

# Characteristics of children who excel academically and mechanisms for caring for them

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## Abstract

The subject of academic excellence occupies great importance in psychology, due to its importance, considering that the outstanding are the elite of human wealth with their special abilities and high intelligence. The developed countries have paid all attention to these groups by caring for them physically, psychologically and socially, while providing material incentives and providing foreign missions to encourage excellence, develop it and benefit from it in the service and advancement of society. Where many scientific fields have been interested and still are pushing those in charge of psychology and education affairs, in particular, to reveal superior models and take care of the family and school climate, as well as the environmental motivating to refine and invest these energies.

Accordingly, we try below to clarify the most important strategies that work to discover and support the category of academic excellence by identifying their characteristics and ways to take care of them.

**Keywords:** academic excellence – characteristics – sponsorship mechanisms.

## Introduction

Outstanding students need to develop their abilities and areas of excellence and care, especially since they have many special and differentiated developmental and guidance needs as for ordinary students. This is contrary to the common belief that these students do not need special attention, because they are able and able to manage and solve their problems on their own.

The problem of outstanding students in our Arab societies is the possibility of identifying their talents first, and providing the appropriate climate for their development and development second, for the benefit of the student himself and the society as a whole. The school, as a social system, plays an important role in this context, because it is the first educational institution in which the child joins after the family.

### **Definition of academic excellence**

The term academic excellence is one of the most important educational terms that scholars differed in defining a unified concept due to the different opinions, standards and criteria adopted in that. It is not possible to say that superiority exists just because there is a certain trait or one particular characteristic, as superiority is achieved by the availability of a set of qualities in the individual that complement each other to embody in a form that inspires uniqueness and distinction from peers.

It is currently the prevailing and adopted definition that a "superchild" is one who shows outstanding performance compared to his peers in one or more of the following dimensions:

- High recall ability.
- Ability to high academic achievement.
- Ability to perform distinct skills such as technical, mathematical or language skills.
- A procedural definition can also be developed for outstanding children as those who get 15 of the total scores of their peers on the man's drawing test to measure intelligence, and the scale of behavioral characteristics of superior-children (Zaghloul, 2009, p. 55).

### **Characteristics of outstanding students**

The most important results of the studies regarding the characteristics that distinguish the outstanding from others can be summarized as follows:

#### **1- Physical characteristics**

- The physical composition of the outstanding in general is slightly better than the physical composition of the ordinary, whether in terms of height, freedom from disabilities, types of sensory deficiencies such as hearing or vision impairment and others.

- The physical growth and motor growth of the outstanding is going at a slightly greater rate than the growth rate among the ordinary, as the appearance of teeth, speech and walking begins early in children who excel from normal children by about two months (Al-Maaytah & Albawaliz, 2004, p. 55).
- The rate of motor activity exceeds his peers and heavier than them, his energy to work is high and his general growth is fast.
- Athletic and loves to run and walk a lot.
- Relatively free of neurological disorders and slightly advanced in bone growth (Obaid, 2000, p. 36).
- Needs fewer sleep periods than his peers.
- Has a compatible physique and motor structure.
- Shows more physical skill than his peers (Zaghloul, 2009, p. 15).

## **2- Mental and cognitive characteristics**

The characteristics and mental qualities are one of the most important characteristics that distinguish the superior from other ordinary people, they are more intelligent than the average, it may be 130° or 140° or more. They are also able to understand cause and effect, recognize the connections and relationships between things, tolerate ambiguity, be able to perceive and deepen experimental sciences, and have many interests in scientific and non-scientific topics at the same time. This is confirmed by studies (Soliman, 2001, p. 67).

In addition, the following characteristics are added:

- They have the speed of learning, understanding and memorization, as the academic superior has a high ability to learn at an early age, especially in the field of language, numbers and solving puzzles.
- The gifted superior student has a high ability to extract information accurately and selectively quickly (Jean, 2013, p. 67).
- Great speed in solving educational problems they encounter.
- Have extensive information on several topics.
- They use their own strategies to understand complex things.
- They fragment things to understand.
- They have the ability to generalize.
- Their level of achievement is high.

- They can predict in advance the outcome of events.
- They have the ability to work in an independent manner.
- Easily control code languages and the digital system (Terrassier, 1999, p. 302).
- Extraordinary ability to comprehensively process information, speed and flexibility in thought processes, speed of assimilation and memorization and storage of an extraordinary amount of information.
- Early ability to use conceptual frameworks and their composition, the ability to generate original ideas and solutions, extraordinary power of focus, perseverance and determination in behavior and activity (Chédia, 2010, p. 83).
- Curiosity and mental curiosity that is reflected in his multiple questions and suggests ideas that others may consider strange.
- Fertility of the cavalry, alertness and superior ability to observe, remember and express his original thoughts easily, accurately and in a good manner.
- He prefers direct speech to the use of symbols, and reads and writes slowly sometimes because of his other mental interests.
- The ability to express his original thoughts easily and accurately, and is able to do effective work independently and does not follow routine methods.
- Willing to take risks and perform difficult work easily (Obaid, 2000, p. 34).
- Increase their linguistic output at an early age, especially words that are characterized by intellectual originality and original expression.
- Their unusual tendency to read, and their early maturity in reading adult books.
- He enjoys reading stories and writing poems and is interested in linguistic ideas, and his reading is at a mature level.
- Addresses problems in a multi-solution manner, and uses creative methods to address them.
- He shows a remarkable interest in everything around him, and his career ambitions are focused on high-end professions and often achieves excellence and success in the professions he chooses (Zahwan, p. 49).
- We find both the scientist (Zahwan, p. 52) mentioning some of the educational characteristics of the outstanding represented in:

