



The “Intensities” of Giftedness: An Informal and Educational Survey, 3 of 3

Child’s name: _____

Child’s age: _____ years, _____ months

Date of Survey: _____

The purpose of this informal survey is two-fold. First, to increase awareness that giftedness impacts not only intellectual development, but also psychological and nervous system development as well. Second, to inform parents, teachers and care givers that responsive behaviors to the overexcitabilities listed below are typical for gifted children. Gifted children, therefore, will need to be taught in such a way that their overexcitabilities are taken into account and their emotional and social growth is fostered.

What are Overexcitabilities (OE’s) or Intensities? Research by Dabrowski shows how the gifted are extremely sensitive in five areas (a stimulus-response difference from the norms) such that a gifted person reacts more strongly than normal, for a longer period than normal, to a stimulus that may be very small. It involves not just psychological factors but central nervous system sensitivity. The five areas are listed below. Please rate on a scale of 0 – 3 how often you have observed the listed intensity in the child in question.

0 = never

1 = rarely

2 = sometimes

3 = highly frequent

Please checkmark the appropriate box:

Dabrowski’s Overexcitabilities (OE’s) or Intensities of Giftedness	0	1	2	3
Psychomotor: A need for movement - athletic activity, fidgeting, fast talking, or lots of gestures. Has lots of physical energy and sometimes nervous tics.				
Sensual: A love for sensory things - textures, smells, tastes etc. or a powerful reaction to negative sensory input such as bad smells or loud sounds. They may give the "cut the label out of the shirt" demand. They may have a high aesthetic awareness - awed to breathlessness at the sight of a beautiful sunset or cries hearing Mozart, etc.				
Imaginational: Person is a day dreamer, inventor, thinks in detailed images, reacts strongly to dreams. May have an imaginary friend. Enjoys stories of magic and fairytales.				
Intellectual: Intensified activity of the mind – curiosity, concentration, capacity for sustained intellectual effort, avid reading, keen observation, detailed visual recall, detailed planning.				
Emotional: Intensity of emotion – positive feelings, negative feelings, extremes of emotion, complex emotions and feelings, identification with others’ feelings. Need for deep connections with other people or animals, inventing imaginary friends, deep empathy and compassion, susceptibility to anxiety and depression.				

Over →

Please take a moment to provide an example(s) of your observations of the child:

Psychomotor –
Sensual –
Imaginational –
Intellectual –
Emotional –

“Overexcitability means that life is experienced in a manner that is deeper, more vivid, and more acutely sensed. This does not just mean that one experiences more curiosity, sensory enjoyment, imagination, and emotion, but also that the experience is of a different kind, having a more complex and more richly textured quality.” (Daniels, p. 9)

Highly gifted people tend to have all 5, but different people lead with different OE's (e.g. engineer leads with Intellectual, poets with Emotional and Imaginational, etc.). Variations in the levels of the individual OE's explain a great deal about temperamental differences. These five OE's describe the unusual intensity of the gifted as well as the many ways in which they look and behave "oddly" when compared to norms.

When overexcitabilities are misunderstood, gifted individuals are often misdiagnosed with ADD, ADHD, bipolar disorder, etc. Therefore it is important to seek out care-givers and educators who already have an understanding of the OE's or help to educate them.

Sources:

Daniels, Susan. *Living with Intensity: Emotional Development of Gifted Children, Adolescents, and Adults*. Scottsdale, AZ: Great Potential, 2009. Print.

Webb, James T. *Misdiagnosis and Dual Diagnoses of Gifted Children and Adults: ADHD, Bipolar, OCD, Asperger's, Depression, and Other Disorders*. Scottsdale, Ariz.: Great Potential, 2005. Print.

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