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Integration and Dynamic Adaptation in the Formation of a Novel 2e School Model

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With the recent explosion in the awareness of the unique niche of students now labeled "twice exceptional" (2e) early research on gifted and twice exceptional educational practices and clinical supports have hit the spotlight, as if for the first time. June Maker first acknowledged the concept in the mid-1970s (Maker, 1977) dubbing it "gifted and handicapped" evolving to twice exceptional within a decade thereafter. Even though some research has been done since, it is not clear to what extent evidenced-based practices are maintained during the implementation process across and within settings and to what extent this variability affects educational and health outcomes for twice exceptional children.

The Quad Preparatory School in New York City is a novel 2e educational model that uses a purposeful system of integration and dynamic adaptation of evidence-based practices (EBPs) from many disciplines. Our meaning of integration lies in the seamless synthesis of practices that provide both educational excellence and appropriate psychosocial support through the implementation of EBPs. These EBPs are in a state of constant "dynamic adaptation" as the individual child adjusts to a personalized system, becomes more trusting, is open to learning, begins to manifest his or her gifts, and internalizes coping mechanisms for his or her challenges. This is an ongoing process for each child, which requires systematic and continual collaboration on the part of the professionals from a variety of disciplines.

This chapter discusses the rationale behind the choices of the specific, novel components of The Quad Preparatory School model, then outlines The Quad Preparatory School's structure for integration and dynamic adaption of EBPs

where continuous feedback allows for simultaneous implementation and the creation of new practices in a truly integrated fashion.

Twice exceptional students are, in a word, complicated. They have been defined as fitting into one of three categories: the disability is recognized but the gift is hidden; the gift is recognized, but the disability is hidden; or the gift and disability negate each other (Baum & Owen, 2004; Reis, Baum, & Burke, 2014). However, we see an even more intricate complexity of traits including not only comorbidity but multimorbidity of diagnoses (i.e., attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and oppositional defiant disorder) as well as secondary traits such as anxiety and depression. We offer three scenarios (of composite children) who can fit the typical definition but who demonstrate the complications of a multitude of factors that, in reality, confound the formula.

1. By age five, D was having severe emotional dysregulation with tantrums triggered by everyday situations. Her perceptions of reality were colored by a hypersensitivity to the environment in terms of sounds, light, temperature, and movement around her; these physical discomforts overwhelmed her. Her verbal ability was extraordinary, as was her memory, yet she showed great difficulty in comprehending concepts in reading and especially in mathematics. Due to her behavior, she was not able to function in a regular kindergarten class so was taken to a private school for special education. Due to her sophisticated language ability, adults would converse with her as if she were an adult about issues that she found frightening. For example, she would notice homelessness and ask questions that were addressed in too many details for her emotional maturity, causing nightmares and high anxiety. The tantrums continued, making social interaction and learning impossible. When D was able to attend school, she made up elaborate and detailed fantasy stories incorporating factual information she had absorbed. This fantasy world became a respite, and teachers began to worry that she was confusing reality and fantasy, so she was forbidden to use fantasy in any form of reading or writing. She became obstinate and defiant as her deficits became more and more the focus of her school day. Her anxiety grew. She was "counseled out" of the private special education setting for behavioral disorder.
2. Although F had some developmental delays, including late expressive language, motor planning delays, sensory sensitivities, and social anxieties, he was always able to thrive in non-special education settings and entered kindergarten in a rigorous, highly structured school for the gifted. During his first three years there, he thrived. His issues did not disappear but were not a detriment in the environment: he made friends in a class of 20, had a best friend, and academically soared under a very structured and traditional educational setting with clear, high expectations that fit his concrete, sequential learning style. After much success, his well-being began to unravel at the end of third

grade when his best friends moved away, and at the same time the social demands began to intensify at school. He became more aware that he was perceived as "gifted" yet began to find concentration and motivation more difficult. His self-esteem began to plummet and his anxiety began to mount as he became his own worst critic. He began to feel different from his peers and more socially isolated. Although well-meaning and eager to keep him, the school was not able to support his social cognitive needs. His emotional regulation began to worsen, and, with a neuropsychological evaluation, a hidden learning disability was discovered. The decision was made to move him into a supportive (i.e., special education) setting, which promised to simultaneously meet his advanced cognitive abilities. However, now only the previously hidden disability could be addressed, exacerbating his diminishing sense of security in his strengths.

