
Roles, Responsibilities, and Professional Qualifications of Key Personnel for Gifted Education Services

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If you want to build a ship, don't drum up people together to collect wood and don't assign them tasks and work, but rather teach them to long for the sea.

—Antoine de Saint-Exupery

When we think about the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), it is likely that many will think about the controversies this important federal law has generated. At the same time, however, specific parts of the legislation address important and vital issues in education. For example, the federal legislation reminds us of the critical need for qualified teachers in core academic areas: English, reading and language arts, mathematics, science, foreign language, civics and government, economics, history, geography, and the arts. By the end of the 2005–2006 school year, each district that receives funds under Title I must have a plan to ensure that all the public elementary and secondary school teachers they employ fulfill the definition of being “highly qualified.”

Although not specifically included in NCLB, gifted educators should be no exception to this rule. To best serve gifted education students, practitioners in our field must have the knowledge, competencies, and dispositions required to carry out their roles and

responsibilities. But what are the prerequisite knowledge and skills that practitioners in our field need so that they may address the cognitive and affective learning needs of our students? What are the competencies that are required of those who sit in administrative positions in gifted education?

In this chapter, Jann Leppien and Karen Westberg describe the foundational knowledge that is a prerequisite for teachers and administrators in gifted education. In addition, they share a comprehensive description of the varied roles and responsibilities of those charged with educating gifted education students. This chapter is most closely aligned with the chapter on professional development, 14, and it addresses the following guiding principle contained in the professional development standard of the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) *Pre-K–Grade 12 Gifted Program Standards* (Landrum & Shaklee, 1998): “Only qualified personnel should be involved in the education of gifted learners.” In addition, the competencies, skills, and knowledge included in this chapter align with the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) initial standards for teacher preparation programs in gifted and talented education (NAGC & CEC 2006).

DEFINITION

Professional qualifications are the knowledge, competencies, and dispositions required by district personnel to effectively carry out their roles and responsibilities for providing a comprehensive and continuous set of services for gifted learners. Gifted children deserve to learn from highly qualified professionals who are aware of and able to respond to the unique qualities and characteristics of the students they instruct (NAGC, 1994). These professional qualifications will vary according to job responsibility as well as according to accreditation standards established by individual states.

RATIONALE

The finest service plan for the education of children who are gifted is of little use without effective instructional personnel. Any educator who spends a substantial amount of time with gifted and talented students in an academic setting, whether homogeneous or heterogeneous, must possess the requisite knowledge, competencies, and traits to implement the goals of differentiated education that are responsive to the students' academic and psychosocial needs. To provide appropriate learning experiences for gifted and talented students, key personnel need to possess knowledge and understanding of

- The nature of individual differences, especially as applied to exceptional abilities
- The origins and nature of various manifestations of giftedness
- The cognitive, social, emotional, and environmental factors that enhance or inhibit the development of giftedness in all populations
- A variety of methods for identifying and assessing students with extraordinary potential
- The historical and theoretical foundations of the field of gifted education, current trends and issues, and potential future directions of the field
- A research-based rationale for differentiated programs and services for gifted students
- Theoretical models, program prototypes, and educational principles that offer appropriate foundations for the development of differentiated curriculum for gifted students

- The unique potentials of gifted students from underserved populations, including but not limited to, gifted females, students who have disabilities, or students who are racially or ethnically diverse, economically disadvantaged, or underachieving
- Curriculum and instruction that is appropriate for meeting the needs of gifted learners
- State mandates that guide district program design, identification procedures, delivery of services, and evaluation guidelines
- Program evaluation as a systematic study of the value and impact of services provided
- Current educational issues, policies, and practices including their relationships to the field of gifted education

GUIDING PRINCIPLES OR ASSUMPTIONS

Several research studies suggest that persons with training in gifted education are more effective in meeting the particular educational needs of gifted learners. Therefore, schools that successfully address these needs view gifted education programming as a collaborative effort integrated into the general education program. The following principles and assumptions that guide this chapter are based on these perspectives (Delcourt & Evans, 1994; Hansen & Feldhusen, 1994; Kirschenbaum, Armstrong, & Landrum, 1999; Landrum & Shaklee, 1998; Neihart, Reis, Robinson, & Moon, 2002; Purcell & Leppien, 1998; Renzulli & Reis, 1991; Shore, Cornell, Robinson, & Ward, 1991; Shore & Delcourt, 1996; Tomlinson, Coleman, Allan, Udall, & Landrum, 1996; Tomlinson et al., 1994).

