

The Implications of the Impostor Syndrome

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TEXAS ASSOCIATION FOR THE
GIFTED & TALENTED

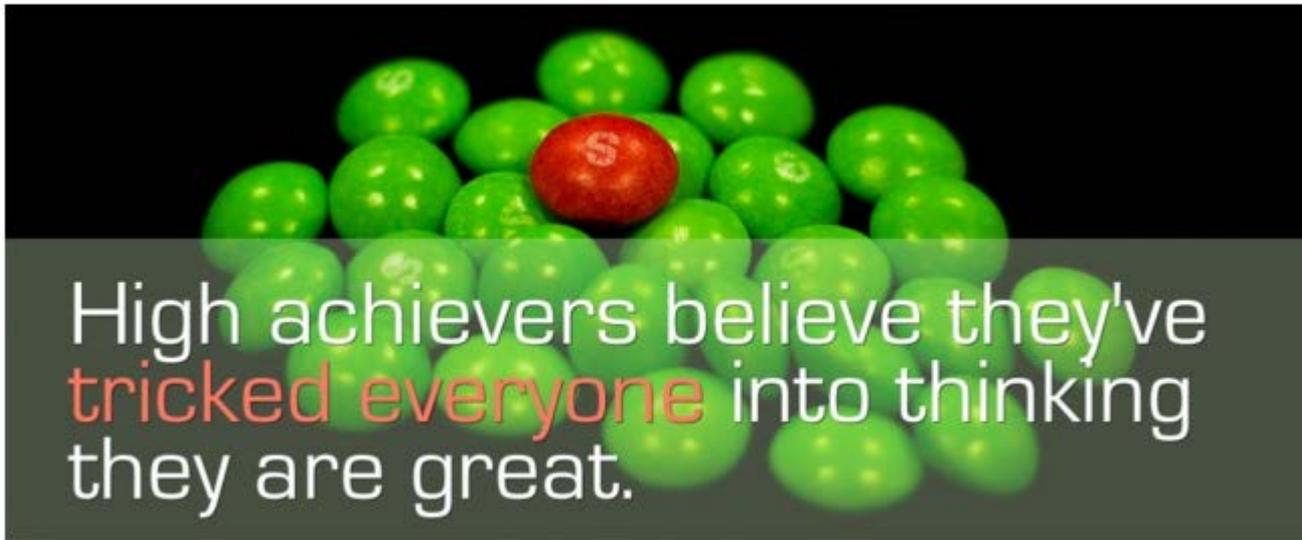
Sheep in Wolf's clothing



When we put on a costume, we may look like the real thing to others, but internally we know we are NOT actually that persona.

Session Overview

- * Definition / Explanation
- * Research (an overview)
- * Socioemotional Impact on GT students
- * Academic Impact for GT students
- * How to recognize it
- * How to combat it
- * Review



www.byrdseed.com/the-curious-case-of-impostor-syndrome

Photo by Jase Curtis



Typically GT students are OVER-confident

Photo Credit:

www.measuringu.com



Impostor syndrome can be defined as a collection of feelings of inadequacy that persist even in the face of information that indicates that the opposite is true. It is experienced internally as chronic self-doubt, and feelings of intellectual fraudulence

Shoemaker, J. (2014, April 30). The Imposter Syndrome and Gifted Children. Retrieved April 02, 2016, from <https://ramblingsofagiftedteacher.wordpress.com/2014/04/30/the-imposter-syndrome-and-gifted-children/>

