

Students Make Sure the Cherokees Are Not Removed . . . Again: A Study of Service-Learning and Artful Learning in Teaching History

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Bringing history alive in one Southern, suburban middle school, this application of community-action service-learning and Artful Learning is chronicled from inception to conclusion. This qualitative participatory action research study explored the effects of this program on 8th-grade gifted students. The purpose of the study was to examine one specific, successful program involving gifted students in a Learn and Serve America grant project site in reference to the service-learning and Artful Learning Models. The results showed improved achievement and suggested enhanced metacognition, self-efficacy, and altruism. The students were actively involved in their own learning, eventually making a difference in their community.

Hannah stood in front of the Natural Resources Committee at the State Capitol and distributed letters from her classmates asking the committee to save an historic site. Dressed in her first grown-up heels, she took a deep breath and commenced.

You have heard the story of the Cherokee people and why the last piece of the Cherokee nation that remains in Georgia, New Echota State Park, should be saved. Now I am going to provide the committee with facts about the historic parks in Georgia and explain in detail ways to save our history.

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Journal for the Education of the Gifted. Vol. 34, No. 1, 2010, pp. 156–176. Copyright ©2010 Prufrock Press Inc., <http://www.prufrock.com>

After presenting the evidence, she moved closer to the table stating with intensity emanating from conviction, “New Echota lost no more money than any other park in Georgia, and some of the sites that you are saving actually lost more money than New Echota! The question we need to ask ourselves is: Why are the Cherokees in Georgia being removed . . .” She paused and added with emphasis, maintaining eye contact, “again?” She held her hands out as if to exact a response.

Hannah ended her speech with a list of solutions for obtaining money for and interest in the park. “The details in making New Echota a successful state park can be worked out if we work together as Georgians,” she pleaded. “It’s not just Cherokee history. It’s *our* history.”

The room erupted in applause and a standing ovation. Wiping away the involuntary tears, Hannah turned and walked toward the door. While checking to make sure that nothing was left behind by my students, I (the second author) heard one of the committee members say to another, “Wow!” which expressed just what I was feeling.

John Dewey (1954) once stated, “Education is not preparation for life; education is life itself.” During the 2004–2005 school year, students at Torrance Middle School experienced this idea firsthand as part of the Corporation for National and Community Service’s Learn and Serve America Grant program. The purpose of this study was to examine the effects of an advanced service-learning program combined with the Artful Learning Model on gifted, middle-grade students in a suburban area in the Southern part of the United States.

Service-Learning

Service-learning, an innovative teaching methodology, integrates community service with academic study to enrich learning, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities. It is a method by which students learn and develop through curriculum integration and active participation in thoughtfully organized service experiences addressing needs in their community (Fiske, 2002).

The first service-learning legislation, the National and Community Service Act of 1990, created the Commission on National and Community Service. The Corporation for National and

