FEATURE ARTICLE
DABROWSKI'S THEORY AND THE PSYCHOLOGY OF GIFTEDNESS

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Gifted education was introduced to Dabrowski's theory of positive disintegration in 1979 in two chapters in the book, Counseling the Gifted and Talented (Colangelo & Zaffran, 1979). Piechowski (1979) contributed Chapter 2 on "Developmental Potential" in which he made a strong case for the overexcitabilities (OEs) being better indicators of giftedness and creativity than most of the published checklists, IQ tests, and other current methods of identification. Ogburn & Colangelo (1979) offered taperscripts in Chapter 11 demonstrating how the theory could be used as a basis for counseling gifted clients. In the ensuing years, Dabrowski's theory gradually has been adopted throughout North America and Australia as fundamental to our understanding of the psychological aspects of giftedness. What is the research base of the theory and how is its connection with giftedness supported?

Dabrowski based his theory on substantial clinical experience with intellectually and creatively gifted children, adolescents and adults (Piechowski, 1992), as well as analysis of the biographies of eminent personalities (Dabrowski, with Kawczak & Piechowski, 1970). Until the late 1960s, the research was largely clinical rather than empirical, composed of extensive case studies. Michael Piechowski, then a young professor in molecular biology at the University of Alberta, met Kazimierz Dabrowski in 1967 and became his translator. From 1969 to 1972, Dabrowski and Piechowski received three successive grants from the Canada Council, enabling the first systematic attempts at empirical research on the theory. Piechowski developed content analysis techniques as a means of analyzing massive amounts of narrative data collected on the subjects. The two-volume work, Theory of Levels of Emotional Development (Dabrowski & Piechowski, 1977), resulted—the culmination of eight years of close collaboration, during which Piechowski returned to the University of Wisconsin to obtain a second Ph.D. in counseling psychology. Dabrowski originated the conceptual framework of the theory and Piechowski contributed the empirical framework, the content analysis techniques, application of the theory and the methodology to the study of self-actualizers, and the introduction of the theory into education for the gifted. And so it was that the psychological study of giftedness gained a theoretical foundation and Dabrowski's theory gained an empirical basis.

THE OVEREXCITABILITIES

The earliest study of overexcitabilities in the gifted was conducted by Dabrowski in Warsaw in 1962 (Dabrowski, 1967). Dabrowski noted that all of the children he had observed in a school for the arts had characteristic ways of releasing tension and responding to stimulation, which he termed "overexcitabilities" (OEs). He categorized these reactions as psychomotor, imaginal, emotional, intellectual and sensual. The term "overexcitability" is a translation of the Polish term, "nadpobudliwość," which literally means "superstimulatability" in the neurological sense—stronger neurological reactions to stimuli (Falk, Piechowski, & Lind, 1994). The five overexcitabilities, like Gardner's (1983) seven intelligences, are innate strengths. They have been considered variables of temperament (Nixon, 1996), and relate most closely to the temperamental qualities of activity level, intensity of reaction, and threshold of responsiveness (Gottfried, Gottfried, Bathurst, & Guerin, 1994; Thomas, Chess & Birch, 1968; Silverman, 1998).

In Social-Educational Child Psychiatry, published in Poland in 1959 [revised in 1964], Dabrowski provided his fullest treatment of the five forms of psychic overexcitability, discussing the clinical and educational implications of the OEs, "as well as the challenges they pose in raising a child prone to high levels of stimulation" (Piechowski, 1995, p. 3).

Dabrowski emphasized the disequilibrating, disorganizing, and disintegrating action of
overexcitability on various areas of psychological functioning.... Overexcitability was defined by the following characteristics: (1) a reaction that exceeds the stimulus, (2) a reaction that lasts much longer than average, (3) the reaction often not being related to the stimulus (e.g., a fantasy image in response to an intellectual stimulus), and (4) a ready relaying of emotional experience to the sympathetic nervous system (fast beating of the heart, flushing, perspiring, headaches). (translated and cited in Piechowski, 1995, p.3)

Only when excitation is beyond the norm does it contribute to developmental potential and qualify as overexcitability (Piechowski, 1979).

