



Westlake Charter School

Expanding Opportunities... Connecting Children to the World!

Program Goal

The goal of the Westlake Charter School's GATE (Gifted and Talented Education) Program is to provide differentiated learning opportunities during the regular school day for identified students. Differentiation is an effective approach to teaching and learning. It modifies the curriculum content and/or teaching methodologies used with the core curriculum so that students may learn at their own ability levels and at their own pace. Differentiation is not a new concept, but is based on best practices in education. Strategies used may include, but are not limited to, flexible grouping, acceleration, in-depth study, complexity and novelty. Promoting academic excellence, independent thinking, student responsibility and self-confidence are key components of our program.

DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION

The Westlake Charter School GATE Program is designed to provide intellectual growth to all GATE students by offering appropriately differentiated instruction. This occurs during the regular school day and meets or exceeds state academic content standards. Each year, the goal is for each GATE student to achieve one year of growth in all academic areas, even if it is beyond grade level expectations.

What Differentiated Curriculum Is: Differentiated curriculum is an approach to teaching which provides students with a number of different options for learning. The word "differentiated" means different or not the same. The regular classroom curriculum is either accelerated to the learner's own pace or studied more in depth by using higher level critical thinking skills and/or by making connections to prior knowledge in other subjects. When appropriate, the students may also complete projects that demonstrate the knowledge learned from the differentiated activities.

What Differentiated Curriculum Is Not: Differentiated curriculum is not intended to be beyond the ability level of the student and should not cause content knowledge gaps in the student's learning. Differentiated curriculum is not intended to be delivered to students all the time and most students do not

need it in all subjects. Differentiated curriculum also does not mean more of the same curriculum.

The purpose of differentiated curriculum is to increase learning and encourage students to become lifelong learners. It seeks to maximize a student's potential by meeting his/her academic, intellectual, social and emotional needs.

Reference: Carol Ann Tomlinson, Ph.D.

Program Coordinator for the Educational Psychology/Gifted Education
Curry School of Education, University of Virginia

PLACEMENT

Classroom Clusters

Westlake Charter School provides GATE clusters in grades 2nd -5th. This is a research-based program in which GATE-identified students (generally 2-6 students in primary grades; 2-8 students in upper grades) are grouped together within the mixed-ability classroom.

Teachers with specific training based on gifted education research provide differentiated instruction to meet the unique needs of these students. Differentiated instruction for students/advanced learners may include, but is not limited to, flexible grouping, acceleration, in-depth study, complexity, and novelty. This may occur daily or periodically throughout the year. Differentiated activities are conducted as an integrated part of the regular program. Supplemental materials and technology may also be used to enhance the basic curriculum.

Being in a GATE cluster classroom does not mean more work for a GATE student; nor are GATE students singled out as being different. A cluster class is often not easily identifiable by GATE and non-GATE parents.

The benefits of being in a GATE cluster include:

- Being grouped both with age peers and students of similar ability.
- Grouping students together for ease and depth of instruction.
- Having teachers with additional training to differentiate the curriculum and meet the needs of gifted learners.
- Remaining at Westlake Charter School.
- Continue to receive regular instruction in Art, P.E., and Spanish.

California Association for the Gifted

A Position Paper

The California Association for the Gifted (CAG) periodically publishes position papers that deal with issues, policies, and practices that have an impact on the education of gifted and talented students. All position papers approved by the CAG Board of Directors are consistent with the organization's philosophy and mission, and the current research in the field. The position papers support the organization's belief in the value and uniqueness of all individuals, its respect for diversity present in our society, and its commitment to honoring the similarities and differences among all students. CAG encourages the provision of educational opportunities that are appropriate to challenge and nurture the growth of each child's potential. The organization is especially mindful of the need for advocacy for individuals who have developed or show the promise of developing intellectual abilities and talents at high levels.

Characteristics of Gifted Children

To provide appropriate education for gifted children, it is important to understand the characteristics of giftedness. Decades of research has provided a body of evidence regarding these characteristics that shows gifted individuals exhibit high levels of functioning in the cognitive, affective, physical, and intuitive areas. Intellectual processing integrates all of these, but individuals vary in the degree to which they are exhibited; no one child will have *all* of these characteristics.

The cognitive area is the logical, rational thought processing characterized by:

- an extraordinary quantity of information an unusual capacity for processing information at an accelerated pace
- persistent, goal-directed behavior
- high levels of abstract thought
- flexibility of thought
- rapid acquisition of a new language

The affective area is the social/emotional interaction expressed by:

- unusual sensitivity to the environment
- empathy and high levels of awareness of the expectations and feelings of others
- early development of idealism and a sense of justice
- emotional intensity
- high expectations of self and others

The physical/sensory area is characterized by:

- heightened sensitivity to light, sound, touch, smell, and taste
- asynchrony, the unusual discrepancy between physical and intellectual development
- high energy, alertness, and eagerness that might be misdiagnosed as a
- hyperactivity disorder
- a tendency to avoid physical activity in favor of intellectual pursuits
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The intuitive area is expressed through non-linear reasoning characterized by:

- creative approaches and inventiveness in any area of endeavor
- insightfulness leading to leaps in understanding
- curiosity
- sensitivity to aesthetic qualities
- interest in the future
- ability to predict
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Some gifted students have characteristics that can act as a barrier to the identification process. Some adults may believe that these same characteristics are incompatible with giftedness.

