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Teaching Twice-Exceptional Students in the IB

10:30-11:45

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Some Background

- A little about me and where I teach
- South Lakes High School: about 2300 students
 - 16-20% receive special education services
 - 47% White
 - 20% Hispanic
 - 14% Black
 - 13% Asian
 - 6% Other (Multiethnic)
 - 10% LEP
 - About 1/3 free and reduced price lunch



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Let's Define 2E (Twice-Exceptional)

Go to www.todaysmeet.com/IB2E.

Type your name and click JOIN.

Type your response and click SAY.



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A Definition of 2E

Gifted, but also negotiating a learning disorder, attention difficulties, or learning differences

<http://www.2enewsletter.com/>



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Myths about Gifted Students

<http://www.nagc.org/resources-publications/resources/myths-about-gifted-students>

- **Gifted students are so smart they can do fine on their own in school and don't need help.**



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Myths about Gifted Students

- **Gifted students are so smart they can do fine on their own in school and don't need help.**
 - “Gifted students need guidance from well-trained teachers who challenge and support them in order to fully develop their abilities. Many gifted students may be so far ahead of their same-age peers that they know more than half of the grade-level curriculum before the school year begins. Their resulting boredom and frustration can lead to low achievement, despondency, or unhealthy work habits. The role of the teacher is crucial for spotting and nurturing talents in school.”



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Myths about Gifted Students

- **Gifted students are good role models for other students and can provide a challenge for them in a regular classroom.**



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Myths about Gifted Students

Gifted students are good role models for other students and can provide a challenge for them in a regular classroom.

- “Average or below-average students do not look to the gifted students in the class as role models. Watching or relying on someone who is expected to succeed does little to increase a struggling student’s sense of self-confidence. Similarly, gifted students benefit from classroom interactions with peers at similar performance levels and become bored, frustrated, and unmotivated when placed in classrooms with low or average-ability students.”



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Myths about Gifted Students

- **This student can't be gifted; he/she earns terrible grades.**



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This student can't be gifted; he/she earns terrible grades.

- Underachievement describes a discrepancy between a student's performance and his actual ability. Gifted students may become bored or frustrated in an unchallenging classroom situation causing them to lose interest, learn bad study habits, or distrust the school environment. Other students may mask their abilities to try to fit in socially with their same-age peers and still others may have a learning disability that masks their giftedness.



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Myths about Gifted Students

- **Gifted students are happy, popular, and well adjusted in school.**



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Myths about Gifted Students

Gifted students are happy, popular, and well adjusted in school.

- “Many gifted students flourish in their community and school environment. However, some gifted children differ in terms of their emotional and moral intensity, sensitivity to expectations and feelings, perfectionism, and deep concerns about societal problems. Others do not share interests with their classmates, resulting in isolation or being labeled unfavorably as a “nerd.” Because of these difficulties, the school experience is one to be endured rather than celebrated.”



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Myths about Gifted Students

- **That child can't be gifted; he/she has a disability.**



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Myths about Gifted Students

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- Some gifted students also have learning or other disabilities. These “twice-exceptional” students often go undetected in regular classrooms because their disability and gifts mask each other, making them appear “average.” Other twice-exceptional students are identified as having a learning disability and as a result, are not considered for gifted services. In both cases, it is important to focus on the students’ abilities and allow them to have challenging curricula in addition to receiving help for their learning disability.



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Neuroscience!

Use it or lose it!

- When you learn a skill and don't practice it, your brain eventually prunes away those pathways and connections.
- When you do practice, those pathways become hardwired.
- Students experience a peak in gray matter and then pruning during adolescence.
- A study by the National Institute of Mental Health showed that students with higher IQs experienced faster pruning than those with lower IQs.
- <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/news/science-news/2006/cortex-matures-faster-in-youth-with-highest-iq.shtml>
- This may indicate “**an extended critical period for development of high-level cognitive circuits**” in middle school and high school—the brain prunes to become more efficient during the teen years.



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Strategies for Helping 2E Students Be Successful in the Classroom

Classroom strategies:

- Group homogeneously
- Differentiate instruction
- Remediate
- Teach critical and creative thinking
- Teach organizational skills
- Modify with technology



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Strategies for Helping 2E Students Be Successful in the Classroom

Group homogeneously:

- The opposite of what I learned in my Master's program!
- Students aren't challenged if they're always grouped heterogeneously.
- When bright students work with other bright students, they push each other and learn more.
- Sports analogy!
- Change it up! Vary your groupings but remember to sometimes group by readiness level.



