

Gifted

GATE Booklet:

A training programme for teachers to join the Gifted programmes.

Part 1: Learning the gifted area



Image by pressfoto on Freepik

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2023

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.

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Introduction to the GATE project

A full training programme for teachers to join the Gifted venture.

Introduction:

Modern countries design national programmes to promote gifted children and invest increasing budgets in doing so. The long-term investment in these children aims to develop the country's educational systems, research institutes, hi-tech industry, social and political leadership and the way to support the development of potential leaders within the country. These nurtured gifted children become the future leaders of the country whether it is in academics, politics, industry or other segment of society. A learning society is one that grows, modernizes, and strives to become part of the developed and prosperous countries.

Nurturing of the gifted children is grounded in leading and awarding a culture in which excellence is a central value. It is a simultaneous obligation to personal excellence, self-abnegation and mobility along with the creation of a learning environment that is creative, flexible, dynamic and strives to promote challenging dialogues and continues creation of new knowledge.



Image 1. Children sitting in the classroom, a photo by Arthur Krijgsman, Pexels

Building a gifted programme represents creating a learning community in which pupils and teachers are equal in their obligation and curiosity about new knowledge, field of expertise and enhancing the range of aspects of consciousness, to express their unique skills and to create appropriate learning and education patterns while constantly innovating.

The main objective of the gifted programme:

- To build a national programme that will trace, select, teach and educate the gifted children living in the country.
- To give children from all layers of society a fair and equal chance to bring forward their qualities and abilities.
- To develop a perception of personal excellence, moral and social responsibility aside from the involvement and personal commitment to the environment and other factors.

The main components of the gifted programme:

- Promotion of nurturing programmes that answer cognitive, emotional, social and moral needs and aspects of the gifted children throughout the years.
- Tracing and selecting gifted and excellent pupils and referring them to the adequate programme suiting them and their needs.
- Developing research and assessment tools to evaluate the programme and its success while developing cooperation with other developed countries.
- Developing training and courses for teachers who will teach these gifted children allowing them to reach higher potential

What would the programme represent to the society?

- **Human rights** – equal and quality education is accessible to everyone.
- **Excellence** – a society that sees excellence as a central value.
- **Social equality** – every person, from all layers gets a fair chance.
- **Investing in people.**
- **Investing in the future.**

Teachers Training Programme to Support Gifted and Talented Students (GATE)

GATE is an international project financed under the Erasmus+ programme. GATE aims to enhance the **competencies and skills of primary education teachers and mentors to help gifted and talented pupils (ages 8-11 y.o) develop their full potential**. To fulfil this hefty goal, the project also foresees the attainment of the 4 following specific objectives.

- To design an innovative **teaching methodology** for GATE pupils.
- To provide a **training programme** for primary education teachers.
- To increase the academic performance of “GATE underachievers” in **STEM subjects**.
- To **increase awareness** among teachers, educators, school staff, public authorities, and education experts about GATE students.

Project partners:



Learning the gifted area

Main topics:

- Definitions of giftedness and the gifted child.
- Measuring, testing and identifying the gifted child.
- The characteristics, behaviors and sociability of the gifted child during their maturation period.
- The social infrastructure of the gifted child.
- Characteristics of families the gifted child grows in.
- What can be expected from the identified gifted child in terms of academic abilities, learning pace and learning difficulties?
- What can we expect from the identified gifted child in terms of individual and social behaviors in various situations?
- What is the image of the graduate we would like to see in terms of academic achievements, behavior and values?

Definitions of giftedness and the gifted child

Definition of gifted children:

Gifted children are the ones who hold the 2-3 highest percentiles of assessed intelligence (I.Q. – Intelligence quotient) in the broad population. Excellent children are the ones holding the 92-97 percentiles.

If the average IQ is measured at 100 and the SDV (standard deviation) is 15, then the gifted are the ones populating the area of more than 2 STV, or, in other words, measuring 130 IQ as shown in the following curve.

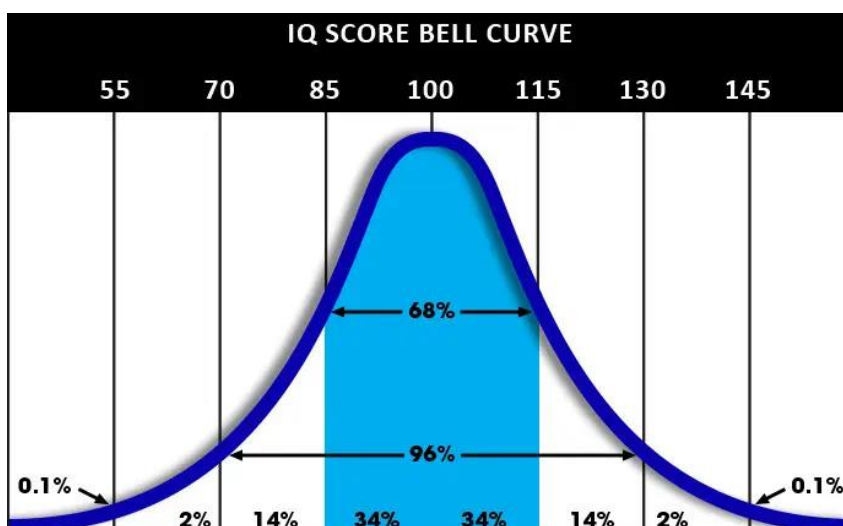


Image 2. IQ score bell curve, <https://iqtestprep.com/iq-bell-curve/>

Research has shown that the true development of a child's IQ level is constructed from 3 main elements:

$$\text{IQ} = \text{Heritage (40\%)} + \text{Environment (40\%)} + \text{Heritage/environment (20\%)}$$

- Approximately 40% of the natural IQ level comes from the child's parents. As such, the more intelligent the parents are, the higher the chance that the child's potential is higher.

