

How to Start a Professional Book Club on Gifted Education

1. Engage leadership team at school site regarding professional GATE book club
2. Decide on ground rules or norms
3. Establish a meeting format and create a schedule
4. Decide on discussion format (i.e. facilitated, etc.)
5. Analyze student data to determine areas of need – select literature that addresses identified need(s)
6. Survey staff for interests/ needs regarding participation and final selection of literature
7. Document hours on Professional Development Record with administrator’s approval (up to 8 hours a year)

Discussion Suggestions

- **Choose one pre-selected question** at a time and toss it out to the group
- **Select a number of questions**, write each on an index card, and pass them out; each member (or a team of 2 or 3) takes a card and answers the question
- **Pick out a specific passage** from the book: a description, idea, line of text; ask members to comment
- **Assign Roles and Responsibilities:** Example: model a Literature Circle: Connector, Discussion Director, Illustrator, Investigator, Luminator, Mark Those Words, Summarizer, Vocabulary Enricher, Wordsmith (roles change each meeting). For definitions see (p. 23) <http://tinyurl.com/pjkgaz5>
- **Avoid “like” or “dislike.”** Those terms aren’t very helpful for moving discussions forward and can make others feel defensive. Instead, talk about how you felt as you read the book and how it relates to your own experiences in the classroom.

Discussion Questions to Get You Started

- Does the book offer a central idea or premise? What are the problems or issues raised?
- Do the issues affect your professional life? How so?
- What evidence does the author give to support the book’s ideas? Does he/she use personal observations and assessments? Statistics? Opinions? Historical documents? Scientific research?
- Have you used any of the techniques outlined in the book in your own work? How successful were they?
- How can you apply the information offered in this book to your own work?
- Are the book’s issues controversial? How so? And who is aligned on which sides of the issues? Where do you fall in that line-up?

Helpful Tips for Your Professional Book Club

- **Members:** 8 to 16 members are best: enough for a discussion if several are absent, but not too many to make discussions unwieldy. Larger groups (such as an entire school’s faculty) can work if divided into smaller groups. Promote voluntary participation.
- **Materials:** Some book clubs read one book per semester, either meeting once to discuss the whole book or meeting several times throughout the semester to discuss the book section-by-section. Others are able to read several books a year and meet more frequently for discussions.
- **Meetings:** Lunchtime during school hours works well, as does setting aside time during scheduled professional development days. Schools have used a professional book club format during banked-time Tuesdays successfully in LAUSD. Faculty lounge or empty classrooms work well.
- **Selecting Books:** A designated leader may choose the books. All members make suggestions, followed by an open discussion and vote. Members take turns choosing. Use the attached professional resource suggestions for choosing books.

Suggested Literature on Gifted Education Appropriate for a Professional Book Club

- Borba, M. (2021). *Thrivers: The Surprising Reasons Some Kids Struggle and Others Shine*. Penguin.
- Castellano, J. & Frazier, A. (2011) *Special Populations in Gifted Education: Understanding Our Most Able Students From Diverse Backgrounds*. Waco, TX: Prufrock Press.
- Delisle, J. & Galbraith, J. (2002). *When Gifted Kids Don't Have All the Answers*. Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit Publishing.
- Ford, D. (2011). *Multicultural Gifted Education*. Waco, TX: Prufrock Press.
- Ford, D. (2013). *Recruiting and Retaining Culturally Different Students in Gifted Education*. Waco, TX: Prufrock Press.
- Ford, D. (1996). *Reversing Underachievement Among Gifted Black Students: Promising Practices and Programs*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Heacox, D. (2002). *Differentiating Instruction in the Regular Classroom*. Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit Publishing.
- Kaplan, S.N. (2022). *Differentiated Curriculum and Instruction for Advanced and Gifted Learners*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Kaye, C. B. (2004). *The Complete Guide to Service Learning: Proven Ways to Engage Students in Civil Responsibility, Academic Curriculum, and Social Action*. Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit.
- Kingore, B. (2004). *Differentiation: Simplified, Realistic, and Effective*. Austin, TX: Professional Associates Publishing.
- Muhammad, G. (2020). *Cultivating Genius: An Equity Framework for Culturally and Historically Responsive Literacy*. New York, NY. Scholastic.
- Smutny, J.F. & von Fremd, S.E. (2004). *Differentiating for the Young Child: Teaching Strategies Across the Content Areas (K-3)*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Strips, C. A. & Hirsch, G. (2000). *Helping Gifted Children Soar: A Practical Guide for Parents and Teachers*. Arizona: Gifted Psychology Press.
- Tomlinson, C.A. (2017). *How to Differentiate Instruction in Academically Diverse Classrooms*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD
- Tomlinson, C.A. (1999). *The Differentiated Classroom: Responding to the Needs of All Learners*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD
- Winebrenner, S. (2001). *Teaching Gifted Kids in the Regular Classroom: Strategies and Techniques Every Teacher Can Use to Meet the Academic Needs of the Gifted and Talented*. Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit Publishing.

Online Suggested Literature on Gifted Education Appropriate for a Professional Book Club

- **Davidson Institute** <https://www.sengifted.org/senglibrary>
- **Goodreads** <http://www.goodreads.com/shelf/show/gifted-education>
- **Hoagies' Gifted Education Page**
http://www.hoagiesgifted.org/gifted_books.htm
http://www.hoagiesgifted.org/professional_books.htm
- **National Association for Gifted Children** <http://www.nagc.org/resources-publications/resources-educators>
- **Social Emotional Needs of the Gifted (SENG)** <https://www.sengifted.org/senglibrary>

"How-To" Resources

- John, L. (2006). *Running Book Discussion Groups: A How-to-Do-It Manual*. New York: Neal-Schuman Publishers.
- Laskin, D. & Hughes, H. (1995). *The Reading Group Book: The Complete Guide to Starting and Sustaining a Reading Group*. New York: Plume.
- McMahon, S. & Raphael, T. (1997). *The Book Club Connection: Literacy, Learning and Classroom Talk*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Saal, R. (1995). *The New York Public Library Guide To Reading Groups*. New York: Crown Publishers.
- Sauer, P. (2000). *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Starting a Reading Group*. Indianapolis, IN: Alpha Books.
- Slezak, E. (2000). *The Book Group Book: a Thoughtful Guide to Forming and Enjoying a Stimulating Book Discussion Group*. 3rd ed. Chicago: Chicago Review Press.

Online Informational Resources

- **Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD)**
<http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/may00/vol57/num08/The-Teacher-Book-Club.aspx>
- **Ed Week** <https://www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/education-week-teacher-bookclub>
- **Education World** http://www.educationworld.com/a_admin/admin/admin599.shtml
- **Exploratory Study** <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ893563.pdf>
- **Good Reads** <http://www.goodreads.com/group/show/114-educator-book-club>
- **Jossey Bass** <http://josseybasseducation.com/uncahtegorized/extend-professional-development-by-engaging-in-book-clubs/>