



# **READ ALL ABOUT IT: USING BIBLIOTHERAPY AND CINEMATHERAPY WITH GIFTED CHILDREN**

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We read to  
discover we  
are not alone

- C.S. Lewis



# Purpose:

1

- Become familiar with overexcitabilities

2

- Discuss how bibliotherapy and/or cinematherapy can help

3

- Find appropriate books/movies to use



*One of the most noticeable traits of gifted learners is the intensity with which they live their lives.*



<http://vimeo.com/7524234>

# Polish psychologist, K. Dabrowski (1902 – 1980)

Simply stated, OEs are an inborn tendency to respond more and more intensely to life's stimuli. He believed some individuals are genetically predisposed to have more intense life experiences.

# Overexcitabilities

- Inborn, heightened abilities to receive and respond to stimuli, greater than the norm
- Presence of OEs result in a real difference in the fabric of life and quality of experience for overexcitable people and those around them



# 5 Types of Overexcitabilities

- Intellectual
- Psychomotor
- Imaginational
- Emotional
- Sensual





Intellectual

Intense activity of  
the mind

Avid curiosity

Thirst for knowledge





# Psychomotor

Heightened excitability of  
the neuromuscular system

Energetic, restless

Can be mistaken for ADHD

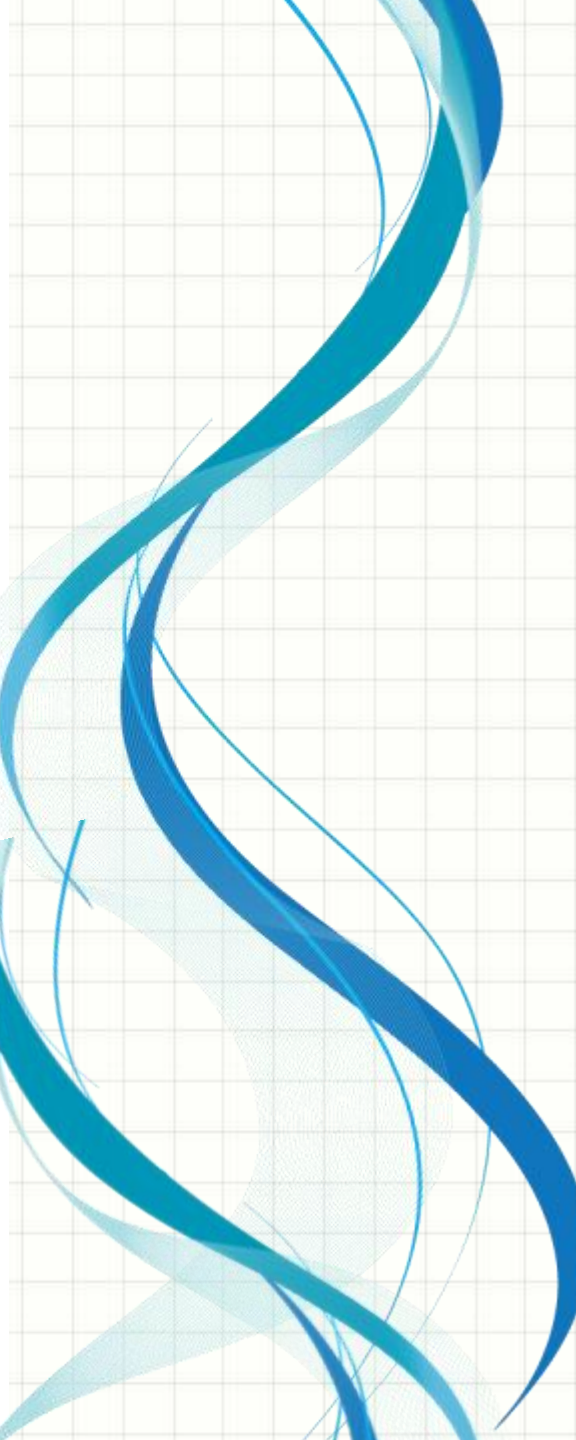


# Emotional

Often first noticed by parents

Intense feelings, extreme emotions

Capacity for strong attachments,  
deep relationships



# Sensual

Overly sensitive to anything that enters the body through the senses

Can be a love for these or an aversion to these

Can look similar to Sensory Integration Disorder





# Imaginational

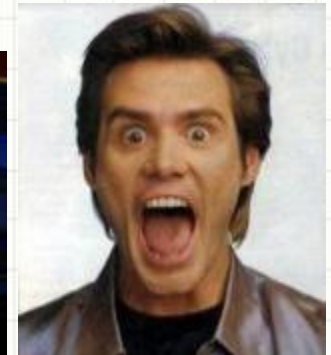
Dreamers, poets, space cadets

Strong visual thinkers

Daydream, imagine all possibilities,  
all worlds

Think and speak metaphorically

These five OEs describe the unusual intensity of the gifted as well as the many ways in which they look and behave "oddly" when compared to norms.

