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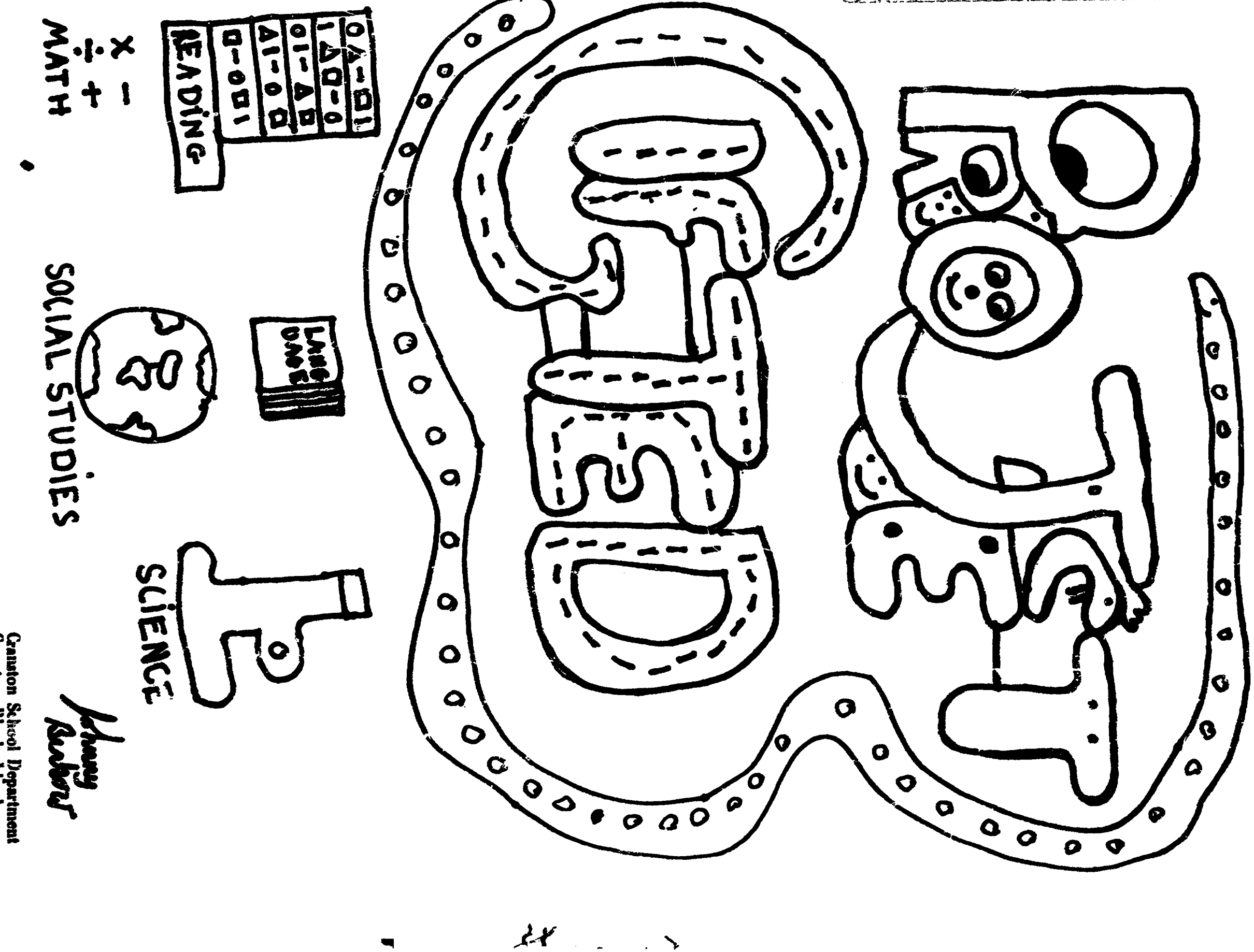
ABSTRACT

Covered in the short discussion of Project Gifted for intermediate grade children are program description, instructional strategy, classification of question categories to cue various levels of thinking, traits common to intellectually gifted students, and procedure for selection of students participating in Project Gifted. Project Gifted is described to foster a learning environment that enables a child to become a critical thinker. The instructional strategy is said to employ Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives as a frame of reference. The classification of question categories includes knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. Then follow brief statements about 17 traits common to intellectually gifted students. The procedure for selection of students is described to involve language arts, mathematics, and reading results on an achievement test battery, verbal test scores, administration of the Stanford Binet Individual Intelligence Test and the Wide Range Achievement Test, results of a teacher behavior rating scale, a selection committee, and informing appropriate parents that their children have been selected for the program. (For related studies, see also EC 042 227-8 and EC 042 230.) (CB)



Cranston School Department
Cranston, Rhode Island
A Title III, E.S.E.A. Program

PROJECT GIFTED

A Title III, E.S.E.A. Program

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PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Project Gifted in Cranston fosters a learning environment which enables a child to become a critical thinker, an evaluator of his surroundings. Individual progress is assured through independent learning activities which enables the child to grow to maximum potential. Activities which are offered in the project include various field trips, individual projects in which a child is particularly interested, photography, folk dancing, dramatics, discussions about world and local events, and experimentation with different supplemental media to develop the best means of solving life's problems.

