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# The Schoolwide Enrichment Model: A Focus on Student Strengths and Interests[1]

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## Introduction From Joe

Most of our work has been devoted to research and development on identification practices and teaching strategies for promoting gifted behaviors. Over the years we realized that many students, in addition to those formally identified as gifted, could benefit from school experiences that are more enriching, engaging, and challenging. We also realized that in order to make changes in *entire* schools we needed to pay some attention to an organizational plan or model for the delivery of these strategies and the professional development that is guided by our theories and research. We believe that a Total Talent Development model must look at the mission, culture, and commitment of entire schools in addition to what goes on in special programs. This approach to applying the pedagogy of gifted education to total talent development is a departure from most traditional approaches that focus only on identified gifted students. Although there has been some criticism from persons representing more conservative positions in the field, national interests in both promoting 21st-century skills for all students and the need to recognize talent potentials in underrepresented groups (see Chapter 17) have resulted in a growing number of adoptions of the programming model presented in this chapter. The Schoolwide Enrichment Model is, in essence, a plan for total school change that incorporates many of the conceptual ideas presented in earlier chapters of this book. The chapters that follow cover major components of the model in greater detail. Because this is an overview of the SEM, we are updating content from the most recently published version of the book.

In this chapter, we provide an overview of the Schoolwide Enrichment Model and recommend that interested readers find our text on the topic (Renzulli & Reis, 2014) for detailed information about implementing the model. This book contains several instruments and planning guides that can be reproduced with permission for individual use.

## What's a Model?

Before providing this overview of the Schoolwide Enrichment Model (SEM), it might be worthwhile to reflect for a moment about the meaning and purpose of this or any other plan that

[1] Reis, S. M., & Renzulli, J. S. (2009). The Schoolwide Enrichment Model: A focus on student strengths and interests. In J. S. Renzulli, E. J. Gubbins, K. S. McMillen, R. D. Eckert, & C. A. Little (Eds.), *Systems and models for developing programs for the gifted and talented* (2nd ed., pp. 323–352). Waco, TX: Prufrock Press. Copyright 2009 Prufrock Press. Adapted with permission.

is designed to bring about selected changes in a school and the ways in which educators serve young people. The first consideration in answering the above question is the distinction between two categories of educational models. We will refer to the first category as administrative models and the second as theoretical models.

Administrative models consist of patterns of school organization and procedures for dealing with such issues as how educators group students, develop schedules, and allocate time, money, and human resources. Administrative models focus mainly on how educators group students and "move around" and how they *arrange* for the delivery of services. Issues dealt with in administrative models might include homogeneous versus heterogeneous grouping, length of the school day or year, inclusion of special education students in regular classrooms, and whether or not educators should use a resource room or within-the-classroom program for the gifted.

Theoretical models, on the other hand, focus on the ways that educators provide the actual services to students, regardless of the manner in which they organize their schools or school schedules. Theoretical models consist of principles that guide the learning process and give direction to the content of the curriculum, the assessment and instructional strategies that teachers use, and ways in which educators evaluate the extent and quality of what their students have learned. Theoretical models focus on the actual outcomes of learning experiences that might take place within any given administrative pattern of organization. Theoretical models are influential in determining the *quality* of school experiences, whereas administrative models are more concerned with the efficiency and "smoothness" of the school's operation.

Although the SEM has certain implications for organizational patterns, we consider it a theoretically based model because it is guided by the Enrichment Triad discussed in Chapter 8 and based on: (1) a series of assumptions about individual differences in learners, (2) research-based principles of learning, and (3) recommended practices that logically follow from these assumptions and principles. A crucial consideration in selecting this or any other model is whether or not there is a consensus of agreement among teachers, parents, and administrators about the assumptions, principles, and recommended practices. We have found that when such a consensus exists, the relatively small organizational or administrative changes necessary for implementing the model are easily accomplished by most schools. Our experience has also shown that a theoretical model that infuses instructional practices into existing administrative patterns of organization has a higher probability of success than an approach that tries to completely reorganize the school.

