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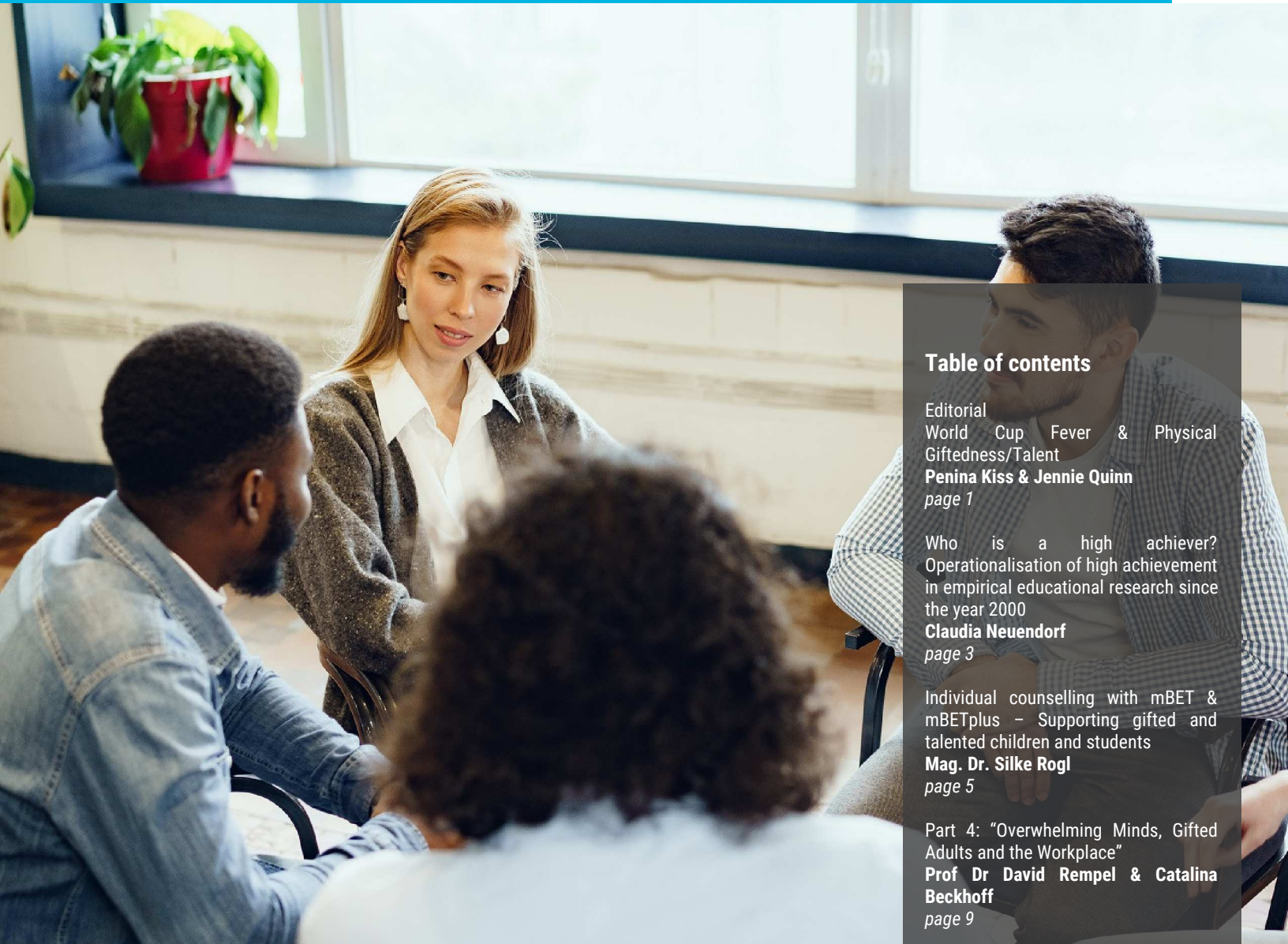


Table of contents

Editorial
World Cup Fever & Physical
Giftedness/Talent
Penina Kiss & Jennie Quinn
page 1

Who is a high achiever?
Operationalisation of high achievement
in empirical educational research since
the year 2000
Claudia Neuendorf
page 3

Individual counselling with mBET &
mBETplus – Supporting gifted and
talented children and students
Mag. Dr. Silke Rogl
page 5

Part 4: "Overwhelming Minds, Gifted
Adults and the Workplace"
**Prof Dr David Rempel & Catalina
Beckhoff**
page 9

Call for Articles
page 12

Call for Advertising Conferences
page 13



Editorial – December Edition WTW Newsletter World Cup Fever & Physical Giftedness/Talent

Penina Kiss & Jennie Quinn

Welcome to the latest edition of the WTW newsletter, which opens with World Cup fever!

