



GIFTED AND TALENTED GUIDELINES

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1 DEFINITIONS

Giftedness refers to a student's outstanding potential and ability in one or more domains, (e.g. intellectual, artistic or sensorimotor).

Talent refers to outstanding performance in one or more fields of human activity. Talent emerges from ability as a consequence of the student's learning experience.

(See Appendix A)

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 RATIONALE

This document replaces the Policy and Guidelines for the Education of Gifted and Talented Students 1996. It complements The Education for Gifted and Talented Students in Western Australia website which includes elements of the 1996 Teaching TAGs (Primary) file and assists in meeting the Gifted and Talented Policy obligations. (Ref <http://www.eddept.wa.edu.au/gifttal/index.htm>)

It has traditionally been accepted that a small proportion (typically less than 5%) of the population should have access to gifted and talented programs. However, a broader view of the characteristics of gifted and talented students needs to be considered. As schools focus on outstanding performances in a range of fields, a higher proportion of the population (possibly as much as 15%) will be identified for gifted and talented provision. (See Appendix A.)

School-based provision (including that by all teachers in their day-to-day teaching) is applicable to 15% of the population and supplementary provision should be available to approximately the top 2.5% of the population in any particular domain or talent field.

It is important that students with exceptional potential are able to have this fostered during their primary years to ensure that the development of specific gifts and talents continues as the students make their educational transition into the secondary school. At the secondary level there should be ongoing monitoring to ensure that new or emerging talents are discovered.

Gifted and talented students are represented in all socioeconomic and cultural groups and are part of the population of almost all schools. For varied reasons many of these students are at risk of not achieving to their full potential. For example:

students abilities are not fostered through appropriate educational provision;

other identified students clearly do not achieve to their potential due to physical, emotional, motivational and social factors or specific learning difficulties;

some students simply are not identified;

their gifts and talents are masked by cultural or other background factors; and

it should be noted that child prodigies and geniuses belong to a very small percentage of the gifted population and from this group those who succeed at school form only a proportion of that same population.

All of these students are identified as requiring teaching and learning adjustments.

(See Appendix D)

A student's giftedness is not always apparent in regular curriculum areas and not always demonstrated in appropriate ways. While gifted students exhibit some common traits, no two gifted students possess the same characteristics. Giftedness can be viewed in multiple ways and children may be gifted in one or several ability domains.

2.2 RELATED POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES

The following Department of Education and Training policies and procedures are related to the *Gifted and Talented* policy:

The Curriculum Framework for Kindergarten to Year 12 Education in Western Australia

Excursions: Off School Site Activities (off school site activities including PEAC)

Students at Educational Risk (SAER)

Enrolment

3 SUPPORTING PRINCIPLES

3.1 THE CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK

The Curriculum Framework is an inclusive framework for all students in Western Australia and is underpinned by seven key principles. One of these principles is that of inclusivity, which means ensuring that, all groups of students are included and valued. These principles guide schools in whole-school planning and curriculum development:

an encompassing view of the curriculum;

an explicit acknowledgement of core values;

inclusivity;

flexibility;

integration, breadth and balance;

a developmental approach; and
collaboration and partnerships.

3.2 INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

The principles of inclusive education present a means of determining the pathways toward an inclusive system of education. The concept of inclusivity is central to the Curriculum Framework. It embodies the notion that all students are valued as learners and are integral to the school community:

- providing access and participation;
- valuing diversity;
- ensuring local decisions and adjustments;
- implementing a new framework for resource allocation;
- matching pedagogy with student needs;
- delivering responsive programs and services; and
- collaborating for better outcomes.

3.3 IDENTIFICATION

Identification processes for gifted and talented students should:

- be inclusive, to ensure gifted and talented students are not educationally disadvantaged on the basis of racial, cultural or socioeconomic background, physical or sensory disability, geographic location or gender;
- be flexible and continuous, to allow for the recognition of gifts and talents which may emerge or be recognisable at any stage of a student's education;
- utilise information from a variety of sources, including classroom teacher observation and assessment, as well as knowledge obtained from other people (for example, parents and peers);
- help the teacher identify a student's intellectual strengths, talents, and social and emotional needs, which will form the basis for educational provision; and
- direct the quality of the teaching and learning environment to enable the outstanding abilities of students to emerge and be recognised.

3.4 PROVISION

Schools and teachers should provide a challenging and enriched curriculum through school-based provision to enable the gifts and talents of students to emerge, be recognised, and be developed.

