GL Assessment®





The lost middle: how the term ‘average’ can obscure student problems and potential

Report 2017

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INTRODUCTION

If teachers were asked what an average grade was in the new GCSEs, what would the answer be? Is it a standard pass, a 4, or a good pass, a 5? Or is it potentially any score from a 3, a near miss, to a 7, an approximate grade B in old money? The answer I guess depends on expectations and on context. But there is no doubt that thanks to the overhaul of GCSEs, and the addition of more granular grading, our understanding of 'average' has been officially stretched.

I'd like to go further. I'd like to stretch 'average' so far that we only use it sparingly and recognise that as far as individual assessment is concerned it's practically useless.

This report shows that while 'average' may be convenient statistical shorthand, for teachers and students it has distinct limitations. A description of 'average' can tell a teacher where a student sits on the overall ability spectrum, but it won't tell them that the student may have slightly lower verbal learning skills and that they may struggle with English more than most in their cohort.

As this report explains, the chances of students who are generally defined as 'average' getting a B or above in English at GCSE range from one in ten to seven in ten, depending on their verbal ability bias. Such divergence in performance cannot accurately be encapsulated by the word 'average'. It is too broad to be useful. It won't give teachers the granular information they need to overcome learning barriers or unlock student potential.

This report is an attempt to do just that. Our analysis shows that within the cohort normally identified as 'average' (the middle half of students), six in ten exhibit some kind of verbal, quantitative or spatial ability bias. If teachers know exactly what this is, they can then tailor interventions accordingly.

At a time when new GCSE grades have stretched the 'middle', and when rigid setting has been called into question by new research from the Institute of Education, isn't it time that we accepted that every child is basically in a set of one?

We need a more fluid approach to assessment and we shouldn't put teachers in the invidious position of making broad judgements based on crude data. As this report suggests, we could start by refusing to consider any child to be 'average'.

Shane Rae, Head of Publishing at GL Assessment

THE LOST MIDDLE:

HOW THE TERM 'AVERAGE' CAN OBSCURE STUDENT PROBLEMS AND POTENTIAL



In the 1950s the US Air Force realised that its planes' cockpits were too small for its pilots, who had tended to put on pounds and inches in the 30 years since they were first designed for the average airman. So it commissioned a survey of 4,000 pilots to figure out what the new average was on a range of ten dimensions.

When the results were in, the air force was surprised to discover that not a single pilot was average across all ten fields. Even when the dimensions were reduced to three, only 3.5% of pilots registered as average in all of them. A pilot who was short in the leg could be long in the arm and vice versa. Varying chest circumferences, torso lengths and head sizes made any concept of average redundant. And so, with the miracle of adjustable seats, headrests and belts, cockpits were redesigned to accommodate the extremes – the tallest, shortest, fattest and thinnest – rather than any 'average'.

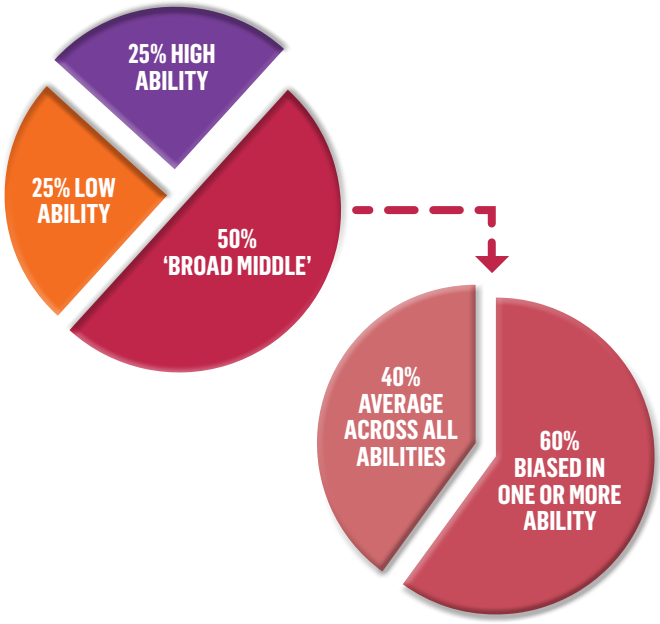
Harvard academic Todd Rose recounts this anecdote in his book The End of Average, in which he argues that school systems often do what the USAF had tried to do: they prize standardisation and ignore variability and individuality[1]. "Human beings don't line up perfectly," he says. "There is no average learner. They all have their strengths and weaknesses. Even geniuses do."

