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# TEMPO

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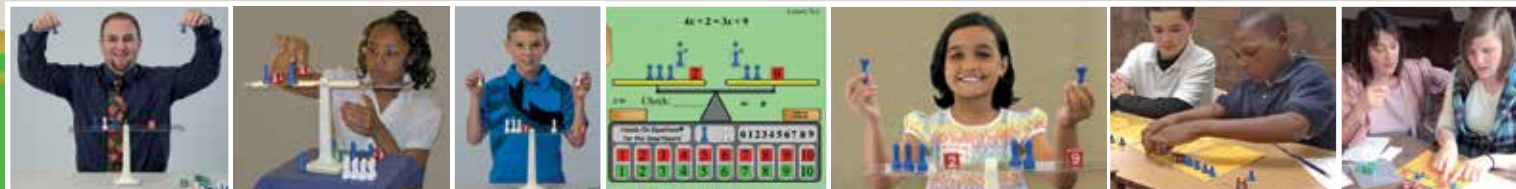
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Opinions expressed by individual authors do not necessarily represent official positions of TAGT.

# FROM THE EDITOR

by Krystal Goree, Ph.D.



**T**HE FIELD OF GIFTED EDUCATION IS FULL OF contributors—individuals who have a distinct passion for gifted kids and who are willing to invest their time, talent, and energy to further the field and provide meaningful educational opportunities for every child. In my mind and heart, this is a special group and, to be a part of the group, one cannot be “faint of heart.” In the area of educational research, those who study gifted are few and far between. In the schools, there is oftentimes only one educator who has expertise in gifted education at a campus, if any. Relatively speaking, we are a small group as is the population we serve. This means that those of us who are dedicated to ensuring that the academic and affective needs of gifted children are effectively addressed must build connections and support one another to accomplish the goals we set.

Networking in today’s world is more multifaceted than ever before. The Internet and social media offer venues for connecting and sharing information that we have never experienced, presenting exciting opportunities to learn and interact; however, these methods of communication do not match the personal interaction we experience and relationships we build when we meet face to face. For this reason, I encourage educators and parents to attend conferences that feature researchers and practitioners in the field. To me, it is extremely rejuvenating to be surrounded by those who encounter the same or similar challenges, have experienced like feelings of accomplishment with kids, have ideas that I look forward to implementing, and share my dreams.

The Texas Association for the Gifted and Talented annual conference is just around the corner! This issue of *TEMPO* features articles written by four of the presenters who will be featured at the conference, providing readers with a sample of the quality professional development offered at this gathering of advocates for gifted children. Carolyn Coil shares her thoughts on the importance of preparing students for the future in an article titled “Building Connections: Developing 21st Century Self-Management Skills for Gifted Students.” John Delandtsheer, author of the award winning publication *Making All Kids Smarter* (2011), speaks to the positive instructional practices he observes in schools and offers tips for enhancing classroom experiences for kids. Lisa Van Gemert addresses the importance of gifted kids making connections in their world, noting the significance of these connections in helping children feel comfortable and confident as they interact with others and adapt to their environment. Wrapping up the issue, Dr. Susan Johnsen, along with Sonia Parker, provides a thorough review of the research on twice-exceptional students and highlights the importance of gifted and special educators working together to ensure that the needs of this special population are addressed through a spirit of cooperation.

I hope you will join us as at the Texas Association for the Gifted and Talented annual conference! It will provide a wonderful opportunity to meet and visit with the world-renowned authors featured in this issue of *TEMPO* along with many other outstanding presenters. We can all build connections as we celebrate gifted kids and learn from one another!



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— AMANDA QUAY

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# BUILDING CONNECTIONS

by Lynette Breedlove, Ph.D.



**T**HE FIRST YEAR I ATTENDED THE TAGT ANNUAL conference, it was at the suggestion of the teacher across the hall. She thought I might enjoy gifted education and recommended I start by getting the required training. I negotiated with my principal to attend the conference. What an experi-



ence! People everywhere talking about bright, amazing kids and the difference they were making for those kids! I was hooked.

The second year, I went to the TAGT conference to learn how to differentiate. While I understood the reasons to do it, I had no idea where to start or how to manage the practical pieces like grading and grouping. I went through the conference program and only attended sessions in the differentiating curriculum strand. Those sessions were presented by some of the biggest experts in gifted education like Susan Winebrenner and Bertie Kingore. Some were presented by teachers sharing their experiences. I left with my questions answered, ready to try again.

Each year I've come back to the TAGT conference and left with questions answered, renewed to advocate for gifted students again. I've gone from attendee to presenter to board member, each year building new connections and reinforcing relationships with other educators passionate about gifted kids. And to think it all started with the teacher across the hall suggesting I get some training in gifted education!

We make differences in people's lives every day in little ways through the connections we make. As teachers, we do that for children every day. We can do it as colleagues, too. TAGT allows me to learn from others and to share with others. It allows me to do what the teacher across the hall did for me.

Find a way to join me at the TAGT annual conference this year so we can build connections with you, sharing and learning from one another to inspire those amazing kids.

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**T**HE THEME OF THE 2012 TAGT conference, *Building Connections*, is rich in meaning for gifted students living, learning, and working in the 21st century. Functioning well in teams and groups, connecting meaningfully with others both digitally and personally, and learning from print and Internet sources as well as from one's teachers, parents, and friends are important 21st century skills. In the same way, connecting one's own work habits and lifestyle to the skills needed to do critical and creative thinking along with rigorous

organization, and study skills. All of these self-management strategies can and should be taught to gifted students since many of them lack self-management skills. One reason is that they often progress successfully through the early years of school without being challenged or putting forth much effort. As a result, some gifted students fail to develop the self-management skills that other students usually master (Siegle & McCoach, 2005). This article explores some of these skills and gives suggestions as to how to help gifted learners master them.

age them to make decisions that help build on these strengths!

However, there is a delicate balance between pointing out strengths on one hand and, on the other hand, having gifted kids get the message that they are so much smarter or better than anyone else! A graduation speech given by David McCullough Jr. in June 2012 at Wellesley High School in Wellesley, MA, emphasized that kids who grow up getting too many awards, trophies, and accolades (as gifted stu-

**BY CAROLYN COIL**

# Building Connections: DEVELOPING 21ST CENTURY SELF-MANAGEMENT SKILLS FOR GIFTED STUDENTS

work are essential for success in the 21st century.

## **SELF-MANAGEMENT SKILLS: AN OVERVIEW**

Perhaps the most basic and overarching of all 21st century skills is self-management. It includes developing self-confidence, self-reliance, responsibility, and independence. It also encompasses persistence and effort, goal setting, time management and

## **SELF-CONFIDENCE**

Self-confidence is built when students realize that their own decisions and actions affect the outcomes of their lives. In other words, self-confidence grows when they recognize that success doesn't come simply by chance or because someone was "just lucky." It comes through making wise decisions about choices in life. For many gifted students, self-confidence increases when we point out and help them identify their own positive qualities, interests, and abilities and encour-

dents often do) should realize that they are *not* special! He adds, "We have of late, we Americans, to our detriment, come to love accolades more than genuine achievement" (McCullough, 2012).

One strategy that may help as we try to enhance self-confidence while not giving our gifted kids undue praise and unearned accolades is to make sure they are connected to other gifted students and are exposed to the work and thinking of such students in their school, region, state, and even nationally and internationally. This raises the benchmark when they see

the work of others in academic fairs, contests, and competitions whether in person or via the Internet. When competing and learning on a wider stage, many gifted students find their self-confidence increasing as they accomplish higher and higher goals!

## INDEPENDENCE AND RESPONSIBILITY

Two self-management skills, taking responsibility and developing independence, go hand-in-hand. The optimal way for these to develop is in tandem with one another. Students who are adept at building 21st century connections innately link the two. Each year they are a bit more independent and at the same time take on a bit more responsibility. Such students build important self-management skills that will benefit them throughout their lives (Coil, 2004).

On the other hand, other gifted students demonstrate a great deal of independence but little sense of responsibility. They do not manage their time well or appropriately prioritize the time needed to do their schoolwork and homework. They might stay up until midnight playing a video game or texting friends and then panic because they have not finished the school assignment they've had 2 weeks to work on! They often blame others when they do not complete required tasks or work at home or at school. These students rarely take responsibility for their own actions.

Another equally negative pattern is the gifted student who demonstrates no independence. His or her parents monitor homework assignments and other activities constantly. They schedule every minute of every day for their child, thereby never allowing any independence to develop. This child may not know when his assignments are due, but his parents know! An extreme example of this is parents who e-mail college professors to find out their children's assignments. We

sometimes call such parents "helicopter parents," and we could also say they are teaching their children lifelong dependence.

For years I have advocated getting rid of the "Parents-to-the-Rescue" syndrome where parents regularly bring forgotten lunchboxes, notebooks, backpacks, and signed agenda books to school for their children. I promote allowing rescuing to a minimal extent in the lowest grades, then weaning kids from this dependence quickly as they advance through the grade levels. Writer Nancy Gibbs describes a "new revolution under way, one aimed at rolling back the almost comical overprotectiveness and overinvestment of moms and dads...[where] less is more; hovering is dangerous; failure is fruitful" (Gibbs, 2009, p. 1, para 4). When this happens, the skills of both independence and responsibility can develop and flourish.

## PERSISTENCE AND EFFORT

In her book, *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*, Carol Dweck explains that a person's mindset can profoundly influence behavior. She has discovered that people with *fixed mindsets* believe that their achievements are based on innate abilities. As a result, they are less likely to take on challenges and are more afraid of failure. People with *growth mindsets* believe that they can learn, change, and develop needed skills. They are better equipped to handle inevitable setbacks and know that hard work can help them accomplish their goals (Dweck, 2006).

This suggests that we should think twice about praising gifted kids for being "smart" or "talented" since this may foster a *fixed mindset*. Instead, if we praise them for their efforts, acknowledging their persistence and hard work, we will support the development of a *growth mindset*—better equipping them to learn and persist in times of disappointment and failure.

I often think of this as a "monitor-your-mouth" strategy. In other words, we need to be careful in the feedback we give to gifted students and be conscious of how often we praise them for their effort, persistence, and hard work rather than telling them how gifted or intelligent they are. Gifted students who have been constantly praised about their intelligence and success generally pick the easiest activities and projects to do in school, and when faced with failure, tend to give up. Those praised for persistence and effort are more successful in the long run as they tend to choose more challenging assignments and classes and try harder in the face of failure and setbacks. This may go a long way in helping them deal with the inevitable challenges of life.

## GOAL SETTING

An essential 21st century skill is the ability to set goals and then work toward them. In an age of instant everything, many gifted kids simply assume they can dream big dreams and somehow they will happen. Fewer students appreciate that the way to realize their dreams is to set goals and then work toward them. Learning ways to build the connections between dreams and goals and then between long-term goals and short-term goals is crucial for success in school and in life. We can assist gifted children by helping them set realistic goals then offering suggestions of ways to achieve these goals. These do not need to be the same for each child or even for each gifted child. Give prompt feedback when assessing progress toward goals, focusing on growth and not on how far behind or ahead one gifted student is compared with others.

Because today's kids are accustomed to everything being done instantaneously, it is hard for some of them to understand how the process of goal setting works, particularly setting a long-term goal and then accom-

plishing a series of short-term goals to achieve it. I have had success in using sports analogies as a means of showing students how goal setting works. Some of the analogies I use are as follows (Coil, 2004):

- ***Have several game plans not just one.*** In the world of sports, all good coaches have more than one game plan. When a play or strategy does not work as planned, a good coach will immediately switch to another. In setting goals for school or for life, gifted kids should never be fixated on just one goal or one way to do something. Instead, they should have at least two additional alternatives in case the first attempt at reaching the goal does not work. Furthermore, on a broader scale, gifted kids should have several goals, not just one. Some gifted children have an intense interest in just one goal or passion area. They are likely to say that if they cannot do that one particular thing, they do not want to do anything else. While such focused interest is a typical characteristic of giftedness, adults should encourage not only several ways to reach a particular goal but also having several goals in case the preferred one does not materialize.
- ***Work toward small goals to reach larger goals.*** Football is my favorite example to use with this analogy. Players strive for a first down, then another and another until a touchdown is scored. Several touchdowns may win a game, and winning many games may get a team to the Super Bowl. This never happens all at once but over many individual plays, scores, and games. In the same way, students need to think through what

their large or long-term goals are and then set smaller, short-term goals that will help them accomplish their final objective.

- ***Listen to the referee.*** In any sport, there is someone (usually called the referee or umpire) who knows the rules, enforces them, and gives teams and individual players guidelines in terms of what they should be doing. In the same way, when gifted children set goals but have no guidance as

win. At the same time, he would also know his personal best time for any given event and would strive to beat whatever that time is. This analogy contains a powerful message for gifted students! No matter how well they do compared to others of the same age and grade, perhaps the most important task is to have them set goals and then measure progress using their personal best as the benchmark.

## LEARNING WAYS TO BUILD THE CONNECTIONS BETWEEN DREAMS AND GOALS AND THEN BETWEEN LONG-TERM GOALS AND SHORT-TERM GOALS IS CRUCIAL FOR SUCCESS IN SCHOOL AND IN LIFE.

### TIME MANAGEMENT AND ORGANIZATION

Many of us who have worked with gifted students over a number of years realize the value of differentiated instruction for gifted learners. Yet one of the major skills needed to be a successful learner in a differentiated classroom is skill in time management and organization. Especially when differentiation involves learning contracts, independent study, or completing alternate activities in a compactor, students need to be responsible for organizing and keeping track of their

own work. In a differentiated classroom where everyone does not have the same assignment and where due dates may be different for each student, time management skills are essential. Assigning differentiated independent work is an excellent way to teach and have students practice organization and time management skills, but we cannot assume all gifted students have such skills (Coil, 2007)!

What, then, is the best way to teach these skills and connect them to the work gifted students are required to do at school? I suggest making a list of traits of a disorganized student, then using it as a checklist for students. Each item on the list should indicate a separate organizational skill.

- to how to accomplish them, and no knowledge of the procedures, rules, or policies that might help them reach their goals, they need a well-informed adult to help them along the way. Sometimes a teacher, parent, or coach assumes this role. At other times, it may happen when one student connects with another student or group of students and learns from them. For young gifted students, an older gifted student or mentor might take this responsibility.
- ***Strive to beat your personal best.*** In many individual sports, one of the goals is to beat one's personal best. A swimmer on a swim team, for example, wants his team to

own work. In a differentiated classroom where everyone does not have the same assignment and where due dates may be different for each student, time management skills are essential. Assigning differentiated independent work is an excellent way to teach and have students practice organization and time management skills, but we cannot assume all gifted students have such skills (Coil, 2007)!

