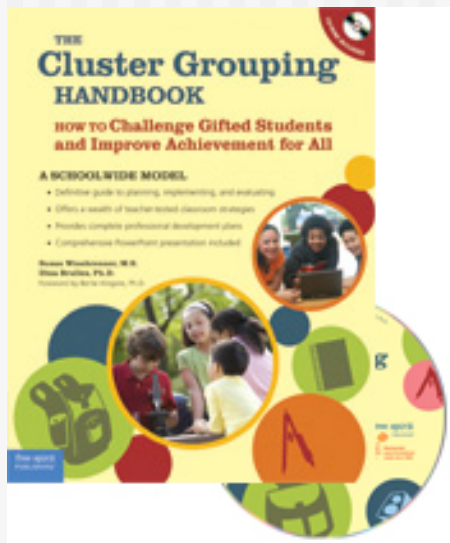


The Schoolwide Cluster Grouping Model

*Embracing Diversity, Increasing Achievement,
& Expanding Gifted Services During Lean Financial Times*



NAGC 2010
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What is The SCGM

and why should we consider it?



The SCGM is a method for providing full-time gifted education services without major budget implications, and with potential to raise achievement for all students.

With the SCGM, *all* students are purposely placed into classrooms based on their abilities, potential, or achievement.

The Bright Child & The Gifted Learner

- | | |
|---|---|
| ■ Knows the answers | Asks the questions |
| ■ Is interested / alert | Is highly curious / Is keenly observant |
| ■ Is attentive & involved | Is mentally and physically |
| ■ Has good ideas | Has wild, silly ideas |
| ■ Works hard | Plays around, yet tests well |
| ■ Answers the questions | Discusses in detail, elaborates |
| ■ Top group | Beyond the group |
| ■ Listens with interest & opinions | Shows strong feelings |
| ■ Learns with ease | Already knows |
| ■ 6-8 repetitions for mastery | 1-2 repetitions for mastery |
| ■ Understands ideas | Constructs abstractions |
| ■ Enjoys peers | Prefers Adults |
| ■ Grasps the meaning | Draws inferences |
| ■ Completes assignments | Initiates projects |
| ■ Is receptive | Is intense |
| ■ Copies accurately | Creates a new design |
| ■ Enjoys school | Enjoys learning |
| ■ Absorbs information | Manipulates information |
| ■ Technician | Inventor |
| ■ Enjoys straightforward, sequential learning | Thrives on complexity |
| ■ Is pleased with own learning | Is highly self-critical |

