rors through such instruments as the Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking or SOI-Learning Abilities subtests helps both students and the adults working with them. Since many divergent thinkers are not aware that their problem solutions and other ideas are unusual, or that they interrupt the usual scheme of things, they profit from a discussion on the value of ideas and of acceptable ways to present them.

The gifted and talented reach the highest levels of mutual interchange (Land, 1979) by participating in the design of an environment appropriate for a development of their uniqueness. As criteria for learning and performance are developed, they cultivate a commitment to life-long learning and to cooperative relationships with peers and adults. A statement of how individuals view the world and their roles in it is an appropriate beginning. The statement could appear as a bill of rights similar to the one suggested for victims of mathematics anxiety (Tobias, 1979). It might look something like this:

I have a right to identify my abilities and to excel.
I have a right to contribute to society.
I have a right to learn more in school than I knew last year.
I have a right to share my knowledge with others.
I have a right to develop my curiosity and creativity.
I have a right to apply what I learn through problem solving.
I have a right to make friends with gifted peers.
I have a right to contribute to the growth of my peers.
I have a right to be different from my peers.
I have a right to respect and learn from others who differ from me.
I have a right to explore alternatives and to experience consequences.
I have a right to know that I may be freed from undue anxiety.

The uniqueness of the gifted suggests that these children must respond independently to their world. Adults might ask the age at which children should use problem solving and self-monitoring to minimize conflict, especially if these strategies are to take precedence over their directives. At what age should children be independent enough to use their gifts in situations that are not designed for it? Ten years old? Eighteen? Although all children are faced with anxiety, the gifted must often deal with it at younger ages than other children, and with a keener sense of the possibilities open to them. It is unfortunate that we know so little about how Einstein, Picasso, Roosevelt and other noted persons dealt with anxiety as children. What we do know is that scientists, artists, and many outstanding leaders were independent thinkers and made profound contributions to society (Waltberg, 1981). A few were known also for their humor, an anxiety-reducing characteristic often lacking in the gifted.

The advantages and disadvantages associated with anxiety are tied to the total persons. The uniqueness of individuals and the complexity of their environments call for assessments and problem solving that is done best by the gifted themselves. Rather than reinforce dependence on one or two solutions to a situation, adults and peers alike should invite gifted youth to become creative problem solvers and decision makers. This approach stimulates, in turn, a sense of intrinsic control and the development of criteria for action. When gifted persons integrate problem solving into their lives, they use positive correlates of anxiety to advantage and transform negative correlates into problem solving opportunities.

REFERENCES
Barber, I. W. "Motivation" Practical Applications of Research, 5(1), 1982
Clark, B. Crowning Gifts. Columbus, Ohio: Merrill, 1979
Freire, R. L. and Treffinger, D. J. "Creative Problem Solving: Guidelines and Resources for Effective Facilitation" G/C/T, 1983, 26, 2-10
Repper, A. "How the gifted cope with their emotions" Roeper Review, 1982, 5(2), 21-23

Guy J. Manaster
Philip M. Powell

A framework for understanding common psychosocial problems of gifted adolescents is based on the assumptions that people want to fit into society, and people want to understand how they fit. Common problems for the gifted are being different in cognitive development from average (out of stage), having abilities and interests which make it difficult to adjust socially (out of phase), and feeling different from others.
Assumptions

The first of two theoretical assumptions on which the framework is based is the simple notion, central to the Individual Psychology of Alfred Adler, that all people want to belong (Adler, 1956, 1964; Manaster and Corsini, 1982). All people want to fit in, to have a place in the human group. Implicit in this assumption is that personal and psychological needs require other people for fulfillment, and that a sense of mastery and competence demand a sense of connection with society. To achieve this sense of belonging, people may develop extraordinary beliefs about themselves and others and behave in extraordinary ways which are only understandable within the context of their own beliefs.

