

# What is Giftedness?

## **GIFTEDNESS:**

As shown in this section, there are a number of models that define giftedness. Essentially, giftedness is an exceptional or extraordinary capability with respect to intellect, creativity and/or task commitment. A good rule of thumb is that the higher the student's level of cognitive or creative ability, the more differentiation and support will be needed. The needs of gifted students will probably not be occasional. Their intensity will require individually planned educational experiences for both in-class and small-group instruction that will accommodate their extraordinary abilities and needs. Core curriculum and learning environments may need to be significantly adapted.

## **ENRICHMENT:**

These students may be "bright" or capable students who occasionally need broader or deeper educational experiences, but are not identified as having the special need of giftedness. Classroom teachers can replace, supplement or extend curriculum, using materials in this handbook.

## **CHALLENGE:**

Challenge has come to mean an opportunity for gifted and/or enrichment students to work on activities that provide more COMPLEX educational experiences. These may happen in class or in pullout groups.

## **PROGRAMMING GUIDELINES:**

Students who participate in gifted/enrichment programs to support their need for challenge should be accommodated in the same way as other special needs students:

- ◆ When good communication is maintained and regular classwork is abbreviated, students should be able to show mastery of the concepts without having to complete all assigned work, in order to maintain their class standing.
- ◆ Teachers can inform students of work that will be graded, and where necessary *make adaptations based on learning goals*, so students do not lose marks because of gifted programming.
- ◆ Students who miss regular classes for school-based or district challenge sessions should check with teachers about what they missed, so they are cognizant of the content of current instruction. **Gifted students should not be required to meet the demands of two different programs simultaneously.**

## Bright Child

## Gifted Learner

Knows the answer  
Is 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 memorizer  
Enjoys straightforward sequential presentation  
Is alert  
Is pleased with own learning  
The needs of bright students may be met in class or through enrichment activities.

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 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  
The needs of gifted students may require individual adaptation in class, as well as special gifted programming.

Source: Szabos, Janice, copyright 1989, Good Apple Inc.

# Brilliant Behaviours

Student \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Strength \_\_\_\_\_

Directions: Offer the student an enjoyable but challenging activity (group or individual) that requires planning and thinking. Watch the student working and check off those behaviours you see demonstrated more **frequently, intensely and for a longer time** than you would expect of a student of that age, gender, temperament and cultural background.

Check (4)	Behaviours
	<b>Humour:</b> Exceptionally keen sense of the comical, the bizarre, absurd.
	<b>Motivation:</b> Intense desire to know, do, feel, create, or understand.
	<b>Interests:</b> Ardent, sometimes unusual, passionate, sometimes fleeting.
	<b>Communication/Expressiveness:</b> Extraordinary ability to convey meaning or emotion through words, actions, symbols, sounds, or media.
	<b>Inquiry:</b> Probing exploration, observation or experimentation with events, objects, ideas, feelings, sounds, symbols, or media.
	<b>Problem-solving:</b> Outstanding ability to bring order to chaos through the invention and monitoring of paths to a goal; enjoyment of challenge.
	<b>Sensitivity:</b> Unusually open, perceptive, or responsive to experiences, feelings and to others.
	<b>Intuition:</b> Sudden recognition of connections or deeper meanings without conscious awareness of reasoning or thought.
	<b>Reasoning:</b> Outstanding ability to think things through and consider implications or alternatives; rich, highly conscious, goal-oriented thought.
	<b>Imagination/Creativity:</b> Extraordinary capacity for ingenious, flexible use of ideas, processes, or materials.
	<b>Memory/Knowledge/Understanding:</b> Unusual capacity to acquire, integrate, retain, and retrieve information or skills.
	<b>Learning:</b> Ability to acquire sophisticated understandings with amazing speed and apparent ease.

# Characteristics of Various Areas of Giftedness

## VISUAL/PERFORMING ARTS

- outstanding in sense of spatial relationships
- unusual ability for expressing self feelings, moods, etc., through art, dance, drama, music
- good motor coordination
- exhibits creative expression
- desire for producing "own product" (not content with mere copying)
- observant

<b>LEADERSHIP</b>	<b>CREATIVE THINKING</b>	<b>GENERAL INTELLECTUAL ABILITY</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• assumes responsibility</li> <li>• high expectations for self and others</li> <li>• fluent, concise self-expression</li> <li>• foresees consequences and implications of decisions</li> <li>• good judgment in decision making</li> <li>• likes structure</li> <li>• well liked by peers</li> <li>• self-confident</li> <li>• organized</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• independent thinker</li> <li>• exhibits original thinking in oral and written expression</li> <li>• comes up with several solutions to a given problem</li> <li>• possesses a sense of humour</li> <li>• creates and invents</li> <li>• challenged by creative tasks</li> <li>• improvises often</li> <li>• does not mind being different from the crowd</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• formulates abstractions</li> <li>• processes information in complex ways</li> <li>• observant</li> <li>• excited about new ideas</li> <li>• enjoys hypothesizing</li> <li>• learns rapidly</li> <li>• uses a large vocabulary</li> <li>• inquisitive</li> <li>• self-starter</li> </ul>

