

PLC/Book Study Guide for *Start Seeing and Serving Underserved Gifted Students*

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and Amy Graefe, Ph.D.**

This guide is designed as a professional development resource and can be used to facilitate a book study or as a learning experience for a professional learning community (PLC). Facilitator notes are provided for additional support and explanation in planning and facilitating your school or group's sessions. We recommend that the principal and/or facilitator read the entire guide and the book before beginning the study.

For each session, participants will be asked to read chapters of the book. They may also be asked to bring materials or create or implement something *prior* to attending a session. Each chapter description includes guiding questions and suggested tasks that can be used as group activities during the group session.

Please note that each session's preparation work is noted at the beginning of the session notes. Before you dismiss participants for each session, look ahead to the next session and review and clarify what must be done before the next meeting. Reach agreements if suggested tasks are going to be adjusted or modified.

Introduction and Chapter 1: See Me

Facilitator note: *It is important to make sure all participants feel safe discussing their experiences with the content in chapter 1. We suggest taking ten minutes to establish norms for the group in order to encourage respectful and supportive discourse. Additionally, the checklists at the end of each chapter are intended for personal self-reflection. Although it is important that each participant complete the checklist, we advise against making participants share their self-ratings unless they volunteer to do so.*

Participant Preparation

To be completed before the first session:

- Read the foreword, introduction, and chapter 1.
- Consider: What is your personal philosophy of teaching underserved gifted learners?
- Complete the “See Me” checklist at the end of chapter 1.

Activities and Discussion Questions

1. A definition of *underserved* is provided in the introduction and in chapter 1. Discuss how you feel about this definition. Would you add anything to it? Why or why not?
2. Would you like to share your personal connections to teaching underserved gifted learners and/or collaborating with their families?
3. What is your personal philosophy of teaching underserved gifted learners?

Facilitator note: *Participants should share only if they feel comfortable doing so. Please make sure they understand that it is okay if their teaching philosophies are still a work in progress. They will have the opportunity to revisit their philosophy in chapter 5.*

4. How is the term *equity* distinguished from the term *equality* in chapter 1, and why is it important to distinguish these terms, especially for our underserved gifted learners?

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5. Divide into groups of four (pairs are fine if there is a small number of participants). Each group will be responsible for rereading and answering the questions in chapter 1 specific to each underrepresented group: students from culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) backgrounds; English language learners (ELL students); learners who are economically disadvantaged; and twice-exceptional (2e) learners (students who are both gifted and have one or more special needs).

Facilitator note: *Each group or pair should share a brief overview of its assigned underrepresented group and its responses to at least two of the self-reflection questions at the end of the section. This is also a great opportunity to ask other participants to discuss the self-reflection questions in chapter 1 specific to each underrepresented group.*

6. Review the identification issues and best practices in the “Toolkit Strategy: Identification Plan Investigation” (pages 20–21). Complete the “Best Practices in Identification Checklist” (pages 29–30) and share your findings with the group. If all the participants work at the same school and/or in the same district, they could complete this activity in pairs or in small groups.

Facilitator note: *The checklist asks participants to describe both “strengths” and “areas for improvement.” Participants may feel frustrated by current identification practices at their schools and/or district. Please validate their concerns, while encouraging them to see strengths and ways that they can positively influence current policies and practices.*

7. Discuss the information concerning implicit and explicit bias in the chapter. Complete one of the implicit bias toolkit strategies (pages 23–25) for homework.
8. Would you like to discuss and share your self-ratings for the “See Me” checklist at the end of chapter 1?

Chapter 2: Understand Me

Participant Preparation

To be completed before the second session:

- Read chapter 2.
- Complete and reflect on one of the implicit bias toolkit strategies in chapter 1. (Please feel free to complete more than one!)
- Complete the “Understand Me” checklist at the end of chapter 2.

Facilitator note: Remember, the checklist at the end of each chapter is intended for personal self-reflection. Although it is important that each participant complete the checklist, we advise against making participants share their self-ratings unless they volunteer to do so. Additionally, please ask for participant volunteers to share their experience completing one of the implicit bias toolkit strategies.

Activities and Discussion Questions

1. What were your takeaways from completing one of the implicit bias toolkit strategies from chapter 1?

Facilitator note: Participants may write a short reflection to this question prior to discussion. You may choose to have pairs or small groups discuss their takeaways rather than doing so in the large group.

2. How do you personally envision a culturally responsive classroom?
3. What strategies do you use to cultivate meaningful connections with your students? Why is establishing meaningful connections especially important for your underserved gifted learners?
4. In small groups, discuss how teachers can use one or more of the toolkit strategies in chapter 2 for making positive connections with underserved gifted learners.

