Alexandria City Public Schools

Gifted Program Recommendations

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OVERVIEW

- Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS) will partner with general education teachers, curriculum specialists, and gifted endorsed teachers to add scaffolding and differentiation to the existing ACPS curriculum.

- All gifted education primary resources will be aligned to the Virginia Standards of Learning and the ACPS curriculum.

- All ACPS teachers will be provided training on differentiating instruction via Division professional development, blended learning, webinars, book study groups, and school-based PLCs.

- All School Education Plans will include action steps for meeting the academic, social, and emotional needs of gifted learners.

IDENTIFICATION

Questions regarding the tools used require more study and discussion..

Samples from other State DOE:

- Should only students exhibiting "superior cognitive ability" be identified?
- Scored two standard deviations above the mean, minus the standard error of measurement, on an approved individual standardized intelligence test administered by a licensed or certified school psychologist or licensed psychologist, or
- Scored at least two standard deviations above the mean, minus the standard error of measurement, on an approved standardized group intelligence test
- Performed at or above the ninety-fifth percentile on an approved individual or group standardized basic or composite battery of a nationally normed achievement test; or
- Attained an approved score on one or more above grade-level standardized, nationally normed approved tests ***(This approved score should equate to the 95% and it appears sometimes our cut scores are lower. Ask Accountability or ACPS school psychologists to come up with a score for SRI and TTM that meet the 95% criteria?)***
- A student shall be identified as exhibiting "specific academic ability" superior to that of students of similar age in a specific academic ability field, if, within the preceding twenty-four months, the student performed at or above the ninety-fifth percentile at the national level on an approved individual or group standardized achievement test of specific academic ability in that field. A student may be identified as gifted in more than one specific academic ability field

Testing/assessment

- Approved instruments and checklists approved by department of education.
- Allow for appropriate screening and identification of minority or disadvantaged students, students with disabilities, and English learners. ***We need help from the Department of Accountability or ACPS school psychologists to identify this assessment***

Is there bias around the assessments or the measures that we are using? Will there be additional guidance when we look at students with lower language proficiency? Will there be ways to look at performance based tasks? Is there an assessment that minimizes cultural bias as well? Is there a way to account for this in the evaluation of a student's eligibility? What about Growth Mindset?

YOUNG SCHOLARS STATEMENT OF NEED

Add Young Scholars as a component of the ACPS Gifted Program

- The young scholars program is designed to address the ongoing issues related to disproportionality in the TAG programs as it relates to race, ethnicity, poverty, advocacy and access of resources
- The program is designed to identify and nurture this underserved population who are often overlooked by traditional selection processes
- Inequities exist because most school districts identify gifted students by using standardized test scores, teacher recommendations, and student grades to establish cutoff scores. This process often screens out underachieving, learning-disabled, culturally different, and-most consistently-students from poverty backgrounds
- Inequities also occurs because students who come from poverty backgrounds have not had the same opportunities as middle-class students, and the identification processes do not factor in environmental differences.
- An identification process that takes the factors surrounding race, ethnicity, poverty, advocacy and access to a variety of resources into account is essential if the process is to address the equity issue. We already know that students from enriched backgrounds typically perform better in school than those from poverty.
- The young scholars programs offset this disparity by doing two things:
    - 1. Developing a young scholars identification process that takes into account the inequality that exists between students with the above mentioned at risk factors and their non-impacted peers
    - 2. They must design a program that provides support, advocacy, enrichment and access to opportunities that begin to close the knowledge gap and prepare identified students to have access to advanced classes that align with their potential

Young Scholar Identification

A young scholar shall be identified as exhibiting "superior cognitive potential" utilizing established guidelines including:

- Attaining an approved score on an agreed upon ACPS rating scale based on data gathered from a review of student records, including demographics, and environmental factors.
- Attaining an approved score on observations by both the Young Scholar certified teacher and the general education teacher during a pre-planned lesson geared at facilitating critical thinking skills in non-traditional settings.
- With review and consideration given to the performance on an approved, preferable non-verbal, standardized group intelligence test particularly if it falls in the 89% or higher for children meeting the first two criteria (but not exempting them should they score below?)
- Review and selection of all possible candidate by grade level team members, talented and gifted endorsed teacher, and school administrators

DELIVERY OF SERVICES

Cluster Grouping Young Scholars *Young Scholar Schools*

A general education teacher delivers services with coaching/support from the gifted interventionist/coach.

- Deliberately place identified students in cluster groups in general education classrooms
- The general education teacher will have the on-going professional development in differentiation and meeting the academic, emotional and social needs of Young Scholars students
- The gifted endorsed or Young Scholar certified teacher will collaborate with the general education teacher to co-teach lessons that foster deeper inquiry and problem solving in already identified young scholars and facilitate the identification of potential students who show evidence of higher level thinking skills.

Cluster Grouping GIA

A general education teacher delivers services with support from the gifted interventionist/coach.

- Deliberately place identified students in cluster groups (at least 3)in general education classrooms
- The general education teachers will have the on-going professional development in differentiation and meeting the academic, emotional and social needs of gifted students
- Students have Education Plans developed by the gifted endorsed teacher and the general education teacher (unless the curriculum is already embedding support for advanced learners, the education plan isn't needed).

Co-teaching in a Cluster Group Classroom: 4th and 5th Grade Language Arts:

A gifted intervention specialist and a general education teacher both provide service via a balanced literacy approach in a co-taught setting.

- The general education teacher will have on-going professional development in differentiation and meeting the academic, emotional and social needs of gifted students
- The gifted intervention specialist and general education teacher have collaborative planning time
    - Planning time may occur in a myriad of ways to fit the needs of the co-teachers within the same norms as SpEd and El co-teachers plan with their gen ed teachers)
- Identified students are clustered in a general education classroom
- Cluster groups have Education Plans developed by the gifted endorsed teacher and general education teacher
- The general education teacher will have ongoing support from an educator with gifted licensure or endorsement
- Where daily co-teaching occurs, the gifted endorsed teacher will be the teacher of record (this is also the way the "teacher of record" is recorded in SpEd).
- Scheduling will parallel best practices of SpEd and EL cluster group scheduling
- Students who are identified mid-year do not switch homerooms. They join the cluster group for the LA block (the same as SpEd and El services)

Current students grandfathered under current model.

