Identification Process of Twice-Exceptional Students

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Identification Process of Twice-Exceptional Students

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EDCI 590 Individual Research

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Abstract

It is difficult to label a student twice exceptional accurately due to the complexity of these students’ achievements. Their giftedness and disability mask each other making it problematic for school psychologists to gather accurate data. If educators were able to have data to make an accurate decision of labeling students twice exceptional then we would be able to individualize instruction for them and properly serve them in schools. Therefore, the research goal was to evaluate the twice-exceptional identification process and how educators can properly serve these students. This evaluation focused on a first grade student with a learning disability who was going through the process of gifted identification. This research provides teachers, school administrators, and the Office of Student Services with key factors in the gifted identification process of twice-exceptional students and how the factors impact the needs of twice-exceptional students.
Introduction

This research concentrated on the identification process of twice-exceptional students at the elementary level in Spotsylvania County Public Schools. An evaluation of the identification process for gifted was conducted which involved a young student who currently attends elementary school and was being considered for the gifted program while being serviced as a student with a disability.

The Twice Exceptional Task Force was developed within the county to construct a program for twice-exceptional (2e) students. Within the year the Task Force was developed and presented a proposal to the school board with the anticipation it would be approved for the 2012-2013 school year. The twice-exceptional identification process and individual programming is currently in the pilot stage within the county.

According to the Virginia Department of Education (2010) the definition of a twice-exceptional student is one who has been “identified as gifted by a committee for the school division’s gifted education program and identified with a disability as defined by the federal and state regulations” (p.5). These students can be labeled with any disability outlined from the federal and/or state regulations. The student who would be involved with my case study already has an individual education plan (IEP). An IEP is a legal document that “outlines the specific educational needs of the child and what services are needed to meet the child’s educational needs” (VDOE, 2010, p. 4).

According to Neihart (2008), there are an estimated 300,000 twice-exceptional students in the United States. Due to the complexity of these students’ achievements, it is difficult to accurately label a student twice-exceptional. Therefore, the goal of this research was to provide the people in charge of overseeing the special education programs within the county, Office of
Special Services, a better understanding of this twice-exceptional identification process and to produce a rubric with guidelines that can be used in the future for the identification process of twice-exceptional students.

**Literature Review**

**Characteristics of Twice-Exceptional Students**

Twice-exceptional students are enigmas because they do not fall into one category and do not have similar characteristics. Although many twice-exceptional students are different in their strengths it is also believed that they struggle with everyday social interactions (Virginia Department of Education, 2010). Both Beckley (1998) and Neihart (2008) agree that twice-exceptional students may have signs of anxiety to school work, low social skills and self-esteem. Some may feel that they do not fit in with their peers and often withdraw themselves.

When it comes to emotions and social skills, twice exceptional students are not strong; but they do express other unique characteristics that can make an educator question their giftedness and/or disability. Their strengths and weaknesses fall along a broad spectrum and often contradict each other. They may be very strong in problem solving when it comes to real world issues, but can have difficulties in basic core skills like drawing conclusions and math calculation (National Education Association, 2006). They have “street smarts” but cannot be successful in the academic areas.

According to the National Education Association (2006), students who are twice exceptional show the following characteristics: can appear disrespectful, strong questioning skills, difficulty with memory skills, strong vivid imagination, require interventions in deficit areas but independent in others, and a high verbal ability. Willard-Holt (1999) states that twice-
exceptional students exhibit the same characteristics of attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) due to their lack of ability to focus on a task for a long period of time.

There is a key distinctive factor that can help an educator decide whether the behavior is related to the giftedness or the ADHD. For example, when a student acts out as a response to a situation the behavior is more likely to be related to giftedness and not ADHD since ADHD behaviors are consistent across all situations (Willard-Holt, 1999). The set of characteristics that applies to all twice-exceptional students and should be focused on during the identification process are proof of exceptional talent and/or ability, inconsistency between what can be achieved and what should be achieved and of a processing deficit.

**Identification Process Testing and Data**

The standard identification process has been difficult to utilize when trying to properly label a student twice-exceptional. Since the students’ giftedness and disability tend to mask each other it becomes difficult to gather true data that shows the twice-exceptionality of the child. Examiners need to review sub scores of standardized tests to find strengths and weaknesses, use a variety of assessments and be aware of the indicators of exceptionality in students (VDOE, 2010, p 9). According to Morrison and Rizza (2007), a task force should be set up to help with the gifted identification process, evaluations and placement decisions of twice-exceptional students. It should also mirror that of a special education team and include any other educator invested in the child’s education.

Brody and Mills (2007) suggest that one pattern or set of scores that identifies all gifted/learning disabled students is not very likely. Further, they believe that it is important for the identification process to seek out the “discrepancy between the ability and achievement” (p. 6). However, this should not be the only important factor that is being considered. The
identification process should also take a look at the cause of the learning problem. Examiners need to investigate where the true deficit is or if the learning problem is from poor teaching.

