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Walden University
2018

Abstract

Social and Emotional Learning Needs of Gifted Students

by

Derek Allen Phelan

MA, University of Northern Colorado, 2009

BS, Hope College, 2004

Project Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Walden University

January 2018

Abstract

Compared to their peers, gifted and talented (GT) students have unique social and emotional needs. As schools mandated social and emotional learning goals for each GT student, support at the state level was limited. The purpose of the study was to answer the guiding question of how students could benefit from implementing key elements in a GT social and emotional curriculum. The study was guided by Corso's approach to promoting and developing positive social-emotional behavior. Data were collected from questionnaires administered to 32 statewide GT experts. Semistructured interviews were conducted with 10 of those GT experts. Thematic data analysis followed an open coding process to identify emergent themes. The findings revealed key elements that should be in place for a successful GT social and emotional curriculum: (a) a dedicated time in the school schedule for affective curriculum, (b) GT students seeking an understanding of identity and GT characteristics, (c) creating partnerships for social and emotional curriculum, (d) properly trained staff, including an understanding of the characteristics of GT students, (e) affective goal setting, (f) adequate resources for instruction, and (g) a process for intensive interventions when needed. This study included the creation of a professional development project to support integration of a social and emotional curriculum for GT programs. The study and project have implications for positive social change: By guiding schools seeking to implement a social and emotional curriculum into a current GT program, student behavior and learning outcomes are fostered.

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Acknowledgments

I would first like to thank the Dr. Ellis who pushed me to finish when I was doubting myself. Things only took off when Dr. Ellis saw my potential and guided through this difficult process. I am incredibly grateful for her feedback and professional friendship. Professionally, I would like to thank Amy and Jennifer for helping me brainstorm ideas and lend an ear. Lynn for editing and being an overall saint. Personally, I would like to thank my husband Jason and my family for their support.

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Section 1: The Problem

Introduction

Experts argue that social and emotional learning (SEL) should be more prevalent in today's gifted and talented (GT) curriculum. However, there is not a consensus on why there is a lack of attention to the SEL of gifted students (Cross, 2011; Peterson & Lorimer, 2012). While current research does not support or refute the concept that GT children need less social and emotional attention compared to their peers, GT students do have unique social and emotional needs (Van Tasel-Baska, Cross, & Olecnhak, 2009). Rinn, Plucker, and Stocking (2010) promoted nonacademic education such as SEL and indicated how social skills influence student achievement. Many teachers and parents realize that all students need to be able to live in a complex, interpersonal world, and that a higher IQ, or intelligence quotient, cannot substitute for an interpersonal skill set.

As human beings, it is important that students grow socially and emotionally as well as intellectually (Corso, 2007). Social and emotional factors enhance or impede academic and student achievement (Elias et al., 2010). In a complex workforce, it is imperative that students, who will be future employees, should be equipped with all skills needed to succeed in the 21st century. Exceptional cognitive or technical ability cannot replace a lack of social and emotional skills (Whetten & Cameron, 2007).

GT students have unique affective needs that are currently being underserved; therefore, it is important to develop a support system to meet their SEL needs (Moon, 2006). Focusing on ensuring that the entire child is being developed will help shift the developmental process.

According to Moon (2006) standardized tests have monopolized educators' time and attention. Tucker (2010) asserted that lack of funding and resources have been the main causes of a lack of attention to SEL for GT students. Accordingly, many GT teachers lack skill for dealing with the social and emotional well-being of GT students (McGee & Hughes, 2011). School districts and individual schools may find it arduous to shift some of their focus from standardized testing to GT SEL, to generate extra finances to support GT SEL, and to provide professional development on affective education for GT teachers (McGee & Hughes; Moon, 2006).

The Local Problem

In the state where the site is located, the Advanced Learning Plan (ALP) for middle school GT students is defined as "a planning guide for making instructional decisions about materials, programming options and assessments for gifted students based upon strengths, interests, and social-emotional needs" (Gifted Education – ALP, Advanced Learning Plan, 2008, p. 1). While this plan addresses "social-emotional" needs, the ALP mandated students to set social or emotional goals until 2013 (Gifted Education-- Advanced Learning Plan [ALP], 2008, p. 1). In the study state, the state government indicated that in 2013, in addition to identifying GT students creating academic goals, students and teachers should also create a social and emotional development goal.

The state Department of Education had good intentions about ensuring that students include an affective educational goal in their ALP, but the new affective goals could not be implemented because the state Department of Education had not yet created

a social-emotional aspect in the curriculum. At that time little support was given to actively enacting the mandated goals. Many GT students generated goals, but then received little support in achieving them. Many educators needed help to determine which guidelines or programming should be used to meet the prescribed goals, which classroom strategies should be used to teach affective education, and which students should be targeted for interventions (Peterson, 2012). Interventions are necessary when the GT student has social and emotional needs that have been targeted through various other methods, such as classroom strategies, but those strategies are ineffective. The interventions may also be put in place because the students' unique social and emotional needs are effecting their learning or well-being.

As of the 2017-2018 school year, at the local site, there was no school-wide GT affective curriculum for teachers to follow, a curriculum that would help students develop a stronger social and EI. Schools similar to the local school, which previously had no affective curriculum in place, were being forced to build a new GT curriculum with no additional funding, guidance, or direction. According to Peterson (2010), the level of comfort and confidence many teachers possessed when implementing SEL to gifted students was low; but their confidence grew as they developed skills from training. Creating a professional development model that supports teacher training can help teachers develop their students' social and emotional intelligence while increasing their own knowledge of teaching social and emotional skills (Mcgee & Hughes, 2011).

According to Van Tassel-Baska, Cross, and Olecnhak (2009), the lack of attention and support for the social and emotional needs of the GT was not just local, but national

Other schools can benefit by addressing this problem. According to Jolly and Kettler (2008), many schools have shifted the educational focus to purely academic skills. With the intense pressure placed on schools to generate high results on standardized testing, it makes sense that programming and the teacher's focus be on high academic achievement rather than the other parts of the child (Moon, 2006). Typically, GT students have high cognitive ability; therefore, they are pushed even harder to achieve higher scores on standardized tests (Jolly & Kettler, 2008). GT students characteristically receive high marks on their report cards and on standardized tests, so teachers often pay little attention to the social or emotional needs of these children (Jolly & Kettler, 2008).

Creating curriculum and support systems geared towards the social and emotional development of GT students will help teach the whole child, rather than just the cognitive aspect (Eddles-Hirsch, Vialle, Rogers, & McCormick, 2010). The state department of education mandated that children have a SEL goal, but setting a goal is important and having a plan and curriculum to achieve the goals becomes necessary (2010). Thus, if there is no viable plan or curriculum attached to the goal, the ALP becomes just more paperwork for students, parents, and teachers. In the absence of any curriculum or guidance on how GT students can achieve their goals, the federal and state government should consider providing direction, support, and resources that focus on SEL (Van Tasel-Baska et al., 2009). School districts can attempt to step up and develop curriculum, but many schools are left with little support, or direction, and are expected to do more work while resources are being reduced (2009).

In 2010, the federal government cut funding. This affected the Javitis program, which sought to improve GT services and targeted underrepresented GT students. The Javitis program could have been utilized for affective programming (U.S. Department of Education, 2012). The problem of lack of funding for affective programming at the federal level remains.

<div style="text-align:center">Rationale</div>

Evidence of the Problem at the Local Level

As of 2017, limited research had been directed toward programming, training, or implementing affective education for GT students at the school under study. At the study school, teachers adopted the pre-advanced placement program as the instrument used to boost academic rigor. Advanced placement is a program created by the College Board to prepare students for college level classes (College Board, 2015).

The rationale for instituting an affective education piece into the gifted program is important because there was no programming, training, or attention given to affective education for GT students. Many reasons have been presented regarding the lack of attention given to SEL in GT education.

Standardized tests have taken over educators' focus (Moon, 2006). Standardized testing has increased nationally in recent years and is continuing to rise (Wright, 2010). Additionally, lack of funding and additional responsibilities placed on schools could be the main cause for a lack of attention to SEL for GT students (Tucker, 2010).

Sometimes the stakes seem even higher academically for GT students because those GT students struggle to show growth. It is hard to show growth for some GT

students due to that fact that many of the students sit at the highest level of performance and improving a score that is already close to the top is hard (Megan, 2011). In the study school, the district focused heavily on creating an academic program because the school was having difficulty keeping GT students in the advanced range for standardized testing. Consequently, the local schools shied away from devoting attention to the social and emotional development of GT students, instead focusing purely on their cognitive abilities (Elias, DeFini, & Bergman, 2010).

In 2002, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) and in 2009, the Race to the Top legislation stressed teacher accountability based on student performance, so high-stakes test taking became increasingly important. Teachers across the nation began shifting their instruction to focus on teaching to the test (Elias, DeFini, & Bergman, 2010; Rakow, 2008). Experts in gifted education observed that schools had begun to focus on the bottom line of test scores even with their high learners, ensuring that each student would reach the appropriate standards in terms of cognitive ability (Jean, 2009; Megan, 2011).

Locally, the state Department of Education mandated that social studies be tested in schools beginning in 2014; thus, science, mathematics, reading, writing, and now social studies are included in standardized testing, placing additional emphasis on academic testing. Standardized tests are not expected to diminish in the future; hence, trying to shift the pendulum to educating the whole child, including the child's social and emotional needs, may be too lofty a goal (Tanis, 2014; Wright, 2010).

Inadequate funding is another problem in obtaining any GT resources because if there is no funding for GT resources, then there would be no funding for various GT

subtopics, such as GT SEL (Tucker, 2010). According to Tucker (2010), out of every

$100 spent in education the nation was spending 2 cents for GT students. Renzulli,

director of the National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented at the University of

Connecticut, stated that in many districts, GT coordinators and experts are "the last ones

hired and the first ones fired," which illustrates that GT funding is not seen as a top

priority (Brody, 2013, p. 1).

While some GT advocates believe petitioning the state and federal government

for more funding for GT students is a worthy cause, many teachers and their students

cannot afford to wait for the state and federal governments to act. In the local district,

funding has not been cut by the school district, but more responsibilities have been placed

on GT program coordinators and teachers. Many GT program coordinators in the local

schools must teach more classes, leaving them less time for supporting students and other

teachers. State mandates forced GT coordinators to track students more and keep

paperwork documenting their goals. Reddy and Newman (2009) indicated that students

with emotional problems consume most of the school's budget and programming.

Although many GT program coordinators are fighting for more staffing and higher

budgets, little is being given by the district or the state. While attempting to shift focus

away from high-stakes testing to SEL could be considered a noble cause, but to some

experts, this shift may not be realistic.

Many GT program teachers lack the skill sets for assuring the social and

emotional well-being of GT students (Tucker, 2010). Some experts believe that GT

educators need more professional development in the SEL of GT students in the

classroom (McGee & Hughes, 2011). In order to teach the child both socially and academically, teachers should be well educated about the distinctive characteristics of gifted students (Dombro, Jablon, & Stetson, 2011). If a GT student's needs are being ignored, the child's social or emotional interactions with his/her peers can be impacted (Reis & Renzulli, 2004). Enhancing a teacher's ability to understand SEL can help the teacher identify a child's social and emotional needs (Dombro, Jablon, & Stetson, 2011).

According to Zeidner and Matthews (2017), there is a need for more information and curriculum that support SEL gifted education. This study examined social and emotional strategies and curriculum that could be injected into current GT programs to address GT students' social and emotional needs, thereby strengthening the overall GT program.

Evidence of the Problem from the Professional Literature

According to the current literature, GT students have unique social and emotional needs; at the same time, employers are looking for employees who not only have a high cognitive expertise, but have strong social skills and can manage their own and others emotions (Clark, 2010; Manring, 2012). Educators have recognized that intellectual quotient is not the sole ingredient for gifted students' success (Renzulli, 2012). GT specialists have determined that students' EI and social intelligence need to be a major educational focus as well (Manring, 2012). Some research indicates that up to a quarter of all gifted children have low social intelligence, which results in their detaching from meaningful and gratifying social interactions (Gere, Capps, Mitchell, & Grubbs, 2010). Some of the social and emotional needs that gifted students experience include

asynchronous development (Harrison & Van Hanegham, 2011), overexcitability (Lamont, 2012), perfectionism (Mofield, 2008), underachievement (Neihart, 2006), victims of bullying (Boodman, 2006; Peterson, 2006), and social pressures. Social-emotional issues can be partnered with being gifted, such as "social isolation and loneliness, which may lead to depression, anxiety, phobias, and interpersonal problems" (Christopher & Shewmaker, 2010, p. 21). According to the literature, when working with a GT population educators need to address their unique and complex social and emotional needs

By addressing the GT students' affective needs, it will give them an advantage in their career by making them more socially and emotionally skillful (Manring, 2012). In the 21st century workforce, those individual workers who are able to manage relationships and navigate social networks with relative ease are highly desirable (Hilton, 2009). Emotional and social intelligence is critical for any student wishing to become a leader and develop leadership skills in the workplace (Killian, 2012). Businesses rely on employees working within a team, developing projects, and engaging in formal and casual networking (Clarke, 2010).

Business students need to be able to demonstrate high cognitive, behavioral, social, and emotional skills in order to be successful in a global business market (Hilton, 2009). Many other companies have noticed a void in what the business world coins their "soft skills," which means having strong communication skills, a hardworking mindset, a friendly and positive rapport with coworkers, and a willingness to learn **(**Bancino & Zevalkink, 2007; Harris & Rogers, 2008; Stoval et al., 2009). Ultimately, students who

can show their cognitive and technical mastery, while illustrating strong leadership

ability, produce the most sought after skills, which are highly marketable to companies

(Manring, 2012).   Employers have stated that focusing solely on cognitive intelligence is

a mistake, as emotional and social intelligence are vital in personal and professional

success (Killian, 2012). Organizations in various fields identified the need for employees

to be well-rounded intellectually, socially, and emotionally (Bancino & Zevalkink, 2007).

Focusing on SEL can serve the employer's and the employees' overall social and

emotional well-being. The purpose of this study was to identify key elements of a

successful GT social emotional curriculum that would give gifted students the well-

rounded experience they need to be successful.

Definitions

Affective curriculum: the interaction of two domains in Howard Gardner's

Multiple Intelligences theory (1983). Interpersonal intelligence refers to direct social

context in one's life by recognizing others' "actions and motivations." Intrapersonal

intelligence "refers to the understanding of oneself, cognitive style, feeling, and

emotions, and the ability to put this knowledge to use" (Johnson, 1983, p. 1).

Emotionally intelligent: the aptitude to manage, recognize, and distinguish one's

own emotions and others (Killan, 2012). Many researchers take EI to the next level,

indicating that emotionally intelligent people take their knowledge and perceptions

centering on emotions and utilize this information to influence their own thoughts and

actions (Far et al., 2013). Emotionally intelligent people typically can manage and

process their emotions in a way that is beneficial to them (Johnson, 2001).

Gifted: defined by the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as "students, children, or youth who give evidence of high achievement capability in areas such as intellectual, creative, artistic, or leadership capacity, or in specific academic fields, and who need services and activities not ordinarily provided by the school in order to fully develop those capabilities" [Title IX, Part A, Definition 22. (2002)]. Many states and districts follow the federal definition. Although educators have begun to shift the meaning of gifted to a broader definition, which could encompass creativity and leadership ability, in this study a more traditional sense of gifted, which generally means a student who has scored higher than 130 on an intelligence test, will be used (Ger et al., 2009; Karin & Doret, 2011).

Intrapersonal intelligence: comprehension of one's own emotions, using this information in a beneficial manner (Johnson, 2001).

Interpersonal intelligence: how one interacts and is able to understand the perceptions, motivations, and actions of other people (Johnson, 2001).

Social-emotional needs: may "include heightened or unusual sensitivity to self-awareness, emotions, and expectations of themselves or others, and a sense of justice, moral judgment, or altruism" (nagc.org/glossaryofterms.aspx). Negative behaviors associated with unmet social-emotional needs include "perfectionism, depression, and underachievement" (nagc.org/glossaryofterms.aspx).

Underachievement: disparity between potential or expectations and actual achievement or a failure to "develop or use potential" (Dowdall & Colangelo, 1982, p. 2).

Significance of the Study

The absence of an affective education curriculum is a major problem facing the field of gifted education. Because the issue is complex and because cognitive ability seems to trump affective learning in today's educational setting, students may not be learning the needed social and emotional skills (Moon, 2006).

The local school in this study, similar to other schools across the nation, has no action plan for implementing a social and emotional curriculum (Zeidner & Matthews, 2017). This is problematic because gifted students could have a number of issues and a lack of attention to work on these issues can cause various issues such as: developing violent behaviors (Salyers, 2014), underachieving in academics (Landis & Reschly, 2013), developing unhealthy perfectionistic tendencies (Christopher & Shewmaker, 2010), becoming socially isolated, and developing depression (Delegard, 2004).

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to identify key social and emotional elements in a successful GT social and emotional curriculum and to suggest means to implement those elements in a middle school GT program. Educators would get assistance in determining: (a) guidelines and/or programming to meet the prescribed social-emotional goals, (b) classroom strategies to teach affective education, and (c) identification of students and strategies for interventions. Teachers would be given training to help them increase their skill sets and use strategies for teaching the gifted student as a whole person and not just addressing his or her intellect. By adding effective strategies and curriculum to address SEL, the school would add to the overall strength of the GT program (Killian, 2012). This study could also be used as a tool to galvanize

affective education for GT students in the district and the state. With positive results, the district could have evidence that focusing on SEL can have profound effects on academic achievement and overall student happiness (Killian, 2012).

Guiding Question

When schools seek to implement social and emotional curriculum into their current GT curriculum, few resources are available. More research needs to be completed to determine the steps that educators and GT coordinators can take to implement such a curriculum into their current GT curriculum.

The guiding question was developed by exploring the perceptions of experts in the field of social and emotional needs for GT students: What are the key elements of a successful GT social emotional curriculum? This was followed up by one subquestion: What are the best practices when implementing these key elements?

Review of the Literature

There is a gap in the literature on creating a GT curriculum for affective education. If school leaders in GT education wanted to create such a curriculum for their middle school, they would have trouble identifying which elements should be included to ensure that the curriculum is effective. There is a variety of research on perfectionism and asynchronous development, but nothing was found on implementing an all-encompassing social and emotional curriculum for GT programs.

The following search terms were used to search the literature: *gifted, gifted learner, gifted and talented, advanced learner, affective learning, affective education, social skills, emotional skills, social-emotional learning, social intelligence, EI, middle*

school. The following databases were used: ERIC, Education Research Complete, Education Source, ProQuest Central, and Sage Premier.

After researching the effects of SEL in a school, it was natural to try to understand what was causing schools--like the local school being studied—not to address affective education for GT students. The research indicated a few reasons why various schools may be neglecting or avoiding affective education. The implementation of affective curricula would require shifting focus away from high-stakes testing and on to educating the whole child, as well as increasing funding and resources for social and emotional training. However, educating GT directors/coordinators in creating a social and emotional GT curriculum had far fewer obstacles than the other two reasons.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework that guided the study was Corso's (2007) adaptation of a model for developing and promoting positive social-emotional behavior. This framework was based on social and emotional development for children while focusing on improving social and emotional skill sets in various ways. Although Corso's (2007) framework provided an overarching idea on how to support students, the model lacked a curriculum. The guiding question and subquestion focused on the key elements that needed to be in place for a successful affective GT curriculum.
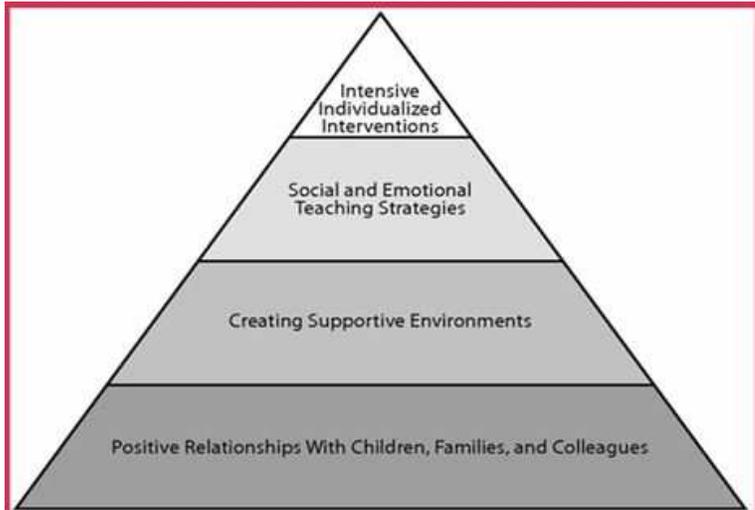
Figure 1. A model for promoting children's social-emotional development and preventing challenging behavior.

The conceptual framework for this study began with understanding why developing affective education, such as social and emotional development, is important for all students, especially GT students. It is vital that we human beings grow socially and emotionally, as well as intellectually (Elias, DeFini, & Bergman, 2010). Social and emotional factors have impeded academic and student achievement for GT students (Elia et al., 2010). Corso (2007) described a pyramid, as seen in Figure 1. It was used by Fox, Dunlap, Hemmeter, Joseph, and Strain (2003) to develop a framework in which the child's social-emotional development would be addressed and proactive measures could be used to help in this development.

The base of the pyramid supported the system, which revolved around relationships. Corso (2007) stressed the relationship between teacher and student; however, he also indicated it is very important for a child to have a positive relationship with his/her family, as well as other adults. Corso (2007) suggested that positive and

respectful relationships are constructed slowly over time, so that a meaningful relationship is established. Testing revealed that children who had parents who were flexible and responsive were more creative and less likely to suffer from extreme perfectionism (Miller, Lambert, & Speirs-Neumeister, 2012).

Generating a supportive environment, the second tier of Corso's pyramid, could include the physical space, which Corso explains is the social and teaching constructs of the classroom. Corso (2007) indicated that a classroom with a supportive environment must have clear expectations, honor the diversity of the learner, give the learner choice, and provide meaningful and engaging lessons. Classrooms that focused on reflection and examination of the learning task served as way of valuing the learner and the learning environment (Bruce-Davis & Chancey, 2012). Furthermore, environments that make GT students feel included could lead to a sense of community, could allow students to connect positive experiences with school, and could ultimately increase academic activity and determination, self-motivation, and the ability to self-regulate (Bruce-Davey & Chancey, 2012).

While some teachers had strategies in place that were focused on relationships and classroom environment, they were less knowledgeable about the top two components of the pyramid: social and emotional teaching strategies and intense individualized intervention. Peterson and Lorimer (2012) explained that affective education could be tricky for teachers because there was a large counseling piece to the SEL and many teachers did not have the appropriate background in teaching these skills. Research indicated that an ineffective or unskilled teacher who taught affective lessons will have

little impact with the students (Corso, 2007). Approaching the top of the pyramid, educators taught certain children various social and emotional strategies. According to Corso (2007), teachers who were purposeful planners of social and emotional development provided a meaningful social structure where students could practice various social skills.

Some important social and emotional goals include: beginning and managing relationships with peers, problem solving, and being able to communicate "feelings, emotions, and needs in appropriate and effective ways" (Corso, 2007, p. 53). Teachers who continually model the appropriate and effective social and emotional strategies were more likely to see their students grow socially and emotionally (2007). When adults drew attention to social and emotional skills, instruction could be advantageous to students; however, teachers needed to provide authentic role-playing situations and describe and discuss the desired behaviors or non-behaviors. Like any skill, practice and rehearsal were required for the skills to become ingrained so that they could be utilized.

The top tier of the pyramid in Figure 1, like many educational pyramids, targeted intensive intervention, and was used when the other steps of the pyramid were ineffective. Wellisch and Brown (2012) argued that schools needed to identify social and emotional problems and create interventions early on; otherwise a child's learning could be impacted throughout his/her entire education. According to Individual Learning Plans, a team is needed to design a plan and implement strategies. The team should include several staff members at the school as well as family members who could reinforce the plan and strategies at home. By creating a team of counselors, teachers, administrators,

and family members, a lot of information could be shared, which could be highly advantageous when creating a plan to positively identify and model the desired behaviors. Corso (2007) stressed the importance of family involvement and creation of a more intimate relationship, leading eventually to a partnership with families.