Impostor Syndrome: Part 1

Feeling like a fake

**doubt
kills
more
dreams
than
failure
ever
will**

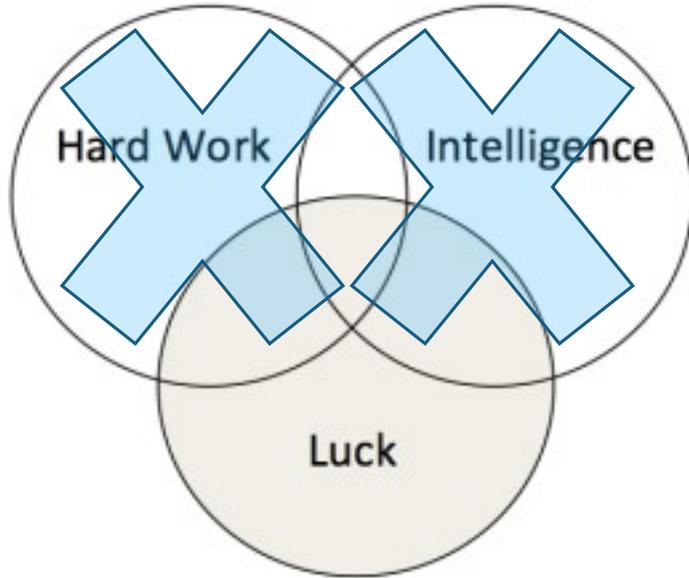
Students may not show their true ability for fear that others may find out their weaknesses (which may or may not exist).

They fear being 'found out' as not actually being Gifted or smart

Impostor Syndrome: Part 2

Success by luck

How Success is Achieved



Students may feel that any success they have achieved in their lives was due to luck or the right timing, rather than their hard work and Giftedness.

Impostor Syndrome: Part 3

Discount success



Students claim that any accomplishments they have were 'easy' or 'not important' or 'anyone could do it'.

There is a discomfort with claiming that success was due to their innate Giftedness.

Research-Clance, Imes, Machlowitz

- * Originally Impostor Syndrome focused on Gifted women who demonstrated low self-esteem and attributed their success to factors other than their hard work or abilities.
- * Bright males seemed to be more likely to attribute success to their efforts, whereas bright women credited external / outside factors
 - * Clance, P. R. & Imes, S. (1978). The imposter phenomenon in high achieving women: Dynamics and therapeutic intervention. *Psychotherapy Theory, Research and Practice* 15(3). 1-8. Retrieved from http://www.paulineroseclance.com/pdf/ip_high_achieving_women.pdf.
Machlowitz (1982)

Research-Cal Tech

- * **Female College Students suffer from I.S. the most**
- * Gifted women often work hard in order to prevent people from discovering that she is an "impostor". This hard work often leads to more praise and success, which perpetuates the impostor feelings and fears of being "found out."

* Cal Tech Counseling Center: The Impostor Syndrome. (n.d.). Retrieved April 02, 2016, from <https://counseling.caltech.edu/general/InfoandResources/Impostor>

Research-Dweck

- * Carol Dweck's *Mindset* demonstrates a clear link between fixed mindset and the difficulty to face challenges if a student believes they have maxed out their abilities or don't have any special abilities at all.
- * Dweck's Fixed mindset crushes GT students who feel they are not really as smart everyone says they are (or that tests show they are).
- * Dweck, C. S. (2008). *Mindset: The new psychology of success*. S.l.: Random House.

Research-Byrd

- * Ian Byrd-
 - * <http://www.byrdseed.com/the-curious-case-of-impostor-syndrome/>
 - * <http://www.byrdseed.com/mindsets-impostor-syndrome/>
 - * Uses his own life experience as a key case study
 - * “I see now that as the distance between my teachers and I increased, the worse these feelings became”

Research-Byrd

- * Ian Byrd:
- * “ I needed:
 - * A mentor.
 - * Feedback I could trust.
 - * To know that my feelings had a name.”
- * Byrd, I. (n.d.). The Curious Case of Impostor Syndrome. Retrieved April 02, 2016, from <http://www.byrdseed.com/the-curious-case-of-impostor-syndrome/> Permission via byrdseed.com

Research-Shoemaker

- * Jeffrey Shoemaker – (observation rather than research)
- * Discusses how this is more common in Gifted girls, than boys (especially in an urban setting)
- * “The group of students that I have that seem to be affected most by Imposter Syndrome is girls. Girls work hard at hiding their abilities.”
- * Ramblings of a Gifted Teacher. (2014, April 30). Retrieved April 02, 2016, from <https://ramblingsofagiftedteacher.wordpress.com/>

Research-Young

- * Valerie Young, Ed.D.
 - * Those with Impostor Syndrome are “people who have a persistent belief in their lack of intelligence, skills or competence” (Young, p. 16)
 - * Infomercial online to purchase her self-help book
 - * www.impostorsyndrome.com
 - * “Anyone can overcome this kind of needless self-doubt”
 - * I.S. does not equal low self-esteem, but it stems from it

