

Anatomy of a Type III Enrichment Project

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Type III Enrichment in The Enrichment Triad Model (Renzulli, 1979) is considered to be the highest level of advanced work that students can pursue. It is defined as “individual and small group investigations of real problems;” and real problems are characterized by the following four criteria:

1. Personalization of the problem. First, a real problem requires a personal frame of reference for the individual or group pursuing the problem. In other words, the problem must involve an emotional or internal commitment to action in addition to a cognitive or scholarly interest or simply wanting to find out more about something. Although teachers or other adults can have some general influence on student choices, the student(s) themselves must decide what they want to study and how they want to study it. This requirement makes Type III Enrichment qualitatively different from the methodology commonly used in today’s emphasis on project based learning.

2. Open-endedness of the problem. A second essential element of real problems is that they do not have a preexisting or unique solutions for the groups or individuals addressing the problem. If an agreed-upon solution or already existing right answer is present, or if a prescribed strategy for solving the problem exists, then it is more appropriately classified as a teacher-assigned training exercise.

3. Use of authentic methodology and advanced content. The third essential element of a real problem is that the problem is addressed using authentic methods that applies advanced content and employing the professional methodology and materials typically used by investigators and creative producers in the various disciplines; even if these processes are applied at a more junior level than adult scientists, writers, artists, etc. We have found that adult professionals can be excellent coaches and mentors in the Type III process and that How-To Books can be excellent resources for providing young people with the professional methodological skills to pursue a problem like a practicing specialist in a given field. For example, a how-book on skills needed to design a questionnaire, rating scale, or interview schedule is an excellent resource for students who might want to do a study on variations in

screen time on the parts of different age groups. Please note in the example that follows the four How-To books that the students used to do research on historical buildings.

4. Work is intended for authentic audiences. The final essential element of real problems is that they are directed toward real audiences. Real audiences are a major part of the *raison d'être* of the practicing professional upon which this model of learning and teaching is based. Professionals produce creative products for one or more specific clients and audiences and real audiences consist of people who voluntarily attend to information, events, services, or objects. Contests and competitions such as science fairs and National History Day events, capstone projects, musical and theatrical performances and fund-raising events for community causes also serve as built in audiences.

I sometimes like to define Type III Enrichment as *the young person thinking, feeling, and doing like the practicing professional, again, even if at a more junior level than adult professionals*. Follow up case studies have often indicated that this type of enrichment has been influential in the career choices of many of the students with whom we have worked.

Although a good deal has been written and filmed about Type III Enrichment (Renzulli, 1982) and a great deal of research has been done on the Model (Reis & Peters, 2020), this brief article is designed to walk the reader through the steps and activities a group of middle school students used to study Victorian structures in their hometown.

We have designed a Type III Management Plan that, in a certain sense, requires students to pay attention to the four criteria listed above. Management Plan completion should be viewed as an *evolving* activity. Note in the example that follows that the students didn't even know about the county and national historical organizations that became audiences until they met with their own town historian.

<https://gifted.uconn.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/961/2022/05/Type-III-Mgmt-Plan.pdf>

Perhaps a good way to summarize what is intended in a Type III Enrichment project is to raise the following questions and hopefully get the answers provided below:

1. **Did every student do it?** **No**
2. **Should every student, do it?** **No**
3. **Would every student want to do it?** **No**
4. **Could every student do it?** **No**
5. **Did the student do it willingly and with zest?** **Yes**

6. Did the student use appropriate resources and methodologies? **Yes**
7. Was the work directed toward having an impact on one or more targeted audiences? **Yes**

References

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