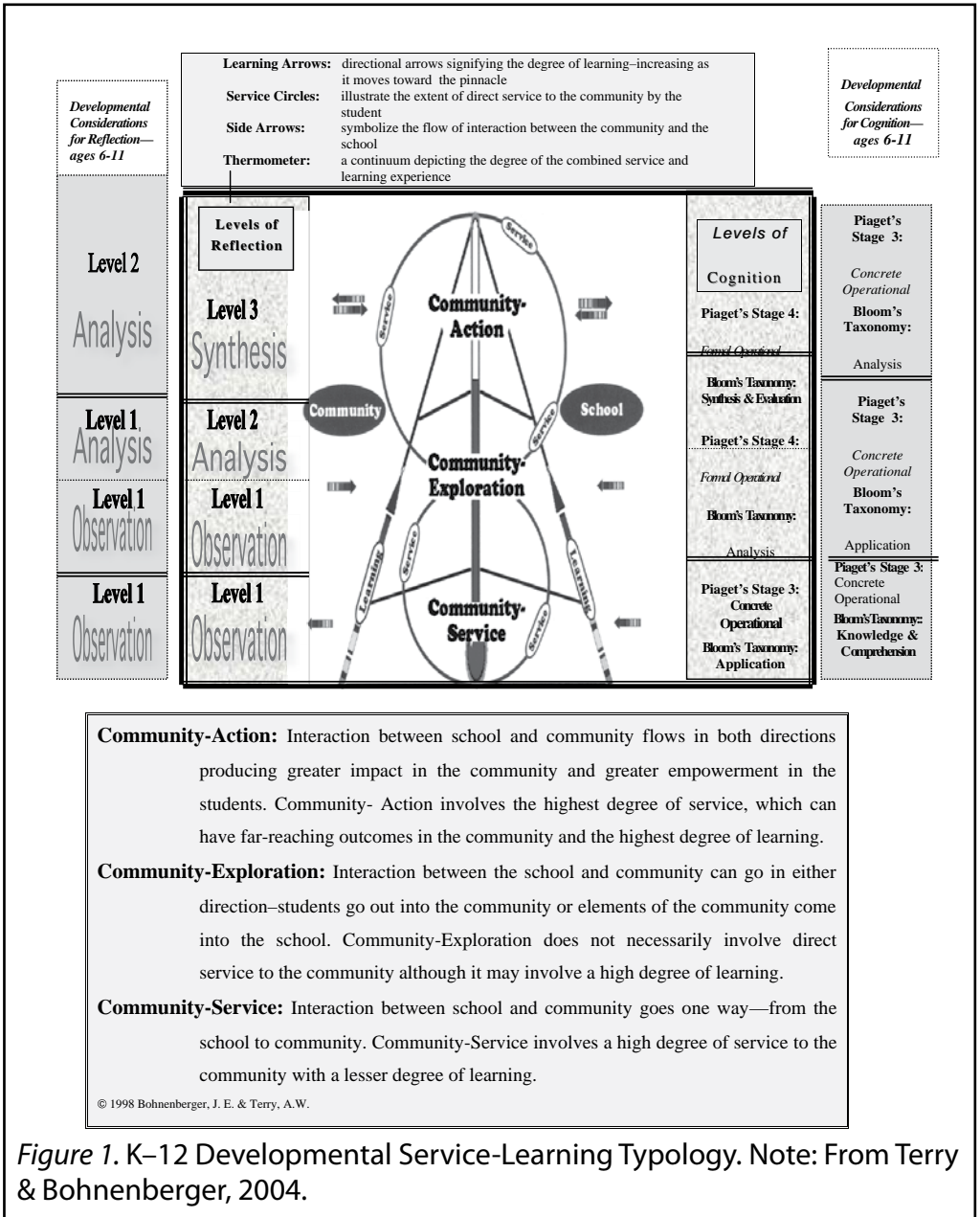


Figure 1. K–12 Developmental Service-Learning Typology. Note: From Terry & Bohnenberger, 2004.

Community Service was later created to mobilize citizens into service. The Corporation manages three main programs: Senior Corps, AmeriCorps, and Learn and Serve America. Learn and Serve America supports and encourages service-learning, enabling more than a million school-age students to make contributions to their community while building their academic and civic skills (Corporation for National and Community Service, n.d.).

The three levels of service-learning are: Community-Service, Community-Exploration, and Community-Action (see Figure 1). The highest level, Community-Action, is an effective curriculum for gifted students, exposing them to community problems and encouraging them to creatively solve those problems in a socially constructive manner (Terry & Bohnenberger, 2004). High levels of service-learning have been shown to promote self-efficacy in gifted students (Terry, 2000, 2003; Terry & Bohnenberger, 2003). Self-efficacy refers to one's perception that he or she can bring about certain desired outcomes. According to Scales (1991), self-efficacy is the sense that one's actions can directly impact the real world.

In Community-Action service-learning, students analyze areas of community concern, generate new ideas, and implement a plan of action to address the area of concern. They develop complex problem-solving skills, enhance their awareness of civic issues, increase their motivation to engage in social issues, gain new understanding and respect for diversity, and attain advanced communication skills, the ability to connect knowledge across the disciplines, and the perseverance to overcome obstacles (Lee, Olszewski-Kubilius, Donahue & Weimholt, 2008; Terry, 2000, 2003; Terry & Bohnenberger, 2003).

