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Integrated Humanities: A Content Model for Senior High School Gifted

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Integrated Humanities:

A Content Model for Senior High School Gifted

A Graduate Project

Submitted to the

Division of Education of Gifted

Department of Curriculum and Instruction

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA

by

Jolene Kay Teske

August, 1998

This Research Project by: Jolene Teske

Titled: Integrated Humanities:
A Content Model for Senior High School Gifted

Has been approved as meeting the research requirement for the

Degree of Master of Arts in Education.

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Abstract

The purpose of this project was to develop an integrated humanities content model for senior high school gifted students. It began as a vision and has developed into a clear content model that will be piloted at the writer's school in the fall of 1999. Through the literature review and working revisions, the writer has become convinced that this type of model is one viable and defensible option for programming for intellectually gifted students at the senior high school level.

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A variety of educational programs have been developed to meet the needs of gifted and talented students at the senior high school level. For example, some use "pull-out" programs based on independent study, some incorporate mentorship opportunities, and some develop curriculum for a specific class geared toward differentiation. Any of these options can be defended as beneficial for students. However, the basis for deciding which type of program to implement should be based on the types of students identified for programming, their needs, and the beliefs of the school, staff, and community (Borland, 1989).

Schools that provide challenging curricular programs for senior high school students based on general intellectual ability need programs that address the unique needs and interests of their students. Identification procedures based on general intellectual ability (eg. standardized achievement test scores and IQ test scores) will select students with strengths in a variety of areas even though they all possess an exceptional overall intelligence. Therefore, implemented programs must seek to enrich each student's individual strengths. They also must be designed to broaden each student's knowledge base so that he or she can explore a variety of areas. Many senior high school gifted students gain little knowledge when limited to the regular curriculum (Jellen, 1986). Without appropriate

opportunities, some of these students may never know where their true interests and gifts lie or may be unable to reach their true potential. According to Van Tassel-Baska (1988), all students, even gifted and talented students, have the right to curriculum that meets their needs, both present and future. She also contends that it is through the creation of a comprehensive and integrated curriculum that educators will have a better chance to assure these rights.

One content model that can be suggested is integrated humanities. Van Tassel-Baska (1988) states that this type of program is essential for gifted students because it cuts across various areas of the curriculum to meet their needs. It also allows for learning and development, thus providing students the opportunity to see relationships between subject areas. Not only will students see the connections, they will be able to see more meaning in learning as they see these connections. This learning will provide more connections to real life.

Another important reason for implementing an integrated humanities model is to prepare students for Advanced Placement (AP) courses and college coursework. Such a model is uniquely suited to developing coursework and learning experiences for students in Grades 9-11 that will lead directly into AP courses as seniors and

then into college. The integration of several disciplines into a viable curriculum design is reflected in liberal arts curricula offered by most colleges today. This writer agrees with the contentions of many writers in gifted education that much of the senior high school curriculum that senior high school gifted students endure is fragmented and disconnected (Knapp, 1984; Clark & Zimmerman, 1998; Purcell, 1981; Van Tassel-Baska, 1988).

A third reason for implementing this type of program model is the ability to focus on the affective needs of senior high school gifted students as they develop critical thinking skills through inquiry-based learning to help foster their moral development and to help them become more productive citizens. According to Abraham Tannenbaum, a forerunner in gifted education and speaker at the Wallace Symposium in Iowa City, Iowa, in May of 1998, educators have a responsibility to expose gifted students to people in history whom they can emulate and help develop in themselves an appreciation for what he called the sanctity of life. He called giftedness an instrument for good or evil and, he said, the job of the educator of the gifted is to guide them through moral development so they become secure people who celebrate life through self-discovery. Development of an appreciation for self-discovery can be the key to being an instrument for good in this world.

Rationale

It is clear that intellectually gifted senior high school students need a curriculum that is thought-provoking and which provides connections among the disciplines. It can also be concluded that an integrated humanities model can be an effective way to meet these needs. Since the writer's senior high school curriculum does not have this type of program available for its students, it seemed appropriate that such a model be developed to be piloted; and thus it became the impetus for this project.

Iowa Falls High School is a medium-sized school in Central Iowa. The student body totals approximately 450 in Grades 9-12. The gifted program identifies students in Grades 9-11 on the basis of general intellectual ability. The identification criteria includes the following: an average score of 120 and above on Cognitive Abilities Tests, 90 per cent and above on the Iowa Percentile Rank of Iowa Tests of Educational Development and Iowa Tests of Basic Skills, and nominations with evidence and support. ACT and SAT scores also are used as support when necessary.

