

Traits Aptitudes and Behaviors

The degree of **frequency**, **complexity**, and **intensity** of the demonstrated traits, aptitudes, and behaviors determine whether students require differentiated instruction in Gifted and Talented/Advanced Academics (GT/AA) programs and services. Observing and documenting the frequency, complexity, and intensity of a behavior can contribute to a student's profile and inform instructional choices.

Frequency refers to the rate of occurrence or the number of times any event recurs in a given period.

Complexity refers to intricacy or sophistication and can be demonstrated and documented through a student's response, performance, or product.

Intensity refers to the passion and energy that a student demonstrates when engaged in an area of interest or ability.

Students requiring GT/AA are, by their very nature, diverse in their range and expression of giftedness (Tomlinson, 2001). The following should be considered:

- Student strengths may be inconsistently demonstrated within and across disciplines.
- Students may selectively demonstrate their abilities only in an area of personal interest.
- Students may intentionally mask potential due to perfectionism or fear of failure.
- Students may demonstrate potential when the learning environment and experiences are designed to address and support learning preferences.
- Students may demonstrate potential when the learning environment and experiences support intellectual risk-taking.
- Students' strengths or potential may be masked by their educational disabilities.

Recognizing that there is a complex interaction of factors, the purpose of the *Traits, Aptitudes, and Behaviors of Advanced and High Potential Students* chart is to stimulate dialogue among educators, enhancing the investigation into the identification and provision of service for students with advanced or high potential abilities (VanTassel-Baska, 2003). There are many ways for students to demonstrate gifted traits, aptitudes, and behaviors and, subsequently, there are many ways to gather evidence and supporting documentation.

Trait, Aptitude, or Behavior	Description of Trait, Aptitude, or Behavior
	<i>The student may demonstrate evidence of:</i>
Motivation/ Task Commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Internal drive; little need for external motivation• Persistence in pursuing or completing self-selected tasks• Concentrating for longer periods when interested• Initiating projects• Working independently at an earlier age• Playing around, yet testing well• Seemingly boundless energy and endurance• A common attitude of "I'd rather do it myself"• Fascination and involvement in a particular problem, area of study, or form of human expression• Attraction to complicated material; boredom with routine tasks
Interests	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Intense, sustained, sometimes unusual or advanced interests• Unceasing pursuit of an activity beyond the group• A wide range of interests• Intellectual playfulness• Self-taught concepts, ideas, or content• Immersion in task of personal interest; "labor of love"

Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highly expressive communications skills • Use of examples, illustrations, or elaborations • An extensive vocabulary • An ability to pick up and interpret nonverbal cues and draw inferences • Early or avid reading ability • Reading a variety of genres and interests • A preference for books and magazines written for older students • Advanced oral skills • Advanced written language skills • Interest in word-play • Advanced artistic expression • Advanced dramatic expression • Thinking faster than able to write • Preference for speaking over writing
Problem Solving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating new designs • Inventing strategies for recognizing and solving problems • Playing around yet testing well • Thriving on complexity • Tackling tasks and problems in a well-organized, goal-directed, and efficient manner • Attacking complicated material by separating it into components and analyzing it systematically • Requiring little direction from teachers • Continuing despite setbacks • Daring to differ, challenge, change, make mistakes, and fail
Memory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having considerable information on school or non-school topics • An extensive background of knowledge • The need for only one or two repetitions for mastery • Paying attention to details • Being a good guesser
Curiosity/ Inquisitiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asking unusual questions for age • Playing around with ideas • Exhibiting a sense of wonder • Demonstrating many interests, hobbies, or collections • Receptiveness to new thoughts, actions, and products
Insight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quickly grasping new ideas • A heightened capacity for seeing unusual and diverse relationships • Keen powers of observation and a sense of the significant • Making valid generalizations about events, people, or objects
Sensitivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong reactions of compassion • An awareness of global issues • A keen sense of justice • Early moral and ethical concern; empathy • Being highly self-critical • Perfectionism • An orientation toward success • Hesitation to try something where failure is a possibility • Skeptical, critical, and evaluative attitudes • An attraction to aesthetic values

Humor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conveying and picking up on humor easily • Precocity; maturity for age • Humor expressed both in work and in social situations • The capacity for seeing the unusual • Seeing humor in situations that may not appear to be humorous to others; the ability to see relationships and make connections
Intensity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong reactions, responses, and behaviors • Heightened sensory experiences • Seeking intellectual stimulation • Questioning authority; nonconforming • Critically examining adult pronouncements • Uninhibited intellectual willingness to express opinions and ideas • Spirited disagreement with the statements, opinions, ideas, and beliefs of others • Belief in his/her ability to carry out important work
Interpersonal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A preference to respond and relate to older student and adults • Interest in mature or sophisticated issues or topics • Resistance to cooperative or collaborative learning • Social challenges with peers
Intrapersonal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-confidence • Self-awareness and reflection • Motivation by personal goals and beliefs • Freedom from feelings of inferiority • A drive to achieve • Setting high standards for self • A sense of excellence about his/her own work and the work of others • Openness toward new experiences; being adventurous • A willingness to take risks in thought and actions
Creativity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The production of many ideas • The production of highly original ideas; imagination • Exceptional ingenuity in using everyday materials • A vivid imagination • Fluent thinking in generating possibilities, consequences, or related ideas • Flexible thinking using different alternatives or approaches • Original thinking seeking new, unusual, or unconventional associations and combinations • Elaborate thinking embellishing basic ideas, situations, or problems • Non-traditional responses and products
Reasoning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Logical approaches to figuring out solutions • Thinking things through in a logical manner • Judgment that seems mature for age • Making quick perceptions of similarities, differences, and anomalies • Seeing relationships and making connections not readily apparent • An ability to spot inconsistencies and to cope with uncertainty • Sorting out relevant and irrelevant information associated with a particular problem or area of study • Common sense • A willingness to debate topics at greater depth