

Jan Dunk

Perception, Resilience, Planning, and Strategy

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SELECTED EXPERIENCE

Esprit Academy, Toronto — Founding Principal

June 2020 - PRESENT

Esprit was founded as a non-profit board-led independent school when the previous employer was forced to wind down at the start of Covid lockdowns. This provided a next chapter for many otherwise stranded students. This undertaking has involved significant strategic work in creating an individualized program optimized for “twice exceptional” students (students with unique talents and unique developmental needs). This program has focused on perception (observing and adapting) in sometimes highly complex situations of development or mental health or other barriers to student success for students aged 6 to 14. As with many entrepreneurial endeavors, starting a business at this time also required continued planning of complex operations such as partnering with therapeutic providers for existing and future students, financial planning, and community partnerships.

The Dragon Academy, Toronto — Head of Lower School

2018 - 2020

With a strategy to bring students into the program earlier than high school, creating this program involved planning and pitching the existing organization, and program development adapted from Montessori practices to the brand and focus of the school. Activities involved generating curriculum, marketing, and classroom design.

The Dragon Academy, Toronto — Resource Teacher

2017 - 2020

Working with students typically from ages 12 to 19 this school emphasized creative thinking and dialog. The resource teacher role typically involves high-risk students and students working through challenges. Required coaching to cultivate resilience and learning strategies as well as adapting programming to the student. Life skills coaching aimed at both the learning environment and the wider community.

Key Value Offered

Perception - developed through adapting child centered programs to achieve results in individualized situations

Resilience - from working with parents, children and supporting therapeutic programs for substantive improvements of students' opportunities given challenging circumstances

Planning - managing the complexity of pedagogical programs, staffing, and parent/customer needs; keeping attention to detail and a big picture in scope.

Strategy - decision-making and alignment of highly involved stakeholders in support of important results - a child's learning and life path

Echo Montessori, Guelph — Owner and Teacher

2010 - 2015

This startup experience involved significant planning complexity as a new offering requiring pre-launch planning, marketing, building reconstruction, as well as compliance under a very specific regulation (Day Nurseries Act) to be licensed given the program included very young children. A partnership with both a forest school and another independent program to provide a rich program and continuity for students past the program focus.

Guelph Montessori, Guelph — Montessori Teacher

2005 - 2010

Teaching role in a newly created program that provided an entry point for young children as part of the school's overall student enlistment program. Integration into existing school culture and environment. A formative experience for customer relationships and needs assessments with parents who are very engaged and themselves going through a lot of change with their children attending school for the first time.

EDUCATION

University of Toronto, Cont. Ed - Full-Stack Developer Bootcamp

July 2023 - October 2023

Toronto Montessori Institute, Toronto — Casa MACTE Certification

2009 - 2010

Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education (MACTE) certification for teaching programs typically offered to students aged 3 to 6 years.

Toronto Montessori Institute, Toronto — Infant and Toddler MACTE Certification

2006 - 2007

Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education (MACTE) certification for teaching programs typically offered to students aged 0 to 3 years.

University of Guelph, Guelph — BSc (Agr)

1994 - 1998

Bachelor of Science program focused on biology, genetics, and related study in the agricultural program.

VOLUNTEERING

Literacy Tutor, Centre for Community Learning and Development - Tutoring adult learners in oral and written communication new to the English Language and Canadian culture.

PanAm Games Young Performer Chaperone - Young performers for the artistic exhibits for the opening ceremony of the PanAm games received support and supervision

Tutor, Frontier College - 'Beat the Street' youth tutor for literacy and numeracy. Preparation for GED testing

LANGUAGES

Fluent in English, Elementary proficiency in French