This report is an attempt to unpack the term 'average' and to suggest that even in broad group terms the label can be over used. As teachers know, and school systems often forget, just because students are statistical neighbours does not mean they have identical abilities. Nor do they necessarily respond to the same interventions in a similar way. A student may be 'average' across a broad spectrum of cognitive abilities but the components of that ability will vary to greater or lesser degrees in each child.

The findings

According to this study of over 24,000 children by GL Assessment, only one in five students is statistically average across the verbal, quantitative and spatial ability ranges[2]. The majority exhibit some type of bias.

This is to be expected of students who are in the top or bottom quartiles. But if we take the middle half of students, the second and third quartiles, three-fifths of them are not 'average' either, but are stronger or weaker in at least one ability[3]. For instance, **11%** of this middle half are below average verbal learners and **7%** are above average, even though they exhibit average quantitative and spatial skills. This matters because it has a marked effect on student outcomes.



In last year's GCSEs, within the middle **50%** of students, only **2%** of those who were slightly weaker verbally gained an A or A* in English. But for students who were slightly more verbally able, the proportion rose to **33%**. Similarly, only **9%** of 'average' students with weak verbal skills achieved a B at GCSE English in 2016, compared to **38%** of those with stronger verbal abilities.

In other words, among the half of all students in the middle of the ability range, the chances of students getting a B or above in English at GCSE range from **1 in 10** to **7 in 10**, depending on their verbal ability bias. At the other end of the scale, over half **(53%)** of students who were verbally weaker got a D or below at GCSE English compared to less than one in ten **(8%)** who were slightly verbally stronger.

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It's a similar story with quantitative ability. **6%** of students in the middle second and third quartiles have below average quantitative abilities and 8% are above average – both have average verbal and spatial skills. Only 1% of students with below average quantitative abilities achieved an A or A* at maths GCSE last year, compared to **30%** of those with above average quantitative abilities. Slightly under half **(47%)** of those who were quantitatively weak managed a D or below compared to only one in twenty **(6%)** who were slightly above average.

The differences are less stark with a spatial ability bias. **7%** of students in the middle second and third quartiles have below average spatial abilities and 8% are above average – both have average verbal and quantitative skills. Spatial thinkers, who think initially in images before converting them into words, can be adept at science and engineering. However, because outcomes at GCSE science are also heavily dependent on verbal and quantitative skills, the effect at GCSE is not so clear cut.

Considering children to be 'average' can be particularly problematic for those with English as an Additional Language. As Nicola Lambros points out (pages 8–9) many EAL children will be judged to be in the middle of the ability range verbally because they participate effectively in lessons and have relatively good speaking and listening skills. However, their good comprehension skills can effectively mask deeper problems, particularly with word knowledge and vocabulary.

Conclusion

Clearly, if teachers can uncover learning strengths and areas for development early on, they will be in a position to target support more effectively. This could be particularly important where students underperform. For instance, **21%** of students in the middle two quartiles with average or above average verbal abilities failed to gain a C or above at English GCSE (a level 4 or 5 in the new GCSEs), which should have been well within their grasp. The same was true in maths, where **20%** of students who registered average or above average in quantitative skills only managed a D or below last year in maths GCSE.

The same is true at the other end of the scale. Among the **50%** of students, across all sub groups (below, average, above), **63%** of students achieved a C or B in English GCSE last year, while **10%** got an A or A*. How much better could they have done if they hadn't been considered 'average'?



English and *CAT* Verbal

This table highlights the students who were below average (Standard Age Score <89), average (Standard Age Score 89 – 11) and above average (Standard Age Score <111) in the *CAT4* Verbal Reasoning battery, and their corresponding grade in GCSE English.

