

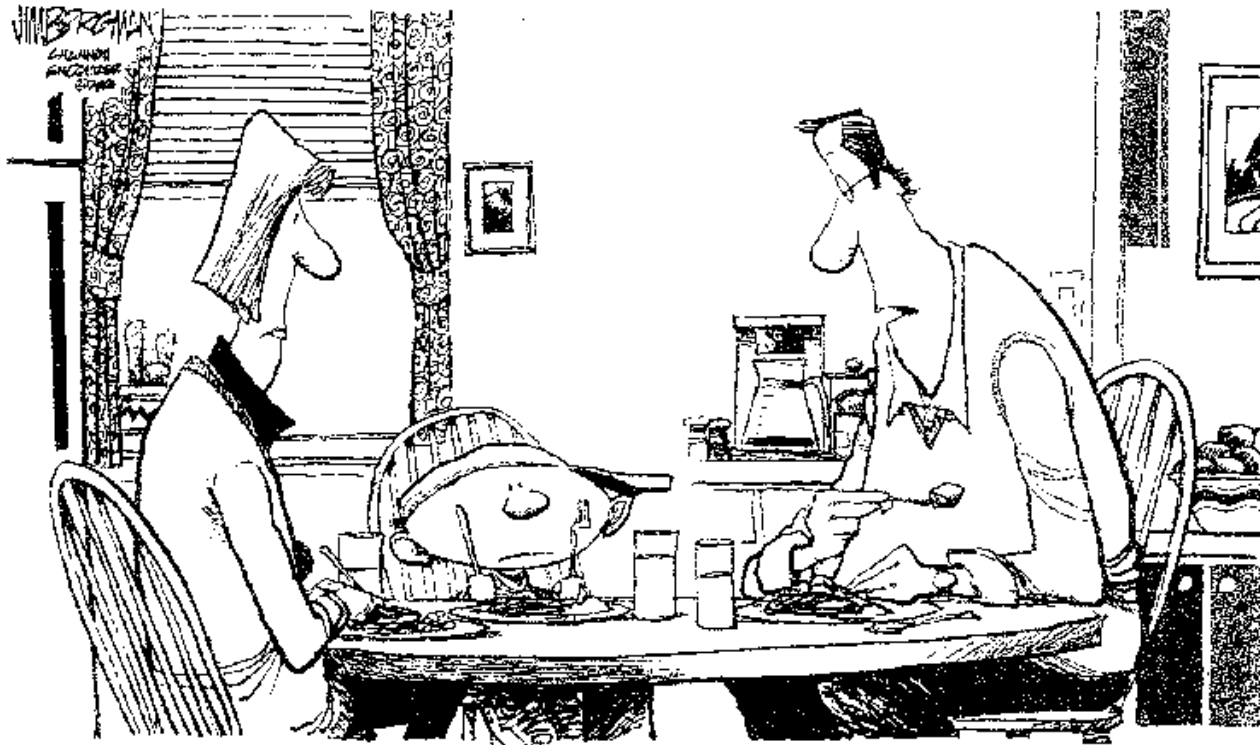
# The Social and Emotional Lives of Gifted Kids

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# The Modern Family



"WELL, YES, WE COULD READ YOUR BLOG... OR YOU COULD JUST  
TELL US ABOUT YOUR SCHOOL DAY."

# Myths of Being Gifted

## The Gifted . . .

- are more prone to emotional disturbances
- have everything going their way
- can succeed without help
- should be valued mostly for their brain power
- are more stable and mature
- should assume responsibility for others
- enjoy being examples to other children
- have abilities that are always valued by their families
- excel or exceed the norms in all areas of development
- need to be disciplined more than others
- will always reveal their giftedness
- are high achievers with high motivation to excel in school

# Gifted Student Disclaimer

- Gifted students are the most heterogeneous group to study because they can vary the most on the most variables

