

Engaging Under-performing Gifted Students in the Middle Years



About Us

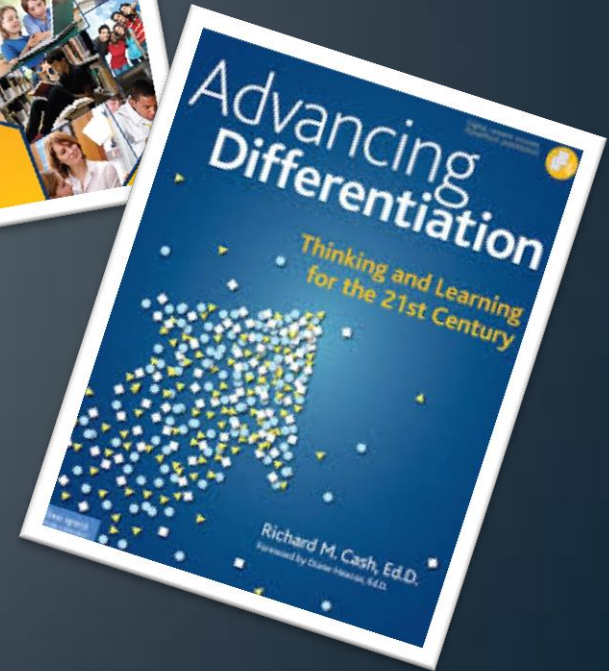
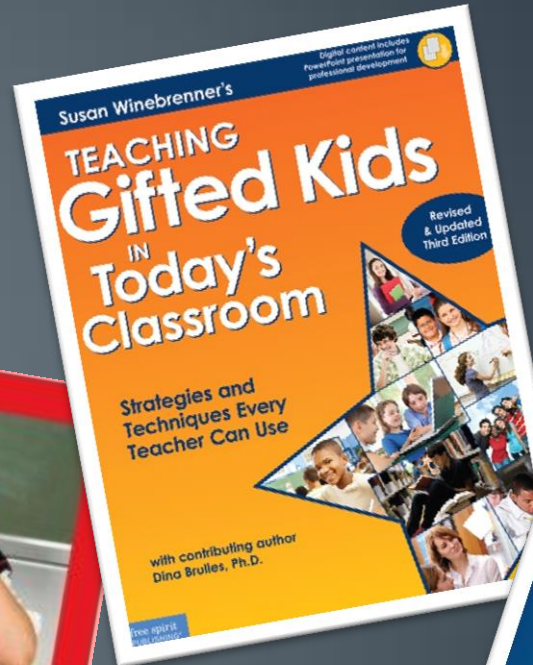
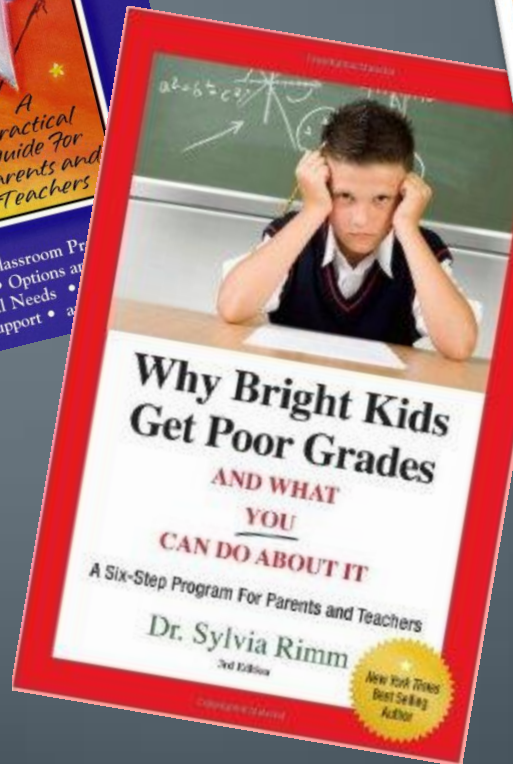