The second assumption, an extension of the first, emanates from social interaction and role theory (Festinger, 1954; Mead, 1934/1965). People want to know where they stand or how they fit in. Although we might not all agree some of the time, society provides labels and roles which serve as guides for self-definition and appropriate behavior. Knowing what role one has taken or may take, and the attitudes, values and behavior associated with that role, makes it easier to move within the role and to decide about its appropriateness for the individual.

Adolescent and Gifted

The range of descriptions of adolescence, including development and change, runs from mildly disruptive to extremely turbulent. Kurt Lewin (1939) termed the position of the adolescent, no longer in the children's group and not yet in the adult group, that of a marginal man. The marginal man is characterized as a person standing on a boundary between two groups, not belonging to either and uncertain about his belongingness. A person in this position, belonging partially to two groups but not completely to either, may exhibit symptoms of emotional instability and sensitivity (Manaster, 1977, p. 111). Adolescents in this marginal position are confronted with roles which are undefined or loosely defined, confused, and sometimes contradictory. Due to the ambiguity of position and roles with which adolescents are confronted, they stress similarity and sameness in order to fit in and to belong.

The psychosocial aim of the adolescent is to find and secure a personally comfortable place in which to belong during this life stage, while recognizing that these years are transitory. The aim is the same for all, and youth, regardless of their mental ability, have difficulty with the process and attainment.

The Framework

Gifted adolescents are in particular psychosocial jeopardy because (1) they are different and do not fit; (2) they appear different to themselves and to others and can or should not fit; or because (3) they feel they are different, feel they do not fit, and accept these conclusions. These three conditions, which define potential adjustment problems for gifted adolescents, will be referred to, respectively, as out of stage, out of phase, and out of sync. Table 1 relates these labels to the three conditions and the psychosocial location of the developments and situations of gifted adolescents, and constitutes the basic framework.

Table 2 presents problems of gifted adolescents that are related to being out of stage. Gifted adolescents who are well able to achieve in school, possibly with great ease and greater understanding, may in traditional classrooms find themselves bored. They may have multiple talents and gifts that are unharnessed, unusual and unrecognized by themselves and/or others. They may have reached a cognitive level which allows them to construct a sense of success and perfection beyond the realm of those around them, and allows them to pressure themselves to reach that high. They may, in fact, be so successful academically, and concentrate so in that area, that none are aware of their deficiencies in other areas. In sum, gifted adolescents who are out of stage may be reacting to and dealing with concepts and goals far beyond the reach of those around them, while being bored and/or out of touch with their immediate environment and the meanings and potential satisfactions that may be there for them.

Out of phase gifted adolescents (see Table 3) often are alienated and distant from or without a peer group with which to interact. Numerous authors identified these problems and other specific behavioral or attitudinal problems which alienate out of phase gifted adolescents from peers, as well as teachers and other adults. These more specific problems, such as a high sensitivity to issues and to personal relationships, lack of social skills, uncertainty over social roles and a highly active and questioning approach to issues, may be seen as indicators of being out of stage, as in confronting life with higher level cognitive skills and lower social skills. However, some of these specific problems may indicate only social deficits, i.e., being out of phase but not out of stage.

Two additional social problems relate to giftedness and sex role in adolescence. The potential for problems in being out of phase as a gifted male adolescent are increased because acting out giftedness is contrary to traditional male-macho sex-appropriate stereotypes. For example, being a brain is not being a real man. In the same vein, the early maturing gifted female
### Table 2: Identified Problems of Gifted Adolescents related to being Out of Stage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Problem</th>
<th>Comment and Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Boredom</strong></td>
<td>1. Easily bored, frustrated by traditional instruction (Alvino, 1981)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Boredom (Compton, 1982)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Listed as problems in J H S - school waste of time (Bachtold, 1978)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Multi-Talented</strong></td>
<td>1. They need feedback about their gifts provided by professional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teachers need to be taught to recognize and deal with these issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>with the gifted (Sanborn, 1979)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Isolated interests and talents (Gifted Children's Resource Center, undated)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. By definition of gifted as multitalented (Butler, 1978)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Perfectionism and Pressures for Success</strong></td>
<td>1. Discontent with any performance short of own goals (Whitmore, 1980)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. The underachievers refuse to compete because of feelings of inadequacy (Barrett, 1957)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Gifted children may be under considerable pressure to achieve (Strang, 1951)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pressures for Success</strong></td>
<td>1. Pressures for success (Schetky, 1981)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Unrealistic expectations of gifted (Whitmore, 1980)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Success masks students needs</strong></td>
<td>1. Many gifted students do so well that this very fact desensitizes us to their needs (Sanborn, 1979)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. High academic achievement, social skills at early age (Whitmore, 1980)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Uneven development</strong></td>
<td>1. Discrepancies between physical, emotional and intellectual maturation are common but may be even more exaggerated in the gifted (Schenkey, 1981)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Brain reaches a plateau (Compton, 1982)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Dialogue between superior intelligence and maturity (Hollingworth, 1942)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Comments are often paraphrased.

