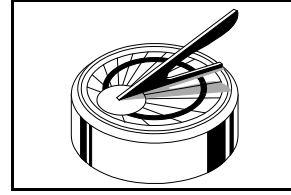


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Congratulations to Ken Siegelman on his being appointed Poet Laureate of Brooklyn, New York by the president of the borough of Brooklyn. Ken has written nine poetry books, one of which was published by Gifted Education Press in 1997 – Learning Social Studies and History Through Poetry. I wish Ken continued success. As a teacher for over thirty years in the New York City Public Schools, his poems reflect the problems of teaching in urban schools. Another book published by GEP, Essential Mathematics for Gifted Students: Preparation for Algebra, Grades 4-8 by Frank Sganga, has been receiving considerable interest from school districts since it was published in early January 2002. This interest may presage shifting needs of educators away from educational models to more content-based concerns.

As I write this introduction during Black History Month, I am again reminded of one of the most pressing needs in gifted education – the identification and rigorous education of gifted minority children. Some of my observations regarding this issue are: (1) Early education programs should be established specifically for minority children who show intellectual potential; (2) admission should not be solely based upon standardized test results; (3) teacher and staff nominations should play a strong role in the identification process; (4) nonverbal ability tests such as the Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test (1997) should be used in conjunction with more traditional instruments to assess these children; and (5) curriculum should focus on developing multiple intelligences.

Dr. Jerry Flack has an interesting article in this issue that shows how a multiple intelligences model can be used to teach gifted students about Abraham Lincoln's life and accomplishments. Clearly, his application of MI theory can be generalized to many other topics and subjects. We welcome Jane Mitchell of The Rock, Georgia who has written a wonderful article on teaching Shakespeare. She demonstrates creativity, drive, enthusiasm and rapport in teaching the Bard's plays to gifted children. Dr. Michael Walters concludes this issue with a discussion of the Black author, James McBride, who has written interesting books about his own life and the lives of Black soldiers in World War II.

Maurice D. Fisher, Publisher

“Would it be better to sit in silence?/ To think everything, to feel everything, to say nothing?/...../ But the nature of man is not the nature of silence./ Words are the thunders of the mind./ Words are the refinement of the flesh./ Words are the responses to the thousand curvaceous moments – / we just manage it – / sweet and electric, words flow from the brain/ and out the gate of the mouth.” From The Leaf and the Cloud, pp. 11-12 (2000, Da Capo Press) by Mary Oliver.

Abraham Lincoln: A Hero for the Ages Seen Through the Prism of Multiple Intelligences

by Jerry Flack Denver, Colorado

In an age of cynicism and disillusionment about political leaders, it is perhaps more crucial than ever that young people have heroic models to admire and emulate. Certainly, no American man shines more brilliantly than Abraham Lincoln, and it would be a tragedy if today's youth did not come to know this remarkable human being. In his superb biography of Lincoln, written specifically for youth, historian Albert Marrin notes that in the past fifty years, every poll of historians has ranked Abraham Lincoln as America's greatest president. Marrin argues that this fact is not because Lincoln was a perfect man. He made many mistakes and had many faults including self-doubt, prejudice, and hesitation. He cried openly in front of generals and cabinet members. But, Marrin points out, Lincoln also had the great gift, the capacity for growth. Lincoln rose above his humble beginnings, his own weaknesses and prejudices, always learning, always maturing as a leader. Marrin furthers his tribute to Lincoln by arguing that while George Washington (incidentally, Lincoln's greatest hero) is perceived as the father of our country, Lincoln must be seen to represent the unity and brotherhood of the American people. (Marrin, 1997, p. 8)

What more natural a subject to study than Abraham Lincoln. There is so very much that young people can learn from an examination of his life.

Sir Richard Livingstone wrote, "True education is the habitual vision of greatness." (Gibbon, 1993, p. 9) If we wish the young people of today to have visions of greatness, such images may be found in an examination of the life of the exceptional Abraham Lincoln.

Lincoln Facts and Accomplishments

In addition to being judged the greatest president ever by historians, Lincoln is also esteemed to have been the greatest writer among all the presidents. This is a singular tribute to Lincoln's own genius, his profound respect for the power of words, and his thirst for learning, especially considering that if one puts all of Lincoln's formal schooling together, it represents roughly the equivalent of one year of formal education. With no paper or pencil available, and most likely no slate, the young Lincoln practiced writing by scratching letters with a rock on the backside of a shovel. Lincoln was mostly a self-taught linguistic genius.

In the domain of the interpersonal, Lincoln was a fascinating person. He so abhorred killing that he gave away his hunting rifle after he killed a turkey as a boy, yet he presided over the

deadliest war in American history. He was melancholy and wept openly at cabinet meetings when he was president. Some say that he even foretold his own death based on dreams he had shortly before the terrible, fateful night at Ford's Theater.

Lincoln possessed an indomitable spirit. He failed in business and lost far more elections than he ever won, yet he never ceased to persevere.

The Lincolns suffered terrible indignities. Lincoln actually had to go before Congress as President of the United States in the midst of the Civil War and swear that his wife was not a traitor to the Union for the Confederacy.

