

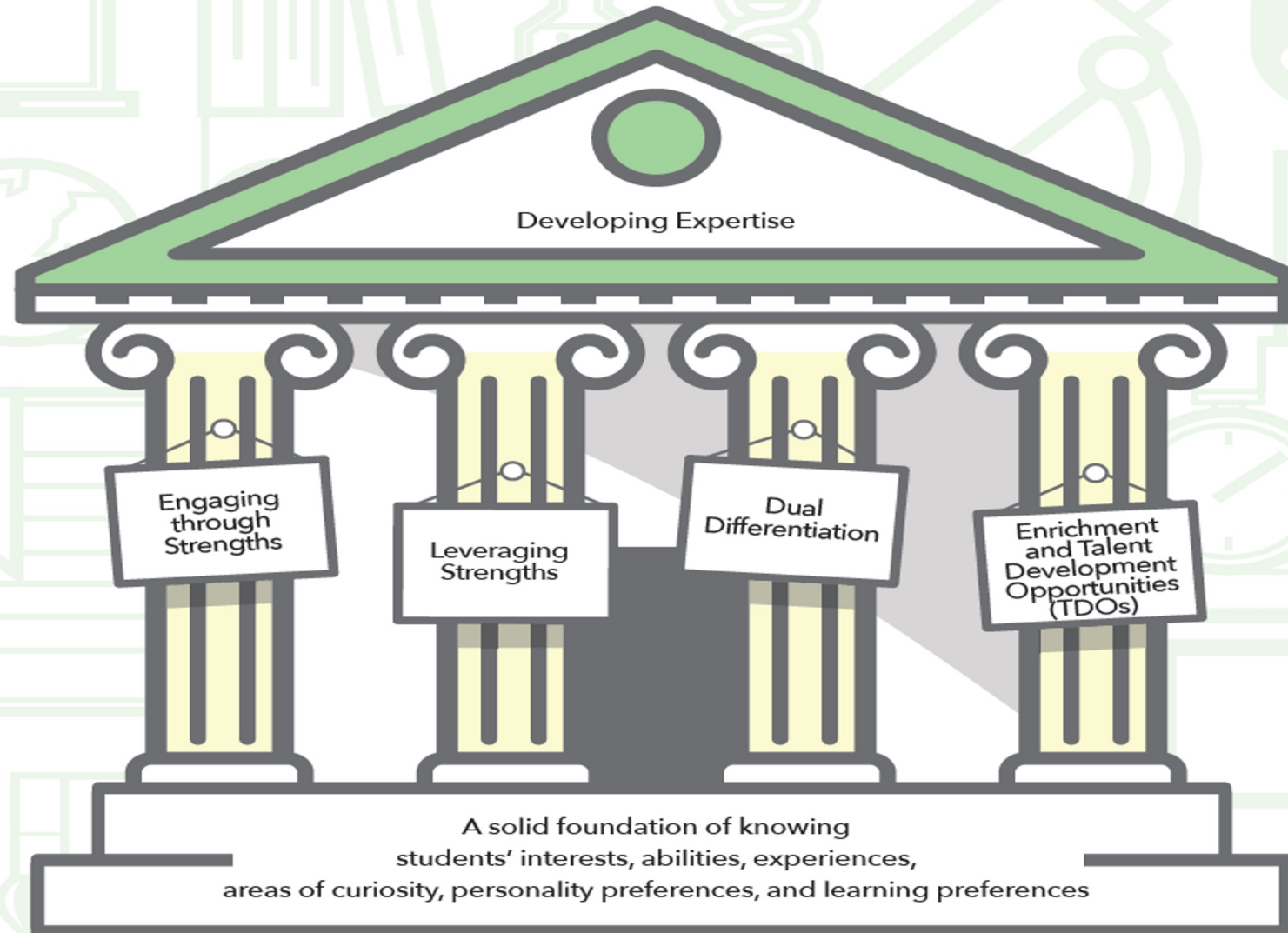
# Bridges Strength-based, talent-focused teaching with the Suite of Tools

Susan Baum, Ph.D.

Bridges Graduate School for Cognitive Diversity

[Bridges.Edu](https://bridges.edu)

# Bridges Strength-based, Talent-focused Teaching



# Bridges Strength-based, Talent-focused Teaching

***Engaging through Strengths:***  
Connecting students' interests  
and strengths to learning  
objectives.

***Leveraging Strengths:*** Bridging  
from students' strength areas to  
create learning in deficit areas.

***Dual Differentiation:*** Targeting  
ways for learning within lessons  
by building on student strength  
areas and avoiding deficit areas.

***Enrichment and Talent  
Development Opportunities  
(TDOs):*** Personal reasons to  
learn necessary skills in the  
pursuit of a high interest or  
passion area ("just in time  
learning").



# Poster Activity

- Engagement—
- Options
- Dual differentiation
- Leveraging strengths





- Talent groups
- Multi-talent groups
- Opinion groups
- Jigsaw groups
- Readiness groups
- Friendship groups
- Interest groups

# Engaging students through strengths

## What is it?

- Creating curricular units that invite engagement and production through strength-based choices that connect to both the students' profile and learning outcomes.

## Thinking

- If students' have sufficient opportunity to engage in the topic, process learning, and communicate learning in ways that align to their unique brain wiring, learning preferences, interests, and talent they would be more willing to participate and produce even if some activities are in their deficit areas.

## Outcome

- Mastery of unit's objectives

# Engaging through Strengths

**Entry Points**

**Type I Experiences**



**Aesthetic**



**Experiential**



**Narrative**

**Performances-Authentic Expression**



**Speech**



**Mural**



**Graph**

**Big Ideas  
Facts & Skills**



## Entry points

- Narrative
- Numerical
- Aesthetic
- Philosophical
- Musical
- Social
- Experiential