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 - 10th Year Teaching
 - Pacific Cascade MS
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 - 6th Grade Advanced Humanities
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 - Pacific Cascade MS
 - Issaquah School District
 - Algebra Teacher
 - Currently working towards a Masters in S.T.E.A.M from the University of San Diego
 - National Boards Certified in EA Math

Major Resources Used





giftedchallenges.blogspot.com

“Lack of attention”

“Lazy”

“Low standards”

www.wisegeek.com

“Incomplete assignments”

“unmotivated and irresponsible”



wiseGEEK



I'M BORED

“Underachievers sit in virtually every classroom and live in many families. They waste educational resources, try the patience of even the best teachers, manipulate their families toward chaos, and destroy their own confidence and sense of personal control.”
(Rimm)

Underachievement Syndrome

Rimm, 2008

- NO gene, neurological or biological explanation for inadequate school performance by capable children
- NOT one particular cause
- These children have *learned* to underachieve
- Underachievers...
 - Usually begin as bright and verbal preschoolers
 - Have an either gradual or dramatic change in their enthusiasm for learning
 - Have percentile scores that decline steadily as they enter underachievement mode

Characteristics of Kids with Underachievement Syndrome

Rimm, 2008

- Disorganized
- Dawdle
- Forget homework
- Lose assignments
- Misplace books
- Day dream
- Don't listen
- Look out the window or talk too much to others
- Consider themselves to have studied after one look at the material

- Slow and perfectionistic
 - "If I finish the work, it will be wrong anyways."
- More concerned about finishing the work, rather than doing quality work
- Careless errors
- Lonely and withdrawn
- Cry, whine and complain
- Bossy; lose tempers easily
- Describe school as boring or irrelevant

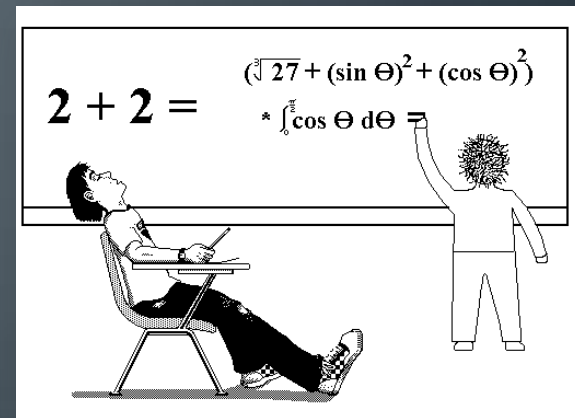
Characteristics of Kids with Underachievement Syndrome

Rimm, 2008

- Creative underachievers may have many unusual ideas, but never bring them to fruition
- Completely immersed in one project
- Some never read; others escape life by reading all the time
- Don't believe they can achieve their goals
- Set goals too high or too low; guarantee failure
- They don't understand what "work" actually means
- They deny themselves the opportunity to build confidence

- **ALL IN COMMON:**
Unconsciously manipulative

- Parent against parent
- Teacher against parent
- Parent against teacher
- Friend against friend



Underachievers say...

Rimm, 2008

- “I get poor grades because I have horrible teachers!”
- “Who wants to be a geek anyways.”
- “The test scores must be wrong; I’m not that smart.”
- “I’d rather not do it at all than do it less than perfectly.”
- “If my mother would only let me work on the computer for as long as I wanted, I could eventually earn a six-figure salary.”



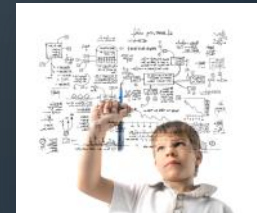
Gifted Underachievement

Rimm, 2008

- “It has been reported that 20% of high school dropouts are gifted.”
- Gifted underachiever vs Low achiever
 - Ability to score high on standardized achievement tests
 - Discrepancy between ability and achievement
 - Sylvia Rimm’s Definition
 - “Underachievement is a discrepancy between a child’s school performance and some index of the child’s ability. If children are not working to their ability in school, they are underachieving” (Hoover-Schultz).