The senior high school gifted program at Iowa Falls High School in the past has focused primarily on language and literature. Students receive credit that fulfills the English requirements for Grades 9-11. Students are then able to take electives during their

senior year to fulfill the senior English requirement. This approach has worked well for most students up to this point. In some cases, however, students who have strength areas other than English have opted out of the program. In other instances, students have not been able to explore areas other than English. A third area of concern is that little focus has been placed on the affective needs of students. Therefore, it is apparent that all the students need a program to incorporate all of their skills and to broaden their knowledge base.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this project was to develop an integrated humanities model for gifted senior high school students, Grades 9-11. The project was designed to be piloted at the writer's school in the fall of the 1999-2000 school year. The created model, as designed, focused on the following components: grouping of students, cycles of programming, organization of themes, the humanities, and moral development, all addressed through the use of inquiry-based learning and active processing. The importance of such a model is evidenced in terms of the reviewed literature, this writer's professional experience, and the established needs of the students.

Definitions

For the purposes of this project, the following definitions are used:

Integrated Curriculum: an attempt to interrelate content with learning experiences and activities to ensure that students' needs are met emphasizing the horizontal relationships among various content topics and themes (Ornstein & Hunkins, 1988, p. 169).

Humanities: the study of all formal and informal acts of humankind that have resulted in creative products that deliberately attempt to portray and enhance the human condition in some form (Van Tassel-Baska, 1988, p. 277).

Integrated Humanities: an attempt to interrelate the study of humankind through the use of various content topics and themes with learning experiences and activities to ensure that students' cognitive and affective needs are met.

Methodology

Procedures

This project began as an idea for expanding the current senior high school gifted programming in the writer's school district. The first step was conducting a literature review to determine effective practices in programming for senior high school gifted students. The

writer began the literature review on computer, utilizing both the internet and ERIC. The ERIC searches led the writer to current and recent periodicals. The writer then searched appropriate books and articles in professional journals. The reviewed literature investigated dimensions related to the basic purposes of this paper including humanities, integration, ability grouping, affective needs of the gifted, and moral development.

After concluding the literature review, the writer began the process of project design. Drafting of standards, choices of themes, and possible assessments was initiated, using both the information found in the research and that based upon the knowledge of the writer's population of gifted students. Through continuing research and revision of the drafts, the project developed into the model described in this paper.

Review of Literature

For the purposes of this project, the literature review focused primarily on humanities and integration, which are the basic premises of the project; ability grouping because students in this content model will be grouped by ability rather than by age; and affective needs and moral development of gifted students because both will be integral parts of this content model.

Humanities and integration.

According to the literature, there are many benefits to the use of the humanities in the general education curriculum. Little research has been conducted as to the benefits in relationship to gifted populations specifically, so this review will begin with regular education benefits. Finn and Ravitch (1988) have argued that learning integrated material in a chronological humanities format is essential to help students develop into effective, well-informed citizens. They are convinced that all students need information to tie them into the past and past experiences. Knapp (1984) also has promoted humanities education or liberal arts education as a necessity for students. He discussed how students need to study all areas in order to get a quality education, but he also asserts that "it would be a disservice to students and to each of those separate disciplines -- to fail to emphasize that the sciences and humanities represent distinct, complementary modes of thought" (p. 98). He concluded that the areas must be thought of as complementary instead of isolated and that this is possible through a humanities approach to a liberal arts education.

In relationship to gifted education curriculum, Van Tassel-Baska (1988, pp. 278-279) has proposed that all gifted students will benefit from a humanities approach. She stated several reasons why

the humanities are important for gifted learners. First, they provide
a combination of cognitive and affective elements engaging students
in intellectual and emotional activities at higher levels. Second, the
humanities are based on interrelationships which gifted students
are able to see and understand. Third, the humanities provide
enrichment not usually found in regular educational curricula.
Finally, the humanities help students understand creativity, the
creative process, and the intellectual process while allowing them
to participate actively in creative processes and critical analysis.

Purcell (1981) also has advocated for what he calls
interdisciplinary study because it "breaks down artificial barriers
of subject areas, emphasizing interdependencies and relationships"
(p. 161). He asserted that such a study for gifted learners is
effective because it is integrative and provides an overall
understanding of knowledge, rather than a fragmented view.

Integrated curriculum with special emphasis on the humanities
also has been recommended by Clark and Zimmerman (1998). They
claimed that "a comprehensive program that integrates the arts and
academics is an ideal way to accommodate individual differences"
among those identified as gifted and talented (p. 750). They stressed
integration as the best way to help gifted students develop social,
personal, and cognitive skills that they will need to participate

responsibly in a democratic society.

<u>Grouping.</u>

Grouping gifted students by ability in a special classroom is a beneficial practice for gifted students (Fiedler, Lange, & Winebrenner, 1994; Kulik & Kulik, 1989). Gifted students are commonly placed for the majority of their school day in general education classrooms, and this does not allow them to develop to the best of their abilities. Such students need to see and interact with other students at or above their ability level. Feldhusen (1998) stated that "gifted students need the challenge of intellectual peers to sustain their motivation and enthusiasm for learning" (p. 8).

