Language: A Springboard To Life
Black English & Academic Excellence
Poetry or Prose: A False Dichotomy
Language Arts
Reading Support for Gifted Language Learners
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Interdisciplinary Studies: Language Arts

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Cover photo by Dan Nelson
Language Arts—the foundation for everything else. I was a history and geography teacher, but I knew that without language arts expertise, my students would not be able to excel in my classes either. In fact, I often teamed with a language arts colleague in order to plan interdisciplinary activities.

Many gifted learners are already proficient in language arts; however, there are subgroups within the larger pool that face serious disadvantages in language arts.

We look at two of those groups in our feature articles. We begin with Saundra Sparling’s piece, “Black English and Academic Excellence: Emerging Practices for Student Success.” She first discusses why it is that Black students insist on using Black English even when they recognize that it hinders their academic success. She then shares recent research showing successful use of Black English as a bridge to mastery of Standard English.

Another disadvantaged group is that of English Language Learners—particularly Hispanic students who come to school speaking Spanish. Crucial to their advancement is learning to read English fluently so they can understand and master all the disciplines. Katie Pedersen shares specific strategies she uses in her elementary classes in San Diego in her article, “Reading Support for Gifted English Language Learners.”

Michael Clay Thompson provides a thought provoking article, “Poetry or Prose: A False Dichotomy.” When I think back to my own early experiences with poetry, what comes immediately to mind is the first line of Joyce Kilmer’s, “I think that I shall never see, a poem as lovely as a tree.” It took place in my second grade classroom and was part of a larger unit on trees. I truly cannot remember any other specific incident of the study of poetry throughout my elementary years.

Thompson argues that it is imperative to teach poetry and poetics co-jointly with teaching prose. He states, “Great prose writers tend, profoundly, to be both readers and writers of poetry as well, and they consistently employ poetic device in the sentences of their novels.” And he makes his case with a lively array of examples from authors including Charlotte Bronte, Herman Melville, Mark Twain, Thomas Hardy, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and Toni Morrison.

Elizabeth Meckstroth and Kathi Kearney employ a provocative title to bring our attention to another language arts concern in their article, “Indecent Exposure: Does the Media Exploit Highly Gifted Learners?” In it they identify the vulnerability of highly gifted children and provide guidelines for parents and teachers when considering exposing these gifted learners to the media.

In the final feature article we share an autobiographical account of a young immigrant from Spain, Michael Cárdenas, who learned English in a southern California school where several cultures meshed. He learned early the significance of understanding different cultures and this knowledge later aided in his success in business as an adult. Recognizing that the modern world values global knowledge even more than before, he developed a non-profit Web site where teachers and students can communicate with others to gain greater knowledge of other cultures.

This issue also includes a number of reference-type inserts that we hope will be useful to busy teachers and parents. Thanks to Hall Davidson who graciously permitted us to print his “Copyright and Fair Use Guidelines for Teachers.” Thanks also to the National Association for Gifted Children for the Compass Points article, “Encouraging Students to Publish,” and also Elaine Wiener for preparing a quick reference sidebar on poetics terminology.

To encourage students to publish their work as a way to assure an “authentic audience,” the Hands-On Curriculum column is devoted to this topic as well, including specific guidelines for carrying out the entire process of writing and publishing in the classroom.

In the Book Reviews section, please note the “Review and Tribute” to Annemarie Roeper on the publication of, The “I” of the Beholder, by Jim Delisle.

We hope the school year has started off well for all our readers. The Winter issue will focus on serving young gifted learners, Pre-K–2; it should reach you just after the winter holidays.

—Margaret Gosfield, Editor
CALENDAR OF CONFERENCES

2007

OCTOBER 1–2, 2007
Colorado Association for Gifted & Talented
Marriott Denver Tech Center, Denver, CO
coloradogifted.org

OCTOBER 7–9, 2007
Kansas Association for the Gifted, Talented, And Creative
Lawrence, KS
kgc.org

OCTOBER 7–9, 2007
Gifted Association of Missouri
Tan-Tar-A, Lake of the Ozarks, MO
mogam.org

OCTOBER 7–9, 2007
Ohio Association for Gifted Children
The Hilton at Easton, Columbus, OH
oagc.com

OCTOBER 11–12, 2007
Wisconsin Association for Talented & Gifted
Kalahari Resort & Conference Center, Wisconsin Dells, WI
wtag.org

OCTOBER 11–13, 2007
New England Conference on Gifted and Talented Education
Holiday Inn by the Bay, Portland, ME
necgt.org

OCTOBER 12–13, 2007
Florida Association for the Gifted
Hilton Tampa Airport Westshore, Tampa, FL
flagifted.org/announcements.htm

OCTOBER 12–13, 2007
Oregon Association for Talented and Gifted
Village Green Resort, Cottage Grove, OR
oatag.org

OCTOBER 18–19, 2007
Virginia Conference on Gifted Education
Renaissance Schaumburg Hotel, Schaumburg, IL
iagcgifted.org

NOVEMBER 14–16, 2007
Texas Association for Gifted and Talented
George R. Brown Convention Center, Houston, TX
txgifted.org

NOVEMBER 16 –17, 2007
Society for the Advancement of Gifted Education (SAGE)
Northern Alberta Institute of Technology, Alberta, Canada
gtecouncil.com

NOVEMBER 9–11, 2007
Illinois Association for Gifted Children
Renaissance Schaumburg Hotel, Schaumburg, IL
iagcgifted.org

2008

FEBRUARY 6–8, 2008
Arizona Association for Gifted and Talented
To be announced
arizonagifted.org

FEBRUARY 15–17, 2008
California Association for the Gifted
Anaheim Mariott Hotel, Anaheim Convention Center, Anaheim, CA
cagifted.org

FEBRUARY 21–22, 2008
Kentucky Association for Gifted Education
Marriott Griffin Gate Hotel, Lexington, KY
wk.edu/kage/

FEBRUARY 29–MARCH 1, 2008
New Jersey Association for Gifted Children
The Westin Princeton Forrestal Village, NJ
njagc.org

April 2–5, 2008
Council for Exceptional Children
Arlington, Virginia
www.cec.sped.org/

April 16–18, 2008
Pennsylvania Association for Gifted Education
Harrisburg Hilton Towers, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania
www.penngifted.org

May 2–4, 2008
Beyond IQ (BIO) Boston
Chelmsford, Massachusetts
www.giftedconferenceplanners.org

If your organization has a state or national event planned, please contact Ann MacDonald at: clanmacd@mac.com to list your information.
The Indiana Academy for Science, Mathematics, and Humanities is one of just 18 such schools nationwide—residential, state-sponsored high schools for highly gifted and talented students with nominal or no tuition fees.* The Indiana General Assembly enacted legislation in 1988 to establish the school that is located on the campus of Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana. The Academy is one of the few such schools that places equal emphasis on the humanities alongside mathematics and science. Each year, some three-hundred 11th and 12th grade students call the Academy home. Ian Cross graduated from the Academy in 2006.

Q. Tell us a little about yourself and your family.
A. I am the eldest of four children with two brothers, Keenan and Colin, and a sister, Eva. Keenan and I are fraternal twins, but I was first by 10 minutes and can still claim the “big brother” mantel. All of my siblings are gifted students, though we are not equally interested in academics. My siblings have all displayed proficiencies for learning musical instruments; each learned to play piano and guitar and also, between the three, the clarinet, bass, drums, xylophone, and other percussion instruments. Other than a brief and unforgiving experience with the oboe, I have played the Scottish Highland bagpipes since 4th grade.

Q. What single event has had the most profound effect on your life so far? How did the Academy compare to your previous high school experience?
A. After some thought, I believe that the most significant event that has affected my life to this point is my decision to attend the Indiana Academy. The most important advantages to switching to the Academy were being able to take classes geared towards talented, dedicated students, and the opportunity to discover and create my own identity. I don’t think I realized it until I arrived at the Academy, but at my previous high school the pressure to conform and not excel (except in athletics) was much greater. One of the first “symptoms” of being at the Academy was a great reduction in the negative self-image I experienced at my old high school. It was like going from a non-intellectual culture into an especially intellectual one.

Socially I found the Academy to be much less cliquish, much more accepting of differences (especially different cultures), and far more engaging. Of course the residential aspect of the school provided unique problems, but it also had many benefits. In fact, my first year at college was very disappointing socially, because I had to deal with the immaturity of many dorm neighbors who did not have two years of experience being away from parents as my roommates, both Academy graduates, and I had.

Another note on the social experience at the Academy: the conversations between students there were far more interesting and engaging than any I ever experienced or heard at my old school. I attribute this to both the intellectualism at the Academy and also the welcoming that young gifted students felt once they arrived. It might also have something to do with the discouragement of certain words or phrases at the Academy. For example, unlike my previous high school, we students were taught why words like “faggot,” “gay,” or “retarded,” when used incorrectly, were hurtful and offensive. Such incorrect usage was thus curbed, and that is something that I greatly appreciated.

The academic experience at the Academy made my first year of college somewhat unchallenging. I certainly feel prepared for future academic challenges. Socially the experience at the Academy prepared me for many aspects of college life, and it also forged my closest friendships in the heat of four semesters of grueling academics. I also think the Academy made it easier for me...
to be accepted into the colleges to which I applied.

Q. What are your greatest interests inside and outside of school?
A. Within school, history and economics are definitely my favorite topics of study. History has always been an interest of mine, and just this last year my macroeconomics class at Earlham College got me really interested in economics. It provided a different perspective on the history I had learned in other classes. I also like studying the German language; because of its many similarities and its shared roots with English, it is much easier to learn than the Russian I studied in high school.

My interests and activities outside of school have become more varied over the last few years, and in some ways more frantic because there never seems to be enough time for everything I want to do. In response, I believe that I go through cycles. For example, sometimes I will be particularly interested in physical activity, and will lift weights for two hours a day before playing racquetball for another two; the next “cycle” might be playing my bagpipes, and I might practice daily for a few hours. I have found that certain nudes can affect these phases, and so sometimes I try to avoid certain books or even certain thoughts because they might take me out of my current phase and into another interest… often I find myself forced to balance interests in working out, practicing my bagpipes, reading, playing video games with friends, modeling and painting miniatures, correspondence, watching movies and listening to music. Sometimes I worry all of this makes me seem a little reclusive, but I still feel sociable. However, even if I am reclusive, I find that the older I get the more introverted I become, so perhaps it isn’t such a bad thing.

Q. When did you learn that you were “gifted” and what, if any, difference did that make in your life?
A. Sometime during Kindergarten I took a test to get into a special “Expanded Learning Program” at a local elementary school, so I guess that was when I was officially identified as a gifted student. However, because I spent the next five years with the same group of similarly talented students, I don’t think I knew what it meant to be gifted. In middle school, however, I began to see students not working hard, not passing classes, and I think that was when I began to understand how I was different; began to see students stealing credit for the work of others, some students making another do all of the work, a student making all the others let him or her complete the project by himself or herself, and so on.

Q. How about recommendations for parents?
A. Encouragement and support from parents is incredibly important for the success of a gifted student, in my opinion. Parents also need to be on the lookout for programs for their gifted child, but should also not force the student into too many programs at one time. It is easy, I think, to overestimate a child’s endurance when it comes to these programs and force them into too many; I think gifted children need more free time to develop their own interests and talents than usual.

Q. So, what’s next?
A. Presently I am studying history and economics at Earlham College in Richmond, Indiana, with German language as my third concentration. I think that I want to go to law school after undergraduate studies, but I still have a lot of time to decide and I don’t want to rush any decision that significant. The next big thing for me, though, is studying abroad; I leave for Germany on August 23rd for the semester, returning on December 19th.

*For more information about residential schools for gifted and talented high school students, see the Duke Gifted Letter webpage: dukegiftedletter.com/articles/vol6no4.sh.html.
your children’s love of language, of talking and listening, reading and writing, began with you. Possibly before birth, but certainly from a very early age, babies respond to the human voice and begin to make sense of the sounds they hear. Even watching children’s television doesn’t help babies learn language—they need a real, live talking partner.

The years before school were intensely important in laying the groundwork for skills with symbol systems other than spoken words. Not only did you help your children acquire rich vocabularies and master complicated sentence structures, but you also introduced the discovery that words themselves are constructed in systematic ways; they can be taken apart and put back together, for example, or made to rhyme. In the countless books you read and endlessly read and reread to them, you dangled the precious keys to the treasures of words and meanings. Many, but not all, of your gifted children began reading and even writing for themselves during those years, usually not because you deliberately taught them how to crack the code, but with your help and support. (Math is a symbol system, too, with its own language.)

So your children have arrived at school, primed and ready to go. How do you support them now in their progress in mastering the language arts—all the parts of thinking and communication that involve skills in oral and written language? Here are some important ways:

• Promise your children that you will continue reading to them as long as they enjoy it, no matter how well they can do it for themselves. Bright children have been known to slow down if they fear they will lose these precious times with their parents. Keep the books you’re reading a bit ahead of your children’s skills (as long as that’s still possible) and talk about unfamiliar words, but don’t interrupt the narrative for “lessons.”

• Bedtime needn’t always be reading stories. Your children will love made-up stories, too—perhaps a collaborative serial adventure about a boy or girl their own age?

• Keep an eye out for the match between your children’s skills and the classroom curriculum. In heterogeneous classrooms, chances are that your children long ago mastered the basic literacy skills their classmates are laboriously acquiring.

Report to the teacher what your child is reading at home (or send a book for Show and Tell). You can brainstorm with the teacher how to create a better curriculum match, with more advanced opportunities, substitute assignments, or reading with older students.

• Make sure your children’s backpacks include a high-interest book they are permitted to read after completing their seat work. After first grade, best to make this nonfiction, so it will look to classmates like “schoolwork.”

MAKE YOUR HOME A HIGH-LANGUAGE ENVIRONMENT

• Family dinners provide great opportunities for children to join adults in discussing events of the day and practicing the skills of discourse. Make sure everyone has a chance to talk. Guard those dinners from being grown-up gripe sessions. Celebrate the accomplishments of your day as well as those of your children. Let them know that it is, in fact, fun to be a grown-up, at least most of the time!

• Find a few private minutes every day with each of your children for quiet, one-on-one conversation.

• Let your children see you reading and writing for work and for pleasure, letting them know that their new skills will come in handy in the years ahead. Favor these activities over passive pursuits such as watching television for a good part of the time, though there’s nothing wrong with watching shows of value with your children and discussing them.

• On short car rides, keep the radio and the I-pod off and the talk going. Out of ideas? There’s always the alphabet game (finding road signs with A,B,C…), Twenty Questions, or another family favorite.

• Establish the tradition of giving a special book on each gift-giving holiday. Encourage your children to bring books as gifts to friends’ birthday parties. Treasure their growing libraries, saving a few of the best—often the worn-out ones—as they outgrow them and, if you have no younger children coming along, give them away or trade the others. When your children become parents themselves, they will be grateful for the favorites you saved for their children.

MAKE USE OF YOUR COMMUNITY’S RESOURCES

• Make a buddy of the children’s specialist at your neighbor...
SUPPORT SUCCESS AT SCHOOL IN THE LANGUAGE ARTS

• Take an interest in homework, of course, making sure that the time and resources are available for your children to do what’s expected.
• If the work at school seems to lack challenge, help your children find alternative materials to read on the subject.
• If your children are advanced spellers, suggest to the teacher that they create substitute-spelling lists from their recreational reading.
• Offer to look homework over, but don’t do so without an invitation. Ask your children to specify exactly where they want your help: the outline of an essay or topic sentences or spelling or punctuation? Then, do just that and no more, unless asked. That way, your children can feel safe requesting assistance and not fear that you will take over or criticize something they’re not ready for.
• With the teacher’s OK, offer to let your children dictate written assignments, because they are likely to have so much more to say than their fingers can execute without the task becoming torturous. You can, if your children agree, type these on the computer without punctuation or capitals, letting them complete the job.
• Insist that your children acquire keyboarding skills for themselves as soon as they have the dexterity to do so. Purchase a typing program such as Mavis Beacon Teaches Typing or any of a number of other choices, and require your children to practice—perhaps just ten minutes a day—more in the summer. These programs have built-in games and the means to track progress. Celebrate words-per-minute milestones. Gifted children hate to write unless they can focus on ideas and content, not on printing/handwriting and enduring the mess they make of things when they try to edit.
• Keep a corner set up with materials for your children’s writing and drawing. Suggest that your children keep a private daily journal—and don’t snoop!

For other suggestions, see: hoagiesgifted.org. Above all, the more you love language, the more your children will as well. Indulge!

NANCY M. ROBINSON, Ph.D., is Professor Emerita of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at the University of Washington and former Director of what is now known as the Halbert Robinson Center for Young Scholars. Her research interests have focused on effects of marked academic acceleration to college, adjustment issues of gifted children, intellectual assessment, and verbal and mathematical precocity in very young children.
D
oes caffeine affect your performance? You know it does. Most of us use caffeine to boost our energy levels, to wake us up, or to sharpen our focus. Now, with the popularization of several national chains, many children have taken up the coffee habit, and as a result, younger and younger children are consuming large amounts of caffeine. How is it affecting their achievement? What should we tell our students about caffeine and performance?

Caffeine increases our capacity to do work, but it can also take us out of our zone of optimal performance. Some kids consume caffeine without thinking about its effects, but a good number of students use caffeine like a drug to manage their mood or energy levels. One practical step we can take to prepare students for the psychological demands of high achievement is to raise their awareness about the effects of caffeine on their performance. Achievers who are serious about their performance will take charge of their caffeine consumption.

**HOW DOES IT WORK?**

Caffeine enhances our ability to work by blocking adenosine, a chemical in the brain that slows its activity. In other words, caffeine keeps the brain from slowing down. Caffeine also increases our levels of norepinephrine and adrenaline in the same way that stress does. This makes our nervous system more reactive, leaving us feeling wired and tense. Caffeine, therefore, often interferes with students' performance by

- increasing their vulnerability to stress and anxiety,
- prohibiting relaxation and rest, and
- destabilizing their moods.

Some talented athletes, for instance, rely on caffeine drinks to energize their game, but this use also increases their risk of injury or violent play. Some musicians and actors use caffeine to keep their energy up and increase their alertness, but the effects also keep them from being able to relax when they need to during a performance. Academically gifted students often use caffeine to decrease their need for sleep, but sleep is essential for brain repair and recovery, and most people function best when they get eight hours. All of us know at least a couple of kids who are so jazzed by the end of the day from all the caffeine they consumed that they have trouble focusing and relaxing.

There is a tremendous range in individual differences in toler-

ance for caffeine. Some people feel irritable and nervous on as little as 200mg. Others can tolerate a lot. The US government has no guidelines about children's caffeine consumption, but the Canadian government recommends the following daily limits:

- 45 mg for 4- to 6-year-olds
- 62.5mg for 7- to 9-year-olds
- 85 mg for 10- to 12-year-olds

It takes 30-60 minutes after consumption for the caffeine to reach its peak concentration in our system and another four to six hours before the effects have worn off. Some doctors recommend children's caffeine intake be limited to 300mg a day at most. You can use the chart below to help your students evaluate their daily caffeine intake and to discuss what limits they might want to follow.

People who struggle with high levels of anxiety are often sensitive to even very small levels of caffeine and should consume very little. People who down several 100 mgs of caffeine a day may experience withdrawal symptoms when they cut back. Withdrawal symptoms include headaches, depression, and fatigue. Substituting decaffeinated products in place of caffeinated drinks initially will make the weaning process easier.