- The fact that the high achievers learn quickly and easily, as they get bored with the details and show boredom because of it. Speed in learning is related to the necessary subjects and skills, they are faster than ordinary people in the ability to reason, conclude and generalize.
- Diversity and interests, contrary to what many think they are creative in one field. But they show a special interest in a subject more than others (Ayasrah, & Ismail, 2012, p. 6).
- Characterized by perseverance in research and independence in learning.

### **3- Psycho-social characteristics**

On a psychological level:

- Emotional, emotional balance, non-nervousness, tendency to fun, humor, humor and kindness in their dealings with others and self-control (Chédia, 2010, p. 68).
- They have the ability to self-control and responsibility, as they are calm and peaceful and are characterized by the lack of emotional problems suffered by the outstanding outstanding for other individuals in society, with the presence of vanity and magnification of some of them.
- They prefer to solve problems on their own and easily adapt to new situations (Zahwan, p. 295).
- They are characterized by high levels of self-confidence, perseverance, strength of determination, optimism, gentle feelings, self-sufficiency and a sense of self-worth.
- Proactively proposes solutions to situations, and his behavior may sometimes be characterized by defiance and non-submission to orders (Obaid, 2000, p. 39).

In terms of social characteristics:

- Open to the community and good participants in social activities.
- A high level of moral maturity.
- Attachment to ideals and issues of truth, justice and morality.
- Establish appropriate relationships with others (El-Sherbiny & Yousria, 2004, p. 102).
- Has socially acceptable traits, tends to keep up with people and courtesy of them, and prefers socially acceptable things and behavior.
- Able to win friends and tend to accompany older than him, and prefers the friendship of the superior to the ordinary (Obaid, 2000, p. 40).

In addition to some of the leadership characteristics:

- Can take responsibility, and is a trusted person.

- Collaborates with his teachers and colleagues, and is reliable.
- Possesses an extraordinary ability to influence, persuade and guide others.
- Moves the capabilities of the group and makes everyone participate (Sobhi, 1992, p. 148).

## **Methods of detecting outstanding students and ways to sponsor them**

### **Methods of detecting outstanding students**

We find among the most important means and procedures that can be used in detecting and identifying outstanding students are the following:

#### **1- Interview Method:**

The interview is an important tool used by specialists in the field of education, as well as those interested in searching for individuals with mental energies in order to diagnose and detect them. Due to the importance of this method in the detection process, specialists often tend to distinguish between two types of interview: those conducted with the aim of diagnosis and evaluation of personality in terms of mental, social, motivation as well as emotional, and the interview that is used in the field of designing and providing scientific programs and appropriate services in order to develop the various abilities and capabilities possessed by the outstanding students (Al-Khalidi, 2008, p. 135).

#### **2- Tests and Measurements**

- Intelligence tests: IQ tests measure an individual's overall mental ability, i.e. measure an individual's ability to acquire, organize and use facts.
- Individual intelligence scale: the most common at the global level, the "Stanford-Binet" scale of intelligence, the "Wechsler" scale of intelligence.
- Collective IQ measures: The most commonly used is the Raven test, known as the sequential matrices test.
  - A- School and academic tests: known as readiness tests and are usually a means of measuring the ability of the examinee to perform behavior that is not related to a specific education or training for classification.
  - B- Achievement tests: It is a type of test that tries to measure what individuals actually got after studying a particular program.
  - C- Innovation and innovative thinking tests: These tests measure innovative thinking, as they require fluency, flexibility and originality in thinking.

D- Personal tests: They are tests that seek to identify the personal characteristics of the superior comprehensively and obtain valuable information to guide him in the field of emotional and social development (Saeed, 2007, pp. 55-57).

### **Methods of educational and academic care for outstanding students**

The student spends most of his day at school, hence the importance of the school's role in providing the necessary care and guidance to the distinguished student, including the necessary aspects of activity for the age stage in which he lives. The school's care for outstanding students includes multiple methods that include enrichment, acceleration, assembly, guidance and guidance.