As Jennie and I watched Australia fight gallantly in their first game of the competition against the French champions of 2018, we pondered on the stream of sporting talent we have around the world. Physical giftedness and talent appear to be the most widely accepted domain around the world when it comes to high-profile competitive sports. Australia is known as a sporting nation, delving into both the summer and winter codes in local and international arenas. We love to support the 'underdog' in our local stadiums while at the same time, we thrive with other top-ranking countries when it comes to cricket, swimming and rugby union, just to name a few. 'Soccer', as we like to call it, might not be one of our greatest strengths on the world stage but we hold our own, as we did against Tunisia and Denmark, making the Round of 16 for the second time since 2006. Though Argentina ended Australia's dream of a World Cup win, we're incredibly proud of our Socceroos. Closer to home, we support our local soccer teams, and root for them religiously each season, as fervently as we do for our Australian Football League (AFL) teams. For better or worse, we love our sport!

There was a time, however, when Australia performed poorly in the 1988 Seoul Olympics. The embarrassed federal government immediately introduced the Going for Gold initiative, where millions of dollars were poured into the hiring of elite coaches and the purchasing of state-of-the-art resources and facilities to improve our performance in future Olympic events. It was not surprising then, that when the time came to action the Senate Committee's report recommendations in gifted and talented education in 1989, the government's short-sighted response was that they had already addressed the issue via the Going for Gold project (Gross, 1999). While elite sports athletes are applauded and funded here, the academically gifted have traditionally been protested against under the guise of elitism and the desire for egalitarianism (Gross, 1999; Ronksley-Pavia, et al, 2019). Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE) is driven by educational curriculum outcomes, which lean towards an academic focus. Instead, teachers tend to find it more palatable to identify gifts and talents in student athletes who demonstrate elite performance in competitive sport. Identifying intellectually gifted and talented students within the aligned curriculum seems to carry less weight. (Jung, 2022).

While this thinking has, unfortunately, been mirrored in many of our schools over many decades, there has been a positive shift in the awareness of diverse gifted education practices across the country, especially in the field of twice-exceptionality, (Walsh & Jolly, 2018). Recent studies around physical giftedness and talent have explored specific aspects around the elite performance of paralympic athletes (Spathis, et al, 2015; Horgarth, et al, 2021), which is quite inspirational. Further studies have been recommended in the physical domain by Jung (2022), one of which suggests further collaboration between scholars in both sport science and gifted education/talent development to share in the future 'development of exceptional ability and achievement', (Jung, 2022). Perhaps we will find even more gifted and talented athletes beyond what we currently know in the physical domain. Maybe they will be the ones who will help Australia win our first World Cup! Until then, we will dream.

This edition shares the expertise of three gifted specialists. Claudia Neuendorf discusses the operationalisation of high achievement in empirical educational research since 2000. Dr Silke Rogl outlines how the mBET and the mBET-plus helps to support gifted and talented children and adolescents. Finally, Dr David Rempel and Catalina Beckhoff share the last instalment of their enthralling series on adult giftedness.

As we draw 2022 to a close, the WTW team would like to sincerely thank all the incredibly talented authors who have contributed to this year's outstanding body of work in the field of high potential, giftedness, and talent development. You've shared research and perspectives that have influenced and shaped the way we empower this unique population of individuals, and for that, we are thankful. We would also like to extend our gratitude to the audience of avid WTW readers for whom this publication is designed.

Wishing you all a very happy holiday and a joyous Christmas season wherever you are in the world. See you in the new year!

Penina & Jennie

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Who is a high achiever? Operationalisation of high achievement in empirical educational research since the year 2000

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In recent years, high-achieving students have received increased attention from researchers, policymakers and practitioners. Their efforts to foster achievement excellence among students have to be accompanied by achievement assessments. Specifically, to evaluate the success of policy implementation and the effectiveness of educational programs, it is mandatory to have established a clear conception of what is meant when high achievement is targeted as an outcome. However, the question of what exactly constitutes high academic achievement is not yet agreed upon by the research community. To answer that question, we have conducted a systematic review of how researchers studying high-achieving students since 2000 have operationalized high academic achievement in their research. In this article, we summarize the findings which were recently published elsewhere (Neuendorf, Jansen, Kuhl & Vock, 2022).

Traditional research on students showing high achievement has focused mainly on issues of giftedness. In giftedness research, various theoretical models have been established over time. Still, conventionally, giftedness is defined by achieving at least two standard deviations above the population mean in a test of general cognitive abilities. However, shifting the focus from potential to performance, no shared guidelines for evaluating performance exist so far. While often, high academic performance has been conceptualized as domain-general (and operationalized, for example, by GPA), modern talent development models focus more specifically on different achievement domains (for example, the Talent Development in Achievement Domains Framework: Preckel et al., 2020). Also, other ideas of what constitutes high achievement in the form of a threshold are rarely explicated. An exception is Gagné's Differentiated Model of Giftedness and Talent (DMGT 2.0; Gagné, 2012): it explicitly designates 10 % of students in each talent domain as talented. However, only a small proportion of research on high-achieving students relies on this specific model. Thus, we endeavoured to create an overview of operationalizations used in empirical research on academically high-achieving students and try to identify common understandings of the use of the term.

