
Table of Contents

Background—Project Description	1
Procedures	4
Leadership Activities	17
Program Evaluation	63
Evaluation Of The Teacher-Scholar Process	70
References	77
Appendices	
A. Condensed Version of the Taxonomy of Educational Objectives	78
B. Suggested Test Items for Leadership Unit	81
C. Annotated Bibliography on Leadership	86
D. Parent Evaluation Form	89
E. Teacher Evaluation Form	90

CHAPTER ONE

Background: Project Description

The developmental work described in this publication had two purposes. The first was the creation of a curriculum unit on *leadership* that could be presented to gifted and talented students at the upper elementary and junior high level that combined the skills and knowledge of teachers of the gifted and those of content specialists. The second purpose of the study was to demonstrate a *method* by which new and valid curriculum materials could be generated for educating gifted students.

The production of one such unit cannot be that helpful to a field crying for valid instructional materials. However, the presentation of a method by which many communities can generate their own instructional materials might be extremely useful. Since there were dual purposes to the project, the evaluation of the effort is also divided into two parts. The first addresses the question, "Were the basic objectives of the leadership unit attained?" The second part of the evaluation asked, "Did the method by which material was generated seem useful and transferable?"

Need for Differentiated Curriculum

The topic of "educating gifted students" has received various levels of attention over the last half century of American education (Gallagher, 1975; Passow, 1979). Much of the discussion and debate within this special field in education has focused upon *where* gifted children should receive such instruction. Should it be in a special self-contained class? Should it be in a resource room with the gifted youngsters spending the majority of time in the regular programs? Should it be in special Saturday morning classes or after-school classes?

For a variety of reasons, these alternatives have stirred much debate in our communities, but they appear to be less important questions than the more fundamental issue of what should be the nature of the *differentiated* educational program they receive, whatever the nature of the place where it is delivered. A number of observers have raised specific concerns about *what* is being taught gifted students, whether it is in a program outside the regular school day, in a resource room context, in a special class, or in a special school. Renzulli (1976) pointed out from his experience in program evaluations of gifted programs:

I have witnessed far too many programs for the gifted that are essentially collections of fun and game activities: such activities lack continuity and show little evidence of developing in a systematic fashion the mental processes that led these children to be identified as gifted (p. 307).

Needs of the Gifted

A first step in determining what the special nature of educational programming for the gifted should be is to remind ourselves what makes them special children in the first place. They seem to have, in comparison with their age group, these special abilities:

1. An advanced ability to relate one idea to others.
2. An advanced ability to make sound judgments.
3. The ability to comprehend larger systems of knowledge that can be mastered by their age peers.

Passow (1979) calls for a design for special programs for gifted and talented that will provide for the differentiation of goals, content, instructional strategies, resources, and evaluation. In particular, he characterizes three major ways in which one can achieve such differentiation: (1) In "greater breadth or depth" which means the considerations of more sophisticated or complex ideas than is present in existing curriculum, whether it be biology, mathematics, social studies, or language arts; (2) in "tempo or pace," which means accelerating either the students or the content. That is, the student can be placed higher on the school ladder in grade placement, or the math program can be presented earlier (seventh grade instead of ninth grade) than is normal for these particular students; or (3) in changes "in kind," which means introducing completely new subject matter not taken by the average student. Special courses or units in symbolic logic, modern economic systems, or the origins of societal values, would fit this type of modification.

Gallagher (1975) believes there should be two major objectives of special education for gifted students:

1. They should master the structure of the knowledge disciplines and understand the basic principles at the heart of the subject matter. They should learn systems of knowledge rather than simple facts and associations.
2. They should learn the heuristic skills of problem solving, creativity, scientific method, etc., so they will become more autonomous learners and not be constrained by the limits of individual teachers.

Why Has There Been Limited Program Development for the Gifted?

While most teachers and educators who work with gifted students would accept the general principles stated above, there is still great difficulty in finding systematic and coordinated units or lessons that carry out the spirit of those abstract principles. Why?

In order to design and execute such a unit, the instructors need to possess an impressive variety of skills and knowledge. They need to know the students themselves and where they are in their intellectual and social development. They need a sophistication about the content area to be studied so that the most sophisticated and complex ideas and systems of knowledge are displayed for the students to master. They need to design interesting and intriguing tasks and experiences for the youngsters that illustrate the major ideas and concepts. These combinations of skills and knowledge are rarely, if ever, found in a

single human being.

More than likely, the sophisticated knowledge of the content areas is in the possession of scholars and academicians who are often found in university settings, whereas the special knowledge of how to design experiences and programs for specific gifted youngsters is most likely in the possession of experienced and capable special education teachers. The physical and psychological distance between persons with these attributes has been inhibiting to sophisticated program development during the past several decades.

There was one brief period of six to seven years in the last three decades where this situation did not prevail. In the last 1950s to mid-1960s, often called the post-Sputnik period, there was a brief marriage or liaison between teachers and some professors of content fields when the National Science Foundation supported the development of numerous curriculum projects. These projects brought together, on a regular basis, scholars from the academic community and teachers from the educational systems. In these circumstances, we saw curriculum development that benefitted the talented students (Bruner, 1960; Goodlad, 1964).

Special Education Organization

There is an additional special problem today in trying to reproduce, in some fashion, that brief but productive liaison between academia and the schools. The growing popularity of the resource room model for providing special education services for the gifted students hinders the use of much of the existing curricula. This model places the gifted student at the elementary school level in the regular education program with his or her age mates for the majority of time in the school program, often referred to as mainstreaming, but draws them out for three to five hours a week, often one hour at a time, to interact with other gifted youngsters and a specially trained teacher who will present specially designed lessons for the gifted.

The lesson presented by this special teacher must take into account the relatively brief amount of time spent with the gifted student. At the same time, the units should try to provide a consistent and coordinated series of lessons around a meaningful topic. A simple transposition of the earlier curricula from science, mathematics, and social studies, designed in the era of the 1960s, obviously will not do. Those curricula were prepared under the assumption that the student would be in a full day program. Some new model, therefore, must be designed and developed which will provide new material of conceptual validity and significance that can be presented within the time and space constraints of the resource room model.

The pattern of educating gifted students at the elementary school level in this project paralleled in many respects the special education programs adopted throughout the State of North Carolina and the country. It is based upon a resource room concept with the students attending their regular fifth and sixth grade for the majority of the school day, but with special arrangements to be in small group settings with gifted peers and specially trained teachers. The selection and procedures for the program itself are presented below to enable the reader to have a sense of the structure into which the program unit was inserted.