Psychomotor OE is a surplus of energy or the expression of emotional tension "through general hyperactivity" (Dabrowski, with Kawczak & Piechowski, 1970, p. 31). Manifestations include excess physical energy, workaholism, nervous habits (such as tics and nail biting), rapid speech, love of movement, impulsivity and pressure for action (Piechowski, 1979). Sensual OE includes responsiveness of the senses, aesthetic appreciation, sensualism, and enjoyment at being the center of attention. Imaginational OE is the capacity to visualize events very well, inventiveness, creativity, fantasy, and poetic, dramatic or artistic abilities. "Imaginational hyperexcitability can provide a basis for the development of prospecting and retrospection, that is to say, the ability to use one's past experience in the planning of the future" (Dabrowski, with Kawczak & Piechowski, 1970, p. 31). Intellectual OE includes probing questions, analytical thinking, reflectiveness, problem solving, interest in abstraction and theory. This OE appears to be most closely associated with intellectual giftedness. Emotional OE involves intense connectedness with others, the ability to experience things deeply, fears of death, embarrassment and guilt, and emotional responsiveness.

In 1979, Piechowski called for a broadened conceptualization of giftedness, beyond standardized testing, and introduced gifted education to the five OEs as a means of assessing creative potential. He suggested that the OEs—or "original equipment"—are basic components of giftedness shared by many types of gifted individuals. "The overexcitabilities may be regarded as the actual psychological potential of the creative person" (p. 49). "The assessment of the strength and richness of these forms should allow a reliable qualitative assessment of creative giftedness" (p. 54). From the time this article was published, a considerable number of studies have been conducted assessing overexcitabilities in the gifted.

Based on Piechowski's hypothesis that the strength of the OEs can be used as a measure of the person's giftedness (Piechowski & Colangelo, 1984), graduate theses and research projects in the United States and Canada have explored the use of OEs in the identification of gifted and creative individuals from different national, ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds (e.g., Ackerman, 1993, 1997b; Breard, 1994; Buerschen, 1995; Calic, 1994; Domroese, 1993; Ely, 1995; Gallagher, 1983; Manzanero, 1985; Rogers, 1986; Schiever, 1983). The instrument employed in these studies was the Overexcitabilities Questionnaire (OEQ), devised by Lysy & Piechowski (1983). The OEQ consists of 21 open-ended questions, such as "What kinds of things get your mind going?" and "When you ask yourself 'Who am I?' what is the answer?" [The full questionnaire can be found in Falk, Manzanero and Miller (1997), Piechowski and Cunningham (1985), Piechowski and Miller (1995), and Piirto, 1998.]

The narrative responses are coded using content analysis techniques. Two trained raters independently score the OEs on a scale from 0 to 3 according to specific manifestations outlined in a coding manual, Criteria for Rating the Intensity of Overexcitabilities (Falk, Piechowski, & Lind, 1994). [The manifestations are summarized in a chart of "Forms and Expressions of Psychic Overexcitability" in Piechowski, 1997, pp. 368-369.] Ratings are based on richness or intensity of a given response. Raters attempt to reach consensus through discussion of differences or the ratings are averaged. Interrater reliabilities were calculated for all OEs in 10 separate studies (N = 427). Interrater reliability ranged from .42 to .95 (Ackerman, 1996). A new analysis of the same data using different means of calculation yielded interrater reliability coefficients of around .90 (Ackerman, 1997b). Test-retest reliability for the OEQ completed three to six weeks apart by a group of 60 adults was .65 (Ammirato, 1987). In a more recent study, internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha) for total OE scores averaged .77 for gifted adults (Miller, Silverman, & Falk, 1994).

Validity for the Overexcitability Questionnaire is accruing from study of groups with known characteristics. American artists (Piechowski, Silverman, & Falk, 1985) and Venezuelan artists, employing a Spanish translation of the OEQ (Manzanero, 1985), both evidenced high imaginative OE scores (Falk, Manzanero, & Miller, 1997). Also, imaginative OE distinguished highly creative junior-high students from less creative students (Schiever,
1983, 1985) and differentiated high and low scorers on the Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking for sixth graders (Gallagher, 1983, 1985). Imaginational OE was also confirmed in samples of talented high school students studying musical theater, visual arts, and creative writing (Piirto & Cassone, 1994; Piirto, Cassone, Ackerman, & Fraas, n.d.). Gifted adults have shown higher intellectual OE scores than a comparison group (Piechowski, Silverman, & Falk, 1985).