## A Brief History of the SEM

How can we develop the potentials of all children? What services should be provided to students who are identified for gifted and talented programs and *how can we* provide some enrichment services to all students who can benefit from more engaging and challenging school experiences? Can enrichment programs for all students help to increase academic achievement scores? Can creative productivity be enhanced when students participate in enrichment or gifted programs? How can we help children learn to think creatively and value opportunities for creative, self-selected work?

The Schoolwide Enrichment Model (SEM) was developed to encourage and develop creative productivity in young people. In this chapter, a description of the model is followed by an explanation of a new SEM service delivery resource that uses a computer-generated profile of each student's academic strengths, interests, learning styles, and preferred modes of expression (see Chapter 14). After this strength-based profile is completed, a highly sophisticated search engine matches carefully selected Internet resources with each student's profile. This breakthrough in technology enables teachers to provide true differentiated instruction and enrichment and saves thousands of hours of teachers' time in implementing the SEM.

The SEM promotes engagement for all students through the use of three types of enrichment experiences that are enjoyable, challenging, and interest-based. Separate studies on the SEM have demonstrated its effectiveness in schools with widely differing socioeconomic levels and program organization patterns (Olenchak, 1988; Olenchak & Renzulli, 1989). The SEM was developed using the Enrichment Triad (Renzulli, 1977; Renzulli & Reis, 1985, 1997) as a core and other components such as enrichment clusters and curriculum compacting, which will be described in detail in Chapter 11. It has been implemented in more than 2,000 schools across the country (Burns, 1998) and interest in this approach has continued to expand internationally. The effectiveness of the SEM has been studied in more than 30 years of research and field-tests, suggesting that the model is effective at serving high-ability students and providing enrichment in a variety of educational settings, including schools serving culturally diverse and low-socioeconomic populations.

The original Enrichment Triad Model (Renzulli, 1976), the curriculum core of the SEM, was developed in the mid-1970s and initially implemented as a gifted and talented programming model in many diverse school districts throughout the country. The model, initially field-tested in several districts, proved to be quite popular, and requests were received from all over the country for visitations to schools using the model as well as for information about how to implement the model increased. A book about the Enrichment Triad Model (Renzulli, 1977) was published, and increasing numbers of districts began implementing this approach. It was, at this point, that a clear need was established for research regarding the effectiveness of the model as well as for other vehicles that could provide technical assistance for interested educators to help develop programs in their schools. Different types of programs based on the Enrichment Triad were designed and implemented by classroom, gifted education, and enrichment teachers. In some of these programs, the focus was on many different types of introductory enrichment, such as speakers, presentations, films, and other Type I exposure opportunities. In others, the process was on Type II process skills, such as problem solving and critical and creative problem solving. In some Triad programs, high levels of student creative productivity occurred, while in others, *few* students engaged in this type of work. In some programs, enrichment opportunities were offered to students not formally identified for the enrichment program, while in others, only identified "gifted" students had any access to enrichment experiences. Some teachers and coordinators were extremely successful in implementing the model, while others were not. Certain professional development opportunities and resources proved to be extremely helpful in enabling some teachers to better implement the program, and we wondered how we could make these opportunities more readily available to larger numbers of teachers and students. And, of course, we became increasingly interested as to why the model was working and how we could further expand the research base of this approach. Thus began almost 30 years of field-testing, research, and dissemination.

## The Dual Goal of Developing Academic Giftedness and Creative Productivity

Present efforts to develop giftedness are based on a long history of previous theoretical or research studies dealing with human abilities (Gardner, 1983, 2008, 2011; Sternberg, 1984, 1988, I 990; Sternberg & Davidson, 1986; Thorndike, 1921) and a few general conclusions from the most current research on giftedness (Sternberg & Davidson, 2005), which provide critical background for this discussion of the SEM. The first essential understanding is that giftedness is not a unitary concept, but rather, that students possess many manifestations of gifts and talents and therefore single definitions cannot adequately explain this multifaceted phenomenon. The confusion about present theories of giftedness has led many researchers to develop new models for explaining this complicated concept, but most agree that giftedness is developed over time and that culture, abilities, environment, gender, opportunities, and chance contribute to the development of gifts and talents (Sternberg & Davidson, 2005).

