

Twice-Exceptionality: The Social-Emotional Side of 2e

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What are some challenges facing gifted students with dyslexia?

1. Gifts masking disability
2. Disability masking gifts
3. No identification



“adversely affects educational performance” appears in most of the disability definitions.

This does not mean, however, that a child has to be failing in school to receive special education and related services.

According to IDEA, states must make a free appropriate public education available to “any individual child with a disability who needs special education and related services, even if the child has not failed or been retained in a course or grade, and is advancing from grade to grade.”



“It is difficult to describe the ‘typical’ twice-exceptional student because of the variability demonstrated among them. The one common characteristic of this group, however, is that they simultaneously possess attributes of giftedness as well as learning, physical, social/emotional or behavioral deficits” (*The Twice-Exceptional Dilemma*, National Education Association)



“A student is considered *twice-exceptional* when he or she is identified as gifted/talented in one or more areas while also possessing a learning, emotional, physical, sensory, and/or developmental disability” (from Assouline, Foley Nicpon, & Huber, 2006)

June 2014 *Gifted Child Quarterly*
(Reis, Baum,
Burke) Operational
Definition



June 2014 *Gifted Child Quarterly*, (Reis, Baum, Burke) Operational Definition


“These disabilities and high abilities combine to produce a unique population of students who may fail to demonstrate either high academic performance or specific disabilities. Their gifts may mask their disabilities and their disabilities may mask their gifts. . . .

Identification of twice-exceptional students requires comprehensive assessment in both the areas of giftedness and disabilities, as one does not preclude the other. Identification, when possible, should be conducted by professionals from both disciplines and when at all possible, by those with knowledge about twice exceptionality in order to address the impact of co-occurrence/co-morbidity of both areas on diagnostic assessments and eligibility requirements for services.”

p. 222 Reis, Baum, Burke



IDEA 2004

Gifted and Talented Students with a disability are recognized as one of the groups of students whose needs have priority in US DOE grants to guide research, personnel preparation, and technical assistance  the Javits Twice-Exceptional Research Grant



Why focus on SLD?

1. It represents more than 35% of students in the 13 (14) diagnostic categories. It is the one category that has grown/changed the most since the implementation of EAHCA (PL94-142).
2. The changes in IDEA are very much reflected in the SLD issues.
3. Increased use of curriculum-based assessment (CBA) and response to intervention (RTI) strategies greatly affect gifted/LD



SLD Assessment Process

1. Cognition (SB5; WISC-IV; WAIS-III)
2. Achievement – two measures in area of difficulty (WIAT-II; WJIII)
3. Psychosocial functioning [Behavior Assessment System for Children, 2nd Edition (BASC-2) Self Report, Parent, and Teacher Rating Scales]
4. Self concept (Piers-Harris Self Concept Scale – 2)
5. Motor *WL only* (VMI 5th Edition; Grooved Pegboard Test)



SLD Assessments

77 Comprehensive assessments completed

- 29 SLD assessments
 - 6 had no diagnosis
 - 6 did not meet cognitive ability criteria
- **17 total GT/SLD** (I+ IQ score in Superior range or above; SLD diagnosis)
 - 14 Disorder of Written Expression (5 w/ co-occurring Reading DO)
 - 1 Reading Disorder (only)
 - 1 Math Disorder (only)
 - 1 SLD NOS



SLD Demographics

14 (82%) boys / 3 (18%) girls

6 ES / 7 MS / 4 HS

17 white

- 3 (18%) Prescribed psychotropics
- 7 (41%) Previously evaluated
- 0 Whole grade accelerated
- 2 (12%) Subject accelerated
- 9 (53%) GT participants
- 1 (6%) SE participants



SLD Profile Analysis – Ability

- Cognitive Composite from 107 – 148 ($m = 125$; 95th percentile)
 - (12 in Superior range or above; 3 in PG range)
- Verbal Composite from 105 – 150 ($m = 128$; 97th percentile)
 - (14 in Superior range or above; 3 in PG range)
- Nonverbal Composite from 84 – 138 ($m = 117$; 87th percentile)
- Working Memory from 88 – 123 ($m = 104$; 61st percentile)
- Processing Speed from 68 – 114 ($m = 95$ 37th percentile)