Nielsen (2002) believes that the best standardized testing for a twice exceptional child is the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children-Third Edition (WISC-III). This test has a variety of subtests that are language and non-language based to get a broader understanding of the child’s ability. However, there is a noticeable discrepancy with the added 16 subtests in the new WISC-IV (Shaughnessy, 2006). Morrison and Rizza (2007) suggest that when using a standardized test, analyzing the individual’s subtest patterns rather than a full scale score will be more beneficial.

A response to intervention (RtI) model can serve as an instructional intervention and an identification tool which can provide educators with data to help struggling students and possibly be used with the identification of disabilities (Crepeau-Hobson & Bianco, 2010). Since the RtI model is a tiered model, the first tier can be used for the beginning of the identification process and intervention for students. This tier allows students the opportunities to explore their interests and strengths within a regular education classroom (Crepeau-Hobson & Bianco, 2010). Most data is collected in this tier to help strengthen the labeling of a student twice exceptional.

When using the RtI model with twice-exceptional students, Crepeau-Hobson and Bianco (2010) suggest that above-grade level screening should be incorporated to help with the data collection. Data collected in the first tier is used in the second tier for academic interventions. Intervention data can be taken into consideration when the eligibility team is determining the student’s academic weaknesses.

A student created portfolio is a component of the gifted identification process and its scores are taken into consideration when determining placement. According to Vaidya (1993),
the portfolio should be unique and individualized. Assignments for each subgroup can vary in content as long as it encourages creativity.

To accurately identify a twice-exceptional student, a wide variety of data needs to be collected. The basis of a decision should not solely be on standardized test scores or grades. Multiple criteria should be used to understand each student’s strengths and weaknesses, such as academic achievement, performance in a variety of settings, and learning style (Coleman, 2003). Input from the student’s teachers, peers, counselors, parents and students themselves can also provide personal information usually not taken into consideration when making a decision about placement.

**Instructional Components for Twice-Exceptional Students**

Once a student is properly labeled twice-exceptional by the individual education plan (IEP) team, they need to outline the accommodations and adaptations that will help the student be successful in the general education population. The definition of accommodations is “a procedure or enhancements that empowers a person with a disability to complete a task that he or she would otherwise be unable to complete because of the disability” (Weinfeld, Robinson, Jeweler & Shevitz, 2005, p. 14). These accommodations must help boost the child’s giftedness but support the child’s deficit areas so they are appropriate for that particular student.

According to Jeweler, Barnes-Robinson, Shevitz and Weinfeld (2008), adaptations are modifications in the delivery of instruction or materials. Adaptations should be only done to the instruction, not the content of the curriculum being taught. Many educators have the misconception that adaptations need to be done to the curriculum in order for special education students to be successful. Even though their deficit impedes their learning, they still need to have access to the same curriculum of that of their peers. Providing appropriate accommodations and
modifications will ensure rigorous instruction and that adaptation in the instruction instead of modification of the content is more effective in the fulfillment of curriculum goals (Jeweler, et al, 2008).

Dansinger (2000) introduces intervention as a way to serve twice-exceptional students. As a school psychologist, he used the coaching method to help improve the achievement of twice-exceptional students. Coaching works on more than just academic weaknesses; it also provides social and emotional support for these children inside and outside of the classroom.

No matter how educators feel about having a twice-exceptional student in their gifted classroom, they need to remember to 1) provide instruction in the student’s area of strength (Beckley, 1998), 2) appropriately differentiate instruction that includes accommodations and adaptations, and 3) provide comprehensive case management to ensure that all the aspects of IEP are being met (Weinfeld et al., 2005).

Programs offered to twice-exceptional students need to focus on the child’s disability but also develop the students’ strengths. There are different programming options for the gifted committee members to consider when placing a student into their program. Options can take many forms: a) a resource room where the disability is considered but the giftedness is concentrated (Brody, 1997, p. 8), b) an enrichment program where the student receives additional help for the disability or c) a self-contained classroom where the focus is on both strengths and weaknesses (Maker, 1985, p. 1).

Based on this review of literature, the identification process of twice-exceptional students is extremely difficult because giftedness may be masked by a disability. Nevertheless, there has been little research on what assessments are beneficial to the identification of these
students and determining the appropriate adaptations and accommodations. Therefore, the goal of this research is to provide the Office of Student Services a better understanding of the twice-exceptional identification process and how educators can properly serve these students.

**Research Question**

The purpose of this research project was to answer the following research question:

How do the assessment results obtained in the gifted identification process and the accommodations stated in the Individual Education Plan (IEP) impact the development of the program plan for a twice-exceptional student?

