

What Educators and Administrators (and Parents, Legislators, Doctors, Grandparents, Coaches...) Need to Know About Smart Kids

Austina De Bonte

President, NW Gifted Child Association (WA State)
President, Northshore HiCap Parents Council (Bothell area)
Founder, Smart is not Easy, LLC

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This talk

- ▶ WAETAG Conference 2014 - 2017 (Washington)
- ▶ OATAG Conference 2016 (Oregon)
- ▶ NAGC 2016, 2017; SENG 2017 (National)
- ▶ Parent/community audiences (plus some educators)
 - ▶ Wenatchee, Mount Vernon, Bellevue, Bothell, Bainbridge Island, Redmond, Lake Stevens, Edmonds, Kirkland Pediatrician, Issaquah, Everett/Mukilteo, Burien, Woodinville, Lynden, Shoreline, Washougal, Federal Way, Seabury School (Tacoma), WA PTA Convention
- ▶ Professional development for educators
 - ▶ Renton SD, Seattle Madison Middle School, Lake Stevens SD, Federal Way SD, Mount Vernon SD, Seabury School, Seattle School Board, Leavenworth
 - ▶ King Count Juvenile Court - Truancy District Reps

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Topics

- ▶ A few basics
- ▶ Twice Exceptional
- ▶ Executive function
- ▶ Emotional life
- ▶ Social life
- ▶ School life
- ▶ Equity
- ▶ Now What?

Worksheet:
Notes for
each section

Slides: <http://www.nwgca.org/resources.html>

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WA State Law

- ▶ Full compliance expected since Sept 2014
- ▶ Must have nomination, assessment, selection of the “most highly capable” students in grades K-12, and provide services relevant to their needs

Chapter 28A.185.020 RCW

(1) The legislature finds that, for highly capable students, **access to accelerated learning and enhanced instruction is access to a basic education.**

- ▶ 2016 - Historic new provisions in ESSA for gifted & talented students
- ▶ 2017 – doubled funding; identifying low-income

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Discussion

- ▶ Introduce yourself at your table ☺
- ▶ What are you hoping to learn today?

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A Note

- ▶ I hate the word “gifted”
 - ▶ Poorly understood (“Every child is gifted”)
 - ▶ Negative connotations, many feel it is elitist
 - ▶ Parents: “If this is a gift, can I give it back?”
- ▶ But, it’s the term used by researchers and most professional organizations
- ▶ Synonyms
 - ▶ Smart, very bright, high IQ, intelligent, highly capable
 - ▶ NOT (necessarily) high-achieving

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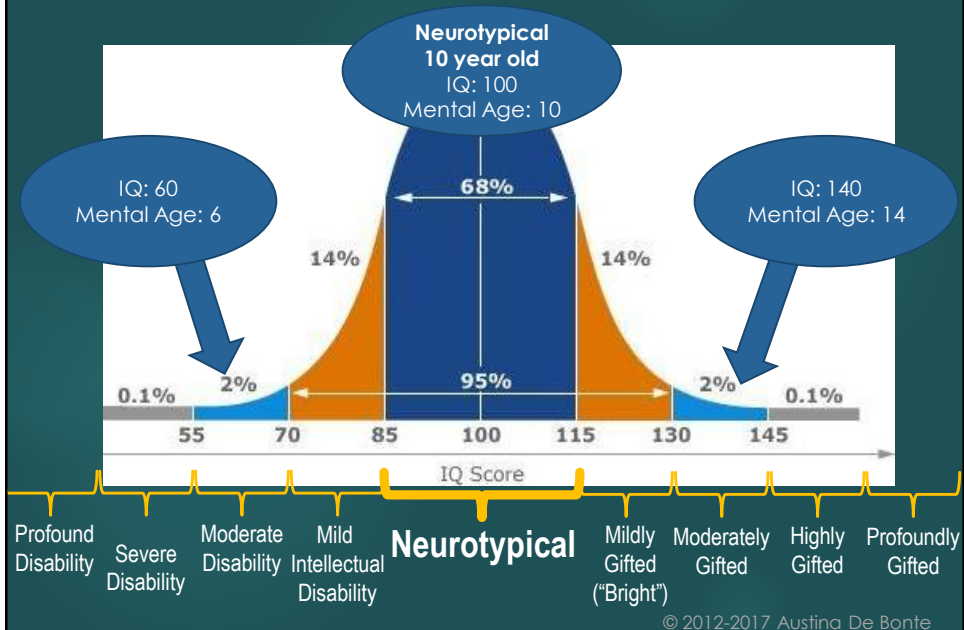
A few basics

WHO IS THIS POPULATION?

TWICE EXCEPTIONAL

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“The Bell Curve”



IQ is and is not...

- ▶ When tested 1-on-1 with a professional skilled in assessing gifted children, IQ...
 - ▶ IS a good measure of a child's reasoning capacity and potential
 - ▶ BUT invalid (low) results can happen
 - ▶ poor facilitation, limitations of the tests, cultural factors
- ▶ IQ is NOT a predictor of long term success
 - ▶ Many other factors...
 - ▶ Environment that impacts development of skills
 - ▶ Motivation, grit and perseverance

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Asynchronous

- ▶ Different ability/maturity levels in different areas
- ▶ Example: a 5 year old
 - ▶ Doing math like an 8 year old
 - ▶ Reading like a 10 year old
 - ▶ Writing like a 6 year old
 - ▶ Emotional maturity of a 4 year old
 - ▶ Social maturity of an 8 year old
 - ▶ Social skills of a 5 year old
- ▶ Most gifted kids develop asynchronously
- ▶ Don't assume a higher level of maturity...
- ▶ MYTH: "If she can't do XX well, then she's not gifted"

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Equally Likely to Be Gifted

- ▶ Girls vs. boys
 - ▶ But girls are less likely to be referred for testing
- ▶ Poor vs. rich
 - ▶ But poor rely on public gifted programs, "the rich have other options"
- ▶ English speaking vs. non-native speakers
 - ▶ Assessments favor native speakers
 - ▶ Minorities less likely to be referred for testing
- ▶ Giftedness cuts across all socioeconomic groups, nations, ethnicities, race, cultures...

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Gifted runs in families

- ▶ Out of 148 sets of siblings
 - ▶ over 1/3 were within five IQ points of each other
 - ▶ over 3/5 were within 10 points
 - ▶ nearly 3/4 were within 13 points
- ▶ But second-born less likely to be identified
- ▶ Parents and grandparents too... 😊

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Twice-Exceptional - 2e

- ▶ Gifted AND
 - ▶ (Stealth) Dyslexia, Dysgraphia, Dyscalculia, Dyspraxia
 - ▶ ADHD, Autism, Aspergers Spectrum
 - ▶ Sensory Processing Disorder (SPD), Auditory Processing (CAPD)
 - ▶ Anxiety, Depression, Mood Disorders, OCD, ...
 - ▶ Vision Processing Disorder (1 in 4, underdiagnosed, covd.org)
- ▶ Surprisingly high incidence
- ▶ Compensation can mask learning disabilities
 - ▶ IQ subtest patterns can help diagnose
- ▶ Many gifted traits mimic ADHD, Aspergers traits
- ▶ Diagnosis is tricky! Insist on an expert

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Dyslexia ("Stealth" subtype)

- ▶ In the gifted population
 - ▶ Dyslexia often manifests as problems with spelling, grammar, conventions
 - ▶ Reading may be at or above grade level
 - ▶ Trouble with phonics, decoding unfamiliar words
 - ▶ Comprehension with short texts (less redundancy)
- ▶ Early ID and intervention is important for long term success
- ▶ May not be diagnosed until middle or high school

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Vision Processing Disorders

- ▶ How the brain processes what the eyes see
 - ▶ Convergence insufficiency, teaming, tracking, 3-D
- ▶ Common: 1 in 4 kids has issues
- ▶ May mimic dyslexia, ADHD
- ▶ Inconsistent scores on standardized tests
 - ▶ HiCap program entrance tests
- ▶ Only diagnosed by a developmental optometrist
 - ▶ COVD.org for listings
- ▶ Vision therapy is available
 - ▶ Research on outcomes is inconsistent
 - ▶ Provider quality matters a lot