The SEM focuses on the development of both academic and creative productive giftedness. Creative productive giftedness describes those aspects of human activity and involvement where a premium is placed on the development of original material and products that are purposefully designed to have an impact on one or more target audiences. Learning situations designed to promote creative productive giftedness emphasize the use and application of information (content) and thinking skills in an integrated, inductive, and real-problem-oriented manner. In the SEM, traditional academic gifts are developed using curriculum compacting, acceleration, differentiated instruction, and various forms of academic enrichment. Our focus on creative productivity complements our efforts to increase academic challenge when we attempt to transform the role of the student from that of a learner of lessons to one of a firsthand inquirer who can experience the joys and frustrations of creative productivity (Renzulli, 1977). This approach is quite different from the development of giftedness that tends to emphasize deductive learning, advanced content and problem solving, and the acquisition, storage, and retrieval of information. In other words, creative productive giftedness enables children to work on issues and areas of study that have personal relevance to the student and can be escalated to appropriately challenging levels of investigative activity.

Why is creative productive giftedness important enough to question the traditional approach that has been used to select students for gifted programs on the basis of test scores? Why do some people want to rock the boat by challenging a conception of giftedness that can be numerically defined by simply giving a test? The answers to these questions are simple and yet compelling. A review of research literature (Neisser, 1979; Reis & Renzulli, 1982; Renzulli, 1978, 1986, 2005) tells us that there is much more to identifying human potential than the abilities revealed on traditional tests of intelligence, aptitude, and achievement. Furthermore, history tells us it has been the creative and productive people of the world, the producers rather than consumers of knowledge who have been recognized in history as “truly gifted” individuals. Accordingly, the SEM integrates both opportunities for academic giftedness, as well as creative productive giftedness.

The major theories underlying the SEM have been presented in Parts II and III of this book and implementation of specific service delivery components will be described in detail in the chapters that follow in this section. In this overview, we will discuss issues that should be considered for persons interested in implementing the model.

## Understanding the Overall Concept of Schoolwide Enrichment

In addition to a working knowledge of the underlying theories presented in earlier chapters, understanding the relationship between the various components presented in Figure 1 is necessary for implementation.

