

METHODOLOGICAL AND PEDAGOGICAL CHALLENGES IN SCHOOLS FOR GIFTED CHILDREN

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Abstract: Specialized schools for gifted students aim to nurture exceptional talents through advanced curricula and tailored teaching approaches. However, these institutions face unique methodological and pedagogical challenges that affect their effectiveness. This article examines key issues in gifted education, including curriculum design, teacher training, and socio-emotional support, while proposing evidence-based solutions.

Key words: grade-skipping, advanced courses, project-based depth, STEM-arts integration, IQ tests, **STEM schools.**

Introduction

“We cannot solve our most important problems within the framework in which we created them” — Albert Einstein

Education is a pathway to success, and educators have a special responsibility to nurture the gifts of the most talented students. This is important for the individual student and helps foster appreciation and understanding of the broader social context in which skills and knowledge can be genuinely beneficial. By encouraging our brightest pupils to reach their potential, we can create an environment of learning, growth, and enrichment for all.

Gifted education is essential in schools because it provides a platform for students to expand and explore their academic, creative, and intellectual capabilities. This can be done by providing an enriching curriculum and adapting instruction to meet the needs of gifted students. According to Mun, having a safe class environment for talented students may contribute to their overall performance (10). Therefore, methods and strategies to reach that environment should be addressed.

The responsibilities of an educator when reaching gifted students are to provide insight into their abilities and interests, create opportunities for them to explore their potential, and provide suitable instruction that corresponds to their intellectual capacity. Additionally, the educator is to ensure that each gifted student receives the same quality of education and guidance as any other student. However, the mission of educating talented might be

overwhelming for some teachers involved in numerous processes at school. In that case, “shared responsibility in collaboration” may become critical to the most efficient education process (Mofield 28).

Gifted education requires differentiated approaches to meet the intellectual, creative, and emotional needs of high-ability learners. Despite their potential, specialized schools often struggle with:

Mismatched curricula (overly rigid or insufficiently challenging)

Inadequate teacher preparation

Social-emotional neglect

Equity gaps in identification and access

This study analyzes these challenges through the lens of global best practices and empirical research.

Four different strategies can be used at school to design education for (highly) gifted children. It’s possible to combine them in any way it suits a child, underneath the terminology:

Compacting:

- The deletion in the regular subject matter, so that it becomes suitable for (highly) gifted children, where the core objectives of primary education are leading
- Skipping unnecessary repetition and exercise material
- Adjusting the curriculum to the learning characteristics of the (highly) gifted child
- If used, it must also be used for debriefing assignments or instruction.

Compensating:

- Spend extra time and practice on subjects where the child fails or where there are gaps

Enriching:

- Expansion of the basic program with additional program components to make it more responsive to the needs and abilities of the individual child

- Pursuit of additional goals

Accelerating:

- Accelerate through the basic program with the possible result of skip to the next academic year or a group

“You don’t have to think for yourself at school, you have to do copy-paste and answer what they want to hear.” — Sara (6)

Compacting

Compacting can be designed in various ways, but one of the ways this can be done is utilizing preliminary testing. This means that children are tested before the start of a new chapter. The teacher then analyzes which goals the child has mastered based on at least an 80%-standard. The child may exclude the exercises and assignments that belong to the already mastered learning objectives. He then makes the lessons with learning objectives that are not yet mastered and does attend the instruction part of these lessons. Compacting cannot be done by itself, it is always in combination with compensating or enriching.

Compensating

Compensating is suitable for children with a disharmonious developmental pattern. These children score very high on certain subjects and lower on others. In such a case, a child can compact the subject matter of the subject in which he is strong. The time available can be used for repetition and to eliminate gaps in the subject with which the child has difficulty.

Enriching

By compacting the regular subject matter, time is freed up for gifted children. This time is filled with enrichment activities. It is important that the enrichment material does not pre-empt the regular curriculum, but that it is deepening or broadening. It helps when schools have a wide range of enrichment materials available.

So the systematization of children's giftedness knowledge, based on pedagogical principles, is required firstly for the identification of fundamental principles for their expedient and productive use in practice;

secondly, for the definition of strategic milestones in the pedagogical search for optimal technologies of support;

thirdly, for the formulation of approaches for the creation of conditions for pedagogical support for children's giftedness in terms of theory, concept and practice, rather than for a sort of "inventory" of the accumulated information. Pedagogical support implements society's need for the construction of an education pattern within which a gifted child is able to master the mechanisms of selfdetermination and self-realization. An educator or education community, which shares this need, may become a subject of this activity.

Conclusion

Don't forcefully treat every child the same. As a teacher, emphasize the fantastic existence of differences between children, between people. It is an absolute fact and at the same time an existential necessity for our species to progress. We need people that are different, think

differently, look, and design differently to make things better, to discover new things, and to find new solutions.

Gifted children are an exception. Everyone knows it, including their class. Including the child itself. That is why it is impossible to make an exception of a gifted child, they already are. This gives a teacher the freedom to organize children's learning in such a way that it empowers every individual child.

As a teacher, you can use the characteristics of a gifted child. These are often children who can learn quickly, think quickly, enjoy doing new things, and often have a fairly large degree of autonomy and self-responsibility.

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