Teaching the Twice Exceptional

A VIEWER’S GUIDE
“2e: Twice Exceptional introduced many viewers to the concept that students can have extraordinary strengths as well as learning challenges. This sequel takes the conversation deeper: now that we’ve identified these unique students, how exactly can teachers effectively educate them? 2e2: Teaching the Twice Exceptional offers innovative insights and strategies designed to help students thrive and learn to define themselves by their strengths instead of their weaknesses.”

Scott Barry Kaufman, Ph.D
author, researcher, speaker, and editor of Twice Exceptional: Supporting and Educating Bright and Creative Students with Learning Difficulties
A Personal Note from

Tom Ropelewski

Since I completed 2e: Twice Exceptional three years ago, I’ve attended screenings at educational conferences, film festivals, and with parent, teacher, and home-school groups across the country. These were cathartic events for many. People often found themselves in tears as they recognized their own children in the ones on the screen. Some of them hadn’t heard the terms “twice-exceptional” or “2e” before. Many felt isolated, misunderstood, and stigmatized. One mother told me that she and her daughter had recently met with their school counselor about an IEP and were told that the girl couldn’t qualify for both the system’s gifted and LD programs. She had to pick just one—there was no “box” for a child who was gifted and learning-differenced. A fourteen-year-old home-schooler thanked me for making a film about “kids like me.”

This was exactly my hope when I had made the film—to connect people who were going through the same issues that my wife and I were with our own son, to let them know they weren’t alone, that with time and support and the right environment their kids could be okay, that there was light at the end of the tunnel.

At the same time, I was using these screenings to gather intel. What questions did people have after watching the first documentary? Was anything confusing or unclear? What did they want to know more about? Sometimes the post-screening Q&A sessions lasted longer than the film itself.

Some of the most persistent questions I received were from teachers in the audience:

I know I have 2e students in my classroom… the bright boy who can never turn in his homework on time… the painfully shy girl who’s a science whiz but who shuts down when she has to work in a group… the kid who sits in the corner and just wants to draw superheroes all day (and draws them extremely well). If I dig deeper and find out that they’re 2e, then what? How do I get them engaged in my classroom activities? I know I’m failing them – what can I do? What exactly happens in a Bridges classroom?

With these questions, I went back to Bridges Academy and talked with headmaster Carl Sabatino about the possibility of a follow-up film. This one would focus on teachers, the issues they face on a daily basis with 2e students, and how they try to solve them.

What I discovered is that the challenges teachers face are as complicated and varied as each of these unique students, but that the path to solutions seemed to lay within the Bridges “strength-based, talent-focused” philosophy.

Bridges Academy is a relatively small but thriving private school, and its influence is growing across the country and internationally. A recent symposium on 2e education hosted by the school drew participants from Australia, Chile, and Japan. I think part of the reason for the success of the Bridges model is that the tools and strategies that educators there are developing—to engage students in learning, to help them understand their gifts and challenges, and to prepare them to find their places in the world—can be used to benefit any student, anywhere. Because who wouldn’t rather be defined by what they can do, rather than what they can’t?

Tom Ropelewski
Producer/Director
The 2e Center provides opportunities for professionals to connect and share expertise about twice-exceptional education.

To learn more about twice-exceptionality and “strength-based, talent-focused” learning environments, and for information about additional resources, news of upcoming symposia, workshops, and learning opportunities, stay tuned to the 2e Center link on the Bridges Academy website: www.bridges.edu/center

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Why This Documentary Matters

The documentary 2e2: Teaching the Twice Exceptional provides a fresh perspective on educating students who, because their brains are wired differently, do not thrive in a traditional classroom with its expectations and requirements. Many of these students are identified as twice exceptional (2e).

In general, what defines 2e students is their individual mix of high abilities and special needs—differences such as learning disabilities, attention deficits, and behavioral difficulties. There is no typical 2e person; instead there is a richness of cognitive diversity. In some cases, certain abilities and talents may arise in concert with learning challenges.

Historically when a student is diagnosed with learning differences, teachers and parents quickly focus on remediating deficit(s)—often at the expense of discovering and nurturing that student’s abilities and interests.

Throughout this film you will see that long-term, sustainable progress can be made by embracing the idea that 2e students do not need to be “fixed.” They are not broken.