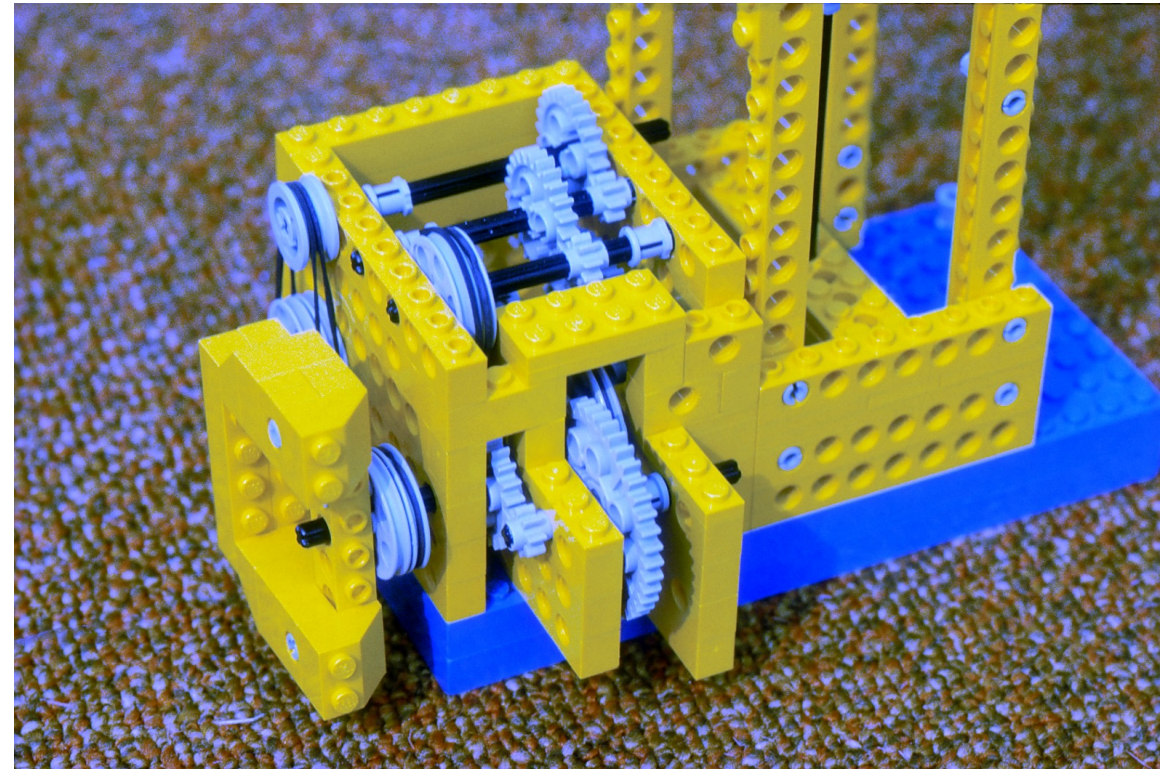
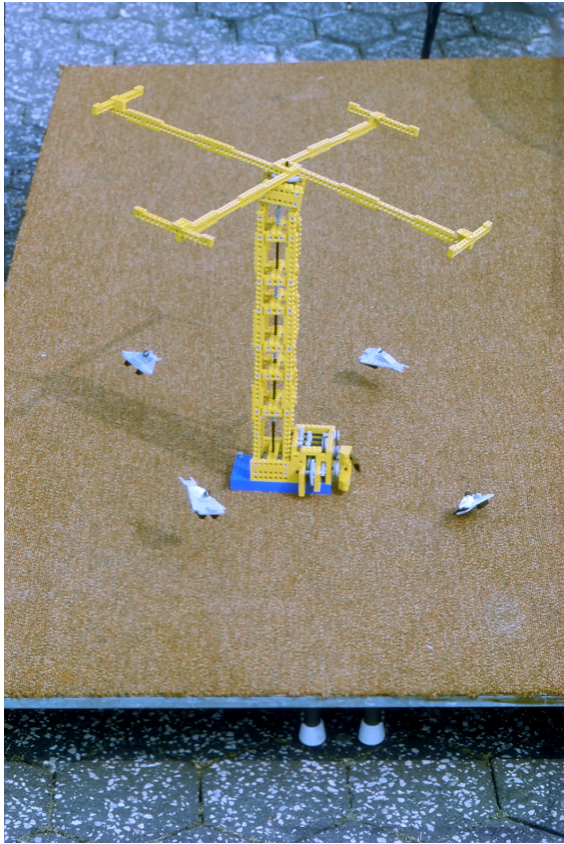


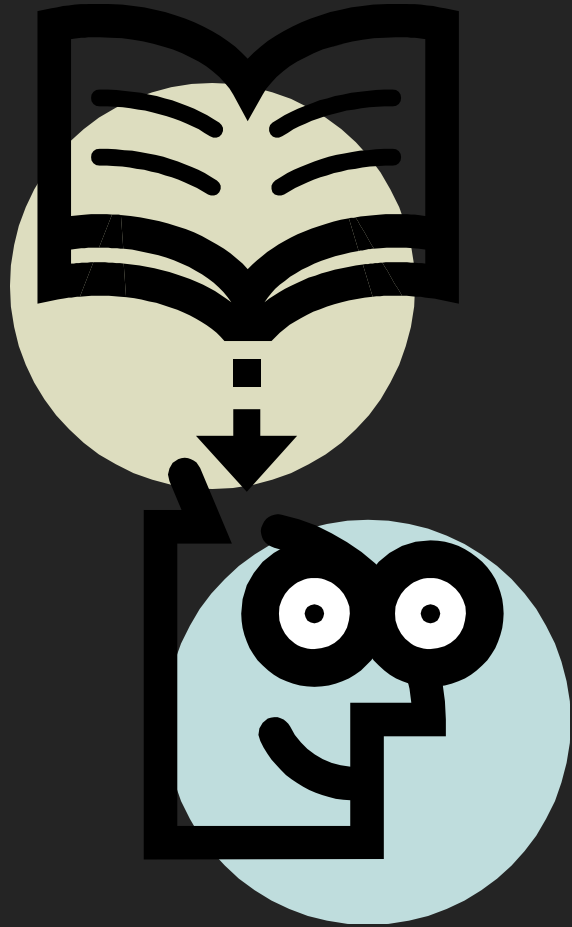


# DISCIPLINARY PERSPECTIVES

- **Creating understanding by using a multi-disciplinary representations of a concept or perspectives:**
- **For example,**
- **How would an artist represent an understanding of the concept?**
-





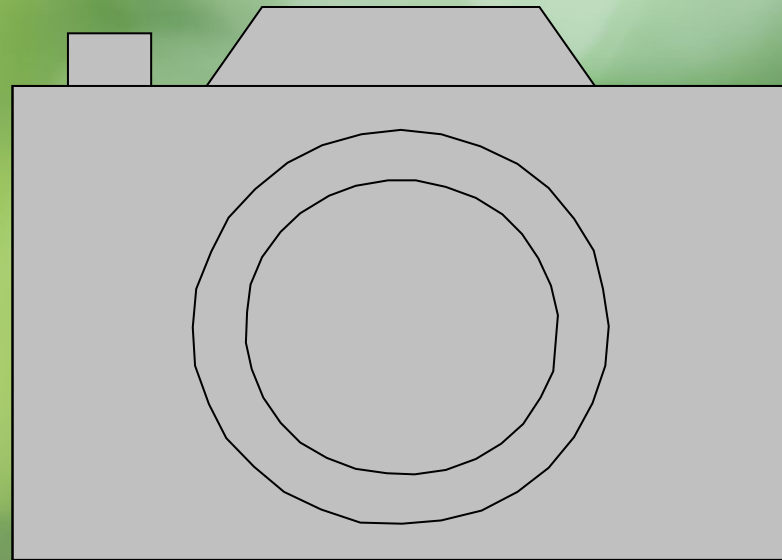


# WRITERS

- communicate with words (poetry, stories, editorials, speeches, scripts, song lyrics).

# ARTISTS

- use visual images to communicate ideas (paintings, sketches, photography, film, cartoons).





# MATHEMATICIANS AND ECONOMISTS



Express ideas using  
mathematical representations



(formulas, tables, charts,  
graphs, timelines).





# HISTORIANS

---

- recreate the past through documenting and analyzing primary sources and communicate their findings using appropriate related products. ( story telling, photo essays, artifacts, video documentaries, interviews, timelines, historical essays).
-



A photograph of a deer with large, velvet-covered antlers standing in a dense forest of evergreen trees. The image is slightly faded to allow text to be overlaid.