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Auditory Processing Disorders

- ▶ How the brain processes what the ears hear
- ▶ One ear "hears" a split second sooner than the other
 - ▶ Dislike sudden noises, noisy environments, remembering multi-step directions, poor auditory memory, trouble distinguishing foreground/background conversation
 - ▶ Usually very acute hearing overall
- ▶ Only diagnosed by a specialist
 - ▶ Audiologist who tests for CAPD
 - ▶ ABLE Kids Foundation (Fort Collins, Colorado)
 - ▶ The only clinic in the world that makes an "ear filter"
 - ▶ One additional battery – isolated words in background noise

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Primary assessment tools

	Group testing (Most school districts)	Private testing (Neuropsychologist)
measures: achievement abilities skills	Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) - math - reading (other subtests available) Also: SBAC, Terra Nova, MAP, California Achievement (CAT)...	Woodcock-Johnson (WJ-III)
measures: reasoning patterns problem solving "potential" "IQ"	Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) - verbal - nonverbal - quantitative Also: Naglieri (NNAT), Otis- Lennon (OLSAT)...	Wechsler (WISC-IV, WISC-V, WPPSI-III) Stanford-Binet (SB-IV, SB-5, SB L-M)

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Other assessment tools

- ▶ Screening: CogAT Screener, Naglieri NNAT
- ▶ Teacher observational ratings/surveys
 - ▶ Gifted Rating Scales
 - ▶ GATES, GES, HOPE, SIGS...
- ▶ Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking
- ▶ Out of level tests
 - ▶ Explore, SCAT (elementary)
 - ▶ SAT, PSAT, ACT (middle school)
 - ▶ Often used for national talent search
- ▶ <http://www.hoagiesgifted.org/tests.htm>

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Ceiling effect

- ▶ If the child gets the top score on a test, what does that score really tell you?
- ▶ Measuring a tall person with a 5 foot ruler...
 - ▶ You know they are taller than 5' but you don't know by how much
 - ▶ Will Smith, Michael Jordan, and Robin Williams will all get the top score
- ▶ What to do about it?
 - ▶ Use higher grade level form of a test, ie CogAT
 - ▶ Use out of level tests, ie SAT, PSAT

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Standard Error of Measure (SEM)

- ▶ *If a single student were to take the same test repeatedly (with no new learning taking place between testings and no memory of question effects), the standard deviation of his/her repeated test scores is denoted as the standard error of measure.*

–Texas Education Association

- ▶ CogAT has an SEM of 4.0-7.0 (mean 100, SD 15)
 - ▶ Practically speaking, this means a 128 (97%) may be statistically equivalent to a 135 (99%)
 - ▶ SEM is highest for non-verbal battery, also kindergarten

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Discussion

- ▶ Have you seen asynchronous kids?
 - ▶ Math/Reading/Writing
 - ▶ Emotional maturity/Social maturity/Social skills
 - ▶ Other?
- ▶ Have you seen 2e kids?
 - ▶ A sibling that doesn't "look" gifted?
- ▶ What assessments does your district use?

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Executive function

AND A LITTLE NEUROSCIENCE

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Executive Function

- ▶ “If I’m so smart, why can’t I find my keys?”
 - ▶ Or homework, lunchbox, jacket...
- ▶ Organizational
 - ▶ Multitasking, keep track of more than one thing at once
 - ▶ Planning, time management, breaking down tasks
 - ▶ Sustaining attention through distraction
- ▶ Regulation
 - ▶ Impulse control, inhibition, self-control
 - ▶ Waiting to speak until it’s your turn
 - ▶ Mental flexibility
 - ▶ Initiating, getting started

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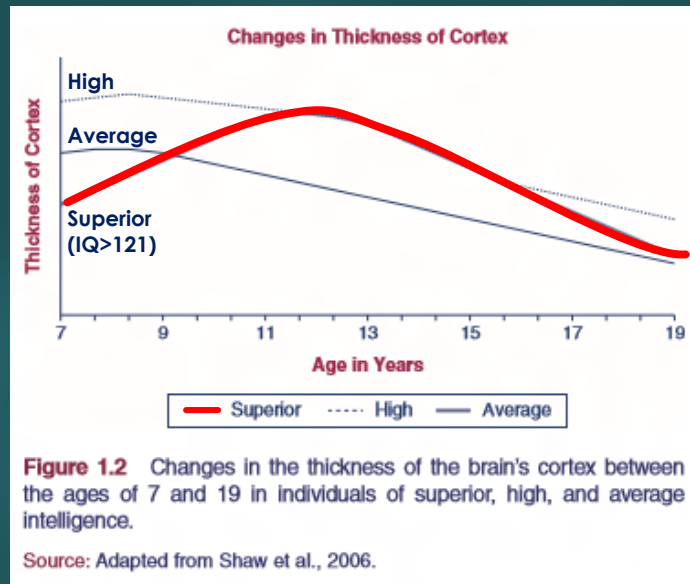
How the Gifted Brain Learns (David Souza)

- ▶ Enlarged brain regions in the frontal & parietal lobes associated with high IQ
- ▶ More areas “light up” during functional MRI
- ▶ Prefrontal cortex
 - ▶ **executive function**, decision making, analysis...



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A different developmental timetable



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Empirical evidence agrees...

"Kids who had higher IQs to begin with seemed to have an extended period in adolescence during which they retained the ability to learn at a rapid pace, just like much younger children."

Angela Brant & John Hewitt, Institute for Behavioral Genetics at the University of Colorado

<http://www.npr.org/blogs/health/2013/09/23/224387862/smart-teenage-brains-may-get-some-extra-learning-time>

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A different developmental timetable

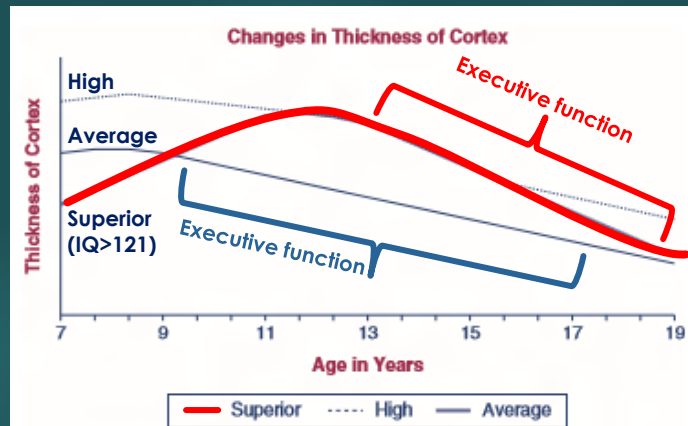


Figure 1.2 Changes in the thickness of the brain's cortex between the ages of 7 and 19 in individuals of superior, high, and average intelligence.

Source: Adapted from Shaw et al., 2006.

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So there is a downside...

- ▶ The later maturation of the cortex may explain why gifted kids tend to lag in executive function skills compared to neurotypical age mates
- ▶ But most do catch up eventually
 - ▶ It might take until their 20s...
- ▶ Need MORE scaffolding & support for executive function in middle school
 - ▶ Similar to ADHD support
 - ▶ Executive function coach, Creative Problem Solving, Time Timer, IEP/504 Plan...

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What is Executive Function Again?

- ▶ “If I’m so smart, why can’t I find my keys?”
 - ▶ Or homework, lunchbox, jacket...
- ▶ Organizational
 - ▶ Multitasking, keep track of more than one thing at once
 - ▶ Planning, time management, breaking down tasks
 - ▶ Sustaining attention through distraction
- ▶ Regulation
 - ▶ Impulse control, inhibition, self-control
 - ▶ Waiting to speak until it’s your turn
 - ▶ Mental flexibility
 - ▶ Initiating, getting started

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Discussion

- ▶ Have you seen evidence of delayed executive function development? What does it look like?
- ▶ How might this developmental research change the way you teach? Choose program models?