Why Does it Matter?

- Gifted children are the largest group of underachievers in education
 - At least 63% of students with an IQ of 130 or above are seriously underachieving and many of these students have a record of truancy.
- Much of the educational community believes that gifted kids can succeed on their own and don't need any special nurturing; little is done to meet their needs
 - They are among the most poorly served in the school population.



Why Does it Matter?

- In the United States, there is no federal mandate for programs or services for gifted learners in the public schools.
- “Only 9 of 50 states require IEPs for the gifted and talented students they serve” (Clark).
- “This situation leads to unnecessary loss of ability, especially among girls and minority students, and regression toward a more average ability level...” (Clark).
- “An environment that is confining, solitary, or lacking in challenges limits the growth of the brain...” (Clark).



“Though more underachievers pervade the school system than all of the special education students combined, there are virtually no special services available to help them. This lack of programs for underachievers is at least partially due to our society’s tendency to label the underachiever as being unresponsive and even lazy” (Hishinuma)

Why Gifted Students can be Underachievers



- Environmental Factors

- The School

- Anti-intellectual school atmosphere
 - Inflexible requirements for graduation
 - “Hidden Underachievers” – The educational system is not set up to recognize their talents
 - “Meaningful learning engages gifted children, and lack of challenge is one of the reasons gifted children are often late turning in their homework” (Strip and Hirsch).

- Student’s Peer Group

- “Underachieving students often report peer influence as the single most important force blocking their achievement.”
 - Anti-academic peer groups can exert pressure on gifted students

Why Gifted Students can be Underachievers

- Power Struggles with adults
 - Excessive inflexibility and/or authoritarian discipline at home/school can result in a power struggle
 - Child, feeling pressure to measure up, can openly rebel
 - This can also take the form of underachievement
 - Student realizes they can't "measure up" and gives up trying
 - Misguided way of taking control of his/her own life



Why Gifted Students can be Underachievers

- Personal/Family Factors

- Unfavorable coping skills or learning styles
 - Low levels of self-confidence
 - An inability to persevere
 - A lack of goals
 - Feelings of inferiority
- Poor family relationships and inconsistent standards
- Parents of underachieving students may not have the skills to support their gifted children
- Cultural/language barriers
- Close one-to-one relationships with at least one adult
 - Dependency; power



Why Gifted Students can be Underachievers

- Boredom
 - Non-challenging work = no effort needed; no learned perseverance
 - Impatience with classmates who aren't performing at their levels
 - Overconfidence and/or frustration can have a negative effect on their success
 - Feel that their teachers are “stupid” and be less motivated to listen
 - “Some experts theorize that nearly one-quarter to one-half of gifted children's time is spent waiting for the other students to catch up” (Strip and Hirsch).
 - Be aware: some gifted students use boredom as an excuse to get out of working

Why Gifted Students can be Underachievers

- Perfectionism

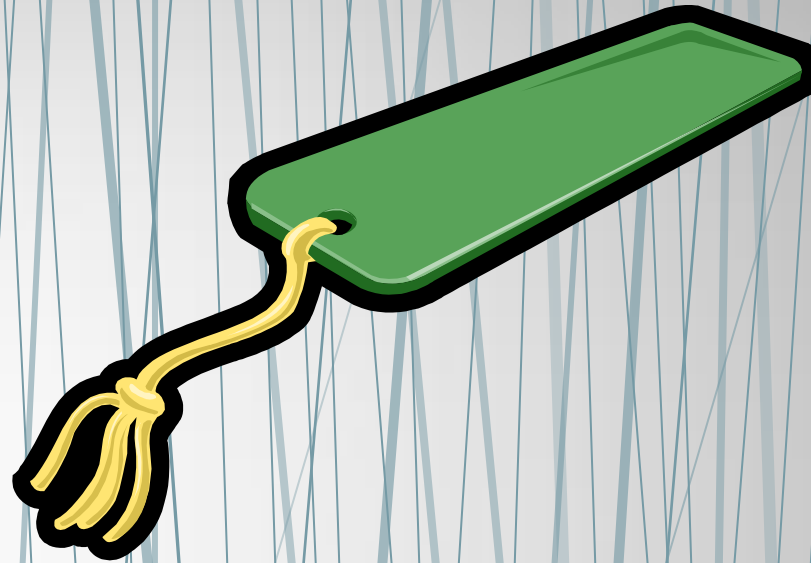
- One of the most pervasive characteristics of gifted children
- A child who has repeatedly failed to measure up to standards (their own, teachers, or parents) will just give up and stop trying
 - May refuse to do homework or study for tests



