

## **EDUC 5440: Learning Environments for Gifted Students**

Course Instructor:

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**Office Hours:** TBD

**Class Hours:** TBD

**Dates:** TBD

**Classroom:** TBD

### **Course Description and Outcomes**

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In this course, designed for K-12 teachers, educators are provided with a background in models, systems, and global practices (environments) used to serve the needs of gifted and talented learners. In this course we examine the academic, emotional, intellectual, and social needs of gifted populations, and see how researchers in the field have developed models to address those needs and differences. A model is a theoretical or ideal framework on which to hand ideas, techniques, strategies, and procedures. The singular importance of models is to help understand the "why" which invariably leads to knowing "how." Therefore, this course helps learners understand how we *should* serve gifted students even if the reality is somewhat different.

#### **Course Objectives:**

Participants will be able to determine the major differences among models for serving gifted populations in schools. In addition, learners will understand what constitutes an effective program. Learners will be able to recognize and differentiate between a model, a system, and a strategy, and will be able to recognize and explain a variety of models used to serve gifted populations.

- **Objective #1:** Create safe, inclusive, and culturally responsive environments leading to social and emotional well-being.
- **Objective #2:** Create inclusive, safe, and culturally responsive environments that foster meaningful and rigorous learning and appropriate social interactions as teachers use effective communication and motivational to facilitate a deep understanding of subject matter.
- **Objective #3:** Adjust communication to individual's language proficiency including cultural and linguistic differences. Help gifted learners adapt to various environments and develop ethical leadership skills.
- **Objective #4:** Demonstrate an understanding of multiple environments along the continuum of services and articulate the relative effectiveness of each, including learning environments outside of a school setting.

## Required Text and Course Material

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**Growing Up Gifted: Developing the Potential of Children at School and at Home.**, Pearson; 8th edition (April 18, 2012), **ISBN-10**, 0132620669, **ISBN-13**, additional supplemental materials and information will be supplied relative to a range of learning environments for gifted learners.

## Assignments

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### Pick One Specific Gifted Model -Paper\*

15% of grade

This assignment is designed to help you become the "resident expert" on a specific model for gifted learners. Remember, models are broad, and often theoretically based inclusive programs. Models are linked to the theoretical perspective of the researcher who authored the model. By digging deeply into one model (particularly one of interest to you), it will help you realize the flow from a research-based model to the reality of how programs in schools are organized. Finally, in-depth understanding stemming from examining the details of a given model will give you substantial insight into how best to address the unique needs of gifted individuals. The purpose of this assignment is to delve deeply into **one** specific theoretical model for serving gifted students. Learners will be able to: a) recount specific details and rationale for their chosen model, b) develop a broad-based understanding for the many dimensions of models for the gifted, and c) articulate the research or theory base behind a specific model.

### Gifted Models Comparison Chart\*

10% of grade

The purpose of this assignment is to assist the learner in drawing conclusions about the parts of methods and systems from a global or research perspective. That is, to understand that models have similarities despite diverse authors and research methodologies, and that some models may be best suited for specific types or configurations of gifted students. The purpose of this assignment is to draw conclusions about the rationale behind research-based models and systems for use in gifted program. Learners will be able to: a) research similarities and differences across different models of gifted programming, b) decide which models are most appropriate for their students, and c) find common themes or elements across diverse systems or models.

#### The Task

1. Read about and be familiar with at least 5 different models for serving gifted learners.
2. Prepare a comparison/contrast chart giving information about 5 different models.

3. Make sure you divide your chart into 4 categories or areas of information including: a) Author or lead researchers of the model, and key information about them, b) Main Premise of model (research basis or why/how it was developed), c) What type of giftedness or development is targeted by the model, d) Your assessment (reflection) of how it would be to implement (challenges or positives).

4. Write detailed descriptions of the information requested for all 5 models. Ensure you embed sources/citations where appropriate and write detailed, insightful information.

5. Submit your Model Comparison Chart.

### **A Look at nearby Models\***

10% of grade

The purpose of this assignment is to launch your exploration of models and/or systems of meeting gifted needs. By exploring other models locally, regionally, nationally, or internationally, it helps give a broader picture of the field and how your own district model may be a hybrid of many other ways to go about addressing the unique needs of gifted learners. The purpose of this assignment is to broaden the learner's perspective and view with respect to programs outside their locale. Learners will be able to: a) explore a variety of programs at various levels of government, b) expand their knowledge base of how gifted programs work elsewhere, and c) appreciate the elements of the locale program. Complete steps below...

