

THE EFFECTS OF COUNSELING ON SELF AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT TO ENHANCE STUDENTS' AWARENESS OF THEIR PERSONAL AND STUDY PROBLEMS

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ABSTRACT

Gifted students may have insufficient insight of their lack of problem-solving skills in various areas. Other than those arising from unsuitable teaching methods, mastery of academic content, and incompatibility between academic content and evaluation, a preliminary survey on students in 10th and 12th grade of an acceleration programme for gifted students revealed that many of them have self-regulated learning and personal problems. Most of the problems related to self-regulation are concerned with time management and motivation.. Those students with personal problems experience difficulty with stress management, emotional control, impulse control (lack of discipline), boredom, tedious life, loneliness, etc. The three most prevalent personal problems in rank order are – (i), emotional control, (ii) impulse control (lack of discipline), and (iii) boredom. For the 12th graders, they also face difficulty in choosing the right career suited to their ability and interests. In response to the survey findings, self counseling and career development programmes have been designed to improve students' insight and problem solving skills in these areas. The paper reports on the preliminary survey, the design of the counselling and its effects on students' problem solving. It also discusses some barriers and alternative suggestions for future intervention.

BACKGROUND

Educating gifted students has mostly focused on meeting their learning needs. Nowadays, there is a growing trend to put emphasis on fulfilling gifted students psychological needs since they are no longer viewed as only having extraordinary learning capacity but also as an individual with complex personalities, high sensitivities and vulnerabilities. As noted by Semiawan (1997), development of the social-emotional aspects of giftedness often plays second fiddle to academic concerns with greater emphasis on the intellectual and academic areas. In school environment, the same phenomenon is also observed. However, in the area of counselling or psychotherapy, most practitioners dealing with gifted children may be ignorant of the unique characteristics of their giftedness (Lovecky, 1993). It is still assumed by most counselling practitioners that gifted individuals have no special needs. Piechowski (1997) suggests that gifted young people have particular issues in psychosocial development. Lovecky (1993) adds that for many gifted children, social and emotional concerns and problems associated with psychosocial development are often misunderstood by the adults in their lives. Even counselling practitioners working with gifted children may not really understand what could be wrong with them.

One aspect related to emotional development, as revealed by Cohen and Frydenberg (1993), is whether gifted children should be labelled as 'gifted'. The effects of labelling are uncertain. Many children were found to be ambivalent about the label and some found the label disabling – affecting relationship with others. This notion is supported by the preliminary survey findings of 61 high school students (10th and 12th grade) who attended the acceleration programme for gifted students. Some students said that the students from regular class are reluctant to join them in the same activities since gifted students are perceived negatively (e.g. conceited or arrogant).

Cohen & Frydenberg (1993) explained that gifted children are often highly sensitive, perfectionistic and intense. In some cases, these aspects can also lead to difficulties with their self concept as well as conflict with the environment. Other problems with which gifted young people may have to cope include multipotentiality, alienation, non-success, emotional overcontrol, boredom, perfectionism, problems relating to self concept and underachievement (Cohen & Frydenberg, 1993, ;Semiawan, 1997, Indonesian Department of Education, 2007). Delisle (1997) said that when one is identified as gifted, many exceptional labels may be attached to this student. Gifted students are often considered 'underachievers' because they did not meet the high standards expected by teachers or parents.

For the 12th graders that are going onto university, they may face the problem of indecision. Crites (1969, in Zunker, 1990) suggested that about 30% of students in high school and college are undecided about a career. Moreover, Prediger & Swayer (1985, in Zunker, 1990) revealed that 71% of high school students in grades 8, 10 and 12 continued to express a need for help with career planning.

Emmett and Minor (1993, in Perrone, 1997) summarized that the major career decision problems facing gifted adolescents include wanting to delay career decision as long as possible, frequently changing their major, feeling 'stuck' in a field of career choice because of the expectations of parents, and having made an impetuous choice from limited number of career options. Eales (1996) stated that career choices are often very difficult for the multitalented/gifted. They undergo the usual assessments and inventories and are told they can do anything they like. However, this kind of advice is unhelpful for them. Given the multipotentiality of the gifted students, it seems that they have too many choices. They will just choose something in an arbitrary fashion just to get rid of the dilemma without giving enough thought to whether it is the right career choice for them, including considering it from the angle of appropriateness to their personality and emotions. Perrone (1997) added that the

gifted students' characteristics of multipotentiality, greater ego involvement in work, high career expectations, and perfectionist tendencies would differentiate their needs in career guidance from students in regular classroom.

