

DIFFERENTIATED CHARACTERISTICS OF THE GIFTED STUDENT

The differentiated curriculum is based foremost on the learning and personal characteristics and needs of gifted learners. All modifications in CONTENT, PROCESS, PRODUCT, and LEARNING ENVIRONMENT are made to accommodate nurture these traits.

The following list suggests traits which are generally found in groups of gifted learners and may distinguish many gifted learners from the regular student population. The degree to which individual students manifest these traits will vary. Likewise, many of these traits may produce either positive or negative behaviors in the classroom. These characteristics may, of course, be evident in students not formally labeled as gifted.

COGNITIVE

- extraordinary quantity of information; unusual retentiveness.
- advanced comprehension.
- unusually varied interests and curiosity.
- high level of verbal ability.
- unusual capacity for processing information.
- accelerated pace of thought processes.
- flexible thought processes.
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- comprehensive synthesis.
- early ability to delay closure.
- heightened capacity for seeing unusual and diverse relationships.
- ability to generate original ideas and solutions.
- early differential patterns for thought processing (e.g., thinking in alternatives, abstract terms, sensing consequences, making generalizations).
- early ability to use and form conceptual frameworks.
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- persistent goal-directed behavior.

AFFECTIVE

- large accumulation of information about emotions that has not been brought to awareness.
- unusual sensitivity to the expectations and feelings of others.
- keen sense of humor—may be gentle or hostile.
- heightened self-awareness, accompanied by feelings of being “different.”
- idealism and a sense of justice that appear at any early age.
- earlier development of an inner locus of control and satisfaction.
- advanced levels of moral judgment.

- high expectations of self and others, which often lead to
- high levels of frustration with self, others, and situations.
- unusual emotional depth and intensity.
- sensitivity to inconsistency between ideals and behavior.

PHYSICAL

- unusual discrepancy between physical and intellectual development.
- low tolerance for the lag between their standards and their physical capacity.
- Cartesian split—can include neglect of physical well-being and avoidance of physical activity.

INTUITIVE

- early involvement and concern for intuitive knowing, metaphysical ideas, and psychic phenomena.
- open to experience in intuitive knowing will experiment with psychic and metaphysical phenomena.
- creativity apparent in all areas of endeavor.

SOCIETAL

- strongly motivated by self-actualization needs.
- advanced cognitive and affective capacity for conceptualizing and solving societal problems.

SOCIAL EXPECTATIONS

- leadership.
- solutions to social and environmental problems.
- involvement with the meta-needs of society (e.g., justice, beauty, truth)

Reference:

Clark, Barbara. GROWING UP GIFTED, Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill
Publishing Company, 1979