

Boredom and the Gifted Child

Understanding and Solutions for Parents

Boredom: A very common concern

- My practice
- What is boredom
- Why it matters
- Boredom and the gifted
- Flow
- When your child says “I’m bored!”
- Interventions

What is Boredom?

- Fisher (1993) “An unpleasant, transient affective state in which the individual feels a pervasive lack of interest in and difficulty concentrating in the current activity.”
- Csikszentmihalyi (1970) “Boredom is the mismatch or lack of tension between personal competence and environmental challenge.”



Who Gets Bored (and who doesn't)

- Everyone!.....But, some more than others
- Individual Factors
- Situational Factors

Individual Factors

- High Mood Monitors vs. Mood Labelers (Mary Harris, 2000)
- Males vs. Females (Farmer & Sundberg, 1986)
- Age (Sundberg and Bisno, 1983)
- Extroverts vs. Introverts (Eysenck and Zuckerman, 1978) BUT.....

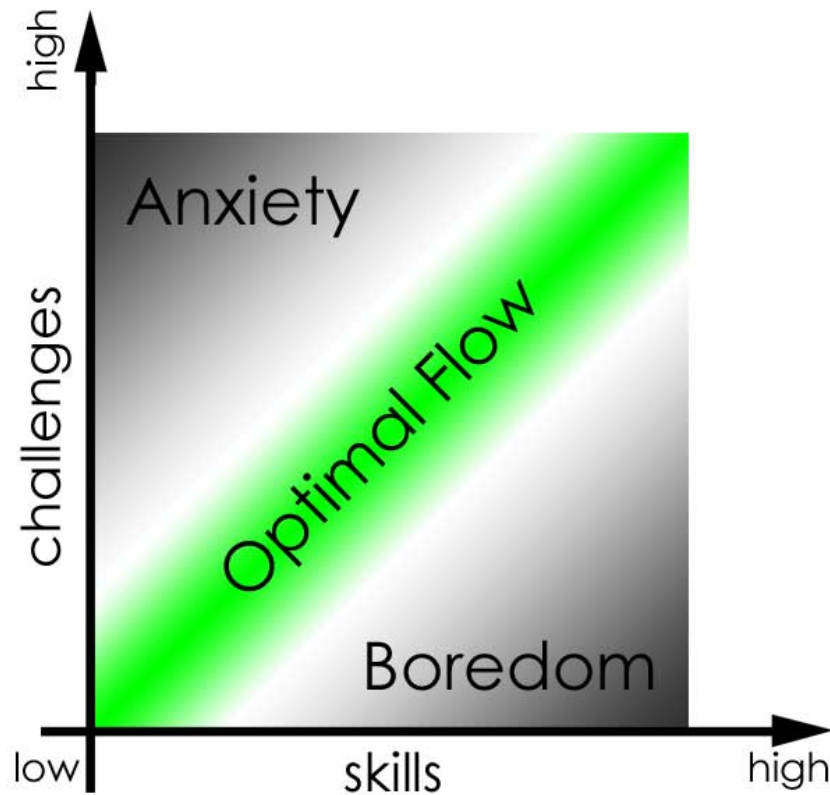
The Boredom Proneness Scale (Sundberg)

- Tests for a propensity for being bored

Situational Factors

- Task is too difficult
- Task is not difficult enough

Just Right: Csikszentmihalyi and Flow



The Cost of Boredom

- Gambling (Blaszczynski,)
- Drug problems
- Drug Relapse (Todman)
- Eating behaviors
- Skipping school
- Dropping out of school
- Behavioral acting out (Freeman, 1992)
- Poor school performance
- Subjective distress

Boredom and the Gifted

- The relationship between boredom and intelligence is not simple:
 - Positive Relationship (Drory, 1982)
 - Negative Relationship (Robinson, 1975)
 - Curvilinear Relationship (Fogelman, 1976)
 - No Relationship (Hill, 1975)

Boredom and the Gifted

- Too many variables for simple solutions

Characteristics of the Gifted and Boredom

- Multi-potentiality and Over-scheduling
- Rapid Learning and Heterogeneous Classrooms
- A comment on state vs. trait boredom in the gifted (Larson and Richards, 1991)

Your Child Says, “I’m Bored!”

- Play it cool.
- Make sure the time is right.
- Find out more. Be ready to listen.
- Empathy

Information Gathering

- Where are you bored?
- When are you bored?
- How do you feel when you're bored?
- How often are you bored?
- How do you deal with being bored?
- What is the opposite of being bored?
- When do you feel interested in school?

Additional Questions:

- Is the work too easy? Too hard?
- Does it seem irrelevant?
- Not an area of personal interest?
- If you could make this better, what would you do?

Interventions

- Change the Situation
- Change the Child

Change the Situation: Working within the Existing Framework

- Working with the teacher (Deslile)
- Increase the challenge
- Enrichment
- Curriculum Differentiation
- Unstructured time (at home)

Change the Situation: More Options

- Acceleration: See **A Nation Deceived: How Schools Hold Back America's Brightest Students**
(Nicholas Colangelo, Susan G. Assouline, Miraca U. M. Gross)
- Home Schooling
- Private Schools
- Ability Grouping (Tieso, 2003)

Change the Child

- Setting goals
- Teach mindfulness (Brown and Ryan, 2003)
- Engage the child's problem solving skills
- Involve the child in decisions regarding education when appropriate
- Encourage the child to generate their own stimulation (Sundberg)
- Increase perceived control and self-determination

When Boredom Needs Special Attention

- Underachievers vs. Non-producers
- Existential Ennui
- Learned Helplessness
- Attention Deficits (Vadanovich, Wallace, and Kass, 2003)
- Learning Disabilities

A Couple Caveats

- Don't get caught by our rushed society.
- Memorization of math facts.

An Encouraging Paradox

“If you don’t succumb to its negative effects, boredom is a great motivational force.”

-Vodanovich