3. L appeared to have a normal early childhood, reaching all developmental milestones within normal ranges. As he grew, he had a fascination with words and built an impressive vocabulary, asking questions about the meanings of words and then using those words. Abstract ideas and emotional sensitivity appeared at a young age and was acknowledged as part of his charming personality. At kindergarten, routine school testing showed unremarkable scores other than in vocabulary development that ranked at the 98th percentile. This discrepancy was not of note or concern in a kindergarten-aged child. L began to lag in reading skills, and by first grade he needed remedial support that lasted several years even when reading improved and special services were no longer needed. Writing continued to be difficult but was attributed to the slow development of a boy. L was a strong participant in oral discussions and seemed to comprehend ideas very quickly, but the gap between his excellent class participation and mediocre written work widened. Eventually his high levels of energy, loud voice, and impulsivity in actions led to problems with his teachers. He was put on medication without a diagnosis, which did not help, and continued his schooling as an average student with moderate "behavior" problems. He did become a stellar musician but was frustrated at the lack of acknowledgment of his intellectual abilities. Depression hit in high school. Continually average test scores prevented L's eligibility for any reading and writing services and from him being placed in any advanced or gifted classes to serve his advanced intellect.

In just these three children, one sees a myriad of gifts, challenges, and learning issues that reflect the wide heterogeneity of the 2e population. We also see the emotional toll that lack of appropriate environments can engender (Craske & Barlow, 2006; Greene, 2014; Kendall & Hedtke, 2006; Pincus, Ehrenreich, & Mattis, 2008). The children who are enrolled in The Quad Preparatory School come from a wide variety of prior school settings—public schools (general education, Integrated

Co-Teaching classes, and gifted and talented programs), independent schools, home schooling, and special education schools. Other than meeting the definition of 2e, the only thing The Quad Prep students have in common upon entering our school is that their prior educational settings—no matter the type, no matter the level of challenge, no matter the level of giftedness or disability—failed them.

This happened despite a solid base of research and EBPs in twice exceptionality specifically and more broadly in gifted education, special education, child and adolescent psychiatry, psychology, developmental pediatrics, speech and language pathology, child neurology, and occupational therapy. This also happened across school settings—even those with a plethora of available resources. In other words, despite knowledge, access, effort, and resources, children were getting worse (National Education Association, 2006). A simple combination of practices and/or curriculum is not enough to serve the complex needs of these children. Rather, a synthesis of approaches from all of these disciplines must be melded into a model that provides a structure that delivers the benefits in a responsively flexible manner to suit the wide variability of individual traits and the simultaneous rapid/lagging trajectory of their developmental journey. The National Association for Gifted Children first recognized 2e children in 1998 when they articulated a foundation of what a program for these children would need:

> 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. (Position Paper, *Students with concomitant gifts and learning disabilities,* National Association for Gifted Children, 1998)

DEFINING THE QUAD PREPARATORY MODEL

In the investigation that led to the establishment of The Quad Preparatory School, we identified several key areas that contributed to the troublesome outcomes we were witnessing. First, given the wide heterogeneity of extreme gifts and challenges in any age-matched cohort, successful dual differentiation of curriculum and instruction in a classroom-based model is difficult to achieve, no matter how large or small the group. Second, forced large group instruction as the predominant delivery method seemed to exacerbate difficulties rather than build on strengths. Moreover, evidence-based clinical and educational practices were not fully integrated or adapted in systematic ways to allow for effective results with the children in real time and space. The primary way that The Quad Preparatory model counters these problems is by implementing a one-on-one manner of teaching the 2e student, not as a means of remediation but as the most efficient

and effective way to meet the student where they are, identify gaps and address them, compact the curriculum to bypass already mastered material, minimize distractions, address individual interests and pursue them, and address social and emotional issues as they arise in real time. Each teacher can also exercise the dynamic adaptation necessary to address the multifaceted and rapid changes that can take place in the child in the right setting.