The children individually follow a schedule which they design in achieving objectives of the program. Teachers involved in the project are co-teaching in the areas of Mathematics and Language Arts. The other core areas, Social Studies, Science, and Reading, are taught by the teachers on a pre-arranged basis.

In summary, general concepts are stressed rather than skills since the focus of the project is to allow a child to prepare for life's situations, to judge and evaluate alternatives to problems rather than simply being a master of facts which cannot be applied to his future. Skills, then, are taught as needed on an individual basis.

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGY

The teaching strategies basic to the learning environment in Project Gifted employ Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives as a frame of reference. The utilization of Bloom's Taxonomy allows the teacher to focus attention on the higher levels of thinking. Synthesis and evaluation, rather than factual knowledge are the focal points of program activities.

Attached is a classification of question categories which cue in on the various levels of thinking outlined in the Taxonomy. This sequential classification provides an overview of the key intellectual techniques that the teacher continually stresses in both subtle and directed student activities.

CLASSIFICATION OF QUESTION CATEGORIES TO CUE VARIOUS LEVELS OF THINKING

BLOOM'S Sequential Classification Related to the Cognitive Domain

Knowledge — as defined here involves recall methods and processes, memory questions, designed to bring to mind the appropriate material.

Tell - list - describe - who - when - which - what - do you remember - state - does - define - identify - did you know that - relate

Comprehension (translation) — comprehension as evidenced by the care and accuracy with which the communication is paraphrased or rendered from one language or form of communication to another.

Change to different symbol or medium - tell in your own words - describe how you feel about - relate - interpret - compare and contrast - what is an anology to - when can you extrapolate from that - discover and explain - what does it mean - what are the relationships

Application — the use of problem - solving techniques in particular and concrete situations. These techniques may be in the form of general ideas, rules of procedures, or generalized methods.

Demonstrate - use it to solve - where does it lead you - how can you use it

Analysis — The breakdown of a communication into its constituent elements or parts with the intention to clarify the communication, to indicate how it is organized, the way it manages to convey its effects, and its basis and arrangement.

How - reason - why - what are causes - what are consequences - what are the steps of the process - how would you start - arrange - specify the conditions - which are necessary for - which one comes first last - what are some specific examples of - list all the problems, solutions

* Synthesis — forms the basis for divergent, productive thinking which encourages originality and imagination. This involves the process of working with pieces, parts, elements, etc., and arranging and combining them in such a way as to constitute a pattern or structure not clearly there before.

Create - devise - design - how many hypotheses can you suggest - think of all the different ways - how else - what would happen if - think of as many as you can - what it would be like if - how many ways are possible - compose develop - in what ways can you improve - suppose - form a new - think of something no one else has thought of before.

* Evaluation — involves making judgement about the value of material utilizing a standard of appraisal. The criteria may be those determined by the student or those which are given to him.

Set standards for evaluating the following - which are good, bad - which one (s) do you like - what do you think are the most likely - rate from good to poor - select and choose - is that good or bad - weigh according to - evaluate the results - judge the evidence - judge according to these standards - judge by how you feel - what is the problem - are these solutions adequate - will it work decide which

*Levels to which instructional strategy is focused in gifted education.

TRAITS COMMON TO INTELLECTUALLY GIFTED STUDENTS

Displays a great curiosity about objects, situations, or events. Has the capacity to look into things and be puzzled: gets involved with many exploratory type activities, is interested in a wide range of things.

Is a self-initiated student, usually needing little help in knowing what to do; starts on his own; pursues individual interests and seeks own direction.

Exhibits originality in oral and written expression. Consistently gives unusual, clever, unique responses or ideas away from the cliche or stereotype.

Has unusual talent to express himself in the arts; i.e., music, dance, drama, drawing, play activities and/or artistic expression.

Has the ability to generate many alternatives. Seeks many directions and is flexible in thinking by going at right angles to the main stream of thought in the classroom.

Is perceptually open to his environment. Uses all of his senses to be aware of things around him; keenly observant and alert to things that are done as well as things that are not done.

