

Gifted and Talented Students



⇒ **Who are they? Students may be identified as gifted if they excel beyond their age peers in one or more of the following areas: (See Appendix B)**

- ❖ ***General Intellectual*** ability characterized by a large capacity to learn and remember information
- ❖ ***Specific Academic*** aptitude to be strong a particular subject.
- ❖ ***Creative Thinking*** ability displayed in curiosity, ideas, opinions and sense of humor
- ❖ ***Leadership*** abilities reflected in self-confidence, sense of responsibility, social interaction and community involvement
- ❖ ***Musical*** abilities expressed in a passion for performance, composition and appreciation of music
- ❖ ***Artistic*** abilities in visual and performing arts.
- ❖ ***Kinesthetic*** abilities displayed in athletics and dance.

⇒ **There are six different types of gifted students:**

Type I	<i>The Successful Type</i>	Learns well, scores high, conforms, no behavior problems, 90% of students identified as “gifted”
Type II	<i>The Challenging Type</i>	Highly creative, appears to be stubborn, does not conform, questions rules
Type III	<i>The Underground Type</i>	Denies talents, often girls, resists challenges, insecure, frustrated
Type IV	<i>The Dropout Type</i>	Angry with adults and society, low self-esteem, feels rejected, inconsistent at school
Type V	<i>The Double-Labeled Type</i>	Has high potential and is learning disabled, underachiever, anxious about failure, stressed
Type VI	<i>The Autonomous Type</i>	Independent and self-directed, risk taker, positive self-image, in charge, expressive

Adapted from: Gifted and Talented Students- A Resource Guide for Teachers, (NB Department of Education, 2007).



⇒ Misconceptions about “giftedness”

❖ *Gifted Students are high achievers.*

It is true that some gifted students are high achievers but not all are. One of the biggest issues today in both gifted and regular education is underachievement. McCoach & Siegle (2003). Often the reasons are complex and have more to do with issues outside of school such as stress, instability, family situations and societal values. Nonetheless, the power of the school to turn this around can be very powerful.

❖ *All children/people are gifted.*

Although all students are unique, have a valuable contribution to make, have relative areas of strengths and deserve an education that allows them to reach their potential (whatever that may be), not all students are gifted (Coleman & Cross, 2005).

❖ *Gifted students will do fine with or without special programming.*

Some gifted students will do fine in spite of an unchallenging school experience. This is particularly true if their parents provide enriching activities outside of school. However, some turn off, never develop good work habits and motivation and for all intents and purposes their giftedness “dies”.

❖ *Gifted students come from advantaged homes.*

Some gifted students, and many of those who are identified as such, do come from advantaged homes but there are many gifted students from less advantaged backgrounds who do not stand out as gifted. The challenge is proper and comprehensive identification (Coleman & Cross, 2005).

❖ *Co-operative learning or other forms of group work are an effective way to meet the needs of gifted students.*

The advantages of co-operative learning are well documented and while it is important for all students to learn to work with others of differing abilities, heterogeneous, co-operative learning should be used sparingly and judiciously with gifted students. Often such experiences provide no intellectual challenge; the gifted student does a disproportionate, or sometimes no, work; and the total experience is negative (Robinson, 2003).

❖ *Gifted students have trouble getting along with peers.*

Generally speaking this is not the case (Pufal-Struzik, 1999). Often gifted students are leaders both in and out of school and throughout their lives. The exception may be those who are “profoundly gifted” and may have little in common with age mates in terms of interests (Tuman & Oden 1935; Grass, 1993). However, even with this population this is not always true.

⇒ **Characteristics of the gifted and talented student:**

Although there are many lists of characteristics of giftedness (Winebrenner, (2001) has developed a very “user friendly” short list of five:

- ❖ *Learns faster, and at an earlier age, than age peers.*
- ❖ *Remembers what has been learned.*
- ❖ *Is able to deal with concepts that are too complex and abstract for age peers.*
- ❖ *Has a passionate interest in one or more topics.*
- ❖ *Does not need to watch the teacher or to hear what is being said; can operate on multiple brain channels simultaneously and process more than one task at a time.*

⇒ **Identification of the gifted and talented student:**

There is no formula to identify gifted students. Ultimately teacher wisdom, knowledge, insight are even more important than the results of standardized testing. Some of the following sources of information should be used as part of the identification process:

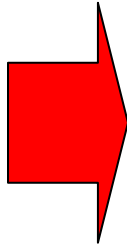
- ❖ *Results of standardized tests in the areas of cognitive ability, general achievement and creativity*
- ❖ *Teacher observations including anecdotal reports and informal assessments. Sometimes just a simple anecdote or one example of student writing, problem solving or artistic production is sufficient*
- ❖ *Various checklists and inventories*
- ❖ *Nominations by parents, peers and self*
- ❖ *Interviews of students and parents (may be important as many areas of giftedness are most evident outside of school).*

In addition, a high level of interest and task commitment in a particular area of learning should be given strong consideration. Some students have the ability, commitment and creativity to eventually become, not only consumers, but producers in the domains of knowledge, or the visual or performing arts. Without identification, and sometimes at a young age, this potential may never be realized (Renzulli, 1986).

What is the difference between "gifted" and "talented"?

Giftedness is the possession, and use of untrained and spontaneous expressed natural abilities, in at least one ability *domain*, to a degree that places an individual in at least the top 10% of age peers. (Gagne, 2003)

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- ⇒ Intellectual
- ⇒ Creative
- ⇒ Socio-affective
- ⇒ Sensorimotor

Talent designates the superior mastery of systematically developed abilities, skills or knowledge in at least one *field* of human activity to a degree that places an individual at least among the top 10% of age peers who are active in the field. (Gagne, 2003)

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- ⇒ Academics
- ⇒ Arts
- ⇒ Business
- ⇒ Leisure
- ⇒ Social Action
- ⇒ Sports
- ⇒ Technology