Table 19.1 shows the constructs that became key to developing The Quad Preparatory School Model, and the sources based on EBPs that we drew from.

Table 19.1. Implementation of TQPS Model

Constructs Key to TQPS Model	EBPs Implemented and Adapted
Foundational skills of self-regulation, executive functioning, independence, coordination	Zones of Regulation (Kuypers, 2011) Tools of the Mind (Leong & Bodrova, 2007) Montessori methods and materials (Montessori, 2010)
Strength- and interest-based instruction, talent development, authentic projects	Project-based learning (Blumenfeld et al., 1991; Stanley, 2011; Strobel & van Barneveld, 2009; Thomas, 2000) Enrichment clusters (Renzulli, Gentry, & Reis, 2005) Schoolwide Enrichment Model (Renzulli & Reis, 2005)
Addressing strengths and weaknesses	Dual differentiation (Baum, Cooper, & Neu, 2001; Pereles, Omdal, & Baldwin, 2009) Alternate entry points, multiple methods of assessment (Baum, Slatin, & Viens, 2005)
Social, emotional, and psychological support	Cognitive behavioral therapies (Albano & DiBartolo 2007; Craske & Barlow, 2006; Kendall & Hedtke 2006; Pincus, Ehrenreich, & Mattis, 2008; Piacentini & Roblek, 2007) Mentalization and mindfulness-based approaches (Allen & Fonagy, 2006) Positive behavioral interventions (Bradshaw, Pas, Goldweber, Rosenberg, & Leaf, 2012) Resiliency building (Duckworth, 2016) Growth mindset versus fixed mindset (Dweck, 2007) Teacher Child Intervention Therapy (Fernandez, Adelstein, Miller, & Gudiño, 2009) Positive psychology (Gaus, 2011; Seligman & Csikszentimihalyi, 2000; Seligman, Steen, Park, & Peterson, 2005) Social thinking (Hendrix, Palmer, Tarshis, & Winner, 2016; Winner, 2002) Cognitive behavioral therapy (Piacentini, Langley, & Roblek, 2007)

Table 19.1. CONTINUED

Constructs Key to TQPS Model	EBPs Implemented and Adapted
Mind-body connection	Sensory integration therapy and occupational therapy (Ben-Sasson, Carter, & Briggs-Gowan, 2010; Miller & Collins, 2013)
	Sensory stimulation in autism (Miller & Collins, 2013)
	Sensory overresponsivity (Ben-Sasson, Carter, & Briggs-Gowan, 2010).
Creativity	Nurturing creative talent (Crammond, 2006)
	Synectics, developing strategies for creative thinking (Davis, 2004)
	Passion and imagination (Kaufman & Gregoire, 2016)
Collaboration and problem-solving	Collaborative and proactive solutions (Dedousis-Wallace et al., 2016; Greene, 2005, 2016; Greene et al., 2004; Greene & Ablon, 2005; Pollastri, Epstein, Heath, & Ablon, 2013; Ollendick, Greene, & Austin, 2015)
Curricular and instructional design and enrichment	Enrichment strategies (Baum, 2004)
	Origins curriculum (Berman, 2015)
	Integrated curriculum (Callahan, Moon, Oh, Azano, & Hailey, 2015)
	Project-based learning (Helm & Katz, 2011; Seligman, Steen, Park, & Peterson, 2005)
	Schoolwide Enrichment Model (Renzulli & Reis, 2014)
	Parallel Curriculum Model (Tomlinson et al., 2009)
Personalized educational plan (for creating a plan and monitoring progress in strengths and weaknesses)	Mentorships/apprenticeships (Berger, 1990)
	Finding, addressing, and monitoring strengths and weaknesses
	(Pereles, Omdal, & Baldwin, 2009)
	Curriculum compacting (Reis, Burns, & Renzulli, 1992)

NOTE: TQPS = The Quad Prepatory School; EBP = evidence-based practices.

