



# Gifted Experience Through the Lens of Literature

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SENG Conference, 2017

# Using Literature and Film to Promote SEL

9:30 - 10:30

Item 1

- Social Emotional Learning

Item 2

- Bibliotherapy

Item 3

- Bibliotherapy and Gifted

Item 4

- Focusing on the Twice Exceptional Student

Item 5

- A Example for Practice

# SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL) COMPETENCIES

## SELF-AWARENESS

The ability to accurately recognize one's own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior. The ability to accurately assess one's strengths and limitations, with a well-grounded sense of confidence, optimism, and a "growth mindset."

- ⇒ IDENTIFYING EMOTIONS
- ⇒ ACCURATE SELF-PERCEPTION
- ⇒ RECOGNIZING STRENGTHS
- ⇒ SELF-CONFIDENCE
- ⇒ SELF-EFFICACY

## SELF-MANAGEMENT

The ability to successfully regulate one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in different situations — effectively managing stress, controlling impulses, and motivating oneself. The ability to set and work toward personal and academic goals.

- ⇒ IMPULSE CONTROL
- ⇒ STRESS MANAGEMENT
- ⇒ SELF-DISCIPLINE
- ⇒ SELF-MOTIVATION
- ⇒ GOAL SETTING
- ⇒ ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS

## SOCIAL AWARENESS

The ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds and cultures. The ability to understand social and ethical norms for behavior and to recognize family, school, and community resources and supports.

- ⇒ PERSPECTIVE-TAKING
- ⇒ EMPATHY
- ⇒ APPRECIATING DIVERSITY
- ⇒ RESPECT FOR OTHERS

## RELATIONSHIP SKILLS

The ability to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups. The ability to communicate clearly, listen well, cooperate with others, resist inappropriate social pressure, negotiate conflict constructively, and seek and offer help when needed.

- ⇒ COMMUNICATION
- ⇒ SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT
- ⇒ RELATIONSHIP BUILDING
- ⇒ TEAMWORK

## RESPONSIBLE DECISION-MAKING

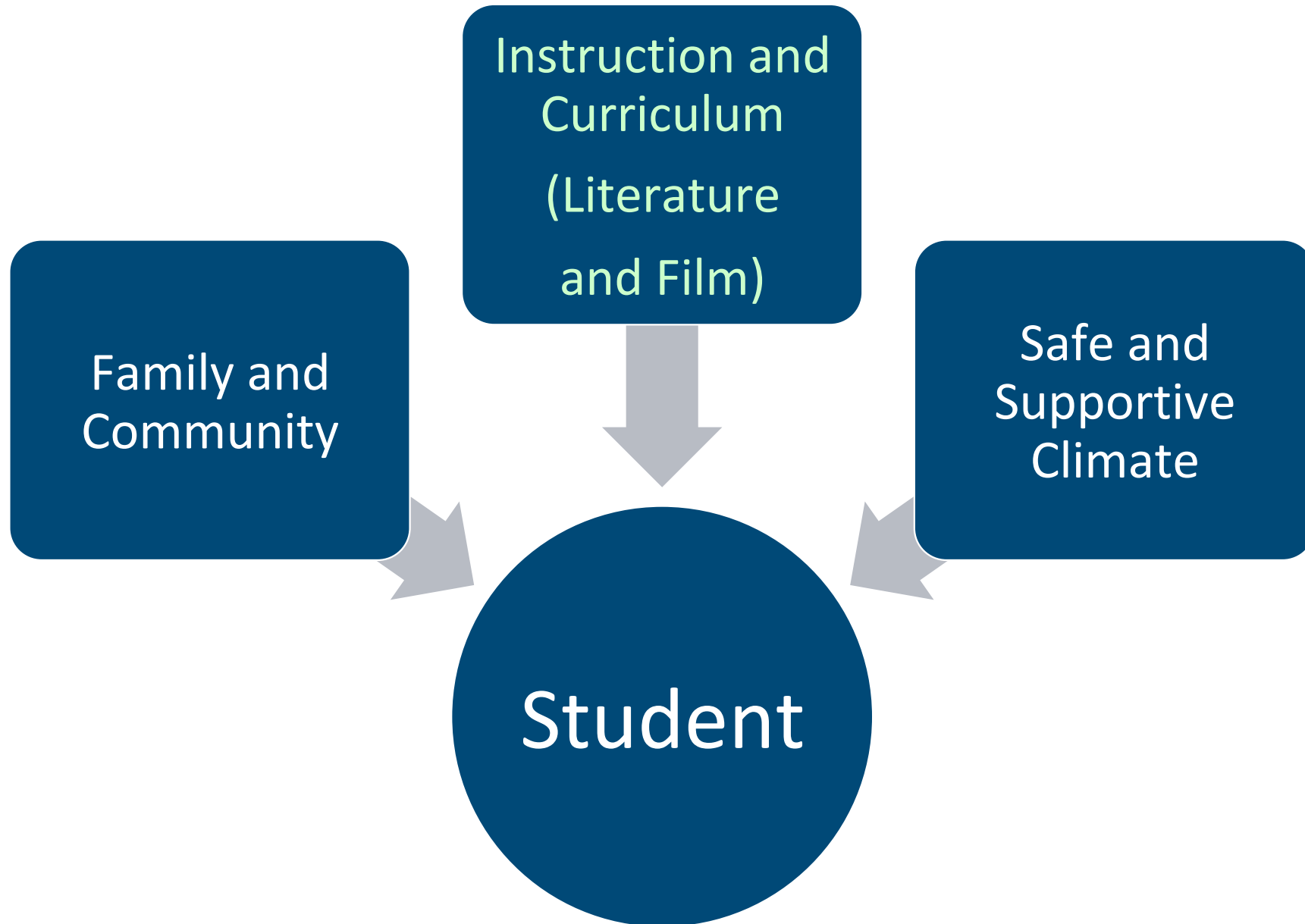
The ability to make constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on ethical standards, safety concerns, and social norms. The realistic evaluation of consequences of various actions, and a consideration of the well-being of oneself and others.

