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## PREFACE

The approach described in this book was first developed (in a tongue-in-cheek manner) to answer a series of “yeah buts” we encountered in various workshops we have given for classroom teachers. What is a “yeah but?” It’s our term for the many objections and excuses given by teachers for not providing a differential curriculum for gifted students.

Here are a few typical “yeah buts”:

Yeah, but—

- ... What do I do with the rest of the class?
- ... He hates to write.
- ... I don’t have time for “creative” activities.
- ... It’s too complicated.
- ... Who’s got the time?
- ... How can I motivate them?
- ... We don’t have the money.
- ... She’s only interested in maths.
- ... Where can I get the materials?
- ... How could a group with such wide abilities work together?
- ... Where would I keep the materials?

In answer to these objections, we decided to develop a materials display for teachers. We felt that the approach presented in this book would provide the solution.

Since all of us are hopeless packrats, we went through our own teaching files and filled dozens of boxes with anything we could find pertaining to a variety of topics. We then brainstormed activities for primary year levels that related to each topic. We tried to include activities for as many diverse talent areas as we could. Each box contained suggested activities in the arts, academic subject areas, creative and productive thinking, and high level thinking skills.

We tried the boxes out with a group of gifted year two children with a wide range of abilities. The children were allowed to explore all of the boxes and choose one to work on. Two or three children could work from the same box.

After a two hour period we collected the boxes and the children returned to their classroom with their projects to share them with the class. Several of the children pursued their topics in their spare time and developed new boxes for the classroom.

Do the boxes answer the “yeah buts”? We feel they do because:

1. They were simple to collect.
2. They worked with all levels.
3. They were easy to store.
4. They were inexpensive (who doesn’t get junk mail?)
5. They encompassed all academic and talent areas.
6. They gave the child a chance to develop interests.
7. They allowed the child to work with minimal guidance.
8. They let the child work within his or her chosen media.

We have shared this idea with many teachers and the reception was always enthusiastic. It’s simple! It’s challenging! It works!