Research Questions

We focused on the following two research questions: 1) Which indicators are used for operationalizing high achievement? In particular, we expected that high achievers would be identified mainly by grades or achievement tests. Here, single indicators or achievement indices made up of different aspects could have been used. Further related is the question of whether subject-specific or subject-general indicators are employed. Large-scale assessments typically find that only a small proportion of students are top achievers in each subject domain (Neuendorf, Kuhl & Jansen, 2017; Zimmer, Brunner, Lüdtke, Prenzel & Baumert, 2007), thus speaking for a differentiated perspective. 2) We

asked which cut-off values are used, i.e., which proportion of the population is typically viewed as belonging to the group of high achieving students?

Method

We conducted a systematic review, following Gough's (2007) guidelines. We only included studies published in scientific journals between 2000 and 2020. The samples had to have included students in primary or secondary education, and researchers must have provided an operationalization of a high-achieving group. We excluded studies focusing on giftedness and talents in arts or sport but instead concentrated on academic achievement. The systematic database search in German and international databases in psychology and education yielded more than 300 articles, 55 of which focused on high-achieving students and operationalized that group and were finally included in the analysis. The studies covered different countries (49% North America, 29% Europe, 13% Asia, 9% others/multinational) and different age groups (20% primary education, 39% lower secondary education, 22% upper secondary education, 20% cross-cutting). The sample sizes of the included studies varied between 9 and 500,000 students, and researchers used a variety of research approaches.

Results

The present study observed diversity in the operationalization of performance. The most commonly used performance indicators were grades (34 %) and test scores (46 %), with cross-domain and subject-specific definitions both being common (see Fig. 1 and Table 1). Some of the studies' cut-off values were difficult to compare: Grading systems, for example, differ between countries and school types, achievement tests were often lacking a population norm, and studies using enrolment in special schools as an indicator of high achievement can hardly provide comparable estimates of achievement necessary for enrolment. However, in instances where a population norm could be derived, the median proportion of high achievers was 10 percent.

Table 1

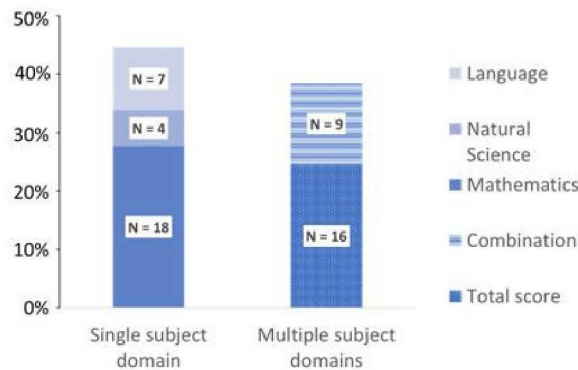
Indicators Used for Operationalizing High Achievement

Indicator	Frequency	Percentage
Test	30	46 %
Grades	22	34 %
School/course enrolment	21	32 %
Subjective evaluations	2	3 %
Others	2	3 %
Combination of multiple indicators	8	12 %

Note. $N = 66$

Figure 1

Subject-specificity of Definitions of High Achievers



Note. 11 studies did not provide this information. *Total score* subsumes studies that used a computed or pre-existing (e. g. GPA) average score. A *combination* score was used by studies that combined achievement in multiple subject domains differently, such as factor scores, latent profile analyses, and/or- criteria.

Conclusion

Studies on high achievement cover a large range of topics and use different research approaches. Therefore, we can also observe a variety of methods to identify the group of high-achieving students. However, this diversity in operationalizations comes with the disadvantage that the same label is used for designating different groups. As a consequence, results are often not comparable between different studies. We, therefore, recommend that researchers are careful when choosing their measurement instruments, describing their target sample and interpreting results so that the possible generalizability of findings is made very transparent and researchers and practitioners can compare results and estimate the relevance of findings for their purposes.

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Individual counselling with *mBET* & *mBETplus* – Supporting gifted and talented children and students

Mag. Dr. Silke Rogl

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Abstract

Two programmes for counselling and supporting gifted and talented children and students have been developed by the Austrian Research and Support Centre for the Gifted and Talented at the Salzburg University of Education:

The multidimensional Instrument for Talent Development *mBET* (Stahl, Rogl & Schmid, 2016) addresses pupils aged 7 to 12 years. The *mBET* combines pedagogical diagnostics with a solution-focused conversation. It is a semi-formal diagnostic instrument including multiple perspectives of teacher, parents, and pupil. In terms of a holistic and systemic concept of talent, the *mBET*-observation instrument covers different areas, which are decisive for the development. The *mBET* also contains a *profile sheet* for summarising the various observations of the three perspectives (teacher, parents, and pupil) and a *support sheet* for preparing and documenting the teacher-parent-pupil conversations. As part of the solution-focused conversation the teacher develops an individually adapted support plan (cooperatively designed with pupil and parents based on the specific strengths of the pupil).

