

## Characteristics of Intellectually Gifted students: Three Views

Characteristics of giftedness are defined differently by leading organizations and professional experts. The **National Association for Gifted Children** (NAGC) has indicated common characteristics of children who are considered gifted.

Additionally, 10 core attributes of giftedness or outstanding talent may be seen in students regardless of socio-economic status, culture, or race. These traits, aptitudes, and behaviors (TABs) were identified by **Dr. Mary Frasier**. She designed the Frasier Talent Assessment Profile, a comprehensive assessment system with multiple indicators that is more effective in assessing the gifts and talents of low-income and minority children than the tests previously used.

Characteristics of creativity identified by **Dr. E. Paul Torrance** may also be indicative of giftedness or outstanding talent. His career was spent refining a series of creativity assessments including the Torrance Test of Creative Thinking (TTCT) which is especially useful in multicultural settings.

It should be noted that in some states (some examples include Tennessee and Colorado) GATE actually falls under special education. While not exhaustive lists, the table below contrasts some different conceptual ways to view characteristics of giftedness.

National Association for Gifted Children	Frasier – TABs and Definitions	Torrance – Characteristics of Creativity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unusual alertness, even in infancy</li> <li>• Rapid learner; puts thoughts together quickly</li> <li>• Excellent memory</li> <li>• Unusually large vocabulary and complex sentence structure for age</li> <li>• Advanced comprehension of word nuances, metaphors and abstract ideas</li> <li>• Enjoys solving problems, especially with numbers and puzzles</li> <li>• Often self-taught reading and writing skills as preschooler</li> <li>• Deep, intense feelings and reactions</li> <li>• Highly sensitive</li> <li>• Thinking is abstract, complex, logical, and insightful</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Motivation: Evidence of desire to learn.</li> <li>• Interests: A feeling of intentness, passion, concern, or curiosity about something.</li> <li>• Communication skills: Highly expressive and effective use of words, numbers, symbols, and so forth.</li> <li>• Problem-solving ability: Effective, often inventive, strategies for recognizing and solving problems.</li> <li>• Memory: Large storehouse of information on school or non-school topics.</li> <li>• Inquiry: Questions, experiments, explores.</li> <li>• Insight: Quickly grasps new concepts and makes connections, senses deeper meanings.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fluency: The ability to think of, or produce many ideas or products.</li> <li>• Flexibility: The ability to think of many different kinds or categories of responses to a stimulus.</li> <li>• Originality: Unusual or infrequent responses compared to same-aged peers.</li> <li>• Abstractness of thought: The ability to capture the essence of something by going beyond what is seen or heard by telling a story, giving dialogue, revealing thoughts, or suggesting meaning in an abstract way.</li> <li>• Elaboration: Imagination and exposition of detail.</li> <li>• Resistance to closure: The ability to delay closure long enough to make the mental</li> </ul>

National Association for Gifted Children	Frasier – TABs and Definitions	Torrance – Characteristics of Creativity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Idealism and sense of justice at early age</li> <li>• Concern with social and political issues and injustices</li> <li>• Longer attention span and intense concentration</li> <li>• Preoccupied with own thoughts—daydreamer</li> <li>• Learn basic skills quickly and with little practice</li> <li>• Asks probing questions</li> <li>• Wide range of interests (or extreme focus in one area)</li> <li>• Highly developed curiosity</li> <li>• Interest in experimenting and doing things differently</li> <li>• Puts ideas or things together that are not typical</li> <li>• Keen and/or unusual sense of humor</li> <li>• Desire to organize people/things through games or complex schemas</li> <li>• Vivid imaginations (and imaginary playmates when in preschool)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reasoning: Logical approaches to figuring out solutions.</li> <li>• Imagination and creativity: Produces many ideas, highly original.</li> <li>• Humor: Conveys and picks up on humor.</li> </ul>	<p>leap that makes possible more original ideas.</p>

Note how these three views of giftedness encompass many more aspects of the student than just intellectual ability and academic achievement. How can students like these be identified?

A test like the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) “measures general and specific reasoning abilities in three domains (verbal, quantitative, and non-verbal) and has been shown to reflect cognitive processes and strategies that are closely related to an individual’s success in school in virtually all subjects” according to its authors. So, it is essentially measuring the reasoning abilities that tend to accompany *success in school* rather than identifying students who have a suite of gifted traits and special needs.

Remember that some gifted students are under-achievers who do not do well in the traditional school setting because of their atypical traits. So, using a test like CogAT may be an efficient way to quickly screen large numbers in order to find students who will do well in school and can handle more rigorous curriculum; however, it is not designed to screen for students who possess the kinds of traits listed here, and who may need tailored interventions to be able to thrive in school and in life.