

ESOL

in Higher Ed

Preparing the Way

Teaching ELs in the Pre-K-12 Classroom



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[Kendall Hunt Publishing](#)

Taking Off the Wrapper: Identifying and Serving Gifted English Learners





Scenario: You are interning in a 4th grade classroom. One of the students is an EL from Puerto Rico who is learning English quickly, although he is shy. The classroom teacher says he is in the process of being evaluated for the gifted program, which can take a long time. She asks you to jot down ways you can support/challenge him academically in this classroom setting...

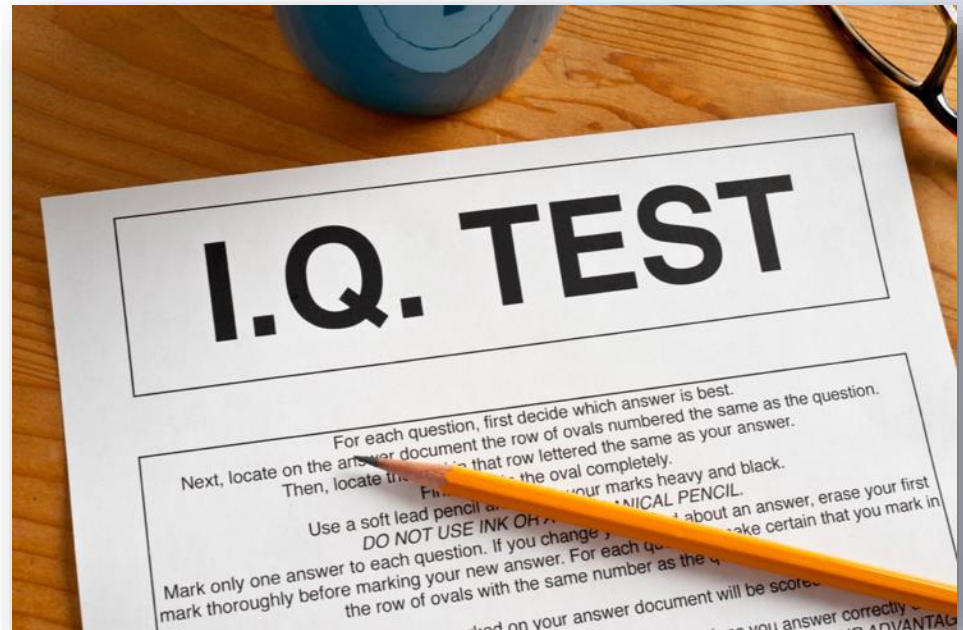
5 Critical Topics

- ① Perceptions and misperceptions about gifted students
- ② Perceptions and misperceptions about ELs
- ③ The underrepresentation of ELs in gifted programs
- ④ Identifying gifted ELs
- ⑤ Serving gifted ELs in the mainstream classroom



ESOL Perceptions & Misperceptions About Gifted Students

- I.Q. is relevant.
- All children are not gifted.
- All children possess an area of strength; this is not the same as giftedness.



ESOL Perceptions & Misperceptions About English Learners

- ELs **DO** want to learn English!
- Teachers often focus on mistakes made by ELs rather than their strengths.
- *Equal* treatment is not necessarily *fair* treatment.
- Culture matters. It includes life experiences and circumstances (e.g., SES).
- Multilingual students are advantaged over monolingual students.
- Many teachers have predisposed negative attitudes toward ELs.
- Many states now require ESOL training in pre-service teacher programs.



- Multiple causes for underrepresentation
- ELs might not take standardized achievement tests or I.Q. tests.
- Classroom teachers are the single most important factor in the identification process.
- Parents of ELs are often reluctant to advocate for their children to be screened for gifted.



- Teacher checklists
- Alternative assessments
- Nonverbal instruments
 - Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test (NNAT)
 - Form 6 of the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT)
 - Raven's Standard Progressive Matrices (Raven)
 - ITBS/ITED (used mainly in Iowa)

Non-EL Gifted	EL Gifted
High level/critical thinking	Ability to go above/beyond/in-depth
High verbal/vocabulary	High level/critical thinking
Quick mastery of subject matter	Ability to learn English quickly
Ability to go above/beyond/in-depth	Similar/same traits as non-EL gifted
Unique approaches/perspectives	Quick mastery of subject matter
Questioning/curious	High verbal/vocabulary
Standardized test scores	Questioning/curious
Teacher's intuition	Artistic
Creative/imaginative	Perfectionist/high standards

Table 8.1 Characteristics of Non-EL Gifted and EL Gifted as Reported by Classroom Teachers.

- View gifted characteristics [checklist](#) for underrepresented populations.
- View [Renzulli Scales](#) for more characteristics.

