

Gifted, Talented & Highly Creative
Questions (from Jan 24, 2004) & Responses

Joyce E. Juntune, Ph.D., Texas A&M University

Understanding Giftedness

1. If we know that GT kids can "slip through the cracks" and often decide to not spend time in college, what does it mean for our country when we require you to have the credentials before you are allowed to do the job?
Gifted students do not object to getting the credentials they need. However, sometimes they can pass a test for the credentials instead of sitting through endless hours of class time. Gifted students need to have meaning in what they do. They will get the grades needed if this is the means to an end that they want. However, sometimes what they want and what we think they need are two different things. Remember—they operate with intrinsic motivation. They have no need to play "our" game if it has no purpose or meaning for them.

2. Do most GT students have relatively good grades?
Gifted students are as varied as any other segment of the population. Some get good grades and some do only what is necessary to keep from flunking out. Others see no meaning or purpose in what is happening so do nothing.

3. Because of culture or broken family background, how can you show the student that they have so much potential? What does it take?
The best thing we can do is take an interest in the student as an individual—notice their abilities—help them develop a vision of what they can become—find them a good mentor. Nothing beats a caring and supportive adult who takes a long term interest in a student.

4. Do GT students do well when placed in leader roles in the classroom?
This only works if their ability or area of strength is in leadership. To place students who have abilities in areas other than leadership in leadership positions has a reverse affect. Just because you are gifted does not mean you are a natural leader or even care to be a leader. This assumption was one of the things that caused great harm to my very bright sister.

5. Can GT do as well on MC tests?
There is not a particular test design that is best for gifted. One of the problems is that they "out-think" the test. They can figure out how every answer would be correct. I teach our gifted students test taking skills and to look for "what the test maker will be looking for"—not necessarily what you think is the correct answer.

6. Do GT like essay type of questions?

If the gifted student has a high ability in communicating through writing AND an in-depth understanding in the content are—this would be a good option. However, just because you are gifted doesn't mean you like to write. Some student's communication strength is in verbal communication or—as in the case of my nephew—in non-verbal communication. With these kinds of students, essay questions would be a very negative experience and not an indicator of their level of comprehension.

7. Are perfectionists high achievers or gifted?

Both high achievers and gifted students can suffer from perfectionism. Having almost unreachable goals usually happens in areas of high ability. A very good book on this topic is "What's Wrong with Being Too Good?"

http://www.freespirit.com/cgi/s_product_nf.cgi?productid=017

8. What age will a gifted child start showing signs of being gifted?

Signs of giftedness can appear as early as one year—when the child comprehends at a level higher than expected for that age group. Remember giftedness is related to accelerated development rates in the cognitive and emotional area.

9. Are there any differences in female & male gifted students and what are they?

Two excellent books are:

"Smart Girls" <http://www.giftedpsychologypress.com/bk091070726X.html> and

"Smart Boys". <http://www.giftedpsychologypress.com/bk091070743X.html>

Remember—gifted girls and boys are more like each other than like their same gender age-mates. Some of the problems that they do face are—gifted boys have to deal with the issue of sensitivity (difficult at middle school level!!!) and gifted girls have to make those terrible choices between being smart and being popular. Some gifted girls also have difficulties when they enter the university because they want to compete in male dominated fields but feel insecure doing it. If they have difficulty—they blame it on themselves and many bail out of engineering, etc.

10. Once a child is identified as GT, and still shows some signs, but not all, are they still GT?

Giftedness is for life. No one shows all the characteristics associated with giftedness all of the time. Since giftedness is something you are from birth to death—not something you acquire—no one can change being gifted.

11. How can you get GT students to work when they only want to pass (70 average—has a negative attitude, but knows he/she doesn't have to pass)?
Gifted students can not be MADE to do anything. They are intrinsically driven and only engage in things that have purpose and meaning to them. It is not uncommon for gifted students to be so turned off by "dumb, useless" school work that they have figured out exactly what they need to make on a given test or assignment to keep from flunking and do no more than the minimum. These are the students we need to talk to and try to find out how to make school more meaningful for them or how to get them out of the school situation at a faster pace.

12. How to socially help "them" develop a pool of friends without psychoanalyzing their friends.
Gifted people do not need or want a pool of friends. All they need are a couple really good friends—friends who share their interests and passions—friends who understand what it means to be gifted. It is difficult for gifted students to find friends if they are in a school with very few gifted students. Summer programs for the gifted are excellent places to find true friends. E-mail makes communication possible throughout the year. A long distant friend who understands is better than a fake friend who uses you to get better grades.

13. Are some students more gifted and show more characteristics than others?
There are levels of giftedness. A student who is two standard deviations away from the mean (approx 130 IQ) will show giftedness differently than a student who is 3 or 4 standard deviations away from the mean (145 - 160 IQ). The higher the level of giftedness the more defining the characteristics.

14. How do I keep up with their energy level (mental & physical) when I am laid back?
You do not have to keep up with their energy—and they don't expect you to. Just give them some guidance and let them go. That is the way they would rather have it anyway. They do not want their teacher to know everything they know or be interested in everything they are interested in.

15. Do students who are gifted always test well?
No they do not. Sometimes they do not think the tests are important. Other times they over think the tests. Sometimes I need more than one test to tell what a gifted student really knows. Sometimes I just ask them to tell me what they know about a subject—and, I listen AND learn!!!

16. Can there be ADD GT students?

Absolutely!!! And there can be LD/GT and Aspergers/GT.

17. Would a possible candidate for the National Merit Scholarship most likely come from a gifted student or high achiever?

Most likely a high achiever or a gifted student who is also a high achiever.

18. If we did all the things for "regular" students that we do for gifted—they would all bloom—How do we firm that with what you have said about GT differences cognitively & emotionally?

Many of the teaching techniques promoting higher order thinking and creative thinking are good for all students and should be taught to all students. To reserve them only for the gifted is a disservice to the rest of the students. However, when one gets into the depth and complexity of the content and spends weeks delving into content related issues---most regular students are not interested. They do not have the passion or staying power to go as far into some content areas as a gifted student. Here is our guideline---"If everyone can do it—let everyone do it but don't call it gifted." As the gifted students often say---"When we finally get to discuss at the level that interests us—the rest of the students' eyes glaze over." Gifted students function at a more complex level both cognitively and emotionally.

19. Is there a correlation between laziness & giftedness?

It probably isn't laziness you are talking about but a response of disinterest in the assignment or the class because the level of discussion or the activity is so-o-o far from where the mind of the gifted student wants to go. After a while, many gifted students just give up and mark time. They unfortunately disconnect from the learning setting—because what we are offering is like giving a teen-ager a steady diet of strained baby food. There is nothing for them to get their teeth into.

20. How can you make a person accept the fact that they are gifted?

You can't make a gifted person do or understand anything---but reading about what giftedness is often helps—or meeting together with other gifted people and discussing (with a knowledgeable person) what it means to be gifted also is great. Sometimes a person thinks if they say they are gifted other people will expect everything they do to be high level and perfect. I wouldn't want to say I'm gifted under those circumstances. Other times, the gifted person is afraid others will think they think they are better than others so shy away from acknowledging giftedness.