Clement (1977, in Zunker, 1990) explains that students in grade 10-12 are in Career Preparation Stage, with characteristics such as having knowledge for entry into occupation, ethical work habits, and understanding of the social and psychological factors connected with work, exploration of contingencies to occupational preferences, etc.

A preliminary survey was done in two high schools with acceleration programmes / classes for gifted students. The survey revealed that the main problems of these students were both in academic and social-emotional areas. The rankings of problems related to the learning materials and teaching methods were (i) unsuitable teaching methods for their learning needs (inflexible teaching methods, less emphasis on students' freedom of thinking), (ii) boring teaching methods, and (iii) incompatibility between academic content and evaluation. For the problem related to independent study or self regulated learning, the rankings were as follows (i) time management and motivational problems, and (ii) difficulties in mastering of academic content on their own. Meanwhile, the students also have personal problems, such as stress management, emotional control, impulse control (lack of discipline), boredom, tedious life, loneliness, lack of socialization skills, etc. The highest orders of the personal problems included emotional control, impulse control (lack of discipline), boredom and stress management. For the 12th graders, they also face difficulty in choosing the right career suited to their abilities and interests. The academic, social-emotional and career planning problems that the students face, were in accordance with what has been stated in the previous paragraphs.

The acceleration model in Indonesia is still limited to the telescoping curriculum (Hawadi, 2004), i.e. finishing the study in less time than usual. Hultgren (1989 in O'Reilly, 2006) listed

the disadvantages of acceleration such as the fear of social isolation from peer group, intensified pressure to mature faster than peers, and a risk that these students will finish the existing curriculum in an injudicious manner. In relation to Hultgren's explanation, Southern & Jones (1991, in Hawadi 2004) also noticed that the weakness of acceleration on student's social adaptation and emotional adjustment is that they may have less time participating in social activities which is important for them. More than half of the students in the survey said that there was less time to do things outside of academic matters since they were too focused in academic performance. Lack of means and opportunity were also pointed out as the sources of the problem with social adjustment. Strop (1985, in O'Reilly, 2006) and Ross & Parker (1980, in O'Reilly, 2006) mentioned that academically talented students usually feel competent in academic areas, but much less so in social areas. Southern & Jones also stated that gifted students may feel frustrated with the tension and demands that they get. Therefore, they may feel exhausted, with decreasing appreciation levels and thereby becoming underachievers.

According to the Department of Education (2007), counselling for gifted students should help them in the areas of problems in study and personalities that hinders the actualisation of their potential, motivational problems, study effectiveness, identification of social-emotional problems and the appropriate problem-solving strategies, and parental counselling, if needed. Meanwhile, in practice, information from the two high schools in the preliminary survey, the acceleration program coordinator, teacher counsellor and classroom teacher respectively stated that there is no special counselling program for the gifted students. The guidance and counselling program is the same for both students in the acceleration and the regular program, even though the gifted may have different needs. Berger (1989, in Delisle, 1997) observed that career guidance for multi-potential students in high schools is not common.

Given the importance of a counselling program to help gifted students understand their unique characteristics, their strengths and weaknesses and develop coping skills, a counseling session with specific purposes to fulfill the students' needs could be given to assist students.

METHODS

The target of the counselling program was the gifted students in the acceleration programme in two high schools in East Java, Indonesia. The counselling was done in a two-hour session for each student. There were 31 students of 10th grade who participated in the counselling and 30 students from the 12th grade. Several areas were discussed in the counselling process, i.e.:

- a. For 10th grade students: their strengths and weaknesses, problems (academic and personal/social-emotional) and the prioritizing of problems to be solved, soft skills for solving problems and action plan. The Parnes' creative problem solving model in helping students to exercise solving academic planning problems are as follows (Van Tassel-Baska, 1993): problem finding, solution finding, and plan of action.
- b. For 12th grade students: their strengths and weaknesses, problems (academic, personal/social-emotional, and especially in major vocational choices) and the prioritizing of problems to be solved, soft skills needed to adapt in higher education learning and in the field of career choice, and action plan. Gribbons and Lohnes (in Zunker, 1990) provided some guidelines for career guidance programmes in senior high schools:
 1. awareness of curriculum choices in terms of abilities, interests and values
 2. awareness of occupational choices in terms of abilities, interests and values and requirements
 3. awareness of personal strengths and weaknesses relating to educational and occupational requirements

4. accuracy and evidence of self rating in terms of relevant abilities for educational and occupational requirements
5. accurate description of occupation
6. Willingness of individuals to take responsibility for their choices.

The purpose of the counselling for grade 10th is to enhance self development as accelerated students. According to Van Tassel-Baska & Baska (1993), the special affective needs of gifted individuals may include: (i) an understanding characteristics of giftedness (the difference from peers), (ii) developing an understanding of one's strengths and weaknesses, and (iii) developing (soft) skills in areas that will cultivate the cognitive and affective development.

As for 12th grade, it will be to assist them in developing career choice (by first, choosing the suitable academic field in university) with regard to their potential, strengths and weaknesses. According to Havighurst, one key developmental task of 12-18 years old adolescents (in Zunker, 1990) is the preparation for a career.

At the end of the counselling session, they were asked to fill in a self report of their strengths and weaknesses, problems (academic, personal/social-emotional, and major vocational choices/choices in academic field in university, for 12th grade) and the priority of the problems to be solved, soft skills to solve the problems and action plan. There are two copies, one copy for the researcher and one copy for the students as a reminder of what they should do after the counselling.

A month after the counselling, a focus group discussion was done to monitor its progress. The discussion focuses on the effect of the counselling as perceived by the students, the progress of the action plan and the obstacles in accomplishing it.

RESULTS

The data from students' self report were as follows:

- a. Understanding strengths and weaknesses

Most of the students felt that they have strengths in intellectual, academic and social-emotional characteristics, except for the 10th grade students in school A. The examples of intellectual characteristics were: critical thinking, creative, grasping material easily, etc. Academic characteristics were: memorization strategy, good study habits, time management, high learning interest, etc. As for social-emotional characteristics, examples were: good communication, ease in socialization, self control, stress management, good in presentation, debate, empathy, etc. The result is described in table 1.

Table 1. The perceived Strengths of the student after counselling

Area of Perceived Strengths	10 th grade School "A"		10 th grade School "B"		12 th grade School "A"		12 th grade School "B"	
	f	%	F	%	f	%	f	%
Intellectual characteristics	6	35.3%	13	38.2%	4	30.8%	14	36.8%
Academic characteristics	2	11.8%	9	26.5%	4	30.8%	14	36.8%
Social-emotional characteristics	9	52.9%	10	29.4%	5	38.5%	10	26.3%
Incorrect response	0	0	2	5.9%	0	0	0	0
Total	17	100%	34	100%	13	100%	38	100%

f : number of responses, since they are allowed to fill more than one response

% : percentage was counted based on the number of students

On the other hand, for weaknesses, most of the students said that they had weaknesses in the social-emotional and academic areas. It is probable that these students felt that

they were intellectually able students, so this characteristic was the least chosen, except for students of 10th grade School A. The result is in table 2.

Table 2. The perceived weaknesses of the students after having counselling

Area of Perceived Weaknesses	10 th grade School "A"		10 th grade School "B"		12 th grade School "A"		12 th grade School "B"	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Intellectual characteristics	10	32.3%	2	7.1%	2	13.3%	2	5.2%
Academic characteristics	10	32.3%	11	39.3%	6	40%	18	46.2%
Social-emotional characteristics	11	35.5%	14	50%	7	46.7%	19	48.7%
Incorrect response	0	0	1	3.6%	0	0	0	0
Total	31	100%	28	100%	15	100%	39	100%

f : number of responses, since they are allowed to fill more than one response

% : percentage was counted based on the number of students

b. The lack of soft skills required in solving problems

The students answered that they lack academic skills such as time management, self-discipline, concentration, study skills, and intrinsic motivation, mostly for students in 10th grade. It is probably because they are still adapting to the demands of acceleration programme, while the 12th graders' needs were more varied. The skills needed to solve social emotional problems were communication, socialization, stress management and emotional control skills.

