

ISSN 0795-8730

Journal of Special Education

Volume 15, July, 2017



*Journal of the Department of
Special Education,
University of Ibadan, Nigeria*

Journal of Special Education

Vol. 15, July, 2017

Journal of Department of Special Education, University of Ibadan, Nigeria

Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Meeting the Unique needs of Gifted and Talented Learners in Nigerian Schools: Support Options <i>G.A. Adelodun</i> | 1 |
| Attitude and Perception Towards Disability and Disability Type among Students of Two Tertiary Institutions in Oyo State, Nigeria <i>Adebayo Francis Komolafe</i> | 10 |
| Influence of Parenting Styles and Peer Relationship on Academic Performance of Students with Visual Impairment in Ibadan, Nigeria <i>Okoli Bibiana Ifeoma, Nwazuoke Ambrose Ikechukwu, Ezeanochie B.C and Oduwole, Joseph Babatunde</i> | 20 |
| Emotional Intelligence, Academic Self-Efficacy and Braille Use as Predictors of Academic Achievement among Secondary School Students with Visual Impairment in Anambra State, Nigeria <i>Olisaemeka A. N. and Eniola M.S.</i> | 37 |
| Re-Orientation: A Key to Successful Implementation of Inclusive Education Programme among Students with Learning Disabilities in Nigeria <i>Gabriel O. Ogunsola</i> | 50 |
| Inclusive Education and Parental Involvement as Predictors of Academic Performance in Civic Education of Primary School Pupils with Special Needs in Oyo State <i>Salako Adebayo Adeyinka and Ajasa Folorunso Adekemi</i> | 62 |
| Effect of Music Therapy and Pictorial Illustration in Enhancing Attention Span among Children with Mild Intellectual Disability in Ibadan, Oyo State <i>U. S. Jacob, D. C. Kanu and J. O. Oyundoyin</i> | 73 |
| Effect of Pre-lesson Assignments and Weekly Formative Tests Assessment Strategies on Low-Achieving Physics Students' Study Habit in Ibadan Metropolis <i>Ukoh Edidiong Enyeneokpon and Adeyemi Sunday Onifade</i> | 87 |
| Perceived Relevance and Applicability of Computer Assisted Instruction to Academic Achievement of Pupils with Mild Intellectual Disability in Ibadan Metropolis, Oyo State, Nigeria. <i>Esther O. Oyefeso</i> | 99 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| Assessment of Availability, Adequacy and Accessibility of Teaching Resource Materials for Education of Pupils with Disabilities in South-West, Nigeria <i>Adeleke Owoade Philip</i> | 111 |
| Classroom Participation, Teachers Attitude and Academic Achievement of Pupils with Dysfluent Oral Reading in Ibadan Metropolis <i>Morufat M. Olakojo and Ngozi P. Okwudiri</i> | 123 |
| Examination Malpractice at The University of Buea: Types, Causes and Solution <i>Agbor Michael Ntui</i> | 134 |
| Literacy and Community Participation: <i>Benue Experience</i> <i>Elizabeth A. Ugo</i> | 145 |
| Strategies for Teaching Self-Help Skills to Pupils with Intellectual Disabilities <i>Oladimeji Oyeyemi Omolayo</i> | 157 |

UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN LIBRARY

Meeting the unique needs of Gifted and Talented Learners in Nigerian Schools: Support Options

Dr. G.A. Adelowun
Department of Special Education
Faculty of Education
University of Ibadan
dradelodun2@gmail.com

Abstract

It has always been the assumption of the generality of the people that gifted and talented children have been so much intellectually endowed by the Almighty God that they do not need the support of anybody in order to succeed in whatever they do. However, the most acceptable definition of gifted children describe them as those who require differentiated educational programmes and services beyond those normally provided by the regular programme. The implication of this is that gifted children have special educational, social and emotional needs that differ from those of other children. To meet those needs a special type of "good" teacher is required. The role the parents could also play in order to meet the unique needs of these children cannot be overemphasized. It is against this background that this study examined the essential characteristics of effective teachers of gifted students, the qualities expected of such teachers and the strategies to be adopted in supporting the gifted learners in the school. Classroom management support that can be given to gifted learners was also examined. Finally, it was recommended for teachers to always create a learning environment that is open, accepting, warm, and intellectually challenging, and to always value the achievement of high ability students. Recommendation was also made for the parents to establish a close, mutually respectful relationship with their children and to provide very often an intellectually stimulating curiosity producing atmosphere in their homes.

