THE SPECIAL EDUCATOR
A Journal Publication of
The Nigeria Association of Special Education Teachers (NASET)
Print ISSN: 1597-1767 e-ISSN: 2971-5709
https://www.tspeducator.com
Volume 24; Issue 3; September 2026; Pages 64- 70.

Educational Approaches and Assessment in Gifted Education Programme

***[1]Ngbede, O. A. & [2]Atteng, C. J.**

[1]Anthill Special Needs Education Centre, Kuje, Abuja
[2]Department of Special Education and Rehabilitation Science, River State University, Port Harcourt

***Corresponding author email:** talktocomradeanyebe@gmail.com

Abstract
Assessment and educational programmes for the gifted are key. Not only do they facilitate the recognition of the potential and specific needs of gifted children, but they also monitor the progress and growth of gifted learners and allow for the evaluation of gifted education intervention services. The paper looked at the concept of the gifted and the various approaches used in providing education for the gifted students in the classroom, as well as the notable characteristics of the gifted. Similarly, the paper touched on why education for the gifted and problems associated with special education for the gifted. In a related development, issues that bordered on common assessment in special needs education vis-à-vis the benefits of assessment in special education were discussed to a large extent.

Keywords: Assessment, Educational Approaches, Gifted Children, Intervention, And Special Education.

Introduction

Education is the bedrock of human development, and for children with special needs, it becomes even more crucial. This section provides a general background to special needs education and justifies why gifted children, despite not having a physical disability, require special educational attention. Generally, education for children with special needs is important, as it is deliberate instruction specially designed to cater to children with different categories of disabilities. Children with giftedness are not really living with a disability, so to speak, but due to the nature of their high intelligence, which requires curriculum enrichment to meet their learning needs, they are special. Educational programmes and approaches for the gifted require careful assessment, which paves the way for the intervention services and methodologies to be employed. This alone cannot be achieved by special education teachers alone; it requires collaboration with general educators, parents, and caregivers. Proper assessment and programme design are a sure way to promote education for the gifted.

Concept of Giftedness

To effectively educate the gifted, it is important to first understand who a gifted child is. This session explores various scholarly definitions and perspectives on the concept of giftedness.

According to Adima (2018) and Ngbede (2021), there is no standard and globally acceptable definition of what a gifted student is. Most definitions select students who are the most skilled or talented in a given area. For example, students with the most skill or talent in music, language, logical reasoning, or mathematics. Children who are gifted are those who demonstrate ability or potential in one or more specific areas when compared to others of the same age, experience, or environment. These gifted children excel in their ability to think, reason, and judge, making it necessary for them to receive special educational services and support to be able to truly develop their potential and talents. Alao (2019) stated that giftedness is not considered a disability, although some gifted children may also have learning disabilities such as dyslexia, ADHD, or autism spectrum disorder. These children are known as twice-exceptional. Identifying these students/ children often requires a professional who is able to assess and identify the two areas of exceptionality, which can often mask one another, making identification more difficult. Because of their unique characteristics, twice–exceptional children require a special combination of educational programmes and support. Bakare (2019) and Ngbede (2021) opined that students with gifts and talents perform or can perform at higher rates compared to their peers of the same age, environment, and experience in one or more domains. They need modification of their educational content to learn and realize their potential.

They stated that children who are gifted come from all races, ethnics and cultural populations, as well as economic strata. They require sufficient access to appropriate learning opportunities to realize their potential. The gifted need support and guidance to develop socially and emotionally as well as in their areas of talent.

Intelligence Quotient (IQ) of the Gifted Child

Intelligence Quotient (IQ) remains one of the most objective measures for identifying giftedness. This session discusses the IQ classification and the range that distinguishes gifted children from average learners.

said that the majority of the population will fall within an IQ level of 85-115. The mean of average IQ is 100. A gifted child's IQ will fall within these ranges or classifications:

a) Mildly gifted: 115-130
b) Moderately gifted: 130-145
c) Highly gifted: 145-160
d) Promptly gifted: 160 or higher

These gifted IQ ranges are based on a standard bell curve. However, different IQ tests may influence this range; some test ceilings cap at 145. In addition, different gifted professionals have used other terms such as "exceptionally" gifted. However, a universal consensus on these ranges and labels may not be reached. It is understood that students who deviate from the average IQ of 100 require special educational accommodations to meet their needs.

