

parenting gifted children: from research to practical application

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how many of you wear **glasses** or **contact lenses**?





lens

clarity

understanding

bias

influences

understanding



myth



research

above

average

emotional

stability

attractive

healthy

personalities

active

social competence

unique stresses

dynamic issues

their characteristics may be
interpreted **positively** or
negatively depending on ...

personal
lens includes
bias

Greyson has such a thirst for knowledge! He asks so many questions in class.

Greyson questions everything I say in class! He is so disrespectful.

I love how he logs on first thing each morning, eager to share some tidbit of knowledge he learned!

curious

at school

NTI is hard enough without Greyson trying to log in 20 minutes early to talk about something not even class related!

You know I counted how many times Greyson asked *why* or *how* in one class. Fourteen! Can you believe it?

You know I counted how many times Greyson asked *why* or *how* in one class. Fourteen! Can you believe it?

I swear I do get tired of answering all of his questions, but I have to chuckle at him. That boy loves to learn. That will take him far in life.

If that child asks me *why* one more time, I will explode!

Greyson really makes me think about my reasoning for why I set bedtime the same for him and Ellie. He is older than she is.

curious

at home

He questions every single rule! He forgets sometimes that he is the child, and I am the parent.

It's so much fun for me to watch him move from topic to topic – it's like I see his mind growing right in front of me.

I swear by the time I get the stegosaurus he *has* to have for his birthday, he's forgotten about dinosaurs and now wants some science fiction toy.

Once he found a butterfly in the house and went into Operation Save Butterfly. You should've seen how calculated he was, how careful and precise.

I swear if he gets a hangnail, he's gonna die!

Two gifted kids—when they do something, they go all the way!

intense

at home

Two gifted kids — one's a complete slob, and the other color codes his closet. Yeesh!

Sometimes I think I could just listen for hours when he starts talking about basketball. He knows every stat for every player — he's even memorized their schedule. I wish I had that passion for something.

Sometimes I can't get a word in at all. He goes on and on and on — and, when he finally stops, I've forgotten what I was going to say.

pick one

For each characteristic, list an example or two of how it might be perceived positively and an example or two of how it might be perceived negatively.

Positive Perception	Characteristic	Negative Perception
	Reasons well	
	Learns rapidly	
	Extensive vocabulary	
	Sensitive	
	Curious	
	Questions authority	
	Vivid imagination	
	Concerned with fairness and justice	
	Long attention span; hyper-focus	
	Excellent memory	

(Characteristics based on Silverman's Characteristics of Giftedness Scale available here: <http://www.gifteddevelopment.com/media/235>; Handout adapted from Lynette Breedlove)

unbiased
lens via
research

vulnerable

truth 1

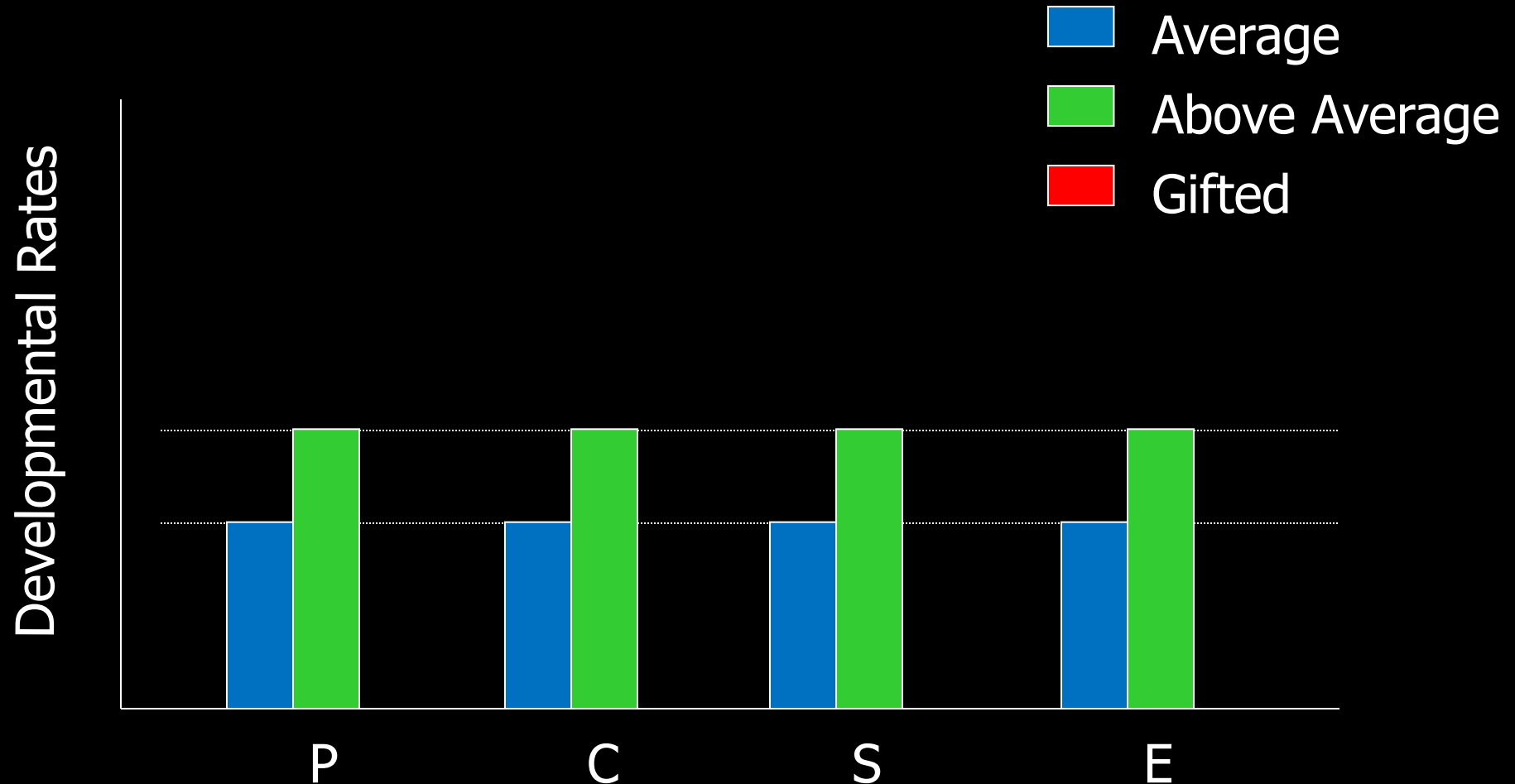
asynchrony

gifted/highly capable
children are rarely
equally mature in all
areas – academic,
physical, social, and
emotional