- Those with special training in gifted education content and pedagogy are more effective than those without such training in delivering services for advanced learners.
- Key personnel are required to implement a comprehensive program for gifted learners.
- The roles and responsibilities of key personnel must be articulated to effectively implement a continuum of services to pre-K–Grade 12 gifted learners.
- Key personnel require specific knowledge, competencies, and dispositions to provide for the educational needs of gifted learners.
- Ongoing professional development is required to assist key personnel in acquiring the knowledge and competencies to address the needs of gifted students.
- Professional qualifications should guide the hiring practices of personnel responsible for providing services for advanced learners.

ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND COMPETENCIES OF KEY PERSONNEL WORKING WITH GIFTED STUDENTS

Those who create comprehensive gifted programs must consider how and by whom the program will be implemented. To effectively serve gifted learners, a school district should identify highly qualified personnel whose responsibility it is to provide services to gifted and talented students. Table 13.1 identifies the roles of key personnel, their responsibilities, and the knowledge and competencies required to deliver services to gifted learners. While these roles and responsibilities may vary according to school district and state programming guidelines, the competencies articulate a range of qualifications needed by

professionals to ensure that gifted learners receive services commensurate with their academic and social needs. Knowledge of these competencies should help districts recognize the types of professional qualifications and commitment necessary. States and school districts should refer to the policy statements that address these competencies (see, Landrum, Callahan, & Shaklee, 2001; NAGC, 1994, 1995; NAGC & CEC, 2006; and VanTassel-Baska, 1994). In districts where only one person has been assigned the responsibility for delivering services to gifted and talented learners, it is recommended that the list be used to target the most essential duties from among the listed responsibilities to provide a minimum of services.

AN EXAMPLE IN NEED OF REVISION

The Gray School District hired a new gifted education (G/T) coordinator who had recently received an Ed.S. degree in special education from a neighboring state university that included one course in gifted education. The newly hired teacher had experience as a special education teacher and coordinator. The Superintendent explained that the individual holding the position would be expected to (1) increase the number of Advanced Placement (AP) courses offered at the high school, (2) work with elementary principals to make a few changes in the services provided for students, (3) complete reports about G/T services required by the state and the district, and (4) ensure that the district was in compliance with the new regulations required by the state. The superintendent explained that he wanted the new coordinator to "respond to parents when they raised concerns about G/T issues and services." In addition, he stated that he didn't really have time to be involved in the program and wanted someone who could assume the role without causing undue attention to gifted education services in the district.

Consequences of Not Identifying the Appropriate Roles and Responsibilities of Key Personnel

When school districts hire individuals who do not have the skills and competencies necessary to carry out the responsibilities for implementing effective gifted education services, the results, unfortunately, are often predictable. Personnel without proper qualifications and training cannot develop appropriate identification procedures, develop and promote high-quality differentiated learning opportunities for gifted learners, facilitate a robust program evaluation that supports refinements to programs and services over time, or communicate knowledgeably with program stakeholders. Over time, the program loses support from parents, administrators, board of education members, and teachers. Eventually, the program budget is reduced or eliminated, which has tragic consequences for bright students.

MAKEOVER EXAMPLE

The superintendent of the Gray School District formed a broad-based committee that wrote a job description for the gifted education coordinator position in their district. The job description outlined specific qualifications and responsibilities, such as providing ongoing professional development to teachers at all levels, responding to the changing demographic characteristics of the student population, and establishing a continuum of services within

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Table 13.1 Competencies Required by Administrators (This category combines building level and central office personnel. Responsibilities will vary according to the number of people who have responsibilities for administering programs for the gifted and talented.)