**Methodology**

An extensive literature review provided background information regarding the difficulties professionals face when labeling a student twice exceptional. Once all parties involved in the evaluation process provided permission, it took about a month for the completion of the interview process, collection of data, and evaluations needed for the committee members to make a placement decision for this child. The evaluation revolved around the gifted identification process itself and not directly on a child. Since this was a new process, this child’s data helped the committee determine a suitable program path that will meet the needs of twice-exceptional students. This research provided teachers, school administrators, and special services with key factors in the gifted identification process of twice-exceptional students and how the factors impact the needs of twice-exceptional students.

**Participants**

This evaluation consisted of a student participant and educators who were interviewed at the end of the evaluation process. Since the student participant is under age, a pseudonym was
used within all documents for the research. The student’s name for further purposes will be Johnny. A pseudonym will also be used for the educators being interviewed about this process.

**Student Participant**

For this evaluation, the student participant was a six year old, African American, male student that had already been found eligible for special education services for a child with a learning disability and speech/language impairment. Even though Johnny is labeled as a student with a disability, he was given an assessment administered by the gifted/talented resource teacher to measure his visual/spatial abilities earlier that year. His scores were higher than any other peer in his class. The school psychologist stated that his scores were very low in verbal communication but off the charts when it came to anything non-verbal. It was discussed during his special education re-evaluation that Johnny would be presented to the gifted identification committee as a twice-exceptional candidate.

**Teacher Participants**

The gifted identification committee members included the school counselor, assistant principal, gifted educator, general educator and a special educator. The gifted, general and special educators were interviewed after the gifted committee members made their decision regarding placement of the student. Each interview consisted of eleven questions and their answers where written by hand on the interview sheet. An example of the interview questions appears in Appendix A.

**Data Collection**

This evaluation included several steps in order to ensure student and school confidentiality and privacy.
Stage 1 included contacting the student’s parents for approval of the use of his data when evaluating the gifted identification process. A written consent form (Appendix B) was given to Johnny’s parents before information was gathered by the researcher. Even though Johnny is underage and consent was given by the parents, the Individual Research Board requires researchers to gather an assent statement (Appendix C) from the participant. A consent form for the educators involved in the interview process appears in Appendix D. The evaluation of the identification process of twice-exceptional students began once all consent forms and assent form were gathered.

Stage 2 included collecting rating scales from Johnny’s parents and his general education teacher. The parent rating scale used the measurements of one being seldom, two occasionally, three usually and four consistently. The parent’s rating scale consists of the following questions:

1. Are you surprised by the knowledge of your student?
2. Does he exhibit/approach a problem with humor?
3. Is he intense/ persistent?
4. Does he ask questions?
5. Is he imaginative and/or creative in his methods of solving a problem?
6. Is he self-initiated when it comes to learning?

The teacher’s report was completed by the student’s general education teacher, Mrs. Hill. Her report was divided into six different categories of Health (Vision/Hearing), Cognitive/Emotional, Communication, Academic Performance, Social and Other.

Stage 3 included the administration of the testing for identification of giftedness. The assessments were determined by both the gifted educator and the director of gifted services. Before the testing began, Johnny’s IEP accommodations were verified to ensure the Special
Education Law was being upheld when testing. Mrs. Alex, the gifted educator, followed a flow chart (Figure 1) in order to document that his accommodations were being verified and obtained. After that was completed she administered the Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test Second Edition (NNAT2) and worked on construction of the student portfolio assignments with accommodations. The portfolio was broken down into three subgroups: expressive language, critical and creativity thinking. Each subgroup was rated out of four points.

**Stage 4 revolved around the observation of Johnny and how he was interacting with the gifted teacher, testing and the program. Observations of this student were conducted by the researcher, as well as the other educators serving on the committee. The student was familiar with each person on the committee. The observation form provided by the gifted education**
program was used by all observers, which included behaviors/academic skills. According to Lichtman (2010), observations should be conducted several times for thirty minutes to an hour. When conducting observations, times were preapproved with the participant’s teachers to ensure instruction would not be interfered with.

Stage 5 included the observation notes of the identification process collected by the researcher. During the identification process, the committee reviewed data from numerous assessments given to the child. After all the testing and evaluation was completed for Johnny, the committee met to discuss his gifted eligibility. The meeting involved more than just the gifted committee members. Since this young man was already being served as a special education student, his parents were invited along with his case manager. The parents were notified by the IEP meeting notification and given a two-week notice of the meeting. The gifted educator followed the federal outlines regarding a student with special education services. Data from the Kaufman Battery Assessments, administered the previous year by the School Psychologist, was reported along with the results from the Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test-Second Edition (NNAT2) which was administered by the gifted educator. Additional assessments included results of the PALs testing, Teacher/Parent rating scale, and the gifted portfolio.

At the meeting, the parents were provided with copy of the Exceptional Student Identification Profile sheet (Appendix E). While the gifted educator was explaining the outcome and meaning of the scores, the special educator was typing the information into Johnny’s IEP through an addendum. The committee shared their input and beliefs about his eligibility.