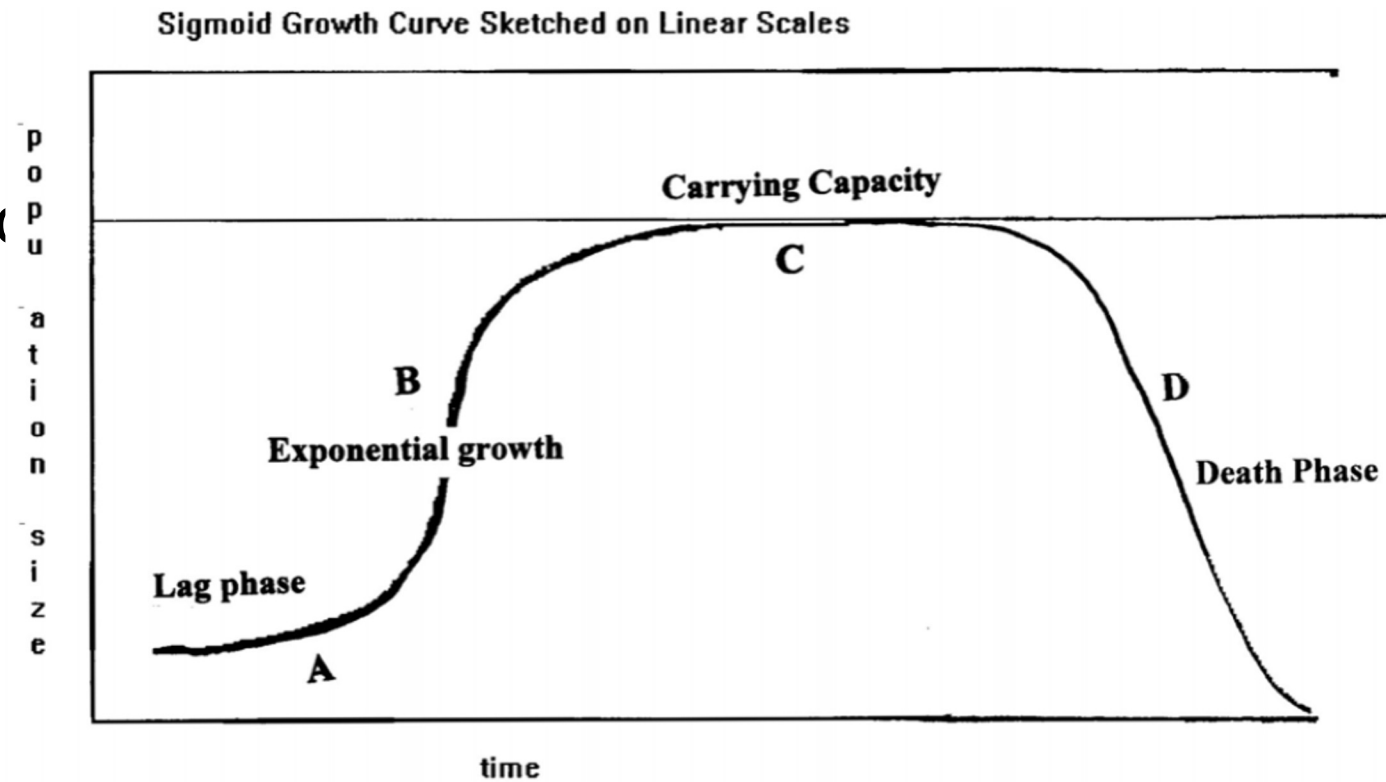
# Oh Deer!

---

Project WILD ©1992 a project of the Council for Environmental  
Education and the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

# Concepts

- Systems
- Cycles
- Interdependence





# Enduring Understandings

- All changes happen in cycles.
- All populations are dynamic due to changes in the environment.

Every habitat has the capacity to support a limited number of individuals.

- Changes in those habitats can be natural or man made.
- There is an interdependent relationship between all organisms and their environment.

Organisms will adapt or perish due to these changes.





# Essential Questions

Should man alter natural occurring events?

To what effect should humans alter natural occurring events?

How does diversity play a role sustaining an environment?

Which features affect environmental conditions?

# Content Knowledge

- *Key knowledge will students acquire as a result of this unit:*

- Components of habitat
- Example and non-examples of what makes a good habitat
- Predator and prey relationship
- Limiting factors on a population
- Carrying capacity










# Annual Record

Year	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Deer	1	2	4	8	14	4	4	6	8	7
Habitat	15	14	12	8	2	11	11	11	3	7
Predator					1	2	2	2	6	4



# Statisticians

You are working for the Bureau of Environmental Studies and are in charge of documenting the statistics of the deer population for the county.



Please use the data in the chart to create line and bar graphs to explain population dynamics, carrying capacity, and limiting factors including features of the habitat over the past 10 years.













# Social Activists

You have heard that the town is planning to sell the forestland on the edge of town to developers who are planning to use the land to build a huge shopping mall.

Please stage a protest using posters and speeches explaining the issue for the deer population. Include information about population dynamics and limiting factors.





# Filmmakers

You work for Disney Films and have been asked to design a documentary film on animal life. You are to create a storyboard depicting the deer population during the last 10 years using the class chart data.

Please make sure your documentary includes information about population dynamics, carrying capacity, and limiting factors including features of the habitat.







# Reporters



YOU WORK FOR THE SIERRA CLUB  
AND NEED TO WRITE AN ARTICLE  
FOR THEIR NEWSLETTER ABOUT  
THE GROWING DEER POPULATION,  
AND THE PROBLEMS IT IS  
CAUSING.



TRACE THE GROWTH FROM THE DATA IN  
THE CHART DURING THE YEARS WHERE THE  
POPULATION WAS AT ITS MAXIMUM AND  
DISCUSS THE ISSUES.



- 2 Social Activist
- 3 Film Maker
- 4 Reporter
- 5 Reporter

Habitat  
Environment

mitig  
Lion  
Fl  
Hunt



Bram





# Science Researchers

---

You work for the state environmental agency and need to find out about the deer population in your state.

Please explore the websites bookmarked on the computers and design a fact sheet with the following information:

- Number of deer in state
  - Problems
  - Laws that protect or limit the deer population
-





# Product Assessment Rubric

Rating	Acceptable	Good	Superior
Quality of Product	Neat, clear, shows organization	Attractive, easy to read and understand	Shows extra effort and passion
Evidence of Limiting Factors	Includes habitat, food, shelter, predators (FWSP)	Demonstrates relationship between FWSP	Predicts future relationship of FWSP
Evidence of Population Dynamics	Shows understanding of PD	Demonstrates fluidity of PD	Predicts future of PD for a population other than deer.
Evidence of Application of Knowledge and Synthesis	Demonstrates understanding of relationship of (FWSP) Population	Shows relationship of FWSP to people	Predicts future of FWSP relationship to future of people



# Evaluation

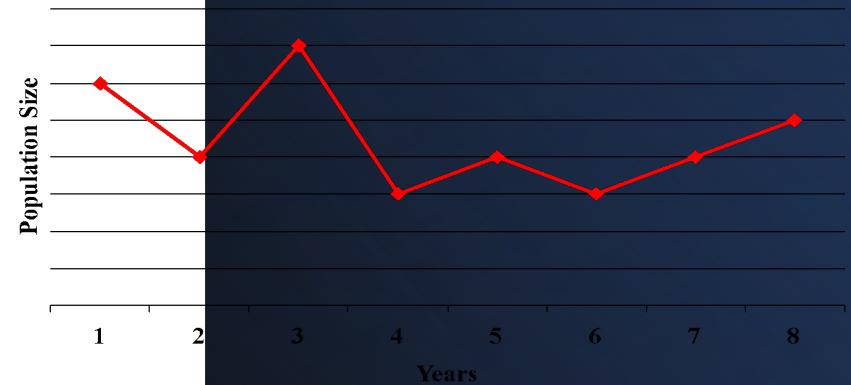
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1. Name three essential components of habitat.
2. Define “Limiting factors” and give three examples.



