the author of ten books, including *The Psychology of Self-Determination*, *Intrinsic Motivation and Self-Determination in Human Behavior*, and *Why We Do What We Do*. A grantee of the National Institute of Mental Health, the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, the National Science Foundation, a fellow of the American Psychological Association and the American Psychological Society.

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"The Mainstream Connections book series teaches that challenges and differences are part of the spice of life, not something to hide or fear. Each child in the series faces a challenge that makes him or her feel different and maybe not as good as other kids. Young readers will learn the value of facing challenges directly, and to respect everyone's unique challenges. Success comes from practice and improvement, especially on the things that are hardest to do."

**Dr. Brian Nosek, University of Virginia
Professor of Psychology**

Dr. Nosek serves as project manager for Project Implicit, a virtual laboratory for research and education in the social and behavioral sciences. The implicit cognition research group integrates basic psychological research, methodological and technological innovation, and public education to advance understanding of implicit cognition - thoughts and feelings that exist outside of conscious awareness or conscious control. Project Implicit is a collaboration of research laboratories at Harvard, The University of Washington and the University of Virginia.

"It is hard to overstate how much better children are served if they believe, rightly, that their efforts to improve academically actually make a difference. Research by Dr. Carol Dweck and colleagues has shown, in impressive detail, that children's beliefs about the nature of intelligence--as being either malleable or fixed--can greatly impact both their attitude towards learning and their academic achievement. It is far better to believe in a malleable rather than a fixed notion of intelligence. Thus it is a delight to see books like the present one put much needed, and scientifically credible, tools in the hands of educators, parents, and children."

**Dr. Jeremy Gray, Yale University
Professor of Psychology**

*Dr. Gray's research focuses on emotion and cognitive/executive control, and how they interact--particularly the effects of emotional states on higher cognitive functions, such as working memory and attentional systems. Dr. Gray's publications include: Gray, Jeremy R., & Thompson, Paul M. (2004). Neurobiology of intelligence: Science and ethics. *Nature Reviews Neuroscience* Gray, Jeremy R. (2004). Integration of emotion and cognitive control. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*. 13, 46-48. Gray, J. R., Chabris, C. F., & Braver, T. S. (2003). Neural mechanisms of general fluid intelligence. *Nature Neuroscience*, 6, 316 - 322. Gray, J. R., Braver, T. S., & Raichle, M. E. (2002). Integration of emotion and cognition in the lateral prefrontal cortex. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences USA*, 99, 4115 - 4120.*

"Katie's dad can't spell. Max can't work under time pressure. Carolyn may never master cursive writing and David wiggles. They are typical of many students who struggle with some aspect of school. They are also lucky because each of them finds understanding or acceptance of their particular learning profiles. Whether it's the realization that famous people have sometimes been "different" learners, a teacher who understands that creativity counts too, or the ability to identify coping strategies, the four students put a human face on what it means to struggle in school-and how essential it is to have partners in persisting for success. Katie, Max, Carolyn, and David are good news for students, parents, and teachers who want to understand what it means to learn outside the traditional lines of school."

**Dr. Carol Tomlinson
University of Virginia
Curry School of Education**

*Program Coordinator for the Educational Psychology and Gifted Education program. Dr. Tomlinson is a reviewer for eight journals and a section editor for one. She is author of over 100 articles, book chapters, books, and other professional development materials. For ASCD, she has authored *How to Differentiate Instruction in Mixed Ability Classrooms*, *The Differentiated Classroom: Responding to the Needs of All Learners*, *Providing Leadership for Differentiated Schools and Classrooms*, the facilitator's guide for the video staff development sets called *Differentiating Instruction*, and *At Work in the Differentiated Classroom*, as well as a professional inquiry kit on differentiation and most recently co-authored a book with Jay McTighe titled *Integrating Differentiated Instruction and Understanding by Design: Connected Content and Kids*. For Corwin Press, she is co-author of *The Parallel Curriculum Model: A Design to Develop High Potential and Challenge High Ability Learners*. Carol's books on differentiation have been translated into eight languages. She works throughout the U.S. and abroad with teachers whose goal is to develop more responsive heterogeneous classrooms.*

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“In *Fancy Smancy Cursive Handwriting*, Esham helps us to understand that authoring and handwriting are not synonymous. Too often gifted and creative children who are highly verbal and have delightful stories to share may have difficulty putting their ideas on paper. To focus on the deficit is to undermine the esteem of budding authors and discourage them from telling their tales. Esham paints a picture of how teachers can help such students embrace authoring and feel good about their writing ability in spite of poor handwriting.”