21. How should one deal with students' frustration of not being able to accomplish "hands-on" assignments immediately?
Remember that a gifted person might have slowed physical development. If this is the case—the mind is at age 18 while the hands can only produce something similar to age 9. This is the most frustrating of situations. Your hands can not do what your mind is seeing. Gifted students think something is wrong with them and tend to do nothing. It is disappointing to have a wonderful idea that your hands can not produce. This is why I give many different choices to students—so they can show me what they know through a venue that is in line with their development. Other times I let them pair with another student so the mind of the gifted student can work in cooperation with the hands of another student.
22. Why do creative students have a difficult time with "common sense" tasks in labs?
If the task requires physical coordination---see the response above. Also—if the task holds no interest for them—they will tend to overlook details while thinking of the big picture.
23. Can you get them to care about paper work or how grades affect their future?
They will care if it is in an area that interests them OR if it will help them achieve a long term goal. Gifted students need to think about the future—develop a clear vision for their future. The clear vision of the future will make the task of today suddenly fit. Most gifted students tell me they disconnect because their teachers only think about the past and the present. They want to think about the future—but find their teachers are not there.
24. What careers would be best for GCT students?
The best career is one that interests them. Many gifted people have multiple careers in life. Sometimes they have a short-term career that pays the bills so that they can do the things they really love in their spare time.
25. How can I convince the powers that be that a student is talented but not gifted? (That this is a high achiever but is not that smart.)
According to state guidelines, we do not "unidentify" a student. A student may withdraw from a program—but it is their choice. Therefore, all gifted programs do have some students who are not gifted. That is why I give choices—so the gifted student can take an idea and run while the student who is not gifted usually decides not to take the higher level options.

26. Is their brain wired differently? Can a MRI determine giftedness?

Yes—in the fact that they see the world differently—they think and process in different ways—they see more in-depth. A MRI can show if more of the brain is functioning during certain tasks and which parts of the brain is functioning during certain tasks—but there is more to thinking than how much of the brain is functioning. The MRI would identify the complex thinker—but we would have to know which tasks to give each person tested and give many MRIs to use it for identification.

27. Does pre-natal nutrition of the mother have any bearing in developing a GT child?

It does have bearing only on how much of the development has occurred by birth. There have been studies to show that even if the child arrives with problems—a caring, supportive, and stimulating environment allows the child to catch up. The development still occurs at a faster pace in the cognitive and emotional area even if the level is not where it should be at birth. Gifted children have been found in the poorest of areas where there was no attention to nutrition before and after birth.

28. How do you know the other areas of physical & emotional development when in high school you only get to know their cognitive level?

Watching a student gives a lot of clues to the physical and emotional development. Listening to what they say and the depth of their understanding gives off clues. The high emotional development comes as they show an immense understanding of injustices of others around the world. They seem to have a mature emotional outlook when discussing certain issues. That is the main job we have—watch the students and respond to what we see and hear.

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Strategies & Ideas

1. How do I spark a fire when I get a student who simply doesn't care—but I see the creative abilities? Do I give many choices in every activity?
I find out what the student is interested in and try to find a way for them to build their content comprehension by using their interest. We are more creative in the areas of high interest or areas in which we have a large storehouse of background understanding.

29. Give me some suggestions on how to deal with empathic gifted students!
A high level of emotional sensitivity and empathy is a part of giftedness. Gifted people feel at an entirely different level than an average person. Often high empathy is behind the drive for "righting a wrong". Related community service (chosen by them not me!!!) in the area of high empathy is a good outlook. They so desperately want to do something about the emotions they are experiencing.

30. Are there indicators or assessments that we can modify to help maintain the interest of the students in our area?
The curriculum experience for the gifted student must tie to the TEKS. That is why we have students test out of material they already know AND we provide them with opportunities to study a related area to a greater depth, study an area of their interest, or study an issue related to the content of the unit. The reason I gave you the "prompts/template" page was so you could plug in your own content and have the beginnings of a depth or complexity activity. Remember--- No one is interested in hearing (for the 10th time) something they learned years ago. Interest comes when the learning is relevant to the student and links to their passions. I do not assess the depth or complexity activities. (I use self-reflection—but not grading.) The test-out grade is the grade for the week since it is an indicator of their knowledge and understanding of the TEKS or concepts I am teaching that week.

31. How do you assess GT students when you are teaching in an area where specific information needs to be learned—as in becoming a registered dietitian or a registered nurse?
See ques 3. I use "test out" to assure that the student knows the required information. Some students need to go through information 4-5 times to understand it—others get it the first time. Giftedness does not mean you are exempt from learning. It means you are exempt from repeating dozens of times, information you already know, as indicated by a mini-test. They need to pass the same test—but may not need the same number and kinds of reviews other student will need.

32. Is it not true that "average" kids respond well to these methods as well?
Many of the teaching techniques promoting higher order thinking and creative thinking are good for all students and should be taught to all students. To reserve them only for the gifted is a disservice to the rest of the students. However, when one gets into the depth and complexity of the content and spends weeks delving into content related issues---most regular students are not interested. They do not have the passion or staying power to go as far into some content areas as a gifted student. Here is our guideline---"If everyone can do it—let everyone do it but don't call it gifted." As the gifted students often say---"When we finally get to discuss at the level that interests us—the rest of the students' eyes glaze over."

33. How can I get more information about ideas to teach gifted students (like you talked about today)?

The July 5-day courses at Texas A&M are an opportunity to gain many more ideas. Also—here are some materials that have been developed for use with gifted students--

<http://cfge.wm.edu/materials.php>

<http://www.teachersfirst.com/gifted/strategies.html>

34. Where can I find more activities to use?

see ques. #6 Also for good thinking activities for students—see the following websites: <http://www.thebrainstore.com/store/storehome.asp>

<http://www.prufrock.com/>

<http://www.piecesoflearning.com/>

35. What are some ways to increase gifted activities/classroom for clothing in PFD?

One general strategy that I like to use is—"Change Over Time". I would have the gifted students choose an area (fashion trends, labeling of clothing, textile products used in clothing, the apparel industry, apparel marketing—to name a few) and study how it has developed over time—what has influenced these developments, how these developments have affected clothing related jobs & careers.

Another strategy would be the use of Venn Diagrams—Compare and contrast apparel choices of three age groups—or three geographic areas—or three countries. Include the similarities and differences in what influences these choices.

Also—Point of View thinking is a natural here—Research different points of view on topics such as: apparel choices, apparel marketing, textile sources, etc.

36. What are some ways to enrich their choices?

Choices can be in (a) the way an assignment is completed—i.e. chart, poster, essay, model (b) how the learning occurs—read and answer questions, design an activity which will show your knowledge level of _____, give three choices of assignments of which they choose one or design a similar assignment of their own, (c) research topics (List some options-they choose from the options or put forth their idea of a research topic.)

Every time a student comes up with a great idea for a choice—I write it down so I can include it in the choices the next semester or year. Many of my great ideas have come from the students!!!

37. I need more teaching strategies to keep the gifted continually challenged.

See ques. 6&7.

