



The Woes of Wit: Supporting Extreme Asynchrony



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Distinguished Technologist & Bridges Doctoral Student



Katrina Scott Yulia Kirill





was too tired to participate in math

wouldn't sit up

trouble working with a partner

kept laying down

crawling on the picnic table benches

hid behind room 15's steps

was asked to leave class to finish his work

making noises during mindfulness

today was not a very good day for Kirill

needed multiple prompts to start work

chose not to follow the group plan

class clown

I am glad you are not in my class

kissing items in music

was singing very loudly in class

did no classwork

trouble focusing

paced all day



BRIDGES GRAD SCHOOL
EDUCATING THE EXCEPTIONAL²



ANXIETY ↑

SELF-ESTEEM ↓



Five Stages of Diagnosis Grief

- Denial
This must be a mistake!
- Anger
No one understands what we're dealing with! We are all alone! How can that be?
- Bargaining
If we can only do this one other type of therapy...
- Depression
Nothing works...
- Acceptance
This is just the way it is, and it's ok...



Russophone

Homeschooling

Science

PG

Special Needs



Gifted



Yesterday, Kirill was too tired to participate in math. He kept laying down. When asked to participate he wouldn't sit up or do the problems. During the follow up activity, he had some trouble working with his partner and accurately classifying the problems.

Today during laps, Kirill went over to room 15's steps and hid behind them while the class was running laps. When asked about it, he said he was too tired to run. This hiding behavior is unsafe (I cannot find/locate him) and dishonest (he is not following the class's group plan). Running laps is actually part of our day as a P.E. component that is mandated by the state. I understand that he does not like running laps, but he does need to try his best. Our class's strategy when we get tired of running is stopping to catch our breath, count to 10 quickly, then try running again.



Mindfulness: During settle down time, Ms Mary asked for them to sit in their carpet position and quietly observe her. Kirill started making noises. When he looked at me and I shook my head and nodded for him to sit correctly, he fixed his position but then when it was time for the class to try the breathing, he began to make his loud noises again. When I said he needed to step out, he said he knows and even offered to go to the office. I took him to Room 4 until breathing was over (about 7 minutes) and then got him to do the brain lesson and journaling- which he did get well.

He did eventually start his math test and got 3 questions done (40 minutes of math time). In reading the rest of the class went to recess and he stayed in to answer the questions and speak with me why he needs to do his best in reading group. At this point, he was willing to talk openly and candidly. I praised him that he had great things to say and should share them when it's appropriate, not just because he is in at recess.

Last Thursday, he was crawling on the picnic table benches rather than participating in the science discussion and he would not join the group even after prompting to follow the group plan. (I know it's a little delayed to talk about this but I figured since I mentioned it in the first email, I'd elaborate now).

Teachers look for antecedents to behaviors. Mindfulness, my guess is it's because it's new and maybe uncomfortable. Science, reading, and math is puzzling because he normally is just fine in those areas. (You may recall writing was our weak spot before and now that's his most cooperative area!). Any insight or thoughts you have, please share! I am willing to try any plan to make him successful in all these areas! (And please understand my reach out is because I want to catch this and fix it early before it becomes habit!).



I just wanted to let you know that today was not a very good day for Kirill. Right away, he chose to not follow the group plan and do the handwriting practice. He got his warnings and then was asked to leave class to finish his work. 15 minutes later, he re entered with it done. He needed prompting from me sitting directly next to him to accomplish the mindfulness tasks. He scribbled through his buddy activity and I had to have him re do it. He tried to scribble again, and I had to give him yet another prompt to re do it. In the afternoon, he needed 2 prompts to start word study. Then, he did not follow the directions and needed prompts to check the checklist to revise and meet expectations. All these tasks have writing in common. Some writing was scripted, some was not, but all entailed sentence writing. I'm not sure if the behavior was a result of the assignment, of the excitement to celebrate his birthday, or a residual of a weekend event. In any case, I'm monitoring it and will let you know if it continues. If you have any insight, that is always appreciated.



Wednesday we had several incidences of Kirill making noise and singing very loudly, disturbing teaching and learning. Students and myself gave him I-messages but he would continue the behavior. Thursday he started the day the very same way with the first task at hand (in the morning message), I called him over and said he could sing and make noises as much as he wanted, whenever he wanted, but he had to do so in a way that didn't bother others. His goal for the day was if a classmate (or I) said we were being bothered during our work, he had to look around the classroom for a place he could go where others weren't, then he could continue as he wished. We brainstormed places and he seemed satisfied. He successfully used his choices throughout the day. On Friday, he had a reminder again in the morning. The only hiccups he had were kissing items in Music and not being a cooperative teammate in PE.



