

GIFTED & TALENTED Pocketbook



A pocketful of
cutting-edge approaches
to a gifted education
where all pupils are
stretched, challenged
and engaged

Barry Hymer

Copyright Notice – Please Read

The contents of this electronic book (text and graphics) are protected by international copyright law. All rights reserved.

The copying, reproduction, duplication, storage in a retrieval system, distribution (including by email, fax or other electronic means), publication, modification or transmission of the book are **STRICTLY PROHIBITED** unless otherwise agreed in writing between the purchaser/licensee and Teachers' Pocketbooks.

Parts of this electronic book may be printed out by the purchaser/licensee, for their personal use only. Multiple printing/photocopying is **STRICTLY PROHIBITED** unless otherwise agreed in writing between the purchaser and Teachers' Pocketbooks.

If you are in any doubt about the permitted use of this electronic book, or believe that it has come into your possession by means that contravene this copyright notice, please contact us.



TEACHERS' POCKETBOOKS

LAUREL HOUSE, STATION APPROACH,
ALRESFORD, HAMPSHIRE SO24 9JH UK

Telephone: +44 (0)1962 735573
Fax: +44 (0)1962 733637
Email: sales@teacherspocketbooks.co.uk
Web: www.teacherspocketbooks.co.uk

Teachers' Pocketbooks is an imprint of Management Pocketbooks Ltd.

Enjoy the read!

To help you move around this e-Pocketbook we have included a full '**Table of Contents**', with links that take you instantly to the chapter or page of your choice. Be sure to reveal the Table of Contents within the navigation pane (sidebar) of your file viewer.

In addition, we have **embedded links** within the book itself, denoted by coloured arrows ► and text that is underlined. These embedded links will get you swiftly from the Contents page to a specific chapter and from **cross-references** to other parts of the book. A link at the foot of the page ◀ will get you back to where you started.

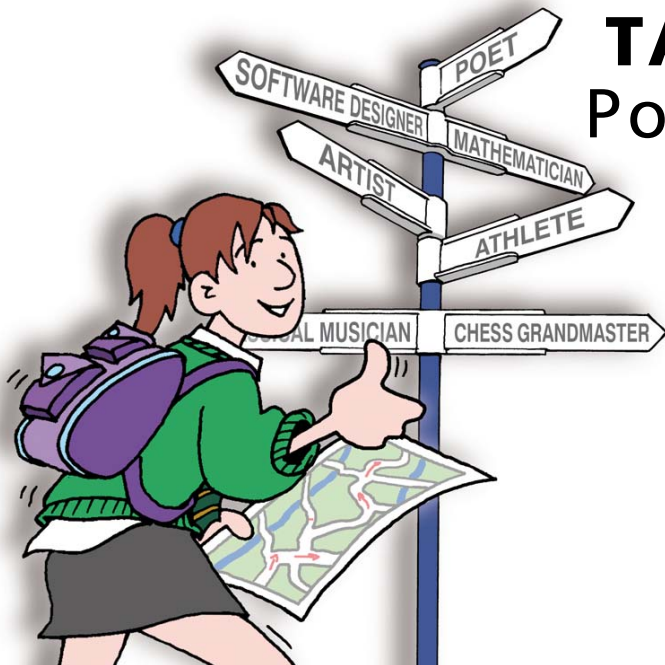
Other features that will help improve your reading experience include word search, zoom, page view options and printing (see *Copyright Notice* on the previous page).

It is well worth spending some time familiarising yourself with your document viewer in order to get the best from this e-Pocketbook.

Enjoy your reading!

GIFTED & TALENTED Pocketbook

**By Barry
Hymer**



Cartoons:
Phil Hailstone

Published by:



Teachers' Pocketbooks

Laurel House, Station Approach,
Alresford, Hampshire SO24 9JH, UK

Tel: +44 (0)1962 735573

Fax: +44 (0)1962 733637

E-mail: sales@teacherspocketbooks.co.uk

Website: www.teacherspocketbooks.co.uk

*Teachers' Pocketbooks is an imprint of
Management Pocketbooks Ltd.*

With thanks to Brin Best for his help in launching the series.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form, or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the publishers.

© Barry Hymer 2009.

This edition published 2009.

Reprinted 2010, 2012.

ISBN 978 1 906610 01 2

E-book ISBN 978 1 908284 89 1

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication
Data – A catalogue record for this book is
available from the British Library.

Design, typesetting and graphics by **efex Ltd.**
Printed in UK.

Contents

Page

	Mystery or Mastery?	A new look at a familiar concept, who's gifted?, definitions, implications for the teacher, raising the bar, are gifts caught or taught? mystery vs mastery, implications of the 'mastery' framework, standards, accountability, small steps	5 ▶
	Motivation – Intelligence's Motor	Your story and others', motivation – extrinsic vs intrinsic, beliefs about ability and about giftedness, big bad 'fixers', a reality check, smart giftedness, intrinsic motivation – case history, praise, the GRACE framework for gift creation	23 ▶
	Grow!	Description, case history, ways of nurturing G, implications for whole school policy, talking the walk, generating G through LogoVisual Thinking (LVT)	45 ▶
	Relate!	Description, case histories, ways of nurturing R, wonder-wall, implications for whole school policy, generating R through Philosophy for Children (P4C)	59 ▶
	Act!	Description, case history, ways of nurturing A, the ASDA challenge, personalised enquiry, implications for whole school policy, generating A through Thinking Actively in a Social Context (TASC)	75 ▶
	Challenge!	Description, case history, ways of nurturing C, the 5-minute challenge, implications for whole school policy, meta-menus, generating C through Dilemma Based Learning (DBL)	89 ▶
	Exert!	Description, case history, ways of nurturing E, implications for whole school policy, generating E through Living Theory Action Research (LTAR)	107 ▶

Gifted & Talented Pocketbook

This is a wonderful book. It's fascinating, it's profound, and it's practical!