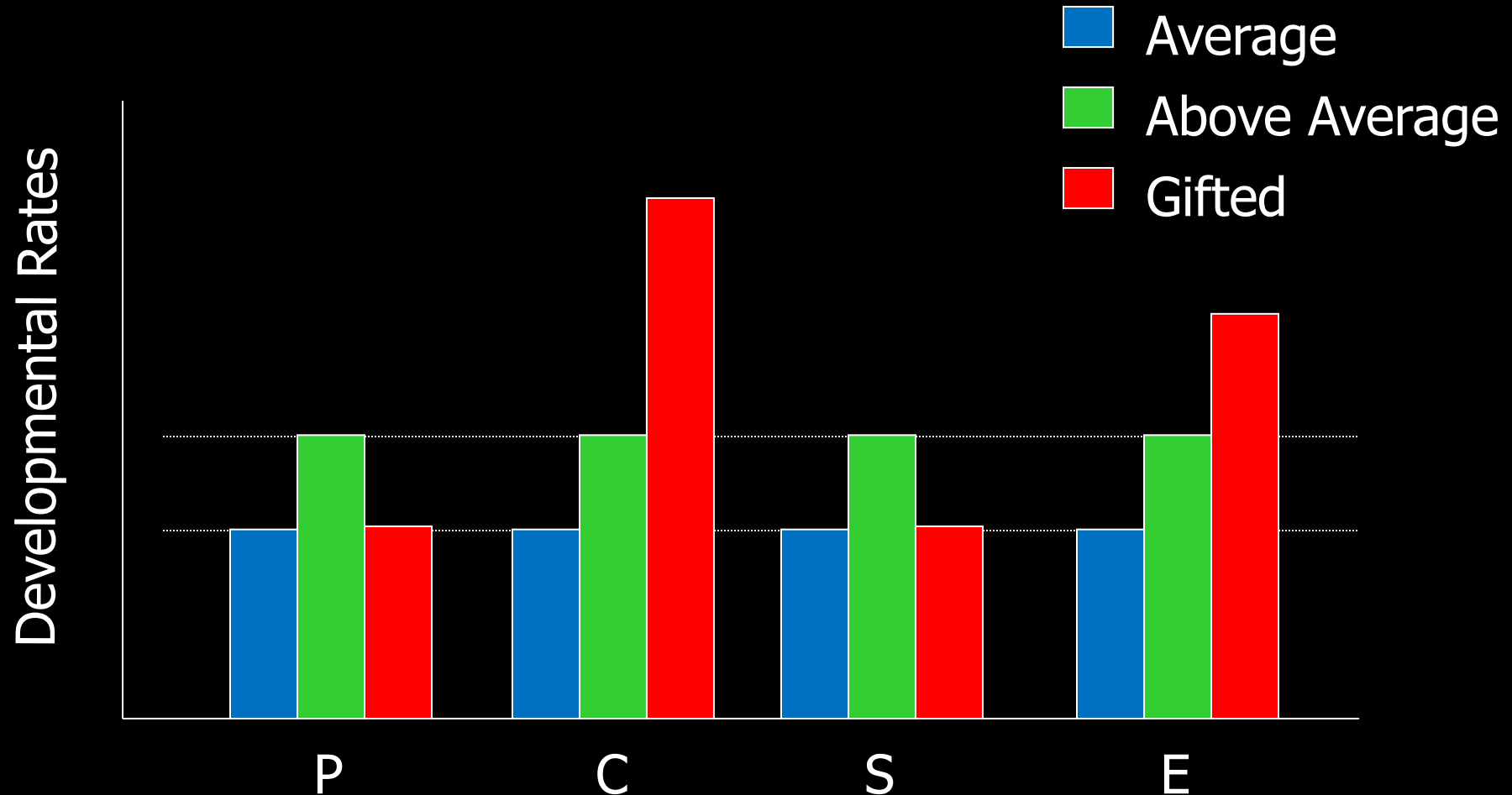
Asynchronous Development



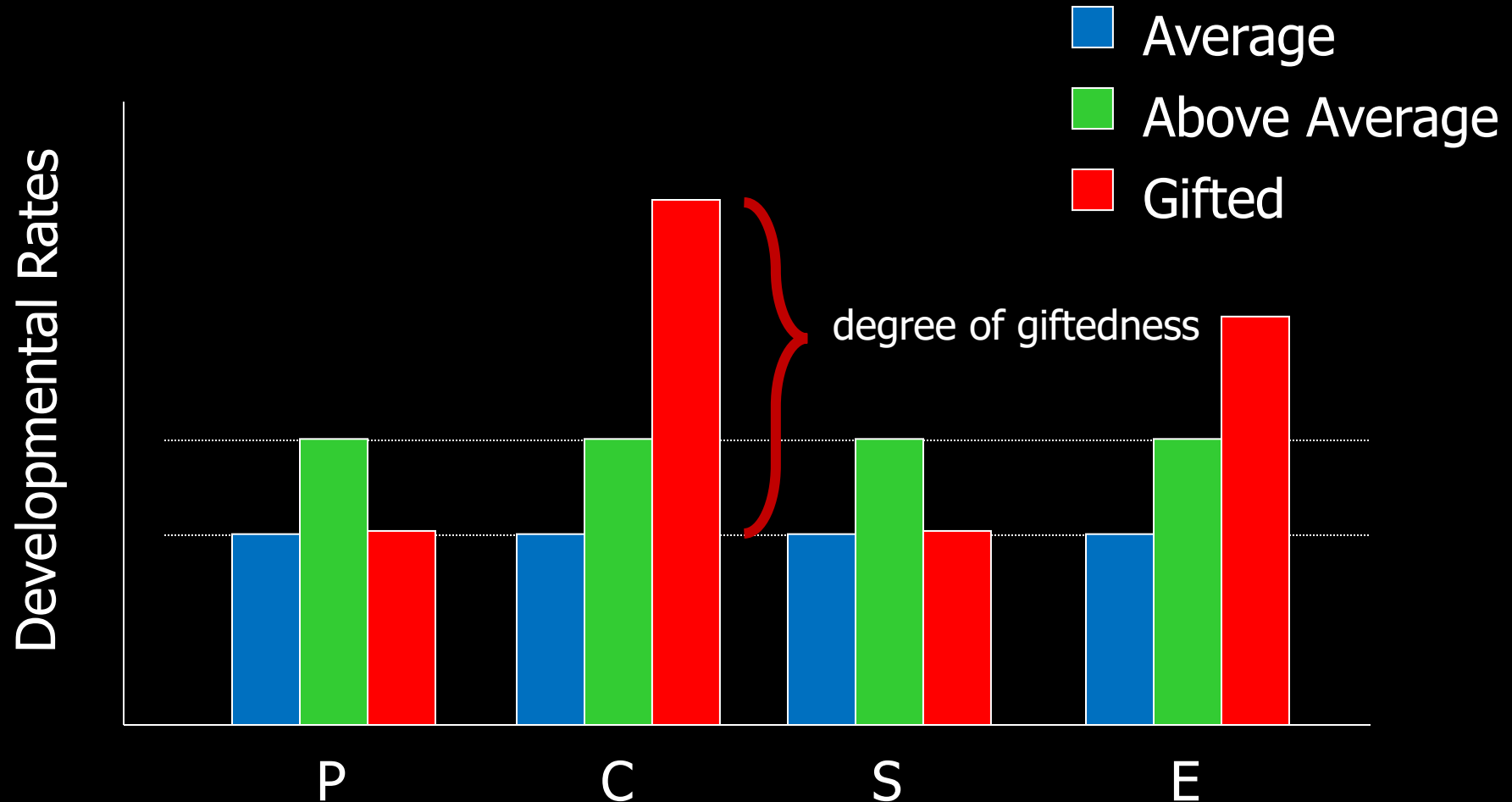
Asynchronous Development



Asynchronous Development



Asynchronous Development



expect advanced development in all areas

personal lens

treat like adult

give too much
responsibility

forget they are children first

remember that
gifted children
are still children

understand the meaning
of being gifted, know the
challenges that
accompany asynchronous
development, and set
realistic expectations

have age-
appropriate
expectations

focus
on strengths

connect with other parents who are
experiencing similar challenges for camaraderie
and support

unbiased lens

find age-mates and
idea-mates

read books with main
characters who also have
unique abilities and
uneven development

explore and teach strategies to address the
misunderstandings and stress that come from being
out of sync with others—such as mindfulness, self-
advocacy, and mind-body tools (yoga or martial
arts)

now **what?**

how does this **truth**
affect your parenting?