# Gifted Characteristics

## Intellectual

## Personality

Insightfulness

Intensity

Sensitivity/Empathy

Need to Understand

Non Conformity

Perfectionism

Perseverance

Acute Self-Awareness

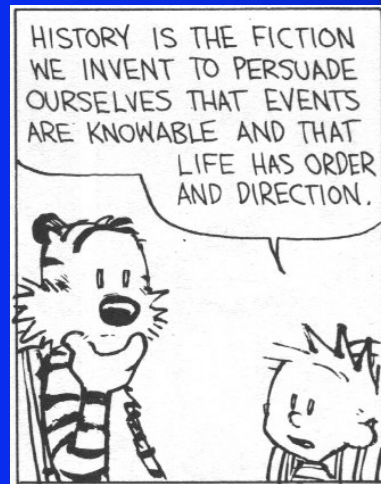
Need for Mental Stimulation

Excellent Sense of Humor

Need for Precision/Logic

Questioning Rules/Authority

B. Clark



Capacity for reflection

Passion for Learning

Early Moral Concern

Complex Thought Processes

Exceptional Reasoning Ability

Divergent Thinking/Creativity

Analytical Thinking

Facility with Abstraction

Intellectual Curiosity

Rapid Learning Rate

Vivid Imagination



# Endogenous Characteristics

- Originate from characteristics of the individual
- Examples in Gifted Students:
  - Overexcitabilities
  - Asynchronous Development
  - Perfectionism
  - Excessive Self-Criticism
  - Multipotentiality

# Exogenous Characteristics

- Emerge as byproducts of the interaction of characteristics of the child with the environment
- Example in Gifted Students:
  - Desire for academic engagement within a school environment not accepting of students who are very serious about learning

# Issues in Development

- Gifted students are children first
- Many psychological and social needs are the same for gifted and nongifted students
- Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs
- Psychosocial Development – Erikson
- Making Friends
- Dating