Too much caffeine can undermine a student's psychological readiness for the demands of high performance. The effects of caffeine

- destabilize mood, taking students out of their optimal zone of achievement;
- energize the nervous system, decreasing students’ capacity for rest and relaxation;
- mimic the effects of stress, increasing a child’s vulnerability to pressure; and heightening feelings of anxiety or dread.

Reducing caffeine consumption may seem like a small thing in the big picture of a student’s achievement, but the biggest accomplishments in life are usually the result of many small steps.

**MAUREEN NEIHART, Psy.D.,** is a child psychologist and former teacher and school counselor from Montana. She is Associate Professor of Psychological Studies at the National Institute of Education in Singapore.
“I Just Can’t Write!”
Keys that Unlock Student Potential

To save man from the morass of propaganda, in my opinion, is one of the chief aims of education. Education must enable one to sift and weigh evidence, to discern the true from the false, the real from the unreal, and the facts from the fiction.

—Martin Luther King, Jr.

The curricular discipline that helps students acquire every skill Dr. King articulates here is language arts. Basic to each is reading: the foundation upon which we build most of what we learn in both school and daily life.

Language arts expands upon reading to include writing, reciting poetry, and journaling. Language arts also includes debating, making oral presentations, participating in Socratic seminars, storytelling, news reporting, and conducting research. Today’s e-mailing, “blogging,” text messaging, and word processing rely upon language arts skills, also—albeit, in new and creative forms.

For such a critically important discipline in a youngster’s education, isn’t it ironic that our nation’s high-ability students are missing much of the instruction they need to develop vital language arts skills? Why is this occurring at a time when the United States can ill afford to ignore its brightest, most creative individuals, to whom it looks for solutions when faced with challenges from other players on the international stage?

The shift in emphasis brought about by No Child Left Behind means that teachers are withdrawing from the bank of instructional time allotted them for all students and spending it on more time for drilling basic literacy with their struggling students. This reduced time for high-end learners is cheating America’s gifted students out of language arts experiences commensurate with their ability. As Alfie Kohn maintains, “Putting children first” is an empty slogan if we watch passively while our schools are turned into test-prep centers (Educational Leadership, September 2005).

Administrators facing the dilemma of challenging their most capable students at levels appropriate to their abilities, while attempting to raise struggling learners’ state test scores, may find the suggestions below worth sharing with their teachers. Gifted and talented students are yearning to develop the advanced-level language arts knowledge, skills, and dispositions they will need as they progress through their education and assume leadership roles as adults. These tips may help.

OPTIONS! OPTIONS! STUDENT CREATIVITY OPENS NEW DOORS

Language arts is about how we communicate—a field rich with options. Third graders in Michigan, for example, started a class newsletter that, to their surprise, won them a national readership. They chronicled class activities on low-cost word processors, took digital photos to accompany their stories, and beamed copy and images to their teacher’s computer via infrared. This spring, they contributed their work to The National Neo, an online newspaper written by students for students. “To have the students’ work put on a national Web site,” their teacher said, “is an exciting way to get them motivated about writing” (Scholastic Administrator, January 2007).

Creative Kids (Prufrock Press) is a national magazine featuring creative contributions of gifted and talented students. Student work includes original photos, mazes, poetry, and puzzles. Student stories, artwork, musical compositions, opinion pieces, and more are featured, as well. Students submit their work and then await their acceptance or rejection letters. Rejections outnumber acceptances; getting published isn’t easy. In time, however, after a student makes the recommended revisions, his or her work is often accepted—precisely the process professional writers experience.

Journal writing, too, is a powerful tool for students who find it difficult to express their self-perceptions. Bright students with low self-esteem but with advanced vocabulary and writing skills, often complain bitterly about writing assignments. According to California high school teacher Maureen Wanket, however, “Well-phrased prompts, such as ‘Write about a time you helped someone. How can you help others today?’ or ‘Write about a time you needed forgiveness,’ can help students use writing for personal reflection.” She credits journal writing with restoring the self-confidence and growth of students previously reluctant and even belligerent in telling her they just couldn’t write! (Educational Leadership, September 2005).

STUDENT INTEREST: KIDS COME ALIVE!

An ad I read recently for a technology-based school program posed this question:

“Why [do] so many kids know a brontosaurus from a diplodocus, but so few understand that 6/8 and 3/4 are equal?” (Scholastic Administrator, January 2007). We administrators, who were teachers once, most likely know the answer: Kids find monsters more interesting.

For student interest there is rarely a substitute; I discovered this while working with gifted learning-disabled youngsters a few years ago. Described to our team as “sluggish, low-esteem eighth-graders who couldn’t read and, therefore, could do nothing else,” these youngsters considered themselves losers even though they
were very bright. Nothing about school interested them; moreover, they had been chided since second grade for being non-readers. Integrated project-based teaching was needed to replace the drill-and-practice techniques, thereby balancing the curriculum with both what’s taught and how it’s taught (Rothstein, Wilder, & Jacobsen, Educational Leadership, May 2007).

Knowing from research that gifted learning-disabled adults were highly successful scientists, engineers, performing artists, and visual artists, our team, supported by a federal Javits grant, introduced these “sluggish eighth-graders” to a high-interest-based curriculum in these four fields. Their response? These youngsters came alive!

Students exhibited an enthusiasm for learning that neither they nor their parents (or teachers, for that matter) knew they could experience, and they did so in surprising ways: when using scientific vocabulary, instruments, and procedures correctly; building model cars to meet specific “distance run” requirements and recording results of each trial run; dissecting owl pellets, then using complex biology “keys” to classify species and sub-categories of animals they reconstructed from the remains found in the pellets; performing solo dramatic roles requiring expressions of sophisticated individual introspection as well as collaborating on dramatic representations of deteriorating pond conditions they were studying; and applying highly-advanced techniques of painting, photography, creating sketches, and so on.

Observing these students’ language arts ability was astounding! Besides discussing their work as professionals, using appropriate technical vocabulary after hearing it only once, these youngsters asked high-level questions that reflected their intelligence and eagerness to learn. With ease they read college textbooks, professional journals, and technical manuals in their respective fields of study.

What did we say about the importance of student interest? These students were reading and deciphering advanced-level maps, data tables, complex diagrams, charts, and instructions. They also became proficient at making detailed oral presentations about the technical aspects of their work.

Our hands-on approach, which stimulated their language skills, virtually unlocked their potential. It gave these students opportunities to express their own thoughts and discuss their work intelligently with academic peers. Finally, these once-“sluggish” kids—now literate and loving it—won the respect of other high-ability students as the gifted and talented students these kids actually were!

Other real world approaches administrators and teachers can take to strengthen language arts learning include academies: school-within-a-school based on themes such as finance, environmental technology, public relations, or constructive science. One Texas high school, described by one of its principals as formerly out of control, now comprises multiple real-world academies. Students in one academy annually study and digest the IRS rules so they can explain the U.S. tax code to community residents needing assistance in preparing their tax returns. Again, language arts is integral to these students’ success, which, in this academy, often means tax refunds and, thus, a boost to the community’s economy. Real-world impact it is! Students take the usual core classes and choose a themed academy, as well (McMullan, Scholastic Administrator, January 2007).

THINKING CREATIVELY AND DEEPLY: ENGAGING GIFTED STUDENTS DIFFERENTLY

Language arts holds a world of promise for all students. For bright youngsters, however, teachers must use strategies to engage their students more effectively, [giving] them “opportunities to think creatively and deeply about what they are reading, for instance” (Ogle, Education Update, April 2007).

The suggestions provided above vary in type but not in their fundamental purpose: to remove the stumbling blocks that thwart student success in language arts. I hope these approaches help my fellow administrators to open up new learning pathways for all students, including our gifted and talented youngsters whose language arts development is currently being short-changed in too many schools.

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Black English and Academic Excellence

Emerging Practices for Student Success

By Saundra Sparling
Recently, I was asked two questions: “Why do African-American gifted students insist on using Black English (BE), also known as African-American Vernacular English (AAVE), even though they know it’s a barrier to their success? How can teachers of gifted education get them to use Standard English (SE), sometimes called edited American English, to promote excellence in their performance in gifted programs? As an African-American and a retired professor whose field of study is giftedness in underrepresented populations, a group that includes BE speakers, I am heartened by what recent research has to say.

The question of students’ insistence on using BE in their classes concerns what the research identifies as the mismatch between the language of home and community and the language of instruction in the classroom (Lee, 2006). There is a significant body of research addressing this mismatch and the quest to improve the academic performance of students who use BE. Lee analyzed the cultural underpinnings of classroom talk and found that:

An emerging body of research now moves beyond the mismatch problem to document and develop new ways of proactively leveraging everyday language as a resource for subject matter specific learning. (p.308)

Some of this research looks specifically at BE, focusing not on causes and remedies for gifted BE speakers failure to achieve, but alternatively, on BE speakers who are achieving academic excellence and classroom practices that promote their doing so. In these classrooms, BE is seen as a rich resource by which teachers simultaneously draw students into high-level classroom participation and SE usage (Perry, Steele, & Hilliard, 2003). It is important to add that teachers from a variety of racial and ethnic backgrounds, not just African-Americans, effectively employ these practices.

This growing body of research provides background for this article in three areas:

• Briefly address the students’ insistence on using BE in the classroom.
• Present several practices teachers and administrators are using in programs to successfully promote academic excellence with BE speakers.
• Broaden exposure to and learning from the research that is focused on the achievement excellence of African-American students.

WHY DO STUDENTS INSIST ON USING BLACK ENGLISH?

On this issue, reasons vary from student to student. A reason that is often cited is opposition identity (Worrell, 2007; Perry, Steele, & Hilliard, 2003). Worrell explains that African-American, American Indian, and Hispanic students often develop an identity in opposition to mainstream society, including in academic achievement. This practice may lead to failure to fully engage in academic enterprises and, at worst, to actively resist achievement because to them it represents “acting White.”

Another reason may be the perception of insistence. Many teachers perceive BE to be a substandard dialect indicative of lower intellectual capacity than that of SE speakers. They also see it as urgently requiring replacement with SE, and feel that SE mastery must occur before other advanced skills in subject matter content can be taught or learned. Perry (Perry, Steele, C., & Hilliard, 2003) argues that, while developing fluency in the language of the dominant culture is an appropriate goal for schools, such fluency should not be a prerequisite for skill acquisition. Belief in such a prerequisite is “very different from the philosophy and practice that were prevalent in many historically Black southern segregated schools where developing academic competencies and fluency in mainstream culture were pursued as simultaneous rather than sequential processes” (p. 67).

Instruction based on these beliefs is often characterized by classroom interaction patterns that devalue a BE speakers classroom participation and achievements. Students struggling to perform under such constraining conditions can appear unresponsive or even resistant to instruction. Godley, Sweetland, Wheeler, Minnici and Carpenter (2006) suggest that teachers’ negative beliefs about BE contribute to the oppositional stance of African-American students toward school culture. It can also contribute stress that is sufficient to inhibit students’ learning, thereby preventing Black students from mastering the very English usage skills teachers seek to promote. “Such pedagogical responses to stigmatized dialects are damaging and counterproductive.”

In a similar vein, Clark (2007) states:

Research has shown that teachers often have low expectations for diverse students. Advocates of this point of view refer to such expectations as deficit thinking. They find that such thinking causes diverse students to doubt their ability and to sabotage their own achievement. (p. 23)

Wynn (Delpit & Dowdy, 2002) offers the following example:

It was over twenty years ago, but it could have happened yesterday. I had taken a group of African-American high school newspaper staff to a university journalism workshop and awards ceremony. There were about eight students with me that day to learn more about print journalism, and, more importantly to receive an award for being one of the ten best high school newspapers in the metropolitan area.

We were sitting together, in a sea of White faces, listening to one of the media experts talk about ways to improve school newspapers. After he had spoken, he opened the session to questions. My students had several they wanted to ask in the effort to discover new ways of writing creatively for their peers back at school. One of my editors leaned over to me and whispered, “Here is a list of questions we want you to ask him.”

“I said, “No, you ask him,” surprised that my student and his cohort were suddenly shy.

“We don’t talk right. You ask him.”
No amount of encouragement from me would prompt them to speak. What I now know is that until that moment, I did not understand how psychologically damaging language biases are. I watched eight students, who happened to be some of the brightest young people I have ever taught, shrink from their brilliance. Here they sat, knowing they had competed with other journalism staffs for the best newspaper—and won—but, at the same time, they felt inferior. (p. 205)

Teachers can help BE speakers prepare for and even overcome both real and perceived threats posed in scenarios like the one above. One approach would be for the teacher to create opportunities for students to practice in advance. Examples of this strategy will be discussed later in this article.

In truth, most African-American students do enter school speaking BE (Craig, Thompson, Washington, & Potter, 2003). Among these are gifted students. They use BE because it is what is used in the home, the community, or with peers. It is their language of intimacy and comfort. It is simply what they know. However, an increasing number of teachers are harnessing the power of their language as a bridge to the successful learning of SE and to academic excellence.

### HOW ARE TEACHERS SUPPORTING ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE FOR BLACK ENGLISH SPEAKERS?

At least five practices have been found to be successful in promoting academic excellence with BE speakers:

- providing contrastive analysis experiences
- employing culturally responsive teaching
- building cultural capital
- involving students in challenging real-world activities
- creating opportunities for advance practice

The first four are used to legitimize students’ BE usage and draw them into high-level classroom participation and SE usage. The fifth helps students overcome their fear of contributing ideas in a public setting.

### Providing contrastive analysis experiences

Contrastive analysis is an compare and contrast strategy. Hilliard (Perry, Steele, & Hilliard, 2003) offers an example of contrastive analysis from the work of Carrie Secret, a teacher in Oakland, California:

For Carrie Secret, helping African-American children acquire fluency in the standard code is not about helping them correct their home language. Rather, it is about helping them acquire fluency in another language. Using contrastive analysis with her students, she uses her knowledge of Black language to help her students understand how their home language differs systematically from edited American English [Standard English]. Sometimes this means helping her students hear differences in pronunciation that they don’t automatically hear, and even over-enunciating endings that they might ordinarily drop. (p. 56)

Perry (Perry, Steele, & Hilliard, 2003) offers a personal example, stating, “Even today it is difficult for me, having been born and reared in Birmingham, Alabama, to hear when I have produced the Black-inflected pronunciation of ‘ask.’ And if I don’t consciously think about it, I will inevitably pronounce the word ‘ask’ as ‘ax’” (p. 56).

Continuing with her contrast analysis example, Perry further describes Carrie Secret’s strategy:

She routinely exposes her students to models of Black literary excellence, individuals who, in their writings—sometimes in the same text, and other times in different texts—write in both Black language and edited American English [Standard English]. In her practice, she affirms that these two modes of linguistic expression are not only not in contradiction with each other but ultimately compatible, and more to the point, evidence of literary excellence. (p. 57)

### Employing culturally responsive teaching

Culturally responsive teaching is the result of linking classroom teaching with successful minority student performance (Rex, 2006). Such methods develop SE and mastery of advanced subject matter simultaneously by using the “stuff” of the students’ cultures, communities, and daily lives as a basis for classroom instruction. Familiar literature or music, community source materials, references to daily life, artifacts, and guest speakers are the tools of culturally responsive teaching. In this example, Perry (Perry, T., Steele, C., & Hilliard, 2003) shares more of the work of teacher, Carrie Secret:

Understanding the role of music in Black culture, Secret uses music—Black popular and classical music and European classical music—to help her students center and calm themselves and to help them focus. Carrie Secret understands that what makes students powerful is not simply their acquisition of the standard code, but their fluency in content knowledge and their familiarity with many literatures and the language of many disciplines. Perhaps most important, she does not see this broad knowledge as oppositional to language and culture of African-Americans. For her classroom, she readily draws upon and uses the cultural characteristics that have been identified as central to African-American culture to ground her educational practice.

She also creates multiple speech events in her classroom, events in which students are expected to practice speaking and presenting in edited American English [Standard English]. She frames these events as “formal locations,” some of which are construed as formal locations or events within the Black community, and others as formal events in society at large. For example, she sometimes asks her students to imagine that they are students at Spelman or Morehouse
College and to think how they would be required to speak in edited American English [Standard English] when they have visitors and when they make reports to the class on their group work. Using culturally responsive practices deeply engages Secrets’ largely African-American student body and they achieve at high levels. (p. 57)

**Building cultural capital.** Perry (Perry, Steele, & Hilliard, 2003) identifies SE as a kind of cultural capital through which the mainstream culture, consequently the school culture, traditionally distributes educational opportunity, such as exposure to advanced skills. She suggests that gifted students are among those who have the intellectual capacity for taking advantage of educational opportunities even though they lack the cultural capital for accessing them. Some causes for this low level of cultural capital include: SE is not spoken in the home; students have had limited exposure to certain books and works of art; and they have never been to a museum or a concert. She points out that the school culture can be modified so that access is given simultaneously to cultural capital and the advanced skills. The following is an example provided by a kindergarten/first grade teacher:

In order to prepare for teaching a unit about Greek architecture, this young kindergarten teacher, unbeknownst to her children, took pictures of every one of their homes. She then put all of the pictures on slides. When she actually began to teach about Greek architecture, she would point to the columns, gables, and other features of the architecture that were present in their homes, as well as in Greek architecture. The vocabulary that emerged from this unit was meaningful, not only in the context of the unit on Greek architecture, but also in the context of descriptions of the children’s homes, homes of their peers, and the architecture of their community.

The same teacher has arranged monthly visits to the Museum of Fine Arts for her kindergarten and first grade pupils. By February of the academic year, her students were more comfortable in the museum and knew more about what is in the museum than the average college student. Monthly visits to the museum had become an accepted ritual, “a practice.” In both these instances, the teacher has explicitly passed on to her students’ cultural capital. And she had also organized instruction such that a prior level of cultural capital was not necessary for her students to access, to fully benefit from, her instruction. (p. 69)

**Involving students in challenging real-world activities.** Challenging real-world activities involve having students prepare for and participate in highly engaging and challenging campus, district, or community competitions, performances, and projects in the real world. Producing a school-wide creative writing journal or newspaper, entering young author events, joining debate teams, or participating in mock trial programs are examples.
Hilliard (Perry, T., Steele, C., & Hilliard, 2003) discusses a mock trial program:

A recent New York Times story charted the rise over the past few years of a new group of dominant schools in the world of competitive high school “Mock Trials” (McDougall, 1999 as cited in Perry, T., Steele, C., & Hilliard, 2003). In this intellectual sport, traditionally dominated by elite schools, where participants take the roles of attorneys in arguing cases based in real law, “schools with poor academic achievement have consistently risen through the championship ranks.” In New York and Philadelphia a tradition of high achievement has emerged. Hilliard goes on to quote the following remarkable results:

• Philadelphia’s inner-city schools have finished first or second in the last three Pennsylvania championships, beating elite suburban schools.
• Overlook High School [in Philadelphia] jumped from its spot on the city’s academic warning list into the No. 1 spot on the state’s Mock trials teams…finishing 11th in the nation…Every member of the team was a rookie, recruited and trained by a history teacher who also doubled as a baseball coach.
• Carver High School, from North Philadelphia’s notorious Badlands, won the city championship and defeated dozens of prep and private schools to finish second in the state finals.
• In Manhattan, the team to beat is Louise D. Brandeis High School, which has nearly as many dropouts as graduates.

