

Gifted And Talented Children

I. Introduction

Any person who exhibits measurable and exceptional skills in a(n) area(s) could be considered gifted and talented. The characteristics must be excessive (almost too high to measure). *A very small portion of our population is G&T.*

Most of the culture in the next twenty years will be created by homeschooled G&T children.

Someone could be very smart, very, very smart, and not be G&T. Our children have a 1-in-20 chance of being G&T. The difference between smart and G&T is the difference between the Book of Romans and the Book of John--both are important, both are anointed, but Romans is profoundly different--not superior--from John. Greek scholars will tell you that Paul was off the scale in intelligence; John, though, was gifted in other ways. Both were used by the Holy Spirit; both wrote anointed books; but Paul was G & T.

The following is a summary of characteristics of a G&T person: high IQ (over 135) and often a behavior problem (not always). At the skill application level G&T students exhibit: *elaboration, originality, divergent thinking, and problem solving*. Social skills include: *cooperative learning approaches, shared decision making, active participation, self-management skills, and a process-oriented approach*.

- ▶ Shows superior reasoning powers and marked ability to handle ideas; can generalize readily from specific facts and can see subtle relationships; has outstanding problem-solving ability. The high IQ may be the best indicator of G&T.
- ▶ Shows persistent intellectual curiosity; asks searching questions; shows exceptional interest in the nature of man and the universe.
- ▶ Has multiple interests, often of an intellectual kind; develops one or more interests to considerable depth.
- ▶ Is markedly superior in quality and quantity of written and/or spoken vocabulary; is interested in the subtleties of words and their uses.
- ▶ Reads avidly and absorbs books well beyond his or her years.
- ▶ Learns quickly and easily and retains what is learned; recalls important details, concepts and principles; comprehends readily.
- ▶ Shows insight into arithmetical problems that require careful reasoning and grasps mathematical concepts readily.
- ▶ Shows creative ability or imaginative expression in such things as music, art, dance, drama; shows sensitivity and finesse in rhythm, movement, and bodily control.
- ▶ Sustains concentration for lengthy periods and shows outstanding responsibility and independence in classroom work. Sets realistically high standards for self; is self-critical in evaluating and correcting his or her own efforts.

►►Shows initiative and originality in intellectual work; shows flexibility in thinking and considers problems from a number of viewpoints.

►►Observes keenly and is responsive to new ideas.

►►Shows social poise and an ability to communicate with adults in a mature way.

►►Gets excitement and pleasure from intellectual challenge; shows an alert and subtle sense of humor.

(Adapted from ERIC, <http://ericec.org/digests/e476.htm>)

One word of caution: G & T status does not imply there is a concomitant growth in morality and spiritual formation. In other words, one can be very gifted, and a moral degenerate. Witness Adolf Hitler. All indications are that Hitler was G & T. However, clearly, he was an evil, if smart, man. G&T evaluation is normally tied exclusively to cognitive development. Daniel in Scripture is a good example of a G & T young person who combined intelligence and moral acumen. Let us not neglect the spiritual formation of our G & T students.

There are several interventions we can employ to educate G & T students. First, we can do nothing. Let child develop naturally. If anything, hold him back until he matures appropriately.

B. Acceleration Overall (curricula compacting)

1. Provides needed pedagogical stimulation.
2. Emotion and spiritual price. Can create elitism.
3. Can spiritual/affective development keep pace with academic development?

C. Contracting

Independent Study Agreement

The following terms are agreed to by parent and student:

The student may learn the key concepts or the information described on the study guide independently.

The student must demonstrate mastery at appropriate checkpoints to continue this arrangement for the rest of the unit.

The student must participate in selected group activities when one day's notice is given by the teacher.

The student agrees to complete an independent project by (date) to share with the class.

Project description: _____ .

The student agrees to work on the selected project according to the following guidelines while the remainder of the class is involved with the teacher. (List guidelines.)

Parent's signature _____

Student's signature _____

D. Implement an entirely new curriculum: student-centered, etc.

The curriculum committee of the Leadership Training Institute (Passow, 1982) developed seven guiding principles for curriculum differentiation that reflect the considerations described in this Digest.

➤ The content of curricula for gifted students should focus on and be organized to include more elaborate, complex, and in-depth study of major ideas, problems, and themes that integrate knowledge within and across systems of thought.

➤ Curricula for gifted students should allow for the development and application of productive thinking skills to enable students to reconceptualize existing knowledge and/or generate new knowledge.

➤ Curricula for gifted students should enable them to explore constantly changing knowledge and information and develop the attitude that knowledge is worth pursuing in an open world.

➤ Curricula for gifted students should encourage exposure to, selection, and use of appropriate and specialized resources.

➤ Curricula for gifted students should promote self-initiated and self-directed learning and growth.

➤ Curricula for gifted students should provide for the development of self-understanding and the understanding of one's relationship to persons, societal institutions, nature, and culture.

➤ Evaluations of curricula for gifted students should be conducted in accordance with the previously stated principles, stressing higher level thinking skills, creativity, and excellence in performance and products.

Developing curriculum that is sufficiently rigorous, challenging, and coherent for students who are gifted is a challenging task. The result, however, is well worth the effort. Appropriately differentiated curriculum produces well-educated, knowledgeable students who have had to work very hard, have mastered a substantial body of knowledge, and can think clearly and critically about that knowledge. Achieving such results for one or for a classroom full of students who are gifted will produce high levels of satisfaction, not only for the students who are beneficiaries, but also for every teacher who is willing to undertake the task.

Name of Student:

ACADEMIC CRITERIA

Standardized Score Percentiles:

99% plus in four subjects (25 points)

99% plus in two subjects (15 points)

SAT/ACT scores:

Ninth grade over 1500 (40 points)

Tenth grade over 1500 (35 points)

Eleventh grade over 1500 (30 points)

Any grade 1350-1600 (20 points)

IQ (If known):

James P. Stobaugh
129-135 (5 points)

Challenging the Gifted and Talented

135-150 (15 points)

Socialization

Is he bored by regular classroom work?

Does he prefer work at least two grades ahead?

Does he have problems working with his peers?

Does he have mood swings?

If you answered yes to all of the above give yourself 40 points.

If you answered yes to three (30), two (20), one (10).

Problem Solving

Does your son/daughter show obvious skills in higher level thinking (analysis, synthesis, evaluation)? (30 for evaluation, 20 for synthesis, 10 for analysis).

A score of 120-150 indicates G&T potential. *The nature of this evaluation implies a great deal of subjectivity so it obviously is inexact; but it can be a rough guide.*

Other assessment modalities include:

►►IQ Test

►►Performance-Based Assessment (Students participate in planning the assessment. Outcomes are most important)

►►Portfolio Assessment (An overview of student performance; multiple giftings can be identified in this assessment)