For students aged 12 to 19 years, the Austrian Research and Support Centre for the Gifted and Talented offers *mBETplus* (Stahl, Rogl & Bögl, 2019), a solution-focused coaching programme that specifically addresses requirements for developing one's *personalised niche*, encouraging talent and the development of excellence using relevant meta-competencies (Olszewski-Kubilius, Su-botnik & Worrell, 2015; Subotnik, Olszewski-Kubilius & Worrell, 2011).

Article

Individual counselling with *mBET* & *mBETplus* – Supporting gifted and talented children and students

The Austrian Research and Support Centre for the Gifted and Talented *ÖZBF* has developed two programmes for the individual counselling and support of gifted and talented children and students, *mBET* and *mBETplus* (Stahl, Rogl & Schmid, 2016; Stahl, Rogl & Bögl, 2019). The following article outlines the concept and practice in counselling the gifted - how to support gifted individuals on the basis of a dynamic multidimensional and systemic understanding of giftedness.

The phenomenon 'giftedness' explains interindividual differences in learning and performance. (...) The construct 'giftedness' encompasses

disposition, potential, learning abilities, learning processes, performance, environment, expertise, and excellence. The optimal interaction of person and environment enables excellent and extraordinary performance. (Rogl & Stahl, 2019, p. 14)

This definition in the *Austrian Strategic Whitepaper* refers to the concepts of Ericsson, Krampe and Tesch-Römer (1993), Gagné (2005), Heller, Perleth and Lim (2005), iPEGE (2009), Subotnik, Olszewski-Kubilius and Worrell (2011), Ziegler (2005; 2012) etc. A system consisting of person and environment determines the dynamic, lifelong learning-process of every child and student in his/her formal, informal, and non-formal educational institutions or learning sites. These locations have to become adequate opportunities to develop their talent. *mBET* and *mBETplus* offer a possibility to design learning opportunities in an individualised way, as they conceptually ask for the student's (personal) goals and are oriented towards the needs of the child/student.



Figure 1. The *mBET* observation instrument for teachers (blue), parents (green) and pupils (orange) combines three perspectives

1. mBET – Instrument for multidimensional Talent Development

The multidimensional instrument for talent development *mBET* (Stahl et al., 2016; see figure 1) addresses pupils from the 2nd to 6th grade.

The *mBET* combines pedagogical diagnostics with a solution-focused dialogue in two stages: a systematic observation led by monitoring (as 1st stage) and coaching (as 2nd stage) with consulting aspects, solution-oriented dialogue, and individualised support planning.

1. Monitoring is a semi-formal diagnostic instrument and contains three different areas, which are decisive for the development of talents: talent & potential, school performance, personality & environmental characteristics (Table 1). In order to adequately cover these different areas, mBET also changes the response scheme. The responding format in the 1st section of the mBET-observation is from "0" to "10" (concerns the areas talent & potential and school performance). "0" represents abilities that are average or below average. In the 2nd section of the mBET the answer options are from "a" to "k" with the possibility of also giving mean values for the ranges personality & environmental characteristics to be indicated (see figure 2).

mBET is also multi-perspective, because it connects the three different views of the teacher, the parents, and the pupil to plan and implement individual supportive interventions. The different observation-inquiry areas of *mBET* and its three perspectives reflect the holistic and systemic concept of talent development.

In addition, *mBET* contains a *profile sheet* for summarising the observations and a *support sheet* for preparing and documenting the interventions and supportive contacts.

Table 1: Systematic observation led by monitoring sheets

Areas of giftedness and talent	Area of characteristics
areas of talent & potential	intellectual abilities
	physical-kinaesthetic abilities
	artistic abilities
	creative abilities
school performance	school success without effort
personality & environmental characteristics	interacting with others
	success & achievement orientation
	overcoming challenges
	personality
	social affiliation

Example to fill in the 1st section *mBET* L

This area of characteristics refers to the student's verbal and nonverbal intellectual abilities

strongly disagree 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 strongly agree

High abilities in text comprehension: easily understands reading and listening, e.g., instructions, explanations; scores high on reading comprehension tasks.