A Different Brain?



- When you look at fMRI's (functional brain magnetic resonance imaging) of gifted thinkers, it looks like a 'brain on fire'
 - High metabolic activity
 - Gifted brains are intense
 - Brain activity is planned and complex; seems to require the coordination of diverse visual, spatial, verbal, and sensory areas
 - Great organizers of diverse and multimodal information
- Positives
 - More vivid sensing, increased memory, greater knowledge, more varied associations, greater analytic ability
- Drawbacks
 - Sensory, emotional, and memory overload; hypersensitivities, personal disorganization, sensory distractibility, "lost in thought," and mental fatigue



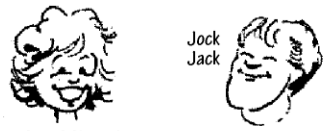
Types of Gifted Underachiever Bookmarks

Utilize as resources in your classroom

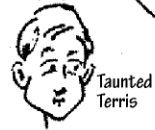
CONFORMITY



DEPENDENT CONFORMERS



DOMINANT CONFORMERS



Hyper Harry

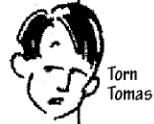
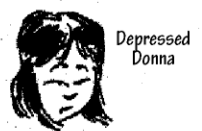


DEPENDENT NON-CONFORMERS

DOMINANT NON-CONFORMERS



NON-CONFORMITY



DEPENDENCE

DOMINANCE

Main Types of Gifted Underachievers

- Dependent (Conformer and Non-Conformer)
 - ✓ Some find that talking about sad feelings is a passive way to control an adult (can be a way to avoid problem-solving techniques).
 - ✓ Often lacks organization skills
 - ✓ Avoid competition/fear of failure
 - ✓ Often afraid to contribute creative ideas/they are highly critical
 - ✓ Establish ways to avoid doing homework
 - ✓ Rarely set realistic goals for themselves
 - ✓ Overwhelmed with long-term assignments

Main Types of Gifted Underachievers

- **Dominant Conformers**

- ✓ They rarely fail courses; do just enough to get by
- ✓ Manage to avoid learning to cope with failure by only engaging in activities that they are good at or can win
- ✓ They might not become underachievers until later on in school (high school or college)
- ✓ Manipulate home and school environments to avoid competition
- ✓ They usually live in highly competitive families
- ✓ Prefer to do things their own way; feel good when they control their activities
- ✓ Often have a defensive response to criticism
- ✓ Will only show parents work/tests that get an “A.” Parents are probably not seeing anything else.
- ✓ They see a lack of praise as criticism

Main Types of Gifted Underachievers

- **Dominant Non-Conformers**
 - ✓ Most resistant to change
 - ✓ Often belligerent, cocky, rebellious, hostile, negative, angry, violent
 - ✓ Feel confident when they are in control
 - ✓ Feel they don't have an area of expertise to get attention from
 - ✓ They are "show-people" and like to have an audience
 - ✓ Alcohol and drug abuse becomes ways to restore power in their lives
 - ✓ Might have been given too many things and don't know the idea of "wish, want, work, wait." They want to be instantly smart or successful.
 - ✓ Consistently compete with everyone (for them to feel good, others must feel bad)
 - ✓ Will often try and manipulate adults against each other
 - ✓ Life for them is boring if they are not busy
 - ✓ Will blame the pressure they feel on their teachers and parents

“Given an appropriate education, these students [gifted underachievers] can grow up to become leading scientists, mathematicians, artists and writers. Unfortunately, for many of these students, their gifts represent a lost opportunity” (Birdsall and Correa).

