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ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF ALL LEARNERS:
THE ART OF ACCOMMODATION

A Specialist Project
Presented to
The Faculty of the School of Teacher Education
Western Kentucky University
Bowling Green, Kentucky

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Specialist in Education

By
Angelica Garnett

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ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF ALL LEARNERS:
THE ART OF ACCOMMODATION

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I dedicate this to my family. Jim, you have always been my rock. You are supportive in whatever my goals may be. Savannah and James, you are two amazing, brilliant young adults. I cannot wait to see what you accomplish. May you reach all your dreams and
beyond.

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ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF ALL LEARNERS:
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Directed by: Janet Tassell, Antonia Szymanski, and Julia Mittelberg

School of Teacher Education

Western Kentucky University

Schools in Kentucky identify gifted students at a young age. Those students are labeled and should be provided with services based on their gifts throughout their educational career. It is the teacher's duty to provide these services in their individual classrooms. This becomes progressively difficult as the student increases in grade level. Supporting teachers in their ability to recognize and manage the different levels in their classrooms does not always happen. The research question of this study focuses on how teachers meet the academic needs of gifted students in their classrooms in middle and secondary schools.

Participants included forty-four teachers in the middle and high school who participated in a survey and four teachers (two in the middle school and two in the high school) who participated in an interview. All participants were from the same district in Kentucky. Data collection consisted of the survey and the interviews. Once surveys were completed, the data was organized. The interviews were transcribed and coded. After organizing the interview data, four themes emerged: teachers provide opportunities to challenge gifted students, differentiating provides the education gifted students need, and obstacles that hinder the growth of the gifted student.

Introduction

Students come into the educational world with different backgrounds and abilities. These students could be behind the average peer, on-track, or above the average peer. Because of their varying abilities, each individual student's needs are different. According to the National Association for Gifted Children, six to ten percent of students in the United States is classified as academically gifted (Adams, 2015). Just as there are policies that guide educators to teach students with disabilities, there are policies that help guide the teaching of students with gifted abilities; although this varies from state to state. The last program the federal government designed devoted solely to teaching gifted students was the Jacob K. Javits Gifted and Talented Student Education Act in 1988 (Glass, 2004). The idea of this program was that gifted students, just like all other students, should receive services in order to develop their skills regardless of their backgrounds (Ward, 2005). Although these policies are not as highly enforced as special education policies, they do guide teachers on how to best serve gifted students.

Gifted students learn differently than their peers. They process information more rapidly and think in more abstract ways (Adams, 2015). They have many other characteristics that can be beneficial to learning; however, all gifted students vary in their gifts. Not all possess the same ability level in the same areas. Some of these characteristics include the ability to process and retain information in large amounts, comprehend advanced level materials, learn at an earlier age, form their own way to think about problems, see unusual relationships, transfer and apply knowledge to new situations, and have longer attention spans (Manning, 2006). According to Kettler and Curliss (2003), gifted students with an IQ of 130 are able to learn approximately eight

times faster than students with an IQ of 70, they are likely to master science and math content two to three times faster. However, they forget or mis-learn this material when it is retaught too many times. Because of these differences, gifted students should be taught in an altered way that is different from the average learner.

When teaching gifted students, it is particularly important to think about structure, time, and support. Structure involves teaching students in ways that will allow them to learn and stay engaged. This may include advanced organizers, concept maps, essential questions, mind maps, outlines for presentations, and focus concepts (Coleman, 2003). Time encompasses teaching in a way that promotes learning in an efficient way. This may include acceleration, checkpoints, preassessments, dual enrollments, curriculum compacting, telescoping, and credit by exam (Coleman, 2003). Support is one of the most important concepts. “Support involves the provision of encouragement and feedback to motivate students and to guide their activities” (Coleman, 2003, p.24). Intentional attention to structure, time, and support can address the needs of gifted students, which differ from the average learner. Planned strategies around these three concepts encourage students to gain knowledge in a way that can keep them engaged and excited about learning. Although structure, time, and support are significant for every student, it is particularly important to understand that these concepts must be dealt with differently for gifted students and it is important that educators address these academic needs of gifted students in their classrooms.

In the public school system, few teachers know about gifted learners and their characteristics. Teachers are often overwhelmed with the multiple duties that encompass their job. They have limited time and support to provide appropriate education for the

variety of students they have in their classrooms. Many times schools focus their time and money on students that have not reached proficiency and gifted learners must fend for themselves. “This policy often amounts to expecting the brightest students to tutor other youngsters while waiting for their own instruction at the expense of their own educational development” (Glass, 2004, p. 28). Although teachers are provided a list of their gifted students and the area that they are exceptional in, many teachers do not know how to provide appropriate services to these students, especially when it comes to academic aptitude and general intellectual ability. This study focuses on the question: How do teachers meet the academic needs of gifted students in their classrooms in middle and secondary school?

Literature Review

Classrooms are full of students who have diverse needs, and teachers often struggle with providing learning experiences that are designed to meet their specific needs (Dixon et al., 2014). Each student is different. Some may have similar backgrounds, yet their experiences are not the same, their abilities are not the same, and the interests are not the same. However, one of the main goals of every teacher should be meeting the needs of each learner (Kim, 2006). It is their job, no matter how difficult it can be. Most classrooms have a vast range of cognitive abilities (Manning, 2006). People do not think about the variety of students that are in one classroom: the gifted student, the struggling learner, and the grade-level student (Dixon et al., 2014). Many teachers tend to teach to the grade level student, and at times to the struggling student, but how many make time to prepare and teach to the gifted student? When teachers ignore gifted students, they are sending messages to them (Cross, 2002). These messages indicate that

their education is not important and that their time is not valuable. It is a message that conveys unimportance and low value. Gifted learners soon understand they are expected to do the work, the lesson is going to be at a low level, and extra knowledge and skills are not appreciated (Cross, 2002). However, the education of gifted students is important, if not the most important. They have the potential to do great things and solve great mysteries. Yet, to do that, their gifts must be discovered and nurtured.

Teacher Role

Teaching gifted students can be a challenge. It is not always easy to have gifted students in class. Although they possess skills that many students do not all have, they are not perfect students just because they are gifted. For example, they do not always have well-developed work habits. In fact, many have been able to complete their work with minimal effort, so they have not had the opportunity to learn these skills in the classroom (Neumeister et al., 2016). Other less-than-ideal behaviors and reasons for those behaviors include the following:

- Unfinished work due to inability to narrow the topic
- Poor class work due to disinterest
- Being sensitive to other people's attitudes and perceptions
- Poor group work due to the burden of doing the group's work
- Bossiness due to practicing leadership activities
- Slow workers due to ensuring the work is perfect
- Behavior problems due to boredom
- Class clown due to keen sense of humor
- Emotional outbursts due to highly sensitive nature (Manning, 2006)

Behaviors, such as these, are caused by ineffective strategies when it comes to gifted students within a classroom. Students that are not given the chance to reach their potential become bored and tend to act out. It is important for gifted students to receive accommodations in order to obtain an education that is appropriate for them. When they do not receive appropriate education, the boring, and monotonous work can be stressful and demotivating (Glass, 2004). The responsibility to understand these behaviors in order to better serve gifted students rests heavily on the teacher (Manning, 2006). Teachers play a great role in a student's achievement. Their attitudes, beliefs, and classroom practices influence the student and the development of their gifts (Sak, 2004). Some teachers do not always find value in all of the gifts. Teacher perception affects student learning. One study suggests that teachers considered the gift of creativity to have a low value in the school environment (Mhlolo & Mulvihill, 2017). For students to grow, teachers should value every individual and their gifts. They should help gifted children develop cognitively, socially and emotionally, assisting them with learning how to cope with frustrations and fears, just as teachers would do with non-gifted students (Vreys et al., 2018).