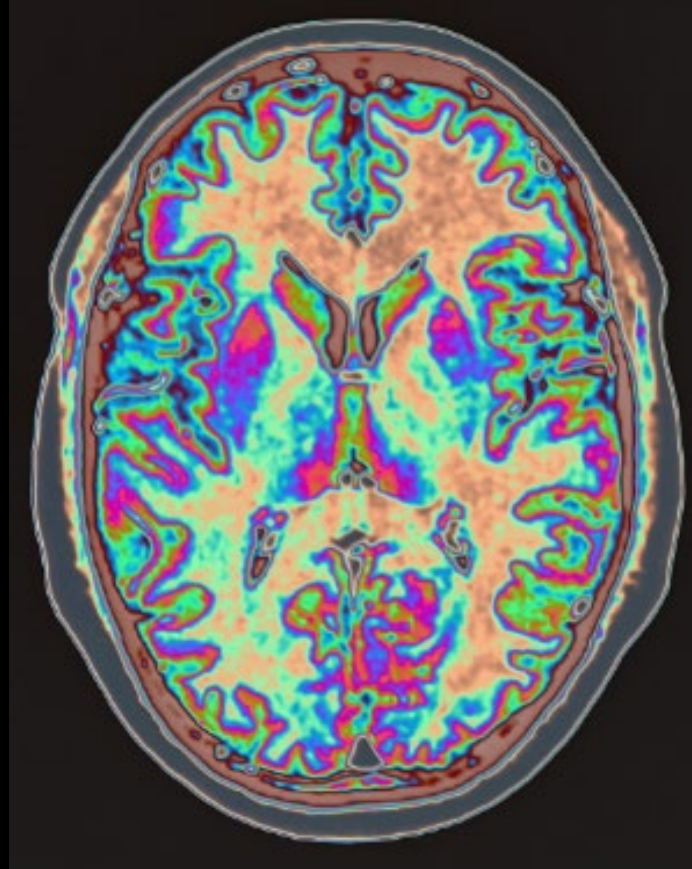
truth 2

“intellectual sweat”

challenge

cultural awareness

novelty



rigor

minimal repetition

faster pace

complexity

if during the first five or six years of school, a child earns **good grades** and **high praise without** having to make much **effort**, what are all the things he **doesn't learn** that most children learn by third grade?

