

Copyright

by

Christine Clark

December, 2011

TALENT DEVELOPMENT AND TWICE
EXCEPTIONAL LEARNERS: THE MONARCH
SCHOOL

A Thesis Presented to the
Faculty of the College of Education
University of Houston

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Education

by

Christine Clark

December, 2011

TALENT DEVELOPMENT AND TWICE
EXCEPTIONAL LEARNERS:
THE MONARCH SCHOOL

An Abstract of a
Thesis Presented to the
Faculty of the College of Education
University of Houston

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Education

by

Christine Clark

December, 2011

Clark, Christine. "Talent Development and Twice Exceptional Learners: The Monarch School." Unpublished Master of Education Thesis, University of Houston, December, 2011.

ABSTRACT

This project was undertaken in order to demonstrate how talent can be developed in twice exceptional learners, individuals who dually possess high abilities and learning difficulties. As a result of interviewing academics, learners, twice exceptional learners themselves, their parents, and individuals working in various art-related institutions, it was decided to concentrate on The Monarch School, a school dedicated to students with neurological differences. The Monarch School's population employs a systematic approach to teaching individuals to develop strategies to understand their ownership of self-regulation, relationship development, executive functioning, and academic competence, thus setting the stage for "liberating" the potential talent of individuals. Working with the staff and students, the researcher filmed a wide variety of activities and classes in the school, reviewed the footage obtained, edited the material, and scripted a voice-over in order to create a documentary that demonstrated this systematic approach to talent development.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	...Page
ABSTRACT	v
I. INTRODUCTION	1
Talent	2
The Monarch School.....	4
Neurological Differences	6
Instruction and Curriculum	7
II. THE FOUR CORE GOALS	10
Relationship Development.....	12
Academic Competence	14
Self-Awareness / Self Regulation	17
Executive Functioning	18
III. ATTRIBUTION.....	20
IV. CONCLUSIONS.....	23
V. THE FILMING PROCESS	26
VI. SUMMARY.....	28
REFERENCES	29

I. INTRODUCTION

The essence of the butterfly effect is taking our current decisions or actions, and realizing the massive role they can play in determining the outcome of our lives and of others. We have no idea what our impact may have on others, but taking action may begin a personal revolution – affecting more than just ourselves. The secret is in recognizing the tools to cultivate change and knowing how to use them.

Individuals with neurological differences lack the implicit executive functioning present in neurotypical individuals. Working memory, attention, inhibition, flexibility, abilities to multitask, and a plethora of other cognitive skills are delayed or impaired. Without explicit executive functioning instruction provided to individuals with neurological differences, individual talent may not be discovered. A cognitive toolkit is the key to unlocking the true potential of these individuals.

Twice exceptional individuals are individuals who dually possess high abilities and learning difficulties. “While the twice-exceptional population can be described as a heterogeneous group of students, Mills and Brody (1999) pointed to the following three characteristics as indicators of the twice exceptional student: (a) evidence of an outstanding talent or ability, (b) evidence of a discrepancy between expected and actual achievement, and (c) evidence of a processing deficit” (Morrison & Riza, 2007, p.58). Helping twice exceptional individuals develop strategies to understand their ownership of self-regulation, relationship development, executive functioning, and academic

competence is to liberate individual selves and potential talent. “(Students) require a challenging curriculum that considers unique duality that each student represents – a strange mix of advanced abilities and academic limitations. Designing these kinds of learning experiences depends on creating dual differentiation (Neu, 1996). The term (twice exceptional) refers to meeting the needs of students who exhibit two contradictory sets of learning characteristics by creating a balance between nurturing strengths and compensating for learning deficits” (Baum, Cooper, & Neu, 2001, p.481).

TALENT

Talent is harvesting the essence of one’s own totality through communication of the human experience. According to A Joint Statement of Core Beliefs and Goals from the National Association for Gifted Children, The Association for the Gifted, and The Council for Exceptional Children (1998), “talent comes in many forms and may be manifested in multiple domains; talents may be developed over a period of time and may manifest themselves at different stages in a child’s development; the range of aptitudes, achievements, and potential among children suggests a need for varied educational experiences designed so that every child in the classroom is actively engaged in respectful, challenging, and meaningful learning; and it is the responsibility of educators to design educational experiences to maximize the development of talents in all children.” To be truly creative one must know his or her own self in more ways than one. He or she must have a need to express his or her uniqueness and core individuality in thought, feeling or action. In the article *The Alphabet Children: GT, ADHD & More*,

Baum and Olenchak (2002, p.78) cite that “Despite the large number of publications in education and psychology regarding attention problems, few have addressed the coincidence of ADHD with giftedness and creativity. Adding to the predicament, the lack of precise definitions of ADHD, giftedness, creativity, leaning disabilities (LDs), and numerous other human conditions serve to muddy the waters educationally (Cramond, 1994; Jordan, 1992; Piechowski, 1991, 1997). “According to Corbett, Wilson & Morse (2002), ‘Arts integration enables students to be active, to experience things directly, and to express themselves in ways best suited to the students.’ A goal of arts integration is to use the arts so that students can have direct experience, can become involved in making decisions about their learning, and can become engaged in lessons that motivate them” (Mason, & Steedly, 2006, p.36). “Learning in and through the arts is an activity that is intimately intertwined with social, academic, and cognitive growth. Efforts to evaluate the degree to which learning occurs need to reflect that complexity” (Mason & Steedly, 2006, p.42). Professional educators at The Monarch School work directly with therapists, coaches, and the Art Director to integrate an academic dialog with students that allows students to have hands-on, relative interaction with academic concepts.

