

**As Moses said:
“Thou shalt group
...fulltimely”**

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A recent conference in Quebec!



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Essential message

Ideally, regular classroom teachers should provide appropriate enrichment to their academically talented students.

In practice, it is not done.

Why? Because it is an impossible challenge.

The only appropriate alternative:
full-time grouping.

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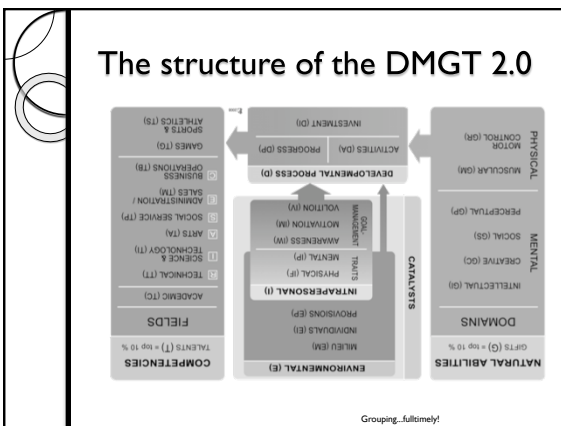
- Introduction
 - Basic terminology: the **DMGT 2.0**
 - Basic assumptions
- Regular Classroom Enrichment (RCE)
 - How often do teachers use it?
 - Why is it so rare?
- The alternative
 - Why “fulltimely”?
 - Answering common objections
- Finale

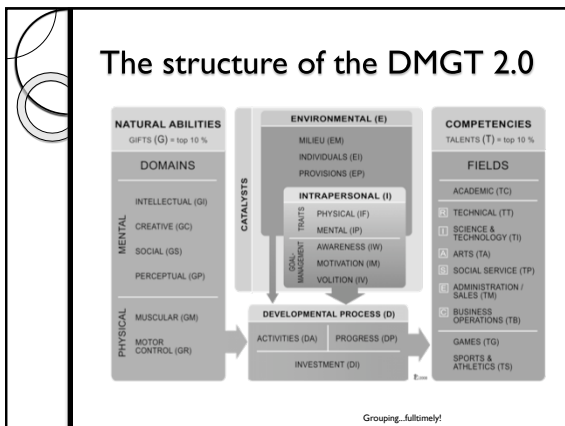
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◦ INTRODUCTION

- Basic terminology
- Basic assumptions

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- ### Basic terminology
- Usual G/T population
 - Three identification tools: SAT, IQ, nominations
 - IQ tests : intellectual giftedness (IG)
 - Achievement tests: academic talent (AT)
 - IG + AT= IGAT
 - Academic Talent Development (ATD)
 - Fully enriched K-12 curriculum
 - Challenging excellence goals
 - Limited access to IGAT students
 - Differentiation or Enrichment?
 - **Enrichment** = differentiation specific to G/T
 - **RCE** = a specific enrichment format
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- ### The rationale for RCE
- Large individual differences exist in learning ability (potential).
 - Curriculum differentiation addresses these differences.
 - Enrichment represents the specific form of differentiation for fast learners.
 - Enrichment should be an integral part of the **regular** curriculum for academically talented students.
 - Because students spend the vast majority of their time in regular classrooms, proper enrichment **should** be provided right there, in their regular classroom.
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REGULAR CLASSROOM ENRICHMENT
A sobering reality

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The 1993 "Archambault" study

- **Main study goals**
- What instructional practices are used with academically talented students in classrooms across the country?
- Do classroom teachers modify instructional practices and curricular materials to meet the needs of academically talented students?
- Do services differ in districts with and without formal gifted programs?

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Methodology: Sample

Grades 3 & 4 teachers

- 4000 public school teachers
- 1000 private school teachers
- 600 teachers (African-Amer. schools)
- 600 teachers (Hispanic-Amer. schools)
- 600 teachers (Asian-Amer. schools)
- 600 teachers (Amer.-Indian schools)
- **Total: 7400 teachers (3456 responses)**

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Methodology: Instrument (1)

Classroom practices questionnaire (CPQ)

- 39 items: 6 sections/scales
- Examples of items:
 - Ask questions to encourage reasoning (35/I)
 - Group by ability across classrooms (29/II)
 - Offer contracts for independent study (25/III)
 - Assign advanced level reading (3/III)
 - Offer creative writing (student's topic) (10/III)
 - Use pretests to determine mastery (12/IV)
 - Eliminate material that students master (13/IV)
 - Use enrichment centers (21/V)
 - Use enrichment worksheets (2/VI)

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Methodology: Instrument (2)

Classroom practices questionnaire (CPQ)


- Frequency scale
 - 0 = Never
 - 1 = Once a month, or less frequently
 - 2 = A few times a **month**
 - 3 = A few times a **week**
 - 4 = Daily
 - 5 = More than once a day
- Answer separately for talented & average students.