Colangelo and Kelly (1983) have found "that gifted students preferred to spend part of their week in special classes with other high-ability youngsters. They tended to like these students better and developed positive attitudes toward school" (p. 17). According to these authors, the interaction with others who are interested in similar activities and are capable of advanced concepts motivates students to work harder themselves and to set higher goals for themselves than they would if they were constantly comparing themselves to the other students in regular classrooms. Studies by Kulik and Kulik (1992) also have supported positive effects on the attitudes of gifted students toward both school and achievement

when they are placed in classes with other high ability students as opposed to spending all of their time with age mates.

Multi-age grouping is another form of ability grouping. It is the grouping of certain ability level students with students in other grades of the same ability level. The multi-age classroom concept has existed since the emergence of public education; in fact, schools used this structure before the industrial age (Houtz, 1996). Houtz found in her research that these classes have a head start on others because at least half of the students will be returning.

Kulik and Kulik (1992) also have contended that multi-age grouping is beneficial academically for gifted students. In their studies, the majority of the students achieved more when grouped by ability in multi-age classrooms. They pointed out that this was conclusive in light of the fact that the curriculum had been adjusted with different methods and different materials.

McCombs (1995) asserted that students' affective and social development are better developed in a multi-age classroom. He attributed this development to a variety of factors: "the security of working at one's own level . . . without the pressure or hindrance of incongruous expectations; . . .the cooperative/non-competitive aspect of the learning environment and its impact on social relations; [and] . . . the flexible social grouping of being able to make

friends at the same level of social development (instead of chronological age)" (p. 4). A study done by Katz, Evangelou, and Hartman (1990) found similar advantages to multi-age grouping, such as (a) the opportunities for making friends and developing relationships with others at similar levels and (b) the cooperative environment as opposed to the competitive one seen in traditional settings.

<u>Affective needs.</u>

The affective needs of gifted students have been studied in areas other than multi-age situations. Studies dating as far back as Leta Hollingworth (1942) have shown that students who are gifted intellectually have special social and emotional needs. Hollingworth concluded at one point that "to have the intellect of an adult and the emotions of a child combined in a childish body is to encounter certain difficulties" (p. 282). She determined that the regular curriculum does not meet the needs of these students and is actually detrimental to their leaning in that it produces apathy.

Colangelo (1988) also declared that gifted students have greater sensitivity and awareness. He stated that being in class with their intellectual peers can give them the chance to interact with other students who may be experiencing some of the same feelings. He also contended that sharing and discussing these

commonalities can help students become more self-confident in their emotional stability as well as their intellectual abilities.

Moral development.

Moral development of gifted students is another area essential for gifted education (Kohlberg, 1971; Tannenbaum, 1998). Students need an environment where they can discuss opinions and ask questions regarding moral dilemmas. In his study, Kohlberg (1971) determined that higher levels of moral reasoning can be developed by educators through the use of class discussions of moral dilemmas.

Tannenbaum (1998) discussed the effectiveness of using biographies of famous people with gifted students to help foster higher levels of moral development. He asserted that the study of biographies allow gifted students to student famous people and evaluate decisions that were made in history and the impact these decisions had on society. His contention was that such opportunities help gifted students develop higher levels of moral development which will then contribute to them being positive and productive citizens in society.

The importance of evaluating the historical development of societal values and philosophies was stressed by Ward (1961). He determined that gifted students need to examine critically historical events and learn to evaluate decisions that were made and

the impact they had on society while also including a self-examination to compare and contrast their own values to the ones exhibited throughout history. This will develop the critical thinking skills necessary for values clarification within the students' moral development.

Piechowski (1991) discussed the importance of classroom application of Piaget's stages of cognitive development, Dabrowski's theory of emotional development, and the concept of emotional or personal intelligence in working with gifted students. His work emphasized the need for gifted students to learn through common struggles to fight for their principles in order to become self-actualized individuals and to understand that this fight is not easy since it often meets with social opposition.

The Project

The discussion of this project is organized into three sections: (a) a description of the model, (b) suggested instruction for use in implementing the model, and (c) procedures for piloting the model. The created model, as designed, is based on the following components: grouping of students, cycles of programming, organization of themes, the humanities, and moral development. Instruction addresses the use of inquiry-based learning and active

processing. Piloting the model addresses the implementation of a pilot program.

The Model

This integrated humanities model has been designed to be multi-dimensional and centered around broad-based thematic concepts in the humanities. The following components of the model are addressed here: grouping of students, cycles of programming, organization of themes, the humanities, and moral development.

Grouping of students.

Students in this particular multi-age, ability-grouped class will be freshmen, sophomores, and juniors identified for the gifted program on the basis of general intellectual ability. Students will enter the course at the beginning of their freshman year and remain involved through the end of their junior year, at which point they will move to senior elective options, preferably AP courses. Students enrolled in this course will meet in one multi-age, ability-grouped classroom for one period per day on a daily basis.