# Evaluation

- 3. Examine the graph. What factors may have caused the following population changes:
  - Between years 1 & 2 ?
  - Between years 3 & 4 ?
  - Between years 5 & 6 ?
  - Between years 7 & 8 ?



# Evaluation

4. Which of the following graphs represents the more typically balanced population?

Chart A

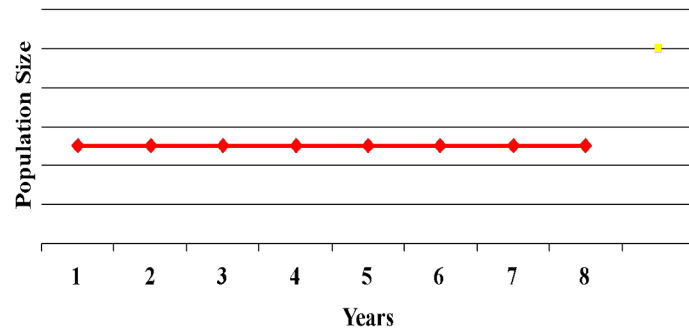
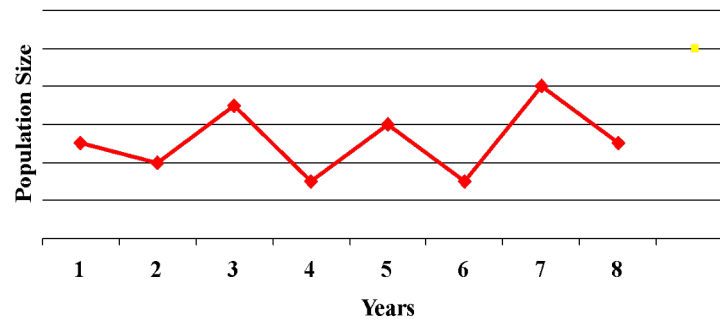


Chart B



## **What is it?**

- These are opportunities where students engage in experience purposely designed to enrich students' abilities through high interest and authentic learning that aligns to their areas of talent and interests. During those inquiries or experiences students may require “just-in-time” learning to pursue their goals.

## **Thinking**

When students are working in a self-selected pursuit of a goal, there is high motivation to achieve their vision. At these times students are receptive to learning skills that help them overcome obstacles such as meeting deadlines or writing a business plan.

## **Outcome**

- Skill development



# TYPICAL WEEK AT BRIDGES

- ADVANCED CORE CURRICULUM (50%)
- ADVISORY SUPPORT GROUPS (15%)
- ENRICHMENT AND TALENT DEVELOPMENT (35%)



# TALENT DEVELOPMENT & ENRICHMENT AT BRIDGES ACADEMY



# ENRICHMENT CLUSTERS



- EVERY FRIDAY
- STUDENT CHOICE
- ACTIVE LEARNING
- GROUP SIZE = 2 TO 6 STUDENTS
- TEACHER AS FACILITATOR OR COACH

“CULINARY CRITICS” ARE INVESTIGATING AND WRITING A GUIDE WITH RATINGS OF KID-FRIENDLY RESTAURANTS AROUND THEIR NEIGHBORHOOD.



# THE EGYPTIAN MUSEUM

MATHEMATICIANS AND BUILDERS AT WORK





# SCIENTISTS



# THE EGYPTIAN MUSEUM: ARTISTS DECORATING THE SARCOPHAGUS





# Talent Development and the Badge Program

- <https://vimeo.com/510009017>



# UPCOMING YOUNG EXPERT

## GAME DEVELOPMENT



### Interest Exploration Badge

Game Design

Vector math and Math for 3D Environments (in progress)

Game Marketing & Focus Groups (in progress)

### Professional Development Badge (professional-level skill)

Game Development with Unity

Programming with C#

Debugging and Troubleshooting

3D Vector Operations



# MUSIC PROGRAM



## BRIDGES WINTER COFFEE HOUSE

MONDAY, DEC. 5TH, 7 - 9.30 PM  
[doors open at 5.30pm]

THE FEDERAL BAR  
5303 Lankershim Blvd  
North Hollywood, CA 91601

**FEATURING**  
THE ROCK BAND  
BLUES EXPLOSION  
SHREDDERS  
ELECTRIC POP ORCHESTRA  
+ Guitar Workshop  
+ The Shaunt Avakian Trio

**COME HUNGRY!**  
Full kitchen available



# ROBOTICS FIRST COMPETITION



# TALENT DEVELOPMENT...IT'S NOT AN OPTION. IT'S A NECESSITY!





# Leveraging strengths

## **What is it?**

- Bridging from students' strength areas to create learning in deficit areas

## **Thinking**

- If students understand a concept or have access to a skill using another symbol system, domain, or context it then starting with that schema would reduce anxiety, provide familiarity. Through careful scaffolding that awareness would bridge to the skill in need of development.