- An approximate additional 40% of IQ level is influenced by environmental factors, including exposure to knowledge and information, parental and societal role models, higher expectations, and access to tools that enable the realization of those expectations.
- The final approximately 20% of IQ development occurs when children are challenged to engage in higher-level thinking and problem-solving. For example, in a zoo, we shouldn't merely point out that we're observing a giraffe or an elephant. Instead, we should encourage the child to notice the differences between an African giraffe and an Asian giraffe, or between an Asian elephant and an African elephant.

Notes to be made:

1. Potentially gifted children are **spread equally** to the general population.
2. Parents with **higher education** levels produce more gifted children.
3. There is extreme impact on the **environment** where a **child grows** and the potential for them to become gifted.
4. A child coming from a **nurturing environment** will have a significantly higher chance of developing their potential.



Image 3. Elder sister and brother studying at home, a photo by Andrea Piacquadio, Pexels

Where would we find the gifted children?

1. The gifted children grow in all layers of society.
2. What makes the difference is accessibility to the evaluation process that defines a child as gifted.
3. The social value of ensuring equal chances and an equitable approach to quality education compels us to identify potentially gifted children as early as possible. We must provide them with accessible processes that will nurture their abilities.

Measuring, testing and identifying the gifted child

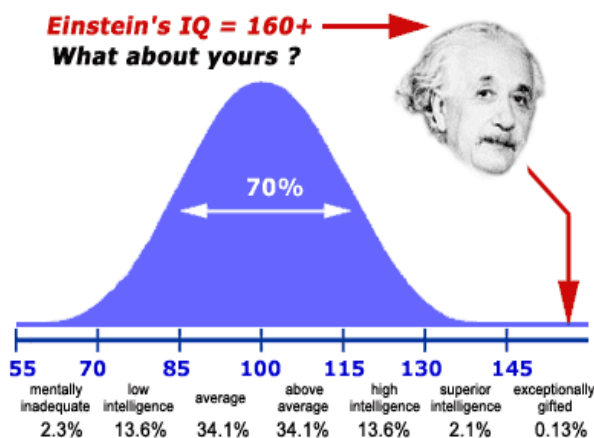


Image 4. The comparison between the IQ of A. Einstein and the average IQ,
<https://www.slideshare.net/SunilSharma53/forensic-psychiatry>

Understanding assessment:

- **Assessment** is a way of testing performance against a set of criteria.
- There are different tools and approaches to assess people, all designed to answer to a certain **characteristic** of a given person.
- Where a more **accurate** result is desired, the test should be more **detailed**.
- Accurate assessment is achieved using various and different means of testing.
- Assessment can be **informal** to check **progress** or **formal** to confirm **achievement**.

Historical background on assessment and testing:

Hippocrates (460-377 BC) divided people into four temperaments:

- ✓ **Sanguine** (extroverted and social),
- ✓ **Choleric** (ambitious and energetic),
- ✓ **Melancholic** (considerate and creative)
- ✓ **Phlegmatic** (stable, relaxed and perceptive).

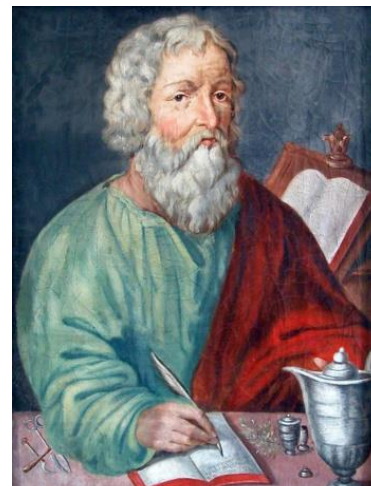


Image 5. Greek physician Hippocrates of Kos, also known as Hippocrates II
<https://www.havefunwithhistory.com/facts-about-hippocrates/>

The Greek-Roman physician **Claudius Galenus** (130-216 AD) combined these with the four natural elements and seasons.

- ✓ Autumn - Melancholic - Earth.
- ✓ Winter - Phlegmatic - Water.
- ✓ Spring - Sanguine - Air.
- ✓ Summer - Choleric - Fire.

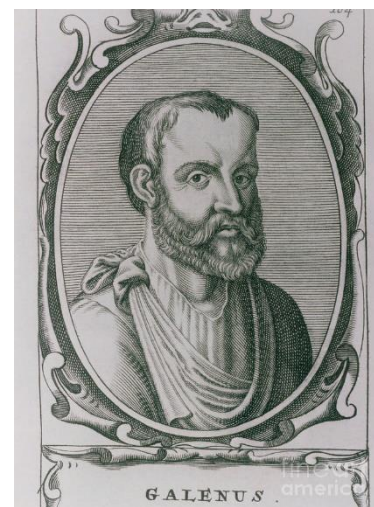


Image 6. Roman and Greek physician, surgeon and philosopher Claudius Galenus
<https://fineartamerica.com/featured/illustration-of-claudius-galenus-national-library-of-medicinescience-photo-library.html>

The psychiatrist **Carl Jung** (1876-1961) suggested four archetypes of personalities:

- ✓ Introvert vs. Extrovert
- ✓ Thinking vs. Feeling
- ✓ Judging vs. Perceiving



Image 7. Carl Gustav Jung, Swiss psychiatrist and psychoanalyst
<https://oseamespirit.com/2020/06/23/carl-gustav-jung-un-homme-remarquable/>

Francis Galton (1822-1911) made the first attempt at creating a **standardized test** for rating a person's intelligence. A pioneer of **psychometrics** and the application of **statistical methods** to the study of human diversity and the study of inheritance of human traits, he believed that intelligence was largely a product of **heredity** and that there should exist a correlation between intelligence and other observable traits such as reflexes, muscle grip, and head size.

