

GT/SLD Pattern of Strengths and Weaknesses

PURPOSE: This tool was developed to support schools as they discuss concerns related to bright students. It is designed to assist teams to determine whether or not a student may be suspected GT with a Specific Learning Disability (SLD). It may help teams to discuss whether a referral for GT/LD services may be appropriate.

Student's Name: _____ ID Number: _____ Grade: _____

School: _____ School Contact Person: _____

DIRECTIONS: As a team, identify strengths and needs.

- 1) First, check for strengths. Place a *check mark* in any box in the strengths column where the area is a significant strength compared with the student's grade-level peers.
- 2) Second, check for needs. Place a *check mark* in any box in the needs column where the student's performance is significantly below expectancy given the student's strengths or if the student performs below grade level in that area.

If there are many areas checked on both sides of the chart, the child may have a pattern of strengths and weaknesses consistent with that of identified GT/SLD students.

COGNITIVE		
Strengths	Needs	Comments/Notes
<input type="checkbox"/> Verbal reasoning <input type="checkbox"/> Visual spatial reasoning <input type="checkbox"/> Problem solving <input type="checkbox"/> Background knowledge and vocabulary <input type="checkbox"/> Making connections between events, ideas, and situations <input type="checkbox"/> Concept attainment and retention <input type="checkbox"/> Long-term, abstract memory <input type="checkbox"/> Critical thinking (analysis, synthesis, evaluation) <input type="checkbox"/> Creativity and imagination, generation of new or original ideas <input type="checkbox"/> Curiosity, questioning	<input type="checkbox"/> Processing speed <input type="checkbox"/> Memory (rote or short-term) <input type="checkbox"/> Executive functioning/mental organization <input type="checkbox"/> Working memory <input type="checkbox"/> Auditory processing <input type="checkbox"/> Visual-spatial perception <input type="checkbox"/> Sequential processing <input type="checkbox"/> Visual-motor integration <input type="checkbox"/> Distractible or hyperactive	
Verbal reasoning is a common characteristic of a GT/SLD student. Generally, GT/SLD students are driven to learn about key areas of interest. While they may have difficulty organizing their thinking, they tend to be able to make good connections and have strong problem-solving capabilities. If weaknesses in rote memory and organization are compensated for, these strengths generally flourish.		

WRITTEN EXPRESSION		
Strengths	Needs	Comments/Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Creative ideas, originality <input type="checkbox"/> May have a strong voice <input type="checkbox"/> Word choice, vocabulary <input type="checkbox"/> Grasp of concepts, ideas <input type="checkbox"/> Background knowledge, information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Translating ideas on to paper <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty “getting started” <input type="checkbox"/> Organization/sequencing of ideas <input type="checkbox"/> Elaboration, providing adequate support/detail (minimal output) <input type="checkbox"/> Conventions/mechanics <input type="checkbox"/> Spelling <input type="checkbox"/> Poor handwriting <input type="checkbox"/> Slow writing speed/fluency <input type="checkbox"/> Minimal production 	
<p>Many times, strengths noted above are only evident verbally through their oral expression (until they learn compensatory strategies) as, most often, their weaknesses impact their ability to get their thoughts out on paper. When the students read back or discuss their writing, they may verbally elaborate and add unlimited description and detail. Some students have great difficulty with the mechanics of writing but can put their thoughts on paper. Others have more difficulty figuring out how to filter through all their ideas and narrowing their focus. Others have difficulty generating/organizing ideas and getting started. Some students have all of these challenges.</p>		

READING		
Strengths	Needs	Comments/Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Listening comprehension (deeper meaning, making connections, inferential thinking, insights) <input type="checkbox"/> Using high-level vocabulary and sharing vast background knowledge <input type="checkbox"/> Applying shared inquiry (high-level discussion and questioning) <input type="checkbox"/> Grasping themes and getting the main idea 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Phonemic awareness and decoding (phonics) <input type="checkbox"/> Oral reading fluency (pace and smoothness) <input type="checkbox"/> Memory, recalling accurate/adequate details <input type="checkbox"/> Written responses 	
<p>Most GT/SLD students have excellent reading-comprehension skills. However, if reading is impacted, the most common areas of need are in decoding and fluency. Students with limited decoding skills often have short-term memory and sequencing difficulties. These weaknesses can impact a student’s comprehension of independently read text. If the written component is removed from the comprehension task, often the GT/SLD responses are advanced for his/her age.</p>		

MATH		
Strengths	Needs	Comments/Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Strong grasp of concepts <input type="checkbox"/> Reasoning, problem solving <input type="checkbox"/> Thinking logically and symbolically at high levels <input type="checkbox"/> Coming up with new or alternative solutions to problems <input type="checkbox"/> Relating math concepts to novel situations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Computation (particularly long division, multi-digit multiplication, working with fractions) <input type="checkbox"/> Retaining and recalling math facts automatically and quickly <input type="checkbox"/> Processing information sequentially (following algorithms, showing your work, explaining how you got your answer) 	
<p>Many GT/SLD students are strong mathematical thinkers and grasp taught concepts quickly. Typical areas of weakness include calculations, basic facts, and showing work. In contrast, the GT/SLD student may be very strong in verbal skills, but have a clear weakness for number sense and visual spatial skills. This student finds math challenging, while having a stronger set of reading skills.</p>		

EXPRESSIVE LANGUAGE		
Strengths	Needs	Comments/Notes
<input type="checkbox"/> Creative and unique ideas <input type="checkbox"/> Verbally fluent <input type="checkbox"/> Vocabulary <input type="checkbox"/> Articulate, “adult-like” discussions	<input type="checkbox"/> Word retrieval <input type="checkbox"/> Organization and sequencing of ideas <input type="checkbox"/> Staying on topic <input type="checkbox"/> Pragmatic language	
<p>Most GT/SLD students have excellent expressive language skills and are described as highly verbal and articulate. Some students may have difficulties with word retrieval and will talk around an idea. Some students may know what they want to say but start and stop or sequence their ideas inappropriately.</p>		

RECEPTIVE LANGUAGE		
Strengths	Needs	Comments/Notes
<input type="checkbox"/> Learning through listening <input type="checkbox"/> Understanding spoken language	<input type="checkbox"/> Following directions <input type="checkbox"/> Identifying salient points	
<p>Most GT/SLD students have strong receptive language ability and learn well by listening to the teachers and others. However, they often have difficulty following directions that are presented orally or identifying what is important. Attention difficulties may impact a student’s listening comprehension, despite strong receptive language ability.</p>		

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL	
CHARACTERISTICS	Comments/Notes
<input type="checkbox"/> Low self-esteem related to school competence <input type="checkbox"/> Anxious about school performance <input type="checkbox"/> Task avoidant (limited to areas of difficulty)	
<p>While social emotional difficulty is not a primary characteristic of a learning disability, many GT/SLD students (whose strengths and needs are not recognized or addressed) may struggle with poor self-esteem, anxiety about school-related tasks, and frustration. They may avoid tasks that they are incapable of doing well (reading, writing) but remain engaged during instruction that is strength-based (discussion, hands-on). Pervasive behavioral or emotional issues are not typical for GT/SLD students, and will often dissipate when/if the disability and the gifts are recognized and addressed.</p>	

Findings:

- The child has a pattern of strengths and weaknesses that is strongly consistent with that of a GT/SLD student.
- The child has a pattern of strengths and weaknesses that is somewhat consistent with that of a GT/SLD student.
- The child has a pattern of strengths and weaknesses that is not consistent with that of a GT/SLD student.