## SPECIFIC ACADEMIC ABILITY

- good memorization ability
- advanced comprehension
- acquires basic-skills knowledge quickly
- widely read in special-interest area
- high academic success in special-interest area
- pursues special interests with enthusiasm and vigor

# Traits Exhibited by Some Gifted Students

## COMMON MYTHS ABOUT GIFTED STUDENTS

- gifted students are a homogeneous group, all high achievers
- gifted students do not need help; if they are really gifted, they can manage on their own
- gifted students have fewer problems than others because their intelligence and abilities somehow exempt them from the hassles of daily life
- the future of a gifted student is assured; a world of opportunities lies before the student
- gifted students are self-directed; they know where they are heading
- the social and emotional development of the gifted student is at the same level as his or her intellectual development
- gifted underachievers need to be pushed to try harder; they need to get organized
- gifted students are social isolates
- the primary value of the gifted student lies in his or her brain power
- the gifted student's family always prizes his or her ability
- gifted students need to serve as examples to others and should always assume extra responsibility
- gifted students can accomplish anything they put their minds to; all they have to do is apply themselves

Source: Berger, S.L., 1989

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE GIFTED THAT TEND TO SCREEN THEM OUT OF PROGRAMS

- bored with routine tasks, refuses to do rote homework
- difficult to get him/her to move into another topic
- is self-critical, impatient with failures
- is critical of others, of the teachers
- often disagrees vocally with others, with the teacher
- makes jokes or puns at inappropriate times
- emotionally sensitive -- may overreact, get angry easily or ready to cry if things go wrong
- not interested in details; hand in messy work
- refuses to accept authority; nonconforming, stubborn
- tends to dominate others

# Characteristics of Gifted Students With Possible Learning Difficulties

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_ Referring Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

This is an observational checklist. If the majority of observations are in columns three and four, refer the child to the School-Based Team for support planning.

	<b>Never</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>Always</b>
1. May not be able to do simple tasks, but can complete more sophisticated activities.	1	2	3	4
2. Does well in language arts, but poorly in mathematics.	1	2	3	4
3. Does well in mathematics, but poorly in language arts.	1	2	3	4
4. Has difficulty with computation, but demonstrates higher level of mathematical reasoning.	1	2	3	4
5. Has musical, artistic, and/or mechanical aptitude.	1	2	3	4
6. Has an active imagination.	1	2	3	4
7. Shows excellent ability in acquiring a second or additional language.	1	2	3	4
8. Makes creative excuses to avoid difficult task.	1	2	3	4
9. Has difficulty printing, reluctant to hand in class work.	1	2	3	4
10. Generalizes minor academic failures to feelings of overall inadequacy.	1	2	3	4
11. Does not do well on a timed activity.	1	2	3	4
12. Shows expertise or great interest in a particular area (e.g. insects, computers, dinosaurs, collection sports statistics).	1	2	3	4
13. Acts out without thinking out the consequences.	1	2	3	4
14. Has poor social skills with peers and adults.	1	2	3	4
15. Frequently off-task, can be disruptive.	1	2	3	4
16. Has excellent visual memory.	1	2	3	4
17. Has sophisticated sense of humour.	1	2	3	4

# Gifted Students with Learning Disabilities (LD)

1. Use a multi-dimensional approach to identification. Allow entrance into the gifted program on a trial basis and use teaching strategies that will aid success. Weigh more heavily those factors, which are not affected by the learning disability.
2. Remediation and rote "skill and drill" activities are not beneficial.
3. Modify while enriching in the regular classroom curriculum.
4. Allow the student to present mastery of material in a manner appropriate to his/her strengths.
5. Higher-level activities can be encouraged, even before basic skills are mastered.
6. Use strategies to adapt for reading differences, if required:
  - books on tape
  - highlighted textbooks
  - content outliners
  - documentaries on subject areas
  - coloured transparencies to place over reading materials
  - comprehension checklists for students to follow when reading
7. Try to present directions and information in more than one manner, since gifted/LD students tend to be visual learners.
8. Use attention-directing techniques.
9. Use a visualization approach to spelling - see sample strategies, pp.
10. Concentrate on the child's strengths. Use high interest materials and encourage engagement in problem solving and research.
11. Maximize on technology with these students (computers, word processors, calculators, cameras, video cameras, tape recorders) to help them produce high quality work and decrease frustration.