

MEET AET VOLUNTEER

Maxine Ficksman



Level of AET membership:

BCET Retired as of 2023.

Type and location of practice: (City, State)

Tarzana, CA Private Practice 1985-2019, Educational Therapist on staff of private elementary school for 13 years.

Leadership roles held in AET:

Advisory Bd Chair, Higher Ed/Graduate Programs Chair, 15 years, President, Past President, President Elect, Public Relations Chair, Program Director, Community Service Chair among others.

How long have you been an educational therapist?

38 years officially, but I feel I was born an ET

What brought you to educational therapy?

Although I had worked in the fields of secondary ed. and remedial reading/ special ed, and had helped and tutored my peers since elementary school, I had not heard of this field until I met an outstanding ET at a party in Los Angeles during the early 1980s. She helped me figure out how to enhance my previous training with an additional MA in reading and a special ed credential.

Areas of expertise:

I have worked with children and their families from pre-school to adults, from low functioning to ADHD, autistic spectrum to highly gifted, twice exceptional, and combinations thereof. I am probably best at finding the breakdowns and figuring out how to help the client move forward, gaining self-confidence and independence. My positions in public and private schools helped me to better communicate with and support allied professionals, administrators, teachers, and parents, and to facilitate the interactions between the team members.

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

Personally, throughout the years, I found that my varied experiences with the range of clients and school settings enhanced my perspective in working effectively with everyone involved. I have always encouraged my grad students and supervisees to seek multi-faceted positions.

Describe a challenge you have faced as an educational therapist:

Probably my biggest challenge was figuring out how to retire from the profession that I have loved for so many years. After co-editing the second edition of the textbook, *Clinical Practice of Educational Therapy*, in 2018, I realized that this was an opportune time to evaluate my contribution to my profession- to gradually retire from my practice, and volunteer.

Describe a highlight of your educational therapy career:

Since I have lived in the same community for almost 50 years, it is a blessing to bump into former parents who share success stories about their children, now grown, many with children of their own. Working as an ed therapist has affected me in so many valuable ways. We learn so much about ourselves - it is a gift.

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

I hope the new ET outreach programs at CSUN will become a catalyst for future programs to include educational therapy in the special school service teams. With more national and international recognition, our field will grow exponentially, helping more children and adults reach their potential.

How have you benefited from your membership in AET?

I became close friends with dedicated professionals and learned much from conferences, study group meetings, and special BCET dialogues. I was asked to coordinate the UCLAx ET program because of my status as President of AET. As AET Community Service chair, I am very proud of my work with Juvenile Justice.

Hobbies/Leisure Activities:

I love fast walking in nature and working out at the gym. I enjoy reading books, newspapers, and poetry, and attending plays, concerts, and museum exhibits. We travel frequently around and out of the country; I especially love spending time and traveling with our adult children and our extended family and friends.