Cycles of programming.

As designed, the model will be organized as a three-year cycle. The purpose of such a cycle is to reduce the possibility of redundancy and to provide a smooth transition into AP courses which can be taken in areas of student interest during the students' senior

year. The three-year cycle will include three levels designated as Levels A, B, and C. The first year of implementation of the cycle (Level A) will include all identified freshmen, sophomores, and juniors. The second year of the first cycle (Level B) will include all new freshmen and the remaining students from the previous year (current sophomores and juniors). The third year of the cycle (Level C) will include all new freshmen and the remaining students from the previous year (current sophomores and juniors). Each year students will leave the course for their senior year to enhance and extend their learning in AP or college-level courses of their choice. At the completion of Level C, the cycle will begin again at Level A.

Each level will be organized around a set of themes encompassing the disciplines of literature, history, drama, visual arts and architecture, music, and philosophy. The organization of the levels will be imperative since each new freshman class will enter at a different level in the three-year cycle. Therefore, each level must be unique so as not to hinder those who have not had the benefit of prior levels in the cycle while also providing connections for those who are continuing in the cycle. Each year will begin with a short orientation unit designed by the continuing students to help the novice students relate to course content and organization, as well as to relate to those students who have been in the cycle for

one or two years. In addition to the orientation, various opportunities will be provided to promote cross-grade learning such as group projects, open-ended discussions, real-life simulations, and problem-based activities. These opportunities should help tie the different age and experience levels together.

<u>Organization of themes.</u>

The course will be structured around a thematic format. Each level will focus on broad themes which encompass the various areas of humanities. Each level will begin with a broad theme which in turn is divided into more specific themes. As currently envisioned, the topical theme for Level A ("The One Hundred") will center on determining the 100 individuals who have made the greatest contribution(s) to humankind, history, or society. The topical theme for Level B will be "Discrimination Through the Ages." The topical theme for Level C will be "The Family Throughout History." It is important to note that either broad or specific themes can be substituted or altered at the discretion of the students and teacher. These specific themes were chosen as broad areas of study as a means to infuse moral reasoning and critical thinking skills. Each theme will allow students to explore and analyze individuals and events in history along with their own convictions based on the evaluation and analysis regarding these individuals and events. This

will help students develop higher levels of moral development (Ward, 1961) as well as critical thinking skills (Maker, 1995).

According to Maker (1995), thematic approaches are effective in gifted education when they allow flexibility for student choice within the realm of broad themes. Therefore, within this model, students also will have choices throughout each level as to the areas within the humanities and the various disciplines selected for emphasis. The use of such choices is essential for gifted students since it increases their learning because of their interest and excitement (Maker, 1995).

For purposes of clarity, examples for Level A will be used throughout this project. The broad theme for Level A is "The One Hundred," which encourages students to determine the one hundred most influential people in history. Conducting studies and projects during the school year, students will work through at least five specific themes involving influential people. These five specific themes include (a) influential world leaders in history, (b) influential men in history, (c) influential women in history, (d) influential minorities in America, (e) influential and/or outstanding youth, and (e) other options at teacher/student discretion. These specific themes will be the basis for each unit, and students will have opportunity for choice within these specific themes. For

example, if there is a special interest in science, one choice might be an in-depth study of Charles Darwin and his philosophical beliefs within the theme of Level A. The results of the study would then be used at the end of the year to help the class determine if Darwin was one of the top one hundred individuals who made the greatest contribution(s) to humankind, history, or society. It will be essential that each student analyze Darwin and his accomplishments; analyze how he developed his ideas and philosophies; analyze how he implemented his ideas and philosophies, evaluate his effect on the humankind, history, and society; and judge if his accomplishments are exceptional in relationship to other prominent individuals also studied throughout the year.

The humanities.

In relationship to the themes, students will study the various areas of the humanities including literature, history, the visual arts, architecture, music, drama, dance, and philosophy. The reviewed literature has indicated that this type of model should be multi-dimensional, focusing on integration of various disciplines as opposed to isolated subject areas. Because the base is so broad and a variety of areas within the humanities will be studied, there should be opportunity for development of all gifts and talents of the identified individuals. Students should have choices available to

extend their learning in various areas of interest.

Primary areas of study within the humanities will be literature and history. Within this model, students will develop critical thinking skills through inquiry-based learning while reading from classical literature. They will use strategies such as journaling, essay writing, open-ended class discussions, problem-based learning projects based on real-life situations with real-life audiences, and real-life simulations to demonstrate these skills as well as to explore deeper meanings in the texts and share ideas with others. One goal of this model is to explore literature, develop an understanding of how it connects with history, and explore each student's feelings and opinions about what he or she has learned. This can be done through inquiry-based learning using a variety of classic literary pieces.

