

Do you understand what it means to be exceptional?

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Importance of a scientific approach

The importance of scientific foundation is often ignored in the education of the gifted and talented.

Salamanca statement

UNESCO 1994 "Every child has unique characteristics, interests, abilities and learning needs"

and education systems should be designed and educational programmes implemented to take into account the wide diversity of these characteristics and needs.



These aims from 1994 are generally ignored by authorities, since pupils and students have become investments and "Human Capital", i.e. an economical value. Giftedness today is only interesting if it can contribute to economic growth.

"They are extraordinary human capital for all of society"
(Bleske-Recheck, Lubinski & Benbow 2004)

"The extremely smart ones are also the extremely wealthy ones" (Wai, 2012)

"All scholars and practitioners of education should always focus on the significance of the highly able for future prosperity" (Clinkenbeard, 2007)

Overachievement has become the norm, and underachievement a stigma.

Types of talents

Persson distinguished between four types of talents:

1. The Stars
High ability, high individual and team achievements
2. The Razors
"Too sharp for their own good" Competent as the Stars, but too aggressive and lacking in sensitivity and people skills. Not for team work
3. The Safe Bets
Not extremely competent, but reliable and employable.
4. The Iffys
"Close but oh so far" Are seen as naïve and too idealistic

Gifted Education Problem 1

There is a difference in the genetics. Inherited ability or talent play a very important role for top achievement in school.

There's nature and nurture

No-one can become gifted by deliberate practice or good teaching alone.

Genes are responsible for about half of sports achievements.

IQ is genetically inherited by 53%

Gifted Education Problem 2

Normal distribution applies to lots of phenomena, including IQ and giftedness.

Overachievement has become the norm to follow for all pupils and employees.

Politicians and policy makers dismiss normal distribution since it exposes the inevitability and inequality.



No wonder this happens, since man generally is programmed to accept illusion as truth for survival reasons. If truth is perceived negative, we tend to prefer illusion to facts.

Values are often understood as scientific facts.

The greater the political and ideological influence on education, the greater its reliance on illusion.

Why do gifted students try to hide their gifts?

A basic principle – you don't want to differ from the group, you don't want to transgress the norm or else you will meet negative reactions.

Problem:

The more extreme you are the more independent and non-conformist you are also.

*There is no such thing as a continuously gifted, empathic and morally high-standing leader! Any gifted person who perchance ends up in a leading position, at whatever level, no matter how compassionate, will invariably also change because of it. This change is always towards sociopathic and narcissistic tendencies. Great power **always** corrupts greatly!*

Practical applications

How to adapt teaching for gifted students

1. Enrichment

Following the regular curriculum but elaborating it by specialised assignments and the coverage of wider and/or more advanced knowledge

2. Acceleration

Following the regular curriculum at a faster pace and therefore graduating at an earlier age (Note that grade-skipping is a form of acceleration)

3. Pull-Out

If inclusive education is the ethos of the school system, a pull-out strategy is often used in terms of advanced placement (AP). That is, the pupils remain most of the time with their class but leave to be taught more advanced classes than their a certain percentage of time every week. Focus for AP is most often Science and Math

4. Ability Grouping

Has been studied in general education research for a long time. It means to divide pupils in a class room with their ability levels in mind.

Consider the important following established fact:

1) In a mixed ability group the low achievers often benefit from the high achievers

when working together, but the high achiever gains nothing!

2) A high achiever needs to work together with other high achievers if they are to benefit in terms of curricular learning.

Cluster grouping is the term used for allowing 4 – 6 gifted pupils to form a group in the inclusive classroom who follow the general curriculum, but that is adapted for their needs.

5. **Summer Enrichment Programmes**

Are programmes offered by some universities, foundations and/or organisations worldwide with the needs of the gifted in mind. These are available in the US, Russia, Hungary, Austria

6. **Extra-curricular Enrichment**

This type of provision is offered outside of the regular school and is most often provided by foundations, charities or other organisations. Hungary, Czech Republic, Romania are countries with such a set-up.

Competitions by "Olympiads" in Maths, Sciences and Music are a kind of extracurricular enrichment which is very popular in The Baltic States, Russia, China, Germany.

7. **Full-time separate schools for the gifted and talented**

In a global perspective it is fairly uncommon to separate gifted and talented students from regular pupils completely. The international norm, in accordance with the Salamanca Declaration, tends to be inclusion and integration. There are however also a number of specialised schools around in the US, Russia, and in Germany (inherited from DDR). Observe that these specialised schools are not to be confused with *social elite schools*