Psychomotor OE differentiated better than the other four OEs between a group of identified gifted high school students and an unselected group in Calgary (Ackerman, 1993, 1997a). No other study unveiled significant differences between gifted and control groups in Psychomotor OE. The developmental significance of Psychomotor OE is also a matter of some speculation. Piechowski (1977) hypothesized that Psychomotor OE must be integrated with other overexcitabilities before it becomes developmentally significant, a position which has been supported by many others (Manzanero, 1985; Falk, Manzanero & Miller, 1997; Piechowski & Cunningham, 1985).

While clinicians report high levels of Sensual OE in this population (e.g., Meckstroth, 1991), only one study of gifted adults yielded statistically significant differences in Sensual OE between the gifted and control groups (Silverman & Ellsworth, 1980). Gifted youth have been found to be consistently higher than their average peers in Imaginational OE (Gallagher, 1985; Schiever, 1985) and even higher than a group of graduate students (Piechowski & Colangelo, 1984). Artists surpassed the intellectually gifted in Imaginational OE and Emotional OE, and equaled them in Intellectual OE (Piechowski, Silverman, & Falk, 1985). All gifted samples studied scored high in Intellectual OE and exhibit high levels of Emotional OE (Gallagher, 1985; Piechowski & Colangelo, 1984; Piechowski & Cunningham, 1985; Schiever, 1985; Silverman, 1983; Silverman & Ellsworth, 1980).

Piechowski and Colangelo (1984) compared several groups of gifted and creative individuals from different parts of the country, varying in age from nine through adulthood, and reported consistency of OE scores across the age span. “The youngest gifted groups (age 9 and 11 in the Denver sample) have each the same OE profile of T [Intellectual], M [Imaginational], and E [Emotional] as the gifted adults. This consistency supports the idea of developmental potential as original equipment” (p. 87).

Piechowski and Miller (1995) compared data collected on the OEQ with data collected via an interview format (originally developed by S. Gallagher, 1983) on children under the age of 15. In addition, they investigated the effects of age and gender on OE scores. Previous studies with adult populations had found no correlation between age and OEs (Lysy & Piechowski, 1983; Miller, Silverman, & Falk, 1994). No gender differences were found in this study, but older children, ages 12 – 14, scored higher than younger ones, ages 9-11, primarily due to the difficulty of the younger students in writing their answers. Even so, the two methods were considered nearly equivalent, as the interview format did not generate higher OEs than the questionnaire. The interview was recommended for assessing children below age 12.

A new version of the Overexcitability Questionnaire, the OEQII, is nearly ready for release: a 50-item self-rating measure employing a Likert scale. The OEQII has been developed over the last 18 years, and has recently attained a clean factor structure, with one factor for each OE. Preliminary data with 563 subjects were very promising (Bouchet, 1998; Falk & Lind, 1998). Another study of the OEQII, with an additional 315 subjects, is in progress (R. F. Falk, personal communication, April 21, 1998). A shortened version of the OEQ is also being explored (Ackerman, 1998; Ackerman & Miller, 1997). These two efforts should result in greater utility of the overexcitability instruments. Further information about reliability and validity of the OEQ is reported in Miller, Silverman, and Falk (1994), Piechowski and Miller (1995), Falk, Manzanero, and Miller (1997), and Ackerman (1997b).

The overexcitabilities, combined with gifts and talents, comprise an individual’s developmental potential—that is, potential for the development of higher order values. Psychobiographical case studies of individuals who have attained higher level development (as analyzed by either Dabrowski’s or Maslow’s theory) reveal that all were gifted individuals and all manifested overexcitabilities (Brennan, 1987; Brennan & Piechowski, 1991; Grant, 1990; Piechowski, 1978, 1990, 1992).

Gifted children and adults demonstrate the overexcitabilities—one of the prerequisites for
developmental potential—to attain higher level development, but actualization of that potential is rare. Failure to actualize potential in the emotional, moral, spiritual, and personality spheres may be partially attributable to the devaluing of these spheres in our societies. Perhaps the disparity can be traced to too much emphasis on one's career as a basis for self-definition and neglect of the developing person. In studies conducted to date, women tended to achieve higher levels of development than men (Miller, Silverman & Falk, 1994). These findings were explained in terms of gender-role socialization, since women are allowed more freedom to develop their emotions. A shift in focus away from productivity as the sine qua non of giftedness might facilitate more balanced development.

