

Concept of Gifted and Instructional Strategies for Gifted Students

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Abstract

Today's educational system does not frames the curriculum with taking into consideration of students interest. Moreover the teaching strategies are more focused on the normal students only in which there is no consideration of gifted students in the class. Every school insists that achieving the highest possible rank in test scores should be the top priority in our school system, instead of producing happy well-adjusted human beings who can think, care about others and innovate.

Hence, the present study is undertaken with the objective i.e. to find out the effectiveness of instructional strategies Triarchic Approach, Problem Based Learning, Strategies based on Bloom's Revised Taxonomy, Tiered Assignments and Flexible Grouping for gifted students of eighth standard eight in science subject. The present was a experimental study in which purposive sampling procedure and True experimental research design was used. Teacher made tests were used to collect the data. The obtained data were calculated by using descriptive and inferential statistics.

The objective wise study was done and these instructional strategies found more effective for gifted students.

Keywords: gifted, Triarchic Approach, Tiered Assignments

Introduction

"We are altogether too easily deceived by the time-worn argument that the gifted student, 'the genius' perhaps, will get along somehow without much teaching. The fact is, the gifted ...and the brilliant...are the ones who need the closest attention of the skillful mechanic" - W. Franklin Jones

The above quotation indicates that in everyday classroom teaching proceeds with taking into account of the normal children but we do not consider the need of gifted children who really need the closest attention of a skillful teacher.

This educational system does not frames the curriculum with taking into consideration of students interest. Moreover the teaching strategies are more focused on the normal students only in which there is no consideration of gifted students in the class. Every school insists that achieving the highest possible rank in test scores should be the top priority in our school system, instead of producing happy well-adjusted human beings who can think, care about others and innovate.

The vast range of learners in today's school environment is subjected typically to one of these three models i.e **a. Survival of the Fittest, b. Determined Behaviorist, c. Brain-Based Naturalist**

The parents as well as also the teachers of gifted child often suspect that the child is bit different from other children. Myths sometimes keep them from recognizing the giftedness and make it more difficult to understand that gifted child has special need.

Concept of Giftedness

Although gifted and talented are often used interchangeably, Gagne'(1985) differentiated between the two terms. For Gagne' giftedness is above-average aptitude (as measured by IQ tests) in creative and intellectual abilities and talent is above-average performance in an area of human activity, such as music, mathematics or literature.

a) Intelligence and Giftedness

Joseph Renzulli (1978) proposed his own definition that giftedness means demonstrating high performance in nearly all areas of intellectual and artistic pursuit with the traits such as general abilities or specific abilities which are above average, commitment to task and creativity.

Robert Sternberg (1985) defined the intelligence is analytical, creative and practical behavior and giftedness results from the ability to perform the skills in one or more of these areas with exceptional accuracy and efficiency.

Sternberg and Zhang (1995) introduced the pentagonal implicit theory to describe giftedness in which the gifted person is one who meets the five criteria such as excellence, rarity, productivity, demonstrability and value.

Gagne (2003) differentiates between giftedness and talent, proposing that giftedness represents innate abilities in multiple domains, while talent is a skill in a single domain that has been systematically developed. The innate abilities fall into four aptitude domains : intellectual, creative, socioaffective and sensory motor.

From these definitions the following characteristics of gifted children are noted.

b) Characteristics of Gifted Children

a. General Intellectual Ability

Formulates abstractions, Processes information in complex ways, Observant, Excited about new ideas, Enjoys hypothesizing, Learns rapidly, Uses a large number of vocabulary

b. Specific Academic Ability

Good memorization ability, Advanced comprehension, Acquires basic skill knowledge quickly, High academic success in special interest area, Pursues special interest with enthusiasm and vigor

c. Leadership

Assumes responsibility, Fluent, concise self expression, High expectations for self and others, Foresees consequences and implications of decisions, Good judgment in decision making

d. Psychomotor

Challenged by difficult athletic activities, High energy level, Exhibits precision in movement, Well coordinated, good manipulative skills, Excels in motor skill

e. Visual / Performing Arts

Outstanding in senses of spatial relationships, Unusual ability in expressing self, Desire for producing "own product", Exhibits creative expression