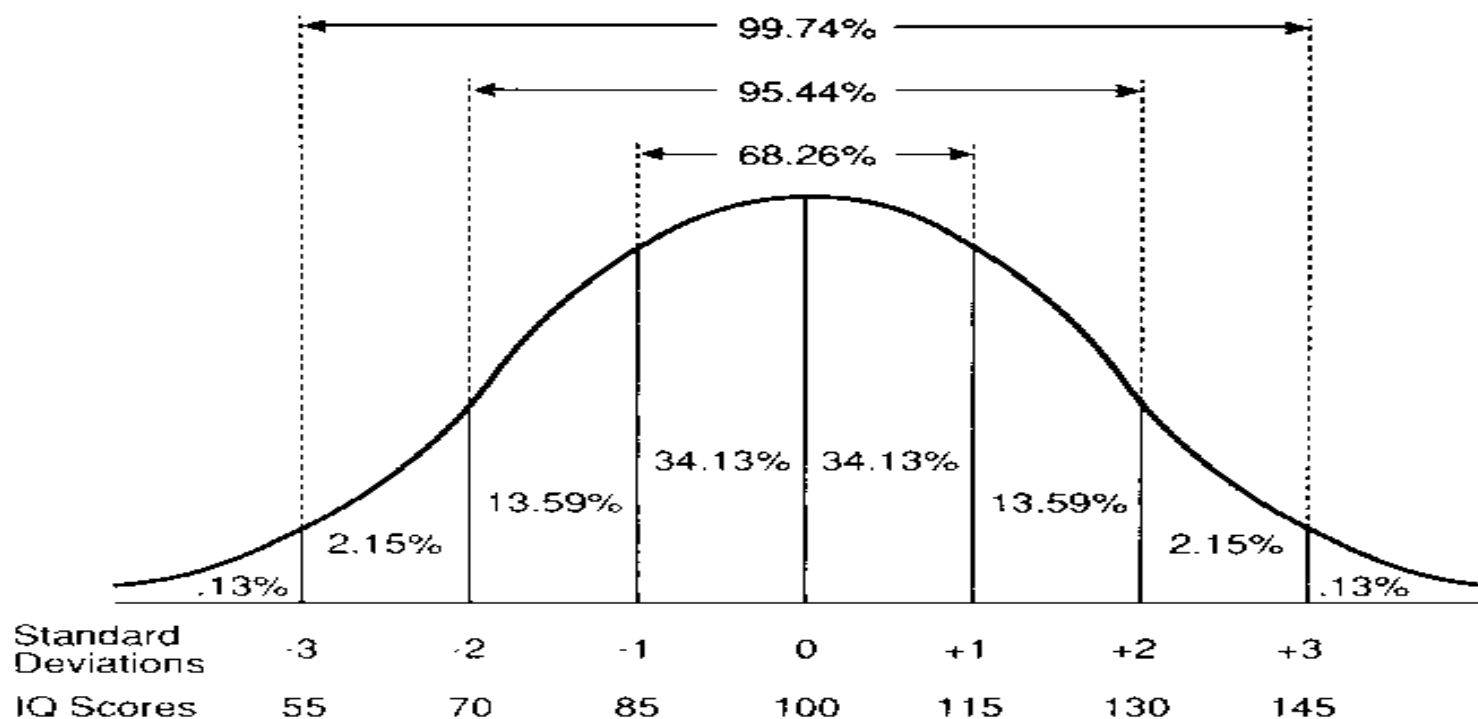
J. Szabos

Who Are the Gifted?

*How does giftedness impact
social & emotional needs & academic needs*



Figure 1
The Normal Distribution of IQ Scores



Scanné de : "SENSE AND NONSENSE ABOUT IQ"
Charles LOCURTO - Ed. Praeger (NY) 1991 - Page 5

The SCGM allows schools to employ...

The critical elements of effective gifted programs:

- ✓ flexible grouping
- ✓ differentiation
- ✓ continuous progress
- ✓ intellectual peer interaction
- ✓ continuity
- ✓ teachers with specialized education

Program elements identified by Barbara Clark

What does it mean to place students into cluster groups?

A group of gifted identified students is clustered into a mixed ability classroom with a teacher who is trained to differentiate for gifted students.



Suggested classroom composition

30 students in 3 classes	Gifted	High Average	Average	Low Average	Far Below Average
A	6	0	12	12	0
B	0	6	12	6	6
C	0	6	12	6	6

Placing students in the classrooms:

- Determine placement for upcoming year following spring testing
- Gifted students make up *approximately* 20% of the gifted cluster class
- Create the number of gifted cluster classrooms necessary to serve all gifted students in each grade

How does the SCGM fit with other inclusion models?

The two models are totally compatible.

For ease of scheduling and to ensure that students receive appropriate instruction by properly trained teachers, schools commonly cluster special education students according to the services they require.

The SCGM replicates this model for gifted students.

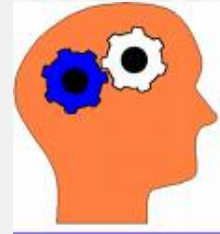
Isn't cluster grouping the same as tracking?

No. In tracking, students are grouped into classrooms with others of comparable ability and remain together throughout their school years. Curriculum is based on the ability levels of the students in each track.

When clustered, all classes have a range of abilities. Teachers modify or extend grade level standards according to the students' needs and abilities. The classroom composition changes each year.

What are the learning needs of gifted students?

All students deserve consistent opportunities to learn new material.



With gifted students, this means having opportunities to engage in intellectually stimulating endeavors that go beyond grade level curriculum.

Why should gifted students be placed in a cluster group instead of being assigned to all classes?

Gifted students...

- need to spend time learning with others of like ability to experience challenge and make academic progress
- better understand their learning differences when they are with learning peers



- ✓ *Teachers are more likely to differentiate curriculum when there is a group of gifted students*

*Can I create small groups
of gifted students in all classes?*



*The desired outcomes of the SCGM become diminished
when doing so because:*

- there is less accountability for teachers to facilitate progress of their gifted learners
 - teachers feel a decreased need to identify gifted students
 - providing appropriate teacher training becomes difficult
- ✓ *All teachers have the full range of abilities!*

*Won't the creation of a cluster group
rob the other classes of academic leadership?*

- With either gifted or high achieving students in every class, all classes have academic leaders
- Gifted students do not make the best academic leaders because they make intuitive leaps, and therefore do not always appear to have to work as hard as others
- High average students have new opportunities to become academic leaders



*Aren't gifted students needed in all classes
so they can help others learn?*

Helping other students learn is not the responsibility of gifted students, and they are usually *not* very good at it!



*Are gifted cluster groups “visible”
in the classroom?*

Gifted cluster groups are rarely distinguishable from other groups of students in the classroom

All students move in and out of groupings according to interest, ability, and pace regarding different topics



Gifted children typically...

