What does ‘gifted’ really mean?

- Aptitude/Ability
- Achievement
- Asynchrony

- State of Missouri: 3 out of 4 criteria
  - Ability
  - Achievement
  - Creativity
  - Parent/Teacher Referral

Distribution of IQ
Counseling High-Ability and Identified Gifted Learners

MSCA Conference
November 10, 2015

Emily Kircher-Morris, LPC
636.344.0433
www.summitcounselingstl.com
emily@summitcounselingstl.com

Misconceptions about Gifted Education and High-Ability Learners

- Gifted learners are **unlikely** to drop out of high school or college, self-medicate with substances, or behave dangerously.
- Gifted education services are a **privilege**.
- Being high-ability means having **few or no significant problems**, including bullying.
- Gifted students' **needs are met** through accelerated classes and enrichment.
- Gifted programming is “**elitist**.”
- Acceleration **should not** be considered as an option for appropriate placement.

Concerns in High-Achievers vs. Underachievers

- **High-Achievers**
  - Denied emotions
  - Isolation or social anxiety
  - Debilitating perfectionism
  - BFLPE

- **Underachievers**
  - Lack of expressive language to share emotions
  - Underlying learning disabilities
  - Inability to ask for help
  - Difficulty with authority

Emotional Intensity

- Dabrowski’s Theory of Overexcitabilities (Intensity)
  - Intellectual Intensity
  - Imaginational Intensity
  - Emotional Intensity
  - Psychomotor Intensity
  - Sensual/Sensory Intensity
Perfectionism

• Healthy vs. Unhealthy Perfectionism?
• Types of perfectionism:
  • Self-oriented
  • Others-oriented
  • Socially prescribed perfectionism

Anxiety and Depression

• Emotional intensity leads to both anxiety and depression in gifted children and teen.
• Mixed messages from society can cause discomfort.
• Existential depression can occur much earlier than in neurotypical peers.
• No concrete evidence that gifted individuals are more likely to have suicidal ideation.

2e Learners

• Twice-exceptional learners are students who demonstrate the potential for high achievement or creative productivity in one or more domains such as math, science, technology, the social arts, the visual, spatial, or performing arts or other areas of human productivity AND who manifest one or more disabilities as defined by federal or state eligibility criteria.
• These disabilities include specific learning disabilities; speech and language disorders; emotional/behavioral disorders; physical disabilities; Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD); or other health impairments, such as Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).
• These disabilities and high abilities combine to produce a unique population of students who may fail to demonstrate either high academic performance or specific disabilities. Their gifts may mask their disabilities and their disabilities may mask their gifts.

Reis, S., Baum, S., & Burke, E.
What can school counselors do?

• Work to support gifted education specialists in the schools to provide social and emotional support for gifted learners.
• Engage in proactive, prevention-oriented small groups with high-ability learners.
• Advocate for the gifted learner to have appropriate placement.
  • Acceleration?
  • Gifted programming?
  • 504 or IEP?

Questions and Comments

Works Cited and Suggested Resources

• Adelson, J. & Wilson, H. ( ).