A classroom is not only an academic environment, but also a social environment. These environments include several different types of relationships: teaching-learning, teacher-student, and peer-peer (Sak, 2004). In order for teachers to encourage learning, they must first build a community. Team building activities and class meetings encourage the class to become unified. Adjusting groups throughout various lessons allows students to know each other better and build community, unlike using labels which tend to divide students (Adams, 2015). When the students are comfortable and the environment is

conducive for learning, differentiation can occur. Teachers report that gifted students show eagerness to learn in such environments (Vreys et al., 2018). With a trusting environment and a setting in which all students are able to learn at their own pace, each student will be able to grow and learn to potential. The role of a teacher is to provide an environment that is favorable to learning by all individuals.

The Difficulty in Accommodating for Gifted Students

Even with a supportive environment, accommodating instruction for students with gifts and talents proves challenging for most teachers. Teachers are dealing with many issues in the classroom, and they have their own goals to achieve as well. For example, many teachers are focused on accountability and standardized testing in order to meet district goals (Rubenstein et al., 2015). There is also an emphasis on reaching proficiency. Not only are teachers spending their time preparing students for standardized tests, they are also taking time to cover the material of the class and preparing themselves to be “highly qualified” (Tieso, 2004, p. 1). They have many tasks to fulfill. When teachers do find time to accommodate for their students, that time is typically spent accommodating for weaker students in the class while often ignoring the needs of the other students in class (Vreys et al., 2018).

Accommodating for gifted students can be difficult to do. Many teachers do not understand the process of differentiation especially in regard to gifted learners. They may think they are differentiating when they use gifted students to make sure group work gets done, or tutor other students that do not understand their work and cannot get their work done, and do cute activities that actually sacrifice high-level content (Hertberg-Davis, 2009). Differentiating effectively can be a lot of work. There are multiple levels in a

classroom and preparing a lesson that differentiates for these levels can be overwhelming and time consuming. Differentiating can be perceived as very time consuming when implemented in a mixed ability classroom (Rubenstein et al., 2015). Challenging factors include: the degree of differentiation required, the need to provide activities beyond the grade level, antipathy toward gifted learners, lack of knowledge about services, and the lack of mandates to support gifted learners (Van Tassel-Baska & Stambaugh, 2005). One or more of these factors may prevent the typical teacher from providing services to gifted students. Another reason teachers do not differentiate is because there is little support beyond a single-day, whole-school professional development which means they simply have not had adequate training. (Herberg-Davis, 2009).

Most educators lack sufficient training and knowledge on servicing gifted students; therefore, they may be providing inadequate services or even incorrect services. Many teachers assume that high expectations may mean giving more work or having unrealistic expectations in which may result in lower grades (Van Tassel-Baska & Stambaugh, 2005). These accommodations are not appropriate for gifted students. Gifted students should not get more work, but work that is more rigorous and has more depth (Adams, 2015). However, providing rigorous and in depth work can create resistance with gifted students (Tieso, 2004). A more difficult curriculum is a vast change to their normal environment. These students are probably used to doing easier, less challenging work. In these rare instances, gifted students can react negatively socially and emotionally (Cross, 2002). Their reaction is because they are not used to the high expectations that come with the appropriate gifted education. Providing rigorous

curriculum and high expectations, while encouraging students to struggle through the content is a big reason why it is difficult to serve gifted learners.

The Importance of Providing Accommodations

Most educators enter a classroom with a heterogeneous mixture of differing developmental levels, interests, and experience (Van Tassel-Baska & Stambaugh, 2005). Teaching this group of varying abilities can be a daunting task. Most teachers end up teaching to the middle, which means that they are leaving behind those students that are either ends of the spectrum (Tieso, 2004). This type of one-size-fits all teaching is not beneficial to most learners, and it is especially not helpful to the gifted student. In fact, it can be detrimental to both the student and society. “Not to recognize and develop the abilities of gifted and talented students will stifle their opportunity and negate their potential both personally and as contributors to society” (Glass, 2004, p. 29). It is important to society that these students realize their gifts and reach their potential. Schools that do not provide appropriately challenging curriculum contribute to this problem (Glass, 2004). These gifted students may very well be the adults who will solve the world’s problems; however, if they are not taught to deal with challenging work, they may never be able to reach that potential.

Mandates challenge the general educator to use strategies in order to implement teaching that ensures success (Manning, 2006). These mandates, as well as research, support acceleration and the use of increased pace and less repetition (Kettler & Curliss, 2003). Gifted students can learn material at a faster pace. Slowing the pace down creates boredom for that student. Schools have routinely used pullout and even self-contained classrooms for gifted students; however, results of a study indicated that this environment

did not significantly impact student learning (Callahan et al., 2015). Typically, it is up to the classroom teacher to provide lessons applicable for each learner. Differentiation in a classroom can be a solution. Students can have the possibility of a rigorous curriculum and the opportunity to be with high-ability peers when skill levels are considered (Rubenstein et al., 2015). In order to differentiate effectively, the educator must recognize several differences in his/her students including their various background knowledge, readiness, interests, and preferences in learning. Educators must then take this information and act on it responsibly in order to make appropriate plans (Dixon et al., 2014). When appropriate plans are created, each student will be provided with individualized education that will allow them to reach their maximum potential.

The Need for Professional Development

Avoiding the one-size-fits-all curriculum and accommodating for the various types of student are not easy tasks. Daily and weekly plans are necessary when creating multiple tiers in the lesson (Van Tassel-Baska & Stambaugh, 2005). These plans that provide interventions can only be successful when there is appropriate and sufficient training offering best practices for teaching gifted students (Vreys et al., 2018). Teachers must understand how to effectively provide lessons to multiple levels of students in their classrooms. “Data-driven, teacher-selected, goal-oriented individual professional learning plans can ultimately have a significant impact on the learning of gifted students” (Karnes & Shaunessy, 2004, p. 64). Teachers who are provided specialized training in this area are more likely to apply differentiated curriculum and instructional approaches more effectively in order to meet the needs of their gifted students (Brown & Abernathy, 2009). A differentiated curriculum is a necessity in order to reach all students. For

teachers to implement an appropriate strategy, they must be thoroughly taught that strategy.

To receive appropriate and adequate training, support must be given to the educators. Differentiating curriculum benefits not only the individual student, but also the school. Providing professional development in this area needs to be a priority for the school so the students and the school to have continuous growth and to reach their potential. Leaders need to give support that encourages teachers to learn these strategies and utilize differentiation appropriately (Van Tassel-Baska & Stambaugh, 2005). Instructional leaders should also provide ample training to help teachers understand the specific needs of gifted students (Vreys et al., 2018). Professional learning experiences should not only introduce the topic, but they should provide opportunities in which teachers can practice the strategy and receive feedback. This will allow teachers to feel comfortable with the strategies they have learned.

Teachers need to be able to implement these strategies immediately after the professional development. Waiting will risk the loss of enthusiasm (Tieso, 2004). Using a coach who assists educators to apply strategies when creating lessons and utilizing the lessons properly would be an effective way to ensure that educators learn how to differentiate appropriately (Dixon et al., 2014). Professional development may enhance skills and boost confidence in effectively teaching (Klassen & Chiu, 2010). These teachers can then use performance information, attitudes of the students and their parents, and classroom practices for gifted children to identify other areas of potential professional growth (Karnes & Shaunessy, 2004). Teachers will understand their students' needs and be more aware of their own professional needs. These individualized

professional development opportunities allow teachers to better educate their gifted students, along with the other various needs of their classroom.

