

Special Educational Needs for Gifted Students

A Case Study about Melinda

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Special Education (Education Program for the Gifted/Talented)

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A rhythmic and rhyming poem that highlights characteristics through which giftedness may be identified, how latent features of gifted children may be recognize, and what teachers can do to help all kids discover and expand their unique abilities and interests as much as their self-determination.

I chose the case study Melinda
because she reminded me
of the little girl & student
that I used to be.

At such a young age
she was gentle & mild,
not like other gifted kids
who can be outspoken & wild.

In the fifth grade
I too was quiet & shy,
and much like Melinda
teachers didn't ask why.

But underneath Melinda's
unassuming guile
was a linguistically creative,
friendly resourceful child.

Although she was known
as an exceptional reader,
it was only by circumstance
that she'd shine as a leader.

Melinda's teachers did not
provide her an earlier chance
to demonstrate her skills that
would have helped Melinda advance.



Being a fine artist, musician, and writer, when my fall 2018 SPED 415: Education Programs for Gifted/Talented class instructor, Hye Jin Park Ed.D., offered the option of developing our final project in the form of just about any creative media, it was an opportunity I couldn't pass up. At first, I wasn't sure I could pull it off. There was a lot of information that I needed to convey. Compacting it all into a poem was a terrific challenge. The words didn't flow out of me like water from a spigot, but I managed to incorporate many of the key takeaways into a rhythmic and rhyming way that is fun to read. The verses reflect what I learned about evidence-based teaching strategies, program formats, and curriculum models for gifted and talented children as well as for most students. Throughout the semester, I built a case study about Melinda who is a talented fifth-grader. The composition also highlights characteristics by which to identify giftedness, how to recognize latent features of gifted children, and what teachers can do to help all kids discover and expand their unique abilities, interests, and self-determination.

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A schoolwide enrichment program that had students working together, Melinda would have revealed she was more than just clever.

Showing deep concern for a disabled younger peer, her investigative interests grew and Melinda's empathy appeared.

Recruiting younger & older students as protectors, artists & writers, she inspired & motivated her peers as her ideas grew like wildfire.

A mentoring extensions provision giving purpose to all, her gifts as well as others would not have been forestalled.

A systematic diagnostic, prescriptive approach would have sooner identified her impressive ability to coach.

In addition to student records, surveys & tests, mixed-ability and cross-grade groups would enable teachers to assess

students like Melinda's educational, social & emotional needs in the inclusion classroom where all students can exceed

Common Core State Standards that alone do not always give benefits of differentiated curricula compact, accelerated & collaborative.

Aligned with cooperative learning alternative to traditional education, using an autonomous learner model is ideal for Melinda's situation.

With a learning contract in place making it clear what she could expect, setting specific goals to see that outcome expectations were met,

study guides & independent study prompting room for incubation, and applying inductive methods can aid content research & product creation.

Challenging a gifted student with abstract components is essential including advanced topics that incite their greatest learning potential.

Applying process-based strategies in formulating a product design, Melinda's critical & creative thinking could be dutifully refined

with graphic organizers and structured content instruction. Teacher's lessons should also include Flexible learning options

that make learning fun & inviting with activities, humor & games that are entertaining & exciting not monotonous & mundane.

Student performance can then be measured with formative assess as teachers adjust their curricula to ensure every students' success.

Assistive & effective technologies are likewise a very helpful tool in the heterogenous classroom where Melinda attends school.

In addition to honing language arts, evolving from teacher-directed plans to independent self-teaching where all students illustrate they can

develop their abilities
while setting their own pace
that makes learning more appealing,
not a stressful competitive race.

This also gives teachers access
to analysis a few clicks away
for summative assessments
where data precisely displays

students' advancements & problems
so that teachers are able to address
students like Melinda's needs,
modifying lessons so they progress.

Creating visual art projects
is another crafty way
to embed learning opportunities
into tactile play.

So are musical endeavors
that use rhyming & timing
to stimulate auditory & visual senses
improving memory & signing.

A normal part of learning
is allowing plenty of mistakes
without giving harsh criticisms
or disappointed looks that take

a toll on children's confidence,
self-esteem & motivation,
teachers need to smile & laugh to stir
self-expression & self-determination.

It's quite true that Melinda is
a persistent & talented kid,
although for several years
her social & linguistic gifts were hid.

But as all children are special
and have their own unique profile
with widely varying curiosities
characteristics & styles,

it's a school's and teacher's job
to bring out all students' best
no matter what a child's ability
disposition or interest.

And even though it's important to
have diverse programs & provisions,
children learn superlatively
if teachers have a deep conviction

believing that all students deserve
to be treated kindly with respect
and positive regard that makes
learning an enjoyable experience.