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ABSTRACT

This issue of the Illinois Association for Gifted Children (IAGC) Journal focuses on creativity. Featured articles include: (1) "Creativity: What Is It? and What Does It Look Like" (Sally Y. Walker); (2) "What Is Creativity?" (Debbie Cho); (3) "Creativity and Underachievement" (Sylvia Rimm); (4) "Stacy Hayden: Creativity-One Mother's Perspective" (Stacy L. Hayden); (5) "An Immodest Proposal for Preventing the Children We Teach from Being a Burden to Their Parents, Schools, or Country, and for Making Them Beneficial to the Public" (Ray Sheers); (6) "Finding Lost Keys: Creativity and the Fine Arts" (Michael Cannon); (7) "The Future of the Gifted in the 21st Century: The Need for Creative Solutions to Perennial Problems" (Maurice D. Fisher and Michael E. Walters); (8) "Thinking Outside the Box: The Power of Creativity in Content" (Karen Meador and Jim Granada); (9) "Cultivating the Gift of Creative Listening to Music" (Douglas Ashley); (10) "Music: Its Creativity and Integration into the Regular Classroom" (Kathryn P. Haydon); (11) "'Write' Where They Are: Creative Differentiation with Emergent Writing in the Early Childhood Classroom" (Cynthia Riess); (12) "Creative Writing for Gifted Students (Grades 1-6)" (Joan Franklin Smutny); (13) "The Art of Writing: Using Art To Recognize the Need for Revising in the Creative Writing Process" (Amy Foust); (14) "Creativity in Children's Writing" (Marian R. Carlson); (15) "Creative Children's Theater in Kenya" (Margaretta Swigert-Gacheru); (16) "Differentiating the Unique Characteristics of the Gifted Child" (Michelle A. Navarro and Julianne M. Kraut); and (17) "When Schools Fail: Is Homeschooling Right for You and Your Highly Gifted Child?" (Karen Morse). A list of gifted resources is provided. (Some articles include references.) (CR)

Illinois Association for Gifted Children Journal, 2002

Edited By
Joan Franklin Smutny

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JOURNAL 2002

IAGC JOURNAL FOCUS: CREATIVITY

I CREATIVITY: DEFINITIONS AND NEEDS

II CREATIVITY AND THE CURRICULUM

III MISCELLANEOUS: TESTING AND HOMESCHOOLING

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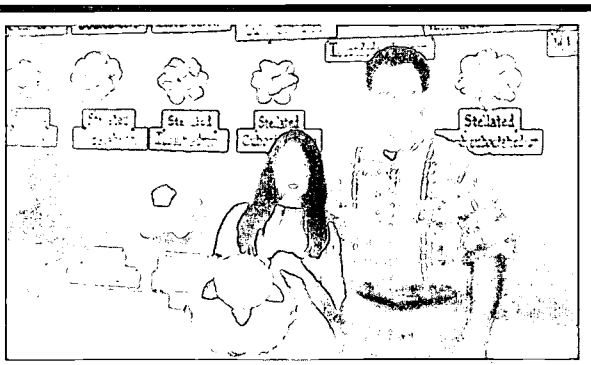


FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Joan Franklin Smutny

> "Now, what I want is, Facts. Teach these boys and girls nothing but Facts. Facts alone are wanted in life. Plant nothing else, and root out everything else. You can only form the minds of reasoning animals upon Facts: nothing else will ever be of any service to them. This is the principle on which I bring up my own children, and this is the principle on which I bring up these children. Stick to Facts, Sir!"
>
> —Thomas Gradgrind (in Charles Dickens' *Hard Times*).

The above quote by Dickens at the beginning of *Hard Times* could easily apply today. The call for more creativity in education (including gifted education) can barely be heard in the hue and cry for new, more rigorous ways to transmit "facts" to our nation's youth. Even in gifted education, creative work is sometimes made to seem less essential than the intensive and accelerated programs in math and science. Any visitor to America's schools or to its gifted programs would conclude that our society regards creativity as a positive influence, but not anything the children really need. The authors in this issue of the IAGC Journal stand apart in this respect. They recognize the *essential* nature of creativity in the growth of gifted children and the profound consequences of its neglect for the future of these children and our nation.

Two questions surface throughout the articles: 1. What exactly does it mean to be creative? 2. How can teachers and parents fulfill the creative needs of gifted students?

Sally Walker provides a vivid picture of what creative behaviors "look like," how creative people can mystify the world around them, and how vitally important it is that schools recognize and nurture creativity in their students. Debbie Cho's article contemplates the value of art as a link to every child's creative self and examines the reasons why so many talented students struggle to create when given the chance. Her poem eloquently narrates the journey of many creatively gifted people and is a tribute to supportive teachers.

Sylvia Rimm examines the psychological aspect of creativity and the need for gifted children to develop the inner strength and freedom to create *without* depending heavily on adult approval or reinforcement. She describes ways that we can instill a healthy self-esteem in gifted students and a resiliency that will support them in the face of obstacles or temporary setbacks. Stacy Hayden is an excellent example of Rimm's discussion. As a newly awakened creative person and a mother, she has learned to recognize and nurture creative talent in her children and to avoid the criticism or pressure that can cause underachievement in young people.

Ray Sheers completes the first section of the Journal with a Jonathan Swift critique on our schools' apparent distaste for all things creative or original. In the spirit of Dickens' Thomas Gradgrind and his love of "facts," he outlines a number of ways that our society and government could complete the process of shutting down the nuisance called "creativity" in our students, thus rendering them more "beneficial to the public."

Michael Cannon begins the second section on the Arts. He describes a variety of creative approaches to the arts (including the humanities, visual arts, and performing arts) in a curriculum for children. They include both the use of the arts as catalysts for creative processes in interdisciplinary curricula as well as the involvement of students in creating art (paintings, performances, etc.) themselves.

Maurice Fisher and Michael Walters recommend a comprehensive and unified program in the humanities and arts for gifted students. The design of a core curriculum that would include the humanities, arts, and sciences would expose creative children to content, materials, and instruction that could ultimately define their future.

Karen Meador and Jim Granada's article on "thinking outside the box" explores ways that teachers can exploit elements of creative thinking already embedded in content standards to design what she calls " 'out of the box' ideas in content-driven classrooms." Content standards may seem like inhibiting boxes to most teachers, but they are less closed to creative thinking than they appear.

Douglas Ashley and Katie Haydon focus on the educational benefits of music in programs for gifted children. Douglas Ashley emphasizes the need to cultivate the creative art of listening to music. Analyzing musical structures and styles as well as the lives of significant composers increases students' understanding of composition and provides meaningful connections to historical periods. Kathryn Haydon looks at creative methods for integrating music into the curriculum. She focuses on how the study of rhythm, sound, and musical styles and structures, for example, can deepen children's discoveries in other subjects-such as mathematics, culture, and poetry.

Cynthia Reiss, Joan Smutny, Amy Foust, and Marian Carlson explore the art of creative writing. Cynthia Reiss demonstrates how the principles of differentiated instruction apply to an early childhood classroom, particularly in relation to emergent writing. She emphasizes the importance of providing variety in writing formats and gives concrete, practical suggestions for supporting emergent writing in young gifted children.

Joan Smutny describes strategies for teaching creative writing to gifted students in Kindergarten through grade six. Based on methods she has used in workshops for thousands of children age five to 16, these strategies are designed around the visual and performing arts as catalysts for exploring ideas, images, moods, textures, and styles for free verse poetry, short fiction, essays, and historical fiction.

Amy Foust has designed a unique system for helping gifted writers revise their work through the use of art projects. Creating a work of art (e.g., painting, sculpture, crafts, etc.) and then altering and refining it has inherent parallels in the often difficult process of revision.

Marian Carlson describes her cross-curricular methods for teaching journalism to gifted middle school students. She includes a journalism unit she designed for The National Teacher Training Institute that draws on the life experience of the first American investigative reporter, Nellie Bly.

Margaretta Swigert-Gacheru completes the second section in her article on how Kenyan educators restored their creativity in the aftermath of colonialism. She describes the intriguing process by which the Kenya Schools Drama Festival-originally modeled on Britain's theatrical tradition-became Africanized. Teachers and students found themselves writing scripts, directing plays, and weaving indigenous songs and dances into their productions. Theatre in the schools became a vital, creative resource for exploring and communicating critical issues in Kenyan society.

Two additional articles in a third section shed some light on the question of creativity, though they do not directly discuss it. The first, by Michelle Navarro and Julianne Kraut, explores the effectiveness of different testing instruments in measuring the abilities (including creative abilities) of gifted children. The authors recommend the use of other methods besides standardized tests (e.g., checklists, observations, etc.) to create a more comprehensive and accurate portrait of a child's abilities.

Karen Morse' article on homeschooling primarily addresses the educational needs of highly gifted children. But it also provides an option for parents with highly creative children. Depending on the kind of education parents feel they can provide, homeschooling may be the most appropriate program for their creative children, with many more opportunities to invent, innovate, and explore individual interests and talents.

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CREATIVITY: WHAT IS IT? AND WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

By Sally Y. Walker

Paul bounded into the kindergarten classroom, full of energy and ideas. His fine motor coordination could not keep up with his mind, so his paper work was carelessly done, late and usually a mess. When he spoke in class, he usually went off on a tangent; the other students would roll their eyes to signal, "There he goes again." He often responded in a dramatic way. His senses were heightened. His curiosity was larger than he was. He loved life and met it head on.

When given free time Paul would draw, plan plays, manipulate the environment. He was a global, tactile-kinesthetic learner who wanted to touch his world. Paul was not a good test taker, and probably saw more to the answers than the test manufacturer. He had trouble organizing his "stuff." It sort of spilled out in the room around him. He mother saw him as creative. His teacher thought him more of a pain than a pleasure. He didn't fit in. He wasn't like the other children. How would he ever adjust to the demands of school?

What is creativity? How do we know it exists? We see it in adults who have made changes or contributions. How can we find it and preserve it in students? Perhaps by looking at adults we can better understand what needs to occur in schools for students who are creative.

Csikzentmihalyi believes that creativity is an idea or action that changes a cultural domain. Culture is made up of multiple domains, and when a domain is changed we have creativity. This is cultural creativity. It differs from personal creativity, which denotes creativity in everyday life. Csikszentmihalyi signifies cultural creativity with a capital C and personal creativity with a lower case c. He feels that by looking at cultural creativity we can better understand personal creativity.

In order to understand creativity we have to look at the l, the society, which is composed of a number of fields, and the culture, which is made up of a variety of domains. Not all cultural domains are equally important. For example, medicine would be considered more important than chess. The importance of the domains changes from culture to culture and over time. By changing a domain one can become famous. Examples of people whose creativity has made change might include Marie Currie, Bill Gates, Linus Pauling, Rachael Carson, or Mary Cassatt.

Creative individuals are people who start with talent, curiosity, interests and drive. As they work in an area or domain, they learn the problems and rules that exist in their area of interest. They know and are aware of other people within the field. Csikszentmihalyi rejects the idea that the creative person is a loner. It is rare to find the isolated creator.

Most creative people have an enormous amount of energy. This does not mean that they are hyperactive, because they can focus on an idea. Many claim to sleep more than the normal person. Creative work needs time and energy for processing. The conscious and unconscious need time to play.

Creative individuals think divergently and are open to new experiences and ideas. When they need to be, these individuals can also be focused, disciplined and responsible. They are not just imaginative or bizarre, but also realistic.

Creative individuals are complex. Creative persons are both extroverted and introverted at the same time. There is a need for interaction and the need for solitude necessary to do creative work. A creative individual is the person who may get to the office early to get work done before anyone else arrives. He wants no one to talk with or see him. Later, he has an open door and others come to him with their plans, ideas and problems and he responds to their needs. Time alone is important to get his work done.

Creative persons do not fit into one mold. They possess characteristics that to some may look contradictory. Creative

people seem to defy definitions. They are competitive and cooperative; humble and ambitious. They may have androgynous traits: the men are sensitive and the women may be dominant and strong. Sometimes they appear to be inconsistent. It's not that they are confused or indecisive. They have to be dedicated enough to take an area of study seriously and have the knowledge that is required and the will to change it. Others may regard the change as somewhat irreverent of the existing knowledge and wisdom. They also may have attachment and detachment at the same time. They care tremendously about what they do, but need to step back and ask the probing questions of "is it good or not?" Closeness is needed, but so is the ability to look beyond, to be critical and to ask the questions that make the difference. Detachment is essential, for it is the ability to step back, to apply the criticism, and to know what is needed.

Creative people have been found to have more than the usual amount of suffering and joy. They tend to be more sensitive than the normal person. Failure at times is almost inevitable and is painful. They are at the same time joyful in what they do, which builds self-confidence. While they have endurance and concentration, they also have a questioning attitude that leads to problem finding. This in turn leads to the opportunity to change some facet of their area of study.

It is not enough to possess all of the personality characteristics and talents needed. When surveyed, creative people responded that "luck" played a significant role in making them creative. They happened to be at the right place at the right time and society needed changes in that area (medicine, nuclear physics, etc.). One may be highly creative personally, but unless society wants to have new ideas in an area, the creativity may not change society as a whole. It is very situation dependent.

Creativity has no real beginning or ending. Within each area there are an inexhaustible supply of new challenges and ideas. People in their 80s and 90s are still questioning, exploring, wondering and making contributions. Infants come into the world wondering, curious, and exploring. Young children are driven to explore and learn about their environments. Their motivation is high. Their possibilities are unending.

A problem exists when our educational systems not only do not recognize the importance of creativity, but also often dampen curiosity and interests. Once lost, these characteristics are hard, if not impossible, to regain again. In order to cultivate creativity, preserving the students' curiosity, talent and interests must be a priority.

In the educational system that regards content standards as the basis for learning, teachers must learn to recognize and promote creative characteristics and talent in their students. Creativity is a necessity for our lives, not an added "fluff" to the curriculum. Teachers can help students value creativity and promote its growth. Capitalize on students' interests. Allow students to delve into topics, to become resident experts. Promote questioning. Allow ideas to be exchanged and challenged. Value task commitment. Recognize talent.

Creativity is a force that separates us as human beings from other life forms. Humans alone can have and express original and creative thought. We alone can build cultures and social systems with creativity. Creativity is the spark that fulfills us when all else is failing. It can bring us joy in the face of despair. It is the hope we have to solve the problems that surround us. It is the road to improving the quality of life for everyone.

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WHAT IS CREATIVITY?

By Debbie Cho

What is creativity, and why is it so important? Is it something you are born with? Can it be taught? Why in the world would a good art program matter in a school if the students were not destined to become famous artists? These answers can be found in basic human nature.

A child is born wanting only what it needs to survive-nourishment, warmth, and nurturing. As this child gets older, survival is no longer enough. The child begins to test the laws of physics. He begins problem solving by pulling, pushing, turning, and twisting. His world is full of challenges and he means to master every one of them. A human baby does not need to be taught how to fit a square block in a square hole. He is born with the curiosity and perseverance that ensure he will find the answer. But why does it matter? What need does this really fulfill?

Imagine a child at two and a half who has never seen a crayon before. When given her first box of crayons, she tries to eat them. After being shown what they are for, the fascinated child sits on the floor with a pad of paper and colors for three hours. Over the next few years this child will fill thousands of papers with scribbles, drawings, and paintings. Each one is proudly shown to every person who will take the time to look. Now imagine her adopted brother. His mother loves to draw and write. She is rarely seen without a pen. His grandfather is a famous artist. This child began drawing at seven months. His

first painting is done at nine months. Over the next few years he, also, will fill thousands of papers with scribbles, drawings, and paintings. He does not care to show them to others, because they are *his* stories, *his* expressions. But both children have a need that is being fulfilled. They are expressing themselves in their own way.

If a young child is told what to do and how to do it at every stage in his life, his creative thinking skills have no room to grow. If he is expected to copy everything perfectly, he is fulfilling the adult's needs. This shows him that his needs are not important. Children will naturally try their hand at things they know they cannot do. Some will continue trying to the point of frustration. Others will lose interest. But they seem to understand at the youngest age that the mistakes they make will show them how to succeed.

My father told me that he used his eraser as much as he used his pencil. He also told me that there was no such thing as a mistake in art. Everything that you do, whether you erase it or not, gets you closer to the finished product. One evening when he saw me getting frustrated because my person did not look like his he ripped an end paper out of a nearby book. He began to scribble without saying a word. His hand was as fast as lightning, his eyes kept moving from the paper to me. A few seconds later, I noticed that something was happening. A face was emerging from the scribbles! The more he scribbled the more fascinated I became. When he was done he slid the paper over to me. It was a beautiful sketch of a man's face. "This could have been a mistake," he said. "But I didn't let it."

That five-minute lesson opened so many doors for me. I had a more realistic view of art, but more importantly, I had a new tool. I practiced drawing one thing and turning it into something totally different. I wanted to see if it worked for writing, too. I would start a poem with the worst line I could think of and then find a way to make it work. This skill also started me on the road to inventing. I would look for totally useless items and create something useful out of them. In my nine-year-old mind if there was no such thing as a mistake in art, that rule must apply to everything else as well.

Shortly after this experience I was at my best friend's house. Her mother was "working" with her little brothers. I was horrified at what she was saying to these young boys. Each boy had a coloring book in front of him, but from the level of concentration on the tiny faces you would have thought they were studying for final exams. Their mother was raising her voice because the four year old kept coloring out of the lines. "And where have you ever seen a purple tree?" she asked while grabbing the purple crayon away. I was shocked. In my family, a person's art was sacred. No one would dream of telling someone how to express themselves. Not only was there no imagination in this family, there was no creative thinking. Everything was done by the book.

If we take our cues from human nature we would see how important creative expression is in a child's life. We are the only species on this planet that creates art for art's sake. There must be a reason for this. It is becoming more and more common to see parents buying into the belief that the end result is all that matters. If my goal is to say that my first grader can duplicate the Mona Lisa, then I might agree with these ideals. But what if ng even more wonderful, more creative were inside my child, only to be pushed out by lessons on how to paint "the right way"? What if something much more primitive that only my child could appreciate were in there, but it was something that would help her express herself? Am I willing to take a chance on trading her creativity in for a finished product that I can brag about? Absolutely not! In doing this I would be sending her a crystal clear message: If you think for yourself, you will be wrong. Instead, I would choose to send the message that anything she creates will be right for her. Human nature will ensure that, given time to explore on her own, she will be curious enough to want to learn more at an appropriate time.

When my older children were in fifth and sixth grade, I volunteered to teach a computer art class at their school. I was extremely uncomfortable with the art program they had. The teacher was teaching college level art to children, taking away all of the creativity in the process. I'll never forget the day my daughter came to me with a drawing of a tree. She had a confused look on her face as she explained that the teacher had taken her drawing, erased it, and drew it "correctly". It was then handed back to the girl who had been taught that rule #1 in art is "no one touches another's art without permission". My son had been done with this teacher for a few years by then. He didn't care what she thought and didn't put forth any effort at all. My children were not my concern, however. They had a strong foundation to build on. I wanted to give the other students a new way to express themselves. I wanted to bring some creativity back into an art program for them.

I found myself in a room with twelve students (fourth through seventh grade) staring at a blank screen. I showed them the program, talked about the different areas they could explore, and waited for them to take off. It never happened. The more adventurous students would start with a simple drawing. They would then add something, but having absolutely no confidence, would immediately erase it. They didn't want to take a chance on ruining the original drawing. Ten minutes into the class I understood what I was up against. I told the children to move to the computer to their right and add something to the image. Every single student saved his or her work. Now keep in mind that not one of the images was worth saving at that point.

I had to take away the concept of ownership if I wanted the class to be free enough to experiment. We continued playing "musical computers" until they reached their own again. I then told them to open a new file. Now they had some tools to work with. I asked them to think of something that made them feel happy, sad, excited, or angry. The focus was on the emotion, not the object. I asked them to create an image that made them feel this way, using colors, filters, images, or whatever they wanted. By the end of the class we had twelve absolutely beautiful masterpieces. These were framed and hung outside the computer room. For the rest of the year the students explored and experimented with creativity. If someone found a process that created a unique look they would gather the other students around and share it with them. They began problem solving when they couldn't get a desired effect. They would take what they already knew and apply it to new situations.

I learned so much more from these students than they could ever have learned from me. No matter what a child's background is, no matter how many years she has been in a destructive art program, there is still a light inside. It might just be a flicker, but it is there. If you give an infant a new object, he will explore it.

If you give an older child an interesting new way to express herself, she will explore it. Children file all of these useful tools away in their minds and call upon them when they are needed. I can not describe the feeling of gratification that came a year after this class when I overheard a student comparing his physics lesson on mass to the fact that you can bend and manipulate an image in Photoshop; all of the pieces are still there if you look closely enough.

The child who is exposed to creative thinking in art can use those skills in every aspect of his life. One of my favorite "rules" this year was to say, "Don't undo it. Make it better." The students learned to take risks. They saw how to learn from mistakes. They understood that accidents are not necessarily bad. Most importantly, they realized what happens when the thought process and the creative process work together.

If we look at our species and compare it to the others on our planet, one difference stands out. Animals have evolved to adapt to their environment. Many of them teach their young the skills they need to survive. A few species can even use creative thinking. But no animal besides a human has ever looked at the needs of its society beyond basic survival and found a way to meet those needs through thought, planning, and creative invention. No animal besides a human has ever looked at its home and carried through on a plan to make it more beautiful. We don't *need* to live in houses with walls. We don't *need* air conditioning. We don't need soft beds to sleep in. But, somewhere along the way someone had a good idea. One individual who was allowed to develop his creative thinking decided to make his life better. Someone found a way to put A and B together in a way that had never been thought of before. What a tragedy it would be to stunt the creative growth of a future Thomas Edison or Leonardo Da Vinci.

Despite the evidence of creativity all around us, as a society we still don't see it as a basic human need. If it isn't an essential need, then how do we explain how architecture has evolved over the centuries? Why do we choose colors to paint our walls? Why do we care where flowers and trees were planted? We certainly don't make the best use of land when we build new housing developments. So, why is it so important? It is important because it touches us on a deeper level. We understand what beauty is. We appreciate it. We manipulate it to satisfy our desires. We find it where others would never think to look. And we create it where it has never been before. We human beings create art and things of beauty to fulfill a very real need. Ours is not a species that can be happy without the freedom to think and create.

DEBBIE CHO is Founder of Da Vinci Academy in St. Charles, Illinois, a school for gifted children (age three to grade eight). She is also an artist and teacher of art, and a poet, as shown on page 7.

CREATIVITY AND UNDERACHIEVEMENT

By Sylvia Rimm

The nurturance of creativity and the prevention of underachievement begin in early childhood, before children ever enter school. Creative achievement is fostered when the psychological defenses that cause children to underachieve or not to perform productively are prevented (Rimm, 1986). These defenses are often caused by pressures children feel that lead them to unconsciously manipulate adults in dependent or dominant ways. They want to protect themselves because they fear that they may not be "smart" or creative enough. Parents of gifted preschool children should read about underachievement before their children even enter school because the seeds of underachievement are often planted during those preschool years. Statistics (The National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1984) indicate that 50 percent of gifted children underachieve.

Early Enrichment and Attention

Biographies of gifted and eminent achievers as well as family histories of gifted underachievers reflect early enrichment and positive attention (Rimm & Lowe, 1988). However, clinical experiences provide some real concerns about the degree of positive attention. For example, did you ever hear parents repeatedly say to their children the following words: "You are the most perfect of all beautiful children!"?

Those words of love conferred on the beautiful first-born girl used to call up the positive image of a loving, caring, and delighted parent. My impressions would probably still be the f I were not a psychologist. Instead, those words only evoke the image of a perfectionistic little girl, a preadolescent obsessed with concerns about designer clothes and makeup, or an eating disorder or depressed adolescent — the "daddy's little girls" of a child and adolescent psychological practice.

The sad and frustrated parents explain to me that Dr. Spock said you couldn't love babies too much. They add that the behavioral psychologists say that positive reinforcement and praise help children learn. The parents explain that they were positive, loving parents and that they tried to build self-confidence in their children: lots of encouragement, lots of attention, lots of praise for creativity, intelligence, and beauty.

With all that self-concept building, why do these children not feel smart and creative and beautiful? The IQ tests say they are gifted; the creativity tests list high scores; and your eyes tell you that they are attractive young people. Why the terrible feelings of inadequacy? Why the self-doubt and poor self-image?

The world of encouragement and love and support is surely the ideal environment for children to be raised. Yet, for some children there is so much praise, so many comments about beauty and perfection and brilliance, so much enthroning as prince or princess that when new siblings come into the family, or when they must share attention in school, they feel "dethroned" (Rimm & Lowe, 1988). By comparison to their former feelings of perfection, they feel less loved, less beautiful, less creative, and less intelligent. No words or accomplishments seem to satisfy their never satiated needs for praise.

Once upon a happy time
There lived a little one
Who reveled in discovering
From dawn till day was done

Each morn he'd greet his mother
With a hasty how d'ya do
And then be off to work again
To add to what he knew

The things this child learned about,
Oh, just to think of it!
Tornados, bugs, and dinosaurs,
Each new eclectic bit

Would energize his little mind
So, round and round he'd pace,
Seeking answers, finding facts,
Until he'd made his case

When the puzzles in his mind
Were finally figured out
He'd share them with his mother
These things he thought about

And then one glorious morning
The child's mother said,
"It's time to go to school so you
Can ***share*** *what's in your head."*

The little one then leapt with joy
He jumped into his pants
He hurried off to school that day
Without a backward glance

This thing called kindergarten
Wasn't quite what he expected
This little boy began to feel
His mind was quite neglected

His teacher didn't understand
Why he was not content
To sit and play with blocks all day,
Why would he not relent?

He asked her quite politely
If maybe he could learn
A thing or two in school sometime
When would it be his turn?

That year began to wear upon
This little child's mind
So he began to look elsewhere
And, oh, what he did find!

He learned about computers,
New languages, and art
He learned about geology
And took it all to heart

When the year was over
The little boy declared,
"I learned so much at home this year...
at school, no one cared.

I think it's best if I stay home.
School is not for me.
I know how to multiply
They're teaching two plus three."

His mother said, "we'll try once more.
You're in first grade next year.
There's so much more for you to learn."
But in her heart was fear.

What if her precious little boy
Was never understood?
What if he got it in his mind
That school was just no good?

When first grade finally came around
The little boy agreed
To give his school one more chance
To teach him what he'd need

His first grade teacher, Mrs. Kinney,
Was an angel in disguise
She tried to see their little world
Through each first grader's eyes

She showed the little boy that year
What he could really do
She showed him how to write a book
She told him what she knew

She listened to the little ones
She valued every child
She made each one feel special
Whether shy, intense, or wild

Mrs. Kinney really saw
The little boy inside
Her words encouraged, gave him strength
And then he really tried

The teacher let him show his class
His knowledge of the Earth
She let him share eclectic bits
She showed the boy his worth

This little boy is not so little
After all these years
He's grown into a strong young man,
Stood up to all his fears

His schooling's not been easy
He didn't want to stay
But there were more Miss Kinneys
Here and there along the way
These teachers that you hear about
Who truly give their all
Can change a little child's life
With gifts they see as small

Encouragement and understanding
Go so very far
To help these children figure out
Who they really are

A teacher's job, to teach a child,
Can be misunderstood
It's a noble undertaking
Some do more than they should

But it's these special teachers
Behind the scenes each day
Who made a world of difference
In the "Grown Ups" of today

Success cannot be measured
In the math their students do
But in the strength each child may gain
That helps to see them through

And so, to all those teachers,
Thanks for the "little things"
Your students learned more than you know
You've given them their wings

Thus, in some ways, too much praise becomes too much of a good thing. Adjusting to the less "special" environment of schools can cause children to feel pressures that they do not understand (Rimm, 1987, 1990a, 1990b).

It is good for parents of preschoolers to enrich, encourage, and praise. If they could moderate that praise just a little bit, children might become less dependent on praise and might be more likely to develop their own personal intrinsic motivation.

Please stay positive, but avoid the superlatives like brilliant, gorgeous, perfect, and genius. Instead, you could replace those with good thinker, hard worker, bright, clever, imaginative, kind, sensitive, attractive, or cute. Those words are more realistic and enable children to live up to reasonable standards of performance and appearance. Even these positive statements should not accompany the child's every word or performance or they come to depend on that extrinsic reinforcement for their motivation.

Here are some additional precautions for preschool children (Davis & Rimm, 1994):

1. Television watching, which is basically a passive-receptive activity, should be monitored and limited (Morrow, 1983). High-interest kindergarten readers come from homes in which there were rules regarding television and in which mothers watched less television than mothers in the homes of low-interest readers. However, educational programs could be exceptions to this policy. Creativity is an active process, and television may inhibit that.

2.. Overstimulation, for example, from too many peers or too much adult talk, can confuse children and detract from active involvement, concentration, and learning. While parent communication to the child is desirable, continuous talk and long abstract lectures may seem meaningless and boring and exceed children's limited attention span. For some children, endless chatter will cause them to become restless and "hyperactive;" they know they should pay attention, but they cannot. For other children, prolonged talking by a parent has the opposite effect, preventing the child's contributions and encouraging him or her to slow down and become very quiet. They give up trying to communicate with this parent.

3. If your child is spontaneously reading, teach the child some basic writing skills. A simple workbook that can be purchased from a local department store can be used for teaching the child to copy printing. Encourage coloring, drawing, cutting, and pasting as well. Exercising that fine motor coordination will help a gifted child feel more evenly skilled in the classroom. Teachers usually suggest postponing the basic skill of printing until school, but this unevenness in abilities often causes children anxiety related to their writing. Be sure not to pressure the child. Five minutes a day will provide your child sufficient practice and will make them feel more comfortable with pencils. Hopefully that practice will prevent the "pencil anxiety" which so many verbally gifted children feel.