CAT Verbal			
Below average	**Average**	**Above average**	**GCSE grades (2016)**
53%	22%	8%	Grades D or below
36%	40%	22%	Grade C
9%	28%	38%	Grade B
2%	9%	33%	Grades A* and A
100%	**100%**	**100%**	

Maths and *CAT* Quantitative

This table highlights the students who were below average (Standard Age Score <89), average (Standard Age Score 89 – 11) and above average (Standard Age Score <111) in the *CAT4* Quantitative Reasoning battery, and their corresponding grade in GCSE Maths.

CAT Quantitative			
Below average	**Average**	**Above average**	**GCSE grades (2016)**
47%	22%	6%	Grades D or below
42%	43%	28%	Grade C
10%	25%	36%	Grade B
1%	10%	30%	Grades A* and A
100%	**100%**	**100%**	

Footnotes

1. *The End of Average: how we succeed in a world that values sameness*, by Todd Rose, HarperCollins, 2016.
2. The study is based on data from 24,500 students who did *CAT* in secondary schools and the results for GCSE in 2016.
3. Around 13,400 of these students have been identified as 'average' or 'middle 50% in terms of overall *CAT* performance





WHAT DOES AVERAGE ACTUALLY MEAN?

By **Poppy Ionides**, Educational Psychologist

The notion of average doesn't elicit the awe and wonder of high scores or the concern oft associated with low ones, but scores falling in the middle of the range deserve equal examination to those at the extremes. After all, each average score is part of a unique life story for which the future is all to play.

What an average score tells us

The journey of understanding what average scores in psychometric tests do and don't tell us starts with maths. One might expect a cut and dried answer to the meaning of 'average'. Interestingly, conventions differ: most test publishers define an average score as one lying within the middle fifty percent of the population (standard scores 90–109*) but those reporting scores do not always choose to define average in this way. For instance, some professionals prefer to think of the average range as the 68% of scores which fall within one standard deviation of the mean (standard scores 85–115). Step one, then, of understanding 'average' is to be clear on the definition in operation.

What an average score doesn't tell us

Maths is just the starting point for making the most out of scores. Two identical scores can hide startlingly different stories. The questions below uncover what scores alone don't tell us:

Does an average overall score mask significant highs and lows? The *CAT4* study reported here suggests that heterogeneity of scores is the rule rather than the exception: four out of five children with an average overall score fell outside the average range for one or more of the verbal, quantitative and spatial domains. Be alive to the possibility – likelihood, even – of spiky areas of strength and difficulty in a child's skill profile.

Are the child's scores in line with other evidence about their current abilities and understanding? Remember that scores provide a snap shot of a child's performance on a particular day; they give a good indication of ability but carry a margin of uncertainty. Consider the possibility of impact from factors such as fear of failure, impulsivity, distractibility, illness, hunger, tiredness and prior learning (including EAL).

Is the child making expected progress? If not:

Do they see their academic ability as set in stone or a set of skills which can be refined over time?
A large body of evidence suggests long-term benefit from a 'growth mindset' in which children believe in the possibility of cultivating their abilities. This feeds perseverance and resilience; failures are seen as opportunities to learn rather than diktats of inescapable ineptitude; those who start 'average' have the ability to be all but. Schools have the power to influence children's mindset.

Are they demotivated? Intrinsic motivation requires the experience of competence, positive relationships and an opportunity to behave in line with our values and interests. Exploring the way in which a child views their competence, relationships, values and interests gives valuable information.

Is there congruence between priorities and beliefs at home and school? Understanding the way in which the child's family views education will help teachers to narrow any gaps that exist between beliefs held by home and school. When communicating with families, be mindful of the possibility of unintended power hierarchies which leave parents feeling inferior and unheard.

One could argue that the questions above are appropriate for making the most of all scores, not just those in the realm of average. I would agree with that. But for those who sit in the comfort of the mid-range it is often not seen as relevant to look behind and beyond scores. As such, this report gives the perfect context in which to sharpen our thinking on what average scores do and don't tell us.