## **Outcome**

- Growth in skill development

# Leveraging Strengths for skill development



## Scaffolding Steps

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

Initiating  
Activity

Target  
Performance

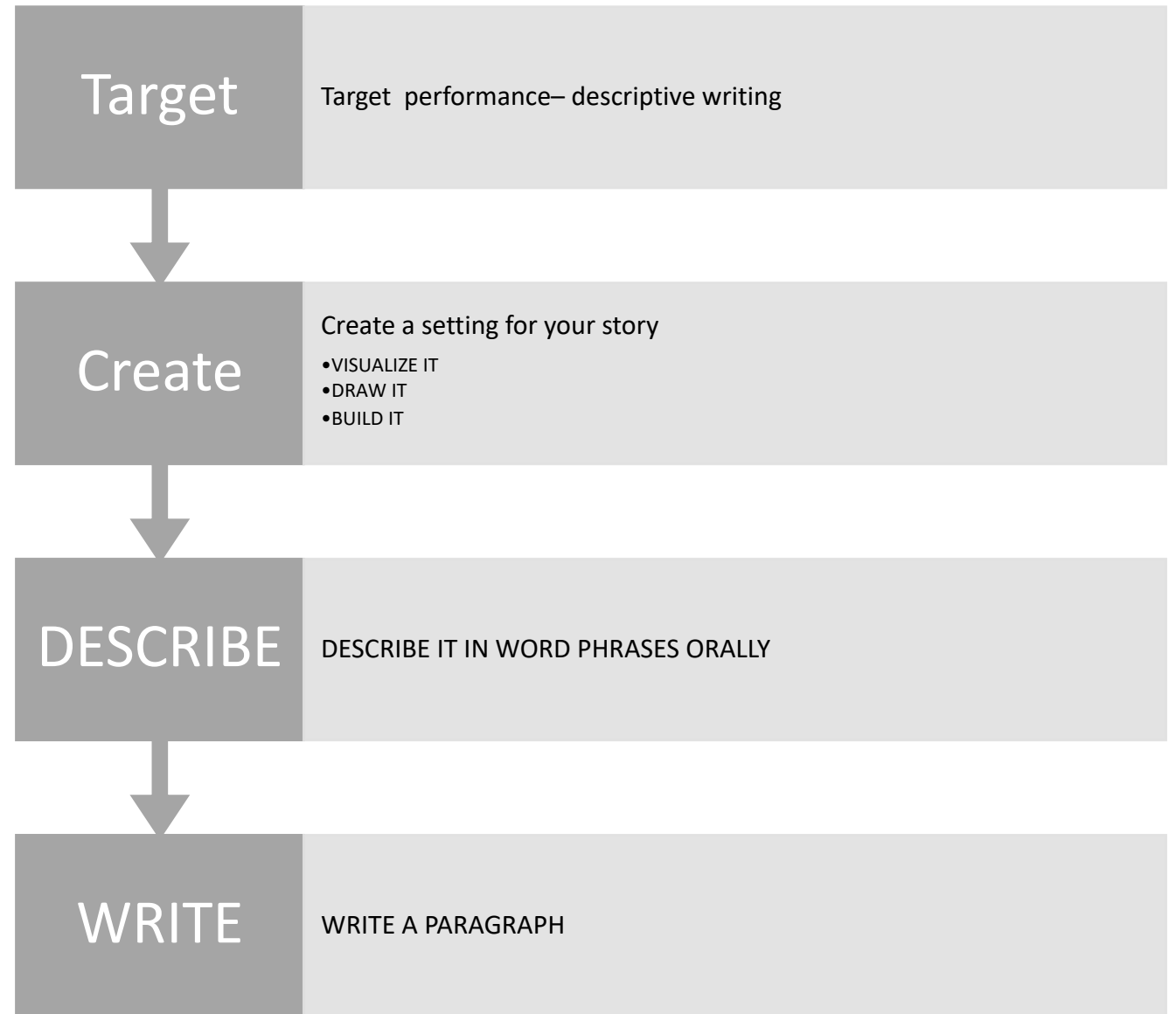








# visualization for writing



# Dual Differentiation

## **What is it?**

- Targeting ways for learning within lessons by addressing students' advanced abilities or positive traits while avoiding deficit areas

## **Thinking**

- If students can engage in a lesson in ways that avoid problematic challenges and at the same time not feel different, then anxiety will be reduced and learning will more likely be a positive experience

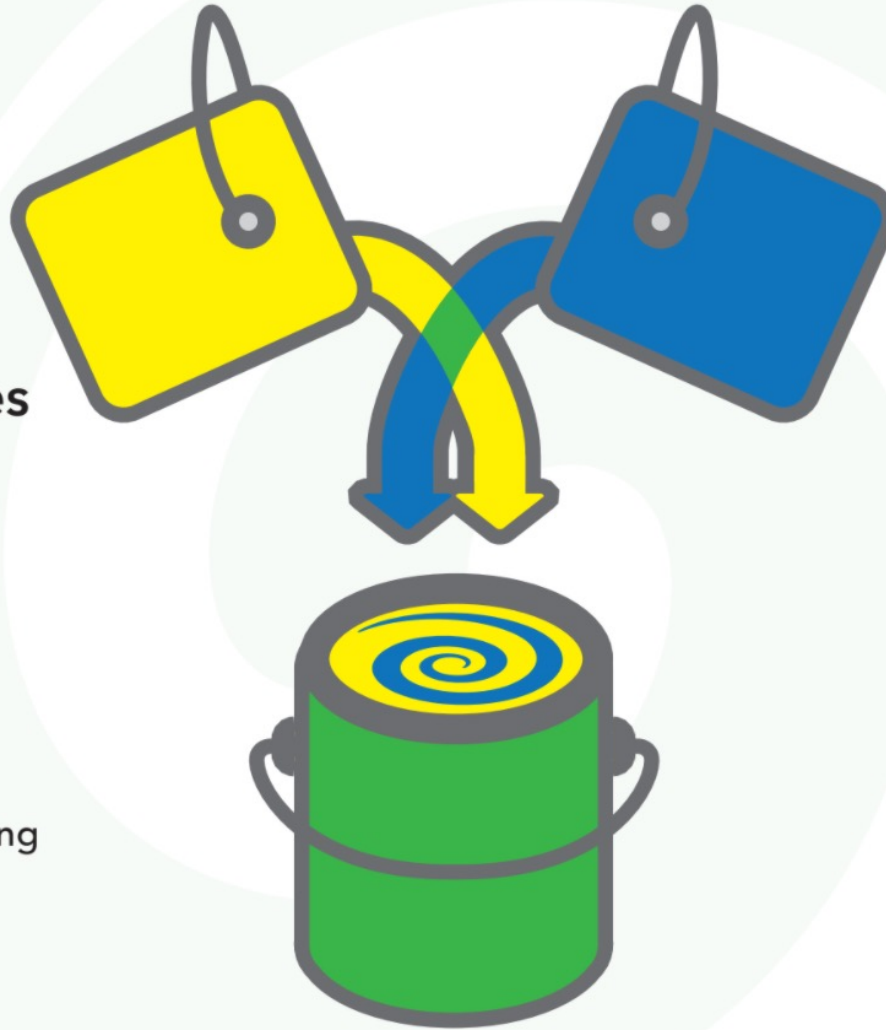
## **Outcome**

- Mastery of lesson objective



## Differentiation for Strengths & Abilities

- Offer intellectually challenging content
- Integrate critical and creative thinking
- Investigate authentic problems (think & act like a professional)
- Use curriculum compacting
- Provide assignments with depth & complexity
- Consider acceleration