4. Some daily "alone time" for a preschool child also is elpful. Interaction with peers and siblings is important to preschoolers, but some small amount of time each day for a child to play alone will encourage independent behavior and imagination. Creative persons of all ages seem to thrive on some amount of time alone.

All four of these precautions can help children very early to take initiative and to be active participants in their environments, rather than to receive stimulation passively.

Early Assessment

There is good evidence that parents can recognize their children's giftedness early. Identification results of a national survey of 1039 parents of gifted children indicated that 70 percent of these children were identified accurately by parents by age three (Gogul, et al., 1985). Of the characteristics which caused parents to suspect giftedness, "early verbal expression" was mentioned most frequently. Other characteristics included an unusually long attention span, good memory, high level of curiosity, and an early demonstration of original and creative behavior.

The reliability of parents' recognition of preschool giftedness was also supported by a program at Towson State University in Baltimore, Maryland (Hanson, 1984). Parents were encouraged to enroll their children in a program for four-, five-, and six-year-old gifted children based on their own perceptions of the children's verbal giftedness. After enrollment, these children were given a battery of tests. Ninety percent of the children tested at least one year above grade level in reading, and all of the five- and six-year-olds had high scores in the Fund of Knowledge subtests. Mathematics scores were not as consistently high, but parents had not been asked to consider math skill in their decision-making.

Research certainly does confirm parents' ability to recognize giftedness in their children. Although we have no way of knowing the percentage of children who are missed by the parent identification procedure, at least we can substantiate that parents do not overidentify to the extent that teachers have often believed. In fact, studies indicate that parents usually underestimate, rather than overestimate, their children's giftedness (Chitwood, 1986).

If parents believe their preschool children are gifted, they might ask when and why it would be good to have them tested. Tests of preschool children are appropriate with the caution that such early tests may be somewhat unreliable. Scores can be adversely affected by many factors, including fatigue, stress, and diet (Perino & Perino, 1981). The scores should not be taken as an absolute measure of the child's ability and certainly not viewed as a limit to that ability. Tests of young children are likely to be conservative estimates of their ability since "test construction makes it virtually impossible to perform at a level higher than their potential" (Chitwood, 1986); but they can perform at a lower level.

If parents are considering early entrance to school or entrance to a particular school, preschool testing can help them to make a more informed decision. Although research (Davis & Rimm, 1994; Rimm, 1992) supports the success of early entrance to kindergarten for gifted children, that decision should not be made lightly. In addition to IQ test scores above 135, children should have good emotional adjustment. Girls

accelerate more easily than boys and tall boys a little better than short boys. Height is not an important factor for girls (Lueck, 1988). Observation in a nursery school environment may be helpful in guiding the decision provided the nursery school teacher is not biased against early entrance to kindergarten and knows about the characteristics of gifted children.

If parents have doubts about early entrance, then typical age entrance is recommended together with subject acceleration in the child's area of greatest strength. Observation by the teacher over time in the accelerated subject will provide the required evidence for the next decision. Teachers will be good observers provided they too have knowledge about gifted children and the current research on acceleration.

Creativity Testing

It is certainly difficult to assess children's actual creativity in the preschool years. It may, however, be useful to know whether you are encouraging creative attitudes and behaviors in your child. PRIDE, a Preschool and Kindergarten Interest Descriptor (Rimm, 1983), was developed to identify creative characteristics in young children. It is a good measuring instrument for identifying highly creative children as well as an appropriate approach to heightening parent awareness about characteristics of creativity.

PRIDE is an easy-to-administer, reliable, and valid instrument for use in screening preschool and kindergarten children for programs for the creatively gifted. It was preceded in development by GIFT - Group Inventory for Finding Creative Talent (Rimm, 1976, 1980), a K-6 creativity inventory; GIFFI I - Group Inventory For Finding Interests (Rimm & Davis, 1979), a creativity inventory for grades 6-9; and GIFFI II (Davis & Rimm, 1980), a creativity inventory for grades 9-12. Since a student self-report inventory tends to be unreliable for children who are ages 3-5, PRIDE was created for use by parents based on their observation of their children. (See Figure 1 for sample items).

The purpose of PRIDE is to identify children with attitudes and interests usually associated with preschool and kindergarten creativity. Those attitudes include: many interests, curiosity, independence, perseverance, imagination, playfulness, humor, and originality.

It is important to use these test scores with caution. That is, creativity inventory scores, like achievement test or IQ scores, should be utilized to screen children "into" gifted programs and not "out." For example, a child with a high PRIDE score should be included in a program even though the child may not have been selected by a teacher. However, a child who is selected by a teacher as being highly creative should not be eliminated from the program because of a low or average PRIDE score. Creativity is a subtle characteristic which is difficult to identify. PRIDE can help schools in that identification process, and PRIDE can help parents be sensitive to their children's creativity.

PRIDE results in a total score and four dimension scores. Descriptions of dimensions follow:

ny Interests - High scorers are curious and ask questions. They show high interest in learning, stories, books, and things around them. Low scorers show less curiosity and have fewer interests.

Independence - Perseverance - High scorers play alone and do things independently. They do not give up easily and persevere even with difficult tasks. Low scorers tend to prefer easier tasks and are more likely to follow the lead of other children.

Imagination - Playfulness - High scorers enjoy make-believe, humor, and playfulness. Low scorers are more serious and realistic.

Originality - High scorers tend to have unusual ideas and ask unusual questions. They are inventive in their art and play and tend to think differently than other children. Low scorers' ideas and artwork appear to be more typical of children of similar age.

Sample items from PRIDE are included in Figure 1.

Preschool and kindergarten teachers and parents of creatively gifted children will benefit from the use of PRIDE as long as they recognize its limitations. It may help to identify highly creative children. It may also help to identify children who are too dependent and need encouragement toward independence and creativity. Finally, it heightens everyone's awareness about the characteristics of creative young children.

Encouraging Creativity Through Building Confidence and Interests

Creativity and underachievement are tied together in this article to provide suggestions to parents and teachers about ways in which children can be encouraged to develop the confidence to create and achieve while preventing the problems of dependencies and the pressures that inhibit creative productivity. Thus, underachievement is prevented by providing an environment for healthy psychological development. The assessment component of this article permits parents and teachers to have a better understanding of where their children are in terms of intellectual growth and creative characteristics. Thus, assessment, if interpreted and used carefully, can help adults guide preschool children to intellectual confidence.

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Figure 1

SAMPLE ITEMS FROM PRIDE

ITEM #	ITEM	CHARACTERISTIC
1	My child gets interested in things for a long time.	Wide interests, task commitment
9	My child has a make-believe friend.	Imagination
12	My child likes to make up jokes.	Sense of humor
17*	My child gets bored easily.	Independence
18	My child likes to take things apart to see how they work.	Curiosity
19	I enjoy make-believe play with my child.	Biographical
20	My child has many interests.	Wide interests
22	My child is quite reflective, rather than impulsive.	Reflectiveness
26*	My child usually does whatever other children do.	Independence
27	My child often does two things at the same time that aren't usually done together.	Unusual interest, attraction to complexity
29	My child seems to do things differently than other children.	Independence
32	My child can do some things that seem very difficult.	Attraction to complexity
37*	When things get hard, my child gives up and does something else.	Independence
38	My child likes to take walks alone.	Independence

**Negatively related to creativity.*

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CREATIVITY — ONE MOTHER'S PERSPECTIVE

By Stacey L. Hayden

Creativity has been said to be the "highest form of mental functioning." Creativity is where the mind knows no limits, no rules, and no boundaries. The geniuses, inventors, and dreamers come from this kind of mental functioning. The definition of create as given by Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary is as follows: "To bring into being; to cause to exist.... To produce as a work of thought or imagination."

Why don't we see imagination? Where are our geniuses today? Are we stifling these young creative minds? We don't see the geniuses because as a society, we don't know how to "deal with" the creative, divergent thinkers of our time. We try to put these innovative thinkers "in a box" because they think "outside the lines."

"We are all creative," says Jane Piirto, Ph.D. In her book, *Understanding Those Who Create* (1998), she states, "Those who are more creative than others have learned to take risks, to value complexity, to see the world or their own surroundings with naivete. Either they have learned to be creative or their creativity has not been pushed down, stifled, and diminished by sarcasm and abuse."

I have a story to share regarding creativity that was stifled at an early age. My mother told me about an early childhood experience she had in elementary school. The teacher handed out a photocopy of an outline of a bird for each child to color. My mother told me she had the bird pictured in her mind done in brilliant colors. She diligently started coloring. The teacher looked over her shoulder and said "Gloria, birds don't really look that way." She said the bird was multi-colored with striped wings and to her, it was beautiful. My mother shared her feelings of disappointment and sadness with me.

"Imagination has little or no place in our schools," says Thomas Armstrong, PhD. In his book *In Their Own Way* (2000), he points out that imaginative answers on most tests receive no credit. Teachers discourage fantasy-oriented responses because they take up valuable class time.

Armstrong talks about the fact that children before the age of seven or eight are highly imaginative. They have the ability to take a simple household object such as a matchbox and transform it, through fantasy, into a car, a house, a piece of furniture, an animal, or any of a thousand other objects. They look at smudges on walls and swirling clouds and see marvelous scenes. Albert Einstein said, "Imagination is more important than knowledge." If only a few more of us could open our minds and share his sentiments.

From a mother's perspective, I would like to share with you some thoughts and ideas on how to identify and nurture creativity with your gifted children and within yourselves. As I am on the learning path about giftedness in my children, I am getting in touch with my own giftedness for the first time in 37 years. As the oldest of three children, I was raised in a highly dysfunctional home with two alcoholic parents. They could barely meet their own needs, let alone my needs. Any extras ot a priority — daily survival was. Unfortunately, I never knew what it was like to be identified as gifted, let alone be appropriately challenged.

Stefanie Tolan (1994) noted that whoever gifted adults may be, they are people with unusual minds: "Gifted children do not disappear when they graduate from high school or finish college or graduate degrees. They become gifted adults. If they enter adulthood blind to their unusual mental capabilities, they may go through their lives fragmented, frustrated, unfulfilled and alienated from their innermost beings" (p. 137). Giftedness is within, and not without.

I remember reading this in an article and actually felt hopeful about my future. Although as a child I may not have had adequate challenges, I am creating my own adventures as a grown woman today. This has been an invaluable lesson for me and my children are able to benefit from my new learning.

How do we identify the creative ones? Creative people can be frustrating to be around. Sometimes, they can appear not to think with any sort of logic or reasoning. I remember a very specific evening sitting with my son in bed reading him a book. He appeared to have interest, until page three when he pointed to the stapled binding in the center of the book and said, "Mom, how do the staples get in the middle of the book? The stapler can't reach that far in the center of the book." I knew then that there was something different about my son.

In an article written by Judy Galbraith and Katrina Wentzel on creativity they point out that children with active, vivid imaginations are a joy. They have endless energy for the things they love to do — dance, build, pound the piano, design. They are excellent problem-solvers because they can see solutions that rarely occur to other children — or adults. They also say there are very practical reasons to view the development of creativity as an essential part of learning and growing up. These children are able to view things from different perspectives — an invaluable leadership quality. Plus, being creative helps them solve problems, and problems, whether they're large or small, are something we all have to deal with.

"Children who are highly creative and inventive like to originate ideas and answers; often these children disregard directions, or balk at them," says Joan Franklin Smutny, Sally Yahnke Walker and Elizabeth Meckstroth in their book, *Teaching Young Gifted Children in the Regular Classroom* (1997). I have experienced some of the unique challenges first-hand of having two highly gifted, creative children. I am a mother of a six-year old boy and a four-year old girl. Although I would never trade them, my children can be very trying and exhausting at times. The example I mentioned of reading with my son is just one example of how these children look beyond the obvious. My son heard the story, but was more interested in the "creation" of the book itself — not the story. Believe me, there are many days when I wonder if we can get through a simple daily task without pondering the universe.

Judy Galbraith and KaTrina Wentzel (2001) also mention

that the very things that are the strengths of creatively gifted children can become their weaknesses and prevent their talents from developing in constructive ways. The ability to look at things from different perspectives may keep a child from seeing the obvious. The need to be creative may make the sometimes-necessary, ordinary, and mundane task nearly impossible. Then I remind myself, "These kids can't help it." This is the way they were made, the way their minds are wired. The average man looks at the world and sees what everyone else sees, while the creatively gifted man looks at the same world and thinks what no one else has thought.

Judy Galbraith and KaTrina Wentzel (2001) say, "The highly creative child is the one who explains a 'better use' for a light bulb, takes an hour to ingeniously fix a broken pencil instead of grabbing a new one, or adds layers of minute detail to a drawing. This may also be the child who has difficulty completing standard or traditional classroom assignments, following schedules, or focusing on structured tasks." Although every child is unique, creatively gifted children share some common traits. A gifted child with this pre-disposition may:

- Have imaginary friends
- Enjoy acting and pretending
- Spend free time drawing, painting, sculpting, singing, or dancing
- Use materials in new and interesting ways
- Have lots of ideas to share
- Invent words, objects, or concepts
- Respond to questions with a list of possible answers

How do we nurture these divergent minds? The above quote emphasizes the need for these minds to be nurtured. For me personally, I have learned that my giftedness never went away, it was always there, waiting to flourish. My sense of self grew from the adversity that I came from, and wisdom well beyond my years has greatly benefited me.

Treat people as if they were what
they ought to be
and you help them to become
what they are capable of being.

Goethe

Above everything else, these children aren't just "brains." They are not machines; we can't turn them on and off like a television set. These are children with feelings and emotions. This is why we must help nurture these precious lives.

"You're very bright, you just don't apply yourself.... You are over-sensitive, learn to toughen-up!....Where do you come up with those ideas?" These are just a few statements I heard during my youth. Criticism hinders creative development. If we want to see creativity, we need to nurture creativity. People who make comments like these, don't understand gifted , nor do they care to. The best way to nurture our children is to refrain from any form of criticism. A friend of mine put this so eloquently, "Nurturing and creativity go hand-in-hand. They interface and interrelate." We must be loving, kind, flexible and compassionate with our children and with ourselves.

In closing, I would like to share a condensed version of a story about a girl named Sarah from the book, *Your Gifted Child*, by Joan Franklin Smutny, Kathleen Veenker and Stephen Veenker (1989, pp. 90-92).

All children love to read, right? Wrong. I didn't. As a two-year old I found storybooks dull. After a few pages of tolerating them (even then I tried to be polite) I squirmed off the reader's lap, took another book, and created new, alternative plots to fit the pictures I saw. This disappointed the adults. It was ever so much more exciting to venture off into new worlds, full of wild exotic preposterous stories.

As I approached kindergarten I was talking to myself for hours, wearing odd clothes, asking questions of passersby, hiding out in neighbors' garages and spying on my folks from my favorite tree lookout. I had this strong conviction that I would find someone committing a dastardly crime that no one but myself would see, crouched so quietly in my tree, and that I would become part of a heroic band that would save a screeching victim from some horrid fate.

....Today I continue to talk to myself, but I have given myself the license to do so. It still amazes me how often I feel guilty for this. I am lucky in that I am winning the battle. Imagination makes all the difference between hope and despair.

Last winter I was trudging through snow with a friend. She was complaining about the weather, having to tramp through this horrid stuff, what a bore the train was, and the drudgery of traveling every day. I just said, "I don't mind at all, because I'm imagining that I've been in a ghastly Siberian work camp for months, eating nothing but dry crusts and greasy broth and they've just let me go and this is the last train out of the station to freedom, warmth and good food."

"You're a nut," she said.

And I probably am. But I am a happy nut. For children, imagination is freedom. And often it is the first thing to go in school. What do children gain by giving up their imagination? Despair. Children need imagination to survive. They don't need therapy and entertainment and computer games and chocolate and VCRs. They need their own creative spirits, and if they have lost those, parents and teachers must help them find them again. My imagination is my salvation and I will hold onto it if it's the last thing I do. It is the last train out of the station, and I'm going to be on it.

Way to go, Sarah!

Love your children, whether they are yours or someone else's. Stimulate, encourage and guide them - don't criticize!

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AN IMMODEST PROPOSAL FOR PREVENTING THE CHILDREN WE TEACH FROM BEING A BURDEN TO THEIR PARENTS, SCHOOLS, OR COUNTRY, AND FOR MAKING THEM BENEFICIAL TO THE PUBLIC

By Ray Sheers

I have argued long and hard that creativity is a vital component of students' education, that if we do not foster creativity (indeed, model it and teach it), we are not serving the true educational needs of our students. Thus, we starve them of the intellectual nourishment necessary to sustain life - in fact, to propel the entire human species forward. But, having been wearied out for many years with offering vain, idle, visionary thoughts (fallen through the decades on understandably deaf ears), I fortunately saw the error of my ways and fell upon this proposal. As it is wholly new, so it has something solid and real, is of no expense and little trouble, and fully in our power to implement with the immediacy it warrants. It should be welcomed with open arms by enlightened politicians, parents, teachers, and administrators practically everywhere.

When the question is posed to educators, "Do we want our students to be creative?", the knee-jerk response is, "Of course, we do." How utterly preposterous! I think it's high time for schools to stop giving lip service to this false god we call creativity and do everything they can to wipe it out, to see it as the plague that it is. Then, when asked the question in the future, educators can honestly and unequivocally say "Absolutely not! No creativity here. As soon as creativity rears its ugly head, we lop it off, and if it grows back, we redouble our efforts until it hasn't the energy left to regenerate itself. After all, it is disruptive, disquieting, dissonant—and disorderly. Messy stuff, indeed, this creativity. Well deserving of destruction."

That should end the matter once and for all. No more cowardly pretense. For too long we've beat about the bush of creativity. It's time we yanked it up by the roots, thereby eliminating it forever from our schools.

A triple-pronged approach is necessary for this proposal's full implementation. We will meet resistance primarily from three quarters: children, teachers, and parents. The children are the easiest to vanquish. After all, they are a captive audience hours a day. We control the learning environment, and for the most part, we're already doing an exemplary job of eliminating creativity from most classrooms. Some students may demand more, but I ask you, who ultimately has the power? Obviously, not the students, although in some schools, they wield far more power than they ought, but that will be easy to remedy as soon as we see widespread acceptance and execution of this proposal. And with time, reversing the child's creative impulses won't even be an issue.

However, it's one thing to obliterate creativity in the impressionable young and quite another to see that it doesn't contaminate the school through its heretic proponent, the Creative Teacher, who will attempt to smuggle it in through the back door. When hiring, administrators should be especially wary of potentially Creative Teachers, a rebellious lot—renegades set on disturbing the status quo, quite capable of establishing fertile ground (*fertilemud* as it's now known) where creativity might fester. They are the fifth column, the enemy from within. Be forewarned: Some of those teachers are ruthless in their dedication to reinvigorating the imagination and quite subversive in their tactics. They must be stopped at all costs. And, believe me, administrators, there are ways. But that is a subject for a future treatise.

Money can be saved, politicians. Did you hear me? Tax dollars will no longer have to go to fund gifted education, reportedly the worst offender of promoting creativity among the elite of the school. By eliminating gifted education, we will eliminate several problems with one fell swoop. No more elitism—either among the "gifted" students or their advocates, "gifted teachers." No need for "special" curriculum. No consideration for the "gifted's" special needs. A truly egalitarian approach that should appeal to practically all. This proposal will be the great leveler. After all, we are a democracy.

Of course, the parents of the "gifted" will at first protest, but they are a minority to be sure, albeit a vocal minority. However, they will have to be convinced to see the error of their ways. The third prong needs to hit them squarely between

the eyes to change their thinking. The gloves need to come off. Ask them a few tough questions: Are gifted children easier to raise? Of course not. Quite the contrary. Do they conform well to school situations? Generally, no. Will they fit into the round pegs of the real world where "giftedness" is irrelevant at best? Almost certainly not. Are their children happier being labeled "gifted," the freaks and geeks of the school? Have you no compassion, Mom? Don't you want your son to be happy and well adjusted, Dad? Whose ego is it anyway? Wouldn't life be simpler for everybody if we just did away with the whole notion of "giftedness," which most people (even some educators) translate as "weirdness?" These are tough questions meant to knock this group of parents off their guard, to take their breath away. Remember, these parents are the minority, and, sadly, they are convinced they are doing the right thing for their darlings, but these voices can and must be silenced. A determined and unwavering resolve is the key to controlling this small group that has for too long called the shots in public education.

There's even better news, politicians. With gifted education dismantled, other special education programs will be the next sacred cows to be led to the slaughter. Can this possibly happen? Of course, it can. It is the next logical obstacle standing in the way of educational progress. A new millennium is at hand. Don't fret, it can be done, and as always, the end justifies the means. Legislate, legislate, legislate!

As you are probably aware, some of our Illinois schools are suffering from deadly mold. Indeed, some school districts have been forced to close schools where the mold has allegedly sickened students and teachers. St. Charles, Illinois, is a case in point. I maintain there is an equally (if not more) destructive force afoot contaminating our halls of learning: the aforementioned *fertilemud*. Formerly, you may recall, I advocated the ridiculous notion that schools should provide great pools of *fertilemud* in every classroom. I was even guilty, let me confess, of attempting to create vast reservoirs of it in my own classroom—even before it was a labeled a "gifted classroom."

Fortunately, few administrators bother to open a closed classroom door, so I was immune from detection for quite some time. When I ran out of space for it in the classroom, I foolishly moved into an even larger arena, the school auditorium, where I encouraged the rank growth of creativity through theater arts. I blush to admit that I even encouraged other teachers to participate in this heinous activity. Some actually did. Creativity flourished, infecting students from all walks of the school (even from the Special Education and ESL classes). We had actors, mimes, dancers, and musicians performing before hundreds of people. We had students working together to design and build sets and props. Some students learned to use light and sound to transform a simple stage into a place where magic reigned. Others toyed with special effects to amaze and astound. Some had their lives forever changed by the experience. Mud was everywhere! My audacious behavior could not go undetected for long though, not when one makes a spectacle of students' creativity and even invites the public in to see it and to celebrate students' ity. What folly I engaged in!

My students sometimes even foolishly forgot to wipe their feet before leaving and tracked the mud elsewhere—even into others' classrooms where such a thing was not tolerated. The mud was easily traced back to me. Some students even boldly walked into the principal's office with mud-encrusted shoes, challenging this or that school policy. I warned them. Did they listen? Of course not. They flaunted their newfound freedom, exposing our folly to all. Who could blame them? They felt empowered. Like Icarus, they spread their wings and imagined the heavens within their grasp. What a dangerous and negligent thing for a teacher to do, knowing full well that the mythical Icarus flew too high and ended up crashing into the sea. Do we never learn that the safest route is always the best? That the tried and true paths lead to the greatest success? Some of my colleagues still believe they are correct in promoting creativity, sending their students soaring to the heights of imagination, despite my lengthy arguments of late to the contrary. Such recalcitrant behavior will undoubtedly reap its just rewards (and, alas, punishments). Muddy footprints will be their undoing, I'm afraid.

What is this vile thing, *fertilemud*? It is the lifestuff of imagination, the raw material vital for creativity. It is fecund; it is messy. It is disorder in an otherwise orderly institution. *Fertilemud* is the muck of life in the midst of decay. It is the place where ideas take on a life of their own and breed freely. And where art is sometimes produced. Outsiders look at it and see utter chaos, a swirling dark mass, a nasty, often noisy mess. Most certainly, something we don't want in our schools. One newly-hired administrator visited my classroom and said with dismay that it looked more like a garage sale than a classroom. He was right. There was hardly room for desks and chairs, so crammed was it with easy chairs and rocking chairs, sofas, bird cages, fish bowls, discarded musical instruments, a public telephone booth, end tables, ventriloquist's dummies, a mannequin minus a hand, used clothes, hats, skeletons, candles, bells, a grocery shopping cart—the stuff of life. Most everything had been picked up off the street and brought to my classroom by misguided students who knew we'd find a use for it somehow, someday. Administrators, as a rule, rightly loathe *fertilemud* for its unpredictable, mercurial nature and its seemingly unfathomable depths, as treacherous and deadly as quicksand. Some students, though, view it as the watering hole that makes life inside a school tolerable.

An Illinois school district is spending well over a million tax dollars to investigate and remove the toxic mold that reportedly infests one of its schools. We've spent a fortune to remove deadly asbestos from schools all over the nation. The least we can do is disinfect our halls of learning by eliminating the *fertilemud* that defiles those same institutions. And it won't cost us a thing. In fact, it will save us money.

Unfortunately, *fertilemud* is not only found in some schools, but even in some homes. A small group of parents falsely believe that encouraging imagination and creativity will aid their children in school. Indeed, some go so far as to allow their children free rein of their imagination from birth on. Obviously, some of the worst offenders are the parents of the so-called "gifted." Some of these parents (don't laugh) even read to their children or play them classical music while they're still in the womb, thinking this will benefit their

intellectual and aesthetic development. An alarming number of them are home schooling their children in the early years, only to turn them loose later in our classrooms, having already infected them and allowing them to contaminate other children.

Such parents need to be educated. They are not to be blamed. They have been misled and misinformed. They mistakenly believed they were sowing the seeds of a benign creative spirit, when, in fact, they were creating monsters, miscreants of the classroom and misfits of society. Schools then have the terrible burden of undoing the damage before releasing these tormented souls into that larger, unsympathetic society. It can be done, but it is sometimes an arduous task, often taking years to undo the damage. In the process, unfortunately, some of the deviants disrupt the education of other children with their bizarre behavior, with their constant challenging of obvious truths and their obstinate and willful desire to go their own way, with their audacious challenging of authority. Fortunately, when all else fails, or when some of the more common avenues fail to modify the corrupted child's behavior, there are modern and effective drugs of choice readily available to conquer unacceptable outbursts of spontaneity and other forms of disruptive behavior. Thanks be to the pharmaceuticals and to those doctors who so freely prescribe them (and of course to the educators who so wisely suggest them as a means of controlling aberrant behavior)!

We can avoid these extreme measures though if only parents would stop advancing creativity in the home. After all, practically every home has at least one television and video game capable of crippling, if not actually killing, creativity—with even fewer obvious side effects than drugs. And far cheaper! Instead of denigrating television as a behemoth devouring our children's minds, educators should be promoting it as the positive influence it has in quashing that real monster, Imagination. Trust me, you will not find much *fertilemud* in a house where television reigns. A tip of the hat is in order to the media moguls who make it possible for us to have this underrated panacea available to practically all—24/7, as they say in TV land.

While in a praising mood, let me be the first to raise the cry, "Blessed are the Test Makers, for they are the pace setters of education." In the past (prior to my recent epiphany), I had always looked upon them with utter loathing. Now, I realize that without their guidance, educators would be sailors set adrift with their precious cargo of young souls in a vast sea of infinite knowledge and possibility. Test makers (and the politicians who are their latest and greatest proponents) rightly set the course for us, steering us safely between points A and B. They define the curriculum and drive our classrooms. They force us to learn the correct formula for good writing, minus that nasty wriggling worm in the apple: Creativity. Since it can't be measured, (thank the deities of tests and measurements), it obviously has no place in good writing, which explains its absence in the state's writing rubric, I'm told. We are the lucky recipients of the multiple choice answers on reading tests where there is only one correct answer, A,B,C, or D. Those students who see possible answers E, F or G are obviously suffering from minds running amuck. And just let them try to justify their warped views in the open-ended response section of the test. Just let them waste their time and lower their score. With enough testing and the proper guidance, students will see the futility of such puerile rebellion.

Fortunately, more and more teachers are being ordered (either explicitly or implicitly) to teach to the test in order to raise scores and subsequently, their district's esteem, parents' property values, and politicians' approval ratings. If it's not going to show up on the test, why teach it? You don't have to be brilliant to figure that out. With so much riding on test scores (including job security for teachers and administrators alike) why would a teacher with half a brain do anything else? The day has come when teachers compete with teachers for the highest scores on these tests. Schools compete with neighboring schools (even within the same district) and of course, there is fierce and healthy competition among districts. There are some hold-outs, though, some obstinate folk who believe that imagination is more important than knowledge. Not an especially new or unique idea, you understand. Albert Einstein first said it. He would have made a lousy teacher in today's public schools with that attitude. No wonder he had trouble in school—even passing mathematics! Maybe he should have kept his nose out of philosophy and American education and stuck to physics where he might have known a thing or two.

I am not so violently bent upon my own opinion as to reject any offer proposed by wise men (or women) which shall be found equally innocent, cheap, easy, and effectual. The great satirist, Jonathan Swift, to whom I owe the inspiration (and more than a few of the words) for this article, advanced a far more daring and shocking proposal in the 18th century to rid Ireland of the problem of its teeming masses of poverty-stricken children. His solution? Breed them as gastronomical delicacies to be sold to the English. He wrote, "I have been assured by a very knowing American of my acquaintance in London, that a young healthy child, well nursed, is, at a year old, a most delicious, nourishing, and wholesome food, whether stewed, roasted, baked, or boiled; and I make no doubt that it will equally serve in a fricassee or a ragout." It was a dark time in Irish history, and through satire he cast a garish and penetrating light on what he felt to be one of the unspeakable horrors of his time—the mistreatment of the Irish by the English, particularly the innocent victims made to suffer the most, the young Irish children. When creativity is squandered or squelched by the very institution that should be fostering it, we inch ever closer toward intellectual mediocrity. And mediocrity, after all, is but another kind of poverty—intellectual, spiritual, and artistic. Ironically, in the richest country in the world we impose it daily on the children who are starving in our schools and in our society. We are rightly appalled by the unspeakable notion of devouring children (as were Swift's contemporaries). Yet we routinely and unflinchingly sacrifice our brightest minds on the altar of mediocrity we've allowed to be erected in our schools.

Most Americans consider the ancient Chinese practice of binding children's feet to have been unbelievably barbaric. It crippled them for life merely to adhere to an arbitrary standard of beauty and status. It's difficult for us to comprehend that such a custom could have been practiced by a civilized people for hundreds of years. And yet, is it any less barbaric to bind

children's minds? If we accept mediocrity, we step back in time to a darker age where superstition reigns over science; where intolerance tramples on human rights; where, by our indifference, ignorance and inhumanity we sanction the building of crematoria to annihilate other races. And I fear we are not merely accepting mediocrity, we are embracing it.

