

Twice-Exceptional Case Study Brandon 13 Years Old — 8th Grade

In school:

Brandon was referred because there were significant concerns regarding a discrepancy between CSAP scores and academic grades. Brandon has a strong desire to be successful in school. Teachers describe Brandon as having many good ideas. He is polite, respectful, and enjoys reading. Brandon seems to enjoy school, but sometimes gets anxious. He has difficulty meeting the expectations in a general classroom setting. Concerns include difficulty following directions, remembering assignments, and struggling with work completion. He is sometimes neglectful, forgetful, and very disorganized. Difficulty with organization is evident by how he struggles to keep his binder organized, locate assignments, and keep track of due dates. It also takes Brandon a significant amount of time just to organize his thoughts. This need for extra time for understanding and processing information is very evident. In the classroom, he often does not understand what is expected. Brandon's struggle with understanding directions negatively impacts his completion of assignments. A teacher noted that frequent comprehension checks have been helpful.

At home:

Mom describes Brandon as brilliant, charming, attractive, insightful, and a hard worker. He is talented in music and plays four instruments. Brandon is first chair in his school band. Primary concerns include: disorganization, poor grades, and misunderstanding information. He seems unmotivated and doesn't seem to make the connection between effort and poor grades. Lack of work completion and difficulty turning in completed work are the main causes of poor grades. Brandon is very emotional (cries every day), overly sensitive, and frequently "gets ill" when an assignment is due. He struggled with gross and fine motor coordination from an early age. He did not learn how to ride a bike until he was nine years old, and his handwriting continues to be extremely difficult to read. He has a history of severe allergies and sinus infections. As a result he missed an entire month of school last year.

In his own words:

Overall, Brandon describes this year as very frustrating. Brandon has a strong desire to be successful in school. He is frustrated with how hard school has become for him, because he knows he is capable of earning *As* in his classes. Primary concerns at the moment include world events he sees on the news. "There is scary stuff happening like SARS, terrorism, and war," he said. Additionally, he admitted to being worried about his grades, but stated that he works very hard. Brandon thinks that his teachers give too much work and he feels overwhelmed. He reports the work isn't too hard, just too much. He said extra time would be helpful, especially with big long-term research projects. He said he does much better seeing directions on assignments instead of just hearing them. He says he tends to collect a lot of research, but it takes him a long time to read and sort the information. When asked why he completes assignments but doesn't hand in the work, he stated that if he didn't understand the assignment or feels it's not up to par, he doesn't hand it in so he can add to it and make changes.

Testing:

During the testing Brandon was very cooperative and he tried very hard. On the math calculation test he was able to complete problems that he had just learned to do that week. He did sometimes struggle with setting up the problems. For example, on a multiplication question, he tried writing the problem in three different ways before he was able to complete it. He did get the problem correct, but it took him a significant amount of time just to organize his thoughts. This was also true with the fluency subtests. Brandon was highly accurate, but just was unable to work at a rate that would be expected given his tested abilities.

Strengths:

- General information
- Vocabulary
- Pre-algebra
- Superior oral language
- Academic skills
- Detail oriented
- Interpersonal skills

Weaknesses:

- Organization and planning
- Auditory processing
- Inability to sequence
- Visual memory
- Visual motor coordination
- Cognitive flexibility
- Transitions

WISC

Verbal	S.S.	%tile	Performance	S.S.	%tile
Information	16	98	Picture Completion	11	63
Similarities	16	98	Coding	06	09
Arithmetic	14	91	Picture Arrangement	09	37
Vocabulary	17	99	Block Design	11	63
Comprehension	13	84	Object Assembly	08	25
Digit Span	14	91	Symbol Search	10	50
Verbal Score	131	98	Verbal Comprehension	131	98
Performance Score	94	34	Perceptual Organization	99	47
Full Scale Score	114	82	Working Memory	124	95
			Processing Speed Index	91	27

Woodcock-Johnson Test of Achievement

Broad Reading

	S.S.	%tile
Letter/Word Identification	101	53
Reading Fluency	102	54
Passage Comprehension	101	53

Broad Writing

	S.S.	%tile
Spelling	113	81
Writing Fluency	122	93
Writing Samples	93	31

Broad Math

	S.S.	%tile
Calculation	127	97
Math Fluency	117	88
Applied Problems	130	98

Twice-Exceptional Gifted/LD Case Study

Alicia

9 Years Old

In school:

Alicia is a nine-year-old and passionate about her love of horses. She can discuss almost any aspect of her passion in great detail including: characteristics and history of various breeds, history of the domestication, and training and riding methods. Alicia is a talented artist and has a wonderful portfolio of her horse drawings, paintings, and sketches.

