

# Strategies for recognizing talented learners, including twice exceptional learners

## Table of Contents

<b>Part 1 .....</b>	<b>2</b>
1. Definitions.....	2
1.2. What is talent and what is the difference to giftedness? .....	2
1.2. What is giftedness? .....	4
1.3. What is intelligence? .....	5
<b>Part 2 .....</b>	<b>8</b>
2.1. Identification by psychologists:.....	8
2.2. Recognition by the educators or/and the parents.....	8
2.3. On the question of diagnosing giftedness.....	8
2.4. Profiles of the gifted, talented and twice-exceptional individuals.....	9
Type I: The Successful .....	10
Type II: The Challenging .....	10
Type III: The Underground .....	10
Type IV: The Dropout and underperformer .....	10
Type V: The Twice exceptional.....	11
Type VI: The Autonomous.....	11
2.5. Conclusion.....	11
<b>Part 3 .....</b>	<b>12</b>
Gifted and Talented Students Recognizing Questionnaire .....	12
<b>Part 4 .....</b>	<b>19</b>
Resources to better understand .....	19
<b>Part 5 .....</b>	<b>22</b>
Twice exceptional learners .....	22
1. Who are they?.....	22

2. What are the unique characteristics of twice exceptional learners?.....	23
3. What characteristics can be observed in twice exceptional students but are not unique to them?.....	24
<b>Part 6 .....</b>	<b>25</b>
Twice exceptional Students Recognizing Questionnaire .....	25
<b>Part 7 .....</b>	<b>26</b>
Suspicion of giftedness or talent: what to do? .....	26
1) On the basis of the general observation grid.....	26
2) Based on the observation grid of doubly exceptional learners .....	27

## Part 1

### 1. Definitions

**Talented, exceptionally gifted, intelligent, ... For all these terms there is a big variety of definitions, which slightly differ from each other. We have chosen Francoys Gagne`s model to illustrate the differences.**

#### 1.2. What is talent and what is the difference to giftedness?

François Gagné, professor of psychology at the University of Quebec in Montreal, in his Differentiating Model of Giftedness and Talent (MDDT) revised in 2021, distinguishes

- gift or giftedness (in scheme G): remarkable natural aptitude in at least one skill area;
- and talent (in scheme T): remarkable knowledge and know-how in at least one field of human activity.

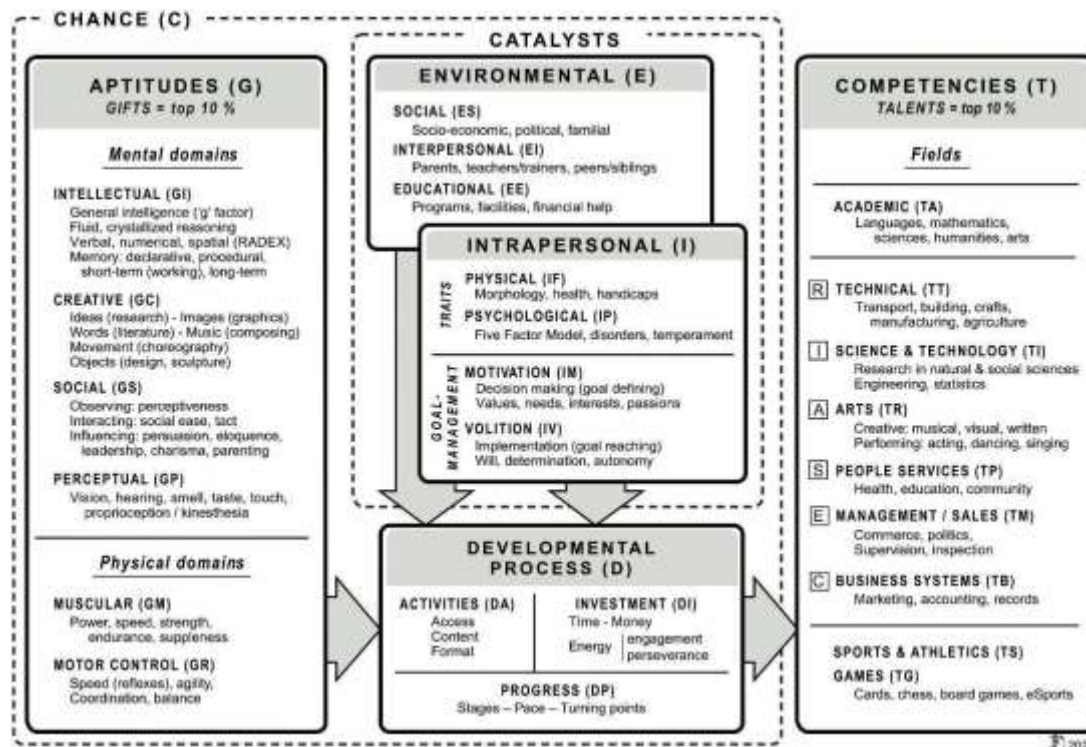
In this model, the term giftedness designates the possession and use of untrained and spontaneously expressed natural abilities (called aptitudes or gifts) in at least one domain to a degree that places a learner among the top 10% of his or her age peers. By contrast, the term talent designates the superior mastery of systematically developed activities (or skills) and knowledge in at least one field of human activity to a degree that places a learner's achievement within the upper 10% of age-peers who are active in that field or these fields.