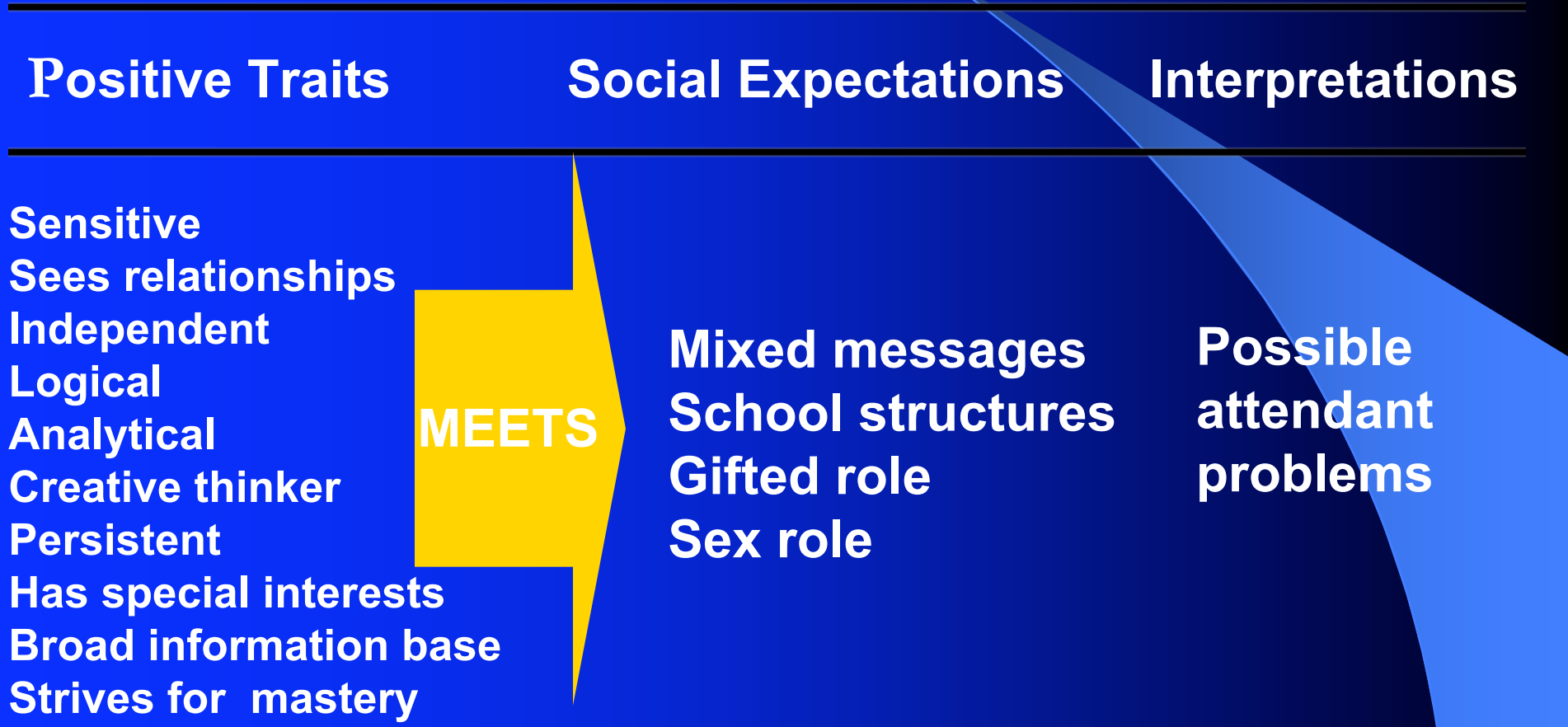


# Power of Social Context

Our children are taught to don masks before they recognize their own faces. They are made to put their tender, pliable forms into prefabricated shells - cultural roles prescribed for age, sex, and class. All too soon the open faces and fluid selves are disfigured as were the bound feet of the women of Manchu China. They are crushed to meet social expectancy. Those who fail to escape the constraints of masks and sheaths can only look ahead, not up or down, right or left.

Elizabeth Drews, 1972

# Traits Meet Social Expectations and are Interpreted as Possible Problems



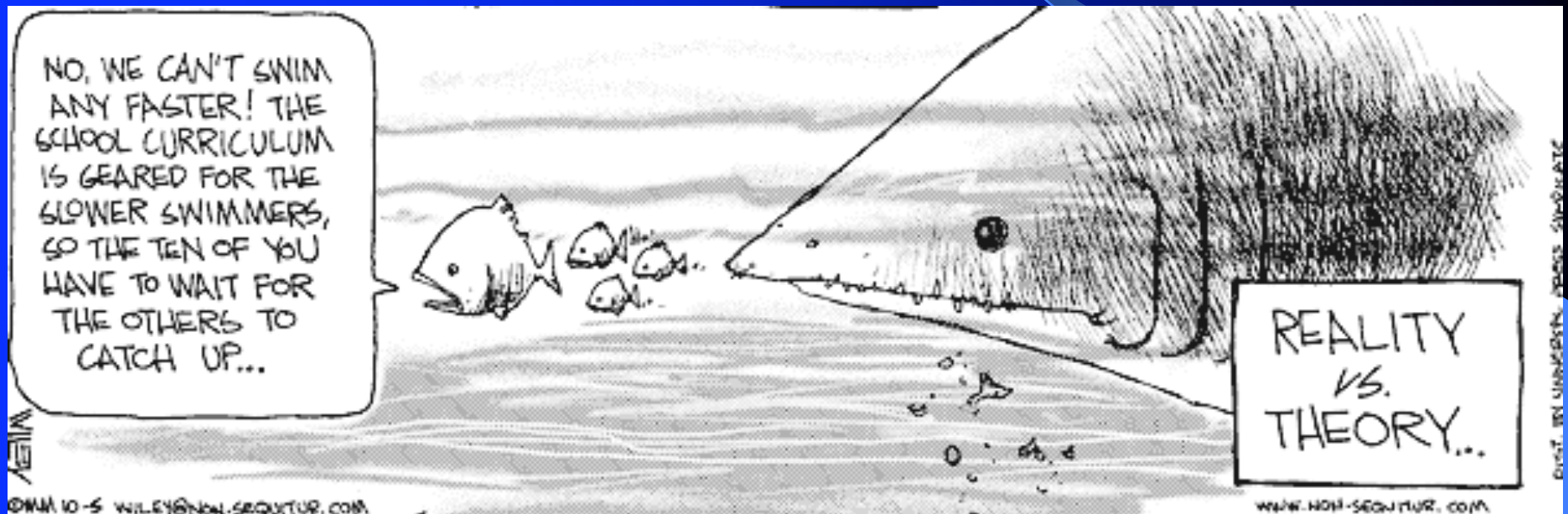
from *Schooling the Gifted* (p. 161), by L.J. Coleman  
1985, Menlo Park, CA: Addison-Wesley

# The Stigma of Giftedness

There is evidence to show that the gifted are influenced by their peers', parents' and teachers' feelings about their abilities. If they are seen as mental freaks, unhealthy personalities, or eccentric simply because they are brainy or creative, many of them will avoid the stigma through conformity. Some would rather underachieve and be popular than achieve honor status and receive ostracism.

