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Unmasking Challenges to Reveal Possibilities

Interventions & Strengths Development * Academic Enrichment * Family Support

Professional Development and Parent Education Workshop Catalogue

Offered by Cindy Z. Hansen

Cindy is a nationally recognized speaker sharing insights about the challenges of high ability learners and those who have multiple exceptionalities (gifted and learning or attention difficulties). In Southern California, Cindy offers SENG Model Parent Groups, and is available for parent workshops and continuing education workshops.

In each of the workshops listed below, audiences are guided through their areas of expertise and perspectives into a nuanced awareness of the exceptional qualities of gifted children, adolescents and adults. Offerings may be adapted for parents or teachers and staff, and some may be offered as collaborative learning sessions with both teachers and parents. The *SENG Model Parent Group* sessions are designed for parents and caretakers of gifted students as a facilitated, community support group and usually run for 6-8 weeks.

Each of the topics may be adjusted in time and focus to meet the needs of the community. A detailed course outline will be made available once the length of a workshop is determined.

1. The Hand You Were Dealt: Challenging our assumptions about what it means to be Gifted.

Everyone has unique characteristics. Thank goodness! It would be a dull world if everyone thought the same way. The mythical view of gifted children are those who get excellent grades and only speak when it is their turn: they work hard, think deeply, rescue kittens and cure cancer. The broader community may believe that giftedness is elitist; that students who don't produce excellence must not be gifted, or that gifted and talented students waste resources that should be going to our under-performing students. Using *The Hand You Were Dealt* game, we will joyously challenge our assumptions and biases of highly able students, and consider how to use this understanding to better endure relatives, spouses, educators, and our children.

2. Hidden Challenges for our Gifted and Twice Exceptional Students

A successful learning environment combines empathy, understanding, and high expectations while *adjusting the details* to assure that a child grows educationally, emotionally and socially on a daily basis. To appreciate the nuanced contradictions of the gifted child who struggles to learn, we must dispel myths, build understanding of their unique journey, and embrace their need for higher cognitive experiences. In this demonstration and discussion, participants will explore the myths of *Giftedness* which often delay support for our GATE students who may have hidden learning challenges or disabilities. Participants will be exposed to some of the challenges 2e students face in the classroom, and modifications which often make a substantial difference in their lives. Participants will leave the workshop with a deeper understanding of neurologically diverse students, several interrelated disabilities, and a set of strategies and resources to use immediately.



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3. **When Lazy Doesn't Make Sense: Introduction to Executive functions and skills**

Difficulty starting a task; staying focused on school tasks; and great ideas without follow-through; are symptoms of *executive functioning*. Often our brightest students are labeled "lazy" and begin to doubt their abilities when their production lags. Gifted students who have poor executive functions, but test within the state mandated norms, are often not recognized as needing specialized assistance, yet these are often underachievers who are most at risk. This presentation describes how executive function delays can manifest in our students with high potential. Integrating theories and research from noted professionals in the special education and gifted communities affords us the opportunity to understand the needs and ways to support, the whole child.

4. **When LaZy Doesn't Make Sense: Adjusting our Viewpoint and Strategies to meet the Needs of our Brightest Students**

This workshop focuses on the viewpoint of the gifted or highly creative child and the divergent thinking styles that affect their thinking processes and their executive skills. Though their production results may be similar to students with LDs or executive skill dysfunction, the foundation that inhibits their productivity and sense of success, may be quite different. Learning may be impacted by environmental factors, social-emotional distractions, or intense sensitivities. Developing ways to move through these hurdles requires alternate perspectives of their journey and a community who shares ideas to transform current expectations into effective solutions.

5. **The Highly Sensitive Child: Modulating Intensities Without Mangling The Spirit**

We have all encountered a child with intense experiences: the child who can't sit still, another is highly emotional, or startles at sounds, or claims to smell color. These interactions may be considered disruptive or frustrating to peers, family members and educators. Yet within these behaviors are gifts which hold rich potential for the child. This workshop will focus on recognizing the types of intensities gifted children may experience, and methods to help them embrace their individuality while existing in a world which may not.

