

PROJECT BRIGHT IDEA 2: Interest Development Early Abilities

A Javits K-2 Nurturing Program funded by the

United States Department of Education

2004-2009

Essential Questions?

How do we educate the child born in 2000 to live, work and compete in the “flat world” described by Thomas Friedman?

How will this generation of children grow up with the necessary knowledge and wisdom, as defined by the new 21st century taxonomies, to address issues, problems and challenges when solutions are complex and not easily definable and accessible?

More importantly, how will children have meta-cognitive prowess to explore deeper questions to ponder and seek solutions to problems not yet known?

Leonardo, The Dreamer

A Debate by Leonardo and Michelangelo



Demonstration Site
Thomasville Primary School
Thomasville, North Carolina

Transforming Education for the 21st Century Learner

Project Bright IDEA 2 was designed as an integrated approach to transforming the classroom for kindergarteners, first and second graders into a vibrant community of learners and problem solvers. This unique K-2 research model, funded by the Javits Program of the United States Department of Education, was designed and implemented by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction and the American Association for Gifted Children at Duke University in response to a legislative mandate to increase the number of gifted children from underserved populations into gifted and academically challenging programs. Based on the success of *Project Bright IDEA 1*, a pilot intervention program for closing the achievement gap, *Project Bright IDEA 2* was awarded the grant to "upscale" the program to more schools and to research the impact on gifted programs from underserved populations.

Bright IDEA Goals

Project Bright IDEA 2 has four goals: 1) to scale-up the activities of *Bright IDEA 1* toward increasing the number of gifted students from underserved populations via changing the dispositions and capacity of teachers to wisely use curricula tailored to teaching those students; 2) to study the extent to which such activities increase the number of third grade students from underrepresented populations who enroll in gifted programs; 3) to advance the quality of these students' meta-cognitive and cognitive skills; and 4) to create a research-based multi-dimensional, pre-identification model for gifted intelligent behaviors (GIB's) based on the Costa and Kallick's *Habits of Mind* and on Frasier's *Traits, Attributes and Behaviors*.

Bright IDEA 2 begins in kindergarten and tailors gifted methodologies for regular classroom teachers to use with all children. *Bright IDEA 2* is built on the most advanced research and best practices and focuses on empowering regular classroom teachers, principals and curriculum specialists, through training and mentoring, to become curriculum architects for the future. Participants are trained to design interdisciplinary, concept-based curriculum units consistent with state standards, infused with *Building Thinking Skills* and *Gifted Intelligent Behaviors*, and to change their dispositions and classroom environments to meet the learning styles and needs of all students.

Bright IDEA 2 students are challenged to use the full range of their talents and intellectual abilities as they address authentic and complex academic tasks. The program builds upon and extends the *North Carolina Standard Course of Study* through rigorous concept-based integrated learning tasks and a research-based thinking skills program. *Bright IDEA 2* teachers and principals create scholarly environments that engage students actively and consistently in sophisticated investigations of materials, texts, and in learning tasks that require them to understand and apply critical and creative processes that are quite advanced for K-2 students. Students are engaged in centers designed around multiple intelligences with task rotations integrated with four major learning styles.

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Bright IDEA Research

Brunswick County

Belville, Lincoln & Supply

Duplin County

BF Grady & North Duplin

Elizabeth City-Pasquotank

JC Sawyer & Northside

Guilford County

Allen Jay & Sedgfield

Murphey Traditional &

Northwood

Hickory City

Viewmont & Jenkins

Lenoir County

Contentnea, Pink Hill &

Northwest

Moore County

Aberdeen & Vass-Lakeview

Roanoke Rapids Graded District

Belmont & Wm. Manning

Robeson County

Peterson & Rosenwald

Rowan-Salisbury Schools

China Grove & Hurley

Wake County

Aversboro & Lynn Road

Harris Creek & Wakelon

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Professional Development Model

The professional development (PD) Model was designed to change dispositions about how to teach diverse populations within a rigorous curriculum environment and to have high expectations for the potential of each and every child. The Model builds upon and extends the work of Dr. Mary Frasier who was pivotal in infusing the cultural perspective in the *Bright IDEA 1* pilot program. Frasier's *Talents, Attributes and Behaviors (TAB's)* and the *Habits of Mind (HOM)* developed by Dr. Art Costa and Dr. Bena Kallick have been adapted into *Gifted Intelligent Behaviors* that can be observed and documented on each child in *Bright IDEA 2* classes. The first phase of teacher training focuses on integrating the state standards, Parks and Black's Thinking Skills, Bloom's revised taxonomy, Marzano's new taxonomy, mathematics for young children, and Stage 1 of *Understanding by Design* into their teaching practices. Participants are prepared to write a concept-based interdisciplinary unit based on a *Bright IDEA* designed template.

