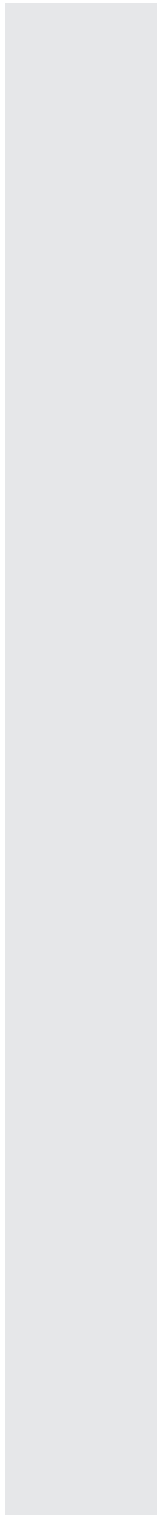

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Exploring and developing diverse potentials and abilities – new perspectives

Summary

This article presents novel approaches to exploring and developing children's diverse potentials and abilities. Traditionally, potential has been understood as an individual's innate endowment, primarily pertaining to intelligence, facilitating achievement. However, new perspectives encompass a broader spectrum of factors, including psychosocial aspects. This article examines two concepts. The first one is the Theory of Positive Disintegration, which focuses on the personal, emotional, and moral development of individuals. According to this theory, a strong developmental potential and its content play a crucial role in the development of personality and abilities. Gifted individuals exhibit characteristics such as heightened intensity of experiences and sensations, as well as asynchronous development. Education should embrace the unique and individualized growth of gifted individuals, with the aim of facilitating their development towards higher values and a complete personality. The second concept under examination is the Talent Development Megamodel, which focuses on domain-specific abilities. Within this framework, distinct trajectories of talent development are delineated based on an individual's domain-specific ability and potential associated with abilities and psychosocial skills. The objective of education within the Megamodel is to foster achievements and ultimately exceptional accomplishments among the gifted.

Keywords: megamodel, potential, Dąbrowski, overexcitability, ability

Słowa kluczowe: megamodel, potencjał, Dąbrowski, wzmożone pobudliwości psychiczne, zdolności

Introduction

An individual's potential encompasses inherent capacities, abilities and predispositions that can be developed and used to achieve success and fulfilment across various domains of life. The Dictionary of Psychology defines "potential" as follows: "potential. Relating to the condition of **potentiality**" (Reber 1985: 561). "Potentiality. A present set of circumstances that suggests a latent ability; characteristics that are used to infer that some property or talent not currently manifested will develop or be learned" (Reber 1985: 561–562). Possessed potential

is a promise of the development of giftedness (Limont 2010). Depending on the context analysed, it can take on slightly different meanings and structures, such as developmental potential related to personal growth (Dąbrowski 1979), intellectual potential understood as IQ-based intelligence (Galton 1874; Cox 1926), potential associated with a domain-specific ability (Bloom (ed.) 1985; Subotnik et al. 2011), as well as potential related to morality (Dabrowski 1970). In early studies, researchers focused on intelligence as an innate, static, and unchanging indicator of intellectual giftedness. Contemporary understanding regards potential as malleable and dynamic, subject to development, and related to various psychosocial factors. The way potential is understood determines the definition of giftedness, identification methods and guidelines for education. Potential and giftedness can be understood as a promise of future achievement and success (Subotnik et al. 2023), a promise to develop ethical leaders who can make the world a better place to live (Sternberg 2020). Viewed through this perspective, potential and giftedness are of interest not only to parents, educators, and teachers, but also to researchers and policy makers seeking to develop optimal methods and programmes in education. The concepts of giftedness differentiate between two ways of understanding giftedness. In one, a gifted individual is important alongside their development and problems (Dabrowski 1970), while the other emphasizes their achievements and accomplishments (Subotnik et al. 2011).