Supplementary provision should enable the most talented students to interact with their peers in specific curriculum fields at higher levels than can normally be provided in the regular classroom or school.

District services should provide support to assist schools in the implementation of policy. Resources allocated to districts for supplementary provision can also be used to provide programs for underachieving gifted and talented students.

3.5 MONITORING

Principals should collect ongoing data to ensure that their gifted and talented students are achieving appropriate standards, and that minority groups are proportionately represented among those students.

Ongoing and systematic monitoring of the quality of policy implementation should occur at school, district and central levels:

at the school level, monitoring of the education of gifted and talented students is an integral part of the regular development and planning processes. (Processes to monitor and report on the quality of implementation of policy should be negotiated by the principal at the district level with the District Director; and

at the central level, reviews should be undertaken and reports received to evaluate policy and the quality of its implementation.

4 RELEVANT LEGISLATION OR AUTHORITY

The Curriculum Framework for Kindergarten to Year 12 Education in Western Australia

School Education Act 1999, Part 3, Divisions 3 and 4, Sections 63, 64, 67, 77, 78, 79

School Education Regulations 2000, Part 2, Division 2 and 4, Sections 16, 17, 38

Equal Opportunity Act, 1984

Senate Employment, Workplace Relations, Small Business and Education References Committee: The Education of Gifted Children, October 2001

Disability Discrimination Act 1992: supported by the Department of Education and Training's Building Inclusive Schools strategy

5 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1 THE SCHOOL

It is the responsibility of principals, teachers and support personnel to be aware of current issues and processes involved with identification of gifted and talented students and provision of programs for these students. They should:

accept that these students have a right to learning programs that match their ability;

appreciate that gifted and talented students' abilities can be at different levels in different areas of endeavour;

acknowledge that the emotional development of gifted and talented students does not necessarily match their ability in other domains;

recognise emotional and social problems of gifted and talented students and be aware that the emotional needs of the students should be addressed;

develop gifted and talented student's understanding and acceptance of themselves;

develop an understanding and acceptance of gifted and talented students by others; and

be supportive of these students.

5.2 THE PRINCIPAL

The Principal's role is to establish an appropriate learning environment for gifted and talented students in their school and in the broader community. Principal's should:

monitor policy implementation and ensure that information about gifted and talented student outcomes is part of a school's management information system;

report appropriate information to the District Director; and

ensure students from a range of cultural and socio-economic backgrounds have not been overlooked, and that those who are underachieving are catered for.

5.3 THE TEACHER

The teacher's role is vital in building inclusive classrooms. Teachers should:

monitor student's progress carefully to identify possible gifted and talented students;

gather information about the students they have identified using a range of strategies;

confirm the information is correct and ensure no student or group of students has been omitted;

ensure the information is incorporated into the school's management information system;

make provision for these students in their day-to-day teaching through a range of strategies and teaching and learning adjustments; and

make provision for identified students in all classes they teach.

(See Appendix B)

6 IDENTIFICATION

The quality of the teaching and learning environment is critical to the identification process. Programs should enable outstanding abilities of students to emerge and be recognised by encouraging students to take learning risks while being sensitive to issues associated with judgement about potential and performance. The identification of gifted and talented students is more about the conditions and context in which their performance is assessed than their achievement against pre-determined criteria.

Principal's should implement strategies to identify all gifted and talented students, and in particular, those who, for various reasons of disadvantage, may not be recognised.

Gifted and talented students are not a homogeneous group. The range of talents and levels of emotional, social and physical development varies significantly. As a result, the behaviours of these students in the classroom may be quite diverse. They are not necessarily the high achievers, the most attentive, or the most cooperative in terms of task completion and compliance in the classroom.

(See Appendix C – Identification processes).

7 PROVISION

It is important that gifted and talented student's abilities be accepted, valued and fostered by teachers, parents, peers and the community. Schools, parents and the students themselves need to consider the provision of learning experiences, which broaden the student's knowledge and skills.

7.1 FORMS OF PROVISION

There are two forms of provision, school-based and supplementary.

(See Appendix H – Provision overview).

7.2 SCHOOL-BASED

School-based provision ensures schools and teachers provide a challenging and extended curriculum to enable the gifts and talents of students to emerge, be recognised and be developed. This form of provision is the responsibility of all teachers and relates to as much as 15% of the population. In some classes, the proportion will be higher.

