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Gifted Education in the Middle

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GIFTED EDUCATION

IN THE MIDDLE

A Project Report

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by

Debra Ann Carlson

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ABSTRACT

GIFTED EDUCATION

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Educators have always been concerned with addressing the needs of gifted students within the regular classroom. It has become difficult to challenge all children when school populations are composed of diverse groups with special needs, interests, abilities, and learning styles.

With an interest in the education of highly capable (gifted and talented) students, the author did extensive reading and research. This project encompasses a variety of strategies, grouping practices and programs that can be implemented into a regular classroom to accommodate the gifted population. With this comes a focus on meeting the unique affective and academic needs of the gifted middle school student.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter One

Background of the Project

Introduction

For the past few years, school districts across the country have been making changes in the way their schools operate, both in response to current research and the movement for educational restructuring and reform. Many of these changes are soundly based on current research about the way children learn and develop, and the educational practices which best support healthy growth and development. However, it is difficult to generalize about all children when school populations are composed of many groups with special needs, interests, abilities, and learning styles (Sicola, 1991).

Parents, teachers, administrators, and community members with an interest in the education of Washington's highly capable (gifted and talented) students have met annually for the past several years, with the support of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, to discuss and plan for the special needs of these students. (Feidler, 1993) examined current research on the needs of gifted students and compared it with the philosophy and intent of some of the major trends in restructuring.

As teachers continue moving into the technology driven "Informational Age" and as they develop and utilize the curriculum of the 21st Century to prepare students for challenges ahead, a major

1

problem continues to frustrate educators. How can teachers prepare children who possess a wide variety of strengths, talents and problems to face a work force that will rely so heavily on communication, collaboration, and thinking strategies? No longer can educators look at life long learning as a luxury, but rather continuous learning will be a survival skill for all students in our education system (Slavin, 1987). Different districts have their own programs to educate gifted students within the classrooms.

Purpose

Educators have their greatest challenge today in developing within the learner the desire or passion to reach his or her full potential. This is very critical with our gifted students who have the potential to make a difference. There are many different ways that these students can express their giftedness and build on their strengths.

Ideas behind gifted and talented Enrichment Programs are based on the premise that each child has an intrinsic right to an appropriate and enriched education. While all children can benefit from many enrichment opportunities, schools need to recognize that students who demonstrate unusual talent and capabilities need special provisions within, and in addition to, the regular curriculum.

Districts should further recognize that highly capable students,

like all students, differ in learning styles, talent areas, interests, abilities, and in personality. These differences, which can challenge traditional approaches to education, are a part of their potential for unique contributions and must be considered when decisions are made regarding individual student programming.

Significance of the Project

Talent should be sought and nurtured in all students (Law, 1998). Wenatchee school district supports and encourages the continuation of existing opportunities for enrichment as well as the further development of high quality options.

There are students whose demonstrated abilities or potential for highly capable behavior identify them as students in need of special services. These students need curriculum that is appropriately differentiated in pace and complexity, and regular opportunities to spend time interacting with their intellectual peers (Kulik and Rogers, 1994).

Limitations

The following are limitations of this project:

1. This project is designed for middle school teachers who have gifted students in their regular classrooms.

2. This project targets all subject areas within the regular curriculum.

3. This project was designed to enhance and promote

higher level activities to encourage higher level thinking
and performance.

<u>Strategies For Differentiation</u>

Compacting
Eliminate skills and /or concepts which student has already
mastered.

Independent Projects
Identify problems or topics of interest to the student; teacher
assists student in planning a method of investigation and in identifying
the product to be developed.

Interest Groups
Based on student interest, not academic ability. Children's
"voices" are heard in choices offered.

Flexible Skill Grouping
Students are matched to skills work by readiness. Movement
among groups is common. All are challenged and no one is labeled.

Learning Centers
A place for children to go to be challenged and pursue interests.

Tiered Assignments
All children can be working on the same unit but assignments
vary.

High-level Questioning
Questions that draw on an advanced level of information, require
leaps of understanding and challenge thinking.

Contracts/Management Plans
The teacher grants certain freedoms and choices about how a

student will complete tasks, and the student agrees to use the freedoms in designing and completing work according to specifications.

Mentorships/Apprenticeships

The student develops skills of production in a field with a resource person from school or community to complete a task.

<u>Definition of Terms</u>

<u>Ability Grouping:</u> Students are put into groups by need, ability or interest. Groups can be formed and reformed to meet varied instructional purposes.

<u>Advanced Placement:</u> Formal AP curriculum for which high school students can complete a course and take the exam for college credit. Also, placement in a class more advanced than the student's age.

<u>Cluster Grouping:</u> A group of 5-6 students are grouped according to ability in a regular classroom.

<u>Creativity:</u> It is the process of combining what exists into something new. This process could be a procedure, an idea, or product. Creativity can be taught. The elements of creativity play an important part in introducing new ideas and solutions to problems.

<u>Critical Thinking: The</u> development of analytical thinking for purposes of problem solving and decision making. Critical thinking uses specific attitudes and skills such as seeing others' points of view, and reaching sound conclusions.

<u>Curriculum Compacting:</u> Mastery of required curriculum is

demonstrated at a faster pace in order to create classroom time to work on Type III enrichment projects.

Differentiating Curriculum: Strategies designed to accommodate the various needs of learners in a classroom are employed. Examples include learning centers, tiered assignments, and curriculum compacting.

Enrichment: Experiences or activities that are above or beyond the "regular curriculum." Falling under the general term enrichment are such practices and offerings as special assignment, independent study, mini courses.

Enrichment Teaching Specialist: Person providing the leadership in planning, developing and providing services in an enrichment program. Works with building principals, classroom teachers, specialists, parents and community members in an effort to promote educational excellence for all students in a school.

Gifted Behavior: Behavior that emerges when above average ability, high task commitment and creativity interact with one another in relation to a particular topic, area of interest, or a specific talent.

Grouping by Readiness: Grouping within a skill area. May be within the classroom, grade level, cross grade level. Most commonly done in language arts and math. May include both acceleration and enrichment.

Honors Classes: Curriculum offered in greater depth and complexity.

Typically for high achieving, motivated students.

Interest Groups: Students who participate in a class or group based on a common interest in a topic.

Multiple Intelligence's: Each intelligence involves the ability to solve problems, fashion a product, or make a contribution that is valued in a least one culture or community. Based on the work of Harvard psychologist, Dr. Howard Gardner.

School wide Enrichment Team: A working group of faculty members and parents who have specific responsibilities for organizing the overall enrichment   effort for the whole school.

