



GIFTED AND TALENTED

SERVICE NEWSLETTER

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"Too often we give children answers to remember rather than problems to solve"
-Roger Lewin

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE?

First, for those of you that are new to your district...Welcome! I am sure by now you have learned many tips and tricks about your new district to help you feel more comfortable and at home in your new job. We are so very fortunate to have such high quality educators in our area. This monthly newsletter is meant to be a tool to gain knowledge on gifted practices and gifted students and give you some additional tips and tricks to feel confident teaching gifted students.

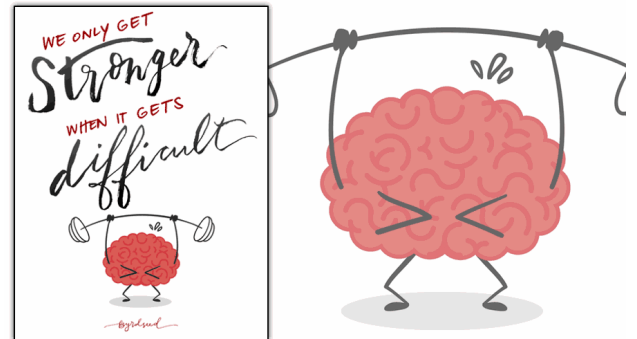
Those of you that know me, know that my position on gifted instruction is that it is appropriate for ALL students. While parts of this newsletter are specific to the gifted child and understating the gifted mind, it is important to note that most instructional strategies are meant to reach ALL learners.

GIFTED INTENSITY

Every month I think, as a classroom teacher, what do I want to know about gifted students? As you may know, there can be unique characteristics and traits that come with a gifted mind. Being gifted can be very intense and cause students to have "intensities" in other areas of their lives that may mask their gifted abilities. Dealing with these *intensities can sometimes be the barrier between reaching a gifted learner and losing them*. Just "keeping them busy" will often result in a flare up of behavior problems. So how do you recognize these issues and deal with them? I plan to use the next few issues to look into the intensity, sensitivity, and overexcitability exhibited by our gifted students.

These characteristics are more noticeable at an early age and over time students learn to either cope by conforming or they become increasing worse in behavior until the idea of giftedness is no longer something that is considered. Both scenarios are unacceptable and result in the student not reaching their potential.

The high level energy of a gifted child cause them to be greatly stimulated, and because they view and process things in different ways, gifted children are often misunderstood. Understanding overexcitabilities is the first step.



5 OVEREXCITABILITIES OF GIFTEDNESS

Overexcitabilities are caused by the heightened ability to respond to stimuli. Overexcitabilities are expressed through sensitivities, awareness, and intensity. While experiencing the world in this unique way offers great opportunity and insight, it also can cause frustration. As educators we need to be able to recognize these traits and have strategies to foster student growth. There are five categories of overexcitabilities (OE) – psychomotor, sensual, intellectual, imaginal, and emotional (Kazimierz Dabrowski). Highly gifted people tend to have all 5, but often one is more prominent than others.

- Psychomotor – The student who has so much energy they can't sit still, let alone sit. They might constantly fidget or talk excessively. Often mistaken for ADHD.
- Sensual – The student on sensory overload. They may not be able to wear socks with seams or cannot tolerate classroom noise or smells.
- Intellectual – Your typical thought of "giftedness" lays root here. Highly intelligent and driven to seek out understanding and truth. Very curious, long attention span, concerns over moral issues, does not tolerate those who cannot keep up intellectually.
- Imaginal – The daydreamers and doodlers out there are often in this category. Easily off task when other ideas that excite them send them off on a different tangent.
- Emotional – Highly emotional over what others may view as trivial matters. Overly dramatic. High level of compassion for others. Sometimes manifests in physical complaints such as stomach aches or blushing.

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5 OVEREXCITABILITIES – CLASSROOM IMPLICATIONS

So you know a little more about the 5 overexcitabilities. Now what can you do to manage these behaviors?