Robert Slaven of John Hopkins University stated, “Improving teacher effectiveness relies on providing teachers with proven strategies known to improve outcomes important to them and the students” (Martin, 2019, p. 202). Teachers who are adequately trained tend to have higher self-efficacy in teaching. This self-efficacy comes from confidence in engaging students, managing behavior, and applying instructional strategies that are effective in allowing growth in each student (Klassen & Chiu, 2010). Self-efficacy allows teachers to be enthusiastic about their specific subject and the lessons they teach (Mahler et al., 2018). This is true for both gifted educators and non-gifted educators. One study determined there was no difference in the self-efficacy between the two groups of teachers (Hong, et al., 2011). Being more comfortable in the classroom and having more confidence encourages teachers to provide a suitable education to all students, including those with gifts and talents.

The Use of Preassessments

In order to understand what each student needs, teachers must assess their knowledge. Lessons cannot be tailored to fit a student without understanding what a student knows, understands, and is able to do. Preassessments can be used to evaluate students prior to the lesson. These preassessments, in turn, can be used to implement modifications for each student (Brown & Abernathy, 2009). The data are not only beneficial to gifted students, but also to the rest of the class. These preassessments can be used to understand a student’s current level of knowledge and make appropriate modifications and accommodations (Rubenstein et al., 2015). Being able to see what a

student's prior knowledge of the content is can be a valuable tool in understanding how to teach a student.

The data that come from preassessments are extremely valuable. With these data, teachers can appropriately group students and adjust curriculum based on need.

Preassessing can allow for adjustment of the pace, complexity, and inclusion of instructional strategies (Van Tassel-Baska & Stambaugh, 2005). Teachers can also use these data to track and discuss a student's growth throughout the lesson (Rubenstein et al., 2015). Because assessment data are so valuable, it is important to assess often (Adams, 2015). Assessing students can be done, not only in the beginning, but also throughout the lesson using formative assessments to make daily instructional decisions (Conner, 2015).

How Teachers Meet the Needs of Gifted Students

Without believing that gifted students require specialized learning or the training in how to provide that, teachers cannot provide appropriate educational learning experiences for their gifted students. Once they believe that students come with different abilities, interests, and that they acquire knowledge differently, they realize students need different approaches to learning experiences (Van Tassel-Baska & Stambaugh, 2005). In order to differentiate with confidence, preassessments are necessary. If students score 85% or higher, VanTassel-Baska and Stambaugh (2005) argue that students require compressed instruction with advanced work substituted in certain areas. Students should be assessed to determine their readiness level and then use tiered objectives. Teaching gifted students new concepts with fewer repetitions is also effective (Kettler & Curliss, 2003). Gifted students need to be provided with opportunities to think at higher levels in

order to challenge them and allow them to grow in their gifts. This means instead of focusing on knowledge, comprehension, and application, they need to focus on higher-level thinking skills such as evaluation, synthesis, and analysis (Vosslamber, 2002). These higher order processes allow gifted students to process the material in a deeper way. When curriculum is modified with depth, complexity, and pace, gifted learners are stretched (Kettler & Curliss, 2003). These modifications will allow students to have more challenging and rigorous lessons.

Many educators can successfully provide differentiated lessons. They use innovative ways to match their individual approaches to teaching while addressing the various levels of student learning (Van Tassel-Baska & Stambaugh, 2005). Educators can teach in a way that will engage student learning while providing differentiated instruction appropriately. It is important that the teacher have a deep understanding of the content and pedagogical skills (Tieso, 2004). However, it is not essential that the teacher has all of the knowledge. Students can acquire knowledge through their own independent study (Van Tassel-Baska & Stambaugh, 2005).

An important aspect in differentiating lessons is ability grouping. Grouping students by similar levels of readiness to learn allows them to feel less isolation and have less frustration (Glass, 2004). It is not appropriate to group gifted students with lower students in order to get the assignment completed. In this situation, the gifted student can feel frustrated with having to do all of the work and the other student will feel frustrated with not being able to assist. Instead, it is more appropriate to allow students with the same abilities to work together. Grouping students in this way is called cluster grouping. Cluster grouping and individual teacher attention is a way of differentiating curriculum

(Cross, 2002). Working together with appropriately grouped individuals is a great way to gain knowledge. However, the groups must be composed of individuals with similar abilities. According to Gubbels et al. (2014), participating in enrichment programs enhance self-concept and motivation. Allowing student to work with other students with similar abilities is beneficial to their academics as well as their confidence.

Some commonly used modifications are enrichment, acceleration, flexible scheduling, curriculum compacting, telescoping, and self-paced instruction. In enrichment, new subjects are introduced to the curriculum, new topics are added to existing curriculum, or current topics are explored in greater depth. With acceleration, students are able to meet the curriculum objectives at a faster rate or at an earlier age (Kim, 2006). Flexible scheduling allows students to avoid studying material that the student has already mastered (Kim, 2006). Students that already know and have mastered certain material could be exempted from that work. Removing these previously mastered activities releases the student from frivolous assignments that cause boredom and frustration. Curriculum compacting is very similar to flexible scheduling. It reduces activities such as practice and introductory assignments while also omitting lessons focusing on what the student already knows (Johnsen, 2005). These activities are also unnecessary and prevent gifted students from accelerating through the curriculum. Telescoping is compacting three years of curriculum into two or two into one (Kettler & Curliss, 2003). It is a way of allowing students to work at a pace that best suits them. In self-paced instruction, gifted students are able to pace themselves in learning the curriculum. They may start at a 3rd grade level, but move into 4th grade material in the

same class (Johnsen, 2005). All of these modifications allow students to receive curriculum in a complex, in-depth manner and at a faster pace.

It is important that all students receive appropriate education. This is true for students who come in at grade level, for those who are behind, and even for those who are above grade level, including children with gifts and talents. In the end the finish line is not at proficiency, but at a place in which all students reach their highest potential. To do this, lessons must be tailored to fit each individual, and educators are the tailors. There are multiple ways in which teachers can do this, but they must also be taught how to best meet their students' needs. It is difficult, but with appropriate support, training, and practice, it can be done. All of these accommodations are worth it when it comes to education and the future.

In this literature review, I addressed topics relating to differentiating education for gifted student in order for them to reach their full potential. The literature review included sections on professional development, the use of pre-assessments, and the use of strategies such as grouping and self-paced instruction to assist in the ability of gifted students. Based on my research, my study aims to determine how middle and secondary school teachers differentiate instruction in order to meet the needs of their gifted students in heterogeneously grouped classrooms.

Method

The purpose of this study is to determine how teachers meet the needs of their gifted students in grades six through twelve. This study provides insight into the experience of gifted students in general education classrooms through the use of surveys and interviews. Teachers provide response that address how they provide learning

opportunities to gifted students in this environment. The overall research question of this study is:

How do teachers meet the academic needs of gifted students in their classrooms in middle and secondary school?

Research Method

This mixed methods research study was completed using a sample size of 50 teachers who provide education to students in grades six through twelve. The teachers surveyed and interviewed have various background experiences. They varied from having one year experience to over 20 years of experience. Additionally, a sample of four teachers was interviewed in order to provide further insight in their teaching strategies. Demographic data on the interview participants is shown in Table 1.

The mixed methods research process combines qualitative and quantitative techniques. Using both of these techniques allows the research to gather a variety of information. Mixing these techniques enhances fidelity, as well as the integrity of the study (Leech et al., 2011). It also enhances the interpretation of results and allows for appropriate conclusions. This type of the study is the most appropriate in order to gather information that can be analyzed, as well as provide further information to better understand the data.

Context and Participants

The context of the study was a public school in a small Western Kentucky community with a total population of 14,651. A total of seventy teachers teach in the middle school and in the high school with thirty being middle school teachers and forty are high school teachers. Thirty-three teachers from the middle school and high school

teachers teach a content course (i.e., English, math, science, or social studies) and 37 teachers teach an elective course (e.g., Agriculture, Culinary, or Yearbook). The sample has limited racial diversity: 93% White, 1.5% Black, 1.5% Hispanic, 1.5% American Indian, and 1.5% Asian.

