

HOW TO ORGANIZE COUNSELLING CURRICULUM FOR GIFTED TALENTED STUDENTS?

Gifted students who exhibit precocious capacity and learning potential; are identified by competent professionals, and need an academic environment beyond standard grade level curriculum. Gifted individuals exhibit many characteristics including, motivation to learn new things, effective and inventive problem-solving strategies, insight to quickly grasp new concepts and make connections, advanced reasoning skills, and imagination and creativity to produce original ideas. Intellectual ability, academic performance, visual and performing arts, creative thinking and leadership are some of their abilities to identify them.

According to ASCA school counsellors provide consultation when appropriate, during identification of gifted talented students. For a talent to be developed, it must be first recognized and nurtured. Multiple measures and qualified teams are necessary for equitable identifications: IQ test, achievement test, behavioral checklists, student interview, teacher recommendation, academic performance..etc. Gifted students may vary widely in shape, size, ethnicity, income level, ability level and interest. Context, experience, program goals and school and individual values affected when the students identified.

Encouraging early Access programs that promote thinking skills and participation in extracurricular opportunities during the summer and after school are important for early identification.

As a counselor have many important roles at the stage of identification:

- Being a talent scout,
- Consulting and collaborating with an educators who are specifically trained to work with gifted and talented students,
- Knowing the limitations of local identification policies,
- Involving parents,
- Advocate for talent identification.(for example: collaboration with universities for Saturday and summer programs, job shadowing programs with universities..etc.)

After identifications of the gifted talented students counsellors should know the characteristics and barriers of the students to plan a better counselling program.

When we first encounter a talented student, he mostly cannot have eye contact, he may seem older than his age, and he might struggle from oral engagement.

Several characteristics are related to asynchronous development. Their cognitive development is rapid then their social and emotional development. They may have characteristic traits as heightened sensitivity, intensity, anxiety, perfectionism, introversion, existential depression and denied emotion. These students may be academically high achievers or underachievers.

Social emotional needs can be diagnosed with interviews they may have fear of failure because of perfectionism. They may probably difficulties with peer relationships and communication with others, they may have questions about reality versus the ideal, they are painfully aware of existential issues, they should have strong feelings and intensity of feelings, because of their sensitivity stress, lack of confidence, shyness and awkwardness may be observed.

Working with classroom and small groups may lead these students' well-being and happiness. Attention to social emotional development of gifted students during all school years might make a difference. Gifted students encounter the same type of stressors (grief, illness, parental divorce) as their peers but they experience them differently because of their different traits.

Gifted education programs should focus on prevention. Firstly, prevention groups can be formed as discussion groups, psychoeducation and activities to higher expressive language and self-awareness. Secondly, after early intervention there may occur support groups related to their needs and about the problems that already exist. Thirdly, the groups to avoid impairments after crises occurred. After crises individual counselling is better but group counselling also should be done.

The most popular program I have read was the weekly discussion programs about growing up. Small discussion groups may be according to grade level or two grades level can be mixed. Developing expressive language is a worthy goal for these groups, listening and responding skills are also included. Increasing self-awareness, breaking down stereotypes, reducing the stigma 'counselling'; developing coping skill; giving and receiving feedback; learning how to recognize anger, fear, anxiety, and perfectionism; asking for help; appreciating peers and teachers and developing empathy and compassion.

In order to plan an affective curriculum, professionals have to know the traits of giftedness and their needs. They may take more responsibility for their own emotional being and destiny rather than blaming others and the context. They may have more concerns about identity, direction, relationships and autonomy. When he has concerns, other friends do not take him seriously. In a group program, they may develop their identity with an open-ended question asked by a facilitator for example about 'sadness' and generate a long and productive discussion.

In schools performance constantly measured, the gifted students both high and low achievers may focus on mostly performance related benchmarks. Gifted students most probably appear to be 'doing fine'. However they need more to be asked how they are feeling, how they are reacting their circumstances, how it feels to be getting ready for middle or high schools.

They also need direction more about career decision; they need to know their personality, interests, wishes, and educational requirements without pressure to decide.

Except for psychoeducational topics, the most generative topics eventually became various 'talk with teens books'. Bringing gifted students together may help them feel connected to school, less alone, more understood, less 'different', less 'crazy'.

Small group topics may be extended to classroom even the school wide.

After school lectures open to all

Volunteers for various type of classes(language, dance, art, medical practice...etc.) and speakers

Student panels; the students choose the topics and discuss at the panels.

All these various programs may develop well-being and bringing gifted students together related to their interests.

RESOURCES

1. <https://dese.mo.gov/media/pdf/gifted-social-emotional-needs-gifted-learners>
2. Wood, S. M., & Peterson, J. S. (2018). *Counseling gifted students: A guide for school counselors*. Springer Publishing Company, LLC.