6. **What is *Gifted* and Why Does it Matter?**

This presentation challenges our assumptions and biases of highly able students as we confront common myths about this neurologically diverse population. The broader community tends to think that giftedness is elitist; that students who don't produce excellence must not be gifted; that gifted and talented students waste resources that should be going to our under-performing students. Far beyond Gardner's Multiple Intelligences, we must consider the temperamental differences between the *Comfortably* gifted, the *Adorably* gifted, the *Quirky*, the *Sensitive*, the *Creative* and the *Profoundly* gifted students within our midst.



Together we will examine the challenges of differentiation, asynchronous development, various origins of underachievement; fears of failure and fears of success which can plague these students with high potential. This interactive workshop welcomes teachers to bring in existing differentiated plans so we may examine alternative strategies for these sensitive students with high potential.

7. Gifted 101: Intensities, Myths and the Eight Great Gripses of Gifted Children

Jim Delisle is fond of saying, "Our kids are *normal*. They just aren't *typical*." What does it mean to raise a neurologically diverse child? This session will explore common myths of giftedness, the intensities that clobber those myths and Jim Delisle and Judy Galbraith's delightful insights about the Eight Great Gripses from their book, *When Gifted Kids Don't Have all the Answers*. Recognizing that each of the attendees has personal expertise due to their experiences with students of high potential, time is reserved at the end of this workshop for questions and round-table discussion.

8. Homework and Passions— Helping our Children lead Balanced Lives

Homework is inevitable. Children will continue to bring home vocabulary and spelling lists, and math worksheets. While more and more schools are re-thinking the purpose of homework, it continues to be a stress in many homes throughout the school year. Helping our children keep a balance between after school activities, homework and "down-time" is critical for the entire household. Poor balance often leads to cranky adults and lost homework! This workshop will explore the skills of "voluntary attention," self discovery, and self advocacy for alternative assignments when their homework repeats known skills. We will leave with ways we can help our children grow their stamina for less preferred tasks and growing their current interests.

9. Effort, Mindset, and Hope: What it Means to be Gifted in a World of Common Core

*10,000 hours makes an expert *Growth Mindset = Success *Put in the Effort and you will succeed

Our children are inundated with easy sayings that are difficult to accomplish; especially if the child is an intensely sensitive, intelligent, artistic, visual, verbal, kinetic, or imaginative thinker. As parents, we try to help our neurologically diverse children navigate the learning and skill expectations of traditional classrooms. Even with the creative possibilities of common core, the demands of writing for our visual and verbal learners, or the demands of verbalizing thinking for our natural mathematicians, may sour our children to their previous passions. This session will explore how the *Myths of Giftedness* conflict with intensity strengths, learning styles, and developmental skills so children may be better understood and supported at home.

10. SENG Model Parent Groups

SENG Model Parent Groups offer parents an opportunity to share ideas, strategies and support in a relaxed setting, guided by SENG-trained facilitators. We emphasize positive parenting, avoiding power struggles, developing life skills, and enhancing relationships. This workshop series helps parents to embrace their child's advanced intellectual or talented nature instead of hiding behind the fear of being





“elitist.” Gifted children ponder deeply, learn impatiently, feel intensely, and often follow the beat of their own drum. Find your voice as a parent so you may give voice, a growth mindset and humility to your child. This workshop requires the purchase of *A Parent’s Guide to Gifted Children* by James Webb, et al, available at www.SENGifted.org or Amazon.com.

SMPG Chapter topics include:

- Characteristics of Gifted Children
- Defining Giftedness & Highly Gifted
- Communication: The Key to Relationships
- Establishing Discipline and Teaching Self-Management
- Intensity, Perfectionism, Stress
- Idealism, Unhappiness, Depression
- Acquaintances, Friends, and Peers
- Family Relationships: Siblings and Only Children
- Motivation, Enthusiasm, and Underachievement
- Children Who Are Twice-Exceptional
- Identifying Hopes & Setting Goals

11. *Seeing My time: A Parent-Student Collaborative*

Does your child have difficulty starting a task, staying focused on school tasks, getting lost in time, Losing homework on the way to school?! Are you ready to find solutions? This course, based on The Sklar Process® helps families come to terms with individual differences in work production and perspective which helps to lower homework stress, meet deadlines, and take charge of Time, as we learn about the neurological diversity behind planning and production skill abilities. Over the course of the 8 hour course, participants will explore study and organizational strategies, time management, and help transform their homes into a procrastination-free zone, using humor, interactive demonstrations, and the *Seeing My Time*™ Workbook.