An example of a literary study within the theme for Level A might be a study of Simon Wiesenthal, a holocaust survivor. Students will be given the opportunity to analyze him and his actions during World War II, as well as his pursuit of Nazi war criminals after World War II. They will be asked to try to determine how and why the holocaust happened, the role of chance, the motivations of various people, and how an event like this could have been prevented. In doing this, students will be looking inward, examining their own

convictions and insight. This will not only develop their critical thinking skills and problem solving skills, but it also will help meet their affective needs in developing their own opinions and reasons for those opinions. Maker (1995) advocated for this type of study because it helps gifted students "learn how to deal with their own talents and possible success" (p.5) through the stimulation of their social and psychological development and because it prompts gifted students to develop their own reasoning processes while evaluating "the process and products of others' thinking" (p. 6).

Students will study the visual arts, architecture, music, drama, and dance in relationship to the various themes. Too many programs in our educational settings today ignore the importance of the arts. Students of this model will gain an appreciation for a variety of mediums and how the arts have had an impact on the lives of humankind throughout history, as well as how the arts have been affected by and reflect history in general. By infusing this element into this model, students will develop a sense of the importance of the arts, as advocated by Clark and Zimmerman (1998). An example for an artistic study within the theme for Level A might be a study of Isabel Duncan and her impact on the world of modern dance and consequently, the society as a whole.

Philosophy also will be integrated into the various themes.

Students will develop an understanding of the philosophies that have evolved throughout the ages and their impact on society in general. They will gain an appreciation for how philosophy affects decision-making and reasoning ability which, according to Maker (1995), is important for gifted students. Through the study of philosophy, students will be able to analyze the circumstances and rationales underlying the products of various philosophers. Through this type of study they also will develop their own philosophies, reasoning abilities, and critical thinking skills. An example of a philosophical study within the theme of Level A might be an investigation of the work and contributions of Socrates and how his questioning techniques are still being used in the decision-making process around the world.

Moral development.

Observable moral conflicts will be a focus of each thematic unit. Through individual/group investigations, meaningful questioning, journaling, and open-ended discussions, students will be encouraged to evaluate decisions made by people in different conflict situations to help the students determine their own opinions concerning such situations. Instead of including moral dilemmas as separate pieces of each unit, they will be treated as incorporated parts of each unit. Such dilemmas are found throughout

history and need to be addressed when found. This is especially important for gifted students. Colangelo asserted that gifted students are so highly sensitive to various moral situations: ". . . they need opportunities to explore and share their own moral thinking" (p. 282).

An example of how moral development can be explored in a Level A study would be to have students do a group research project about President Harry Truman to explore his decision to drop the first atomic bomb. Students would analyze the circumstances facing Truman, analyze his evaluation of these circumstances, and then make a judgment as to whether Truman's actions were justified. This exploration would help students determine if Truman should be considered one of the one hundred most influential world leaders. It also would help them with their own moral development through the exploration of their own feelings and opinions on a significant moral conflict.

Instruction

Effective teaching strategies are essential to quality instruction, and there are many from which to draw. In a model like this one, many can be used constructively to ensure learning. However, there are two instructional strategies that will be invaluable to promote the desired dynamic learning that gifted

students need. These include inquiry-based learning and active processing.

Inquiry-based learning.

One effective teaching strategy that needs to be considered for this model is inquiry-based learning, which involves students asking thought-provoking and meaningful questions (King, 1995). According to Maker (1995), methods of inquiry and the use of higher level thinking skills are two areas essential to the education of gifted students. The use of such learning strategies contributes to deeper understanding and the promotion of application in various situations. This is especially important for gifted students because it provides better understanding of content areas, as well as an enhancement of their independence (Maker, 1995; Bruner, 1960). It will help students to formulate questions as well as answers to questions. As proposed by King (1995), inquiry-based learning involves teaching students to get to the point where "whatever they see, hear, read, or experience, they are constantly analyzing it, puzzling over its significance, searching for explanations, and speculating about relations between that experience and what they already know" (p.13).

Teachers can accomplish this by helping students to ask and respond to types of questions that generate higher levels of thought, through reciprocal peer questioning, through having students create

questions for home reading assignments or after lectures, and through modeling. Once students understand higher level questioning, it is important to make sure the assessments align with this type of questioning. Students need to be evaluated on the basis of their thinking abilities, not just memorized information. They will learn that the types of open-ended questions they are generating in class will be the types that will be asked on the examinations and that an understanding of the material is essential to be able to answer the more thought-provoking questions (King, 1995).

Martinello and Cook (1993) also have discussed the power of inquiry, especially when used with integrated curriculum. They believe that this type of program is optimum for students when it is "organized around big ideas and central questions and invites students to seek information, knowledge, and truth by experiencing the interdisciplinary qualities of inquiry, the way scholars do" (p. 47). It can be concluded from this that when students are taught to ask relevant questions about significant ideas and choices made in history, they can begin to formulate educated opinions of their own.

