

Teacher- Research Questionnaire 2 – Students with Exceptional Learning Abilities and a Dual Diagnosis.

This questionnaire is one of a three part investigation into perspectives on the incidence of educational provision in the Irish educational system, due to a dual diagnosis, i.e. Dual Exceptionality- or exceptionally able and presenting with another learning difference or condition.

It is important to fill out the entire questionnaire whether or not you have had occasion to offer additional support to a student with exceptional learning abilities and or with a dual diagnosis (twice exceptional student).

Section 1- Demographical information

Name _____ Contact Mble: _____ email _____
(will only be used by researcher for identification/contact purposes)

Reside in _____ (County) Male ___ Female ___ Age _____
Nationality _____

School size (Primary) Small ___ Medium ___ Large ___

School size (Secondary) Small ___ Medium ___ Large ___

Location of School Urban _____ Rural _____
Type: Single sex ___ (B/G) Mixed ___
Multi D. ___ Denominational ___ Other ___
National ___ Fee paying ___ Disadvantaged status ___
Montessori ___ Steirner ___ Homeschool ___

Employed as: Learning Support ___ Resource Teaching ___ Principal ___
Mainstream ___ SENCO ___ Lecturer ___
SNA ___ Language Support ___ Other ___

Section 2 – Historical Training and Experience

As a young person, had you always been interested in a career as a teacher? Yes/No

Can you remember what your earliest experience was that led you to seek teaching as a career?

Please expand _____

Did you have any favourite subjects at school that you followed with a passion, perhaps one or two that may have continued to be a part of your life interest today? Yes/No Please expand

Do you feel that your own overall educational experience in school was a good one? Yes/No

Educational qualifications attained:

- a) Bachelors Degree in _____
- b) Higher Dip in _____
- c) Post Grad. Dip _____
- d) Masters Degree _____
- e) Phd in _____
- f) Specialist Dip/Cert _____
- g) Other _____

If working in an area of SEN or learning support, was it you who chose to work in this area, or were you assigned to work in SEN? Chose _____ Assigned _____

If you chose to do so, is there any particular reason and or area of interest as to why you have chosen to work in this area?

Are you working in an area of SEN or learning support at present? Yes/No Please describe

Are you in charge of others who are working in areas of SEN or learning support at present? Yes/No Please describe

Have you been working with students in the area of SEN and or learning support for:

- a) a long time(4 or more years) _____
- b) a moderate time(2-3years) _____
- c) a short time (0-1 year) _____

What areas within the spectrums of SEN or Learning differences/disability have you have exposure to (you may tick more than one:

- a) **Specific Learning difficulties**
 - a. dyslexia type _____
 - b. dyscalcula _____
 - c. dyspraxia (in the organisation of thoughts area) _____

- b) Autism Spectrum**
 - a. Autism _____
 - b. Aspergers _____
 - c. PDD (pervasive developmental disorder) _____

- c) AD(H)D**
 - a. ADD _____
 - b. ADHD _____
 - c. In girls _____
 - d. In boys _____

- d) Exceptional (intellectual) Learning Disabilities**
 - a. Mild _____
 - b. Moderate _____
 - c. Profound _____

- e) Sensory Integration** (heightened reactions/tolerance/intolerance to environmental stimulus Including one or more, or specific types of: sound, taste, touch, sight, smells and physical pressure)
 - a. Over sensitive _____
 - b. Under sensitive _____
 - c. Mix of both _____

Sensory Modulation Difficulties (inability to sense and adjust degree of pressure, weight, strength, volume of voice/sound, or emotion, physical and or emotional responses to stimuli and such like. Examples:

 - a. Weight/sound of footfall _____
 - b. Adjusting vocal volume to environment _____
 - c. Holding a writing implement to hard/soft _____
 - d. Application of writing pressure _____
 - e. Grasping strength _____
 - f. Frustration/Anger/Tolerance/Pain/fear levels and repair/desist from same. _____
 - g. Breaking/or hurting and appearing not to know how hard a blow was, or how/when to desist form Same (being able to tell when enough is enough). _____

- f) DCD** (developmental Coordination Delay/Disorder, to include physical dyspraxia type behaviours)
 - a. Handwriting _____
 - b. balance _____
 - c. coordination _____
 - d. organisation _____

- g) Emotional Behavioural**
 - a. Intensity _____
 - b. Low frustration tolerance _____
 - c. Low self esteem _____
 - d. Emotional management issues _____