- lack of organization
- extensive daydreaming
- failure to complete work
- argumentativeness
- challenge to authority
- challenge to assignments that seem pointless to the learner
- keen sense of humor that may not be understood
- perfectionism (e.g. fear of failure)
- inability to prioritize interests that can result in mediocrity
- emotional intensity
- experience of different reality

The California Association for the Gifted believes that achievement tends to be higher, and self-efficacy and self-esteem more healthy when parents and educators understand these characteristics and provide appropriate environments for gifted students.

Parents and educators should facilitate opportunities for learning that are appropriate to the cognitive, affective, physical, and intuitive functions of gifted learners. This practice nurtures positive characteristics, avoids some of the negative manifestations associated with giftedness, and encourages optimal development of the student's potential.

References:

- Clark, B. (2002). *Growing up Gifted* (6th ed.). Columbus, OH: Merrill/Prentice-Hall.
- Davis, G., & Rimm, S. (2004). *Education of the gifted and talented* (5th ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Karnes, F.A., & Bean, S.M. (2001). *Methods and Materials for Teaching the Gifted*. Waco, TX: Prufrock Press.
- Approved 11-20-05

The Differences Between a Bright Child and a Gifted Learner

Source: Janice Szabos, Challenge Magazine

A Bright Child:	A Gifted Learner:
Knows the answers	Asks the questions
Is interested	Is highly curious
Is attentive	Is mentally and physically involved
Has good ideas	Has wild, silly ideas
Works hard	Plays around, yet tests well
Answers the questions	Discusses in detail, elaborates
Top group	Beyond the group
Listens with interest	Shows strong feeling and opinions
Learns with ease	Already knows
6-8 repetitions for mastery	1-2 repetitions for mastery
Understands ideas	Constructs abstractions
Enjoys peers	Prefers adults
Grasps the meaning	Draws inferences
Completes assignments	Initiates projects
Is receptive	Is intense
Copies accurately	Creates a new design
Enjoys school	Enjoys learning
Absorbs information	Manipulates information
Technician	Inventor
Good memorizer	Good guesser
Enjoys sequential presentation	Thrives on complexity
Is alert	Is keenly observant
Is pleased with own learning	Is highly self-critical

RESOURCES WEBSITES FOR PARENTS

California Association for the Gifted <http://www.cagifted.org/>

Capitol Region GATE Consortium California Department of Education

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/gt/> <http://www.crgate.org/>

National Association for Gifted Children <http://www.nagc.org/>

American Association for Gifted Children <http://www.aagc.org/>

World Council for Gifted & Talented Children <http://world-gifted.org/>

Academic Talent Search ~ Sacramento State <http://edweb.csus.edu/Projects/ats/>

Center for Talented Youth ~ Johns Hopkins University <http://cty.jhu.edu/>

Supporting Emotional Needs of the Gifted <http://www.sengifted.org/>

The Association for the Gifted ~ The Council for Exceptional Children

<http://www.cectag.org/>

Neag Center for Gifted Education and Talent Development ~ University of Connecticut

<http://www.gifted.uconn.edu/>

Davidson Institute for Talent Development <http://www.davidsongifted.org/>

Hoagies' Gifted Education Page <http://www.hoagiesgifted.org/>

Prufrock Press Gifted Education Blog & Gifted Child Info Blog <http://www.prufrock.com/>

WEBSITES FOR LEARNING & DISCOVERY

A Library of Blue Ribbon Learning Sites

<http://www.kn.pacbell.com/wired/bluwebn/index.cfm>

The Academy of Achievement <http://www.achievement.org/>

EduHound: Everything for Education K12 <http://www.eduhound.com/>

Filamentality “Learning Web” <http://www.kn.pacbell.com/wired/fil/>

Chem4kids.com <http://www.chem4kids.com/index.html>

Young Writers Workshop <http://www.meddybemps.com/9.700.html>

Science News for Kids <http://www.sciencenewsforkids.org/>

BOOKS

<i>A Parent's Guide to Gifted Children</i> by James T. Webb, Janet L. Gore, Edward R. Amend, and Arlene R. DeVries
<i>Barefoot Irreverence: A Collection of Writings on Gifted Child Education</i> by James R. Delisle
<i>Being Smart About Gifted Children: A Guidebook For Parents And Educators</i> by Dona J. Matthews and Joanne F. Foster
<i>College Planning for Gifted Students: Choosing And Getting into the Right College</i> by Sandra L. Berger
<i>Coping for Capable Kids (Revised)</i> by Leonora Cohen
<i>Genius Denied: How to Stop Wasting Our Brightest Young Minds</i> by Jan Davidson, Bob Davidson, and Laura Vanderkam
<i>Growing Up Gifted: Developing the Potential of Children at Home and at School (7th Edition)</i> by Barbara Clark
<i>Living with Intensity: Understanding Sensitivity, Excitability, and Emotional Development of Gifted Children</i> by Susan Daniels
<i>A Love for Learning: Motivation and the Gifted Child</i> by Carol Strip Whitney
<i>The Gifted Kids' Survival Guide for Ages 10 and Under</i> by: Judy Galbraith