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AUTHOR Johnson, Andrew P.
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ABSTRACT

This paper describes a process used to create or revise a gifted education program and a model gifted education program for elementary schools that includes methods of identification and ideas for programming. The following steps are outlined for creating or revising a gifted education program: (1) read relevant textbooks to get a feel for gifted education; (2) designate a committee; (3) identify a philosophy or mission statement; (4) describe the rationale; (5) list program goals; (6) define giftedness; (7) design a method of identification based on the definition; and (8) create programs to meet the needs of those students identified. The paper then describes a gifted education program developed for Grantsburg Elementary School in Grantsburg, Wisconsin. The program is intended to help all students reach their full potential, increase the over-all academic and intellectual strength of the school system, recognize the importance of thought in the development of humankind's advancement in the world, and promote a climate of excellence. The program is organized around the following four areas: creativity and intelligence, specific academic areas, the visual and performing arts, and leadership. Appendices include a teacher creativity inventory, assessment forms, and a glossary. (Contains 12 references.) (CR)

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A MODEL GIFTED EDUCATION PROGRAM FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS: PROCESS AND PRODUCT

ANDREW P. JOHNSON

CENTER FOR TALENT DEVELOPMENT

MINNESOTA STATE UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

The necessary steps to use to create or revise a gifted education program are: (a) read relevant textbooks, (b) designate a committee, (c) identify a philosophy or mission statement, (d) describe the rationale, (e) list program goals, (f) define giftedness, (g) design a method of identification based on the definition, and (h) create programs to meet the needs of identified students. This paper describes these steps and presents a model gifted education program for elementary schools. This model program includes definitions, methods to use for identification, and various programming ideas.

For information related to gifted education, or to find out about earning a Masters Degree in Talent Development and Gifted Education, contact --

Andrew P. Johnson, Ph.D.
Center for Talent Development
Minnesota State University, Mankato
328 Armstrong Hall, MSU-52
Mankato, MN 56001
andrew.johnson@mankato.msus.edu

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A MODEL GIFTED EDUCATION PROGRAM FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS: PROCESS AND PRODUCT

Effective gifted education programs do not happen without careful, informed planning. Below are described (a) the process used to create or revise a gifted education program and (b) a model gifted education program for elementary schools that includes methods of identification and ideas for programming.

-- PART I --
THE PROCESS: CREATING THE PROGRAM

This section outlines the steps necessary to create or revise a gifted education program.

1. Read relevant textbooks to get a feel for gifted education. I would recommend The Handbook of Gifted Education (Colangelo & Davis, 1997); Talented Children and Adults: Their Development and Education (Piirto, 1994); and Education of the gifted and talented (Davis & Rimm, 1998).

2. Designate a committee. This will ensure balance and make the process feel less autocratic. If possible, include parents, teachers, school board members, and at least one administrator. The committee should not be used to design the program; rather, to set a philosophy and approve decisions. The actually planning is done most efficiently by groups of two or three. Also, it is important that committee members are operating from a sound knowledge base. Disseminating the information from the textbooks will ensure that decisions are based on sound research-based theory.

3. Identify a philosophy or mission statement. The philosophy or mission statement will be used to justify everything that follows. In this sense, it is very much like the objective on a lesson plan. Some use their district's mission state or philosophy here. Others create a separate philosophy for the gifted education program. Identifying a philosophy will provide guidance during the planning process.

4. Describe the rationale. Questions that should be answered here include: Why is this program important? Of what benefit will it be to the school, the students, and society? Why should your school or district spend time and resources here?

5. List program goals. What is the specific aim of this gifted education program? Objectives are specific things you wish to accomplish. Since specific objectives may fluctuate based resources and other variables, I find it more pragmatic to list four to six flexible goals.