When we understand how a 2e child learns best—and acknowledge all the aspects of twice exceptionality—we are afforded a more optimistic view of that child’s possibilities.

This documentary provides a vivid picture of what happens when 2e students are able to engage in learning in a psychologically supportive environment guided by the belief that a strength-based, talent focused education yields the highest benefits.

Susan Baum, Ph.D.
Director, The 2e Center for Research and Professional Development

Robin Schader, Ph.D.
Trustee, Bridges Academy
Much of the information in this guide is adapted from the book
*To Be Gifted and Learning Disabled: Strength-Based Strategies for Helping Twice-Exceptional Students With LD, ADHD, ASD, and More*
(Baum, Schader, & Owen, 2017, Prufrock Press).
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   Producer/Director

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   Head of Bridges Academy
“I have learned first and foremost to look for interests, talents, strengths, shades of strengths or the mere suggestion of a talent. Knowing that a person builds a happy and successful life not on remediated weaknesses but on developed strengths, I have learned to place those strengths at the top of what matters.”

Edward Hallowell (2005)

**Strength**

/streNG(k)TH/

*noun*

1. the quality or state of being strong, in particular.

2. a good or beneficial quality or attribute of a person or thing.

“the strengths and weaknesses of their sales and marketing operation”

**synonyms**: strong point, advantage, asset, forté, aptitude, talent, skill; speciality

“What are your strengths?”
The Setting

2e2: Teaching the Twice Exceptional takes place at Bridges Academy, a school for twice-exceptional students where strengths, talents, and interests are recognized, leveraged to support skill development, and nurtured in their own right.

Far from being a therapeutic school, Bridges Academy focuses on providing a safe, intellectually vibrant learning community with opportunities to enrich students’ experiences and develop their abilities and talents.

The Bridges Academy Community understands that:

1. 2e students grow academically, socially, and emotionally when they are valued for what they can do — not identified by what they cannot do.

2. 2e students benefit from a learning environment with small class sizes in which the curriculum is dually differentiated — designed to develop their special talents while providing strategies to compensate for problematic weaknesses.

3. 2e students need the gift of time that allows them to develop at their own pace without rushing or pushing.

4. 2e students require intellectual and social peers (who can range across age groups) to stimulate learning and healthy relationships.

5. 2e students thrive with patient faculty and staff members who respect students’ abilities, who are highly intelligent, and who perceive students as young people with great potential.

Throughout the movie you will see classroom environments, instructional strategies, and practices that allow students to learn in ways that reflect different kinds of minds, align to cognitive strengths, talents, or interests, and reduce social and emotional roadblocks to learning. Notice that focusing on strengths is beneficial for students, teachers, and parents alike. This perspective highlights the role of schools as places of discovery and opportunity.
Themes in 2e2

Putting strengths at the “top of what matters” requires a community that is on the lookout for when each child is at his or her personal best.

There are three main ideas to consider when using a strength-based approach to designing a curriculum:

1) to understand and value that brains are wired differently
2) to recognize that different kinds of learners thrive in different kinds of environments
3) to offer Talent Development Opportunities (TDOs), which help students develop skills and prepare them to be successful adults.

1. Brains are wired differently

There is no longer a question that each human brain is wired differently in terms of how it perceives the world and how it processes and organizes information. But the differences presented by 2e students can be difficult to understand, especially because their brains are not always attuned to the requirements of traditional learning.

We find that the metaphor of green offers a way to better grasp the complexity of twice-exceptional students. Each has distinguishing strengths (think yellow) and complex challenges (think blue). As we know with painting, when you mix yellow and blue, you get green.

Although this two-dimensional representation of green risks implying that each student is a static blend or type, the reality is that each student moves across the spectrum from yellow to blue at different times, within different environments, and in response to changing conditions. Twice-exceptional students come in a wide and ever-changing range of greens.

All of us can recognize various “yellows” and “blues” within ourselves. But, as shown in the next diagram, it is the mix of extreme abilities and challenging deficits that makes it so difficult for 2e students to navigate the world around them.
Intriguingly, within the last decade, professionals have noted that the wiring that makes the “blue” condition can also result in a “yellow” advantage. Consider the work of Drs. Fernette and Brock Eide, whose groundbreaking book *The Dyslexic Advantage* outlines major strengths of the dyslexic brain:

“...dyslexic brains...show an alternative pattern of processing that affects the way they process information across the board. Dyslexic brains are organized in a way that maximizes strength in making big picture connections at the expense of weaknesses in processing fine details.”

