



# Understanding Your Gifted Child From the Inside Out

A WOGI Podcast Series  
in five parts presented by  
**Patricia Gatto-Walden,  
Ph.D.**





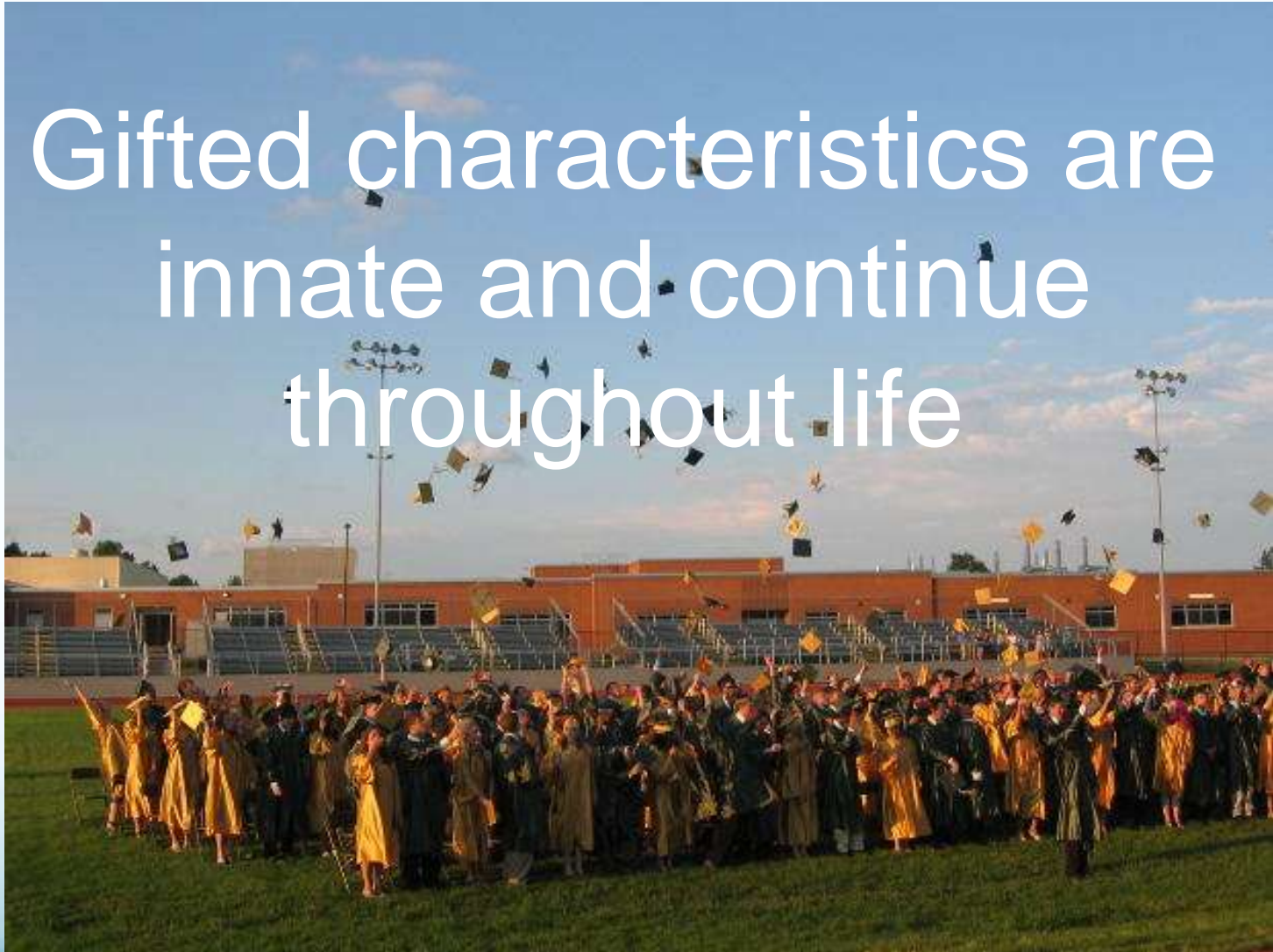
# Part 1: What does it mean to be gifted?



## What does it mean to be gifted?



Gifted characteristics are  
innate and continue  
throughout life



An educational program may consider.....

- Students meeting admission criteria
- An IQ score
- Academic productivity
- A child's portfolio
- Parent and teacher recommendations





But this is not  
the whole  
picture!  
Giftedness is  
shown in all  
aspects of a  
person.