However, just following these practices alone is not enough. As we adapted each of these practices, we found that each is "dynamic" in that different components can be implemented at different times and in different settings for individual children. The key is to develop the model and train a staff that can identify the needs and the concordant practices to address those needs at the right time (Kazdin, 2008; Malti, Noam, Beelmann, & Sommer, 2016).

Once the key constructs were defined, the first thing that The Quad Preparatory School created was a multidisciplinary team, responsible for implementation,

integration, and dynamic adaptation of the practices that are key to the model. The following cornerstones of our model were developed and implemented.

The People

Unique to 2e students is the need for deep expertise and experience in EBPs from both educators and clinicians. School leadership was redefined as co-leadership so that there was equal expertise and experience in gifted and twice exceptional educational practices and clinical practice. Thus Quad Prep leaders are highly skilled and experienced in disseminating practice in their respective fields.

1. Quad Prep co-leaders must be exceptionally effective educators of other professionals within the school, bringing expertise and experience in training and in the professional development of educational and clinical staff. Time is protected for leadership teams to meet weekly with both teachers and outside providers and to use ongoing feedback and new information about students to create new "ad hoc" adaptations in real time.
2. Outside expert coaches and a "train the trainer" model is used to support the use of coaches to facilitate the dynamic adaption process (Bradshaw et al., 2012). The needs of twice exceptional children run an extremely wide gamut, and no in-house leadership would be able to attain expert status in all areas. Thus a priority of the school is to cultivate and develop a network of outside experts and align resources and time for systematically including their input and coaching in their respective areas of expertise. This includes a very active and multidisciplinary professional advisory board that meets thrice yearly as well as partnerships with professional organizations and institutes of higher education (e.g., Association for the Education of Gifted Underachieving Students, Cooper Union College, New York University). The result is a growing base of in-house experts trained in EBPs.
3. Staff support and professional development are augmented by Friday team meetings between clinical and educational staff (with a noon dismissal) to discuss issues regarding individual students and possible approaches that can be used during the next week to help with the social and emotional issues with each child. Psychologists check in and monitor the progress of various strategies during the week, and the progress is revisited to assess success and make adaptations where necessary. We also hold half- and whole-day professional development sessions throughout the year focusing on implementation, staff-directed needs, instructional strategies, and culture/collaboration. Implementation is constantly being evaluated and flexibly refined.
4. Our commitment to collaboration and clear communication informs relationships between The Quad Preparatory School, parents, and

clinical service providers engaged by families. The director, head of school, teachers, and clinical staff review weekly progress and hold scheduled monthly phone conferences with parents and outside providers for each child that cover both academics and social emotional development.

Structure of the School

Our school is organized into preps or cohorts, (currently nine preps) of 8 to 10 students ranging from grades K to 12. The preps are multi-aged typically with children in a two-year chronological age span grouped by developmental level, academic readiness, and social cognitive levels. The preps progress developmentally focuses in the youngest grades on the development of skills necessary to function at school in a successful way. Academic depth and breadth progress quickly as young students develop.

In the Lower School, which encompasses what would traditionally be elementary school (K–5), each prep has two academic teachers, an associate teacher (education background), a psychosocial teacher (psychology background), a special education teacher, and several psychology interns.

Prep 1, Foundations level

Our Foundations class (K–1) uses a Montessori method combining manipulative materials in a structure that encourages children to choose their own work within a structured environment that is designed to meet developmental needs (Montessori, 2010). The primary foundational skills being developed are concentration, coordination, independence, and self-efficacy. Adaptations to a pure Montessori practice must be made, as many of our younger children come to us with profound asynchronous development. Basic skills that lead to self-regulation and executive functioning must be addressed before academics with four-, five-, and six-year-olds who have taught themselves to read yet do not have the world experience or psychic grounding to process what they hear from the adult world and only partially comprehend. Negative behavior at this stage diminishes quickly when a sense of order and independence is internalized. The Montessori practices help young children to do this. This class is led by Montessori trained teachers, a special education teacher, and a psychosocial teacher. When combined with the early childhood multidisciplinary curriculum *Tools of the Mind* (Leong & Bodrova, 2007), which is specifically designed to strengthen nascent executive functioning skills of self-regulation, the environment is prepared to nurture independence and develop skills to move on to higher academic levels.

