

BUILDING SELF-EFFICACY

What is self-efficacy?

“...the perception that a person can organize and carry out some action. These judgements in turn influence thoughts, behaviour and emotional arousal.” (Baum, 1988, p.226)

How do I help build self-efficacy?

Increased self-belief is built through successful experiences. These in turn motivate better performance. It is important that the successful experiences of our children be accomplished in areas that are respected and perceived as a challenge. At the same time, successes will only be recognized as accomplishments if they meet the standards of the student. (Baum, 1988)

Focused attention should be given to developing the areas of strength, just as we do for areas of challenge. In fact, spending time working on the gift/talent, will ensure the child views themselves as a competent learner, which will often lead to improvements in other areas, including areas of challenge! (Baum, Cooper & Neu, 2001)

How can I help a perfectionist child?

Children with these tendencies need to learn that not only is it normal to struggle but also that no one is going to think less of them if they do!

Teach them that success with long term goals is simply achieving many short term goals.

Show them how to use creative problem solving.

Use phrases that refer to effort such as “Put in your best effort” rather than focusing on “Always do your very best!”.

(Winebrenner, 2001)



Additional Resources

Where can I go for more information?

Online resources:

- LD Online: Gifted & LD (<http://www.ldonline.org/indepth/gifted>)
- Gifted Development Center (<http://www.gifteddevelopment.com/index.htm>)
- National Center for Learning Disabilities (<http://www.nclد.org/types-learning-disabilities/adhd-related-issues/giftedness/giftedness-learning-disabilities>)
- Gifted & Talented Online: Realising potential (<http://gifted.tki.org.nz/For-schools-and-teachers/ Twice-exceptional-2E-students>)
- Free Spirit Publishing—variety of books on multiple learning needs (<http://www.freespirit.com/>)

Print resources:

- Teaching Gifted Kids in the Regular Classroom—Susan Winebrenner
- The Survival Guide for Kids with LD (Learning Differences) - Gary Fisher & Rhoda Cummings
- The Survival Guide for Teachers of Gifted Kids—Jim Delisle & Barbara Lewis
- Differentiating Instruction in the Regular Classroom—Diane Heacox



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Supporting Gifted Students with Learning Disabilities



Advice, tips and tools for teachers and those who work with twice exceptional students in the school setting.



The Puzzle of the Twice Exceptional Child

Gifted children with learning disabilities offer areas of talent where they are able to perform at a high level while at the same time have areas of challenge that cause difficulties with academic achievement (Brody & Mills, 1997). Their areas of strengths and needs often interact and can at times mask each other. This can lead to talents that are not nurtured or learning strategies that are not taught (Robinson, 1999).

Willard-Holt (1999) comprised a list of some common characteristics of gifted children with learning disabilities, though as with all learners, there is no one definition that describes all children who are both gifted and have a learning disability.

- High abstract reasoning ability
- Good mathematical reasoning ability
- Keen visual memory, spatial skills
- Advanced vocabulary
- Sophisticated sense of humor
- Imaginative and creative, Insightful
- Exceptional ability in geometry, science, arts, music
- Good problem finding and solving skills
- Difficulty with memorization, computation, phonics, and/or spelling
- Distractibility and/or disorganization
- Super sensitivity, Perfectionism
- Grasp of metaphors, analogies, satire
- Comprehension of complex systems
- Unreasonable self expectations
- Often, failure to complete assignments
- Difficulties with sequential tasks
- Wide variety of interests

TEACHING TIPS, TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES

(Douglas M. J., 2007)

Academic Strategies

- Use active inquiry
- Provide open-ended challenges
- Consider students' preferred learning styles, interest, and strengths
- Incorporate opportunities for students to investigate real-world problems for real audiences
- Use acceleration and curriculum compacting in strength areas
- Teach whole concepts and then parts rather than part-to-whole
- Teach creative thinking and dramatics
- Provide students with detailed rubrics, checklists, or performance lists to reduce frustration

Socio-emotional Support Strategies

- Tap into students' strengths by using biographies and autobiographies, inspirational quotes, and self-help and how-to books
- Offer peer or group counseling sessions to address issues of self-concept, self-esteem, fear of failure, negative interactions with teachers, and poor peer relations
- Encourage the use of reflective journals employing various modalities to address issues of self-esteem or self-efficacy
- Conduct short- and long-term goal setting sessions

Behavioural Strategies

- Create opportunities for students to assume responsibilities
- Enhance motivation by planning for less desirable tasks to precede a preferred one
- Assess present levels of student performance to provide appropriately challenging assignments
- Limit choices; too many choices may interfere with students' decision making
- Use a variety of environmental settings as cues for desired behavior.
- Provide private space for independent work

As with all differentiation, it is important to consider possible adaptations to Content, Process, Product, Environment and Assessment.

An understanding of strategies to support areas of challenge (including available technology) will ensure the student is able to continue working in areas of strength while addressing areas of challenge.

A PERSPECTIVE ON TYPICAL BEHAVIOUR CHARACTERISTICS OF STUDENTS WHO ARE GIFTED WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

(Bees, C. 2009)

Characteristic	Interpreted As...	Strategy
Perfectionist, fear of failure, idealist	Lazy	Develop an appreciation for struggling to learn
School phobic	Hypochondriac, fake sickness	Do something they love each day at school
Highly sensitive	Self-indulgent	Acknowledge feelings
Socially inappropriate	Immature	Talk privately, explicitly teach social skills
Socially isolated	Snobby, depressed	Provide time with peers at same intellectual/friendship level
Low self-esteem	Helpless	Demystify gifts and challenges
Inattentive, fails to complete work	Doesn't care	Chunk tasks, provide checklist
Rebellious against "drill and rote", different learning style	Spoiled, defiant	Provide choice of task at higher level (more complex), incorporate interests, learning strengths.