Traditional understanding of potential as an individual's innate endowment, primarily pertaining to intelligence

Historically, an important and ongoing problem associated with giftedness has been the question of **nature or nurture** (Galton 1874). During the early stages of giftedness research, the dominant notion held that potential was hereditary and served as the foundation for the development of giftedness and abilities. In the second half of the 19th century and in the first half of the 20th century, psychologists became interested in giftedness, but predominantly in intelligence. The study of intelligence began with the application of psychometric and historiometric methods. A pioneer in this field was Francis Galton (1883), who held that potential or natural ability was innate and hereditary. However, he advocated for an expanded conception of giftedness that would encompass the entire structure, including capacity, passion, and commitment to hard work. Lewis M. Terman (1916) conducted a longitudinal study of gifted children with high IQs, while Leta Stetter Hollingworth (1926) developed concepts for identifying, supporting, and educating children with IQs above 155. Catharine Cox (1926) conducted a broad study with the application of the historiometric method, the results of which showed that geniuses had high IQs in childhood. The belief in the genetic and innate conditioning of potential, and its stability over the lifespan, was often accompanied by references to the influence of environment and upbringing on the development of intellectual giftedness.

A novel approach focusing on a broader spectrum of factors encompassing psychosocial aspects

A novel approach to understanding potential incorporates more factors, including intellectual, personality, emotional, psychosocial, and other elements. This approach is a response to strong objections raised by researchers, theorists, and practitioners against the concept of intelligence as the sole, static, and innate indicator of potential and giftedness. Joseph S. Renzulli's (2005) model, known as the Three-Ring Conception of Giftedness (TRCG), incorporates above-average, but not necessarily superior, ability, creativity, and task commitment. He classified giftedness into two categories: the first encompasses **schoolhouse giftedness**, important for school-based learning, while the second includes **creative-productive giftedness**. Renzulli (2005) also emphasized a wide range of domain-specific ability *and advocated for educational programmes tailored to address diverse forms of giftedness once identified in students.*

Howard Gardner (1999), the author of the Multiple Intelligence (MI) concept, recognized the complexity of human potential, encompassing not only one, but nine distinct intelligences as defined by him. Gardner (1999) defined intelligence as the ability to solve problems, generate new ideas, or creations, thereby associating it with creative abilities. He believed that each individual possessed these intelligences, but in varying profiles, and their identification enabled the customization of educational programmes to address the specific needs and capacities of each student.

The Differentiated Model of Giftedness and Talent (DMGT), developed by François Gagné (2016), shows the process of development and transformation of natural abilities into mature talents. The DMGT consists of five components: natural abilities, talents, a developmental process, and two catalysts: intrapersonal and environmental. Gagné (2016) believes that basic natural abilities can be observed in the day-to-day activities of children and students, both at home and at school.

The psychosocial model of giftedness called Sea Star (Tannenbaum 1983) encompasses general and special abilities, as well as non-intellective, environmental, and chance factors. The model's author classifies abilities into two categories: productive and performative. The productive category includes abilities that enable an individual to engage in activities resulting in the creation of a product, work, or concept. Examples include painting a picture, writing a book, or formulating a theory. The second category comprises abilities whose expression is connected with the process of performing. For instance, this could involve playing a musical piece for those gifted in music or participating in theatrical performances for those gifted in dramatic arts (Tannenbaum 2003). Abraham J. Tannenbaum emphasizes that "Keeping in mind that developed talent exists only in adults, a proposed definition of giftedness in children is that it denotes their potential (...)" (1983: 86).

In contemporary models, the concept of potential reflects its great complexity. It is associated with innate, qualitatively distinct natural, intellectual, creative, and domain-specific abilities. This article presents two models that differ in the understanding of potential and

giftedness. In Kazimierz Dąbrowski's (1979) Theory of Positive Disintegration (TPD), potential is seen as an individual's attainable level of development. In contrast, the Megamodel (Subotnik et al. 2011) defines potential in terms of abilities and psychosocial variables necessary to reach the highest levels of achievement at specific stages of development.