There are 455 students enrolled in the middle school (grades six through eight) and 617 students are enrolled in the high school (grades nine through 12). There are 77 students that are identified gifted and talented in the middle school (17%), while 170 (28%) of the high school are considered gifted and talented. One Gifted and Talented coordinator is responsible for overseeing identification and services for the entire district which consists of four schools: Primary, Intermediate, Middle, and High. The primary and intermediate schools serve gifted students through pullout programs. In middle and high school classroom, teachers are responsible for providing services to gifted students in their rooms.

Data Sources

All teachers in both the middle school and high school were asked to fill out the survey through Google Forms that was sent to them through their e-mail (N=70). Participation from all teachers was encouraged. Forty-four teachers completed the survey for a response rate of 63%. Four teachers were randomly be chosen from volunteers, two from the middle school and two from the high school, to be interviewed in order to gain further knowledge of their experiences educating gifted students. These interviews were conducted through Zoom and transcribed. Questions were asked regarding the teachers' understanding of the needs of their gifted students, as well as the differentiation process they use in their classrooms (See Table 2).

Data Collection

The researcher sent letters to teachers via email requesting participation in the study. The survey was attached to the email (See Appendix A). The surveys took approximately 15 minutes. Once the surveys were completed, four teachers (two from the middle school and two from the high school) were chosen at random to participate in an interview. The researcher sent letters to these teachers through their emails requesting their participation. The interviews lasted approximately thirty minutes.

The questions asked were designed to gain more insight regarding the teacher's knowledge of their students' gifts and their ability to differentiate instruction. The researcher transcribed all interviews and coded the data in Google Sheets. This allowed the researcher to analyze the data thoroughly. The teachers reviewed the transcribed data for accuracy.

Data Analysis

The researcher collected the data of the survey through Google Forms. Teachers received an email with a survey link attached. To participate, they clicked on the survey link and answered the questions associated with the study. The overall data of each question was combined and graphed through Google Forms. Descriptive statistics and correlations were created to view relationships between the answers given. This data was used to compare the survey results and find correlations.

The researcher personally transcribed all of the interviews. The researcher thoroughly read over all of the answers to each question of the interviews to pick out key pieces of information. Important phrases in those interviews were listed on a spreadsheet, and labeled as T1 (teacher one), T2 (teacher two), T3 (teacher three), or T4 (teacher

four). The phrases were read over several times to determine the focus of the words. Then those phrases were categorized into different topics that they represented. The topics were then organized by similar relationships, where four themes emerged.

Results

Survey data were analyzed to determine how teachers perceive the way they meet the academic needs of gifted students in their classrooms in middle and secondary school (See Appendix A). Correlational relationships were determined and illustrated through statistical analysis. Forty-four out of seventy teachers responded to the survey request. This is a response rate of 63%. These questions pertained to how teachers perceived their ability to provide services to gifted students.

Figure A indicates the number of years of teaching experience. The mean number of years' experience was 15.08. Figure B indicates the number of graduate courses the teachers took in gifted education. Although the mean was 1.08, the data was skewed due to one teacher (2%) having sixty-six hours. Of the forty-four teachers that participated in the survey, 77% of the teachers felt confident with recognizing academic gifts. 52% also indicated that they felt comfortable with meeting the needs of academic gifted students, while 45% felt comfortable with differentiating curriculum. On the other hand, most teachers (73%) have had no courses in gifted education and 61% agreed that they did not have sufficient training in providing services to gifted services. These contrasting ideas were found in many places within the survey results.

Descriptive statistics from the surveys done by classroom teachers are provided in Table 2. Figures C-E provide details regarding the teachers' perceived ability in providing services to gifted students in their individual classrooms. The scales were 1—

strongly disagree, 2—disagree, 3—neutral, 4—agree, and 5—strongly agree. The closer to 5 they answered, the more strongly they felt about their ability to service gifted students. The teaching experience of those that participated in the survey varies from one to twenty-five years, with a mean average of fifteen years' experience. Of these teachers, about thirty-eight people (76%) had 0-3 graduate level courses in the gifted and talented (GT) program. Twenty-seven (57%) agreed that they had the ability to recognize characteristics of students with high academic potential (this was about the same for creativity). Approximately twenty (40%) say that they feel capable of meeting the needs of gifted students.

Figures F-G provide details regarding how often services were provided to gifted students. The scales were 1—never, 2—occasionally, 3—monthly, 4—weekly, and 5—daily. The closer the answer to 5, the more frequent services were provided to gifted students in the classroom. When asked how often gifted students received services, thirty-nine (78%) stated that providing services to gifted students never or only occasionally happened. When asked if gifted students received differentiated instruction, twenty-nine (58%) stated that differentiation rarely or only occasionally happened. Only 10 (20%), stated that differentiation happened on a weekly or daily basis.

Interviewees spoke about their experience with the gifted and talented program. This included their ability to provide services, as well as their perceptions of how the district and school provides services. Interviewees were encouraged to speak freely about their ideas and experiences, which led to a very candid and truthful discussion about what is provided to gifted students in individual classrooms and outside of the classroom. Four themes evolved from these discussions. These themes include the topics of teachers

provide opportunities to challenge gifted students, all students grow through differentiation, obstacles hinder the growth of the gifted student, and teachers need support to provide appropriate instruction.

Four Themes from Teacher Interviews about Gifted Education

Theme One: Teachers Provide Opportunities to Challenge Gifted Students

All of teachers in this study reported they try to develop the potential of the gifted students in their classrooms through opportunities that challenge them. The teachers shared that gifted and talented students require more than what is being taught to the general population and most teachers know this. When asked, “What do you believe are effective strategies in teaching students who are identified as gifted within the regular classroom?” Misty, 10th grade science teacher, answered, “Allow them to explore [that] beyond the actual content and the material.” Interviewees expressed that teaching gifted students in a class with multiple learning levels is difficult; however, the responsibility of providing services to gifted students relies on them. Ellen stated, “Meeting the needs of everyone looks good on paper, but in practice it’s much more difficult.” All of the teachers that were interviewed reported similar comments about giving the basic level of instruction and mostly differentiating for the lower-level students. All of the teachers made similar statements about gifted students needing something different from other students in the classroom. Ellen, 12th grade science teacher, stated, “You know, I think we have to make sure that we provide opportunities for kids to go beyond if they want to and maybe take a different approach to solving a problem or having some selection and what type of products they make.” More opportunities for gifted students will provide the challenge that most gifted students need to continue to develop their ability and interest

level. The four teachers noted that gifted students need different options or choices than what is given to other students. Some activities that were addressed by the interviewees included day trips, internships, and summer programs. Opportunities such as these can enhance the learning of gifted students.

Interviews revealed that teachers believed opportunities to challenge gifted students should go beyond the general education classroom. They expressed that these different opportunities allow gifted students to pursue their passions or explore new interests to engage students in ways that exceed what may be available in the regular classrooms. Three of the four teachers stated that it is important to connect students to what they are interested in. All teachers stated that student choice was important. Katie, 7th grade reading teacher, stated “To me, the gifted and talented program is just something that allows students who show excellence in areas to excel in those areas that they are identified in, as well as expose them to things that they might not normally get exposed to in the classroom with different experiences and opportunities that is sometimes hard to get in the regular classroom with the regular education.” Two of the four teachers mentioned in their interviews that gifted students need opportunities outside of the classroom to extend their thinking and expand their experiences. Teachers understand that gifted students are provided with a service that should help them excel in their areas. Ellen talked about previous experiences in a different district. She stated, “They were able to have opportunities to go to outside of their realm go to different cities go to museums go do concerts go to Science Museums. Things [Opportunities] like that that really opened up their eyes to things that were out there that they didn't know existed.”

