

## A Twice-Exceptional Child - A Case Study

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### Abstract

This is a qualitative case study of a gifted twice-exceptional student with impulse control disorder (ICD) co-diagnosed with depression. This study follows the 'case study' pattern (precedence). The data set of this study is composed of documents from a study involving a twice-exceptional student with adverse event sampling who has been selected through purposive sampling (activity papers, drawings), minutes of interviews with the student's mother and teachers and observation notes kept throughout the process. Data have been analyzed using the content analysis methodology. At the end of this study seeking to find out what this gifted student with impulse control disorder [ICD] co-diagnosed with depression goes through in the event of being also twice-exceptional and whether or not his/her condition of being gifted is overshadowed by him/her having psychological; the fact that disadvantaging traits of such twice-exceptional child has been found to dwindle almost down to none can be interpreted as the positive outcome of the effective approach towards the analyzed unit of the two emerging main categories, i.e. school and family. The consistent and supportive attitudes of the family have ensured to eradicate the tantrums (temper fits) of the twice-exceptional child, topped with treatment of the child and a fine administration of the drug doses. At school, on the other hand, the available supervision policy, intervention methodologies in support of treatment and the professional approach of the teachers have contributed to the formation of a socially-enabling environment for the twice-exceptional child, including, also, backing by his/her peers. Taking into consideration that mere drug treatment would not be sufficient, support of the family as well as of the school reveals that the symptoms linked with the depression-co-diagnosed-ICD of the twice exceptional child were prevented from suppressing the child's giftedness.

**Keywords:** Twice exceptional, gifted/talented, impulse control disorder

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## Introduction

Having special needs, as a concept, covers differences either above or below the average in terms of physical or behavioral performance. When this definition is focused on individuals with special needs, the concept immediately expands to cover gifted as well as prodigal children (Ataman, 2012, p. 20). Cavkaytar's (2008) definition of the concept in the Implementing Regulation on Special Services under the Ministry of National Education is as follows:

"The individual requiring special education is an individual who, for a variety of reasons, is significantly different than his/her peers, in terms of personal features and educational competencies. This is a general definition, which comprises all children who have different traits and require special education and training (p. 5).

These students, they display an outstanding performance in terms of intellect and ability but their learning challenges are what endangers their academic success. These students are considered as gifted/talented individuals challenged in terms of learning. As a concept *they are referred to as 'twice gifted'* (Weinfeld, Barnes- Robinson, Jeweler, Shevitz, 2006, p. 15). It is hard to estimate the number of twice-exceptional students. According to the US. Department of Education, there are approximately 360.000 twice exceptional students in America's schools (as cited in Baum, Owen & Schader, 2017, p. 25). On the other hand how many twice exceptional students in Turkish schools in not known.

Having indicated the three sub-groups of twice gifted students, Beckley (1998) shares certain clarifications regarding this group: The first of these groups face challenged at school and their level of success is below expectations. They have been diagnosed as gifted but also with learning challenges. These children go through lacking achievements, a weak academic perception of the self, insufficient motivation and indolence for the learning challenges that befall them are not diagnosed. The circumstances in time become harsher and augmented academic challenges give way to learning difficulties. Students in the second group have been diagnosed with challenged learning but such traits as being gifted or having other talents have not been found. Measurements performed on the students, low IQ scores and analysis of intellectual data have been found to be insufficient. These students stand out at first glance not with their talents but with what they cannot achieve. Then, the third and the last group comprises of children who have been diagnosed neither with a gift nor with learning difficulty and who do not stand out in generalized classes. These children are considered to lack capabilities required for services which are offered to gifted children. They are assumed to be mediocre for their gifts and challenges overshadow one another. Their performance is borderline, which is, as a matter of fact, below their potential.

Diagnosing a child with being gifted/talented is critical in terms of teacher's assistance when this condition has been identified, especially during primary school. Recognition, especially of twice exceptional children by their teachers, peers and parents displays a series of ups and downs and painful events. As a result of their study Şekeral and Özkardeş (2013, p. 216) indicate that gifted children, as regards symptoms of learning deficit, suffer from moderate to severe challenges in terms of hyper-mobility and attention skills, as teachers suggest. The higher frequency of such problems as hyper-mobility and attention alludes to two possibilities. One of these possibilities is that gifted children learn easier and quicker than their peers whereby repetition of certain academic concepts might bore them. And the second is that such hyper-mobility can be a harbinger of attention deficit and hyper-activity.

Considering that a teacher encounters through his/her career hundreds of children, one can expect them to feel this twice exceptionality upon recognition of the conflicts that these children go through. For example, a student with attention deficit is capable of making advanced calculations in his/her mind. However, it would not be a trusted methodology to expect such in-depth observations from each and every teacher. Teachers need to be informed about twice exceptional children through certain trainings and the use of certain documents. One of the prominent schools in the world, focusing

on this matter, Montgomery County Public Schools [MCPS] lists the characteristics of twice exceptional children as follows (MCPS, 2015, E1):

**Graph 1.** Characteristics of twice exceptional students

Those without challenges	Those with challenges
Quick in learning basic concepts and subjects and acquires information easily and without requiring many repetitions.	Experiences cognitive challenges frequently during the learning of basic concepts and subjects, requires to learn compensative strategies so as to acquire information.
High-level of verbal skills.	High-level of verbal skills but experiences difficulties in writing most of the time where s/he may also fail in timely and appropriate use of language.
Adorned with the ability to read earlier.	Frequent experience of reading difficulties depending on the weakness in cognitive processes.
Keen observation skills.	Memory deficiencies despite keenness of observation powers.
Adorned with high critical, problem solving and decision-making skills.	Very good at solving real life problems with heightened critical thinking and decision-making skills; individual improvement achieved often through balancing strategies.
Long lasting attention with continuous and intense concentration.	Frequently experiences difficulties in focusing his/her attention but can concentrate for long periods on issues of interest.
Creative among his/her generation; with his/her own ideas, developmental.	Adorned with extraordinary imagination; ideas not strange but mostly original, capable of divergent thinking and may seem daydreaming during such thoughts.
Risk taker.	Mostly refrains from risk-taking, ignores academic issues, may take risks without scrutiny outside of school environment.
Adorned with an extraordinary and very much advanced sense of humor.	May make use of humor to cover for failures at school or resort to humor among friends so as to parry a problem circumstance.
More mature than peers.	May display immature traits at times of anger, crying or retreat, etc.
Freewheeler.	Requires teacher support and feedback at times of difficulty however highly independent on other issues; displays stubbornness and stereotype behaviors.
Sensitive and fragile.	Very sensitive in areas of insufficiency, self-critical as well as highly-critical of others, including teachers.
May not be accepted by other children and may feel isolated.	May be perceived as liking solitude as s/he cannot blend in with gifted types or those with learning difficulties, and may experience problems in being accepted by others as a result of insufficiency of his/her social skills.
Displays leadership features.	Leaders, quite often, emerge from not-so-traditional students, displaying a strong ability to cope with difficulties yet learning challenges may hinder leadership skills.
Wide range and diversified interests.	Diversified interests but learning challenges hinder furthering acquaintance with these interests.
Their interest is highly-focused about which they are passionate and ousting towards other issues which are extrinsic to such passion.	Their interest is highly-focused about which they are passionate and ousting towards other issues which are extrinsic to such passion. The latter often comprise of matters outside of the scope of school.

