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# YouTalent Spotter

Version 1.0  
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This document is part of the CoTalent project, in which nine organizations from six European countries work together to create tools for teachers to support talented students<sup>1</sup>. More info on [www.cotalentwizard.eu](http://www.cotalentwizard.eu)

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## You Spotter Tools Version 1.0

Dear Colleague,

We are happy to provide you the very first version of the YouSpotter Tools. As the CoTalent project is not finished yet and we are still developing the tools, this version is not the final one. Therefore, if you decide using it, we would be very happy to gain your feedback.

You can evaluate the instruments used by following this link:

Each instrument will come along with three leading questions in order to make it easier working with the tool.

- What is the tool about?
- How do I use the tool?
- What should I do with the completed/used tool?

As a teacher you can choose which instruments you want to use to spot your talented students. You can either screen a whole course (Character Trait List or Entrepreneurship Character Trait List) or challenge the students to hand in a written assignment or develop a Poster voluntarily.

The reason why you can choose two different tracks (screen or challenge) to spot talented students is based upon literature review and exchange of expertise and discussions on experiences between teachers and students involved in the project.

Research showed that honor students do show different character traits than their peers not enrolled in an Honors Program. Those character traits can allow teachers to spot them. But some character traits are not yet shown by talented students (f. e. if they are not yet enrolled in an Honors Program and challenging tasks and assignments are missing) who have the potential to do achieve on a high level. Therefore, spotting talented students cannot be solved only by observation of visible traits using f. e. questionnaires or checklists, screening a whole course. Talented students do have the potential to rise to the top and their way to handle assignments can give a hint on their talent and ability to successfully follow an Honors Program, as well.

Giving every student the opportunity to voluntary do an assignment can already give a hint on those students willing to do more than the regular curriculum or class offers.

It is possible to also use more than one tool to spot the students in your class.

Before you are getting started with using the tools you should ask yourself the following questions:

- Why do I want to spot talented students?
- What happens next if I have spotted talented students?

If you have any questions or concerns using the tools please do not hesitate to contact us.



## Talent Characteristics Spotter List

### *Instruction for Teachers*

Dear Colleague,

Your university is offering Honors Programs, and you would like to alert potential candidates about these opportunities, but are not sure which students might be interested and suitable?

#### *What is the Talent Characteristics Spotter List?*

The Talent Characteristics Spotter List helps you in getting an overview over all the students in your class who might be suitable for Honors Programs at your university. Please be aware that this tool is not part of the selection and admission process for an Honors Program. Instead, this **screening** tool helps identify more students who could possibly be interested in and suited for an Honors Program, but who might be unaware of the programs that are offered or who might not consider themselves suitable candidates for such programs. As a teacher you play a critical role in making students aware of the programs offered and in encouraging them to apply for an Honors Program.

The Talent Characteristics Spotter List is best suited for you, if:

- your class size is 30 students or less,
- you have known all students for at least one semester already.

#### *How do I fill out the Talent Characteristics Spotter List?*

Before filling out the Talent Characteristics Spotter List, please make sure that you have **all the students in your class** in mind. Therefore, please put a name list of the students in your class in front of you or have it displayed on your monitor while filling out the tool.

On the following pages, different characteristics of students are described. Below each characteristic, examples for behaviors are listed that point to these abilities/qualities/characteristics. In the blank lines marked with "obvious talents", please **fill in the names** of all students that show this kind of behavior, regardless of whether you think they would like to participate in an honors program or not. Please also fill in the blank space behind "hidden talents" with the names of those students where you strongly suspect these characteristics, but have not observed them yet. In case of doubt, naming too many students is much better than omitting a student.

If you feel that a certain talent aspect from your domain or study track should be considered and is not yet on the list, you can add this at the end of the Talent Characteristics Spotter List and, like before, fill in the names of students with obvious and hidden talents.

When you are finished with all characteristics, please take a few more minutes to re-read your list and to reflect about whether you have considered all students in your class and have not missed anyone.

#### *What should I do with the completed Talent Characteristics Spotter List?*

For a visual overview of your assessments, please fill in the in the table on the last. Copy the names of all students who show or whom you suspect of possessing a certain characteristic into the respective cells. The table shows you a **pool of possible candidates** for Honors Programs. Please inform all students on your list (both "obvious" and "hidden" talents) about the respective Honors Programs and refer them to the relevant contact persons. If you want to forward your completed list to other colleagues in your institution, please keep in mind possible restrictions and data privacy regulations.