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Emotional life

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3 core traits



SENG: Supporting Emotional Needs of the Gifted (www.sengifted.org)

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Perfectionism

- ▶ Erase a hole in the paper
- ▶ Impatient with others, aren't "doing it right"
- ▶ Meltdown at the first sign of trouble
- ▶ Can't make a decision
- ▶ Hate criticism, dwell on mistakes
- ▶ Reach for impossible goals
- ▶ Trouble accepting compliments
- ▶ Unwilling to start, afraid to try, "I don't want to"
- ▶ "Challenge Cards" in the corner of the classroom may not work...

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Sensitivity

- ▶ Too loud: fireworks, movies, toilets
- ▶ Too scary: movies, even Disney ones!
- ▶ Crying when another kid gets hurt
- ▶ Concern about the tigers going extinct
- ▶ Scratchy tags in clothing, buttons, sock seams...
- ▶ Low pain tolerance
- ▶ Bathing/swimming: water in my eyes/nose!
- ▶ Picky eater, don't like foods to touch, textures, smells
- ▶ Food sensitivities/allergies
- ▶ Big reactions to minor setbacks, overreacts to discipline
- ▶ Sensory seeking - loves snuggling, soft fabrics...
 - ▶ Or, hates to be touched...

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Intensity

- ▶ Tears of joy at a beautiful sunset
- ▶ So focused they don't "hear" you
- ▶ Obsessions about a topic of interest
- ▶ Difficulty with transitions
- ▶ Big focus on fairness
- ▶ Competitive: most, best, fastest, highest
- ▶ Intense nightmares, fears
- ▶ Sleep issues, hard to settle down, stay asleep
- ▶ Major meltdowns
- ▶ Mood swings: higher highs, lower lows
- ▶ Stubborn, strong-willed, inflexible

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Overexcitabilities -

- ▶ Dabrowski's 5 "super-stimulabilities"
 - ▶ Psychomotor
 - ▶ Sensual
 - ▶ Imaginational
 - ▶ Intellectual
 - ▶ Emotional
- ▶ Hard wired - fMRI shows "Brain Overexcitability"
 - ▶ Experience a more intense reaction
 - ▶ For a longer period than normal
 - ▶ To a stimulus that may be very small
- ▶ Honor it! Coach how to cope with it, not change it

Sensual OEs to an extreme...

Sensory Processing Disorder
Sensory Integration Disorder
Central Auditory Processing Disorder (CAPD, APD)

"The Highly Sensitive Person"
"The Out of Sync Child"

Occupational Therapy (OT)
Wilbarger Skin Brushing

OEs aren't an accident; they support higher intelligence.

More energetic
Imagine deeper
More curious
Hear more
See more
Feel deeper

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Coaching Intense Emotions

- ▶ Anxiety, anger, fear
 - ▶ Leads to aggression, tantrums, withdrawal
- ▶ Is this a “baby” problem or a “giant” problem?
 - ▶ On a scale of 1 to 10, engage logical reasoning
- ▶ You might wait forever for them to try something new/scary/difficult on their own
 - ▶ Goal setting, sticker charts, natural consequences...
 - ▶ Sometimes they need a push
 - ▶ Hold accountable, insist on finishing, sit with the tantrum
- ▶ Food really matters
 - ▶ Protein and fats at every snack: “feed your brain”

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Taming the Worry Monster

From Dr. Dan Peters, Summit Center

- ▶ Amygdala is the seat of emotion & worry
 - ▶ Tries to trick you, exaggerates, lies, “takes over”
- ▶ Big brain surrounds the tiny amygdala
- ▶ Use your big brain to keep your amygdala from taking over
 - ▶ Keep your brain fed and strong – nutrition!
 - ▶ “Boss it back!”

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Discussion

- ▶ What characteristics do you recognize?
- ▶ How well do you support OEs, sensitivities, perfectionism, and intensities?
 - ▶ ...while still providing discipline and consistent expectations
- ▶ What techniques work (and don't work)?

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Social Life

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Introverts vs. Extroverts

▶ Introverts

- ▶ Get energy by being **alone**
- ▶ Stereotype: quiet, shy, reserved, need processing time, think before talking, prefer 1-on-1 over groups, want a few good friends
- ▶ But, some can be very social as well!

▶ Extroverts

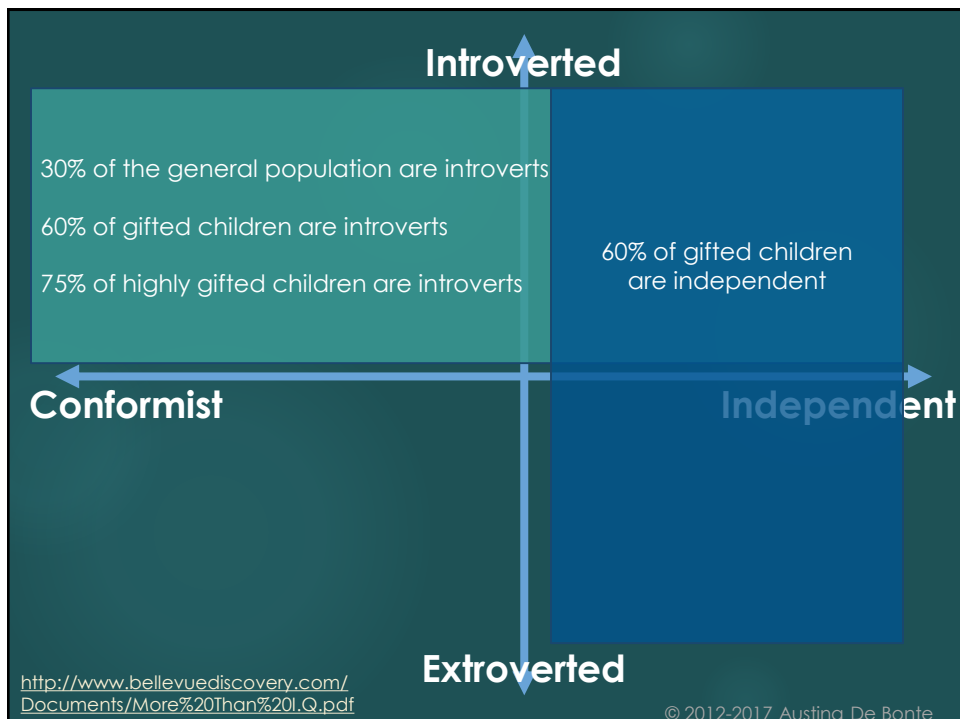
- ▶ Get energy by being **with other people**
- ▶ Stereotype: outgoing, enjoy parties, think out loud, want to have lots of friends

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Independent vs. Conformist

- ▶ Independent
 - ▶ March to their own drummer
 - ▶ Personal desires aren't swayed by group opinions
 - ▶ "To thine own self be true"
- ▶ Conformist
 - ▶ Want to belong to a group
 - ▶ Will adjust their desires to remain with the group
 - ▶ Want to blend in, fit in
 - ▶ Sensitive to peer pressure

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“ When gifted children are asked what they most desire, the answer is often ‘a friend’. The children’s experience of school is completely colored by the presence or absence of friends. ”

(DR. SILVERMAN, 1993)

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Axioms for Social Development

- ▶ You can't force two kids to be friends
 - ▶ Authentic social connection is vital
- ▶ Social development requires practice
- ▶ All humans seek belonging and to be understood

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Social mismatch

- ▶ More complex vocabulary
- ▶ More involved games, stricter rules, fairness
- ▶ Interested in niche topics, ask unusual questions
- ▶ Kids realize very early
 - ▶ They are somehow **different**
- ▶ Gravitate to older kids or adults
- ▶ Feel like they have to “fake it” to make a friend
- ▶ Lonely, social isolation
 - ▶ Even if they have playmates
 - ▶ “No one understands me” “They don’t get my jokes”

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Social maturity

- ▶ **Stage 1: “Play partner”**
- ▶ **Stage 2: “People to chat to”**
 - ▶ *sharing of interests*
- ▶ **Stage 3: “Help and encouragement”**
 - ▶ *uni-directional*
- ▶ **Stage 4: “Intimacy/empathy”**
 - ▶ *bi-directional*
- ▶ **Stage 5: “The sure shelter”**
 - ▶ PG 6-7 year old vs. neurotypical 11-12+ year old
 - ▶ “A friend is a place you go to when you need to take off the masks. You can take off your camouflage with a friend and still feel safe.”