The Lincolns lost two of their four sons while they were still in childhood and the grief nearly destroyed each of them. One story, perhaps apocryphal, is that Lincoln's grief over his second lost son, William or "Willie" was so intense that he had the boy's body exhumed at least once so that he could look once more upon his son's face.

A Lincoln Study

A study of Lincoln can begin at any age level and any curriculum model may be used to design such a study. In this article, stellar references about Lincoln are highlighted that cross all grade levels. Howard Gardner's multiple intelligences theory is the basis for organizing curriculum experiences. Although additional intelligences have been proposed by Dr. Gardner, the eight intelligences outlined in David Lazear's *Eight Ways of Knowing* (Skylight, 1999) are used herein. These intelligences are: verbal/linguistic, musical/rhythmic, logical/mathematical, visual/spatial, bodily/kinesthetic, naturalist, interpersonal, and intrapersonal.

Multiple Intelligences and Abraham Lincoln

In a past issue of the *Gifted Education Press Quarterly* (Fall, 1998), I was fortunate to be able to share how I have used Multiple Intelligences theory and activities to teach elementary school teachers and students using the fairy tale Cinderella as the content base. It was truly a joy to talk with kindergarten and first grade students about how they would plan and build a mall exclusively for children to be called Cinderella City. In the recent years I have worked with more middle school and secondary teachers about the same Multiple Intelligences theory and activities, but I have accentuated more sophisticated content, specifically the courage and wisdom of Abraham Lincoln. It is those ideas I wish to share

here.

Because I described the Multiple Intelligences theory and teaching activities in the earlier article, I will only briefly touch on them here. Dr. Gardner's theories and works have become as famous as any concept in contemporary education and do not require yet another detailed explanation here. Therefore, I summarize his work below as I understand it. I should also mention that I am aware that Dr. Gardner has explored additional intelligences, but this is foremost an article about teaching strategies and I have found that classroom teachers perceive his first eight intelligences to be by far the most useful and practical elements to plan curriculum for their students.

Multiple Intelligence Theory Definitions

Verbal/Linguistic Intelligence refers to the knowledge, skills, and use of language in oral and written communications. Facility with language or linguistic intelligence involves phonology, syntax, and semantics; understanding and using the sound, order, and the meaning of words.

Musical/Rhythmic Intelligence refers to the ability a person has to compose, perform, and appreciate music. The principle components of musical intelligence are pitch, rhythm, and timbre.

Logical/Mathematical Intelligence is the ability to problem solve and “figure things out.” Activities include mathematical operations utilizing numbers in problem solving, but can just as readily include scientific problem solving or invention wherein a person makes a startling analogy or intuitive leap and suddenly solves a problem or offers an explanation of natural phenomena previously unknown. The core intelligence is not necessarily verbal. History is replete with examples of mathematicians and other problem solvers who discovered or understood solutions to problems before they were able to eventually articulate their conclusions.

Visual/Spatial Intelligence involves the capacity to orient one's self to spaces and to inhabit and navigate those spaces whether they be small spaces such as a classroom or the oceans of the world. Spatial intelligence involves more than visual perception as evidenced by the fact that blind persons can learn very well to navigate their world. There are first-rate blind sculptors. Artists and navigators are among people who use space, distance, and perception with particular skill.

Bodily/Kinesthetic Intelligence allows people to utilize bodily movement to physically solve problems, create new products and perform with or without the use of tools. A fine surgeon exhibits bodily-kinesthetic skill as does a mime and a baseball

pitcher. Tailors and construction workers also rely heavily on their bodily-kinesthetic intelligence.

Naturalist Intelligence allows people to survive in the natural world. Societies have always depended on those who can cultivate the land and make food grow, and those whose sensibilities allow them to use natural phenomenon to cure and heal. After survival, there are also those who find inspiration in nature such as the photographer Ansel Adams and the philosopher Henry David Thoreau. There are also scientists such as Rachel Carson who protect and preserve nature.

Interpersonal Intelligence is the first of two personal intelligences Gardner cites. Interpersonal intelligence involves the ability of people to successfully interact with other human beings. Some individuals exhibit remarkable skill in their ability to read other person's needs, wishes, and intentions. Teachers, religious leaders and politicians are among the professionals who widely utilize interpersonal intelligence.

Intrapersonal Intelligence refers to the internal knowledge people possess about themselves. This intelligence involves introspection and an understanding of one's feelings, behavior patterns, and reactions to the world and being able to use such self-knowledge to positive effect. People who recognize their tendency to procrastinate and thus create action plans to make sure they fulfill responsibilities are persons who effectively employ intrapersonal intelligence.

Multiple Intelligences Activities

Activities and performances commonly associated with each of the multiple intelligences are listed below.

