



TONI JENNINGS EXCEPTIONAL
EDUCATION INSTITUTE

MAKING AN IMPACT FOR A BETTER FUTURE



2022 / 2023

ANNUAL REPORT

***TONI JENNINGS
EXCEPTIONAL
EDUCATION
INSTITUTE
ANNUAL REPORT
2022/2023***



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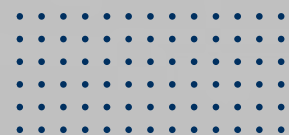
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The Legacy of Toni Jennings

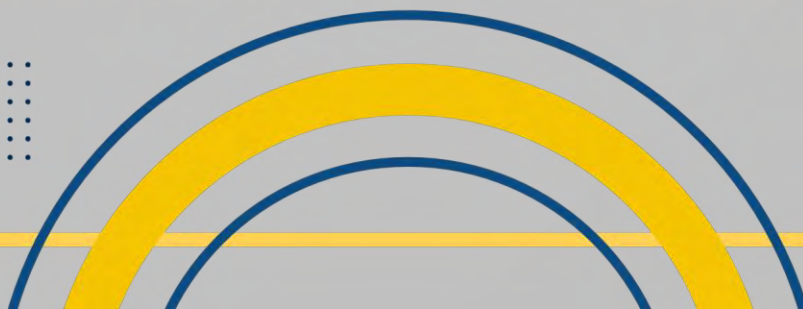
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Toni Jennings is an educational leader who continues to influence the work we are committed to — teaching, learning, and service.

At the start of her career, Jennings worked as an elementary school teacher. In 1976, she began her political career as a Florida House of Representatives member. Since then, she has also held office in the Florida Senate and was elected 16th lieutenant governor of Florida. She has devoted her career to working on issues related to education, healthcare, hurricane preparedness, disaster relief, and the business industry in Florida.

Jennings is a strong, caring community leader who works hard to make a difference in the lives of our Central Florida children and their families.



MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR



Greetings. This year, our commitment to fostering inclusive education for all students has been stronger than ever.

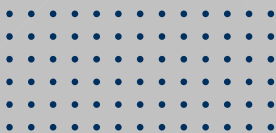
Our mission, to equip educators and support families of students with disabilities, is vital, and I am proud to share the significant impact we've made over the past year. Through a range of events, programs, research, and services, we have directly contributed to improving the education and lives of exceptional students.

Our research initiatives have continued to push boundaries, leading to publications in prestigious journals and providing evidence-based practices that educators and policymakers can implement.

I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to every member of our community - our dedicated staff, inspiring educators, committed families, and, most importantly, the exceptional students we serve. Your engagement, feedback, and relentless pursuit of inclusive education fuel our work. With your continued support, we are confident in our ability to further our mission and make a difference in the lives of many more exceptional students. Thank you for trusting us and being a part of our journey.

Yours sincerely,

**Eleazar Vasquez, Ph. D. BCBA
Director,
Toni Jennings Exceptional Education Institute
University of Central Florida**



THE TJEEI TEAM



The TJEEI Team was on the move this year, spreading messages aligned with supporting children with disabilities. Presentations at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, Teacher Education Division of the Council For Exceptional Children, American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, and many more.



MAKING AN IMPACT

The Toni Jennings Exceptional Education Institute (TJEEI) at the University of Central Florida has been making a monumental impact for students with disabilities, their families, and the community. Programs supported by TJEEI have provided services to the community, cutting edge research programs, and added over 25,000 special education teachers. With your support, we will continue to grow these numbers.



TJEEI

IMPACT

**1.5
MILLION SCHOLARS**

Over a million scholars benefited from TJEEI's initiatives



**EDUCATION OVER 25,000
TEACHERS**



Prepared over 25,000 exceptional education teachers & leaders

RESEARCH \$20 MILLION

Over \$20 million in external funding since 2017



**SERVICE 30,000 HOURS
ANNUALLY**

Over 200 families served with screening events since 2017



BE PART OF THE SOLUTION

Join the
Toni Jennings Exceptional Education Institute Team
Visit www.tjeei.ucf

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION SERVICES

Since July 1, 2022, TJEEI has taken significant strides in advancing its inclusive education services program. With a strong commitment to providing equal access to education, TJEEI has implemented comprehensive support systems and resources for students with disabilities. The program encompasses a wide range of services, including personalized academic accommodations, assistive technologies, accessible campus facilities, and specialized counseling and mentorship programs. Through proactive collaboration between faculty, staff, and students, UCF fosters an inclusive learning environment that embraces diversity and promotes the success of all students, regardless of their abilities. By prioritizing accessibility, advocacy, and empowerment, TJEEI's inclusive education services program strives to create an equitable educational experience for every member of its diverse student body.