- ⇒ IDENTIFYING PROBLEMS
- ⇒ ANALYZING SITUATIONS
- ⇒ SOLVING PROBLEMS
- ⇒ EVALUATING
- ⇒ REFLECTING
- ⇒ ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITY



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# Student Learning Experience



# My Project Northstar Assignment

- “To create an extensive bibliography, targeted resource guides, and supporting materials for disadvantaged gifted and highly able learners living in rural areas, with a specific focus on American Indian populations.”

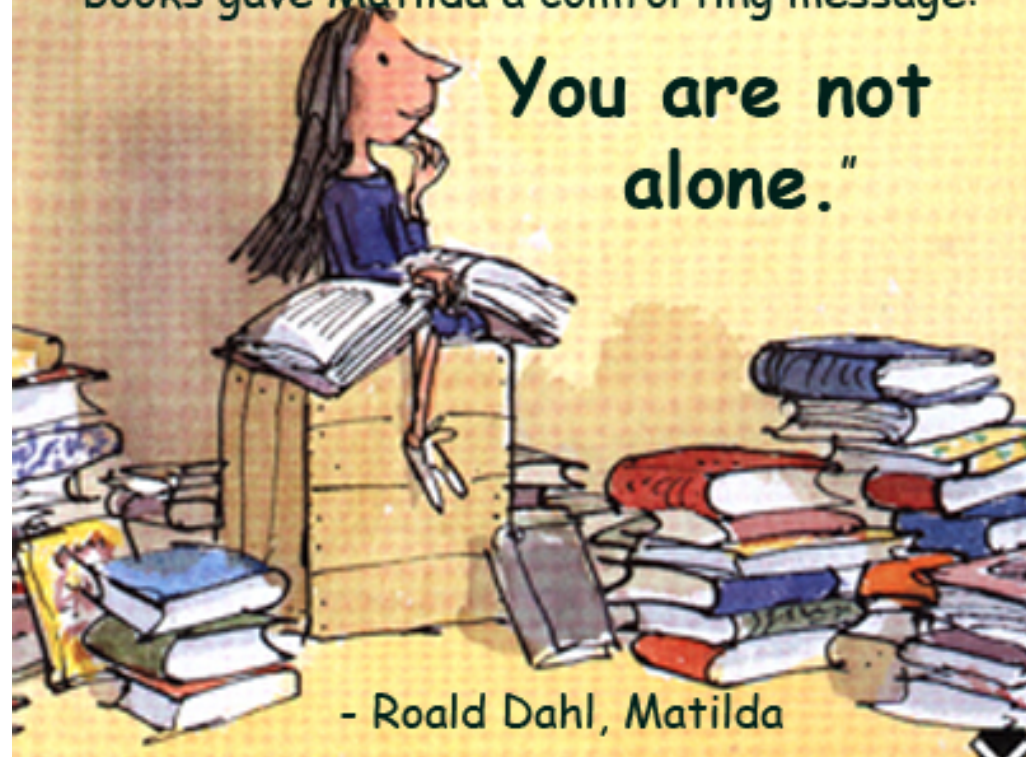
Specifically:

- A “Quick Reference Guide”
- Annotated bibliography
- “*Reflection Guides*”
- Compilation of ancillary resources (links, study guides, templates, discussion prompts)

# The premise of my work and this presentation:

"So Matilda's strong young mind continued to grow, nurtured by the voices of all of those authors who had sent their books out into the world like ships on the sea. These books gave Matilda a comforting message:

**You are not alone."**



- Roald Dahl, Matilda

# DEFINING THE CONCEPT

- "Bibliotherapy is the process of using books to help children think about, understand, and work through social and emotional concerns."