Expert observers note that the pace and culture of national Mock Trials have changed, as the new champions make their distinctive mark and presumably inspire each other to new levels of performance. The nature of the courtroom arguments has changed—“more hotly contested,” with “rapid-fire objections.” And the new style has raised levels of performance across the board. Deborah Lesser, coordinator of the New York City Mock Trials, says that “students are sharper, more nimble on their feet, more in command of rules and strategies and presentation” (p.145).

Creating opportunities for advance practice. Through such techniques as role-playing and visualization, students can practice handling themselves in a mock or imaginary event before participating in the real event. In role-playing, students brainstorm a list of past reactions they have had when speaking in SE-dominant settings. Then, while their classmates react in the ways listed during the brainstorm, they each practice sharing their ideas or asking their questions just as they would at the real event. The goal is to practice confidently expressing ideas in a context of varied reactions.

The goal in visualization is to have students picture themselves responding effectively during the event. Ask the students to close their eyes and guide them through hearing the sounds and seeing the faces of the other people who might attend. They are then guided to experience themselves staying calm and feeling confident, speaking effectively, and if they do falter, persisting in giving their input.

SUMMARY

Excellent instruction is the primary tool teachers can use to help students develop academically (Roscoe & Atwater, 2005). In many classrooms across the United States, BE speakers are achieving academic excellence. BE is being valued as a rich resource by which teachers simultaneously draw students into high-level classroom participation and SE usage. The instructional practices of these teachers have major implications for gifted education teachers working with BE speakers. Creating opportunities for advance practice, providing contrastive analysis experiences, employing culturally responsive teaching, building cultural capital, and involving students in challenging real-world activities are only some samples of what can be done to promote academic excellence in gifted Black English speakers.

REFERENCES


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Trochee trips from long to short;  
From long to long in solemn sort  
Slow Spondee stalks, strong foot!, yet ill able  
Ever to come up with Dactyl’s trisyllable.  
Iambics march from short to long.  
With a leap and a bound the swift Anapests throng.  
One syllable long, with one short at each side,  
Amphibrachs hastes with a stately stride —  
First and last being long, middle short, Amphimacer  
Strikes his thundering hoofs like a proud high-bred Racer.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge,  
“Metrical Feet—A Lesson for a Boy”

In a sense, curriculum means making a bet on what knowledge students actually need in life. Sometimes the bet is wrong. Sometimes essential content is not recognized as essential; it is underestimated and relegated to the sidelines. Sometimes society’s values mask the importance of bodies of knowledge. Sometimes the goals of curricula are stymied by assumptions we do not even realize we are making, and students have to face the challenges of life without elements of knowledge that they need.
Intellectual history is replete with examples of false assumptions that blinded scholars for decades or even centuries, only to give way eventually to different paradigms that offered clearer explanations of the truth.

One obvious example of such a false scientific assumption is the traditional Newtonian distinction between matter and empty space. This assumption is natural because it appears to be the reality that is represented to us by our sense perceptions; but ever since Einstein revolutionized physics, scientists have discussed ultimate reality in different terms, replacing the apparent dichotomy between matter and empty space with the unified concept of space-time. In the concept of space-time, both matter and empty space are regions in a four-dimensional space-time continuum that unites everything in the universe into one, vast, wheeling geometry of galaxies, stars, planets, people, molecules, atoms, subatomic particles, and energy. The entire universe is one space-time object.

In this immense unity of space-time, we are the walrus, and

From a curricular perspective, to teach great reading or great writing inherently involves teaching great poetics: types of rhyme, assonance, consonance, alliteration, meter, and the array of other details involved in high-level control of language.

—Michael Clay Thompson
instead of the sun's gravity having to reach supernaturally across 93,000,000 miles of “empty space” to hold the Earth in its orbit, the Earth simply has to roll politely around a circular groove of space-time that rings the sun.

A FALSE ASSUMPTION—A FALSE DICHOTOMY

In our nation’s typical language arts curricula, we may be operating under such a false assumption—a false dichotomy—that blinds us to vital truths about language and that results in insidious barriers to student learning, particularly when it comes to teaching students how to write or how to read great writing. Like modern physics, modern language arts curricula may be in need of a unified theory that dissolves an outmoded separation assumption and replaces it with a coherent explanation.

This false dichotomy is the distinction between poetry and prose. No single description can accurately represent the views of thousands of teachers or the ideas that are contained in written curricula, but the stereotypes about poetry and prose might be summarized in this way:

Poetry and prose are not the same; they are different genres of writing. In prose, the writer concentrates on the clarity of the sentence and the precision of the diction, and the aesthetic aspect of a prose sentence is in its conciseness and its logic.

In poetry the poet—we will not use the word writer—concentrates on the sound of the sentence and its relationship to the beauty of the subject, and the aesthetic aspect of a line of poetry is in the musical qualities of its rhythm and in the sounds of its words.

One underlying principle of these specious stereotypes, for that is what they are, is that prose writers need not fret with the poetics of a prose sentence. The writer of a novel, article, or essay is poetically off-duty and can write with a muffled ear; prose is all about meaning and is not concerned with sound.

A SEXIST STEREOTYPE?

A second principle (hideous to say) is that poetry and prose have emotional and possibly sexist stereotypes that interfere with their intellectual truths. Real men, goes the stereotype, write prose; prose is the language of history and other impassive cognitive articulations that address the ugly world in many words. Poetry has a decidedly feminine stereotype in popular culture. Poetry is thought to be more concerned with emotions, with personal responses, and with beauty. Poems are imagined to be pretty and to have pretty revelations as their purpose. Sweet poems are weaker than muscular prose.

POETRY AND PROSE: THE INTERCONNECTIONS

The intellectual truth, of course, is that prose and poetry have the same range of content, from ugly to beautiful, from tragic to triumphant, from love to terror. More important for our discussion—to put one piece of the truth in blunt terms—is that many novelists also write poems, and they regularly employ their poetic devices in the prose sentences of their novels. Why would they not? So here is the rub: if we do not really know about poetry, we can not really know about prose, either. Think about the implications for language arts curricula.

To be deaf to poetics is not only to be deaf to poetry; it is to be deaf to prose as well. If you can’t read Wordsworth, you can’t read Jane Austen either. Furthermore, to be deaf to poetics is to be unaware of the poetic elements of one’s own sentences—a poetic aspect that is there, like it or not, and that will be well written or not, like it or not.

From a curricular perspective, to teach great reading or great writing inherently involves teaching great poetics: types of rhyme, assonance, consonance, alliteration, meter, and the array of other details involved in high-level control of language.

DEMISE OF POETRY IN SCHOOLS

Even so, poetry and the array of poetic devices used in poetry wither on the curricular sidelines. Many a student has graduated from high school with no grounding in classical poetics whatsoever. In many an English class, poetry has minimal prominence, and when the class finally reads a poem, the emphasis may be on pseudo-interpretive questions (What do you think the poet meant by this line?), ignoring the powerful poetic techniques of the line.

Why do I use the term pseudo-interpretive? I use it because the poetics can be so decisive in confirming an interpretation that it seems foolhardy to pretend to interpret without them. As a quick example, Blake’s “Tiger” is written in trochees, the dread metric feet of evil and villains, which unambiguously identifies Blake’s tiger as a terrifying monster, not a cute animal.

Of course, this is all fine talk; it would be more persuasive if we had copious examples of poetic prose to examine. If we were presented with prose sentences using poetic techniques in a manner unquestionably intentional, and from an impressive variety of prose works and authors, we might cast a cold eye (Yeats said that.) on curriculum, and rethink what knowledge our students will need. Ergo, let us look at some sentences.

POETIC TECHNIQUES

Charlotte Brontë. Charlotte Brontë, in her 1847 masterpiece Jane Eyre, wrote, “The sternest-seeming stoic is human after all.” Look at the brilliant alliteration of Sternest Seeming Stoic; it is difficult to imagine a more stoic word than stoic, with its tough st and concluding k sound. Brontë surely began with the adjective stoic, and then encased it in words that would amplify it: Sternest Stoic, with Seeming for good measure. The tough beginning of this sentence contrasts dramatically with its pleasant conclusion of soft consonants: human after all, HuMaN aFteR aLL—human sounds for a human thought.

Herman Melville. In his 1851 classic, Moby Dick, Herman Melville wrote, “Up from the spray of thy ocean-perishing—
Pithy, Precise, Poetics
A Quick Reference to Poetic Terms

alliteration: al-li-tér-a-tion  (al-li-t’ér-a-sh’ən)

n. The repetition of the same sounds or of the same kinds of sounds at the beginning of words or in stressed syllables, as in “on scrolls of silver snowy sentences” (Hart Crane).

amphibrach: am-phi-brach  (əm’fī-brāk’)

n. A trisyllabic metrical foot having one accented syllable between two unaccented or short syllables, as in the word remember.

assonance: as-so-nance  (əs’ə-nəns)

n. The repetition of identical or similar vowel sounds, especially in stressed syllables, with changes in the intervening consonants, as in the phrase tilling at windmills.

consonance: con-so-nance  (kōn’sə-nəns)

n. The repetition of consonants or of a consonant pattern, especially at the ends of words, as in blank and think or strong and string.

dactyl: dactyl  (dāk’təl)

n. A metrical foot consisting of one accented syllable followed by two unaccented or of one long syllable followed by two short, as in flattery.

iamb: iamb  (i’amb’, i’am’)

n. A two-syllable foot that begins with a stress, such as “get over.”

poetics: po-et’iks

n. 1. Literary criticism that deals with the nature, forms, and laws of poetry. 2. A treatise on or study of poetry or aesthetics. 3. The practice of writing poetry; poetic composition.

rhyme: rhyme also rim  (rīm)

n. A word that corresponds with another in terminal sound, as behold and cold.

trochee: tro-choe  (trō’kē)

n. A metrical foot consisting of a stressed syllable followed by an unstressed syllable, as in season, or of a long syllable followed by a short syllable.

sibilant: sib-i-ant  (sib-uh-luhnt’)

adj. Phonetics: characterized by a hissing sound

spondee: spon-dee  (spōn’de’)

n. A metrical foot consisting of two long or stressed syllables.


—Prepared by Elaine Wiener

straight up—leaps thy apotheosis!” We hear the wash of the sea in the sb consonance of oCean-periSHing, which is followed by a spondee (two stressed syllables in a row, often used to emphasize an idea) straight up. The pause before and after the spondee straight up doubles its power. Abraham Lincoln, an accomplished poet as a young man, used spondees brilliantly in the Gettysburg Address.

Mark Twain. Mark Twain often used poetic touches in his prose, and sometimes he used them intensely. In Tom Sawyer, written in 1876, Twain wrote, “The dreadful secret of the murder was a chronic misery.” Twain made the sentence rich with r’s: dREADful seCRet muRDer chRONic misERy. Alliteration is a powerful tool for emphasis, and Twain alliterated Murder and Misery. Notice the subtle touches in dREADful seCRET, as well as seCRet and CHRONic. What Twain accomplished with all of these devices was to give the sentence a richness by surrounding the key words with other words sharing their sounds; he supported muRDer with dREADful, and muRDER with MisERy. When a word has no echo among its companions, it tends to sink down and lose prominence. These poetic techniques pop the power words out of the line.

Thomas Hardy. Thomas Hardy is known as a great novelist, but he also wrote some of the best poems in English literature. Some feel he was a greater poet than a novelist. In his 1886 novel The Mayor of Casterbridge, Hardy wrote, “Thus his jealous soul speciously argued to excuse the separation of father and child.” We hear the hissing evil of the argument in the combined alliteration and consonance of the: dREADful seCRet muRDer chRONic seCRet. It sounds like the sibilant screech of a vampire. Notice the assonance of argUed and excUSE. The character’s treachery is condemned by the poetics of the sentence.

H.G. Wells. In 1895 H.G. Wells used a brilliant metrical device in The Time Machine. Wells wrote that “Things will move faster and faster toward the subjugation of Nature.” The faster and faster idea of the sentence is amplified by Wells’s use of falling meter. Falling meter is the use of metrical feet that begin with a stressed syllable and end with an unstressed syllable, of which there are two: trochees and dactyls. A trochee is a two-syllable foot that begins with a stress, such as LIN-cloN. A dactyl is a three-syllable foot that begins with a stress, such as HAPP-i-ly. Wells pushed his sentence with falling meter: THINGS will move / FAS ter and / FAS ter / TOW ard and / SUB ju / GA tion of / NA ture. We see dactyl, dactyl, trochee, dactyl, trochee, dactyl, and trochee. Falling meter is not some arcane technical device that most writers do not know about; it is one of the introductory elements of poetics—a standard device. Sylvia Plath used falling meter brilliantly in her poem “The Moon and the Yew Tree”: THIS is the / LIGHT of the / MIND / COLD and / PLAN e / TAR y. In addition to giving the sentence a toppling pace, Wells received benefit from the traditional use of falling meter for suggesting danger or evil.

Joseph Conrad. Look at the way Joseph Conrad used meter in this sentence from his 1902 novel Heart of Darkness: “I had to
watch the steering and circumvent those snags.” The sentence begins with two iambs, *i HAD / to WATCH*, but then shifts to a little known poetic foot, the amphibrach, which is a three-syllable foot in which the middle syllable is stressed, *the STEER ing*, but then for the swirling of circumventing the snags, the sentence reverts to spinning iambs: *and CIR / cum VENT / those SNAGS*. By putting the amphibrach in the center of the sentence, Conrad created a pause that propelled the sentence into its final three iambs. Notice the very strong alliteration of *Steering Circumvent Snags*; we can almost hear the *sss* of the rapids.

**James Barrie.** In James M. Barrie’s 1904 novel, *Peter Pan*, we read, “They suddenly saw the perfidious pirates bearing down upon them.” Barrie used alliteration in *Suddenly Saw* and in *Perfidious Pirates*, and he emphasized the pounding *p’s, b’s*, and *d’s* to suggest the force of the event: *suDDenly, PerfiDious, Pirates, Bearing, Down, and uPon*. These consonants (PB TD KG) are known as *stopped consonants* because they involve a stopping of the breath, and they are often used in poetry and prose to give the force of impact to a sentence. Barrie also drummed out the end of the sentence in menacing trochees (A
trochee, recall, is a two-syllable poetic foot in which the first syllable is stressed; it is the evil opposite of the sweet iamb and is often used for villains and danger, e.g. the witches in Macbeth with their DOUB le / DOUB le / TOIL and / TROUB le: PI rate / BEAR ing / DOWN u / PON them. Barrie’s brilliant combination of alliteration, assonance on the heavy consonants, and trochaic meter perfectly complements the meaning of the idea and makes the sentence more powerful than it would be absent the poetics.

F. Scott Fitzgerald. In his 1925 novel The Great Gatsby, F. Scott Fitzgerald wrote, “Happy vacuous bursts of laughter rose toward the summer sky.” By establishing assonance (the repetition of a vowel sound) on the low a vowel in happy and vacuous, Fitzgerald prepared us to notice laughter: hAppy vACuous Laughter. Then Fitzgerald shifted the sentence to one of the two sounds that Edgar Allan Poe said were the most powerful in English, the r: buRts laughteR Rose towaRd summerR. The consonance on the r gives the richness of laughter, har bar, to the sentence. Notice the subtle similarity of buRts laughteR summER.

Toni Morrison. In Toni Morrison’s Song of Solomon, written in 1977, we see this sentence: “He went completely under and got a glimpse of a small, slivery, translucent fish.” First, notice that the sentence is essentially iambic, hv WENT / com PLET e / ly UN, but when it gets to the wiggly fish, it changes to a wiggly anapest, der and GOT, then back to an iamb, a GLIMPSE, and then back to another anapest, of a SMALL. All of these feet end in stressed syllables, so we would say that they are in a risinG meter. The sentence ends in the dactyl SIL ver y and two iambs trans LU / cent FISH. In other words the metrical matrix of the line is iambic, but Morrison wiggled the meter in the fish part; the meter is as descriptive as the words are. Beyond the meter we notice that early in the sentence there is rough g alliteration in Got Glimpse, but the consonants shift to slippery s’s to describe the Small Silvery transSlucent fish.

There are hundreds of these examples of prose sentences that incorporate poetic techniques, and it would be easy to continue with dozens more in this article, but the point is made. Great prose writers tend, profoundly, to be both readers and writers of poetry as well, and they consistently employ poetic device in the sentences of their novels.

What we see in the examples above should not surprise us, even though it may. It should not surprise us that an alpha-talent of language who has devoted his or her entire life to writing would be more aware of the most elementary components of language such as vowels, consonants, silences, and stresses, than a person of ordinary language talent or slight language interest. That Jane Austen used vowels and consonants to paint sounds into her sentences is only surprising if we have unknowingly assumed that a literary genius’s language mind is no more language-aware than anyone else—a patent absurdity. Such writers, even though they are writing what we think of as prose, may be doing things in their sentences that will be missing from our curricula if we persist in looking only at the prose side of prose. If we open our minds to a full view of a great novelist’s sentence, we may find, like Balboa, that there is an unknown world on the back of the sentence.

Think about it: most outstanding published novelists are incapable of writing a classic. A Dickens is as rare as a Shelley; an Austen is as remarkable as a Yeats. When we read the sentences of such writers, whether they were writing in what we call poetry or what we call prose, we should allow ourselves to be illuminated by the creative power of someone who has taken language far, far beyond all normal assumptions.

IMPLICATIONS FOR LANGUAGE ARTS

The implications for language arts curricula are profound. We must include the formal study of poetics as one of the core components of language arts. Students must be taught to avoid thinking about poetics only when they are studying a poem and to be poetics-aware while reading great prose. Finally, using the sentences of great novelists as their models, students can begin to experiment with poetic devices such as alliteration, assonance, consonance, and meter not only in their own poems but in their own prose sentences. We would not expect every prose sentence to be written in full poetic regalia, but we want students to have poetic techniques at their command when the content is appropriate.

REFERENCES

All examples in this article were taken from 4Practice. Vol. 2, listed below, but the concepts and poetic terms are a result of the work done for my poetics textbook series.

Poetry textbooks by Michael Thompson, published in 2006 by Royal Fireworks, Unionville, NY:
- The Music of the Hemispheres
- Building Poems
- A World of Poetry
- Poetry and Humanity
- Poetry, Plato, and the Concept of Beauty
- Poetry, Plato, and the Concept of Truth

Textbooks that discuss poetic devices used in prose sentences by Michael Thompson, published in 2007 by Royal Fireworks, Unionville, NY:
- Practice Island
- Practice Town
- Practice Voyage
- 4Practice. Vol. 1
- 4Practice. Vol. 2
- 4Practice. Vol. 3

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Walking into classrooms today, it is commonplace to find a sea of faces representing a multitude of cultures. Gifted students whose primary language is one other than English are eager to learn. This sounds simple enough, but challenges arise when students are non-native speakers or come from low socio-economic families. As teachers accept the challenges of teaching language acquisition and reading proficiency, blended with academic rigor, gifted English learners (EL) embrace learning. The diversity found in today’s classrooms offers opportunities for educators to create rich learning communities that include students with varied strengths, passions, and abilities.

We know that gifted English learners come to school with the ability to think abstractly, use higher-level thinking skills, and work independently. Because of their limited experiences and thirst for expanded knowledge, they are grateful to be introduced to new material (e.g., Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, graphic-arts exhibition (Kitano and Pedersen 2001).