Webster (2015) has studied decisions of teachers in normal education regarding twice-exceptional children as well as their reasons for acceptance/non-acceptance. The study revealed teachers' deficiencies in teaching experiences, shortcomings in education, lacking self-confidence, mundanity of professional life and misconceptions, as a result of which they do not accept these students.

Problems experienced by gifted/talented students do not but concern challenges in learning. Some of these students, as a result of certain psychological problems that they experience, might be labeled or their academic successes can be overshadowed. Within this scope, a definition of depression and impulse control disorder is important in terms of definition of the unit of analysis of this study designed as a situation study. Burçak Annagür and Tamam (2011, p. 23) indicate that depression is the most frequently encountered of psychological disorders, which is defined as not enjoying activities and circumstances that were previously pleasing, loss of interest in such activities and circumstances culminating in depression, pessimism and sorrow and pain upon loss of interest therein, ending up in a depressive mood, physical as well as psychological lack of energy, psychomotor and cognitive slow-down, limited content of thought and an overall dwindling of the individual's functionalities. Another important point stressed by Burçak Anangür and Tamam (2011, p. 23) is the high level of other disorders such as anxiety disorders, behavioral disorders, impulse control disorders which are co-diagnosed with depression in these patients. Impulsivity can be defined as an inclination to carry forward a certain act to reduce a certain stress, which has emerged from diminishing power of the self to resist such impulses, but without any consideration for negative impacts which might arise from such an act.

The condition of being gifted and having learning as well as psychological difficulties has been proven to be simultaneous but still many schools fail to provide suitable conditions for twice-exceptional children. First of all, there are, in the school environment, basically two types of challenges for the twice-exceptional child: (1) insufficient diagnosis procedures and (2) insufficiency of enterprises aiming to offer suitable learning experiences (The Twice-Exceptional Dilemma, 2006, p.3). Recently, in Turkey, many a work has been ongoing so as to provide gifted/talented children with the education which is fit for them. However, there is yet a sub-group of students under this group, which makes things even more complicated and who can be said to be immersed in a chaotic environment both at home and at school. These children who have been adorned with diversified talents fail to satisfy the needs of their surroundings, ending up in experiencing emotional and social problems. This group of students which is defined as twice-exceptional is composed of children who are both gifted/talented but also with certain learning difficulties and psychological disorders. Turkish society is yet to discover this situation and this is the reason why families and teachers label these children with incompetency and harm them as regards self-exploration. Then, what traits are there to tell us that these children are twice-exceptional? How should these children be supported so that they will be valued as much as they deserve to be in education as well as at home and then be able to benefit from and reflect the great potential within? This study is important as it exemplifies positive interventions and practices targeting students grappling with such circumstances. We believe that the study will benefit the overall literature on this matter as it is a presentation of the unique condition of twice-exceptional children through academic studies, with the target audience of educators and teachers.

This study aims to reveal the twice-exceptionality of a student who is at once gifted/talented but who also has psychological issues. In line with this overarching goal, answers to questions below will be sought:

- Ψ What does a gifted/talented student who also has impulse control disorder in addition to the diagnosis of depression experience in the event of being twice-exceptional?

- Ψ Do psychological issues experienced by a gifted/talented student who has been co-diagnosed with impulse control disorder in addition to the diagnosis of depression overshadow the gift/talent of him/her?

### **Methodology**

This is a qualitative case study of a gifted twice-exceptional student with impulse control disorder (ICD) co-diagnosed with depression. The pattern utilized in the study is Integrated Single Case Pattern for the scope of the study concerns the unique case of SD, who is the subject of the study. The Integrated Single Case Pattern employs a single unit of analysis (an individual, a program, a school, etc.), which can be further used while working on excessive, dissident and distinctive conditions which are incongruous with general standards (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2016, p. 300). Gay Mills and Airasian (2012, p. 444-445) define case study analyses as unique for their provision of substantial and illuminating information against other types of research and state that information provided as part of case studies are anchored in reader's mind after mingling with the latter's own information, experience and understanding and that the case at hand is re-interpreted by the reader as s/he reads the sample case provided as part of the case study at hand. They claim that the most important aspect of the Integrated Single Case Pattern is that it illuminates similarities and differences between the content of such single case and other circumstances.

The data set of this study is composed of documents from the study involving SD (activity papers, drawings), minutes of interviews with the student's mother and teachers and observation notes kept throughout the process. The study is limited to these data acquired and cannot be generalized for SD describes the situation. Data have been analyzed using the content analysis methodology.

### **Unit of Analysis**

SD has been selected through purposive sampling methodology as the sample of the study as an adverse event (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2016, p. 119). SD, the unit of the analysis is a boy, born 2008 schooling at Nesibe Aydın School in Ankara during the school year 2016-2017. Student has been diagnosed by his teachers as a gifted boy, who has been enrolled in the Development and Science Program which is a special education and training program for gifted children during the weekend. When the aim of the study was explained, the school principal has provided information on a couple of twice exceptional students. SD was one of them. The principal has notified us regarding a briefing with the parents on this matter. S/he has then informed that the child in question had a fit and that called the mother to school, who most probably was on her way back. The principal then informed the mother that there were two researchers at the school and asked whether or not it was possible for her to come back to school. SD's mother, then, was interviewed at the office of the school counselor. During the interview, the researchers told the mother that they have seen the video in which SD had his tantrum and attacked the objects around, throwing them to the floor and also that they were told by the principal that SD was undergoing treatment, explaining to her the aim of the study explicitly. SD's mother also confirmed her son's condition and the diagnoses, adding also that in addition to having been diagnosed as a gifted boy SD was undergoing treatment for depression and impulse control disorder. SD's use of such antidepressant drugs as Risperdal and Prozac were informed. It was explained that at this stage it was an ethical mandate to get SD's parents' approval, considering the circumstances SD was in. SD's mother metaphorically commented on this matter, saying that 'the Godsend would not show unless you have nowhere to go.' The parent informed us of her consent on this study as well as that she would inform SD that he would be meeting us and that we would do some activities together.

