Final Project
RCE:4124
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My final project for this workshop involved conceptualizing, designing, building, and deploying a website that will contain information on Gifted and Talented educational programs, with particular emphasis on diverse linguistic and cultural communities.

This site, called "A DIVERSITY TOOLKIT FOR GIFTED/TALENTED PROGRAMS" (subtitled "A Service of the Belin-Blank Center at the University of Iowa", can be found at https://jamesbrewer2.wixsite.com/diversitytoolkit.

The graphic design of the website was inspired by the iconic Mexican architect Luis Barragán, who used earth tones and organic themes, in conjunction with a joyous application of color and form, in his buildings. The structure of the website represents the first influence, while the addition of the 21 flags of Hispanic countries and the photographs of gifted children from all backgrounds represents the second. In particular, I paid homage to Torres de Satélite, Mexico City (1958).

I should note that I presumptuously branded the site to the Belin-Blank Center. This was an autonomous decision by me, and I sincerely hope that, for this academic exercise, my decision creates no issues. If it does, please contact me and I will rebrand the site at once.

The website was conceptualized using the IBM Design Thinking process. There are several steps that constitute this process. They are:

- <u>Hills</u> are user-centric statements that define the mission and scope of a project, and focus the work on desired market outcomes. I leveraged the talents of the following professional educators from the University of Northern Iowa, all with substantive practical and research experience in TAG education, to help me establsh the hills: Dr. Audrey Rule, Dr. Judith Finkelstein, Dr. Linda Fitzgerald, and Dr. Deborah Rich.

- <u>Playbacks</u> serve many purposes: to capture feedback and ideas from stakeholders, to check your progress against original goals, to review designs, and to communicate the current state of the project. You, Dr. Castellano, are the first to provide playback!

- <u>Sponsor Users</u> help you to surface many aspects of the problems that you're trying to solve in a Hill. The aforementioned UNI educators, and you, Dr. Castellano, constitute this group.

- <u>Radical collaboration</u> means that all key stakeholders are part of co-creating great user experiences from the beginning, using a cross-discipline approach of working throughout the entirety of a release. Together, we are starting this step of the journey.

It will be clear from your review of the website that my implementation of IBM Design Principles is incomplete. Specifically, the Radical Collaboration step that is essential to bring the site to a mature level, remains to be performed. If you would like to move this website forward, I will be more than pleased to collaborate with you.

Based upon the sessions to establish the "Hills", I designed the website to have seven components (note that the images depicted here are partial and that by referring to the website itself you can review them in their entirety):

1) Home Page, where the latest information on the profession can be found, including meetings and seminars, current research and news, and a "practitioner spotlight" that presents a key figure in the TAG community.

2) Guiding Principles, featuring national, state, and local standards for TAG, organizational resources, and articles on the nature of giftedness and cultural competency.

A DIVERSITY TOOLKIT FOR GIFTED/TALENTED PROGRAMS

A Service of the Belin-Blank Center at the University of Iowa

HOME   GUIDING PRINCIPLES   IDENTIFICATION & ASSESSMENT   PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT   RETENTION   EVALUATION   REGISTER

Welcome!

The guiding principles that you will discover here provide you with the precepts for establishing and governing a program for gifted and talented students from diverse cultural and language backgrounds. The sources listed relate to standards for gifted education established by the US Department of Education, State Boards of Education, and leading organizations. They also furnish definitions and resources for the nature of giftedness itself - essential for planning programming for diverse populations. Finally, they provide guidance on evaluating and establishing levels of cultural competency, enabling school systems to effectively deliver programming to gifted learners from diverse backgrounds.

"The aims of gifted and special education are to focus on the individual and his/her strengths/needs to enhance individual talent development, creating tensions when the rate of return on education is not obvious and resources are diverted from "more efficient" educational practices." Catharina F. de Wet

RESOURCES

NATIONAL STANDARDS

US Dept of Education - Javits Act

US Dept of Education - Javits Act Funding

US Dept of Education - Rights of ELL Students

National Association for Gifted Children - Home Page

National Association for Gifted Children - Diversity

QUALITIES OF GIFTEDNESS

Intelligence

Creativity

STATE STANDARDS

Iowa Dept of Education

Illinois Dept of Education

US Dept of Education - State Funding Tables

ORGANIZATIONAL RESOURCES

Iowa Gifted and Talented Association

Illinois Association for Gifted Children

Belin-Blank Center - University of Iowa

3) Identification and Assessment, where resources featuring identifying TAG students from ELL populations, as well as assessment techniques specifically geared toward non-verbal methods.

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Identifying gifted and talented children from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds is a difficult challenge. Over the past century, numerous methods for identifying gifted talented children were developed and widely deployed. These methods, while effective at discovering children from higher socio-economic and English-speaking homes, left underrepresented minority, culturally and linguistically diverse children. New techniques are now available to better reach young gifted children from poverty-level homes or aligned with linguistic or racial minorities, and provide these gifted and talented students access to the programs they deserve.

