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Gifted Youth and Their Hobbies: An Exploration of Information Behavior

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GIFTED YOUTH AND THEIR HOBBIES:

AN EXPLORATION OF INFORMATION BEHAVIOR

By

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Dedicated to my mother. Of course.

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted as a way to begin to fill a gap in the literature regarding young people and hobby pursuit. Through intensive exploratory research, the study sought to explicate the information behaviors of gifted young people related to their hobby pursuit. Focus groups and home visits were conducted and participants were given the opportunity to review the results for accuracy. Thirty two young people participated in focus groups, twelve in home visits, and three in review of data analysis.

It was found that three different themes are commonly at play in the hobby pursuit of gifted young people: "Always Activated," or the idea that even when participants are not actively engaged in hobby pursuit, hobbies still play an important role in their everyday behavior; "Adult Facilitated Access," referring to the ways that adults facilitate hobby pursuit in young people's lives – this theme speaks to the mediating role that adults must play in order to introduce young people to potential hobby interests and to support hobby pursuit once it has germinated; and "Autonomy," or the ways that gifted youth make choices about what to do at any given time, how to solve problems, and who to consult when outside help is deemed necessary.

It was also found that the participants are very independent, preferring to address challenges on their own. They use a variety of information sources and they make complex decisions about how to share information about their hobbies based on the recipient's level of expertise. In addition, they make decisions about the extent to which feedback should be heeded, based on the level of expertise of the person providing the feedback.

As a result of the study, it was determined that Everyday Life Information Seeking, Serious Leisure, and theories of intrinsic motivation can be used effectively with younger subjects, although the idea of adult facilitation needs to be addressed. It was also determined that

a large number of young people are introduced to their hobbies through school programs, either special classes held once or twice a week (such as chorus or art) or after-school activities like debate clubs. This provides an argument for retaining funding for these programs.

Further research will replicate the current study with a wider range of ages and will examine such factors as race and family make-up to determine their potential impact on phenomena related to hobbies and information behavior. In addition, more attention will be paid to hobby genesis and hobby development over time.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Through intensive exploratory research, this study sought to examine and explicate the information behavior of gifted youth related to their hobby pursuits and how the processes of their information behavior evolve during the pursuit of hobbies. The definition of "information behavior" used in this study was borrowed from Wilson's (1999) work, where he defines it as "those activities a person may engage in when identifying his or her own needs for information, searching for such information in any way, and using or transferring that information" (p. 249). The definition of "gifted" is based on the statutes developed by the Florida Department of Education, which cite gifted youth as possessing an intelligence quotient (IQ) at least two standard deviations above the mean (mean=100; 2SD=130) or possessing the capability for high performance academically or in leadership, motivation, or creativity (State of Florida, 2002). For the purposes of this study, youth has been defined as the ages from eight to fourteen, inclusive: middle childhood and early adolescence. Most of the literature reviewed for this project addresses young people that fall within the age parameters of the current study. The terms "youth" and "young person/young people" are used interchangeably throughout this report. "Hobbies" are defined as pursuits that are so intrinsically rewarding that they take on aspects of a career, being pursued over a long period of time and characterized by growth in knowledge and expertise (Stebbins, 2007).

The investigation drew upon the theoretical frameworks of Everyday Life Information Seeking (ELIS), theories of intrinsic motivation, and Serious Leisure theory to examine the information behavior of gifted young people related to their hobbies. The methodology was inspired by that used in a study conducted by Fisher et al. (2007) with preadolescent youth.

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Purpose of the Study

The three frameworks (Everyday Life Information Seeking, Serious Leisure, and theories of intrinsic motivation) taken together provide a unique explanatory method for examining how one might approach studying the information behavior related to hobby pursuit of youth and in particular gifted youth. Gifted youth possess many unique traits. It has been demonstrated that their needs are often not met in schools, so it is important to know how and if they are met in some way outside of schools.

Everyday Life Information Seeking (ELIS), with a particular emphasis on "mastery of life" (understood as the way an individual approaches problem solving) and "way of life" (understood as the way an individual prioritizes things and activities), provides a way of conceptualizing a young person's information seeking outside of school. Serious leisure provides a way to conceptualize the time young people spend in pursuits that are self-driven; and theories of intrinsic motivation provide an explanation for why serious leisure, conceptualized for the purposes of this study as hobby pursuits, is self-motivating and for how one's mastery of life can develop.

The theories of ELIS and intrinsic motivation have been demonstrated to explain some youth behavior. However, no one, to this researcher's knowledge, has integrated ELIS with theories of intrinsic motivation to show how hobby pursuit (serious leisure) can be important not only as a part of "way of life" and as a demonstration of "mastery of life" but also in inserting self-actualization and sustainability (as manifestations of intrinsic motivation) in these areas. Also, while everyday life has been studied with regard to youth, serious leisure and its pursuit have not. Only in putting all of these together is it possible to adequately understand why

hobbies might be especially important to gifted youth and fill the unique needs of this
population.

Hobbies have been demonstrated to provide great satisfaction for those who pursue them.
It is possible that they also provide a needed intellectual challenge for gifted youth. This study
sought to better understand the information processes involved in hobby pursuit for gifted youth
and to examine if and how hobby pursuit challenges them and impacts other areas of their lives.
The qualitative design and analysis served to explicate a rich and detailed picture of these
processes. A review of the literature establishes the framework for as well as the need for the
current study.

Background of the Problem

Gifted youth possess unique traits that differentiate them from their peers not just
intellectually but also socially and emotionally (see, for example, Pfeiffer & Blei, 2007;
Mendaglio, 1995; Silverman, 1997; Terrassier, 1985; Webb, Meckstroth, & Tolan, 1982). A
great deal of work has been done, especially in the fields of education (e.g., Adams-Byers,
Whitsell, & Moon, 2004; Hunt, 1965; Kulik, 2003; Reis & Hebert, 1995; Rogers, 2002; van
Tassel-Baska, 2005) and psychology (Bleske-Rechek, Lubinski, & Benbow, 2004; Pfeiffer,
2001; Pfeiffer & Blei, 2007), regarding the special needs of the gifted youth population. The
field of Library and Information Science (LIS), however, has been nearly silent on gifted youth.
The little work that has been done in LIS regarding gifted youth has been tied to schools,
focusing, for example, on tasks related to assigned research projects (e.g., Bishop, 2000;
McGregor, 1993).

Statement of the Problem

Most of what is known about the information behaviors of gifted youth is related to school-based information problems. While it is known that gifted youth often find ways outside of school to challenge themselves (see, for example, Bucknavage & Worrell, 2005; Olszewski-Kubilius & Lee, 2004), we do not know the extent to which these activities are hobby-related, nor the information processes through which gifted youth pursue these activities. Serious leisure, which includes hobby pursuit, amateur pursuits, and volunteerism, might provide motivation and challenge for gifted youth outside of school. Of particular interest to this study were hobbies, because hobby pursuit has been demonstrated to be an information-rich endeavor (Hartel, 2007).

While some academic investigations have been carried out examining hobby behaviors from the Library and Information Science (LIS) perspective (see, for example, Hartel, 2007; Kari, 2001), none of these studies address youth in general, nor gifted youth specifically. Moreover, no existing study brings together gifted youth, leisure studies, and information behavior. The absence of concrete knowledge about these issues leaves parents, caregivers, and mentors of gifted youth and the gifted youth themselves without information that might impact information behavior and provision of information and information services. This study, therefore, addressed research gaps in several areas.

Significance of the Problem

Much work has been done in LIS examining the information behaviors of youth of all ages in schools (Gross, 1999; Kuhlthau, 1990; Solomon, 1993), and, more recently, in everyday life situations (Howard & Shan, 2007; Hughes-Hassell & Agosto, 2007; Mehra & Braquet, 2007; Meyers et al, 2007). But while the body of literature on everyday life information behavior of youth (typical youth and a variety of youth with special needs, e.g., gay teens) is growing, this is

an area where gifted youth have been ignored. Hobbies present young people with opportunities to learn, grow, and develop; and youth in general and gifted youth in particular may spend a great deal of their intellectual energy on hobbies that occur outside the aegis of school.

This research project focused on the information behaviors of gifted youth related to their hobby pursuits, in order to fill these identified research gaps and to provide valuable information that might be useful not only for gifted youth and the adults who care about their well-being, but also for all youth driven by strong interests outside of school. Existing models have been confirmed and expanded for a new population. Many could potentially be impacted by this work, for example, researchers interested in gifted youth and in the informal, interest driven pursuits of young people. Librarians and other information providers, too, will benefit from knowledge regarding the ways that gifted young people seek and use hobby-related information. School-teachers and administrators will benefit from recognizing the impact that hobby pursuit can have on the development of gifted young people, especially regarding academic confidence and academic achievement. Gifted program developers might be able to use what is known about gifted hobby pursuit; and those who create policy documents regarding gifted youth, especially regarding provision for extracurricular support, can benefit as well. Parents and families will benefit from an understanding of how they might support the information processes of gifted youth regarding their hobbies, and gifted young people themselves might discover more effective ways to achieve expertise or venues for expression of their hobby pursuit. Because gifted young people are young people first, this work might apply to typical young people and others interested in youth in general as well. More work will be needed in the future in order to make comparisons and greater generalizations.

Theories

Three theoretical frameworks provided the backbone for the research questions that guided this study. The theoretical frameworks of interest, Everyday Life Information Seeking (ELIS), theories of intrinsic motivation, and Serious Leisure theory, informed the development of the research questions and the analysis and interpretation of data collected.

Everyday Life Information Behavior (ELIS) is concerned with the ways that people prioritize their time, known as "way of life," and the ways they work to maintain this way of life, known as "mastery of life," especially as regards attitudes and beliefs about information seeking (Savolainen, 1995). These attitudes and beliefs are informed by the individual's personality as well as the context in which the individual finds him or herself; they are built over time and are largely the result of social conditioning. However, feedback from experiences also plays a role in the development of these preferences.

Theories of intrinsic motivation (see, for example, Csikszentmihalyi & Csikszentmihalyi, 1992; Maslow, 1987; Reiss, 2004; Spielberger & Starr, 1994) address the internal traits and states of individuals that lead to behavior. Intrinsic motivation is an individual experience, but an individual's context and the task with which an individual is faced have a significant impact on how that individual is motivated internally. Those who are intrinsically motivated have better outcomes than those who are not on a variety of measures, including academic engagement and achievement, healthy risk-taking behaviors, and general well-being (Csikszentmihalyi & Csikszentmihalyi, 1992; Festinger, 1957; Hunt, 1965).

Serious leisure addresses pursuits outside of paid and unpaid work (e.g., home maintenance and grocery shopping). The correlate in children was considered, for the purpose of this study, to be pursuits outside of school and other mandated activities (e.g., homework and

chores). Hobby pursuits, amateurism, and volunteerism are the three dimensions of serious

leisure, of which hobbies were of particular interest for this study for their rich opportunities for

exploring information behavior (Hartel, 2007).

Research Questions

An overarching research question with three sub-questions guided this study, seeking to

bring together studies of gifted children, studies of information behavior, and leisure studies in a

coordinated way to address the overarching question "What are the everyday life information

behaviors of gifted young people that are related to their hobby pursuits?" Using the ELIS

framework (Savolainen, 1995) and theories of motivation (e.g., Csikszentmihalyi &

Csikszentmihalyi, 1992; Festinger, 1957; Hunt, 1965) this research project also pursued the

following three sub-questions:

a) In what ways do gifted youth integrate the seeking, use, and sharing of information

about their hobby pursuits into their daily activities, and how does the pursuit of

hobbies impact the way activities are organized? ("way of life," or the order of

priorities in one's life)

b) In what ways do gifted youth approach the search for, use, and sharing of information

about their hobby pursuits, and how does this impact other areas of the gifted young

person's life? ("mastery of life," or the development of an approach to information

situations)

c) How do gifted youth maintain interest in the pursuit of their hobbies over time?

(intrinsic motivation)

The methodology to investigate these questions was chosen for the depth and richness of

data that could be collected. It was hoped that the volume and depth of data would contribute to a

broad-based understanding of the information phenomena related to hobby pursuit for gifted youth.

Methodology

This study was loosely inspired by "Tween Day," a research design devised by Fisher et al. (2007) that incorporates focus group sessions, brief informal information-related activities, and individual interviews into a single day. Following this model, seven focus groups, consisting of two separate sessions per focus group, were conducted. Focus group sessions were interjected by hobby-information-related activities during which the researcher was a participant-observer. Participants were recruited from gifted programs at local schools and from the local chapter of Mensa, an international high IQ society with rigorous standards for admission -- all members are certified to be in the top two percent of the total population in IQ scores (www.american.us.mensa.org). Participants were either members of Mensa or participating in a gifted program at school, confirming their identification as gifted according to the Florida statutes. Participants were grouped according to age (8-11 year olds; 12-14 year olds) in order to allow for differing levels of autonomy and its potential impact on hobby pursuit. Six focus groups consisted of young people aged eight to eleven. One (small) group was twelve and thirteen year olds. Focus groups were audio- and video-recorded for transcription and analysis.

The first of two highly structured sessions for each group concentrated on the information seeking and use processes of hobby pursuit. Following the first session, participants were given a break for snacks and movement, with informal activities provided that centered around hobbies. The researcher was a participant-observer during this social time. The second session for each group explored how information processes during hobby pursuit impact, and are impacted by, intrinsic motivation and external forces such as social capital, based on theories of intrinsic

motivation and the framework devised by Savolainen (1995). Both focus group sessions were intended to gather general data from which it was expected that patterns and themes would emerge.

Patterns and themes discovered during initial data analysis were used to guide data collection during home visits/interviews. This was a departure from the Tween Day design that incorporated all data collection into one day of activities. Subjects for home visits were selected from focus group participants based on their willingness to participate further in the project. The young people were again the primary focus at the home visits, as well as the ways they use the information spaces in their homes in support of hobby pursuit. Parents/guardians also participated, as a way to provide a historical context for their child's hobby pursuits. It was believed that the potential value of experiencing the participants' actual hobby spaces and getting a historical picture of the child's hobby pursuits would provide high quality data that could not be gained from the highly structured focus group sessions.

Subjects for the study were obtained through coordination with local teachers of gifted youth, the local area chapter of Mensa, and a number of gifted-focused agencies both locally and across the country. Thirty-two young people participated in the focus group sessions. Subjects for home visits were selected based on their interest in further participation. Twelve families participated in home visits.

Audio and video recordings of focus group sessions, information interactions during unstructured time, and home visits were usually transcribed within forty-eight hours following data collection, to assist with ongoing and iterative data analysis. All recordings and transcript documents are kept on a password protected external hard drive, which is stored in a locked cabinet in a locked office to protect confidential information and the integrity of the data. This

data will be held for no more than ten years and subsequently destroyed and only the researcher will have access to it during that time.

Data analysis took place in two distinct stages. Initial close reading identified themes and patterns that related to the research questions. Further analysis with reference to Everyday Life Information Seeking, theories of intrinsic motivation, and Serious Leisure determined whether these frameworks were able to describe the information behavior of gifted youth related to their hobby pursuits. Preliminary findings were made available to participants, so that they could be involved, if they wished, throughout the analysis process and to insure the integrity, accuracy, and reliability of the data and findings. Three young people remained active in the study through this stage.

Findings

Three primary themes were identified as being at play in the hobby pursuit of gifted young people: "always activated," or the idea that even when not actively engaged in hobby pursuit, awareness of hobby-related stimuli remains high, and a factor in other decisions; "adult facilitated access," specifically regarding the ways that adults introduce and support hobby pursuit; and "autonomy," or the power that these young people assert over all aspects of their hobby pursuit. It was found that in terms of "way of life," the study participants engage in hobby pursuit even when it must be squeezed in among other activities and they often use hobby pursuit as a way both to motivate themselves to complete other work quickly, and incorporate hobbies into other work to make it more fun. In terms of "mastery of life," it was demonstrated that these young people are confident in their own abilities, capable of finding quality help when they need it, and that, at least in some cases, behaviors that they discovered to be effective during hobby pursuit transferred successfully to other pursuits as well. As far as intrinsic motivation is

concerned, enjoyment, challenge, a feeling of accomplishment, and curiosity are the primary

motivating forces for continued hobby pursuit.