<i>Responsibilities</i>	<i>Knowledge</i>	<i>Competencies</i>
<p>Planning and implementing districtwide programs and services for pre-K-12 gifted learners</p>	<p>Understand that a continuum of programming services must be available for gifted learners including cluster group options, special pull-out classes, homogeneous classes, special or magnet schools, mentorships, dual enrollment, special counseling services, etc., to address students' academic and psychosocial needs.</p>	<p>Establish programming services for pre-K-12 that are specifically designed for the identified needs of the population.</p> <p>Develop services that address all types of giftedness including general academic, specific academic, creativity, leadership, and visual and performing arts.</p> <p>Develop policies for early entrance, grade skipping, ability grouping, dual enrollment, and curriculum modification.</p>
	<p>Understand that variations exist in educational settings (e.g., philosophy, values, size, organizational, cultural conditions), which may affect the gifted program in unique ways.</p>	<p>Assess the current level of services provided to gifted students within the district to develop a comprehensive pre-K-12 program.</p>
	<p>Understand that gifted education programs and services must be (1) designed from both a theoretical and empirical perspective (i.e., research that supports particular designs or practices with gifted learners) and a practical perspective (i.e., resources available) and (2) planned in collaboration with those who are knowledgeable in the field.</p>	<p>Design programs in consultation with informed experts and within the parameters of established and "best" practices in the field.</p> <p>Develop and disseminate programming documents describing the gifted education programming mission statements, goals, and objectives.</p>
<p>Establishing and maintaining financial resources for personnel and materials for programs for the gifted</p>	<p>Understand that gifted education funding should be part of the continuous budget planning process and should receive support comparable to similar efforts within the district.</p>	<p>Establish and sustain funding specific to the continuum of gifted education services provided by the school and district.</p>

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Table 13.1 (Continued)

<i>Responsibilities</i>	<i>Knowledge</i>	<i>Competencies</i>
<p>Guiding the identification and placement of selected students for special services</p>	<p>Understand that a comprehensive, cohesive, and coordinated process for student nomination results in more accurate and equitable identification of students. The use of multiple sources of information provides information about students' abilities that can be overlooked when using objective data. A comprehensive nomination process provides opportunities for the referral of students from special education teachers, parent recommendations, psychologists, curriculum specialists, etc.</p>	<p>Develop an identification plan that assures the individual assessment of potentially gifted students' knowledge and abilities as specified by state regulations or district policy.</p> <p>Select assessments that go beyond a narrow conception of giftedness and include multiple sources of information about students.</p>
<p>Selecting key personnel to work with gifted education students</p>	<p>Understand that gifted learners are entitled to be served by professionals who have (1) specialized preparation in gifted education, (2) expertise in developing appropriately differentiated content and instructional methods, (3) ongoing professional development, and (4) exemplary professional/personal traits.</p>	<p>Develop a procedure for selecting teachers with specific responsibility for the identification and provision of services for gifted and talented students. Hire specialist teachers in gifted education that possess a certification/specialization or degree in gifted education.</p> <p>Develop a comprehensive ongoing professional development plan for all key personnel who work with gifted learners.</p> <p>Articulate the roles and responsibilities of all persons working with advanced learners. Teachers with primary responsibility for teaching gifted learners should be evaluated to assure their competency in delivering differentiated curricula and instruction.</p> <p>Create orientation programs to inform parents of the services available to their children.</p>

<i>Responsibilities</i>	<i>Knowledge</i>	<i>Competencies</i>
<p>Developing and maintaining education programs and services for parents of gifted students</p>	<p>Understand the importance of informing parents of the services that are available to their children and that parents of gifted learners should have regular opportunities to provide input and make recommendations about program services.</p>	<p>Disseminate information regarding policies and practices in gifted education (e.g., student referral and screening, appeals, informed consent, student progress, curricular options, etc.).</p> <p>Provide workshops to assist parents in understanding the psychosocial and academic needs of gifted learners.</p> <p>Establish an advisory committee that reflects the cultural and socioeconomic diversity of the school or school district's total student population, which includes parents, community members, students, and school staff members.</p> <p>Implement an appropriate curriculum that assures mastery of basic skill requirements of the general curriculum and allows for modification, extension, and integration of this general curriculum into any specialized curriculum for the gifted.</p>
<p>Facilitating a decision-making process among all district personnel to establish a comprehensive curriculum for pre-K-12 gifted learners.</p>	<p>Understand that gifted services must be designed to supplement or extend the academic skills and knowledge learned in regular classrooms at all grade levels to ensure continuity as students progress through the program.</p> <p>Understand curriculum models and demonstrate strong skills related to the implementation and evaluation of such models.</p>	<p>Articulate the curriculum for the gifted program within the context of the general curriculum, state and national standards, and the differences required for a specialized curriculum.</p> <p>Develop and implement a comprehensive staff development program for teachers of the gifted, regular classroom teachers, and support staff that delivers and improves the curriculum and instruction of gifted learners.</p>

