

# Giftedness

The Ministry of Education (2001) defines giftedness as “an unusually advanced degree of general intellectual ability that requires differentiated learning experiences...”

Gifted students have the ability to easily and quickly process and retain new information. They can demonstrate flexible thinking, high creativity, and high sensitivity to criticism from others. Often, students with giftedness require learning experience beyond the curriculum taught in a regular school program.

## TYPES OF GIFTEDNESS

Giftedness can be exhibited in different ways:

- **Academic:** a demonstration of significantly higher abilities than their peers in core subjects such as math, English, and science
- **Creative:** a demonstration of significantly higher abilities than their peers in creative subjects such as music, arts, and drama
- **Connective:** an exceptional ability to draw together ideas and link concepts well above their peers
- **Gifted/LD (sometimes called ‘twice exceptional’):** someone with exceptional talents in one area but a disabling weakness in another; often identified in students with a large discrepancy between intellectual ability and demonstrated ability

## COMMON ISSUES WITH GIFTEDNESS

- **Frustration:** Students may become frustrated working with others who do not process as they do. Frustration can also be reflected as poor attitude and behaviour towards adults and peers trying to help them.
- **Underachieving:** Students may not show their full potential in terms of intellectual abilities to try to appear more like their peers.
- **Social isolation:** Gifted students can often experience a feeling of “where do I belong?”. They may lack the social skills to relate to other students or be rejected by their peers for being a ‘teacher’s pet’.
- **Emotional challenges:** Students may have heightened sensitivity and risk being easily hurt or affected by words or actions of others. Without intervention and support, gifted students are at high risk of developing forms of anxiety and depression.

## HOW WE SUPPORT STUDENTS WITH GIFTEDNESS

- ✓ Aligning the work to students' interests and challenging them by incorporating multisensory activities and elements
- ✓ Incorporating opportunities for students to investigate real-world problems
- ✓ Teaching whole-part rather than part-whole and then allowing the student to use POW writing strategies to explain their understanding
- ✓ Establishing a warm and nurturing environment through weekly interactions for students to feel comfortable expressing ideas, needs, wants, likes and dislikes
- ✓ Providing students with a safe space to voice their frustrations and then supporting them in developing material they can use in school to alleviate this; for example, checklists, time out cards, rubrics and performance lists, etc.

**"Being the clever one in class is sometimes fun and easy, mostly though I prefer not to tell how much I know in case I have to answer. People don't get how I can be so good at one thing but not at another"**

- Alicia