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5. Consider what it means to convey high expectations for students and why that is important. How might educators inadvertently convey low expectations for their underserved students?
 6. Discuss why creating a safe climate is important for underserved gifted learners. Complete the “Safe Climate Checklist” (pages 54–55) for the next meeting.

Facilitator note: *This may be a good time to revisit the issues of underrepresentation and retention of students from underrepresented groups in gifted programming.*

7. In pairs or as a whole group, brainstorm specific ideas for implementing (or more purposefully implementing) several of the “Tips to Promote Meaningful Engagement” (pages 42–43).
8. Complete the “UDL Strategies Checklist” on pages 60–61. In pairs or small groups, discuss what areas you are doing well in and one or two areas that you’d like to work on in the upcoming weeks.
9. Would you like to discuss and share your self-ratings for the “Understand Me” checklist at the end of chapter 2?

Chapter 3:

Teach Me

Participant Preparation

To be completed before the third session:

- Read chapter 3.
- Complete and reflect on the “Safe Climate Checklist” from chapter 2.
- Complete the “Teach Me” checklist at the end of chapter 3.

Facilitator note: Remember, the checklist at the end of each chapter is intended for personal self-reflection. Although it is important that each participant complete the checklist, we advise against making participants share their self-ratings unless they volunteer to do so.

Activities and Discussion Questions

1. What were your takeaways from completing the “Safe Climate Checklist” (pages 54–55)? In what areas are you doing well and in what areas is there room for growth this year?

Facilitator note: Participants may write a short reflection to this question prior to discussion. You may choose to have pairs and small groups discuss their takeaways rather than doing so in the large group.

2. Talk about ways you already connect learning to your students’ lives. How could you more purposefully use service learning or problem-based learning to help your underserved gifted learners make meaningful connections to their futures?
3. Discuss Dr. Banks’s four approaches to multicultural education (Contributions, Additive, Transformative, Decision-Making and Social Action). How do you currently embed Dr. Banks’s four approaches to multicultural education in your instructional practices? Brainstorm ideas for utilizing the Transformative and Decision-Making and Social Action approaches in your classrooms to empower your underserved gifted learners.

Facilitator note: *Too often, teachers utilize only the Contributions and Additive approaches in their classrooms. Consider labeling four pieces of poster paper with each approach and having teachers write down what they already do that fits under each approach and what they can do in the future to ensure they are going beyond the Contributions and Additive approaches.*

4. How is flexible grouping implemented in your school, grade level, and/or classroom? Discuss specific grouping strategies described in chapter 3. How can these current grouping practices be improved to better meet the needs of your underserved gifted learners?
5. How do you respectfully differentiate for your underserved gifted learners, in particular? Select one toolkit strategy from the “Respectfully Differentiate for Your Students” section (pages 79–86) in chapter 3 to implement for a current or future lesson and bring the lesson to the next meeting.
6. Discuss ways in which you already engage your students in higher-level thinking. Using the information in this section of the chapter, how can you improve your current practices in this area?
7. Would you like to discuss and share your self-ratings for the “Teach Me” checklist at the end of chapter 3?

Chapter 4: Challenge Me

Participant Preparation

To be completed before the fourth session:

- Read chapter 4.
- Select one toolkit strategy from the “Respectfully Differentiate for Your Students” section in chapter 3 to implement for a current or future lesson. Bring your lesson to share with other participants.
- Complete the “Challenge Me” checklist at the end of chapter 4.

Facilitator note: Remember, the checklist at the end of each chapter is intended for personal self-reflection. Although it is important that each participant complete the checklist, we advise against making participants share their self-ratings unless they volunteer to do so.

Activities and Discussion Questions

1. In pairs or small groups, share the lesson plans you wrote incorporating one of the “Respectfully Differentiate for Your Students” toolkit strategies. How can this type of lesson empower your underserved gifted students to learn in your classroom?
2. As opposed to just adding challenge to lessons, chapter 4 recommends adding challenge *thoughtfully*. Discuss why the latter is particularly important for underserved gifted learners.
3. How could you embed one or more of the “Supply the Support Necessary for Success” toolkit strategies (pages 107–108) into your current instructional practices?
4. Divide into four small groups (pairs are fine if there is a small number of participants) for the remaining four strategies in the chapter (1. Provide opportunities for mentorships; 2. Identify possibilities for independent investigations; 3. Recognize when acceleration is vital; and 4. Embed curriculum compacting into units). Each group should reread the

information in its assigned section and create a poster that explains the following: the overall strategy; how it can be used to support underserved gifted learners; potential obstacles to implementation; and ideas for how this strategy (participants may also choose to reference specific toolkit strategies) can be feasibly implemented at the classroom, school, and/or district levels.