Verbal/Linguistic Intelligence Activities:

reading, writing poetry and prose, editing, formal speaking, journal keeping, storytelling, giving directions, learning foreign languages, appreciating verbal humor (e.g., puns)

Musical/Rhythmic Intelligence Activities:

singing, playing, improvising, composing, keeping time, humming, using percussion instruments, making rhythmic patterns, responding to music, learning and using Morse Code

Logical/Mathematical Intelligence Activities:

outlining and conducting science experiments, predicting outcomes, estimating, math calculating and problem solving, reasoning and debating, understanding analogies and abstractions, detecting and solving mysteries, deciphering or creating codes, solving brain teasers, playing chess

Visual/Spatial Intelligence Activities:

painting, drawing, imaging, composing photographs,

orienteering, building models, inventing, designing and building, inventing, mapping, creating diagrams, working with mazes and jigsaw puzzles

Bodily/Kinesthetic Intelligence Activities:

dancing, acting, skating, sculpting, sewing, crafting, playing sports, physically illustrating, pantomiming, practicing martial arts, tinkering with machines

Naturalist Intelligence Activities

observing nature, labeling and mounting specimens, collecting data, keeping logs, studying changes in the environment, gardening, farming, caring for animals, classifying natural objects, protecting wildlife

Interpersonal Intelligence Activities:

leading people, cooperating, mediating and solving disputes, teaching others, organizing, negotiating, empathizing, counseling, sharing, interviewing, collaborating, understanding others, brainstorming, volunteering, peer coaching and tutoring

Intrapersonal Intelligence Activities:

silently reflecting, keeping a diary or journal, daydreaming, understanding one's self, imagining future roles and opportunities, analyzing self behaviors, motives, and performances, goal setting, clarifying values, making personal choices, designing, implementing, and evaluating daily, weekly, monthly and life plans

Abraham Lincoln Multiple Intelligences Activities

Verbal/Linguistic Intelligence

Read Walt Whitman's Lincoln tributes.

Study important authors of the time (Louisa May Alcott).

Examine letters Lincoln wrote and received (see Grace Belden's letter urging Lincoln to grow a beard and the letter Lincoln wrote to Mrs. Bixby, a mother who lost five sons in the Civil War).

Analyze Lincoln's eloquence with words found in such works as The Gettysburg Address.

Read Lincoln's poetry that he wrote as a young man.

Seek, read, and analyze Lincoln's quotations and aphorisms.

Write and illustrate an ABC book about Lincoln.

Explore the six-trait writing model trait of voice. Then, read Lincoln's letters and speeches exclusively from the point of view of noting how he used voice in his writing.

Alone or with others, perform a readers' theater presentation of either a collage of Lincoln's writings or tributes to Lincoln

by such poets as Walt Whitman (e.g., "O Captain! My Captain!"). Write a concrete poem about Lincoln in the shape of his silhouette; then create a similar concrete poem about yourself.

Memorize a memorable speech and present to class. Write and deliver Lincoln's acceptance speech for his second term of office, or paraphrase one of his speeches. Pose as Lincoln's speech writer.

Memorize and deliver a favorite Lincoln speech.

Read aloud a poem or letter Lincoln wrote.

Read aloud Walt Whitman's poetic tributes to Lincoln, "O Captain, My Captain." and "When the Lilacs in the Dooryard Last Bloomed."

Read passages from **Abe Lincoln Remembers** (2000) by Ann Turner. Pick a passage from Lincoln's life and model Turner's style. Write a first person account that Lincoln himself might have written.

Study the lives and works of other authors of Lincoln's time such as Harriet Beecher Stowe (Uncle Tom's Cabin).

Read Lincoln's poetry found in such works as Harold Holzer's **Abraham Lincoln, The Writer** (2000). How might his early writing of poetry impacted his later writings such as the Gettysburg Address? (Example: "Four score and seven years ago," is far more poetic than saying "87 years ago.")

Examine a speech by Lincoln and paraphrase using today's language.

Choose a topic about which you feel strongly and write a debate briefly outlining your views.

Musical/Rhythmic Intelligence

Listen to Aaron Copland's "Lincoln Portrait."

Listen to Civil War-related songs (e.g., "Dixie").

Read the story of how Lincoln requested the Union band to play "Dixie" at the war's end.

Compose music as a tribute to Lincoln.

Create a new, improved rhythm instrument using Lincoln pennies.

Compose a rap song that recreates the chronology of the Civil War.

Listen to songs that slaves sang. Reflect upon how such songs may have helped slaves cope with their intolerable circumstances.

Use a familiar tune (e.g., “Greensleaves”) and create new lyrics that tell the life story of Lincoln.

Drummer boys played a significant role in the Civil War.

Read about the lives of these boys. Study the “language” of various drum cadences and bugle cadences used in the Civil War. Are there different meanings to different rhythms and bugle calls, such as “retreat” and “charge ahead”?

Find recorded examples of period music from the Civil War that might have been played at White House affairs the Lincolns hosted.

Compose a message in Morse Code to be sent to the front dismissing McClellan from his command.

Listen to tapes of authentic Civil War-era songs including “Battle Hymn of the Republic.” Identify instruments of Lincoln's time. Sing or teach a song from this era.

Create an original ballad about the life of Abraham Lincoln.

Use an existing folk tune or create a new one.

Learn enough Morse Code to send a message about Lincoln's arrival in Washington, D. C., his assassination, etc.

Logical/Mathematical Intelligence

Learn the dimensions of the Lincoln Memorial.

Study Lincoln-inspired architecture, especially buildings carrying his name.