Characteristics of the Gifted

Gifted children exhibit distinct behavioural, cognitive, and emotional traits that set them apart from their peers. This section highlights the common characteristics that help in their identification which include, but are not limited to:

retentive memory, quizzical, hungry for knowledge, able to solve social problems, self-criticism, good sense of humor, self-motivated, require minimal guidance, good in social and physical skills, verbal ability, unusual capacity to process information, high curiosity level, they are persistent and intense in the way they learn, sense of justice, strong imagination, keen observation, ability to recognize more options, dislike repeating/practicing things already known, they are perfectionists (ability to understand what is perfect in a situation…) e.t.c.

Type of Giftedness

Giftedness is not uniform. It shows in different forms and behavioural patterns. This section categorizes gifted children into six distinct types to aid better understanding and intervention.

a. Successful- They are children who are good at school. Successful gifted children are obedient in class, do homework without a lot of prompting, test well, and may become perfectionists.
b. Autonomous- These are likely successful children in that they understand and can perform well in the traditional school system, but they are willing to push boundaries in ways that "successful" gifted children are not.
c. Challenging and creative – They are generally the opposite of "successful" gifted children. They may harbour extraordinary creative gifts as writers, composers, artists or fashion designers, graphic artists, or photographers. These children may be bored or show behavioral problems because they feel they do not fit into the unbreakable structure of a typical school day.

d. Underground- While many children's giftedness is discovered in their early years, some children may slip through the usual testing. Others do not even manifest until their middle school years. Underground gifted children, in most cases, tend to be girls who are of late elementary to early middle school age.

e. Potential dropout or at Risk- These children need sensitivity and patience. They may come from an unstable home environment or a culture which discourages academic excellence or gifted education (especially for girls). Some may never have experienced support for basic educational goals, or their parents may be completely disengaged from their school experience.

f. Doubly Exceptional-These are children who are gifted and also have some learning or physical disorder. Their disability may hide their gift, or they may overwhelm the learning/physical challenge, leaving one or the other undetected. Doubly exceptional children are sometimes mislabeled as "lazy' since they perform well in one area but struggle in another.

Why Special Education for the Gifted

Given their exceptional abilities, gifted children cannot thrive optimally in a regular classroom without specialized support. This section tries to justify the need for special education programmes for the gifted.

Parents, educators and the community have a responsibility to support all children as they reach their personal best (Anyebe 2021). It is important to support the growth and development of the whole gifted child, including their intellectual, social, emotional, and physical domains. Parents and caregivers' support begins at home because they are usually the first to identify a child's extraordinary gifts and talents. Educators too have a role to play. They have a duty to help the gifted develop their academic potential and collaborate with their parents.

Cite this article as:
Ochochoe, N.A. & Atteng, C.J. (2026). Educational Approaches and Assessment in Gifted Education Programme. *The Special Educator, 24*(3), 64- 70.

Educational programmes for the gifted

Meeting the unique learning needs of gifted learners requires deliberate and structured educational strategies. This section outlines proven approaches and best practices for teaching gifted students.

For gifted students to maintain relevance and to be well guided in all areas, especially academics, Callaham (2007), Henage (2000), and Taylor (2003) put forward the following educational approaches for the exceptional children:

i. Teacher education**:** Teachers who know how gifted students learn and are well trained in gifted education strategies are critical to a high-level gifted programme. Providing basic training to all teachers on recognizing and serving advanced students helps identify and more appropriately educate those students in the regular school setting.

ii. Accelerated approach**:** This refers to the school process of educational programmes, early entrance into school, skipping entire classes, and doing more work per year.

iii. Ability grouping**:** This approach deals with the process of grouping the children into various groups where academic activities will be given to them based on their individual abilities. This method encourages peer teaching and capacity development in the children. The role of the teacher in ability grouping is to guide the children when necessary.

