

The Intensity of Giftedness: Dabrowski's Overexcitabilities

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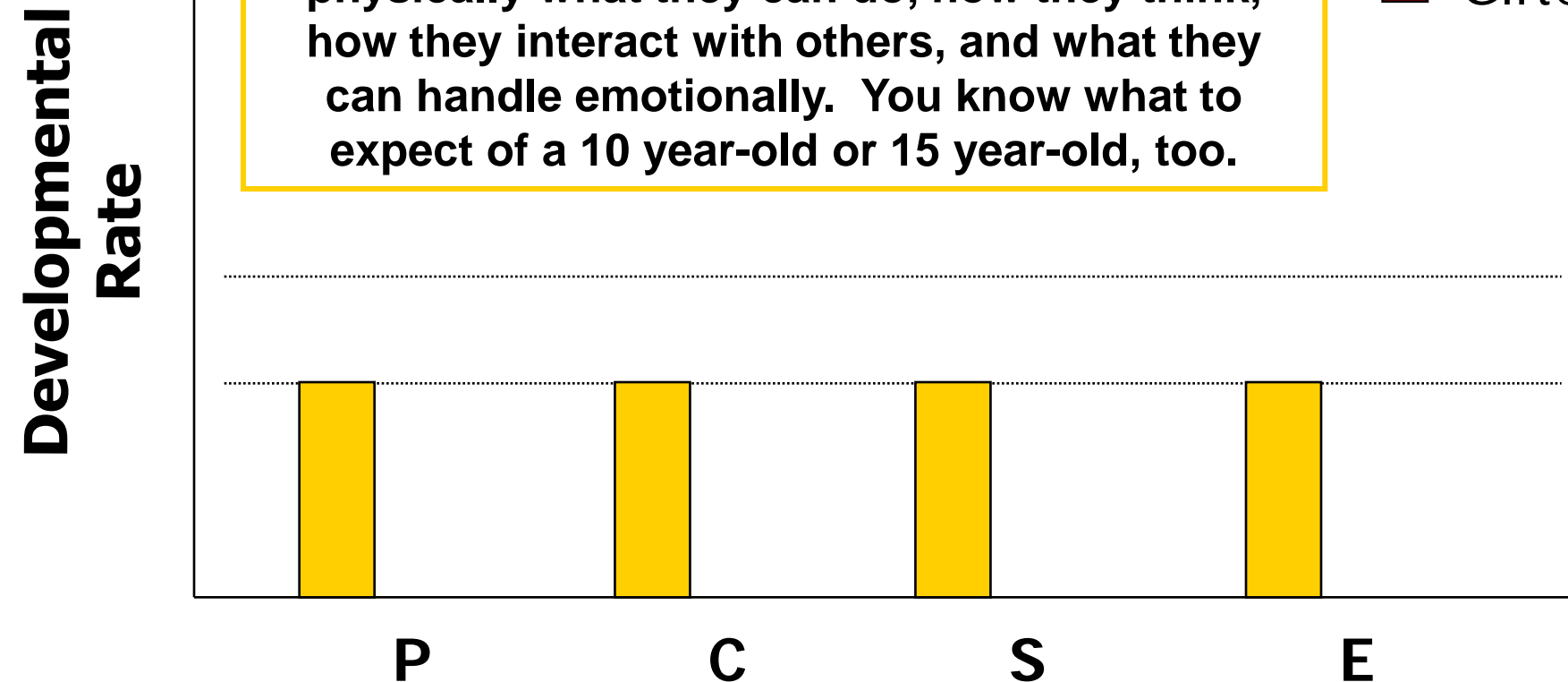


Asynchronous Development

Children's developmental rates are usually very even. Their physical (P), cognitive (C), social (S), and emotional (E) development is linked together. These areas develop at the same rate.

You know what to expect of a 5 year-old: physically what they can do, how they think, how they interact with others, and what they can handle emotionally. You know what to expect of a 10 year-old or 15 year-old, too.

