

Definitions of giftedness and talent

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Definitions of Giftedness and Talent Giftedness has been defined in different ways by different U. S. Office of Education defines giftedness as the ability to demonstrate high performance by virtue of outstanding abilities (Renzulli, 2011). Gifted children should be given differentiated services and programs beyond those provided to normal students in regular schools in order to enable them achieve their full potential for self and society.

The three-ring conception of giftedness suggests that there are three interlocking traits that enhance unique creative contributions and unique accomplishments of people who achieve recognition. The three traits are: above-average ability, creativity and task commitment. Renzulli (2011) suggests that special programs tend to favor children with above average ability and ignore those who may perform poorly academically but demonstrate a high level of task commitment.

Renzulli (2011) sums everything in his own definition which suggests that giftedness can be defined as a sum of three basic clusters of human traits – above average general abilities, high level of task commitment, and high level of creativity. Gifted children are those capable of developing and applying these traits to valuable areas of human performance. For children to attain an effective interaction of these trait clusters, they should be provided with unique programs and services that are not available to ordinary instructional systems.

This can be related to the definition of Gagne (2003) who suggests that giftedness is the possession and use of superior natural abilities to at least one area of ability, to a level where an individual appears among top 10% of his peers. These natural abilities are used to develop talents through a developmental process that uses environmental and interpersonal catalysts.

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Talents are defined as systematically developed skills, and include arts, social affection, business, academics, leisure and sports (Gagné, 1999).

Natural abilities are genetically determined and include: intellectual abilities, creative abilities, sensory abilities, and socio-affective abilities. Some of the interpersonal catalysts that can be used in the development process of giftedness include physical abilities e. g. health, motivation, self-management and personality. Environmental catalysts include: other people, culture and family, programs and events.

From this definition by Gagne, it is clear that the concept of natural abilities brings the whole difference between Renzulli's and Gagne's definition.

Although both definitions suggest that intellectual abilities and creative abilities are components of giftedness, Renzulli does not explain whether they are natural or artificial. However, what the two definitions agree is that these abilities are used by students to enhance high level of human performance and talents. Both definitions also suggest that the development process requires catalysts. Services and programs are provided by the two definitions as key catalysts of development process of giftedness. However, Gagne has added more interpersonal catalysts including health and motivation.

The school district should use the definition by Gagne (2003) to follow the practice of gifted education because it allows students to be exposed to several catalysts needed to develop their natural abilities into useful talents that enable them to succeed not only in education but also in other talents including sports and arts. Renzulli's definition is a bit narrow and relies more on intellectual abilities and human performance rather than focusing on a wide range of abilities and talents that are useful in human life in and out of

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class.

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