1. Pick a context - local school district, another state, or another country
2. Look for information on that particular model or large-scale service delivery. remember we are not looking for classroom strategies or curriculum (that's another course), rather you are looking for "how do they do gifted" in Melbourne, or New York, or Phoenix, or in Kansas.
3. Devise some guiding questions such as: "How do \_\_\_\_ group kids, or How does \_\_\_\_ articulate their philosophy of gifted on their website, or Does \_\_\_\_ think mixing gifted and nongifted is a good idea?"
4. Write up your findings and include your guiding questions, your findings, and your sources.
5. Submit "your" Model project as a paper.
6. The parameters for where this model occurs is open because your inherent curiosity will lead you to examine this issue in ways that provide natural motivation. In short, you should be driven to find out more about x, because you always wanted to know what x did with gifted students. You may wish to research a former program in a former district, or a new exotic place. Whichever location you choose, please ensure that let the reader know something about why you made that choice.

### **Develop and market a Program\***

10% of grade

The purpose of this assignment is to enhance your perspective of gifted programs by designing one. This is not a detailed unit by unit, lesson by lesson type of assignment. Rather, it asks you to give an overview of the big picture. Suppose you were hired to design a program for gifted learners in a school or a small district where none had existed before - you have a blank slate. You are asked to present to a board or committee what you propose for the new program, and of course, explain why. The purpose of this assignment is to produce a document (or presentation) to outline a beginning gifted program, and to convince the audience that your program meets the needs of the gifted population. Learners will be able to: a) propose a program starting point given what they know programs need, b) sell the program to a constituency where there has not been a program previously, and c) convince their audience all four dimensions of gifted needs are addressed.

**Task:** Imagine you are tasked with coming up with a program that addresses the needs of gifted students in the areas of academic, emotional, intellectual, and social areas. Your meeting is to propose the overview of the program - the theoretical or philosophical direction, and what it might look like. So, a macro look at the program and later you can add details such as content, processes, and lessons.

**Criteria:** To be successful at this task follow the guidelines below:

1. Decide how you might address the 4 areas of academic, emotional, intellectual, and social needs
2. Be clear as to why those needs are different for gifted learners, and articulate your philosophy with respect to those needs
3. Keep in mind a program is something like pull-out, part-time mentorship, cluster grouping etc., and not lessons, units and activities!
4. List and explains your goals for your program. In other words, what might you expect to accomplish or how would the various pieces of your program be efficacious for your gifted students.
5. Speak to the players or resources needed to implement your program.
6. Submit your program - this assignment need not be APA, you decide how best you will present your written program

## **Statement of Principles: Your “Gifted” Philosophy\***

10% of grade

The intent of this assignment is to develop critical thinking and commitment to serving the needs of gifted learners. By developing and subsequently articulating a philosophy or set of beliefs about the gifted, one becomes more disposed toward a multitude of ideas that come along, and that can be harnessed to achieve that end. The purpose of this assignment is to think critically about the unique needs of gifted students and articulate your thoughts and beliefs for the same. Learners will be able to: a) think critically and deeply about the construct gifted, b) develop and articulate their philosophy about how and why to serve gifted students, and c) discuss the full circle of addressing gifted needs including short- and long-range goals.

**Task:** Think, think, think about...

- What you believe about who you have come to know as the gifted
- What you believe about learning and how that process works
- What you believe about the role of the teacher, particularly where it concerns advanced thinkers
- What you believe can happen if we ignore the needs of the gifted population
- What you believe about what can happen when gifted children are nurtured and encouraged to develop their potential

### **Criteria:**

1. Encapsulate your thinking in a set of statements
2. Express your beliefs
3. Explain your beliefs
4. Submit your assignment entitled: Statement of Principles (Philosophy)
5. You are the best judge of form, format, shape, and length - this is your philosophy!

## **Grouping Practices for Optimal Learning\***

15% of grade

Learners will be able to compare theoretical grouping to local instructional practices. This is an opportunity to see how gifted learners are served in your local school, school district, or state. The purpose of this assignment is to give an opportunity for cohort members to see and interpret gifted practices in a school setting. Learners will be able to: a) converse with a Gifted specialist and/or gifted students, b) compare what is written in articles and other text to the realities of school gifted programs, c) develop skills in reflection and interpretation via a detailed observation protocol.