Postscript

Most of this article was written prior to the earth-shattering events of September 11, 2001. Suddenly, the dark shadow of terrorism has changed everything in our schools, our homes, our economy, our nation, our world. One cannot help but wonder about the relevancy of a discussion of creativity in the wake of such horrific acts of violence. Certainly, artists will do what they have always done—reflect and respond to the tragedy. From devastation art will spring, as it always has. But that is not enough. These, unfortunately, are not the first, nor are they likely to be the last acts of violence against our nation. Future terrorist attacks may be even more inhuman, our losses incomprehensible. The history of mankind is written in the blood of countless victims of acts so horrible they make us want to weep.

We need to realize, however, that these recent attacks on our country were not conceived in mediocre minds. Whatever else may be said about the masterminds of such cruel and heinous acts, we cannot and ought not ignore the fact that it was devastation of such scope and magnitude as to be unimaginable to most of us. And yet, someone imagined it, planned it, and executed it. Even the President said he had never dreamed such a thing could happen. That fact is, though, that it should have been imagined. We need creative thinkers not just to produce works of art in reaction to such nightmares, but we need them to imagine the unimaginable, to predict such catastrophic events, to have our nightmares in our stead so that we may sleep nights. Someone has to think the unthinkable and plan for such contingencies that seem more and more likely to occur in this uncertain world. Not to do so may mean our annihilation.

In a very real sense, creative and divergent thinkers are our shamans, those holy men who dive into the murky waters of the unconscious and the collective unconscious to bring us Truth and not just Beauty. Our schools and our society should be cultivating such minds in order to combat terrorism and other threats to our country, indeed, our civilization. If art isn't a legitimate enough reason to promote creativity (and, sadly, for many, it isn't), the events of September 11 certainly have provided a more palpable and exigent one. More than ever we need our gifted to dive into the depths of fertilemud for us so that we as a people may rise from the ashes of New York and Washington, D.C. with renewed vision and purpose. Our very survival may depend upon it.

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FINDING LOST KEYS: CREATIVITY AND THE FINE ARTS

By Michael Cannon

Creativity in art, like ever other form of
Creative activity, consists in triumph over given
Determined, concrete life, it is a victory over the world.

— Nicolas Berdyaev

Nicolas Berdyaev, a 20th century Russian political/religious thinker, makes a critical observation about the nature of artistic creativity. With this in mind, I would like to consider the following: (1) How we, as teachers of gifted students, might give them the opportunity to appreciate the creative achievement of those artists who have triumphed over their world and in the process changed it forever; and (2) How we might give our students the chance to create their own artistic products and performances.

There are two possible approaches to understanding the place of the fine arts in the creative process for students. One way is to use significant artistic achievements from the past to focus learning, both on the work itself and on its place in the milieu of its creation. Another approach is to provide opportunities for students to experience art directly—by creating, making, and inventing. When both approaches can be , students become intensely involved in the learning process and the content itself reflects more of the complete human experience.

In the study of the humanities, whether it is an interdisciplinary curriculum or separate classes in social studies and language arts, the visual and performing arts play a pivotal, though often ignored role in understanding the concepts and dynamics of these content areas. There are three avenues open to utilizing the fine arts to deepen student understanding.

First, a work of art can be used to stimulate student interest in an area of study. Like the spurs used by horseback riders, a well-selected piece of art can motivate the students and direct them along the course the teacher has in mind. It is especially useful at the beginning of a lesson to focus student attention on the underlying concepts and ideas in a different format. For example, in a study of World War II, or of the Holocaust, play the opening of Shostakovich Symphony No. 13, "Babi Yar" in

conjunction with reading Yevgeny Yevtushenko's poem by the same name. Both these works, which recount in different forms the murder of several thousand Jews in Kiev, are most likely unfamiliar to most students and the novelty adds to the impact. This approach is equally useful in both the study of literature and social studies.

Art can also be the key to understanding a past time, a culture, and/or work of literature. Like the key to a long-closed room, works of art can unlock doors to understanding that might remain shut. In preparation for a study of Keats, Tennyson, and/or Arthurian legend, the paintings of the Pre-Raphaelite and Victorian artists such as, John Waterhouse and Sir Frank Dicksee, can spark discussion and debate. Presented before students read the individual works such as, Keats' "La Belle Dame Sans Merci," Tennyson's "The Lady of Shalott," or Malory's *Le Morte D'Arthur,* the paintings can be used to speculate on the narrative. After reading the text(s), students can analyze the different artistic/literary responses to common themes and ideas. Like the song of Keats' nightingale, works of art are

> *Charm'd magic casements, opening on the foam*
> *Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.*

Thirdly, a work of art can be the core around which an entire unit of study is created, like a star with planets in orbit around it. To fulfill this function, the work of art needs to be particularly rich and suggestive. While visual arts and music can certainly be employed in this way, a more challenging and complex work, such as opera, may be more effective. Opera, with its synthesis of text, drama, dance, instrumental and vocal music, has been called the highest form of artistic expression. To use an opera as the core of study, start with an opera that has strong historical or literary ties to a specific period. For example, Puccini's *La Boheme* which takes place in 19th century France is an excellent focus for the study of the Industrial Revolution and European history. And as the central characters have occupations that span the humanities (author, musician, artist, philosopher), they can inspire a number of independent study projects. Other operas that have strong historical/cultural possibilities include *Tosca, Aida*, and *Madame Butterfly*. Operas with direct literary antecedents abound, from *La Cenerentola* to *Eugene Onegin*. Selected carefully, a complex work of art can offer many possibilities as the core of a unit of study.

However much art is used in the curriculum in the ways cited above, when students actually create art on their own, learning moves into another dimension altogether. Learning to play a musical instrument, or sing; to draw, paint and sculpt; to dance and act are all vital to the education of gifted children. And when these activities are connected with one or more of the core subjects in a performance and/or demonstration, the possibilities for student involvement and excitement are enormous. Two examples in an elementary and middle school will demonstrate what I mean.

On an elementary campus, the genre under study for the six weeks was biography and among the standards being covered were multicultural literature and drama. Cesar Chavez was chosen as the subject and students conducted research on the internet to gather facts. A play was located and as students acquired parts and learned lines, great things began to happen. They came up with new ideas for staging, props, and action. They brought their violins and began writing text about Cesar Chavez for music they were learning in orchestra. Another student wrote new words to a song by a favorite singer and intended to sing them for the performance. The dramatic presentation fueled creative responses that the teacher never expected.

Swords cross and Shakespeare takes on new life in a summer program for gifted and talented middle school students. For a month, students are immersed in the Rennaissance, learning art techniques of the period while creating their own paintings, ceramics, and masks. They learn to play and sing madrigals and other period music and perform dances that would have been familiar to Elizabeth I. The class of weapons reverberates as they learn the basics of fencing and Renaissance sword and dagger fighting, a skill that is very useful in drama. And as they learn their parts in *Romeo and Juliet, Macbeth*, or *Midsummer Night's Dream*, the ideals and concepts of the Renaissance become real in a way that would be difficult to accomplish in an ordinary school setting. The culminating performance of the plays and music, sword fighting demonstrations, and display of art work for a public audience brings everything together.

Whether students explore paintings to generate new ideas, use art as a means to understanding a culture or text, research opera as the core of their study, or perform on their own, the fine arts are essential to the creative growth of gifted students.

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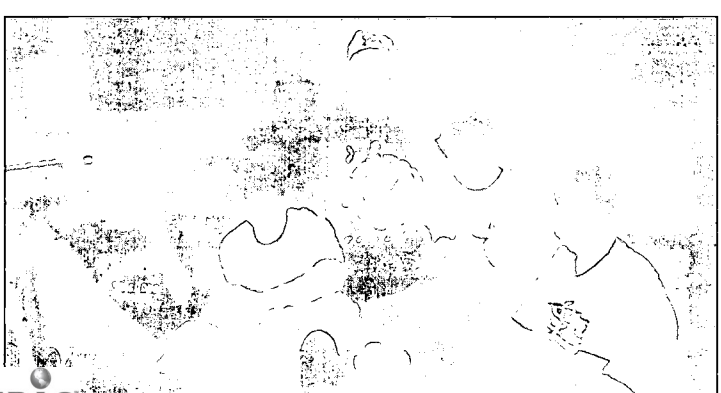

THE FUTURE OF THE GIFTED IN THE 21ST CENTURY: THE NEED FOR CREATIVE SOLUTIONS TO PERENNIAL PROBLEMS

by Maurice D. Fisher and Michael E. Walters

"The price of greatness is responsibility." Winston Churchill.

In this time of national crisis resulting from terrorism at home and abroad, it is important that we carefully examine our gifted programs to determine if they help students to understand world affairs and the positive elements of Western civilization. This is also a time of great need in the gifted field for examining the basic principals of differential education and determining whether these principals are relevant to the "War Against Terrorism."The survival of democracy depends upon whether we are properly educating gifted and regular education students to understand the political and economic challenges the United States will face in order to overcome the bin Ladens and Omars of the world. A stimulating and educational humanities and arts curriculum can help gifted students gain insights into and understanding of these serious threats to our nation.

As editors, authors and publishers of books and articles on educating the gifted, we work with many outstanding writers in this field. Based upon our observations of their insights as educators and idea-developers, the potential contributions of these individuals toward improving the discipline of differential education is not being fully recognized in gifted education publications, particularly in relation to current national and world events. In order to fulfill the promising bright future of differential education in a time of national crisis, these writers/educators must be heeded at a more serious level than is now apparent. They are very much concerned with the lack of national direction in developing a rigorous and appropriate humanities and arts curriculum for the gifted.

Their prescription, the design of comprehensive and unified programs in the humanities and arts, should be more thoroughly discussed in the gifted education literature and aggressively implemented by school districts across the country. Only when this change in the direction of gifted education has occurred will we feel more secure about the integrity of differential education in the 21st century and the validity of gifted programs for educating students to develop and effectively contribute to our nation's victory over terrorism.

History has shown continuously the need to have gifted leaders in positions of power who are well-schooled in the humanities and arts. Our nation has been fortunate in producing such leaders in times of crisis. During the American revolution and afterwards we had such individuals as George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Alexander Hamilton and John Marshall who gave the new country guidance and direction. Another example is during the American Civil War which threatened the unity of the United States; the leadership and skills of Abraham Lincoln held us together. During the depression and World War II, we benefited from the leadership skills of Franklin Delano elt. The challenges of the Cold War were met by the outstanding leadership abilities of Harry S. Truman and John F. Kennedy who made very crucial decisions under great international pressure. All of these individuals were students of the humanities and arts.

A strong humanities and arts curriculum will help gifted students to achieve the following levels of leadership and understanding:

1. Study history to determine how the United States has become the greatest democracy in the modern world.
2. Examine various cultures and religions of the world to identify their similarities, differences and points of conflict.
3. Examine different musical and art forms to see how aesthetic appreciation can be expressed in a variety of ways.
4. Study the great literature and poetry of the world as an expression of human creativity among different nations and cultures.
5. Develop a profound understanding of the humanities and arts.
6. Appreciate a challenging humanities and arts curriculum that promotes rigorous problem solving, leadership and holistic thinking.
7. Use information from the humanities and arts to work in teams, small groups and problem-solving communities.
8. Apply computer knowledge and skills to design new art forms and innovative ideas in literature, history, and philosophy.
9. Acquire interdisciplinary knowledge based upon the study of different areas of the humanities and arts.
10. Stimulate gifted children's sensibility levels through the study of history, philosophy, music, literature and other areas of the humanities and arts.

Our other concerns about the future of this important field of education center around the successful resolution of two problems within the next several years: the design of a comprehensive system for identifying the gifted (Fisher, 1994), and the construction of a core gifted education curriculum for the elementary through high school levels.

Comprehensive System for Identifying the Gifted

Unfortunately, most of our current procedures for identifying the gifted do not take objective account of the broad range and types of giftedness found in our public schools. By

reexamining the ideas of the great thinkers of child development such as Jean Piaget (Gruber & Voneche, 1977), Jerome Bruner (1966) and Maria Montessori (1964) — who apparently have been "thrown down" a memory-hole by many contemporary educators — we can learn a great deal about how the human mind develops, expands its interests and abilities, and reaches peak levels of functioning.

This information in combination with the current research of knowledgeable experts on human intelligence (e.g., Gardner, 1983, 1991, 1993, 1997, 1999; Sternberg, 1985, 1997, 2000) will help educators of the gifted determine what is missing from their identification procedures and what needs to be accomplished to fill these gaps. It is essential for us to begin using a comprehensive procedure (Fisher, 1994) nationwide which concentrates upon several areas of import. This procedure has been designed to be culturally fair for administration to all ethnic groups.

Accelerated Early Development

Evaluations of children's early motor, language, reading, thinking and artistic/musical abilities should be included in all determinations of giftedness. This is where the educator's knowledge of theorists and researchers such as Piaget (Gruber & Voneche, 1977), Bruner (1966), and Gardner (1983) can be used to make valid assessments of precocious development during infancy and the preschool years. To obtain this information, it may be necessary to interview parents or send them a list of questions to answer about this period in their children's development.

Behavioral and Learning Characteristics in the School and Home

This area of assessment includes classroom and out-of-school behaviors which indicate giftedness. Different areas such as independent learning, self-motivation, inventiveness, task involvement and reasoning-logical thinking would be assessed and reported by teachers who have known the student for at least one semester. Preferably, at least two teachers who are familiar with the student would evaluate these behaviors and characteristics.

Aesthetic Perceptions and Interests

The affinity for discussing ideas and interests in higher-level thinking is the type of characteristic assessed under this part of a comprehensive identification system. Characteristics like sensibility represent the core of the gifted student's mind. It is possible that the gifted student will not clearly show many of these characteristics until adolescence. However, certain highly gifted youngsters may demonstrate them in elementary school or earlier.

We must increase the ability and confidence of classroom teachers to identify the gifted by using the above categories of accelerated early development, behavioral and learning characteristics in the school and home, and aesthetic perceptions and interests. Since it will require the intensive training of regular and gifted education teachers to accomplish this goal, let us begin this necessary task immediately in order to realize the vision of gifted education in the 21st century and

Core Gifted Education Curriculum

It will take several years to design and implement such a curriculum because we must first carefully reexamine and revise current instructional approaches which are generally inadequate for educating the gifted. In the past, individuals such as Robert M. Hutchins and Mortimer Adler have attempted to use the Great Books as core curriculum in the humanities. Even historians such as Ariel and Will Durant have used the humanities and arts to demonstrate various historical periods. A modern example of this approach to history is the works of Simon Schama who wrote about Rembrandt (1999) and England (2000). Additionally, PBS has presented many documentaries which use the humanities and arts as a basis for understanding human history (e.g., Clark, 1969).

Through engaging in serious reflection, objective research and debate, and critical analysis in the professional journals and at national conferences, we can decide what parts of the present curriculum should be abolished, what features should be continued, and what new content and methods should be added. Such decisions must be based upon objective educational research conducted by impartial investigators, and collaborative work among educators and parents. Our position is that we must develop a core knowledge-based curriculum in the humanities, arts and sciences that has several salient characteristics.

Differentiated Studies in Literature

Beginning in the elementary school, gifted children should study Shakespeare's plays as a basis for analyzing various human emotions, such as, love, fear, hate, and happiness (Walters, 1990). The dilemmas experienced by the characters in these plays demonstrate how great literature illuminates recurring human problems that are relevant to contemporary situations. This theme should extend to the work of other great writers such as Charles Dickens, by showing how their books apply to our own society (Walters, 1996). By studying and reflecting upon such literature, gifted students will gain insights into their own personal values and character (Walters, 1984). Additionally, the novels of the great Russian writers, Tolstoy and Dostoevsky, can help gifted students of world literature to understand many universal dilemmas concerned with love, hate, old age and death.

What influences a gifted child to become a great writer? V. S. Naipaul offers one answer to this question that can probably be generalized to other authors of his caliber. His father, who was a journalist in Trinidad, provided the initial model for developing his career in literature and recently winning the Nobel Prize in Literature (2001). The numerous letters (Aitken, 1999) written by his father while the younger Naipaul was a student at Oxford University reveal the type of parent-child interactions and concerns that can sometimes activate an illustrious career in the humanities. One example of this relationship that clearly illustrates the positive effects a parent can have on his or her gifted child is the following excerpt from a letter (dated 10/5/50) written by Naipaul's father:

My dear Vido,

It must now be 11 p.m. in England. Your first day in the University must have long finished. I am both curious and anxious to know how Oxford reacted to you; or how you reacted to Oxford. Send me a detailed pen-picture of the day.

Don't be scared of being an artist. D. H. Lawrence was an artist through and through; and, for the time being at any rate, you should think as Lawrence. Remember what he used to say, "Art for my sake. If I want to write, I write — and if I don't want to, I won't...." Love from Ma and all, Pa (from Between Father and Son, Family Letters: V.S. Naipaul by Gillon Aitken, Editor, 1999, p. 23).

To emphasize the importance of this bond between parent and gifted child, the *Chicago Tribune* has said of this extraordinary correspondence: "By illuminating a heritage more emotionally profound than we suspected, these wonderful letters complicate and intensify our understanding of the sensibility behind Naipaul's novels and behind the armor of Seepersad Naipaul's brilliant son" (from reviewers' comments, 1999).

Study of Ethics in the Life of the Individual and the Nation

Here the differentiated core curriculum will turn directly to the intellectually powerful philosophers of ethics such as Aristotle, Spinoza, Moses Maimonides, Kant, Martin Buber, Abraham Joshua Heschel, Mohandas Gandhi, Henry David Thoreau, Leo Tolstoy, Abraham Lincoln, Martin Luther King, Jane Addams, Mother Teresa, Winston Churchill, Albert Einstein, Eleanor Roosevelt, Caesar Chavez and Jane Goodall. Examples of the perennial questions of ethics included in this part of the curriculum are: What is morally correct behavior? When is war justified? Is there universally good and bad behavior? Can the writings of these great philosophers of ethics be used to solve modern problems of terrorism, environmental decay, drug abuse, crime, civil rights, abortion and moral decline? If so, how? (LoGiudice & Walters, 1987; Grispino, 2001)

Study of Great Systems of Philosophy

This part of the core curriculum will emphasize Socrates' dictum that "the unexamined life is not worth living." Gifted students will learn that asking the right questions is just as important as giving correct answers. Both points will be stressed by having students examine the Socratic Dialogues in order to reflect upon such universal questions as: What is truth and logic? What is beauty? What is the nature of reality? What is knowledge? What is critical thinking? What is the good life? What is the basis for human communication? Further analysis of these questions will be made by examining the philosophies of John Locke, Descartes, Kant, John Stuart Mill, Bertrand Russell, and Ludwig Witgenstein in terms of their meaning to contemporary life (LoGiudice, 1985). All of these questions are premised on the idea of rigorous investigation and inquiry rather than the usual "trick dog" (superficial teaching methods that neglect the depth of study necessary for understanding these issues) approach currently used in modern education.

Mathematical and Scientific Thinking

The historical study of both fields will be emphasized. The lives and work of the great scientists such as Newton, Einstein, and Bohr will be analyzed to determine what factors in their environment influenced the progress of their ideas. Such fields as cosmology (Hawking, 1988, 2001), quantum physics (Ready, 1989) and prehistoric archaeology (Bleiweiss, 1988) will have a role in this part of the core curriculum so that gifted students can see how science investigates the origins of the universe, physical matter, and mankind.

Isaac Asimov's extensive scientific writings can be used to stimulate gifted students' interest in and knowledge of science (e.g., *Understanding Physics*, 1988; *Atom: Journey Across the Subatomic Cosmos,* 1992; and *Asimov's Chronology of Science and Discovery*, 1994). In addition, the classical summaries of scientific research can serve to peak their interest. As an example, Dr. Philip Tierno, Jr, a noted professor of clinical microbiology and diagnostic immunology at New York University Medical Center describes how a movie and one particular book motivated him to become a biologist: "...My fascination with germs began in childhood, when I read the life story of Louis Pasteur. Around the same time I saw on television a Hollywood movie about Pasteur, starring Paul Muni. Then I read Paul de Kruif's classical book, *The Microbe Hunters*, about Pasteur and the other great pioneers of microbiology, and that got me hooked. Right then I knew that I wanted to become a microbe hunter, too, and take part in the quest to solve the germ puzzles that lie at the heart of human health and disease, and indeed of all biology." (*The Secret Life of Germs*, 2001).

Another example of an outstanding mentor relationship is described by the famous neurologist and writer, Oliver Sacks (1985, 1990, 2001), whose uncle, a chemist, served as his mentor and stimulated his desire to become a scientist. Sacks, an English child whose parents were physicians, was sent to the safety of a private school in the country during the German bombing of London (World War II — Battle of Britain). After returning to London in the summer of 1943 at the age of ten, he began visiting his Uncle Tungsten again and studying chemistry with him. In regard to this mentor relationship, he said: "Above all, I delighted in being able to visit Uncle Tungsten again — his place, at least, seemed relatively unchanged (though tungsten was now in somewhat short supply, because of the vast quantities needed for making tungsten steel for armor plating). I think he also delighted in having his young protege back, for he would spend hours with me in his factory and his lab, answering questions as fast as I could ask them. . ."(from *Uncle Tungsten: Memories of a Chemical Boyhood*, 2001 by Oliver Sacks, p. 34).

Differentiated Arts Curriculum

The visual arts have been particularly ignored in recent years in America's public schools. But the gifted curriculum must reawaken interest in both the visual and performing arts (painting, sculpture, music, dance and drama) through a variety of creative strategies. Our recommendations are as follows:

1. Use of mentors from the arts who work with promising gifted students on a continuous and systematic basis.
2. An intensive program in music and arts appreciation beginning in kindergarten and continuing through high school.
3. Periodic visits to museums and symphony, jazz, folk and other performances to stimulate gifted children's sensibility to the great art and music of the United States and the World.
4. Study of biographies of great musicians, artists, dancers and other performing artists.

5. Search and analysis of extensive information on the internet (Fisher. 1997) concerning art museums, the lives of famous musicians and artists, and the displays of painting and sculptures from art galleries around the world.
6. Study of CD ROMs (Fisher, 1997) that cover the great art museums of the world.
7. Participation in plays and viewing great plays from Shakespeare to Arthur Miller.
8. Viewing PBS shows and video tapes on the performing arts.

As an example of Number 8 above, PBS Channel 13 (New York City) had a show on December 16, 2001 concerned with the American dancer, Merce Cunningham (*American Masters*), followed by "Rediscovering Dave Brubeck," the famous jazz pianist. Both shows provide gifted students with insights into the physical talents and intellectual ideas of these great performers.

In addition, we have found that gifted students can learn a great deal about different artists by studying quotations, such as:

> What's the most significant thing about her? When you get right down to the nitty-gritty, it's that she believed in me. There was a time when my parents and Miss DeLay were the only people in the world who believed I could have a career. The fact that I was disabled — a lot of people looked at me with distorted vision. And she never did. She was able to see. —Itzhak Perlman, 1945- (concert violinist on his great teacher, Dorothy DeLay, of the Juilliard School of Music).
>
> The conductor and director must create the atmosphere, but a situation must exist where the singers can think and use their own remarkable faculties. It's like bringing up a gifted child. —Sarah Caldwell (symphony orchestra and opera conductor; in "Sarah Caldwell: The Flamboyant of the Opera," by Jane S. Appleton, 1975).
>
> ....In recent years I have done a good deal of consultation with young painters, and the job of each is to find a gallery which will exhibit his paintings; to do so he must compete with scores of others equally gifted who are likewise searching for space. In fact, I find no aspect of life which is free from competition, and I find it in no way degrading to enter that battle and to throw my talent upon its mercies. —James Michener, 1907-1997 (author, Pulitzer Prize winner; from Sports in America, 1976).
>
> No, painting is not made to decorate apartments. It's an offensive and defensive weapon against the enemy. —Pablo Picasso, 1881-1973 (Spanish painter, originator of Cubism; from an interview in 1945).
>
> I would like to paint as the bird sings. —Claude Monet, 1840-1926 (painter, founder of the Impressionistic movement).
>
> Paint as you see nature yourself. If you don't see nature right with an individual feeling, you will never be a painter, and all the teaching cannot make you one. A painter must work out his own problem in his art, as everyone must work out his own problem in life. -Claude Monet, 1840-1926 (painter, founder of the Impressionistic movement; from Monet, Biography and Catalogue Raisonne by D. Wildenstein, 1974).
>
> Read all the Shakespeare you can; if you can play Shakespeare, you can play anything. —John Carradine, 1906-88 (movie actor, Shakespearean performer).
>
> Bobby seemed unstoppable. Years later, when asked, "How long have you wanted a ballet company?" Bobby responded, "Since I was nine years old." Everywhere he went, he danced. One afternoon in fifth grade at Summit Elementary, after weeks of rain, when the physical education teacher had run out of ideas for indoor sports activities, Bobby offered to teach them all how to polka.... (from The Joffrey Ballet by Sahsa Anawalt, 1996).

Importance of Parent Involvement and Mentoring in the Education of Gifted Students

Rivero (2000) and Smutny (2001) have carefully detailed the significant role that parents can play in the education of their gifted sons and daughters. This role is particularly important in a differential humanities and arts program because parents can provide their children with many interesting examples of how such areas as history, philosophy, music and the arts can help to enrich one's life and help in solving many problems encountered along the road of life. Some examples of individuals who were outstanding mentors were the parents of Benny Goodman and George Gershwin who encouraged their talented children to learn music. Some earlier examples of parental mentoring are the parents of Bach, Mozart and Brahms who provided their children with extensive lessons and encouragement to become great classical musicians and composers.

Further instances of effective parent-mentors come from the lives of: (a) the Nobel Laureate in physics, Richard Feynman, whose father constantly challenged him to solve puzzles and mathematical problems; and (b) the world-renowned pediatric neurosurgeon, Ben Carson, whose early life in the Detroit ghetto was challenged by an academically demanding, religious and loving mother. One time, his mother said, "You can do it Bennie. You just set your mind to concentrating.... We'll keep reviewing the times table until you know them better than anyone else in class!" (Carson, 1990, p. 34). The author, James Gleick (1992), describes one of Feynman's favorite stories about his father:

> The adult Richard Feynman became an adept teller of stories about himself, and through these stories came a picture of his father as a man transmitting a set of lessons about science. The lessons were both naive and wise. Melville Feynman placed a high value on curiosity and a low value on outward appearances. He wanted Richard to mistrust jargon and uniforms; as a salesman, he said, he saw the uniforms empty. The pope himself was just a man in a uniform. When Melville took his son on walks, he would turn over stones and tell him about the ants and the worms or the stars and the waves. He favored

process over facts. His desire to explain such things often outstripped his knowledge of them; much later Feynman recognized that his father must have invented sometimes. The gift of these lessons, as Feynman expressed it in his two favorite stories about his father, was a way of thinking about scientific knowledge. (Gleick, 1992, p. 28).

Public institutions can also serve as effective mentors (e.g., Jack London was encouraged to read good books by a public librarian, and Louis Armstrong started learning formal musical performance while in an orphanage near New Orleans). Of course, teachers can also serve as important mentors in the lives of gifted children. James Baldwin had many teachers who encouraged him to write stories. And Willa Cather, who came from the heartland of America (Nebraska), was stimulated to write by her teachers and other community members. Home libraries have also been influential in the lives of many gifted individuals such as Abraham Lincoln, John Stuart Mill and Jane Austen.

Conclusion

The war against terrorism will be won by using many avenues of national effort — political, economic, military, humanitarian and educational. It is essential that programs for the gifted contribute to this national cause by offering rigorous humanities and arts programs. The type of differentiated core curriculum proposed above will stimulate the development of gifted students' reasoning powers, artistic appreciation and improve their understanding of contemporary problems. It should begin in grade one and continue through graduate/professional school. Moreover, it should prepare the gifted for a lifetime of study and reflection concerning the great unanswered questions of our existence: What does it mean to be a human being? What is his place in the universe? What is the best type of political system? What is the good life? When is military power justified? It is obvious that parents must also play a strong role in the development and implementation of this curriculum.

By identifying the great unrecognized thinkers and writers of our time and giving them a national forum for expressing their ideas about how to best educate the gifted, by designing comprehensive procedures for identifying the gifted, and by designing a core knowledge-based curriculum for differential education, we will fulfill and surpass the challenge of educating the gifted in the 21st century and beyond. Let us begin now!

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THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX: THE POWER OF CREATIVITY IN CONTENT

by Karen Meador and Jim Granada

This article discusses the power that results from infusing creative thinking in content in order to encourage students to think outside the box. It examines how existing content standards already include elements of creative thinking and makes suggestions for providing opportunities for "out of the box" ideas in content-driven classrooms. We begin with an examination of the box.

Our world is filled with different kinds of boxes such as shoeboxes, pillboxes, hatboxes, and miter boxes, all of which have a tangible form. In addition, our world contains many other boxes that are more abstract and that type of box forms the basis for this article. Although we cannot see or grasp this box, it definitely has structure. We talk about this box when we say we are "boxed in" or complain that a co-worker cannot "think outside of the box;" yet, we seldom stop to define the box from which we want to escape. Consideration of the following questions helps clarify the nature of the box:

- What is the box?
- Who made the box?
- Who controls the box?

The Nature of the Box

The abstract box may represent the structure, rules, and protocols within which we live. It can also represent common modes of action or thinking that may preclude innovation. The nature of the box varies according to the individual, and often, a highly creative individual needs a box within which to focus. While the structure of a curriculum guide stifles one teacher, one guide frees another by providing needed parameters within which innovation occurs. While some students say an assignment stifles their creativity, others see the same assignment as an opportunity for innovation.