One of the biggest challenges educators face is creating an achievable playing field for second language youngsters if they are to succeed in reading. Many English language (EL) learners do not enter classrooms as prepared as native speakers. Introducing academic rigor along with English development and creativity results in a learning environment honoring gifted potential.

A stumbling block for EL learners is the lack of opportunities to read books outside of school. Whether it is a case of priorities, lack of personal books, a different language spoken at home, or adults away at work, not all children spend the time needed to practice and enjoy reading.

The following classroom applications and instructional strategies have been used effectively with gifted English learners who are considered emerging readers.

**Reading for Meaning**

Initially, children are taught to sound out chunks of letters and combine them to make words. Eventually words are strung together to make sentences and paragraphs. Children begin celebrating that they can read! Yet we know that the ability to say the
words is not the same as reading for meaning. Constructing meaning happens when a student’s world knowledge, life experiences, and literary background converge (Fountas and Pinnell, 2001).

Reading cannot be taught in isolation; the integration of reading with speaking, listening, and writing is crucial to the development of proficiency. EL learners and students who enter school with limited world experiences due, in part, to low socio-economic levels, have very different experiences to bring to the classroom than native English-speaking, middle-class students. Our objective then is to help these children expand their worldviews and experiences.

Direct instruction is necessary to teach students how to predict, monitor thinking, make connections, question, infer, analyze, summarize, and synthesize text to make meaning (Fountas and Pinnell, 2001). Understanding nonfiction requires understanding text format features such as bold print, tables, captions, and glossaries. Students can then begin to sort ideas, make inferences, and analyze data and ideas. We may also challenge students to understand a character’s motivations, notice details, think about the significance of unusual events, consider how the environment described in the book affects the characters, or evaluate the fairness found within a story (Angelillo, 2003). At some point these strategies for comprehension become automatic for proficient readers.

READ-ALOUD AND THINK-ALOUD STRATEGIES.

Read-aloud. Youngsters who are developing reading skills and English vocabulary benefit enormously from both read-aloud and think-aloud strategies. Reading aloud to students is as important in upper grades as it is in primary grades. Students new to English have the opportunity to hear the rhythm and flow of language as well as being introduced to many new words within academic set-

Classroom Application of Read-aloud, Think-aloud Strategies

At the beginning of the school year, it is important to build a sense of community within a culturally diverse classroom. Begin by selecting a book to read aloud that has a focus on respecting individuality, such as Elmer by David McKee (1968). This book is chosen for several reasons. The language is fairly straightforward and the pictures support the text. The story allows for a great deal of discussion about self-esteem, peer groups, friendships, and being part of a larger community. Furthermore, it holds the interest of all students. Prepare for the read-aloud by asking students to focus on a strategy you have already exposed them to while listening. This story lends itself well to predicting, making connections, or inferring. As you read-aloud or think-aloud the story, stop at key points to ask students questions or model thinking connected to the focus strategy.

These basic comprehension strategies are key to building analytical thinking. There are several other Elmer stories that can be read throughout the week. Rigorous thinking occurs when students are asked to analyze the characters and their feelings over time as discovered in subsequent stories. You can encourage students to add their own artistic creativity to the Elmer stories by providing a directed drawing lesson featuring Elmer and friends in all their colors and designs. Displaying the pictures depicts the diversity of the classroom community and starts off the year celebrating a common shared experience.
VISUAL LEARNING: GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS

Group students with academic peers to read a National Geographic Explorer edition entitled, “River of Life” (or some other appropriate reading). Assign the portion called, “The New Solar System” to the group of emerging, grade level, and above grade level gifted readers. Have students work in pairs to read the article in order to support the less-skilled reader. After reading, instruct students to complete a compare-and-contrast organizer allowing them the choice to compare any two planets. Upon completion, ask students to share their information with a small group and then the whole class.

Three things should happen. First, students are given choices about what to compare based upon individual interests; second, opportunities are presented for students to develop academic language as part of vocabulary development; and third, all students in the group, regardless of language ability, are able to discuss common reading and ideas.

as she pauses during the reading. Both read-aloud and think-aloud strategies benefit the emergent reader.

VISUAL LEARNING: SYMBOLS HELP EMERGING READERS

Another feature of the model of visual learning is the use of icons or symbols to support thinking. This encourages students to look more deeply at an idea or concept. Kaplan and Gould (2003) created a set of icon cards to trigger student thinking, and when combined, complex ideas emerge. Emergent readers do quite well with these visual cues. They include thinking skills such as analyzing patterns, details, rules, trends, big ideas, ethics, multiple perspectives, and ideas over time, as well as looking at the language of a discipline. Students may also want to explore what Kaplan and Gould (2005) call “Content Imperatives.” These include the exploration of ideas such as origins, parallels, paradoxes, convergence of ideas, and contributions. When students are ready, each of the thinking skills above can be intertwined to help students make meaning of complex ideas.

In 1998, Kaplan and Gould developed a very simple graphic organizer called a “frame”: applying one or more icons for depth
Classroom Application of Tiered Reading Lessons

Gather a collection of 8–10 books on a common topic such as pets. The books should include all types of animals that could be pets and range from early reading levels to more difficult levels (Fountas and Pinnell, 2001).

Encourage students to read several books of their choice during a 20–40 minute reading period. During the following 20 minutes, have students fill out a task card that asks questions calling for a variety of levels of thinking. For example, they could be asked to discuss the new facts they learned about a hamster. The student could also respond to a prompt that asks if the hamster would make a good pet for her and why or why not. These prompts require basic knowledge and comprehension and then ask for an evaluation. Allot a final 10 minutes or so for students to join with peers to discuss their ideas. This is a great opportunity to have homogeneous discussion groups (Pedersen 2007).

When reading fiction stories, a task card could be created that calls for analyzing character perspectives. Such a task card calls for the reader to recall character traits and a common event shared by two characters. Students are asked to point out or infer how the characters felt during the event. The key to successful tiered literacy centers is in the accessibility of appropriate reading materials, followed by questions that push students to move beyond recall and comprehension, and finally to share ideas verbally. This speaking and listening portion is key for EL learners and students with limited world experiences.

INDIVIDUAL AND SMALL GROUP SESSIONS

Individual time to work with students is probably the most effective way to move emerging readers forward. Time is limited and fitting in time for conferences can prove to be yet another challenge for the teacher. Setting aside time for EL instruction in a small group setting is beneficial, particularly as a way to prepare them for the content in science and social studies. Helping students make connections between new material and what they already know—and to decide what is important in the text—prepares them for future class reading of the material.

Academic or content language is difficult for emerging readers and having time to explore ideas in a non-threatening atmosphere leads to greater understanding during regular class readings. One-on-one conferences—even for five minutes—lets students know they are valued and gives the teacher an avenue to note misconceptions and errors that might not otherwise become evident. Information uncovered during an individual conference leads to planning the next steps for guided reading groups.

TIERING OF READING ACTIVITIES

If gifted EL students are to be appropriately challenged, educators must set forth activities that will support students’ current level of reading while challenging their ability to think on more abstract levels. Effective tiering “enables all students to work on common goals, but at a degree of difficulty appropriate for their current individual needs” (Tomlinson, 2001). In tiering, all children work on the same skill(s). By scaffolding activities, emergent readers, as well as experienced readers, are appropriately challenged.

The concept behind tiered literacy centers (Pedersen 2007) is to create an opportunity for groups of readers to independently explore books on like topics. Placing books that range in difficulty in thematic tubs allows emergent readers to explore the same topics as their native speaking peers. These books can be read while the teacher is working with other small groups during guided reading. Rigor is added when children fill out a task card that requires higher level thinking skills including analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. Differentiation takes place on two levels: text readability and leveled task card prompts based upon Blooms Taxonomy. Student conversation about the reading is a very powerful tool, allowing gifted EL learners the opportunity to share ideas, thinking, and wonderings with other gifted and non-gifted readers. All students’ ideas are honored and explored with respect.

INTO THE FIELD

Bringing outside mentors and experts into the classroom is another way to expand knowledge. Taking students on trips outside the classroom allows them to gain life experiences that they might not acquire otherwise. A visit to a local museum, tide pool, wild animal preserve, science lab or other location that supports academic studies and standards is time well spent. Budget and transportation issues sometimes limit the ability for some trips.

Classroom Application: A Class Field Trip

If funding is not available for a bus trip, students may go on a walking excursion to a local chain grocery store. Prearrange to have a manager or docent explain the daily operations of each department and escort students systematically through the aisles. This trip could be an extension to a health unit while studying consumerism and healthy choices.

Prior to the trip, have students bring in empty packages, cartons, and boxes to examine for nutritional values. While at the market, students can compare similar products for nutritional and monetary values. Back in class, continue readings both in the text and with trade books. This simple and no cost trip can help all youngsters understand the workings of a market and how to be smart consumers, thus providing another common experience related to classroom reading.
PULLING IT TOGETHER

As EL students are becoming identified as gifted learners, it is the teacher’s responsibility to find ways to transmit the skills of reading while respecting the potential for processing abstract thought and ideas. Students today are required to become proficient readers at an early age, and for English language learners and those who come from families of low socio-economic levels, this often poses a challenge. Modeling reading and using read-aloud and think-aloud strategies demonstrates the ideas of fluency, questioning, inferring, predicting, as well as vocabulary development.

Providing students with tools such as graphic organizers and icons helps sort ideas while nudging English learners to think in more complex ways. Allowing time to work with academic peers offers opportunity for vocabulary development while respecting their gifted potential.

Setting aside time for individual conferences lowers anxiety for the emerging reader and allows the teacher and student time to build positive rapport. This quiet, personal time gives emergent readers the specific instruction needed to help them move forward. Small group or guided instruction offers emergent readers the chance to work with other readers (native and non-native) who have the same reading issues. This promotes an environment in which readers are least likely to be nervous and are open to accepting help from both the instructor and their peers to improve vocabulary, grammar, and reading strategies.

Creating activities that offer a range of thinking levels designed to go along with leveled texts supports the emergent reader. This tiering allows all students to work on the same reading skill, but with accessible literature. The more opportunities students have to read books independently without struggling, the more quickly they move to more challenging material.

Experiences with mentors who support learning and excursions outside of the classroom create new knowledge bases from which EL learners can draw.

Oral and written language is an integral part of reading success. The more opportunities our gifted EL learners are given to share ideas and respond both orally and in written form, the better readers they become. The more life experiences they have and the more books they read and listen to, the more they understand what they read. Promoting respect for the diversity and knowledge gifted EL students bring to the classroom and the abstract ideas they discuss improves us all.

KATIE PEDERSEN, M.S. has taught in both gifted and highly gifted elementary programs for the past 17 years in the San Diego Unified School District. During two of those years she served as the elementary GATE resource teacher and was responsible for GATE teacher certification instruction. As an active board member and past president of the Association of San Diego Educators of the Gifted, she has planned or presented at local conferences as well as CAG, NAGC and the World Council for Gifted and Talented Children. Her current passion is working with gifted, second language students where she incorporates Tiered Literacy Centers daily.

Resources to Support Reading for Gifted English Language Learners

**Teacher Resources**


**Classroom Resources**


—Prepared by Katie Pedersen

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KATIE PEDERSEN, M.S. has taught in both gifted and highly gifted elementary programs for the past 17 years in the San Diego Unified School District. During two of those years she served as the elementary GATE resource teacher and was responsible for GATE teacher certification instruction. As an active board member and past president of the Association of San Diego Educators of the Gifted, she has planned or presented at local conferences as well as CAG, NAGC and the World Council for Gifted and Talented Children. Her current passion is working with gifted, second language students where she incorporates Tiered Literacy Centers daily.
A 9-year-old homeschooler, who successfully completed two college courses at the age of eight and is scheduled to take a full-time college course load at age nine, must have her parents apply annually to the local school board for “approval” of her homeschooling program in the state where they live. The school board requested that this young college student, who had passed the college’s entrance exams, take a 4th grade achievement test to “prove” she was learning. The parents and child refused, and the local school board denied approval of the homeschooling program. Local headlines read “Genius Child is Denied Home Teaching,” and the AP wire and the New York Times picked up the story.

After she had cooperated with national television network producers to develop a program on gifted children, the producer called back the leading expert in gifted education to admit: “We’ve never tried to develop a segment that has produced so many slips of papers on our desk! We thought that producing a program on gifted children would be easy, but it is so complex that we decided to focus on prodigies instead.”

Indecent Exposure

Does the Media Exploit Highly Gifted Children?

By Elizabeth Meckstroth and Kathi Kearney
e live in a media-saturated age. These are only two examples of how extremely gifted children are subjected to publicity—publicity often filled with stereotypes, sensationalism, and inaccurate, inappropriate, or unwanted expectations. In fact, children who astonish us with exceptional feats, whether intellectual, athletic, or in the arts, are often the most sensationalized in our post-modern, 24/7 media world.

As a child's intelligence increases beyond the norm, so does the potential for misunderstanding that child's emotions and personal principles. The personalities, values, abilities, and interests of highly gifted children often differ as much from each other as from the rest of the population. Anything you can say about one of these children, the opposite will hold true for another. However, considering some of the distinctive, generalizable traits of extremely gifted individuals helps parents and educators become more cautiously protective in creating supportive publicity—if media coverage is chosen at all.

CHARACTERISTICS OF EXTREME GIFTEDNESS AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR MEDIA ATTENTION

Highly gifted children and youth have exceptional abilities and often an intense, acute awareness. These characteristics, coupled with the fact that they are still young, can also create extraordinary vulnerabilities. Educators and researchers alike find that the highly gifted tend to be emotionally sensitive, intuitive, and want peer-group acceptance. These qualities are confirmed in studies published by Gross (2004), Plichowski (2006) and Silverman (2000). Social and emotional issues for exceptionally intellectually gifted students are summarized in the service publication of the National Association for Gifted Children, The Social and Emotional Development of Gifted Children: What Do We Know? “The most highly talented are the most vulnerable, probably because they are exceedingly ‘out of synch’ with school, friends, and even family” (Neihart, M. et al 2002). These characteristics have implications when a school, parent, or even the child is considering media attention.

Introversion. After assessing over 4,000 children, researchers at the Gifted Development Center (GDC) found that more than 75% of children over 160 IQ have a predominately introverted personality and gain comfort and energy from being alone. Introverted people are likely to become embarrassed when they are the center of attention. For introverted children, being singled out—whether by a teacher in the classroom, a neighbor in the community, or by The New York Times or CNN—can cause humiliation.

Desire for Privacy. Introverted people also tend to have an intense need for privacy, often hiding what is most important to them. As far back as the 1930s, Leta Hollingworth, who followed 12 profoundly gifted children above 180 IQ from early childhood into adulthood, noted:

Those who test above 180 IQ are characterized by a strong desire for personal privacy. They seldom volunteer information about themselves. They do not like to have attention called to their families and homes. They are reluctant to impart information concerning their plans, hopes, convictions, and so forth. (Hollingworth, 1942, p. xvi)

Yet the very nature of our post-modern twenty-first century media seems tailor-made to promote the exact opposite.

Other personality characteristics. The GDC study also found that 90 percent of the exceptionally gifted children they evaluated are sensitive and are concerned with justice and fairness. Between 84 and 88 percent are perfectionistic, persistent in their areas of interest, and question authority (Silverman, 2004). Sensitivity, justice, fairness, and perfectionism are not usually the first words that come to mind when one thinks of contemporary media. This dichotomy between who these children are and the actions of the media that tries to present them to the world is often in sharp conflict.

Complexity and asynchrony. Many highly gifted children are enigmas to us—they are so complex that we rarely can really know what is going on within them. Their extreme asynchronous development creates extra adjustment challenges for them (Morelock, M. J. 1992). Their intellectual and personality characteristics amplify their life experiences, and their differences from the norm tend to exacerbate their sense of dissonance with others.

Furthermore:

The literature on the intellectually gifted suggests that, while the majority of highly gifted children enjoy unusually positive and supportive family relationships…., their social relationships with age-peers are fraught with difficulty….. (Gross, 2004, p. 178)

These qualities can intensify the repercussions, real and perceived, from publicity and media coverage about their personal lives, even if the publicity is positive.

The Problem of Unreasonable Media Expectations

Prodigies—children who demonstrate the abilities of a talented adult before about age 11—are sensationalized in our media. A flare over “gamer” prodigies [video game players] was featured in two issues of the New York Times within two consecutive weeks—one of them on the front page (June 5, and 17, 2007). Music prodigies who are also intellectually gifted have been a staple of the media for more than a hundred years, as well as stories about young mental calculators who can square 18 digit numbers or nine-year-olds who multiply six digit numbers in their heads. This focus on discrete, single-domain prodigy abilities can cast a comparative shadow on other highly gifted children who are equally gifted but have less flagrant, “showy” talents. Meckstroth recalled that sometimes, when she interpreted exceptionally high IQ testing results to parents, emphasizing how rare their child’s high score was, the response was something like, “Oh, I’ve seen those gifted kids on TV, and my child’s nothing like that. He can’t be that smart.”
TWO TYPES OF PRESS COVERAGE

Accidental press coverage. When highly gifted children are featured in the media, usually one of two things has happened. It may be accidental press coverage—the press was there at just the right (or wrong) time; the story of a child’s giftedness becomes an unexpected part of another story that the media was covering at the time. Or, like the young homeschooled girl mentioned at the beginning of this article, the parents may have been trying to accomplish one thing (a homeschool program approval required by state law) while the media took the story in a wildly different direction (The “Genius Child is Denied Home Teaching” headline).

Conscious choice publicity. The second type of media coverage is what we will term conscious choice publicity—media coverage that the child and family may choose to participate in (or not). Types of “conscious choice publicity” include press coverage arranged by the child’s school or initiated by the local or national media regarding academic accomplishments and competitions; agreement to assist and/or be interviewed by a local or national news organization, print or broadcast, in the development of a news story or documentary about gifted children; and, these days, individual choice to publicize one’s child or for the child to publicize himself or herself via the Internet, including personal websites, blogs, and social networking sites such as MySpace and FaceBook.

Telling the whole story. Regardless of whether the media coverage is accidental or consciously planned, focus on the processes accomplished youth apply along their way to achievement. Include aspects such as practice, having a meaningful goal, and compassionate teachers. Highlighting the steps taken along their way to achievement can encourage other parents and children to develop their life skills and attain meaningful accomplishments.

Felice Kaufmann studied the lives of the 1964-68 Presidential Scholars—the top highest achieving male and female high school graduates in each state. By midlife, after most had achieved professionally near the top of their fields, many of these outstanding students realized that for most of their lives they had been facilitating other people’s priorities and jumping through other people’s hoops. Eventually, some of them followed their hearts and focused their lives on their own dreams and aspirations. They became goat farmers in VT, guitar players, changed careers entirely, and wrote poetry, among other things. In many cases, they reported to Kaufmann that they had returned to talents and activities they enjoyed as young children and preteens (Kaufmann, F. (May 13, 1995) Young children and preteens (Kaufmann, F. (May 13, 1995) that they had returned to talents and activities they enjoyed as young children and preteens (Kaufmann, F. (May 13, 1995) among other things. In many cases, they reported to Kaufmann that they had returned to talents and activities they enjoyed as young children and preteens (Kaufmann, F. (May 13, 1995)•GECommFall0723-43.qxd 9/13/07 11:32 AM Page 30

Common Gifted Education Myths

MYTH: Acceleration options, such as early entrance, grade skipping, or early exit can be socially harmful for gifted students.

