

# Elementa

*Intersections between Philosophy, Epistemology  
and Empirical Perspectives*

---

3  
(2023)  
1-2

The Gift

*Edited by Francesco Fistetti*

*Francesco Fistetti*

EDITORIAL – What Is the Gift Paradigm? A Reading Guide 7

## FIRST SECTION

*Alain Caillé*

Recent Extensions of the Gift 15

*Jacques T. Godbout*

The Enduring Relevance of Mauss' *Essai sur le don* 43

*Francesco Fistetti*

The Gift Paradigm: Towards a Science of “total social facts” 59

*Annalisa Caputo*

Ricœur, Gift and Poetics 81

## SECOND SECTION

*Andreana Lavanga - Francesco Sulla*

Praise as a Gift in the Relationship between Teachers  
and Their Students 93

*Anna Daniela Savino*

The Gift of Desire: The “inner voice” between Neuroscience and Theory of Attachment 105

VARIOUS

*Roberta Baldini - Maria Grazia Mada Logrieco*

The Gifted Student: Gifts and Talents Development 125

*Alessandro De Santis - Stefania Fantinelli*

Digital Well-Being as a New Kind of Adaptation to the New Millennium Needs: A State-of-the-Art Analysis 135

*Salvatore Iuso - Pia Marinaro*

Education and Culture: Pluralism in the Age of Globalization 153

# The Gifted Student: Gifts and Talents Development

Roberta Baldini - Maria Grazia Mada Logrieco

*Università degli Studi di Foggia (Italy)*

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7358/elementa-2023-0102-balo>

[roberta.baldini@unifg.it](mailto:roberta.baldini@unifg.it)

[maria.logrieco@unifg.it](mailto:maria.logrieco@unifg.it)

---

## ABSTRACT

*The concept of giftedness has evolved significantly over time. Today, it still lacks a singular and precise definition, but it is continually evolving. One notable model found in the literature is the Differentiated Model of Giftedness and Talent (DMGT) by Gagné. This model appears to be a valid contribution to better understanding giftedness, the characteristics of gifted students and the problems related to these constructs. The article aims to highlight the characteristics of gifted students, underlining critical points and strengths in relation to the various contexts, specifically to the school context, and to Gagné's model (personal, scholastic, environmental and social), with a focus on future implications.*

**Keywords:** development; education; gift; giftedness; high potential; learning; resources; school context; student gifted; talent.

---

## 1. INTRODUCTION

International statistics show that 5% of the population have high cognitive potential (IQ score of 120 to 129) and about 2% are gifted (IQ score of 130 and above). These statistics (*Fig. 1*) highlight the importance of increasing knowledge and understanding of the concepts of giftedness and gifted students, especially in school settings. It is important to do this to properly recognize gifted children in order to adequately meet their educational needs.

Who are the plus-documented individuals? And what characteristics do they have?

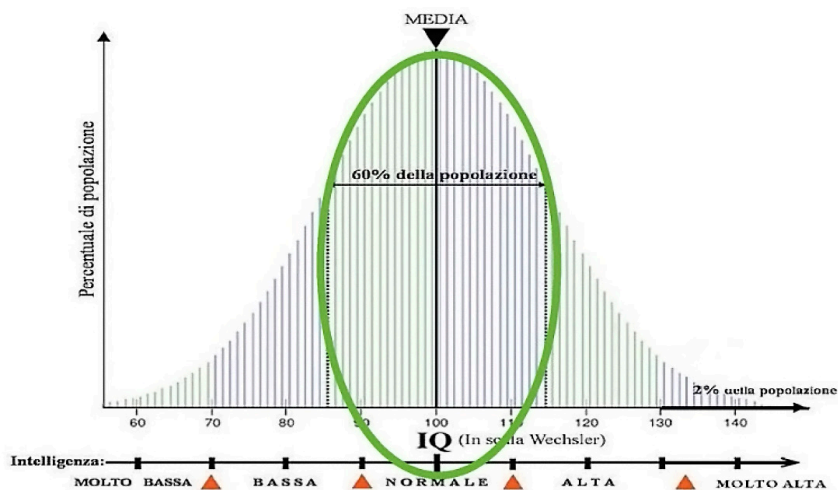


Figure 1. – Gaussian curve of intelligence distribution.