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Main results

Description	Gifted	Aver.
I - Questioning and thinking	4.08	4.03
II - Providing challenges and choices	1.74	1.54
III - Reading and written assignments	2.10	1.79
IV - Curriculum modifications	2.37	2.17
V - Enrichment centers	2.64	2.51
VI - Seatwork	2.38	2.24
Average values:	2.55	2.38


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Summary of results

- Very infrequent 'enrichment': at best, once weekly on average.
- Little differentiation between high and average achievers: most 'enrichment' provisions target the whole group.
- No geographical differences.
- No differences between sub-samples.
- Having a 'gifted program' changed nothing.

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Authors' conclusion

- "The results of this survey paint a **disturbing picture** of the types of instructional services gifted students receive in regular classrooms across the United States.
- It is clear from the results that teachers in regular third and fourth grade classrooms make **only minor modifications** in the curriculum and their instruction to meet the needs of gifted students."

(Archambault et al., 1993, p. 5)

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Parallel study (Westberg al.)

- **Method:**
 - Sample: 46 classes (national coverage).
 - Observation instrument adapted from CPS.
 - Two 1-day visits.
 - Two target students: one gifted, one average.
 - Five subjects: Reading, Language, Math, Science, Social science.
- **Results:**
 - Homogeneous grouping only 21% of the time.
 - Advanced content 5% of the time on average (11% in math).
 - No differentiation 84% of the time on average.

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Authors' conclusion

“The results of the observational study indicate that **little differentiation** in the instructional and curricular practices, including grouping arrangements and verbal interactions is provided to gifted and talented students in the regular classroom.”
(Westberg et al., 1993, p. XI)

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Replications


- **Whitton, 1997**
 - 600 grade 3 & 4 teachers, NSW, Australia.
 - Same instrument, almost identical results.
- **Robinson, 1998**
 - 1000 7th grade teachers, USA.
 - No meaningful differences in curriculum between high and average achievers.
- **Westberg & Daoust, 2003**
 - 550 grade 3 & 4 teachers, USA, 2 states.
 - Same instrument, almost identical results.

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Why the lack of RCE?

- Priority to at-risk students (NCLB)
- Impact of mainstreaming policy
- Increased workload
- Limited training (pre/in-service)
 - ~60% of public school teachers had no training whatsoever in G/T
 - ~1% reported having a degree in G/T
- Ambivalent attitudes toward talent

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Teachers' beliefs

Fordham Institute Survey (2008)
(National sample of 6000 K-12 teachers; 900 respondents)

In your judgment, how easy or difficult a mission is it to implement differentiated instruction on a daily basis in the classroom?

35% = very difficult
48% = somewhat difficult
12% = somewhat easy
4% = very easy


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In a nutshell


MISSION IMPOSSIBLE !

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THE ALTERNATIVE: FULL-TIME GROUPING

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Why “fulltimely”?

Critique of the “**pull-out**” model

- A part-time response to a full-time need
- A content mostly unrelated to the academic curriculum
- A costly enterprise
- A false sense of “problem solved”
- A potentially valuable complement, but...
...a poor substitute to fulltimely!

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Common objections: academic impact

- They don’t achieve better as a group.
- The risks of failure are increased.
- Imperfect identification of talent.
- The group loses stimulating leaders.

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What does the research say?

On academic impacts

- **Research survey**
 - Dozens of studies conducted.
 - Several meta-analyses performed.
 - Focus on paired-ability studies.
- **Main conclusions**
 - No difference in many cases.
 - Positive difference in a few cases.
- An essential condition: **enrichment**.

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Common objections: social impacts

- Unhealthy competition.
- Lowered self-concept
- Social homogenization.
- Labeling from the out-group.
- Creaming: a loss for teachers.

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What does the research say?

On social impacts

- Very few studies.
- Little impact one way or the other.
- Much social diversity **within** high ability groups; much depends on the school's geographical location.
- A major testimonial plus: intellectual stimulation from peers with similar interests.
- Little negative impact in regular classroom.

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B.C. By Johnny Hart

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A crucial question

Why do most educators outside of gifted education—and many within—always give priority to **social** adjustment over **educational** adjustment?

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FINALE


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In a nutshell

Because regular classroom teachers do not provide broad-based and sustained enrichment, it is only through full-time grouping, at all grade levels of the K-12 educational system, that we will properly answer the educational needs of academically talented students.

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Looking ahead

Please don't hold your breath !

- Full-time grouping is a long-term goal.
- The importance of Nelson Mandela's approach: "pragmatic idealism."
- It might look utopian, but...
...it has begun its slow dissemination.
 - The network of 'selective' high schools in NSW.
 - The Governor's schools in the United States.
 - The International Baccalaureate program.
- The challenge ahead: "Advocate unremittingly."

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Joyce's thoughtful statement

- "Acceleration and grouping are the lightning rod issues that test the level of acceptance that gifted programs enjoy in a local school district.
- The greater the commitment to serving gifted students, the greater the acceptance of advancing and grouping them appropriately."

(Van Tassel-Baska, 1992, p. 68)

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**SINCERE THANKS
FOR YOUR
ATTENTION**

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**You have a question?
You would like more information?
I offer "mouse delivery".**

**• Just send me an email:
gagne.francoys@uqam.ca**

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