

Distinguishing Characteristics of Gifted Students With Factors

| | Traditional Characteristics | Characteristics of Culturally/Linguistically Diverse Gifted Students | Characteristics of Low Socio-Economic Gifted Students | Characteristics of Gifted Students With Disabilities |
|--------------------|--|---|---|---|
| Basic Skills | Ability to learn basic skills quickly and easily and retain information with less repetition | May require more repetition or hands-on experiences at an introductory level | Lack of opportunities and access to school-readiness materials may delay acquisition of basic skills | Often struggles to learn basic skills due to cognitive processing difficulties; needs to learn compensatory strategies in order to acquire basic skills and information |
| Verbal Skills | High verbal ability | May have high verbal ability in native language; may rapidly acquire English language skills if they possess academic skills in their home language | Lack of opportunities may delay the development of verbal skills | High verbal ability but extreme difficulty in written language area; may use language in inappropriate ways and at inappropriate times |
| Reading Ability | Early reading ability | May demonstrate strong storytelling ability and ability to read environmental print in home language. | Lack of access to reading materials may delay acquisition of reading skills | Frequently has reading problems due to cognitive processing deficits |
| Observation Skills | Keen powers of observation | May display high levels of visual memory or auditory memory skills | Strong observational skills which are often used to "survive on the streets" | Strong observation skills but often has deficits in memory skills |
| Problem Solving | Strong critical thinking, problem-solving and decision-making skills | Strong critical thinking in primary language; often solves problems in creative ways; particularly interested in solving "real-world" problems | Excels in brainstorming and solving "real-world" problems; strong critical thinking ability; rapid decision-making skills | Excels in solving "real-world" problems; outstanding critical thinking and decision-making skills; often independently develops compensatory skills |
| Persistence | Long attention span — persistent, intense concentration | Long attention span — persistent, intense concentration | Persistent in areas of interest usually unrelated to school | Frequently has attention deficit problems but may concentrate for long periods in areas of interest |

Albuquerque Public Schools Gifted Task Force; developed by E. Nielsen (1999).

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| Curiosity | Questioning attitude | Some culturally diverse children are raised not to question authority | Questioning attitude which may at times be demonstrated in a confronting or challenging way | Strong questioning attitude; may appear disrespectful when questioning information, facts, etc. presented by teacher |
| Creativity | Creative in the generation of thoughts, ideas, actions; innovative | Often displays richness of imagery in ideas, art, music, primary language, etc.; can improvise with commonplace objects | Strong creative abilities | Unusual imagination; frequently generates original and at times rather "bizarre" ideas |
| Risk Taking | Takes risks | Degree of risk taking may depend upon the familiarity of the situation based on different cultural experiences | Takes risks often without consideration of consequences | Often unwilling to take risks with regard to academics; takes risks in non-school areas without consideration of consequences |
| Humor | Unusual, often highly developed, sense of humor | Humor may be displayed through unique use of language and responses | May use humor to become "class clown," to deal with stressful situations, and to avoid trouble | Humor may be used to divert attention from school failure; may use humor to make fun of peers or to avoid trouble |
| Maturity | May mature at different rates than age peers | Accepts responsibilities in the home normally reserved for older children | Often mature earlier than age peers since they must accept responsibilities in the home which are normally reserved for older children or even adults; inexperience may make them appear socially immature | Sometimes appear immature since they may use anger, crying, withdrawal, etc. to express feelings and to deal with difficulties |
| Independence | Sense of independence | May be culturally socialized to work in groups rather than independently | Circumstances often have forced the student to become extremely independent and self-sufficient | Requires frequent teacher support and feedback in deficit areas; highly independent in other areas; often appears to be extremely stubborn and inflexible |

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| Emotionality | Sensitive | May be sensitive, particularly to racial or cultural issues | May be critical of self and others including teachers; can understand and express concern about the feelings of others even while engaging in anti-social behavior | Sensitive regarding disability area(s); highly critical of self and others including teachers; can express concern about the feelings of others even while engaging in anti-social behavior |
| Social Skills | May not be accepted by other children and may feel isolated | May be perceived as a loner due to racial/cultural isolation and/or inability to speak English; entertains self easily using imagination in games and ingenious play | Economic circumstances as well as his/her giftedness may isolate the student from more financially secure peers | May be perceived as a loner since they do not fit typical model for either a gifted or a learning disabled student; sometimes has difficulty being accepted by peers due to poor social skills |
| Leadership | Exhibits leadership ability | May be a leader in the community but not in the school setting; demonstrates "street-wise" behavior | May be a leader among the more non-traditional students; demonstrates strong "street-wise" behavior; often excels in brainstorming and problem-solving around social issues | Often leaders among the more non-traditional students; demonstrate strong "street-wise" behavior; the disability may interfere with ability to exercise leadership skills |
| Broad Interests | Wide range of interests | Interests may include individual culturally related activities | Wide range of interests that are often unrelated to topics/subjects addressed in school | Wide range of interests but is handicapped in pursuing them due to process/learning problems |
| Focused Interests | Very focused interests, i.e., a passion about a certain topic to the exclusion of others | Very focused interests, i.e., a passion about a certain topic to the exclusion of others | Very focused interests, i.e., a passion about a certain topic to the exclusion of others — usually not related to school subjects | Very focused interests, i.e., a passion about a certain topic to the exclusion of others — often not related to school subjects |

Albuquerque Public Schools Gifted Task Force; developed by E. Nielsen (1999). Sources: New Mexico State Dept. of Ed. (1994) *Technical Assistance Document-Gifted Education*; Fox, L., Brody, L., & Tobin, D. (1983). *Learning Disabled Gifted Children*; Torrance, E.P., Goff, K., & Neil, B. (1998). *Multicultural Mentoring of the Gifted and Talented*; Van Tassel-Baska, J., Patton, J., & Prillaman, D. (1991). *Gifted Youth At Risk*