

BEYOND AND LOUDER THAN WORDS

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Output 05

One of the topics we faced during the three years of our KA2 project was the presence in schools of students who were in a way out of the normal condition of students. They are called "high performing students" but we realized that no one of us had clear in mind what this kind of student was.

HIGH PERFORMING STUDENT: A MISTERY TO BE SOLVED

WHAT IS AND WHO IS A HPS?

Utente Erasmus+ ka2 partnership



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One of the topics we faced during the three years of our KA2 project was the presence in schools of students who were in a way out of the normal condition of students. They are called "high performing students" but we realized that no one of us had clear in mind what this kind of student was.

So after a long discussion about the topic we decided to see what results we could have looking inside our national realities. This output is the result of this shared job.

Introduction

1- How to define a high performing student

The abilities of a high-performing student extend to all subjects: art, humanities, linguistics or science. Of course, a student would have an appetite for a certain subject area, but a good student knows that knowledge is power and wants to learn as much as possible, hence, is good at all subjects. They appreciate the importance of these subjects and get into a personal bet to excel even at the subjects that they will not follow in the future.

<https://phi-tuition.eu/.../what-makes-a-high-performing-student/>

this general definition of a high performing student suggests three main ideas:

- 1) A high performing student excels in all subjects
- 2) The more they excel, the more they want to excel
- 3) They know that knowledge is power, as Bacon said.

So, we need to consider a high performing student as a kind of person always thirsty for knowledge and living in a world that is only his?

As teachers, we need to look for something more, and we also need to find those signals that suggest the presence of high performing students in our class, in the same way we need to recognize those students in difficulties.

Part 1

Searching the Net, we noticed that there are few pages related directly to the students, while it is full of articles related to high performing schools. This suggests to the writer of this output a kind of separation of high performing students from the rest of the class.

The following quotations are two of the best description of high performing students we have found and they give a detailed list of characteristics this kind of students show.

<http://www.sheffieldstateuniversity.com/blog/top-10-characteristics-of-high-performing-students/>

High performing students are so important for a society because these can play a vital role in success of humanity in the society. So, people should adopt a caring behaviour about their children for making them intelligent and sharp and clever without any doubt and reservation in the social and commercial way of life. Some guidelines are linked with adequate education of students and these should be used for gaining better results of education system. In other side, some directions are common which should be obligated by all parents because these general suggestions can play an important role in success of relations of children and parents. As the result of this situation, people can follow common directions and recommendations in selection procedure of education plan for gaining success in this matter. Some common points are mentioned as under for attainment of satisfactory results in education sector.

- 1. High performing students should use apt learning procedure with consideration of their abilities and skills because this care can produce some progressive consequences about performance of children.*
- 2. In the same way, people are also easy with usage of attractive and well prepared **educational programs**, because this technique is increasing the level of success of education system along with production of well-mannered students.*
- 3. Similarly, usage of striking and informative literature with trendy formats is also a sign of accomplishment that can be gained within least time for attainment of shining and high performing students in the society.*

4. Accordingly, parents should also obtain support of educational professionals that have proper awareness about learning procedure; this is helpful for success of high performing students.
5. Consequently, people should use those academies that are linked with students by concern of subjects and purposes of education perceptions. This technique can help the parents as usage of adequate academy according to condition of subject can make high performing students active and prominent in learning students.
6. This is also confirmed that those people who are using education plans with examining the particular features are able to suggest a beneficial learning scheme to gain high performing students in the community.
7. Selection of subjects is an important process that should be performed with proper care and attention in the social order. Adequate subjects according to abilities of high performing students can produce shining results in the communal order.
8. Similarly, usage of modern technologies in learning procedure can make high performing students active and clever to attain educational objectives with rapidness and success.
9. Parents should use proper sources for education of high performing students because encouragement and satisfaction of learner is the key to achieve educational tasks within limited time.
10. Consequently, **high performing students** should be treated with critical observance of social and educational progress. This tact can enhance their performance and they can achieve their objectives within short time easily.

As the result of this scene, parents should take proper interest in education of their children and this is highly influenced to prepare high performing students in the society.

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Characteristics of High Achieving Students, High Ability Students* and Creative Thinkers

For purposes of identification and placement, the following characteristics may be used as a guideline. While High Achieving Students and Creative Thinkers may be high performing students, the characteristics labeled **High Ability Students*** best describe those students in P-H-M schools who need High Ability services.

High Achieving Students	High Ability Students*	Creative Thinkers
Remembers the answers	Poses unforeseen questions	Sees exceptions
Is interested	Is curious	Wonders
Generates advanced ideas	Generates, complex, abstract ideas	Overflows with ideas, many of which will never be developed
Works hard to achieve	Knows without working hard	Plays with ideas and concepts
Answers the questions in detail	Ponders with depth and multiple perspectives	Injects new possibilities
Performs at the top of the group	Is beyond the group	Is in own group
Learns with ease	Already knows	Questions: What if?
Needs 6-8 repetitions to master	Needs 1-3 repetitions to master	Questions the need for mastery
Enjoys the company of age peers	Prefers the company of intellectual peers	Prefers the company of creative peers
Understands complex, abstract humor	Creates complex, abstract humor	Relishes wild, off-the-wall humor
Grasps the meaning	Infers and connects concepts	Makes mental leaps: Aha!

