

<p>OXFORD BROOKES UNIVERSITY</p> <p>department for education and skills creating opportunity, releasing potential, achieving excellence</p>	<p>Unit 2, Section 3</p> <p>Developing Talent</p>
<p>Key issues</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Department for Education and Skills distinguishes between giftedness and talent. • Pupils with talents in arts and sport need specific provision if they are to fulfil their potential. • Identifying characteristics of talent should include the assessment of potential as well as high-level performance. • Provision for the talented is multi-dimensional.
<p>Introduction</p>	<p>The DfES distinction between giftedness and talent is one between students who have academic ability and those with ability in the creative/performing arts or sport. The distinction is a common one, although it may be couched in different terminology. For example, American usage of 'gifted' and 'talented' tends to follow Gagne's (1991) model. In this, the term 'gifted' 'designates the possession and use of untrained and spontaneously expressed natural abilities'. The term 'talent', however, 'designates the superior mastery of systematically developed abilities (or skills) and knowledge in at least one field of human activity'.</p> <p>Students with gifts in the arts or sport may also be gifted academically. Winner and Martino (2000) point out that gifted and talented children can share identifiable characteristics, namely precocity in learning, an intense interest in the area of high ability, and an often highly individual learning style.</p> <p>In terms of identifying and providing for the students, it is clear that talented children present their educators with problems and opportunities similar to those of the gifted.</p>
<p>Identification</p>	<p>The work of Renzulli (1977) in developing the 'three-ring conception of giftedness' has had a seminal influence on the work of identifying talented pupils. Three interlocking clusters of traits and their interaction are shown to be the necessary ingredients of accomplishment. These are above average ability, commitment to the task, and creativity. Since his early work Renzulli (2003) has acknowledged that personality and environmental factors also influence giftedness. Ofsted (2003) judged that primary schools were far less adept at identifying talented pupils than they were gifted ones. In a</p>

previous survey of 10 pilot masterclasses, 31 summer schools, 18 local authorities and well over 100 secondary schools, Ofsted (2001) had also reported that far fewer talented pupils than gifted ones were identified.

In identifying talented students, teachers are confronted with a key issue: how to ensure that the assessment process includes

the possibility of identifying potential as well as high-level performance. In a survey of a small sample of schools in 2004, Ofsted reported that criteria for identifying talented pupils are rarely helpful in pinpointing the underachiever or, by implication, latent or potential talent. (Ofsted 2004, para. 17)

In the development of talent, teachers of the relevant subjects must first be satisfied that they are able to recognise the characteristics and indicators of a talented pupil. In a study of musical talent Haroutounian (2000) defined five categories of criteria for identification:

- perceptual awareness and discrimination
- metaperception (a type of high-level creativity)
- creative interpretation
- behaviour/performance
- motivation.

She proposes that identification should be carried out in the context of a musical situation by trained observers. The relevance of the environment in which the process takes place is similarly emphasised by Gardner in Warburton (2002). He argues that assessments should occur in situations true to the nature of the talent field, with pupils engaged in artistic activity. Gardner also states that for creative intelligence, fair assessments should be ongoing, not snapshot tests.

Another insight into the identification of talent can be found in the Taxonomy of the Psychomotor Domain (University of Mississippi 2001-2) This provides indicators of behavioural characteristics which may imply potential.

The importance of testing in the talent domain has diminished in favour of multiple measures of identification. Standardised tests have given way to observational models. However, such models should be used judiciously, as they can be culturally and stylistically biased and can indicate previous learning rather than innate potential. The recent programme for identifying talent, 'Sport Interactive', is based on proficiency in simple physical and performance tasks with the purpose of predicting future accomplishments in sport. An evaluation by Abbott and Collins (2002) noted that the physical