One way to implement inquiry-based learning within the theme of Level A might be to have students develop questions related to Adolf Hitler's motivations and the rise of Nazism in Germany and pose those questions as journal writings for the class. Such journal

activities will then become springboards for authentic class discussions/activities concerning moral dilemmas. Students will evaluate moral dilemmas of Hitler, those serving Hitler, those fighting Hitler, and those opposing Hitler while trying to save others and stay alive themselves.

Active processing.

Another essential tool for effective teaching is active processing. As defined by Caine and Caine (1997), active processing is the way students internalize and conceptualize information through actively participating in how and what they learn. It is where the learner becomes aware, through constant questioning and evaluation, of what they are learning, how they are learning, and why what they are learning is important. According to Caine and Caine (1997), "active processing is the key to perceiving patterns and making sense of experience. The brain/mind naturally searches for meaning, tests experiences, reacts to novelty, and seeks control. Active processing expands on natural capacities" (p. 182).

Active processing is especially important for gifted learners because it provides a pathway to metacognition which, according to Barell (1991), is essential for gifted students. He claims that metacognition, "reflecting on our own thinking" (p. 266), develops thinkers who are better able to "acquire and use knowledge about

themselves, the tasks they are to perform, and the strategies that will benefit them in each case" (p. 266).

Implementing active processing involves helping students to seek deeper and broader meanings from information; helping them to develop critical thinking skills by asking effective questions; helping them to explore different features of different systems; helping them to understand and generate alternatives; helping them to reflect on feelings, choices, and actions; and helping them to find closure. Developing a learning environment using active processing is a critical role for the teacher. It involves adjusting for the levels of students, immersing them in material and modeling, and trying to make everything real by giving them opportunities for choices in their own learning.

One way to implement active processing within the theme of Level A might be allowing students to determine not only the area within the humanities to study, but also the specific individuals they want to study. Some students may have a special interest in mathematics and therefore might want to spend time studying an architect like Frank Lloyd Wright and how he used mathematics in his architectural planning.

Piloting the Project

On the basis of what the writer has observed in the literature,

the district, and the community, it has become clear that an integrated humanities model can be one defensible and viable answer for gifted programs at the senior high school level. This particular project was developed as a pilot program for Iowa Falls High School.

This integrated humanities model is a visionary model developed to prepare gifted senior high school students for more advanced courses, specifically AP courses and college-level work, as well as to prepare them to be more productive, insightful citizens in the 21st Century. Colleges and AP instructors work on the assumption that students are able to evaluate material, make inferences from that material, and produce products based on those evaluations and inferences. These skills can be developed in an integrated course that prompts students to read, investigate, and evaluate events and decisions throughout history. Through this process, students become capable of determining defensibility of positions as well as indefensibility of positions. Their power to evaluate becomes based on rational observation. Such skills also will help prepare students for the 21st Century where problem-solving skills will be most valuable. Students need to understand how they fit into the ever-changing world and how decisions made by people affect all of humanity. This cannot happen unless students are able to read, investigate, and evaluate with competency.

Hopefully, this pilot program will prove its effectiveness. It will be implemented at Iowa Falls High School in Iowa Falls, Iowa, in the fall of 1999. It will replace the current three-year cyclic program which emphasizes language arts curriculum including reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing. Both programs address programming for gifted senior high school students identified for general intellectual ability. The pilot program will follow students through the three-year cycle into the AP courses and then on to college and beyond to include at least six years.

Students will be monitored throughout their four years at Iowa Falls High School and then continue for two additional years. The writer will monitor their relevant successes and failures both in the class, in subsequent classes, and, if appropriate, in their careers. This will be done through a series of self-evaluations, interviews, teacher evaluations, and course evaluations of available samples of students.

Such feedback will prove to be useful in evaluating and revising the programming for the model over the first six-year period. During this time period, formative evaluations based on periodic reports will be initiated to provide opportunities to make minor changes and adjustments in programming to improve effectiveness. Extensive records will be kept to provide the

information and documentation necessary for a thorough review of the effectiveness of the model. In six years, at the conclusion of the 2003-2004 school year, a summative evaluation of the model will be conducted to determine if it should be continued, revised, extensively modified, or discontinued.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Gifted senior high school students need a program that will meet both their cognitive and affective needs. They need a program that is comprehensive and integrated to help them make connections with their learning. They need a program that allows them choice to develop special interest areas while also developing the depth and breadth of their knowledge base. The writer's work with this project has convinced her that an integrated humanities model will meet all of these needs and is one viable alternative to gifted programming at the senior high school level.

Further studies need to be implemented as to the feasibility of such programming in various high school settings. Also, pilot studies need to be conducted in schools that vary in terms of student enrollment, gifted populations, minority populations, and socioeconomic populations. Do the different demographics make a difference in terms of the content model?