A *Buddy System Observational Tool*, (Hargett) was created, to assist the teachers as they observe each other's classrooms. This tool helps in observing how a *Bright IDEA* classroom deviates from typical classrooms and promotes teachers' continual improvement of the learning environment as they become more adept at teaching their units and managing their classrooms.

Now funded for the entire five years, data has been collected on approximately 4200 *Bright IDEA 2* students and 4200 standard program students and 400 participants, including 168 *Bright IDEA 2* classroom teachers. An additional 168 standard program teachers had data collected on their classes. Data has been collected from *North Carolina K-2 Assessments* and a math problem-based questionnaire. A pre and post curriculum unit was taught that integrates all of the best practices into one unit for deep understanding of the concepts. Out of these assessments, gifted intelligent behaviors are observed in students and reported as progress toward independent learning and potential for gifted programs.

The professional development model included training by national, state and local trainers providing all participants with research-based instructional practices. An *Educator Disposition Survey* was administered to all participants at the beginning and end of training to determine the impact of training on principals' and teachers' dispositions and their practices. As a result of the training and the practice in the classroom, the project has produced approximately 125 concept-based integrated curriculum units. The multi-cultural, concept-based interdisciplinary units provide rigor and differentiated instruction for the high population of diverse students.

Project Bright IDEA 2 was designed to fulfill the recommendations set forth in the *Darity Report* that was submitted to the State Board of Education on the status of underserved populations and the need to close the achievement gap and to increase the number of gifted children from these populations. Results Indicate that the Project has more than met the stated goals of the research.

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Impact of Project to Date:

Five-Year Research Project
 Eleven School Districts
 28 Cohort Schools
 168 Bright IDEA Classes
 168 Standard Classes
 1 Demonstration Site

Curriculum Design Training for:

180 Classroom Teachers
 15 AIG Teachers
 30 School Principals
 11 AIG Coordinators
 15 Curriculum Specialists
 8 Mentors – Pilot Site
 Dissemination Sites

Research-Based Training

Adapted for Bright IDEA:

Thinking Skills (Parks & Black)
 New Taxonomy (Marzano)
 Bloom's Revised Taxonomy
 Habits of Mind (Costa & Kallick)
 Talents, Attributes, and Behaviors (Frasier)
 Learning Styles (Silver & Strong)
 Multiple Intelligences (Gardner)
 Mathematics for Young Children (Olive & Sheffield)
 Understanding by Design (McTighe & Wiggins)
 Interest Development (Alexander & Gayle)
 Performance Task Rotations & Instructional Strategies (Moirao)
 Differentiated Instruction (Smutny)
 Concept-Based Curriculum Model (Hargett and Gayle)
 Multicultural Methods & Materials North Carolina Standard Course of Study
 All three cohorts have been supported by numerous on-site follow-up curriculum design training events conducted by the project team, AIG coordinators, lead AIG teachers and lead mentors from the participants in Bright IDEA.

Research Findings

Increasing Talent Pool for Underrepresented Populations

Before project Bright IDEA 2 began its work in 2004 in the 6 counties of Cohort-1, essentially no students from their schools were nominated to Gifted and Talented programs from underrepresented populations. Due to the mere requirement of participating schools to recommend students, 72 (10%) third graders who graduated from **non**-Bright IDEA classes were nominated. With this positive change in mind, the impact of Bright IDEA on its 2nd grade graduates was *astounding* - 88 (24%!) third graders who were taught by Bright IDEA second grade teachers were nominated for Gifted and Talented programs. That is, **one in every four** students from Bright IDEA classes developed the multi-intelligence powers needed for being nominated. A chi-square analysis of proportions reveals that this is an extremely significant difference ($p < .0001$).

Gifted Intelligent Behaviors (GIB's)

Bright IDEA teaches *Gifted Intelligent Behaviors*, adapted from Costa and Kallick's, *Habits of Mind* and Frasier's, *Talents, Attributes and Behaviors* through concept-based curriculum units designed by the teachers and principals in the project. Rubrics were used to develop a profile of the students that led to the increase in the head count for the talent pool of Bright IDEA students. The data collected during the 2005-2006 year of implementation from Cohort-1 is available on the web site: www.aagc.org.