Alicia contributes to many class discussions and frequently relies on her visual memory, advanced vocabulary, and unique sense of humor. Teachers comment on Alicia's ability to remember so much detail.

Alicia struggles with reading and writing. Her oral reading is not fluent, characterized by word-by-word reading with many decoding errors. She relies on sight words, contextual cues, and her advanced abilities in reasoning skills to comprehend and predict text. Alicia is very self-conscious about her oral reading and hates when she is called on to read in class.

Alicia's writing is characterized by many wonderful and creative ideas that are very loosely organized. Her writing has many spelling and grammatical errors.

Alicia has always struggled with the weekly spelling tests. She works hard daily and practices each night, but still only manages to average *B-* or *C* on the weekly tests.

At home:

Alicia lives with her mother and younger brother. She spends much of her time doing homework, studying for spelling tests, or working on the computer researching horses. She will also work on her portfolio, adding to her sketches and drawings. Weekends are usually devoted to riding and doing extra work around the stables.

In her own words:

Alicia is very frustrated by her inability to read and write as well as most of her classmates. She says this makes her feel "stupid." She is particularly upset by the teasing she sometimes receives during spelling bees at school. She says she never gets picked to be on a team. Alicia does not see herself as well-liked by her peers and does not go out of her way to include herself in socializing at school. She claims that no one shares her interest in horses and she has nothing in common with anyone.

Twice-Exceptional Gifted/EBD Case Study

Doug

12 Years Old — 7th Grade

In school:

Doug has been receiving special education services for his emotional/behavior disorder since he was eight years old. His behaviors were characterized by extreme and sometimes unpredictable outbursts which included throwing objects, tearing papers or books, and hitting people. Despite his excellent vocabulary, love of reading, and ability to problem-solve, Doug was not identified as “gifted” until recently. His overall IQ of 147 was a great surprise to most of his teachers. Doug’s history teacher stated, “How can he be gifted if he is identified as EBD? He can’t keep up with the gifted kids!”

Doug likes to identify himself as “cool.” He spends time with a group of students who have gained a local reputation as troublemakers. A few of his friends have had recent run-ins with the law.

Doug loves music and drawing. Although he does not play any instrument, he talks about joining a rock band when he gets older. He combines his love (and fantasy) of joining a rock band with his artistic skills by designing CD covers and sketching out scenes from the music videos he wants to create and produce.

Doug is clearly a leader — although he may be demonstrating his leadership skills inappropriately at times. He knows how to draw people in to his inner circle and motivate them to collaborate with him on any number of tasks.

Doug’s performance in academic areas is sketchy at best. When he is involved in a creative project of some kind, his interest will keep him motivated enough to complete the task. Doug excels in creative writing and talks about writing music lyrics. He is also a very talented artist. Much depends on his relationship with his teacher. If he likes his teacher, he is more likely to live up to the expectations. If not, he does not care.

At home:

Doug lives with his mother and younger sister. His parents divorced when Doug was five. Doug’s father lives out of state. Doug speaks to his father regularly and sees him during school holidays and the summer months. Doug’s mother is very concerned. She is afraid that Doug’s friends are a bad influence on him and that he will soon have problems with the law. She recognizes her son’s intelligence and creativity but does not know how to nurture that or how to advocate for her son. Her biggest concern and fear is Doug’s involvement in potentially illegal activities (including rumors of his friends using drugs).

In his own words:

“I go to school because I have to. Once I am legally able, I want to quit school and start a rock band.” When asked to identify his greatest challenge, Doug said, “People think I’m crazy because I get into a lot of fights at school. I don’t care what people think about me.” When asked what were his strengths, Doug’s response was, “I don’t know . . . Maybe I’m just really good at causing trouble.”

Twice-Exceptional Gifted/ADD Case Study

George

7 Years Old — 2nd Grade

In school:

George is a seven-year-old child in 2nd grade. He is a good friend to his classmates and often volunteers to help them with their work (even when he has not finished his own). George is a high-level thinker. He loves to ask or answer the “why” or the “what if” questions about most subjects, but particularly for science-related themes. He has a passion for investigating UFOs and extraterrestrial beings. He has daily stories to share with the class about the most recent UFO sightings or new discoveries about life on other planets.