Single Subject Self-contained Classroom: 4th and 5th Grade Mathematics

A gifted endorsed teacher will deliver the curriculum.

- Students are pulled-out to a self-contained mathematics class
- Minimum instructional time is equivalent to the district instructional time for the corresponding subject, grade level and setting
- This setting serves only students identified as gifted or accelerated
- Delivery of the ACPS TAG mathematics curriculum

EDUCATION PLANS

An education plan will be developed for GIA, Language Arts and Mathematics (social studies and science?) identified students in collaboration with an educator who holds licensure or endorsement in gifted education.

Education Plans Include:

- Description of the services to be provided
- SMART goals/ measurable academic goals.
- Progress reporting
- Persons responsible
- Annual review

PROFESSIONAL DEVEOPMENT

General Education Teachers' Professional Competencies

- The ability to differentiate instruction, utilizing ACPS curriculum, based on a student's readiness, knowledge and skill level (observable and measurable)
- The ability to create and sustain classroom instruction differentiated to meet the needs of all learners
- The ability to select and implement ACPS differentiated curricula that incorporates advanced, challenging complex content
- The ability to understand the social and emotional needs of students who are gifted and to address the impact of those needs on student learning
- The ability to recognize and respond the characteristics and needs of students from traditionally underrepresented populations who are gifted
- The ability to create safe and culturally responsive learning environments
- The ability to use data from a variety of sources to measure and monitor the growth of students who are gifted
- The ability to participate in the development of Education Plans

ACPS will imbed differentiation into all PL, the work of Learn Forward, and the curriculum

ACPS will hire a consultant with expertise on differentiation of curriculum and instruction

ACPS school education plans and PLC work will reflect a focus on differentiation

ACPS will prioritize support for those teachers who are willing to complete their Gifted Endorsement

ACPS will prioritize support for teachers who are willing to complete their Young Scholars training

ACPS will encourage gifted endorsed teachers to expand their training in coaching

CURRICULUM

The ACPS curriculum shall include differentiation to meet the needs of all learners

ACPS will expand the curriculum to challenge all learners, including gifted, with rigor and relevance

All primary resources including those utilized for gifted education, will be aligned to the Virginia SOLs and imbedded within the ACPS curriculum.

Gifted endorsed teachers will be encouraged to participate in curriculum writing

"An effective curriculum for students who are gifted is essentially a basic curriculum that has been modified to meet their needs." Journal for the Education of the Gifted

Appendix 1

8VAC20-22-370. Gifted Education (Add-On Endorsement).

Endorsement requirements. The candidate must have:

1. Completed an approved teacher preparation program in gifted education; or

2. Completed the following:

a. Graduated with a baccalaureate degree with an endorsement in a teaching area;

b. Completed 12 hours of graduate-level coursework in gifted education; and

c. Completed a practicum of at least 45 instructional hours. This practicum shall include a minimum of 45 instructional hours of successful teaching experiences with gifted students in a heterogeneously grouped (mixed ability) classroom or a homogeneously grouped (single ability) classroom. One year of successful, full-time teaching experience in a public or accredited nonpublic school may be accepted in lieu of the practicum. A mentor holding a valid license with an endorsement in gifted education must be assigned to the teacher.

Statutory Authority

§ 22.1-298.1 of the Code of Virginia.

Historical Notes

Derived from Volume 23, Issue 25, eff. September 21, 2007.

Website addresses provided in the Virginia Administrative Code to documents incorporated by reference are for the reader's convenience only, may not necessarily be active or current, and should not be relied upon. To ensure the information incorporated by reference is accurate, the reader is encouraged to use the source document described in the regulation.

As a service to the public, the Virginia Administrative Code is provided online by the Virginia General Assembly. We are unable to answer legal questions or respond to requests for legal advice, including application of law to specific fact. To understand and protect your legal rights, you should consult an attorney.

Appendix 2

Differentiation

"Fulfilling the Promise of Differentiation: Responding to the needs of all learners

The idea of differentiating instruction is an approach to teaching that advocates active planning for and attention to student differences in classrooms, in the context of high quality curriculums.

The idea of differentiating instruction to accommodate the different ways that students learn involves a hefty dose of common sense, as well as sturdy support in the theory and research of education (Tomlinson & Allan, 2000). It is an approach to teaching that advocates active planning for student differences in classrooms." Carol Tomlinson

For professional development

The Institute on Academic Diversity at the Curry School of Education, University of Virginia offers spring, summer and fall professional development sessions on Differentiating Instruction. Meet Dr. Tomlinson and renowned educators at the Institute on Academic Diversity sessions, and see how classroom practitioners use the principles and practices of defensible differentiation to support student achievement.

The ASCD (Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development) offers some online courses on Differentiating Instruction. In addition, the ASCD offers a variety of professional development institutes on differentiation throughout each year.

www. differentiationcentral.com
This website is devoted to differentiation and is reviewed by Dr. Tomlinson and her colleagues at UVA. You can find more resources, sample lesson plans, and discussion rooms devoted to differentiation.

www. ascd.org
The ASCD developed books and multimedia kits related to differentiation for professional development. They also offer on-line classes for those wanting to learn more about the philosophy of differentiation, and offer a Differentiation Channel on PD InFocus.

Education Insights
This website is a source of interviews on a range of topics in education. Dr. Tomlinson's interview is also available on it.

ASCD EDge
What was your critical transformation as a teacher? We have a **video clip of Dr. Tomlinson** sharing her transformational moment as a teacher. How was that? Do you want more about other renowned educators' transformational experiences? Visit the **ASCD EDge** and check out those stories.