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## ORGANIZATION CHECKLIST

Directions: *Mark a check under Yes or No to indicate how organized this student is.*

Name of student: \_\_\_\_\_

**No    Yes**

- |     |     |  |
|-----|-----|--|
| ___ | ___ | 1. There are things in his/her locker, backpack, desk or cubby that haven't been looked at in a month or more.   |
| ___ | ___ | 2. At home, she/he has a pile of books, comic books, magazines or videos that have been recorded that she/he hasn't read or seen yet but is going to do some day.        |
| ___ | ___ | 3. This student never writes down assignments because he/she thinks he/she can remember everything that is important.  |
| ___ | ___ | 4. He/she forgets about long-range assignments until it's too late to do a good job on them.   |
| ___ | ___ | 5. This student's parents keep track of his/her schedule of after-school activities, and the student just does whatever they tell him/her to do.                         |
| ___ | ___ | 6. Once a week or more, this student leaves at home at least one of the following: materials needed for class, homework, notes that should be signed, agenda books, etc. |
| ___ | ___ | 7. This student has a hard time keeping track of his/her keys, glasses, purse, wallet, jacket, shoes, hat or other things he/she can't leave home or school without.     |
| ___ | ___ | 8. This student has trouble remembering important dates like anniversaries, birthdays, class field trips, test dates, etc.   |
| ___ | ___ | 9. When this student starts on an assignment or project, he/she has a hard time completing it because of getting distracted easily.                                      |
| ___ | ___ | 10. This student is very disorganized but is motivated to learn organizational skills.   |

\_\_\_    \_\_\_ **Totals**

### SCORING

- |            |  |
|------------|--|
| 10, 9 or 8 | Yes—This student has major problems with organization!                 |
| 7 or 6     | Yes—This student needs to develop additional organizational skills.    |
| 5, 4 or 3  | Yes—This student has good organizational skills but can still improve. |
| 2, 1 or 0  | Yes—This student has excellent organizational skills!                  |

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An Organizational Checklist I have developed is above (Coil, 2009).

This checklist helps to pinpoint areas where students need assistance in becoming more organized. If you look at the items a student marks "Yes," you will see which areas are organizational problems for a particular student and can then begin working on them.

### RESEARCH SKILLS: CONNECTING AND EVALUATING INFORMATION

I once had a gifted student say to me, "I got this information from the Internet, and if it's on the Internet it has to be true!" This was 10 years ago. My hope is that all students are now more savvy information consumers than this student was in 2002. In

an age of "Information Glut," gifted learners, particularly those who do lots of work independently, need to develop skills in using and evaluating resources for independent study and independent learning. Some students may be happy simply cutting and pasting paragraphs from different sources. This is definitely not what we want because no critical or analytical think-

ing is involved! Others may want to connect and analyze information from a variety of sources but do not have the skills to organize the information or to be critical information consumers. Yet such skills are crucial in the Information Age.

More than ever before, we need to teach our students about the reliability and validity of sources. When almost all sources came in hardcopy, were edited by a professional editor, and originated from reputable publishers, reliability was not as much of a problem. However, with the advent of websites, social media, blogs, self-publishing, YouTube, and the like, this has changed. Today, anyone with personal agenda, a cause to advocate for, a strong opinion, or something to complain or disagree about can do so over the Internet with a look of authority. Lots of bad, incorrect, and misinformed information is out there and available, for we live in an age in which anyone can be an author, an actor, a self-appointed expert, or a publisher of their own work.

Students must be taught to discriminate and recognize reliable and valid versus poor sources of information. Information cannot be readily understood without evaluating its source and placing it in context. When researching appropriately, students will gather information from a wide variety of different sources, critically evaluate it, and then connect it to create a finished product. In doing so, they must learn to use both critical and creative thinking skills. They must analyze, synthesize, and evaluate the information they gather and develop the ability to understand, appraise, and integrate information from a wide variety of sources.

When information from the Internet reinforces students' knowledge from past experiences and/or from ideas and facts they have obtained from other sources (e.g., books, teachers, magazines, newspapers, CDs, commercially-produced computer software,

DVDs, and TV), they are more able to make the connections necessary to analyze and interpret their information.

On the other hand, when digital information is about an unfamiliar topic, comes in a vacuum, or is not connected to other ideas and experiences, incorrect, unreliable or biased information is more likely to be taken as truth. Much of what our students currently read and hear, particularly on the Internet, expresses some type of a bias. Bias exists when a writer or speaker uses a selection of facts (while omitting others), choice of words, tone, and point of view to convey a particular feeling, attitude, or opinion toward the subject.

At the same time, the Internet is increasingly becoming the first and preferred source of information for many of us; most certainly this is the case for the majority of gifted students.

Unquestionably, we can no longer assume that their information is going to come solely from the textbooks they are issued and the encyclopedias in the school library!

It is often difficult for students to judge how reliable their sources of information are. To develop this 21st century skill, learning to detect bias and propaganda and connect various sources of information together, gifted learners need to collaborate with one another and with their teachers, media specialists, and outside professionals. They must learn to compare and contrast information about the same topic from a variety of different sources.

I sometimes use a Crime Scene Investigation (CSI) analogy with gifted kids. Many popular forensic investigation shows on TV have characters looking carefully at evidence, some of which is contradictory evidence. They have to examine it closely to discover the truth. Often the truth is not the most obvious answer or contained in the first clue. They usually have to dig deeper and find out more. The same is true for doing research, whether one is using the

Internet, print sources, social media, or various types of videos or pictures. Students have to learn to examine all of the evidence, dig deeper, and look at many sources before coming to the most logical conclusions they can.

## STUDY SKILLS

Many gifted students need to improve their academic habits and develop better study skills. They often breeze through the early years of elementary school putting forth little effort to study. The end result is that they do not develop study skills nor the self-discipline and tenacity that usually accompany them. At some point in every student's life, however, the time comes when he or she does not know the material being taught and can no longer breeze through. It suddenly becomes apparent that studying is a necessity in order to do well.

Building connections among the different areas of content being taught and between concepts within each subject is an important study skill. This generally leads to deeper understanding and not just rote learning in order to pass the test. Other skills we usually think of as study skills include:

- Memorization techniques
- Paraphrasing main ideas
- Categorizing information
- Previewing written material
- Outlining
- Note-taking skills
- Listening skills
- Building vocabulary

Identifying the specific study skills that need to be built, enhanced, and improved for each individual student is extremely important. Even our highest achievers usually have targeted study skills that need to be further developed.

## CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

In this article I have highlighted

## AN ACHIEVER RUBRIC

Look at the rubric below. Where would you score today? Try using this rubric often as you work to become an achiever.

Criteria:	Not So Hot	Working On It	Almost There	You're an Achiever
<b>Self-Confidence</b>	I know I'll just be a failure so I don't even try.	I think I have some strengths, and I try not to get discouraged when I fail at something.	I learn from my failures. My parents and friends have confidence in me.	I know I will do well in anything I try. I look forward to learning from my mistakes and I never give up.
<b>Goal Setting</b>	I don't set any goals. I hope I'll be lucky and win the lottery one day.	I set goals for the week or grading period in at least one subject.	I have short-term and long-term goals and check regularly to see how I'm doing.	I set goals regularly and have a plan for meeting my goals. I plan backward for short- and long-term goals.
<b>Motivation</b>	I don't care what happens to me in school or in the rest of my life.	I'm interested in learning a few things. I have to be motivated by others to get my work done.	I try very hard even when things are difficult. My friends and family encourage me. Sometimes I'm a bit lazy.	I have lots of interests and am excited about learning. I put forth the most effort when the task is difficult.
<b>Organizational Skills</b>	I am totally disorganized! I can't remember my assignments and I lose everything.	Sometimes I write down my assignments, and I get most things done although I procrastinate a lot.	I am organized, get all my homework done, but never have time to do things I enjoy.	My schoolwork, homework, and life outside of school are in order. I plan long-range assignments and have time to have fun, too.
<b>Study Skills</b>	I never study and really don't know how to begin.	Sometimes I study, but it's almost always at the last minute.	I get all my homework done. I know how to do a research paper and how to memorize things for a test.	I have excellent study skills. I know how to research, take notes, and memorize new information. I am always prepared for tests.

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a number of self-management skills essential for success in the 21st century. Many gifted learners will have mastered some of them; I daresay none have mastered them all. These skills do not exist in a vacuum. They are richly connected together to form the tapestry that makes up the 21st century gifted learner. One strategy I draw on to tie many of these skills together is using An Achiever Rubric (see above). Several skills are listed on the left-hand side of the rubric and the progression toward mastering each skill can be seen from left to right (Coil, 2004). Share this rubric with your gifted students or gifted children as they monitor their own progress in becoming achievers.

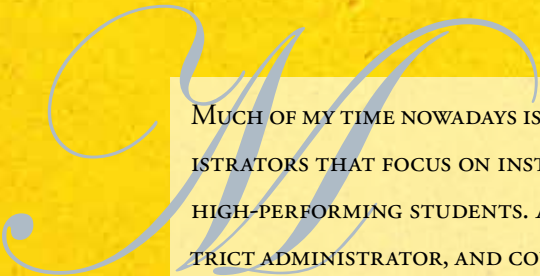
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- Carolyn Coil** is an internationally known speaker, author, trainer, consultant, and educator who has worked in the field of education for over 30 years. Carolyn has served as an adjunct professor at several different universities and has worked in numerous countries with teachers, parents, and students, offering practical strategies for raising student achievement, differentiating curriculum, implementing a variety of assessment strategies, and dealing with the problems and challenges associated with preparing ourselves and our children for living and working in the 21st century. Carolyn can be reached at her website: [www.carolyncoil.com](http://www.carolyncoil.com)



# ALL THAT *Really* Matters

JOHN P. DELANDTSHEER, M.A.



MUCH OF MY TIME NOWADAYS IS SPENT PRESENTING SEMINARS TO TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS THAT FOCUS ON INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES APPROPRIATE FOR GIFTED AND HIGH-PERFORMING STUDENTS. AS A FORMER PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHER, PRINCIPAL, DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR, AND COUNTY COORDINATOR FOR GIFTED EDUCATION, WORKING WITH THIS PARTICULAR GROUP OF STUDENTS HAS BEEN MY FOCUS AND PASSION FOR MORE THAN 40 YEARS. NOW I ENJOY SHARING THE IDEAS AND STRATEGIES GAINED THROUGHOUT MY CAREER, ALONG WITH CURRENT RESEARCH ABOUT HOW CHILDREN LEARN.

Since retiring and writing my book, *Making All Kids Smarter*, I am able to visit a variety of schools and classrooms to provide staff development training to teachers. During the course of my training sessions, I have frequent opportunities to observe students and teachers at work. Recently, I was providing teacher training for

gifted and talented education in the town of Lompoc, which is located on the central coast of California. While there, one of the participants in the training invited me to visit the Cabrillo High School Aquarium. What an experience! As Chris, a high school science teacher, walked me through the beautiful aquarium

facility, his enthusiasm was simply infectious. This young man proudly showed me the movie theatre that was built to resemble a lighthouse, the complex water filtration systems, the exquisite murals, and, of course, the sea life in large aquariums and touch-tanks. This all is part of a public high school campus that supports the marine biology curriculum. The students manage the aquarium, conduct the tours, take care of the tanks, and serve as curators for various aspects of this giant undertaking. Chris is an alumnus of Cabrillo High School who had been instrumental in the start-up of the aquarium project. After completing college, he returned to his community to share the joy and excitement of marine biology with a new generation of high school students.

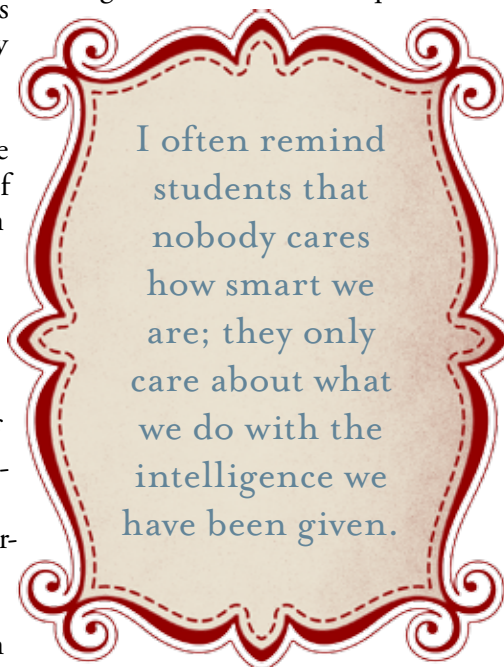
Observing this incredible aquarium project got me thinking . . . I am convinced we need to talk more about what is “right” with education. This unique aquarium and everything it means to the town of Lompoc, to the high school, to the students, and to Chris deserves to be recognized. There are other amazing things going on in schools across this nation that deserve to be highlighted. We just need to do a better job of sharing our successes.

### LET'S TALK ABOUT WHAT'S GOOD

Most books, articles, and media reports tend to emphasize what is wrong with public education. I suppose books that speak to the topic of what is right with education don't sell. At any rate, it is very difficult to find much in print nowadays that has anything good to say about the hard work and achievements of students, teachers, and administrators.

In this article, I will be sharing

some of the successful programs and practices I see in my travels. There are some wonderful educational experiences that happen for our gifted students every day. You all have examples of how the needs of gifted and high-ability students are being addressed in unique and



relevant ways. Let us not forget that our primary focus and concern is providing students with a quality education. I believe we are doing it! I see examples every day in my home state of California, and I'm sure you see them in Texas as well.

### THREE PREMISES

In my work with teachers, I emphasize three basic premises:

1. Teach students in a manner consistent with how the brain processes information.
2. Encourage a larger group of students to use strategies previously reserved for only our gifted and smartest.
3. Ensure that creativity, academic rigor, and critical thinking are part of each student's *daily* educational experience.

### BRAIN-COMPATIBLE TEACHING

I have spent more than 20 years reading studies and books about brain research. Leslie Hart's book of the 1980s *Human Brain and Human Learning*, started me on the road to understanding how the brain works and especially how brain research can result in brain-compatible classrooms. I have seen teachers all over California embrace these strategies, realizing that students learn more when they are presented information in a manner consistent with how the brain functions. As more books and articles appear about the brain, I witness teachers sharing this information with their students.

As teachers share more research with their classes about how the brain processes information, I have seen students become more aware that they are the *captains of their own brains*. Some students even practice brain exercises to help increase their concentration and attention. With guidance, students can become aware of how they learn best and understand that hard work has its rewards.