Carol Dweck,
Professor of Psychology, Stanford University.

A marvellously lucid and engaging introduction to the 21st century way of thinking about giftedness. Every G&T teacher should have a pocket for it!

Guy Claxton,
Professor of the Learning Sciences,
University of Winchester.

At last, a book on G&T that is inspiring! It's based in sound educational values and fundamental evidence about learning.

Chris Watkins,
Reader, London Institute of Education.

'We pass through this world but once. Few tragedies can be more extensive than the stunting of life, few injustices deeper than the denial of an opportunity to strive or even to hope, by a limit imposed from without but falsely identified as lying within.'

Stephen Jay Gould –
The Mismeasure of Man



**Mystery or
Mastery?**



**Motivation –
Intelligence's
Motor**



Grow!



Relate!



Act!



Challenge!



Exert!



Mystery or Mastery?

‘Gifted and talented’ – a recent history



It seemed so simple in the post-war years: ‘bright’ children were destined for grammar schools and professional careers, and the ‘less able’ were destined for secondary moderns and vocational futures in the trades. Comprehensives, in turn, aimed to service all abilities, and ‘differentiation’ was the buzzword. Whilst accusations flew to and fro about whether or not these systems were ‘elitist and discriminatory’ or ‘failing to stretch the ablest,’ the notion of ‘ability’ was rarely questioned. Few wondered whether the concept itself might need updating.

Towards the end of the 20th century the term ‘gifted and talented’ entered the formal vocabulary of English schools, first through the Excellence in Cities Programme and then through a welter of emerging national structures and ‘G&T’ initiatives – many of which have now morphed into the ‘personalised learning’ and ‘narrowing the gap’ agendas.

Carpe diem – seize the day! We now have the opportunity to take G&T away from the mean streets and dead-ends of ‘ability,’ ‘identification’ and ‘cohorts’ and turn instead into the open avenues of learning and gift-creation for all.

G&T – a new look at a familiar concept



Whilst valuing and celebrating the many examples of best practice in G&T that have emerged over the past decade and more, this Pocketbook sets out a vision that diverges from familiar paths. It has arisen from years of experimentation with and exposure to different ways of thinking about this field of education, and from observing outstanding teachers at work with their students.

The *Gifted & Talented Pocketbook* is a response to the dissatisfactions that I and many teachers feel with the principles and outcomes that underpin the traditional, data-driven framework. That framework promotes a ‘test-and-place’ and ‘them-distinct-from-the-rest-of-them’ practice which can actually hinder the development of gifts and talents. This book offers a challenging, invigorating and realistic alternative, fit for the 21st century.

What remains is a commitment to ensuring that *all* pupils, including those already working at an advanced level, receive educational opportunities that allow them to be appropriately stretched, engaged and challenged.

Will this approach work for me?



You are likely to find much in this Pocketbook's approach to giftedness that you can identify with if you subscribe to the following values, beliefs and principles:

- Children do not have the same skills and strengths, but all can respond well to rich, challenging, personalised educational opportunities
- Gifts and talents aren't 'found,' 'discovered' or 'identified' in children – they're made, created and grown
- Gifts and talents aren't stable, measurable attributes – they wax and wane along with children's educational environments, the quality of their relationships, their commitment and dedication, and other factors
- A focus on children's *performances* and on teacher-imposed targets is less likely to lead to a long-term passion for learning (and achievement) than a focus on their *learning*, and their personally-generated targets

'The healthy functioning community depends on realising the capacity to develop each [child's] gift.'
Peter Senge (Society for Organizational Learning)



Who's gifted? Definition 1



So what exactly do we mean when we label someone as 'gifted' and how do we decide who is? Do we need to? There are hundreds of definitions of giftedness, but since labels lead our thinking as well as describe it, let's give some serious thought to a couple of these. First, a very familiar one:

Exceptional academic ability or potential relative to one's peer group.



And a related way of 'reading' Safia, a Year 6 pupil:

It's no wonder Safia's so bright. Her parents are both highly able people themselves. Her exceptional academic achievements are explained by her natural giftedness. She clearly needs special provision, and she has in fact responded well to the accelerated literacy and numeracy provision she's had access to as part of our school's G&T cohort. She's one of our success stories and is destined for great things.

Who's gifted? Definition 2



Now consider this less familiar definition of giftedness:

A preparedness to invest time, energy and resources (intellectual, physical, emotional, social) into an area of learning.



And a related 'reading' of Safia:

Safia has responded tremendously well to her stimulating and supportive home background and to the opportunities she's had in school. She's achieving wonderfully well but is showing signs of being more interested in her scores and class position than in her learning, and she's nervous of 'failure'. She seems, however, to have a genuine interest in art and design - how might I best help her to deepen and extend her interest in this area?

Which of these definitions and 'readings' do you hear most often in the staffroom?
Which do you feel most comfortable with? Why?