Creator of the Box

Some of us create our own boxes by setting safe limits within which we live and produce. Under these circumstances, the individual controls the box. Students create and control their own boxes when they self-select courses and projects that assure personal success. The fear of failure forces each to stay in a self-made box rather than taking a risk and exploring other options. Other students create their own failure boxes by refusing to make a true effort on an assignment or waiting until the last minute to initiate their work. These actions provide an excuse for failure and the student may remark, "It's O.K. that I made a low grade since I didn't even try anyway." In other words, if the student plans the failure, it's acceptable. It is not acceptable to work hard and then fail. Students also box themselves in by failing to recognize opportunities for generative thinking within learning episodes and assignments.

Control of the Box

An employer or family member may build and control the box. An employee can be boxed in when the company's standard operating procedures discourage innovation in fear of change that might disrupt production. A person may not share a productive idea for fear of losing employment. The company should, however, consider that while an innovation, such as a new invention for more efficiently putting a product in a container would require a packing line to shut down for installation, it might have the potential to save time in the long

run. Parents control the box when their demands for high grades force students into courses that ensure success and make their children fearful of exploring new, unknown areas of study.

The world needs creative people who can think outside of the box. Where would we be today without the creative efforts of individuals such as Henry Ford and Thomas Edison? Employers hire creative thinkers to develop and improve products and design ad campaigns to boost sales. Publishers seek a writer whose words result from original and innovative thinking, and John Q. Public admires inventiveness and hopes that government leaders exercise creative problem solving. Creative thinking facilitates escape from the box; therefore, it is advantageous for educators to determine ways in which we can encourage creative thinking through content.

Getting Out of the Content Box

Educators can easily obtain books filled with exercises that help students practice thinking outside the box. Yet, students may not automatically associate the strategies learned from these with academic content and real life. Students may initially need to isolate and practice skills such as thinking originally or elaborately and resisting closure. Following this initiation, however, they must also receive guidance in applying this type of thinking within an academic context. Creative thinking development within a meaningful context can help create real-world creative thinkers. For example, the student who learns to write with imaginative flair can use this skill in real life communication. Novelists, songwriters, advertisers, and others have benefited from language arts instructors who embedded creative thinking skills with content and helped students get out of the box. When social studies instructors insist that students use Creative Problem Solving and flexible thinking in order to view the world from multiple perspectives, students gain valuable practice in skills needed to solve personal, local, and global problems. Mathematics teachers who demonstrate and appreciate multiple pathways to problem solutions support the positive use of resistance to closure, an important element of creative thinking. Science teachers who use inquiry methods may also encourage students to incubate and reflect, thus combining creative and analytical thinking to reach conclusions. These skills are definitely needed in our community, state, and world leaders if they are to make sound decisions. We want these leaders to think outside the box of past protocol and antiquated decision pathways.

Curriculum Standards

Teachers who aspire to integrate creative thinking skills with the rigors of academics need not reinvent the wheel. Those who have a clear understanding of components of creative thinking often find the basis for the creativity-content connection in local, state, and national standards. For example, the Illinois Learning Standards contain numerous guiding statements that provide opportunities to merge creative thinking and academics. A few examples follows on next page.

The Language of Creativity

dents need to hear the language of creativity, and we develop this language as we make students aware of the creative thinking processes they use within the content areas. When students brainstorm possible research questions or problem solutions, remind them that they are being fluent. When they add details to a science lab report talk about the purpose of elaboration. When they view a situation from multiple perspectives, discuss how they are being flexible thinkers, and, when they develop an innovative new way to display mathematical data, point out the value of original thinking. Later, when we ask students to be more fluent and flexible prior to making a decision, they will understand their task. Other examples of the use of the language of creativity follow in the next section.

Questioning

In our attempts to elicit out of the box thinking from students, we often employ old standby questions such as "what would have happened if . . .?" For example, what would have happened if the Texans had won the Battle of the Alamo? Yet, we must also move beyond questions about how historical changes might have impacted the present into questioning that requires fresh, generative thinking applicable to current events and personal lives. Consider asking "what would happen if . . . ?" prior to decision-making and action. When talking about the war on terrorism, we might provide the following assignment.

What would happen if the United States sent all our military power to Afghanistan? Think fluently in order to discuss multiple effects and consequences of this action. Use flexible thinking to analyze and explain a variety of perspectives of this action. Elaborate upon the reasoning behind each perspective. Following this analysis, develop your own original plan regarding the appropriate disbursement of military personnel. Use the map provided to elaborate on your plan and indicate strategic location of military forces.

We often ask elementary students to think outside the box and consider what would have happened if the events of a story had been changed. What would have happened if the hunter had not arrived at Red Riding Hood's grandmother's house? We can benefit from this thinking practice by asking students to think about the effect of changing story events prior to writing their own narrative. After students establish characters and initiate original story lines, we can ask them to practice fluency by generating multiple plot lines for characters. For example, what would happen if one of the characters in the story had an accident? How would this effect the rest of the story? Would the story be more exciting if this character found a new friend rather than having an accident? What would happen in the rest of the story following this action? We help students resist closure by asking them to explore these various options rather than using the first ideas that enter their minds.

We want students to appreciate creative, innovative thinking and to have appropriate tools and strategies to utilize throughout life. This should enable them to recognize the impact of thinking outside the box and making real-world application of content learning. Their adeptness at opening their own boxes may facilitate success in their personal and professional lives.

STANDARDS	ELEMENT(S) OF CREATIVE THINKING
Language Arts 4B Speak effectively using language appropriate to situation and audience.	• Expressional Fluency, "the ability to express ideas in alternative ways," enables students to "rephrase or restate ideas in a variety of ways to match the characteristics of varied audiences. (Maker, 1996, p. 151)." • Association fluency, "the ability to produce a large quantity of rich relationships among ideas (Maker 1996, p. 151) " improves students' chances of optimal communication with audiences. Analysis of a variety of relationships allows students to select those most relevant to a particular audience.
Language Arts 2B Read and interpret a variety of literary works.	• Point of View: Literature response provides an appropriate avenue for students to practice taking multiple perspectives. • Synthesis: Students become producers of information when they connect information to create new understandings.
Science 11B Know and apply the concepts, principles and processes of technological design. (Early Elementary) 11.b.3c Given a simple design problem, formulate possible solutions. (Middle/Junior High School) 11.B.3c Select the most appropriate design and build a prototype or simulation.	• Solution-Finding: Teach students to use criteria to judge the appropriateness of various problem solutions. Amabile (1996) maintains that those who are taught to evaluate solutions in a positive manner may be better prepared to solve problems creatively than those who have been taught to use negative evaluation (p. 251).
Science 11A: Know and apply the concepts, principles and processes of scientific inquiry. (Early High School) 11A.4e Formulate alternative hypotheses to explain unexpected results.	• Flexible Thinking: Students should practice viewing situations or phenomena from various perspectives in order to consider all possibilities.
Mathematics 9A Demonstrate and apply geometric concepts involving points, lines, planes and space. (Late High School) 9.A.5 Use geometric figures and their properties to solve problems in the arts, the physical and life sciences and the building trades, with and without the use of technology. 9C Construct convincing arguments and proofs to solve problems. (Middle/Junior High School) 9.C.3b Develop and solve problems using geometric relationships and models, with and without the use of technology.	• Sensitivity to Problems: finding problems, detecting difficulties, or detecting missing information • Creative Problem-Solving: Although students must initially learn specific steps for finding solutions, eventually they need ample involvement in tasks that are heuristic rather than algorithmic procedures. "Algorithmic tasks are those for which the path to the solution is clear and straightforward-tasks for which an algorithm exists. . . . heuristic tasks are those not having a clear and readily identifiable path to solution - tasks for which algorithms must be developed (Amabile 1996, p. 35).
Social Science 15B Understand that scarcity necessitates choices by consumers. 15C Understand that scarcity necessitates choices by producers	• Point of View (previously described)

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CULTIVATING THE GIFT OF CREATIVE LISTENING TO MUSIC

By Douglas Ashley

The gift of being able to listen at a very deep level of penetration is perhaps not so easily visible as many other gifts. Yet without this ability there is a serious gap in one's education and development. Such focused listening needs to be cultivated because it can only occur when a potent package of qualities works together. This focus comes from alertness, memory, concentration, and attention among other things. As with other gifts, these essential qualities clearly need to be encouraged, developed, and stimulated.

One of the best ways to do this is through a significant acquaintance with great music. This subject is of particular interest to me as a teacher of music appreciation. Although the music majors at my university do not take this course, there is still a wide range of aptitude and background among the students. Unfortunately, much of what we hear in pop music and on television makes very little demands on us, and it does not require study or relatively long periods of concentration.

Listening to complex musical structures is even regarded by many as a passive thing, although it should be considered an active one. This talent or gift is not, of course, restricted to those who are considered gifted in other areas. However, the ability to listen well aids achievement by developing the previously mentioned listening skills.

From my observations, there appears to be a tremendous number whose potential for quality listening is considerably underdeveloped. Those of us who teach music must make efforts to reach these people through non-technical means. Those who teach gifted children can point out the qualities which fine music expresses — qualities which the gifted already have and innately appreciate. Also, musical intelligence shows in ways not immediately connected to music. Joan Smutny points this out in many places in *Stand Up for Your Gifted Child* (2001).

No doubt teachers can discover other advantages from encouraging more active and discerning listening skills. And surely it is very worthy to help all students cultivate their talent to understand, appraise, and enjoy the tremendous contributions of great music to civilization.

Special attention should be given to the child who has no formal training in music or who comes from a home where great music is not a part of the environment, because the attitude of family and peers is a determining factor in a child's exposure and reaction to classical music. An easy and effective approach is simply though osmosis, so to speak.

The influence of peers was brought home to me when I was a music student in Vienna. In the dining facility of my student dormitory I became acquainted with a group of American students who were studying at an English language division of the University of Vienna. Although there were no music students in that group, nevertheless by the spring term almost all of them had been to the opera more than once. In most cases it meant that I gone very early in the morning three days before the performance and stood in line for student tickets. This investment of time and energy is a telling testament of interest stimulated by environment.

There have been instances on my campus when some students have given parties before an important concert, connecting it with a special social event. This positive atmosphere counteracts the ignorant jokes and negative remarks one sometimes hears about classical music.

The inventiveness, the sense of beauty, the urgent need to communicate, and the achievement of excellence inherent in great music, naturally appeal to the gifted. The impact of emotion controlled by discipline, the balance of unity with variety, and the cohesion of an extended work are easy for the gifted to identify with. Music is a language, and like all languages it is symbolic. Understanding the qualities expressed is the key to understanding their symbolic representation in sound.

It simply is not necessary to have a knowledge of analytic procedures and formal structures or even the ability to read music in order to enjoy it. Although such analytical skills may be required for a successful performance or for evaluating the historical significance of a work, without those skills one can still respond to the qualities and messages expressed.

In addition to the intellectual demand it makes and the spiritual enrichments it affords, fine music is important for other reasons. Most people need to develop audio memory which allows one to focus for an extended time on a cohesive speech, problem, or piece of music as it continually unfolds. Also on the basis of discerning the fine qualities (or lack of them) one is equipped to appraise a work of art in an individual yet educated way.

Making value judgments in this manner also encourages the gifted student to combine value with facts. Without values, how can there be ethics? Without values, what is the need for truth? The arts provide a splendid field for critical evaluation combined with respect for individual taste.

A useful test for value judgments comes from these two questions: What is the work trying to do, and how well does it do it? Obviously both answers must have strongly positive elements for there to be even a basis for a masterwork.

Those who like to think for themselves want and need to come to terms with great works for themselves. Whether it is a play by Shakespeare, a symphony by Beethoven, or a painting by Monet, the gifted deserve to make their own discovery of these and other works. No matter how much the teachers and text book writers want to stress lesser known works thereby omitting some from the traditional canon, the gifted who are trained in critical thinking need time to make their own evaluation and conclusions of what has long been considered the great monuments of civilization.

The discipline of critical and focused listening and of

appraising music is hardly covered in the schools. Certainly there are not any clues in the teen magazines nor much help from other sources.

It is noteworthy how the arts provide a key for understanding societies in various cultural periods. A knowledge of the musical style of a period tells us much about what the period wanted as well as what influenced it.

For instance, we can consider the work of Bach. Coming at the end of the Baroque era (c.1600-1750), his work also culminates one thousand years of complex polyphony. With all due respect to Bach's remarkable contributions, they were possible only because of a notational system allowing exact duration and pitch to be written. It took centuries to develop and refine this system to the point where it could carry the exhaustive contrapuntal structures of the great Baroque composers. Here again, even if one does not know how to analyze Bach's music, one can admire the independent contrapuntal lines overlapping for continuous flow. One can admire how they all work together in a harmonic system giving direction, forward motion, and shape to the total work (Not that I have always succeeded in presenting the glories of Bach's music. A student once wrote that he still did not like Bach's music.)

Nevertheless, Bach's achievements are a powerful reflection of that civilization. It was often the intention of the Baroque composers to bring out a non-verbal message in their work. One favorite way is called tone-painting in which the words are depicted in significant musical figures. Words such as "running down" can be sung to a pattern of notes running down the scale. The symbolism can be more profound as in the Sanctus of Bach's Mass in B minor where groups of triplets represent the Trinity. Such symbols can clearly be heard and interpreted by an experienced listener.

Another important facet of Baroque music is the way the cultural identity of various nations was deliberately expressed by distinct elements of style. Long before there was politically a German or Italian nation, the composers and experienced listeners were clearly aware of what was called Italian, French, German, or British styles. It is important to understand these cultural traditions and the roles they played when considering the forces of nationalism.

A significant revelation of the creative process comes with a study of the music of the great masters of the classical style. The music of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven represents the epitome of the classical era in music (c.1750-1827). In spite of the tremendous emphasis of this period on clarity and formal beauty these composers often break the rules of a superimposed and rigid formal grid.

This style often is a synthesis of distinct musical ideas. The resulting tensions must be resolved and balanced for a work to express classical ideals. A favorite procedure for embodying this aesthetic ideal is the so-called sonata form. It is also often called first movement form because it is used so frequently for the first movement of sonatas, chamber music works, symphonies, and concertos.

It would be distracting and out of proportion here to give a detailed explanation of sonata form. However, the one essential ...e is to present musical ideas and then explore some of their rhythmic and harmonic possibilities through development and intensification. Generally, the tensions increase to about two-thirds through the work giving space for a balanced resolution of the tensions, thereby reaching a settled conclusion.

Although for all intents and purposes the classical period ended with the death of Beethoven in 1827, it was not until 1840 when an abstract of this form appeared in a music textbook, implying that this was one of the most proper ways of composing music (Rosen, 1972). By this time many masterworks had already been written to establish the romantic period. Nevertheless the stale academic attitude prevailed in the conservatories.

However, at least to my knowledge, there is not even one movement by Haydn, Mozart, or Beethoven which exactly follows this strict description of 1840. Indeed, it is the ways in which the plan is broken that are so fascinating. It offers a revealing view of the process of creative genius because although the rules are sometimes broken, the results never betray the principles of the period with its classical aesthetics. (Let the gifted child take comfort in this when dealing with some of the bureaucracy in the school).

A closer examination tells us why these composers took these liberties. It is simply that they were aware of the most artistic way to use the musical ideas. They would break with the strict formal outline but still compose music which expressed symmetry, clarity, balance, forward movement, and a satisfactory resolution of the tensions. The important lesson to learn is that in great art ideas take form. Reverse this profound truth, and the inspiration is stifled or else it was not much in the first place.

Even the earliest little pieces of Mozart are a clear illustration of perfection as completeness and balance. These one-page pieces which he wrote between the ages of six and eight cannot profitably be improved in any way. They are perfect examples of how young Mozart so naturally fulfilled the ideals of the classical period. On this foundation he was later able to combine spontaneity with formal beauty. Indeed, often he made no alteration from his first draft.

On the other hand, Beethoven found composing laborious, although his large structures of some thirty minutes unfold with a tremendous sense of unity and inevitability. Rarely in any other music is there such expansion without padding or such unity with continuity and progress.

It is rare to find in any other composer such a range of human feelings within a balanced formal structural plan. The enduring nature of Beethoven's work is partially accounted for because the musical ideas take and use the form and harmonic skeleton. Here again the forms are creatively altered for artistic reasons.

The relation of art and society is a paradoxical one in the romantic period. Individuality is much treasured on the one hand, while at the same time many composers felt urged by the forces of nationalism to use music as a means of heightening a sense of national identity. This period starting in the 1820s and going on more or less until the first world war is inseparable from politics.

Nationalistic references were accomplished through the use

of folk rhythms and folk tunes, the use of certain instruments with nationalistic associations, and the use of titles. Such references were naturally more pointed when a language was incorporated into the work. In addition to the obvious connection between language and country, each language influences music because of its own inflections of pitch and accents when spoken.

Listeners hearing a particular language naturally respond immediately, even when no special political statement is intended. In any case, these are some of the ways in which music could be taken as a rallying point for various groups. It is noteworthy that music somehow escaped the prohibition of the censors.

This relation of music and nineteenth century nationalism provides another approach to the music itself, which may be more interesting to students who have little experience listening to classical music. Chopin in Poland, Verdi in Italy, and Dvorak in the Czech lands exemplify only a few of many composers whose music is closely associated with the national identity and hopes of a particular country.

As we have seen, the music of each stylistic period calls for particular knowledge and listening skills. This is curiously true of twentieth century music. There are wider gaps between art music and folk and popular music than in the previous periods. But this challenge can be a welcome one for the intellectual capabilities of the gifted. If the music itself does not first attract their attention, then a look at the other arts might easily provide an introduction to various currents and aims of twentieth century art. Much of it is simply written off. For instance, the Prague Post lists upcoming concerts as classical or modern. In this case the classical concerts are all older and traditional music and the modern events are jazz and pop.

Likewise, many young listeners think of two categories of music. One is old (classical) and the other is one of the myriad forms of popular music. A colleague of mine and I were astounded when I played Schumann's Faschingsschwank and Corigliano's Etude-*Fantasy* in his class. The class could not tell which work was the one by a living composer. (Surely I did not mangle the Schumann that badly!).

This past summer I had two surprises just before my concert in Olomouc at a summer institute for gifted students from central Europe. One student told me I should change the program and only play pieces that everyone knows. The other said just before I began, "Oh, now we will hear some things that are very strange to us." Fortunately, the program of Mozart, Schumann, Liszt, and Chopin that was chosen especially for this group was well received.

Although a long discussion of what makes a good performance goes beyond the scope of this article, there is an incident that illustrates the importance of a good performance and how it is heard by a listener new to classical music.

We had a guest pianist on our campus series whose developed technique was miles ahead of any communication of emotion. At least that was my opinion as I sat next to a music appreciation student. I wondered what he was thinking. He then told me that he thought the pianist was very good but that he was [illegible]ying the concert.

He put it down to not liking classical music, when all too often it is the spiritual dimension that is lacking (Ashley, 1993). When I pointed out the expression markings on the program, he realized that the pianist was not making much effort to express those indications. It gave me the opportunity to suggest it was the performance rather than the music that did not appeal to him.

An outstandingly successful venue is offered in Vienna every night of July and August. Videos of great opera performances are shown outdoors on an enormous screen in front of the town hall. Between the projector and screen there is room for four thousand people to sit and watch. Behind the projector's cabin there are many good restaurants serving another two thousand people who can hear the music but not see the screen.

Dr. Franz Patay, the director of this program, says it would be a very conservative estimate to say at least half of one million listeners attend each summer. It is a mathematical certainty that more people go to this open air event annually than attend the Vienna State Opera (Patay, 2001).

There are varied opportunities to hear classical music, but availability plus good presentation are needed to attract and retain audiences. School concerts for children are offered by leading orchestras in many cities, for example. Can we not consider these examples as a kind of wake-up call indicating there remains a vast untapped audience for fine music?

Those of us who teach can reach many of these people through non-technical means. Those who teach gifted children can point out that the qualities which fine music expresses are the same qualities that the gifted have and appreciate. No doubt teachers will discover other advantages from the encouragement of more active and discerning listening. Surely it is a worthy effort to help all students cultivate their talent to understand, appraise, and enjoy the particular contributions of great music to civilization.

In a rare interview in 1896 Brahms spoke of his source of inspiration. He made the stipulation that the interview could not be published until fifty years after his death. In his book Talks with Great Composers, Arthur M. Abell quotes many composers who spoke along this same line of thought when Brahms said: "All truly inspired ideas come from God. Beethoven, who was my ideal, was well aware of this....the ideas flow in upon me, directly from God" (Abell, 1964).

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MUSIC: ITS CREATIVITY AND INTEGRATION INTO THE REGULAR CLASSROOM

By Kathryn P. Haydon

Actively involving students in a creative learning process is especially important when working with gifted students. The essence of creativity can be simply defined as originality. To create is to invent, develop, initiate, and originate. To think creatively, then, is to think out of the box, use one's imagination, to develop a fresh perspective, and to see things in a different light.

With the meaning of creativity in mind, one can analyze the traits commonly exhibited by gifted children from a different perspective. There are various publications detailing these traits, and one of the most comprehensive and complete lists can be found in the recently published book, *Stand Up for Your Gifted Child* (2001) by Joan Franklin Smutny. Many of these qualities are of a creative nature. According to this list, many gifted children: can apply knowledge easily; enjoy making discoveries on their own as well as solving problems in their own way; see many possible answers to questions or solutions to problems; have vivid imaginations; think of new ways to do things; like to create by drawing, painting, writing, building, experimenting, storytelling, or inventing; like to play with words; love math games, playing with number concepts, and figuring out how to solve math problems in unique ways; are extremely curious, ask lots of questions, and question the answers; become so involved that they are not aware of anything else; enjoy singing, playing an instrument, dancing or moving rhythmically, or pantomime; respond to music, are able to improvise tunes and rhythms, or compose songs, see patterns and connections that others don't see, even among things that are apparently unrelated; tend to rebel against what's routine or predictable; are very active and have trouble sitting still; like to discuss abstract ideas like God, love, justice, and equality; express unusual sensitivity to what is seen, heard, touched, tasted, and smelled; show a willingness to follow intuitive hunches even if they can't immediately be justified.

With these attributes in mind, one can deduce that most gifted children are active learners and are stimulated by new opportunities and ways of learning, especially those that encourage them to participate in the learning process. An educator can take advantage of an effective teaching tool that inspires creativity and is interactive: music.

There is increasingly more research available to prove the benefits of incorporating music into the regular classroom. In his article, "The Music in Our Minds," featured in a recent publication of *Educational Leadership*, Normal Weinberger cites the benefits of music in education, based on work by J. Hanshumaker:

> Music has the ability to facilitate language acquisition, reading readiness, and general intellectual development; to foster positive attitudes and to lower truancy in middle and high school; to enhance creativity, and to promote social development, personality adjustment, and self-worth (Weinberger, 1998).

While all of Weinberger's points are important benefits to keep in mind when exploring this topic, we will focus here on the capability of music to heighten creativity.

The integration of music into the regular classroom to enhance creativity and extend methods of learning does not have to be complex. Janet Bartell, a well-respected public school teacher in the Chicago area, uses music to welcome the children into her third-grade classroom each day, to supplement certain teaching units, and to provide inspiration for writing and art assignments. Some of her students' favorite pieces are Vivaldi's "Four Seasons" and Saint-Saens' "Carnival of the Animals." During their unit on Jamestown, the students listen to and discuss Dvorak's "New World Symphony." When the class studies astronomy, they take in Gustav Holst's "The Planets." They try to identify the planet that corresponds with each movement, and discuss the elements of the music that lead them to their conclusions.

Julie Kurtz, a public school music and private lesson teacher in the San Francisco Bay area, who studied music education along with flute performance at Northwestern University, agrees that incorporating music into the curriculum does not have to be a difficult nor daunting task, even to the teacher who knows little about music. She suggests that connecting music to curriculum that is already being taught makes it come alive for the students. Kurtz says, "Music has a very real and tangible connection to just about anything. A subject or concept comes alive when you sing about it and compose with it." Kurtz stresses the effectiveness of teaching kids to compose music to reinforce the curriculum. A general belief is that one cannot compose unless he or she has studied music for a long time. However, just the opposite is true. Composing allows students to be creative and express themselves while completing a very structured assignment. Composition assignments can reach learners of all levels. One student can succeed just by following the basic rules, while an exceptional student can turn the assignment into something more complex.

There are various approaches a teacher can use to introduce composition, Kurtz says. For example, in a reading class in which the teacher is trying to help students use structure, creating compositions can help them understand how poetry, essays, and short stories each have distinct structures. A simple way to do this is through "found sounds." Ask the kids to explore the classroom and to find things in the room that create sound. They can then put different sounds together in a pattern that mirrors the structure concept you are trying to teach. You can add additional parameters, asking students to compose a song with a beginning and an end, with loud and soft elements, or to create a piece that tells a story.

Another approach to composition that Kurtz found effective is creating a "sound piece" in a group forum. Select a theme, such as "A Day at the Beach" or "A Day in the City," or incorporate a theme from a unit, such as "A Day at NASA." On

the board, detail each hour or half hour from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m., and talk about what would be happening on the beach or in the city during each time period. Ask the students to look around the room and find things to represent the sounds. Write the objects on the chart, and give each student responsibility for an instrument or sound. Then proceed with your composition based on the chart.

When studying a certain culture in social studies or history, the teacher can incorporate music by bringing in an instrument, even if he or she does not know how to play it. Let the students touch it, and try to make sounds with it. Also bring in music tapes from that culture, so they can listen and learn how music differs in other places. Ask them to close their eyes and imagine what the song might be about. They could ask themselves, "What have I learned about these people and their way of life? What purpose might this song serve in their culture?" This type of thinking enables students to experience culture in a way that facts and figures cannot convey.

In addition to the many experts such as Kurtz who provide ideas to regular classroom teachers on how to incorporate music into the curriculum, there are also structured programs that seek to do just that. As one of the most respected arts organizations in the world, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra runs a variety of programs that provide music-integration opportunities for Chicago-area students and teachers. One such initiative is Primarily Arts Network (PAN). Through a partnership with three Chicago public schools, musicians and educators seek to integrate music into the classroom by providing development opportunities for teachers (Primarily Arts Network, 2001). The PAN educators give teachers practical tools and activities to weave into their lesson plans, and teach them how to do so. After one workshop activity, a teacher from one of the schools commented, "This [music] lends itself to poetry: pattern, movement, rhyming words, new vocabulary, and describing words" (Kamin et al, 2001).

Although PAN is a structured program, its results can be easily obtained by the average teacher. The following is just one example of the active, hands-on learning that results when a teacher effectively integrates musical concepts and ideas with mathematical concepts of repetition in multiplication tables.

> First, students listened to four selections of music and identified the contrasts between each song. The songs ranged from slow classical to fast jazz tunes. Students were asked to describe how each song made them "feel." Students then focused on one song and identified the repetition of patterns as A, B, C, D. Students were instructed to add movements to the four musical patterns. Finally, they were divided into four small groups and added musical instruments to each pattern. The goal for this lesson was to demonstrate repetition and for students to learn to identify patterns in music as a means to enhancing their understanding of patterns in multiplication. This was an excellent example of PAN in the classroom. Students were completely engaged during the entire lesson; the integration of music into this lesson enhanced their understanding (Kamin et al, 2001).

musical approach used in this activity helped the subject matter come alive creatively for students. Their interest in learning mathematical concepts was inspired by creative opportunities to explore musical structures.

There are many resources available for teachers to integrate music into their curriculum, and also many extra-curricular music activities for parents and children. Parents play a key role in supplementing the work that teachers do to stimulate the creative learning process through music.

> The brains of children are well equipped to understand music, and, consequently, children enjoy and engage in music long before they reach kindergarten. If parents and caregivers would reinforce children's spontaneous musical activities as much as they reinforce language behaviors, then children would develop this natural channel of communication, expression, and cognition (Weinberger 1998).

It is important to look for opportunities to expose children to music and musical concepts at a young age. Since music is so multifaceted, it aids in complete development.

The Kohl Children's Museum in Wilmette, Illinois recently unveiled a new, permanent exhibit called "Music Makers." This is a hands-on forum where children explore various musical concepts from a very young age. There are numerous stations that allow children to explore the how, what, and why of music by interacting with the exhibits. Exhibits focus on topics such as rhythm, vibration of sound, and composition. The exhibit at the Kohl Children's Museum is just one example of the resources available to expose children to music both in the classroom and on the side. Communities of all sizes offer such resources, including many local libraries.

The depth of learning that results when children—especially gifted children—engage in musical activities and concepts in the regular curriculum should be enough incentive for teachers to explore this method of teaching. The fact that strategies for integrating music into the regular curriculum are abundant and easy to implement should facilitate this. Musical opportunities such as, concerts for young listeners, is another forum that can stimulate and inspire the interest of students. Structured programs provide specific training in this area and inspire the enthusiasm and joy that children often find in educational encounters with music. The fact that music is such fun should not deter teachers from exploiting its enormous educational value. Norman Weinberger says as much:

> Sometimes I think that music is at a disadvantage because it is so much fun. Can anything so enjoyable really be important in education? Absolutely. Music offers great opportunities for communication and expression, for creativity and group cooperation—plus, it's good for the brain and can enhance learning and intellectual development. Instead of asking, "Why music?" perhaps we might ask, "Why not music?" (Weinberger, 1998).

Any educator or parent who works with gifted children can verify that they do indeed learn best by taking part in a creative process, in an environment where they can use their talents to make connections between concepts and patterns, apply

knowledge, and make discoveries on their own. Music is a universal means for engaging the hearts and minds of gifted children in new ways and challenging them educationally while they enjoy the process.

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"WRITE" WHERE THEY ARE: CREATIVE DIFFERENTIATION WITH EMERGENT WRITING IN THE EARLY CHILDHOOD CLASSROOM

by Cynthia Riess

"The goal [of writing] is to make one's thinking visible" (Collins & Parkhurst, 1996, p. 3).