Key words: Support, Unique needs, Gifted and Talented Learners, Classroom Management.

Introduction

Giftedness relates fully to the total personality structure, requiring perfect equilibrium to attain the full potential. Giftedness points to a particular talent with which a person has been endowed in respect of either his intellectual abilities or other personal qualities and which clearly distinguishes him from his fellow man. Intelligence, creativity and talent have been central to the various

definition of giftedness that have been proposed over the years. Pasricha (1969) defined a gifted child as one who exhibits superiority in general intelligence or the one who is in possession of special abilities of high order in the field which are not necessarily associated with high intelligence quotient. Guilford (2009) believed that creativity was the key to the solutions and innovations by the most gifted scientists and inventors. Witty (1958) recognizing the value of including special skills and talents, described gifted and talented children as those “whose performance is consistently remarkable in any potentially valuable area”. Havighurst (1957) defined gifted children as those individuals from kindergarten through high school age who show unusual promise in some socially useful area and whose talents might be stimulated. These three concepts continue to be reflected in the current and still-evolving definitions of gifted and talented children.

Renzulli, Reis and Smith (1981) defined gifted children as those who have demonstrated or shown potential for high ability, high task commitment and creativity. The reason for this is that the above mentioned three clusters of behaviour are characteristics necessary for any worthwhile gifted activity. No single cluster makes “giftedness”. Rather, it is the interaction among the three clusters that research has shown to be the necessary ingredient for creative/productive accomplishment.



It is important to point out that each of the clusters is an ‘equal partner’ in contributing to giftedness. No one is superior to the other.

The generally accepted definition of giftedness and talentedness according to Marland (1972) is as follows:

Gifted and talented children are those identified by professional qualified persons who by virtue of outstanding abilities are capable of high performance. These are children who require differentiated educational programmes and/or services beyond those normally provided by the regular school programme in order to realize their contribution to self and society. Children capable of high performance include those with demonstrated achievement and/or potential ability in

any of the following areas, singly or in combination: General intellectual ability, specific academic aptitude, creative or productive thinking, leadership ability, visual and performing arts, and psychomotor ability.

From the above definition, inference could be made that the gifted and talented children need special support and differentiated educational programmes in order to meet their unique needs in schools. Furthermore, since the responsibility of giving this support rests heavily on the teachers handling them, effort has been made in this study to stress the essential characteristics those teachers must possess before they could discharge their duties effectively. Again, the qualities expected of such teachers have been explained while the strategies to be used in supporting the gifted learner have been extensively discussed.

Finally, this study also examined various management and instructional procedures which the teacher could fall back upon to meet the unique needs of the gifted child in the classroom. Mention must also be made of the fact that the role the parents play in giving adequate support to their gifted children in order to meet their unique needs in schools cannot be overemphasized. Parental involvement is quite essential since the number of hours the children spend with their parents at home are by far greater than the number of hours spent in the school. In this study, recommendations were made for parents to know how to support their children in order to enhance their giftedness. It is against this background that all the aforementioned points that the study examined were discussed one after the other.