6. Define giftedness. What exactly is giftedness? I would recommend using definition provided by the US Department of Education (1993),

> Children and youth with outstanding talent perform or show the potential for performing at remarkably high levels of accomplishment when compared with others of their age, experience, or environment. These children and youth exhibit high performance capability in intellectually, creative and/or artistic areas, possess an unusual leadership capacity, or excel in specific academic fields. They require services or activities not ordinarily provided by the schools. Outstanding talents are present in children and youth from all cultural groups, across all economic strata, and in all areas of human endeavor

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(Htp://www.ed.gove/pubs/DevTalent/part3.htrr).

7. Design a method of identification based on the definition. The methods used to identify students should reflect your definition and must use multiple criteria. That is, more than one measure and more than one type of measure must be used. If the US Department of Education definition is used, identification and programs should include all five areas: intellectual, creative, artistic leadership, and specific academic fields.

8. Create programs to meet the needs of those students identified. Sometimes these last two steps merge. Here, you are looking for instruction, classes, methods, and open-ended activities related to students' special talents.

-- PART II --
THE PRODUCT: A MODEL GIFTED EDUCATION PROGRAM FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

This section contains a model gifted education program based on the program I developed for Grantsburg Elementary School is Grantsburg, Wisconsin.

Gifted Education

Philosophy

It shall be the policy of Grantsburg School District to provide the best possible educational experience for all students, enabling them to reach their full potential intellectually, academically, artistically, creatively, and socially.

Rationale

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction requires schools districts to identify and program for gifted and talented students in five areas. By focusing on excellence, and allowing and encouraging our top students to excel in these areas we will make our entire district a better, more productive learning environment.

Goals

The goals of this program are to:

1. help all students reach their full potential.
2. increase the over-all academic and intellectual strength of our school system.
3. recognize the importance of thought in the development of humankind's advancement in the world.
4. promote a climate of excellence.

Organizing Centers

This gifted education program is organized around the following four areas: creativity and intelligence, specific academic areas, the visual and performing arts, and leadership

Highly Creative and Intellectually Gifted

This concept of giftedness reflects an inclusive intellectual paradigm. Here, intelligence is seen as the ability to create products or solve problems which are valued within a culture setting (Gardner, 1995). The line between intelligence and creativity becomes blurred when both cognitive traits are seen as having equal importance in solving problems and creating products (Sternberg, & Lubart, 1991).

Definition

Those students who show unusual precocity in tasks requiring creativity, original thinking, reasoning, or high-level thinking skills. When compared to their classmates, these students are above average in their ability to solve problems or fashion products that are of value in a cultural setting.

Identification Procedures

The Threshold Model is used to identify highly creative and intellectually gifted students. This model describes a more inclusive method of defining and identifying highly creative and intellectually gifted students (Davis, 1997; Piirto, 1994). Instead of using high criterion scores on intelligence tests for inclusion into gifted education program (140 or above), students here break a lower threshold (score of 115 to 120), plus meet other types of criteria. This reflects the inclusive intellectual paradigm described above and allows for a conception of giftedness that includes a variety of talents. The threshold model also compliments Renzulli's (1997) Schoolwide Enrichment Model. Here, 20-30% of the population are eligible to go to enrichment centers for special instruction.

As an example -- Students score 115 or above on some form of an intelligence test plus any two of the following: (a) achievement test composite score in the 90th percentile or above; (b) achievement test reading score in the 90th percentile or above; (c) achievement test math score in the 90th percentile or above; (c) high creativity index score (*see Appendix A*), (d) parent recommendation; (e) teacher recommendation; (f) pupil nomination; (g) outstanding product or performance in a cognitive or aesthetic domain (*see Appendix B*); or (h) awards or honors in a cognitive or aesthetic domain.

Programming:

See *Appendix C* for a description of each of these:

1. Ability grouping.
2. Acceleration.
3. Chess, checkers, and other game tournaments.
4. Cluster grouping.
5. Comedy contests.
6. Continental Math League.
7. Creative dramatics.
8. Creative problem solving.
9. Cross grade grouping
10. Curriculum compacting and differentiation.
11. Drama-Rama.
12. Enrichment centers.
13. FACES.
14. Future Problem Solving.
15. Inquiry or independent projects.
16. Inventors fair.
17. Odyssey of the Mind.
18. Reading workshop.
19. Resource room.
20. School newspaper or magazine.

