



**Spring
 2017**

From the Editor

Dear *SCOPE* readers,

Welcome to the Spring 2017 issue of *SCOPE*! In this issue we provide a popular article written by our own Chair, Dr. Elissa Brown. I have personally shared this article originally published through Edtopia on my own facebook and Twitter page to generate understanding of serving gifted students, and I think you'll want to share it, too!

In a new section, From the Field– we captured voices of current K-12 teachers sharing thoughts about why they love teaching gifted students!

You'll also find information in this issue about the Curriculum Awards and a new APA document describing 20 psychological principles for learning.

Send me an idea or an article! We'd love to include your thoughts in the next newsletter! We also need a Newsletter Editor, let me know if you'd like to help!

Stay tuned for information on some upcoming webinars we plan to host in the near future!

Emily Mofield, Ed.D., NAGC Curriculum Studies Chair–Elect

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NAGC Curriculum Network Leadership

Curriculum Chair: Elissa Brown

Convention Program Chair: Leighann Pennington

Chair-Elect/Newsletter Editor: Emily Mofield

Curriculum Award Chairs: Christine Briggs and Carol Ann Williams

From the Network Chair



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Dear Curriculum Studies Network members,

Welcome to our spring edition newsletter. In this edition, we've asked YOU to share with us the best part of teaching gifted students and we included what you had to say. Additionally, we are re-publishing a blog that I wrote for Edutopia about "Do's and Don'ts" for serving gifted students in general education classrooms. Lastly, a new publication from APA was released in early April, which shares the top principles for teaching and learning in gifted education based on psychological science. The link for the full document is included so please read and disseminate to your various stakeholders. It is a wonderful resource from APA and can be used for professional development, conversations with parents and certainly sharing with your colleagues. Don't forget there is still time to submit a curriculum unit to the Curriculum Network. The deadline is June 1, 2017 and more information can be found at: <https://www.nagc.org/get-involved/nagc-networks-and-special-interest-groups/networks-curriculum-studies/network-awards>

Warmest & Sunshine regards,
Dr. Elissa F. Brown, Curriculum Studies Network Chair

Curriculum Awards Submission Deadline— June 1, 2017

Are you interested in submitting a curriculum unit to be considered for a Curriculum Studies Award? See <https://www.nagc.org/get-involved/nagc-networks-and-special-interest-groups/networks-curriculum-studies/network-awards> for details.

Here are a few highlights of what needs to be included:

- A goal statement for unit/objective tied to national or state standards and benchmarks.
- Unit to rubric explanation: For each attribute in the rubric, explain how the submitted unit addresses the criteria found in that attribute. This might include highlights of lesson elements that address differentiation, opportunities for talent development, how student growth is measured, etc.
- Self-assessment: For each of the criteria included in the rubric, explain how the submitted unit addresses the criteria/attributes. For each section, include a summary of the ways the unit demonstrates the criteria. For example, this might include highlights of lesson elements that address differentiation, opportunities for talent development, how student growth is measured, etc.
- Unit submissions must be self-contained. Everything that is needed for evaluating the unit must be submitted with the unit. Evaluators will not do outside research.
- Units must include evidence of effectiveness (student growth). This can include copies of student work samples, pre/post assessments, student case study describing individual student growth as result of this unit.
- The unit must demonstrate appropriate challenge for use with gifted students grouped in heterogeneous instructional settings or gifted classrooms.
- Written components of the unit must be complete and substantive.

*Send
submissions to
NAGC Curriculum
Studies Award
c/o Christine Briggs
105 Briargate Walk
Circle
Lafayette, LA 70503*

Serving Gifted Students in General Ed Classrooms

Dr. Elissa Brown (Originally published through Edutopia)

<https://www.edutopia.org/blog/gifted-students-general-ed-classrooms-elissa-brown>

Gifted students who are served in general education classrooms frequently finish their work sooner than other students. This can happen in one subject area, such as mathematics, or in all subject areas. Due to their rapidity of thought (VanTassel-Baska & Brown, 2007), they typically finish assignments before other children. Then they may act out because they are bored. What is really going on is a mismatch between the academic needs of the student and the pace and depth of the curricula and instructional program. Following are suggestions for how to best serve these students -- and what not to do.

Don't. . .

