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Team research on intrinsic motivation in student populations: A continuing project

Marian Brow Petrovick

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TEAM RESEARCH ON INTRINSIC MOTIVATION IN STUDENT
POPULATIONS: A CONTINUING PROJECT

A Project
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
Rehabilitation Counseling

by
Marian Brow Petrovick
June 1998
TEAM RESEARCH ON INTRINSIC MOTIVATION IN STUDENT POPULATIONS: A CONTINUING PROJECT

A Project
Presented to the
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June 1998

Approved by:
Dr. Joseph Turpin, First Reader
Dr. Dudley Wiest, Second Reader

6-3-98
This project presents some of the ongoing work completed by me in conjunction with a team of researchers who study intrinsic motivation in students in grades kindergarten through high school. The current project involves examining the relationship of the home and school environments and gifted versus regular students in Grade 6.
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INTRODUCTION TO ONGOING PROJECT

Understanding the construct of student motivation and its relationship with other factors in a child's life experience is a primary concern to school counselors, teachers and other education professionals. If children can be provided with that which helps develop the highest level of intrinsic motivation, then we (as parents, professionals and the community) can help our children achieve their highest potential.

To that end, a small research team consisting of Dr. Dudley Wiest (School of Education), Dr. Eugene Wong (School of Social and Behavioral Sciences) and myself, in conjunction with support personnel in the Orange County school system, examine the construct of student motivation. This research is ongoing, with different iterations of data examining factors such as grade level/age, gender, socioeconomic status, and type of classroom (e.g., gifted, regular and special education).

The following review of literature will be contained within a journal article examining the relationship between intrinsic motivation and home and school environments, comparing gifted and regular education students in Grade 6. Due to the nature of work submitted for publication, the review is thorough but concise. Its restriction on number of pages is purposeful. Additionally, the article's
LITERATURE REVIEW FOR CURRENT ARTICLE

Achievement and the Home Environment

A substantial amount of the variance in school achievement is attributed to family support and the home environment (Soto, 1989), which play a primary role in the development of one's self-concept. According to Whitmore (1979) negative attitudes about the self that may lead to underachievement generally become stabilized around ages eight to ten, and then become resistant to change after that age. Because motivation and achievement are interrelated (Hay, 1993), parents would be well advised to understand and incorporate family practices and habits that support the development of intrinsic motivation and a positive self concept at as early an age as possible.

According to Scott (1988), Soto (1989), and Karnes & Shwedel (1987), a number of factors in the parent-child relationship have been found to be more prevalent in the home environment of gifted children than in their regular peers. Examples include: unconditional positive regard; genuine interest and respect for the child; ongoing communication and involvement; conveying an attitude of persistence; allowing freedom and independence; interest in unusual questions and consistency in conveying to children that they were important
as inquisitive human beings; employing specific strategies to impart a positive self-image; higher parental aspirations for both themselves and the child, and reinforcement of those aspirations; emphasis on reading and oral language usage; knowledge of the child's educational progress; and longer and more frequent involvement in the child's activities.

Of note is the indication that parental beliefs or expectations about the child's abilities have a greater impact on the child's self-concept of abilities than actual past performance (Dickens & Cornell, 1993). Therefore, the child whose parents believe he can succeed and who communicate their beliefs and expectations to the child may tend to have a more positive self-concept than the child who actually succeeds but receives no reinforcement or support from home.

Achievement and the School Environment

Like the home environment, school can play a role in encouraging or discouraging the development of intrinsic motivation in gifted students (Hay, 1993). Education professionals recognize the importance of motivation in a scholastic environment. In fact, the lack of motivation to excel is considered to be one of the critical issues in understanding underachievement in the gifted (Chan, 1996). Yet, it appears that some of the widely accepted teaching practices may actually decrease a student's level of motivation.
As discussed in Vallerand, Gagne, Senecal & Pelletier (1994), events and practices in the classroom such as giving rewards, surveillance, competition, evaluation, and teachers' controlling style all undermine intrinsic motivation. Gifted students perceive themselves as more intrinsically motivated toward school tasks than their regular peers (Chan, 1996; Vallerand, Gagne, Senecal & Pelletier, 1994; and Chan, 1988); however, these students also need to perceive that the task to be performed has some personal meaning or purpose before their motivation is activated (Hay, 1993).