0 → does not demonstrate high text comprehension
1 → occasionally demonstrates high text comprehension
5 → tends to demonstrate high text comprehension
10 → always demonstrates high text comprehension

Example to fill in the 2nd section *mBET* T

This area of characteristics refers to aspects that can influence talent development. Please note the changed responding format

strongly disagree a b c d e f g h i j k strongly agree

Impulse Controlling: can regulate and suppress spontaneous impulses to act; e.g. waits for his/her turn; considers before acting; has self-discipline

a → does not show impulse control
f → shows standard impulse control
k → always shows good impulse control

Figure 2. Note the changing of the responding format:

2. After the systemic collection and holistic view on the child in the 1st stage, the 2nd stage contains the creation and planning of the support: Coaching helps to find the ideal and most supportive intervention for the pupil. The solution-focused dialogue in the 2nd stage enables the teacher to develop and target an individually adapted support (cooperatively designed with pupil and parents based on the specific strengths of the child).

The dialogue follows five predefined sequences: opening – exploration – solution focusing – activity planning – conclusion (see figure 3). The conversation management and methods include solution-focused questions, well-formulated-goal questions, scaling questions, miracle questions (de Shazer, 2005; de Shazer & Dolan, 2013). The teacher leads the conversation with his constructivist view and goal- and solution-focused attitude. He assumes the role of a coach (instead of acting as 'teacher'). Depending on the task, a teacher has different suitable modes (referring to the four styles of guidance and counseling, Radatz, 2009, pp. 97-101):

- trainer (building up professional knowledge and/or skills)
- expert/advisor (the advisor's expertise and know-how solves the problem quickly and efficiently; pupil gives up responsibility)
- coach (further development; pupil has the responsibility for the content)
- facilitator (listening without taking active action; takes time and patience).

For the purposeful use of these modes, it is necessary to reflect on one's own tasks or aims and become aware of possible role-conflicts.

The *mBET*-Coaching is a process-oriented support for the coachee. A goal- and solution-oriented coaching means to avoid expert tips – as they are usual in consulting cases. The coachee is guided by the coach to reflect on goals, to find his/her own way to raise his/her own potential, and to expand the personal repertoire of actions, knowledge, and competencies. Personal responsibility and initiative of the coachee are essential elements of successful coaching settings. Relevant topics in these solution-oriented dialogs are e.g., one's own values, the self-concept, the effectiveness of the learning process, personal goals and priorities, considerations following psychological diagnostics, underachievement (Bögl, 2021).

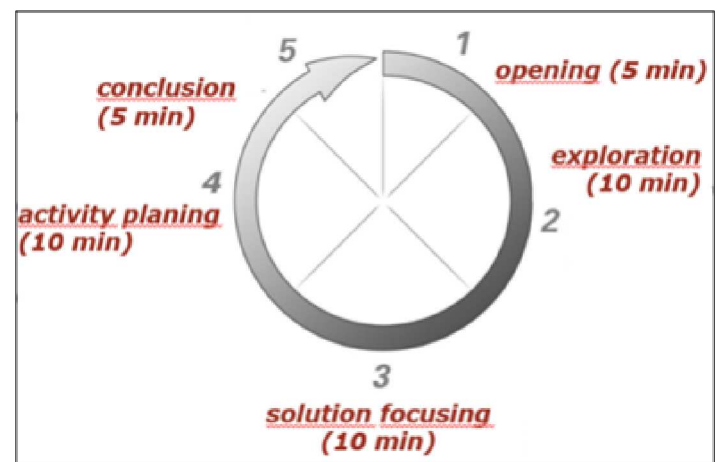


Figure 3. Five predefined sequences of the solution-focused dialogue during the mBET-process

The theoretical concept of *mBET* is founded in the following conceptual frameworks: moderator-models, e.g. Munich model of giftedness (Heller & Perleth, 2007) or *DMGT* (Gagné, 2005), component models (e.g. Renzulli, 2005), the Actiotope model (Ziegler, 2005) and radical constructivism (e.g. von Foerster, 1996, 2013; von Glasersfeld, 2013). The observation-instrument is based on different gifted and talented rating scales (e.g., Gifted Evaluation Scale *GES-3*, McCarney & Arthaud, 2009; Gifted Rating Scales *GRS*, Pfeiffer & Jarosewich, 2003; Scales for Identifying Gifted Students *SIGS*, Ryser & McConnell, 2004; Scales for Rating the Behavioral Characteristics of Superior Students – Revised Edition *SRBCSS-R*, Renzulli et al., 2013; see Stahl et al., 2016). *mBET* is classified as a semiformal, systematic, criterion-orientated instrument. It consequently contrasts with informal, random, unsystematic tools (like everyday observation, door-and-hinge conversation, instinct, and subjective judgment) and with standardised tests.

To summarise and recap the advantages of using *mBET*: *mBET* enables a systematic talent-support for pupils from 2nd to 6th grade using observations and individual dialogues. It combines a holistic, systemic look at the individual with the three perspectives, a dynamic and multi-dimensional development process and a solution-oriented dialogue with customised talent-development (see figure 4).

