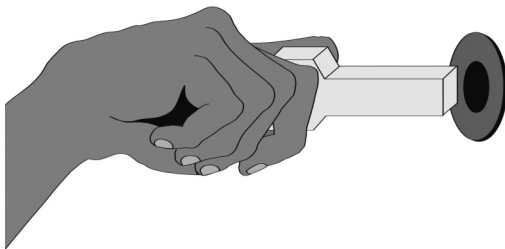


PROLOGUE:

Being Gifted Is Like Having Access to a Really Nice Car- Understanding the Diversity of Gifted Students



Gifted students can be as diverse as they are similar. Being gifted is like having access to a really nice car. However, the forward motion of the car is directly related to the interactions among the driver, environment, and road conditions.

- The gifted from a nurtured, enriched background has the car with an outside accessory package that seems bright and shiny. Everyone can see, admire, and encourage the talents.
- The low-income gifted has the car but may not yet have the keys to drive it. Environmental circumstances may limit others' understanding of how incredibly well it can drive.
- The high-ability gifted has the car, but may only be allowed to drive it within the city limits. Routinely, it is required to use its brakes. It is regulated and must follow all the usual traffic signs, including slow, caution, speed limit, and stop.
- The gifted genius or prodigy has the car but its motor is considered too powerful for many driving environments. It must frequently prove itself by taking standardized driving tests that may not match its motor. It needs to access more supportive road conditions so it can exceed current speed limits.
- The underachieving gifted has the car, but is not driving it. It may be packaged with a fixed mindset or the air is out of its tires. It remains parked in the garage.
- The primary-aged gifted has the car, but is considered too young to drive it. The driver has to wait and must be older in order to get a license or access a map to drive further.
- The asynchronous gifted has the car, but some of its features are at different stages of development. Its driving range is limited because others do not think it is ready to drive. In many instances, it appears to others to be an average car instead of a really nice car.
- The language-different gifted has the car, but the surrounding signs and directions are in another language. The driver is slowed by this environment and needs support to comprehend how to move in the most productive, forward direction.

- The ADD/ADHD gifted has the car, but its signal lights do not work consistently or in the expected way. The electrical system is wired differently so it stays in motion when others want it to stop.
- The culturally-different gifted has the car, but it has a shrink-wrap cover over it that clouds its exceptional features and potential speed from others' view. It may receive a lower octane gasoline when a higher grade is needed.
- The learning-different gifted has the car, but the computer control systems are different. The mechanics are kept so busy trying to reprogram the computer that the car never gets to be driven.
- The adolescent gifted female has the car but isn't driving it. She may self-sabotage to fit in with others or she may be sabotaged by others who think she does not deserve to drive it. Some wonder what her daddy does that caused her to get the car in the first place!
- The gifted and creative thinker has the car with a potpourri of exciting, hidden features. However, it has such advanced technology that others may find it weird or difficult. Sometimes, its multipotentiality and features are so unique that the car has trouble focusing on how to get started.
- The gifted who demonstrates social-emotional intensity has the car. However, its color is too extreme and its accessories seem outrageously overdone for its environment. The mechanics think the intensity is

a deficit and try to settle it down so they can manage its motion and reactions. It is encouraged to use a lower octane and remain in the restricted environment of the garage.

Being gifted is like having access to a really nice car. However, there are many types of giftedness just as there are numerous kinds of cars.

- ✓ Help strengthen students' and adults' understanding and sensitivity to the diversity of the gifted.
- ✓ Implement a wider range of equitable practices that recognize and energize high-ability or high-aptitude students from underrepresented populations as well as the general population.
- ✓ Support high expectations and high achievement beyond what is solely measured by standardized tests.
- ✓ Support and nurture high ability and high aptitude as early as possible to forward the development of a mindset for effort and high achievement.
- ✓ Be a powerful advocate supporting the pace and level of learning opportunities that nurture our gifted learners as they proceed on the high-speed freeway of continuous learning.

Adapted from Kingore, B. & Rinard, L. (1997). Atypical gifted: Understanding the diversity of the gifted. *TEMPO*, 17 (2), 1, 6.