TRUTH: Academically gifted students often feel bored or out of place with their age peers and naturally gravitate towards older students who are more similar as “intellectual peers.” Studies have shown that many students are happier with older students who share their interests than they are with children the same age. SOURCE: COLANIELLO, N., ASSDULINE, S. G., & GROSS, M.U.M. (2004). A NATION DECEIVED: HOW SCHOOLS HOLD BACK AMERICA’S BRIGHTEST STUDENTS. I OWA CITY, I. UNIVERSITY OF IOWA. NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR GIFTED CHILDREN. NAGC.ORG.
Tips for Parents and Teachers Regarding the Media and Gifted Children

Remember, you can always say “No.” In many cases this is the best choice. Think carefully about whether or not it is in the child’s best interest—both present and long-term—to have any media coverage at all. Likewise, if you or your child becomes uncomfortable at any time with how an interview or filming is progressing, you should feel free to terminate the interview.

What goes on the Web, stays on the Web. These days, even tiny local newspapers have a worldwide Internet presence. Furthermore, instead of being archived on microfilm in difficult-to-access libraries in small towns, local, national, and international news stories are immediately archived on the Internet and become accessible to anyone with an Internet connection for years to come. If you decide to allow media coverage of your child, do it knowing that any information you provide, however obscure, will be available worldwide for the foreseeable future (including easy access to your child’s address). All news is global now, and, like Pandora’s box, cannot be recalled once it is out there.

Treat everything you say as if it is on the record. Even if the reporter insists that what you say is not going to be publicized, you should treat it as if it is.

Consult with the child about any areas of his or her life that the child considers private and not to be publicized, and honor the child’s requests. You can also ask the reporter if the family can review the text draft before publication and correct errors; some news organizations will permit this, and some will not.

Prior to the interview, ask the interviewer for the interview time limit so that you can manage the process. This is helpful for planning purposes for both parties.

Request that questions be sent to you before the interview so you and your child can adequately prepare. Again, some news reporters will accommodate you with this request, while others will not. If you feel strongly that you want an opportunity to consider the interview questions prior to the interview, then make that a condition of the interview at the outset.

Keep your audience/reader in mind, rather than your interviewer. Even though you are speaking to an interviewer, remember that the story the reporter will write or film is a story for public consumption.

Get your main message out first! Limit your main messages to two or three at the most. Center on these themes, return to them frequently, and keep your focus points in mind as you concentrate on the interview or production process. Maintain your direction. Keep your answers fairly brief.

Refer to published materials, experts, and institutions whenever possible. Adding comments such as, “Articles in the Gifted Education Communicator supports this concept…” or, “as cited in the book Growing Up Gifted…” or “Dr. ABC, a specialist in the education of gifted children, suggested that. . .” rather than, “I think…” not only adds credibility to your statements but will also give the reporter additional sources to read or interview to support the story.

Think in “quotable quotes.” Post-modern media likes sound bites, and a simple, succinct statement will stick with readers and viewers, many of whom have little or no background about what a parent or teacher of the gifted lives with every day. For instance, Stephanie Tolan’s “quotable quote,” “You don’t have the moral right to hold one child back to make another child feel better,” says volumes about the ethics of acceleration. Practice a few “quotable quotes” applicable to your child’s own situation before the interview.

Be cautious when interviewers interject their own information or biases and attempt to pose it as a question to you or your child. One example might be, “Gifted children are usually loners, aren’t they?” Often similar statements are widely believed by the general public but are based on presumptions about gifted children, not facts. Counter with facts, and don’t let a reporter put words in your mouth (or your child’s).

Avoid the “Super Kid” portrayal. Many reporters want to create a great story. Their spin could make a child seem like an “odd ball,” “geek,” or a “Super Kid.” Make every effort to make sure that your child is portrayed as a whole child—and not just in his talent area.

Stress the processes and components of astonishing success. Emphasize how children persisted and invested time and effort into their achievements. Precocity may mean that this child practices a lot. Elaborate on how this child received support and encouragement from others.

Always confirm the deadline for the story with the interviewer. This will allow you to follow up as necessary. Arrange for the interviewer to call or e-mail you prior to publication or production to conduct a fact check on the final version of the story. If a media agency employs separate fact checkers (other than the original reporter) be sure to return their calls! They usually are working on a tight deadline, and if you do not make yourself available to them for fact checking, you may find errors—sometimes-irreversible errors with long-term repercussions—in the final published version of the story.

If you were pleased with the results of the publicity, call the reporter or producer and thank him or her. Usually, reporters get complaint calls. Elaborate on the details about how the process was beneficial to you and to others. They will likely be astonished to receive accolades and be more eager to help you with publicity in the future!

—Prepared by Betty Meckstroth and Kathi Kearney
Language
A Springboard to Life
By Michael Cárdenas

I was born in Spain and lived in Cáceres, a beautiful city with old-world traditions. There, if you go to church, you have a choice—the men-only mass or a family mass. Women have not come so far in Cáceres. Shopping for food takes about two hours a day. You go to the meat store for meat, fish store for fish, bakery for bread…you get the picture!

When I was five, I immigrated to San Diego without a single word in my English vocabulary. All I knew about the United States was what Hollywood had to show. When Halloween rolled around and I discovered that all I had to do was say, “Trick or treat!” to get a bag full of candy, I knew I was going to love it here.

I was surprised to see how diverse my elementary school population was. We had a large contingent of Italians and Portuguese. The groups shared their traditions and language internally.

Back then, corporate America didn’t cater to different ethnic groups. A global economy wasn’t really part of the business landscape. Language arts didn’t have the degree of practical value that it does today. If you were a language arts student at university, you were an idealist—someone who could talk about literature from far-away countries. You stood out since no one really knew what in the world you were studying.

In the last 30 years, the United States has turned 180 degrees. Corporate America now understands full well that if you sell to more than one ethnic group you need to talk their culture, their language, their folklore. My background enabled me to recognize the value of communicating in this fashion, and so I started a successful business that helps companies market and sell their goods and services all over the world. Called Local Concept, our motto is “Fit in. Anywhere.”

That motto is even more important for our children than it is for products. As the father of two gifted children, I am very aware that their future world will be much smaller than the one I grew up in. That’s why Local Concept developed GlobalPal, a nonprofit Internet-based pen pal program for students to exchange letters with students in other countries. Language is not a barrier because Local Concept provides the translation.

Students at my children’s school, Bird Rock Elementary in La Jolla, California, have been corresponding for several months with their counterparts in St. Andrews School in Buenos Aires, Argentina. They’ve shared important information about favorite sports and colors, the makeup of their families, and what they like about school. With GlobalPal, teachers can sign up for free at www.globalpal.net and select a school for their students to correspond with. Local Concept provides the technology and translation. Student privacy is strictly enforced.

The kids love it and so do their teachers. They gain a rare understanding of cultural and geographic differences that will help them tackle the challenges and opportunities ahead. My goal is to have many more students take their first step around the world using GlobalPal as a stepping-stone.

Why is this important? If you speak a second language, you undoubtedly are sensitive to cultural differences. This is a viable asset that most monolingual people don’t have—the ability to look at life with a global perspective. Language and culture go hand in hand, and only by recognizing these cultural differences can you compete in the global arena.

By way of example, in the United States, children take their lunch to school. They have about an hour for lunch, and most of that hour is spent playing. Most children in the U.S. scarf down their lunches in about five minutes. Children in the U.S. eat with their hands, i.e., sandwiches, fruit, cookies, and potato chips. It is OK to walk while you eat.

Compare this meal pattern with that of Spain or Argentina where children go home to be with their parents for lunch. They have about two hours for lunch and lunch is a sit-down meal where children are required to use forks and spoons. It is rude to eat outside the meal table, and it’s especially rude to eat while you walk.

A second area of cultural significance has to do with respect. In most cultures, children are taught to respect their bosses, their teachers. Compare this with the U.S. notion that it is healthy and somewhat encouraged that students challenge the status quo or the teachings of the class.

These small but important distinctions send ripples throughout each culture. To play in the global arena, our children must understand and respect such cultural differences. Let’s raise them to fit in. Anywhere.

MICHAEL CÁRDENAS is the founder and president of Local Concept, a San Diego-based company that helps businesses fit in globally. He is the father of two gifted children and the originator of GlobalPal, a nonprofit Internet-based pen pal program that removes barriers to international communication.
Gifted Education Communicator
Published by the California Association for the Gifted (CAG)

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Gifted Education Communicator
Information and practical solutions for parents and educators

Gifted Education Communicator is designed to be a practitioner’s journal—providing you with the information and strategies to apply the theory, research, and best practices in the field. Noted leaders and experienced parents address a broad range of themes and issues related to educating and parenting the gifted. The high quality of articles has made the journal a highly respected publication in the field of gifted education. You’ll find these regular features in each issue of Gifted Education Communicator:

• Feature theme articles by national leaders in the field
• Parent Talk
• Hands-on Curriculum
• National Calendar
• Teacher Talk
• Administrator Talk

UPCOMING THEMES: Winter—PreK–2; Spring—Understanding and Applying Brain Research; Summer—Parenting Gifted Children
When I present to teachers and parents, I use a Peanuts cartoon that shows Charlie Brown in bed thinking, “Sometimes I lie awake at night and I ask, ‘What is the meaning of life?’ Then a voice comes to me that says, ‘I before E, except after C!’” My poor son spent a lot of time memorizing this rule. Then he misspelled “species” on his test because he kept spelling it... “species.” (He did follow the rule, though, right?) There are so many words that are spelled with rules that are broken or that make no sense—it seems silly to have the rule in the first place!

Spelling seems to be universally challenging for visual-spatial children and adults, except for those with a photographic memory. Thank goodness for spell checkers! For those who think in images (estimated at between 75-80% of the gifted population), not words, it can be very difficult to memorize all the rules of the English language and all the exceptions to those rules.

Creating pictures of spelling words, particularly pictures that will live on as memorable images in the visual learner's mind, is a more effective technique than memorizing rules. Color can be a great tool for accomplishing this. Taking the “IE” in FRIEND, for instance, and writing them in a different color, or even larger type, helps to secure the image that, in this instance, the I precedes E.

In the example above, the student created a story that involved each letter of the word, “mountain.” The challenging part of the word for this child was the “ai” combination, so in this story, the character had to slide down the “a” in order to use the “i”-ce pick to climb back up. The image and story worked together to aid the student in remembering the letter combination.

Any time students can incorporate color, exaggerated size, humor, and imagery—all techniques that engage the right hemisphere—they have a greater chance at recalling the new material. Visual-spatial learners should avoid traditional spelling rules that do not serve to generate mental images for the speller/reader. “Inventive spelling” should be restricted as well because the incorrect version is likely to become a permanent mental image for the student.

Another useful technique is to have students type each spelling word on a computer using a different font for each word. Students should select a font that matches the feeling or mood of the word. So, serendipitous which sounds like a fun and interesting word, might look like this: serendipitous Just be sure they use a font they can read!

If your visual-spatial children have successfully created an image of the word in their minds, they will be able to spell that word forward and backward with the same ease. To test whether the image your child has created has a permanent, retrievable place in their memory, ask your child to spell the word in reverse. If this can't be done, the student should try alternate techniques to create a permanent mental image until he or she is able to spell the word correctly forward and backward.

A VISUALIZATION APPROACH TO SPELLING
1. Ask the student to write the spelling word in large print with bright-colored ink on a white piece of paper with the difficult part of the word written in a different color and possibly larger. Use only one word per page.
2. Have the student hold the paper in front as far as his or her arm can reach, slightly to the left of center for the student and above eye-level.
3. Tell the student to study the word carefully, then close his or her eyes and picture the word in his or her imagination.
4. Now, tell the student to do something wild and crazy to the word in his or her imagination—the sillier the better. (Students can make the word more colorful, have the letters act like people or animals—anything that will help remember how the word is spelled.)
5. Ask the student to spell the word backward with eyes closed. When the student can do this accurately, he or she truly has an image of the word and is not relying on sounding it out.
6. Next, ask the student to spell the word forward with eyes closed.
7. Have the student open his or her eyes and write the word once.
What do students write in your class? How do you encourage young, talented writers toward excellence?

These days, young writers often find their work in demand at top publishing houses. Ned Vizzini, Christopher Paolini, and S.E. Hinton have turned their teenage voices into a wide following of readers. Publishers have caught on to the idea that the teenage voice is a marketable commodity, and are more receptive to young writers.

As a teacher, you have the opportunity to work with students and to encourage their writing talent. You have the chance to watch young writers develop and flourish before your very eyes.

ENHANCING TALENT

How can you specifically encourage writing talent? What direction can you give students? Practically speaking, writing is difficult to direct because it is an interior talent, one that emerges gradually upon the page.

However, writing is a dynamic activity. Teachers can provide encouragement to young writers by offering input on class papers, journals, and creative writing exercises. When you offer constructive criticism, you might start by emphasizing the positive aspects of the piece at hand. Then you can progress to emphasizing ways in which it can be improved during a short conference with the student. The student will come away with a sense of his ability as a writer, as well as areas to improve.

DEVELOPING WRITING SAMPLES

How do you encourage students to submit for publication? As a teacher you have the opportunity to bring publications into your classroom. Sharing magazines that publish student writing is the first step toward giving students a sense of the publishing business.

Writing workshops are particularly helpful, especially when students are 11 and above. Ideally, by the time students reach middle school, they will understand the basics of grammar and the structure of a story. They will also understand different writing genres, such as poetry and short stories. With this knowledge, students can progress toward writing workshops. These can take place during the school day or as part of an after school program.

How do you lead a writing workshop? Writing workshops should follow a particular etiquette, in which students share their pieces and give constructive criticism. One effective way of beginning a writing workshop is to have students work in pairs, with friends they are comfortable with as they begin the peer editing process.

Encouraging Students to Publish*

By Suzanna E. Henshon
With peer editing, an effective beginning is to provide students with specific instructions about the process. In your guidelines, students will comment about the title of the piece, the word choice, the grammar, spelling, and other areas for improvement; this structure forces students to go beyond the step of writing a “good paper” and gives them a sense of what an editor does in real life. By working together in the editing process, they will understand their own writing mistakes. The goal is for students to develop better writing and editing skills. Some students will hone their work further, in the hopes of submitting it professionally.

ANALYZING THE WRITING MARKETS

After students have progressed with their writing samples, the class might take a look at forums where exceptional writers submit their work. Creative Kids, Cricket Magazine, Stone Soup, and Imagine are magazines in which young writers are frequently published.

As you and your students analyze these works, try to figure out what audience and purpose the magazine serves. Imagine has specific themes in each issue, while Cricket Magazine sponsors contests for young writers and artists. Students can go online and study winning entries in the Scholastic Arts & Writing Awards.

Editorial taste is an important thing for young writers to see and analyze. Editorial taste is a sense of what the magazine has published in the past; it is an intangible understanding of what is appropriate for a particular audience. By carefully studying several issues of a magazine, students can attain a sense of style, content, and age level. These are important components in defining editorial taste, and will guide students toward a more directed submission to a particular publication.

How do you and your students study editorial taste? Each published work reflects the effort of numerous editors, so to define individual editorial taste is difficult. However, students reading Cricket Magazine will see that folk tales from around the world are featured regularly. On the other hand, American Girl features more contemporary stories about young girls. Understanding the basic differences between the audiences of these publications is the first step toward understanding editorial taste.

SUBMITTING WORK FOR PUBLICATION

At school, teachers can provide publishing opportunities for students. Teachers can create a class website, or help sponsor a section in the school newspaper that features student work. By having these local publishing opportunities, students can gain confidence in their voices and visions as writers. Students can also share their work at school assemblies or at parent nights, if they are comfortable presenting their work.

After numerous revisions of work and attaining an understanding of the market, students may choose to submit their writing for publication. During this stage, students will learn the importance of professionalism and being attentive to details.

Regardless of whether a young writer is published, through this process you will be able to encourage student writers to attain a higher skill base. By taking students beyond the first draft, you teach valuable insights about what it means to be a writer. Success in any career field is contingent not only upon diligence, but also persistence. You might just be the teacher who provides encouragement to a young Annie Dillard or Toni Morrison. Or you might be the teacher who proves encouragement to a researcher who will follow in the footsteps of Joyce VanTassel-Baska or Howard Gardner.

MAGAZINE RESOURCES

American Girl Magazine includes stories, articles, and activities for girls ages 8–14. americangirl.com/agmg/mag_activities.html

Creative Kids includes stories, poems, and games written by children under the age of 17. prufrock.com/client/client_pages/prufrock_jm_createkids.cfm

Cricket Magazine has delighted, challenged, and entertained young readers ages 9 to 14 for over 30 years. cricketmag.com

Imagine Magazine is published by Johns Hopkins University. Each issue follows a particular theme, and talented writers in grades 7–12 are invited to submit work for publication. cty.jhu.edu/imagine/index.html

Poets & Writers Magazine features many top writers in the literary world, and is a magazine that students can enjoy reading for many years to come. pw.org/mag

Stone Soup is a magazine featuring the works of young writers and artists ages 13 and under. stonesoup.com

Writer’s Digest provides a wide variety of resources for writers of all ages, from books to annual competitions to a popular magazine. writersdigest.com

Writer’s Journal is a magazine with articles about writing nonfiction, fiction, poetry, and movie scripts. writersjournal.com


Editor’s note* This article first appeared in the Spring 2007 Pull-Out Supplement to Compass Points, the newsletter of the National Association for Gifted Children. Printed by permission and with gratitude.
Editor’s Picks: Plagiarism in the New Age

No doubt cheating has been an issue of concern for as long as kids have been going to school. In the age of information with technology, however, researchers find that plagiarism and cheating have increased substantially. Cheating has become so much easier with the prevalence of computers in schools, homes, and dorm rooms. Below you will find several Internet resources with information to help you learn more about this topic.

1. Computers, the Internet, and Cheating Among Secondary School Students: Some Implications for Educators


Abstract:
This article investigates in greater depth one particular aspect of cheating within secondary education and some implications for measuring academic achievement. More specifically, it examines how secondary students exploit the Internet for plagiarizing schoolwork, and looks at how a traditional method of educational assessment, namely paper-based report and essay writing, has been impacted by the growth of Internet usage and the proliferation of computer skills among secondary school students. One of the conclusions is that students’ technology fluency is forcing educators to revisit conventional assessment methods. Different options for combating Internet plagiarism are presented, and some software tools as well as non-technology solutions are evaluated in light of the problems brought about by “cyberplagiarism.”

2. What Can We Do To Curb Student Cheating?


Introduction and topics covered:
A 1998 national survey found that four out of five top students admitted cheating at some point. In another nationwide study, nine out of ten high school teachers acknowledged cheating is a problem in their school. Is cheating a problem in your school? Has the Internet added some new dimensions to the problem? This week, *Education World* explores the problem of cheating.

• The Internet: A New Tool for Old-fashioned Cheating
• Battling Internet Rip-offs
• How Can You prevent cheating
• Cheaters Are Liars
• Ads Against Cheating
• Caution To Teachers

3. Internet Plagiarism: An Agenda for Staff Inservice and Student Awareness


Internet Plagiarism Presentation Outline:
• Extent of the Problem
• Recognize the Signs
• Pinpoint the Source
• Prevention

4. Guide to Cheating at Lakeview High School


Excerpts:

**Why You Shouldn’t Cheat**

People’s words, work, and/or ideas are considered “intellectual property” - meaning the creator owns them.

