

Figure 3

Supporting Gifted Potential in Mixed-Ability Classrooms

- Encourage young gifted learners and English Language Learners with only beginning reading and writing skills to conduct research, projects, and share complex ideas through verbal recordings rather than written responses.
- Regularly employ pre-assessments to document exempting gifted students from work they have already mastered. Implement replacement tasks instead of redundant work.
- Encourage student autonomy by posting a list of generalizable products from which students can select when pursuing replacement tasks.
- With gifted students, generate criteria that promote high quality responses so students can document their approximations to excellence when pursuing replacement tasks.
- Require gifted students to daily self-assess learning behaviors, effort, and results when working on replacement tasks or projects. Review these self-reflections and debrief with students as appropriate.
- Ensure that gifted students maintain records of progress and personal changes as learners rather than gauge their results through comparisons with grade-level peers.
- Form interest-based groups across grade levels to nurture more in-depth information and problem solving. These students regularly work together when teachers place others in small groups for re-teaching or to practice and apply grade-level skills.
- When appropriate in class, place gifted students in similar-readiness small groups to promote applications beyond grade level.
- As flexible groups, implement text clubs or literature circles with a diverse range of materials that allow all students to select books at, below, and beyond grade-level.
- Jigsaw using complex materials for advanced students during cooperative learning.
- Implement Socratic seminars in which students take the leadership roles in preparing and conducting the seminars.
- When practicing grade-level learning standards, allow gifted students to use higher-level materials for applications. For example, all students can be practicing mathematical operations using a range of materials instead of only the grade-level textbook.
- Implement cluster-grouping classrooms so gifted students have constant access to an intellectual peer group as well as an age peer group. The key to success is a teacher who likes gifted students and is quite accomplished at differentiating instruction.