

Susan Winebrenner's

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PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



# TEACHING Gifted Kids IN Today's Classroom

Strategies and  
Techniques Every  
Teacher Can Use  
Updated Fourth Edition

with contributing author  
Dina Brulles, Ph.D.



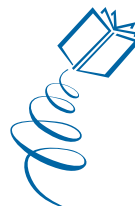
TEACHING  
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**Strategies and Techniques  
Every Teacher Can Use**

**Susan Winebrenner, M.S.,**  
with contributing author **Dina Brulles, Ph.D.**

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PUBLISHING®



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## Dedication

This book is dedicated to all the educators who have found its previous editions so helpful, and who have consistently spread the word to colleagues far and wide. We are forever in your debt!

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# Foreword

by Bertie Kingore, Ph.D.

Is the word “classic” overused? Not when referencing this book. *Teaching Gifted Kids in the Regular Classroom* (its original title) is a true classic in gifted education. Susan Winebrenner’s first and second editions transformed how gifted children are perceived and nurtured in mixed-ability classrooms. At the university level, both my undergraduate and graduate in-service teachers were enriched by the content and spirit of this book and perceived immediate connections that influenced their interactions with gifted students.

With Dina Brulles, the impact continues with a third, and now fourth, edition: *Teaching Gifted Kids in Today’s Classroom*. The title change is most appropriate, as this work explores applications in contemporary education and more authentic learning initiatives, including the changes implied by the required standards that are integrated throughout the book.

This new edition continues the tradition of excellence with updated content, new topics, expanded resources, and the addition of Dr. Brulles’s field experience and research in school systems. The book is a pleasure to read. It is well-crafted with practical applications that demonstrate how to address the two crucial needs of gifted students: compacting and differentiation. The discussion and applications of curriculum compacting and differentiation techniques are succinct, clear, and absolutely manageable—the best available to teachers. Compacting is particularly crucial for gifted students to enable them to experience continuous learning and avoid the less meaningful repetition of known concepts and skills.

The added chapter and expanded emphasis on assessment and technology is timely and sorely needed. The authors build a solid case for effectively combining the two for increased interest and achievement outcomes. They provide numerous, ready-to-use formative assessment techniques in keeping with required standards and the increased emphasis on continual assessments by most schools. Educators must use pre-assessment and formative assessment to document that gifted students have changed as learners as a result of classroom learning. Assessment is also vital to ensure that gifted students experience continuous progress in all content areas.

The authors provide a useful and unthreatening set of technology techniques and sample lessons for the classroom. Their choices encourage teachers who are less “techie” than their students to embrace the benefits of technology, while teaching students to be smart internet researchers who understand how to evaluate websites.

In the current educational forum, there are very few guarantees. But Susan Winebrenner and Dina Brulles have provided us strategies and procedures that guarantee effectiveness. There is a good reason why this book has been in continuous publication since 1992: It is a definitive book on teaching gifted kids, and we need it in today’s classrooms.

*Bertie Kingore, Ph.D.*



# Introduction

Of all the students you are teaching in a given class, which group do you think will probably learn the least this year? It may surprise you to find that in a class that has a range of abilities (and which class doesn't?), it is the *most* able, rather than the least able, who will make the smallest amount of academic progress. These are the students who are almost never given an opportunity to demonstrate that they already know what is going to be taught.

How does this happen? Mostly it's because each year we are presented with our curriculum content and feel intense pressure and responsibility to teach all the standards assigned to our grade or subject to all of our students. For advanced learners, this creates a situation in which much of their school time is wasted on grade-level work they have already mastered.

As adults, we often have options when we find ourselves in a situation like this. We can leave the class, lecture, or presentation and seek an alternative way to spend that time with something more satisfying and productive. Students do not often get that choice. To some extent, they are confined within a system that will not let them move

ahead until they first complete all the grade-level requirements. The frustration faced by these students can be agonizing and maddening, and their wasted time and energy a tragedy.

For example, when a student was interviewed by a national researcher and was asked what it was like to be a gifted student in a heterogeneous classroom, he said it felt like his teacher was "stealing" his learning time by making him sit through so many lessons he already knew.

Can you identify with this student's frustration, impatience, and resentment? Think of the last time you *didn't* have the option to leave a redundant meeting or lecture and were instead forced to sit through it. And vow that now as a teacher you will avoid imposing such a fate on your gifted students.