Essential Characteristics of Effective Teachers of Gifted Students

Effective teachers of gifted students are expected to possess the following characteristics:

- insights into the cognitive, social and emotional needs of gifted students
- skills in differentiating the curriculum for gifted students
- employ strategies that encourage higher level thinking
- encourage students to be independent learners
- provide student-centered learning opportunities
- act as a facilitator or "guide on the side"
- create a non-threatening learning environment
- are well organized
- possess indepth knowledge of subject matter
- have broad interests, often literary and cultural
- have above average intelligence
- lifelong learning
- think creatively
- possess excellent communication skills
- willingness to make mistakes
- possess a sense of humour
- are enthusiastic

The Qualities expected of Good Teachers of Gifted and Talented Learners

According to Nwazuoke (1996) gifted children have special educational, social and emotional needs that differ from those of other children. To meet those needs a special type of “good” teacher is required to support them. Nwazuoke (1996) stressed further that the teachers in question must possess the following qualities.

Openness: Openness refers to a teacher’s ability to be sensitive and accepting. It is characterized by a concern for people rather than things. Openness applies to new ideas, methods, and materials for teaching and it applies to students’ thinking and opinions as well. Effective teachers must be open emotionally-sensitive and responsive to gifted children’s feelings, vulnerabilities, and uniqueness. Openness in relationships with other professionals, parents and other community members is an important area that should not be overlooked either.

Flexibility: For effective teachers of the gifted to be able to give full support to their gifted students, they must be flexible in their approaches toward curriculum and learning. An individualized approach to students’ needs, learning styles, and abilities is especially important. Flexible teachers use a variety of curriculum materials as well as instructional groups, which they would modify to meet the unique and changing needs of their students. Teachers should possess a wide range of teaching styles and methods. They must be able to change these depending on the nature of the subject being taught, the learning situation, and the child. Questioning methods must be flexible, going beyond the recall level and encouraging children to think, analyze, relate, and evaluate information.

Flexibility regarding use of classroom time and space is important also. Student input and direction should be allowed and encouraged as much as possible so that children realize they have a part and responsibility in directing their own learning.

Positive Sense of Self: A positive sense of self is imperative for teachers of gifted students. Effective teachers of gifted children exhibit self-confidence and enthusiasm. Teachers must be secured in their knowledge of who they are and what they believe. This positive sense of self frees teachers to enjoy and delight in the intelligence and uniqueness of the children around them, rather than feel threatened by them and the challenges they present.

Strong Communication Skills: Communication skills are essential for teachers of the gifted. The social and political nature of gifted child education necessitates that those working in the field communicate accurately and sensitively with others. Keeping in mind and responding positively to common objections and misconceptions. The role of the gifted teacher is often one of social and political advocacy as well as teaching. The teacher who understands giftedness and its

implications for children, and who can communicate this knowledge effectively to others, aids those he or she teaches plus gifted child education in general.

In communicating with gifted children, the effective teacher develops and shows an understanding of each child's social, and emotional needs along with the child's academic needs.

Intelligence: Teachers of gifted students must be similar in many respects to those they teach: inquisitive, skilled in analytical reasoning and problem solving, creative, alert, and knowledgeable. With the emphasis in gifted child education on teaching higher-level thinking skills, like critical and creative thinking, teachers must be comfortable enough with such skills to use them in their own learning. Teachers of gifted students should be role models of what we want for and from the students themselves – that they become curious, lifelong learners who value intelligence, learning, and excellence.

Strategies to be adopted in Supporting the Gifted Learner in the School

Adelodun (2013) stressed that teachers could use various strategies to support the gifted and talented students depending on the student's learning abilities, the school's policies, how classes are structured and the educator's amount of time to devote to that student. In many cases, educators modify the individual student's curriculum while keeping them in the classroom with their peers. Some classrooms are structured to allow each student to learn at his or her own pace, and in these environments, gifted students can thrive alongside peers who are also succeeding according to their own abilities. Adelodun (2013) stressed some of the successful tactics which educators have used while teaching gifted students:

Acceleration: Educators utilize this approach to reaching gifted learners by either advancing them to upper grade levels or allowing them to complete their class work at a more rapid pace than their peers.

Enrichment: Some teachers have success in providing additional assignments to enrich the education of gifted students and challenge them in new ways on top of the regular assignments which they must complete for their traditional class work.