Piechowski (1992) addressed the need to "find and nurture human potential for altruism, self-actualization, and high levels of moral development" (p. 181):

We need tools for identification and cultivation of such potentials. Dabrowski's theory of emotional development is such a tool; it is a theory of human transcendence toward a life inspired by universal ideals of human brotherhood, peace, service, and self-realization. The theory arose from his extensive clinical experience with gifted and talented children, adolescents, and adults.

One of the basic characteristics of the gifted is their intensity and an expanded field of their subjective experience. The intensity, in particular, must be understood as a qualitatively distinct characteristic. It is not a matter of degree but of a different quality of experiencing: vivid, absorbing, penetrating, encompassing, complex, commanding—a way of being quiveringly alive. (p. 181)

Piechowski and Colangelo (1984) emphasized that the OEs are not specific domains of talent or prodigious achievement. "Rather, they represent the kind of endowment that feeds, nourishes, enriches, empowers and amplifies talent" (p. 87). Dabrowski's model "promises to uncover for every individual child its principal mode of responding to the world" (Piechowski, 1974, p. 91). The various permutations and strengths of the OEs may least partially account for the wide range of individual differences within the gifted population. Like variables in temperament observed in infants, the overexcitabilities appear to be stable characteristics that differentiate the interests, motivation, and behavior of children with different kinds of gifts.

References


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**From the Chair, (cont. from p. 1)**

explored this possibility or is conducting research from this perspective.

Research on the psychology of giftedness in general is still in its infancy. There are many unasked and unanswered questions for us to consider in the years ahead. I look forward to dialoguing with you about these ideas in Louisville.

**Erratum:** The Editor regrets failing to include the second and third authors of the lead article in Volume 9, #1. The article should have been titled *What is the Source of Gifted Memory Abilities?* by J. F. Gualtney, D. F. Bjorklund, & D. Goldstein.
Education and psychology have enjoyed a recent surge in theories with potential for impacting and altering educational practices. These theories, which include work on intelligence, learning styles, development and creativity, have generated a great deal of excitement and interest for researchers who have an eye on educational practice. Given this excitement, the temptation to apply these theories immediately is often difficult to resist. However, the history of education is littered with promising theories that were under-researched and too swiftly applied. The purpose of this article is to outline steps that researcher can take to begin authenticating potentially useful theories from a psychometric perspective.

One such theory is Dabrowski's Theory of Positive Disintegration, specifically the notion of overexcitability. The theoretical work of Dabrowski (1964) has generated a considerable amount of excitement among both researchers and practitioners concerned with education of the gifted. As Ackerman (1997) explains, Dabrowski's theory "is not a theory of giftedness, but [it] does provide an excellent framework that can be used as a foundation for characterizing giftedness and developing a method of identification" (p.230). Clearly, any theory that lends promise to the possibility of characterizing or identifying the elusive construct of giftedness is worthy of further study.

The development of the Overexcitabilities Questionnaire (Lysy & Piechowki, 1983), an open-ended questionnaire designed to assess overexcitabilities, is a large step in the direction of making a transition from theory to research to practical utility of identifying giftedness. Yet, as with any translation from theory to practice, there are important considerations that researchers with a practical orientation should keep in mind.

Considerations in Translating Theory into Practice.

One way that researchers interested translating a descriptive theory into a prescriptive theory proceed is by developing an instrument that aims at assessing specific tenants of the descriptive theory. In the case of overexcitability and the possible links to giftedness, researchers have available to them the Overexcitabilities Questionnaire (OEQ). Any instrument that has the potential to alter educational practices or be used to make important educational decisions for individual students carries with it very stringent ethical responsibilities on the part of researchers. Namely, educators have a responsibility to establish evidence of strong psychometric characteristics prior to making claims or suggestions that will alter educational practices that are based on the use of a particular instrument.