In terms of specific information behaviors, these young people make choices about who

to consult for information and help based on level and area of expertise rather than on age. They

decide who to share their work with based on known preferences of their audiences and they take

feedback to heart based on their trust of the source (expert/helpful vs. novice/unhelpful). They

make use of a variety of source types for keeping in touch with what is happening related to their

hobby, including radio, websites, and other people. Finally, they distinguish between the positive

interactions and information sharing they have with others who share the same hobby and the

frustrating interactions that can result from others being more interested in being right than in

truly engaging in sharing about the hobby.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Hobbies provide great satisfaction for those who pursue them. It is possible that they also provide needed intellectual challenge for gifted youth. This study sought to better understand the information processes involved in hobby pursuit for gifted youth, and to examine if and how hobby pursuit challenges them and impacts other areas of their lives. Three frameworks, Everyday Life Information Seeking (ELIS) (Savolainen, 1995), theories of intrinsic motivation (see Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Csikszentmihalyi & Csikszentmihalyi, 1992; Festinger, 1957; Hunt, 1965), and Serious Leisure (Stebbins, 2007), informed the research questions and provided a lens through which to examine the data collected. A review of the literature establishes what is known about these topics and in so doing establishes gaps in research and the need for this study.

The research question and sub-questions for which this literature review provides context are: "What are the everyday life information behaviors of gifted young people related to their hobby pursuits?"

   a) In what ways do gifted youth integrate the seeking, use, and sharing of information about their hobby pursuits into their daily activities, and how does the pursuit of hobbies impact the way activities are organized? ("way of life")

   b) In what ways do gifted youth approach the search for, use, and sharing of information about their hobby pursuits, and how does this impact other areas of the gifted young person's life? ("mastery of life")

   c) How do gifted youth maintain interest in the pursuit of their hobbies? (intrinsic motivation)

Information Behavior

As a basis for this study, the definition of information behavior developed by Wilson has been used. Wilson (1981) originally conceptualized information behavior as the processes involved in information seeking, including the user's context (the combination of factors leading to an information need) and any barriers that might keep the user from meeting established information needs. The early model took into account both the intermediary used to find information, e.g., a librarian, and the resources that could be used to address the information need. Wilson is important by virtue of the fact that he was the first to create a comprehensive model of information behavior. This model is still in use today.

In the second iteration of his model, Wilson (1996) coined information behavior as a more generalized idea that encompassed three major elements: the context that spurs an information need; the factors affecting a person's response to the need; and "the processes or actions involved in that response" (p. 39). In revising his earlier model, he used theory from outside the information sciences including stress/coping theory, risk/reward theories, and social learning theories. With the advent of this second model, Wilson effectively expanded the definition of information behavior to include the entire, very complex, processes from conceiving of an information need through the eventual resolution of that need.

In his most recent model, Wilson (1999) explicitly defined information behavior as "those activities a person may engage in when identifying his or her own needs for information, searching for such information in any way, and using or transferring that information" (p. 249). This is the first time Wilson articulated the aspect of "use" of information, although it is implied in earlier models. The latest model incorporates the work of several prominent contributors to information science research, including Ellis, Kuhlthau, and Dervin, as well as Wilson's own

earlier work (Wilson, 1999). He determined that each of these researchers (among others) was examining slightly different aspects in the continuum of information behavior, but that the work was complementary rather than contradictory (Wilson, 1999).

In the following section, a review of existing literature establishes gifted youth as a user group that possesses traits that differ from those of typical youth. In addition, what is known about their information behavior as a unique population is examined.

Gifted Youth

Although gifted young people possess unique traits based on their giftedness, they are, first and foremost, young people. While their development may proceed unevenly (a concept discussed in a later section), or more quickly than typical children, they move along the stages in the same basic order as do typical children. Therefore, a discussion of general child development is in order as a preface to the ways that gifted young people are unique.

Child Development

Child development is a fluid process that occurs along a continuum, at different rates, and in a number of domains including physical, cognitive, and social. Physically, children develop from infants through adolescence and into sexually mature adulthood. Physical development includes the maturation of the body as well as gross and fine motor skill development. Cognitively, children develop from very concrete and self-centered thinking to ever-increasing levels of abstraction and distance from self (Piaget, 1975). Another conception of cognitive development describes children's growth in terms of supportive social and cultural interactions, which lead to ever increasing sophistication in solving problems (Vygotsky, 1986). Emotionally, young people develop from being fully dependent on caregivers to establishing an individual identity and social relationships (Erikson, 1953). A table included in Appendix A illustrates the

developmental theories of Piaget, Vygotsky, and Erikson, three primary leaders in the field of child development.

A full discussion of differing theories of child development and the challenges to these theories is beyond the scope of this dissertation. The general ideas presented in the table are relevant, however, both to the discussion of gifted youth, who are children first, and to the discussion of development of "way of life" and "mastery of life," addressed in a later section.

Child development as it impacts data collection is addressed in Chapter Three. The following section defines giftedness, followed by a description of the characteristics of those youth who have been identified as gifted or who might potentially be identified as gifted.

Definition of Giftedness

A universally accepted definition of giftedness has yet to be developed. One of the first and most enduring ways that giftedness has been determined is by means of intelligence testing. The traditional definition, therefore, has been based on these test scores (typically, two standard deviations above the mean is considered to be gifted). These measures, however, have been deemed problematic for a variety of reasons, including ethnic, racial, and socioeconomic bias inherent in the items (Frasier, 1997; Sarouphim, 2001) and bias toward only certain forms of ability – most often verbal and mathematic -- while ignoring other types of ability such as leadership or artistic ability (Richert, 2003). In addition, testing procedures tend not to take into account the developmental nature of giftedness (see, for example, Gagne, 2005; Jarvin & Subotnik, 2010) nor have they been able reliably to predict future gifted performance (Howe, Davidson, & Sloboda, 1998; Simonton, 2001).

Strides have been made toward mitigating problems of definition, however. It is consistently agreed, for example, that giftedness is a complex set of phenomena that can manifest

in different ways and at different times. In addition, giftedness is almost always defined in terms of, and in comparison to, the performance of typical young people (Kaufman & Sternberg, 2008). Beyond this, however, there is disagreement about whether or not a definition of giftedness should include factors such as performance, motivation, and/or creativity (see, for example, Gagne, 2000, 2003; Renzulli, 1986; Sternberg, 1995; Tannenbaum, 2003). Adding to the difficulty is the fluid nature of giftedness and the fact that it can develop in different ways and in different domains over time in an individual (Reis & Renzulli, 2009).

The United States federal government has adopted a multi-faceted definition of giftedness in an attempt to encompass the majority of these ideas and to allow for the possibility that giftedness manifests in a variety of ways, including intellect, creativity, leadership, or specific academic aptitudes (Marland, 1993). While the definition originally included athletic talent, this was later removed from the definition. This federal definition places particular emphasis on giftedness requiring services above and beyond those typically provided in regular classrooms.

The State of Florida defines the gifted as possessing "superior intellectual development and… [being] capable of high performance" (2002). This definition is operationalized, again, by a demonstrated need for specialized programming, possession of a majority of characteristics commonly ascribed to gifted students according to a standard scale or checklist, or a score of at least two standard deviations above the mean on a standardized intelligence test. Note that the individual checklist or scale to be used is not specified. Many checklists have been developed that address traits of gifted youth, including the Gifted Rating Scales (Pfeiffer & Jarosewich, 2007), which incorporates the national criteria for giftedness along with other factors to aid in identification of students who are potentially gifted. There is provision in the Florida definition

for under-represented groups that includes elements such as demonstrated or potential leadership capability, motivation, academic performance, and creativity.

The State of Florida definition of giftedness potentially fails to identify a number of students who are gifted, based on its emphasis on intellectual ability and the fuzzy nature of its provision for abilities other than intellectual. This study is exploratory and descriptive in nature, however. It is recognized that further work will be required in order to generalize findings and to address all the nuances and complexities involved. For this reason, the State of Florida definition has been deemed appropriate to use for the current study.

Characteristics of Gifted Youth

Gifted youth are as diverse as their typical counterparts. No single set of traits can be said to apply to all gifted youth equally. While traits commonly associated with giftedness will not be present in every gifted child, and an individual gifted child may not possess all common traits, the more of these traits a young person possesses, the more likely he or she is to be identified as gifted (Pfeiffer & Jarosewich, 2007). A large vocabulary, long attention span, and early reading, for example, contribute to gifted youth having a deeper understanding of the nuances of language than is typical (Jackson, 2003; Pfeiffer & Jarosewich, 2007; van Tassel-Baska, 2003). Early or intense interest in art or music is also commonly expressed (Pfeiffer & Jarosewich, 2007; Walberg, Williams, & Zeiser, 2003; Winner & Martino, 2002), as is intense curiosity, high motivation and concentration, which contributes to an ability to acquire knowledge and skills at a rapid pace, and a tendency to think in unusual or unexpected ways (Pfeiffer & Jarosewich, 2007; Walberg, Williams, & Zeiser, 2003). Use of a broad range of and advanced strategies for problem-solving is also commonly observed in gifted youth (Steiner, 2006). They often also have a unique sense of humor and a tendency to experiment and do things differently from the

norm (Coleman & Cross, 2000; Gross, M.U.M., 2000; Webb, Meckstroth, & Tolan, 1982).

While giftedness is commonly associated with being emotionally well-adjusted (Terman, 1925; Walberg, Williams, & Zeiser, 2003), gifted youth may experience concerns such as boredom, perfectionism, and social rejection as well (Colangelo, 2003; Colangelo & Assouline, 2000).

Gifted youth also often experience life more intensely than do typical young people. Dabrowski devised a typology of five different intensities commonly manifest in gifted youth. He called these intensities OverExcitabilities (OE) (as described in Silverman, 1997). *Psychomotor* intensity is related to movement: a child with psychomotor intensity is likely constantly in motion, even at rest. *Sensory* OE manifests in a heightened response to sensory input: a vibrating car or the tag in the back of a shirt, for young people with sensory OEs, can be excruciating. *Imaginational* intensity is related to visual thinking: youth with imaginational intensity tend also to be very verbal, making heavy use of metaphor; they are also the ones that cling to fairy tales like Santa Claus, even in the face of intellectual evidence against it. *Intellectual* intensity is what is understood as "typical" giftedness: youth with intellectual intensity enjoy solving puzzles and playing challenging games. *Emotional* intensity manifests both as strong emotion and as a broad range of emotion. Many others have also discussed the gifted child's heightened sensitivity and emotional intensity (see, for example, Coleman & Cross, 2000; Mendaglio, 1995; Roedell, 1984; Tolan, 1989). This intensity "can easily be misunderstood as 'emotional immaturity' in contexts in which intensity is not appreciated" (Silverman, 1997, p. 51).

Development of gifted children is even more variable than is typical child development, so that the age ranges displayed in the table (Appendix A) have a wider variance when gifted children are being discussed. "Asynchrony," or development that does not proceed at a typical

pace or in typical directions, is quite common in gifted youth. Hollingworth (1942) was the first

to discuss this idea and to differentiate between the internal and external aspects of this

challenge. Terrassier (1985) expanded on this idea in *Dyssynchrony-Uneven Development*.

Internally, asynchrony can manifest as unmatched levels of development of specific capacities

such as intellectual, physical, and emotional (Terrassier, 1985). Thus, a pre-schooler might be

able to read, but unable physically to pronounce some of the words in his extensive receptive

vocabulary. Externally, this quality can manifest in being mis-matched with age-mates on all

levels (e.g., intellectually superior but behind in physical development) and/or in other peoples'

expectations that the child will act his age (Terrassier, 1985).

These traits can manifest in ways both positive and negative, and they can manifest

individually or as an entire syndrome. The following section addresses what is known about the

information behavior of gifted youth.

Gifted Youth and Information Behavior

While very little work has been found that addresses the information behaviors of gifted

youth, there have been a few studies worthy of note. The most common theme that has emerged

in this work is that a gifted young person who focuses on process over product has a more

positive experience with information seeking and information use and outcomes are also more

positive. Bishop (2000), for example, found that gifted students who worked on a research

project were more engaged in the research process when their focus was on what they were

learning about their topic and not solely on the finished product and the grade they might

receive. Callison et al. (1986) reported that students who were engaged in the research process

were more likely to use creativity in their database searches for information on their topics. Both

Bishop (2000) and McGregor (1993) found that a process-oriented approach to research projects

resulted in deeper and more complex thought throughout the research process and the ability both to present their findings in complex and appealing ways and to transfer what they learned on the project to other aspects of their lives.

However, although a process-oriented approach has been demonstrated to be superior, gifted young people often encounter barriers to becoming fully engaged in the process. While Callison et al. (1986) found that gifted students tend toward creative use of databases to find sources and to increase sophistication in their search strategies, McGregor (1993) and Bishop (2000), in contrast, observed that if the young people in their study did not find the information they were seeking in their first attempt, they assumed that the information was simply not available. Further, Bishop (2000) and McGregor (1993) found their subjects relied very heavily on teacher intervention for acquiring sources. One possible explanation for this discrepancy is that the Callison et al. (1986) study focused on the gifted young people's use of databases, so specific training in how to use the database was provided and reinforcement might have played a role in the observed results. These studies were conducted in a time before access to the Internet was the nearly ubiquitous phenomenon that it is today, and so they do not fully address current practices or resources. No more recent studies were found, however, that addressed the information behavior of gifted youth in the digital era.

The findings of the majority of studies conducted in the LIS field on gifted youth may actually have limited application, however, to gifted youth. The majority of studies conducted on these youth have been carried out not to discover the information behaviors of gifted youth *for their own sake*, but are based on the assumption that gifted young people are more articulate about their thought processes and thus can generate more useful data than would typical young people (e.g., Callison et al., 1986; Chung & Neuman, 2007; Kuhlthau, 1990; McGregor, 1993;

Marchionini, 1989). The findings of these studies, therefore, may not be as meaningful for providing enlightenment about the information behaviors of gifted youth because it is often assumed that they already possess both knowledge and skills that they may not, in fact, possess (McGregor, 1993). This, in turn, can impact the way that gifted youth approach the task set before them and thus the quality of the data collected about them specifically.

Another gap in what is known about gifted youth's information behavior arises in that the findings from most of these studies can only minimally inform work on everyday life information behavior. They have primarily been conducted in schools and have as their major focus the students' approach to school-based assignments (e.g., Bishop, 2000; Chung & Neuman, 2007; Kuhlthau, 1990). One of the aspects of gifted youth's information behavior about which little is known is how it takes place outside the school context or outside of assigned topics. Two studies, however, are worthy of special note both because they examined gifted students for their own sake and because they looked at extracurricular use of available resources.

Both of the following studies hint at the existence of a gifted life of the mind outside school-assigned work, and they corroborate the significance of a process-oriented approach to information seeking, even beyond the confines of school. Craver's (1987) work focused on school library use of the students in an all-gifted school setting. While the study was conducted on school grounds and based on the use of school resources, it was not tied to specific school assignments but was based on general use of the library and its resources. In fact, the purpose of the research appears to have been twofold: to inform media specialists about the kinds of things both that grab and hold students' attention in school libraries and that compete with the media center for gifted students' attention. One significant but peripheral message of this work, however, is that extracurricular activities are very important in the lives of gifted students, even

when their intellectual needs are ostensibly being met at school. Gifted students still hunger for more.