38. Besides "higher level" teaching activities, what other techniques do you suggest for teaching these students?

I use a combination of "test-out", higher order thinking, independent research, and assignment choice.

39. What objectives in the lesson plans show you are meeting their needs (buzzwords for administrators & appraisers)?

The key words from the state document are "depth" and "complexity". For example: "Depth: The student will create a concept diagram for _____, identify the critical areas within the concept and explain the reasons for his/her thinking." I allow a choice in how this is presented—a paper, a chart, a verbal presentation to a group, etc.

40. I feel that the students who are GT are often bored in my class. How should you engage them when discussing nutrition, child development, etc.?

This is where small group activities work well. I would ask the student to identify 2 or 3 things they wonder about related to (Child Development: prenatal development, the role of genetics, parenting or discipline and the emotional development of a child, etc. Nutrition: nutritive supplements, activities and nutritional choice, the relationship between nutritional choices and psychological needs, etc.) I would have them research their topic of interest and form small groups where they would share their info with others—rotate the groups so students are a part of more than one group. Student involvement in the learning AND linking learning to interests are two of the best ways to combat boredom.

41. I teach Family Consumer Sciences Career Preparation Coop class—How can I individualize some of the topics taught for the different work-based learning training areas?

I would have students sign up for different areas of interest to them. They would demonstrate the skills needed in that area or show the levels of skills needed in a chart or demonstration—entry level skills->advanced skills.

42. What can be done with GT students who feel as if they don't want to participate in any projects?

I would find out why they don't want to participate—Do they see the project as irrelevant? Do they feel it is a "please the teacher" project? Do they see no purpose in the project? Then I would have them personalize the project to meet the goals of the project but in a way that had meaning for them.

43. How can we challenge gifted students?
The key is to invite them to go deeper into the content area, tie it to their area of interest, encourage them to research questions they have about a topic/concept, or relate it to real world situations.
44. What links could we search to find more activities?
See ques 6&7.
45. How do you motivate a gifted student who wants to blend in with underachieving peers?
Underachievement is a complex situation that often requires the involvement of a counselor as well as the family. A great book on underachievement is "Why Bright Kids Get Poor Grades"
http://www.freespirit.com/cgi/s_product_nf.cgi?productid=395
Sometimes the student is tired of the high expectations placed on gifted students and just wants to be "normal", Other times—the pull of needing to be accepted by others trumps the intellectual needs. This is why I am a great proponent of guided discussion groups where gifted students can get together and learn about giftedness as well as learn they are not alone.
46. What projects are suitable for students who always finish first?
I want students who finish the assignments to have their own plan for how they will use the "extra" time. I have thinking activities, mind games, and logic puzzles available—but if they want to read, draw, etc., that is their choice. They have accomplished what I planned for the day—their time is now THEIR time. This is where I use the "card with 4 boxes"—four things you want to do when your work is done today.
47. Do gifted and talented activities work well with special needs and LEP students?
I am a believer that every classroom should involved students in higher order thinking activities. This does not mean that every student could or should function at the same level. What is challenging to the gifted student is at a level that many others students cannot comprehend. The speed, complexity and interconnections of gifted students are beyond what a base level student—who is struggling with the basic concepts—is able to do. Remember every student has gifts, but that is different from being gifted—developmentally "out of sync".
48. What are some ways to stimulate GT kids in class—some do not want to stand out from the rest of the class?
Once again—I like test-out as a strategy because it lets the students AND me know who needs more review and who can delve into projects and studies based on individual interest. Choice and linking to student interest are the best ways to stimulate GT students in a classroom.

49. I would like some prompts to initiate projects & independent study in Personal & Family Development?

Depth: --Develop a concept diagram on the concept of family.

--Research the influence of cultural patterns and beliefs on family and social relationships for 3 different cultures

--Interview a person who exhibits sound decision making and responsibility. How did they develop these areas? What can you learn from their experiences?

Complexity: --Examine the newspaper. What things in the society support sound decision making and responsibility? What things undermine sound decision making and responsibility?

--Research multiple points of view on "What is sound decision making?" or "What is responsible behavior?". Suggested people would be—community service people (police, fireman, youth leaders, religious leaders), potential employers, educators, family members.

--Research how a family changes over time from the birth of the first child to the graduation of the youngest child. What influences these changes?

50. Please tell me again—what are the words for?

The list of words in the handouts had to do with topic/concepts where I have used the concept diagram technique.

51. What are some methods to catch the students up with concept gaps they have with testing for TAKS is practiced all the time -teaching the test not content?

I design my own test-out tests so I know if there are concept gaps that need to be filled. Also—strategies like the concept diagram and applied thinking activities can be used to reveal concept gaps. I teach to the gaps or hold tutoring sessions for the students who need special work in that area. This also works when using test-out. One day a week, students who have tested out work on a project of their choice while I work with the students who have gaps. I also look for technology based programs that can be used for individual students to fill gaps in learning.

52. How can I relate this to Hotel & Restaurant Management?

Complexity: --Research how the hotel industry has changed over time. What has influenced these changes? Predict how the industry will change in the next 20 years. What will influence these changes?

--Research how the services of a restaurant or lodging facility are viewed from multiple points of view—manager, foreign guest, local guest, guest with special needs, owner, hourly wage employee, How would you change and improve services based on these multiple points of view? How would these changes impact the economics of the facility?

Depth: --Use an Expanded Venn Diagram to compare and contrast hotel & restaurant management in a national/regional chain, family owned, and locally owned facility.

--Conduct an in-depth study of a facility in your area. When was it opened? Who owned it? Has it changed owners? Has it changed services? Why were these changes made? What impact did it have on the facility?

53. What are some strategies for mixed classes?

With mixed classes, I especially like using the alphabet book on a topic, using an object and example/non-example from the breadth part of the handout. Students can work in small groups or individually and share their findings. Remember—gifted students can do these activities in small group settings but to give it the depth needed—they need to research ideas that are beyond what is covered in the textbook or classroom discussion.

54. Ready, Set, Teach Class—students are working with other teachers in a classroom—I am trying to have each student design lessons for their students—teachers are having problems letting my students have an open range for their lessons—Can you help me?

I assume from the question that you are talking about student teachers? It sounds as if there needs to be a discussion of expectations with the host teachers, the student teachers and the supervisor—so everyone knows what was said and what the expectations are. Potential problems on the part of the host teachers can be discussed and solved.

I would also encourage the students designing the lessons to show CLEARLY how the lesson effectively accomplishes the learning objective. Is this a good use of the learning time in a classroom? I have seen "fun" activities that took valuable time but in the end the student did not know why they were doing it or what had been learned because of it. There is nothing like success. I usually design my first lessons so there is some openness and a high level of learning. When the teacher sees how much more learning was accomplished in the same period of time as a regular lesson, they are more willing to allow the next lesson.