How can you avoid this? You might want to hold on to something before you read the next sentence. *You are not required to teach all the standards to all of your students.* You are only required to document that the standards assigned to you have been mastered by the students assigned to you. Some of your students are gifted, or very advanced, and they may already

## A Note from the Authors About This Update

For this updated fourth edition of *Teaching Gifted Kids in Today's Classroom*, we have refreshed its classic content for a new generation of educators. As the number of gifted programs continues to decrease in schools year after year, teachers in inclusion classrooms need this resource more than ever before to ensure their brightest learners receive the challenges and special attention they seek and need. Likewise, in this age of required standards focused on depth and rigor, gifted education techniques can now benefit many more students than just those formally identified as gifted. In this fourth edition, we include updated information on students with twice-exceptionalities, discuss the implications of MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Supports) on gifted students, and address debates about some gifted education practices. We also elaborate on our popular Study Guide method to make it even easier for teachers and students to use. And in the spirit of keeping up with technology, we have improved our section on helpful digital tools for teachers, particularly as it relates to Google Classroom and related resources. We hope you enjoy!

know much of what you are planning to teach, or they can often learn new material in much less time than their age peers.

Students are recognized as gifted if they have exceptional abilities in any area of learning that significantly exceed grade-level expectations, and they can understand content designed for students older than them by about two years or more. Since grade-level standards are designed for grade-level learners of a certain age, grade-level curriculum cannot, by definition, be at the instructional level of gifted students. This is essential to understand if we are to ensure that gifted students actually learn something new and challenging every day in school. All other students have that experience daily, so why shouldn't gifted students also enjoy it? As long as mastery is documented, students may experience any of the challenging learning options described in this book.

## “But It’s Too Hard!”

The United States is struggling to maintain a leadership role in the world. One reason is that in the United States we have been unable to provide enough candidates for high-level math and science courses and, consequently, for jobs in technology, science, and engineering. This is not because we lack students who are gifted in math and science. It is because these students often rebel from the tedium of spending so much time being taught what they've already learned that they likely come to assume that if someone is gifted, he or she must just “know” what is required without having to work hard to learn it. Hence, it is understandable that by the time these kids have an opportunity to take advanced courses, they are out of practice at working hard and may have lost the courage to put forth effort without the promise of easy success. When asked why they opt not to take advanced math courses in high school, for example, a common response from students is simply, “Because it’s too *hard!*” This—from some of the smartest kids in the country.

The research of Dr. Carol Dweck at Stanford University validates these ideas. Her study, described in chapter 1 of this book (see page 18), demonstrates that in order for students to be

motivated to progress to advanced and challenging levels of learning, they must have the mindset that hard work is absolutely necessary for learning success and the perception that effort is the key factor to seeking new challenges throughout one's lifetime. They must believe, from their own experience, that smart people can work very hard—and even struggle, sweat, and fail sometimes—and *still* be considered smart and gifted. In short, when gifted students discover early on that they can get high praise and grades for tasks they complete with little or no effort, they may conclude that being gifted means being able to do things without really trying. And the longer they are allowed to believe this, the harder it is for them to rise to the challenge when one is finally encountered.

We should be seriously concerned about the plight of gifted students in most classrooms today. Many consistently bring home perfect report cards and sail from grade school through high school, graduating in the top five percent of their class, while rarely being required to work hard. When they are accepted into prestigious colleges and universities, where everyone in the freshman class was *also* in the top five percent of their high school graduating class, the competition for A's is fierce and learning requires a lot of time, effort, and intensive study skills. Many gifted students have never learned these skills and are at a loss about how to effectively study, manage their time, handle intense competition and pressure, or deal with less-than-stellar grades and test scores—all of which can lead to a sense of discouragement, severe anxiety, eating disorders, depression, and other harmful outcomes.

Where do we want these kids we care about to be when they realize that success is not always easy and that it is perfectly natural for all students to have to work hard in order to learn new things? Surely not alone in a freshman dorm, miles away from home. We want them to experience challenges in their local school environment, so we can help them celebrate their first B and demonstrate that life goes on—and often improves!—even when one's grades are not perfect.

One fourth-grade teacher who attended a gifted workshop series Susan presented had an eye-opening experience that you may relate to. She started thinking about how happy she had



felt the day before, when all of her most capable readers got A's on the end-of-the-unit test. But then she wondered whether their grades reflected what they had actually learned from her. Was it possible that these students knew the material before the unit even began?