## Talent Characteristics Spotter List

**Class name:** \_\_\_\_\_

---

### **Intellectual abilities**

e.g. high cognitive and analytical thinking skills, quick comprehension of complex and abstract ideas, ability to identify complicated patterns

*Students with...*

- obvious talents: \_\_\_\_\_
  - hidden talents: \_\_\_\_\_
- 

### **Critical evaluation**

e.g. asks questions relating to course content (during class), challenges assumptions and hypotheses, analyzes, synthesizes and integrates information, applies theories, rebellious attitude

*Students with...*

- obvious talents: \_\_\_\_\_
  - hidden talents: \_\_\_\_\_
- 

### **Task orientation and task responsibility**

e.g. generally well-prepared for class, prepared according to curriculum and beyond, takes tasks and obligations seriously

*Students with...*

- obvious talents: \_\_\_\_\_
  - hidden talents: \_\_\_\_\_
-



**Academic interaction with peers**

e.g. learning groups, study-related discussion and project groups, student research projects, engages in team competitions related to discipline

*Students with...*

- obvious talents: \_\_\_\_\_
  - hidden talents: \_\_\_\_\_
- 

**Academic interaction with teachers**

e.g. seeks out academic discussion beyond class content or schedule, asks for additional feedback on assignments and projects, talks about career plans with faculty members or advisors

*Students with...*

- obvious talents: \_\_\_\_\_
  - hidden talents: \_\_\_\_\_
- 

**Extracurricular engagement**

e.g. participates in extracurricular activities and university initiatives, volunteers in committees

*Students with...*

- obvious talents: \_\_\_\_\_
  - hidden talents: \_\_\_\_\_
- 

**Motivation for academic self-development**

e.g. passion for learning, ambition, initiative, willingness to engage in challenging assignments and projects, drive to excel

*Students with...*

- obvious talents: \_\_\_\_\_
  - hidden talents: \_\_\_\_\_
-



**Openness**

e.g. excitement and enthusiasm about new ideas, openness to new teaching and learning methods, curiosity, seeks information and new knowledge

*Students with...*

- obvious talents: \_\_\_\_\_
  - hidden talents: \_\_\_\_\_
- 

**Academic self-confidence**

e.g. confident in own academic abilities and competences, shares own standpoint in content-related discussions (i.e. in class), presents hypotheses and own findings in presentations and/or manuscripts

*Students with...*

- obvious talents: \_\_\_\_\_
  - hidden talents: \_\_\_\_\_
- 

**High academic achievement** measured in grades

*Students with...*

- obvious talents: \_\_\_\_\_
- 

**Low academic achievement** due to boredom

due to boredom, mental under load or under challenge, sense of frustration with current education system

*Students with...*

- obvious talents: \_\_\_\_\_
- 

**Optional:**

**An important talent aspect in my domain, discipline or study track:**

\_\_\_\_\_

*Students with...*

- obvious talents: \_\_\_\_\_
- hidden talents: \_\_\_\_\_





**Talent Characteristics Spotter List: Class Overview for \_\_\_\_\_**

Talent Characteristic	Obvious Talents	Hidden Talents
Intellectual abilities		
Critical evaluation		
Task orientation and task responsibility		
Academic interaction with peers		
Academic interaction with teachers		
Extracurricular engagement		
Motivation for academic self-development		
Openness		
Academic self-confidence		
High academic achievement		
Optional Talent Aspect: _____		



## Written Assignment

### *Instruction for Teachers*

#### *What is the tool about?*

In this document you will find different suggestions for written assignments which you can hand out to your students. As talented students tend to seek challenging assignments inside and outside university and not every class will offer those assignments in the beginning, using the material below can besides others be supportive in spotting those talented students.

You can hand out the assignments in the very beginning of the new study period. It is not meant to be a duty task but voluntarily worked on. You can set your own deadline or restrict the accepted assignments to a maximum (f. e. only the first five handed in assignments will be accepted).

You can skip the introduction and explanation to the different types of writing assignments, if you are only interested in the task itself and not in the “why” of choosing it for these assignments.

#### *How do I use the tool?*

There are three different topics for writing an essay. You can choose which assignment (dilemmas, develop personally, use your talent) you want to hand out, for every section you should pick out one tasks and not all the dilemmas or questions about personal development or using your talent.

You will find some information about the three different topics and why they are important for the group of talented students.

#### Solve Dilemmas

Not alone Europe but the world is changing rapidly and facing issues which need to be addressed. But there are no easy answers and we need talented and creative people, willing to change the world to the better. As every problem can be perceived by different views and most of the time offers more than only one solution, dilemmas are frequent.