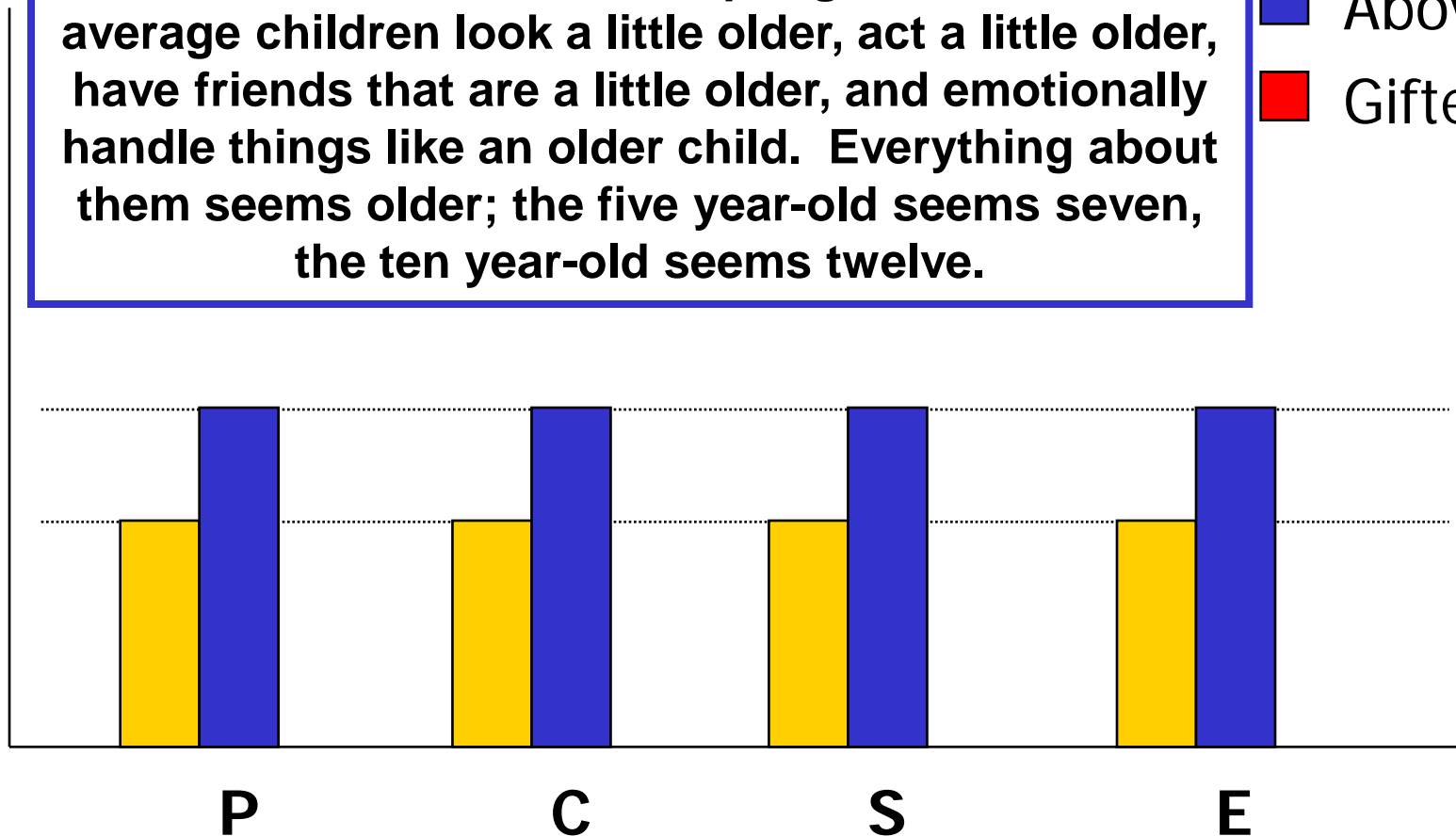
- Average
- Above Ave.
- Gifted



Asynchronous Development

The development of above average children is the same, but their rates of development are a little faster than that of average children. The four areas are still linked and develop together. Above average children look a little older, act a little older, have friends that are a little older, and emotionally handle things like an older child. Everything about them seems older; the five year-old seems seven, the ten year-old seems twelve.

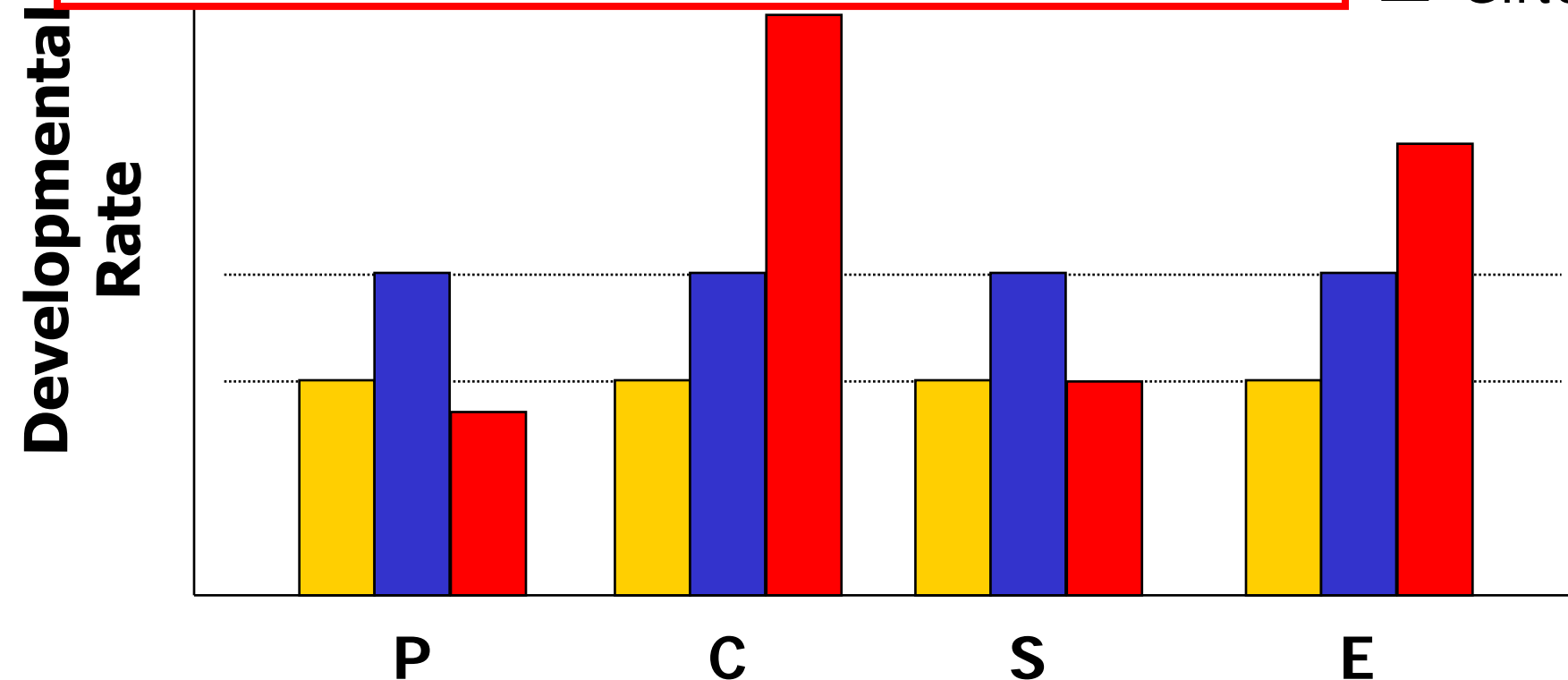
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Asynchronous Development

