**Varied Characteristics of Gifted Students**

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| **Traditional Perception of a Gifted and Talented Student** | **Gifted and Talented Student from Poverty** | **ELL who is also a Gifted and Talented Student from Poverty** | **SPED/504 Student who is also a Gifted and Talented Student from Poverty** | |
| **Learning: Use of Language** | | | | |
| Is highly verbal and  uses advanced  vocabulary  Exhibits richness of  expression,  elaboration, and  fluency  Uses complex  sentences effectively  Naturally uses  metaphors and  analogies to express  relationships | May have limited  verbal skill and uses  vocabulary limited to  informal language  Exhibits richness of  expression when  entertaining or telling  a story  Uses advanced  nonverbal expression  May lack cause and  effect relationships in  sentence structure  Uses figurative  language in  comparisons to  people and  entertainers  May try to shock teacher or peers to get attention | Displays limited  thoughts in English but may be rich in native language  Expresses language  nonverbally due to  limitations in native  language and English  May use inventive  vocabulary  combining both  languages  Develops new  language quickly  when given the  opportunity  Gains language  proficiency through a  cycle of silence in  order to avoid errors in speech | Is highly verbal with  advanced  vocabulary, but may  experience great  difficulty in written  language  Demonstrates strong  listening  comprehension and  recall  May use language in  inappropriate ways  and at inappropriate  times  Creatively finds  alternative ways of  communicating  Easily learns  compensatory language systems, such as Braille, sign language | |
| **Learning: Curiosity and Questioning Attitude** | | | | |
| Is inquisitive  Doesn’t accept information at first glance  Asks penetrating  questions  Shows curiosity and inner drive for thorough,  independent understanding | Is often obnoxious  with questions  Likes to stump people  May enjoy questions  that “shock” people  Questions authority  Asks questions that  focus on relationships  Questions issues related to fairness  Is unwilling to follow  rules  May demonstrate self-destructive behaviors  because of curiosity | Is curious and can learn to be independent, but still  values relationships  Asks questions to learn  and reinforce relationships and fairness  May be culturally  conditioned NOT to  question | Has a strong  questioning attitude  May appear disrespectful when questioning  information and facts  presented by the teacher  Enjoys active inquiry,  experimentation, and  discussion |
| **Learning: Preferences** | | | | |
| Thinks holistically; sees the big picture  Makes abstract and  sometimes random  connections | Benefits from  discovery learning  Thinks conceptually  Benefits from use of  manipulatives  Makes concrete,  sensory, and/or  emotional connections | Benefits from  kinesthetic learning  experiences  Thinks visually  Does not respond to  aural input | Demonstrates  exceptional abilities in  geometry, science,  arts, and music  Performs better with  more challenging or  complex work; dislikes rote, fact, and skill level learning  Loves construction,  using computer  simulations;  demonstrates strength  in mechanical and  spatial skills; is drawn  to inventions  Demonstrates love of  and great skill at drawing, but may have poor handwriting | |
| **Motivation: Sensitivity and Maturity** | | | | |
| Is concerned with  right and wrong,  good and bad  Evaluates and  passes judgment on  events, people, and  things  Needs to see  purpose in activities  and rules  Prefers older or adult  company because  of Intellectual needs  May not be accepted by same age peers and may feel isolated | Passes judgment on an unfair system and people representing that system  Identifies with the antihero  Uses situational ethics;  right and wrong depends on the situation  Has a more pronounced need to see purpose for  following rules  Withholds trust until  sincerity is proven  Is more willing to accept new information once  trust is established  Often matures earlier  than age peers since  accepts responsibilities for others  Is sensitive to the feelings of those they like  May be isolated from  peers by economic  differences as well as  giftedness | Places high  importance on the  needs of the peer  group and/or family  Willing to defend  the needs of the  group  Needs to hide  academic  achievement if it is  not valued by the  peer group  Seeks sincerity, honesty  May be particularly  sensitive to racial  and/or cultural  issues  May be perceived as a loner due to cultural, racial, or linguistic isolation combined with  isolation due to giftedness and socioeconomic status | Disguises low self esteem through immature behaviors such as anger, crying, disruptive behaviors, or withdrawal  Has advanced ideas  and opinions and is  uninhibited in  expressing them  Is highly intuitive and  insightful; may think  and perceive multi-dimensionally  (using all senses) |
| **Motivation: Interest and Persistence** | | | |
| Has a wide range of  interests  Has very focused  interests  Is passionate about  certain topics to the  exclusion of others  Has a wide range of  interests that are often  unrelated to school  topics/subjects  Is unaware of many  topics that may potentially be of interest  Demonstrates persistent, intense concentration  Has a long attention  span in areas of interest  Is often persistent in  self-selected tasks | Is interested in things  and ideas that are  relevant to their lives  and personal  relationships  Lacks exposure to  many topics of  potential interest  Persists in areas of  interest usually  unrelated to school  Is less aware of timelines and deadlines  Has difficulty staying  focused due to random thoughts and ideas  Is impulsive | Is interested in things  and ideas that are  relevant to home and  family  Is willing to complete tasks and maintain interest to make connections and  build relationships | Has a wide range of  interests that are not  related to school  topics and learning  Lacks motivation,  interest, and patience  for learning in areas  that do not interest  the student  Demonstrates  persistence and  concentration in  areas of strengths and  interests  Has very focused interests or a passion about a certain topic to the exclusion of all others—often not related to school topics |
| **Creativity: Sense of Humor** | | | |
| Displays a keen sense  of humor  Uses puns, jokes, and  riddles  Understands subtle  humor and nuances  of language | Imitates people and  events, as a reflection  of sense of humor  Tells stories in colorful  ways  Mimics accurately  Creates original jokes  Often seen as a class clown  Uses humor to deal  with stressful situations  and avoid conflict | Displays humor  through the unique  use of language and  responsiveness | Uses humor to divert  attention from school  failure  May use humor to  make fun of peers or  to avoid trouble  Is highly creative, fun-loving, and witty  Dreams up clever jokes and stories  Grasps metaphors,  analogies, and satire |
| **Affective: Criticism** | | | |
| Is a perfectionist  Does not believe that  anything is ever good  enough  Cannot finish  something because it  still is not right  Has a strong self image  about academic performance | May become  frustrated because of  skill gaps or lack of  language to express  thoughts, feelings,  and ideas because of  perfectionism  Expresses frustrations  through acting out or  withdrawal from  teacher expectations  May display low self image about academics  Highly sensitive to criticism | Seeks approval from  teacher  Is especially sensitive  to criticisms from the  peer group and  family | Is highly sensitive to  criticism; may not  understand  constructive criticism  Is highly critical of self  and others, including  teachers  Has very low self esteem  due to focus on the disability—by the student and the system |

Source: Slocumb, P. D. & Olenchak, F. R. (2006). Equity in gifted education: A state initiative. Austin, TX: Texas Education Agency. <http://www.gtequity.org/docs/equity_in_ge.pdf>