Theme Two: All Students Grow Through Differentiation

According to the interviews, three of the four teachers discussed the needs of gifted students and how they are different from what is offered to the general population. Beth, a 7th grade math teacher, allows her students to work at different levels on her math units. She said, “So, a lot of times in my classroom, I use different layers, not just for the gifted students, but for everyone, different layered content sheets.” All of the interviewees agreed that gifted students need more and two interviewees had ideas on how to provide this. Ellen agreed stating, “I think we have to make sure that we provide opportunities for kids to go beyond if they want to and to maybe take a different approach to solving a problem or having some selection and what type of products they make.” All teachers agree that providing different learning strategies to the different learning levels in the classroom will ensure that all students will receive their appropriate education.

According to the interviews, all of the teachers agreed that providing choice can be a way to encourage gifted students to want participate in more challenging tasks. Misty stated that “You have to connect to their interest otherwise they’re not going to want to do it because that leads to more work. It has to be something that connects to them and their ideas.” Katie agreed that providing multiple formats for exhibiting learning was the key, stating, “Multiple ways of learning and doing, and also being able to choose, like how they present their final product. Not everyone wants to write a paper or want to speak in front of others.” All four teachers agreed that some type of choice should be provided to gifted students to engage their learning.

Theme Three: Obstacles Hinder the Growth of the Gifted Student

All of the teachers interviewed mentioned issues that hinder growth for the gifted students. This included financial barriers, wrong focus, time, knowledge, mixed classes, funding, planning time, resources, energy, etc. Katie said, “I think as a district, there’s kind of a push that they can kind of carry themselves, so we tend to focus on our low performers or our on-the-bubble kids.” Ellen also agreed, stating, “I think a lot of times we get overwhelmed by all the different needs we need to meet in our classrooms and we don't always pay attention to those kids because a lot of times those kids will do on their own.” Two of the teachers agreed that many gifted students will do the work on their own; however, they are not being challenged and teachers are not doing enough.

When asked what the barriers are, interviewees included a lack of resources, time, and funding. All four interviewees stated that time was an important barrier on providing appropriate education for gifted students. Ellen stated, “I think one reason may be why that doesn't happen as often as it should is because it takes a lot of planning. It takes a lot of extra work to sometimes get those things leveled so that there's something for everyone.” When asked what the barriers were to implementing appropriate services, Beth answered, “Time. Not enough resources in the classroom. Not enough bodies in the classroom. You have too many other students to worry about. Your students are all over the place.” All teachers that were interviewed agreed that time effected their ability to provide appropriate services.

Theme Four: Teachers Need Support to Provide Appropriate Instruction

All of the teachers reported that they are failing when it comes to helping gifted students reach their potential. One interviewee stated that they are not made a priority. Three of the four teachers interviewed stated that there is a lack the support they need to

effectively teach gifted students. All of the teachers mentioned that there was a lack of training to develop the strategies needed to teach gifted students. One teacher mentioned getting overwhelmed by all of the needs in the classroom. Katie stated, “I feel like right now there’s not really a lot of support.” Teachers stated they want to provide effective strategies in order to assist all students in reaching their potential, but they do not receive all of the tools they need to do this. According to the interviews, all of the teachers understood that gifted students require certain services, but do not always know how to implement this effectively. Beth agreed, stating, “As a general education teacher, I don’t get anything. Any supports-you have to research and like I said, it’s really hard.”

All of the teachers interviewed mentioned difficulties in providing appropriate education for gifted students. All of teachers stated they had a lack of knowledge on the strategies that are effective. One teacher (Ellen) stated that it “has to be a priority in your district.” Ellen also stated, “You have to have teachers that are willing and have ideas and have the ability to develop activities and instruction for those kids.” Misty stated that “providing PDs for strategies, teaching techniques, provide challenging activities that are enticing to students is a good way to do that.” 75% of the teachers that were interviewed stated that they rarely receive any supports. Misty also stated, “In my entire career, experienced two PDs that actually offer that, so I don’t think it is offered enough.” Misty has had thirteen years of experience in teaching.

Summary

After surveying and interviewing teachers, four themes emerged from the data. These themes include teachers provide opportunities to challenge gifted students, all students grow through differentiation, obstacles hinder the growth of the gifted student,

and teachers need support to provide appropriate instruction. All of these themes relate to the overall research question of how teachers meet the academic needs of gifted students in their classrooms. According to interviews, teachers already do some activities that are differentiated and try to challenge the gifted students. However, there are obstacles that hinder the growth of gifted students. One important issue is the lack of support the teachers receive. This lack of support is indicated in the surveys, as well as the interviews and relates to all of the other themes.

Discussion

Four themes emerged as a result of this case study that answer the research question. These themes include the topics of teachers provide opportunities to challenge gifted students, all students grow through differentiation, obstacles hinder the growth of the gifted student, and teachers need support to provide appropriate instruction. Each theme reflects back to the research question. This study looked at the perspectives of teachers and their ability to provide appropriate services to gifted students. The research question below directed this study.

1. How do teachers meet the academic needs of gifted students in their classrooms in middle and secondary school?

Theme one (teachers provide opportunities to challenge gifted students) answers the research question. Based on the teacher interviews, most teachers try to provide opportunities to challenge the gifted students in their classrooms. Many of the teachers provided examples of how they tried to meet the needs of their gifted students. Some allowed for choice, while others provided different levels; however, many lessons do not go deep enough or far enough into the material. It is common for teachers to give the

basic level of instruction and mostly differentiating only for the lower level students. Teachers have a hard time preparing lessons for students that need more. According to Hertberg-Davis (2009), it is not easy to meet the individual needs of students. High-stakes testing makes the classroom less welcoming for gifted students. The teacher's focus is on meeting proficiency and not meeting everyone's individual needs. Many of the teachers that were interviewed discussed opportunities inside, as well as outside, of the classroom. These outside experiences give students unique experiences that will help them grow. To engage students, teachers need to find something meaningful (Adams, 2015). Gifted students need a chance to experience learning in many different ways that extend their basic knowledge.

Theme two, all students grow through differentiation, also answers the research question. Differentiating is important when meeting the needs of any mixed class. This provides a way that all students can move at their own pace, but also is able to be challenged to work on harder layers. Many times, providing these differentiated lessons benefit all levels in the classroom, not just the gifted students. Different approaches can include different paths to get to the end or different products that challenge the student's abilities. In the study, *Through the Looking Glass: One School's Reflection on Differentiation*, teachers differentiated their lessons. The result was that all of the students contributed to the work in one way or another (Tieso, 2004).

Giving gifted students a harder assignment instead of the easier assignments the other students are asked to perform can be a difficult chore. It can be challenging to get students to want to learn when the work is harder. Students also work harder when the lesson is connected with something that interests them. They will do more if they want to

know more. As stated earlier in the literature review, most educators enter a classroom with a heterogeneous mixture of differing developmental levels, interests, and experience (Van Tassel-Baska & Stambaugh, 2005). Providing choice and connecting them with their interests will encourage students to do those difficult assignments. Students do not always feel comfortable performing certain tasks and may avoid the work in order to avoid the end product. This is not just with gifted students, but also with non-gifted students. Giving choice allows students to feel comfortable and safe with the task, which will allow them to go way beyond the basic content they are learning.

