

Differentiation Strategies for Gifted and Talented Learners

Differentiation within the classroom provides students with the best environment for having their academic needs met. Differentiation is the least intrusive intervention for gifted students, who like all students should be seen to be “only as special as necessary.”

- Content
 - Provide more challenging reading materials
 - Focus on the overall trends, patterns and themes rather than small details and facts
 - Study problems that do not have a clear solution
 - Use topics of interest to the student, relevant to how the world works, complex and worthwhile
- Process
 - Allow for flexible groupings of students: individuals, pairs, small groups
 - Create specialized learning centers for skill work
 - Encourage creativity and reward risk-taking
 - Explicitly teach skills needed to learn independently (research, organization, etc.)
- Product
 - Allow a variety of acceptable products (using Multiple Intelligences)
 - Offer leveled projects (For an A....., For a B....., etc.)
 - Involve the student in creating a scoring guide
 - Assign tasks that are authentic and for a real audience
 - Match the product to the outcomes being met
- Learning Environment
 - Physical space: Allow the student to freedom to move within the class and school and have control over the materials needed.
 - Conditions: Encourage and show appreciation for humor and creativity.
 - Teacher: The teacher of a gifted student should be willing relinquish control of learning, be curious and enthusiastic as well as committed to differentiation.
 - Groupings: students are given opportunities to work with other strong students, even across grades.

Adaptations for Gifted Learners

- Presentation Strategies
 - Vary the method of presentation
 - Avoid having the student copy notes when material is already mastered
- Curriculum Strategies
 - Provide opportunities for open-ended and self-directed activities
 - Provide instruction in research skills needed to conduct independent study in student’s area of interest
 - Provide independent learning opportunities
 - Use advanced supplementary/reading materials
 - Encourage the use of creativity and ask higher level questions
 - Provide opportunities to develop depth and breadth of knowledge in a subject area

- Organizational/Behavioural Strategies
 - Use study Contracts for students to achieve outcomes
 - Use Learning Logs for independent or outside learning
 - Establish a timeline for long-range projects
- Motivational Strategies
 - Provide fewer drill and practice activities when material is learned
 - Provide self-checking materials
 - Provide tests at a higher level of thinking