Create story problems from Civil War and railroad extension statistics (e.g., miles of rail built before, during, immediately after the Civil War).

Compute miles traveled by Lincoln in his lifetime.

Determine the number of Civil War fatalities and casualties (greatest losses in nation's history).

Use a Venn diagram to compare schools of Lincoln's youth with your school.

Create a puzzle (e.g., cross-word, maze) using important facts from the life of Lincoln as clues.

Create a Venn diagram comparing wildlife in Kentucky, Illinois, and the Virginia area to students' current land area.

Make a graph of death tolls by battle, North and South.

Create a blueprint, complete with realistic measurements for Lincoln's boyhood cabin. Use a computer program for the creation of the blueprints.

Develop a code that could have been used for communication by soldiers in the Civil War.

Look about. Find as many things as possible that portray Lincoln's face (e.g., penny).

Create original story problems based upon statistics from the Civil War (e.g., miles of rail track built before, during and immediately after the Civil War).

Examine the number of votes Lincoln received in the presidential elections of 1860 and 1864. What percentage of the vote did he receive in each election? (Note: In 1860, Lincoln was elected president with the lowest percentage of the popular vote in the history of the nation. In 1864, he became the first president in more than 30 years to win re-election.)

Compute the miles Lincoln traveled in his lifetime from his birth in Kentucky to his death in Washington, D. C.

Investigate the staggering financial costs of the Civil War to both the North and the South.

Determine the number of Civil War fatalities and casualties which represent the greatest losses in American military history.

Study to become a Lincoln scholar. Choose one aspect of Lincoln's life (e.g., his boyhood) and learn all you can about it. Choose a creative way to share your expertise.

Visual/Spatial Intelligence

Examine famous sculptures of Lincoln; learn how Mt. Rushmore was sculpted.

Draw exterior views and floor plans of Lincoln homes (log cabin, Springfield, IL home).

Learn about the building the Lincoln Memorial (white marble from Marble, CO).

Map Lincoln's life; then map your own life thus far.

Study portraits of Lincoln.

Create a portrait of Lincoln.

Photocopy photographs and words of Lincoln and create a Lincoln collage.

Sculpt a likeness of the Lincoln Memorial and then create a drawing or sculpt a likeness of what you would want a memorial to you to look like.

Create a portrait of Lincoln made entirely of Lincoln pennies.

Build a “log” cabin from Lincoln pennies.

Create a collage made up of Lincoln symbols: pennies, hat,

ax, Mississippi River boat, rocking chair).

Identify one of the great battlefields of the Civil War and design a contemporary National Parks and Monuments brochure for it.

Create a new banknote. All images on the note should pertain to Lincoln and his life.

Build a cabin with Lincoln Logs and list other creative uses for Lincoln Logs. Use Lincoln Logs to build a recreation of Lincoln's cabin. Build to scale using your own blueprints.

Design costumes (one-dimensional) for Lincoln's family from construction paper....make paper dolls.

Study Lincoln's hat. Then design a new hat that would show your personality.

Draw a map that charts Lincoln's train travels on the way from Springfield, Illinois to Washington, D.C.

Examine famous sculptures of Lincoln such as Mt. Rushmore and Daniel Chester French's sculpture of Lincoln in the Lincoln Memorial. How were they created? How long did it take the sculptors to complete their works? What problems did they have to overcome? See especially **The Statue of Abraham Lincoln: A Masterpiece** by Daniel Chester French. Minneapolis, MN: Lerner, 1997.

Draw exterior and interior views of the Kentucky cabin in which Abraham Lincoln was born in 1809.

Carve or mold a statue or bust of Lincoln. A bar of soap, soft wood, clay, or any other medium is acceptable.

Study the impact of photography on the Civil War. See especially the work of Mathew Brady.

Draw a multiple intelligences profile (bar graph) of Abraham Lincoln. What intelligences did he possess in great abundance? What intelligences did he not have opportunities to develop?

Map the route of Lincoln's funeral train.

Bodily/Kinesthetic Intelligence

Improvise a family scene between Lincoln and his family.

Present a speech as Lincoln might have delivered it.

Stage an interpretive dance commemorating a moment from Lincoln's life.

Create a human bar graph of Lincoln's MI Profile.

Locate and read articles about actors who have portrayed Lincoln on stage and screen.

Construct an exhibit for the classroom or school.

On butcher paper, outline Lincoln's body, especially his height, and compare to your own body; how much of the great man's shadow can you fit?

Study the environmental challenges soldiers from both the North and the South faced. How did soldiers transport their equipment from place to place over rugged terrain and in bad weather while on the march? What were some of the hardships Confederate and Union soldiers suffered such as frostbite and diseases carried by insects?

With the aid of a very skilled adult, practice orienteering and hiking through difficult and unfamiliar terrain.

Create a tableau with characters from Lincoln's life to depict important occurrences. Have students use dance movements to go along with a song from the Civil War era.

Draw Lincoln's image on a large sheet of butcher paper, complete with shoes and top hat, to his known measurements. Then students measure their height and compare to Lincoln's.

Discover the games children played during the 1800s. Develop instructions and play one or more games.