Completes assignments on time	Initiates projects and extensions of assignments	Initiates more projects than will ever be completed
Is receptive	Is intense	Is independent and unconventional
Enjoys school often	Enjoys self-directed learning	Enjoys creating
Absorbs information	Manipulates information	Improvises
Is a technician with expertise in a field	Is an expert, abstracting beyond the field	Is an inventor and idea generator
Memorizes well	Guesses and infers well	Creates and brainstorms well
Is pleased with own learning	Is self-critical	Is never finished with possibilities
Get's A's	May not be motivated by grades	May not be motivated by grades
Is able	Is intellectual	Is idiosyncratic

Chart created by Bertie

Kingore

Both the pages have points in common we would like to highlight before giving any conclusion or judgement.

A) High performing students should use apt learning procedure with consideration of their abilities and skills because this care can produce some progressive consequences about performance of children.

These quotations mean that a high performer is a student who should use learning techniques according to his abilities and skills because they are influential on their performance. The discussion we had gave us a result that this should be the action referred to all students in a class to give everyone the same possibilities.

B) Accordingly, parents should also obtain support of educational professionals that have proper awareness about learning procedure; this is helpful for success of high performing students.

This is to say that families should be involved in the process of learning thanks to the help of professionals of education. The question we raised was about the economic problem: who's going to pay and what?

C) Selection of subjects is an important process that should be performed with proper care and attention in the social order. Adequate subjects according to abilities of high performing students can produce shining results in the communal order.

Therefore, teachers should choose only those subjects satisfying the requisites of the skills of high performers. The question was: and the other subjects? And in a class you have different high performers with different skills for different subjects?

D) Similarly, usage of modern technologies in learning procedure can make high performing students active and clever to attain educational objectives with rapidness and success.

E) Parents should use proper sources for education of high performing students because encouragement and satisfaction of learner is the key to achieve educational tasks within limited time.

F) Consequently, high performing students should be treated with critical observance of social and educational progress. This tact can enhance their performance and they can achieve their objectives within short time easily.

These three final points can be studied together because they refer to the possibility technology offer to students and family to reduce and gain time and also, to the encouragement needed to obtain the best of students and the critical observation on high performers achievement.

Before analysing the second paper we would like to make some reflections on the first one and the points we have highlighted.

Most of the points seem to suggest a sort of different treatment of high performers inside the same class.

They are special students, aiming at the maximum, and the expectancies of families are strong, but the objection the Italian partner did was: do we have to separate them

from the rest of the class? Do we have to show difference in approach with them and rest of the class? Are we including students or secluding them in a different situation? And what degree of “intrusion” do the families have to play?

It was not easy to answers to the questions asked for many reasons. It seemed that there was a sort of difficulty in answering because we realised we were going into a field that could have shown to be dangerous and no partner wanted to appear to defend a situation of exclusion or separation of students in a class. This is still true in the case of special needs students sometimes and it is not a fair behaviour but, anyway, the problem is there and we need to give an answer as teachers. The aim of the Erasmus projects is also that of putting together different school realities and see what of good can be absorbed by everyone.

After finding pages and pages about how High performer students and schools are seen in Europe (see database) we concluded that in general no clear idea about what was the best thing to do with these students was. So we started to think about a solution to the problem and in the meeting in Netherlands we asked to the colleagues from Macedonia to study a possible solution, to be then discussed in the next meeting.

Part 2

One of the things that appear to be easy comprehensible about the presence of high performing students is that sometimes they represent a problem. Do we have to separate them from “normal students” and let them fly over the rest of the class? Or we have to find a way to share their abilities and competences with the others even if this could slow down their possibilities to learn more and more?

We discussed a lot about these problems and as we said before there seem to be a sort of reluctance in every partner to talk about the national behaviour in this field. All Europe is undergoing a phase of a search for inclusion but at the same time this seems to be only a school problem. Many countries facing the problem of newcomers have an excluding reaction, fearing the arrival of new cultures to impose their way of life.

This contrasting feeling cannot avoid to influence the world of teachers but we think our role is to find a way of living together as citizens of the world, in the spirit of the Erasmus action.

Nevertheless, searching the net it is quite easy to find lots of schools declaring themselves to be “high performing schools for gifted”.

Does this mean schools are trying to choose their students refusing the holy principle of inclusion? Or this is only a way leading to an idea of creating a new leading class able to face the problems of the future? Or, again, the idea of a school for all has lost its power being substituted by normal and special schools, where special schools are those for gifted students?