School wide Enrichment Model: Developed by Dr. Joseph Renzulli, this model is designed to meet the needs of traditionally defined gifted students as well as to enrich the lives of all students within a given school or district. Key features of this program include: various levels and types of enrichment services; involvement of classroom teacher, parents, and administrators; procedures for curriculum compacting; enrichment teams; and open and frequent communication.

Talent: Demonstrated skill or advanced ability in one of the multiple intelligence's.

Talent Development: Establishing the conditions and providing opportunities to explore the multiple intelligence's in order for talent to

emerge.

Talent Groups: Students who are referred to the enrichment specialist based on a demonstrated talent in a particular area such as reading or math or art.

Type I Enrichment: Consists of general exploratory activities that are designed to expose students to topics, events, books, people, etc. not ordinarily covered in the regular curriculum.

Type II Enrichment: Process skills necessary for students to successfully conduct an in-depth investigation on a topic of interest in a self directed manner.

Type III Enrichment: Recommended as the mainstay of programs for advanced ability students and consists of activities in which students become actual investigators of real problems of topics by using appropriate methods of inquiry. Type III enrichment is characterized by (1) identification of a general area in which advanced level work will be done, (2) focusing upon a specific question or problem, (3) use of multiple advanced level resources, (4) acquisition of raw data using appropriate methodological techniques, (5) development of a polished piece of work and (6) sharing of products and findings with appropriate audiences.

Project Overview

Chapter one includes the purpose and significance of this project,

as well as the limitations and terms that will be used throughout the project. Chapter two reviews the literature that was used to support the basis for this project. Chapter three explains the interest and the purpose the author expressed in this project. Chapter four includes a handbook of lessons and activities developed to enhance and challenge the gifted population within the regular middle school classrooms. Chapter five summarizes the background of the project and contains the conclusion of the project.

Chapter Two

Review of Literature

Introduction

In recent years, the practice of grouping students both within and between classes has received much attention, a range of conclusions have been drawn, and opinions expressed regarding the effectiveness of various grouping practices on student achievement, self-concept, and attitude. Several meta-analytic reviews have concluded that the effects of ability grouping programs vary according to the features of each program and the group of learners involved. Some grouping programs have no effect, others have moderate effects, and some have large and significant effects for some learners (Kulik, 1993). Since the research findings for one type of grouping or of one population of students cannot be generalized to apply to other grouping programs or populations, it is important to look critically at the sources and studies used when basing decision making on research.

Grouping Practices

In order to better understand the research on grouping practices, a distinction must be made between "tracking" and "ability grouping." Tracking involves broad, programmatic, long-term placement decisions that separate students for most or all of their academic subjects based on test data, student selection, or prior

achievement. Importantly, students that are involved with tracking usually follow the same basic curriculum, have the same learning outcomes, and use the same materials, with only minor variations in pace (Kulik, 1993).

Ability grouping includes any of a variety of organizational structures of long or short duration, in which students of similar ability work together (Robinson, Davis, Fiedler and Helman, 1982). Ability grouping may take many forms, but most commonly includes: within class ability groups for specific skill acquisition in which the curriculum, materials and methods vary according to the learning needs of the students in the group.

Cross grade programs, flexible grouping, and cluster grouping are examples of ability grouping. Research base supports positive outcomes at all ability levels for flexible ability grouping in specific subject areas such as math and reading, and improved attitudes toward subject matter in grouped populations (Allan, 1991). Further, when high ability students were grouped and provided with enriched and accelerated curriculum, the effect on achievement was large. A primary conclusion drawn by the majority of studies on this topic is that grouping without curricular adjustment (tracking) has no effect, either positive or negative, on student achievement, self-concept, or attitude (Rogers 1991). As Slavin (1986), points out, "ability grouping is not a single practice, but has many fundamentally different

forms which have different educational as well as psychological effects"(Slavin, 1986, p.3). Factors such as the type of group, the extent to which heterogeneity is reduced and the instructional modifications which have been made in order to fit the needs of the learner were the key to achievement gains (Slavin, 1987).

Strategies For Success With Gifted Students

Research shows that flexible grouping can be an effective and important strategy when it is designed to meet the needs of specific groups of students. Studies by Cox & Daniels (1985), Davis & Rimm (1985), Kulik (1985), Slavin (1987, 1990), Rogers (1991) and others conclude that gifted students are likely to benefit most when grouped by ability in the specific subject area, when those groups are flexible, and adjusted to meet student need and interest. An appropriate, effective education for highly capable students requires a differentiated curriculum, teachers trained in methods which facilitate their learning, and the thoughtful use of flexibility grouping. Flexible grouping may also provide important opportunities for gifted students to interact and develop relationships with their intellectual peers, work at an appropriately challenging and complex level, and make significant, measurable gains in academic achievement.

Van Tassel-Baska (1989) when discussing studies in which significant gains were made in cognitive abilities as a result of ability grouping for gifted students, further states, "educators cannot

differentiate instructional plans for gifted learners effectively without ability grouping in some form. Thus, to eliminate ability grouping for all is to eliminate special programs for the gifted and talented" (p.212).

Another grouping strategy, cluster grouping, allows students to work together within their areas of strength while remaining a part of a heterogeneous classroom. In this model, three to six highly capable students are placed together in an otherwise mixed ability classroom with a teacher who has some training in working with the gifted, and will make appropriate modifications in the curriculum to provide consistently challenging opportunities for them.

Guidelines For Success With Gifted Students

The following guidelines for success with gifted students are offered by Karen Rogers and James Kulik, (1991, p.418) based on conclusions drawn from research synthesis on ability grouping and the gifted learner:

1. Grouping for acceleration of curriculum produces substantial gains when applied in the form of non graded classrooms, curriculum compacting, grade telescoping, subject acceleration, advanced placement programs, and early admission to college.
2. Students who are academically gifted and talented should spend the majority of their school day with others of similar abilities and interests. The strength of the research base on the positive outcomes for acceleration and full-time grouping for

gifted students is consistent and significant.

3. Cluster grouping of gifted students with a sufficiently trained teacher can be considered when schools cannot support a full-time gifted program.

4. In the absence of a full-time gifted program, gifted students might be offered specific group instruction across grade levels, according to their individual knowledge acquisition in school subjects, either in conjunction with cluster grouping or in its place.

5. Students who are gifted and talented should be given experiences involving a variety of appropriate acceleration based options, which may be offered to gifted students as a group or on an individual basis.

6. Students who are gifted and talented should be given experiences which involve various kinds of enrichment that extend the regular school curriculum, leading to the more complete development of concepts, principles, and generalizations.

