

SPAN Sept 27, 2018 at WW media center

First Meeting of the 2018-2019 school year

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Reminder that there will be coffee meetings at the Lund's in Prior Lake in November, January and March. Specific dates to be announced.

Next meeting will be Nov. 27 at WW Media Center. It will be an MCGT-sponsored CHAT night, with facilitator Pam McDonald, District 196 gifted specialist, leading us through a discussion about asynchronous development in gifted kids.

Other activity: Family Day at National Association of Gifted Children's annual conference being held in Minneapolis. Family Day is Sat. Nov. 17: <http://mcgt.net/nagc-2018-family-day>

Review of Financials:

Starting balance (as of March 2018): \$2096.45

Income: Membership dues \$48.00

Expenses

MCGT Membership: \$65.00

2e movie license: \$75.00

Current balance: \$2004.45

Topic: Intensities in Gifted Kids

Speaker: Patty Bradley, former Edina gifted specialist

Most audience members had elementary aged children, some middle school and handful of HS parents.

Agenda:

- What it is?
- How we recognize it?
- What does it mean for us as parents and teachers?

Gifted Characteristics:

- Intense
- Sensitive
- Persistent
- Perceptive
- Uncomfortable with change

Gifted students can have intensity; as parents, flip the language on this (parents try to use the first words - teachers may use the second word)

- High energy – hyperactive
- Persistent – nagging
- Imaginative – not paying attention
- Passionate – oppositional

New labels (book recommendation: Raising Your Spirited Child)

| Old Negative Labels | New Exciting Labels |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demanding• Unpredictable• Loud• Argumentative• Stubborn• Impatient• Manipulative | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Holds high standards• Flexible, creative• Enthusiastic• Opinionated, committed• Assertive• Compelling• Charismatic |

Gifted kids aren't better....

- They just learn differently than other students
 - Pick up a concept 4 – 8x faster
- They learn faster
- They learn at a deeper cognitive level

It is important middle school kids are clustered or they go underground -start underachieving. Middle school years are critical.

Help gifted students understand that being gifted is a gift and with it comes responsibility - they should give back to their community.

Gifted Vs. High-Achieving

| Gifted | High-Achieving |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inquisitive• Advanced sense of humor• Emotional intensity and sensitivity• Greater metacognition• Extrapolates knowledge to new situations ~ goes beyond what is taught• High-capacity memory• Thinking is abstract, complex, logical, insightful• High curiosity• Greater self-awareness | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Knows the answer rather than asks the questions• Is interested, but may not be extremely curious• Pays attention but may not get involved• Works hard to get good grades• Seeks clear, fast solutions• Needs more repetition to grasp new concepts• Like to finish a project |

Myths of Gifted Students:

- They will succeed no matter what
- They like school and get good grades
- They are good at everything
- Teachers enjoy having them
- Easy to identify
- Everything comes easy
- Have trouble making friends

Truths about Gifted Kids

- Something you are born with
- Learn 4-8x faster than other students
- Generally, don't know how to study; lack these skills
- Excel in critical-thinking and problem-solving
- Typically, are as well-adjusted as other peers; 8 out of 10
- Development is usually asynchronous (mental age doesn't match physical)
 - Exhibit super-sensitivities or over-excitabilities– sensual, intellectual, psychomotor, emotional, imaginal
 - More likely to have anxieties

| <u>Overexcitability</u> | <u>Characteristics</u> | <u>Benefits</u> | <u>Challenges</u> |
|-------------------------|---|---|---|
| Psychomotor | Always on, Needs to Move, Needs to Talk | Enjoys sports & debate, likes order & conversation | Impulsive, difficulty sleeping, intensely competitive |
| Sensual | Heightened awareness of the senses | Deep appreciation for beauty | Oversensitive to smells, tastes, textures. Prone to sensory meltdowns |
| Intellectual | Always thinking, seek answers to deep questions | Curious, Analytical, Theoretical, Abstract | Asks lots of questions, follows “rabbit” trails to excess |
| Imaginational | Prone to daydreaming and make believe | Richly Creative, Loves the Arts – poetry, music, drama | Frequently anxious, exhibits magical thinking (I believe it, so it must be so) |
| Emotional | Highly sensitive | Highly attuned to other’s needs, Very empathic | Prone to anxiety, depression & anger, experiences physical symptoms, frequently feels lonely or isolated |

Psychomotor:

- Use foreshadowing when routine needs to change; talk about it before the change – especially for younger kids
- Use routine – especially at bedtime
- Give them a paper/pen so they can write down what comes to them at night
- Remove their screen time before bed time – take all technology out of their bedroom – that is what sleep research is saying because they can’t shut the brain off
- Use relaxation techniques to calm the body
- Melatonin – natural supplement and may need to be open to it
- Apps – that help with relaxation