Research also needs to be conducted as to the viability of such a curriculum in relationship to gifted students as opposed to general education students. Is such a model appropriate for general education students as well as for gifted students?

Finally, there is much to be researched in terms of the relative concreteness of the philosophy of this type of content model in relationship to the reality of implementing it with senior high school gifted students. Does this model, which is supported by quality research, really work in the classroom? Are the applications effective and does dynamic learning occur? These types of questions need to be addressed through additional pilots and empirical research.

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Appendix

Integrated Humanities: An Organizational Outline

The purpose of this model is to provide appropriate programming for senior high school gifted students. It will meet both their cognitive and affective needs; it will be comprehensive and integrated to help them make connections with their learning; and it will allow them choices to develop areas of special interest while also increasing the depth and breadth of their knowledge base.

I.   Student Standards
     The student will be able to:

   A.   analyze, synthesize, and evaluate classic literature with sophistication

   B.   understand how classic literature fits into history and evaluate cause/effect relationships

   C.   evaluate and justify personal feelings and opinions about what they have learned through higher level critical thinking, inquiry, and moral reasoning

   D.   demonstrate knowledge of and ability to apply in-depth research skills

   E.   understand and pursue personal interests and passions

   F.   demonstrate depth and breadth of various knowledge bases across broad fields of study

   G.   demonstrate, using standard English, effective communication skills, both in writing and in speaking

   H.   evaluate values, ideas, and human characteristics as they relate to the decision-making process

I.   make connections among various disciplines and between those disciplines and real life

J.   demonstrate inter- and intrapersonal skills through classroom activities with students at their intellectual level

K.   analyze and evaluate differences between abstract and concrete ideas and use this information to judge or justify opinions, behavior, and/or decisions

II.   Delineation of Possible Themes and Topics By Level

   A.   Level A: The One Hundred (Studies to determine the one hundred individuals who have made the greatest contribution(s) to humankind/history/society) (Year One)

        1.   Influential world leaders in history
        2.   Influential men in history
        3.   Influential women in history
        4.   Influential minorities in America
        5.   Influential/outstanding youth
        6.   Other options at teacher/student discretion

   B.   Level B: Discrimination Through the Ages (Year Two)

        1.   The one hundred: Perpetrators or victims of discrimination? (connection with Level A)
        2.   Religious persecution
        3.   Conflicts within a specific culture
        4.   Conflicts among cultures
        5.   Conflicts in the community
        6.   Great victories over discrimination
        7.   Other options at teacher/student discretion

C.   Level C: The Family Throughout History (Year Three)

1.   The impact of family upon future eminence (connection with Level A)
2.   Discrimination, resilience, and the American family (connection with Level B)
3.   The changing role of the wife and mother
4.   The changing role of the husband and father
5.   Humankind's search for the divine
6.   The family of the 90s
7.   Technology, the family, and the 20th/21st Centuries
8.   Other options at teacher/student discretion

III.   Suggested Thematic Reading List (For the most part, the sources listed are from the library of Iowa Falls High School. However, it is expected that students will search other resources including public libraries, college libraries, and the internet.)

A.   Level A: The One Hundred

1.   Boughton, S. Great lives. New York, NY: Doubleday.
2.   Browne, R.E. (Ed.). (1990). Contemporary heroes and heroines. Detroit, MI: Gale Research, Inc.
3.   Encyclopedia of world biography. (1973). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, Inc.
4.   McGreal, I.P. (Ed.). (1992). Great thinkers of the western world. New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc.
5.   Smith, S. (1979). Ideas of great educators. New York, NY: Harper & Row Publishers, Inc.

B.   Level B: Discrimination Through the Ages

1.   Chalk, F.R. (1990). The history and sociology of genocide. New Haven, CT: Yale University.

2.   Dobrowski, M.N. (1992). <u>Genocide in our time</u>. Ann Arbor, MI: Pieran Press.

3.   Friedman, I.R. (1990). <u>The other victims</u>. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company.

4.   Johnston, F.A. (1987). <u>Class, race, and gold</u>. Lanham, MD: University Press of America.

5.   McClean Donaldson, K.B. (1996). <u>Through students' eyes</u>. Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, Inc.

6.   Smythe, M. M. (Ed.). (1976). <u>The black American reference book</u>. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

7.   Solaun, M. (1973). <u>Discrimination without violence: Miscegenation and racial conflict in Latin America</u>. New York, NY: Wiley, John & Sons, Inc.

8.   Stanley, J. (1994). <u>I am an American</u>. New York, NY: Crown Publishers, Inc.

C.   Level C: The Family Throughout History

1.   Coles, R. (1997). <u>The moral intelligence of children</u>. New York, NY: Random House, Inc.

2.   <u>Family in America: Opposing viewpoints</u>. (1992). San Diego, CA: Greenhaven Press, Inc.

3.   Friedan, B. (1997). <u>Beyond gender: The new politics of work and family</u>. Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press.

