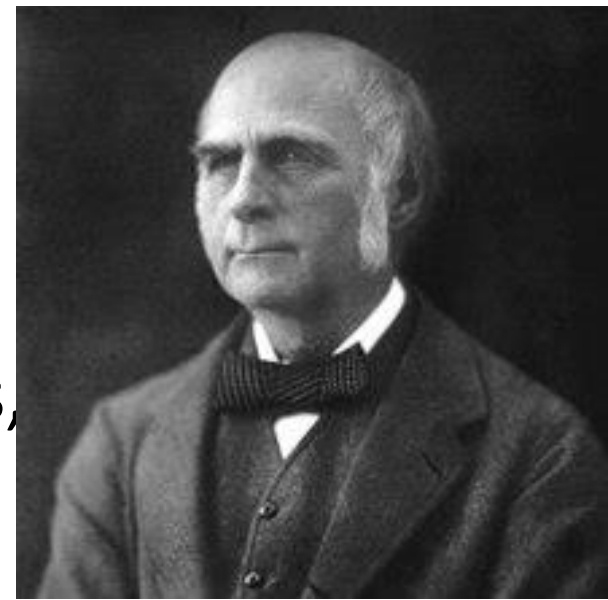


GIFTEDNESS

- **Exceptional children** is an inclusive term that *refers to children with learning and/or behavior problems, children with physical disabilities or sensory impairments, and children who are intellectually gifted or have a special talent.*

- Positive psychology focuses on wellbeing, happiness, flow, personal strengths, wisdom, creativity, imagination and characteristics of positive groups and institutions.
- The focus is not just on how to make individuals happy, thereby maintaining a self-centered, narcissistic approach, but on happiness and flourishing at a group level as well.

- The earliest scientific studies of giftedness were Sir Francis Galton's (1869) investigation of the eminent families of people, Hereditary Genius, and Terman's 35 year longitudinal study of gifted children.



- Galton found that eminence ran in families and concluded that giftedness was predominantly hereditary.
- Whether giftedness is innate or environmental continues to be controversial issues.
- Some argue that the talents of gifted children are the product of intensive deliberate practice while others argue that such talents are innate.



- The early focus on positive psychology is exemplified by such work as Terman's studies of giftedness (Terman, 1939).
- It is generally agreed that gifted children differ from their peers in ways other than intellectual ability alone.
- Evidence of this was found by the American psychologist Lewis M. Terman, who in 1921 initiated a study of more than 1,500 gifted children with IQs higher than 140.
- Following the study participants as they aged, Terman observed a greater drive to achieve, along with greater mental and social adjustment, among the gifted group as compared with nongifted children

- Valuable evidence suggests that *gifted children show outstanding innate talent before practice, but then are motivated to practice a great deal to master their talent and so environmental factors also contribute to the growth of their giftedness.*

Meaning and definition of Gifted Children

The term 'gifted child' has been defined by different scholars and psychologists in the following words.

Witty (1940): The term gifted or talented stands for those whose performance is consistently remarkable in some potentially valuable activity.

Marland report (1972): The gifted are those who possess outstanding abilities or potential in the area of general intellectual capacity, specific academic aptitude, creative or productive thinking, leadership ability, visual or performing arts .

Havighurst (1958) : The talented or gifted child is one who shows consistently remarkable performance in any worthwhile line of endeavor.

Prem Parischa (1964): The gifted child is one who exhibits superiority in general intelligence or the one who is possession of special abilities of a high order in the fields which are not necessarily associated with a high intelligence quotient.

On the basis of above definitions we may draw the following conclusions about the meaning, nature and characteristics of gifted children:

1. The gifted child is essentially an exceptional child.
2. In comparison to children of his own group, he or she is superior in some ability or group abilities.
3. In the most cases, the gifted children always exhibit superior performance in the area or areas of their giftedness only.
4. A gifted child need not necessarily possess a very high intelligence quotient (I.Q).

- **Gifted** children are, by **definition**, “Children who give evidence of high performance capability in areas such as intellectual, creative, artistic, leadership capacity, or specific academic fields, and who require services or activities not ordinarily provided by the school in order to fully develop such capabilities.”

Giftedness and Multiple intelligence

- Professor Howard Gardner has proposed that *intelligence is not unitary construct*.
- Rather there are multiple intelligences and giftedness entails not high overall ability but outstanding ability in one of these multiple intelligence.