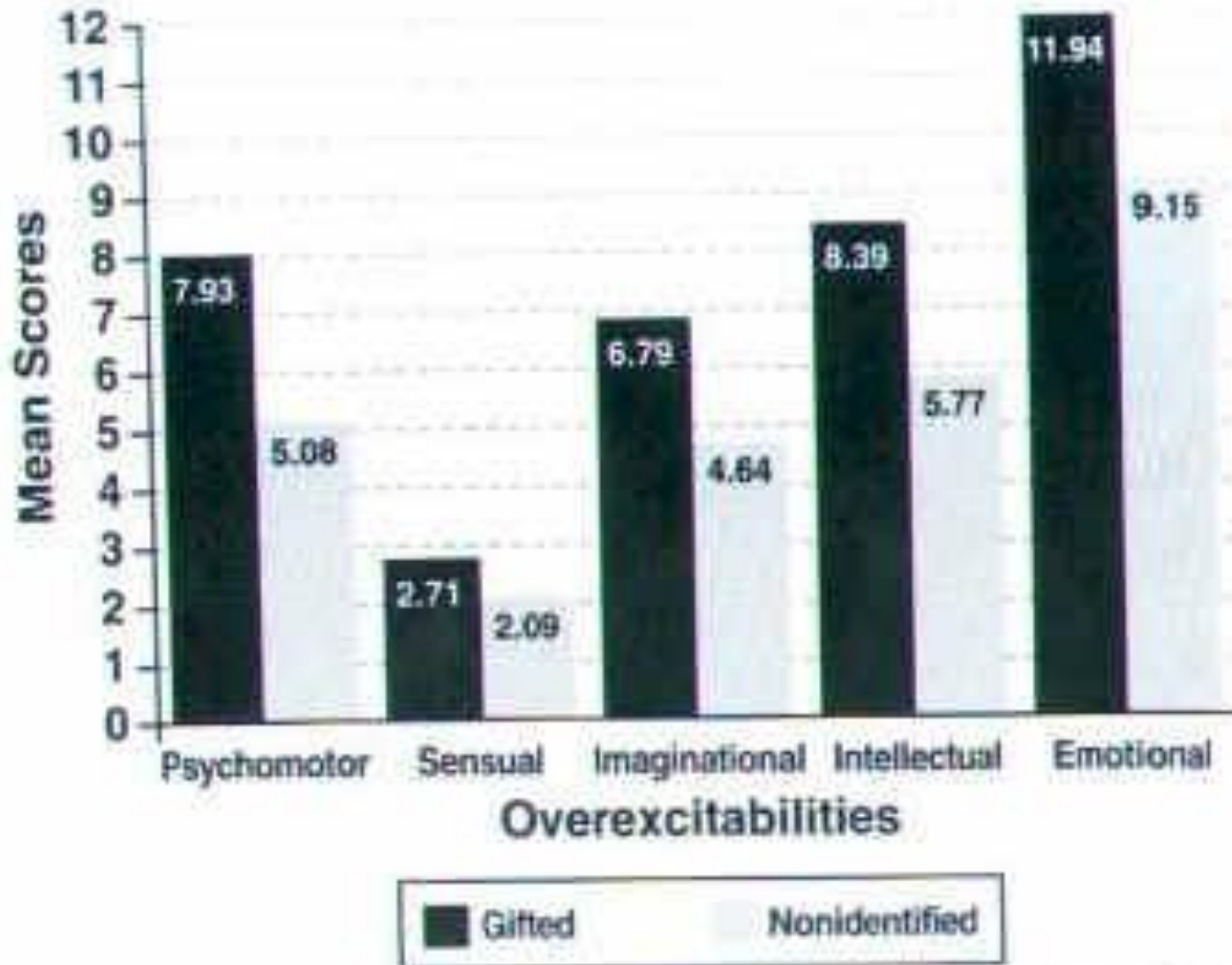


Highly gifted people tend to have all 5 of these, but different people lead with different OE's.





# OEs Gifted and Non-Identified



Gifted N = 42, Nonidentified N = 37

total possible score for each OE = 63

# General Strategies

Share descriptions of OEs with family, class, educators, counselors

Teach child to be advocate for self – help others to understand OEs

Bibliotherapy – Informational articles as well as novels, picture books, and movies, especially those that depict characters who struggle with Oes

Cinematherapy – Developed out of Bibliotherapy; viewing and discussing films that feature “gifted” characters

# SOCIAL – EMOTIONAL ISSUES

“...raising (or teaching) a gifted child is usually not the cakewalk that everyone else assumes it to be... because they come packaged with all these worries, sensitivities, quirks, and surprises, together with their unique intelligence.”

The reality is that gifted kids don't always have everything going for them, despite what others may misperceive about them in that regard.

Some problems suffered by gifted

- Being bored in school
- Being misunderstood by teachers
- Being youngest in class
- Being not understood or accepted by peers

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search ID: abr1259

“Let’s get a few things straight. No speed reading, no silly voices, no skipping pages....”





# Bibliotherapy

The use of quality literature as a base for discussing social and emotional experiences and issues and to help in healing problems associated with these issues

# BIBLIOTHERAPY

The reading is typically followed up by discussion with a trusted adult.

“For gifted students, bibliotherapy is an effective way to introduce them to fictional peers and mentors - people like them (or like them in certain ways) whose lives, struggles and decisions are revealing and affirming.”

Delisle and Galbraith (2002)



Literature allows a reader to identify with characters and problems in a book and relate them to their own lives.

The reader learns how others deal with frustrations and disappointments, and allows them to gain insights into alternative solutions to their own problems.





# BIBLIOTHERAPY

By allowing the reader to understand that they are not the only ones with a particular problem they will be more willing to discuss their problem more openly



# BIBLIOTHERAPY



Because gifted children are usually voracious readers, carefully chosen books can be excellent conversation starters.

‘..this technique with gifted children has special advantages. It takes their strength areas, such as their ability to conceptualize, to generalize and to abstract, and allows them to use these strengths to support areas of need and personal growth.’

Barbara Clark (1997)

Through the exposure to characters in books, bright and insightful children can learn more about their own individual characteristics, as well as develop strategies and problem solving techniques to deal with the quirks of others. Becoming involved in someone else's stories through books and movie plots offers a way to safely release emotion.