## **Collection and Analysis of Data**

In this study, the semi-structured interview method according to Merriam's (2013, p.87) was employed during meetings with SD's mother and teachers so as to collect data on SD's experience of being twice-exceptional. Accordingly, specific observations on SD were heard and participants were asked about their opinion regarding SD through flexible questions. That is why the data collected through such interviews are limited to those interviews done with the school principal, deputy principal responsible for the Improvement Science Program and SD's own mother.

Researchers in this study have employed the participant-observant technique as per Merriam (2013, p. 118) so as to observe how SD behaved within the group and during one-on-one studies and attended the Development and Science Program, where they have carried out individual activities with him. That is why the window of time to observe SD was limited to 10 classes.

Study documentation is limited to the observation reports by the researchers produced as per the document classification by Merriam (2013, p. 132-141), student's personal papers as shared by the counselor and the visuals drawn by SD himself. Documents obtained throughout the study have been analyzed through content analysis. Indicating his/her use of qualitative material with voluminous content analysis in his/her attempts to reduce and interpret data to determine basic consistencies and meanings, Patton (2014, p. 453) exemplifies the content analysis as utilized in case studies. In this study, inductive analysis methodology was employed. Documents obtained during the study have been studied by both researchers and the data obtained as such have been segregated as per conceptual units, which were coded. (For example, like the student being a perfectionist). These codes were found to emerge in relation with two main categories. These categories are SD's life at school as well as his family life. Linking codes and categories with themes, two main themes emerge: giftedness and being subject to psychological problems.

## **Validity and Credibility**

In the qualitative study, Creswell (2014, p. 250) recommends the researchers to determine agreed strategies so as to prove the accuracy of the study regarding the limits of validity. These are coined as 'validity strategies' and the qualitative study is thought to house diversified validity strategies with diverse patterns.

Emphasizing that validity, in the qualitative study, has a different place, Yıldırım and Şimşek (2016, p. 272, p. 273) draw our attention to the fact that measures which need to be employed in relation with validity would enable other researchers to use such strategies.

Here, there are certain terms which enable a different perspective on validity and credibility concepts through a qualitative lens. Here is how Creswell (as cited in 2014) relays these terms:

"During the testing of the credibility of a study, Lincoln and Gube (1985) have employed such terms as credibility, authenticity, transferability, dependability and confirmability in lieu of those such as internal validation, external validation, reliability and objectivity, which constitute the values of natural scientists" (p. 246).

In this context, the Table below concerning the strategies employed in this study which is parallel to the Table 1 concerning the conceptualization of concepts accepted in qualitative and quantitative studies was prepared by Yıldırım and Şimşek (2016, p. 277).

**Table 1.** Strategies used to ensure validity and credibility in the study

Criterion	Quantitative terminology	Qualitative terminology	Strategies employed in the study
Accurate representation of truth through the outcomes of the research	Internal validity	Credibility	Data collection with an in-depth focus Expert review Peer review Triangulation
Implementation of the outcomes	External validity (generalization)	Transferability	Purposive sampling Detailed description
Ensuring consistency	Internal credibility	Consistency	Member control (confirmation of participants)
Objective impartiality	External credibility (repeatability)	Confirmability	Archiving of sources

The 'triangulation' strategy concerning consistent verification of the themes through use of different data sources (observation, interviews, document reviews) has been employed so as to ensure internal validity of this study. An in-depth definition of the findings obtained to ensure the internal validity of the study has been made and the report has been reviewed by one program development expert and two qualitative studies experts through the lens of 'peer review' and 'expert review' strategies, and feedback has been obtained. Sampling strategy has been employed so as to ensure external validity of the study. Adverse case sampling was studied to for an in-depth description of the twice-exceptionality dilemma. External validity mostly concerns the generalization of the results of a study. Many, and rightfully so, claim that the results of the case study cannot be generalized (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2016, p. 299). In fact, the value of the qualitative study is in specific descriptions and themes developed within the context of a specific place of research. The distinctive feature of a good qualitative study, instead of generalization, is specialization (Creswell, 2014, p. 203-204). Here, results obtained concerning the unique condition of SD can be interpreted in the form of an analytical generalization that disadvantages of twice-exceptional students can be prevented to overshadow their advantage through family-school collaboration.

In addition, 'membership control/participant confirmation' strategy was employed in the study to ensure internal credibility where a provider of information during research was asked to read the report and provide feedback. Documents obtained to ensure external credibility of the study were later archived systematically in a way to facilitate use by other researchers.

## Findings

This study aims to reveal the twice-exceptionality of a student who is at once gifted/talented but who also has psychological issues. Findings as per the questions asked within the framework of this study in line with the overarching goal are as follows:

**What does a gifted/talented student who also has impulse control disorder in addition to the diagnosis of depression experience in the event of being twice-exceptional?**

### Category: School Life

When we went to participate in the Development and Science Program carried out on weekends at Nesibe Aydın Schools, we have encountered gifted/talented students. SD, on the very first day we have spent with him, struck as a student who displayed different qualities than the rest of the group. [Code: Development and Science Program]. As we walked in the classroom and the rest of the class was just looking at us but SD said: 'You come from Hacettepe University, don't you? My father

works there, too.' His mother, when we talked with her, had told us that she would tell SD about us. Then we moved on with the working paper consisting of mind-games. In general, other children who participated in the Development and Science Program were quite gamesome and interested but there were also those who have quit upon seeing the questions they failed to solve. All the while, SD was, in a high voice, saying 'I cannot do it but I will!' When the application was over SD did not want to return his paper and started crying that he would not return his paper unless he solved all the questions. We allowed him to keep his paper under the condition that he did not show it to his friends, and broke off for lunch. During lunch he appeared with his paper in his hand. He told us that he would solve all the questions. Then he returned the paper, telling us that he answered all the question. He seemed relieved. And when we checked the questions we found that all were done correctly.

When we wanted to work with him individually, SD turned us down telling us that he wanted to join his friends to play the games within the program. [Code: He is having difficulties being convinced and during transition]. We managed to have him in the principal's office thanks to his teachers' efforts to convince him. He rejected working with us as soon as he walked in. Then, we sought the assistance of the IT Teacher who was in the corridor. And the IT Teacher was observed to be quite good at establishing communication with SD. SD was observed to comply especially with the instructions of the deputy principal responsible for the Development and Science Program as well as those given by his IT teacher, as he did what he was asked to do. Naturally, and like many gifted children, SD had limited room for acceptance [Code: Limited room for acceptance]. He initially faced us with enthusiasm after his mother gave her the news about us but then he turned reluctant to work with us. His IT teacher told him: "OK. I am waiting for you SD. Finish what you are doing with your teachers and come back to me so that we can work on the Scratch program." Upon hearing this, SD, standing outside the door, steered inside. This was the deputy principal's room and before the table stood two white leather chairs. In between the chairs was a white table. SD seated himself on one of the chairs. It was when we asked him to paint/draw a picture. But he was so excited and told us that he was not able to draw/paint. He said: "My drawing/picture may be not-so-good and maybe you do not like it." We then resumed our efforts to convince him. And he decided to draw/paint. He said: "But I am not going to sit on the chair, I am going to sit on the floor." He then bent over the coffee table and started drawing this picture where he was together with his family.