(https://www.wired.com/2011/09/dyslexic-advantage/)

**Notice in film:**
“Green” students struggle with their incongruous mix of gifts and disabilities. There are students with ADHD, Specific Language Disabilities (SLD, including dyslexia, dysgraphia, and phonological disorder), Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), anxiety, and mood disorders—as well as combinations of learning differences. Simultaneously, there is evidence of remarkable talents, in-depth interests, advanced understandings, and enthusiasm for learning.
Here are a few examples of the challenges and benefits for three types of brain wiring observable in the film:

**DYSLEXIC WIRING**

As the Eides point out, while these brains do not develop in ways that give them the educational skill sets of reading and writing according to expected timelines, they are developing a “problem-solving apparatus” that is “especially good at putting together big pictures, or seeing larger context, or imagining how processes will play out over time.” (see the resources section on page 24 for more information about the Eides’ work).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Challenges</strong></th>
<th><strong>Benefits</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trouble decoding written language</td>
<td>Can be metaphorical thinkers. Because they make connections between and among disciplines, they can see things that others miss.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor spelling and handwriting</td>
<td>Seeing 3-D spatial perspectives is easy for them. For example, they may think like architects, engineers, or builders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty with rote memorization of facts and remembering details</td>
<td>Excellent at narrative reasoning—recalling stories, episodes, and concepts. They profit from experiential learning.</td>
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ADHD WIRING

Students with an ADHD brain can’t always pay attention in class or concentrate on a task. They can be disruptive to others. But, as child and adult psychiatrist Edward Hallowell argues, “There is also a “gifted” side to ADD that packs the power to propel the child or adult to success, even greatness. It’s all about tapping into the “mirror traits” of the negative symptoms associated with ADD, which can become amazing assets.” (see resources on page 24).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenges</th>
<th>Benefits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Easily distracted, selectively attentive, difficulty completing tasks</td>
<td>Often creative, intuitive thinkers with a flair for innovation and out-of-the-box thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hyperactive, needs stimulation and movement</td>
<td>Can have high energy and enthusiasm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impulsive and disorganized</td>
<td>May be risk takers, adventurous spirits, seek novelty, and show curiosity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN was a scientific, political, and literary genius and was thought to be challenged with ADHD.
Dr. Temple Grandin, noted animal scientist and autism advocate, describes ASD students as “differently-abled” learners who are concrete thinkers and often have in-depth interests. They can also be cognitively rigid, have difficulty considering multiple points of view or engaging in topics that don’t interest them. Many autistic students excel at visual thinking, which can allow them to focus on details. They can also excel at following directions and functioning in a rule-based, predictable environment. They are logical, “if, then” thinkers and often gravitate toward math and science. (see resources on page 24).

### ASD WIRING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenges</th>
<th>Benefits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inability to grasp the big picture or read between the lines</td>
<td>Can be knowledgeable, skilled, and passionate in a particular area and highly motivated to pursue that area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social awkwardness, a lack of social skills and social awareness</td>
<td>Has the ability to focus intently on details of things and situations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A need for predictability. Often overwhelmed by exposure to sensory stimuli</td>
<td>Tends to be logical (very helpful in decision-making where emotions may interfere). Sees the world in black and white and communicates with total honesty</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Marie Curie was a chemistry genius and was thought to be challenged with ASD.
2. Starting with strengths

To discover what constitutes a positive, strength-based learning environment, we must first get to know our students on a broad-based level that includes identifying how and when a student is motivated, comfortable, and intellectually engaged. This happens when a school community invests time and effort in observing students as they participate in activities designed to uncover the ways they shine as individuals, as well as when they work in concert with others (or not).

In the film, you will hear about Starting with Strengths Days. At Bridges, the first two days of the school year are devoted to activities that will help teachers “jump start” their understanding of their students very quickly. Students complete a questionnaire called My LearningPrint™ in which they make note of their interests and activities (both academic and at home), perceived strengths, and preferences in subjects and learning conditions. It is a non-judgmental document that reveals a unique “learning fingerprint.”

