

The Exceptionally Able Child

Definition:

Exceptionally able children demonstrate exceptional academic ability. These students have high cognitive abilities and therefore they relate to the world in unique ways.

Some characteristics of *gifted* children:

- Learns at a much faster pace
- Has the ability to process material to a much greater depth
- Demonstrates keen powers of observation
- Has learned to read at an unusually early age
- Shows an interest in reading widely and rapidly
- Displays incredible intensity in energy, imagination and intellectual prowess
- Has the ability to apply themselves to a given task for prolonged periods of time
- Has a well developed vocabulary base (perhaps more sophisticated than that of peers)
- Displays good powers of reasoning and problem solving
- Has an extremely good memory and can transfer information according to various circumstances
- Can be sensitive and emotionally intense
- Enjoys playing and experimenting with numbers

Meeting the needs of the exceptionally able child:

Challenging Material: It is important to engage these children in work which is both challenging and stimulating. This could include material which they would not normally encounter, such as languages, legal studies, archaeology, psychology, creative writing, science, advanced mathematical work, pharmacology and philosophy.

Acceleration: This strategy only suits the more advanced gifted children. These students often relate better to students who are a number of years older than themselves and so it might be appropriate to move them into an older class for all subjects.

Telescoping: Reducing the amount of time a student takes to cover the curriculum, e.g., cover 3rd and 4th class mathematics in one year.

Individualisation: This requires the student going into greater depth than peers on the same material, i.e., keeping a student with their age group but providing differentiated tasks for them.

Independent Study: This is an opportunity for students to pursue areas of personal interest or to individually investigate course topics.

Components of an individual study programme could include:

1. Identifying and developing a focus
2. Developing skills in creative and critical thinking
3. Using problem-solving and decision-making strategies
4. Learn research skills
5. Share the product with an audience beyond the classroom
6. Keep a portfolio of results (to evaluate progression)