

**George Mason University**  
**EDCI 625: Contemporary Issues and Trends in Gifted Education**  
**Summer 2010**

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**Graduate School of Education**  
**571-423-4746**  
**Mondays/Wednesdays 4:30-7:10, Saturdays 9-1**  
**Location: Science and Technology II Room 258**

**Office Hours: By Appointment**

**Course Description:**

This course focuses on current research, trends and issues as well as legislation and litigation concerning children identified as gifted and talented. It will provide professionals in the field of gifted education, regular education and related fields with the knowledge and skills needed to serve as advocates for gifted child education. Pre-requisites: completion of EDCI 621, 622, 623, 624 endorsement sequence or special permission.

**Standards:**

This course is designed around the Virginia Licensure Regulations for School Personnel (1998) and specifically addresses 8 VAC 20-21-270: gifted education (add-on endorsement) standards:

- A6: Understanding of contemporary issues and research in gifted education, including:  
    The systematic gathering, analyzing and reporting of formative and summative data;  
    and,  
    Current local, state, and national issues and concerns.
- A7: Understanding of and proficiency in, grammar, usage, and mechanics and their integration in writing.

Furthermore, this course is designed to address NAGC/CEC Joint National Standards (2008) for the preparation of teachers of the gifted:

**Standard 9: Professional and Ethical Practice**

Educators of the gifted are guided by the profession's ethical and professional practice standards. They practice in multiple roles and complex situations across wide age and developmental ranges. Their practice requires ongoing attention to professional and ethical considerations. They engage in professional activities that promote growth in individuals with gifts and talents and update themselves on evidence-based best practices. Educators of the gifted view themselves as lifelong learners and regularly reflect on and adjust their practice. They are aware of how attitudes, behaviors, and ways of communicating can influence their practice. Educators of the gifted understand that culture and language interact with gifts and talents and are sensitive to the many aspects of the diversity of individuals with gifts and talents and their families.

K1	Personal and cultural frames of reference that affect one's teaching of individuals with gifts and talents, including biases about individuals from diverse backgrounds.
K2	Organizations and publications relevant to the field of gifted and talented education.
S1	Assess personal skills and limitations in teaching individuals with exceptional learning needs.

S2	Maintain confidential communication about individuals with gifts and talents.
S3	Encourage and model respect for the full range of diversity among individuals with gifts and talents.
S4	Conduct activities in gifted and talented education in compliance with laws, policies, and standards of ethical practice.
S5	Improve practice through continuous research-supported professional development in gifted education and related fields.
S6	Participate in the activities of professional organizations related to gifted and talented education.
S7	Reflect on personal practice to improve teaching and guide professional growth in gifted and talented education.

**Standard 10: Collaboration**

Educators of the gifted effectively collaborate with families, other educators, and related service providers. This collaboration enhances comprehensive articulated program options across educational levels and engagement of individuals with gifts and talents in meaningful learning activities and interactions. Moreover, educators of the gifted embrace their special role as advocate for individuals with gifts and talents. They promote and advocate for the learning and well-being of individuals with gifts and talents across settings and diverse learning experiences.

K1	Culturally responsive behaviors that promote effective communication and collaboration with individuals with gifts and talents, their families, school personnel, and community members.
S1	Respond to concerns of families of individuals with gifts and talents.
S2	Collaborate with stakeholders outside the school setting who serve individuals with exceptional learning needs and their families.
S3	Advocate for the benefit of individuals with gifts and talents and their families.
S4	Collaborate with individuals with gifts and talents, their families, general, and special educators, and other school staff to articulate a comprehensive preschool through secondary educational program.
S5	Collaborate with families, community members, and professionals in assessment of individuals with gifts and talents.
S6	Communicate and consult with school personnel about the characteristics and needs of individuals with gifts and talents, including individuals from diverse backgrounds.

**Course Goals and Participant Outcomes:**

This course will enable participants to:

- gain knowledge of historical, political and theoretical perspectives as well as major current trends and issues in gifted education and how they related to current gifted education professional roles and programs;
- examine the role of federal and state legislation and policy (e.g. No Child Left Behind, Jacob Javits Act of 1998) on services for gifted children and their families;
- examine the purpose of advocacy and the role of local, state and national organizations;
- discuss the intersection of equity and excellence in such efforts as National Board of Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS), the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL's) or NCLB;

- synthesize the implications of current trends and issues within the context of historical, political and theoretical perspectives in gifted education;
- gain knowledge of applicable laws, rules and regulations regarding the planning and implementation of programs/services for gifted children and their families;
- possess the knowledge and skills to communicate effectively on behalf of gifted children at the local and state level

### III. Nature of Course Delivery

During this advanced online seminar participants are provided an opportunity to examine their own knowledge base regarding gifted and talented learners. They are expected to examine the extant research and emerging theories in gifted child education and to demonstrate their ability to advocate and communicate effectively with colleagues, parents and the larger education community.