- e. Strong reactions to environment and stimulus _____
- f. Control issues _____
- g. Empathy issues _____
- h. Motion/kinetic/tactile issues _____
- i. Social relationship breakdown and repair issues _____
- j. Hyper focus or alternatively distractibility _____

h) Learners with Exceptional Abilities

- a. In a single subject _____
- b. Cross a range of subjects _____
- c. Culturally distinct _____
- d. English as a second language _____
- e. Dual exceptional - highly able, however, presenting with one or more learning differences, or other SEN, such as
 - a. emotional behavioural _____
 - b. ADHD _____
 - c. Aspergers _____
 - d. Sensory Integration/modulation _____
 - e. Dylexia _____
 - f. DCD _____
 - g. Other _____
- f. Classified as
 - i. Mild (somewhat ahead of peers 1-2 years) _____
 - ii. Moderate (very ahead of peers 2-3 years) _____
 - iii. Profound (significantly ahead of peers 4 or more) _____

Of the above SEN conditions you have ticked, can you tell me which ones you have had specific training for? Please note _____

It is said, that, because of the asynchrony, or developmental discrepancy, some of the traits inherent in learners with exceptional abilities may mirror other conditions with a closeness that sometimes makes it difficult to tell them apart, i.e., Where does the ‘gifted’ end and the ‘asperger’ begin’... ‘Is it hyperactivity and bad behaviour, or just high energy that needs to be adequately channelled? Is it a sensory condition, or just a highly developed processing of sensations due to acute intensity/awareness of their surroundings?

Would your training experience have given you the knowledge to know the difference? Yes/No

Have you had any training on students with exceptional abilities, or dual exceptionalities? Yes/No
Please expand _____ In your opinion, should there be comprehensive training in this area for teachers? Yes/ No

Do you feel exceptional/dual exceptional students/learners have special learning needs? Yes/No

Section 3 - Current work place- identification policy and provision

Most schools in Ireland would carry a policy on SEN, and the provision that they will make for this group. Does your school include learners with exceptional ability in this policy?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Don't know

If yes, does it outline what type of provision it is willing to make for this group? Yes/No Please expand _____

Would it include information on Dual exceptional learners and provision for same? Yes/No Please expand _____

If no, does it have a separate policy on exceptionally able learners and provision for same? Yes/No

What are the main forms of provision that you feel your school would/does offer exceptionally able students, please number by most likely (please mark '0' if not likely at all):

- a) Acceleration _____
- b) Differentiation _____
- c) Collaborative work _____
- d) Ability Grouping _____
- e) Mentoring _____
- f) Pull out groups _____
- g) Individual learning support _____
- h) Concurrent curriculum units _____
- i) ICT support and projects _____
- j) Counselling and social emotional training, awareness and support _____
- k) OT work _____
- l) Speech and Language _____

In general what main forms of provision are offered to students in other categories of SEN in your school, please number by most common type of provision (please mark (0) if not available):

- a) Change of grade level _____
- b) Differentiation _____
- c) Collaborative work _____
- d) Ability Grouping _____
- e) Mentoring _____
- f) Pull out groups _____
- g) Individual learning support _____
- h) Concurrent curriculum units _____
- i) ICT support and projects _____

- j) Counselling and social emotional training and support _____
- k) OT work _____
- l) Speech and Language _____

Dual exceptional students, along side their acute intellectual abilities, may have complex needs arising from uneven development. They may have traits, or conditions in common with other SEN groups, or even be identified or carry a dual diagnosis arising from these differences/difficulties.

Occasionally found in remedial/learning support/ or resource learning groups, some of these students may be identified by their learning difference/disability/SEN/behavioural difficulties as the primary indicator of a need, before their exceptional learning abilities are identified.

It has been suggested that early intervention, through identification, support through social skills group and self esteem games and validation through appropriate educational support and inclusion can help these children and their peers cope more easily with their differences, and avoid more serious emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Teachers can often be the first people to identify a student experiencing difficulties and suggest that perhaps there may be a need for further assessment. Yes/No

Would you/or staff find it difficult to identify an exceptionally able student in your school? Yes/No A dual exceptional student in your class/school? Yes/No A student with general learning difficulties? Y/N

Some exceptionally able children, like all children do have genuine secondary difficulties. Others may develop difficulties due to a school not having adequate access to appropriate resources, training and personnel, which may result in inappropriate placement, lack of support and understanding which over time, may manifest in a very real and visibly marked need for intervention.