During Stage 5, extensive notes about observations of the gifted identification process and the committee’s discussion regarding appropriate placement were completed. Notes included thoughts, the committee’s actions towards a decision, the impact of the IEP on
placement, and information presented in the committee’s meetings. For this student, the researcher was not an active member of the committee but acted as an evaluator and observer of the process.

The final stage of the research was where the researcher sat down with the general, special education and gifted educators to conduct interviews. Each teacher was interviewed privately and separately from everyone else. Each interviewee was given a copy of the questions ahead of time to ensure an answer would be provided in the time allotted for interviews. This also helped since time was constricted due to each other’s schedules during the day. The answers provided from the teacher’s were handwritten onto the questionnaire sheet. Each interview took about 15-20 minutes depending on the answers given.

**Results**

Once the members of the committee met to determine Johnny’s gifted eligibility, all the data was presented to the parents. Mrs. Alex, the gifted/talented resource teacher discussed the data that was recorded onto the Identification Profile Sheet. The ability test scores showed that Johnny placed in the ninety-eighth percentile on the NNAT2 with the score of 131. The Kaufman Assessment Battery was not explained in great depth since it was administered by the school psychologist within the past year. However, Johnny’s scores landed him in the ninety to ninety-seven percentiles in the components of Mental Processing Index (MPI), Simultaneous, and Learning. His knowledge score was low at the thirty-ninth percentile.

Mrs. Hill, the regular classroom teacher, explained the reasoning for Johnny’s scores. On the teacher report, Mrs. Hill identified that Johnny’s strengths were in two areas: cognitive and academic performance. She stated that Johnny demonstrates strengths in the areas of memory and the ability to make connections/transfer knowledge within the classroom. Academic
performance strengths were observed to be in basic reading skills and math reasoning. Johnny’s grades, past report cards and Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS) test score were also shared at the meeting. Johnny is reading on a second grade level but has difficulty answering oral questions about what was read. The Parent rating scale scores showed Johnny’s mother rated him a nineteen out of twenty-four.

The portfolio subgroups (expressive language, critical and creative thinking) were rated out of four points. For expressive language, two writing samples were collected and earned a score of 2.8/4. Critical thinking consisted of three different visual/spatial activities that included analogies. Adding up the scores, Johnny earned 3.6 out of 4. Creative thinking activities consisted of drawings and different abstract pieces created by Johnny. He earned 3 out of 4 in that subgroup. Mrs. Alex also shared with the gifted committee, the scoring of a spontaneous verbal problem she gave Johnny to complete. He received 11 out of 27. Each round of the problem was worth 9 points; on the first round he got a 5 out of 9 points and for both round two and three, he scored 3 out of 9 points.

After all the data was presented to the committee, each member was given the opportunity to express their feelings or concerns regarding his placement. Many were skeptical as to whether Johnny could be successful in the gifted/talented program due to his disability. Because of that, the committee decided to provisionally approve his eligibility for gifted services for one year. This provisional year would be monitored by the committee to make sure that Johnny will be able to maintain a successful level of performance within the classroom. At the end of his provisional year, the committee will meet again to see if he was successful in the program.
Once Johnny was found eligible for the gifted/talented program, the production of Johnny’s Exceptional Plan for Instruction started. The gifted teacher and his special education case manager met to discuss what his plan would look like and how it would align with his IEP needs. His accommodations and disability were taken into consideration while completing his plan. The Instruction plan outlined Johnny’s strengths, present level of performance, areas of need, student data, instructional goals, plan for instruction and service along with signatures of the gifted committee members. A copy of his instructional plan can be found in Appendix F.

Mrs. Alex, the gifted educator, reported that Johnny is doing very well when being pulled out with the gifted group. She accommodated him in her own way that works with his disability and her program. Since Johnny has difficulty with expressive language, Mrs. Alex has proved a red/green card. When Johnny needs directions or help with an assignment, he turns the card to the red side. The card is green until then.

**Analysis and Discussion**

**Portfolio Observation**

The portfolio construction took about four weeks to complete due to time limitations of Johnny’s other services. Mrs. Alex taught Johnny for forty-five minutes once a week for the four-week duration. While working on his portfolio assignments, Johnny was the only student in the gifted resource room and free from pressure of others. Johnny came in the classroom willing and very ready to participate. He often asked questions to clarify what needed to be done and enjoyed having Mrs. Alex right there with him at the table. It was observed that Johnny asked more questions when one on one in the gifted resource room then in the classroom with his peers.
Eligibility Meeting Observation

The gifted eligibility meeting was held early in the morning with the gifted committee members. Mrs. Smith, Johnny’s special education case manager, attended the meeting since she was aware of the information needing to be entered into his IEP. It was discussed once Johnny’s mother arrived that since he was a student with an IEP, all information would be entered into the IEP addendum and it would be signed at the end. Mrs. Alex discussed with the committee all the testing results and the data collected.