- > While I think the school is doing a great job around teaching the kids not to be bullies, last Thursday when I was a chaperone on the field trip, I witnessed something resembling it. Kirill was sitting at a picnic table eating lunch with a few other students. He was excited, and occasionally got up to run around and play with a rope tied around a tree near the table. Perhaps he was also saying something non-sensical without addressing anyone in particular, but nothing bad or extraordinary.
- >
- > One of the students from his class who was sitting at the same table kept saying: "Do you want everyone to know you are a class clown?" And then another student from a different class sitting right next to Kirill said: "I am glad you are not in my class."
- >
- > Kirill either wasn't paying attention or did not understand that both of these remarks were about him, or perhaps he did, but decided to ignore it or pretend he didn't hear it. But I felt really bad for him. Obviously, what these students were saying wasn't nearly as bad as it could have been, but they are only in 2nd grade. I know that someone like Kirill would be the perfect target for bullying, and it could damage his self esteem and self worth, so I am concerned.



Hi Katrina, I wanted you to know that this week I am experiencing some attitude issues with Kirill. He was having trouble focusing and not wanting to work on his computer with the district person who comes to help him on Wednesday. Today, he started again and I had a talk with him and he got a little better. He also copped an attitude with his teacher helper Mrs. H this morning when she tried to get him to do some reading. I had received a report from the sub last week that he paced all day and did no classwork. This is true, that some days he paces a lot. Today, he would not be redirected. Usually if I say, "That's enough exercising now it is time to come work on..." he will do it, but very little work got done today. He rarely works on math, avoids word study and has trouble getting started on reading. He did well during science.

I have noticed his last 3 spell checks have not be great, so I am reassigning him to a different word study group. His group has surpassed him and he needs to work with words at his level. I will try to make this seamless, and I have switched kids before, so maybe it won't be noticed. I wanted you to know. Sorry it isn't good news. 😞



Toxic stress (Dann, 2022; Monterusso, 2022)

- Parents

“You know, for the person who micromanaged for years because nobody else is advocating so I have to advocate you know, I have to go out and get training and I have to be the mama bear and I have to go stand up in IEP meetings and I have to, you know, get my lawyer lined up... IEP processes were incredibly stressful.” (Claudia)



Toxic stress (Dann, 2022; Monterusso, 2022)

- Students

So, this is the part that breaks my heart. I had no idea. I hear these stories. Now. [my child] still isn't one to sort of share her day. She's not the kid who comes home and says this is what happened today. Daily abuse from peers and from ancillary faculty is what I've learned. She was nicknamed 'the garbage girl' and was ostracized routinely. By first grade she would wet her pants before recess so that she wouldn't have to go to recess and be bullied... Yeah, I mean, she has incredible. I was and this is my diagnosis, PTSD from her [district] experience and the repeated name calling and belittling and yeah. (Maggie)



Meeting 2e children's needs in the classroom

- 9/10 received special education services (Huber, 2007)
- 4/10 received gifted services (Huber, 2007)
- 0/12 were recommended for gifted services (Dann, 2022)
- 44 school switches between 12 subjects (Dann 2022)

Parent experiences and reactions to the assessment process (Dann, 2022)

- 6/12 were denied assessment by the district
- Overwhelm, anger, confusion, judgement, prolonged frustration, shock



Characteristics of 2e present challenges for schools (Rubenstein et al., 2015)

- High intellect with intense interests

“[Manny] was obsessed with astronomy and science. . . .So we have quite a [book] collection here, mostly written for adults, but just imagine this four-year-old kid sitting down by himself reading books written for adults. He was a curious kid.”

- Asynchronous development

“[Bruce] didn’t even learn to tie his shoes until he was probably ten years old. He could do all kinds of calculations, but he couldn’t tie his shoes. ”



Teachers maintained inappropriate expectations (Rubenstein et al., 2015)

“He’s just so smart. It’s easy to expect him to be able to fix or correct his behaviors because he is so smart, and that makes it doubly frustrating. They’re [the teachers are] like, “If you can read eighth grade science textbooks, why in the world can’t you not have a meltdown?” ”



Teachers lacked structural flexibility (Rubenstein et al., 2015)

“I [Don] went to the superintendent. I went to the principal. And they said, “[Chris] does not meet the criteria. He is an average student.” And I would say, “He doesn’t study. He has a 4.0.” Well, that’s not uncommon in this school system. So we went to [the university], and [Chris’s doctor] helped me, and [the university] accepted him based off his grade point average and [a doctor] recommendation. So he got accepted, and he did two summer college courses: astrophysics and geology. He finished with 100.75% in geology and like 98.8% in astrophysics, but he is not in the ninth grade gifted program. ”