Facilitator note: *You may choose to have groups hang their posters on the wall for a “gallery walk” in which participants can walk around, review the posters’ information, and use sticky notes to add ideas to each poster. At the end of the gallery walk activity, all participants should debrief the four strategies together.*

5. Would you like to discuss and share your self-ratings for the “Challenge Me” checklist at the end of chapter 4?

Chapter 5:

Advocate for Me

Participant Preparation

To be completed before the fifth session:

- Read chapter 5.
- Please respond to the three questions that frame chapter 5:
 1. Which strategies in this book are most practical for you and have the greatest potential to help your students?
 2. How will you adjust your current teaching practices based on the new knowledge you've acquired?
 3. How will you educate others about the needs of underserved gifted learners?
- Revisit, reflect on, edit, and add to the personal philosophy of teaching underserved gifted students that you wrote for the first session.
- Complete the “Advocate for Me” checklist at the end of chapter 5.
- Bring all your completed end-of-chapter checklists.

Facilitator note: Remember, the checklist at the end of each chapter is intended for personal self-reflection. Although it is important that each participant complete the checklist, we advise against making participants share their self-ratings unless they volunteer to do so.

Activities and Discussion Questions

1. What does advocacy mean to you? What characteristics do you associate with being an advocate?

Facilitator note: On a piece of poster paper, take notes on characteristics that the participants share. Continue to add to this list throughout the session.

2. In pairs or small groups, reflect on how you have advocated for underserved gifted learners in the past, how you advocate for them presently, and how you hope to advocate for them in the future.

Facilitator note: Ask a volunteer in each group to take notes to facilitate easier sharing of ideas and experiences with the entire group.

3. Using the end-of-chapter checklists, complete the “Advocacy Focus Finder” (page 164) and write a SMART goal for one focus area.
4. Review the toolkit strategies in “Advocating Beyond Your Classroom” (pages 153–159). Which would you feel most comfortable using to advocate for your underserved gifted learners in the future?
5. Complete the “Action Planning Template” (pages 169–170) for one advocacy focus area.

Facilitator note: Consider having participants pair up to support each other and provide feedback on each other’s goals and action plans. Leave time for sharing as a whole group. Please note that you should try not to rush the activities in this session. To give participants ample time to process and plan, you may choose to assign some of these tasks prior to the meeting or to have more than one meeting for chapter 5.

6. Review and update your ratings for the “Advocate for Me” checklist at the end of chapter 5.
7. Would you like to share any updates to the personal philosophy of teaching underserved gifted learners that you wrote for the first session?

About the Authors



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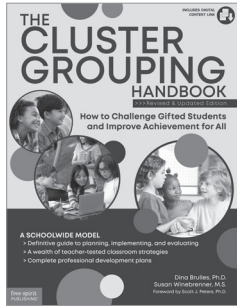


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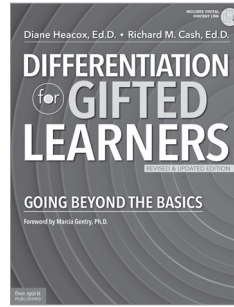
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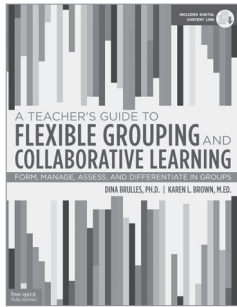
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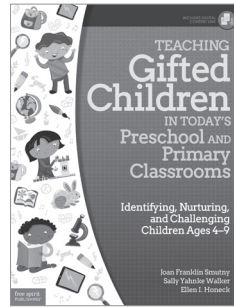
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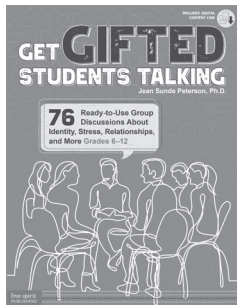
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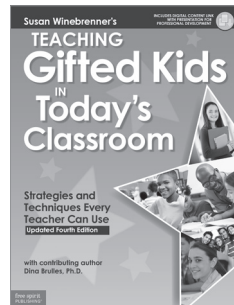
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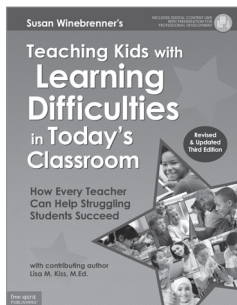
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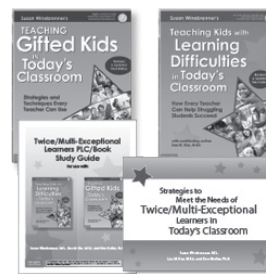
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