Kazimierz Dąbrowski's Theory of Positive Disintegration

Kazimierz Dąbrowski's Theory of Positive Disintegration is a theory focusing on the personal, moral, emotional, and spiritual growth of individuals (Dąbrowski 1979; Piechowski 2014). Developmental potential plays a crucial role in this theory, as it indicates the maximum attainable level of an individual's development under favourable environmental conditions. This theory holds that human development is a dynamic process that encompasses successive stages of disintegration, or the breakdown of psychological structures, followed by integration at higher levels. According to Dąbrowski (1979), disintegration is a natural component of the developmental process and can manifest itself through various symptoms, such as fear, anxiety, or emotional sensitivity. In this theoretical framework, disintegration leads to positive transformations and facilitates the development of one's personality towards higher values in the hierarchy, provided the individual possesses sufficient developmental potential.

Developmental potential

Dąbrowski identified three factors in the development of an individual. The first one is the innate constitutional developmental potential (DP), which defines the individual's potential level of development (Piechowski 1979). The second factor encompasses the impact of the immediate social environment. The third developmental factor represents the autonomous forces of self-directed development. Developmental potential can be strong, average, or weak. In cases of strong positive potential, the environment is not relevant, whereas for individuals with average or weak potential appropriate educational programmes are crucial to support and stimulate their development (Dąbrowski 1970).

Developmental potential comprises five forms of overexcitability (OE): psychomotor, sensual, intellectual, imaginal, and emotional. It also involves interests, abilities, intelligence, talents, as well as early manifestations of the individual's inner life and identity awareness (Piechowski 1979). Overexcitability is an intense and prolonged reaction to both external and internal stimuli, accompanied by enduring affective memory. Strong potential encompasses all or nearly all forms of OE, especially intellectual, imaginal, and emotional OEs (Dąbrowski 1979). Each form of OE has its own distinct characteristics (Piechowski 2014; Dąbrowski 2019). Psychomotor OE is characterised by an excess of energy, expressed through rapid speech, intense physical activity, and a tendency towards impulsiveness and competitiveness (Piechowski 2014). Children with psychomotor OE encounter problems

at school, displaying hyperactivity in the classroom, disturbing teachers, and struggling to concentrate (Dąbrowski 1964). Sensual OE is associated with a strong sense of sensual and aesthetic delights and deriving joy from sensory experiences. Individuals with this form of OE experience pleasure during encounters with beauty and art (Piechowski 2014). Young children show a need for frequent caresses and closeness to their mother, and some individuals may exhibit balletic abilities (Dąbrowski 1964). Intellectual OE manifests itself through the intensified activity of the mind, cognitive curiosity, a capacity for sustained intellectual effort and concentration, as well as a strong need for reading and reflective thinking (Piechowski 2014). From an early age, children inquire about the nature, causes, and purposes of phenomena, expecting satisfactory answers. They exhibit keen observation skills and advanced logical-causal reasoning. They can be highly critical, which stems from their independent thinking, formulating personal judgements and opinions at an early stage, as well as a sense of autonomy from adult authority. They frequently display exceptional intellectual abilities. Nevertheless, their development may be asynchronous due to their heightened focus on intellectual growth, which may lead to emotional and social problems (Dąbrowski 1964).

Imaginational OE is characterized by the free play of the imagination, rich associations of images and impressions, as well as fantasy and invention. Individuals with this form of OE enjoy the world of imagination and often create imaginary worlds and characters (Piechowski 2014). Children have difficulty distinguishing between the products of their imagination and reality. They may find the world of imagination more attractive than reality and their school environment demanding and unpleasant (Dąbrowski 1964).

Emotional OE is characterized by the presence of intense, complex, and extreme emotions, alongside a capacity for empathy. Individuals with this form of OE are aware of a whole range of feelings, demonstrate deep compassion, show tenderness in their relationships, and frequently experience feelings of loneliness. They are able to differentiate their own feelings well, which is expressed through inner dialogue and a predilection for self-judgement (Piechowski 2014). Children's emotional life develops early, and they show a strong emotional attachment to those closest to them and, at the same time, an aversion to strangers. The first months at school can be difficult for them due to an excess of stimuli and difficulties in relieving accumulated mental tension (Dąbrowski 1964). The intensity of experiences in gifted children is often misunderstood by those around them. High energy displayed by children is viewed as uncontrolled activity, often confused with ADHD (Mika 2006). Emotional sensitivity is interpreted as immaturity, while creative imagination is sometimes seen as fantasizing or losing touch with the real world. Intellectual inquiring is viewed as undermining authority (Daniels, Piechowski 2009).

