Academic self-concept in twice-exceptional students: An exploratory investigation

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Doctor of Philosophy

School of Education and Professional Studies
Griffith University
July 2014
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<tr>
<td>ACER</td>
<td>Australian Council for Educational Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADA</td>
<td>Anti-discrimination Act</td>
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<tr>
<td>AGAT</td>
<td>Australian General Ability Test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANOVA</td>
<td>Analysis of variance between groups</td>
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<td>ASD</td>
<td>Autism spectrum disorder</td>
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<td>BASC-2</td>
<td>Behavioural Assessment for Children 2nd edition</td>
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<tr>
<td>BFLPE</td>
<td>Big-fish-little-pond effect</td>
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<tr>
<td>DDA</td>
<td>Disability Discrimination Act</td>
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<td>DMTG</td>
<td>Differentiated Model for Giftedness and Talent</td>
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<td>INC</td>
<td>Inconsistent Responding index, part of PH-2, which is designed to identify random response patterns.</td>
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<td>IQ</td>
<td>Intelligence Quotient</td>
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<td>MYAT</td>
<td>Middle Years Ability Test</td>
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<td>NAPLAN</td>
<td>National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy</td>
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<td>PH2</td>
<td>Piers-Harris Children’s Self-Concept Scale 2nd edition</td>
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<td>PRS</td>
<td>Parent rating scale, part of BASC-2, on which the parent describes their child’s observable behaviour</td>
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<td>QCS</td>
<td>Queensland Core Skills</td>
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<td>RBl</td>
<td>Response Bias index</td>
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<tr>
<td>SB 5</td>
<td>Stanford Binet 5th edition</td>
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<tr>
<td>SDH</td>
<td>Structured development history, part of which allows the researcher to gather information on the child’s background history</td>
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<td>SOS</td>
<td>Student observational system, part of the BASC-2, for recording and classifying directly observed classroom behaviours</td>
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<td>SRP</td>
<td>Self-report scale, part of BASC-2, on which the child can indicate his emotional self-perceptions</td>
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<tr>
<td>TRS</td>
<td>Teacher rating scale, part of BASC-2, on which the teacher gathers descriptions of the child’s observable behaviour</td>
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<td>t-test</td>
<td>A statistical hypothesis test in which the test statistic follows a student's ‘t’ distribution, if the null hypothesis is supported. It is most commonly applied when the test statistic would follow a normal distribution</td>
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Declaration

This work has not been previously submitted in any University. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the dissertation contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the dissertation itself.

Signed:……………………………………………………………………

Geraldine Townend

17 September, 2014
Dedication

To my beloved family and friends for always supporting, helping, and standing by me.

“I have not failed 700 times. I have not failed once. I have succeeded in proving that those 700 ways will not work. When I have eliminated the ways that will not work, I will find the way that will work.” Thomas Edison.
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Abstract

Academic self-concept relates to students’ perceptions of their academic accomplishments, academic competence and their expectations of academic success or failure. Academic self-concept has been identified as being critical for academic success in school as it underpins educational aspirations, academic interest, course selection, and achievement over time.

Twice-exceptional students are gifted with a coexisting disability. Twice-exceptional students present as a dual paradox for education systems, both in terms of being gifted and having a disability, and in terms of the lamentable lack of nurturing of a potential resource both for the individual and also at a national level. The paradox of two, or one, or neither of the exceptionalities being visible in a child in school is due primarily to outward behaviours, lack of community knowledge, and challenges with identification (Vail, 1989). Despite over twenty years of empirical research on twice-exceptional students, the influences on academic self-concept remain virtually unexplored.

Australian professional teaching standards call for educators to design and implement learning experiences that value diversity. The teaching standards include identifying individual learning needs and adopting strategies for teaching students with disabilities, for those who are gifted, and for those who are twice-exceptional. Few studies have investigated the ways in which psychosocial, school, and academic experiences influence twice-exceptional students.

This research investigates the psychosocial influences on the school experience for twice-exceptional students and how these influences shape academic self-concept. A qualitative case study research design included both quantitative instrument data in addition to interview data. This research was undertaken at a private boys’ school in South East Queensland. The school has a proactive approach to twice-exceptional students and, at the time of data collection, was one of the few schools in the region recognising and aiming to cater for the unique needs of twice-exceptional students.

Findings provide new understanding about the psychosocial influence on academic self-concept for twice-exceptional students with key influences being generated mainly by teachers in the school context, and secondly by peers. This research contributes to a gap
in the field, and leads to a better understanding that can be applied to policy and practice for gifted education.