THE IES TEAM



Dr. Matthew Marino
Principal Investigator



Dr. Kiera Anderson
Internship Experience
Manager



Dr. Jaime Best
Program Director



Dr. Ben Gallegos
Program Coordinator

IES GOALS

1. Lead the nation in diversity, equity, and inclusion by creating mutually beneficial partnerships across colleges and community resources.
2. Develop a planned community with a continuum of wrap-around services to support the following domains for individuals with ID, including; a) independent living, b) employment, c) continuing education, d) social engagement in the community, and e) health care.
3. Customize service provision using an a-la-carte menu of supports to maximize individual employment, health, happiness, life-long learning, and participation in the community.
4. Leverage individual strengths and attributes to connect individuals with ID to the greater Orlando community.



IES STUDENTS

Supports and Partnerships

Knights Exemplar

Student Health Services

College of Health Professions and
Sciences-Communications
Disorders Clinic

Career Services

Central Florida Community Arts

Wellness and Health Promotions
Services

Recreation and Wellness Center

Office of Institutional Equity/Title
IX



The Toni Jennings Exceptional Education Institute actively engages in a wide range of community supports, demonstrating its commitment to inclusivity and supporting individuals with disabilities. Through partnerships with local organizations, the institute promotes community integration and advocates for the rights and inclusion of individuals with disabilities. The institute also participates in community events, such as disability awareness campaigns and fundraisers, fostering a sense of belonging and encouraging public involvement in the cause. By actively participating in community supports, the Toni Jennings Exceptional Education Institute strives to create an inclusive society where everyone can thrive and lead fulfilling lives.



PARTNERS AND PROJECTS

PROJECT FOCUS

DOWN SYNDROME FOUNDATION

SUMMER KNIGHTS

TJEEI CORN HOLE TOURNAMENT

ASSESSMENT SCREENINGS

OCPS TRANSITION

HIGH SCHOOL TOURS

FLORIDA CENTER FOR STUDENTS WITH UNIQUE ABILITIES

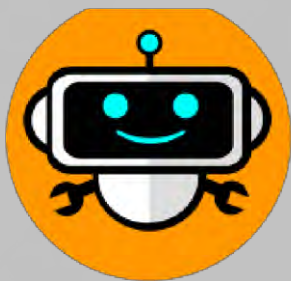
CENTER FOR AUTISM AND RELATED DISABILITIES (CARD)



COMMUNITY IMPACT

RESEARCH IMPACT

Toni Jennings Exceptional Education Institute focused its research efforts on advancing knowledge and improving outcomes for students with disabilities. The institute conducted cutting-edge research in areas such as inclusive teaching practices and curriculum adaptations.



Project
Social
Code



**PROJECT SOCIAL CODE
MODELME
C.O.R.I.T.E.
SPECIAL EDUCATION BURNOUT**

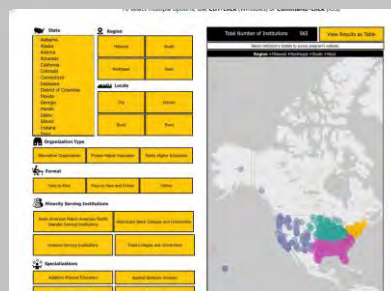


RESEARCH IMPACT

Researchers at the institute collaborated with educators and industry experts to develop evidence-based interventions and innovative strategies that enhance learning experiences for students with disabilities. The research efforts aimed to address the unique needs of diverse populations and pave the way for more inclusive and effective educational practices. The institute's commitment to research in these years strengthened its position as a leader in the field of exceptional education.



BIOMETRICS ANALYSIS PROJECT RISE C.O.R.I.T.E.



EDUCATION IMPACT

The Toni Jennings Exceptional Education Institute (TJEEI) at the University of Central Florida (UCF) provides funding opportunities for teachers to pursue higher-level education. Through scholarships, grants, and other programs, TJEEI supports teachers in accessing advanced degrees, certifications, and professional development opportunities. These funding opportunities enable educators to enhance their knowledge and expertise, ultimately strengthening their ability to provide high-quality education and support to students with disabilities.