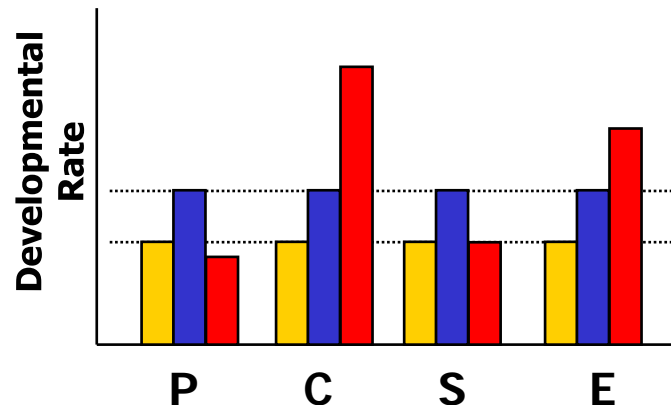
The developmental rates of GT children are different. Their areas of development are out-of-sync; they are not linked together. Each GT child has a different pattern. Many experts in Gifted Education call this the “hallmark of giftedness.” The students identified as GT in schools are usually cognitively gifted, so that is the area with the fastest rate of development. In addition, most gifted children’s emotional development is more rapid than their physical or social development. The areas don’t usually “catch up” with one another.

- Average
- Above Ave.
- Gifted



Asynchronous Development

The out-of-sync (or asynchronous) development of gifted kids is an integral part of who they are and how they interact with the world. This is why they act like an adult at one moment and throw a temper tantrum the next. Different parts of them are different ages all at the same time.

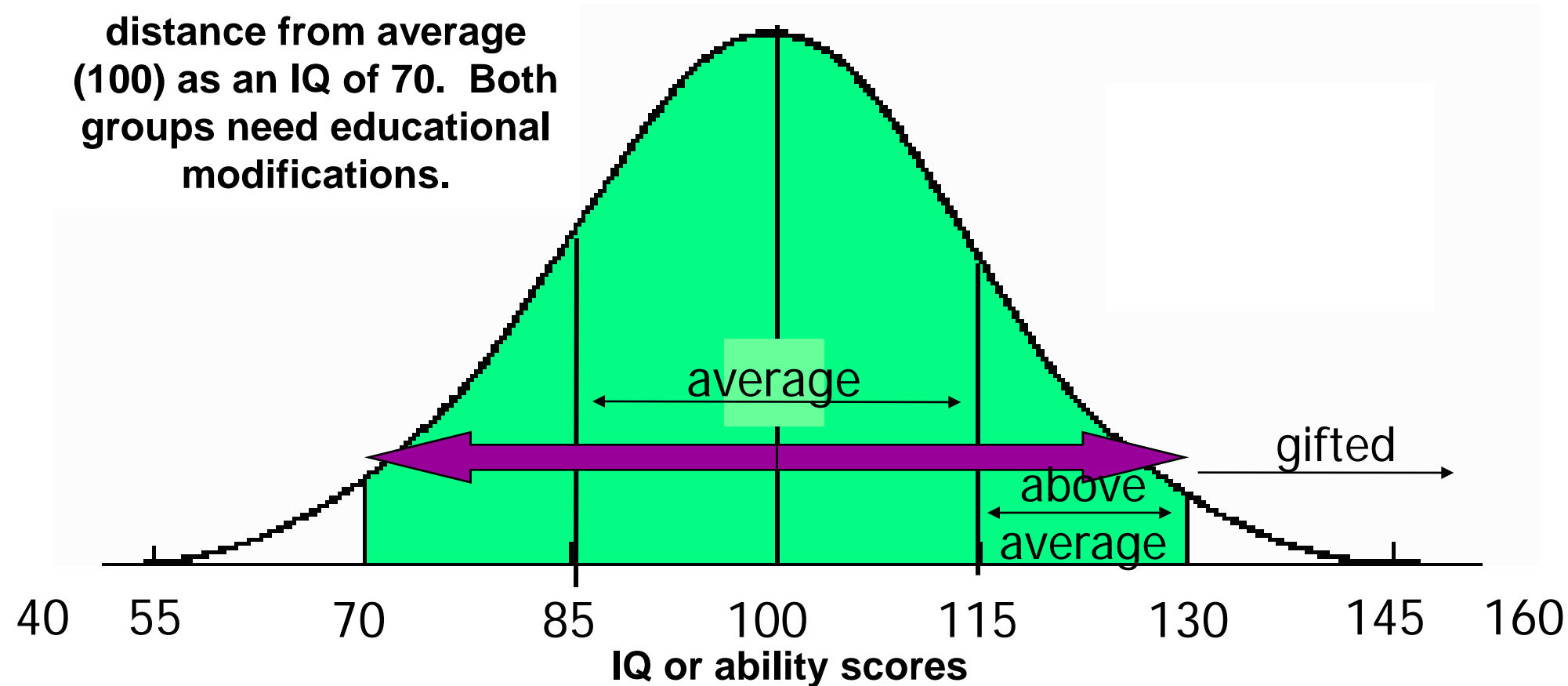


Degree of Giftedness

Degree of giftedness – how far a child is from an average IQ

IQ, or mental ability, is one part of giftedness. The higher the level of giftedness, the more educational needs a student has.