Preps 2, 3, 4, and 5 Transition levels

These preps are comprised of second, third, and fourth-grade-aged children. This group is called transitions as the principles emphasized in Prep 1 continue with the goal of developing further self-regulation and executive functioning, leading

to a more independent student in a departmentalized Upper School. Academics include skills in all areas emphasizing exercises that increase fine motor control and promote success in writing. As many 2e children have difficulties with writing, cursive writing is introduced as a more easily managed form of writing (Meyers, 2014). Teachers and occupational therapists work together to decide which students would benefit from this instruction, and they work together to complement the process. This is often the stage at which children begin to show difficulties in a traditional setting, as seen with the case study children described earlier. Instruction is therefore delivered in a one-on-one format with small groups when ready. The academic content must also be presented with multimodal approaches, for example with alternate entry points from dramatization to building to art (Baum, Slatin, & Viens, 2005). When children struggle with the mechanical aspects of writing and are trying to compose at the same time, the task becomes overwhelming. Creating content first through another medium helps children to express what they want to say, to then elaborate and organize thoughts rather than trying to compose, organize, and physically put words on paper all at the same time causing frustration and shut down.

Prep 6, Signature level

This group consists of children typically in grades 4, 5, and/or 6. Children are placed and moved from one prep to another based on their social, emotional, and intellectual development reflecting the personalized and flexible approach to the rate of growth in each child. Here children have reached our signature level by showing readiness to navigate à more independent schedule yet continuing with their two academic teachers in one-on-one lessons covering subjects in an integrated manner with one teacher specializing in humanities and the other in STEM. Content expands to higher academic and interest levels, yet gaps in skills and understanding can still be addressed relatively quickly by using the curriculum compacting concept (Reis, Burns, & Renzulli, 1992) of systematically pretesting to determine where a student's skills lie on a continuum, addressing the misunderstandings or gaps with enough explanation and practice to master it and then moving on to new material. If a student has a special interest, teachers can engage in dialogue and make connections or help create and mentor projects that might happen in the real world. Students are encouraged to make connections between disciplines and taught how to reflect on their own place in the world and their personal identity (Tomlinson et al., 2009).

Preps 7, 8, and 9, Upper School

These preps are departmentalized to go deeper into content, but work in collaboration. Preps 7 and 8 are comprised of students in Grades 6 to 7 and 7 to 8, respectively. High-level science and mathematics are taught, with many opportunities for depth in history, literature, and writing that employ the interests of the student. In many cases, once students have gained a sense of self-efficacy, they can achieve understanding of content several years above their chronological age, resulting in some students beginning high school credit courses in 8th grade. Art

and music are required of every student in all grades along with electives such as engineering, coding, debate, drama, creative writing, film, student government, and foreign language offered to students in the Upper School (Grades 5–12). The Upper School has teachers in each core domain (sciences, mathematics, English language arts, history, and foreign languages), with Advanced Placement courses offered to those who are ready. Teachers from both education and psychology backgrounds collaborate for psychosocial integration in seminar sessions (3–5 students in core academic subjects) and for supervision during work periods (in which students continue work from their academic sessions) as well as offer mini enrichment courses.

Social Cognition and Engagement through Strength Based Teaching

The foundation of social cognition education and practice at The Quad Prep is based on the Social Thinking framework (Winner, 2002), which includes vocabulary that establishes a common language to discuss social functioning, curriculum lessons, and strategies that break down social concepts into concrete, teachable formats. Social Thinking reveals the hidden rules of social communication and explicitly teaches fundamental social concepts, such as perspective-taking, to help children and adults navigate the nuanced world of social interaction.

