

Gifted Students Myths & Truths



Students who are gifted have exceptional needs. Addressing and dispelling the myths that surround gifted education aids in the implementation of education programs and teaching practices that attend to the unique needs of gifted students.

Myth: All children are gifted.

Truth: God has given all children gifts and all children are gifts from God, but not all children are cognitively gifted in a way that requires special programming to meet exceptional needs.



Myth: Gifted programming is elitist.

Truth: Education for all students should be equitable and fair. All students deserve to learn something new and experience growth each day. It is equitable and fair to give each student, including the gifted student, what he or she needs to learn and be successful.

Myth: Gifted students are high achievers.

Truth: Many gifted students struggle academically for a variety of reasons. Underachievement is common in the gifted student population. It is estimated that approximately **20% of high school dropouts are gifted**. Providing appropriate academic, social and emotional support aids in the actualization of achievement from the earliest grades, through adolescence, and into adulthood.

Myth: Acceleration is socially and emotionally detrimental to gifted student development.

Truth: Acceleration is one of the most misunderstood and underutilized practices in serving gifted students. It is often only associated with grade skipping. Grade skipping is only one way to accelerate learning. *A Nation Empowered: Evidence Trumps the Excuses Holding Back America's Brightest Students* identifies 20 different types of acceleration, most of which have nothing to do with grade skipping.

Myth: Children with learning disabilities cannot be gifted.

Truth: There are students who have learning disabilities and giftedness; they are considered twice exceptional. When a child has a learning disability, the difficulty that child encounters frequently becomes a focus in the academic career of the child. Often, mediating the disability trumps the identification of giftedness. Addressing both the learning disability and the giftedness will allow the individual to flourish.



Myth: It is more important to address the needs of struggling learners than gifted learners.

Truth: Addressing the needs of struggling students with learning difficulties while giving less consideration to the developmental needs of gifted learners does not allow for the growth and success of students with the highest ability and potential.

Myth: Gifted students are smart; they will be fine on their own.

Truth: Appropriate identification and educational programming for the gifted is essential. Without appropriate attention and educational programming, many gifted students struggle academically, socially and emotionally. If we do not address the needs of the gifted, we are ignoring the developmental needs of future philosophers, priests/bishops, scientists, writers, inventors, artists, and leaders our country needs.