The model presents six aptitude domains: intellectual, creative, social, perceptual, muscular and motor control. (Gagné François, 2020, <https://gagnefrancoys.wixsite.com/dmgt-mddt/the-dmgt-in-english> , consulted 1/4/2023)

Gagné identifies two catalysts: environmental catalysts (E) (social, interpersonal and educational) and intrapersonal catalysts (I) which are physical and psychological traits and motivation and volition

(focus on goal achievement, self-control, autonomy, determination). In order to move from aptitude to talent, alongside the presence of catalysts, a developmental process (D) is needed: activities, investment of time and energy and progress.

This model is preferred because the talents targeted belong not only to the field of general school subjects but also to the fields of Technique, Science and Technology, Arts, Social Service, Administration and Sales, Business Operations, Sport and Games. In addition, this model is among the most recent and takes into account the person as a whole.



As educators, we need to recognize

- talents related to the general subjects taught such as mathematics, languages, science, etc. which mainly belong to the intellectual and creative mental fields;
- talents related to technical and vocational courses in the qualifying education options, which belong to the intellectual, creative, perceptual mental domains and to the physical muscular and motor control physical domains;
- talents that are mainly exercised outside school and are less obvious to detect but whose recognition is a lever we can use to encourage our students. For example, Jessica, 12, who suffers from dyslexia and dyscalculia, has sewing skills well above the average of her age. Her teachers could, for example, ask her to give a demonstration to her class and use this demonstration to make a report, a video capsule (creation of a scenario, dialogues, etc.).

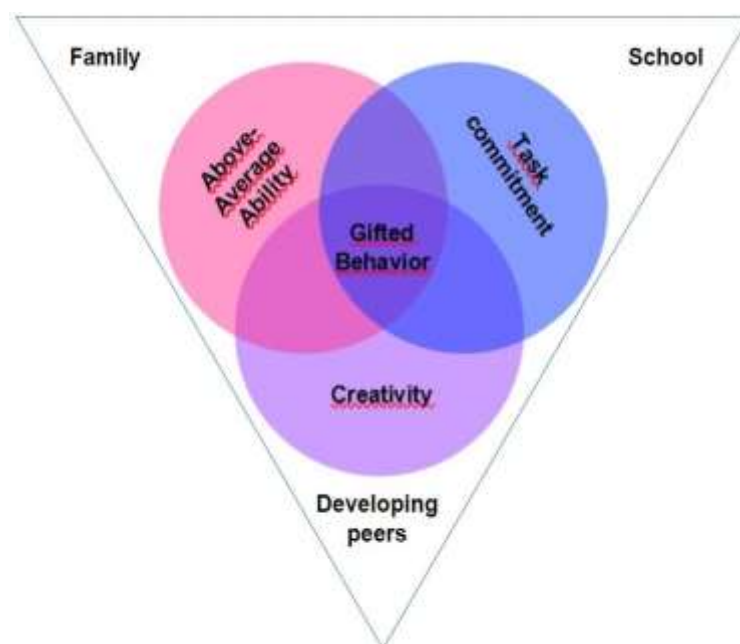
## 1.2. What is giftedness?

There are many theoretical conceptions of giftedness. Those of Joseph Renzulli/Franz Mönks and François Gagné are two of the most prominent.

Joseph Renzulli, an American psychologist who specialized in the field of high intellectual potential, produced a model (1978) which shows that above average ability needs three factors to be realized: above average ability, task commitment (motivation) and creativity.

Renzulli: Gifted behavior occurs when there is an interaction among three basic clusters of human traits: above average-general and/or specific abilities, high levels of task commitment (motivation), and high levels of creativity. Gifted and talented children are those who possess or are capable of developing this composite of traits and applying them to any potentially valuable area of human performance. As noted in the Enrichment Model, gifted behaviors can be found “in certain people (not all people), at certain times (not all the time) and under certain circumstances (not all circumstances).” (Renzulli. J.S (1978). What makes giftedness?)

Subsequently, Franz Mönks, a Dutch psychologist and founder of the ECHA - Diploma, completed this model by adding interaction with the environment, namely for the young person: family, school and developing peers.



The three-ring conception (Renzulli, 1978)

In conclusion, the achievement of outstanding talent requires three predisposing factors:

- 1) above average ability: e.g. having an absolute ear for music, being very tough at running, having a strong sense of leadership, being capable of great precision in welding metal parts, etc.
- 2) creativity: being able to explore, to experiment different ways to think and to play with ideas;

3) task commitment (motivation): a real intrinsic motivation to carry out one's activities, from which stems perseverance in the effort to achieve one's objectives.

