

BELIN-BLANK

Supporting the Social and Emotional Development of High Ability and Twice- Exceptional Students

22nd Annual IAGC Convention

February 3, 2017

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Social competence (Olszewski-Kubilius et al. 2014)

- Average or above-average interpersonal abilities and positive perceptions of friendships
- At least as well-adjusted as other students in overall self-concept, affect regulation, social skills, and adaptive behavior

Family environment (Olszewski-Kubilius et al. 2014)

- Gifted students perceived their family as connected, flexible, supportive, and affectionate
- More so than parents, gifted children felt their parents were more rigid and emphasized rules/consequences

Influences (Olszewski-Kubilius et al. 2014)

- Students with higher social competence had more positive perceptions of their family functioning
- Gender – more females in the socially competent group than males

Affective concerns (Peterson, 2015)

- Underachievers
- High Achievers
- Perfectionism
- Twice-exceptionality

Additional things to consider:

perfectionism

- Perfectionism is continuous
- What type of perfectionism?
 - Adaptive (high standards, self-oriented)
 - Maladaptive (other-oriented, socially-prescribed)



Perfectionism

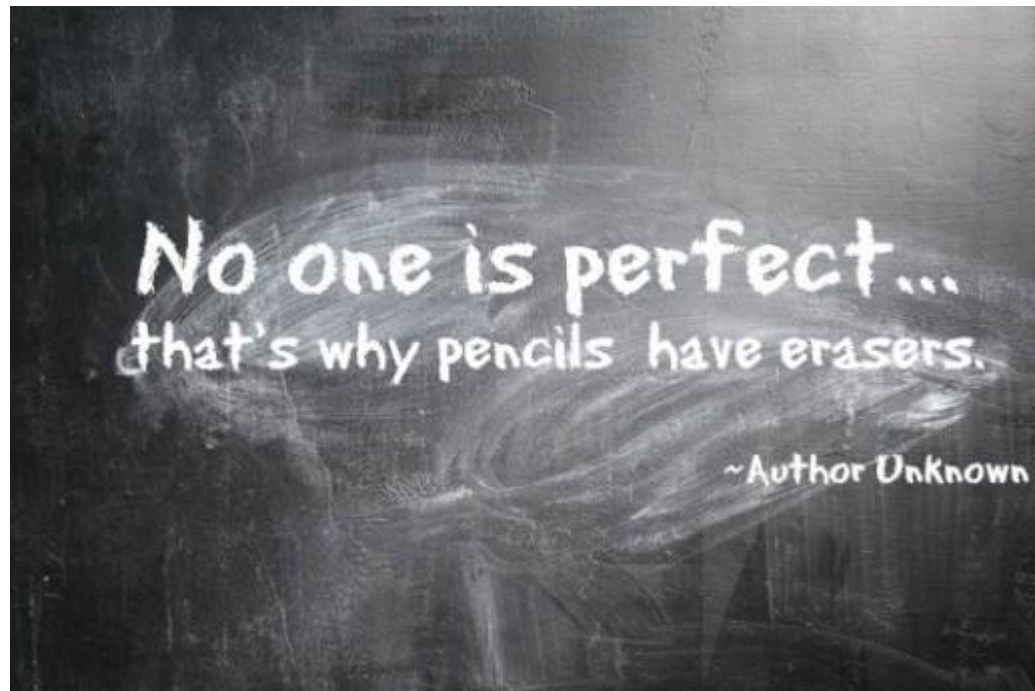
1. Realistic goal orientation?
2. Expose to “failure” – easy coursework and striving to be perfect can lead to boredom and less risk-taking.
3. Self-reflection – how do you respond to failure? Do you expect perfection?

I'VE LEARNED SO MUCH
FROM MY MISTAKES...

I'M THINKING OF MAKING
A FEW MORE.