"I like to do pictures, but the words say it just how I want." (Karly, age 5)

"It's not supposed to be grown-up writing. It's my Rob writing!" (Rob, age 5)

The pre-kindergarten class hums with the sound of minds at work. Rob calls across the room to his friend, Nate, to check on just what letter it is that represents the first sound in nocturnal. That's an important thing to tell about his bat. Karly points out to a neighbor where, exactly, in her picture her spaceship is located—right between the J of Jupiter and the S of Saturn. Murmurs of staccato letter sounds mingle with whispered sentences and an occasional giggle. Here, Arjun sits, his straight back inclined toward the table, eyes intent on his appearing words, tongue poking out. Nearby, Sammie leans back, holding her paper up with the glimmer of a smile, before she stands up to share it with me. Later, Eli settles himself with a confident wriggle in the Writer's Chair to read what he would do to help an injured wolf in his pack.

One of the most frequently expressed concerns of colleagues in early childhood is the challenge of meeting each of our students *where he or she* is on the wide-ranging continuum of emerging literacy, providing appropriate challenge to all, while hurrying none. The early learning of young gifted children is often characterized by *peaks* of knowledge and reasoning with adjoining *valleys* of non-exposure or untapped interest. As an early childhood teacher of the gifted, I know the importance of sharing wide-ranging and diverse experiences with my students and making playful use of higher-order thinking skills. As a reading specialist, I am aware of the importance of surrounding my students with a literacy-rich environment.

While some of us teach in schools or programs specifically oriented toward the needs of gifted students, it is important to remember that all classroom teachers are teachers of the gifted, especially early childhood teachers. The term *early childhood* only includes instruction from preschool up to—and often including—the primary grades. Gifted students may not be identified until late in the early childhood years, and many services for the gifted begin later still. As a result, providing differentiated instruction for gifted children is often exclusively the task of the early childhood classroom teacher. Finding time to add "something different" for these students can be a daunting task in a room full of children eager to engage the teacher's attention.

My pre-kindergarten students arrive in September with a wealth of knowledge and experience. Some are already becoming adept readers; others are not yet making connections between letters and sounds. All are brimming over with curiosity and energy. How can the needs of those actively seeking support in writing and those with beginning alphabetic knowledge be met in the same challenging, low-risk environment?

In this article, we first examine differentiation—what it is and how it meets the needs of our gifted students—and review current research on emergent writing and its use with young gifted children. Open-ended drawing/writing activities, integrated with classroom exploration, are shown to further creative differentiation in the early childhood classroom, and suggestions for implementing emergent writing and samples of student writing bring theory to practice.

What is Differentiation?

Differentiation, as proposed by Virgil Ward in the 1960's, was a model for a unique curriculum for gifted students, one based on continuous, problem-based learning. The Marland Report, in 1972, called for a gifted curriculum based on higher-order cognitive processes, strategies that take into account

learning styles of the gifted, and homogeneous grouping. Passow proposed integrated, in-depth study across systems of thought and recognition of the student's role as a social learner (Hertzog, 1998). Tomlinson (1999) extended and applied these principles to the regular classroom, calling for the modification of content, process, and/or products of instruction according to student readiness, interest, and/or learning profile with the goal of motivated, efficient learning at an appropriate rate and level of challenge.

VanTassel-Baska (cited in Berger, 1991) indicated that content for gifted students is best and most efficiently arranged around broad-based, integrative themes, rather than by subject area. With learning seen as forward progress from an entry point, content compacting, acceleration, and differentiation came to be seen as components of the gifted curriculum and useful in the regular classroom (Winebrenner, 1999). It is precisely because our gifted students learn differently from their peers that these programs were proposed.

Needs of the Gifted Child

What are the unique learning characteristics of gifted students? We know that gifted students learn new material in less time, retain it more effectively, and perceive ideas and concepts at more abstract and complex levels (Clark, cited in Winebrenner, 1999). They often show marked preference for working on challenging tasks and have the drive and motivation to take action against problems and obstacles (Sieglen, cited in Haensly, 1999). Gifted students may function at several levels of concentration simultaneously, absorbing classroom interaction while simultaneously engaged, either cognitively or physically, in individual pursuits (Winebrenner, 2000). Additionally, gifted children benefit from spending at least part of the day in homogenous groups, in which they more effectively demonstrate their abilities, more comfortably take risks, and model higher-order thinking skills for each other (Winebrenner, 1999). These characteristics impact curriculum design for gifted learners in three significant ways:

- *the need for challenge*
- *the need to do "their work"*
- *the need for a social environment characterized by low-risk exploration*

First, gifted children need both the assurance that they will "learn something new and challenging every day" and that they will be expected to make continuous progress in their learning (Winebrenner, 2000, p. 56). Goals viewed as challenging but attainable increase motivation and learning better than goals perceived as very easy or too difficult (Schunk & Swartz, 1993). Gifted children thrive when the brain is used vigorously, seeking meaningful patterns and connections between the known and the new (Tomlinson, 1999). Sufficient challenge, then, is a significant component of appropriate curricular design.

Further, much of gifted students' educational time needs to include "their work," defined by Winebrenner (2000, p. 54) as the exploration of "something they don't already know." Gifted students do not benefit from taking the same assignment as their age peers and doing it *more* quickly, *more* beautifully, or just doing *more* of it. Subject matter needs to be "dynamic, ...tually intriguing, and personal...bestow[ing] power to the learner" (Tomlinson, 1999, p. 31).

Finally, many gifted children are highly perfectionistic and need an environment that fosters exploration and experimentation, while maintaining brain function at a level of moderate arousal. Higher-order thinking needs to be a designing force in curriculum development, moving from less to more in transformation, abstraction, complexity, multifacetedness, open-endedness, ambiguity, independence, speed and the opportunity to make mental leaps (Tomlinson, 1999). If a classroom environment is to foster higher-order thinking, it must also foster acceptance of partial successes, repeated attempts, and successive approximation—a view of learning as an on-going process or continuum, rather than a destination.

It's Great in Theory...

Unfortunately, while many early childhood educators recognize the need for instruction based on student assessment, application of this knowledge tends to stop with the assessment itself. Only a small number of kindergarten teachers, and fewer than half of the first grade teachers surveyed, differentiated curriculum for children with advanced verbal and reading ability (Strickland, 1989; Harste & Woodward, 1989). Yet "it is common to find within a kindergarten classroom a five-year range in children's literacy-related skills and functioning" (Riley, as cited in the joint position paper of the International Reading Association/National Association for the Education of Young Children [IRA/NAEYC], 1998). Clearly, there is a need to adapt instruction to foster growth from each child's point of entry. Can the inclusion of emergent writing in the early childhood classroom serve such a purpose? What is emergent writing, and why is it appropriate in the early childhood classroom?

Emergent Writing in the Early Childhood Classroom

"It should be possible for children's voices to be heard, right from the start, not only through what they say, but also through what they write" (Hall, 2000, p. 358).

Emergent writing allows the child to communicate, using and building on whatever graphophonic knowledge he has at this moment. Research in emergent writing came into its own in the 1970's with the studies of Clay and Read, who catalogued children's unconventional initial writing attempts. Over the next decade, Read, Sulzby and Teale, and others provided educators with sequences or stages of emergent writing, from scribbling to conventional forms (cited in Yaden, Rowe, & MacGillivray, 2000). By demonstrating the purposeful approximations children were making as they learned to use graphophonic knowledge, word patterning, and syntactic cues to encode words, parallels could be drawn to the way children gradually acquire conventional speech (Yaden et al., 2000). For example, one child might write " MGDBP," using initial letter sounds to represent the sentence "My green dragon bites plants." Another child may hear both initial and final sounds "MI GN DR BS PS," while a third may be beginning to include vowels and more complex orthographic structures: "MY GREN DRAGN BITS PLATS." It is interesting to note that three-year-olds' markings when asked to *draw* something are quite different from those used when they are asked to write something, and that the *pre-letter* writing attempts of four-year-olds from different cultures differ in shape and orientation, indicating children's emerging

knowledge of the written symbols they see around them (Harste, 1990).

Emergent writing in the early childhood classroom takes place in a social context, with adults as well as peers modeling both the value and use of writing. The modeling of everyday writing (grocery lists, e-mails from grandma) by people important to children is a major motivator for learning about and using print. Watching peers begin to write and observing classroom demonstrations of writing prompts students to make their own attempts. Emergent writing by young children is a new (to them) and exciting way of engaging in social dialogue with these important people, much as emergent speech is to a two-year-old (Dyson, 1995). This writing is a new and developmentally appropriate form of self-expression to be shared, read, talked about, and honored (Sulzby, Teale, & Kamberelis, 1989).

Reading and writing development can be fostered in young children by stimulating linguistic awareness in "cognitively demanding activities in a playful setting," embedded within a rich curriculum (Arnqvist, 2000, p. 366). Phonemic and linguistic games actually lead to an increase in children's questions about how to write and also have significant impact on students' reading and spelling three to four years later (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, cited in Arnqvist, 2000).

It should come as no surprise to those of us who know young children that there is tremendous appeal in doing something that they see done by adults and older children every day, that is important and valued in our culture, and enormously empowering in its potential for self-expression (Roskos & Neuman, cited in Rowell, 1998). Katims, in his research with preschool children, confirmed that "with appropriate pportunity...[children] did develop a notion of themselves as *writers*, with the crucial idea that their language can be meaningfully inscribed in the form of words on paper" (1991, p.9).

Current research reminds us that motivation and acquisition of ability in any endeavor is predicated on exposure (Bodrova, Leong, & Paynter, 1999). A child never exposed to water or a bicycle will be unlikely to want to swim or ride, nor will she be likely to develop expertise in these activities. What, then, does emergent writing look like in the early childhood classroom? How can we provide that exposure?

Emergent Writing: What Does It Look Like?

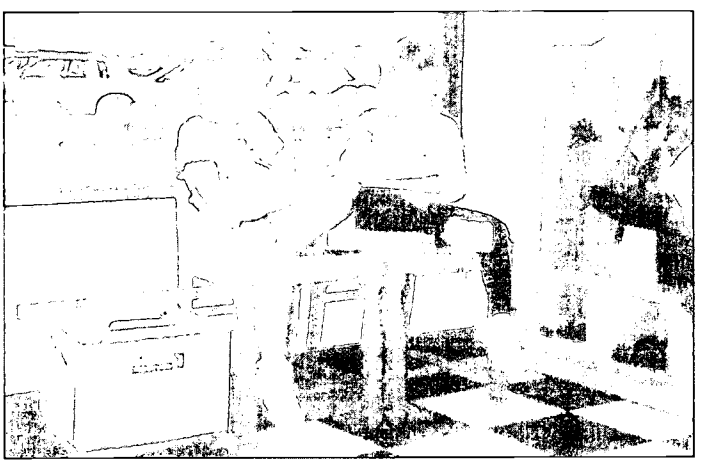
"The goal [of writing] is to make one's thinking visible"(Collins & Parkhurst, 1996, p. 3).

In practice, the ways that emergent writing for preschoolers can be encouraged are as diverse as the teachers who envision them, but they can be grouped into three broad categories.

- self-motivated writing
- journaling
- responsive or language experience writing

Self-motivated writing is that which occurs spontaneously in classrooms. A variety of writing materials and environmental print props are readily available for use during free choice activities and role play. Signs made for block buildings, menus made for a restaurant, notepads used by scientists, are all es of this child-initiated writing. Writing done for real purposes, to meet authentic needs, is included in this category. A child may "write" a note to the teacher, reminding her of the need for more blue paper, or to herself as a reminder to bring in her special book about whales to share. Writing-for-a-purpose is modeled throughout the day, and writing by adults and other students is evident around the room. This form of *available* writing is found most frequently in early childhood classrooms. It encourages labeling and simple communication, but may not provide the gifted child with the opportunity to express deeper, more lyrical, or more complex thinking.

Individual journals provide open-ended opportunities to use pictures and/or letters to communicate ideas important to the child. Sufficient time set aside for children to become engrossed in representing their ideas on paper can yield exciting results. Journal entries can be shared with partners or a small group or can be a vehicle for active adult-child interchange.



Haley and Elizabeth share their journals.

In one gifted pre-kindergarten classroom, the children end the day with whole group reflection, sharing with each other the highlights of new things learned or done. They then use their journals to draw and write about their explorations. Emergent writing makes possible the use of the "big words" so beloved of small children, like *photosynthesis* and *chlorophyll* during the study of trees and *nocturnal* and *hibernate* during animal research. In this way, complex ideas, meaningful and important to the child, can be expressed *before* the acquisition of advanced graphophonic code. Unimpressed by a Valentine theme that had many girls waxing poetic, David wrote that, "My love bug is a carnivore." In his response to a story read in class, Rob wrote, "The dragon jumped off the roof. He used a parachute." Using initial sounds almost exclusively, Rob was still able to make use of this substantial word.

Responsive or language experience writing, a third category, emerges as a direct extension of an integrated curriculum. Children may brainstorm an alternative story ending, "become" the character in a book, or take on an imaginary or real life role. In the classroom mentioned earlier, the children begin with a whole group dramatic, musical, or brainstorming activity based on a current unit of exploration or a book enjoyed by the class. Children take a moment to think on their own and then ideas are energetically exchanged. Collins and Parkhurst (1996, p.3) suggest that "gifted students who love to generate ideas, play with words and ideas, and probe topics creatively will thrive during this stage." The students then

Gaby and Alec, intently imagining the planst they will become when they "sprout".

transform their ideas into a picture, with the opportunity to use an accompanying sheet for writing. Some children work with great detail on their pictures; some want the writing paper first, commensurate with the expected range of ability and personal preference. Children meet individually with the teacher to share and elaborate on ideas, and the teacher transcribes their writing in conventional spelling on post-it sized "Rosetta Stones," which are attached to facilitate later reading. The children take turns in the Writer's Chair to share pictures and/or writing with other emergent writers. In this class, the ratio is one adult to seven children, and access to prompt adult encouragement and scaffolding has been found to be essential to happy, confident writing. Children have become animal researchers reporting their findings, journeyed into space, described amazing characters visiting them in dreams, and imagined the popcorn explosions accidentally caused by their pet dragons.

With agreement that differentiation is desirable for young gifted children and with research on emergent writing indicating that it provides a valuable component of a rich early literacy curriculum, we can examine whether emergent writing satisfies the criteria for differentiation. Does emergent writing provide children with "their work" at an appropriate pace and level of challenge in a low-risk environment?

Writing As Creative Differentiation: It's "Their Work"

"I like to do pictures, but the words say it just how I want." (Karly, age 5)

Children use what they know to help them learn what they do not yet know: they use representational forms, either pictures or letters; they draw from their life experiences and oral language skills; they use the story language and story structure they have acquired as listeners, and they use their imaginations to take the real and known and transform it into something that has never been—until now (Fields & DeGayner, 2000). Wonderful imagery needs only a few letters to be expressed in writing.

Sammie, age four, responded to a scenario of providing help to a fellow wolf who was injured; she would "bring him water in my mouth and lick his hurt." Not satisfied with her non-fiction range of options, however, she created a second version, and brought him "hot lemonade and a bag of dog cookies." Her fictional version, read along with the non-fiction, prompted several other students to write imaginative cures during their choice time and led to class discussion of the terms fiction and non-fiction based on the children's own writing. In this way, writers learn from other writers; they share ideas, and their responses scaffold others. Similarly, children's writing gives them a tangible, concrete, point-to-it referent for their experiences—a photograph of their ideas that they have the power to "take" at any time.

Writing As Creative Differentiation: It's a Challenge

The first time a child opens a milk carton, zips a coat, or ties a shoe, the pride of doing alone what was once only the province of knowledgeable adults is apparent in the grin of achievement. Similarly, children from literate homes know that adults write for real purposes: parents make lists, send e-mails, authors write the books children enjoy. Listening to that which has been written has value and pleasure. Many children enjoy scribble writing and many parents cheerfully—and appropriately—call it "writing" (Burrows, 1994). It is, however, the first time someone else reads *bat* from the letter *B* next to their picture or reads *I saw Mars* from a shaky crayoned *I S MS* that the child knows—really knows—that he or she has stepped into a new world. He or she is a writer. Because of the open-ended design of emergent writing, children move at their own pace, making use of their own interests. "Limited knowledge of sound/symbol relationships is not an obstacle to authorship.... [On the contrary,] the process of synthesizing sounds is engaging...energetic, and dynamic" (Hall, 2000, p. 361). Children's unique responses allow them to think as richly, and share as much, as they are able.

Emergent writing is, by its very nature, a problem-solving endeavor. Choices, decisions, and higher-order thinking define emergent writing: choosing among unique ideas, moving from social/verbal interactions to independent/individual production, even shifting from the oral to literate codes, is a delicious challenge (Cox & Fang, 1997). Many gifted children exhibit verbal precocity and a strong sense of pattern that enables early and effective code-shifting (Lamb & Feldhusen, 1992). Putting on and taking off story language, then, is much like donning a costume. Children's writing encourages the creation of sentences that children would be unlikely to speak aloud, but readily express in the lyrical language of books.

"I have no mirror but I can see my friend." (Mark, age 4)

"Under the ocean, the fish ran from the hammerhead shark." (Arden, age 5)

"I, Louis Pasteur, saved a little boy." (Kyle, age 5)

"A wolf got hurt and I set her under a tree." (Blake, age 4)

"The dolphin was blue and purple in the ocean light." (Mandy, age 5)

When writing begins in the verbal, social setting of the group, moves into the written realm of the individual writer, and returns to the appreciation of peers, it is as appropriate for preschoolers as transformations made in the dress-up center.

Creative Differentiation: It's Scaffolding in a Low-Risk Environment

"It's not supposed to be grown-up writing. It's my Rob writing!" (Rob, age 5)

Children make the most significant gains in learning when they are presented new concepts and skills that are slightly ahead

of what they can do independently and are provided the scaffolding needed to gain independent use of them (Bodrova et al., 1999). Emergent writing provides the opportunity for scaffolding in a low-risk environment by enabling children to learn from and with each other and adults. Jerry Harste reminds us that "[m]ost of what we know about language has been learned from being in the presence of others" (1990, p. 317). As children seek to communicate ideas important to them, listening for sounds they hear and discovering the letters that represent them, they are building graphophonic code. The sounds students can isolate and the way they choose to represent them at a given time, be it picture, scribble letter, or conventional letter symbol, encourage children to "enter and exit at their own level of interest and involvement." Because it is an open-ended activity, children's readiness is not an issue; rather, the "real issue is whether we, as teachers, can accept and value varying responses" (Harste, 1989, p. 153).

Those students who most readily acquire the writing process are those who, during their preschool years, have their writing attempts acknowledged for the meaning communicated rather than the form of the effort (Dickinson, Wolf & Stotsky, in Burrows, 1994). Scaffolding, therefore, can also take the form of verbal responses. Burrows (1994) defined three types of adult response supportive of emergent writing. The adult:

- is an appreciative audience for the meaning the child is sharing.
  "I can really see your dolphin in my mind the way you described it!"
- responds to specific requests for assistance in working out a writing problem.
  "That's the same sound as the beginning of Shane's name. How can we find it?"
- assesses the child's present level and provides information to help him/her move to a more advanced level of development. "You can hear the first sounds so easily now.
  Can you listen for the last sound in your dragon's foot?"

Most importantly, the word *writing* is used to refer to the child's attempts.

Cognitive scaffolding, in the form of modeled metacognition, is also available to early writers. Gifted students have been found to develop metacognitive knowledge and control earlier and benefit more from metacognitive modeling than other students. Because writing is a multimodal activity—children talk, draw pictures to clarify ideas, observe others, give and ask for ideas and assistance—it provides adults multiple entry points (Harste, 1989) to model use of prior knowledge, brainstorming, structuring ideas, and self-assessment.

Some Practical Considerations for Introducing Emergent Writing

As with any endeavor, experience tends to point up the areas not fully explained and the misperceptions that result. The following may serve to facilitate the introduction of emergent writing into your early childhood classroom:

- First, know what you are doing and why. Be able to discuss the robust research available to you. Toward this end, numerous resources are embedded in this article.
- Next, give your young children time to become familiar with the idea of being a writer. Like other classroom routines, it takes time to establish. Model, model, model.
- Take the time early in the year to explain to parents what emergent writing looks like. Remind them that they were thrilled when their child first said *muk* for *milk* or *uppee* for *pick me up*. At the time, they probably announced to anyone who would listen that their child was talking. By encouraging and understanding what their child was saying, their child—through successive approximation—learned to speak in adult-sounding sentences. Emergent writing follows the same pattern. When a child can write the first sound in a word, tell them, "Wow, you're a writer now!" The first and last sound? "Wow, what a writer you are!" Starts to add middle sounds and vowels? "Wow, way to be a writer!" Read, acknowledge, and encourage each step of the way.
- Define your terms with colleagues. During a discussion with my administrator early in the first year, I was mentioning how enthusiastic the children were about writing in their journals, and that some continued writing even after their parents arrived to pick them up. She looked bewildered and finally asked me, "But what about the ones who can't write yet?" "Writing" can include pictures, letter labels, and/or attempts at words or sentences.
- Another misunderstanding we have found at the preschool level involves the word *work*. Children readily use the phrase "working hard" when they talk about building a road in a sandbox, painting a picture, building a fort. Their use indicates pride in a self-generated, important task. When children report that they "worked hard" at writing, however, parents may perceive this as inappropriately academic, perhaps from their own experience with years of uninspired essay writing. Making parents aware of the playfulness of writing in the early childhood classroom is helpful, as is an effort on the teacher's part to avoid overusing phrases like "Good work" and "Good job" when talking about students' creations, especially those in writing. "Way to be a writer!" is a good alternative.
- Finally, as the children begin writing, save examples, either originals or photocopies, along with conventional English "translations." Over time, the growth seen in these picture-and-writing creations is remarkable, and they are a real favorite—and a source of pride—with parents at conference time. At the end of the year, let the children sit and share their portfolios with friends and with you and enjoy their delight at the wonderful thinking they can hold in their hands.

Summary

The emergent writing process brings together the best of

both involved adult-child interaction and the individual child's initiative and creativity. While emergent writing is beneficial for all children, it is also consistent with the criteria of differentiation and, as such, is an effective means of differentiating curriculum for gifted children in the early childhood classroom. Emergent writing gives young gifted children the opportunity to be appropriately challenged while engaged in "their work" in a low-risk, social environment. Exposure to a variety of writing formats allows children to develop flexible metacognitive strategies for representing ideas concretely. Emergent writing entices them with a new and exciting way of communicating those ideas, and it gives teachers and parents a matchless invitation to keep at least a part of themselves securely tucked in the world of childhood.

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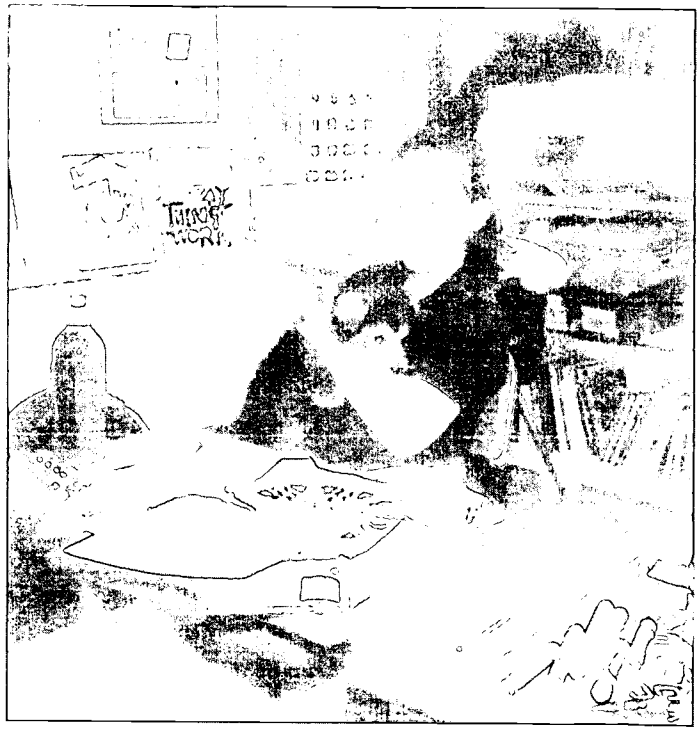

CREATIVE WRITING FOR GIFTED STUDENTS (1-6)

by Joan Franklin Smutny

Stuart is a second grader who dreads his reading class. His mother reported that he rarely sat still through even one story at school. According to his teacher, he fidgets and wriggles around on his chair, whispers to himself and scribbles distractedly on his notepaper. At the last parent-teacher conference, she said that Stuart might possibly have an attention deficit problem.

When his mother asked Stuart about the reading class, he said, "I was busy with this!" He showed his mother a series of little figures he had drawn. "Oh," his mother said," Are these people in the story your class was reading today?" "Oh no," Stuart said, "This is the one I made up about the people in a different story—MY story!" He started telling his mother about his own story, jumping around the kitchen, acting out some of the parts, and explaining the different motivations of the characters and the adventure they were on.

"I was blown away," Stuart's mother said. "I knew he was an imaginative kid and he talks to himself a lot, but I wasn't prepared for the sophistication. He had a really complex plot, dramatic conflict, and could rattle off each scene of his story in vivid detail." In discussing his learning needs, it was clear to me that a child like Stuart would not be satisfied by a more accelerated reading class. At home, he read fourth or fifth grade books, but never for very long. I told his mother that Stuart was tired of reading other people's stories; he wanted to create his own.

Children like Stuart have a long road to travel in the regular schools. Some of them develop behavior or emotional problems because of their undernourished gifts; many more spend their school years wondering what's wrong with them. A neglected creative gift—especially one as pronounced as Stuart's—can produce a real sense of sadness and even pain in young people. They know that something's missing, but because their talents have gone unseen for so long they may go through all the years of public school before discovering what this is.

As a teacher of creative writing for gifted students from all age groups (K-10th grade) and cultural backgrounds, I have personally witnessed the transformation that happens when creative children write. After even a week of writing, slumped over and despondent students have become energized, inspired, and excited about their work. For creatively gifted children, the act of writing nurtures their souls and enables them to experience the joy of doing what they love. As Stuart told his mother after she found a mentor to work with him in writing: "Oh mom, now I can write my own books for people to read!"

In the following pages, I have outlined creative processes I use to help gifted children begin to unlock their writing talents. Teachers can adapt any of them to the needs and time constraints of their classroom and to the specific learning needs of students.

Poetry

Poetry presents an extraordinary challenge on a creative, intuitive, and analytical level. There is no better way for creatively gifted students to experience the power of metaphoric e, the quality of words, and the complexity and subtlety of meaning these create than to write free verse. Without the constrictions of a rhyme scheme, they are free to focus on imagery and point of view, and experiment with different writing styles.

Creating a group poem. I find it helpful to begin by doing a free verse poem with all the students before they work on their own. I may start by presenting a poster or picture on a topic, such as nature. I encourage the students to think about the atmosphere of the picture—the color, the feeling they get, and what certain images mean to them. To help them along, I may ask questions like: If you were to think of the people (or animals) in this picture as colors, what colors would they be? If you were to think of them as music or sound, what would you hear? If they had texture and temperature (such as cold, smooth, warm, liquid, etc.) what might they be?

After a brief discussion, I start asking for words, phrases, or parts of sentences to put on the board. Individual children contribute them, each building on the previous word, phrase, or part of a sentence, each suggesting some new aspect of the picture that no one else has seen. As the students offer their ideas, I write it down on the board so everyone can see the lines and build on them. Once the students have shared their ideas, I read the whole poem aloud to the class and we talk about the images and ideas conveyed.

Presenting creative catalysts. The students are now ready to work on their own individual poems. The teacher can provide a wide range of catalysts (e.g., posters, pictures, paintings, films, musical recordings, books, games, puzzles, etc.) and guide students in deciding what they would like to use. I often choose a theme for a day or a week, such as animals, cities, holidays, and paintings of art. Sources for writing poetry are indispensable, whether they present a general theme or provide a variety of possible topics for the students to choose. Again, I try to stimulate original thinking through focused questions and directions such as these:

- Look at this picture carefully; what do you think the people are doing? What are they staring at? Imagine what exists outside the lines of the painting. What do the expressions on their faces tell you? What do you think might have happened just before this picture was taken?
- Pick an animal or person in this short film; write down what you feel, see, hear, taste, sense around you. Write short phrases, images to create the world of this film according to your chosen subject.
- Choose an image from a magazine that depicts a busy neighborhood. Imagine living there yourself. What sounds do you think you'd hear on this street? Walk down the street in your mind and imagine what you would see, who would you talk to, and what you might smell as you passed the little shops.

The point is to make the catalysts accessible to the students in a variety of ways—to get them to enter new worlds and then

create images of their imaginary experience and analytic thought. Unburdened by the obligation to stick to a rhyme scheme and similarly sounding words, many gifted writers produce verse with extraordinarily sensitive and vivid imagery.

A mournful sky
Shivering
Casting waves of unhappiness through her veins
Thoughtful limbs
Reach upward to plant a kiss on a frowning thought
comforting
A seed
Soon to change the color of Mother sky to
a rich healthy sapphire blue
that will burn away her black cape of troubles
Melt them down to tiny drops
Letting them fall away to cool the Earth
Then thank her fellow trees
And invite them up her stairway for tea, as an
honor for their kindness

— Kendall, grade 5

Short Fiction

Exploring the elements of fiction can be exciting if students can improvise with them. All students can benefit from the critical thinking that this strategy demands and the teacher can adapt it to more difficult content, depending on the ability and grade level of the students. The idea is to pose the fundamental questions: If you could change this, what would you change it to? How? Why? Then break down the different elements of a composition and discuss how specific changes could change the whole effect.