On average,
the higher the
IQ, the more
mature a social
relationship the
child is seeking

(Miraca Gross, 2002)
study of 700 children

http://www.davidsongifted.org/db/Articles_id_10400.aspx

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Asynchronous social development

- ▶ Desire higher maturity level relationships
- ▶ BUT, may lack practical social & friendship skills
 - ▶ Some kids need explicit instruction
 - ▶ Or, lack of practice
 - ▶ Or, just average social skills
- ▶ ALSO, there's a difference between
 - ▶ Knowing what to do ("Smile and say hello")
 - vs.
 - ▶ Actually doing it ("I don't want to")
- ▶ OR, a child may have great social skills
 - ▶ Can flex to match interests, play patterns with others
 - ▶ But still longs for "someone who really gets me"

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How it plays out over time

- ▶ Biggest social maturity gap ages 4-9 (Gross, 2002)
 - ▶ Gifted kids looking for deeper relationships
 - ▶ But, other kids still pretty inclusive
 - ▶ So far, the gap is largely invisible
 - ▶ No one really understands me, "silent suffering"
- ▶ Social mismatch becomes visible in 4th-5th grade
 - ▶ Left out of parties, playdates, playground games

Why? What's so special about 4th-5th grade?

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In 4th-5th grade:

- ▶ Neurotypical kids just got to Stage 4
 - ▶ More focus on shared interests
 - ▶ Friends who are “just like me,” cliques begin
 - ▶ Fewer birthday parties inviting the whole class
- ▶ Gifted kids often get left out socially
 - ▶ THROUGH NO FAULT OF THEIR OWN
- ▶ Everyone needs their clique. Even gifted kids.
 - ▶ It's an expected stage of social development

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Socially sensitive

- ▶ An offhand comment from a peer can cause serious turmoil
- ▶ Intense response to perceived rejection
 - ▶ No one reached out to invite me to play the game
 - ▶ He hates me, she thinks I'm weird
 - ▶ I'll never have any friends
- ▶ Coaching
 - ▶ Is it really true? Engage logical reasoning.
 - ▶ “Playful” teasing vs. “hurtful” teasing
 - ▶ Waiting for an invitation rarely works...

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Consider this scenario...

- ▶ A gifted kid enters preschool with age-appropriate social skills
- ▶ In school, feels "different" from other kids, desires deep friendship, but doesn't find it
- ▶ After a few years, starts falling behind in social skill development due to lack of practice
- ▶ Lack of social skills makes it even harder for them to flex to find common interests with agemates.
- ▶ Loses confidence due to perceived rejection.
- ▶ Kid is visibly struggling socially, but we strongly believe that kids "need to be able to get along with all kinds of people in this world"

What should we do?

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Solving this scenario

- ▶ When a kid is struggling, do you:
 - ▶ (a) Keep throwing them into the deep end of the pool
 - ▶ (b) Put them in the shallow end with a float and a teacher
- ▶ Make the environment easier, so that they can get skill development back on track
 - ▶ Group together with true peers
 - ▶ Coaching & support
- ▶ **Neurotypical kids don't need to bridge these asynchronies to develop socially**
 - ▶ This is an unrealistic challenge for a gifted kid who is not also gifted socially

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Solving this scenario

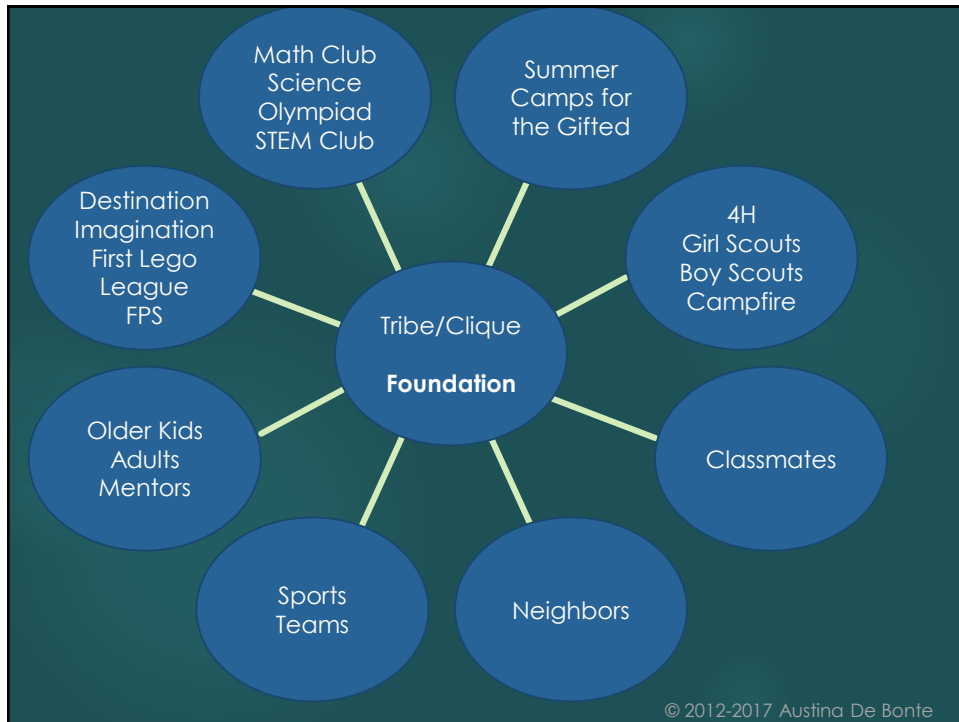
- ▶ When a kid is the only one in the pool
 - ▶ (a) Keep them in the pool
 - ▶ (b) Find a peer who can
- ▶ Make sure they can get skill
 - ▶ Group to
 - ▶ Coaching &
- ▶ **Neurotypical kids don't need to bridge these asynchronies to develop socially**
 - ▶ This is an unrealistic challenge for a gifted kid who is not also gifted socially

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Peer relationships

- ▶ **Goal: Find my tribe**
- ▶ Who?
 - ▶ Similar age? grade level in school?
 - ▶ Similar abilities? maturity level? interests?
- ▶ Ideally, all of these
 - ▶ School programs with similarly gifted age-mates
- ▶ Not always possible to find locally
 - ▶ Especially highly gifted or in smaller communities
- ▶ By middle school: social & emotional healing needed for many kids

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Gifted programs can help socially

- ▶ Program models that place gifted children with other similarly gifted peers
 - ▶ Full-time classrooms
 - ▶ Cluster grouping
 - ▶ Pull-out programs
- ▶ Serving the whole child is more than just appropriate academics
 - ▶ Prioritize social & emotional growth

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Discussion

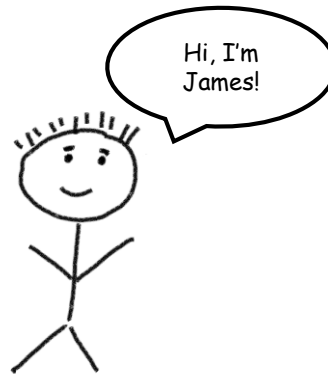
- ▶ What of these social development patterns do we recognize?
- ▶ Is social development a priority in our classrooms? How do we support it? How might this impact program models?

