BE RESOURCE-FUL FOR MIDDLE GRADES GIFTED LEARNERS

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A long time ago, in a galaxy far, far away....
Do you remember ...?

- Were you a teacher when Gifted Resource was a popular model in middle schools?

- Were you a student when Gifted Resource was a popular model in middle schools?

- Did you even know this was a model in middle school?
ADVANCED LEARNING PROGRAMS - GOALS

• Development of Cognitive Skill growth
• Promotion of Affective Skill growth
• Extension and enrichment of the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards
Background

■ Middle School Advanced Content Committee discussions
■ Gifted elective interest
  - Reading class alternative
  - Study Skills class for gifted students
■ Social Emotional issues seen with MS gifted students
■ Earning FTE
Interest at school level

- Approached by one middle school wanting an alternative for gifted students
  - Students overwhelmed with high-pressure Advanced Content classes
  - Students on anxiety medications
  - Students with other social-emotional adjustment issues

- Offered Gifted Resource course as an option
  - Created a framework
  - Purchased books and materials
  - Offered to meet one on one with teacher to offer support and guidance
  - Began offering the class in second semester
The result...

*Gifted Resource for Middle Grades*
Concept and gaining support

- Year One, second semester (2015-16)
  - Concept - one teacher and two 6th grade classes

- Year Two (2015-16)
  - MS 1 – two sections 6th and 7th grade
  - MS 2 – six sections, 6th, 7th and 8th grade
  - MS 3 – two sections, 8th grade (teachers give up part of planning)

- Presented to MS principals at Leadership Meeting
Participants

- Gifted middle school students who need support and additional rigorous academic opportunities to address cognitive and affective needs

- Gifted endorsed middle school teachers willing to step outside the traditional advanced class “box”
Curriculum

- Grounded in academic content
- Emphasis on interdisciplinary enrichment
- Includes an extension of knowledge and skills that may not be available in other middle grades content-specific courses
- Content, teaching strategies, and expectations for student mastery are differentiated to be appropriate for gifted students
Skills

- Advanced communication and research skills
- Critical thinking
- Logical reasoning
- Creative problem solving
- Philosophical thinking
- Social and self-awareness
- Personal efficacy
It also makes you use critical thinking skills to get you ready for higher grades.

It’s an important class because it goes above and beyond AC classes.

This class meets my needs because the students must work things out on our own. Our teachers gives us guidelines and we do the rest.

The learning is much more student based than curriculum based.

The morning logic puzzle really gets my brain going for the rest of the period.

I like this class because it teaches me about things you wouldn’t learn in other subjects.

It helps me bring out my inner genius.

This class makes me push my limit of thinking.

Overall this class helps me and my classmates learn to the best of our abilities.

I can express myself and gain higher knowledge of the world around me and myself.
Framework

First/Fall semester:
- interdisciplinary content-based unit including research skills, divergent and evaluative thinking lessons/activities – 60% (grades 6 and 7) OR
- interdisciplinary content-based unit focused on building leadership skills and including research skills, divergent and evaluative thinking lessons/activities – 60% (Grade 8)
- affective education and philosophy – 20%
- convergent thinking and logical thinking/problem solving – 20%

Second/spring semester:
- action research and independent study project – 60%
- affective education and philosophy – 20%
- convergent thinking and logical thinking/problem solving – 20%
Standards - Georgia DOE Gifted Services

- LE1.1: The curriculum includes interdisciplinary, real world learning experiences which incorporate advanced research and communication skills.

- LE1.2 Resources designed to specifically address the needs of gifted learners, including critical and creative thinking, problem-solving activities, and social and self-awareness, are incorporated into the curriculum.

- LE1.3: The LEA provides opportunities for students to learn with and from intellectual peers and experts
Course Outcomes

1. The curriculum includes interdisciplinary, real world learning experiences which incorporate advanced research and communication skills.

The student will be able to:

- Make relationships and connections among various topics and disciplines.
- Research, evaluate and propose solutions to authentic problems and dilemmas.
- Choose appropriate problems and dilemmas to research and resolve.
- Formulate thought-provoking questions for research.
- Apply and adapt a variety of strategies to resolve problems and dilemmas, and evaluate their effectiveness.
- Effectively communicate both verbally and nonverbally using a variety of modalities.
- Understand and adjust communication for a given audience.
- Read and respond to a variety of texts.
- Write for a variety of purposes.
- Use knowledge of language and appropriate conventions when writing, speaking, reading, and listening.
Since I have the aptitude as a gifted student and I need the challenges, this class helps me to get that challenge that I need.

Gifted resource is an important class because it gives the excelled (sic) student the challenges they need...I need a challenge and the feeling of being a smart, gifted student. I love this class!

This class challenges me and gives me an opportunity for success in other ways than just get good grades, like making myself become a better person.

Gifted resource is important to me because not all of my classes give me a challenge.

It also teachers me to expand my vocabulary, accept challenges, and gives me crucial and valuable strategies for life in general.

...giving me the challenge that I need during school because when I'm not challenged I lose focus...

It meets my needs by challenging me to do my very best and by giving me fun, challenging work and not boring easy work.