Leal and Moss, on the other hand, (1999) examined the non-fiction pleasure reading of four gifted young people to determine why they read non-fiction, what kind of non-fiction reading appealed to them, and what it was about these works that appealed. This work, while limited in scope, can provide insight into the kinds of textual sources that might be preferred by gifted youth when seeking information. This work also provides support for the idea that a process-oriented approach in information seeking (in this case, non-fiction that uses narrative to convey information) engenders more positive experiences and outcomes, even outside the school environment. While these two studies provide for the possibility that gifted students outside of school are worth examination, they do not specifically address information behavior related to hobby pursuit.

In the next sections, the three theories that established the framework for the investigation in this study are reviewed in light of their relevance. First, the backbone of the project, Everyday Life Information Seeking, is discussed in detail. Following this, the framework of Serious Leisure, key to the study of hobbies, and its relation to information behavior and hobbies, is described and discussed. Finally, the major components of theories of intrinsic motivation are established and placed within the larger contexts of serious leisure and ELIS.

Everyday Life Information Seeking (ELIS)

The primary focus of Savolainen's model is to describe and explain how contextual factors affect and are affected by people's use of information in everyday life (outside of work or school) and how people make choices about information sources (Savolainen, 1995). The ELIS model was primarily influenced by a theory called *habitus*, developed by Bourdieu, which

suggests that "a system of socially and culturally determined dispositions… [form] the base on which one's way of life is organized" (Savolainen, 1995, p. 262). In *habitus*, cultural norms influence both the structure and the classification of preferences – these are the ideas that Savolainen adapted in his own work.

The ELIS model encompasses four basic concepts. The first, "way of life," or the order of things, deals with the choices that people make based on cultural and social norms for thinking, perceiving, and evaluating ("things"), and the preference given to activities ("order"). "Mastery of life" addresses an individual's confidence regarding the worthiness of demands placed on him and in the adequacy of resources to cope with those demands. There is also an element of individual confidence that stimuli (both internal and external) are structured and predictable.

"Mastery of life" is manifest in four distinct typologies: *optimistic-cognitive*; *pessimistic-cognitive*; *defensive-affective*; and *pessimistic-affective* (Savolainen, 1995). The optimistic-cognitive typology of mastery of life is a faith that if one thinks about a problem in a systematic way, one will be able to determine the best way to solve the problem. The pessimistic-cognitive typology operates in essentially the same way, but without the underlying assumption that the problem will be solved. In the defensive-affective typology, individuals may avoid problems that pose a risk of failure; alternately, they may fall into wishful thinking instead of being realistic. The pessimistic-affective typology is, essentially, the belief that one is incapable of solving a problem presented. "Systematic information seeking plays no vital role here because emotional reactions and short-sightedness dominate problem-solving behavior" (Savolainen, 1995, p. 266).

It is worthy of note that there is room in the ELIS framework for an individual to change and develop in his or her approaches to solving information problems. One's approach to mastery of life can be impacted by a variety of factors. ELIS assumes that this process of change

will, if it occurs, be very slow. However, this framework was created with adults in mind. Youth, on the other hand, grow and develop quickly.

Joining "way of life" and "mastery of life," the third core concept in ELIS is "orienting information," that is, information that orients a person in their time and space. This includes current events, for example, and is closely tied to use of media tools such as newspapers and televisions, and more recently, weblogs and podcasts. Finally, "practical information" is that information sought as a solution to particular problems (Savolainen, 1995).

ELIS also defines the relationships between these concepts. At their core, "way of life" and "mastery of life" determine each other. Material, social, and cultural capital provide the basic equipment necessary to seek and use information; and the distribution of this capital, in combination with attitudes and current life situation and in comparison to others, determines the basic conditions of "way of life" and "mastery of life."

Child Development and ELIS

The ages or stages at which a young person is likely to develop "way of life" and "mastery of life," key concepts in Everyday Life Information Seeking theory (Savolainen, 1995) are of primary importance. ELIS only addresses adult subjects, but creative extrapolation can be used to apply the concepts to young people. "Way of life," for example, defined as "'the order of things,' which is based on the choices that individuals make in everyday life'" (Savolainen, 1995, p, 262), is based on socially and culturally accepted norms, which are internalized. To a certain extent, young people have less say in how their "way of life" manifests than do adults, based on the level of dependence they have on adult caregivers and the amount of autonomy provided to them by these caregivers. However, children clearly make choices about how to spend their time and often these choices are not in line with parent wishes (for example video

games vs. playing physical games outside). "Way of life," then, is a phenomenon that emerges in children potentially as early as they begin to understand themselves as separate from their parents and attempt to gain independence in toddlerhood (corresponding to Piaget's Preoperational stage and Erikson's Initiative stage, as described on the table in Appendix A).

Savolainen, in his discussion of "mastery of life," addresses the formative influences of one's existence inside a social class, a culture, and a specific generation (for example, Baby Boomers), as well as the importance of one's own personality, all of which are present from birth (1995). "Mastery of life" deals with approaches to problem solving (specifically information seeking) as impacting and impacted by all of these generative factors and the interactions between these factors. All of these factors are present from birth and so "mastery of life," despite Savolainen's application of the framework solely to adults, can be said to be emergent and developing from birth on. For example, an infant might learn that certain types of noises it makes result in food being offered, and so begins to use that noise on a regular basis when it feels hungry. Continued positive response to this noise (i.e., food being offered) leads to an infant's developing sense that it can have an impact on the world around it. Vygotsky's ideas regarding scaffolding, or adult support for learning slightly beyond one's capability, corresponds with possible later-than-infancy development of "mastery of life."

ELIS and Youth

Child and adolescent developmental stages play a significant role in both the ways that information behavior manifests and in the issues that are significant to a given user at any point in time. Fisher et al. (2007) and Meyers et al. (2007) are explicit in addressing the importance of taking development into account both in designing the research process and in analyzing the data collected. Agosto and Hughes-Hassell (2006a, 2006b) and Hughes-Hassell and Agosto (2007)

also explicitly tied their findings about the everyday life information seeking of urban teenagers to concurrent findings about seven areas in which young people grow and develop during adolescence. Even those studies that do not specifically address the development of youth examine topics that are developmentally important to youth, such as career choice (Julien, 2004), the coming out process during which one defines one's sexual preference (Hamer, 2003; Mehra & Braquet, 2007), and drugs (Todd & Edwards, 2004).

Most of what we know, however, is based on finite information seeking situations. Even the coming out process, which can take place over a long period of time and involve very complex information needs (Hamer, 2003; Mehra & Braquet, 2007), is still a finite process -- there comes a time when active information seeking is no longer relevant, even if coming out still occurs periodically in an individual's life. Each of the studies mentioned is geared toward examining how young people approach solving particular life problems.

Even when the focus is more generalized, there is an emphasis on information behavior as problem-solving. For example, some conceptualize everyday life information seeking in youth as a striving toward adulthood (Agosto & Hughes-Hassell, 2006a, 2006b; Hughes-Hassell & Agosto, 2007) or toward identity (Fisher et al., 2007; Meyers et al., 2007) and thus as essentially rooted in problem solving.

Everyday Life Information Seeking as a framework has apparently only been used in one study of youth, examining the everyday life information needs of urban teenagers (Agosto & Hughes-Hassell, 2006a, 2006b; Hughes-Hassell & Agosto, 2007). The authors determined seven different areas of adolescent development and connected the 28 different information needs they identified to these areas of development. They concluded that, "the essence of teen everyday life

information seeking (ELIS) is the gathering and processing of information to facilitate the teen-to-adulthood maturation process" (p. 1394).

The works cited above have contributed to our knowledge of how young people find and use information in everyday situations. However, the focus of the majority of this work has been problem-oriented -- in essence, information is sought and used as the solution to some sort of information problem. In addition, this work has focused on episodic information seeking and use, that is, information problems that have a clear onset, development, and termination.

In contrast to the problem-focused literature, Ito et al. (2008) examined how young people (primarily 13-18 years of age) use digital media. A full explication of that work is beyond the scope of the current discussion. However, the study is worthy of note for its findings regarding young people's use of digital media specifically for hobby pursuit. In the study, teens were found to use the Internet to access "specialized knowledge groups of both teens and adults from around the country or world, with the goal of improving their craft and gaining reputation among expert peers" (p. 2). "Improving their craft" here can be equated with information seeking and "gaining reputation among expert peers" can be equated with both information use and information sharing.

Another notable exception to the dearth of literature on youth and non-problem-oriented information behavior, O'Leary (2012) adds to what is known about information seeking related to hobby pursuits, an area quite clearly relevant to this study. She focused on the ends served by information seeking, rather than the information seeking processes themselves, and found that both social (belongingness, social interaction) and personal (fulfillment, self-image, self-regulation, and information skills) factors played a role in the development of information seeking skills for a young man with Asperger's Syndrome and a "Special Interest Area" of

hockey. O'Leary argues that information seeking in the pursuit of this young man's hobby "was not just an end in itself but a means to much larger ends such as friendship, belonging, communicating, managing negative emotions, and personal fulfillment" (2011, para. 39).

Hobby pursuit is pleasure-oriented (Hartel, 2007). It is also long-term, often developing throughout a lifetime, with corresponding information needs that increase in complexity and depth over time. While there is now a growing body of literature addressing hobbies and information behavior and even young people, none of the work addressing youth that has been found has focused specifically on the impact that growth and development might have on these information processes.

The following section addresses Serious Leisure as a framework and examines extant work that is relevant to this study. This discussion addresses why problem-oriented information seeking research is not sufficient for a full understanding of the type of information seeking addressed in this study.

Serious Leisure

Stebbins (2007) has defined Serious Leisure as "the systematic pursuit of a… core activity that people find so substantial, interesting, and fulfilling that, in the typical case, they launch themselves on a (leisure) career centered on acquiring and expressing a combination of its special skills, knowledge, and experience" (p. 5). A leisure career in this instance means a pursuit that is so intrinsically rewarding and fulfilling that increasing expertise is pursued in much the same way as it is for paid work. According to Stebbins (2007), Serious Leisure occurs in *free time* (i.e., not during *paid work, unpaid work*, or *self-care*) and is subdivided into three separate categories: *amateur pursuits* (pursuit in leisure time of an activity that others get paid to do); *hobbyist activities* (pursuit in leisure time of an activity that has no paid professional

relationship); and *career volunteerism* (offering unpaid help for the benefit of the volunteer and those being helped).

The six characteristics identified by Stebbins (2007) to distinguish Serious Leisure from either casual leisure (watching television or hanging out with friends) or project-based leisure (pursuits that are pleasurable and intrinsically rewarding but short-term, such as building a home theater system) consist of the following, the possession of any of which mark it as distinct from casual or project-based leisure:

* the occasional need to persevere

* finding a leisure career in the endeavor

* significant personal effort, using specially acquired knowledge, training, experience, and/or skill

* eight durable benefits (*self-actualization*; *self-enrichment*; *self-expression*; *regeneration/renewal of self*; *feelings of accomplishment*; *enhancement of self image*; *social interaction and belongingness*; and *lasting physical products of the activity*)

* unique ethos that grows up around each instance of serious leisure

* participants in serious leisure tend to identify strongly with their chosen pursuits

As hobby pursuit is of particular interest in this study, it merits a bit more discussion in reference to Serious Leisure. Stebbins (2007) subdivides the pursuit of hobbies into five categories, within which there is the potential for significant overlap. Those who pursue hobbies may be *collectors* (those who collect things like stamps, coins, baseball cards, etc.); they may be *makers and tinkerers* (those who quilt, craft, or garden, etc.); they might be *activity participants* (those who bird-watch or belly-dance or scuba-dive); they might be *sports and games enthusiasts* (those who play golf or football or Dungeons and Dragons); or they might be *liberal arts*

enthusiasts (those who pursue the humanities such as learning new languages or keeping up with politics).

Serious Leisure and Information Behavior

A small number of studies have examined the point where information behavior and hobby pursuit intersect. Most of these studies are focused on adults and all are on one specific hobby, rather than hobby phenomena as a whole. Ross (1999), for example, examined people who read avidly for pleasure and Hartel (2007) looked at those who are hobby gourmands. Several studies examined individuals with specific ongoing research interests that were not tied to work, such as interest in paranormal phenomena (Kari, 2001); interest in information of a sexual nature (Spink & Ozmutlu, 2001; Spink, Ozmutlu, & Lorence, 2004); interest in hockey (O'Leary, 2011); and interest in genealogy (Fulton, 2006; Yakel, 2004).

These studies also demonstrate, according to Hartel (2007), distinct contradictions to commonly held tenets in information behavior research. Ross (1999), for example, demonstrates that there need not be a question in order for information seeking to be generated. Spink and Ozmutlu (2001) and Spink, Ozmutlu, and Lorence (2004) demonstrated that, rather than stopping at acquisition of information, or "satisficing," people who seek sexual information work harder to get the information (i.e., visit more web pages in an online search) than is typical for information searches and engage with the information longer than in typical scenarios of information seeking. Clearly, the Principle of Least Effort does not apply here, but not enough is known to determine what theoretical explanation does apply. Finally, Hartel (2007), similar to Ross, demonstrated that there need not be a problem or a gap in order for information seeking to take place.

Hartel (2007), a gourmet hobbyist herself, conducted her dissertation on the information spaces and practices of other gourmet hobbyists, finding that the information worlds of these hobbyists was intricate and multi-faceted. The primary contribution of her dissertation, though, was to challenge many of the assumptions of LIS research, including the Principle of Least Effort; the constructs of problems, gaps, and doubt; the narrow focus on seeking and searching; and the paper/digital dichotomy.

Serious Leisure and Youth

Serious leisure is seen as a developmental pursuit that morphs over time. The majority of studies that examine youth and their serious leisure activities focus on adolescents and identity formation, with the assumption that preschool and elementary-aged children are not developmentally ready for serious leisure pursuit (e.g., Kleiber, 1999). However, this discounts both the developmental discrepancies common to gifted youth and also the prevalence of phenomena such as Pokemon and fascination with dinosaurs among young children.

One idea that has been discussed regarding the leisure of gifted youth is the importance of connectedness in all pursuits. That is, a distinction between "work" and "play" may actually be detrimental to the gifted student's successful allotment of energy in any given pursuit. For example, gifted students who reported that they were bored doing schoolwork also reported more passive leisure pursuits such as watching television (Rathunde, 1993b).

This suggests that lack of deep engagement in one area may be indicative of lack of engagement in a number of areas. However, hobbies might also be seen as a way to escape an oppressive or non-nurturing school environment. For example, it has been demonstrated that some gifted youth, primarily those who are spatially rather than verbally or mathematically gifted, tend toward dissatisfaction with school and underachievement, but do pursue active,

creative hobbies (Gohm, Humphreys, & Yao, 1998). It is not known the extent to which, or if, school and leisure pursuits are correlated in gifted youth. Also not known is if or how pre-teens approach hobby pursuit.

Intrinsic Motivation

As discussed previously, serious leisure (and hobby pursuit as a subcategory of serious leisure) is distinguished from other leisure pursuits by its long term nature, by the effort involved, and by the occasional need to persevere (Stebbins, 2007). Although hobbies are considered overall to be pleasurable pursuits, the need for effort and perseverance calls for theoretical constructs that go beyond simple pleasure in explaining the long term nature of these pursuits.

Hartel (2007) has demonstrated that a problem-situated perspective is no longer adequate to describe the full range of information behavior. The Principle of Least Effort, for example, Hartel (2007) argues, breaks down when confronted with the pleasure-situated information behavior related to hobby pursuits. Theories of intrinsic motivation, in contrast, aim to describe the conditions that lead to deep task engagement and the persistence to pursue tasks even when difficulties arise.

External rewards have been shown to have either limited short-term positive effects on behavior or even a net detrimental effect on behavior because of a shift in focus away from pleasure in a task to anticipation of a reward (see, for example, Cameron & Pierce, 1994; Deci, Koestner, & Ryan, 2001; Rotter, 1966). Therefore, while external rewards such as recognition likely play some role in the pursuit of hobbies, it is assumed that these are not the primary motive force behind hobby pursuit. Rather, hobbies are pleasure based and interest driven (Stebbins, 2007) and thus the primary motivation is intrinsic to the individual.