Using fractured fairy tales. One way I have found to get at this is to use fractured fairy tales as examples. The teacher can present a series of questions to help the children think through the changes and what they mean. Examples include:

- What characters in this story differ from the original and how?
- Which events occur in the new one that don't in the original?
- How do the changes in characters and plot in the second one change the meaning and the way you feel about the characters? How does this change the overall effect?
- What do you think the writer is trying to say in this new version?

Analyzing story elements. The usefulness of fairytales is that they allow an analysis of story elements in a relatively simple form. For example, if students are asked to change the of even a few characters in a fairytale, they will discover that this automatically affects plot. Some of the choices students make to change a tale may remove the conflict and suspense from the story. If this happens, the teacher should take the students back to the original. What moment in the story held the most tension for them? What kept them riveted? Re-examining their own ideas, gifted students can then identify the areas where the conflict and suspense have gone and can brainstorm ways to create new conflicts. What adjustments need to be made in character? In the story line? How can they achieve this without sacrificing their ideas?

By improvising with the elements of fiction in this way, gifted students advance their storytelling powers. They can apply this knowledge to create spoofs, political satires, social commentaries, and even tragicomedies out of other narratives. One student might decide to make Little Red Riding Hood a tough, strong girl, completely unafraid of the wolf and able to save her grandmother. Another student may choose to tell the story of Cinderella from the point of view of the stepmother who believes her step-daughter has maligned her. Another student may take up the superman narrative or some other comic book character and give them a humorous flaw that creates problems when he/she has to save the day. This process can apply to the simplest stories as well as to the most advanced novels and plays. For gifted students, the possibilities are limitless and the problems presented by the process can be endlessly fascinating.

Biographical and Historical Fiction

The study of biographies and histories provide rich material for gifted students to re-imagine actual events from new, even unusual points of view. Conventional non-fiction creates a seamless narrative based on multiple sources and multiple points of view. An omniscient voice tells the story as though the information is unbiased and complete. Gifted students rarely accept anything on face value and enjoy debating issues in politics and history based on their own alternate readings of the events. Writing biographical and historical fiction enables them to capitalize on this talent and use it to explore different perspectives both critically and creatively.

Researching the facts. I usually begin by exposing the students to the life experiences of prominent men and women through books, magazines, short films, and pictures, drawings or images of their work. I ask them what influences in these individuals' young lives affected their development, how they overcame the obstacles or challenges that stood in their way, and what their most significant contributions were. I tell them to write this information down in paragraph form or as a series of notes. They should also record any questions they have about the person's life. Many gifted students find themselves continually going back to do more research as they develop their story in more detail. This is one of the great values of biographical (and historical) fiction: it inspires deeper research and a more critical analysis of issues that appear in their story.

Creating a point of view. Next, I instruct them to choose a person (or animal or object) in a prominent person's life and describe an event from this perspective. It could be the person's brother, sister, friend, dog, or even his/her favorite pen. One of my student's chose to write about Abraham Lincoln from the point of view of the pen he used to write the Gettysburg Address. The activity enables gifted students to re-shape their knowledge

within the context of a specific viewpoint—one that is personal and somewhat biased. As students begin to tell their stories, they discover how individual points of view create a different focus and perspective than the more "objective" biographies that synthesis information from multiple sources.

Historical fiction works in a similar way. The class may be studying a particular period, let us say, the Civil War. The students acquire a detailed understanding of the issues and conflicts between the north and south and what finally drove the two sides to war. I then ask them to create a character from this time. The person could be a sister whose brother is in the war, a mother or father with two sons, one on the union side, the other on the confederate, the child of a slave, a plantation owner, an abolitionist, etc. The students create a personal history for their imaginary character and write a story or anecdote that *could have* occurred in the life of this person in this place in this time.

Gifted students who use biography and history as a source for creating fiction begin to see history—and non-fiction generally—in a different light. They realize that within a news report or historical event are many individual lives, each with a slightly different perspective. Perhaps in no other form do critical and creative thinking work so closely. Gifted writers who love history discover a limitless source of material—the stories of many civilizations around the world—that can become the world of their characters, the cause of conflicts, the most suspenseful moments of their own stories.

Final Thoughts....

In our society, creativity is often relegated to the category of "enrichment." But creativity is an essential ingredient for the growth of gifted children—an inner resource they can apply not only to literary projects, but to problems in life. Creative work trains the mind to think in terms of "what is possible," to ward off negative predictions and assumptions, and to use the imagination to work through difficulties. Higher-level thinking skills of analysis, interpretation, and evaluation are inherent to the creative processes described in this article. Activities such as these enable students to *act on* a set of variables rather than accept them as permanent or unchangeable realities.

Surely what we are telling our most creative students when we discourage them from creating their own imaginative worlds is "You cannot make an impact on the world as it is; leave it alone; accept it; resign yourself to being an intelligent but passive observer, recorder, memorizer." It takes courage to write—a willingness to express one's vision unequivocally, honestly, and vividly, even at the risk of ridicule or misunderstanding. As teachers, we must support our students' first steps. Seeing some highly creative students afraid to write the first sentence on a blank piece of paper, I am reminded of T.S. Eliot's poem, The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock: "And should I then presume? /And how should I begin?" "Do I dare /Disturb the universe?" But these students do begin. The thousands of poems, stories, and essays I have collected over the years is a vivid testament to the eloquent and imaginative visions, dreams, and hopes of creative children. Each one who picks up a pen in my class and writes has in effect said, "Yes, I do dare disturb the universe."

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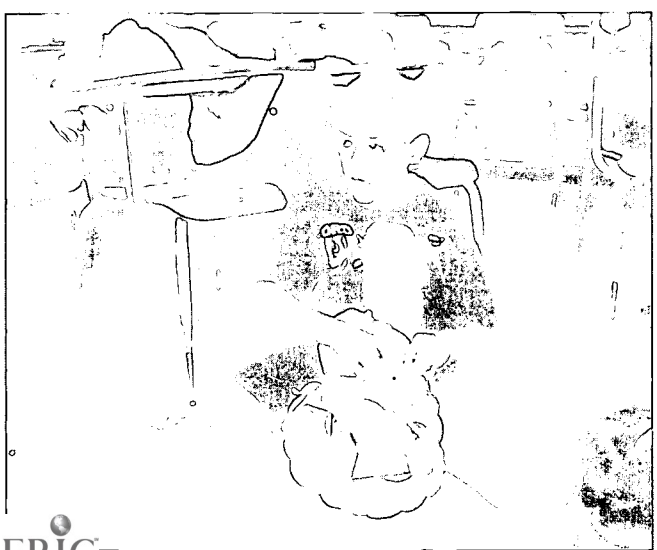

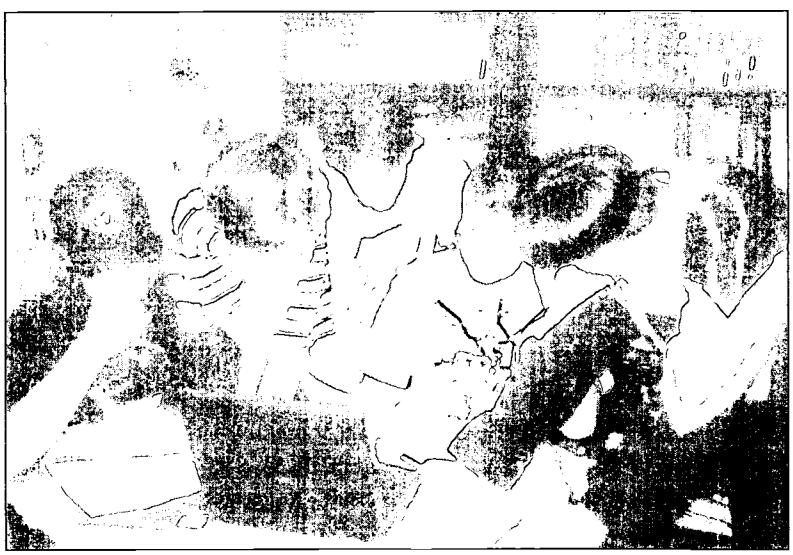

THE ART OF WRITING: USING ART TO RECOGNIZE THE NEED FOR REVISING IN THE CREATIVE WRITING PROCESS

By Amy Foust

As educators, we know that students reveal their creativity in many forms. Students who struggle with basic quizzes and tests will surprise us when given the freedom to express their understanding creatively. This is even more apparent in the gifted child, whose comprehension is far more complex than can be communicated by traditional testing. I am always searching for different venues to tap into my students' interests and knowledge base.

Every August, I am confronted with a new set of English students hesitant to join me in the world of writing. It can take months to transform a classroom of students into a community of writers. Furthermore, they need to be constantly reassured in all the steps of the creative writing process.

As many writing teachers can attest, getting students to internalize the value of each of these steps can be arduous and often fruitless. Students brainstorm, revise, and edit only when and how we tell them to. They have a difficult time understanding how critical each of these steps is to the outcome. While many gifted students realize the need to edit, they tend to be severe critics of their own work and rarely enjoy the process. I have probably experimented with as many different techniques of teaching revising as years I have been teaching, each with varying degrees of success.

At the 2000 N.C.T.E. Convention in Milwaukee, I attended Cheryl Yocum and Judy Cova Kelly's "Enhancing Student Writing Through Art." In this presentation, they examined how art provides a catalyst for writing and how the processes for art and writing are similar. This idea raised several questions: Would students recognize and be willing to follow the creative process in order to produce a piece of artwork? Would they identify the need to revise their artwork in the process? Could they recognize the parallels between the process of art and writing? Would they then internalize the need to revise in their own writing?

These questions intrigued me enough a year later to develop this project to connect art and writing for this school year. I felt this study would best be accomplished at the beginning of the school year in order to build a strong foundation for the process of writing for the year.

My purpose was to take students through the process of producing a piece of artwork. Through this discovery, the students would recognize the modifications and changes that occur during the creative process, which they would ultimately internalize and transfer to the process of creative writing.

Before I began planning, I consulted with the art teacher in our junior high building. I didn't feel like I had a strong art background and I needed any help I could get. Fortunately, she became an invaluable resource and excited coach. Not only was she enthusiastic about the feasibility and ramifications of this unit of study, but she also identified specific terms and aspects of art that might help with the writing. She gave me some art ...ples that our class could use and provided materials from her own supplies. Without the art teacher's support and guidance, I would not have felt nearly as confident or accomplished.

When I finally approached my sixth grade students with the idea of doing an art project, they all seemed excited. I expressed my hesitation, stating that I didn't have a lot of experience with art. After all, I was a writing teacher. This made them feel that they had something to give to me. Soon, they started to take on the role of coach while we worked through the process together.

We brainstormed where to begin. Some students were ready to bring in materials and get started the next day. But after more discussion, they realized there were so many options that they really needed to "study" some of the options. Basically, we agreed to look at a variety of artists and artwork first.

For the next lesson, I gathered several prints and photos of artwork from the public library, the art teacher, and even from the supplemental materials in our reading series. I tried to choose artwork that showed a broad expanse of materials and subject matter, but portrayed a strong mood. We studied everything from a metal sculpture of a hanging spider to the lively colors of a Matisse to symbolic photos comprising an Indian's cloak. I wanted students to see how an artist uses everything from the materials to the colors, lines, and shapes to help portray a mood. Modern art seemed to work the best here.

The artwork was placed randomly around the room and students "reviewed" four pieces of their choosing. The class then participated in a whole group discussion of their findings. The depth of analysis and critical interaction from students of all levels amazed me. There were no right or wrong answers to their opinions and interpretations, so all students felt comfortable sharing and exchanging ideas.

Prior to starting this project, each student brought in a "Me Box" to share with the class. The "Me Box" contained items from home that were special to the students and revealed a little bit about him or herself. I like to do this project at the beginning of the year in order to better familiarize myself with the students and help create a classroom community.

We decided to use the "Me Box" as the basis for the art project. Using the techniques we just studied, each student chose an item from their "Me Box" to convey the mood artistically. They used the same guidelines to plan their art that they used to critique artwork during the previous lesson. Each student used the mood of the piece as the driving force to decide what materials to use, and to explore color, lines, and shapes. We also started to consider how the title enhanced the meaning of a piece and the students came up with "working titles."

During the next class period, students briefly went over their completed planning sheets with their peers and made any changes based on those recommendations. They seemed eager to share and willing to consider possible modifications. During this time I met with students individually to review their plans

and discuss getting the necessary materials. Often the students volunteered to provide some or all of their materials from home. This made it easier for me and also gave the students more pride, knowing they were taking on more responsibility.

Finally, we had our plans and materials and were ready to begin! During these class periods, artists worked in a designated area of the room with other artists using the same medium so they could share supplies. Painters shared paints and sculptors shared tools. Luckily, our class periods are 60 minutes so each group could be responsible for their own set up and clean up. At the end of each creation day, students reflected on their progress and any changes from their original plan. Curious to see how readily they revised their artwork, I anxiously read their responses to the questions, "What did not go as well as planned today?" And "What changes are you going to make to your original plan?" Some sample reflections are given below:

> "I am going to change the clay by putting holes for windows in the clay so it looks more real."
>
> "I didn't get to make my chain right. I'm wrapping the chain around the stopwatch, and coloring it different."
>
> "I'm not going to paint him exactly like the way I did on the original plan."
>
> "I think I might add more shapes to my background and use different (sic.) colors."
>
> "I changed the background (sic.) of my picture from white to the Italian flag."
>
> "I am going to change the color of the bear because brown doesn't show how much he means to me."

In order to pull the project to a close and celebrate their accomplishments, I took pictures of each student with their artwork. In addition, each student wrote an "About the Artist" piece. We spent two class periods creating this page so that the students had enough time to plan, create a rough draft, revise with a partner, edit and produce a final copy. Although they were required to follow the steps of the writing process here, I did not want to use this part of the project to parallel the two processes just yet.

As a final celebration, we posted all the "About the Author" pieces with their photos on the classroom bulletin board. At this point, the art projects could go home but we still had the lasting memories and reminders to keep in the room. Not surprisingly, the bulletin board of artists was the first part of the room that students showed their parents when they came for conferences.

The ultimate goal of this project was to parallel the processes of creating art and creating written work. The students seemed to recognize and understand the necessary steps to creating art but the true test was to see if they now identified the same steps in writing.

On chart paper, we brainstormed as a class the steps we followed to produce our artwork. They were precise and wanted credit for all their preparation and hard work. The process they came up with is as follows:

Art Project

1. Brought and shared Me Box.
   Chose one important thing.
3. Looked at other artists. Got ideas.
4. Planned project. Made sketch.
5. Started making it.
6. Reflected on work. Made necessary changes.
7. Put on finishing touches.
   - Paint
   - Pictures
   - Title
8. About the Artist
9. Celebrated!

I titled a second parallel column "Writing Project" and asked the class what steps we should take if we wanted to write about a Me Box item. With a little guidance, they could see that the same steps were going to be employed for the written piece as were used for the art project. They also recognized that they had already accomplished the first two steps and that they were ready to "study" other authors for ideas before planning.

Art Project	**Writing Project**
1. Brought and shared Me Box.	1. Bring and share Me Box.
2. Chose one important item.	2. Choose one important thing.
3. Looked at other artists. Got ideas.	3. Look at other authors. Get ideas.
4. Planned project. Made sketch.	4. Plan.
5. Started making it.	
6. Reflected on work. Made necessary changes.	
7. Put on finishing touches. -Paint -Pictures -Title	
8. About the Artist	
9. Celebrated!	

In order to study an author and get ideas, we used a sample narrative that another writing teacher had given to me. In the story, a son describes going on a water ride at a theme park with his father. Although you could use any narrative piece, I like this example because it is concise but still gives clear descriptions and focuses on an emotion or mood. Just as we had tried to portray a mood with our artwork, I wanted the students to portray the emotion of their Me Box item in their writing. We also referred to pages from our writing textbook to examine ideas and read examples of how to begin the narrative piece.

Since the students had been using bubble maps to outline chapters in Social Studies, they decided that using a bubble map to plan their writing would be easiest. In our planning, we were sure to include a strong beginning, details, climax, feelings, and an ending that reiterated why that Me Box item was so special.

Just as we did with the art project, students used an entire class period (60 minutes) to work on their rough drafts. Sometimes I require silent writing time but, what I realized was that, with their peers available, students revised as they wrote because they were talking to their peers, constantly getting feedback. This was permissible during the art project so I had to alter my expectations that some talking during writing might actually be helpful and this may be the time some students do their revising. Although this may not qualify as formal revising,

I still needed to recognize its validity. Some students, however, did not like to be disturbed during their writing and they were allowed to move to a quiet place in the room. All learning styles should be accommodated.

After their rough drafts were completed, we were ready to revise. Rather than tell them what to do, I referred back to the chart. They could see that the corresponding step stated that they needed to make changes but no one expressed excitement at the day's plan. The response was more like the usual low moans or blank stares when you tell them it's time to revise.

I pulled out my stack of Art Project Reflection sheets and began asking students about the changes they made to their art projects.

"Frankie, you wrote that you changed the background of your picture from white to the Italian flag. Why did you choose to do that?"

"Well, because white was boring and I wanted to show that the important part of my necklace was that it was from Italy."

"Did that change make it better?"

"Yeah. I think so."

The class agreed that Frankie's change resulted in a better, more meaningful art piece.

"Heather, you ended up wrapping the chain around the watch but that wasn't in your original design. Why did you make that change?"

"Because it wasn't working. The chain kept breaking so I wrapped it around the watch so it would stick to the watch and not break."

"Did that make it better?"

"Yeah."

We continued discussing changes we made to our art projects while I wrote the reasons on the board. The students concluded that there are two reasons to make changes during this point in the process: 1) To make it better. 2) To change things that aren't working. This became our working definition of revising.

I always write with my students to help model the process and help develop our class as a community of writers. I used a rough draft that I had written about a childhood friend as an example to revise on the overhead. The students knew the photo because I used it as my catalyst for the art project so they were familiar with its importance. After reading the piece, we referred back to our definition of revising: How could I make it better? What should I change if it isn't working?

As they gave me suggestions, I wrote notations on my rough draft explaining that, as the author, I might choose to use the suggestion or I might not, but I want to write it down and remember it for later. I was also careful to praise how each student stated their suggestions to me. I pointed out that they were polite and offered suggestions for improvement and weren't simply critical. They all agreed that these were the same communication skills we should expect when working with each other.

inally, the students paired with a partner and followed the same process on their own writing. I either worked with an individual student or walked around and eavesdropped on peer conferences.

At the end of the period, I asked for nominations for Outstanding Peer Conference Partners. As students raised their hands and explained why their partner was outstanding, I kept a running list on chart paper with descriptions. We keep this list on the wall and add new nominations as partners get nominated.

We used the subsequent class period to review our peer conference partners' ideas for revisions and how to revise using these suggestions. Although it seems obvious to adults, students need to be reminded of these techniques. Again, using my writing as the example, I showed the students how I could use an asterisk to point out where I want to add more detail, how to cut and paste paragraphs or sections, and how to use a thesaurus to find better words. The students then employed these techniques to their own writing. If there was enough time, some students wanted another peer conference to help them find more areas for improvement. If they felt that they didn't get enough suggestions from their first partner, I reminded them of our list for Outstanding Peer Conference nominations.

Referring back to our expanding process chart, students recognized that the next step was to put on the finishing touches. This meant it was time to look up spellings, correct punctuation, and finalize the title.

Art Project	**Writing Project**
1. Brought and shared Me Box.	1. Bring and share Me Box.
2. Chose one important thing.	2. Choose one important thing.
3. Looked at other artists. Get ideas.	3. Look at other authors. Got ideas.
4. Planned project. Made sketch.	4. Plan.
5. Started making it.	5. Rough draft.
6. Reflected on work. Made necessary changes.	6. Revise: make it better. Change things that aren't working.
7. Put on finishing touches. -Paint -Pictures -Title	7. Final touches -Editing -Spelling -Punctuation -Title
8. About the Artist	8. About the author
9. Celebrated!	

We used two class periods for editing and publishing so that there were several opportunities for me to help with the mechanics of editing.

No artistic endeavor is complete without an unveiling and celebration. To commemorate our writing accomplishments, I conduct a "Coffeehouse" for my students. Heated water from the coffee makers are used to make hot chocolate, table cloths cover the desks, and the lights are dimmed, transforming the classroom into a "Beatnik Coffeehouse" where up and coming authors are featured. We have a lot of fun "taking this fieldtrip" and the students always look forward to completing the next writing project so they can join the celebration.

Reflection:

The goal of this project was to parallel the process of producing art with the process of writing and ultimately provide enough proof of the need for revising that students would internalize its worth in the creative writing process. This unit was not the "magic wand" that now makes my students want to revise. We keep the process chart on the wall, referring back to it constantly, so that students at least recognize it as an expectation in our class. Will they revise on their own once they leave my classroom? I can only hope. Did they more readily internalize the importance of the creative process? I feel that they did because the students accepted the creative process for art and could then begin to recognize the similarities between art and writing.

Although this wasn't a cure all for the need to revise, there are a few reasons I feel more confident with the students' revisions this year after completing this unit. First, we completed the unit at the beginning of the year so it sets up the expectation for these steps in our community of writers. Second, the students came up with the process and consequently feel more ownership and responsibility to fulfill the guidelines they helped create. Third, we kept the step of revising simple. They don't have to go down an entire list of questions and things to change, like I've seen in many classrooms. We focus on two simple ideas: How do I make it better? How do I change things that aren't working? Lastly, I recognized that giving more classroom time to the writing of the rough draft and allowing productive talk among peers during this time is a valid dimension in the revising process.

For next year, I would like to improve on the effectiveness of our celebration by possibly having a "gallery showing" so other classes can come in and view the students' work. On the Art Reflection Sheet, I would like to add the question, "Why did you make the changes you did?" This will help later when we parallel the importance of making changes from an original plan. Along the same lines, I might stretch the time we take to write the rough draft and have students write a similar reflection sheet during the rough draft process that they did during the making of their artwork. This might help document and confirm that good writers are always revising their work.

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CREATIVITY IN CHILDREN'S WRITING

By Marian R. Carlson

Encouraging creativity in students' writing is a joy and challenge for teachers. It's the heart and soul of the writing process for it breathes life into ordinary, dry lessons. This is the "art" of writing that can launch students into a love of the written word and develop skill. Middle grade students not only grasp the imaginative effort in writing but they can be published as young authors in national magazines and newspapers.

However, one reason many teachers avoid the writing process is the time consumed in editing students' work. One way this challenge is solved is by establishing a three step editing routine. First, teach the students to edit silently by themselves; next, students edit out loud with a peer; and finally, they edit with an adult. A grammar guide, such as *The Write Source* by Houghton Mifflin provides detailed editing information for all.

As teachers work at writing themselves, keeping journals and writing letters, their own confidence is strengthened. This depth and appreciation of the writing process to their mentoring of the students. At each grade level, essential writing skills are needed and building creativity into the content of lesson plans provides the spark for engaging gifted students. All students work toward their personal best and are lifted to a new level through critical thinking, problem solving, role-playing, brainstorming, and other creative methods. One approach doesn't fit all. Creativity is fresh, flexible, and defined by each class and student.

Last year, The National Teacher Training Institute sponsored by WGBY-57 and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting asked me to be a Master Teacher and create two units for middle school language arts. The following is one cross-curricular approach to utilizing creativity in writing through a historic role model. In The Art of Writing, Nellie Bly, the first American investigative reporter, comes to life through video, role-playing, newspaper writing, music, the arts, and more. Through this extraordinary role model, students are motivated to discuss, research, interview, think, and write. This

lesson was presented in the New England area and is available, along with The Science of Writing and other lessons plans, on the web at wgby.org/eduntti/.

One of the units follows:

Overview:

This lesson engages students in the art of writing using a historic role model, research on the Web, and practical reporting methods. Students become "investigative reporters" in a fast-paced news "office." They analyze and evaluate a video about the first famous female reporter, Nellie Bly (1864-1922), focusing on the qualities it takes to be a successful communicator. Students research a writer of their choice and present their findings in a News Spot report. Nellie's Top Ten Writing Tips (end of this article) inspire students to design their own creative self-portrait as a reporter. Finally, the ace reporters conduct real-life interviews with a current role model and write an article celebrating a neighbor.

Time Allotment:

Two 75-minute class periods.

Learning Objectives:

Students will be able to:

- Compare and contrast life in 19th century America with today;
- Understand the importance of one individual in history;
- Identify the elements of good story and news writing;
- Develop skills as a reporter working with a partner on an interview;
- Catch the spirit of becoming a life-long writer.

Standards

From the *English Language Arts Curriculum Framework, Massachusetts* www.doc.mass.edu

Identify basic facts and ideas read, heard, and viewed. (LS #9)

Identify, analyze, and apply knowledge of the structure, elements, and meaning of nonfiction or informational material. (LS #13)

Develop characters through the use of basic acting skills. (LS #18)

Edit writing with a student partner. (LS #22)

Generate questions, note-taking and summarize. (LS #23)

Conduct research using appropriate methods. (LS #24)

Media Components

Video: *Around the World in 72 Days* (PBS VIDEO).*
**for activities that use this video on the life of Nellie Bly, see Web site - wgby.org/eduntti/*

Web sites

People and Features
http://www.pbs.org/amex/world/
This Web site, a tie-in to the PBS series, American History and Culture, features famous journalists.

My Hero, Directory - Writers
http://myhero.com/home.asp
This Web site features information, quotes, and book lists on great writings.

Authors on the Web
http://www.acs.ucalgary.ca/-dkbrown
This is a children's literature Web guide. (Yahoo magazine) "One of the most amazingly helpful sites."

Just for Kids Who Love Books
http://www.alanbrown.com
A great collection of links about authors and books, this comprehensive site summarizes authors' lives and lists their books.

Materials:

- One "reporter's" trench coat
- Pencil and small spiral notebook
- Name "tent"
- Nellie Bly Worksheet
  (Library of Congress photo credit)
- Nellie's Top Ten Writing Tips worksheet
- Know Yourself worksheet

Prep for Teachers

Prior to teaching, bookmark the Web sites used in the lesson. Prepare the name "tents" by cutting paper 6" x 9", fold in half long ways. Ask the first student to arrive to act as "editor" and have students print their "name tents" in black marker, then place on their "office" desk.

Cross-Curriculum Extensions

Visual Arts/Language Arts

Provide students with a copy of the three-page Nellie Bly Booklet. Discuss Nellie's Top Ten Writing Tips (worksheet) as an on-going source of what a good writer has. Ask students to keep this as an important document in their binders. Now they can use it as a basis for creating their own self-portrait entitled Know Yourself (worksheet). Include real name, pen name, and motto. Add pen name to back of name "tent."

Social Studies/Language Arts

Working in pairs as reporters, assign students the job of interviewing a parent, grandparent, teacher, or friend. They don't have to be a famous writer. Prepare a few questions ahead of time, such as: Do you like to write? What kinds of things do you write? What books do you like to read? Discuss the importance of setting a time for the interview that's convenient for everyone, spelling names correctly, and being a good listener. Student reporters may want to take notes, tape, record, or produce a video of the interview with permission. Share the results in a class program, Know Your Neighbor.

Drama

In small groups ask your students to create a Play of the Day based on their knowledge of Nellie Bly, Q.O., Joseph Pulitzer, etc. Write about one moment in time, such as Nellie trying to get Pulitzer to hire her. Encourage students to read books to add to their information and details for the script. Encourage them to

improvise as they feel inspired. This living history may include simple scenery, costumes, or artifacts, such as Nellie Bly undercover in a disguise, Pulitzer's tall silk hat, or an early typewriter.

Music

Sing Along. The editor of the Pittsburgh *Dispatch* decided Elizabeth Cochran needed a byline that was "neat and catchy." The name Nelly Bly was made famous by the great songwriter Stephen Foster. The name Elizabeth was spelled in haste as Nellie. Words to the song are found on this Web site. Special Features http://www.pbs.org/amex/world/

Community Connections

* Contact a local newspaper and arrange for a reporter to visit your classroom as a guest speaker. Ask the reporter to describe a career in the newspaper business today. Students can prepare a few questions ahead of time. Ask the reporter if they know who Nellie Bly was!
* Contact a local newspaper and arrange for a class tour during production hours if possible. Prepare for the visit by reading Deadline! From News to Newspaper by Gail Gibbons. In this short story, students will catch an overview of the work and many steps in this industry.
* Compile the class interviews. Know Your Neighbors. Add photos or sketches, make a booklet to share with your school. Donate a copy to your library.

Student Materials

"Nellie's Top Ten Writing Tips" worksheet

"Know Yourself" worksheet

NELLIE'S TOP TEN WRITING TIPS

What a Good Writer Has

1. A good writer has a **notebook** to capture ideas—practice writing everyday as faithfully as sports or music.
2. A good writer has a **nose** for news—sniff out the best stories around.
3. A good writer has an **eye** for detail—pay attention and spot the key moments in life.
4. A good writer has an **ear** for dialogue—listen to conversations and use them when appropriate.
5. A good writer has an imaginary **camera**—focus on a specific topic, not a general one, i.e., "A Bath for Cupid," not "My Pet Cat."
6. A good writer has a **strategy for starting**—a structure to think in, an outline, timeline, story web, etc.
7. A good writer has a **hook**—grab the reader in the first sentence with a fact, quote, question, anecdote, or dialogue.
8. A good writer has a quiet **place** to think, and dream, and write—slow down and don't hurry here and there.
9. A good writer has a **love of words**—find specific nouns and active verbs, metaphors, and similes, not adjectives and adverbs.
10. A good writer has a **strategy for finishing**—polish up the masterpiece by proofreading and revising.

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CREATIVE CHILDREN'S THEATER IN KENYA

By Margaretta Swigert-Gacheru

Through the centuries, within the traditional Kenyan society, children were invariably perceived as precious beings and were highly prized by the community at large. As such, a child's early education was everyone's concern. The nurturing of children's creative thinking, however, was a responsibility especially reserved for the elders—men and women held in high social esteem who were recognized as veritable reservoirs of rich oral traditions and fabulous folklore.