This achievement also depends on three environmental factors: the family, the school and developing peers. It is easy to see that the family environment is of primary importance in nurturing and developing a child's exceptional abilities. If a family, which is musically illiterate, is unaware of a child's musical ability, it will be very difficult for the child to develop this talent in an environment that does not recognise it. As far as school is concerned, although some young people express their gratitude to the team that has surrounded their schooling or to one or two teachers who have understood and encouraged them, there are also young people who have not felt encouraged or even recognised by their educators for their exceptional disposition. Finally, sharing with people, young or old, who have the same level of ability (developing peers) is essential as it allows the young person to feel less isolated and to confront others of similar strength, to see how they cope with challenges.

### 1.3. What is intelligence?

With that term it is completely the same as with the other two terms – there are a lot of different, but at the same time similar explanations. We can define the word intelligence as the capacity for abstraction, understanding, creativity, problem – solving, etc.

To shed light on the diversity of areas in which talents can develop, the model of multiple intelligences, developed by Howard Gardner (1998), may be useful. While describing the different areas of intelligence separately, Gardner emphasizes their interdependence. They should not be pitted against each other, which is still often the case in our culture. Although Gardner's theory has never been scientifically validated, we believe that it might be a good entry point for young people's learning. Focusing our good teaching practices on stimulating the different styles of intelligence can only be a plus in order to develop the skills of our young talents.

#### LINGUISTIC INTELLIGENCE

- Rich vocabulary
- Good linguistic expression
- High general knowledge
- Interest in books, stories, poems...
- Preference for word games, rhymes...
- Tendency to invent stories, poems...

#### MUSICAL INTELLIGENCE

- Rapid recognition of melodies
- Differentiated perception of tones and melodies...
- Quick and easy memorization of melodies
- Good sense of rhythm

- Knowledge of one or more instruments (or desire to learn a musical instrument)
- Invent and compose own melodies

#### LOGICAL-MATHEMATICAL INTELLIGENCE

- Good mathematical understanding
- Arithmetic thinking
- Easy/playful handling of numbers
- Early registration of quantities
- Good logical-analytical thinking (puzzles, jigsaws)
- Good understanding of cause and effect (reasoning)
- Trying alternative (creative) solutions to mathematical problems

#### PICTORIAL-SPATIAL INTELLIGENCE

- Talent in drawing figures (also mirror image)
- Good three-dimensional thinking (spatial thinking)
- Good ability to read maps and plans
- Fertile imagination
- Love of images, shapes, figures (abstract visualised content)
- Easy understanding of statistics, diagrams

#### PHYSICAL-KINESTHETIC INTELLIGENCE

- Talent for imitating movement sequences
- Good development of gross and fine motor skills
- Handicraft
- Talent for movement in dance, sports, etc.
- Good body awareness and differentiated body schema

#### PERSONAL INTELLIGENCE (INTRAPERSONAL)

- Independent identity and personality (self-will)
- High self-motivation and initiative
- Autonomy and independence of thought
- Ability to reflect on one's own actions (thinking about oneself)
- Good access to one's own emotional state
- Differentiated self-concept (knowledge of own strengths and weaknesses)

### INTERPERSONAL INTELLIGENCE

- Predilection for social life
- Talent for establishing and maintaining contacts
- Leadership (for groups)
- Good empathy
- Good ability to advice and help
- Good ability to cooperate and manage conflict

### NATURALIST INTELLIGENCE

- Interest in nature and landscape
- Love for plants and animals (often also pet owners, garden)
- Love for nature-related subjects (geology, zoology, biology, geography ...)
- Interest in environmental and ecological issues
- Investigation and classification of plants, foods, (microscopy, chemistry ...)
- Interest in evolution

### EXISTENTIAL INTELLIGENCE

- Enthusiasm for philosophical discussions
- Processing of philosophical concepts and theories
- Treatment of the content of religions
- Interest in ethical and moral standards of conduct
- Reflecting on questions of meaning
- Interest in existential questions of being

Intrapersonal intelligence and personal intelligence are the two components of emotional intelligence, which allows us to develop good relationships with our peers. Being able to observe the emotions of the people around us, and to adapt our posture, is essential for developing good social skills.

#### Resources

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/254092876\\_Giftedness\\_and\\_Talent\\_Reexamining\\_a\\_Re\\_examination\\_of\\_the\\_Definitions](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/254092876_Giftedness_and_Talent_Reexamining_a_Re_examination_of_the_Definitions)

<http://hautpotentielquebec.org/ressources/MDDT-FR-Survol1-Copy.pdf>

[Tessa KIEBOOM](#) - « Accompagner l'enfant surdoué » - Ed. de Boeck (2018)

[More details about multiple intelligences \(in French\)](#)



## Part 2

Whereas Part I dealt with the terms TALENT, GIFTEDNESS and INTELLIGENCE and the various models and graphs of Giftedness, Part II will deal with the identification of highly gifted learners by psychologists and/or educators and parents.