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Program Issues

55. Do we get extra funding for GT students in FCS classes/
I don't know how your school district distributes the state and local funds. Often the funds pay a percentage of the teacher's salary of teachers who provide the main services to these students. Other times most of the money is used in the identification process.
56. Are the requirements for GT state mandated or local?
The requirements are set by the state. The State Plan for Texas can be found at <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/gted/>
57. It seems like most of the GT students I've seen identified are simply high achievers. Is this true across the board in schools?
Historically, more high achievers are identified than gifted students. This is because high achievers are easier to find.
58. With GT students, do we have special mods for these students & do we (by law) have to keep documents about these students in our files?
Someone in the district is keeping modification records of these students. It is usually the teacher providing the main services for the student (one of the core content areas).
59. If we believe a student is GT, but is failing several classes, what should we do?
Definitely talk to the counselor or someone in the district who understands giftedness. This student may need to accelerate and test out of courses so s/he can get out of high school OR they may be facing problems outside the school OR they may be finding that nothing has purpose. Doing nothing is not going to change the situation. A great book on underachievement is "Why Bright Kids Get Poor Grades" http://www.freespirit.com/cgi/s_product_nf.cgi?productid=395
60. Is it required for these students to be identified in our classes?
You should be given the list of those students in your class who have been identified gifted within your district.
61. What about "inclusion"—mainstreaming GT with "special ed" students?
This only works if they have a shared interest or passion. I have mixed students for part of the week and then have students who do not need all of the review or need a faster pace "test-out" for the remainder of the week.

62. Why do we focus mainly on academics, and not on other gifted skills?
An obsession with testing has pushed us into an area here we have not taken the time to think about what our students really need. Students need more than their academic skills developed.
63. Who tells & gets the school to take care of the gifted students? They always look at the high achiever. Who regulates the GT program?
Gifted programs are regulated by the state—but the accountability visits by the state have been put on hold during this budget crisis. The best people to hold a district accountable are the parents of the gifted students.
64. Are schools required to let their teachers know who the gifted students are?
Required is a strong word. Let's just say schools are supposed to let teachers know. Talk to your coordinator of gifted students and request that this information be made available to the teachers with gifted students in their classes.
65. How do we get GT students in our classes. They are encouraged to take other classes (AP) instead?
Gifted students—like all students should take the classes which best meet their needs.
66. Why are they not IDed for us like spec ed?
They should be---ask that they do.
67. Which is more beneficial for gifted students—pullout or a classroom program?
It depends on the level of the student. However, for most students I would say—a combination. is the best approach. They need time to pursue their own independent study—but benefit from stimulating discussions with students of varying abilities.
68. Do you think GT should be pulled from the class and put in an area where they can work together?
See the response to ques 13. Also—according to the State Plan—gifted students are to participate in three kinds of groupings -work independently, work with other gifted students and work with students of varying abilities
<http://www.tea.state.tx.us/gted/gtrule.htm> 89.3.1
69. I already know a lot about special ed students but not gifted—why isn't this being taught to teachers?
It should be—but right now training in gifted education is given after one has a bachelor's degree. I think it came from the belief that teachers need some teaching experience to be able to work successfully with gifted students.

70. Our school thinks that putting students in advanced classes is serving GCT students. How can this be changed since there is no agency or group that can make them change?

The best way to change this is to educate the people in the district on what giftedness really is AND to involve the parents in requesting an expansion of services. AP classes do provide an excellent service—however, there needs to be more than one way to serve gifted students.

71. How are teachers chosen to teach such programs? It appears that only content area (core teachers) are chosen to receive this training. What tools can the FCS teacher use to take advantage of such training?

You are right about core teachers being chosen. That is because the state requires that services for gifted students be provided in all four core areas. However, I would talk to your GT coordinator and tell him/her you would like to know when GT training is available so you can participate.

72. How can we attract more of these students?

Students will migrate to the classes that meet their needs AND that is the way it should be.

73. Without weighted GPA—how do we attract these students to our classes?

Many gifted students are not concerned about the weighted GPA. They will enroll in classes that develop their interests and meet a need for them. However, high achievers will want weighted GPAs.

74. How do you "bridge the gap" with a GT student who is having emotional troubles at home with parents—and during your classes—the student keeps interrupting your class to be dismissed to see a counselor. The only feedback I got from the counselor is that the student is gifted and has problems at home.?

This student might need to see an outside counselor. Remember—gifted students have a heightened sensitivity. Emotional problems are more magnified for them, I take emotional problems seriously with gifted students since they can easily slip underground and go into a depression.

The student you described here is definitely yelling out for help by his/her actions.

75. How do districts separate high achievers & GCT students in our GT programs? Is the test we give to identify them really sufficient?

Sometimes the students are together and sometimes separated. This depends on the type of service they choose. They might be together in an advanced class and separate during independent study and sharing seminars.

The state requires more than one test for identification. I believe that more than one test should be available if we feel our first test has not captured the student's ability profile.

76. Is it better to have a separate GT class? When those students are gone, do you have them make up what they missed?

I like part-time separate classes where students can discuss at the level that challenges them AND where they can learn more about what it means to be gifted.

77. What is the difference between GT, Honors, Pre AP? It is all the same in our building.

The key is that teachers are to differentiate the curriculum in the class (whether it is Honors, AP, or regular) to provide the challenge needed and match the interest of the gifted students. Some schools do nothing different and the gifted student feels unwanted in the school.

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Identification

78. Are the gifted & talented identified—or do we identify them?

Every district is required to have a process in place for identifying gifted students. However, I always encourage teachers to look for gifted students who missed being identified. The state requires that the identified students be served. However, many times I find that when teachers discover unidentified gifted students, knowing about giftedness helps them better understand the student and provide more meaningful work for that student.

79. How many indicators identify them as gifted?

When I use one of the lists to decide if I should nominate a student for formal testing—I look for a "critical mass" of the indicators. One or two items wouldn't catch my attention—but 65% would!!

80. How do you identify for grouping when they are not labeled by the counselor?

You should know which of your students are identified as gifted. However, I don't group by label but rather by what mix makes for the most productive group for the assignment at hand.

81. What is the fastest way to identify a gifted & talented—especially when we teach quick semester courses?

You would not do a formal identification—but sometimes knowing about giftedness helps you better understand a student.

82. Why don't we have better "evaluations" for identifying gifted & talented learners?

I don't know what measures are used in your district. But all districts are to use a mixture of formal testing and observation.

83. How do you determine gifted, high achievers, & low achievers while teaching throughout the year?

I use the gifted/high achiever list I gave in the handouts. Basically—high achievers like to do what they are told and please the teacher. Gifted students are more intrinsically motivated and look for purpose and meaning in assignments. Low achievers have more potential and ability than they are choosing to show in the classroom. Remember---low achievers can be gifted students, creative students, or regular students.

84. Is there a test that can be administered to students to determine GT other than getting a list of who has been tested & the results?

There are several tests that are used to determine giftedness. The state of Texas requires that districts use at least 3 different measures during the identification process. Since the measures used are professional standardized tests—they must be administered by a professional with proper training in test administration and interpretation. As a classroom teacher, you should be provided a list of identified students. Also—you need to know the characteristics and watch for any student exhibiting a number of these characteristics. If a student matches the characteristics and responds to the differentiated assignments at a level similar to other gifted students---refer the student for formal assessment and identification.

85. How can you tell the difference between a student who is gifted and one who is not?

A gifted student will usually test at least 2 standard deviations above the mean, have strong intrinsic motivation (though not always where you would like to see this motivation!!!), has various domains of development "out of sync" with age mates and within self, has excessive energy in imaginational, intellectual, and emotional domains, and needs time alone to recharge.