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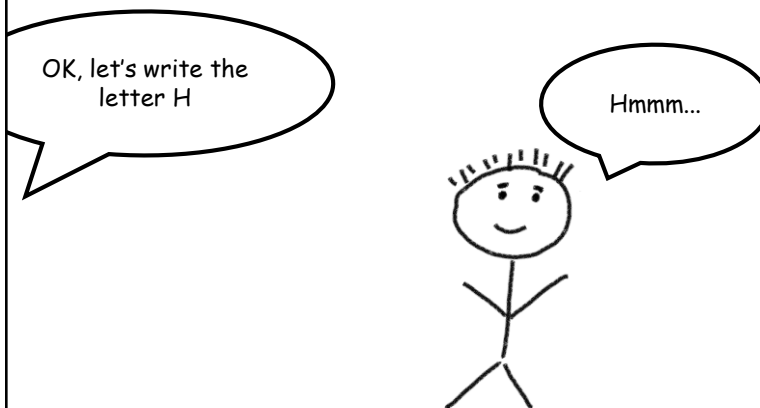
Grit & Growth Mindset

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Meet James



James didn't know how to write his letters
when he entered kindergarten



But with some practice, he learned

Give it a try,
you can do it!

Hey! I
made an H



He was nervous about subtraction...

Yes, you can. Here, let's
do it together

I'm not sure I
can do this...



...and he did struggle, but the teacher helped him, and he figured it out

No, not that way. Try this instead...

Oh, I get it now!
Like this?

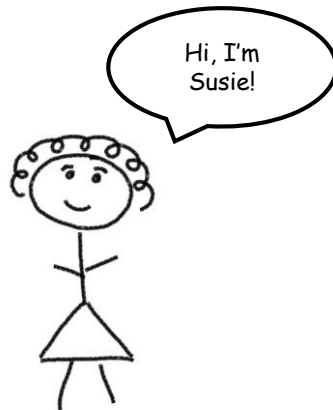


In Kindergarten, James learned it was OK

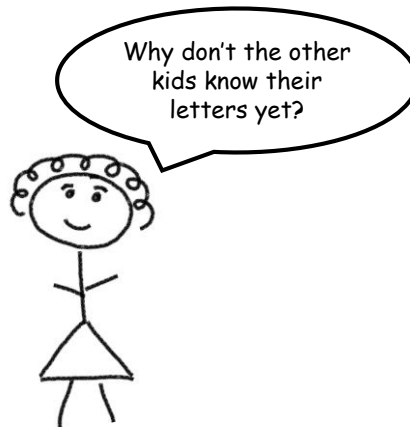
- to ask questions
- to try
- to not give up at the first hurdle



Meet Susie



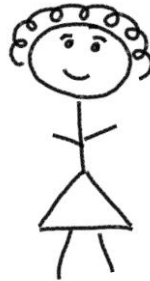
Susie is very bright. She started Kindergarten already knowing how to sound out words, and was surprised that other kids didn't read yet.



Susie quickly grew in her abilities, seemingly without trying

2 beans
+ 2 more beans
= 4 beans all together

So... $40+40=80$,
right?



As Susie grew, she easily picked up on new topics

Let's talk about
weather...

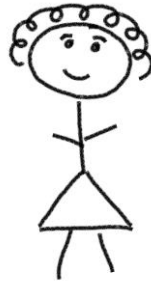
I read a book about
cumulus clouds once.
They are the
puffy ones!



Susie often finished assignments early

Class, you have until
recess to work on...

I'm done!
What should
I do now?

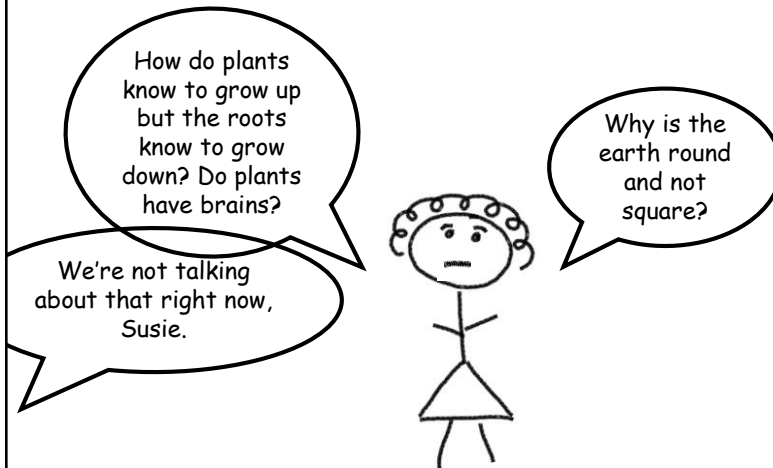


Susie's parents were very proud of her perfect report card, and remarked at how easily she learned new things

"Susie is a delight to
have in class." We're
so proud of you!

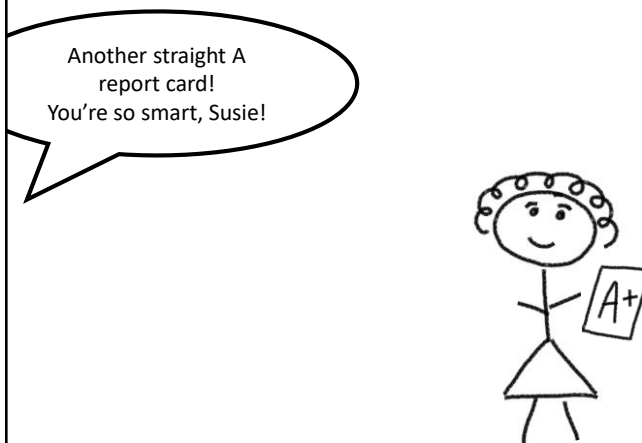


In kindergarten, Susie asked a lot of questions

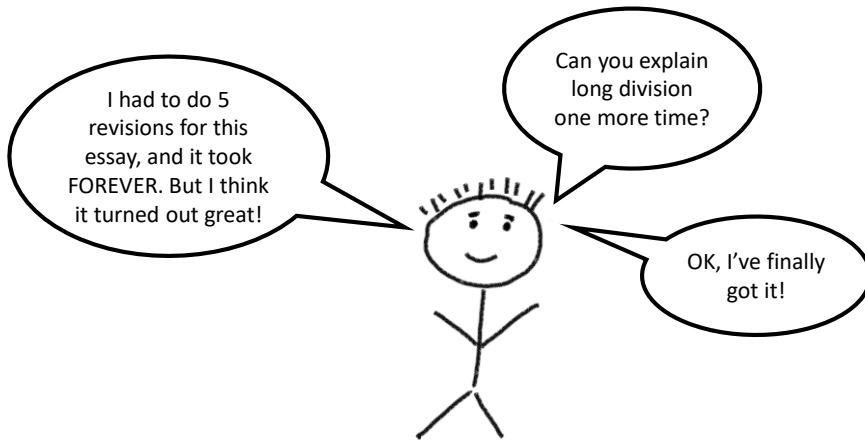


Susie stopped asking so many questions

By 2nd grade, Susie realized that she didn't need to work very hard to do well in school.



Meanwhile, James grows, and every school year gradually presents bigger challenges...



James has had lots of practice learning how to attack new, hard challenges.

- He has strategies

- Don't give up.
- Read it again.
- Ask for help.
- Try it, even if you're not sure how to do it at first.

James goes to middle school, high school, college...

All along, learning
how to tackle
bigger and bigger
challenges.



I have worked through
hard problems before,
I bet I can figure this
out too.

Meanwhile, Susie continues to achieve
despite not putting in any real effort

Wow, Susie, your essay
was magnificent!



I wrote it on the bus

Meanwhile, Susie continues to achieve
despite not putting in any real effort

How do you get so many
creative ideas?