7. The use of mixed ability cooperative learning groups should be used sparingly for gifted students, perhaps only for social skills development programs. Until evidence is accumulated that cooperative learning provides academic outcomes similar to or superior to the various forms of ability grouping, it is important to continue with the grouping practices which are supported by research.

8. Schools should resist calls for wholesale elimination of ability grouping. It is important to distinguish among programs which make curricular and other adjustments to the special needs of

highly talented learners, and have significant positive effects on achievement, and those who provide the same or similar curriculum at all levels of ability and make little or no difference at any ability level. The Joplin plan in reading, within class reading and math groups, and other flexible grouping practices have all been shown to be positive in effect for all ability levels when curricular adjustments are made.

9. Highly talented students profit greatly from work in accelerated classes and out-perform non accelerates by an average of one full year. Schools should therefore try to maintain programs of accelerated work.

10. Highly talented youngsters also profit greatly from an enriched curriculum designed to broaden and deepen their learning, and out-perform equally talented controlled students by four to five months. Schools should therefore try to maintain programs of enrichment.

11. Bright, average, and slow youngsters all profit from grouping programs that adjust the curriculum to the aptitude level of the groups. Schools should try to use ability grouping this way.

Underachieving Gifted Students

A gifted underachiever is a person of high intellectual and /or creative potential whose performance consistently fails to reflect his/her abilities. Underachieving behavior is most commonly identified in academic and school related settings through testing and

observations of a student's performance.

Dowdall and Colangelo's (1982) working definition of underachievement states that the discrepancy between potential and achievement is generally measured by:

1. Two standardized measures (e.g., IQ achievement tests),

2. A standardized measure and performance (IQ and grade point), or

3. Two non standardized measures (e.g., teacher expectation and daily assignments). (p.181)

Being gifted does not guarantee high academic performance. People with high ability may find it difficult to measure up to either personal or societal expectations of giftedness. Characteristics such as perfectionism, extreme sensitivity, a recognition of the gap between mental ability and physical capability and a lack of adequate work skills can cause frustration and serve to lower the motivation of these children or alter their image of themselves. The wish to be "like others" may also lead bright children to mask their high abilities thus creating a pattern of underachievement that is sometimes hard to detect.

While underachievement is a broad term, some qualifiers may enable us to better define the problem. Whitmore (1980) suggests that we consider four categories in identifying the nature of underachievement:

1. the discrepancy between aptitude and achievement,

2. the duration of the underachievement,

3. the scope of the underachievement,

4. the effects of the underachievement on the individuals and others.

It is also useful to consider the context within which a child is considered to be underachieving. Physical and learning handicaps or learning problems created by substance abuse can also contribute to inadequate academic performance. The systems which surround the child, such as family, the school, peers, and societal and cultural expectations, are key contributing factors that may affect underachieving children's chances of success.

Strategies For Success In Working With The Gifted Underachiever

In designing a plan to help a gifted child overcome the pattern of underachievement, it is important to consider all the factors that bear on a child's performance: strong reasoning abilities, their own ability to perceive the quality of their performance, relationship with peers, and the basic skills needed to experience success. All of the significant adults in a child's life (parents, teachers, tutors, counselors and friends), are critical in ensuring that children obtain assistance in a timely and continuous manner.

A common characteristic of underachieving children is a

perception of a lack of control over decisions that affect them. They do not feel empowered to change the pattern of underachievement. They may also struggle with a fear of failure or a fear of success and subsequently develop behaviors such as chronic procrastination which prevent them from being productive and enjoying the fruits of their labor (Adderholdt-Elliott, 1989 p.19). Strategies for working with such children include:

1. the setting of realistic goals with built-in positive rewards,

2. teaching them to manage their time wisely while building enough challenge into every task.

Children develop confidence and an internal sense of control if power is given to them in gradually increasing increments as they show maturity and responsibility (Rimm 1986).

The combination of high ability and poor performance promotes feelings of isolation in underachieving gifted children, some of whom may feel poorly equipped to have positive peer relationships. Low academic skills or language barriers may sometimes cause these children to be grouped with students who do not match their intellectual level or share common interests. Helping these students find a peer is an important first step in designing successful social experiences. Moving on to structured and positive small group activities will enable them to practice and appreciate newly learned skills and consolidate their feelings of success. Some examples include

bibliotherapy (the use of literature to discuss common problems or issues), role-playing (use of drama to express feelings or unresolved questions) or group discussion on self chosen topics which relate to their underachievement or their giftedness (Adderholdt-Elliott,1987).

The regular classroom setting is often a difficult place for an underachieving child who is constantly comparing him/herself to peers and is unable to cope with the competition. Frustrations may take the form of extreme behavior that might surface as withdrawal or disruptive actions. The goal would be to restore the child's ability to function productively in a classroom setting. A plan could include learning to focus to help them derive meaning from learning materials, exhibiting self-control, displaying tolerance of others, and accepting responsibility for behaviors (Rimm 1986).

The lack of an appropriate match between the learning needs of a child and the demands of a curriculum is often found to be a source of conflict for the underachieving child. Since the learning profiles of gifted underachieving children indicate that they have strengths and weaknesses, any successful program must take both of these in account. Early identification of the problem, followed by a program design that builds on students' strengths and creates the opportunity for choice and acceleration where appropriate, will build on their sense of self worth (Whitmore 1988).

The task of understanding the motivation of the underachieving

gifted child is challenging. Since underachievement can be exhibited in many ways, it is important that the use of all our knowledge of how and why children learn in planning for these children who have potential of being personally satisfied, successful, and productive (Tannebaum 1993).

Cluster grouping:

Cluster grouping consists of five to eight gifted students, top 5% of ability are clustered in the classroom of one teacher who has training in how to teach exceptionally capable students. The other students in class are of mixed ability.

Why cluster group?

When a teacher has several gifted students, taking the time to make appropriate provisions for them seems realistic. Furthermore, gifted students can better understand and accept their learning differences if there are others just like them in the class.

The learning needs of gifted students:

Consistent opportunity to learn new material and to develop the behaviors that allow them to cope with the challenge and struggle of new learning.

How should students be identified for the cluster group?

It should be those students who have demonstrated that they will need curriculum that exceeds grade level perimeters.

What are the advantages of cluster grouping?

Gifted students feel more comfortable when there are other students just like them in the class. They are more likely to choose more challenging tasks when other students will also be eligible. Teachers no longer have to deal with the strain of trying to meet the needs of just one precocious student in class. The school is able to provide a full-time, cost-effective program for gifted students, since their learning needs are being met every day.