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<i>Responsibilities</i>	<i>Knowledge</i>	<i>Competencies</i>
	<p>Understand that a comprehensive gifted education program must establish a plan to recognize and nurture the unique socioemotional development of gifted learners.</p>	<p>Support a well-defined affective curriculum that addresses personal/social awareness and adjustment, academic planning, and vocational/career awareness for gifted learners.</p>
<p>Implementing effective data management systems and accountability requirements for gifted students and district personnel</p>	<p>Understand that program evaluation provides a systematic study of the value and impact of services and provides a means by which programs can be improved.</p>	<p>Develop formative and summative evaluation of the gifted program that focuses on both quantitative and qualitative outcomes and leads to ongoing revision of the curriculum and instructional approaches.</p> <p>Allocate adequate time, financial support, and personnel to conduct systematic program evaluation.</p>

Table 13.2 Competencies Required by A Coordinator of Gifted Services

<i>Responsibilities</i>	<i>Knowledge</i>	<i>Competencies</i>
Implementing a comprehensive gifted education program based on standards	Knowledge of state and national standards	Develop comprehensive services for pre-K-12 gifted learners based on state and national standards.
Implementing the district or state identification process and procedures	Knowledge of the identification procedures for intellectually, academically, creatively, culturally diverse, and twice-exceptional gifted learners. Understand the relevance of cultural, ethnic, and socioeconomic factors in relation to assessment and achievement for individual students.	<p>Implement the district and state gifted identification procedures, and interpret assessments to identify the unique needs of gifted students.</p> <p>Collaborate with classroom teachers to nominate students for gifted education programming services on an ongoing basis.</p> <p>Conduct meetings to inform parents and teachers of students' eligibility and district procedures for program placement and services.</p>
Planning the organization and implementation of curricular offerings for gifted students	Knowledge of educational and psychological needs of the gifted and talented and application of a variety of instructional models and/or educational strategies appropriate for use with gifted and talented learners.	<p>Develop a differentiated curriculum scope and sequence plan for pre-K-12 appropriate to meeting the unique intellectual and emotional needs and interests of gifted and talented students.</p> <p>Implement a range of recommended strategies for differentiating the core curriculum, such as acceleration/pacing, depth, complexity and novelty, and grouping for appropriate instruction, as well as individualized planning to assist gifted students in realizing their unique potentials.</p>

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Table 13.2 (Continued)

<i>Responsibilities</i>	<i>Knowledge</i>	<i>Competencies</i>
Integrating gifted programming services into the general education program	Understand the principles of collaboration to ensure the integration of gifted education into the general education program.	<p>Create environments in which giftedness can emerge and gifted students feel challenged and safe to explore and express their uniqueness.</p> <p>Develop effective ways to communicate with school personnel and to disseminate information regarding major policies and practices in gifted education.</p> <p>Articulate and support the roles and responsibilities of those involved in the delivery of services to gifted learners.</p> <p>Provide consultation, collaboration, and staff development services in gifted education for teachers, administrators, and counselors in the general education program.</p>
	Knowledge of the principles of differentiated curriculum and instruction to match the distinct characteristics of gifted learners	<p>Assist teachers in using the principles of differentiated curriculum and instruction designed to match the distinct characteristics of gifted learners, including those who have been traditionally underrepresented in programs and services.</p> <p>Incorporate instructional strategies for the gifted into the regular curriculum to ensure academic rigor through the development of high-level proficiency in all core academic areas.</p> <p>Locate appropriate materials and resources to facilitate programming services for gifted learners.</p>