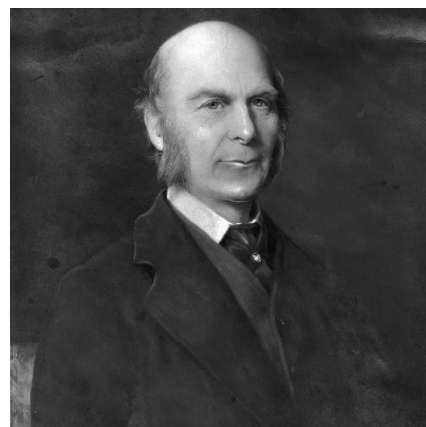


Image 8. British polymath and the originator of the behavioral genetics movement, Sir Francis Galton
<https://www.biography.com/scientist/francis-galton>

I.Q. – Intelligence quotient:

Alfred Binet (1857-1911) invented the **term IQ**. He focused on **verbal abilities**. It identifies intellectual disability in school children, but in specific contradistinction to claims made by psychiatrists that these children were "sick" (not "slow") and should therefore be removed from school. The score on the Binet-Simon scale would reveal the child's mental age in comparison to chronological age.



Image 9. French psychologist Alfred Binet
<https://www.verywellmind.com/history->

The rationale for testing people:

- People testing aims to know the person tested. It gives us the opportunity to assess the compatibility between one's qualities, abilities, the requirements and characteristics of a specific profile.
- A good test should be constructed to demonstrate a specific quality or ability.
- Standard – all people tested did so in equal format, time, and environment.
 - ✓ **Valid** - proven to be able to test the segment it is supposed to test.
 - ✓ **Reliable** - if used once more will give similar results.
 - ✓ **Objective** – results would remain unbiased by factors such as culture, assessor influence etc.
- A well-constructed assessment is the gathering of multiple angles of evaluation made by various tests and various assessors.

The assessor and their approach:

- The assessor is an intermediary aimed to bridge the desire to know and knowing.
- The assessor uses the right tools in assessing a specific desire to know.
- The assessor represents the mission they were sent to complete and their personal preferences should not play a role in the assessment.
- The assessor should have a wider picture of the whole process and the specific role they play within.
- Test running should be a reliable and objective procedure. The personality of the assessor plays a role in the analysis of the results. Well-constructed tests include a manual for grading performance, aiming to disconnect the assessor from the results.

- Modern approaches, mostly holistic, tend to relate to the subjectivity of the assessor as a fact and suggest using multiple assessors and sources of information to deal with this issue.

Creating and practising differential diagnosis:

- The term "**differential diagnosis**" was suggested by German psychiatrist **Emil Kräpelin** (1856-1926), and it was mainly used in medicine and pharmacology.
- Differential diagnosis is the art of **observation**, the ability to observe situations, behaviors, symptoms, and information and come to a firm conclusion that can become a significant step toward dealing with the specific subject of the observation and its desired goals.
- Differential diagnosis calls for higher **sensitivity to details**, greater **analytic** abilities, extensive knowledge in related areas, a free mind, and an internal freedom **to dare**.
- It is used to differentiate unique children with the potential of being gifted from the rest of the age group.
- As such, differential diagnosis is a skill that can be studied, but making it an expertise demands gaining thorough guided experience.
- In the case of gifted children, it is a tool used by kindergarten teachers to observe the whole group and come to a firm conclusion as to who is who.



Image 9. German psychiatrist Emil Kräpelin
<https://psychnews.psychiatryonline.org/doi/full/10.1176/pn.41.8.0031>

General assessment tools, known and modern:

- In general, two groups of tests are used:
 - ✓ **Personality tests** – aimed to assess behaviors, feelings, and perceptions.
 - ✓ **Intelligence tests** – aimed to quantify segments of human intelligence.

- In testing personality, we identify three groups of tests:
 - ✓ **Projection tests** (like TAT, Ink Blots, and evaluation cards).
 - ✓ **Self-reporting inventory** (Big 5 personality traits – NEO240, MMPI).
 - ✓ **Group dynamics** – the person tested is given a mission as part of a group and is being observed.