I often remind students that nobody cares how smart we are; they only care about what we do with the intelligence we have been given. I am gratified to witness a shift in many students' perceptions and transitions from helplessness to that of self-reliance. When I hear students say to their teachers that they want to do it themselves without help, I have to smile. Our next goal is to help parents understand that whenever they are doing their child's work for them, it robs their child of dendrite growth. Sometimes parents need to be reminded that the best help they can give is in the form of encouragement, rather than taking over

the assignment or the project. Once I asked a father, "What grade did you get on your son's Science Fair project?" He responded, "A minus" before he realized the implication of my question.

### WHOEVER DOES THE WORK GETS SMARTER

One of the basic premises of brain research is the simple idea that whoever does the work gets smarter. If parents or teachers do all the work, they will get smarter. If the kids do the work, they are the ones who will get smarter. Isn't that the goal of schools? Whatever a teacher can do to place the burden of work on the shoulders of the students, the better! I see more and more classrooms organized with the students being responsible for many of the tasks that teachers used to do: designing bulletin boards around content, grading papers and quizzes, organizing paperwork, cleaning, etc. It has been enlightening to observe lessons being taught by students using the same framework for lesson planning that the teacher normally uses. My own son was given an opportunity to teach a science lesson. His grade on the lesson was based upon how well his classmates did on the quiz he created. You can bet he taught to the test on that lesson!

I am enough of a realist to

understand that not all students are willing to take the responsibility for their own learning. Of course, I am aware that not all students and parents give a hoot about school. But, as I have said to high school and middle school students for years,

Someone has to do the menial tasks in our society; not everyone needs to go to college. It's often about perseverance and not about intelligence. You decide. Do the assigned work or don't. It's up to you. I will help you if you don't understand. I know you can do it and I won't give up on you. But if you choose not to do the work, then don't disrupt the classroom so that students who want to learn are not prevented from doing so. There are a lot of jobs out there. Some require critical thinking, some don't. It's basically up to you!

It took me many decades to realize that I am not *Captain of the World!* I refuse to hold teachers responsible for the choices students make. That's why I am pleased to see teachers place the responsibility for learning squarely on the students. I am even more pleased to see how many students willingly and eagerly take the opportunity to become more responsible. Since teachers need to be outstanding presenters and explainers, I am excited to see the emphasis being placed on how to deliver a clearly

articulated sequential lesson based upon a standard. This is essential to student learning. Teachers are at their best when they can explain the content clearly and design a well-constructed learning experience for their students. We may be a test-driven nation right now, but I do see teachers who are better at what they do because of it. Our gifted students benefit greatly from a lesson presented sequentially and clearly. So do all students.

### KIDS CAN'T LEARN WHEN THEY ARE AFRAID

Students don't learn when they are alienated, feel stupid, fear failure, or are embarrassed. Since fear is a major inhibitor to the brain's ability to learn, I am very proud of the position many school boards are taking related to intellectual as well as social and physical bullying. I see strides being made to create student networks and cultures where it is the norm for students to stand up for classmates who are being bullied or harassed. I hear stories from teachers where kids stopped bullies in their tracks by simply intervening on behalf of the student who was being mistreated. This is a terrific sign. I believe in the adage, "You are your brother's keeper." Teachers and administrators are on the right track. We are addressing it head on in America.



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I also see a shift from competition to cooperation in schools and classrooms. I witness teachers having serious conversations with some of our gifted students about these students' intolerance and impatience with those of lesser abilities. Being gifted is no excuse for being impolite. In Merrill Harmin's book, *Inspiring Active Learning*, he emphasizes DESCA, an acronym that encourages a less competitive and a more compassionate classroom atmosphere (Dignity, Energy, Self-Management, Community, and Awareness). I see schools embracing a more community-based approach to classrooms and schools where students are helping each other learn, rather than criticizing students who don't grasp a concept. Students are more productive when they feel connected to others in the classroom. Teachers are working hard to create a classroom atmosphere where students aren't afraid of being wrong or of looking stupid in front of classmates. No one likes to be embarrassed.

## ACTIVE LEARNING

I am excited to see more active learning in classrooms. Kids seem to be talking more, sharing more, *doing* more. Teachers seem to be talking less. If learning primarily takes place during the "output" phase of instruction, then it logically follows that students learn best when they are either *talking* about the content, *writing* about the content, or *making/creating* something related to the content. At Mariposa Elementary School in Redlands, California, where I was principal for nine years, the classrooms were busy places. There was a lot of "hustle and bustle" with kids being expected to explain to classmates how to do something, to take notes on content, and to

create visuals related to that content. Because our school served as a demonstration site for brain-compatible teaching and learning, we had many visitors. As these visitors entered classrooms, they were immediately greeted by a student docent, given a tour of the room, and provided with an explanation of what was happening.

Mariposa Elementary is also known for its botanical gardens that are entirely maintained by the students. Students learn how to prune the topiaries, dead-head flowers, cultivate and fertilize the soil, pull weeds, and plant new vegetation. The gardens have been designed around specific curricular themes and include a desert oasis, an Asian garden, many raised vegetable beds, as well as a Shakespeare garden, a Jurassic Park garden, a bird and butterfly sanctuary, a nature trail that features native plants, and a California historic timeline garden. There are water features in most of the gardens, such as waterfalls, streams, and ponds. The desert oasis waterfall was built by our gifted students as an after-school project. While adults supervised, the students did the installation work. The gardens are an extension of the classrooms. For example, the vegetable gardens provide healthy snacks and tasty salads for students to enjoy. The topiaries reflect characters from children's literature. The Shakespeare garden contains plants and flowers mentioned in his plays. The pride the students have in their campus is directly related to the work *they* perform to keep the campus neat, clean, and attractive.

## THE ARTS AND LEARNING

Research studies are clear that there is a connection between the visual and performing arts and

academic learning. During these very difficult financial times, many school districts still attempt to provide a balanced instructional program by finding ways to fund the arts. Often music, art, drama, and dance are supported through donations from parents and the community. In Palm Desert, CA one middle school has a steel drum corps that is so professional, they are asked to perform all over Southern California. The drama students at a high school in Northern California compete in a state Shakespeare competition. Districts and school boards should be commended for supporting the arts. We know students benefit cognitively from participating in the visual and performing arts. We also know that there is a correlation between music and mathematics. For example, singing and playing a musical instrument has been proven to have a positive impact on understanding mathematics. It takes a lot of planning and financial juggling to find the money, but many districts are keeping their music, art, and drama programs afloat.

## THE SPILLOVER EFFECT

The first time I came across the term *spillover effect* was in an article written by Dr. Sandra Kaplan, a professor at the University of Southern California (USC). She cites evidence that supports the practice of providing strategies formerly reserved for gifted children to a wider range of students. When this concept was first discussed a few decades ago, many teachers of the gifted expressed concern that somehow the programs for their high-ability students would be watered down if other students participated. In fact, the opposite has proven to be true. As the use of these strategies has "spilled over" to other students, their learning has

increased. For example, the valuable thinking tools of the *Icons of Depth and Complexity* and the *Content Imperatives* (Kaplan and Gould) are now being used in many classrooms, not just those for the gifted. I even see the use of interdisciplinary themes in classrooms where there are no identified gifted students. The spill-over effect is everywhere!

There are strong efforts throughout California to seek out and identify underrepresented populations of students for gifted programs. As I work with teachers through the diverse state of California from the agricultural San Joaquin Valley to the technological Silicon Valley, I see gifted strategies being implemented everywhere. Wherever I work, I collect writing samples from students. Some of the best compositions and essays come from students in rural farming communities near the border. Their teachers are providing a differentiated curriculum to all students, regardless of whether or not they are identified as gifted.

Elinor Ruth Smith, a retired instructor at University of California San Diego and Riverside campuses, coined an aphorism, “You won’t find your gifted kids unless you do gifted stuff!” Dr. Roger Taylor, nationally known consultant in gifted and talented education, says it in a different way, “Kiss all the frogs!” Recently I was in a fourth-grade classroom at Huff Elementary School in Mountain View, CA. Students were analyzing a story from their anthology using the *Icons of Depth and Complexity*. One young man made a particularly insightful comment that surprised both the teacher and his classmates. Later I asked why everyone was so astonished that this excellent comment had come from this particular boy. The teacher told me that the student was in special education and had been identified as severely emotionally disturbed with many social and academic problems. Such a *cognitive leap* would never have occurred with this student if the teacher hadn’t been doing gifted “stuff” with everyone.

### DAILY DOSES OF CREATIVITY, RIGOR, AND CRITICAL THINKING

At the beginning of my teaching career in the early 1970s, the delivery model for gifted education was through pull-out programs with a designated resource teacher. As that resource teacher, my responsibility was to provide enrichment activities for my students from 3–5 hours a week. These activities didn’t necessarily relate to any curriculum; they were interesting and fun. Current practice, I’m pleased to report, now connects gifted strategies with curricular content providing differentiation that focuses on depth, complexity,

acceleration, and novelty within the classroom. The delivery model is moving away from pull-out programs toward grouping gifted students in clusters of about 10 students. The rest of the class is comprised of a wide variety of students of mixed abilities. As a result, these talented cluster group teachers are striving to create differentiated learning opportunities in *every* lesson they teach throughout the day.

Instead of offering differentiation once a week or special enrichment classes after school, they provide relevant gifted instruction on a daily basis. The expectation seems to be that every lesson has an opportunity to imbed in it a relevant activity for gifted and high-ability students. What is interesting for me, as an outside observer, is to watch the lesson and see where the differentiation takes place. Perhaps it’s at the beginning with an unanswered or paradoxical question. Perhaps it’s when the teacher allows his bright students to skip the practice pages if it’s clear they already know how to do the skill. Perhaps it’s in the body of the lesson when the teacher brings in a relevant supplemental magazine or newspaper article that increases the depth of knowledge of the topic. Perhaps it’s at the end of

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the lesson when the teacher asks students to explain how the lesson relates to their year-long theme or to another subject they are studying. Perhaps it's the emphasis on technical vocabulary that students are required to use when they are discussing the topic. Perhaps it's all of these in one lesson! The state standard is being taught but it is clear that the needs of gifted students are being considered in every lesson.

Another positive change is in the types of projects and products gifted students are being allowed to create. Traditionally, fifth-grade students in California were assigned a state report. Basically, students were expected to put together a notebook containing information about a state of their choice finding some facts about geography, agriculture, cities, the state flag, the state bird, etc. Some fifth-grade teachers still require the state report; however, it certainly looks different today. Teachers are asking students to discuss new ideas, not just to regurgitate information. Students are asked to use critical thinking skills to compare and contrast, to look at relevant issues and problems facing the state, and to discuss the cause and effect relationship of geography, climate and natural resources. They are expecting students to be original and creative in the presentation of their projects. Technology is deeply imbedded in schools; not only in the way teachers present information to students, but in how students share their projects in class. Educators have embraced technology to such an extent that it would

...despite the many challenges facing our schools, teachers are doing great things right now for students.

be hard to conceive of teaching without it. These projects not only require students to research information and draw conclusions, but to present their results in an interesting and clever way. I certainly enjoy seeing student PowerPoint presentations. They are not only

creative, original, and accurate, but are reflective of the personalities of the students who created them.

#### WHAT REALLY MATTERS

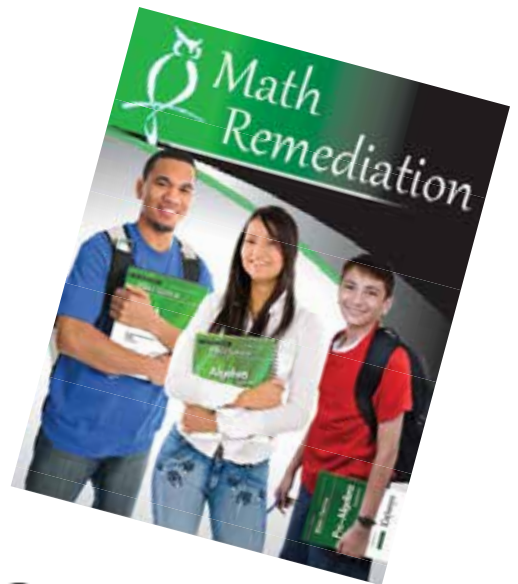
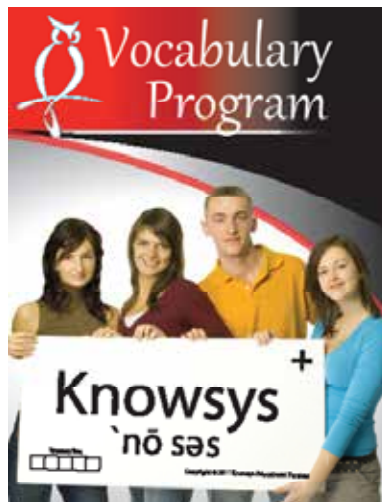
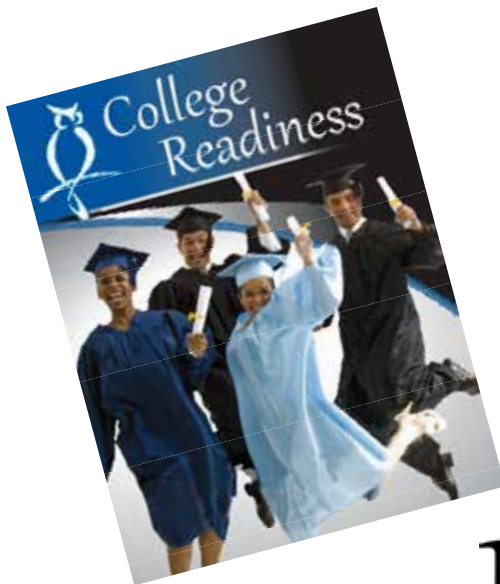
We have only to turn on the television, listen to radio talk shows, read a blog, or open a newspaper to recognize that these are tough times in our county, especially for education. As educational leaders we have a choice to make. We can moan about the financial picture facing schools and get caught up in the collective misery that is often the conversation in staff lounges and after school get-togethers. Or we can look around and recognize that despite the many challenges facing our schools, teachers are doing great things right now for students. It is my hope that we choose to look for and highlight the successes we see around us. I would encourage you to compliment a staff member on his idea, to share with a colleague what you are doing that seems to be relevant and meaningful for your students. I see great things in schools every day; I'll bet you do, too!

I remember a world prior to state standards. I remember a world prior to the Common Core. I think we are better off now than we were then. We know what we are supposed to teach. We have tools and pedagogy to do it. Most of the

excellent teachers I know, and have personally observed, quietly do terrific things in their classrooms every day. They have positive, meaningful interactions with students and leave a lasting mark on their character. They teach the standards but they don't let the standards get in the way of their desire to meet the needs of students, both academically and emotionally.

