



## Gifted Children – A Pleasant Challenge

### KEYWORDS

Giftedness, Gifted Children, Teaching Strategies

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### ABSTRACT

*This paper focuses on the pleasant challenges of teachers to handle gifted children. Gifted describes individuals who demonstrate outstanding aptitude or competence in one or more domains. The child who has above average abilities as compared to the child who is intellectually average are termed as gifted children. In a democracy and a technologically –oriented society, it is this category of children who plays an important role of providing leadership in various public and private sector of the nation. This paper also highlights the teaching strategies of gifted children – enrichment programme, differentiated instruction, special assignment, projects, free choice activity, demonstrating, supervise, correspondent study provision for more material and extra depth assignment.*

### INTRODUCTION

It has been recognized in almost all countries of the world that each individual child should be educated in accordance with his special educational needs. This principle is more relevant to the child who has above average abilities as compared to the child who is intellectually below average. In a democracy and a technologically –oriented society, it is this category of children which plays an important role of providing leadership in various public and private sector of the nation. The progress of the nation depends to a great extent on the dedication and ceaseless efforts of the leaders to lead the country towards its goals.

### GIFTED CHILDREN

Gifted describes individuals who demonstrate outstanding aptitude or competence in one or more domains. Aptitude is defined as an exceptional ability to learn or reason. Competence is defined as documented performance or achievement in the top 10% of the population. Educators use various teaching methods to meet the needs of gifted and talented children. The following are the common approach in teaching gifted children - enrichment, special assignment, project, free choice activity, monitor and demonstrating, supervise, correspondent study provision for more material and extra depth assignment. Differentiated instruction is a method of accommodating the diverse needs of all students in the regular classroom.

### ANCIENT SYSTEM OF INDIAN EDUCATION:

India is famous for its cultural heritage all over the world. In ancient time we had full-fledged system of education. Scholar from the countries of the world visited India to receive education in the famous ancient Universities of Nalanda and Taxila and mitages. Though there is no systematic reference to the Education of the gifted children but there is mention of Dwarapandit in the University of Nalanda who used to screen the seekers of admission to the University.

### THE ROLE OF SCHOOL IN FOSTERING GIFTEDNESS

Enrichment has been interpreted in two ways: namely, enrichment in the regular class, which essentially means an increase in breadth of the classroom programs for gifted children. Proponents of such enrichment argue that variety and exploration are more important than precision and intensive work; the other interpretation is enrichment in depth. Those who

emphasize the academic purposes of education favour the latter interpretation. But in practice, most of the programs of enrichment reconcile these two points of views.

The following are the common approach of Enrichment:

**Special Assignments:** Gifted children are given special assignments, which need more in depth study of the topics.

**Projects:** Projects may be of two types: Individual and group. An individual project is often scientific investigation, the creative writing or social research.

**Free Choice activity:** Gifted children are allowed to choose activity of their interest but these activities are not evaluated for scores.

**Monitor and demonstrator:** As usual in our elementary schools, children are used as instructors or leaders. Intellectually elder children help younger or intellectually average children in their learning (reading, and arithmetic).

**Supervised correspondence study:** This approach is used in higher secondary and above classes.

**Provision for more materials:** Some teachers help gifted children by providing them good books and laboratory experiments.

**Extra- depth assignments:** These assignments are selected carefully by the teacher to help gifted children to advance their knowledge of the subject.

### TEACHING STRATEGIES FOR GIFTED CHILDREN:

Some guidelines on major teaching strategies that are useful for bringing up maximum development of the potentials among gifted children are listed below.

#### Self-awareness activities

Two important self-awareness activities which can be of greater importance in inculcating the quality of initiative, expression, listening skills and independent decision-making in gifted children are: boundary-breaking activities, and encounter lessons. A brief description of these two techniques is given below:

a) Boundary- breaking activities

The technique of boundary breaking is very simple. The procedure runs as:

The group of students should not be more than twenty. They are asked to sit comfortably in chairs, which are arranged in a circle. The leader of the group begins with a question and proceeds around the circle with each child responding intuitively. If any one of the members of the group does not want to respond or needs more time to think he may indicate by saying "Pass". The leader and group's role is to listen and to accept the response.

No questioning or justification for one's stand is involved. However, adults and children of ten will seek a member following a boundary-breaking session to ask for further clarification.

Boundary breaking must include psychological safety and acceptance to be effective. The leader of a boundary-breaking group is expected to be interested in listening as well as acceptance. If there are side comments, the leader should wait patiently and then gently move on to the next person. After several sessions, the comments dwindle to a minimum. Here are some examples of boundary breaking questions:

1. If you could be any plant, which would you choose?
2. What is your favourite time of the day?
3. What colour is laughter?
4. Think of proud and what do you recall?