An IQ of 130 is the same distance from average (100) as an IQ of 70. Both groups need educational modifications.

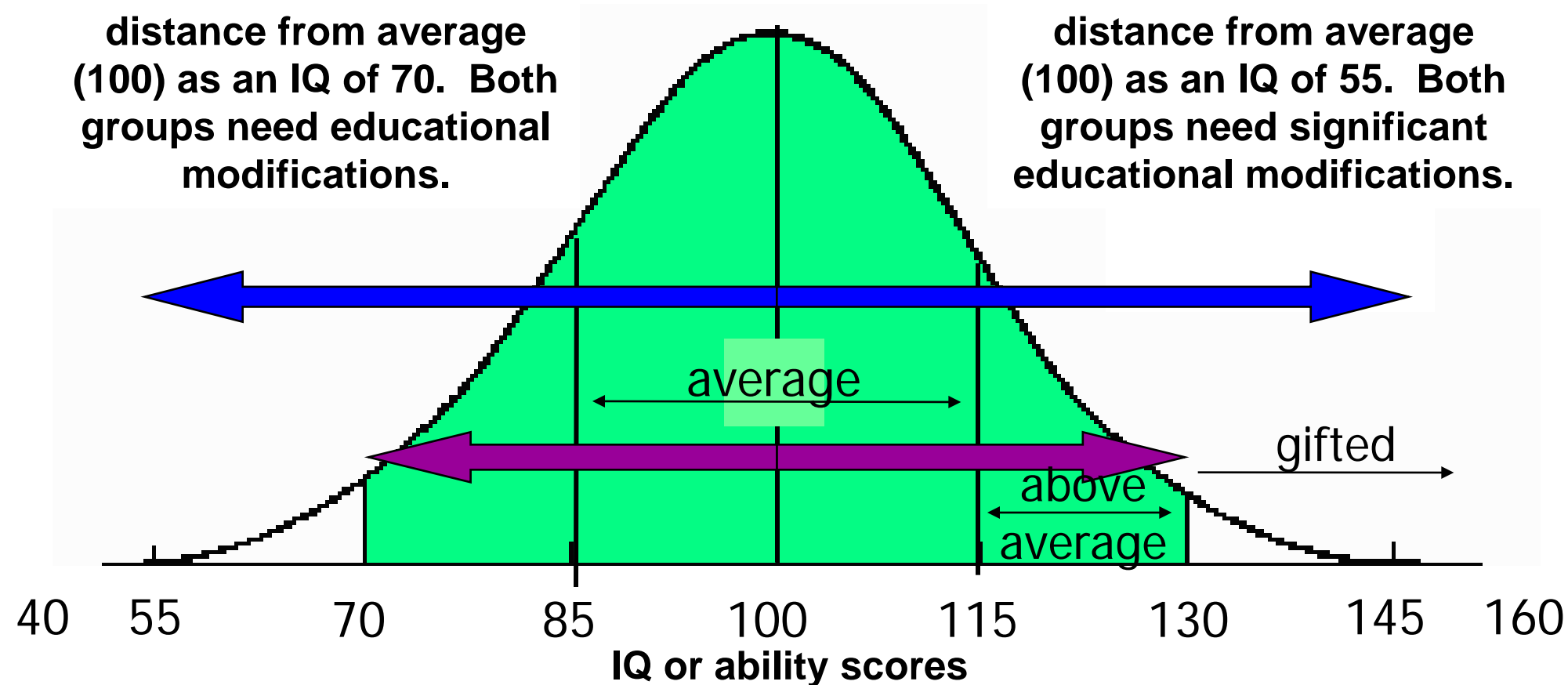


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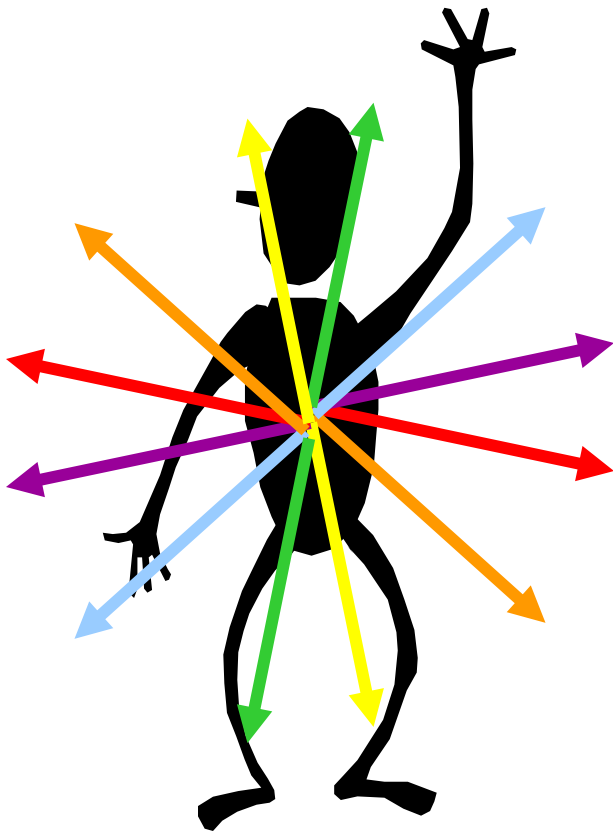
An IQ of 130 is the same distance from average (100) as an IQ of 70. Both groups need educational modifications.