- Indirect approach
- Character actions
- Consequences of character actions



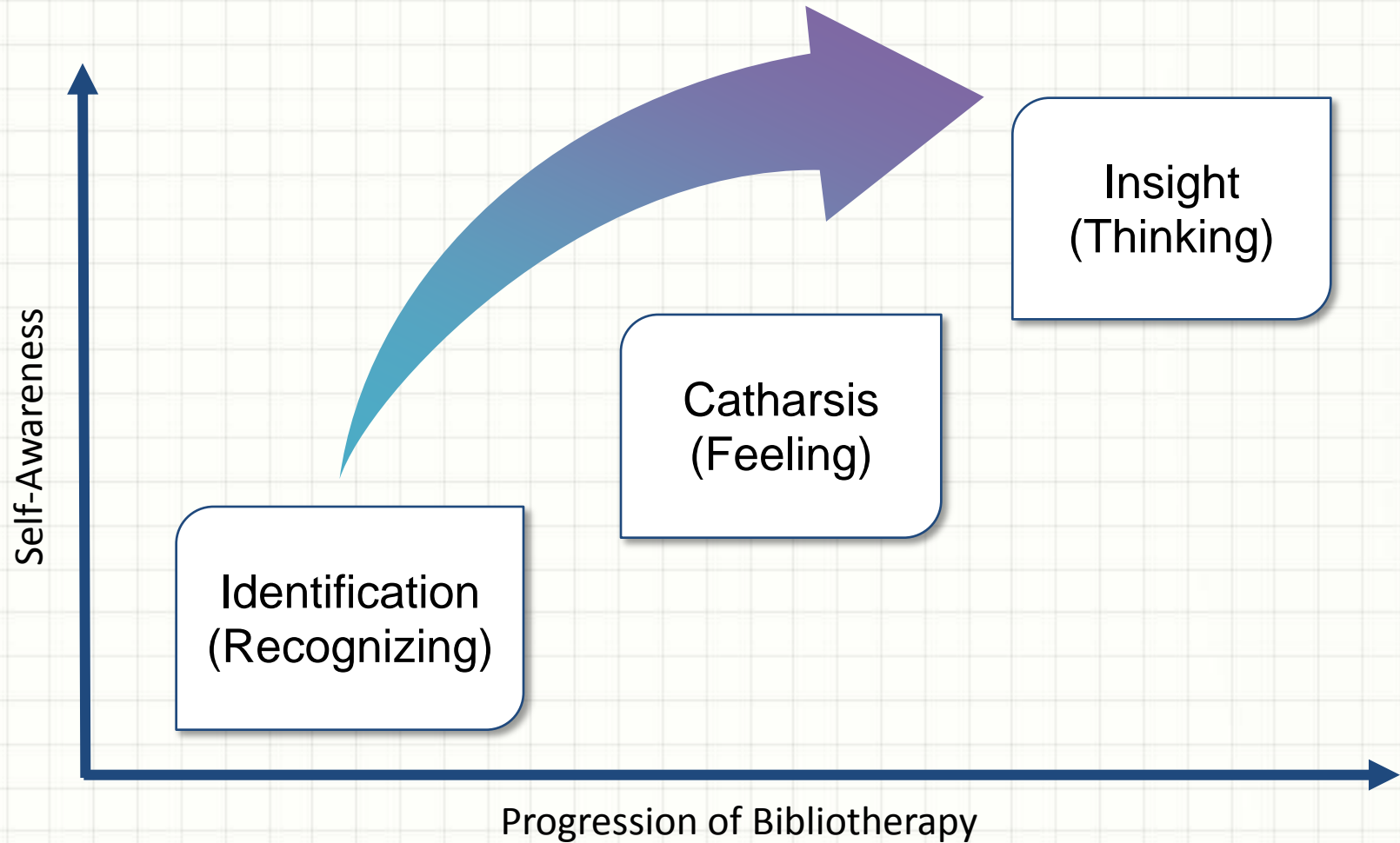
Better understanding of self

It can allow them to learn about themselves vicariously and to know that they're not alone, that others have - and have had - the same concerns or problems.