iv. Compact the curriculum and provide enrichment activities**.** Provide environments that are stimulating and address cognitive, physical, emotional, and social needs of gifted children in the curriculum. Let the students move quickly through the required curriculum content and onto more advanced material. Allow for academic rigor.

v. Implement a multi-level and multi-dimensional curriculum**.** Differentiate the curriculum to address differences in the rate, depth, and pace of learning. This will enable all students in the class to learn about a specific area by creating projects at their own ability level. For example, if students are learning about the state of Delaware, students of different ability levels can be assigned to different types of tasks. At the conclusion of the class, all of the students can present what they have learned to the entire group.

vi. Be flexible with the curriculum**.** Take advantage of real-life experiences that can be translated into problem-solving academics for all students. For example, an impending snowstorm can be used to instruct students. Students of different ability levels can be given different tasks, such as figuring out what snow is made of, predicting the amount of snowfall, or determining how many snowplows will be needed if 8 inches fall.

vii. Make the curriculum student-cente**red.** Engage gifted students in the curriculum decision-making process, allowing them to learn how to take responsibility for their own learning. Draw the curriculum from the students' interests and educational needs.

viii. Allow students to pursue independent projects based on their own individual interests: Independent projects can be assigned based on ability level. Encourage creativity and original thinking among gifted students. Allow them to explore ways of connecting unrelated issues in creative ways.

ix. Allow gifted children to assume ownership of their own learning through curriculum acceleration**:** Instruct them to work ahead to problems or skills that they do not know. To help children learn the value of attaining knowledge in their lives, encourage learning for its own sake, rather than emphasizing the results or accomplishments. Teach research skills for accessing information; higher-level thinking skills for processing it; creative thinking and problem-solving skills for flexibility in approach and generation of information; and communication skills for sharing it

x. Try to maximize your students' potential by expecting them to do their best**:** Encourage them to advance as quickly as they can. Assist in developing projects that allow them to achieve success one step at a time.

xi. Teach interactively**:** Have students work together, teach one another, and actively participate in their own and their classmates' education. Note: This does not advocate gifted children being peer tutors in the classroom; the gifted student should be challenged as well. Emphasis should be on working together in the classroom. Cluster gifted children together at a table within the regular classroom and utilize advanced materials, as well as other suggested resources and modifications, to meet their exceptional needs.

xii. Explore many points of view about contemporary topics and allow opportunity to analyze and evaluate material: Allow open forums and debates in the classroom about controversial issues. As a teacher of gifted children, take an active stance. Be an advocate for gifted students. Utilize specialized training to ensure the ability to meet the needs of gifted students. Share personal interests with all students to enrich and expand their world.

xiii. Consider team teaching, collaboration, and consultation with other teachers: Use the knowledge, skills, and support of other educators or professionals in the schools.

xiv. Provide opportunities for gifted children to interact with other gifted children across grade levels and schools through competitions or collaborative projects.

Cite this article as:
Ochochoe, N.A. & Atteng, C.J. (2026). Educational Approaches and Assessment in Gifted Education Programme. *The Special Educator, 24*(3), 64- 70.

xv. Encourage gifted students to participate in extracurricular activities that involve academic skills**:** Examples include math and debate teams. Because gifted children are often natural leaders, it is important to invite them to use their talents and abilities in beneficial, rather than disruptive, manners. For example, encourage the gifted student to run for office in student council, or another extracurricular activity in which he/she is involved.

xvi. Involve students in academic contests**:** Gifted students tend to be competitive by nature. Therefore, participating in regional and national competitions such as spelling bees, science fairs, and essay competitions will be fun challenges.

xvii. Allow gifted children to create and publish a class newspaper to distribute**:** This consists of assisting students in understanding their special capabilities and the training necessary for them to reach their full potential.

xviii. Set individual goals: Help guide students in creating their own goals and set goals that are specific, measurable, aggressive, realistic, and within a reasonable time frame. Be sure not to place expectations that are too high or too low.

