Recognizing and Nurturing High-ability Adolescents

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Mandate:
All Indiana school corporations will identify students of high ability in the general intellectual and specific academic domains and provide them with appropriately differentiated curriculum and instruction in areas of core content in grades K-12.

High Ability Education in Indiana Senate Bill 408

Definition:
IC 20-10.1-5.1-2: “high ability student”:
• (1) performs at, or shows the potential for performing at, an outstanding level of accomplishment in at least one domain when compared to other students of the same age, experience, or environment; and
• (2) is characterized by exceptional gifts, talents, motivation, or interests.

Who are our High Ability students?

Normal Distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Deviation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85</td>
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<tr>
<td>115</td>
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<tr>
<td>140</td>
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Proportion

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Bright vs. Gifted

Bright Children - Know the answers

Gifted Children – Ask the Questions
Is Interested

Is Highly Curious

None of my toys work because I took them all apart to see what makes them work.

Is attentive

Mentally & physically involved

ADHD vs. Gifted

- Difficulty with sustained attention
- Daydreaming
- Failure to concentrate unless in one-to-one
- Failure to complete independent activities
- Ability to listen attentively seems diminished
- Messy, disorganized environment
- Impulsivity, poor judgment in situations
- Problems adhering to rules for regulating
- Activity level often heightened
- Trouble following directions

Has good ideas

Has wild, silly ideas

Works hard

Plays around, yet tests well

Answers the questions

Discusses in detail, elaborates
Listens with interest  
Is receptive  
Shows strong feelings & opinions  
Is intense

6 to 8 Repetitions for mastery  
1 to 2 Repetitions

Average Percentage of new Mathematics Content in Three Mathematics Series

Grade Level  
Percentage  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Enjoys peers  
Prefers adults

Grasps the meaning  
Understand ideas

Completes assignments  
Initiates projects

Enjoys school  
Enjoys learning

Asynchrony  
Giftedness is asynchronous development in which advanced cognitive abilities and heightened intensity combine to create inner experiences from the norm. This asynchrony increases with higher intellectual capacity. The uniqueness of the gifted renders them particularly vulnerable and requires modifications in parenting, teaching and counseling in order for them to develop optimally.

Asynchrony = 13 year old body + 17 year old mind + 9 year old emotions

I’ve mapped out the concepts  
I’ve already grasped to save you

If you need additional help, please let me know.
Absorbs information
- Manipulates information

Enjoys straight forward presentation
- Thrives on complexity

Multipotentiality:
- An almost true story...

Non performers
- Lazy?
- Perfectionist?
- LD?
- Curriculum mismatch?
- Lack of support?
- Cultural mismatch?

The Perfectionist
- Is highly self-critical
- Do your best!

Signs of Dysfunctional Perfectionism
- Delayed starts
- Unwillingness to share work
- Extreme response to poor grades
- Relentless self-criticism
- Feelings of inferiority
- Fear of the future
- High level of anxiety
- Refusal to turn in work or accomplish goals
- Inability to tolerate mistakes
- Inability to cope with ambiguity & change
- Inability to share responsibility
- Susceptible to depression following productive periods

CLOSE TO HOME by John McPhee

How most college students decide on a major...
I'm looking for something to tell me how to be totally unique without anyone being able to tell.

Twice Exceptional Students (Learning Disabled and Gifted)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Deficiencies</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thinking Abilities</td>
<td>Self Expression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Creativity</td>
<td>Organizational Abilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-term Memory</td>
<td>Short-term Memory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstractions</td>
<td>Sense Perceptions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(distractibility, static on the auditory channel, sensori-motor)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem Solving</td>
<td>Social Interactions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insight</td>
<td>Self-esteem</td>
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Organizational Difficulties can be:
- Thoughts going in
- Thoughts coming out
- Stuff
- Time

Never ever, ever say:
- You’re smart.
- That’s easy.
- You should know that.

The Need for Challenge

To succeed you need to learn how to fail.
- Thomas Edison
- Abe Lincoln
- Louisa Mae Alcott
- Michael Jordan
- Walt Disney
- Even Bill Gates

Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky)

Challenge and Motivation

“Only when challenges and skills were felt to be high and working in tandem did all the varied components of well-being - cognitive, emotional, and motivational - come together for the students. Concentration was far above its normal classroom level, and self-esteem, potency, and involvement also reached their highest levels.”

(Csikszentmihalyi, Rathunde, & Whalen, 1993, p. 186)
“Social adjustment, not intelligence or prior school experience, was found to be the best predictor of academic performance and attitude toward school.” (Elksnin p. 5)

“It isn’t any great prize to be gifted, in fact, it can be a curse.”

“I didn’t belong as a kid and that always bothered me. If I’d only known that one day my differences would be an asset.”