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STUDENT STRENGTH ASSESSMENT

INTERVIEWER'S GUIDE

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Directions for Interviewers: Using the interview questions for each characteristic, ask each teacher to name children/youth in his/her classes who fit the description.¹

When the teacher gives a name, ask for some examples of things the student(s) do. Based on their examples, record the letter that corresponds to the area(s) in which the students show their ability.

If the teacher does not give a name or names immediately, or does not think of anyone in certain category, give her/him examples from the list provided. These examples also may be helpful if teachers are having trouble deciding about students or they wish additional information to help think about the strengths of students in their classes.

1. Humor: Which student or students in your class seem to have exceptionally keen sense of the comical, bizarre, or absurd?

Examples

Spatial – (S)

- Draws funny cartoons
- Makes things that are funny or that seem weird or bizarre

Linguistic – (L)

- Invents or plays with words
- Uses concepts or vocabulary from first or second language inappropriately to make people laugh
- Tells funny stories
- Writes weird, funny or bizarre stories
- Adds humor to other assignments such as reports or discussions

Logical-Mathematical – (LM)

- Creates cause-effect relationships that seem funny or bizarre
- Uses numbers or math concepts in humorous ways
- Creates parodies of scientific processes

Personal – (P)

- Shows a sense of humor that delights, entertains, or surprises other people – either age-mates or adults
- Uses stories, jokes or comments that make people laugh to ease tension in a group
- Has ability to satirize political correctness or social conventions

Musical – (M)

- Makes up funny, weird, or bizarre music

Bodily Kinesthetic – (BK)

- Creates facial expressions and movements that are funny, crazy, or bizarre
- Uses drama, dance, or athletics to make people laugh

¹ Questions are based on the description of characteristics of gifted learners developed by L. S. Kanevsky, C. J. Maker, A. B. Nielson, and J. A. Rogers published in C. J. Maker and A. B. Nielson (1996). *Curriculum development and teaching strategies for gifted learners* (2nd ed.). Austin, TX: Pro-Ed. The original list of characteristics is based on the work of Mary Frasier [Frasier, M. M. and Passow, A. H. (1994). *Toward a new paradigm for identifying talent potential* (Research Monograph 94112). Storrs, CT: University of Connecticut, The National Research Center for Gifted and Talented].

2. Motivation: Which student or students in your class have an intense desire to know, do, feel, create, or understand?

Examples

Spatial – (S)

- Wants to draw or make things all the time
- Doodles, scribbles, or draws during class discussions
- Continues working on drawings or constructions after others have stopped
- Shows excitement about all sorts of hands-on materials and activities
- Wants to create models to aid in understanding

Linguistic – (L)

- Reads or writes a lot, both at home and at school
- Enjoys talking, reading or writing
- Likes to learn and use new words
- Continues to read, write, or talk long after everyone else has stopped
- Prefers explanations in words

Logical-Mathematical – (LM)

- Enjoys using numbers or math concepts, both during math and other subjects
- Includes math concepts in stories, such as dimensions, time, and cause-effect relationships
- Enjoys challenging math activities
- Prefers data arranged in charts or graphs for explanatory purposes

Personal – (P)

- Introduces self or talks to visitors at home or those who come to class
- Asks personal questions of teachers, parents, relatives, other students, visitors, or people he/she doesn't know
- Enjoys reading biographies or hearing about famous people
- Writes stories, draws, or makes constructions that include people or personal relationships
- Shares personal information about him/herself
- Prefers collaborative projects
- Learns well from others

Musical – (M)

- Wants to listen to music or play it all the time
- Experiments with musical instruments for long periods of time
- Chooses musical instruments or activities when given an opportunity to select own activities

Bodily Kinesthetic – (BK)

- Constantly moving
- Experiments with Karate, gymnastics, athletic moves, dances, weight-lifting, and any other bodily kinesthetic movements he/she has observed
- Loves drama, athletics, dance, and any other activities involving body movement
- Imitates cartoon characters

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3. Interests: Who in your class has ardent, passionate, sometimes unusual or fleeting interests?