Table 3. The lack of soft skills required in solving problems

Soft skills	10 th grade		10 th grade		12 th grade		12 th grade	
	School "A"		School "B"		School "A"		School "B"	
	f	%	F	%	f	%	f	%
Time management	3	17.6%	10	32.3%	0	0	6	11.5%
Self-discipline/volition	1	5.9%	6	19.4%	2	11.1%	5	9.6%
Concentration	4	23.5%	0	0	1	5.6%	1	1.9%
Accuracy	0	0	0	0	1	5.6%	5	9.6%
Study Skills (reading, note taking, memorizing)	1	5.9%	1	3.2%	4	22.2%	7	13.5%
Intrinsic motivation	2	11.8%	2	6.5%	1	5.6%	4	7.7%
Communication (presentation, debate, persuasion)	0	0	0	0	3	16.7%	5	9.6%
Skills in Socializing	2	11.8%	8	25.8%	3	16.7%	8	15.4%
Stress management	1	5.9%	2	6.5%	0	0	3	5.8%
Controlling emotions	1	5.9%	2	6.5%	0	0	4	7.7%
Decision making	2	11.8%	0	0	3	16.7%	4	7.7%
Total	17	100%	31	100%	18	100%	52	100%

f : number of responses, since they are allowed to fill more than one response

% : percentage was counted based on the number of students

c. Prioritising problems

Students' ability to prioritise problems could be seen from their ability to identify what kinds of problems they faced and putting priority on the problem to be solved.

Table 4 showed that more than 50% were able to both identify and prioritise problems.

Table 4. The Ability to prioritize problems after having counselling

Ability to prioritize problems		10 th grade School "A"		10 th grade School "B"		12 th grade School "A"		12 th grade School "B"	
		f	%	F	%	f	%	f	%
Identify problems	Able	11	100%	18	90%	8	100%	21	95.5%
	Unable	0	0	2	10%	0	0%	1	4.5%
<i>Total</i>		<i>11</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>100%</i>
Prioritise problems to be solved	Able	11	100%	18	90%	5	62.5%	18	81.8%
	Unable	0	0	2	10%	3	37.5%	4	18.2%
<i>Total</i>		<i>11</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>100%</i>

f : number of students

% : percentage was counted based on the number of students

d. Ability to decide the major vocational choices for 12th grade students

More than half of the students felt certainty in deciding their major career decision by choosing the academic field in university, as revealed in table 5.

Table 5. The Ability to decide the major vocational choices for 12th grade students

Ability to decide the major vocational choices	12 th grade School “A”		12 th grade School “B”	
	f	%	f	%
Able	6	75%	19	86.4%
Unable	2	25%	3	13.6%
Total	8	100%	22	100%

f : number of students

% : percentage was counted based on the number of students

e. Action plan

In planning the action, the students were asked to identify the goal and steps that should be taken to solve the problems, and break them down into operational manner with consideration of SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, time-limit). Most of the students were able to identify the goal and the steps/procedure to solve their problems after prioritising them. However, they struggled to set performance indicators with which to evaluate success of the action taken, as revealed in table 6.

Table 6: Ability to make action plan

Ability to make action plan		10 th grade		10 th grade		12 th grade		12 th grade	
		School "A"		School "B"		School "A"		School "B"	
		f	%	f	%	F	%	f	%
Goal identification	Able	11	100%	17	85%	8	100%	19	86.4%
	Unable	0	0%	3	15%	0	0	3	23.6%
<i>Total</i>		<i>11</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>100%</i>
Steps / procedures identification	Able	10	90.9%	10	50%	7	87.5%	12	54.5%
	Unable	1	9.1%	10	50%	1	22.5%	10	45.4%
<i>Total</i>		<i>11</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>100%</i>
SMART consideration	Able	2	18.2%	0	0	0	0	4	18.2%
	Unable	9	81.8%	20	100%	8	100%	18	81.8%
<i>Total</i>		<i>11</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>100%</i>
Operational indicator	Able	1	9%	0	0	0	0	3	13.6%
	Unable	10	90%	20	100%	8	100%	19	86.4%
<i>Total</i>		<i>11</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>100%</i>