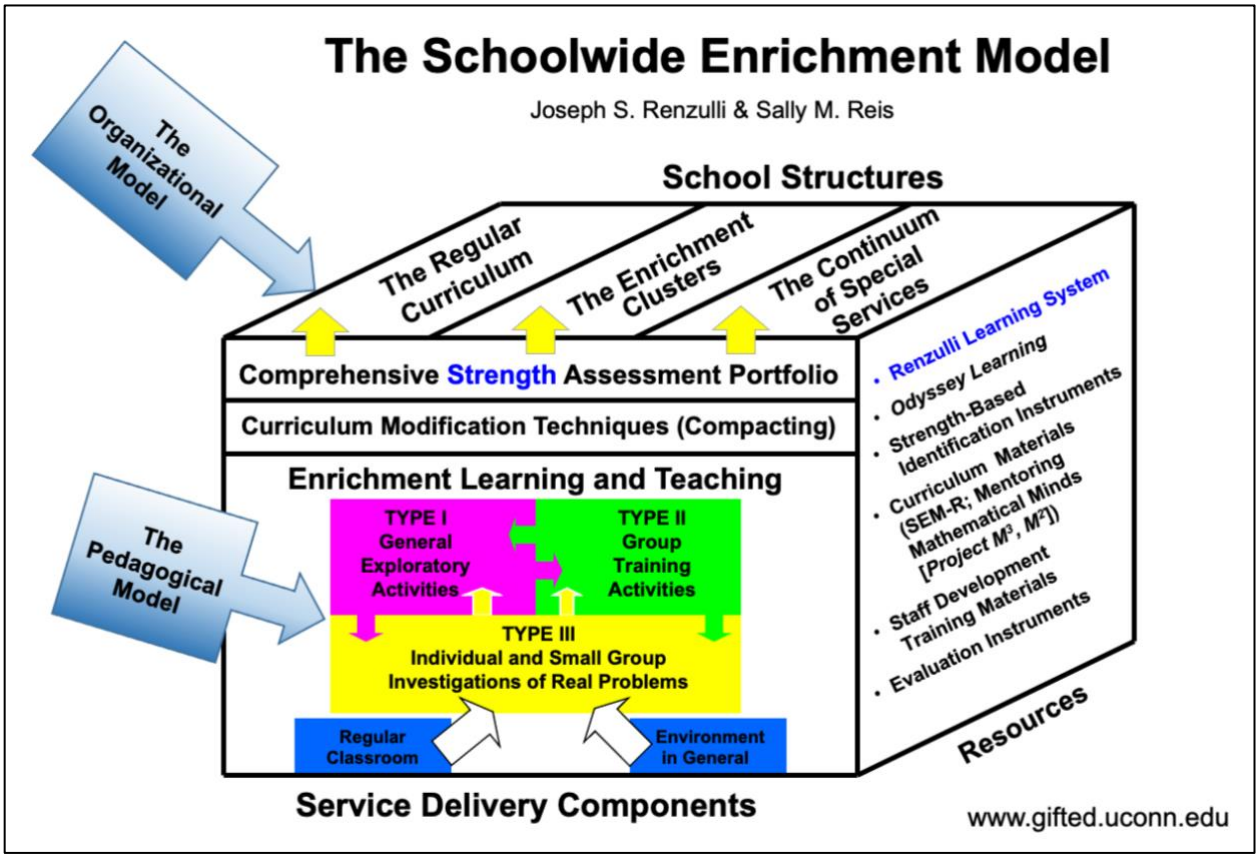



**Figure 1.** *The Schoolwide Enrichment Model.*

The three major service delivery components on the face of the cube in Figure 1 are designed to be brought to bear on the three school structures at the top of the diagram. The comprehensive strength assessment is achieved by compiling a Total Talent Portfolio for each student that includes information from achievement tests, teacher ratings of potential for creativity and task commitment (Renzulli, Hartman, & Callahan, 1971), as well as self-ratings that students complete about their interests, learning styles (Renzulli & Sullivan, 2009), and preferred modes of expression (Kettle, Renzulli, & Rizza, 1998). Interest questionnaires cover the full range of academic areas as well as questions about topics in which students may have interests that are outside traditional academic areas. Learning style preferences include: projects, independent study, teaching games, simulations, peer teaching, computer-assisted instruction, lecture, drill and recitation, and discussion; expression style preferences include preferences for production in the following areas: computer, service, drama, artistic, audio/visual, written, commercial, oral, manipulative, and musical. We recommend that a Total Talent Portfolio that focuses on student strengths rather than deficits be completed for all students.

The other two service delivery components (curriculum modification techniques and enrichment learning and teaching) are covered respectively in other chapters in this book and a separate chapter is devoted to the school structure that we call enrichment clusters (see Chapter 12). Chapter 14 describes an electronic system for creating Total Talent Portfolios for each student and an Internet-based system for matching enrichment resources with student profiles. This system can also be used by teachers to locate enrichment resources for selected curricular topics.

The continuum of special services mentioned in Figure 1 represents a broad range of opportunities and grouping arrangements that a school might provide to meet individual needs. Clubs, service organizations, and extracurricular activities fall into this category. Finally, the resources listed in the righthand side of the cube are examples of items that we have developed over the years to make implementation of the SEM easier for teachers and administrators.