Participants must have easy access to Bb at MASON and be prepared to work online a minimum of 3 hours per week. Participation online is considered as 'attendance' student must log on a minimum of 3 times per week to participate/lead online discussions of the content. No 'absences' (failure to logon & participate actively) from an online class are permitted.

### IV. Required Texts:

**Gladwell, M. (2008). Outliers: The Story of Success, Little Brown: New York, NY. ISBN: 978-0-316-01792-3**

Readings will be drawn from contemporary journals as well as the published research from the National Center for Research on Gifted and Talented (NRC G/T) housed at: The University of Connecticut, The University of George, The University of Virginia and Yale University. Journals may include:

*Gifted Child Quarterly*  
*Journal for the Education of the Gifted*  
*Journal of Teacher Education*  
*Educational Leadership*  
*American Educational Research Journal*

### V. Course Requirements and Assignments

The following assignments are intended to further the participants understanding of the field of gifted education in the larger context of schooling.

- A. *Informed participation in all Bb discussion* sessions is expected. All readings and assignments are to be completed prior to class. Class begins on Thursday and ends on Wednesday. Active and informed participation in class discussions based on your readings and experiences is required.
- B. *Annotated Reading Journal* – all readings are to be briefly summarized in your journal. A critical analysis of the reading in light of contemporary issues and

research should be provided for each entry. Journals are due twice during the semester. All Journal entries should be within the past five years or less.

- C. *Bb Discussion Group* – each participant will lead the discussion of a particular chapter/topic during the course of the semester. Discussion questions will be submitted the week before and during the week the leader will moderate the session.
- D. *Major Project* – Students will become an “expert” in a particular dimension of contemporary issues and trends in gifted education. Each participant will select a major project that relates to that dimension. These projects are to be designed in conjunction with the instructor and should be relevant to the educational role of the participant. They may include:
  - i. writing and submitting an article for publication;
  - ii. identifying potential funding sources and writing a grant proposal;
  - iii. creating a seminar series for classroom teachers;
  - iv. creating a community education series for parents and community leaders;
  - v. reading and selecting a series of books (with annotated bibliography) for “teachers as readers” series;
  - vi. submitting a proposal for presentation and creating the presentation.

Other projects of similar scope and depth may be negotiated with the instructor.

Each project will be assessed for:

- a) Accuracy of information presented;
- b) Congruence of issues with observed areas of need in the context of the participants educational role
- c) Inclusion of critical stakeholders;
- d) Acknowledgement of issues of special populations;
- e) Integration of the role of policy
- f) International context of the issue as it relates to gifted programming and curriculum

Grading Scale: 100 = A+, 94-99 = A; 90-93 = A-; 86-89 = B+; 80-85 = B; 70-79 = C; Below 70 = F. Grades below B are not eligible for master’s degree work.

## **VI. GSE Syllabus Statements of Expectations**

The Graduate School of Education (GSE) expects that all students abide by the following:

Students are expected to exhibit professional behavior and dispositions. See [gse.gmu.edu](http://gse.gmu.edu) for a listing of these dispositions.

Students must follow the guidelines of the University Honor Code. See [http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/#TOC\\_H12](http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/#TOC_H12) for the full honor code.

Students must agree to abide by the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing. See <http://mail.gmu.edu> and click on Responsible Use of Computing at the bottom of the screen.

Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the GMU Disability Resource Center (DRC) and inform the instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester. See [www.gmu.edu/student/drc](http://www.gmu.edu/student/drc) or call 703-993-2474 to access the DRC.

## Tentative Outline of Readings/Activities

Date	IN CLASS	FOR NEXT CLASS	DUE
6/28 Class One	World views of Giftedness	<p><b>Read</b> <i>Outliers</i>, Introduction and Part I Find out the identification procedures used in an international setting of your choice.</p> <p><b>Discussion board question:</b> Create your own definition of giftedness. How do your ideas relate to the ideas presented by Gladwell? Compare the definitions of giftedness used in international settings to the Federal definition of Giftedness and Gladwell.</p>	
6/30 Class Two	Identification procedures in practice; Discussion of Outliers	<p><b>Read</b> <i>Outliers</i>, Part Two</p> <p><b>Discussion board question:</b> What procedures are in place or would need to change in order to account for the effect of Legacy that Gladwell discusses?</p>	<p><b>Discussion board response:</b> How does your definition of giftedness relate to the ideas presented by Gladwell? Compare the definitions of giftedness used in international settings to the Federal definition of Giftedness and Gladwell.</p>
7/7 Class Three	High ability students from Low- Income Settings	<p><b>Read</b> <i>High Achieving Students in an Era of NCLB, Mind the Other Gap</i></p> <p><b>Discussion Board Assignment</b> Identify an audience of relevant stakeholders for your role, i.e. parents, teachers, VAG. Create a presentation that shares the critical issues in the documents above that would relate to the audience.</p>	<p><b>Discussion board response:</b> What procedures are in place or would need to change in order to account for the effect of Legacy that Gladwell discusses?</p>
7/10 Saturday 9-1 Class Four	Advocacy for High Ability Students from low-income settings	<p><b>Read</b> <i>Characteristics of teachers in a full day gifted program</i> <i>Teachers of Gifted Students: Suggested Multicultural Characteristics and Competencies</i> <i>Characteristics and Competencies of Teachers of Gifted Learners: The Hong Kong Teacher Perspective</i></p>	<p><b>Discussion Board Assignment</b> Identify an audience of relevant stakeholders for your role, i.e. parents, teachers, VAG. Create a presentation that shares the critical issues in the <i>High Achieving and Gap</i> that would relate to the audience.</p>