For example, the courts ruled that individuals could not exchange music over Napster because… [the songs were owned by the artists or their record companies.]

Therefore, if you do use someone else’s words, work, and/or ideas, give them credit where credit is due.

**Examples of Cheating**

• Hiring someone to write a paper
• Buying a paper or project
• Sharing files (e.g., an Excel Worksheet) in a business class
• Copying math homework
• Building on someone else’s ideas without proper citations
• Turning in someone else’s “Canticle” journals
• Letting your science lab partner do all the work and just putting your name on the final report
• Letting Dad build your cathedral for your Mod 10 Project
• Looking at another’s test
• Turning in your brother’s or sister’s old Civil War project
Copyright and Fair Use Guidelines for Teachers

This chart was designed to inform teachers of what they may do under the law. Feel free to make copies for teachers in your school or district, or download a PDF version at www.techlearning.com. More detailed information about fair use guidelines and copyright resources is available at www.halldavidson.net.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Specifics</th>
<th>What you can do</th>
<th>The Fine Print</th>
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</table>
| Printed Material         | • Poem less than 250 words; 250-word excerpt of poem greater than 250 words  
• Articles, stories, or essays less than 2,500 words  
• Excerpt from a longer work (10 percent of work or 1,000 words, whichever is less)  
• One chart, picture, diagram, or cartoon per book or per periodical issue  
• Two pages (maximum) from an illustrated work less than 2,500 words, e.g., a children’s book | • Teachers may make multiple copies for classroom use, and incorporate into multimedia for teaching classes.  
• Students may incorporate text into multimedia projects. | • Copies may be made only from legally acquired originals.  
• Only one copy allowed per student.  
• Teachers may make copies in nine instances per class per term.  
• Usage must be “at the instance and inspiration of a single teacher,” i.e., not a directive from the district.  
• Don’t create anthologies.  
• “Consumables,” such as workbooks, may not be copied. |
| (short)                  |                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                             |
| Printed Material         | • An entire work  
• Portions of a work  
• A work in which the existing format has become obsolete, e.g., a document stored on a Wang computer | • A librarian may make up to three copies “solely for the purpose of replacement of a copy that is damaged, deteriorating, lost, or stolen.” | • Copies must contain copyright information.  
• Archiving rights are designed to allow libraries to share with other libraries one-of-a-kind and out-of-print books. |
| (archives)               |                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                             |
| Illustrations and        | • Photograph  
• Illustration  
• Collections of photographs  
• Collections of illustrations | • Single works may be used in their entirety, but no more than five images by a single artist or photographer may be used.  
• From a collection, not more than 15 images or 10 percent (whichever is less) may be used. | • Although older illustrations may be in the public domain and don’t need permission to be used, sometimes they’re part of a copyright collection. Copyright ownership information is available at www.loc.gov or www.mpa.org. |
| Photographs              |                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                             |
| Video                    | • Videotapes (purchased)  
• Videotapes (rented)  
• DVDs  
• Laserdiscs | • Teachers may use these materials in the classroom.  
• Copies may be made for archival purposes or to replace lost, damaged, or stolen copies. | • The material must be legitimately acquired.  
• Material must be used in a classroom or nonprofit environment “dedicated to face-to-face instruction.”  
• Use should be instructional, not for entertainment or reward.  
• Copying OK only if replacements are unavailable at a fair price or in a viable format. |
| (for viewing)            |                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                             |
### Medium

**Video**  
(for integration into multimedia or video projects)

- Videotapes
- DVDs
- Laserdiscs
- Multimedia encyclopedias
- QuickTime Movies
- Video clips from the Internet

**Music**  
(for integration into multimedia or video projects)

- Records
- Cassette tapes
- CDs
- Audio clips on the Web

**Computer Software**

- Software (purchased)
- Software (licensed)

**Internet**

- Internet connections
- World Wide Web

**Television**

- Broadcast (e.g., ABC, NBC, CBS, UPN, PBS, and local stations)
- Cable (e.g., CNN, MTV, HBO)
- Videotapes made of broadcast and cable TV programs

### What you can do

**Video**

- Students “may use portions of lawfully acquired copyright works in their academic multimedia,” defined as 10 percent or three minutes (whichever is less) of “motion media.”

**Music**

- Up to 10 percent of a copyright musical composition may be reproduced, performed, and displayed as part of a multimedia program produced by an educator or students.

**Computer Software**

- Library may lend software to patrons.
- Software may be installed on multiple machines, and distributed to users via a network.
- Software may be installed at home and at school.
- Libraries may make copies for archival use or to replace lost, damaged, or stolen copies if software is unavailable at a fair price or in a viable format.

**Internet**

- Images may be downloaded for student projects and teacher lessons.
- Sound files and video may be downloaded for use in multimedia projects (see portion restrictions above).

**Television**

- Broadcasts or tapes made from broadcast may be used for instruction.
- Cable channel programs may be used with permission. Many programs may be retained by teachers for years—see Cable in the Classroom ([www.ciconline.org](http://www.ciconline.org)) for details.

### The Fine Print

**Video**

- The material must be legitimately acquired: a legal copy (not bootleg) or home recording.
- Copyright works included in multimedia projects must give proper attribution to copyright holder.

**Music**

- A maximum of 30 seconds per musical composition may be used.
- Multimedia program must have an educational purpose.

**Computer Software**

- Only one machine at a time may use the program.
- The number of simultaneous users must not exceed the number of licenses; and the number of machines being used must never exceed the number licensed. A network license may be required for multiple users.
- Take aggressive action to monitor that copying is not taking place (unless for archival purposes).

**Internet**

- Classroom resources may be posted only on a password-protected mediated site. They may not be archived. Think of it as a dynamic bulletin board for enrolled students.
- Any resources downloaded or uploaded must have been acquired.

**Television**

- Schools are allowed to retain broadcast tapes for a minimum of 10 school days. (Enlightened rights holders, such as PBS’s Reading Rainbow, allow for much more.)
- Cable programs are technically not covered by the same guidelines as broadcast television.

### Sources

- United States Copyright Office Circular 21, Sections 107, 108, and 110 of the Copyright Act (1976) and subsequent amendments, including the Digital Millennium Copyright Act; Fair Use Guidelines for Educational Multimedia; cable systems (and their associations); and Copyright Policy and Guidelines for California’s School Districts, California Department of Education.  
  
  **Note:** Representatives of the institutions and associations who helped to draw up many of the above guidelines wrote a letter to Congress dated March 19, 1976, stating: “There may be instances in which copying that does not fall within the guidelines stated [above] may nonetheless be permitted under the criterion of fair use.”

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*Printed by permission of Hall Davidson.*
Getting Published

Your name in lights! Or, more substantially, in print. The sine qua non of language arts is a real audience. But how does one accomplish that? This set of lessons provides pointed exercises and a blueprint for reaching that audience: selecting the venue, cleanup editing, conforming to any given length and style restrictions, and the submission process—either outside the classroom or through self-publishing. That name in lights can be that of your student with a manuscript suitable for posterity.

What does publishing do for a language arts assignment? This goes well beyond turning in an assignment and receiving a grade with comment. There is an added dimension that encourages depth of analysis and care in execution. The students will be motivated by realistic goals and the possibility of creating a lasting product. The requisite discussion of ideas energizes the nitty-gritty of polishing.

EDITORIAL COLLABORATION

Discuss the concept of editorial collaboration. Arduous as it may seem at the time, what is the advantage of revision versus the spontaneity of first thoughts?

- How is trust in an editor established?
- Is the experience of an editor supportive or limiting?
- How should the final word on artistic direction be determined?
- Do the reasons for what has been written become clearer?

Insight from thinking through this subtext informs tightness of construction, clarity on what the author really wants to say, and provides practice in peer editing.

An initial experience in class editing gives authors opportunities to hear what their words suggest to readers. Begin by suggesting to students three related words, e.g., dry, cracked, parched, and allow them a short time to close their eyes and create a mental image. (A parched man lying on the sand, the sun beating down overhead, reaching out in desperation towards a mirage.) After a minute, ask them to raise their hands to indicate that they have an image in mind. Then, give them 3 minutes to write a paragraph of exactly 25 words. This forces them to edit on the spot—changing phrasing, crossing out, and choosing more vivid words. When the time is up, ask for volunteers to stand and read their paragraph out loud. Standing focuses a formal attention to the words.

To point out the importance of word choice in communicating the intent and how that differs from listener to listener, ask students to close their eyes again and try to picture what the author has said. Then, call upon various volunteers to describe the image the paragraph suggested to them. After several students have given their interpretation, ask the author to elaborate on what the initial picture was. Students can then compare and contrast the specifics that sent them off in another direction. Have students comment on the life experience that is brought to the picture. Hearing the differences brings to the fore the need to be concise in causing the image to bloom from the part to the intended whole.

“FIRST DRAFT” EDITING

After the initial experience of whole class examination of how the choice of words influences understanding, use a “first draft” exercise to illustrate the tensions of editing with the one-to-one peer editor technique. One such assignment is to change the mood or situation of a nursery rhyme. The idea is to do a quick-write and practice polishing. Have a projection of the original “Mary Had a Little Lamb” available and ask a student to read it aloud. Then present this amplification, which might be in need of editing.

One thing was sure: Mary had lost her lamb. She had looked almost everywhere. How could it survive without her care? What would she tell the school authorities? It seemed like only moments ago in this shady forest that it had been following behind her, sure to go where she led. Now, the forest seemed a little too shady….

Or an example with Jack be Nimble, Jack be Quick.

Jack had always been nimble. And quick. Maybe quick was the problem. He had mastered the candlestick in every detail, his agility unquestioned. But now, his judgments came precipitously, and the tragic accident was to snuff the flame forever….

Have students continue from one of these examples or generate one of their own, after which partners are set up for mutual editing. At the conclusion, elicit some editing principles or provide a rubric or check list:

- detail not supporting central theme
- repetitive ideas without artistic intent
- choice among adjectives not based upon connotation
- related ideas not grouped logically
- opening sentence doesn’t provoke interest in the topic
- overused words or phrases

From the experience of first draft editing, students may want to modify the rubric by adding spell check, grammar check, and appropriateness to the assignment.
CHOOSING THE VEHICLE

“UNPRUNING”

Deadwood is inevitably present in an initial writing. Thinning requires attention to the life of the structure, the trunk in the undergrowth. A novel exercise is to “unprune” a clear sentence or two. Compare this assignment with the previous one where the selection of the path is the goal; here, it is simply finding the path, any path. For instance, “To be, or not to be: that is the question,” becomes “I have considered the possibility of the condition of ‘being’ along with the opposite alternative choice, that is to say, ‘not being,’ as questionable.”

Here are some student examples:

If you really have given it your best shot and all, what with those mean people laughing their heads off at you, and with you probably not wanting to try to try again, you still ought to get out there and make a bigger fool out of yourself giving it your best shot some more times. —Kit

When playing in a game where you’re all running around, such as sports or something like it, it’s not completely to the finish until it is all the way to the end. —Dong Ping

Try this with “Go West, young man.” or “To err is human, to forgive divine.”

SETTING THE STAGE

Ask the students to recall memorable, can’t-put-it-down, reading of various genres. Analyze what made it compelling.

Inevitably, the subject comes back to the formality of publishing. What does the act of publishing bring to the written word? Flesh out the following characteristics with student discussion and examples.

- Access—material is readily available to a wider audience
- Polish—beyond spelling and grammar, there is sequence and coherence
- Feedback—not the pat on the back—or stab, but knowledgeable criticism
- Permanence—part of a record over time
- Influence—contributes to the public discussion
- Depth—considered input during construction

An interesting contrast would be the ever-present blog, which has its own special variety of these qualities.

CHOOSING THE VEHICLE

At this point the teacher must choose to either self-publish or get assistance with publishing. If you self-publish you will need your own set of criteria—a workable process decided upon ahead of time. A class newspaper or journal, a collection of poems, a short story, for instance, all depend on classroom rubrics, tailored to in-house standards. If, however, the goal is to have the wider circulation of a formal publisher, the criteria will already have been set. You will need to survey the possibilities and then request specific guidelines and deadlines. Here are some publishing examples of both endeavors from our classroom experiences. We begin with in-house publishing:

Audio recording of original mysteries. After lessons in the construction of mysteries—the crime, alibis, red herrings, evidence, and the line-up of suspicious characters—the students create their individual thrillers, ready for public consumption. With editing completed, students choose small groups with which to make an audio recording of their completed dramas. Equipped with highlighted scripts for each part, students practice in character with the addition of necessary sound effects—creaking door, menacing footsteps. Recordings can then be made using tape or a computer with a microphone and DVD. The completed products can be shared individually, with small groups, or a larger audience, which could include parents. The students each keep a copy of their masterpiece.

Short stories and novels. Following the complex process of composing individual stories—editing, typing, formatting, and illustrating—the time for publishing arrives. One audience possibility is to make arrangements with another class for students to read to small groups or to the whole class. Another would be to invite parents to an Author’s Reception at school.

With completed examples in hand, the teacher contacted a local bookstore for wider exposure. Students were invited to a public reading and reception in the store and a window display of the finished books. Another year’s products were displayed in a case at the public library.

Journals and yearbooks. As the year goes by, culminate activities by having students summarize the learning and write captions for accompanying photographs to be included in a class journal. Journalistic essays and examples of projects, guest consultants, and field trips can also be included. Copies of these journals are distributed to each family, consultant, institution, or company involved—resulting in a lasting record, as well as a good public relations opportunity for gifted program and education in general.

Poetry. The fine-tuning of poetry is more fully supported by having a publishing venue in mind. This could be an individual chapbook or an edited group effort. There are many poetry contests locally and online. The possibility of winning a contest and having your own poem disseminated professionally adds to the validity of critical thinking in the polishing process. The announcement of the winners—letter or phone call—creates a stir of excitement.

In San Diego, the annual Border Voices Poetry Fair is a joint effort of the San Diego Union-Tribune, San Diego State University, and California Poets in the Classroom. It features student poems from throughout San Diego County that were written in the classroom with the guidance of local poet members. The resulting paperback book includes winning poems from elementary through high school, a listing of the runners-up, alongside the contributions of published major poets. An opportunity for public reading is available to all the students of published poems, as well as readings by the invited major poets and takes place at the Poetry Fair held on a Saturday at San Diego State University. One year, the overall winner—and the winners in each grade-level grouping—had lines from their poems printed on advertising displays for the fair and displayed inside local buses as “Poetry in Motion.” Another year, students read their poetry in various rooms of the San Diego Museum of Art—a surprisingly attainable venue through the education representatives at the institutions.

At our classroom end-of-the-year Showcase, the students whose
poems had been published did recitations with a background of individually selected music while sitting on stools, chairs, and boxes of assorted heights, passing the microphone along. The music needs to be subliminal and suit the mood of the poem—Eric Satie; Asian, Indian, or Native American flute music work especially well.

**Newspapers.** School, classroom, and commercial newspapers offer students the opportunity for publishing in a variety of language arts genre—everything from cartoon captions and letters to the editor, to featured articles and editorials. Most newspapers have a Newspaper in Education program (NIE) that can provide teachers with varied curriculum, as well as contacts for contests.

Editorials create an immediate interest. Begin a discussion by bringing in letters to the editor on issues that trigger lively debate such as school uniforms, cafeteria food, bullying, voting age, underage drinking, military recruitment. Many such letters can be found by Googling the subject + letters to the editor. On another day the subject could be personal letters or published poems, plays, or skits that have special meaning.

Identify a local reporter whose articles would be of interest to the class—read and discuss several of these. Contact the reporter to invite him/her into the classroom. Identify yourself, the type of class you teach, which particular article generated the attention and why the coverage has been of particular value to your students. Newspapers are always looking for a way to increase readership in the younger demographic group. Insight from this interaction can be of great assistance in publishing class newspapers and responding to the numerous opportunities to submit writing to local newspapers.

When students are familiar with newspaper features, book reports can be formatted, conveying the information as editorials, political cartoons, feature stories, advertisements, crime reports, and advice columns, among others.

Classrooms newspapers can be designed around a course of study communicating the flavor of specific events from different eras in history: headlines, biography, food section, social events, and financial reports. Computer programs have made formatting a doable project—a far cry from cut and paste.

**Electronic Publishing.** The Internet has become a widespread source of communication—nationally and internationally. There are many venues available for classrooms to collaborate and use electronic publishing. Because needs and guidelines vary, each teacher must evaluate the sites. Some resources are included; more may be obtained by Googling electronic publishing + kids, + children, and + students.

**TAKING CREDIT**

Autobiographies are often a necessity when publishing is involved—book jackets, article credits, and scripts for introductions. Assign your students a 50- to 75-word self-description to accompany their submitted product. For this assignment, students must strictly edit to the required number of words.

Coming up with a bio is not as easy as it might seem. Bring in book jackets and book reviews to see how professional choices for inclusion were made. The old adage, write what you know, is suitable when tailored to the audience. What background entitles the author to contribute to the body of knowledge? Assessing the pertinent information involves realizing the value of contributions and giving interest to the bona fides of the students’ life—experiences, recognitions, awards, interests, age, school, and hobbies.

Another way to introduce this is to write about someone in the family who has received recognition: cookies at a fair, music competition, sports trophy, or a dance performance. For those not used to taking credit, it’s easier to start by writing a bio for someone else.

If the attraction of a Broadway marquee has lit up possibilities, follow the image as published by Sidney Lanier in The Marshes of Glynn:

> Ye marshes, how candid and simple and nothing-withholding and free
> Ye publish yourselves to the sky and offer yourselves to the sea!

**RESOURCES**

The following Web sites offer opportunities for teachers to sample a variety of publishing ideas. More can be found by Googling “magazines that publish student writing” or similar topics.

- **kids-space.org**
  Sponsored by an official 501(c)(3) non-profit organization which supports the artis-tic collaboration of international children online for ages 13 and younger. It includes three areas for participation: creative activities, communication activities and guide and learning section.

- **glc.k12.ga.us/trc/cluster.asp?mode=browse&intPathID=5377**
  Sponsored by the Georgia Department of Education, this site provides information on opportunities for electronic publishing.

- **californiawritingproject.org/Parents/places_to_publish.html**
  Sponsored by the California Writing Project, this site lists a number of possibilities for online publishing as well as other places to publish student writing.

- **rutgers.edu/~kvander/childpublishing.html**
  A comprehensive list of resources for Children’s Writing and Publishing by Kay E. Vandergrift, it also has links to the sites.

- **teenlink.com/Submissions**
  Teen Ink is an online magazine for teens from 13-19. Includes submission guidelines for art, poems stories, and so forth.

- **longwood.cs.ucf.edu/~MidLink/**
  Longwood is a non-profit project sponsored by North Carolina State University and the University of Central Florida. Any school, teacher or student is invited to participate.

- **stonesoup.com**
  Stone Soup features a sample issue online and a section of stories, poems, and artwork by young writers and artists from all over the world.
My friend, June, is a physician. She is two people in my life. She is a loving, kind, and generous friend. She is funny and terribly smart and most interesting. But in her office, she is crisp. She is clear minded, makes quick decisions, and is very candid—sometimes blunt. There is no vacillating. She expects you to do as she says…and I do!!