As Huck and Cormier (1996) explain, "The conclusions drawn and the recommendations made...can be no better than the data on which they are based" (p. 75). It is therefore important that the instrument used to collect the data is psychometrically sound. There are two essential steps in fulfilling the responsibility of establishing a psychometrically sound instrument: (1) produce compelling evidence that data collected is reliable, and (2) gather comprehensive evidence of validity.

The first step is important because an instrument, in order to be of practical use, must produce data that is consistent. Huck and Cormier's (1996) suggestion to use a variety of approaches in testing reliability should be heeded, because "different methods for assessing reliability consider the issue of consistency from different perspectives" (p. 86). By using a variety of approaches to assess reliability, a more complete picture of the consistency of the collected data is formed. In general, most authors recommend that an instrument that has the potential to alter educational practices and/or have lasting effects on individual students should be associated with reliability estimates of .9 or greater. Reliability estimates of .6 or greater are acceptable when using an instrument for group research purposes.
Gathering comprehensive evidence of validity is the necessary second step in establishing the psychometric quality of an instrument. While the consistency of collected data is necessary to establish the validity of an instrument, the data collected by an instrument has no practical meaning until we know what is being measured. Therefore, there should be strong and comprehensive evidence of validity in the collected data. When using an instrument that is designed to assess a construct such as overexcitability, researcher should be as comprehensive as possible in assessing estimated validity. Specifically, we encourage researchers to examine multiple aspects of construct validity (e.g., convergent, discriminant, and factor analytic evidence) and predictive validity (concurrent and longitudinal evidence). Of course, "the quality of the data that are paired with the new instrument's data" (Huck & Cormier, 1996, p. 96) is of paramount concern - comparing data collected with unreliable instruments of questionable validity is a step in the wrong direction!

In general, researchers working with the OEQ have done an admirable job. They do not appear to have oversold the uses of the OEQ, a too-common occurrence for new associated with potentially useful theories. In addition, the psychometric work being done with the OEQ has been moving in promising directions, but there is still some distance that needs to be covered. Researchers have gathered specific evidence of reliability and construct validity (Gallagher, 1985; Miller, Silverman, & Falk, 1994; Piechowski, Silverman, & Falk, 1985; Schiever, 1985; Silverman, 1993), but a comprehensive picture of the OEQ's validity has the to be established. While these initial findings show promise, Ackerman's (1997) assessment that "currently, the Overexcitability Questionnaire is not tenable as a quantitative assessment instrument" (p. 235) still appears to be accurate.

The final psychometric step in the journey from theory to practice is the use of reliable and valid instruments to explore the practical tenability of the theory. As noted above, the OEQ is not yet ready to be used to identify gifted students, although it is a promising instrument. Researchers working with Dabrowski's theory and the OEQ should continue to focus on establishing evidence of validity. With continued research and more comprehensive validity studies, the Overexcitability Questionnaire has the potential to evolve into an instrument that can offer a meaningful contribution to educational practices with gifted children. Educators and research who identify promising theories should follow the lead of individuals studying overexcitability. That is, researchers should take deliberate steps to develop the psychometric soundness of an instrument and then proceed to study the educational implications of a particular theory.

References


The original intent of this column was to find research outside of the traditional annals about gifted children and adults that nevertheless dealt with Dabrowski and giftedness. So much for good intentions...there were no such articles found in searches of the Carl UnCover, PsychLit, or ERIC databases. What follows instead are a few articles that address another aspect of Dabrowski’s theory: the relationship between anxiety/mental health and emotional development. The articles, both theoretical and empirical, do not necessarily directly involve measures of Developmental Potential, but they are all designed to explain or test one or more of the assumptions behind Dabrowski’s theory. Hopefully they will be of use to anyone interested in doing their own research into Developmental Potential as they build a baseline of awareness about the theory and its applications.


This article provides an interesting theoretical background on Dabrowski as compared to other popular psychological theories. The author asserts that one of the reasons that Dabrowski’s theory has not gained widespread attention or acceptance in the United States is because of its theoretical basis, which is much different from the theories of American Humanistic psychologists. Weckowicz presents his thesis in a carefully constructed set of comparisons designed to reveal both the similarities and the differences between the two schools of thought.

Similarities identified between Dabrowski and American Humanists include the rejection of reductionism (represented by Behaviorism), and that both attempt to explain complex human behavior, which requires the development of new and different forms of research methodology.

