



Help Yourself...And a Student

5-Min. Professional Development

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Gifted 108: Barriers in realizing gifts & talents

A school's primary goal is providing ALL students with an appropriate educational experience. Gifted & Talented programs exist to serve the needs of highly able students to address the individual needs of each student who needs additional challenges to have his/her learning needs met. Unfortunately, many gifted learners do not have his/her learning needs met due to barriers preventing them from achieving at high levels on standardized assessments or daily work.

There are 4 main barriers that prevent students' gifts from being noticed and talents from being developed – low-income levels, culturally and ethnic diverse backgrounds, Limited English Proficiency, and physical and/or learning disabilities.

Barriers related with Low-Income Levels

- Limited access to enrichment programs offered during the summer
- Limited access to rigorous curriculum
- Less likely to live in a literacy-rich home
- In accurate perceptions held by educators
- Additional responsibilities including after school jobs, care for younger siblings, or other family responsibilities
- Lowered parental aspirations for children
- Limited experience with college

Barriers related to Limited English Proficiency

- Standardized tests scores may be too high to take into account students operating in 2 languages
- Articulate in native language but not in English so it is difficult to express themselves and their gifts at school

Barriers related to Culturally & Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds

- Giftedness is not recognized or is defined differently by different culture groups
- Standard achievement tests are bias to the majority [white, middle- to upper-class]
- Puerto Rican children are raised to seek advice from their family instead of acting independently
- Mexican American children are taught to respect their elders and authority, not individual competition
- African American children may have mixed feelings about academic success; fear of being accused of 'acting white'
- American Indian children are taught the value of interdependence, decisions are made collectively

Barriers related to Physical and/or Learning Disabilities

- Disability masks their ability to demonstrate their giftedness in most recognizable ways
- Some students can be Unidentified Learning Disabled and Unidentified Gifted
- Some students can be Unidentified Gifted and Identified Learning Disabled
- Some students can be Identified Gifted Unidentified Learning Disabled
- Discrepancy scores identify student for disability
- IEP focuses on interventions for the disability not the gift
- May have concerns with processing, fine/gross motor skills, or disruptive behaviors

Reference:

Delisle, J. & Galbraith, J. (2011) *The Gifted Teen*. Minneapolis: Free Spirit Press.

Delisle, J. & Galbraith, J. (2002) *When Gifted Kids Don't Have All the Answers*. Minneapolis: Free Spirit Press.

Piirto, J. (2007) *Talented Children and Adults, 3rd Edition*.

Waco: Prufrock Press.



"No, I can't explain my D in math. That class teaches us about numbers, not letters!"