Tannenbaum

# Gifted Students in Schools



# Is Being Gifted a Social Handicap?

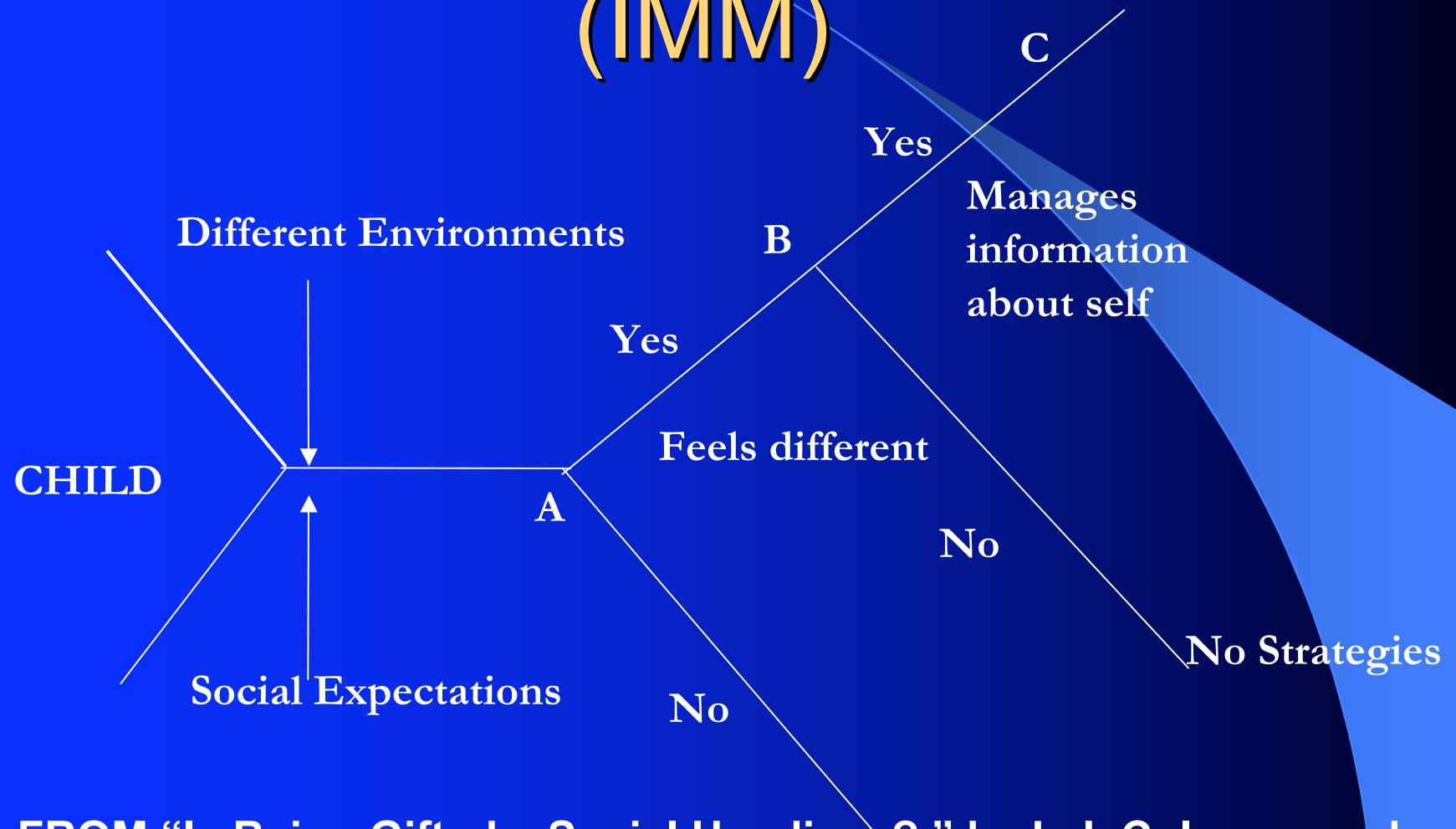
- Schools are largely social enterprises
- Stigma of Giftedness Paradigm
  - Gifted students want to have normal social interactions
  - They learn when others discover their giftedness, they will be treated differently
  - They learn they can manage information about themselves that will enable them to maintain a greater amount of social latitude

# Stigma of Gifted Students



"Mr. Wickers called me 'gifted' in front of the whole class. I'm ruined."

