

DIFFERENTIATING WITH RIGOR & ENGAGEMENT FOR GIFTED LEARNERS K-12

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High achievement requires a rigorous learning environment where students:

- *Engage in high-level learning processes,*
- *Receive support to learn content, concepts and skills on and beyond grade-level, at a pace commensurate with their capabilities, and*
- *Demonstrate continuous learning and deeper understanding through assessments and high-end products that evidence relevant, sophisticated content.*

In a rigorous learning environment, educators demonstrate five instructional priorities.

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Instead of accumulating correct answers from the past, educators in rigorous learning environments should be more concerned with challenging advanced students to pose essential questions, examine the ambiguity of multifaceted materials, explore different ways of thinking, and engage in problem solving real-world issues relevant to today and the future.

Rigor is not characterized by more work but by more meaningful work that is intellectually challenging and thought provoking, relative to the age of the child.

Kingore, B. (2013). *Rigor and engagement for growing minds*. P A Publishing.

FIGURE 7.3: HIGH-ABILITY LEARNERS: RIGHTS, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND INSTRUCTIONAL DIFFERENTIATION

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HIGH-ABILITY LEARNERS HAVE THE RIGHT TO:	HIGH-ABILITY LEARNERS HAVE THE RESPONSIBILITY TO:	HIGH-ABILITY LEARNERS NEED INSTRUCTION DIFFERENTIATED TO:
The identification and nurturing of their advanced potential as early and consistently as possible regardless of age, special needs, language, or background experiential gaps.	Share their high-level ideas and unique problem-solving responses. They need to exert the effort required to demonstrate complex ideas and products so educators observe their potential in learning contexts.	Avoid the barriers to attainment that limit some individual's opportunity to demonstrate outstanding potential. Provide open-ended, problem-based experiences. Be alert to potential demonstrated through learning behaviors as much as products or test results.
A learning environment with developmentally appropriate high expectations and intellectually challenging work aligned to advanced capabilities at and beyond core standards.	Work productively while pursuing intellectual work with critical thinking, curiosity, passion, effort, and persistence that yield the life skills and habits of mind for success and achievement in multiple pursuits.	Implement curricular modifications, such as acceleration, cluster grouping, curriculum compacting, tiered lessons, problem-based learning, and individual inquiry. Communicate expectations for a greater degree of complexity and depth to promote students' excellence.
Teachers who have esteem for advanced students and are quite accomplished at differentiating instruction to elicit beyond grade-level achievement, personal satisfaction with learning, and autonomy.	Respect and be responsive to the culture of learning teachers work diligently to provide. They should respond productively as teachers demonstrate empathy for them and their impassioned learning interests as well as achievements.	Select instructors with a passion to teach advanced students, skill in differentiation, ability to facilitate individual inquiry, and understanding of beyond grade-level content. Avoid assignments based on scheduling convenience or a teacher's <i>turn for a gifted section</i> .
Interactions with intellectual peers and age peers to experience a real-world balance between academic challenge and the social and emotional support that promotes resilience and joy in learning. Academic rigor and socialization skills are mutually beneficial.	Practice active listening and the language of diplomacy when interacting with others and responding to hard questions. They must model respect during social interactions to communicate <i>with</i> others rather than <i>to</i> others.	Artfully use flexible grouping for continuous learning. Base peer interactions on mutual needs and interests more often than peer tutoring or cooperative tasks that enable others to conclude solutions to problems previously understood by high-ability students.
Experience continuous learning by pre-assessing out of previously mastered work and advancing academically at a pace and level responsive to their learning profile and readiness.	Expend effort to learn while understanding that excellence should represent personal best rather than a comparison with grade-level peers. They should maintain records of personal progress and changes as learners.	Use preassessments and formative assessments to ensure a pace and level of instruction that fosters continuous learning. Evaluate curricula for the degree of challenge to engage intellectually demanding learning processes.
Replacement tasks that enhance conceptual understanding and construction of deeper meaning rather than "enrichment" tasks that merely treadmill learning by focusing on different applications of understood concepts and skills.	Engage in intellectually demanding tasks rather than settle for easy accomplishments. They should avoid calling undue attention to themselves when engaging in replacement tasks.	Effectively reverse underachievement by ensuring replacement learning tasks based on interests and strengths. Promote rigorous intellectual accomplishments representing personal and utilitarian worth that impacts others.
Be called upon to respond in class proportionately to other students. They should not dominate class discussions or flexible group interactions nor should they be ignored.	To participate, interact, and collaborate by actively listening to build upon others' ideas rather than interrogate or intimidate peers. They need to understand and encourage the perspective of others as often as they share their point of view.	Ensure a positive, collaborative climate that tiers the complexity of questioning and interactions so all students explore the topic in an intellectually stimulating manner. Allow students to prepare responses in pairs; randomly call on one pair to respond.
The encouragement of diverse, content-rich, and appropriate but unexpected ideas rather than only simple, right-answer responses. They should feel inspired to question, adapt, and extend as much as accept the current wisdom.	Risk asking a provocative question, sharing a complex idea, and applying more sophisticated vocabulary rather than clam up and dumb down responses as a way to better fit in the class.	Encourage unique perspectives and complex responses by providing extensive opportunities for conceptual thinking involving open-ended problems related to change, issues, and ethics.
Become experts investigating interests that may seem unusual for their age. They seek specialized content at an early age, are intrinsically motivated by personally relevant topics, and experience joyful learning pursuing their topics for an extended time.	Develop a structure of knowing that fosters development of insightful generalizations as well as accumulation of vast amounts of information. They should experience higher levels of intellectual work as they become self-directed and self-corrective.	Promote authentic learning applications with technology, mentors, and in-person or online advanced classes to build upon students' learning passions, even when their topics are outside of the current curriculum.
A culture of respect enabling them to feel understood, accepted, and supported while maintaining their uniqueness, idealism, and intensity. They flourish with unconditional encouragement from at least one person who facilitates passions more than redirects learning solely to core curriculum or today's occupations.	Demonstrate respect for peers as well as seek respect from them, understand others' perspectives as well as expect others to understand their perspective, and develop a richer understanding of every person's worth. They should seek and interact with at least one person who can support their intellectual and personal progress.	Mutually respect all learners while reinforcing that differences are natural and valued. Respond to effort and social-emotional needs as well as foster achievement and giftedness. Facilitate gifted students' self-understanding and interactions with intellectual peers so they feel welcomed to use their intellect.