Pull Out: In some schools, teaching gifted students is accomplished by pacing them in a separate class with other gifted peers. These often work in conjunction with their regular curriculum by giving students more creative exercises and critical thinking drills that modify how they approach and enjoy regular assignments.

Self-Pacing: A more inclusive way to reach gifted students is by promoting self-pacing for all learners, regardless of ability. Through this method, teachers can create individualized education plans that benefit gifted learners alongside their normal peers.

Classroom Management Support for Gifted Learners

There are many management and instructional procedures, which the teacher could fall back on to meet the unique needs of the gifted child in the classroom (Nwazuoke, 1996). Nwazuoke (1996) went further to stress that no one management approach is in itself sufficient to facilitate effective learning in the gifted child. Rather, a combination of instructional procedures will be quite helpful to the teaching-learning process. A classroom teacher who has a positive attitudinal disposition towards the gifted child in the classroom, has better chances of success as a facilitator of the learning process than one who has low tolerance value for giftedness.

It is very important for the teacher to be quite open to the gifted child's unique ways of responding to stimulus. It is obvious that no single teacher can successfully meet all the unique needs of the gifted child in the classroom. The option open to the teacher is to adopt a number of strategies. One of such strategies is the use of a community mentor. A mentor is someone found to be very successful and accomplished in his or her talent field. Opportunities are created for gifted children to relate with accomplished people in their various areas of interest. The idea is to encourage the children to model their lives on the lives of the mentors. A country like Nigeria is blessed with men and women who have distinguished themselves in the sciences and humanities, creative arts and sports. Perhaps, it is important to note that the choice of mentors to invite must be strictly dependent on the child's areas of interest. The mentor may be expected to deliver lectures, hold symposia or workshops for the children or meet them informally in a question-and-answer forum after the school period (Nwazuoke, 1998).

Another instructional procedure for managing giftedness in the classroom is bibliotherapy. According to Swassing (2015), bibliotherapy consists primarily in providing well-chosen books to the gifted learners to increase self-knowledge and self-esteem and find relief from personal conflicts. The books to be selected for the gifted children must match their age, needs, aptitude, interests and ability levels (Swassing, 2015). To this end, the classroom is expected to be large enough to accommodate classroom library where books can be kept. The classroom teacher would no doubt require the services of a professional librarian in this matter. It is hoped that bibliotherapy would help gifted children in thinking constructively and positively while at the same time increasing their level of abstraction.

Mental ability grouping is another form of grouping which the teacher could adopt for the children in the classroom. The assumption here is that children who belong to the same mental ability bracket are likely to achieve at a near uniform rate. The job of the teacher is made easy when it is known that the children have identical mental ability. In cases where there are sharp differences either in the mental ability of the children or their subject aptitude, the teacher could resort to the use of the resource room technique called Pull-out. As the name implies, a gifted student who requires individualized attention is "pulled" out of the classroom and

taken to the resource room to be attended to by resource room personnel who themselves express considerable expertise in the child's area of need. At the end of the period, the child is returned to his regular class to continue with the others (Nwazuoke, 1998).

An instructional procedure which is related to the pull-out technique is called telescoping (Nwazuoke, 1998). In telescoping, a child is allowed to benefit from instruction at higher levels of study at given periods of the day after which he returns to his regular class. The child is granted this benefit in a subject where he has demonstrated outstanding promise or when it is known that the regular class material will look ordinary to him.

Nwazuoke (1996), also pointed out that another instructional procedure for managing giftedness is by engaging the services of an itinerant teacher to provide support to the classroom teacher. The function of an itinerant teacher is to move from one school to another instructing students on a particular specialized skill or number of skills. To this extent, the itinerant teacher is a very knowledgeable person whose expertise may not be easily sourced within the school system. The days and times the itinerant teacher is supposed to visit should be part of the overall framework in programme planning. In effect, the coming of the itinerant teacher should dovetail into the programme of the school in such a way that normalcy is not disrupted.