from [Positive Child Guidance](#) by Darla Ferris Miller

# Making Connections



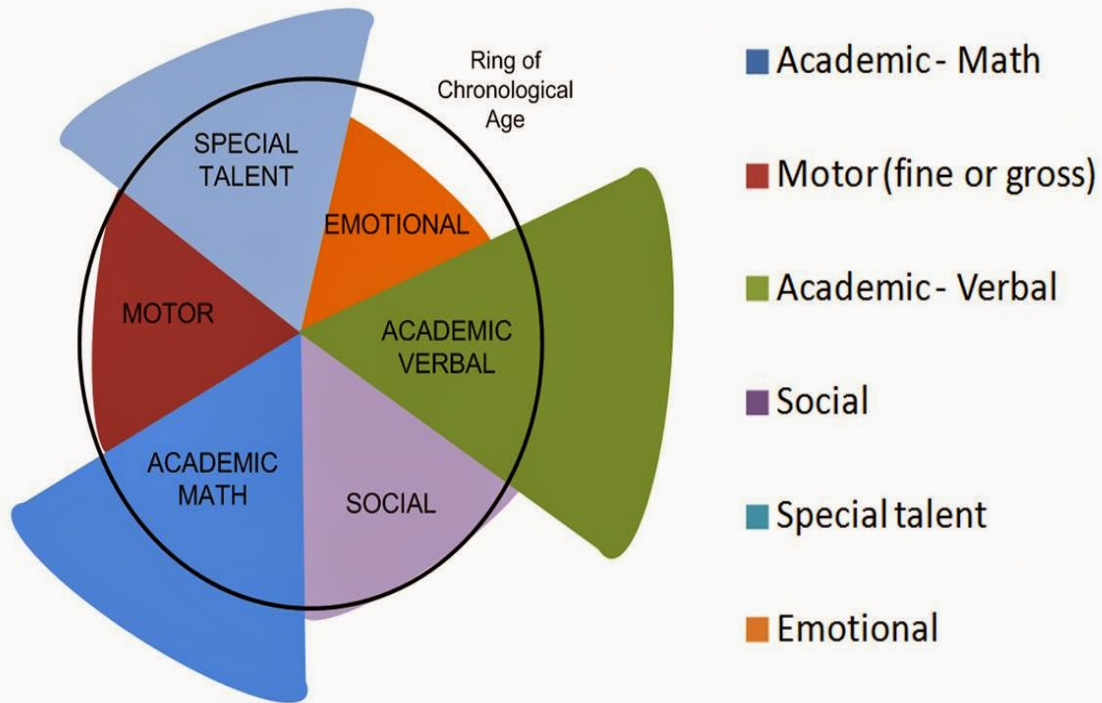


\*"Giftedness is **asynchronous development** in which advanced cognitive abilities and heightened intensity combine to create inner experiences and awareness that are qualitatively different from the norm. This asynchrony increases with higher intellectual capacity. The uniqueness of the gifted renders them particularly vulnerable and requires modifications in parenting, teaching and counseling in order for them to develop optimally."

\*Columbus Group, 1991

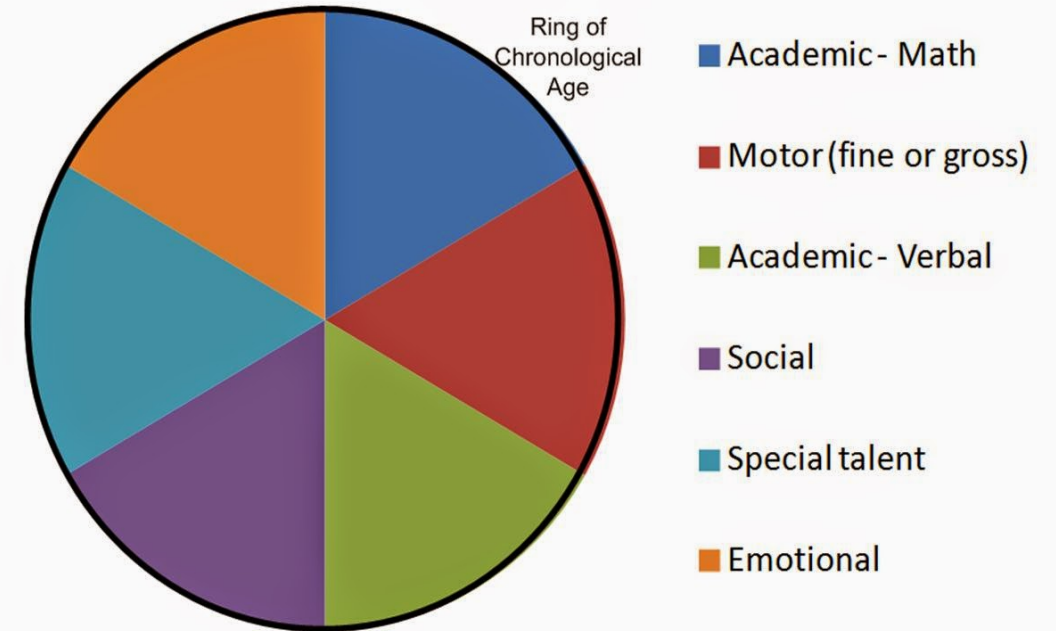
# Asynchronous Development

Areas of Development



# Typical Development

Areas of Development



# Another selection filter: *When Gifted Kids Don't Have All The Answers*

Delisle & Galbraith

No one explains what being gifted is about – it's kept a big secret

School is too easy and too boring

Parents, teachers, and friends expect us to be perfect all the time

Kids often tease us about being smart

We worry about world problems and feel helpless to do anything about them

We feel overwhelmed by the things we can do in life

Friends who really understand us are few and far between

We feel different and alienated

# Asynchronous Development

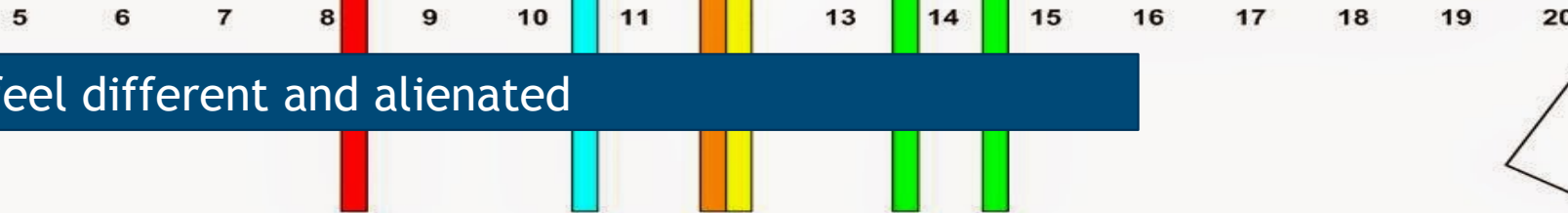
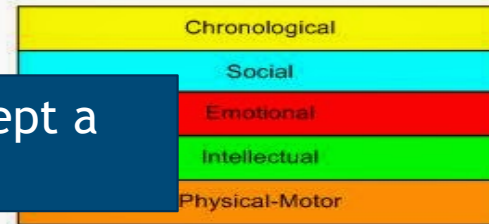
Is a discrepancy between cognitive, emotional, social and physical development.