Examples

Spatial – (S)

- Interested in models, art supplies, hands-on materials, pictures, building, sculptures, clay, blocks, art activities, video games

Linguistic – (L)

- Interested in new words in first or second language, or in other unusual languages
- Interested in stories, books, unusual words, puns, rhymes, or figures of speech
- Reads voraciously
- “Publishes” books or newsletters

Logical-Mathematical – (LM)

- Interested in puzzles, math games, logic games, chess, checkers, mastermind, battleship, dungeons and dragons
- Conducts experiments
- Categories items in a collection

Personal – (P)

- Interested in people and personal relationships
- Interested in her/himself
- Joins or forms groups to promote social change (e.g., save the wetlands)

Musical – (M)

- Interested in sounds and how they are made
- Listens intently to tones made by instruments
- Sings while doing other activities

Bodily Kinesthetic – (BK)

- Watches sports, dance, gymnastics, skating, or other events involving movement with unusual interest and intensity
- Wants to learn unusual dances, sports, or skill involving body movements

4. Communication/Expressiveness: Who in your class has an extraordinary ability to convey meaning through words, actions, symbols, sounds, or media?

Examples

Spatial – (S)

- Drawings, models, constructions, or paintings show feelings or abstract ideas
- Paintings show moods, feelings, or ideas in interesting ways
- Photographs capture a mood or feeling in either landscapes or pictures of people
- Combines pictures and words to clarify meaning

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Linguistic – (L)

- Speaks well in first language
- Explains ideas clearly even though grammar may not be correct
- Stories (either oral or written) are unusually clear, precise, and interesting
- Oral or written directions are easy to understand
- Stories or essays convey emotions unusually well
- Uses figures of speech to clarify or extend meaning
- Uses sound, rhythm & emphasis effectively in spoken and written words

Logical-Mathematical – (LM)

- Can show or perform steps in a logic or math problem even though he/she may not be able to explain it verbally
- Explanations are clear and logical, and often or always are made with symbols, diagrams, or numbers rather than words
- Provides results of experimental studies in scientific form and vocabulary

Personal – (P)

- Words and facial or bodily expressions seem to match well (e.g., are consistent)
- Discussions of personal experiences contain unusually descriptive accounts of the emotions of self or others
- Can perform lifelike impersonations of real people or imaginary characters
- Is an actor you can “read” clearly

Musical – (M)

- Creates moods and expresses feelings or ideas through playing music
- Creates moods and expresses feeling or ideas through singing
- Makes up songs about activities or events

Bodily Kinesthetic – (BK)

- Creates or shows moods, feelings, or ideas through movement, body language, or dance
- Makes up dances, plays, or movements about activities
- Can demonstrate (act out) an idea or concept without using words so that others can guess

5. Inquiry: Which student or students in your class show probing exploration, observation, or experimentation with events, objects, ideas, feelings, sounds, or media?

Examples

Spatial – (S)

- Wants to touch things
- Experiments with different colors in art work
- Tries out new hands-on materials as soon as they are available
- Wants to know how things are used
- Watches carefully before trying something new

Linguistic – (L)

- Tries out new words in first or second language
- Combines vocabulary from two languages to experiment with their effects

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- Enjoys playing with words or using unusual or complex vocabulary
- Usually uses words appropriately, but may try them out for effect even though the use is not exactly correct
- Looks up words in the dictionary
- Listens intently to new stories or books
- Reads to acquire information

Logical-Mathematical – (LM)

- Creates or carries out science experiments either at home or at school
- Closely observes pets or plants being grown in the classroom
- Wants to know how things work (may take things apart and not be able to put them back together)
- Asks questions such as “Why? How? When? How come?” about things and events
- Studies maps or charts to acquire information

Personal – (P)

- Asks questions such as “Why? How? When? How come?” about people and relationships
- Watches people
- Listens intently to conversations and interactions
- Tries new or unusual ways to organize groups or get things done
- Probes to discover interests and motivations of others

Musical – (M)

- Experiments with different instruments and compares sounds made by each
- Experiments with different rhythmic patterns
- Plays loud and soft, fast and slow, short and long with different tones and in different sequences

Bodily Kinesthetic – (BK)

- Experiments with movements and actions
- Experiments with personalities and characters by “becoming” the character in dress, movement, tone of voice, and bodily expressions
- Tries out new and unusual movement or activity sequences

6. Problem-Solving: Which student or students in your class have outstanding ability to bring order to chaos through the invention and monitoring of paths to a goal? Who enjoys a challenge?