A dilemma describes a situation in which both suggested decisions do not lead to a desired result. Dilemmas often are perceived as paradox and, normally, there is no right or wrong decision, as both of the opportunities do have negative effects. Regarding to social policy Rittel & Webber already pointed out the difficulties when answering social problems in 1973:

“The search for scientific bases for confronting problems of social policy is bound to fail, because of the nature of these problems. They are “wicked” problems, whereas science has developed to deal with “tame” problems. Policy problems cannot be definitively described. Moreover, in a pluralistic society there is nothing like the undisputable public good; there is no objective definition of equity; policies that respond to social problems cannot be meaningfully correct or false; and it makes no sense to talk about “optimal solutions” to social problems unless severe qualifications are imposed first. Even worse, there are no “solutions” in the sense of definitive and objective answers.” (Rittel & Webber, 1973, p. 155)

Furthermore, they point out that decisions made cannot easily be reversed, as “every attempt to reverse a decision or to correct for the undesired consequences poses another set of wicked problems, which are in turn subject to the same dilemmas” (Rittel & Webber, 1973, p. 163).

Spotting talented students who show a great desire to learn and do wrap themselves around wicked problems, can be difficult. Handing in a written assignment based on a dilemma can help finding those talented students. You can find some suggestions for dilemmas on the assignment sheet, but surely there are some questions around your own scientific topic which can be transported into a likewise dilemma.

When talking about talented and motivated students, they also show different perspectives on their own learning path and biography. They do show a high openness connected to curiosity, originality and creativity (Miller & Speirs Neumeister, 2017, p. 317 referring to Coaste & McCrae, 1992; Davis et al., 2010). Additionally, they show higher self-concepts (Spisak & Squires, 2016).



These qualities can be visible during class, but as students enrolled in Honors also can be more introverted (Achterberg 2005, p. 78 referring to Palmer & Wohl, 1972) they might not be spotted.

Giving them the opportunity to hand in a written assignment about the personal development can be a opportunity.

Those questions can be about reflecting your own learning biography and the academic path you went on but also can be about the future. There are already questions on the assignment sheet, which can be used or added with own suggestions.

#### Develop Personally

When talking about talented and motivated students, they also show different perspectives on their own learning path and biography. They do show a high openness connected to curiosity, originality and creativity (Miller & Speirs Neumeister, 2017, p. 317 referring to Coaste & McCrae, 1992; Davis et al., 2010). Additionally, they show higher self-concepts (Spisak & Squires, 2016).

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#### Use your Talent

Students enrolled in Honors do show a higher interaction with their department, teachers and outside university (g. e. Achterberg, 2005; Scager et al., 2012; Buckner et al., 2016). Especially the engagement in co-curricular activities cannot be perceived inside classroom activities. Giving talented students the opportunity to write an assignment around questions of how to use your talent for society can help to spot those active students.

Especially as they are “heavily encouraged to take part in experiential learning through internships, study abroad, leadership roles, and faculty-directed research” (Plominski & Burns, 2017, p.18).

The questions on the assignment sheet can also be connected or expanded regarding special research questions inside your own department or class.

#### *What should I do with the completed/used tool?*

We are still working on a guideline what to do with the handed in assignments at the moment but using the tool already without it can still give you a kick start into getting to know your students better and spotting the talented ones among them. As handing in a written assignment is voluntarily you will be able to see which students in your course are willing to do more than the regular curriculum asks. By reading the essays it is also possible to see which students are able to elaborate on a topic in written form. The handed in assignments can be a starting point for discussion within the course or with the students separately and you could gain more insights on the students than obviously shown within your seminar.

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## Written Assignments

### Introduction Solve Dilemmas for Students

Regarding to the question, how to spot motivated students who show a great desire to learn and do wrap themselves around wicked problems, written assignments can be a way to show the teacher your personal talent and motivation. Therefore, it is your choice to hand in an essay answering the dilemma given. A dilemma describes a situation in which both suggested decisions do not lead to a desired result. Dilemmas often are perceived as paradox and, normally, there is no right or wrong decision, as both of the opportunities do have negative effects. Due to this, there is no wrong or right, no fixed solution that is expected within your essay. Still, there are some requirements you should be aware of when writing the essay.

#### Requirements for the written assignment

- Your essay should be no longer than 5 pages.
- If quotations are used, there must be a reference list.
- You can hand in your essay in English as well as in the National Language
- Do not exceed the deadline given

Coming up, you will be given a dilemma. Think about what to choose or how to react within the opportunities given. Outline your choice and the consequences of it and explain why you did not choose otherwise.