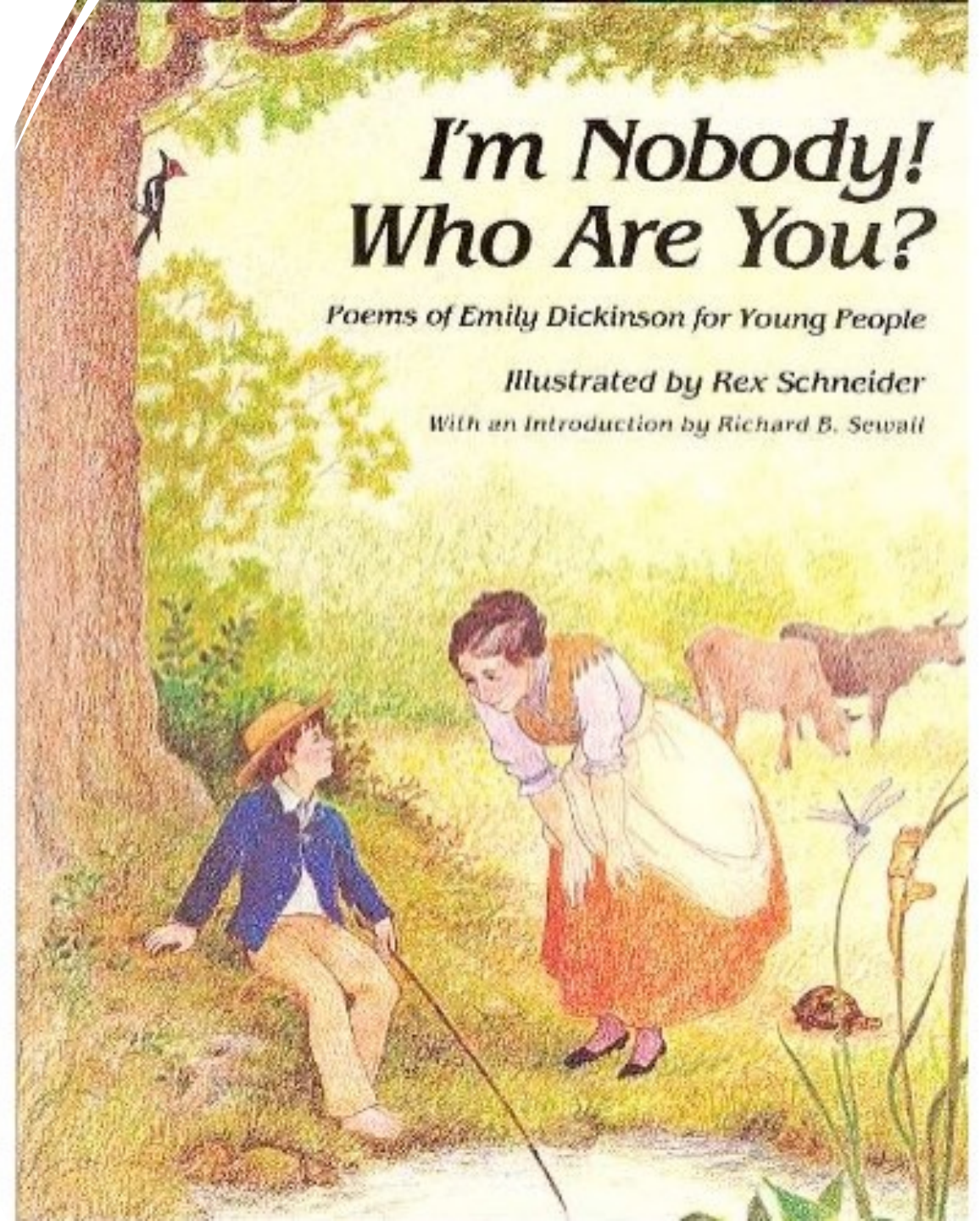


## Differentiation for Learning Challenges

- Make content & resources accessible
- Include performance-based assessments
- Accommodate need for movement
- Minimize distractions (for those with hypersensitivities)
- Provide ways for students to recover emotionally

High comprehension  
but poor decoding  
skills

- A WORD IS DEAD
- WHEN IT IS SAID
- SOME SAY
- I SAY IT JUST
- BEGINS TO LIVE
- THAT DAY





*Let's Make  
You Think*



## Strengths

## Challenges



A strength-based, talent-focused approach at home and at school allows growth, even in deficit areas.

# Introducing the Suite of Tools™

To Connect with the PERSON in PERSONALIZED LEARNING | Section A

## C.L.U.E.S.™

Collect Information, Look for connections, Uncover patterns, Explore different perspectives, and Synthesize findings

### I. ENVISION

What would make this a good year? List goals, expectations, hopes, and from the student, teacher(s), and parent(s) perspectives.

Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher/Coach/Mentor: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher/Coach/Mentor: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher/Coach/Mentor: \_\_\_\_\_

To Connect with the PERSON in PERSONALIZED LEARNING | Section C-1

## Quick Personality Indicator™ (QPI)

Student Version

Understanding personality attributes can help each of us establish positive relationships, communicate effectively, set and accomplish goals, and find pathways to work through differences.

**Directions:** When instructed, read the statements inside and give points to the four possible answers by putting a 4, 3, 2, or 1 in the white box next to each response.

Give a **4** to the statement that **MOST** describes you.  
Give a **1** to the statement that **LEAST** describes you.

Please be sure to assign all the numbers (4, 3, 2, and 1). Do not leave any boxes empty.

**Here's an example:**

My favorite ice cream is...
Vanilla (I really love vanilla ice cream the most, so I give it 4 points in the white box.)

To Connect with the PERSON in PERSONALIZED LEARNING | Section D

## Creating Possibilities

This tool reminds us of the importance of offering daily opportunities for students to experience joy in learning.

## Magic happens when interests and abilities intersect.

The two sections in this document use information about a student's interests and abilities in distinct ways:

- ★ **Plan for Success™** is a place to note how interests and strengths can be leveraged to build necessary academic and personal skills.
- ★ **The Talent Development Maker™ (TDO)** is about finding opportunities to develop the student's expertise in particular areas of strength, interest, and talent.

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For more information, visit [www.bridges.edu](http://www.bridges.edu)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

To Connect with the PERSON in PERSONALIZED LEARNING | Section B-1

## My LearningPrint™

Student Version

A tool to discover, consider, and record unique combinations of interests, abilities, learning preferences, and experiences.

Your responses to the questions inside will help you create your own LearningPrint.  
This paper portrait of yourself as a learner will be distinct and individual, much like a fingerprint.

Robin Schader, Ph.D. and Wanying Zhou, Ph.D. (2016, revised 2018)  
The 2e Center for Research and Professional Development at Bridges Academy • 2921 Laurel Canyon Road, Studio City, CA 91604  
For more information, visit [www.bridges.edu](http://www.bridges.edu)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Bridges 2e Center for Research  
& Professional Development  
Studio City, California

# C.L.U.E.S.™

Collect Information, Look for  
connections, Uncover patterns,  
Explore different perspectives,  
and Synthesize findings

## I. ENVISION

What would make this a good year? List goals, expectations, hopes, and dreams  
from the student, teacher(s), and parent(s) perspectives.

Student: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Parent 1: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Parent 2: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Teacher/Coach/Mentor: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Teacher/Coach/Mentor: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Teacher/Coach/Mentor: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Robin Schader, Ph.D. & Susan Baum, Ph.D. (2016)

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## II. TAKING STOCK

Summarize interests, strengths, learning preferences, and experiences from screening tools such as **My LearningPrint™** and the **Quick Personality Indicator™** (QPI), as well as pertinent results from classroom performance and educational testing.

Current Interests: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Strengths: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Learning Preferences: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Experiences: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Personality Indicators: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Special Aptitudes/Talents: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Educational Indicators (grades, production, etc.): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Key Results from Psychoeducational Assessments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

To Connect with the PERSON in  
PERSONALIZED LEARNING | Section B-1

# My LearningPrint™

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A tool to discover, consider, and record unique combinations of interests, abilities, learning preferences, and experiences.

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Please be sure to assign all the numbers (4, 3, 2, and 1). Do not leave any blank.

Here's an example:

My favorite ice cream is...				
Vanilla (I really love vanilla ice cream the most, so I give it 4 points in the white box.)				4
Chocolate (Chocolate is my least favorite ice cream flavor, so it gets 1 point.)		1		
Orange (Orange is my 2nd favorite ice cream flavor, so it gets 3 points.)			3	
Boysenberry (Boysenberry is my 3rd favorite ice cream flavor, so it gets 2 points.)	2			

Susan Baum, Ph.D. and H. J. Nicols, M.S. (2008, rev. 2015)