Overexcitabilities affect the way individuals perceive, feel, experience, behave, and function. Individuals with more forms of overexcitabilities have richer and more complex experiences of stimulus reception and processing (Dąbrowski 1979; Piechowski 1986). The link between emotionality and sensitivity and giftedness was identified not only by Dąbrowski (1975), but also by other researchers. Studies of very young gifted children

have shown that they are characterized by sensitivity and intensity from the earliest years, and they exhibit a keen interest in the world around them (Vaivre-Douret 2011; Roeper 2013). In his early research on intelligence, Galton (1883) identified two characteristics that distinguished individuals of high and average intelligence. The first characteristic is high energy, which he defined as a capacity for hard work. The second characteristic is a heightened sensitivity to internal and external stimulation. According to William M. Cruickshank (1963), supersensitivity in young children serves as the source of their exceptional intellectual giftedness, enabling them to assimilate a significant number of sensory experiences.

Overexcitability, giftedness, and asynchronous development

Dąbrowski's theory was incorporated into the field of giftedness research by Michael M. Piechowski (1979), who believed that overexcitability could be a good indicator of giftedness. According to Piechowski, "giftedness is a multifaceted phenomenon involving the interplay of specific talents, favourable environmental events, and unique personality characteristics" (1986: 190). Adopting such an understanding of giftedness, based on developmental potential, makes it possible to include personality in the analysis of giftedness, considering the emotional-social sphere. The following definition was put forth by researchers from the Columbus Group: "Giftedness is asynchronous development in which advanced cognitive abilities and heightened intensity combine to create inner experiences and awareness that are qualitatively different from the norm. This asynchrony increases with higher intellectual capacity. The uniqueness of the gifted renders them particularly vulnerable and requires modifications in parenting, teaching, and counselling in order for them to develop optimally" (Tolan 2013: 14). Asynchronous development refers to a developmental discrepancy between mental age and chronological age (Silverman 2013).

First researchers who studied, identified, and diagnosed giftedness and who created programmes and schools for gifted children had already observed that these children's development was uneven. Leta Hollingworth (1926), one of the researchers interested in the asynchronous development of children, concluded that gifted children required special attention in terms of emotional and social development and functioning. A similar view was held by Terman (1916), who noted that gifted children encountered problems in social interaction. He argued that premature intellectual development definitely hindered their social adjustment. According to Terman (1916), the higher the child's IQ, the greater their problems with social functioning. Jean-Charles Terrassier (1985) distinguished between internal asynchrony and external asynchrony. Internal asynchrony refers to uneven rates and discrepancies in children's intellectual, psychomotor, and emotional development. In contrast, external asynchrony has a social nature and refers to children's relations with school, family, and other children.

Educational programmes in schools are typically designed for children of average abilities, which means that there is a shortage of suitable programmes for gifted students.

Gifted children may experience a lack of understanding from their parents due to their unique development and deep thinking. They may also experience problems in their relationships with peers, struggling to find friends who share a similar level of intellectual development and interests in similar problems. They also frequently encounter a lack of acceptance or aggression from peers due to their difference and uniqueness. It should be stressed that asynchronous development is the norm for exceptionally gifted individuals, and their development is both unique and individual. This means that there is no singular developmental pattern for them (Dąbrowski 1975; Silverman 2013; Limont 2014).