patience

persistence

value of team work

work ethic

organizational skills

decision-making skills

sacrifice

time-management skills

Importance of practice

ask for help

grit

responsibility for learning

study skills

ask good questions

how to fail

problem-solving skills

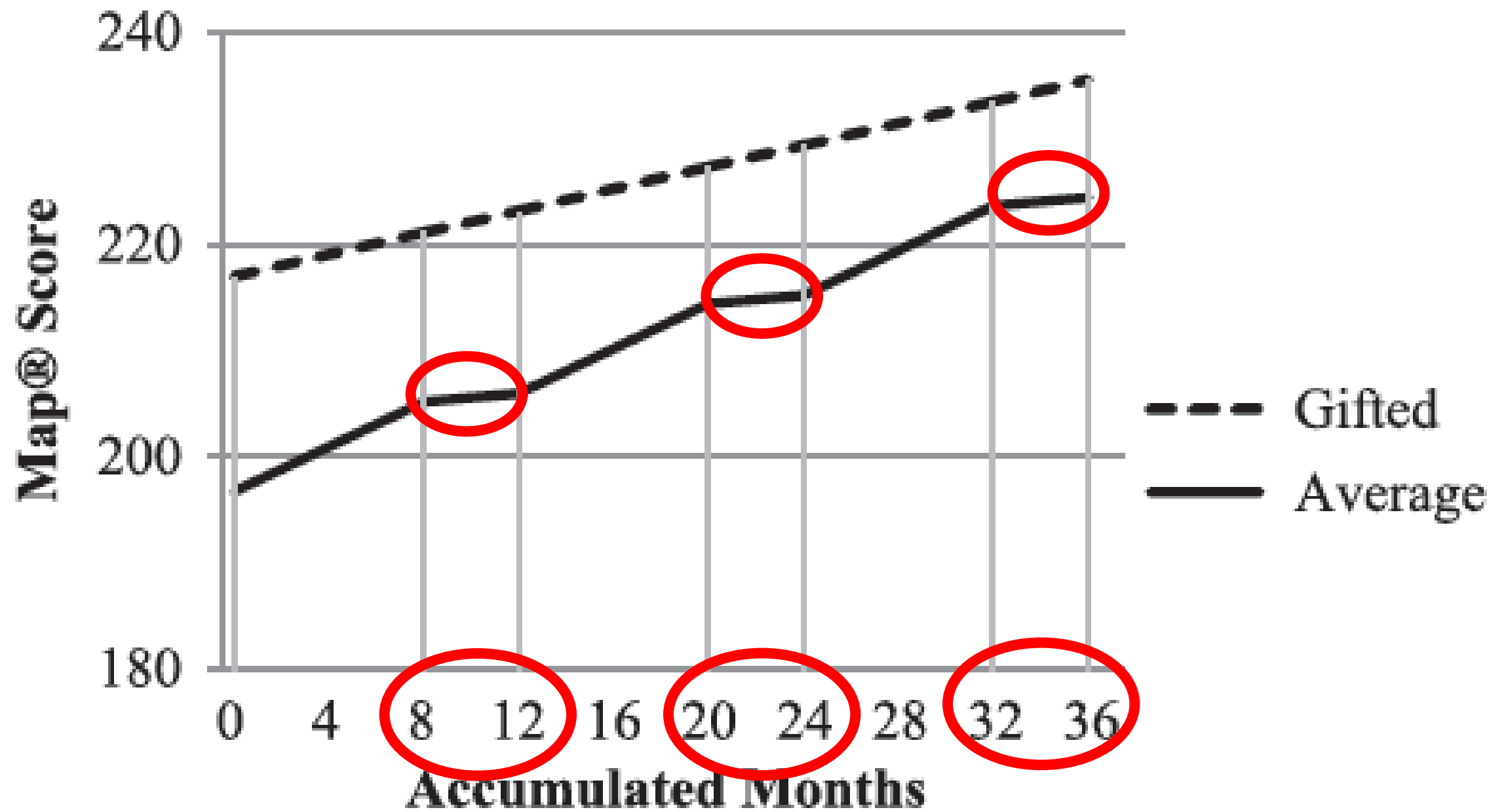
intrinsic motivation

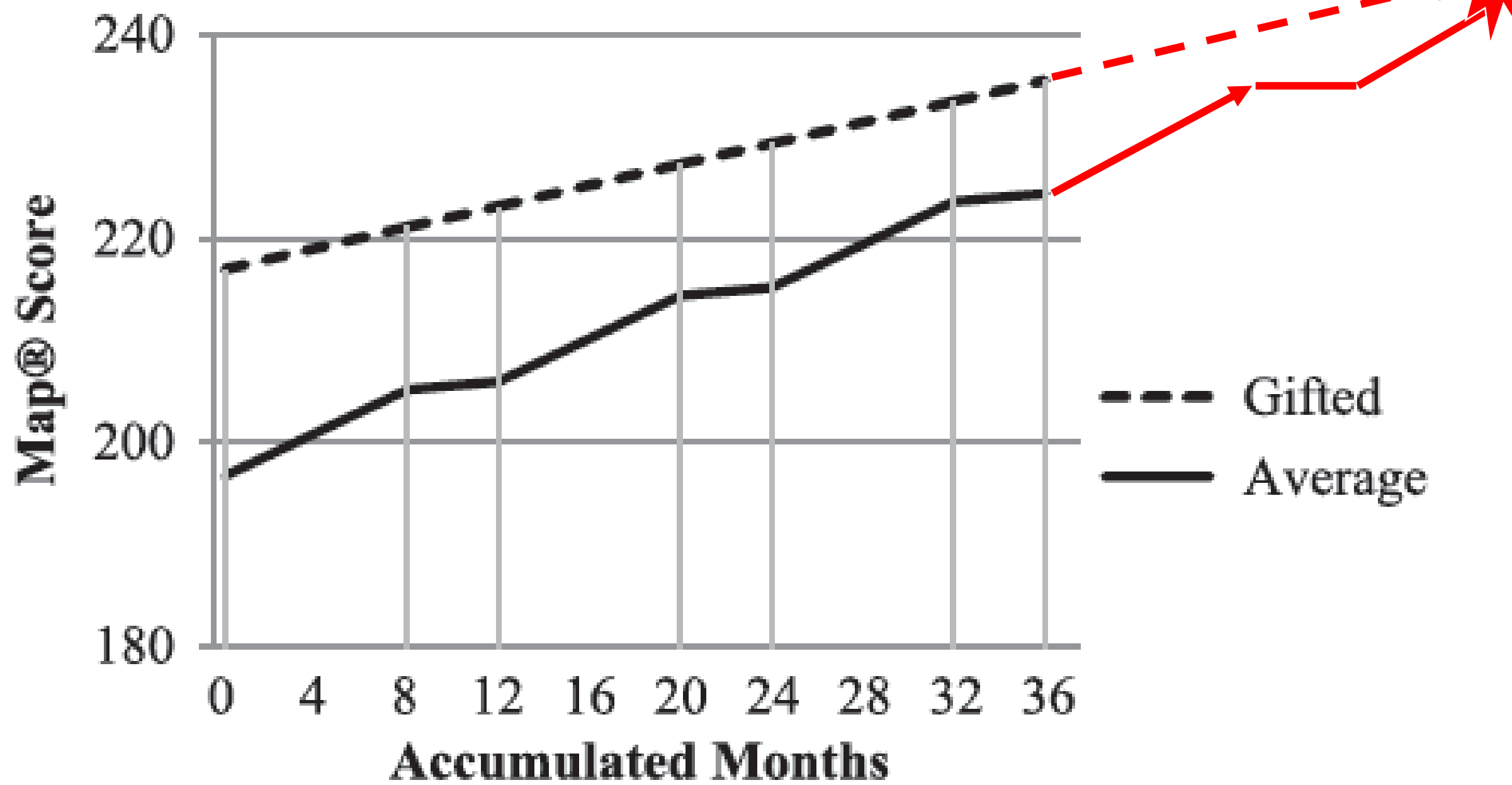
coping skills

goal setting

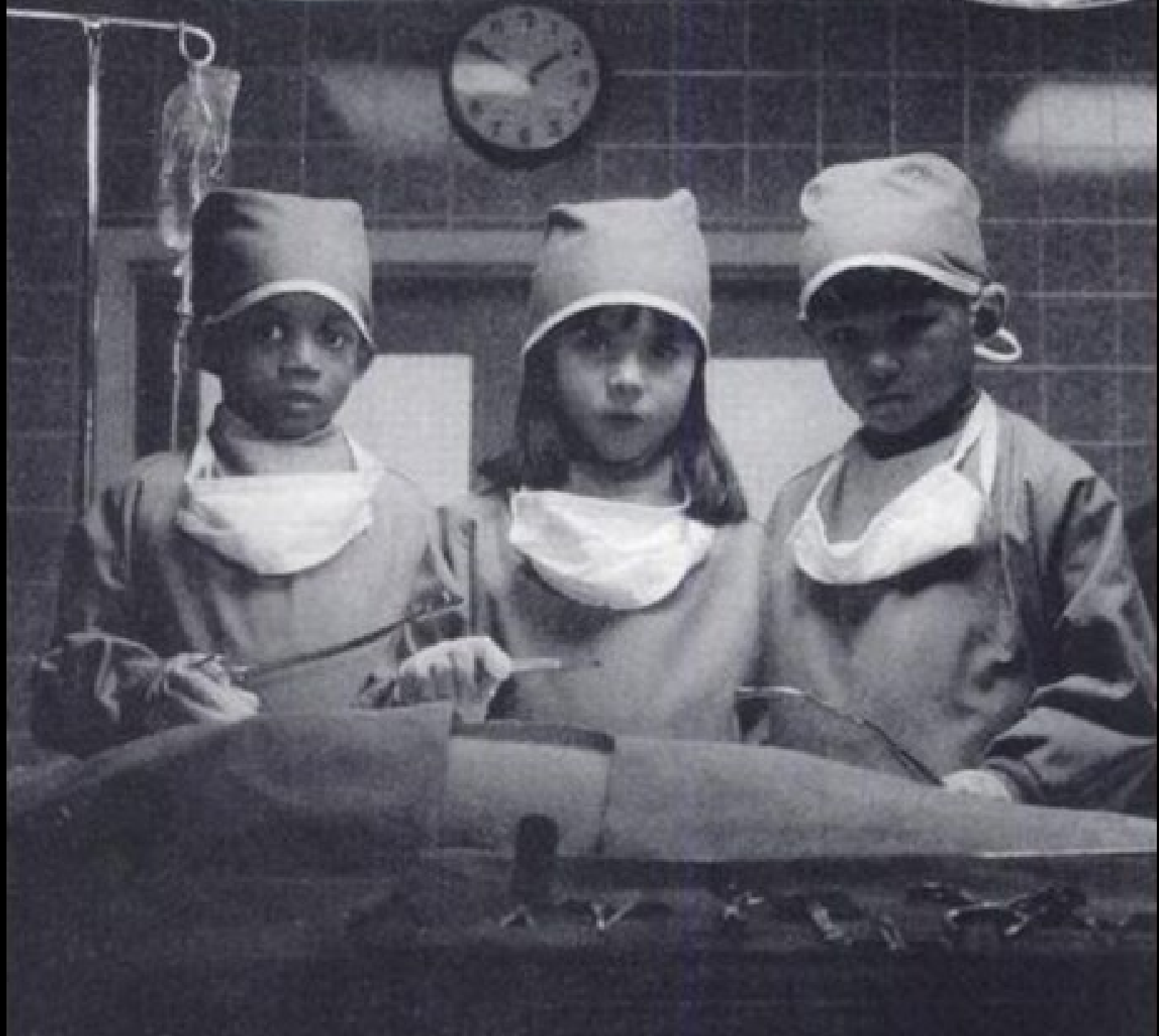
empathy for others

productive struggle





Lamar, Josie,
and Kai will be
performing
your bypass.



gifted learners needs
come from their
strengths, not their
deficiencies

“doesn’t work well in a team; insists on their way”

“no empathy for others”

“socially awkward”

personal

“lazy”

“quits if it isn’t easy”

lens

“won’t ask
for help”

“refuses to do homework”

“refuses to show the work”

“freaks out when get a B”

effort and process are more
important than products

partner with school

model that
learning is fun

don't let the