Individual expression within the context of community is the fundamental framework that talent is built upon. Unlocking our innermost selves is necessary for a meaningful and well-balanced life. The key to this wholeness is a competence and love for knowledge, knowing one’s inner mechanics that make one tick when observing

personal thought feeling and action; knowing how one's expressed thoughts, feelings and actions affect others, and an awareness of the necessary steps needed to achieve desired results in a plethora of ways throughout life.

THE MONARCH SCHOOL

The Monarch School, located in Houston, Texas, is a therapeutic day school dedicated to students with neurological differences. According to Jerome Bruner, a developmental psychologist, "The development of the human intellectual functioning from infancy to such perfection as it may reach is shaped by a series of technological advances in the use of the mind" (p.1). These technological advances depend on increasing language facility and exposure to systematic instruction (Bruner, 1966). As children develop, their actions are constrained less by immediate stimuli. Cognitive processes (thoughts and beliefs) mediate the relationship between stimulus and response so that learners can maintain the same response in a changing environment or perform different responses in the same environment, depending on what they consider adaptive" (Schunk, 2008, p.342). The Monarch School demonstrates that objective-based education may be successful when students are given a toolset of the four core goals (relationship development skills, academic competence, self regulation and executive functioning) to use in a myriad of situations throughout life. All academic courses taught at The Monarch School include art and creativity. The learning program is deeply interwoven in creativity to encourage students to not only think for themselves but to think outside the box.

The Monarch School places emphasis on the idea that learning must occur in the context of human relationship. Many a time the part of us that sees ourselves as something separate makes us feel weak and isolated. In the zone of union and community we may grow into our unique and individual design, accentuated by our personal talents and individual selves.

According to Baum, Cooper, and Neu (2001, p.477), “Gifted learners frequently neglected in our nation’s schools are those with concomitant learning and attention disabilities. Because they exhibit learning problems due to physical, cognitive, or behavioral deficits, these students seldom achieve at the level of which they are capable.” Unlike the majority of the nation’s schools, The Monarch School provides students mental health assessments, treatment plans, adaptable academic curricula, and the explicit teaching of executive functions to propel students forward.

NEUROLOGICAL DIFFERENCES

Neurological patterns can be used to one’s advantage when these patterns are noticed in a place of neutrality. The majority of the twice exceptional learners attending the Monarch School fall under the diagnostic label of autistic spectrum disorders (62%), followed by ADHD (40%), anxiety disorders (21%), and mood disorders (13%).

Heward (2006, p.264) defines autism as “a neurobehavioral syndrome marked by qualitative impairments of social interaction; communication; and restricted, repetitive, and stereotyped patterns of behavior.” The National Research Council (2001) states

“there is no single behavior that is always typical of autism and no behavior that would automatically exclude an individual child from a diagnosis of autism” (Heward, 2006, p.11). The largest percentage of students attending The Monarch School fall in the autistic spectrum.

Regarding The Monarch School’s 40% of the population diagnosed with ADHD, Jack Golberg reviewed Russell A. Barkley’s 1997 book entitled, *ADHD and the Nature of Self-control*. Goldberg found that “Barkley posits the core problem in ADHD to be that of a deficit in the thinking of contemporary researchers. He goes beyond current thinking by elaborating that the deficient inhibitory system in a child with ADHD manifests in three ways. Compared to a normal child, he/she is less able to stop a dominant, habitual response (a proponent response) from emerging even if he/she knows that his/her interest is much better served by suppressing it. Secondly, he/she is less capable of stopping an ongoing response; and finally, he/she is not able to deal as well with interference which would disrupt ongoing mental processing” (Goldberg, 1997, p.90). Goldberg further concluded that “Barkley is at his most innovative in arguing that the inherited, brain based deficit in behavioral inhibition must impede the development in children, of four executive functions which are critical for becoming self-regulated – non-verbal working memory, internalization of speech, self-regulation of arousal and affect, and reconstitution (the capacity to manipulate verbal and non-verbal mental representations). Deficits in these executive functions are secondary to the behavioral inhibition deficit and they vary in degree amongst affected individuals. The claim that

there are these four self-regulatory executive functions derives from an analysis of earlier theories about such functions and from factor analyses of neuropsychological tests of frontal lobe functions. The explicit elaboration of the sub-functions of the four is based on logical analyses of capacities required for self-regulation whose development could be put at risk by a deficit in behavioral inhibition” (Goldberg, 1997, p.90). The Monarch School seeks to fill the ADHD deficit in behavioral inhibition experienced by 40% of its student population by applying the quadrant of The Monarch School’s four core goals to the instruction given by professional educators and the aptitude of cognitive life skills learned by students.

According to the American Psychiatric Association (2002), anxiety disorders “are maladaptive emotional states or behaviors caused by excessive and often irrational fears and worries, sometimes lasting six months or more”. The APA defines mood disorders as the characterization of “impaired functioning due to episodes of abnormally depressed or elevated emotional states” (p.513).