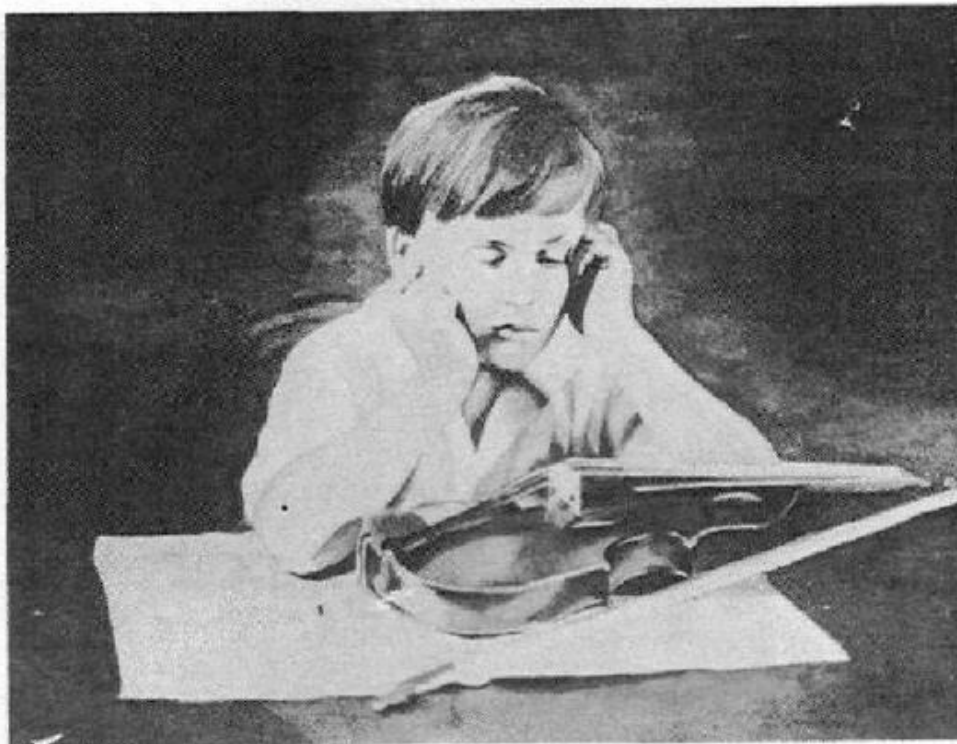


Image 10. The Thematic Apperception Test (TAT), a type of projective test that involves describing ambiguous scenes to learn more about a person's emotions, motivations, and personality
<https://original.newsbreak.com/@dr-donna-l-roberts-561947/2326999352888-projective-tests-in-psychological-assessment-the-thematic-apperception-test-tat>



Image 11. The Rorschach test is a projective psychological test in which subjects' perceptions of ink blots are recorded and then analyzed

<https://armano.medium.com/the-great-american-rorschach-test-1ff073d884aa>



Image 12. Evaluation cards, another type of projection test

<https://www.sociocracyforall.org/meeting-cards/>



Image 13. The Five-Factor Model, a framework for understanding human personality

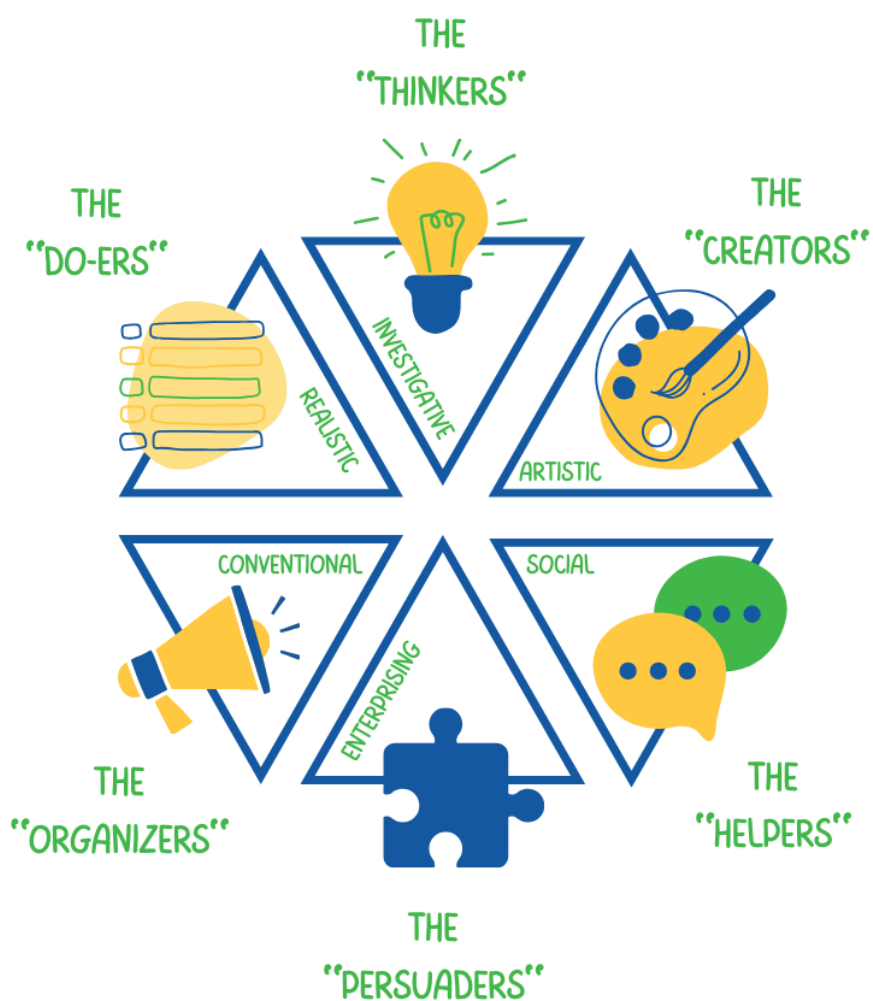


Image 14. The NEO240 Personality inventory



Image 15. The Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI)
<https://www.pearsonclinical.co.uk/store/ukassessments/en/mmpia/Minnesota-Multiphasic-Personality-Inventory-Adolescent-Restructured-Form/p/P100009125.html>

- In testing intelligence, we identify 2 major parts:
✓ **Verbal intelligence** (parts of Wechsler, parts of Stanford-Binet)



Image 16. The Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC), an individually administered intelligence test designed specifically for children between the ages of 6 and 16
<https://www.kiddyfamilyclub.com/icerik/cocuklar-da-objektif-testler-2041>