Implications for education

Dąbrowski (n.d.) criticized traditional formal schooling, claiming it focused only on children's external environment, disregarding their internal psychological development and developmental potential. He argued that the educational process should encompass students' unique personality traits, such as sensitivity, frustrations, strengths, and weaknesses, as well as creative abilities (Rankel 2008). According to Dąbrowski (n.d.), it is essential to consider students' imagination and emotional sensitivity, as well as the intensity of their experiences and sensations. These aspects should be as important as students' intellectual capacities. By understanding and accommodating these aspects, the educational process can become more effective and beneficial for students. Dąbrowski (n.d.) suggested that schools should establish an environment that would enable children to develop fully, both intellectually and emotionally. He advocated for the child-centred holistic and humanistic education, which acknowledged the child's non-typical development through careful observation of the child's problems, feelings, emotions, and sensitivities (Rankel 2008). According to Dąbrowski (n.d.), the traditional education system placed a strong emphasis on specialization and achievement in a specific area aligned with the student's abilities, combined with productivity and performance. He believed that narrow specialization could restrict an individual's personal development, and such a one-sided ability development might result in delays in emotional growth. It is therefore necessary to ensure a balance between intellectual and emotional aspects of development (Dąbrowski n.d.). He expressed concern that a focus on one-sided specialization could lead to integration within a narrow field, heightened self-centredness, a lack of sympathy, and a tendency to autocratic attitudes, concurrently resulting in the underdevelopment of self-awareness and self-control (Grant, Piechowski 1999).

Dąbrowski emphasized that the educational process should be intertwined with a student's self-development and self-education. These elements are crucial for the development of investigative and problem-solving skills. An education based on these elements facilitates the analysis and exploration of a wide range of subjects and issues, thereby stimulating intellectual and creative growth. A child-centred approach to education means respecting the child's autonomy. Through appropriate experiences, students can follow their passions based on their own interests and abilities. It is crucial to try to understand

the child's perspective in order to customize education to their needs. This approach treats students as individuals in the educational process, which fosters their full development and self-fulfilment. Understanding the child's perspective and inner life helps the child find their unique developmental path (Grant, Piechowski 1999).

The Talent Development Megamodel

The Talent Development Megamodel (TDMM) was developed using data from an extensive and meticulous review of existing subject literature and a synthesis of what the authors considered to be the most important information from theories, models, and concepts of giftedness (Subotnik et al. 2011, 2023). The name "Talent Development Megamodel" is intended to reflect the contributions made by theorists and researchers from earlier models of giftedness. The Scholarly Productivity/Artistry (SP/A) model (Subotnik, Jarvin 2005) was particularly relevant to this framework. The SP/A model outlines the process of transforming abilities into competences, and then competences into expertise and eminence, with outstanding levels of artistry among musicians or scholarly productivity among scientists. Furthermore, it highlights the diverse developmental trajectories across various areas of specialization within a particular discipline, as well as the significant role of psychosocial skills that act as catalysts in the transition from one developmental stage to the next.

Key assumptions and concepts

The Megamodel is a developmental framework that offers insights into giftedness across diverse domains and subdomains. It also emphasizes the role of psychosocial skills in the development of talents towards achievements at the level of eminence. According to the model's authors, gifted individuals can be categorized into two groups: performers and producers, with each group excelling in separate domains.

The performers are individuals who engage in activities related to the process of performance, for example singers, instrumentalists, dancers, as well as actors and athletes. Producers, on the other hand, include individuals who produce specific works, for example composers, choreographers, as well as writers, scientists, and academics (Subotnik et al. 2011, 2019). The Megamodel outlines several key assumptions that play an important role in the process of development from potential to eminence. The model's authors believe that giftedness is essential for talent development and that both general and domain-specific abilities are significant for achieving outstanding performance. Domain-specific abilities are malleable and should be cultivated through the use of emerging opportunities for interaction with peers and experiences that require effort. This is essential for transforming potential into achievement, expertise, and, sometimes, eminence. The process of developing giftedness depends on seizing opportunities at different stages of development, for example during