INSTRUCTION & CURRICULUM

Curriculum resources are available for professional educators of twice exceptional learners. In the book review of *Smart Kids with Learning Difficulties: Overcoming Obstacles and Realizing Potential*, Weinfeld et al discuss that “Any of these conditions (neurological differences) can complicate the identification of a child as gifted. The book not only offers tools to assist planning instruction but also includes a host of guides for

educators to use in planning instruction that will serve both the challenges and talents of these students. It includes advice for parents on how to ensure that school officials and teachers are modifying the curriculum and learning environment to accommodate learning disabilities while developing the strengths of gifted students. Finally, it provides information for students about understanding and overcoming their own learning challenges” (p.398), which is interesting through the lens of theorist Jean Piaget, whose view of learning difficulties as the normal reaction of normal children to being given sensory function tasks for which they are not developmentally ready. In Baum, Cooper, & Neu’s 2001 study, it was found that “Switching the focus away from these problematic areas for a time empowered the students to use other intelligences to solve problems and create products. As a result, their successes on tasks more complex than those typically used in remedial lessons boosted the students’ self-efficacy and perception of their abilities as learners. In other words, accommodating the needs the students had as gifted learners helped them to compensate for their learning difficulties” (p.480).

The Monarch School provides a neutral environment – neutral enough for learners (varying in age from four years to twenty-eight years old) to be observers of their patterns. The connections available through the Monarch School’s individually specific program in a unified community nourish the individuals to be twice exceptional, talented members of society. According to Reeve, Jang, Carrell Jeon, and Barch (2004, p.148), “In general, autonomy-supportive teachers”, facilitate, whereas controlling teachers interfere with, the congruence between students’ self-determined inner motives and their

classroom activity. Autonomy-supportive teachers facilitate this congruence by identifying and nurturing students' needs, interests, and preferences and by creating classroom opportunities for students to have these internal motives in their classroom activity". Such was the case found with the educators and administrators of The Monarch School.

Professional educators' instructional practices influence the way students learn and retain information. Actively engaging instruction and materials will motivate students' interest in subject matter. Tasks should be diverse and exhibit personal relevance for students. The Monarch School's curriculum is mastery goal oriented. Actively engaging instruction and materials motivate students' interest in subject matter, heightening students' self-efficacy and unlocking individual talent. Utility value is attached to each task. For example, the importance of math is explained and understood by a student whose interests lie in the fine arts. Math is understood as being a necessary skill for creating a successful piece of art.

Developed curriculum permits students to take on leadership roles to increase cognitive task engagements. Students are taught that they are responsible for their own behaviors by professional educators who provide students situations dependent on choice, and encouraging student motivation. Embracing student involvement in the decision making process demonstrates the importance of individuality.

Recognition in the form of feedback is most effective in the practices and policies of a scholastic setting. Feedback permits students the opportunity to be successful. Performance feedback addressing the accuracy of the learner's work, motivational feedback that is personally tailored to encourage a learner's individual competence and feedback related to a learner's effort encourage self-efficacy and motivation within a student. Recognition practices and policies in an academic setting permit students the opportunity to be successful.

Instruction at The Monarch School is learner centered. The grouping of learners is structured cooperatively in effort to give learners an opportunity to share success. An array of interest, achievements and motivation exist within a group to encourage students to learn from one another. Not only this, but grouping is continuously varied, giving students the opportunity to work consistently with different individuals. By doing so, students' beliefs and judgments about their capabilities to perform a task successfully are valued for their individual contributions as well as group strengths and weaknesses. Grouping sends messages to students about the nature of ability. It also encourages peer interaction and socialization – two important aspects needed in an individual's integrated development.

II. FOUR CORE GOALS

A critical role of the learner is to accept responsibility for his or her own progress within The Monarch School's four core goal framework. Four research-based areas

determine the progress of each student: ownership of academic competence, ownership of relation development, ownership of self-regulation/self-awareness, and ownership of executive functions. Theorist Jean Piaget (1896-1980) believed cognitive development depends on four factors: biological maturation, experience with the physical environment, experience with the social environment, and equilibrium or adaption between cognitive structures and the environment” (Schunk, 2008, p.337). Referencing Piaget’s (1963) model of developmental stages, these four core goals developed by The Monarch School honor Dr. Russell Barkley’s (1997) notion describing the shift from external controls for students to internal controls. The Monarch School’s four core goals are similar to Wilber, Patten, Leonard & Morelli’s AQAL, or “All Quadrants, All Levels” conceptual map of four quadrants: “the individual interior (i.e. your thoughts, feelings, intentions an psychology), the (your) collective interior (i.e., your relationships, culture, and shared meaning), the (your) individual exterior (i.e., your physical body and behaviors), and the (your) collective exterior (i.e., your environment and social structures and systems)”. (Wilber, Patten, Leonard, & Morelli, 2008, p.28) According to the research by Ryan and Deci (2000, p.76), ”Context supportive of autonomy, competence, and relatedness were found to foster greater internalization and integration than context that thwart satisfaction of these needs.” The Monarch School’s four core goals were created with this intent.

The four core goal areas of The Monarch School are activated at four student levels: the Novice level (persons are to understand what is asked of them), the

Apprentice level (persons are to realize how to execute the task at hand), the Challenger level (persons take ownership of their work and communal execution), and the Voyager level (persons apply learned knowledge to self-structure).