Appendix 3

Young Scholars Training

Three courses a teacher must take along with a field trip to FCPS to view implementation:

Young Scholars Introduction

- This course is an overview of the program and provides insight about its value and the summer program used in the district

Young Scholars Identification

- This course goes through the steps to identify students and the requirements that they must meet. It provides examples of lessons and an overview of the 9 strategies used in the lessons, as well as how there must be two teachers in the room so that one can be an observer of student behaviors and the other the instructor of the lesson. The course also provides examples of students and their backgrounds so teachers can grasp what a Young Scholar may look like in their classroom and to dismantle the orthodox view of a gifted child.

Nurturing Young Scholars

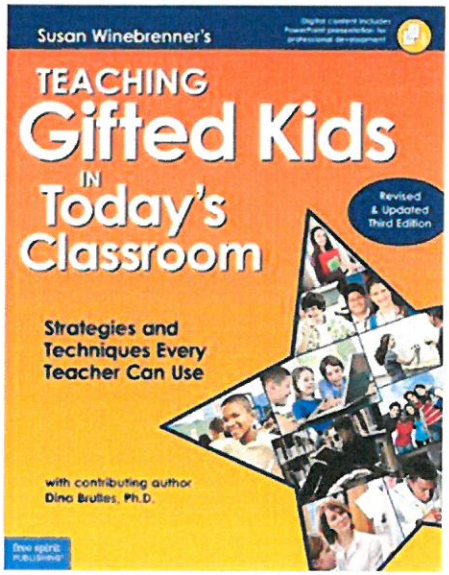
- This course provides strategies to work with Young Scholars (and all students). The De Bono Six Hats is an example of strategies that we discuss along with the ones outlined for Critical and Creative Thinking Lessons such as Mindmapping; Fluency; and Visualization to name a few.

or

Young Scholars Certification in CaseNex

Appendix 4

Resource



This is a resource to meeting the learning needs of gifted students in the mixed-abilities classroom—seamlessly and effectively with minimal preparation time. Included are practical, classroom-tested strategies and step-by-step instructions for how to use them. The third edition provides information on:

- using technology for accelerated learning
- managing cluster grouping
- increasing curriculum rigor
- improving assessments
- boosting critical and creative thinking skills
- addressing gifted kids with special needs
- supporting State Standards

Digital content provides a PowerPoint presentation for professional development, reproducible forms ready to customize and print for classroom use, additional extension menus for the primary and upper grades, and a special supplement for parents.

Differentiated Instruction: The Curriculum Connection

Differentiated Instruction: The Curriculum Connection directly addresses one of five nonnegotiables of differentiated instruction: the role of curriculum in designing and delivering high-quality differentiated instruction. In this course, you will explore the attributes of high-quality curriculum and what it means to teach for understanding. You'll discover how teachers in a differentiated classroom write objectives that adhere to standards documents. Finally, you will examine the role of rigor and relevance in designing differentiated curriculum that leads to these objectives.

By the end of this course, through video examples, in-depth readings and reflections, and practical applications, you'll be ready to design or adapt classroom work so that it reflects the attributes of what experts consider to be high-quality curriculum.

More specifically, as a result of the course, you will

- Examine and refine the quality of your curriculum.
- Identify key understandings in your curriculum.
- Develop learning targets (KUDs) for use in the classroom.
- Ensure that unit KUDs reflect applicable standards.
- Make a plan to address common student misunderstandings.
- Analyze tasks for rigor and relevance.
- Make a plan to increase rigor and relevance of student work.

In the spirit of differentiation, please feel free to choose the sequence of the course modules and module elements in the way that suits your readiness, interests, and learning profile.

Essential Questions and Key Objectives

The following table includes the essential questions that each module of this course is based on, as well as the key objectives—what you will know, understand, and be able to do (KUD) after completing each of the course modules.

Module 1: Curriculum and Differentiation: What's the Connection?	
Essential Questions	• What distinguishes high-quality curriculum from curriculum that is not? • Why is high-quality curriculum important for differentiation?
Know	• The attributes of high-quality curriculum.
Understand	• All learners deserve access to the highest-quality curriculum a school can offer. • Effective differentiated instruction begins with high-quality curriculum.
Do	• Identify key characteristics of high-quality curriculum. • Examine and refine the quality of one's curriculum. • Explain the relationship between high-quality curriculum and high-quality differentiated instruction.
Module 2: Teaching for Understanding	
Essential Questions	• What really matters in learning? • Why is understanding so important to student achievement and retention?
Know	• The role of understanding in learning.
Understand	• To teach knowledge and skill without understanding is an exercise in futility.
Do	• Explain why understanding is key to achievement and retention. • Identify key understandings in your own curriculum.

Module 3: Getting Ready for Differentiation: Setting High-Quality Learning Goals (KUDs)	
Essential Question	• What is the role of the KUDs in ensuring high-quality differentiated curriculum?
Know	• Attributes of Know (K), Understand (U), and Be Able to Do (D).
Understand	• High-quality differentiation begins with high-quality curriculum. • The K, U, and D act as individual parts of a system, working together to form the goals of a unit of study.
Do	• Identify Ks, Us, and Ds. • Explain the role of the KUDs in high-quality curriculum. • Write KUDs for use in the classroom.
Module 4: Barriers to Teaching for Understanding	
Essential Questions	• What gets in the way of teaching for understanding? • How can teachers overcome these challenges?
Know	• Barriers to teaching for understanding.
Understand	• To teach knowledge and skill without understanding is an exercise in futility.
Do	• Identify barriers to teaching for understanding. • Make a plan to address common student misunderstandings.