21. Super Science Solver.
22. Think tank.
23. Think-sticle Course.
24. Up and Out Thinking Skills program.
25. Writing contests.
26. Writing workshop.

Academically Gifted

Definition

Those students who are capable of making outstanding progress in one or more of the academic disciplines: language arts, mathematics, reading, or science.

Identification Procedures

Students are identified by achieving any two criteria in the following areas:

Math. (a) teacher nomination, (b) self nomination, (c) achievement test mathematics score in the 90th percentile or above, (d) outstanding student product or performance, or (e) outstanding performance in math contests.

Reading. (a) teacher nomination, (b) self nomination, (c) achievement test reading score in the 90th percentile or above, or (d) number of books read.

Language Arts- Writing. (a) teacher nomination, (b) self nomination, (c) achievement test writing score in the 90th percentile or above, (d) outstanding performance on writing assessment (*see Appendix D*), or (e) honors or awards related to writing.

Science. (a) teacher nomination, (b) self nomination, (c) achievement test science score in the 90th percentile or above, (d) outstanding performance on a science-related product or performance (*See Appendix B*), or (e) honors or awards related to science or science contests.

Programming

Math.

1. Ability grouping.
2. Acceleration.
3. Cluster grouping.
4. Continental Math League.
5. Cross grade grouping.
6. Curriculum compacting and differentiation.
7. Enrichment centers.
8. Inquiry or independent projects.
9. Super Science Solver.
10. Think-sticle Course.

Reading.

1. Ability grouping.
2. Acceleration.
3. Cluster grouping.
4. Cross grade grouping.
5. Curriculum compacting and differentiation.
6. Enrichment centers.
7. Inquiry or independent projects.

8. Reading workshop.
9. Up and Out Thinking Skills program.

Language Arts - Writing.

1. Comedy contests.
2. Creative dramatics.
3. Drama-Rama.
4. Enrichment centers.
5. FACES.
6. Lab report.
7. School newspaper or magazine.
8. Up and Out Thinking Skills program.
9. Writing contests.
10. Writing workshop.

Science.

1. Creative problem solving.
2. Curriculum compacting and differentiation.
3. Enrichment centers.
4. Future Problem Solving.
5. Inquiry or independent projects.
6. Inventors Fair.
7. Lab report.
8. Odyssey of the Mind.
9. Resource room.
10. Super Science Solver.
11. Think tank.
12. Think-sticle course.
13. Up and Out Thinking Skills program.

Visual and Performing Arts

Definition:

Those students who demonstrate an outstanding ability in the visual and performing arts: music, drama, dance, literature/writing, and the visual arts.

Identification Procedures:

Students are identified by achieving any two criteria in the following areas:

Music. (a) parent nomination, (b) check list, (c) Selmor Music Inventory, (d) Product and Performance Assessment Form (*see Appendix B*), (e) awards or honors related to music, or (f) teacher nomination.

Visual Arts. (a) parent nomination, (b) check list, (c) Able Art Assessment (*see Appendix G*), (d) Product and Performance Assessment Form (*see Appendix B*), (e) awards or honors related to music, or (f) teacher nomination.

Dramatic Arts. All students will have the opportunity to audition for and/or participate in those dramatic experience available. It is not appropriate to have students formally identified in this area at the elementary level. Rather, it is the goal of this gifted education program to get as

many students involved in dramatic activities.

Programming:

Music.

1. Ability grouping
2. All School Specials
3. Curriculum compacting and differentiation
4. FACES

Visual Arts.

1. Curriculum compacting and differentiation
2. Enrichment centers
3. FACES
4. Inquiry or independent projects

Dramatic Arts.