My LearningPrint™ is part of a suite of four tools designed to be used actively throughout the school year and beyond. The other tools are:

- **C.L.U.E.S.™** is an acronym for Collect information, Look for connections, Uncover patterns, Explore different perspectives, and Synthesize findings.

- **Quick Personality Indicator™ (QPI)** is a personality styles questionnaire to show how we organize our worlds and how we relate to others.

- **Creating Possibilities™** has two distinct sections—
  1. **Plan for Success™**, a sketchpad for designing learning opportunities that leverage interests and strengths to build necessary academic and personal skills.
  2. **Talent Development Opportunity Maker™** (TDO), a form to organize purposefully selected opportunities for developing a student’s expertise in an area of strength, interest, and talent (both within and outside of school).

The information gathered with these tools is shared between teachers and modified as the students grow and develop new interests. Some of it is shared within the classroom, since it can help students establish connections with their peers—for example, it may be useful for students to know that there are others who share their passion for entomology, archaeology, chess, scouting, or other activities outside the regular classroom. In addition, the information provides a basis for productive conversations with parents.

During Starting With Strengths Days, the students also engage in non-academic exercises that allow the teachers to observe them in action as they solve problems individually and in groups. To conclude the days, teachers meet to share their observations and initial hypotheses about how best to connect with each student and how to create optimal learning environments to accommodate that year’s diversity of minds.
3. Environments for different kinds of learners

Optimal learning environments for 2e students are heavily determined by their unique cognitive profiles. In order for learning to be successful, it is critical to discover what that would entail—noteing that the environment includes not only the intellectual climate of a classroom, but also the social/emotional context and the physical space.

In the Schoolwide Enrichment Model, Drs. Renzulli and Reis present a diagram that illustrates why environments matter. They note that gifted behaviors (found at the intersection of achievement, creativity, and task commitment) are not consistently present. Instead, they occur in certain people (not all people), at certain times (not all times), and under certain circumstances (not all circumstances).

![Gifted behaviors are present:](image)


That is why it behooves us, as caring adults, to discover and create the circumstances and times in which a student can do his or her best, as well as note the times and circumstances in which it is difficult for a student to learn.
A. The Physical Environment

Learning style theorists are clear that no single learning environment suits all learners—certain physical conditions can enhance (or detract from) the ability to learn.

Ideally, students are encouraged to discover their own preferences by trying different alternatives and then selecting what works best for them as they complete assignments, listen to lectures or discussions, or get themselves as organized as possible.

Things to keep in mind:

Typically students with dyslexic wiring do well with visual information. They find it helpful to access resources that include websites, video clips, podcasts, audio books, and graphic novels. Resources that enable productivity can include art and building materials, and computer programs for work in filmmaking, composing, or graphic design.

Students with ADHD need a physical environment that allows for movement—chairs that rock, podiums at which students can stand during lessons or “seat-work,” and instruction that incorporates movement into the design of the lesson.

ASD students need environments where there are quiet spaces—classroom areas that allow them to shut out excessive stimuli, or headphones that block external noise. These students may do well with fidgets and places to move (or even swing) in order to refocus.

Notice in film:
- The different options available for seating and movement in the classroom
- How technology is used to support and enhance learning and productivity
- The ways students are grouped together and why
B. The Social & Emotional Environment

The emotional climate of a classroom can promote a sense of well-being and acceptance in which each child feels like a valued member of the community—or it can be a place of anxiety with fear of punishment, ridicule, and unreasonable demands for highly sensitive students. Anxiety and stress compromise all aspects of learning—often resulting in lower performance and negative behaviors.

A positive learning environment is one in which students feel respected. Diversity, in the largest sense of the word, needs to be recognized and honored. For this to happen, opportunities must be created for all students to exhibit what they are good at doing.

**Things to keep in mind:**

Twice-exceptional students frequently lack skills in emotional and social regulation, organization, stress management, and conflict management. They may be easily overwhelmed by negativity or excessive demands, and find themselves unable to cope emotionally with academic and behavioral expectations.

Dyslexic students can feel supported when **creative thinking is encouraged and their expertise in seeing the big picture and explaining the world metaphorically is acknowledged and valued by others.** They function best when teachers don’t place a premium on reading and writing, but instead offer options for students to communicate what they have learned in a variety of ways.

