

Involving All Students in Advanced Activities



The 3 Es’ inject fun and enrichment into instruction to improve climate

Applying the pedagogy of [gifted education](#) to all classrooms can lead to total school improvement. That is the aim of my work, an enrichment-infusion process called the “schoolwide enrichment model,” or SEM.

“Curricular infusion” simply means that we do not argue with the reality of today’s standards and test-driven approaches to school improvement. Rather, we examine materials and teaching strategies that can make the prescribed curriculum more interesting and enjoyable.

It means we provide the [professional development](#) and technology-based resources that allow teachers to promote the three goals of our model (the 3 E’s): enjoyment, engagement and enthusiasm for learning.

Happy teachers always produce the best results. They know what will work best in their classroom, and they also know that no amount of standardization, regulation or reams of supervisory paperwork have made sustainable differences in achievement scores or the culture of their school.

Common goals

Our research with schools using the schoolwide enrichment model has shown that anything that saves teachers time, promotes the 3 Es and avoids needless paperwork is more likely to be adopted and sustained.

An enrichment-based approach (rather than drill-and-practice) actually improves student achievement, improves attendance, minimizes

suspensions, increases student and teacher engagement, and promotes greater job satisfaction on the part of teachers.

Our model also promotes ownership and educator involvement by providing opportunities for each school to design its unique approach to SEM. Ownership and creative involvement are what produce sustainability and pride. We believe in common goals like the 3 E's but unique means for achieving these goals.

Advanced levels for all

Most overly prescribed “flavor-of-the-month” school improvement models lack sustainability because they are overly prescriptive. They also factor out the kinds of creative program development and joyful learning opportunities that make teaching the innovative and enjoyable process that attracts people to the profession.

Our broadened conception of total talent development advocates general enrichment opportunities for all students, and motivates them to pursue self-selected projects at advanced levels. This is a radically different approach from other models that require a student be certified as “gifted” before advanced opportunities, resources and encouragement are provided.

An emphasis in our work is on infusing highly engaging and enjoyable activities into any and all required curriculum topics. It is amazing to see how quickly students acquire analytic skills and creative and investigative mindsets—rather than simply memorizing material for the next round of tests. Our studies have shown that when teachers enjoy and are engaged in enrichment activities, the entire atmosphere and the culture of the school changes.

Individualized enrichment

Technology has made this enrichment infusion easily available to most schools and classrooms. Information about student strengths can be

quickly obtained by using an electronically produced profile that documents each student's interests, learning styles, preferred modes of expression and academic strengths [<https://renzullilearning.com/>].

A powerful search engine scans through thousands of enrichment activities and matches them to each student's profile. This technology is a one-of-a-kind tool developed at the University of Connecticut (<https://gifted.uconn.edu>) that makes personalized learning easy. Teachers can use the same search engine to differentiate their curriculum by entering topics, events or other keywords to quickly locate enrichment activities categorized by age/grade levels, standards and interest areas.

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