### Table 3: Identified Problems of Gifted Adolescents related to being Out of Phase

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Problem</th>
<th>Comment and Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alienation, Distance from/without peer groups</strong></td>
<td>1. Alienation because of divergent thinking and creativity, etc (Alvino, 1981)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Being different in adolescence is bad enough for normal teenagers, but more for gifted early adolescents (Compton, 1982)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Due to different interests, self-direction (Gifted Children Resource Center, undated)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Listed as Problem-disillusionment with system (Bachtold, 1978)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sensitivity</strong></td>
<td>1. Feelings of alienation versus the wish to be accepted (Schenkey, 1981)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To issues not-relevant to peers</td>
<td>2. Lack of acceptance by age peers (Alvino, 1981)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To Interpersonal Relationships</td>
<td>3. J H and H S gifted students resemble each other not age peers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Problems arise in matching gifted with intellectual and age peers (Lessinger and Martinson, 1961)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Deficit Social Skills</strong></td>
<td>1. Supersensitive to issues and concerns not viewed as important by age peers (Alvino, 1981)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Sensitivity-a mixed blessing, both an asset and a liability. It is a liability when abused by manipulating other (Schenkey, 1981)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Hypersensitivity leading to connections and relationships often too much for normal peers (Whitmore, 1980)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Supersensitivity of nervous system creates intellectual giftedness by allowing the assimilation of extra amounts of sensory input (Cruickshank, 1963) in Whitmore, 1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Uncertainty over roles</strong></td>
<td>1. Uncertainty concerning roles in society (Alvino, 1981)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity level</td>
<td>1. Child can be physically and mentally exhausting (Schenkey, 1981)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tendency to Challenge Authority</td>
<td>2. Tendency to challenge authority (Schenkey, 1981)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being Male</td>
<td>1. More adjustment difficulties for males than females (Bachtold, 1978)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early maturing girls</td>
<td>1. Gifted girls who are early matures and large may have considerable problems (Compton, 1982)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Comments are often paraphrased.

**Imposed Problems**

The framework presented above is an attempt to conceptually organize problems that gifted adolescents may have because they are gifted and adolescent, and because of the social and psychological dynamics related to the rate and magnitude of their emotional and cognitive development. The assumption is that these factors could interact to increase the potential for gifted adolescents to display these three types of maladjustments even in the best of worlds. That is to say, gifted adolescents might come to maladjusted conclusions and feelings about themselves, and behave in socially nonfunctional ways even if peers, parents and teachers did not label and stereotype them.

However, none of us, gifted adolescents included, live in the best of all possible worlds. The label gifted and talented, and its equivalents, can provoke stereotyped, nonfunctional attitudes and behaviors (Reschly and Lamprecht, 1979). Families may not accept and support children with high mental...
abilities (Compton, 1982). Parents may have unrealistic expectations for their accomplishments (Whitmore, 1980), or they may be intolerant and insensitive (Alvino, 1981), unprepared to cope (Compton, 1982), inflexible (Landau, 1981), or too narrow (Holland, 1961) in interacting with gifted students.