RELATIONSHIP DEVELOPMENT

The Monarch School believes learning must occur in the context of human relationship. Interestingly, Baum, Cooper and Neu (2001, p.485) cite “A common complaint of both gifted and learning-disabled students is their lack of social skills (Whitmore, 1980). The underlying reasons for this deficit may differ from student to student. The learning-disabled student may miss social cues that inform behavior and fail to develop the skills of socialization as a result (Adelman & Taylor, 1986; Taylor, 1989). In addition, their lack of confidence in their own academic abilities often prompts them to act out to hide their weaknesses (Olenchak, 1994; Tannenbaum & Baldwin, 1983)”. Socialization is an important area of human development. Relationship development is the idea of self relationship versus relationship with others, known as the “I / We” relationship. According to Wilber, Petten, Leonard & Morelli, the “I / We” relationship between an individual interior and a collective interior is the relationship between one’s own consciousness and shared understanding with others. Synchronization of attraction and relation to rejection issues is addressed in this part of development. Balanced cooperation and equitable participation occurs. “It is important to understand that socialization involves having a basis for relating to others. An individual needs to feel that he or she has something to contribute to a relationship and has a need or motivation

to relate (Adelman, & Taylor, 1986; Silverman, 1989). These students first, however, must have the opportunity to interact with peers with similar strengths and interests. Working together on a mutually decided goal brings about teamwork and sharing. This teamwork implies that each member of the team has something valuable to offer (Gentry & Neu, 1998; Maslow, 1962) to the team's success" (Baum, Cooper and Neu, 2001, p.485).

In relationship development flows of communication are maintained; turn taking and joy sharing occur; curiosity, social referencing and shared attention occur. Relationship development for an Apprentice means entering and exiting conversations and activities in a coordinated fashion; making contributions to small group activities; sharing interests, objects and opinions; remaining a part of group activities for the entirety of their duration; successfully working with others to complete projects; initiating and accepting initiation from others to participate in social events; and living within the rules for competitive and non-competitive games and play.

Relationship development at The Monarch School is marked by students' humor, playfulness, forgiveness and mercy, fairness, equity, justice, bravery, valor, honesty, authenticity, goodness, social intelligence, love, kindness, generosity, citizenship, teamwork, loyalty, and leadership. Principles of the Developmental-Individual Based-Relationship model developed by Greenspan and Weider (1997) has been incorporated into the program, incorporating the social, emotional and intellectual capacities of the

student rather than focusing on isolated behaviors. It is inclusive. At the Apprentice level, modeling is used by academic instructors with students narrating actions as they occur making the steps to target achievement tangible for students. At the Challenger level, this means practicing and contributing feedback more than destructive criticism; soliciting and contributing appreciation for others when involved in group efforts; soliciting and incorporating the thoughts and feelings of others into the group action; practicing mutual ownership of relationships, neither submitting nor dominating; accepting and living within a mediated settlement of conflict and communication breakdown.

ACADEMIC COMPETENCE

Academic competence is about sustaining mental energy. Communication of understanding is expanded, making space to work toward academic standards and overcoming learning obstacles. Individuals decide to represent their ideas in work. New information revealed to students of The Monarch School is intertwined with their existing ways of thinking, creating both qualitative and quantitative accumulation of knowledge while simultaneously expanding learning structures.

Interest is the seed for talent development. Interest refers to a person's willful engagement in an activity which may encourage motivation and learning. It is the esteem an individual holds for an object, activity, or task. It is a person-object relation, characterized by the value of commitment and positive emotional valences (e.g. Krapp,

Hidi & Renniger, 1992; Prenzel, 1988; Prenzel, Krapp & H. Schiefele, 1986; U. Schiefele, 1992, 1996). If the individual does not value a task, does not view the task as being personally important or having any utility value, he or she may not express interest. Persons expressing interest self-intentionally act on personal intrinsic value for activities which is usually related to a positive emotional feeling. “A substantial body of research on values and academic behaviors suggests that when students value a learning activity in terms of high task value, utility value, interest value, attainment value, instrumental value, future goals, future consequences, future time perspective, and/or intrinsic goals, they become increasingly likely to actively engage in that topic, to persist in that topic over time, to achieve highly, to show relatively sophisticated self-regulation, and to understand what they are trying to learn (DeVolder & Lens, 1982; Husman & Lens, 1999; Miller & Brickman, 2004; Miller, Greene, Montalvo, Ravindran, & Nichols, 1996; Shell & Husman, 2001; Vansteenkiste, Simons, Lens, Soenens, & Matos, 2005; Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). All these studies support the general conclusion that students tend to invest more effort and achieve more when a lesson is perceived to have personal importance or relevance” (Jang, 2008, p.798). Affect, knowledge and value impact one’s interest. “To facilitate students’ motivation, rationales need to produce two effects: Students need to see the importance and personal utility within the task, and students need to perceive high autonomy, while working on that task.” (Jang, 2008, p.808). It is not necessarily based on experience, but because of its close relation to emotions and affect, it is one of the broader theories defined.

Many times emerging individual interest is marked by an individual's positive personal feelings about a task that lead the individual to exceed necessary or required involvement in the task. Such a person becomes resourceful in the subject area or topic, and accredits more value for the content. Talent may emerge in this stage in which the content becomes an opportunity for the individual, but without proper reinforcement the value may be lost. External support is important for many individuals experiencing emerging individual interest. It is a relatively enduring predisposition to reengage in particular contents over time (Hidi & Renniger, 2006). Such external support is provided to students of The Monarch School.