xix. Consider parental input about the education of their gifted children: Practical Recommendations and Interventions: Gifted Students 3

xx. Always remember that gifted children are similar in many ways to the average child in the classroom**:** Do not place unrealistic expectations and pressures on gifted children.

xxi. Address the counseling needs of each student to support emotional growth, as needed**:** Some gifted students have issues regarding anger, boredom, bullying, delinquency, isolation, depression, peer relations, perfectionism, dropping out of school, stress, frustration, and underachievement. About 20-25% of gifted students have emotional difficulties.

xxii. Remember that gifted children may not excel in all areas**:** They may be ahead of other students in some areas and behind in some areas. Become aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the children in your class.

xxiii. Do not assign extra work to gifted children who finish assignments early**:** This is unfair and frustrating to them. Simply offering more of the same only restricts further learning. Instead, allow those children to work on independent projects or other unfinished work when they finish an assignment early.

xxiv. If a child attends resource rooms, communicate with the specialist for suggestions on how to enrich daily classwork**:** Avoid penalizing the child for special class attendance. Have another child in the regular classroom take notes and assignments for him/her.

xxv. Provide plenty of opportunities for gifted children and average children to engage in social activities: Some gifted children may need help in developing social skills.

xxvi. Try to find the joy and uniqueness in each child**:** Children may exhibit their gifts on non-typical levels, rather than in general intellectual aptitude or specific academic abilities. Keep in mind that every child will have different needs.

xxvii. Organize resources to free yourself to work with individual children and give the children greater control of the learning situation: Supplementary books and learning tools, community resources, and the use of community members with specific skills as mentors can be helpful.

xxviii. Establish and maintain a warm, accepting classroom**:** Teach your classroom community to embrace diversity and honor differences. Provide an environment in which the child can demonstrate his or her potential or aptitude to learn and perform. Teachers should strive to establish a noncompetitive, individualized, and open classroom, which allows all students to advance at their own rate of learning.

xxix. Remember that implementing some of these strategies will benefit all of the children in the classroom, not just the gifted ones: Practical Recommendations and Interventions: Gifted Students

Problems of Special Educational Programmes for the Gifted

Despite its importance, the education of gifted children in Nigeria is beset by numerous challenges. This section examines the major problems militating against effective gifted education programmes.

Alao (2019) enumerated problems and challenges faced in the education of children with giftedness to include, but not limited to:

Funding**-** Special education for the gifted is quite expensive because of the special equipment, materials, and other aids necessary for their education. This equipment is in short supply due to scarcity of funds from the government.

Problem of Awareness**-** Not many people, especially in Nigeria, are very much aware of the children and education of the gifted children. This is because special education in general is relatively new, and such people, including parents, are not aware of the potentialities of the gifted.

Training and Motivation**-** Teachers who are specially trained to handle gifted children are not much and those that are engaged are not motivated. The tempo of the motivation and incentives, like allowances, for the special education teachers available is quite discouraging. This makes education for the gifted more problematic. Policy

Cite this article as:
Ochochoe, N.A. & Atteng, C.J. (2026). Educational Approaches and Assessment in Gifted Education Programme. *The Special Educator, 24*(3), 64- 70.

Issues- There are no defined policies, plans, and guidelines in the education of the gifted. In places where there are policies by the government, they end up weak and inactive. There is no effective legal framework in favour of special education for the gifted. Limited Research-In Nigeria, research in special education is very low compared to that of developed countries, where new approaches in special education and education for the gifted are continually discovered through research findings. Inadequate Special Schools-There are not enough special schools for the gifted, and as such, these children end up getting enrolled in regular schools where their talents and potential cannot be properly harnessed. Limited Literature- There is a problem of literature that are related to the education of the gifted. Even the few available ones are usually addressed to advanced readers in higher schools. This scarcity of indigenous literature may mean that we will continue to rely on imported materials which, apart from transferring their cultures and practices, are quite expensive. This affects the education of the gifted.
Problem of Identification and Assessment- Because of low levels of awareness and inadequacy of special schools for the gifted, identification and assessment are hindered.
Guidance and Counseling Problem- The education of the gifted faces challenges because of a lack of guidance and counseling services. When these gifted children are not properly guided on career paths, it becomes a big problem for them and even society

Way forward

1. Training and Retraining- There should be training and regular retraining of special educators by the government with a view to developing their capability and keeping them abreast of new trends in handling the gifted.
2. Governments at various levels should be committed to training and motivation.
3. There is a need for the government to establish more special schools, especially for the gifted, and to see to the provision of the necessary resources that are vital to the teaching and learning of the gifted.
4. There should be a legal framework in favour of education for the gifted.