George’s teachers report extreme difficulty with his ability to pay attention in class, particularly when doing large-group instruction or during less-structured activities (independent work time). During these times, George will look out the window, fidget with anything available, play with his clothing, dig through his desk, etc. He has great difficulty finishing assignments and staying on-task for more than a few minutes at a time. This causes him great frustration and anxiety. He becomes frustrated when he sees his peers are finished with their work and he is not; he becomes anxious if he knows he’ll have to stay in during recess or lunch to complete an assignment. George’s concentration is greatly improved when he is working in small cooperative groups (no more than three students) or with individual teacher attention.

George can’t seem to keep up with his belongings. Although this may be typical for many 2nd graders just learning these skills, for George it is much more severe. He loses clothing, books, papers, and homework. Just about anything given to George is lost during the day.

At home:

George’s parents are committed to helping their son but often become very frustrated with him. They report having to repeat requests or demands several times before he acknowledges that he has heard them. George’s mother said, “It is almost as if he is off in his own little world and never heard a word I said. Before they diagnosed ADD, I thought they were going to tell me he was deaf!”

Although there has been some improvement since a new medication has been tried, there are still the same old problems. George forgets his homework (or jacket, lunchbox, notes, etc.) in school and needs commands or requests repeated several times. George’s parents are worried that his self-esteem is being diminished as he becomes more aware of his challenges.

In his own words:

When asked what he sees as his biggest challenge, George said, “I’m just stupid . . . I forget everything and never finish anything!” When asked what he sees as his strengths, his response was, “Nothing. I am not good at anything.”

Twice-Exceptional Gifted/Physical Disabilities Case Study

Jason 10 Years Old

In school:

Jason is a very bright and curious child. He loves small-group discussions where he can thrive on asking provocative questions and enchanting his audience with his ability to play with words. He loves reading novels, watching movies, writing or watching plays, writing or reading poetry, and just about anything that involves language and drama.

Jason's cerebral palsy has become more challenging as he gets older. He is now confined to a wheelchair all day, which has really been an emotional setback for him. He has undergone many surgeries over the last few years including procedures to correct blocked shunts and increasing problems with his s-curve scoliosis. His speech is impaired (although he is intelligible) and he has difficulties with most gross and fine motor control.

Jason is currently working on or above grade level in most academic areas. Although he was initially identified for his physical disability and receiving special education and related services for speech and physical therapy, he was only recently identified as "gifted" based on his superior capacity with language. Jason is learning to use various assistive technology devices to help him with his writing.

At home:

Jason lives with his parents and older brother. Jason spends much of his after-school time going from doctor to therapist. He has few friends outside of school and spends most of his free time on the computer, watching movies, or reading plays.

Jason's parents have been strong advocates for their son. They were thrilled when the school finally saw their son as a "gifted" child and not *just* a child with a disability. They always knew Jason was special in many ways, including his unique abilities with words and word play.

Jason's parents' biggest concern, aside from mounting medical bills and problems with medical insurance, is what will happen to their son as he gets older and his medical needs become greater, and who will take care of him when they are gone.

In his own words:

When asked about his strengths, Jason said, "I love going to the gifted class with Mrs. Francetti. She really knows how to make me think! I guess I think of myself as someone who can make people laugh because I know how to tell jokes. I like to write plays. Someday I want to write plays or be a famous actor." When asked about his challenges, Jason said, "I guess my biggest challenge is that I am not great with numbers! I hate math. I don't know how to think with numbers — How do they do it? I guess I also have a challenge because of being in a wheelchair. Although I can get around OK, it still makes things hard for me sometimes. I miss a lot of school because of doctor appointments or having to go in for surgery — I hate that. The doctors and nurses are nice and I get to do my schoolwork while I'm there, but I miss being in school."

Twice-Exceptional Gifted/Sensory Impaired (Visually Impaired) Case Study Wilfredo 12 Years Old

In school:

Wilfredo has been described by his teachers as a “natural leader . . . he has a keen sense of people and social perceptiveness — overall, very strong interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences exhibited.” Wilfredo has some difficulty with logically thinking through solutions. This may in part be due to the fact that many of the logical thinking activities are visually-based dilemmas; however, given time and a partner to work with, Wilfredo can usually come up with some creative solutions.

This student excels in situations that need a leader. He is the first to volunteer to coordinate just about any activity or social service project — particularly those dealing with animal abuse, justice, discrimination, or issues dealing with poverty or homelessness.

Wilfredo is working on grade level for all academic subjects, although his writing composition and vocabulary are very advanced. Wilfredo does have some difficulty with mathematics, although cooperative learning activities seem to help with concept and skill development.

