



GIFTED RESOURCES

Myths: Gifted Learners

Myth: That student can't be gifted, he is receiving poor grades.

Truth: Gifted students can be underachieving students, meaning their performance is not matching their ability. The root of the problem may differ from student to student. Gifted students may become bored or frustrated in an unchallenging classroom situation, causing them to lose interest and learn poor study habits. Other students may mask their abilities to try to fit in socially with same age peers, while still others may have a learning disability that masks their giftedness.

Myth: Gifted students are happy, popular, and well adjusted in school.

Truth: Many gifted students do well in their community and school environment. However, some gifted children differ in terms of their emotional and affective needs. Some experience heightened sensitivity to others' expectations and feelings of perfectionism. Others do not share interests with their classmates, resulting in feelings of isolation or not fitting in.

Gifted Learners versus High Achievers

High achieving students know what it takes to be successful in school and are willing to put in the time and effort. Giftedness reflects innate aptitudes that may or may not emerge as exceptional academic talent over time.

Below is a list of a few characteristics for high achievers versus gifted learners. This list is not exhaustive. Resources are listed below.

High Achiever	Gifted Learner
Knows the answers	Asks the questions
Is interested	Is highly curious
Has good ideas	Has original, wild, silly ideas
Tests well	Plays around, yet tests well
Answers questions	Responds with a unique perspective
Absorbs information	Manipulates information
6-8 repetitions for mastery	1-2 repetitions for mastery
Enjoys peer conversations	Prefers adult conversations
Grasps meaning	Draws inferences
Copies accurately	Creates a new design
Technician	Inventor
Pleased with their own learning	Highly self-critical



Did You Know...

Twice Exceptional:

Some gifted students also have disabilities. These students can often go undetected in the regular classroom because their disability and gifts mask each other, making them appear average. Some twice exceptional students may be gifted in math, but struggle with reading. Other students may have Attention Deficit Disorder, dysgraphia, or other disabilities.

At Risk:

Gifted students need social and emotional support in order to be successful. Many gifted students think and problem solve at much higher levels than their chronological age peer. Their emotional level may be closer to their age. This results in asynchronous development. Anxiety and depression are common, as is perfectionism. Without support, gifted students have a high dropout rate. Fear of failure and high levels of intelligence can allow students to hide their challenges.

Look For...

- Are easily bored by routine tasks
- Rebel against conformity
- Creatively make toys or tools out of anything
- Ask probing questions - why and what if
- Make connections between ideas that classmates don't get (but you do)
- Have an adult sense of humor
- Make up their own games on the playground
- Rapid learner
- Unusually large vocabulary and complex sentence structure for age
- Advanced comprehension of word nuances, metaphors and abstract ideas
- Deep intense feelings and reactions
- Keen and/or unusual sense of humor

It is important to note that not all gifted children look or act alike. Giftedness exists in every demographic group and personality type. It is important that adults look hard to discover potential and support gifted children as they reach for their personal best.

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<https://www.nagc.org/myths-about-gifted-students>

Best



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Practices for Identifying Gifted Students

No single test can capture a gifted student's dynamic abilities.

Susan K. Johnsen

Parents often go to principals to ask for help in supporting their gifted children. They may request acceleration for their child in mathematics, a specialized curriculum or course, extracurricular activities, a pullout program, or even a different teacher. Since misconceptions about identifying gifted students are prevalent, it's important that principals have information that will help parents make good decisions.

Who Are Gifted and Talented Children?

Children who are gifted and talented exhibit a wide range of characteristics. Some may excel in academic subjects, performing well above grade level in specific areas, such as math or reading. Others may be more interested in the arts, playing musical instruments, or using various media to demonstrate their talents. Still others may show leadership abilities by working with their peers to achieve specific goals. This variety is reflected in the federal definition of gifted and talented students, as stated in the Improving America's Schools Act of 1994:

The term "gifted and talented" when used in respect to students, children, or youth means students, children, or youth who give evidence of high performance capability in areas such as intellectual, creative, artistic, or leadership capacity, or in specific academic fields, and who require services or activities

not ordinarily provided by the school in order to fully develop such capabilities.

Since the federal government does not mandate gifted education, states are free to develop their own definitions. Most choose to incorporate diversity, with 30 states recognizing intellectually gifted; 29 recognizing academically gifted; 19 recognizing creatively gifted; 13 recognizing leadership; and 20 recognizing giftedness in performing/visual arts (NAGC & CSDPG, 2005). Some states even specifically address special populations, such as English-language learners (Arizona and Florida), gifted students with disabilities (Arizona and Kentucky), culturally diverse students (California and Florida), rural students (Vermont), and highly gifted students (California).