Beginning with outlining the basis for Dabrowski’s thinking in European dynamic psychiatry and influenced by Existential philosophy and noting the impact of two world wars on the development of a pessimistic attitude, one of the first differences was the resulting emphasis on the dignity of man in Dabrowski’s theory and on acquired happiness, the ultimate goal of the American Humanistic school. Weckowicz also points out that Dabrowski’s theory was developed in a significantly different setting, away from the conceptually rigorous and empirically-based paradigms of academia, even though a building research base is growing to test and refine Dabrowski’s ideas.

One of the most interesting sections of the article compares Maslow and Dabrowski, contrasting Maslow’s emphasis increased mental health with development and Dabrowski’s claim that development is attended by increased mental anxiety; Maslow’s claim that emotional development is continuous and Dabrowski’s assertion that stages of development are discontinuous, with the ‘disintegration’ of one level as the next begins.

Ultimately, the argument turns to the differing assumptions that the two schools of thought hold as to the purpose of pain and suffering. Weckowicz concludes that Dabrowski (and Existentialists in general) support the claim that pain and suffering both have the potential for good, since they can lead to moral choice, courage, and loyalty, and concludes that, ‘this,... could account for the resistance to both Existentialism and Dabrowski’s theory in North America’ (p.133).


A sample of 61 men, aged 18-39, completed questionnaires measuring emotional development according to Dabrowski’s scheme along with the Costello-Comrey Depression Scale and a questionnaire to measure ‘experienced levels of emptiness and existential concern’ (p.835) developed by the author. The authors tested the hypothesis that depression, existential concern
and experiences of emptiness would be higher in subjects with higher levels of emotional development. The subjects’ responses to the questionnaire soliciting emotional development was coded into three levels (although Dabrowski defines five): level one, where the individual is concrete, ‘averse to introspection, lacking a capacity for experiences of guilt, and self-criticism,’ Level two, where the individual experiences a ‘multiplicity of disconnected, fragmentary selves with little sense of one having priority or ascendancy over another’ and level 3 where, although the psyche is still disorganized, the individual develops a ‘moral sense and the selves become hierarchically arranged into ‘higher’ and ‘lower’.

Data from the questionnaires were analyzed to determine possible relationships among the variables. An analysis of variance showed a significant difference in Experienced Levels of Emptiness in subjects at either the first or second of Dabrowski’s levels of emotional development. The correlation between Experienced Level of Emptiness and subjects’ level of emotional development were also significantly correlated; this significant correlation was observed at all three levels of emotional development. On the other hand, no significant relationships were observed between the depression measure and either level of emptiness or emotional development. According to the authors, ‘This again supports the notion that emptiness and depression are different aspects of experience’ (p. 838).


deGrace presents a study designed to test the assumption that mentally healthy individuals are anxiety free. He uses as the basis for his argument Dabrowski’s theory of Positive Disintegration which presents the thesis that neurosis can be a catalyst to positive growth, that is, some individuals can experience positive maladjustment and that, ‘a healthy degree of tension, such as that which results from the will to give meaning to one’s life, is inherent to human nature and essential to true psychological health’ (p. 566).

To test the relationship between self-actualization and anxiety, 90 male forestry majors were asked to complete the Personal Orientation Inventory (a measure of self-actualization), and the IPAT Anxiety Scale. Subjects were sorted into two groups: high self-actualizing and low self-actualizing, and scores on the IPAT were used as the independent variable. A t-test comparing the level of anxiety reported by the High Self-Actualizing and Low Self-Actualizing Groups yielded no significant differences, that is, the High Self-Actualizing group was just as likely to experience anxiety as the Low Self-Actualizing group. Raw scores for both groups placed them in ‘the category of neurosis with mild anxiety level’ (p. 567).

In his discussion of the results, the author reasserts a conceptualization of mental health in which disequilbrium and equilibrium play equal roles: ‘An individual who would be considered healthy would never cease to develop, the wheel of growth passing by the point of disequilibrium as well as by the point of equilibrium; while one who is fixated at one or the other of these points would be considered sick’ (p. 568).


