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Rating the Behavioral Characteristics of Superior Students

by Joseph S. Renzulli*

The purpose of this activity is to help you become more familiar with the key concepts for each of the items in the *Scales for Rating Behavioral Characteristics of Superior Students (SCRBS)*. We have found that a fast way for teachers to gain a greater familiarity with the scales is by trying to match the key concepts with each of the items from the Learning, Motivation, Creativity, and Leadership scales. The words or phrases that describe the key concepts are listed at the top of each page. Your first task is simply to match the letters of the key concepts with the appropriate scale items. This procedure should take only a few minutes. After you have matched the key concepts with the items try your hand at coming up with another key concept. Enter your “creative” thought in the space below each item.

After you have completed the matching and have written your own key concepts we suggest that you divide up into small groups and discuss your responses. One of the purposes of this activity is “to negotiate” any of the differences of opinion that may exist as a result of the matching process. Keep in mind that there are no “right” or “wrong” answers to this activity. Rather, the purpose is to help people think about the meanings of the items and verbalize your thoughts. We have found that this process leads to greater understanding and higher inter-judge reliability on the parts of persons using SCRBS.

The second part of this training activity consists of dividing up into small groups and attempting to list specific examples of behaviors that you may have observed in children. Some of these behaviors may fall into more than one of the characteristics described in the scales, but don’t be concerned about multiple classifications or making fine discriminations about the categorization process. Once again, the purpose of this activity is to help teachers reach consensus or agreement about the interpretation of each of the respective scale items. Inter-rater reliability increases when all teachers in a given school are in relative agreement about the meaning of each of the scale items. Any specific examples that you feel might clarify the meaning of a given item should be noted in the spaces to the right of each item. For example, if a child has noted similarities between the American Revolution, the Russian Revolution and the Black or Feminist Revolution, this understanding and generalization might be indicative of a high rating on Item No. 5 on the Learning Characteristics Scale. Similarly, a child who simply refuses to complete worksheets in a basic skill area (or does them in a hasty or sloppy fashion) because he or she already knows how to do the work might be indicative of a high rating for Item No. 2 on the Motivational Characteristics Scale.

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Any and all examples should be discussed in your small group meeting and efforts should be made “to negotiate” differences of opinion that may help you to reach consensus or common agreement about the categorization of examples according to scale items. Please keep in mind that this activity is only for purposes of teacher training. If it is helpful for you to jot down the agreed upon key concepts on a copy of the rating scale please feel free to do so.

Creativity Characteristics

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|-------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------------|
| A. Critical Questioning | C. Non-Conformity | E. Aesthetic Sensitivity | G. Not Afraid to Try | I. Mentally Mischievous |
| B. Curiosity | D. Divergent Thinking | F. Courage of Opinions | H. Laughs "Insightfully" | J. Resistance to Role Stereotyping |