	<p>development of pupils alongside specific training programmes can alter the results and may therefore lead to the premature de-selection of many talented children. The importance of cultural perspectives in the development and identification of talent is suggested by Winner (2000), who shows how, in art, children are identified as talented if they are able to adopt styles traditional to their culture. This could mean that in a western classroom a child whose work shows the ability to represent objects realistically is likely to be identified. Gifted children in China, on the other hand, will be identified if they show equal precocity in the allusionistic style traditional to that culture.</p> <p>Teachers should be particularly on the lookout for pupils who show high levels of interest and motivation in the talent field. Csikszentmihalyi (1996) found that significant activities taking place outside school is a key indicator of the creative adolescent. He noted that passion and commitment are common characteristics and contribute to the development of intrinsic motivation. Ericsson, in Van Tassel-Baska (2001), emphasises that these characteristics may be vital for the development of the necessary practice and rehearsal skills needed to achieve high levels of performance. Gagne's (1993) model of giftedness and talent acknowledges that curiosity, self-confidence, initiative and motivation are driving factors in the development of talent.</p> <p>A useful starting point for identifying talented pupils is nomination by teachers and parents. Rostan et al (2002) noted that different criteria are used by parents, teachers and experts when this happens. Lee (1999) explored teachers' conceptions of gifted and talented youngsters. Among the seven conceptions outlined she noted rarity, 'noticeability' and comparison as aspects for further exploration.</p>
<p>Providing appropriate challenge</p>	<p>The level of challenge offered in the talent domain is crucial to successful development. Van Rossum (2001) questioned 129 dance students at the Amsterdam School of the Arts about their backgrounds and education in preparation for a dance career. His findings suggest that their dance classes became more focused, serious and demanding at about the age of 14. At this age the young people in his sample tended to characterise their classes with words like 'disciplined', 'inspiring' 'geared towards improvement.'</p> <p>Seeley (Seeley, 1996) suggests two strategies which are derived from the idea that mentors and role models are an important factor in the development of talent. The first is that local artists in the community, even if amateurs, should be identified as mentors for students. The second is that schools should seek to link their own arts-based programmes with the</p>

	<p>work of students' private instructors, so that the individual attention given by the latter can enhance the effect of the school's programme.</p> <p>Ofsted (2004) place importance on auditing pupils' sporting involvement within and beyond the curriculum. Stollery and McPhee (2002) questioned able pupils about their 'crystallising' experiences at school. The greatest frequency of response cited inspiring teachers, parental encouragement, and motivation through praise. Among the demotivating factors, respondents cited being embarrassed about their talent in front of peers, or tutors dismissing its importance, for example accomplishment in music.</p> <p>This points to the value of putting talented pupils in distinctive groups of peers who share their talents. It is reassuring and motivating for such pupils to join like-minded pupils in teams, youth theatres, bands and orchestras. Downing & Watson (2004) conducted research which focused on curriculum content in a number of secondary school art departments. Their work paints a disappointing picture of current art and design education, highlighting elements which are successful as well as areas badly neglected within the subject. In relation to identifying and providing for gifted and talented pupils, this research is important, as it encourages art teachers to take a wider and more contemporary view of education in this field, thus giving pupils more opportunity and inclination to explore it.</p> <p>Creative Partnerships are another route towards successful provision for the development of talent. In 2001, Doherty & Harland (2001) carried out an evaluation of many such schemes for NFER They highlighted the fact that successful partnerships contributed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'increasing pupils' engagement in learning (overcoming disaffection) • preventing or reducing drop-out from educational settings • rejoining pupils with their educational 'careers' (overcoming 'fractures' in pupil progress) • 'altering aspirational trajectories (providing pupils with new opportunities) '.
<p>Activity 2.3</p>	<p>You may wish to consider the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ What place does 'talent' occupy in national educational policy? ➤ What appropriate extension activities might be featured in schemes of work in talent subjects? ➤ What is the effect of acceleration programmes in arts and sport?

<p>Learning outcomes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To understand the distinction between 'gifted' and 'talented' in the context of other definitions • To understand the common characteristics of gifted and talented students. • To understand some of the issues surrounding provision within the talent domains
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