An IQ of 145 is the same distance from average (100) as an IQ of 55. Both groups need significant educational modifications.





Intrinsic Motivation



Gifted children have an internal drive to KNOW things. Unfortunately, their interests don't always coincide with what their teachers are teaching. Gifted children tend not to respond to the same rewards as high achieving students. High achievers are motivated by grades, pleasing adults, and competition. Some gifted children are also high achievers.

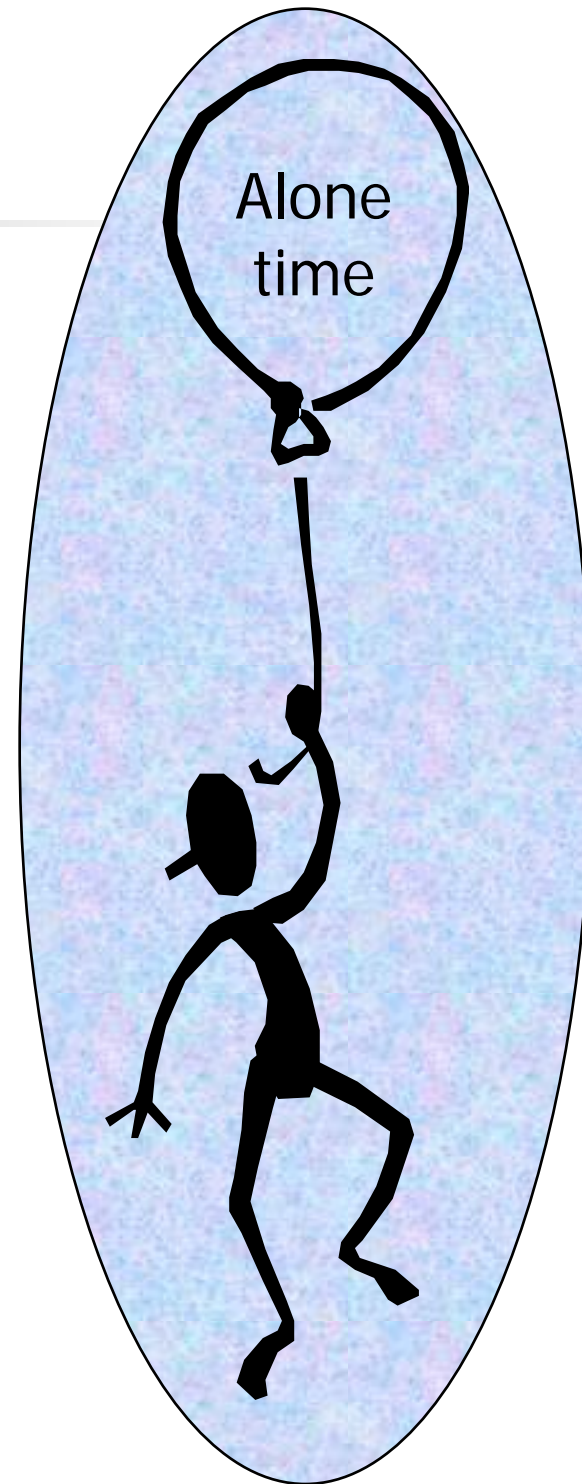
To motivate a gifted child, you need to tap into their interests, values, and logical abilities. Gifted children often seek a challenge and the opportunity to study their interests.



Introversion

Many people are energized by being around and interacting with other people. This is called extroversion.

Many gifted people are energized by being alone. This is called introversion. While they may like being around other people, it drains their energy reserves. They seek opportunities to recharge by being alone or escaping into a good book.



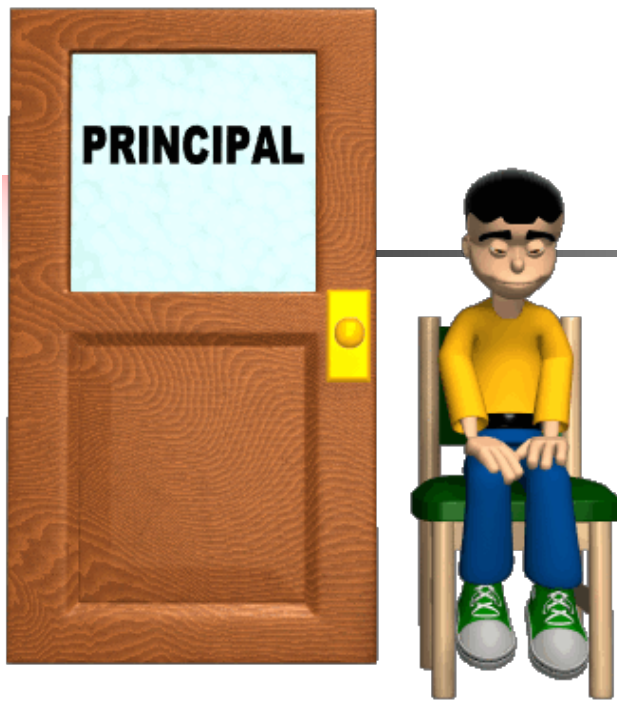
From others

Key to Everything GT



- Asynchronous Development
- Degree of Giftedness
- Intrinsic Motivation
- Energy from being alone (Introverted)