- <https://www2.education.uiowa.edu/belinblank/Clinic/pdfs/pip2.pdf>

Verbal/Nonverbal Discrepancy Analysis:

| <u>verbal > nonverbal</u> | <u>no split</u> | <u>nonverbal > verbal</u> |
|------------------------------|-----------------|------------------------------|
| 7 (41%) | 10 (59%) | 0 (0%) |

15 – 46 points

(1 – 3.5 SDs)



SLD Profile Analysis – Achievement

- Sight word reading = comprehension = reading speed
 - All means in the Average range
- Math reasoning = calculation > math speed
 - Means in Average to High Average range
- Expressive > receptive language



SLD Profile – Written Language

- WJIII: written expression > spelling > writing fluency
 - All in Average range
- WIAT: overall lower scores than WJIII
 - spelling = written expression
 - (Mean = 95 (37th percentile) and 93 (32nd percentile, respectively)
- Fine motor skills lower end of Average range (mean = 92)



Dyslexia and Giftedness: The “Invisible” Disability

- Talent in oral language despite specific learning disability in written language
- “Many students with dyslexia self-report that no one sees how much harder they have to work to achieve the same reading and writing outcomes as their classmates” (p. 229, Berninger & Abbott, 2014)

Case Example: Jack

- 3rd grade student, bright, hard-working
- Reason for Referral
 - Demonstrated learning difficulties in written language and sustained attention
 - Referred by talented and gifted coordinator
- Background
 - Discrepancy between exceptional verbal self-expression ability vs. weaker written self-expression ability
 - Early (1st grade) reading difficulties on DRA and DIBELS (used in Rtl)
 - Participated in small group reading instruction to improve sight reading and fluency
 - Services discontinued when these scores were at grade level

Case Example: Jack

- Clinical Assessment
 - WISC-IV: VCI (99.7th percentile), PRI (94th percentile), WMI (68th percentile), PSI (21st percentile)
 - WIAT-III: Oral Language (90th percentile), Mathematics (79th percentile), Reading (68th percentile), Written Language (55th percentile)
 - Discrepancy between Verbal IQ and Written Language: 2.8 standard deviations (< 10% BR)

Masking Effects

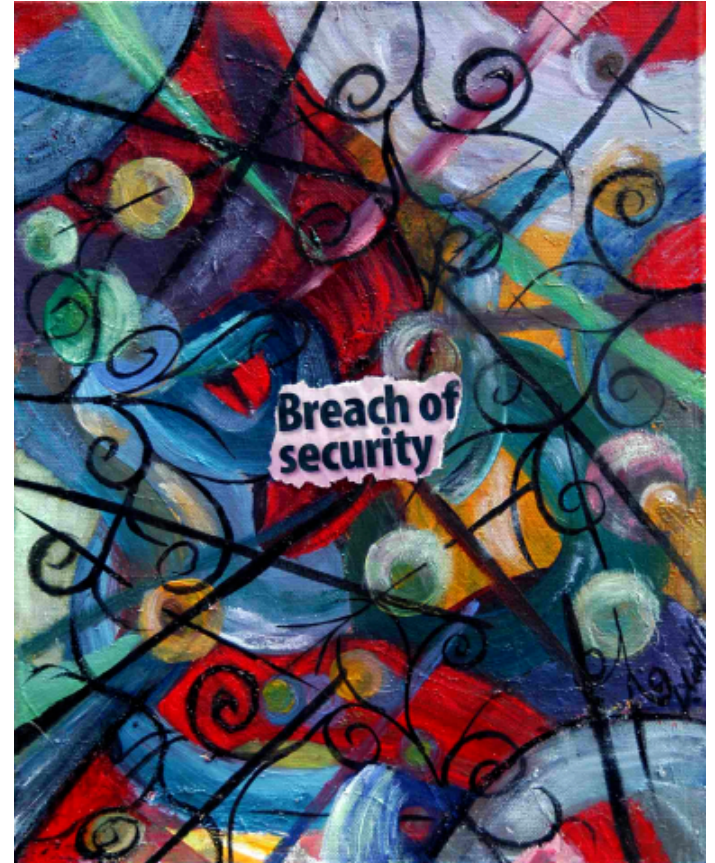
- Superior verbal reasoning abilities may mask effects of dyslexia on oral and written language skills
 - Typically NOT the lowest achievers in Rtl measures
 - Underachievement given verbal ability, more effort required
- Giftedness in verbal reasoning does not eliminate dyslexia impairments in the verbal working memory that supports written language
 - Storage and processing units for spoken and written words
 - Phonological and orthographic loops for integrating word codes and output systems (mouth or hand)
 - Attention/executive function of working memory for focus, switching, sustaining, and self-monitoring attention