**Common Goals and Unique Means**

Far too many school improvement models have become so structured and prescriptive that they seldom achieve sustainability. In schools using highly structured approaches, teachers often feel that their professionalism has been taken away from them, that they must essentially follow someone else's "script," and therefore they cannot make creative contributions to what goes on in their own classrooms. Long lists of state-dictated standards, highly structured fill-in-the-blank forms for lesson planning, and endless teacher evaluation rubrics have resulted in a generally disheartened profession and teachers who feel as though they lack any form of ownership in what goes on in their own schools. We have avoided these kinds of structures by establishing three general goals for schools implementing the Schoolwide Enrichment Model in which most educators would agree with the theory, thereby allowing teachers a wide degree of laterality for achieving these goals (see Figure 2). The first goal is *enjoyment*. Anything that we enjoy doing we generally do better and we tend to grow and try to improve in the process. Enjoyment leads to *engagement*: a commitment to become intrinsically involved in and energetic about what one is learning or doing. Research has shown that higher engagement results in higher achievement (Dotterer & Lowe, 2011; Greenwood, 1991; Reyes, Brackett, Rivers, White, & Salovey, 2012; Wang & Holcombe, 2010). And engagement leads to *enthusiasm* for the act of learning itself. We also recommend that the following list of high-end learning objectives be used as a guide for planning all enrichment activities:

- plan a task and consider alternatives;
- monitor one's understanding and the need for additional information;
- identify patterns, relationships, and discrepancies in information;
- generate *reasonable* arguments, explanations, hypotheses, and ideas using appropriate vocabulary and concepts;
- draw comparisons and analogies to other problems;
- formulate meaningful questions;
- transform factual information into usable knowledge;
- rapidly and efficiently access Just-In-Time information and selectively extract meaning from that information;
- extend one's thinking beyond the information given;

- detect bias, make comparisons, draw conclusions, and predict outcomes;
- apportion time, money, and resources;
- apply knowledge and problem-solving strategies to real-world problems;
- work effectively with others;
- communicate effectively in different genres and formats;
- derive enjoyment from active engagement in the act of learning;
- and creatively solve problems and produce new ideas.




**Figure 2.** *The three Es.*

These are the learner-centered skills that grow young minds, promote genuine student engagement, and increase achievement. Although focusing on these outcomes may be

counterintuitive[2] to the "more-practice-is-better" pedagogy, we need only look at the track record of compensatory learning models to realize we have been banging our collective heads against walls and following an endless parade of reforms being forced through the schoolhouse door with no results. We need to be courageous enough to explore bolder and more innovative alternatives that will provide all students with a more highly enriched diet—the kind of diet that characterizes learning in the nation's best public and private schools. This is not to say that we should abandon a strong, standards-based curriculum that focuses on basic competencies, nor should we forget to demand accountability data to evaluate returns on investment in alternate approaches to addressing the problem.

But we also need to infuse into the curriculum a series of motivationally rich experiences that promote student engagement, enjoyment, and a genuine enthusiasm for learning. Common sense and our own experience tell us that we always do a better job when we are working on something in which we are personally engaged—something that we are really "into" and that we truly enjoy doing. Take, for example, the demonstrated benefits in performance that result from extracurricular activities that are based on a pedagogy that is the opposite of the pedagogy of drill and practice. How many unengaged students have you seen on the school newspaper staff, the basketball team, the chess club, the debate team, or the concert choir? Their engagement occurs because these students have some choice in the area in which they will participate, and they interact in a goal-oriented environment with other likeminded students interested in developing expertise in their chosen area. They use authentic problem solving, interpersonal, and creative strategies in order to produce a product, service, or performance and their work is brought to bear on one or more intended audiences other than, or, at least, in addition to the teacher. The engagement that results from these kinds of experiences exemplifies the best way to approach learning, one that differs completely from the behaviorist theory that guides so much of prescriptive and remedial education.

All learning, from diapers to doctorate, exists on a continuum ranging from deductive, didactic, and prescriptive on one hand to inductive, investigative, and inquiry oriented on the other. Students who have not achieved a certain, predetermined score are subjected to endless amounts of repetitious practice material guided by the didactic model. Then, when scores do not improve, we often think that the obvious solution is to simply redouble our efforts with what has been popularly called a "drill and kill" approach to learning; an approach that has turned many of our schools into joyless places that promote mind numbing boredom, lack of genuine student and teacher engagement, absenteeism, increased dropout rates, and the other byproducts of overdependence on mechanized learning. Proponents of popular but extremely prescriptive reading programs may boast slightly higher test scores, however the endless drill and practice only prepares students for more test taking rather than actually *learning to read*, enjoying reading, and making reading an important part of their lives.