Try to find another example of a similar dilemma and see, if your choice would tend into the same direction and why.

Explain how underlying questions of the dilemma can be found in problems within your academic discipline.

#### Dilemma 1) Chicken Game

Two rulers of famous countries are on the brink of war. One has to withdraw, otherwise both will start war. But the one who's going to withdraw loses reputation. If no one withdraws, both have shown their power and "won", but do not gain any benefit for their countries as they are in war for a long time, ruining their economies, society's life and infrastructure. Additionally, it is not sure, if they will win the war and stay ruler.

#### Dilemma 2) Stag Hunt

Two individuals go out on a hunt. Each one has to choose individually to hunt a stag<sup>[1]</sup> or to hunt a hare. None of the players knows the choice of the other. If going to hunt a stag, they need the cooperation of their partner to be successful. But an individual can also get a hare by themselves. A hare is worth less than a stag.



### **Guidelines Self-Construction of Dilemmas for teachers**

If you do not want to use a dilemma proposed you can also create an own dilemma, best fitting to the topic of the course or the field of study. First you should decide which kind of dilemma you want to create.

#### **Relevant definitions**

- Moral Dilemma: Choice between two behaviors which are against own moral principles. There is no third option.
- Semi-realistic moral dilemma: Predicament of a hypothetical person which has to choose between two reactions, which are against her own moral principles.
- Educational moral dilemma: A dilemma which is used to get participants of a dilemma discussion to think about moral solutions and develop their judgmental and discussion competences in a group and as an individual.

Depending on your choice the dilemma should be meaningful and offer plenty of different arguments and views on the two set actions proposed. Therefore, it can be wise to search for arguments on your own or ask colleagues about their perspectives. Hereby, you can already test the dilemma on practicability before handing it out to your students. Additionally, the following requirements can help when creating a dilemma.

#### **Requirements of a useable dilemma**

The dilemma...

- should inherit only two possible solutions,
- should rely on a realistic or hypothetical problem, which is attractive to discuss and think about,
- can relate to your own field of study / course,
- should be short and simple to understand,
- should address moral or ethical perceptions,
- should not evoke hate/fear or other negative emotions.

### **Examples of field connected dilemmas**

#### **Teacher Training**

A university wants to expand its course program and therefore, asks the students which course they would like to add to the program. Course A focusses on the needs of gifted pupils in school while course B focuses on the needs of disadvantaged children in school. Both of the course contents are highly useable for the teacher training students and an equal amount of pupils would benefit from the knowledge and experiences gained during the course. The university decides to use a survey to ask the students for their opinion, but both of the options are equally voted for. There is no option both the courses could be offered to the students. Which program should be picked?



### **Introduction Develop Personally/Use your Talent for Students**

Regarding to the question, how to spot motivated students who show a great desire to learn and do wrap themselves around wicked problems, written assignments can be a way to show the teacher your personal talent and motivation. Therefore, it is your choice to hand in an essay answering the question regarding personal development and/or how to use your talent. There is no wrong or right, no fixed content that is expected within your essay. Still, there are some requirements you should be aware of when writing the essay.

#### **Requirements for the written assignment**

- Your essay should be no longer than 5 pages.
- If quotations are used, there must be a reference list.
- You can hand in your essay in English as well as in the National Language
- Do not exceed the deadline given

### **Develop Personally**

Next, you will be given a question about your personal development. Write an essay in which you answer the following questions:

- 1) Using your personal competencies, how would you like to change the world and why?
- 2) Using your own experiences, what advice would you give your teenage self and why?
- 3) What is your passion in life?
- 4) Who would you like to be 20 years from now?

### **Use your Talent**

You will be given a question about how to use your talent. Write an essay answering the question:

- 1) How do you plan to make use of your education?
- 2) What do you consider to be the most urgent problem facing humanity and why?
- 3) Do you think the government should fund research?

#### **Further steps to use this tool (not yet accomplished)**

Honors and non-honors students fill out the assignment.

Based on their handling of the assignments a guide for teachers will be evolved how a Honors Student typically handled the assignment and how to spot potential honor students within his/her class.

Written assignments can be changed, if they are not working in practice.



## The poster assignment

### *Instruction for teachers*

Dear Colleague,

This spotter tool is essentially a poster assignment that allows the talented as well as the less talented students to express themselves in a creative format.

The poster assignment allows students with a variety of talents to express themselves in a format that lets them combine content and form and lets them communicate their personal reflections on seemingly non academic topics. This can inspire students with talents outside the traditional academic interpretation to come forward and reveal otherwise hidden competencies.