Sub-Types of Giftedness



Betts and Neihart (1988) have categorized gifted and talented students into six groups.

Successful Gifted

Successful Gifted are the most easily identifiable, and may account for up to about 90% of the identified gifted students in schools.

They are the students who have learnt the system and are well adjusted to society with a generally high self-concept.

They are obedient, display appropriate behavior, and are high achievers,

Challenging gifted

They possess high levels of creativity.

They do not conform to the system and often have conflicts with teachers and parents.

They get frustrated, as the school system does not recognize their abilities.

They may be seen as disruptive in the classroom and often possess negative self-concepts, even though they are quite creative.

This is the group of gifted students who are at risk of dropping out of schools for unhealthy activities, like getting involved in drugs or exhibiting delinquent behavior.

Dropout gifted

These students are irritated and angry because they feel that the system has failed to meet their needs.

They are often perceived as 'disobedient', and may be disruptive or withdrawn.

They fail to complete schoolwork, and their levels of achievement fall well below their ability

Double-labeled gifted

These students are gifted but also have a physical or sensory disability or a learning difficulty.

Often their giftedness goes unrecognized because people fail to see past their disability.

They can become angry and frustrated, and may feel powerless.

- Stephen Hawking IQ is 160 and belongs to a genius group - only 0.003% of the world population.



Autonomous gifted

These students are confident, independent, and self-directed.

They are intrinsically motivated and willing to take risks.

They set goals for themselves and take responsibility for their own learning.

Culturally diverse gifted

These are students who are not identified as having exceptional ability.

Some may go unrecognized because their performance generally is affected by low self-esteem and low teacher expectations.

Their gifts and talents may not be recognized or valued within their school, or the values and behaviors of their culture may discourage them from displaying their abilities.

Renzulli three-ring model of giftedness

- Renzulli (1986) defined giftedness in his three-ring model as involving:
- 1. outstanding general ability as measured by IQ tests or specific aptitude tests for domains such as mathematical ability, musical talent or sculpture;
- 2. creativity in the domain of high ability; and
- 3. commitment and a high level of motivation to develop skills in the domain of high ability.

RENZULLI'S THREE-RING MODEL CONCEPTION OF GIFTEDNESS



- Within the **above average abilities** Renzulli makes a difference between general abilities (like processing information, integrating experiences, and abstract thinking) and specific abilities (like the capacity to acquire knowledge, perform in an activity).

- By **creativity** Renzulli understands the fluency, flexibility, and originality of thought, an openness to experience, sensitivity to stimulations, and a willingness to take risks.

- Under **task commitment** he understands motivation turned into action (like perseverance, endurance, hard work, but also self-confidence, perceptiveness and a special fascination with a special subject). Renzulli argues that without task commitment high achievement is simply not possible.

- Only if characteristics from all three rings work together can high achievement or gifted behaviour be witnessed.
- Recently Renzulli shifted his emphasis toward the background factors in his models, the personality and environmental factors influencing gifted behaviour.

Importance of Gifted Children

Any society progresses on the abilities of Gifted and Creative people. Arnold Toynabee has said that progress of all societies, depended on the creative minorities. The creative people would invent and create ideas, which would be put into practice by the gifted people.

Societies have declined because of their lack of interest in creativity. Talented people invent new ideas, find new ways of using things, produce gadgets. All the electronic gadgets, machines, military equipments, vehicles are all products of creative thinking.

Characteristics

- Unusual alertness, even in infancy
- Unusually large vocabulary and complex sentence structure for age
- Enjoys solving problems, especially with numbers and puzzles
- Often self-taught reading and writing skills as preschooler
- Deep, intense feelings and reactions
- Highly sensitive

- Thinking is abstract, complex, logical, and insightful
- Idealism and sense of justice at early age
- Concern with social and political issues and injustices
- Longer attention span and intense concentration
- Preoccupied with own thoughts—daydreamer
- Vivid imaginations (and imaginary playmates when in preschool)

- Learn basic skills quickly and with little practice
- Asks probing questions
- Wide range of interests (or extreme focus in one area)
- Highly developed curiosity
- Interest in experimenting and doing things differently
- Puts idea or things together that are not typical
- Keen and/or unusual sense of humor
- Desire to organize people/things through games or complex schemas

- A genius is **an individual who has exceptional capacities in terms of intellectuality, creativity, and originality** that surpasses others. A genius goes beyond the boundaries of a particular field and explores new knowledge.
- Gifted means the child has **exceptional academic, creative, artistic skills**. A gifted child may be able to perform exceptionally well in the classroom and display a higher level of performance than expected for his age.