Then, we talked to his IT teacher about his/her observations about SD, where s/he touched upon the following issues:

*"This week after lunch he was pushing girls around, towards the toilet. Acting with violence against them. He picked up the warning sign on the corridor (Caution! Wet Floor) and threw it on the ground. SD today, was interested in the work that we did. But, it is still problematic to get him to a chair and get him prepared to work."*

The first session comprised of some work aiming to gather information about the child's relations with his family as he was talked through his drawing, which is performed with primary school students to get to know them. When we said "Wow! What a beautiful drawing," he said "Yes, I am talented in painting." In our meeting with SD's mother regarding her son, she had already given us a hint of his talent in painting and drawing [Code: talented in painting and drawing]. So, when SD turns down this activity saying he is no good at it despite he knew otherwise, can be interpreted as a reflection of his perfectionism, which is known to be the case with gifted/talented children. Because SD has not ended the activity without completing all of the questions on the mind-games paper and cried until he answered all of the questions. Then it was seen that he had answered all questions correctly although these were questions that were prepared under three groups with varying levels of difficulty [Code: Perfectionism].

Then we had another session whereby we wanted to learn more about his life at school by asking him to draw for us his school, teacher and schoolmates. Furthermore, we explained him that we would be penning down this creative piece for which we required him to select a child who would be

the hero of our prospective story. He was free to pick a name, age and gender for this hero. He chose, in parallel to himself, another 9-years-old child by the name 'Sarpaç Yaylıköy.' And when we asked him to describe this protagonist SD described him as a nice, determined boy. In the story that he told and we put on paper he always emphasized the importance of staying calm. Moreover, he told us that his hero's favorite class was drama and that the drama teacher in the story was also a calm person. As this work with SD was in progress, we were also accompanied by his teacher from the Development and Science Program and at the same time the respective deputy principal. Then, as we interviewed him he touched upon two issues as SD authored in his own story. He said SD was always warned at school, to be calm and still had problems with his drama teacher. "But the drama teacher is exactly like the opposite of how SD portrays him/her to be. Keeping calm is what he is always dictated to do." [Code: He has problems at drama class.]

### SD's Story

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*Sarpaç draws and paints during the breaks and studies during class. He is a nice, determined child. He likes to share but cannot sit still and remain calm for it is boring and he just cannot do it. He gets nervous. Starts running around. He likes to walk around at school. He loves the drama class. One day, he wants to go to the convenience store which beyond the security point. He also invites his friends Eren and Asli to join him. Then, they have to act unnoticed at school, and they go past many challenges. Then, they get to the security checkpoint where they encounter some cops. This when things start to get tricky. Then they hide behind a bush and unnoticed by the police they go to the store. This is how Sarpaç acknowledges the importance of keeping calm. And he lingers in calmness after. There are things Sarpaç gets angry at. That is in the high-school section of the school campus. And high-schoolers treat children badly. Those among them, who wanted to go to the canteen that they, have chased Sarpaç. Then Sarpaç got angry and started chasing them back. Yaren Atokul. That is his drama teacher. This teacher is happy and s/he is always calm. Sarpaç. He is a calm boy and his teachers always praise him for that.*

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The school counselor during the interview has told that s/he had to attend the drama class because of 'issues' and that s/he had to intervene and share his/her observations:

*"He loves drama very much. He wishes to assign roles within the group. And the entire group is so tolerant towards him. He would have been cast out if it were another class. He has had certain problems in the drama class. I joined the class, too. Then, when it was SD's turn, he said 'It is too late for me.' Then hell broke loose! And when his friends gave up the activity he wanted, he said: 'No, do not go. No, you cannot leave.' Then he decided on his friends' roles. "Kardelen, now you play this character!" But Kardelen says she wants to be the student. SD agreed at first then he went crazy.*

His teacher at the Development and Science Program and the deputy principal have said, on the same issue, that:

*"He is creative but he and his drama teacher cannot just come to terms with one another. SD loves this class but he cannot just get on with his group and that is why they came to my room. When he makes an obsession out of it then he cannot just drop it. He gets so mad as to throw a mobile to his teacher. He failed to establish communication with his drama teacher. But SD is not a tough child to get on well with, unless you find a way to understand him. SD stops when I tell him to stop. He saw me*

*on the street, and he was like a normal kid walking around. SD is lucky that his friends tolerate him. Maybe it was his teachers behind it."*

In the other session where we observed SD, he was again unwilling to work. He was holding this box of fruit juice. He said he was trying to make a phone of it. "You choose another one after me. I do not think that is fair," he said and indicated his unwillingness to participate. He often said he wanted other children to be included in this 1-on1 work individually because it was not fair otherwise.