Events and practices that provide choice and acknowledge students' feelings tend to support and enhance intrinsic motivation (Vallerand, Gagne, Senecal & Pelletier, 1994). In the classroom, gifted students are highly motivated by opportunities to be self directed, involved in planning and evaluating classroom activities, and defining tasks or assignments. Activities such as competitions and rewarding the student may take away from this feeling of self-direction. However, caution is indicated in allowing this freedom to be taken too far. Classrooms that are too unstructured may have a reverse effect on motivation (Galbraith, 1979; Runco & Nemiro, 1994).

Because gifted children may be in special danger of losing their intrinsic motivation to learn unless challenged in the academic setting (Rogers, 1985), teachers and other educators may have greater success with students if they
become aware that some of their heretofore typical practices may be counterproductive. Success may be further increased if teachers take the time to understand a student's individual learning style. Generally speaking, the gifted student's style of learning is different from that of the average student and increased awareness of this style may result in improved academic achievement (Yong & McIntyre (1992; Galbraith, 1979). When queried, parents of gifted students reported that if their children lack the opportunity to undertake more difficult curricular challenges and be recognized for their special abilities, the children appear to become less motivated and settle for lower standards (Purcell, 1993).

In addition to direct service to the child, schools can enhance intrinsic motivation through support for the parents of gifted students. For example, standard educational programs for parents focus on the needs of average children, thus they do not address uncommon problems faced by parents of the gifted (Strom, Strom, Strom, & Collinsworth, 1994). If schools and parents can work together to understand and work toward meeting the special needs of the gifted student, the student's motivation, and thus his achievement and success, may rise accordingly.
DATA FOR THE CURRENT ARTICLE

Dr. Eugene Wong is responsible for the computer analysis of the data gathered by the Orange County school system personnel. Upon completion of this analysis, Dr. Wiest, Dr. Wong and I will collaborate to write the other components of the article (e.g., Discussion, Conclusion, etc.). Given the variety of responsibilities managed by each team member, it is not anticipated that this activity will be completed before my project deadline.

REFERENCES FOR THE CURRENT ARTICLE

The following reference list is complete for my review of the literature. It does not include work referenced by Dr. Wiest.
REFERENCES


INTERNET RESOURCE DIRECTORY FOR THE GIFTED

Introduction to this Section

Essential to my continuing research on student motivation, I must access the most recent data and information available on the subject. To do so, I rely on resources available on the worldwide web. During the course of my research for this particular article, I compiled a listing of internet sites that pertain to the gifted.

The following is an annotated list of addresses for web pages that may be of interest to gifted individuals and those involved with gifted individuals, such as parents, counselors and education professionals. Search parameters focused on resource sites for gifted and talented children in a kindergarten through grade 12 setting. The list does not include sites whose primary purpose is for profit.

Due to the dynamic nature of the World Wide Web, this directory is neither exhaustive, nor can the current availability of any site be guaranteed. Since many sites cross-reference each other, my intent was to provide as many pages as possible from which the researcher could link to other resources. Therefore, most web addresses in this list will provide links to many other sites.

Unless otherwise noted, all web addresses are preceded by http://www. All addresses have been verified as of June, 1998.
Resources Listed Alphabetically

AltaVista. Search engine.
   altavista.looksmart.com/r?l&izf&e55974

American Association for the Gifted (AAGC). Advocacy group promoting gifted awareness and supportive systems.
   jayi.com/aagc

California Association for the Gifted (CAG). Non-profit organization for parents and educators promoting the welfare and education of gifted students. CAGifted.org

Challenge Magazine. Articles, lesson plans and activities for teachers and parents of the gifted.
   Frankschaffer.com/challeng.html

Council for Exceptional Children Groups. List of e-mail and listserv groups for gifted and talented and interested parties. cec.sped.org/eric/eric/gifted.htm

Council for Exceptional Children Selected Internet Resources for Gifted Education. Links to Federally funded centers, university sites and miscellaneous sites of interest. cec.sped.org/faq/gt-urls.htm

Distance Learning Resource Network. Disseminates information from and for educators and other parties interested in distance education. wested.org/tie/dlrn/

Educational Internet Resources. Links to various educational programs and systems for the gifted.
   CAGifted.org/intref.htm
Education Program for Gifted Youth, Stanford University. Courses for gifted students through Stanford's Continuing Studies Program. www-epgy.stanford.edu/epgy/epgytop.shtml

Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC). Links to ERIC database and other educational resources. aspensys.com/eric/index.html

Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) Clearinghouse on Gifted Education. Links to ERIC resources. cec.sped.org/er-menu.htm

Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) Special Resources. Links to ERIC bibliography sites and other resources. eskimo.com/~user/zeric.html


Free Spirit Publishing. Links for gifted and talented resources. freespirit.com/html/c_lgifted_nf.html


Gifted and Talented Web Site Resources. Many links to other web sites. total.net/~geofftay/gifted.html

Gifted Child Quarterly. Research and manuscript journal. Nagc.org/Publications/GiftedChild/index.html

Gifted Child Today. Professional magazine for parents and teachers of gifted. prufrock.com/gifchild.html
Gifted Development Center. Information and resources for the gifted, parents and schools. gifteddevelopment.com

Gifted Education Press. Books, materials and periodicals on educating the gifted. cais.com/gep/


Gifted Resources Home Page. Excellent page with numerous links to a variety of gifted resources. eskimo.com/~user/kids/html

GT World. On-line support for parents of gifted children. gtworld.org

Guidance and Career Resources: TAG. List of educational resource pages. a-plus.net/education/help/

Hoagies' Gifted Education Page. Very good page with links to a variety of educational resources and support groups. ocsc.com/hoagies/gift.htm

Hollingworth Center for Highly Gifted Children. National volunteer resource and support network for the gifted, their families and schools. midcoast.com/~hlo/hollingworth.html

Institute for the Academic Advancement of Youth (IAAY). John Hopkins University program. jhu.edu:80/~gifted/
Jacob K. Javits Gifted and Talented Education Program. U.S. Department of Education program supporting the development of the gifted and talented.
ed.gov/prog_info/Javits/index.html

Lycos. Search engine.
lycos.com/wguide/wire/wire_387269_49379_3_1.html

Masters Program in Gifted Studies. Mississippi University for Women program focused on the development of special competencies for working with the gifted and talented.
muw.edu/depart/academic/edu_hs/gifted/

Mensa. Organization for the gifted. mensa.org

National Association for the Gifted (NAGC). Advocacy group addressing the needs of gifted children within the broader topic of diverse and special needs children.
NAGC.org

National Foundation for Gifted and Creative Children (NFGCC). Free information, including downloadable files, for parents of gifted children.
wysiwyg://111/http://www.nfgcc.org

NEAG Center for Gifted Education & Talent Development.
University of Connecticut program.
ucc.uconn.edu/~wwwgt/

Odyssey of the Mind. Program promoting creative team-based problem solving. odyssey.org
Organizations for the Gifted. Names, addresses and web pages to a variety of organizations, including research and scholarship organizations. eskimo.com/~user.zorgs.html

Pitsco's Launch to Gifted and Talented Resources. Variety of links to gifted and talented resources.
pitsco.com/p/gft.html

Prufrock Press. Books, magazines and research journals supporting gifted education. prufrock.com

Roeper Review. Peer review journal covering a variety of issues on the gifted.
roeper.org/html/roeper_review.html

School Psychology Resources. Links to a variety of issues of interest for educators, counselors, parents, etc.
bcpl.net/~sandyste/school_psyh.html

Study of Exceptional Talent (SET). Links to gifted and talented and educational sites.
http://jhunix.hcf.jhu.edu/~setmentr/kinks.html

Supporting the Emotional Needs of the Gifted (SENG). Improving the quality of life for gifted individuals.
educ.kent.edu/Frames/EFSS/SENG

The Association for the Gifted (TAG). Special interest group of the Council for Exceptional Children. CEC.sped.org

The TAG Family Network. Support organization run by parents.
teleport.com/~rkaltwas/tag/
The TAG Project. E-mail information for families of the
talented and gifted.

access.digest.net/~king/tagfam.html

World Council for Gifted and Talented Children. Organization
that networks educators involved in gifted education
around the world. worldgifted.org

Yahoo! Search engine.

yahoo.com/text/education/k_12/gifted_youth/
Resources Listed by Topic

Associations and Groups

American Association for the Gifted (AAGC). Advocacy group promoting gifted awareness and supportive systems. jayi.com/aagc

California Association for the Gifted (CAG). Non-profit organization for parents and educators promoting the welfare and education of gifted students. CAGifted.org