With professional adult supervision, locate a (dead) tree that can safely be chopped down and split into logs and rails.

As a class, choreograph in chronological order a mime presentation of the salient events in Lincoln's life. Note that this also involves the logical sequencing of Lincoln's life.

Create a quilt square about some aspect of Lincoln's life and words.

Act out a scene from Lincoln's life. It can be a dramatic event such as the delivery of the "Gettysburg Address," but it can also be a playful family scene with Lincoln playing with his sons Willie and Tad.

Improvise a scene between Lincoln and his family.

Re-stage a portion of the Lincoln-Douglas Debates.

Design and construct a Lincoln tribute or Lincoln museum in the classroom.

Explore the Internet to find pictures and information about actors who have portrayed Lincoln in movies and on the stage.

Naturalist Intelligence

Investigate the diets of Civil War soldiers. How and on what did they survive?

Identify plants and animals indigenous to the lands of Lincoln's youth.

Note the references and comparisons of Lincoln to the natural world in the words of poets such as Walt Whitman. What natural medicines were employed by doctors and nurses in the Civil War?

Lincoln did not like to hunt or kill wild animals. Stage a debate (as with the Lincoln-Douglas Debates) between those advocating hunting and those opposed. What are the pros and cons of hunting today? What were they in Lincoln's time?

Identify recipes and prepare some of the foods that may have been eaten by Lincoln on the Illinois frontier.

Identify the natural materials, species and number of trees, that would have gone into building a log cabin in Lincoln's boyhood days. What impact would the construction of such cabins have had on the natural environment?

What animals (e.g., bears, mountain lions, buffalo) lived in the great wildernesses of Lincoln's youth? Do any of these species still inhabit the regions of Kentucky, Indiana, and Illinois?

Plan and prepare a simple meal to be cooked over a wood fire. With adult supervision and in a safe place, cook the meal and eat it. Was the preparation of food easy in Lincoln's boyhood years?

Identify and create an herbarium of plants used for medication during the Civil War.

Identify and compare the natural medicines and resources that would have been used by a Native American family in North America in the 1500s, by the Lincoln family in the 1800s, and by your family in the year 2002 or beyond. How would lives of each different family be impacted by the natural environment?

Read some of Lincoln's writings, especially his early poems, about his early life. Draw a natural scene where you imagine he might be happiest as a boy. What plants and animals could be in the picture?

Create an entry for the Farmer's Almanac for some period during Lincoln's life.

Examine wood cutting, wood burning and related environmental issues: lack of trees, air pollution.

Invite a forestry expert to class; study the different kinds of forest.

Study gardens of the 1800s and draw a blueprint for the garden for Lincoln's Springfield, Illinois home or the White House.

What plants and animals were indigenous to the lands of Lincoln's youth? (Which are extinct or at least no longer present in his homeland?)

Note how poets such as Walt Whitman often use references and comparisons to the natural world in their tributes to Lincoln (e.g., lilacs, the great star Venus, shooting stars). See "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd."

Interpersonal Intelligence

Seek and read evidence of Lincoln's faith, his belief in God.

Debate with others concerning Lincoln's greatness (e.g., Was Lincoln greater than Washington and/or Jefferson?).

Was Lincoln justified in suspending many First Amendment rights during the Civil War?

Prepare and deliver an Oprah or Rosie O'Donnell type of interview with the Lincoln Cabinet.

Compare the leadership characteristics of Jefferson Davis and Abraham Lincoln.

Consider the impact the Civil War had on families. All of Mary Todd Lincoln's brothers and brothers-in-law fought for the Confederacy. Mrs. Lincoln herself was considered by many to be a spy.

Discuss with others the causes of the Civil War.

Discuss with others Lincoln's greatness. Does he deserve to be named the greatest president?

Pretend one person is Lincoln and the other is Douglas. Debate issues they would have debated. You are a reporter scheduled to interview Lincoln today, April 14, 1865. Prepare the questions you want to ask him.

Appoint North and South representatives to debate a war issue or an issue that the students care about in their time frame. Can they reach a compromise?

Offer courting advice to Mary Todd via an Advice Column.

Conduct a debate as Lincoln and Douglas may have experienced it: issues of slavery. Examine contemporary issues that have some of the same divisiveness.

Assume the role of a modern TV talk show host and comment on the Lincolns as parent role models. Abraham and Mary Todd Lincoln spoiled their children shamelessly,

according to contemporaries. Willie and Tad Lincoln were the first presidential children to actually live and grow up in the White House. They enjoyed wild rides through the halls of the White House in a cart pulled by a pet goat.

Class discussion: What if the South had won the Civil War? What would life be like today?

Intrapersonal Intelligence

What do I most admire about Lincoln?

Note the incredible number of failures in Lincoln's life. How does one cope with such heavy personal losses?

Imagine a letter Mary Todd Lincoln might have written from 1861-65 to her family, most of whom fought for the Confederacy, about the Civil War.

How did Robert E. Lee feel about being offered commands in both the Union and Confederate Armies? Write his thoughts in a diary entry.

Write an epitaph that Robert Lincoln, the president's eldest son, might have penned privately on the morning of his father's death.