Hello Katarina,

I appreciate your passion, perseverance, and creativity in finding activities that tap into Kirill's interests. I would encourage you to continue searching for activities for younger students that will incorporate a wide variety of learning strategies. A two-hour lecture series designed for adult learning and interactions may include some high interest information for Kirill, however I do not see the course meeting his needs in terms of writing, studying, and sustained, successful participation/interaction within the context of the course and its requirements, which also include discussion and cooperative group work. For those reasons, I am afraid that I cannot recommend his candidacy for the course.

There are however, many opportunities for rigorous learning in our area. Lawrence Hall of Science, The Exploratorium, The Tech Museum and many other groups, offer programs, camps and activities that are engaging, rigorous, and fun for students. I have included a link to a site called YouSTEM Bay Area. This site might be a good place to continue your search. If you see activities you are interested in learning more about, I would encourage you to call and ask about how the activity might support Kirill's specific interests.

<http://youstem.org/main/discover?type=0&local=0&season=0&grade=1&costType=0&subj=1%2C2%2C3%2C6%2C5%2C4>

Again, I appreciate and support you in your continued efforts to engage Kirill in activities outside of the school day while we work on his IEP goals to be successful with second grade curriculum standards in school. In talking and interacting with Kirill in the library one day, he mentioned that he only likes to learn through reading books that he is interested in, and seemed disinterested in other types of learning or information. Finding experiences that will help him to grow his thinking around topics he likes that also offer opportunities to practice in his growth areas will contribute to his success in school as well.

Thank you and please let me know if you have any further questions.

With kind regards,

From: Yekaterina Tsipenyuk O'Neil <ytsipeny@yahoo.com>

Reply-To: Yekaterina Tsipenyuk O'Neil <ytsipeny@yahoo.com>

Date: Wednesday, February 22, 2017 at 4:33 PM

To: [REDACTED]

Subject: recommendation letter for Kirill O'Neil

Dear Ms. [REDACTED]

I am writing to ask you whether you would be willing to write a recommendation letter for Kirill. As you know, he is very interested in science, and we found out that Foothill College is offering a physics course that has no science or math prerequisites. The course is offered on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 6 till 8:15pm, starting in April through the end of June:

PHYS 12 :: INTRODUCTION TO MODERN PHYSICS						5 Units
Non-mathematical introduction to the ideas of modern physics intended for majors in the physical sciences. Introduction to the history and ideas of physics focus on three areas of modern physics, thermodynamics and the concept of entropy, Einstein's special and general theories of relativity, and quantum mechanics. The key ideas in these areas are explained using demonstrations, analogies, and examples drawn, whenever possible, from the student's own experience. Examine the impact these physics ideas have had on other fields, such as poetry, literature and music. No background in science or math is assumed.						
5 hours lecture. (60 hours total per quarter.)						
42086 TEXTS	PHYS-012--01	Lecture	06:00 PM-08:15 PM	TTh	[REDACTED]	5015
Class runs from 04/10/2017 - 06/30/2017.						

Here is the link to the full description of the course: https://www.foothill.edu/schedule/outlines.php?act=1&rec_id=2809&Quarter=2017S.

Having looked through admission requirements, it seems that the college may make exceptions and accept students who are in elementary school, but the first requirement for this is a recommendation letter from the school principal: <http://www.foothill.edu/hs/#sfadmission>.

Please, let me know your thoughts.

Thank you,
Katrina



12/15/16, 5:57 PM

Hi there, I have a 7-year-old son who is very interested in science in general, and astronomy in particular, to the extent that in addition to having visited various space museums and observatories all over the country (the usual thing you would expect a 7-year-old to do), he's been watching astronomy lectures available on youtube, including those of Alex Filippenko, as well as Russian astronomers Vladimir Surdin and Sergei Popov (my son is bilingual in English and Russian). Furthermore, he is currently finishing up an online introductory astronomy course offered by Moscow State University taught by Vladimir Surdin, and he is doing surprisingly well.

I am looking for programs that could engage my son and guide him. If you know of such a program or perhaps a person who would be willing to become my son's mentor (despite his young age), or have any other suggestions, I would greatly appreciate it.

Would it be possible for him to attend your lectures at Foothill College? Thank you in advance, Katrina

12/15/16, 10:09 PM

I am sorry, but I don't know what you are asking. Who is the "him"?