<i>Responsibilities</i>	<i>Knowledge</i>	<i>Competencies</i>
	Understand the guidance and counseling needs of gifted learners.	Collaborate with counselors to increase their understanding of the socio-emotional needs of gifted learners and develop a comprehensive guidance and counseling program that addresses personal/social awareness and adjustment, academic planning, and vocational and career awareness.
Providing advocacy for the continued support of gifted education services	Understand how to communicate and work in partnerships with colleagues, administrators, school boards, students, families, business, and industry on behalf of gifted learners.	<p>Network with community members and businesses to provide support and resources.</p> <p>Recruit business and community members to serve as facilitators of mentorships and apprenticeships.</p> <p>Create communication vehicles that explain the programming services available to gifted and talented students.</p> <p>Locate a variety of resources to share with parents to support their gifted children at home.</p> <p>Develop activities to encourage parental and community involvement in the education of the gifted, including the establishment and maintenance of an effective advisory committee.</p> <p>Participate professional organizations related to gifted and talented education to inform the school district of best practices.</p>

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Table 13.2 (Continued)

<i>Responsibilities</i>	<i>Knowledge</i>	<i>Competencies</i>
Organizing the evaluation of the gifted and talented program using formal and informal evaluation techniques.	Understand how systematic gathering, analyzing, and reporting of formative and summative data can be used to improve the existing program.	Organize and implement district and state evaluation procedures. Gather information, using reliable and valid instruments and procedures, to address pertinent questions raised by all constituency groups and to respond to the needs of all stakeholders.
Planning ongoing professional development in the field of gifted education.	Knowledge and implementation of the current practices and "best practices" defined in the field to provide services to gifted learners	Engage in continuous professional development regarding the characteristics of gifted learners and their related social and emotional development.

Table 13.3 Competencies Required by Teachers of the Gifted

<i>Responsibilities</i>	<i>Knowledge</i>	<i>Competencies</i>
<p>Implementing the district and state identification process and procedures</p> <p>Planning and implementing curricular offerings for gifted students.</p>	<p>Knowledge of the characteristics of and identification procedures for intellectually, academically, creatively, culturally diverse, and twice-exceptional gifted learners. Understand the relevance of cultural, ethnic, and socioeconomic factors in relation to assessment and achievement for individual students.</p> <p>Knowledge of educational and psychological needs of the gifted and talented and application of a variety of instructional models and/or educational strategies appropriate for use with gifted and talented learners.</p>	<p>Implement district and state gifted identification procedures, and interpret assessments to identify the unique needs of gifted students.</p> <p>Collaborate with classroom teachers on an ongoing basis in nominating students for gifted education programming services.</p> <p>Conduct meetings to inform parents and teachers of students' eligibility for program placement and services.</p> <p>Communicate with school personnel about the characteristics and needs of individuals with gifts and talents.</p> <p>Use assessment information in making eligibility, program, and placement decisions for individuals with gifts and talents, including those from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds.</p> <p>Interpret assessment data to plan appropriate curricular offerings based on individual profiles of the students.</p> <p>Develop a differentiated curriculum appropriate to meeting the unique intellectual and emotion needs and interests of gifted and talented students.</p>

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Table 13.3 (Continued)

<i>Responsibilities</i>	<i>Knowledge</i>	<i>Competencies</i>
	<p>Knowledge of educational and psychological needs of the gifted and talented and application of a variety of instructional models and/or educational strategies appropriate for use with gifted and talented learners</p> <p>Knowledge of the principles of differentiated curriculum and instruction to match the distinct characteristics of gifted learners</p>	<p>Integrate instruction in a variety of fields to encourage interdisciplinary thought and studies in gifted students.</p> <p>Assess students' strengths, interests, and learning preferences to plan curricular experiences for gifted learners.</p> <p>Use current, research-based methods for assessing and reporting on the progress of gifted students for purpose of making differentiated educational decisions.</p>
<p>Collaborating with other key personnel in delivering gifted education programming services</p>	<p>Understand the importance of collaboration in delivering quality services for gifted learners in a variety of settings.</p>	<p>Use performance data and information from all stakeholders to make or suggest modifications in learning environments.</p> <p>Collaborate with other key personnel who provide services to gifted learners, including classroom teachers, counselors, gifted education coordinator, content area specialists, special education teachers, and curriculum directors to support and advocate for continuous programming services for gifted learners.</p> <p>Model techniques and coach others in the use of instructional methods and accommodations.</p> <p>Foster respectful and beneficial relationships between families and professionals.</p>

