



Anderson School Newsletter

A publication of the Anderson School for the Gifted & Talented
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Winter 1997
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PERSPECTIVES OF DR. & MRS. ANDERSON

Gifted and talented children need challenging curriculums that extend instruction and explore content in much greater depth than regular education. Because gifted children think divergently and are able to focus intently on specific topics, they need opportunities to explore and investigate independently and then to share ideas with other students.

At the Anderson School, daily discussions of current events, utilizing the newspaper and other media, help to orient children so that they realize the responsibility for identifying critical problems in our society and offering solutions is on them. Our students are encouraged to find their own topics or areas of interest as they are reading. Later, they voice their own particular interests that they wish to explore through our lively discussions.

Precocious children analyze, synthesize and evaluate events routinely and frequently have

acquired a repository of knowledge so vast, that they come richly prepared to share their beliefs and opinions. They are anxious to discuss ideas and share them with their peers. And peer interaction is the focal point of our daily "walks through the newspaper".

This interaction is so important to them, that the teacher becomes part of the discussion group and shares in the inquiry process instead of serving as a disseminator of information.

This exploration of ideas and concepts involves our children in critical, evaluative, reflective and creative thinking. Dealing with abstract ideas at a high level of complexity is a wonderful and appropriate learning process for children of high ability.

John Barell suggests that, "If we want students to become persons who are good at identifying and resolving meaningful dilemmas or conflicts, then we must daily provide for this within the classroom". Our school provides the atmosphere for identifying dilemmas and working out

solutions through the interaction of interested peers. Stimulating interaction with a mentor/teacher and intellectual peers proves to be a powerful way to meet the needs of precocious children.

- *If you bungle raising your children, I don't think whatever else you do matters very much. -
(Jacqueline Kennedy)*

UPCOMING HOLIDAYS

Dec.23-Jan.6 Christmas Holiday
JAN. 20 M. L. King Day
JAN. 31 Stock Show Day
FEB. 17 President's Day
Mar. 17-21 Spring Break
Mar. 28 Good Friday
May 5 Cinco de Mayo
May 26 Memorial Day

- *To avoid criticism, do nothing, say nothing, be nothing. -
(Elbert Hubbard)*

"BUNS" THE RABBIT IS WHAT?

Our friendly, world traveling bunny, it turns out, has been a mother for several days (unbeknownst to everyone). She has four adorable babies.

Apparently, she has taken the subject of multiplication very seriously. (A rabbit-teacher conference is definitely in order.)

- *Do not think you are on the right road just because it is a well-beaten path.* -

ASSESSMENT IN A "NUTSHELL"

We tend to reward students who can regurgitate information and demoralize the others by giving them poor grades. The cold, hard truth is simply that grading academic endeavor is highly, highly subjective. You could take your child to several different classrooms in different schools and the teachers would make different assessments of the same child. Some teachers hand out the grade of "A" freely while others boast that no one in their class makes an "A".

Too many teachers are concerned about tests and grades rather than teaching for real learning, developing thinking skills or being creative. If a child can read well and think and be creative, they will do well in college and in life.

We sometimes forget that life is tough and very stressful no matter what route you take. Why do we add to this stress by testing and grading at an early age? Does someone, somewhere really believe it is necessary to deprive children of their childhoods by constantly placing demands upon them for the regurgitation of seemingly endless and often frivolous facts through test after test after test? Why do we insist on stressing

out our children at early ages? All too soon they will have the stress of college or university life, jobs, marriage, mortgage, children of their own, and just life in general.

Children should be provided with wonderful learning and living opportunities. We should read to them and make sure they read - constantly! And we should motivate them with as much joy as their hearts can endure. Then just stand back and see if you can stop the learning from occurring.

- *Lord, give me the wisdom to make stepping-stones out of stumbling blocks.* -

HOW WE DIFFER FROM OTHER SCHOOLS [PART 3]

The topic of homework is frequently raised by the parents of prospective students. And it is, arguably, a serious concern. The philosophy we adhere to is multifaceted but, essentially, we believe that childhood is too precious and too short to be expended completing assignments that are typically redundant, not needed, or in very many instances, counterproductive. Childhood should not be expended by extending the school day late into the night or expecting the parents to take over the role of the teacher.

Sadly, some schools even pride themselves on demanding an inordinate amount of homework. It somehow became reputations to [irresponsibly] place tremendous burdens for completing unbelievable volumes

of homework upon young shoulders. Some parents are impressed by the volume of homework being required. They draw an immediate correlation between the homework that is expected and the quality of learning they assume takes place. Perhaps a close investigation is called for of the quality and relevance of the homework assignments. Careful consideration should also be given to the value of time well spent with family and friends after school. Children desperately need time to be children - to laugh, play, relax, be with other children and spend some time with their parents. They might actually get to know and like one another, should they be given the opportunity to be together rather than spend almost the entire evening pouring over texts that may contain little of significance to their adult lives. After school time could best be spent imparting values and building self-esteem by turning off the TV and enjoying hobbies and getting to know what makes their parents successful in life, business and marriage. A long walk coupled with time for sharing conversation with a parent is of more value than any homework assignment.

Our students are almost always successful in completing their daily syllabus. On those infrequent occasions when they are not completed, we may permit them to complete their work at home. Our motto is, "We work hard and we play hard". If students work diligently during the school day, they can easily complete their syllabus.