Since there were two weeks between each workshop, she decided to find the answer to her question. The next day, with no advance warning, she gave these same students the end-of-the-unit test for the following unit. They were tested on the skills and the vocabulary only, not on the content of the stories, which they had not yet read. Again, they all got A's. This experience was one of the most startling of the teacher's career. She began to consider alternate methods of teaching her most capable readers to make sure they were not simply going through the motions of learning, but they were making measurable forward progress.

When gifted students realize that they already know a lot of the subject matter, they usually have little choice but to dutifully go through the assigned curriculum, waiting and hoping for the rare times when there will be something new or challenging for them to learn. Since very few teacher training programs require candidates to take even one course in gifted education, you are not to blame as a teacher for not knowing how to handle this situation effectively. We are confident that this book will help you teach gifted students in ways that can empower them for a lifetime of challenge, hard work, and achievement.

Author and educator Dr. Sylvia Rimm has expressed this eloquently when she says: "The surest path to high self-esteem is to be successful at something you perceived would be difficult." It is therefore possible that each time we take away students' opportunity to struggle by insisting they do work that is too easy for them, we steal their opportunity to have an esteem-building experience. Unless kids are consistently engaged in challenging work, they will lose their motivation to work hard.

A related self-esteem issue is that, especially in grades preK–8, students' self-esteem is usually a goal of the school. When atypical learners conclude that their specific learning needs are not being attended to, they may worry that other

students and even teachers do not approve of them the way they are and wish they were more "average" or "normal." There are few challenges to one's self-esteem as painful as knowing you have to try to hide your real self on a daily basis. Many gifted students realize from an early age that it is safer for them to pretend to be average than to demonstrate their exceptional learning abilities. This leads to serious disenfranchisement issues. However, this entire situation is fixed when their teachers provide appropriate compacting and differentiation opportunities daily in their classes for students who need them. Gifted students interpret these options as evidence that it is okay to be themselves. Their classmates come to the same conclusion and are more likely to follow the teacher's example and demonstrate acceptance behaviors toward any students with significant learning differences.

## Why Gifted Students Need Differentiation

Many educators believe there is no need to do anything special for gifted kids. "After all," they reason, "most gifted students get good grades and high scores on standardized tests. They do just fine without extra help or attention. They will 'make it' on their own." In fact, this idea is causing discreet gifted programs to disappear in districts across the country. Some states have even reallocated funds formerly earmarked for gifted education to the "general fund," leaving decisions about where that money should be spent up to individual districts. To understand why gifted students *do* need special attention, let's look at the bell curve on page 5. Rest assured that we use this model only to demonstrate reasons why differentiating for gifted students is required as much as it is for students who are struggling.

When we teach a class of students, we usually differentiate content, pacing, amount of work, and activities based on what we know about typical students at that age. Let's call those kids the Twos, because they are in the middle of the three groups represented on the bell curve and are usually students of average abilities. Many students enter a grade level missing many of the basic

## A Question of Terms

Perhaps we should consider the question of whether to continue to call advanced students gifted. This term has caused decades of hard feelings between children and families when some students are deemed “chosen” and others are rejected. Even worse, the implied opposite of “gifted” is “*un*-gifted.” This has not been intentional, but the label “gifted” resonates with many as a prize that some people win and some people lose. Some argue for a more judgment-free term such as “advanced learners” to clarify the advanced level at which students are able to work. Other terms used for these students are “high-ability,” “accelerated,” and “high-potential”—all perhaps less divisive and less emotional terms than “gifted.” However, no matter the word used to describe it, giftedness itself remains the same, identified through careful testing and observation. It is, after all, a *learning difference*, not a label.

competencies they were supposed to acquire in earlier grades. They are often children with learning differences or special needs, or children of poverty, and may have lacked the early learning experiences that prepare kids for kindergarten. These kids are far to the left on the bell curve (see page 5); let's call them the Ones. These children are described as students with exceptional educational needs because they are not typical learners, nor do their abilities and performance fall into the middle range of the bell curve.

We also have some students who are ahead of their age peers in what they know and can do. We'll call them the Threes. On the bell curve, the Threes are the same distance to the far right as the Ones are to the far left. Hence, they can also be described as students with exceptional educational needs. Therefore, they are entitled to all the same differentiation opportunities our system makes available for the Ones—not because the Threes are specially privileged, but because they are *equally as atypical in their learning needs*.