Because of the diversity among students with gifts and talents, most professionals in gifted education have moved away from a psychometrically derived definition (e.g., a high score



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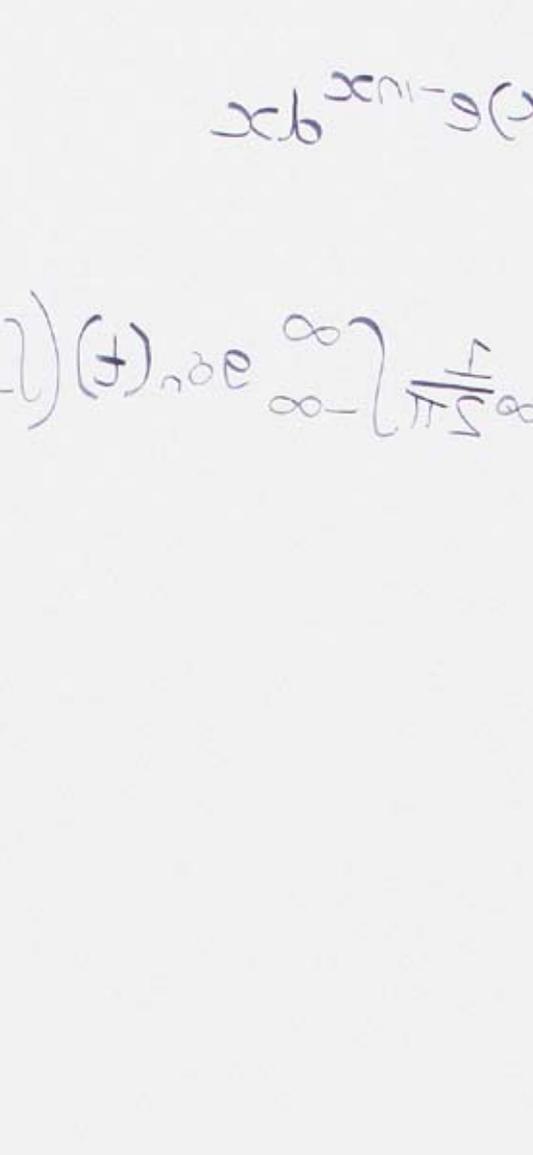
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on an intelligence test) and toward broader conceptual models. These models incorporate a multiplicity of factors that influence a gifted and talented child's development and ultimate display of high-quality performances and products. For example, Tannenbaum (2003) identified five influential factors:

- General ability (e.g., IQ);
- Special ability (e.g., aptitude in a specific area);
- Non-intellective facilitators (e.g., dedication to a chosen field, strong self-concept, willingness to sacrifice, mental health);
- Environmental influences (e.g., parents, classroom, peers, culture, social class); and
- Chance (e.g., accidental, general exploratory, sagacity, personalized action).

In his model, Gagné (1995, 1999) not



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Accommodations Wheel

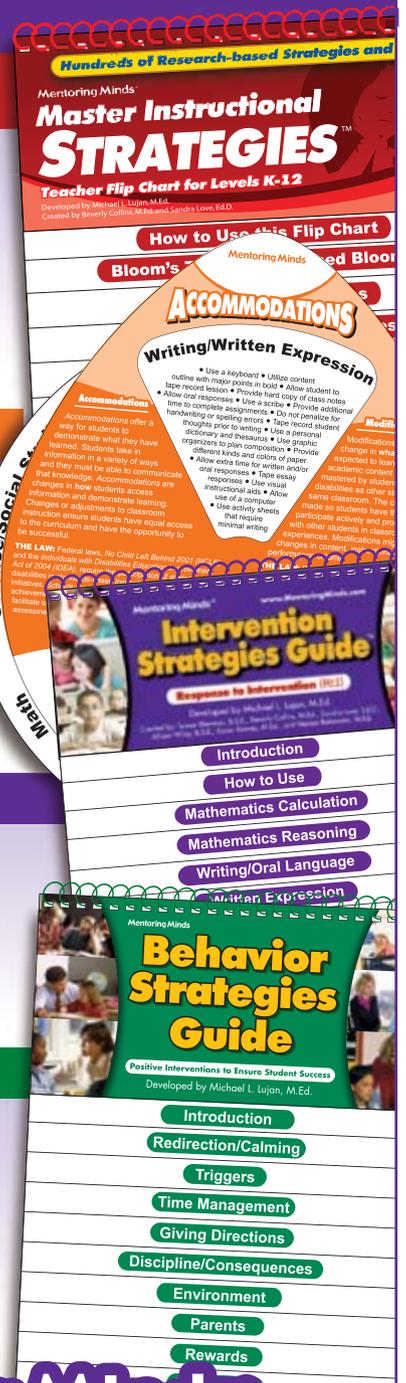
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Intervention Strategies Guide

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only identified a variety of factors but also discriminated between *gifts* and *talents*. According to him, gifts are natural abilities that must be developed into talents, which emerge through the systematic learning, training, and practicing of those skills that are characteristic to a particular field. This development may be facilitated or hindered by two general categories of factors:

Intrapersonal catalysts are influenced by genetic background and include physical (e.g., health, physical appearance) and psychological (e.g., motivation, personality, volition) factors.

Environmental catalysts include surroundings (e.g., physical, social, cultural); persons (e.g., parents, teachers, mentors, siblings, peers); undertakings (e.g., programs for gifted and talented students, extracurricular activities); and events (e.g., death of a parent, major illness, winning an award).



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The Identification Process

In developing a method for identifying gifted and talented students, there are important issues to be considered (Johnsen, 2008):

Gifted students will exhibit their talents not only in a domain but also within a specific area of interest. For example, Zack, a fourth grader, performed similarly to his age peers on classroom science activities, but was well beyond grade level in his theoretical understanding of the shape of the universe and black holes, which emerged incidentally during an opportunity for independent study.

Giftedness is a dynamic concept. A single test score may not capture how a child's gifts might be developed into talents, particularly for children who have limited opportunities for out-of-school enrichment activities (Johnsen, Robins, Witte, & Feuerbacher, 2003). Any identification method should therefore consider ways of providing opportunities for students to exhibit their gifts and collect samples of the students' work over a period of time.

