Battling the Myths in Gifted Education
Myth #1

Gifted students will be fine on their own.
Myth #1

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CLTKl9oYApI
Myth #1

A few factors that could influence gifted students from not being fine could be:

- Disabilities
- Underachievement
- Asynchrony
Myth #2

*Gifted students always earn good grades.*
Myth #2

Grades are not always correlated with giftedness. A few factors that could influence grades:

- Interest
- Rigor
- Educational System
Myth #2

Exploring Topics in Surprising Depth

Gifted students want to know the what, why, and how of topics of interest.

Example: Nuclear fusion
Myth #2

How it can look in the classroom

• Intense focus for long periods of time when appropriately challenged.

• Difficulty transitioning when engaged in area of interest.

• Gloss over details in subjects not of interest.

• Exhaust topic and move on to new one.
Myth #2

Insatiable Curiosity

Gifted students constantly explore new ideas and topics; often at levels above their chronological age mates.

Example: Never ending questions...
Myth #2

How it can look in the classroom

• Ask difficult questions.
• They aren’t challenging authority but they want to know.
• Often ask questions that have the answer “that depends...”.
Teachers told me I was rude,
Bumptious, overbearing, shrewd.
Some of the things they said were crude
I couldn’t understand.
And so I built myself a wall,
Strong, solid, ten feet tall.
With bricks you couldn’t see at all.
So I couldn’t understand.
Myth #2

Underachievement

When a discrepancy exists between a child’s school performance and an ability index.

Example: A child is working at a 3rd grade level with the rest of class, but has the ability to work at a 6th grade level.
Myth #2

- Listen
- Model
- Encourage

Intrinsic Motivation
Myth #2

Listen - Often times gifted kids’ interests are not what we deem to be important. Remember that interest/importance is in the eye of the beholder.

Model - A child’s motivation will likely be influenced by a model appropriate or inappropriate.

Encourage - Children to explore their interests and talents and take risks.
Myth #3

Giftedness cannot coexist with a disability.
Myth #3

In the field of gifted education, a twice exceptional learner refers to a gifted student with a co-occurring disability.

Disability may mask or hide abilities.

• Albert Einstein
• Bill Gates
Myth #3

Misdiagnosis

Characteristics of gifted students can present similarly to various disabilities leading to an incorrect diagnosis.

Example: Rose, 9
Myth #3

Example:

• Rose is a whimsical child.
• She rushes through her assignments if she actually starts them, and never turns things in on time.
• If Rose isn’t blurting out answers during class discussions, then she is constantly asking questions, which may or may not be on topic.
• Rose is easily distracted and needs substantial redirection to the task at hand.
Myth #3

What diagnosis comes to mind?

• ADHD, ADD

Gifted characteristics which could lead to misdiagnosis:

• Boredom
• Understimulation; lack of challenge
• Extraordinary processing speed
Myth #3

Extraordinary Processing Speed

Have an ability to learn and process complex information quickly, and perceive patterns and form connections.

Example: A typically developing child may take three weeks to master a concept, a gifted child may take one class period.
Myth #4

Educating gifted students requires a wealth of time and resources.
Myth #4

Accommodations can be adapting the original lesson or it can be going beyond the lesson for the students.
Myth #4

- Pretesting
- Ability Grouping
- Independent Projects
- Mentors
- Compacting Curriculum
Myth #5

Gifted options are socially harmful for gifted students.
Myth #5

Research suggests that giftedness and optimal social adjustment to age peers are often inversely correlated.

Example:
4 year old: What did one candle say to the other candle?
7 year old: What?
4 year old: Are you going out tonight? HAHAHA
7 year old: Just stares at him.
Myth #5

Importance of peers

- Chronological vs. Mental Age (asynchrony)

- With advanced intellectual development comes advanced concepts of friendship.

- Gifted children most always interact as well or even better with older students.
Myth #5

“It’s not that we have poor social skills, it’s that we have different social skills.” 15, girl

“It is nice to find friends that I can relate and talk to.” 11, boy

“Being different can cause bullying so it’s cool to have friends that understand me.” 13, boy
8 Great Gripees of Gifted Children

1) No one explains what being gifted is all about—it’s kept a big secret.
2) School is too easy and too boring.
3) Parents, teachers, and friends expect us to be perfect all the time.
4) Friends who really understand us are few and far between.
5) Kids often tease us about being smart.
6) We feel overwhelmed by the number of things we can do in life.
7) We feel different and alienated.
8) We worry about world problems and feel helpless to do anything about them.
Closing

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Any Questions?

Thank You

www.DavidsonGifted.org/EdGuild
Resources
Books and Publishers

www.AccelerationInstitute.org
• A Nation Deceived: How Schools Hold Back America’s Brightest Students – The Acceleration Institute

www.GiftedBooks.org
• Guiding the Gifted Child - Webb, J., et al.
• Re-Forming Gifted Education: Matching the Program to the Child - Rogers, K.

www.Prufrrok.com
• Developing Math Talent - Assouline, S. and Lupkowski-Shoplik, A.
• Parenting Gifted Kids: Tips for Raising Happy and Successful Children - Delisle, J.

www.FreeSpirith.com
• Freeing our families from perfectionism - Greenspon, T.
• Teaching Gifted Students in the Regular Classroom - Winebrenner, S.

www.DavidsonGifted.org/DB
• Resources > Browse by Topic: Parents and Books; Plus, lots of Articles on various gifted topics