Research-Kasper

- * Joseph Kasper-personal experiences from a talented and published author
- * “As I understand it – and more important, as I experience it – impostor syndrome is rooted in a constant fear of being discovered to be a fraud and a charlatan. One of the various effects is that I tend to externalize accomplishments and internalize setbacks.”
- * Kasper, J. (2013). An Academic With Impostor Syndrome. Retrieved April 02, 2016, from <http://chronicle.com/article/An-Academic-With-Impostor/138231/>
- * *Joseph Kasper is the pseudonym of an assistant professor in the humanities at a regional public university in the South.*

Research-Reis

- * Sally M. Reis, Ph.D.
- * “If ability is high and less effort is warranted, many women begin to feel that they are lucky rather than academically gifted.”
- * Reis specifically sites studies where female students consistently attribute their success to external factors other than themselves
- * Reis, S. M., Ph.D. (2002). Internal barriers, personal issues, and decisions faced by gifted and talented females. *Gifted Child Today*, 25(1), 14-28. Retrieved April 2, 2016, from <http://gct.sagepub.com/content/25/1/14.full.pdf.html>

Research-Delisle/Berger

- * James Delisle and Sandra Berger-underachieving Gifted students are those who show a discrepancy between their school performance and some ability index (such as an IQ score)
- * It is a behavior and as such can be changed and molded for the better
- * It is in the eye of the beholder, as in success to the student may differ from what the teacher expects
- * Delisle, J. R., & Berger, S. L. (1996, May 16). Underachieving Gifted Students. Retrieved April 02, 2016, from http://www.kidsource.com/kidsource/content/underachieving_gifted.html Last modified April 20, 2000

Socioemotional Impact

- * GT students with I.S.
 - * may become increasingly withdrawn from peers or teachers in an effort to hide their 'fraudulence'.
 - * may begin attributing ALL successes to outside factors
 - * may resist any praise or congratulatory remarks
 - * may develop a sense of discomfort with other GT peers (a sense of not-belonging)
 - * may become depressed or reclusive
 - * may feel burdened by outside world's perspective and shut down

Academic Impact

- * GT students with I.S.
 - * may opt for easy projects or assignments to avoid revealing their 'fraudulency'
 - * may take easier (or non-AP/honors) classes
 - * may refuse to accept credit or accolades for work accomplished
 - * may put forth minimal effort to 'prove' they are not actually gifted
 - * may not attempt extracurricular events (such as UIL or decathlon) due to fear of failure and lack of confidence that they can actually compete

How to recognize it

- * If GT students...
 - * Refuse to take on challenges that you know s/he can accomplish
 - * Start suddenly submitting subpar work
 - * Seem to withdraw from other intellectual peers, and demonstrate behaviors of their age peers
 - * Seem to feel uncomfortable with praise and accolades
 - * Attribute all success to something other than themselves
 - * Academic risk-taking is greatly reduced

How to combat it-Delisle

- * Delisle:

- * Supportive Strengths: allow classroom techniques that allow students to feel like 'family' rather than an education 'factory' worker seems to help overcome this sense of inadequacy
- * Intrinsic Strategies: the learner's self-concept is connected to their desire to achieve academically and classrooms that encourage a positive attitude toward learning/achieving will help eliminate I.S.
- * Remedial Strategies: allow students to achieve in their areas of academic strengths/interests, while providing various opportunities in areas of deficiencies to create a safe environment where mistakes are part of learning

How to combat it-Byrd

- * “Teachers, stay close to your students. Don’t let the brightest kids just work on their own. This can increase the feelings of being an impostor.
- * Give caring, honest feedback of how your best students can improve. Never give the impression that you think they’ve perfectly mastered a topic (because they *know* they haven’t, and you will then appear to be un-objective).”

Tell students to . . .

- * Realize that you are under-estimating your abilities
- * When you receive positive feedback, accept it and use it constructively. By denying it, you are hurting that person's judgement.
- * Don't attribute your successes to luck.
- * Don't talk about your abilities or successes with words like "merely," "only," "simply," etc.