Gifts and talents are exhibited by children who have disabilities, or who come from different ethnic, cultural, and economic backgrounds. It is estimated that black, Hispanic, and Native American students are underrepresented by about 50 percent in gifted education programs (Ford, 1996). To improve identification of special populations of gifted students, professionals need to examine local and state definitions so that a wider range of characteristics are considered. Teachers also need to be trained to observe characteristics that may be manifested in different ways by different cultural groups and by children with disabilities (Fernández, Gay, Lucky, & Gavilán, 1998; Johnsen & Ryser, 1994; Whitmore, 1981).

Early identification is important to the development of gifts into talents. Identifying students' gifts early is particularly important for children who come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. When provided with challenging learning activities that nurture their gifts, these children perform at a much

higher level than children who are provided a skill-based curriculum that focuses on their weaknesses (Borland, Schnur, & Wright, 2000; Johnsen & Ryser, 1994).

Best Practices

Given these four issues, best practices in identification methods incorporate:

Multiple assessments, because no one test can possibly sample all of the behaviors that a gifted student might demonstrate. Consequently, information needs to be gathered from qualitative assessments (e.g., portfolios, checklists); from quantitative assessments; from different sources (e.g., teacher, parent, student, peer); and in different contexts (e.g., school, home, extracurricular activities).

A **pre-referral process**, where teachers provide challenging and differentiated opportunities in their classrooms and observe their students' responses.

Parent involvement in developing knowledge about gifted students so that they understand the purpose of a gifted program and can become observers and developers of their own children's gifts.

Identification Phases

Most often, states and school districts organize their gifted identification procedures into three phases (Johnsen, 2004), with decisions made at each phase to determine if the students will progress to the next.

During the **nomination phase**, educators should consider all students to ensure equal access, particularly those with disabilities, from minority or lower income backgrounds, who are learning English, or are from rurally isolated areas. In this phase, schools should send fliers home in multiple languages, advertise the program options, and describe the identification process. Teachers may implement pre-referral or differentiated strategies to observe how students interact with challenging and diverse learning activities. Where available, teachers of gifted and talented students might work with

"Identifying students' gifts early is particularly important for children who come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds."

small groups to uncover special gifts and interests. Specific assessments that are used during this phase include:

- Teacher and parent checklists;
- Portfolio products and performances;
- Peer and self-nominations;
- Student background information;
- Teacher observations; and
- Group intelligence and achievement tests.

During the **screening or identification phase**, individually administered or

small-group assessments designed to identify gifted and talented students in specific talent domains are used. For example, students who have aptitudes in mathematics might be administered the Test of Mathematical Abilities for Gifted Students (Ryser & Johnsen, 1998); for those with aptitudes in the performing arts, they might provide a portfolio of their best works or participate in an audition before a professional panel (Baum, Owen, & Oreck, 1996). Specific assessments that might be used during this phase include:

- Individually administered tests;
- Professional observations;
- Portfolio products and performances;
- Auditions; and
- Interviews.

During the **selection or placement phase**, a trained committee of professionals in gifted education examines all of the data to determine which students need services or activities that are not provided

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Myths and Facts About Gifted Students

To examine your school's background knowledge in gifted education, how might your parents and teachers label the following assumptions about gifted students, as myths or facts?

1. Gifted and talented are synonymous terms.
2. Gifted students display their talents in an interest area.
3. Gifted students are different from one another.
4. The best way to identify most gifted students is by using intelligence tests.
5. It is better to wait until third or fourth grade to identify gifted students.

Answers: 1. Myth 2. Fact 3. Fact 4. Myth 5. Myth

in the general education classroom. Professionals recommend the use of a format, such as a case study or a profile, which allows the committee to examine an individual student's strengths and weaknesses. Committee members need to be cautious in their deliberations so that:

- Assessments are equally weighted;
- Best performance is used as an indicator of potential;
- Quantitative scores are comparable;
- Errors in assessments are considered; and
- Performance over time is described (Johnsen, 2004, 2008).

Gifted students are as distinct from one another as they are from other children. They need to be identified and supported so that their gifts in specific domains will be developed into talents. Early identification is especially critical for students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds and those with disabilities. Effective identification practices incorporate multiple assessments within a dynamic process, provide training to parents and teachers, and make decisions based on a comprehensive system that provides equal access to all students. □

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WEB RESOURCES

The Association for the Gifted has published a diversity document that recommends best practices in identification. www.gifted.uconn.edu/siegle/TAG/TAGBook.pdf

The National Association for Gifted Children has published a position statement entitled "Using Tests to Identify Gifted Students" (www.nagc.org/index.aspx?id=404) and has other publications related to assessment that may be accessed online at www.nagc.org.

The National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented lists 26 monographs related to assessment, evaluation, and identification. The abstracts and conclusions may be accessed online at www.gifted.uconn.edu/nrcgt/resource.html.



Asynchronous Development

Gifted children vary in their abilities and often their patterns of growth differ from their age peers.

When the social, emotional, physical, intellectual, and creative aspects of a person develop on a trajectory that is outside of norms, and at an uneven rate, it is described as *asynchronous development*.