Students with ADHD focus and engage best when **learning is active and assignments provide broad boundaries within which their creative minds can bounce.** Adult tolerance for humor (sometimes irreverent) and a respect for their often out-of-the-box thinking builds trust and provides a basis for forming relationships.

ASD students **benefit from authentic opportunities to practice social awareness and build skills contextually** (during field trips, interviews, and other “real world” activities). Structured programs for decision making such as Creative Problem Solving (CPS) with its predetermined steps and guidelines allow these students to generate alternatives and gain perspective of the ideas of others. Tolerance and respect among the teacher and peers for ASD students’ tendency for “black and white” thinking, their unabashed honesty, and their need for explicit social cues are critically important to create a positive emotional climate for these students.

**Notice in film:**
- How teachers demonstrate patience and acceptance of brain differences
- That issues of time are addressed in a variety of ways
- The impact of perfectionism
- The range of strategies used to reduce anxiety
C. Intellectual Environment

Twice-exceptional students require an environment that engages intellect and specific interests and talents while accounting strategically for deficits. Through dual differentiation, students are offered multiple ways to access, process, and communicate information that both address their abilities and also allow them to circumvent their challenges.

Things to keep in mind:

For students with dyslexic brains, it is necessary to introduce intellectually stimulating material in ways other than through print. Students are encouraged to use graphic organizers, visual maps, and three-dimensional models. Teachers offer a variety of product choices other than writing to demonstrate understanding of the curriculum.

For ADHD brains, some of the same strategies used for dyslexic brains are appropriate, especially if the students are spatial thinkers. For these students, learning strategies would include lessons that allow for divergent thinking, open-ended assignments, experiential activities, and problem based activities.

ASD brains fare well when the intellectual environment includes sequential learning, focuses on elaboration and details, and includes factual information. For them the optimal intellectual environment would include opportunities for scientific and logical thinking, along with time to pursue their own interests.

Notice in film:
- Students are given choices to demonstrate their mastery of concepts
- How instructional strategies are aligned to different minds
- The ways in which students’ interests and talents are integrated into lessons
- How students are engaged in authentic learning and problem solving
- The levels of questioning and discussion taking place
4. Talent Development Opportunities (TDOs)

Individual gifts, like seeds, begin to develop when the conditions are right. Otherwise, they may remain unseen, dormant, and never come to fruition.

**Stages of Talent Development**

- **Latent**: Initial stage where potential is present but not yet realized.
- **Emergent**: Stage where initial growth and development begin to show.
- **Manifest**: Fully realized stage where talents are fully developed and expressed.

From *Applying Gifted Education Pedagogy in the General Education Classroom: Professional Development Module*  
The National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented, 2004

Talent development opportunities (TDOs) engage students and help them develop skills in areas of their interests and talents. Such activities are intrinsically motivating and move students from novice towards expert in specific domains. When students view learning as purposeful and relevant, they are willing to stay in the struggle, tackle new skills, and produce high-level work. In the process, they enhance their cognitive and social skills.

For students with manifest talents—those already on a path to expertise—TDOs provide a plethora of varied opportunities to practice and hone their craft. Interestingly, in the film Michel’s father said that his son hardly ever practices drumming more than ten minutes a day. However, when we meet Michel in his classroom, he’s clapping in a complicated polyrhythm, playing in music class, in performances, and supporting his classmates musically. Since practice is often defined as to perform (an activity) or exercise (a skill) repeatedly or regularly in order to maintain or improve one’s proficiency, the father’s comment opens an interesting discussion about what practice means in different situations.

Exciting energy develops when accomplished adults take mentoring roles. For example, there is mutual enjoyment and respect (as well as inspiration) when Musician’s Hall of Fame inductee Don Peake plays alongside student musicians.
In the film, you see different kinds of TDOs. While these experiences may seem like “extras” (usually optional in a traditional setting), they constitute an essential part of educational programs for twice-exceptional students.

**Semester-long Enrichment Clusters** are mixed-age groups of students who come together by interest. They work collaboratively on creative projects within specific domains with students contributing according to their individual capabilities. For example, the Horticulture Group engages in beautifying the campus with drought-resistant plants.