**Conclusions**

A change of attitude by teachers, researchers, and gifted children alike, would go a long way toward ameliorating the psychosocial problems of the gifted. All must recognize that although the gifted differ from the average in particular identifiable ways, it is only in these ways that they differ. In all other ways the gifted are typical, common, ordinary, regular and normal and able to healthily fit in with others. When their differentness is seen as primary by others and themselves, gifted adolescents accentuate them, and strive for increasing superiority and do not adjust to others well.

The gifted must be seen as average with gifts, not as superior with faults. Like everyone, the gifted must have the courage to be imperfect and (Manaster and Corsini, 1982, p. 55) the courage to be average in order to be psychosocially adjusted.

**REFERENCES**


Levin, K. Field theory and experiment in social psychology American Journal of Sociology, 1939, 44, 689-697.


Resch, D. J. and Lamprecht, M. J. Expectancy effects of Labels Fact or Artifact Exceptional Children 1979, 46, 55-56.


**Table 4: Identified Problems of Gifted Adolescents related to being Out of Sync**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Problem</th>
<th>Comment and Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-Concept Problems</td>
<td>1 Poor self-concept (Alvino, 1981) 2 Self-image problems (Bachof, 1978) 3 Excessive self-criticism (Carroll, 1940)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insecurity and Anxiety Too much, too cognitive</td>
<td>1 Insecure and anxious because of perceived physical deficits, different interests, self-direction (Gifted Children Resource Center) 2 Far more attention is given to the gifted child's cognitive development than to his or her emotional needs (Alvino, 1981) 2 Burn-out gifted tired of extra work, label of them in different category (Compton, 1982)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Severe Psychological Problems</td>
<td>1 Caused by accumulated environmental insensitivity (Gifted Children Resource Center, undated) 2 Maladjustment increases with age (Witty, [1940] in Whitmore, 1980)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Comments are often paraphrased.*

While gifted young people appear to have it all, they often make serious mistakes about themselves and their giftedness. Without an accurate and realistic self-concept, many of these youths create emotional difficulties for themselves which prevent them from fully using their talents in constructive or satisfying ways. Specifically, gifted youths frequently misunderstand what giftedness actually means in their lives, hold unrealistically high expectations for their own achievement, confuse the means and the ends of their accomplishments, overvalue their cognitive dimensions at the expense of their affective natures, or view giftedness as an entitlement.

**Mistakes Gifted Young People Too Often Make**

Leslie Kaplan

While gifted young people appear to have it all, they often make serious mistakes about themselves and their giftedness. Without an accurate and realistic self-concept, many of these youths create emotional difficulties for themselves which prevent them from fully using their talents in constructive or satisfying ways. Specifically, gifted youths frequently misunderstand what giftedness actually means in their lives, hold unrealistically high expectations for their own achievement, confuse the means and the ends of their accomplishments, overvalue their cognitive dimensions at the expense of their affective natures, or view giftedness as an entitlement.

**Conclusions**

A change of attitude by teachers, researchers, and gifted children alike, would go a long way toward ameliorating the psychosocial problems of the gifted. All must recognize that although the gifted differ from the average in particular identifiable ways, it is only in these ways that they differ. In all other ways the gifted are typical, common, ordinary, regular and normal and able to healthily fit in with others. When their differentness is seen as primary by others and themselves, gifted adolescents accentuate them, and strive for increasing superiority and do not adjust to others well.

The gifted must be seen as average with gifts, not as superior with faults.

Like everyone, the gifted must have the courage to be imperfect and (Manaster and Corsini, 1982, p. 55) the courage to be average in order to be psychosocially adjusted.

**References**


Gifted Children Resource Center "Gifted Children: What Are They Like?" Los Angeles Undated.


Lewin, K. Field theory and experiment in social psychology American Journal of Sociology, 1939, 44, 689-697.


Reschly, D. J. and Lamprecht, M. J. Expectancy effects of Labels Fact or Artifact Exceptional Children 1979, 46, 55-56.