Research shows that some gifted and talented children develop asynchronously. In fact, for one group of psychologists, educators, and parents (Columbus Group), asynchronous development is central to their definition of giftedness. They believe that giftedness is based on the inner experiences of the individual combined with advanced cognitive development.

Asynchrony can be demonstrated in a variety of ways. For example:

- A 6-year-old child with a 9-year-old mind wants to draw and write like a 9-year-old, but his motor coordination is age appropriate.
- A 5-year-old girl may be reading at an 8th grade level, but she is at grade level in math.
- A young gifted child may cognitively understand difficult concepts such as death and social justice, but may not have the life experience to handle these concepts.

Asynchrony implies greater complexity. And, these qualitatively different experiences may occur in all cultures, ethnic groups, and segments of society.

KEY CONCEPTS

Increased Asynchrony. As levels of giftedness increase, asynchrony may be more pronounced and social relationships may become more problematic.

Progressive Development. The discrepancy between mental age and chronological age is progressive. A 6-year-old with a 9-year-old mind will become a 12-year-old with an 18-year-old mind.

Anxiety. When a child realizes he is out of sync from his age mates, he may experience fear, anxiety, or depression.



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

» How is social development of gifted youngsters both similar and different depending on gender?

Read: www.sengifted.org/archives/articles/developmental-phases-of-social-development

» In what ways does asynchronous development affect all the members in a family?

Read: www.hoagiesgifted.org/asynchronous.htm

» Is a child who demonstrates asynchrony a candidate for acceleration?

Read: www.accelerationinstitute.org/nation_deceived



www.nagc.org

Asynchronous Development

Peers. It's essential that gifted children spend time with like-minded age peers as well as like-minded "idea peers." Varied groups of friends are essential to meet children's needs at different levels of growth.

Perfectionism. Children may experience intense frustration when their hands and feet cannot keep up with the visions of their more advanced minds.

Acceleration. Research supports that acceleration is one way to challenge bright students. Age, size, and perceived maturity should not be a barrier to screen for possible acceleration; immature behaviors used as a coping strategy to "fit in" often disappear when the child is placed in the right environment with cognitive peers.

Twice-Exceptionalities. The most asynchronous gifted learners are often those with learning disabilities, commonly referred to as twice-exceptional or 2E learners. This combination requires additional support at home and at school.

Age-Appropriate Expectations. Adults must continually remind themselves that gifted children are still children. It's important to have age-appropriate expectations.

SOME BEGINNING STRATEGIES

- Focus on your child's strengths.
- Help your child and others to: understand the meaning of being gifted, know the challenges that accompany asynchronous development, and set realistic expectations.
- Explore and teach strategies to address the misunderstandings and stress that come from being out of sync with others—such as mindfulness, self-advocacy, and mind-body tools (yoga or martial arts).
- Find multiple peer groups for your child. One group may include those close in cognitive ability and another may include those with similar interests. A mental age match is sometimes more essential than a chronological age match.
- Bibliotherapy: Have your child read books with main characters who also have unique abilities and uneven development.
- Connect with other parents who are experiencing similar challenges for camaraderie and support. Join a parent support group or start your own.
- Help educators understand what you notice at home regarding the asynchronous development of your child. Keep educators informed when you see your child soar or if you feel your child is lagging behind.

FOR MORE INFO

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Lesley Kay Sword ✍ Sep 14, 2011 4 min read

Emotional Intensity in Gifted Children

By Lesley Kay Sword.

Giftedness has an emotional as well as intellectual component. Intellectual complexity goes hand in hand with emotional depth. Just as gifted children's thinking is more complex and has more depth than other children's, so too are their emotions more complex and more intense.

Complexity can be seen in the vast range of emotions that gifted children can experience at any one time and the intensity is evident in the "full-on-ness" about everything with which parents and teachers of the gifted children are so familiar.

Emotional intensity in the gifted is not a matter of feeling more than other people, but a different way of experiencing the world: vivid, absorbing, penetrating, encompassing, complex, commanding – a way of being quiveringly alive.

Emotional intensity can be expressed in many different ways:

- As intensity of feeling – positive feelings, negative feelings, both positive and negative feelings together, extremes of emotion, complex emotion that seemingly move from one feeling to another over a short time period, identification with the feelings of other people, laughing and crying together
- In the body – the body mirrors the emotions and feelings are often expressed as bodily symptoms such as tense stomach, sinking heart, blushing, headache, nausea
- Inhibition – timidity and shyness
- Strong affective memory – emotionally intense children can remember the feelings that accompanied an incident and will often relive and 're-feel' them long afterward
- Fears and anxieties, feelings of guilt, feelings of being out of control
- Concerns with death, depressive moods
- Emotional ties and attachments to others, empathy and concern for others, sensitivity in relationships, attachment to animals, difficulty in adjusting to new environments, loneliness, conflicts with others over the depth of relationships
- Critical self-evaluation and self-judgment, feelings of inadequacy and inferiority.

Many people seem unaware that intense emotions are part of giftedness and little attention is paid to emotional intensity. Historically the expression of intense feelings has been seen a sign of emotional

instability rather than as evidence of a rich inner life. The traditional Western view is of emotions and intellect as separate and contradictory entities, there is however, an inextricable link between emotions and intellect and, combined, they have a profound effect on gifted people. It is emotional intensity that fuels joy in life, passion for learning, the drive for expression of a talent area, the motivation for achievement.

