

The Many Faces of Gifted & Talented Students

Identification & Strategies for Gifted Education

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Alison brings experience from both an educational and psychological background. Having taught for seven years at Methodist Ladies' College, Melbourne and worked as a school psychologist at Kincoppal-Rose Bay, Sydney, she has first-hand experience in recognising and catering for the social, emotional, and academic needs of students. Alison established a private practice in Melbourne, in 2004, with a particular interest in the areas of parenting, counseling, and gifted children and is completing a PhD through La Trobe University looking at the benefits of using narrative therapy with children in counseling.

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Identification

Testing

In order to know with certainty that a child falls within the gifted range, a thorough IQ assessment must be undertaken. This would typically involve a psychologist administering an IQ assessment such as a WISC or a Stanford Binet. A Full-Scale IQ assessment of 130 + indicates that a child does fall within the gifted range.

A formal IQ assessment is often required in order to qualify for certain programs, or to be accepted into various selective groups. Having a formal assessment may also be useful if school placement or acceleration is to be considered.

In terms of the New Jersey State Mandate for G & T provisions in schools, the Department of Education states

- **N.J.A.C. 6A: 8-3.1(a)5 ii requires local district boards of education to provide appropriate K-12 educational services for gifted and talented students. Therefore, the identification process and appropriate educational challenges must begin in kindergarten.**

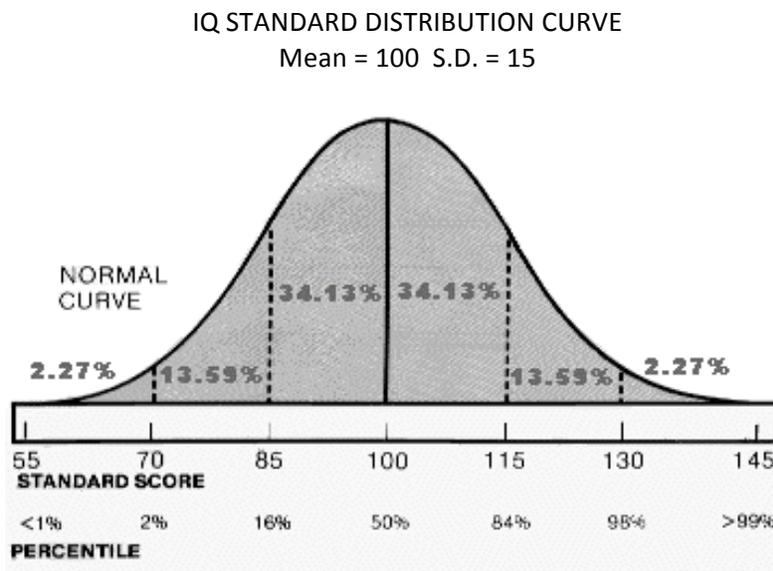
The regulations define gifted and talented students as:

- *Those students who possess or demonstrate high levels of ability, in one or more content areas, when compared to their chronological peers in the local district and who require modification of their educational program if they are to achieve in accordance with their capabilities.*

In terms of provisions for enrichment within the classroom, a formal IQ assessment is not necessary, as the State requires schools to identify students with **“high levels of ability ... when compared to their chronological peers in the local district”**. In a very general sense, this would equate to approximately the top 10% of any peer group (e.g. the top 2 or 3 students in any class).

Norms

Intelligence falls along the normal distribution curve, with the majority of people falling one or two standard deviations (15 – 30 points) from the norm (IQ = 100). Even within the gifted range, there is a spread of IQ scores, ranging from 130 – 180+.



IQ PREVALENCE

Level	IQ range	Prevalence
Mildly gifted	115 - 129	1:6 - 1:40
Moderately gifted	130 - 144	1:40 - 1:1000
Highly gifted	145 - 159	1:1000 - 1:10,000
Exceptionally gifted	160 - 179	1:10,000 - 1:1m
Profoundly gifted	180+	Fewer than 1:1m

(Source: Miraca Gross, University of NSW)

Asynchrony

WHAT IS GIFTEDNESS?