Due to Wilfredo’s visual impairment, he is learning to use various assistive technology devices. He uses the computer with special voice recognition software, text reader devices, and enlarged text. He also uses many of these devices for writing and creating multimedia presentations.

At home:

Wilfredo lives with his mother, father, and two siblings. Wilfredo spends much of his free time at the local Humane Society where he is responsible for feeding the animals and socializing the dogs and cats. He loves this responsibility and has been very influential in raising money in the community and organizing food drives for the animals.

Although Wilfredo has friends in school, he rarely sees them on weekends or during vacations. Wilfredo generally gets along well with his siblings, although according to his mother, he knows how to get under everyone’s skin from time to time!

In his own words:

When asked about his strengths, Wilfredo said he knows he is a leader, “or at least that is what my teachers tell me,” (as he laughs). “I guess I could use those leadership skills doing something positive when I get older — maybe I can get involved in politics, government, or something like that.” When asked about his weakness, Wilfredo said, “I know you expect me to talk about my visual impairment — but that is not my weakness! My weakness is that I do not know how to play a musical instrument — aren’t *all* visually impaired or blind people supposed to be musicians?” (again said with a laugh). “You know . . . Ray Charles, Stevie Wonder?”

Twice-Exceptional Gifted/Hearing Disability Case Study

Jerry

15 Years Old — 9th Grade

In school:

Jerry is a 15-year-old freshman at the local high school. He uses a sign language interpreter for most of his classes, but has begun using a form of Computer-Assisted Notetaking (CAN) in his social studies class to see if that gives him access to all of the communication in a lecture-based class. The teacher of the deaf consults with Jerry's general education teachers and provides him instructional support once a week during his study hall. During that time, the teacher of the deaf introduces vocabulary and concepts of upcoming new units and reinforces or expands on vocabulary and concepts of recently completed units.

Jerry is generally a cheerful young man. He plays a variety of sports and loves to tell jokes. In class, Jerry performs very well on individual assignments but sometimes struggles in group projects because the other students do not know sign language and the interpreter sometimes can't keep up with the verbal barrage of brainstorming or fast-paced discussions. Jerry excels at math and is currently taking Geometry and is breezing through it. He also loves to read but is a reluctant participant in any oral presentations in school. He maintains a 3.6 grade-point average.

Jerry memorizes facts very easily and often seeks additional information about class topics on the Internet or from library books. His parents and teachers have always commented on how intelligent Jerry is, but it took a few years before he received services as a gifted student because his assessment profile showed inconsistent results, which is typical of students with a hearing disability. He performed well on non-verbal tests and relatively poorly on verbal and timed tests. As he has matured and his English skills have improved, his verbal scores have improved and his assessment profile shows more consistency across subjects/domains. He occasionally uses incorrect grammar or mispronounces sophisticated vocabulary, but overall his language skills are much better than when he was younger.

Jerry knows most of the other students at school and has many brief casual conversations throughout a school day, but he doesn't have a best friend or a small group of close friends. He would like to have more friends to spend his free time with but isn't sure how to make that happen in a comfortable way.

At home:

Jerry was born with a severe/profound hearing loss in both ears. When Jerry's hearing loss was detected when he was two years old, the family began receiving weekly services from a parent advisor in an early intervention program for families of children who are deaf or hard of hearing. He was only saying random vowel sounds when they started with the early intervention program. The family decided that using sign language would be the best way to communicate fully with Jerry. Before long, he knew and used many signs and began learning to

pronounce some words. Since that time, Jerry's language skills have continued to improve, especially since he learned to read. Jerry had hearing aids but stopped wearing them when he turned 13. He reports that they are not that helpful to him.

Jerry's parents and his sister are fluent in sign language, so they are able to communicate fully with each other. The family is very close and often goes camping, hiking, biking, or snowboarding together on weekends or holidays.

Jerry has played recreation league soccer, football, and baseball. He loves being active and enjoys the challenge of playing sports. He has expressed interest in trying out for one of the school teams, but is unsure if he would like having the interpreter there or if he would be able to function well without the interpreter there.

In his own words:

When asked what his strengths are, Jerry replies, "I'm good at math and sports. When I'm working a math problem or playing a sport, I am equal to hearing kids." When asked what his weaknesses are, Jerry hesitates and then says, "Sometimes I'm not very good with new words, and writing takes some extra time to be sure I don't make any errors." When asked if he likes school, he laughs and says, "Sure, I like to learn, but sometimes I get bored." Jerry plans to attend the National Technical Institute of the Deaf and major in microelectronics or telecommunication engineering.