When I listen to her stories about medical school training where doctors learn to be so decisive, I understand how she evolved to a physician’s personality. She is so sure. Now much of that comes from years of experience so she knows what works. I know that she problem solves and researches to find answers. And I know that sometimes she has to try different alternatives, but usually things work out just as she predicts. Above all, however, is her intuitive ability. Her education, her experience, and her judgment all blend together to coalesce into her instincts. It is a sixth sense.

That sixth sense applies to teaching as well as medicine. We have many more unknowns than medicine, as surprising as that may seem. We have many more untouchable areas than medicine. But Dr. June will tell us that the clarity of purpose is often more important than what you do because you can adjust and change what you do as long as your purpose is stable.

That is the message for this column. In gifted education we have many points of view, many philosophies, and many strategies. These are never consistent, but at all times our clarity of purpose should be. The definition of purpose is an anticipated outcome that is intended or that guides your planned actions. All we have to do is check our plans along the way with our purpose—our reason—to keep us on track.

However, that is not as easy as it sounds. The traditional question, faced by many of us trained in gifted education, has always been “What is your objective?” Or what is your reason? Or what is your purpose? The thesaurus blends these definitions all together with different nuances like a fruit drink in the blender, coming out with a mixed flavor. But we don’t dare have a mixed flavor. We have to have clear objectives while simultaneously having that sixth sense that gives us a special edge for what a clear objective would be…should be.

On the other hand, before you think you have it hogtied, do a Google search for objectives in gifted education around the country. You will find gifted programs on the web that make you proud; they look so polished and do make good sense. But they almost all make good sense. It is then that you realize that even clear objectives are in the eye of the beholder. They have to fit your own needs, of course, and they have to be so specific that you can write them down and predict results that can be seen. That, indeed, is the real test: results that can be seen. Will all our fancy words and standards become just words in the light of concrete, visible, provable outcomes? How our children are tested or discovered or bored or engaged are part of the details that lead to those important ends, but aren’t the ends still the final proof? That proof may be test results or folders of writings or research reports that represent months of work. That proof may be seen in objectives that are as indeterminate as presenting challenges or understandings or providing an accepting environment. Whatever the collective criteria are, they will all be seen as hard evidence. And it had better be seen in ways that are translatable to non-educators.

These possible solutions may translate into an openness to the kind of precision seen in some aspects of the medical world. Education is very different from medicine, but we can take some lessons from the cohesiveness of that profession. And that brings us full circle to Dr. June’s prescription that has solutions that show up in results. The proof, really, is in the pudding, isn’t it! Even for educators whose outcomes are far more subtle and far more complex than healing a wound.
In an era of “helicopter” parents who hover over their kids to ensure they encounter no bumps in their growing up journeys, I think about parents who had a different perspective on what it means to raise competent, confident, contributing young people; they were parents of the young adolescents I taught. Those parents taught me a great deal in my early years as a teacher—and still do. On that list of parents who “got it” was Joan White.

Joan was Mom to Beth, Ken, Peter, Steve, and Marilu. At the time, I had a sense that she was a wise woman. Having watched her kids grow up to parent kids who are now the age they were when I taught them, her wisdom is beyond question.

Joan’s family was “well off” financially. What grounded them, however, was not a sense of privilege and plenty, but a sense of responsibility. I don’t mean the kind of responsibility that hangs heavy around the neck and leads to guilt. Rather, Joan helped her children develop a realistic sense of the individual in the world. For her—and ultimately for her children—living was about relationships, nurturing those relationships, and caring for the world around you.

For starters, Joan’s children never knew there was money to spare in their family. It appeared that each kid had a very few school outfits and wore those until they had seen better days. They were always clean, but never flashy, never excessive. They were utilitarian. Christmas gifts were spare and simple—often something for the family. Life was centered on matters of greater consequence than clothes and current trends. They lived in a house designed to emphasize family and environmental friendliness. The boys didn’t have separate bedrooms with private baths, but rather lived in dorm-like space on the lower floor of the house. The girls had very small rooms on a very tiny upper floor. What mattered most was the large family room and dining area. That’s where the family of seven really lived.

I taught Joan’s kids during a time when typewriters still reigned. In that family, no one would be hired to type students’ term papers. Each kid—in succession, oldest to youngest—was expected to learn to type in order to type the papers of their immediately younger sibling. In turn, each recipient of the typing was expected to do chores for the sibling who did the typing, as long as the project required.

In adolescence, when peers begin to call kids away from their families with the promise of more compelling activities, Joan’s kids knew not to ask to miss a family birthday, a holiday, or a Sunday night dinner. It simply wasn’t done. Family was first.

Friends and neighbors were second. The kids learned young that when they were not needed at home, someone else could benefit from their talents and strong bodies. One summer, I was scheduled to move at the same time I was leaving the hos-
pital after unintended surgery. I came home to a house full of boxes left by the mover and couldn’t figure out how to get myself from room to room—let alone unpack all the boxes. Peter, Ken, and a couple of friends showed up at my front door. They’d come to paint, unpack boxes, and whatever else I needed. They’d be available all week, they said. I didn’t learn until later that Joan had quietly provided a choice for how her two sons and two overnight guests would spend their summer days that week. At breakfast, she explained that there was work to be done outside cutting tall grasses for hay. Mrs. Tomlinson could also use some help in her new house. (I have no idea how she knew I was in need).

The boys didn’t take long to decide that working inside an air-conditioned house was a better deal than mowing hay. What was interesting to me was that they never resented the choice. They never felt put upon to be asked to work—or to work for someone else. (I had the best paint job in town. They even painted the inside of wooden cornices!) We also laughed an unreasonable amount during the week they camped out with me. We all remember the time as great fun.

ONE STORY TELLS THE TALE

One of my now apocryphal memories of Joan pretty much sums up her sense of who she wanted her children to be and how she went about fostering that perspective in her kids. The late 1970’s was a time of unrest in the country. Protests were on the news often as people took to the streets to voice opinions about a number of issues.

Peter was a young teen—and the rebel of the family—at least as much as anyone in that family could be a rebel. He had a quick mind, and it was interested in being a mind of its own. In our school, a new tardy policy was a contentious issue for some of the kids who found it inconvenient to get to class on time. A very popular and outspoken young woman challenged the policy by intentionally getting herself suspended for excessive tardies. In turn, her buddies had vowed to support her with a protest at school.

Our principal was herself the mother of two teenagers—and a highly effective leader. She learned of the planned protest shortly before it was scheduled to occur. To prevent a potentially sticky situation, she came on the public address system and noted that she was aware that some students were angry about the tardy policy and planned to stage a boycott to make their feelings known. She explained also that in this country, people have a right to express themselves as long as their expression does not interfere with the rights and needs of others. For that reason, she said, she would approve a brief demonstration. Students who wanted to express discontent with the tardy policy could go to a designated area of the school when the next class bell rang. They would be able to stay there in silent protest.
I might have been sorry about that. And I'm sorry I was less of a young man than respectful of your role when I went to the demonstration. I'm dis-ipate in the demonstration. "I did not make a mature deci-

Joan listened. When Peter finished, she quietly said to him, "Peter, let me ask you a couple of questions. Do you have any sense of how hard this principal works to make this a school you really like to attend?"

"Yes, ma'am," he responded, "but I don't see what that's got to do with anything. She told us we could have the protest."

"And do you believe that you or your friends have the insight and skill to handle a protest if it should happen to get out of control?" she continued.

"Nothing happened, Mom," Peter said. "Nothing could have gone wrong."

"And Peter," she continued, "do you want me to believe you are enough of a grown up to make decisions on your own behalf?"

There was a bit of a pause this time—an uneasy silence.

"What I'm asking," Joan said calmly, "is whether I can see in you a young man who effectively weighs the consequences of his choices?"

There was another silence, and then Peter said, "Mom, if you can wait for me a few minutes, I think I need to talk with the principal so I can apologize."

The principal says the apology came with tears and an explanation from Peter that he had been thoughtless to participate in the demonstration. "I did not make a mature decision," he told her. "It didn't occur to me that I was being dis-respectful of your role when I went to the demonstration. I'm sorry about that. And I'm sorry I was less of a young man than I might have been."

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And to engage in a conversation with the principal and other school leaders to explain their position. At the end of the conversation, another bell would ring and the protesting students would be expected to go to their next classes where their peers and teachers would be waiting for them.

It was a brilliant maneuver. It allowed the students to make a statement. It avoided an administrator–student showdown.

That afternoon, Peter's mom came to school to meet his brother, Steve, and to provide transportation for a field trip to Chapel Hill, NC, where Steve's English class would be doing research over the weekend and also have a chance to visit an excellent college. Peter ran to the car with spit and vinegar, announcing, "Mom, you won't believe it. We had a protest at school today..."

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Common Gifted Education Myths

MYTH:
Gifted students are happy, popular, and well adjusted in school.

TRUTH:
Many gifted students flourish in their community and school environment. However, some gifted children differ in terms of their emotional and moral intensity, sensitivity to expectations and feelings, perfectionism, and deep concerns about societal problems. Others do not share interests with their classmates, resulting in isolation or being labeled unfavorably as a "nerd." Because of these difficulties, the school experience is one to be endured rather than celebrated. It is estimated that 20 to 25% of gifted children have social and emotional difficulties, about twice as many as in the general population of students. Source: Winner, E. (1996). Gifted Children: Myths and Realities. New York: Basic Books.
What are Gizmos?

Gizmos is a collection of over 400 award-winning, online simulations that are designed to provide virtual hands-on inquiry lessons to supplement the core curriculum in math and science. This resource is available for grades 6–12 at present. It will be available for science in grades 3–5 in the fall of this year. The program has received many honors and awards including winner of the SIIA CODiE Award for Best Science Instructional Solution, 2006 and 2007, finalist for the AEP Golden Lamp Award, 2006, and the AEP Distinguished Achievement Award, 2007.

Although the program is complex, using it is definitely not. There is enough information on the website to teach users how to navigate the activities. There is a Help Screen (Click on the “?”) available as well as Exploration Guides for each Gizmo. The complexity comes in as the teacher designs a differentiated lesson that includes elements of depth and complexity and high-order thinking skills. Because Gizmos are easy to use and a student could follow online instructions to complete a task, it could be tempting to let the gifted cluster work with this program on their own. Although students who did that would not be wasting their time, they would be missing the valuable intellectual experience that a well-planned, differentiated lesson would provide. It is important to design a lesson for using the Gizmos just as you would for any other resource used in the classroom.

The material is aligned to many national and state standards for math and science and is correlated to over 90 textbooks. The correlations are easy to use. For example, a search on a State standard results links to the gizmos that would be appropriate to use in that unit or lesson listed below the search topic.

Each simulation is inquiry-based and provides the opportunity to explore concepts by experimenting with variables, making predictions, and developing hypotheses. Then with the click of a button, graphic, often animated, results are provided. Variables can be modified, time can be condensed, and the new results can be analyzed and compared instantly.

For example, Figure 1 illustrates a science gizmo in which students can create generations of mice, focus on one trait, fur color, and observe the results of combining dominant and recessive genes. They can analyze the patterns that emerge and predict future outcomes. They can use the information they have gathered to formulate a hypothesis as to what rule explains the results they are seeing. The concepts in the core curriculum in science and math are analyzed in depth; in just this one example, students are finding details, patterns, seeing trends, judging with criteria, making predictions, and formulating hypotheses. Results can also be copied and put into a word processor. Gizmos allow students to learn the required concepts of the core curriculum through engaging activities and hands-on analysis, not rote memorization.

Each Gizmo includes a set of multiple choice comprehension questions. Students answer the questions and submit their answers. The results go immediately to the student and the teacher. Teachers receive data on how many students missed each question. They can also get a report for each stu-
dent. These questions provide the opportunity for a check for basic understanding either as a pre-test or after the activity. The questions can be helpful but the heart of the lesson is the process of working with the Gizmos.

The Exploration Guide for each Gizmo provides a detailed step-by-step lesson. This can be printed out and used “as is” or copied into a word processor to be modified. (See Figures 2 & 3.)

MATH GIZMOS AND EXCERPT FROM EXPLORATION GUIDE

A teacher can create a class list or several class lists and then modify the resources available to the students in that class. A student can sign on and see which Gizmo or Gizmos they are to use for their lesson. Others are not visible to them.

A visit to the website will provide a video preview of the Gizmos and the offer of a 30 day free trial. Research to support Gizmos and contact information for further exploration is also available.

Gizmos are an annual subscription that can be purchased for districts, schools, or individual teachers. More information can be obtained from the ExploreLearning website at: www.explorelearning.com or contacting sales@explorelearning.com.

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Back Issues of Gifted Education Communicator Available

- Summer 2002 Program & Performance Assessment
- Fall 2002 Interdisciplinary/Language Arts
- Winter 2002 Gender Issues
- Fall/Winter 2003 Visual & Performing Arts/Gifted High School Students
- Summer 2004 Curriculum & Instruction
- Fall 2004 Philosophy & Humanities
- Winter 2004 Underachievement
- Spring 2005 Program Design: Key to Success
- Summer 2005 Creating Creativity
- Fall/Winter 2005 Math & Science/ Twice Exceptional Populations
- Spring 2006 Counseling & Guidance
- Summer 2006 Computers & Technology
- Fall 2006 Social Studies
- Winter 2006 Middle School Learners
- Spring 2007 Identification
- Summer 2007 Role of Administrators

For a complete listing of contents for each issue and an order form, visit the CAG website at CAGifted.org. For questions on ordering back copies ($8–15, plus postage), contact the CAG Office at 916-441-3999.
Language arts is a part of nearly every subject today. Students are asked to explain their arithmetic, present their social studies to the class, and of course compose and edit based upon their reading in language arts itself.

“Creativity as an Elusive Factor in Giftedness,” cfge.wm.edu/documents/Creativity.html, was written by Joyce VanTassel-Baska, College of William and Mary. In her essay, VanTassel-Baska tries to define creativity, but more importantly, offers six goals that both teachers and parents may strive for to encourage creativity in our gifted youth. With these goals, schools and families can help gifted students develop their creativity. And this creativity is important throughout life, not just for writers and artists, but also for scientists and mathematicians creating new ideas in their fields.

Barbara Clark tells us of “The Importance of Social Studies and the Education of Gifted Students,” findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa4033/is_200204/ai_n9066730. But the importance lies not just in the study of these subjects, but the methods by which they are studied. Traditional memorize-and-restate methods do not serve the gifted learner, who is capable of analysis and understanding at greater complexity. Beginning with brain research, and continuing to the curriculum, Clark explains how to offer that higher level of complexity in the social studies classroom, and throughout the gifted student’s educational experience. “The appropriate education of these children and youth can allow important contributions to the future of us all.”

In “Breaking With Tradition: Teaching Composition to Gifted Students,” findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1254/is_3_33/ai_75506803 Elissa Guralnick emphasizes something that may seem obvious, but bears repeating: gifted students need instruction in writing, too! The best writers still need guidance, their writing scrutinized and reviewed. Even though their writing may be technically accurate, they need lessons in organizing, editing, and defending their conclusions. Guralnick makes her points with examples from legal and scientific writings of good students who, without guidance in composition, cannot make their points understood. Even the best students need instruction in writing.

Parents and teachers alike can find language arts curriculum units free on the Internet. EDSITEment, edsitement.neh.gov, which includes “The Best of the Humanities on the Web,” sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities, is a library of humanities curriculum units available.
for everyone to use. Hundreds of units in language arts, foreign language, art and culture, and history and social studies units, at all grade levels, K-12, can be found here. Search by topic, level, or browse general subject areas. Each unit contains everything needed by teachers and homeschoolers to instruct gifted students: introduction, learning objectives, preparation required, lesson activities, assessments, and additional website resources.

From Hans Christian Andersen’s fairy tales to Shakespeare’s Hamlet, from Greek mythology to Japanese poetry; from epic poems to tales of the supernatural, there are hundreds more units on a variety of topics—and these are just the language arts units. There aren’t enough days in the year for all this learning!

Language arts is not a strong suit for every gifted child, especially the twice-exceptional gifted child (gifted and learning disabled). The best time to address weaknesses in a gifted child is as soon as they are noted, without waiting until after a weakness has been identified as a disability.

For students who need it, there are language arts tools to help develop the strengths that come naturally to others. ReadWriteThink Student Materials, readwritethink.org/student_mat, includes tools for just about every language arts task. For the sequential thinker, Notetaker organizes up to 5 levels of information. For the visual spatial thinker, try Webbing Tool instead, with hypertext organization to arrange and rearrange thoughts. Story Map helps students organize the elements of character development, story analysis, or writing preparation. Timeline helps students create and organize events in time. There are tools for acrostic, diamante, riddle, and shape poems, and for biography, comic, drama, and mystery writing. And these are only a few of the interactive tools available from ReadWriteThink!

KIDS KORNER

For the fall, kids can explore amazing things on the Internet. From language games to twenty-first century cultural literacy to science—there’s something here for everyone!

LANGUAGE

Think you’re good with words? Try Etymologic, the toughest word game on the web, etymologic.com/. You get 10 chances to show what you know, but fear not, the correct answer is given in case you aren’t as rooted in language as you think you are. And you can play again and again.

Do crosswords make you cross? Then don’t stop here! The New York Times Learning Network Crossword Archive, nytimes.com/learning/teachers/xwords/archive.html, offers great crossword puzzles by Will Short, featuring a range of topics to suit everyone: history, geography, math, science, journalism, language arts, fine arts, and more. There’s even a puzzle on preparing for college. Print the puzzle, or play online (Java required).

Looking for a different challenge? Try the Thinks.com Daily Codebreaker, thinks.com/daily_codebreaker.htm. A Codebreaker is a different kind of crossword puzzle without any clues. Instead, each letter (A-Z) in the puzzle has been replaced by a number, and it’s up to you to determine the words from a few clues provided. Can you think outside the boxes?

Have a minute? Try Vocab Minute! princetonreview.com/vocabminute. Research and Schoolhouse Rock tell us music is a powerful memory tool, and we know vocabulary is a powerful predictor of success. The folks at The Princeton Review combine the two, using music to teach great new vocabulary. Better yet, download their monthly podcast to your iPod or MP3 player, and take your Vocabulary for a spin.

Word Racer is an interactive game, games.yahoo.com/games/rules/wordracer/basics.html, where players compete with up to seven others to form words from a grid of letters. All words must be constructed of adjacent letters. It’s a wild race! Just be careful—you’ll find yourself coming back for more, time and again.

For more links for the Love of Language, including word games, vocabulary, and writing, visit Hoagies’ Kids and Teens: For the Love of Language, hoagiesgifted.org/language.htm.

CULTURE

Wonder what’s important to the rest of the world? Zeitgeist is a noun, from the German roots zeit, meaning time, and geist, meaning spirit. Zeitgeist is the spirit of an era. The Google 2006 Year-End Zeitgeist, google.com/intl/en/press/zeitgeist2006.html, offers a year’s worth of the most popular searches. What words were most searched last year? What and who were most inquired about socially? What news events were most requested? Which political figures garnered the most attention? Whose

Running the Numbers: An American Self-Portrait, chrisjordan.com/current_set2.php?id=7, offers a different view of American culture. Chris Jordan's photographs give context to some of the frightening statistics of American society today: What does 426,000 cell phones actually look like? And that's just the number of cell phones retired in the US every day; see what else Jordan depicts!

