

4. a) Asynchrony
- b) Affect Regulation
- c) Multipotentiality

Asynchrony

Asynchrony occurs often in gifted children, and is more extreme for younger children and the highly gifted. It is common for developmental domains to be “out-of-synch”, or asynchronous. These include intellectual, social, emotional, moral/spiritual, and physical domains. It is possible to also experience within-domain asynchrony, especially in the intellectual domain. Gifted students may demonstrate uneven cognitive abilities. For example, they may be extremely advanced verbally, but not as advanced in the visual-spatial domain. They may exhibit extremely strong mathematical abilities, and only average abilities in history. They may possess be able to perform at extraordinary levels in the musical domain while at the same time, experiencing difficulty with speaking or writing.

Affect regulation involves managing emotional experience in a healthy way. Affect regulation in gifted children is often (but not always) more mature than expected for chronological age, but less mature than the child’s intellectual age. For example, gifted children often have fears like those of older nongifted children. They may worry about the dangers of nuclear warfare, political unrest, or world famine. Some gifted children cannot watch the news on television without crying over every local or even international tragedy. Some cannot enjoy life as a child because they are so worried about problems over which they have little or no control. Although they can comprehend these dangers on an intellectual level, they do not have the emotional maturity and control to set their fears aside and go on with their daily lives. Adults often expect gifted children to behave in all ways like older children and are confused and frustrated when the children act in an unexpectedly “immature” way.

The differing rates of development in the child’s physical, social/emotional, and cognitive growth are often manifested in a lack of fit between the school curriculum and the child’s needs. This may be demonstrated by a lack of conformity to cultural expectations based upon the chronological age of the child, problems relating to age peers, and preference for older companions.