No comprehensive single theory of intrinsic motivation yet exists. However, it is generally agreed that the construct is complex and multi-faceted. At the heart of theories of intrinsic motivation lies the individual. Individuals possess unique sets of traits, predispositions, and preferences, all of which influence what they will consider to be motive forces. The individual and his or her motivation cannot be examined fully without taking into account the context in which he or she is situated, however. An individual's context is both social (e.g., teacher expectations, peer pressure) and cultural (e.g., family influences, media, values). Finally, the nature of the task with which a person is faced must be taken into account when attempting to explicate intrinsic motivation. For example, the way a task is structured (e.g., competitive or cooperative) can influence an individual's motivation. Likewise, the subject matter of the task (in relation to individual preferences) and its difficulty (relative to an individual's skills and abilities) are also important factors to consider.

Internal motive forces have been attributed to a wide range of factors. One may be motivated internally, for example, by physical or social/emotional needs (see, for example, Alderfer, 1972; Bandura, 1986; Herzberg, 1966; Maslow, 1987). Likewise, cognitive factors such as the drive toward equilibrium when one's expectations and reality are out of alignment (Festinger, 1957; Hunt, 1965) or the drive to make the world a predictable place (see, for example, Allport, 1954; Heider, 1958; Weiner, 1986) may provide intrinsic motivation. One may also be internally motivated by curiosity (Spielberger & Starr, 1994) or by desire and/or pleasure (see, for example, Csikszentmihalyi & Csikszentmihalyi, 1992; Reiss, 2004), wholly separate from needs or deficits.

Hobbies are a pleasure driven pursuit, but occasionally one needs to exert a great deal of effort for very little apparent return or to persevere through periods where the pursuit is tedious

or even unpleasant. Thus, something beyond the experience of pleasure is required to maintain hobby pursuit over time. Various constructs have been suggested that may play a role in the continuation of hobby pursuit when the need to persevere exists. Most recently, the idea of "grit," or the combination of passion and perseverance, has been introduced (Duckworth, Peterson, Matthews, & Kelly, 2007). The Grit Scale (Duckworth & Quinn, 2009) examines an individual's beliefs about his or her abilities and the ways he or she approaches tasks. The level of grit a person possesses has been correlated with achievement in terms of GPA, level of education achieved, academic retention, and final round attained in a national spelling bee (Duckworth & Quinn, 2009). In essence, the "grittier" a person is, the higher his or her achievement in these domains. Other constructs that may play a role in hobby pursuit are internal locus of control (Rotter, 1966), or the belief one has that events in one's life and one's responses to these events are under his or her control; self-discipline (Duckworth & Seligman, 2005; Bandura, 1997), or the ability to control one's impulses; and delay of gratification (Mischel & Mischel, 1983; Mischel, Shoda, & Peake, 1988), or the ability to cope with waiting for a pleasurable stimulus.

While there is no single construct that explains intrinsic motivation, it is generally agreed that time spent on tasks that are intrinsically motivating has a positive impact in a variety of areas, including academic achievement (Gottfried, 1985; Gottfried, 1990; Gottfried, Fleming, & Gottfried, 2001; Hickey, 2003; Stipek, 2002); taking on challenging projects (Gottfried, Gottfried, Cook, & Morris, 2005; Reeve, Nix, & Hamm, 2003); greater self-awareness (Palen & Coatsworth, 2007; Rathunde, 1993a; Tuss, 1993); and greater confidence and self-esteem (Stipek, 2002; Thorkildsen, 2003). Of particular interest for this study is the idea that time spent

in tasks that are intrinsically motivating actually contributes to organizing cognitive structures (Csikszentmihalyi & Csikszentmihalyi, 1992; Festinger, 1957; Hunt, 1965).

It has been demonstrated that there are ways that intrinsic motivation can be fostered and developed. While the bulk of this body of literature is situated in school settings, it may still be applicable when examining contexts outside of school, including hobby pursuit. For example, it is known that when youth are given freedom in learning experiences, or autonomy over their education, this contributes to internal motivation (Brophy, 2004; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Tuss, 1993). In the case of hobby pursuit, young people pursue something over which they have a great deal of autonomy, both for ways of finding new information and for sharing their new-found knowledge. Likewise, teacher traits such as demonstrating curiosity, fostering a strong sense of classroom community, and encouraging independent thinking can also contribute to the development of intrinsic motivation (Olszewski-Kubilius, 1998; Osterman, 2000; Rea, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Whalen, 1998). Young people who find mentors to guide them through their hobby pursuit and help them to achieve greater and greater levels of expertise may find that mentors play this same sort of role. Finally, family support has been shown to be a significant factor in fostering intrinsic motivation -- this can take a variety of forms, including helping a young person to develop his or her interests, encouraging hard work, and demonstrating risk-taking behavior (i.e., take on challenging tasks) (Csikszentmihalyi, Rathunde, & Whalen, 1997; Gottfried, Fleming, & Gottfried, 1998; van Werkhoven, van Londen, & Stevens, 2002).

The primary thrust of scholarship in gifted youth and intrinsic motivation is, as it is in LIS, focused on education and education-related activities. It is discussed most often in terms of talent development, which is operationalized as academic engagement and achievement. Some of

this work might potentially be applicable outside school and academic achievement. The

following section places the problem into the context of the literature as previously discussed.

Problem in Relation to the Literature

Hobby-related information behavior has only very recently emerged as a topic of study in

LIS. As such, very little scholarly work exists, and what work there is concentrates almost

entirely on adult populations. There is a call for more investigation into the information behavior

of young people engaging in hobby pursuits.

Some research has been conducted regarding the information behavior of youth outside

of school, including some special populations of youth such as gay teens. This work has

contributed to our knowledge of how young people find and use information in everyday

situations. However, the focus of most of this work has been problem-oriented, i.e., information

is sought and used as the solution to some sort of information problem. In addition, the work has

focused primarily on episodic information seeking and uses, that is, information problems that

have a clear onset, development, and termination. Even the work on information needs during

the coming out process, which is sometimes a very long and complex process, conceptualizes a

beginning, middle, and end. In contrast, hobby pursuit is pleasure-based, and indefinite. It is a

process that can be addressed by the theory of Serious Leisure and its importance can possibly be

explained by theories of intrinsic motivation.

Almost all of the work that has been done in the area of youth studies in everyday

information behavior has focused on specific everyday information needs, although recent work

has started to generalize a bit more. One of the populations missing from this body of research is

gifted youth. It has been established that gifted youth are a special population with traits that

distinguish them from typical youth, and yet no work has been found that examines the everyday life information behaviors of this population.

Knowledge about the information behaviors of gifted youth related to their hobby pursuits can add to the growing picture we have of the everyday life information behavior of youth in general. It can also follow in the footsteps of work into hobby information behavior, adding to the small mosaic of pleasure-based information seeking and use that already exists.

This chapter has discussed the three frameworks that inform this study, detailing specific concepts that are addressed in the research questions, including "way of life," or the ways that people organize their time and prioritize their activities ("in what ways do gifted youth integrate the seeking, use, and sharing of information about their hobby pursuits into their daily activities and how does the pursuit of hobbies impact the way activities are organized?"); "mastery of life," or the ways that people approach problem solving ("in what ways do gifted youth approach the search for, use, and sharing of information about their hobby pursuits and how does this impact other areas of the gifted young person's life?"); and intrinsic motivation ("how do gifted youth maintain interest in the pursuit of their hobbies over time?"). The third theory, Serious Leisure, provides the narrow focus and a context for examining hobbies. The stage has thus been set for this study, first by providing the larger context into which the current study can be placed and second by illustrating the lack of work in the area that the current study attempts to address.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Overview

Theories of intrinsic motivation hold that the pursuit of activities that are at once challenging and intrinsically rewarding contributes to growth and development as well as psychological well-being (Csikszentmihalyi & Csikszentmihalyi, 1992; Festinger, 1957; Hunt, 1965). The pursuit of hobbies is an endeavor that is intrinsically rewarding; those who pursue hobbies tend to treat them as a career outside of work, continually adding to their skills and expertise and finding new ways to enjoy the pursuit (Stebbins, 2007).

It is known that gifted young people are often not properly challenged in school (see, for example, Ross, 1993). Hobbies might provide an opportunity for gifted youth to experience appropriate challenge and thus to develop in ways that they cannot at school. It is not known, however, if or how gifted youth participate in hobby pursuits and what they glean from these pursuits. The study described below sought to fill this gap in knowledge.

Because so little is known about the topic, this project aimed to be an exploration of important themes in order to set the stage for future detailed work in the area. Patterns in the data collected that revolve around the information processes related to hobby pursuit for gifted youth were examined.

In this chapter the use of a qualitative methodology, loosely inspired by a method that has been labeled "Tween Day" (Fisher et al., 2007), is explained. Once the strength of the methodology is established, a study is described that used specific qualitative methods of data collection and analysis. A discussion of ethics and the ongoing protection of research participants follows, including detailed coverage of research planning and data collection issues related to

child development and the measures taken in the current study to address these issues and ensure both protection of the subjects and validity of the data.

This study attempted to fill a gap in LIS literature by identifying the pertinent themes at play in the information behavior of gifted youth related to their hobby pursuits. In addition, it was hoped that it would be possible, based on the work, to establish the ways in which hobbies might be important to gifted youth.

Theoretical Background

Three primary frameworks informed the current study. Savolainen's framework of Everyday Life Information Seeking (ELIS), theories of intrinsic motivation, and the theory of Serious Leisure are combined in order to examine the places they intersect. Serious Leisure theory is used to identify everyday life pursuits that qualify as hobbies. Central to the study are the ELIS concepts of "way of life," or the ways people prioritize their time, and "mastery of life," or the ways people work to maintain their way of life, including their approach to solving problems. For the purposes of this study, these concepts were operationalized as the ways in which hobby pursuit is developed and maintained over time (for "way of life") and how other aspects of life impact styles of hobby-related information behavior and how or if the pursuit of hobbies impacts styles of information seeking in other aspects of life (for "mastery of life"). Theories of intrinsic motivation examine whether or how hobbies can create a positive path of growth for gifted youth. Intrinsic motivation theories and Serious Leisure theory add important dimensions to ELIS that have not previously been explored.

The overarching question guiding this study was "What are the information behaviors of gifted young people related to their hobby pursuits?" The following sub-questions were also suggested, based on the ELIS and intrinsic motivation frameworks:

a) In what ways do gifted youth integrate the seeking, use, and sharing of information about their hobby pursuits into their daily activities and how does the pursuit of hobbies impact the way activities are organized? ("way of life")

b) In what ways do gifted youth approach the search for, use, and sharing of information about their hobby pursuits and how does this impact other areas of the gifted young people's lives? ("mastery of life")

c) How do gifted youth maintain interest in the pursuit of their hobbies? (intrinsic motivation)

Qualitative Methods

Whereas quantitative methods are recommended when one is interested in numerical information that leads to generalizable conclusions, qualitative methods are more appropriate when a detailed understanding of the phenomena at issue is desired. Qualitative methods in general can achieve a more nuanced picture of concepts and relationships, especially in exploratory studies, than can quantitative methods which by their nature focus on assigning numbers to social data (Kvale, 1996). Qualitative methods allow for a depth and breadth of coverage that cannot be achieved with a quantitative approach.

Creswell (1994) has defined qualitative methods as "an inquiry process of understanding a social or human problem, based on building a complex, holistic picture, formed with words" (p. 1). Further, as Bates (2004) has argued, a person-centered approach is key in studies of everyday life information seeking. Qualitative methods privilege the experiences, environments, and expressions of participants.

Of particular interest for the methodology of the current study is the Tween Day project (Fisher et al., 2007; Meyers et al., 2007). The researchers examined the information behavior of

"tweens," or youth between the ages of nine and thirteen. They developed a methodology called "Tween Day" to collect data, offering engaging activities intermingled with data collection activities such as focus groups and intensive interviews.

The Tween Day methodology was used with consistent results on three different days, in three different settings, indicating the reliability of the method for collecting rich data. The methodology was designed based on principles of developmentally appropriate research on young people. The developmental focus of the work impacted research design decisions regarding child protection, schedule design, data collection, and the incentives that were offered. In addition, the researchers recognized and incorporated multiple levels of consent and assent; they balanced researcher authority with approachability and acceptance; and they embraced the contexts embedded in tweens' information lives; as a bonus, the young subjects learned that participating in research can be fun (Meyers et al., 2007).

The Tween Day schedule included two separate focus group sessions, an informal WebQuest activity, individual interviews, and breaks for lunch and snacks. This format, based on the same principles of child development, was loosely incorporated into the design of the current study. While some procedural changes were made for the current study -- discussed in detail in the following section -- all elements were selected based on a developmental perspective including focus groups, home visit/interviews, and unstructured time, as well as snacks, breaks, and incentives.

The Research Design

This exploratory study identified important themes that can be examined more deeply in later studies for verification and to distinguish causal and other relational factors. The goals of this study were to describe the subjects' lived experiences regarding hobby-related information

phenomena; to identify emergent themes in these experiences; and to begin to explicate the processes involved.

In the following section, the research design in three phases (two focus group sessions, informal hobby-related activity observation, and a follow-up intensive home visit/interview) is described; the preparation for the conduct of the research and the data collection methods are described; and a description of the data analysis and record management follows. Included in the data collection procedures are audio- and video-recorded focus group sessions and unstructured time between groups with youth participants and audio-recorded in-home interviews. Data were analyzed through very close reading in an iterative process in order to identify patterns and themes pertinent to the research questions.

Preparation for the Research[1]

Preparation for conducting the research included obtaining the sample of youth and selecting a site in which to conduct the first phase of the research. This section details the reasoning behind decisions regarding recruitment and participant selection as well as describing the work upon which this study was loosely modeled.

Sample

The subject population is gifted youth between the ages of eight and fourteen, inclusive, who either participate in a gifted program at their school, are accepted members of American Mensa, Ltd. (a national affiliate of an international society for people whose intelligence quotient [IQ] ranks in the top two percent of the general population), or have otherwise been identified as gifted according to the State of Florida definition of giftedness, which includes performance of at

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[1] A proposal was submitted to the Institutional Review Board at Florida State University and received approval based on the protocols described in this chapter.

least two standard deviations above the mean on a standardized intelligence test or high potential/performance in one or more of a variety of areas including academics, motivation, creativity, and leadership (State of Florida, 2002). The lower age limit, eight years, was selected because this is the earliest age at which the majority of gifted students in Florida are identified as gifted. Most schools will not test young people for giftedness before third grade because it is believed that the impact of early stimulation evens out around eight years old and thus identification is more reliable. Fourteen years was selected as the upper age limit for a variety of reasons. Although young teens are more independent than pre-teens, they still must often rely on their parents for things like transportation and spending money, both of which likely have an impact on the ways that "way of life" (i.e., organizing the daily schedule) is negotiated for these young people. It is believed that older teens typically have more access to independent transportation and thus likely a more adult approach both to "way of life" and "mastery of life" (problem-solving approaches).

It was hoped that the researcher's connections with various gifted youth service providers in Florida, including teachers and leaders of local Young Mensan groups, would help to garner their assistance in recruitment efforts. While each entity agreed to help in different ways (posting flyers, sending emails, etc., as detailed in the following section), these efforts did not result in the numbers of participants it was hoped would be achieved. Recruitment efforts were expanded, with IRB approval, to several venues, and permission was also granted to use Skype in order to collect data from participants for whom the distance for collecting data face to face was prohibitive but who otherwise wanted to participate.