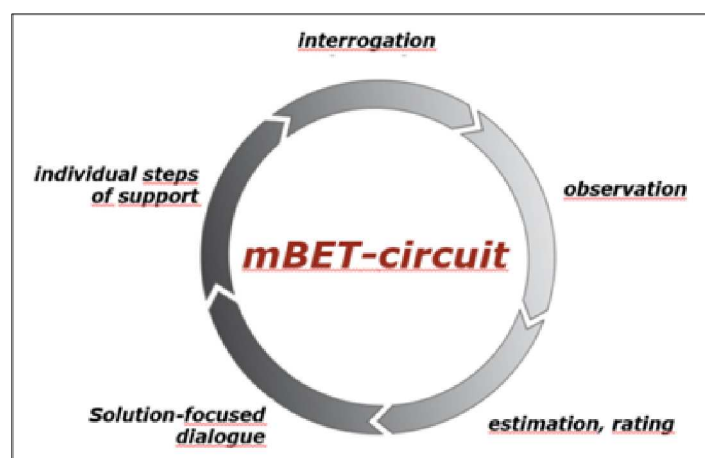


Figure 4. Dynamic talent promotion: the *mBET*-circuit starts with the interrogation, followed by observation & rating in stage 1 and solution focused dialogue & individual support in stage 2.

2. *mBETplus*-coaching for talented and high-achieving students

For students from 12 to 19 years old, *mBETplus* (Stahl et al., 2019; see figure 5) offers a solution-focused coaching that specifically addresses requirements for developing the *personalized niche*, (Subotnik et al., 2011). Successful talent development needs beneficial psychosocial factors (as motivation, perceived opportunities, productive mindset, psychosocial strength, social skills, etc., Olszewski-Kubilius et al., 2015, p. 199). The *mBETplus*-coaching sharpens the talent development-process by focusing on relevant personality characteristics and environmental components such as the following: learning management, self-discipline, motivational aspects of learning and achievement, learning environments, self-efficacy, feedback by coach, peers, and experts.



Figure 5. *mBETplus*-documents at a glance: the *topic-map* for the emerging issues or questions during the coaching (in the middle), the reflection-sheets and other tools for the *mBETplus*-process.

The *mBETplus*-coaching process is individually adaptable. Therefore, *mBETplus* provides flexibly applicable materials such as the topic map (figure 6) with the possibility to place and visualise all the issues or questions that emerge during the coaching. *mBETplus* also offers reflection sheets for the *mBETplus* components, tools for conducting the coaching-conversation etc. According to the *mBETplus* philosophy the *mBETplus*-coach raises solution-oriented questions, and thereby leads the coachee (student) to his/her own answers. In *mBETplus*-coaching, the coachee is responsible for his/her own development.

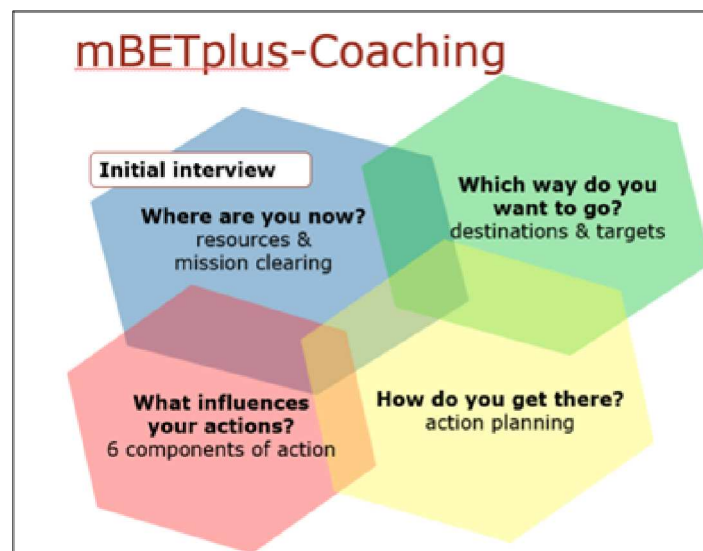


Figure 6. *mBETplus*-topic map

The *mBETplus* coaching cycle starts with an initial contact for a clarification of resources, task and mission. This clarification is very important for the success of the whole coaching process. The coachee also receives any information he/she needs within this first mission-clearing-interview. Then the actual coaching process starts with focusing goals and targets. The coaching follows the four *topic map*-fields, *resources* – “where are you now”, *destinations & targets* – “which way do you want to go?”, *6 components of action* – “what influences your actions?” and *action planning* – “how do you get there?”.

3. Perspectives

Currently the ÖZBF is inventing and designing a new programme and coaching-service for high-achieving students at universities and higher education institutes, named *mBET-Excellence*. Above-average skills and competencies will be supported to find the *specialized niche* in the student's individual domain (Subotnik et al., 2011), or to establish a network (e.g. *persons in the shadow*, Gruber, Lehtinen, Palonen & Degner, 2008) etc.