Primary and secondary school-based provision occurs within the individual classrooms of all teachers on an ongoing basis. Additionally, schools may develop strategies, which allow the most able students to learn together.

(See Appendix B)

7.3 SUPPLEMENTARY

Supplementary provision enables the most gifted and talented students to interact with their gifted and talented peers in specific curriculum fields at higher levels than can normally be provided in the regular classroom or school. The resources for supplementary provision are centrally allocated and provide for approximately 2.5% of the population in a particular domain or area of talent.

At the primary level, schools and districts (or service areas) are responsible for the selection and implementation of the organisational structures for supplementary provision for gifted and talented students. Primary Extension and Challenge (PEAC) provides one such organisational structure.

At the secondary level, the Department of Education and Training supports the Secondary Special Placement Program (SSPP) in several metropolitan senior high schools. Centrally funded programs provide gifted and talented students with a range of specialist programs to meet their specific needs.

7.4 ACCELERATION

Acceleration is a placement strategy that enables a gifted student to work within an older chronological grouping. It is one form of flexible provision. The decision to accelerate any student needs to be made with considerable care by a principal in consultation with the student, parents, teachers and school psychologists.

The development of a range of suitable options to meet a child's learning needs, of which acceleration may be one possibility, is necessary in this process.

Decisions regarding permanent, full-time acceleration of younger students in particular should proceed only after thorough and careful consideration of the implication for the whole long-term schooling experience of the student. This includes the academic, social, emotional and behavioural needs of the student. In certain situations acceleration may be the best option for a small number of exceptionally gifted students.

Decisions may have to be made on behalf of younger students to address their individual learning needs. It is desirable that gifted students become progressively more involved in, and responsible for, the decisions regarding provision of appropriate education and development programs.

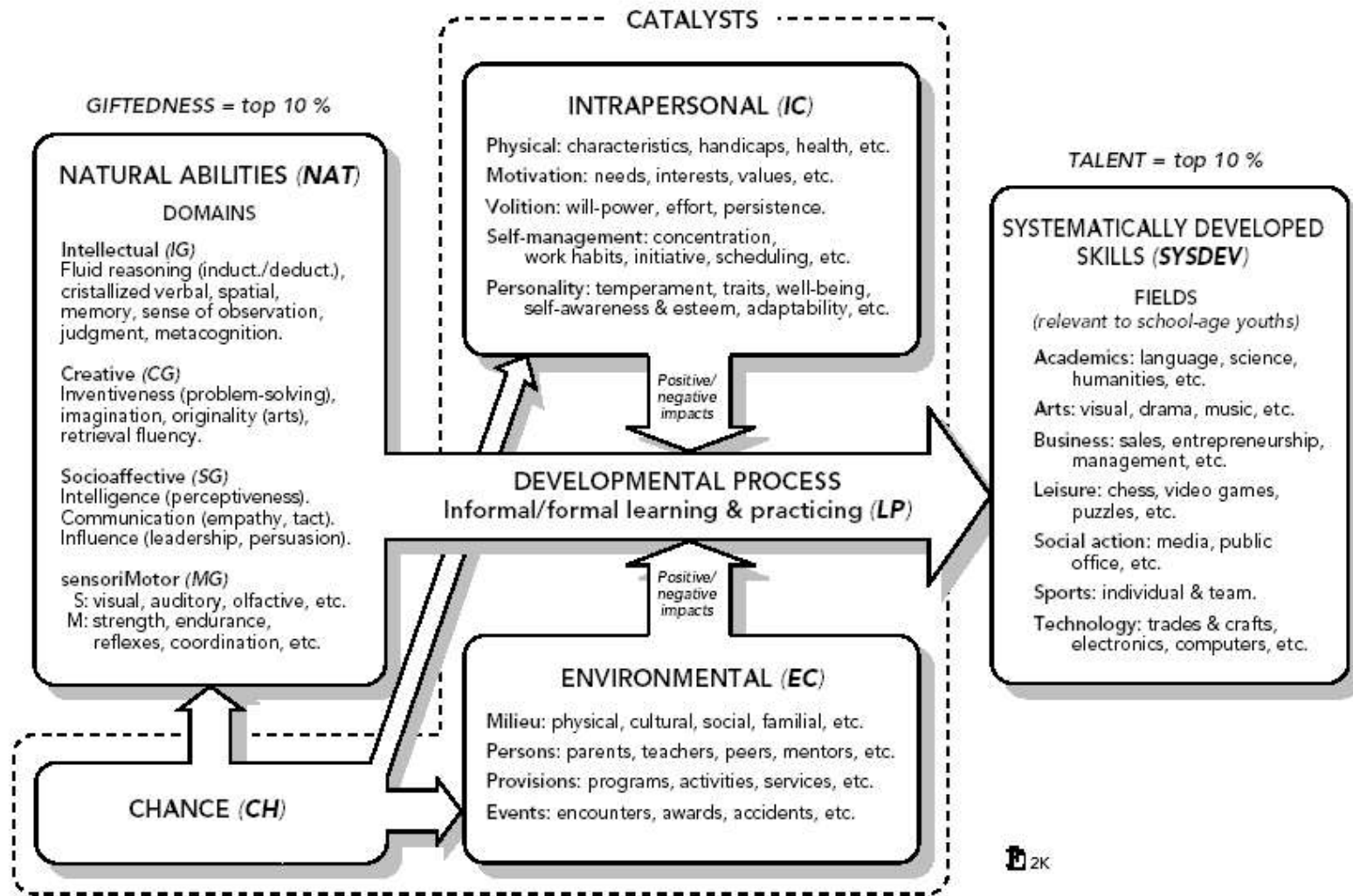
To determine the appropriateness of acceleration for a particular student it is desirable to monitor and evaluate the relevance and effectiveness of strategies that may include learning and teaching adjustments, such as an Individual Education Plan, peer tutoring and/or mentoring programs. The Curriculum Framework's principles of assessment need to be kept in mind when evaluating the suitability of acceleration: any measure of the child's readiness to accelerate should be valid, educative, explicit, fair, and comprehensive.

