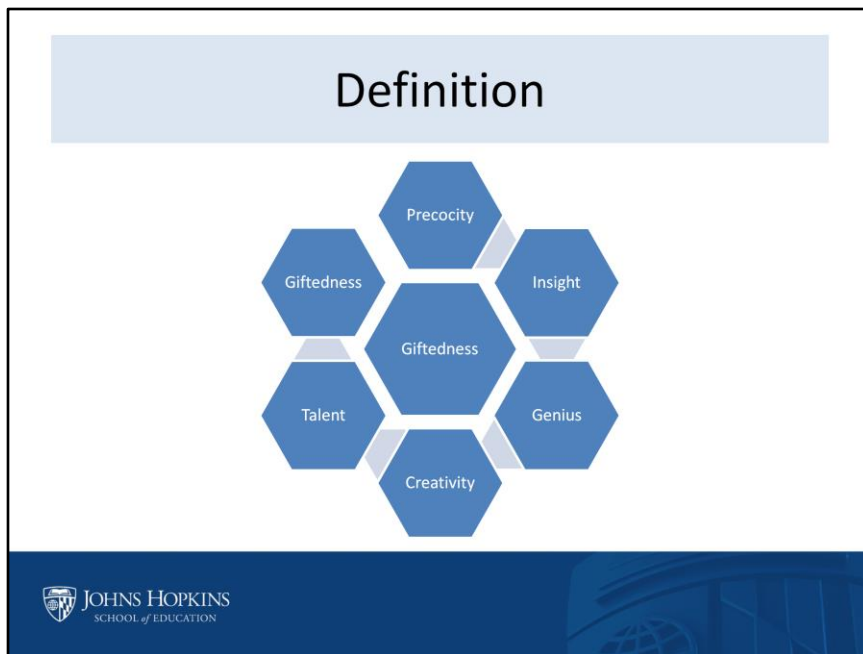


Learners with Special Gifts and Talents and Twice Exceptionality

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This presentation provides an overview of terms and issues associated with learners with special gifts and talents and learners with twice exceptionalty.



Just as we have seen with other definitions of exceptionalism, there are differing views on what constitutes giftedness. Your textbook describes terminology that is frequently used when referring to individuals who are gifted. The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) definition states that “Gifted and Talented means students, children, or youth who give evidence of high achievement capability in areas such as intellectual, creative, artistic, or leadership capacity, or in specific academic fields in order to fully develop those capabilities. The term twice exceptional means a gifted and talented student with a co-occurring disability.” While students who have special gifts are not entitled to special instruction or services under the IDEA, students who are twice exceptional can be eligible if their educational performance is impacted by their disability. Retrieved from <http://www.cec.sped.org/Special-Ed-Topics/Who-Are-Exceptional-Learners>

Identifying and measuring giftedness can be challenging due to issues with standardized assessments, cultural variations of behavior, and values placed on certain abilities but not on others.

Characteristics

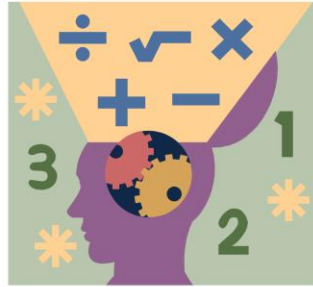
- Overcoming Stereotypes
- Conflicting Cultural Values
- Neglected Groups
- Under Achievers
- Available Resources



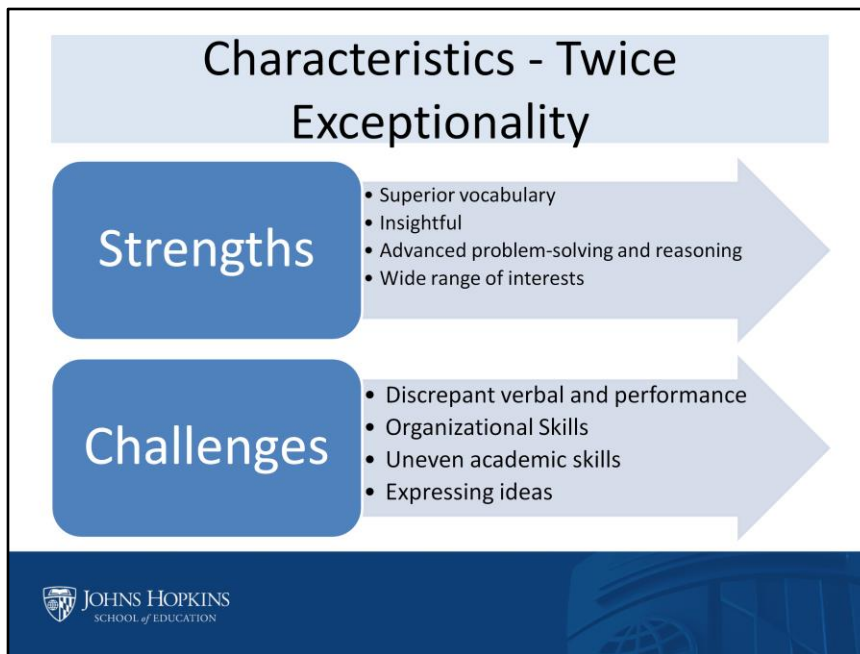
Your textbook discusses common stereotypes associated with individuals who are gifted such as co-morbidity with mental illness, social awkwardness, and assumptions that identified students never need help with academic tasks. As with most stereotypes, these assumptions can be harmful and do not consider the individual. Another belief that your textbook describes as part of American culture, is that individuals with special gifts should not receive special resources as they are already at an advantage. I have witnessed the repercussions of this belief; in districts when budgets are cut, enrichment programs are often the first to go. What are your thoughts and opinions regarding allocation of resources for students with special talents and gifts? Please post your response in the discussion. Other issues that may prevent individuals with special gifts and talents from achieving their full potential are limited resources due to poverty or other environmental circumstances, and underrepresentation of certain ethnic minority groups. After you watch the UDL video, consider how UDL might help teachers recognize the special gifts and talents in students who may have been overlooked.

Twice Exceptionality

- More stereotypes
- Access to programs
- Impact of disability



Your textbook makes a great point that people too often make an assumptions about one's intellectual ability based on physical characteristics. As a result, the special gifts and talents for students with cerebral palsy and other physical disabilities can be overlooked. While sometimes children with CP also have an intellectual disability this is not always the case. Another example: People diagnosed with muscular dystrophy (MS) may experience physical and speech disabilities but their intellect is not impacted. However, people may talk loudly or slowly to them assuming that they have limited understanding. We must be cautious with these dangerous assumptions! In addition, twice Exceptionality does not only refer to students with physical disabilities. However, according the US Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights, only one percent of students with disabilities are enrolled in gifted and talented programs. This could be due to problems with definitions and identification and/or scarce resources for gifted programs to begin with. In some cases the impact of the disability could overshadow the student's unique gifts and talents or the student's giftedness could mask impact of the disability.



We recognize that all students differ in their strengths and challenges and we need to be careful when making generalizations about student characteristics. This slide contains some of the possible characteristics that may be present in children who are twice exceptional. Your textbook describes strategies to meet the needs of students with twice exceptionalities and to recognize potential in students who also have disabilities. Some of these include maintaining high expectations, emphasizing abstract thinking, creativity, and problem solving, and encouraging strategies to compensate for deficits using one's strengths. These strategies are consistent with what we have discussed throughout this course in terms of using a strengths-based approach to respond to student needs.