Module 5: Differentiated Instruction and Standards	
Essential Questions	• How can differentiation realistically coexist with standards? • In what ways do the KUDs reflect and expand upon standards?
Know	• Goals of standards-based instruction. • Goals of differentiated instruction. • How standards are incorporated into KUDs.
Understand	• Standards and differentiation are not incompatible. Standards are *what* we teach; differentiation is *how* we teach. • Standards alone are not powerful enough for high-quality differentiation or for meaningful learning. Standards are incorporated into KUDs; they are not a substitute for KUDs.
Do	• Reconcile the differences between the standards movement and differentiated instruction. • Ensure that unit KUDs reflect applicable standards.
Module 6: Rigor and Relevance for All	
Essential Questions	• What are the roles of rigor and relevance in ensuring high-quality curriculum for all students? • What do rigor and relevance look like in the differentiated classroom?
Know	• The roles of rigor and relevance in planning high-quality curriculum for the differentiated classroom. • Strategies for increasing rigor and relevance in the differentiated classroom.
Understand	• High-quality curriculum must be both rigorous and relevant to the needs of diverse learners. • All learners deserve access to the highest-quality curriculum.
Do	• Analyze tasks for level of rigor and relevance. • Make a plan to increase rigor and relevance of student work.

Course Syllabus

Module 1	**Curriculum and Differentiation: What's the Connection?** Module Welcome • Video: Providing Quality Curriculum • Reading: The Curriculum Connection • Reading: *Educational Leadership*—Mapping a Route Toward Differentiated Instruction • Video: High-Quality Curriculum and Differentiation Check for Understanding • Application: Planning for High-Quality Curriculum Reflection
Module 2	**Teaching for Understanding** Module Welcome • Reading: What Really Matters in Learning? • Video: Guiding Students to Understanding • Video: What Is Understanding? • Reading: Understanding Understanding Check for Understanding • Application: Identifying Key Understandings Reflection

Module 3	**Getting Ready for Differentiation: Setting High-Quality Learning Goals (KUDs)** Module Welcome • Video: Setting Learning Targets • Reading: Distinguishing Knows, Understands, and Do's • Reading: KUDs As a System • Video: Essential Questions and KUDs • Video: KUDs in Action—Elementary School • Video: KUDs in Action—Middle School Check for Understanding • Application: Writing KUDs Reflection
Module 4	**Barriers to Teaching for Understanding** Module Welcome • Reading: *Educational Leadership*—Cover the Material—Or Teach Students to Think? • Reading: *Educational Leadership*—You Can Teach for Meaning • Video: Minds of Our Own • Reading: Student *Mis*understanding and What We Can Learn from It Check for Understanding • Application: Addressing Student Misunderstandings Reflection

Module 5	**Differentiated Instruction and Standards** Module Welcome • Video: Standards and Differentiation • Reading: *Educational Leadership*—Reconcilable Differences? Standards-Based Teaching and Differentiation • Reading: *Educational Leadership*—Standards for Diverse Learners • Reading: Turning Standards into KUDs Check for Understanding • Application: Incorporating Standards into Unit KUDs Reflection
Module 6	**Rigor and Relevance for All** Module Welcome • Reading: What Is Rigor and Why Does It Matter? • Reading: *Educational Leadership*—Teach Up for Excellence • Video: The World Peace Game—Elementary School • Video: Rigor and Relevance in the Classroom—Middle School • Video: Rigor and Relevance in the Classroom—High School • Reading: *Educational Leadership*—High Expectations for All • Reading: *Educational Leadership*—Why We Run Our School Like a Gifted Program • Video: Differentiation: Rigor and Relevance for All Check for Understanding • Application: Increasing Rigor and Relevance Reflection

Resources

Texts

Brady, M. (2008). Cover the material—Or teach students to think? *Educational Leadership 65*(5), pp. 64–67.

Brandt, R. (1993). On teaching for understanding: A conversation with Howard Gardner. *Educational Leadership 50*(7), pp. 4–7.

Erickson, L. (2002). *Concept-based curriculum and instruction: Teaching beyond the facts.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Kluth, P., & Straut, D. (2001). Standards for diverse learners. *Educational Leadership, 59*(1), pp. 43–46.

McTighe, J., Seif, E., & Wiggins, G. (2004). You can teach for meaning. *Educational Leadership 62*(1), pp. 26–31.

Marzano, R. J. (2010). High expectations for all. *Educational Leadership, 68(1)*, pp. 82–84.

Strickland, C. (2009). *Exploring differentiated instruction.* (The professional learning community series.) Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Strickland, C. (2007). *Tools for high-quality differentiated instruction: An ASCD action tool.* Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Strong, R.W., Silver, H. J., & Perini, M. J. (2001). *Teaching what matters most.* Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Tomlinson, C. A. (2003). *Fulfilling the promise of the differentiated classroom.* Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Tomlinson, C. A. (1999). *The differentiated classroom: Responding to the needs of all learners.* Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Tomlinson, C. A. (2000). Reconcilable differences: Standards-based teaching and differentiation. *Educational Leadership, 58*(1), pp. 6–11.

Tomlinson, C. A., & Imbeau, M. B. (2010). *Leading and managing a differentiated classroom.* Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Tomlinson C. A., & Javius, E. L. (2012). Teach up for excellence. *Educational Leadership, 69(5)*, pp. 28–33.

Tomlinson, C. A., & McTighe, J. (2006). *Integrating differentiated instruction and Understanding by Design: Connecting content and kids.* Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Wiggins, G., & McTighe, J. (2005). *Understanding by design,* 2nd ed. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Video

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ASCD. (2008). *Differentiated Instruction in Action: High School* [DVD]. Alexandria, VA: Author.

ASCD. (2006). High Schools at Work: Engaging Students in Learning [DVD]. Alexandria, VA: Author.

ASCD. (2007). *Moving Forward with Understanding by Design* [DVD]. Alexandria, VA: Author.

ASCD. (1998). *Understanding by Design: What Is Understanding?* [Video program]. Alexandria, VA: Author.