Plus gifted individuals exhibit superior innate abilities, compared to the peer group; they are highly curious individuals who learn new learning faster than their peers; they are interested in a variety of subjects, often unrelated to their age; they have excellent observation and critical judgment; they exhibit good language and memorization skills; they show creativity and passion in performing many activities; they may exhibit marked emotionalism and perfectionism. These characteristics may be present all together or in part in gifted individuals; it is not possible to apply a one-size-fits-all label to gifted individuals.

Gifted students have many characteristics therefore which might allow them to be identified within a context such as a school, for example.

These students do not always recognize their potential as a resource, and therefore the role of reference figures is crucial. In the school setting, the adult of reference is the teacher. It may be difficult for teachers to recognize the individual characteristics of the gifted individuals and thus understand the high potential of these children. Often, the unique traits of these students may be misconstrued as negative attributes. At times, these students' idiosyncrasies might be misconstrued as learning disabilities or neurodevelopmental disorders. To prevent such misjudgments, teachers should be trained to carefully and critically observe all students, identifying both their strengths and weaknesses. In addition, teachers should be properly prepared and trained to work with gifted pupils.

They should be able to recognize the peculiarities of students in order to create specific and individualized instructional plans. An instructional plan for gifted students should include specially selected tools and strategies, for example tasks with various solutions, “open” tasks or creative homework. Thus, the role of the teacher appears to be crucial in the development and enhancement of children’s and young people’s abilities, and even more so with gifted individuals.

In conclusion, giftedness can be defined as a gift, a great resource for children and young people to exploit, while paying proper attention to the development of this gift. Importantly, this high potential must be protected both from an individual’s perspective and within a group of individuals to prevent it from being wasted.

## 2. THEORETICAL EXCURSUS OF THE GIFTED STUDENT

The concept of giftedness has been analyzed and explored by many scholars and researchers over time. The earliest findings regarding the genius of individuals and individual characteristics such as intellect and innate abilities can be attributed to Galton (1869); later Hollingworth (1924) and Terman (1925) put the focus on the high cognitive potential of gifted individuals, placing such individuals in restricted groups differentiated from the rest of the population. In the 1950s, Witty revised the existing definitions, introducing the concept of performance in individuals with high potential; the scholar inserts the concept of performance in one with the high potential of gifted individuals. Giftedness thus begins to have a broader and more multidimensional description. Following these scholars, Renzulli (1986; 2009), as a result of multiple researches on the topic, creates the Three Rings Model for successful plusdotation, which is based on the three concepts: above-average intelligence, creativity, and commitment required in the task. The scholar explains the correlation between these issues, saying that possessing many skills in the absence of creativity and without the right commitment, cannot produce the desired results. This model, has been revisited and modified several times, as has Gagné’s Differentiated Model of Giftedness and Talent (1993; 2009). The latter scholar defined gifted children as a small, restricted group of the population (10%) with marked abilities in the areas: intellectual, creative, social, perceptual and physical-motor, in relation to the environmental variables of different social contexts.

The theoretical framework and definitions of plusdotation, influence the strategies and tools used to identify gifted individuals and, consequently, the shared criteria, which define the profile of a gifted individual.

As of the present, there is still no universally accepted definition of giftedness (Carman, 2013), highlighting the ongoing debate and evolution of this concept

## 2.1. Differentiated Model of Giftedness and Talent (DMGT)

In the Differentiated Model of Giftedness and Talent, author Gagné proposes a distinction between “plusdotation” and “talent”. The researcher defines plusdotation as a subject’s possession of innate abilities, or gifts, relative to the peer group. Such gifts are present in the following domains: intellectual, creative, social-affective and sense-motor. The scholar then, defines talent as a process of systematic and progressive enhancement of innate abilities. Such skills developed over time called competencies, are present in the following domains: scholastic, artistic, technological or sports (Gagné, 2009). These descriptions provide insight into an additional concept: the process of talent development, which corresponds to the evolution of gifts into talents. Development processes can take four different forms: maturation; informal learning; formal non-institutional learning; and formal institutional learning.