Due to long waiting lists for NEPS services, schools sometimes find themselves with hard choices to make. Example: A diagnosis of exceptional ability may bring recommendations for provision, however a school is not obligated to follow these, and is not entitled to access of any additional resources, hours or personnel (such as an SNA). A diagnosis of Emotional Behavioural difficulties will allow the school to allocate added support such as resource hours (3.5 a week), and types of individual interventions.

In your school, would most assessments for suspected SEN be referred through NEPS for assessment? Yes/No Does this include learners with exceptional abilities? Yes/NO

Would you know what your relative length of waiting time would be for an assessment through NEPs of this type? Please note

Would the recommendations from a NEPS assessment usually be implemented upon diagnosis? Yes/No

Would this hold true in the case of an exceptionally able child, or would they require a second diagnosis in order for the school to comply with the NEPS recommendations? Please expand

If you/your school were to have to chose which order these students would be recommended for a NEPS assessment, in what order do you think they would fall (please number 1-8 in order of most likely to receive assessment)? Students with/who present as:

- a) Moderately learning disabled (2-4 years behind their peers) _____
- b) Emotional Behavioural difficulties _____
- c) Moderate Exceptional Abilities (2-4 years ahead of their peers) _____
- d) Dual diagnosed Moderately learning disabled student with Emotional Behavioural difficulties _____
- e) Moderate Exceptional Abilities with Emotional Behavioural difficulties _____
- f) ADHD _____
- g) Specific Learning Difficulty (Dyslexia type) _____
- h) Suspected Asperger with high functionality _____
- i) DCD _____

Have you ever had a student assessed for exceptional ability through NEPS in your school? Yes/No

Has a child in your school ever received a diagnosis for exceptional ability through a private psychologist? Yes/No

Has a child in your school ever received an assessment that placed them in the 'exceptionally able' category through the Centre for Talented Youth (CTYI)? Yes/No

Has it ever been the case that once a child has been identified as exceptionally able within your school, it has been felt that the best intervention is to suggest the child attend CTYI courses, as school has no additional resources to provide for that child? Yes/No Please expand

If a student was identified as exceptionally able, did your school have the adequate resources to provide for this student? Yes/No Please Expand

Tell me, if you had two students in your school, one with learning disabilities, and one with exceptional learning abilities both with the same special educational needs do you feel they would both be allocated the same level of support? Yes/No Why/Why not?

Schools at this time, in Ireland under current legislation appear not have resource hours or extra provision allocated to exceptionally able children, despite the NCCA publication of Guidelines for teaching exceptional students. This creates a dilemma as according to the 1998 education act they do/should come under the umbrella of special educational needs

Has it ever been suggested, by a psychologist or school staff member, to a parent in your school, who may have had an assessment resulting in a diagnosis of exceptional ability that a second diagnosis might be needed in order to access extra hours or provision? Yes/No

Has a parent of an exceptionally able child, in your school, ever gone to seek a second diagnosis for, say, emotional behavioural difficulties, in pursuit of additional support through your school? Yes/No

Please

expand

In your school, has there been a child/children who had special needs arising from a learning disability/difference or other SEN that has subsequently been identified as having exceptional learning abilities in any area(s)? Yes/No

Would you feel that a second diagnosis may be needed in order for a school to provide additional support for exceptionally able students outside standard recommended differentiation within the mainstream classroom as they are not included in the list on the circular which sets out those who will be allocated support? Yes/No

It is said that dual exceptional children which have special educational needs arising out of emotional and behavioural difficulties may do so due to lack of understanding and appropriate educational 'fit'. In your experience would you say that this is true? Yes/No. Please expand

Section 4 – Case studies

Have you ever had to give support to a dual exceptional child in your school? Yes/No

Can you identify the second diagnosis/need(s)? Yes/No please note: _____

Some students with exceptional learning abilities have difficulties fitting into normal class structures, and the curriculum opportunities that are offered, they may become bored, restless and take on patterns of disaffection and negative behavioural issues. Sometimes this ends up being identified/diagnosed as an 'emotional and behavioural difficulties'

Do you feel that this could be avoided if only appropriate resources and adequate provision was in place for these children along with training for teachers in this area? Yes/No

If you are/were working with an exceptionally able learner with a second diagnosis of emotional behavioural difficulties, would you be willing to share your experiences, in confidence with this researcher? Yes/No