Giftedness is asynchronous development (uneven development among the five domains) in which advanced cognitive abilities and heightened intensity combine to create inner experiences and awareness that are qualitatively different from the norm.

*Columbus Group, 1991*



Five  
words  
related  
to  
being  
gifted....



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Working on Gifted Issues

*Marking the Course*

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# **Part 2:**

## **Asynchronous Development, Sensitivity, and Perceptivity**



## Asynchronous development



## Giftedness is seen in all five domains of development

- *Intellectual*
- *Emotional*
- *Physical*
- *Moral/Ethical*
- *Social*



## Giftedness Defined by Asynchronous Development

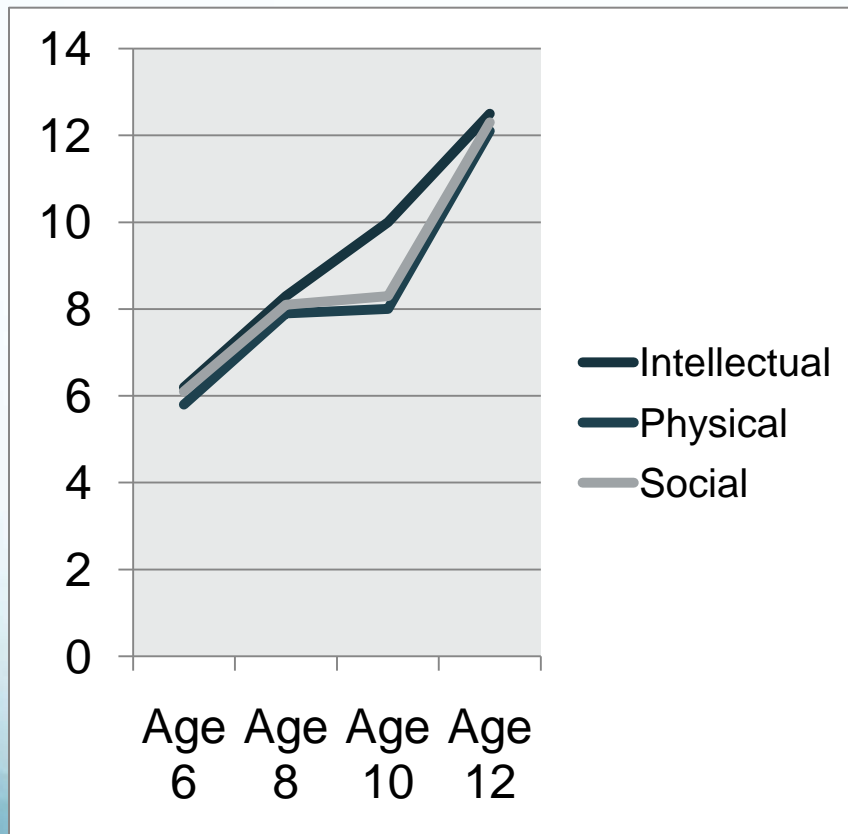
In 1991 a group of GT professionals and parents known as the Columbus Group defined giftedness as "asynchrony."

This definition targets the inner experience of the gifted. It explains why a gifted child might be years ahead of peers with certain cognitive skills while more typical or even immature in other areas of development.