It can seem a Stan Lee comics but our fear is not so strange.
(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stan_Lee)

Part 3

“Many parents and educators try hard to inspire students with various qualities and skills to make sure that they have a comfortable and fulfilling life. There are numerous articles available for parents and teachers on how to pass their skills on to children and, in the end, how to be a good parent or a good teacher. This article,

unlike others, is aimed directly for the students.” (<https://phi-tuition.eu/.../what-makes-a-high-performing-student/>)

This is another problem high performer students could rise: the families' expectations.

Sometimes families expect a lot from their sons and daughters and sometimes these expectations are not rewarded by success. Families should consider the fact that many times talent can manifest only in one or two subjects of studies and this could give a feeling of inadequacy in the other subjects.

But searching the net we have found that another problem related to the success or failure of high performing students is represented by their social status. (Achievementtrap: How America is Failing Millions of **High-Achieving Students** from Lower-Income **Families**.)

“Sadly, from the time they enter grade school through their postsecondary education, these students lose more educational ground and excel less frequently than their higher-income peers. Despite this tremendous loss in achievement, these remarkable young people are hidden from public view and absent from public policy debates. Instead of being recognized for their excellence and encouraged to strengthen their achievement, highachieving lower-income students enter what we call the “achievement trap” — educators, policymakers, and the public assume they can fend for themselves when the facts show otherwise (achievementtrap A Report by the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation & Civic Enterprises with original research by Westat BY: Joshua S. Wyner / John M. Bridgeland / John J. DiIulio, Jr)

This research shows that hopefully a lot of students coming from lower income families do not fail to reach high level of achievement, but the same research assesses the fact that many times they are “invisible”, compared to their peers coming from high income families and also that they face difficulties at a start level they fight to fulfil in the remaining school years.

The study gives also an important fact to be discussed: “Importantly, as each of these and related efforts unfold, we must consider how advancing policies and practices that assist high-achieving lower-income students can be used to help all students. The picture painted by this report runs counter to the expectations we have of our educational institutions. As we strive to close the achievement gaps between racial and economic groups, we will not succeed if our highest performing students from lower-income families continue to slip through the cracks. Our failure to help them fulfil their demonstrated potential has significant implications for the social mobility of America's lower-income families and the strength of our economy and society as a whole. The consequences are especially severe in a society in which the gap between rich and poor is growing and in an economy that increasingly rewards highly-skilled

and highly-educated workers. By reversing the downward trajectory of their educational achievement, we will not only improve the lives of lower-income high-achievers, but also strengthen our nation by unleashing the potential of literally millions of young people who could be making great contributions to our communities and country.” (achievementtrap A Report by the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation & Civic Enterprises with original research by Westat BY: Joshua S. Wyner / John M. Bridgeland / John J. DiIulio, Jr)

So, inside the lines we read the idea that high performing students could be a resource for all students. And if so why there is a sort of shame talking about how this student is treated in our own country?

Part 4

High performing schools and family

From the studies, OSPI researchers distilled nine characteristics that were found most often in high-performing schools:

A clear and shared focus High standards and expectations for all students

Effective school leadership

High levels of collaboration and communication Curriculum, instruction and assessments aligned with state standards

Frequent monitoring of learning and teaching Focused professional development A supportive learning environment

High levels of family and community involvement

“No single characteristic led to school success. Most studies identified five or more of the traits. Research found that reaching that level takes years of sustained school commitment, affecting values, attitudes, beliefs, and instructional practices. cursory attention to the nine characteristics will yield superficial changes, but not lasting success”. ([Nine characteristics of high-performing schools: A research-based resource for schools and districts to assist with improving student learning](#)

GS Shannon, P Bylsma - Washington Office of Superintendent of Public ..., 2007 – ERIC)

And we go back to the starting point: do we really need special schools for the high performing students or **they** need instead that schools act in order to give each students the help to develop his own possibilities?

Our temporary conclusion is that there should be a sort of helpful collaboration between the school and the family (the influence of family has already been

discussed but there is an important paper about it (The Relation of Parenting Style to Adolescent School Performance Sanford M. Dornbusch, Philip L. Ritter, P. Herbert Leiderman, Donald F. Roberts, and Michael J. Fraleigh Stanford Center for the Study of Youth Development).

High performer student needs to be into a context that doesn't exclude him, but at the same time he needs to see his requests for more challenging knowledge satisfied.

As teachers we need to recognize them in our classrooms and give them what they need, in order to prepare their potential to be increased through knowledge, and in a way through the many methodologies and good teaching practices we have studied in our Erasmus project (CLIL, Active learning, cooperative learning, debate and others) to give them also the possibility to share with the other classmates their abilities and competences.

PS: as a group of partners that have worked really hard we suggest the vision of the video realized by the students of Gimnazija Goce Delcev , a municipal secondary school located in the centre of Kumanovo, Macedonia.

This video is a valid example of what a high performing student is and probably to see them in action will give some answers to our questions.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RVynZlqTq7s&feature=youtu.be>