Recent brain research also indicated the need for students to receive affective education in order to help them achieve academically (Willis, 2007). The amygdala was often associated as the affective part of the brain, and studies showed that when students were anxious, blood flow went to this portion of the brain, causing diminished neural activity in other parts of the brain, such as the prefrontal cortex which helped process information (Willis, 2007). In other words, when students experienced anxiety and extreme discomfort, they did not learn as well. Furthermore, brain scans showed that when a student was placed in a stressful environment, there was a blockage of memory storage: information could not access through the amygdala, indicating that the information was not being stored (Willis, 2007). Many activities that involve social interaction, such as "cooperative learning and social collaboration" released more dopamine, and dopamine was associated with "attention, memory storage comprehension, and executive functioning" (Willis, 2007, p. 35). Brain research indicated that when educators take time to focus on social and emotional aspects of the learner, the teachers could maximize the learning that will take place.

Other research showed that thinking becomes enhanced when gifted students' education focuses on affective goals (Dettmer, 2006). Bloom's taxonomy, which is known for advancing problem solving and critical thinking for all students, added an

affective domain (Dettmer, 2006). The affective domain included "internalization, wonder, and risk taking" (Dettmer, 2006, p. 70), which further supported the principle that affective education should not be thought of as a separate entity from cognitive education. Both affective and cognitive learning mutually support one another.

Individually, gifted students could benefit from SEL, but what was often not considered was that the overall school achievement and school climate could benefit when schools focus on SEL (Elias, 2010; Meredith, Anderson, & Policy Studies Associates, 2015). With attention to social and emotional curriculum, schools noticed that both students and the staff viewed their school climate in a more positive light, and in the process, the schools noticed that student behavior was improving and so was student achievement (Elias, 2010; Elias & Arnold, 2006). In broader terms, when affective education became part of the focus at school, students could actively seek social change and become members of society who would be change-agents in the world (Elias, 2010).

While affective learning could lead to short term goals of academic achievement and a more positive school climate, it was equally important for gifted students to foster their social and emotional skills for their personal lives, in order to have meaningful and healthy relationships (Killian, 2012). Research indicated that gifted students who had high emotional quotient (EQ) scores were more likely to have a higher satisfaction in their overall life (Killian, 2012).

The initial process of the literature review was two-fold. First, understanding how affective education—or lack thereof—impacted GT students was crucial. Then, finding what caused a lack of affective education in GT schools had to be examined. The

literature showed that GT students had unique social and emotional needs such as: asynchronous development; overexcitabilities; perfectionism; underachievement; social pressure, bullying, violence; and the social and emotional issues of being gifted and a minority. The literature also revealed that SEL helped students' overall social and emotional well-being and happiness. Having strong social and emotional skill sets would also benefit students in career readiness (Manring, 2012).

<div align="center">**Review of the Broader Problem**</div>

Emotional and Social Learning for Gifted Children

Research supported the idea that many gifted children need additional support when it came to social and emotional problems; in fact, many researchers believed that gifted students had to comprehend and manage situations far outside the normal sphere of average students because gifted students had the intellect to understand the complexities of the world beyond their normal age level, but generally only had the emotional and social capacity for their age level, or even younger in some cases (McGee et al., 2011; Rinn et al., 2010). Gifted students could suffer from social or emotional problems with which many normal students their age might not have to contend (Silverman, 2002). While gifted students' academic intelligence might be significantly higher than their peers, their social and emotional levels could be much lower. Some gifted students were observed to have problems in "initiating and maintaining relationships with others, resolving conflicts, communicating feelings…in appropriate and effective ways" (Corso, 2007, p. 53). Other experts reported that gifted students suffered from more serious issues. Clinicians who worked with gifted students report issues such as: "trauma,

anxiety, depression, suicidal ideation, bullying, learning disability, underachievement, career development impasse and poor coping" (Peterson, 2009, p. 280). Therefore, a range of negative implications could come along with being a gifted child.

Conversely, other research refuted the idea that gifted students had different social and emotional needs from their typical peers (Cross, 2011). Cross indicated that there was not enough research and data to support the idea that gifted students had a set of different social and emotional needs (2011). Nelihart, Reis, Robinson, and Moon (2002) stated after reviewing the literature that existed at that time, they saw no evidence that GT students experienced additional emotional and social problems.

While there was disagreement between leading experts on whether or not gifted students had different social and emotional needs than the regular student, there was little argument that GT students needed more social and affective education in school (McGee et al., 2011; Moon, 2002; Nelihart, et al., 2002; Rinn et al., 2010). The benefits of working on the social and emotional developments of gifted students could last a lifetime (Cross, 2009). Teachers witnessed signs of gifted students lacking social and emotional development; however, since these social and emotional issues were not on a report card or tested it was easy for teachers to focus solely on curriculum (Rinn et al., 2010). When balance was accomplished, the education of the whole child occurred (Elmore, 1994).

Asynchronous Development and Overexcitability

One issue that GT students might face revolves around having a heightened cognitive ability with an emotional or social maturity that is well below their cognitive ability (Silverman, 2002). In other words, their heightened intelligence status may be far

above their emotional level, sometimes causing a student to understand a deep complex issue without having the social or emotional strategies to manage the emotions (2002). For example, GT students who studied in Clark County School District felt uncomfortable when discussing environmental and ecological issues because there was an obvious "lack of closure" regarding the topic (Hartsell, 2006, p. 266). Consequently, students started to see a world that was not as moral as they had envisioned and that could be both frightening and intriguing.

In 1972 the term *overexcitability* was coined by Dabrowski. Overexcitability can be closely related to the intensity many gifted children possess. Overexcitability is a heightened response to certain stimuli (Mendaglio & Tillier, 2006). Although the research was far from empirical and was based largely on theory and interviews, several researchers noted that although it may be hard to statistically quantitatively measure overexcitability, it does not mean it does not exist (Dabrowski, 1972; Mentaglio & Tillier, 2006). Tieso (2007) noted that gifted students measured higher on each of the five "composite subscales" of Dabrowski's overexcitabilities (p. 6). In a 2011 study, researchers found that gifted learners were more likely to suffer from lack of sleep and fear from undistinguished causes than their normal counterparts (Harrison et al., 2011). Additionally, overexcitability may cause perfectionism and social and intellectual asynchrony, which will be discussed later (Tieso, 2007).

Dabrowski (1974) identified five types of overexcitabilities that were not mutually exclusive from one another. The first type, psychomotor overexcitability was what the name suggested, in that gifted students frequently allowed their minds to go on

autopilot on one topic, unable to stop thinking about that particular topic, which was often associated with jitteriness of movement, and excess movement (Lamont, 2012). Intellectual overexcitability often left students feelings uneasy about open-ended topics that dealt with deep issues such as life or death, and the meaning of life (Lamont, 2012; Porter, 2008). Additionally, a student who read about ecological issues might have had difficulty with the open-endedness that deforestation was occurring and little was being done to reverse it (Hartsell, 2006). Imaginational overexcitability was connected to creativity and caused students to become engrossed in a fantastical world. Emotional overexcitability was common in gifted children; students who suffered from this illustrated intense emotions and reactions based on their emotions. Emotional overexcitability could leave children feeling fear, anxiety, and overt shyness. In addition, they could have a difficult time transitioning to new situations (Lamont, 2012).

Because research showed that gifted children matched their identity with their giftedness, and because gifted students had tendencies to show deep respect for their teachers, discipline could be incredibly difficult for gifted students to face (Cross, 2011). Gifted students, especially those who dealt with perfectionism and a high competitive nature, could view being disciplined as a devastating blow to their identity (2011). A setback to GT students' expectations and reputations could seem disastrous and could sometimes cause them to lose sight of all their previous goals for the future, especially when they viewed the punishment as unfair (2011). Adolescents sometimes found the broad scope of life hard to grasp; many students could only dwell on short-term problems. Whatever event had caused the discipline could be cataclysmic to the student

and often sent the child into a spiral of irrational thinking, which could possibly lead to depression or even suicide (2011).

While some children experienced emotional oversensitivity, research indicated gifted children are more likely to experience physiological sensitivity or hypersensitivity (Lagos, 2013). Physiological sensitivity is the actual hypersensitivity related to stimuli to one or more of the five senses (2013). Physiological sensitivity means that anyone who has sensory sensitivity could respond to situations very differently from a person who has no sensory sensitivity. Physiological sensitivity can result in abnormal reactions (Gere, Capps, Mitchell, & Grubbs, 2009). For instance, a high-pitched noise or halogen light may go unnoticed by a person with less acute senses, but a hypersensitive person may become focused on that sound or light, which could cause their behavior to change (2009). Although additional research is needed to substantiate gifted children's likelihood to have heightened sensitivity, researchers who have interacted, interviewed, and taught gifted children have observed this trend (Gere, Capps, Mitchell, & Grubbs, 2009).

Because hypersensitivity was found to be more closely correlated to children who were gifted, it may help explain why gifted students not only had enhanced awareness of their environment, but also reacted in an increased emotional and behavioral manner (Lagos, 2013). Quantitative research showed that samples of gifted students were more sensitive than their normal counterparts in auditory processing, visual processing, tactile processing, multisensory processing, and sensory process to endurance and tone (Gere et al., 2009). Consequently, the overwhelming sensitivity to their environment could cause distractions and could disrupt a child's ability to focus (Cross, 2011). Although students

who demonstrated hypersensitivity often needed accommodations and could get distracted quite easily, hypersensitivity could be helpful in experiencing things in a way that was different than most people, allowing the person to problem-solve and think differently (Gere, Capps, Mitchell, & Grubbs, 2009). Hypersensitivity could lead to abnormal social interactions such that peers may deem a child to be socially awkward, causing them to develop unhealthy peer interactions (Gere, et al., 2009).

Perfectionism and Underachievement

Perfectionism is viewed as a difficult topic because it could have positive and negative attributes (Mofield, 2008). A lot of evidence suggested that perfectionism could be considered a strength to both gifted and non-gifted students, citing that a competitive drive to achieve was a positive characteristic (Christopher & Shewmaker, 2010). On the other hand, plenty of research existed that indicated that serious emotional issues, such as depression and suicide, were more likely to occur to gifted people (Christopher et al., 2010). Some researchers believed an unhealthy focus on high expectations that gifted students had of themselves to succeed was due to perfectionism. Perfectionism can contribute to other unhealthy traits unhealthy such as: anxiety (Delegard, 2004) eating disorders (Goldner & Cockell, 2002), obsessive-compulsive disorder ("Working with Perfectionism", 2010), and low self-esteem (Delegard, 2004). In one study, boys showed unhealthy means of coping with perfectionism, such as avoidance (Mofield, 2008). Therefore, there was overwhelming evidence illustrating that despite the idea that perfectionism could often be positive, perfectionism could also lead to unhealthy social and emotional issues.

Some recent studies were encouraging, finding that affective lessons centered on the topic of perfectionism could help in several areas such as: "deep concern over mistakes, doubt of action, personal standards, and other unhealthy perfectionistic" traits (Mofield, 2008, p. 1). Nevertheless, there was not overwhelming research that affective education could help with some of the problems associated with unhealthy perfectionism, there was not enough research and more research needed to be conducted in this area.

Some people may believe that the opposite of perfectionism would be underachievement; however, perfectionism may, in fact, be the cause of underachievement for many students (Merriman, 2012). Underachievement could be tied to social pressures based on gender and race (gender will be highlighted here, as race will be discussed in a later section). Some girls may believe they should be valued by their appearance and looks rather than their intelligence, noting that while they want to be smart, they do not want to be "too smart" (Neihart, 2006, p.1). Conversely, boys may avoid trying to be smart because it may jeopardize their identity of being strong and masculine. Neihart (2006) noted that students may reject habits that help them achieve such as studying, taking higher-level classes, working with the teachers, so that they do not have to lose their perceived identity.

Other students may underachieve due to perfectionistic fears of failure that paralyze them (Mofield, 2008). If a GT student were underachieving due to fears of failure and perfectionism, the student, with knowledge and strategies to cope with this issue, might be able to overcome his/her fear and perform at a higher academic level (2008). Without strategies and knowledge, the GT student might not attempt to succeed.

If the student's perception was that he/she did not really try, then he/she could not fail in his/her mind (2008).

Additional research into gifted underachievement is being undertaken as many questions on how to solve this problem are being asked. Many researchers now break down gifted students into three groups: achievers, underachievers, or selective consumers (Figg, Low, McCormick, & Rogers, 2012; Peters, 2012). However, a different group of researchers found that too much time was being spent on arguing over types of underachievers and not enough on how to combat underachievement (Flint & Ritchotte, 2012). Other studies showed that many gifted students, however, not all, believed that giftedness "interferes" with social acceptance and that giftedness was a "social handicap" (Coleman, 2014, p. 1). Many researchers have acknowledged that they have not fully identified the list of causes of underachievement, though most consistent lists revolved around school climate, teacher education programs and style, perfectionism, stress, motivation, depression, and family support and dynamics (Bourgeois, 2011).

Many experts were bewildered at the rate of gifted dropouts, which many experts believed was caused by an underlying issue of underachievement (Bourgeois, 2011). Dropping out was concerning for GT students because there was a correlation between students who decided to drop out and had debilitating problems in their future, including "poor health, unemployment, poverty and dependence on government assistant programs" (Landis & Reschly, 2013, p. 1). Many of the factors leading to students dropping out, such as, "drug and alcohol use/abuse, learning disabilities, pregnancy, and family conflict" (Landis & Reschly, 2013, p. 3), paralleled the many factors that drove

from research around GT students who dropped out of high school. Other factors such as a student not attending or liking school and an overall apathy for his/her education could be associated with the term underachievement (Cramond, Kuss, & Nordin, 2007), which could lead to increased dropout rates.

As of 2017, little research has been conducted on effective interventions for underachievement. Attempting to help underachieving gifted students, when few proven effective approaches are available, may be a challenging task for GT program leaders.

Bullying, Social Pressures, and Violence

While most kids have to face bullying at some point in their lives, it may be harder for gifted students. Many gifted students are bullied based on their superior knowledge, which can be incredibly difficult for gifted children because it takes what was supposed to be strength and turns that strength into an exposed weakness for other students (Boodman, 2006). Boodman (2006) suggested that gifted students might be more emotionally sensitive than their peers. In fact, in one study, which interviewed 432 gifted students across 11 states, research indicated that more than two-thirds of 8th graders reported that they were bullied based on their higher than average cognitive ability (Peterson, 2006). According to Peterson (2006), gifted children reacted differently to bullying when compared to their typical counterparts. Gifted children may be more likely to receive significant emotional harm when bullied because of their intellectual abilities. Other studies supported this notion, indicating that the gifted students who scored highly in verbal skills could be more sensitive and cared about their social standing more than average students (Boodman, 2006).

Research also showed that gifted students were significantly less likely to go to an adult for help when they faced this problem (Boodman, 2006). Some gifted students would not ask for assistance from adults or their parents, even when they faced major challenges in their lives (Peterson, Duncan, & Canady, 2013). Students, instead, believed this was a problem they should solve on their own (2013). As a result, several students reported that they would avoid school, become withdrawn, perform at a more average academic level, or generate violent thoughts to avoid being bullied (Peterson, Duncan, & Canady, 2013).

One important area of research that needed further inquiry was whether gifted students were more likely to commit acts of premeditated violence than their peers. In 1998 the devastating shootings at Columbine High School in Colorado spotlighted the issues of school shootings. As many experts looked to identify reasons for this horrific event, some people wondered if gifted students were more likely to be able to carry out these carefully plotted types of violence (Boodman, 2006). After the Columbine shootings many psychologists and researchers delved into the motive behind the shooters at this school. The social and emotional aspects of the gunmen were examined and at least one major research study found that the shootings might have resulted due to a lack of social and emotional intelligence in the gifted students (Salyers, 2008). Salyers (2008) explained that the boys who committed the shooting felt undervalued and mistreated for their creative and cognitive ability, causing them to question why their existence even mattered and who was to blame for the perceptual burdens they had faced in life. Consequently, many researchers believed that this may have caused their "social-

emotional self-efficacy" to worsen, leaving them to try to gain power in an extreme manner (Salyers, 2008, p. 8). In different shootings in Littleton, CO, Conyers, GA, and Springfield, OR, four of the shooters shared characteristics of giftedness while also having an emotional/behavior disorder (2008).

James Holmes, who carried out the Aurora Theatre Shooting in July of 2012 at a midnight movie of the Dark Knight, leaving 12 people dead and 70 wounded, was also considered by many to be a gifted child (Bello, Eisler, & Nasser, 2012). Holmes graduated with honors in neuroscience, and at his trial, evidence indicated that Holmes suffered from more serious mental problems and was seeing a psychologist for his mental disability. Many people who knew Holmes claimed he was an awkward, lonely, socially inept student who did not have many human connections (Bello, Eisler, & Nasser, 2012). This was not to conclude in any manner that gifted students are more likely to commit violent acts, but it does warrant more research. Additional studies need to be conducted on extreme violent cases of random killings and any trends or correlation with gifted people and their social and emotional needs. Schools should look into opportunities for rigorous affective programming targeted at the social and emotional needs of gifted students.

Minority GT Populations and Their Social and Emotional Needs

The 1993 National Excellence Report the United States Department of Education noted a distinct problem with the underrepresentation and retention of minority students in GT programs at both the state and local level, indicating that trends in budget cuts, insubstantial research, and lack of programming were partly to blame (Jolly et al., 2008).

While many experts believed the first action should be to have a strategy to identify minority students, other researchers noted that affective education could play a major role in the retention of minority students (Lovett, 2011).

African American and Latino students felt they should choose between doing well in school and being popular (Lovett, 2011). As a result, minority gifted students sometimes underperformed or opted out of gifted programming in order to fit in with their peers (2011). Educators and parents may have not understood the risk gifted students of color took to pursue an advanced educational path (Niehard, 2006). The gifted minority student could be faced with severe repercussions for participating in gifted programs, such as feeling isolated, unnoticed, and marginalized. Minority students were frequently prone to prejudice and rejection from peers and even family members (Niehard, 2006).

Social pressures placed on minority students may be problematic because minority gifted students have the potential to perform as high as other gifted students, but often do not have support systems to deal with the social pressures of being identified as a gifted minority (Belleza, 2012). As a result, many schools do not have conversations or dialogue regarding the shifting of behavior based on the setting and cultural milieu. Children should not feel that they have to choose between two identities; rather, they should be taught how to transform their behavior based on the setting (Lovett, 2011). Students should feel that the educational environment allows them to have both a cultural and intellectual identity (Belleza, 2012).

Students outside of the gifted program may not worry as much about overcoming racial stereotypes as gift students; however, the gifted students may experience fear from losing their social network (Ford, 1994). Ford (1994) found in the mid 1990's that over half of all identified GT African American girls had been ridiculed and teased because they were smart or were "acting white" (p. 168). For students who become identified as GT, there was little counseling, mentoring, or other transitional support (Lovett, 2011).

Affective Education and Leadership Wanted

While literature illustrated affective education benefited students' well-being and happiness, additional literature suggested improving social and emotional skill-sets could also help students' careers (Clarke, 2010; Lindgreen, Swaen, Harness, & Hoffmann, 2011; Manring, 2012). If educators' goals were to prepare their students to be well equipped for the workforce, then schools should listen to what skills employers deem to be needed for their employees to be successful. Emotional and social maturity is critical in becoming a leader and developing leadership skills in the workplace (Manring, 2012). Students should develop these affective skills because in the 21st century workforce employers are looking not only for workers with high cognitive skills, but also for workers who are also able to manage relationships and navigate social networks with relative ease (Hilton, 2009).

Recent research indicated that businesses rely more on having employees work as a group, developing projects, and casual networking (Clarke, 2010). Business students need to be able to demonstrate high cognitive, behavioral, social, and emotional skills in

order to be successful in a global business market (Hilton, 2009). In other words, companies want their employees to have it all: high cognitive skills matched with high affective skills. Ultimately, students who can show their cognitive and technical mastery, while illustrating strong leadership ability, become the most sought after employees and are the most marketable to companies (Manring, 2012).

Students' social and emotional strengths play a major role in whether or not they possess the soft skills needed (Far et al., 2012). Corporations search for high-potential managers and employees who have above average social and emotional skill sets because research shows that higher interpersonal skills indicate that a team will be more effective in working together (2012). An attribute that employers are looking for in the role of managers is the ability to influence others and to steer change with a group of colleagues (Lindgreen et al., 2011). One study indicated that emotionally intelligent employees had an advantage over other employees because employers viewed the emotions in the workplace as significant information, allowing strong interpersonal relationships to develop, which improved the emotionally intelligent employee's overall performance (Farh, Seo, & Tesluk, 2013). Therefore, understanding the skills needed for a position is a difficult task, but what can be more difficult is managing various and "conflicting human emotions" (Farh et al., 2012, p. 890).

Companies are looking for employees who have strong moral standards and can resist corruption (Cory & Hernandez, 2014). Kellerman (2006) stated that people's moral compass depends heavily on their social and emotional understandings because social and emotional intelligence involves "self-awareness, motivation, sincerity, passion, and

conviction" (p. 77). If there is a link between social and emotional learning and a more ethical and moral employee, the implications could be huge because employees could dissuade other less moral or ethical employees from committing unethical acts. Moreover, large corporations may make decisions considering what is best for the workers and the environment, rather than only answering to the bottom line of the dollar. In some fields, people are focused on social and emotional intelligence not only to enhance their performance, but also to improve the work place environment. Companies try to avoid hiring people who lack EI because those employees can create a work environment that is negative and spreads toxicity (Mcvey, 2012).

If employers desire strong social and emotional skills, educators cannot assume that these skills will be taught at home or that they are genetically in-grained (Far et al., 2012). Some students may come in with stronger skills in social or EI just as some math students may come in with a higher level of understanding of math. This does not mean that educators do not push the higher math students because they have a pretty decent understanding of the subject matter. Instead, educators differentiate and lead students to deeper levels of understanding. Some research, though little has been done, suggested that women in a workplace environment are inclined to have higher levels of EI than men (Farh et al., 2012). If more research substantiated this claim, then educators may have another achievement gap; however, this gap would be an affective achievement gap rather than a cognitive achievement gap between male's and females' leadership abilities in the workplace.

As a result of increasing research in the corporate sphere, colleges are implementing new standards around affective skill sets and utilizing new curriculums, such as service-learning, because the curricula enable students to work on their EI by reflecting, being coached, and modeling certain behaviors, which allows students to achieve profound development (Manring, 2012). While some college and school districts are using service-learning and other strategies to promote affective development, most schools are not. Similarly, most public schools do not address the soft skills future employees will need to be successful in a high-demanding, intercommunicative, global work place.

Identification and Education of Social and Emotional Needs

In order to address improving a child's social and emotional skill sets (Peterson, 2012), a collaborative team should identify the social and emotional needs of the student (Corso, 2007). If educators need to work harder on helping children with social and emotional development, the initial step should be to help children, parents, and teachers identify what areas their GT child may need to focus on improving. A frequent problem with GT students is that only standard protocols are being utilized to help GT students, when a collaborative method could be used, as well (Coleman & Hughes, 2009). Collaborative problem-solving works because parents are involved, creative solutions are brainstormed that go beyond standard protocols, and solutions and ideas often take into account the child's unique issues, such as twice exceptional students or students who need more coaching (Coleman & Hughes, 2009). By gathering data from the child, the parents, and the educators, the collective group is gathering a body of evidence in various

contexts in order to make an informed decision as to which affective needs should be addressed.

After the identification of a social or emotional deficit that the teacher, parent, and student "partner triangle" decide upon, it is imperative that this triangular partnership understands the problem and develops an action plan/intervention on which students can work (Corso, 2007). The problem is that often teachers, parents, students, and counselors do not have the knowledge or skills to create a meaningful partnership around giftedness.

Gross, a Professor of Gifted Education and Director of the Gifted Education Research, Resource and Information Center (GERIC) noted that the most frustrating lesson she has learned is that there is a disconnect between what teachers believe and what researched interventions indicate (Henshon, 2007). For instance, one social myth that many teachers may have is that gifted students would rather work alone than in small groups. This, however, was not proven true in research in a general sense. While some students favored working alone, others chose to work in small groups (French, Walker & Shore, 2011). Frequently teachers may simply view the child as odd or quirky, instead of properly understanding that the unusual trait may stem from a bigger issue.

Parents of gifted students take on various roles in their gifted child's development based on their perception of the parent's role. Many factors play a role in the amount of time and effort parents take in their child's education, such as the confidence parents have in their ability to help their child, their own and the child's prior educational successes and interactions, and having an understanding and background knowledge of gifted children and their motivation (Mcgee & Hughes, 2011).

Recent research has been very limited on how parenting affects gifted children, but research needs to be continued so that educators can help guide parents in order to maximize the parent/child relationship (Cross, 2009). Cross (2009) stated while there is very limited research on parenting gifted children, parents should focus on best practices for overall parenting research and keep up to date on current research. Educators need to help parents with resources and training to achieve this goal.