## Tentative Outline of Readings/Activities

		<p><b>Discussion Board Question:</b> Should teachers of gifted students be assessed on their performance and/or competencies? Why or why not? What measures should be used? What competencies should be expected and/or required? How might teachers' performances be assessed so that important competencies can be mentored and developed?</p>	
7/12 Class Five	Assessment and Performance of Gifted Teachers	<p><i>Read Alternative Assessments Chapters 12-14</i></p> <p><b>Discussion Board Assignment</b> Develop and/or modify a lesson plan using an alternative assessment.</p> <p><b>Discussion Board Question</b> How will you know your teaching has resulted in student learning? What do you mean when you say student learning?</p>	<p><b>Discussion Board Question:</b> Should teachers of gifted students be assessed on their performance and/or competencies? Why or why not? What measures should be used? What competencies should be expected and/or required? How might teachers' performances be assessed so that important competencies can be mentored and developed?</p>
7/14 Class Six	Assessment and Performance of Gifted Students	<p><b>Review</b> the NAGC Curriculum Standards, <b>Analyze</b> a piece of standard curriculum from your area according to the NAGC curriculum standards</p>	<p><b>Discussion Board Assignment</b> Develop and/or modify a lesson plan using an alternative assessment.</p> <p><b>Discussion Board Question</b> How will you know your teaching has resulted in student learning? What do you mean when you say student learning?</p>
7/19 Class Seven	NAGC Curriculum Standards	<p><b>Preview:</b> International Baccalaureate Organization website <a href="http://www.ibo.org/">http://www.ibo.org/</a> The College Board (Advanced Placement) website <a href="http://www.collegeboard.com/">http://www.collegeboard.com/</a></p> <p><b>Discussion Board Question:</b> How do these programs align with the ideas that Gladwell presents? Are these gifted programs?</p>	<p><b>Discussion Board Assignment:</b> Post your analysis of a piece of standard curriculum from your area based on the NAGC curriculum standards.</p> <p><b>Discussion Board Question:</b> What modifications, if any, would you suggest? Why? If not, why?</p>

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		What are these programs like in the context of gifted programs internationally?	
7/21 Class Eight	International Baccalaureate and Advanced Placement Programs	<b>Read</b> <i>Lift the Ceiling Increase Rigor With Critical Thinking Skills</i> <b>Discussion Board Question:</b> What implications does gifted students' ability to more deeply internalize their understandings have on curriculum and pedagogy?	<b>Discussion Board Question:</b> How do align with the ideas that Gladwell presents? Are these gifted programs? What are these programs like in the context of gifted programs internationally?
7/24 Saturday 9-1 Class Nine	Curriculum and Pedagogy	<b>Read</b> <i>Tracking and Detracking in MA</i> <b>Discussion Board Question:</b> What policy issues does the <i>Tracking and Detracking</i> report raise? What are the policy implications, benefits and/or consequences for gifted students of this practice? How do the policy implications of this practice influence the aspiration of excellence and equity for all students?	<b>Discussion Board Question:</b> What implications does gifted students' ability to more deeply internalize their understandings have on curriculum and pedagogy?
7/26 Class Ten	Policy Implications <i>Tracking and Detracking in MA</i>	<b>Search</b> <a href="http://www.thomas.gov">www.thomas.gov</a> for any pending bills related to Gifted Education <b>Research</b> policies and regulations in your district. <b>Discussion Board Assignment:</b> Summarize the policies and regulations in your district as well as any bills pending in congress relate to gifted education. Discuss how these relate to Gladwell's ideas. What are the policy implications? How would you change federal definition, and current identification procedures based on this information?	<b>Discussion Board Question:</b> What policy issues does the <i>Tracking and Detracking</i> report raise? What are the policy implications, benefits and/or consequences for gifted students of this practice? How do the policy implications of this practice influence the aspiration of excellence and equity for all students?
7/28 Class Eleven	Discussion of pending bills and local policies; Funding	<b>Work</b> on final product.	<b>Discussion Board Assignment:</b> Summarize the policies and regulations in your district as well as any bills pending in congress related to gifted education. Discuss how these



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	Implications at the Local, State and Federal level		relate to Gladwell's ideas. What are the policy implications? How would you change federal definition, and current identification procedures based on this information?
7/31 Saturday 9-1 Class Twelve	Presentations of Final Products; Post-Assessment; Evaluation		<b>Final Product</b>