Now ask yourself, “What do I do differently for students who are having trouble keeping up with the grade-level standards (the Ones)?” Your answer might include these interventions:

- **Adjust the amount of work** they have to do. You may require them to do less work than the typical learner for equivalent credit.
- **Change the pacing of the lesson** and adjust the amount of time they have to work. You might slow down your rate of instruction or provide more time for them to complete their work.
- **Change the content** in order to teach them what they are missing. If they are missing material they were supposed to master in a previous grade, you provide learning time on standards from other grade levels even though they are not part of your assigned standards.
- **Teach to their learning modalities and preferences**, and allow students to express what they have learned in ways that are compatible with those modalities.
- **Find topics in which they are highly interested**, so you can entice them to learn some of the standards through those high-interest topics.
- **Change the peer interactions** they have with their classmates, taking special care to pair them with students who can support them and with whom they can work comfortably.
- **Seek out their parents and former teachers** to get information that might empower you to help them learn more successfully. You may even invite their parents to come to school beyond the regular conference times, because you know that these students' achievement often improves with parental interest and assistance.

Many of us make most or all of these adjustments daily for the benefit of the Ones in our classes. Do you feel that these adjustments are unnecessary or unfair to the other students? Do

you refrain from making them because of the extra work that is required of you? Probably not.

Just like the Ones, the Threes on the other end of the bell curve are deserving of differentiated instruction and interventions. Not because they are gifted, but because, like the Ones, they are not average. The level, pacing, amount of work, and type of learning activities that benefit average learners are just as inappropriate for above-average learners as they are for students who are working below grade-level expectations. For the Threes, the following adjustments are often necessary to improve their attitudes and willingness to do their schoolwork:

- **Lessen the amount of grade-level work** they must do because they can demonstrate mastery with less practice.
- **Increase the pace of a lesson** and allow them to spend considerable class time working on extensions or independent study.
- **Adjust the content** so it extends beyond the grade-level parameters, fuels students' passion for learning all they can about an interesting

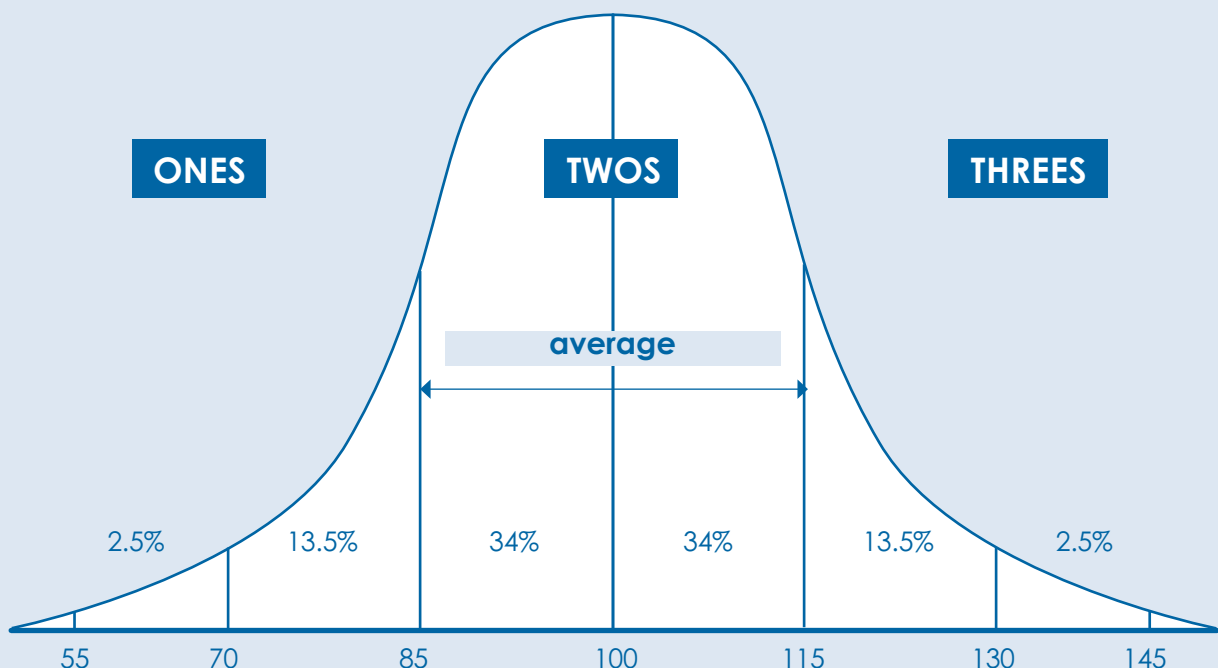
topic, and gives them opportunities for acceleration as part of their regular school experience.