“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 gift renders them particularly vulnerable and requires modifications in parenting, teaching and counselling in order for them to develop optimally.

(The Columbus Group, 1991, in Morelock, 1992)

A differentiated model of giftedness and talent

GIFTEDNESS designates the possession and use of untrained and spontaneously expressed natural abilities (called aptitudes or gifts), in at least one ability domain, to a degree that places an individual at least among the top 10% of age peers.

TALENT designates the superior mastery of systematically developed abilities (or skills) and knowledge in at least one field of human activity to a degree that places an individual within at least the top 10% of age-peers who are or have been active in that field or fields.

(Gagne, F., A differentiated model of giftedness and talent, 1997)

BRILLIANT BEHAVIOURS - (Tom Comerford)

- **Humor:** Exceptionally keen sense of the comical, the bizarre, absurd
- **Motivation:** Intense desire to know, do, feel, create or understand
- **Interest:** Ardent, sometimes unusual, passionate, sometimes fleeting
- **Communication / Expressiveness:** Extraordinary ability to convey meaning or emotion through words, actions, symbols, sounds or media
- **Inquiry:** Probing exploration, observation or experimentation with events, objects, ideas, feelings, sounds, symbols or media
- **Problem-solving:** Outstanding ability to bring order to chaos through the invention and monitoring of paths to a goal; enjoyment of challenge
- **Sensitivity:** Unusually open, perceptive or responsive to experiences, feelings and to others
- **Intuition:** Sudden recognition of connections or deeper meanings without conscious awareness of reasoning or thought
- **Reasoning:** Outstanding ability to think things through and consider implications or alternatives; rich, highly conscious, goal-oriented thought
- **Imagination/Creativity:** Extraordinary capacity for ingenious, flexible use of ideas, processes or materials
- **Memory/Knowledge/Understanding:** Unusual capacity to acquire, integrate, retain and retrieve information or skills
- **Learning:** Ability to acquire sophisticated understandings with amazing speed and apparent ease.

BRIGHT CHILD

- Knows the answers
- Interested
- Is attentive
- Has good ideas
- Works hard
- Answers the questions
- Top group
- Listens with interest
- Learns with ease
- 6-8 repetitions for mastery
- Understands ideas
- Enjoys peers
- Grasps the meaning
- Completes assignments
- Is receptive
- Copies accurately
- Enjoys school
- Absorbs information
- Technician
- Good memoriser
- Straightforward / sequential
- Is alert
- Is pleased with own learning
- Reasons to an answer

HIGHLY ABLE LEARNER

- Asks the questions
- Is highly curious
- Is mentally and physically involved
- Has wild, silly ideas
- Plays around, yet tests well
- Discusses in detail, elaborates
- Beyond the top group
- Shows strong feelings and opinions
- Already knows
- 1-2 repetitions for mastery
- Constructs abstractions
- Prefers adults
- Draws inferences
- Initiates projects
- Is intense
- Creates a new design
- Enjoys learning
- Manipulates information
- Inventor
- Good guesser
- Thrives on complexity
- Is keenly observant
- Is highly self critical
- Makes quantum leaps

(By Janice Szabos Challenge Copyright 1989 Issue 34)

PROFILES OF THE GIFTED AND TALENTED

(developed by George Betts and Maureen Neihart)

TYPE I (successful in school)

These children display appropriate behaviour, learn well and are able to score high on achievement and IQ tests. They learn to get by with as little effort as necessary. Instead of pursuing their own interest, they go through the motions of school looking for structure and direction from teachers and parents. They appear to have positive self-concepts because they achieve in school and are liked by peers. However, they do not have skills that will make them independent learners to last their entire life.