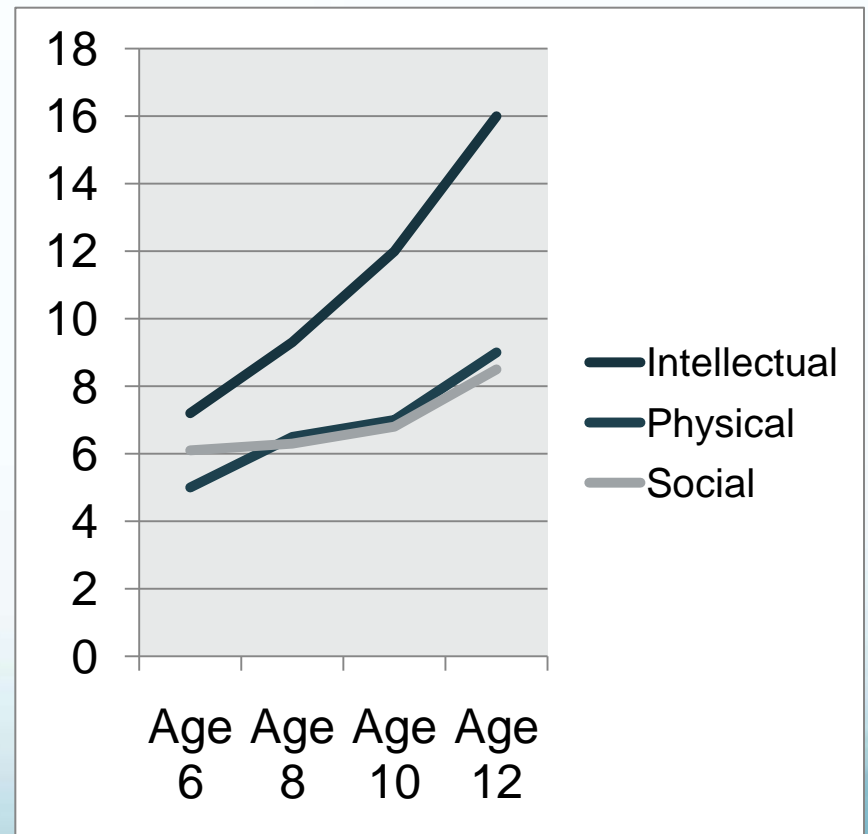


## Development

### Synchronous



### Asynchronous



## A Sensitive Nature

- Reactionary
- Justice and fairness
- Does the task have meaning?  
Does it really matter?



## Perceptivity

- Depth and breadth
- Innovative connections between concepts
- Observing nuances



## Understanding differences through use of a metaphor

If everyone was a television set.....

- 3 channels (average)
- 80 channels (gifted)
- 250 channels (highly gifted)
- 750 channels (profoundly gifted)

*Adapted from Betty Meckstroth*



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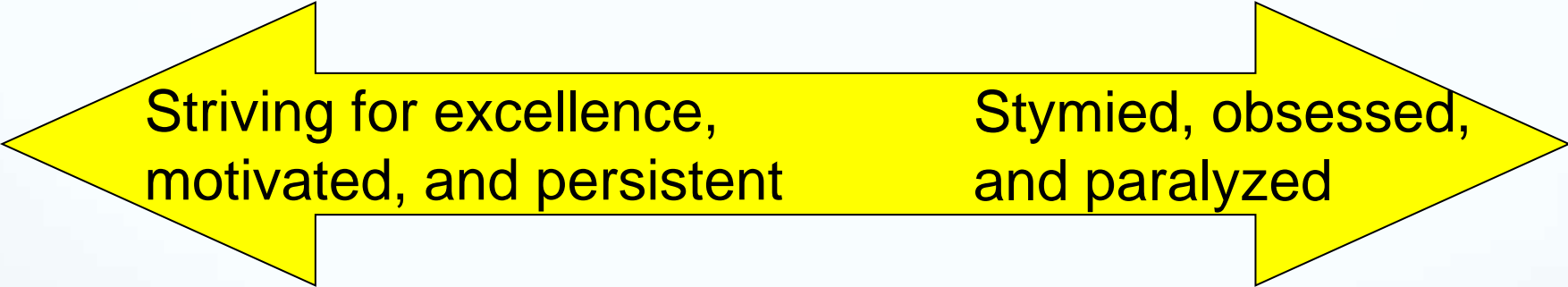


# Part 3: Perfectionism, Personality, and Temperament



## Perfectionism

- What I can imagine
- Continuum



Striving for excellence,  
motivated, and persistent

Stymied, obsessed,  
and paralyzed

- Can become locked into all or nothing mentality
- Perfectionism, pleasing, procrastination, paralysis





# Personality and Temperament

“The apple does not fall far from the tree.”



## Introverts

- Re-energize by themselves
- Feel drained by people
- May have a public and private persona
- Reveal self to only a few
- Are happy with one or two close friends
- Mentally contemplate and rehearse before speaking
- Dislike being the center of attention
- Are uncomfortable with changes
- Are reflective
- Fear humiliation

Adapted from Linda Silverman, 1993  
*Counseling the Gifted and Talented*



## Introvert and Extravert Continuum



## Extraverts

- Get energy from interaction with others
- Quickly and openly trust others
- Think aloud
- Enjoy being the center of attention
- Are comfortable in new situations
- Like having many friends
- Can be distractible and impulsive
- Are risk-takers in groups
- Learn by doing

Adapted from Linda Silverman, 1993  
*Counseling the Gifted and Talented*



## Temperament....

- Optimistic or pessimistic
- Self-concept and self-esteem
- Quality of self-talk and recurring tapes
- Willingness to try and take risks
- Persistence and effort
- Tolerating frustration
- Resilience





