

University of Groningen

The Netherlands gets 2e inclusive

Minnaert, Alexander

Published in:
Variations

IMPORTANT NOTE: You are advised to consult the publisher's version (publisher's PDF) if you wish to cite from it. Please check the document version below.

Document Version
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Publication date:
2020

[Link to publication in University of Groningen/UMCG research database](#)

Citation for published version (APA):

Minnaert, A. (2020). The Netherlands gets 2e inclusive: Shifting from multitrack toward inclusive education. *Variations*, (4), 23-25.

Copyright

Other than for strictly personal use, it is not permitted to download or to forward/distribute the text or part of it without the consent of the author(s) and/or copyright holder(s), unless the work is under an open content license (like Creative Commons).

The publication may also be distributed here under the terms of Article 25fa of the Dutch Copyright Act, indicated by the "Taverne" license. More information can be found on the University of Groningen website: <https://www.rug.nl/library/open-access/self-archiving-pure/taverne-amendment>.

Take-down policy

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

Downloaded from the University of Groningen/UMCG research database (Pure): <http://www.rug.nl/research/portal>. For technical reasons the number of authors shown on this cover page is limited to 10 maximum.



The Netherlands Gets 2e Inclusive

SHIFTING FROM MULTITRACK TOWARD INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

by Alexander Minnaert, Ph.D.

THE DUTCH EDUCATION

system has a long history of segregating special education, but it has recently turned toward a more inclusive model. Policies such as the Salamanca Statement (1994), the Passend Onderwijs Act of 2014 (translated as “Befitting Education”), and the Incheon Declaration (2015) have offered a variety of responses to questions about appropriate programming for students with special needs. The number of students in special schools has slightly decreased over the last 10 years, and advocates continue to push for additional support and accommodation for special education students through a child-centered pedagogy.

Toward this end, Evelyn Kroesbergen, Agnes Burger-Veltmeijer, Minnaert,

and Lianne Hoogeveen obtained a three-year grant from the Netherlands Initiative for Education Research in 2019 to explore questions about twice-exceptional students’ characteristics and developmental challenges, in order to glean insights about possible identification processes. The investigators also seek to lay the groundwork for programs that more adequately accommodate the educational needs of 2e students, find factors to reduce frustration, increase talent development, and contribute to a successful school career for these students.

Indeed, there is an increasing awareness of the need for specific support structures for twice-exceptional students, who have high learning potential but struggle with

academic tasks due to emotional, behavioral, and learning issues (Ruban & Reis, 2005; Brody & Mills, 1997). However, there is a lack of consensus about how to define and identify these students (Beckmann & Minnaert, 2018; McCoach et al., 2001; Reis et al., 2014). The reality is that 2e students are often overlooked when assessed for either giftedness or persistent developmental problems (Reis et al., 1995). This can lead to 2e students being denied access to appropriate educational and career opportunities.

In the Netherlands, the demand for practical guidelines for 2e students increased substantially after the passing of the Passend Onderwijs Act, which provided that students are only referred to special programs if their academic and social needs are not being

met. But the current Dutch educational system is inadequately equipped to meet the challenging educational needs of these 2e students. This increases the risk of problematic behavior, early school dropout, and educational outcomes that do not measure up with 2e students' high intelligence and aptitude.

This consequence yields harmful effects both for the students' personal development and for society in general, necessitating that schools gather insights on 2e students and create structures that support their high capacities and relatively weaker learning-related, neuropsychological, and social-emotional skills (Burger-Veltmeijer et al., 2018).

In recent years, Dutch scholarship specific to twice-exceptionality has

increased. Beckmann and Minnaert (2018) wrote about the often neglected "non-cognitive" challenges that gifted students with learning problems often face. Their study revealed that 2e students experience a high degree of frustration in academic situations. Asynchronies in 2e students' non-cognitive characteristics were encountered, which required tailored counseling skills to provide effective support for their learning needs.

The main conclusions of a review by Burger-Veltmeijer et al. (2018) are: it is very difficult to diagnose these students (a variety of criteria are used); it is difficult to tap their needs; and it is important to apply an individual approach by an expert diagnostician. These challenges are heightened by the shortage of empirical data on this matter, which was first recognized

more than two decades ago, emerged continuously thereafter, and is still present today. Within the very limited amount of practice-oriented research in the Dutch educational system, decisions are made about the needs of these students, without empirical basis, which are often "taken for granted" by professionals (Burger-Veltmeijer et al., 2018). Consequently, the risks of these unsubstantiated facts result in a lack of inclusive and equitable quality education for 2e students. In general, differences among levels of intelligence, learning results, neuropsychological, and non-cognitive characteristics generate even more complexity into the diagnostic and needs-based assessment processes of 2e students (Beckmann & Minnaert, 2018; Burger-Veltmeijer et al., 2011).

