

Descriptions of Content Modifications

Differentiated Units

One of the most effective ways to deliver differentiated curriculum to gifted students is through designing differentiated units that incorporate individual learning abilities and levels of content and skill. This instructional design has proved to be an effective planning tool and is appropriate for gifted students in regular classrooms, part-time classes, resource settings, and full-time placements.

Computer-Based Instruction

Computer-based instruction can be used both to enrich the curriculum and to remediate specific skill deficits. This is particularly appropriate for gifted students having specific skill gaps (e.g., gifted underachievers, learning disabled, culturally diverse, and credit accrual).

Learning Centers

Learning centers have been found to be an appropriate way to provide content enrichment. These are usually designed as tabletop workstations for individual or group work. Students may self-select centers or be assigned to a center on a rotating basis. The center approach adapts well to the development of multiple intelligences. Although this is usually considered an elementary activity, it has been used effectively with middle school students. Learning centers may be located in regular classrooms, media centers, or resource rooms.

Tiered Assignments

The teacher uses different levels of activities within a class to accommodate the needs and prior knowledge level of the student. Students may explore basically the same content but at different levels of complexity.

Contracts

Learning contracts are agreements made between teacher and student that allow the student to work independently on either accelerated or enriched materials related to a unit of study. To be effective, it is important that contract goals be realistic and that the teacher meet with the student on a regular basis and review progress.

Independent Investigations

This may be used as a way to either accelerate or enrich learning. Students displaying content mastery and having a special interest may contract with the teacher for an independent study project. This works best for students who are self-directed, who have strong interests, and who have a clear idea of what they would like to investigate. The teacher serves as a resource person and meets periodically with the student to assess progress. Independent study may also be used at the secondary level as a course in which students work independently and come together periodically to share experiences in a seminar.

Curriculum Compacting

Curriculum compacting is modifying or streamlining the regular curriculum in order to eliminate repetition of previously mastered material, upgrade the challenge level of the regular curriculum, and provide time for appropriate enrichment and/or acceleration activities while ensuring mastery of basic skills.

Thematic Units

Thematic units deal with information from various disciplines that is integrated under a broad based theme such as conflict, power, patterns, etc. Because it provides the opportunity to deal with content at a highly abstract level of sophistication, it is an appropriate way to modify curriculum for gifted students.

Visual/Spatial Instructional Strategies for Intellectually Gifted

- Activities that involve creating, inventing, manipulating, 3-D projects in all content areas
- Building with blocks, including Legos, and connecting it to content-related concepts/activities
- Application of real-world problems, intellectual challenges, puzzles, tangram activities
- Use lots of visual representations (videos, posters, graphs, charts, maps, note-taking in pictures)
- Venn-diagrams - 2 rings, 3 rings and other graphic organizers
- Use of analogies in diverse subject areas
- Use of metaphors during instruction
- Problem-based Learning (PBL) and Project-based Learning
- Makerspace challenges and inquiry-based learning
- Present "big idea" concepts at the beginning of instruction