Social skills are not developed in isolation. An important class for all students throughout their time with us is called Core, which begins with explicit social thinking strategies at the younger grades through role-play, modeling, stories, and film, but as children develop, they take on projects in interest areas that begin to integrate content areas and ultimately result in authentic products for authentic audiences (Renzulli, Gentry, & Reis, 2003). Interest groups evolve and children work toward a goal in small groups such as creating a cookbook through testing recipes and related scientific concepts, building prototypes of inventions, and participating in social service projects that will reach beyond school walls. The concepts of authentic products for authentic audiences inherent in enrichment clusters (Renzulli et al., 2003) provide a much greater buy-in for students than "simulated" projects, as some of them have called school projects. Our adaptation of both the Social Thinking curriculum and enrichment clusters comes in the integration of both allowing the authentic projects to grow organically from the interests of the children and to provide real life contexts for social skills.

Social and emotional development is completely interwoven with academic and executive functioning at The Quad Preparatory School. Using collaborative problem-solving (Greene, 2014), cognitive behavioral strategies, social cognition, and motivational techniques, teachers and clinicians alike are trained and experienced in integrating social and emotional learning concepts, strategies, and language into all aspects of our students' day. We have found that through the integration of the psychosocial attention, children become available for learning,

and then when interests are tapped, negative behaviors diminish, they can use their strengths to compensate for learning difficulties, and success breeds success. The positive spiral allows us to truly educate at their potential in all areas—academic, social and emotional.

The Curriculum

Content

The Quad Preparatory School provides students with an academic program that acknowledges individual learning styles and accommodates for the asynchronous development that is characteristic of our students. The curriculum is founded in the understanding that as young minds are building skills, they need challenging material and a foundation in higher order thinking as developmentally appropriate. These skills empower and prepare students to tackle increasingly complex problems and issues as their basic skills develop.

The curriculum framework integrated throughout the school called Origins (Berman, 2015) gives students an overall understanding of the "big picture" of the universe in both time and space. It captures the imagination as our children ask the big questions, "Where did I come from?" or "How did everything get to be made?" which is a seeking to understand the systems, patterns, and relationships that form the networks of all disciplines and knowledge. Children want to make order of their environment and beyond, thus timelines and geographic knowledge give students a foundation to make connections and to have a greater understanding of how all came to be.

Origins focuses on the story of the birth of the universe, elements, solar systems, and planets, and ultimately on Earth. A series of key experiments introduces concepts of physical science such as gravity and centrifugal force, then chemistry as students learn how the elements were formed, and finally life science when life emerged billions of years after Earth came to exist. Classification of plants and animals correlates with simple organisms to the most complex as life developed. We look at the development of humans from the perspective of their basic needs, physical and spiritual, creating a framework from which to study any culture. Science and history are initially one in the same as the events of chronology, formation of galaxies, solar systems, geography, and then early life, classification, and ultimately the appearance and needs of humans are presented in stories, then in later grades studied at a deeper level. In mathematics we look at how and why counting began, and in literacy we explore early alphabets and the origins of writing. A sense of the relationship of each person in and to the world takes on a different perspective in this context, and children come to understand how all humans are connected across time and space and how their individual cultures express their common life experiences in different ways. Personal identity also takes on a new perspective. These topics are not typically taught until much later in a more traditional curriculum, if at all, and then in

very isolated segments, but for cognitively advanced children, there is a fascination with such big-picture ideas. Through this engagement, reading and writing become important tools to fulfill boundless curiosity.

Such a curriculum that addresses both the affective development in the question "Who am I?" and that creates a big picture of the universe, planet, and civilization provides a sound foundation for all other study in literature, science, arts, mathematics, philosophy, history, and languages. Units of study present related stories of questions that arise from a sense of wonder of the individual child and the place he or she has in the world. As the child grows, he or she also begins to question "Why am I here?" thus interfacing a sense of identity with purpose. Nurturing this natural need for reflection lays the foundation for the habits of mind necessary for creative productivity presented in the curriculum of the higher grades as well as nurtures a sense of purpose and self-efficacy.