[2] I have referred to the argument made here as a counterintuitive approach because almost every bone in most policy maker's bodies sees a certain logic in the more practice-is-better approach to closing the achievement gap—it just seems to "make sense." The fact that this approach simply has not worked is the best evidence for coming at the problem from a different direction—this conclusion also makes sense!

**All Roads Lead to Rome**

With these three common goals and the above list of objectives in mind, we encourage schools to make their own decisions about how the goals will be achieved. The metaphor that we sometimes use is that "all roads lead to Rome" (in this case, the 3Es). However, there are many ways to get to Rome. We believe that the unique means for "getting to Rome" is based on the selection and use of a program development model that has two essential requirements. First, a model should consist of a shared mission and set of objectives. Everyone (or at the very least, almost everyone) involved in the selection and implementation of a model should agree that the mission and objectives represent a "destination" that they would like to reach. If an agreed-upon goal is "to get to Rome," then there is no ambiguity, vagueness, or misunderstandings about where everyone is going.

This first requirement of a model means that a great deal of front end time should be spent exploring alternative models, discussing and debating the advantages and disadvantages of various approaches, and examining related factors such as underlying research, implementation in other schools, and the availability of supportive resources. Reaching consensus *before* embarking upon a journey will help ensure that everyone involved will get to Rome rather than to Venice or Moscow!

Although we advocate that programs based on the Schoolwide Enrichment Model should strive to accomplish an agreed-upon mission and set of objectives, we also believe that any plan for program development must allow for a great deal of flexibility in the achievement of its objectives. This flexibility is necessary because no written plan or set of procedures can take into account the variations that exist at the local school level. Differences in school populations, financial resources, the availability of persons from the community at large, and a host of other local variables must be considered in the implementation of this or any other approach to school improvement. A model that does not allow for such flexibility could easily become a straitjacket that simply will not work when one or more of the local considerations are not taken into account. Some schools will have supplementary resource teachers for advanced-level students and others will not. Some school districts will have an abundance of community resources readily available, and others, perhaps more geographically isolated, will have limited access to museums, planetariums, colleges and universities, etc. Some schools may serve larger proportions of culturally diverse students than others and certain highly selective schools may have such a large number of high-achieving students that they have been designated as a school for the gifted.

Another reason why we believe that a model for program development must maintain a large degree of flexibility is that educators tend to quickly lose interest in "canned" programs and models that do not allow for local initiative, creativity, and teacher input. New and better ways to provide enrichment experiences to students will be discouraged if program development does not encourage local adaptation and innovation to occur. The SEM does provide a certain amount of general direction in both the development of program objectives and in the procedures for pursuing these objectives. At the same time, however, the specific types of activities that educators select and develop for their programs, and the ways in which they make these activities available to various populations of students will actually result in the creation of their own programming model. Educators will, in effect, be writing their own resource guide based on the

activities that they select and develop. We have found that if the three general goals of the Schoolwide Enrichment Model and the objectives listed above are maintained, even if in a slightly modified form, a school's program will achieve the integrity that is sought in this total system approach. In this regard, the program that educators develop will attempt to achieve the best of two worlds! First, their program will benefit from the theoretical and research developments and the many years of field testing and practical application that have led to this particular approach for total talent development. Second, the ideas, resources, innovations, and adaptations that emerge from local situations will contribute to the uniqueness and practicality of programs that are developed to meet local needs. And we have found over the years that many teachers and leaders from excellent SEM schools have contributed to the profession by sharing their work at conferences, workshops, and in various publications. We view this type of sharing as a best-case example of teacher leadership and the extended professionalization of the work of teachers who have achieved the best of both worlds.