Typical 12 year old:

No one explains what being gifted is about - it's kept a big secret

Friends who really understand us are few and far between

We feel different and alienated



If Gifted = Asynchronous Development then  $2e = \text{Asynchrony Squared}$

Atypical 12 year old = Asynchronous Gifted Child

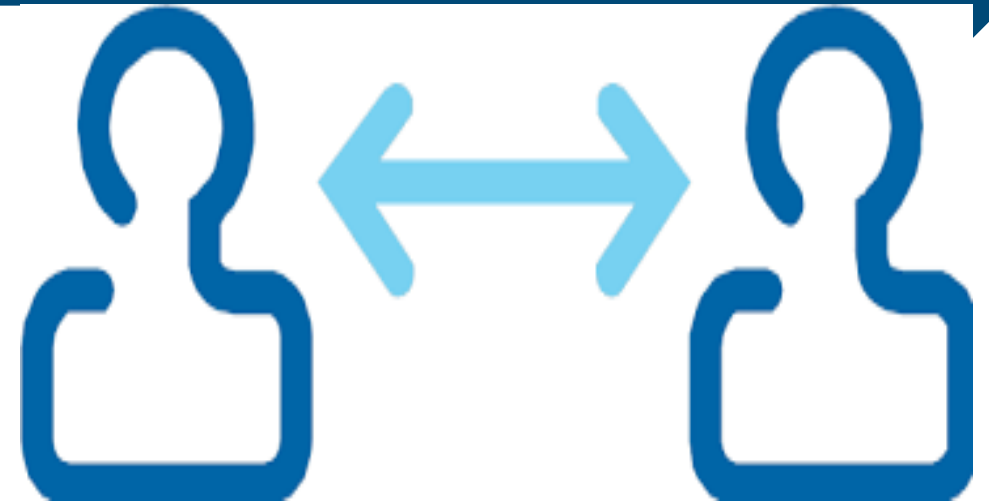
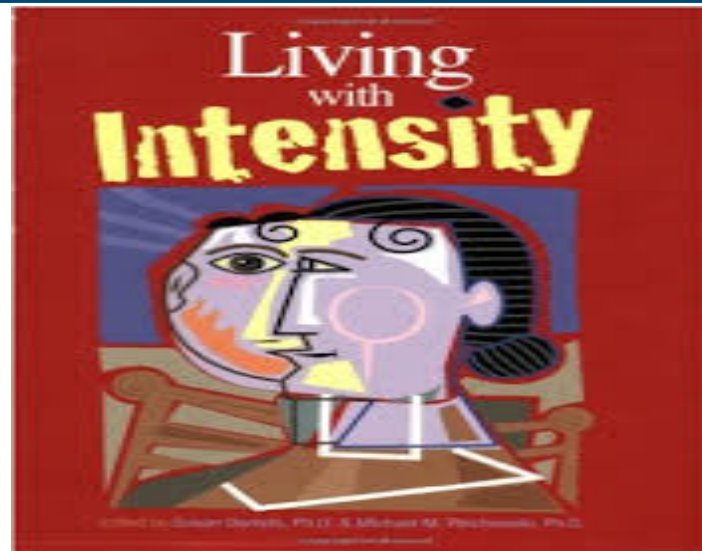
Example: Researching Greek Mythology and fighting over the front seat.

# The Identification Process

Gifted protagonist(s) with **realistic** settings, conflicts, challenges . .

**Relatable** depictions of giftedness

Identification!



# An example

**Themes:** Loss, perseverance, family, recovery, belonging, growth, grit,

Willow Chance is an adopted, orphaned polymath who is accused of cheating (by the middle school principal) because she achieved the highest test score on a state standardized test, and yet her teachers report “no evidence” of high aptitude. She is sent to the guidance counselor whose job is to discredit her. The counselor, Dell Duke, starts with word association.

**Author:** Sloan, H. G

**Title:** Counting by 7's

2013, Puffin

Pp. 384

ISBN13: 9780142422861

Lexile: 770



“Willow, do you know why you’re here?”

The administrator didn’t blink as she stared straight at me.

“You cheated”

I found myself answering:

“I didn’t cheat at anything”

“No one in the state got a perfect score.

I said,” Really?”

I had very little experience with authority. So I didn’t defend myself.

I just clammed up.

\* **The aftermath of Willow’s perfect standardized test score**

# Dell's Interview with Willow

◆ Dell: chocolate

◆ Dell: piano

◆ Dell: space

◆ Dell: dark

◆ Dell: big

◆ Dell: car

• Willow: antioxidant

• Willow: concerto

• Willow: time

• Willow: matter

• Willow: matter

• Willow: tography



# Cognitive “versus” affective outcomes

## William and Mary ELA

- To develop analytical and interpretive skills in literature
- To develop persuasive writing skills
- To develop linguistic competency
- To develop listening/oral communication skills
- To develop reasoning skills in language arts
- To understand the concept development

## Response Guides

- Promote self-understanding
- Develop understanding of the “other”
- Multiple perspectives
- Ethical considerations
- Challenges associated with asynchronous development, over-excitabilities and dual exceptionalities
- Self-advocacy

As the novel opens, Willow Chance tells readers, “I do not like to exclude people (I’m the one who is always excluded, so I know how *that* feels).”

Share a time when you felt excluded or witnessed someone being excluded due to an aspect of giftedness

Investigate the properties of Willow Trees to determine the significance of Willow’s name.

## Chapters 1- 9

Write an advice letter/text/tweet/email to one of the characters offering advice to one of the characters who have written you for help with one of the challenges they are facing

When it is discovered that Willow is “highly gifted.” She declares that “It’s possible that all labels are curses. Unless they are on cleaning products.”

Share a time when you were “labeled,” or discuss the pros and cons of labeling (identifying) gifted student

Willow's parents help serve as a navigator to her by understanding her uniqueness and helping her feel confident to explore the world

Who has helped you understand your uniqueness, or whom have you helped?