The gifted young people who did participate comprised a convenience sampling. Anyone who was interested, met the basic criteria for participation in the study (identified gifted either by

participation in a gifted program at school or by official membership in Mensa, eight to fourteen years old, had had a hobby for at least a year), and actually showed up was welcomed. In all, thirty-two young people participated in seven different focus groups. Follow up home visits, where the researcher interviewed families, were conducted with a smaller sampling, again a convenience sampling of twelve focus group participants whose families were willing. Three focus groups were held fully face to face, three were held fully on Skype, and one was a combination of face to face and Skype. Six of the home visit/interviews were in person, the remaining six were via Skype.

Site Selection

The downtown branch of the local library was selected as the original site at which to perform focus group sessions. This site was chosen for its central location and its well established position in the greater community. The meeting rooms are large, clean, and reasonably priced (free for groups smaller than eight). They are also set away from the main part of the library, so that traffic flow (and thus potential distraction) is minimal. For the focus groups that took place via Skype, there was no set location – participants could join from any location that was Skype enabled.

Participant Recruitment and Compensation

The subject pool was identified through the use of recruitment materials distributed in several different venues, as follows:

1) local Mensa newsletters throughout Florida, at the discretion of local editors

2) flyers handed out to gifted young people during recruitment school visits in gifted classrooms

3) email notice on a local electronic discussion group

4) gifted-interest websites such as Hoagies

5) gifted-interest groups on Facebook

A website and frequently updated blog made available to families who expressed an interest before the focus groups were convened explained the study in more detail to youth and parents. All other recruitment notices mentioned the topic of study (information behavior related to the hobbies of gifted youth who pursue hobbies) and that the purpose was to learn more about the hobbies of gifted young people. "Hobby" was not defined in the recruitment materials; anyone who believed him- or herself to be pursuing a hobby was welcome to attend. However, it was stipulated that potential subjects must have been actively pursuing their hobby for at least one year, a time deemed as long enough in a young person's life to demonstrate consistent intrinsic motivation. It was unknown whether youth would define hobbies in the same way the literature does, but this provided relevant information about how youth perceive hobbies and the role of hobbies in their lives (see Chapter 5). Contact information for the researcher was provided. Those who expressed an interest in learning more about the project were directed to the project website containing all consent/assent materials and a place to sign up confidentially for specific focus group session meetings, through www.timecenter.com. All who signed up for focus groups were encouraged to bring something related to their hobby to share during the break between sessions.

Participants ranged from eight to thirteen years old and compensation was intended to appeal to this age group, as suggested by the Tween Day research design. Incentives included t-shirts, pencils, stickers, and the chance to win a gift certificate at an online retailer of challenging toys, games, and educational equipment like microscopes. Appealing and relatively nutritious refreshments were provided for participants; families had the option of stipulating special dietary

requirements, but none did so. It was also believed that participants would enjoy the opportunity to learn about and participate in scholarly research.

Data Collection

The phases of the project and time expectations are summarized in the following table. Adjustments were made as necessary both to time spent on individual questions and time spent overall on data collection at all stages of the project. Below the table, each phase of data collection is discussed in detail.

Table 3.1 *Research Activities*

Research Activity	Time Requirement
Background Information Survey	very brief, conducted during orientation to the research
Focus Group Session One, concentrating on information behavior	45-60 minutes
Informal hobby-related activity/snack/Participant observation	45 minutes
Focus Group Session Two, concentrating on intrinsic motivation, development and the impact of hobby pursuit	45-60 minutes
Home Visit	45-90 minutes
Participant feedback on analysis	up to 3 hours inclusive, in 2 - 3 different phases

This research study utilized focus groups, consisting of two distinct sessions for each group; participant observation during informal hobby-related socializing between sessions; and home visits that incorporated intensive child and family interviews and tours of hobby spaces. The goal was to construct a nuanced picture of the information processes involved in the pursuit of hobbies for gifted youth. It was assumed that the older set of subjects (twelve to fourteen year olds) would have more independence than would the younger ones, both developmentally (Erikson, 1953; Piaget, 1975) and in terms of family relationships, and that this difference in life

circumstance would have an impact on subject responses. In addition, older youth typically have longer attention spans and it was believed this might allow for more in-depth and lengthy discussion than would be possible with the younger group (eight to eleven year olds). Therefore, in order to allow for more meaningful participant interaction, subjects were grouped by age for the first stages of data collection, including the focus groups and informal hobby-related socializing. As it turned out there was only one small focus group consisting of young people older than eleven years.

Collecting Background Information

As part of the orientation to the research process and after Consent/Assent forms were completed, participants were asked to complete a very brief demographic survey. Demographic data were used to examine the possible impact these factors have on the phenomena of hobby pursuit, and vice versa.

Focus Groups and Audio/Video Recordings

As a way of collecting data that would provide a general outline of the phenomena in question (Meyers et al., 2007; Patton, 2002) and would also encourage lively participation (Krueger, 1994; Meyers et al., 2007; Patton, 2002), tightly structured focus groups were utilized during the first phase of data collection. Some of the potential limitations of focus group research include the limited time available to address each question, the necessary focus on general themes at the expense of detailed coverage, the fact that they take place outside the natural setting in which the phenomena under study occur, and the potential that minority viewpoints might not be expressed (Krueger, 1994). These limitations were somewhat mitigated by the use of several instruments in multiple phases for collecting data.

In keeping with the developmental focus of the Tween Day methodology, focus group sessions utilized a variety of questions and prompts to maintain the interest and energy of the young participants and the sessions were brief, with freedom of movement. Snacks were provided both as incentive and as a means to attend to the physical needs of the young subjects.

In a group setting, participants addressed questions regarding their motivations toward hobby pursuits, hobbies in the larger milieu of their lives, and the information behaviors surrounding their hobby pursuit. Questions for the focus groups were devised based on the main research questions and the theories of interest, with a particular emphasis on where ELIS, intrinsic motivation theories, and Serious Leisure converge. The data collection instruments (Appendix B) and the rationale for each individual question in the focus groups and interviews (Appendix C) are grounded in theory and research to the extent that it exists. One question set exists for both age groups. However, while the same topics were covered in each age group, the language was adjusted slightly as necessary to ensure participants' understanding. Two sessions were conducted with each focus group. Sessions occurred in Saturday morning groupings or after school during weekdays over the course of several weeks and participants were able to select the date and time that best fit into their schedules. Because young participants were able to schedule their own sessions, some groups contained participants who knew each other. Focus groups are typically more effective when participants do not know one another (Krueger, 1994; Kvale, 1996; Patton, 2002). However, given the difficulty of scheduling groups at all, this limitation was considered reasonable; in fact, in the groups where any of the participants knew any of the others, they were all friends and thus quite comfortable both agreeing with and arguing with one another. The data collected from these friend groups do not differ significantly from that

collected in the other groups so it does not appear that the data were compromised as a result of familiarity.

Focus group sessions were audio- and video-recorded as an aid to transcription. The researcher took brief notes, tied to specific questions, while the participants were speaking, but the primary focus was to listen actively and manage time and movement from one question to another in the groups. There was only one video camera and it remained in one place throughout the data gathering sessions. Because the researcher was the sole investigator for the project, it was important to have video recordings in order to ensure the most complete and highest quality data. All participants and their families agreed to full video-recording, so no adjustments were necessary in order to hide faces.

Even given the problems recruiting and scheduling, the number of groups that eventually took place allowed for data saturation. Because only one group was conducted with the older age range, however, questions still exist regarding the impact of age on information behavior related to hobby pursuit.

Participant Observation of Hobby-Related Activity Between Focus Group Sessions

Although the Tween Day researchers offered informal information activities in between formal data collection activities (focus groups and intensive interviews), they did not collect or record data during this period. Yet, they observed their subjects interacting with information and with each other, engaging deeply in the activity.

It often happens in a study during unstructured time, where participants are not being formally interviewed or even, necessarily, observed, that conversations continue beyond the bounds of the structured periods. In fact, Awoniyi (2008) found this to be the case when she gave her participants a lunch break and returned a half hour later to find them still engaged in lively

conversation on the same topic they had covered in the focus group. As a result of astute observation and quick action, Awoniyi was able to obtain Review Board permission to record that unstructured time in later focus group sessions as part of her data collection (2008).

Therefore, unstructured time in the current study was allotted to allowing for young participants to share their hobbies and any hobby-related items they might have brought. The researcher acted as participant-observer in these conversations. Most did not use the opportunity to talk about their hobbies further, preferring instead to eat and peruse the incentive items. Continuing the video recorder during this time, however, proved not to be a distraction, as most participants had forgotten its existence by that point.

Follow-Up Home Visits

In order to deepen and enrich data collected during group activities (Meyers et al., 2007) and to provide participants the opportunity to discuss hobbies in their natural settings (Bates, 2004; Creswell, 1994; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Hartel, 2007), follow-up home visits with young subjects and their families were conducted. Home visits allowed the researcher to interview participants in more detail than the focus groups did and to observe first-hand the ways that hobbies fit into subjects' lives, not only physically (in the spaces they take up) but also in accommodations that families make to support hobby pursuit. Finally, interviews with families provided historical context for hobby pursuit, allowing for some loose extrapolations on how "way of life" and "mastery of life" might be developed as a result of hobby pursuit.

Home visits were conducted at the convenience of the families involved. Semi-structured questions were derived following initial analysis of focus group data. Interviews typically lasted from forty-five to ninety minutes and were audio-recorded. Parents were interviewed alongside their child(ren) in order to establish a historical context for the child's hobby-related information

behaviors. The young subject then led the researcher on a tour of the hobby spaces in the home. The researcher encouraged the young person's commentary on the spaces and items he or she deemed important. In all cases, parents allowed the child to conduct the home tour on their own, ensuring that data collected in that phase was not influenced by what the children thought their parents would like them to say. Interviews were audio-recorded in order to assure accuracy in data collection. All families consented and assented to this recording.

Ethical Issues

In this section, measures taken to ensure participants' safety, comfort, and confidentiality are discussed. In addition, issues related to child development and the particular challenges of working with young subjects are addressed, both generally and as they relate specifically to the current study.

Potential risks.   The potential risks to subjects for participating in the current study were minimal. Hobbies are a pleasant subject and orientation to the research provided an opportunity to set reasonable and mutually agreed upon expectations regarding group conduct and respect. Although provisions were made in the materials for shifting the camera to alleviate discomfort, this did not turn out to be an issue. It was made clear throughout the orientation and data collection process if at any time a participant did not want to answer a question, or did not want to participate further, that they were free to pass or to leave without fear of consequences.

Privacy/confidentiality. Several protections were put into place to ensure that personally identifying information was and is kept confidential, as follows:

 * Written consent and assent were obtained from young people and their parents for video-recording and audio-recording at the beginning of each phase of the project. Those who did

not consent to be recorded had the opportunity to leave the project before it began, without consequence. This did not, however, come up.

* Only the researcher transcribed recordings. All participant names were replaced in written transcripts with anonymous user IDs.

* Notes and observations taken during data collection by the researcher are stored in a locked cabinet in the researcher's office, which remains locked at all times.

* Electronic data (all recordings and transcriptions) are stored on a separate, password-protected external hard drive inside another locked cabinet. No others besides the researcher have access to this data.

Consent/assent. Consent and assent forms (See Appendix E) clearly outline the research and the tasks required of participants. It is believed that these forms gave participants the information they needed to provide informed consent. Recruitment materials did not provide full consent information but did provide the researcher's full contact information so that complete materials could be obtained upon request.

Research was not conducted and data were not gathered until informed consent and assent of all parties had been obtained. Informed consent was considered to be an ongoing process throughout the project and participants were always free and encouraged to ask questions and re-evaluate their choices about participation in the study.

Role of the researcher. In line with the Tween Day method, the researcher attempted to maintain a workable balance between authority, to ensure a safe and comfortable atmosphere for all participants, and approachability, to keep participants talking and engaging with the material. The researcher approached the work most like a participant observer and as a mix of insider and outsider: as a person who is gifted and has hobbies, like the participants, and as someone who

enjoys popular youth culture; but also as an adult who has adult sensibilities. Participants were encouraged to address the researcher by her first name, fostering rapport, but a firm "teacher voice" was also used if necessary (it proved not to be).

Child development and research protocols. Although all research is fraught with challenges, particularly when working with human subjects, when those subjects are below the age of eighteen those challenges stand out in stark relief. Beyond the necessity to ensure the participants' safety and comfort, the researcher must also ensure the validity of the data collected by taking into account, at all stages of the research process -- from recruitment through data analysis -- the young subjects' cognitive, social/emotional, and physical development. This section outlines those issues of primary concern when collecting data from youth participants. The table at the end of the section delineates specific ways that this project addresses these issues.

Of primary importance in helping to ensure the validity of data collected from young people is making sure that it is clear how the research is personally relevant to them (Garbarino, Stott, et al., 1992; Grieg & Taylor, 1999; Pellegrini & Bjorklund, 1998). When young subjects do not see how the research topic or processes are relevant to them, it can have repercussions on their understanding of and engagement with the topic and procedures and thus, potentially, on behavior (e.g., being disruptive to other participants or providing inaccurate testimony) (Grieg & Taylor, 1999; Woodhead & Montgomery, 2003). On the other hand, when the study's relevance to the young subjects is properly established, this goes a long way toward ensuring that any data collected from young participants is meaningful and valid (Garbarino, Stott, et al., 1992).

Naturally, there are other considerations as well. When one explains the relevance of the project or asks questions for which substantive answers are important, for instance, the cognitive

developmental level of the participants must be taken into account so that the concepts and language used are meaningful to them while still accurately representing the research purposes and procedures (Pellegrini & Bjorklund, 1998; Siegal, 1991). Participant understanding, in fact, must be revisited throughout the research process. Likewise, it is crucial to consider the attention span of young subjects in planning data collection procedures (e.g., brief and lively sessions are more effective than extended, monotonous sessions), orienting young people to the work, and in actually collecting the data (Garbarino, Stott, et al., 1992; Siegal, 1991). Also notable is the fact that young peoples' ability to clearly remember and describe past events may not be fully developed (Siegal, 1991). Awareness of this issue should guide research planning in order to minimize this potential complication.

Just as cognitive development must be considered, so, too, is consideration of social/emotional development crucial when planning and conducting research with young people. Young people tend to be malleable to a greater extent by forces outside themselves than are adults (Graue & Walsh, 1998; Woodhead & Montgomery, 2003). In the context of research, this can manifest as "researcher-pleasing" behaviors or answers that do not necessarily reflect the child's actual experience. This is common even in research on adults, but the added perception of the researcher as an authority figure, just by virtue of the fact that she is an adult, can exacerbate this problem in young subjects. Peer pressure is also a potential issue -- young people in a focus group may either remain silent or agree with others in order to be accepted by the group, even if their experiences differ from others expressed (Graue & Walsh, 1998; Grieg & Taylor, 1999; Pellegrini & Bjorklund, 1998). Incentives, too, can sway a young person toward participation in the research even if he or she is not otherwise inclined in that direction (Pellegrini & Bjorklund, 1998). Awareness of these issues must guide how the researcher establishes his or her role in the

research process, how group sessions are managed, and decisions on any incentives to offer young subjects for their participation.

Any research with human subjects must address issues of the participants' physical comfort and safety. When one works with young people, however, it is especially important to be cognizant of the impact that physical discomfort may have on the data collection process, from disruptive behavior to incomplete or inaccurate testimony (Grieg & Taylor, 1999; Pellegrini & Bjorklund, 1998). One must therefore plan accordingly to meet the physical needs of young participants -- including the need for movement, for sustenance, and adequate provision for breaks -- in order to minimize the potential impact on data that can arise from physical discomfort.

The following table provides a snapshot of the ways this research project addresses the issues related to collecting data from young subjects.

Table 3.2 *Developmental Appropriateness of Research Activities*

Relevance
The research was about hobbies, which the young subjects presumably enjoy participating in and sharing.
The project was framed in terms of curiosity (the researcher is curious and wants to know more), something with which the young subjects are familiar.
The subjects were framed as experts on their own experience and assured that their expertise can help satisfy the researcher's curiosity and maybe their own as well.
Subjects were informed that what is learned from the project might help other kids with hobbies.
Subjects were informed that what was learned from the project might help adults to help kids with their hobbies, where kids want help.

