

Profiles of Gifted and Talented

Gifted children are as uniquely developed as other children. Dr. George Betts, founder of the Center for Education and Study of Gifted, Talented, and Creative students developed the Autonomous Leader Model for students and is one of the 2003's most influential leaders in gifted education. Through his work with licensed clinical psychologist and former secondary educator, Dr. Maureen Neihart, they have developed profiles of the gifted and talented. They have differentiated the six profiles as a generalization to help facilitate the development of all aspects of the gifted student.

Since all gifted students are impacted by their unique abilities in different ways, their relationships, education, families, and genetics all play a role in the development of their personalities. All of these factors make it nearly impossible to group all gifted individuals into just one category. The profiles were created to provide general information about the needs, behaviors, and emotions of gifted people and how they may interact with their world. This in turn helps all people develop a greater awareness about this population. No one profile fits an individual, rather they possess multiple traits from the different identified types.; The Successful, The Creative, The Underground, The At-Risk, The Twice Exceptional, and The Autonomous Learner.

Type I, The Successful, accounts for as much as 90% of those identified as gifted in schools. These individuals learn quickly and test well so they display appropriate school behavior and rarely act out. They are eager to please, well liked, and often seen as very successful. While they maintain quality grades, they are unaware they may have deficiencies and don't adequately develop autonomy and can become adults who are underachievers because they lack the skills, concepts, and attitudes for life-long learning and the ever-changing challenges in life.

Type II, The Creative are the most overlooked type unless schools have specific programs designed for them because they can come across as challenging and obstinate, questioning authority. They haven't learned the system of school and receive little recognition for accomplishments. Since they struggle with self-esteem and have conflict in their relationships, they are at a higher risk for dropping out of school. They often exhibit addictive or delinquent behaviors when needs are not met.

Type III, The Underground gifted is one who tries to hide their giftedness. Most often middle school girls will do this. Boys can show the same attitudes but often do so later in school, when there is athletic participation pressure. These individuals seek acceptance from non-gifted peer groups and will deny their passions to conform to group expectations. They frequently feel anxious when their needs are different from parents' and teachers' expectations.

Type IV, The At-Risk group is often angry with self and adults because their needs are not met by the system and over time they feel rejected. This can be expressed through depression, withdrawal, acting out, and defensiveness. They have talents outside the school

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realm which may be unusual, and this makes school seem irrelevant. Dropping out can be emotionally or mentally in addition to physically. They usually have low self-concept especially if their gift is not supported or they have been disenfranchised for a long time, thus building resentment toward the educational system or family.

Type V, The Twice Exceptional child will have a physical or emotional handicap in addition to their giftedness. Many times their handicap masks signs of giftedness making it difficult for some to properly service gifted students, and they are often not even identified for gifted programs. Schools often give support for weaknesses but fail to support the gifts of these students causing them to feel frustrated and rejected.

Type VI, The Autonomous Learner is the end goal for all students, to be able to learn effectively in the school system on their own and create new learning opportunities for themselves. They make the system work for themselves and are quite successful. They receive the positive support for accomplishments as well as for the individual person through peer and adult respect. This along with their independent and self-directed nature allows them to develop leadership skills in their schools and community. They understand they are in control of their futures and set the goals needed to see it through to fruition.

Support for the gifted student is paramount to their success both academically as well as socially. This support can only come from the understanding and acceptance of the unique traits which help to form the gifted personality. The profiles are a starting point to help develop this awareness.

Betts, G., Neihart, M. *Profiles of the gifted and talented*. Gifted Child Quarterly. 2014.

Betts, G., Neihart, M. Profiles of Gifted, Talented, Creative Learners (Presentation). 2017.