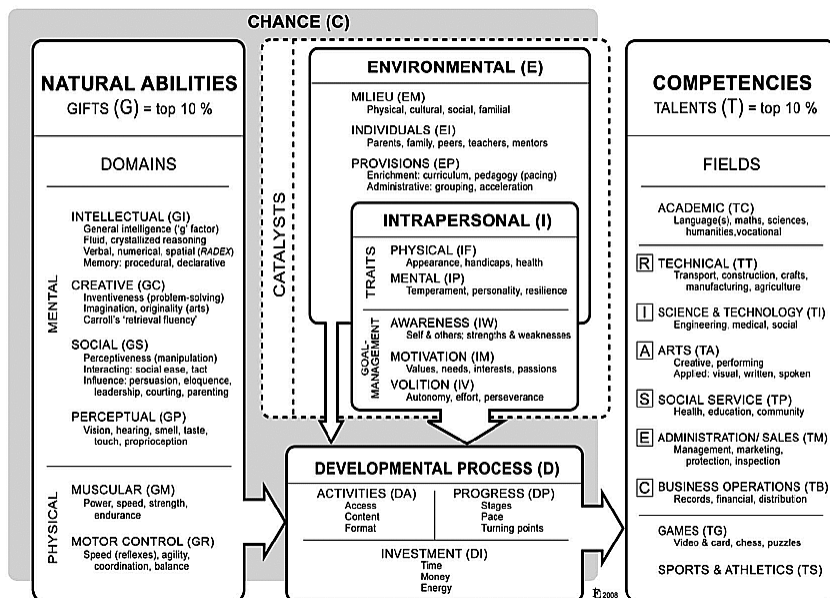


Figure 2. – Differentiated Model of Giftedness and Talent (Gagné, 2009).

According to this model then, plus-ability can be defined as the individual's personal and innate aptitude that can evolve into talent through continuous exercise, skill enhancement and the intervention of internal and external factors related to the individual. The author defines internal and external factors as intrapersonal and environmental catalysts. Intrapersonal catalysts are the characteristics of the person positively or negatively influence the learning process. Its include the individual's physical and psychological characteristics (motivation, temperament, personality). Environmental catalysts are the influences relative to different contexts. Its include social aspects in the multiple contexts (school, recreational places, etc.).

The DMGT model has evolved from 1995 to 2009, by Gagné. *Figure 2* shows the model as it evolved in 2009.

## *2.2. A review of the student gifted: critical points and strengths*

One definition that finds greater acceptance today identifies the gifted plusendowed child as “an individual who, relative to peers, shows or has the potential to show surprising ability at a given time and in specific areas considered to be prominent in his or her culture of belonging” (Keating, 2009; Sternberg *et al.*, 2011; Pfeiffer, 2012).

In general, some common characteristics, although not necessarily present in their entirety in individuals, can be attributed to plusdotation (*Tab. 1*).

*Table 1. – Critical points and strengths in gifted children.*

CRITICAL POINTS	STRENGTHS
They are easily bored	They learn quickly and easily
They don't know to listen	High verbal competence
Adverse attitudes toward their reasoning	Good performance in critical thinking and abstract reasoning
They are frustrated when their humor is not understood	Good sense of humor
Can be considered “bizarre”	Excellent creativity and imagination
They are afraid of failure	They aim for perfectionism
Easily distracted	Excellent memory
Low self-esteem	Sensitive
Possible social isolation with peers	They prefer adults

The literature suggests that characteristics associated with giftedness such as high sensitivity, intensity, intellectual, emotional, and imaginative excitability may be risk factors for the development of emotional-behavioral problems (Shahzad & Begume, 2010; Carrie, 2011). Strong abstract thinking and reasoning skills can lead to situations of boredom and frustration, resulting in distractibility and isolation from the class group.

The gifted child possesses a very high IQ, amazing cognitive abilities, exceptional curiosity and imagination, but he has many difficulties in managing relationships with others and thus also his emotions. Therefore, he may respond to environmental demands with behaviors that are not socially appropriate; he does not “know” other ways. The need to find appropriate responses exposes the student to the risk of enacting problem behaviors, for example, defiant behaviors toward peers and teachers. These aspects undermine the child’s relationships, in different contexts. The child needs to learn how to “create” good relationships and “manage” his or her emotions. An environment rich in opportunities for the child, and with the presence of support figures for the child, could be of great help to the gifted child.