The school counselor has a pivotal role in working with special populations in the school (Wood, 2010). Lack of understanding GT students may indicate that many counselors are not trained in working with GT students, which is highly problematic. In fact, counselors who graduated from the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Educational Programs (CACREP) did not have to take a course that specializes in gifted education or any special needs that may arise with that unique population (Peterson & Morris, 2010). Many teachers do not have any training in counseling or a background in teaching affective skills. Therefore, a valid problem may exist: if no one in the partner triangle is an expert in GT affective needs, attempting to solve a GT affective issue may be difficult since no one is trained to identify or understand the issue.

Often the student, who should be the center of the issue, can be left out of the collaborative process. Through reflection and guidance students can be a very valuable member in helping identify affective traits and learning about various affective issues (Jones, 2009). By undertaking guided self-reflection, students can make important discoveries that help them identify areas of improvement and allow them to take initiative to help manage and seek solutions (2009). Identifying a student's social or emotional

concerns and then developing a plan of improvement are important steps. When the stakeholders of a child have input, the chances of success are more likely to occur than without their input.

Ultimately, a literature review for gifted affective education was difficult because the topic is very comprehensive, and while experts had pinpointed various specifics around affective education, very few studies were all encompassing. Additionally, GT students often have a unique and a wide-spectrum of social and emotional needs, necessitating an analysis of vast umbrella of literature. Lastly, identifying a theoretical framework for both GT students and affective curriculum was not possible. Because the comprehensive literature is lacking, GT education needs more research in order to educate stakeholders how to implement affective curriculum into current gifted structures.

Implications

After the data were analyzed, the findings of this project helped in the development of a professional development opportunity for GT teachers and leaders, providing GT program coordinators ideas and strategies for implementing an affective GT curriculum in the school. Training would include the purpose of the curriculum as well as learning targets for the GT teachers and leaders. Because the local school being studied did not have an affective program for GT students, the GT student population could benefit greatly from training and techniques that could be applied in their daily lives. As the social and emotional curriculum strengthened, the academic curriculum would become stronger, as well. As of the time of this project, there was no consistent

GT social or emotional curriculum being used in the school district. Thus, a social and emotional curriculum developed for the school under study could be used as a model for other middle schools or at district level GT camps and programs. If a partnership between parents, schools, and students could be created, it could testify to the strength of using collaborative methods to both identify gifted students' needs and to educate all the stakeholders in various SEL.

The findings of this study could also be used as a tool that could galvanize affective education for GT students in the district and the state. With positive results, the district could find evidence that focusing on SEL can have profound effects on academic achievement and overall happiness. With parent interviews and student blogs, the anecdotal impact could provide valuable information along with the message that gifted students' needs are unique and need to be addressed. It is noted that if gifted teachers are absent of gifted training they are more likely to show no changes in their instruction for the gifted population (Van Tassel-Baska et al., 2009). Teachers lacking affective knowledge and training will likely only teach cognitive skills. Thus, educating teachers in social and emotional GT learning can help influence what the stakeholders view is important and can guide further gifted staff development.

Training teachers and coordinators could help clear up myths that many teachers, parents, and students have about gifted students. One common misconception is that because gifted students can often exhibit advanced cognitive abilities, they also possess an ability to handle advanced emotional content (VanTassel-Baska et al., 2009). Misconceptions such as this and others need to be cleared up to maximize teacher

effectiveness. With misguided beliefs, teachers may ignore or mismanage a gifted child's affective education.

The significance at the local school is that it would be giving GT students an opportunity to take time to focus on SEL immediately. Additionally, students would be able to identify potential social or emotional issues in a safe environment with a support group of interested adults and peers. Reflection and guidance could help students understand and manage their social and emotional behavior in a positive way.

The implications of implementing affective education, on a larger scale, would lead to stronger leaders and employees in the future workforce. Lastly, affective education programs could decrease violent actions and allow students to develop more meaningful relationships, as well as an overall happier lifestyle.

Summary

Ultimately, the purpose of education is to prepare students for successful adulthood in the 21st century. The U.S. and its employers expect educators to instruct GT students to become leaders in the world economy and in the workplace. To accomplish this, educators must teach both cognitive and social skills; however, standardized testing has steered gifted education to concentrate most of its efforts solely on cognitive skills. The literature showed the link between social and emotional learning, academic performance (Eddles-Hirsch et al., 2010; Garces-Bascal, 2010) and the workplace. Thus, while tending to children's academic needs, educators must also attend to their social and emotional needs. Research indicates that employers want gifted workers who are cognitively, socially, and emotionally intelligent. To produce GT workers with these

attributes, educators must address both the unique academic and affective educational needs of GT children.

There is little support at the national or state levels for providing gifted students an affective education, so districts have to create their own programs. The training of counselors, teachers, and parents in the social and emotional issues that all middle school students face could be the most immediate solution to further the cause of providing a social and emotional education for GT students. At the local school, teachers have been very effective in addressing the academic needs of students; however, a shift to also focus on SEL could lead to tremendous growth in social, emotional, and academic results.

Section 2 provides a background to the methodology of the research project, including the research design, setting, participants, and data collection and analysis. This qualitative case study was used to collect data to answer the guiding question. Participants in the study were educators and experts who have experience working with GT students. The interviews were transcribed and reread several times. I coded the transcripts and made notations within the transcription. I then looked for common patterns, relationships, and themes. Member checks and triangulation were conducted to improve reliability.

Section 3 was written after the data had been analyzed; the findings helped in the development of a 3-day professional development training that provided GT coordinators at school's curriculum to implement in an affective GT curriculum. The professional development plan included the purpose, goals, learning outcomes, and the target audience.

Section 4 discusses the strengths and limitations of the project; it offers recommendations for various approaches for future studies that could be used with further research. In Section 4 there is a description of learning for the research development and process. Lastly, I include a reflective analysis of myself as a practitioner, scholar, and project developer.

Section 2: The Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to identify and implement the key elements and explore the challenges involved in a successful GT social and emotional curriculum. The literature on SEL for GT students is growing; however, to date, there is little on the key elements needed in an affective social and emotional curriculum for a GT population. In Section 2, I describe the qualitative research design, participants, data collection methods, and the data analysis procedures employed in this qualitative case study.

Qualitative Research Design and Approach

Many schools across the nation fail to develop an action plan for initiating an effective SEL curriculum or program for GT students. Failure to develop an action plan can lead to programs completely ignoring SEL, and focusing almost solely on cognitive development rather than the whole child. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to identify key social and emotional elements for a middle school GT program. A qualitative case study was a natural approach because the solution to the problem can be found through "experience, observation, and review of related research" (Lodico, 2010, p. 269). A qualitative study was needed to yield a comprehensive and detailed understanding of the topic. A qualitative design necessitated engaging and interacting with participants (Farber, 2006). This study was guided by one guiding question: What are the key elements of a successful GT social emotional curriculum, and one subquestion: what are the best practices when implementing these key elements?

It is expected that the results of this study will make it easier for other GT programs to implement SEL by focusing on key elements. To identify these elements, careful research was conducted.

Justification of the Choice of Research Design

Yin (2008) focused on defining case study by the process, noting that the researcher is scrutinizing a phenomenon in its actual context, especially when there is no clear connection between the actual phenomenon and the content. Stake (1995) described a case study as research in which the researcher comprehensively investigates a program, an event, an activity, or a process with one, and often, several individuals. Thus, according to both definitions, this research was appropriate because the researcher was "scrutinizing" and "comprehensively investigating" (Stake, 1995, p. 1) what was needed to implement a social and emotional GT program. A case study allowed for the data to be gathered that was needed to answer from the guiding question. A case study was justified to establish the existing perceptions of GT teachers and experts to determine what is needed to create an effective social and emotional education program.

Because the programming would be newly established based on research and literature, there was no clear connection between the phenomena and the context, and, thus, research was warranted to determine what components would be needed in affective programming to make the program beneficial for gifted students. Completing a case study and working directly with experts in the GT field led to the identification of key elements that could support GT teachers when creating a project. Two methods of data

collection were used to determine the perceptions of the stakeholders, which Creswell (2009) also suggested is an important process in conducting a case study.

A mixed method study was considered but ultimately rejected due to the time consumption and the difficulty of the researcher becoming educated in both quantitative and qualitative studies. A quantitative study would not have been an effective choice for this study for several reasons. A quantitative study would not yield as much significant information as a qualitative study (Creswell, 2008; Lodico et al., 2010). Quantitative studies generally use numeric data from a large group of people (Creswell, 2009), a resource not available for this study. In addition, a quantitative study would not be able to unearth answers to the complex and intricate issues related to GT affective education.

Other qualitative theories were considered but eventually eliminated because they were not logical choices for the problem at hand. Grounded theory would mean starting backwards from traditional research in order to create a response to the guiding question by collecting the data initially (Creswell, 2009). Because my research started with a problem, grounded theory was not a logical choice.

Another option considered originally was ethnography. While GT students are a specific population, giftedness does not fit a culture or sub-culture usually identified with ethnographic studies (Creswell, 2009). While the group of participants, in this case those knowledgeable about working with GT students, do work with a sub-culture, ethnographers usually choose a single site or location and then collect information about that group (Creswell, 2009). In this study, participants were selected from various locations across the state. Therefore, with many different qualitative and quantitative

research designs available, case study was found to be the most appropriate means to address the problem.

Participants

Access to Participants

Before contacting participants, I received permission from Walden University's Institutional Review Board (Approval No. 08-25-16-0250480) to ensure that this study met the ethical standards of Walden University and adhered to U.S. Federal regulations (Walden University IRB for Ethical Standards in Research, 2014). Specifically, the IRB assured that there was informed consent, equitable procedures, along with minimized and reasonable risks, and that the potential benefits of the research outweighed the potential risks (Walden University IRB for Ethical Standards in Research, 2014). The process and scope of the project plan provided the IRB an explanation of how data would be collected and analyzed and the methods that would be used to protect the participants.

Hancock and Algozzine (2006) indicated that a researcher needed to identify participants who could share the most insight and knowledge on the topic related to the guiding question. Since the definition of an *expert* could be ambiguous, I focused on participants who had experience working with GT students and had a vested interest in this population. Therefore, I sought out local gifted professional organizations familiar with giftedness to seek participants who would participate in the study. Before approval was granted, the various organizations were provided an overview of the proposed study, which specifically outlined the purpose, procedures, goals, and benefits of the study. An

e-mail was sent to each member asking for participants to volunteer. The e-mail included an overview of the research, which was approved by Walden University's IRB.

Setting and Sample Participants

Utilizing purposeful sampling, which is when a researcher deliberately chooses specific individuals, was essential in this case study because the phenomenon being studied revolved around a distinct subgroup of GT experts (Creswell, 2009). A small population of local GT program experts was available to interview in the state, hence it was justifiable to use purposeful sampling. Because the expert field was so small, gender, race, and age were not considered in the sample. Eighty electronic questionnaires were distributed to GT experts, and 32 individuals completed informed consent forms, agreed to participate, and completed the questionnaire. Additionally, 10 GT experts completing the questionnaire agreed to participate in a semistructured, one-on-one interview.

Some participants gained their experience in GT work in elementary schools, while some developed most of their expertise in secondary education. Some participants taught at the collegiate level. Many of the participants taught at various grade levels throughout their GT careers. The sample group represented various GT experts from various areas and varied backgrounds. Both urban and rural educators were represented.

Protection of the Participants

Measures were taken to ensure participants had rights and those rights were protected. Creswell (2009) indicated that rather than using a person's name for questionnaires and interviews, the researcher should use a code, such as Participant 1 to protect the participant's identity. Each participant was given a corresponding letter for

interviews and numbers for questionnaires, and referred to by the code instead of the participant's name, which maximized confidentiality. A master key, which identified the participant's name with the number, was placed in a locked space to reduce risk of disclosure. Because I was the only researcher, transcriber, and keeper of records, those measures helped further maintain the privacy of all participants.

Participants were allowed to elect out of the study at any point with no justification or ramifications or breach of confidentiality. No individual opted out of the study. If a person had opted out after they had given the information, the data would have been destroyed and not used. All 32 individuals starting the electronic questionnaire completed all questions.

At the conclusion of the questionnaire, participants were asked to voluntarily participate in a one-on-one interview. To gain access, all participants received an initial informal, introductory e-mail (see Appendix B), which provided a detailed explanation of the study along with its purpose, assurances, sponsorship, completion time, and description of any benefits as well as any limited risks that could occur from participating in the study. A link to the electronic questionnaire was included in the e-mail. If no response was received, a follow-up e-mail was sent one week later. If there was still no response after one additional week, an additional follow-up e-mail was sent requesting participation. The purpose of the follow-up e-mails was to further establish a researcher-participant working relationship by answering any questions or concerns the possible participants may have had and to determine a date and time that worked for the interview.

Once a response had been received and an interview had been set up, an e-mail was sent to the participant to remind and confirm the location, date, and time of the interview.

Participants selected to complete the questionnaire received an electronic informed consent form (Appendix C) and information about the purpose and goals of the study. Participants received a similar consent form (Appendix D). The consent forms indicated that the participants would not be placed in a situation of harm or be asked questions that could harm them. Confidentiality and informed consent were also addressed in the consent form. The electronic questionnaire would have taken approximately 10-30 minutes to complete. Questionnaire participants also had the right to ask questions and request results of the study. Background questions were asked about experiences and education with gifted students and social and emotional educational background.

Based on their willingness, 10 participants who responded to the questionnaire were interviewed to ensure I obtained rich and deep data, which was when data saturation was achieved (Merriam, 2009). Each interviewee was notified that the interview would be recorded with their permission and then later transcribed.

Data Collection

In keeping with Walden University's ethical standards, no data was collected until after the Walden's IRB granted approval (Lodico et al., 2010). Because the goal was to obtain the perspective of local experts, a variety of resources were needed to understand the perceptions of local experts regarding the necessary components that were in an

effective affective GT program. Interviews and questionnaires were employed by me to generate data leading to insights into the guiding question (Hancock et al., 2006).

Electronic Questionnaire

The electronic questionnaire (see Appendix E) contained open-ended questions, multiple choice questions, and short answer questions, which were aimed at answering the guiding question. The researcher also considered the setting of the interview to collect "high-quality information" (Hancock et al., 2006, p. 40).

Semistructured Interviews

Convenience for the interviewee was important for securing interviews with experts to alleviate long distance travel and to respect the amount of time interviewees were asked to invest in the process. However, the optimal setting had to be somewhere that had little to no distractions and was private for both parties. I tried to meet with each candidate face-to-face in a one-on-one interview; however, almost all participants requested to be interviewed via telephone. Each interviewee was notified in advance and electronically signed an informed consent form stating that they understood that their interview would be recorded and they were reminded again before the recording began. The interviewees were reminded of the purpose of the interview. Each interview lasted from 25–40 minutes.

For the interview, I used the interview protocol (Creswell, 2010) as a guide (see Appendix F), which also, in turn, organized the interview process. Using open-ended, semistructured interviews (Appendix G) with local experts allowed for flexibility. Yin (2009) suggested that a good interviewer "must have a firm grasp of the issues being

studied" (p. 69). Being well-versed in the current literature helped me in the semistructured interview. An interviewer who is well-informed in current literature on the topic can ask pointed questions which can lead to insightful information that can lead to understanding the problem better. Because the interview contained open-ended questions, it allowed for me to fully explore the topic of the research study. All questions aligned with the guiding question. The questions were formed with assistance from my chairperson.

The interviews were recorded using iPhone apps TapeACall and Voice Record as a back-up. I listened to the recording in a slower speed to transcribe all interviews. After I manually transcribed all of the interviews, I listened to them while reading for accuracy. As data and thoughts emerged, I wrote directly on the transcripts. Reflective journals were utilized to track emerging understandings. This journal helped keep track of the biases I had as I sorted and synthesized data. In order to help improve accuracy, member checks were completed (Creswell, 2012). Member checking included reviewing the transcribed interview with the interviewee to ensure the findings were accurate and answers were interpreted accurately.

I had been to many GT trainings and had attended some social and emotional training; however, it had not been extensive. Not many biases had been formed; however, I checked in after the data had been collected to see if there were any hidden biases to note.

Role of the Researcher

Merriam (2002) explained that qualitative research tries to comprehend the phenomena from an interpretive viewpoint, and that data collection and analysis are performed by the researchers, and therefore, they are the primary instrument. (Creswell, 2007). My role as researcher was to responsibly collect data, which would be used later to analyze the problem. Data analysis followed from an inductive approach to figure out possible solutions to the problem. While I had worked with many GT students over my educational career, I currently was working in the role of teacher librarian at a middle school. None of the people who took part in the interviews were people I knew personally, so there were no conflicts of interest.

There was no prior relationship between the participants and researcher. By using the consent form, the researcher and participants were able to establish a mutually trusting working relationship. The ensuring of confidentiality also established trust between the researcher and participant. Because there was no potential for personal or professional harm or ethical code violations, and the data collecting was straightforward, there was nothing that would cause the participant to become professionally or personally uncomfortable about being interviewed or questioned. Allowing for the participants to ask questions or ask to be removed from the study helped strengthen the trust of the research-participant relationship.

Data Analysis

According to Merriam (2009), in qualitative analysis, data collection, and analysis proceeded simultaneously. Hancock et al. (2006) stressed the notion that a case study was

a recursive process and should be an ongoing process of investigation and scrutinizing of the data. Yin (2009) advised that researchers start with the guiding questions before the analysis of the data takes place and that I should consistently go back to the guiding questions when examining the data to make sure the data is answering the guiding question. Therefore, the inductive data analysis approach that was employed is when smaller pieces of data are collected and used with other information to form larger, more general conclusions (Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtl, 2010).

Creswell (2009) suggested that a "preliminary exploratory analysis" be completed to develop a general main idea of the data that had been collected (p. 243). I read through the questionnaires and interview transcripts first for this exploratory analysis. After this, I read the questionnaires several more times and took notes and searched for emerging themes. The research began as soon as I started the analysis during interviews, during transcription, and then during the first readings and subsequent reading (Yin, 2009). I referred to the guiding questions as a guide to stay on topic and search for common themes. The answers to the questionnaires and the interviews were reread several times.

Questionnaire Data Analysis

The first step in coding the questionnaire was to organize the data (Creswell, 2012, Merriam 2009). Because the questionnaire was organized by placing all the responses of each of the participants by question, the electronic questionnaire was easier to read and re-read, as I searched and highlighted parallel themes. Many of the questions were open-ended, allowing participants to respond to the questions in their own words. As Creswell and Plano-Clark (2007) suggested, I designated codes based on various

categories or themes that participants mentioned in their responses. Any information that was provided that did not align with the guiding question was not utilized unless it was considered discrepant data, which was noted. Themes, possible ideas, explanations, and questions were noted on the right side of the margins on the page. The process of thematic analysis was utilized by repetitively reviewing the information to identify parallel themes (Hancock & Algozine, 2011). After I analyzed the themes, I used a data matrix to organize the themes based on each question asked.

Interview Data Analysis

During the interviews and transcription, I made notes, which were made on the transcript or in a notebook to record thinking and evolution of themes and ideas. After transcribing each interview recording, the notes and the transcriptions were constantly reviewed several times to ensure the data were being coded and analyzed correctly. I referred back to current research as questions, clarifications, or ideas started to emerge. As with the questionnaire review process, I color-coded the transcriptions as themes emerged, repeated the highlighter process I used for the questionnaires, and wrote notes on the right-hand margins of each page. As data were examined several times, coding continued by comparing, contrasting, and combining the data. After all apparent themes were identified, I compiled and organized the themes in a data matrix. The layering of the coding allowed me to explore the phenomenon and I developed a deeper understanding of social and emotional curriculum for GT students. Hatch's (2002) nine-step typological analysis was followed.

Evidence of Quality and Discrepant Cases

Throughout the study evidence of quality was followed. Triangulation was

confirmed through two instruments, an electronic questionnaire, and the interview. After

all the data had been analyzed and organized in a matrix chart, all participants were given

the opportunity to have member checks, where they could review findings and check for

accuracy. Member checking involved asking participants to look over the transcribed

interviews and give feedback on the researcher's emerging findings to ensure there were

no misunderstandings (Merriam, 2009). Member checks helped for accuracy in the

information. Participants received an electronic copy of the transcript and the findings

and could check for accuracy. The one discrepant case that was supported by current

research was not used, but was reported in the findings as a discrepant case. Current

research indicated that the theory was new and needed more research in order to be

proven.

<center>**Data Analysis Results**</center>

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to identify key elements of social

and emotional GT curriculum. Additionally, I wanted to identify the best practices when

implementing these key elements in a successful social and emotional GT program. This

section presented the significant elements around GT social and emotional curriculum

from current research, questionnaires, and interviews from experts in the GT field. Eighty

questionnaires were sent out, 39 questionnaires were started, and 32 questionnaires were

completed. Additionally, ten one-on-one, semistructured interviews were conducted. The

categories and themes identified in the questionnaires and interviews were consistent

with the literature review in Section 2 except for the discrepant data already mentioned. Many of the participants duplicated several answers.

Demographic Data

Many of the participants taught both elementary and secondary level GT students and some taught collegiate classes. Almost one-third of the participants taught more than four years with GT students. Half of the participants had at least 10 years' experience working with GT students. Additionally, 81% of participants indicated they had in-depth training in GT SEL. When asked if the participants knew if their school's mission statement included "educating the whole child" or "social and/or emotional learning," slightly fewer than half of participants indicated they did, while about a third indicated they did not, and 19% participants were not certain. Table 1 provides background data from the questionnaire participants.

Table 1

Participant Demographic Data from Questionnaire

Demographic	Raw response numbers	Total responses (%)
Levels taught		
Elementary	18	
Secondary	23	
Other	5	
Experience teaching GT		
0-3 years	6	19
4-10 years	10	3
10 years or more	16	50
Specialized social/emotional educational background:		
Extensive	22	69
Above average	7	22
Not much	3	11
None	0	0
School's mission statement addresses social and emotional well-being		
Yes	15	47
No	11	34
I'm not sure	6	19

Questionnaire Findings

After asking participants questions regarding demographic data, the remaining

questions were specifically designed to gather data to answer the guiding guiding

question and subquestion. Data were organized into two categories correlated to the

guiding guiding question and subquestion. A number of emergent themes were found in

each category.

GQ1:   What are the key elements of a successful GT social emotional curriculum?

The questionnaire addressed many perceptions regarding this guiding question about GT social and emotional curriculum: (a) a dedicated time in the school schedule for affective curriculum, (b) GT students seeking an understanding of identity and GT characteristics, (c) creating partnerships for social and emotional curriculum, (d) properly trained staff, including an understanding of the characteristics of GT students, (e) affective goal setting, (f) adequate resources for instruction, and (g) a process for intensive interventions when needed.

A pattern from various questions and participants that kept emerging was that teachers and GT coordinators found it very difficult to allocate time in the school day for SEL. The questionnaire asked about resources that help or could help them adequately monitor social and emotional goals. Participant 1 stated that "Time, time, time, time and too little staffing." Similarly, Participant 9 stated that "in a small school where many teachers and staff are fulfilling multiple jobs, time is always in a short supply." Many participants agreed that they had little time in the day with all their other responsibilities to fit in social and emotional curriculum. However, other participants indicated that the difficulty was finding time in the school day to gather the students in order to implement the curriculum. In other words, it was not necessarily that they were too busy themselves, but that the schedules for the students was too filled to find a time to meet with students and implement curriculum. Participant 28 noted that "There isn't much time that I have with students for education and to follow up on progress." The GT coordinators or experts who felt they were successfully implementing social and emotional curriculum

noted that they had a regular time to meet with GT students during the week. The ways in which the various GT teachers met were very different. The most popular manner in which GT staff met with students around social emotional curriculum was during lunch bunches usually through some instruction, but mainly through discussion groups. For instance, Participant 8 indicated that

> The entire time for our TAG, that's our class twenty minutes before lunch, and our lunch period, we focus on social and emotional learning. The kids check in verbally telling something that they experienced in the past few days. We choose a topic like bullying or being overwhelmed, discuss and do an activity like acting this out or something around the topic. I supplement materials and activities depending on the time of the year or what the kids are requesting. This takes place once a week with different kiddos.

Other participants indicated that they did pull out groups, especially during an advisory/homeroom time. Other less popular options mentioned were quarterly elective classes, teachable moments, and meditation. However, almost all participants who said they felt like they were meeting their students social and emotional needs had a set time where they focused on social and emotional curriculum.

