

**GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT
ADVANCED STUDIES IN TEACHING AND LEARNING**

**EDCI 621: Section 001
Introduction to Gifted and Talented Learners
Fall 2010
Mondays 4:30-7:10 (onsite and online)
GMU Fairfax Campus, Innovation 211**

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Office Hours: *by appointment*

Course Description: This course is designed to examine the nature and needs of gifted and talented learners. Participants will become knowledgeable about the characteristics of gifted and talented students. In addition, participants will examine the role of culture in the manifestation of gifts and talents as well as gifted behaviors in special populations.

Standards: This course is designed around the program standards endorsed by the National Association for Gifted Children-Council for Exceptional Children (2006) as well as the Virginia Licensure Regulations for School Personnel (1998) and specifically addresses 8VAC 20-21-270: Gifted Education (add-on endorsement) standards.

Virginia Department of Education: Gifted Education

- A2: Understanding the characteristics of gifted students (p 39).
- A6: Understanding of contemporary issues and research in gifted education
- A7. Understanding of, and proficiency in, grammar, usage and mechanics in their integration in writing.

CEC-NAGC Initial Knowledge & Skill Standards for Gifted and Talented Education

Standard 1: Foundations

- K1 Historical foundations of gifted and talented education including points of view and contributions of individuals from diverse backgrounds.
- K2 Key philosophies, theories, models and research supporting gifted and talented education.
- K3 Local, state/provincial and federal laws and policies related to gifted and talented education.
- K4 Issues in conceptions, definitions and identification of gifts and talents, including those of individuals from diverse backgrounds.
- K5 Impact of the dominant culture's role in shaping schools and the differences in values, languages, and customs between school and home.
- K6 Societal, cultural and economic factors, including anti-intellectualism and equity vs excellence, enhancing or inhibiting the development of gifts and talents.

Standard 2: Development and Characteristics of Learners

- K1 Cognitive and affective characteristics of individuals with gifts and talents, including those from diverse backgrounds, in intellectual, academic, creative, leadership and artistic domains.
- K2 Characteristics and effects of culture and environment on the development of individuals with gifts and talents.
- K3 Role of families and communities in supporting the development of individuals with gifts and talents.

K4 Advanced developmental milestones of individuals with gifts and talents from early childhood through adolescence.

K5 Similarities and differences within the group of individuals with gifts and talents as compared to the general populations.

Standard 3: Individual Learning Differences

K1 Influences of diversity factors on individuals with exceptional learning needs.

K2 Academic and affective characteristics and learning needs of individuals with gifts, talents and disabilities.

K3 Idiosyncratic learning patterns of individuals with gifts and talents, including those from diverse backgrounds.

K4 Influences of different beliefs, traditions, and values across and within diverse groups on relationships among individuals with gifts and talents, their families, schools and communities.

S1 Integrate perspectives of diverse groups into planning and instruction for individuals with gifts and talents.

Standard 5: Learning Environments and Social Interactions

K1 Ways in which groups are stereotyped and experience historical and current discrimination and implications for gifted and talented education

K2 Influence of social and emotional development on interpersonal relationships and learning of individuals with gifts and talents.

S3 Creating safe learning environments for individuals with gifts and talents that encourage active participation in individual and group activities to enhance independence, interdependence and positive peer relationships.

S4 Creating learning environments and intercultural experience that allow individuals with gifts and talents to appreciate their own and other's language and cultural heritage.

S5 Develop social interaction and coping skills in individuals with gifts and talents to address personal and social issues, including discrimination and stereotyping.

Standard 9: Professional and Ethical Practice

K1 Awareness of personal and cultural frames of reference that affect one's teaching of individuals with gifts and talents, including biases about individuals from diverse backgrounds.

S1 Assess personal skills and limitations in teaching individuals with exceptional learning needs.

S2 Encourage and model respect for the full range of diversity among individuals with gifts and talents.

S4 Conduct activities in gifted and talented education in compliance with laws, policies and standards of ethical practice.

S5 Improve practice through continuous research-supported professional development in gifted education and related fields.

S7 Reflect on personal practice to improve teaching and guide professional growth in gifted and talented education.

Course Goals:

Participants in this course will demonstrate their competency in the following areas:

1. Ability to identify the salient characteristics of gifted and talented learners;
2. Identify varied expressions of advanced aptitudes, skills, creativity and conceptual understandings manifested by gifted and talented learners;
3. Recognize the role of culture, language, ethnicity in the identification and manifestation of gifts and talents;
4. Develop an increased awareness of the cognitive and affective social-emotional needs of gifted and talented learners;
5. Ability to utilize information from parents, community members, and stakeholders to identify early indicators of exceptional potential;
6. Identify and address current local, state and national issues related to the education of gifted and talented learners; and,
7. Understand the key elements and national standards for education and programming for gifted and talented learners.

All participants will be expected to:

- a) demonstrate their knowledge of subject matter through informed participation in class discussions, presentations and products developed;
- b) demonstrate their understanding of the characteristics of gifted and talented learners through a presentation designed to be given to community members, parents and/or local organizations;
- c) demonstrate their understanding of local, state and national research and issues in the field through a response journal;
- d) demonstrate their understanding of the social-emotional needs of gifted and talented learners through seminar presentations; and,
- e) demonstrate their ongoing commitment to professional development through the use of a professional development plan.

Grading Scale: 94-100 = A, 90-93 = A-, 86-89 = B+, 80-85 = B, 70-79 = C, Below 70 = F

Final grades below a B do not count toward endorsement.

