



Gifted Plus Issue 3

April 2016

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GIFTED PLUS DIVISION OF TAGT

IN THIS ISSUE

Focus on Twice Exceptionality

The idea of twice-exceptionality (2e) is complex and, to many, counter-intuitive. How can someone be both cognitively gifted and simultaneously have a learning disability? Many believe that if you're gifted and you have a learning disability, the two cancel each other out, resulting in a typical learner. Often, twice-exceptional students are labeled, as Susan Baum describes, as lazy, underachieving or average.

Many educators never know they have a twice-exceptional student in their class because the child's disability masks their ability, resulting in a failure to adequately evaluate the child's ability. Sometimes, the child's disability has a social component to it, making it difficult for them to relate to peers and teachers, further complicating their experiences in school.

These dynamics make our Division critically important.

Parents with twice-exceptional students and teachers who have learned about 2e issues often find themselves frustrated with the lack of understanding, even among those responsible for evaluating or creating educational plans for 2e students. Most teachers in classrooms now began teaching before the idea of twice-exceptionality was part of the educational lexicon.

Its integration as part of understanding giftedness will be an ongoing process, and it is our hope that the information in this newsletter will give those interested in 2e issues concrete resources and ideas to share with others, opening a dialogue that has been silent too long.

The best thing that can be done for 2e students is to inform adults. This newsletter and division hope to move that process forward.

- *Lisa Van Gemert, Chair*



Build Your Library

Recommendations for great reads and library additions can be found on page 3.



The 2e Newsletter

Find out about this rich resource for those interested in 2e issues on page 2.



2e by the Numbers

300,000 estimated number of twice exceptional students in the United States

1/6 of all gifted students evaluated at Gifted Development Center had an exceptionality

0 number of hours of required training in 2e for educators in any state.

0 number of hours of required training in 2e for mental health professionals in any state.

1 messy yet helpful website with information on nearly every disability coexisting with giftedness, found at uniquelygifted.org.



The Misdiagnosis Complication

Issues of twice exceptionality are further complicated by the fact that many gifted behaviors look like disabilities to those unfamiliar with gifted traits. A gifted child's disinterest in topics of interest to age-group peers, ability to concentrate for extended periods of time on topics of interest, ability to tune out all stimulus when cognitively engaged, and/or strong belief in justice and fairness, combined with a lack of training by mental health professionals, all combine to create an environment in which misdiagnosis can occur.

Gifted students are often misdiagnosed with ADHD, Oppositional Defiance, Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder and more. SENG (Supporting the Emotional Needs of the Gifted) shares quality information on misdiagnosis, so visit bit.ly/qt-misdiagnosis to begin your understanding of how misdiagnosis occurs.

The 2e Newsletter: Where Those Who Care Learn

The strongest, most consistent voice in the 2e community is the *2e Newsletter*, a bi-monthly newsletter focused exclusively on 2e issues. Written for both parents and educators, the *2e Newsletter* is the best place for anyone interested in issues of twice exceptionality to begin or to deepen understanding. Its archives are deep, rich with information and encouragement, with issues dating back to 2003.

The newsletter has an accompanying blog, 2enewsletter.blogspot.com.

The 2e Newsletter generously offers a \$10 discount to members of the Gifted Plus Division. Email Mark Bade at Mark@GlenEllynMedia.com, mention the discount and he will send a PayPal request for payment, payable by credit card or PayPal.

Visit 2enewsletter.com to learn more.



400,000+

students in Texas are identified as gifted. That number would increase dramatically with effective evaluation instruments for 2e students.

11 of 13

Number of categories of disability in Texas for purposes of Special Education that can coexist with giftedness.



100%

of the 36 pages in this report from NEA are about 2e issues bit.ly/2e-dilemma

1

Twitter hashtag for the Division. We invite you to use #giftedplus



Learn more about twice exceptional, and expand your ability to advocate for students.

A number of articles and books address the issues the Gifted Plus Division focuses on, and they make a great place for those new to these issues to begin to learn more, for educators and administrators to use in professional development, and to build a curated professional library. For those who have years of experience, they can add fresh voices and new perspectives. Each issue, we share articles and books with you related to that issue's theme.

Different Minds: Gifted Children with AD/HD, Asperger Syndrome, and Other Learning Deficits by Deirdre V. Lovecky

If This is a Gift, Can I Send it Back?: Surviving in the Land of the Gifted and Twice Exceptional by Jen Merrill

Misdiagnosis and Dual Diagnoses of Gifted Children and Adults: ADHD, Bipolar, OCD, Asperger's, Depression, and Other Disabilities by James T. Webb, Edward R. Amend, Nadia E. Webb, Jean Goerss, Paul Beljan, F. Richard Olenchak, Sharon Lind

Rethinking Learning Disabilities: Understanding Children Who Struggle in School by Deborah P. Waber

Spotlight on 2e (series of easy-to-read booklets on 2e topics from *2e Twice Exceptional Newsletter*)

The Mislabeled Child: How Understanding Your Child's Unique Learning Style Can Open the Door to Success by Brock Eide and Fernette Eide

Twice-Exceptional Gifted Children: Understanding, Teaching, and Counseling Gifted Students by Beverly A. Trail

Ungifted: Intelligence Redefined by Scott Barry Kaufman

If you know of a great title or resources, please email Lisa Van Gemert at lisa@lisavangemert.com. We'd love to include it in our newsletter. Our next issue focuses on dyslexia.

An Educator Speaks: Moving Beyond the Myth

Through recent research into neurodiversity, we are learning that the human brain - in all its amazing and infinite iterations - does in fact produce human beings who are gifted AND something more. Students who are identified as twice exceptional (or, even better, gifted plus) have something extra going on in addition to their giftedness. Historically, the "plus" has been interpreted as a "minus" or a barrier to student success (homelessness, learning differences, poverty, bilingualism, etc.). These are the issues that impact student lives but are whispered about among educators and parents. We love to brag about our kids achievements, but are often wont to admit their struggles. As contrary as it may seem, gifted kids might need tutoring, they might need behavior plans, 504s, counseling, speech, language and/or special education services.



The world needs all of our gifts. And children need to understand that their unique mind - in all its fascinating glory - has a contribution to make to the advancement of humanity. - Angela Reina-Greca, Advanced Academic Studies, Richardson ISD

Gifted Plus Division

Connecting TAGT members
who care about youth for
whom gifted is only the
beginning of the story.

Connect with Gifted Plus

Those currently serving the Gifted Plus Division are:

Chair: Lisa Van Gemert, American Mensa, lisa@lisavangemert.com

Vice Chair: Heath Dear, Sheldon ISD, HeathDear@sheldonisd.com

Secretary: Caroline Duda, Crosby ISD; cduda@crosbyisd.org

Past Chair: Mary Ann Clark, El Paso; mxclark@episd.org

Board Liaison: Mary Lea Pfenninger, Region 3 ESC; mpfenninger@esc3.net

Please contact any member of the Division Leadership with questions, comments, feedback or concerns. We actively seek the input of division members to know what information and support would be of value.

If you are interested in Division Leadership, contact TAGT Member Services and Office Manager Justin Ables-Hensel at jables@txgifted.org.