"The principal goal of education is to create men and women who are capable of doing new things, not simply repeating what other generations have done." Jean Piaget

RESOURCES

IDENTIFICATION

Parental & Family Observation Methods

School and Teacher Observation Methods

GATEway

DISCOVER

Generative Models (Scott & Delgado)

Techniques for Identifying Early Childhood Learners

Identifying, Gifted and Talented, English Language Learners, Iowa Department of Education, The Belin-Blank Center

ASSESSMENT

Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test(NNAT)

Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT, Form 6

Raven Standard Progressive Matrices (Raven)

Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking (TTCT)

"Identifying Academically Gifted English-Language Learners Using Nonverbal Tests, A Comparison of the Raven, NNAT, and CogAT,"

University of Iowa - Iowa Testing Programs

4) Program Development, with sections on curriculum development, gifted & talented standards (in more depth than on the Guiding Principles page), program funding (grant opportunities from federal, state, and non-profit sources), and professional standards and teaching endorsements.

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Developing programs for gifted and talented students demands both a thorough understanding of the legal and statutory landscape, as well as a clear vision for the needs and requirements of the student. For diverse programs that include ELL students, there can be additional considerations in light of myriad distinctions in the language, culture, and customs of their home environments.

"To keep up interest in a subject, a teenager has to enjoy working in it. If the teacher makes the task of learning excessively difficult, the student will feel too frustrated and anxious to really get into it and enjoy it for its own sake. If the teacher makes learning too easy, the student will get bored and lose interest. The teacher has the difficult task of finding the right balance between the challenges he or she gives and the students' skills, so that enjoyment and the desire to learn more result." Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi

RESOURCES

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

Methodology and Philosophy

Developing a Statement of Purpose

Determining Essential Outcomes

Establishing Goals & Objectives

Creating and Validating Content

Methods - Activities

Methods - Lessons

Performing Assessments

Conducting Evaluations

GIFTED & TALENTED STANDARDS

Iowa Dept of Education

Illinois Dept of Education

National Association for Gifted Children

Council for Exceptional Children

Gifted and Talented Plan Requirements for CSIP Submission

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS & TEACHING ENDORSEMENTS

National Association for Gifted Children

University of Iowa - Belin-Blank Center

5) Retention, with federal, state, and local resouces focused on retaining TAG students from lower socio-economic, as well as from under-represeted linguistic, cultural, and racial groups. In addition, an interactive Perserverance Model is provides to assist practitioners in locating resources to anticipate stressors and mitigate the risks of TAG students leaving the programs.

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Teaching gifted and talented students involves providing a challenging curriculum, a collegial classroom environment, and the technical and methodological resources to support each student's endeavors. External factors, such as parental/familial buy-in and support, socio-economic pressures, and cultural or peer-group headwinds, create a dilemma for the gifted and talent student, regardless of background. Teachers and administrators must be attuned to the existence of such obstacles, and have strategies to remediate the risks to continued participation in gifted and talented programs.

"The principal goal of education is to create men and women who are capable of doing new things, not simply repeating what other generations have done." Jean Piaget

RESOURCES

RETENTION

US Department of Education - Jacob Javits Program

Iowa Department of Education - Gifted Programs

Illinois Department of Education - Gifted Programs

Local Education Agencies (LEAs)

Leadership Competency

Competency Checklist

PERSEVERANCE MODEL

6) Evaluation, which presents the Logic Model process, to guide practitioners through the assessment of results and outcomes, partly in response to government mandate, but more importantly to address the need for transparancy to stakeholders.

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The evaluation of any educational program, within the framework of federal and state mandates, requires the annual yearly progress of each student. Antilla and Rude (2011) note that for "subgroups of learners - special populations such as disadvantaged, cultural/ethnic minorities, ELLs, and students with disabilities - meet annual yearly progress of every school site." They go on to assert that "a lack of gifted and talented program evaluation literature persists in spite of the fact that we are in an educational era that emphasizes accountability."

One framework commonly used to conduct accountability and evaluation efforts is the logic model process. Logic models are useful in illustrating how a program operates from its guiding principles through its execution, and into its expected performance and outcomes (Bickman, 1987). A sample logic model for gifted and talented program delivered to a school district in suburban Chicago was collaboratively generated by key stakeholders and was led by Dr. Tonya Moon. It conveys the interaction of resources, activities, outputs, stakeholders, outcomes, and influences for that district's gifted and talented programs. Excerpts from this model are presented below; the complete evaluation can be found here.

"Don't measure yourself by what you have accomplished, but by what you should have accomplished with your ability." John Wooden

SAMPLE LOGIC MODEL FOR GIFTED/TALENTED PROGRAM FROM PAPER BY DR. TONYA MOON (CITATION)

7) A Registration page, for practitioners and other users to contact the Belin-Blank center and to share their thoughts on the website and any other matters.

Please let me know your thoughts on this project. I thoroughly enjoyed the workshop, and I look forward to learning much more about TAG. Most importantly, I anticipate working with Hispanic families to gain access to programs that both respect their cultural mores, as well as to expand the opportunities for their children through programs and resources. Salud!