The Bernstein Artful Learning Model

The Bernstein Artful Learning Model is an arts-based school improvement model inspired by visionary composer, Leonard Bernstein. Believing that the artistic process is a fundamental way of learning that is transferable to any discipline, Bernstein's vision and passion led to the founding of the Leonard Bernstein Center for Learning. Artful Learning is concept-based and interdisciplinary, with teaching and learning centered around the exploration of masterworks, the

asking of significant questions, rigorous scholarship, active creation, and reflection (Grammy Foundation, 2001).

The Artful Learning Model is based on the power of music and fine and performing arts. The four main elements of the Artful Learning Model are: experience, inquire, create, and reflect. According to proponents, it is the use of the masterwork that gives students the power to better understand the message of the work and its relationship to the curriculum (Grammy Foundation, 2001). However, research could not be found to substantiate these claims.

Characteristics of Gifted and Talented Students

The federal definition of giftedness addresses intellectual, creative, and artistic areas; leadership capacity; and excellence in specific academic fields. It states that outstanding talents are manifested in children from all cultural backgrounds, socioeconomic groups, and in all areas of human endeavor (Ross, 1989). The gifted make up a very diverse group of individuals having abilities in one or more domains, being sufficiently advanced, and requiring changes in the school environment (Reis & Renzulli, 2004). In Georgia, the gifted are identified as having a high degree of intellectual and/or creative ability, and/or exhibiting a high degree of motivation, and/or excelling in specific academic fields (Georgia Department of Education, 2010).

Methodology

The qualitative participatory classroom action research design used for this study is an emergent design and a spin-off of a larger study. This larger, overarching quantitative research study involved multiple sites in four states and a broader, heterogeneous population. The study was funded by the Corporation for National and Community Service through a Learn and Serve Grant from 2003–2006. The purpose of the program was to develop replicable K–12 service-learning programs incorporating Leonard Bernstein’s Artful Learning Model and the K–12 Developmental Service-Learning Typology (see Figure 1) as the

framework to develop age-appropriate lessons designed to positively impact student learning and the community.

The purpose of this study was to examine one specific, successful program involving gifted students in one grant-project site in reference to service-learning and the Artful Learning models. As the history teacher, I was participant observer. The methods used in the study were relatively new to me, so I had no preconceived ideas of their possible impact when I began the study. I had effectively used the Artful Learning Model during the first nine weeks with all my classes; I employed a new unit incorporating both service-learning and Artful Learning in the second nine weeks, upon which this study is based. A university professor (the first author) worked with me guiding the study and helping to make sense of the data.

The research questions were broad and exploratory.

1. What was the program's overall impact on the students in my gifted history class?
2. What effect did the program have on student content learning?
3. What effect(s) did the methods have on the students?

Data were collected from four primary sources: my observations and detailed notes; documents including pretests and posttests; videos; interviews; and one of my student's presentation at the National Character Conference.

Description of Participants and Program

Torrance Middle School is a suburban school in the South with an upper middle class population having the following characteristics: 91% White, 7% African American, 1.5% Hispanic, and .5% other. The participants consisted of 21 eighth-grade gifted students: 13 females and 8 males; 18 were White, 2 were African American, and one was multi-racial. All gifted students were in two separate classes and identified through Iowa Tests of Basic Skills scores along with each student's achievement in the seventh grade. The five gifted students involved in the performance theater were three females and two males; four were White and one was African American. Ms. Smith

and I are White teachers who live within this community. I have taught for 15 years and Ms. Smith, for 7 years.

Description of the Program

This program was an interdisciplinary unit on the Trail of Tears, the forced removal of the Cherokee Indians from Georgia. I taught the students Georgia history; Ms. Smith taught them language arts. The other two eighth-grade social studies teachers in the school used traditional teaching methods while my class employed the service-learning and Artful Learning models. At the end of the unit, students in all three classes took the same multiple-choice test based on state standards. We social studies teachers created the test together with the questions derived from the state Criterion-Referenced Competency Test (CRCT) Guide.

Initially I put the students in groups and handed out note cards. On each card, students were confronted with racial stereotypes about Georgians in the 19th century. They had to determine whether the fact on the note card described the Cherokees or European settlers during the early 19th century. Students came face to face with some of their own prejudices. For instance, students were shocked to discover that the Cherokees had their own printing press and working newspaper as well as their own court system. One student summed up the feelings for the class when he blurted out, "No way!"

