



# Help Yourself... And a Student – 5 min. PD

David Wolff

@wolffdavid11

davidwolff.weebly.com

## Gifted 301: Redefining “Gifted”

What does the term, ‘gifted,’ mean to you? Compare your answer to a colleagues’ meaning. Chances are that your definitions of ‘gifted’ are different; chances are your definitions are polarizing.

Eric Calvert explains, “Because ‘gifted’ and ‘gifted education’ are terms that ‘everybody knows,’ we often use them without explaining what we mean and checking for shared understanding.”

A clear definition and philosophy of gifted education will drive your services, identification process, mission & vision, and assessments administered.

What could go wrong if we assume that all stakeholders know what we mean when we say ‘gifted’ or ‘gifted education’?

In 2013, David Yun Dai and Fei Chen published, *Three Paradigms of Gifted Education: In Search of Conceptual Clarity in Research and Practice* in The Gifted Child Quarterly. Their research outlined three different paradigms of gifted education that are currently present in the gifted education community: Gifted Child, Talent Development, and Differentiation.

Review the table to the right and reflect on the following questions:

- What evidence supports the paradigm your district operates under for gifted services?
- Is there a mismatch between YOUR philosophy of gifted services and the evidence that supports your DISTRICT’s philosophy?
- What steps would you need to take to align your philosophy and the district’s philosophy?
- What are the ramifications if your philosophy of gifted services does not align with the district’s philosophy?
- Describe current gifted services you are aware of that align with each of the three paradigms.

	The Gifted Child Paradigm	The Talent Development Paradigm	The Differentiation Paradigm
<i>What ‘gifted’ means</i>	Giftedness is human quality measured on IQ tests; cognitive elite	Giftedness is malleable set of developing capabilities	Defines the educational needs specifically in the context of the school
<i>Who are the ‘gifted’</i>	Students with superior mental qualities	Selection based on aptitudes for specific domains	Diagnosis of strengths and needs for educational purposes
<i>Purpose for ‘gifted’ services</i>	Serving the gifted, thinking and leadership qualities as goal	Supporting domain specific excellence; Model after authentic professions	Responding and servicing needs within the confines of school
<i>How to provide ‘gifted’ services</i>	Programs uniquely suited for the gifted	Enrichments, authentic learning, mentorships	Appropriate pacing, school based instructional & curricular adaptations

Reference:

Calvert, E. (2016) Hornell Gifted and Talented Symposium.

Chen, F. and Dai, D. (2013) *Three Paradigms of Gifted Education: In Search of Conceptual Clarity in Research and Practice*. Gifted Child Quarterly. Volume 57 Number 3 Summer 2013.