child be a
tutor

every child
should learn
something
every day

unbiased
lens

“what questions did
you ask today?”

“you got an A and didn't study –
let's figure this out”

“the grade isn't as important as what you learned”

ALLIANCE Guidelines

Ally with the teacher privately about your concerns.

Listen to what the teacher has observed about your child.

Learn about what the teacher thinks is best for your child.

Initiate a conversation about your child's strengths and problems.

Ask about experimental ideas for engaging and interesting curricular and extracurricular activities.

Negotiate to find appropriate adult and peer role models.

Consent to alternatives if experimental opportunities are not effective.

Extend possibilities patiently.

(Sylvia Rimm, *Why Bright Kids Get Poor Grades and What You Can Do About It*, 2008, p. 189)

now **what?**

how does this **truth**
affect your parenting?

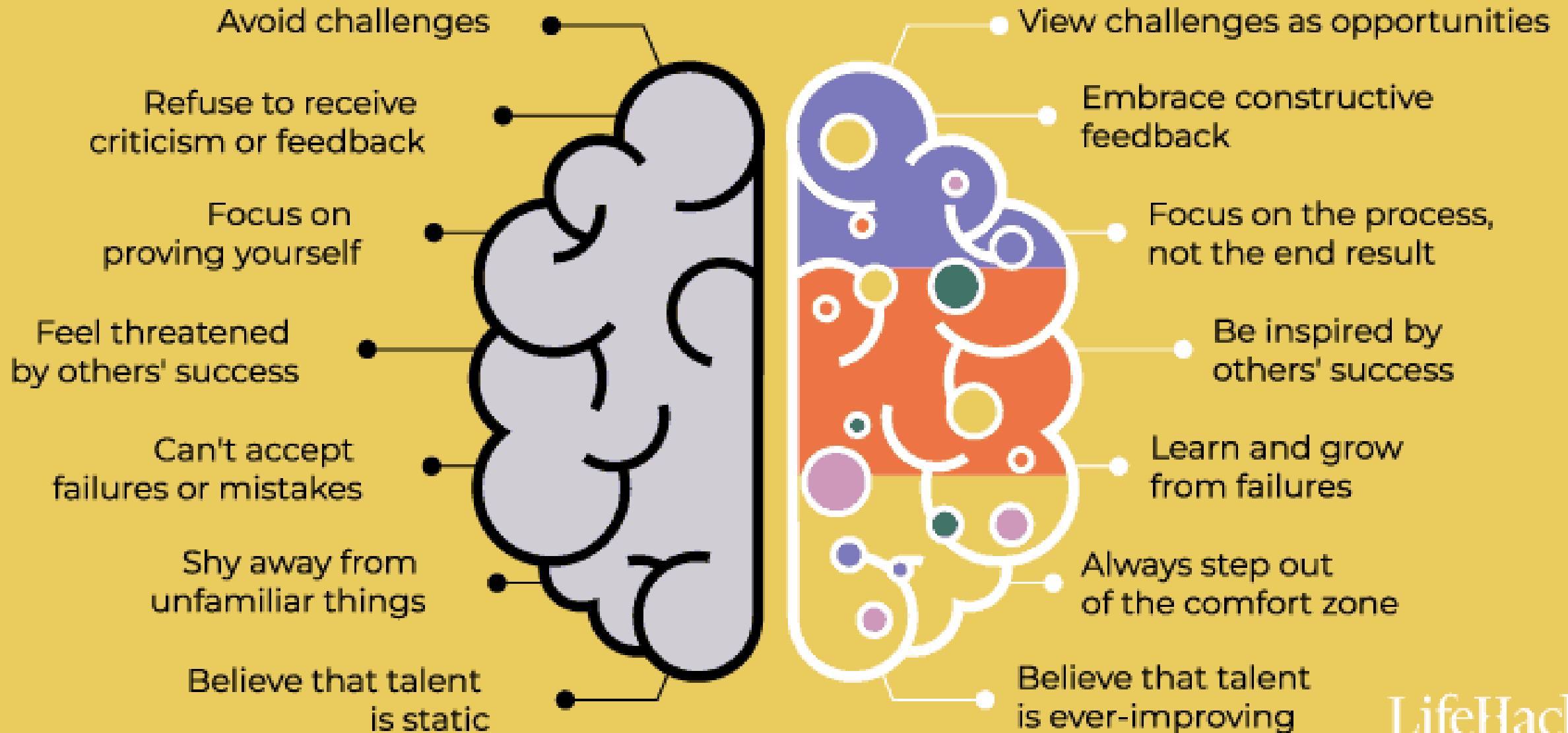
truth 3

mindset (Dweck, 2007)