1. All School Specials
2. Comedy contests
3. Creative dramatics
4. Drama-Rama
5. Enrichment centers
6. FACES

Leadership

Definition:

Those students who show outstanding aptitude in leading groups to solve a problem, create a product, or work toward a common goal/objective.

Identification Procedures:

At the elementary level, it is not developmentally appropriate to formally identify in this area.

Programming:

All students should have access to leadership units in their regular curriculum. These units will identify famous leaders, describe leadership traits, teach interpersonal skills, and provide students with leadership opportunities in small group settings. Here they will be asked to solve problems or create products.

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Appendix A
Teacher Creativity Inventory

Nominate up to four students you consider outstanding in each category. Leave categories blank if you are not able to respond. On the bottom list those students who show up in four or more categories.

problem solving or inventing	visual arts	drama, enacting, or creative play	dance or creative movement
music or rhythm	poetry or written expression	is able to generate many ideas	puts things together in interesting ways
likes to do things differently	sense of humor	has unique or original ideas	likes to share or express ideas

Students who show up in four or more categories:

Appendix B
Product and Performance Assessment Form

Student: _____ Age: _____

Grade: _____ Type of Product or Performance: _____

_____

When compared to other students of a similar age, rate the product or performance on the following criteria:

1. creativity ____
2. integration of ideas ___
3. technical merit ___
4. sophistication and level of detail ___
5. aesthetics: artistic expression, emotion, feeling ___
6. overall effect ___

Key: 5 = very high; 4 = high; 3= above average; 2 = average; 1 = low.

Comments:

Appendix C
Glossary of terms

ability grouping - Students are put in flexible groups based on their need. This is done most often in mathematics. Contrary to common lore, students of all levels achieve more in when grouped according to their ability and self-esteem does not suffer. Ability grouping is much different than tracking.

acceleration - Students are able to progress through a curriculum at a much faster pace. It is recommended that acceleration always be accompanied by enrichment. That is, it is not enough to simply go faster; rather, the curriculum of high ability learners should be substantially different than those of average and low ability learners.

All school specials - Once a month, all students gather in the gymnasium or auditorium for an all school program. Here, outstanding effort and achievement are recognized, students have the opportunity to design and perform drama, music, or dance routines, and teachers perform skits.

chess, checkers, and other game tournaments - These are tournaments which are set up and run very much like the NCAA basketball tournament. That is, brackets are created with all the contestants list. As students win they progress to the next round. Students engage looking at the brackets and seeing the progress of various contestants. Tournaments are usually set up over a three-week period with the games played at noon recess. Make sure the rules are clearly posted and good sportspersonship is stressed.

cluster grouping - This is one of the most effective ways to meet the needs of high ability learners. Here, four to eight identified students are put in one classroom teacher's classroom. This teacher has had special training in methods to implement to create open-ended, high level activities within the normal curriculum. This also allows identified students to interact with like-minded peers. This is very efficient in terms of cost and teacher time.

comedy contests - Students like to be silly. Why not use this energy to create a comedy contest? Students are given 2 minutes to create a presentation that makes you laugh. They are rated on (a) comedic effect or funniness, (b) originality, (c) presentation, and (d) staying within the time constraints. You may wish to have categories which include both group presentations and individual presentations.

Continental Math League - This is a contest where students are given six very high level problems to do each month for six months. (There are a variety of math contests and leagues.) Participation here is purely voluntary and is open to all students. Make sure that teachers instructed and provide guided practice in solving word problems in math. Post the results of the top players every month. Keep a tally of the total points through the year. At the end of the year, give out medals for high place winner at each grade level and hand out a trophy for the top scorer at each grade. Scores here can also be used as one criteria in identify outstanding mathematicians or used for highly creative or intellectually gifted students.

creative dramatics - This a form of drama whereby students are given a structure but they are free to improvise dialogue and actions within that structure (Johnson, 1998).

creative problem solving - A thinking skill used to solving real life and imaginary problems across the curriculum. Here students (a) look at the problem, (b) generate many solutions, (c) choose one solution, (d) refine, and (e) communicate their solution.

cross grade grouping - Here students are grouped for instruction across grade levels.