#### b) Encounter lessons:

Encounter lessons are of great importance to the gifted because they encourage them to build their inner strengths and perceptions of their inner strengths. Encounter lessons are based on the following four psychological principles that can be expressed in terms of teacher behaviour.

#### The teacher will

- A) Help the student think about whom he is, what he can do and ought to do.
- B) Help the student to feel valuable and worthwhile.
- C) Help the student to see learning as relevant to his individual needs.
- D) Help the student to develop, and maintain a learning atmosphere that reflects psychological safety and freedom.

Encounter lessons are short lessons of 15 to 20 minutes involving a small group of 8 to 10 members. There are active lessons in which the object is to truly encounter others and their ideas. Encounter lessons are best suited for gifted children because of their need to have free rein for their creativity and linking for new and unusual activities. An example of encounter group lesson prepared by Phyllis Strums, a teacher of the gifted, is given.

#### Chairs fantasy

Chairs fantasy is used to foster creativity to identify with some thing and become that something.

Setting the stage: Imagine that you are all chairs arranged around a dining room table.

#### Leading Questions:

- 1) What is your position at the table?
- 2) What famous person would you like to sit upon you?
- 3) How would you feel if a 300-pound man sat upon you?
- 4) What was your most important moment as dining room chair?

#### Evaluation Questions:

- 1) Study various styles of furniture and their History.
- 2) Design and needlepoint a chair seat.

Encounter lessons, which create interest and motivate students, are very useful for gifted children to give them op-

portunity to use their imagination for creative exercises by providing novelty in learning techniques.

#### Techniques by Bloom vs. Guilford

The teacher of the gifted who wants to plan lessons utilizing both affective and cognitive experiences could use the Bloom taxonomy for the affective domain, and supplement intellectual operations as defined by J.P. Guilford (1967, 1977) in his model structure of intellect (SOI). Independent study, simulation, inquiry are some more useful and commonly used techniques.

#### THE PROCESS OF EVALUATION

University Education Commission, presided over by Dr. Radhakrishnan wrote, "For nearly half a century, the examination has been recognized as one of the worst features of Indian Education."

#### WH. Ryburn strongly criticizes examinations as:

- An enemy of true education.
- An incubus.
- A bloodsucker.
- A bane of educational system.
- A necessary evil.
- A glorification of memory.
- A begetter of rivalry and strife.
- A dead hand of education.
- A growing tyranny.
- A presumptuous attempt to gauge the depth of human ignorance.
- An obstacle to learning.

Sultan Mohiyuddin writes, "Business firms wanting employees look at the results of the examination, the high schools base their admission on it, and government accepts it as a passport to all departments of service; there are no specific, mental or moral traits, and disabilities that the ordinary examination seeks to discover and measures and there is, therefore, no definite guidance it can offer to the professions, business houses and higher educations institutions."

#### MEASURES FOR IMPROVEMENT IN EVALUATION:

##### Introduction of New Types of Tests:

Attempts should be made to minimize the subjective element. Essay type of questions should be reduced and supplemented by new type of objective.

##### Thought-provoking Questions:

Questions should be thought provoking and evenly distributed over the entire course. Question should be such as to discourage cramming.

##### Class Work:

Due consideration should be given to the regularity of the students in class work.

##### Viva Voce Tests

External examinations may be supplemented by viva voce tests if possible.

##### Faith in the Teacher:

The teacher should be trusted. He should be given a fair opportunity to know and study closely the students he teaches.

##### Cumulative Records:

Cumulative records should be maintained in respect of all students on each and every aspect of his/her personality and performance.

##### Examination as Means:

Examinations should be regarded as means and not as ends. These should be conducted in such a manner that they become effective instruments of education. They should serve as stimulus to learn new facts, gain new experiences, discover weak points and estimate progress.

**Oral Examinations:**

Oral examinations should be held in addition to the written ones. Some qualities like candidate's alertness, intelligence, spatial interests, mental outlook, his personal qualities of mind and character and his mastery of acquired knowledge can be better tested by viva voce tests than by written examinations.

**Variety of Evaluation Techniques:**

A well-conducted examination should test both the actual attainment and capacity for future achievement. A combination of the tradition examination and carefully constructed intelligence, supplies a more reliable means of seeking candidates for higher courses of study than the traditional examination alone.

**CONCLUSION**

If we compare our children with other country children, definitely our children will stand at least one step ahead of any other. Our system itself is well built to accommodate the various needs of the children. Despite there arise a small accommodations, adaptations and supportive intervention strategies for gifted children which, in turn would become a nation building activity in deed. A lot of productive work can be done to improve and tap the potential of the children with Giftedness. If the sphere of education fails to give them an opportunity to bloom, they may end up in non-social activities too. The true meaning and aim of education can be achieved well by empowering these children.

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