Guiding Development: The Social Emotional Range Of Gifted Students

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Who I Am

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Education
B.S. Psychology
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Career
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Comfort, Risk, and Danger Zone
Zones of Comfort, Risk and Danger

The **Comfort Zone** is usually a place where we feel at ease, with no tension. I know what to do. The comfort zone is a place where you can rest and relax.

The **Risk Zone** involves adapting to new circumstances, and it is the richest place for learning. It is where most people are willing to not know everything, or sometimes, to not know anything at all; where you want to or need to learn something.

The **Danger Zone** requires all your attention to survive and there is nothing else that can be accomplished. You might be defending yourself, shutting down out of fear, want to run a way or you might just fight back hard.
Comfort, Risk, or Danger Zone

- Flying
- Traveling
- Going on a blind date
- Public Speaking
- Going to college
- Interviewing for a job
- Bungee Jumping
- Roller coasters
- Scary Movies
- Hiking
- Shopping at the mall
What’s The Point?

• When we work in groups, when we make our work and ideas public, when we explore challenging issues, it is most helpful to be aware of our affective reactions in order to manage optimum learning.

• Comfort Zone = not growing
• Risk Zone = exhausting
• Danger Zone = where some students spend most of their time.
• Homeostasis
How Are They GT?

- In each bag you will find a set of 6 types of GT students and the descriptions for them.

- Working with your table match the GT type with the definition.

- We will share out when we are finished.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE 1: The Successful</th>
<th>TYPE 2: The Challenging</th>
<th>TYPE 3: The Underground</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>most easily identifiable</td>
<td>the divergently gifted, who possess high levels of creativity.</td>
<td>gifted students who deny their talents or hide their giftedness in order to feel more included with a non-gifted peer group.</td>
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<tr>
<td>may account for up to about 90% of the identified gifted students in schools.</td>
<td>do not conform to the system and often have conflicts with teachers and parents.</td>
<td>are generally females, who are frequently insecure and anxious as their belonging needs rise dramatically at that stage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>have learned the system and are well adjusted to society with a generally high self-concept.</td>
<td>get frustrated, as the school system does not recognize their abilities.</td>
<td>Their changing needs often conflicts with the expectations of parents and teachers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>obedient, display appropriate behavior, and are high achievers, therefore, loved by parents and teachers.</td>
<td>may be seen as disruptive in the classroom and often possess negative self-concepts, even though they are quite creative.</td>
<td>appear to benefit from being accepted as they are at the time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>they can also get bored at school and learn the system fast enough so as to use the minimum effort to get by.</td>
<td>This is the group of gifted students who are at risk of dropping out of schools for unhealthy activities, like getting involved in drugs or exhibiting delinquent behavior.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>are also dependent on the system</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TYPE 4: The Dropouts</td>
<td>TYPE 5: The Twice Exceptional</td>
<td>TYPE 6: The Autonomous Learner</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>the angry and frustrated students whose needs have not been recognized for many years and they feel rejected in the system.</td>
<td>students who are physically or emotionally handicapped in some way, or have a learning disability.</td>
<td>have learned to work effectively in the school system. Unlike Type 1, they do not work for the system, but rather make the system work for them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>express themselves by being depressed or withdrawn and responding defensively.</td>
<td>does not show behaviors of giftedness that can identify them in schools.</td>
<td>are very successful, liked by parents, teachers and peers, and have a high self-concept with some leadership capacity within their surroundings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>are identified very late; therefore, they are bitter and resentful due to feelings of neglect and have very low self-esteem.</td>
<td>show signs of stress, frustration, rejection, helplessness, or isolation.</td>
<td>accept themselves and are risk takers, which goes well with their independent and self-directed nature.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For these students, counseling is highly recommended.</td>
<td>often impatient and critical with a low self-esteem.</td>
<td>are also able to express their feelings, goals, and needs freely and appropriately.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>are easily ignored as they are seen as average.</td>
<td>Types 1 &amp; 6 - generally identifiable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>School systems seem to focus more on their weaknesses, and therefore fail to nurture their strengths.</td>
<td>Types 2, 3, 4, 5 - risk of not being identified or misdiagnosed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Gifted Social Emotional Needs

Let’s all experience it together!
Social Emotional Needs

- Strengths and potential problems can be flip sides of the same coin
- Asynchronous development
- Emotional Overexcitability: Heightened emotional sensitivity
- Gifted students are often shy, know they’re shy and know that shyness is often looked down upon.
- Imposter Syndrome
- Face social challenges not just from peers, but parents and teachers as well.
- Gifted students’ abstract intuition conflicts with teachers’ desire for concrete thinking.
- Needs cannot be met by one style of learning.
Results of SE Needs Not Being Met

- Appear cheerfully competent
- They become great at “doing school”
- Toxic levels of fear
  - Anxiety
  - Depression
  - Aimlessness
  - Isolation

- They become dependent on authority and approval
- Directionless ambition
- Risk aversion
- Competitiveness
- Cynicism

Perfectionism

Harmonious Passion v Obsessive Passion
-Daniel Lerner
How Does This Impact My Classroom?

- In your table groups discuss what behaviors you would anticipate based on the aforementioned social emotional needs?

- We will share out when we are finished.
Social Emotional Needs: This Is Still Not Ok

• rules are **not** options

• assignments are **not** choices

• anger and withdrawal are **not** appropriate responses
What We Can Do For Them

- **Know Yourself**
  - Apply their natural analytical thinking capacities to a social situation or a problem that is bothering them.
  
  - The things most worth doing are worth doing for their own sake
    - Spending time with friends
    - Reading a book
    - Listening to music

  - How to think (Not what to think. They get enough of that.)

  - Not to take things for granted. Reach your own conclusions!

  - Think remorselessly.

  - Not to think of who they wish to be but of who they already are.
What We Can Do For Them

• Direction
  • True self esteem is not caring if you get an ‘A’ because you realize grades don’t define your value.
  • True self esteem means defining for yourself what success means.

• Passion
  • You can’t recognize the things you actually care about until you let go of all the things you’ve been taught to care about.
What We Can Do For Them

- Risks

  - Moral Imagination: the capacity to envision alternatives for how you live
    - You do not have to accept the invitation to every party you're invited to.

  - Moral Courage: the bravery to act on your imagination
    - Makes people uncomfortable
    - Makes people feel insecure
What We Can Do For Them

- **Promote leadership**
  - What leadership is not:
    - Getting to the top
    - Sharing all the values of the people in charge
    - Devoid of content
    - Be a team player
    - Avoid painful feelings
    - Don’t offend, exclude, or confront anyone.
What We Can Do For Them

What leadership is:

- Character
- Duty, honor, and devotion to the benefit of others
- “Resistant minds” that ask questions, formulate new directions, and find new ways of doing things.
- “Dissident impulse”, the impulse to say no
Help Me Help You

Teachers

- “Educate” means to “lead forth” not “transfer knowledge from one brain to another”.
- Challenge assertions, pose follow up questions, welcomes, encourages, guides and pushes
- Don’t know the answers to all the questions.
- Discussions are collaborative and open ended.
Help Me Help You

• Models how to think together

• Understands that moments of disorder are the most interesting parts of class

• Go somewhere new and go together.
The Regimentation Of Youth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>We routinely....</th>
<th>So we...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mandate “activities”</td>
<td>Reward joiners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insist in “leadership”</td>
<td>Reward climbers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value those who give us what we want</td>
<td>Reward manipulators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punish those who will not play the game</td>
<td>Rob children of their youth</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
References:


SRI Protocols for Youth Engagement www.schoolreforminitiative.org