Assessment in Gifted Education

Assessment is central to any meaningful educational intervention. This section discusses the meaning and significance of assessment in the context of gifted education.
According to Ngbede (2021), assessment is a process of evaluation which may consist of anything from simple observation that a teacher or aide jots down while a student works on an assignment to complex multi-stage procedures such as a group of teachers assembling a large portfolio of student work. There are assignments that are required by individual schools that help educators determine whether or not a student qualifies for special education and, if so, the types and frequency of services that will best support a student's success. Anyebe (2021) see assessment as the wide variety of methods used by educators to evaluate, measure, and document the academic readiness, learning progress, skill acquisition, or educational needs of students. This could be formative, pre-assessment, high-stakes, and summative assessment. Good assessment provides data that are useful for tracking progress in their education programme. A good assessment tells exactly the nature of the programme development and intervention services.
Gifted assessments are required for enrolment in special gifted programmes within the public school system or in private schools offering a gifted curriculum. These assessments determine whether a child is functioning above the age expectation in his/her ability to logically solve problems. Assessment is a critical component of gifted education; not only does it facilitate the recognition of potential and specific needs of gifted students, but it also monitors the progress and growth of gifted students and allows for the evaluation of the gifted education programmes.

Common Assessment in Special Education

There are different tools and methods used to evaluate children with special needs. This section reviews the common assessment types applicable to gifted and other special needs learners.
Taylor (2003) and Henage (2000) identified the following common assessments in special needs education:
Developmental Assessment**:** This deals with the theory of how students develop the knowledge, skills, abilities, and values you intend to measure. The teacher conducting the assessment needs to have good knowledge of the stages through which children progress as they develop. The areas to be assessed are behaviour, cognition, communication, motor-sensory abilities, and adaptive skills.
Screening Assessment: This means an assessment given to determine whether children may need specialized assistance services or whether they are already being placed in a course, grade level, or academic programme. This kind of assessment may be conducted three times a year for all students to assess specific skills and to identify those at risk academically.
Intelligence Quotient (IQ) Assessment**:** An intelligence quotient is a total score derived from a set of standardized tests or subtests designed to assess human intelligence. It measures a range of individual cognitive abilities and provides a way to measure an individual's capabilities and potential.
Academic Achievement Test**:** This kind of assessment measures specific academic strengths and weaknesses through an individually administered standardized evaluation. It measures the skills that have been learnt in academic areas such as Mathematics, reading, language, and written expression.

Cite this article as:
Ochochoe, N.A. & Atteng, C.J. (2026). Educational Approaches and Assessment in Gifted Education Programme. *The Special Educator, 24*(3), 64- 70.

Adaptive Behaviour Scale**:** This test is used mainly to assess children with intellectual disability and other types of developmental delays. It is an interview-based rating scale that assesses the adaptive behaviour of children aged 2 to 21 years. The main purpose is to establish the presence and magnitude of adaptive behavior deficits.
Behaviour Rating Scale**:** A behaviour rating scale is an assessment instrument completed by a clinician or a third party (e.g teacher, peer, parent) that includes items that assess one or more targeted child behaviours.
Curriculum-based Assessment: This is a type of ongoing assessment that involves periodic monitoring of a child's daily performance in relation to what is taught.
End of Scale Alternative Assessment**:** Alternative assessment is a learning assessment method that focuses on the individual needs and growth of each student. It is also called formative assessment, which is usually teacher-generated and takes into account the individual background and needs of every unique learner.

