



# Case Study: Gifted Child

# Case Study



The purpose of a case study is to develop and demonstrate understanding of a real-life case and then make a decision about it.

# Case Study: Gifted Student

## YOUR BRIEF

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1. Case Study: Brief
2. In teams of 2 you are going to look at a case study. Each case involves a problem.
3. You will read the situation, discuss some questions then do some research using the sources given to you.
4. You will record your answers to the questions, either by making notes or using an audio recorder.
5. You will make notes from the source texts/website(s).
6. With your partner, you will collate (put together) the information.
7. The objective is to make some recommendations regarding a solution to the problem.
8. You will write a report describing a) the case b) how you investigated the possible solutions c) recommendations
9. You will present your work to the class using the presentation tool of your choice (eg Keynote, PowerPoint, Prezi, etc). You will speak for 2-3 mins and will use between **1 - 4 slides** per team.

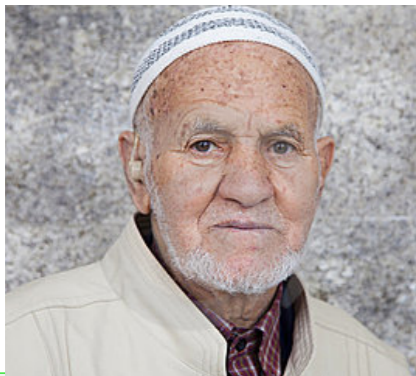
## Read the case study

### CASE STUDY: Gifted Child

#### TASK

Your colleague is having problems with a student in his English class. Read the case study telling you what the colleague, student and his parents think about the situation and consider the problem areas.

The teacher, Mr Ali says:



" I get really angry with Mohamed sometimes. He is an extremely bright boy but he is very disruptive in class. He is always clowning around and distracting other students. I'm always telling him to be quiet and to listen to me if he wants to learn. He always wants to question everything. The frustrating thing is that he's a very fast learner, is very talented at reading, writing and solving problems and always gets an 'A'! I have to admit that Mohamed is a charming boy, with a good sense of humour. He gets on well with his classmates too. I just wish he'd listen to me. After all, I'm the expert."

Mohamed says:



" Mr. Ali's classes are so boring! He expects us to sit up straight and just listen as he drones on and on. I used to really like English but now I really dread going to the class. Whenever I ask a question, Mr. Ali tells me to be quiet. It's very frustrating. Sometimes I make jokes to make my friends laugh. Somebody needs to lighten up the class! At my old school we were encouraged to to work independently and to think for ourselves but here I'm just expected to sit passively. How can I ever learn anything if he doesn't let me think? Sometimes i feel really depressed about the class."

**Now go to the next page and discuss the questions with your partner. Make notes of your answers.**

## Discuss:

- What might be the problem with the teacher's attitude to the situation? Give reasons for your answer.
- Do you think Mr Ali is right in his opinions about teaching? Give reasons for your answer.
- Do you think that Mohamed is a bad student? Can you sympathise with his viewpoint? Give reasons for your answer.
- Would you describe Mr Ali's attitude to the situation as positive or negative? Give reasons for your answer.
- There are several reasons for disruptive behaviour in the classroom. Make a list of some of them.
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## Emotional Problems v Gifted Student?

Some students misbehave because they have emotional problems. Some students misbehave because they are classed as 'gifted'. If not challenged, they can become bored, frustrated or depressed.

**Task:** Pick out 5 behaviours that might belong to a student with emotional issues and 5 behaviours that might belong to a gifted student.

Do you think Mohamed has emotional issues or could he be a gifted student? Give reasons for your answer.

| Types of Behaviour                                |
|---|
| Shouts and screams in class.                      |
| Shows wit and humour.                             |
| Questions the teacher rudely.                     |
| Deliberately destroys school property.            |
| Challenges the teacher on certain points.         |
| Expresses curiosity about many things.            |
| Threatens the teacher and other students.         |
| Shows great imagination.                          |
| Uses bad language with the teacher and students.  |
| Desire to work independently and take initiative. |

**Task:** It is your job to make some recommendations to your colleague, Mr Ali. In order to do this you will do some further research. You will be given the source texts/ website(s).