** Standard scores compare a child's performance with the scores achieved by children of their age in the standardisation sample. CAT4 uses standard scores with a mean of 100 and standard deviation of 15. Fifty percent of children achieve standard scores from 90–109; 68% of children achieve standard scores from 85–115.*

THE RISKS OF CONSIDERING A CHILD TO BE 'AVERAGE'



By **Beccie Hawes**, Head of Service at Rushall's Inclusion Advisory Service



I was recently proof reading some end of term reports for a colleague. I always read the teacher's comment at the end first because they often really capture what a teacher thinks makes that pupil special. One really stood out:

'Sam is a lovely, quiet member of the class. He always completes his work to the best of his ability and always hands in his homework on time. He is a popular member of the group and always follows our class rules reliably....'

When looking at standardised assessment scores for Sam you could perhaps expect to see them all say 100. You could then award him the dubious accolade of 'Congratulations Sam, you are the most average of average'. You could also make the assumption not to worry about him as he's there or there about. But is that the right thing to do?

I had never met Sam before but felt that, although his report was good, it wasn't remarkable in any way. I couldn't help wondering if we were missing something and if we were doing all that we could to help Sam be the best that he could be.

Sam's termly teacher assessments had placed him as meeting age-related expectations. When we delved deeper, however, his scores were all within the 'average' band but his numbers were declining over time. It became clear that Sam was on the slide. The beauty of a standardised assessment is that the scores show progress or lack of in real time as the goalposts move in line with the child's age. His scores showed that he was not making or maintaining progress.

We decided to have a chat with Sam. The conversation was a revelation. Sam said he had always coped well with school work but was 'running out of coping' as the 'work was getting trickier and trickier'. The conversation with Sam made us stop and think. We had missed the start of Sam's slide and there could be others like him.

Consequently, we have adopted the following five key principles when scrutinising assessment data.

1. Accepting 'average' on face value is not satisfactory. The 'average' standardised score of between 85 and 115 is a large band to move within. 'Average' can be misleading as it may stop us from identifying pupils that are either beginning to experience difficulties as their coping runs out or identifying pupils that are making perhaps accelerated progress.
2. Pupil voice as part of assessment practice is essential. The pupil's thoughts about their own performance and how they feel in the classroom can bring a whole new level of understanding of what it is like for each individual learner and their perceptions of the barriers that they face to learning.
3. Trust your professional hunch. If a pupil's scores don't 'sit right' it is essential to delve deeper and drill down.
4. A fresh pair of eyes is vital in providing support and challenge when interrogating results. Having a colleague who doesn't know the pupil explore your assessment data 'cold' can prompt questions that encourage you to look beyond the assessment score and performance descriptors to find the teaching tweak that could make a huge difference and the reasons behind any surprises.
5. Triangulation is crucial in getting the full picture. Look at the all of the available assessment information about the pupil over time and compare performance across assessments so that a deeper understanding of the pupil's typical progress from their unique starting point is clear. This can be used as an early alert system – proactive is always better than reactive.

So what happened to Sam?

We developed a programme of subject specific vocabulary, key concepts and strategies to help Sam 'cope' in lessons and set up systems for him to signal when he needed help. Sam and his teachers can definitely see some promising green shoots. He now asks for help much more readily when he feels that his coping skills are low, he is becoming more resilient and confident and he answers more questions in a faster time. All in all Sam doesn't sound so 'average' now!

WHY AVERAGE AT KEY STAGE 2 SHOULDN'T MEAN AVERAGE FOR ALL OF GCSE



By **Hilary Fine**, Senior Publisher, GL Assessment

An enduring frustration for many teachers is the difficulty of accurately predicting student attainment at GCSE from Key Stage 2 scores, as well as the difficulties of using this data as the basis of school performance measures.

The following statistics illustrate the point. In 2013, only 30% of children with an average Level 4b across KS2 English, Maths and Science attained a Grade C in Geography. Similarly, 38% of children with a level 4b achieved a C in Biology, 37% in Chemistry and 48% in English. This shows why we need to be cautious – and of course, most teachers are.