In a study designed to test deGrace’s claim that anxiety is sometimes related to mental health, Wilkens and Krauss gave 31 graduate and undergraduate students the Personal Orientation Inventory, the Taylor Manifest Anxiety Schale, the State-Trait Anxiety Battery. General relationships were first explored in the data analysis, then subjects were divided into two groups, High Self-Actualizing and Low Self-Actualizing.

Correlations between the various measures revealed a significant negative correlation between self-actualization and manifest anxiety. The correlation between self-actualization and state anxiety was negative and non-significant.

The results of the comparison between High Self-Actualizing and Low Self-Actualizing subjects (one-tailed t-tests) resulted in significant differences on all measures. From these results the authors claimed that, ‘(1) high self-actualized Ss had lower trait anxiety scores; and (2) high self-actualized Ss were susceptible to state anxiety within the limits established by their trait anxiety level’ (p. 958), and continue assert that their hypothesis of lower anxiety among self-actualized individuals was upheld because of the lack of more generalized anxiety.
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Message from the Chair

Sidney Moon
Purdue University

We are looking forward to seeing you in Louisville November 12-15! We have an exciting convention planned. Mike Sayler, Program Chair, and Juanita Matthews-Morgan have put together a great research strand (see p. 8). Our working meeting will be Thursday November 12th from 6:00-10:00 p.m. We’ll have a pizza buffet dinner and social hour from 6:00-7:00. Then Nancy Robinson will talk with us about research issues from her perspective as a senior researcher in our field. After Nancy’s talk, we’ll engage in some strategic planning by working in small groups to develop goals for our Division for the next three years. Next, Rena Subotnik will talk with us about her experiences as a legislative fellow in Washington DC during the past year. We’ll conclude the evening with a research retreat—an opportunity for us to talk about our own research in small groups with others who are interested in and/or conducting similar research.

We especially encourage graduate students to attend our working meeting. We have a lot of fun and it’s a great way to meet other researchers and get involved in our Division. We also encourage graduate students to attend our business meeting on Friday morning at 10:30. There we’ll conduct the official business of the Division and present our 1998 Awards. Hope to see you there!

One of the positive trends I see in our field is greater interest in psychological aspects of giftedness. This issue on Dabrowski is one example. The increasing tendency of researchers in psychology to focus on giftedness as an important variable is another. Ditto for the increasing interest in talent in the personal and social domains. I see this trend as a very important one for our field in the 21st Century, as there are many aspects of the psychology of giftedness where little or not current research exists.

I have just finished reading an interesting book that is a case in point. The book is titled Understanding Psychological Preparation for Sport: Theory and Practice of Elite Performers (1996). It was written by researchers from the field of sports psychology, Lew Hardy, Graham Jones, and Daniel Gould. Several things struck me while reading this book. The first was that although the authors probably would not identify themselves with the GT field or attend NAGC, the research they were summarizing on elite performers was GT research. Second, the volume focuses unabashedly on understanding what distinguishes the best competitors in sports (“elite performers”) from more average performers. I inferred that the prejudice against the use of the word “elite” to refer to top performers that exists in educational settings appears to be nonexistent in the world of sports. Perhaps as a result, mainline sports psychologists have conducted far more research on extremely talented athletes than mainline educational researchers have on extremely talented students. Third, sports psychology has developed an entire field devoted to helping the “best” performers become even better through psychological techniques such as positive self-talk, imagery, relaxation, arousal control strategies, etc. What would happen, I asked myself, if a similar approach were taken to helping top students perform at even higher levels through similar psychological techniques? To my knowledge, no one in our field has

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Message from the Chair

Sidney Moon
Purdue University

We are looking forward to seeing you in Louisville November 12-15. We have an exciting convention planned. Mike Sayler, Program Chair, and Juanita Matthews-Morgan have put together a great research strand (see p. 8). Our working meeting will be Thursday November 12th from 6:00-10:00 p.m. We’ll have a pizza buffet dinner and social hour from 6:00-7:00. Then Nancy Robinson will talk with us about research issues from her perspective as a senior researcher in our field. After Nancy’s talk, we’ll engage in some strategic planning by working in small groups to develop goals for our Division for the next three years. Next, Rena Subotnik will talk with us about her experiences as a legislative fellow in Washington DC during the past year. We’ll conclude the evening with a research retreat— an opportunity for us to talk about our own research in small groups with others who are interested in and/or conducting similar research.

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