Table 13.3 (Continued)

<i>Responsibilities</i>	<i>Knowledge</i>	<i>Competencies</i>
Networking with families about their children's academic and social progress.	Understand how to communicate and work in partnerships with colleagues, administrators, school boards, students, families, business and industry, and the public in advocating appropriate programming for gifted students.	Disseminate and communicate information regarding the program activities. Network with curriculum committee teams to advocate for the acquisition of advanced materials and resources.
Participating in appropriate professional development about giftedness and gifted education.	Knowledge and implementation of the current practices and "best practices" defined in the field to provide services to gifted learners.	Collaborate with guidance personnel in implementing intervention strategies for at-risk gifted students. Inform parents of their children's academic and social development and progress through a variety of communication vehicles. Foster partnerships with the families of gifted students to facilitate a total learning environment.
		Engage in ongoing professional development regarding the characteristics of gifted learners and their related social and emotional development.

the district. After a national search and extensive interviews, the district hired someone who had an M.A. degree in gifted education as well as experience as a gifted education coordinator and specialist. More important, at her previous district she had been successful in providing vision and leadership that resulted in a strong program of services for gifted learners. Shortly after being hired, she formulated a gifted advisory committee representing all levels. With the coordinator's leadership, the advisory committee worked on a needs-assessment plan that resulted in a mission statement, an action plan for the upcoming year, and a three-year plan. The goals on the action plan included tasks such as examining the services being provided to students at the middle school level, reexamining the identification plan to ensure its fairness in representing the demographics of the district, increasing professional development opportunities for classroom teachers, examining the alignment of the curriculum in the gifted program services with the curriculum in the regular program, providing more communication to the school board and administrators, and developing a series of sessions on key issues for parents. After three years, the coordinator requested and received increased financial support from the superintendent and the school board. As a result of this careful planning, the Gray district has a reputation as a system that provides support for all of its learners, including its most capable students.

PLANNING CHART FOR ARTICULATING THE ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS OF KEY PERSONNEL

The planning guide above can be used by districts to evaluate the degree to which they have articulated the roles and responsibilities and the knowledge and competencies of key personnel who will be involved in delivering services to gifted learners. After reviewing the competencies tables shown earlier in this chapter, make revisions or clarifications to your district's gifted program by identifying the practices you desire.

ADVICE FOR THE SOLE PRACTITIONER

Creating ownership for a gifted education program is one of the most successful ways to ensure its success. When one gifted education specialist has the sole responsibility for implementing a gifted and talented program in a district, our best advice would be to develop strategies for ensuring program ownership. The first thing that can be done to promote ownership is to establish a gifted education advisory group (see Appendix A). An advisory group serves as a working group of faculty members, administrators, and parents who have responsibilities for developing a comprehensive gifted program for learners in pre-K-12 levels. At the elementary level, this team would include parents, community resource persons, administrators, and faculty representatives from each grade level, as well as art, music, physical education, or media specialists. At the middle school and secondary levels, this team would include faculty members from each department. This team would assume some of the responsibilities of the administrative role, such as conducting a districtwide needs assessment, developing an identification plan, making decisions about how services will be delivered, and establishing a schoolwide

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Table 13.4 Competencies Required by Classroom Teachers