Provide an example of "reflexive incredulity" such as that evidenced on Pp. 36 & 37

## Remaining Chapters

"While my teachers labored over the rigors of their subject, I sat in the back, pretty much bored out of my mind."

"Willow, how does this book make *you* feel"?  
"It make me feel really bad. The moon can't hear someone say goodnight, it's 235,000 miles away. And bunnies don't live in houses. Also, I don't find the artwork very interesting."

When have you witnessed or experienced this? What did you do?

What should Willow's teacher do next?

# A “generic” reflection guide

## Reflection and Discussion Guide

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<b>Focus</b>	<b>Questions about your reading</b>		<b>Questions about your discussion</b>
First reaction	What was your first reaction? Describe it briefly.	Literary associations	Can you make a connection with another work of art (poem, play, song film, story)? If so, explain.
Feelings	What feelings or emotions did you experience?	Other readings	Did your understanding differ from your discussion partner(s). How were they similar?
Visual images	What images came to mind as you were reading?	Evolution of your reading	Did your understanding or feelings about the reading change as you talked? If so, how?
Associations	What memories of people, places, events came to mind?	Other readers	What did you observe in others as you talked?
Judgments of importance	What do you think is the most important word or phrase in the text? Why do you think so?	Evaluations	If you were to recommend this text to someone, who would you want to read this, and how might it benefit them?
Characters I	Whom did you most admire, and why?	Questions	Is there anything else you would like to discover about this author, theme, setting or topic? If so, how might you investigate?
Characters II	With whom did you most identify, and why?		
Identification of problems	Was there anything you had trouble understanding?		
Author	Why do you think the author wrote this?		

Adapted from Probst, R. (1988). **Dialogue with a Text**. *The English Journal*, Vol. 77, No. 1. (Jan.1988). Pp. 32-38.

# Special populations

2E

Rural

Impoverished

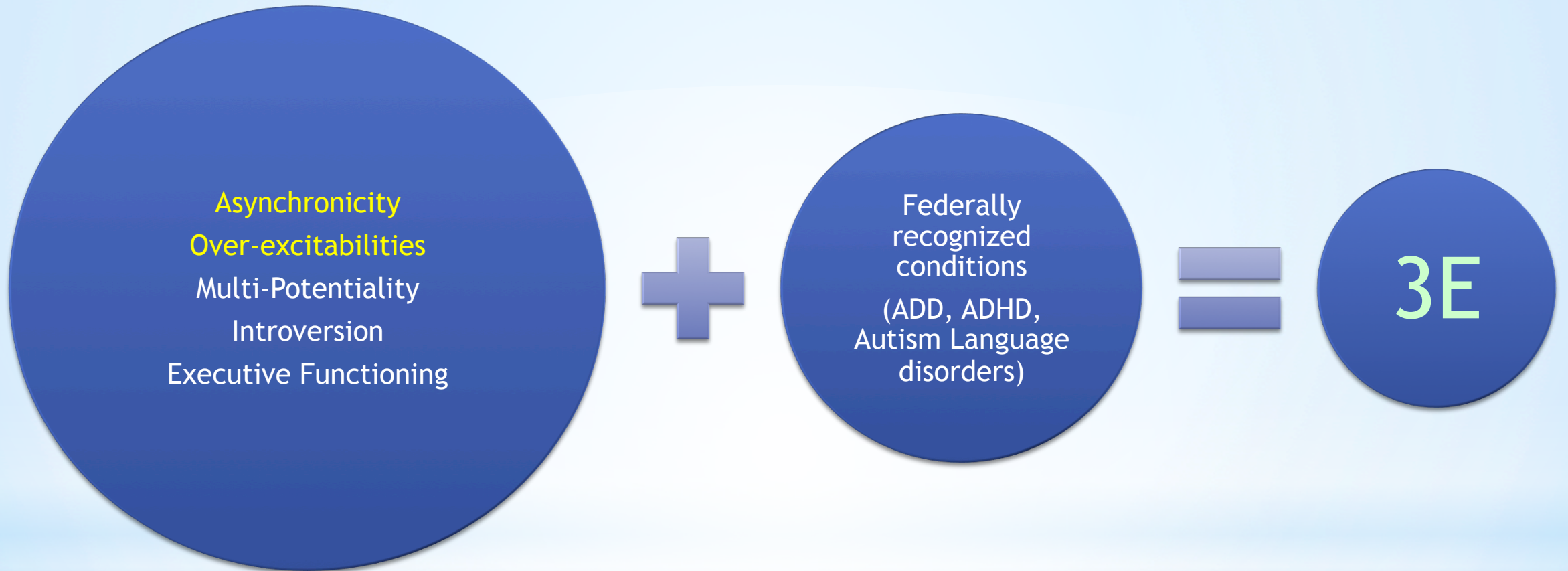
Minority

# The Twice-Exceptional in Fiction

\*Twice-exception learners have the characteristics of gifted students and students with disabilities. They have the potential for exceptional performance in one or more areas of expression, which includes general areas such as creativity and leadership or specific areas such as math, science, and music. These students have an accompanying disability in one or more of categories defined by IDEA.

## \* A proposed definition

From *Twice-Exceptional Gifted Students* by Beverly Trail, © 2011 by Prufrock Press Inc. (<http://www.prufrock.com>)



**\* Argument for “3E” status**



## Twice exceptional

(multiple) intensities, (profound) intelligence, advanced vocabulary.

“Freak the Mighty” (which has a sequel, “Max the Mighty” as well as a movie entitled “Mighty”) refers to *two* protagonists, Max, who is being raised by his grandparents and is considered “developmentally delayed,” and Kevin, who is brilliant. Max narrates this story, explaining how Kevin (the “freak”) and he met, and their ensuing adventures. To say much more would spoil the story, except to say it takes both Max and Kevin to become “Freak the Mighty.”