Feeling everything more deeply than others do can both be painful and frightening. Emotionally intense gifted people often feel abnormal. "There must be something wrong with me... maybe I'm crazy... nobody else seems to feel like this." Emotionally intense gifted people often experience intense inner conflict, self-criticism, anxiety and feelings of inferiority. The medical community tends to see these conflicts as symptoms and labels gifted people neurotic. They are however an intrinsic part of being gifted and provide the drive that gifted people have for personal growth and achievement.

It is vitally important that gifted children are taught to see their heightened sensitivity to things that happen in the world as a normal response for them. If this is not made clear to them they may see their own intense experiences as evidence that something is wrong with them. Other children may ridicule a gifted child for reacting strongly to an apparently trivial incident, thereby increasing the child's feeling of being odd. Also sensitivity to society's injustice and hypocrisy can lead many emotionally intense gifted children to feel despair and cynicism at very young ages.

The most important thing we can do to nurture emotionally intense gifted children is to accept their emotions: they need to feel understood and supported. Explain that intense feelings are normal for gifted children. Help them to use their intellect to develop self-awareness and self-acceptance.

Parents need to exercise appropriate discipline as this helps develop a sense of security that leads to the development of self-discipline and a feeling of emotional competency. Appropriate discipline is the consistent application of values, rules and behaviours that are held to be important in the family. Explain the benefit of rules to the child and enforce them through consequence of behaviour.

Discuss feelings openly; the negative as well as the positive. It can be helpful to use an "emotional thermometer" to initiate discussion e.g. "on a scale of 1-10, how are you feeling today?" Take time to listen to children's ideas, opinions and feelings. Be non-judgmental: don't interrupt, moralize, distract or give advice.

Appreciate their sensitivities, intensities and passions. Don't try to minimize their emotions because you feel uncomfortable with their pain. It doesn't help to say "you're too sensitive" or "snap out of it" or "it'll be OK."

Reassure them when they are afraid and help them to find ways of expressing their intense emotions through stories, poems, art work, music, journal entries or physical activities. Realize that they become frustrated when their physical capabilities do not match their intellectual ability and help them to deal with this. Reward the process of effort and not only the outcome. Emphasize strengths and don't dwell on shortcomings.

Realize that sensitivity does not mean weakness. Give them responsibility that is age appropriate and do not over protect them from the world and from the consequence of their actions. Remember that they are children first and gifted second. Don't expect them to be little "adults". Play, fun and leisure activities are essential for strong emotional development.

Finally, seek preventative professional counseling where appropriate; it is important both to support healthy emotional development and to prevent social and emotional problems.

We can help our emotionally intense gifted children to accept their inner world of experience and value it as strength. This often means we have to accept and value our own emotional experience and feelings so that we can be a positive role model for children. Speaking about and valuing our emotions can be very difficult to do in a society that values rational, logical thinking and sees emotions as the opposite of rationality. However, if emotional intensity is seen by parents and teachers and presented positively to children as a strength, children can be helped to understand and value this gift. In this way emotionally intense children will be empowered to express their unique selves in the world and use their gifts and talents with confidence and joy.

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Six Strategies for Challenging Gifted Learners

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Gifted students—you may or may not spot them in your classroom. They may be highly visible, like the high achievers or straight-A students. But they may also be among those students who don't finish their work (it's never perfect enough), who zone out or act out in class (they're bored), or who test poorly because they overthink things ("Hmmm, this answer might be true in this case, but it might not be true in that case"). Some schools and districts have substantial resources to identify and support giftedness, wherever it shows up. Some offer pull-out programs. Others offer cluster grouping, in which gifted students are grouped in specific classes at each grade level. Dina Brulles, director of gifted education in the Paradise Valley Unified School District in Phoenix, Ariz., believes gifted students need less grade-level work, faster-paced lessons, deeper and more advanced content, and opportunities to work with other gifted students. They also require a different kind of interaction with the teacher, who must be less of a "sage on the stage" and more of a "guide on the side."

But First, the Big Picture

M. René Islas, executive director of the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC), notes one persistent challenge to gifted education—a lack of uniformity in programming. A recent NAGC study found that 19 states don't monitor gifted programs at the local level, only seven require their districts to report on gifted student achievement, and fewer than half report on the race and ethnicity of their gifted students (minorities are significantly underrepresented in gifted programs, according to the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights).

But there are promising signals as well, explains Islas. The Every Student Succeeds Act requires states and districts to track the progress of their highest-achieving students and allows schools to use Title I funds to identify and support gifted students. Plus, the law opens up the possibility for schools to use computer-adaptive assessments to recognize student mastery of content above grade level.

Then there are the challenges and opportunities at the school level. With the following strategies, teachers can tend to the complex needs of their high-ability students in the heterogeneous classroom.

1. Offer the Most Difficult First

"Gifted students don't need to do 25 problems in math when they can do the five most difficult first to demonstrate mastery," says Brulles. She offers this opportunity to all students, not just those identified as gifted. Students who successfully complete the five problems are excused from that night's homework. If classwork is involved, the teacher simply needs to have a few extension activities on hand—tasks that carry the concept to the next level—for students to work on quietly while others complete the regular assignment.

"Most Difficult First" is one manageable way for teachers to compact the curriculum for their high-ability students. With compacting, students get to "throw away" the part of the curriculum that they already know, while receiving full credit for those competencies. This frees up students to work on more challenging content.