Staff who work with GT students needed to be properly trained around social and emotional curriculum for GT students. Of 32 respondents, 19 mentioned that the staff needed to be properly trained in social and emotional curriculum. In another question, 16 participants indicated that the staff needed to understand gifted characteristics to

effectively implement social and emotional curriculum. I combined these two themes since the literature and participants indicated that much of the training around social and emotional curriculum involved understanding the unique characteristics of the gifted population. Participant 19 indicated:

An effective social and emotional GT program should address an understanding of giftedness, how giftedness affects the child such as self-expectations, expectations of others, perceived expectations, mindset and mindfulness, as well as interacting with peers and self-advocacy.

Because many gifted students are so unique, staff who work closely with GT students should be properly trained in social and emotional curriculum, which would include time spent understanding what characteristics come are associated with giftedness.

A majority of participants indicated that having social and emotional goals is important for social and emotional growth in GT students. Nearly all 26 of the 32 participants, mentioned setting affective goals in one way or another. The state does mandate social and emotional goals for GT students, which could affect the data around goal setting. Participant 23 indicated, "I work with parents and students to make an Advanced Learning Plan with kiddos from all different backgrounds…the affective overachiever, the rebel, the twice exceptional, etc. I also pull specific groups to work on perfectionism, confidence, anxiety, etc." Participant 2 agreed: "I work with students to fill out questionnaires and establish an affective goal in their ALP, as well as their academic goal." Other

participants, indicated that partnering with teachers, parents, and counselors was important in making and following through with goals. Participant 30 stated that, "knowing the kids very well and gaining input from teachers/parents can be helpful, as students can act differently in different environments." Additionally, many participants indicated that there were some best practices that could be utilized when creating goals, which will be discussed in the research subquestion, which focuses on the implementation piece of SEL.

Many teachers felt that there was a lack of resources available to them when it came to GT social and emotional curriculum. Of the 21 participants who felt they were not meeting all the social and emotional needs of their students, many indicated that resources were sparse. Participant 29, stated, "Our 'curriculum' has largely been generated by us which is why I am working on developing a more consistent program, but I'm building it literally piece by piece." Many participants, such as Participant 4, stated:

> Right now, all I have is a scale I inherited. I would want to understand a theory behind social emotional tool before adopting it. I don't have a lot of tools, scales, or checklists, that I can verify as being helpful and well developed. I also would want students, parents, staff, and myself to be able to use it.

Many participants expressed frustration that there was a lack of resources, especially ratings, scales, and rubrics. Many other questions were asked regarding the implementation of the key elements identified.

SQ1: What are the best practices when implementing these key elements?

There were four commonly held perceptions regarding research subquestion 1 about gifted students and social and emotional curriculum: (a) creating a safe environment for students to in order to attain self-discovery and understanding, (b) celebrating strengths rather than focusing on weaknesses, (c) a broad spectrum of gifted characteristics needed to be embedded, (d) flexibility and differentiation of instruction in the classroom (e) having strategies around social and emotional goal setting, and (f) differentiated strategies for individualized instruction.

Participants indicated that while many of them used small group discussion as an instructional method, this was not the only method or practice that should be utilized, and discussion alone is not enough qualify as a curriculum. Participants mentioned other instructional methods, such as: (a) direct instruction, (b) using ALP's to set goals, (c) using books or literature/bibliotherapy, (d) discussion groups, (e) modeling/role play, (f) learning or reinforcement activities, (g) self-reflection, (h) cooperative learning, (i) video/TED talks, and (j) surveys/checklists/rubrics that would help identify a range of behaviors. Many of the participants cited a combination of strategies when delivering instruction, such as Participant 4, who stated, "I utilize direct instruction initially, and then either facilitate discussion groups or do an activity to take it to the next level. Bibilotherapy and self-reflection could also be incredibly helpful when discussing these topics." Participant 29 also had a variety of instruction methods, indicating, "I do discussion groups, team building activities; and bibiliotherapy can be incredibly helpful through personal reflection, character analysis, literature discussions, etc." Almost all

participants agreed that to reach GT students and their unique characteristics not one strategy that would work for every topic or every child.

Participants indicated that best practices for social and emotional curriculum were to include a broad range of gifted characteristics. When participants were asked to identify common social and emotional topics that should be addressed, many topics were identified. Of 32 total participants, 16 participants mentioned perfectionism, 14 mentioned coping with stress/anxiety, 13 mentioned working on social peer interactions, 11 mentioned overexcitabilities, four mentioned depression or existential depression, three mentioned self-advocacy, understanding giftedness, self-confidence, and underachievement. Many participants highlighted several topics, such as Participant 24, who stated, "the need to understand giftedness, perfectionism, stress, social interactions with peer, sense of identity, and sensitivity to the world." Participant 11 agreed, "there are subgroups of gifted populations that can be grouped together by their social and emotional goals." Current literature from Section One of this project supported the notion that the best practice was to cover a wide-array of topics.

While a wide-array of topics needed to be covered, not every topic needed to be covered in-depth according to many participants. In fact, many participants agreed that student instruction could and oftentimes should be differentiated. Participant 2 indicated, "I do some direct instruction around prevalent topics, but I also do pull out groups on specific social or emotional areas." Participant 9 indicated that they had an elective class into which students could self-select:

I teach a class called "Finding Balance" as an elective two days a week, which focuses solely on stress management and perfectionism for GT students. However, students self-select this class. I encourage students to take this class if they are dealing with this, and other students who have taken the class encourage friends they see that might benefit from the class. I want it self-selected because if a student is not having an issue in this area, there's no reason for them to take this class.

Participant 9 realized that each GT student's needs were different, and that, while there may have been a need for a larger population to take a class in perfectionism or stress managements, there were other students who did not see this as an area in which they would have liked to see personal growth. Many participants indicated that on some level, whether it be in creating goals or covering various topics, curriculum should be differentiated by the teacher.

Lastly, participants understood that just coming up with a goal around social and emotional curriculum was not enough. There were practices that could benefit the creation of the goal. When asked to explain the process of developing social and emotional goals around the ALP's, three major themes emerged: understanding of various social and emotional topics, including the student in the goal setting, and creating the goal from a strength. One participant indicated that each student needed to understand some of the basic social and emotional characteristics that applied to GT students. Participant 3 stated:

It's important for some direct instruction to occur before choosing social and emotional goals, so students have a base understanding of various areas that they need to work on and aren't randomly picking things, or only picking things they understand. A menu of social and emotional behaviors to work on is important.

Students need to have a broad understanding of various social and emotional areas of potential improvement. Tools that help them monitor or identify where they are currently on a social or emotional topic could be advantageous. Next, while input from parents, teachers, counselors, etc. is valuable, the student should select the goals they want to improve. Participant 8 stated, "It is important to confer individually with each student and have a discussion around the data they have and what SEL goals they may select." Participants agreed the most important person involved in creating the goal needs to be the actual student.

Lastly, participants agreed that the goals need to be strength-based goals. That is, the goals should be written in a positive format that focuses on an area of improvement as an opportunity and based on a philosophy that celebrates the students' talents (Baum, Shader, & Herbert, 2014). Participant 20 stated, "We are trying to focus on strength-based affective goals. I try to frame it with selecting a strength that is sometimes an Achilles' heal—one which they would like to develop for leverage." Several participants indicated the need for teachers to have a menu of SEL goals and ensure students understand what each goal means before goal setting. Additionally, participants added that goals needed to be shared with

other teachers, counselors, and parents in order to increase the likelihood of achieving the goal.

Interview Findings

Similar to the questionnaire, the interview questions were developed in order to answer the guiding question and subquestion. Data were organized into two categories. with a number of emergent themes in each category, correlated to the guiding question: What are the key elements of a successful GT social emotional curriculum? Many of the themes were similar to the questionnaire; however, the interviews went into greater depth to fully understand the complexity of the guiding question. Because the questionnaire answered many of the questions as far as where and when social and emotional curricula were taking place at school, the interview did not focus on these types of questions. The interviewee focused on the curriculum and how it was being implemented, which directly tied into the guiding question and subquestion. There were many commonly held themes: (a) a dedicated time in the school schedule for affective curriculum, (b) GT students seeking an understanding of identity and GT characteristics, (c) creating partnerships for social and emotional curriculum, (d) properly trained staff, including an understanding of the characteristics of GT students, (e) affective goal setting, (f) adequate resources for instruction, and (g) a process for intensive interventions when needed.

Throughout the participants' interviews, the participants expressed that the GT coordinator needed to develop strong partnerships and relationships with various members of the community in order for the social and emotional curriculum to be embedded successfully. As mentioned in the questionnaire analysis, many of the

participants expressed the lack of time in the day, which was why partnering with many people could assist coordinators and teachers in teaching social and emotional curriculum. Several participants mentioned the importance of having support from various community members such as, administrators, teachers, parents, and mental health/counselors.

Educating administration was integral in having an affective social and emotional curriculum. Because administrators, in large part, managed scheduling and provided resources, it was important they understand the need for time within the school week for social and emotional curriculum to take place and that GT students be provided the proper resources needed. Interviewee #6 stated, "The biggest challenge has been educating the administration and other teachers to why this [social and emotional curriculum] is so important to the students' academic and overall success." Therefore, GT coordinators must develop relationships and meet regularly with the administrative team or administrative representative to ensure they understand the needs of gifted students.

Teachers, similar to administrators, should have a relationship, and feel like they can partner with the GT coordinator. Classroom teachers often interact with GT students more than the coordinator, so they could be very helpful when implementing social and emotional curricula and working on student's individual SEL goals. When teachers notice social or emotional issues that could be impacting a student or their learning, they need to feel that they could reach out for assistance from an expert who understands GT students and GT characteristics. In some instances, students need to be pulled out of class due to

their particular social and emotional needs. Participant #3 stated, "it can be difficult when a student needs to be pulled from a class, but a teacher is resistant because they think it is not necessary. It was helpful when the teacher trusts the GT coordinator and the relationship is symbiotic." When the GT coordinator and classroom teachers are communicating and partnering, it can be advantageous for everyone, especially the student.

While the classroom teacher spends a great deal of time with their GT students, the parent-child relationship can also benefit or hinder a child's social and emotional well-being. Work on social and emotional goals at home could help the student. In fact, the conceptual theory provided by Corso's positive social-emotional behavior (2007) stated the importance of family interaction, by placing it at the base of the pyramid. Participant 9 indicated:

> Developing relationships with parents is so important for tons of reasons. They
> need to know you are an expert who is empathetic and cares, so that if something
> is going on in their child's life that you care and are a resource to utilize. They
> need to be involved in the ALP.

Other participants stated that the partnership should be developed with the goal that parents are willing to learn more about their child and how they could fit into various GT areas that they may not even be aware is offered. In other words, partnering could foster parents becoming better educated around GT social and emotional areas. Participant 4 stated: "I have a parent presentation and offer it twice a year. I really think that all this stuff should be required for all parents who are newly identified. It's an eye opener.

Parents need to learn about all the different issues around giftedness." Many parents are

incredibly busy, so they need to trust the GT coordinator that the time the parents put in

will be valuable to them and their child. Another GT coordinator echoed the idea of

partnering with parents to educate and inform when the participant 7 stated:

I just did a workshop with parents yesterday and many of them kept saying "just

do your best." With all the best intentions in the world. Because what we are

trying to say is it's okay because whatever your best is fine. But for that

perfectionistic child, who has unrealistic expectations, the best is something that

is not achievable. If they have issues of perfectionism …the best can't occur.

Many parents may know their kids have unique characteristics, but when they

learn about the behavior, then they can name it, acknowledge it, and hopefully

have a few strategies to strengthen their child's SEL.

Participants mentioned the importance of working and collaborating with

either a counselor or mental health team more than any of the other partnerships.

Participant 8 stated:

One of my largest successes in our building is that I finally started getting

other people in the building to see GT as not one person's domain.

Everyone thinks if it's GT, it's solely my job. This year I started working

with the counselor and I liked that piece of collaboration because I could

see a shared ownership and potential to build that out larger.

Other participants echoed the importance of having a connection with the

counselor. For instance, participant 10 stated: "My counselors are incredibly good

about touching base and staying connected. They have educated themselves. They have even gone to GT state conference with me for three years now." While many participants indicated how the counselors could work together to benefit students, one participant focused on how he/she could learn new skills from the counselor:

> I have learned so much from one of our counselor. He's a genius. I sent some kids down to counselors and observed and sometimes they ask questions and get situations so much better than I do. And sometimes it's a simple question that I wonder, why didn't I think of doing that. One year we had a difficult language arts teacher. One of the kids came to me upset about a project. I thought I would coach the kid on how to have a mature conversation with the teacher, so that he could self-advocate for himself. He went to the teacher and it was a complete disaster and he came to me after crying and I didn't know what to do, so I took him to the counselor. The counselor started asking a series of questions that calmed him down and made sense of the situation. "When you went to her, what did you want to get out of it?" He used that moment as a huge life lesson. When you go into a situation you have to understand your desired result may not always happen. I wish I had some counseling skills. I could tell that student got it (Participant 1).

Participant 10 realized that while she understood GT kids, she did not have the extensive counseling background, but that between the two of them, they were far more effective when working with students when addressing GT SEL.

Developing relationships is important so that proper training could take place with staff members. Having a properly trained staff around GT students was mentioned by participants more than any other theme. While understanding gifted characteristics was not the only area of training staff, it was indicated that it was the most important piece of training and an essential key element in having a successful GT social and emotional program.

Because GT students have unique characteristics compared to their peers, it is important that the staff can identify, understand, and have strategies to work with these characteristics (Van Tasel-Baska, Cross, & Olecnhak, 2009). When asked who should be trained around GT SEL, the overwhelming response from participants was anyone who worked with these students, whether it be counselors, administrators, or teachers. Participant 2 indicated: "All teachers or staff who come in contact with them [gifted students] should have basic training and understanding of GT students' characteristics and how they learn differently." This participant captured both the social and emotional and academic piece to working with GT students.

Understanding GT social and emotional characteristics could help debunk misunderstandings. Participant 3 stated:

Many teachers can easily get irritated with a student and mischaracterize the GT student or their behavior. So, task persistence can be seen as stubbornness or as an asset. And so if the teacher is trying to have a transition and it pulls the kid away from their pursuit, especially if that kiddo has an imaginational or intellectual

overexcitability, they could be resistant or angered, and, in turn, be labeled as difficult, stubborn, or insubordinate.

In the questionnaire, participants were asked which social and emotional areas they noticed in their students. The literature supported the participants' responses: perfectionism, underachievement, overexcitability, coping with stress and anxiety, depression, and inadequate social skills. I asked participants more in-depth questions about these characteristics and how understanding these characteristics could help the teacher or staff member understand and alter strategies to benefit the learner. One participant had been asked to work with a difficult student who teachers knew was bright, but had difficulty showing it and had difficulty working in the traditional classroom. Participant 3 reported:

> I decided to do some cognitive tests to figure out if the student was gifted and for us to develop her strengths and areas of improvement. I administered the COGAT one-on-one…Each segment was ten minutes. I very quickly realized that in the middle of this test this student probably had a psychomotor overexcitability…the only way I could get the student to get through each segment was to set up an obstacle course that we would run through in between. The student turned out to be gifted, and we were able to work with the teachers who had the student to work on strategies that could be utilized for psychomotor overexcitability.

Another participant shared a similar story around a different overexcitability. Participant 8 explained:

> I had a GT student who had an amazing imagination and oftentimes wanted to
>
> share his ideas and stories with teachers so much that it became distracting to run
>
> a classroom and difficult for some teachers. I worked with teachers and I first
>
> trained them in imaginational overexcitability and all of us agreed this student had
>
> this. Just naming the overexcitability and discussing it changed teacher's
>
> perspective of this student. I worked with them to see this as a strength that we
>
> needed to manage. We worked with the parents to develop strategies to find
>
> appropriate channels for the student to share their imagination and worked on
>
> finding appropriate times for sharing.

Both of these overexcitability examples illustrated how staff training could benefit the

teacher and ultimately the student. Other participants shared how training around SEL in

GT students could affect a teacher's perspective on students and how teachers educated

their GT population.

Many students also had more than one overexcitability or had other areas that

could have be seen as either strengths or improvements. Participant 6 stated:

> I'm thinking of a student. He has a kind of imaginational, as well as psychomotor
>
> overexcitability as well as perfectionism. They are layered together and is pretty
>
> evident in asynchronistic development, as well. It is clear he is engaged and wants
>
> to do well, but he is also squirrely and gets off task, so we actually had to dig in.
>
> With talking to him and his parents, we found out a lot of this comes from
>
> perfectionism. When he knows what to do he is great, but when stressed or is
>
> unclear on what to do, he gets to a breaking point and distracts himself with more

engaging activities. He read a couple of the books that I've used before. He loved to read, so it worked well with him. He got to learn what perfectionism is and started identifying with that and understanding himself. He became more focused in class. It was just that little hurdle of going "Oh, that's why I get frustrated. Now it makes sense that I'm afraid to do it wrong." And we kind of pushed and helped support him in trying things that weren't exactly perfect to help him get through the emotional frustration and understanding how that works and how I can control my wiggly-ness and understanding what I can do to combat that.

Therefore, parents, teachers, or others may have to dig in order to uncover what layers of complexities each child has. In this case, there were many, which could possibly explain the child's giftedness, but some of those characteristics were manifesting themselves in negative ways that inhibited the student from achieving his potential.

Oftentimes training could allow teachers and staff to see students in a different light. While a student may experience emotions very intensely, a teacher could view the child as dramatic. Participant 1 elaborated on this topic:

I had one student who was always involved in drama with friends and oftentimes was in tears or causing others to be in tears. Her teachers assumed she was a drama queen. One day her mom called and found a text indicating she was suicidal. After we first contacted mental health, counselors, mom, teachers, and I discovered her intense emotions she always had. I brought some materials on emotional overexcitability to see if this may be accurate with the student. Everyone indicated that they thought this was accurate, so we spent time

reviewing emotional overexcitability and explored the strengths and possible

negative manifestations. We also developed check-in times for the student, and

we wanted to work on self-reflection and education with mom and the child, so

they could have strategies for themselves and strategies so they could advocate

with future staff members. This child was happier and while the drama didn't

disappear, it was greatly reduced. Overall, she was a happier kiddo and no longer

suicidal.

Again, training led to enlightenment all the way from students to adults. In many of these

instances, the training happened only when a student had negative manifestations from

certain GT characteristics. The benefits of training staff of GT characteristics before a

child has issues can be a great advantage, allowing staff to see the student in a positive

light and not view a certain characteristic as a hindrance or bothersome.

In many of the interview examples, there was a focus on staff development;

however, there was also an element of the students understanding themselves and their

uniqueness. Because many students experience at least one of the overexcitabilities,

perfectionism, or stress, it is important they be educated in the various GT characteristics.

Understanding overexcitabilities could oftentimes best be explored by encouraging

students to self-reflect and self-discover who they are as a person and a learner. Many

participants expressed the greatest advantage to SEL was that it allowed students to have

a greater understanding of who they were. Participant 3 stated:

I think SEL can bring self-awareness and an understanding of oneself. I think

maybe they don't feel like they are different alone. They understand

overexcitabilities, the existential stuff. I think they understand their giftedness and

frame it in a positive trait that they can harness rather than negative factors.

Participant 9 agreed:

They understand how their emotions work and how to manage them in a way that

benefits their unique spirit. It can help normalize them in the sense of a gifted

population. They understand that others feel that same level of intensity. They

also understand it from a psychological or brain science way, which is easier for

some of them to comprehend.

Therefore, we need to educate and train students to understand that oftentimes being GT

comes with unique characteristics. Being able to manage their positive and negative

manifestations could help them navigate both academics and relationships, and ultimately

lead them to a happier lifestyle.

Lastly, when students have manifestations that are detrimental to their health or

academic environment and many classroom strategies have been exhausted, there needs

to be a plan for intensive intervention. While some participants would have preferred a

different word other than "intervention" because of the negative connotation, most

participants agreed a meeting needed to take place when certain characteristics

manifested themselves in a negative manner. Depending on the situation, the student,

staff, parents, teachers, GT coordinator, mental health staff, and other interested adults in

the child's life could be valuable in determining possible strategies to help the student. It

is also important to note that certain people may not be beneficial in an intervention.

Participant 8 indicated that

We had an intervention for a student who was incredibly stressed. When we

talked in a roundtable style and that we were worried about the student's stress

level, we soon realized something when mom spoke. She was the one creating the

stress and her expectations were incredibly high. We had to have our meeting and

then a separate secret meeting without mom. It became clear that this adult was

not helping the child and that we needed to do some coaching with the student

and try to do some coaching with mom.

The right people need to be in the right room to use everyone's brainpower to benefit the

student. The idea is that everyone has expertise to contribute, whether it be about mental

health or contributing to the child's behavior or history. Children could act very

differently at home and at school, so understanding the whole child is important.

SQ1: What are the best practices when implementing these key elements?

Many factors around implementation were noted when looking at the key

elements in a GT social and emotional program: (a) creating a safe environment for

students to in order to attain self-discovery and understanding, (b) celebrating strengths

rather than focusing on weaknesses, (c) a broad spectrum of gifted characteristics needed

to be embedded, (d) flexibility and differentiation of instruction in the classroom (e)

having strategies around social and emotional goal setting, and (f) differentiated

strategies for individualized instruction.

One of the main themes from the interviews illustrated that curriculum that

allowed self-discovery was needed, especially if it allowed students to understand

themselves and their potential GT characteristics. In order for students to do this, a safe

space where they could be candid and honest in their reflection, without fear or judgment, was essential. Participant 2 stated:

> I think the teachers need to do lots of team building and safe space building. The kids first need to feel a sense of belonging. They also need to feel this way in social emotional curriculum to be able to talk effectively about their feelings. If the space is safe, and they feel like they belong, then they need time with peers for discussion and reflections.

Participant 5 agreed stating:

> I spend the first week with my students building relationships and team building. We get closer and feel connected and when students are more connected they can be more honest and vulnerable. I ask for lots of reflection in group and in journaling. I think journaling is helpful, but kids feel vulnerable to share their work, even though it can enhance the entire group's trust. It allows other kids to connect and feel a sense of normalcy. When one of my students opens up about something, I can see other kids feel similar, and they just seem a little lighter—like before they thought they were the only person that felt that way.

Creating a safe and open environment seems to benefit the group. Group members are then able to delve more deeply into topics and pursue self-reflection in a very profound way.

Perhaps the most important factor in implementing a GT curriculum is to ensure that various GT characteristics were seen as strengths rather than weaknesses. GT students should not feel like they are odd in a negative way, but instead feel like they are

unique in a positive way. In other words, they needed to see that many of the characteristics that make them different, also make them gifted. Participant 5 stated:

> If a curriculum is supportive of and acknowledges the characteristics of giftedness, it can be positive and helpful as it allows students to acknowledge their own strengths and challenges, and, in doing so, they will be more responsive to the differences in others. If it's a curriculum that paints them as negative or tries to normalize them with the mainstream, then it can be detrimental to the student's well being.

Participant 9 agreed, indicating:

> Things like intensity, sensitivity, perfectionism, heightened sense of justice. It is imperative these are recognized as characteristics and the key elements are to support and nurture those characteristics and potentially teach coping mechanisms, but not to try to take away those characteristics that are essential and integral part of being a gifted individual. For example, sensitivity is a characteristic in GT kids. You can't take away someone's sensitivity; it's part of who they are. You can teach coping mechanisms to allow the sensitivity to be a strength rather than a challenge.

Students could see these characteristics as intrinsic strengths, but some staff members could view the student's GT characteristics as a negative attribute. Oftentimes in a class of 30 students and without proper training, many staff members can misdiagnose a behavior that is different than their peers, instead of seeing a certain behavior as a unique asset.

Lastly, the implementation of GT curriculum needed to be flexible and individualized for the students who are in that classroom. A teacher typically has a sense which of the students is gifted and should allow them to explore various areas of passion and interest that pertain to that individual student. Participant 9 stated:

> I would say the biggest thing really is understanding who the students you have are and developing the curriculum to their needs. It needs to be flexible because every time I get a student they likely have different social and emotional needs and I need to be willing to address whatever they are coming in with, so I use a variety of things. I tend to do some basic instruction around common GT characteristics so students have a basic understanding. This way they can help identify if that certain characteristic applies to them, and even if it doesn't, it can be beneficial when interacting with someone who does have those characteristics. But when we do in-depth research, group discussions, I try to differentiate as much as I can.