Importance of Assessment in Special Education
Assessment does more than just identify learners; it shapes instruction, intervention, and policy. This section highlights the benefits of assessment in special education.
Assessment plays vital roles in providing appropriate services and placement for gifted students. Therefore, Assessment:
1. Helps in collecting information about the child.
2. It helps to determine whether or not academic goals have been achieved.
3. Data from the assessment is used for an intervention programme.
4. It causes teachers to reflect on their practice and decide whether they taught well or not.
5. It enables teachers to take significant control of what students are learning in the classroom.
6. It helps the educators to design appropriate instruction and set goals.
7. It measures academic performance.
8. Teachers use the data from assessment to determine student eligibility for special education services.
9. It provides data for curriculum designers on whether or not to enrich/modify the curriculum.
10. It detects all the activities during the evaluation.
11. It detects information for student placement in remedial classes.
12. It provides feedback or responses.
13. It provides an avenue for evaluating the teaching methods.

Conclusion
In conclusion, gifted children are valuable national assets whose potentials, if properly identified and nurtured through appropriate educational approaches and sound assessment, can contribute immensely to national development. This paper has shown that giftedness is diverse, has identifiable characteristics and IQ patterns, and requires specialized teaching approaches such as accelerated ability grouping, curriculum compacting, and enrichment. However, in Nigeria, gifted education is still hampered by funding, lack of awareness, inadequate trained personnel, weak policies, and poor assessment culture.

Therefore, for gifted education to achieve its goals, there must be concerted efforts by government, educators, parents, other key stakeholders, and the community to provide inclusive, well-funded, and professionally driven programmes that address he academic, social, and emotional needs of gifted learners.

Suggestions
Based on the findings, the following are suggested:
1. **Government intervention:** Federal, State, and Local Governments should establish more special schools for the gifted and adequately fund gifted programmes with modern materials and assistive technology.
2. **Teacher training:** Regular training, retraining, and motivation (special allowances, incentives) of special educators should be institutionalized.
3. **Policy and legal framework:** A clear, enforceable national policy and legal framework specifically for gifted education should be formulated and implemented.
4. **Awareness creation:** Massive public enlightenment should be carried out to sensitize parents, teachers, and community leaders about giftedness and its management.
5. **Research and Local materials:** Government and universities should fund research in gifted education and encourage production of indigenous literature and instructional resources.
6. **Early identification and assessment:** Standardized assessment centres should be established in all states for early identification, screening and continuous assessment of gifted children, including twice-exceptional learners.
7. **Guidance and counseling:** Functional guidance and counseling units should be integrated into all gifted programmes to support career choice and emotional needs.
8. **Parental involvement:** Parents and caregivers should be actively involved in the educational planning and progress monitoring of their children.

Cite this article as:
Ochochoe, N.A. & Atteng, C.J. (2026). Educational Approaches and Assessment in Gifted Education Programme. *The Special Educator, 24*(3), 64- 70.

References

Adima, E. E . (2018). Fundamentals of Special Education. Heinemann Educational Books (Nig Limited Ibadan).

Aloa, K. O. & Ngbede, O.A. (2019). Guidance and counseling implications for parents of children with special needs. A paper presented at a sensitization and advocacy seminar on special children empowerment. november, 29- december 1st. . Abuja.

Anyebe, O.N.(2021). Inclusive education and the plight of children with special needs. Seminar paper presentation on Special Needs Day. GSS, Kuje. March 13. abuja.

Bakare, C. G. (2019). The cumulative cognitive deficit syndrome in African children. An inaugural lecture delivered at the University of Ibadan.

Callaham, (2017). Giftedness in …children need development problem and alternative. Bethseda. ed intervention.

Henage, D. (2000). The Gift Intervention Manual. Columbia-Hartford.

Ngbede, O. A. (2021). Educational interventions for gifted and talented children. Paper presentation on Special Needs Day. Government secondary school, Gwagwalada.

Taylor, S. (2003). Your top student classroom strategies for the gifted. ME: Stenhouse Publishing, Portland.

Cite this article as:
Ochochoe, N.A. & Atteng, C.J. (2026). Educational Approaches and Assessment in Gifted Education Programme. *The Special Educator, 24*(3), 64- 70.