

Ten Things All Teachers/Administrators Should Know About Gifted Students

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1. Gifted students are not all alike. They vary in respect to general ability, domain-specific aptitude, interests and predispositions, and motivation and personality. Thus one programme or service is insufficient to respond to their diverse needs.
2. Gifted students benefit from interaction with peers. Intellectual peerage contributes to important growth patterns in all subject areas (Kulik & Kulik, 1992). For example, cooperative learning, carried out in heterogeneous classroom settings, produces no growth (Rogers, 2001).
3. Gifted students need various forms of acceleration throughout their school years, ranging from content acceleration to Advanced Placement or dual enrollment to mentorships (Shiever & Maker, 2003; Renzulli & Reis, 2003; Clasen & Clasen, 2003).
4. Gifted students are capable of producing high level products in specific areas of learning at the level of a competent adult (NAGC, 1990). For example, fourth graders can draft a policy for pollution that would rival an adult community committee.
5. Gifted students need to be challenged and stimulated by an advanced and enriched curriculum that is above their current level of functioning in each area of learning (VanTassel-Baska, 2003).
6. Gifted students need to be instructed by personnel trained in the education of gifted students to ensure that they are sufficiently challenged, exposed to appropriate level work, and motivated to excel (Croft, 2003).
7. Gifted students at elementary level require differentiated staffing and flexible scheduling to accommodate their needs; at secondary level, they require special classes (Feldhusen, 2003).
8. Gifted students have counselling needs that require psychosocial, academic, and career preparation on an annual basis (Colangelo, 2003; Greene, 2002; Jackson & Snow, 2004; Silverman, 1993). At secondary level, assigning one counsellor to the gifted may be the best staffing model to employ.
9. Gifted students have affective characteristics that may render them vulnerable in school settings such as perfectionism, sensitivity, and intensity (Lovecky, 1992; Robinson, 2002).
10. Gifted students in general have healthy social relationships and adjust well to new situations (Robinson, 2002). Concerns for social development more than cognitive growth are rarely warranted.

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