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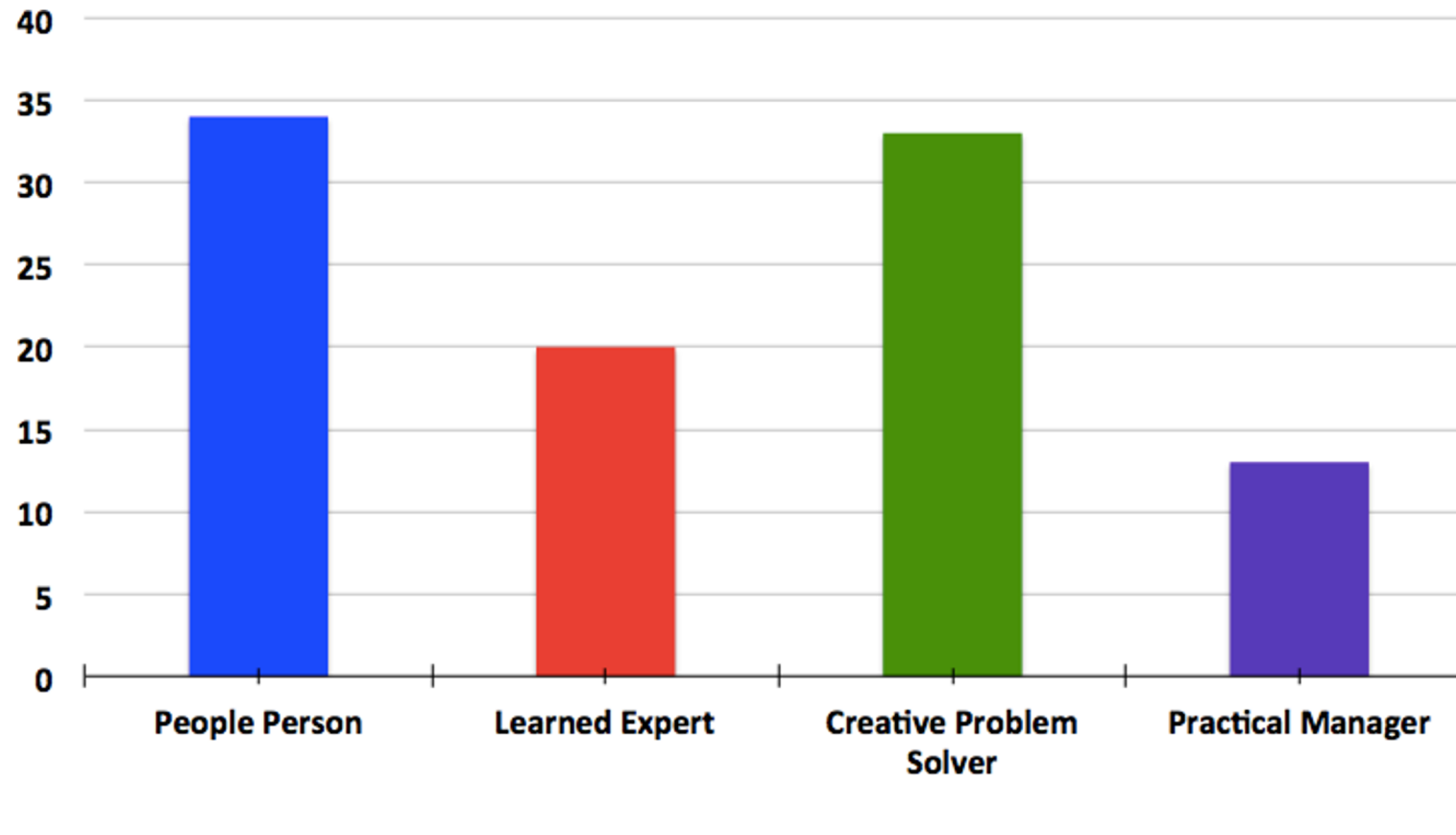
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# Susan's Personality Profile



# Personality Preferences

Practical Managers



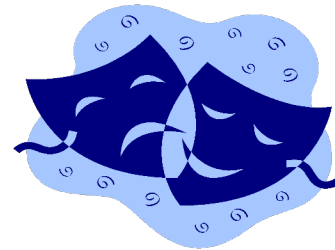
Learned Experts



Creative Problem Solvers



People Persons



## II. Taking Stock

**Current Interests:** Loves to draw, read, and argue

**Strengths:** Drawn to the visual and performing arts. Talented in debate.

**Learning Preferences:** Superb visual memory, doodling and sketching helps organize ideas, avid reader

**Experiences/Background:** Father is a dentist, Mother is a social worker. One of two children

**Personality Indicators:** Learned Expert / Creative Problem Solver

**Special Aptitudes/Talents:** Artistic, dramatic, and outstanding metaphoric thinker

**Educational Indicators:** Reading 3 years above grade level, written production minimal,



# III. Potential Obstacles to Success

## **At School:**

- Doesn't like to write
- Blurts out answers / interrupts
- Talks at length about unusual topics
- Argumentative
- Easily distractible when not interested

## **At Home:**

- When engrossed in a project, it's almost impossible to get her attention



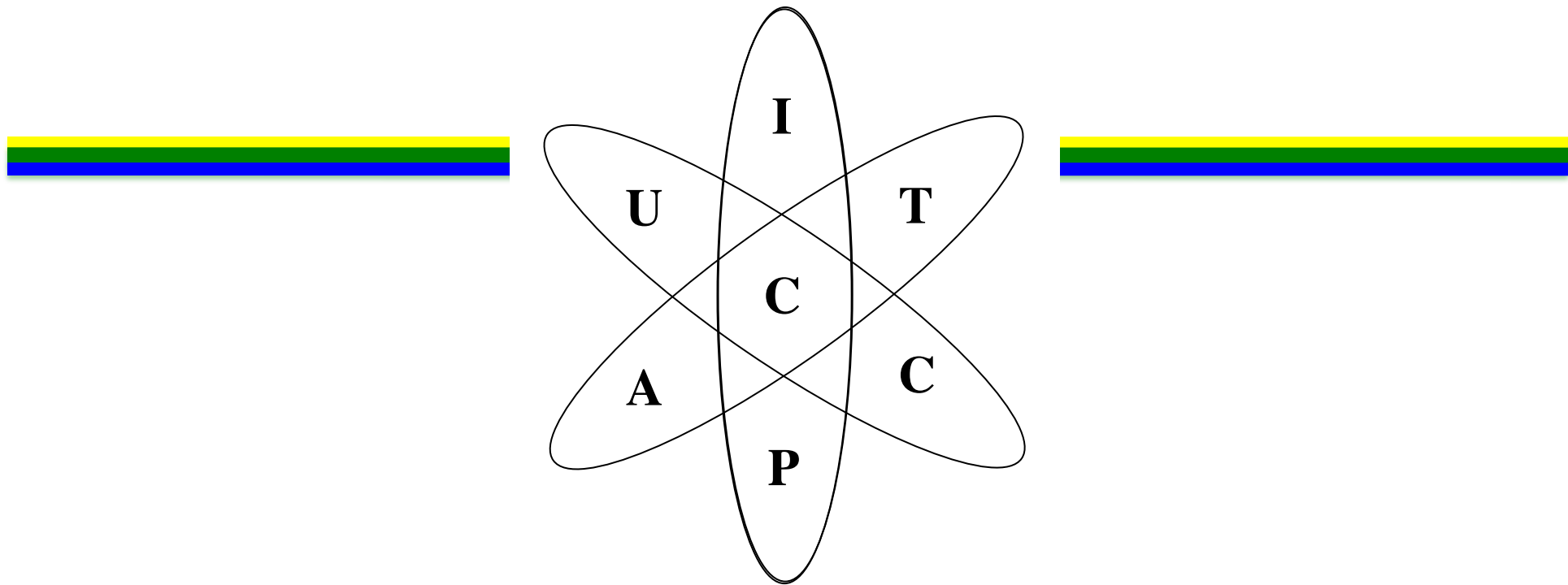
## IV. Times of Personal Best

**Mother:** When she's involved in art, especially animation

**Father:** Talking politics or about movies we have seen together

**Teacher:** Participating in discussions. When working on an art project.

**Student:** Creating images, animations, or performing on stage



"...we believe gifted behaviors take place in certain people (not all people), at certain times (not all the time), and under certain circumstances (not all circumstances)."



# Creating Possibilities

This tool reminds us of the importance of offering daily opportunities for students to experience joy in learning.



Magic happens when  
interests and abilities  
intersect.