# Information Management Model (IMM)



FROM "Is Being Gifted a Social Handicap?," by L.J. Coleman and T. Cross, 1998, *Journal for the Education of the Gifted*, 11, p.44

# Coping Strategies

## Continuum of Visibility

HIGH VISIBILITY

INVISIBILITY

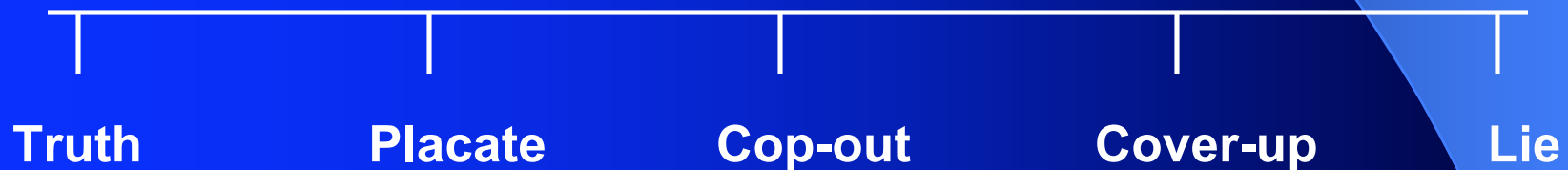
DISIDENTIFYING



FROM "Is Being Gifted a Social Handicap?," by L.J. Coleman and  
T. Cross, 1998, *Journal for the Education of the Gifted*, 11, p.44



# Continuum of Verbal Responses to Threatening Scenarios



**FROM "The Social Cognition of Gifted Adolescents in Schools: Managing the Stigma of Giftedness," by T. Cross, L Coleman, and M. Terhaar-Yonkers, 1991, *Journal for the Education of the Gifted*, 15, p.52**

# Additional Social Coping Behaviors

- Sitting Quietly
- Underachieving

# “Biology Exam”

**Setting:** In the cafeteria line, several people from your class are discussing the biology exam.

**Tracy:** Man! Wasn't that test impossible? I must have spent 10 minutes trying to label that crazy diagram of the muscular system.

**Chris:** I blew the whole thing, even though I studied really hard.

**Marti:** I probably failed it too.

Marti says to Jon, “I bet you breezed through it and didn't even open the book to study.” Actually, Jon spent several hours studying and thought it wasn't a difficult test. If you were Jon, what would you be most inclined to say?

# “Biology Exam” Responses

**A:** “Tests can be hard sometimes.” (cover-up)

**B:** “Yeah, that exam was a pain.” (lie)

**C:** “I probably studied as hard as you did, but the test wasn’t too hard.”(placate)

**D:** “I thought it was kind of easy.” (truth)

**E:** “How long did you study?” (cop-out)

# “Substitute Teacher”

**Setting:** In the hallway between classes

**Pat:** Wasn't that substitute teacher for Ms. Cross awful? I couldn't figure out what she was trying to say about the Western Expansion. She really lost me.

**Fran:** How about what Pete pulled on her, pretending he was sick and ready to throw up on her desk!

**Jo:** She even believed it. I wish I had thought of that one! I would rather have spent the period in the clinic instead of sitting in that class.

Everyone but Billy nodded their heads in agreement. Fran looked at Billy and asked, “Didn't you think that was hysterical?” Billy felt the substitute had started an interesting topic, but Pete had made it impossible for her to teach. Billy thought Pete had been unnecessarily rude. If you were Billy, which would you be MOST inclined to say?

# “Substitute Teacher” Responses

**A:** “Pete can be funny sometimes.” (cover-up)

**B:** “I thought the class got out of control; Pete went too far.” (truth)

**C:** “Some of it was funny, but Pete shouldn’t have gone that far.” (placate)

**D:** “Pete was funny; the substitute was asking for it.” (lie)

**E:** “I wonder when Ms. Cross is coming back.” (cop-out)

# Recommendations

- Treat gifted children as children first
- Establish communication among parents, teachers, and counselors
- Teach gifted children social skills, ways to manage stress, and to enjoy nonacademic activities
- Try to understand the social milieu of school

# Recommendations

- Learn about individual child's personality, social goals, and needs
- Find counseling for gifted students and their families
- Create opportunities for gifted children to interact
- Model adaptive behaviors