TYPE II (creative / divergent)

These children have a high degree of creativity and can appear to be obstinate, tactless, or sarcastic. They diverge from the system and have not learned to make it work for them. Conflict is often involved in home and school interactions because they challenge authority and may also challenge peers. They are not always included in social activities. However, they have a sense of humor that is attractive to their peers but may be disruptive in the classroom. They struggle with negative self-concept because their talents have not been affirmed.

TYPE III (underground)

These children want to hide their talents. Generally this occurs with middle school females, although males may also want to hide their abilities. Peer acceptance is of primary importance to this type of child. They frequently feel anxious and insecure and their changing needs are often in conflict with the expectations of adults.

TYPE IV (dropout)

While this type is most often in high school, there may be primary students who attend school sporadically or who have 'dropped out' emotionally and mentally, if not physically. These children are angry and resentful because their needs have not been met. They have very low self-esteem. They often have interests outside the regular school curriculum and fail to receive support and acknowledgement for any talents they have in the outside areas. They may act depressed, withdrawn, or defensive.

TYPE V (double-labeled)

These children are highly able, but may also be emotionally or physically handicapped. They might also have learning disabilities. They often do not exhibit behaviors that schools look for in highly able children. They may have sloppy handwriting or disruptive behaviors that keep them from completing work. They show signs of stress and may feel rejected, discouraged, helpless, or isolated. They may use humor to put others down because their own self-esteem is so low. They may be very skillful in intellectualizing as a way of coping with their feelings of being inadequate. They are often impatient and critical, and react stubbornly to criticism.

TYPE VI (autonomous learner)

While few children demonstrate this style at a very early age, parents may see evidences of it at home. They have learned to use the system to create opportunities for themselves. They have strong, positive self-concepts because their needs are met. They are independent and self-directed. They feel secure about designing educational goals. They accept themselves and take risks. They are able to express feelings, goals, and needs appropriately and freely. They do not wait for others to facilitate change for them. As high school students they are well-respected by adults and peers and may serve in some leadership capacity.

STUDENT PROFILES - FEELINGS, BEHAVIORS & NEEDS - (George Betts)

PROFILE	FEELINGS / ATTITUDES	BEHAVIORS	NEEDS
Successful	Bored Dependent Positive self concept Anxious Guilty about failure Extrinsic motivation Responsible for others Diminish feelings of self and rights to their emotion Self critical	Perfectionist High achiever Seeks teacher approval and structure Non risk taking Does well academically Accepts and conforms Dependent	To see deficiencies To be challenged To take risks Assertiveness skills Autonomy Help with boredom Appropriate curriculum
Challenging	Boredom Frustration Low self esteem Impatient Defensive Heightened sensitivity Uncertain about social roles	Corrects teacher Questions rules, policies Is honest, direct Has mood swings Demonstrates inconsistent work habits Has poor self control Is creative Prefers highly active and questioning approach Stands up for convictions Is competitive	To be connected with others To learn tact, flexibility, self awareness, self control, acceptance Support for creativity Contractual systems
Underground	Unsure Pressured Confused Guilty Insecure Diminished feelings of self and rights to their emotions	Denies talent Drops out of advanced classes Resists challenges Wants to belong socially Changes friends	Freedom to make choices To be aware of conflicts Awareness of feelings Support for abilities Involvement with gifted peers Career information Self acceptance
Dropouts	Resentment Angry Depressed Explosive Poor self concept Defensive Burn out	Has intermittent attendance Doesn't complete tasks Pursues outside interests Spaced out in class Is self abusive / Isolates self Is creative Criticises self and others / Is defensive Does inconsistent work Is disruptive, acts out Seems average or below	Individualised program Intense support Alternatives Counselling (individual, group and family) Remedial help with skills
Double Labelled	Powerless Frustrated Low self esteem Unaware Angry	Demonstrates inconsistent work Seems average or below May be disruptive or acts out	Emphasis on strengths Coping skills Highly able support group Counselling Skill development
Autonomous	Self-confident / Self accepting Enthusiastic Accepted by others Supported Desire to know and learn Accepts failure Intrinsic motivation Personal power Accepts others	Has appropriate social skills Works independently Develops own goals Follows through Works without approval Follows strong areas of passion Is creative Stands up for convictions Takes risks	Advocacy Feedback Facilitation Support for risks Appropriate opportunities