1. Use these students, whether formally identified as gifted or not, as teacher assistants.

Using gifted students as tutors or teacher assistants for other students in the classroom is inappropriate and unethical, and it does not provide for their social-emotional or academic needs. When an appropriately differentiated education is not provided, gifted learners do not thrive in school, their potential is diminished, and they may even suffer from cognitive and affective harm.

2. Expect the gifted student to be well behaved.

Just because a student is smart does not mean that he or she is well behaved. Frequently, if there is a mismatch between classroom instruction and a gifted student's intellectual needs, that child may "act out" or misbehave. It's not because he or she is looking for attention, but because this student may be bored. Gifted students are developmentally asynchronous, meaning that their cognitive and emotional development are out of sync.

3. Give them more work because they finish early.

You are sending the implicit message, "Hey, you're smart, here are another 20 math problems," while everyone else is still working on the original set of 10. By giving gifted students more of the same type of work, you are penalizing them for being bright. If the child is intuitive, he or she will actually slow down and never finish early any more because that means getting *more* work. You want them to produce quality, not quantity.

4. Isolate them to work independently without oversight.

While independent research projects based on student interest may provide depth in an area, teachers assume that a gifted student is self-regulated and can work independently on a project without any guidance, oversight, or accountability. Sending them unsupervised to the computer lab, library, or back of the room to work independently may not produce the desired result.

5. Expect a gifted child to be gifted in every subject area.

Emerging research and new definitions of gifted speak to gifted students having an area or domain of high ability that generally is not across all areas. For example, even though a student is a gifted reader (able to read adult novels), he might not be a good writer -- reading and writing are different skills sets. Just because a student is highly precocious in math does not mean that she will be just as high in science.



Dr. Elissa Brown is the director of the Hunter College Center for Gifted Studies and Education and program coordinator of Hunter College's Advanced Certificate Program in Gifted Education. She is an education policy fellow under the Institute for Educational Leadership. Before coming to Hunter, she was the North Carolina state director of gifted education and teacher preparation programs. Dr. Brown was the director of the Center for Gifted Education at the College of William & Mary from 2002-2007. She has been a district gifted-program coordinator, the principal of a specialized high school, classroom teacher, federal grant manager and international consultant. She has served as an adjunct professor at several universities, including Rutgers and Duke University. She is a published author in the field of gifted education and presents widely. She is the parent of three children and lives in East Harlem, New York City.

Do . . .

“Everyone thinks critically about something, and he or she can be creative as long as the work is built upon a solid content foundation.”

1. Figure out in what area(s) students are gifted.

You can acquire this information through formal and informal assessments that will help you provide extension, enrichment, acceleration, and complexity in that student's specific area of strength. This may mean a different lesson plan or finding additional resources related to an area of study. You could collaborate with the technology specialist, explore related arts, or work with other teachers to find appropriate extensions. Often this can mean linking the assignment to the student's area of interest or giving him authentic problems.

2. Ensure that task demands and assessments are content rich.

Many teachers think that serving the gifted means providing them with thinking skills or creative activities in isolation. These are fine as long as they are linked to high-level content. Everyone thinks critically about *something*, and he or she can be creative as long as the work is built upon a solid *content* foundation.

3. Find other gifted students and create opportunities for them to work together.

Gifted students need intellectual peers to develop optimally. This can be achieved in a variety of ways, through ability grouping during school or supplemental programs, such as talent search programs like Johns Hopkins University's Center for Talented Youth, or Saturday or summer enrichment programs. These supplemental programs are imperative to the health and well-being each learner. Gifted students need to spend time with other gifted students.

4. Learn about this special diverse population of learners.

Take classes, get certified or licensed in gifted education, attend conferences, and become a life-long learner seeking out others who have a vested interest in gifted learners. You need to network with other people, who can converse with and support you so that you won't feel isolated in your attempts at meeting gifted students' needs in the classroom or at the school level. There are national and state gifted advocacy associations as well as partners available through university networks.

5. Implement research-based curriculum units.

These units, which have been found to be effective with gifted students while complementing state standards, can augment your curriculum, instruction, and assessment, and typically have efficacious results with different populations of gifted students. Seek out curriculum units that have been funded through the Javits program, the National Science Foundation, and other sources, because student learning results have to be documented. Moreover, there are additional methods and models that have been effective for use with gifted learners. Using these units of study will save you time that you might otherwise spend seeking resources, while ensuring that what you are using in the classroom is supported by research.