Examples

Spatial – (S)

- Builds complex, intricate structures, or models
- Creates constructions, drawings, paintings, maps, and other visuals that closely resemble what they are intended to be
- States what he/she is going to make or draw, then completes it
- Tries new ways to build a tower or structure until the desired height or design is achieved

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Linguistic – (L)

- Invents spelling for complex words or vocabulary that shows understanding of how the word sounds
- Persists in writing or rewriting a poem or story until it sounds “just right”
- Tells or writes stories with a clear plot or a recognizable beginning, middle, and end
- Knows when to use first and second language
- Uses knowledge of grammar to figure out vocabulary
- Enjoys word problems, crosswords puzzles, Scrabble, Dictionary or other games involving words or language
- Gives or writes clear directions for reaching a goal

Logical-Mathematical – (LM)

- Solves puzzles easily and quickly
- Enjoys working on complex puzzles or games that are challenging
- Uses tangrams, pattern blocks, unifix cubes, or attribute blocks effectively to solve puzzles or logic problems
- Groups and regroups objects or ideas using multiple attributes
- Invents new ways to solve math problems
- Gets bored with easy computation problems
- Creates a logical structure for evaluating possible solutions to problems
- Follows a sequential procedure to define, investigate and solve problems
- Gets bored with easy computation problems or many similar examples

Personal – (P)

- Organizes groups to solve problems
- Proposes solutions to conflicts between people
- Enjoys working with groups on class projects
- Likes to work alone, but solves own problems effectively
- Draws on personal experiences to design a problem-solving procedure
- Applies personal standards in evaluation of problem solutions

Musical – (M)

- Enjoys challenging musical activities, such as learning to play an instrument
- Tries to play familiar tunes on instruments
- Creates challenges such as attempting to synchronize instruments or songs being played on different recorders
- Creates musical pieces with a clear beginning, middle, and end

Bodily Kinesthetic – (BK)

- Movements and actions are well coordinated
- Creates challenges such as jumping higher or farther, learning a complex move such as cartwheels or somersaults, or performing stunts on the playground
- Creates pleasing dances or movements

7. Sensitivity: Who in your class is unusually open, perceptive, and responsive to experiences, feelings, and others?

Examples

Spatial – (S)

- Notices colors, shapes, or variations in light
- Sees details in pictures, models, or constructions that others may miss
- Can remember visual details of the environment or of personal experiences
- Can recall/recreate visual aspects of personal experiences

Linguistic – (L)

- Notices differences in structure of first and second language
- Notices variations in meanings of words
- Shows sensitivity to rhyme, rhythm, alliteration, and other subtle aspects of language
- Notices differences and similarities between words in first, and other languages
- Seems to know when a certain word or combination of words will be better than another

Logical-Mathematical – (LM)

- Notices differences and similarities in mathematical concepts or symbols
- Sensitive to errors in logic or cause-effect reasoning
- Thoughtful observer
- Meticulous in conducting experiments

Personal – (P)

- Remembers people's names or faces
- Notices details about people or social situations that others might miss
- Responds strongly or emotionally to personal experiences
- Reacts strongly to situations perceived as unfair to self and others
- Diplomatic or tactful
- "Reads" a situation and intervenes to restore harmony among members of a group
- Seems to know the "right thing" to say or do in most situations

Musical – (M)

- Notices movements and actions that others seem to miss
- Winces or shows discomfort if a musical instrument is out of tune
- Shows discomfort when notes played or sung are not in harmony

Bodily Kinesthetic – (BK)

- Notices movements and actions that others seem to miss
- Can imitate subtle movements or action sequences
- Responds to music or sound with rhythm or movement

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8. Intuition: Who in your class experiences sudden recognition of connections or deeper meanings without conscious awareness of reasoning or thought?