What are the disadvantages of cluster grouping?

There may be pressure from parents to have their children placed in a cluster classroom, even if they are not in the actual cluster group. These situations may be handled by:

1. providing training for all staff in compacting and differentiation so parents can expect those opportunities in all classes.

2. requiring parents to provide written documentation of their child's need for curriculum differentiation instead of requesting the placement by phone.

What specific skills are needed by cluster teachers?

Cluster teachers should know how to:

1. Recognize and nurture behaviors usually demonstrated by gifted students.

2. Create conditions in which all students will be stretched to

learn.

3. Allow students to demonstrate and get credit for previous mastery of concepts.

4. Provide opportunities for faster pacing of material.

5. Incorporate students' passionate interests into their independent studies.

6. Facilitate sophisticated research investigations.

7. Provide flexible grouping opportunities for the entire class. There is an alarming trend in many places to eliminate gifted education programs in the mistaken belief that all students are best served in heterogeneous learning environments. The work of Lange, & Winebrenner (1993), Rogers (1993), and others clearly documents the benefits of keeping gifted students together in their areas of greatest strength for at least part of the school day. It appears that average and below average students have much to gain from heterogeneous grouping, but must not sacrifice gifted students' needs in the attempts to find the best grouping practices for all students.

If cluster groups are not allowed to be formed, gifted students may find their achievement and learning motivation waning in a relatively short period of time. Parents of gifted students may choose to enroll their children in alternative programs, such as home schooling or charter schools. The practice of cluster grouping represents a mindful way to make sure gifted students continue to receive a quality

education at the same time as schools work to improve learning

opportunities for all students (Van-Tassel-Baska 1991).

Gifted Minority Students

Identifying gifted minority students is much more than choosing

proper testing criteria, it is a part of a total integrated process that

uniquely serves a diverse student population. An understanding of

minority students' culture, environment, strengths, and weaknesses is

needed for designing an appropriate model of identification (Law 1997).

Unidentified gifted minority students represent undiscovered

potential for society (Hiatt 1991). Across the nation numbers of

minority students in gifted programs rarely mirror demographics of

the larger population. Barkan and Bernal (1991) discovered a long

history of under representation of gifted children from the non

dominant ethnic groups. Pressures on educators to use procedures

such as individual IQ tests and multiple screenings actually serve to

eliminate a disproportionate number of students from the gifted

programs (Torrance 1981). Students from a language minority culture

can be particularly difficult to identify as gifted because these

students are usually admitted to gifted programs only after they have

mastered English. Thus, by default, one needs to be fluent in English to

be gifted (Barkan & Bernal 1991). In many cases, rather than being

thought bright for having the ability to speak two languages,

bilingualism created barriers between students' cultures and their

access to programs which would nurture their skills and talents (Zappia 1992). Zappia (1992) concludes that minority students have been tested with minimal considerations for students' environment, culture, and language. Traditionally, these students have been tested in their non dominant language using procedures and instruments that were standardized for an Anglo-American, middle-class population. These assessment practices have resulted in inappropriate labeling and misplacement of many minority students (Zappia 1992).

Bernal (1989) implied that a program should be designed around the creativity and diversity of the learners. Torrence and Wu (1981) completed a twenty-two year longitudinal study which researched the adult life of children who had been identified as creatively gifted but not as intellectually gifted. The creatively gifted children became adults who contributed to society much more than those who had been identified as intellectually gifted. From these findings, authors Torrance and Torrance (1985) expressed their concern for using intelligence quotient (IQ) scores as the sole criterion for gifted.

Gifted minority students should be placed in programs where identification instruments have direct relationships to program goals. Udall (1989) states that no one profile of a gifted minority student exists. Continuing, she notes that even though all gifted students share similar cognitive, affective, and social characteristics, the behavioral expression of giftedness will vary among cultures (Udall

1989).

Yong (1994) expresses the importance of conscientious decision making regarding curriculum, instruction, and assessment for diverse student populations. He states that self-concepts and internal locus of control of ethnically diverse students can be enhanced through numerous approaches, such as setting realistic goals and objectives. This should be accomplished by using instructional materials and resources that have a multicultural perspective, encouraging parental participation in their children's learning. Consistent and positive feedback should be provided on students' performance , stressing independent learning, and helping students to become aware of their own attributions (p. 194).

Lloyd (1998) examines four theories of learning to consider when creating a gifted curriculum. The first theory he states is the schema theory. This is based on the premise that the brain collects information in the form of long-term memory, which is then organized schematically similar to a complex filing system. Learning takes place as the schemata are accessed, adding new information to the files that already exist or replacing information as one updates (Lloyd 1998). The second theory as expressed by Lloyd (1998) is cognitive flexibility. This theory relates to the accessibility to multiple schemata in order to understand concepts of greater complexity. Learning occurs when the brain creates new connections and concepts

through the manipulation of of schemata from the data. The third theory is the reader response and it focuses on the direct and extended learning that takes place when something is read (Lloyd 1998). Learning in this theory changes from literal practice to a level at which valuing and personal reactions are encouraged. The fourth theory described by Lloyd is social cultural theory. This is where learning focuses on movement from independent operations to those requiring assistance, with a strong emphasis on social interactions (Lloyd 1998).

These four theories can provide a well rounded curriculum for gifted students and can reflect important considerations for the bilingual/bicultural learner in the diverse classroom (Lloyd 1998).

Kitano and Espinosa (1995) believe the curriculum for the gifted English-language learner should be conceptual in content emphasis and should allow the development of a learning environment in which a student can freely use either language to help define the concepts and generalizations they are learning. The curriculum for the gifted bilingual student should emphasize the high levels of thinking and performance that are expected of any gifted student (Kitano & Espinosa 1995). The classroom and school should focus on student empowerment, structured to reflect a value of diverse languages and cultures as they challenge and work with this unique population.

Banks and Banks (1993) describe four levels of multicultural

content integration. The first two levels include contributions and additive. These levels are self-descriptive and portray heroes, holidays, and traditions as well as themes and perspectives. These two levels do not change the structure of the curriculum and do not reflect the complex levels of thinking expected of gifted students. The emphasis should be put on the last two levels which include transformational and social action levels. Structural curriculum changes take place in the transitional level allowing students the opportunities to view concepts, issues, and themes from diverse perspectives. The last of the four levels is the social action level and it infuses into the curriculum real-life experiences involving decision making and action on social issues (Banks & Banks1993). These last two levels reflect many traditional curriculum practices in gifted education, including application of problem-solving processes and the inclusion of real problems for real audiences (Banks & Banks 1993).