The two sections in this document use information about a student's interests and abilities in distinct ways:

- ★ **Plan for Success™** is a place to note how interests and strengths can be leveraged to build necessary academic and personal skills.
- ★ **The Talent Development Opportunity (TDO) Maker™** is about finding opportunities to develop the student's expertise in particular areas of strength, interest, and talent.

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## The Talent Development Opportunity Maker™ (TDO)

First, build a TDO Menu by developing a list of classes, lessons, experiences, workshops, etc. that will foster this student's passion(s) for \_\_\_\_\_. Include authentic **Explorations** (to broaden), **Experiences** (for skill development) with professionals, and **Opportunities** for performance and production that will support progression toward expertise.

Consider Opportunities to Explore:	Classroom and Extracurricular Options	Enriched Options Beyond School
Take Classes or Lessons:		
Observe or Attend events:		
Create:		
Perform:		
Find a Mentor:		
Join Special Programs/Clubs:		
Interview Experts:		
Apprentice:		
Enter Contests or Competitions:		
Other Options:		

Then create a TDO Agenda from the possibilities above:

Options Selected (with dates)	Frequency and Location	Date to Revisit
•		
•		
•		
•		
•		
•		
•		



# Summarize and Apply

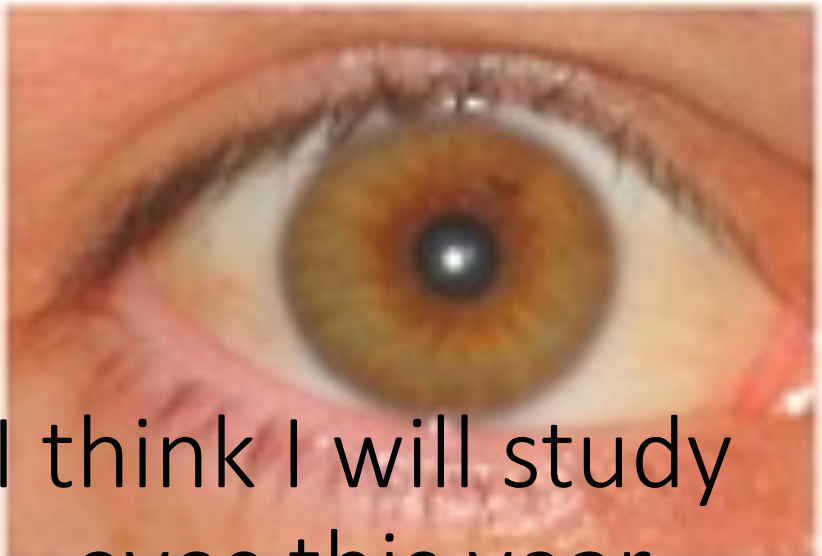
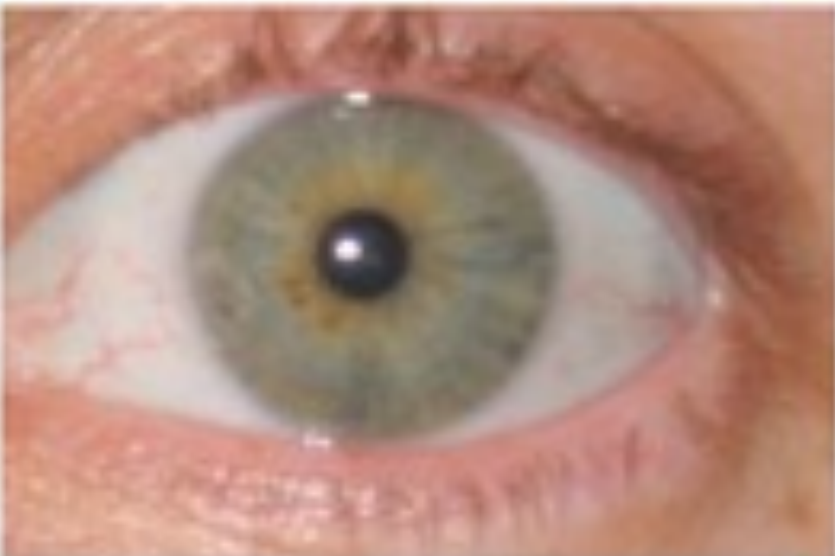
<b>Taking Stock</b> “This child is...”	<b>Creating Possibilities</b> in the classroom	<b>Talent Development Opportunities (TDOs)</b> at home & in the greater community	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• is an avid &amp; advanced reader</li> <li>• prefers historical novels</li> <li>• thinks metaphorically</li> <li>• is passionate about art</li> <li>• is drawn to drama</li> <li>• loves to argue</li> <li>• shows leadership capacity</li> <li>• primarily a creative problem solver / learned expert</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage reading with historical novels, manuals, &amp; graphic novels</li> <li>• Include point-counterpoint arguments, mini debates, &amp; moral dilemmas as pre-writing</li> <li>• Use visual arts integrated lessons</li> <li>• Use Synectics to encourage writing</li> <li>• Incorporate performing arts experiences</li> <li>• Suggest comic books as products</li> <li>• Allow doodling to help with attention &amp; working memory</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Debate Club / Team</li> <li>• Advanced Art classes</li> <li>• Credits earned as teaching assistant in visual arts</li> <li>• Drama Club</li> <li>• Shakespeare Boot Camp</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enter drawings for exhibit at local gallery in Culver City.</li> <li>• Take classes during the coming term at Art Center in Pasadena (sculpting &amp; drawing)</li> <li>• Visit Manga exhibition and continue to study Japanese for trip to Japan this coming summer.</li> <li>• Apply for prestigious Cal Arts summer program, <i>Inner Sparks</i>.</li> </ul>











I think I will study  
eyes this year





# Let the gifts take the lead!

When looking for an educational fit, most people are concerned about “services,” “accommodations,” and learning support options.

Yet we know this to be true: The most important issue is whether or not the opportunities offered (curricular and extra-curricular) match a particular child’s strengths, interests, and talents.

*“I have learned first and foremost to look for interests, talents, strengths, shades of strengths or the mere suggestion of a talent.*

*Knowing that a person builds a happy and successful life not on remediated weaknesses but on developed strengths, I have learned to place those strengths at the top of what matters.”*

Edward Hallowell (2005)



“I discovered that being a little bit different actually sets you aside in show business; it makes you special. You always try to turn your negative into a positive.”



- 
- I had wonderful teachers. I would not be in show business without them. I remember Mrs. Hawke, my English teacher, who said to me, 'You know, you're always telling jokes in the hall, why don't you write some of those stories down and maybe you can tell them to the class?' It would have never occurred to me to do that, because that just seemed like homework. And for the first time in my life, homework was actually enjoyable. I'd write something down, and then cross it out, saying now that doesn't sound right, and then write it again. And then she'd have me stand up in front of the class and have me read these stories and I realize now that they weren't very good, but at the time I got a few laughs and she said, 'Maybe you could be a comedy writer or something like that.' It was an eye-opener. It was something I've always been grateful for."

- 
- And hang in there he did, shaping his career according to his strengths. “I realized that I was not going to be an accountant or a banker, and so what am I good at? Well, I’m pretty good at talking and telling silly stories. I had always assumed I’d go into sales like my dad because you have to do things to amuse customers, but I took it to the extreme. But that’s what it is: you find out what your strengths are and what your weaknesses are and you play to your strengths.”



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### 2e News

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As people notice the variety with just the modest with multiple exceptions, it becomes increasingly important for everyone to advocate.

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