When teachers do not meet the academic needs of gifted students, this may hinder the growth of the gifted student. This is the third theme. Sometimes teachers fail to provide the appropriate services for gifted students. Although they know more must be done, it is still a challenge to determine the best way to implement it. There are too many challenges that teachers face that prevent them from providing the education that all students deserve. Most schools want to get their students to proficiency. The goal of most schools is to prepare students for standardized tests (Tieso, 2004). Because of this, teachers are not focused on their gifted students, as they are already at or past proficiency. Ellen stated, “We really don’t have a focus on gifted education.” When teachers are focused on these low performers, gifted students are not having their needs met. They are already where they need to be in the eyes of the school district. Katie stated, “[We] focus on our low performers or our on-the-bubble kids.” There’s no need to focus on those high-level students when they have already met the goal. When teachers focus on the lower levels, gifted students are not receiving the attention they deserve as well.

The goal for proficiency is not the only reason teachers fail to provide appropriate services. There is a lack of resources, time, and funding. All of these issues contribute to the problems gifted students have in receiving appropriate services. Time is the most difficult issue when providing differentiating education. Ellen stated, “[There are] so many different demands on our time.” It already takes time to provide adequate lessons for class; however, when a teacher is trying to create tiered lessons for the multiple levels in the class, it can take more time and planning. Teachers need time to observe other teachers and collaborate with their colleagues (Dixon et al., 2014). It is clear that teachers are overwhelmed by the challenges in the classroom. There are many barriers to providing the right services. It is difficult to overcome these barriers and provide the right education to everyone. It takes a lot of planning to determine a lesson and then determine how to modify that assignment to fit all of the levels in the classroom. With this help, teachers can provide lessons that are appropriate for all. Unfortunately, this help is not usually given. Teachers understand they must provide appropriate education for all the students in the classroom, but learning to manage their time or how to modify assignments effectively takes support.

When support is given, teachers are finally able to meet the academic needs of gifted students. This is the fourth and final theme. It also answers the research question. Teachers are providing a one-size-fits-all education or catering to only the low level students; however, this is not their fault. This lack of support for teachers will hinder growth in students as well as increase their frustration levels. As shown in the interviews, teachers need a place in which they can receive ideas, resources, and assistance in

providing appropriate education for all students. Teachers need professional development opportunities geared to how to effectively educate gifted students.

It is difficult to provide great lessons and also take the time to modify those lessons to fit the students that need more support and the students that need more rigor. “Professional development that focuses on increasing teacher skills and gives teachers the chance to practice the strategy should make a difference” (Dixon et al., 2014, p. 123). Teachers want to be successful in teaching to all their students; however, they do not always know how to do that. Having ideas is a great start, but teachers need help in how to implement these ideas. With this help, teachers can provide lessons that are appropriate for all. Unfortunately, this help is not usually given. One interviewee, Misty, has had thirteen years of experience in teaching; however, she has had only two professional development opportunities in thirteen years. This is not enough to help and encourage the average teacher. Teachers need ongoing training on skills (Van Tassel-Baska & Stambaugh, 2005). Effective strategies that help gifted students can help all students.

Limitations

After doing the study, it is clear that there are some limitations. One limitation is that the study took place in a small district. There are only 50 teachers to consider. Although the response rate was high (88%), the number of teachers to participate is a relatively low number. Another limitation is that I work at this district. The teachers that participated in the survey and interviews knew me on a personal level. Feedback from both the surveys and interviews could have been less honest due to that relationship. Doing this study in a district that I had no relationship with might have provided more sincere and genuine responses. Student perspective was also not taken into account.

Students are an important piece to this study. Understanding their views might have impacted the study or the analysis of the research question. Finally, only one district was used in this study, so the study was one-dimensional. More districts should be considered to improve the accuracy of the study.

Implications for Future Research

After completing this study, reviewing the literature, and looking at the themes that emerged, there were implications for future research that surfaced. These implications related to sample size and training. Two key ideas became evident after the research was complete.

1. Complete future research using the same research question; however, using a larger sample size. Include multiple districts in order to gain more accuracy.
2. Complete future research using the same research question in one district, but incorporate a pre/post survey with a series of professional development sessions and then follow-up surveys and interviews with how teachers implement learned strategies.

For the first implication, using a larger sample size that includes more than one district will provide a more accurate review of the research question. It will decrease the limitations from the current study. The second implication will provide further insight to whether appropriate training can affect how teachers meet the academic needs of gifted students in their classrooms. Theme four, teachers need support to provide appropriate instruction, really drives the path of the research question. Providing appropriate training affects the other themes (teachers provide opportunities to challenge gifted students, differentiating provides the education gifted students need, and obstacles that hinder the

growth of the gifted student). Doing a study that provides education for teachers may increase opportunities to challenge gifted students (theme one), allow for better and more differentiation (theme two), and lessen obstacles that hinder the growth of the gifted student (theme three). When teachers differentiate, they are responding to the learners needs by how content is presented, learned, and responded to (Dixon et al., 2013). “All these adaptations are designed to meet the individual characteristics of learners and to maximize their time in school” (Dixon et al., 2013, p. 113). When this is done, everyone learns to their potential.

Conclusion

This study examined how teachers meet the academic needs of gifted students in their classrooms in middle and secondary school. Although surveying the teachers gave a larger sample to receive feedback from, the interviews gave in-depth, honest, open-ended information that was crucial to this study. The teachers appeared candid and authentic when discussing their perceptions of the gifted program. All of the teachers tried to give all of their students the best education; however, they all found it difficult provide an adequate education to their gifted students. All of the interviewees discussed the lack of support and training. The perception of the lack of training and support was mirrored by the survey results. Although many stated that they were able to recognize gifts and differentiate instruction, few provided sufficient services to those gifted students on a daily or even weekly basis.

The task of differentiating instruction to all the different levels of students in one classroom is a daunting task. Supporting teachers and showing them how to effectively and efficiently differentiate instruction will help all kids reach their potential. Teachers

have the willingness to provide the appropriate education; however, not the knowledge. Although there are other ways to support gifted students, all require supporting a student's ability to advance through the lessons. With support and training, all teachers can provide appropriate education to every individual in the classroom.

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Table 1

Interviewees Career Data

Teacher	Name (Pseudonym)	Content	Grade Level	Years of Experience
<i>T1</i>	Katie	Reading	7	9
<i>T2</i>	Misty	Science	10	13
<i>T3</i>	Beth	Math	7	10
<i>T4</i>	Ellen	Science	12	21

Table 2

Statistics

	How many years have you been teaching?	How many graduate level courses have you had in gifted education?	I feel confident in my ability to recognize the characteristics and behaviors of middle and high school students with high academic potential.	I feel confident in my ability to recognize the characteristics and behaviors of middle and high school students with high creative potential.	I feel capable of meeting the needs of middle and high school advanced learners in my classroom.
Valid	42	42	37	37	38
Missing	0	0	5	5	4
Mean	15.083	1.88	3.57	3.59	3.21
Std. Deviation	8.8772	10.175	.801	.798	.875
Range	36.0	66	3	3	3

