

# MEET AET VOLUNTEER

## Risa Graff



### Level of AET membership:

BCET

### Type and location of practice: (City, State)

Private Practice in Olympia Fields, Illinois

### Leadership roles held in AET:

Currently on Conference Committee, Ethics Committee, and the Mentoring Program Committee, Webinar Committee and a Past President

### How long have you been an educational therapist?

45 years

### What brought you to educational therapy?

I had a very different path to educational therapy than most ETs. When I finished grad school in 1975, a mentor invited me to join her in a private, clinical practice. After a few years, I began to call myself an educational therapist because that's what I felt like I was. When I learned there was a national organization for educational therapists, I was thrilled to find the support I needed. AET continues to educate me decades later.

### Areas of expertise:

Customizing interventions to fit the educational needs and personal interests of clients. Using nonacademic tools to teach executive functions and learning strategies. Helping clients find joy in learning when they've been demoralized by school.

### What is the best career advice you can give to new ETs?

1. Find a study group and a mentor or two. Educational therapy is complicated -- don't try to practice in isolation. No matter how long we're in practice, we all need colleagues with whom we are comfortable discussing our practice issues. 2. Don't be afraid to be creative in your practice. 3. Join an AET committee or work group. It will give back to you ten fold.

### Describe a challenge you have faced as an educational therapist:

My biggest challenges occurred at the beginning of my practice when I felt very isolated and insecure about my skills. The Chicago AET Study group was and is a tremendous support.

### Describe a highlight of your educational therapy career:

Doing supervision and mentoring other ETs along their professional journeys continue to be highlights for me.

### What do you think the future of the educational therapy profession will look like?

I hope that the profession of educational therapy will grow large enough to be a household word in all areas of the US. Having enough members to establish licensure would be wonderful.

### How have you benefited from your membership in AET?

Without joining AET, I would have quit working decades ago. My membership continues to keep me current in terms of information needed to practice well, but more importantly, I am nurtured and advised by ETs that I trust and admire.

### Hobbies/Leisure Activities:

Yoga, martial arts, needlework, spending time with grandchildren.