<i>Responsibilities</i>	<i>Knowledge</i>	<i>Competencies</i>
<p>Implementing the district and state identification process and procedures</p> <p>Planning and implementing curricular offerings for gifted students</p>	<p>Understand how gifted students are identified for programming services using district and state identification procedures.</p> <p>Knowledge of the characteristics of giftedness, the educational and psychological needs of the gifted and talented, application of a variety of instructional models and/or educational strategies appropriate for use with the gifted, as well as the ability to modify, adapt, and design appropriate curricular experiences for gifted learners</p> <p>Knowledge of the principles of differentiated curriculum and instruction, including preassessment, to match the distinct characteristics of gifted learners</p>	<p>Collaborate with the gifted education teacher(s) and coordinator in nominating students for gifted education programming services on an ongoing basis.</p> <p>Develop differentiated curriculum using instructional strategies that support inquiry, self-directed learning, discussion, metacognition, debate, and other appropriate modes of learning.</p> <p>Implement differentiation strategies for modifying existing curriculum to meet the academic needs of gifted learners.</p> <p>Apply curricular and instructional modifications and adaptation to the core curriculum to develop rigorous and challenging curriculum for advanced learners.</p> <p>Compact the core curriculum for gifted students so that learning experiences are developmentally appropriate for their needs, interests, and abilities.</p> <p>Use a variety of teaching and learning patterns: flexible grouping, large- and small-group instruction, homogeneous and heterogeneous grouping, teacher and student-directed learning, and opportunities for independent study.</p>

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Table 13.4 (Continued)

<i>Responsibilities</i>	<i>Knowledge</i>	<i>Competencies</i>
Collaborating with other key personnel in delivering gifted education programming services.	Understand the importance of collaboration in delivering quality services for gifted learners in the classroom.	Network with teacher of the gifted or coordinator of services to locate resources and materials to augment differentiated curriculum and to supplement independent study opportunities for individual students. Collaborate with guidance personnel in implementing intervention strategies for at-risk gifted students.
Communicating with families about their children's academic and social progress Participating in ongoing professional development in the field of gifted education	Understand that developing partnerships with the families of gifted students helps provide an effective learning environment for gifted learners. Knowledge and implementation of the current practices and best practices defined in the field to provide services to gifted learners	Participate in the gathering of information that can be used to evaluate the gifted education program. Inform parents of their children's academic and social development and progress through a variety of communication vehicles. Engage in ongoing professional development regarding the characteristics of gifted learners and their related social and emotional development.

Table 13.5 Competencies Required by Guidance and Counseling Personnel

<i>Responsibilities</i>	<i>Knowledge</i>	<i>Competencies</i>
<p>Implementing the guidance and counseling services for gifted learners</p>	<p>Understand, nurture, and provide services to address the unique socio-emotional development of gifted learners.</p>	<p>Develop and implement counseling and guidance services specifically designed to address the unique needs of gifted students.</p> <p>Collaborate with key personnel in providing intervention strategies for at-risk gifted students that can take place in school, at home, or in the community.</p>
<p>Participating in ongoing professional development in the field of gifted education</p>	<p>Knowledge and implementation of the current practices and best practices defined in the field to provide services to gifted learners</p>	<p>Establish referral procedures to provide intervention strategies for at-risk gifted students.</p> <p>Provide information and support to parents regarding at-risk gifted students.</p> <p>Engage in ongoing professional development regarding the characteristics of gifted learners and their related social and emotional development.</p>

professional development program for the staff. This team can then assist the gifted education specialist in creating ways to bring about the necessary changes that may need to occur to implement comprehensive programs and services.

Depending on the size of the district, the overall structure of the district, as well as the diverse academic and social and emotional needs of gifted learners, different decisions must be made to implement an effective program. For example, a small district may determine that they can best meet the needs of students by clustering students in classrooms, while the role of the gifted education specialist serves as a collaborative consultant to those classroom teachers who will work directly with these students. At the secondary level, a district may decide to have honor classes, and the gifted education specialist may play the role of establishing mentorships for students who want to be engaged in independent studies. At both levels, an advisory team can assist the gifted education specialist in figuring out a plan to best meet the needs of advanced learners. The gifted education specialist can use the planning chart provided in this chapter to brainstorm possible implementation plans with the advisory team to ease the daunting challenge of creating a comprehensive program.

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