Participant 2 challenged that we must go beyond just various characteristics in the way we differentiate. We need to look at gender, race, maturity level, etc. This participant also stated:

> The implementation of strategies and curriculum can depend on the criteria that you are using to establish your setting. So if you're just putting together a group based on 12-year-olds, you have to recognize those 12 year olds can be a range of 8 to 17 developmentally. Incorporating all those aspects are critical for success. One thing to consider that many people forget to consider is introversion and

extroversion. We know from the literature, especially highly gifted students tend

to be more introverts, meaning they get their energy from being alone rather than

being in a group. So if you have a group of introverts, you might need to change

your strategy.

Differentiation is very important as far as academics were concerned for all students, and

especially GT students; however, many curricula forget to honor the students when it

comes to social and emotional curriculum.

Discrepant Data

There was one valid discrepancy in the data, which was noted in the coding and

was scrutinized with literature. Participant 9 addressed recent research as of mid-April

2016 that challenged Dabrowski's idea of overexcitabilities. DeYoung (2015) introduced

new data indicating that openness to experience was a personality factor in the five-factor

model of personality. Certain aspects of the idea of openness appeared to be similar to

Dabrowski's overexcitabilities. Recent studies examined characteristics of

overexcitabilities and corresponding openness and showed the strong correlation between

the two, indicating that the educational field should start to explore openness as a

possibility for gifted behavior rather than overexcitabilities (Kerr et al., 2016). Due to

reviewing current literature and research, participant 9's data had been supported by the

current literature, so it must be noted in the data findings as a possibility of GT behavior,

although more research needs to be conducted on the idea of openness in GT education.

Some other data were contrary to other consistent themes, but there was no literature or

data based research to support the claims; thus, those pieces of data would not be used in the project study.

Evidence of Reliability and Validity

Research credibility depends on how accurately the participants' perception of the information corresponds with how the researcher accurately recorded the information in the findings (Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtle, 2010). Member checking involved asking participants to look over the transcribed interviews and give feedback on the researcher's emerging findings to ensure there were no misunderstandings (Merriam, 2009). Member checks helped for accuracy in the information. When being interviewed, many of the participant would naturally start a topic or sentence and then shift to another topic, leaving one topic unfinished. The member checks allowed the interviewee to go back and finish their thought, which allowed the data to be richer, deeper, and more accurate. Triangulation involved looking at convergence of various data points (Yin, 2014). To also strengthen the validity of the study, I triangulated the findings by comparing notes from both methods. Additionally, the themes that were highlighted were in the same color for both the questionnaire and interview. Because the data from the questionnaire and interview were similar it strengthens the validity of the data. Yin (2014) indicated that triangulation is the merging of data collection.

Project Deliverable Based on Findings

The findings show that even highly trained gifted experts still feel like they are not meeting all their gifted students' needs, which is why professional development training is needed. The project, Effective Affective Curriculum, is designed to provide

GT coordinators and gifted teachers structure and guidance to improve their current social and emotional GT curriculum. The professional development will allow coordinators and teachers to examine their current social and emotional curriculum and identify strengths and areas of improvement. If schools did not have a current social and emotional curriculum, this professional development would be advantageous to identify and develop a social and emotional curriculum that would work in their unique school setting. The professional development would also highlight effective implementation strategies to ensure the key elements were being employed in a strategic manner. The school district that will be utilizing the PD already has a mandated gifted PLC cadre in place. Because the district tries to not overburden teachers, the gifted coordinator would likely use the PLC group as a platform or vehicle for the professional development; however, various elements of the PLC would likely need to be in place.

The PD is designed for GT experts and teachers who are all in the same district. The PD will span 3 days and will begin at 8:00 am and end at 4:30 pm. The PD will address key elements needed in an effective social and emotional curriculum. The PLC members will discuss successes and continued struggles in their PLC as the year continues. The GT experts and teachers should be able to apply sound principles of teaching, learning, advocacy, and reflection to their GT social and emotional curriculum. Various formats will be used throughout the 3 days such as: PowerPoint presentation, small breakout session, group thinking/brainstorming, cooperative learning, role playing, demonstration, reflective writing, and hands-on activities. One of the main formats will be where GT experts will collaborate, brainstorm, and problem-solve in small groups to

help find solutions that work at each of the unique school settings.

Two of the first three project goals are derived from the Section 2 findings, which involve identifying key elements for GT curriculum and implementing that curriculum. The first goal is for experts to identify the key elements that should be incorporated in their GT social and emotional curriculum, and the second goal is to focus on the implementation of those elements. The third goal is for participants to access an online tool where GT experts can share materials they have gathered and discuss various topics that focus on social and emotional curriculum. At the end of the PD, gifted teachers and coordinator should be able to go back to their school with a plan of action to implement social and emotional curriculum into their school's setting.

Conclusion

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to identify key elements that would improve gifted social and emotional curriculum. The data that were gathered helped provide insight into identifying key social and emotional elements in a middle school GT program. To strengthen the research, I triangulated the findings.

The data analysis that was reported helped me determine that there were key elements needed to be in place for a successful social and emotional curriculum. The analysis of the data yielded information that could be utilized in the local community to create a professional development for local schools to create their own social and emotional curriculum. The following themes were identified: (a) a dedicated time in the school schedule for affective curriculum, (b) GT students seeking an understanding of identity and GT characteristics, (c) creating partnerships for social and emotional

curriculum, (d) properly trained staff, including an understanding of the characteristics of GT students, (e) affective goal setting, (f) adequate resources for instruction, and (g) a process for intensive interventions when needed.

Additionally, data analysis indicated that when implementing various elements of social and emotional curriculum the following should be considered: (a) creating a safe environment for students to attain self-discovery and understanding, (b) celebrating strengths rather than focusing on weaknesses, (c) embedding a broad spectrum of gifted characteristics, (d) utilizing a flexibility and differentiation of instruction in the classroom (e) having strategies around social and emotional goal setting, and (f) differentiating strategies for individualized instruction.

The findings in Section 2 were used to create a 3-day PD around SEL. The project study has a literature review to effectively implement the PD.

Section 3: The Project

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to identify the key elements and explore the challenges involved in a successful GT social and emotional curriculum. After I analyzed the data collected from 32 electronic questionnaires and 10 semistructured interviews from statewide GT experts, seven themes emerged: (a) a dedicated time in the school schedule for affective curriculum, (b) GT students seeking an understanding of identity and GT characteristics, (c) creating partnerships for social and emotional curriculum, (d) properly trained staff, including an understanding of the characteristics of GT students, (e) affective goal setting, (f) adequate resources for instruction, and (g) a process for intensive interventions when needed. Findings from this study indicated a need for professional development around key elements that should be in place for a successful social and emotional curriculum for GT programs. Because the local school district currently has a professional learning community (PLC) in place, and because the district encourages similar training or PDs to stay connected, the PLC group will serve as a platform for the professional development (PD). The district gifted coordinator has stressed that all gifted PD should be implemented through their gifted PLC.

Section 3 sets out the project goals and rationale for the project: a 3-day professional development on implementing a social and emotional curriculum into a current GT program. The project includes learning outcomes, target audience analysis, an hour-by-hour timeline for a 3-day PD training seminar, and a list of required materials for

leaders and participants. A PD implementation plan and an evaluation of the professional

learning experience are described. All project-related documents can be found in

Appendix A. This section includes a discussion about enacting social change among the

participants.

Purpose and Goals

The purpose of the 3-day PD is to provide GT teachers and coordinators with key

elements that they can implement to be successful in their GT social and emotional

curriculum. GT coordinators and GT teachers will work together to generate strategies

and approaches to improve social and emotional curricula in their school or community.

Follow-up sessions and online discussions will continue periodically throughout the

school year. The overarching goal of the professional development is for GT experts to

develop a deeper understanding of key elements and implementation strategies for

improvement in their current GT social and emotional curricula, which directly aligns

with the guiding question. Therefore, the title of the proposed PD program will be

Effective Affective Curriculum. Two of the first three project goals are driven from the

Section 2 findings, which involve identifying key elements for a GT curriculum and

implementing that curriculum. The first goal is for experts to identify the key elements

that should be incorporated in their GT social and emotional curriculum, and the second

goal is to focus on the implementation of those elements. The third goal is derived from

the constructivist theory and honors the continuation of improvement by creating an

online tool where GT experts can share materials they have gathered and discuss various

topics about social and emotional curricula. Therefore, learning can continue after formal professional development training.

The PD is designed for GT experts and teachers in a single school district, who are already in the PLC. The first 3 days of the PD will lay the foundation for social and emotional gifted PLC. That is, the PD will address SEL, but the PLC members will discuss successes and continued struggles in their PLC as the year continues. The GT experts and teachers should be able to apply sound principles of teaching, learning, advocacy, and reflection to their GT social and emotional curriculum. GT experts will also collaborate to help the group as a whole, and in the process, all participants will be more connected and likely collaborate in future and share resources in the future. Gifted experts will identify their social and emotional curriculum's strengths and areas that need improvement. Lastly, GT experts will display professionalism and ownership of professional growth and learning. Greater details of the specific objectives and timeline can be found in the appendices.

The PD workshop Effective Affective Curriculum will be take place through an existing PLC that meets regularly throughout the school year; however, the first 3 days will serve as a face-to-face interaction to serve as a foundation for the PLC work. This PD will focus on GT social and emotional issues. Each day of the workshop will include two 15 minute breaks and a 60-minute lunch break. GT experts and teachers are expected to attend all 3 days of the workshop.

Rationale for Choosing a Professional Development Workshop

As explained in Section 2, 81% of the participants in this research study identified themselves as having extensive or above average education in GT social and emotional education, which illustrated the high number of GT experts in social and emotional education who participated in this study; however, almost two thirds of those same participants indicated that they felt that their social and curriculum was not addressing all their students' needs. Therefore, many of these GT experts were still seeking professional development in order to improve their social and emotional curriculum. The idea that trained experts in GT social and emotional studies still felt that they were not reaching all students was one of the major reasons that steered my project to a professional learning experience for GT coordinators and GT teachers. Interviewee and participant 4 stated:

There are times I feel effective in social and emotional areas, but it is sporadic, and non-linear. I wish my affective program was more comprehensive. It's like I have pockets of tools and knowledge, but I need to fill in the gaps and put it together in to a working system.

Many of the participants shared similar feelings, noting that while they had lots of knowledge, they needed to structure their social and emotional curriculum in a way that was more targeted and effective. These types of comments, like Participant 4's from above, reflect the need for more professional development opportunities for GT experts, so that the professionals can learn together and provide continued mutual support as they apply what they have learned. Furthermore, research indicated that oftentimes educators

struggle to take new educational innovations and ideas and transform them into acquired

practice in the classroom (Sjoer & Meirnik, 2016).

Vygotsky was the first to develop social constructivism with the idea that social

interactions combined with critical thinking were the key part of any learning community

(Powell & Kalina, 2009). By using a learner-centered collaborative approach to training,

GT experts take ownership in their learning. In accordance with a constructivist

conceptual theory, the traditional passive learning experience is transformed to an active

and more organized learning experience that is ultimately more meaningful for the

learner (Li & Guo, 2015).

Several participants in the interviews indicated that many of their counterparts in

the GT world are GT themselves and share some of the same unique characteristics as

their students. This also played a role in choosing constructivism as a conceptual

framework because it promotes the creation of a PD experience by the learners who have

diverse, unique, and varied perspectives (Nabhani, Bahous, & Hamdan, 2012). While the

PD will include characteristics of constructivism, the content will be aligned with the

guiding question and the findings. By using a constructivist approach, this project will

offer solutions through problem solving and collaboration attempting by GT experts to

improve their gifted social and emotional curriculum.

Review of the Literature

Introduction

In this section, current literature, which related to my proposed project, is

reviewed. The findings from this research study were directly aligned to the guiding

question, and, accordingly, shaped the type of project designed to address the problem.

The guiding question and problem did not lend themselves to focusing on a project that

dealt with policy or evaluation. Rather, the findings led to either focusing the project on a

curriculum plan or a PD. From the findings in section two, the data showed that several

strategies could be utilized in order to have a successful social and emotional GT

program. In other words, there was not just one way to achieve a successful curriculum.

The curriculum would likely vary according to the school, the staff and, most

importantly, the students. Therefore, a one-size-fits-all curriculum plan would not be

advantageous for this particular project. For instance, if only one model was presented,

but it was not effective within a certain school's schedule or systems, then it would not be

beneficial or useful to that school. However, participating in a PLC that respects the

learners and their understanding of their unique setting is crucial to finding solutions that

will work for various participants.

A PD that also focuses on PLC is an appropriate choice for this project because

the district will likely pair the two like-minded events/groups together. The gifted

coordinator has requested that all gifted PD be delivered through the current gifted PLC

that is in place. The data from section 2 indicated that most participants had a lot of social

and emotional training; however, their current curriculum was not meeting the social and

emotional needs of their students. Therefore, the PD was chosen as the most practical

means for answering the guiding question. The 3-day workshop was intended for GT

coordinators and experts followed by use of an on-line discussion group and a site for

sharing resources and curriculum. In this section, I will discuss how the research was

completed, the theory of PDs and PLCs, the important components for this PD, and potential barriers and solutions.

Several databases from Walden University's library were utilized for this specific project study and to research PLCs. The databases that were used were ERIC, Education Research Complete, Education Source, ProQuest Central and Sage Premier. Boolean phrases were used in the search such as: *teacher collaboration, designing professional development, collaborative professional development, gifted, professional learning communities, professional learning experiences, collaboration, academic achievement social and emotional learning, adult learner*. I selected many peer-reviewed articles published within the last 5 years. By utilizing several different databases and reading several articles, I achieved saturation.

Professional Development

The project is a 3-day professional development seminar, and the PD participants will all be members of an existing gifted PLC. At the beginning of each academic school year, new members are added to the PLC, and the district gifted coordinator ensures PLC review the purpose, concepts, norms, and goals of the PLC. Because this 3-day PD will take place at the beginning of the school year, the group will have to review the purpose and norms of PLCs. The PD will have to acknowledge the current gifted PLC group and use many of the PLC strategies and characteristics in the professional development. Therefore, it is appropriate I research literature on PD and PLCs to ensure the professional development has many elements of a PLC and respects the progress that the established group has achieved.

PD is considered an important and effective strategy for school districts to utilize to improve student learning (Gravani, 2015). Teachers have been given opportunities to attend PD, which are offered in a variety of formats (Koellner & Jacobs, 2015). After reviewing different types of PD models and speaking with the district GT coordinator, a constructivist approach was deemed to be the most beneficial. The constructivist approach to learning was first designed by Piaget (1975) by understanding that professionals could teach better in an active learning environment.

Vygotsky continued Piaget's ideas by indicating that the teacher and the students should be equally involved in the learning process (Mahn, 2012). Thus, the social interactions between the teacher and students, combined with all of their expertise and critical thinking, led to Vygotsky coining the term social constructivism (Powell & Kalina, 2009). The social piece of social constructivism allows facilitators and learners to interact in a place called Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), where both the facilitators and the learners can provide support to move the group in order to stretch to an intended learning target (Vygotsky, 1978).

Experts in PD believe that the most effective PD involves an active process and is collaborative in nature, which fits with constructivism (Desimone, Smith, & Phillips, 2013). Constructivism aligns with the idea that GT experts come with a great deal of knowledge around GT social and emotional issues and that each GT expert's background knowledge will help build or construct greater meaning (Vygotsky, 1978). A PD that invites all gifted experts to contribute in a PD may be the district's answer to address GT social and emotional needs.

Because the group members are familiar with the PLC, and the PLC is a platform or vehicle for the PD, it is appropriate for a brief review of PLCs. The history of PLCs) has transformed over the years. PLCs were used in commercial business before being adopted by academia in order to foster a team environment that would maximize the worker and, thus, the organization's efficiency (Senge, 1990). Senge's research indicated that professional organizations are incredibly similar as learning communities (1990). The idea is that teachers discontinue working in isolation, and use a collaborative model that aims to increase student achievement (Dufour & Eaker, 2008). While collaboration is an important component of PDs and PLCs, so too, is the idea that all parties involved have a sense of shared responsibility.

Schools need to distinguish between teaching and learning in an educational environment (Koellner & Jacobs, 2015). Much of the conversation around PLCs was how teachers should teach, but the missing piece was what was actually being learned and focusing on results. Lastly, one of the largest barriers to PLCs is time, so using new tools to create ongoing discussions within the PLCs can be beneficial.

Project Content

The literature review suggested four areas are important when presenting a PD workshop when working with PLC members which included (a) collegial collaboration (b) shared responsibility and vision (c) a focus on results, and (d) addressing limited time (Bayar, 2014; Carpenter, 2017; Endepohls-Ulpe, 2017; Petrie & McGee, 2012). Because the PD group members are part of an existing PLC, they will be referred to as PLC members.

Collegial Collaboration

Members from the PLC have a goal to encourage learning as an ongoing endeavor and to appreciate collaboration (Speck, 1999; Carpenter, 2017). Effective PD allows members to reflect on their strengths and weaknesses and work toward goals (Hands, Guzar, & Rodrigue, 2015; Teague & Anfara, 2012). The constructivist model takes passive learning and flips the learning into a more interactive and engaging model (Li & Gu, 2015). Bruner (1996) added that PLC members should be communal and team members should work together to construct sensible meaning. Research indicated that the learner-centered method maximizes synergy (Juvova, Chudy, Nermesiter, Plischke, & Kvintova, 2015). Juvova et al. (2015) explained that synergy is the exponential increase in group effectiveness due to diverse perspectives. Because teachers are instrumental in learning that takes place in the classroom, their expertise and experience should be valued and respected (Wells, 2014). Participants need to feel the content is relevant to them in order for the PD to be engaging and meaningful.

A barrier that often leads to an unsuccessful PD is the understanding of implementation when collaborating. Jones and Thessin's (2015) implementation phases are developing, implementing, and sustaining, and they look very different when collaboration takes place. Collaboration becomes even more critical during the implementation stage because critical thinking, reflective thinking, problem solving, and support are needed in order to overcome obstacles and challenges.

Shared Responsibility and Vision

A constructivist approach to PD is flexible in nature and respects the learner's expertise. Because the GT expert is the learner, it makes sense that the PD be flexible because each learning community is unique and different. In order for this PD experience to be effective, the PD has to take into consideration the needs of the school and the needs of the GT expert and its current program (Bayar, 2014). Many GT experts indicated that either they, themselves, or their peers were gifted learners, and that for any training or PD this giftedness needed to be taken into consideration to meet the unique learners' needs. Therefore, the PD framework needed to ensure that GT experts were involved in the process of creating SEL for GT students (McLaughlin & Overturf, 2012; Warr Pedersen, 2017).

A PD modeled in social constructivism allows the PLC's to rely just as much on the learner, which is the GT expert, as the facilitator. A more standard form of PD involves presenting new strategies or idea by an expert who would transfer that knowledge to the learner without any active participation by the group, sometimes referred to as a *sit-and-get*. Research indicated that when teachers have a choice and a say in the PD, they are intrinsically motivated to make improvements in their teachings (Sumsion, Brownlee, Ryan, Walsh, Farrell, Irvine, & Berthelsen, 2015). Bayar (2014) stated that teachers need to be involved in both the development and the approving of the PD activities. When developing goals as a group, the goals should be consistent with the goals of the school and not disconnected from the district or school's mission (Collopy, 2015; DeLuca, Bolden, & Chan, 2017).

Sharma (2014) indicated that when instructors use a social constructivist approach, they act as facilitators rather than simply someone metaphorically handing over information. This supports the notion that social constructivism fits this specific project because the GT experts have identified in the section 2 findings that they already come in with a wealth of knowledge around GT social and emotional issues, and it makes more sense that I would be the facilitator rather than someone who is more of an expert than the attendees. This important shift from teacher to facilitator is a crucial adjustment in mindset and an important reason why the social constructivist approach was chosen as the conceptual theory for this project.

Focused on Results

The purpose of PD and PLCs are to improve teacher learning and student learning (Petrie & McGee, 2012). Many schools focus on content and pedagogy, which can measure student proficiency (Goe, Biggers, Croft, & National Comprehensive Center for Teacher, 2012). Teacher effectiveness is critical in determining students' success, and PD is an avenue to improve teacher effectiveness (Desimone, Smith, & Phillips, 2013; Minor, Desimone, Lee, & Hochberg, 2016). Current research indicated that teachers and experts involved need to have leadership in the PLCs (Jones & Thessin, 2015). Once the PLCs have been formed, the PLC begins with analyzing preexisting knowledge, which will be the foundation for new knowledge (Forlin, Loreman, & Sharma, 2014). Forlin et al. (2014) indicated that misconceptions and gaps can be addressed as learning and discussion take place. This is taken into consideration in the PD especially when training the staff on GT characteristics.

Additionally, schools also need to focus on what skills students need to develop in order to meet the demands of a 21st century workforce (Campbell, Saltmarsh, Chapman & Drew, 2013). As technology changes year after year, schools need to stay aligned with what the workforce is demanding, and the PD discussions need to reflect an evolving workforce (Owen, 2015). This piece of information was noted when considering what technology would be best for the PD. Schoology, which is an online interactive tool was deemed to be the best fit for the PD.

One of the problems regarding gauging the success of a curriculum, as indicated in section 2, centers on the idea that SEL is a continuum that cannot necessarily be mastered. It cannot be measured in the same way as a standardized test can measure knowledge of concrete facts. Many experts in this study did not know which tools, matrices, or continuums to utilize. One of the focal points for the 3-day training is how to measure success when it comes to SEL.

Address Lack of Time

As noted in Section 2, several participants repeatedly spoke about how there was little time for them to actually implement social and emotional curriculum in their day and current research supports lack of time as an issue around PD (Endepohls-Ulpe, 2017). A barrier that had been stated by many GT experts in Section 2 was the lack of time for PD to address social and emotional curriculum. It is not surprising that time was brought up by participants, as the literature also suggested that this is one of the most prominent barriers in creating a successful PD (Attard, 2012; Forte & Flores, 2014; Masuda, Ebersole, & Barrett, 2012). Because PLCs for middle school GT experts take

place during the school year, when there are many constraints on the GT experts'

schedules and responsibilities, it is hard for GT experts to consistently attend every PLC

meeting. Many times PD can be hard to create when there are several opposing forces

competing for minimal time (Killion, 2016). Some of the competing forces can also be

within the PD itself. Some PD tries to take on too many goals and covering too much

content in a short time period (Spencer, 2016). Some research suggests that focusing only

on a few key elements is more beneficial to the participants (Voogt, 2015).

A solution that some PLCs have been utilizing is shifting to a blended model of

PLCs where the PLC can continue their PLC work online (Edinger, 2017; Kusmawan,

2017). Social networks and online tools have clear advantages for busy, time-limited

members (Forbest, 2015; Gray & Smyth, 2012). It would seem reasonable that this lack

of time would also stretch to professional development. By using online tools,

participants can participate at their convenience and share tools, ideas, and solutions with

one another. In other words, the collaboration can be ongoing and not restricted to a

certain time and place. Another advantage to continuing PLC in an online format is that it

allows more people who lack competency or confidence to have more time for research

and practice before being forced to converse with their colleagues (Bond, 2016).

Social and Emotional Best Practices

Educators have recognized that intellectual quotient is not the sole ingredient for

gifted students' success and that SEL needs to take place in schools (Renzulli, 2012). The

trend in education has been to place a major focus on measurable performances, which

measures the success of a student, a school, a district, and even the state (Moon, 2006).

As a result, there has been a lack of SEL at schools with gifted students. Research also indicated that gifted students who had high emotional quotient (EQ) scores were more likely to have a higher satisfaction in their overall life (Killian, 2012). Current literature stated that there are numerous best practices for schools to consider when delivering social and emotional curriculum (Cross & Cross, 2017; Killian, 2012).

Cross and Cross (2017) indicated the need for PD for staff in order to stay abreast of new developments in research. Peterson (2015) indicated the PD needs to happen not only at the teacher level, but that it should be extended to counselors, as well. Karantzas, (2017) suggested that PD for staff can help clear up misconceptions and can lead to problem-solving a certain child's unique social and emotional needs. If gifted teachers are unavailable to attend the gifted training, they are more likely to show no changes in their instruction for the gifted population (Van Tassel-Baska et al., 2009).

Literature indicated that partnering with many stakeholders can be beneficial to the student (Olszewski-Kubilius, & Clarenbach, 2014; Peterson, 2015). Davis (2010) posited that parents or caregivers should support the social and emotional needs, as well as the academic needs. Peterson (2015) also suggested the need to involve a counselor when unique social and emotional needs are occurring in the child's life to help provide support and assistance.