Gifted students need teacher advocates that care about them, understand them, and can provide differentiation in the classroom, as well as options and opportunities outside of the classroom that will help them achieve at levels commensurate with their abilities. By implementing these suggestions, you'll do more than meet their needs. You'll be setting them on a trajectory toward developing their talents.

From the Field

What's the best part of teaching gifted?

We asked this question to current K-12 teachers who teach gifted students in a variety of settings. Here's what they said!

The best part of teaching gifted students is _____

- ◆ Meeting the needs of students who truly have a passion for learning and creativity
- ◆ Designing challenging lessons that foster creativity and facilitating long-term projects that allow them to pursue a subject they are passionate about
- ◆ Their insatiable quest for knowledge
- ◆ Every day, I learn from them, and they learn from me!
- ◆ Working with students who are thoughtful and curious and passionate about learning-the ability to follow a class on their passions, to often learn from my students, to go in depth with ideas, the ability to help them scaffold their already brilliant analytic abilities by teaching them effective collaboration strategies and then watching as they begin to teach each other...to name a few things!
- ◆ The reciprocal nature of teaching and learning. Enriching their learning experiences actually enriches mine, and to me, makes teaching exciting!
- ◆ Brains! Mischief!
- ◆ They push my teaching
- ◆ They challenge my assumptions by voicing unique perspectives
- ◆ Their enthusiasm for learning
- ◆ Their curiosity and desire to learn
- ◆ The challenges and growth I feel as a teacher, keeping gifted learners engaged and providing complex material that meets their needs allows me, as an educator, to try new strategies and techniques which enhance my teaching abilities and makes the job more rewarding.
- ◆ Being there when the lights come on and to know that I played a small part.
- ◆ Watching their intellectual confidence build as their thinking is pushed to new levels.



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Photo from Pixabay

Want to Run for a Chair or Chair-Elect of a Network?

Though there are no new positions open for our Curriculum Studies Network, there are several openings in other areas. We seek out opportunities to collaborate with the other networks. Consider bringing your passion about curriculum to other networks within NAGC.

Computers & Technology Chair-Elect
Conceptual Foundations Chair-Elect
Counseling & Guidance Chair
Counseling & Guidance Chair-Elect
Middle Grades Chair
Middle Grades Chair-Elect
Parent & Community Chair
Parent & Community Chair-Elect
Professional Development Chair
STEM Chair-Elect

Please consider applying for candidacy to one of these open positions or urge other qualified candidates to seek office. Be sure to review the position descriptions and eligibility requirements carefully. Specifically, we encourage you to verify that you are an active member of NAGC before submitting your candidacy package. If you are running for a network position, remember that you must show a record of membership in the specific network.

From the National Office– NAGC



Using Psychological Science to Enhance Teaching and Learning: A New Resource for Gifted Educators

A few years ago, APA produced a publication drawn from psychological science around teaching and learning (<http://www.apa.org/ed/schools/teaching-learning/top-twenty-principles.aspx>). That document was internationally distributed and translated into several languages. Recently, several scholars in the field of gifted education revised the APA document to reflect the top principles for ***PreK-12 creative, talented, and gifted students' teaching and learning***. The document was recently published (April 2017).

Psychological science has much to contribute to enhancing teaching and learning in both regular education and gifted education classrooms. Teaching and learning are intricately linked to social and behavioral factors of human development, including cognition, motivation, social interaction, and communication. Psychological science can also provide key insights on effective instruction, classroom environments that promote learning, and appropriate use of assessment, including data, tests, and measurement, as well as research methods that inform the practice of serving gifted students. We present here a gifted education supplement to a list of the most important principles from psychology—the “Top 20”—that would be of greatest use in the context of preK–12 classroom teaching and learning, as well as the implications of each principle as applied to classroom practices for gifted students. Each principle is named and described, relevant supporting literature is provided, and its relevance for the gifted classroom is discussed.

The full document can be found here:

<http://www.apa.org/ed/schools/teaching-learning/top-principles-gifted.pdf>

TOP 20 PRINCIPLES FROM PSYCHOLOGY FOR PREK–12 CREATIVE, TALENTED, AND GIFTED STUDENTS' TEACHING AND LEARNING



AMERICAN
PSYCHOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION

Center for Psychology in Schools and Education