* San Roman, M. (2014, September 04). 8 Tips About Overcoming Impostor Syndrome I Wish I Had Known. Retrieved April 02, 2016, from <https://open.buffer.com/impostor-syndrome-8-tips-i-wish-i-had-known/>

Tell students to . . .

- * Keep a journal of your accomplishments
- * Recognize that perfect does not exist, and mistakes help us learn
- * It's good to be humble, but it's ok to accept praise when earned
- * Remember that even experts seek help and guidance from others

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Review

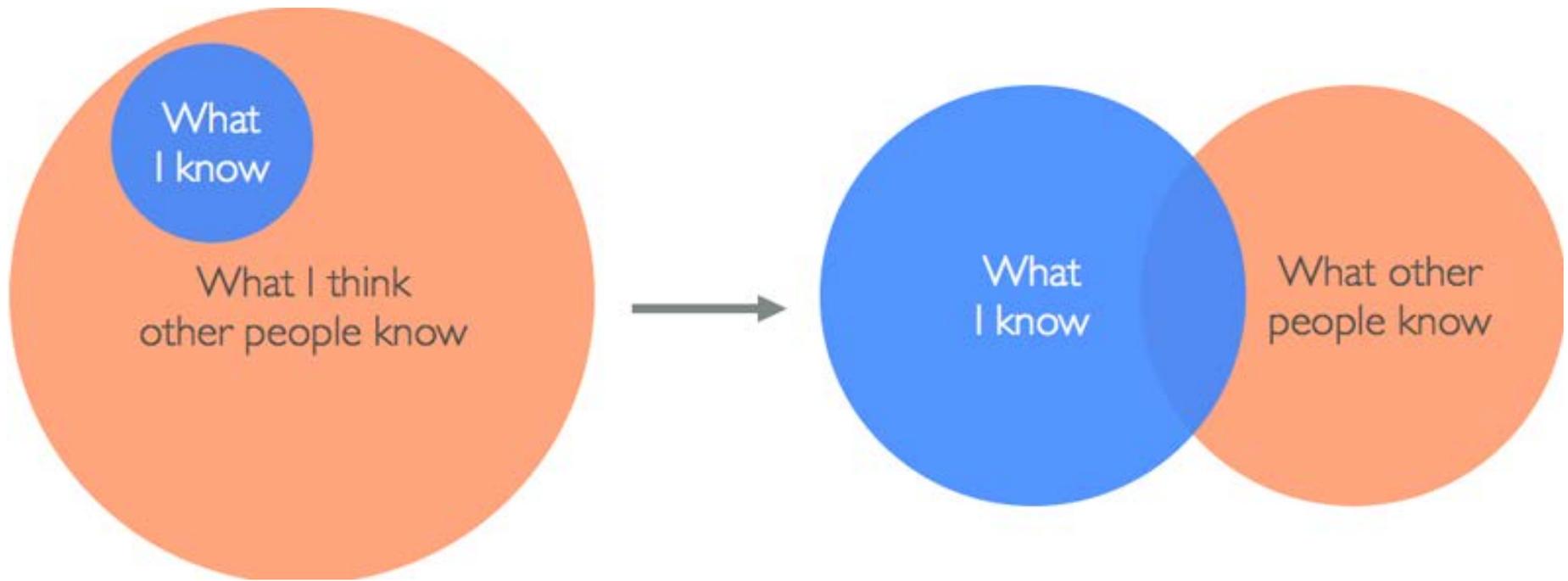
- * Impostor Syndrome is an inaccurate view of one's true abilities and intelligence
- * I.S. has a history in female studies, with very little done in modern day Gifted classrooms
- * I.S. is highly linked to self-esteem and mindset
- * I.S. is behavior based and can be changed
- * I.S. is not easy to identify, but changes in a GT student's risk-taking is a sign
- * Teachers can combat it by creating a 'safe' classroom environment where mistakes are part of learning

Impostor Syndrome



Overconfidence





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- * Young, V., Ed.D. (n.d.). Impostor Syndrome. Retrieved April 02, 2016, from <http://impostorsyndrome.com/>

Questions/Comments?

- * Thank you.
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