Intrinsic learning occurs when educators and administrators are focused on the student as an individual, and challenge the student to explore the truth of personal character, abilities, values and commitments in an academic setting. "As Ainley (1998) argued, general interest in learning represents a characteristic way of approaching novel, uncertain, or puzzling phenomena with the goal or purpose of understanding those phenomena. This type of interest may involve both seeking new knowledge and expanding existing knowledge" (Ainley, Hidi, & Berndorff, 2002, p.546). Academic competence at The Monarch School is marked by a student's citizenship, teamwork, loyalty, leadership, perspective, wisdom, appreciation of beauty and excellence, curiosity, interest in the world, love of learning, industry, diligence, and perseverance.

At the Apprentice Level, this means accepting the practice problem sets assigned by teachers; developing a hands on repertoire of skills, experience, and talents; working towards sentence-like descriptions and sequences of all aspects of learning; incorporating teacher methods of establishing, practicing and preserving learning; learning established routines for transmission of learning through literacy; representing learning and finished products; and working according to task schedules developed by teachers. It is crucial that the professional educators at The Monarch School include individual growth and effort in student evaluation. Teachers and administrators encourage self-efficacy and simultaneously contribute to the attainment value of student performance by including this type of evaluation based on the four researched-based areas. Accurate student feedback in each area is most important.

With regard to academic competence, this area of learning for a Challenger student means regularly achieving academic progress and task completion as guided by teachers; using academic problem solving to solve real life problems; taking responsibility for accurate communication of learning status with others; working towards paragraph-like integrated sequences of learning; and working at symbolic, inferential, conceptual, and deductive levels to interpret meaning.

SELF REGULATION / SELF AWARENESS

Self-regulation and awareness start within. When an individual shares mind, emotion and action with others within the framework of a balanced, realistic and

fundamentally healthy approach to life, he or she is practicing self-regulation and self-awareness. Self-control, self-regulation, honesty, authenticity, genuineness, modesty, humility, capacity to love and be loved, caution, prudence, discretion, spirituality, faith, hope, optimism, future-mindedness, zest, enthusiasm, energy and gratitude mark a Monarch student's abilities to self-regulate.

Self-regulation for an Apprentice means controlling behaviors to conform to the needs of the school, home or community; accepting guidance to expand self-regulatory competence; using toolkit strategies to maintain self-regulatory balance; making accurate self evaluations on daily tracking with teacher assistance; incorporating breaks and times for system restoration into rhythms; participating in the instruction of routines that sustain focus and energy through activity; and applying strategies that soothe and calm when experiencing stressful or joyful situations.

Self-regulation for a Challenger means exercising mindful attunement of self with others and environment; inhibiting self from over or under reacting to stressful and joyful situations; modifying behaviors and actions in situations that prove troublesome; regaining self control following a stressful and joyful incident with minimal intervention; and modulating effect in multiple environments in a nonintrusive manner. Sensory regulation and motor coordination, emotional modulation, shifting and focus of thoughts and actions, inhibition and creating meaning while finding relevance all define self-awareness.

EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING

Executive functioning is an individual's consistent planning and organizing, both mentally and physically. Working memory and flexible sequencing occur and tasks are managed to completion. Interest, originality, perseverance, critical thinking, and optimism towards the future mark this part of self-development. Individuals take initiation in their own lives out of the balance of these attributes, activating and generating their lives and futures. Appreciation of beauty and excellence, curiosity, interest in the world, love of learning, hope, optimism, future mindedness, judgment, critical thinking and open-mindedness, creativity, ingenuity, originality, industry, diligence and perseverance mark executive functioning at The Monarch School.

Executive functioning for an Apprentice means following directions offered by teachers to solve problems; participating in review and preview sessions scheduled by teachers; operating with a system of visual supports that regulate tasks, schedules and routines; anticipating and maintaining teacher prescribed daily proofing and tracking; and organizing materials when directed to do so.

Executive functioning for a Challenger means fluidly shifting to alternate activities when requested to do so; referencing and using acquired sets of tools and strategies rather than depending on others; sifting plans, expectations, and actions in response to changing realities; incorporating the efforts of others into personal learning

and activities; selecting tracking objectives – previewing them and reviewing them on a daily basis; adopting organizational strategies and accommodations suited to individual learning needs; completing assignments outside of the supervision of the assigner; and executing plans for time and task management on projects and assignments.

III. ATTRIBUTION

Attribution theory is founded on the assumption that individuals are rational beings who make conscious decisions in an effort to understand the environment in which they live. Not only do individuals search for a cognitive understanding of their surroundings, but they also seek to understand the reasoning behind the decisions they make. This is of importance to Monarch School educators and administrators when working with the students of the school. Mindful of the neurological differences of each student, faculty emphasizes the importance of student understanding of this theory for individuals' lives on an intrapersonal level in which self-directed thoughts and emotions are partially accountable for a situation's less desirable results. For instance, if a child is having conflict with a classmate in a group setting, he or she is directed by the professional educator to examine his or her self-focus in relation to the occurring conflict. Once a cause has been selected, the properties of the cause are examined. The quest to understand the motivational consequences of casual beliefs is the core of an attributional approach to motivation.