**Author:** Philbrick, R.

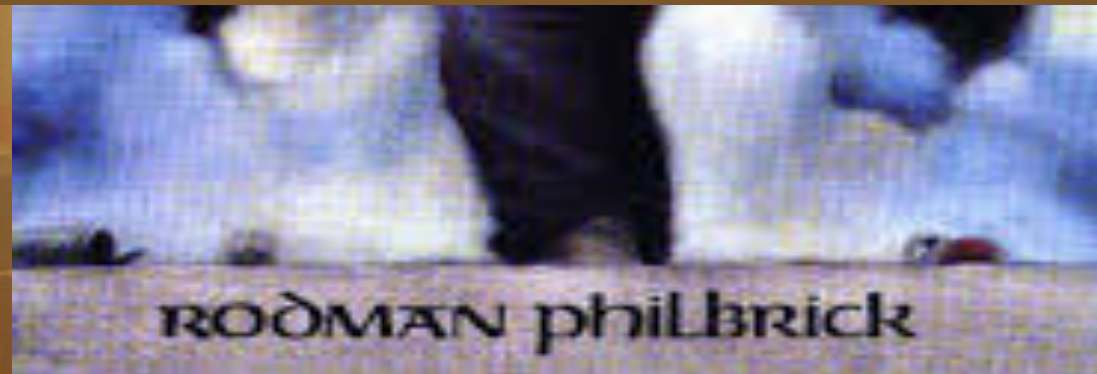
**Title:** Freak the Mighty

2001, 2007 Scholastic

Pp. 193

ISBN13: 9780746087251

Lexile: 1000



2E

**Loneliness, alienation,  
perseverance, courage**

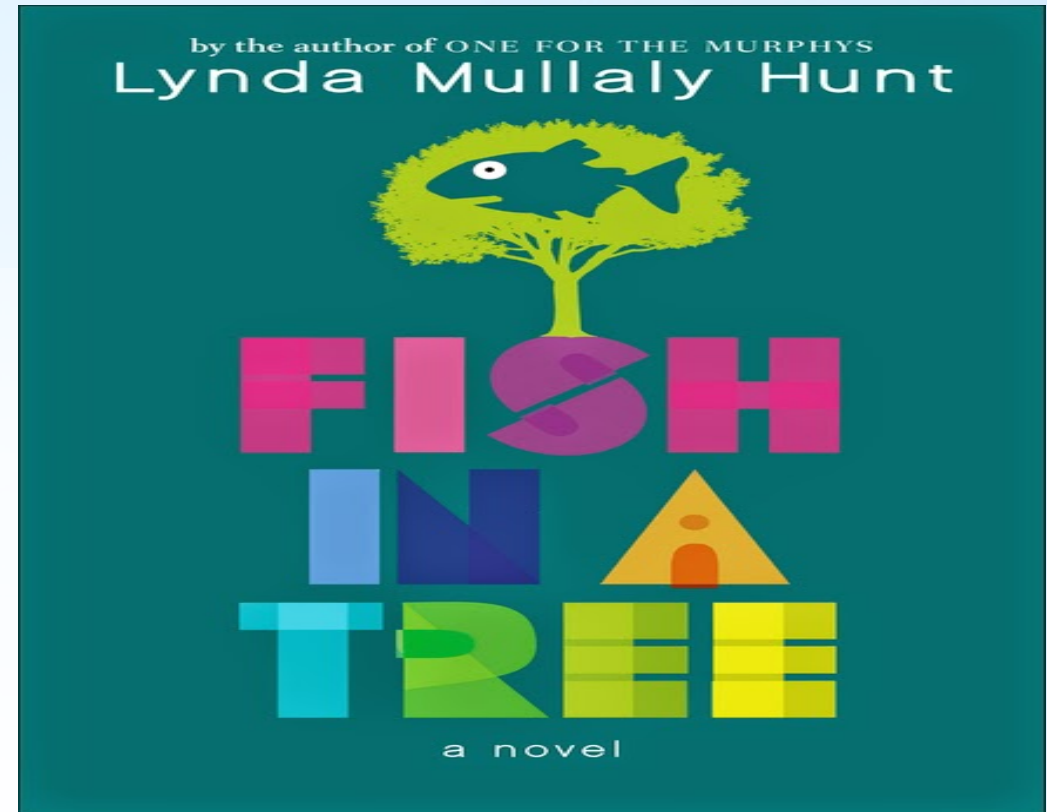
Mentoring, peer resentment, intelligence, language facility, academic excellence, academic competition, several intensities

Melody Brooks is eleven-years-old and does not speak, due to cerebral palsy, a condition that allows several people, including a doctor, to assume she is “severely brain-damaged and profoundly retarded.” However, due to loving parents, a wonderful neighbor, her dog Butter Scotch and eventually assistive technology, Melody’s intelligence, humor, courage and personality emerge, as she enters an academic competition with her “classmates.” The many complications of being twice-exceptional are beautifully rendered by the author, Sharon Draper.