Today, there is substantial body of research indicating that gifted children may develop psychological problems (depression, school phobia, anger management problems or trauma) because of their vulnerability and lack of understanding from other people. In such cases, it is necessary to carry out supportive network work to help children with giftedness. This network includes the school, family and social context. In addition, studies show that working synergistically with the family can foster better coping skills and greater resilience in the gifted child (Pfeiffer, 2013).

### 3. CONCLUSION: A FUTURE PERSPECTIVE

According to the models analyzed and the characteristics of the gifted individuals illustrated in the article, it is clear that giftedness is to be considered a gift, a high potential to be harnessed. This potential requires appropriate and facilitating contexts to flourish, develop and remain active over time.

It is evident that the environment in which the individual is born, grows and develops is to be considered fundamental. Attention is therefore given to the family context, the school context, and the social context. Family relationships, interactions with teachers and the classroom group, and relationships with the peer group are necessary connections for the development of the talents of the gifted individual. A welcoming, supportive and motivating environment, in each and every area mentioned, is the fertile ground on which the foundation of the development of the gifted individual rests.



Specifically, within the educational context, gifted students must be properly observed, recognized, identified and supported. School for these children must be a place full of curiosity, creativity, exchange of new ideas and continuous knowledge. Gifted individuals must feel free to express themselves according to their characteristics and potential. All students, regardless of their giftedness, should feel safe to learn and make mistakes.

An inclusive school must have the student at its center, considering their interests, needs, timing, cognitive styles, and vulnerabilities. An inclusive school must create a personalized learning plan for students, where differentiation is synonymous with inclusion. Doing so will enable students to learn more easily and quickly. These aspects will positively affect the level of students' self-esteem and was psychological factors.

In this context, teachers play a pivotal role, both in terms of education and relationships. In fact, the literature shows that a good quality of teacher-student interaction turns out to be a protective factor for the social-emotional and cognitive development of the students themselves, with positive effects on learning processes, regardless of the quality of the relationships students establish with other reference figures (Ansari, Hofkens, & Pianta, 2020).

Teachers therefore, must have personal skills to connect with students, to motivate students, to nurture curiosity in children, to ignite their imagination and enable them to learn new knowledge, while respecting all individuals. Teachers should adeptly recognize students' strengths and focus on their resources rather than their weaknesses, providing praise without resorting to punishment or labels. Teachers must be advocates and carriers of a real concept of social inclusion, in an inclusive school that has the student at its center. All efforts aim to emphasize the importance of recognizing and identifying gifted children in order to cultivate their resources and talents through the use of appropriate tools, strategies, and contexts. This not only prevents the waste of human potential but also contributes to the realization of a truly inclusive world.

## REFERENCES

- Ansari, A., Hofkens, T. L., & Pianta, R. C. (2020). Teacher-student relationships across the first seven years of education and adolescent outcomes. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 71, 101200.
- Borland, J. H. (2009). Myth 2: The gifted constitute 3% to 5% of the population. Moreover, giftedness equals high IQ, which is a stable measure of apti-