Image 17. The Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale (commonly known as Stanford-Binet or SB, a well-established and widely accepted intelligence test used to measure cognitive abilities and intellectual functioning <https://www.wpspublish.com/sb-5-stanford-binet-intelligence-scales-fifth-edition>

✓ **Operational intelligence** (like, parts of Wechsler, Raven) *Group dynamics*

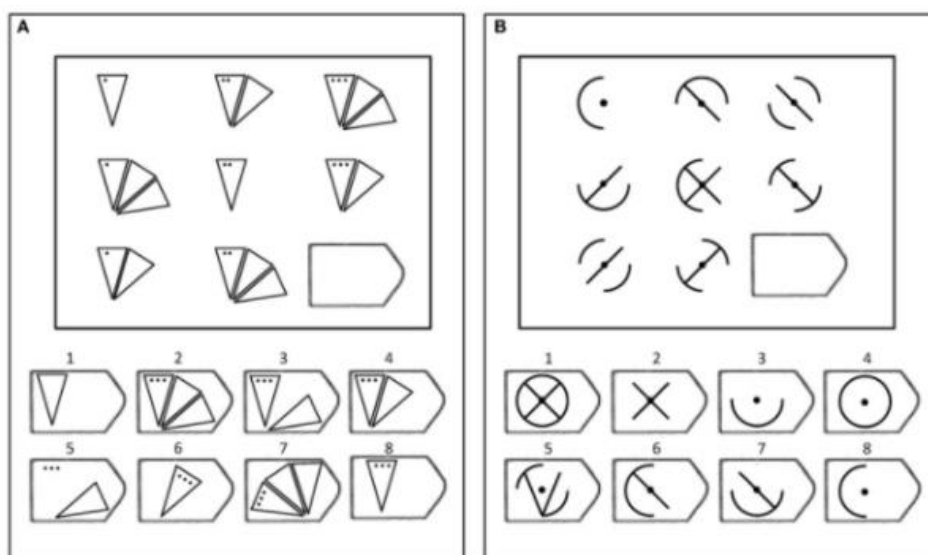


Image 18. The Raven's Progressive Matrices (RPM), often referred to as Raven's Matrices, a non-verbal intelligence test developed by Dr. John C. Raven <https://www.iqmindware.com/iq-eq-bioq-framework/>

- Modern testing tools consist of two revolutionary approaches:
 - ✓ Using newly designed assessment cards for the projection of personality
 - ✓ Using known box games to test intelligence (such as “Tangram”)



Image 19. Tangram puzzle, a traditional Chinese dissection puzzle

The structure of the Wechsler test WISC-R – Weschler's intelligence scale for children - Revised

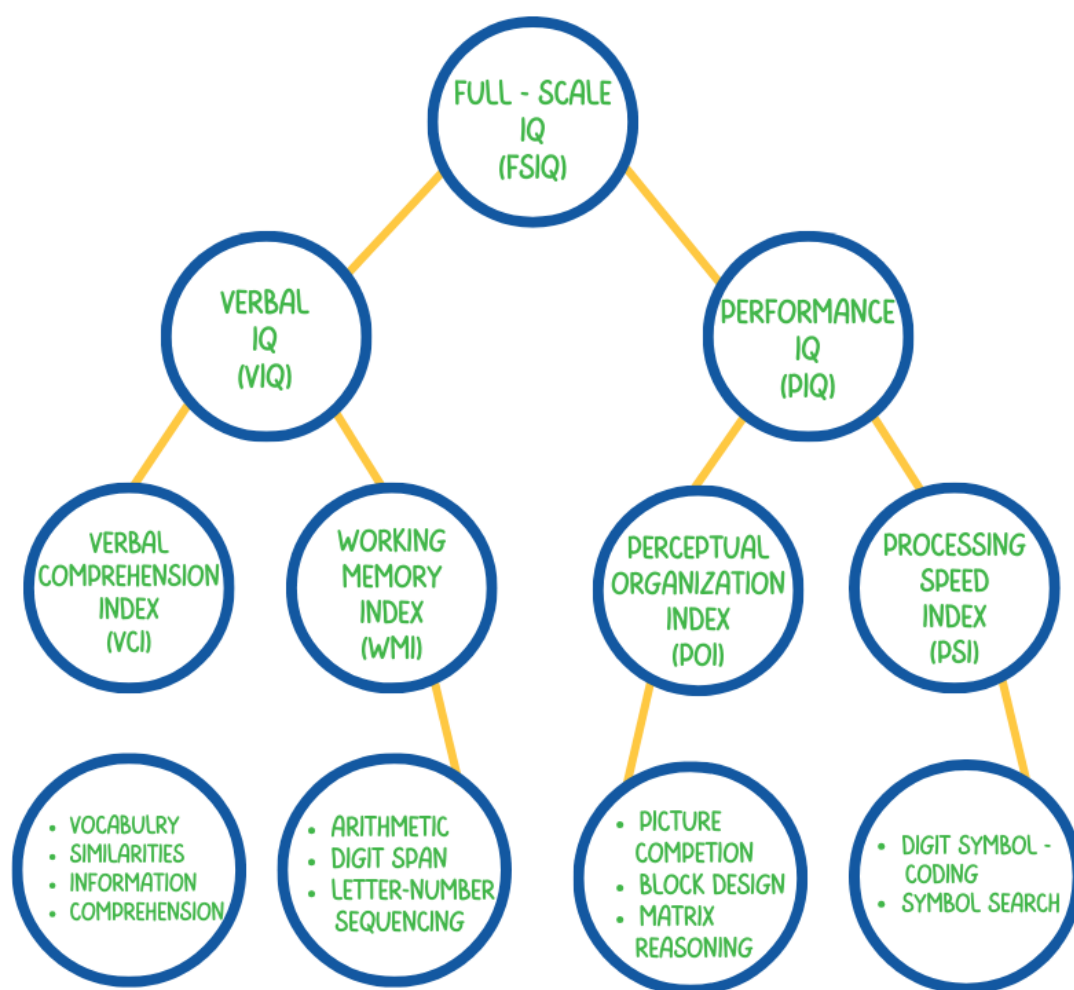


Image 20. The Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children-Revised (WISC-R), a revised and updated version of the original Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC)