Other research focused on the need for GT staff to focus on the unique needs of gifted students in a strength-based approach (Bianco & Harris, 2014). Initially, staff should understand GT students' unique needs. Some of the social and emotional issues that gifted students experience include: asynchronous development (Harrison & Van

Hanegham, 2011), overexcitabilities (Lamont, 2012), perfectionism (Mofield, 2008), underachievement (Neihart, 2006), bullying (Boodman, 2006; Peterson, 2015), and other social pressures. By addressing these unique needs through curriculum, students will be more likely to manage their emotions and relationships. It is important that when working with students on their SEL goals, that they are addressed in a strength-based manner (Bianco & Harris, 2014). Research indicated that by using a strength-based approach, students are more likely to overcome difficult social or emotional obstacles (Baum., Schader, & Hébert, 2014). While research is continuing to improve on best practices for gifted SEL there is a lack of literature in this area, and more research needs to be conducted.

Summary

The literature review focused on the type of project that would be utilized to identify and implement key social and emotional curriculum. The best approach based on the constructivist theory was a PD within an existing PLC. The goal is to use the PD constructivist approach to improve affective social and emotional curriculum and implementation in middle schools in the district. The literature searches were conducted to gain information and strategies to successfully implement a PD for this middle school GT expert group, while also searching for potential barriers or obstacles that could lead to an unsuccessful professional learning experience. Because the PD has to be run through an existing PLC, it is important that the PD shares some characteristics and research with PLCs. PD and PLC both need to have a strong sense of collaboration, a sense of shared

responsibilities, a focus on results, and the use of modern technology to combat one of the most difficult barriers, time.

Project Description

Based on data collected and the review of the literature, a three day PD training was designed to identify key elements in a successful GT program and find ways to implement them effectively across middle schools in the district. The first goal of the project is to identify key elements in a successful GT curriculum. Next, those goals that are stated need to be implemented in an effective manner. A third goal is to create an online tool where GT experts can share materials they have gathered for social and emotional curriculum. In order to achieve any of these goals, the GT experts must be given an opportunity to collaborate with peers while developing social and emotional curriculum.

Needed Resources and Existing Supports

One of the most positive existing support structures is the state mandated Advanced Learning Plans (ALPs). Each ALP must include a social and emotional goal, with a plan and strategies to achieve that goal. This is beneficial because this state legislation is mandating that ALP's have social and emotional goals, so it forces the topic to the forefront.

Another existing support is that a PLC group of GT experts currently exists in the district. This is beneficial because the group is already organized with the members needed. The PLC also has a history of trust and collaboration already, so deeper discussions can take place. While some time must be spent at the beginning of the PD on

reviewing PLC norms, the expectations, problem-solving, and collegial collaboration should run more smoothly.

Our district GT coordinator is very committed to working with GT teachers in our district to improve SEL. The GT district coordinator has already made it a goal to improve the district's social and emotional curriculum. The GT district coordinator would help facilitate and bring in another facilitator or two from either the state level or our district level to help with our training.

The first week of school in our district is a work week with no students. Each building has certain days dedicated to their home school; however, there are other days that are work days to prepare for class. By using 3 days of training at the beginning of the year, I could maximize the ability to change and implement social and emotional curriculum right at the beginning of the year before students return to school. Therefore, the first 3 days of training would occur during work week. In order to make this happen, I would need to coordinate with the district GT coordinator and get permission from all middle school principals to pull GT coordinators and experts from their buildings during teacher work week.

Another support structure is the monthly, half-day meetings that GT coordinators have already in place. This would allow continued follow up of social and emotional PLCs to continue through the year. The PLCs allow for new strategies and research to be shared within the group.

I would need various resources in order to create the 3-day PD. The first human resource I would use would be our current district gifted coordinator to present on the

social and emotional characteristics of GT students. Since the coordinator has presented this topic previously to other groups, we could utilize the same materials and resources for this portion of the PD. I would also use the district technology coordinator to present how teachers could use Schoology to download and share resources to help achieve the third goal for the PD. Another human resource would be a member from the district breakout.edu team to help create an interactive hands-on activity to help apply learning.

Physical resources that the district would help supply would be the school or site, where we would hold the PD. We would need various technology such as projectors, speakers, extension cords, dongles, and plugs. Other materials such as paper, nametags, writing utensils would also be needed.

Potential Barriers

One potential barrier of workweek PD is that many building principals have varied work schedules. In other words, some buildings may divide their time differently, and it could be very difficult to get all district principals to ensure the GT coordinators 3 days off. Typically, school buildings only have one GT coordinator, which would make it unlikely for a principal to change a schedule for that one person. Additionally, another potential problem is that GT coordinators at the middle school level often have several positions besides just GT. Most teach other classes and some share job responsibilities, meaning that the role of *GT Coordinator* is not their only job title.

Time is an obstacle not only during work week, but during the entire year, also. While there are regular monthly half-day meetings scheduled for GT coordinators, there are many other issues aside from social and emotional issues that need to be addressed,

such as testing, staff development, training, placement, etc. By focusing solely on social and emotional curriculum, there would be no time for other GT issues.

Potential Solutions

During work week most staff members conduct their building level training the first two days, allowing 3 days for additional training and preparation for the beginning of school. However, some principals break up this training throughout the week into several half days. The district gifted coordinator could e-mail principals to urge them to complete their training the first two days of work week. While this may not be a guaranteed solution, as principals have the ability to control the work week schedule, it could lead to more principals structuring their work week in a way which would allow for a 3-day professional development.

To ensure GT coordinators and teacher show up to the training, the gifted district coordinator would need to communicate that social and emotional curriculum is one of the goals of the year, which could be done by stressing the importance of this goal the previous year. *Save* the date notices should be sent out three to four months in advance. At the end of the school year, electronic invitations should be sent out. Phone calls could be made for those who have not responded. The more effort and importance the gifted district coordinator can place on the social and emotional training, the more likely it will be that people will attend, even if they have to miss some other training.

Proposal for Potential Timetable

The proposed timetable would be over the 2018-2019 year, and would likely be modified by working with the district gifted coordinator and the district's social and

emotional committee. It would be best to do this PD training at the very beginning of the year. After a discussion with the current coordinator, it was deemed that because the gifted PLC group meets 1-2 days at the beginning of the year, the best chance of getting a 3-day PD in place would be during work week. After the PD is planned, we would have to book either a district room big enough for coordinators or a library that is in a central location for middle schools.

The title of the 3-day training is *Effective Affective Education: How to Identify Strengths and Improve Weaknesses in your Social and Emotional Program.* The training will be hands on and collaborative in nature.

Roles and Responsibilities of Self and Others

Currently, the district has a small group of teachers/coordinators on the Gifted Social/Emotional Committee. This group would start planning and divide roles and responsibilites. While this three day PD plan that I have created would be a great start, it would not be wise to walk in and act like their input and expertise would not significantly add to the overall training.

The district GT coordinator and his/her staff would help with communication by sending out the save-the-dates and electronic invitations. The staff could call those who have not responded during the end of the school year and summer to ensure participation was as high as possible. The staff could also reserve the facilities, order supplies, collate materials, type up agenda, and help with managerial functions, such as name cards, check-in, room arrangement, and general technology set up. The district coordinator

indicated that their staff works over the summer and coordinating the PD would give them goals to work on.

My responsibilities would include acting as facilitator for the icre breakers unless others on the committee wanted to help. On day 1, Session 1, I would present and facilitate the session since it focuses on my research. Other sessions that are linked to my research, such as implementation would also be facilitated by me. The district coordinator would present Session 2 on Charcteristics of GT Students. The instructional leadership technolgoy team, which has a smaller committee that specializes in breakout.edu would work with the district coordinator in the Unlocking the Gifted Student activities. I would facilitate the daily reflections. We would bring in the district technology coordinators to explain Schoology, which is an interactive online sharing tool. Most of the work during the second half of the PD is group work and involves a collaborative process. Anyone in our PD organizational committee would be roaming the room looking to help groups that were stuck or struggling and trying to add valuable input. Committee members will be asked to engage in discussion and ask probing questions to collaborative groups. Group members will be encouraged to participate and chime-in as the goal of the PD is to use all the experts in the room.

<div align="center">**Project Evaluation Plan**</div>

Lodico et al. (2010) indicated that timely professional development evaluation should address the adult learner and implementation of learned practices. The project will allow various points of formative assessment through reflection and other methods, and a summative assessment at the conclusion of the professional development. Some type of

reflection will be given at the end of each half-day session. There will be a mid-point formative assessment of the professional development and the final evaluation will be given at the end.

Both summative and formative evaluations are effective evaluation instruments (Gravani, 2015). By using closed and open-ended questions in a formative evaluation it allows the professional development facilitator to be able to access information that may benefit the professional development program in an immediate way. The summative evaluation allows for a more complete and detailed analysis of the entire PD (Gravani, 2015). Therefore, for this project both formative and summative evaluations were chosen to gather rich and extensive feedback. The feedback will be utilized to strengthen and improve the current PD.

The purpose of this project is to allow gifted advisors, teachers, and experts an opportunity to examine their current social and emotional curricula and evaluate strengths and weaknesses. Within this summative evaluation is the opportunity to build upon strengths and improve areas in the curriculum that may be weak. An electronic evaluation form will be given to each participant (copy of questions in Appendix A).

Most of the questions will be based on the fundamental goals of the project. The first goal of identifying key elements in a successful GT curriculum has subtopics for each GT expert to consider. Those subtopics are a result of the findings from this study and include: (a) a dedicated time in the school schedule for affective curriculum, (b) GT students seeking an understanding of identity and GT characteristics, (c) creating partnerships for social and emotional curriculum, (d) properly trained staff, including an

understanding of the characteristics of GT students, (e) affective goal setting, (f) adequate resources for instruction, and (g) a process for intensive interventions when needed. The second goal is the implementation of Goal 1. A third goal is to create an online tool where GT experts can share materials for social and emotional curriculum. In order to achieve any of these goals, the GT experts must be given an opportunity to collaborate with peers.

Because the goals were driven from data and current literature that were rooted in the guiding question, it makes sense that the evaluation tools primarily measure whether or not the PD achieved the goals and to what degree. While many questions will be targeted to the effectiveness of the goals, there will also be two other sets of questions. One set of questions will measure engagement in the professional learning experience. Within the engagement set of questions, there will be one open-ended question asking for any ideas to improve or enhance engagement for the PD. Lastly, opportunity for reflection will be guided through open ended questions in the professional development evaluation. This final evaluation will allow the participants time to reflect on the PD and their experience. In addition, responses to the guided reflection will allow the facilitators more insight into a participant's experience in the PD, which can lead to improvement for the next PLC.

The key stakeholders who will benefit initially from PD evaluation are the facilitators. However, by contributing to a stronger PD curriculum, the evaluations will also benefit future PLC members. By participating in a meaningful PD experience around GT social and emotional curriculum, GT experts will hopefully return to their school

excited with new ideas and tools to strengthen their current curriculum and programs. In turn, students will have more consistent and targeted curriculum, which can help them develop better self-awareness, stronger relationship building skills, better emotional regulation, and an understanding of their strengths and areas that need growth.

Project Implications

The state has mandated schools to create advanced learning plans, which must contain a social and emotional goal. The goal of this research project was to determine key elements of a successful GT social and emotional program, which can help experts create an actual curriculum rather than writing down random goals. After collecting data via questionnaires and interviews, it became clear that GT experts in the state needed more resources and help in identifying and strengthening certain elements in their GT social and emotional program.

Local Community

As indicated through data, several local GT experts felt that they had significant training and education in GT SEL. However, a majority of experts believed they were not reaching all their students' social and emotional needs in an effective way.

The PD first will illuminate the research findings, which will allow GT experts in this district to focus on several key elements of their GT social and emotional program. The PD will also allow GT experts to reflect on their current social and emotional curriculum/programs at their individual schools and examine the strengths and weaknesses in the various elements identified within the research. They will be able to think about their GT students and what would work best in their unique community. Use

of a constructivist approach in the PD allows all participants to bring their expertise to the table and collaborate to problem solve various issues. Giving GT experts a PLC to focus on social and emotional curriculum will allow them to identify strengths, which will allow them to perpetuate those strengths and even improve upon them. On the contrary, GT experts will be able to identify areas of improvement, which will allow them to focus on certain areas. Development and implementation of a plan to improve certain areas of the GT social and emotional curriculum will allow the entire district to offer a stronger and more complete GT social and emotional program.

The ultimate goal of having a stronger social and emotional curriculum is to have GT students in the district be more effective in knowing their strengths and recognizing areas of improvement in their social and emotional well-being. Students will hopefully be able to articulate and have a plan for improving SEL. They will be able to evaluate their social and emotional intelligence and continue to work on certain areas that they may have targeted. They will also be able to celebrate and use the areas that are strengths in the future. The affective education they receive will hopefully lead to happier and well-rounded human beings. It could also lead them to be more effective in how they engage in meaningful and professional relationships.

On a more personal level, research shows that up to 25% of all gifted children have low social intelligence, which can result in detaching from meaningful and gratifying social interactions (Gere, Capps, Mitchell, & Grubbs, 2010). By providing a rich curriculum that encourages strong relational skills, students can lead a more connected life. Additionally, emotional and social intelligence is critical for any student

wishing to become a leader and develop leadership skills in the workplace (Killian, 2012). An effective curriculum in social and EI, equips students to have more than just technical or content based skills; they will be able to communicate effectively and interconnect in a myriad of ways.

Far-Reaching

There is not extensive amount of literature that looks at GT social and emotional curriculum as a whole. Most studies focus on one specific area such as perfectionism or underachievement, which can be very valuable, but not universally applicable. There are not many studies which focus on social and emotional curriculum or key elements as an entirety. The research finding alone can be very valuable when a GT expert is looking to improve or initiate a social and emotional curriculum. Schools will be able to have a guide of key elements within their current program to begin evaluation and improvement. Social change can occur when schools have a clear guide to evaluate their program in key areas. This evaluation can allow an organization to celebrate and perpetuate successes, but also hone in on areas that need to be improved. The recursive evaluation process will lead to a stronger social and emotional curriculum, which is advantageous for the GT students who interact with the GT curriculum.

A professional learning experience can bring possible solutions and ideas to the forefront by utilizing multiple experts' knowledge and experience. This sort of PD process goes beyond the idea of simply identifying or evaluating a school's GT curriculum, it now provides potential solutions. Rich dialogue can lead to action within schools around key elements in GT social and emotional curriculum. Furthermore,

research can be conducted around various ideas that may stem from this dialogue.

Schools that may find this overwhelming can focus on a few areas at a time. As experts

meet and develop new strategies and curriculum, they create a synergy that leads to

benefits for current, as well as, future stakeholders.

Conclusion

Section 3 described the proposed project for the project study. The project was

developed from findings in section 2. The project goals were stated and derived from the

guiding question and data. This section provided a rationale of why the project was

chosen and how the project answers the guiding question. The literature review provides

a conceptual theory and supports the goals and content of a PLC because the district

would use the PLC as a platform or vehicle for the PD. The section also explores why a

PD, which is rooted in constructivism, is the preferred project. A description of this

project and a list of resources and potential barriers and solutions are found in this

section. Additionally, the section highlights various components of the project found in

the Appendix and proposes an evaluation system. Finally, the implications of the project

are projected to create social change both locally and in a more far reaching manner.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

Introduction

The purpose of the 3-day PD training seminar, Effective Affective Curriculum for GT Students, is to provide GT teachers with key elements that they can implement to be more successful in GT social and emotional curricula. In Section 2, I conducted interviews with local experts and sent out questionnaires. The data from Section 2 was analyzed and used to help create a 3-day professional learning experience for gifted experts in my district. The PD was rooted in social constructivism.

In this section, I will cover the following topics: (a) the project's strengths and limitations, (b) my growth as a researcher, scholar, and practitioner (c) recommendations for alternative approaches for future studies, (d) my own understanding and learning in project development, leadership, and change, (e) the overall significance of the project, (g) how the project can influence social change in the field of gifted education.

Project Strengths

There are several strengths in the 3-day PD, titled Effective Affective Curriculum for GT Students. The first strength of the project is the timing. Although timing is not necessarily an inherent strength, there is a need for much more research in GT SEL (Van Tassel-Baska, Cross, & Olecnhak, 2009). The combination of the lack of literature on effective social and emotional curricula for GT students and the demand by ALPs to submit a social and emotional goal for all GT students, make this topic important at this time. Thus, GT experts are finding there is a need and desire to learn more about the topic itself (Zeidner & Matthews, 2017). While there is some literature on GT social and

emotional subtopics such as perfectionism, overexcitability, asynchronous development, and so on, there is little literature that explains the key elements of a successful social and emotional curriculum. In other words, existing studies shed light on specific topics in GT SEL; few studies discuss how to go about using the subtopics in the scope of a larger curriculum.

The state is mandating schools to set goals for SEL; thus, GT coordinators and teachers are searching for as much information on SEL as possible. Additionally, my own research from this study indicated that while many GT experts have training in GT characteristics, they feel they are not reaching all their GT students when it comes to providing social and emotional curricula, which further highlights the need for this PD. Therefore, the lack of literature, the state's mandated ALP), and data from experts, illustrate that this topic needs to be addressed. Because there is already a desire to learn more about this topic, the PLC member's engagement in the PD should happen organically because of their natural desire to fill this gap of knowledge.

Another strength of the PD is that the PLC members are allowed to be the experts. They are recognized as experts and asked to problem-solve, collaborate, and have meaningful dialogue to improve all of their GT programs. Wells (2014) indicated that teachers are the center of student learning, so their expertise and experience should be valued as a tremendous asset to the PLC group. Quint (2011) further argued that the exchange of information in a collaborative environment can benefit both the strongest teachers and the weakest teachers. Each GT coordinator or teacher's experience and training allows them to be a vital member of the PD, and each PLC member bring a

certain set of skills, which allows them to be valued member of the group (McLaughlin &

Overturf, 2012). While the 3-day professional learning experience gives GT experts

various key elements they need to include in their GT SEL curriculum, it does not

necessarily indicate how to achieve this. Because each school is unique and has different

schedules, stakeholders, supporting staff, etc., there cannot be a prescribed one-size-fits

all curriculum. Therefore, the solution(s) can be dynamic and specific to one location.

Since each expert knows their school and population the best, it further promotes the idea

that the GT expert is not only an expert in GT affective curriculum, but they are the best

expert to enact the curriculum in their school. That is not to say that schools in our district

do not have similarities, which could benefit from collegial collaboration, but GT

coordinators will be more apt to gauge what may or may not work within their school

setting.

One of the biggest strengths of the professional learning experience is that there is

built in work-time to begin to figure out how to implement and include key elements in

their GT social and emotional curriculum. When analyzing data in Section 2, one of the

strongest themes that emerged was the notion that there was a lack of time and resources

to create social and emotional curriculum. There was not time enough in the day to

implement curriculum, but there was also not enough time to develop curriculum

(Endepohls-Ulpe, 2017). This 3-day workshop addressed each of the key elements of GT

curriculum and at least gave some time for GT experts to reflect and begin to figure out

how to effectively implement the various key elements into their GT social and emotional

curriculum. The third goal allowed an avenue to share resources during the workshop and

allowed experts to add to the sharing tool in the future. The last afternoon of the 3-day PD gave teachers much needed work time to develop certain key elements in their social and emotional curriculum. Most successful PLC workshops are meaningful when the PLC members can walk away with a plan, a tool, or curriculum to utilize when they get back to their school. The hope is that there were several opportunities during the 3-day training for the PLC members to start planning how they will go about implementing the key elements in their specific school.

<div align="center">**Project Weaknesses**</div>

There were weaknesses of the PD design that were realized. To begin, the attendance of all GT coordinators and experts that will be in the year-long PLC may not be able to attend all session of the 3-day professional learning experience. Because each school is site-based, there are many competing forces fighting for teacher's time. Many other meetings and training, are mandated by principals or district administration. Oftentimes the most difficult part of PD is finding time where there are no competing forces (Killion, 2016). For instance, some additional district training is facilitated by a small group of district trainers and must be rotated throughout various schools during "work week," which is the week before students return after summer break. This time period is problematic because if the district mandates a certain training for various schools, it would mean everyone would likely miss at least one session of *Effective Affective Curriculum for GT Students* to attend the mandated training. Sometimes there will never be a perfect time that fits within all participants' parameters and schedules (Killion, 2016).

Another weakness of the PD is that the 3-day PD may try to cover too much content in too short of a time (Spencer, 2016). This professional development goal is to provide a positive experience where members get a little bit of time to delve into lots of various elements that could be added to their current GT program. However, many participants may leave overwhelmed, feeling that they were exposed to too many elements to add in to their curriculum. A common mistake with professional development is that there are too many objectives planned in a short amount of time (Spencer, 2016). Members may feel like they started ten different aspects to their GT curriculum and were not able to finish any of them, which could cause them stress and anxiety. Potentially, focusing on only a few key elements could be more productive (Voogt, 2015). Therefore, the goals of the PD may have been too lofty considering the time frame.

Recommendations for Alternate Approaches

As mentioned in the project weakness, the current PD may contain too many topics to focus on in a short time period. Time for PD is valuable and sparse, so spending time on an area that is already a strength may not be beneficial for many GT coordinators/experts. Additionally, by giving PLC members a choice, you are valuing their expertise and time. Experts indicate that when professional have choice around PD, they are more focused and engaged (Sumsion et al., 2015). Additionally, the idea that everyone needs to work on every key element and that the teacher cannot choose their own areas of improvement undermines the conceptual theory of the professional development—which is rooted in social constructivism, and accordingly is supposed to respect and value the knowledge and expertise each GT expert brings to the group.

An alternate approach for this PD would be to quickly highlight various key elements and have members select two or three areas to focus on more closely. The PLC members will already be taking a self-assessment, so they would already know where their strengths and areas of improvement lie. In this alternative approach, I would still spend time to focus on successful strategies for implementation because it does not matter which element the PLC members choose, effective implementation is essential. The primary difference would be that members would not need to focus on all of the key elements. They would able to choose one to three options from the following listed in Goal 1: (a) a dedicated time in the school schedule for affective curriculum, (b) GT students seeking an understanding of identity and GT characteristics, (c) creating partnerships for social and emotional curriculum, (d) properly trained staff, including an understanding of the characteristics of GT students, (e) affective goal setting, (f) adequate resources for instruction, and (g) a process for intensive interventions when needed. As a result of creating more time, each of the goals above would need to have more structure, depth and support. However, this alternative approach would hopefully allow experts to feel like they have something that is close to implementation once the students return the following week.

Scholarship

This project study has left me well versed in the research process and the importance of following all the necessary steps in research. After finishing this process, it is easy to reflect on how the research process works and why the process is needed in its entirety. However, when I was going through the research process, it was much harder to

understand why every single piece was needed. At times, all the various steps seemed redundant or unnecessary. When you are finished and look at everything from a backwards sequence, everything makes sense. I finally created a 3-day professional learning experience for GT SEL based on the findings in Section 2, which were driven from questions aligned to my guiding question. The guiding question was generated from an actual problem in education, where there was a lack of research. When you trace the research process, it is aligned and deeply rooted in solving a problem that needs to be addressed.

The easiest part for me was creating the 3-day professional learning experience because I have participated in many professional development opportunities. As the research process continued, I became more reliant on the rubric, ensuring I included everything that was needed. I also became highly effective in accessing and analyzing educational research. The constant practice of doing this will be a life-long lesson that I can continue to use to stay immersed in educational trends, as I try to continue to lead in my district.

Project Development

In developing this project, I have honed various skills, starting with the ability to ensure that I have clear and obtainable goals and outcomes. I also learned that project development is better when it is collaborative, which is why I reached out to other experts and asked questions and guidance when creating my project.

One of the greatest lessons I learned is that PD is typically best when it is rooted in social constructivism. When teachers are viewed as experts and given the opportunity

to share their expertise, the learner feels valued and engaged. Too many of my experiences with PD have been sit-and-gets. Now, when I reflect on the best PD opportunities, it has been collaborative or been a workshop model, where experts are valued.

Leadership and Change

In my school and district I am oftentimes looked up to as a leader, but I have learned that a leader always need to continue to grow. This entire lengthy process has provided me to become an expert in social and emotional gifted curriculum. It has also given me a wide array of knowledge into gifted education as a whole, especially in realizing the important of SEL for all students, regardless if they are identified gifted or not. I truly feel that I can make a difference in my school district around GT learning. I hope my new knowledge and expertise can spread from the local district level to the state level. I also believe that while I may not have the opportunity to research topics to this scale, I can still use the research process to help me affect change. Understanding a problem and doing research on current literature for a problem does not have to take months; it can be done quickly depending on the problem.