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2nd Edition

THE DIFFERENTIATED CLASSROOM

Responding to the Needs of All Learners

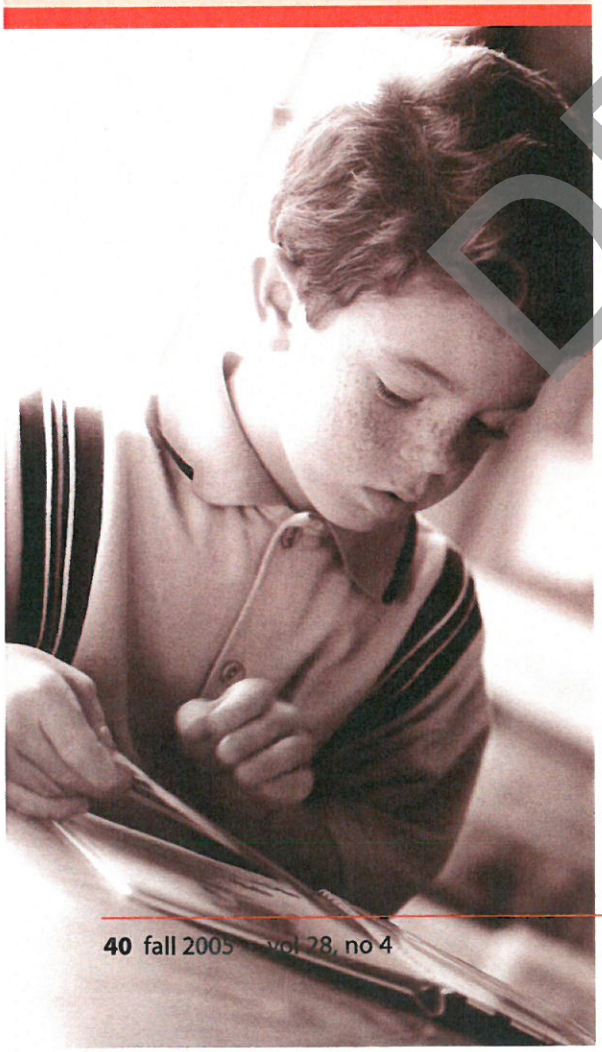
Carol Ann Tomlinson

THE DIFFERENTIATED CLASSROOM

Responding to the Needs of All Learners

Meeting the Educational Needs of Young Gifted Readers in the Regular Classroom

by Michele Moore



Four-year-old Susie was sitting on the couch with her dad when a commercial for Kenmore washers and dryers was broadcast. "Kenmore colorfuls" flashed on the screen, and Susie read it aloud to her dad. "Kenmore colorfuls . . . look Daddy, you can get washing machines in different colors." Her father looked at her with amazement; he didn't know his daughter could read.

It is likely that all kindergarten teachers will have a young gifted reader in their classroom at some point in their career, and they must be prepared to meet the needs of this very special population.

Characteristics of Young Gifted Readers

Vosslamber (2002) defines a young gifted reader as "one who displays the three aspects of giftedness that Renzulli proposes (above-average ability, task commitment, and creativity) in the area of reading" (p. 14). Renzulli (1998) argues that gifted students have three characteristics that interact to create giftedness:

1. *Above average ability* includes general abilities and specific abilities. *General abilities* include those skills that can be measured by standardized or IQ tests, such as word comprehension, word fluency, and verbal reasoning. *Specific abilities* are specialized skills best measured by performance-based assessments, such as making up stories, illustrating stories, and finding connections between stories with similar themes.
2. *Task commitment* includes self-confidence, hard work, and an ability to recognize one's own special talents and skills and the practical use of those skills. Early readers who demonstrate task commitment will realize that they are able to read texts that are more difficult than those being read by their classmates and will show an interest in further developing these skills by expressing their areas of reading interests and projects that they would like to develop.
3. *Creativity* is originality in thinking. Early readers will likely have very different and more advanced interpretations of readings than their classmates. They may see novel connections between similarly themed texts and/or may offer interesting explanations for an author's choice of setting, character, plot, and so on.

According to Mills and Jackson (1990), young gifted readers require less drilling than their classmates, have longer attention spans, and are able to retain larger quantities of information. These children also have extraordinary discrimination and generalization abilities and are known to use more effective reading strategies than average readers (Bond & Bond, 1983). Schnur and Lowrey (1986) report that young gifted readers use phrases and entire sentences at an early age that accurately incorporate advanced vocabulary words. They are also able to use context and picture cues more successfully than their peers to aid word identification and comprehension.

Unfortunately, some negative characteristics can be associated with precocious reading ability. Kingore (2001) and Richert (1997) report that young gifted readers can display some or all of the following problem behaviors:

- self-criticism,
- inability to deal with failure,

- boredom with grade-level curriculum,
- inappropriate behavioral outbursts or reactions,
- sloppy work,
- demanding of their parents' and teacher's attention,
- demanding of other students,
- inconsiderate of others needs/wants, and
- difficulty transitioning from one subject to the next during the school day.

Halsted (1994) reported other negative outcomes of precocious reading. Young gifted readers may push themselves to read any text they can decode before they have the emotional maturity to comprehend the material; it can be difficult to find advanced level books for young readers that contain age-appropriate material. Finally, reading ability is affected by the young child's environment. Most of these children have parents who created a very rich literacy environment for their young children (Lefevre & Senechal, 1999). There are, however, would-be gifted readers who come from disadvantaged households where reading materials may not be as available. This experience can seriously diminish the display of reading skills in these young children.

The Instructional Needs of Young Gifted Readers

"The instruction of children must respond to their abilities in order that they all reach mutual as well as individual goals in school" (Hansen & Robenhagan, 1993, p. 4). Previous research demonstrates that the learning needs of gifted and talented students go beyond what is traditionally provided in the regular classroom (Starko & Schack, 1989). Current research has shown that gifted elementary school children who participate in special programs do better academically than their gifted peers receiving no special services (Collins & Aiex, 1995). Research has also shown that holding an advanced reader to a grade-level reading curriculum can negatively impact his or her continued above-average reading development (Gentry, 1999; Kulik & Kulik, 1996).

