Acceleration and the Twice-Exceptional Student

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Presentation Overview

- Twice-exceptionality
- Belin-Blank Center work in twice-exceptionality
- Acceleration, is it an option?
What is twice-exceptionality?

Individuals who, “demonstrate the potential for high achievement or creative productivity in one or more domains… and who manifest one or more disabilities as defined by federal or state eligibility criteria” (Reis, Baum, & Burke, 2014, p. 222, Gifted Child Quarterly).
The figure below provides a visual display of students' abilities, and emphasizes the significant differences in the cognitive, academic and adaptive functioning skills of twice-exceptional students with ASD. The Belin-Blank Center is an active leading contributor to this body of research and several recent publications have been included in this document (see Annotated Bibliography).
Students who are diagnosed with ASD have a developmental disorder that results in severe social, communication, and/or behavioral impairments. For gifted students on the autism spectrum, the “most pressing problem” is that “their emotional and behavioral challenges are considered ‘side effects’ of being unusually bright, rather than the manifestations of a neurological disorder,” according to Bashe and Kirby (2001, p. 364–365). This occurs even though autism is considered to have the best empirically based, cross-national set of criteria for diagnosis (Volkmar & Klin, 2005).
The figure below provides a visual display of students' abilities, and emphasizes the significant differences in the cognitive skills and self-concept of twice-exceptional students with ADHD. The Belin-Blank Center is an active leading contributor to this body of research and several recent publications have been included in this document (see Annotated Bibliography).
Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

The primary features of ADHD are difficulties sustaining attention/focus, high levels of activity, and/or difficulties controlling impulsive behavior. While most people occasionally experience difficulties with one or more of these symptoms, individuals diagnosed with ADHD are consistently challenged by these symptoms across all areas of their lives (e.g., at home, in school, and in social settings). This condition is estimated to occur in approximately 5% of children and 2.5% of adults (APA, 2013). Within the DSM-V (APA, 2013)
The figure below provides a visual display of students' abilities, and emphasizes the significant differences in the cognitive, academic, and adaptive functioning skills of twice-exceptional students with SLD. The Belin-Blank Center is an active leading contributor to this body of research and several recent publications have been included in this document (see Annotated Bibliography).
Specific Learning Disability (SLD)

A learning disorder, also called specific learning disability (SLD), refers to **significantly lower academic achievement relative to cognitive ability.** In other words, students with learning disabilities perform at a lower level in a specific academic area than would be expected given their intellectual abilities. Learning disorders are not general, but rather specific to an academic skill area, such as reading, mathematics, or written expression. Within the DSM-V (APA, 2013), the diagnosis of Specific Learning Disorder is specified by not only the broad academic area in which the student has difficulties, but also the subskills that are impaired.
What does this information mean?

Realize the importance of identifying and celebrating student’s strengths in the classroom, which can be used to develop effective interventions, including acceleration.

Promote collaboration among psychologists and educators since both are necessary players in the identification of 2e.
What does this information mean?

Consider Acceleration in the student’s talent domains.

From a sample of 76 twice-exceptional students, we found that there was great variability based upon the diagnosis.
• Only ASD was whole-grade accelerated
• Greater percentages of ASD were single-subject accelerated
# Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diagnosis</th>
<th>Total Number</th>
<th>Wole-grade Accelerated</th>
<th>Single-Subject Accelerated</th>
<th>G/T Participation</th>
<th>SPED services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ASD</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>4 (10%)</td>
<td>16 (39%)</td>
<td>25 (61%)</td>
<td>9 (22%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLD</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3 (13%)</td>
<td>12 (50%)</td>
<td>4 (17%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADHD/OCD</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (20%)</td>
<td>3 (60%)</td>
<td>1 (20%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-diagnostic ASD</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2 (33%)</td>
<td>5 (83%)</td>
<td>1 (17%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>4 (5%)</td>
<td>22 (29%)</td>
<td>45 (60%)</td>
<td>16 (20%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What does this information mean?

Recognize that there is no one, diagnostic psychoeducational assessment profile for a 2e student; yet patterns exist that should alert professionals to consider whether the same student has a gift and a disability.

Acceleration is definitely an option, along with appropriate accommodations.