4.   Kaplan, L.D. (1998). <u>Family pictures: A philosopher explores the familiar</u>. Menlo Park, CA: Open Court Publishing Company.

5.   Levinson, D. (Ed.). (1994). <u>Encyclopedia of world cultures</u>. Boston, MA: G.K. Hall & Company.

6.   Lewis, O. (1961). <u>The children of Sanchez</u>. New York, NY: Random House, Inc.

7.   <u>Primitive worlds: People lost in time</u>. (1973). Washington, D.C.: National Geographic Society.

IV. Suggested Humanities Reading List (For the most part, the sources listed are from the library of Iowa Falls High School. However, it is expected that students will search other resources including public libraries, college libraries, and the internet.)

    A. History

        1. Asimov, I. (1989). <u>Asimov's chronology of science and discovery</u>. New York, NY: Harper & Row Publishers, Inc.

        2. Brownstone, D., & Franck, I. (1994). <u>Timelines of the arts and literature</u>. New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc.

        3. Hornsby, A., Jr. (1997). <u>Chronology of African American history</u>. Detroit, MI: Gale Research, Inc.

        4. Lacey, P. (1978). <u>Great adventures that changed our world</u>. Pleasantville, NY: The Reader's Digest Association, Inc.

        5. Urdang, L. (Ed.). (1981). <u>The timetables of American history</u>. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, Inc.

    B. Literature

        1. Drabble, M. (1985). <u>The Oxford companion to English literature</u>. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, Inc.

        2. Hart, J.D. (1983). <u>The Oxford companion to American literature</u>. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, Inc.

        3. Howatson, M.C. (1989). <u>The Oxford companion to classical literature</u>. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, Inc.

        4. Magill, F.N. (Ed.). (1993). <u>Masterpieces of American literature</u>. New York, NY: Salem Press, Inc.

5.   Siepmann, K.B. (Ed.). (1987). <u>Benet's readers'</u> <u>encyclopedia</u>. New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc.

C.   Biographies/Autobiographies

1.   Angelou, M. (1969). <u>I know why the caged bird</u> <u>sings</u>. New York, NY: Random House, Inc.

2.   Lash, J.P. (1971). <u>Eleanor and Franklin</u>. New York, NY: W.W. Norton and Company, Inc.

3.   Levy, A. (1993). <u>The Wiesenthal file</u>. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdsmans Publishing Company.

4.   McLanathan, R. (1993). <u>First impressions:</u> <u>Michelangelo</u>. Hong Kong: Harry N. Abrams, Inc.

5.   Sherrow, V. (1993). <u>Jonas Salk</u>. New York, NY: Facts on File, Inc.

D.   The Arts

1.   Bordman, G. (1984). <u>The Oxford companion to</u> <u>American theatre</u>. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, Inc.

2.   Cross, M., & Ewen, D. (1969). <u>The Milton Cross new</u> <u>encyclopedia of the great composers and their</u> <u>music</u>. Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc.

3.   Janson, A.F. (1995). <u>History of art</u>. New York, NY: Harry N. Abrams, Inc.

4.   Norwich, J.J. (Ed.). (1975). <u>Great architecture of</u> <u>the world</u>. New York, NY: Random House, Inc.

5.   Norwich, J.J. (Ed.). (1990). <u>Oxford illustrated</u> <u>encyclopedia of the arts</u>. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, Inc.

E   Philosophy

    1.   Durant, W. (1953). <u>The story of philosophy: The lives and opinions of the greater philosophers</u>. New York City, NY: Simon & Schuster.

    2.   Eliot, C.W. (1937). <u>The Harvard classics</u>. New York, NY: P.F. Collier & Son Corporation.

    3.   Flew, A. (1979). <u>A dictionary of philosophy</u>. New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, Inc.

    4.   Kenny, A. (Ed.). (1997). <u>The Oxford illustrated history of western philosophy</u>. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, Inc.

    5.   McGreal, I.P. (Ed.). (1992). <u>Great thinkers of the western world</u>. New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc.

    6.   Reese, W.L. (1996). <u>Dictionary of philosophy and religion</u>. Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press International, Inc.

V.   Possible Assessments (including both paper/pencil assessment and authentic/performance-based assessment)

    A.   Essay tests
    B.   Essay writing
    C.   Research papers
    D.   Presentations (both group and individual)
    E   Research presentations (both group and individual)
    F.   Projects (both group and individual)
    G   Research projects (both group and individual)
    H.   Problem-based learning projects based on real-life situations and real-life audiences (both group and individual)
    I.   Journal writing
    J.   Open-ended class discussions
    K.   Debates

L. Creative drama activities

M. Other options at teacher/student discretion

VI. Possible Program Evaluation Strategies

    A. Rubric developed by teacher and students

    B. Teacher evaluations of program

    C. Student evaluations of program

    D. Interviews

    E. Progress reports based on student success