

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|----|
| Introduction to the Autonomous Learner Model | 5 |
| Dimension I: Orientation | |
| Beginning the Program | 8 |
| Find Someone | 9 |
| Getting to Know Me | 11 |
| Getting to Know You | 13 |
| Interest Inventory | 15 |
| Learning about the Autonomous Learner Model | 19 |
| Dimension II: Individual Development—Area: Learning Skills | |
| Tails, Tails, Tails | 22 |
| Things Kids Can Learn To Do | 24 |
| The Boomerang | 25 |
| Luckily, Unluckily | 26 |
| Solving a Real Life Problem | 28 |
| Solving Maths Puzzles | 30 |
| Let's Think about It | 37 |
| Setting Goals | 43 |
| Dimension II: Individual Development—Area: Personal Understanding | |
| All About | 47 |
| Let Me Tell You About | 50 |
| My Thoughts About | 51 |
| A Bag About | 53 |
| Twelve Good Things About | 54 |
| What's in Your Head? | 56 |
| What Should I Do? | 58 |
| Dimension II: Individual Development—Area: Interpersonal Skills | |
| Interviewing | 62 |
| Who's Talking? | 65 |
| Working in a Group | 68 |
| Dimension III: Enrichment | |
| Introduction to Explorations | 71 |
| Introduction to Investigations | 72 |
| Introduction to Cultural Activities | 74 |
| Introduction to Service | 75 |

INTRODUCTION

The Autonomous Learner Model was originally designed by George Betts and Jolene Knapp-Kercher to meet the social, emotional and cognitive needs of gifted and talented secondary school students. Being aware that autonomous learners are developed over a period of time, gifted educators have realized the advantage of implementing the ALM (Figure #1) with students before they enter secondary school. During the past few years, Autonomous Learner Programs have been developed at various year levels, including kindergarten and primary, throughout the United States and Canada.

If gifted students are not identified at an early age, the risk of their becoming underachievers is greatly increased. Many educators advocate early identification of gifted children for special educational opportunities. Young gifted children are priceless human resources. Failure to design programs to identify these young gifted children and to provide appropriately for their educational needs is to be guilty of social irresponsibility. The Autonomous Learner Model for the Gifted and Talented provides the structure for meeting the educational needs of this special segment of our population.

The first three dimensions of the Autonomous Learner Model, Dimension I - Orientation, Dimension II - Individual Development (Figure #2) and Dimension III - Enrichment Activities, provide the major focus for young students in kindergarten and the primary year levels who are just beginning a program. Orientation activities are designed to develop student skills in all four components of Dimension I: Understanding Giftedness, Group Building, Self-Understanding, and Program Opportunities and Responsibilities. Parts of three of the four areas of Individual Development are targeted in the beginning primary activities in this book: Learning Skills, Personal Understanding, and Interpersonal Skills. The Enrichment Activities included are Explorations, Investigations, Cultural Activities and Service.

Included is a chart which describes the areas of the first three dimensions of the ALM and the location of related activities in each dimension. This is a guide for implementation for teachers and counsellors.