For example, during a math class, high ability first grade students may go to a third grade math group. This is a very effective approach in terms of time and teacher resources. However, all grade levels would have to have their math class at the same time.

curriculum compacting and differentiation - Here students are able to test out of a short, abbreviated version of a unit and engaged in other activities. A criterion score is usually determined ahead of time, for example 80% on a pretest means you are eligible for a differentiated experience. Students are usually give full points if they meet the criterion on the pretest. Their grade for that unit then would be based on their independent project (see Appendix E and Appendix F).

Drama-Rama - A drama festival in which elementary students from different schools compete in two categories: student-written dramas and adult-written dramas. Dramas are judged on students use of voice, body, characteristics, and story. Each drama is given a blue, red, or white ribbon. Actors of Merit are chosen within each drama.

enrichment centers - Students who test out of their regular curriculum (see compacting), go here for special instruction or projects.

FACES - This is the acronym for Fine Arts Consortium for Elementary Students. Here, elementary students who have been formally identified as having outstanding talent in one or more of the performing arts, meet with students from other districts for specialized instruction related to that art.

Future Problem Solving - In small groups, students are given a problem likely to be faced in the future. They find a solution to that problem then list the positive and negative effects of that solution.

inquiry or independent projects - In inquiry students ask a question and gather data to answer that question. If it is true inquiry they should be free to come to any conclusion based on their data. Once the data is collected, it must be presented in the form of a lab report (see lab report) or class presentation.

Inventors Fair.

lab report - A form for presenting findings for inquiry experiments, observations, and investigation. There are three parts to the lab report (a) conditions, (b) results, and (c) conclusions. This conditions contains the question or purpose of the inquiry, and how and where the data was collected. In the results, only that data that was collected is presented. Often, students use tables or graphs to present the data. Finally, the conclusions tells what the data might mean or how it might be used.

Odyssey of the Mind - OM competitions are annual contests for elementary through high school students where they compete solving a wide variety of problems or creating products and performances. Based on their performance, students are eligible to go to state, national, and world finals. The down side of OM is that it takes a great deal of time both as a participant and advisor/coach.

reading workshop - Reading workshop is the best way to meet the needs of high ability readers within a classroom setting. Here, the main reading curriculum is reading and enjoying books (Graves, 1983). Students choose those books to read. Teachers teach skills in short, mini-lessons. Other components of reading workshop include teacher conferences, portfolio assessment, book clubs, and reading logs.

resource room - Students who are involved in compacting are able to go to a resource room for instruction and guidance to work on their projects. A talent development specialist is in charge of this room. The goal is to provide just enough structure to allow students to work on their independent projects.

school newspaper or magazine - The journal or magazine is a place to display students writing and art work. Also, you might think of appointing students to be editors. I would recommend having a them each month, and having students submit their insights, stories, poems, pictures, and drawings.

Selmor Music Inventory - This is a commercially prepared and individually adminstered music test which measures elementary students' musical abilities in the following areas: (a) pitch, (b) rhythm, and (c) musical memory.

Super Science Solver - Sometimes called s-cubed, this is where students are given a problem to solve or a challenge. For example, who can create a device to make a tennis ball go the furthers? Who can create the strongest bridge using 25 tooth picks and 1 square inch of playdough? Can you create a design for a flying bike?

think tank - Students are given a problem from real life, the newspapers, the school, history, or from literature. Their job is to solve the problem and present their findings to the class.

Think-sticle Course - In a gymnasium, you set up an obsticle course with a variety of problems at five to ten spots. One at a time, students go through the course, completing the problems as quickly as they can. Students with the quickest times are recognized.