### **Assignment:**

1. Observe gifted students in whatever instructional grouping is available in your school if you can. **If you are in a setting where you do not have identified gifted students and/or a formalized program, please contact the instructor for an alternative assignment.**
2. If possible, contact your in-house GATE Specialist, or one in another school to discuss grouping. Be sure to have a conversation (in person, email, text) about push-in versus pull-out programs.
3. Prepare an observation form with 3 columns labeled - **Notes, Pros, and Cons**. Make certain you have a minimum of 5 entries - that is, 5 types, or times, or different activities in which you observed gifted students. If you choose to observe one of your own students in detail, make sure you have 5 different examples/activities and or tasks.
4. Under "Pros" reflect on the advantages to the students by the type of program or instructional delivery.
5. Under "Cons" reflect on any disadvantages or improvements to the program that would better meet the needs of gifted students.
6. Submit your 2 - 3-page observation form. Good luck!

## **Design a “Perfect” Program Model\***

15% of grade

This is a culminating activity and one that requires the integration of readings, learning from colleagues, discussion throughout the course, investigation through experience, and your own sense of equity for gifted learners. The title of the assignment is a misnomer - it WILL NOT BE PERFECT. However, educators need to be idealists when they consider their sphere of influence and how they can best meet the needs of learners. Researchers in the field of gifted education have tried for many years to design and implement "perfect" or

best practices programs. None have been perfect but offer a model to guide the building and implementation of strategies, groupings, and programs to best reach gifted students in school settings. Learners will be able to:

- stretch their thinking and develop their emerging theories of what constitutes an effective GATE program,
- think critically about the needs of gifted students, and
- think critically and in-depth about the component parts of curriculum and instruction for gifted and high ability learners.

Task is as follows...

Design a program, based on your knowledge so far, that would adequately address the needs of gifted learners in the following areas of development: academic, intellectual, emotional, social, and physical. A "perfect" program would meet all these needs because where there are extreme strengths, there are often weaknesses and to create an optimal educational environment, all areas of development would be addressed. Be sure to discuss how each of these areas will be taken into consideration to form a holistic and pervasive program to help gifted learners be challenged, grow, and to develop life-long positive dispositions.

**How to be successful on the assignment:**

1. You might start by jotting what you know, what you learned, and what you believe in each of those domains or developmental areas.
2. You may wish to consider what you have seen in terms of programs and superimpose your ideas of how those ideas can be improved - or be made "perfect."
3. Give a rationale or reason for your program and say why it is fabulous, awesome, incredible, and of course..."perfect."
4. Articulate what your program will do, what it will look like, and how it effectively address each of the 5 developmental areas.
5. Discuss some specifics in each category concerning how instruction and content might be delivered and/or assessed.
6. Give your program a title - of course your name can be part of it if you like.
7. Submit your APA formatted program document which will be at least 4 pages in length, not including the title page and references page. So, 6 pages total, minimum.

## **Weekly Discussion Threrads\***

15% of grade

For this lesson's discussion, please respond to one (1) of the prompts below. As people respond to and discuss different prompts learning is amplified. Make sure your initial posting in the discussion thread is a minimum of 250 words to earn full points. Then, respond to two (2) colleagues in the course after reading their responses to a prompt. Your responses to cohort members should be a minimum of 150 words each to earn full points. Example form discussion #2 is below.

**Please respond to one the following prompts as your original posting for this week:**

1. Models are large pervasive "ideals" of what a program could or would like. Continue this prompt with your thoughts on the benefits or disadvantages of models. You might start of with "I think the advantage to developing a theoretical model for serving gifted learners is..." (continue that thought).
2. Despite academic, emotional, and psycho-social needs of the gifted population, it seems that schools focus on just one aspect - academic capabilities. Some of the reasons for this are.... (you finish the thoughts)
3. How do you suppose different researchers in the field of gifted (e.g., Dr. Betts) come up with different ideas on what an effective model should contain?

\* A detailed description and rubric for these assignments can be found on Canvas.