fixed

growth

Fixed Mindset vs Growth Mindset



Worstward Ho

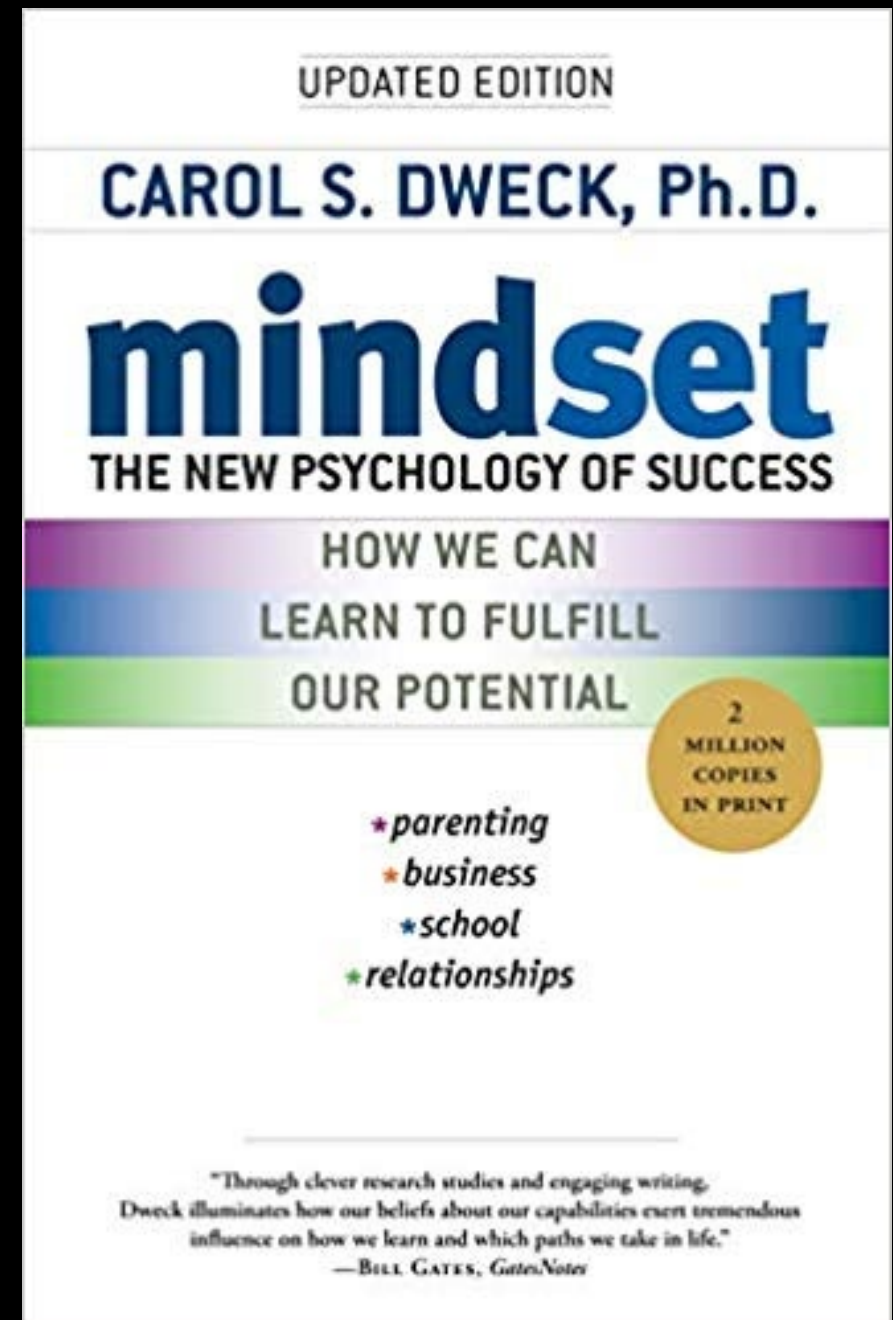
Samuel Beckett

Ever tried. Ever
failed. No
matter. Try
again. Fail
again. Fail
better.



"The best thing parents can do is to teach their children to love challenges, be intrigued by mistakes, enjoy effort, and keep on learning."

Carol S. Dweck



productive
struggle

“grades are
the most
important
thing”

“look at all those trophies –
that’s my girl”

personal lens

“you’re so smart”

“I hate math”

“I’m a terrible cook”

“don’t take the honors or AP class –
it could hurt your scholarship chances”

“yet”

“boy, did I mess up at work today”

unbiased

emphasize
effort over
intelligence

“I see how hard
you are working”

lens

“I have trouble
with cooking
Italian food – I
think I’ll take a
class”

“I think I’m finally getting the hang of
the new software at work – I sure have
put a lot of effort into it”

now **what?**

how does this **truth**
affect your parenting?

truth 4



UNDERACHIEVEMENT

THE TALLEST BLADE OF GRASS
IS THE FIRST TO BE CUT BY THE LAWNMOWER.

www.despair.com

underachievement

takes as little as
four weeks
without challenge
to set in

“observable discrepancy between
potential and performance”

“involuntary
underachievers”

anxiety and depression

reversible: counseling and
educational interventions

“doesn’t care”

“unmotivated to learn or succeed”

personal lens

“lazy”

“always looks
for the easy
way out”

“he’s an average student”

“no work ethic”

Trifocal Method

guarantee gifted learners are
challenged

have mentors who are achieving-role models

unbiased lens

ensure they have
study skills and
self-regulation
strategies

“her grades are average,
but during discussions,
she’s so analytical – I
better do some digging”

make learning experiences
more meaningful by
addressing student interest
and goals

connect to authentic
learning experiences



now **what?**

how does this **truth**
affect your parenting?

truth 5

perfectionism

“healthy perfectionist” vs.
“unhealthy perfectionist”

fear of
failure

obsesses over mistakes
or imperfections

unrealistic standards

reversible: counseling and
educational interventions

“just finish already”

“what a goody-goody”

personal lens

“as long as
you’re trying
your hardest”

“just do it to
the best of
your ability”

“oh, you missed one there – go back and look”

model mistakes; provide examples of imperfection in role models from books and movies, and adhere to schedules that limit time spent on assignments

create timelines for the completion of work; work with children to divide large tasks into manageable sub-goals

unbiased lens

de-emphasize grades and external evaluations; focus instead on growth and the satisfaction from completing work—before work is evaluated

create safe environments to take academic risks; praise attempts, rather than the outcomes

role play good sportsmanship and help children develop pride in the process and effort rather than the final outcome

tools x

- Create a Project
- AI Assistant
- Generative summary
- Export a PDF
- Edit a PDF
- Request e-signatures **NEW**
- Create a PDF
- Stylize this PDF
- Fill & Sign
- Combine files

Edit PDF content

Make changes to text and images right in your PDF.

Edit a PDF

Perfectionism

Parents and teachers of gifted children often express frustration with the impossible expectations that their children hold for themselves.

Perfectionism affects many populations, but poses special concerns for gifted students. Many gifted children face unchallenging schoolwork and can achieve at perfect (or near-perfect) scores with relatively little effort. Their achievement expectations often become reinforced by teachers, parents, and even peer groups—and puts them at particular risk for perfectionistic behaviors.

Perfectionism manifests in children in several ways, and there are strategies for adults to help their children.

HEALTHY & UNHEALTHY PERFECTIONISM



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

» Although unhealthy perfectionism is a common concern about gifted children, parents and teachers can use strategies to help change to healthier orientations.

» Children exhibiting unhealthy perfectionistic behaviors...

now **what?**

how does this **truth**
affect your parenting?

truth 6

term and definition of
giftedness according
to your country,
region, state, or
district

“every child is gifted in their own way”

personal lens

students who do
really well in
school

really smart
students

unbiased
lens

example: Commonwealth of Kentucky,
United States of America

KRS 157.200(1)(n) includes within the definition of "exceptional children" a category of "exceptional students" who are identified as possessing demonstrated or potential ability to perform at an exceptionally high level in general intellectual aptitude, specific academic aptitude, creative or divergent thinking, psychosocial or leadership skills, or in the visual or performing arts.