Students are involved in **Problem/Project-Based Learning Weeks** twice a year. These opportunities are based on authentic issues in the real world and allow students to work as practicing professionals in an area of ability or interest. Students develop executive functioning skills (such as planning, time management, and collaboration). In the 2e2 movie, you will observe students planning their own participation in a larger class-wide project involving the establishment of a society on a remote island. The student documentarians were charged with filming the other groups as they created a government that could protect the island’s fragile ecology yet allow sustainable economic growth for its citizens.

Classes such as **Robotics First, Jazz & Rock Band, Drama Club, and Automobile Restoration** are other opportunities chosen by students to develop their interests and talents. In these TDOs we see talents shine….and any deficits can be undetectable.

During high school, all students participate in the **Young Expert (“Badges”)** program. This program requires students to define an in-depth project in an area of interest and talent, create a plan, and work with faculty coaches to reach their goal. In the process, students learn to manage time and be responsible for their own learning. When they show sufficient evidence of achievement, they are awarded badges. An accumulation of badges in a domain results in a “Young Expert” status.
5. Dealing with obstacles to successful learning

Although twice-exceptional students are talented in a variety of areas, they face many obstacles to achieving success. Due to the gap between what they can and cannot do, and their history of failure (along with inappropriate expectations), 2e students are not always emotionally available for learning. Anxiety is the primary culprit. Most of these bright but challenged students experience some level of anxiety; in some instances, it interferes with cognitive processes. Others suffer from unhealthy perfectionism as they doubt their own capacity to produce high level work. Afraid that their performance will never be good enough, or that their execution won’t match the ideals they imagine, they will either procrastinate or fail to complete assignments, thereby avoiding external evaluation.

Many are slow processors of information, which results in the need for more time to complete tasks. In addition, because of their asynchrony, these students may not have met developmental milestones at predictable stages. Time needs to be considered a critical variable in understanding the needs of the 2e learner. Finally, a major obstacle to success is the inability to produce work, especially if it involves writing.

Throughout the film you will notice how these variables negatively impact the students’ performance, and how a strength-based approach helps them overcome these challenges.

**Notice in film:**
- Students talking about their anxiety
- Methods teachers use to alleviate anxiety and perfectionism as they support students’ productivity
- How students are encouraged to write
- The role of talent development in helping students’ deal with these obstacles
For Discussion

1. The documentary begins with the idea that brains are wired differently. Consequently, students’ optimal ways of learning and their obstacles to learning vary. What did their responses to the question “How does your brain work?” reveal to you?

2. The documentary chronicles several individual lives and stories that turn out to have some important things in common. What unique strengths (of the students, teachers, and parents) did you observe? Which of the student strengths might not have been recognized in a traditional school or classroom setting?

3. What impressed you about the ways the students discussed their lives, talents, anxieties, coping strategies, and growth?

4. What expressions of anxiety or discomfort did you hear most clearly? What challenges did the students face? How did they successfully address these challenges?

5. Think of a current student (or one you taught in the past) who came to mind as you watched the students portrayed in this film. What might you do (or have done) as a result of insights gained from watching the film?
Glossary

Asynchrony refers to uneven developmental rates of a child’s intellectual, emotional, social, and motor skills. For example, a student demonstrating highly advanced intellectual abilities may have social or motor skills that lag substantially behind. In the prior film 2e: Twice Exceptional, a student explains, “I think I have the intelligence of someone a little older than my age, but emotionally I’m a very small child... and physically I’m right in the middle, so everything is just a bit off kilter.”

Dual Differentiation refers to meeting the needs of 2e students in the classroom by paying attention to and addressing high abilities and learning challenges simultaneously when teaching. For example, think of a student with high-level comprehension—one who benefits from sophisticated content but has reading limitations. Poetry could be an excellent entry point because many poets use simple language to convey complex ideas.

Enrichment Clusters are multi-age interest groups in which students come together once a week for 6-10 weeks to create a product or service in areas of interest. The teacher is a facilitator as students engage with real world problems and issues. The students consider their areas of strength and discuss the ways each might contribute to help the group meet its goal.

Interest includes what one is curious about, gives attention to, and has a desire to know more about it. According to Merriam-Webster, it is something “a person enjoys learning about or doing.”

