

Beyond Competency: Creating and Experiencing a Gifted Education Specialist Cohort for Professional and Personal Development

I. Creating University partnerships

- A. Why a GT endorsement?
- B. State definition of highly qualified GT teachers
- C. University selection process
- D. Online, in class and hybrid course meeting options
- E. Evaluation of GT program courses
- F. Options for Master's degree and beyond

II. Funding sources and support

- A. Half rate tuition through the University of Denver
- B. 75% tuition incentive to teachers working in highly impacted schools / gifted focus school feeder system
- C. District tuition reimbursement
- D. Focus school (magnet school) resources
- E. Use of non-GT funds
- F. State and federal grants may be a possibility
- G. Scholarships through the University or school districts
- H. Professional development budget through school districts
- I. Participant / liaison between the cohort participants and University.
 - 1. Maintain billing and receipts
 - 2. Registration and books
 - 3. Point of contact for participants and University
 - 4. Secure and monitor funding sources
 - 5. Set dates for classes
 - 6. Troubleshoot IT concerns
 - 7. Advertise and recruit members for the cohort
 - 8. Publicize and organize professional development

III. Cohort program outcomes

- A. Individual Educators' benefits
 - 1. Building an instructional network among cohort participants
 - 2. Teacher expertise in individual schools
 - 3. Participation in a University program
- B. School benefits
 - 1. Teacher leaders with GT knowledge base and expertise
 - 2. Resource to building teachers
 - 3. Awareness and support within the GT parent community
- C. District/Community
 - 1. Raise awareness of needs of GT students
 - 2. Resource for current/cutting edge research-based information on GT programming
 - 3. District level curriculum development and professional leadership
 - 4. Linking community professionals/resources with GT programs/students

IV. Personal Growth of Participants

- A. Diversity of Group Members
 - 1. Geographic, languages, ethnicities, socio economic, immigration
 - 2. Public and charter school teachers, district level personnel
 - 3. Secondary and elementary levels
 - 4. Various roles and responsibilities within school districts
- B. Self Awareness
 - 1. Anxiety
 - 2. Overachievement
 - 3. Perfectionism
 - 4. Developing trust
- C. Developing Gifted Awareness
 - 1. Defining giftedness
 - 2. Awareness of district policies and programs
 - 3. Developing strategies for identifying underrepresented populations
 - 4. Advocacy for gifted education at all levels
- D. Making an Impact
 - 1. Published chapters in gifted education literature
 - 2. Professional development at schools
 - 3. District, state and national level presentations
 - 4. Creation of international foundation
 - 5. Grant writing at the school and district levels

V. Personal growth of instructors

Creating relationships of care between graduate students and instructors (Noddings)

- A. "Whole person" graduate student model
- B. Recognizing and programming for diverse needs
- C. Increased focus on authentic feedback based on a growth model
- D. Facilitation of meaningful discussions with ongoing peer group
- E. Supporting the development of independently operating professional learning community
- F. Creating a bridge to other instructors
- G. Online elements
- H. Recognizing and acknowledging constraints of the institutional program
- I. Personal impact

VI. Benefits and Challenges of a Cohort Model

- A. Personal and Professional bonds
 - 1. 2+ year relationships – maintaining the time commitment
 - 2. Networking – during and after – helping others in class
- B. Endorsed, knowledgeable teachers
 - 1. Increased expertise – how to create positions, responsibility & role in district
- C. University partnership
 - 1. first group – first group
 - 2. University benefits – how to maintain relationship
 - 3. Some flexibility of program – support needed
 - 4. location – logistics
- D. Increased awareness of GT issues
 - 1. As we learned more, we wanted to bring GT to the table

VII. Continued relationships of cohort participants and instructors

- A. Bonds – professional and personal
- B. Networking
- C. Opportunities for PD within/between schools and districts
- D. Rebecca implemented a district GT plan in a small rural district with support from cohort members
- E. Kelly implemented a plan at 2 schools and was hired at a school that also had another cohort member
- F. Susan secured an administrative position in another district as a GT director
- G. Instructors returned to provide PD for district
- H. Cohort members meet semi-regularly to nurture interpersonal bonds and discuss current affairs in GT education
- I. Cohort members, including instructors, work together to create presentations such as this one
- J. Cross-district members use one another's leadership to limit "reinventing the wheel" such as EA surveys