Eventually, the financial picture will turn around. Perhaps we will never be able to spend in education like we did two decades ago. Perhaps we shouldn't. We simply must ask ourselves what is important. I often have asked myself that question from a parent's point of view, "What did I want the schools to provide for our son?" It wasn't about expensive technology or field trips. It was about relevance, rigor, and enthusiasm. I wanted his teachers to appreciate our son for the intelligent, clever, artistic, and conscientious kid that he was. I wanted them to stretch his thinking. The schools in our town did a good job with our son. He now has come back with his wife and twin babies to run the veterinary clinic, to give back to his community. The schools and teachers gave him a lot and now it's his turn to give back to them. That's all we have a right to expect. That's all that really matters. Chris came back to Lompoc as a teacher to share his enthusiasm for marine biology through the aquarium project. Isn't that what we really want for our gifted students—to contribute their gifts and talents to make this a better world?

**John DeLandsheer** is a former teacher, GATE coordinator, principal, and educational consultant. He has been a featured speaker at national conferences and is author of the book *Making All Kids Smarter*, winner of the 2011 Legacy Book of the Year for Teachers awarded by the Texas Association for the Gifted and Talented. He is semi-retired and lives with his wife, Joelle, in the small mountain community of Fawnskin, CA, near Big Bear Lake.



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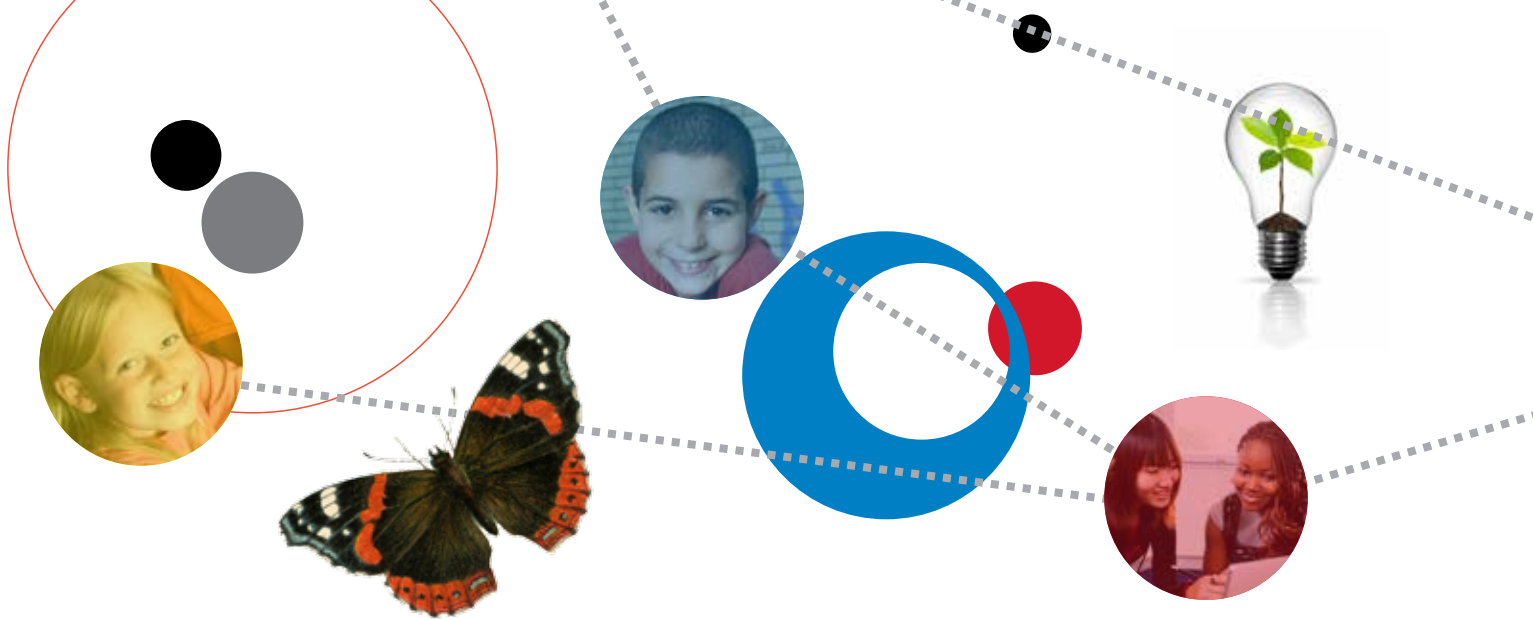


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# Adaptive Giftedness and the Power of Connection

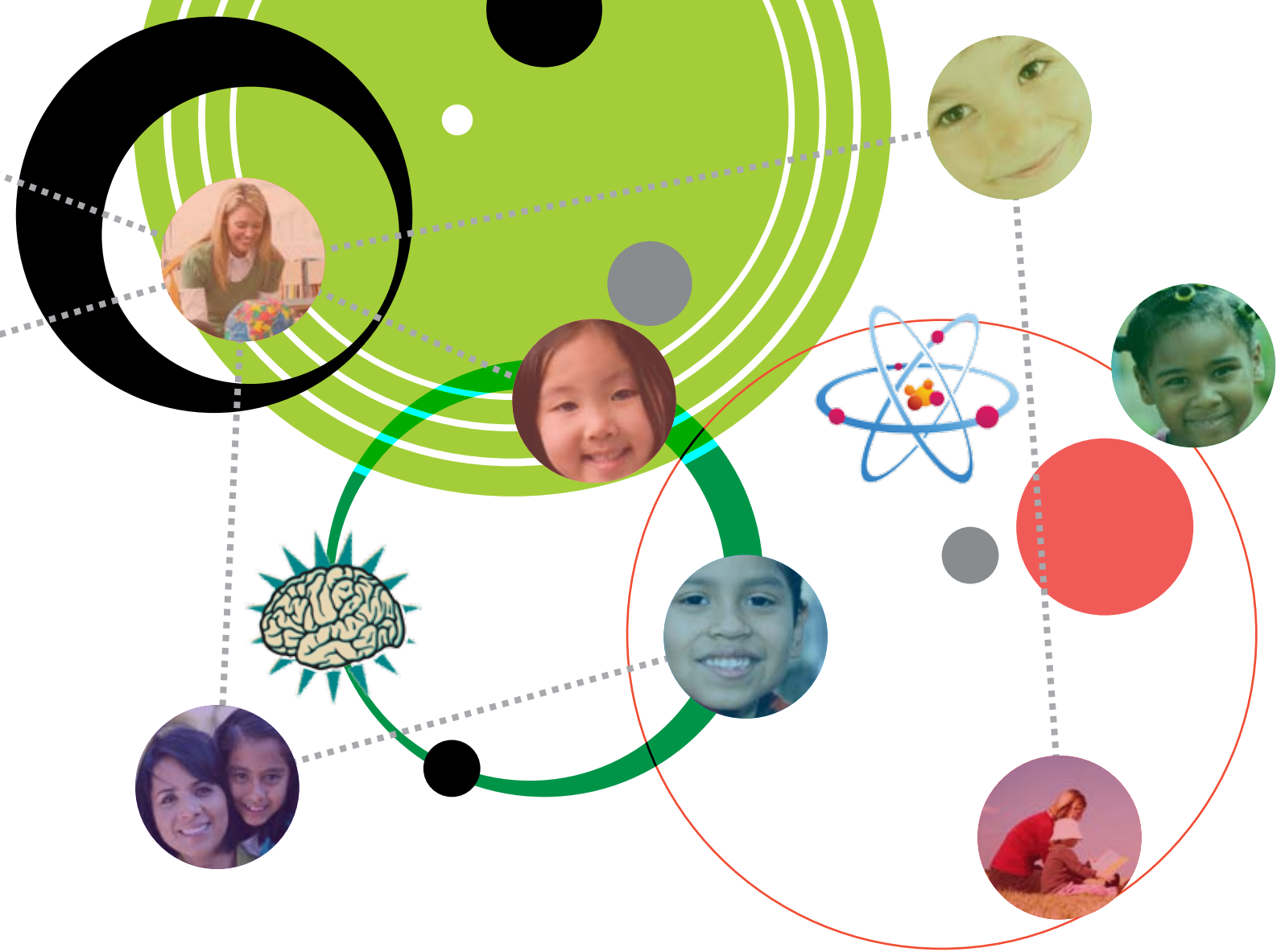
Lisa P. Van Gemert, M.Ed.T.

Unlike invitations to Hogwarts that are flown in by owl, the notification that a child has been admitted to the “gifted” group comes in many, though no less startling, forms. As soon as a parent’s suspicions have been confirmed through school or private testing, the fear sets in. The portrayal of gifted children in television, movies, and other popular media could easily lead one to believe that if not parented and educated perfectly, a gifted child could easily squander his or her intellect and end up a social outcast, unable to function in a world that in many ways is far better suited to more typical learners. Some parents and

educators may secretly wish that there actually were a Hogwarts-type school for those whose magic is an atypical mind. But parenting and educating gifted children need not create anxiety in either parents or educators. Gifted children who build connections with themselves, their peers, their parents, their teachers, and their communities become “adaptives,” children who are qualitatively different from the norm, yet who navigate both worlds with ease in a way.

## CONNECTION WITH THE SELF

Gifted children must be fully connected with themselves in order to lead fulfilling lives, perhaps even



to a greater degree than a typical learner. Cardillo (2010) asserted that

self-awareness—placing attention on who you are, have been, and want to be—is important. It helps synchronize behaviors, actions, and events so that they can coordinate meaningfully as a person works toward present goals. Self-awareness helps provide links toward a more fulfilled and exhilarated life that is rooted more in intrinsic than extrinsic reward. (para. 4)

Cardillo referenced some of the greatest threats to gifted children's psychosocial development as well as academic achievement: asynchronization and a lack of intrinsic motivation. Connection to the self through specific techniques and thought processes can minimize these threats.

Roeper (2008) noted that gifted children “experience the enormous complexity of the world and add to this complexity by inventing and creating their own world. The onslaught of the world around them, as well as that inside of them, is particularly expansive for the gifted child” (p. 9). Many times, children mentally or emotionally recuse themselves from their world because of this dynamic, a process that can lead to even greater social separation from peers and parents, in addition to creating problems in school when they are seen as “tuning out.” In order for gifted children to become fully connected with themselves, the opposite technique, a psychological therapeutic method known as mindfulness, provides a better method for handling stressful situations. Mindfulness, which has

been described by Kabat-Zinn (1994) as paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally” (p. 4), arose from the Buddhist tradition, though it is not inherently religious, and the therapeutic technique has separated from its religious tradition.

Mindfulness involves being fully present with intention in a moment or a process, observing what is happening or being seen without judging the feelings or thoughts that arise from the moment. For example, if a child is in a classroom and begins to feel bored, deliberately mental distancing or distracting oneself is often the default technique. Mindfulness, on the other hand, would encourage the child to listen to what is being said, to take note of his or her own reactions, and to observe how those reactions are

# **Mindfulness** involves being fully present with intention in a moment or a process, observing what is happening or being seen without judging the feelings or thoughts that arise from the moment.

being manifest. A child may then consciously think something like, “The teacher is repeating the directions again. I know them already, and I am feeling anxious to get started. I feel my heart racing a little bit. I want to turn my paper over. My feet are tapping. My hands are a little sweaty.” The child makes no judgment about this and does not add thoughts such as “Why can’t I be like everyone else?” or “This class is stupid.”

When a child uses this technique to manage such situations, he or she is then able to become a superior reporter of events. A child who is able to explain these thought processes to a teacher or parent will likely have a greater chance of appropriate adjustment in the future than one who simply drifts away or uses judgmental statements (e.g., “Your class is so boring”) in lieu of a neutral description of the feelings and thoughts prompted by the experience. Ironically, the more the child pays attention to his or her own feelings, the less bored he or she becomes. For example, giving children the guidance to notice just five things about the environment or inner thoughts engages and occupies the mind.

Semple and Burke (2012) noted that a “mindful state of mind is receptive, attentive to the immediate experience, and associated with an attitude of curiosity and nonjudgmental acceptance” (p. 412). Feelings of attentiveness combined with an attitude of curiosity create precisely the mental state that will produce the most effective experience for gifted children,

both in social and academic situations. Patricia Bear, LPC, a therapist in practice in Eugene, OR, explains that “mindfulness allows gifted children to tune into their bodies, not just their minds, which leads to true wisdom. Feelings arise as sensations, and when children learn to pay attention to their feelings in combination with paying attention to their intellects, they get wisdom, as opposed to simply knowledge” (personal communication, June 27, 2012).

Children may be more receptive to mindfulness if they are introduced to it with a parent (Semple & Burke, 2012) or by way of mindful activities such as yoga or the art form Zentangle®. The practice of mindfulness may serve as a tool to help gifted children learn to be fully present in the moment, even in painful moments, recognizing and acknowledging feelings and thoughts without being overwhelmed by them because they observe them without judgment or preconceived expectations of how they ought to feel.

Gifted children also connect with themselves more effectively when they have the lexicon to express their feelings and convey knowledge. While expansive vocabularies are one of the hallmarks of gifted children, parents and educators can help them enrich their psychosocial vocabularies, exploring the subtle nuances and connotations of words so that they can exactly express what they feel and think. Dr. Vidisha Patel, a therapist and member of the Board of Directors for Supporting Emotional Needs of

the Gifted (SENG), recommends sharing what she calls “emotional adjectives” with children, explaining that sometimes “they’ll have a limited vocabulary to describe what their mood or emotion was—maybe only three or four words” (Van Gemert, 2011a, p. 19). Patel suggests using art to help identify emotions or comparing moods to the weather. For example, a child might be asked, “If your mood was the weather, would it be a sunny or a gray day?”

Often, the learning of a foreign language, even at a young age, is helpful because children gain more than one way to express their thoughts to others as well as themselves. In many ways, becoming an adaptive gifted child is much like acquiring a form of bilingualism, and the acquisition of the language of a different culture may help gifted children understand in a deeper way that it is possible to successfully coexist in more than one experience.

Additionally, children of high ability must understand that although giftedness signals high ability, turning that ability into achievement requires the acquisition of other attributes as well, such as the growth mindset described by Dweck (2006). One of the most important attributes that gifted children need to develop is what psychologists have termed *grit*. In their study on grit, Duckworth, Peterson, Matthews, and Kelly (2007) explained that grit, defined as perseverance and passion in pursuit of a long-term goal, “may be as essential as talent to high accomplishment” (p. 1089). Duckworth et al. encouraged parents and educators to “encourage children to work not only with intensity but also with stamina. In particular, we should prepare youth to anticipate failures and misfortunes and point out that excellence in any discipline requires years and years of time on task” (p. 1100). This is actually good news for gifted children because when ability can be separated from achievement, it can also be separated from

identity, meaning that gifted children who understand that success in any endeavor is the combined result of ability and hard work are less likely to perceive failure in a particular endeavor as a sign of a lack of ability because there is another component to the equation.

