

GATE SYMPOSIUM: SUPPORTING YOUR STUDENTS' CREATIVITY

DEFINITELY DO...

- Do partner up with your school's fine arts teacher and **collaborate as co-mentors** for students who have large art projects or ideas.
- Do **set a budget** for providing students with paint, brushes, oil pastels, and other art materials.
- Do encourage students to think **outside the box**. Their trifold posters do not have to be two-dimensional or limited to the space on one poster. Students can create installation pieces, sculptures, interactive artwork, or even experiences for their presentations.
- Do provide students with recycled materials like cardboard boxes, old newspapers or magazines, and other "free" supplies that they can **repurpose in creative ways**.
- Do **inspire students** by exposing them to various art forms and genres (from traditional art to performance art) through lessons on art history and symbolism in art. There are many art history lessons already available on YouTube or through Khan Academy. Students can also access all of the world's museums online.
- Do encourage students to utilize as much of their poster as possible. The poster should not only communicate the content (their data and findings), but their posters should also act as a canvas on which they can **express their message** through imagery, color, and symbolism.
- Provide a **creative space** for your students that fosters creativity. This can be achieved by pushing desks or tables to the perimeter of the room and lining the floors with plastic table cloth. By setting aside a time and space for creativity, students will recognize that the **presentation and marketing** of their ideas is just as important as the content. Oftentimes, with GATE students, the research aspect may never end because students will continuously search for yet another article to cite and incorporate in their research. Be strict with your timeline and make sure students put in just as much effort into the artistic aspect of their projects as they do on their research.

PLEASE DON'T...

- Do not allow students to use **pre-fabricated materials**, such as bulletin borders, letter cut-outs, or cute decals that can be found at a crafts store. The point of this project is for students to truly create and not use something that has already been created by someone else. This will ensure that each poster will be very unique, and you will not get a serialized collection of identical posters.
- Do not allow students to **superficially use decorative elements** for the sake of decoration. Remind students that every detail of their posters must be relevant to their content. For example, colors, patterns, and shapes should symbolize aspects of their research. Students should be able to justify every artistic decision when they present their posters.
- Do not **over-help your students** during the artistic process. You should certainly allow students to ask for some help with the process of figuring out how to make their ideas into a reality, but try not to be hands-on. Strongly discourage students from getting their parents to do their projects for them, unless it is dangerous (i.e. sawing wood). Avoid parental intrusion by providing students with an ample amount of time in the classroom to work on their projects, and by enlisting the help of tutors (if available) for extra support.