In England, the expected standard at KS2 (which changed from a Level 4b to a scaled score of 100 in 2016) is used to predict the 'average' attainment of Grade C at GCSE across a range of subjects - or indeed, a 4 or a 5 as the new GCSEs are introduced. It therefore follows that a child who attains an average score in their KS2 SATs will be predicted average scores in their GCSEs as part of their Attainment 8 and Progress 8 scores. But is this right?

As Steve Walters, Deputy Head of Newport Girls' High School in Shropshire, explains: "SATs scores offer some information, but one set of data is not enough, especially now that national curriculum levels have been scrapped." And now that GCSE grades have changed, too, target setting has become more difficult than before with the boundaries of the middle grade 4 or grade 5 bands being much more difficult to predict.

Unlike the Key Stage 2 SATs, which focus on Mathematics and English knowledge and skills of the Key Stage 2 curriculum, many schools use an assessment of cognitive reasoning abilities to add a more nuanced picture of each child that can also helpfully inform target setting.

"We have sound and secure baseline data which informs target-setting processes. And if you work to the target, Progress 8 will look after itself in years to come," adds Steve. Results from the *Cognitive Abilities Test* are particularly useful, he says, as they produce 1-9 indicators, which help preparations for the new Progress 8 measure.

> **"We've got to remember that we're here for the children"**

James Lissaman, Assistant Head at De Lisle College in Leicestershire, agrees that it's important to look beyond a simple attainment measure. He points to the example of a student who, when she arrived, had fairly low target grades in the more academic subjects and was targeted E grades for most of her GCSEs. "However, the *Cognitive Abilities Test* showed that she was very creative and very active, and she left us with A grades in PE, art, drama and music," he says. "We could have pushed her down the academic route, but it was clear that it wouldn't have been right for her. We've got to remember that we're here for the children."

If a child has an 'average' score on the Key Stage 2 national tests and we predict them 'average' grades at GCSE, we may already be capping their potential rather than committing to supporting their hard work and effort. It is therefore worth utilising more than one source of information on the child and look at both attainment at Key Stage 2 as well as an assessment of cognitive reasoning to ensure we see the bigger picture.





THE MIDDLE CHILD: ANALYSING DATA IN AN EAL CONTEXT



By **Nicola Lambros**, Deputy Head, King's College Madrid

The importance of maintaining a focus on literacy within the curriculum has never been far away from the government's agenda and anyone working within education would agree that developing strong literacy skills are key to a student's success, particularly as external examinations consist of written papers.

Despite this, incorporating effective literacy strategies into a lesson can, at times, be challenging particularly if staff do not have clear data informing them of each student's literacy capabilities. Furthermore, for some teachers, teaching literacy effectively within their lessons, especially those which are not literacy based, may not be an area of expertise. However, our classrooms are becoming progressively more globalised with increasing numbers of students having English as an Additional Language (EAL).

Some of these students are quickly identified for extra support as they present with very low levels of language acquisition; often these students are then tested further to establish specific areas of need and teachers are then provided with increased information and data to effectively differentiate their teaching which ensures these students make good progress. However, the majority of EAL students, in an international school environment, present with a good level of speaking and listening skills; they effectively communicate within the classroom and actively participate in learning activities. These students rarely raise concerns or are considered to be underachieving, particularly if their attitude to learning is good.

Should the *Cognitive Abilities Test* (*CAT4*) or a similar aptitude test be completed these students will often sit within stanines 4–7 for their overall *CAT4* score, results which are seen to confirm the fact that they are cognitively able and do not require extra support for literacy. Closer analysis of the *CAT4* batteries can however reveal a very different picture.



Analysing *CAT4* data from cohorts of primary and secondary students in two international schools in differing areas of the world, most if not all students with EAL have a significant verbal deficit (the difference between their standardised age score for the verbal and non-verbal batteries, any deficit larger than minus 10 being statistically significant). It is crucial that literacy development is a key focus in every lesson for students with a deficit of minus 10 or more if they are to achieve their very best across the curriculum. Therefore, every teacher must be or become a confident teacher of both their subject area and literacy, even if their subject is not literacy based.