- **Allow them to work with each other** on extension tasks and limit our expectations for them to assist other students who need help.
- **Change our style of interaction with them** from being a provider of information, or “sage on the stage,” to being a learning “guide on the side.”
- **Welcome their parents as important partners** in their learning. After all, every adult's goal for his or her kids is the same—for kids to love school and love learning for the rest of their lives.

## Building Lifelong Learners

Becoming an enthusiastic lifelong learner is, arguably, the most important goal for success in the 21st century. Many experts predict that all the students we currently teach will be required throughout their work lives to change careers numerous times before they retire, due to economic situations and advances in technology.

### IQ Scores and Percentage of Students at Each Level





Thus, many students will need to go back to some sort of schooling to be retrained for another career. In order for them to welcome that reality, they must have had positive experiences in school when they were young.

Look again at the bell curve on page 5. Which two groups of students do you predict are the *least* likely to be happy about returning to school later in life? If you predicted the Ones and the Threes, you would be correct. Why? Because school for many of them was stressful most of the time. The Twos usually have more positive experiences because much of what happens in school is geared toward them, the typical learners. The Ones feel stressed to meet standards and pass tests, while the Threes feel frustrated about feeling unchallenged so often in school.

## Gifted Education Techniques Benefit Everyone

When students have had access to gifted education, it has significantly improved learning experiences for all students in heterogeneous classes. Every pedagogical method we've used with gifted kids over the years is now considered state-of-the-art for all kids. Project work, meaningful student choice, self-directed learning, literature-based reading, inquiry, problem-based learning, and a focus on STEM/STEAM—all were born in gifted education practices.

Another methodology previously used only with gifted students is included in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Within ESSA, schools have vastly improved methods for testing advanced learners in the grade levels at which these students are working. For instance, under ESSA, students who are taking geometry in eighth grade can take a math test at their own level instead of the typical state test for eighth graders. All states are now required by federal law to provide such “out-of-level” testing when it is needed for any advanced learner.

ESSA also encourages the use of computer-adaptive tests to better measure how well students are growing academically and to show

whether students need advanced math classes to take their work beyond their actual grade levels. All states are now required to describe how they plan to provide all students with the opportunity to take advanced math. This is another example of how attention to the needs of advanced learners can positively impact entire schools.

When we provide what gifted kids need—namely, a consistently challenging curriculum—other students are likely to benefit as well. Teachers who are trained for cluster classes learn that the differentiation opportunities are always offered to all students—not just those formally identified as gifted. This practice demonstrates high expectations for all students and most students react very positively to those expectations.

## What Gifted Students Need

A good definition of learning might be “forward progress from a student’s entry level at the beginning of each school year to her or his achievement levels at the end of the school year.” So what do gifted students need in order to learn? They need two crucial things: *compacting* and *differentiation*. Compacting means condensing a semester’s or year’s worth of learning into a shorter time period. Differentiation means providing students with different materials, tasks, and activities than their age peers—tasks that lead to authentic learning for them. Both compacting and differentiation can be used to tailor learning for gifted students in the following five areas: *content*, *process*, *product*, *environment*, and *assessment*.

- 1. Content.** As a teacher, you are responsible for making sure that all kids learn the content standards they are expected to know. Students who demonstrate that they have already learned some of the content, or who are able to learn required content in much less time than their age peers, should be provided with differentiated content.

Content is differentiated through the use of curriculum compacting, learning contracts, accelerated pacing, learning centers, flexible grouping, advanced resource materials, independent study, and mentorships. The

focus of differentiated content should be on students attaining a deeper, more nuanced understanding of the issues and viewpoints connected to a specific topic.

- 2. Process.** This defines the methods students use to make sense of concepts, generalizations, and the required learning standards. It encompasses learning modality considerations, creative and productive thinking and conceptualizing, focus on open-ended and problem-solving tasks, opportunities for meaningful research, and the skills to share what they are learning.