Can identify with characters similar to self

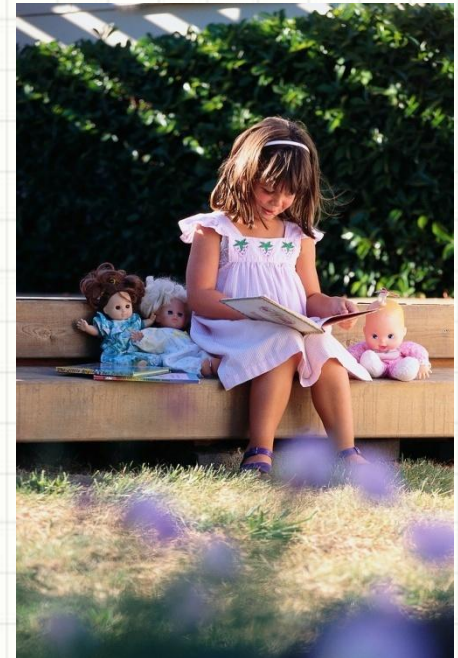
# Bibliotherapy/Videotherapy Process





# Identification

- Reader/viewer identifies with the character – recognizing something of herself and so coming to care what happens to the character
- Characters are very real, but distancing effect of story creates “safety”



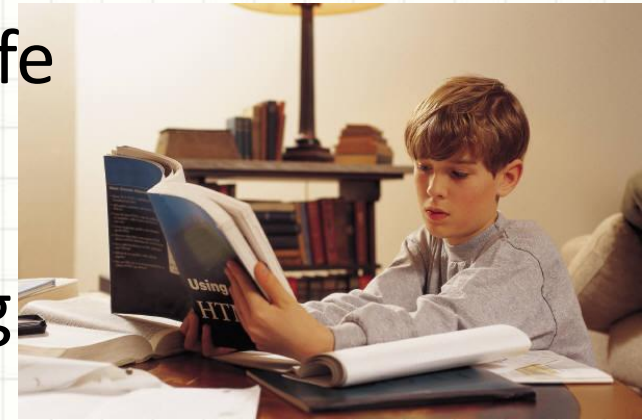
# Catharsis

- Reader/viewer follows character through a difficult situation
- Creates an empathetic, emotional reaction



# Insight

- Reader's application of the character's situation to his own life
- Transfer understanding of the character's personality and motivations to himself, increasing self-understanding and bringing own options into clearer focus
- Can occur following identification and catharsis or during follow-up discussion





# Choosing Books

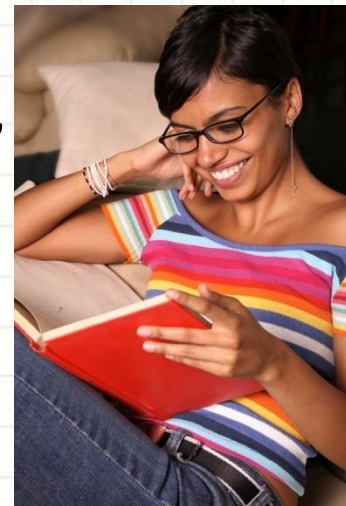
Can use both fiction and non-fiction, but different purposes

- Non-fiction biographies for examining characteristics of successful gifted individuals
- Fiction better for developmental bibliotherapy because child's reaction to fiction typically begins at the emotional level. Especially good when accompanied by discussion with others who have shared reading



# Choosing the Book

- Look for books that evoke emotions, situations that offer alternatives, and have characters with whom the reader can identify
- Pre-read the book in order to develop talking points
- Develop questions that are “interpretive” not just fact questions



# Setting the Stage/Reading the Book

- Must be willing to read the book for full benefit of discussion
- Informal discussion, rather than “school-type response”
- Can be separate reading followed by discussion or read aloud with accompanying discussion





# Preparing the Questions

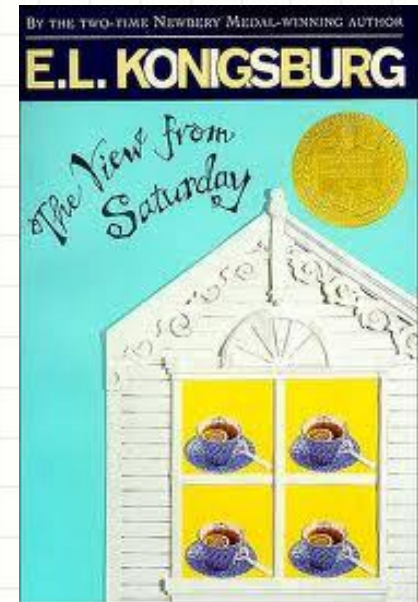
- Questions are based on emotional response rather than questions of plot and character, writing quality or style
- Can start with a few fact questions to make sure there is a basic understanding of the book
- Leader does not “know” the answer

# Some Generic Questions

- What is the central character's biggest issue?
- How do you think he/she feels when...
- What strengths does he/she have to help them cope with...?
- How has someone you know handled that situation?
- What would you have done?
- What advice would you give...?
- What effect do the people in the book have on one another?