Thus, part of developing the quality of grit in gifted children involves strategies for handling discouragement and failure, both of which are essential for self-awareness. Encouraging children to keep a journal (letting them dictate to a parent may be necessary for prewriters) can enable them to see the ebb and flow of challenge, success, and failure over time. Adults need to help gifted children avoid negative self-talk and self-deprecation in the face of failed attempts. To do this, adults can facilitate a child's debriefing of a discouraging episode, helping the child see the strengths he or she has that can be used to increase the odds of a successful next attempt. Research conducted on soldiers suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder indicates that as we recall memories, we actually reconsolidate them, adding or deleting details and emotion associated with them (Brunet et al., 2008). As adults help children revisit challenging incidents, the child may be able to consolidate the memory, incorporating the feelings of acceptance and resolve encouraged by the parent. Reading stories of people the child admires or relates to who have struggled can also lead to the understanding that it is acceptable to fail as part of the achievement process, an idea that is anathema to many children.

Mindfulness, a well-developed lexicon, an understanding of the role of mindset and perseverance, as well as a proper understanding of the role of failure will allow the type of connection with self that can lead to a stronger ability to connect with the outer world.

## CONNECTION WITH PEERS

An irony of intellectual giftedness is that often the social and emotional development of the child is of more and deeper concern than is cognitive development, particularly in the realm of peer relationships. The perception exists that there is an inverse relationship between IQ and EQ, or emotional intelligence. Fortunately, the research does not support this assumption. The literature exploring the connection between giftedness and peer acceptance shows that gifted children cope in similar ways (Preuss & Dubow, 2003) as their typical learner peers, they score higher on need fulfillment, empathy, academic self-concept, and lack of emotional anxiety (Shechtman & Silektor, 2012), and they scored higher than nongifted peers when rated on openness to experience, in addition to being virtually indistinguishable from the nongifted when rated on mental distress and subjective well being (Zeidner & Shani-Zinovich, 2011).

Lee, Olszewski-Kubilius, and Thomson (2012) found that gifted students felt positively about their ability to initiate, form, and maintain relationships, even with age-group peers. Their interpersonal skills and relationships were within the same range as their typical learner peers, and they rated their academic self-concept higher than their social self-concept, an expected result. Even studies that show difficulties with peer relationships (Morawska & Sanders, 2008), have findings based on such qualities as getting along better with adults than with peers, an idea that even the researchers admitted was expected since "gifted children may have specific interests or talents that are different to those of most children" (p. 824).

Gifted children frequently are drawn to older children or adults who may be more likely to share interests. Additionally, "their advanced maturity means that they often have different

expectations for friendships, looking for intimacy and moral integrity at much earlier ages than other children" (Neihart, 2007, para. 3). Essentially, gifted children may be looking for something altogether different in a friendship than an age-group peer. Neihart explained that the true peers of gifted children may not be their same age, but rather share similar interests, abilities, or motivation.

It is imperative that parents and educators not undermine gifted children's social comfort by consciously or subconsciously having an expectation that simply because a child is gifted he or she will be socially awkward. The research simply does not bear this out. Children of all intellectual levels struggle with peer acceptance, and adults can easily exacerbate the situation in several ways. One problematic scenario occurs when parents or educators assume that a gifted child is likely to have social difficulty and, therefore, use coincidental experiences to confirm the hypothesis, even when similar incidents among typical learners would not engender the same conclusion.

Occasionally adults will use social difficulty as a misguided diagnostic tool, seeing age-group peer awkwardness or maladaptive behavior as a sign of profound giftedness. Because of this, they may not intervene to help the child acquire appropriate social skills as they would in a typical learner. In extreme cases, they may actually subtly encourage it, intimating to others that a lack of social appropriateness on their child's part is simply part of his or her giftedness. This dynamic prevents connection with peers because the child may internalize the message that it is the giftedness that distances him or her from peers, rather than normal social development strain or a skill that is lacking but could be developed.

Parents may consider reflecting upon what their expectations are for peer interaction, and, as the child matures, discussing these with the

child. While it is a rare child who gets along with all children, everyone can learn insight into the behavior and feelings of others. Pointing out pictures in books and magazines and discussing how the person may be feeling at that moment can help children begin to read the emotional expressions of others. Further discussion can lead to when the child him- or herself has felt that way, what made it feel better, and what did not.

In order to help gifted children build connections with age-group peers, adults can help them find points of common interest. Often, gifted children feel that they are on the outside looking in, and they may need reminders that everyone feels that way sometimes and that all children have commonalities and differences. Gifted children also need exposure to children who think as they do, and these connections can be made through organizations such as the National Association for Gifted Children and its affiliates, American Mensa®, and Supporting Emotional Needs of the Gifted (SENG).

Dr. Patel explains the crucial role of parents in assisting gifted children's social success, helping them to avoid situations that would clearly be problematical. Forcing a child with sensory issues to attend a very loud concert, for example, would be counter-productive. She suggests, "As a parent, you can control the situations you put them in...It helps to think about it and contemplate their behavior when they're not there and there is nothing that's involving them that's there" (Van Gemert, 2011a, p. 18). In this way, parent preparation and reflection play a key role in the social success of gifted children.

Peers play a critical role in one aspect of underachievement, what I term "under-attempt"—the declining of rigorous academic challenge motivated by fear of failure or educational ennui brought on by a persistent lack of academic challenge. Under-attempt

diminishes the opportunities for gifted children to be challenged, to prepare themselves for higher level work, and to experience the highest degree of rigor possible. Peer influence can counteract or augment the fear of failure and lack of desire for challenge. Research by Frank et al. (2008) found that academic placement played a key role in the definition of social context for teens. The researchers observed that it is "many small, day-to-day experiences and voluntary changes that contribute to whether or not an adolescent advances into a higher math course from one year to the next" (p. 13). Although this study dealt particularly with math, the idea is the same for any subject: youth who develop their identity through the lens of others, as is common in adolescence, may avoid challenging work in order not to appear different from the norm.

Positive peer relationships influence both academic and creative talent development (Seon-Young, 2002), making it even more important that gifted children develop and maintain age-group peer relationships if they are educated in a typical school setting. Although age-group peering is a limited range issue (preschool through high school graduation), the importance of those developmental years ensures that parents who assist gifted children in navigating this social dynamic are essential in the development of adaptives.

## CONNECTION WITH PARENTS

Developing gifted children's connections with their parents enables the parents to most effectively serve as appropriate advocates and reliable reporters, assisting their children in navigating school, social situations, and even, perhaps most importantly, the child's connection with the self. Because gifted children often require more parental involvement in the educational sphere than typical learn-

ers, maintaining a strong connection between gifted children and their parents benefits gifted children in more areas than just the family arena.

In order to accomplish this, parents can utilize practical strategies that teach effective listening and role modeling. One such strategy is the development of a family storytelling habit. Robin Moore, author of *Creating a Family Storytelling Tradition*, says,

Perhaps the greatest benefit of family stories lies in the simple and powerful act of listening. When we feel deeply heard, listened to, it is possible to heal old wounds are healed, build bridges built and family re-affirm our connections to our family. True listening begins with the willingness to see the world through another's eyes. (personal communication, June 26, 2012)

When parents and children learn together to become effective storytellers, they also gain skills that are applicable in a wide range of situations. Acquiring the ability to use their voice as an instrument, controlling breath, understanding the necessity for eye contact, and being deliberate with gestures can help children communicate with others, even when those others are not necessarily an audience. Children whose parents help them learn to tell others' stories become better tellers of their own stories, facilitating connection with peers, educators, and their parents.

One place parents and children learn to listen to each other is at the dinner table. Multiple studies show that the family dinner acts as a type of "vaccine," protecting children against all sorts of ills. Dr. Robin Fox, an anthropologist at Rutgers University, noted that it is not just the sharing of food that makes family dinner so profoundly important. Gibbs (2006) explained, "If it were just about food, we would squirt it into their mouths with a tube. A meal is about civilizing children. It's

about teaching them to be a member of their culture” (para. 4). This includes the family culture. As families gather, even families of two, children learn to take turns, to listen, to be listened to, fundamental manners, and other vital skills that enable them to navigate their world outside the home.

A return to the family table gained momentum in 2001 when a study done by the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) found that teens who eat with their parents do better in school, have less mental stress, and are far less likely to abuse drugs or alcohol (Gibbs, 2006). In 2005, CASA released another study showing that families get better at it as they practice (Gibbs, 2006), so it is crucial that parents not give up too quickly. One of the most important findings in the study was that kids who ate with their parents were more likely to think their parents were proud of them, a key ingredient in developing confidence in children.

Subscribing to (or checking out of the library) magazines for kids creates an opportunity for parents to have topics to talk about with their children. Many high-quality magazines for children address topics of interest to children. As they get older, adult publications may be appropriate. Along with the simple pleasure of receiving mail, magazines facilitate discussion in manageable amounts of time. Articles of interest can springboard to an independent study of the topic. Magazines are also portable, so they can be shared, providing another bridge of connection with peers or educators.

Parents should share their own interests with their children. Seeing a parent connecting with his or her own lifelong learning benefits children, who see that learning is not about school, but rather about passion for a subject. These simple, no-stress strategies serve as bridge-builders between parents and children.

## CONNECTION WITH EDUCATORS

Any real or perceived vulnerability on the part of a child tends to elicit protectiveness on the part of parents, a natural response. In the case of gifted children, parents may find themselves overadvocating, burning bridges

***Parents must bear in mind that academic ability is a complex interdependence of intellectual and social skill.***

rather than building them with the people with whom they most need connection. It is natural for parents to become frustrated with an educational system that seems least able to address the needs of the most able, and sometimes parents and educators engage in a test of wills despite the fact that they share the same goal of student success (Van Gemert, 2009). The old adage that little pitchers have big ears is doubly true for gifted children, and parents who think that their own negative feelings towards educators have no deleterious effect on the child's success in school, both socially and scholastically, may be surprised to find that they themselves have done far more damage than even the most ineffective teacher.

Parents must bear in mind that academic ability is a complex interdependence of intellectual and social skill. Part of school success is the ability to operate and cooperate within a group, show respect for others' property and feelings, and patience with process. Children whose parents expect that intellectual giftedness alone should equate with school success often miss the other necessary skills. When parents and educators look at the entire child, not just the intellect in isolation, strategies can

be developed that may better lead to school success. Both parties can utilize a “rate and wait” strategy of evaluating at regular intervals what is happening, trying new techniques, involving the student in the discussion, and then waiting sufficient time to see if the new strategy is effective.

Gifted children must be viewed with less emphasis on the gifted and more emphasis on the children part in order to be fully integrated into school and social environments. Patricia Bear, LPC, explained, “We live in a culture that overvalues intellect. If you say, ‘She is so thoughtful,’ that is a compliment. If you say, ‘She is so emotional,’ that is not a compliment. The focus and attention on giftedness then eclipses other activities and interests and prevents gifted children from getting inside their bodies and emotions” (personal communication, June 28, 2012). People begin to see intellectual giftedness and other, less cerebral interests as mutually exclusive, expecting that if a child is gifted, he or she may not also be the captain of the football team or the homecoming queen or a cheerleader.

In a study conducted on youth, some of whom were intellectually gifted and some of whom were able and active in arts or athletics, Fredericks, Flanagan, and Alfeld (2010) found that although they had expected to discover passion in both groups of participants (as demonstrated by talking about the activity all of the time, being very focused on it, feeling joyful about it, and including it in their identity formation), they discovered the opposite. “There was little evidence of passion among the gifted youth” with regard to schoolwork and “many of the gifted students had difficulty identifying aspects of school that interested or excited them” (Fredericks et al., 2010, p. 1). This was an inappropriate comparison to make. The gifted children were expected to be passionate about a forced activity (school) simply because they had

high ability in one aspect (intelligence) that is necessary for school success. A better comparison would have been gifted athletes who were forced to compete in football or gifted dancers who did not enjoy dance classes but were forced to attend. They noted that although some of the participants described passions outside of school, the teachers had not made an effort to “connect these interests to the school curriculum” (Fredericks et al., 2010, p. 10). While this would be ideal, it is also interesting that there was no

*Nation Deceived: How Schools Hold Back America's Brightest Students* (Colangelo, Assouline, & Gross, 2004), reviewed the history and research surrounding acceleration and found that negative attitudes towards acceleration fly in the face of virtually all research. Children who are good candidates for acceleration (the *Iowa Acceleration Scale* is one effective instrument for determining appropriateness) report uniformly positive experiences.

My own son, now a 19-year-old

ner to determine when boredom intervention is necessary and how it will be handled. Differentiated instruction is not dessert: It is the main course for gifted children, the right of the child, and the responsibility of the educator. Education is not a one-size-fits-all garment, and parents and educators must work together to alter it to fit the needs of the child. Teachers and parents are both adjusters of the program, with teachers connecting with the child sufficiently to design an appropriate program and parents recognizing that

**Differentiated instruction is not dessert: It is the main course for gifted children, the right of the child, and the responsibility of the educator.**

expectation that the teachers would connect interests in sports or the arts to the curriculum. Both parents and educators serve gifted children better when they recognize that intelligence does not necessitate passion for school any more than height necessitates passion for basketball. They are traits, not destinies. The perception that simply because one is bright that school should be both enjoyable and easy is a logical fallacy.

Another area in which perception and reality differ is in attitudes towards acceleration. The same people who lament gifted children's attraction towards friendships with older peers argue against allowing those same children to accelerate to an academic level with older peers, a paradox that harms children and frustrates parents. Neihart (2007) found that grade skipping, early entrance to school, and early college admission has socioaffective benefits for gifted children, as long as the acceleration was based on a full scope of evaluation, including academic as well as social and emotional maturity. The Templeton National Report on Acceleration, A

college senior, attended first grade for 2 days, was skipped to second, and then single-subject accelerated in math and science, a combination of techniques that demonstrates the flexibility of possibilities inherent in acceleration. When asked about it, he said, “I simply cannot imagine having had to remain at the levels the system says I should have. I took AP Calculus BC at age 14. Traditional practice would have had me in Algebra 1. That doesn't help anyone, and would have made me literally crazy. Acceleration made it possible for me to stay in public school.”