#### **1- Method or program of assembly**

In it, distinguished children are placed in homogeneous groups within peers who are similar to them in IQ rates or interests, skills and talents. This method allows for better care as a result of the convergence and homogeneity of their basic abilities, which increases the degree of interaction between teacher and student and between distinguished students. Placing outstanding students in one classroom with the appropriate conditions and capabilities helps them to develop their abilities and tendencies better, and this situation enables them to interact with each other and reduce the disparity between them at the level of mental and performance abilities, especially if they have qualified teachers with the necessary experience and skill, in addition to the richness of the content of the courses and their proportion to their inclinations and preparations. The assembly is carried out by:

- A- Establishing special schools for outstanding students: only outstanding students who possess distinct mental and performance abilities are enrolled, revealed by approved tests such as intelligence test, creative thinking and others. These schools work to:
  - Create convergent mental homogeneity between children and outstanding students.
  - Place certain rows according to the actual level.
  - Being able to find specialists capable of carrying out the success of this task.

The classes are in their entirety free classes similar to the lab, so that children in one class are divided into groups, each with its own hobby and work, whether in the field of mathematics, science, art, languages or others.

- B- Establishing special classes for the gifted and gifted: where the outstanding students are grouped in special classes within regular schools.

- It helps to create opportunities to participate with other ordinary students in various types of school activity, develops their ability to establish social relations, helps them to exercise leadership roles, and provides the opportunity for ordinary people to socialize with them, benefit from them and establish fruitful relationships with them.
- They can devote all their study energies to research and achievement.
- C- Collection by partial isolation: It is also called "graded classes" and in this type of grouping gifted and talented students are taught with ordinary students in the same class, but the outstanding students are grouped at a specific period of the school day and a specific place, and isolated from their colleagues in special classes to receive a special education.

Displaced pupils may be of the same age and level of schooling, may be of different ages and levels, depending on the nature of the special programme, and may be from the same school and within its premises or from different schools and hosted by one of them. (Obaid, 2000, p. 8)

## **2- Speed up method**

This method often works to overcome the great frustrations and boredom faced by distinguished students in the regular class as a result of waiting for their ordinary colleagues to acquire the information they absorbed from the first time, or as a result of the various pressures that fall on them by their peers and those around them, hence the acceleration comes as a direct and practical solution for distinguished students who are quick to achieve (Obaid, 2000, p. 10).

This process is also called academic acceleration, as it allows the academically gifted person to skip the steps of the educational ladder very quickly to the educational degree in which it is commensurate with his mental abilities, without taking into account the age factor, and not adhering to the educational plan adopted in the school.

Among the forms of acceleration, we mention:

- Early admission of the gifted in the first grade of primary school: before the age of six of his chronological age, because the mental abilities he possesses exceed the mental abilities of those of his age. Acceptance is based on mental age, not chronology.
- Skipping classes: This method is based on allowing the outstanding child to skip one class during one school stage.

- Compression of classes in one stage: This is done through the establishment of special programs similar to those of ordinary students, so that they can finish this stage in a short period compared to their peers. (Al-Quraiti, 2001, p. 185)

Among the criticisms of the Acceleration Program is that throwing gifted and talented children into advanced classes with older students deprives them of opportunities to play and normal social life, as well as opportunities to practice leadership roles that were much more likely to exist among ordinary chronologically older peers than with their older colleagues (Al-Quraiti, 2001, p. 193).

### **3- Enrichment method**

Enrichment means those arrangements whereby the usual curriculum of ordinary students is modified in a planned and purposeful way, by introducing additional learning experiences and activities to make it more broad, diverse, deep and complex so that it becomes more challenging and exciting for the preparations of the distinguished and satisfies their educational mental needs.

These modifications or additions may be in the form of subjects that do not give ordinary students, or increase the level of difficulty in traditional subjects, or delve deeper into one or more subjects. Enrichment in all subjects is called horizontal enrichment, while enrichment in a particular subject is called vertical enrichment.

The organizers of these programs adopt some important methods that help them to a large extent in developing and developing the capabilities of gifted and talented people, including:

- Carry out field visits with them to museums, laboratories, factories, laboratories and various institutions.
- Participation in various scientific and cultural events.
- Accustom them to scientific research in various fields to raise the level of understanding and academic achievement.
- Encourage them to study educational materials for higher academic levels than their academic level.
- Use appropriate education technologies. (Al-Quraiti, 2001, p. 195)

In addition to the role played by the school in containing outstanding students, attention must also be paid to their families and those in charge of their education and awareness of their roles. This can be achieved as follows:

- Meetings between specialists, management and parents of outstanding students.
- Issuing bulletins and booklets suitable for parents in general and outstanding students in particular, so as to deepen the concept of excellence and the importance of family care for them. Conduct research and social studies on the families of these outstanding people and what can be deduced on the basis of excellence and the role of the family in it, so that these studies become a basis in the field of care.
- In the field of awareness, cooperation with the media must be developed and the correct image of excellence must be developed and disseminated by all means through radio, television, the press and all available means of publishing to achieve a broader understanding by parents about excellence and the foundations and how to develop excellence.
- Directing special programs for parents and linking them to the school and the educational office, so that we develop trust between parents, the office and the school (Zarraqa & Zararga, 2013, pp. 304-305).

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