Fogarty (1991 p.8) addresses that simply having a good curriculum in place for gifted bilingual/bicultural learners is not enough to provide a learning environment that is commensurate with the abilities and special needs of these students. A sound curricular framework must be accompanied by appropriate instruction and authentic assessment.

Grant and Piechowski (1999) point out that "an understanding of the child's perspective and inner life aides us in assisting children in

finding their own way in life" (p. 8). Instructional design for bilingual/bicultural gifted students, must include selecting resources and designing learning experiences that are tangential to a child's language and culture with a direct relation to their day-to-day life experiences(Grant & Piechowski 1999).

Kaplan (1999) emphasizes the unique needs of language-diverse gifted students and points out one of the shortcomings of educating English-language learners. "In teaching the gifted, the emphasis should be on giftedness, not on the students' status as an emergent English language learner" (p. 20). The need to use strategies appropriate for gifted learners without diminishing them due to language differences is key (Kaplan, 1999).

When working with minority gifted students, teachers must always consider a learning environment that allows them to extend and refine their first and second language and that celebrates their own culture. Providing these students with a creative, flexible, and supportive learning environment will allow us to identify more students and will provide opportunities that will tap their talents and maximize their performances.

Chapter Three

Procedures

Interest in Project

The author became interested in this project several years ago while teaching sixth grade in the Wenatchee School District. The author was trained as a cluster teacher for gifted students entering Orchard Middle School. The author was involved in a wide variety of training workshops and state conventions. Meetings were held district wide to help incorporate instructional strategies to enhance and extend the achievement of highly capable students.

Purpose of the Project

The focus of this project was to use the Wenatchee School District enrichment model program and create and explore meaningful learning opportunities for the gifted students within the regular classroom.

This project incorporates instructional strategies to enhance and extend the achievement of highly capable students. As well as integrating a variety of skills, abilities, and talents through proper grouping practices. Also included are an array of projects to encourage students to explore, analyze, and enhance their ability to think critically and creatively.

The author hopes that all cluster teachers and regular middle

school educators can utilize and implement this information gathered from research. The author's idea is to foster the full potential and success of gifted students within middle school classrooms.

Chapter Four

Results of the Project

Introduction

As a member of the Orchard Middle School enrichment team there has been an opportunity to experience and help plan and incorporate into the classroom the ideas and outcome of the district wide program. Included in this handbook are educational practices, philosophy,unique instructional strategies, grouping practices, and projects that guide the gifted students in classrooms.

Understanding and working with the gifted population in the district is both challenging and rewarding. Included in this project are some grouping practices and the research that support the outcome of different styles and techniques.

Incorporated into this project are strategies and guidelines that cover success of working with gifted students. Also included is the information on how underachieving gifted students are identified and strategies that work in motivating this type of gifted learner towards success.

The belief that schools have the power to steer gifted students toward becoming autonomous learners is an added asset in education. Through well designed programs that allow students to reach their full potential, all will see growth and lifelong accomplishments.

The Nine Intelligence's identified by Howard Gardner

*Verbal/Linguistic

*Logical/Mathematical

*Visual/Spatial

*Musical/Rhythmic

*Bodily/Kinesthetic

*Interpersonal

*Intrapersonal

*Naturalist

*Existential

Verbal/Linguistic: This intelligence is also known as verbal intelligence. It is different from the other intelligences because everyone who speaks can be said to possess it at some level, although it is clear that some people are more linguistically talented than others. Verbal/linguistic intelligence expresses itself in words, both written and oral, and in auditory skills. People who have this kind of intelligence can learn by listening. They like to read, write, and speak, and they like to play with words. They are often seen as possessing high levels of the other intelligences simply because standard testing tools usually rely on verbal responses, no matter which type of intelligence is being assessed.

Logical/Mathematical: This intelligence includes scientific ability. It is the kind of intelligence that is often called "critical thinking." People

with this kind of intelligence like to do things with data; they see patterns and relationships. They like to solve mathematical problems and play strategy games, such as checkers and chess. They tend to use graphic organizers both to please themselves and to present their information to others. This kind of intelligence is highly valued in our technological society.

Visual/Spatial: This intelligence is sometimes called the visual intelligence. People with this kind of intelligence tend to think in pictures and learn best from visual presentations such as movies, pictures, videos, and demonstrations using models and props. They like to draw, paint, or sculpt their ideas and often represent moods and feelings through art. They are good at reading maps and diagrams and they enjoy solving mazes and putting together jigsaw puzzles. Visual/Spatial intelligence is often experienced and expressed through daydreaming, imagining, and pretending.

Musical/Rhythmic: People with this kind of intelligence are sensitive to sounds, environmental as well a musical. They often sing, whistle, or hum while engaging in other activities. They love to listen to music; they may collect CDs and tapes, and they often play an instrument. They sing on key and can remember facts and other information. If musical/rhythmic is not recognized as a talent, it is often treated as a behavior problem.

Bodily/Kinesthetic: People with this kind of intelligence process

information through the sensations they feel in their bodies. They like to move around, act things out, and touch the people they are talking to. They are good at both small and large muscle skills and enjoy physical activities and sports of all kinds. They prefer to communicate information by demonstrating or modeling. They can express emotion and mood through dance.

Interpersonal: This intelligence is evident in the individual who enjoys friends and social activities of all kinds and is reluctant to be alone. People with this kind of intelligence enjoy working in groups, learn while interacting and cooperating, and often serve as mediators in case of disputes, both in a school situation and at home. Cooperative learning methods could have been designed just for them, and probably the designers of cooperative learning activities as an instructional method have this kind of intelligence also.

Intrapersonal: Is shown through a deep awareness of inner feelings. This is the intelligence that allows people to understand themselves, their abilities, and their options. People with intrapersonal intelligence tend to be independent and self directed and have strong opinions on controversial subjects. They have a great sense of self-confidence and enjoy working on their own projects and just being alone.

Naturalist: The human ability to discriminate among living things (plants, animals) as well as sensitivity to other features of the natural world (clouds, rock configurations, etc.).

Existential: Individuals who exhibit the proclivity to pose and ponder questions about life, death, and ultimate realities. (Gardner only recently disclosed the existence of this intelligence area. Perhaps if there were programs that deal with Socratic questioning, they would fall into this category).

LESSON PLAN ONE

Subject Area or Theme: U.S. History

Objective: Students will be able to list sequentially, and differentiate among, the wars in which the U.S. has been involved.