- remember to **skim and scan** the articles/texts for ideas. **Highlight & annotate** key information.
- Do **NOT** copy anything from the articles.
- Remember to **make a note** of where the information came from so that you can **cite** your sources. When using the source texts/ websites to do your research, focus on the following ideas:

**Focus on the following questions:**

- How could Mr Ali improve the situation for
  - a) himself    b) the student?
- What strategies could Mr Ali use to improve the situation?

**Link to Source Texts:** [https://www.dropbox.com/sh/02v2fvzolgawmzi/AAB-7\\_levXgy-MVFYCjOyiwfa?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/02v2fvzolgawmzi/AAB-7_levXgy-MVFYCjOyiwfa?dl=0)

You can also find the source texts in this iBook on p8.

**Link to website:** <https://www.nagc.org/resources-publications/resources/timely-topics/ensuring-diverse-learner-participation-gifted-1>

Make sure you have enough information. You will need to expand on your recommendations during your presentation.

If you find a piece of research that you find interesting, you can do more of your own research on that topic.

When you have finished your research, take the information you have gathered back to your partner.

You will need to:

- Collate the information
- Organise the ideas
- Make some recommendations
- Write a report.
- Present your findings to the class.

## Writing the Report: guidelines

| Title.....      |  |
|-----------------|--|
| Introduction    | Provide background to the case           |
| Investigation   | Describe how you conducted your research |
| Recommendations | Make your recommendations                |



**Case Study: Report on .....** (write title of report here)

### Introduction

In teams of two, we were given a case study to investigate. In the case we were given, the teacher, (enter teacher's name), was concerned about the fact that he/she .....(enter the problem situation). The teacher was concerned because he/she (give an explanation of the teacher's concerns).

The student, (enter student's name), was ..(enter details about the student's concerns, attitude to the situation and his/her feelings).

### Investigation of the case

First we .... (describe what you did first e.g. read the case study).

Next we ..... (describe what you did with the sources/ website(s) you were given. How did you divide up the

work-load? Did you conduct any interviews? Visit the library? etc).

(How did you record the information? Voice recording? Notes?)

(When you had finished your research, how did you collate it?)

## Recommendations

What was your conclusion?

What did you think about the attitude of the teacher? student?

What are your recommendations to the teacher? You can use bullet points for this.

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## Present Your Case to the Class



- Speak for 2-3 mins.
- Use 1-4 slides per team.



## Source Texts

### Source 1

What sets gifted children apart from other students in a classroom? It is basically the ability to absorb abstract concepts, organize them effectively and apply them more appropriately. It is estimated that around 5 to 15% of the school age population are gifted or talented students. These students can have increased capabilities in academics, creativity, music, dance, art, and/or leadership. There are several things the teacher can do to develop a classroom environment that will challenge and nurture gifted learners.

Create an Independent Project activity. Gifted and talented students tend to have a lot of extra time on their hands as they often finish their work quickly. Allow students to pursue independent projects based on their own individual interests. Independent projects can be assigned on the basis of ability level. Encourage creativity and original thinking among gifted students. Allow them to explore ways of connecting unrelated issues in creative ways.

Incorporate Multiple Intelligences into your lessons. Howard Gardner's MI theory states that all people possess at least seven different types of intelligences – linguistic, logical-mathematical, visual-spatial, body-kinesthetic, music, interpersonal and intrapersonal. Apply this theory to your classroom to ensure that every student will be challenged in one or more specific areas.

### Assignments

You can offer your students the same materials but expect different outcomes according to their ability. Include higher-level questions on exams for talented students. Refer to Bloom's Taxonomy as a guide for use with gifted students.

### Flexible Curriculum

Be flexible with the curriculum. Take advantage of real-life experiences that can be translated into problem-solving academics for all students. For example, an impending snowstorm can be used to instruct students. Students of different ability levels can be given different tasks, such as figuring out what snow is made of, predicting the amount of snowfall, or

determining how many snow plows will be needed if 8 inches fall.