In all of our work, we have consistently recommended that educators should make whatever modifications and adaptations are necessary to the particular procedures recommended for accomplishing various program tasks. We believe that there are many pathways and alternatives to reaching desired program outcomes. Once everyone in a school has agreed upon a destination, the uniqueness and excitement of the journey should involve the creation of an individualized plan for getting there. If all roads lead to Rome, what an unimaginative, and indeed, even boring world it would be if there was only one way to get there! Each school develops its *own* ownership of the SEM by the ways in which it selectively adopts, adapts, and creates the methods, materials, and organizational components that will make the school and program an *original* application of the Schoolwide Enrichment Model.

## Research Related to SEM

A collective body of research on the SEM (Gubbins, 1995; Renzulli & Reis, 1994) summarized at https://gifted.uconn.edu/schoolwide-enrichment-model/semresearch/ suggests that the model is effective at serving high-ability students in a variety of educational settings and in schools serving diverse ethnic and socio-economic populations. These studies also suggest that the pedagogy of the SEM can be applied to various content areas, implemented in a wide variety of settings, and used with diverse populations of students including high-ability students with learning disabilities and those who underachieve. This research suggests that implementation of the SEM results in more use of advanced reasoning skills and thinking skills. This research has also demonstrated that students who are involved in SEM activities achieve at higher levels in traditional achievement tests than students who continue to use regular curricular or remedial activities.

## Non-Negotiables in Implementing the SEM

The many changes taking place in general education have resulted in some unusual reactions to the SEM that might best be described as the good news/bad news phenomenon. The good news is that many schools are expanding their conception of giftedness and they are more willing than ever to extend a broader continuum of services to larger proportions of the school population. The bad news is that the motivation for these changes is often based on mistaken beliefs (a) that we can adequately serve high-potential students without some forms of grouping,

(b) that we don't need special program teachers, or (c) that special program teachers are best utilized by going from classroom to classroom with a "shopping cart" of thinking skill lessons and activities.

**Non-Negotiable #1**

The first non-negotiable is that anyone who tries to implement an SEM reads our book entitled *The Schoolwide Enrichment Model: A How-to Guide for Talent Development* (3rd ed.; Renzulli & Reis, 2014). A thorough knowledge of the goals and components is essential.

**Non-Negotiable #2**

Although we have advocated a larger Talent Pool than traditionally has been the practice in gifted education, a Talent Pool that includes students who gain entrance on both test and nontest criteria (Renzulli, 1988), we firmly maintain that the concentration of services necessary for the development of high-level potentials cannot take place without identifying and documenting individual student abilities. Targeting and documenting does not mean that we will simply play the same old game of classifying students as "gifted" or "not gifted," and let it go at that. Rather, targeting and documenting are part of an ongoing process that produces a comprehensive and always evolving "Total Talent Portfolio" about student abilities, interests, and learning styles (Dunn, Dunn, & Price, 1977). The most important thing to keep in mind about this approach is that all information should be used to make individual programming decisions about present and future activities, and about ways in which we can enhance and build upon documented strengths. Documented information will enable us (a) to recommend enrollment in advanced courses or special programs (e.g., summer programs, college courses), and (b) it will provide direction in taking extraordinary steps to develop specific interests and resulting projects within topics or subject matter areas of advanced learning potential.

**Non-Negotiable #3**

Enrichment specialists (a.k.a. gifted education teachers) must devote a majority of their time to working directly with Talent Pool students, and this time should mainly be devoted to facilitating individual and small-group investigations (i.e., Type IIIs). Some of their time with Talent Pool students can be devoted to stimulating interest in potential Type IIIs through advanced Type I experiences and advanced Type II training that focuses on learning research skills necessary to carry out investigations in various disciplines. To do this, we must encourage more classroom teachers to become involved in talent development through both enrichment opportunities and in curriculum modification and differentiation within their classrooms. We must also encourage more classroom teachers to participate in enrichment teams who work together to provide talent development opportunities for all students in the school, enabling the enrichment specialists to work with more advanced students.

