

GIFTED OVEREXCITABILITIES:

**Detangling brain function and its influence
over social-emotional learning.**

Center for Gifted

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Photo by Ian Taylor

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"A gifted child's capacity for intense experiencing is an asset".

"It deserves to be understood and affirmed instead of squashed".

Living with Intensity
Daniels & Piechowski 2009

Dabrowski

(1902 – 1980)

Psychiatrist

Psychologist

Masters degree in education

❖ Piaget

❖ Freud

Theory of Emotional Development

Theory of Positive Disintegration

"Disharmony within the individual and his adaptation to the external environment."

No growth, within a person, can take place without having this disharmony.

You can't know where you are going until you know where you have been.

Dabrowski 1964

Overexcitabilities (OE's)

"A higher level of reactivity of the central nervous system."

"Influences how individuals experience internal and external reality."

"Our intensities are there to help us develop our talents."

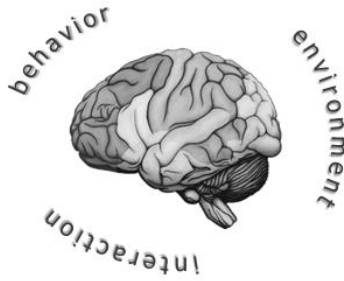
Dabrowski 1964

Six Reasons Gifted Children are Perfectionists:

1. Abstract concept trying to exist in a concrete world
2. A function of asynchrony
3. Set standards appropriate for mature social groups
4. Often successful at their first attempts when young
5. School work is often too easy
6. The drive towards self-improvement gets distorted

Silverman 1999

Detangle Brain Function



So why is this important?

- ❖ When we analyze ...
- ❖ What facts are chosen to evaluate ...
- ❖ How patterns are gathered ...

Influenced by
Overexcitabilities (OE's)

Science behind the gifted brain

- > MRI imaging
- > Children between ages of 5 - 11

**Average IQ's
(83-108)**

Peaked ~
7-8 yrs

**Above Average
IQ's (109-120)**

Peaked ~
7-8 yrs

**High IQ's
(121-145)**

Peaked ~
11 yrs

National Institutes of Mental Health 2006

Intellectual OE'S

- ❖ Asks lots of questions
- ❖ Think about their thinking
- ❖ Ponder and analyze
- ❖ Capable of sustained attention
- ❖ Keen on detailed planning
- ❖ Eager and ready to oblige
- ❖ Have rich fund of info to share with others



Sisk 2009

Emotional OE'S

- ❖ Intense feelings and extreme emotions
- ❖ Strong emotional ties and attachments
- ❖ May have difficulty adjusting to new places
- ❖ Sensitive and empathy can manifest into tears
- ❖ Have intense affective memories



Sisk 2009

Psychomotor OE'S

- ❖ Restless / Lots of energy / Rapid speech
- ❖ Often compulsive talkers / Constant chatter
- ❖ Press for action within group activities
- ❖ Love games and fast sports
- ❖ Can be impulsive with their marked enthusiasm
- ❖ General fidgeting / Misunderstood as hyperactive



Sisk 2009

Sensual OE'S



- ❖ Heightened sensory experiences:
 - seeing, tasting, smelling, touching, hearing
- ❖ Appreciates beautiful objects
- ❖ Fascinated with words and writing styles
- ❖ Sensitive to labels on shirts, fabrics
- ❖ May reject certain foods because of the texture

Sisk 2009

Imaginational OE'S



- ❖ Frequent use of images and metaphors
- ❖ Talk about elaborate dreams and illusions as if they occurred

Sisk 2009

"When emotional, imaginational, and intellectual OE's surpass sensual and psychomotor OE's in strength ...

... there is great developmental potential for the individual to reach high levels of personality development."

Dabrowski 1972

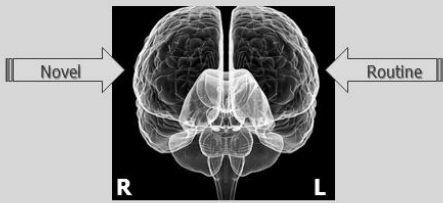
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Dabrowski 1972

What research has taught us ...

After sufficient repetition, responses become routine.



Shifts to left hemisphere via the corpus callosum

Goldberg 2001 The executive brain: Frontal lobes and the civilized mind

RESOURCES

Beautiful Oops

By: Barney Saltzberg

How the Gifted Brain Learns (2nd Edition)

By David Sousa

Intellectual ability and cortical development in children and adolescents

www.fed.cuhk.edu.hk/~lchang/material/Evolutionary/IQ%20and%20cortical%20thickness.pdf

Living with Intensity

By: Susan Daniels and Michael Piechowski

Making Great Kids Greater: Easing the Burden of Being Gifted

By: Dorothy Sisk

Positive Disintegration

By: Kazimierz Dabrowski

Raising A Sensory Smart Child

By: Lindsey Biel

Recognizing and honoring the sensitivities of gifted children

By: Joan Smutny – Communicator, California Association for the Gifted, 29(3), 10-11

The Challenging Child

By: Stanley Greenspan

The Five Love Languages of Children

By: Gary Chapman

Additional resources can be found on my website through my Goodreads link.