Sensual:

- Food separation on plates
- Tagless shirts/seamless socks
- Watch for fabric feel
- Sensitive to parent facial expressions

Intellectual:

- Give them notebook to write down their question
- Get them books at library on their favorite subjects/passions
- Alexa – have them ask her their questions

Imaginational:

- Teaching them the difference between imagination and reality – especially starting at 4 yrs.; help them bridge the concept
- Nature pre-schools vs. 'regular' pre-school may help with kids who have a very active imagination between reality and magical thinking

Emotional:

- Stomach aches, anxiety attacks
- Help them understand they are more sensitive – explain this is a gift they have
- Consider a counselor for relaxation techniques instead of a dr. and medication
- Label the emotion for the kids
- May need to try various techniques and see what works

Risk Factors of Gifted Adolescents

- Underachievement
- Perfectionism
 - Learned trait; not something they are born with but something that is modeled (book recommendation: What's good about it and what's bad about it)
- Rejection from peers
 - Realize they may not need as many friends as 'social norms' would suggest
 - Be willing to open your house to their friends
 - Need to teach them social skills (this is true for all kids – no one is born with this)
- Nonconformity – sometimes in disturbing directions
 - Don't say 'no' to an adolescent but give them alternatives
 - Get them involved in something they may be passionate about
- Depression, anxiety, isolation and low self-esteem are a risk

Challenges of Gifted Students

- Parental and social pressures to achieve
 - Talk about what being gifted means
 - Talk about topics that make them excited
- Increased (perhaps unrealistic) expectations from parents and teachers
 - Don't use sarcasm
- Peer rejection – often due to intellectual differences

- Excessive self-criticism
 - These kids are the pros at this
 - Talk about positive self-talk
- Variable frustration & anger
- Social-emotional issues
 - In our society is it not 'acceptable' to 'be too smart' – especially in adolescents (i.e. nerd, geek)
 - Teenage yrs. are the most difficult socially and can impact self-esteem
 - Gifted students are more sensitive – feel the emotional stress of adolescence with greater depth
 - Many gifted are highly attracted to theater; they can be someone else-explore different characters

One characteristic they all have in common – they all have potential to achieve self-fulfillment and make a contribution to society and the well-being of the people.

Recommendations for Conferences:

- Curriculum must be challenging, personally meaningful and rewarding to students - change the pace, level or kind of instruction
 - Compacting the curriculum (suggest pre-tests to see what they already know); have them do the hardest problem instead of all the problems to show they understand the concept
 - Options in assignments – work independently; want to be involved in the decision-making process; can use independent contracts between teacher and student
 - Offer independent study options – student then has ownership – parents can supervise this as well as other teachers
 - Work with affective and cognitive needs of students (affirmation means more than grades)
- Free Spirit Press- buy your child's teacher a gift/gift certificate from here; great resource for books
- Instruction should require minimum memorization and drill practice and maximize inquiry, scientific investigation and creative production
- Cluster kids of similar ability/working with intellectual peers
 - Confidentiality does not allow teachers to tell you who else is gifted in a classroom

INTENTION – as parents and teachers, act with intention; what do you want your child to achieve

Advocate for Gifted Kids

- Have your child's IQ tested
- Educate yourself & others what this means
- Provide opportunities for the child to explore their passions – possibly outside of school
- Use patience and explanations when dealing with child's behavior

- Hold the child accountable – they can be really good at manipulation; important to be consistent on what is important to you (let other things go)
- Role model how you would like the child to respond – kids learn 80% by what you role model
- Use positive labels when describing your kid's behavior
- Become involved in Gifted issues

Recommended Resources:

- Free Spirit Publishing (www.FreeSpirit.com/gifted)
- Great Potential Press (WWW.GreatPotentialPress.com)
- Mindware (www.MindWare.com)
- Hoagies Gifted Education (www.hoagiesgifted.org)
- SENG (sengifted.org)

Additional Opportunities:

- Knowledge Masters
- Word Masters
- Quiz Bowl
- Science Fairs
- Academic Triathlon
- Mock Trial
- History Day
- United Nations
- Theater
- Music
- Athletics
- NUMATS (Northwestern University Midwest Academic Talent); in Chicago – kids as early as 3rd grade can take the SAT and opens doors to take summer classes at Northwestern)
- AMC (American Mathematics Competition)
- Stanford University EPGY (Education Program for Gifted Youth)