

## IDENTIFICATION OF GIFTED STUDENTS

The identification of gifted students refers to the process by which attempts are made to become aware of students who are gifted. The main purpose of identification is to ensure that gifted students are provided with appropriate educational interventions (e.g., academic acceleration, ability grouping, withdrawal programs, differentiated curriculum within a mixed-ability setting, mentorships, enrichment activities) that meet their specific needs. Essentially, the identification of gifted students represents a necessary initial step that informs *whether* any gifted education interventions should be offered and, if so, *which* gifted education interventions may be appropriate.

Along with monitoring of the progress of gifted students and the evaluation of gifted education programs and provisions, identification forms a fundamental component of the assessment of gifted students.

The following are principles and recommendations that should be considered in the identification of gifted students and the development of a program of identification for gifted students in schools:

- The identification of gifted students should reflect the conceptualisations and definitions of giftedness that are adopted in the specific national, cultural, school, and other related contexts in which identification takes place. As the model of giftedness that is commonly adopted in Australia is Gagné's Differentiated Model of Giftedness and Talent (DMGT), identification practices in Australia should align with the definition of giftedness proposed in this model.
- The identification process should take into consideration the specific educational interventions that can be made available to the identified students, being mindful that economic factors and logistical issues may mean that the full range of educational interventions for gifted students cannot always be offered.
- The identification process that is adopted should be informed by legal and policy requirements. Some legal considerations may include the relevant state legislation on education (e.g., Education Act 1990 in New South Wales) and federal legislation on age discrimination. Each state and territory in Australia also has a gifted education policy or other guidelines to support gifted education.
- The identification process should acknowledge giftedness across all domains, including giftedness in the intellectual, creative, social, perceptual, muscular, and motor control domains.
- The identification process should acknowledge differences in the levels of giftedness. Gagné provides a classification system for levels of giftedness that is compatible with the definition adopted in the Differentiated Model of Giftedness and Talent. This classification system differentiates between mildly (top 10%), moderately (top 1%), highly (top 0.1%), exceptionally (top 0.01%), and extremely (top 0.001%) gifted students according to their level of giftedness.

- A multiple criteria approach to identification should be used whereby data are gathered from multiple sources. Such an approach is likely to be inclusive of students from diverse backgrounds, and conducive to the minimisation of bias in the identification process.
- All parties who are involved in the administration of identification instruments need to be provided with appropriate professional development to allow them to gain a complete understanding of these instruments, and the requisite skills and knowledge for the administration of these instruments.
- The identification instruments that are used should produce valid and reliable information on the giftedness of students.
- The identification instruments that are used should incorporate both objective (e.g., IQ tests) and subjective (e.g., teacher nominations) instruments, as these instruments do not identify identical groups of students.
- The data collected from identification instruments should be collectively considered when making decisions about whether students qualify as being gifted. Identification processes whereby students need to meet identification thresholds for further testing should be avoided as they have been found to result in some gifted students remaining unidentified.
- The data that are obtained from identification instruments should be “combined” using a rule that is consistent with the intended educational interventions. For example, combination rules that require all identification thresholds to be met (i.e., the “conjunctive” or “and” rule) are recommended for interventions such as acceleration, while combination rules that require only one of the identification thresholds to be met (i.e., the “disjunctive” or “or” rule) are recommended for interventions such as enrichment.
- The identification process should be ongoing, as the collection of data from multiple sources over an extended period of time may provide the most accurate picture of the abilities of gifted students.

### **Key References**

Acar, S., Sen, S., & Cayirdag, N. (2016). Consistency of the performance and non-performance methods in gifted identification: A multilevel meta-analytic review. *Gifted Child Quarterly*, 60(2), 81-101. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0016986216634438>

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Peters, S. J., Makel, M. C., & Rambo-Hernandez, K. (2021). Local norms for gifted and talented student identification: Everything you need to know. *Gifted Child Today*, 44(2), 93-104. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1076217520985181>

## **Key Resources**

The Aussie Educator provides links to gifted education policies in each state/territory of Australia (<http://www.aussieeducator.org.au/education/gifted.html>)

The Australian Council of Education distributes a number of identification instruments (<https://www.acer.org/au/assessment>)