At the upper school level, a curricular model from gifted education, the Parallel Curriculum Model (Tomlinson et al., 2009) offers an opportunity for higher levels of intellectual demand by first presenting core information, then making connections in a cross-disciplinary exploration, with the opportunity to further delve into the real-world practice revealing relevance of the material. The model then comes back to the reflective practice of identity in asking "What can I do to make a difference?" These practices support the integration of key concepts and language of Social Thinking (Winner, 2002) into all aspects of the curriculum as well. This ensures that a robust synergy between affective and intellectual development is maintained throughout the school day.

Instruction

Teachers at The Quad Prep employ a variety of evidenced-based strategies. Academic instruction is given one-on-one for a third of the day with academic group seminars, supervised work periods, group project periods, electives, counseling, and occupational therapy completing the day. Our students' needs can best be met in this format by either accelerating, modifying, pursuing special interests, or pacing for specific needs to fill in learning gaps while raising the achievement bar. The one-on-one ratio insures that students are taught through their strength areas and that they can move as quickly as they are able. If remediation is necessary for skill building, extra sessions can be held with a special education teacher. The one-on-one periods allow us to go beyond individualization of instruction to truly personalize learning.

Environment

The Quad Preparatory School's learning environment provides a consistent, calm, and nonjudgmental space in which each child can flourish. We acknowledge the courage that each student displays through the process of learning to renew trust and tackle areas of challenge, and we support each success and near-success with encouragement to build resilience and grit. In addition to our integrated academic, social, and emotional skills curricula, the related services of speech and

language therapy, occupational therapy, and counseling (by doctoral-level clinical psychologists) are provided by full-time professionals who are an integral part of our school.

Parent and Community Partnerships

Utilizing the talents of the adults in our community, be it parents or grandparents, neighboring businesses and professionals, or other friends of the school, gives children an opportunity to learn how "school subjects" have relevance and meaning. Musicians, artists, bankers, architects, and nutritionists are only a sampling of the professionals who have much to offer to our children. Interests are triggered when a visitor presents his or her profession to the students. The skills and methodologies of different disciplines can also become part of the curriculum and lead to mentorships, apprenticeships, and major projects. These experiences can lead to a lifetime of interest and often a career (Renzulli & Reis, 2014).

In addition, Quad Prep has implemented a purposeful system of communication between our psychosocial staff, teachers, parents, and outside providers. With regular monthly conference calls, all parties can share their perspectives of the progress of the child, just as the psychologists do with the academic staff once a week. Time is protected, and parents and any outside providers are given a schedule for conference calls in September for the remainder of the academic year, allowing all the constituents the opportunity to fine-tune goals for the next month.

Autonomy of Students

Developing a sense of autonomy is the ultimate goal for all of our students, which allows any adult to live a full and satisfying life. Autonomy can only be reached if one has developed the skills of executive functioning, emotional regulation, sensory integration, anxiety management, competency, and resilience. Moreover, by using the Collaborative and Proactive Solutions (Dedousis-Wallace et al., 2016) method for student-led solutions to troubleshooting, conflict resolution, and student buy-in for skill building, students are willing and able to grow ever more independent over time. Autonomy and self-actualization enable 2e students to realize their goals beyond high school such as college, a profession, entrepreneurial endeavors, or whatever else they choose.

HOW DO WE MEASURE SUCCESS?

The Quad Preparatory School has been collecting data on various relevant outcomes since inception and is continually in the process of analyzing and using the data in germane ways. One construct put in place is our use of psychology interns to track both individual student goals and adoption of strategies we are teaching to reach the identified goals. Thus if the student is able to consistently

use a particular strategy but not reach the associated goals, we know in real time that we need to adapt specific teaching strategies. We have developed a research committee that collaborates with outside academic departments of psychology and education to both track outcomes for our use and to contribute to the growing evidence base for twice exceptional children.