What schools can do

- Understand / be aware
- Provide staff professional development on issues related to giftedness
- Employ staff specifically trained in gifted education
- Open-ended tasks
 - Modified worksheets
 - Differentiated projects
 - Bloom's / Gardner's grid
- Differentiation / modification
- Higher Order Thinking tasks
- Time out space with reading material
- Independent research projects
- Small ability groupings within classroom
 - Maths / Literacy
- Small group withdrawal for extension
- Mixed class ability groupings / clustering
 - Science / philosophy / problem solving / creative writing
- "Hardest first" system – compacting curriculum (instead of / not as well as)
- Contract-based learning system
- Single subject acceleration
- Mentor program (with older children)
- IEP (Individual Educational Programs) / GIEP / GAP
- Case Management team (regular meetings and reviews)
- Acceleration / Grade skipping
- Chess clubs / lunch time and after school enrichment activities etc.

Checklists

There are a wide range of checklists from which to choose. Start with a general characteristics checklist, then develop more subject-specific checklists for the various programs and provisions at each year level.

<http://www.austega.com/gifted/9-gifted/22-characteristics.html>

- Selection criteria for enrichment and extension opportunities must be:
 - SUBJECT SPECIFIC
 - QUANTIFIABLE
 - TRANSPARENT
- We need to be able to explain and justify our choices, based on our own professional judgment

GARDNER'S EIGHT INTELLIGENCES

- **Logical-mathematical**
 - Sensitivity to, and capacity to discern, logical or numerical patterns and long chains of reasoning.
- **Linguistic**
 - Sensitivity to the sounds, rhythms, and meanings of words;
 - sensitivity to the different functions of language.
- **Musical**
 - Abilities to produce and appreciate rhythms, pitch, and timbre;
 - appreciation of the forms of musical expressiveness.
- **Spatial**
 - Capacities to perceive the visual-spatial world accurately and to perform transformations on one's initial perceptions.
- **Bodily-kinaesthetic**
 - Abilities to control one's body movements and to handle objects skilfully
- **Naturalistic**
 - The ability to observe, understand and organise patterns in the natural environment, and sensitivity to other features of the natural world
- **Interpersonal**
 - Capacities to discern and respond appropriately to the moods, temperaments, motivations and desires of other people.
- **Intrapersonal**
 - Access to one's own feelings and the ability to discriminate among them and draw upon them to guide behaviour; knowledge of one's own strengths, weaknesses, desires and intelligences.

BLOOMS TAXONOMY

- **Knowledge** - This level is the most common level in standard curriculum activities. It consists of activities which relate to the transmission and acquisition of information.
- **Comprehension** - This level focuses on understanding new information presented. There is a need to find meaning in the information learnt or studied.
- **Application** - This level involves using methods, concepts, principles and theories and applying them to new situations in a concrete way.
- **Analysis** - Analysing a problem or situation involves breaking down the information into its constituent elements and explaining the relationships between them. The process can involve the identification of patterns, clarification of the underlying structure, determining the foundation principles and gaining a fuller understanding of the context.
- **Synthesis** - This process is a creative one. In synthesising a solution, the student must take the constituent elements and fit them together in such a way as to create a whole which serves as a solution to the problem. They must integrate ideas and information, theories and methods within the limits of the environment of the problem.
- **Evaluation** - The highest level of cognitive skill, according to Bloom, is Evaluation. This level involves the judging of ideas and solutions according to a set of criteria. In making judgments, students must establish criteria and apply them in decision making.