- tude: Spinal tap psychometrics in gifted education. *Gifted Child Quarterly*, 53(4), 236-238.
- Brazzolotto, M. (2021). Le percezioni sul talento e sulla genialità secondo alcuni studenti gifted. *Formazione & insegnamento*, 19(3), 184-196.
- Carman, C. (2013). Confronto tra mele e arance. Quindici anni di definizioni di talento nella ricerca. *Journal of Advanced Academics*, 24(1), 52-70.
- Carrie, L. B. (2011). An examination of the relationships between ego development, Dabrowski's theory of positive disintegration, and the behavioral characteristics of gifted adolescents. *Gifted Child Quarterly*, 55(3), 208.
- Gagné, F. (2008). Trasformare i doni in talenti. Breve panoramica del DMGT 2.0. *Studi sulle alte capacità*, 152, 81-89.
- Guarneri, P., & Resta, V. (2019). Plusdotazione. Inquadramento e presa in carico. *Psiba: Quaderno dell'Istituto di Psicoterapia del bambino e dell'adolescente* 50(2), 73-86.
- Keating, D. P. (2009). Developmental science and giftedness: An integrated life-span frame-work. In F. D. Horowitz, R. F. Subotnik, & D. J. Matthews (Eds.), *The development of giftedness and talent across the life span*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Mangione, G. R., & Maffei, F. (2013). Didattica e bambini dotati. Approcci consolidati e prassi emergenti. *Giornale Italiano della Ricerca Educativa / Italian Journal of Educational Research*, 6(11), 140-156.
- Marsili, F., & Pellegrini, M. (2023). L'identificazione degli studenti con plusdotazione. Evidenze empiriche e implicazioni pratiche. *RicercaAzione*, 15(1), 201-211.
- Novello, A. (2016). Insegnare le lingue a studenti gifted. Strategie didattiche per la plusdotazione. *Romanica Cracoviensia*, 16(2), 109-119.
- Novello, A. (2019). Gli studenti gifted. Riflessioni e proposte per la loro valutazione linguistica. *EL.LE*, 7 (3), 391-412.
- Olivieri, D. (2018). Modelli di plusdotazione e sviluppo dei talenti. I bambini dotati. *Formazione & insegnamento*, 16(2), 153-172.
- Pfeiffer, S. I. (2012). Prospettive attuali sull'identificazione e la valutazione degli studenti dotati. *Giornale di valutazione psicoeducativa*, 30(1), 3-9.
- Pfeiffer, S. I. (2013). Lessons learned from working with high-ability students. *Gifted Education International*, 29(1), 86-97.
- Pfeiffer, S. I. (2021). Ottimizzare i risultati favorevoli nella consulenza ai dotati. Un approccio basato sulle migliori pratiche. *Gifted Education International*, 37(2), 142-157.
- Rizzo, L., & Pinnelli, S. (2023). Promoting well-being at school: From an inclusive perspective the focus on the gifted student / Promuovere il benessere scolastico. Dalla prospettiva inclusiva l'attenzione per l'alunno gifted. *Italian Journal of Special Education for Inclusion*, 11(1), 154-164.

- Sandri, P., Zanetti, M. A., & Bennardi, I. (2023). Gifted students and inclusive distance learning: An exploratory survey. *Form@re – Open Journal per la formazione in rete*, 23(2), 189-208.
- Sgambelluri, R. (2019). Valutare e valorizzare gli studenti gifted a scuola. Verso la progettazione di un modello integrato di valutazione per l'inclusione. *Formazione & insegnamento*, 17(3), 104-117.
- Shahzad, S., & Begume, N. (2010). Level of depression in intellectually gifted secondary school children. *Gifted and Talented International*, 25(2), 91-98.
- Sorrentino, C. (2017). Giftedness e contesti secondo una prospettiva pedagogica. *Italian Journal of Special Education for Inclusion*, 5(1), 161-170.
- Vinci, V., & Sgambelluri, R. (2020). Riconoscere e promuovere il talento e l'alto potenziale di studenti gifted. Dai test di valutazione alle strategie didattiche personalizzate. *Formazione & insegnamento*, 18(2), 253-269.
- Zanetti, M. A. (2016). Una doppia difficoltà in classe. I bambini ad alto potenziale. *Journal of Applied Radical Behavior Analysis*, 16-21.

## RIASSUNTO

*Il concetto di plusdotazione si è evoluto molto nel corso del tempo. Ancora oggi non ha una definizione univoca e precisa, ma risulta essere in via di continui sviluppi. Sono stati proposti differenti modelli sulla plusdotazione, come il Modello Differenziato della Plusdotazione e del Talento (DMGT) di Gagné, che appare essere un valido contributo per comprendere meglio la plusdotazione, le caratteristiche degli studenti gifted e i problemi correlati a tali costrutti. L'articolo mira a evidenziare le caratteristiche degli studenti gifted, sottolineando punti critici e punti di forza in relazione ai vari contesti, nello specifico al contesto scolastico, e al modello di Gagné (personale, scolastico, ambientale e sociale), in una prospettiva futura.*

Copyright (©) 2023 Roberta Baldini, Maria Grazia Mada Logrieco

Editorial format and graphical layout: copyright (©) LED Edizioni Universitarie



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons

Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License.

### *How to cite this paper:*

Baldini, R., & Logrieco, M. G. M. (2023). The gifted student: Gifts and talents development. *Elementa. Intersections between Philosophy, Epistemology and Empirical Perspectives*, 3(1-2), 125-133. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7358/elementa-2023-0102-balo>