Once all the data was presented, the committee began talking about their point of view on placement. Johnny’s mother was included in this conversation and shared feelings she had about his involvement in the gifted program. It was noted that the committee had to be reminded about what it meant to be labeled twice-exceptional. It was unsettling to hear how many members did not truly understand the label of twice-exceptional and made uneducated statements. Research shows that educators world-wide are not aware of what twice-exceptional truly means, therefore many twice-exceptional students are not being identified (NEA, 2006). Mrs. Smith was able to interpret how his disability limited him in certain situations. Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Alex were very professional and positive throughout the whole eligibility meeting.

Making of the Exceptional Plan of Instruction

Mrs. Alex and Mrs. Smith met to produce an Exceptional Plan of Instruction for Johnny that would be reflective of what type of student Johnny is. Mrs. Smith was able to include information based on his IEP and areas of need. Since Johnny has deficits in his expressive and receptive language, it was noted that he needs extra time to respond to oral questions. Before moving on to his gifted program goals, it was discussed what would happen to the work he was
missing when being pulled out for gifted services. Both came into agreement that individualized instruction would be beneficial for work being missed.

Mrs. Smith generated the first instructional goal since it was directly driven by his expressive language. They want Johnny to verbally tell his teacher what the problem is, how he will solve it and what his plan/action would be. The second goal is more gifted services related. The completion of critical thinking and visual spatial activities with 85% accuracy help build his strengths. Accommodations were also discussed. Since one of his IEP accommodations is repeating directions, Mrs. Alex developed the strategy of the two-sided colored card. The red side indicates he needs help with directions and the green means he understands the directions. Johnny will flip the card when he needs help with a given assignment. A checklist will also be used which has visual cues to help Johnny express the problems and solutions in an activity.

The construction of the Exceptional Plan of Instruction shared characteristics of the development of an IEP but with fewer people involved. Morrison and Rizza (2007) mentioned that the Instructional Plan would resemble an IEP. It was noted that the final document contained many of the same components of an IEP (strengths, present level of performance, needs and measurement of goals). Different from the construction of an IEP, the Exceptional Plan of Instruction was developed by the gifted and special education professionals. However the classroom teacher, parents and administration signed it without attending a meeting to review the plan. This differs from the research which states that plans should be developed with all gifted committee members, parents and a diagnostician (Brody, 1997).

**Gifted Resource Room**

During the first observation of Johnny in the gifted resource room, it appeared that he was overwhelmed with the new change in his schedule but he was willing to work and be
cooperative. One area of strength Johnny has is in reading, so Mrs. Alex gave him an
independent reading assignment to do while she got the other students settled in to their work.
Johnny quickly changed his card to red asking for help. Mrs. Alex acknowledged his request and
went over to see what was wrong. Since Johnny had been in the gifted resource room before with
just Mrs. Alex, he wanted her full attention by having her sit next to him. She explained that she
would be over at the next table for a few minutes and would be back to check in on him later.
Johnny accepted this and went back to work. Mrs. Alex discussed this behavior with Mrs. Smith,
and it was suggested that the helplessness that Johnny perceives should be redirected. Counseling
could help twice-exceptional students with the inner conflict between their want for
independence and understanding their need for support (Brody & Mills, 1997). Counseling has
not been discussed at this time due to the reduction of the behavior shown previously in the
gifted resource room.

The National Education Association (2006) suggests that a negative behavior needs to be
replaced with a more appropriate one. Mrs. Alex was able to change the negative behavior by
simply talking with Johnny about what was expected from him and what needed to happen.
Change in behavior can be a result of low self-esteem or self-concept (Brody & Mills, 1997, p
15). Helplessness in Johnny was not seen previously in the general education classroom. It was
felt that Johnny behaved this way to test his boundaries within the new environment of the gifted
resource room. This has not been a reoccurring behavior since Mrs. Alex had redirected Johnny
into a more appropriate behavior that worked within the resource room.

During the last day of observation, it was noted that Johnny was doing very well in the
gifted/resource room. He walked in very confidently, knew where his assignments were located
and got straight to work. Mrs. Alex accommodated him without making him rely on her for
every single direction. It is believed that she has been able to create an environment that nurtures the giftedness while taking the disability into consideration. Mrs. Alex’s resource room fits the criteria set by Brody (1997) as an ideal option for a twice-exceptional classroom.

**Interviews**

Interviews were conducted after the gifted identification process for Johnny was completed, along with the construction of his Exceptional Plan. All participants of the interviews have direct contact with Johnny and were part of the gifted committee for his twice-exceptionality. The interview was directed towards their involvement in the process, feelings and opinions of the outcome.

The gifted resource teacher, special education and general education teacher were all interviewed separately so no answers were influenced. Results showed that all felt that the gifted committee was given data that showed an accurate picture of Johnny’s abilities. Unanimously, it was felt that all information was placed in the IEP; however, Mrs. Smith believed the committee included more information in the IEP than other schools across the county.