More precisely, it was grandparents who were assigned the essentially oracular role of imparting the community's (or clan's) values and vision of life to youth. Using songs and spell-binding stories, wily riddles and proverbial rhymes, elders would implicitly convey the joys of creative expression and imaginative thinking to their children's offspring.

Unfortunately, for a variety of reasons, this time-honored method of introducing creative thinking to Kenyan youth has all but vanished throughout much of the Republic. Despite the fact that many of the region's finest poets, playwrights, and [illegible]ng artists have acknowledged the immense debt they owe to their elders for having given them such glorious tutelage at a tender time of their lives, this singular approach to education has almost died out. Poets like Uganda's Okot p'Bitek and Sudan's Taban lo Liong as well as novelist-playwrights like Kenya's Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Nigeria's Nobel Prize winning Wole Soyinka all have recorded remarkable accounts of their early upbringing under the care and cultural guidance of elders who enriched their early lives.

One contemporary Kenyan storyteller who had the good fortune to grow up under the wise and whimsical eye of his father's mother says the training his Mama Misca gave him was rich in imaginative charm and ethical insight. To Aghan Odero, it was also highly interactive. She not only shared a seemingly endless stream of stories, songs, riddles and rhymes with her offspring, but also expected each one to regularly take his or her turn re-telling a tale or two they had learned from Misca to one of their brothers and cousins. That way, children were not merely entertained. They had to pay attention to the details of Misca's storylines and learn them by heart. Then too, future professional performers like Aghan also loved taking special

note of the cadence and imaginative phrasing his grandmother used when telling her most spellbinding tales. In fact, he claims, that in spite of his having studied with some of Africa's finest performing artists, he has yet to find one more compelling or charismatic than his Mama Misca.

With the coming of Western education to Kenya, however, the value of storytellers like Misca began to diminish—at least in their traditional forms—as did the oral traditions they shared and the local languages they used. The vital role that the storyteller played in nurturing both the character and creative thinking of Kenya's children and young people gave way to Western educators who could not adequately replace this traditional oral interpreter and the rich legacy he provided. Consequently, as the social value of these traditions, languages and local lore depreciated, Kenyan youth began to distance themselves from their own cultures (including their own mother tongues) and adopt, through formal schooling, the cultural values and lifestyle of the West. This kind of schooling, with its emphasis on logic and the memorization of facts, did little to kindle the imaginative and creative power of Kenyan children.

For many years after Kenya obtained its Independence from Britain in the early 1960s, critical and creative thinking were still not being taught within the national school curriculum. Instead, Kenyan youth were being taught to absorb information and study to pass final exams. The need for a more creative framework and orientation to genuine learning—one that recuperates some of the diminishing traditions of pre-colonial Kenya—has become increasingly obvious to educators.

Although many aspects of colonial education persisted beyond Independence, an extracurricular activity in the performing arts gradually became the means for addressing the creative needs of Kenyan youth. Established in the late 1950s, the annual Kenya Schools Drama Festival initially copied the performance program designed in the United Kingdom. Set up in Kenya for the children of European settlers and ex-patriots to partake of Britain's great theatrical tradition, particularly the plays of William Shakespeare—the Drama Festival was (and still is) an essentially extramural activity. However, the Government Ministry of Education does provide a modicum of funding that enables primary and secondary schools from all eight provinces to participate in this high-profile cultural event.

In 1963, the Government made a conscious decision to continue supporting the Festival. In the late 1970s, an African team finally took charge of running the Festival and began revolutionizing the role of Theatre and the Performing Arts in Kenya. Perhaps the most radical step in this process was the appointment of Wasambo Were to be Kenya's first African Chief Inspector of Education in charge of the Drama Festival. He set the stage for a new kind of Theatre Arts and through him performance became one of the most crucial vehicles for inspiring creative thinking among Kenyan young people.

Mr. Were had always loved theatre, including all the works of Shakespeare which he had often put on stage, either as a student or as an English teacher. But Mr. Were was also committed to 'indigenizing' the Schools Drama Festival. Once he recognized the tremendous power the Chief Inspector had, he immediately began to turn the Festival around—from being an ing extension of colonial policy to becoming an avenue for communicating authentically Kenyan creative expression.

Instead of letting the Festival showcase the works of Shakespeare, the Chief Inspector sent out the word to teachers through the Government's nationwide network, that the Festival would begin featuring original, Kenyan scripts. The Festival was to become a platform for showcasing vital aspects of Kenyan indigenous culture. He also said that the Festival should foster critical thinking among Kenyan youth through the performing arts, as students aimed high and worked to see their plays reach the national finals.

While setting out such an ambitious agenda for one annual national drama festival, Mr. Were never anticipated achieving his goals without having a strong support team with which to work. He established and implemented his goals by creating a committee composed of headmasters (Principals) and teachers from primary and secondary schools. The major criteria for making it to his Festival Support Committee was a sincere love of theatre and a deep desire to make the Festival into a vehicle for unleashing the untapped creative talents of Kenyans.

Practically overnight, Were was able to encourage teachers nationwide to put down their published plays and pick up their pens. His intent was to enable teachers to write scripts of their own that would serve to mirror aspects of Kenyan everyday life. Teachers responded readily by writing scripts which their students not only enjoyed putting on stage but which also challenged them to think creatively. Soon, students began writing scripts of their own.

The resounding response that Were received from both teachers and students, as well as from school administrators, validated the Chief School Inspector's new policy. At the same time, it reflected a wider trend in university circles which related to Kenyans reaffirming authentic aspects of their own indigenous cultures. This trend has subsequently been described in a work by the former head of the University of Nairobi's Literature Department, Professor Ngugi wa Thiong'o. His book, *De-colonizing the Mind*, has become an inspiration for script-writer/school teachers as well as for university scholars and writers who are trying to re-integrate local traditions and cultural practices into the theater experience.

This move to find new uses for traditional culture has been critical to the process of inspiring young people to create their own theatrical ideas (drawn from their own cultures and traditions), rather than imitate the performance styles of the West. The most exciting aspect of current cultural trends in the country has been the students' enthusiastic response to Mr. Were's call to "Kenyanize" the Schools Drama Festival. The young people are the ones who have taken hold and become most fully involved in using theatre as an avenue for creative thinking and artistic expression.

In spite of the Drama Festival being an extracurricular activity and Drama not being one of the "examinable subjects" included in the national schools syllabus, increasing numbers of primary and secondary school children have participated in preparations for the Drama Fete. They not only learn their lines, new songs and dance steps, but also gain practical knowledge in various aspects of stagecraft—everything from stage management to set design, costuming, make-up and sometimes even script-writing. In many instances, teachers write the scripts

and choreograph dances. However, the students frequently contribute cultural material of their own by researching the dances, songs, stories, and oral histories of their communities and sharing them with the class. This becomes a way for children in a multi-ethnic country to appreciate their own and others' cultures, expand their creative thinking, and find diverse material for composing original theatre productions. Assembling traditions from a variety of ethnic groups that can be integrated into a particular story or theme, the teachers and students synthesize the research they have done and use it as a resource for addressing contemporary Kenyan issues.

So infectious has the "drama bug" become that not only are rural schools in the most remote corners of Kenya signing up to take part in the theatre competition; but the teacher training colleges across the country have also established their own annual Drama Fete as well. Outside the perimeter of the national schools and colleges, increasing numbers of private schools have become active participants in staging school productions. In addition, this national fascination for drama has now spilled over into the churches and social halls. Several church organizations and social groups are now conducting annual drama festivals of their own.

One organization that has had a marked impact on the quality of school productions being staged during the Schools Drama Festival is entitled the Kenya Drama and Education Association (KDEA). Composed mainly of school teachers, KDEA was formed in the early 1990's by two local university lecturers who were desirous of creating a nation-wide network of teachers who had a love for children's theatre. Its purpose is to advance theatre in education throughout Kenya; promote theatre as a tool of enlightenment in all disciplines (not just the language arts); advance freedom of expression; and cultivate creative capabilities (dance, song writing, acting, art, stage craft, story telling, writing).

Since its inception, KDEA has enlisted "lay" drama teachers countrywide and the group has conducted a variety of workshops in different provinces throughout the country. Most have been aimed at enhancing teachers' ability to produce quality theatre of social significance. Several have focused on scripting plays which inspire creative thinking on the part of student thespians who increasingly contribute their own imaginative talents to the production of school shows.

KDEA has organized several regional and sub-regional workshops which have enriched Kenyan teachers' perspectives of methods of teaching, scripting and staging school productions tremendously. Just recently, KDEA held an international symposium for drama teachers which offered Kenyan pedagogue/producers even larger opportunities to get fresh views of how to strengthen a national theatre movement that is currently unfolding so rapidly in Kenya.

One trend that has clearly emerged since the outset of Kenyans' efforts to indigenize the School Drama Festival program is the consistent tendency to focus on themes reflective of current social issues and events alive in the public psyche. In the process, students have not only acquired considerable theatrical experience. They have also ensured that the school productions gain nationwide attention. Many shows have [illegible] upon sensitive social issues which are not widely reflected in other local media spheres. In fact, observers now feel the Schools Drama Festival has come to serve as a sort of social barometer, reflecting the most heated public issues as well as the most troubling social trends. In recent years, school productions have reflected on issues ranging from child abuse, polygamy and corruption in high places, to the tragedies of reckless driving, gender inequity, increasing drug abuse and the AIDS "epidemic".

What may be one of the more fascinating features of the Schools Drama Fete in recent times is the way teachers and students have begun collectively creating scripts which reflect wider aspects of oral literature. In fact, in 1996 it was the award-winning musical production by Nyeri Girls School that best revealed the way students have begun "going back to their roots" in the rural areas to consult with their elders about the stories, songs, riddles and rhymes that grandparents used to regularly hand down to the younger generation. In a sense, the Nyeri Girls' production revealed the way the Drama Festival encourages and enables young people to participate in Kenya's cultural revival at the same time as it is leads young people back to a deeper appreciation of their own cultural roots.

Staging a show in the local language of Gikuyu and performing traditional songs and dances that have rarely been seen in recent times, has resulted in rich learning experiences for both students and audiences. The Nyeri High School girls gained a great deal from the production. It not only required them to learn new elements of their own people's culture, but also compelled them to gain deeper insights into the way elements of the old culture can be blended with aspects of the new to create a musical production that is fresh and fun to perform as well.

Most of all, a production like The Marriage, by Nyeri Girls, illustrates just how far Kenyans have come since the first efforts were made to indigenize the Drama Festival. However, The Marriage is only one of many school productions which reveal just how deeply drama has taken hold of young people's hearts and minds throughout the country and especially through the schools and the Schools Drama Fete.

In 1998, Kenya featured a second international Theatre and Education Conference that coincided with the Schools Drama Festival. The impact of these two simultaneous events was significant, and extended the influence of young Kenyans' affection for theatre to hundreds of other theatre lovers both at home and abroad. Without doubt, one reason the Drama Festival has gone from strength to strength since the 1970s is because its organizers consciously sought to infuse children's critical thinking into the whole theatrical program. The impact of such efforts continues to grow with increasingly affirmative results upon students, teachers, parents, and the community.

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DIFFERENTIATING THE UNIQUE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE GIFTED CHILD

By Michelle A. Navarro and Julianne M. Kraut

I. Identifying the Gifted Child

There has been considerable debate over what constitutes "giftedness" in the past three decades. The numerous theories and models of intelligence make a starting point for identification and assessment problematic. Delisle (1992) defines a gifted child as "someone who has the ability to do schoolwork without much difficulty or someone who can succeed even in small things which require a particular skill" (p.5). Other theorists focus on multi-intelligence abilities ranging from linguistic to musical to interpersonal and beyond (Gardner, 1993).

Carroll (1997) indicates that many educators accept the definition of giftedness proposed by the federal government, which states:

> 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:
>
> V. Intellectual
> VI. Creative
> VII. Artistic areas
> VIII. Leadership capacity
> IX. Specific academic fields (p. 3).

In many ways gifted children are out of sync with what is considered age-appropriate developmental behavior. Giftedness may be viewed as asynchronous development, in which intellectual abilities and heightened awareness and intensity create inner experiences that are qualitatively different from the norm (Smutny, 1997). Asynchronicity also refers to the uneven development in intellectual and academic achievement often observed in gifted children.

II. Intelligence Testing

In general, many professionals rely on intelligence and achievement tests to identify giftedness, principally because these two attributes can be scientifically measured. The Weschler Intelligence Tests appear to represent the best available starting point for identification and assessment of giftedness in children because of their distinct subtests, verbal and performance intelligence scores, full scale scores, and their many composite and index test scores. However, it must be pointed out that these tests represent only a facet of the evaluation process—mainly its starting point—and that it would be irresponsible to consider them conclusive without further investigation.

There are two forms of the Weschler tests for children, the Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence-Revised (WPPSI-R) for children ages three to six years 11 months, and the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children-III (Third Edition) (WISC-III) for children ages six to 16 years 11 months. The forms are divided into approximately ten subtests and three supplemental tests. Scores are compiled to provide a verbal and performance I.Q. score and an overall I.Q. score (see attached form for detail). The pattern of scatter in the scores provides a starting point for profiling an individual child's intellect and ability.

These patterns of test scores are important in formulating hypotheses about a child's intellect and ability. There are several types of patterns. The first type of pattern is called inter-subtest scatter, referring to the differences and similarities between the subtests. ACID scores (ACID refers to Arithmetic, Coding, Information, and Digit Span on the Weschler scale) are examined to determine if there are attention problems and/or learning differences. Children with lower scores on these subtests relative to their other scores may have attention-span or concentration problems. An "M" shaped configuration in the pattern may serve as an initial indication that a child may have an auditory processing disorder (Malter & Frank, 1995). The "M" shape indicates a higher score in similarities and vocabulary with corresponding lower scores in arithmetic, information, and digit span. The clinician must be very cautious at this point because what may appear to be an auditory processing deficit may actually be a difference in learning style indicative of individuals who are more visual-oriented learners. Therefore, it is also important to administer a Learning Styles Inventory in addition to other testing measures when conducting a thorough assessment.

Another type of pattern, intra-subtest scatter, indicates inconsistent performance within a particular skill. Each subtest is designed to progress in difficulty as it is completed. Some children, however, may miss simpler questions, while excelling at the harder problems. This pattern may be representative of a gifted child who is a visual-spatial learner. Other children have sporadic subtest scores, correctly answering the easy questions, missing the intermediate ones, and getting the hard ones right. This may be indicative of emotional problems interfering with their ability to learn, or possibly boredom with the test.

A trained clinician needs to be aware of the entire spectrum of possible explanations for a child's pattern of scores (including learning difficulties, emotional problems and giftedness). A "bored" gifted child may score poorly on coding due to apathy with what he/she may find to be an overly simplistic representation. However, the score may also be indicative of fine-motor difficulties, dyslexia, or impaired visual processing. These are indications a clinician must be skilled in identifying and differentiating.

The Weschler is divided into verbal and performance subtests (see insert 1-A). Verbal scores represent many left-hemispheric functions that Kaufman (1979) identifies as linguistic. Children who score high on verbal scores may perform well in a traditional school setting because of their

superior verbal skills and analytical thought processes.

Performance scores involve more right-hemisphere skills and may help in identifying a visual-spatial learner (or a child with a visual-spatial deficit). A visual-spatial learner may need to learn concepts all at once, for example being able to excel at mathematical reasoning while failing to do correct computations (Silverman, 1994).

Verbal-Performance splits are more common in gifted children. Given the nature of the asynchronicity in their development, many gifted children tend to have significantly higher verbal scores on the Weschler test than the norm. This may cause a clinician to identify pathology where there is none. Conversely, a clinician who overlooks a split simply because gifted children may have this tendency is in danger of possibly under-diagnosing learning disabilities.

One of the most readily noticeable identifying features of a non-verbal learning disability is a Verbal I.Q. score that is significantly higher statistically than the Performance I.Q. score on formal measures of intelligence (Johnson, 1987). In general, the greater the magnitude of discrepancy between scores, the more likely the accuracy of the diagnosis. Discrepancies between the Verbal Comprehension Index and the Perceptual Organization Index are also important measurements for an investigative assessment of non-verbal learning disorders (Kaufman, 1979). The Weschler tests provide the trained clinician with statistical information on three different I.Q. scores and provide valuable information that further testing may be necessary for a complete and thorough assessment for a diagnosis of non-verbal learning disabilities (NYLD).

There are some drawbacks to using the Weschler tests to identify gifted children. The ceiling I.Q. score may deflate a child's overall score. This may have impact on the exceptionally gifted children, as evidenced in recent studies at the Gifted Development Center in Denver, Colorado. The Center suggests that a child who performs at the 99th percentile on two or more of the Verbal Comprehension subtests should be given the Stanford-Binet L-M test for a more accurate diagnosis. The Stanford-Binet L-M test may be used to extend beyond the limits of the Weschler tests, and has often been used for identifying the highly gifted child. Statistically, the Weschler I.Q. score ceiling is 160, while the Stanford-Binet L-M extends well into the 200s. The revised Stanford-Binet, which will be published in the year 2002, will have a ceiling I.Q. of 200 (Riverside Publishing, 1999). The L-M form should be used with caution due to its age, its normative structure, and the possibility that it may not be valid in a court of law, or accepted as evidence of giftedness in the public schools. Its greatest value may be in its support of data derived from other tests, and its ability to identify the highly gifted individual.

III. Achievement Testing

Tests of achievement measure a child's performance and understanding of academic knowledge. As such they do not measure a child's true intellectual capacities. What they do provide is academic standing relative to age and grade. Achievement tests are useful for comparison of one child to another, beginning at age four or five. When used in conjunction with a test for general intelligence, it can be a valuable tool for (ng learning ability or disability. Achievement tests provide a substantial amount of information but need to be supplemented by other psychometric measures.

Many public schools utilize a standardized, group-administered achievement test, such as the California Achievement test, to determine gifted child placement. There are a number of problems that can arise from this method. First, gifted children may be mistakenly identified as average. This can result from the child's not being able to learn at his/her own level. These tests are often administered two to three years after a gifted child has begun school. In kindergarten, for example, the gifted child may have entered with reading skills, but must wait for the rest of the class to catch up, a decision the teacher may make early on. The gifted child may thus become bored at being forced to attenuate him/herself to a lower level of learning than his/her ability, or may manifest his/her intellectual superiority in other ways, such as daydreaming. Gifted children may also seek to create their own world to compensate for the lack of stimulation in the real world. Unfortunately, these mechanisms of coping, if that's what they may be called, can lead to elevated stress in the gifted child. This can also lead to their being labeled inattentive, uncooperative, and possibly attention-deficit. In short, these are not children teachers are likely to nominate as "gifted."

When identifying children for gifted programs, these types of children are either underrepresented or overlooked altogether: 1) girls, particularly adolescent girls, who are more predisposed to hide giftedness in order to gain or retain social acceptance; 2) highly energetic boys; 3) children with disabilities, often because their giftedness is obscured by their disability; 4) children labeled as troublemakers, since admission to gifted programs is considered a reward and these children are disqualified because they cause trouble; 5) children from minorities or non-mainstream social groups; 6) children who perform poorly on tests, which may be the result of their being visual-spatial learners, easily distracted, or experiencing emotional problems (Smutny, 1998; Galbraith, 2000).

Carroll (1997) feels that the teacher may be yet another hindrance. He states that "teachers are good at picking out the high-achieving 'teacher pleasers' but are less effective at identifying the child with superior intellectual ability or the highly creative" (p. 9).

Ideally, the use of multiple criteria in selecting students for gifted education is recommended and should include several of the following measures: Intelligence Tests, Parent Checklists, Achievement Tests, Pupil Products, Creativity Tests, Peer Nominations, Aptitude Tests, Self-Nominations, Teacher Nominations, and Outstanding Creative Performance Potential (Carroll, 1997).

Achievement tests may be better used in conjunction with general intelligence measures. For example, the Weschler Individual Achievement Test (WIAT) is directly normed to the Weschler Intelligence Scales. Measurement specialists have often stressed the importance of using co-normed or linked data from achievement and ability tests in diagnosing and assessing learning disabilities. Using these tools, one is able to calculate meaningful estimates of ability-achievement discrepancies (WIAT Manual, 1992). This is also pertinent information in diagnosing giftedness. What a high I.Q. score and a low

achievement score indicate is (1) the child's environment is not fulfilling his/her intellectual and creative needs; (2) the child's attention, auditory or visual processing may be interfering with learning; (3) the child is a possible underachiever or non-producer; (4) the child may be suffering emotional or social problems; (5) other learning differences may be affecting the child. A high achievement score and average I.Q. score, conversely, may present a child who is living in an enriched environment and may be achievement-oriented without being gifted (i.e., an over-achiever).

IV. Non-Test Data: Observations

Testing, for reasons described previously, can provide factual information about identifying and assessing the gifted child. However, there is as much significant information to be derived from observation and relationship-building between tester and child. Dialogue often reveals certain insights and sensitivity a child may not exhibit during a test such as the Weschler or Stanford-Binet. Consider the information on this observation of Matthew, aged eight, whose I.Q. is 178:

> As Matthew and I conversed over the strange oddities of life, I found myself unaware of the details in the backdrop. Thus, Matthew's intense shriek of terror sent me into alarm status. On the iron lamp was the culprit, and with one quick swoosh the spider was no more. Then to my amazement, Matthew asked why I killed it. Perplexed and a little defensive, I explained that I thought he was afraid of the spider. Matthew was indeed scared, but he retorted, "Do we have to kill something because it scares us? That doesn't seem fair" (Author's clinical data—case information, 1999).

Matthew's obvious insight is something no test could deliver, and it provides a view into how his mind works. The focus of a number of studies has been heightened senses in gifted children. Piechowski (1989) identified heightened senses as overexcitabilities, and grouped them into five different categories: 1) psychomotor; 2) sensual; 3) intellectual; 4) imaginational; and 5) emotional. These may be viewed as clues, pieces of a puzzle. A child is a complex being, and giftedness is not relegated to simple intellectual ability; it permeates all aspects of a child's being. It is therefore not only useful but necessary for the clinician to recognize data outside the parametric tests. This information provides a more holistic picture of the gifted child.

V. Non-Test Data: Historical Information

Parents frequently underrate their ability to provide accurate information about their child. However, they can provide invaluable information about their child's early years, particularly the social, emotional, and developmental history of the child. In addition, they can provide a broader family history (including their own) that, because of the influence genetics has on intelligence, is valuable enough to extend from their gifted child to a better understanding of themselves.

Historical information also provides a systematic approach to the investigation process. For instance, if the parents complain of erratic behavior, they are asked to journalize the [illegible]ts and look for patterns. Many times what seems like erratic behavior is instead a response to an internal or external event. A child who is extremely sensitive to touch may have trouble changing clothes or tolerating things like clothing tags; yet, he/she may not be able to verbalize the complaint. Medical history is essential in the same way. For example, a child with hypoglycemia may react strongly to a drop in his/her blood sugar level. This information again contributes to a fuller, more complete picture of the gifted child.

VI. Projective Tests

Projective tests are indirect, interpretive psychological tests such as simple story-telling and picture drawing. The Children's Apperception Test is comprised of pictures that have animals in various ambiguous situations. The child tells his/her perception of what has happened before, during and after the picture. An example of this is the following, from Sarah, aged 5:

> "The bear parents had a new baby bear. I climb in the crib to be closer to him. He cries, he is not happy. I think I startled him. My parents come in. They are very upset with me. I have to leave the crib. It was dark in the room. I just wanted to help. Why don't they see that? I wish I could just disappear, then there would be a reason for people to ignore me." Sarah begins to cry (Author's clinical data-case information, 1999).

Much can be construed about Sarah from this one excerpt. Her vocabulary, feelings of isolation, sensitivity to others, empathy, and her coping mechanisms are very advanced for a five-year-old. This is evidence that projective tests can be an effective diagnostic tool to gain insight about a gifted child's psychological realm.

VI. Overall Perspective

Giftedness is not one-dimensional, but rather multi-dimensional in nature. It requires a broader, more circumspect view than mere parametric testing can provide. Not only does some parametric testing exclude valuable, insightful information, it may even cause a misdiagnosis of someone who may be gifted. It requires the skill of a tester to promptly administer and interpret tests such as the Weschler and Stanford-Binet.

Parents seem to be the hope for the future. Just as parents who have children with learning disabilities banded together to make and change laws to protect their childrens' futures, so too should those with gifted children. Part of this change may require influencing school boards to broaden the scope of the identification system. Early identification, education, flexibility and acceptance are also important.

Education of teachers to better identify giftedness is a crucial element. As discussed earlier, enrollment in a gifted program is viewed as a reward, and often this results in teachers overlooking potentially gifted children because of their inattentiveness, apparent boredom, or differences in learning styles. Teachers must learn to put aside any personal feelings to view objectively what is being presented to them by these children, and to consider the possibility that these behaviors may be an indication of giftedness, not signs of apathy or boredom.

Finally, proper assessment and identification will help assure that children do not "slip through the cracks" of the school system. Assessment needs to be done by an individual who can identify both ends of the curriculum. As stated previously, gifted children with their asynchronous development may present special needs and may not be identified as gifted. Testing may come up short in properly identifying a gifted child for a number of reasons such as, the child's poor testing capability, emotional problems, or learning disabilities. Furthermore, even if the Weschler test indicates possible giftedness but the child is not producing, further testing and analysis is necessary. The more complete the picture of the child, the more likely identification will be successful.

Gifted children are a minority in the population, distinguished by their exceptional abilities. The gifted children today are our problem-solvers, innovators, and leaders of tomorrow. "Outstanding talents are present in children and youths from all cultural groups across all economic strata, and in all areas of human endeavor" (Carroll. 1997, p. 3).

Weschler Intelligence Scale for Children - III

Subtests

Verbal –

Left Hemisphere	**Unique Abilities**
Information	Range of general factual knowledge
Similarities	Logical abstract (categorical) thinking
Arithmetic	Computational skill
Vocabulary	Language development, word knowledge
Comprehension	Demonstration of practical information, evaluation, and use of past experience
Digit Span	Short-term (auditory) memory

Performance –

Right Hemisphere	**Unique Abilities**
Picture Completion	Visual alertness, visual recognition and identification (long-term visual memory)
Picture Arrangement	Anticipation of consequences, temporal sequencing and time concepts
Block Design	Analysis of whole into component parts, nonverbal concept formation, spatial visualization
Object Assembly	Ability to benefit from sensory-motor feedback, anticipation of relationships among parts, flexibility
Coding	Ability to follow directions, clerical speed and accuracy, psychomotor speed, short-term memory (visual)
	Following a visual pattern, foresight

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WHEN SCHOOLS FAIL: IS HOMESCHOOLING RIGHT FOR YOU AND YOUR HIGHLY GIFTED CHILD?

By Karen Morse

"The ranks of homeschoolers are being swelled by conventional parents who suspect their children are being let down by public schools," (Los Angeles Times, May 7th , 2001). No longer is homeschooling reserved for Christian educators or children with handicaps. It has reached the broader secular community for the simple reason that parents know when their children's educational needs are not being served. Homeschooling has gained some positive press in newspapers and magazines, and a number of universities solicit homeschooled students because of their impressive SAT scores and life experiences. While most people remain skeptics, it is a far more widely accepted method of educating children than ten years ago, and most certainly more than the thirty years ago when homeschooling had its first growth spurt.

Homeschooling in the United States is growing at a fascinating speed. An estimated 1.5 to 1.9 million K-12 students were registered homeschoolers in the United States in the fall of 2000 (Lines, 1998; Ray, 1999, 2000). These statistics may be grossly underestimated as they are based only on the families registered as homeschoolers in their state. The majority of states do not yet require families to register privately schooled or homeschooled children.

Very little research in highly gifted is obtainable, with almost no data on homeschooling highly gifted children. Because this top 1%-2% of students is such a small percent of the population, the area of highly gifted is not an easily funded area of research. Not only are these students and their families logistically difficult to track down, but there is yet a vast misunderstanding and apathy toward this population. When children are home there is less information, such as test scores and other statistical data available.

Individuals who score above IQ 145 are considered highly gifted. The range of 90 or more IQ points beyond includes the exceptionally gifted IQ 160+, and the profoundly gifted 180+. Silverman (1994) found that the highly gifted are as different from their moderately gifted peers as the gifted are from average learners; they also encompass a range larger than their mentally handicapped counterparts. They have value structures so different from their chronological peers that they are able to make greater sense of the world and the disparity between their perception of it and that of the average learner. They seldom seek popularity or acclaim and often prefer isolation for quiet reflection. In fact because of their modesty, researchers think that there are more than 25% of the highly gifted population who remain unidentified.

There is no single profile of a highly gifted learner. "They seem to be characterized by their uniqueness," and are "almost impossible to know," (Meckstroth, 1994). Most of our nation's schools can't begin to address the breadth of needs of the highly gifted individual. For these children who are 3-5 standard deviations above the norm, a traditional school setting is almost always an uncomfortable and inappropriate place. Not only do highly gifted children see differently, but also they see the detail of the world that others don't see at all. "We all see the world through some kind of lens. Gifted people see the world through a microscope. Highly gifted individuals see the world through an electron microscope" (Tolan, 1990).

In a classroom of 25 to 30 children, it is hard for even the best teachers to meet the individual needs of every child. The children with learning disabilities have daily mentors and abbreviated course work. The highly gifted children in our country are the only group of children who receive no federal mandate for a *free and appropriate* education. Full inclusion classes are the norm in our country rather than the exception, but the diversity and variance of abilities in a regular inclusion classroom is gaping for the child who needs rapid acceleration and engaging material. Many schools are unyielding when it comes to accelerating work within the classroom and use the *What would we do with your child next year?* excuse. However even if agreeable, curriculum acceleration, early entry, or grade skipping isn't always enough for children who may be working as much as 5-8 years beyond their classmates (Gross, 1993). "To become intellectually accessible to all students, public schools must provide access to the full range of curriculum, preschool through college," Kearney, (1996).