### 2.1. Identification by psychologists:

A valid scientifically based diagnosis of giftedness can just be carried out by psychologists. They use different kinds of tests. The best ones are tests in which the psychologists guide the learner through the test. This usually takes about two and a half hours. Next year, there will be a separate paper informing about the tests and the special methods used by the psychologists of Talente OÖ (one of our Austrian partners). When the educators come to Austria, there will also be a lecture on that.

### 2.2. Recognition by the educators or/and the parents

Neither the parents nor the educators have got the tools and the skills to carry out a psychological diagnosis.

The following research by experts might help:

### 2.3. On the question of diagnosing giftedness

Exceptionally gifted learners are as different as all other learners!

They are far ahead of their peers in various areas of development and may be characterized by the following (cf. Lange & Mehl, 1993; Eyre 2004, Webb 1993).

#### **Their intellectual performance behavior:**

- They are capable of learning at a faster rate than the average for their age group
- They have highly detailed knowledge in their areas of interest
- They are characterized by a large range of vocabulary and sophisticated expressions
- They have an excellent memory capacity
- They understand contexts quickly
- They observe well and accurately
- They recognize cause-and-effect relationships much more quickly and possess a high level of abstraction
- They are advanced in their ability to think logically



- They think critically and independently

**Their work attitude and interests:**

- They show unusual perseverance and great commitment in solving tasks in their fields of interest
- They get bored quickly with routine tasks
- They are not easily satisfied
- They are very self-critical
- They show interest in “adult topics”
- They work independently and need little guidance from adults

**Their social behavior:**

- They are often pronounced individualists
- They often question authority (if somebody is no authority for them)
- They readily take on responsibility and show leadership qualities
- They like to “leave the beaten path”
- They show a strong awareness of right and wrong
- They have a high level of empathy
- They prefer equally empowered friends rather than age- peers
- They reject rules for the sake of rules; the rules must be comprehensible to them

As mentioned above, highly gifted learners are just as diverse and heterogeneous as averagely gifted children... Quite a lot of scientists have dealt with the different “types” of gifted individuals.

## 2.4. Profiles of the gifted, talented and twice-exceptional individuals

After several years of observations, interviews, and reviews of literature, George Betts and Maureen Neihart have developed six profiles of gifted and talented children and youth. These profiles help educators and parents to look closely at the feelings, behavior and needs of the gifted and talented.

Parents and educators may use the profiles to gain a deeper awareness of the gifted and talented. Furthermore, educators can present the information directly to learners in order to help them develop more insight into their own needs and behavior.

George Betts and Maureen Neihart offer a [succinct chart](#) that profiles 6 different “types” of gifted individuals:

Successful

Challenging

Underground

Dropout and underperformer

Twice exceptional

Autonomous

## Type I: The Successful

Learners who are Type I learn well and are able to score high on achievement tests and tests of intelligence. They are sometimes said to have learned the system. As a result, they are usually identified for placement in programs for the gifted. Rarely do they exhibit behavior problems because they are eager for approval from educators, parents and other adults. These are the learners many believe will “make it on their own.” However, they often become bored with school. But they are usually liked by their peers and are included in social groups.

## Type II: The Challenging

Type II's are the divergently gifted. Many of them are not recognized as highly talented in the school system. They possess a high degree of creativity and may appear to be obstinate, tactless or sarcastic. They quite often question authority and may challenge the educator in front of the class. They often do not conform to the system. Neither have they learned to use it to their advantage. Their interactions at school and at home often involve conflict. They sometimes struggle with their self-esteem. They often challenge their peers and are therefore often not included or welcomed in activities or group projects.

## Type III: The Underground

The Type III gifted learner is known as the “underground gifted”. In general these are very often girls aged 12-15. They begin to deny or hide their talent in order to feel more included. They frequently feel insecure and anxious. Their changing needs are often in conflict with the expectations of educators and parents. All too often, adults react to them in ways that only increase their resistance and denial. So they benefit most if they are accepted as they are – without any pressure. If a gifted boy goes underground, it tends to happen later (16-18).

## Type IV: The Dropout and underperformer

Type IV gifted learners are often angry. They are angry with adults and with themselves because the system has not met their needs for many years and they feel rejected. They may express this anger by acting depressed and withdrawn. They often have interests that lie outside the realm of the regular school curriculum and they fail to receive support and affirmation for their talent and interest in these unusual areas. These are often older learners who attend school sporadically or only on certain days and have very often already “dropped out” emotionally, mentally and physically. Their self-esteem is mostly very low. They are bitter and resentful as a result of feeling rejected and neglected. They might put themselves in danger. Family counseling is strongly recommended and the Type IV youth should also be given individual counseling.