Displays a willingness for complexity. Thrives on problem situations; selects a more difficult response, solution, or problem over the easier; seeks complex asymmetrical forms compared to symmetrical forms; has a preference for "digging in" to things.

Has the capacity to use knowledge and information other than to memorize, store and recall. Seeks new associations among items of information; combines elements of materials or knowledge in a unique fashion.

Shows superior judgement in evaluating things. Reasons things out; seeks logical answers; can see implications and consequences; makes decisions easily.

Is a good elaborator. Produces a variety of detailed steps; continually adds on to ideas, responses, or solutions, loves to embellish materials and ideas.

Is a good guesser. Is able to hypothesize; is full of wonder about things; is a risk-taker; makes good educated guesses.

Learns rapidly, easily and efficiently.

Has the ability to see relationships among unrelated facts, information or concepts.

Uses a lot of common sense; seeks the most practical approach.

Retains and uses information which has been heard or read.

Uses a large number of words easily and accurately.

Asks many questions of a provacative nature; inquisitive about knowing why instead of what; has the capacity to inquire.

PROCEDURE FOR SELECTION OF STUDENTS PARTICIPATING IN PROJECT GIFTED

Phase I

I. A team of three psychologists employed by the Cranston School Department reviewed the results of the SRA Achievement Test (Intermediate Battery Form C, grade 3 and 4) which had been administered to the entire third grade population of 1,040 students in the Cranston School System.

The SRA Achievement Test Battery includes the following areas:

A. Language Arts

1. Capitalization
2. Grammatical Usage
3. Spelling

B. Mathematics

C. Reading

1. Comprehension
2. Vocabulary

Any child scoring in the 80th percentile or above in three of the six areas of the SRA Achievement Test was included in the initial screening population pool.

II. The second criterion employed in the screening of the initial population pool was both teacher and principal recommendation. This procedure therefore allowed children not present for the SRA Achievement Test to be included in the population pool. It also allowed teacher and principal judgement to play a part in the screening process of those youngsters who did not score above the 80th percentile in three out of the six SRA areas of achievement measurement. This process created a population pool of 254 students which were eligible for further screening.

Phase II

The population pool of 254 students were administered the Verbal Section of the Lorge Thorndike Group Intelligence Test. This test was administered by the Cranston School Department's psychological staff and the guidance counselor employed by Project Gifted. Based on the number of new students that the program could accomodate, a 129 or above on the Lorge Thorndike Group Intelligence Test (Verbal Section) was established as the cutoff score. The Cranston School Department's psychological staff utilized this information along with the data gathered in Phase I of the selection procedure to refine the initial population pool to a total of 51 students.

Phase III

I. Letters requesting permission to administer individually the Stanford Binet Individual Intelligence Test and the Wide Range Achievement Test to the population pool of 51 students were sent to the parents of each child.

The Wide Range Achievement Test includes the following areas:

A. Spelling
B. Reading
C. Arithmetic

II. Simultaneously with the letters sent to parents, teachers were asked to rate the behavioral characteristics of the 51 students. The rating sheet listing behavioral characteristics of gifted children entitled Scale For Rating Behavioral Characteristics of Superior Students was forwarded to each classroom teacher of the students in this population pool. This rating scale was developed by Dr. Joseph S. Renzulli, Associate Professor of Educational Psychology at the University of Connecticut and

Mr. Robert K. Hartman, School Psychologist, Darien, Connecticut Public Schools. The November, 1971 issue of the National Council for Excep Children magazine has recognized the scale and has an article in which explained in detail.

The following behavioral characteristics are examined by the rating scale:

A. Learning Characteristics

B. Motivational Characteristics

C. Creativity Characteristics

D. Leadership Characteristics

Phase IV

A selection committee was established to examine all data available on th final population pool of 47 students, (the number individually tested with parental approval). This committee was made up of the following professional personnel:

A. Three school psychologists

B. The assistant superintendent in charge of elementary education

C. Psychological consultant from the University of Rhode Island

D. Director of Pupil Personnel Services

E. Director of Project Gifted

The final selection of students to participate in Project Gifted was conducted in two steps:

A. Individually by committee members

Acting individually and basing their final decision on all the available data, each committee member selected 20 students and four alternates to participate in the program.

B. The committee acting as a group

The committee acting as a group first choose students appearing on all seven lists and then on all six lists. It was not necessary to go beyond comparing six lists to arrive at the final 20 students and four alternates.

Phase V

The final step in the selection procedure was to inform the parents of the children in the final population pool that their child had been selected to participate in Project Gifted. A meeting was scheduled so that the administration could explain the program to the parents of the selected children. The parents were asked to sign an acceptance form as an indication that they would allow their child to participate in Project Gifted.