Dr. Susan Baum, The College of New Rochelle

Professor Emeritus, Gifted Education

*Dr. Baum is widely published in the areas of primary-aged gifted students, twice exceptional students, and the social/emotional factors affecting gifted students. Her publications in these areas include the following books: *Creativity 1,2,3; Chi Square, Pie Charts and Me; and To Be Gifted and Learning Disabled: From Identification to Practical Intervention Strategies*. She is coeditor and author of several chapters in a book titled *Nurturing the Gifts and Talents of Primary Grade Students* and is coauthor of *Multiple Intelligences in the Elementary Classroom: Pathways to Thoughtful Practice*, in collaboration with Howard Gardner. Dr. Baum served on the Board of Directors of the National Association for Gifted Students*

“In a simple book series, Barbara Esham has completed something very complicated and very important for us to understand about education. Each story demonstrates to children and the adults around them that it is important to ask questions when you do not understand something, to reach out and help others who are struggling, and to appreciate that everyone has talent even if it not the same as your talent. In addition to showing the importance of putting effort into one's work, the stories tell us all (children and adults) that understanding oneself is very important in success. As someone who researches the impact of diversity on performance and attitudes, it is very refreshing to read stories about how being "different" is not a bad thing, but something that can be a source of pride and achievement. I may have my college and graduate students read this series in my courses because I see them struggling with some of the same issues. I know I learned some things from the series about myself and about how to treat others!”

Paul H. White, Ph.D., OPL, University of Utah

Professor of Psychology

*Dr. White's research interests focus on attitudes and persuasion; prejudice and stereotyping; and group processes. Professor White's publications include: Fleming, M. A., Petty, R. E., & White, P. H. (2005). Stigmatized targets and evaluation: Prejudice as a determinant of attribute scrutiny and polarization. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 31, 496-507. Smith, J. L., Sansone, C., & White, P. H. (in press). *The stereotyped task engagement process: The role of interest and achievement motivation. Journal of Educational Psychology*. Smith, J. L., & White, P. H. (2002). An examination of implicitly activated, explicitly activated, and nullified stereotypes on mathematical performance: It's not just a female's issue. *Sex Roles: A Journal of Research*, 47, 179-191. White, P. H., Sanbonmatsu, D. M., Croyle R. T., & Smittipatana, S. (2002). Test of socially motivated underachievement: "Letting up" for others. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 38, 162-169.*

“Your books are delightful! I can't wait until they are published so that I can share them with our twice-exceptional clients. I love the way you transform negative reactions of parents and teachers into affirming strategies that support everyone involved. I especially enjoyed the way David used his creative problem-solving skills to brainstorm all the ways he could handle his 'Wiggle Fidgets'. Your books for children are definitely needed. I believe that they will make a real difference.”

**Linda Kreger Silverman, Ph.D. Director,
Gifted Development Center**

*Co-Chair of the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) Task Force on Assessment; she serves on the American Psychological Association Task Force on Giftedness. Her textbook, *Counseling the Gifted and Talented* (Love: 1993), is the most popular text in this area; it has been adopted at more than 50 colleges and universities. Her latest book, *Upside-Down Brilliance: The Visual-Spatial Learner*, was released November, 2002. She founded the only journal on adult giftedness, *Advanced Development*. Currently, she is conducting research on profoundly gifted children, the visual-spatial learner, comparative assessment of the gifted on different instruments, the effects of vision therapy, and introversion. Linda has been studying the assessment, psychology and education of the gifted since 1961 and she has contributed over 300 articles and chapters in this field.*

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“As a researcher who has studied twice exceptional young adults, and the mother of a child who was labeled both gifted and learning disabled, I was delighted to read this series of books. I believe that they will help children who are both smart and learning disabled understand that they are not alone. Barbara Esham’s Mainstream Connections Children’s Book Series reinforces the essential truth that all kids learn differently. By understanding that there are others like them who have achieved, children with learning differences will feel better about themselves. Anything that promotes a healthier self-concept in kids who are both smart and also learning disabled has the potential to make a difference in their lives and these books fit that description well!”