When these students are further tested with the New Group Reading Test many of them often have good comprehension skills but significantly weaker word knowledge and vocabulary skills. This in practice means they can comprehend and rote learn information but lack the depth and breadth of vocabulary, in particular subject specific technical vocabulary, to explain in their own words what they have learned. This inhibits them from cognitively processing new information in a manner reflective of their non-verbal score which can reduce their ability to engage higher order thinking skills and therefore limit their progress and achievement. Furthermore, unless explicitly taught, grammar skills may also be lacking especially in older students who joined secondary school with little English.

Compounding these issues are the increasingly complex academic demands students face as they move through school and unless schools address the verbal deficit and close the literacy gap students with a verbal deficit will often struggle and underachieve. Notably, at first glance many of these students appear to be achieving good academic grades, but teachers should understand that if their verbal deficit is addressed much higher academic success is possible, particularly in the later stages of their education, university and beyond.

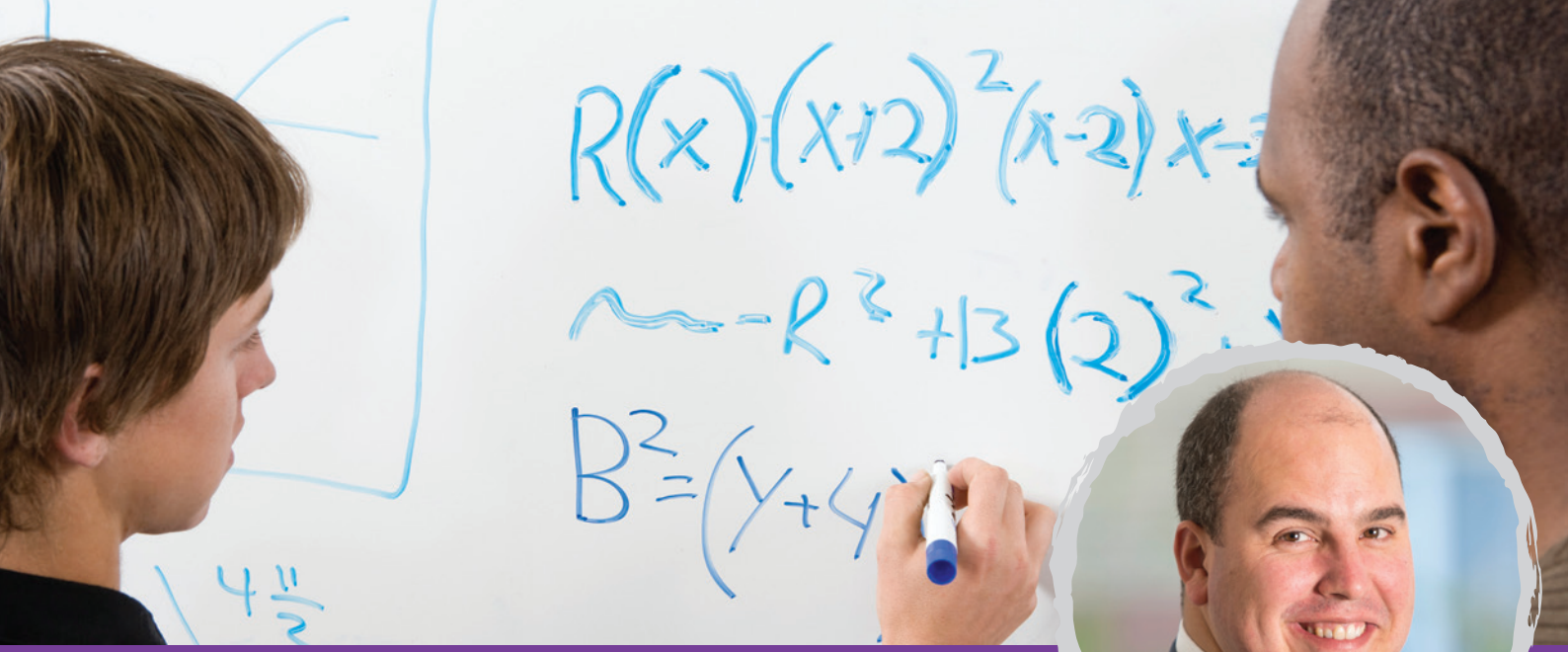
So what can we do? Very often it is as simple as making the implicit explicit. We need to explicitly teach literacy skills in context when the opportunity arises in the classroom. To name but a few:

- Consistently applying the school's marking for literacy policy and giving students the opportunity to improve their writing when they have made mistakes;
- Explicitly teaching reading strategies such as skimming and scanning and taking time to teach students how to use diagrams, pictures, headings and topic sentences in text books to gather meaning and identify key points and ideas;
- Explicitly teaching writing strategies that are important for your subject such as effective note taking or writing a practical report in science;
- Always providing and referring to key word glossaries and giving opportunities for the use of technical language to be practiced;
- Scaffolding writing activities for students and incorporating opportunities to use writing strategies such as Point, Evidence, Explain wherever possible;
- Providing explicit success criteria for writing; presenting students with information in a variety of styles, e.g. research papers or more advanced text books and teaching information gathering strategies and encouraging the use of talk partners and providing scaffolds such as 'Thought Stems' to enable students to effectively discuss and clarify their ideas with a partner before writing them down.

If we provide teaching staff with key data with which to identify their students' literacy needs and provide professional development to arm them with a number of tools to effectively teach literacy within all subjects, we can enable all teachers to become effective teachers of literacy. This, I believe, is one of the key components required to ensure every student realises their true potential and an important investment in the future of our young people.



"Every teacher must be or become a confident teacher of both their subject area and literacy, even if their subject is not literacy based."



AVERAGE WITH FLASHES OF BRILLIANCE: DUAL MULTIPLE EXCEPTIONALITY AND MATHEMATICS

By **Dr Adam Boddison**, Chief Executive, nasen

Some of my proudest career moments have come from my time as a mathematics teacher in both primary and secondary schools. It was through better understanding my own strengths and weaknesses as a teacher and through constantly developing my knowledge of how my students learnt that I discovered DME. For those who may not be familiar with this term, DME is Dual and Multiple Exceptionality and it refers to those who have both high learning potential and one or more special educational needs or disabilities.

It is not always easy to identify children with DME because their abilities can mask their needs just as their needs mask their abilities, so they can appear to be 'average with flashes of brilliance'. In many classrooms these children may appear to be an average child, but the reality is that their needs are not being met and their potential is not being realised.

To progress in this area, there are political and cultural barriers that need to be overcome. Politically, DME is not currently recognised as a special educational need, which adds an additional layer of complexity to identification. Culturally, there is a perspective from some that students who are coping and have high learning potential are going to do okay anyway, so why ought we to invest the nation's scarce resources into this group. Of course, this perspective can vary significantly depending upon which lens these children are viewed through. Seeing DME children as a subgroup of those with SEND can be interpreted very differently to seeing DME children as a subgroup of those with high learning potential.

In statistical terms, it is difficult to quantify how many children and young people may have DME, but a conservative estimate is 1 in 100. So there may be very few of these children in your school or even in your mathematics classroom, but if there were any, would you know what signs to look out for and what provision to put in place?

In thinking about how DME might manifest itself in a mathematics classroom, it is worth noting that there is no checklist. There are some indicators, but ultimately it is about better knowing the child.

One of the indicators you might look out for is inconsistency. For example, a student might be able to produce excellent written work, but struggles to answer questions verbally in the classroom or to communicate their ideas in any other format. Interestingly, there are many excellent mathematicians in universities around the world who are research leaders in their fields, but who also struggle with the teaching element of their roles.