SCALE ITEMS		SPECIFIC EXAMPLES OF OBSERVED BEHAVIORS
_____ 1.	Displays a great deal of curiosity about many things; is constantly asking questions about anything and everything. (National Education Association, 1960; Goodhart & Schmidt, 1940; Torrance, 1962) Another Key Concept _____	
_____ 2.	Generates a large number of ideas or solutions to problems and questions; often offers unusual "way out," unique, clever responses. (Carroll, 1940; Hollingworth, 1942; National Education Association, 1960) Another Key Concept _____	
_____ 3.	Is uninhibited in expressions of opinion; is sometimes radical and spirited in disagreement; is tenacious. (Torrance, 1965; Gowan & Demos, 1964; Getzels & Jackson, 1962) Another Key Concept _____	
_____ 4.	Is a high risk taker; is adventurous and speculative. (Getzels & Jackson, 1962; Villars, 1957; Torrance, 1965) Another Key Concept _____	
_____ 5.	Displays a good deal of intellectual playfulness; fantasizes; imagines "I wonder what would happen if ... ;" manipulates ideas (i.e., changes, elaborates upon them); is often concerned with adapting, improving, and modifying institutions, objects, and systems. (Rogers, 1959; Gowan & Demos, 1964; Getzels & Jackson, 1962) Another Key Concept _____	
_____ 6.	Displays a keen sense of humor and sees humor in situations that may not appear to be humorous to others. (Torrance, 1962; Gowan & Demos, 1964; Getzels & Jackson, 1962) Another Key Concept _____	
_____ 7.	Is unusually aware of his impulses and more open to the irrational in himself (freer expression of feminine interest for boys, greater than usual amount of independence for girls); shows emotional sensitivity. (Torrance, 1962; Rothney & Coopman, 1958; Gowan & Demos, 1964) Another Key Concept _____	
_____ 8.	Is sensitive to beauty; attends to aesthetic characteristics of things. (Wilson, 1965; Witty, 1958; Villars, 1957) Another Key Concept _____	
_____ 9.	Is nonconforming; accepts disorder; is not interested in details; is individualistic; does not fear being different. (Carroll, 1940; Buhler & Guirl, 1963; Getzels & Jackson, 1962) Another Key Concept _____	
_____ 10.	Criticizes constructively; is unwilling to accept authoritarian pronouncements without critical examination. (Ward, 1962; Martinson, 1963; Torrance, 1962) Another Key Concept _____	

Learning Characteristics

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|-------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| A. Inquisitive | C. Articulate | E. Reading Maturity | G. Memory |
| B. Analytical Reasoning | D. Conceptual Understanding | F. Perceptiveness | H. Knowledgeable |

SCALE ITEMS		SPECIFIC EXAMPLES OF OBSERVED BEHAVIORS
_____ 1.	Has unusually advanced vocabulary for age or grade level; uses terms in a meaningful way; has verbal behavior characterized by “richness” of expression, elaboration, and fluency. (National Education Association, 1960; Terman & Oden, 1947; Witty, 1955) Another Key Concept _____	
_____ 2.	Possesses a large storehouse of information about a variety of topics (beyond the usual interests of youngsters his age). (Ward, 1961; Terman, 1925; Witty, 1958) Another Key Concept _____	
_____ 3.	Has quick mastery and recall of factual information. (Goodhart & Schmidt, 1940; Terman & Oden, 1947; National Education Association, 1960) Another Key Concept _____	
_____ 4.	Has rapid insight into cause-effect relationships; tries to discover the how and why of things; asks many provocative questions (as distinct from informational or factual questions); wants to know what makes things (or people) “tick.” (Carroll, 1940; Witty, 1958; Goodhart & Schmidt, 1940) Another Key Concept _____	
_____ 5.	Has a ready grasp of underlying principles and can quickly make valid generalizations about events, people, or things; looks for similarities and differences in events, people, and things. (Bristow, 1951; Carroll, 1940; Ward, 1961) Another Key Concept _____	
_____ 6.	Is a keen and alert observer; usually “sees more” or “gets more” out of a story, film, etc. than others. (Witty, 1958; Carroll, 1940; National Education Association, 1960) Another Key Concept _____	
_____ 7.	Reads a great deal on his own; usually prefers adult level books; does not avoid difficult material; may show a preference for biography, autobiography, encyclopedias, and atlases. (Hollingworth, 1942; Witty, 1958; Terman & Oden, 1947) Another Key Concept _____	
_____ 8.	Tries to understand complicated material by separating it into its respective parts; reasons things out for himself; sees logical and common sense answers. (Freehill, 1961; Ward, 1962; Strang, 1958) Another Key Concept _____	

Leadership Characteristics

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|-------------------|------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| A. Physically Fit | C. Reliable | E. Positive Self-Concept | G. Takes Charge | I. Collaborator |
| B. Popular | D. Gets Involved | F. A People Person | H. Articulate | J. Flexible |

