

Adapted from: Uppervention: Meeting the Needs of Gifted and Talented Students

By [Josh Work](#)

May 20, 2014 Updated May 6, 2014

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<https://www.edutopia.org/blog/uppervention-for-gifted-talented-students-josh-work>

## **FROM A STUDENT'S PERSPECTIVE...**

The following are presented to you as a launching point for exploring the Gifted or talented students' perspective of their learning environment. Building off of these types of questions, it is hoped that we are able to better identify our talented and gifted students as well as how to better serve their educational needs so that they are more likely to achieve their potential.

### **Recognize Their Talents**

Each and every one of our students is unique. As classroom teachers, sometimes we can become distracted with our daily lessons and not fully recognize all the talents of the individuals we teach. We need to recognize our students' talents and modify future activities to better challenge their natural skills.

- Think of all the things that you can do and want to do. We all have something that we do better than other things. What are those things for you?
- If you could be great at something, what would that be?
- When you're at school, in what ways do you stand out? (good and bad?)
- When you're with friends, in what way do you stand out? (good and bad?)
- When you're at home, with your family, in what ways do you stand out? (good and bad?)
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### **Student Centered**

Whether the student is talented in mathematics, music, drawing or reading, as educators we need to create opportunities for them to showcase their abilities. Differentiating curriculum to meet the needs of our talented students is critical for developing a stimulating learning environment.

- When you're at school, does it feel like what you are learning is somehow connected to how you think about things? Or how you would do it? Think

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about when your teacher is done with the lecture part (or during it?), and she asks you to work on something, maybe by yourself or with a group of students, is this how you would do it? What else would you do?

- When you're working on an assignment or something the teacher has asked you to do in class, how closely do you stick with the instructions? Are you trying to understand the question and problem solve it or are you mostly sticking with the "steps?"
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### **Develop Deeper, Not Wider**

Just because a student is gifted in your content doesn't mean that you should swamp him or her with "extra" work. Engage your gifted students by allowing them to select a topic that they would like to learn more about. Design activities or projects that develop higher-level thinking around their selected topic. If these students still have an interest in the same topic after they have completed one project, continue to deepen their understanding before moving on to something else that sparks their curiosity.

- When you're at school, does it feel like what you are learning is somehow connected to the things you are most interested in learning about?
- In what ways is what you're learning about connected to what most interests you?
- What would be a cool way to do with what you are learning? In other words, your teacher taught you something, then you had an assignment that you did in class or maybe at home. What else would be fun to do with what you learned?

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## **Encourage Curiosity**

Sometimes gifted and talented students do not fully realize their skills until someone challenges them. Are we encouraging our students to think critically and explore their interests? Have open debates in class that cover both contemporary and content area topics. Try to make connections between real-world events and what is going on in your class. This will encourage students to think critically about the world around them.

- Think about what's going on in your home and in the outside of school, in what ways is what you're learning about connected to those things?
- We often rely on our teachers to help us learn new things and she usually gives us homework and things to do. As you're learning new things and working on assignments, do you talk with the teacher or mostly just listen? If you do talk, what kinds of things do you talk about (with the teacher, with other students, with your friends)? Maybe you don't talk a lot in class, that's cool too, what are you thinking about as your working on an assignment?
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## **Be Realistic and Flexible**

Not all of your gifted and talented students will get straight A's or be their class president. Some of the most gifted and talented students are those who come from complex home environments and have to deal with difficult emotional situations at a young age. These issues can lead to anger, frustration, isolation or depression.

Remember that even though your student may be gifted academically, he or she is still developing emotionally and socially. Support your gifted and talented students by staying involved beyond just the content. You may need to scale back a project or take a break from it altogether for a period of time. Gifted students can sometimes become hyper-focused on their independent projects and develop unneeded

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pressure on themselves. Create learning opportunities that are realistic, measurable and within a set time frame.

- What kinds of school things would you like to have more time learning or doing?
- What kinds of school things would you like to have less time learning or doing?
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