2. Pre-Test for Volunteers

Let's say a teacher is teaching two-digit multiplication. He might do some direct instruction for 10 minutes, then offer students the end-of-chapter test, saying, "If you get 90 percent or higher, you won't have to do the homework or practice work. You'll have different work to do." According to Brulles, some gifted students will take this option, whereas others may decide, "I don't know this; I need the practice work." Again, as in Most Difficult First, this strategy requires having extension work for students who test out of the material.

3. Prepare to Take It Up

Susan Flores, a 2nd grade teacher in Paradise Valley, meets a range of student abilities by using the standard as her baseline. "My desk serves as a staging area. I have several piles of activities there that take a concept up or down."

For example, when the class is working on the distributive property in math, those "piles" might include differentiated worksheets, word problems, and task cards. Depending on how students grasp the concept, Flores can either reteach, offer practice, or enrich.

Flores also uses "choice boards." In math, she might offer nine ways that students can demonstrate learning of multiplication. "Students can [use] one of their iPad apps or create a game. They jump in where they want to jump in," she notes.

All students in Flores's class can choose whether they want to take their learning to the next level. "I don't say, 'Because you're gifted, you get choice, and because you're not gifted, you don't.'" Optional challenge work is available to anyone who wants to try it.

4. Speak to Student Interests

Janice Mak, a gifted cluster teacher and 7th and 8th grade STEM teacher in Paradise Valley, gives students a menu of options in her computer science class. After students learn the basics of programming—perhaps through an online course from Stanford University or work with Google CS First clubs—they work in teams to create a robot. Students choose the level of complexity, from designing dogs that bark to building miniature disco rooms in which a record plays and lights flash. Students can also tailor a project to their interests. In a module on architecture, some students designed a playground for Egyptian students using Legos, Build with Chrome, or Minecraft. One student opted instead to recreate the White House using Minecraft. The [ignite presentation](#) format offers another way for Mak to differentiate work on the basis of student interest. The presenter has exactly 5 minutes and 20 slides, which auto-advance every 15 seconds, to discuss a topic of interest (aligned to the unit). This activity allows students to share their passion with their peers, be it nanotechnology and its role in medicine, the physics of roller coasters, or the latest advances in virtual reality.

According to education expert Jenny Grant Rankin, knowing a student's emotional intensities—what Polish psychologist Kazimierz Dabrowski called "overexcitabilities"—is also key to teaching gifted students. Dabrowski identified five areas of sensitivity that are strongly related to giftedness: psychomotor, sensual, intellectual, imaginal, and emotional.

Overexcitabilities will often appear as quirks, such as compulsive talking or organizing, heightened sensitivity to smells or tastes, insatiable curiosity, or daydreaming. Knowing a student's overexcitabilities can help teachers shape engaging—and personalized—learning experiences. An imaginal student will benefit from an assignment that he's free to complete in a unique way. An intellectual student will prefer to investigate why certain areas of the world struggle with starvation rather than simply listing those areas. Although we tend to see overexcitabilities negatively, they are often accompanied by great creativity, imagination, and drive.

5. Enable Gifted Students to Work Together

According to NAGC, research shows that enabling gifted students to work together in groups boosts their academic achievement and benefits other students in the classroom, as well. When gifted students work together, they challenge themselves in unexpected ways. They bounce ideas off one another and take a peer's idea to a new place. They also learn that as smart as they are, they, too, must exert effort with challenging content—and that they'll sometimes fail along the way.

That said, gifted kids need to work both in and out of their group. "As adults, we have to be able to work with everyone," explains Flores, "and gifted students might not learn this if they're always separated out." Teachers can provide multiple opportunities for heterogeneous groupings through Think-Pair-Shares, Clock Buddies, and Season Teams.

6. Plan for Tiered Learning

This approach relies on planning lessons or units at different tiers of difficulty. But does this require teachers to add to their already full plates?" I don't see it as doing one more thing; I see it as being more strategic," explains Mak. Teachers have to plan for their lessons, so why not develop deep and complex activities for high-ability students at the same time? This one way of planning—providing work at the entry, advanced, and extension levels or at varying Depth of Knowledge Levels—offers a multiplicity of ways to learn. It may take more time in the planning stage, but it is ultimately more efficient because bored students aren't acting out or zoning out in class—they've got challenging work to do—and struggling students are getting support. Once teachers create these tiered resources, they can use them again and again.

Author Carol Ann Tomlinson advocates *teaching up*—"a practice of first planning a lesson that's challenging for high-end learners and then differentiating for other learners by providing supports that enable them to access that more sophisticated learning opportunity." It replaces "the more common practice of planning for mid-range performers, then extending that lesson for advanced students and watering it down for others." This approach, Tomlinson says, challenges advanced learners more than trying to pump up a "middling" idea—and serves other students better as well.

Dos & Don'ts of Teaching Gifted Students

Do...

- Understand that gifted students, just like all students, come to school to learn and be challenged.
- Pre-assess your students. Find out their areas of strength as well as those areas you may need to address before students move on.
- Consider grouping gifted students together for at least part of the school day.
- Plan for differentiation. Consider pre-assessments, extension activities, and compacting the curriculum.
- Use phrases like "You've shown you don't need more practice" or "You need more practice" instead of words like "qualify" or "eligible" when referring to extension work.
- Encourage high-ability students to take on challenges. Because they're often used to getting good grades, gifted students may be risk averse.
- Offer training in gifted education to all your teachers.