It isn't just more, harder work, it is a different kind of work that is fun at the same time as challenging.
Course Outcomes

2. Utilize resources designed to specifically address the needs of gifted learners, including critical and creative thinking, problem-solving activities, and social and self-awareness, are incorporated into the curriculum.

The student will be able to:

- Apply critical thinking skills to various situations: metacognition, observation, questioning, prediction, analysis, interpretation, inference, summarize, evaluation, synthesis, explanation, transferring.
- Cultivate critical thinking through the use of: clarity, accuracy, precision, relevance, depth, breadth, logic, significance, and fairness.
- Think creatively to generate innovative ideas, products, or solutions to problems.
- Apply components of divergent thinking to ideas, products, and problem-solving situations.
- Reason logically to solve problems using induction and deduction.
- Analyze logic to determine if it sufficiently supports opinions, theories, conjectures, and conclusions.
- Reflect upon their abilities to develop areas of strengths and recognize areas of weakness to facilitate self-growth.
- Set appropriately high standards for work and behavior.
- Seek opportunities and take initiative for self-growth, especially in the area of leadership.
Gifted resource is a value because its whole goal is to increase your critical thinking and expanding your creativity to try new things or experiment outside the box.

I always feel like I can express myself and be creative. I feel like I can be proud of myself and be independent.

This is my only class where I am able to use my creativity freely without limits and it makes school fun.

Gifted resource covers more real world and creative aspects of life that can’t be fit into another class.

We use creativity and take learning to a new level.

There’s a level of freedom in Gifted Resource that allows me to ask questions and be as creative as I want about whatever is exploring the depths of my mind.

Personally the class meets my needs by opening opportunities for different styles of thinking, learning and being creative.

It lets me think outside the box and to make discoveries I can’t find in a textbook or out of teachers words.
Course Outcomes

3. Provide opportunities for students to learn with and from intellectual peers and experts.

The student will be able to:

- Interact and exchange ideas, feelings, information, thoughts, and knowledge with intellectual peers and experts.
- Recognize and value the strengths of individual differences of peers and community members.
- Participate actively and appropriately in a variety of learning situations.
Gifted resource is an important class to me because I am surrounded by people that have the same level of intelligence and talent as me.

Although I have all advanced classes...this class allows me to let all of my intelligence out and show everyone who I am.

This class gives me many opportunities to show my intelligence and flexibility in many given situations.

It has helped me with my communication. I used to not speak because I was shy and now I like presenting.

It lets the gifted students think how they should be able to think.

It lets me use my talents and abilities in class.

If not for this 6th grade gifted class, I wouldn't be able to express my thoughts, feelings, intelligence, and other greatness.

I believe it meets my needs by giving me a chance to express myself and let me be myself more so than any other classes.

Gifted even teaches us to give back to the world through service projects.

It helps us learn how to work and collaborate with people we may or may not get along with.
Resources

- Exploring Peoples and Cultures: Authentic Ethnographic Research in the Classroom (6)
- Ecopolis: An Interactive discovery-Based Social Studies Unit for High-Ability Learners (7)
- Building Everyday Leadership in All Teens: Promoting Attitude and Actions for Respect and Success (8)
- Philosophy for Teens: Questioning Life’s Big Ideas (6)
- MORE Philosophy for Teens: Examining Reality and Knowledge (7)
- The Examined Life: Advanced Philosophy for Kids (8)
- Changing Tomorrow 2: Leadership Curriculum for High-Ability Middle School Students
- Action Research for Kids
- I'm Not Just Gifted: Social-Emotional Curriculum for Guiding Gifted Children
- Stand Up! Speak Out!: The Social Action Curriculum for Building 21st-Century Skills
- Logic and mind benders books
Scheduling

May be offered by semester or entire year
- 5th academic
- Reading class alternative
- School-wide “study skills”
- Connections course

Course Numbers used
- 71.22600 - 6th grade Gifted Resource
- 71.22700 - 7th grade Gifted Resource
- 71.22800 - 8th grade Gifted Resource
1. **Grading**

   - Grading for this course shall be on a traditional 0-100%/A-F scale.

2. **Continuation of Services**

   - Gifted students must maintain an 80% or higher in order to maintain in good standing. Students that drop below an 80% will be placed on probationary status. If a student receives a 79% or lower for two or more quarters, he/she will be removed from the course.

3. **FTE guidelines for claiming gifted weight**

   - Gifted resource classes must meet state and local criteria for gifted class size. See Cobb IE2 waiver for details. The gifted resource teacher must have a gifted endorsement on his/her certificate. The class should be a homogenous grouping of all gifted identified students.
Middle School

Gifted Resource Classes

In Action!
Middle School

Gifted Resource Classes

Make a Difference for the Students
Makes a difference in the gifted students’ lives

To any school, I think this a great class for our generation.

Gifted resource is my personal outlet of my day in and around school.

Gifted Resource Rules!

I don’t think I would enjoy school if it weren’t for this class.

It (GR) meets my needs as a gifted student by making me better at all sorts of things, and I highly recommend this program to other schools and districts.

This class is the highlight of my day.

In general, I value this class and I hope other kids in middle school will be able to have this ingenious class.

I think GR is an awesome class. The teacher doesn’t think like a business zombie. She is creative and lets us be us...
Thank you for attending!

**MAY THE RESOURCE BE WITH YOU!**

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