Three distinct and important factors that would likely impact the attribution process are consensus, consistency and distinctiveness. These three factors serve as cues to the individual, signaling what type of attribution they are likely to make. Consensus, consistency and distinctiveness are not always used in equal measures when making attributions. Casual rules and schemas, attributional biases, prior knowledge and individual differences also impact an individual's attribution process. Schemas are general beliefs used in unexpected situations (especially surprising occasions) by individuals that guide their inferences. For instance if a student believes he or she has low creative fine art abilities, he or she may develop a compensatory schema in which he or she believes that higher levels of effort will compensate for lower abilities. Ability and effort are classified as internal causes to the individual. Individuals who believe that outcomes are outside of their control, due to luck or the involvement of others, have an external locus of control. Emotions such as pride, shame and guilt result from attributions and effect achievement behavior. Task success usually results in an individual experience and heightened sensation of pride and achievement. Through the use of the attribution process students will more effectively be able to understand in greater detail the causes of events, the impact of personal motivations, affects, and behaviors, and be able to relate to future expectations with results.

Dr. Neil Sarahan, Challenger Program Director of The Monarch School, explains (enclosed video, 2011) in reference to a triad of students working together:

What we are witnessing is three students who are highly compulsive, highly confused and distractible, trying to participate in an experiment of a lesson in self-awareness, a lesson in how to know themselves, and their success at sitting at this table is different than their success doing this maybe two years ago or even two months ago. Two months ago they could not have had this meeting in a relatively public space. We couldn't have invited them to balance this representing drawing done showing "Here's what I did!" They would not have been able to balance this challenge then, and they are actually sharing the dialogue with one another!

We are seeing here a dialogue in "what did you do" that is about self-awareness that helps a student keep track of what they are doing about their personal self-awareness. This is a remarkable moment of a triad – using the colors, using the drawing, using themselves socially. At the same time we are witnessing this, we can look to the background to see a teacher who is having a one-on-one conference with a student about how to engage and attaching, and then she comes to an awareness of her learning disabilities. She is a teenager. There is a cost and a benefit to self-awareness, right? It is an acceptance of your totality.

So here we have a student that is saying I wish it wasn't as hard for me as it is for someone else. And in this conference is a teacher who knows how important that dialogue is relative to individual learning. They don't just press on, they stop, pause and have a dialogue about how important it is, why it is that this is so difficult for the student to fully connect with the material at hand. If you nest all of that dialogue into the class itself, then you get closer to what the Monarch should be – able to help people realize this is stuff kids work on in every class they are going in. If you provide the resources and dialogue right there in that class, and if you practice how you do that for

an hour and a half a day - this self-awareness exercise - you can actually get a sense of calm. You can take it on. You can breathe. You could not feel so overwhelmed by it and you can have, we think, more courage to now do. Check here [Dr. Neil points back to the common area table] and see what's happening. [Dr. Neil explains that person is saying, "Ok!"] I did this exercise in self-awareness but I did it for the purpose of expanding my abilities as a learner. And to see that person, instead of throwing the book in the trash, instead of fighting it...this moment that happens here is a really cool way—of saying, "let's talk about how I did". And this record becomes a fiber in class after class after class. It is obvious this moment, that is more difficult for one person, is a scarier concept for one person in one script than it is for two and a half years at Monarch, one and a half years at Monarch, three months at Monarch.

I am enormously proud. This person has enough structural support to stay in this moment. It's a hard thing to ask adults to be self-aware, to be self referential, to be vulnerable about strengths and challenges, and to take it on, on a daily basis, and do the work that is necessary to come out the other side, while at the same time making credible academic progress. That's remarkable. I am amazed at the courage of the kids to keep doing that double tracking.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

Talent development is marked by peak experiences. Peak experiences are valuable moments when an individual experiences insight and the feeling that something important has happened. Usually the individual loses track of time and awareness of his or her self. The moments may be characterized by a sense of intense joy and a many-sided awareness of the object or idea which brought on the given peak experience. A peak experience is a self-validating moment which serves as an end in itself. Usually the individual experiences a feeling of integrated wholeness. Positive attributes include an

increased sense of creativity, functioning, and a feeling of being closer to actualizing individual human potential. Using peak experiences in the classroom envelops the humanistic philosophy of education in which the student experiences cognitive and personal growth simultaneously. In an open educational setting which is flexible for students to have peak experiences, excitement and enthusiasm will be heightened in the classroom. Such is the case in The Monarch School. Allowing for peak experiences will give substance and direction to students, and will serve as personal and professional motivators throughout their lives.

“The National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) (1998) developed a position paper, ‘Students with Concomitant Gifts and Learning Disabilities.’ This paper stresses the need to address both the gift and disability of these special youngsters. Due to a specific learning disability, an increasing number of students are not achieving up to their potential despite the fact that they demonstrate high ability or gifted behavior. These students exhibit characteristics of both exceptionalities; giftedness and learning disabilities. Their gifted behaviors often include keen interests, high levels of creativity, superior abilities in abstract thinking, and problem-solving prowess. Similar to their peers with learning disabilities, they frequently display problems in one or more of the following: reading, writing, mathematics, memory, organization, or sustaining attention. Because of their dual set of seemingly contradictory characteristics, gifted learning-disabled students may develop feelings of depression and inadequacy and consequently may demonstrate acting-out behaviors to disguise their feeling of low self-esteem and diminished academic self-efficacy. Students who have both gifts and learning disabilities require a dually differentiated program: one that nurtures their gifts and talents while accommodating for learning

weaknesses. Being dually classified is often key to students' receiving appropriate services. A comprehensive program will include: provisions for the identification and the development of talent; a learning environment that values diversity and individual talents in all domains; educational support that develops compensatory strategies including the appropriate use of technology; and school-based counseling to enhance students' ability to cope with their mix of talents and disabilities. Without appropriate identification and services, the gifts of these students may never be developed. (NAGC, 1998)" (Baum, Cooper, Neu, 2001, p.477-8).