Figure A

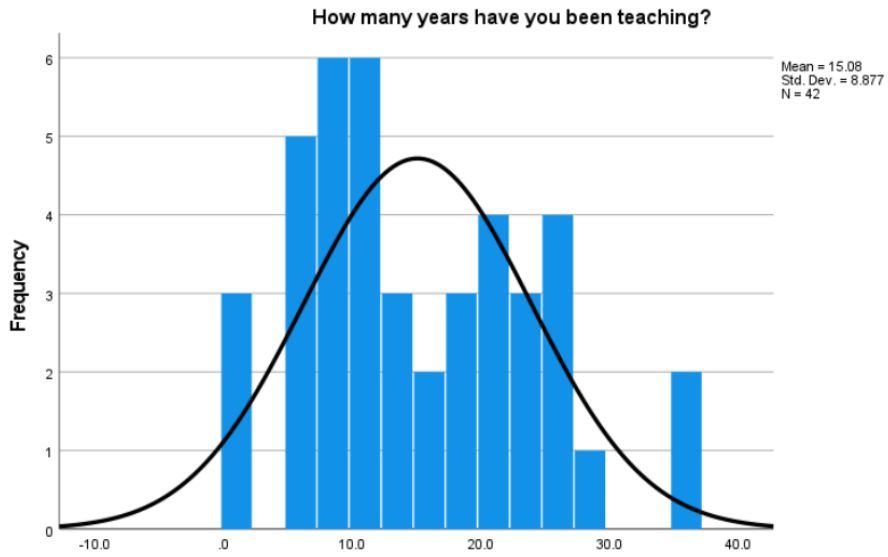


Figure B



Figure C

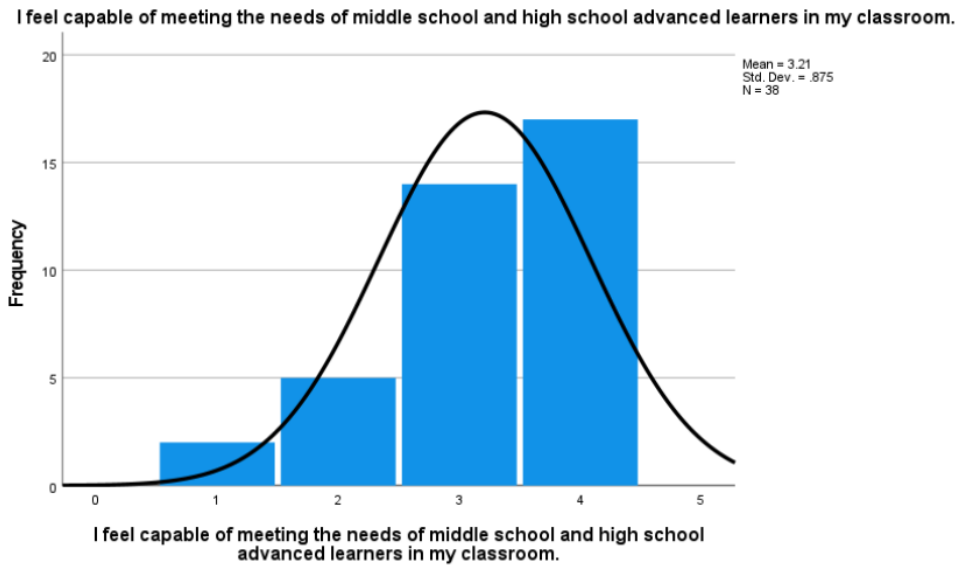


Figure D

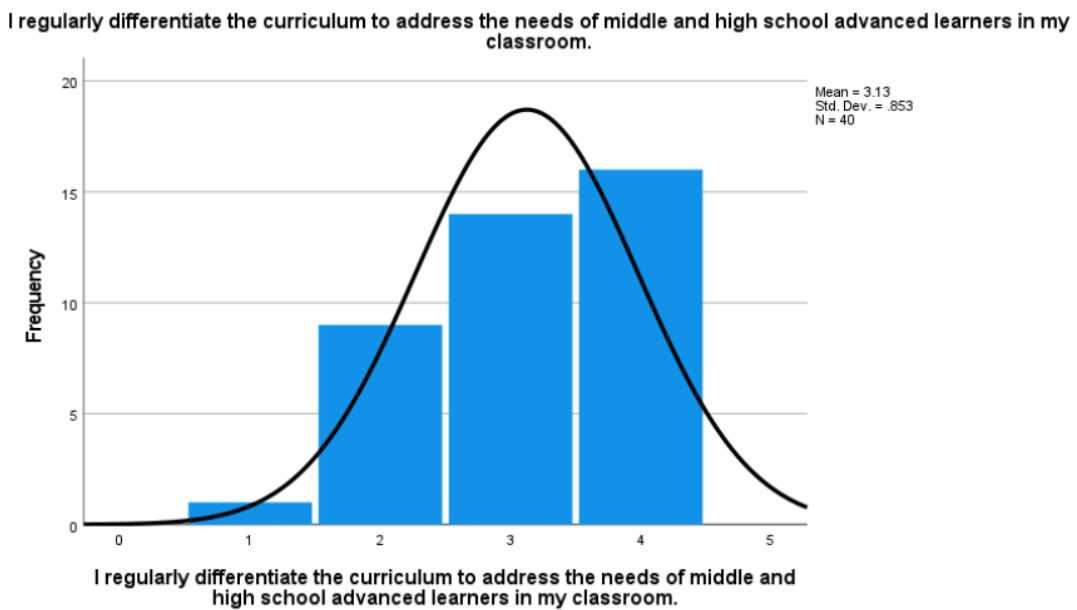


Figure E

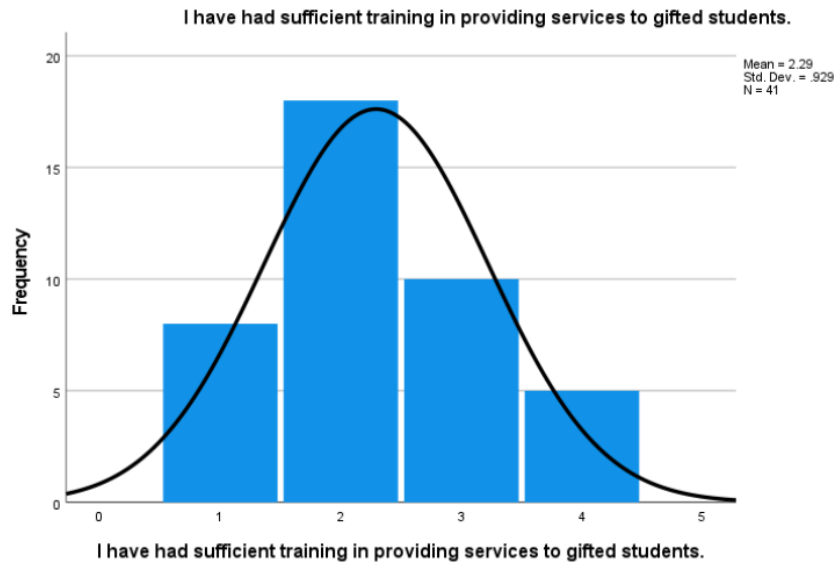


Figure F

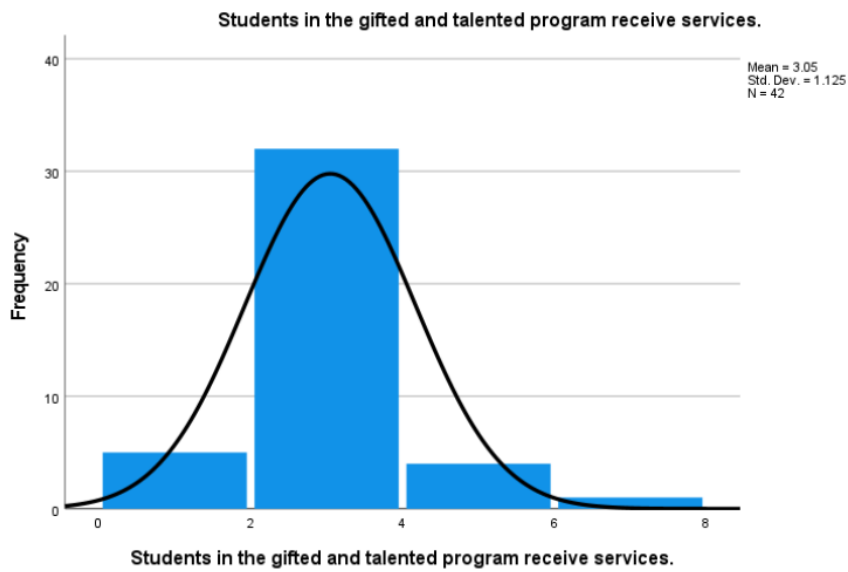
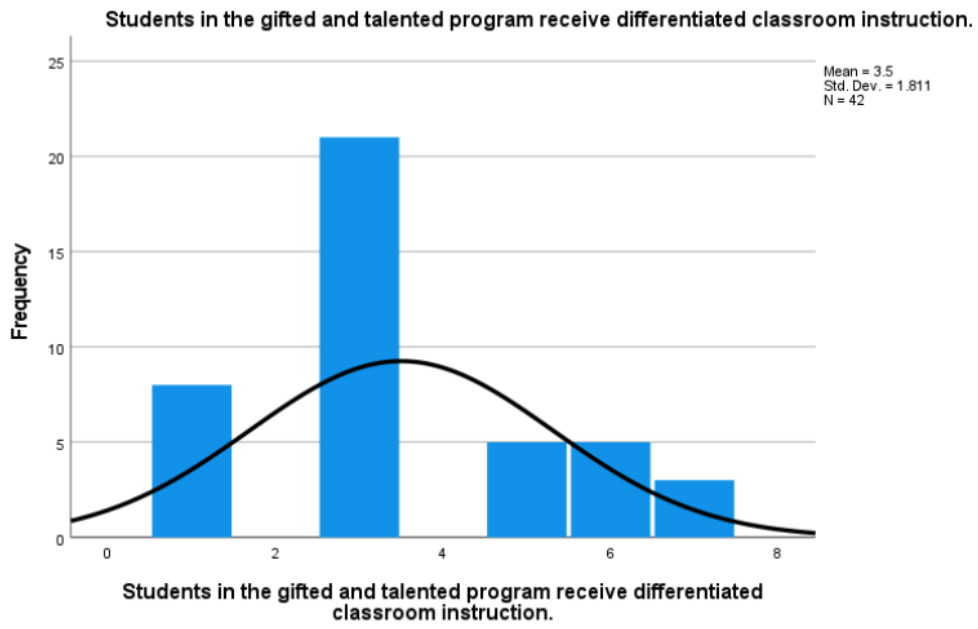


Figure G



APPENDIX A: INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

Only WKU IRB stamped and approved forms are to be used with participants

Project Title: Understanding the Academic Needs of Gifted Students

Investigator: Angelica Garnett, WKU student, 270-348-3497

(include name, department and method of contact)

You are being asked to participate in a project conducted through Western Kentucky University. The University requires that you give your signed agreement to participate in this project.

You must be 18 years old or older to participate in this research study.

The investigator will explain to you in detail the purpose of the project, the procedures to be used, and the potential benefits and possible risks of participation. You may ask any questions you have to help you understand the project. A basic explanation of the project is written below. Please read this explanation and discuss with the researcher any questions you may have.

If you then decide to participate in the project, please sign this form in the presence of the person who explained the project to you. You should be given a copy of this form to keep.

1. **Nature and Purpose of the Project:** The purpose of this study will be to determine how teachers meet the academic needs of gifted students in middle and secondary school.

2. **Explanation of Procedures:**

You are being asked to participate in a study regarding your current perceptions about how teachers meet the academic needs of gifted students. Your participation will involve the completion of an interview that will require approximately 30-45 minutes of your time to complete. This interview is being conducted virtually and will be recorded.

3. **Discomfort and Risks:**

There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts to participants as a result of their participation in this study. The risks associated with participation in this research are minimal and no more than that encountered in everyday activities.

4. **Benefits:**

Refusal to participate in this study will have no effect on any future services you may be entitled to from the University or Trigg County Schools. Anyone who agrees to participate in this study is free to withdraw from the study at any time with no penalty.

5. **Confidentiality:**

All data will be kept in a secure manner. Publications or presentations related to this study will not include identifiable references to subjects' identities.

6. **Refusal/Withdrawal:** Refusal to participate in this study will have no effect on any future services you may be entitled to from the University. Anyone who agrees to participate in this study is free to withdraw from the study at any time with no penalty.

You understand also that it is not possible to identify all potential risks in an experimental procedure, and you believe that reasonable safeguards have been taken to minimize both the known and potential but unknown risks.

Signature of Participant

Date

Witness

Date

- I agree to the audio/video recording of the research. **(Initial here)** _____

THE DATED APPROVAL ON THIS CONSENT FORM INDICATES THAT
THIS PROJECT HAS BEEN REVIEWED AND APPROVED BY
THE WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
Paul Mooney, Human Protections Administrator
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APPENDIX B: SURVEY QUESTIONS

Q1 What district do you work for?

Q2 What is the name of your school?

Q3 How many years have you been teaching?