Discovering the real meaning of history through multiple points of view. Terms such as *civilized* and *savage* were debated. The students identified, interpreted, and appraised. They read about the Cherokee alphabet, newspaper and court system. They became agitated at the way the Cherokee people and its culture have been depicted. One frustrated boy asked, "Why was it so hard for Georgians back then to accept people that were more like them than they were different?" That question was the springboard I used to introduce the students to the Trail of Tears.

Using inquiry and primary sources as a springboard for studying history. With the breaking down of stereotypes of Native Americans, I wrote the word *survival* on the board and asked the students to define it. Hands went up throughout the room. Each question reinforced the concept that tough decisions are made in order to

survive. The United States made tough decisions so the settlers could live as they wished without fear. Cherokee chiefs signed a treaty to remove their people when they knew that Cherokee law would require their deaths for such an action.

The unit moved forward with various activities designed to examine multiple points of view. Students investigated primary sources; they debated and defended decisions made during the removal of the Native Americans. The following strategies were implemented during this phase: role playing, research, performance theater, Artful Learning, persuasive writing, and simulation.

I tried to connect to today's world and how some people hurt each other over money, gold, and other valuables just as they did in the 19th century. "Why didn't the Cherokees do something about it like fight back?" asked a usually quiet boy.

"What would you have done if you were a chief in the Cherokee nation?" I inquired. "I would have killed anyone who came on my land!" shouted a football player. "The Creek and Seminole Indians tried that and lost!" blurted another student. "I would have taken my case to the governor of Georgia," answered another student. "Our book states that Governor Lumpkin wanted the Cherokees removed, so that would have gone nowhere," responded another. Finally, one student shouted, "I would have sued!" The class was startled when I responded, "That was exactly what the Cherokees did."

The anticipation for my next words grew. "Well, what happened?" asked Daniel in the back row. Unfolding my arms, I flashed up a statement from Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court John Marshall on the overhead projector. The students leaned forward in their desks reading the ruling that acknowledged the Cherokees as a separate nation. Not only did the Cherokees not have to leave Georgia, but the United States should have helped protect them. "So the Cherokees won?" inquired the football player. "See, I was right the whole time!" he continued, obviously proud of himself.

I waited quietly for this to sink in. "If they won, then why were they removed?" Daniel asked. I projected President Andrew Jackson's response to the Supreme Court decision on the screen: "Mr. Marshall has made his decision; now let him enforce it."

The class exploded with anger! "He can't do that!" shouted Hannah. "He was supposed to enforce the court's decision and protect

the Cherokees,” Daniel interjected. “He should have been impeached for violating his oath of office and breaking the Constitution.” With the class in agreement that the Cherokees had won and should have been allowed to stay in Georgia, I followed with another question.

“What would you have done if you had been alive back then?” The students became quiet. Hannah, a highly gifted student, raised her hand confidently. “I say we put President Andrew Jackson on trial for the genocide of the Cherokee people!” The class erupted with wide acclaim in support of her idea. So that’s how this eighth-grade, gifted social studies class decided to initiate this project. On their own.

Moving from inquiry to simulation. For the trial, the students selected roles representing multiple points of view. These students worked on their roles in the trial by reading letters and diary excerpts. When the day of the trial arrived, a jury of students from another class was drafted, and the trial of President Andrew Jackson commenced. Day after day the prosecution presented its case by calling witnesses, including Chief Justice John Marshall, to the witness stand to testify. What seemed like a sure victory for the prosecution was becoming a passionate court battle in a class that 2 weeks earlier knew very little and cared even less about the Trail of Tears.

At the end of the trial, the jury foreman read the verdict: “We, the jury, find the defendant, President Andrew Jackson, not guilty.” The class erupted in an avalanche of cacophony! Discord indeed.

Implementing the Artful Learning Model by examining masterworks and performing. To conclude the unit on the Trail of Tears, I implemented the Bernstein Artful Learning Model by presenting two paintings from two different perspectives. The first painting by artist Robert Lindneux, *Trail of Tears*, is a colorful, eye-catching view of the event. It features Cherokees with smiles on their faces, wagons loaded with supplies and travelers wrapped up in coats and blankets as they left the darkness of their past and entered into the light of a new day.