SCALE ITEMS		SPECIFIC EXAMPLES OF OBSERVED BEHAVIORS
_____ 1.	Carries responsibility well; can be counted on to do what he has promised and usually does it well. (Baldwin, 1932; Bellingrath, 1930; Burks, 1938) Another Key Concept _____	
_____ 2.	Is self confident with children his own age as well as adults; seems comfortable when asked to show his work to the class. (Drake, 1944; Cowley, 1931; Bellingrath, 1930) Another Key Concept _____	
_____ 3.	Seems to be well liked by his classmates. (Bellingrath, 1930; Garrison, 1935; Zeleny, 1939) Another Key Concept _____	
_____ 4.	Is cooperative with teacher and classmates; tends to avoid bickering and is generally easy to get along with. (Dunkerly, 1940; Newcomb, 1943; Fauquier & Gilchrist, 1942) Another Key Concept _____	
_____ 5.	Can express himself well; has good verbal facility and is usually well understood. (Simpson, 1938; Terman, 1904; Burks, 1938) Another Key Concept _____	
_____ 6.	Adapts readily to new situations; is flexible in thought and action and does not seem disturbed when the normal routine is changed. (Echler, 1934; Flemming, 1935; Caldwell, 1926) Another Key Concept _____	
_____ 7.	Seems to enjoy being around other people; is sociable and prefers not to be alone. (Drake, 1944; Goodenough, 1930; Bonney, 1943) Another Key Concept _____	
_____ 8.	Tends to dominate others when they are around; generally directs the activity in which he is involved. (Richardson & Hanawalt, 1943, Hunter & Jordan, 1939; Bowden, 1926) Another Key Concept _____	
_____ 9.	Participates in most social activities connected with the school; can be counted on to be there if anyone is. (Zeleny, 1939; Link, 1944; Courtenay, 1938) Another Key Concept _____	
_____ 10.	Excels in athletic activities; is well coordinated and enjoys all sorts of athletic games. (Flemming, 1935; Partridge, 1934; Spaulding, 1934) Another Key Concept _____	

Motivational Characteristics

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|-----------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| A. Self-Direction | D. Opinionated | G. Methodical |
| B. Values Orientation | E. Self-Motivated | H. Perfectionist |
| C. Task Commitment | F. Maturity of Interests | I. Avoids Mundane Tasks |

SCALE ITEMS		SPECIFIC EXAMPLES OF OBSERVED BEHAVIORS
_____ 1.	Becomes absorbed and truly involved in certain topics or problems; is persistent in seeking task completion (It is sometimes difficult to get him to move on to another topic.) (Freehill, 1961; Brandwein, 1955; Strang, 1958) Another Key Concept _____	
_____ 2.	Is easily bored with routine tasks. (Ward, 1962; Terman & Oden, 1947; Ward, 1961) Another Key Concept _____	
_____ 3.	Needs little external motivation to follow through in work that initially excites him. (Carroll, 1940; Ward, 1961; Villars, 1957) Another Key Concept _____	
_____ 4.	Strives toward perfection; is self critical; is not easily satisfied with his own speed or products. (Strang, 1958; Freehill, 1961; Carroll, 1940) Another Key Concept _____	
_____ 5.	Prefers to work independently; requires little direction from teachers. (Torrance, 1965; Gowan & Demos, 1964; Makovic, 1953) Another Key Concept _____	
_____ 6.	Is interested in many "adult" problems such as religion, politics, sex, race - more than usual for age level. (Witty, 1955; Ward, 1961; Chaffee, 1963) Another Key Concept _____	
_____ 7.	Often is self assertive (sometimes even aggressive); stubborn in his beliefs. (Buhler & Guiri, 1963; Gowan & Demos, 1964; Ward, 1961) Another Key Concept _____	
_____ 8.	Likes to organize and bring structure to things, people, and situations. (Ward, 1961; Gowan & Demos, 1964; Buhler & Guirl, 1963) Another Key Concept _____	
_____ 9.	Is quite concerned with right and wrong, good and bad; often evaluates and passes judgment on events, people, and things. (Getzels & Jackson, 1962; Buhler & Guirl, 1963; Carron, 1940) Another Key Concept _____	

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