86. How do schools identify—at what age—and how do the labels affect the child?

Schools identify heavily in K-2, but will conduct a formal assessment process at any grade level, if the teacher, student, or parent requests it. Each school designs their own assessment process, but it must follow state guidelines of using at least three different measures and including both quantitative and qualitative data.

(State Plan pg 4)

*Labels actually are helpful **IF** one explains what it means to be gifted. The child knows by the time they enter school that they see the world through a different set of eyes. Unless giftedness is explained to them—they think something is wrong with them. Most gifted people are relieved to find out that something isn't wrong with them AND that they are not the only person in the world like this.*

87. Can you test a 5 year old—How?

Yes, a five year old can be tested for giftedness.. Most ability level tests used by the schools can be used with 4 & 5 year olds. Private psychologists often have tests that can be used with younger children.

88. Can a person be gifted in only one area?

Yes—most people are not gifted in every area. In fact the State of Texas defines gifted as, "...a child or youth...who exhibits or has the potential to exhibit high performance capability in an intellectual, creative, OR artistic area, possesses an unusual capacity for leadership AND/OR excels in a specific academic field."

(State Plan pg 11)

89. How are students classified as GT?

Each school designs their own assessment process, but it must follow state guidelines of using at least three different measures and including both quantitative and qualitative data. Final selection is made by a committee of at least three educators who have been trained in the nature & needs of the gifted.

(State Plan pg 4 <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/gted/>)

90. Can they be identified for a program as late as high school?

"Students in grades K-12 shall be assessed and, if identified, provided services."

(State Plan pg 4)

91. What is the referral process for a gifted students at the elementary level vs the high school? Who should be contracted? How likely is it that we have H. S. student unidentified?

Every district has a procedure in place for referring and identifying gifted students. Often the counselor is the school person in charge of handling the referral process. In other schools, there is a manual in the principal's office outlining the referral procedure. Contact the person in your district who is listed as the GT Coordinator, GT Resource Teacher, etc. if no one at your school knows the procedure.

92. When a child is tested for GT, what type of test questions are there? Is the test based on cognitive info only?

Each district decides on the tests they will use to uncover the gifted students in their district. Usually there is an ability test (verbal or non-verbal), a creativity measure, an achievement index, observation checklists that range from thinking ability to motivation, and input by teachers and parents.

93. How does a school district "label" a student gifted or talented?

Each district decides on the approximate percentages of students they will serve in the gifted program. This could range from 3% - 8%. They use these percentages to set cut-off levels in the identification process. Do know that the state requires an appeal process to be in place for a teacher or parent who thinks the assessment is not an accurate picture of the student's abilities.

94. How do we discover the extent of their giftedness so we can help them?

You not only have the right to know who has been identified as gifted, you should also have access to their identification profile—which indicates the level of ability and the area(s) of strength. However, being a good "kid-watcher" has always been my best tool for discovery. I watch their level of passion and listen to the level and kinds of questions they ask.

95. How easily can creative people be identified?

Creativity like intelligence is on a continuum. Also—like intelligence, there are verbal and non-verbal tests of creativity as well as researched observational checklists. There are wonderful descriptions of the characteristics of highly creative people just like there are lists for highly academically gifted people. Do remember that highly creative people are also highly intelligent—though do not always test as high as their ability.

96. Can a person be gifted & a high achiever?

Absolutely!! If you will look at the chart I gave you—the two ovals interlock—meaning there are high achievers who are not gifted in our programs, high achievers who are gifted in our programs and (hopefully) gifted who are not high achievers.

97. What are ways to better identify special needs children that are also gifted in our classrooms?

The best way is to involve a special education teacher who has taken coursework or training in gifted education. At the very least—both areas must be involved in the assessment process since one's giftedness affects how one performs on special education testing and one's learning difficulty affects how one performs on the giftedness assessments. In the case of my nephew—his special education needs were identified years before his gifted needs. Sometimes we stop assessing too soon. Once we find something we focus on that and do not look for other areas.

98. How do you measure the standard deviations for gifted/high achievers—tests—and then use the info to see how to best serve them—and what about the regular kids—can you plot out a class?

The standard deviations are a part of a test interpretation process. Every standardized test has a manual which helps one plot the student scores in relationship to what would be "average" on the test. Remember---the further away they are from the average in the classroom the more services they need. If you gave your entire class the same standardized measure—you could plot out a whole class according to standard deviations.

99. How do you identify gifted students that are in the shell you described?

To find students who have gone "underground" one needs an observant teacher, counselor, administrator, or parent who realizes that the behavior and thinking they are seeing might be related to underserved gifted abilities. Once they are referred—a good testing process will show their hidden abilities.

100. What tests are available to truly determine if a student is GT or creative?

Some of the tests used in the State of Texas include SAGES-2, CoGAT, RIAS, Ravens, Torrance Test for Creative Thinking, Creativity Assessment Packet, OLSAT, Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test, Renzulli Scales, TONI, GATES, Slosson, Iowa Tests of Basic Skills, Metropolitan Achievement Tests, Aprenda, We are required to test in the language of comprehension or find an interpreter. (State Plan pg 4)

101. Why are more students labeled at-risk and not gifted or a combination?
We still have many people who are not looking for gifted students in at-risk populations. Often we find one label—any label --but do not seek to see if there is more at stake than meets the eye.
102. Should the TAKS test be used to cut down the students in GT class?
No—because TAKS is not about ability—but about the BASIC information we expect a student to know at a given grade level. Most students should know the BASIC information. With gifted students, we are looking for those who understand differently and at a level beyond the regular curriculum.
103. Through many projects and labs we have ample opportunity to observe creativity. What criteria do we use to identify GCT students?
Creatively gifted students also go through a formal assessment process that looks at their ability, their creativity AND their level of idea production. However, as a teacher when I see a student who is seeing new applications for knowledge, has a high intuitive level of thinking, does not seek acceptance from the group, is a risk taker, has a sense of humor, is curious, is attracted to novel approaches, and seems to understand his/her own creativity—I might have a highly creative person on my hands.
104. How do you pick GT when they are a high percentage of students with concept gaps---7th gr. working at 3rd gr. math & 1st gr. reading?
Giftedness is about ability which may or may not mean a student is achieving. Ability tests uncover ability even if the student has knowledge gaps. That is why there is a formal assessment process. Personally—if I had a 7th grader with the gaps you mention—I would look into why???. Someone has been ignoring this student for some time. This didn't just happen this year. Is there a learning disability that has gone unnoticed? Did the child have a lengthy illness during some of the critical learning times? Has the child moved a lot? This student certainly must be discouraged and definitely needs some diagnostic work AND tutoring.

