

Talented and Gifted and Accelerated Learners

Best Practices to Maximize Student Learning

INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES IN GIFTED EDUCATION

Ability Grouping: is arranging students by ability to meet their various instructional needs. These groups are specific to the educational goal to be achieved and can be flexibly formed and reformed as needed. These groups are not “tracking.”

Acceleration: is access to higher level activities and skill development. Acceleration is addressed through pacing, complexity, and depth of the planned course work. Acceleration means moving at a faster pace through academic content. Examples are:

- Acceleration in the Content area for specific areas of giftedness
- Advanced Placement Classes in high school or sooner
- Concurrent enrollment
- Early entrance to Kindergarten (*with caution and prior test scores*)
- Grade skipping
- Post-secondary options to earn high school credit and college credit at the same time
- International Baccalaureate

Cluster Grouping: is grouping students in a mixed ability classroom for structured learning. It usually includes a small group of learners with similar instructional needs. Cluster grouping is an intentional placement of students based on the students’ needs.

Content Area Acceleration: refers to acceleration of a student in his or her area of TAG identification. Not all students are identified in the same areas of strength and not all students need access to the same accelerated curriculum.

Differentiation of Instruction: Differentiated instruction is an organized, yet flexible way of proactively adjusting teaching content, process, product, or environment to meet students where they are to assist them in achieving their maximum growth as learners. Teachers should consider student differences in readiness, knowledge, understanding and skills, in light of the student’s previously demonstrated learning profile. Teachers take responsibility to modify the curriculum and instruction according to content, pacing, and/or product to meet unique student needs in the classroom, including TAG identified students

Content and Practices are: what the individual student learns

Process is: how the student learns

Product is: the student’s response to what she/he has learned

Environment is: the location, classroom, and emotional environment in which the learning takes place

Oregon Department of Education

Rebecca Blocher, Specialist in Talented and Gifted Education

Rebecca.blocher@state.or.us, 503-947-5931

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Depth and Complexity: The depth and complexity of instruction addresses the student's depth of investigation paired with instruction that allows a student to delve deeply into a subject to create a thorough investigation in an area of interest or passion. Depth and complexity are learning extensions may occur over an extended time.

Grade Skipping or Whole Grade Acceleration: should only be embarked upon as a result of a thorough child study including academic and social – emotional needs analysis. It is in the child's best interests to complete a through child study through the Iowa Acceleration Scale. ODE can provide support for this endeavor.

Pre-Test: is a measurement of the student's learning **before** a topic is taught. Teacher instruction based on a pre-test allows TAG students to move at a quicker pace through the curriculum because the student has had the opportunity to demonstrate proficiency or a prior level of knowledge. A pre-test addresses the TAG student's needed adjustment to accommodate their assessed levels of learning and accelerated rates of learning. See definitions of Rate and Level at the end of this document.

Scaffolding: is a specialized teaching strategy geared to support new learning when students are first introduced to new content. Scaffolding provides students with context, motivation, and a foundation from which new understanding can be built. Scaffolding is a build out of previous information linked to new learning.

Telescoping: applies to accelerating the timing of instruction into less time such as completing three years of work in two years. (Just like a telescope functions, one year slides into another.)

Tiered Assignments: is a total classroom model based on differentiated instruction so that all students are working toward the same goal, but the learning activities are geared toward each student's or group of students' level of understanding and the students' instructional needs.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE GIFTED LEARNER

Perfectionism: is a personal quality that appears frequently in the TAG population. The behaviors generally are: the consistent desire to perform perfectly in multiple domains, thus averting real or perceived criticism. Perfectionism has both positive qualities and debilitating qualities. Gifted children are often sensitive to stress and try to alleviate unpleasant situations through their perfectionistic behaviors.

Social Emotional Needs: Gifted students have many affective needs that include heightened or unusual sensitivity to self-awareness, emotions, and expectations of themselves and others. They also have a sense of justice, moral judgment, or altruism. Educators working with gifted learners may also need to address issues such as perfectionism, depression, underachievement, and career/college planning.

TALENTED AND GIFTED INSTRUCTIONAL REQUIREMENTS SPECIFIC TO OREGON

LEVEL OF LEARNING: Level of learning is the student's instructional level in the curriculum and the place where the student will be successful but will encounter knowledge and skills not yet learned or mastered. Level is more than advanced grade level; it involves complexity and sophisticated concepts.

RATE OF LEARNING: Rate is a measure of the pace at which the student successfully progresses through the curriculum after being placed at an appropriate instructional level. A student's rate of learning will vary, depending on the subject, point in the learning process, degree of interest, level of difficulty, and learning style.

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