Overall, all three of the interviewees were very positive about the evaluation. It was stated that the whole picture of the student was looked at, not just the scores from an assessment. They all felt the team did a great job on this new evaluation of twice-exceptional.

**Gifted Education and Special Education Teachers**

Mrs. Alex’s and Mrs. Smith’s interview answers were not as detailed as the general education teacher. Even though they were conducted individually, their answers were very similar. They both believe that Johnny was accurately placed in the gifted program and labeled twice-exceptional. Since the twice-exceptional label involves both abilities on the spectrum of
achievement, their professional background allowed them to understand what it meant when the term twice-exceptional was being used.

Mrs. Alex’s belief is about the gifted identification process were very different from Mrs. Smith. Mrs. Alex was unaware about some steps in the identification process and increased involvement of the parents. She stated she would like to see more training for all staff including the gifted teachers around the county. Her beliefs are justified by the National Research Council (2002), who suggests that professional development needs to be provided to school staff to ensure better understanding of twice-exceptional students.

Mrs. Smith expressed her desire for a review of students in higher elementary grades who were tested for gifted and not found eligible due to their disabilities. She believes that this twice-exceptional identification process can help find other individuals eligible for gifted services. Another special education student was used as an example. Krochak & Ryan (2007) acknowledges the loss of potential with these missed students and understands that they will possibly never get a chance to develop their talents due to the undiagnosed giftedness.

Mrs. Alex and Mrs. Smith’s recommendation align with the thoughts from the National Education Association (2006). They all believe that school districts need to be trained in the identification process, definitions and programming for twice-exceptional students. The under-representation of twice-exceptional students is one of biggest problem facing schools today. Krochak and Ryan (2007) interpret the under-representation as a direct result of a lack of “definitive definition” and “identification criteria” (p.410). McCoach, Kehle, Bray and Siegle (2001) recommend the use of the established state and federal criteria to identify twice-exceptional students. Using this established criterion might fix the under-representation in the school systems.
General Education Teacher

The answers from the general education teacher were very interesting and more reflective of the gifted identification process. Mrs. Hill felt very unsure about the whole process when it was presented to her at the beginning of the year. She definitely did not expect him to qualify for gifted services since in the classroom he often appeared lost and confused. The National Education Association (2006) suggests that twice-exceptional students often exhibit characteristics that mask their giftedness making others question their giftedness.

During the gifted eligibility process, Mrs. Hill thought that Johnny would not need gifted education services; however, she now sees the benefits of placing Johnny. Due to the nurturing environment of the gifted resource room, Johnny became more confident academically. Nielsen (2005) recognizes that the discovery of one’s talents in a safe environment can support the growth of confidence.

Twice-exceptional students are considered enigmas because of a disability masking their potential giftedness. Researchers have outlined ways that a gifted identification committee can recognize the giftedness in a student. They all agree that the use of multiple criteria is a better option than using standard based assessments when identifying a child as twice-exceptional. The evaluation of the twice-exceptional identification process validated the research that illustrated how difficult it is to accurately label a student. Even though this evaluation was for one child, it proved to be a learning experience for the gifted identification committee.
Conclusion

The evaluation of the gifted program for twice exceptional students began with one question in mind: How does the result of the assessments obtained in the gifted identification process and the accommodations stated in the IEP impact the development of the program plan for a twice exceptional student? Ultimately each child’s program plan is going to be different due to their needs according to their IEP. Each plan has to look at the child’s needs in order to access the curriculum at grade level, incorporate their accommodations and play to their strengths.

A gifted program should require a safe environment that supports the student’s abilities but can give students “tools” to help with their learning problems (Baum, 2004). Identification of a twice exceptional student is very tricky and will continue to be unless we, as educators, decided to look at evaluation testing in a whole new light. Scores should not be cumulative; each subgroup should be scored independently so a child’s strengths are more noticeable and not hidden within the average cumulative score (Baum, 2004; Krouch & Ryan, 2007; VDOE, 2010).

Therefore, it is recommended that a gifted and a special education educator become chairs of a committee for which its sole purpose is to determine gifted education eligibility for special education students. This will help to ensure that all rights and laws have been met and upheld while testing such candidate. The gifted educator will be able to consult with the special educator to make sure the IEP is not being violated and to see that special education regulations regarding a meeting for the decision process are being met. Having this specialized committee with two advocates on both sides of the spectrum can help make the process go smoother.
Within the school system, no matter what level, there needs to be a strong emphasis on collaboration. Kalbfleisch & Iguchi (2008) state that a case manager should facilitate collaboration between all the educators that have an invested interest in the student’s academic achievement this will provide the student with a learning environment that can help him be successful.

Also professional training should be provided throughout county schools. Both the National Association for the Gifted (CEC, 2001) and The National Research Council (2002) agree that training can help with the identification of twice-exceptional students and their potential giftedness. Since many students are overlooked, professional development can provide support in not just the identification of these students but in how to nurture the student’s giftedness as well.