Assessing children from age 3 to 7

Psychological approach:

1. Children are vulnerable, dependent, and easily influenced.
2. They are not yet able to plan their future.
3. They are biased by parental desires and are easy to manipulate.
4. Frustration threshold is very low.
5. Consent to cooperate can vary due to internal and external disruptions.

Tools used + practice:

1. For precise results you may use WIPSSI (Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence) or Binet battery of tests.
2. Kindergarten teachers and teachers' testimonials after being trained to practice differential diagnosis.
3. Games based on understanding instructions, speed, and motivation.
4. Evaluative cards aimed to reflect desired characteristics.

Assessing children from age 7 to 12

Psychological and social approach:

1. The pupil is ready to be tested after being preliminary observed.
2. The pupil rules the language he is tested with.
3. The pupil understands the reason he is tested for, the consequences of failure and success.
4. The family of the pupil supports them being tested and understands the consequences, sacrifices, and the reciprocal support the pupil will need.

Main tools used + practice:

1. Precise tools – WAIS

- a. **Verbal comprehension** – the ability to learn a language, organize information through language, to draw, to define, to deduct, to conclude and create terms.
- b. **Working memory** – attention function, the ability to preserve newly learned information in the STM (Short-term memory) through the verbal channel and be able to manipulate it.
- c. **Perceptual organization** – visual perception, spatial organization, analysis, synthesis, learning with minimum verbal arbitration.
- d. **Processing speed** – attention, speed of learning in real-time, how fast the subject internalizes a new rule and activates it.

2. Evaluative, non-direct tests:

- a. "TANGRAM"
- b. Evaluative cards

Assessing children above 12 years old

Psychological and social approach:

1. The pupil is mature enough to be able to cope with frustration while going through longer processes and evaluations.
2. The pupil is in the process of shaping their future, therefore very attentive to processes that might brighten this future.
3. The pupil, having significant life experience, should already possess an autonomous judgment system and internal values.

Main tools + practice:

1. **Precise** – WAIS, Raven
2. **Evaluative** – MMPI, NEO240, cards

See Annex 1 for a demonstration of the testing part.

The characteristics, behaviors and sociability of the gifted child during their maturation period.

Emotions and emotional development:

It is observed that gifted children exhibit **intense emotions**, deep interests, and strong opinions compared to other children their age. Sometimes gifted children have trouble managing these strong feelings.

For example, a young gifted child may be very upset when their drawing isn't as 'good as the one in the book'. A school-age child might worry more than others about friendships and other troubles or not always getting things 'right' in class. Older children may feel anxious about not being able to fix, acclimate or change. They might be extremely excited about a work of art and fail to understand why others don't feel the same way.

Strategies for handling strong feelings of gifted children:

Good communication is one of the keys to supporting a gifted child's emotional development.

It's all about talking, listening and responding in a **sensitive** way, even when the children's feelings seem out of proportion to what has actually happened. Talking and listening gives gifted children time to think through their feelings and gives them a chance to comprehend those feelings.



Image 21. Girl Reading Book, a photo by Andrea Piacquadio, Pexels

It's good to help children learn to understand and manage their emotions by **naming feelings** and suggesting ways to

manage them. For example, 'It sounds like you feel frustrated about your drawing. Why don't you have some quiet time with your favorite book? You

could work on your drawing again later.'

If the children are older, **active listening** and problem-solving can help them work through the ups and downs of adolescence.

Social development and skills of gifted children:

- Gifted children can think faster and/or more deeply than other children their age. So, they are often good at imagining what it's like to be in somebody else's situation.
- Sometimes these qualities mean the gifted child gets along well with others. Other times, it might seem like they don't quite fit in with children their age.
- It is observed that gifted children prefer to play or be with older children. This is because they are thinking and feeling at a similar level to older children.

Strategies for helping gifted children get along with others:

- Like any child, the gifted child will sometimes need assistance to learn about getting along well with others.
- A great starting point for getting along with people is understanding that **different people have different strengths**. Help the child learn this as part of the everyday family or school routine. For example, if the child has siblings, they'll learn that other people have different talents and interests.
- Give the gifted children opportunities to build and practice **social skills** through:



Image 22. Group of Children Playing on Green Grass, a photo by Yan Krukau, Pexels

- ✓ **Playgroups** – for younger children.
- ✓ **Interest-based groups for older children and teenagers** – for example, youth band, drama class, chess club or youth movement.
- ✓ **Groups and programmes for gifted children.**

Behavior: gifted children:

Like all children, gifted children can behave in challenging ways sometimes. But their challenging behavior happens for certain reasons. For example, it can happen because they:

- ✓ are quick to question family rules and routines
- ✓ are easily frustrated
- ✓ need challenging learning opportunities

Strategies for managing family rules and routines:

- Gifted children often have excellent memory, so they are likely to remember rules and routines well.
- However, it might be hard to get those children to follow family rules and routines.