Strategies to Re-engage Gifted Underachievers

- “When teachers provide appropriate challenges, gifted students become engaged in what they are learning and are able to achieve goals that they value. They remain motivated and avoid the behavioral and emotional consequences of tuning out” (Willis).
 - Strategies for dealing with perfectionism and a growth mindset
 - Enrichment for students who demonstrate mastery
 - Strategies for cooperative learning
 - Options for interest-driven, individualized, higher-challenge learning
 - Strengthened teacher expertise

Strategies for dealing with perfectionism and a growth mindset

- Perfectionism
 - Help child realize that setting high standards is admirable, but not meeting standards is not a reason for depression or loss of self-worth
 - Point out that failure can be the best teacher
 - Share stories of innovators who are successful BECAUSE they failed
 - Beethoven
 - Einstein
 - Thomas Jefferson
 - Help students practice time management
 - Help students set goals and prioritize

Changing Our Mindset



Carol Dweck, world-renowned Stanford University psychologist, talks about the power of our mindset or our beliefs (especially around challenge). We can either have a Fixed Mindset where we let failure (or even success) define who we are, or a Growth Mindset where we see setbacks as opportunities to grow and improve ourselves. Just like how we learned how to walk... there are many stumbles along the way, but to reach our potential and live the life we desire, it takes practice and perseverance. We always have a choice about which view we adopt for ourselves... and it's never too late to change. What's your view?

It's up to you!



FIXED MINDSET

Belief that my intelligence, personality and character are carved in stone; my potential is determined at birth



GROWTH MINDSET

Belief that my intelligence, personality and character can be developed! A person's true potential is unknown (and unknowable).

DESIRE	Look smart in every situation and prove myself over and over again. Never fail!!	Stretch myself, take risks and learn. Bring on the challenges!
EVALUATION OF SITUATIONS	Will I succeed or fail? Will I look smart or dumb?	Will this allow me to grow? Will this help me overcome some of my challenges?
DEALING WITH SETBACKS	"I'm a failure" (identity) "I'm an idiot"	"I failed" (action) "I'll try harder next time"
CHALLENGES	Avoid challenges, get defensive or give up easily.	Embrace challenges, persist in the face of setbacks.
EFFORT	Why bother? It's not going to change anything.	Growth and learning require effort.
CRITICISM	Ignore constructive criticism.	Learn from criticism. How can I improve?
SUCCESS OF OTHERS	Feel threatened by the success of others. If you succeed, then I fail.	Finds lessons & inspiration in other people's success.
RESULT ...	Plateau early, achieve less than my full potential.	Reach ever-higher levels of achievement.

Individualizing Instruction

- Assess which students have achieved mastery of unit materials before teaching
 - Compacting and providing extension work can offer opportunities for gifted students to explore, use advanced technology, and investigate disciplines outside the traditional curriculum
- Gifted middle school students may still need help developing resilience and strategies for using their gifts (Willis).
- Middle school may offer their first tests: they are encountering information that is difficult
 - They may not know how to persevere
 - They may think they are no longer smart

Why Cooperative Learning can Fail to Motivate Some Gifted Learners

- More efficient to work independently
- Struggle with social skills
- Do not want the “Smart Kid in the group” stigma
- Does not see value in communicating their understanding
- Does not want to teach other kids



How to create a Positive Cooperative Learning Environment for Gifted Learners

- Mindful group selection
- Thoughtful selection of groups tasks
 - Challenge level, length, and final product
- Explicitly teaching expectations and the value in cooperative learning
- Successful teacher facilitation
 - Actively monitoring
 - Recording positive group observations
 - Require teacher check-ins
 - Positive reinforcement of cooperative learning skills
 - Sharing observation with the class
 - Peer evaluation of positive contributions of each group member