Strategies for Gifted Students

General classroom teaching strategies used in the classroom are not benefited to the gifted students. It makes boarded them and this leads to limit their creativity. Hence, the special strategy needs to be used for them. These are –

- **Triarchic Approach**

Concept

In this strategy the problem solving cycle involves five steps. These are identification of problem, collection of information to solve problem, devising a strategy for solving the problem, monitoring and evaluating the problem solving. This strategy engages the student in analytical, creative and practical thinking while solving the problem.

Characteristics

1. This strategy helps to stimulate the intelligence among students.
2. This strategy helps to enhance the analytical, creative and practical thinking among students.

Abilities that get enhanced among students

1. Analytical Thinking – judge, compare, contrast, evaluate and critique.
2. Creative Thinking – suppose, invent, imagine, explore and discover.
3. Practical Thinking – implement, use, apply and contextualize.

- **Problem- Based Learning Strategy**

Concept

Problem- Based Learning Strategy places students in the position of trying to solve a multifaceted problem of significant complexity. The problem resembles a real- life situation in that the students lack some of the information they need to solve the problem or are not clear on the steps they will need to take.

Characteristics

1. In this strategy the student get engaged with to think analytically.
2. This strategy also helps to enhance the decision making ability among student.
3. This strategy also helps to enhance the ability to develop a action plan.

Abilities that get enhanced among students

1. Analytical Thinking – judge, compare, contrast, evaluate and critique.
2. Decision Making – look for alternative solutions and select one from them.
3. Develop an action plan – develop an action plan by properly arranging the sequence of actions.

- **Strategy based on Bloom’s Revised Taxonomy:**

Concept

This strategy is useful for understanding the complexity of human thought. Bloom’s original taxonomy contained six levels i.e. knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation. But a group of educators revised the original taxonomy based on more recent understandings about learning which is known as Bloom’s revised taxonomy. The levels in it are as remember, understand, apply, analyze, evaluate and create.

Characteristics

1. This strategy helps to enhance the convergent and divergent thinking ability among students.
2. In convergent thinking students remember, understand and apply.
3. In divergent thinking students analyze, evaluate and create.

Abilities that get enhanced among students

1. Convergent thinking – remembers, understand, and apply.
2. Divergent thinking – analyze, evaluate, create.

- **Tiered Assignments**

Concept

Tiered Assignments provide differentiation by allowing students at different ability levels to work on the same content. Students are grouped for instruction based on their prior background knowledge in a given subject area. They seek out the answers to different questions and are assigned different activities based on their ability.

Characteristics

1. In this strategy teacher chooses core element in which all students have mastery.
2. Teacher make groups of students according to their prior background knowledge.
3. Separate versions of the activities are devised so that the low-, middle-, and high- ability students are adequately challenged.

Abilities that get enhanced among students

1. Convergent thinking – remember, understand, apply
2. Divergent thinking – analyze, evaluate, create

- **Flexible Grouping**

Concept

Flexible grouping strategy benefits more to gifted students as it help them to access more advanced knowledge and skills and to pursue their learning tasks in greater depth.

Characteristics

1. Students are grouped as per their interest.
2. Students have freedom to choose their group.

Abilities that get enhanced among students

1. Adjustment ability – exchange of thoughts with each other.
2. Co – operative ability – enhancement of learning and psychomotor skills.

Conclusions

In this study the instructional strategies used for gifted students such as Triarchic Approach, Problem Based Learning strategy, Strategy based on Revised Bloom's Taxonomy, Tiered Assignments and Flexible Grouping are found more effective than traditional teaching method.

As these above strategies help gifted students to think analytically, creatively and practically and also think convergently and divergently, help students in decision making and developing an action plan, enhances the adjustment ability and co-operative ability which will help producing happy well-adjusted human beings who can think, care about others and innovate and will become a part of the nations' progress.

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