Dr. Sally Reis, University of Connecticut

Distinguished Professor and Teaching Fellow Educational Psychology

*Dr. Reis is a professor in the Educational Psychology Department at the Neag School of Education at the University of Connecticut, where she also serves as principal investigator of the National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented. Dr. Reis serves on several editorial boards, including the Gifted Child Quarterly, and is a past president of the National Association for Gifted Children. She is also interested in extensions of the Schoolwide Enrichment Model for both gifted and talented students and as a way to expand offerings and provide general enrichment to identify talents and potentials in students who have not been previously identified as gifted. She has traveled extensively conducting workshops and providing professional development for school districts on gifted education, enrichment programs, and talent development programs. She is co-author of *The Schoolwide Enrichment Model*, *The Secondary Triad Model*, *Dilemmas in Talent Development in the Middle Years*, and a book published in 1998 about women’s talent development titled *Work Left Undone: Choices and Compromises of Talented Females**

“Barbara Esham has provided a great service with this wonderful series of books. These books will entertain and inform children and their parents and show them that they are not alone, that others have faced these challenges and done wonderful things. These well written and beautifully illustrated books will interest children and their parents and help to increase their awareness that giftedness comes in many different wonderful packages.”

Rich Weinfeld, Educational Consultant

Director of the Weinfeld Education Group

*Rich Weinfeld is co-author of *Smart Kids with Learning Difficulties: Overcoming Obstacles and Realizing Potential*. Mr. Weinfeld previously served as Montgomery County (Maryland) Public School’s first full-time Instructional Specialist for Gifted and Talented/Learning Disabled Programs. Mr. Weinfeld has presented many workshops regarding best educational practices that help all students to succeed. He has been selected to present at the last seven national conferences of the National Association for Gifted Children, as well as at numerous other state and national conferences, including several of MSDE’s GT conferences. His presentation topics have included: "Adaptations and Accommodations – Enabling or Empowering?" "Programs That Work for GT/LD Students", "Issues Facing Boys in Education", "Appropriate Accommodations that Ensure Access to GT Instruction," and "Helping Boys Succeed in School. Mr. Weinfeld coordinated the highly successful, "Diamonds in the Rough" national conference that focused on the needs of gifted, underachieving students.*

“In grammar school I was slow to learn how to read and memory problems made the times tables impossible (repeated first grade). Throughout my educational career I struggled with tasks requiring long reading assignments or rote memory skills. Subjects that required conceptual and abstract thinking were relatively easy, e.g. science, philosophy, aesthetics, psychology. Others were challenging, but not impossible, e.g. economics, constitutional law. Still others were virtually impossible to master, e.g. history, foreign language. Yet, when the direction of my academic pursuits became increasingly subject to choice, I, as you might imagine, was more influenced by my strengths than my weaknesses. I still don’t know the times tables by heart, but my college degree is in Industrial Engineering. I still read slowly, but have been practicing law for 35 years and love to read for recreation. I personally identify with *Last to Finish* and *If You’re So Smart*. I was that child; I am that child; I would have benefited from knowing that child when I was a child. This project has the potential of changing lives for the better with its simple, creative, and charismatic message that will allow those of us who have every felt alone to believe that ‘we belong and are connected’. I believe Barbara Esham will change lives.”

Emerson Dickman, Advocacy Attorney

President of the International Dyslexia Association

Emerson Dickman has been a member of the Board of Directors of the International Dyslexia Association for 12 years and is currently the President. Emerson was Project Leader of the scientific consensus meetings to develop a research definition of Dyslexia for the National Institute for Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) in association with the International Dyslexia Association in 1994 and again in 2002. In December 2004 Emerson was Project Leader of an invitational forum attended by 33 organizations on the issue of Building Capacity to Deliver Multi-Tiered Reading Intervention in Public Schools.