## Type V: The Twice exceptional

Type V refers to gifted learners who are physically or emotionally handicapped in some way, or who have learning disabilities. The vast majority of gifted programs do not identify them, nor do they offer differentiated programming that addresses and integrates their special needs. Type V learners do not exhibit behaviors that schools look for in the gifted. They may have disruptive behavior that makes it difficult for them to complete work. They also show symptoms of stress; they may feel discouraged, frustrated, rejected, helpless or isolated. These learners may deny that they are having difficulty by claiming that activities are “boring” or “stupid.” They want to avoid failures and are unhappy about not living up to their own expectations. They are often impatient and critical and react stubbornly to criticism. And yet these young people have enormous assets: they relate easily to others, they have a conceptual way of thinking, they like solving problems and are attracted to novelty and complex ideas.

## Type VI: The Autonomous

The Type VI is the autonomous learner. Like the Type I's, these learners have learned to work effectively in the school system but their motivation is intrinsic. They do not work for the system, they make the system work for them to create new opportunities. Type VI's have strong, positive self-concepts because their needs are being met. They are successful and they receive positive attention and support for their accomplishments as well as for who they are. Type VI learners are independent and self-directed. They realize they can create change in their own lives. They are able to express their feelings, goals, and needs freely and appropriately.

## 2.5. Conclusion

By looking closely at the behavior and feelings of gifted and talented youth, more and sometimes better educational programming may be developed to meet their diversified needs. It is absolutely essential that educators and parents understand the cognitive, emotional and social needs of the gifted and talented.

### Ressources

Betts,G., Neihart,M. “Profiles of the gifted and talented” in Gifted Child Quarterly 1988, 2020

## Part 3

### Gifted and Talented Students Recognizing Questionnaire

The purpose of this questionnaire is to identify characteristics observable in class for a learner with specific attitudes and skills. If a majority of items are ticked in several categories, a suspicion of giftedness and/or talent could be raised. Learning should therefore be differentiated in this sense to meet/correspond to the needs of this learner.

Item	<i>Understanding</i>	YES
1.	Understands quickly and autonomously	
2.	Is bored by repetitive tasks or tasks that seem easy to him/her, may oppose	
3.	Shows an above-average understanding for areas of interest	
4.	Shows high motivation to solve complex tasks or problems	
5.	Gets impatient with lack of understanding or slowness of peers	
	<i>Memorization</i>	YES
1.	Presents facilities for rote learning	
2.	Shows very good short-term (instructions) and long-term (lessons, subjects) memorization skills, in terms of speed and ability	
3.	Likes to know but is not very willing/invested in memorization work (e.g. vocabulary/spelling in a foreign language)	
4.	Remembers many facts and details, dates, names, poems, lists	
5.	Tends to correct teachers and peers (points out mistakes)	
6.	Easily memorizes plays, choreographies	
7.	Easily memorizes strategies and templates or patterns developed to easily integrate them into new situations	
	<i>Rhythm</i>	YES
1.	Learns new concepts/content in an accelerated way, especially if interested	
2.	Completes requested tasks quickly and correctly	
3.	Gets bored and impatient when he/she has to wait for other students, disturbs them	
4.	Is quick to verbalize and reformulate ideas	

5.	Performs well without time constraints, performs significantly less when time is limited or timed (marked stress)	
6.	Writes more easily and quickly on the computer tool than by hand	
7.	Makes the work inaccurate/neglected because his/her hands cannot keep up with his/her thoughts	
	<i>Knowledge – vocabulary</i>	YES
1.	Presents an elaborate language (complex sentence structures), rich and precise vocabulary, rapid learning of oral language	
2.	Learned to read alone before entering the first primary year	
3.	Shows significant general knowledge, fields of interest sometimes uncommon for age	
4.	Shows a significant interest in reading encyclopaedias, dictionaries, documentaries, at a level above his/her age	
5.	Is very comfortable speaking, expresses himself/herself easily, communicates clearly, easily exposes his/her thoughts	
6.	Writes very rich texts using examples, illustrations or relevant elaborations	
7.	Expresses less easily in writing than orally in terms of sophistication	
8.	Likes to read for pleasure, for long periods of time, different types of literature	
	<i>Reasoning</i>	YES
1.	May be struggling to structure his/her thinking (too many ideas at the same time), to find the essential elements, to anticipate	
2.	Makes many multiple connections, relevant or unusual relationships (that others do not see), cause-and-effect relationships	
3.	Has a great capacity for abstraction, synthesis of information, easily sorts between relevant and irrelevant information for a given problem	
4.	Understands math almost intuitively but is in difficulty or unable to justify his/her answers, does not go through the intermediate steps	
5.	Needs to understand and master everything	
6.	Prefers the complex, tendency to neglect what seems simple to him/her. He/she can fail a simple exercise because he/she looks for the trap	
7.	Easily generalizes and transfers information, easily integrates ideas and materials	
8.	Finds answers without always knowing how to explain them	