ACTIVITIES & ASSESSMENTS

Over a period of time students will review materials and...

...Meet together in cooperative groups to develop strategies for remembering the sequence of the wars in which the U.S. has been involved. (Interpersonal) * Share and discuss strategies with the whole class. Demonstrate how they work.

...Design and create a mural showing distinguishing features of the periods in which the wars occurred. (Visual/Spatial) * Share and appreciate the completed mural. Decide whether or not the details look authentic.

...Learn a song representative of the period in which the war occurred. (Musical/Rhythmic) * Perform a song. Teach it to the class.

...Learn a dance representative of the period in which the war occurred.

(Bodily/Kinesthetic) * Perform a dance. Tell where and when it was performed historically.

...Gather data about some aspect of the wars (e.g., countries involved, casualties, length, etc.) and then organize the data in a graph.

(Logical/Mathematical) * Display and explain the graphs. Tell how the data was derived.

...Reflect on the values represented by the opposing sides in the conflicts. (Intrapersonal) * Present a summary of values for the class to reflect upon.

...Write a piece in which you portray the values represented by the opposing sides in one or more of the conflicts. Any genre may be used. (Verbal/Linguistic) * Read aloud written pieces or pass them around for the class to read.

LESSON PLAN TWO

Subject Area or Theme: Reading and Writing

Objective: Students will read a story about pioneers during the

Westward Movement and respond in writing in the form of a journal.

ACTIVITIES & ASSESSMENTS

Over a period of time students will read material and...

...Working independently, pretend to be pioneers and keep journals that

reflect the historical period of the trip. (Intrapersonal and

Verbal/Linguistic) * Discuss the experience of keeping a journal.

Share its contents with groups or the class.

...Figure out how far the pioneers traveled during the whole trip and as

a daily, weekly, and/or monthly average and trace the trip on a map.

(Logical/Mathematical and Visual/Spatial) * Use a map to

demonstrate how the distance traveled was figured. Compare results

and averages with other students.

...Working in a cooperative group, create a story map of the trip on a

section of the bulletin board. (Interpersonal and Visual/Spatial) *

Discuss and appreciate the story map. Talk about the experience of

working as a group. How was the leader chosen? How were decisions

made?

...Alone or in a group, build a model of a covered wagon. (Interpersonal

or Intrapersonal and Bodily/Kinesthetic) * Compare the model to real covered wagons. Tell how the model was constructed.

...Working in a cooperative group, research, learn, rehearse, and perform for the class one of the songs sung by pioneers. (Interpersonal and Musical/Rhythmic) * Perform the song(s) individually or in groups. Entertain other classes that are studying the same time period.

LESSON PLAN THREE

Subject Area or Theme: Math

Objective: Students will use word problems to investigate math concepts.

ACTIVITIES & ASSESSMENT

Over a period of a day or longer the student will...

...Work individually(intrapersonal) to write problems (verbal/linguistic) about math concepts (logical/mathematical) currently being studied.   * Give the problem to other students to solve.

...Work together, using manipulatives to solve the problems that were created by other students.   (Interpersonal and Bodily/Kinesthetic) * Explain and discuss the use of manipulatives to solve problems. Did they help you?...everyone?...some people?

...Create illustrations to clarify their problems.   (Visual/Spatial) * Exchange papers and look at the drawings. Do they help to explain the problems?

...Work together or independently to write at least some problems about counting the beat in music. For example, how many half notes in a bar of sheet music with a given time signature? (Musical/Rhythmic) * Demonstrate the musical beat for one or more of the problems. Beat out the time with a partner. Did your rhythms match one another?

LESSON PLAN FOUR

Subject Area or Theme: Science

Objective: Students will investigate the function of the pores of a leaf as it relates to photosynthesis.

ACTIVITIES & ASSESSMENT

Over the period of time needed the student will read about photosynthesis and...

...Be able to answer questions about the process of photosynthesis (Verbal/Linguistic)   *   Explain photosynthesis to another member of class.

...The word photosynthesis means, using the energy from light to make food (photo refers to light and synthesis refers to making food.)

...Trees take in water through their roots and carbon dioxide through their leaves. By using light energy from the sun, trees change these substances into food called glucose. The gas called oxygen is given of in the process.

...Speculate about what would happen if the pores in leaves were closed. (Intrapersonal)   *   Write your speculation on a piece of paper. Check it when you finish your investigation.

...Working in cooperative groups, discuss, plan, and carry out an experiment to test their ideas. (Logical/Mathematical, Interpersonal,

and Bodily/Kinesthetic) * Demonstrate and explain your experiment to the class. Was your original speculation (hypothesis) correct? ...Draw sketches of their experiment at regular intervals. (Visual/Spatial) * Display sketches to the class.

THEME ONE SAMPLE

Subject Area or Theme: Flight

Objective: Students will gain information about the theme, increase vocabulary, and develop research and critical thinking skills.

Literature:

> * *Lost Star* by Patricia Lauber. Scholastic, 1985.
>
> * "Wilbur Wright and Orville Wright" by Rosemary and Stephen Vincent Benet. *Poetry Place Anthology.* Instructor Books, Scholastic, 1990.

PRESENTATION OF THE THEME

Getting Started:

Collect books and magazines about airplanes and flight. Discuss the origins of flight. Do a flight cluster on the board. Discuss the importance of flight and the important people in flight history.

Connection with Literature:

Read aloud *Lost Star* by Patricia Lauber. Discuss Amelia Earhart's life. What effect did she have on flight in the United States?

Read aloud "Wilbur Wright and Orville Wright" by Rosemary and Stephen Vincent Benet.

Related Reading:

Amelia Earhart by Roxanne Chadwick, Lerner 1987.

Charles Lindbergh by David Collins, Garard 1978.

The Wright Brothers by Jason Hook, 1989.

The Story of Flight by Jim Robbins, Warwick, 1989.

Wings: The Early Years of Aviation by Richard Rosenblum, Four Winds, 1980.

Theme One Activities:

Verbal/Linguistic:

*Print vocabulary words associated with flight on index cards and have students look up words and add definitions to cards.

*Have students research, prepare, and give a two-minute oral report on a person famous in flight history.

*Have students read other poems by Rosemary and Stephen Benet and write a short report about the subjects of these poems.

Logical/Mathematical:

*Provide a chart showing the relative lengths of different types of aircraft. Have students cut lengths of string to match the lengths of the airplanes and stretch them out across the play field. Label the lengths of string with the names of the planes they represent.