For example, gifted children might not want to turn off the light if they're reading a book they're really interested in. Alternatively, they might come up with some excellent reasons why reading is more important than going to sleep.

- It can help to be firm about general expectations – for example, turning the lights off by 9 pm on weeknights. Still, being ready to negotiate about the little things is a good idea. For example, if the child wants to read past bedtime, one can let them do so on weekends.
- If the child has siblings, rules that state how the family treats its members can help them get along – for example, 'Knock and get permission before

going into each other's rooms.'

Strategies for handling frustration:

- Gifted children often set very high standards for themselves and get frustrated when they can't meet them. This can sometimes result in tantrums and other difficult-to-deal-with behaviors.
- It is great for children to work towards high standards. But they need to understand that they can't have high standards for everything.



Image 23. A Child with a Headache Lying on the Rug, a photo by Yan Krukau, Pexels

It's OK to make mistakes because mistakes help us learn what to do differently next time. **Self-compassion** is all about treating yourself kindly when things don't go well.

Strategies for finding the right learning opportunities:

When gifted children aren't given enough opportunities to learn outside of home, they might:

- not engage with activities or other children at childcare or school.
- seem fine at childcare or school but have tantrums or seem upset and withdrawn when coming home.
- distract classmates at school or stare out the window instead of doing the classwork.



Image 24. A Kid With Multicolored Hand Paint, a photo by Alexander Grey, Pexels

The only way to overcome those situations is to give them a proper substitute, it can be an after-class activity and studies, social activity like a youth movement, sports like gymnastics, learning music and playing an instrument and such.

The social infrastructure of the gifted child?

- A gifted child thrives best within a typical family environment, guided by capable and nurturing parents who serve as significant parental figures.
- Gifted children are most frequently found in families that are more educated and see education as a significant part of a child's development.
- Gifted children flourish when exposed to a rich array of new and diverse knowledge, coupled with improved accessibility to this wealth of information.

Characteristics of families that gifted children are growing in:

- Families with meaningful parental figures and role models.
- Children are given appreciation and meaning to education and learning.
- Parents demonstrate assertiveness, decision-making, flexibility, creativity, openness to a discussion and openness to criticism.
- Meaningful siblings.
- Appreciation of clean language as well as clean and organized housing.

What can be expected from the identified gifted child in terms of academic abilities, learning pace and learning difficulties?

(Based on Dr. Colm O'Reilly Dublin City University)

Many gifted children present unique characteristics that help identify them as gifted. From a young age, a child with an extended vocabulary or great curiosity about how things work may show early signs of giftedness. Other characteristics are not so obvious, however, making it difficult to identify gifted children in many settings, including school. It is useful for guidance counsellors to be familiar with and be able to recognize traits of giftedness that can be used to help the classroom teacher. Here are some general characteristics of gifted children. These are typical factors stressed by educational authorities as being indicative of giftedness. Obviously, no child is outstanding in all of these characteristics.

- 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.
- Shows persistent **intellectual curiosity**; asks probing questions; shows exceptional interest in man and the universe.
- Has a wide range of interests, often of an intellectual kind; develops one or more interests to a 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 their 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 and 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 several 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 an **intellectual challenge**; shows an alert and **subtle sense** of humor.

Learning disabilities among Gifted children

(Based on Linda E. Brody & Carol J. Mills – LD NEA)

Pupils who are gifted and have learning disabilities are those who possess an outstanding gift or talent and are capable of high performance but also have a learning disability that makes some aspects of academic achievement difficult.

Some of these pupils are **identified** and their needs are met. This happens rarely, only when a school specifically decides to identify and serve these students. Many children who are gifted but possess learning disabilities “fall through the cracks” in the system.



Image 25. A Stressed Boy Sitting on the Floor of a Library, a photo by Mikhail Nilov, Pexels

There are three subgroups of children whose dual exceptionality remains unrecognized:

- **Pupils who have been identified as gifted yet exhibit difficulties in school.**

These pupils are often **considered underachievers**, and their underachievement may be attributed to poor self-concept, lack of motivation, or even some unflattering characteristics, such as laziness. Their learning disabilities usually remain **unrecognized** for most of their educational lives. **As school becomes more challenging, their academic difficulties may increase to the point where they are falling sufficiently behind their peers.** And that can be the moment at which someone finally suspects a disability.

- **Pupils whose learning disabilities are severe enough that they have been identified as having learning disabilities but whose exceptional abilities have never been recognized or addressed.**

It has been suggested that this may be a larger group of pupils than many people realize. In one study, as many as 33% of pupils identified with learning disabilities had superior intellectual ability. Inadequate assessments and/or depressed IQ scores often result in underestimation of these students' intellectual abilities. If their potential remains unrecognized, it never becomes a cause for concern or the focus of their instructional programme. Due to this underestimation or overly inflexible identification and/or instructional expectations in the "gifted programme," they are rarely referred to gifted services.

- **Perhaps the largest group of overlooked pupils are those whose abilities and disabilities mask each other.**

These children sit in general classrooms, ineligible for services provided for pupils who are gifted or have learning disabilities and are **considered to have average abilities**. Because these pupils typically function at grade level, they are not seen as having problems or special needs, nor are they a priority for schools on tight budgets. Although these pupils appear to be functioning reasonably well, they are, unfortunately, **performing well below their potential**. As coursework becomes more demanding in later years, and without the help, they need to accommodate their limitations, their academic difficulties usually increase to the point where a learning disability may be suspected, but their true potential is rarely recognized.