Conversely, a student may be able to answer verbally any question directed at them in the classroom using superior language and to be able to conceptualise the bigger picture, but when it comes down to answering written questions, they seem to struggle. The point here is that there are flashes of brilliance within the inconsistencies. As a teacher, it is worth reflecting on what sets of circumstances are required to bring out those flashes of brilliance. With the right environment and with barriers to learning removed, the brilliance can become a more regular feature of their learning.





A second area of inconsistency to watch out for is a mismatch between the mathematical talents that are being displayed inside and outside the classroom. For example, I taught a student who was in the bottom set for maths because he had regularly scored poorly in the end of term tests. He didn't seem interested in maths at all, but then his form tutor told me that he was a "wizard at Sudoku" and I found out from his parents that he watched Countdown religiously and could often complete the numbers game mentally before the time limit.

I came to understand that this student had an attention deficit disorder and could not concentrate for any period of time more than about five minutes, so he appeared to be disinterested in lessons and he completely switched off in tests. Knowing this simple fact transformed his experience of maths. My Head of Department was not easy to convince, but in the end he allowed me to move this student into my top set for maths. I provided the student with a series of very short tasks in lessons that covered roughly the same content as the rest of the group and it worked. Indeed, his self-esteem was significantly better for it too.

Another indicator to watch out for is coping strategies. I once taught a student who struggled to write down their mathematics, so they would try to say something impressive to steer the lesson into a discussion, thereby minimising the amount of writing time. For example, when teaching indices to this class, I explained the rule that $a^0=1$ and the student immediately said, but what about 0^0. This insight itself was another example of a flash of brilliance.

In thinking about what kind of provision to put in place, it should ideally be a combination of high quality differentiation that removes barriers to learning and truly stretches the student, alongside effective special educational provision that removes barriers to learning and meets the needs of that specific child. The provision will depend on exactly what the needs are, but it is worth remembering that these children may respond to the provision differently to other students due to their high learning potential.

More broadly, as a classroom teacher it is worth engaging both the SENCO and the gifted and talented coordinator in the school as the student may have operated under the radar of both, but may actually benefit from the opportunities and support available. It is important to ensure that the parents and the students themselves are brought into the discussions too and that they are part of planning the provision.



USING ASSESSMENT TO IDENTIFY HIDDEN POTENTIAL



Sarah Haythornthwaite, GL Assessment's Sales and Marketing Director, explains how the company's whole-pupil approach to assessment provides teachers and senior leaders with the data and insights to gain a holistic view of each pupil.

GL Assessment has worked in partnership with schools for over 35 years to develop a range of assessments that support better outcomes for pupils. Our assessments help alert schools and teachers to a child who may need special support and allow early intervention strategies to be put in place.

Our *Cognitive Abilities Test: Fourth Edition*® (*CAT4*) provides a robust, standardised measure of cognitive reasoning ability, without reference to curriculum-based material. Used by over 50% of UK secondary schools and an increasing number of primary schools, *CAT* measures verbal, non-verbal, quantitative and spatial ability.

The data helps identify a pupil's strengths and areas for development, providing accurate and reliable information for teaching and learning. It helps teachers to set achievable but challenging targets and quickly identify if progress has halted.

CAT4 Combination Reports can also automatically combine and compare data from our other assessments – the *Progress Test in Maths*® (*PTM*), *Progress Test in English*® (*PTE*) and the *New Group Reading Test*® (*NGRT*). This report remains the only type of its kind in the UK, helping schools identify if there are any discrepancies between ability and attainment that might require further investigation.

As this Lost Middle report has demonstrated, only a small minority of children are truly average. Poor verbal, quantitative or spatial skills often mask potential. The education system is still not well attuned enough to identify our different learners. And only deeper insight into a pupil's capability, learning problems, current and comparative performance and rate of progress will allow teachers to personalise learning and maximise the potential of every child in their classroom.

For further information please visit **gl-assessment.co.uk**. To contact your local area consultant to organise a school visit or a free quote please visit **gl-assessment.co.uk/consultants** or to discuss your specific requirements, call **0330 123 5375**.

GL Assessment®

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