8 MONITORING

On-going and systematic monitoring of the quality of policy implementation should occur at school, district and central levels.

It is the responsibility of the District Director to monitor and report to the appropriate Executive Director on the effectiveness of school planning in developing provisions for gifted and talented students, including identification processes and provision strategies used in schools and districts.

APPENDIX A GAGNE'S DIFFERENTIATED MODEL OF GIFTEDNESS AND TALENT



Gagné's Differentiated Model of Giftedness and Talent (DMGT.US.2K)

APPENDIX B THE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF PRINCIPALS AND TEACHERS

| Principals and teachers should . . . | Ideas to consider |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understand and implement the department's gifted and talented policy; | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Nominate a gifted and talented coordinator to promote the policy and help monitor its implementation. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure procedures are in place for the ongoing identification of gifted and talented students, as well as identification for placement in school and supplementary programs; | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Use identification procedures in the Teaching TAGS. ⇒ Teachers monitor student's progress carefully to identify possible gifted and talented students, gather information on identified students using a range of strategies, confirm the information is correct and ensure no student or group of students has been omitted, and ensure the information is incorporated into the school's management information system. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide an appropriate and challenging learning program based on a range of strategies which match the learning styles and needs of gifted and talented students; | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Devise strategies to use in day-to-day programs to provide a differentiated curriculum (enrichment, extension or acceleration) for identified students. ⇒ Provide access to appropriate supplementary programs. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • participate in professional development about the education of gifted and talented students; | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Work through and implement strategies in the Teaching TAGS. ⇒ Access information from professional associations to keep abreast of gifted and talented initiatives. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • collaborate to share resources within and between schools; | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Develop district networks. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use school development planning processes to collect and review data relevant to the achievement of gifted and talented students and to set priorities and targets which address their needs; | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Make provision in the school management information system to identify gifted and talented students and to report on the performance of these students as a sub-group of the school population. ⇒ Include gifted and talented provision as a school priority if warranted. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • encourage parents of gifted and talented students and community stakeholders to participate in the education of gifted and talented students. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Communicate strategies adopted by the school to cater for gifted and talented students. ⇒ Involve parents in curriculum resource developments. ⇒ Draw on community experts to assist with school-based and supplementary programs. |

APPENDIX C THE IDENTIFICATION OF GIFTED AND TALENTED STUDENTS CLASSROOM AND SCHOOL-BASED INFORMATION

| Method | Points to consider |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Teacher observation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes use of progress maps, developmental continua, Monitoring Standards materials and Teaching TAGS observation schedules. |
| School records | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider all students in the group. |
| Behavioural indicators | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Base judgements on objective criteria which consider academic, social and behavioural indicators. |
| Class evaluations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obtain information from all staff involved with a student as well as previous teachers or reports and records. |

Other information sources are critical when minority groups are being considered.