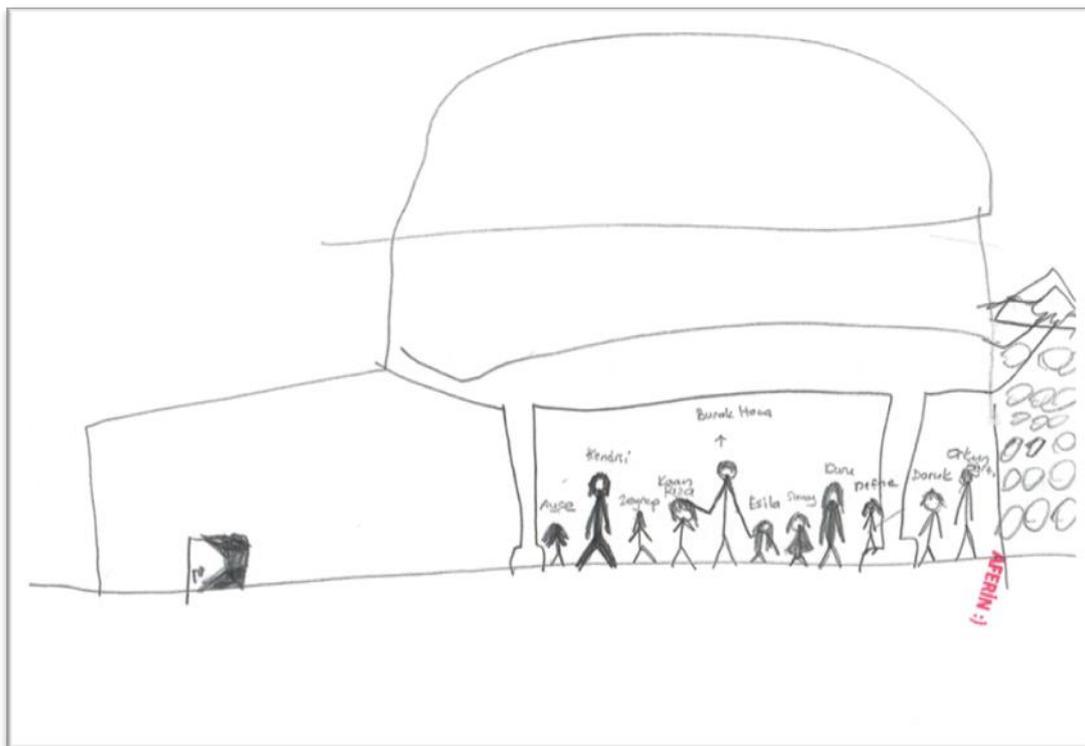


Diagram 1. SD's drawing of his teacher and friends

Looking at SD drawing/painting of his life at school, he places himself inside the school and together with his friends, which is interpreted as he his life at school is quite positive. He has drawn his class teacher amidst and hand in hand with children. This can also be interpreted as that the teacher has good relations with both SD and the rest. SD has drawn himself bigger than other children. [Code: He considers himself to be superior than his friends.] His emphasize in drawing himself in bolder colors than his mates can be interpreted s that he considers himself more in the front. Similarly, he can said to be considering himself to be superior than his friends. One thing that attracts one's attention is that SD always uses a single color and draws with a pencil. The deputy principal has informed that this was the case with all of his drawings and that SD did not like to painting with color. Looking at his activity papers during the guidance class the school counselor exemplifies his perception of the school as follows: "My school is the best place for me because I cannot find these things elsewhere." According to the school counselor this is a parent speaking, which reveals the fact that SD's parents have told him that they would send him to another school if he did not act accordingly and so much so that they even took him to a village school and told him that would be the new school. "I want the school to be calm and I want to change things. I am only angry at a couple of people." This expression also reveals the elevated level of SD's awareness according to his teacher who also interprets this expression as he really wants to overcome his anger management problem.

### **Category: Family Relations**

SD was interviewed about his drawings and his family as he drew. The first thing that attracted our attention was his unique, personalized interpretation of things and characters. His style was so detailed and he erased and re-drawn over and over again, saying that the fences of the animal shelters were not good enough and he drew them over and over again, working on the details.



Diagram 2. SD's family picture

In the picture is a tree-house just next to the house they live. He says there is a passage from their home to this house. There are cats and dogs that share their home with them. He has drawn his mother outside the house and hand in hand with his little sister. His sister is seen trying to reach out to her mother. He said: "Let me draw a box underneath her feet so that she can stand well." Saying that he has two older brothers, he has drawn one of them on his way to the tree-house and placed himself on the shoulders of his other older brother. He said: "My brother always takes me upon his shoulders." Then it was decided that the work would be reviewed with the school counselor after the work was complete. Because, in the meeting with his mother she had previously told that SD only had one younger sibling. The true meaning of the home that SD has drawn by applying his imagination vastly, the tree-house and the identities of the two older brothers in his picture were revealed in the meeting with the school counselor. The school counselor has opened up a file comprising of documents related to SD and s/he quoted from SD: "I dream when I am bored. I want everyone to know me." SD's imagination is extremely vague regarding the dreamy home-life he depicts in his drawing but he was charged with this. Burdened. Someone has supported him in coming up with such a story. He alludes to older brothers, who he does not have. He told me about them, too. I talked to his mother. She told me he had cousins but also that the extraordinary characters SD put in his family-drawing were all products of his imagination. [Code: Daydreamer]

We talked to SD that he had to finish drawing but he continued etching out minute details and said: "I am not finished yet." As he continued drawing, he said he missed his old puppy so much. He also told about his older brother and how he likes (older brother) to play with Legos. We asked him what the most important rule at home was. "Never touch the rifle!" he said, indicating that his father

had a rifle. We asked him about his parents' personal traits that he liked the most and the least. He said, the best thing about his father was that he has funny and that his father's least favorite personal trait was his anger... He loved it when his mother caressed his hair. His mother's least favorite trait was the same as his father's. The best thing he liked about his little sister was that she was small and younger. She has no traits that SD dislikes. His two big brothers have no personal traits that push SD away. Also, the best things about them are that they are sharing. They share their Legos with him. Then there was a knock on the door and they told us that it was SD's parents who were asking for him. This is how we ended the individual working session.

In the meeting we had with the school counselor we asked about SD's family's attitude towards this issue.

*"It is important to have the family's backing," we were told. "Whenever there was any negative behaviors we have notified the family. Sometimes every day. He had a girlfriend who was like him. We attempted to break them. We found that his angry reactions were acquired. He does not prefer his mother's actions at home. He takes three drugs each day, routinely. The number of his fits are limited since the beginning of the year. He is not an unhappy, outcast child. It is now possible to establish eye contact with him, which was not the case the year before. His mother and father have been working very hard until lately. Establishing routines and making believe that he is a part of that cycle is important. Otherwise, when there is anything lacking clarity, this sways him. And this is what we call a behavioral disorder. When we asked him 'Who do you play with the most at home?' he said my sister, mom and dad. When computer games were out of the picture, the family brought in a lot of support. In the games he plays, there is an insatiable, unsatisfiable side to him. His choice of peers has enriched. What he wants to do the most is to play games. His opinion of himself from a peer's perspective is that he is quarrelsome. According to him, he is 'the one and only' for his mother and 'the angel' of his father. We know his relations with his family are good. He has an awareness of this situation. Family's approach is supportive towards SD. This is about the family being consistent. [Category: Family / Code: Supportive / Code: Consistent]*

**Do psychological issues experienced by a gifted/talented student who has been co-diagnosed with impulse control disorder in addition to the diagnosis of depression overshadow the gift/talent of him/her?**

In one of the sessions with SD he was given some working papers as a part of the enrichment program. Then, the famous story of gravity, with Newton and the apple was read out loud to him. Then, SD was observed to look about and busy himself with things on the desk. Then he was asked to tell back what he heard. SD told it exactly the way he listened to it. Although, in terms of his attitudes as he listened, SD was observed to lack focus but actually he was registering the text in his mind. The meeting with the deputy principal also revealed that it was no different in classes under the Development and Science Program. All the while, SD was walking about the room, giving the impression that he would quit anytime [Code: Problematic focus]. The paper given to SD included mass and weight issues. SD was interested. He was observed to have a certain mastery of space-related basics. [His academic achievements are fine]. When we asked him how he knew all that, he said he took a certain class at the Development and Science Program [Code: Development and Science Program]. Then he began to draw the planets of the Solar System. He was also talking about the features of the planets and giving percentages about the gravitational forces of these celestial bodies.

