

**BEING MISUNDERSTOOD: PRACTICAL
CONSIDERATIONS TO HELP GIFTED
STUDENTS BETTER UNDERSTAND
THEMSELVES AND RELATE TO THEIR
PEERS.**

Presentation given at the 2014
GACEC meeting in Savannah, GA

ORGANIZATION

- Nature
- Measurement
- Intervention



NATURE

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE GIFTED (JOHNSEN, 2011)

- Intense interests
- Persistent
- Inquisitive nature
- Uses vocabulary beyond grade level
- Humor
- Learns information quickly
- Analyzes problems and considers alternatives
- Broad base of knowledge

WHAT IS “MISUNDERSTOOD”?

--to incorrectly interpret words, images,
and/or behaviors.

MYTHS HAVE NEGATIVE EFFECTS (CROSS, 2011, P. 13)

“Myth 1: Gifted students should be with students their own age.”

“Myth 2: Gifted students should be in same-age heterogeneous classes.”

“Myth 3: Gifted students should be perfectly well-rounded.”

“Myth 4: Being gifted is something you are just born with.”

“Myth 5: Everyone is an expert in giftedness.”

“Myth 6: Adults know what gifted students experience.”

“Myth 7: Being too smart in school is a problem, especially for girls.”

“Myth 8: All kids are gifted/no kids are gifted.”

CELEBRITY PERSPECTIVES

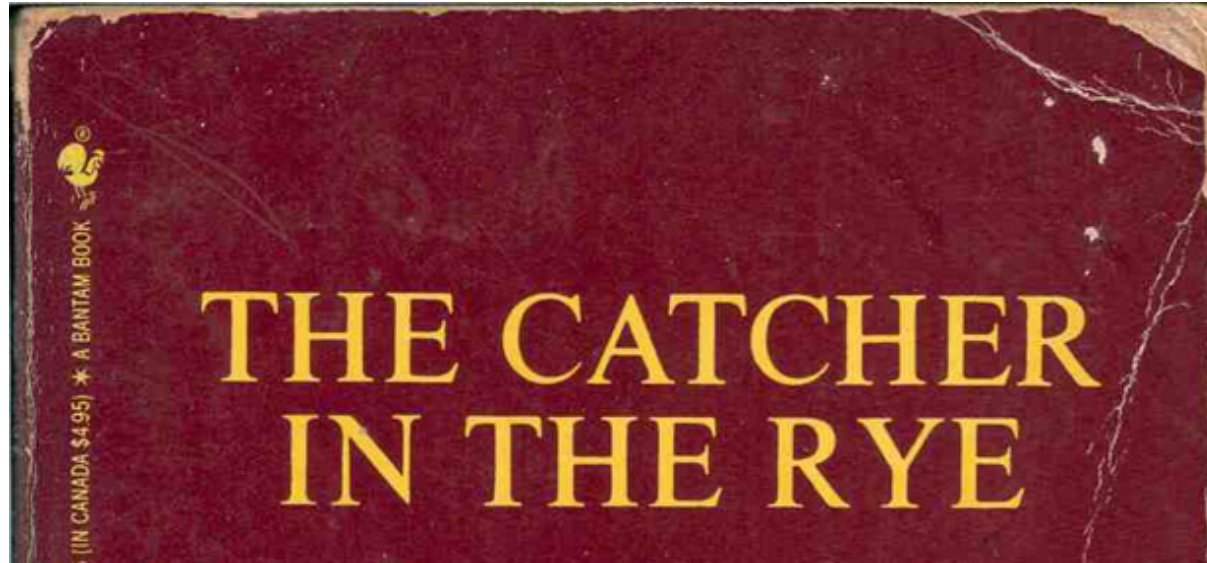


“I like being misunderstood.”



“To be great is to be misunderstood.”

WHO IS HOLDEN CAUFIELD?



WEBB, GORE, AMEND, & DEVRIES (2007) WORK ON UNHAPPINESS

- Signs

- Grades slipping
- Loss of interest in clubs & extra curriculars
- Changes in social/peer relationships
- Withdrawal from family
- Changes in habits

- Strategies

- Listening to the child
- Accepting concerns (not minimizing or ignoring)
- “Do not say “you shouldn’t feel that way”—telling a child that his feelings are wrong will only add to his self-loathing.” (p. 165)
- Helping child engage in new activities/exercise

DELISLE (1984)

“We should use computers, play advanced games, and learn a lot about ourselves and how to deal with the fact that other people will always expect more out of us.”
Girl, 10, Arkansas (p. 63)

“People expect me to be real stuck-up and sometimes treat me as if I am. I sometimes even exaggerate and tell people I make lower grades than I really do because I don’t like to feel like an oddball.” Boy, 11, Alabama (p. 46)

“Cold shoulders, dirty looks, and smirks hurt a lot more than somebody coming right out and saying something horrible.” Girl, 11, Michigan (p. 37)



MEASUREMENT

DEVELOPED AS A COLLABORATION BETWEEN FACULTY AND TWO GRADUATE STUDENTS (ALPHABETICALLY)

- Jennifer Breneiser
- Christopher A Coffey
- Shelby L McCoy
- David Monetti
- James A Reffel
- Mark A Whatley