I asked the class to recall what they had read in the primary sources about the Trail of Tears and then examine the painting closely. Quickly the hands went up. Hannah laughed as she pointed out just how historically inaccurate Lindneux’s painting was. “Not only did most Cherokees not travel in wagons loaded with food and supplies, but they surely weren’t smiling!” she jeered.

What had begun as a moment of curiosity for the students was now provoking the students' wrath as they recognized where they had seen this painting—in their textbook! The once-giggling Hannah asked, "How could something so biased and wrong be placed in our textbook?" Another added, "Are they trying to change history to make us feel better about what happened to the Native Americans?" "It makes it appear like they are going on a summer vacation to Disney World!" shouted one student.

The second painting caused the class to turn from anger to intense thought as they analyzed Native American artist John Guntrie's haunting painting, *Shadow of the Owl*. The painting features several Cherokee Indians trekking through the thick white snow as an owl appears behind them. The students enjoyed comparing the loneliness of the second painting with the family vacation imagery of the first painting. The symbolism was easily recognizable for the students, and they were eager to discuss what they saw in the work while comparing it to the other painting. For instance, one student commented, "I think the white snow is a representation of the White Man obstacle the Cherokees were trying to journey through to survive." I stood back in amazement as the class seemed to run itself with the students' energy and passion.

One student observed another interesting detail in the painting. "If you look carefully, you can see how the Cherokees in the distance are fading away. It's like the painting is trying to show that the life, the history the Cherokees had known was fading away, too." This Artful Learning experience reinforced the viewpoint that social constructivist learning environments such as this, which give students opportunities to wrestle with complex and challenging activities, help shift students' values, motives, expectancies, and needs (Boekaerts & Cascallar, 2006).

The final part of the unit involved a performance theater. Grant monies allowed the students to present their performance theater at the neighboring elementary and high schools. Students representing different points of view selected President Andrew Jackson; a soldier on the Trail of Tears, John Burnett; Cherokee Chief, John Ross; and a 9-year-old Cherokee boy, Samuel Cloud.

These students created their performances while explaining how character shaped their journey of survival. They designed and created

their own costumes, persona, and dialect to become the characters they were portraying. After each dramatic presentation, the students answered questions from the audience while remaining in character. It was obvious the students had not just memorized dates and facts but had attained a deeper understanding of this moment in history. At the conclusion of the unit, students were asked to reflect on it. "I will never forget the Trail of Tears as long as I live because I felt like I experienced it, too," wrote one of the students.

The curtain did not fall: Situational learning involving authentic problems. The passion these students experienced carried over into a powerful service-learning project that moved them from the classroom to the boardroom of Georgia's State Capitol. One morning before homeroom, Hannah bounded up the hall, newspaper article in hand. "Look what I found! You aren't going to believe this!" Hannah pointed out the article in the newspaper entitled, "Budget Cuts May Force the Closings of Several State Historic Sites." One of the proposed historic sites on the list was the Cherokee Capitol, New Echota. Selected as the capitol of the Cherokee people in 1825 near present-day Calhoun, GA, New Echota originally featured a thriving town center with its own printing press, courthouse, and store. Today, New Echota is a state historic site with many original and reconstructed buildings as well as a museum providing a glimpse into how the Cherokees once lived.

When hearing of its possible destruction, the students became enraged. They couldn't believe that Georgia would sell off something so sacred to Georgia's history. "I have Cherokee blood in me, and if they sell this off, it's like they are removing my culture again!" exclaimed one student.

"What should we do about it?" one student asked the class. "Why don't we call the paper after school and let them know how upset we are about it?" another student responded. Some thought they should call the state General Assembly and express their concern.

"I am sure our state reps [*sic*] care what a bunch of eighth graders think! And besides, they are too busy anyway," Daniel chimed in. "Well, why don't we give them something to think about by explaining why New Echota should be saved and give them ways to do it?" shouted Hannah to a smattering of applause. "If they are too busy to

find out how to save New Echota, then we will do the work for them,” she announced.

The students decided to write letters to advocate saving the historic site. With that small first step, students at Torrance Middle School began a community action movement that would bring about the saving of an historic site and a new confidence that every voice matters, even that of an eighth grader. The students worked diligently on their goal to save the Cherokee capitol. I helped guide them in their research while Ms. Smith taught them the proper format for writing persuasively.