*"Neptune has more gravity than Earth," he was saying. "That is, when I drop this pencil it falls at the speed of light. Neptune, in fact, is not a ball of gas but a planet. Not some place like Jupiter where it is impossible to set foot on."*

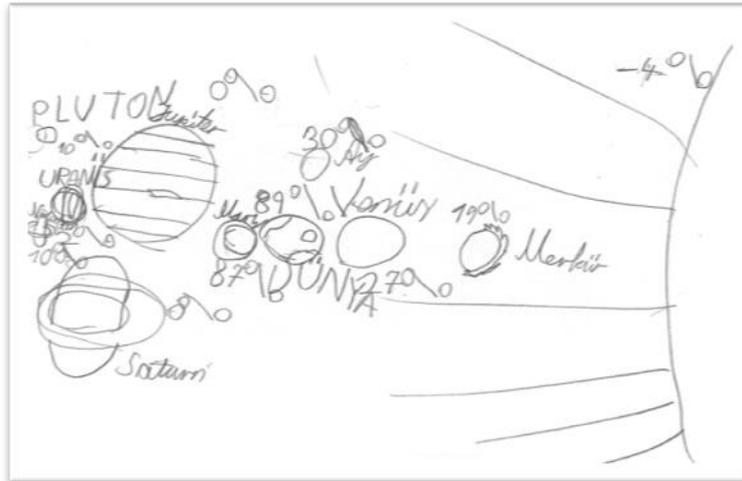


Diagram 3. SD's drawing of the planets

Deputy principal's impressions about SD are as follows:

*"He used to come to the Development and Science Program. Everybody has heard about him around the primary school. For me, he has been coming to my classes for ten weeks now, and without a single problem. Most of the time he has a pencil and some paper before him. He draws. This week I told them about scorpions. He listened without drawing."*

The school counselor has also touched upon his drawing behavior.

*"I have an observation in class. He used to draw around the subject-matter of violence. His relations with the rest of the group were so limited. He barely participated in the class. He now resorts to drawing less."*

Deputy principal's observations about SD continue as follows:

*"His attitude is mostly monotonous. With some paper and a pencil, he always busies himself. Sometimes daydreams. When I tell him about ants he talks about this giant ant, as if it exists. Sometimes he is in his own imagination [Code: Imaginative]. He is interested and he abides by his own rules. You can never establish eye contact with him [Code: Not establishing eye contact]. He is so imaginative and builds things up in his mind and makes himself believe in his own construct. And he is done, completely, as soon as he is fixated with something. He has issues with focusing [Code: Problematic focus]. For example, we are watching some video in the classroom and he is whining about it and says: "Why watch all this if we can have the real one?" He gets fixated with anything. It all starts with whining and evolves into frustration and anger if that thing does not turn out as he wishes. He is calmer this year for he has taken up some medication. I believe that these features get the better of him, his gift."*

School counselor's observations regarding SD's medications and anger fits are as follows:

*"My first and foremost observation about him is that he is self-centered. That has always been the root cause of problems so far. You see that there are two different versions of SD. His focus on his areas of interest is good but on the flipside there are problems and issues and not wanting to do things. Let us assume that a crate of tangerines are brought to class. Everybody gets one and he asks for a second one. And*

*he starts insisting if he does not get that extra one. He starts having nervous breakdowns. Getting that piece of food is vital for him. And in any activity he always wants to talk first. There was this period when he used my office. Then he insisted so much to continue using my office. That insistence is so thick. Then, physical reactions. He starts vandalizing. The mood-swings and reactions can be abrupt. For example, when his ball rolls away to some place he did not intend he comes all the way here from the garden, breaking up and smashing things all along the way. He has his own convictions about himself. He wanted to help his friends but his one of his friends did not want any help. "But," he said, "I am cleverer, that is because." [Code: Considers himself to be superior to his friends]. I believe the problem with convincing and transition arises from his impulsiveness and other issues regarding focus. [Problematic focus]. In general, he does not establish eye contact [Code: Not establishing eye contact] and whines about almost anything. But, for example, very recently we went to Anitkabir (Atatürk's Mausoleum). He followed all instructions. And no anger fits for the last month. He is taking medication [Code: Anger management and the effect of drugs].*

SD participated in mind-games on that day. He completed a puzzle, which required remembering certain numbers, which were shown at intervals of certain seconds. He was happy upon his good achievements. He won prize chocolates for that. Then he said he wanted to watch his friends. While other individual games continued, SD was sitting with us among grouped desks, drawing. He painted the picture below, he named the 'Dragon Tower.'



Diagram 4. The Dragon Tower

He was observed as he drew, to be calm and focused. But after a short while he rose his head in a burst of anger. And started yelling: "My time! My time lost in vain!" We reminded him that he wanted to draw pictures but SD started shouting inside the classroom and threw those prize chocolates at us [Code: Conviction and transition issues]. At that moment we brought in a teacher from the Development and Science Program and told him/her what happened. SD was having a fit, crying and sitting on the floor. They took him to another room to calm him down. This fit emerged during our work.

SD's behavior during group classes verifies those of the school counselor. That day they played the mind-game 'Sleeping Beauty' with his class at the Development and Science Program. In the game, SD drew prince's cards to wake princesses up but he did not enjoy the game at all and he kept on complaining to me: "Why not the knight, why can I not draw the dragon card?" SD was winning in the game but he also wanted to draw the cards he wanted, otherwise he complained. Then, other children told him he was doing great and that it seemed that he would win [Code: Peer-tolerated communication]. At different rounds of the game he wanted to deal the cards. His friends were so tolerant although he was so selfish. His behavior in general was calm but always inclined towards doing what he wanted. When he could not achieve what he wanted, he immediately complained and whined.