Table 3.2 *Continued*

Cognitive Development
Attention Span
Subjects were able to select a session time that did not conflict with other desirable activities, so that attention was not divided.
Focus group sessions were lively and fast-paced and each person had an opportunity to talk, with no single person monopolizing the conversation.
It was assumed that the research topic is of interest to the participants, which would be an aid to increasing attention span. Likewise, it was assumed that the subjects would enjoy learning about and playing an authentic role in the research process.
The researcher observed the level of interest and energy of the participants at all times and made adjustments as necessary to accommodate for waning attention.
Level of Language
Recruitment ads were clear about the nature of the project and provided contact information for the researcher.
Instructions were clear about what participation would involve. It was related to experiences in the subjects' lives with which they were familiar. For example, focus groups can be likened to circle time at school.
Parents and subjects were provided opportunities to ask questions during orientation to the research. Subjects were encouraged to ask questions throughout data collection if there was something for which they wanted clarification.
All assent forms are written in language that is accessible to child subjects and their right to opt out was made clear both verbally and in writing. Participants were reminded throughout data collection of their rights to opt out without consequences if they so chose.
The researcher observed the subjects' level of understanding and made adjustments in vocabulary as necessary. When participants did not understand a question, it was rephrased.
The researcher used the subjects' vocabulary for describing their world whenever possible.
Issues of Recall
Data collection was focused on habitual practices or noteworthy/memorable events related to something from which the participants derive pleasure.
Focus group data were triangulated with family interviews. It was hoped (and so it seemed to turn out) that presence in the places where hobby pursuits take place would be an aid to memory.

Table 3.2 *Continued*

Social/Emotional Development
Role of the Researcher
The researcher created an atmosphere of serious fun by being approachable, respectful, honest, and engaged in the research.
The researcher balanced the necessary authority for managing a diverse group of people with an attitude of playful irreverence. This model of behavior encouraged the subjects' fullest and most engaged participation.
Peer Pressure
Everybody in the groups had the opportunity to speak.
Ground rules for behavior were agreed upon collaboratively before focus group sessions began. The researcher suggested two rules (1. Be honest; 2. Be kind) and subjects had the chance to suggest others if they chose.
Each individual's input was honored. It was made clear, throughout data collection, that there were no right or wrong answers, and that everyone's experience is both common and unique.
Incentives
Incentives were selected based on what is known to be appealing to young people, relevant to the research, and at once enticing enough to serve as a genuine token of appreciation for their participation but not so enticing as to coerce participation where young people are not so inclined.
Physical Development
Snacks and drinks were readily available throughout the focus group meetings.
Sessions were brief, punctuated by breaks, and subjects had the freedom to move around as they needed to in order to remain comfortable.

Data Management

At the conclusion of data collection, there were approximately forty-five hours of recordings. This is a great deal of data to manage, so a system was put in place before data were collected in order to manage it all effectively. The researcher also transcribed the recordings herself, rather than outsourcing the service. This had the dual benefits both of being considerably

more affordable and of providing the researcher the opportunity, as Hartel (2007) suggested, to review the data intensively before beginning the formal analysis process.

All recordings were transcribed as soon as possible after collecting the data, generally within forty-eight hours. This helped to jog memory and draw attention to items that might have been missed or neglected. It also kept the transcription from lingering as a necessary task. These processes not only helped to manage the volume of data, but also helped to foster emergent insights as content was tackled only a short time removed from when it was collected.

Data Analysis

Analysis for this research project was an ongoing process, begun during focus groups and continuing through all data collection, participant feedback, and completion of the study. The researcher completed this analysis alone, introducing significant limitations to the findings from this project (discussed in more detail in Chapter Four). However, this limitation is somewhat ameliorated by the fact that findings were shared with participants, three of whom took the opportunity to provide feedback based on their own experience.

Data were initially analyzed in broad strokes in order to identify major themes and ideas. As individual focus groups were completed and the recordings transcribed, the researcher read through the transcript several times in an effort to identify prominent ideas. During each new reading, notes were taken on these ideas and then set aside. This process was repeated with each new set of data.

As themes emerged, data were re-examined to determine their fit; when data did not appear to fit into any already identified categories, new potential categories were identified and then tested against data already collected. This was performed for each new set of data in isolation and then together with previously collected data. This allowed for completely new ideas

to emerge and to be explored iteratively with both older and newer sets of data. All analysis involved examining repetitions of ideas, identifying specialized vocabularies, and discovering similarities and differences within and among participants.

Preliminary findings, once a full examination had taken place and themes had been identified and confirmed inductively, were presented to willing participants in order to garner their feedback on how well it fits their experience. These constructions were tested by presenting them to the participants because,

> the best and most stringent test of observer constructions is their recognizability to the participants themselves. When participants themselves say, "Yes, that is there, I'd simply never noticed it before," the observer can be reasonably confident that he has tapped into extant patterns of participation. (Lofland, 1971, p. 34)

In addition, there is the assumption that "the important reality is what people perceive it to be" (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984). It is the subjects' lived experiences that are of primary interest, as well as the phenomena that are important to them. It is assumed that the research participants are the experts on their experiences and that they can best articulate what those experiences mean to them.

The young subjects participated in the analysis process, as expert evaluators of their own experiences with hobbies, to the extent that they wished and where assent and parental consent had been obtained. They did not perform primary analysis but were only provided the opportunity to confirm, add to, or refute initial data analysis findings presented by the researcher (see Appendix G for the materials presented to the participants). Participation in this phase of the research was confidential, just as with other phases of the project. Participants were provided with a link to preliminary findings online and presented with three basic questions:

Where did I get it wrong?

How did I get it wrong/how would you change it?

What else should I add?

They were given two weeks to send their responses through whatever means they wished (all selected email). For those who did not respond within one week, a follow-up reminder was sent. Internet access was not an issue for the three young people who contributed to this part of the project. All participants expressed satisfaction with the results; none had any corrections or additions to make.

Before completion, each individual idea expressed in the data had been placed into a category and re-confirmed against other categories and against existing data. Because this was an exploratory study, less emphasis was placed on numbers of participants expressing a certain idea than on ensuring that all ideas expressed were given voice.

Conclusion

The culmination of this research is a descriptive and comprehensive elucidation of the hobby-related information behavior processes of gifted youth. This includes a reasoned discussion of specific patterns and themes that emerged from the data. Themes and relationships were identified and then verified by the participants to ensure the highest quality results. Finally, the study was placed back into the framework and body of research literature from which it was conceived. This was the final stage of data analysis.

Limitations of Qualitative Methods

Several types of limitations are common to qualitative methods. This section addresses these broad limitations. Those limitations specific to this study are addressed in Chapter Five.

Reliability and validity. This study collected data from a variety of sources and through a variety of means in order to triangulate the data and ensure the most comprehensive coverage. The strength of this approach is that it allows multiple examinations of the same phenomena, but from a variety of angles, and thus a comprehensive picture can emerge. Agosto and Hughes-Hassell (2006b) demonstrated the effectiveness of this approach when they were able to replicate the results of earlier studies into the everyday life information behavior of youth. In addition, great care was taken to ensure that the data collected were valid from a developmental point of view and that it addressed the research questions at hand.

Generalizability. Qualitative research is context-bound (Creswell, 1994). Sometimes the whole purpose is just to explicate one specific situation, to explore it as deeply and broadly as possible. Generalizability, in these cases, might not be desired, necessary, or even appropriate. The idiographic approach, common in the humanities and growing more so in the social sciences, "cherishes the particulars, and insists that true understanding can be reached only by assembling and assessing those particulars" (Bates, 2005, p. 9). In the same way that a photomosaic is, at once, made up of hundreds of tiny photos that are themselves complete as individual photos, but that also, together, form a comprehensive picture that is more than the sum of its parts, so, too, can qualitative research build upon itself, case by case.

This study seeks not to generalize to other areas or populations, nor to identify causality, but to determine the pertinent themes involved in the phenomena surrounding the information behaviors of gifted youth engaged in hobby pursuit. These themes can be further refined, explored more deeply, and generalized only after additional investigations and proofs of concepts.

The next chapter presents the findings from the research project described in this chapter. The initial discussion is tied directly to the instruments used to collect data. Later, emergent themes are addressed and tied back to the data that were collected.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

This chapter presents the findings from the focus group sessions and the in-home visits. It also presents the three themes that emerged from the data analysis. Chapter Five will address these findings in light of the research questions.

The Participants

Thirty-two young people, ranging in age from eight to thirteen years old, participated in seven focus group sessions. Each participant had been identified as gifted either by virtue of membership in Mensa, participation in a gifted program in school (in Florida), or acceptance into a gifted-only private school (out of state). Boys and girls were fairly equally represented, with seventeen boys and fifteen girls participating. No apparent relationship emerged between gender and any other factors of interest; the findings reported, therefore, apply equally to boys and to girls. All participants were in the eight to eleven age range with the exception of one small group consisting of a thirteen year old and two twelve year olds.

All participants self-identified as having a minimum of two hobbies currently active; most participants had three. All five of the hobby categories as described by Stebbins (2007) were represented in the study, although "Liberal Arts" was not in evidence a great deal, at least not as far as the participants were concerned. Some ideas that came up in general conversation seemed to indicate that hobby pursuit did in fact take place in the liberal arts area, but the participants did not themselves consider these things to be hobbies. The table below provides the hobbies and hobby types represented in the study. Many of those listed were discussed by more than one participant. Drawing, for example, was the most popular hobby claimed by participants; musical performance (singing, dancing, playing an instrument) was the second most common

hobby. The hobbies listed in the table below are broad representations of wide variations in each activity and there is quite a bit of overlap. For example, Skylander is a video game franchise consisting of the video games themselves but also of collectible figures that act both as video game controllers and as cute displays, cards, codes, and related but separate mini-games that can be played on portable devices like iPads. A video gamer might play Skylander but not be interested in collecting the figures or playing the additional mini-games, or he might be interested in all of that.

Table 4.1 *Hobby Categories and Representative Hobbies*

Collector	Maker/Tinkerer	Activity Participant	Sports/Game Enthusiast	Liberal Arts Enthusiast
Skylander (4)	Photography (7)	Musical instrument/Choir (11)	Team sports (9)	Reading (16)
Pokemon/Magic (5)	Drawing (12)	Surfing (2)	Video games (7)	Animals (3)
Jewelry (2)	Sculpture (3)	Dance (8)	Trapeze (1)	
Miniature glass animals (1)	Legos/Electronics (4)	Scouting (4)	Tennis (2)	

At the focus group sessions, rudimentary background information was collected in the form of a very brief survey (see Appendix B: Background Information) regarding the types of schools the participants attended, the types of accommodations they received for their giftedness, and their parents' highest level of education completed. It was hoped that the demographic data would provide some additional insight into the findings.

Participants attended both public and private schools; none were home-schooled. The private schools attended were gifted-exclusive private institutions and the majority of participants in this project came from these private schools. For those who attended public school, some were in gifted "pull out" programs where they attended class in a regular classroom

for most of the week but were pulled out one day a week for gifted-specific instruction and support. Most of the "pull out" participants were also accelerated in at least one subject as well, meaning that they worked on curriculum above their own grade level in certain areas of particular strength, while working at grade level in other areas. Others of the public school gifted students were in a full time gifted classroom within the larger public school setting.

Parents of the participants had completed varying levels of education, ranging from high school through graduate school. Most had completed an undergraduate education. However, this information was only collected from the parent who brought the child to the focus group session (or completed the paperwork beforehand). Partner parents were not addressed, nor were other dynamics of family make-up, for example, single parents, siblings, etc. Based on home visits, it is known that single parents, nuclear families, and blended families are represented. As well, children with siblings and only children are represented.

<div align="center">**Focus Groups**</div>

Focus groups, the first phase of the research project, were conducted in order to uncover major ideas at play in the hobby pursuit of gifted young people. Small groups convened in person and virtually via Skype to answer questions both collectively and individually about hobby pursuit. The first of two sessions for each group addressed hobby pursuit primarily in terms of information seeking and sharing (instrument is available in Appendix B: Focus Group Session One). Following a short break, the second session was conducted, which primarily addressed motivational factors in the pursuit and sharing of hobbies (instrument available in Appendix B: Focus Group Session Two). Discussion of the focus group findings is organized roughly around the data collection instruments used in the group sessions.

Group Session One

The first focus group session was the longer of the two sessions. The primary emphasis during this first session was on information seeking and sharing in hobby pursuit. The following section details participant responses to the questions posed during the first session.

How would you define the word "hobby?" The consensus of all participants of the study was that "hobby" means an activity that is enjoyable and that one does often, if not every day. In addition, it was unanimously explicitly stated that a hobby can sometimes be difficult but that it is worth the effort. One young artist defined *hobby* as "something that you might do every day that you enjoy, but sometimes you do not have to enjoy it." A video gamer defined it as "something you want to do, something you do and you enjoy it, even though sometimes you might not do it as enthusiastically." A lacrosse player defined it as "something you really make a commitment to, not something you just do once. Something you put your focus on." And a dancer said "it's something you do every day and it's fun except when your feet hurt."

What activities are involved in your hobby? *[Because all participants had more than one hobby, for this and most of the remaining questions they were asked to focus primarily on their favorite hobby.].* In addition to activities that demonstrate direct engagement in the hobby itself (for example, the artist drawing or the boy scout attending a troop meeting or camp-out), these young hobbyists engage in a variety of peripheral activities that serve the purpose of preparation for or reinforcement of the main pursuit itself. It is not enough for the hobbyist merely to play soccer, for example. It is also important to stay in shape and work toward higher levels of fitness in order to continue improving the game and remain competitive. Running, on the weekends and on "those rare days I have nothing after school," keeps one soccer player in tip-top shape and at the top of his game. But physical fitness is also not enough. This same player also follows international soccer, watching games whenever he gets the chance. While this could (and likely

does) serve a myriad of purposes within the context of his hobby pursuit, this young man stated specifically that he follows it so he "can be in on that conversation" with his teammates, who also follow it. For him, this is very much a social activity, even when he watches alone. In the same way, one of the musical theater hobbyists not only takes voice and dance lessons in an effort to continually improve her performance at auditions, but also actively attends musical theater performances (Broadway and local), reading the scripts and memorizing the songs before she sees the shows.

As far as fitting these and other hobby-related activities in with required activities like schoolwork and family responsibilities, all of the participants were very clear about what the priorities are. "Homework is always the first priority," according to one participant, a sentiment echoed by all. There is also a common understanding that if family-related events arise, hobby-related activity can and often does take a back seat (sister has to go to the doctor and dad cannot leave work to take the hobbyist to Little League practice, for example; or, a booked family vacation means a theater hobbyist cannot attend a new workshop on voice projection she just learned about). Beyond issues that are completely out of their control, however, these young people often make really difficult decisions about what to do and what not to do with their time (and what, perhaps, to pursue at a later time) related to their hobby pursuit.

For the heavily-scheduled hobbyist, sometimes the tough choice is about how deeply to pursue an activity: take it to the next level, which means devoting more time and effort to it and dropping some other things, or let that activity go in order to explore a different activity more fully. But the choice can also be in the moment, as seemingly trivial as how to spend an afternoon. "If there's a certain amount of time to do homework," stated one participant, "you use

that time to do homework. And if your friend wants to come over during that time, you have to make the tough choice and say 'No.'"

One participant noted, however, that although he does not have much time for "other" things any more (like watching television casually), "what's important to remember there for me is, it's not that I have less free time, it's just that my free time is spent on these hobbies." Another participant noted how volleyball and piano had been a kind of "cure" for procrastination. While she used to "burn time" on pursuits that to her had no real value, now she is more conscious of making her time count.

