

Redefining smart and success

Business



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Over 35 years, Lewis Terman documented the growth of his handpicked children who stood at the apex of the intellectual pyramid. He was dumbfounded. The majority of his “Termites” led ordinary lives. Few were prominent professionals.

Even fewer fitted his definition of genius. Why is this? The answer lies in the intellectual threshold: you only need to be smart enough to be successful. Not all who dominate media and respective fields are Mensans. Even though Bill Gates and Jimmy Fallon are not Einstein-smart, they have been redefining technology and comedy. Now, how smart is “smart enough”? In an age where medical expertise is valued, a person with literary smarts is shadowed by her friend who is fascinated by lungs and guts. In an age where tech-savviness is prized, a person with art smarts is one-upped by his friend who codes like the way he preps ramen.

These other smarts are undervalued simply by the era we live in. The girl might be Jane Austen 2.0 and the boy might be the next Picasso. Although most of us know that smartness is not restricted to a specific personality or profession, we tend to associate smartness to sets x, y, z, thereby limiting potential developments. We are shooting ourselves in the foot.

Through reinterpretation – that sufficient smart should not be outshined by excessive smart and that all smarts are valuable – we can explore and embrace many, many possibilities.