### Student-Centred

Make the curriculum student-centered. Engage gifted students in the curriculum decision-making process, giving them an opportunity to learn how to take responsibility for their own learning. Draw the curriculum from the students' interests and educational needs.

**Source:** [Watkins, M. \(2003\). Gifted Students. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.](#)

### Source 2: Why Do Some Teachers Resist Change?

The first step in overcoming resistance to change by teachers is to decide who is resisting change and why. To begin this process, principals need to identify teachers' attitudes and behaviors within the context of the social norms of their schools.

One of many barriers to individual change that has been documented is a failure to recognize the need for change. Unless teachers understand and appreciate the need for change in their schools, their interest in maintaining the way things are will be stronger than their willingness to accept change. Habit is a related barrier to teachers changing their practices. Rather than working to develop new skills/strategies, it is simply easier to continue teaching in the same ways.

Other reason for teachers resisting change might be a result of their past experiences. Many people feel a sense of security from doing things in familiar ways, so forcing a teacher to change well-established professional and instructional patterns could result in a fear of the unknown. Furthermore, if teachers feel that the school environment for change is unsafe, they not only are unlikely to embrace new practices but might

also become defensive and resort to their old habits. Similarly, teachers might actually feel threatened in a number of ways by the idea of change. Their acceptance of change could be affected by what they see as threats to their expertise and proven abilities. They might also believe that they lack the knowledge or skills to implement the change successfully. For some teachers, change may also threaten their power relationships.

In order to help teachers to change, schools must offer professional development, develop a professional learning community, reward constructive behaviour and aim for short-term successes. Recognizing that change is difficult and that teachers' confidence levels may decrease at first as they try new strategies, it is critical that schools respond with good feedback. A supportive environment is necessary for change to happen, so that teachers do not feel stressed and go back to their former strategies and methods.

**Source:** Rogers, E. M. (2013). *Diffusion of innovations* (5th ed.). New York: Free Press.

### **Source 3: How to Support Gifted Students in Your Classroom**

Technically all students, according to developmental psychologists Abraham Maslow and Howard Gardner, are gifted at something. But within the realm of what happens in the classroom, a teacher can help those superstars shine even brighter by simply adding a few additional strategies to their teaching repertoire.

Gifted children have sharp observational abilities, will have above average vocabularies and will 'see more into' a story or poem than their peers. They can be very self-critical and always strive for perfection. Because of this they have a strong feeling for judgment: of themselves and others. They are curious and will ask questions about almost anything and everything. Gifted children are easily able to transfer learning from one area to another, which reminds one of the theory of multiple intelligences proposed by Howard Gardner.

### **Best Teacher for the Job?**

Research shows that the teacher's behavior in class is an important factor when teaching gifted students. Some teachers view gifted students as nuisances, especially if that student is displaying bad behavior because their cognitive needs are not being met. Other teachers are intimidated by gifted students and some teachers simply do not recognize that a student is talented.

In truth, the effective instruction of gifted students requires a gifted teacher. This does not mean that the teacher has to be smarter, more talented or more able than the students. But it does mean that they should be aware of the signs of giftedness and should respond to those signs.

Such a skilled teacher will help the student use his own giftedness and will channel resources and enhanced learning opportunities towards that student that will enlarge the student's natural gifts in ways that the students did not even realize existed. Such a teacher will push gifted students to higher personal

standards rather than just giving them more work to do or forcing them to tutor other students who are less capable. For example, a teacher that notices a student's writing ability should encourage that student to continue.

### **Strategies**

Often a classroom teacher, especially one that is not aware of the characteristics of a gifted child, will not identify such a child. One way to do this is to keep a checklist of characteristics and plot each student's characteristics against the checklist.

Once identified, it becomes more of a challenge for the teacher to handle them. Obviously they need something different to keep them on task and to provide them with appropriate learning experiences. They are motivated by challenge to solve, by the extraordinary and by the unknown. However, in most cases the teacher has neither the time, nor the energy, to cater for each and every child. Researchers have

identified a number of comments made by regular class teachers. For example, “I know that students are different, but I teach ten different lessons.”, “ I don’t know how to help gifted students. They are so smart they probably know more than me.”, “I have trouble making my lessons meet everyone’s needs.”