Don't...

- Confuse high achievers with high-ability students. High achievers put in the time and effort to succeed in school. This may not be the case with high-ability students. Their gifts may not translate into academic achievement and their behavior can at times appear noncompliant.
- Assume that all gifted students are the same and that one strategy works for all.
- Assume that by making gifted students tutors, you're providing a learning extension.
- Confuse extension activities with additional work. Gifted students need deeper and more complex assignments.
- Refer to alternate work for gifted students as "free time." Call it "choice time" or "unfinished work time," so students understand that they are required to tackle a task during this time period.
- Give too many directions to students about how they should complete a task. Say, "Here's the end result I'm grading. How you get there is your choice."
- Assume that gifted students are growing academically. Rely on formative and summative assessments.

"It's Just Good Teaching"

All students have the right to learn something new every day, whether they are in regular classrooms or in special education, language acquisition, or gifted programs. And every student will benefit from being pulled up to go beyond the curriculum at times.

But as Tomlinson points out, "Learning should be joyful or at least satisfying, rather than just hard."

Is this challenging for educators? Sure. But according to Flores, "Any good teacher can do these things well. It's just good teaching."



RENZULLI CENTER FOR CREATIVITY, GIFTED EDUCATION, AND TALENT DEVELOPMENT

The National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented (1990-2013)

RECURRING THEMES IN CAREER COUNSELING OF GIFTED AND TALENTED STUDENTS

The National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented

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Introduction

To move forward in any field it is important to assess its current state, to note issues that remain the same, and to look for new trends. In this review of literature, some research-based and some not, recurring themes in career counseling for gifted and talented students are presented for re-examination.

Choosing a career is a lifelong process that demands accurate perceptions of ability, potential, and achievement (Kelly, 1996). Many career choices must be made during the lifespan, requiring much thought and reflection in the decision-making. A lifelong approach to career development is needed as career plans "are based on a long series of iterative decisions made throughout our lives" (Watts, 1996, p. 46). Career plans must be constantly revised to adapt to a continually changing world.

Different stages exist in career awareness and career maturity (Kelly & Colangelo, 1990; Super, 1980), but central to all of these stages are the common issues of decision-making, development of identity, and exploration. Modern career counseling should teach students self-awareness and decision-making to help them build satisfying lives (Mitchell, Levin, & Krumboltz, 1999) and help in the development of necessary attitudes, skills, and academic pursuits for career exploration and planning.

Research and current literature indicate training and attention in schools to nonacademic issues such as career needs is minimal (Frederickson, 1986; Kelly, 1996; Mitchell, Levin, & Krumboltz, 1999; Moon, Kelly, & Feldhusen, 1997; Perrone, 1997; Watts, 1996). By not addressing the career needs of gifted and talented students in our schools, our society loses potential contributions, and many of these individuals continue to be anxious, confused, or frustrated about their career decisions. Gifted and talented adolescents require more than attention to their academic pursuits. While in the planning phase of career decision-making, individuals in late adolescence are also establishing their identity. A solid sense of self is the underpinning for clarifying plans and aspirations (Chickering & Reisser, 1993) thus, self-concept may be positively related to career; certainty and career planning.

Gifted and talented students may face more challenges in career development than their age-peers due to possible additional psychosocial issues that may affect their sense of identity, including multipotentiality (Kelly & Hall, 1994; Perrone, 1997), early cognitive maturation (Frederickson, 1986; Kelly & Colangelo, 1990), unhealthy perfectionism and stress from the high expectations of significant others (Clark, 1992; Perrone, 1997; Schuler, 2000; Silverman, 1993). Gifted and talented females may also face further challenges in career development (Arnold, Noble, & Subotnik, 1996; Hollinger & Fleming, 1992; Kerr, 1994; Reis, 1998; Rimm, 1999). Some of the literature is research-based and some is not, however the issues above proliferate in discussions of gifted education and talent development.

Multipotentiality

Multipotentiality is frequently cited as a problem for gifted and talented students in career planning (Clark, 1992; Kelly & Hall, 1994; Perrone, 1997; Silverman, 1993), although little empirical research demonstrates that this is, in fact, the case. In a 1997 study of 1,000 gifted adolescents, Achter, Benbow, and Lubinski found that only 5% truly displayed multipotentiality when above-level assessments of abilities and preferences were used. While intellectual ability was high across many academic subject areas, these multipotential students were actually diverse in their strengths and relative weaknesses, predispositions, and likes or loves for certain subject areas.

According to Berger (1989), the problem facing gifted students in their career planning may not be multipotentiality, but the lack of decision-making skills. Instead of focusing on their many existing abilities, these students should be encouraged to explore other aspects of their lives, such as their values, life-goals, and leisure activities (Stewart, 1999). By doing so, students learn to expand their experiences and develop new talents. Rysiew, Shore, and Carson (1994) assert that career decision-making is not a problem for students with multiple abilities, unless accompanied by multiple interests, motivations, and opportunities. Students are often expected to choose areas of specialization before they have even really experienced post-secondary institutions offerings as fields of study or majors.

Gifted and Talented Females

While many career counseling issues are the same for both genders, the career decision making process for gifted girls may present more challenges than for gifted boys because of girls' earlier puberty and emotional maturation, along with greater self-concept discrepancies, higher and multiple societal ideals imposed on them and a minority status in some male-dominated occupational settings (Arnold, Noble & Subotnik, 1996; Kerr, 1994; Randall, 1997; Reis, 1998). Unfortunately for gifted girls, many of the same obstacles to career eminence have remained since the 1970s (Reis, 1998).