Image 26. Sad schoolboy, a photo by Jonas Mohamadi, Pexels

What can we expect from the identified gifted child in terms of individual and social behaviors in various situations?

The challenges that gifted pupils face can be surprising to those who believe the myth that they do not need help and that they'll do fine on their own. Gifted children have differently wired brains that make them unique compared to their neurotypical peers. While most individuals think of giftedness in terms of academics alone, **giftedness also applies to a child's social and emotional development**. While all children must navigate the bumpy road of identity formation and social belonging, gifted children may experience these problems differently and more intensely as they develop and mature. To help parents and educators navigate common gifted behavior and emotional problems, here is a list of some of the most common challenges for gifted pupils as well as advice on how to help pupils through these challenges.

Some of the most common problem areas for gifted children are:

- **Sensitivities and Overexcitabilities**
- **Social Skills**
- **Perfectionism**
- **Self-Concept**

Sensitivities and Overexcitabilities:

Research has shown that gifted pupils experience **heightened sensitivities** and **advanced emotional processing**. These abilities are often put within the framework of Dabrowski's concept of overexcitabilities, which describes the heightened sensitivity and intensity for gifted children in the areas of psychomotor (surplus energy and movement), sensual (keen sense of smell, touch etc.), emotional (rich inner experience), intellectual (curiosity and search for knowledge), and imaginal (vivid imagination). Because of these unique

characteristics, gifted children may have **adverse reactions to intense stimuli**, which can look like problem behavior on the surface. For example, a perceptive child may see something on the news that frightens them and refuse to sleep alone at night. Children who are overexcitable in the intellectual and psychomotor areas may not be able to sit still at their desk and interrupt their teachers with questions.

Sensory or emotional sensitivity may contribute to a range of feelings, like frustration or sorrow, and a variety of gifted behavior problems, like acting out or withdrawing. Understanding how overexcitabilities or sensitivities manifest in a child may help parents find suitable solutions for problem behaviors.

Social Skills:

Many make the mistake of believing gifted children are inherently awkward and bad at socializing, which is simply untrue. Gifted child's problems with socializing often stem from their asynchrony and educational setting. Asynchrony, or uneven development, is often considered a core trait of giftedness.

These pupils may be college-age intellectually but still 12 in terms of their social skills. As a result, it can be difficult to make friends who share their interests or hard to know how to appropriately express themselves in group settings.

Depending on the educational environment, these children may be labelled with problem behaviors like being bossy, snobbish, anti-social, etc. Their difficulty making friends within a classroom may have nothing to do with their ability or desire to socialize, but instead be a result of not having like-minded peers with whom they can form a connection. When it comes to gifted friendships, there is a notable discrepancy between classmates, or age mates, and someone that they consider as a true peer.

Perfectionism:

Perfectionism can look like regular high-achieving behavior until it starts to damage the child's well-being. Perfectionist children may display a range of challenging behaviors, such as competitiveness with others, achievement at the expense of socializing, or avoidance of activities they fear they will fail at. Perfectionism is often related to self-esteem when the gifted child, or those around the child, expect them to be gifted all the time, in every subject.

While there is debate about whether perfectionism comes in both good and bad varieties, the issue for many gifted pupils is that this pressure to be perfect comes from their inability to see themselves beyond their role as the “smart pupil” in class. **Gifted children should be reminded frequently that their value is not based on their grades or performance alone.**

Self-concept:

Self-concept is another of the most common challenges of being gifted. Gifted children hit many adolescent milestones earlier than their peers but may struggle to develop a healthy self-concept during crucial identity formation periods. While parents are the primary way children learn about themselves, negative experiences at school and with peers may harmfully influence the way a gifted child sees themselves. **If the child feels unsupported and unaccepted at school, they may develop low self-esteem and feel that their giftedness alienates them.** Low self-esteem can contribute to a wide range of emotional challenges, including **anxiety** and **depression**. While gifted children may not be more susceptible to anxiety and depression compared to their peers, according to research by Tracy Cross and others, their unique intellectual gifts may contribute to an acute experience of anxiety/depression.

If you suspect your child is suffering from anxiety, depression, or any of the issues described above, it might be time to reach out to trusted friends for advice or seek a gifted therapist.

Fortunately, what works well for a gifted child's intellectual development may also help prevent these gifted emotional and behavioral challenges. Finding someone **to test your child for giftedness**, especially when using individual assessment tools, may help **reveal sensory processing** issues so that parents and educators can collaborate to provide the appropriate accommodations. Gifted identification may also help families access special programmes to support their development or advocate for acceleration. Using acceleration techniques, such as ability grouping or grade skipping, can provide pupils with intellectual peers who get them and want to interact in the same ways they do. It may also come as a relief to not feel like they must be the smartest kid in class.

The emotional and social benefits of acceleration are supported by the findings from "A Nation Empowered". Supporting the intellectual and social needs of gifted children can help promote a healthier sense of self and a growth mindset that will allow them to appreciate both their strengths and weaknesses.

What is the image of the graduate?

1. Become excellent in science, technology, art, literature, law, business, philosophy and entrepreneurship.
2. Demonstrate perseverance and persistence, creativity and originality, curiosity, intellectual and/or artistic honesty, ability and desire to constantly learn and develop the ability to think and act under conditions of uncertainty.
3. Demonstrate multidirectional thinking, interdisciplinary vision, analytical ability, efficient information consumption, broad vision and awareness of value implications.



Image 27. 2 Boys Writing on the Whiteboard, a photo by Mikhail Nilov, Pexels

4. A graduate of the unique programmes must be a person with a social commitment and a high level of morality and humanity.