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Parent information | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents are aware of a student's pattern of interests and learning rates for new material. Techniques for obtaining information can include interviews and checklists and could be included in enrolment procedures. |
| Peer report | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student reports are generally reliable. The instruments need to be carefully structured to seek efficiently broad information. Students may nominate friends, but a pattern of responses usually emerges. Peer reports supplement other methods. |
| Student self report | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students are generally objective about themselves. Self-reporting has been shown to relate well to peer and parent information. Student interest inventories may be used but value judgements and gender bias need to be considered. Requires sympathetic approach and possibly is most effective in an interview situation. |

Standardised assessments can assess differing content in-group or individual situations. **There are three main test types.**

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Achievement tests | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> These assess performance in school-related tasks and are usually subject based. Previous learning is required as is a level of reading ability in most cases. Under-achieving or special needs students may not be identified. Tests should not be grade or age-limited, or culturally or content-biased. |
| Intelligent tests | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The tasks presented are selected to reduce the amount of formal learning that is required. Tasks require a range of language, visual or combined problem solving strategies and skills and are usually different from "typical" school experiences. |

Creativity tests

- May identify the creative thinker who could otherwise be overlooked. May be too narrow in scope to be used without being supplemented by other measures, unless the identification of creativity is the sole objective of testing.

APPENDIX D TEACHING AND LEARNING ADJUSTMENTS

| Teaching and learning adjustments should... | Teachers should expect that gifted and talented students are capable of learning how to . . . |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be flexible to match students' knowledge, abilities, needs and phrases of learning; • include a range of group and individual activities to accommodate different abilities, skills and learning rates; • enable the development of generic skills and higher order thinking skills and strategies; • allow negotiation of self-selected topics for learning within established curriculum parameters; • be open-ended , encouraging questioning and tasks which allow students to construct knowledge; • demonstrate logical, critical, creative, lateral and parallel forms of thinking; • pay attention to product and the demonstration of achievement in student's learning; • encourage students to help other students with their learning; and • explore the possibilities of open learning, telematics, multi-campus developments, external education sites and other resources. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • direct, manage, negotiate and evaluate their own learning; • consider relationships and generate new ideas, hypotheses and creative solutions; • become producers, rather than reproducers, of knowledge; • develop skills of critical analysis and creativity; apply analytical processes for problem solving and decision making; • make defensible judgements and evaluate their own ideas and those of others; • work confidently in independent and cooperative situations; and • enjoy learning. |

APPENDIX E APPROACHES AND STRATEGIES FOR THE PROVISION OF A DIFFERENTIATED CURRICULUM

Differentiated curriculum relates to both school-based provision and supplementary provision, and specifically in-class provision by teachers on an ongoing basis.

Schools and teachers enable students to fulfil their potential by providing opportunities for them to direct, manage and negotiate their own learning, both as group members and as individuals. As students progress from primary to secondary to post-secondary education, it becomes increasingly important for them to have these skills. Teachers should provide a differentiated curriculum for gifted and talented students, particularly in their day-to-day teaching, to assist them to make informed educational and career choices.

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| Enrichment . . . broadens the range of experiences for all students. | Extension. . . encourages expansion of knowledge and skills in the regular curriculum. | Acceleration . . . enables gifted and talented students to participate in learning based on their performance, usually with older students. |
|--|--|---|

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| <p>Enrichment is vital for students who may experience educational disadvantage due to language, cultural or low socioeconomic background.</p> <p>Enrichment activities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • excursions; • competitions; • clubs; • guest speakers; • using ICT (information, communication technology). <p>Enrichment assists improve skills such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • creative thinking; • problem solving; • questioning; • independent research. | <p>Learning new strategies for constructing knowledge is a particularly important goal for extension programs.</p> <p>Extension can be provided through a range of on-site learning centers using negotiated curriculum contracts within the school, with community mentors or through peer tutoring.</p> <p>Appropriate strategies are fundamental to the quality extension program.</p> <p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • learning centers • challenge centers • parallel programming • contracts • mentors • peer teaching • camps • using ICT | <p>Acceleration can be provided through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • early entry of children to formal schooling, secondary; • ability groupings within the class; • cross-setting and cross grading; • vertical and family groupings; • telescoping the curriculum to allow exemption from knowledge and skills already demonstrated; • placement in a specific subject area at a higher year level within a classroom, within a school, across primary school and secondary school or across a secondary school and a post –secondary institution; • year skipping or placement at a higher year level; or • whole group acceleration, where a whole class is provided with fast-paced learning. |
|--|---|---|