Further to the author's bio;

- Research focus: talent beliefs, teacher profession research, school quality with focus on promoting talent and school management
- Doctorate in educational science at the University of Salzburg (*teacher beliefs in giftedness and talent in mathematics correlated with cognitively activating teaching*, 2021)
- Deputy managing director of the Austrian Center for Gifted Education and Research ÖZBF (2012 – 2019)

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Factors that help gifted employees to utilize their potential within organizations

Prof Dr David Rempel & Catalina Beckhoff

"You are gifted- then you must be high achieving!"- Within the first parts of our series, we explained that this may not be true for all gifted employees. Some gifted employees may even be unaware of their intellectual giftedness and find themselves unhappy, underachieving, and questioning why they feel so different compared to their peers. Once "overlooked" gifted adults enter the workforce, some are struggling with typical giftedness characteristics or the impacts of pitfalls they are, unintentionally, running into. Frustration, demotivation, boredom or burn- and bore-outs may be possible severe consequences for, first themselves, but likewise for employers, who lose valuable human capital. Different giftedness approaches and intelligence tests are proven to be insufficient to reliably identify all gifted employees within organizations, which is why attention must be paid to increasing giftedness knowledge and identification of, especially underperforming, gifted employees. Factors that help gifted employees to utilize their potential within organizations are the focus of this article.

1. Identification

Due to the described inefficiency of common giftedness approaches and intelligence tests, some intellectually gifted employees remain unnoticed and are simply overlooked. Most share the distinct feeling of "being different" compared to others without knowing why, which often remains a painful side effect until they learn about themselves. Within the last part, we discussed typical giftedness characteristics that HR managers and supervisors may want to keep in mind to identify gifted candidates and employees early on. Sensitivity should be applied if managers grasp that an employee could be intellectually gifted and possible guidance from an expert sought (Vreys et al., 2016). Learning about their own abilities often comes with a great shift in how gifted employees see themselves, as a reminder of all the experienced challenges, with sadness of missed opportunities, great frustration of how nobody helped them before, as well as relief in finally finding answers. Therefore, gifted employees should be approached with sensitivity, in a private setting and possibly with the help of a giftedness coach to best support them in gaining this new self-awareness.

2. Giftedness awareness among organizations

"Gifted"- aren't they those weird, maladjusted, and misbehaving nerds?!" Well, even though several studies prove this assumption to be simply wrong, this stereotype is unfortunately still "alive and well" in many people's minds (Baudson, 2016). Giftedness awareness, knowledge, and understanding must, therefore, be greatly improved within many organizations to create a trustful environment in which gifted employees are able to utilize their capabilities (Vos et al., 2016).

Knowledge can then guide the development of tailor-made development programs or serve as a guideline to define a tailor-made job that benefits gifted employees as well as their organizations.

3. Appreciative and respectful organizational culture

We are all different, each and every one of us has individual "weird" behaviors, weak points but likewise, our own individual strengths. If we are better at something than most people and if we have a fitting workplace, we can make use of these strengths for team and company success. Our social construct would not work if we were all completely the same, with the same goals, motives, dreams, talents, and weak points. Respecting, but even more, appreciating our individuality can help us find the strengths to develop and best use our talents in the interest of the company. If organizational cultures are not as open, gifted employees often hide their abilities to fit in or because they anticipate negative consequences arising (Van Casteren et al., 2021). Therefore, let's drop stereotypes, boxes, and definitions of "normal" and appreciate everyone for what they have to share with their individual talents, independent of their gender, race, look, hobbies, or intellectual capabilities. There are no employees without talents, only many employees stuck in jobs that do not match their individual abilities.

4. Open communication

In the last article we described typical preferences and needs of gifted employees, however, gifted employees are a highly heterogeneous group and cannot be generalized based on their heightened cognitive abilities (Zeidner & Matthews, 2017). An organizational culture with open communication between colleagues and supervisors will motivate gifted employees to reflect and put into words what they need from their work environment. On the other hand, supervisors can make sure through open, honest, and appreciative communication that gifted employees best use their capabilities in the interest of the company. While some gifted employees may run unintentionally into pitfalls and conflicts, an open feedback culture can erase misunderstandings before serious and irreversible conflicts arise as a consequence (Van der Waal et al., 2013).

