Examining Critical Issues in Gifted Education: A Case Studies Approach

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Using Case Studies

• What is a case study?
• What are the components of a case?
• Suggestions for implementing case studies
• Model analysis of a case study narrative including steps for solving a case study – a step by step approach
What is a Case Study?

A case study provides opportunities for the reader to analyze and reflect on various situations in education. Case studies encourage a detailed analysis and critical reflection of the most current and prevalent issues in gifted education such as identifying gifted children of poverty, differentiating instruction, implementing grouping practices, meeting social and emotional needs, serving twice exceptional students, RtI and gifted, and the reality of limited resources.
What is a Case Study?

• A case study provides an opportunity for the reader to reflect on various viewpoints and seek alternative solutions within an authentic setting.

• A case study presents a dilemma which provides a teaching tool to facilitate inquiry and stimulate an interactive response.

• As a result, case studies provide a vehicle to help move the reader from a personal issue to a more objective approach to decision making.
Kuntz & Hessler (1998) state the case study method enhances learning by

• developing **higher order thinking skills**,  
• illustrating the **relevance** of the study in society,  
• asking participants to **question assumptions** underlying the theories presented, and  
• shows learning from the cases long after the study concludes.

Who can use case studies?

• All educators (teachers, administrators, counselors, psychologists, support staff) involved in educating gifted learners

• All parents and community members wanting to increase their level of awareness about the characteristics and needs of gifted children through discussion to refine understanding, exploration and more in-depth, reflection on current practices to extend their perspective.
Case Study Narratives

• Narratives provide quick **overviews** to introduce the study before reading the case.

• Within each case **“things to consider”** guide the reader’s thinking without imparting an explicit solution.

• **Discussion questions, activities, extensions,** and suggestions for further reading support the **standards of excellence** set forth in the current National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) Pre-K-12 Programming Standards.
Discussion Questions

Discussion questions encourage exploration of the issue presented in the case study. They allow for the reflection of personal and professional philosophies and stimulate further investigations provided in the activities that follow.
Activities and Extensions

Activities prompt further investigation of issues.

Extensions provide an opportunity for the participant to apply understanding and insights related to the issue presented in another context, field, or situation. Choosing to participate in one or more activities ensures that insight into the topic is obtained.

Suggestions for further reading offer the participant additional resources to broaden the concept for enhanced understanding.
Tools to Enhance the Analysis

FOCUS

Who  
What

ISSUES

Primary  
Secondary

FACTORS

Cultural  
Other
Tools to Enhance the Analysis

CASE

- Additional Information/Research
- Course of Action
- Supporting Documents
- Collaborations

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Raul’s case introduces the reader to an at-risk 15 year old boy who exhibits mathematical talent in spite of the challenges of poverty and a difficult living environment.
Raul

Preparing the education professional to recognize and respond to the needs of students from diverse, at-risk populations is critical to student achievement and success.

These students may need complex support in which the hidden rules of culture are acknowledged and respected.
Creating Safe and Productive Learning Environments

Point of view

• Raul
• Raul’s teacher
Raul

• lives in poverty
• small, economically depressed community
• parents are immigrants working several jobs
• responsible for siblings 5, 9, 11 and 12
• no friends
• often tardy or absent from school
• often sleeps through class
• does not complete class assignments
• appears to lack motivation
• history of high test scores
Raul’s Point of View

- My first responsibility is to ensure my siblings are safe, well fed and complete their homework
- My brothers and sisters need my help
- I have no time for friends
- I’m too tired to do my homework— I don’t have the supplies anyway
- I can miss school, I’m not learning anything anyway
- What’s the point— I can’t go to college, my family needs me
Mrs. Smith’s Point of View

• Raul is absent or tardy more often than not
• He seems to listen in class but never turns in his assignments
• Why does he earn high test scores and low grades?
• I recommended him for honors math, why did he refuse to register for the class?
• Why won’t his parents return my calls or attend conferences?
• Why should I bother?
Things to Consider

• Culture impacts students every moment of every day
• Family and community are core values in the Hispanic/Latino culture.
• Hispanic/Latino families value self-sufficiency and are unlikely to request or depend on assistance from outside of the family
• Attendance issues are often more complex than they appear
• Generational poverty impacts what students think about themselves, school, and aspirations for the future.
“What we don’t know we make up.”

Donna Ford
Raul

**Discussion Questions** center on an analysis of the impact of the learning environment on the identification and achievement of at-risk learners.

**Activities** expand knowledge of characteristics of at-risk gifted learners and offer an opportunity for educators to research systems of support and identify local resources.

**Extensions** include a role play activity and the design of a cultural competency workshop. Additional research and resources are listed.
Raul

Discussion Questions

• Why is Raul reluctant to register for the honors math class? What environmental factors may have influenced his decision?

• Would Raul benefit identification as a gifted learner? Is assessment of potential appropriate or inappropriate for high school students? Explain why.

• Is Raul at risk? What systems of support would benefit Raul?
Raul

Activities

• With colleagues, role-play a conversation with Raul’s parents.
• Research organizations that support promising learners like Raul who come from impoverished environments. Create a list of local resources for at-risk students.

Extension

• Design a cultural competency workshop for Mrs. Smith and the teachers at her school.
Resources


Resources continued

• Smith-Adcock, S., Daniels, M. H., Lee, Sang M. Villalba, J. A., & Indelicato, N. (October 1, 2006). *Culturally responsive school counseling for Hispanic/Latino students and families: The need for bilingual school counselors.*

For more case studies....
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