I dunno...they just
pop into my head



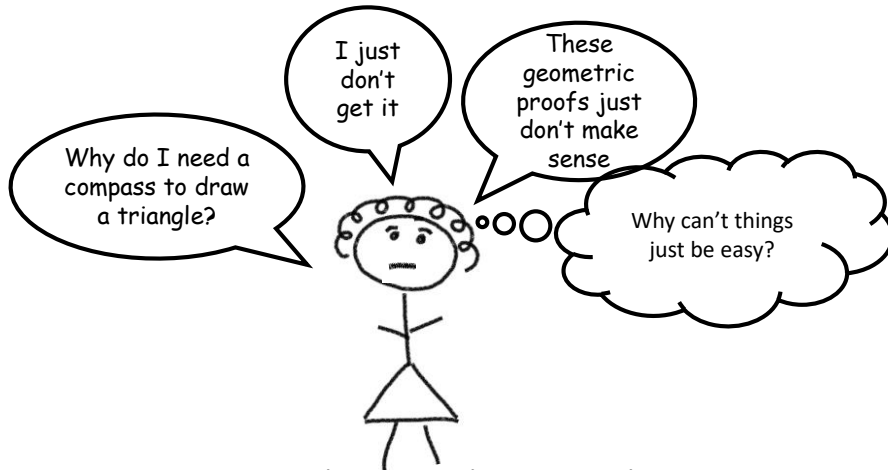
Susie grows too. She starts middle school, and
does well in her honors classes

Honors English,
Honors World History,
Honors Pre-Algebra,
Chemistry, French

This is easy, just like
elementary school.
No sweat.

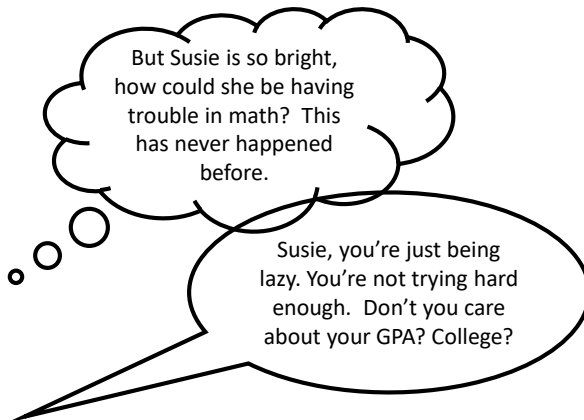


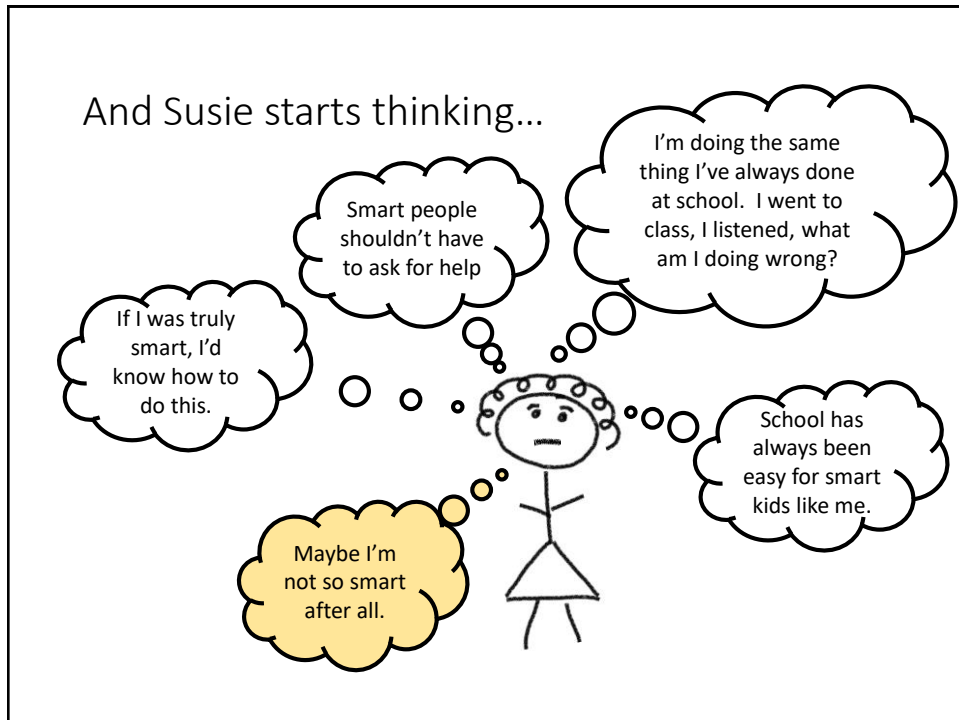
But the next year she takes Honors Geometry...



Her teacher sends a note home that Susie's grades are slipping.

And her parents react...





Because Susie's elementary school experience didn't stretch her, Susie never had the opportunity to develop these skills:

- Self-confidence
 - to know that she can tackle a truly hard problem
- Emotional coping skills
 - to persevere through a challenge
- Delayed gratification
- Tolerance for failure
 - and learning from mistakes
- Study skills
 - to learn something you don't already understand
- Time management

Susie never learned how to LEARN
Susie never learned GRIT

What is grit?

- ▶ Self-discipline
- ▶ Persistence through challenge
- ▶ Ability to withstand stress
- ▶ Tolerate and learn from failure
- ▶ Perseverance and passion for long-term goals
- ▶ Delayed gratification
- ▶ Maintaining effort and interest over years despite failure, adversity, and plateaus in progress
- ▶ Stamina: Winning the marathon, not the sprint

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Grit is more important than IQ

- ▶ Duckworth & Seligman studied success at:
 - ▶ West Point Military Academy
 - ▶ National Spelling Bee
 - ▶ Adolescents: High school juniors, 8th graders
- ▶ "It wasn't social intelligence. It wasn't good looks, physical health, and it wasn't IQ. It was *grit*."
- ▶ "Self-discipline predicted academic performance more robustly than did IQ."
- ▶ **"In our data, grit is usually unrelated or even inversely related to measures of talent."**

Duckworth grit scale

<http://www.sas.upenn.edu/~duckwort/images/12-item%20Grit%20Scale.05312011.pdf>

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Another data point

- ▶ IQ scores only explain 25%-49% of the variance of school grades
 - ▶ (Neisser et al., 1996), (Anderson & Keith, 1997)

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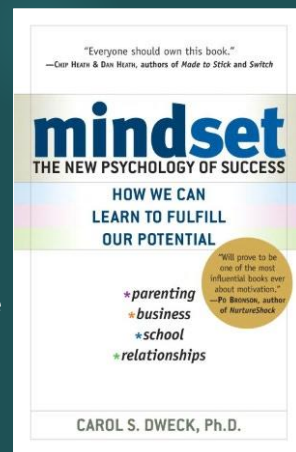
Does IQ predict “success?”

- ▶ Terman study of gifted children through adulthood
- ▶ SMPY – Study of Mathematically Precocious Youth
- ▶ Variety of levels of performance as adults
- ▶ The common factor:
 - ▶ Successful individuals had SUPPORT
- ▶ IQ alone is not a predictor of success

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Growth Mindset

- ▶ “Effort Effect” – 5th graders
 - ▶ Kids who were told they were smart didn't try as hard next time
 - ▶ Kids who were praised for effort did better
- ▶ Fixed mindset vs. growth mindset



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Growth Mindset Takeaways

- ▶ Don't praise kids for being smart
- ▶ Praise effort and progress, not results
- ▶ Do not praise the "A" if it was effortless

- ▶ "NOT YET" is a very powerful idea
- ▶ "Keep on trying, keep on trying..."
 - ▶ The brain is a muscle. It needs a workout to get stronger.

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Is it OK for school to be easy?

If a gifted child is allowed to "skate" through regular classrooms where they pick up the new ideas seemingly without trying, they may never learn how to tackle a genuinely hard problem.

Eventually, they find themselves in middle school geometry, or high school physics, and may be faced for the very first time with a topic that is not intuitive for them—and may have no experience, no strategies, no emotional coping skills to tackle it.

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Identity Crisis: Smart ≠ Easy

- ▶ “Things have always been easy for me, because I am so smart.”
- ▶ “Uh oh, this new thing isn’t easy.”
- ▶ “Maybe I’m not smart anymore...”
- ▶ Some kids dig deep and adjust, but others...

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It can go really bad

- ▶ High School dropouts...
- ▶ Suicide...
- ▶ School shooters...
- ▶ Prison...