the transition from achievement to expertise. The optimal age to begin talent development varies depending on the domain; for some it is childhood, while for others adolescence or adulthood (Subotnik et al. 2011). The developmental trajectories related to beginning, peak, and end points also vary across domains. Talent development is a long-term process that depends on both formal and informal factors. However, the mere emergence of opportunities is not sufficient for talent development. It is necessary to actively engage with these opportunities and use them. Psychosocial skills, such as self-confidence, mindset, and commitment are crucial for achieving short and long-term goals and for skilfully promoting oneself. Creativity is one of the key components in the transition from ability to competence and eminence. In children, creative activity is manifested as little-c creativity, whereas creativity associated with eminence and outstanding achievements is referred to as Big-C creativity. Key psychological skills relevant to talent development include self-regulation, perseverance, and anxiety reduction. Individuals who are developing their talents must confront successes, failures, and criticism (Subotnik et al. 2023). The Megamodel presents two definitions of giftedness: an operational one and a comprehensive one. The operational definition can and should be used to analyse the development of domain-specific abilities within the context of the Megamodel's assumptions (Subotnik et al. 2011; McWilliams et al. 2019). This definition includes the key propositions about giftedness that are frequently cited by other researchers. "Giftedness (a) reflects the values of society; (b) is typically manifested in actual outcomes, especially in adulthood; (c) is domain specific; (d) is the result of the coalescing of biological, pedagogical, psychological, and psychosocial factors; and (e) is relative not just to the ordinary (e.g., a child with above-average art ability compared to peers) but to the extraordinary (e.g., an artist who revolutionizes a field of art)" (Subotnik et al. 2011: 7). The comprehensive definition, on the other hand, reads as follows: "Giftedness is the manifestation of performance or production that is clearly at the upper end of the distribution in a talent domain even relative to that of other high-functioning individuals in that domain. Further, giftedness can be viewed as developmental, in that in the beginning stages, potential is the key variable; in later stages, achievement is the measure of giftedness; and in fully developed talents, eminence is the basis on which this label is granted. Psychosocial variables play an essential role in the manifestation of giftedness at every developmental stage. Both cognitive and psychosocial variables are malleable and need to be deliberately cultivated" (Subotnik et al. 2019: 11). The comprehensive definition, which contains more information than the operational definition, can form the basis for the development of educational programmes following the Megamodel concept (Subotnik et al. 2023).

Potential for outstanding achievement

Potential for outstanding achievement is the key variable for giftedness. The definition of this concept is broad and reads: "Potential refers to the likelihood that the combination

of relative strengths with other abilities will be predictive of future high performance” (Subotnik et al. 2019: 10). This definition does not refer to specific individual characteristics but emphasizes the significance of strong potential that can be regarded as an indicator of future achievements. This generalization welcomes various additional variables relevant to potential, which are analysed in the context of a specific model or theory.

The authors of the model argue that the literature review has revealed several variables associated with outstanding achievement, which were deemed as potential. The most important of these include general and domain-specific ability, creativity, motivation and mindset, task commitment, passion, interest, opportunity, and chance. Certain variables may be shared by both performers and producers, whereas others are specific to each group (Subotnik et al. 2011). In their later publication, the model’s authors outlined key psychosocial skills associated with potential in education: teachability but able to push back with ideas of one’s own; motivation (intrinsic and extrinsic); persistence through good and bad times; self-confidence, comfort with varied perspectives; tasteful self-promotion; and screening out distractions (Subotnik et al. 2023: 7).

Education

In the context of gifted education, the model’s authors propose, for example, the use of enriched education tailored to three levels of development: potential, competence, and expertise. They emphasize that educational programmes for gifted students should focus on domain-specific aspects, considering the developmental trajectories involved. It should be acknowledged that an individual’s abilities are not static but can be cultivated through suitable measures. It is also important to cultivate psychosocial skills and formulate developmental paths in both academic and professional contexts. Moreover, individuals should seize emerging opportunities and possibilities that may further develop their abilities (Subotnik et al. 2023).

The present approach to stimulating the development of abilities is largely based on enriching educational programmes with diverse topics from different fields. In the early stages of talent development, it is crucial to identify potential, which involves recognizing abilities. This identification may take place at various points in life, depending on the specific area of interest. This process involves identifying and nurturing students’ hidden potential. Fostering the development of this potential requires the use of practical activities that demonstrate possible ways to utilize students’ talents. It is also important to introduce open collaborative thinking and encourage individual reflection within the context of the challenges faced by students. Students who exhibit interest in specific topics should be provided with support to further explore and deepen their passions.