Negative attitudes towards acceleration almost always originate on the institutional side, and in order for gifted children to make effective connections with educators, the educators who serve them must open their professional minds to the academically and cost-effective method of acceleration, setting aside their own bias in favor of what is best for the student. Educators must keep in mind that school is for the student, not the student for the school.

Parents and educators must part-

ner to determine when boredom intervention is necessary and how it will be handled. Differentiated instruction is not dessert: It is the main course for gifted children, the right of the child, and the responsibility of the educator. Education is not a one-size-fits-all garment, and parents and educators must work together to alter it to fit the needs of the child. Teachers and parents are both adjusters of the program, with teachers connecting with the child sufficiently to design an appropriate program and parents recognizing that

## CONNECTION WITH COMMUNITIES

Early social concern is a hallmark trait of gifted children, and connecting them with their communities invokes this ability, creating a dynamic in which children can express their genius through action, an ideal that builds true self-concept in gifted learners. Often, children's early, intense social conscience is neglected, “becoming a victim of societal pressures toward avarice and self-centeredness” (Van Gemert, 2011b, para. 1). According to Roeper (1992), an environment in which young children are kept from developing feelings of being on the outside or being separated from the world should be established. This can be accomplished through service-learning.

Terry (2008) explained, “Advanced levels of service-learning have been shown to provide gifted students with opportunities to exhibit

high levels of creativity, responsibility, reflective judgment, self-awareness, empathy for others, and autonomy of thought and action, in addition to other characteristics of self-actualization” (p. 47). Parents need not fear that children who serve their communities will be scarred by exposure to struggle and poverty. Author Roald Dahl clearly understood that children perceive the dark side of the world. His characters in books such as *Danny, the Champion of the World*, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, and *Matilda* encounter the darker sides of life without surprise or long-lasting ill effect. Of greater danger is to deny the gifted child the opportunity to expand beyond the narcissism that can accompany high ability in any arena. The research bears out that “if we want our students to lead creative, productive lives, we must give them opportunities to learn in ways that have consequences for others, as well as for themselves” (Terry, Bohnenberger, Renzulli, Cramond, & Sisk, 2008, p. 64).

Fortunately, finding places for youth to involve themselves in service-learning is not complex. The U.S. Department of Education website (<http://www2.ed.gov/students/involve/service/edpicks.jhtml>) offers links to many local organizations and matching services. Serving on advisory boards of libraries, schools, or councils, as well as more traditional volunteering in arenas in which they may be of persistent as opposed to episodic service, invites gifted children outside themselves and into the world that has need of them. Their natural social concern combined with high-level problem-solving skills make service-learning an ideal fit, enabling connection with the community as well as themselves. Gifted youth feel “deeply and profoundly about the world around them, and the adults in their lives need to facilitate the translation of that feeling into action” (Van Gemert, 2011b, para. 8).

The connections they build with themselves, their peers, their parents, and educators make this last connection with their communities possible. These connections are the key to the effective care and education of gifted children, creating adaptives who are as much at home in the world around them as their typical learner peers.

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What the Research Says About

# Twice-Exceptional Students

## Building Partnerships With Special Educators

**Sonia L. Parker and Susan K. Johnsen, Ph.D.**

**S**TUDENTS WHO EXHIBIT PATTERNS OF extreme abilities, such as giftedness, combined with areas of significant difficulty, such as a learning disability, are often overlooked in the identification process for gifted programs. Previously referred to as a puzzling paradox by Baum (1990), researchers have labeled this group *twice-exceptional* (2e) (Nielsen, Higgins, & Hammond, 1995). Since Congress includes twice-exceptional children under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (2004) [P. L. 108-446, Section 681(d)(3)(J)], serving gifted students with disabilities has become an increasingly important topic of research and requires partnering with special educators.

This review examined articles that have been published since 2002 in *Gifted Child Today*, *Journal for the Education of the Gifted*, *Gifted Child Quarterly*, *Roeper Review*, and *Journal of Advanced Academics*. All articles focused on gifted students with disabilities such as learning disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The search yielded 31 articles with 10 descriptive studies (Barber & Mueller, 2011; Chae, Ji-Hye, & Kyung-Sun, 2003; Karnes, Shaunessy, & Bisland, 2004; Rinn & Nelson, 2009; Rinn & Reynolds, 2012; Rizza & Morrison, 2003; Shevitz, Weinfield, Jeweler, & Barnes-Robinson, 2003; VanTassel-Baska, Feng, Swanson, Quek, & Chandler, 2009; Weinfield, Barnes-Robinson, Jeweler, & Shevitz, 2002; Yssel,

Prater, & Smith, 2010), 10 qualitative studies (Al-Hroub, 2010a; Assouline, Foley Nicpon, & Doobay, 2009; Assouline, Foley Nicpon, & Whiteman, 2010; Cooper, Ness, & Smith, 2004; Hannah & Shore, 2008; Hua, 2002; Kim & Ko, 2007; Pereles, Omdal, & Baldwin, 2009; Turk & Campbell, 2002; Turk & Campbell, 2003), and two quasi-experimental or experimental studies (Al-Hroub, 2010b; Hartnett, Nelson, & Rinn, 2004). The remainder of the articles provided reviews, critiques, and recommendations. Of particular note was one review of the empirical literature over a 20-year period (Foley Nicpon, Allmon, Sieck, & Stinson, 2011).

Five studies looked exclusively at elementary-aged students (Al-Hroub, 2010a, 2010b; Assouline et al., 2009; Chae et al., 2003; Cooper, et al., 2004). Four studies focused only on secondary-aged students (Barber & Mueller, 2011; Hua, 2002; Rinn & Reynolds, 2012; VanTassel-Baska et al., 2009; Yssel et al., 2010). Nine articles included a range of students (Assouline et al., 2010; Bisland, 2004; Foley Nicpon et al., 2011; Gardynik & McDonald, 2005; hannah & Shore, 2008; Shevitz et al., 2003; Turk & Campbell, 2002; Weinfield et al., 2002). Two examined twice-exceptional students at the preschool level (Chamberlin, Buchanan, & Vercimak, 2007; Pereles et al., 2009), two at the college level (Turk & Campbell, 2002, 2003) and one examined adults (Kim & Ko, 2007). Four studies examined the perceptions of educators, preservice teachers, or graduate students toward twice-exceptional students (Hartnett et al., 2004; Karnes et al., 2004; Rinn & Nelson, 2009; Rizza & Morrison, 2003).

Twice-exceptional students who displayed giftedness and had learning disabilities were the focus of 15 articles (Al-Hroub, 2010a, 2010b; Assouline et al., 2010; Barber & Mueller, 2011; Bisland, 2004; Cooper et al., 2004; Gardynik & McDonald, 2005; han-

nah & Shore, 2008; Hughes et al., 2009; Hua, 2002; Karnes et al., 2004; Shevitz et al., 2003; VanTassel-Baska et al., 2009; Weinfield et al., 2002; Yssel et al., 2010). A smaller number of articles highlighted gifted students with ADHD (Rinn & Nelson, 2009; Rinn & Reynolds, 2012; Turk

**...a collaborative effort between classroom teachers, gifted educators, special educators, and parents is needed to identify twice exceptional learners and address their special needs.**

& Campbell, 2002, 2003), Autism Spectrum Disorder (Assouline et al., 2009), and emotional/behavioral disabilities (Rizza & Morrison, 2003).

Researchers searched for characteristics of twice-exceptional students and sought to find both identifying factors and treatments. Some of the studies reported a strong neurological component linked to learning disabilities (Assouline et al., 2009; Cooper et al., 2004; Gilger & Hynd, 2008). The notion of a brain-based disability led Cooper et al. (2004) to the conclusion that behavior problems did not always occur with 2e students. In fact, Chae et al. (2003) determined that gifted students who demonstrate better internal control than nongifted students may be able to compensate for attention issues. Gifted students with written language disability showed more uncommon behaviors but fewer psychosocial problems (Assouline et al., 2010).

Another set of characteristics studied were twice-exceptional students' cognitive, social, and emotional development. In the cognitive area, Hannah and Shore (2008) noted that metacognitive skills were more developed in high school students who were twice exceptional. On the other hand, Barber and Mueller (2011) found that 2e students had lower self-concepts

than their peers and that their social perceptions most resembled those with learning disabilities. Gardynik and McDonald (2007) determined that risk and resilience could potentially be protective factors for issues with self-concept. Using historical cases, Kim and Ko (2007) described how wisdom might also be an important compensating characteristic of 2e students. Struggles and triumphs of the students were documented in many of the case studies such as the Turk and Campbell (2002, 2003) articles.

Early identification of twice-exceptional students emerged as a theme in assessment as did the importance of ensuring differential diagnoses of both the child's giftedness and disability (Chamberlin et al., 2007; Cooper et al., 2004; Gardynik & McDonald, 2005; Hartnett et al., 2004; Hua, 2002; Rinn & Nelson, 2009; Rinn & Reynolds, 2012). For the most part, these students are difficult to identify because of the unintentional masking of both ability and disability (Foley Nicpon et al., 2011). For early identification, Chamberlin et al. (2007) suggested using two types of authentic assessments: routines-based assessments and play-based assessments. The importance of early identification could also be found in suggestions for treatment and future practice (Gardynik & McDonald, 2005; Hua, 2002). VanTassel-Baska et al. (2009) noted that students may have had negative experiences in their gifted programs in the past, making it more important for appropriate treatments and programs to be established early.

In order to implement effective interventions, educators and families need to understand the complexities and talents of twice-exceptional children. For this reason, researchers studied teachers' perceptions of behaviors and assessment (Al-Hroub, 2010a; Hartnett et al., 2004; Karnes et al., 2004; Rinn & Nelson, 2009; Rizza & Morrison, 2003). When prompts were given for giftedness

as a characteristic of students, teachers were more likely to identify students as gifted or twice-exceptional. When the suggestion of giftedness to describe behaviors was not presented, a smaller percentage of teachers noted this as a possibility (Hartnett et al., 2004; Rinn & Nelson, 2009).

Authors described specialized and individualized interventions by a multidisciplinary team that focused on students' strengths as effective (Foley Nicpon et al., 2011; Gardynik & McDonald, 2005; Hua, 2002; Weinfield et al., 2002). In addition, all of the programs emphasized the importance of emotional support from caring adults to develop a positive self-concept and self-efficacy (Gardynik & McDonald, 2005; Hua, 2002; Weinfield et al., 2002). Researchers identified specific learning strategies and characteristics of effective gifted programs for twice-exceptional students (Bisland, 2004; Morrison & Rizza, 2007; Shevitz et al., 2003; Weinfield et al., 2002). For example, Weinfield et al. (2002) described the Wings Mentor Program designed specifically for gifted students with disabilities that matches a 2e student with a mentor to explore interests. A few articles described how twice-exceptional students are accommodated with the Response to Intervention (RtI) process. These highlighted challenges with using RtI with twice-exceptional students and provided suggestions to implementing the program (Hughes et al., 2009; Pereles, Omdal, & Baldwin, 2009). When gifted programs do not accommodate students with disabilities, 2e students report more negative behaviors, low motivation, and lack of accommodations for their disabilities (VanTassel-Baska et al., 2009). Therefore, a collaborative effort between classroom teachers, gifted educators, special educators, and parents is needed to identify twice-exceptional learners and address their special needs.

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Al-Hroub, A. (2010a). Developing assessment profiles for mathematically gifted children with learning difficulties at three schools in Cambridgeshire, England. *Journal for the Education of the Gifted*, 34, 7–44.

The purpose of this multiple case study design was to determine whether multidimensional assessments are useful in identifying dual-exceptional students—in this case, students who are mathematically gifted with a learning disability. Three males and two females, ages 9 years to 11 years, 5 months were included in the study. Six formal and informal assessments were administered. The researcher found that the dual-exceptional students needed to have learning differences assessed using a variety of instruments:

- Assessment profiles and case histories represented the educational, familial, medical, and psychological backgrounds of the students.
- Multidimensional assessments were useful in describing the students' strengths and weaknesses.
- Distinctive cognitive patterns and verbal performance discrepancies proved to be useful in identification of the students (WISC-III; Dyslexia Screening Test; Neale Analysis of Reading Ability).
- Dynamic assessments involving math tasks were helpful in finding untapped math potential.
- Historical data helped clarify quantitative data.

The author concluded that while psychometric tests are useful, they provide a partial picture only. Both qualitative and quantitative data need to be used in identifying gifted math students with learning disabilities. Moreover, these students represented gifted students with unrecognized learning disabilities. No students with learning disabilities who might have gifts in math or other areas were a part of this study. Al-Hroub recommended professional development for teachers, the school community, and parents to raise awareness of the definitions, identification, and characteristics of dual-exceptional students that might increase the number of students served.

Al-Hroub, A. (2010b). Programming for mathematically gifted children with learning difficulties. *Roeper Review*, 32, 259–271.

Identification and programming for mathematically gifted students with a learning disability in Amman, Jordan, was the subject of this article. Twenty-nine students (13 boys, 16 girls), ages 10 years to 11 years, 11 months, were split into two matched groups and received two different treatments. The first group received traditional instruction and the second group received instruction with multisensory elements and enrichment. Both groups received a multidimensional evaluation that included four informal assessments (direct observation, documentary evidence, parent and teacher interviews, and teacher nomination) and psychometric testing. In a pretest and posttest given to the students, those in the multisensory treatment group had significant point increases over those in the traditional group. Those in the multisensory treatment group also demonstrated higher levels of participation. The impact of multisensory and enrichment programs may specifically help students who are both mathematically gifted and have been diagnosed with a learning disability.

Assouline, S. G., Foley Nicpon, M., & Doobay, A. (2009). Profoundly gifted girls and autism spectrum disorder: A psychometric case study comparison. *Gifted Child Quarterly*, 53, 89–105.

The purpose of this case study was to distinguish characteristics between two profoundly gifted girls, one with and one without Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The 12-year-old girl was classified as a Type B gifted student denoting high cognitive ability with the potential to exhibit symptoms consistent with social-emotional difficulty. The 11-year-old girl was classified as a Type C gifted student denoting high cognitive ability with severe social impairments; she was diagnosed with an ASD. For reference, a Type A gifted was described as a student having high cognitive ability and well developed social skills. For both girls, the researchers assessed intellectual and academic functioning, neuropsychological functioning, ASD, adaptive functioning, and social skills. The authors discussed the importance of comprehensive testing, including psychoeducational evaluation, in order to identify the strengths of twice-exceptional children as well as any weaknesses. The authors found significant differences in neuropsychological functioning. Measures designed to detect Autism Spectrum Disorder, adaptive functioning, and executive functioning are able to identify ASD in profoundly gifted students and find appropriate interventions.