- Are intensely curious and have many interests
- Process information with great speed and deep understanding
- Remember forever what they learn
- Readily grasp underlying principles and make generalizations
- Are highly sensitive
- Prefer to work alone
- Relate well with older students and adults
- Demonstrate advanced sense of humor
- Require little direction
- Sustain long periods of attention and concentration



**These behaviors apply to all content areas, all day long.*

The SCGM enfranchises *all* gifted students...



- *Creatively gifted people*



- *Gifted Perfectionists*



- *Culturally and linguistically diverse gifted students*

- *Twice-exceptional gifted students*



- *Non-productive gifted students*

Creatively gifted people...

- Have original ideas and challenge existing ideas
- Enjoy complexity
- Tolerate ambiguity and delay of closure
- Are intensely aware of beauty
- Take risks and lack inhibition
- Delight in non-conforming behavior
- Ignore disorder
- Appreciate time alone



**Allowing for student-directed learning draws on students' creativity.*

The Gifted Perfectionist may...

- show reluctance beginning a task
- start work over often and work slowly to avoid mistakes
- be needy of teacher attention and cry easily when frustrated
- argue in response to teacher comments

Gifted Cluster Teachers can:

- model acceptance of mistakes
- teach realistic goal setting
- show appreciation of the learning *process*
- emphasize “personal best” *not* “being the best”
- avoid win/lose situations



Culturally and linguistically diverse gifted students commonly...

- acquire language with ease and rapidity
- set high standards for themselves
- use creative ability in problem solving
- demonstrate strong leadership skills in own culture
- show abilities in fine or practical arts
- have a richness in imagination and informal language
- may easily adapt to new situations



Including twice-exceptional gifted students

Twice-exceptional gifted students:

- have a learning disability or attention deficit disorder
and are gifted!
- deserve similar gifted services as other gifted identified students

Gifted Cluster Teachers should:

- teach to the areas of strength
- teach appropriate compensation strategies when needed
- allow for student-directed learning

Including non-productive gifted students

Non-productive students may:

- not see the need to complete assignments
- feel unmotivated by required work
 - that does not hold their interest or challenge them
- be afraid to fail, so they never *begin*

Gifted Cluster Teachers can:

- give credit for previously mastered content
- allow students to do more challenging work
- teach students to set their own goals
- acknowledge and show appreciation for effort
- allow student-directed learning based on interests and strengths

What are some advantages of cluster grouping?

- Grouping all gifted children in a regular classroom provides social, emotional, and academic advantages to students
- Teachers can focus instruction to better meet all students academic needs
- Schools provide full-time gifted services with few additional costs
- Achievement levels increase

What are possible challenges when cluster grouping?

- Parental pressure to place children who have not been identified as gifted into the gifted cluster classroom
- Placing students when enrolling during the school year
- Making sure that compacting and differentiation are consistently occurring in the gifted cluster classes

Staffing The SCGM

- Gifted Cluster Teachers, at every grade
- Gifted Specialist, at every school
- Gifted Coordinator, district level



Gifted Cluster Teachers...

- Understand, respect, and enjoy teaching gifted students
- Strongly support inclusion
- Decrease use of whole group instruction
- Encourage student-centered approach to learning
- Participate in professional development



Gifted Cluster Teacher responsibilities

- Hold or are working toward obtaining a gifted endorsement
- Differentiate curriculum and record student progress
- Participate in gifted cluster teacher meetings and other professional development
- Assist grade level teachers when nominating students for gifted testing

Gifted Mentor responsibilities

- Hold or are working toward obtaining a gifted endorsement
- Preside over gifted cluster teacher meetings
- Attend district Gifted Mentor meetings and professional development
- Provide staff development at the schools
- Oversee nominations, administration, and reporting of gifted testing at school

Gifted Coordinator responsibilities

- Hold a gifted endorsement / certification
- Preside over Gifted Specialist / Mentor meetings
- Monitor progress of the model
- Organize and provide staff development
- Coordinate testing schedule, administration, and reporting of testing results
- Communicate with school community
- Analyze student achievement

Effective cluster teachers know how to:

- Understand and implement the SCGM
- Recognize gifted potential in all populations
- Pay attention to students' social/emotional needs
- Identify students who needs learning accommodations
- Compact and differentiate
- Form flexible learning groups
- Integrate basic skills and higher order thinking skills
- Create and use learning extensions and tired lessons
- Use appropriate assessments and grading practices
- Develop student's abilities to self-direct
- Build effective parent/teacher partnerships

Professional development with the SCGM

- Gifted Mentor meetings
- Gifted Cluster Teacher meetings at sites
- Districtwide Gifted Cluster Teacher meetings
- After-school teacher workshops
- Teacher Inservices
- Book studies: face-to-face & online
- Web-based learning



Gifted Mentor meetings

The Gifted Coordinator and Gifted Mentors / Specialists meet monthly to:

- schedule and prepare for testing
- address student placements
- prepare and use DEP's
- analyze student achievement
- plan professional development
- discuss parental support

Gifted cluster teacher meetings

Each school's Gifted Mentor leads monthly meetings.