5. Challenging assignments

Intellectually gifted employees unite great cognitive abilities, such as abstract thinking and reasoning, the ability to spot commonalities and differences and to draw new associations (Schubert et al., 2015), which they typically enjoy unleashing when working on challenging assignments (e.g., Persson, 2009; Van Casteren et al., 2021; Ferriman et al., 2009). Many enjoy complex projects in which they can apply their

analytical abilities as well as their creative problem-solving skills. Engaged in projects, gifted employees typically feel the most energized during the starting up phase, when a new process needs to be designed. The implementation phase gives gifted employees energy as many obstacles still must be overcome. The energy starts to drain off in the optimization phase and shows to be the lowest in the maintenance phase, when only daily problems need to be handled (Vreys et al., 2016). In the selection of fitting assignments, employers must keep in mind that the definition of challenge and complexity may greatly differ in the perception of gifted employees compared to their peers. An open communication between supervisors and gifted employees may help in defining a tailor-made project line-up that satisfies employers as well as the respective employee.

6. Flexibility and autonomous working

Gifted individuals tend to be very autonomous beings and, therefore, prefer allowed autonomy within their work environment (Vreys et al., 2016). The required autonomy refers especially to the methods of how gifted employees handle projects or produce certain results. Many are happy to leave the actual decision-making process up to their managers but prefer being able to find their own way of how to reach a certain goal (Van Casteren et al., 2021), which many enjoy in a structured environment where supervisors organize the prerequisites for them (Nauta et al., 2012).

7. Creation vs leadership

Many gifted employees are very driven by their motivation to create and invent, which could be products, processes, improvements, business models or new techniques (Schlegler et al., 2018; Hossiep et al., 2013). As many are very oriented on the creation and task itself, they are often not very driven to evolve into leadership positions. Often, this is not a result of not being confident enough or of not wanting to take responsibility, most gifted adults simply like being engaged with new inventiveness. Therefore, some may even perceive leadership tasks as a burden that keeps them away from what they are really interested in. Acceptance and understanding of this motivation orientation can support the definition of a suitable position for gifted adults, which they perceive as truly engaging and motivating.

8. Development opportunities

The active and demanding brains of gifted employees usually need to be fed with a variety of different tasks, new experiences, challenges, and opportunities. Most gifted employees truly strive to constantly develop their capabilities, to learn new techniques, improve their knowledge in different fields and to just not stop “using their brains” (Persson, 2009). Repetitive and routine tasks may quickly cause frustration while projects that are new and challenging typically highly motivate gifted employees if these meet their interests. Within organizations, this may often be difficult for supervisors and colleagues to understand, especially because our current “business world” demands rising specialization in many roles. However, new projects, business models, and challenges need to be solved in every organization, especially within the quickly developing technical changes and rising competitiveness among organizations, which are often highly suitable for gifted employees.

9. Individual adjustments

Within our last parts we discussed that some gifted adults show higher sensitivity levels towards different stimuli (e.g., van Thiel et al., 2019; Lovecky, 1986; Roeper, 1991) and, therefore, may require a different work environment compared to their peers. Some may be especially sensitive towards noise, smell, light, or the emotions of others, which can quickly cause stress if they do not have the chance to recharge in a quieter or more isolated workspace. Allowing home office agreements or allowing them to occupy a single office can make a huge difference

for those who feel disturbed and stressed when forced into a shared office or loud environment.

10. Fitting teams

Opposite to assumptions many may still have when it comes to the social skills of gifted employees, many are not only highly appreciated team members, but are especially emphatic due to a heightened emotional sensibility. However, gifted employees often feel held back when they are forced into unfitting teams (Persson, 2009), which many experience as draining their energy and as a stressful burden they can quickly find frustrating. On the other hand, many appreciate organizations where they have the chance to work with like-minded peers (Vreys et al., 2016; Veldman-de Jonge & Jen, 2022). As this may not be possible in every organization, a compromise of more single tasks and limited “teamworking time” may be a fitting way of meeting both the interests of the gifted employees, as well as of their organizations.

Overall, gifted employees can be highly motivated colleagues, who enjoy challenging tasks, who strive with increasing complexity, and who constantly seek solutions for problems that may not yet be detected by others (Persson, 2009). Generally, their active power brains cannot be understood as solely a quantitative difference in speed or capability but as a qualitative difference that influences how gifted adults think, act, and perceive their environment. As many gifted employees already know what they need within the work environment to utilize their potential, an open and respectful communication between managers and employees can be the most important first step. Increasing giftedness knowledge and identification among organizations, especially for “overlooked” gifted adults, can be an important second step in supporting underperforming gifted adults in their careers. Support from giftedness experts can be sought if managers and supervisors need help in understanding, identifying or working with gifted employees. However, the most important factor enabling gifted employees to live up to their individual potential remains an open, respectful, and appreciative organisational culture. Ideally, differences and individual needs are not only tolerated but highly appreciated as it truly enhances every organizational success if individual strengths are combined in a diverse workforce.

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We would like to invite you to write an article for the WorldTalentWeb newsletter. The theme and writing style are open for the author to determine. Articles could take the shape of an interview with a specialist in the field, a report on research or a recent event, a book or resource review etc. The guidelines for the article are listed below.

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