The students traveled to public libraries, made possible by the grant monies, and perused the Internet to obtain information about Georgia’s historic sites. Many students began putting their feelings down on paper and tried to articulate, not only about why they wanted New Echota saved, but also how it could be saved. One of the students in the class discovered other state historic sites in Georgia that had fewer visitors and made less money than New Echota yet were not in danger of closing

The students organized their research identifying ideas to generate money and interest in New Echota. “I went to New Echota last year with my brother, and it was boring compared to the Renaissance Festival,” a student stated. One student explained in very simple terms why she went to the Renaissance Festival. “I have fun at the Renaissance Festival because of the games, reenactments, food, and music. If New Echota had that same excitement about the Cherokee culture, then I know I would want to go there just as badly,” she continued. Then they listed the number of visitors at each historic site in Georgia and how much money each site made or lost. “The research shows that New Echota should not be closed because it loses less money than many of the historic sites they plan to keep open,” Cedric explained. By organizing their research and thoughts, the students were prepared to write their letters.

“Why don’t we deliver our letters in person?” Hannah asked upon completion of the letter-writing assignment. Carolyn, who played little Cherokee Samuel Cloud in the performance theater, stated, “There is no way they can look us in the eyes and tell us it can’t be saved!” It was settled. The letters would be hand delivered by students dressed

in regalia. Now they had to make it happen, to strive for their most important, authentic goal—to save New Echota.

After talking to their state senator, they were invited to present before the state's Natural Resources Committee—to change history. On a chilly March day, 5 eighth-grade students, several of their parents who offered to drive, and their teachers trekked to the Georgia State Capitol for the purpose of saving the Cherokee Capitol.

Wearing the look of empowerment mixed with just a hint of uncertainty, the students entered the packed committee room where members of the Natural Resources Committee were seated behind a semi-circle table. In the back of the room were visitors and other individuals waiting to express their issues with the committee. Behind the committee were photographers and a local television station. The students' demeanor reflected their awareness of being face to face with their moment in history. They had no idea that in the next 30 minutes, they were about to make a difference in Georgia's history.

The first student to step out in front of the committee was Cedric dressed as Cherokee Chief John Ross. Taking a deep breath, he began his story explaining the pain he and his family endured on the Trail of Tears. He finished with, "The Cherokees have been removed once before; please don't do it again." The room erupted in applause.

One by one, the students presented in character while looking directly into the eyes of committee members. They each finished their presentation with the same statement, "The Cherokees have been removed once; please don't do it again!"

The final student to present was Mandy dressed as Captain John Burnett. She walked to the middle of the room, saluted the committee, and related Captain Burnett's story on the Trail of Tears. She shared how the Cherokees were dragged from their homes and placed in a stockade. She even quoted from Burnett's diary: "I have been in an American Civil War and watched men kill each other by the thousands, but I will always say that the Trail of Tears was the most cruel thing I ever witnessed."

When the students exited the room after receiving a standing ovation, they walked into a large marble room in the Capitol filled with statues and paintings of former governors and others who have contributed to Georgia's history. Standing right in the middle of this room were 5 eighth-grade students who wondered if they had

impacted Georgia's history as well. A bright light from a television camera appeared before the enchanted teens, and a reporter proceeded to interview each student.

The next week they anxiously awaited the ruling of the committee. The committee recommended that New Echota be taken off the list of park closings. The letter from the committee stated that it was the students' passionate presentation that changed their minds about New Echota's fate.

How remarkable that students who take their service-learning to the highest level (See Figure 1) can become a part of history. As one student asked me, "Do you think we will be in the next Georgia history book?" I responded honestly, "As long as New Echota exists, you will always be a part of Georgia's history."

Findings

Involvement in this program helped the students master the objectives of the unit. The gifted students in this class showed greater gains on the posttest of the unit compared with the other gifted classes taught using traditional methods. They found that examining opposing points of view is an engaging method of studying history and enhances metacognition. For instance, one student commented, "I now realize history can be painfully negative and at the same time positive, depending on the point of view we are studying."

