Meeting the Social and Emotional Needs of the Gifted

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Myths and Realities

Cooperative learning in heterogeneous groups provides academic benefits for gifted and talented students.

Distinguishing Myths from Realities: NRC/GT Research

Gifted and talented children should spend the majority of their school day with others of similar abilities and interests.

When using cooperative learning, student achievement disparities within the cooperative groups should not be too severe.

Distinguishing Myths from Realities: NRC/GT Research

Cooperative learning can be effectively substituted for specialized programs and services for academically talented students.

Distinguishing Myths from Realities: NRC/GT Research

There is some evidence that labeling a child gifted has a positive effect on his /her self-esteem.

Distinguishing Myths from Realities: NRC/GT Research

Gifted students have lower self-esteem than non-gifted.

Distinguishing Myths from Realities: NRC/GT Research

Schools should call for the elimination of ability grouping because ability grouping has negative effects on student achievement.

Distinguishing Myths from Realities: NRC/GT Research

Bright, average, and slow youngsters profit from grouping programs that adjust curriculum to the aptitude levels of the groups.

Distinguishing Myths from Realities: NRC/GT Research

Highly talented youngsters profit from work in accelerated classes as well as from an enriched curriculum.

Distinguishing Myths from Realities: NRC/GT Research

Creativity tests are an effective means of identifying artistically gifted and talented students.

Distinguishing Myths from Realities: NRC/GT Research

Primetime, commercial television offers inadequate and inappropriate role models for gifted children.

Distinguishing Myths from Realities: NRC/GT Research

Creativity in children is a sign of and a contributor to psychological health.

Distinguishing Myths from Realities: NRC/GT Research

Gifted children identified during their preschool years tend to stay ahead of other children with regard to academic performance.

Distinguishing Myths from Realities: NRC/GT Research

Teachers need to show students examples of superior student work in order to challenge them to ever increasing levels of math achievement.

Distinguishing Myths from Realities: NRC/GT Research

Talented students are capable of greater mathematical power than we have ever asked them.

Definitions of Gifted

National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC)
A gifted person is someone who shows, or has the potential for showing, an exceptional level of performance in one or more areas of expression.
Definitions of Gifted

The Javits Act (1988)

This definition is taken from the Javits Act, which provides grants for education programs serving bright children from low-income families:

"The term gifted and talented student means children and youths who give evidence of higher performance capability in such areas as intellectual, creative, artistic, or leadership capacity, or in specific academic fields, and who require services or activities not ordinarily provided by the schools in order to develop such capabilities fully."
Definitions of Gifted


In the report titled National Excellence and Developing Talent, the term "gifted" was dropped. This definition uses the term "outstanding talent" and concludes with the sentence: "Outstanding talents are present in children and youth from all cultural groups, across all economic strata, and in all areas of human endeavor."
Definitions of Gifted

**Renzulli:**
Gifted behavior occurs when there is an interaction among three basic clusters of human traits: above-average general and/or specific abilities, high levels of task commitment (motivation), and high levels of creativity. Gifted and talented children are those who possess or are capable of developing this composite of traits and applying them to any potentially valuable area of human performance. As noted in the Schoolwide Enrichment Model, gifted behaviors can be found "in certain people (not all people), at certain times (not all the time), and under certain circumstances (not all circumstances)."
Definitions of Gifted

- Florida Definition

6A-6.03019 Special Instructional Programs for Students Who Are Gifted.

(1) Gifted. One who has superior intellectual development and is capable of high performance.

(2) Criteria for eligibility. A student is eligible for special instructional programs for the gifted if the student meets the criteria under paragraph (2)(a) or (b) of this rule.

(a) The student demonstrates:
1. Need for a special program.
2. A majority of characteristics of gifted students according to a standard scale or checklist, and
3. Superior intellectual development as measured by an intelligence quotient of two (2) standard deviations or more above the mean on an individually administered standardized test of intelligence.
Definitions of Gifted

- **Florida Definition**

  (b) The student is a member of an under-represented group and meets the criteria specified in an approved school district plan for increasing the participation of under-represented groups in programs for gifted students.

  1. For the purpose of this rule, under-represented groups are defined as groups:

     a. Who are limited English proficient, or

     b. Who are from a low socio-economic status family.
Definitions of Gifted

Florida Definition, continued

2. The Department of Education is authorized to approve school district plans for increasing the participation of students from under-represented groups in special instructional programs for the gifted, provided these plans include the following:
a. A district goal to increase the percent of students from under-represented groups in programs for the gifted and the current status of the district in regard to that goal;
b. Screening and referral procedures which will be used to increase the number of these students referred for evaluation;
c. Criteria for determining eligibility based on the student's demonstrated ability or potential in specific areas of leadership, motivation, academic performance, and creativity;
d. Student evaluation procedures, including the identification of the measurement instruments to be used;
e. Instructional program modifications or adaptations to ensure successful and continued participation of students from under-represented groups in the existing instructional program for gifted students;
f. An evaluation design which addresses evaluation of progress toward the district's goal for increasing participation by students from under-represented groups.
Definitions of Gifted

Florida Definition, continued

(3) Procedures for student evaluation. The minimum evaluations for determining eligibility are the following:

(a) Need for a special instructional program,
(b) Characteristics of the gifted,
(c) Intellectual development, and
(d) May include those evaluation procedures specified in an approved district plan to increase the participation of students from under-represented groups in programs for the gifted.
Demands of Giftedness

- To focus on or devour a subject
- To be creative or inventive
- To question generalizations and “authority”
- To concentrate, to be totally absorbed
- To resist routine drill
- To work alone
- To seek order, structure and consistency
- To have one’s intelligence responded to
- To seek out mental peers
- To have thinking time
- To be outstanding in some areas but average in others

Lane, M. and Ho, Nora. Social and Emotional Needs of the Gifted
www.ssku.k12.ca.us/menui/gate/documents/SocialandEmotionalNeedsoftheGifted
The Intensity of Giftedness: Dabrowski’s Overexcitabilities
Asynchronous Development

“If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music he hears, however measured or far away.”

Henry David Thoreau
Asynchronous Development

Breedlove, L. The Intensity of Giftedness: Dabrowski’s Overexcitabilities [Powerpoint slides].
Asynchronous Development

Asynchronous Development

“Understanding this out-of-sync (or asynchronous) behavior is crucial for meeting the needs of gifted children. This out-of-sync development is a major factor of who they are and how they interact with the world. “

Kazimierz Dabrowski

- Theory of Positive Disintegration
  - Psychiatrist – focus was on the field of gifted children and adult
  - Typical child – excited by the world; Gifted child – tend to seek out stimulation
  - >IQ = more innate intensities
  - Intensities exceed what one would expect from typically developing children
Intensities/Overexcitabilities
- Psychomotor
- Sensual
- Intellectual
- Imaginational
- Emotional

Silverman, 1993
Teacher Toolbox
Psychomotor

- Surplus of energy (i.e., rapid speech, intense enthusiasm, acting out, sleep less than typical babies)

- Psychomotor expression of emotional tension (continual talking, impulsive behavior, nervous habits)
Strategies for Psychomotor

- Talk about Over Excitabilities
- Plan for movement
- Help them understand how this is perceived by others
- Model appropriate ways to release the need for movement
- Provide “moving furniture”
- Avoid confusing this with the medical condition ADHD
Sensual

- Sensory pleasure (i.e., seeing, smelling, hearing)

- Sensual expression of emotional tension (i.e., overeating, wanting to be center of attention)

- Aesthetic Pleasures (i.e., appreciation of beauty, writing styles)
Strategies for Sensual

- Talk about Over Excitabilities
- Limits offensive stimuli and provide comfort in the environment
- Provide appropriate opportunities for them to be in the “limelight”
- Teach them strategies to control their environment
- Stress management techniques
Intellectual

- Probing questions; problem-solving; learning
- Theoretical thinking (meta-cognition, introspection, moral thinking)
- Love of learning
- Moral thinking
- World Issues
- Critical of others
Strategies for Intellectual

- Talk about Over Excitabilities
- Show the child how to find answers to questions
- Provide ways for those interested in moral and ethical issues to act upon their concerns
- Teach them how their intent - when spoken - may be perceived as cruel or disrespectful
- Help them “get out of their heads and into their bodies”
- Question Journal – pick 1 to ask me
Imaginational

- Free play of the imagination (i.e., frequent use of image and metaphor, facility for invention and fantasy)
- Spontaneous imagery as an expression of emotional tension (i.e., tendency to dramatize, fear of the unknown)
- Have vivid dreams
- Elaborate stories
- Day dream
Strategies for Imaginational

- Talk about Over Excitabilities
- Help them differentiate between their imagination and the real world (embellishment and lying)
- Use a mental stop sign in mental video
- Provide appropriate outlets – use creativity to solve problems
- “Idea Trap” - journal
Emotional

- Intensity of feeling (i.e., positive or negative feelings, extremes of emotion)
- Somatic expressions (i.e., tense stomach, sinking heart)
- Inhibition (timidity, shyness)
- Strong affective memory
- Fears and anxieties, feelings of guilt
Emotional (cont’d)

- Concern with death, depressive and suicidal moods
- Relationship feelings (i.e., emotional ties and attachment, empathy, sensitivity in relationships)
- Feelings toward self (i.e., self evaluation and self-judgment, feelings of inadequacy and inferiority)
Strategies for Emotional

- Talk about Over Excitabilities
- Accept all feelings- regardless of intensity
- Teach individuals to anticipate physical and emotional responses and prepare for them.
- Help them understand how it will affect others
- Model “temperature taking”
- Journal
Gender Issues and the Gifted Child

“The majority of individuals who “used to be” gifted are female.