Q4 How many graduate level courses have you had in gifted education?

Q5 The following questions are on a scale of strongly disagree to strongly agree.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I feel confident in my ability to recognize the characteristics and behaviors of middle and high school students with high academic potential. (1)	1	2	3	4	5
I feel confident in my ability to recognize the characteristics and behaviors of middle and high school students with high creative potential. (2)	1	2	3	4	5
I feel capable of meeting the needs of middle school and high school advanced learners in my classroom. (3)	1	2	3	4	5

I regularly differentiate the curriculum to address the needs of middle and high school advanced learners in my classroom. (4)	1	2	3	4	5
I have a clear understanding of who my gifted students are in my classroom. (5)	1	2	3	4	5
I have a clear understanding of what categories my students are gifted in. (6)	1	2	3	4	5
I have confidence in differentiating instruction for the gifted students in my classroom. (7)	1	2	3	4	5
I have had sufficient training in providing services to gifted students. (8)	1	2	3	4	5

Q6 The following items are on a scale of Never, Occasionally, Monthly, Weekly, and Daily.

	Never	Occasionally	Monthly	Weekly	Daily
Students in the gifted and talented program receive services. (1)	1	2	3	4	5
Students in the gifted and talented program receive differentiated classroom instruction. (2)	1	2	3	4	5

Students in the gifted and talented program have individual goals that are monitored throughout the year. (3)	1	2	3	4	5
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Classroom teachers are given resources to support gifted and talented students. (4)	1	2	3	4	5
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Q7 The following items are on a scale of Never, Rarely, Often, and Every Time.

	Never	Rarely	Often	Every Time
I use preassessments to assess prior knowledge of my students. (1)	1	2	3	4
I adjust my curriculum based on results of preassessments. (2)	1	2	3	4
In enrichment, new topics are added to existing curriculum or current topics are explored in greater depths. I modify my curriculum by enrichment. (3)	1	2	3	4
In acceleration, students are able to meet curriculum objectives at a faster rate. I modify my curriculum by acceleration. (4)	1	2	3	4
In flexible scheduling, students avoid studying material they have already mastered. I modify my curriculum by flexible scheduling. (5)	1	2	3	4

Curriculum compacting is eliminating practice or introductory activities that prevent gifted students from accelerating. I modify my curriculum by curriculum compacting. (6)

1	2	3	4
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Telescoping allows years of curriculum to be compacted in order for gifted students to move faster. I modify my curriculum by telescoping. (7)

1	2	3	4
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In self-paced instruction, students are able to pace themselves in learning the curriculum. I modify my curriculum by self-paced instruction. (8)

1	2	3	4
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APPENDIX C: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What do you believe is the purpose of the gifted and talented program? Explain.
2. What do you believe are effective strategies in teaching students who are identified as gifted within the regular classroom?
3. What services should be in place to develop the potential of students who are identified as gifted in academics?
4. How are teachers supported in addressing the needs of students identified as gifted with advanced abilities in academics?
5. What are the barriers in supporting students identified as gifted with advanced abilities in academics?
6. How are teachers making sure that the needs of students identified as gifted are being met?