Changing Teacher Dispositions

The goals of the project were accomplished in terms of teachers' adoption of key pedagogical principals and major change was evident in: dispositions toward race/ethnicity, toward parents' role and the teacher's need to proactively partner with the parents, and toward understanding how to teach math to young children.

Evaluator's Kudos (Ron Tzur, Ph.D.)

After five years, project Bright IDEA-2 demonstrated two essential attributes: (a) capacity to initiate and sustain, in a sizeable number of teachers, a desired transformation in the notoriously resistant-to-change modes of teaching and (b) capacity of the team to self-improve via intensive reflection on unexpected problems and via immediate and efficient responses to ongoing feedback (formative evaluation). These two produced a remarkable increase in the number of underserved students who become eligible for Gifted and Talented programs. Combined, these findings suggest that Bright IDEA is evolving into a national model program for transforming teaching and learning at K-2 levels.

This model program consists of the project goals (found to be comprehensive, focused, unique, and scalable), professional development activities (found to be highly effective and teacher-empowering), and degree to which the project goals are accomplished (i.e., found to increase the number of underserved students nominated for G/T programs and to promote desired changes in teacher dispositions/practices). Teachers have become excited about innovating around their own creative use of the model.

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References

Increasing Opportunity to Learn via Access to Rigorous Courses and Programs: One Strategy for Closing the Achievement Gap for At-Risk and Ethnic Minority Students. A report prepared for the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction by:

William Darity, Jr.

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

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Domini Castellino

Duke University

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Karolyn Tyson

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Submitted to the State Board of Education, May 2001.

In response to State Law 2000-67, Section 8.28(b), which directed the State Board to study the under-representation of minority and at-risk students in Honors classes, Advanced Placement and academically gifted programs. For the full report:

www.ncpublicschools.org

State Laws

115C-150S - Article 9B was passed in 1996 to broaden the definition of academically gifted and to give school districts flexibility in determining how AIG students are identified. For more information on NC Gifted Laws:

www.ncagt.org

Bright IDEA has been adapted in a strategic plan for The Exceptional Children Division, NCDPI, to meet the needs of Coordinated Early Intervening Services (CEIS) and to align with RTI strategies for special needs students.

Article 9B – North Carolina Law

The section of Chapter 115C of the North Carolina General Statutes addressing academically or intellectually gifted students is Article 9B, a section added in August 1996. It replaced previous sections of Article 9 that pertained to academically gifted students and removed gifted education from the law governing children with special needs. It begins with a statement of purpose and definition of gifted students. §115C-150.5. *"The General Assembly believes the public schools should challenge all students to aim for academic excellence and that academically or intellectually gifted students perform or show the potential to perform at substantially high levels of accomplishment when compared with others of their age, experience, or environment. Academically or intellectually gifted students exhibit high performance capability in intellectual areas, specific academic fields, or in both intellectual areas and specific academic fields. Academically or intellectually gifted students require differentiated educational services beyond those ordinarily provided by the regular educational program. Outstanding abilities are present in students from all cultural groups, across all economic strata, and in all areas of human endeavor."*

Nurturing the Potential and Developing Talent in K-2 was a strategy designed by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction to implement one of the recommendations of the *Darity Report* and as a response to State mandates.

Bright IDEA Local Education Agencies (LEA's) Student Population 2008-2009 Membership:

***Brunswick County – 11,452 Students**

Duplin County– 8,756 Students

***Elizabeth City/Pasquotank County – 5,995 Students**

***Guilford County– 70,332 Students**

***Hickory City – 4,474 Students**

***Lenoir County – 9,425 Students**

***Moore County– 12,231 Students**

***Roanoke Rapids Graded School District – 2,281 Students**

Robeson County– 23,204 Students

***Rowan-Salisbury – 20,428 Students**

***Thomasville City-Demonstration Site – 2,551**

***Wake County – 132,518 Students**

***School Districts have expanded components of the Model across their districts based on available funding. Building Thinking Skills, Habits of Mind and Learning Styles Training are the components most used. Many are training on Marzano and Bloom's Revised Taxonomy also.**

Mary Watson, Director, Exceptional Children Division, NCDPI and Dr. William Darity, Professor, Duke University and Board Member of AAGC discuss: Project Bright IDEA and the rationale for the research on NC Now, UNCTV. Check it out: <http://is.gd/a2vu3>

See classroom videos: www.marinegraphics.com/briteideas/
Visit AAGC at: www.aagc.org

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