9.	Regularly questions the rules, argues or discusses logic, gives the teacher another way of doing things	
10.	Opposes following the proposed steps to complete tasks or solve problems, solves exercises by methods other than those proposed by the teacher	
11.	Easily understands game tactics, rules, techniques to use depending on the situation	
	<i>Curiosity – interests</i>	YES
1.	Enjoys the book corner, reads often (including at inopportune times)	
2.	Exhibits great curiosity, great desire to learn, great insight	
3.	Needs to ask a lot of questions about details (varied and original), questions not of his/her age, also questions the answers given	
4.	Shows interest in existential questions (about the functioning of the world), his/her interests are sometimes restricted in certain areas	
5.	Mobilizes according to his/her particular interests, takes original initiatives and shows persistence in the pursuit of his/her interests	
6.	Refuses to do the requested activities if he/she is not interested in them	
7.	Constantly observes what is happening around him/her	
8.	Likes to make discoveries and solve problems on his/her own	
9.	Likes to discuss and learn about abstract ideas (religion, love, justice, equality, universe, etc.)	
10.	Asks tough questions on sharp topics	
	<i>Task behavior</i>	YES
1.	Rejects application exercises	
2.	Gives the impression of not listening (talkative, dissipated, dreamy or agitated) but has heard and understood	
3.	Tends to perfectionism	
4.	Shows a high level of attention and concentration (can focus on two or three tasks simultaneously and does not seem aware of what is happening around) or on the contrary is too easily distracted	
5.	Gets frustrated when inactive	
6.	Has specific attention to detail but struggles to organize them into a coherent whole	
7.	May be stubborn to pursue purpose/areas of interest	
8.	Hides his/her talents to be like others	

9.	Shows a keen sense of observation	
10.	Gives up the task if the job does not meet his/her requirements or if he/she makes a mistake	
	<i>Humor</i>	YES
1.	Possesses a keen sense of humor, understands different levels of meaning	
2.	Plays with words, metaphors, sometimes has an irrelevant humor, humor at the expense of others, ironically	
3.	Has a sense of timing in words or gestures, has a sense of repartee	
	<i>Imagination</i>	YES
1.	Has a lot of original, creative and relevant ideas, has a playful spirit	
2.	Is quick in designing ideas, has many ideas spontaneously	
3.	Presents a developed artistic sense (drawing, painting, writing, construction, experiences, stories, theater)	
4.	Makes original connections between ideas	
5.	Exhibits ingenuity in the use of common materials, invents games/toys/other objects	
6.	Solves problems in non-traditional ways, considers different possible responses	
7.	Draws or doodles constantly, during explanations and exercises	
8.	Exhibits some aesthetic sensitivity, appreciates complexity in artworks and is able to interpret them	
	<i>Leadership</i>	YES
1.	Demonstrates leadership to peers, leads the group positively to carry out a project	
2.	Easily resolves interpersonal conflicts	
3.	May be authoritarian, impatient with others, does not accept authority	
	<i>Emotions</i>	YES
1.	Refuses to work to escape confrontation with the risk of failure, does not tolerate failure, avoids new activities	
2.	Presents hypersensitivity (strong sensitivity and affective reactivity), intense emotions	
3.	Shows heightened empathy (towards people and their problems), feels what others feel	
4.	Shows anxiety, worry, especially at the time of evaluations	



5.	Is never satisfied with him/herself and his/her performance, clearly underestimates him/herself	
6.	Has affective-cognitive dyssynchrony (difference between cognitive abilities and emotional skills)	
7.	May be frustrated by his/her own imperfection	
	<i>Relational</i>	YES
1.	Prefers conversations with adults or older students	
2.	Integrates with difficulty into the class group (not comfortable), enters little relationship with peers	
3.	Requires a positive emotional relationship with the teacher, which represents a source of motivation and a sense of competence, his/her academic results may depend on it. This need is significantly more pronounced than among his/her peers.	
4.	Does not participate constructively in group work	
5.	Irritates others with his/her incessant questions	
6.	Has strong ties with animals	
	<i>Sense of justice</i>	YES
1.	Has a strong sense of justice, sensitivity to injustice, wants to save the world	
2.	Is hypersensitive to his/her environment and others	
3.	Feels a need for intense coherence between values and actions	
4.	Feels frustrated when others don't follow the rules, claims if he/she sees something as unfair or illogical	
	<i>Maturity</i>	YES
1.	Acts in social situations with maturity	
2.	Feels marginal in the classroom, bored with children of his/her age	
3.	Is sensitive to spiritual values or beliefs and reflects on philosophical issues	
	<i>General behaviour</i>	YES
1.	Tends to monopolize speech	
2.	Resists the efforts of the teacher who wishes to motivate or discipline him/her	
3.	Shows a behavior of Mr. – Mrs. "I know everything"	
4.	Is highly flexible in behaviour: adapts easily to new requirements and modifies his/her usual processes to be more efficient	