APPENDIX F CHECKLIST OF LEARNING AND BEHAVIOURAL CHARACTERISTICS COMMON TO THE GIFTED AND TALENTED STUDENT

STUDENT NAME _____ DATE _____

| ITEM | | Yes | No |
|-------------------|--|-----|----|
| A LEARNING | | | |
| 1 | Is a rapid learner, who understands advanced topics easily. | | |
| 2 | Shows insight and fantasises about cause-effect relationships. | | |
| 3 | Persists in completing tasks. | | |
| 4 | Sees the problem quickly and takes the initiative. | | |
| 5 | Learns basic skills quickly and with little practice. | | |
| 6 | Is reluctant to practise skills already mastered, finding such practice futile. | | |
| 7 | Follows complex directions easily. | | |
| 8 | Constructs and handles high levels of abstraction. | | |
| 9 | Can cope with more than one idea at a time. | | |
| 10 | Has strong critical thinking skills and is self-critical. | | |
| 11 | Has surprising perception and deep insight. | | |
| 12 | Is a keen and alert observer, notes detail and is quick to see similarities and differences. | | |
| 13 | Displays intellectual and physical restlessness; once encouraged, is seldom a passive learner. | | |
| 14 | Has a remarkable range of general (or specialized) knowledge in one or more areas (e.g. dinosaurs). | | |
| 15 | Possesses extensive general knowledge (often knows more than the teacher), and finds classroom books superficial. | | |
| 16 | Explores wide-ranging and special interests, frequently at great depth. | | |
| 17 | Has quick mastery and recall of information, seems to need no revision and is impatient with repetition. | | |
| 18 | Learns to read early and retains what is read; can recall in detail. | | |
| 19 | Has advanced understanding and use of language, but sometimes hesitates as the correct word is searched for and then used. | | |
| 20 | Sees greater significance in a story or film and continues the story. | | |
| 21 | Demonstrates a richness of imagery in informal language and brainstorming. | | |

| | | | |
|----------------------|--|--|--|
| 2 2 | Can ask unusual (even awkward) questions or make unusual contributions to class discussions. | | |
| 2 3 | Asks many provocative, searching questions which tend to be unlike those asked by other students of the same age. | | |
| 2 4 | Has exceptional curiosity and constantly wants to know the reasons why. | | |
| 2 5 | Displays intellectual playfulness; fantasises and imagines; is quick to see connections and manipulate ideas. | | |
| 2 6 | Often sees unusual, rather than conventional, relationships. | | |
| 2 7 | Can produce original and imaginative work, even if defective in technical accuracy (e.g. poor spelling and/or handwriting). | | |
| 2 8 | Wants to debate topics at greater depth. | | |
| 2 9 | Mental speed is faster than writing ability, so is often reluctant to write at length. Prefers to talk rather than write and talks at speed with fluency and expression. | | |
| B BEHAVIOURAL | | | |
| 1 | Sets very high personal standards and is a perfectionist. | | |
| 2 | Is success-oriented and hesitates to try something where failure is a possibility. | | |
| 3 | Demonstrates a sense of humour and loves incongruities, puns and pranks. | | |
| 4 | May be behind peers in manual dexterity, which can be a source of frustration. | | |
| 5 | Can have a negative self-concept and suffer from poor social acceptance by age peers. | | |
| 6 | Daydreams and seems lost in another world. | | |
| 7 | Listens to only part of the explanation and sometimes appears to lack concentration, but always knows what is going on. When questioned usually knows the answer. | | |
| 8 | Often prefers company of older students and adults. | | |
| 9 | When interested, becomes absorbed for long periods and may be impatient with interference or abrupt change. | | |
| 1 0 | Can be stubborn in own beliefs. | | |
| 1 1 | Shows sensitivity and reacts strongly to things causing distress or injustice. | | |
| 1 2 | Empathises with others and often takes a leadership role; very understanding and sympathetic. | | |
| 1 3 | Shows unusual interest in adult problems such as important issues in current affairs (local and world), evolution, justice, the universe, etc. | | |

(Exceptionally Able Children, 1997)