- Classroom teacher is (typically) first to notice gifted traits and nominate a child for screening.
- Great care should be taken in how this is explained to families and especially to students.
- Identification should be presented as a tool to determine appropriate level of challenge. (Avoid label of “gifted” at this stage.)



Gifted identification can take up to a year to become official. How will you meet their needs?

- Avoid common pitfalls of keeping gifted students busy (e.g., “Help your neighbor.”).
- Differentiate.
- Match curriculum to the academic readiness of the child.
- Focus on mastery of content objectives (e.g., Avoid busy work. Do not expect gifted students to ‘show their work’ in math. For many, complex problems are merely ‘mental math.’)
- Alternative assessments/options nurture imagination and creativity, characteristics of giftedness.
- YO-YO approach provides options and encourages personal accountability.
- Allow/encourage students to suggest their own options to demonstrate mastery of content objectives.

YO-YO Approach



"You're on your own!"

As a teacher, consider your personal interests, passions, and areas of expertise. Can you share with your students? Can you model a passion for learning? Can you inspire?

- Watch a short clip from [The Hobart Shakespeareans](#).
- Discuss Rafe Esquith's passions (e.g., Shakespeare, coming of age literature classics).
- Discuss how "average" 5th grade ELs have mastered these classics.
- Brainstorm how you can bring your passion to your students.

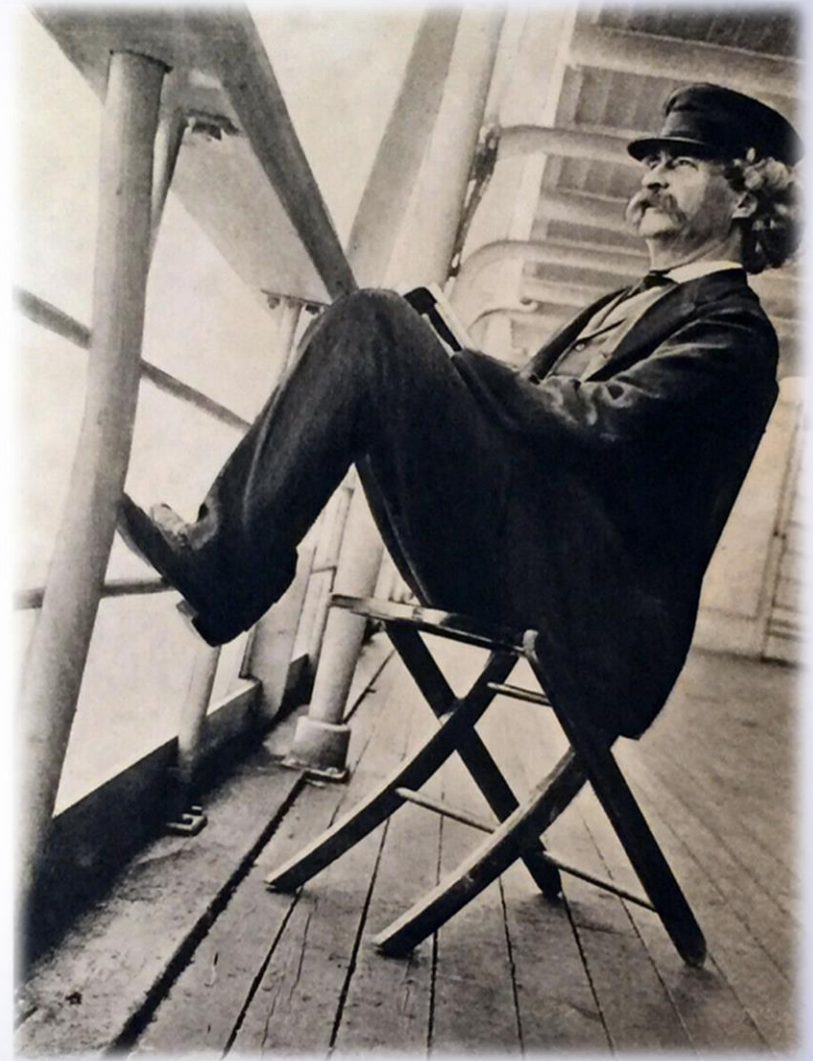


The Hobart Shakespeareans - Trailer - POV 2005 | PBS

*“I have traveled more
than anyone else, and
I have noticed that
even the angels speak
English with an
accent.”*

Mark Twain

Following the Equator, 1897



Review these resources:

[A Nation Deceived: How Schools Hold Back America's Brightest Students](#)

[Myths About Gifted Students](#)

The logo for ESOL in Higher Ed is a dark blue rectangle. Inside, the word "ESOL" is written in large, white, bold, sans-serif capital letters. Below it, the words "in Higher Ed" are written in a smaller, white, sans-serif font.

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