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Strategies for Helping 2E Students Be Successful in the Classroom

Differentiate instruction:

- Based on level of readiness, interest, and learning profile.
- Provide multiple, meaningful activities or learning centers
- I love Think Tac Toes
- For more info, read anything by Carol Ann Tomlinson
- Or, check out *Strategies for Differentiating Instruction, 2E: Best Practices for the Classroom* by Julia Roberts (no, not *that* Julia Roberts)—this has great examples of activities in various content areas
- Julia Roberts has written other books specifically for gifted instruction and for elementary classrooms



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Remediate:

- Sometimes a learning disability makes “easy” skills very difficult for our 2E kids.
- Make time to remediate with these students.
- Sometimes teaching something in a different way makes it click for them.
- Reach out to colleagues for new ideas on how to teach a skill with which your students are struggling.



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Teach critical and creative thinking:

- Encapsulation (today's meet!)
- Mind mapping
- Visualization
- Questioning (Socratic seminar, debate)
- Point of view
- Analogies
- Decisions and outcomes
- Fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration
- Plus, minus, interesting (PMI)

- <http://www.fcps.edu/is/aap/level1.shtml>



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Teach organizational skills (ATL!):

- How can you help students be more organized?
- We need to intentionally teach organizational skills and assess them.
- Notebook checks
- Reminders in phones/devices/agendas
- Create studying plans or discuss strategies.
- Reflect after assessments: how did my planning and studying result in this outcome? How could I do better next time?
- Teach time management with calendars.



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Modify with Technology:

- Typing instead of handwriting
- Audio books can supplement reading—tell students to read along as they listen.
- Use a phone or ipod instead of a paper agenda.
- Record and play back lectures or notes.
- Allow students to record lessons, or record and post them.
- Allow students to photograph notes from the board.
- Record ideas or an essay and then type it up.
- Dictation software may help.
- Check with school support staff—you may own helpful software but not know about it.
- There are even fonts to help students with dyslexia!
- Ask students what they already use that they find helpful.



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Strategies for Helping 2E Students Be Successful in the Classroom

Support strategies:

- Build relationships.
- Reach out to support staff.
- Communicate.
- Be flexible.



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Strategies for Helping 2E Students Be Successful in the Classroom

Build Relationships:

- Talk to your students about non-school related hobbies and interests.
- Talk to students about strengths and how to capitalize on them.
- Talk to students about weaknesses and how to work around them and improve them.
- Check out *Neurodiversity in the Classroom* by Thomas Armstrong for information on working with students' strengths.
- Ask students to reflect on their learning and thinking.
- They are likelier to self advocate when they trust you.



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Strategies for Helping 2E Students Be Successful in the Classroom

Reach out to Support Staff:

- Others in the building are assigned to help these students.
- Speech/language pathologists, case managers, guidance counselors, school social workers, psychologists may have different perspectives or simple solutions.
- Let people observe the student in your class.
- Keep the conversation going all year with these colleagues
- Make suggestions and ask questions.



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Strategies for Helping 2E Students Be Successful in the Classroom

Communicate:

- Sometimes parents have solutions.
- Usually, parents are thankful for updates on behavior and progress.
- Often, calling parents yields missing information.
- Speak to the student about needs, wants, problems, and solutions.
- Sometimes a five-minute break solves a problem!
- Sometimes kids need to take a lap or be allowed to work in the hallway away from other students.
- Often, there is a simple solution.



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Strategies for Helping 2E Students Be Successful in the Classroom

Be flexible:

- A differentiated classroom can be noisy and messy.
- 2E kids have diverse needs.
- The more flexible you can be, the more successful your 2E kids may be in your IB classroom.



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Strategies for Helping 2E Students Be Successful in the Classroom

What strategies have you used successfully with your 2E students?

How can we support 2E students across the IB Continuum?



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Resources

<http://www.2enewsletter.com/>

<http://www.learnnc.org/lp/pages/6960>

<http://www.nea.org/assets/docs/twiceexceptional.pdf>

<http://www.sengifted.org/>

<http://www.nagc.org/>

<http://www.nclld.org/>

http://www.ascd.org/publications/newsletters/education_update/nov13/vol55/num11/Ten_Tips_for_Teaching_the_Twice-Exceptional_Student.aspx

- http://blogs.edweek.org/teachers/unwrapping_the_gifted/2010/04/di_spelling_myths_about_gifted_educ.html
- <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/the-teen-brain-still-under-construction/index.shtml>
- http://www.sparkcharter.org/uploads/2/1/7/9/21793226/brain_based_learning--willis.pdf
- <http://www.apa.org/education/k12/brain-function.aspx?item=2>