Because effective practice requires time and implicit nurturing to develop, staff retention becomes an extremely important priority. For both the clinical and educational staff, we hold regular supervision meetings to both gain information on how to support staff and to give feedback from informal observations. Two times a year, teachers are formally observed and evaluated in the spirit of supporting growth and improving professional practice. We also require that a teacher work a year as an associate teacher in a classroom with an experienced teacher before becoming a head academic teacher. Staff retention metrics are key indicators of progress for us—100% of staff returned from 2015–2016 to 2016–2017.

Finally, The Quad Preparatory School has been collecting and informally recording successes in the form of individual case studies and feedback from outside providers and parents. To date, we have witnessed observable changes of increased confidence and productivity in our students who were previously failing. We have not had the need to "counsel out" any students because we were unable to meet their needs. We have received near universal positive feedback from parents and outside professionals that students are growing both academically and in social and emotional realms simultaneously. For example, a student had a repeat neuropsychological evaluation done after attending The Quad for two years. He exhibited significant improvement in academic indicators and reduction in symptoms of task avoidance and anxiety. Until we have completed more formal and prospective outcome studies over longer time periods, we are grateful that these early exemplars show us that the model is successful. Parent satisfaction also offers a testament to positive direction:

> Quad is a rarity for a school—it actually practices what it preaches!
>
> My child had a hugely successful year his first year at Quad. He advanced emotionally, socially and academically. He went from a kid who hated school and did everything he could to get sent home, to a kid who loved school and was sad for it to end and can't wait for it to start again. The staff is skilled, sensitive and warm and my child formed friendships with them equal to those he formed with the other children. The parents at Quad are as devoted to the school as they are to their own children and are available and supportive! (parent correspondence, 2016)

WHERE ARE OUR THREE STUDENTS NOW?

Although our students described at the beginning of this chapter are composite profiles, they resemble true-to-life students. D, whose behavior and deficits overshadowed her strengths, was ultimately diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder

at age nine. By this time, in the proper setting, her negative behavior had all but disappeared. Even though she was still highly sensitive to physical environmental factors, she had learned how to use mindfulness to manage her hypersensitivities. She continued to struggle with mathematics but progressed, although slowly. Her strong language ability and vivid imagination manifested in beautifully written poetry and stories. At 12 she won a major award from a youth literary magazine and gained the confidence she needed to continue studying writing with the goal of making it a career.

F, whose gifts were so evident at the elementary level but began to diminish as he reached adolescence, was ultimately diagnosed with a learning disability that he had been able to compensate for until the work he was encountering became more complex. This began to manifest in social maladjustment. His anxiety level, due to what he interpreted as his inability to achieve, began to rise until interference was so severe that he began to have debilitating panic attacks and developed symptoms of obsessive-compulsive disorder. With a change to a school that understood the 2e child, counseling, appropriate attention to his learning disability, and a project-based curriculum focusing on his area of interest in political anthropology, he was slowly able to work through the anxiety, take more risks, and found ways to tap into his potential once again.

L was the "hidden" 2e child as he was not eligible for any special services for his learning disability or for his gifts as his test scores showed that he was "average." His music became his passion, which carried him through bouts of depression stemming from a deep sense of frustration, sense of being misunderstood, and isolation. He was able to attend a college that did not require the SAT, as he had never been able to perform on tests to a level commensurate with his potential, even though an early neuropsychological evaluation had shown a 129 IQ. In college, he found for the first time a sense of intellectual challenge, which engaged and empowered him. Although he still struggled with the mechanics of writing, he was stimulated to work hard and seek help when necessary, and he found better than "average" success. He was able to succeed but on his own with many silent struggles. Who knows what he could have achieved had he had support and encouragement from the educational system? This is the profile of the 2e child that we still need to learn how to identify and support in the future.

All of these children represent the kinds of students we see at The Quad Preparatory School, and we have found that many of the best practices that we use not only benefit our students but would work with all children. There is still so much to learn about each of these children and how to unlock their potential. We have a large key ring and need to find the right key for each door. If we cannot find the right key in what we have, we forge a new one until we find success.

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