Overexcitability	Problem	Strategies
Psychomotor	Fidgety and making noise during worktime?	Offer opportunities to move around, construct objects, or other physical outlets. Other ideas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow time for physical activities. Build it into lessons when appropriate. • Provide time for spontaneity and open-ended work.
Sensual	Overreacting to a sound or agitated over fit of clothing?	Get to the root of the problem so the problem can be avoided. Offer guidance on how to deal with troublesome situations. Other ideas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limit stimuli and set up comforting environment • Give unexpected attention at times to give them the attention they may need/expect • Provide activities they can do in front of an audience.
Intellectual	Too many detailed questions during the middle of a lesson?	Give them 10 minutes on a computer to get their questions answers. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide ways for moral and ethical issues and concerns to be dealt with through community service. • Help them become self-aware to how their actions and words may hurt others. • Teach them how to find their own answers to questions.
Imaginational	Deeply involved in a book or movie's fictional world?	Provide an ongoing creative outlet for their feelings along with a creative, open-ended project they can do when they are done. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help them separate fiction from reality by having them talk through it in their head or on paper first. • Encourage them to apply their imagination to function in the real world and promote learning. For example, creating a new system to organize papers.
Emotional	Sobbing or overly angry over a minor recess incident?	Listen and lend a non-judgmental ear for the student to explain what happened. Give them time to cool down and offer some ways to deal with their emotions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accept all feelings and help them work through their problems. • Teach them to anticipate physical and/or emotional responses and prepare for them.

For any overexcitability, remember to focus on the positives and be patient. Teaching stress management and self-awareness are critical components of dealing with these issues.

Resources:

"Dabrowski's Over-excitabilities: A Layman's Explanation. By Stephanie S. Tolan. <http://www.stephanietolan.com/dabrowskis.htm>.

"Five Unexpected Traits of Gifted Students". <http://www.brydseed.com/five-unexpected-traits-of-gifted-students/>

"Overexcitability and the Gifted" by Sharon Lind. <http://sengifted.org/archives/articles/overexcitability-and-the-gifted>



READY TO USE MATERIALS/RESOURCES

- Curious and thought-provoking videos, pictures and articles are perfect to spark student engagement and invite creativity. Click to see favorites from August at [Brydseed](#). For example, a picture of a butterfly drinking a turtle's tears or food shaped like the states.
- For some easy to use and implement creative math warm-ups to get your students thinking click [here](#).
- What is creativity? Click [here](#) to go to my website. Scroll down to Creative Thinking.
- Showing regard for others is traits that successful people may exhibit. Try these K-5 activities from [Learning to be a Durable Person](#) by Mary Hennenfent.
 - [Activity 11 - Put Your Best Foot Forward \(grades 1-3\)](#)
 - [Activity 11 - No Fear \(Grades 4-5\)](#)
- [Stimulate Creative Thinking](#) activities are quick and easy activities to keep your students going. Click [here](#) for some samples.
- Learning through failure promotes perseverance and resilience. Read more on this topic [here](#).

CREATIVE THINKING

Creative thinking is the ultimate teaching strategy to engage students and reach higher level thinking strategies. Creative thinking requires the use of fluent, flexible, original, elaborated ideas. Each thinking skill asks students to go beyond and explore the depth and breadth of subjects. As Albert Einstein said "creativity is intelligence having fun". Creative can be taught and if not used can be lost. It is a 21st century skill that *will produce thinkers and doers in the future*.

Activities such as brainstorming, webbing, problem solving (not just with math), visualizing, transforming, symbolizing, and questioning are all ways to access this type of thinking. *Creativity is a process, not an event*. So do not expect your students to excel at these activities the first time around. It needs to be taught and practiced just like other skills.

A great place to start is with S.C.A.M.P.E.R. This acronym is a 21st Century problem solving technique that many businesses use to accelerate their profits and design new products. Teaching students to utilize this will stimulate their creative thinking and help them solve problems they cannot figure out. So when they come across a problem in their content material they can use this strategy instead of coming to you for help...creating independent learners! Click the links below for resources on what S.C.A.M.P.E.R. is and how to use it in your classroom. Your students will struggle at first, but in the face of failure they will learn to persevere and develop more resilience.

[SCAMPER Video](#) – To find out what this technique is and see a sample

[SCAMPER Questions](#)

Go to <http://tebbe.weebly.com/di.html> and scroll down to Creative Thinking to download a SCAMPER Template to use in your classroom.

[SCAMPER Poster](#)