

The Student's Educational Plan

State Rule 6A-6.0311, FAC, indicates that “Special programs for exceptional students encompass instruction and related services which provide significant adaptations in one or more of the following: curriculum, methodology, materials, equipment, or environment designed to meet the individual learning needs of exceptional students.”

The educational plan (EP) for a student who is gifted is intended to specify what those adaptations will be to meet the specific needs of the student. The intent is to identify the academic strengths of the student who is gifted and what adaptations-or differentiation-will ensure that the learner continues to make gains.



Resources

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Differentiated Instruction for Gifted Learners



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Instructional Strategies and Practices

Differentiated instruction is a systematic approach to planning curriculum and instruction for academically diverse learners. Differentiated instruction is responsive teaching that stems from the teacher's solid understanding of how teaching and learning occur. The teacher's goal is to maximize the capacity of each learner (Adapted from the works of Tomlinson, 2003).

Differentiated Instruction.....

- Is NOT simply individualized instruction or small group instruction.
- Is NOT chaotic.
- Is NOT just another way to provide homogeneous grouping.
- Is NOT a one-time event or checklist of best practices.
- Is NOT giving additional work to a student who finishes early.
- Is NOT having a student tutor another student.

Differentiated instruction for gifted learners requires enhancing the curriculum and instruction with greater depth and complexity for added challenge and rigor. Depth of a study can be increased by considering one of the following :

- Details or attributes
- Patterns or trends
- Unanswered questions
- Rules and Language of the discipline
- Ethics involved

Complexity can be increased by adding an element to foster connections

- Across time
- From differing points of view
- Between other disciplines

Other strategies include the use of tiered instruction or fostering areas of strength of the student. Tiered instruction adjusts the content, process or product to appropriately challenge the learner. These adjustments can include:

- Promoting a new and different perspective;
- Changing an element for increased challenge;
- Fostering thinking of new possibilities; and
- Applying evaluative skills.

Fostering areas of strength of the student can include the use of:

- Multiple intelligences
- Interests
- Modalities of strength or preference



The Role of Pre-Assessment

Pre-assessment is a critical practice in differentiating instruction for gifted learners. Pre-assessment facilitates teacher understanding of what students know, understand, and are able to do before a new unit begins. If a pre-assessment reveals that a student has an in-depth understanding of the topic, modifications can be made to provide the student with learning experiences at a deeper or more complex level, and accelerated pace. Pre-assessment ensures accountability in matching the learning to the learner.