Some adolescent girls continue to opt out of the most challenging classes and lower their occupational aspirations as they progress through the educational system (Gottfredson, 1981; Reis, 1998), even though academic preparation and aspirations are crucial to college success (Gladieux & Swail, 2000).

Gifted girls tend to have more dominant career orientation, less traditional sex-role orientation, and a greater need to achieve in academic and occupational arenas than other females in general (Wolleat, 1979). While at the same time, the successful integration of career and family is of concern to most females with high career aspirations and is of more concern to females than to males (Reis, 1998). In a study of almost 1,000 college students, Novack and Novack (1996) found that 80% of females planned on attending graduate school and said they would be more committed to their careers than to marriage. However, a potential conflict is evident when one considers that 97% of these young women also said they planned to marry and 92% said they would be willing to make a career sacrifice for their husbands. Appropriate career counseling for females must realistically address both the difficulties and the advantages in successfully combining career and family.

Girls benefit from mentorships, with female mentors when possible, throughout their education (Beck, 1989; Gladieux & Swail, 2000; Reis, 1998). In Beck's study on the effects of a mentoring program for high school females (1989), she found that career development was the area the most affected by the mentorship, and that females felt more strongly than males that the mentorship helped them look at ways to combine career and

family. Kerr (2000), however, believes that all of the work of high school mentoring can be undone in a year and a half at college. Gifted and talented college girls frequently succumb to the culture of romance at this level, realizing that status on campus is most often achieved by having a relationship with “a great guy,” rather than by the pursuit of academic excellence and achievement (Erwin & Stewart, 1997; Kerr, 1994; Reis, 1995).

Unhealthy Perfectionism and High Expectations of Others

Unreasonably high expectations of self and unhealthy or neurotic perfectionism (Schuler, 2000) may lead to problems in choosing a career path (Clark, 1992; Kelly & Hall, 1994; Novack & Novack, 1996; Silverman, 1993). An unhealthy perfectionist can be immobilized because of a desire to be perfect. The pressure to make the perfect career choice, to please significant others, including parents, teachers, and peers, can cause anxiety and fear of failure, which in turn may lead to indecision (Stewart, 1999), delaying decision making about careers, or frequent change of college major (Frederickson, 1986).

Another possibility is that to gain approval or hold love, gifted and talented adolescents may choose to behave according to the expectations of others rather than pursue personal fulfillment (Colozzi & Colozzi, 2000). This preoccupation with the opinions and expectations of others can be an advantage, as in a positive mentoring situation, or a distinct disadvantage. Some gifted and talented students, and in particular females, do not pursue their own dreams because they feel they must conform to the wishes of their parents (Reis, 1998).

Early Cognitive Maturity and Vocational Identity

Super (1980) explains career or vocational maturity as the knowledge of one’s career interests, abilities, and goals in relation to the work world. Gifted students have demonstrated earlier career maturity by being more certain of career choices than other students (Kelly & Colangelo, 1990). This early, and sometimes premature certainty, may actually limit the further exploration of career possibilities, especially in college, where more choices are offered (Frederickson, 1986). Often, academically gifted students choose careers that require 10 or more years of post-secondary training (Stewart, 1999), and if this career decision is made early due to cognitive maturation without synchronous emotional maturation, the adolescent may not be able to consider the long range planning, persistence, and self-sacrifice needed to achieve the intended career goal. Kerr and Colangelo (1988) found that 50% of intellectually gifted college-bound students in their high school study selected majors from only three areas, engineering, health professions, and physical science, even though they were presented with almost 200 possibilities and had self-identified broad extracurricular interests. The long-term training for most professional careers also requires a certain amount of dependence, both financial and emotional, while the gifted population often needs to assert more independence at an earlier age (Silverman, 1993).

Kelly (1992) found that as a group, gifted students perceived fewer career barriers than other students, that gifted boys expressed more interest in a wider range of occupations than gifted girls, and that gifted girls seemed to attain more career information on their own than their male counterparts. Gagné and Poirier (1990) studied over 400 eighth and twelfth graders and found that over half of the students made their career choices based on limited personal knowledge of only 10 professions. Appropriate and ongoing career counseling could help many young students who know little about the changing nature of the work world or the myriad of occupations in it.

Conclusion

There are many opposing beliefs about the nature of what counts as educational knowledge, for instance research-based studies versus reviews of literature, but what is certain is that there is much more that we need to know about career counseling for the diverse gifted and talented population. To provide appropriate career counseling for all gifted and talented students, additional areas seldom addressed in the existing literature need to be further explored. Areas of future consideration should include:

- the career needs of gifted and talented students who underachieve;
- the emphasis on college for gifted students;
- members of special populations of gifted and talented such as:
 - emotionally gifted,

- creatively gifted,
- disadvantaged,
- gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender;
- the importance of chance in career development.

A lifespan approach to career counseling is crucial, acknowledging that occupational interests, competencies, creativity, and preferences may indeed change over time. Career counseling must also be tailored for individual needs of a diverse population. A collaborative career counseling effort among counselors, parents, and teachers can help each student develop a personal definition of identity, achievement, and career success after careful self-analysis of abilities, life goals, and occupational possibilities.

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