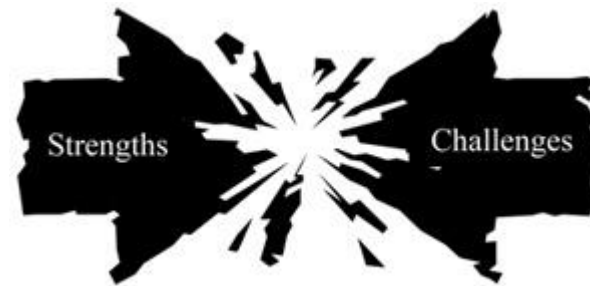
Less is known about twice-exceptional children

1. Are there unrealistic self-expectations?
2. Is there understanding of their ability and disability?



~385,000 twice-exceptional children exist (Foley Nicpon & Cederberg, 2015)

Likely an underestimate because the many twice-exceptional children with 504 Plans not counted in this total



Five factors that complicate therapeutic work and research with twice-exceptional students:

1. Onset – which came first?
2. Giftedness itself does not put one at greater risk for psychological concerns.
3. Gifted – best thought as an aspect of identity
4. High ability adds complexity to the diagnosis
5. Misdiagnosis / missed diagnosis

General findings

1. Success in academic domains may be connected to social/emotional development
 - a. Willard-Holt – need for resilience and perseverance
 - b. “Normalize” disability with high expectations (Speirs Neumeister)
 - c. Strengths-based approach (Baum)

General findings

2. Poor psychosocial development may be linked to removal from GT programs due to poor grades
 - a. Denial of gifted/talented services may have a negative cyclical effect – impacting motivation and self-concept

Gifted / ASD

1. Typically, high ability children with ASD do not report the same psychosocial behaviors their parents and teachers do
 - a. Parents = odd bx, withdrawal, inattention, hyperactivity, depression, trouble adapting, poor social skills
 - b. Teachers = odd bx, withdrawal, depression, trouble adapting

Gifted / ASD

2. Symptoms may change over development

a. Improved adaptability and fewer odd behaviors

Gifted / ADHD

1. Use of stimulant medications

- a. Just as effective as with children with ADHD
(Grizenko et al)

Gifted / ADHD

2. Overall psychosocial functioning

- a. GT/ADHD have less overall attention, social, and externalizing problems (Grizenko et al)
- b. Do not underachieve related to peers without ADHD (Bussing et al)
- c. Protective factor?

Gifted / ADHD

2. Overall psychosocial functioning

Gifted/ADHD significantly lower self-esteem, behavioral self-concept, and overall happiness than GT only

But the same feelings about friendship, self-reliance, social stress, intelligence level, physical appearance, ability to handle anxiety, and popularity (Foley-Nicpon et al)

Gifted / ADHD

2. Overall psychosocial functioning

Gifted/ADHD more likely to repeat grades, need academic support, present with co-existing psychological difficulties than GT (Antshel)

As adults, more mood, anxiety, and disruptive behaviors, greater social and academic difficulties.

Do educators know when to refer for ADHD? Is that possible in schools in Illinois?

Gifted / LD

1. Overall psychosocial functioning

Generally, parent, teacher, and self-observations of psychosocial functioning in the average range (Assouline et al), but teachers reported more trouble adapting to change, and parents reported more aggression, hyperactivity, withdrawal, inattention and “odd” behaviors

Gifted / LD

1. Overall psychosocial functioning

90 gifted students with LD; self-perceptions and self-concepts were closer to students with LD than GT and unidentified students.

Gifted / LD

2. Success in adulthood

Co-existing mental health disorder, counseling and medication intervention – those who were successful found a major within their talent domain and low emphasis on skills associated with their disability.

Why don't we know more?

1. Low incidence population
2. Limited access to students
3. Low interest from an empirical lens

What is needed to know more?

1. More general samples instead of just clinical samples
2. Specific experimental group definition
3. Work grounded in operational definitions
4. Use of comparison groups
5. More diverse samples
6. Do diagnostic category, educational intervention, family constellation or other environmental factors matter?
7. What about exposure to like-minded peers?