This study corresponds with other studies that have found a positive relationship between giftedness and advantages for metacognitive knowledge (Alexander, Carr, & Schwanenflugel, 1995) as the following student comment illustrates. "For the first time I feel like I can have my own opinion about an historical event instead of being told how I should feel." The results also support the theory that a homogeneous learning environment, such as the one in this study, is desirable for promoting self-efficacy in gifted students. A side effect of this homogeneous grouping was that this gifted class provided leadership for my other nongifted classes, which were taught using similar methods. The gifted class developed the service-learning ideas and fired up the other classes to get involved in activities such as writing the letters.

In this study with teachers acting as facilitators, students became actively involved in their own learning processes, leading to increased achievement, and enhanced self-efficacy, and altruism (see Table 1). Showing traits of both self-efficacy and altruism, one student stated, “There is no way they [the Natural Resources Committee] can look us in the eyes and tell us it can’t be saved!”

Instead of focusing on the status quo of classroom learning, which is generally disconnected from the real world, history wrapped in service-learning and the arts provided these gifted students with opportunities to begin operating in a dynamic society. Community-Action service-learning provided them with experiences in solving real-world problems which enhanced self-efficacy and altruism (see Table 1) as they learned how to—*and that they could*—make a difference in the real world, even making history themselves.

Plan of Action

As a result of this study, all eighth-grade social studies teachers at Torrance Middle School have adopted this unit and are working to include more that involve the methods used in this study. To date, two other history units have been created with more in the works. Ms. Smith and I have continued our work together to incorporate more interdisciplinary units for our students.

Limitations of the Study

As with most participatory action research, sacrifices in methodological and technical rigor are made in exchange for more timely evidence that can be used to develop a real-time process of practice. There may be a trade-off between methodological sophistication and truth in terms of attaining timely evidence (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000). In order to add credibility to the findings, an ethnographic method was used in the write up, allowing the students to speak for themselves. In addition, a university professor trained in qualitative research techniques guided the study. Transferability is limited to a primarily

Table 1

Findings Related to Pedagogical Models

Model	Stage/Area of Model	Findings of the study
Community-Action Service-learning	Creative Problem Solving	<p>The students organized their research into columns on the whiteboard. One column listed potential marketing ideas to generate money and interest. Another column listed ways to improve the park. The final column listed the number of visitors at each historic site in Georgia and how much money each site made or lost.</p> <p>Solving problems led to altruism as the students worked to help their community as evidenced by this student response: "Well, why don't we give them something to think about by explaining why New Echota should be saved and give them ways to do it!"</p>
	Cooperative Learning Strategies	<p>Students worked cooperatively throughout their service-learning experience. They were able to differentiate their own learning experience by selecting work that appealed to their strengths. For instance, while students who were the better debaters or presenters worked together on a presentation for the committee, students who were able to process the material to a greater depth researched the reasons why the historic site was losing money and provided statistical data to the group.</p>
	Cognitive Apprenticeship Model (Brown, Collins, Duguid, 1989)	<p>In this project, I facilitated my students' learning providing the four elements of this model that lead to learning: <i>scaffolding, modeling, coaching, and fading</i>.</p> <p>Although it was strange at first, I learned to fade really well as I watched my students take ownership of their own learning. Self-efficacy was an outcome as Hannah's comment illustrates: "If they are too busy to find out how to save New Echota, then we will do the work for them."</p>
	Reflection	<p>The students were involved in reflective activities throughout the project—from the beginning through the end. We held discussions often; as well, students wrote about their experience and what it meant to them as a part of their classroom assignments.</p> <p>As one student stated to the Natural Resources committee with tears in her eyes, "It's not just Cherokee history. It's <i>our</i> history."</p> <p>Enhanced metacognition was an outcome as this student comment shows: "For the first time I feel like I can have my own opinion about an historical event instead of being told how I should feel!"</p> <p>The experience impacted the students long after it was over. Reflecting on the experience three years later, one student's altruistic response was: "The unit inspired me to fight for those who need a voice. Doing the right thing is not the most popular thing, but it sure made me feel good." She has now set as her career goal to become an attorney.</p>