Gifted students should spend most of their learning time using learning processes that are more complex and abstract than is suitable for their age peers. They should collect and analyze knowledge and data as though they are professionals in a given field, assuming an attitude of inquiry rather than one of information gathering. And they should be expected to support their findings with valid evidence.

Process is differentiated through the use of flexible grouping, approaches based on learning modalities or multiple intelligences, opportunities for learning at more complex levels, sophisticated research practices, and adjustable time limits.

- 3. Product.** This describes the ways in which students choose to demonstrate their understanding of the content and process. Some gifted students resist assignments that require a written product, as their brains may move much faster than their hands. They may be more willing to produce a unique artifact, exhibit, independent study, or performance. Gifted students should be guided to produce what Dr. Joseph Renzulli calls “real-life products for appropriate audiences.” These go beyond the typical research papers or reports to include alternatives that develop individual students’ talents and curiosities.

Product is differentiated by steering students to exciting and unusual resources and to people who can help them mine and use them, and by encouraging students to use available technology to its best advantage.

- 4. Environment.** This describes the physical setting where learning takes place, as well as the expectations and attitudes present in the classroom and other learning locales. Gifted students typically spend more time in independent study than their classmates, and they sometimes may work outside the classroom or school as part of their differentiated learning. They thrive in a challenging atmosphere in which individuality is valued and nurtured.

Learning environment is also differentiated by adjusting your expectations as a teacher to require higher level responses to more challenging lessons, establishing a positive attitude toward individual differences, allowing flexible time limits, providing opportunities for in-depth research, and arranging mentorships.

- 5. Assessment.** Assessment practices have changed dramatically. They now are coming much closer to the attributes of assessment we have always used with gifted students. Gifted learners should experience consistent opportunities to demonstrate previous mastery before a particular unit is taught or to experience differentiated pacing. They should be encouraged to develop their own scoring rubrics and other methods to assess their independent study projects. We should strive to be certain that the manner in which we set up the assessments for their advanced work avoids simple extrinsic reward systems such as special stickers or extra credit. When we do that, students are working for the points or grades, rather than the intrinsic desire to learn all they can about a particular topic. To quote Karen Brown, a highly effective teacher of the gifted, “It’s not just about the grades, it’s about the *learning*.” In a perfect world, that should be the goal for all students and teachers.

Assessment is differentiated for advanced learners by setting up classroom conditions that allow them to get full credit for required standards without necessarily being expected to do all the activities that have been designed to lead to mastery.

We understand the uncertainty, and even fear, you might be feeling as you contemplate the tasks of finding out what your gifted students already know, giving them credit for it before you teach it, and providing alternate activities for them to work on instead. You may be asking yourself, “How will I gather the materials and resources I need? Won’t differentiating content, process, product, environment, and assessment take a lot of time and add more to my teaching load? Will I lose control of my classroom?” We assure you this book will ease your doubts and fears and make your efforts to teach your gifted students—and consequently *all* your students—more successful and rewarding. As in all new learning, you will be less stressed if you choose one strategy to use in one subject area, and concentrate on that until you and your students have reached a comfort level. At that time, you might choose to use the same strategy with another subject area or try out another strategy in the same subject area. The catchphrase is “*start slowly*,” as you build toward successful implementation of several strategies from this book.

## About This Book and Digital Content

Formerly titled *Teaching Gifted Kids in the Regular Classroom*, this book has been in constant publication since 1992, during which time hundreds of thousands of educators have shared, discussed, dog-eared, highlighted, and, most importantly, *used* it. The feedback from teachers, administrators, and parents has been dramatically positive and readers often state, “I wish I would have known the things in this book years ago—I might have avoided a lot of heartache and frustration for myself and the gifted kids I have taught and parented.” No guilt intended! Simply begin today to make your own forward progress in your quest to have gifted students (and their parents) feel happy that you are their teacher.

In creating the third and fourth editions, we chose a slightly different title to more clearly state its mission: *Teaching Gifted Kids in Today's Classroom*. It's a guide written for educators of

gifted kids in all grades, kindergarten through high school, in a variety of present-day learning environments—be they “regular” classrooms, gifted cluster classes, full-time gifted classes, school- or district-wide gifted programs, or at home. The design has undergone a complete face-lift, and extensive content has been updated, revised, and added to such topics as technology and assessment to make the book resonate with current teaching and learning realities.