One factor that limits long-term accelerated development of reading skills is the lack of challenging reading materials in the classroom. Chall and Conard (1991) analyzed the match of text difficulty to reader readiness. They found that " . . . language arts texts for advanced readers provided little or no challenge, since they were matched to students' grade placements, not their reading levels" (p. 111). Another study found informational texts to be almost nonexistent in first grade classrooms, yet young gifted readers demonstrate a strong interest in this type of reading material (Duke, 2000).

Another factor that can negatively affect the reading development of these readers is their educators' definition of differentiated curriculum (Tolan, 1985). A teacher who gives a young gifted reader an advanced text to read quietly while he or she performs drills with the rest of the class is not providing sufficient programming for this child. Educators must provide challenging learning activities along with advanced texts to truly meet the needs of these young readers.

Identification of Young Gifted Readers

Although a child may be reading upon entering kindergarten, there may be skills that the child needs to strengthen or develop. Before any instructional adjustments are made, the students' reading level and skill needs should be determined. Preassessments can also be used to determine a students' ability to use available reading strategies when confronting new or difficult text (Tomlinson et al., 2002).

A variety of formal assessments can be used to determine whether or not a young student is reading above grade level. The *Iowa Test of Basic Skills* (Hoover, Dunbar, & Frisbie, 2001) is recommended to assess reading achievement. The *Test of Oral Reading Fluency* (Deno & Marston, 1987) or *DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency* (Good & Kaminski, 2001) can be used to measure students' ability to read connected text with ease. It is also recommended that teachers administer *DIBELS Retell Fluency* (Good, Kaminski, & Dill, 2002) to ensure that a student's text comprehension skills are also above grade level. A student may be a very fluent reader at a young age, but if he or she is unable to comprehend the text that was just read, the child will quickly fall behind in reading if provided with advanced texts.

There are also a variety of informal measurements that can be used to assess primary students' attitudes toward reading and their views of the reading process. In addition to a student's reading level, teachers should also take into account the student's maturity level when making the decision whether or not to offer advanced reading instruction. The *Elementary Reading Attitude Survey* (McKenna & Kear, 1990), *Early Reader's View of the Reading Process* (Cecil, 1999), and the *Primary Reading Interest-A-Lyzer* (Moore, 2005) are three assessments that can offer teachers more information about their early readers.

Self-regulation should also be assessed in these students. Self-regulation has been characterized as an "active, internal executive control process" (Iran-Nejad, 1990, p. 573). One recommended standardized assessment of self-regulation is the *Response to Challenge Scale* (*RCS*). The *RCS* measures cognitive, affective, and physical self-regulation in response to a physical challenge course (Lakes & Hoyt, 2003).

Self-regulation plays a major role in the successful academic performance of gifted students. Teachers have described successful learners as being self-directed, motivated, and taking an active role in the learning process. These students are able to identify, formulate, and even restructure task goals to suit their abilities or needs (Wang & Palincsar, 1985).

Not all gifted students are able to self-regulate to the same degree (Rohrkemper & Como, 1988). Some students are able to adjust their strategy use to meet the cognitive demands of an advanced curriculum on their own. Other students will automatically seek the help of teachers or other students because they want to limit their engagement in or avoid excessive cognitive effort (Como & Mandinach, 1983).

Curriculum Modification for Young Gifted Readers

Advanced readers who have mastered on-grade-level skills need to have access to skill instruction that is above grade level. The skills must be advanced and may require teachers to look at the type of skill development often provided in the instruction offered to advanced level students. Researchers have made many suggestions for adjusting the curriculum for young gifted readers. For example, Abilock (2004) reports that programs for gifted readers should include the following components:

1. *Inquiry reading.* This is usually reserved for students in grade 3 and above (Cassidy, 1981). For example, on-grade-level readers are learning basic reading skills using the Houghton Mifflin basal reader in their respective reading groups for 75 minutes per day. During this 75 minutes an advanced reader, who is reading two years above-grade-level, can go to the school library and with the help of the librarian research whales, a topic she has expressed interest in. Over a period of 4 weeks, she will create a presentation on whales to present to the class.

2. *Authentic research.* In grades K–2, authentic research involves the teacher working with the entire class. Students are taught basic research skills and are given a single research question to work on as a group. For advanced readers, the primary teacher may ask an upper grade-level teacher (certified in a particular subject) to teach the advanced readers a specific thematic unit. These students will work with the teacher to learn advanced research skills and the advanced concepts of a particular theme. They may focus on multiple research questions in a single session and will be expected to provide more in-depth responses to the questions. In grades 3–5, students would apply the research skills to work independently on individual topics.

3. *Individual work with mentors.* Mentors can be effective resources for early readers. First, mentors can serve the role of a personal tutor, as classroom teachers must often devote a majority of their time to on-grade-level readers. In some cases, early readers also need to develop advanced reading skills before they can understand advanced text. Mentors can work with these students to teach them skills that they may encounter with the advanced text.

Mentors can also spend time with early readers to share information about a particular career or specialized skill that may be of interest. These meetings could take place during a reading instruction period or after school.

4. *Resources beyond the school community.* Guest speakers who are experts can be invited to the school to give presentations. Students interested in the topic of the presentation should be given the opportunity to attend. Classroom teachers or TAG teachers can also take students on field trips to locations that will provide students with additional information for their research projects (e.g., National Weather Service Office for students interested in meteorology, the astronomy department of a local university for those students interested in space).

5. *Extended, independent projects of choice.* Early readers may express an intense interest in a particular topic that normally would not be covered during their grade level. The teacher should work with the school librarian to locate resources for the student, guide the student in selecting a research question, and allow the student to work on his or her project during compacted lessons (see curriculum compacting below).

6. *Ability grouping.* Students are grouped according to their current reading level with all above-grade-level readers, all on-grade-level readers, and below-grade-level readers in the same groups. The teacher creates three lesson plans to meet the needs of the students at each level. The teacher rotates between groups to

provide instruction. Ability grouping can also occur between classrooms. An advanced reader in second grade may participate with the third grade for reading instruction. It is important for teachers to continuously reassess students' skills to be sure that their instructional needs continue to be met.