KRS 157.224(1) commits the state to a comprehensive educational program for its exceptional school-aged children.

KRS 157.230 requires all school districts to operate programs for resident exceptional children, primary - grade twelve (12). This administrative regulation establishes the requirements for programs for gifted and talented students.

services provided

- advanced grade placement
- Advanced Placement (AP)/International Baccalaureate (IB)/College in the High School/Running Start (Dual credit)
- advanced subject placement
- cluster grouping
- honors
- independent study
- mentorships
- other
- part-time grouping (content specific)
- pre-AP/IB
- regular classroom with differentiated instruction
- Self-contained classroom

General Intellectual Aptitude

self-starter

complex
information
processing

inquisitive

formulates
abstractions

uses large
vocabulary

enjoys
hypothesizing

excited
about new
ideas

observant

learns
rapidly

Specific Academic Aptitude

strong
memorization

widely read in area
literature

- reading
- writing
- mathematics
- science
- social studies
- world languages

acquires basic skills and
knowledge quickly

learns
rapidly

advanced understanding in area

pursues special interest with
enthusiasm and vigor

high academic
success in special
interest area

Creative or Productive Thinking

improvises sense of play

doesn't mind being
different from the
crowd

independent thinker

generates
several
solutions to a
given problem

creates &
invents

challenged by
creative tasks

original thinking
in oral & written
expression

sense of humor

Leadership

high expectations
of self & others

strong communication skills

organized

self-confident

well-liked by peers

likes structure

assumes
responsibility

foresees consequences &
implications of decisions

fluent, concise
self-expression

Visual or Performing Arts

observant

strong motor
coordination

creative expression

desire for
producing *own*
product/
performance

outstanding
sense of spatial
relationships

unusual ability for expressing
self (feelings, moods) in art

From Joyce Juntune's "Characteristics of Various Areas of Giftedness"

now **what?**

how does this **truth**
affect your parenting?

truth 7

“he’s got a learning disability – there’s no way he’s gifted”

“she’s supposed to be gifted – but she can’t even add fractions”

personal lens

“there are no gifted children at _____ school – it’s title I”

“what do you mean she’s gifted? she’s just a C student who likes to dance”

“this kid never comes to school, and, when he does he’s sleeping in class or goofing around – no way am I nominating him”

twice-exceptional
students

a gifted student is not
gifted in every area

unbiased lens

gifted students
come from ALL
demographics

students can be
identified in
one or more
areas

gifted students are not necessarily
model students

research-based
resources



- only magazine published for parents, grandparents, and caregivers who support gifted children
- founded in 1996 to provide practical tools and advice for families
- benefit to premier and parent members of NAGC (\$119/\$59)

Parenting for High Potential

Success Strategies for Parenting Gifted Kids

- collection of 50+ chapters on key topics for parenting gifted children
- curated from 220+ best PHP articles 2010-2019
- practical, how-to, step-by-step advice

Parenting Gifted Kids



NAGC TIP Sheets (Timely Information for Parents)

<https://www.nagc.org/family-tip-sheets>

Perfectionism

Parents and teachers of gifted children often express frustration with the impossible expectations that their children hold for themselves.

Perfectionism affects many populations, but poses special concerns for gifted students. Many gifted children face unchallenging schoolwork and can achieve at perfect (or near-perfect) scores with relatively little effort. Their achievement expectations often become reinforced by teachers, parents, and even peer groups—and puts them at particular risk for perfectionistic behaviors.

Perfectionism manifests in children in several ways, and there are strategies for adults to help their children.

HEALTHY & UNHEALTHY PERFECTIONISM

Although children's perfectionistic behaviors can be a frustrating and overwhelming experience for parents and teachers, it's important to understand that they can have positive benefits for students. Perfectionism, as a set of behaviors, can be classified as healthy and unhealthy.

Unhealthy. Unhealthy perfectionism can be associated with stress, unyielding expectations, risk avoidance, and procrastination, which can ultimately lead to depression and anxiety disorders, greater levels of violence and substance abuse, and eating disorders. When serious concerns about a child's mental health arise, it's imperative to seek help from a mental health professional.

Healthy. Healthy perfectionism is associated with achievement and dedication to academic performance. Students who exhibit healthy perfectionism have high expectations for their work, motivation to complete tasks, and self-confidence in their abilities to reach goals. Therefore, interventions aim to help children transition from unhealthy to healthy behavior.

PROFILES & STRATEGIES

Children manifest their perfectionism in various ways, including overachievement, procrastination or risk-avoidance. Many gifted children fit multiple categories and may vary by area (e.g., homework, extracurricular activities, school projects).

Academic Achiever. Characterized by high expectations for academic performance, with a strong focus on external evaluations, such as grades. Often emotionally upset with grades that are less than the highest performance levels.



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

• Although unhealthy perfectionism is a common concern about gifted children, parents and teachers can use strategies to help change to healthier orientations.

• Children exhibiting unhealthy perfectionistic behaviors can fit several profiles that each present unique challenges but ultimately can be overcome.

• Unhealthy perfectionism often manifests as procrastination when perfection on tasks becomes too overwhelming.

• Declining participation in fun activities may be a way that unhealthy perfectionists avoid disappointment in failing to live up to unreasonably high expectations.



Nurturing Gifted African American Children



Gifted African American children may exhibit giftedness differently than others. Parents and educators must be aware of important nuances to identify and support them.

Parents of gifted African American students have an important role in their child's education. Knowing the hurdles gifted African American children may face is the best way for parents to ensure positive academic and social experiences for their children in school.

IDENTIFICATION

According to the NAGC Position Statement *Identifying & Serving Culturally & Linguistically Diverse Gifted Students*, scholars agree there are many challenges in creating equitable identification procedures for culturally and linguistically diverse students, including African American gifted children.

Intelligence testing can create barriers for identifying gifted African American students, as intelligence test scores are sometimes lower for racially and culturally diverse students. Many districts rely on verbal ability tests and high cutoff scores, which can unfairly discriminate. A better solution is to use one or more of the following strategies for identifying African American gifted students:

Non-verbal tests. Non-verbal tests focus on reasoning ability instead of language and other academic knowledge.

Universal screening and local norms. Universal screening (assessing all students within a grade, school, or district) gives all children the opportunity to show their strengths. Local norms (scores calculated among students of similar backgrounds) allow children's scores to be compared to other students in their school or district (rather than at the national or state level), thus highlighting those students within the school who need more challenge.

Rating scales. Rating scales provide information about a child that extends beyond test scores. These scales often assess characteristics of giftedness and observable behaviors such as creativity, leadership, motivation, problem solving, inquisitiveness, humor, and academic abilities. Two options include the Traits, Aptitudes and Behaviors Scale (TABS) and the Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking (TTCT).

Portfolios. Portfolios provide an opportunity for educators to judge a product or collection of work that represents a student's knowledge or problem-solving ability, and offer insight into the best ways to support students in gifted education programming.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

• Teachers can overlook potential gifted behaviors in African American students, but parents are in a key position to notice traits of giftedness in their child.

