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The need for multiple sources of information

Thus far, the use of characteristics lists to help with identification of gifted children has been the main focus of discussion as this type of identification 'instrument' is often used by parents. That is not to imply that it is the best or the only means of identification. The current multi-faceted view of giftedness requires a multi-sourced identification approach.

Various kinds of information, both subjective and objective, from a number of different sources should be obtained when a school or individual attempts to identify giftedness or exceptional ability in students. As shown in the outer ring of Figure 1, information from parents, teachers, peers, other school staff, community members and the child should be included for consideration in the identification process. These people contribute identification data through a variety of instruments shown in the middle section of Figure 1.

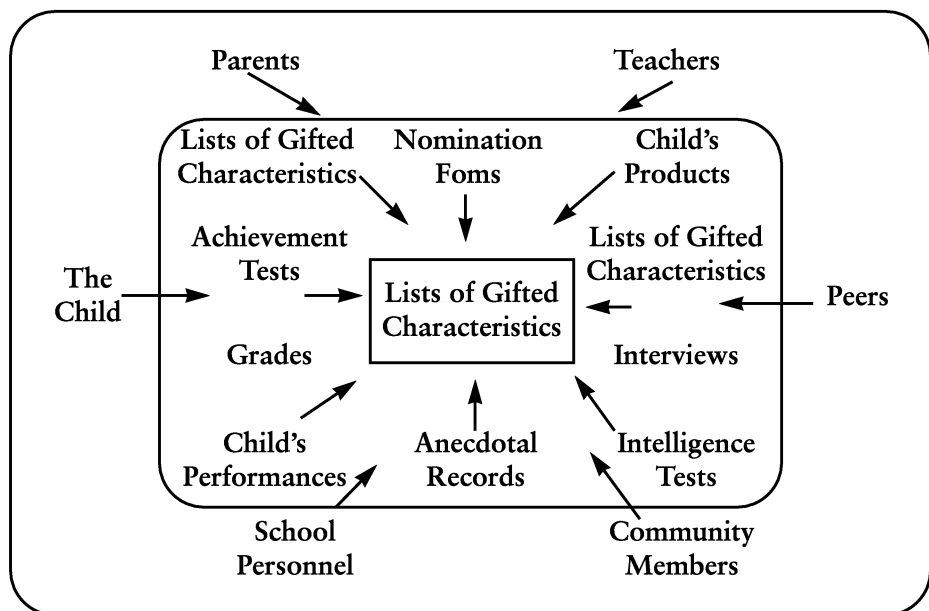
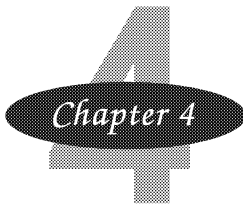


Figure 1: Identification Methods and Participants

Nomination forms, behavioural checklists, and anecdotal records are methods often used to gather subjective information. The products and performances of the child may also contribute information to the process, while interviews with parents and the child can often add extremely valuable information. While it is possible to use school grades in the identification process, the information needs to be regarded with some caution as poor grades may not accurately reflect a child's potential abilities.



Acceleration as an Option for Talented Students

Stan Bailey

In this chapter the author defines and explores the various forms of acceleration. Useful advice is given for parents, including some of the precautions that need to be noted.

What is acceleration?

Acceleration is an umbrella term that embraces several forms of *faster-than-usual progression through school*, usually by promoting a student to a higher grade, either full-time or part-time. It is sometimes referred to as ‘accelerated progression’, to emphasise that it is mainly about allowing a highly able student to change placement to a class that is working at a level more appropriate to her/his current achievement level. It is *not* the same as ‘accelerative learning’ (also known as ‘accelerated learning’) which is a *way of teaching* that is meant to improve the learning of all students in a class, regardless of ability.

It should be emphasised that acceleration does not usually mean that students are being made to speed up and learn faster than they are already willing to, but rather that the school is allowing them to progress at something closer to their natural rate. Acceleration means we have taken off the brakes! As David Elkind put it, acceleration involves arranging a ‘better fit’ between the school curriculum and the student’s abilities or level of development.

There are three main forms that acceleration may take, though there are several variations within each of these, namely:

- grade skipping;
- subject acceleration;
- early entry.

Grade skipping

Many people equate the term ‘acceleration’ solely with grade skipping, an example of this being when a student is promoted at the end of Year 3 directly



Understanding and Managing Your Gifted Child

Deslea Konza

The author of this chapter discusses the general management of gifted children from her own experiences as the parent of gifted and talented children. Many practical suggestions are given to help parents deal with things such as unacceptable behaviour and managing your own behaviour as a parent in different situations.

Introduction

The family is the first and most significant environment for any individual and the development of a child cannot be understood without considering these early and powerful influences. The family environment can nurture or it can neglect - either way, it will have a great impact on the developing child.

There is a great deal that parents can do to help their gifted children. Before I outline specific strategies that may help you manage challenging or disruptive behaviour when it actually occurs, there is a need first to examine how you might promote a home environment that will actively nurture and support the young gifted child and minimise the chance of those disruptive and damaging behaviours occurring.

Provide emotional support and a climate of acceptance

Gifted children have the same social and emotional needs as all other children. They need to belong, they need a secure self concept and they need strategies to help them manage the stress that comes as a result of being gifted.

It would be fair to say that the broad aims of any family would be for all members to develop positive feelings about themselves, to have confidence in their abilities to contribute positively to the family unit and to the wider community, and to feel emotionally supported by the family. In order for this to occur, the home must be a place of unconditional acceptance of the child, if not of the behaviour.