Delisle, J. & Galbraith, J. (2002). *When gifted kids don’t have all the answers.* Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit.


Appendix A

Name of Interviewee:
Interview Questions:

1. What role did you have within the committee or the placement of this child?

2. How did you feel about the identification process?

3. What did you think of the results of the testing?

4. Do you feel that the outcome/placement was correct?

5. Are there any results that you feel should be specifically placed in the IEP?

6. What part of the process surprised you? Confused you?

7. Are there any improvement you feel should be made if there is another child to go through this process?
Appendix B

Dear Parents,

My name is_________________, and I am a graduate student at the University of Mary Washington. As you may remember, I served as your child’s case manager during his kindergarten year. I am currently in the process of finishing up my master’s degree and working extensively on my research project. I am inviting your child to participate in a research study.

Involvement in the study is voluntary, so you may choose to have your child participate or not. Please feel free to contact me with any questions that you may have about the research that I will be conducting, I will be happy to explain anything in greater detail.

I am interested in learning more about the identification process of twice exceptional students. You will be asked to allow me to observe the process of gifted identification for your son. I will also be analyzing your student’s assessments and gifted portfolio. This will not take any time away from his academic studies or from the classroom. All information will be kept confidential. Confidential means that no one except me and the committee will know about his involvement. In any articles I write or any presentations that I make, I will use a made-up name for your student.

The benefit of this research is that you will be helping the school system to understand the identification process for a twice exceptional student and how the program should implemented. This information should help us to get a better understanding on how to identify such students.

The risks to your son for participating in this study are minimal. Social risks include students in his class may know he is being an object of the research and alter their behavior towards him. These risks will be minimized by observations can be done in a group setting with his peers to observe social interaction and his class routine will not be interrupted. If you do not wish to continue, you have the right to withdraw from the study, without penalty, at any time.

**Participant** - All of my questions and concerns about this study have been addressed. I choose, voluntarily to have my student participate in this research project.

________________________________________________________________________
Print name of Parent

________________________________________________________________________
Signature of Parent __________________________ Date __________________________

________________________________________________________________________
Print name of investigator

________________________________________________________________________
Signature of investigator __________________________ Date __________________________
Appendix C

Assent Form: Twice Exceptional Identification Process

“My name is ______________________ and I work here at your school” “I’m currently working on my graduate studies research project where I’m going to be evaluating the identification process of twice exceptional students, like yourself.”

“I am asking you to take part in this study”

“If you agree, you will be observed by me to check your progress. You will be pulled out to do some testing with the gifted educator. All gathered test data and other information will be shared with me.”

“You do not have to be in this study. No one will be mad at you if you decide not to do this study. Even if you start, you can stop later if you want. You may ask questions about the study.”

“If you decide to be in the study I will not tell anyone else what you say or do in the study. Your information will keep confidential and no one will have access to my notes.”

“Signing here means that you have read this form, or have had it read to you, and that you are willing to be in this study.”

________________________________________________________________

Print Name of Participant

Signature of Participant        Date

Print name of investigator

Signature of investigator        Date
Appendix D

Dear Participants,

My name is __________________, and I am a graduate student at the University of Mary Washington. I am currently in the process of finishing up my master’s degree and working extensively on my research project. I am inviting you to participate in a research study. Involvement in the study is voluntary, so you may choose to participate or not. Please feel free to contact me with any questions that you may have about the research that I will be conducting, I will be happy to explain anything in greater detail.

I am interested in learning more about the identification process of twice exceptional students. You will be asked to allow me to interview you regarding this process and its potential outcome. This will not take any time away from your primary duties as educators. I will also be observing the gifted committee and will take notes on the gifted identification process and observations. All information will be kept confidential. Confidential means that no one except me will know what you say during the interviews and no one will have access to my observation notes. In any articles I write or any presentations that I make, I will use a made-up name for you.

The benefit of this research is that you will be helping the school system to understand the identification process for a twice exceptional student and how the program should be implemented. This information should help us to get a better understanding on how to identify such students.

If you do not wish to be interviewed or used in the final project, you have the right to withdraw from the study, without penalty, at any time.

Participant - All of my questions and concerns about this study have been addressed. I choose, voluntarily to participate in this research project.

____________________________________________________
Print name of Participant

____________________________________________________
Signature of Participant Date

____________________________________________________
Print name of investigator

____________________________________________________
Signature of investigator Date
Appendix F

Exceptional Plan of Instruction for SCOPE

Student's Name: 
School: 
Instructional Contact/Title: 

Date: 
Grade: First Grade 
IEP/ 504 Plan: IEP

Disability:

Student's Strengths: (including his/her unique gifts, challenges, potential)
shows strength with visual and spatial activities. He is able to manipulate shapes and images in his head.
He also shows strength with critical thinking activities. He can reason and think logically.

classroom teacher indicated that on her teacher report that 
shows strength in memory, making connections, basic 
reading skills and in math reasoning.