Table 1, continued

Model	Stage/Area of Model	Findings of the study
	Celebration/ Demonstration	Presenting to the Natural Resources Committee at the state Capitol was a wonderful experience for the students. It allowed them to make their case and have their voices heard. The letter from the committee stated that it was the passionate presentation from the students that changed their minds about New Echota's fate. The students felt empowered because <i>they had changed minds</i> .
Artful Learning	Experience	Two art masterworks were <i>experienced</i> to help students discover the importance of perspective. The students <i>experienced</i> comparing the loneliness of the second painting with the <i>family vacation</i> imagery of the first painting. This experience deepened their understanding of the historical event and created an emotional response.
	Inquire	Significant questions were asked to help with the direction of the experience. The depth of student responses was remarkable. One student was seen holding her head as she stood up to leave at the end of class. When she passed me she mumbled, "That made me think so much my head hurts."
	Create	Creation of the performance theater was life changing for at least one student. Three years later, he expressed that he is planning to pursue acting as a career.
	Reflect	Students reflected throughout the unit. What did the experience mean? How did their views change? Student discovered how they learn best due to the project strategies which enhanced metacognition skills. When interviewed three years later, one student remarked, "I have told my teachers in high school that they should be looking at different points of view when they teach. I also told them to use more art, music and drama in their lessons because many gifted students like me learn better that way."

White, eighth-grade gifted population in a Southern suburban public school setting.

Discussion

Although a plethora of folk wisdom, research literature, and biographical and anecdotal accounts exist about creativity and giftedness, we are still unable to answer very fundamental questions about people who have devoted their lives to improving the human condition, people like Nelson Mandela, Mother Theresa, and Martin Luther King, Jr. Although speculation abounds concerning the necessary

ingredients for giftedness and creative productivity, and while these theories have called attention to important components and conditions for a high level of accomplishment, they have not explained how the confluence of desirable traits results in altruism. Understanding how positive human attributes develop is especially important because it should help us direct the educational experiences we provide for the gifted and talented students who will shape the values and the actions of the future (Renzulli, 2002).

Involvement in the history curriculum examined in this study helped these gifted students discover that history is not always as it appears in their textbooks. Many students found the study of opposing points of view to be an interesting method of studying history. For instance, one student in the class commented, "History can be painfully negative and at the same time positive, depending on the point of view we are studying." And they took this learning to a new level by impacting their community.

Educators could make school more relevant and meaningful for students through the implementation of high levels of service-learning and Artful Learning. The results of this study suggest that these models can be used together effectively. When gifted students become involved in their own learning processes, achievement, metacognition, self-efficacy, and altruism are enhanced, as this study has suggested. Although outside the scope of this study, there are indications that student achievement improves for all learners, even if they do not experience a high level of service-learning.

In community-action service-learning, students take control of their learning with teachers acting as facilitators. They can address civic reform, such as legislative initiatives and health and human services; professional services, such as historic nominations and grant writing; and community enhancement, such as cultural and aesthetic ventures and environmental improvements. These initiatives link well to social studies and science. Language arts is also a natural fit for high levels of service-learning, connecting to writing, speaking, and reading curriculum objectives. What better way to motivate gifted students to write persuasively than by giving them a topic about which they are passionate? Or by giving them a business letter to write that has meaning to them and they will actually mail? Or by giving them a speech they will actually deliver to a real audience? High levels of

service-learning have been shown to provide gifted students with opportunities to exhibit high levels of creativity, responsibility, reflective judgment, self-awareness, empathy for others, and autonomy of thought and action (Terry, 2000, 2003).

In Artful Learning, students are introduced to a masterwork for exposure to rigorous and important ideas and classical works, creating an engaging experience; next, students inquire and build their own understanding around significant questions; then, students create something through active, hands-on involvement; and finally, they reflect thoughtfully on what they understand. By understanding history through multiple points of view, the encouragement of higher order thinking skills, Artful Learning and service-learning, history becomes meaningful to students. Reflection, key to both models, can be achieved through discussion, writing, acting, and drawing. The fact that the models overlap in some areas makes them a natural fit in any classroom.

What would our world be like if people like Martin Luther King, Jr. or Gandhi had not used their talents to make the world better? Even though we are only beginning to examine what motivates altruistic people to make meaningful contributions to society, we can learn much from students like the ones involved in this program, a program that infused Artful Learning and service-learning. As Hannah stated after the project ended, "The unit [program] inspired me to fight for those who need a voice. Doing the right thing is not the most popular thing, but it sure made me feel good."

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Authors' Note

This research was part of a Corporation for National and Community Service Learn and Serve America grant.