6. *Critical reading guidance.* Teachers should work with advanced readers to teach them the skills needed for critical reading that leads to the comprehension of texts. These skills include:

- Skimming over the text before initiating actual reading of the book.
- Using features of the text (e.g., text size, bold text, images) to predict what the book will be about.
- Utilizing background knowledge—personal experience, information learned in a class, previous knowledge.
- Making connections between the current text and texts read in the past, a student's personal experiences, and/or other real-world experiences.
- Summarizing the main ideas every few pages.
- Thinking about what they have read and personally responding to the text.

7. *Guided discussion of genres.* Teachers should introduce students to the variety of genres as strategies, rather than mere facts, through shared experiences. Have students discuss differences they may have noticed in the ways that books (e.g., fiction, nonfiction, and poetry) are written. Teachers should give students the opportunity to read books from different genres on a single topic, for example, *Lessons From Mother Earth* by Elaine McLeod (fiction), *Earthwatch* by David Burnie (nonfiction), and *Earthshake: Poems From the Ground Up* by Lisa Westberg Peters (poetry). Students can then be given the opportunity to create their own works in these genres.

8. *Asking and responding to higher level questioning.* Higher level questioning requires students to go beyond the information that they should have simply learned from reading a book, listening to a lecture, or any other instructional method their teacher may have used to introduce a text (Rhem, 1999). Bloom's Taxonomy (1956) is an excellent resource to guide teachers as they create higher level questions for students.

For example, if a teacher is reading *When Little Bear Bragged* by Margaret Fox, questions such as "Why did Little Bear lose the race?" or "What animals did Little Bear play with during the race?" would be considered lower level questioning because these questions can be answered by simply reading the text—no higher level thinking is required.

To challenge the students, the teacher can ask the students to: "Explain how the following two stories, *When Little Bear Bragged* and *The Tortoise and the Hare*, are both alike and different" or "Pretend you are Little Bear. Write a letter (a teacher can write down the response for students who are not proficient writers or have the students use a computer to type their response) to Father Bear that explains the lesson you learned by losing the race to Grandpa Tortoise."

It is beyond the scope of this article to discuss all of these suggestions in detail, but a few of the available modification options will be explained. According to Dooley (1993), "A stimulating reading program for young gifted readers has at least two major components: provisions for mastering the basic curriculum quickly through curriculum compacting, and a differentiated curriculum created through modification of the content and the processes used to explore that content" (p. 547).

Previous research has shown that 50% of the current grade-level curriculum could be eliminated for advanced and gifted students (Reis, Burns, & Renzulli, 1992). Curriculum compacting is a method of altering the regular curriculum by eliminating the content students have already mastered and providing them with content that is appropriate for their ability level (Reis, Burns, & Renzulli). A preassessment will determine the content the student has already mastered and what the student still needs to learn. In exchange for on-grade-level texts, teachers can provide early readers with advanced texts. For example, if a first-grade teacher is teaching a unit on rain forests, he or she may select a rain forest text for advanced readers that represents more advanced vocabulary or abstract ideas (e.g., *The Great Kapok Tree: A Tale of the Amazon Rain Forest* by Lynne Cherry for on-grade-level readers and *Scholastic Q & A: Rain Forests* by Melvin and Gilda Berger for advanced readers).

Flexible grouping is another modification that can be used with young gifted readers. Students are grouped and regrouped in response to instructional objectives and students' needs (Tomlinson, 1999). When a teacher uses flexible grouping, a single student may work independently, work with a group during a language arts activity, and work with another

group during a science activity. Students can be grouped by skill, readiness, ability, interest, learning style, or for socialization. Flexible grouping can occur within the classroom, between grade-level classrooms, or even across grade levels.

Cluster grouping is one form of flexible grouping in which several advanced or gifted students in a particular grade are placed in a single classroom with an otherwise heterogeneous student mix (Gentry, 1999). Gifted students benefit from learning together and need to work with intellectual peers who have similar areas of strength (Kulik, 1992; Rogers, 1998). The classroom teacher should have specialized training in gifted and talented education to ensure that the learning needs of these students are met within the heterogeneous class. Since several advanced students are clustered together full-time in one classroom, a teacher can place them in a homogeneous group part of the day for more effective compacting and differentiation. Cluster grouping allows advanced readers to learn together on a daily basis while students of all other ability levels are grouped heterogeneously (Winebrenner & Devlin, 2001).

Renzulli (1988) recommends that activities for gifted students emphasize higher level thinking skills and use less structured teaching strategies. The Enrichment Triad Model would be one option for these students (Reis, Burns, & Renzulli, 1992). This model provides gifted children with the opportunity for self-directed learning through the use of Type I, II, and III activities (Renzulli, 1977). Type I activities are exploratory activities in which students are exposed to different areas of interest and then decide on a single topic or problem to study in depth. Type II activities provide students with the technical skills and thinking processes needed to investigate their chosen research topic or problem. During Type III activities, students explore their topic or solve their problem through individual or small group work. Students then submit a product that reflects their learning (Reis, Burns, & Renzulli). This product could take any number of forms, from creating an informational brochure to organizing a fundraising effort for a particular cause. See Figure 1 to view a sample student's progress through Type I and Type II activities that lead to the development of a Type III project.

Selecting Reading Materials for Young Gifted Readers

When selecting appropriate texts for young gifted readers, Austin (2003) reported that books to challenge these students should have the following characteristics:

- *Advanced language, structure, and point of view.* Young gifted readers enjoy abstractions, finding patterns, and making connections between two different, but similar texts (Van Tassel-Baska & Brown, 2001).
- *Ambiguous endings/content.* These young readers like to read books without predictable plots. They want to view reading a text as if they were trying to solve a puzzle.
- *Vocabulary that is rich, precise, and varied.* The purpose of reading is to increase knowledge; young readers should be offered books that will challenge them.
- *Characters who are professional role models and/or gifted individuals.* Young readers need someone to identify with. There may be only one or two children who are able to read in the kindergarten classroom; we want these children to realize that their talent is a positive thing.
- *Pictures.* The use of picture books can be an excellent outlet for creative writing. Students can write their own stories to go along with the illustrations in the text or discuss the author's purpose for including certain details within the text.
- *Interest.* It is essential that the classroom teacher provide different text genres related to the young readers' interests (McIntosh, 1982).