Teachers can help themselves by being aware of the research done on gifted children. They should know about flexible scheduling and the strategy of accelerated learning.

One easier area for a regular classroom teacher to focus on is the assignment of work. Allow the gifted student to decide, choose, evaluate and to judge what they will work on. These assignments should require in-depth research, in-depth acquisition of knowledge and problem solving. Students could be asked to plan a family holiday, for instance. They would need to study the options based on each family member’s likes and dislikes, examine the costs, look into timings, etc.

Realising the gifted child’s excellence in reading, the teacher could ask for an alternative ending to a story that the class is studying. Alternatively, they could be asked to write a story based on a character from the book. By doing this, the teacher can continue with the curriculum but still meet the needs of the gifted child.

Problem solving is a major interest field for the gifted. The teacher could use anagrams, charades and other puzzles in all subject areas, whether in languages, the sciences, mathematics or social studies to create a situation that needs to be solved. Activities like these serve as motivational assignments.

**Source:** [Johnsen, S. “Definitions, models, and characteristics of gifted students,” in Identifying Gifted Students: A Practical Guide, pp. 1–22, Prufrock Press, Waco, Tex, USA, 2004.](#)

#### **Source 4: Flexible Scheduling: What is it?**

Flexible pacing includes any program in which students are taught material that is appropriately challenging for their ability and allows them to move forward in the curriculum as they master content and skills. For able or gifted learners, flexible pacing generally means some form of acceleration, accomplished by moving the student up to advanced content or by moving advanced content down to the student. The rate of progress can be varied in either direction. With flexible pacing all students can progress through school at a pace that provides a steady challenge without unnecessary frustration or unreasonable pressure.

#### **Methods to Achieve Flexible Pacing**

**In practice, flexible pacing can be achieved by a variety of methods:**

- Continuous progress. Students receive appropriate instruction daily and move ahead as they master

content and skills. The purest form of flexible pacing, continuous progress breaks the age-in-grade lockstep.

- Compacted course. Two or more courses, usually scheduled for a semester each, are compacted into an abbreviated time.
- Advanced level course. Students are enrolled in courses normally taught at a higher grade level.
- Grade skipping. Students move ahead 1 or more years, skipping levels in the normal sequence of promotion.
- Early entrance. Students enter elementary school, middle school, high school, or college earlier than the age usually prescribed.
- Concurrent or dual enrollment. Students at any grade level take classes in two school levels. For example, elementary school students take some classes at junior high; junior high students take some high school

classes; high school students enroll for some courses at a college or university.

- Credit by examination. Students enter an advanced-level course or receive credit upon satisfactory completion of a comprehensive examination or upon certification of mastery. The best known examples are the College Board's advanced placement and college-level examination programs.

### **Teacher Changes Needed to Promote Flexible Pacing**

Allowing students to move through the school curriculum at their own pace requires a special commitment from every teacher. First, the teacher must agree that the best way to serve students is to allow them to progress in key subject areas as they master content and skills. The teacher must recognize that as a consequence students will be placed for instruction with other students at the same achievement level, not necessarily with those of the same age.

### **Re-training**

A shift to flexible pacing normally requires training or retraining in teaching methods and classroom management that support some form of continuous progress. Inservice instruction may include conferences and workshops on methods of grouping, team teaching, curriculum sequencing, and a variety of topics specific to the subject of pacing. Teachers may also need training in more advanced or broader content within specialty areas. At the secondary level, summer institutes that prepare teachers for the College Board's advanced placement courses or the International Baccalaureate are well established. These cooperative programs contribute by helping teachers address the needs of advanced high school students undertaking college-level coursework on their high school campuses.

**Source:** [Daniel, N.,\(2015\). Flexible pacing for able learners. Reston, VA: The Council for Exceptional Children. \(ED 298 725](#)