

**Becoming a Brilliant
Star:
Twelve Core Ideas
Supporting Holistic
Education**

William G. Huitt, Editor

To my Brilliant Stars
Geoff, Katie, and Kevin

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William G. (Bill) Huitt

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Preface

My original college major was business and marketing and I initially worked in the insurance and retail industries. While there, I saw the benefit of setting explicit goals and collecting data for the purpose of measuring success towards meeting those goals.

When I entered education, I adapted that emphasis and focused on goals related to increasing academic achievement as measured on standardized objective tests. After teaching for several years, I joined a team at Research for Better Schools in Philadelphia who had a similar core mission. That work led to the development of a highly successful program that was the foundation of multiple conference presentations, articles, book chapters, and a book published by ASCD titled *Improving classrooms and schools: A research-based perspective*.

As I worked with that research over the next decade, it became clear that humanity had entered a new era, the digital/information age. Continuing to read business-oriented literature, I noticed a critique of the competencies and capabilities (and the lack thereof) of young people who were entering the workforce as well as concerns about their quality of citizenship. As a result, I became aware that a more holistic approach to schooling and education was necessary.

In response to this growing awareness, I began to develop the Brilliant Star framework that is the focus of this book. The book's chapters reflect the culmination of numerous efforts to organize and communicate to educators and policy makers what theory and research have to offer regarding a more well-rounded conceptualization of a focus of facilitating child and adolescent development. A major goal is to create the elements of a dashboard that can focus attention on a profile that is more reflective of the whole person rather than simply focusing on a single score for academic knowledge and skills.

The purpose of the book is to put all of this knowledge and experience into one volume for easy access. The framework is not intended to be a final, definitive statement regarding human capacities or potential competencies and capabilities, but rather to encourage parents, educators, and policy makers to create a more holistic view of the focus of education, in general, and schooling, especially during childhood and adolescence.

William G. (Bill) Huitt

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INTRODUCTION

Introduction

The Brilliant Star framework was developed for the purpose of organizing what is known about human potentials that can be influenced by learning, especially in structured contexts such as schools. A major influence on this approach was Gardner's (1983, 2006) conceptualization of multiple intelligences. However, Gardner's approach focused on intelligences that met certain research criteria while the domains identified in the Brilliant Star framework are considered as potentials that are actualized through experience into competencies and capabilities. The framework was initially conceptualized in the early 1990s and the chapters of the book were written over a 15-year period beginning in 2003. The chapters have been slightly edited and updated for inclusion in this book.

The first chapter provides an overview of the Brilliant Star framework and considers the development of the whole person from the perspective of developing capacities in eight domains: (1) temperament, personality, and self-views, (2) cognition/thinking, (3) affect/emotion, (4) conation/volition (or agency/self-regulation), (5) social/interpersonal, (6) physical/bodily-kinesthetic, (7) spiritual/transpersonal, and (8) moral character. Basic research is considered as well as how interested adults, especially educators, can facilitate development in each of these areas.

Three chapters discuss different aspects of the cognitive domain. Chapter two considers the cognitive domain from the perspective of information processing theories and memory. It includes descriptions and definitions of important terms and models that have been used to depict memory types and processors. The frameworks associated with the stage theory model and schools of thought on pattern recognition and representation models are discussed as well as those on schema, parallel distributed processing, and connectionist models. The chapter ends with discussion on the assessment of cognitive processing in education today and activities for developing instruction that is built on the theories discussed.

Chapter three considers the cognitive domain from the perspective of cognitive development. This chapter provides an overview of the developmental theories of Bruner, Dewey, Piaget, and Vygotsky and the educational application of cognitive and social constructivism, including instruction and assessment activities.

Chapter four uses the theory and research on information processing and cognitive development to explore how people use mental representations as they interact with, and attempt to understand, the environment within which they are embedded. It summarizes the different types of mental representations, from the most general level of worldviews to the most specific level of schema and scripts. The basic perspective is that human beings do not interact with the environment as it exists in reality, but rather

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do so through mental representations that have been constructed as they have interacted with it. An overview of how the mental representations can be modified is also explored.

Three chapters focus on the affective, volitional, and social domains. Chapter five provides an overview of the affective domain. Mounting evidence supports the position that human beings are inherently emotional beings and that affective/emotional development impacts human development and behavior in a wide variety of important ways. This chapter provides an overview of emotion and the affective domain, including developmental considerations and methods that can be used to facilitate development in this domain. Also discussed are instruments and methods to assess emotional and affective development.

Chapter six provides an overview of the conative domain and the role of agency in human development and behavior. Conation is defined as the mental process that activates and/or directs behavior and action. Various terms used to represent some aspect of conation include intrinsic motivation, goal-orientation, volition, will, self-direction, and self-regulation. Issues are discussed related to various activities and strategies that parents and educators can use to assist children and youth in their development, as well as assessments of conation and its subcomponents.

Chapter seven focuses on social development. Research has shown that human beings are inherently social. Developing competencies in this domain enhance a person's ability to succeed in school as well as positively influencing mental health, success in work, and the ability to be a citizen in a democracy. This chapter outlines research and theories related to the development of social competence and provides a literature review of theory and research supporting the vital importance of social competence, including a discussion of empirically-based interventions and measurement tools that educators can use to facilitate development of social competence.

Three chapters focus on the physical, spiritual, and moral character domains. Chapter eight discusses physical development. It provides an overview of the importance of maintaining physical fitness and proper nutrition as well as an overview of the means by which physical fitness can be obtained and maintained. Cardiovascular endurance, muscular strength, muscular endurance, flexibility, and body composition are components of physical fitness; consuming a healthy diet that includes grains, fruits and vegetables, and lean protein sources are aspects of good nutrition. The chapter also reviews literature related to the assessment of components of physical fitness.

Chapter nine provides an overview of spiritual development and describes the role of schooling in this domain. The first section explains important terms and establishes the importance of spirituality as a component of life success. The second section discusses some important

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issues regarding the development of spirituality, while the third and fourth sections provide a review of how to stimulate and assess spiritual development, respectively.

Chapter ten provides an overview of moral and character development. This issue has been a topic of concern for thousands of years and was central to the development of American schooling, losing favor in the middle of the twentieth century. Over the last several decades there has been increased attention to the importance of moral character as central to the purpose of schooling. This chapter reviews theories related to moral character development and suggests methods for including it in the school setting.

The last two chapters focus on the integration of the other domains. Chapter eleven considers issues related to self- and self-views with a focus on self-concept, self-esteem, and self-efficacy. These are considered especially relevant because they are constructed by the individual as he or she reflects on personal behavior and interaction with the environment, especially other people. The infant has no conceptualization of self as a separate organism and only develops this concept as he or she becomes more mobile. These self-views are quite flexible throughout childhood and adolescence and are, therefore, open to influence. However, once they become stable in later adolescence or early adulthood, they are quite difficult to change.

The final chapter discusses some ideas related to developing curriculum for glocal citizenship. The concept of glocal comes from the integration of a need to have a global focus while interacting within a local neighborhood and community. The expression “Think global, act local” captures the essence of this concept. Discussed are some practical applications for curriculum development and guiding the teaching/ learning process using the Brilliant Star framework as a guide to thinking about preparing children and youth for life as adults in a rapidly changing, digital, global sociocultural milieu.

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