• Take time to understand characteristics of giftedness, identification procedures, and programming options so you can interact effectively with the school.

• Get involved at school! Knowing the staff and daily operations can help when thinking about ways to meet your child's educational needs.

Dig Deeper: Identification

NAGC Position Statement: *Identifying & Serving Culturally & Linguistically Diverse Gifted Students*, www.nagc.org

Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking, www.ststesting.com

Search: *A New Window for Looking at Gifted Children*, A Guidebook by M. M. Frasier et al



Talking With Your Child About Giftedness

Many parents and caregivers question how to talk with their high-ability children about giftedness or twice-exceptionality (2e), so it's essential to feel comfortable in ways to broach the topic.

Perhaps your child has just been identified as gifted and talented. Or, your gifted child may notice they're different from their age mates—with unique interests, an advanced vocabulary, social awareness, or an ability to complete work quickly and effortlessly, while other students struggle. In these situations, parents often wonder: "Do I dare use the word gifted?" "Will my child develop an ego?" "Will the gifted label put pressure on them?"

As a parent or caregiver, you may understand that the differences your child exhibits relate to her giftedness, but your child likely does not. When children notice and feel different from their peers, they seek explanations. Sadly, their peers may be eager to provide them with poor explanations for these differences. Age mates may describe the gifted or 2e child as odd, weird, or strange. Some kids may criticize or humiliate gifted children for their knowledge or behavior. Even well-meaning adults can unreasonably expect gifted children to know all the answers or to always behave appropriately.

That's why it's important to provide gifted and 2e children with a positive framework for understanding their differences through the lens of giftedness.

THE WORD GIFTED

Many parents are uncomfortable with the term *gifted*, as some see negative connotations—even though the term is intended to highlight a strength area, not make a value judgement. *Gifted* is a common term in education literature and legislation; parents are encouraged to become comfortable with this term. If you feel uncomfortable using the term *gifted* or seek other words to describe your child, you can substitute other descriptors such as *accelerated learner*, *quick learner*, *bright*, *precocious*, *high ability*, and *high potential*, to name a few.

Modeling is also important. Adults have strengths and weaknesses, too. When parents acknowledge and show they're comfortable with their own strengths and weaknesses, it helps children become comfortable with their own giftedness and areas of weakness. Using descriptive terms to label our children's strengths helps them become more comfortable with those strengths.



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

• Help gifted and 2e individuals recognize what gifted is and what it's not.

• Giftedness may mean that students learn differently or more quickly than others.

• Giftedness does not mean children learn effortlessly. To succeed, students need to put forth effort in school and work.

• Giftedness may indicate you are better at something, but it doesn't mean you are better than anyone.

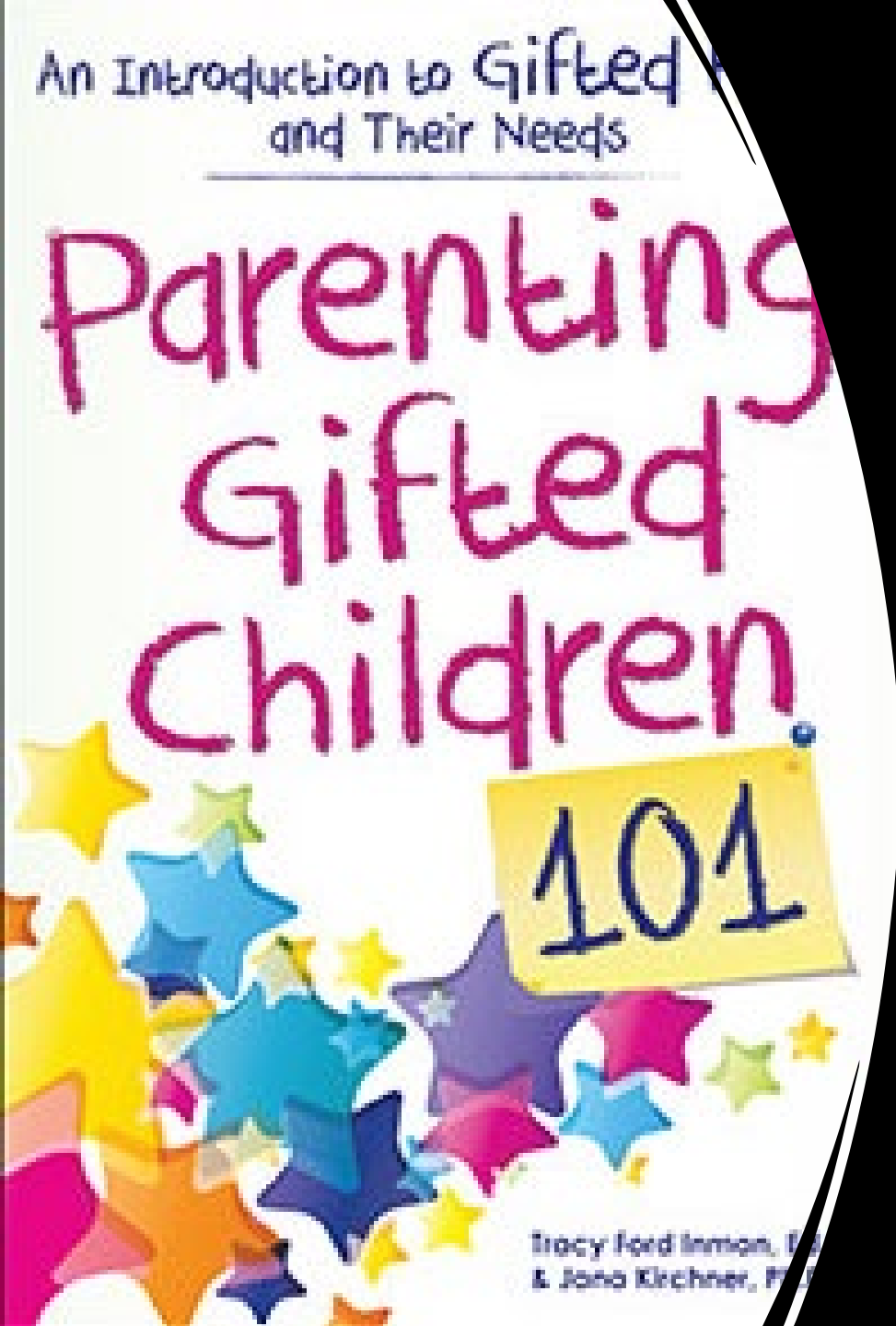
JUST FOR KIDS

501 Success Secrets for Gifted Kids by Christine Fonseca (2011).

The Survival Guide for Gifted Kids: For Ages 10 & Under by Judy Galbraith (2013).

The Gifted Term Survival Guide: Smart, Sharp, and Ready for (Almost) Anything by Judy Galbraith & Jim Delisle (2011).





Parenting Gifted
Children 101: An
Introduction to Gifted
Kids and Their Needs

TAGT Legacy Book Award
for parenting book

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