The school counselor exemplifies SD's twice-exceptionality:

*"His academic achievement was excellent. [Code: Excellent academic success]. He is doing great in math. His visual motor-skills not so great. This paper for example, is not fit for third grade (Diagram 5). [Code: Weak visual motor-skills]."*

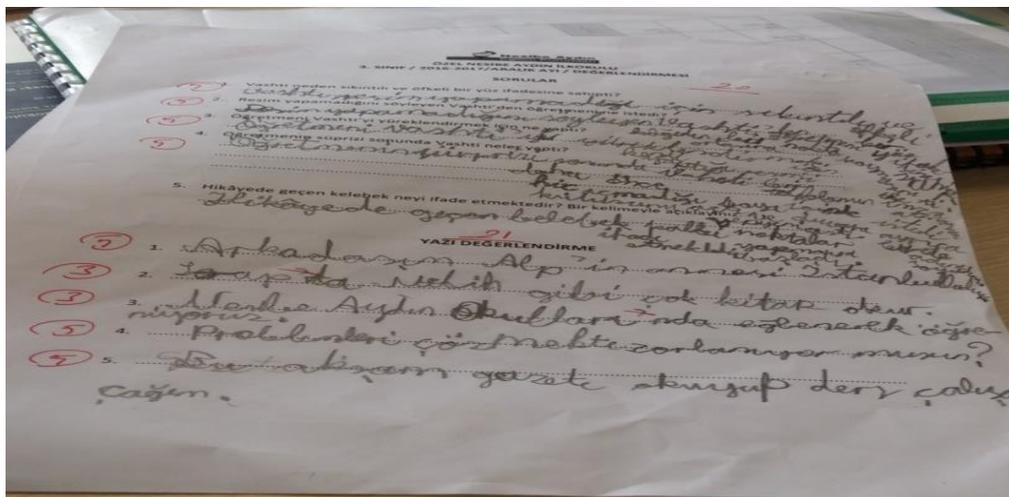


Diagram 5. SD's working paper

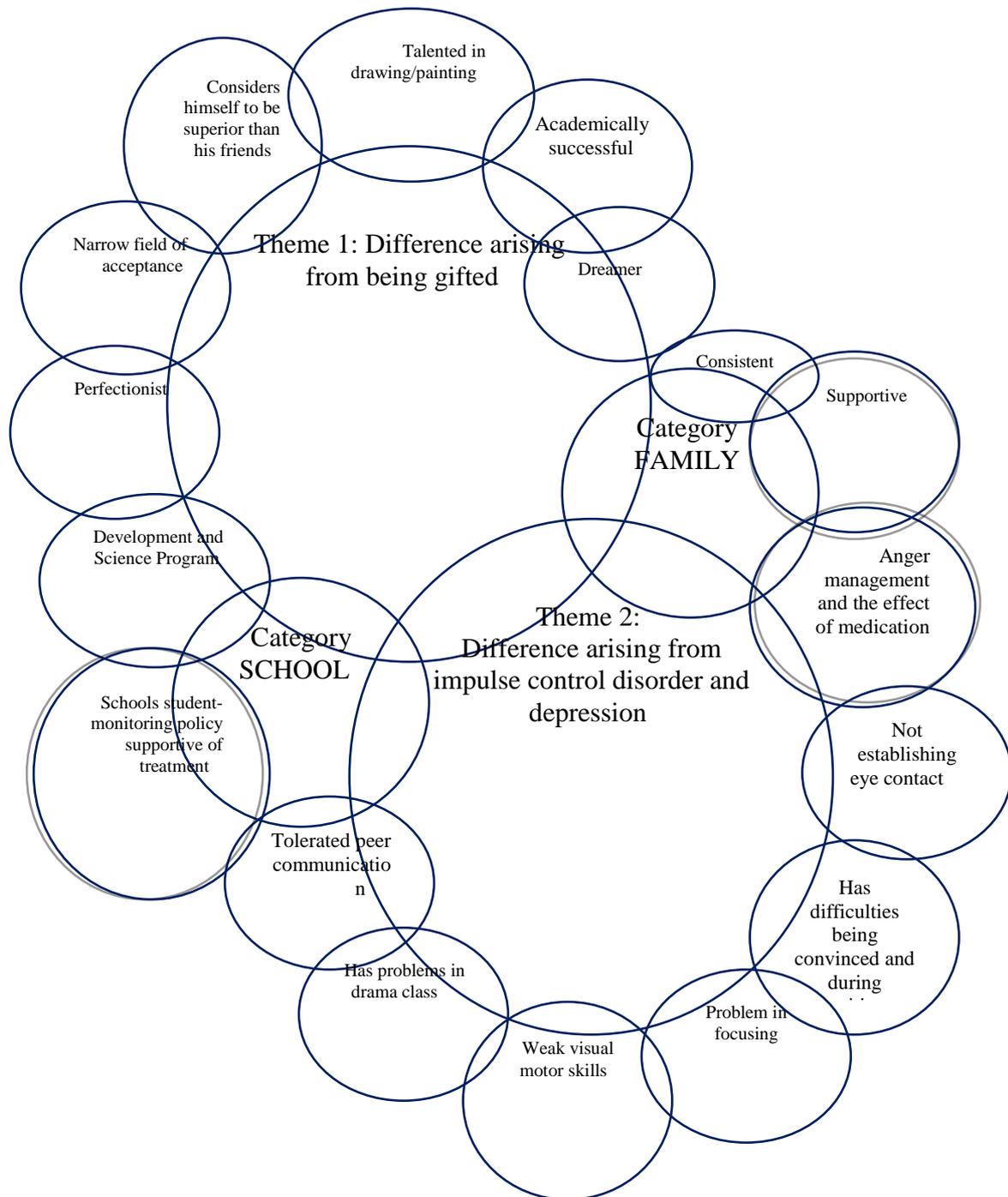
*"I think until the last three weeks his impulsivity overshadowed his giftedness. He is back to normal in the last month. It was difficult to manipulate him. His behavior changed for the doses were reset [Code: Anger management and the effect of medication]. He is doing better academically, he is aware of himself. We called the family in and shared with them whatever we had at hand. He cannot pull off anger management which is solved thanks to medications. In those times he is going through a turmoil and we are seeking ways to solve the crisis. And when he is back to normal, we try our best to gain from such times. We can now make discoveries about him through our observations. Before, we used to focus solely on whether SD was angry or not. [Code: School policy to monitor the child is supportive of treatment]."*

*He wrote, on the paper he was given during counseling and guidance activities, "My teacher, she is nice." According to his teacher he is saying that he is successful. He told his mother that he wanted to "change this SD." The way he is perceived in his peer group is changing. He can also have his own perception and labeling of himself. In the activity, which took place in November he said that he was a 'warrior.' In his working paper in December he wrote: "I am calm, peaceful and happy." This is reflection, here. This what this child aspires to be. "Sometimes my friends escape from me. I cannot hold my calmness." He is aware that his friends are drawn away from him because he hits*

*them. Other children tolerate him very much, when he reacts violently." [Code: Peer-tolerated communication].*