## **Late assignments**

Assignments will not be accepted unless preapproved by the instructor. Late assignments will be deducted 15% if a week or more late, without prior authorization from the course instructor.

## **Other Grading Policies**

**Cheating:** Please refer to the Academic Catalog or the Student Handbook for the University's statement on academic honesty. It is your job to know whether you are breaking the rules. If you

have questions or concerns about the Policies and Procedures in the Student Handbook, please ask! I will not tolerate plagiarism and cheating. Dishonest assignments will receive a zero on the first offense and repeat offenders will receive an F for their grade in the class. In addition, all cheaters and plagiarizers will be reported to the office of the dean of students regardless of whether it is your first offense.

## Grading Scale

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<b>A</b> 94-100%	<b>A-</b> 90-93.9%
<b>B+</b> 87-89.9%	<b>B</b> 84-86.9%
<b>B-</b> 80-83.9%	<b>C+</b> 77-79.9%
<b>C</b> 74-76.9%	<b>C-</b> 70-73.9%
<b>D+</b> 67-69.9%	<b>D</b> 64-66.9%

This grading scale will be used to determine letter grades at the end of the semester. For major assignments, the percentage of the final grade designated for each assignment has been determined based upon the expected amount of effort and care required to complete the assignment.

It is your responsibility to regulate your learning. If something is unclear, it is up to you to take steps necessary to correct the situation. You must attend to the purposes of the assignments and activities. You must self-monitor your comprehension. You must identify and access resources that will clarify and strengthen your knowledge. Don't expect to simply absorb knowledge, you must take the initiative and make the effort to incorporate new understandings into what you already know.

Class sessions are predominantly interactive with a heavy emphasis upon collaboration. It is imperative for you to attend all class sessions. It is your responsibility to communicate to the instructor when class attendance is not possible. You will be allowed to miss one class sessions before your absences begin to affect your course grade.

## Attendance Policy

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Classes will be conducted weekly during the semester. Class attendance is mandatory. Except in the case of an emergency, absences must be cleared ahead of time through an instructor. Please note that more than one class absence may negatively impact the student's final letter grade, regardless of whether the student has cleared the absence(s). Additionally, all course assignments must be completed to an acceptable standard as determined by the course instructors. Failure to meet these requirements may result in a reduction in letter grade or removal from the course.

**Tentative Schedule (Check Canvas for updates)**

Date	Topic	Assignments and Reading
Week One	Models for Serving Gifted Students	Assignment #1 Discussion Thread #1
Week Two	Meeting the Needs of High Ability Learners	Assignment #2 Discussion Thread #2
Week Three	Effective Scope and Sequence Planning	Assignment #3 Discussion Thread #3
Week Four	Designing Extensions to Core Instruction	Assignment #4 Discussion Thread #4
Week Five	Philosophy behind Serving Gifted Students	Assignment #5 Discussion Thread #5
Week Six	School Based Models	Assignment #6 Discussion Thread #6
Week Seven	Dream up a "Perfect" Model	Assignment #7 Discussion Thread #7
		Readings as per Canvas assignments

**Course Policies**

**Statements Required in Course Syllabi**

Per SUU [Policy 6.36](#)

**COVID Website:** <https://www.suu.edu/coronavirus/>

**Thriving Thunderbirds:** If you find yourself struggling with mental health issues, please visit <https://www.suu.edu/mentalhealth> for resources.

**Important syllabus statements related to ATTENDANCE and current COVID-19 conditions**

***What should I expect in the classroom this semester?***

*The following are general guidelines for the classroom environment.*

- **Class Attendance is Required:** If you are registered for a Face-to-Face, Synchronous Remote, or Hybrid course, attendance is required. If you are ill, you may request a faculty member record the class and share it with you, or you may request other reasonable accommodations. Your instructor will work with you to develop a plan for completing coursework. *In order for you to receive academic accommodations and ensure that your request is communicated to faculty, you **must** submit this [self report form](#).*
- **Course [delivery modalities](#) are posted online for each course, but may be modified in response to emerging COVID conditions:** SUU is employing every effort to maintain a learning environment that is engaging and safe. The course modality listed when you registered for courses should remain for the semester; however, due to COVID conditions, the delivery of modality for a specific course may change during the semester. Normally, these changes will be short term or in some cases longer. When such a modification is needed, faculty members will work with their department chair and/or dean and the students to maintain an effective learning environment.