Each chapter presents proven, practical, easy-to-use teaching and classroom management strategies, which are listed in a box at the start of each chapter. These strategies have been used by many teachers for over more than two decades. Scenarios profile students with whom the strategies have been successfully used, so you'll be able to draw parallels to the characteristics, needs, and responses of your own students. The strategies are described in step-by-step detail, frequently asked questions about the strategies are answered, and chapter summaries review the main points of each chapter. Of course, you are free to adjust any of the strategies as you use them as long as you never lose sight of these students' critical need for consistent compacting and differentiation that are essential parts of their total school program. The references and resources for all chapters appear together at the end of the book, listed by chapter.

**Chapter 1** describes the learning and behavioral characteristics of gifted students. Special attention is given to populations that have been underserved in the past, including young gifted children, nonproductive students, gifted students from multicultural and low socioeconomic populations, and those considered “twice-exceptional” (possessing both gifted abilities and learning challenges). The chapter concludes with a discussion of the qualities needed by teachers of gifted students.

The strategies in **chapter 2** are designed to be used with curriculum that is skill-based and lends itself to pretesting, because some of your students will already know much of what you plan to teach. These strategies will help you meet the needs of your gifted students in any skill work related to reading, math, language arts, or other subject areas. Chapter 2 also contains information about creating and using extension activities.

The strategies in **chapter 3** are designed to be used with subject areas in which most of the content is new to students, such as science, social studies, literature, problem-based learning, and interdisciplinary or thematic units. Methods other than pretests and learning contracts are often necessary for these types of curriculums. **Chapter 4** describes appropriate reading and writing instruction for gifted students, and **chapter 5** explains how to plan differentiated curriculum for all of your students at the same time. Chapters 3 through 5 use many similar principles and methods, so you may want to read and use these chapters together.

**Chapter 6** shows you how to help gifted kids manage independent study based on personal interests. **Chapter 7** describes issues to consider when grouping gifted students for instruction and learning. Strategies for making cooperative learning fair for gifted students, and methods for grouping gifted students in homerooms or self-contained classes—including cluster grouping—are explained.

**Chapter 8** includes discussions of assessment and grading practices for gifted students and strategies for using technology to challenge gifted students. There are also many references to technology throughout the book. Technology is becoming integrated in students' learning, facilitates our easy location of extension activities, and can transform pretesting and formative assessment.

**Chapter 9** discusses issues related to gifted education programming, such as acceleration, schoolwide cluster grouping, and International Baccalaureate programs; record-keeping for differentiation experiences; the roles of gifted education specialists; and how to interact with parents and colleagues.

**Chapter 10** (available in the digital content) is intended to be read by parents of gifted kids. Teachers should read it, too, so they can anticipate parents' questions and expectations. Sharing this section with the parents of gifted students before you conference with them is often very productive.

Finally, the **conclusion** pulls all of the book's content together, while the **references and resources** section lists research and information materials, arranged by chapter, which can assist

you in keeping your gifted students motivated to move forward in their learning.

The **digital content** included with the book contains all the reproducible forms from the book. Many of the digital forms are customizable, which means you can alter them and print out your own versions. The digital content also includes chapter 10 on parenting, 20 additional extension menus, and a PDF presentation that provides an overview of concepts and strategies described in the book and can be used for professional development. For information on how to access the digital content, see page 245.

## How to Use This Book and Digital Content

The chapters presented here flow the best if the book is examined from start to finish. However, if you decide to study one or two chapters ahead of the others or to read the chapters in a different order, that's perfectly fine as well.

The book is intended for educators of gifted students. It is an essential resource for every classroom teacher and every building principal, and even for some parents. All classes have some overlooked gifted kids, and we want this book to be a resource for all teachers, whether or not they have any identified gifted students in their classes. As districts restructure the way they deliver gifted education services, administrators often tell parents that although self-contained and/or pull-out classes have been cancelled, the "gifted program" will now take place in the regular classroom. That promise cannot be kept unless those regular classroom teachers know how to challenge gifted students. As a teacher of gifted students in any setting, you can use this book as your guide to meeting those students' unique needs. Administrators promising to meet gifted students' needs can fulfill that commitment by sharing this book with all classroom teachers and allowing them time to study its contents and plan for differentiation. An ongoing book study will ensure that you implement the strategies successfully.

This book is also useful in PLCs (professional learning communities) studying issues regarding differentiation, keeping families enrolled