Conclusion

Finally, one can say emphatically that like other children, the gifted children have certain basic needs, for security, for love, for belongingness and the need to be accepted as an individual. In addition to these basic needs, the gifted children may have certain additional specific needs on account of their exceptionality or speciality with regard to the possession of their giftedness or talent. Undoubtedly, a gifted child needs a proper environment for his or her development. He or she wants to be understood carefully in response to his or her different needs and problems. The gifted child is exceptionally curious and has a thirst for knowledge. Therefore, he or she is in the habit of seeking the truth by asking searching questions. The parents as well as the teachers, who do not understand the necessity of the child's urges, usually snub him or her. Sometimes, he or she wants appreciation for the ingenuity in scientific field or creativity in arts, but does not get it. Consequently, he or she feels insecure and rejected. A sort of mishandling or carelessness on the part of teachers or parents, further aggravates the situation and the child is turned into a nuisance. It is against this background that the underlisted recommendations are made for both the parents and the teachers of gifted children.

Recommendations

In view of the fact that the role parents and teachers must play in meeting the unique needs of gifted and talented learners cannot be underplayed, the following recommendations are made for both of them.

For Parents

Parents are to provide an intellectually stimulating curiosity producing atmosphere in their homes and must also appreciate the gifted child's ingenuity in scientific field or creativity in arts. Parents are to establish a close, mutually respectful relationship with their children and they must also ensure that they become role models of behaviour they desire their gifted children to have.

It is recommended that parents show affection, trust and approval to their children. Parents are also implored to support their gifted children and to always get involved in anything their children do. All the aforementioned points are all the gifted children need from their parents in order to promote and enhance their giftedness.

For Teachers

It is recommended that the teacher satisfy the curiosity of their gifted students at all times and the teachers must always value their achievement. Teachers are to create a learning environment that is open, accepting, warm and intellectually challenging. Teachers are to also see to it that they provide opportunities for gifted students to build their self-concept.

It is recommended that the teachers always look for ways to meet the individual needs of their gifted students. Finally, teachers are to give the gifted underachievers opportunities to focus on their talent areas such as: music, art, drama, sculpture, athletics and so on. If all these recommendations are strictly adhered to by the teachers, all the unique needs of gifted learners would have been met and their giftedness would be fostered.

References

- Adelodun, G.A. 2013. Effective and Creative Teaching of Gifted and Talented Students in Secondary Schools, in M.A. Araromi, O.A. Moronkola and J.A. Ademokoya, (Eds), *Teaching and Evaluation in Regular and Special Secondary Schools, Ibadan*. 599-612.
- Guilford, J.P. 2009. A Revised Structure of Intellect, Report of Psychology, Los Angeles: University of Southern California 19 (3), 1-63.
- Havighurst, R.J. 1957. In N.B. Henry (Ed.) Education for the Gifted, Fifty Seventh Year Book of National Society for the Study of Education, No.11. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Marland, S. 1972. Education of the Gifted and Talented (Report to the Congress of the United States by the US Commission of Education).
- Nwazuoke, I.A. 1996. Mangement of Giftedness in Nigeria. in S.O. Ayodele (Ed) *Education in the Service of Humanity. Ibadan: The Educational Research and Study Group*.

- Nwazuoke, I.A. 1998. Characteristics and Education of Children with Special Needs. A Paper Presented at the Workshop on Theories of Child Development Education and Culture, Counselling Process and Parent-Teacher Relationships held at the Faculty of Education, University of Ibadan from 14-18 December 1998.
- Parischa, P. 1969. *Guideline for Grade Advancement of Precocious Children*, Roeper Review, 9, pp.25-27.
- Renzulli, J.S. Reis, S.M. & Smith, L. 1981. What Makes Differences? *Re-examining a Definition*; Phi Delta Kappan 603.
- Swassing, R.H. 2015. *Teaching Gifted Children and Adolescents*. Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Company.
- Witty, P.A. 1958. Who are the Gifted? in N.B. Henry (Ed.) *Education of the Gifted*. Fifty-Seventh Year book of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part II. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN LIBRARY