Assouline, S. G., Foley Nicpon, M., & Whiteman, C. (2010). Cognitive and psychosocial characteristics of gifted students with written language disability. *Gifted Child Quarterly*, 54, 102–115.

The purpose of this article was to explore comprehensive assessment for twice-exceptional students. The authors identified 14 gifted students from Iowa who also had a specific

learning disability of written language. The students' ages ranged from 8 years, 2 months to 17 years, 9 months and represented grades 2–11. They administered ability, achievement, and psychosocial assessments to create profiles for each student. They reported the following results:

- Gifted students were identified as having a score of 120 or higher on the verbal scale of a cognitive ability test.
- Verbal abilities were found to be stronger than students' nonverbal abilities.
- While reading performance varied, math was at or above grade level.
- Students showed more unusual behaviors but fewer psychosocial difficulties.

A case study was described at the end

of the article to demonstrate the application of the data and the importance of intervention and assessment. The authors noted the fundamental need to use comprehensive assessment including individually administered cognitive ability testing to identify needs and strengths for twice-exceptional children.

Assouline, S. G., Foley Nicpon, M., & Whiteman, C. (2011). Cognitive and psychosocial characteristics of gifted students with written language disability: A reply to Lovett's response. *Gifted Child Quarterly*, 55, 152–157.

The purpose of this article was to respond to Lovett's critique of Assouline et al.'s 2010 article on characteristics of gifted students with written language disability. The authors provide evidence that refutes

Well, if I wasn't already sold on taking in the "Building Connections" session, I am now.



No matter how gifted or talented, never doubt the value of a few helping hands and connections.

alternative explanations: motivation, past experiences, and measurement error. They conclude that identification of gifted students with disabilities requires a comprehensive psychoeducational evaluation.

Barber, C., & Mueller, C. T. (2011). Social and self-perceptions of adolescents identified as gifted, learning disabled, and twice-exceptional. *Roeper Review*, 33, 109–120.

The purpose of this study was to examine self-perceptions and social perceptions of twice-exceptional students in comparison with three other groups: (a) those classified as gifted, (b) those classified as having a learning disability, and (c) those classified as neither gifted nor learning disabled (control group). Data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health helped the researchers identify 90 twice-exceptional students and the matched groups. Students were in grades 7–12 at the time the surveys were given. The analysis found that social perceptions of the twice-exceptional students most resembled students with learning disabilities except on their perceived relationship with their mothers. Twice-exceptional students were found to have less positive relationships with their mothers than the other groups. Additionally, the twice-exceptional students were found to have lower self-concept than the control group.

Bisland, A. (2004). Using learning-strategies instruction with students who are gifted and learning disabled. *Gifted Child Today*, 27(3), 52–58.

This article gives an overview of students who have both gifts and disabilities and discusses learning strategies that will help them achieve academically. It also emphasized that special education teachers, regular education teachers, and teachers of the gifted should be aware of the unique char-

acteristics of students who have both gifts and disabilities and how they should be aware of strategies to assist them in reaching their full potential. The article classified three distinct groups of gifted students with learning disabilities. It then discussed characteristics of these students. It explained that these students possess outstanding gifts or talents, but that their disabilities make academic achievement difficult. The remainder of the article discussed the importance of instructional goals and explained many different instructional strategies that are beneficial to the student with multiple exceptionalities. It also emphasized that self-efficacy and independence of learning are key areas that should be stressed in preparing gifted/learning-disabled students for the future.

Chae, P. K., Ji-Hye, K., & Kyung-Sun, N. (2003). Diagnosis of ADHD among gifted children in relation to KEDI-WISC and T.O.V.A. performance. *Gifted Child Quarterly*, 47, 192–202.

The purpose of this study was to (a) determine the prevalence of ADHD in gifted children and to discuss cognitive, social, and attention characteristics of twice-exceptional students; (b) compare performances on a comprehensive test of ability and a test of ADHD assessment between gifted and nongifted students; and (c) identify the relationship between gifted students' performance on ADHD and intelligence tests. Participants included 106 gifted students (73 boys, 33 girls) and 71 nongifted students (40 boys, 31 girls). The average age for both groups was 7.7 years. Diagnoses for ADHD were made based on the Test of Variables of Attention (T.O.V.A), which assesses sustained attention, the Children Behavior Checklist (CBCL), and behavioral observations. Ten of the 107 gifted students (9.4%) were classified as having ADHD. The prevalence rate was consistent with previous findings. In

comparison with nongifted students with ADHD, the gifted students showed higher sensitivity and made fewer commission and omission errors. Both groups of students did equally poorly when assessed on response time that may be an important part of diagnosing ADHD. Gifted students demonstrated better internal control and their intellectual ability could compensate for attention issues that were experienced, particularly from boredom. The authors found that gifted students were better than nongifted students on broad tests of attention and noted that higher norms may be needed on tests such as the T.O.V.A. for use with gifted children with ADHD to decrease the risk of false negative diagnoses. In comparison with nongifted children and gifted children without ADHD, the twice-exceptional children scored poorly on social competence tests but there was no significant difference in creativity.

Chamberlin, S. A., Buchanan, M., & Vercimak, D. (2007). Serving twice-exceptional preschoolers: Blending gifted education and early childhood special education practices in assessment and program planning. *Journal for the Education of the Gifted*, 30, 372–394.

The purpose of this article was to address considerations for identifying and intervention planning for twice-exceptional preschoolers. They describe two types of authentic assessments (i.e., routines-based assessments [RBA] and play-based assessments [PBA]) that might be used in identifying twice-exceptional preschoolers. In RBA family members and preschool teachers are interviewed to assess the child's everyday routines across environments. PBA provides information about a child's functioning in language, sensorimotor functioning, social competence, self-regulation and academic skills.

Cooper, E. E., Ness, M., & Smith, M. (2004). A case study of a child with dyslexia and spatial-temporal gifts. *Gifted Child Quarterly*, 48, 83–94.

This case study followed a boy from kindergarten to grade five who has dyslexia and spatial-temporal gifts. His reading, writing, and spelling skills were below grade level, he had poor motor skills, and was easily distracted. Two tests were administered—a psychological test (Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children-III) and a cognitive educational evaluation (Woodcock Johnson Psycho-Educational Battery-Revised). He demonstrated a high average range of cognitive ability and was gifted in visual processing, perceptual-motor skills, and nonverbal areas of reasoning. His weaknesses included long-term retrieval and auditory processing. Through the descriptive history of his experiences, the authors concluded that:

- Dyslexia is a brain-based disorder.
- Identification should occur early and use specific assessment tools.
- Systematic instruction in remediation areas should be balanced with challenging tasks. Having both a learning disability and giftedness does not automatically mean that behavior problems will also occur.
- Additional research is needed about identification and curricular practice.

Foley Nicpon, M. F., Allmon, A., Sieck, B. & Stinson, R. D. (2011). Empirical investigation of twice-exceptionality: Where have we been and where are we going? *Gifted Child Quarterly*, 55, 3–17.

The authors reviewed the literature about twice-exceptional students over the past 20 years and found 43 empirical studies. Specifically addressed were gifted students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Attention Deficit

Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and specific learning disabilities (SLD). In five of the empirical studies, students identified as gifted had also been diagnosed with ASD. Educators were challenged in meeting the advanced academic needs of gifted students with ASD while balancing social, emotional, and behavioral concerns. Moreover, a large percentage of classroom teachers and school psychologists were not aware of twice-exceptionality or only have a passing familiarity. There were 17 empirical studies of gifted students with ADHD. In examining the themes from these studies, the authors found an unintentional masking of both ability and disability within this population, confounded by social difficulties. They recommended treatment plans for each student to individualize interventions and frequent assessments by a multidisciplinary team. Finally, 21 empirical articles focused on gifted students with a SLD. These

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articles addressed (a) identification and referral, (b) psychosocial factors, (c) effects of interventions, and (d) cognitive/academic patterns. No singular pattern for identification of any of the twice-exceptional students emerged but patterns exist amongst the students that may help inform identification and treatment options. Identification and referral needs to be comprehensive, use multiple assessments, and individualized. Similarly, psychosocial functioning varies across gifted students with SLD with some experiencing depression, low self-efficacy, and worthlessness while others are able to overcome their disability through self-determination and self-advocacy. While diagnostic profiles vary, students tend to have very strong verbal abilities with weaker nonverbal abilities. Effective interventions focused on building strengths while addressing weaknesses.

Gardynik, U. M., & McDonald, L. (2005). Implications of risk and resilience in the life of the individual who is gifted/learning disabled. *Roeper Review*, 27, 206–214.

This article provided an overview of the risk and resilience literature for gifted students, students with learning disabilities, and gifted students with learning disabilities. Gifted students with learning disabilities are vulnerable to negative outcomes due to their paradoxical combination of gifts and disabilities. They often have the ability to compensate for their academic problems, leading to problems with identification and they are frequently not given supportive interventions. Many times the hiding of learning problems caused internalized anxiety and lowered self-esteem. Earlier studies found that when gifted programming focused on twice-exceptional students' strengths, their self-concept scores were comparable to scores of gifted students. Adding to the risk factors for gifted students with learning disabilities is the belief in the mutual exclusiveness of giftedness and

learning abilities and/or the complacent belief of gifted students being able to manage high levels of success despite their learning disability. Protective factors included nurturing the students' talents and focusing on their strengths. Early identification, teaching to the students' abilities, self-understanding, and caring teachers can serve as successful interventions. The authors urged for more empirical research regarding specific protective factors to mediate the risks for this group of students.

Gilger, J. W., & Hynd, G. W. (2008). Neurodevelopmental variation as a framework for thinking about the twice exceptional. *Roeper Review*, 30, 214–228.

The authors propose a multifaceted thinking tool that addresses the variation of giftedness that emphasizes reading disabilities (RD) and twice-exceptional children. The model that they describe is the Atypical Brain Development (ABD) model. The ABD model is based on three assumptions: (a) The brain is the basis of behavior; (b) individual differences in behavior are due to variable brain structure and function; and (c) individual differences are the result of the complex effects of genes and the environment on the developing and learning brain. The presence of multiple issues that twice-exceptional students experience may be linked back to one source—the brain. According to the ABD model, genetic components to disorders or diseases such as RD should also contribute to neurodevelopmental effects that may in turn lead to areas of other cognitive deficits, spatial skills, or giftedness. A pictorial summary, as well as applications and implications of the whole-brain perspective, is presented along with a multilevel approach to intervention and assessment.

hannah, c. l., & Shore, B. M. (2008). Twice-exceptional students' use of metacognitive skills on a compre-

hension monitoring task. *Gifted Child Quarterly*, 52, 3–18.

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the role of metacognition for gifted students with a learning disability. Participants included six students in grades 5 and 6 (elementary group) and six students in grades 11 and 12 (high school group). The twice-exceptional students were presented with reading passages that included distinct errors meant to hinder comprehension. They were asked to think-aloud during their reading to detect their use of problem-solving strategies. Metacognitive abilities were demonstrated more by the high school group: they readily used the look-back strategy, monitored their comprehension, used background knowledge, and verbalized their failure at understanding based on unknown or anomalous text. At the high school level, comprehension deficits were attributed to the students and not to the content or text. Due to this finding and the performances exhibited by the students, the authors noted that a focus on critical reading skills might be of importance. They stated that positively directed, highly structured enrichment programs might have positive impacts on the students. The metacognitive characteristics exhibited by the individual students provide insight into twice-exceptional students and how they approach specific tasks.

Hartnett, D. N., Nelson, J. M., & Rinn, A. N. (2004). Gifted or ADHD? The possibility of misdiagnosis. *Roeper Review*, 26, 73–76.

This article addressed the possibility of misdiagnosing ADHD and giftedness. Participants included forty-four graduate students who were enrolled in their first year of a school counseling program. The graduate students were randomly placed in the control or experimental group. Two forms of a vignette were used in the study—one that provided diagnostic alternatives

(Form B) and one that did not (Form A). For those given Form B, 46% of the time, a diagnosis of gifted was given and 32% of the time, a diagnosis of both gifted and ADHD was given. On Form A, none of the graduate students diagnosed the student as either gifted or gifted with ADHD. The discrepancies in the two forms suggest that clarifications between giftedness and ADHD may be needed in counseling programs to avoid either missing or misdiagnosing twice-exceptional students.

Hua, C. B. (2002). Career self-efficacy of the student who is gifted/learning disabled: A case study. *Journal for the Education of the Gifted*, 25, 375–404.

The purpose of this study was to explore, from a self-efficacy perspective, the career development pattern of a student who is gifted/learning disabled (G/LD). Specifically, the study examined factors that enhanced or impeded the development of self-efficacy of a student who is G/LD in his educational experiences and how his self-efficacy affected choices regarding his future. A qualitative, instrumental case study was used. Six months before the study, an International Baccalaureate program coordinator and a gifted/talented teacher at a local high school were asked to nominate potential participants based on the following criteria: (a) the student was identified as gifted and talented, (b) the student was identified as having a learning disability and had received special education services, and (c) the student was at the age where post-secondary goals would be considered. The participant chosen was a male, Caucasian high school junior. He was identified as having a learning disability at the age of 6; he was also found to have an IQ of 135. Interviews with the mother and the G/T teacher were obtained for triangulation purposes. A semi-structured interview technique was used. Interview data were analyzed

using a grounded theory framework. The results of this study indicated that early recognition of potential opportunities and resources for talent development and encouragement and emotional support from caring adults are critical in facilitating the development of positive self-efficacy for the GT/LD student in a career choice. In addition, the study suggested that the curriculum should be flexible and provide choices that match interests, talents, and special needs in order to help develop strengths and compensate for disabilities. Also, the study suggested educators can help GT/LD students assess themselves realistically by providing encouragement and helping to set attainable goals.

Hughes, C. E., Rollins, K., Johnsen, S. K., Pereles, D. A., Omdal, S., Baldwin, L., Brown, E. F., Abernethy, S. H., & Coleman, M. R. (2009). Remaining challenges for the use of RtI with gifted education. *Gifted Child Today*, 32(3), 58–61.

The purpose of this article was to identify challenges to gifted education with the use of Response to Intervention (RtI). The authors noted overall challenges of RtI that related to (a) a systemic view of change, (b) an inclusionary rather than an exclusionary philosophy, (c) collaboration across budget and resource allocations, (d) leadership, and (e) professional development. At the school and classroom levels, the effective implementation of RtI requires (a) instructional differentiation, (b) collaboration, (c) research-based instructional practices, (d) decision points for more intensive services, and (e) appropriate assessment instruments. Finally, for twice-exceptional students, these challenges were discussed:

- focus on disabilities rather than abilities;
- RtI may not include academic acceleration;

- lack of awareness of academic, social, and emotional needs;
- gifts may mask disabilities and students may appear average;
- negative behaviors may interfere with the recognition of ability; and
- inconsistent implementation of interventions.