When you want to know more about your hobby, what do you usually do? When asked this question, each of the participants emphasized their desire first to solve problems on their own. However, they also know where to get help when they do need it. "Googling and libraries are fine," said one young woman, "but it really helps if you talk to your instructor or somebody you know is really advanced in the hobby." Likewise, one young man stated "You know who to ask because they're the actual people who do it."

But while all of these hobbyists are quite experienced now, this was not always the case. At some point, each of them was a novice in their hobby. When discussing the evolution of their information seeking processes related to hobby pursuit, one young woman summed up the general sentiment:

When you're new in a hobby, you do broad things like read about it on the internet, because you don't know the insiders and you're just getting a general perspective. You do a lot of random stuff, just trying to get a feel for things. Basically, a lot more opportunities for exploration open up once you get out of the shallow end a little bit.

How do you keep track of new things happening that have to do with your hobby?

All of the young participants acknowledged that "keeping up to date" was an important facet of their hobby pursuits. Connectedness was emphasized by all participants. Whether it was a baseball player receiving practice schedules through email, a Boy Scout visiting a scouting website to learn about new badges, or a dancer relying on those who are even "more into it" than her to alert her to upcoming classes or recitals, all of these young people have networks in place that help them keep current in their hobby pursuits. These networks, once established, take very little active effort to scan and maintain. While it may take some effort and searching in the beginning, "Once you find your interests and get into it," as one participant said, "it really goes into the back of your mind and you don't need to think about it too much, it's just there."

How do you share information about your hobby with other people? Sharing information about hobby pursuits manifests in a variety of ways with this group of young people. In general, the preferred method of sharing information about hobby pursuit is just allowing it to "come up naturally in conversation," either in response to direct queries or as similar topics arise and can be connected to the hobby in some way. Socially, there is an awareness both that these things must not be forced (one does not, after all, go into the cafeteria at school during lunchtime and just holler, "Hey, video games are awesome!" and expect to receive a meaningful response) and that some audiences are ready to hear about hobbies like *Magic the Gathering* (a card game based on battles between fantasy creatures) and some are decidedly not. Another way that hobbies are commonly shared among this group of participants is through formal exhibitions (recitals, competitions, service projects, etc.). These exhibitions, whatever form they take, provide a venue for participants to display what they feel is their best work.

Group Session Two

   The second focus group session focused primarily on motivational factors for hobby pursuit. This session was held following a break during which participants were provided with unstructured time. Most participants used this time to peruse the incentive items or eat the snack provided for them. The following section details participant responses to the questions posed during the second session.

   What made you interested in your hobby/How did you hear about your hobby? In almost all cases, participants were introduced to their current hobbies through some sort of adult-sponsored activity: a required class at school, for example, or a special activity provided by the local public library. One young woman was introduced to her passion on a Girl Scout field trip to a local dance show. "I liked how it was so graceful and pretty," she said, "so when I told my mom about it she signed me up for a dance class." A young man introduced to a variety of painting styles in his art pull out class at school found all the styles interesting and thought "I wonder if I could do that." A Boy Scout mentioned peers as his first introduction to the hobby but it actually took "years of pestering" his parents (they were concerned it would take up too much of his time) before they consented to his participation. Another had pursued soccer for so long that he did not remember what had gotten him into it in the first place, although he suspected it was his older brother (not a research participant), who at one time had been active in the same hobby but had moved to different pursuits.

   What is it about your hobby that keeps you interested even if you've been doing it a long time? Essentially, the thing that keeps these young people coming back for more is the never-ending challenge of hobby pursuit. There is, according to one participant, so much to learn and master:

Right when you get comfortable, they put you out of your comfort zone again. It keeps

you interested if you truly care about the topic in its whole and not just one little part of

it. Because as it's changing, you're developing, getting better, and opening up to new

opportunities for doing that.

Another participant took this idea of growth and applied it to team sports, stating that "You

advance to more complex skills and strategies. As you improve, your competition also improves,

so there are always new challenges."

When participants were asked if pursuit of their hobby was ever boring, the resounding

response to the query was "My hobby is *never* boring!" Upon further discussion and reflection,

however, a few brave souls admitted to the occasional small twinge of boredom. For one

baseball player, when he feels "there's a danger" that he'll soon get bored, he increases his level

of challenge by joining a higher level team for the following season. One common refrain is the

realization that sometimes one just has to grind through the boring stuff in order to get to what is

really cool. For one young pianist, for example, "the only thing that gets you through that first

year of scales is knowing that after a year you'll be able to do some crazy intense songs." For the

Boy Scout on his way to Eagle, "you have to do some boring merit badges. But once I'm done

with those, I can do as many fun badges as I want. That's what I think about."

These participants have devised a variety of coping mechanisms that also help them

address significant challenges that arise in the pursuit of their hobbies. Sometimes slowing down

is the answer, like the young violinist who advocates just "taking extra time to make sure you do

it right." Other times, looking at the challenge from a different angle can be helpful, like the

artist who tries drawing things upside down in order to figure out what is happening in a picture

that does not seem to be working. Yet other times, a break is called for. This can be a "within

hobby" break like simply working on a different piece, or it can be a full mental break from the hobby for a brief time (typically not more than a day) in order to "recharge." "Asking for help" was a commonly mentioned option. One participant even went so far as to state that "The best thing to do is ask for help" from somebody who knows about the hobby. He does not typically, however, follow his own advice, as comes clear when he continues: "A lot of times I try on my own. I'd save a lot of time by just going to my coach first." He is in good company, however. In all cases, asking for help was the solution of last resort.

When asked what makes them want to solve these challenges in their hobby pursuit rather than changing hobbies, many participants discussed the investment of time and effort already placed in the hobby, weighing their current discomfort against the high value they place on the activity in general. Some anticipate the feeling of accomplishment they know will come when they have met the challenge. As one young woman said, "The success you feel after nailing it, it's worth all of it." Another stated that "You *want* to advance, you want to get better, you want to see yourself improve, see results," and that is why you don't leave when you're challenged. But one young man stated succinctly what all participants said in one way or another, "The challenges are the reason it's not boring! It's what keeps it interesting, keeps it fun. So to drop out would basically be to say 'I don't like this much excitement, I don't like fun.'"

If you're doing something that isn't your hobby (e.g., schoolwork or chores), what do you do if it's boring? What do you do if it's too hard? Participants discussed a variety of coping strategies for when a required activity is boring. One common way to approach these tasks is to figure out how the task is going to be helpful. As one participant said, "A worksheet might be boring to complete, but it's usually introducing me to a whole new subject that I can learn more about on my own, so that makes it worthwhile." Another mentioned how doing the

boring homework can help you do well on a test; keeping that in mind makes it easier to get through. For many, it helps to think about what they will get to do after completing the boring task – usually something related to their hobby. Yet others incorporate hobby-related activity into boring tasks as a way to get through them, for example, the young woman who practices songs while she washes the dishes. While it is not specifically a coping mechanism but rather a general way of thinking, one young man approaches homework simply as one of his responsibilities, "what I've agreed to do. I just think about it as honoring my part of the deal."

When it comes to required tasks that are very difficult, some make an effort to approach the problem from a new angle in an attempt to see it in a different way and thus be able to solve it. However, they are not shy about seeking help. If a lack of other alternatives mentioned is indicative of the time they spend trying to figure things out on their own, then these young people generally seek help on required work much sooner than they would if they were working on difficult hobby-related tasks.

When you're doing hobby activities, what kinds of things are you thinking?
According to these young people, thoughts tend not to stray very far afield when one is engaged in hobby pursuit. Some focus on the future, like what their current project will look like when it is complete. Or, like one video gamer who thinks "Win, win, win, win, win, trade it in, get another one, win, get another one, win, get another one, win." Some, instead, look to the past, noting how far they have come, how much they have improved. But for most, "It's really just a very narrow, in-the-moment way of thinking. What do I do *right now*, where should I move *right now*? And it's always different."

When you're talking about your hobby, do you prefer telling people about it who don't know about it, or talking with people who know lots about it? Why? When it comes to

sharing almost anything hobby-related, the overwhelming preference for these hobbyists is the company of like minds, those who really understand the nuances and the challenges of their hobby pursuit. "When they're impressed," said one young woman, "it carries more weight." Not only that, but an "insider" can also suggest alternative approaches or techniques, helping the hobbyist to progress and improve.

This does not, however, discount the value of an inexperienced audience. While "it's hard to really have a conversation with them, for them to really get what you're saying if they don't have a context for it," it is also "really easy to impress them and make your hobby look awesome." Many of the participants also find it quite gratifying to teach their hobby to other people or to recruit new people into their ranks.

Would you say that your life has changed because of your hobby? How? Among these young people, improvement in the hobby pursuit itself was a commonly mentioned "side effect" of long term participation in hobbies. Most, however, focused more on the ways that they feel their life in general has been impacted by their hobby pursuit. Certainly the time they spend outside of school and other required activities becomes more hobby-focused, leaving less time for other, less personally meaningful pursuits. In addition, some mentioned the benefits of having not just parents but other adults as role models and guides, saying that "it gives you a broader perspective, more diversity, makes you more well-rounded." A clarinetist related the greater focus and level of commitment she had attained through her hobby pursuit to her increased drive and sense of responsibility in her life, stating that "it definitely teaches some really important values." A sculptor talked about how he was more likely to be comfortable taking calculated risks in both his hobby and his life, "just exploring around, seeing what can happen, I'm not really scared of stuff." For almost all participants, the changes they noticed were all-

encompassing, impacting not only their hobby pursuit, and not only a few other parts of their lives, but everything about who they are. As one said, "It changes not just aspects of how you act, but really your identity and how you think of yourself and the world around you. Also, it shapes a lot how people think of you. Like, I'm 'that soccer kid.'"

Home Visits/In-Depth Interviews

Following the focus group sessions, twelve of the participating families consented to take part in home visits and in-depth interviews. These home visits were conducted not only to observe young hobbyists in their natural environment and see how they physically incorporate hobby pursuit into their lives, but also to interview parents for a historical perspective on their child's hobby pursuit.

Parents universally reported very early engagement in hobby-related behavior among their children. Some children began pursuing single-minded interests as early as four years old, although the majority of participants had somewhat later starts, often related to school exposure, for example, the young people who were introduced to the possibilities of drawing in kindergarten art class. For a young collector, it was a school trip to the zoo that introduced her to panda bears and launched a persistent fascination with the creatures and a growing collection of glass and plush figures as well as panda art and books on pandas. "She came home that day with her eyes full of stars and her arms full of panda bear stuff," said her mother:

> I think she was carrying almost every panda thing the zoo's store sold. Obviously, we had given her too much spending money! But it was hard to begrudge what she'd spent. It made her so happy, and soon it was clear that her interest was going to stick.

Another trend was the tendency for hobby-related pursuits to start out broad and shallow and then deepen and gain greater focus over the years, as with the young dancer who took a

variety of dance classes early on but has since focused on one specific type of dance and expanded her knowledge and experience in that area. One father tells this story about his young musician:

Her progression has been really clear, from kind of generally interested all the way to kind of obsessed (but I don't mean that in a bad way). And her focus isn't just related to specifically what she does while she's practicing, or even the way she practices. It's in the way she approaches the whole thing, the whole package. It's all somehow more driven.

Parents also spoke of the challenge in balancing the child's hobby pursuits with other things in his or her life, especially in earlier stages when general exploration is such an important part of learning a hobby. This includes, for many, making certain that free time is part of the weekly routine, as this father makes clear:

I make sure that he has at least one un-scheduled day each week. I've read about those kids that are over-subscribed and they're so stressed out and maybe they get into Harvard, but do we really need to be thinking about Harvard when he's nine? I don't want that for him. He has a lot of interests, too, he wants to do everything, but it's easier to say "No" to something and avoid a crisis than it is to get in a crisis and have to let go of something you've invested in. And he's still just a kid. He needs time to just play and be a kid.

In addition, concern over when to push and when to let the child lead was a commonly cited issue. "We had him enrolled in a scuba diving course and halfway through he decided he wasn't all that interested anymore," stated one mother. "Of course we wanted him to finish. It was something he'd asked for and we had already paid for the full course." Most of the parents

said that it was important to understand where resistance was coming from – was their child afraid? Bored? Stressed out? Having this knowledge helps to inform the next step. Once the cause is addressed, most families resolve this issue with some sort of compromise, for example requiring the child to spend a certain amount of time in a specific pursuit (or complete a course) and then allowing him or her to make a decision independently after that. "It turned out," said this mother, that:

> He was afraid of the ocean, and that was part of the class. Since certification wasn't the goal, we just told him he didn't have to do that part. That made him feel better about staying and then he ended up doing the ocean dives anyway.

> In terms of how young people create and use hobby spaces in their homes, most often (almost exclusively, in fact), hobby pursuit was something that took place in all parts of the house indiscriminately. Bedrooms and family rooms/play rooms were common depositories for hobby-related items and tools, but storage and use was not, in any cases, limited to one spot in the home. Nor was space used related, apparently, to the level of interaction required for a given hobby pursuit. A young person whose hobby is writing or drawing is just as likely to do most of his work in the middle of the family room while others play games or read or pursue their own interests as a video game player who loves cooperative play is likely to play alone in his bedroom.

Themes

All data collected from background surveys, focus group sessions, and home visits were analyzed qualitatively and triangulated in order to ensure complete coverage from all angles and as a way to verify findings from one data collection method to another. Analysis of transcripts from focus groups and home visits/in-depth family interviews revealed three significant themes

at play in the hobby pursuit of gifted young people. The first of these themes, related to the construct of *way of life* (how daily activities are organized and prioritized) in Savolainen's ELIS (1995), is "Always Activated," or the idea that even when participants are not actively engaged in hobby pursuit, hobbies still play an important role in their everyday behavior. The second theme is "Adult Facilitated Access," referring to the ways that adults facilitate hobby pursuit in young people's lives – this theme speaks to the mediating role that adults must play in order to introduce young people to potential hobby interests and to support hobby pursuit once it has germinated. The final theme, related to *mastery of life* (approaches to solving challenges), is "Autonomy," or the ways that gifted youth make choices about how to solve problems and who to consult when outside help is deemed necessary. These themes are discussed below.

"Always Activated" [way of life]

Hobbies play an important role in participants' everyday lives even beyond active pursuit of the hobby itself. There is a sense among participants of being especially "attuned" to hobby-related stimuli, even when engaged in other activities, in a way that allows for suggestions or reminders of things they want to try related to their hobby. For example, pop-up ads that appear while one is generally surfing the Web might draw a gamer's attention to a new game; whether it is a reminder of an earlier mention or whether it is the gamer's first encounter, this brings the hobby to the forefront. Likewise, an unrelated book or television show may turn a hobbyist's mind to try a new dance move. Walking in the mall with friends, a young artist might encounter an object that he or she wants to try to draw. These stimuli seem to provide both reinforcement for continued pursuit of the hobby (and thus continued awareness of the stimuli) and direction for future pursuits within the hobby.

These serendipitous experiences that bring the hobby often to mind are the most passive way that hobbies figure into everyday life. In addition to this, young people will often use their

hobbies both as a way to make their chores more fun (or at least less onerous) and as a motivator

to get their chores done quickly so that more time is available for unadulterated hobby pursuit. In

the former case, one might dance, sing, or listen to music while washing the dishes, for example.

Another common method is to alternate from chore to hobby activity and back. As one

participant expressed it:

> When I'm trying to do my hobby and feed the dogs, I'll just put this big jug I use to fill
>
> their bowls under the sink and I'll just put the sink on very lightly so it takes a while. I'll
>
> go do my hobby for a little bit and then I'll bring their food over to what I'm doing, put
>
> that in there, do my hobby some more. And by the time I come back the jug is filled
>
> enough to give them water.

"Adult Facilitated Access" [adults as mediators of information]

"Access" in the context of hobby pursuit for young people can refer not only to

information about the hobby, but also to hobby-related activity itself. Issues of *awareness*,

affordability, and *availability* all play a role in the ways that adults facilitate access to hobby

pursuits for young people.