Write an epitaph Lincoln might have written a few days prior to his death as he anticipated that fateful event.

Write a eulogy for Lincoln from the point-of-view of an ex-slave or a Union soldier.

You are President Lincoln. You know a reporter will interview you today. ***Write in your journal, in preparation, an evaluation*** of your achievements, your relationships, your failures, as well as your plans for the future. Write out excerpts from Lincoln's diary entries that respond to his many failures.

Lincoln was physically different from others. What makes you stand out from the crowd? How do you feel about your difference?

Write a journal entry as Lincoln might have written it himself at some critical juncture in his life.

Write a journal entry that one of Lincoln's young sons might have written during their lives in the White House.

Consider Lincoln's introspection and depression. Did these traits help or hinder his conduct of the war?

Lincoln Books

There is no shortage of fine Lincoln books for students of all

ages and ability/readiness levels. Only two figures have more books about them registered in the Library of Congress than Lincoln, Jesus Christ and Shakespeare. The following are especially relevant and time works on Lincoln. Many fine books speak to at least one particular intelligence to be found in Lincoln's life. The vast majority of Lincoln books celebrate his interpersonal skills of great leadership, while others honor his great writing skill. More recently, Raymond Bial has singled out his naturalist skill in the book, **Where Lincoln Walked** (1997).

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Lincoln's Words

Lincoln made the following remark to a young law student: "Always bear in mind that your own resolution to succeed, is more important than any other one thing." (Freedman, 1987,

p. 134) If teachers want gifted youths to succeed, they must provide models of greatness. It is difficult to imagine a greater example of a successful gifted man than Abraham Lincoln. When one adds into the equation the humble beginnings and misfortunes of life that Lincoln suffered, his importance as a role model becomes ever greater. Lincoln is perhaps the greatest American ever and a particular approach to a study of his life may be found in the Multiple Intelligences way.

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Abraham Lincoln - Quotations

"I am a firm believer in the people. If given the truth, they can be depended upon to meet any national crisis. The great point is to bring them the real facts."

"What constitutes the bulwark of our own liberty and independence? It is not our frowning battlements, our bristling sea coasts, the guns of our war steamers, or the strength of our gallant and disciplined army. . . .Our reliance is in the *love of liberty* which God has implanted in us. . . .Destroy this spirit, and you have planted the seeds of despotism at your own doors. . . ."

"In times like the present, men should utter nothing for which they would not willingly be responsible through time and eternity."

"No man is good enough to govern another man without that other man's consent."

"It has ever been my experience that folks who have no vices have very few virtues."

"Most folks are about as happy as they make up their minds to be."

"I have endured a great deal of ridicule without much malice, and have received a great deal of kindness not quite free from ridicule."



Shakespeare Sampler: A Unit to Connect Elementary Gifted Students to Shakespeare

by Jane P. Mitchell The Rock, Georgia

While my first experience in teaching Shakespeare to my gifted fifth graders at our Georgia elementary school was not a failure, it was also not the learning experience for my students that I had envisioned. After the unit had ended, I reflected upon my teaching and what I needed to do the next time I taught "Shakespeare Sampler," a unit so named because it represents a "sampling" of Shakespeare to introduce young students to the Bard. As a former junior high and high school teacher, I believe wholly in exposing younger students to Shakespeare, for "Usually, even by the time students are in junior high, they have come to feel that Shakespeare is 'hard' and that they have to endure it like bad-tasting medicine that's good for them." (Wood, 1997, 457-458) I wanted my students to feel the same enthusiasm I have for Shakespeare's stories and to marvel as I do how a good plot can live forever. What I realized was that in teaching Shakespeare for the first time to younger students was that I had not made enough connections to things my students already knew. I had not sufficiently dealt with the difficulty of the language, and I focused too much on the details of plot rather than the broad aspects of theme. But when my next group of fifth graders asked about the life-sized poster of William Shakespeare, I was ready to say, "Let me introduce you!"

The first connection that I made with this group of students was one of historical perspective. I read the book, Bard of Avon: The Story of William Shakespeare (1992) by Diane Stanley and Peter Vennema to my students. As I read, I stopped occasionally to pose questions. The first was, "Where is England and what do you know about this country?"

My students were able to tell me its location and the fact that English citizens colonized our original thirteen colonies. Then I inquired about Queen Elizabeth. Through discussion, students connected her as England's ruler during the "Age of Exploration." Sir Walter Raleigh and Sir Francis Drake were explorers they had studied, they told me, and I could see that they were now viewing William Shakespeare as a contemporary of these historical figures. As I continued to read aloud, students learned that Queen Elizabeth died in 1603 and that James of Scotland became king. Again I stopped. "What do you know about King James?" I asked. Finally, a student said, "Wasn't he the one the Jamestown, Virginia settlement was named for?" Another connection was made. Students were able to grasp that at the time of Shakespeare, our own country had not been formed but was being rapidly claimed by several countries through colonization. I asked students to visualize William Shakespeare hearing news about the Jamestown settlement. "Would he want to write about the

New World in one of his plays?" I asked. Students discussed the question and decided that maybe it was possible that American history could have inspired Shakespeare. I would save *that* connection for later in the unit, for now it was time to address the language of Shakespeare's plays.

