The Socio-Emotional Needs of Gifted Learners
Syllabus

Course Description

Course participants will develop an understanding of the unique socio-emotional needs of gifted students and the instructional implications of this framework. Participants will explore characteristics of the gifted, developmental traits, vulnerabilities, and subsequent guidance and counseling needs, such as grade acceleration. Participants will apply current research on best practices for working with this unique group to their own teaching situation and explore ways to share this information with their colleagues.

Competencies (corresponding NAGC professional standards for graduate programs in gifted education)

Upon completion of this course, participants will be able to
- Define the cognitive, social, emotional, and environmental factors that enhance or inhibit socio-emotional development of giftedness in all populations (I.B. (1)(c)).
- Describe the unique socio-emotional development of gifted students from underserved populations, including but not limited to gifted females and those who are disabled, racially or ethnically diverse, economically disadvantaged, and/or underachieving (I.B.(1)(i)).
- Create an environment in which giftedness can emerge and gifted students can feel challenged and safe to explore and express their uniqueness (I.B.(2)(d)).
- Develop in gifted students the attitudes and skills needed to become independent, life-long learners, to self-evaluate, and to set and pursue appropriate personal and academic goals for future success (I.B.(2)(k)).

Materials

All materials are accessed via the CaseNEX website using the PIN provided and the user name/password you create.

All readings listed can be found by going to Class Materials→Virtual
Library → Readings (Search).

If you do not have the most recent versions of the following software, please download each from the given sites.
- Adobe Reader
- QuickTime

Cases Used

- Counselor Take Counsel
- Hop, Skip, and a Jump: A Close Look at Grade Acceleration
- Moving Up
- You’re Out of Here: Motivation and Gifted Learners

Course Schedule

Find session dates by selecting Syllabus on the top menu bar. For typical courses, final Discussions, Journals, and Workbooks are due by Saturday at midnight unless otherwise noted. Please see the News Flash for any alterations of the course schedule posted by your instructor.
**Introductory Session**  
*Exploring the CaseNEX Site*

Complete these tasks prior to the beginning of Session 1.

**Readings**

Read the course requirements, paying special attention to the Case-Analysis and Workbook Assignment Rubrics. They will be used by your instructor throughout the course to evaluate assignments where appropriate.

**Discussion**

Post one entry introducing yourself to your classmates. You may choose to describe your professional background and experience, relevant personal information, or what has prompted your interest in better understanding the socio-emotional needs of gifted learners. (100 words or fewer)

**Journal**

What do you find inspiring and challenging about meeting the socio-emotional needs of gifted learners? (100 words or fewer)

**Note**

Use CaseMail to send a note to your instructor stating that you will be taking this course. To do so, click on CaseMail on the top menu bar and then ‘Click here to create a new message.’ Use the marked link to look up an address. Continue linking down until you see the class list. Select the instructor’s name and then compose your message and hit ‘Post Message.’
Session 1
Understanding Social and Emotional Characteristics of Gifted Learners

Case
Counselor Takes Counsel

Readings
- Social Emotional Needs of the Gifted
- Nurturing Social-Emotional Development of Gifted Children

Discussion
In this case, resource teacher Clara Hayes attends a workshop on the “socio-emotional development” of gifted students. The information presented in the workshop brings Clara to the realization that gifted students are as different socially and emotionally as they are intellectually. Using your knowledge from this case and the assigned readings, discuss some of the issues that put gifted students at a greater risk for social and emotional maladjustment. What consequences (positive and negative) do the social and emotional intensity and the sensitivity of gifted students have on their ability to learn and process information?

Journal
The article “Social/Emotional Needs of the Gifted” presents seven common myths about the social and emotional characteristics of gifted students. Choose one myth that you have seen perpetuated at your own school. Discuss how this misperception affected a gifted student or a group of gifted students. Use your knowledge from the readings to discuss how this situation might have been handled differently?

Note
Check your CaseMail (linked from top menu bar) and News Flash (on the right when you login) for notes from your instructor every time you log on to the site.