Student's Present Level: (in class performance, specific academics, creative ability, social and emotional/behavior 
status, including baseline data for areas of need)

—is reading on an instructional reading level of 2nd grade. He was able to answer 2/6 comprehension 
questions correctly for this reading level. He scored a 30 on the spelling assessment, which was a 10 point increase 
for the fall assessment. 

received the following grades the first nine weeks on his report card; Reading-2, 

Student's Areas of Need: (Build from the student's strengths to develop his/her talents, what strategies does the 
student need to develop his/her talents, what explicit instruction is needed to enable the child to independently use 
strategies, what needs to be implemented during academic transitions).

In the classroom, 
is demonstrating a need in following directions when they are given and 
answering questions appropriately. Further he is demonstrating deficits in expressive and receptive skills 
related to narrative organization, complex sentence formulation and temporal concepts.

often needs additional time to respond or process, simplification, and repetition of directions in 
the classroom. When asked a question, 
does not always give an answer that makes sense. He 
does best when answering questions about known facts ("what letter is this?")

will need individualized instructions for work that is missed during SCOPE. A note or a list 
providing instructions could also be helpful.
### Exceptional Plan of Instruction for SCOPE

**Student Data:** (Use data to determine if student is making adequate progress. Data can be in the form of SOL, Benchmark, grades or standardized test scores).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Testing Year</th>
<th>SOL</th>
<th>Benchmark</th>
<th>Standardized Tests</th>
<th>Grades</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2012-2013 School year</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PALS Fall-Spelling 20, PPWL-20, IRL-2”</td>
<td>1st Nine Weeks-Reading 2, Language Arts 2, Math 3, Social Studies 2, Science 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mid-year-Spelling 30, PIS, IRL-2nd</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Instructional Goals:** (Build goals from the student’s strengths, academic goals, social-emotional goals, strong or weak skill areas, and accommodations needed to include SOL testing).

1. **Annual Goal:**
   - Will verbally express to his teacher how he solved a problem, what his plan was and the actions (steps) that he took during each lesson/activity in SCOPE class.

   How will the goal be measured: (check all that apply)
   - [X] Check list
   - [X] Classroom Participation
   - [ ] Homework
   - [ ] Data Collection
   - [ ] Special Project
   - [ ] Observation
   - [ ] Written Reports
   - [ ] Tests and quizzes
   - [ ] Standardized tests

**Report of Student Progress on goals**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marking Period</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progress toward goal</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Progress on this goal will be reported using the following goals: **M** – Mastered this goal; **NI** – Not implemented; **NP** – No progress; **PW** – Progressing well; **SP** – Some progress

**Comments:**
Exceptional Plan of Instruction for SCOPE

**Instructional Goals:** (Build goals from the student’s strengths, academic goals, social-emotional goals, strong or weak skill areas, and accommodations needed to include SOL testing).

2. **Annual Goal:**
   - will complete two critical thinking exercises and two visual spatial activities with 85% accuracy independently during the nine weeks.

How will the goal be measured: (check all that apply)
- [ ] Check list
- [ ] Classroom Participation
- [ ] Homework
- [X] Data Collection
- [ ] Special Project
- [ ] Observation
- [ ] Written Reports
- [ ] Tests and quizzes
- [ ] Standardized tests

Report of Student Progress on goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marking Period</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progress toward goal</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Progress on this goal will be reported using the following goals: **M** – Mastered this goal; **NI** – Not implemented; **NP** – No progress; **PW** – Progressing well; **SP** – Some progress

**Comments:**

**This can be designed to be an individual page for each instructional goal.**
Exceptional Plan of Instruction for SCOPE

**Plan for Instruction:** (Identify differentiation strategies to meet dual needs for the student, identify areas that need acceleration or require accommodations, and what areas require both acceleration and accommodation)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Description of Strategy</th>
<th>Why Appropriate for Student</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>will have a two sided colored card.</td>
<td>[will use the two sided card to indicate if he needs help with directions. Red meaning he needs help with directions, green meaning he is good with directions.</td>
<td>IEP Accommodation- Repeating directions as needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Checklist</td>
<td>will use a visual checklist to help with verbalizing the problem, plan and actions taken in an activity.</td>
<td>To meet his annual goal.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

☐ The IEP accommodation page will be attached to this plan.

**Plan for Service:** (Where will the student receive services? Collaborative classroom with specialists, consultation, resource)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Services</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SCOPE Pull-out, Scope teacher will consult with case manager and classroom teacher</td>
<td>Once a week</td>
<td>Room 32-Gifted Resource Room</td>
<td>1 hour</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Signature of Committee Members:

Parent(s)/Guardian(s)  
Gifted Education Resource Teacher  
Classroom Teacher  
504 Coordinator  
Review Date: [Date] (1 Year duration)