Options for interest-driven, individualized, higher-challenge learning

- Activate their executive functions
 - Judgment, critical analysis, prioritizing, organizing, separating fact from opinion, weighing validity, deduction, induction, recognizing relationships
 - Allow gifted students to mentally manipulate information
 - Increased input, questioning, creative problem solving, analogies, connecting knowledge to real-world possibilities

Cross-Impact Matrix (CIM)

What Impact does this → Have on this? ↓	A The 1860 election of Abraham Lincoln	B The attack on Fort Sumter	C The emancipation Proclamation	D Lee's Surrender to Grant in 1865
1 Economy				
2 Politics				
3 Race Issues				
4 Social Structure				

Straight Ahead – Uphill - Mountainous



- **Straight-Ahead**
 - Instructions guide you from start to finish
 - All grade-level content, skills, and language
- **Uphill**
 - Instructions take you about half-way, then drop you off to see if you can finish
 - Mostly grade-level content and skills; language may be slightly above grade-level
- **Mountainous**
 - Instructions get you started, but you guide the task for most of the journey
 - Content and skills extend beyond the grade-level framework; cognitively demanding diction

“Students feel valued and motivated to achieve when adults listen to them, allow them to explore, give them a voice in planning classroom activities, reward them when they try things that stretch their intellectual limits, and respect their dignity and individuality”
(Strip and Hirsch)

Extension Activities

- When students document mastery, their first activity should be to engage with that material at a higher level
 - It isn't silent reading time or journal writing time
 - Focus on depth and complexity
- Think: How can a standard be extended in more challenging ways?
- Don't use extension work time to have students work on areas of weaknesses

Extension Activities

- Should not be MOTS (more of the same)!
- MOTS almost guarantees:
 - Passive withdrawal
 - Disruptive, aggressive behavior
 - Boredom and frustration
- Let them “outside the umbrella” of the classroom activities

SLOW



**CHILDREN
PLAYING**

Tic-Tac-Toe Board/Extension Menu

- Can be used as extension work, a tiered assignment, or a way to offer choice to gifted students
- Options:
 - Student choices create a “tic-tac-toe”
 - Choose one option that ALL students must do
 - Base on skill level, interest, multiple intelligences, etc.
- Allows for creativity, and students feel empowered to dictate the direction of the own learning



www.exquisite-minds.com



American Wars Extension Menu

Present a detailed biography of an important person during the time of this conflict. Include evidence of this person's influence during the war period.	Research the patriotic music used by both sides in the war. Point out similarities and differences. Describe how music influences patriotism in civilians and soldiers. Compare the patriotic music of this war to that of other wars.	Locate information about the medical practices used on the battlefield and in field hospitals during this war. Include biographical information about famous medical people of that time.
Discover how military people communicated with each other and with their commander-in-chief during this war. Focus on events in which poorly understood or poorly delivered communications influenced the outcome of a military effort.	Student Choice	Investigate battles in which creative or uncommonly used tactics were employed. OR design strategies that you think would have led to more victories and fewer casualties. Be sure to use only the technology available during that time period.
Discover words or phrases that were "coined" during this war period and remain part of our English usage today.		Investigate other types of wars: between families, clans, children in school, mythical creatures, etc. Share information about them and include a comparison of elements found in a traditional war between countries.
		Investigate and describe ways in which this conflict or wars in general could be avoided.

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Biography Extension Menu

Create a bibliography of biographies in a specific category. Examples: women, astronauts, children, musicians, inventors, sports heroes, entertainers. Read those that look interesting to you. Find a way to get others interested in reading them.	Read three biographies in a specific category (see the box at the left). Illustrate the elements they have in common.	Illustrate the relationship between the subject's life and the time period in which he or she lived. Include information about specific events and how they influenced the person's life.
Describe gender or ethnic issues in biographies written for your age group during the past 10 years, and during the first 5 years of any previous decade.	Student Choice	Discover some things about which the subject would have been proud. Use these to create his or her obituary and epitaph.
Create an illustrated timeline showing major and minor events in the subject's life. Create a second timeline showing things the person might have wanted to do or accomplish.		Act out a biography of a person who was connected to a particular historical event your classmates are studying. Challenge your audience to guess the person's identity.
		Use photography to illustrate the "snapshot method" of biography, in which you show common themes or elements found in three biographies.