**(optional) ZOOM ETIQUETTE:** If your instructor utilizes the Zoom online conference system, you will need to have a way to communicate (a webcam, a microphone, a smartphone/landline, or using chat within the Zoom app). We will adopt the same rules and norms as in a physical classroom (take notes; participate by asking and answering questions; wear classroom-ready clothing). For everyone's benefit, please:

- Join the course in a quiet, distraction free location;
- Be aware of your background if you have video enabled;
- Mute your microphone or phone unless you are speaking;
- Close browser tabs and software not required for participating in class; and
- Remember that SUU classes are in the Mountain Time zone.

The success of this class will depend on the same commitment to learning we all typically bring to the physical classroom.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:** Scholastic dishonesty will not be tolerated and will be prosecuted to the fullest extent (see [SUU Policy 6.33](#)). You are expected to have read and understood the current SUU student conduct code ([SUU Policy 11.2](#)) regarding student responsibilities and rights, the intellectual property policy ([SUU Policy 5.52](#)), information about procedures, and what constitutes acceptable behavior.

**Please Note:** The use of websites or services that sell or generate essays is a violation of these policies; likewise, the use of websites or services that provide answers to assignments, quizzes, or tests is also a violation of these policies.

**ADA STATEMENT:** Students with medical, psychological, learning, or other disabilities desiring academic adjustments, accommodations, or auxiliary aids will need to contact the [Disability Resource Center](#), located in Room 206F of the Sharwan Smith Center or by phone at (435) 865-8042. The Disability Resource Center determines eligibility for and authorizes the provision of services.

If your instructor requires attendance, you may need to seek an ADA accommodation to request an exception to this attendance policy. Please contact the Disability Resource Center to determine what, if any, ADA accommodations are reasonable and appropriate.

**EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT STATEMENT:** In case of emergency, the University's Emergency Notification System (ENS) will be activated. Students are encouraged to maintain updated contact information using the link on the homepage of the mySUU portal. In addition, students are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the Emergency Response Protocols posted in each classroom. Detailed information about the University's emergency management plan can be found at <http://www.suu.edu/emergency>.

**HEOA COMPLIANCE STATEMENT:** For a full set of Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA) compliance statements, please visit <https://www.suu.edu/heoa>. The sharing of copyrighted material through peer-to-peer (P2P) file sharing, except as provided under U.S. copyright law, is prohibited by law; additional information can be found at <https://my.suu.edu/help/article/1096/heoa-compliance-plan>. You are also expected to comply with policies regarding intellectual property ([SUU Policy 5.52](#)) and copyright ([SUU Policy 5.54](#)).

**DISCLAIMER STATEMENT:** Information contained in this syllabus, other than the grading, late assignments, makeup work, and attendance policies, may be subject to change with advance notice, as deemed appropriate by the instructor.

**(optional) SUUSA STATEMENT:** As a student at SUU, you have representation from the SUU Student Association (SUUSA) which advocates for student interests and helps work as a liaison between the students and the university administration. You can submit T-Bird Squawks feedback by going to <https://www.suu.edu/suusa/voice>. Likewise, you can learn more about SUUSA's Executive Council at <https://www.suu.edu/suusa/executive-council> and about all of SUUSA's Student Senators at <https://www.suu.edu/suusa/senate>. If you have any specific concerns regarding any of your courses, please contact the SUUSA VP of Academics at: [suusa\\_academicsvp@suu.edu](mailto:suusa_academicsvp@suu.edu).

**(optional) Thriving Thunderbirds:** If you find yourself struggling with mental health issues, please visit <https://www.suu.edu/mentalhealth> for access to valuable resources.

Mental health is essential for your academic success. SUU provides resources, support, and services to address mental health issues at every level of concern. We are committed to helping all [Thunderbirds Thrive](#).

If you need assistance navigating any of the resources, please contact [Counseling and Psychological Services](#), the [Dean of Students' Office](#), or the [Health and Wellness Center](#).

*Note: This syllabus is meant to serve as an outline and guide for the course. Please note that the instructor(s) may modify it at any time with reasonable notice to students. The instructor(s) may also modify the schedule at any time to accommodate the needs of the class. Should you have any questions or concerns about the syllabus, it is your responsibility to contact the instructor(s) for clarification.*