

EMOTIONAL SENSITIVITIES AND INTENSITIES OF GIFTED CHILDREN

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One of the basic characteristics of the gifted is their intensity and an expanded field of their subjective experience. The intensity, in particular, must be understood as a qualitatively distinct characteristic. It is not a matter of degree but of a different quality of experiencing: vivid, absorbing, penetrating, encompassing, complex, commanding – a way of being quiveringly alive. (Piechowski, 1991:181)

I use this quote from Michael Piechowski in my lecture to first year primary teaching students. Invariably I get at least one student who identifies with it, and who has never realised that there is an emotional sensitivity and intensity in being gifted. They now have something that explains their difference from their peers, rather than just being weird!

How did these students get to university without knowing who they are?

This workshop will explore and discuss the sensitivities and intensities of gifted children, relating them to Dabrowski's Theory of Positive Disintegration and his concept of overexcitabilities. Understanding these aspects of gifted personalities is important for both parents and their children.

Piechowski, M. M. (1991) Emotional development and emotional giftedness. In N. Colangelo and G.A. Davis (Eds.) *Handbook of gifted education*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon pp. 285 - 306