Workbook
None this session
Session 2
Meeting the Social and Emotional Needs of Gifted Learners

Case
Counselor Takes Counsel

Readings
- Exceptional Children Require An Exceptional Approach - Issues in Counseling Gifted Children
- How Parents Can Support Gifted Children
- Helping Gifted Students With Stress Management
- Gifted Students and Stress Management

Discussion

In this case, Clara Hayes creates a plan for better meeting the needs of gifted students at Burnside Middle School. She is disappointed with the guidance counselor’s reaction to her plan. Use your knowledge from the articles and the case to discuss why you think Clara’s plan was not well received. What are some of the issues that prevent social and emotional needs of gifted learners from being addressed? If you were Clara what would be your next step in trying to work with colleagues to meet the unique needs of the gifted learners at Burnside?

Journal

In the “Exceptional Children Require An Exceptional Approach - Issues in Counseling Gifted Children the author makes recommendations for meeting the special needs of gifted learners. How might these recommendations be applicable to your school setting? How might your perspective differ from that of administrators, counselors, and other classroom teachers?

Workbook

None this session
Session 3  
*Acceleration as an Option*

**Case**
Hop, Skip, and a Jump: A Close Look at Grade Acceleration

**Readings**
- Teaching Young Gifted Children in the Regular Classroom
- What We Know About Academically Talented Students: A Sample of Our Findings

**Discussion**

In this case first grade teacher Aggie Huller struggles with the issue of labeling a young student as gifted and makes the following comment to the gifted resource teacher:

> I’ve heard teachers say that you can’t tell if children are gifted this early. Perhaps kids appear “smart” because they get a lot of attention and teaching at home. How do you really know if a young student is gifted?

Use the information presented in the readings for this week along with your own knowledge as an educator, to support or deny Aggie’s concerns about labeling a young child as “gifted”.

**Journal**

Use the knowledge presented in the case and in the readings for this session to analyze why educators have been slow to embrace acceleration as an option for meeting the needs of gifted learners. What can you do in your classroom to help change the perspectives of parents and teachers with regard to accelerating gifted students?

**Workbook**

None this session
Session 4  
Asynchrony

Case  
Hop, Skip, and a Jump: A Closer Look at Grade Acceleration

Readings  
- Giftedness as Asynchronous Development  
- Nurturing Giftedness in Young Children

Discussion

For gifted student Ian Kline, asynchrony is used to describe uneven academic development. Use the knowledge from this course to discuss asynchronous social development and the consequences that this condition might have on the achievement of gifted students. What actions can teachers take to address this type of uneven development?

Journal

In this case gifted resource teacher Lillian Booker comments on Ian’s inconsistent performance in reading and writing, stating that, “Gifted behaviors aren’t always consistent in all subjects. The development of a child’s advanced abilities does not necessarily occur consistently or simultaneously.”

The readings for this session label this type of uneven development as asynchronous learning. Use your knowledge from the readings to briefly describe asynchronous learning and discuss the impact that it might have with regard to the social and emotional development of the gifted learners in your classroom. Consider the perspectives of the gifted learner and parents in your discussion.

Workbook

Student Activities

The first case in this course, Counselor Takes Counsel, talks about a middle school teacher’s concern for the needs of her gifted students. The second case, Hop, Skip, and a Jump, discusses the social and emotional needs of a first grade student. Use the information from
both cases and the assigned readings to create a chart showing the social and emotional needs specific to:

- young gifted students;
- gifted adolescents; and
- overlaps between the two groups.

Consider the age group that you work with at your school and then come up with a list of strategies that you could implement to better meet the needs of this age group.

This Assignment should be no more than 800 words.

**This Assignment is required for graduate students.**

Due by the end of this session
Session 5
Coping with Giftedness

Case
Moving Up

Readings
- Social Adjustment and Peer Pressures for Gifted Children
- The Stress of Being Gifted and Talented
- Underachieving Gifted Students
- Perfectionism and the Highly Gifted Child

Discussion
The Moving Up case briefly discusses the negative consequences that can occur when parents and educators fail to create situations for students to deal with giftedness in a positive way. Perfectionism and underachievement are two of the consequences that may occur when a student has difficulty dealing with his/her intellectual talents. Discuss these negative coping skills in more detail. Use the information from the case and the assigned articles for this week to create an action plan for dealing with perfectionism and underachievement in gifted students.

Journal
The readings for this session provide research on peer relationships and social acceptance of gifted students. Discuss some of the issues that gifted students have with regard to peer relations. Consider the perspective of your gifted students. What might be some of the coping skills that they would use to affect social acceptance? How can you use this information to help gifted students experience social acceptance in your classroom?

Workbook
None this session
Session 6
Special Needs of Gifted Girls

Case
Moving Up

Readings
• Gifted Girls - Many Gifted Girls, Few Eminent Women: Why?