Trouble Traits



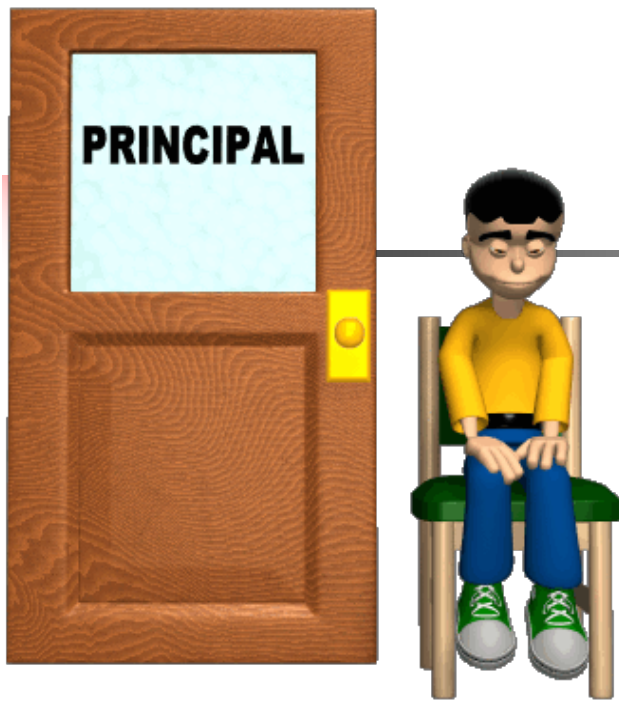
You may have heard people say, “I want my child in the classroom with the gifted kids. They don’t have behavior problems.” This is a MYTH.

High achievers tend to have fewer behavior problems because they are motivated by making adults happy and getting positive feedback from authority figures.

There are four traits that tend to get gifted people into trouble:

- **Intensity**
- **Sensitivity**
- **Multi-potentiality or Multi-stimulus**
- **Excessive Energy**

Trouble Traits



- Gifted kids are **INTENSE!**

Gifted kids experience life more intensely than others. They react in big ways to small things. They often get “tunnel vision” which causes them to have trouble changing topics or letting something go. When captured by a topic, they get deeply into it. They may be so focused they don’t hear things around them; you may have to touch them to get their attention.



PRINCIPAL

Trouble Traits

- Gifted kids are **SENSITIVE!**

Gifted kids are able to empathize earlier than their peers. They tend to feel the pain of others. They also tend to take criticism very personally. Their feelings may be hurt easily.

Gifted kids are also more sensitive to their surroundings. They may be affected by sounds, smells, and textures in a room more than others.



PRINCIPAL

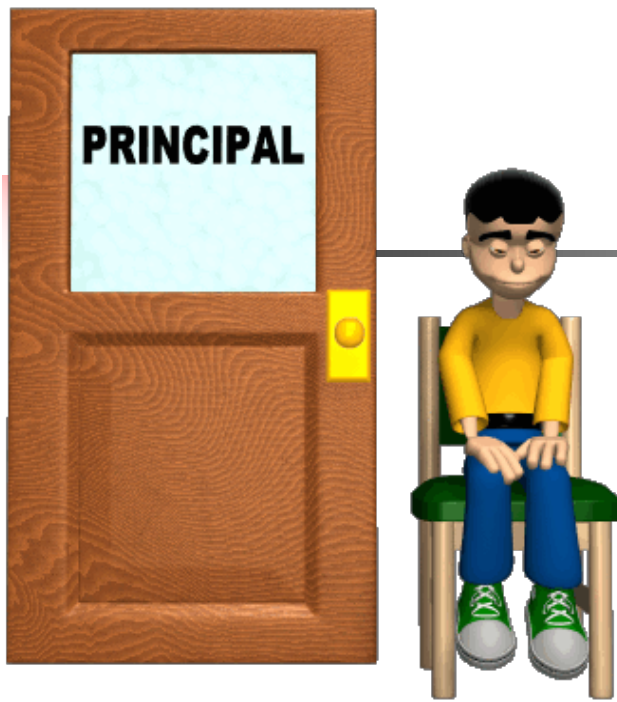
Trouble Traits

- Gifted kids have **MULTI-POTENTIALITY!**

Multi-potentiality means they have the potential to be good at many things. Gifted kids also respond to multi-stimulus. They can pay attention to more than one thing at a time. They take in everything from their surroundings, absorbing information without having to focus on it specifically.

These traits make decision-making difficult. When you are interested in many things and good at many things, how do you decide what topic to study or choose a college major?

