

Dos & Don'ts of Teaching Gifted Students

Do ...

- Understand that gifted students, just like all students, come to school to learn and be challenged.
- Pre-assess your students. Find out their areas of strength as well as those areas you may need to address before students move on.
- Plan for differentiation. Consider pre-assessments, extension activities, and compacting the curriculum.
- Use phrases like "You've shown you don't need more practice" or "You need more practice" instead of words like "qualify" or "eligible" when referring to extension work.
- Encourage high-ability students to take on challenges. Because they're often used to getting good grades, gifted students may be risk averse.

Don't ...

- Confuse high achievers with high-ability students. High achievers put in the time and effort to succeed in school. This may not be the case with high-ability students. Their gifts may not translate into academic achievement and their behavior can at times appear noncompliant.
- Assume that all gifted students are the same and that one strategy works for all.
- Assume that by making gifted students tutors, you're providing a learning extension.
- Confuse extension activities with additional work. Gifted students need deeper and more complex assignments.
- Refer to alternate work for gifted students as "free time." Call it "choice time" or "unfinished work time," so students understand that they are required to tackle a task during this time period.
- Give too many directions to students about how they should complete a task. Say, "Here's the end result I'm grading. How you get there is your choice."
- Assume that gifted students are growing academically. Rely on formative and summative assessments.