Janet Heuer  
Ann Koprowics  
Ruth Harris

Gifted Program Staff  
Rockford, Illinois

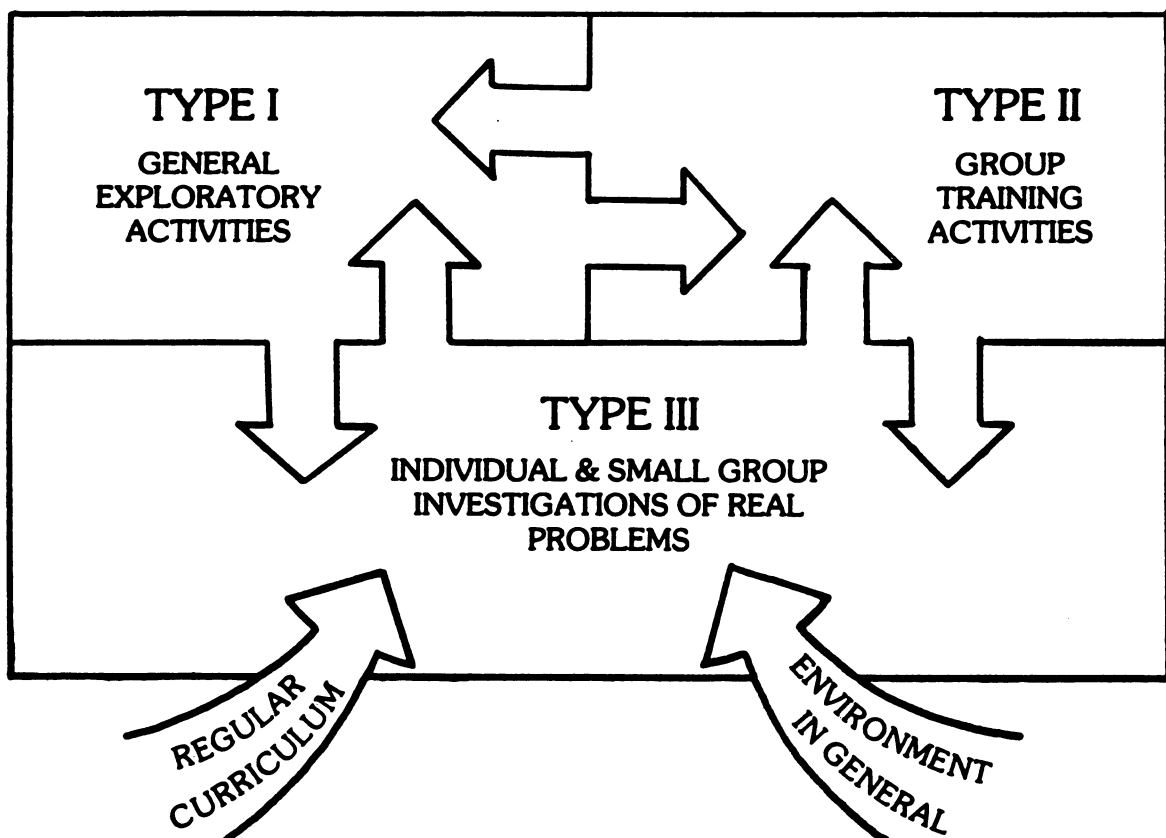
# CHAPTER 1

## MAGIC KITS: A Rationale

The characteristics frequently mentioned in the literature describing gifted children include:

1. Performance above year level in subject matter.
2. An intense curiosity about many areas.
3. Task commitment to a chosen subject of interest.
4. An ability to use higher level thinking skills, including analysis, synthesis and evaluation.
5. A desire and ability to investigate topics independently without teacher mandate.

Various models which recognize these characteristics have been proposed to aid in the development of appropriate instruction for gifted children. One of these, "The Enrichment Triad", advocated by Dr. Joseph Renzulli (Renzulli, 1977), proposes three types of activities. The Renzulli diagram below illustrates the Triad Model.



Type I, or General Exploratory Activities, are designed to expose the student to a wide variety of topics not necessarily included in the year level curriculum. Exposure to these topics is provided through field trips, speakers, interest centres, library resources, etc.

Type II, or Group Training Activities, focus on instructional techniques to develop the student's ability to engage in self-initiated research and production. Some of these strategies include brainstorming, classification, interpretation, analysis, synthesis, evaluation, hypothesizing, and creative and productive thinking skills.

Individual and small group investigation and real problems, or Type III activities require that students synthesize their previous experience with Type I and II activities and then initiate and implement a meaningful project.

The MAGIC KITS strategy presented in this book delineates a method to implement levels I and II of the Enrichment Triad. The MAGIC KITS, by their very nature, encourage Type I exploration of numerous topics using a variety of materials. The suggested activities within the MAGIC KITS train students in Type II processes, which in turn may develop into self-initiated Type III projects.



- 1** Classify birds in one or more of the following ways: migration habits; flying and flightless; nesting habits; common, endangered and extinct; types of beaks; types of feet. Think of unusual ways to classify birds. Can you think of 5 ways? 10? 20?
- 2** Plan a conservation poster about an endangered species.
- 3** Choose your favorite bird and research it. Draw, cut out or take pictures of birds and start your own bird scrapbook.
- 4** On a map of the world, chart the migration patterns of 5 different species of birds. Make a graph or chart showing how many kilometres they fly. What is the average length of flight? The longest migration? The shortest migration?
- 5** Plan a campaign to choose a new state bird.
- 6** List all the song titles about birds or write a song of your own.
- 7** If you were a bird, which one would you be? Why? Write a story about your life.
- 8** Think of as many "birds" as you can. Make a list (example: Admiral Byrd, old crow, bird brain).
- 9** Draw the skeleton of a bird and label its parts.
- 10** Find out how a bird flies. Compare a bird to an aeroplane.
- 11** Design bird houses for various types of birds.
- 12** Design a new species of bird using parts from various existing birds.
- 13** List differences in size and color between the male and female in various species.
- 14** Draw, write or talk about 10 different kinds of nests.
- 15** Which came first—the chicken or the egg? Defend your position.
- 16** Make a bird feeder and keep an account of the birds using it. Chart the birds by their feeding habits.
- 17** Make a list of all of the birds found in your state or territory.
- 18** Make a map showing the states and the state bird for each.
- 19** List unusual birds and record where they are found.