### Conclusion and Argument

As a result of the analysis of the twice-exceptionality dilemma of SD, who is the unit of analysis of this study, definition of SD's life at school and life at home mainly categorized under two headings. Many of SD's characteristic traits in connection with such themes as his giftedness and impulse control disorder are presented systematically in the Overlapping Domains, below:



**Figure 1.** Characteristics of SD's twice exceptionality

### Overlapping Domains (Miles and Huberman, 2015, p. 248)

Overlapping domains can be interpreted as follows: SD has been diagnosed with a gift, who has enrolled in a weekend education and training program (Development and Science Program) for such children and he is academically successful. He is talented in painting/drawing; socially, with limited room for acceptance and significant perfectionism. SD's awareness regarding being clever is very elevated. During the interview with the school counselor he was reported to tell one of his friends that he was cleverer. SD is seen to aggrandize himself in his painting of the school. These findings can be interpreted as that there is this side of SD, which sees himself superior to others in relation to being gifted. Imagination and daydreaming are other outstanding characteristics of SD. Interviews conducted with his teachers and the thoughts he purports in his drawings about his family life as well as on other issues makes one think that this child has a fully-fledged imagination.

Kauder (2009), in his PhD dissertation, where s/he examines self-perception methodologies of twice-exceptional children has found significant differences in self-respect and perception of the self of gifted and twice-exceptional children. As data from the study suggest that such perception is neither age nor gender-bound, the feeling of insufficiency in twice-exceptional students were found to be more visible. SD's perception of the self is highly elevated and he does not feel incapable in the class environment, which can be asserted as one different finding of this study.

SD experiences significant problems in his schooling as he is diagnosed with depression and co-diagnosed with impulse control disorder. These problematic behaviors have been found as a result of the interviews conducted with his teachers as well as through class observations during the Development and Science Program. SD does not establish eye contact and imposes his own will during interpersonal communication. For this reason, he experiences problems during any activity as regards convincing and transition. Teachers are patiently trying to iron out such traits, an approach which is pursued also by other children as they look up to the teachers. SD has encountered focusing problems in class and returned erroneous working papers due to his weak visual motor skills. One problem SD is well aware and tries to get rid of is the drama class and the disagreement that marks his relations with the drama teacher.

Gulett in his/her PhD dissertation concerning the teaching of social skills to twice-exceptional children (2008), draws our attention to children's neglect of their teachers' teaching of social skills. In his/her study, Gulett (2008) has worked simultaneously with five gifted students (boys) who had emotional and behavioral disorders. In the study, which is conducted within a qualitative study pattern, students have been taught drama activities (role-play behavior) and some social skills and observed in classroom activities conducted with and without school counselors. Outcomes of the study have demonstrated that twice-exceptional students can acquire social skills and utilize such skills through generalization. This study reveals lack of social skills as the root cause of SD's problems at the drama class. When the drama class, where group communication is most condensed, turns into a problem this can be so construed as to result from SD's own incapability regarding interpersonal skills.

As a result of the study, SD's such disadvantaged behaviors were seen to recede almost to none during the interview with his teacher, the school consultant. This is an affirmative outcome of the interaction of the two main categories (i.e. the school and the parents) with the unit of analysis. It is possible to eradicate SD's anger fits through the family's consistent and supportive attitude, treatment of the child as well as good adjustment of the doses. Then, although under the school category SD's teachers have warned that his disadvantaged features have overshadowed his giftedness, the student was still accepted to a program (Development and Science Program) for gifted children. Through student supervision policies, treatment-supporting intervention methodologies and teachers' professional attitudes accompanied by peer support, the school has provided for SD an environment where he is socially supported. Considering that a drug-only treatment would not succeed family and school support are seen to have stopped impulse control disorder symptoms which accompanied by SD's diagnosis of depression, inhibited his gift.

In his/her phenomenology study entitled 'Teachers' Experience with Twice Exceptional Children' Roberson (2016) informs that, teachers, through normal education have certain problems for lack of education tailored for special students as well as a result of unrealistic expectations and the traditional belief that gifted students would not have any problems. In the study, seven teachers were interviewed for their experiences with twice exceptional students. Study outcomes suggest that the participants have only very limited knowledge of the phenomenon of twice exceptionality, that they lack self-confidence on this matter and that students have to be given assistance and preliminary learning opportunities in the classroom. Again, the outcomes of the study also under strike the importance of good communication with the family, understanding the shortcomings of the child, of ensuring for the child a socio-emotional environment at once understanding and enabling as well as the importance of communication and organization. For this reason, Roberson's findings (2016) are supportive of the findings of the study.

Walker, in his/her study indicates the difficulty of identifying gifted children with emotional issues (2000), and accordingly it has been revealed in the interviews with such students that teachers' failure to identify these students constituted a significant problem. Twice exceptional children who claim to be labeled as a result of their problematic behaviors in class, signaled in the direction of their need to be accepted by their peers and their teachers. In his/her PhD dissertation where s/he carries out a content analysis of training programs proposed for twice exceptional children, Bole (2006) touches upon the need to improve teachers' pedagogical skills on relevant matters as well as the fact that teachers, as such, fail to recognize such students' advantages as they focus extensively on their disadvantages. Another important issue the study considers important is ensuring legal protection for twice exceptional children so as to provide them with much needed, suitable education environments. Trail (2008) explained that cognitive skills in children could vary in certain areas, between both end of the scale, as do their metacognition and styles of creativity and thinking. S/he signals the requirement that these students need to learn mechanisms to cope with academic challenges, which have to be tailored to satisfy their individual needs and the need for work involving flexible teachers and empowering family support so as to ensure integration with the society. The criticality of the introvert mindset of twice exceptional students and within this scope, the importance of personal acceptance zone, perception of the self, offering realistic expectations and ensuring their self-realization are emphasized. With such peculiarities, twice exceptional students have to be equipped with skills required and supported to succeed. In the manual s/he has prepared Lam (2014) provides teachers with a content which promotes special traits of twice exceptional students. In this manual where twice-exceptionality has been elaborated, strong sides of twice exceptional students, challenges that they face and the low level of self-respect in them are also explained. It is noteworthy, especially, when s/he handles such students' nervous fits. The manual explains multi-modal teaching strategies to be employed while working with these students as well as provides guidance on how to communicate with families.

As a conclusion, recommendation is to design a social skills program for SD on the basis of these findings, to examine individually-unique cases of other twice exceptional students through case studies, design comprehensive studies and research regarding twice exceptional students, develop enrichment and differentiation programs for twice exceptional students, improving these students' social skills, prepare materials and seminars to inform teachers regarding twice exceptionality as a concept and to carry out the work needed to set up teams to work with this type of students at schools.

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