Analysis of Self as Scholar

Completing this project study has been one of the most difficult processes of my adult life. After five years, there was a moment I wanted to quit. I am grateful that I had a chairperson who supported me, and believed in me as scholar. There are many moments in my professional life where it is easy to forget your own capabilities. Doubt creeps in and self-confidence can quickly dissolve. It is important to surround yourself with people

who acknowledge and believe in your abilities. Moving forward even if it feels like you are crawling is important. My mantra in the middle of my project was to just keep moving forward each week, even if it seemed like I was taking very small steps.

One of my weaknesses is not finding a structure/conceptual theory before I start to address problems. I have learned when a framework is provided; it helps align the entire process. I oftentimes naturally want to skip this step, but I have realized as a scholar you need to be thorough, and you may have to spend more time in the beginning steps to go faster in the latter ones. Lastly, I learned that scholarly research is essential in improving education. Across the country there are many educators like me dedicated to finding solutions in our field. One person will not have an answer to all the educational problems that arise. However, if we have enough educators who can intellectually find a problem worth solving, diagnose it, and carefully investigate the problem, then we are more likely to become a nation of strong educators, which, in turn, would leader to a smarter and more compassionate nation.

Analysis of Self as Practitioner

Two key pieces of scholarship come to mind when I think about how this process has affected my scholarship. The first is on how to effectively view and address situations and problems. The second valuable notion is the need to stay informed in current educational research.

This doctoral project study has enhanced many skills needed to be an effective leader and educator. This lengthy research process has taught me how to look at various situations and break them down. Analyzing the problem and exploring it from different

angles has not always been my first step. Sometimes I try to solve a problem that I do not fully understand. In this research process, a large focus of the paper is focused on finding the problem and understanding it. Everything stems from the problem, and you cannot move forward with another step until you truly understand the complexity of the problem. Spending more time on understanding the problem is an important skill I value now.

The literature review served as a way to understand the intricacies of an issue. Doing careful research and searching for potential solutions that have been researched is critical as a leader. The solution in education does not always have to be original. If a solution exists and research exists to support it, then it makes sense to utilize that strategy. However, if you never use research or do not immerse in current research than you can be ignorant to viable, researched solutions.

Analysis of Self as Project Developer

As a project developer, I witnessed the value of alignment and consistency. Being consistent from the beginning of the research to the actual project was imperative. If I had not been aligned, my goals would not have matched my guiding question. Because everything was aligned, my project goals were already completed. In education, it feels we may start with one problem and if not focused on that problem, end up exploring other unintended issues and never circle back to the root of the problem.

I realized that when you plan PD, you need a strategy or conceptual theory to root the actual PD. You cannot always just jump to the solution and start solving. You have to figure out how to deliver or implement the material in professional learning.

Pausing and evaluating the situation is imperative. Lastly, I believe that in education we need to view educators as experts and valuable participants to benefit learning.

Reflection on the Importance of the Work

The importance of the project design and the developed practices for stronger social and emotional curriculum for GT students is important and necessary in our school system. Too many schools across the country believe because a child is cognitively smart that the child is automatically adequate in all other areas, especially in social and emotional intelligence (McGee et al., 2011; Moon, 2002; Nelihart et al., 2002). High-stakes testing has pushed educators to steer away from anything that is not testable on standardized tests (Elias, DeFini, & Bergman, 2010; Rakow, 2008). Therefore, a project that aims to identify key elements needed for effective social and emotional curriculum for GT students can benefit teachers who are seeking ways to improve their current social and emotional curriculum.

This study and the developed project help teachers, GT coordinators, and GT experts examine their current program and identify areas of strength and areas of improvement. Some schools may be neglecting certain elements needed to have an effective affective curriculum. This project also focuses on successful ways to implement the curriculum, which is critical. The PD provides an opportunity for teachers to collaboratively work together to solve issues and plan together to create effective curriculums that meet their unique students' needs.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

Social change involves a collective action of individuals who are closest and most familiar to the social problem and oftentimes are the most logical choice to develop solutions that address the social issues. I believe the PLC members that attend this PD experience will be motivated and excited around gifted SEL. I hope that members will be able to understand more concretely what elements are needed to have an effective social and emotional curriculum. This study was able to not only identify key elements; it identified thoughtful ways to implement the key elements, as well. The 3-day PD allows teachers time to actually plan out or at least put into place pieces to improve their current GT social and emotional curriculum. PLC members will have time to examine where SEL can take place and who can help them in this worthy endeavor.

I hope that ALP goal setting will not seem like such an overwhelming chore, but serve as a doable opportunity to effect a child's SEL, leading to social change and improvements within the current educational system. I hope teachers are ignited with new ideas on how to train teachers at their school about the characteristics of GT children. Most importantly, I hope my professional learning experience creates meaningful discussion and, most importantly, social action around educating our gifted students in more than just a cognitive way.

When I was listening to the interviews in my research, I was immediately shocked at how many experts knew so much about gifted SEL, but most of the experts still felt like they did not have a completely effective curriculum. Many felt like they were not meeting many of their students' needs. Many had difficult time explaining any key

elements that should be in a successful GT social and emotional curriculum. It became clear at this moment that my research mattered. That there truly was a gap in the literature and that these responses were evidence of this gap. While many people were not entirely confident in their school's current social and emotional curriculum, their expertise and knowledge was still integral in determining what key elements were needed. Each person contributed important insight and when we put it all together it created several themes. These themes eventually became the key elements of an effective social and emotional gifted program. Individually, we may not have had all the answers, but as a group there is a collective wisdom that is powerful.

Gifted educators can use this research in a meaningful way. Even if educators can focus on one of the key elements defined, they will be improving their curriculum in some way. If gifted teachers can apply this knowledge to their school, they can take what once was seemed like an abstract concept, and turn it into a concrete and tangible goal. Each improvement in a social and emotional gifted program will benefit students greatly. The more we are able to improve our current programs and discuss SEL, the more likely we are to find strategies that work for various schools and students. By identifying the key elements, schools can assess what areas they want to apply the most resources and energy. In other words, educators and schools can develop a strategic and focused plan that maximizes their time and resources.

I would recommend more future research to focus on one or two of the key elements: (a) a dedicated time in the school schedule for affective curriculum, (b) GT students seeking an understanding of identity and GT characteristics, (c) creating

partnerships for social and emotional curriculum, (d) properly trained staff, including an understanding of the characteristics of GT students, (e) affective goal setting, (f) adequate resources for instruction, and (g) a process for intensive interventions when needed. In other words, a researcher may want to solve any one of the problems above such as, trying to find ways to schedule affective curriculum in a school's constructs. What strategies can be done?

The study should also take into consideration the findings around implementation. As far as practice, teachers and gifted experts should be sharing what strategies they are successful in their educational setting. It would be beneficial for educators and students to have a collective body of resources for educators to have access to. Using Schoology or another online sharing tools should be considered.

Conclusion

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to identify key elements in a GT social and emotional curriculum. During this project study, I realized that the problem that I focused on was a worthy cause and would provide me an experience of growth and knowledge. After a lengthy literature view and several hours transcribing interviews, I concluded that I have gained a substantial amount of content knowledge around GT SEL. Additionally, I have learned a great deal of understanding of how the research process works.

I hope this research process will help advocate GT social and emotional education. I believe that this research will impact how I work with each of my peers and with gifted students in two ways. First, I hope that it will add valuable research to my

district's PLC. As noted in this research, their needs to be much more comprehensive research around how schools and GT program can effectively implement GT social and emotional curriculum.

Secondly, on a personal level, I know that this research project will motivate me to advocate in my district and in my state for more resources and education in GT social and emotional curriculum development. I hope that my new knowledge will help me voice and articulate the need for gifted affective curriculum. This research will help spread and encourage gifted leaders to examine their own school and district's current GT social and emotional curriculum and hopefully implore them to improve upon what is currently in place. But before I can affect social change in a large way, I must go back to where my problem first existed, my own community and start there.

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Appendix A: The Project

Professional Development: 3-Day Training Session

Title

- Effective Affective Curriculum for GT Students

Purpose

- The purpose of the 3-day PD training seminar is to provide GT teachers with key elements that they can implement to be more successful in GT social and emotional curriculum.

Program Goals

Goal 1. The first goal of identifying key elements in a successful GT curriculum has subtopics for each GT expert to consider. Those subtopics are a result of the findings from this study and include: (a) a dedicated time in the school schedule for affective curriculum, (b) GT students seeking an understanding of identity and GT characteristics, (c) creating partnerships for social and emotional curriculum, (d) properly trained staff, including an understanding of the characteristics of GT students, (e) affective goal setting, (f) adequate resources for instruction, and (g) a process for intensive interventions when needed.

Goal 2. The second goal includes the implementation of Goal 1. The subtopics of implementation that will be the focus are gathered from the study: (a) creating a safe environment for students to self-discovery and understanding, (b) celebrating strengths rather than focusing on weakn   esses, (c) a broad spectrum of gifted characteristics needed to be embedded, (d) flexibility and differentiation of instruction in the classroom, (e) having strategies around social and emotional goal setting, and (f) differentiated strategies for individualized instruction.

Goal 3. A third goal is to create an online tool where GT experts can share materials they have gathered for social and emotional curriculum. In order to achieve any of these goals, the GT experts must be given an opportunity to collaborate with peers while developing social and emotional curriculum. GT experts must also allow for participants to reflect on their current and future practices around social and emotional curriculum (current strengths, areas for improvement, potential solutions for future, etc.). For instance, GT expert may be already doing several things in their social and emotional curriculum very well. Reflection can allow the GT expert to reinforce what they are currently doing, and allow them to share their successful strategies to the group. The experts may find other areas of improvements they could make to their program, where they may develop or implement new strategies.

Target Audience:
- The target audience is a PLC group of GT coordinators and GT teachers in a district.

Program Outcomes

- apply sound principles of teaching, learning, advocacy, and reflection to their GT social and emotional curriculum.

- collaborate to help the group as a whole and in the process all participants will be more connected and likely collaborate in future and share resources.

- identify their social and emotional curriculum's strengths and areas that need improvement.

- display professionalism and ownership of professional growth and learning.

Format

- PowerPoint presentation
- Breakout session
- PLC
- Group Thinking and Brainstorming
- Cooperative learning
- Role playing
- Demonstration
- Reflective writing
- Breakout.edu activity
- Hands-on activities
- Critical thinking
- Group presentation

Timeline

The PLC workshop *Effective Affective Curriculum for GT Students* is a PLC that meets regularly throughout the school year; however, the first 3 days will serve as a face-to-face interaction to serve as a foundation for the PLC work. This PLC will focus on GT social and emotional issues.

Topic/ Activities	Time Frame	Duration	Mode of Delivery	Presenter /Sponsor	Materials Needed
Day 1					
Registration & Meet and Greet	8:00 am – 8:30 am	30 mins.	Registration via registration form	Facilitator GT District Coordinator's Staff	Name Badges Agenda Folders w/handouts
Icebreakers	8:30 am – 9:15 am	45 min.	Group Activity	Facilitator (Derek Phelan)	Microphone Telestrations PowerPoint Projector
Session 1: PLC Norms and Philosophy, Goals, Outcomes,	9:15 am – 11:00 am	105 mins. w/ 15 minute break included	Presentation (90 mins.)	Facilitator/ Presenter (Derek Phelan)	Internet Computer PowerPoint Presentation Microphone Handouts

Topic/ Activities	Time Frame	Duration	Mode of Delivery	Presenter /Sponsor	Materials Needed
and My Research					Note pads Pens
Survey and Self-Assessment	11:00 am - 12:00 am	60 mins.	Reflection and Small Group Share	PLC members	Reflection and Self-Assessment
Networking Lunch	12:00 am-1:00 pm	1 hour			
Session 2: Characteristics of GT kids	1:00 pm – 2:30 pm	90 mins.	PowerPoint Presentation Group Discussion	Presenter District Coordinator	Computer Microphone PowerPoint Presentation
Break	2:30 pm-2:45 pm	15 minutes			
Unlocking the G Student	2:45 pm - 4:00 pm	75 mins.	Breakout. edu	Breakout.edu team (dist. Members)	Microphone Locks, Boxes, hand outs
Discussion and Reflection	4:00 pm – 4:30 pm	30 mins.	Discussion	Facilitator (Derek Phelan)	Microphone
Day 2					
Icebreaker	8:00 am – 8:30 am	30 mins.	Group Activity	Facilitator (Derek Phelan)	Microphone
Session 1*: How to Implement Key Elements Presentation*	8:30 am – 10:45 am	120 minutes. w/ 15 minute break	Roleplay Discussion Small Group Brainstorming Large Group Sharing	Facilitator (Derek Phelan)	Computer Microphone PowerPoint Presentation
Whip-around	10: 45	15 mins.	Group Activity	Facilitator	Microphone

Topic/ Activities	Time Frame	Duration	Mode of Delivery	Presenter /Sponsor	Materials Needed
	am – 11:00 am			(Derek Phelan)	
Schoology Sharing	11:00 am – 12:00 pm	60 mins.	Presentation Demonstration	District Tech Coordinator	Computer Microphone
Lunch (fill out midpoint evaluation)	12:00 pm- 1:00	1 hour			
Session 2:Partnership Plan	12:15 pm- 1:45 pm	90 mins.	Small Group Brainstorming Critical Thinking	Facilitator (Derek Phelan)	Computer Table Assignment Cards Partnership Plan Handout
Break	1:45- 2:00	15 mins			
Session 3: Time Plan	2:00 pm - 3:30pm	90 mins.	Small Group Brainstorming Critical Thinking	Facilitator (Derek Phelan)	Computer Time Plan Scratch paper
Reflections: Letter to Yourself	3:30 pm – 4:00 pm	30 mins.	Small Group Reflection	Facilitator (Derek Phelan)	Microphone Paper Pen/pencil
Day 3	(members grab table assignment cards as they walk in)				
GT students seeking an understanding of identity and GT characteristics	8:00 am – 9:00 am	60 mins.	Small Group Brainstorm Share Out	Facilitator (Derek Phelan)	Computer Microphone
Affective Goal Setting Workshop	9:00 am –10:45 am	90 min includes 15 min	Small Group Brainstorm Share Out	Facilitator (Derek Phelan)	Computer Microphone

| Topic/ Activities	Time Frame	Duration	Mode of Delivery	Presenter /Sponsor	Materials Needed
		break			
Process for Intervention	10:45 am – 12:00 am	75 min	Small Group Brainstorm Share Out	Facilitator (Derek Phelan)	Computer Microphone
Lunch	12:00 am – 1:00pm	60 mins.			
Content Building Work Time	12:00 pm - 3:30	18o mins (breaks taken as needed)	Work Time Small Group Share Out	Facilitator (Derek Phelan)	Computer Microphone
Evaluation and Reflection	3:30 pm- 4:00 pm	30 mins	Evaluation	Facilitator (Derek Phelan)	Pen Evaluation Form

Materials/Equipment
- Laptop/iPad
- Audio visual equipment/Promethean Board/Active Board
- Cardstock
- Paper and writing utensils
- Name tags
- Refreshments (Candy for tables)
- Chart paper
- Table top self-stick easel pad
- Markers
- Telestration Board Game for Icebreaker
- Handouts
- Sign in sheet
- Evaluation forms
- Manipulatives/Artifacts
- Notebook
- Note cards/Index cards
- Pocket folders

In-depth Breakdown

Day one of the workshop includes the following:

1. *Registration & Meet and Greet*

    PLC members will sign in, get name tags, and get folder. Members will

    informally meet and greet other PLC members. District GT secretaries will help

    with check-in. Title slide will be projected.
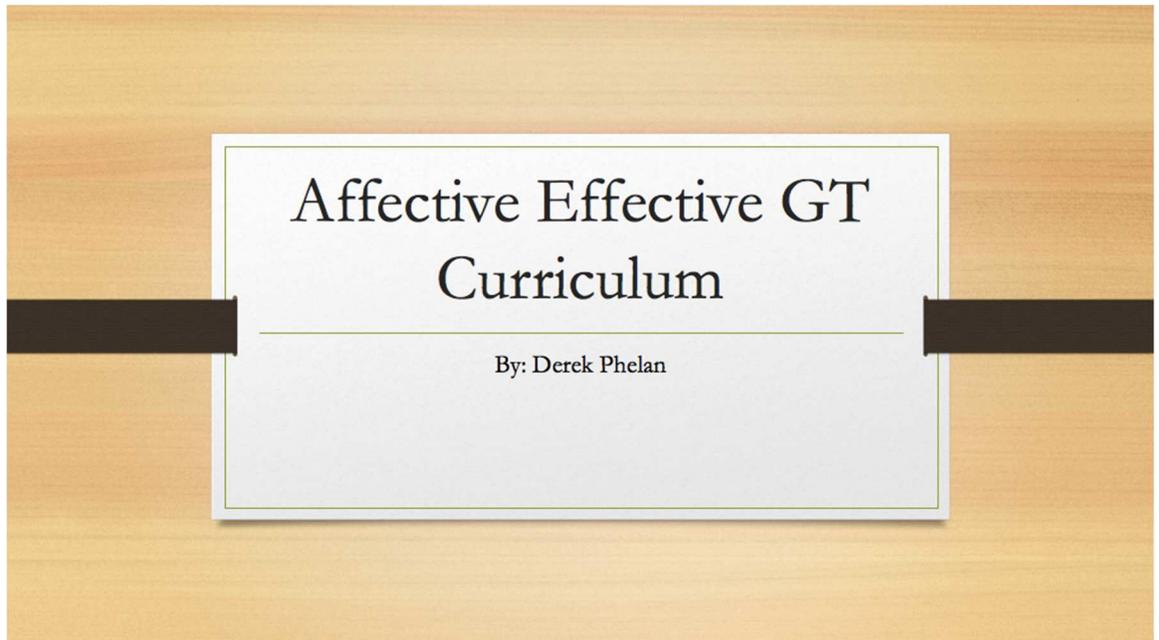
2. *Icebreakers, Goals*

    This session will include three ice breakers. Members will be sitting randomly in

    small table groups (6 people to a table) for the first ice breaker to work. The first

    icebreaker is called Telestration. The goal of this icebreaker is to introduce

    everyone, learn something about their summer, and build some trust within the

    group. PLC members will be drawing pictures and predicting what the drawings

are. After 6 rounds, we will reveal the initial sentence that was used to answer the question "What's one fun thing you've done this summer?" and we will look at the picture as it has changed from around the group. The second icebreaker is a called Slogans. Each member will come up with a slogan for their GT program. Each person can draw a logo if they want to accompany their slogan. The third will be a quick whip-around with each person reading their school's mission statement. The last ice-breaker will segue into the topic of SEL. The following icebreaker slide will be up.
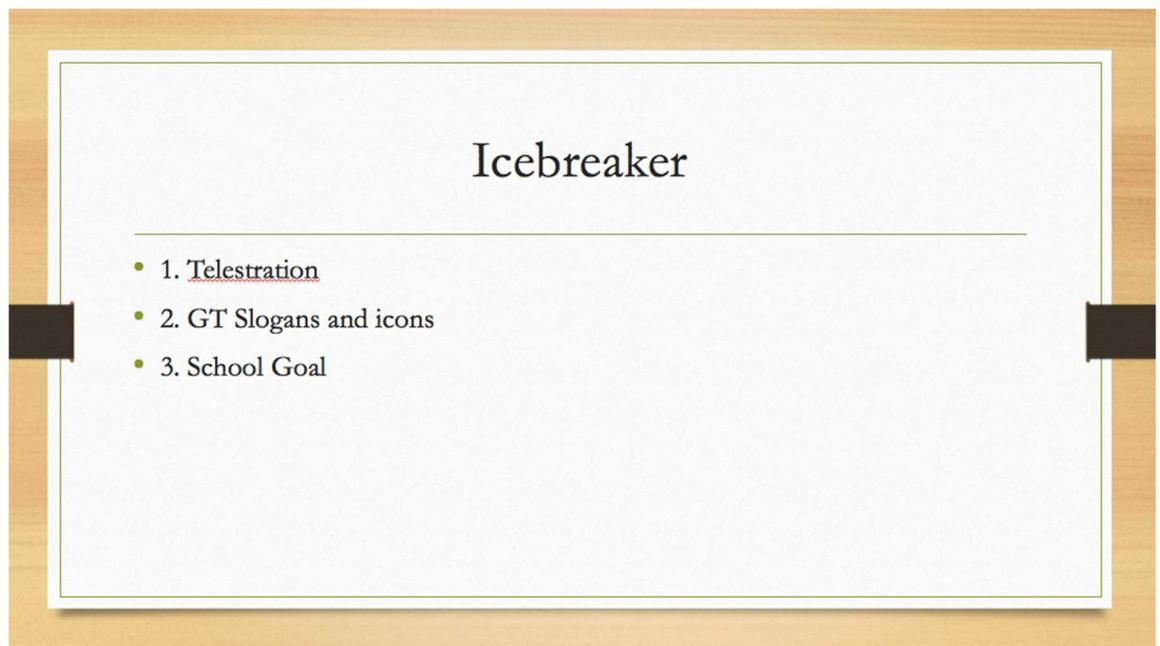
3. *PLC Norms and Philosophy, Goals, Outcomes, and My Research*

This PowerPoint will walk the PLC of my research and findings. There will be a 15-minute break within this time. We will also review philosophy of the PLC and norms. We will review goals and outcomes that we hope to achieve from the PLC and review the 3-day agenda. Presentation will end with each person creating

their own mission statement for their GT social and emotional curriculum.

Members will share out in small groups and volunteers in a large group setting.

The following slides will be part of the presentation.

PLC NORMS

- Start on time, end on time
- Take care of your business when you need to. We are all adults.
- Express genuine feelings and allow yourself to be vulnerable.
- Celebrate accomplishments and share praise.
- Student social and emotional learning is the most important issue.

PLC Philosophy

- Rooted in social constructivism, which believes that knowledge is constructed through meaningful interactions.
- Everyone is an expert in the room, but collectively we are more powerful.
- We don't have all the answer. This is an ongoing process.
- Helps teachers work smarter by sharing the tasks of analyzing data, creating common assessment tools, and devising other strategies for both students who struggle and those who need more challenge.

Goal 1

- **Goal 1.** The first goal of identifying key elements in a successful GT curriculum has subtopics for each GT expert to consider. Those subtopics are a result of the findings from this study and include: (a) a dedicated time in the school schedule for affective curriculum, (b) GT students seeking an understanding of identity and GT characteristics, (c) creating partnerships for social and emotional curriculum, (d) properly trained staff, including an understanding of the characteristics of GT students, (e) affective goal setting, (f) adequate resources for instruction, and (g) a process for intensive interventions when needed.

Goal 2

- **Goal 2.** The second goal includes the implementation of those goals. The subtopics of implementation that will be the focus are gathered from the study: (a) creating a safe environment for students to self-discovery and understanding, (b) celebrating strengths rather than focusing on weaknesses, (c) a broad spectrum of gifted characteristics needed to be embedded, (d) flexibility and differentiation of instruction in the classroom, (e) having strategies around social and emotional goal setting, and (f) differentiated strategies for individualized instruction.

Goal 3

- A third goal was to create an online tool where GT experts can share materials they have gathered for social and emotional curriculum.

Outcomes

- apply sound principles of teaching, learning, advocacy, and reflection to their GT social and emotional curriculum.

- collaborate to help the group as a whole and in the process all participants will be more connected and likely collaborate in future and share resources.

- identify their social and emotional curriculum's strengths and areas that need improvement.

- display professionalism and ownership of professional growth and learning.

My Research Question

- **SQ1: What are the best practices when implementing these key elements?**

- **RQ1:   What are the key elements of a successful gifted and talented social emotional curriculum?**

What did I do in my research?

- Read over 250 peer reviewed articles regarding social and emotional curriculum for GT students.

- Sought out 48 experts to answer questions that were aligned to the research question—highlighted various themes to the questions that emerged

- Interviewed 10 participants—transcribed all interviews (lots and lots of pages). Analyzed data and searched for common themes.

- Answered Research Question

Key Elements

- (a) a dedicated time in the school schedule for affective curriculum
- (b) GT students seeking an understanding of identity and GT characteristics
- (c) creating partnerships for social and emotional curriculum
- (d) properly trained staff, including an understanding of the characteristics of GT students
- (e) affective goal setting
- (f) adequate resources for instruction
- (g) a process for intensive interventions when needed

Consideration for Implementing Key Elements

- (a) creating a safe environment for students to self-discovery and understanding
- (b) celebrating strengths rather than focusing on weaknesses
- (c) a broad spectrum of gifted characteristics needed to be embedded,
- (d) flexibility and differentiation of instruction in the classroom
- (e) having strategies around social and emotional goal setting
- (f) differentiated strategies for individualized instruction.