King James proved to be a helpful connection to introducing the language of Shakespeare. "What else do you know about King James?" I asked.

The students were puzzled at first, until one said, "Well, there's the King James Bible."

"Great!" I answered. "Tell me about it."

The students knew much more than they realized as they began to relay the fact that King James authorized the writing of this Bible. They told me about its language, the usage of "thee" and "thou," that our language had changed over the years, and that people of King James's *and* Shakespeare's time must have spoken English in the manner it was written in this version of the Bible.

Now it was time for some fun. I gave each student a handout that I had compiled directly from the vocabulary and grammar sections of the website "Welcome to the Renaissance Faire," (<http://www.renfaire.com/index.html>). Together we read aloud the list of words and phrases. Then the students used this handout as they conversed with a partner. I asked if students had ever heard of the play, "Romeo and Juliet." All hands went up. I explained that the original story of "Romeo and Juliet" was actually a very old one, around long before Shakespeare himself, and that Shakespeare based this play on this older story. (Bevington, 1989, 991). Then I asked students about two tales with which they were familiar and that had been around for a long time: "The Three Little Pigs" and "Goldilocks and the Three Bears." I divided the students into two groups, one for each fairy tale, with these directions: Rewrite and present the story as a play using "Shakespeare's English." The results were hilarious.

My room turned into a stage. Desks became the houses for the three little pigs. Stacked books became a chimney. Construction paper "plates" became the containers for make-believe porridge, and chairs pulled together made the beds for the bears. Students rummaged through a box of old clothes to find aprons, shawls, and hats. It was show time with the following lines:

"Good e'en, thou most industrious little pig!"

"Wherefore hath all *my* porridge been eaten?"

“Nay, thou most horrible wolf, ye shall not come in!”
“Aroint, Goldilocks! Thou hath invaded our home!”

And as the Big Bad Wolf entered the “chimney,” all the actors in “The Three Little Pigs” called out, “Fare-thee-well, thou most wicked wolf!”

Students now had connected Shakespeare to the history they had studied and to literature they knew and loved. It was time now to introduce a sampling of Shakespeare's plays. Shakespeare's plays have much appeal for younger students. As Dr. Albert Cullum states:

“Shakespeare has lived through the centuries not only because of his lyrical and his exciting narratives, but also because he clearly defines the good and evil of his characters and situations. Shakespeare never clouds his viewpoints nor obscures his opinions. Right is always triumphant and evil is always destroyed.” (1995, p.4)

In addition, “. . .the stories are wonderful -- rich, good tales that anyone can understand at some level -- and understanding increases with exposure.” (Wood, p. 456)

The first play that students read was *Julius Caesar*. I chose to use the abridged play from Dr. Albert Cullum's Shakespeare in the Classroom: Plays for the Intermediate Grades. After reading the play, students discussed the themes of friendship, loyalty, and patriotism -- topics relevant to both the play and to their lives. Brutus, they maintained, was especially believable, because of his inner conflict. They related Caesar's growing popularity to modern politics in which popularity polls are reported frequently. And, through Cassius they recognized their own tendencies to be influenced occasionally by those who want to “make trouble.”

Julius Caesar was an excellent play to connect our previous study of principles of public speaking. We discussed how voice inflection, rate, and projection can change the audience's perception of the character. And, we discussed how, in any speech, the audience plays a role, as well. I divided the class into three groups: one group performed the beginning street scene with the soothsayer; another did Brutus's speech and his audience; and the third group performed Antony's speech with the audience. In each, we discussed how the characters conveyed caution, loyalty, self-defense, and challenge, not only through their words but also by their voices.

The next play the students read from Cullum's book was *The Tempest*. In addition to its entertaining, magical story, I chose this play to read because of its many themes and its connection to American history. “Profoundly influenced by European and Native American encounters in the New World, the play's themes include colonialism, slavery, racism,

indentured servitude, the domination of women, native resistance, social rebellion, and political utopia.” (Carey-Webb, 1993, p.30). Through these themes, students immediately recognized my earlier question in which I asked if Shakespeare could have been influenced by things he heard about English colonization in the Americas. They became further engrossed with history when I told them of the letter written by colonist William Stratchey who recorded a hurricane off the coast of Bermuda. (Carey-Webb, p.31) Once again, Shakespeare and his world were brought a little closer to my students' frame of reference.

The final play that I introduced was *Hamlet*. This time, instead of the students reading the play, I read a narrative version. Other narrative children's books of Shakespeare's plays are available, but mine happens to be an old copy of E. Nesbit's The Children's Shakespeare (1938) that I obtained from an used book sale. The plot, at first, was more complicated to students than the other two plays, and it was not as easy for them to determine if Hamlet was a true protagonist. It was time for another connection. Most of the students had seen the movie The Lion King (Roger Allers and Rob Minkoff, dirs., 1994). I told students that they were going to watch a video of The Lion King and that they needed to record any similarities between the movie and *Hamlet*. Occasionally, I paused the video so students could discuss their observations, for they quickly saw that “Hamlet and Simba, the lion cub, are banished from their homes, face life threatening dangers, survive, and come back home to revenge the death of their fathers.” (Gavin, 1996, p.55). After the video, we further discussed the similarities between Simba and Hamlet, and though Hamlet's life ended tragically, students agreed that Hamlet had “accepted his responsibility and done his duty to his father, his country, and himself.” (p. 57) The connection this time was not an historical one but one of modern culture -- an animated movie.