ITEMS

- 31 items on the draft form of the instrument
- Example items:
 - I am careful to limit the vocabulary I use so that I don't alienate my friends
 - I think about things that I do not share with others because I do not think they would understand
 - I use creative writing and/or art to share things I am thinking about
 - I work very hard to hide my emotions because I do not think others would understand
 - I find myself thinking one thing, but telling people something else
 - I feel sad that people do not get me

SCALING

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Disagree Strongly	Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Neutral	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Agree Strongly



INTERVENTION

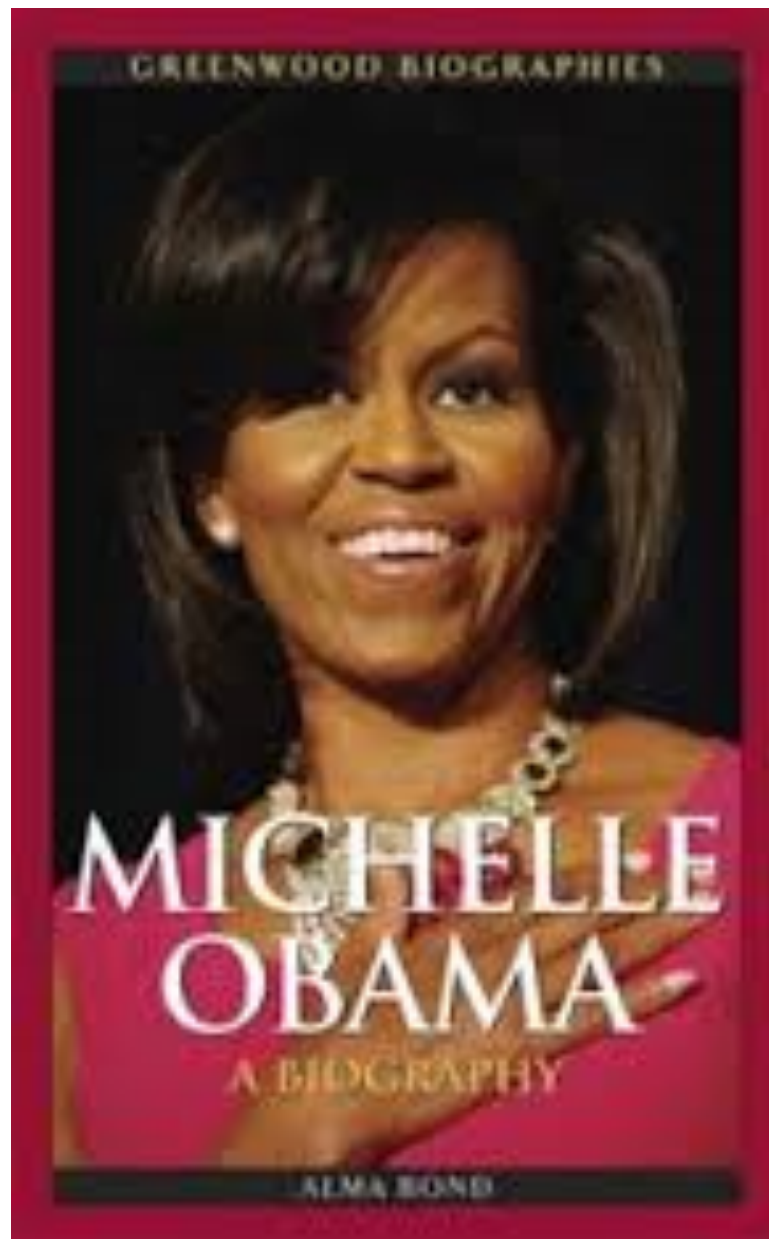
STRATEGY #1: DELISLE (1984)

- Conduct classroom surveys on various high interest topics (such as favorite foods, movies, desirable qualities in friends)
- Have the students analyze and graph the information from the class.
- This activity helps students recognize similarities they share with others, instead of only seeing differences.

STRATEGY #2: CROSS (2011)

- Recommend that students read biographies of successful individuals from fields that interest students.
- This strategy works because students tend to spend time on things they like and are good at.
- It is also very helpful for them to see the struggles of distinguished individuals.

EXAMPLE



STRATEGY #3: HEBERT & SERGENT (2005)

- Use films to guide discussions regarding social and emotional issues.
- Involve the person with the most training in adjustment on campus (the school counselor).
- Use classroom guidance sessions (more efficient and impact greater numbers of students).

EXAMPLE



POSSIBLE DISCUSSION/ESSAY

QUESTIONS:

- What is your opinion of the role of children as presented in the film?
- Did Ender's successes come too easily? Why or why not?
- What social and emotional problems is Ender confronted with? How did he resolve (fail to resolve) those issues?
- Why did the military select Ender and wash out Peter and Valentine? Were other kids selected that acted in ways similar to Peter and Valentine?
- What is your impression of Ender's reaction to the realization that he had been duped? What did he do to successfully cope with the situation? What else could he have done to better cope?

EXAMPLE #2



POSSIBLE DISCUSSION/ESSAY

QUESTIONS:

- How is Elsa's situation similar to the situation that gifted girls may face in our schools?
- Why did Elsa go into seclusion in the mountains?
- Why was Elsa trying to hide her gift from the people of her community?
- Was Elsa's power a gift or a burden? Give at least two reasons for your viewpoint.
- Describe how a gifted girl could potentially interpret the "Let It Go" song lyrics: "The wind is howling like this swirling storm inside. Couldn't keep it in, heaven knows I tried. Don't let them in, don't let them see. Be the good girl you always have to be."

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