	<i>Perceptive</i>	YES
1.	Has hyperesthesia (hypersensitivity to one or more senses)	
2.	Easily discriminates sounds	
3.	Has an absolute ear	
4.	Can effortlessly produce or reproduce musical rhythms or sequences	
5.	Easily discriminates smells and tastes	
6.	Has a good sense of direction, is easily located in space	
7.	Assimilates the forms of expression and vocabulary of different people, easily imitates them through stories, music and role-playing	
8.	Reacts with emotion to different art forms	
9.	Accurately perceives paths, contours, colors, shapes, spaces, and the relationships between all these elements	
10.	Easily recognizes the elements of nature	
	<i>Muscular</i>	YES
1.	Shows some muscle strength	
2.	Shows some power (ability to perform an activity quickly and repeatedly with some force)	
3.	Shows a certain speed (of realization of the movement, of running)	
4.	Shows above-average endurance, good physical condition	
	<i>Motor control</i>	YES
1.	Shows fast and precise reflexes	
2.	Shows great dexterity and very good motor coordination	
3.	Manipulates with precision and speed the tools at disposal, quickly learning this manipulation	
4.	Shows a very good balance	
5.	Uses his/her body to express emotions	
6.	Shows excess of physical energy (high level of enthusiasm), with multiple gestures or impulsive acts	

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## Part 4

### Resources to better understand

Non-exhaustive list of relevant and important literature in the field of educating talents and gifted learners for those who want to know more about this topic.

Arnold, Dietrich; Preckel, Franzis: Hochbegabte Kinder klug begleiten. Ein Handbuch für Eltern. Beltz 2011

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<https://octopus-formations.fr/evenement/la-douance-cest-bien-le-talent-cest-mieux/> : webinaire de François Gagné sur le développement du talent et le MDDT (Modèle Différenciateur de Douance et du Talent)

<https://gagnefrancoys.wixsite.com/dmgt-mddt/> avec entre autres un outil appelé Tracking Talents de reconnaissance par les pairs

## Part 5

### Twice exceptional learners

#### 1. Who are they?

Twice exceptional learners are students who present a giftedness or/and a talent as well as an adjustment or learning disability. The latter may involve sensory, physical, motor, or cognitive (Foley-Nipcon & Candler, 2018).

Different profiles exist within this category:

1. **Learners identified as gifted/talented and whose giftedness masks the disorder/deficit:**

These learners redouble their efforts, use compensatory strategies, or are faced with easy learning. However, as school activities become more complex, they find it increasingly difficult to compensate. The disorder/deficit may remain invisible and academic difficulties are then attributed to other factors (lack of motivation, intolerance to effort, adolescence, temperamental behavior, etc.).

2. **Learners with a disorder or deficit that masks giftedness:**

The family and/or educational team emphasize the difficulties created by the disorder or deficit. The learner's strengths are not considered or even made apparent.

3. **Learners whose talent/giftedness and deficit/disorder are masked:**

Neither the deficit/trouble nor the talent/giftedness has been noticed and is therefore not considered. The learner feels both overwhelmed by the academic difficulties that are bound



to accumulate as he/she goes through school and frustrated because he/she feels that he/she could do much better.

Because gifted and talented students who do not perform well may have undiagnosed learning disabilities (Baum et al., 1991), it is important to consider the possibility that a specific learning disability may be responsible for a student's underperformance. (Reis and McCoach).

Baum (1990) identified four recommendations for gifted students with learning disabilities:

- (1) encourage compensatory strategies,
- (2) promote awareness of strengths and weaknesses,
- (3) focus on the development of the youth's giftedness and/or talent, and
- (4) provide an environment that values individual differences.

(Reis et McCoach)

## 2. What are the unique characteristics of twice exceptional learners?

It is important to note that there are as many profiles in this category as there are twice exceptional learners. Therefore, the following characteristics may not be present in all twice exceptional learners.

- Appear more intelligent than their academic performance suggests;
- Develop uneven academic skills (may excel in one area and be average or below average in others) or have inconsistent academic performance;
- Use highly sophisticated vocabulary when speaking, but their written expression appears weaker;
- When working on assignments, have creative ideas, but have difficulty organizing their ideas or the task;
- Understand concepts easily but are frustrated by their inability to master certain skills;
- Participate well in class discussions, but lack listening and concentration when lectured;
- Difficulty following directions on tasks;
- Perform well when given sufficient time, but less so when time is limited or when they are timed;
- Take longer than other students to complete school tasks or homework;
- Have difficulty following instructions during tasks
- May perform better on more difficult tasks than on easy tasks;
- Show low self-motivation and effort for academic tasks;
- Show low self-esteem, especially in their area of weakness;
- Use mechanisms to compensate for their deficits (e.g., a student with fine motor problems will only want to write on the computer);
- Fatigue easily because of the energy required to compensate for their deficits at school;
- Have some deficits in executive function.

### 3. What characteristics can be observed in twice exceptional students but are not unique to them?

The following characteristics are not unique to twice exceptional learners but can be observed in them too.