What contributes to “giftedness?” (Subotnik et al. 2012)

- Ability
- Creativity
- Motivation
- Emotional Trauma
- Parents
- Interest
- Passion
- Opportunity
- Chance
- Cultural factors

Talent Development Megamodel (Subotnik et al. 2012)

Underlying principles:

- abilities matter
- domains of talent have varying developmental trajectories
- opportunities need to be provided and taken
- psychosocial variables are determining factors in development of talent
- preparation for eminence is the aspired outcome of gifted education.

- Programs for high ability students are effective
- This includes ability grouping
- Within-class programming – can't slip into “no-program”
- Incorporate academics with the development of self-concept

- When deciding programming options, consider type of program influences cognitive and affective development

Implications:

1. In general, twice-exceptional children appear to have more complex social and emotional presentations than their gifted peers without a diagnosis. This implies that the twice-exceptional may need additional interventions, such as counseling and other mental health interventions.

Implications:

2. Focusing on talent development and exposure to environments where students' gifts are fostered and their difficulties are remediated may benefit the social and emotional development of twice-exceptional children.

Implications:

3. Professional development is crucial to ensure that gifted students with learning disabilities are considered for gifted programs as they may be missed or not referred by their regular or special education teachers (Bianco, 2005; Crim, Hawkins, Ruban, & Johnson, 2008).

Implications:

4. Psychosocial functioning may improve over time among twice-exceptional youth. If psychotherapy and other mental health interventions are sought, improvements may be greater, depending on the child's disability (Weisz et al., 1995).

Implications:

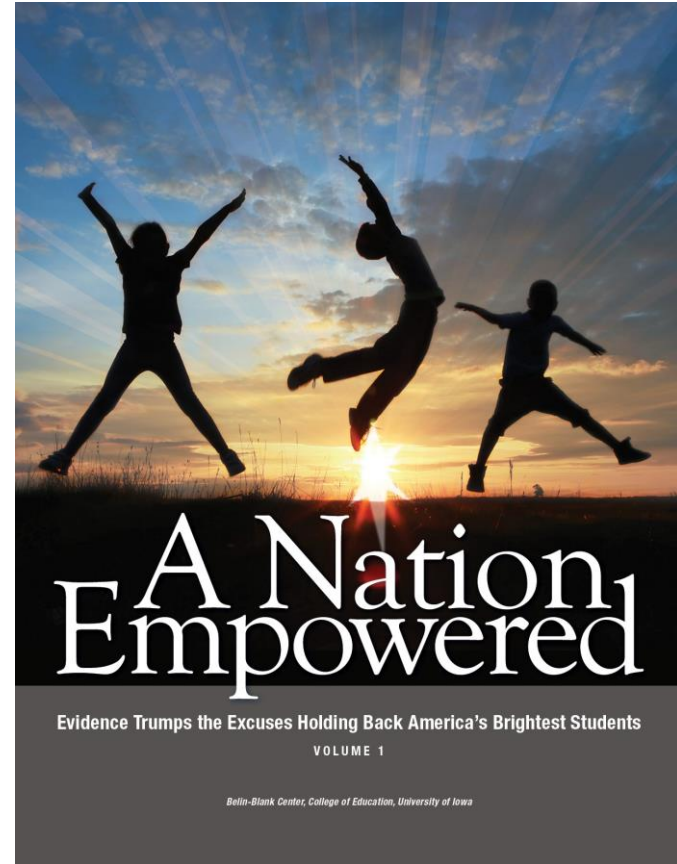
5. While parents and educators observe social and emotional difficulties in twice-exceptional children, it is not common for the student to report similar difficulties.

Implications:

6. Comprehensive assessment is necessary to sort out the nuances present in the social and emotional presentation of twice-exceptional students so that misdiagnosis is avoided.

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