**TELEPORTS SCHOLARS
LEAD SCHOLARS
PROJECT ABA SCHOLARS
PROJECT ASD SCHOLARS
CIDDL**



MILESTONES

● SUMMER 2022

- Inclusive Education Service moves to TJEEI
- Inaugural Summer Knights program welcomes five new students.
- Model Me Team recognized with the Gold Award at the 2022 Serious Play Conference (ModelMe)

● FALL 2022

- TJEEI hosts Biometric Analysis Workshops
- IES program Orientation welcomes new students
- UCF IES Annual Alumni/Student Tailgate event
- IES program Orientation welcomes new students
- Project ABA awarded

● SPRING 2023

- Mongolian delegation visits TJEEI
- UCF Day of Giving supports TJEEI
- TJEEI Team Present Project RISE to the Harvard School of Education Master's Program
- Doctoral Students Graduate
- Pearls of Wisdom Awarded
- TJEEI team completes presentations and attends conferences



PRESENTATIONS, PUBLICATIONS AND AWARDS

This has been a great year for disseminating information. The TJEEI Team delivered a multitude of compelling presentations and contributed research findings to esteemed scholarly journals.

● PRESENTATIONS

- Marino, M. T., Vasquez, E III, Patterson, M., Wilder, T., Tazi, Y, & Parsons, C. (April. 2023). Presentation. Project Rise: Developing a Universal Design for Learning Special Education Teacher Recruitment Map. Harvard Graduate School of Education. Cambridge, MA.
- Grays, A. (2023, March). Technology-enhanced performance-based feedback. Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) Annual Conference. Louisville, KY.
- Marino, M. & Grays, A. (2023, March). Introducing CIDDLE. Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) Annual Conference. Louisville, KY.
- Vazquez, E., Marino, M. & Grays, A. (2023, March). Revolutionary artificial intelligence disrupting education across the globe. Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) Annual Conference. Louisville, KY
- Hunt, J., Marino, M., Taub, M., Duarte, A., Bentley, B., Benzoni, A., Holman, K. (2023, April 14). Feasibility of game-enhanced fraction curriculum to enhance conceptual understanding and engagement of diverse students [Roundtable] American Education Research Association Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL, United States.
- Holman, K. (2023, March 14). Dream 2B: Supporting Inclusive Elementary Math Instruction through Game-based Learning and Universal Design Principles [Poster presentation] Universal Design for Learning-Implementation and Research Network Summit, Orlando, FL, United States.
- Taub, M., Holman, K., Marino, M, Hunt, J. (2022, March 30). Dream2b [Presentation]. Universal Design for Learning-Implementation and Research Network Summit, Asynchronous Session.
- Grays, A. (2022, March). Technology-enhanced performance-based feedback in early childhood education. American Association of College Teacher Educators; Holmes Pre-Conference, New Orleans, LA.
- Grays, A. & Wilder, T. (2023, February). Understanding how culture influences language development and play during early childhood. American Association of College Teacher Educators; Holmes PreConference, Indianapolis, IN.
- Anderson, K., David, K., & McCormick, G. (2023, January). Building Inclusive Campuses [Presentation]. Florida Center for Students With Unique Abilities Interactive Virtual Event. Zaugg, T.
- Grays, A. Holman, K. (2022, December). Creating accessible presentations. Florida Association of Teacher Educators, Orlando, FL.
- Dieker, L., Barrion, N., Wadors, L., Smith, A., Marino, M., Grays, A., Holman, K., Nelson, N., Tyler, N., Fernandez, E., Garilli, A., & Schaldant, M. (2023, March 3). Program Chair Invited: Office of Special Education National Center Slam: Practical Teacher Tools [Presentation]. Council for Exceptional Children 2023 Convention and Expo, Louisville, KY, United States.
- Dieker, L., Holman, K., & Kohnke, S. (2023, March 3). Free, free, free, free, free: Resources for STEM teaching [Poster presentation]. Council for Exceptional Children 2023 Convention and Expo, Louisville, KY, United States.
- Holman, K. (2023, March 3) Interventions for Developmental Dyscalculia: A Systematic Literature Review [Presentation]. Council for Exceptional Children 2023 Convention and Expo, Louisville, KY, United States.