4. *Survey and Self-assessment*

Members will begin by taking survey and self-assessment identifying strengths

and weaknesses about their GT program. Members will be encouraged to share

one strength and one area of improvement if they choose in a larger setting. The

surveys are meant for self-assessment and not meant for judgement or

comparative purposes.

Day 1, Session 1 Handout (Self-assessment/reflection)

Part I

I have a dedicated time in the school schedule for affective curriculum.				
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I promote GT students to seek an understanding of their own identity and GT characteristics				
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

I create partnerships with others in my building or in the district when it comes to social and emotional curriculum.				
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
My school staff understands and has been trained in the characteristics of GT students				
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
My goal-setting is streamline and generally effective.				
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I have adequate resources for instruction				
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I have and understand the process for intensive interventions in terms of social and emotional learning.				
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

Part II

I create a safe environment for students to search for self-discovery and understanding.				
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I celebrate students' strengths rather than focusing on their weaknesses.				
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
My curriculum currently covers a broad a broad spectrum of gifted characteristics (perfectionism, overexcitabilities, stress, underachievement, asynchronous development, etc.)				
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I am flexible and differentiate the instruction in the classroom.				
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I have strategies around social and emotional goal setting				
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

I have differentiated strategies for individualized instruction.				
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

PART III

Why is social and emotional learning important for your students?

How can social and emotional learning affect your students' relationship as they grow older?

How can social and emotional learning affect your students' employment success as they grow older?

What are your biggest strengths that you can bring to the collaborative group?

What are other strengths in social and emotional learning, not addressed in this reflection/self-assessment?

What area(s) that you can improve will make the greatest impact on your students?

What are your top three areas of improvement?

GROUP SHARING—for the remainder of the time small groups will share their self-analysis and reflection. Group members will be encouraged to allow themselves to be vulnerable and encourage others to not make judgments.

LUNCH

5. *Characteristics of GT Kids—by District GT Coordinator*

Information about GT characteristics will be presented to staff with time for dialogue to add additional layers of meaning regarding training other staff around

GT characteristics. According to the GT Coordinator, roleplay, videos, short excerpts from articles will be used in a training she has prepared.

6. *Unlocking the GT Student—facilitated by District Breakout. Edu team*

Our district has a breakout.edu team that will work with staff to help create breakout.edu activities. The team will create an affective GT breakout.edu. After staff has absorbed from previous session, they will get an opportunity to apply the knowledge they just learned in an enjoyable activity that involves teamwork and problem-solving. Each group will go to a station and be working as a team to unsolved a box that has a lock on it. This type of learning is called breakout.edu. Each station will have a fictitious student with some certain GT characteristics. Table groups will have to identify certain behaviors that match that coordinate to a number, letter, or directions which will help unlock the box. Inside the box will have strategies to help students understand and manage their strengths and weaknesses in that area.

7. *Discussion and Reflection*

This discussion and reflection will center around training others around GT characteristics. A reflection sheet will be given to guide the thinking.

Day 1 Session 2 (Discussion and Reflection Handout Day)

1. As a group, identify challenges that arise when training teachers and staff in the GT characteristics of students?

2. As a group, brainstorm some creative solutions to problems or ideas for opportunities to train staff/teachers about GT characteristics.

3. Identify anything from session 2 training that could be used in your training of staff?

4. What would need to be modified/reworked to make GT training at your school work?

5. Write on the back of this piece of paper 2-3 ideas that you could put into place to help train various staff/teachers in your building.

Day 2 of the workshop includes the following:

1. Opening & Icebreakers

    This time will be for one quick icebreaker, a review of PLC norms, and an overview of the day's agenda. The icebreaker will be a chain activity. I will start and tell the group some interesting facts about me that are very specific. People will link arms with me and the last person on the chain will repeat revealing specific and interesting facts about them until the entire group is linked.

Icebreaker Day #2: Chain

- Everyone will spend 60 seconds writing down interesting facts about them that they think very few people will have in common.
  - Ex. I took figure skating lessons when I grew up.
  - Ex. I play the guitar.
- I will start with interesting facts about myself, if you have that fact in common, you will come up and join elbows with me. I will continue until someone joins me.
- The last person linked will read their interesting facts, until the entire group is linked.

2. *How to Implement Key Elements Presentation*

This rotational group activity will involve active participation, brainstorming, collaborations, and discussion. Groups will rotate to 6 different stations in various orders. Each person will have a card that indicates the order for their rounds. For instance, one participant may receive a card that states Round 1: Table D flexibility and differentiation of instruction in a classroom. Round 2: Table A Creating a Safe Environment for Students Self-Discovery and Understanding, etc. Each member will rotate to all 6 tables, but at different times and with different members, giving members a chance to work with all experts in the room. The goals/Tables are: (a) creating a safe environment for students' self-discovery and understanding, (b) celebrating strengths rather than focusing on weaknesses, (c) a broad spectrum of gifted characteristics needed to be embedded, (d) flexibility and differentiation of instruction in the classroom, (e) having strategies around

social and emotional goal setting, and (f) differentiated strategies for individualized instruction. Each table will have a professional article, video, poem, that grounds the brainstorming/discussion. The mini-activity will range from 2-5 minutes. The rest of the time will be used for brainstorming potential ideas/solutions.

3. *Whip*

Each member will write out a 3-2-1. They will identify 3 things they learned, 2 things they know they are good at, 1 opportunity for improvement. See slide below:
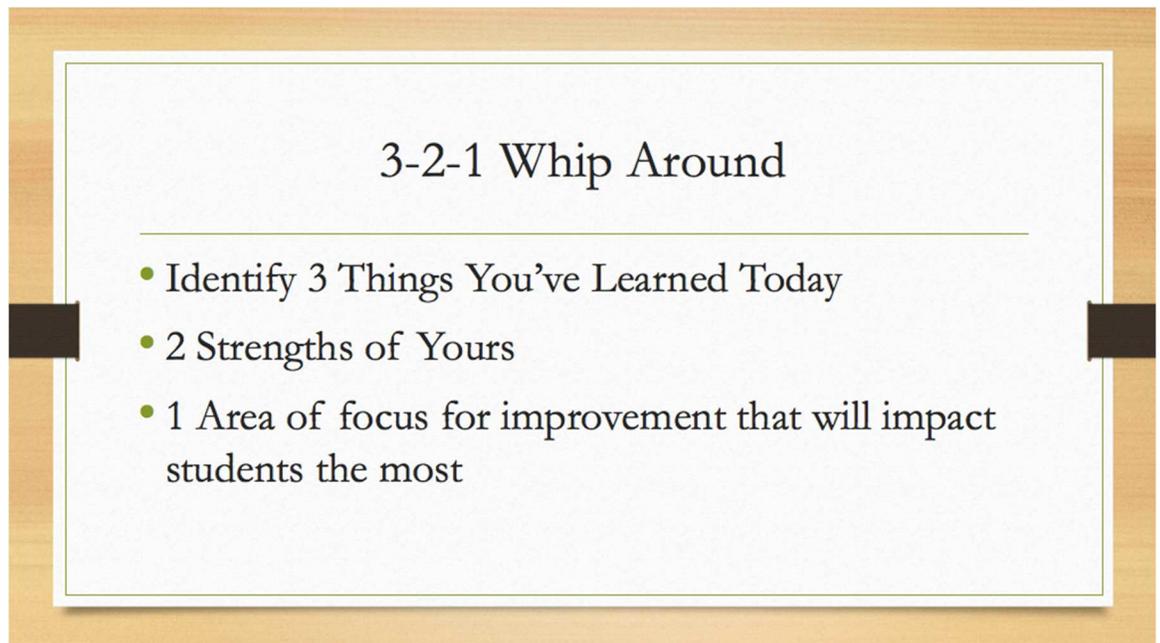
Reflection

Schoology Sharing by District Tech Team

This presentation will show the staff how to use the online tool called Schoology. They will learn how to add themselves to the Schoology group, where the different folders for GT SEL are, and how to add content/curriculum to the folders for future PLC use.

Lunch—Midpoint Evaluation

The professional development so far is well-organized.				
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The professional development respects the learner's background and contributions.				
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The physical environment is conducive to learning				
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
As a result of attending the workshop, I understand the key elements that need to be in place in a GT social and emotional curriculum.				
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I have brainstormed several ideas that I can use to improve my GT social and emotional curriculum.				
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I have an understanding some strategies to keep in mind when implementing key social and emotional strategies.				
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I have more resources to help effectively teach GT social and emotional curriculum at my school.				
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Overall, I would encourage other colleagues to participate in this 3-day training.				
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

How will you use the information learned in this 3-day professional development?

_____

_____

_____

Please describe what part of the professional development was most valuable and what suggestions you may have for future professional development.

_____

_____

Please describe an area that could be improved for the next professional development_____

4. *Partnership Plan- (Large Group Brainstorm, Personal Planning)*

   PLC members will list as many potential partners/partnership opportunities that they can think of in 2 minutes on their piece of paper. Then as a large group we will list partners. As members raise their hand and give answers, I will type their responses in Schoology under a shared document called *Potential Partners of GT Learning.* Before going on to a new suggestion, the group will suggest how that partnership can benefit GT social and emotional education. I will also record this on the document, which will be projected. Each member will select which partnerships are available at their school and write down. Each member will rank the top 5 partnership that will help them most with improving GT SEL. The group will come back together and come up with strategies to begin a partnership or improve a current partnership (i.e. meetings, inviting them to a conference, writing a hand written note, mini-presentations, etc.) They will develop a communication strategy to attempt to create a meaningful partnership.

Day 2, Session 2 (Hand Out: Partnership Plan)

Partnership Plan

2 Minutes

What partners could you team up with to help you with social and emotional learning at your school?

From the list that the group generated, write down all the potential partners that would apply to your school.

Rank the top 5 partners that would be most beneficial in order to improve GT social and

emotional learning.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

> What strategies could you use to develop partnership or improve a current partnership?

Communication Strategy

Of the 5 partners you chose as your highest rank, write down which strategy/strategies do you think would be most effective for each partner.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

**If there is any time remaining, members can use to work and further develop their plan.
That could be setting up a meeting, writing a letter or card, etc.

5. *Time Plan (Large group brainstorming and personal planning)*

   Each member will analyze their own schedule and the school schedule. They will annotate on their schedules. The group as a whole will share strategies explaining how GT social and emotional curriculum currently fits into their busy schedules. I will produce a document on Schoology that will be projected, so I can record the group's ideas. Participants will examine their own schedule and student's schedule to identify problems and seek solutions. At tables, members will work on trying to set up times in their schedules to work on social and emotional curriculum. Members are encouraged to collaborate, bounce ideas off one another, and even move around to other tables to gain ideas.

6. *A Letter to Yourself*

   Each member will write a letter to themselves on a sheet of paper. It will include the following points on the slide below. These letters will be collected and sent to each participant through district mail in 3 weeks.
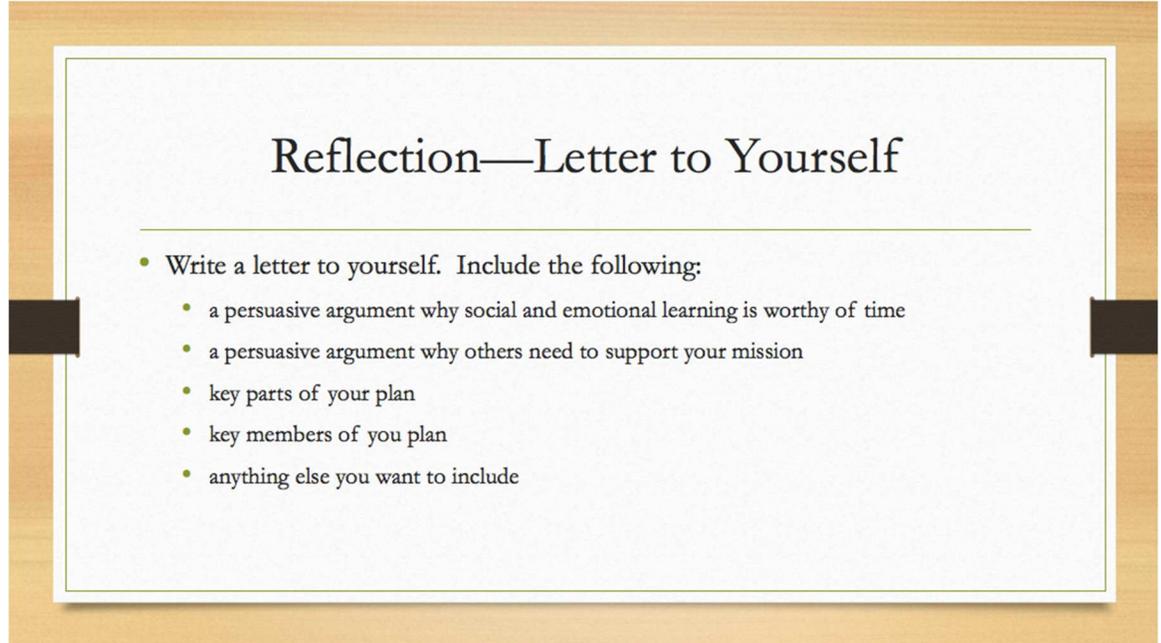
Day three of the workshop includes lots of work time/collaborative problem-solving (each member will get various table numbers for each activity, so that the group can work in various small groups):

1. *GT students seeking an understanding of identity and GT characteristics*

    PLC members will find strategies to motivate students to see understanding of themselves and potential characteristics they have. The goal is for students to really seek an understanding of who they are and various GT characteristics. Group members will spend 5 minutes jotting down things they already do or would like to do to achieve this goal. Groups will rotate 3 times to share their ideas. The last 5 minutes each member will add their ideas to the Schoology Group under the GT Identity and Characteristics Page.

2. *Affective Goal Setting Workshop*

Members as a group will share a list of obstacles for ALP plans/goals. Because some people perceive ALPs as a nuisance and unneeded paperwork, members will also list the benefits of ALP plans to remind people how beneficial the plans can be. Members will problem-solve, share ideas, and collaborate at various tables. The last 15 minutes will be time for reflection and potentially allow participants to implement some of the ideas they have come up with.

3. *A Process for Intensive Intervention— (District Response to Intervention (RTI) Coach)*

    This PowerPoint presentation will explain what an intensive intervention is, what it can be used for, who should be present, what success looks like, and why it is necessary. The presentation will be 30 minutes long, and the last 15 minutes will be used for table discussion. The goal will be taking the current RTI model and sharing how modifications can help our GT students.

    Lunch

4. *Content Building in Schoology—*

    The rest of this time will be utilized for each participant to add content to the Schoology page and fill in gaps where content is lacking. This could be curriculum and content they already used. New curriculum or modified curriculum could also be added to Schoology at this time. The time can be used to focus in one area or multiple areas.

5. *Evaluation and Reflection*

Each PLC member will fill out an evaluation and guided reflection on the 3-day

Professional Learning Experience. The purpose is to provide feedback on

strengths and weaknesses and the overall effectiveness of the PLC. It will also

provide additional information on what additional resources will be needed

moving forward with the PLC.

Summative Evaluation

Session_____

PLEASE CIRCLE YOUR RESPONSE TO EACH OF THE FOLLOWING ITEMS.

The professional development was well-organized.				
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The professional development respected the learner's background and contributions.				
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The physical environment was conducive to learning				
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
As a result of attending the workshop, I understand the key elements that need to be in place in a GT social and emotional curriculum.				
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
As a result of attending the workshop, I have brainstormed several ideas that I can use to improve my GT social and emotional curriculum.				
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
As a result of attending the workshop, I have an understanding some strategies to keep in mind when implementing key social and emotional strategies.				
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
As a result of attending the workshop, I have more resources to help effectively teach GT social and emotional curriculum at my school.				

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Overall, I would encourage other colleagues to participate in this 3-day training.				
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

How will you use the information learned in this 3-day professional development?
_____
_____
_____

Please describe what part of the professional development was most valuable and what suggestions you may have for future professional development.
_____
_____

Please describe an area that could be improved for the next professional development_____

 Please share any additional thoughts on the topic or presentation:
_____
_____
_____
What support do you need to continue improving social and emotional curriculum in your school?
_____

_____

Appendix B: E-mail Invitation and Questionnaire

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Derek Allen Phelan and I am a Walden University doctoral student. I am conducting a research study. You have received an e-mail to fill out this questionnaire because you work with Gifted and Talented students and you may have valuable information that can be utilized to help develop curriculum for GT social and emotional behavior.

This study is being conducted by Derek Allen Phelan, who is a researcher and doctoral student at Walden University. Currently, Derek Phelan is a middle school teacher/librarian. The role of researcher will be kept separate from his current position. The research gained through this research study will help provide insight into the learning and development of SEL for GT students.

The purpose of this qualitative case study is to identify key social and emotional elements in a middle school GT program, and how students benefit from social and emotional curriculum. From this information, certain participants will be selected for a more in-depth interview, in which they will have the opportunity to participate if they desire.

Background Information:

The purpose of this qualitative case study is to identify key social and emotional elements in a middle school GT program, and how students benefit from social and emotional curriculum.

Procedures:

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to:

Answer questions via an electronic questionnaire (approximately 15-25 minutes)

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Your participation in this study is voluntary. This means that everyone will respect your decision to participate or not to participate in the study. You may change your mind once we have started the study. If you feel stressed during the study you may stop at any time. You may also refuse to answer or skip any questions that you feel are too personal.

Privacy:

Any information you provide will be kept confidential. The researcher will not use your personal information for any purposes outside of this research project. Also, the researcher will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in the study reports. Data will be kept secure by using password protection, codes in place for names, storing names separately from data, locking key and data in separate areas. Data will be kept for a period of at least 5 years, as required by the university.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:

There are no perceived risks to individuals participating in this study. Individuals who participate will provide valuable information that will increasing the knowledge of SEL for GT students in the broader GT community. You will receive a one-page analysis of research findings when the research is completed. There will be no financial compensation or gifts for participating in this study. Some applicants who fill out the questionnaire will be contacted to see if they will be interviewed to provide further information.

Appendix C: Introductory E-mail for Interview

To Whom It May Concern:

You have received an invitation to be interviewed because after reviewing your

questionnaire, it was deemed by the researcher that you have specialized expertise in the

social and emotional education of GT students that could be very valuable.

Your participation in this study is interview. Your participation will involve setting up a

time for interview via e-mail of phone. The interview should take approximately 30

minutes of your time. You may choose not to participate at any time; however, you input

will provide valuable data. You will not be penalized in any way should you decide not to

participate or to withdraw. There are no known risks to the participants who take part in

the interview. You will receive the questions before the interview.

To refresh your memory, here is information about the study:

Background Information:

The purpose of this qualitative case study is to identify key social and emotional elements

in a middle school GT program, and how students benefit from social and emotional

curriculum.

Procedures:

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to:

Participate in one 30-60-minute audio-recorded interview

Engage in member-checking, which consists of a review of the transcribed interview to ensure credibility of the findings and interpretations. (approx. 20-30 minutes)

If I learns about any evidence of child abuse, I would need to disclose such information to the proper authorities.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

There are no perceived risks to individuals participating in this study. Individuals who participate will provide valuable information that will increasing the knowledge of SEL for GT students in the broader GT community. You will receive a one-page analysis of research findings when the research is completed.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:

There are no perceived risks to individuals participating in this study. Individuals who participate will benefit from this research by increasing their knowledge of SEL for GT students. You will receive a one-page analysis of research findings when the research is completed. There will be no financial compensation or gifts for participating in this study.

Privacy:

Any information you provide will be kept confidential. The researcher will not use your personal information for any purposes outside of this research project. Also, the

researcher will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in the study reports. Data will be kept secure by using password protection, codes in place for names, storing names separately from data, locking key and data in separate areas. Data will be kept for a period of at least 5 years, as required by the university.

Appendix D: Questions in Electronic Questionnaire

Background Questions

1. What is your name?

2. Check what level(s) you have taught?   Elementary   Secondary

3. In your school's mission statement is there any mention of affective education or teaching the whole child?

       Yes   No   I'm not sure

4. Briefly describe your educational background and training in GT learning?

5. How long have you worked with GT students?

6. Do you have any specialized training or education in GT social or emotional learning?

Identifying Key Elements

7. Are you able to address social and emotional learning in your GT program? Why or why not?

8. Who should provide social and emotional curriculum for GT students?

9. Where in the school day should social and emotional needs be addressed?

10. What are the key elements of a successful social and emotional GT program?

Social and Emotional Learning

11. Does the social and emotional curriculum you have in place actually impact all of the social/emotional outcomes you are concerned about? Explain.

12. From your experience working with gifted students, what common social and emotional problems have you found need to be addressed? Why do you feel this way?

13. How do you go about writing your social and emotional goals?

14. How do you go about monitoring the progress of social and emotional aspect of the ALP?

15. Follow up: With more support and resources how would you progress monitor the ALP's or how could ALP's be even more effective for you?

16. I would consider being interviewed to provide further data collection. Yes   No   Maybe

Appendix E: Interview Guide

*each interviewee will have an appendix defining terms

QUESTIONS FOR GT SOCIAL EMOTIONAL INTERVIEW

1. When GT students have an affective or social/emotional curriculum in place, how can it impact the students in these various areas:

    Social life?

    Emotional well-being?

    Academics?

2. What are the key elements of a successful GT social and emotional program? Explain why they are important.

3. What are the best practices to use when implementing these key elements (from question 2)?

4. When you have gone about developing social and emotional GT curriculum, describe the experience in terms of successes and or obstacles.

5. Can you recall an example of a student(s) who have received social and emotional support in the following areas (use chart below)? What emotional support were you able to provide the student? Walk me through some of them.

6. What does it take to become fluent enough to teach social and emotional curriculum to GT students?

7. When a student needs an intensive intervention around social and emotional learning, how do you address the student's needs? Explain who is involved in the interventions?

8. How were you able to determine the effectiveness of the intervention you provided?

9. To what extent do you collaborate with mental health professionals in your building?

10. What ways can parents be involved about GT social and emotional issues?

Term	Definition	Characteristics
Psychomotor Overexcitability	Psychomotor OE is a heightened excitability of the neuromuscular system. This Psychomotor intensity includes a "capacity for being active and energetic"	-- love of movement for its own sake --surplus of energy demonstrated by rapid speech, --zealous enthusiasm, --intense physical activity, and a need for action
Intellectual Overexcitability	Intellectual OE is demonstrated by a marked need to seek understanding and truth, to gain knowledge, and to analyze and synthesize (Dabrowski & Piechowski, 1977; Piechowski, 1979, 1991	--overly elaborate planning --excited and interrupt --dwell on one topic and think about it forever --intensely curious, active minds, keen observers
Imaginational Overexcitability	Imaginational OE reflects a heightened play of the imagination with rich association of images and impressions, frequent use of image and metaphor, facility for invention and fantasy, detailed visualization, and elaborate dreams (Dabrowski & Piechowski, 1977; Piechowski, 1979, 1991).	--confuse reality and fiction --create their own private worlds with imaginary companions -- dramatize to escape boredom --write stories or draw instead of doing seatwork --may have difficulty completing tasks when some incredible idea sends them off on an imaginative tangent
Emotional	Emotional OE is often the first to be noticed by parents. It is reflected in heightened, intense feelings, extremes of complex emotions, identification with others' feelings, and strong affective expression (Piechowski, 1991) -	--physical responses like stomachaches and blushing or concern with death and depression (Piechowski, 1979). --have a remarkable capacity for deep relationships; --they show strong emotional attachments to people, places, and things --have compassion, empathy, and sensitivity in relation-ships --accused of "overacting" or being melodramatic
Sensual Overexcitability	Sensual OE is expressed as a heightened experience of sensual pleasure or displeasure emanating from sight, smell, touch, taste, and hearing (Dabrowski & Piechowski, 1977; Piechowski, 1979, 1991)	--may may find clothing tags, classroom noise, or smells from the cafeteria so distracting that schoolwork becomes secondary --may also become so absorbed in their love of a particular piece of art or music that the outside world

		ceases to exist
Perfectionism	This term is debated among experts, so we will use at an large general dictionary definition to define the term: refusal to accept any standard short of perfection	--can lead to stress, anxiety, eating disorders, depression, obsessive compulsive disorder --underachieving, apathetic, lack of effort
Underachievement	This term is debated among experts, but we will use a general definition in which there is a strong variance between performance and intellectual ability.	--Low self-esteem; Consistently negative attitude toward school and learning --Reluctance to take risks or apply one's self --Discomfort with competition --Lack of perseverance; lack of goal-directed behavior --Social isolation; Disruptiveness in class and resistance to class activities. --Weaknesses in skill areas and organization