

When their needs are not met...

This story, which was found on the website for the National Association for Gifted Children, is the true story of a child whose needs were not met in the classroom:

When Christopher was five, he could add and subtract multi-digit numbers with ease. He could tell time without pause. He could make change with precision. It was May before his kindergarten teacher introduced the notion that numbers are read from left to right on the page. In first grade, Christopher was hungry to read real books, but he spent the first year "learning" vowels, consonants, and how to make words. In second grade, he wanted to know about black holes. His teacher gave him a book on the subject, but it left Christopher with many unanswered questions, so he asked for other books. His teacher told him there were none.

In third grade, his standardized math scores in the spring were so high, that his teacher suggested that he might enjoy going to fourth grade math class for the last month of school-but noted that even if he could do the fourth grade math, he'd have to repeat it next year. There were no provisions for acceleration, in or out of grade level.

There are many options that are available for this student and for the many other gifted students whose needs are not being met.



For more information on Meeting the Needs of Gifted Learners in Mixed-Ability Classrooms, you can visit the following websites:

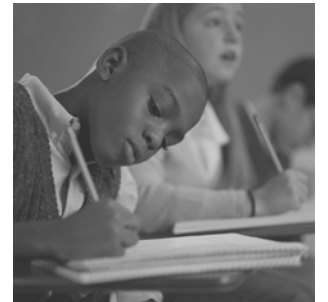
National Association for Gifted Children:
www.nagc.org

Differentiating Instruction for the Gifted:
http://www.kidsource.com/kidsource/content/diff_instruction.html

Strategies for Differentiating Instruction:
<http://members.shaw.ca/priscillatheroux/differentiatingstrategies.html>


SPED 6403

Meeting the Needs of Gifted Learners in Mixed-Ability Classrooms



Differentiating Instruction– One Size Doesn't Fit All

How can I tell if my child's needs are being met in the classroom?

- *Instruction within the classroom should be concept focused and principle driven. Students should be given ample opportunities to explore on their own and apply the key concepts that are being taught.
- *On-going assessment of student readiness and growth are apparent in the curriculum. After assessment, the teacher builds from the needs of the classroom.
- *Flexible grouping is consistently used. Your child should not be working with the same group of students each day all year long.
- *Students should be active explorers with their teacher guiding their explorations.
- *Goal setting between the student and teacher should be apparent.

Source: http://www.kidsource.com/kidsource/content/diff_instruction.html

What is differentiation?

According to Carol Ann Tomlinson, a well-known gifted education researcher, a differentiated classroom offers a variety of learning options that are designed to tap into different readiness levels, interests, and learning profiles. In a differentiated classroom, a teacher uses a variety of ways for students to explore curriculum content, a variety of sense-making activities or processes to which students can come to understand and “own” information and ideas, and a variety of options through which students can demonstrate or exhibit what they have learned. A class is not differentiated when all students are doing the same thing and no adjustments are being made to the difficulty levels of the assignments that are given.



Types of Differentiation...

With the constant pace of today's world, there is no room for gifted students to be falling behind. Most teachers who have an effective classroom differentiate instruction within their classroom somehow. There are many ways for teachers to meet the needs of gifted learners within a mixed-ability classroom. Some of the options that should be available to all students include:

1. Curriculum Compacting: The teacher assesses a student's knowledge, skills, and attitudes and providing alternative activities for the student who has already mastered the content to be taught.
2. Acceleration: This is done by allowing students to work at a faster pace than other students within the classroom. The student and teacher set a pace and a goal for learning.
3. Flexible grouping: Although a student may be working below grade level in one subject, he or she may be able to work above grade level in another. For a gifted student, flexible grouping allows the student to work with other intellectual peers.