Characteristics of gifted children AND adults

- Unusual alertness
- Rapid learners
- Excellent memory
- Unusually large vocabulary
- Complex sentence structure
- Unusual emotional depth
- Intense feelings and reactions
- Highly sensitive
- Thinking is abstract, complex, logical and insightful
- Concern with social issues and political injustice at young age
- Preoccupied with own thoughts
- Highly developed curiosity
- Limitless questions
- Wide range of interests
- Extreme interest in one area
- Interest in experimenting; doing things differently
- Divergent thinking
- Keen and unusual sense of humor
- Long attention span
- Independent worker
- Produces unusual products or ideas
- Understands relationships and comprehends meanings


VanTassel-Baska. *Comprehensive Curriculum for Gifted Learners*, 1994,
• Social

• Emotional

• Intellectual
Imagine what this feels like

Outliers

![Histogram showing the distribution of IQ scores with outliers marked]
Understood.org

What It's Like to Have Dyslexia and Other Learning and Attention Issues
My teacher gets me

• Emotional safety: my feelings are accepted not judged
• I am worthy as I am
• My teacher wants to know me
• He doesn’t assume I am lazy and not trying
• She enjoys me
• She helps me figure out how I learn knowing that each of us need something different
• He helps me use my strengths to learn
EMPhASize ThE GiFT

• Teachers of twice-exceptional (2e) gifted learners must emphasize the gift each student embodies. Although the daily challenges these students face in school often overwhelm them, teachers can help them become successful learners.

• Magic formula to help GT/LD (2e) students succeed
  – lessens tension caused by dual exceptionalities
  – strengthens confidence
  – raises self-esteem
  – increases other gifted students’ respect
  – helps improve social interaction
  – wins recognition for a valued accomplishment

BUILDING PERSISTENCE AND RESILIENCE

• “At what point do we expect a gifted child to make an effort at his weak abilities and persevere through his challenges, rather than refusing or shutting down?”

• How do we increase a gifted child’s persistence and resilience?

• How do we teach a child the coping skills he or she needs to manage life’s inevitable challenges and adversity?
  – Improve frustration tolerance (Lengthen the fuse)
  – Teach them to use their great “thinking brain”
  – Help form a realistic view of self and abilities
  – Scaffold and support weaknesses
  – Set up opportunities for success

• Since gifted kids tend to have strong wills and ideas, it is often very helpful to include them in the plan.

• Help them understand the reason for, and importance of what you want to help them with, and ask them for ideas to increase the chances of success.

• It takes a lot of courage for gifted children to do things that make them feel “stupid” and inferior.
• Take these chances in a private forum.
• Very bright kids who are used to being seen as the smart ones, do not want this image to be blown or exposed.

sound familiar?

“Emotionally insecure, intellectually self-confident...This can easily lead to perfectionism, fear of failing, or escalating know-it-all-ness and arrogance to mask the uncertainty. Is vulnerable to a stupid or blunt display of power.”

How Deficits Can Affect Twice-exceptional Children

- Interfere with their ability to make sense of visual or auditory information
- Make it hard to correctly interpret social cues, like facial expressions and tone of voice
- Limit the functioning of short-term memory
- Take the form of language-based disorders that make reading, writing, mathematics, or verbal expression difficult
- Appear as a mood disorder, leaving a child anxious or depressed, or an attention deficit that makes it hard to sit still and focus
- Hamper fine or gross motor skills
- Interfere with the brain’s ability to organize and interpret information taken in through the sensory experiences of touch, taste, smell, sight, and sound, as well as body placement and movement (With deficits in the ability to process sensory input, a child reacts to the world quite differently from others. Classroom lights, sounds, and smells may seem painfully intense, making concentration on lessons difficult.)

*Understanding Your Twice-exceptional Student, 2nd ed.,* p.3 (Part of the Spotlight on 2e Series From the publishers of 2e: Twice-Exceptional Newsletter, www.2enewsletter.org)*
Typical Behaviors and Characteristics

• Are **disorganized** and lose track of belongings
• Have an uneven academic pattern, with extreme areas of both strength and weakness
• Have trouble remembering to do or follow through with tasks and sticking to a schedule
• Have a poor sense of time and difficulty estimating the time needed to complete tasks
• Have difficulty with multi-step instructions and performing tasks sequentially
• Take longer to process language and respond than might be expected, based on their intelligence
• Find it hard to take a systematic approach to problem solving
• Have difficulty with writing, including organizing thoughts, writing legibly, and spelling
• Fear embarrassment and tend to avoid taking risks in the classroom
• May have narrowly focused interests
• Can pay attention in their areas of interest
• Thrive when they have opportunities to interact with twice-exceptional peers
2e Newsletter

Spotlight on 2w Series:

2enewsletter
Hidden lives of HIGH ABILITY PEOPLE
Psychomotor OE

SURPLUS OF ENERGY
CAN BE MISDIAGNOSED WITH ADHD

• Rapid speech
• Impulsive behavior
• Competitiveness
• Compulsive talking
• Compulsive organizing
• Nervous habits and tics
• Preference for fast action and sports
• Physical expression of emotions
• Sleeplessness
Sensual OE

HEIGHTENED AWARENESS OF ALL FIVE SENSES: SIGHT, SMELL, TASTE, TOUCH, AND HEARING

• Appreciation of beauty, whether in writing, music, art or nature
  – Includes love of objects like jewelry
• Sensitive to smells, tastes, or textures of foods
• Sensitivity to pollution
• Tactile sensitivity (bothered by feel of some materials on the skin, clothing tags)
• Craving for pleasure
• Need or desire for comfort
Imaginational OE

FREE PLAY OF THE IMAGINATION

VIVID IMAGINATIONS CAN CAUSE THEM TO VISUALIZE THE WORST OR GREATEST POSSIBILITY IN ANY SITUATION

• Vivid dreams
• Fear of the unknown
• Good sense of humor
• Magical thinking
• Love of poetry, music and drama
• Love of fantasy
• Daydreaming
• Imaginary friends
• Detailed visualization
Emotional OE

EXCEPTIONAL EMOTIONAL SENSITIVITY

SOMETIMES MISTAKENLY BELIEVED TO HAVE EMOTIONAL PROBLEMS AND DISORDERS

- "He's too sensitive for his own good."
- Extremes of emotion
- Anxiety
- Feelings of guilt and sense of responsibility
- Feelings of inadequacy and inferiority
- Timidity and shyness
- Loneliness
- Concern for others
- Heightened sense right and wrong, of injustice and hypocrisy
- Strong memory for feelings
- Problems adjusting to change
- Depression
- Need for security
- Physical response to emotions (stomach aches caused by anxiety, for example)
Intellectual OE

MOST RECOGNIZED IN GIFTED CHILDREN
ACTIVITIES OF THE MIND, THOUGHT AND THINKING
ABOUT THINKING

• Children who lead with this intensity seem to be thinking all the time and want answers to deep thoughts.
• Questioning of the teacher can look like disrespectful challenging.
• Deep curiosity
• Love of knowledge and learning
• Love of problem solving
• Avid reading
• Asking of probing questions
• Theoretical thinking
• Analytical thinking
• Independent thinking
• Concentration, ability to maintain intellectual effort
WHAT IS THEIR EXPERIENCE?

Some intense parents of gifted children:

- Fear
- Don’t feel listened to or validated
- Emotionally and physically exhausted
- Work hard to keep up with child’s insatiable need to learn, think, create
- Worry that child isn’t developing skill of hard work and perseverance due to no challenge in school - she might not succeed despite her great assets
- Worry that child’s mental health is suffering
- Feel like Special Needs parents without the support of family and friends
- Feel lonely from lack of community and friendships
- Feel isolated, no one to talk with about their joys and challenges of raising a gifted child
- Feel like an outlier
“killer statements”

- Stop living in an ivory tower!
- With your memory, I don’t believe you really forgot! I think you didn’t want to do it!
- For someone so smart you sure can act dumb!
- You don’t have any common sense at all!
- Where were you when I was explaining all of that – asleep?
- You’re always thinking of yourself – never about anyone else!
- That idea isn’t new, you know. It was discovered years ago!
- You’re not ready for that. It just won’t work, and would just be a waste of time.
- You’re just going through a stage – you’ll outgrow it.
- Just straighten up and shake it off – you’re just feeling sorry for yourself!
- What makes you think you’re so special? – Everybody’s got problems!

Resources

Books:


• [http://www.2enewsletter.com/topic_store_SpotlightDetails.html](http://www.2enewsletter.com/topic_store_SpotlightDetails.html)

Web:


• [www.sengifted.org](http://www.sengifted.org) (Social Emotional Needs of Gifted)
  – Online parent support groups
  – Articles library
  – Media library
  – Annual Conference for parents and educators

• [www.hoagiesgifted.org](http://www.hoagiesgifted.org) (Gifted Resource “go-to” site)

• [www.2enewsletter.org](http://www.2enewsletter.org) (Twice-Exceptionality)

• [www.youtube.com/watch?v=qZxKXAT4GMw&feature=em-share_video_user](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qZxKXAT4GMw&feature=em-share_video_user)

• [www.Understood.org](http://www.Understood.org)

• [http://www.2enewsletter.com/topic_resources_AnnotedBibliography.html](http://www.2enewsletter.com/topic_resources_AnnotedBibliography.html)
thank you!

Heidi Molbak, M.S., NCC, CEP
Head of Schools, FlexSchool
heidi@flexschool.net
(203) 628-4018