Implications

1. Among our sample, written language the area where students have the most difficulty, several with co-occurring reading and writing difficulties.
2. Our sample of gifted students with SLD were not typically accelerated in school.
3. Less discrepancy in the SLD cognitive profiles than in the ASD cognitive profiles, but a similar pattern.
4. Perform “average” but below intra-individual expectations.
5. These students may get missed if a comprehensive evaluation is not completed.



Social & emotional



Nurturing **Potential** | Inspiring **Excellence**

SLD Psychosocial Patterns – Parent Report

- 71% reported global adaptive skill difficulties
- One parent reported overall internalizing problems
 - 59% reported withdrawal symptoms
- 47% reported global externalizing problems
 - 52% reported hyperactivity symptoms



SLD Psychosocial Patterns – Teacher Report

- 33% reported overall emotional/behavioral difficulties
- 3 reported overall externalizing symptoms
 - 40% report hyperactivity
- 3 reported overall internalizing problems
 - 33% reported withdrawal
- 47% reported observing learning problems



SLD Psychosocial Patterns – Self Report

- Only 3 students reported global emotional/behavioral concerns
- 3 reported internalizing problems
- 82% had a positive impression of school
- 61% had a positive impression of teachers
- 82% felt self-reliant
- 82% had Average + self-esteem scores



SLD Self-Esteem Patterns – Self Report

- 82% reported global Average to High self-esteem
 - 82% Average or above intellectual self-esteem
 - 65% reported feeling popular with peers



What does all this mean?

1. While psychosocial concerns exist, they are generally mild as a group, particularly in comparison to 2e with ASD
2. Teachers are more likely to observe educational problems in 2e with LD than 2e with ASD
3. In our group of students, not many reported emotional or behavioral difficulties



Suggestions from PIP-2

Packet of Information for Professionals

- Dyslexia and Written Language
 - Assistive technology
 - Tape record
 - Offer an assortment of writing utensil options
 - Print or cursive
 - Share notes
 - Use graph paper
 - Extra time on writing assignments
 - Write about special interests
 - Content first and mechanics second (drafts and proof reading)



How do I address gifts?

- Listen, listen, listen, and support
- Highlight the child's strengths and interests, and use this information to stimulate learning
- Employ alternate (nontraditional) ways to demonstrate understanding
- Ensure that GT participation is not contingent on good behavior



How do I address the disability?

- Flexibility, flexibility, flexibility, and support
- Be actively involved in [IEP or 504] planning
- Communicate with the child and his/her parents
- Be positive!!!
- Be consistent
- Provide examples of appropriate behaviors
- Encourage learning of various strategies to address areas of difficulty (assistive technology, self-advocacy, study skills, time management, coping skills, etc.)



What can I tell parents?

- Obtain support (web communities, literature for parents, 2e newsletter, etc.)
- <http://www2.education.uiowa.edu/belinblank/clinic/pip2.pdf>
- Seek ways in and out of school to accommodate for gifts and disabilities/difficulties
- Emphasize the student's strengths
 - Recognize the value of highlighting gifts



What else can I do?

- Help the student think about and plan for the future
 - College – what environment would be the best fit?
 - Investigate careers that are good fits with the student's gifts and areas of difficulty
- Help the student develop self-advocacy skills



What else can I do?

- Emphasize resiliency and persistence
- Consider finding mentors in student's area of interest
- Reframe ideas of “learning disability” -- but don't ignore it!





Thank you!