*Have students do a lift experiment. Provide strips of paper 2" x10" and provide the following instructions: "Using both hands, hold the strip just under your lower lip and blow." Ask students to be prepared to describe what happened, either orally or in writing.

Visual/Spatial:

*Provide a diagram of an airplane. Have students use an encyclopedia to label its parts.

*Provide a blank outline map of the world. Have students use it to indicate the route of Amelia Earhart's around-the-world flight.

Bodily/Kinesthetic:

*Have students create an airplane mobile. Use a book about airplanes or another resource to find pictures of different types of planes.

*Have students make and test paper airplanes for a paper airplane contest. The categories can be highest flying, most creative,farthest flying, and longest flying.

Musical/Rhythmic:

*Set up a listening post or individual tape players with earphones. Provide a tape of Symphony No. 9 in E minor *From the New World* by Antonin Dvorak. This work is often called Dvorak's *New World Symphony.* In it he uses themes from American black spirituals.

*Give students this information: In 1937, when Amelia Earhart's plane went down, there was no TV. The radio kept people informed about the unsuccessful search for her. Between the news bulletins, they played part of Dvorak's *New World Symphony*, the music that is on the tape recorder. It was the part based on the spiritual called "Goin' Home." Listen to the music and then write a paragraph

describing how it made you feel.

*If you had been deciding what music to play on the radio while people searched for Amelia Earhart, would you have chosen Dvorak's *New World Symphony*? Explain. If you would have made another choice, what music would you have played? Why?

Interpersonal:

*Have students work as a group to make a sequence of events chart of Amelia Earhart's life.

*Have students prepare a list of questions they would ask if they were interviewing a pilot.

*Have each student interview another student about any experiences he or she might have had with airplanes. Students who have not flown can be interviewed about trips they would like to take.

Intrapersonal:

*Have students find a book about flight and read it.

*Tell students, "Pretend you are Amelia Earhart. Make up another ending for her story."

THEME TWO SAMPLE

Subject Area or Theme: Respect/Principles

Objective: Students will build awareness of the necessity for ethical behavior in their daily lives.

Literature:

*   "Thank You, M'am," by Langston Hughes. Relationships, edited by Michael Spring. Scholastic, 1987.

*   "Dreams" by Langston Hughs. Reflections on a Gift of Watermelon Pickle... Scholastic, 1968.

PRESENTATION OF THE THEME

Getting started:

Before reading the story ask students to think of something they really want but cannot afford to buy. Have them share their items with the class. List them on a chart. Categorize them. What percentage chose an article of clothing, electronic device,etc.?

Connection with Literature:

Read the short story aloud or let students read it silently. When they are finished, ask if they were surprised that Mrs. Jones did not call the police. Ask if they would have called the authorities.

Read aloud "Dreams," a poem by Langston Hughes.

Related Reading:

*   *Selected Poems of Langston Hughes* "Mother to Son." by Langston Hughes, Random House, 1990.

* *Talking to the Sun* by William Carlos Williams. "To a Poor Old Woman." Henry Holt and Company, 1995.

* *Black Boy* by Richard Wright. "The Streets of Memphis." Harper and Row, 1945.

Theme Two Activities

Verbal/Linguistic:

*Have students pretend to be Roger in the story and write a letter to Mrs. Jones, explaining how he spent the money she gave him.

*Students can pretend to be Roger ten years later and write a letter to Mrs. Jones, telling what has happened in his life so far.

*Students should read other poetry on this theme and write about them.

Logical/Mathematical:

*Have students work on estimation of different items from the related reading.

*Provide newspaper ads, catalogues, and copies of their priced items. Have students find real advertised prices for them.

*Ask students to compare their original estimates with the real prices they found. Were the real prices more or less than their estimates? What were the actual differences in price in dollars and cents? Did anyone find more than one "real" price for an item?

Visual/Spatial:

*Ask, "What do you think Roger's neighborhood looked like? Draw a picture of it."

*Say, "Draw a picture of what Roger's face looked like when Mrs. Jones gave him the money.

Bodily/Kinesthetic:

*Have students work together in groups to plan and rehearse a play based on the story. Let each group act out its play for the whole class.

*Have students decide on suitable props for their plays and make them from various art materials.

Musical/Rhythmic:

*Have at least one tape recorder and a microphone available for students to use.

*Give students this information: Langston Hughes, who wrote the short story "Thank You, M'am" and several of the poems you have read, wrote many books of poetry. The poems have been translated into at least twelve languages, and many of them have been set to music.

*Can you think of a tune for any of the poems you have read by Langston Hughes? It could be a familiar melody or one you make up yourself. You can use the microphone to tape record your ideas.

Interpersonal:

*Have students work as a group to make a chart showing important facts about various careers. They can use encyclopedias and other reference books to find out salary, education, and availability, as well as any other information they come up with.

*Have students prepare a list of questions they would ask if they were interviewing someone about a particular career.

*Have each student make a list of questions and interview another student about his or her reaction to the story.

Intrapersonal:

*Tell students to find another story by Langston Hughes and read it.

*Ask students to pretend they are Roger and make up another ending for his story.

Theme Three Sample

Subject Area or Theme: Empathy

Objective: Students will build awareness of feelings.

Literature:

"All Summer in a Day" by Ray Bradbury. *The Stories of Ray Bradbury.* Knopf, 1980.

"Sunflakes" by Frank Asch. *Sing a Song of Popcorn.* Scholastic, 1998.

PRESENTATION OF THE THEME

Getting Started:

Brainstorm as a class what the world would be like with constant rain for seven years. How would it look? feel? smell? sound? How would life be different? Dim the lights and play a recording of rain showers and storms.

Connection with Literature:

Read the short story aloud, expressing, through your reading, the various moods of the story: the monotony of the constant rain, the excitement of the children, the tension of their conflict with Margot, and their fervor in the sunshine.

Read aloud "Sunflakes," a poem by Frank Asch.

Related Reading:

* "The Fun They Had," by Issac Asimov, *Earth is Room Enough,* Doubleday, 1957.

The Martian Chronicles by Ray Bradbury, Doubleday, 1958.

The Green Book by Jill Patten Walsh, Farrar, 1982.

Children's Atlas of Earth Through Time, Rand McNally, 1990.

Theme Three Activities

Verbal/Linguistic:

*Students may write descriptive poems about the sun, using the couplet written by Margot as a model.

*Have students write a paragraph describing their feelings when they got something they had wanted for a long time.

*Have students write one paragraph describing their feelings when they lost something that meant a lot to them.