**Author:** Draper, S. M.  
**Title:** Out of My Mind  
2010, Simon and Schuster  
Pp. 224  
ISBN13: 9781416980452  
Lexile: 700

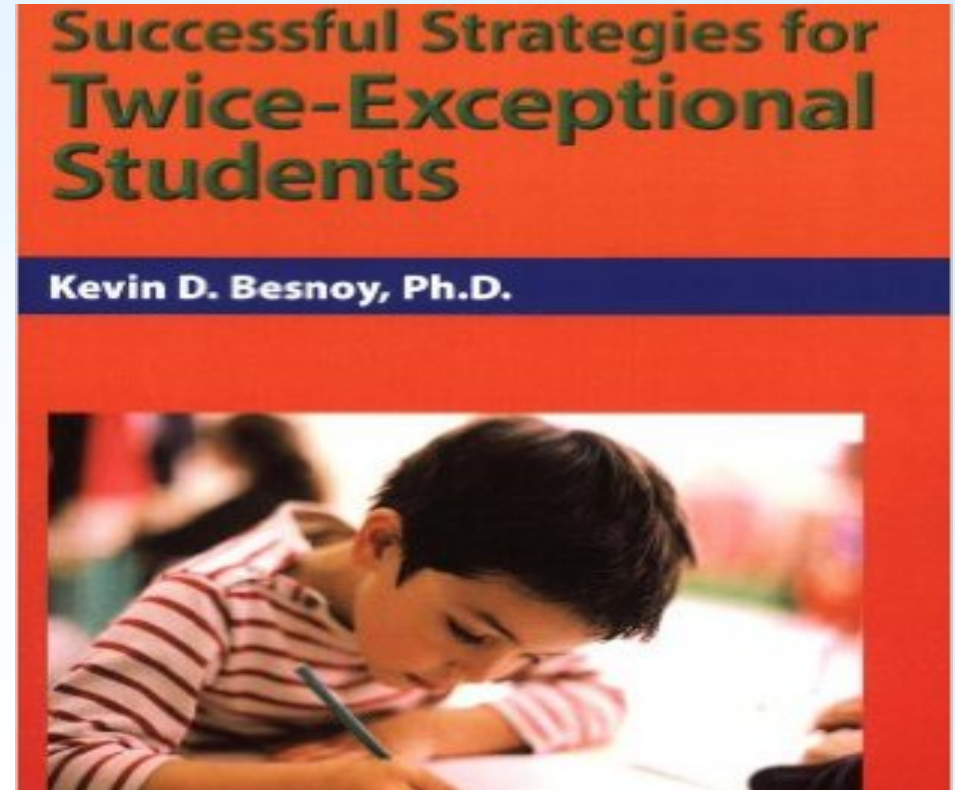
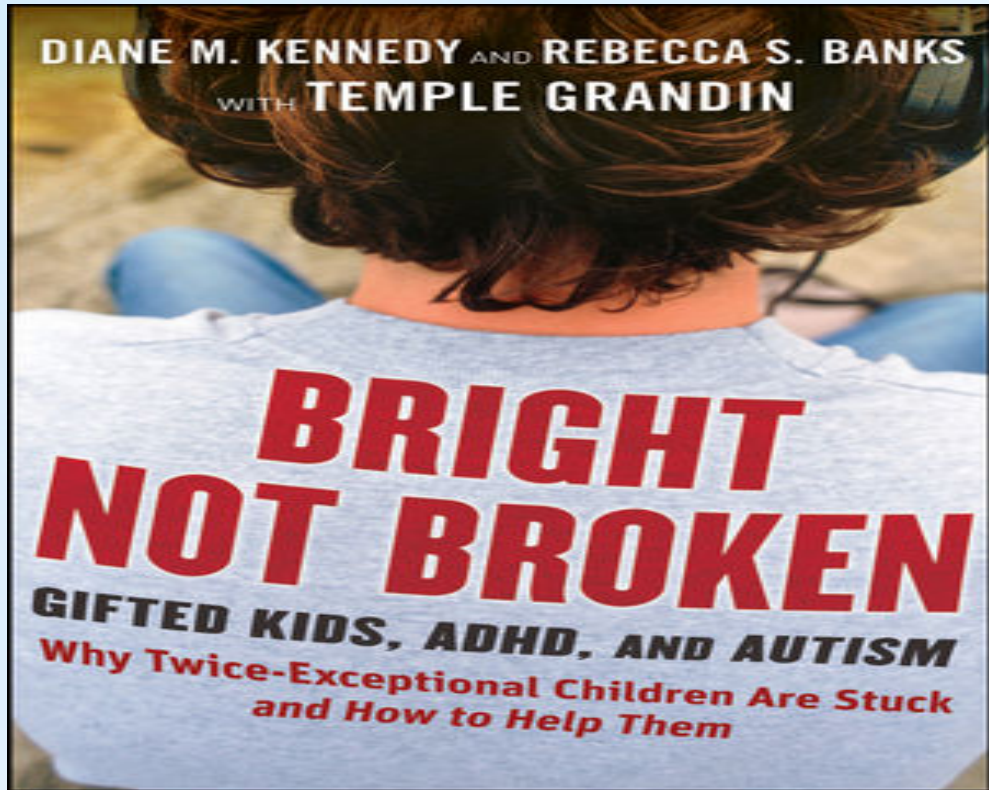
- \* Reading about twice-exceptional characters in fiction offers 2E students an indirect, non-threatening means of experiencing, discussing and perhaps resolving issues that confront them in real life.