Examples

Spatial – (S)

- Notices connections when looking at pictures, making constructions, painting, drawing, or creating visual images
- Sees connections between images, shapes, colors, or other visual stimuli
- May not be able to explain the connections with words
- Sees the form of a visual representation for conveying an idea/image
- Knows where he or she is in relation to other environmental elements

Linguistic – (L)

- Notices connections when talking, reading, listening to explanations of ideas, or when thinking about ideas
- Sees connections between ideas, generalizations, and abstract linguistic concepts
- Interrupts others to share insights
- May not be able to explain the insight immediately or in terms understandable to others

Logical-Mathematical – (LM)

- Notices connections when talking, reading, listening to explanations of ideas, or when thinking about ideas
- Sees connections among mathematical concepts or abstract ideas
- May not be able to explain the connection with words
- Gets correct answers to math problems without working out the solution (e.g., long division, multiplication, algebra, geometry)

Personal – (P)

- Notices connections when working with people or when working alone
- Has insight about personal interactions, social concepts, or about him/herself
- Recognizes the “moment” when another person needs support

Musical – (M)

- Notices connections while listening to music
- Notices connections while playing or creating music
- Makes connections about sounds or songs heard in the past and those being listened to now
- May not be able to explain connections with words

Bodily Kinesthetic – (BK)

- Notices connections when dancing, playing sports, or when involved in movement experiences
- Makes connections between dancing and athletics, drama and gymnastics or other activities involving movement
- May not be able to explain connections with words

9. Reasoning: Which student or students in your class have outstanding ability to think things through and consider implications or alternatives? Who exhibits rich, highly conscious, goal-oriented thought?

Examples

Spatial – (S)

- Gathers and organizes materials before beginning a painting, drawing, model, or construction
- States “I am going to make _____,” and continues until goal is reached to her/his satisfaction
- Does not explain reasoning, but shows it through work on constructions, drawings, or paintings
- Draws or makes visual models before providing verbal explanations
- Clearly knows how to get from point A to point B in the most efficient way

Linguistic – (L)

- Talks about own actions or thoughts, either in first or second language
- Identifies many alternatives during brainstorming
- Makes predictions and inferences, and can explain why one prediction might come true and another might not
- Uses speech to communicate goals and procedure to self and others

Logical-Mathematical – (LM)

- Completes math games and puzzles systematically
- Organizes materials and makes plans for science experiments, projects, or other activities
- Often does things in a step-by-step way
- Connects cause to phenomenon or predicts effects of specific actions

Personal – (P)

- Reminds others in the group when they have forgotten their task
- Helps group members choose parts of a task to complete a cooperative activity
- Develops plans for completing independent projects or other individual activities
- Works well alone completing self-chosen activities and meeting personal goals
- Knows what he/she wants to do as an adult and works toward that goal

Musical – (M)

- Says (for example) “I am going to make up a new song” and then continues until goal is accomplished
- Tries out tones and rhythms until he/she can accurately play a familiar tune
- Experiments with instruments or voice until desired effect is achieved

Body Kinesthetic – (BK)

- Says “I am going to learn to ride a tricycle,” and continues until he/she is successful
- Makes things or imitates movements before talking about them
- Tries out movements and expressions until a desired effect is created

10. Imagination/Creativity: Which students in your class have an extraordinary capacity for ingenious, flexible use of ideas, processes, or materials?

Examples

Spatial – (S)

- Creates colorful or unusual paintings
- Builds structures or models using materials in unusual ways
- Makes many different drawings, paintings, or constructions
- Adds interesting details to drawings, paintings, or constructions

Linguistic – (L)

- Combines words or concepts from first and second language in unusual ways
- Uses words of second language in interesting, but not necessarily correct ways
- Tells interesting stories
- Uses unusual words, phrases, or descriptions
- Writes poetry, stories, descriptions, or essays that are unusual or original
- Uses rhythm, rhyme, alliteration, and other subtle aspects of language when speaking or writing

Logical-Mathematical – (LM)

- Makes up new ways to play games
- Designs new ways to solve puzzles or do logic problems
- Comes up with unusual solutions to math problems
- Creates puzzles or math problems
- Uses math manipulatives in unusual ways
- Designs new experiments to test hypotheses
- Combines elements in unusual ways