There are still few studies available on needs-based, treatment-oriented assessment or effective psycho-educational interventions for 2e students within the Dutch educational system. But these areas are the focus of our future research.

In addition to focusing on identification and support for 2e students, our Netherlands Initiative for Education Research grant aims to optimize the knowledge and skills of teachers in instructing and counseling 2e students, and in evaluating the effectiveness of these skills and knowledge within the context of an inclusive program. Toward this end, researchers have compared empirical literature from the international community to practice-oriented studies in the Dutch educational system and will evaluate the effectiveness of any resulting interventions with subsequent empirical research.

The main conclusions: it is very difficult to diagnose these students; it is difficult to tap their needs; and it is important to apply an individual approach by an expert diagnostician.



References

- Beckmann, E., & Minnaert, A. (2018). Non-cognitive characteristics of gifted students with learning disabilities: An in-depth systematic review. *Frontiers in Psychology, 9*, 504.
- Brody, L. E., & Mills, C. J. (1997). Gifted children with learning disabilities: A review of the issues. *Journal of Learning Disabilities, 30*(3), 282-296.
- Burger-Veltmeijer, A., Kroesbergen, E., Minnaert, A., & Hoogeveen, L. (2018). *Passend onderwijs voor dubbel-bijzondere (hoog)begaafde leerlingen: Fabels en feiten over (het voorkomen van) frustratie van talent* [Tailored Education for Twice Exceptional Gifted Students: Facts and Myths on the Prevention of Talent Frustration]. Nijmegen, Eindhoven, Groningen: Radboud Universiteit, ABV, Rijksuniversiteit Groningen. [NRO, project number 405-18-631]
- Burger-Veltmeijer, A. E. J., Minnaert, A. E. M. G., & Van Houten-Van den Bosch, E. J. (2011). The co-occurrence of intellectual giftedness and Autism Spectrum Disorders. *Educational Research Review, 6*, 67-88.
- de Leeuw, R. R., de Boer, A. A., Bijstra, J., & Minnaert, A. E. M. G. (2018). Teacher strategies to support the social participation of students with SEBD in the regular classroom. *European Journal of Special Needs Education, 33*(2), 166-186.
- Ledoux, G. (2012). *Ex ante evaluatie Passend onderwijs. Studie in opdracht van de ECPO* [Ex ante evaluation Appropriate education. Study commissioned by the ECPO]. *Evaluatiekader Passend onderwijs*. Den Haag, the Netherlands.
- McCoach, D. B., Kehle, T. J., Bray, M. A. & Siegle, D. (2001). Best practices in the identification of gifted students with learning disabilities. *Psychology in the Schools, 38*(5), 403-411.
- Ministry of Education Culture and Science. (2014). *Wet Passend Onderwijs* [Act of Befitting Education]. Den Haag.
- Reis, S. M., Baum, S. M., & Burke, E. (2014). An operational definition of twice-exceptional learners: Implications and applications. *Gifted Child Quarterly, 58*(3), 217-230.
- Reis, S. M., Neu, T. W. & McGuire, J. M. (1995). *Talents in two places: Case studies of high ability students with learning disabilities who have achieved*. Storrs: University of Connecticut, The National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented.
- Ruban, L. M., & Reis, S. M. (2005). Identification and assessment of gifted students with learning disabilities. *Theory Into Practice, 44*(2), 115-124.
- UNESCO (1994). *The Salamanca statement and framework for action on special needs education*. Paris: UNESCO.
- UNESCO (2015). *Incheon Declaration and SDG4 - Education 2030 Framework for Action*. Incheon.



Alexander Minnaert

Alexander Minnaert, Ph.D., graduated with a master's degree in educational, school, and medical psychology at the University of Leuven in Belgium. He obtained his teacher education certificate for secondary and higher education, both in Belgium and the Netherlands, a post-graduate certificate in learning and instruction at the Friedrich-Schiller Universität Jena in Germany; and received his doctorate in educational psychology at the University of Leuven in 1996. In 1997, he was appointed assistant and associate professor in instructional sciences and clinical education at the Department of Education, Leiden University. In 2004, he became full professor at the University of Groningen with a focus on clinical educational research, motivation and emotion, learning problems, innovations and transformations in (inclusive) education and educational research methodology.