Up and Out Thinking Skills program - This is a series of 19 creative and critical thinking skills that can be embedded into any curriculum (Johnson, 2000)

writing contests - Create contests throughout the year based on a theme or topic. Award several ribbons to outstanding writing in various categories (genre) such as poetry, fiction, nonfiction, and comedy.

writing workshop - This is the best way to meet the needs of high ability writers within the classroom. Here, students are given their choice of writing topic and spend the majority of class time writing. Students are present instruction in the various mechanical part of writing in short mini-lessons (Atwell, 19**).

Appendix D
Writing Assessment

Characteristic	Rating
depth of thinking	
organization	
sentence structure	
word choice	
mechanics	
ideas/creativity	
TOTAL:	

6 = outstanding, 5 = high, 4 = high average, 3 = low average, 2 = low, 1 = very low

Comments:

Appendix E
Plan for Research-Observation

Investigator: _____

- before the observation -

1. What is your question? What are your curious about? What do you want to investigate?

2. Important background knowledge (use the back side):

3. How, where, and what will you observe?

4. How long will you observe? How many observations will you make? How many observers (scientists) will you use?

5. How will your record your observations?
Checklist and tally marks ___ Open-ended observation ___ Other ___

6. When will you present your findings to the class? _____

- after the observation –

7. How will your organize your data? (Look for groups, patterns, order, etc.)

8. What conclusion can you make based on your data? (Use the back if necessary.)

9. How will you present your data and conclusion?

lab report __	graph/table __	video __	story __	poster __	poem __
photos __	brochure __	plan __	map __	visual art __	other __

Appendix F
Plan to Experiment

Scientist: _____

- before the observation -

1. What is your question? What do you want to test?

2. Important background knowledge (use the back side):

3. How, where, and what will you test?

4. What materials will you use?

5. How will collect data?

weigh__	measure __	record __	checklist __	other __
observe __	time __	count __	questionnaire	

6. When will you present your findings to the class? _____

- after the observation –

7. How will your organize your data? (Look for groups, patterns, order, graphs, tables, etc.)

8. What conclusion can you make based on your data? (Use the back if necessary.)

9. How will you present your data and conclusion?

lab report __	graph/table __	video __	story __	poster __	poem __
photos __	brochure __	plan __	map __	visual art __	other __

Appendix A

ABLE ART ASSESSMENT

Adapted with permission from Project Able, by Dr. Laurel Scott, University of Wisconsin - Superior

Identifying Artistic Talent

Three drawing tasks will be used to assess ability in the visual arts.

I. Complete the Picture

Students are given a 9" X 12" sheet of white paper with a partial, incomplete drawing on it. They are asked to "Complete the Picture". Students complete the drawing in pencil. No other instructions should be given and students should not be given suggestions about what to draw. If asked, the teacher can simply say, "Draw what you think it is." Sufficient time should be allowed for all students to complete their pictures.

This task assesses Originality and the ability to Elaborate visually.

II. Still Life Drawing

Using a Beginner's Pencil or other soft pencil and 12" X 18" white paper, students are to draw a prearranged still life. They should not be advised on "how to draw" the still life or told how large to make the drawing. Sufficient time should be allowed for all students to complete their pictures.

This task assesses the ability to draw/render a three-dimensional subject on a two-dimensional surface, and the ability to develop a balanced composition.

III. Imaginary Drawing

Students are given 12" X 18" white paper and color crayons and/or colored felt-tipped markers or colored pencils. Read the following information to students:

> You are walking down a sidewalk. There is a tall fence to your right and you can't see what is on the other side of the fence. The fence is very long. You continue walking and finally you see a hole in the bottom of the fence. The hole is just big enough for you to crawl through it. You crawl through the hole in the fence. WHAT DO YOU SEE ON THE OTHER SIDE?

Repeat the instructions if necessary. Students should not be given suggestions about what to draw. Sufficient time should be allowed for all students to complete their pictures.

This task assesses Imagination (the ability to depict an imaginary event in a visual form), sense of color, composition, and the ability to draw/render.

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Telephone: 507-389-5460
FAX: 507-389-5853
E-Mail Address: andrew.johnson@mankato.msus.edu
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