**SCIENCE**

In Cogito, cogito.org, you can explore the intersection of science and the arts from computer animation to science fiction. You can find book reviews, Best of the Web guides, listings and reviews of summer and distance-education programs, internships, and academic competitions. Sign up for membership, and, participate in online interviews with experts in various fields and in discussion forums with other members, and access to the Cogito virtual library where you can find a wide variety of research materials and a librarian dedicated to helping you. Cogito is a project of Johns Hopkins Center for Talented Youth (CTY).

Is science baffling? Struggling to understand? Looking for help? blobs.org is an informal science explanation site, with tons of medical, scientific, and mathematical explanations to satisfy every gifted child. From abdomen—the body part below the thorax, to Zwitterion—a state where an ion has both positive and negative charge, find answers to all your scientific questions at blobs.org.

Instructables, instructables.com, is the gifted child’s haven! Step-by-step instructions to build a marshmallow gun, or your own Beetlebot robot, make magnetic frig lights, or an origami wallet from playing cards; the range of projects is indescribable! Create food projects from a fire-breathing dragon cake to a Han Solo in carbonite chocolate bar. Construct a zip-line racer or a home-designed go-cart. Resurface damaged CDs, or turn your computer desktop into an RSS bulletin board. All the instructions you need are right here!

For more science links, including links to science fair project ideas and science museums, visit Hoagies’ Kids and Teens: Science Links, hoagiesgifted.org/science.htm. ■

**CAROLYN KOTTMEYER** is the founder and director of Hoagies’ Gifted Education Page, hoagiesgifted.org, and Hoagies’ Kids and Teens Page, hoagieskids.org. She is the 2005 winner of the NAGC Community Service Award, and the 2006 PAGE Neuber-Pregler Award. Most recently, she was named a Surf Aquarium 2007 Educator of the Year.

**LANGUAGE ARTS**

Breaking With Tradition: Teaching Composition to Gifted Students findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1254/is_3_33/ai_75506803

Creativity as an Elusive Factor in Giftedness cfge.wm.edu/documents/Creativity.html

EDSITEment edsitement.neh.gov

The Importance of Social Studies and the Education of Gifted Students findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa4033/is_200204/ai_n9066730

ReadWriteThink Student Materials readwritethink.org/student_mat

KIDS KORNER blobs.org blobs.org

Cogito cogito.org

The Daily Codebreaker thinks.com/daily_codebreaker.htm

Etymologic etymologic.com


Hoagies’ Kids and Teens: For the Love of Language hoagiesgifted.org/language.htm

Hoagies’ Kids and Teens: Science Links hoagiesgifted.org/science.htm

Instructables instructables.com


Word Racer games.yahoo.com/games/rules/wordracer/basics.html
BOOK REVIEW

The “I” of the Beholder


A REVIEW AND TRIBUTE BY JIM DELISLE

There are only a few people in the field of gifted child education whose every word is filled with hope, honor and wisdom. One of these rarities, Annemarie Roeper, took the time to share these attributes in her new book, The “I” of the Beholder: A Guided Journey to the Essence of a Child. If you have contact with gifted children in any way—as a parent, an educator, a counselor, a friend—this book has to be on your short-list of “must reads.”

First, some background on the author. Born in Vienna in 1918, Annemarie learned quickly the value of education and the arts, under the tutelage of her parents. As the youngest student ever to enter medical training with Sigmund Freud, Annemarie, at age 19, was well on her way to a successful career with Freud as her mentor. World events altered this plan, as Hitler’s march through Europe caused her family to lose everything it had built up over 30 years; it was such a shock that Annemarie writes “…to this day, I have yet to truly overcome it” (p. xiv). Eventually coming to America due to the efforts of her future husband, George, Annemarie and he established several schools based on global interdependence and self-actualization. Their premiere example, The Roeper School, still exists in Michigan; today, it is undoubtedly the nation’s best-known school for gifted students. Too, it is obvious that the source of much of the wisdom Annemarie possesses is due to her nearly four decades of service to the children and parents of Roeper School.

Now…to her landmark book. Like a careful gardener who tills the soil well before introducing seeds into it, Annemarie begins her book in a way that nurtures the reader: she holds a conversation between herself and her “self.” To set the base for future chapters, Annemarie provides an extensive dialog between this Freudian-trained educator and an amorphous other who seeks an answer to the question of what it means to be human. As Annemarie responds,
“All human beings hold inside them the mysteries of personal growth” (p. 27).

After introducing us to several young children whose searches for themselves involved Annemarie’s guidance, she proposes a “curriculum of emotional growth” (p. 34), which presupposes that we must “replace strategies and intervention with relationships and empathy” (p. 40). In the next three chapters, Annemarie gives specific examples of this curriculum in action. Believing that, “Almost everything that school is about involves the suppression of children’s natural emotions” (p. 43), Annemarie introduces us to several more children, including Erica, an 11-year-old gifted child whose performance in school mathematics was weak because school taught her skills while Erica learned through concepts. The visceral emotional disconnect that Erica felt with school caused her to procrastinate and to resent school. Annemarie’s careful, loving intervention with Erica did not change school for the better, yet it allowed Erica to see that her self was intact and on-target, even if school activities seldom allowed her to learn in ways most accommodating to her mind and soul. Annemarie’s decades-long experiences include interventions with at least 1,000 more gifted children whose selves needed protection and nurturance.

This is the magic that Annemarie creates in both her writing and her work with children: instead of giving easy, false answers to complex issues, Annemarie allows the child to experience learning and loving in ways that are as individual to them as are their fingerprints.

Chapters 6–8 introduce readers to a new awareness Annemarie sees in this generation’s gifted children: an expanded reality based on spirituality. As she writes, “They can hear things most of us can’t hear, see things most of us can’t see, and that a touch to their skin is felt more strongly than most of us experience” (p. 59). To Annemarie, spirituality does not equate with religion and is, instead, “…the totally unbiased view of the unknown” (p. 61). “…the modern gifted child seems to be moving toward an acceptance of the unknown ability of the universe” (p. 62). Annemarie believes that open discussion with gifted children about life’s uncertainties can help them cope later with the tragic, inevitable events that entail everyone’s life—and in her chapters, she provides specific ways to do just this using her SAI (Self-Actualization and Interdependence) Model—a “…redefinition of every aspect of education” (p. 90).

Other notable topics in this small gem of a book include the following:

- the very-real nature of imaginary companions for gifted children (“A most important component that makes life bearable,” p. 66.)
- why and how giftedness is often confused with pathology (for example, when emotionally overexcitable children are called ADD/ADHD)
- the increasing variety of gifted children’s interests (“They may love Shakespeare and Mozart, but they also love gardening and much else,” p. 85.)
- Annemarie’s unique and child-focused Qualitative Assessment (QA) method of evaluating children for giftedness through observations and discussions with the children themselves (“The only instrument complex enough to understand a human being is another human being,” p. 103.)

I have no favorite part of The “I” of the Beholder, as each section of the book contains its own brand of recognition of the complex world of the gifted child. However, the book’s concluding chapters take us on Annemarie’s personal journey through her own self-discovery. From her early recollections as a child she comments, “At an early age, I became an accomplished daydreamer” (p. 112), and in her recollections of needing to escape the Nazis she says, “I can remember today the very moment when a part of me died” p. 114). And in her personal commentary on the importance of her QA method, “[It] comes from the fact that I’ve spent many years looking for my own self” (p. 115), Annemarie unseals her inner psyche, giving tacit permission for the rest of us to explore our own.

…and then the book ends with a chapter unique in the annals of giftedness. Titled “Growing Old Gifted,” this chapter is impossible to read with dry eyes. You won’t cry out of pity or remorse; rather, you will come face-to-face with Annemarie’s crystal-clear vision of the road she now travels daily as an 88-year-old woman. Some exquisite excerpts:

- There’s no definition of where I am in life now. It’s beyond old—and I can’t write about it because I can’t define it. I’m saying goodbye to the last stage that’s definable. I have never felt this way before. (p. 121)
- My conclusion is that when you reach the age beyond old, your only reality is the unknown. (p. 121)
- What would happen if every administration had an elected council of elder statespeople? …chances are, they might bring a spiritual dimension, a view from a greater distance. (p. 121)

The “I” of the Beholder is the most compelling, honest, and thought-provoking book that exists today in the field of gifted child education. Few individuals would be able to write this book at all, but thanks to Annemarie Roeper’s lived experiences, as well as her reflections on 60+ years of work with and on behalf of gifted children, it is a volume to cherish and to share.

At several points in her book, Annemarie expresses that even now, at 88 years of age, she is still not sure of the ultimate reason for her existence. In my view, the presence of The “I” of the Beholder gives at least a partial solution to this eternal question.

JIM DELISLE, Ph.D., is Distinguished Professor of Education at Kent State University in Ohio, where he directs both graduate and undergraduate programs in gifted child education. He also teaches middle school students in Twinsburg, Ohio, one day a week. He publishes and speaks widely.
Mindset: The New Psychology of Success
By Carol S. Dweck
hardcover, $24.95, 276 pp.
ISBN 1-4000-6275

REVIEWED BY ELAINE WIENER

We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is a habit.
—Socrates

Man is what he believes.
—Anton Chekhov

Some people dream of worthy accomplishments while others stay awake and do them.
—Unknown

It has all been said before. We know these wisdoms. We believe them. We have seen them play out in our professional literature and in our lives. Other educators, also, have written about such thoughts, but sometimes new phrasing, new stories, and a new approach bring a fresh slant. And now Carol Dweck has captured this essence in a new book, I think, will be one of the most important books written in our field.

Dr. Carol S. Dweck is the Lewis and Virginia Eaton Professor of Psychology at Stanford University and a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Her book jacket appropriately shares the fact that “she is widely regarded as one of the world’s leading researchers in the fields of personality, social psychology, and developmental psychology.”

Any teacher can tell you that some children grasp learning more easily than others, but what each child—each adult does with that ability is where and how our paths diverge. And the fascination of Carol Dweck’s study is how those paths diverge and why they diverge as they do.

Carol Dweck observes that some people have a fixed mindset that “creates an urgency to prove yourself over and over.” To feel deficient in these most basic characteristics becomes too threatening and does not allow room for error or room for disagreement. She tells us that “Every situation calls for a confirmation of their intelligence, personality, or character.” In addition, she adds, “There was a saying in the 1960’s... ‘Becoming is better than being.’ The fixed mindset does not allow people the luxury of becoming. They have to already be.”

On the other hand, Dr. Dweck points out, “There is another mindset where the hand you are dealt is just the starting point for development.” She calls this the growth mindset. Dr. Dweck continues: “Many growth-minded people didn’t even plan to go to the top. They got there as a result of doing what they love. It’s ironic: The top is where the fixed mindset people hunger to be, but it’s where many growth-minded people arrive as a by-product of their enthusiasm for what they do.”

Dr. Dweck then shares many examples of successful people, but the beauty of their success is not in their talent or brilliance, but in their blood, sweat, and tears in applying those abilities. You will savor unexpected statements or stories about people like John McEnroe, Michael Jordan, Jack Welch, Laura Hillenbrand (Seabiscuit), Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg, Thomas Edison, Darwin, Mozart, Jackson Pollock, Alfred Binet, Benjamin Bloom, Muhammad Ali, Tiger Woods, Iacocca, and the incomparable John Wooden, to mention only a few.

This book is filled with examples that are amazing because they involve people we know who worked far harder than we imagined to accomplish their expertise. These examples are so persuasive and engaging that you reset your thinking about yourself, regardless of what you already know about yourself, regardless of your age, and regardless of your accomplishments. It did not surprise me to read this blurb from Robert Sternberg, Dean of Arts and Sciences at Tufts University, whose own accomplishments have filled our bookshelves in gifted education:

A good book is one whose advice you believe. A great book is one whose advice you follow. I have found Carol Dweck’s work on mindsets invaluable in my own life, and even life-changing in my attitudes toward the challenges that, over the years, become more demanding than less. This is a book that can change your life, as its ideas have changed mine.

Mixed in with the philosophy and the stories are wonderful highlighted boxes of wisdom to apply to your own life. Dr. Dweck also often refers to Haim Ginott who was the father of the concept that over praising is harmful not helpful. His frequent mention in her book honors his memory.

This is a total package: research, examples, and personal advice!

Buy this book. Buy another copy for every one of your dearest friends. And if your children are adults, buy each of them a copy. Do it yesterday!

ELAINE WIENER is Associate Editor for Book Reviews for the Gifted Education Communicator. She is retired from the Garden Grove Unified School District GATE program in southern California. She can be reached at: esw.ca@worldnet.att.net

Ready, Willing and Able: Teaching English to Gifted, Talented and Exceptionally Conscientious Adolescents.
By Dagny D. Bloland
(2006) Heinemann
paperback, $22.00, 208 pp.

REVIEWED BY DAN NELSON

It may not be the book everyone else was reading this summer, but it should be on your list. While others wonder about the fate of one gifted boy wizard, Dagny Bloland’s Ready, Willing
and Able: Teaching English to Gifted, Talented and Exceptionally Conscientious Adolescents guides language arts teachers with solid examples, concrete applications, and approachable plans for differentiation for all gifted students.

Bloland is a veteran teacher of gifted middle and high school students in Chicago and shares her curriculum and rationale. Chapter topics include independent reading, assigned reading, coaching writing, group discussions, grammar and usage, and assessment and grading.

Bloland works to see her students as individuals and teach to the level of each—a foundation of differentiation. She works to foster a strong relationship with parents, finding the parents “almost always easy to work with.” I hope to have her luck with this; by following her eight steps to create good communication, I just might.

Independent reading is a cornerstone of Bloland’s program. She believes that GTEC (Gifted, Talented, Exceptionally Conscientious) students should read to their challenge level, and therefore, this reading is valuable for differentiation. Bloland borrows from Nancy Atwell and institutionalizes independent reading by providing class time for students to read and discuss. Useful materials and log sheets are provided.

Every class has assigned texts; Bloland’s is no exception. She shares examples of what can be wrong with assigned reading—students who don’t read the text but instead rely on last minute summaries just before the bell. Bloland presents “a log/study guide” as a scaffold at the beginning of the text. The guide allows for self-pacing through the assigned reading and also time for one-on-one discussions. An example guide and student work is presented.

I particularly enjoyed the chapter on coaching writing. Bloland rejects the attraction of teaching writing in a formulaic, scripted way. She opts instead for an approach based around Vygostsky’s Zone of Proximal Development. Students stretch past what they can do easily, and with support, explore and improve their writing. Peer editing and review and conferencing are key to this approach; the materials at the end of the chapter help to put such a program in place.

Getting away from the classic model of teacher and taught, Bloland strives to be a coach in her classroom. Integral to this is her belief in large and small discussions. She relies on research to focus these groups and manage expectations. This chapter reads as less innovation and more encouragement; small groups can work; just give them time and monitor them closely.

“The Cool Web of Language,” a phrase borrowed from Robert Graves, titles a chapter on grammar, usage, and linguistics. A note for the early-career teacher: resist the urge to be overwhelmed by this chapter. Bloland has spent many years in the classroom; this chapter highlights her experience. Start with her love of diagramming and, as you become more comfortable, move into the assignments on linguistics. I love teaching grammar and will happily adopt some of the approaches well presented here, but I recommend a slow approach for new teachers. Bloland makes this sound much easier than it is. The materials presented here are very clear and very challenging.

Assessment can trouble all teachers; Bloland deals with it frankly. She allows that differentiation can be tough on the computerized grade book, but encourages teachers to try it anyway and let the chips fall where they will. The exceptionally conscientious parents may have questions about such an approach, but this is when the trust you earned earlier in the year pays dividends.

Bloland has done a good job in explaining her approach and facilitating others to follow along. The materials are clear and practical, but I wish there were a way to download them. Scanning or retyping these masters will be time consuming, and this may prevent some teachers from using them. A search of the publisher’s website for these masters was disappointing.

Don’t let Bloland’s cheery tone throughout the text discourage you. She skips over some of the challenges of teaching the gifted population and may make excellence look a little too easy. But isn’t summer a time for optimism?

DAN NELSON has been teaching English/Language Arts, Journalism, and Yearbook for the past twelve years. He taught in the GATE program at Balboa Middle School from 2001-2004 and currently teaches Honors English at Ventura High School in Ventura, California. His undergraduate degree is in English Literature, and he earned his Master in Teaching from Azusa Pacific University.

Literature Links: Activities for Gifted Learners
By Teresa Smith Masiello

REVIEWS BY ELAINE S. WIENER

Our Gifted Education Communicator reviews books we believe are the best books related to gifted education. For the most part, if in our opinion, a book is not excellent, we simply don’t review it at all. That would waste your time and ours. I also know that my book reviews are exuberant; I am a very enthusiastic appreciator of other people’s thinking—other people’s fine thinking.

I preface this book review with the above paragraph because, in addition to my usual enthusiasm, this book knocked my socks off! I wanted to give up the easy life and return to teaching just so I could use the literature mentioned and in the manner that Teresa Masiello describes.

Ms. Masiello is a Gifted and Talented Resource Specialist for the public school...
system in Frederick County, Virginia. She has taught elementary and middle school, led workshops and in-service training, and her book reflects authentic hands-on experience. She is the real McCoy!

*Literature Links* is geared to gifted readers. No compromises, no watering down, no fitting in. The author tells us how to take back control of the curriculum! While she is telling us how to use trade books, for example, she weaves references to leaders in gifted education to verify her opinions. Her book is solid with evidence for those of us who like grounding.

This book consistently gets right to the point.

Parents want their bright children to
• be challenged,
• maintain a love of learning through reading,
• learn life-long reading skills,
• meet characters in books who struggle with the same issues as the gifted child.

Teachers want
• activities that can be implemented easily and within time restraints,
• material to fit the needs of advanced readers without making other students feel inferior,
• a reading program that incorporates a variety of literature to satisfy the different interests of students in their classroom,
• reading programs and activities that contain assessment tools to help evaluate the progress of gifted readers.

Then your cup runneth over when reading this: what gifted readers want, how literature links can help, student objectives, teacher objectives, parent objectives, and specific suggestions for using those details. These tempting categories are enough to persuade you to buy the book, but the best is yet to come. There are questions to help teachers focus on gifted readers. And, yes! There are answers to those questions. Charts are here with characteristics, checklists for identifying strong and gifted readers, and for those who revel in organization—key points at the end of the chapters. Be still my beating heart.

One of my favorite pages—a sheet that could be blown up to make a class chart—shows the importance of using trade books with gifted readers. Then there are pages defining differentiated curriculum, how to differentiate, questioning, compacting, graphic organizers—all familiar aspects to old timers but in the most wonderful organized way. Even our old friend Bloom’s Taxonomy is here. Put all together, it is a cornucopia for experienced educators and will make a young new educator giddy with gratitude.

The first 47 pages make up this gold mine, with pages 46 and 47 offering suggestions for using all the material. Then the rest of the book is composed of titles of children’s literature with matching questions and charts and graphic organizers—all how to’s in the finest, most specific ways leading to fun and success.

Do I need to say run and buy? If you are a supervisor or coordinator of a gifted program, buy one for every teacher you have. I’m reading mine, fantasizing the perfect classroom, using *Literature Links*.

*ELAINE WIENER is Associate Editor for Book Reviews for the Gifted Education Communicator. She is retired from the Garden Grove Unified School District GATE program in southern California. She can be reached at: esw.ca@worldnet.att.net.*
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