



## **First Forum on Gifted Education in Lebanon**

الملتقى الأول للتعريف بالموهبة والإبداع في لبنان

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## **Creative Activities Addressing Giftedness**

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**Abstract:** In recent years, researchers have shown a higher interest in gifted individuals, children, teenagers, and even adults. These individuals share many common characteristics such as being highly sensitive, using abstract and complex thinking, enjoying solving problems involving numbers and puzzles, and having a developed sense of idealism and justice at an early age. These are just a few characteristics mentioned in the literature.

In the language classroom, teachers can design materials tailored to the needs of these students. In this paper, teachers will be acquainted with various integrated language activities which require the gifted students to use their:

- Excellent memory
- Unusually large vocabulary and complex sentence structure
- Advanced comprehension of abstract ideas
- Concern with social and political issues and injustices



Because gifted learners have a vivid imagination and a highly developed curiosity, these integrated activities can help them enjoy more their English language classrooms in addition to developing their communication and leadership skills.

Key words: giftedness, English language, creativity, group work, communication, leadership, problem solving, YouTube

## INTRODUCTION

“The gifted child of today is the hope of tomorrow. From These ranks should come the leaders of the 21st century” (Karnes & Chauvin, 2000). Gifted kids are crucial to their nations for they can promote the development of their societies.

Who are gifted learners? These learners think and process information differently than their peers (Brewer, 2016). They excel in at least one of the following areas: intellectual abilities, academic abilities, creative thinking, and/or performing and visual arts (Karnes, 2000). However, these students are characterized by a lower social ability (Winner, 1999 in Brewer, 2016).

In order to address giftedness, teachers should be trained and empowered to become confident in classrooms including gifted and talented students (Casey & Koshy, 2013). In addition, educators need to include the creative problem solving framework (CPS) into the gifted education program to help students develop cognitively (Treffinger & Isaksen, 2005). Developing professionally is the goal of teachers of gifted students whose aim should be the learner rather than the learning itself (Celik-Sahin, 2014).

The activities in this paper aim to integrate the language skills (reading, writing, speaking and listening) and subskills (grammar and vocabulary) to motivate students to improve their English language proficiency. According to Castillo and Annette (2011), the integration of the English language skills has a positive impact on the students' academic achievement. In the activities below, students of mixed abilities work together in groups to accomplish authentic tasks based on language integrated skills and technology use. Using technology is highly recommended in today's 21<sup>st</sup> century class to motivate students to learn (Wilson, 2015). In addition, using peer feedback in class can help learners improve their sense of responsibility and autonomy (Sultana, 2009). In order to increase the students' engagement and motivation to learn, Bravo, Amante, Fernandez, Enache and Simo (2009) suggest the use of videos in the language classrooms. The videos that students produce in their groups are used as educational tools to develop learners' critical thinking skills. According to Alhamami (2011), YouTube can be used as a learning tool to help students be more proficient in the English language. Consequently, students would be highly interested to watch videos on YouTube (Terantino, 2011) and with these activities, they are going to be more enthusiastic when others watch their own videos on YouTube.



## ACTIVITIES

The purpose of the activities in this paper is to help students in general and gifted learners in particular develop linguistic, critical thinking, communication, and leadership skills. The benefits targeting gifted children are detailed at the end of each activity.

### Activity 1-Talk about Our SDG on Youtube

(Skills to develop: reading, writing, speaking, and listening for grades 4-6 or 7-12.)

This is a group work activity which can be done at 2 different proficiency levels:

- a) End year exhibition: Students in grades 4-6 can work in groups on a final year poster that can be displayed at the end of the school year or
- b) Six week project: The theme of the project can be changed every 6 weeks so that each group of students in grades 7-12 can work on 5 to 6 projects per academic year.

#### Introduction:

*Talk about Our SDG on YouTube* is an activity engaging students in diverse language skills. Themes related to UNESCO's Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) are introduced. Students need to work in groups in order to produce a collaborative poster and video to be uploaded on YouTube.

#### Instructions

FIRST, help students decide on a topic related to the sustainable development goals (SDG). This topic can be one of the lessons in their textbooks. Then, the students need to search for information using a variety of resources to be decided on by the teacher such as magazines, newspapers, radio or TV news, research articles, e-books, e-magazines, etc.

SECOND, students need to write on the selected topic using a variety of genres; for example, narration, biography, compare/contrast, cause-effect, description, how to/procedure, argumentative, persuasive, etc.

#### Group formation

A group of 5 students of mixed abilities should work on 5 different writing genres whereby each student in the group is responsible for 1 of the 5 genres selected. Let's say the topic/theme is poverty which is related to SDGs. students need to search for recent information about poverty. Each student will write about poverty according to the writing genre assigned to him/her. Students should follow the writing process to write their share of the project. Then, the teacher or peers can check students' writings (paragraph writing for grades 4-6 and essay writing for upper grades 7-12 using a scoring rubric).

Note: If students are well trained to write essays in grades 5-6, they can present a poster essay.

THIRD, students are now ready for their poster presentation. Each group will collect their writings in a poster. Students talented in drawing, painting, or photography can decorate their poster.

Then each student will present his/her work by delivering a short presentation. Students in cycles 3 and 4 (grades 7-12) can use a scoring rubric to rate the performance of their peers. This evaluative activity can promote students' oral-aural communication.

FOURTH, each group records a 3 minute video to be uploaded on Youtube. The school or class teacher needs to have a YouTube channel. This task requires students to produce a short video using an advertisement or awareness campaign to discuss their SDG topic. Students have to mention only the main points of their poster presentation in order to tape their 3 minute group video. It's noteworthy mentioning that students have to present a video showing an advanced English proficiency to be uploaded on YouTube.