In addition to these plays, students were exposed to other Shakespeare activities during the unit. First, I did want them to experience Shakespeare's text, so I made copies of Polonius's advice to Laertes from *Hamlet*. This speech was relatively easy for students to understand because of its many phrases that have since become proverbs. I also read to students Shakespeare's London: A Guide to Elizabethan London by Julie Ferris. This entertaining “travel guide” gave students a sense of what life was like in Shakespeare's England. Other books, such as Stewart Ross's Shakespeare and Macbeth: The Story Behind the Play, were available for students to read independently. And, at my student's request, I read the story of *Romeo and Juliet*, the play whose name they were most familiar.

Near the end of the unit I distributed copies of Shakespeare's 29th sonnet. After students read the poem they discussed its

meaning and its rhyme scheme. Then I read to my students a quote by poet and author Maya Angelou:

“I remember I must have been about 12 and I read the sonnet - I think it was the 29th of Shakespeare. And he could have been a little black girl in the South for me . . . Now he wrote that in the 16th Century, a white man in England. But he told the absolute truth about a black girl in Arkansas in the '40's.” (Terry, 1993, p. M3)

Students were familiar with Angelou as the author of President Clinton's Inaugural Poem. Some said they had seen her on *The Oprah Winfrey Show*. Now they pondered that Shakespeare had also touched this renowned and popular figure in American literature. Another connection had been made.

Before the unit had ended, I wanted students to consider the authorship issue. I reread to students an excerpt of Bard of Avon: The Story of William Shakespeare, which I had used to introduce the unit:

“Over the years, there have been people who could not believe that the son of a glove maker, a small-town boy with only a grammar-school education, could have written the greatest series of plays in the English language.” (Stanley and Vennema, 1992)

I went on to tell them more about the authorship issue, and then I asked them to discuss the possibility that someone else might have written the plays attributed to Shakespeare. To my surprise, they found the whole issue preposterous. For these gifted students from a small, rural town, hearing that anyone doubted the abilities of the real William Shakespeare would be the same as someone doubting that they, also from a small town, could be successful in an endeavor that they chose. William Shakespeare was now an author that they claimed for themselves.

According to Peggy O'Brian, “As teachers our job is to help students make connections -- between themselves and a piece of literature, between a piece of literature and the ideas it embodies, between the world of the piece and the student's world, connections *within* a piece of literature.” (1993, p. 42) During this unit of “Shakespeare Sampler,” students made connections -- to history they had been exposed to, to beloved fairy tales, to universal themes, to a popular movie, and to a poet with whom they had seen on television -- and, as a result, they made a personal connection to William Shakespeare. To these young students, Shakespeare was *most marvelous!*

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Black History and Giftedness

by Michael E. Walters

Center for Study of the Humanities in the Schools

Black History Month is always a good opportunity for teachers to become aware and appreciate the role that sensibility has upon the development of the gifted individual. The success of any Black American is obviously the result of a personality enriched with the attributes of sensibility. Even with a gene for giftedness, there are many obstacles that every Black American has to overcome due to the enduring prejudices that unfortunately are a part of the American landscape. The problems of racial bias are evident. Yet especially on a psychological level, they still exist like an ongoing plague. One of the major features of the United States is that the attributes of sensibility contribute to people's achievement despite economic, ethnic and racial barriers. The writer, James McBride, is an example of how sensibility and giftedness can help individuals to become successful in the United States. His first book, **The Color of Water** (1996), has become a modern classic and is now used in many high school and college courses. The subtitle of his book is significant – **A Black Man's Tribute to His White Mother**. His mother was from a Polish Jewish background. She was married to a Black minister and had twelve children. All of them became successful in such fields as medicine, music and education. This was despite the family's abject poverty and living in low-income public housing in Brooklyn, New York. Ruth McBride was not only a mother but a role model; she emphasized the twin pillars of religious devotion and respect for education. At sixty-five years she received a degree in social work from Temple University.

McBride has recently published a new book in February 2002 entitled, **Miracle at St. Anna** (2002). This novel is based upon the historical experiences of the noteworthy Buffalo Soldiers (92nd division) in Italy during World War II. Besides describing the heroic struggles of these soldiers, it is about identifying with the oppressive conditions of Italian citizens during this war.

Gifted students and their teachers will find these two books by James McBride not only esthetically enjoyable, but insightful concerning how sensibility allows the gifted to achieve success despite overwhelming obstacles. At the end of **The Color of Water**, McBride returns to his mother's hometown of Suffolk, Virginia to locate his Jewish roots. He meets a childhood friend of his mother who sent her a taped message:

“Ruth, this is Aubrey Rubenstein. I don't know if you remember me or not, but if you do, I'm glad to meet your son and I see you've accomplished a great deal in your life. . . .” (p. 228).

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