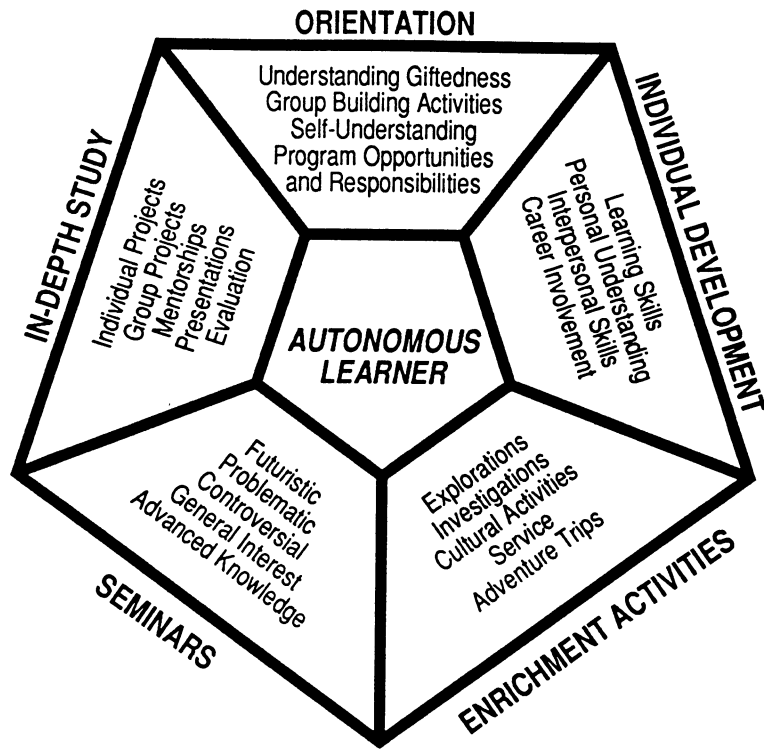


Figure #1.
 The Autonomous Learner Model

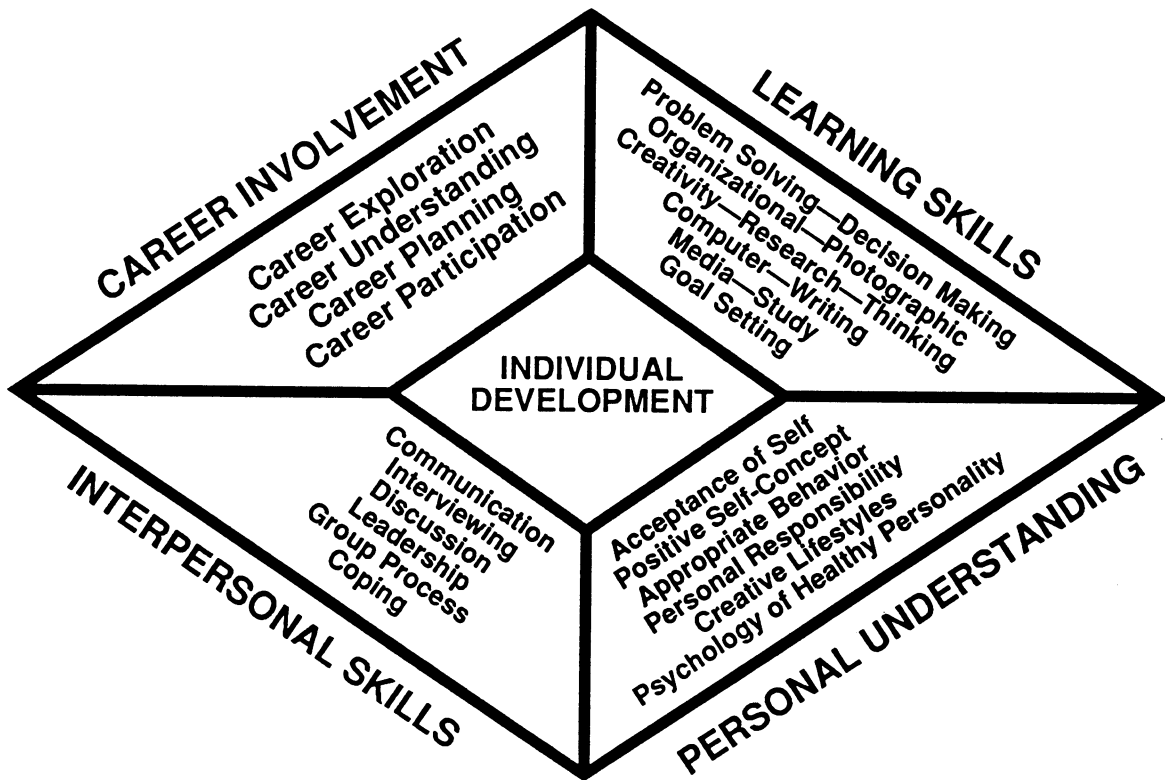


Figure #2.
 Individual Development Dimension

BEGINNING THE PROGRAM



Area: Understanding Giftedness

Dimension I: Orientation

Objective: The students will develop an awareness of what it means to be gifted.

Materials: Transparency/Blackboard/Butcher's Paper

Procedure: The Name Game Activity serves as an ice-breaker and also gives the teacher a chance to learn student names if not already known. Ask the first student to say his or her name and then the teacher's. For example: "I am Sally Smith and this is Mrs. Brown." The next student follows by saying, "I'm Jerry Jones. This is Sally Smith and you're Mrs. Brown." Proceed around the circle until all students have been introduced. If the group is so large that it becomes difficult for students to remember the names, stop after about ten students and begin again. If possible, the teacher should take the last turn and attempt to say the names of all the students.

Proceed with the following questions:

How is everyone alike in this group? Examples: Students in this group learn quickly; probably all have areas in which they don't do well; all have many similar physical characteristics.

How are people in this group different? Examples: Different size, shape, hair color; different interests, abilities.

What are some of the things that happen in our school for students with special needs and/or abilities? Examples: Resource Room; learning disabilities classes; speech therapy; hearing impaired class; special reading; athletics; drama; music; art; teachers give students more, less or different work depending on what they are capable of doing.

All of you have special talents for learning. How does that make you feel?

How might you respond to other students who ask, "Why are you in that group?" Accept and encourage all possible answers, recording them on a blackboard, transparency or large pad of paper. (Note the format given below.) When the list is completed, ask the students to think of the consequences that might accompany each answer, recording this under a new column titled "Consequences." Go through the list and discuss each answer and its consequences, helping students to realize how they can help others understand and accept the program. For inappropriate responses, help them formulate a response that would be appropriate.

What might happen in the classroom if you return from this group in the following ways: noisily; excitedly; talking to others; quietly; etc. Establish an ideal way to re-enter the classroom, and reinforce this appropriate behavior frequently.

Closure: Explain that today you want them to be ready if someone asks them, "Why are you in that group?" Have them role play by responding in their own words as you ask them, "Why are you in that group?"

FORMAT for blackboard, transparency or butcher's paper:

WHY ARE YOU IN THAT GROUP?

Answers

Consequences