Assignments and Assessments

- A. Presentation on the Characteristics of Gifted and Talented Learners (30%)** – each participant (in a small cooperative group) will create an hour long presentation including graphics (handouts) that examines the nature and characteristics of gifted and talented learners. Each presentation should specify age level, audience and general context for its use. Participants should prepare with the idea in mind that the presentation would be appropriate to show other staff members or parents unfamiliar with gifted and talented students. The presentations will be assessed according to:

1. Accuracy of the information presented;
2. Ability to translate key principles into practical use;
3. Clarity of explanation;
4. Appropriateness of the presentation to the audience;
5. Thoroughness and accuracy of how your presentation reflects the current knowledge of the field.
6. A 3-5 page outline for the instructor which details all of the above information and includes a copy of the handouts.

- B. Critical Response Journal (30%)** – each participant will maintain a response journal for the duration of the endorsement sequence. The critical response journal will be written in APA format. The topics in the course outline should comprise the bulk of the articles read (e.g. characteristics, curriculum, identification...)

1. Currency of literature reviewed;
2. Accuracy of annotated bibliography;
3. Summary of article that accurately reflects the author's intent;
4. Reflection on reading that identifies key understandings, connections to other readings and experiences, application of the research and influence on the reader.
5. All entries will be of the caliber expected at the graduate level.

A = 12/15 journal entries B = 8/12 journal entries C = fewer than 8 entries

- C. Seminar Discussion Leader (20%)** - each participant will prepare and lead a class discussion of a major area of study regarding the social and emotional development of gifted children. The team will provide an outline of the major issues along with a series of discussion questions for the class.

Team topics will be based on a chapter from:

Neihart, M., Reis, S., Robinson, N., and Moon, S. (2002). *The Social and Emotional Development of Gifted Children What Do We Know?* Waco: Prufrock Press, Inc.

D. Class/Course Participation (20%) – each student will be expected to actively participate in informed online and classroom discussions of topics relevant to the course. All students are expected to attend each onsite class session and to be prepared to actively engage in class activities. During online session weeks, all students are expected to log on to the Discussion Board at least twice a week to answer questions, raise additional issues and engage at least two other colleagues in the group. Discussions will be assessed for timeliness, accuracy of information shared, critical reflection and connection to readings. Discussion responses that focus solely on personal/professional experiences are unsuitable for posting.

Mode of Course Delivery:

This is a hybrid course utilizing both Blackboard and onsite class meetings. Course delivery will be through mini-lecturers, experiential activities, small group discussion based on professional interests and research based questions that can be examined through action research projects, whole class discussions or student presentations. The instructor will also be available for face to face meetings.

Required Texts:

Davis, G., Rimm, S. & Siegle, D. (2011) *Education of the Gifted and Talented (6th Edition)*. New Jersey: Pearson Education.

Recommended:

Landrum, M., Callahan, C. & Shaklee, B. (2001). *Aiming for Excellence: Gifted Program Standards*. The National Association for Gifted Children, Washington, DC: Prufrock Press, Inc.

Sousa, D. (2003). *How The Gifted Brain Learns*. Thousand Oaks: Corwin Press, Inc.

Recommended Readings:

Gay, G. (2000). *Culturally Responsive Teaching: Theory, Research and Practice*. New York: Teacher's College Press.

Ford, D. and Harris, J. (2000). *Multicultural Gifted Education*. New York: Teacher's College Press.

GSE Syllabus Statements of Expectations

The Graduate School of Education (GSE) expects that all students abide by the following:

Students are expected to exhibit **professional behavior and dispositions**. See <http://www.gse.gmu.edu> for a listing of these dispositions.

Students must follow the guidelines of the **University Honor Code** http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/#TOC_H12 for the full honor code.

Students must agree to abide by the university policy for **Responsible Use of Computing**. See <http://mail.gmu.edu> and click on Responsible Use of Computing at the bottom of the screen.

Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the GMU Disability Resource Center (DRC) and inform the instructor, **in writing, at the beginning of the semester**. See www.gmu.edu/student/drc or call 703-993-2474 to access the DRC.

Attendance Policy

CEHD graduate students are expected to attend *all* class periods of courses for which they register. In- class and online participation is important not only to the individual student, but to the class as whole. Class participation is a factor in grading; “*instructors may use absence, tardiness, or early departure as de facto evidence of nonparticipation and as a result lower the grade as stated in the course syllabus*” (GMU 2006).

Tentative Schedule of Onsite/Online Class Sessions

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Readings Due</u>
8/30	Overview of course and requirements, Pre-assessment and introductions	
9/6*	Labor Day Holiday – NO CLASS *Online Discussion Board: Initial Posts	Davis, et al Chpts. 1-2
9/13	Examining Beliefs – Myths & Realities about Giftedness Historical Perspectives, Conceptions of Intelligence	Davis, et al Chpt 3-4, 17
9/20	Assessment and Identification of Giftedness	Davis, et al Chpt. 8-9
9/27*	Standards in Gifted Education - Federal Issues * Online Discussion	NAGC Program Standards CEC-NAGC Teacher Education Standards Davis, et al Chpts. 15
10/4	Special Populations in Gifted Education Discussion Leaders Group 1	Davis, et al Chpts. 11-12
10/11	Holiday – NO CLASS	Neihart et.al.
10/18	Mid-Point Assessment Motivation and Achievement Discussion Leaders Group 2	*1st Reading Journal Due
10/25	Discussion Leaders Group 3 Discussion Leaders Group 4	

11/1	No Class: Readings/Journals/Group Meetings	
11/8	Models of Delivery – making connections	Davis, et al Chpts. 5-7, 10
11/15	Political, Social and Cultural Issues in Gifted Education	Davis, et al Chpts. 13-14
11/22*	International Perspectives on Giftedness *Online Discussion Board	Posted readings: Geneva Gay
11/29	Preparation for final presentations – appointments with instructor	
12/6	Final Presentations	
12/18	Final Presentations Course Evaluations Post-assessments Due	

*** Indicates online format for the class.**