Concentration should be placed on how children acquire knowledge and moral values. "To be successful, school reform efforts need to be coordinated, coherent and comprehensive rather than focused on one or two dimensions of the school environment" (Schunk, Pintrich & Meece, 2008, p.372). Humans adapt to the world, to the environment, through intelligence. It is a biological necessity for humans to adapt. Life is a process and education is a critical part of development. "Certainly, all children would benefit if curriculum and instruction were tailored to their strengths and individual talents. As Darling-Hammond (1996) argues, what is needed is an education that seeks competence as well as community, that enables all people to find and act on who they are; what their passions, gifts, and talents may be; what they care about; and how they want to make a contribution to each other and the world (p.5)" (Baum, Cooper, Neu, 2001, p.489). To change one's structure of thinking and reasoning, one must construct a new mental picture as a form of accommodation to the environment. Accommodation takes place with the mechanisms of: an individual's interaction with the physical environment, and an individual's interaction with the reasoning of others, an individual

establishing a new equilibrium at a more advanced and adaptive level, and at the maturation of awareness. “If we truly want every child to maximize his or her potential – which includes talent in areas not always addressed at their particular grade level in school – we must create a learning environment conducive to success, maintain high expectations, and instill high hopes in each learner to become an expert in his or her area of talent” (Baum, Cooper, Neu, 2001, p.489). It must be understood there is no one-size-fits all.

What is most universal is most personal. Our fates lie in how we connect. Our talent lies in our unique abilities of expression. At The Monarch School, differences that separate individuals from community are distilled; all that is left is intrigue. Students that come into unity with The Monarch School discover that there is always something new waiting to be revealed, that being conscious of themselves and their environment accelerates the learning process, and this type of learning can only stem from our individual and unique natures.

V. THE FILMING PROCESS

Enclosed is the documentary thesis video of The Monarch School at work, which shows how the concepts explained in this thesis supplement manifest themselves into action within the school environment. In order to create the enclosed documentary video, over forty hours of film were captured at The Monarch School by the author, documenting the learners and administrators engaging in activities designed to develop

creativity. After reviewing the footage obtained, video clips of the material captured were chosen by the author for best demonstrative content to illustrate the connections instilled at The Monarch School between talent development and twice exceptional learners. There was no consultation with The Monarch School and the author in the development of the enclosed video.

Because of the neurological differences of The Monarch School population, a small, semi-pro Sanyo camera was purchased to shoot the footage obtained. The captured video footage was logged for visual and verbal content. Those written logs became the skeleton structure of the video. Each clip that entered the timeline was translated into the correct codec for the video software for Final Cut Pro from the author's video camera, allowing the software to read the video captured by the camera. This process took four minutes to four hours depending on the size of the video clip. The author then took the footage and placed it in a Final Cut Pro timeline. All clips were rendered and edited to create the video by the author.

After creating a rough timeline, the author then scripted the voice over, using her voice, to lay into the timeline narrating the video. The picture had to be re-finessed so that picture matched the demonstrative images. The entire editing process took six months.

VI. SUMMARY

The video and narrative have been created by Christine Clark in order to present a successful functioning model of the development of talent in twice exceptional learners who have not experienced success in other educational settings. This video is important for the world of educational programming. There is not enough educational programming that explains what this population experiences, nor is what is available necessarily accessible by the general public. This concise demonstration of the model illustrated at The Monarch School to instill talent development in twice exceptional learners serves perspective parents to not only understand The Monarch School's methods in video form, but to inform all educators and parents of the tools and methods needed to engage this population. "Teaching and learning are reciprocal, not complementary; they represent two sides of the same coin, not two parts of a fitted puzzle." (Lieberman, 2001, p.43) Regarding talent development in twice exceptional learners, Krochak and Goldstein (2001, p.44) remind us that, "Despite Einstein's brilliance in visual and spatial reasoning and problem-solving, researcher Bernard M. Patter wrote, as a schoolboy he had behavioral problems, was a rotten speller, and had trouble expressing himself. His report cards were dismal (p.1)." The Monarch School's professional educators consistently alternate ways for students to access needed information while developing individual talent. The Monarch School provides a comprehensive, balanced, and inclusive life practice for students and faculty alike. Its integral approach breathes an idea that is beyond dichotomies in approach to awareness.

REFERENCES

- Ainley, M, Hidi, S., & Berndorff, D. (2002). Interest, learning, and the psychological processes that mediate their relationship. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 94 (3), 545-561.
- Assouline, S.G., Nicpon, M.F., & Whiteman, C. (2010). Cognitive and psychosocial characteristics of gifted students with written language disability. *Gifted Child Quarterly*, 54 (2), 102-115.
- Baum, S.M., Cooper, C.R. & Neu, T.W. (2001). Dual differentiation: An approach for meeting the curricular needs of gifted students with learning disabilities. *Psychology in the Schools*, 38 (5), 477-490.
- Baum, S.M., & Olenchak, F.R. (2002). The alphabet children: GT, ADHA, and more. *Exceptionality*, 10 (2), 77-91.
- Carbonneau, N., Vallerand, R.J., Guay, F. & Fernet, C. (2008). The role passion for teaching in intrapersonal and interpersonal outcomes. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 100 (4), 977-987.