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Underachievement is common

- ▶ Has its roots in 1st, 2nd, 3rd grade
 - ▶ But often isn't visible until middle or high school
- ▶ Kids may never have to develop:
 - ▶ How to handle a real challenge
 - ▶ Persistence, perseverance, "grit"
 - ▶ Emotional coping skills
 - ▶ Study skills, time management skills
- ▶ 2e issues may be hidden until the material gets challenging enough
- ▶ **Underachievement – very difficult to reverse**
<http://www.hoagiesgifted.org/underachievement.htm>

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Underachievement

- ▶ Has its roots in 1st, 2nd, 3rd grade

"When they start to underachieve, the natural response for self-preservation is to actually stop caring. They're like: "I don't care about school anymore, this is stupid, this is boring." You'd rather be disengaged and do bad, than **TRY** and do bad.

Typically, over time we start to see elements of anxiety and depression that kick in."

- Dr. Dan Peters, Summit Center

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Smart kids at a disadvantage

- ▶ They are rarely challenged in school, so have no personal experience with effort -> results
- ▶ Less likely to develop
 - ▶ Grit
 - ▶ Perseverance
 - ▶ Growth mindset
 - ▶ Tolerance for failure
 - ▶ Time management
- ▶ It's hard to truly challenge a gifted kid
 - ▶ They are capable of a LOT more than they let on
 - ▶ Perfectionism leads them to stay away from challenges that they aren't sure they can tackle

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More disadvantages

- ▶ Parents who don't push elementary students to stretch themselves
 - ▶ "There's time for that later, in middle school"
 - ▶ Especially girls...
- ▶ Parents who don't allow kids to struggle
 - ▶ Learned helplessness
- ▶ A system that has taught kids that being smart means that school is easy

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Emotional traits don't help

- ▶ Common traits
 - ▶ Sensitive to criticism
 - ▶ Intense reactions to setbacks
 - ▶ Stubborn/inflexible
 - ▶ Takes things personally
 - ▶ Perfectionistic
 - ▶ Afraid to try new things
 - ▶ Dwells on mistakes
- ▶ These traits predispose kids to avoid challenge
 - ▶ Or to give up too soon

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“ I never recognized myself as gifted, and school came easy to me. I never learned to study until I almost failed my first year of college. Kids who weren't as smart as me, had skills that I had never learned, and understood how to work the system, it was humiliating to figure that out the hard way. ”

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“ I was never challenged in school until college, and I almost lost an academic scholarship my first semester because I had never learned how to study or work hard!

”

My whole concept of self was shaken when I finally "failed" at something.

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“ I'm not good at things I'm not good at.

”

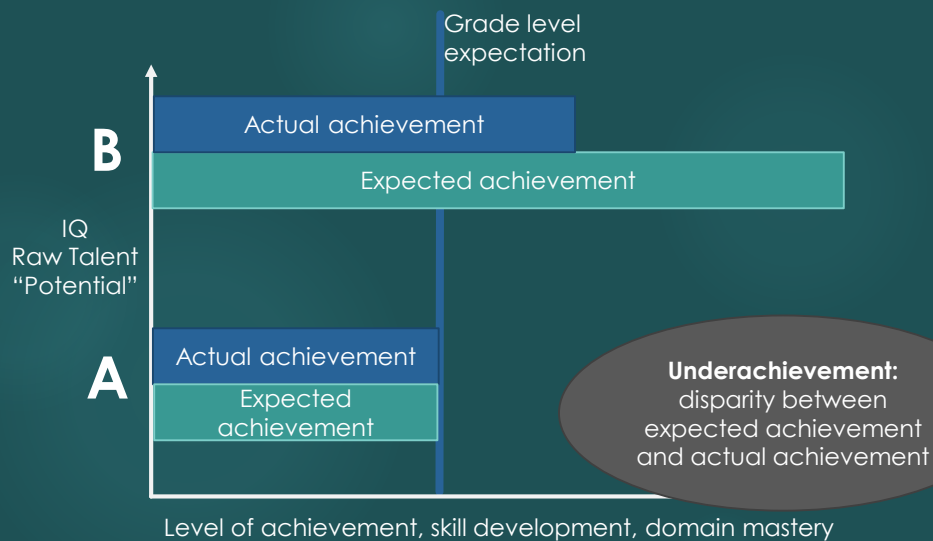
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Underachievement

WHEN GRIT FAILS TO DEVELOP

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What is underachievement?



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Disengagement

"When they start to underachieve, the natural response for self-preservation is to actually stop caring. They're like: "I don't care about school anymore, this is stupid, this is boring." You'd rather be disengaged and do bad, than **try** and do bad.

Typically, over time we start to see elements of anxiety and depression that kick in."

- Dr. Dan Peters, Summit Center

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Causes of underachievement

- ▶ Lack of grit (persistence, self-discipline, etc.)
 - ▶ Fixed mindset that encounters frustration
- ▶ Under-challenging curriculum:
"this is pointless"
- ▶ Dumbing down to fit in socially
- ▶ Learning disabilities (2e) may be hidden until the material gets challenging enough
- ▶ Delayed development of executive function

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Reversing Underachievement

- ▶ **Very difficult to reverse once entrenched**
 - ▶ It started in 1st, 2nd, 3rd grade...
- ▶ Strategies that have the most hope:
 - ▶ "Figure out the individual cause"
 - ▶ Address any learning disabilities & medical issues
 - ▶ Build on student's strengths & passions
 - ▶ Motivate with the long term picture
 - ▶ Career exposure, mentors, internships
 - ▶ **A dedicated, caring teacher that believes in me**
- ▶ Ideal: PREVENT underachievement by systematically developing grit and watching for 2e

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Build Up Persistence & Grit

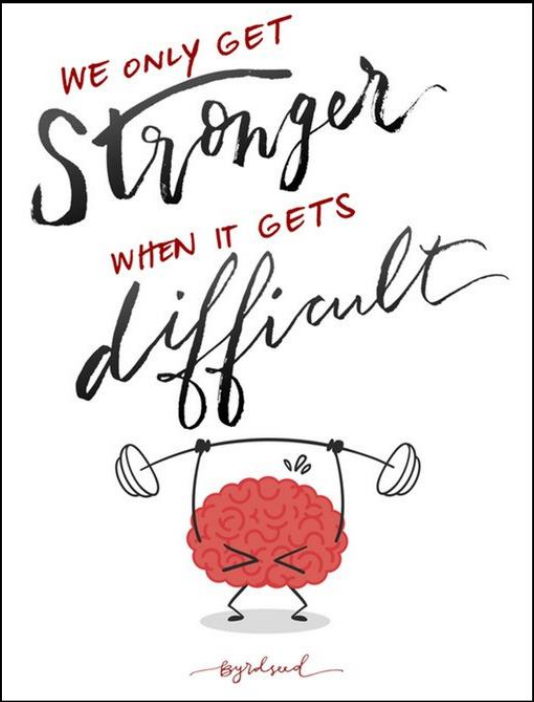
- ▶ Provide experiences with genuine challenge
 - ▶ Advanced school programs
 - ▶ Musical instruments, especially private instruction
 - ▶ Foreign language
 - ▶ Sports teams, individual sports
 - ▶ Martial arts, swimming, fencing, tennis...
 - ▶ Independent study projects
 - ▶ Contests
 - ▶ First Lego League, Destination Imagination, etc.
- ▶ Not an insurmountable mountain of challenge
 - ▶ Just a steady stair step
- ▶ Character education

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Teach a Growth Mindset

- ▶ Notice and reinforce effort & progress
 - ▶ Do not praise kids for being smart
 - ▶ Would you praise them for having blue eyes?
- ▶ Discuss perfectionism openly
- ▶ Let kids struggle and fail (within reason)
- ▶ Insist on persevering through challenge
 - ▶ Do not let kids give up
 - ▶ Not just academics – extracurriculars, sports...

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WE ONLY GET
Stronger
WHEN IT GETS
difficult

byrdseed

“The brain is like a muscle. It needs a workout to get stronger.”

Posters & Lesson Plans
byrdseed.com

Discussion

- ▶ Do you remember a moment of crisis when something in school was genuinely hard for the first time?
- ▶ Do your students have grit? A growth mindset?