## \* Using literature

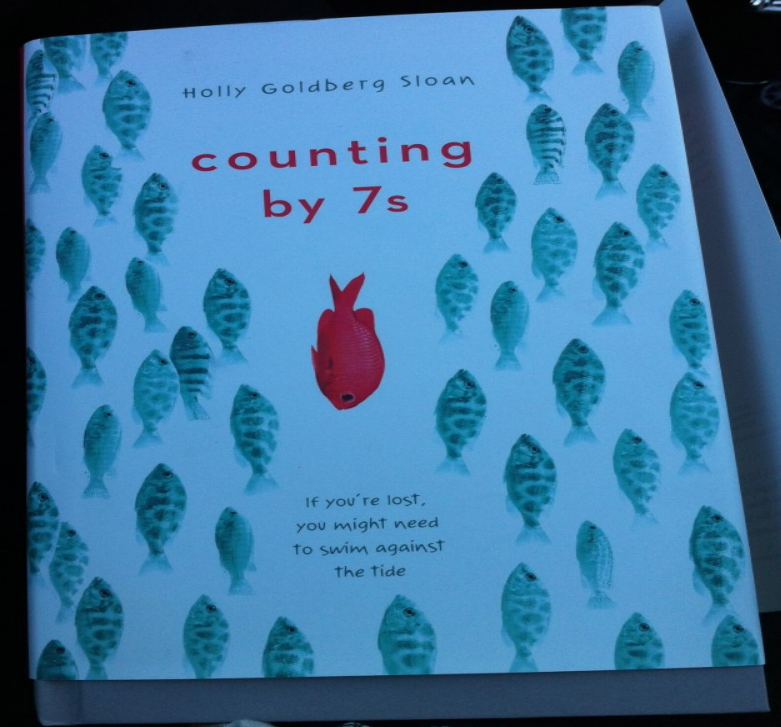
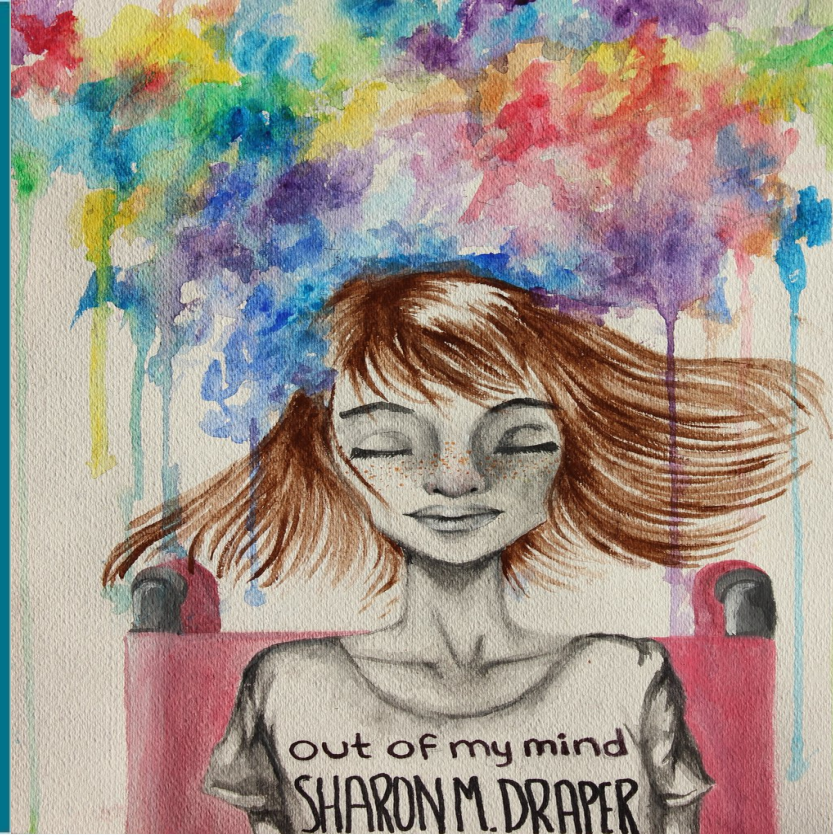
“. . . If you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will spend its whole life feeling stupid.”

A. Einstein



\* Non-fiction can provide the how

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER  
Lynda Mullaly Hunt



\* Fiction can provide the why

## \*Helping 2E students through literature

Criteria:

- Authentic portrayal of the 2E student(s) to help promote identification
- Realistic, contemporary setting
- Substantive literature to promote reflection, critical and creative thinking and robust discussion

I'm asking you to  
pay attention  
and view it all as  
being Alive.  
With a capital A.

#CountingBy7s



## Study Guide

- \* Willow's parents help serve as a navigator to her by understanding her uniqueness and helping her feel confident to explore the world; in your opinion, will their absence make it more difficult for her to deal with others?
- \* After the death of her parents, Willow is placed in a type of child protective services program run by the state. Ask students to learn more about the local and state institutions in your area. What are the primary functions of such programs?

\* Correlates to Common Core Standard Reading Literature: Key Ideas and Details

C.C.S.S.E.L.A. Literacy. R. L. 4.1, 4.2, 4.3; R. L. 5.1, 5.2, 5.4; R.L. 6.1, 6.2; R.L.7.1, 7.2

From PenguinClassroom.com

## Reflection Guide

- \* Willow is accused of cheating due to her perfect test score. Have any of your accomplishments been questioned? If so, what were the circumstances, and how did you react to the accusation?
- \* Willow describes her first few days in school this way, "While my teachers labored over the rigors of their chosen subject, I sat in the back, pretty much bored out of my mind. I knew the stuff, so instead I studied other students."
- \* How often are you bored in school, and what do you do to pass the time? Have you ever told your teachers or family that school is boring, and if so, what was the result?

\* Important Distinction



# Reflection Guide for “A Time to Fly Free”

(T. L. S. 1985)

## \* Alone

What feeling or emotion did the text give you? Describe it briefly and explain why you think the text caused that reaction.

What memory does the text call to mind—of people, places, events, sights, smells, or even of something more ambiguous, perhaps feelings or attitudes?

What is the most important word or phrase in the text? Explain briefly why you think the word or phrase you've picked is the most important.

Does this text make you think of another text, song, TV show, or literary work? What is it and what connection is there between the two pieces?

## \* Together

- \* How did your reading of the text differ from that of your discussion partner(s)? In what ways were they similar?
- \* How did your understanding of the text or your feelings about it change as you talked?
- \* What did you observe or learn about your discussion partner(s) as your discussion has progressed?



# Thank you!

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