Trouble Traits



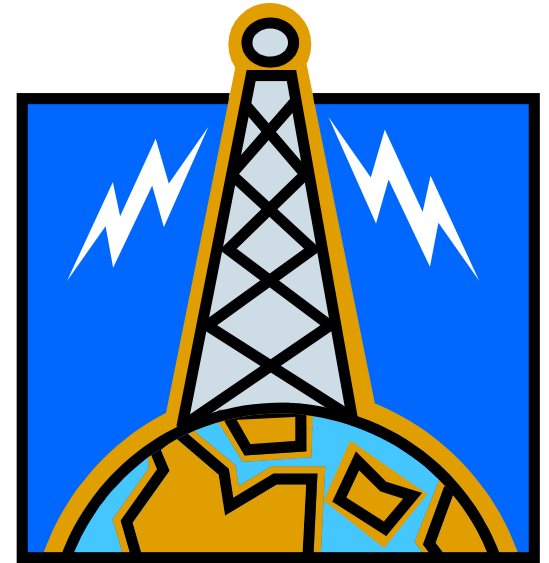
- Gifted kids have **EXTRA ENERGY!**

Gifted kids often need less sleep than their peers. Parents of highly gifted kids report their children stopped napping at very early ages.

This extra energy leads gifted kids to prefer fast games and fast activities. They interrupt others because they know what the other person is going to say and they want to move on in the conversation. They may need to wiggle and move to let some of the extra energy out.

Dabrowski's Overexcitabilities

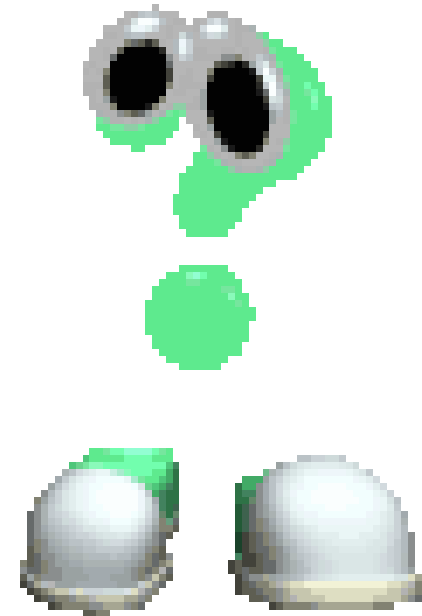
- Overabundance of positive energy
- Bigger antennae (Lind)
- Innate
- See in very young
- Often the more gifted, the more they are present



Overexcitabilities

Intellectual

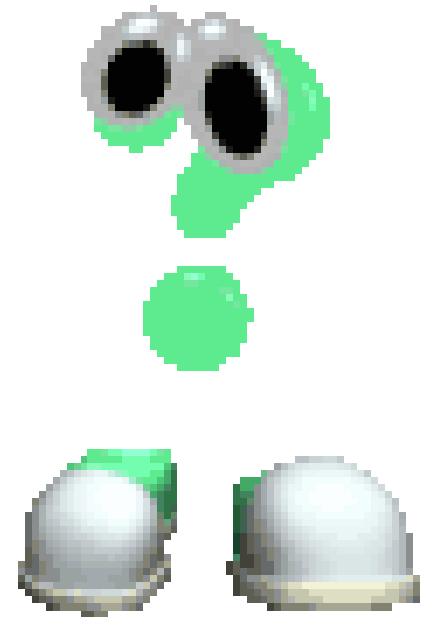
- NEED to know
- Questioning
- Unanswerable questions
- Theory
- Moral thinking (fairness)
- World issues
- Critical of others



Overexcitabilities

Intellectual - Strategies

- Talk about OEs
- Teach to find answers
- Remember asynchronous development
- Help understand how criticism affects others
- Help act on moral concerns
- Question journal – pick 1 to ask me



Overexcitabilities

Imaginational

- Rich imagination
- Vivid dreams (dream in color)
- Elaborate stories
- Mix truth & fiction
- Multiple imaginary friends
- Science fiction or fantasy
- Day dream



Overexcitabilities

Imaginational - Strategies

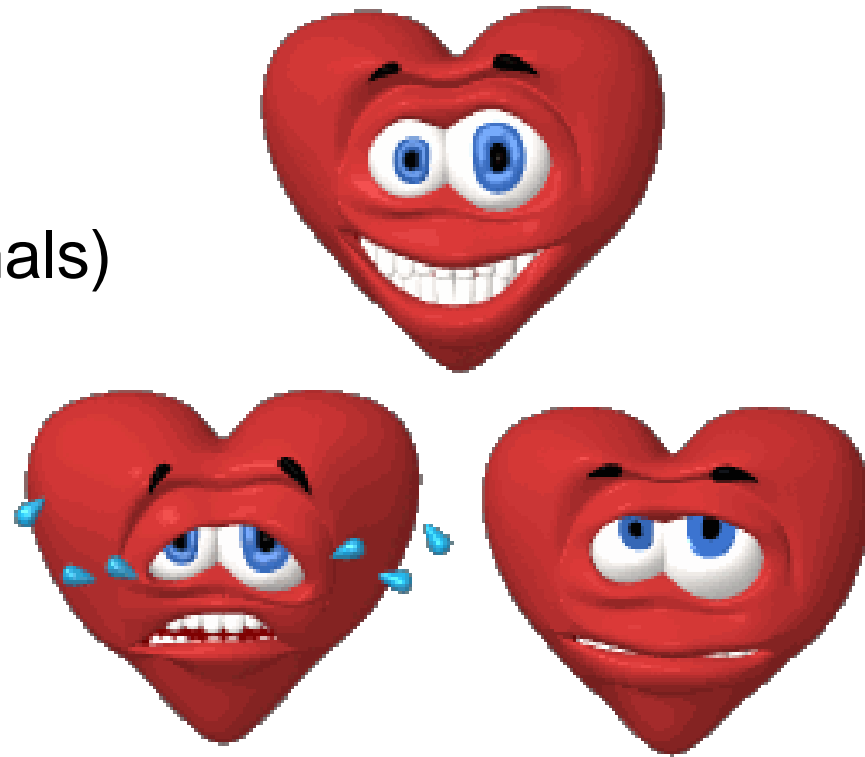
- Talk about OEs
- Differentiate between embellishment and lying
- Use a mental stop sign in mental video
- Provide outlets – Use creativity to solve problems
- “Idea trap” - journal