12/15/16, 10:43 PM

Sorry for the confusion: my second message is the continuation of the first. I am talking about my 7-year-old son. Please, let me know if you cannot see my original message, and I will paste it here again. Thank you!

12/16/16, 12:01 AM

Sorry, that is just too young for Foothill College classes.

12/16/16, 10:23 AM

Even though he is doing well in an online university-level class?

Input field: |Aa

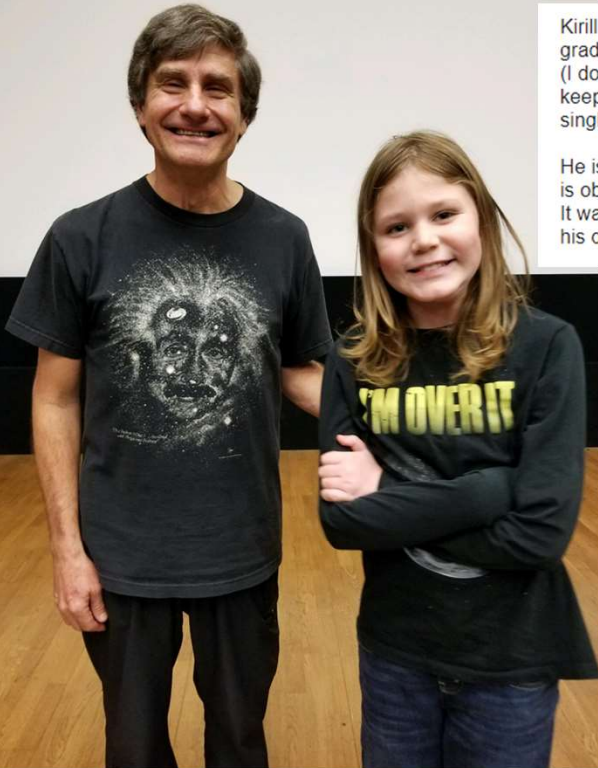




I wanted to let you know that Kirill scored 63/75 on his final exam! For context, scores above 57 correspond to A-range grades, which are better than 67% of the class. Additionally, the mean was 50.6. Very impressive — this was definitely a difficult exam!

Kirill did great in Astronomy C10! He would have received an "A" grade if he were an enrolled student. That's the top 30% of the class. (I don't have his exact ranking because, unfortunately, the GSI didn't keep track of all his homework and quiz scores. If you send me every single score that Kirill got, I could calculate it.)

He is very inquisitive and eager, and has a lot of knowledge. He is obviously highly intelligent, way out in the normal distribution. It was a great pleasure to interact with him. I really appreciated his questions, many of which were excellent.





Beneficial learning strategies NOT used at schools (Willard-Holt et al., 2013)

Flexibility

- Having a flexible schedule at school that changes with your interests
- Having the freedom to move around the classroom or school while learning
- Negotiating deadlines
- Freedom to work on an assignment until you decide you are finished
- Freedom to explore a topic even after the class has moved on
- Learning things that are different from what anyone else in your class is learning
- Choosing who will hear or see what you have learned
- Deciding how your work will be marked



Beneficial learning strategies NOT used at schools (Willard-Holt et al., 2013)

Access to experts / mentors

- Talking with experts
- Having a mentor
- Learning by doing research with help from an expert who is not your teacher
- Hearing an expert's thoughts about your work
- Having your work marked in the same way an expert's would be judged



Beneficial learning strategies NOT used at schools (Willard-Holt et al., 2013)

Other

- Being taught metacognitive strategies (how to monitor your own thinking)
- Spending time with peers who are twice exceptional



Home school can provide all of these and more

Flexibility

- Schedule
 - Sleep
 - Vacations / educational trips
 - Traffic / crowds
- Many different ways to learn
 - Independent study through a school district
 - Learn at home: curriculum / books / podcasts / documentaries / YouTube / subscriptions / online classes
 - Micro schools / à la carte classes / tutors / mentors / coops / online schools / community college
- Ability to constantly adjust
- Sensory processing and many other issues become irrelevant



Home school can provide all of these and more

Access to experts / mentors

- Talking with experts (public lectures / college & university classes / MOOCs)
- Having a mentor
- Learning by doing research with help from an expert who is not your teacher
- Hearing an expert's thoughts about your work
- Having your work marked in the same way an expert's would be judged



Home school can provide all of these and more

Other

- More free time to just play and dedicate to interests
- Ability to interact with people with similar interests
- Ability to interact with people of various ages
- Ability to make decisions for themselves
- More opportunities to have real life experiences



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Thank You.

Yekaterina (Katrina) O'Neil

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https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BN9_0e2AcXA