● PRESENTATIONS (CONTINUED)

- David, K. & Best, J., (2022). Interprofessional Collaboration to Improve Success of Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities in Post-Secondary Education. ASHA National Convention, New Orleans, Louisiana.
- Marino, M. T., Vasquez, E., *Patterson, M., *Wilder, T., *Goldman, S., (2022, June). Presentation. Get to know the CIDDL Center. AACTE New and Seasoned Deans Leadership Academy. Tampa, FL.
- Hines, R., Moore, E., Moise, D., & McCloud, A.P. (2022). Special education & language disorders: Interdisciplinary collaboration to create speech and language expertise among special educators [Presentation]. Florida Association of Teacher Educators. Orlando, FL.
- White., A., Gallegos, B., Skelton, S., & Green, T. (2022). The intersection of race, language, and disability: What does it mean for personnel development? OSEP Leadership and Project Directors' Conference. Virtual.
- Donehower, C., Pennington, R., Vasquez, E., Hansen, S., Marelle, C., DeMarco, J., Pinczynski, M., & Enriquez, J. (2022). Cracking the social code: A STEM and social skills curriculum for students with ASD and ID. Proceedings for the Division of Developmental Disabilities conference.

● PUBLICATIONS

- Marino, M., Vasquez, E., Dieker, L., Basham, J., & Blackorby, J. (2023). The future of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in special education technology. *The Journal of Special Education Technology*.
- Donehower, P. C., Walker, J., Thomas, C. N., Taylor, M. S., Best, J., Diaz, M., Rose, C. A., & Vasquez, E. (2023). Functional analysis in simulated environments. *Journal of Special Education Apprenticeship*, 1. doi:10.1037/sepa0000121
- Hunt, J. H., Taub, M., Marino, M., Duarte, A., Bentley, B., Holman, K., & Kuhlman, A. (2023). Effects of game-enhanced supplemental fraction curriculum on student engagement, fraction knowledge, and stem interest. *Education Sciences*, 13(7), 646. <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci13070646>
- Grays, A. & Wilder, T. (2023, March). Uniting teams, enhancing outcomes: examining the impact of universal design for learning and adult learning theory on professional development for early steps providers in Florida. University of Central Florida, Orlando, FL.
- Carter Jr, R. A., Zhang, L., Hunt, T. L., Bloom, L., Wilder, T. L., Yang, S., & Parsons, C. (2023). Educator preparation: a multi-discipline analysis of standards to promote critical thinking. *Teachers and Teaching*, 1-17. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2023.2191184>.
- Grays, A., Moise, D., Moore, E., Young, F., & Wilder, T. L. (2023) Why are we whispering: Addressing implicit bias in K-12 education. Southeastern Regional Association of Teacher Educators. *SRATE Journal*. (In Press).
- Scott, L., Anderson, K., Parsons, C., Hirn, J., Kerns, C., & Romualdo, A. (2023, under revision). All the voices: An experiential, intersectional and reflective approach. In IGI Global (Ed.), *Meaningful and Active Engagement of Families of Students with Disabilities*.
- Wilder, T. L., Patterson, M., Young, F., Grays, A., Tazi, Y., Carter, R., & Marino, M. (2023). Supporting minority-serving institutions to recruit a diverse workforce. *Educational Researcher* (Submitted for review, 01/2023).

● PUBLICATIONS (CONTINUED)

- Vasquez, E., Straub, C., Nagendran, A., Walsh, G., Hughes, C., Schaffer, K., Koch, A., Delisio, L., & Russell, M. A comparison of simulated and traditional environments on the social responses for children with autism. In revision for submission.
- Gallegos, B., Dieker, L., Smith, R., & Ralston, N. C. (2022). Serving students with disabilities who are culturally and linguistically diverse in rural communities: Technology access is essential. *Northwest Journal of Teacher Education*, 17(1).
<https://doi.org/10.15760/nwjte.2022.17.1.1>
- Wilder, T. L., Anderson, K., Parsons, C., Tazi, Y., & Marino, M. T. (in review). Empowering women in STEM: Understanding the role of executive function skills. *Journal of Special Education Technology* (Submitted for review 02/2023).