Personal – (P)

- Suggests new ways for groups to work together
- Tries unusual ways to get things done
- Has many different ideas for reaching a goal, regardless of whether it is personal or collective

Musical – (M)

- Creates unusual, pleasing songs with voice or instruments(s)
- Plays instruments(s) while singing
- Plays several instruments in unusual and interesting sequences
- Creates unusual rhythmic patterns

Bodily Kinesthetic – (BK)

- Body movements are flexible, varied, graceful, and often unusual
- Can make up many different ways to move from place to place
- Expresses opposite qualities through movement, such as fast/slow, strong/weak, tight/loose

11. Memory/Knowledge/Understanding: Who in your class has an unusual capacity to acquire, integrate, retain, and retrieve information or skills?

Examples

Spatial – (S)

- Remembers and uses new art techniques
- Uses maps, globes, and visual aids better than others in the class
- Finds her/his way to or from new places easily after going there only once

Linguistic – (L)

- Remembers and uses new words accurately after hearing or reading them only once
- Use of the first language is advanced for age, although it may not always be correct
- Knows a lot of information about many things
- Can retell stories, experiences, videos, or movies accurately and with many details
- May be the best student in reading or language arts in his or her first language

Logical-Mathematical – (LM)

- Remembers complex strategies
- Works puzzles no one else can do
- Remembers and uses math concepts that others in the class have not yet learned or cannot understand
- May be the best student in understanding math but gets bored with computation problems
- Can construct a logical or philosophical explanation

Personal – (P)

- Seems to know what motivates people
- Remembers information and principles related to people, groups, and societies
- May be the best student in social studies
- Shows unusual or sophisticated understanding of her/himself
- Shows unusual or sophisticated understanding of how groups can work together
- Understands how groups or individuals can resolve conflicts

Musical – (M)

- Remembers and repeats complex tonal patterns
- Remembers and repeats complex rhythmic patterns
- Has perfect pitch in voice, and can match tones in instruments or between instruments and voice(s)

Bodily Kinesthetic – (BK)

- Remembers and repeats complex movement patterns
- Remembers and repeats complex dances or athletic activities
- Moves body parts in isolation or moves whole body in a coordinated way when necessary
- Coordinates body even when near the floor
- Imitates sports figures, dancers, or actors accurately

12. Learning: Who in your classroom has the ability to acquire sophisticated understanding with an amazing speed and apparent ease?

Examples

Spatial - (S)

- Draws or paints like children much older
- Creates constructions using symmetry, perspective, composition, or complementary colors in ways that are advanced for her/his age
- Can put something back together after taking it apart
- Needs little practice to acquire advanced techniques

Linguistic – (L)

- Learns a second language quickly
- Combines vocabulary for first and second languages to explain ideas
- Learns to read quickly or without being taught
- Knows letters, sounds, and meanings that are advanced for his/her age
- Uses complex sentence structure or vocabulary in first language
- Uses varied and interesting forms for writing (e.g., non-rhyming poetry, acrostics)
- Recognizes similarities among languages
- Understands the structure and conventions of language

Logical-Mathematical – (LM)

- Works math and logic problems like children who are older
- Learns how to do new puzzles quickly or without being taught
- Learns new math skills quickly or easily
- Understands scientific classification
- Explains similarities and differences among objects/ideas and categories

Personal – (P)

- Learns new group skills easily and quickly
- Gets to know people, both classmates and adults, quickly and easily
- Knowledge of self is unusual for his/her age and grade
- Applies social rules in sophisticated and advanced ways
- Classroom behaviors indicate an advanced level of metacognitive monitoring of his/her work

Musical – (M)

- Learns songs and tone patterns quickly and easily
- Can pick out, sing, or recognize a new tune accurately after hearing it only once
- Learns to play an instrument quickly and easily when given an opportunity

Bodily Kinesthetic - (BK)

- Learns complex movements, dances, or athletic skills quickly or easily
- Can relax totally and tighten completely as needed
- Can repeat movement, dance, or athletic skill sequences accurately after seeing them only once