Suggested meeting components:

- Discussion of specific strategies
- Sharing resources: lessons, materials, etc.
- Nomination and testing issues
- Problem solving regarding classroom or site concerns
- Planning for growth- scheduling students and incoming gifted cluster teachers



Peer coaching in The SCGM

- Ensures long-term implication of content learned in staff development
- Allows gifted cluster teachers to learn together
- Can prepare teachers for becoming gifted cluster teachers and Gifted Mentors
- Supports what occurs in Professional Learning Communities

For a supportive school culture...

- Carefully balance the classrooms according to students' abilities
- Provide information to teachers and parents
- Build a cooperative partnership between school and home
- Invite all teachers to participate in professional development opportunities



Parent information

- Provide office staff with information they can use to answer parents questions
- Develop a Gifted Education Services link to your classroom, school, or district website
- Prepare a brochure with FAQ's about cluster grouping
- Hold informational evenings for parents of gifted students

More parent information

- Gifted Coordinator sends out letters with test results describing the gifted service model
- Gifted cluster teachers send out letters describing differentiated learning opportunities in the classroom
- Offer school-based or districtwide workshops, book studies, or guest speaker presentations

Planning with principals and staffs

- Develop plans according to the schools' needs
- Present plans to staff and seek input
- Identify gifted cluster teachers
- Identify students to be placed into gifted cluster groups
- Provide training for gifted cluster teachers

The SCGM in times of lean budgets

Full-time gifted services are provided with:

- No initial outlay of funds needed
- No additional staffing
- No extra materials required
- Desirable staff development that benefits all students
- Retaining students that remains steady keeping tax dollars in the district

Showing growth in the SCGM

Schools can track ongoing growth by measuring:

- Academic achievement
- Gifted population identified and served by year
- Ethnic representation of gifted students
- Teachers participating in gifted education training

**This requires first creating a gifted student data base.*

The SCGM: Achievement Implications



- Narrowed range of abilities allows for more focused instruction
- Teachers learn strategies for high ability learners they can use for all students, not just the gifted students
- On-going assessment of students' strengths and needs ensures continual progress
- Gifted students are more likely to receive advanced instruction and extended learning opportunities
- Not all student are working on the same material at the same time
- ✓ *Higher expectations for all students!*

Examining Academic Achievement

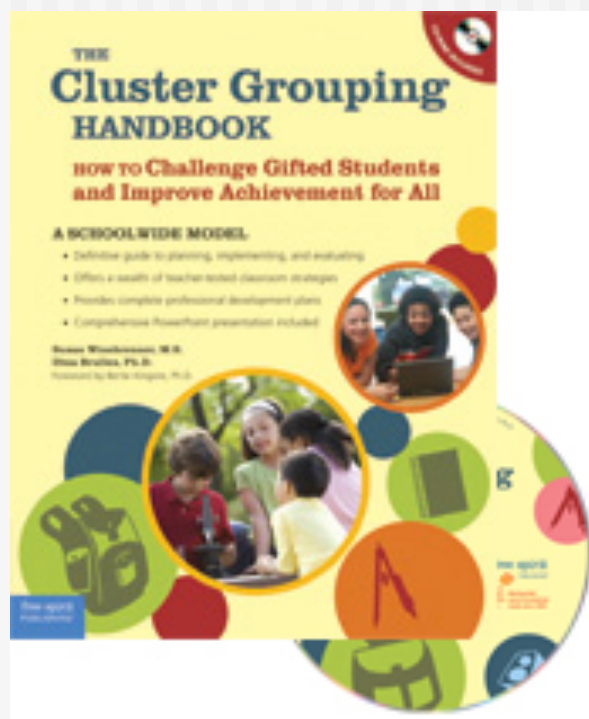
- Gifted students ~
in a cluster classroom vs. not cluster grouped

- Non-gifted students ~
in gifted cluster classes vs. not in a cluster class

Benefits of The SCGM include:

- Challenging gifted students every day, all day
- Creating learning and leadership opportunity for *all* students
- Empowering all teachers by expanding awareness and providing preparation
- On-going assessment of students' strengths and needs
- All students have opportunities for extended learning

Contact & Resources



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