● AWARDS

- Towson, J., Schaffer, K. & Vasquez, E., (2022) Project Early Childhood and Applied Behavior Analysis. Office of Special Education Programs. 2022-2026. Project ABA: Preparing a Diverse Cadre of Early Childhood and Special Education Teachers in Applied Behavior Analysis Award Number H325K220085 1,250,000
- US Patent No. 11,600,188 (March, 2023). Sensory Determinative Adaptive Audio Rendering Assigned to University of Central Florida Research Foundation, Inc.
- US Patent No. 11,600,189 (March, 2023). Therapeutic Simulator System for Stress Disorders
- Assigned to University of Central Florida Research Foundation, Inc.
- US Patent No. 11,600,190 (March, 2023). Simulation Therapy for Autism Spectrum Disorder Assigned to University of Central Florida Research Foundation, Inc.
- Holman, Kenneth. The Central Florida English-Speaking Union Jessie Drey Memorial Scholarship (\$5,000 for Fall 2022 and \$5,000 for Spring 2023).

TJEEI HIGHLIGHTS

TJEEI GOES INTERNATIONAL

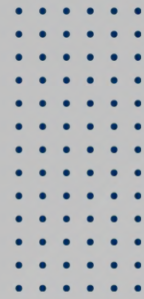
TJEEI was honored to host an education delegation from Mongolia.



The Mongolian Delegation visited TJEEI to learn more about our supports and inclusive programs. Topics of discussion included Inclusive Education Services, Universal Design for Learning, Project Social Code, and laws that govern the support and education of students with disabilities.

TJEEI IS SOCIAL
Follow us on social media!
Stay connected year-round!
Facebook/Instagram: @TJEEIOfficial
Twitter: @OfficialTJEEI





Dr. Jacqueline Rodriguez
Chief Executive Officer
National Center for Learning Disabilities

In honor of Dr. Cynthia Pearl and in the spirit of her career, the early career award "Pearls of Wisdom" was created for eligible UCF students who have graduated from the Exceptional Education doctoral program.

The 2023 Pearls of Wisdom award goes to Dr. Jacqueline Rodriguez.

Dr. Rodriguez is Chief Executive Officer at the National Center for Learning Disabilities. As CEO, Jackie leads a team at the forefront of the learning disabilities rights movement. Her commitment to learning accessibility empowers strategy, partnerships, policy recommendations, and research that advance the lives of individuals with learning disabilities and attention issues.



PEARLS OF WISDOM

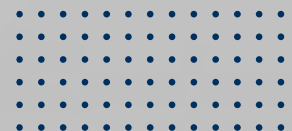


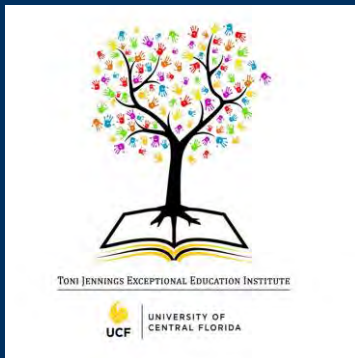
LOOKING FORWARD

The Toni Jennings Exceptional Education Institute has always been at the forefront of promoting inclusive education and empowering students with disabilities. As we look ahead, the future of the institute holds immense potential for supporting students with disabilities. This includes expanding research in biometric analysis and harnessing the power of artificial intelligence (AI) in education. These advancements will not only enhance individualized learning experiences but also foster inclusivity and equal opportunities for students with diverse abilities.

Artificial intelligence (AI) is revolutionizing various industries, and education is no exception. In the future, the Toni Jennings Exceptional Education Institute will harness the power of AI to transform the educational landscape for students with disabilities. AI algorithms can analyze vast amounts of educational data, identify patterns, and provide personalized recommendations for students' learning paths. Intelligent tutoring systems can adapt to individual strengths and weaknesses, enabling students to progress at their own pace. Moreover, AI-powered virtual assistants can provide real-time support and guidance, fostering independent learning and problem-solving skills.

One exciting aspect of the future for the Toni Jennings Exceptional Education Institute is the expansion of research in biometric analysis. Biometric data, such as eye movements, facial expressions, and physiological responses, can provide valuable insights into students' engagement, emotional states, and cognitive processes. This data can help educators design personalized interventions, tailor instructional strategies, and enhance learning outcomes. The institute will invest in state-of-the-art technology and research facilities to explore the potential of biometric analysis further.





TONI JENNINGS EXCEPTIONAL EDUCATION INSTITUTE



4221 Andromeda Loop, Orlando,
FL 32816



407-823-6708



tjeei@ucf.edu



ccie.ucf.edu/tjeei

