

## **Characteristics of Gifted Students with Disabilities**

The following characteristics may be among those observed in twice-exceptional students, particularly those with specific learning disabilities. (Higgins, Baldwin & Pereles, 2000; Weinfeld, Barnes-Robinson, Jeweler & Shevitz, 2006)

- Struggle with basic skills due to cognitive processing difficulties; need to learn compensatory strategies in order to master basic skills.
- Show high verbal ability but extreme difficulty in written language area; may use language in inappropriate ways and at inappropriate times.
- Experience reading problems due to cognitive processing deficits.
- Demonstrate strong observation skills but have difficulty with memory skills.
- Excels in solving real world problems; have outstanding critical thinking and decision-making skills; often independently develop compensatory skills.
- Show attention deficit problems but may concentrate for long periods in areas of interest
- Have strong questioning attitudes; may appear disrespectful when questioning information, facts, etc presented by the teacher.
- Display unusual imagination; frequently generate original and at times rather “bizarre” ideas; extremely divergent in thought; may appear to daydream when generating ideas.
- May be unwilling to take risks with regard to academics; take risks in non-school areas without consideration of consequences.
- Can use humor to divert attention from school failure; may use humor to make fun of peers or to avoid trouble.
- Appears immature since they may use anger, crying, withdrawal, etc to express feelings and to deal with difficulties.
- Require frequent teacher support and feedback in deficit areas; highly independent in other areas; can appear stubborn and inflexible.
- Sensitivity regarding disability area(s); highly critical of self and others including teachers; can express concern about the feelings of others even while engaging in antisocial behavior.
- May not be accepted by other children and may feel isolated. May be perceived as loners since they do not fit the typical model of either a gifted or learning disabled student; sometimes have difficulty being accepted by peers due to poor social skills.
- Exhibit leadership ability. Is often a leader among the more nontraditional students demonstrating strong “street-wise” behavior; or the disability may interfere with the student’s ability to exercise leadership skills.
- Show a wide range of interests but may be thwarted in pursuing them due to processing or learning problems.
- Very focused interests, for example, a passion about certain topics to the exclusion of others, often not related to school subjects.