f : number of students

% : percentage was counted based on the number of students

DISCUSSION

From the above results, after the counselling, the students showed that they were more knowledgeable of their strengths and weaknesses, more able to identify their problem and prioritise the problems to be solved, as well as identifying the goal and steps that should be taken to achieve it. The 12th grade students were more certain of their choice of academic

field in university after the counselling. Nevertheless, from the monitoring discussion, they revealed that they had an unclear vision of the steps needed for career success. It seems that the counselling process only provided an orientation toward vocational choice and how to obtain the appropriate information for the career choice. It is still far away from what Super states as “wisdom of vocational preferences”. Super (in Zunker, 1990) identified six dimensions of career maturity concept that he thought were relevant for adolescents, i.e.:

1. Orientation to vocational choice (an attitudinal dimension determining if the individual is concerned with the eventual vocational choice to be made)
2. Information and planning: a competence dimension concerning specificity of information individuals have concerning future career decision and past planning accomplished
3. Consistency of vocational preferences: individual consistency of preferences
4. Crystallization of traits: individual progress toward forming a self concept
5. Vocational independence: independence of work experience
6. Wisdom of vocational preferences: dimension concerned with individual’s ability to make realistic preferences consistent with personal tasks

Meanwhile, the results suggested that students still faced difficulties in creating the key performance indicators to evaluate the success of the action taken. These findings are also supported by the result from focus group discussions.. These students pointed out that they needed guidance periodically to help them overcome the dilemma and build independent skills to solve the problem.

Gifted students may have problems at school with boredom, quantity of work, inappropriate pedagogy, parent or teacher expectations and personal high standards. These complications will heighten the emotional stress of gifted students. Stress is often caused by an inequality between expectation of parent, teacher or themselves and what the students can do (Cohen

and Frydenberg, 1993). Therefore, they need someone who is able to help them discuss the difficulty. However, school counsellors, teachers, and parents are often busy or moreover, unskilled to counsel gifted students (Van Tassel Baska, 1993). It is actually unnecessary to find professional counsellor to do the counselling for gifted children, if finance is limited. Silverman (1993b) said that gifted individuals prefer a good listener who can guide them through the problem solving process compared to being given the solution, since they are capable of high-level problem solving. She, then suggested that the teacher/counsellor without a broad training, should first, invite them to share feelings, perform active listening, paraphrasing what the counsellor hears, support feelings without taking sides on the issue, help the students to clarify the problem, help them to analyse and prioritise problems, as well as to help these students to explore the options/ problem solving alternatives.

The result from the focus group discussions also revealed that even though there was a school counsellor for the students to talk to, some of them were reluctant to use this service. The reasons were that they were worried that the information given to the counsellor would be conveyed to other teachers and the unease with the counsellor. It is emphasised by Mendaglio (1997) that confidentiality is an important consideration in the counselling process. The counsellor should keep the information that is given by clients. Meanwhile, teachers or other school personnel may need information that is revealed during counselling process. In this matter, the students must be convinced that the information would not be given without their permission.

Table 3 indicate that the students require soft skills in academic and social-emotional area. The most required soft skills in academic area were time management skills, including how to discipline themselves and keep up their volition. Study skills such as reading, note-taking and memorization skills were also needed. It seems that there is a relationship between learning strategy and the teaching methods. Data from interview with classroom teacher showed that

the commonly used teaching method was lecturing. It was preferred because of the load of learning materials that should be given to students. Facing such a demand, students have to find appropriate learning strategies, especially the memorization strategy, since the competence learning standards required them to memorize and comprehend the content.

From the data of the group discussions, students generally said that this kind of learning situation bored them, made them feel unchallenged, and they feel unmotivated to learn. Semiawan (1997) explained gifted students may not feel challenged in school since the task load is easy for them. They need the essential task to challenge their level of thinking. With regards to the feeling of being unmotivated, Seeley (1993) explained that it is the inner conflict in students' goals which affects interest level (Seeley, 1993). This might correspond with statements from Csikszentmihalyi and Larsen (1984, in Seeley, 1997):

When external goals are imposed by adults, adolescents become disinterested and have a hard time investing psychic energy in their pursuits.

