Differentiation for Gifted Learners

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: individual, pairs, small groups
- Create specialized learning centers for skill work
- Encourage creativity and reward risk-taking
- Provide opportunities for divergent (many answers) and convergent (best answer) thinking
- Explicitly teach skills needed to learn independently (research, organization, etc.)

Product

- Allow a variety of acceptable products (using Multiple Intelligences, for example)
- Offer leveled projects (For an A.., For a B..., etc.)
- Involve the student in creating the scoring guide
- Assign tasks that are authentic and for a real audience
- Match the product to the outcomes being met

Learning Environ.

- **Physical space**: Can the student move freely within the room? Who has control over materials?
- Conditions: Are humor and creativity appreciated? Is the atmosphere welcoming? Is discovery encouraged?
- **Teacher**: Is the teacher committed to differentiation? Curious and enthusiastic? Willing to relinquish control of the learning?
- **Groupings**: Do gifted students have opportunities to work with others like them even across grades?

Learning Environ.

- Arrange for a mentor to work with the student in interest area
- Cluster group gifted/talented students by areas of strength in the classroom
- Allow independent use of library

Adaptations for Gifted Learners

Presentation

- Vary the method of presentation: lecture, small groups, large group, demonstration, individual experimentation
- Avoid having student copy notes when material is already mastered

Curriculum

- Provide opportunities for open-ended, self-directed activities
- Provide instruction in research skills needed to conduct an independent study in student's interest area
- Provide independent learning opportunities
- Use advanced supplementary/reading materials
- Encourage the use of creativity Ask higher level questions
- Provide opportunities to develop depth and breadth of knowledge in a subject area

Behavior

- Use a Study Contract for student to achieve outcomes
- Use a Learning Log for independent or outside learning
- Establish a timeline for long-range projects

Motivation

- Provide fewer drill and practice activities when material is learned
- Give student choices of activities in learning the content
- Allow the student to 'buy' time for selfdirected activities after material is learned

Assessment

- Give a pretest to allow the student to demonstrate mastery
- Provide self-checking materials
- Provide tests at a higher level of thinking

Enrichment Strategies for Gifted Learners

Enrichment = working on something more in DEPTH while still keeping pace with classmates but has time to explore topics of interest.

Independent Study

Student selects a topic of interest in any area where they show strength. Student & teacher work parameters for process and product. This suits students who have task commitment and who tend to finish regular work quickly and correctly.

Study Contract

Student works alongside their peers while allowed to make choices about what or how to learn. Suits student who has already met some but not all outcomes for a particular unit. A menu of mutually-acceptable choices should accompany the study contract to ensure the student is using her earned time wisely.

Mentorship

Suits students with heightened knowledge in a specific academic area. Mentorships vary in frequency of visits and may even take place online. Care must be taken to ensure that the student and the mentor are compatible and that the arrangement is agreeable to both parties.

Interest Center

The student can use earned time during the school day or create the center as a result of independent study. Others would be invited to use materials collected and/or created by the student to learn about a special topic which can be embedded in or tangential to the curriculum.

Enrichment Clusters

Small group of students with similar interests and aptitudes, can be brought together for a set period of time each week to pursue a topic of study under the guidance of a teacher or mentor. The topic may change frequently or develop into a long-term exploration, but it should be openended and have real-world application.

Learning Log

Allow the student to complete a learning log of their experiences to show what they have learned and how it connects to classroom outcomes. This will provide evidence of learning for them to move on to the next unit or level in a particular subject. A learning log is also a good assessment tool for a mentorship.

Tiered Assignments

Suits students who have not yet met the outcomes but can do so easily and requires additional challenge. Math Ex: student may perform similar operations as their peers but uses more challenging numbers or complete more steps. LA Ex:student may read more challenging texts, write in a more sophisticated genre, or use more complex words in word study.

Specialized Grading Criteria

The parameters of the assignment may be changed to increase rigor to suit the student's strengths. This does not mean increase the amount of work - but increase the cognitive lift required by the student. This may be a different content, process, or product.

Extension Activities

Many textbooks and teachers' guides provide follow-up or extension activities as time allows. When gifted students finish early, these may be suitable ways for them to get the challenge and depth of understanding they require. Open-ended, real-world problems are excellent ways to extend students' learning.