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DDM – Digging Deeper Matrix

- Provides a tiered system for creating activities at all levels of Bloom's that are rigorous and complex
- Moves all students into advanced levels of thinking, while respecting varying needs for academic difficulty
- Levels
 - Level 1 (Blue): All students
 - Level 2 (Pink): Some students
 - Level 3 (Green): Advanced Learners
- Could be used...
 - Homework provided to all students; small groupings
 - Extension Work (the Advanced Options)
 - For individuals or small groups
 - As a guide for instruction
 - Selected activities used during lessons
 - As sequential movement
 - As an assessment tool for curriculum and instructional purposes

Digging Deeper Matrix (DDM)

Unit:

Standards

Students will know:

Students will be able to:

Students will understand:



	RECALL (R)	UNDERSTAND (U)	APPLY (A)	ANALYZE (Z)	EVALUATE (E)	CREATE (C)
LEVEL 1 FACTUAL	FOR ALL STUDENTS Specific/Concrete (1R)	Translate (1U)	Original Way (1A)	Individual Elements (1Z)	Check Clarity (1E)	Reorganize (1C)
LEVEL 2 PROCEDURAL	Tools/Skills (2R)	Interpret (2U)	FOR SOME STUDENTS Practical Way (2A)	Relationship Among Ideas (2Z)	Judge Accuracy (2E)	Formulate (2C)
LEVEL 3 CONCEPTUAL	Abstract Information (3R)	Extrapolate (3U)	FOR ADVANCED STUDENTS Creative Way (3A)	Principles Governing Elements (3Z)	Critique Validity (3E)	Innovate (3C)
ASSESSMENTS						

Based on Anderson, Lajoie, W., and David N. Gasko, eds. *Assessing for Learning, Teaching, and Assessing: A Revision of Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives*. New York: Addison-Wesley Longman, 2001.
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Digging Deeper Matrix (DDM)



Unit: Revolution and the New Nation 1763-1820

Standards: The student will demonstrate knowledge of how the principles of the American Revolution became the foundation of a new nation.

Students will be able to:

- Analyze economic, political, and philosophical conflicts leading to the American Revolution.
- Explain how and why the American colonists won the war against the more superior British resources.
- Interpret the impact the Revolutionary War had on groups within American society.
- Infer the impact of revolution on nations and groups of citizens within those boundaries.

Students will understand:

- The causes, effects, and consequences of revolution.

Students will know:

- Important vocabulary, dates, and events (such as treaties, battles, political writings, and relations with foreign nations and Native Americans) related to the American Revolution.
- Important political, economic, military, and cultural figures related to the American Revolution (such as George Washington, Samuel Adams, John Adams, Paul Revere, Thomas Jefferson, Charles Cornwallis, Marquis de Lafayette, Thomas Paine, Patrick Henry, John Locke, and Baron de Montcalm).
- Important debates and facts over slavery; status of free blacks, women, and Native Americans; migration to Canada; and the westward movement of white settlers.