Linda Silverman
Females : Gifted

- Preschool:
  - Reading “too early”
  - Oblivious to peers
  - Unusual interests

Kerr, B. *Smart Girls, Smart Boys* [powerpoint slides] Retrieved from [www.cleoslab.org/resources/](http://www.cleoslab.org/resources/)
Females: Gifted

- Kindergarten:
  - Denied early admission because reading is discounted

Kerr, B. *Smart Girls, Smart Boys* [powerpoint slides]  Retrieved from [www.cleoslab.org/resources/]
Females : Gifted

Elementary:

- Gifted girls are more like gifted boys than like average girls in interests, aspirations, and play.
- Vivid, intense fantasy life
- Need for aloneness and privacy
- Need for acceleration and challenge

Females : Gifted

- Middle School:
  - Pressure to be pretty
  - Pressure to be popular
  - Pressure to camouflage talents

Kerr, B. *Smart Girls, Smart Boys* [powerpoint slides] Retrieved from [www.cleoslab.org/resources/](http://www.cleoslab.org/resources/)
Females: Gifted

- High School:
  - Continued high grades, but may take less rigorous courses
  - Fear of standardized testing
  - May be multipotential and over committed
  - Continued pressure to enter the culture of romance

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Females: Gifted

- Although many girls outperform boys on the primary grades, by the time they reach the milestone of high school graduation, most have fallen behind their male peers.
- Some gifted girls, at an early age, begin an attempt to blend in with their age peers, even if it means hiding their abilities.

Kerr, B. *Smart Girls, Smart Boys* [powerpoint slides] Retrieved from www.cleoslab.org/resources/
Females: Strategies

- Individualized advising
- Preparation for testing
- Focused guidance
Males: Gifted

- Preschool
  - High activity level
  - Advanced problem solving
  - Strong asynchrony

Kerr, B. *Smart Girls, Smart Boys* [powerpoint slides] Retrieved from [www.cleoslab.org/resources/](http://www.cleoslab.org/resources/)
Males: Gifted

- Kindergarten
  - Victims of kindergarten red shirting so that he can “mature a little more”

Kerr, B.  *Smart Girls, Smart Boys* [powerpoint slides]  Retrieved from [www.cleoslab.org/resources/](http://www.cleoslab.org/resources/)
Males: Gifted

- Elementary
  - May act out when bored
  - If denied advancement, may bully others
  - Bartleby Syndrome may strike!

Kerr, B. *Smart Girls, Smart Boys* [powerpoint slides] Retrieved from [www.cleoslab.org/resources/](http://www.cleoslab.org/resources/)
Males: Gifted

- Middle School
  - Pressure to be athletic
  - Need to hide creativity and sensitivity
  - Pressure to withdraw from female friends

Kerr, B. *Smart Girls, Smart Boys* [powerpoint slides] Retrieved from [www.cleoslab.org/resources/](http://www.cleoslab.org/resources/)
Males: Gifted

- High School
  - May feel pressure to be a hero or scholar athlete
  - May disengage from extra curricular activities and interests perceived as female
  - May avoid career interests now dominated by women and narrow choices too much

Kerr, B. *Smart Girls, Smart Boys* [powerpoint slides] Retrieved from [www.cleoslab.org/resources/](http://www.cleoslab.org/resources/)
Males: Gifted

- Both males and females can, at times, suffer from conflicts between identity and achievement motivation.
- Highly able males who become bored in the classroom are more likely to react by acting out and underachieving.
Males: Strategies

- Encouragement to feel and express emotions
- Need someone to listen and empathize
- Explain about gender stereotyping and expectations
- Participate in interest - based groups
Perfectionism and Giftedness

“Sometimes...when you hold out for everything, you walk away with nothing.”

From the television show Ally McBeal
Perfectionism and Giftedness

- Often set unrealistic standards for themselves and others
- Often believe that others have expectations of perfection for them
- May interfere with completion of a task because it is not perfect
- May display an all or nothing attitude
- Prone to high stress lifestyles and sometimes depression

Perfectionism and Giftedness: Strategies

- Allow the student to be “perfect” in some things rather than all things
- Encourage the student to keep striving
- Teach them to focus on future successes rather than obsessing on setbacks
- Praise student’s efforts and determination vs. their being “smart” or “talented”

Gifted Underachievement

“There are risks and costs to action. But they are far less than the long range risks of comfortable inaction.”

John F. Kennedy
Gifted Underachievement

- Definition: discrepancy between the student’s school performance and the student’s ability
- Earns C’s and D’s on report cards but scores in the top percentile on standardized tests
- Can vary from subject to subject / classroom to classroom

Gifted Underachievement

- Environment should be mutually respectful, non-authoritarian, flexible, and non-questioning
- Opportunities for success, sense of accomplishment, belief in themselves, environment that stimulates a love for learning
- Interest based projects

Gifted: Peer Relationships

“ I don’t know what’s more difficult about being gifted – living up to the label for my parents and teachers or living it down in front of my friends.”

Anonymous
Gifted: Peer Relationships

- Difficult for high ability students to find friends with the same interests and hobbies as their same age peers
- Research has shown that gifted children are well-liked and popular with peers until around age 13
- Become more socially conscious as they mature, with increased awareness of behaviors that are considered to be “normal or regular”
- Popularity: First – gifted boys; Second – non gifted boys and girls; gifted girls least popular
- Profoundly gifted students have the greatest difficulty finding true peers

Gifted: Peer Relationships Strategies

- Encourage the student to pursue their special interests

- Be aware that the majority of gifted students want to belong more than they want to be smart

Bibliography


Bibliography