At the competence stage, the enrichment process evolves gradually, moving from broad areas to more targeted and in-depth studies. The proposed topics should consider students’ strengths, which facilitates the exploration of new areas. Students’ participation

in competitions and public presentations of their works holds a significant role in their development, affording them experience in social interaction. An important practical strategy involves students' participation in activities that simulate real professional scenarios. This enables them to become familiar with the methods and techniques used in authentic professional practices. It is also important for students to receive early information about educational opportunities and career pathways within a specific field. The cultivation of independent learning skills should be encouraged through engagement in short-term projects and problem-based tasks. In this context, mentors assume a crucial role in sharing their informal knowledge with students and helping them to establish valuable contacts.

At the expertise stage, enrichment entails offering advanced scientific knowledge in an area aligned with students' interests. Extracurricular activities, engagement in thematic communities, and informal learning play a key role at this educational stage. Further exploration of career pathways constitutes an important element of the curriculum. Such experiences, along with others, contribute to enhancing students' understanding of culture, values, and specific terminology of their selected field. The cultivation of independent learning skills should be based on particular experiences and self-driven research. The capacity to establish networks with peers and mentors plays a crucial role in talent development. This facilitates mutual emotional support and fosters opportunities for collaboration within peer groups. The importance of psychologists cannot be understated either, particularly for students preparing for competitions, public speaking, or auditions. Their support is crucial in terms of enhancing concentration, managing stress, and developing resilience to failure (Subotnik et al. 2023).

Summary

The two models or rather concepts of giftedness discussed above present different perspectives on giftedness, developmental potential, and education. In Dąbrowski's theory, developmental potential is innate, and it indicates the attainable level of personality development. This potential includes not only abilities, but also psychological variables, such as overexcitabilities, which influence the intensity and depth of experiences, empathy, and sensitivity to others' problems. Gifted individuals exhibit asynchronous development, where accelerated intellectual growth often comes at the cost of social and emotional development. Their development is unique, and it requires individualized, student-centred education. Understanding who they are, what they feel, and what problems they face is crucial.

The contrasting concept is the Megamodel, which emerged from a synthesis of information gathered through a thorough review of literature on giftedness. In this model, potential is interrelated with abilities and psychosocial variables that vary across different stages of development. The Megamodel focuses on domain-specific abilities, i.e. different abilities with distinct developmental trajectories that can be identified at different ages. Education should use abilities and psychosocial skills in the development towards the highest levels

of achievement and success, and finally to expertise. This concept emphasizes carefully designed educational programmes for gifted students that include the monitoring of results in the form of achievements that surpass those of their peers. Professional career pathways are integrated into education, and support is related to potential obstacles that impede the realization of planned success.

Conclusions

Two important questions arise in theories of giftedness. The first one concerns the **nature or nurture** dilemma, while the second pertains to the **being or doing** choice. Many researchers and theorists of giftedness have tried to address these questions by attempting to determine whether the genetic **nature** factor or the environmental **nurture** one has a greater influence on the development of personality and ability. The nature perspective shows that many traits and abilities are hereditary, which suggests that individuals possess some innate predispositions that influence their development and behaviour. Such an understanding of developmental potential is characteristic of Dąbrowski's theory, which places a significant emphasis on genetic and innate factors. In contrast, the nurture perspective emphasizes the impact of the environment, education, as well as social and cultural experiences on individuals' giftedness and the development of their traits and identity. This approach to potential is reflected in the Megamodel, where psychosocial skills play a crucial role. To sum up, potential can be understood in terms of **nature** (Dąbrowski's theory) or **nurture** (the Megamodel). The concept of **being or doing** refers to the choice between focusing on inner characteristics, values, and identity (being), which is consistent with Dąbrowski's theory, or on achievements, actions, and specific skills (doing), which forms the foundation of the Megamodel. In the context of giftedness, the choice between being or doing involves focusing on the development of inner potential, self-awareness, and self-acceptance (Dąbrowski 1979) or on the pursuit of success, actions, and the enhancement of specific skills (megamodel).

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