Strength-based approaches aim for alignment of curriculum and educational experiences with a student’s unique mix of strengths, cognitive styles, profiles of intelligences, learning preferences, and experiences. This does not mean that students will only work in an area of strength and produce only in ways they prefer. Instead they are also challenged to grow in areas of weakness. Strengths are purposefully leveraged to help master skills and overcome problematic weaknesses in the core disciplines.

Talent-focus involves on-going identification and recognition of a student’s budding interests, as well as advanced abilities, along with explicit options for exploring and expressing those abilities and interests within and outside the curriculum. “Talent focus” is used as an overarching term that includes “talent development.”
Talent development refers to the process of encouraging and supporting abilities as a student moves from novice towards expert in a specific area. The skills are nurtured in their own right—not as an opening for remediation nor as a reward or motivator for achievement.

When watching the “Extras” to 2e2, Sally Reis, Ph.D. speaks about the Enrichment Triad Model (Renzulli, 1977) in which she refers to Type I, Type II, and Type III activities.

Type I Activities highlight exploration and offer exposure to potential areas of interest not necessarily found in the regular curriculum. Students with learning deficits may be introduced to ideas through lectures, demonstrations, movies, interest centers, or other approaches that bypass their weaknesses in reading. These activities are meant to expose students to new ideas in a non-threatening atmosphere.

Type II Activities provide training in how-to-learn areas (such as critical thinking, creativity, and problem solving, using the authentic skills of a discipline). For example, students who are interested in history will learn how historians conduct inquiry—using primary sources, triangulating data, and reporting findings using timelines and documentary films.

Type III Activities are those in which students become active investigators of relevant, real world issues. Students (as individuals or groups) are mentored in the development of a product that will impact an intentional audience, preferably outside the school setting. The student collects data, uses authentic skills of the discipline (as well as relevant materials or experiences that are frequently outside his or her comfort zone) to accomplish a goal in an area of high interest. Along the way, the student often learns how to self-regulate. And, thanks to on-going reflection and discussion between the student and mentor during the process, the student comes to understand that he or she is capable of focusing, persisting, and accomplishing a worthwhile project.
Resources

Live links for each of the resources described in this brief annotated list can be found on the 2e Center resources page at: http://www.bridges.edu/center.

The 2e Twice-Exceptional Newsletter is written for parents, professionals, and educators. It provides articles on topics such as identification, schools, and programs, parenting issues, and book reviews. In addition, the publishers offer the “Spotlight on 2e Series,” a selection of useful booklets including “The Mythology of Learning: Understanding Common Myths about 2e Learners” and “Parenting Your Twice-exceptional Child.”


Hallowell, E. & Ratey, J. (2017). Delivered from distraction: Getting the most out of life with attention deficit disorder. New York: Random House. This book paints a picture of people with ADD who are described as “original, charismatic, energetic, often brilliant.” It describes the extraordinary talents and gifts embedded in their highly charged but easily distracted minds.

Bridges Academy: Educating the Exceptional$^2$

Bridges Academy is unlike any other college preparatory school — independent, charter, or public. Our promise is to use our strength-based program to unlock human potential. Our program is student-centered and life-changing.

We educate a unique population of students with learning differences who are amazingly bright, outside-the-box thinkers, and capable of developing expertise at a very young age in any number of fields—from robotics to religion, string theory to Sanskrit, politics to poetry.

We believe it is possible and necessary to leverage strengths and to tap into student passions when designing and aligning educational experiences for learners. In a dynamic, supportive community of excited teachers and engaged parents, anything is possible.

We look forward to working with you through the 2e Center.

Carl Sabatino
Head of School
Bridges Academy
THE SUITE OF TOOLS™

Discover and include the person in a strength-based, talent-focused, personalized approach. Using these four evidence-based tools can lead to big changes in motivation and engagement.

1. **C.L.U.E.S.™**
   (Schader & Baum, 2016)

2. **My LearningPrint™**

3. **Baum-Nicols Quick Personality Indicator™ (QPI)**
   (Baum & Nicols, 2008, rev. 2015)

   (Baum & Schader, 2015)

For more information, contact the 2e Center at Bridges Academy (818) 506-1091, or order at www2emovie.com