gifted, Talented & Highly Creative
Questions (from Jan 24, 2004) & Responses

Joyce E. Juntune, Ph.D., Texas A&M University

Classroom Management

105. I have had students say they didn't want to be in GT because they didn't want to sign up for more work. How do we change AP classes for GT students? We need something different.
Any class for gifted students needs to offer choice, be taught in an interdisciplinary instructional style—gifted students love to find linkages and connections—and allow for independent study.
106. How do you require more from GT students in regard to grades when some just see MORE work?
Do not require more—provide a different level of work. It is not about "in addition to" work—but "instead of" work.
107. Do we give these gifted & talented assignments separate from the other students or do all the students in the class get the same assignment?
*I handle assignments using "test-out" and choice. I test students out of review work on a regular basis. When they test-out, they do not need to do the planned review work. I give them an "instead-of" assignment or let them work on an independent study of their choosing.
I also offer choices on a regular basis. I have more than one way to complete an assignment or show an understanding of a concept we are covering. The choices range in complexity—but students are allowed to choose which assignment or combination of assignments they want to do to show understanding of the concept.*
108. How do you assign GT students a different assignment than the rest? Doesn't this invite a negative response or possible lower self-esteem of those at the lower level ability?
Use "test-out" or choice (see ques. #3). I do not give any assignment based on a label. I give the assignment because of what the student shows s/he knows and what their "test-out" gives evidence that they need.
109. Are all GT going to accept the more challenging assignment rather than select the one requiring less work?
I do not mind if a gifted student does not choose the challenging assignment every time. I have a private discussion where we decide how many times they will choose the challenging assignment—3 out of 5 times. Remember, if the content being covered is not in their area of strength—it might be inappropriate to choose a challenging assignment. Also—the challenging assignments and the regular assignments should take about the same length of time to do. One should not be seen as more work---but a different quality or level of work.

110. How do you capture their interest? By challenging them more?
You capture their interest by connecting the content to THEIR interest.
111. What if they resent the "extra" or "harder" work?
Their work should not be "extra"—but different. They do not see more complex work as harder unless it is busy work with little or no meaning for them.
112. Is it okay to give GT students an alternative assignment instead of the normal one?
Yes, it is as long as it is given as a choice. I do not assign work "because you are gifted" any more than assigning work "because you are taller" than the other students. The assigned work has to match the student's need.
113. Is it okay to pair up GT students and special needs students?
Yes—if the learning is perceived as beneficial for both students. Many times it is discouraging for a student who is struggling to pair with a student who can easily understand. It is not the motivator people think it is. Students do best when paired with a student near their ability level---where they feel they are not being left behind or having to do all the work because others "don't get it".
114. What can you do in the classroom to use your gifted learners to your advantage for effective learning?
I offer choices and independent study. I do not want all of the students involved in all of the activities all of the time. That is inappropriate instruction.
115. How do you battle the answer, "Is this for a grade?" and a refusal to work if no grade.
This is a year long goal for me. I make some of the work the "ticket" to the discussion group. I want them to see there is a purpose for the assignment. An assignment that is perceived as only to please the teacher will not result in learning.
116. How do you give grades? (The final grade)
I never give more grades than I am required to give. I separate learning from evaluation. I give tests (after the benefit of learning) and specific projects that require an application of the learning for the grade points. There is a clear understanding at the beginning of the semester just how grades are calculated. I explain to them the separation of learning and evaluation.
117. Can you justify judgment grades?
I have detailed criteria in my rubric so that the students would come to a conclusion similar to mine. I am very specific and can clearly show how each point is earned.
118. If you use these assignments which meet the GT student, how do we accommodate other learners?
Choice and test-out—see ques #3

119. When you have mostly low-level learners, and a couple gifted students, how do I accommodate the gifted ones' need for "extra depth" when the low-level ones are barely "squeezing by" already?
See ques #3—choice and test-out. I also allow my GT students to conduct their own mini-seminar discussions with a designated leader and a reporter. I provide them with Socratic Discussion prompts.
120. I will often have 7-10 special ed students in a classroom along with a few "over achievers" and one gifted student. Do you have any suggestions for teaching this group without appearing to be just giving more work to the upper level students?
see ques #3—choice, test-out—independent study
121. When using the charts & graphs, how do you keep the lower, average, high achievers & gifted kids interested?
As I mentioned—I often use the charts as a tool for group discussions. They can always be used for guided discussion. GT students will go further into the content when they use these charts individually—but the other students gain from the discussions guided by the teacher, while the GT students are off doing activities based on their own choices.
122. How do you use activities & ideas like these for special ed., average, high achieving & GT students—especially when the GT are so few?
see ques #17
123. How do you teach gifted, talented, & special ed all at the same time?
see ques #3
124. What do you do with the students in your classroom who just don't get these activities we just covered? They are all in the room at the same time.
see ques #17
125. How do you effectively address the needs of all students and not let one group fall through the cracks?
see ques #3 and #17
126. When teaching to the gifted & talented student—will the other students (average & below) catch on or will another lesson have to be designed to reach them?
see ques #17
127. What evaluation tools are most effective for GT students?
I use evaluation rubrics because that gives the students clarity in what I am looking for as evidence of knowledge application.

128. Do you give these activities to the whole class or save them for the gifted students for enrichment activities?
see ques #17
129. When putting students in a group, is it better to put gifted students together or separate them into different groups?
see ques #9
130. Okay—so how do you handle the “breadth” in your classroom the 55 to 145 IQ's? When you do the concept ideas the 55-85 are not going to handle these as well—maybe even come to dread them. I am not sure how to use these ideas with such a huge range—which we have every period.
I would guess that you have some other modifications for the 55 IQ students. Also see ques # 17.
131. When you offer so many choices/changes to accommodate the gifted, don't you find the average & below average lost & confused?
I only offer 2 or 3 choices at any given time. The choices are usually available to the students who test out. If there are choices for everyone—I usually have 2 choices and then encourage the students to design their own choice that meets the objective. That way—the regular students don't get confused and the GT students have an avenue for a choice that is more appropriate for them.
132. Do you give these students different work than others—or do they do the same & more?
see ques #3 and #17
133. How do I work with those who are probably gifted in a class with medium & extremely low or special needs learners so they do not think the rest of the group is beneath them? Will they think an extra or different assignment is fair?
see ques #3, #4, and #17
134. I just can't figure out how to deal with all the levels of students in one class. Do you have any suggestions?
see ques #3 and #17
135. What type of rubric do you use for grading these projects?
My rubrics are very specific. Each point given can be clearly tied to the description on the rubric.

136. How can I best get the rest of the class to work with these kids?
They are not always accepted by others.
see ques #9 It is very intimidating for students with extreme differences in ability to work together. Projects that call for extremes have to be very well-thought out so everyone feels they gain by the experience.
137. How would you manage a classroom when 1-2 are gifted (I never get high achievers!!), 10-12 are regular students and 10 or more are special ed—without having to rewrite the curriculum/activities constantly?
see ques #3
138. How do you give the GT students more complex assignments without punishing them for being gifted?
see ques #3 & #4
139. How can I successfully use some of these diagrams in the classroom mixture of gifted, ESL, & special ed students? Do I use it strictly as motivation fro those gifted student and not worry about those others "not getting it"?
see ques #17
140. What structure should GT students be given in projects or assignments?
I believe in guidelines not rules. I teach all of my students a basic planning process at the beginning of the year so that they can do some of their own planning instead of me having to design a plan that only works for some students.
141. What do you do if you start implementing creative activities and some students continue not to participate?
That is why I like to have students work in small groups or with a partner. I ask the students generate some ideas on the topic of study within the group. Then I can call on each group to share some of their ideas. Many students do not like to be singled out when asking for ideas that are not specifically from the book. They don't want to look "stupid".
142. Do you automatically give GT students the projects & assignments they can/should do? How do you give options to the GT without the other students feeling like they are dumb or the GT students thinking they are the "smart kids" or "nerds"?
Test—out see ques #3
143. What do you actually say to the class when a gifted student works on depth rather than cognitive—"Why does she get to do that and we don't"?
see ques #3 and #4 Nobody gets an assignment because of a label—but rather because of evidence of understanding and therefore a need.

