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Department: The Learning Curve

Mindsets, Motivation, and Meaningful Work

“Often it’s not that kids don’t want to do work, it’s that kids don’t want to do meaningless work. If we can inject some meaning into what they do, we can take care of some of their negative responses to stereotype threat or boredom, any of the affects that afflict both underperforming and gifted kids.” – Joshua Aronson

NAGC, together with generous support from the Javits Gifted and Talented Students Education Program in collaboration with the National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented and the American Psychological Association, aired two dynamic webinars on the topic of Malleable Minds last week. The publication, [*Malleable Minds: Translating Insights From Psychology and Neuroscience to Gifted Education*](#), brought together psychologists and neuroscientists who have different research interests related to topics such as motivation, stereotype threat, creativity, early learning, and cognition with researchers in the field of gifted education to discuss the intersections of their work and the implications of that work for school practice.

Joshua Aronson, internationally known for his research on stereotype threat and minority student achievement, shared his research and insights on motivation and stereotype threat in the webcast, [“The Growth Mindset and Stereotype Threat.”](#) His work helps us to understand one of the most frequently voiced concerns in our field—why do some children and adolescents with potential underachieve and what can we do about it?

Section three of *Malleable Minds* covers the application of cases, narrative accounts of teaching and learning that integrate theory and research in engaging vignettes about the real world of schools and classrooms. In the webinar, [“Teacher Behavior as a Tool to Understanding the Motivation of Gifted Learners,”](#) Joyce VanTassel-Baska, Smith Professor Emerita of Education at the College of William & Mary, had the audience share their responses and solutions to her case about Mrs. Darby and her elementary gifted program.

Ann Robinson, one of the book’s editors, and virtual host for both webcasts, encourages the use of these archives for instruction, “The cases in *Malleable Minds* are a vehicle for professional development. They were designed for you to use with your staff or your colleagues in an interactive PD format.”

Use the links above to access the recordings. A PDF handout of the presentations is available under the Resources tab when viewing the programs.