Discussion
This case ends without a consensus from parents and the staff at Henderson on how to best meet the needs of Madison Silver. Consider the knowledge that you have gained from this course and suggest a plan of action for meeting the needs of Madison Silver. Consider the perspectives of Madison and her parents in your plan. Support your decision with research from the articles you have read throughout the course.

Journal
The main character of this week’s case is a female Madison Silvers, a highly gifted math student. According to the research in the readings for this session, math and science are two subjects where boys are generally leaders. Use your knowledge from the readings to explain this phenomenon. List some of the issues that place gifted girls at a greater risk socially and emotionally. Discuss ways that you as an educator can help promote positive self-esteem and empowerment for gifted girls.

Workbook
Outreach Materials

This assignment is intended to help you synthesize what you have learned in this course and provide support to gifted students and their families. First, briefly describe the issues faced by you and your gifted students related to socio-emotional development. Next, prepare 2 resources for use by students and families that will help them better understand and address these issues. These resources should explain characteristics of gifted learners, common myths and struggles, possible supports and solutions, and resources for further learning. Be
sure to cite course readings as needed to substantiate your work. You may select from the following list or use your own ideas:

- Pamphlet
- Letter or Email
- Talking points or a PowerPoint for conferences/workshops
- Information guide
- Web-based guide

Limit each piece to 500 words or fewer. Post your descriptions of issues in your workbook then attach the 2 resources you created.

**This Assignment is required for graduate students.**

Due by the end of this session
Session 7
Learning Environment

Case
You’re Out of Here: Motivation and Gifted Learners

Readings
- The Learning Environment
- Differentiating the Learning Environment
- Deciding to Teach Them All

Discussion
You’re Out of Here: Motivation and Gifted Learners, discusses some issues that contribute to the inconsistent performance of 10th grade gifted student, Jeremy Connor. The scenario in this case illustrates the important role that learning environment plays in meeting the needs of gifted students. Take a closer look at the Advanced Placement classes that Jeremy is excelling in. What would be some of the positive aspects of the learning environment that keep him interested and motivated in these classes? Consider Jeremy’s perspective. How might he respond to the teachers’ evaluation of his progress?

Journal
The “Learning Environment” reading in this session provides ideas for creating a socially and emotionally responsive classroom for gifted learners. Use this article as a guide to develop an action plan for your own classroom. How can you create a responsive learning environment and improve learning consequences for your gifted students?

Workbook

Staff Involvement

The behavior of gifted learners in the school setting has been linked to at least four areas: student grouping, educational programming, curriculum and instruction, and attitudes toward giftedness. For this assignment imagine that you have been asked to present a brief overview of two of these areas for a staff meeting. Use your
knowledge from this course to describe the topics and present the types of action that teachers might take to promote positive learning behaviors for gifted students. This assignment should be no longer than 800 words.

OR

Case Analysis

Use the 5-Step Method to discuss the actions, consequences, perspectives, issues, and knowledge that are relevant to Jeremy Connor’s inconsistent progress at school. Use your case analysis to draw a conclusion about what the appropriate placement for Jeremy should be. Remember to cite research from the course readings to support your analysis. You may refer to the Case Analysis Rubric under the course tutorial to guide your thinking.

This Assignment is required for graduate students.

Due by the end of Session 8
Session 8
Motivating Gifted Learners

Case
You’re Out of Here: Motivation and Gifted Learners

Readings
- Motivation and Gifted Students
- Why is Behavior So Hard to Understand?
- Is Your School Using Best Practice for Instruction

Discussion
In this session’s case, teachers are divided on whether or not Jeremy’s performance justifies having him continue in advance placement courses for the next school year. Jeremy’s math teacher, Mrs. Carter, wonders, “How can we justify keeping a student who hides his talents, displays non-conformist behavior, rejects rote learning, and has poor study habits in our AP courses?” Prepare a response to Mrs. Carter’s question citing specific issues related to the social and emotional needs of gifted students.

Journal
Reflect on the higher level learners you have worked with in your own classrooms. Describe some of the successful actions that you have taken to encourage motivation and improve learning consequences for individual students. What are some of the causes for a lack of motivation in gifted students? Use knowledge presented in the readings to discuss intrinsic motivation as compared to extrinsic motivation.

Workbook

Staff Involvement due by the end of this session