144. I feel overwhelmed at times when I am to modify the lesson for special ed, gifted, & the middle student—How would you do this?
see ques #3 and #17
145. With a gifted child—how do you fairly grade projects if you have $\frac{1}{2}$ your class that doesn't want guidelines because they want to be creative & the others you have to give a rubric to? How is grading fair? Should my rubric be that broad?
Creative people need and want guidelines. However they don't want a prescription with no movement room. I talk about "freedom within the guidelines". I share the purpose of an assignment—the criteria on which I will evaluate the level of knowledge application. Then I give them the freedom to respond within the guidelines I have set. Creativity does not mean—no standards and no guidelines!!
146. I sometimes have difficulty handling gifted students who have a low tolerance for some of my special ed students. I may have to repeat or re-explain to a special ed student a concept they are having difficulty grasping. In the mean time, the gifted student acts up and makes snide remarks about the student's inability. What should I say or do with a gifted student to keep them engaged & not have them be bored?
This comes from years and years of useless work and wasted time in classrooms. That is why I use "test out" and get the students who do not need the 33 reviews out of there and on to other projects. (See ques #3)
147. During a semester course—how do we identify gifted, break their shell and motivate them to do more than minimum in such a short time—AND deal with ESL and low level students all at once?
It is not your job to identify gifted students. However, understanding how gifted students act and think helps you better understand a student that could be gifted but was overlooked.
148. Where can I get more on the theory of—not grading everything and teaching them a life skill of responsibility? I need resources and practical suggestions.
This idea is covered in both the research of Amabile (Growing Up Creative) and Rimm (Why Bright Kids Get Poor Grades). Some specific tools for teaching planning, decision making and life problem solving can be found at the following web site <http://www.creativityservices.com/>
149. How can I explain to other students in a class why a gifted student may take an assignment and adapt it personally and the regular student does not?

- (See ques #3) This arises out of choice. Any student should have the choice to personalize an assignment. The gifted person will have a more complex twist—but each student should experience assignments that are personally meaningful.*
150. As a parent of a gifted child—I know these students are often asked and expected to teach other students (and occasionally the teacher) so much that they feel it is a burden and they shut down. How can we as teachers avoid "using" gifted students in that way?
(See ques #4) Assignments and activities in the classroom should always be based on "Is this a meaningful experience for the student?" (See ques #3)—Gifted students should be involved in their own independent study instead of "marking time" in the classroom.
151. In my classroom—I have many students who are labeled learning disabled—special ed. They seem so gifted!! They are extremely creative. In my class they shine. If I put them in the area of gifted & creative wouldn't that make them feel better about themselves? Don't they belong in gifted & creative? I seldom have students who can't learn if they are allowed to do creative work to address their strengths. Is this just because of my easier content?
Being able to do creative work and being gifted and highly creative are two different things. Every person has creative ability. I am a believer that every classroom should involved students in creative thinking activities. This does not mean that every student could function in a learning setting for the gifted. The speed, complexity and interconnections are more than many students can comprehend. Remember every student has gifts, but that is different from being gifted—developmentally "out of sync".
152. Is my content more difficult to keep the attention of the GT student than other areas such as science?
Attention comes from interest. Content that is interesting to a gifted student keeps his/her interest. As adults—we do not pay attention when we are in a meeting covering content that does not interest us.
153. How do you get GT, special needs, and LEP students to work together cooperatively?
see ques #4
154. Should a gifted and talented student be given a different learning activity from other students such as special ed students or should they be used as peer tutors?
Peer tutors is the worst option for a gifted student unless they ask to do it. Even then—it should not be a steady diet because their learning is suffering. Use test-out and choice. See ques #3 & #4.

155. How can you motivate them to get through the boring paper work?
No one is motivated to do boring work. I know plenty of teachers who avoid boring work. That is human nature. In the classroom, inappropriate assignments translate to boring work. When I use choice—I find the student will put up with 1 or 2 meaningless assignments if they then get the option to test -out of the remaining assignments for the week.
156. Is it just my thought or do high-achievers fear gifted students during project time?
I don't know what you mean by fear—but students who are too far apart in thinking and performance ability can feel intimidated and not learn.
157. Should there be a different evaluation tools or criteria for students' performance "outside the box"? When is this appropriate and when do we "follow the rules"?
My rubrics allow for varying ways of presenting the information—but not the omission of critical information. See ques #41.
158. How do you go between "creative" answers and "the textbook" answer on questions without confusing & overwhelming the non-gifted student?
Creative answers should be tied to the content—it is just a different way of saying the same thing. Creativity is NOT anything goes. Also-sometimes I preface the question with—"How would the author of the textbook like you to answer?"
159. How do you schedule for GT, spec ed—what we call "singletons"?
I do the whole class part of the week and then test-out and/or offer choice for the remainder of the week. See ques #3.
56. How do you deal with students that say, "This is boring" to get out of work—while the administrators, parents, & counselors let them make excuses?
It is sad if people are making excuses for students. This is one sure way to develop dependent learners with a "victim" mentality. I would like to know why an administrator or a counselor is making excuses for a high school student. However, "boring" indicates many things. Sometimes it means-I really don't know this but do not want to ask---(that is why I use "test-out"). Other times it means—This has no meaning for me it is just a teacher power game—(which is why I try to tie learning to student interests). See ques #3. Student involvement in the learning, linking learning to interests, and offering choices are some of the best ways to combat boredom.

Gifted, Talented & Highly Creative
Questions (from Jan 24, 2004) & Responses

Joyce E. Juntune, Ph.D., Texas A&M University

Adult GT & Parenting

160. How can my 22 year old find a focus? He has many of the indicators but has no idea what he wants to do.
The first issue I always deal with is that you do not have to do one thing in life—you can have many careers. Which career do you want to pursue first? Also—it is perfectly fine to get a job that is not your first love to pay the bills while you follow your passion as an avocation—which may or may not turn into an income producing activity). The key is—knowing what you are passionate about—not what other people want you to do. Exploration is fine. Many students think they have to find the “perfect” job—which does not exist. They need to meet people who share their passions and find out the kinds of careers they have. If the person feels that counseling would help---find a counselor who understands giftedness.
161. I need help for my child. I am a high achiever and she is gifted.
It does not matter that she is gifted and you a high achiever as long as you both understand what it means to be gifted and a high achiever. I think the Gifted Kids Survival Guides http://www.freespirit.com/cgi/s_product_nf.cgi?productid=016 http://www.freespirit.com/cgi/s_product_nf.cgi?productid=015 are terrific ways for gifted students to gain an understanding of giftedness.
162. As a parent of a GT student (who made excellent grades in elem, ok grades in JHS, not so great but passing in HS) how do I motivate him to do well & study in college?
You cannot make a gifted person do anything!!! The key is that any experience must be meaningful for him. Why is he in college? Does he know what he wants to pursue? Has he talked to professionals in the field who will tell him what courses are important in the field. Gifted students apply themselves when the activity is interesting to them or helps them meet THEIR goal.
163. Why do parents not want their children tested?
There are two reasons. Sometimes parents do not want their child to have any special services. I have had special education parents not want their child tested for that very reason as well. They just think everyone should have the same educational services. Then, there are the parents who themselves were identified as gifted and had a miserable time in school—being teased by the students and constantly hounded by teachers to do better work—or used as a example for others in the class. They remember how horrible their school experience was and are hoping to save their child from the same fate.