How Can Educators Assess Young Gifted Readers?

Authentic assessment should be used to assess reading comprehension. Many of the methods used in today's classrooms will not allow teachers to realize the higher level thinking abilities of these students. Some examples of authentic assessment methods to use with younger students include comparing and contrasting fiction versus nonfiction books on a similar topic, writing a letter to the main character to explain how he or she would handle a situation differently, or creating a presentation using Kidspiration or similar programs. It is important to provide a variety of opportunities that will engage students with any learning style.

Rubrics are another source of authentic assessment. They should be provided to students as a means of self-assessment; rubrics would be even more effective if the students were involved in the design of the rubric once they become familiar with the

First Grade

TYPE I ACTIVITIES	TYPE II ACTIVITIES	TYPE III PRODUCT
1. Read *Owl Moon* by Jane Yolen. 2. Visited the following Web site: http://www.enchantedlearning.com/subjects/birds/info/Owl.shtml and learned about the different species of owls. 3. Attended presentation on owls given by wildlife expert from local university. 4. Explored an owl pellet.	1. Read the following nonfiction books: *All About Owls* by Jim Arnosky, *Welcome to the World of Owls* by Diane Swanson, and *The Barn Owls* by Tony Johnston. Read the following fiction books: *The Duck and the Owl* by Hanna Johansen and *The Owl and the Woodpecker* by Brian Wildsmith. 2. Wrote to the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge for information about the threats to the owls' habitat. 3. Researched how to use computer to create informational brochures. with text and images.	1. Created a brochure using Microsoft Word to hand out to students and parents at the annual ziti dinner and distributed copies to the local library to inform the public of the dangers facing owls.

Figure 1. Sample development of a Type III project

process (Katz, 1997). Rubrics make the grading criteria clear to students; essentially, it puts students in control of their own performance. Even younger students will be able to document their own performance; they know beforehand what will earn them a √+ versus a √ or √-.

Finally, a Total Talent Portfolio (TTP) is another useful authentic assessment option. The TTP is a "vehicle for gathering and recording information systematically about students' abilities, interests, and learning styles" (Renzulli, n.d.). Students maintain primary control over their portfolios by choosing the items they want to be placed in their portfolios and defining the goals for what types of items they would like to include in the future. These portfolios will follow them year to year enabling their future teachers to understand the abilities and interests of their students.

According to Reis and Renzulli (1985), use of the Total Talent Portfolio enables educators to:

1. Collect information that reveals a student's strength areas.
2. Classify this information according to a student's abilities, interests, and learning styles.
3. Review and analyze the information in order to make educated decisions about providing the best opportunities for enrichment experiences.
4. Encourage the participation of students in decisions about their participation in special programs.
5. Use the information for educational, personal, and career counseling and for keeping parents informed about the services being offered to their child.

The use of Total Talent Portfolios with early readers will guide teachers when choosing interest-based reading selections. For these younger students, teachers will have information about the types of books the students enjoy reading (e.g., informational texts, mysteries) and their interest areas (e.g., animals, space). Teachers can use this information to select high interest books that will challenge and motivate early readers to maintain their love of reading and continue their accelerated acquisition of reading skills.

A Final Note

As Nancy Ewald Jackson (1991) states, "the nature of giftedness changes as skills and children mature. We need to balance the need to celebrate and support each child's current accomplishments against recognition that new challenges are encountered as development progresses; the same children may not always meet those challenges most successfully" (p. 12). It is our responsibility as educators to nurture these students and provide them with appropriate instruction at each level of their academic development.

Recommended Resources for Educators of the Young Gifted Readers

Print Resources

Codell, E. (2003). *How to get your child to love reading: For ravenous and reluctant readers alike.* Chapel Hill, NC: Algonquin Books.

In this text, Codell presents her theory that there are three issues that must be considered when encouraging a child to read: a child's personal interests, the ability to make connections between the book and the

child's experiences, and the ability of books to help children brainstorm their own ideas. She includes lists of books from a variety of themes.

Fredericks, A. D. (1987). *The gifted reader handbook.* Tucson, AZ: Goodyear Books.

This book includes projects and activities to develop critical and creative thinking skills.

Halsted, J. (1994). *Some of my best friends are books: Guiding gifted readers from pre-school to high school.* (2nd ed.). Scottsdale, AZ: Great Potential Press.

This book includes summaries of approximately 300 books appropriate for gifted readers, summaries of research on gifted readers, and discussion questions that can be used during reading sessions.

Kingore, B. (2002). Reading instruction for the primary gifted learner. *Understanding Our Gifted, 15,* 12–15.

Kingore offers suggestions for professional development for educators of gifted readers and cites some research that has been performed with this population of students.

Polette, N. J. (2000). *Gifted books, gifted readers: Literature activities to excite young minds.* Littleton, CO: Libraries Unlimited Press.

This book offers suggestions for advanced reading and thinking activities for more than 200 children's books to meet the needs of gifted readers.

Online Resources

GT World Reading Lists
http://gtworld.org/gtbook.htm

Guiding the Gifted Reader
http://www.kidsource.com/kidsource/content/guiding_gifted_reader.html

Recommended Books for Gifted Young Readers
www.tasgifted.org.au/preschool_books.htm

Pauline's List of Chapter Books for Young Gifted Readers
http://www.geocities.com/hardingpj/giftedkidsbooks.html

PlanetEsme.com
http://www.planetesme.com

Books for Children Featuring Gifted Children
http://www.hoagieskids.org/reading_lists.htm

Read-Write-Think
www.readwritethink.org

Bloom's Taxonomy's Model Questions and Key Words
http://www.utexas.edu/student/utdc/lrnres/handouts/1414.html

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