Accelerating Learning with Gifted and Talented Students: Instructional Ideas for Teachers
2021 Learning Acceleration Resources

Gifted students need programs that support optimal learning opportunities to make continuous progress. Acceleration is a cornerstone of gifted learning and is more supported through research than any other gifted practice. As you are preparing the instruction for gifted students, it is important to take into consideration the needs of gifted learners. Gifted students thrive in an environment where the teaching considers the complexity of the learning and the readiness of the learner. To support this idea, this tool outlines the four tenants prevalent to differentiate for a gifted learner (based on the Maker Model) and how to provide instructional strategies, aligned to the NIET Teaching and Learning Standards Rubric, that support their readiness. The applicable rubric indicators are noted in parentheses within the document. For more learning acceleration resources, click here.

Content and Curricular Materials

- Use pre-assessments to establish what students already know. Do not reteach the mastered content to those students. (Instructional Plans, Assessment)
- Increase the pace of learning for gifted students by compressing the curriculum in terms of skills and/or content areas. (Lesson Structure and Pacing, Instructional Plans)
- Adjust the complexity of objectives that gifted students engage in. (Instructional Plans, Standards and Objectives)
- Provide more complex/abstract materials for gifted students. (Instructional Plans, Activities and Materials)
- Allow students time to reflect and construct meaning. (Lesson Structure and Pacing, Student Work)

Instructional Strategies and Process

- Model strategies students need to process content and create products. (Presenting Instructional Content, Activities and Materials, Thinking, Problem-Solving)
- Give students choices throughout the instructional process – in topics, ways of learning, modes of expression, and working conditions. (Activities and Materials, Motivating Students, Teacher Content Knowledge)
- Use a variety of approaches to present or introduce information. (Presenting Instructional Content)
- Give students open-ended assignments to encourage self-discovery. (Activities and Materials, Thinking, Problem-Solving)

- Structure a metacognitive approach for accomplishing academic tasks. (Presenting Instructional Content, Teacher Content Knowledge)
- Use flexibility in assigning groups. (Grouping Students)
- Allow students to work independently and collaboratively within groups. The majority of a student's time in group work should be spent with intellectual peers. (Grouping Students, Academic Feedback)

Student Work and Products

- Encourage student choice and originality in the creation of products. Allow students to use a variety of techniques to produce their creations. (Assessment, Student Work, Activities and Materials, Thinking, Problem-Solving)
- Guide students to create products that demonstrate more complex or in-depth mastery of content – for example, independent research projects, research summaries, presentations, demonstrations. (Assessment, Student Work, Activities and Materials, Problem-Solving, Thinking)
- Call for self-evaluation of all products as part of the metacognitive process. (Assessment, Activities and Materials, Engaging Students and Managing Behavior)

Learning Environment

- Support student choice of tasks. (Engaging Students and Managing Behavior, Teacher Knowledge of Students)
- Intentionally structure student-to-student dialogue and discussion. (Engaging Students and Managing Behavior, Respectful Culture, Activities and Materials)
- Balance teacher-talk with student-talk. (Academic Feedback, Respectful Culture)
- Listen respectfully to what students have to say. (Respectful Culture)
- Create an environment receptive to new ideas and resources. (Respectful Culture)
- Encourage and model acceptance of the unique abilities and needs of each student in the classroom. (Respectful Culture, Teacher Knowledge of Students)