Logical/Mathematical:

*Have students create word problems based on the idea that the sun would shine for only one hour every seven years. For example: A child is born on February 27,1990, two days before the sun comes. On May 6, 2004, how many times has that child seen the sun?

*Have students research the atmosphere of Venus. How does it compare with the atmosphere of earth?

Visual/Spatial:

*Provide a listening post or tape recorders with earphones and art materials, such as water colors, colored pencils, crayons, and drawing paper. Tape the passage from the story that describes the

children's experience of seeing the sun for the first time. Tell students to listen to the tape with their eyes closed as they try to "see" what the children saw and then draw the picture they imagined.

*Have students refer to an encyclopedia or other reference material to draw a diagram of the solar system.

Bodily/Kinesthetic:

*Have students design and make a model of the world described in Bradbury's story. (It could be as simple as a diorama.) Have them check their designs with you before they start construction.

*Have students act out Margot's reaction when she comes out of the closet.

Musical/Rhythmic:

*Using whatever materials are available in the classroom and the center, have each small group devise ways to recreate the sounds of a rainstorm. With lights dimmed, each group can perform its storm for the class.

Interpersonal:

*Have students work as a group to brainstorm reasons why the inhabitants of Earth would need or want to move to another planet. Groups can then decide if this is likely to happen.

*Have students use reference books to determine Earth's approximate population. Find out how many people can ride in the spaceships we have today. How many spaceships would be needed,

under current conditions, to transport the entire population? How long

would it take to get to Mars?

Intrapersonal:

*Have students find another story by Ray Bradbury and read it.

*Say, "Pretend you are Margot. Make up another ending for her

story."

THEME FOUR SAMPLE

Subject Area or Theme: Natural Disasters

Objectives: Students will build an understanding of nature and the causes of natural disasters.

Literature:

> *The Big Wave* by Pearl S. Buck. Harper and Row, 1947.

PRESENTATION OF THE THEME

Getting started:

Begin by brainstorming a list of natural disasters. The list may include hurricanes, tornadoes, volcanoes, earthquakes, monsoons, floods, and tidal waves or tsunamis.

Connection with Literature:

The Big Wave is a classic that can be enjoyed in one or two settings. It should be read without interruption so that the beauty of its language and the emotion generated by the story can be fully appreciated. When the reading is completed, let students generate topics for discussion; for example, the interdependence of farmers and fishermen, how to live with dangers over which you have no control, grieving, the pros and cons of Jiya's choice to stay with Kino's family, the symbolism of Jiya's decision to put a window facing the sea into his house, etc.

Related Reading:

* "Until I Saw the Sea" *The Random House Book of Poetry for Children*

by Lillian Moore, Random House, 1983.

* "Do You Fear the Wind?" *Childcraft, Vol. 3* by Hamlin Garland, World Book, 1987.

Volcanoes and Earthquakes by Patricia Lauber, Scholastic, 1985.

Theme Four Activities:

Verbal/Linguistic:

*Provide examples of haiku, a Japanese verse form consisting of three unrhymed lines of five, seven, and five syllables. Haiku usually describes nature. Have students study the examples and write a haiku of their own on the subject of natural disasters.

*Give students a definition of **personification** and some examples: **Personification is representing an idea or a thing or a person.**

Examples: The west wind dances down the lane.

The clouds are crying raindrop tears.

*Have students find examples of personification in *The Big Wave* and in the poems listed in "Related Reading." Then have them write some of their own to describe natural happenings.

Logical/Mathematical:

*How deep is the ocean? What is a fathom? Have students research and report the answers to these questions in a graphic form.

*Have students write some word problems about natural

disasters.

*Have students look up earthquakes, volcanoes, and tsunamis. What is the relationship among them? Draw and label a diagram to show their relationship.

Visual/Spatial:

*Have students use a venn diagram to compare everyday life in Japan to life in the United States.

*Have students study terracing as a farming practice. Find pictures that illustrate this practice. What does it do? Why is it necessary?

Bodily/Kinesthetic:

*Have students study a physical map of Japan. They should find and mark places where the mountains and the sea would be in the area described in the book.

*Have students make paper-mache or salt dough maps of Japan to show its rugged topography.

Musical/Rhythmic:

*Using materials available in the classroom and center, have each small group devise ways to express the experience of natural disasters with sound. What does an earthquake sound like? a Tornado? a hurricane? a volcano? Some students may actually know, but it can be just as effective to imagine these sounds.

Interpersonal:

*Have each small group discuss one of the following topics. Have them choose a leader to record their conclusions:

*the interdependence of farmers and fishermen

*how to live with dangers over which you have no control

*grieving

*the pros and cons of Jiya's choice to stay with Kino's family

*the symbolism of Jiya's decision to put a window facing the sea into his house

Intrapersonal:

*Prepare reading response journals. On one side write quotations from the book. Leave the other side blank for students' responses. Ask students to respond to the quotations and continue with quotations they choose themselves.

*Have students find another book by Pearl Buck and read it.

Chapter Five

Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Summary

Gifted should be viewed not as "the gifted" but as individuals, each of whom has a unique pattern of abilities and interests that need to be nurtured. They should have the opportunity to spend at least part of their time with others like them by ability and/or by interest. This avoids the serious social emotional problems of isolation and feeling different that plague gifted children. Gifted children should have the option to move as fast and as far as they are able. Boredom and unchallenging work begets cycles of frustration and puts gifted children at risk for dropping out, just as work that is too difficult causes other children of lesser ability to drop out. It is important to allow the gifted population the chance to investigate in-depth areas in which they are greatly interested and should be encouraged to become producers of new information, rather than consuming what others have done. To optimize their potential, gifted children throughout their academic journey, need guidance from supportive caring teachers and adults.

Conclusions

Educators need to remember to make adaptations for gifted children in the areas of grouping strategies that I covered in my paper.

Cluster grouping is the strategy of placing high achievers in one classroom with a trained teacher, this has proven to be a powerful boost to achievement. Adaptations can and should be made to challenge and motivate bright children through the learning environment, curriculum content, and skills mastery. The key feature of an appropriate learning environment is competent staff who continually challenge bright students. Content enrichment gives gifted students material designed to broaden their understanding within the general educational goals. Finally, skills mastery refers to providing cognitive skills, such as creative problem solving, increase the ability of gifted students to think productively.

Recommendations

School districts need to plan carefully what benefits they want gifted learners to get from specialized programs and find ways to evaluate whether the students are achieving them. A sound curriculum for gifted students will provide varied and challenging experiences that will develop their potential for the sake of themselves and society. We need to remember that the basic principles used in educating gifted and talented children are sound educational principles for educating all children.

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