Karnes, F. A., Shaunessy, E., & Bislard, A. (2004). Gifted students with disabilities: Are we finding them? *Gifted Child Today*, 27(4), 16–21.

The identification and number of twice-exceptional students in Mississippi was the focus of this study. Of the 149 public school special education directors, 60% responded. Four categories of giftedness were identified: intellectual giftedness, academic giftedness, artistic giftedness, and creative giftedness. Among 319,469 students, the directors identified 5.9% as gifted and 12% as having a disability. Only 318 students (0.1%) were identified as being gifted with a disability. The authors concluded that professional development was needed for educators who teach gifted students so that those with disabilities might be identified. Additionally, campaigns should be created to raise awareness in the public about twice-exceptional students.

Kim, J., & Ko, Y. (2007). If gifted/learning disabled students have wisdom, they have all things! *Roeper Review*, 29, 249–258.

This study sought to address the role of wisdom in the development of twice-exceptional students in their gifted programs. The authors looked at three historical figures, with all three identified as gifted and one identified with a learning disability. They hypothesized that over time, those without a learning disability would have a higher IQ and demonstrate more creativity. Niels Bohr (classified as having a learning disability), who was a Noble Prize winner in Physics, was described as having a

lower IQ than J. Robert Oppenheimer, the “father of the atomic bomb,” and Enrico Fermi, another Noble Prize winner in Physics. Additionally, Bohr was found to be less creative than the other two scientists. However, the authors believed that he demonstrated more wisdom, which may have helped him overcome his disability. Both Fermi and Oppenheimer were found to have succumbed to fallacies of thinking: Fermi to the fallacy of omniscience and Oppenheimer to the fallacy of egocentrism.

Lovett, B. J. (2011). On the diagnosis of learning disabilities in gifted students: Reply to Assouline et al. (2010). *Gifted Child Quarterly*, 55, 149–151.

The author offers three explanations for gifted students who fail to achieve at a superior level in one or more academic areas: motivation, past learning experiences, and measurement error. He questioned Assouline et al.’s criteria used for identifying a student with a writing disability without ruling out other explanations for the discrepancy between writing performance and intelligence.

Morrison, W. F., & Rizza, M. G. (2007). Creating a toolkit for identifying twice-exceptional students. *Journal for the Education of the Gifted*, 31, 57–76.

The purpose of this article was to review the literature on twice-exceptional students, to design an identification plan for school districts, and to describe three schools who implemented the toolkit. They recommended that schools (a) provide professional development for general, special, and gifted education teachers about the characteristics of twice-exceptional students; (b) include gifted educators on teams that refer students for special education services; (c) be flexible in reviewing subtest scores on tests to identify discrepancies; and (d) use qualitative and quantitative

data in making decisions. A toolkit for identifying twice exceptional students should include description and items in four categories: prereferral and screening, preliminary intervention, evaluation procedures, and educational planning.

Pereles, D. A., Omdal, S., & Baldwin, L. (2009). Response to Intervention and twice-exceptional learners: A promising fit. *Gifted Child Today*, 32(3), 40–51.

In this article, the use of a Response to Intervention (RtI) model with a problem-solving/consultation process was discussed as an appropriate and promising fit for twice-exceptional students. Utilizing an adapted model from the Colorado Department of Education, the authors listed six core principles of a RtI model:

1. All students can learn.
2. Early intervention is imperative in identifying twice-exceptional students.
3. Comprehensive tiered interventions are crucial for twice-exceptional students.
4. Ongoing academic and behavioral performance data needs to be collected.
5. Collaboration among families, educators, and community members is foundational.
6. Twice-exceptional children are more at risk for failure and underachievement without family engagement.

The five-step RtI/problem-solving/consultation process was described using a case study of a kindergarten boy who was identified as twice-exceptional: initial consultation, initial problem-solving team meeting, intervention implementation and progress monitoring, follow-up consultation, and follow-up problem-solving team meeting. The combinatory approach to intervention was found to be a promising fit and should be considered in imple-

menting RtI with twice-exceptional children.

Rinn, A. N., & Nelson, J. M. (2009). Preservice teachers’ perceptions of behaviors characteristic of ADHD and giftedness. *Roeper Review*, 31, 18–26.

There is a concern of the misdiagnosis of ADHD for gifted students based on shared behavioral characteristics. In this study, the authors sought to replicate a previous study using preservice teachers to determine the potential of misdiagnosing ADHD and giftedness. Participants included 132 preservice teachers (96 female, 36 male), ages 17–46. A vignette of a student demonstrating gifted tendencies and ADHD symptoms was presented to the teachers. One version of the vignette asked whether the behavior could be attributed to being gifted and talented or having ADHD. The other form asked for thoughts on the underlying reasons for the behavior problems without prompting the participant on the possibility of the student being gifted. The researchers found that when given the prompt, teachers were more likely to consider giftedness as a reason for the behaviors. When the prompt was not given, 20% of the preservice teachers still listed giftedness as a potential explanation. The use of a prompt in increasing the likelihood of seeing giftedness as a reason for certain behavioral displays may help limit the risk of misdiagnoses of ADHD in gifted students.

Rinn, A. N., & Reynolds, M. J. (2012). Overexcitabilities and ADHD in the gifted: An examination. *Roeper Review*, 34, 38–45.

Gifted students sometimes display characteristics that are similar to the behavioral characteristics of students who have been diagnosed with ADHD, which can lead to misdiagnoses for the gifted students. The shared characteristics between ADHD and overexcitabilities are explored in

this article. The 116 participants (73 males, 43 females) from an accelerated summer camp for the intellectually gifted were studied. Students ranged in age from 12 to 16 and had just completed grades 7–10. Demographic information, overexcitability characteristics, and symptoms of ADHD were collected. While actual misdiagnoses were not determined, potential relationships between symptoms of ADHD and overexcitability did emerge with the following forms of overexcitability: sensual, psychomotor, and imaginal.

Rizza, M. G., & Morrison, W. F. (2003). Uncovering stereotypes and identifying characteristics of gifted students and students with emotional/behavioral disabilities. *Roeper Review*, 25, 73–77.

This article focused on teachers' ability to identify gifted students who had emotional and behavior disabili-

ties. Participants included 33 graduate students (27 females, 9 males) and 59 undergraduate students (47 females, 12 males). They responded to a survey that asked them to categorize characteristics and behaviors of students in classrooms as having an emotional/behavior disorder (EBD), being gifted, being both, or being neither. Both groups viewed gifted students more positively—successful and liked by peers and adults. Conversely, those with an EBD were viewed more negatively—disruptive and dangerous. The authors noted teachers' stereotypes of students with an EBD may limit the identification of gifted abilities. Preservice teachers were also less inclined to accurately identify twice-exceptional students. The authors concluded that students with an EBD may not receive interventions that develop their talents.

Shevitz, B., Weinfield, R., Jeweler, S., & Barnes-Robinson, L. (2003). Mentoring empowers gifted/

learning-disabled students to soar! *Roeper Review*, 26, 37–40.

The Wings Mentor Program in Maryland's Montgomery County Public Schools is founded on four basic principles: (a) focus on strengths, (b) build in success, (c) enhance self-esteem, and (d) plant a seed. It was established to provide additional support to gifted learning-disabled students who were not succeeding in the classroom in grades K–12. A mentor is matched to a student and they meet during the school day for an hour each week for 8 weeks to explore selected interests. The mentors are hired as part-time employees by the school, attend training sessions on the characteristics of gifted learning-disabled students, and partner with the classroom teacher. The culminating project at the end of the semester is a classroom presentation by the student. The experience allows the "at-risk" students to be actively engaged in their

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own learning and realize their creative and intellectual potential.

Turk, T. N., & Campbell, D. A. (2003). What's right with Doug: The academic triumph of a gifted student with ADHD. *Gifted Child Today*, 26(2), 40–46.

This article was a follow-up to the Turk and Campbell (2002) article that documented the struggles of a dual-exceptional male student. In this piece, the authors extend the narrative and focus on the successes that Doug experienced and his academic triumphs. The freedom and independence of Doug's freshman year proved to be too difficult for him. At the beginning of his second year of college, he made the decision to move off campus and to start medication. At the same time, he began a regimen of physical and mental exercises. Adding deliberate structure to his daily routines such as making his bed and organizing his schedule with his Palm Pilot helped keep him organized. He managed to maintain a job and felt support in attending a support group for those with ADHD. With the use of medication, Doug was able to focus more on his studies and felt more able to succeed in his courses. This portion of the narrative highlights the ability of dual-exceptional students to overcome the challenges of having ADHD while focusing on the strengths of their giftedness.

Turk, T. N., & Campbell, D. A. (2002). What's wrong with Doug: The academic struggles of a gifted student with ADHD from preschool to college. *Gifted Child Today*, 25(4), 48–61.

This article was presented as a narrative that followed a student from preschool to college. The focus for this male student was to highlight the weaknesses and some of the challenges he had faced being a dual-exceptional student who was both gifted and had ADHD. Doug had been both precocious and

hyperactive during his early childhood. After being diagnosed as gifted through his youth, he developed a reputation with teachers as someone who could not stop talking nor could listen well. He felt bored often, which resulted in impulsivity. In junior high, the focus was often on his giftedness, which lulled others into giving him more independence and potentially a false sense of security as he relied less on outside help. His social skills were superficially developed but yet he continued to demonstrate precocious behaviors that often resulted in punishment in response to what he thought was a desire to learn. In high school, Doug felt that academic rigor was nonexistent and found the attention he desperately craved in friends and drugs rather than school. His struggle through college and his experiences and feelings are explored. This narrative presents a unique longitudinal view of the inner thoughts of a dual-exceptional student and the observations and perceptions of his teacher.

VanTassel-Baska, J., Feng, A. X., Swanson, J. D., Quek, C., & Chandler, K. (2009). Academic and affective profiles of low-income, minority, and twice-exceptional gifted learners: The role of gifted program membership in enhancing self. *Journal of Advanced Academics*, 20, 702–739.

The authors assessed the 4-year longitudinal effects of a gifted education program on students from different subgroups. Five distinct groups who were in either grade 7 or grade 8 were included: low-income White students ( $n = 13$ ), low-income African-American students ( $n = 9$ ), low-income students of other minorities ( $n = 2$ ), students with high nonverbal skills but low verbal skills ( $n = 9$ ), and twice-exceptional students ( $n = 5$ ). Using interviews, parents, students, and teachers were asked to assess the students' academic, cognitive, and social-emotional development. Interviews

with the twice-exceptional students revealed more negative than positive factors. The students reported more negative behaviors, lack of organization skills, hypersensitivity, low motivation, and lack of accommodations for their disabilities from the teachers. Two of the five students had been permanently removed from the gifted program and demonstrated a common issue of struggling to keep up with work in both their regular class and the gifted program.

Weinfeld, R., Barnes-Robinson, L., Jeweler, S., & Shevitz, B. (2002). Academic programs for gifted and talented/learning disabled students. *Roeper Review*, 24, 226–333.

In the Montgomery County Public Schools in Maryland, educators have developed a dynamic comprehensive program for the gifted learning-disabled student population in grades 2–12. Those identified with severe learning disabilities are placed in self-contained classrooms while those with milder disabilities receive gifted services in their general education classes. Students with severe learning disabilities who demonstrate academic deficits that cannot be overcome through accommodations in the home school receive appropriate gifted education at the gifted learning disabled Center. A mentorship program is available with 60–70 students participating each year. A full-time program coordinator oversees all of the instructional and program opportunities. The authors described the best practices that have been successful in this program in terms of school climate, instructional skills and strategies, and content area instruction. Overall suggestions for educating gifted students with learning disabilities include (a) gifted and talented instruction in the student's area of strength, (b) opportunities for the instruction of skills and strategies

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## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Measure your grit with the Grit Scale: <http://www.sas.upenn.edu/~duckwort/gritscale.htm>
- Watch Dr. Sherry Turkle's discussion of how technology is changing the way we connect: [http://www.ted.com/talks/lang/en/sherry\\_turkle\\_alone\\_together.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/lang/en/sherry_turkle_alone_together.html)
- Read a great book on parenting with the mind in mind: Siegel, D., & Bryson, T. (2011). *The whole-brain child: 12 revolutionary strategies to nurture your child's developing mind*. New York, NY: Delacorte Press.
- Discover great magazines for children: <http://www.cobblestonepub.com/magazines.html>
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## BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATORS

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in academic areas that are affected by the student's disability, (c) a differentiated program including individualized instructional adaptations and accommodations, and (d) comprehensive case management to coordinate all aspects of the student's individual educational plan.

Yssel, N., Prater, M., & Smith, D. (2010). Finding the right fit for twice-exceptional students in our schools. *Gifted Child Today*, 33(1), 54–61.

In this article, parental perceptions of the social-emotional and educational difficulties of twice-exceptional students were recorded. The 18 participating parents all had twice-exceptional middle school students in grades 6–8 who had attended a

summer camp for twice-exceptional students. Of the parental questionnaires collected, 10 students had been identified at school for their giftedness as well as their disability and only 5 had received both remediation and enrichment. An overall theme was that parents felt that their children did not receive adequate services for both. Thirteen parents reported difficulties in language/arts; 16 reported organizational problems; and 11 reported social-emotional problems. The article includes samples of parental responses as well as ideas from the camp that have worked well with twice-exceptional students.

**Sonia Lee** is a doctoral student in the Department of Educational Psychology at Baylor University. Her research interests relate to adult learning, training and development, and organizational behavior.

**Susan K. Johnsen, Ph.D.**, is professor in the Department of Educational Psychology at Baylor University where she directs the Ph.D. program and programs related to gifted and talented education. She is the author of more than 200 publications including *Identifying Gifted Students: A Practical Guide*, books related to implementing the national teacher preparation standards in gifted education, and tests used in identifying gifted students. She is editor-in-chief of *Gifted Child Today*. She serves on the Board of Examiners of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, is a reviewer and auditor of programs in gifted education, and is chair of the Knowledge and Skills Subcommittee of the Council for Exceptional Children. She is past president of The Association for the Gifted (TAG) and past president of the Texas Association for the Gifted and Talented (TAGT). She may be reached at Department of Educational Psychology, Baylor University, One Bear Place #97301, Waco, TX 76798 or [Susan\\_Johnsen@baylor.edu](mailto:Susan_Johnsen@baylor.edu).

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