Chamberlin, J. (2001). Putting a face on child mental illness: An art exhibit seeks to raise awareness of a too-often ignored problem. *Monitor*, 32 (6), 28.

Crisp, R.J. & Turner, R.N. (2009). Can imagined interactions produce positive perceptions? Reducing prejudice through simulated social contact. *American Psychologist*, 64 (4), 231-240.

Gilger, J.W., & Hynd, G.W. (2008). Neurodevelopmental variation as a framework for thinking about the twice exceptional. *Roeper Review*, 30 (4), 214- 228.

Goldberg, J. (2000). Book review, ADHD and the nature of self-control (three years after publication). [Review of the book ADHD and the Nature of Self-control, by Barkley, Russell A. (1997)]. New York: The Guilford Press

Harackiewicz, J.M., Barron, K.E., Durik, A.M., Linnenbrink-Garcia, L., Tauer, J.M. (2008). The role of achievement goals in the development of interest: Reciprocal relations between achievement goals, interest, and performance. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 100 (1), 105-122.

Harackiewicz, J.M., & Elliot, A.J. (1993). Achievement goals and intrinsic motivation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 65 (5), 904-915.

Heward, W.L. (2006). *Exceptional children: An introduction to special education*. (8th ed.) New Jersey: Pearson Education.

Hidi, S., & Renninger, K.A. (2006). The four-phase model of interest development. *Educational Psychologist*, 41 (2), 111-127.

Hughes, J.N., Luo, W., Kwok, O., & Loud, L.K. (2008). Teacher-student support, effortful engagement and achievement: A 3-year longitudinal study. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 100 (1), 1-14.

Jang, H. (2008). Supporting students' motivation, engagement, and learning during an uninteresting activity. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 100 (4), 798-811.

Krochak, L.A., & Ryan, T.G. (2007). The challenge of identifying gifted/learning disabled students. *International Journal of Special Education*, 22 (3), 44-54.

Lahey, B.B. (2009). Public health significance of neuroticism. *American Psychologist*, 64 (4), 241-256.

- Lau, S., & Nie, Y. (2008). Interplay between personal goals and classroom goal structures in predicting student outcomes: A multilevel analysis of person-context interactions. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 100 (1), 15-29.
- Liberman, D., & Gore-Laird, H.M. (2001). *Think! Divergent concepts on theory and practice in educational psychology*. Connecticut: Survey Publications.
- Mason, C.Y., & Steedly, K.M. (2006). Rubrics and an arts integration community of practice. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 39 (1), 36-43.
- Mills C.J., Brody, L.E. (1999). Overlooked and unchallenged: Gifted students with learning disabilities. *Knowledge Quest*, 27, 36-40.
- Morrison, W.F., & Rizza, M.G. (2007). Creating a toolkit for identifying twice-exceptional students. *Journal for the Education of the Gifted*, 3(1), 57-76.
- Mayer, J.D., Salovey, P., & Caruso, D.R. (2008). Emotional intelligence: New ability or eclectic traits? *American Psychologist*, 63 (6), 503-517.

Neihart, M. (2003). Gifted children with attention deficit Hyperactivity disorder.

Eric Digest, English Document (ED) 4.

Olenchak, F.R. (2001). Lessons learned from gifted children about differentiation.

Teacher Educator, 36 (3), 185-98.

Orendorff, K.A. (2009). The relationship between ADHD and giftedness. English

Document (ED) 38.

Ramirez-Smith, C. (1997). Mistaken Identity: Gifted and ADHD. English Document

(ED) 9.

Reeve, J., Jang, H., Carrell, D., Jeon, S., & Barch, J. (2004). Enhancing students'

engagement by increasing teachers' autonomy support. Motivation and Emotion, 28

(2), 147-169.

Reyna, C. & Weiner, B. (2001). Justice and utility in the classroom: An attributional

analysis of the goals of teachers' punishment and intervention strategies. Journal of

Educational Psychology, 93 (2), 309-319.

Ryan, R.M., & Deci, E.L. (2000). Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being. *American Psychologist*, 55 (1), 68-78.

Schraw, G., & Lehman, S. (2001). Situational interest: A review of the literature and directions for future research. *Educational Psychology Review*, 13 (1), 23-52.

Schunk, D.H. (2008). *Learning theories: An educational perspective*. (5th ed.) New Jersey: Pearson Education.

Schunk, D.H., Pintrich, P.R., & Meece, J.L. (2008). *Motivation in education: Theory, research, and applications*. (3rd ed.) New Jersey: Pearson Education.

Skinner, E., Marchand, G., Furrer, C., & Kindermann, T. (2008). Engagement and disaffection in the classroom: Part of a larger motivational dynamic? *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 100 (4), 765-781.

Urdu, T., & Mestas, M. (2006). The goals behind performance goals. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 98 (2), 354-365.

Weinfeld, R., Bares-Robinson, L., Jeweler, J. & Roffman Shevitz, B. (2006). Smart kids with learning difficulties: Overcoming obstacles and realizing potential. Waco, TX: Prufrock Press.

Wilber K., Patten, T., Leonard, A., & Morelli, M. (2008). Integral life practice.