Overexcitabilities

Emotional

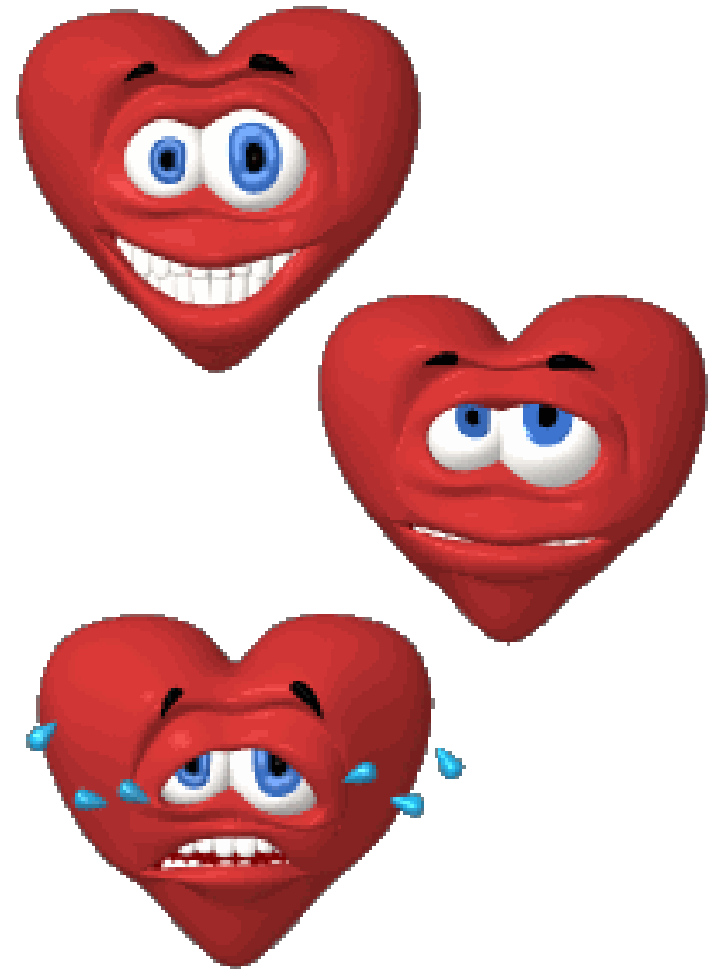
- Emotional depth
- Strong attachments (people, animals, stuffed animals)
- Critical of self
- Self aware
- Fears and anxiety
- Cries easily
- Appears to be overreacting
- Physical reactions (stomach and head aches)



Overexcitabilities

Emotional - Strategies

- Talk about OEs
- Accept all feelings
- Help them anticipate them
- Help them understand how it will affect others
- Develop feeling vocabulary
- Journal



Overexcitabilities

Sensual

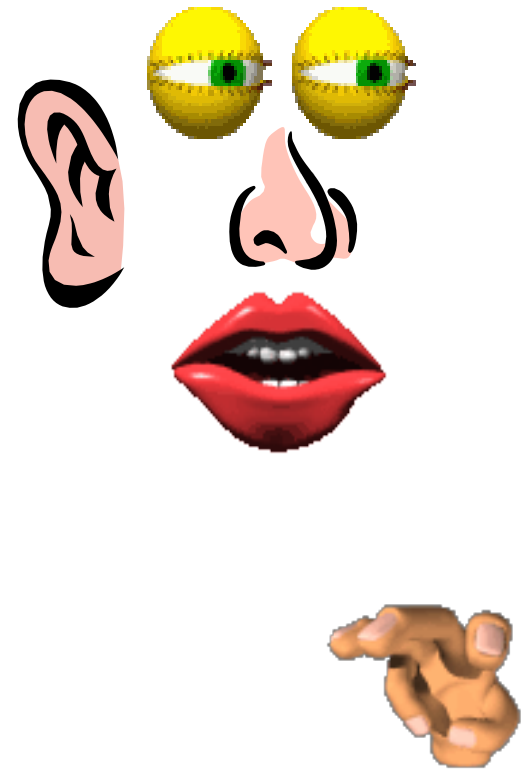
- Sight, smell, touch, taste, hearing
- Dischord
- Ticking sounds (clocks)
- Visual composition
- Clothing (tags, socks, stockings)
- Foods (texture, allergies, tastes)
- Aromas
- Hands on walls & clothes



Overexcitabilities

Sensual - Strategies

- Talk about OEs
- Pay attention to environment
- Teach them to control their environment
- Provide opportunities for them to be the center of attention
- Stress management



Overexcitabilities

Psychomotor

- Rapid speech
- Fast games
- Movement
- Nervous habits
- Little sleep
- Impulsivity
- Interrupt
- Workaholic



Overexcitabilities

Psychomotor - Strategies

- Talk about OEs
- Schedule in movement
- Help them understand how it is perceived by others
- Choose appropriate ways to release need for movement
- Provide moving furniture (rockers, exercise balls)
- Don't confuse with ADHD





To learn more



Kazimierz Dabrowski

Michael Piechowski

Sharon Lind

www.sengifted.org