Council for Exceptional Children Groups. List of e-mail and listserve groups for gifted and talented and interested parties. cec.sped.org/ericec/gifted.htm

Gifted Development Center. Information and resources for the gifted, parents and schools. gifteddevelopment.com

GT World. On-line support for parents of gifted children. gtworld.org


Hollingworth Center for Highly Gifted Children. National volunteer resource and support network for the gifted, their families and schools. midcoast.com/~holo/hollingworth.html

Mensa. Organization for the gifted. mensa.org
National Association for the Gifted (NAGC). Advocacy group addressing the needs of gifted children within the broader topic of diverse and special needs children. NAGC.org

National Foundation for Gifted and Creative Children (NFGCC). Free information, including downloadable files, for parents of gifted children. wysiwyg://ill/http://www.nfgcc.org

Organizations for the Gifted. Names, addresses and web pages to a variety of organizations, including research and scholarship organizations. eskimo.com/~user.zorgs.html

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The Association for the Gifted (TAG). Special interest group of the Council for Exceptional Children. CEC.sped.org

The TAG Family Network. Support organization run by parents. teleport.com/~rkaltwas/tag/

The TAG Project. E-mail information for families of the talented and gifted. access.digest.net/~king/tagfam.html

World Council for Gifted and Talented Children. Organization that networks educators involved in gifted education around the world. worldgifted.org
Journals and Magazines

Challenge Magazine. Articles, lesson plans and activities for teachers and parents of the gifted. Frankschaffer.com/challeng.html

Free Spirit Publishing. Links for gifted and talented resources. freespirit.com/html/c_lgifted_nf.html


Gifted Child Quarterly. Research and manuscript journal. Nagc.org/Publications/GiftedChild/index.html

Gifted Child Today. Professional magazine for parents and teachers of gifted. prufrock.com/gifchild.html

Gifted Education Press. Books, materials and periodicals on educating the gifted. cais.com/gep/


Prufrock Press. Books, magazines and research journals supporting gifted education. prufrock.com

Roeper Review. Peer review journal covering a variety of issues on the gifted. roeper.org/html/roeper_review.html
Resource Pages

Council for Exceptional Children Selected Internet Resources for Gifted Education. Links to Federally funded centers, university sites and miscellaneous sites of interest. cec.sped.org/faq/gt-urls.htm

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Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) Clearinghouse on Gifted Education. Links to ERIC resources. cec.sped.org/er-menu.htm

Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) Special Resources. Links to ERIC bibliography sites and other resources. eskimo.com/~user/zeric.html

Gifted and Talented Web Site Resources. Many links to other web sites. total.net/~geofftay/gifted.html

Gifted Resources Home Page. Excellent page with numerous links to a variety of gifted resources. eskimo.com/~user/kids/html
Guidance and Career Resources: TAG. List of educational resource pages. a-plus.net/education/help/guide/tag.html


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Pitsco's Launch to Gifted and Talented Resources. Variety of links to gifted and talented resources. pitsco.com/p/gft.html

School Psychology Resources. Links to a variety of issues of interest for educators, counselors, parents, etc. bcpl.net/~sandyste/school_psych.html

Study of Exceptional Talent (SET). Links to gifted and talented and educational sites. http://jhunix.hcf.jhu.edu/~setmentr/kinks.html

Search Engines

AltaVista. altavista.looksmart.com/r?l&izf&e55974


Lycos. lycos.com/wguide/wire/wire_387269_49379_3_1.html

Yahoo! yahoo.com/text/education/k_12/gifted_youth/
University, Government and Other Programs

Education Program for Gifted Youth, Stanford University.

Courses for gifted students through Stanford's Continuing Studies Program.

www-epgy.stanford.edu/epgy/epgytop.shtml

Institute for the Academic Advancement of Youth (IAAY). John Hopkins University program. jhu.edu:80/~gifted/

Jacob K. Javits Gifted and Talented Education Program. U.S. Department of Education program supporting the development of the gifted and talented.
ed.gov/prog_info/Javits/index.html

Masters Program in Gifted Studies. Mississippi University for Women program focused on the development of special competencies for working with the gifted and talented.
muw.edu/depart/academic/edu_hs/gifted/

NEAG Center for Gifted Education & Talent Development. University of Connecticut program.

ucc.uconn.edu/~wwwgt/

Odyssey of the Mind. Program promoting creative team-based problem solving. odyssey.org