Teachers, as excerpted from students' statement in FGD, often believe that motivation is an inherent characteristic of the students. When it happens, then underachievement is explained naively as 'lack of motivation' and the understated message is that the student is the one who is responsible for it (Seeley, 1997). The discussion with students revealed that teachers sometimes put the label on them, such as "gifted students know it all", so they should have the ability to easily grasp the material being explained by teachers, compared to the students in regular classes. According to the students, this way of teaching would not motivate them because it seemed that the teacher did not appreciate their learning progress. Pomerantz & Pomerantz (2002) explained that teachers may support the students by encouraging progress, rather than solely emphasising on the result/performance.

Consequently, teachers who teach gifted students should be able to accommodate students' learning needs. According to the teachers of gifted students, Starko and Schack (1989 in Feldhusen, 1997) noted that the strongest perceived needs of the students were e.g.: removal

of earlier learned materials, higher level thinking skills, and opportunities for independent study.

Soft skills needed in area of social-emotional problems (Table 3) were skills (and opportunities) for socialising with peers other than friends in acceleration program. An outbound training as another part of the intervention program should be extended to also provide them an opportunity to practise interpersonal skills.

CONCLUSION

Most of the students said that the counselling process helped them to understand more about their strengths and weaknesses, the priority of the problem to be solved and the soft skills needed for it. For the 12th grade students, 83% of them felt that the counselling helped them to be sure of the academic field to select in university which will lead to their occupational choices.

However, most of the students (both 10th and 12th grade) still struggle in planning the operational steps to achieve the solution for their problems according to the requirement of it being specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and having time-limit. Judging the successful criteria by deciding on the appropriate key performance indicators of action being taken is somehow still difficult for them. It seems that further and intensive guidance is needed in this matter.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Regarding the discussion above, further suggestions are offered:

- a. The counselling program should be done regularly, and should focus on helping the students to develop the operational steps to solve problems. According to Silverman (1993a), in exploring unresolved conflict, the therapist can help the client who is a gifted individual come to terms with his or her differences, to help the individual

realise that sometimes their potential may cause them to struggle to optimise the potential, engaging the individual in a dialogue to sharpen his/her personal beliefs and values, helping them to focus their energies in reaching aspirations, up to monitoring progress. For the 12th grade students, since the dilemma of deciding their future careers might be rooted in their multi potentiality, it should be considered also in the counselling process. Mitchell's study (1977) according to Zunker (1990) imply suggestion for career guidance program in senior high schools, i.e.:

- i. the guidance must provide programmes designed to meet various needs of students according to the stages of career development
 - ii. The exploratory stage (ages 15-24) as defined by Super (in Zunker, 1990) is the time when career choices are narrowed but not finalised, and a time of readiness to involve oneself in processing choices. It is important to analyse their own characteristics in terms of career decisions
 - iii. Information, modules and activities being provided to match occupations with their characteristics and skills
 - iv. They should understand the relationship of career choices and educational requirements.
- b. The school counsellors need to be equipped with the appropriate counselling technique for dealing with gifted students. Silverman (1993b) said that gifted individuals prefer a good listener who can guide them through problem solving process compared to being given the solution, since they are capable of high-level problem solving. Therefore, the suggestions for the teacher/counsellor without a broad training, should first, invite the students to share feelings, perform active listening, paraphrasing what the counsellor hears, support feelings without taking sides on the issue, help the students to clarify

the problem, help them to analyse and prioritise problems, help the students to explore the options/ problem solving alternatives.

- c. Outbound training emphasising personal development can be included as an alternative way to develop students' personal (social-emotional and academic) skills for optimising their potential.
- d. Since academic problems faced by the students are commonly related to the teaching process, it is suggested that teachers use methods that can challenge higher level of thinking so that the students will not get bored. Pomerantz & Pomerantz (2002) explained that teachers may encourage or discourage gifted students' progress at school. Teachers may encourage progress by asking good questions rather than emphasising on the product/result only, stimulating interest, making lessons fun, being warm, acknowledging talent and making the tasks exciting. Meanwhile, students might be discouraged by teachers who use unnecessary repetition, are boring, are overly directive, overemphasize sense of their own status, etc. Curriculum differentiation may be applied to challenge students' level of learning.

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