# Possible Questions for: The View from Saturday

- Identification
  - Which character are you most like? Why?
  - In what way do the characters on the team have trouble because they are gifted? How are things easier for them?





# Possible Questions for: The Report Card



- Catharsis
  - Why do you think Nora hides her intelligence?
  - Have you ever acted this way around others?
  - How does Nora's relationship with Stephen change when he realizes how smart she is?
  - How does Nora feel when she is "backed into a corner?"

# Possible Questions for: The Twinkie Squad



- Insight
  - When do you hide your real feelings?
  - What are the advantages of doing this?
  - When do you turn away from showing your true gifts and interests?
  - Does this make you feel more accepted by others?

## **Cinematherapy:**



\*commonly known as videotherapy, has been used as a medium for counseling adolescents for quite some time. The roots of this method stem from bibliotherapy, a technique which allows a reader to vicariously experience conflicts and situations in a secure, less direct manner than standard practice counseling (Newton 1995)



# Using Movies



- Beware stereotypes in movies
- Look for content you wish to discuss
- Watch together or let kids watch together
- Follow up with discussion, either at key points or afterward
- Can be very informal
- Film provides “therapeutic metaphors”
- Can be linked with books and compared

## Possible Movie Titles

- [The Incredibles](#)
- Ferris Beuller's Day Off
- A Bug's Life
- Good Will Hunting
- [Akeelah and the Bee](#)
- The Sandlot
- Fly Away Home
- Meet the Robinsons
- Hoot
- Wide Awake
- \* [Real Genius](#)
- \* The Breakfast Club
- \* Billy Elliott
- \* Cloudy with a Chance
- \* Dead Poet's Society
- \* Spellbound (docu.)
- \* Little Man Tate
- \* Brave
- \* October Sky
- \* [Matilda](#)

## Akeelah Questions

- Why did Akeelah misspell the word? Why did Dylan?
- Do you agree with her decision?
- Have you ever not done your best on purpose?

# Themes

Questions can be geared toward theme most appropriate for age level

- Establishing identity
- Dyssynchrony
- Being alone
- Relationships with Others
- Using Abilities and Talents
- Perfectionism
- Underachievement
- Multipotentiality





# Resources

- Carnegie Library

<http://www.carnegielibrary.org/kids/books/>

- Hoagies Gifted

<http://www.hoagiesgifted.org>

- Supporting Emotional Needs of the Gifted (SENG)

<http://www.sengifted.org>

- Cinematherapy slideshow

<http://www.slideshare.net/jdanielian/cinematheapy>



## RESOURCES

Delisle, PhD, Jim and Judy Galbraith. When Gifted Kids Don't Have All the Answers. Minneapolis: Free Spirit Publishing, 2002.

Galbraith, Judy. The Gifted Kids Survival Guide. Minneapolis: Free Spirit Publishing Co., 1984.

Halsted, Judith Wynn. Some of My Best Friends are Books. Scottsdale: Gifted Psychology Press, 1994.

Nugent, Stephanie. Social & Emotional Teaching Strategies. Waco: Prufrock Press, 2005.

## OTHER RESOURCES

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- Frazier, M. & McCannon, C. Using bibliotherapy with gifted children. *Gifted Children Quarterly*. 25, 81-85.
- Heller, Sherri Z. *What Makes You So Special?* Phoenix: Thinking Caps, 1979

**QUESTIONS?**

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Good literature is built on life itself -and  
life's not always easy! Cornett& Cornett