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School Life

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3 Factors in a Good School Fit

► Level

- Appropriate level of challenge, depth, complexity
- Enrichment vs. acceleration

► Pace

- Gifted learners need 1-3 repetitions
- Neurotypical learners need 6-8 repetitions (or more)

► Peers

- Academic peers to discuss, challenge each other, work together, etc.
- Optimal for social development

From Washington Association of Educators of the Talented and Gifted (WAETAG.NET)

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When the school doesn't fit...

- Constantly ask probing questions
 - Annoy teacher & other kids
- Trouble socializing with other kids
 - Lack of common interests
 - Advanced vocabulary
- Dumb themselves down to "fit in"
 - Consciously or subconsciously
 - Particularly gifted girls going "underground"
 - 3rd grade "regress to mean" phenomenon
- Become the class clown
 - Or the dreamer, the loner, or the victim...
 - Or the A+ student!

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Gifted programs help kids socially

"Gifted children have better social adjustment in classes with children like themselves.

The brighter the child, the lower his or her social self-concept is likely to be in the regular classroom.

Social self-concept improves when children are placed with true peers in special classes."

(Silverman, 2009)

Caveat: As long as you place kids early...

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Gifted programs help kids emotionally

It's not uncommon for a gifted kid to cry in class over a frustration

... in a typical classroom, this can be socially limiting

... in a gifted classroom, this is no big deal

Grouping gifted kids together helps normalize their emotional challenges, OEs, perfectionism

... in a typical classroom, they feel different, misunderstood, teased for being hyper-sensitive, differences can become pathologized

...in a gifted classroom, common experience creates a supportive, accepting environment

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Why not put one gifted kid in each classroom? Doesn't that help other kids?

- ▶ Gifted kids are NOT role models
- ▶ When other kids look at the natural abilities of gifted students, they only get discouraged that there's no way they could possibly "catch up."
- ▶ When gifted learners are removed from the classroom, other bright kids step up and become more meaningful classroom leaders.

(Delisle & Galbraith, 2003; Winebrenner and Devlin, 2001; Shunk, 1998)

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Won't kids get arrogant if they are put in a gifted program?

Actually, when kids are among true peers they are no longer the smartest kid in the room

- ▶ Humble
- ▶ Get challenged by peers
- ▶ Develop true self-confidence, self-reliance

Kids realized they are somehow different in preschool or kindergarten...they already know.

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Multipotentiality

- ▶ Especially gifted teens and young adults
- ▶ So many talents and potential, which path should I pursue?
 - ▶ Choosing classes, majors, careers, jobs...
- ▶ The desire to “be all that I can be”
- ▶ Stressful!

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Equity

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“Equity” does not mean giving the same education to every kid

- ▶ Different kids are in different places
- ▶ Every kid should learn something new at school every day
 - ▶ Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development
 - ▶ Not too easy, not too hard
- ▶ Not **MORE** work, **DIFFERENT** work
 - ▶ Not just more classwork on top of the “regular” stuff
 - ▶ Make sure the kid doesn't feel punished for being smart by giving them more work
 - ▶ Piles of homework is NOT the goal
 - ▶ Not a pressure cooker, just the right level to build grit

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The Real Equity Problem

SEE ME!

GIFTED CHILDREN IN POVERTY AND FROM MINORITY GROUPS ARE 2.5 TIMES LESS LIKELY TO BE IDENTIFIED FOR, AND IN, GIFTED AND TALENTED PROGRAMS IN SCHOOLS. CHILDREN DESERVE FAIR IDENTIFICATION STRATEGIES.



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Outdated, biased practices:

- ▶ Testing on Saturdays
- ▶ Parent & teacher nomination
- ▶ Requiring an online application, email address, ...
- ▶ Not providing tests in native language (i.e. Spanish)
- ▶ Strict score cutoffs without professional judgment
- ▶ Screening based on report card grades
- ▶ No transportation to programs
- ▶ Etc...

Peeling the Onion: Equity in HiCap (nwgca.org)

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Equity of Identification Problems

- ▶ Relying on parents, community members and/or teachers to refer students
- ▶ Using the words "Nominate" or "Application"
- ▶ Testing only in English
- ▶ Conducting HiCap testing on Saturdays or after school
- ▶ Using only group-administered cognitive & achievement tests
- ▶ Waiting until 2nd grade to "really" identify HiCap students
- ▶ Having hard cut-off scores, matrixes, or entrance criteria for HiCap programs
- ▶ Using high grades as HiCap entrance criteria
- ▶ Relying on appeals to catch mistakes in the identification process
- ▶ Once-a-year testing process, with no leniency for missing deadlines.
- ▶ Not providing practice tests to all students
- ▶ "Public notice" style of communication about the Highly Capable program
- ▶ Multi-disciplinary selection committees that do not reflect the district population, and do not have HiCap subject matter expertise
- ▶ Qualifying HiCap students based on available space
- ▶ ...

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Equity of Access Problems

- ▶ Being the only student of color, or one of very few girls in a HiCap classroom
- ▶ Districts that only provide in-class differentiation as a HiCap model
- ▶ Teachers with little or no training about the unique needs of HiCap students
- ▶ HiCap curriculum does not reflect the demographics of the student population
- ▶ Assuming that all HiCap students have access to technology after school for homework
- ▶ Assuming that all HiCap students have access to homework help & executive function support at home

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“We cannot close the achievement gap or address the overrepresentation in special education of our subgroups until we address their underrepresentation in highly capable programs.”

Dr. Donna Ford, Vanderbilt University

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Now What?

RESOURCES AND NEXT STEPS

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Who are we?

- ▶ NW Gifted Child Association
 - ▶ Parent education
 - ▶ Professional development
 - ▶ Regional events
 - ▶ Outreach!
- ▶ Donations fund our operating costs
- ▶ Tell your representatives that you care about gifted education (<http://app.leg.wa.gov/districtfinder/>)
 - ▶ WA Coalition for Gifted Education

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Bottom line...

**Mismatch with
the environment**

Smart is NOT Easy

Emotionally – Socially – Academically

Grit – Executive Function

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Why do we serve HiCap kids?

- ▶ They are a special needs population
- ▶ Without intervention they are at risk
- ▶ Nurturing the WHOLE CHILD
- ▶ GOAL: Functioning citizens in our community

- ▶ NOT:
 - ▶ To create eminent leaders (Einstein, Steve Jobs, ...)
 - ▶ To send more kids to Harvard, Stanford, MIT...
 - ▶ To nurture child prodigies
 - ▶ To increase our international math ranking
 - ▶ To improve the US economy

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Program Models: Pros/Cons

- 1) Full-time highly capable classroom
- 2) Acceleration: Full grade skip
- 3) Subject acceleration (“walk to math”)
- 4) Cluster Grouping with Differentiation
- 5) Pull-out or enrichment program
- 6) Afterschool enrichment program
- 7) Homeschooling

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Educators: What can you do?

- ▶ Early identification & services are important
 - ▶ Social, emotional & academic development
 - ▶ They can be tricky to identify
 - ▶ Particularly look for possible 2e kiddos
- ▶ Keep looking in secondary school
 - ▶ Learning disabilities often get diagnosed late
- ▶ Support full time classrooms for HiCap
 - ▶ Professional development for HiCap teaching strategies
- ▶ Learn more! (see handout)

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Discussion

- ▶ What are your top 3 takeaways from today's workshop?

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We will come to your town

- ▶ NWGCA Board Members are glad to come to your town to give a short form of this presentation, or another one on a topic that is relevant to your community
- ▶ We also do professional development for educators, administrators, and school boards
- ▶ Please contact info@nwgca.org for more info

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Upcoming Dates

Bring your colleagues, friends, neighbors! 😊

Redmond, Nov 1 at 6:30pm
Charlotte NC, NAGC, Nov 9-12
Bellevue, Nov 14 at 9am
Kenmore, Nov 15 at 7pm

Details: <http://www.nwgca.org/events.html>

Slides: www.nwgca.org/resources.html
(scroll to the bottom)

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Thank You 😊

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<http://www.nwgca.org>

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