FIFTH, classmates watch the group videos and rate the presentations of their peers on YouTube using a rubric in order to develop their critical thinking skills. Comments can include the content, organization, fluency, accuracy (grammar), pronunciation, lexis, body language, etc.

#### **Benefits**

*Talk about Our SDG on YouTube* can benefit students in general and gifted learners in particular by improving their communication and leadership skills in addition to developing their creativity and imagination. This activity involving group work can help gifted kids to communicate and collaborate with others in order to complete the given project. Moreover, developing their English proficiency, oral presentation and writing skills are additional benefits in this activity. Gifted learners can also develop their leadership skills by helping their friends in the group, follow up on the good work, and lead the group to achieve their goal and finish their project on time. Creativity is also targeted in this activity where students in general and gifted in particular can use their imagination and creativity to design the poster and come up with an interesting idea for their video. Giving students a purpose for working together on their SDG project and saving their creative ideas and designs in a poster and on YouTube can increase the students' motivation to learn the English language.

#### **Activity 2. Act Out a Caricature**

(Skills to develop: writing / speaking for grades 6-12)

##### **Introduction**

In this activity, students need to develop a scenario among the characters found in a given caricature then act it out.

##### **Instructions**

Use the same caricature for all groups. Suggest different situations and ask groups to choose one.

For example, this caricature (a guy and a girl in a car showing the girl bursting into tears) works best with high schoolers. The different situations for this caricature can be as follows:

Group 1- the guy is leaving his girlfriend because he found a job abroad

Group 2- the girl discovered that her husband is cheating on her

Group 3- the girl is pregnant from the man, her boyfriend

Group 4- girl's father decided to marry his girl to a wealthy old man

Besides the girl and the guy in the caricature, other students can play the role of the imaginative father and mother for example.

After developing their scenario, each group acts out their situation and record it in a round 3 minute video.

Classmates can comment on their friends' videos using a rubric to develop their critical thinking skills.

Comments can include content, format, body language, sound effects, etc. . .

Groups can repeat their video recording to produce a better work before uploading the video on the school's or teacher's YouTube channel

Note: To challenge students who are proficient in the English language, ask them to act out the situation on the spot i.e. without preparation.

##### **Benefits**

This group activity promotes students' collaborative, communicative as well as acting skills. It also develops their writing and speaking abilities. Gifted learners in particular can use their imagination and creativity to develop the group scenario and design the background music and setting for their video.



### **Activity 3. Our Short Story on YouTube**

(Skills to develop: Writing and speaking for grades 7-12)

#### **Introduction**

The students in groups need to write a short story based on the cover page which is an abstract painting.

#### **Instructions**

Provide all students with the same abstract painting that you can choose from google clip arts. Ask them to use this abstract painting as the cover page of their short story. Groups of students can follow the writing process by filling the story map before writing their draft. After finishing their stories, peer correction can take place. Students can correct their peers' stories using a writing rubric and rate the novelty and creativity of the story.

#### **Act It Out on YouTube**

In groups, students can act out the story having the following characters: narrator, 2 or 3 characters. After recording their stories, the students' video is ready to be uploaded on the teacher's Youtube channel. These videos can be used as educational tools where students are going to develop comprehension questions for each video. Then, each group of students will be given the questions prepared by another group to respond to.

#### **Benefits**

This activity helps mainly gifted students develop their communication skills, creativity, and imagination. It can also promote their leadership skills by exhibiting advanced English proficiency and hence suggesting a well-structured story and comprehension questions.

### **Activity 4. GramVoc Challenge**

(Skills to develop: writing and speaking integrating grammar and vocabulary for grades 6-12)

#### **Introduction**

This is a challenging language activity that proficient students usually like. Students are supposed to develop a dialog or write a paragraph/essay while including the following: a grammar lesson, thematic vocabulary, various sentence structures (simple, compound, complex, and compound complex)

#### **Instructions**

Students in their groups can write a dialog about their chosen situation including:  
various past tenses

+ thematic vocabulary: plastic surgery, doll-like/look like, inner beauty, physical attraction, risks, self-confidence, sex appeal, identity

+ at least 3 simple sentences, 3 compound sentences, 3 complex sentences

The situations can be as follows:

Group 1: Talk about artists before and after plastic surgery

Group 2: Teenage girl trying to convince her parents of her decision to change her looks

Group 3: Girl met her dream man on facebook while hiding her real looks. Now it's time to meet her future husband & manage her lies

Group 4: Man takes his wife to the plastic surgeon because he wants her to look like a specific star

#### **Act it Out on YouTube**

Students can act out their situation while using correctly the past tenses and vocabulary words in context. They can also use pictures to make their scenes more interesting. Classmates can comment on their friends' scenes in order to improve the acting situation and develop their critical thinking skills. After filming the different situations, the videos are then uploaded on the school's or teacher's YouTube channel.



### Debate

The class can debate various controversial issues. It can be divided into proponents and opponents of plastic surgery. A gifted learner can take the role of the moderator and hence develop his/her leadership skills while communicating with the 2 opposing parties.

### Benefits

In general, group work helps gifted students develop their communication skills. In addition, the GramVoc Challenge can develop their English language proficiency while developing their leadership skills mainly in debates. They can also use their creativity and imagination to develop a script based on their given situation.

### CONCLUSION

Addressing the needs of gifted learners is a priority in nowadays education programs and training teachers to be well prepared to educate the gifted should be the concern of teacher preparation programs. Helping these kids develop their cognitive, linguistic, social, and problem solving skills would better prepare the leaders of tomorrow.

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