**Non-Negotiable #4**

SEM programs must have specialized, trained personnel who work directly with Talent Pool students to teach advanced courses and to coordinate enrichment services in cooperation with a Schoolwide Enrichment Team. The old cliche, "Something that is the responsibility of

everyone ends up being the responsibility of no one," has never been more applicable than when it comes to enrichment or gifted education specialists. The demands made upon general education classroom teachers, especially during these times of mainstreaming and heterogeneous grouping, leave precious little time to challenge our most able learners and to accommodate interests that clearly are above and beyond the regular curriculum. In a study completed by The National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented (Westberg, 1991), it was found that in 84% of general education classroom activities, no differentiation was provided for identified high-ability students. Accordingly, time spent in enrichment programs with specialized teachers is even more important for high-potential students.

Related to this non-negotiable are the issues of teacher selection and training, and the scheduling of special program teachers. Providing unusually high levels of challenge requires advanced training in the discipline(s) that one is teaching, in the application of process skills, and in the management and facilitation of individual and small-group investigations. It is these characteristics of enrichment specialists rather than the mere grouping of students that have resulted in achievement gains and high levels of creative productivity on the parts of special program students.

Every profession is defined, in part, by its identifiable specializations, according to the task(s) to be accomplished. But specialization means more than the acquisition of particular skills. It also means affiliation with others who share common goals, the promotion of one's field, participation in professional activities, organizations, and research, and contributions to the advancement of the field. It also means the kinds of continued study and growth that make a difference between a job and a career. Now, more than ever, it is essential to fight for the special program positions that are falling prey to budget cuts. All professionals in the field should work for the establishment of standards and specialized certification for enrichment specialists. They should also help parents organize a task force that will be ready at a moment's notice to call in the support of every parent (past as well as present) whose child has been served in a special program.

## Conclusion

There may never have been a time when so much debate about what should be taught has existed in American schools. The current emphasis on testing as connected to federal legislation, the standardization of curriculum, and the drive to increase achievement scores has produced major changes in education during the last two decades. Yet at the same time, our society continues to need to develop creativity in our students. As overpopulation, disease, war, pollution, and starvation increase both here and throughout the rest of the world, the need for creative solutions to these and other problems is clear. The absence of opportunities to develop creativity in all young people, and especially in talented students, is troubling. In the SEM, students are encouraged to become partners in their own education and develop a passion and joy for learning. As students pursue creative enrichment opportunities, they learn to acquire communication skills and to enjoy creative challenges. The SEM provides the opportunity for students to develop their gifts and talents and to begin the process of lifelong learning, culminating, we hope, in creative productive work that they choose.

Enrichment programs have been the true laboratories of our nation's schools because they have presented ideal opportunities for testing new ideas and experimenting with potential solutions to long-standing educational problems. Programs for high-potential students have been an especially fertile place for experimentation because such programs are usually not encumbered by prescribed curriculum guides or traditional methods of instruction. The SEM provides a repertoire of services that can be integrated in such a way so as to create "a rising tide lifts all ships" approach. The model includes a continuum of services, enrichment opportunities and three distinct services: curriculum modification and differentiation, enrichment opportunities of various types, and opportunities for the development of individual portfolios including interests, learning styles, product styles, and other information about student strengths. Not only has this model been successful in addressing the problem of high-potential students who have been underchallenged, it also provides additional important learning paths for creative students who achieve academic success in more traditional learning environments but long for opportunities for innovation in school.

The absence of opportunities to develop creativity in all young people, and especially in talented students, is troubling. In the SEM, students are encouraged to become responsible partners in their own education and to develop a passion and joy for learning. As students pursue creative enrichment opportunities, they learn to acquire communication skills and enjoy creative challenges. The SEM provides the opportunity for students to develop their gifts and talents and to begin the process of lifelong learning, culminating, we hope, in higher levels of creative and innovative work in their areas of interest and passion as adults.

When all is said and done, we hope you will agree with a school superintendent who said, "the Schoolwide Enrichment Model is nothing more than organized common sense."

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