- Can be very self-critical or perfectionist;
- Have unrealistic expectations of their performance;
- Exhibit disruptive behaviour in class;
- Display poor social skills and feelings of isolation (the learner may be aggressive or defensive in some relationships);
- Need unusual support from parents for school work, social interaction, organisation, etc.;
- Are hypersensitive;
- Have one or more specific skills (artistic, musical, technical, etc.).

Most of these characteristics come from Module 3 of the Moodle of Line Massé, Claire Baudry and Caroline Couture, Department of Psycho-education, Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières with their kind permission.

We are attaching them in the form of an observation grid, which can be used in addition to the more general grid provided in our module.

If you are interested in the characteristics of gifted learners with different types of disabilities (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), impulsivity, behavioural problems, psychological problems, overexcitability), we suggest you read [https://gifted.uconn.edu/schoolwide-enrichment-model/gifted\\_underachievers/](https://gifted.uconn.edu/schoolwide-enrichment-model/gifted_underachievers/)

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## Part 6

### Twice exceptional Students Recognizing Questionnaire

The purpose of this questionnaire is to identify characteristics observable in class for a learner with both specific attitudes and skills AND learning disability. If a majority of items are checked in several categories, a suspicion of twice exceptionality could be raised and should be referred to a specialist psychologist.

Appears more intelligent than academic performance suggests	
Develops uneven academic skills (may excel in one area and be average or below average in others) or has inconsistent academic performance	
Uses highly sophisticated vocabulary when speaking, but written expression appears weaker	
When working on assignments, has creative ideas, but has difficulty organizing ideas or task	
Understands concepts easily but gets frustrated by his/her inability to master certain skills	
Participates well in class discussions, but lacks listening and concentration when lectured	
Has difficulty following directions when on task	
Performs well when given sufficient time, but less so when time is limited or when there is a timing	
Takes longer than other students to complete school tasks or homework	
May perform better on more difficult tasks than on easy tasks	
Shows low self-motivation and effort for academic tasks	
Shows low self-esteem, especially in his/her area of weakness	
Uses mechanisms to compensate for his/her deficits (e.g., a learner with fine motor problems will only want to write on the computer)	
Fatigues easily because of the energy required to compensate for deficits at school	
Has some deficits in executive function	

Can be very self-critical or perfectionist	
Has unrealistic expectations of his/her performance	
Demonstrates disruptive behaviors in class	
Displays poor social skills and feelings of isolation (may be aggressive or defensive in some relationships)	
Requires unusual support from parents for school work, social interaction, organization, etc.	
Is hypersensitive	
Has one or more specific skills (artistic, musical, technical, etc.)	

Massé, L., Baudry, C., Couture, C., Pearson, J. and Bégin, J.Y. (2021). Education of gifted students - Module 3.

## Part 7

### Suspicion of giftedness or talent: what to do?

#### 1) On the basis of the general observation grid

- 1.1. As you are aware of the problem of gifted and/or talented learners, there is no doubt that your attitude will be open and positive!
- 1.2. Offer the learner an interview. During this interview, the first thing to do is to create an alliance with the young person, to question him/her about his/her interests, ideally extracurricular ... and try to make the connection between his/her own classroom experience and your perception. For talented and/or gifted young people, as for other young people, the bond of attachment is the essential gateway before talking about personal development.
- 1.3. During the interview with the learner, cite the characteristics you have identified. Perhaps he/she is aware of this (he/she may have been identified by a specialist without your knowledge). During your exchange, you will probably make him/her more aware of it. Your speech must make him/her understand that his/her natural abilities can be worked on in order to optimize his/her personal development. Without commitment, motivation and effort, they would be little exploited. As

Jeanne Siaud-Facchin points out<sup>1</sup>, it must be emphasized that "There are many differences in human nature and none is better than another. Everyone must learn to live with what they are, for the best for themselves and for others. »

Assign him/her one or more strategies for enriching the content and learning that you have implemented within your class, if these do not automatically concern all students. Do not forget that communication within the class is essential for everyone to accept the differentiation of learning.

- 1.4. In agreement with your principal, have an interview with the learner and the parents to explain what is being implemented and why.
- 1.5. In agreement with your director, explain to the other teachers the characteristics identified, the needs targeted in agreement with the learner and the avenues of pedagogical strategies implemented, and the meaning of these.
- 1.6. If you notice that the learner is in difficulty and/or suffering, call on specialized staff as soon as possible via your principal (psychological, medical and social assistance center attached to your school, university psychological service, etc.).

## 2) Based on the observation grid of doubly exceptional learners

First of all, talk to your principal and ask him/her to call the psychological service of your school so that a diagnosis is made and that adequate remediation is considered. This service will contact parents and possibly help them to find specialists outside the school.

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<sup>1</sup> Jeanne SIAUD-FACCHIN, L'enfant surdoué : L'aider à grandir, l'aider à réussir, Odile Jacob, 2008,