	RECALL (R)	UNDERSTAND (U)	APPLY (A)	ANALYZE (Z)	EVALUATE (E)	CREATE (C)
LEVEL 1 FACTUAL	Specific/Concrete (1R) List important dates of the Revolutionary War	Translate (1U) WHAT? What led to the colonists' revolt against Britain?	Original Way (1A) How did the Treaty of Paris change the mapping of territories of North America?	Individual Elements (1Z) What were the basic disagreements among the Native Americans, colonists, British and French?	Check Clarity (1E) Why did the Native Americans, colonists, British and French have their disagreements?	Reorganize (1C) Put yourself in the role of a colonial ambassador. What message would you send to Britain or France?
LEVEL 2 PROCEDURAL	Tools/Skills (2R) Describe how the Red Coats attacked Boston.	Interpret (2U) SO WHAT? Why was this revolt important?	Practical Way (2A) How did the change of territories after the Treaty of Paris affect the colonists?	Relationship Among Ideas (2Z) How did these disagreements relate to each other?	Judge Accuracy (2E) In what ways might any or all of the disagreements have been avoided?	Formulate (2C) Put yourself in the role of a British ambassador. What plans would you make to settle disputes in the colonies?
LEVEL 3 CONCEPTUAL	Abstract Information (3R) Define a revolution.	Extrapolate (3U) NOW WHAT? What effect has the American Revolution had on our nation and Britain?	Creative Way (3A) Describe a modern day conflict where map boundaries were redrawn.	Principles Governing Elements (3Z) Why did each group seek control?	Critique Validity (3E) What made one group's claim more valid than the other group's claims?	Innovate (3C) Create a position statement that would either support or oppose colonization.
Assessment Examples	Paper/Pencil Test	Essay	Performance	Graphic Representation	Essay Persuasive Speech Role Play	Speech/Debate Research Proposal Graphic Representation

Based on Anderson, Lois W., and David R. Kravitz, eds. *Assessing for Learning, Teaching, and Assessing: A Revision of Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives*. New York: Addison-Wesley Longman, 2001.
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Implementing Extension Activities

- Handouts:
 - “How to work Independently on Extension Activities”
 - “The Essential Rules for Independent Work”
- Just for gifted?
 - It is beneficial for all students



www.pacificlearning.com



How to Work Independently on Extension Activities

- ✓ Listen to the teacher's lesson if you are required to do so.
- ✓ Ask any questions you have about the lesson while it is being taught.
- ✓ Do the problems or activities you are asked to do.
- ✓ When you are allowed to, select an extension activity.
- ✓ Work on the extension activity for the rest of this period.
- ✓ Working with a partner is okay; if you need help, ask your partner for help first.
- ✓ Follow the Essential Rules for Independent Work at all times.
- ✓ Check the answers if they are available.
- ✓ If you need to talk to the teacher, let her or him know in an agreed upon way so that you do not interrupt instruction.
- ✓ If you finish early, either select another activity or make a more difficult version of the one on which you have been working.
- ✓ If you are working in math, make up some more difficult problems just like the ones the class is working on, or create some word problems for others to solve.
- ✓ Complete the necessary record keeping.
- ✓ File your extension work in the required location.

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The Essential Rules for Independent Work

1. Do your work without bothering anyone.
2. Work on your extension activity without calling attention to yourself; please don't talk while the teacher is teaching.
3. Refrain from asking the teacher questions while he or she is working with other students.
4. Do the extension activity you have agreed to complete. If you finish it before the class is finished working, choose another extension activity.
5. Keep records of the tasks you are working on in the way your teacher has explained.

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Grading Extension Work

- You don't – Most of the Time
- Grades entered are the ones that document student mastery
 - Add comments to the gradebook about extension work
 - Monitor all curriculum modifications on the Compacting Form
- Compacting Form
 - Created by Joseph Renzulli and Linda Smith
 - Use a separate one for each student
 - Store them in a specific place
 - I keep them in electronic folders

THE COMPACTOR

Joseph Renzulli and Linda Smith

Student's Name:

Areas of Strength	How Mastery Was Documented	Alternate Activities
Identifying Primary and Secondary Sources	Completed the Five Most Difficult First	Optional question about bias is mandatory
Mesopotamia Geography	Study Guide Method 3.1 Grade Cam Quiz – 10/10	Game Board (Standard #1) Poem (Standard #2)
[Type here]	[Type here]	[Type here]
[Type here]	[Type here]	[Type here]

We need students to get
more **DEEPLY INTERESTED** in things,
more **INVOLVED** in them,
more **ENGAGED** in wanting to know,
to have projects that they can
get **EXCITED** about and work on
over long periods of time,
to be **STIMULATED**
TO FIND THINGS OUT ON THEIR OWN.

- Gardner

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