Needs and Problems of Gifted Children

The gifted children have certain basic needs, for security, for love, for belongingness and the need to be accepted as individual.

These basic needs, the gifted children may have certain specific needs.

- The need for the knowledge and understanding
- The need for the creativity and ingenuity.
- The need for the development of their exceptional ability or abilities
- The need for self actualization or self expression.

Possible Associated Problems of Gifted children

Gifted children become bored and frustrated. dislike repetition and shallow curriculum, hide abilities to gain acceptance, receive negative adult attitudes, inquiry

Be unusually vulnerable, feel confused if thoughts and feelings not taken seriously

Set unrealistically high goals, feel inadequate, feel frustrated with others, fear failure, inhibiting attempts in new area

- Social Rejection by Peers:

In case the gifted child gets undue attention and appreciation , he becomes too much conscious of his superiority and develops a aristocratic attitude.

- Classroom Maladjustment:

Many of the gifted children learnt not only faster than others but also differently. In our normal classroom settings, teacher try to break a complex subject matter into small bits of information for being presented one at time.

- Problems aroused through the strengths of one's Giftedness

Problems aroused through the strengths of one's Giftedness:

- Their original and stimulating contributions to discussion may appear as a deliberate part of disturbance on their part for leading discussions off the track.

- Their strong sense of humor may not be understood or appreciated by their classmates and teacher resulting into their nicknaming as “class clown” who act such for gaining attention or creating problems in the class.

- Problems arising out of the dual Exceptionality

Many people still struggle to comprehend that a child can be gifted but also have learning challenges or even sometimes profound disabilities. Consequently children with special needs which result from both their high abilities and their learning difficulties are difficult to identify both inside and outside of the classroom. Subsequently this group within the gifted spectrum is often poorly served.

Characteristics of Gifted Students with Specific Disabilities

Characteristics of Students with ADHD

Poorly sustained attention

Diminished persistence on tasks not having immediate consequences

Often shift from one uncompleted activity to another

Impulsivity, poor delay of gratification

Impaired adherence to commands to regulate or inhibit behavior in social contexts

More active, restless than other children

Often talk excessively

Gifted Students with Learning Disabilities

- High abstract reasoning ability
- Good mathematical reasoning ability
- Keen visual memory, spatial skills
- Advanced vocabulary
- Sophisticated sense of humor
- Imaginative and creative
- Insightful
- Exceptional ability in geometry, science, arts, music
- Good problem-finding and -solving skills
- Difficulty with memorization, computation, phonics, and/or spelling
- Distractibility and/or disorganization
- Supersensitivity
- Perfectionism

Gifted Students with Hearing Impairments

- Development of speech-reading skills without instruction
- Early reading ability
- Excellent memory
- Ability to function in the regular school setting
- Rapid grasp of ideas
 - High reasoning ability
 - Superior performance in school
 - Wide range of interests
 - Nontraditional ways of getting information
 - Use of problem-solving skills in everyday situations

Example

Rahul, a 5th standard boy was well built and good in studies. He was often called 'book worm' by his classmates. He often felt that he is not accepted by his classmates, who according to him were slow learners. He could not be easily convinced, as he would ask for proof. His parents were asking him to do well in his studies, otherwise the future would not be bright for him. He often felt that his teachers were not appreciating him for his work. He would answer the questions easily in the class and was prompt in his home work. Slowly he developed a type of disappointment in his studies and towards the school. He was often bullied by his classmates, as he was one year younger to them also.

Identify the problems faced by Rahul with respect to the special abilities he has?

1. The child may have some problems of adjustment and hence develops superiority feeling.
2. The child may feel isolated.
3. Class work was very easy and so boring to him.
4. The child may get bullied because of age.
5. Child may be pressurized by families, which he may not like.
6. Teachers may not like him because of questions.

Education Of The Gifted Children

There is an urgent need for a well thought-out programme or scheme of special education for the gifted children .

The following plans have been put forward by different thinkers for this:

- Separate school
- Ability grouping or separate classes
- Acceleration or double promotion
- Enrichment Programme