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# Part 4: Overexcitabilities: Psychomotor, and Sensual



## My child is so intense.....



## Dabrowski's Theory of Positive Disintegration



## Dabrowski's and Piechowski's Overexcitabilities

--Ways We are Too Much--



## Intensities/Overexcitabilities

- Psychomotor
- Sensual
- Intellectual
- Imaginational
- Emotional

Michael Piechowski, 1979  
*Developmental Potential*





## Misdiagnosis of gifted, highly gifted, and profoundly gifted



## Psychomotor

Surplus of energy, rapid speech, intense physical activity, enthusiasm, acting out, moving body with intellectual pursuits, continual talking, impulsive behavior, and nervous habits.

*Piechowski, 2006*



## Sensual

- Enhanced sensory pleasure or difficulty (e.g., seeing, smelling, tasting, hearing, touch)
- Aesthetic Pleasures (e.g., appreciation of beauty, music, writing styles)
- Sensual expression can include overeating, wanting to be center of attention, sexual overindulgence



Piechowski, M. (2006). *"Mellow Out," They Say. If I Only Could: Intensities and Sensitivities of the Young and Bright.* Madison, WI: Yunasa Books





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**Part 5:**  
**Overexcitabilities:**  
**Intellectual, Imaginational,**  
**and Emotional**



## Intensities/Overexcitabilities

- Psychomotor
- Sensual
- Intellectual
- Imaginational
- Emotional



Piechowski, 2006  
*Mellow Out, They Say, If I Only Could*



## Intellectual

- Intensified activity of the mind, curiosity, concentration, sustained intellectual effort, keen observation, detailed recall
- Passion for probing questions; problem-solving; search for truth and understanding
- Thinking about thinking; theoretical thinking; analysis; metacognition; introspection; moral thinking

Piechowski, 2006



## Imaginational

- Free play of the imagination (e.g., frequent use of image and metaphor, invention and fantasy, visualization, imaginary worlds, magical thinking)
- Spontaneous imagery, tendency to dramatize, mixing truth and fiction, night terrors, fear of the unknown



Piechowsk, 2006



## Emotional



- Intensity of feeling (e.g., positive or negative feelings, extremes of emotion)
- Somatic expressions (e.g., tense stomach, sinking heart, breaking heart, sweaty palms)
- Continuum of emotional experience (e.g., inhibition, timidity, shyness, ecstasy, euphoria, pride)
- Strong affective memory
- Fears and anxieties, feelings of guilt



## Emotional (cont'd)

- Concern with death, depressive and suicidal moods
- Strong attachments and need for deep relationships, sensitivity in relationships, empathy and compassion
- Strong feelings toward self (e.g., inner dialogue, self evaluation, and self-judgment)

*Piechowski, 2006*



## Intensities/Overexcitabilities

- Psychomotor
- Sensual
- Intellectual
- Imaginational
- Emotional



Piechowski, 2006  
*Mellow Out, They Say, If I Only Could*



“The truly creative mind in any field is no more than this:

A human creature born abnormally,  
inhumanly sensitive.

To him...a touch is a blow.

A sound is a noise.

Misfortune is tragedy.

A joy is an ecstasy.

A friend is a love.

A lover is god.

And failure is death.”



*Pearl Buck*



## Important Websites:

- WOGI – Working on Gifted Issues: <http://www.unfwogi.com>
- Florida Association for the Gifted Children (FLAG): <http://www.flagifted.org/>
- Florida Gifted Network: <http://www.floridagiftedednet.org/>
- National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC): <http://www.nagc.org>
- Hoagies Education Page: <http://www.hoagiesgifted.org>
- Davidson Institute for Talent Development: <http://www.gt-cybersource.org>
- Institute for Educational Advancement: <http://www.educationaladvancement.org>
- Supporting Emotional Needs of the Gifted (SENG): <http://www.sengifted.org>



## Gifted Book List and References

- Daniels, S., & Piechowski, M. M. (Eds.). (2008). *Living with intensity: Understanding the sensitivity, excitability, and the emotional development of gifted children, adolescents, and adults*. Scottsdale, AZ: Great Potential Press.
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- Silverman, L. K. (2002). *Upside-down brilliance: The visual spatial learner*. Glendale, CO: De Leon Publishing.
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- Webb, J. T., Gore, J. L., Amend, E. R., & DeVries, A. R. (2007). *A parent's guide to gifted children*. Scottsdale, AZ: Great Potential Press.





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