164. I am looking for resources on how to live with a gifted child who seems to always be testing you, knows everything already, and how to instill importance in things they are not interested in.

Communication is the best tool for dealing with a gifted child. Persuasion does not work. Force does not work. Reason does. Gifted people are very intense. When they set their mind to do or not to do something—no one else can change their view. They respond to reasoning (not the parents reasoning) through situations. They like to be respected for their thoughts. Too often power struggles are the outcome of heated conversations. I know this is difficult—but—stay calm, make your point (briefly and without a lecture), give choices with shared decisions as to consequences. Nothing happens overnight—but in the long haul—gifted people respond to people reaching out to understand them and to accept them. Two great books for parents are: "Survival Guide for Parents of the Gifted"

http://www.freespirit.com/cgi/s_product_nf.cgi?productid=022

and "Guiding the Gifted Child"

<http://www.giftedpsychologypress.com/bk0910707006.html>

Also—the Texas Association for the Gifted and Talented (TAGT)

<http://www.txgifted.org/> has a special portion of their conference every fall devoted to issues of parenting.

165. How can you best help their parents? What can we tell them?

I would recommend the books I listed earlier and TAGT. (Ques. 4) The more their parents can understand giftedness the better it will be for everyone. Some the best things for parents to do are: having regular conversations with their gifted child, being curious about the things they are passionate about and being there for support.

166. What do you do with parents who think their child is GT, but really the child is not?

A parent can recommend a child for testing. Let the testing results speak for themselves. Also—I have had parents come and observe when gifted students are working together on a level that is challenging for them. Many parents do not realize the level of complexity and abstraction that goes on in the minds of gifted students. I did not have to say any more. Also—often a parent wants a child in a gifted program because that is the only place where anything of interest happens in the school. If it is a response to a "killer" regular program—changes need to be made in regular classes. School should be inviting to all students and learning should be exciting for every student.

167. I have a daughter that is like your sister—very bright and ruined by the school system. How do we help her?

You cannot force someone to change, who does not want to change. My sister has said many times—the pain of revisiting her past through counseling is more than she can endure. She has satisfied her intellectual needs through her own study and focused on the needs of her gifted children being met so they have a different life

than she has had. If your daughter will go to counseling—choose a counselor who understands giftedness.

168. Over the years I have had 3 truly gifted students that were completely lost in our educational system. What can we do? Can these people be reached as adults?

(See Ques 1& 8). Adults can be reached if they seek counseling with the "right" counselor, wants to understand, and desires change. It is a tough battle. I use Counseling the Gifted by Linda Silverman (Love Publishing) in one of my classes on giftedness at Texas A&M. I love the in depth way she describes giftedness and its related problems in the first 3-4 chapters. It is a good read for someone who really feels lost and can't understand why.

Gifted, Talented & Highly Creative
Questions (from Jan 24, 2004) & Responses

Joyce E. Juntune, Ph.D., Texas A&M University

Additional Resources

169. Can you come to our district? What are the costs?
*I am in districts on a regular basis conducting in-service training sessions on giftedness and creative thinking.
Contact me at j-juntune@tamu.edu or 979-776-9347 for costs and further information.*
170. I would like to have extra copies of some of the handouts to pass on to other teachers who work with the GT program.
If you want extra copies of the handouts—contact me at j-juntune@tamu.edu and provide me with an address and the number you want. I will be happy to send them to you!!
171. I would like to know more about your summer classes.
The summer classes are held during July. Each class lasts one week. The costs range from \$375 for a commuter (2 graduate extension credits) to \$565 for the class and a single dorm suite. If you included your e-mail address on the question form you should receive an e-mail brochure in March. If you did not receive it—send me an e-mail request j-juntune@tamu.edu and I will send it by return mail. If you would like print brochures mailed to you or to your school—send me the address and number of brochures. They will be sent in April.
172. What are references for working with a GT visually impaired child at the early elementary level?
Anytime a child has a double label—one needs to access the services for both areas. The visually impaired services will provide for that area. For the gifted area—the same as any child—a stimulating environment—remember the child is very curious—respond with the information. This type of child will have more of their stimulation through talking, being read to, people explaining things, etc for areas that do not have large print books available. I would use plenty of books on tape—have conversations about what interests the child—and above all let the child learn about visual impairment and outstanding people who were visually impaired but went on to accomplish great things. Visually impaired gifted children can do many of the activities orally. Also—there are many research references that are oral—on the internet and in the media centers of our schools—so individual research can go forward with listening and recording thoughts into a tape recorder. A good reference on special needs areas of gifted is Diverse Populations of Gifted Children by Starr Cline & Diane Schwartz.

173. Do you have any suggestions for summer programs for gifted students (boy, age 12, small school)?
*Many universities and colleges offer summer programs for gifted students. Here are the links for some of them. <http://globalnets.com/yap/> ;
<http://www.orgs.ttu.edu/IDEAL/insthome.htm>
<http://www.baylor.edu/SOE/CCE/index.php?id=10522>
<http://www.tamug.tamu.edu/tag/index.html>*
- Also—check out the summer programs listed on the national gifted organization (NACG) site. <http://www.nacg.org/summer/2004/2004listings.htm>*
174. I would love more detail on the subject.
*I included some professional readings in the handouts I gave you. Here are some good web sites on gifted education.
<http://gifteddevelopment.com/>
<http://www.stephanietolan.com/dabrowskis.htm>
<http://www.ditd.org/public/>*
175. I need resources for GT art students.
*Gifted students in the area of the arts need a mentor and private or small group lessons to hone their abilities. They would benefit from participating in special classes provided by art museums. Here are some interesting web sites related to the arts and giftedness.
<http://nasad.arts-accredit.org/index.jsp?page=FAQ+14>
http://www.education-world.com/a_curr/curr074.shtml
<http://www.festivalhill.org/Summerprogram.html>
<http://www.ahhaa.org/>
<http://www.hspva.org/>*
176. Is it possible to work with Texas Tech Curriculum Center and give tips on techniques to use for the curriculum guides for the different areas? Some of us forget about the gifted student and these ideas could be a benefit to us.
What a great idea!!! I will find out who to contact and see what they think of this cooperative effort.