Miraca Gross, researcher on high and profound giftedness in Australia, explains that effective teaching must involve a sensitive assessment in the learning process and a presentation of problems that slightly exceed the level already mastered. If the work is too easy it produces boredom and lack of task commitment, which lead to underachievement. In fact, in the last 40 years, some textbooks have dropped three grade levels. Gross feels it is the very process of learning that makes all the difference in taking giftedness to talent. The process can instill motivation, initiative, interest, and perseverance-life-long skills that allow each person's unique potential to develop to its fullest (1999).

Self-esteem comes from doing something you never thought you could do. When self-esteem increases, motivation and achievement also increase. So as teachers and even as parents, we must give these children something to reach for. We must stop looking for the weaknesses we want to fix, and look for the strengths to enlarge. Doing work the student already knows doesn't enhance self-esteem.

What's your style? Defining the approach you will use to educate your child may be the most daunting part of getting started. This is often the major reason why many parents doubt they have the necessary qualifications to teach their child. "I'm not a teacher. I wouldn't have any idea how to teach my child and he would never listen to me." The approach to teaching and learning will evolve from your child's motivation to learn, personality traits you both share that mesh or conflict, values you hold as a family, and your enthusiasm for seeking out new adventures. Also, you will want to embrace the qualities in your home that you expect in an outstanding classroom teacher for

highly gifted students. Whatever style or strategy you choose, home education requires innovation, patience and commitment from everyone involved. It is the ultimate IEP (Individualized Educational Plan) that we begged for in school but couldn't get for our child because IEP's are reserved for students at the other end of the Bell curve. Home education promotes interaction between parent and child and encourages learning as a process rather than a series of required tasks to be checked off. Homeschooling promotes mastery of topics with depth and acceleration.

Many families embark on the homeschooling experience before even trying school. Don't put the cart before the horse if you're not confident that homeschooling is right for your family. You may not want to fix what isn't broken...yet. If there is some question about whether or not homeschooling is right for your family, you may want to investigate other options before embarking on the homeschool journey.

Public schools can offer numerous options for gifted students. You may be surprised to find that your district is already utilizing one or more of these interventions or may be willing to implement something. Sometimes programs vary even within the same district. Some gifted teachers may be more or less innovative. Consider exploring other public schools, magnet or charter schools, and private schools in the area that may accommodate your child. Perhaps your child's school would be open to exploring some new possibilities. However, be astute in your investigation, asking very pointed questions as to exactly what the intervention will look like, how often it will be in place, and who is responsible for the follow-through.

Interventions described below such as early accelerated placement, access to mentors and counselors, flexible pacing and valuable enrichment experiences are only possible solutions that are few and far between in finding a good fit for the highly gifted. The intellect of these children develops anywhere from one and a half to two times the rate of their chronological peers (Hollingworth, 1942). With this knowledge, how can we expect them to not suffocate in a chronologically matched group without serious intervention? The following are options most commonly seen in districts with a program in place.

- Enrichment – Subjects that are not usually studied may be explored in depth and breadth during a time of day your gifted child can afford to miss in the regular classroom. This may be an independent study, time with a mentor, or with other students with similar interests and abilities, perhaps at varying grade levels. Interest grouping can occur with core academics as well as with enrichment study. A group of fifth graders may be keenly interested in reading together, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, or investigating the southern perspective of a *united* America and could work to present their findings to the class.
- Early entrance – Consider early entrance to kindergarten. However, most public schools will not yield on the birthday entry level to kindergarten unless the child has had a comparable kindergarten experience in a private school.
- Acceleration – The child works at a higher-grade level and/or a faster pace than chronological peers and is ready to move ahead in a single subject area or by grade level. With highly gifted children, a single grade level is seldom sufficient.
- Clustering – Gifted children at the same grade level are grouped together in one classroom with a teacher who has interest and ability in providing differentiated instruction. Their curriculum is compacted in the areas where little rehearsal is needed, reducing the amount of time required to spend on content already mastered and allowing the child to work more in depth on areas of interest and ability.
- Self-contained – With a fine teacher and program in place, this is the most effective option for gifted and some highly gifted children. The teacher has certification and extensive experience in gifted education and understands fully the exceptional and divergent needs of this population.
- Mentors and Tutors – They meet with your child before, during or after school. I had a fifth grade student especially advanced in computer technology who would walk across the street to the Middle School to work with the eighth grade technology teacher during his prep period. This was very generous of the teacher to give his time, and the two developed a wonderful working relationship. They worked on advanced language programming and designing. Talk to other teachers, gifted friends and people within your community to track down someone to nurture your child's interest or at least to guide you in that direction. You may even be allowed to have a private tutor come into the class to broaden your child's scope of interest and ability. This will threaten some teachers. Others will be thrilled to be relieved of the responsibility.

Be creative. Your school may be open to suggestions that haven't been explored. They may allow you to hire a consultant who works with the classroom teacher to differentiate the curriculum for your child. The teacher may allow your child to bring in special interest topics from home to work on after proving with the five most difficult problems that she already knows long division. The teacher may appreciate you coming in to work with a small group of high-end children on a regular basis. Perhaps your child is very independent and could benefit from computerized instruction, which would allow her to progress at her own pace. While some schools are very rigid, others just don't have the resources or expertise to serve this population.

Look for a teacher who can readily define characteristics of gifted children and recognizes key differences within the population. This teacher is adept at assessing individual strengths, weaknesses and styles of learning for all of her students. She understands that differentiation is not cooperative grouping and can accommodate the varying levels of ability in her classroom. She assists students in planning their own learning and helping them assess the effectiveness of their own learning activities. She understands that giftedness goes beyond academic talent and can address their affective needs as well as their scholastic demands.

Think of how vastly different our world of today is from even one hundred years ago. Someone traveling through time would

hardly recognize the country as we know it today. Yet, if that same time-traveler were to walk into today's classroom, it would be far more familiar. Instruction is teacher-directed, lecture-oriented and textbook-driven, and spelling tests are still given on Fridays. Drill and practice reinforce concepts. Basal readers abound with their linear comprehension skills and phonics. Are we really training our students to be problem-solvers and independent thinkers who can step into a role of entrepreneurship and have the world available to them? Or are we grooming them for complacency, limiting them to a single, predictable career? Those who step out of the box and demonstrate their versatility will live full, creative lives and make significant contributions to our world. With our society and culture changing at lightening speed, only those who have learned how to learn and how to think for themselves will be able to keep up. Are we giving our children the best that is known in the world? Are they helping to solve the mysteries of the universe? Are they informed? Are we helping them learn to develop their own goals and values? By nature, humans gravitate toward things that are intrinsically satisfying. For learning to be life-long and meaningful it must be valuable and engaging. Galileo's words of yesterday remain eloquently fitting today: "You cannot teach a person anything, you can only help him find it within himself."

This is not to discount the need for children to have a phonemic awareness of the language, but writing letters to protect the now extinct Carrier Pigeon might have had a more lasting effect than practicing spelling words in cursive on a worksheet.

We scream for schools to provide an individualized program that is free and appropriate, with depth and acceleration, with flexible grouping and real-life applications. Our political and social system is based on democratic principles. The school as an extension of those principles must provide an equal educational opportunity for all children to develop to their fullest potential. But, equal opportunity doesn't mean that everyone gets the same instruction. This means allowing gifted children the opportunity to learn at their level of development. For truly equal opportunity, a variety of learning experiences must be available at many levels, even within a gifted program. Each person has the right to learn and to be challenged at the most appropriate level where growth proceeds most effectively. There is indeed a most remarkable program available now to every highly gifted child—home education!

Highly gifted children of IQ 140+ enter kindergarten knowing about half of what will be taught that year, while children of IQ 170+ will have previously learned all that will be taught in kindergarten (Hollingworth, 1942). Because of the limited resources and experts available to assist highly gifted children in schools, many families are turning to homeschooling as a means of better meeting the diverse needs of their highly gifted children.

Often it is clear from the start that the public school will not be an option for your child, particularly if the child is exceptionally or profoundly gifted. Homeschooling offers the one-to-one tutoring that, in many ways, is the most effective teaching strategy available for most purposes according to teachers, researchers and historians. It comes as no surprise that with individual tutoring students are found to have greater ntion and understanding of the material, improved performance and attitude toward subject matter (Cohen, Kulik, & Kulik, 1982; Fager, 1996). Homeschooling is an option that can provide the highly gifted child with an accelerated curriculum, flexible pacing, meaningful enrichment, substance and depth in areas of strength and interest.

Teaching styles within this option vary as much as do the families that are homeschooling. Listed below, in alphabetical order, are several of the most common teaching strategies or pedagogical approaches that homeschoolers have reported using successfully (e.g., *The Teaching Home*, 2000). Parents regularly mix elements of multiple approaches.

- Classical – Teach the tools of learning (i.e., grammar—mastery of a language, dialectic—logic, and rhetoric—the expressive and creative use of language) so they may be used in the study of any subject.
- Lifestyle of learning – Teaching and learning are treated as a seamless and organic part of living within a family, geographical community, local faith community, and nation—that is, the "real, everyday world."
- Schooling at home – Parents generally teach as they were taught in schools. There is a high degree of structure. It often involves active teaching with the teacher having a clear-cut and outstanding role. There is no significant integration of subject areas.
- Structured/mastery learning – Content to be learned is clearly presented in (usually) consumable booklets (or via computers) in a sequential, step-by-step manner while immediate feedback to the learner is emphasized. Often the parent is viewed more as a moderator or administrator than as an active teacher.
- Unit studies – These emphasize the concept that all knowledge is interrelated and learned more easily and remembered longer if it is presented and studied in a related way. Subject areas (e.g., math, history) are blended together as the teaching is centered on a common theme or project.
- Unschooling – This approach emphasizes giving children as much freedom to explore and learn about the world as parents can comfortably bear; it does not mean allowing them to misbehave (Holt Associates, 2000).
- Worldview – This approach emphasizes that all education is value- and belief-driven and no form of education or schooling can be otherwise. It purposely and explicitly integrates a particular worldview in curriculum materials, activities, and ways of thinking. An example is "The Principle Approach," which focuses on researching a religious writing to identify basic principles or truths, reasoning from these truths through an academic subject (e.g., history, politics), relating the principles to the student's own character and self-government, and recording in writing the application of the principles and ideas to life and living (*The Teaching Home*, 1998, 2000).

When embarking on the homeschool journey, parents should consider their personal philosophy of education, join a homeschool group, and explore web sites and magazines. Extend

research from publications for homeschooling to educational periodicals and materials directed at teachers and parents of gifted. Internet searches can be done on topics related to homeschooling the highly gifted populations. Almost every state has an annual gifted conference with helpful presentations and my favorite, exhibit halls where the dollars chink at rapid-fire rates into the hands of publishers.

The highly gifted child is more likely to choose solitary play over chronological peer interaction because of the nature of their peers' play. Because of this, they may be labeled as immature, unsociable or a loner, but it is rather their *social* maturity that causes them to remove themselves from an activity that offers no intellectual fuel. Parents want their children to be happy and meet well with society. So if they don't "fit" how do we help them become socially acceptable?

The question homeschool parents face the most is unquestioningly, *What about socialization?* The use of the word "socialization" vs. "social development" is noteworthy. What we really want for our children is an ability to *effectively interact* with a *variety* of individuals. As Americans we value individuality; yet we're constantly trying to make everyone a round peg. Stephanie Tolan says it beautifully: "If we can't all be round pegs, then at least shave off the corners enough to fit the square pegs into the round holes" (1990). Really, isn't it just that we want for children to be happy and productive contributors to society and to look beyond themselves to the larger world?

One of the most valuable benefits of homeschooling a highly gifted child is the opportunity to find intellectual peers who are also chronological peers. There is little more empowering than finding out that you are not the only eight year old who daydreams about quantum physics and that you no longer have to pretend to like GI Joe in order to have a companion. Too, multi-age homeschooling groups are much more tolerant of children with differences and activities tend to focus more on interests and ability rather than on ages.

School plays a very important role in our society and there will always be a need and benefit to some degree of group instruction. But it can't be all things to all people. America was founded to celebrate the individual, to encourage independent thinking and expression of talent and ability. We all know the stories of Edison, Einstein and Lincoln, bound for failure within the school system, labeled as inept and deficient of meaningful intelligence. Yet hundreds upon thousands of our world's leaders, contributors, thinkers and inventors were unsuccessful playing the school game; yet in the comfort of a nurturing homeschool environment were able to reach for the stars and become tremendous contributors to society. Winston Churchill once said, "I am always ready to learn, but I do not always like being taught." And of course Mark Twain "never let school interfere with 'his' education."

Webster defines education as "the act or process of imparting or acquiring general knowledge, developing the powers of reasoning and judgment, and generally of preparing oneself or others intellectually for mature life." Comparing education and culture, Webster continues, "Education and culture are often used interchangeably to mean the result of schooling. Education, however, suggests chiefly information acquired. Culture is a m[illegible]hought and feeling encouraged by education. It suggests an aspiration toward, and appreciation of high esthetic ideals. The level of culture in a country depends on the education of its people."

Isn't what we're after a culture of well-informed citizens who have developed power of reasoning and judgment? If children don't fit well into the system that has been arbitrarily constructed to educate the masses then school can actually mitigate against their learning. We can assault our students with so much schooling that the result is a society with much less culture.

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RESOURCES

ORGANIZATIONS

California Association for the Gifted
5777 W. Century Boulevard, Suite 1670
Los Angeles, CA 90045
(310) 215-1898
www.cagifted.org

The Center for Gifted
National-Louis University
2840 Sheridan Road
Evanston, IL 60201-1796
Telephone: (847) 256-5150, ext. 2150
www.centerforgifted.com

Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)
1110 North Glebe Road, Suite 300
Arlington, VA 22201-5704
1-888-232-7733
www.cec.sped.org/index.html

Educational Assessment Service, Inc.
W6050 Apple Road
Watertown, WI 53098
1-800-795-7466
www.sylviarimm.com

Education Program for Gifted Youth (EPGY)
Ventura Hall
Stanford University
Stanford, CA 94305-4115
1-800-372-3749
www.epgy.stanford.edu

ERIC Clearinghouse on Disabilities and Gifted Education
1110 North Glebe Road
Arlington, VA 22201-5704
1-800-328-0272
www.ericec.org

The Gifted Child Society, Inc.
190 Rock Road
Glen Rock, NJ 07452-1736
(201) 444-6530
www.gifted.org

Gifted Development Center
1452 Marion Street
Denver, CO 80218
(303) 837-8378
www.gifteddevelopment.com

Hollingworth Center for Highly Gifted Children
827 Central Avenue #282
Dover, NH 03820-2506
www.hollingworth.org

Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA)
PO Box 3000
Purcellville, VA 20134
(540) 338-5600
www.hslda.org

Illinois Association for Gifted Children (IAGC)
800 East Northwest Highway, Suite 610
Palatine, IL 60074
(847) 963-1892
www.iagcgifted.org

National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC)
1707 L Street N, Suite 550
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 785-4268
www.nagc.org

The National Foundation for Gifted and Creative Children
395 Diamond Hill Road
Warwick, RI 02886
(401) 738-0937
www.nfgcc.org/index.html

National Home Education Research Institute (NHERI)
PO Box 13939
Salem, OR 97309
(503) 364-1490
www.nheri.org

National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented (NRC/GT)
University of Connecticut
2131 Hillside Road, Unit 3007
Storrs, CT 06269
(860) 486-4676
www.gifted.uconn.edu/nrcgt.html

National Women's History Project
7738 Bell Road
Windsor, CA 95492-8518
1-800-691-8888
www.nwhp.org

Parents of Gifted and Talented Learning-Disabled Children
2420 Eccleston Street
Silver Spring, MD 20902
(301) 986-1422

Texas Association for the Gifted and Talented
406 East Eleventh Street, Suite 310
Austin, TX 78701-2617
(512) 499-8248
www.txgifted.org

Torrance Center for Creative Studies
Department of Educational Psychology
The University of Georgia
Athens, GA 30602-7146
(706) 542-5104
www.coe.uga.edu/torrance

PUBLISHERS AND PUBLICATIONS

A.W. Peller
210 Sixth Avenue
PO Box 106
Hawthorne, NJ 07507
1-800-451-7450
www.awpeller.com
A distributor for more than 100 publishers, producers, and manufacturers of educational materials, its Bright Ideas for the Gifted and Talented catalog features products such as books, kits, videos, posters, games, and CD-ROMS for gifted students K-12.

Cobblestone Publishing Company
30 Grove Street, Suite C
Peterborough, NH 03458
1-800-821-0115
www.cobblestonepub.com
Cobblestone is a publisher of high-quality nonfiction magazines for young readers such as Click, Ladybug, and Ask for grades preK-4, and Cricket, Footsteps, and Calliope for grades 4 and up. It uses the expertise of editors, writers, and advisors in a variety of fields to produce magazines on history, world cultures, science, and other subjects in an interesting and engaging way.

Creative Learning Press
PO Box 320
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www.creativelearningpress.com
Creative Learning Press provides a variety of manuals and activity books for teachers working with gifted children including, Renzulli and Reis' best-selling Schoolwide Enrichment Model and Reis' Work Left Undone: Choices and Compromises of Talented Females. It offers an extraordinary Mentors-in-Print section with a wide range of stimulating, hands-on, how-to books for gifted children at all grade levels.

Critical Thinking Books and Software
PO Box 448
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1-800-458-4849
www.criticalthinking.com
Producer of one of the largest selections of high quality critical thinking products for K-adult education, it supplies products that improve academic performance, encourage students at all ability levels, and extend achievement for future success.

Dandy Lion Publications
3563 Sueldo, Suite L
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401
1-800-776-8032
www.dandylionbooks.com
Dandy Lion is a leading publisher of educational teaching materials that stress development of creative and critical thinking for students in grades K-8. It presents innovative methods for teaching all subjects, and is ideal for teachers in gifted and talented programs, teachers in regular classrooms, homeschoolers, and parents.

Free Spirit Publishing
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Minneapolis, MN 55401-1299
1-800-735-7323
www.freespirit.com
An award-winning publisher of nonfiction resources for children and teens, parents, educators, and counselors, Free Spirit develops a variety of research-based and user-friendly materials on such topics as, self-esteem and self-awareness, stress management, school success, creativity, friends and family, peacemaking, social action, and special needs (i.e., gifted and talented, learning differences).

Gifted Education Communicator (formerly known as Communicator), features articles by national leaders in the field, parent-to-parent articles, and hands-on curriculum. See the entry for California Association for Gifted for more information.

Gifted Education Press
10201 Yuma Court
PO Box 1586
Manassas, VA 20108
(703) 369-5017
www.cais.com/gep
Gifted Education Press is a publisher of books and periodicals on ed ifted children. It offers a wide range of innovative materials for teachers, parents, homeschoolers, and students on all subjects for all grade levels and distributes materials in school districts across the nation.

Gifted Psychology Press
PO Box 5057
Scottsdale, AZ 85261
(602) 954-4200
www.giftedpsychologypress.com
Gifted Psychology Press is a publisher of books for parents, teachers, counselors, and educators of gifted and talented children that focus on subjects such as, guiding gifted students, creativity, college planning, self-esteem, legal issues, girls, mentorship, parent advice, and more.

IAGC Journal is a yearly journal that features articles on specific topics such as underserved populations, young gifted children, creativity, and teaching strategies for gifted students in the regular classroom. See the entry for the Illinois Association for Gifted Children for more information.

New Moon Publishing
PO Box 3620
Duluth, MN 55803
1-800-381-4743
www.newmoon.org
New Moon is the publisher of New Moon: The Magazine for Girls and Their Dreams, New Moon Network: For Adults Who Care About Girls, books for girls, and curricula and learning activities for all grades that correspond with each issue of New Moon. New Moon is an invaluable resource for teachers, homeschoolers, and girls' group leaders.

Open Space Communications, Inc.
1900 Folsom, Suite 108
Boulder, CO 80302
1-800-494-6178
www.openspacecomm.com
A Colorado-based company that serves those who live and work with gifted children, Open Space produces books and tapes and also publishes Understanding Our Gifted, a journal for teachers and parents. Several resources are also available in Spanish.

Parenting for High Potential is a quarterly magazine for parents published by the National Association for Gifted Children. It includes suggestions for activities to do with your child as well as the latest Web sites, technology, and educational toys, all reviewed by experts in the field.

Phi Delta Kappa International
408 North Union Street
PO Box 789
Bloomington, IN 47402-0789
www.pdkintl.org
Phi Delta Kappa is a publisher of books for grades K-12, including "fastback" booklets. Topics include gifted girls and an overview of gifted education. They also publish Phi Delta Kappan, a professional print journal for education.

Pieces of Learning
Division of Creative Learning Consultants Inc.
1990 Market Road
Marion, IL 62959
1-800-729-5137
www.piecesoflearning.com
Pieces of Learning is a publisher and producer of K-12 supplementary enrichment activity books, resource books, and parenting and staff development videos. Topic areas include critical and creative thinking, questioning skills, and materials for subjects such as language arts, math, writing, literature, thematic learning, research, and much more.

Prufrock Press
PO Box 8813
Waco, TX 76714-8813
1-800-998-2208
www.prufrock.com
Prufrock is a publisher of innovative products and materials that support the education of gifted and talented children. It also provides teachers and parents of gifted children a comprehensive online education resource, a listing of gifted children links and products, gifted education magazines (e.g., Gifted Child Today), research journals, identification instruments, books and more.

Roeper Review
PO Box 329
Bloomfield Hills, MI 48303
www.roeperreview.org
This journal covers a broad range of issues for professionals who work with teachers and psychologists, and for professionals who work directly with gifted and talented children and their families. The journal provides coverage of policy issues, developments, innovations in practice, and applied research. It emphasizes both the cognitive and the emotional.

Skipping Stones: A Multicultural Children's Magazine
PO Box 3939
Eugene, OR 97403
(541) 342-4956
www.treelink.com/skipping/main.htm
Skipping Stones is a nonprofit children's magazine that encourages cooperation, creativity and celebration of cultural and environmental richness. It provides a forum for sharing ideas and experiences among children from different lands and backgrounds.

TEMPO is a journal published four times a year by the Texas Association for the Gifted and Talented. The journal focuses on gifted education and features articles on a variety of themes such as, leadership, identification, and homeschooling.

Thinking Caps
PO Box 26239
Phoenix, AZ 85068
(602) 870-1527
Thinking Caps is a publisher of educational materials for the gifted. Although primarily designed for teachers, parents can use this source to supplement their children's education. The materials are based on Bloom's taxonomy.

Thinking Works
PO Box 468
St. Augustine, FL 32085
1-800-633-3742
Thinking Works distributes educational materials from a variety of publishers. There is an extensive selection, useful to both teachers and parents.

Tin Man Press
PO Box 11409
Eugene, OR 97440
1-800-676-0459
www.tinmanpress.com
Tin Man publishes original thinking-skills materials for the elementary grades that are applicable for a broad range of enrichment applications and in gifted programs.

Zephyr Press
3316 North Chapel Avenue
Tucson, AZ 85716
(520) 322-5090
www.zephyrpress.com
Zephyr is a publisher of educational materials that focuses on multiple intelligences. The activities within the products integrate disciplines so that the learning is more meaningful. Products are designed for educators or parents, and tools are practical, easy to use, and incorporate the latest research.

WEB SITES ON GIFTED

A Glossary of Gifted Education
members.aol.com/svennord/ed/GiftedGlossary.htm

GT World! A Meeting Place for Families and Friends of the Gifted and Talented www.gtworld.org

Hoagies' Gifted Education Page
www.hoagiesgifted.org

Surfing the Net with Kids
www.surfnetkids.com

TAG Family Network
www.teleport.com/~rkaltwas/tag

TAG Project
www.tagfam.org

Talent Development Resources
TalentDevelop.com

Welcome to the Gifted Resources Home Page
www.eskimo.com/~user/kids.html

Whole Family Center
www.wholefamily.com

WEB SITES ON HOMESCHOOLING

Families Learning About Giftedness (FLAG) -
members.aol.com/LrningAtHm/flagindex.html

Homeschooling Resources for Gifted Students
www.cec.sped.org/ericec/minibibs/eb18.htm

Learn in Freedom!
learninfreedom.org

NAGC Membership Application

Why YOU should belong...

- NAGC disseminates information to shcool personnel, public officials, parents, and the media related to the nature and education of gifted students.
- NAGC serves as a public advocate concerning the needs of gifted students.
- NAGC promotes research and development on the nature and education of gifted children at all ages and education levels.
- NAGC encourages and assists the development of state and local organizations that support gifted education.
- NAGC produces an annual education convention for more than 3,500 attendees on current trends, research, and new programs in the field of gifted education.
- NAGC educates parents to help them ensure that their children's needs are met at home and in school.

Member Benefits

- *Gifted Child Quarterly* magazine AND/OR *Parenting for High Potential* magazine
- *Communiqué* newsletter, including updates on federal legislation, parent and public information, and announcements of upcomng events
- A public education liaison in Washington, DC advocating for the needs of gifted and talented children
- Network for information on gifted and talented children and youth
- Discount on NAGC resource materials
- Discount on NAGC's annual convention

A Parent Associate Membership is available to parents and grandparents ONLY. This limited membership category receives only *Parenting for High Potential* magazine. Parent Associate members may join NAGC divisions.

PLEASE REMIT ALL PAYMENTS IN U.S. DOLLARS
CHECKS PAYABLE TO: NAGC Membership
1707 L Street, NW, Ste. 550
Washington, DC 20036
202/785-4268

Name _____

Address _____
(Home Address only for Parent Associate Membership)

City/State/Zip _____

Work Telephone ( ) _____

Home Telephone ( ) _____

E-Mail _____

Check one; ☐ Teacher ☐ Professor ☐ Parent
☐ Administrator ☐ Counselor ☐ Consultant
☐ Coordinator ☐ Other_____

☐ New ☐ Renewal (# _____)

Referred by: _____
(Please print)

PLEASE NOTE: Institutional Membership includes a discount for only one (1) attendee at the NAGC Annual Convention. NAGC is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and your donation is tax deductible to the extent the law allows.

PLEASE NOTE: *You must indicate which magazine you prefer. If no box is checked you will receive GCQ only.*

1) U.S. MEMBERSHIP

	OPTION ☐ *GCQ or PHP*	☐ *Both Magazines*
1 Year Individual	☐ $ 50.00	☐ $ 70.00
1 Year Institutional	☐ $ 50.00	☐ $ 70.00
2 Year Ind. or Inst.	☐ $ 95.00	☐ $ 133.00
3 Year Ind. or Inst.	☐ $ 140.00	☐ $ 197.00
Contributor (1yr)	☐ $ 100.00	
Life Member (Ind. only)	☐ $ 700.00	
Parent Associate (Limited*)	☐ $ 25.00	*(receive PHP only)*
Graduate Student	☐ $ 25.00	*(receive GCQ only)*

Graduate Advisor's Signature_____

Name of School _____

CANADIAN/FOREIGN MEMBERSHIP

1 Year Individual	☐ $ 60.00	☐ $ 85.00
1 Year Institutional	☐ $ 60.00	☐ $ 85.00
2 Year Ind. or Inst.	☐ $ 114.00	☐ $ 161.00
3 Year Ind. or Inst.	☐ $ 170.00	☐ $ 240.00

2) DIVISIONS ($10 per Division per year)

☐ Arts	☐ Curriculum Studies	☐ Professional Development
☐ Computers & Technology	☐ Early Childhood	☐ Research & Evaluation
☐ Conceptual Foundations	☐ Global Awareness	☐ Special Populations
☐ Counseling & Guidance	☐ Middle Grades	☐ Special Schools/Programs
☐ Creativity	☐ Parent & Community	

1) MEMBERSHIP $_____
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IAGC VISION

It is the vision of the Illinois Association for Gifted Children that the diverse expressions of gifts and talents of all individuals are valued by society.

Responsibility for nurturing, encouraging, and supporting the full development of potential in children and youth is accepted and shared by their families, educators, and communities. Individuals value themselves and their accomplishments. Their contributions are celebrated by society.

Goals

- *To promote advocacy efforts that benefit gifted and talented children by establishing an effective political network.*
- *To develop standards of quality for what teachers and other professionals need to know about educating children with gifts and talents.*
- *To develop standards to evaluate the appropriateness of programs and services which affect the lives of children with gifts and talents.*
- *To foster professional growth of educators by providing opportunities to learn about standards of quality for understanding and teaching children with gifts and talents.*
- *To network with others by disseminating news and information to educators and parents through regular communication in the form of a newsletter, journal and the Internet.*
- *To work cooperatively with the Illinois State Board of Education, universities, and other organizations that serve children with gifts and talents.*

For more information, contact us at:

IAGC
800 E. Northwest Highway, Suite 610
Palatine, IL 60074
Tel: (847) 963-1892 Fax: (847) 963-1893

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Circle One: Family Coordinator Administrator Teacher University Other

Mail will be sent to this address:

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FAX ( ) _____

E-mail ( ) _____

District Name/No. _____

School/Office _____

Position _____ Gr. Lv. _____

School/Office Add. _____

City _____ State ____ Zip_____

County _____

School Phone ( ) _____

FAX ( ) _____

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Our membership list may be given or sold to outside groups. Please check this box if you want your name excluded from this list. ☐

We urge you to consider making an additional DONATION to IAGC to assist in our committee work. IAGC is a 501(C)3 non-profit organization and your donation is tax deductible to the extent the law allows. Please help us to continue our committee work with your donation.

Donation $ _____

ANNUAL DUES $40.00 $ _____

Total check **(to IAGC)** $ _____

Mail to: IAGC
800 E. Northwest Highway, Suite 610
Palatine, IL 60074

Illinois Association for
Gifted Children
800 E. Northwest Highway, Suite 610
Palatine, IL 60074

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