

GIFTED STUDENTS' EDUCATION

INTRODUCTION

"The term 'gifted and talented,' when used with respect to students, children or youth, means students, children or youth who give evidence of high achievement capability in areas such as intellectual, creative, artistic, or leadership capacity, or in specific academic fields, and who need services or activities not ordinarily provided by the school in order to fully develop those capabilities.

Most people understand that giftedness entails being bright and having high potential, and existing definitions of giftedness typically focus on capability and achievement as identifiers of giftedness.

"Gifted individuals are those who demonstrate outstanding levels of aptitude (defined as an exceptional ability to reason and learn) or competence (documented performance or achievement in top 10% or rarer) in one or more domains. Domains include any structured area of activity with its own symbol system (e.g., mathematics, music, language) and/or set of sensorimotor skills (e.g., painting, dance, sports).

What are the unique characteristics of gifted individuals?

Aside from showing increased potential or demonstrating advanced accomplishment in one or more specific content areas as many definitions of giftedness suggest, other more specific characteristics tend to appear regularly in the literature surrounding gifted individuals. When discussing characteristics of gifted children, we must understand that any one of these characteristics may be present or not present—there are so many variables at work. Furthermore, these common cognitive and affective characteristics do not comprise a comprehensive list. Cognitive attributes that appear often among gifted individuals include:

- Above-average general intellectual ability
- Ability to find and solve difficult and unusual problems
- Ability to process and learn information quickly

- Ability to see connections, relationships, and multiple perspectives
- Ability to understand abstract and complex concepts
- Extensive and detailed memory
- Intense love of reading
- Advanced vocabulary and communication skills
- Curiosity in many areas
- Desire to ask a lot of questions
- Intense, sustained passion in one area, which may change over time
- Ability to concentrate for long periods of time on projects of interest

They develop differently. Although a high achiever's physical, cognitive, social, and emotional domains may seem to develop more quickly than an average student, those domains still move in sync with one another. Gifted learners, however, show asynchronous development, as both the cognitive and emotional domains develop faster.

They are motivated differently. High achievers are motivated extrinsically. They make good grades, please their teachers, show interest in assignments, understand and memorize easily, and thrive on knowing the answer. Gifted learners are motivated intrinsically. They typically show interest and perform well if the activity is meaningful, individualized, and related to their passions. Instead of memorizing and practicing already-mastered skills, gifted learners prefer to pondering ideas, looking at multiple perspectives, and asking—rather than answering—the questions. They perceive and react to the world differently. While both high achievers and gifted learners may be intuitive and sensitive individuals, children who are gifted tend to exhibit even more awareness, sensitivity, and emotional intensity than their non-gifted peers. The difference lies in the degree. Generally, gifted students seem to intuitively understand situations, people, and behaviors more completely than their peers and react to situations more intensely.

They replenish their energy differently. Both average and high-achieving youth typically recharge and thrive when spending time with others: studying in groups, calling friends, and “hanging out.” Children who are gifted tend to exhibit more introverted behaviors and find groups—especially of the same age—distracting.

CONTENT

Day 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What Does Being Gifted Really Mean?• How is giftedness defined?• What are the unique characteristics of gifted individuals?• Are high achievers and gifted learners the same?
Day 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is gifted education?• Gifted children and learning difficulties• Motivation and encouragement
Day 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Perceptiveness and awareness of being different• Nonconformist behaviours• Desire to become all they are capable of becoming
Day 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Need for mental stimulation and preoccupation with understanding• Perfectionism
Day 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introversion• Anxiety• Heightened sensitivities, particularly emotional intensity

OUTCOMES

- Comprehending a variety of materials.
- To be familiar with the structural elements of literature.
- Evaluates diverse materials according to a set of criteria or standards.
- Creates a literary work in a self-selected form, using appropriate structural elements.
- Analyzes and interprets key social, cultural, and economic ideas as expressed in the literature, art, and music
- Create a curriculum articulation task force representative of subject areas, grade levels, and a broad cross section of school personnel interested in curriculum.
- Organize subtask forces to examine state/local learner outcomes by subject area and across K-12 levels. (Vertical planning is essential to the success of this task.)
- Review existing state or local learner outcomes, using the stated criteria for judging whether they are challenging for gifted learners at the requisite stage of development.
- Discuss findings with the overall task force. Have each subtask force justify the decisions made regarding adaptations in the generic learner outcomes for gifted students.
- Review gifted program goals/curriculum goals; align with subject area outcomes.
- Create additional learner outcomes for gifted students as needed, using the notes and suggestions of the subgroups.
- Develop analogous assessment protocols for the differentiated outcomes.
- Align the differentiated learner outcomes for gifted students with existing classroom activities and materials; develop new activities and locate supplementary materials as needed.

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