### **When to use the tool**

The poster assignment can be given to the students as part of the lectures when you need to let the students free their creativity before a traditional assignment.

It can also be given to students as a form of presentation in a new class. It should be noted though that it can be a sensitive matter to reveal personal reflections to fellow students that you are not yet close to.

Finally the poster assignment can be given to selected students that shows signs of extraordinary talents. In this case it is important to be aware of the risk of not targeting all the relevant students in the class.

To add to the useability of this assignment it can be given to the student to do voluntarily. The fact that a student chooses to take on the assignment is an additional indication of some of the traits characteristic to talented students.

### **The poster format**

The only limitation of the poster should be that it must be able to hang on a wall.

This means that the students can choose to make posters in 2, 3 or even 4 dimensions adding audio-visual effects, they are free to select suitable and meaningful materials or to supplement a traditional poster with artefacts of their own choosing.

When the students prepare the posters, their ambition should be that the *form* of the poster is in close alignment with the *contents* of the poster. This means that the form of the poster should enhance the messages of the poster i.e. if you want to express structured and effective working habits, your poster should be well structured and with a clear and well argued answer to the question in focus.

### **The questions**

The posters should be created as an answer to a general but carefully chosen question. These questions should inspire the students to reflect on their past, their passions or their ambitions. The students should be given the possibility to discuss topics that lie outside the curriculum. It is important that the question distracts the students from the scholastic habitus that may have limited their performance, thus hiding their talents.

The purpose of the question is to inspire the students to reflect and express themselves in a creative way.

You can make your own custom made question to supplement your curriculum or you can pick one of the following sample questions:

- Using your personal knowledge and competencies, how would you like to change the world and why?
- Using your own experiences, what advice would you give your teenage self and why?





- What is your passion in life?
- Who would you like to be 20 years from now?
- What do you consider to be the most urgent problem facing humanity and why?
- Argue pros and cons on governments funding research.
- How do you propose to guide children to embrace modern technology wisely?
- How do you connect your field of study to the outside world?
- What do you see as an important ethical dilemma in your field of study?
- Where does your decisions come from?
- What does the world offer you?
- What can you do to open up and let the world come to know you?

### **Interpretation of the posters**

When the students hand in their posters a variety of signs of talent should be observed. These signs include the following:

- Ability to engage in a topic
- Competencies in an extra curricular subject
- Metacognitive skills that lets them reflect on their own passions
- Self confidence that allows them to present personal reflections
- Awareness of the target audience
- Extensive communicative skills
- Imagination and creativity

You may use the form at the end of this document to collect your impressions of the poster presentations in your class.



## Evaluation of posters

Fill in one table pr. poster/student and mark a score on the scale from 1 to 5 for each of the 7 signs of talent.

You may include additional signs of talents of your own choosing in the table below.

1 is the lowest score indicating that the student perform below what could be expected,

3 is the middle score indicating that the student perform at an expected level and

5 the highest score indicating that the students performance is well above what could be expected.

Class \_\_\_\_\_

Student name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Talent	Mark 1	Mark 2	Mark 3	Mark 4	Mark 5	Comments
Ability to <b>engage</b> in a topic						
<b>Competencies</b> in an extra curricular subject						
Metacognitive skills that lets them <b>reflect</b> on their own passions						
<b>Self confidence</b> that allows them to present something personal						
<b>Awareness</b> of the target audience						
Extensive <b>communicative</b> skills						
Imagination and <b>creativity</b>						



## The poster assignment

*Instruction for students*

**Dear student,**

*It is important to have a variety of interests in order to live a fulfilling life. It is equally important to be true to your passions.*

It is easy to see a student only as an academic achiever, however a lot of your accomplishments in your studies has to do with parts of your life that lies before and outside of your studies. These merits often shows talents that are important to the development of academic competencies, but they are rarely a part of the curriculum.

In this assignment a rather unusual and perhaps rather difficult question will be presented to you. You must answer the question in the form of a poster that can be presented on a wall. When you answer the question and prepare your poster you should consider how the content of your answer can be expressed by the format of your poster ex. if your answer has to do with you being very interested in painting, your poster should reflect this creatively instead of being of a traditional poster setup.

You have to create a poster in which you present your personal view on the following question:

*Using your personal competencies, how would you like to change the world and why?*

Your poster must be created so that it can be hung on a wall, but you are free to choose your materials, whether it should be in two, three or four dimensions and to supplement your poster with necessary artefacts. It is important that the form of your poster reflects the content of your answer to the central question.

Your poster must be ready for presentation one week from to day.

Enjoy!