Awareness. For all but one participant in the study, initial information about their current

hobbies was provided by an adult, usually a parent or schoolteacher. Most commonly, it was a

subject taught at school like art, band or PE. For a few, an adult in their family (or family friend)

was a professional in the child's hobby area; the relationship itself, in those cases, facilitated the

young person's awareness of the hobby.

In addition to exposure within schools to information and experiences related to potential

hobby pursuits, parents made a great deal of effort outside of school to introduce their children to

a broad range of information and experiences. These came in the form of a wide variety of

activities including museum visits, concerts, day camps, and community events. A common

concern among parents was balancing this broad exposure with deep engagement. Extra-curricular classes, for example, usually require some commitment, at least for a short time; if the young person ends up not wanting to complete the activity, or wanting to change direction, parents worry about fostering a lack of commitment or focus but also about forcing a child to do something unwanted and otherwise unnecessary and thus causing resistance to what could later be something positive if it were not forced.

Affordability. In most cases, cost is a factor in hobby pursuit. Equipment, classes/lessons, and materials are more than the typical tween can afford on his or her own. While many of the participants contribute some toward these commodities by either saving up allowance and/or gift money or trading/selling older items for newer ones, they still need to be subsidized in order to participate fully in their hobby pursuit. Adult caregivers were most often the ones funding this access.

In addition to financial support, many participants commonly received hobby-related items as gifts. In some cases, several adults (usually family) would pool funds toward one significant hobby purchase. One family, for example, with the help of aunts, uncles, and grandparents, all of whom were interested in supporting their young artist, purchased a six week long intensive summer course in comic book creation that was beyond their individual means. Likewise a new musical instrument or entry fees into an important but costly competition make meaningful gifts for young people who otherwise would not have access to these items.

Availability. Another way that adults facilitate access to hobbies for young people is through arranging their lives in such a way that there is both time available for hobby pursuit and a way for young people to get to where the hobby activity is taking place (in cases where it is not in the home or someplace the child already is). In some cases, adults purposefully restrict access

to hobby pursuit, but only for a short time and only where other people are not negatively impacted (for example, a parent might restrict video game time, but typically a member of a sports team is obligated to participate even when being disciplined).

Time. The scheduling needs of the young hobbyist must be balanced against those of the rest of the family. It can be quite complex to negotiate schedules when a family is active, especially given the inflexibility of some pursuits (for example, dance classes or soccer practice that are only offered at certain times). While young people do have some say in the activities in which they participate, adults wield a great deal of power in scheduling their children's lives. The parents in this study used this power not only to support hobby pursuit but also to mandate "down time," where young people had no responsibilities or tasks.

Transportation. Young people fourteen years old and below certainly cannot drive themselves to practices, games, recitals, or anything else. Not all hobby pursuits require transportation, but this is often another area that must be negotiated when it comes to facilitating a young person's ability to participate fully in his or her hobby. Car-pooling was a common strategy, especially in cases where groups of children worked together or in the same place.

Discipline. Hobbies are an enjoyable activity. This characteristic also makes their pursuit a useful tool for adult caregivers to use to encourage desired behavior and discourage undesired behavior in the young hobbyist. The threat of losing their hobby privileges for a period of time was one that these participants took seriously. "Maybe if you don't do it, the consequence is you get your hobby taken away," was a common refrain. Another participant stated that he "couldn't afford" to rush through his chores or do them poorly, for the same reason.

"Autonomy" [mastery of life]

These young hobbyists are very self-directed and confident in their own problem solving capabilities. They are constantly making decisions about how to cope with challenges their hobby pursuit presents, who to consult when help is necessary, and the kind of feedback to take to heart (and, conversely, what not to merit heavily). In addition, many have established rituals as a way to get themselves into the "hobby frame of mind," where it otherwise might be difficult to transition.

Coping with Challenges. When faced with challenges in their hobby pursuit, the resource most commonly used by participants is, by far, themselves. The coping mechanisms these young people employ serve both to help them solve whatever is causing frustration and to reinforce their confidence in their ability to do so.

Review past achievements. Regardless of the nature of the hobby, each of the participants had already put in a great deal of time on it at the time of the study, thus creating a history for themselves. These histories were full of challenges the young people had overcome, successes they had experienced, and things they can do now that at one time they could not. When feeling discouraged about their progress, participants reported that looking at what they had already done successfully helped them to regain perspective and confidence.

Some participants created an actual physical representation of former successes. One young artist, for example, made a notebook for herself that contains different shapes she has drawn as well as her own instructions for creating each shape. If she is having difficulty with a certain technique, she consults the notebook first to see if it is similar to a problem she has already solved. Hobby journals and portfolios can serve the same purpose.

Along the same lines, "sideways pursuits" – activities or techniques that are similar to the one causing frustration, but already mastered – serve as a way to restore confidence and to

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refresh a hobbyist's commitment and drive. These sideways pursuits look different in different hobby types. For example, an artist might simply "draw something else" for a while, or "go to a different picture." A video game player might select a different game or revisit an earlier level in the same game. Likewise, a violinist may revisit a recent recital piece or "hit up the book of Christmas songs we play every year."

Work around mistakes. "Sometimes," one young person said, "when you make a mistake it's like at first you're like, 'WHY DID I HAVE TO MAKE THAT MISTAKE, NOW THE WHOLE THING IS RUINED!' [*many big arm gestures*] but then after you think about it for a little while and look at it again, it maybe isn't so bad and it can be something else that's even maybe better because you didn't expect it, like it was a surprise." In the same way, errors in playing music or volleyball (or any other hobby with the possible exception of collecting) can lead to unexpected discoveries. Certainly not all participants were this easygoing about mistakes, but it was a surprising majority, especially given the sensitivities that are common to gifted young people.

Trial and error. When trying to figure something out related to their hobbies, these young people often employ trial and error or casual experimentation. One participant spoke of "just messing around with camera settings," observing what each setting achieves and taking detailed notes so that she can repeat the process if she finds an effect she likes. Another mentioned drawing one thing over and over, tweaking it each time to see what happens, sometimes even drawing the image backward or upside down just to get a new perspective. These methods were used both on their own merit and as a way to solve particular problems, especially when time and pressure were not at issue.

Take a break. Sometimes a problem just does not get solved in one sitting, no matter how many coping mechanisms are used. At those times, many participants said they needed to "sleep on it," so to speak. This does not necessarily mean going to bed but rather just letting it go for a little while so that one can return to the problem fresh. Commonly, these young people spoke of being able to solve the problem while they doing something entirely different and not even thinking about it.

Outside help. Only after making a concerted effort to address challenges on their own and being unsuccessful do these hobbyists look outside of themselves for assistance. They do not meander on their way to the most helpful resource, either. Parents, for example, are most often not consulted for help with hobby-related challenges; these young people recognize that although their parents are great in general, they are really not much use in terms of helping their children move forward in their hobbies.

A number of factors seem to play a role in the amount of time a young person will spend trying to solve a problem on his or her own before consulting an expert. Full exploration of these phenomena was beyond the scope of the current study, but the patterns were consistent.

- The perceived difficulty of the challenge in terms of the young person's skill level

- The perception of how close the young person is to solving it on his or her own (the closer they feel they are to a solution, the less likely they are to seek outside help)

- The perceived value of the end result as opposed to the perceived value of the process itself (for example, one gamer feels like beating the game is the most important thing, while another feels like the playing and exploring are what is important) – valuing product over process leads to earlier consultation with an expert

Evaluating feedback. In addition to making decisions regarding solving challenges in their hobbies, these young people also make decisions about the value to assign to feedback they receive on their work. Again, parents do not figure heavily into these internal calculations. "You like that they're proud of you," said one participant, but that does not carry the same sort of weight that detailed feedback from an expert does, for the same reason that parents are usually not consulted for advice: they do not know enough about the subject to contribute meaningfully to the young person's growth in it. Likewise, when sharing their work with peers or others who do not share the same hobby, if they get negative feedback, "That's fine. It's just their opinion. I'll just show [my painting] to someone else," said one participant, echoed by many. Again, it is understood by the participants that the audience in this case does not know enough about the hobby to comment in a way that is helpful. Positive feedback feels nice in the same way that it is nice when parents are proud; negative feedback from "outsiders" is essentially ignored.

Rituals. Transitions between activities can be difficult. A shift in focus is required, and it often takes great effort or significant time to achieve this shift fully. Regardless of a hobby's intrinsic structure (e.g., drawing as relatively unstructured, performance violin as relatively structured), the study participants often have established a specific trigger for its activation. A ritual (or habit), can, as some of these young people have discovered, ease and hasten that shift. This ritual is often as simple as climbing onto a low branch of a favorite tree or drinking a glass of milk ("Sometimes I have to drink two glasses, but then I'm ready to go!"). In all of the cases where participants use these sorts of rituals, the young people established the rituals themselves, sometimes by design, others by serendipity.

The next chapter addresses these findings in terms of the questions that drove the research. Challenges and limitations will also be addressed. Finally, implications of the project will be discussed, and recommendations will be made for further inquiry and exploration.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

Up until now, the bulk of research in library and information studies (LIS) on the information behavior of gifted youth has been confined to the school environment and focused on how gifted young people conduct research for school (imposed queries). In addition, this work is not, by design, largely interested in gifted youth themselves but in all youth, with gifted young people (who are assumed to be on the whole more articulate and engaged but otherwise the same) as their representatives. While research has begun to venture into the everyday life information behaviors of young people, this work has up to now been heavily focused on problem solving rather than pleasure seeking. In their work on urban teenagers, for example, Agosto and Hughes-Hassell focused on seven specific areas of adolescent development and related those developmental needs to information needs (Agosto & Hughes-Hassell, 2006a; Hughes-Hassell & Agosto, 2007). In their work with tweens, Fisher et al. (2007) emphasized the struggle toward identity formation and tied that to information needs. One notable exception is O'Leary's report on a young man with Asperger's Syndrome who pursued hockey as a hobby, finding that hobby pursuit contributed to both his identity construction and his connection to a social world, in addition to "diminish[ing] the deficits typically recognized in youth with Asperger's Syndrome" (2011, para. 6).

This study sought to fill identified research gaps by providing a picture of the information behavior of and motivating factors for gifted youth regarding their hobbies. Focus groups and home visits/family interviews were conducted in order to collect rich qualitative data and those data were analyzed qualitatively with the results examined and verified by the young participants themselves.

The previous chapter discussed the findings from this research in terms of the data collection instruments and the primary themes that emerged through analysis. This chapter examines these findings in terms of the research questions that drove the project. A discussion of participants' definitions of 'hobbies' as compared to the research literature based definition is followed by examination of the data regarding each of the sub-questions and then the main question of the project. Finally, limitations, implications, and suggested further research are addressed.

Definition of "Hobby"

Before entering into a full discussion of the findings in terms of the research questions, it is interesting to compare the definition that participants cited for "hobby" to that provided by the serious leisure literature. This section details the literature-based criteria for "hobbies" and addresses this definition with regard to how young hobbyists describe and define their own hobby pursuits.

According to the research literature in serious leisure (Stebbins, 2007), a hobby is defined as a pursuit that is long term, rewarding, and characterized by growth in knowledge and expertise. As a condition of participation in this research study, participants had to have pursued at least one hobby for a minimum of a year. In terms of a child's life, a year is quite a long time, yet even among the youngest participants, this was a relatively short time period in terms of their hobby pursuits – almost all had been active in one hobby for at least four years, many quite a bit longer than that. The use of "fun" and "enjoyment" as recurring terms to describe and define their hobbies speaks to their hobbies being seen as rewarding pursuits. Growth in knowledge and expertise was evidenced in a number of ways: for some, including a young woman in music theater, it was her tightening focus (from general movement classes to dance specializations) and

participation in larger parts in shows and recitals. For a boy in soccer it was the movement from community teams to competitive teams to even higher ranked competitive teams. As demonstrated by participants' own stated definitions (detailed in the previous chapter) and the manifestations of hobby pursuits in their lives, their conception of "hobbies" matches that in the research literature in that it is long term, rewarding, and characterized by growth in knowledge and expertise.

Omissions

While all of the bases appear to have been covered in participants' discussions regarding their hobbies, it was interesting to note that many topics that came up just as casual remarks actually pointed to a number of other pursuits that, according to both the participants' own and the literature-based definition, would also be considered hobbies. This refers specifically to activities participants did not list as hobbies; in fact, one participant stated unequivocally that volleyball was not a hobby for her and yet when it was suggested that participants bring hobby-related items to the group sessions to show them off, she specifically brought her volleyball knee pads. Another participant, in a throwaway comment at the end of the group session when he was selecting his incentive items mentioned that he wanted the green bag because "I love frogs and I have everything about frogs so green is my favorite color." Nowhere had he mentioned frogs before. And indeed, in a follow up home visit, he talked a great deal about frogs and how he had read every book at his school library about frogs and was soon to run out of books at the public library, even the adult books. He had pictures of frogs, was able to reel off several species and their characteristics without even thinking about it, and yet it never occurred to him that frogs might be a hobby. When asked if it was a hobby, he said it was not but was unable to articulate

why. The same was true in many cases and with a variety of types of self-professed "not-hobbies" in evidence.

Research Questions

The research questions for this project focus on the primary theoretical constructs of *way of life* and *mastery of life* as presented in Savolainen's ELIS framework (1995). Likewise, as a point of potential juxtaposition and mutual interaction, the construct of intrinsic (internal) motivation is addressed. The following sections engage with the data collected in terms of these constructs.

Research Question (A): *In what ways do gifted youth integrate the seeking, use, and sharing of information about their hobby pursuits into their daily activities, and how does the pursuit of hobbies impact the way activities are organized?*

This research question addresses the primary construct of "Way of Life." In terms of Savolainen's model (1995), *way of life* refers to the "order of things," or the choices that people make in their everyday lives about what is important, based on culturally and socially understood norms ("things"), and the preferences that they give to activities beyond the workday ("order"). As part of the construct of *way of life*, the concept of "orienting information" plays a vital role. *Orienting information* refers to the practices in everyday life that ground an individual and connect him to his time and location, such as listening to the radio or reading weblogs. An analogous work-related process would be an academic's subscription to the RSS feeds of TOCs for relevant journals in his or her field and subscription to email lists for conference announcements and/or calls for papers. These orienting practices are ongoing and largely habitual or automatic, taking place somewhere between fully active and subconsciously.

As reported in the previous chapter, it was found that the young participants' awareness of hobby-related stimuli is heightened even when engaged in activities not at all connected to their hobby pursuit. This process appears on the surface to mirror the analogous adult processes as laid out by Savolainen (1995) – that is, young people apparently experience the same types of information orienting processes as do adults.

Not addressed in the ELIS framework, however, is the exact genesis of these habitual scanning behaviors, or the processes through which they come to be. At least as far as hobby pursuit is concerned, one participant addressed exactly this issue:

> I don't go to art shows or anything like that to show my work or get inspiration or learn more. I can google if I want to draw a particular kind of picture and then I'll just practice it on my own where nobody has to look at it yet. I'm still pretty new at drawing so I don't need an art class or to be like in contests so I don't pay attention to if those things are happening. I think when I get better at it I'll want to know and learn more like in a class or try to be in competitions, but not right now.

It appears, therefore, that there may be a threshold where, when it is crossed, through whatever means (skill acquisition, for example, or perhaps other life events bringing it to the forefront), passive intake of information becomes more purposive until in that one area it settles at a higher level of orienting information. That is, it may require practical (more active and focused) information processes in order to discover effective places to begin to scan habitually.

In terms of hobby pursuit itself and the ways that priorities are set and activities are organized, young people exercise a great deal of autonomy. It is common that they will "squeeze" hobby-related activities into the small cracks of time between other scheduled activities. Because hobbies play such an important role in identity formation and reinforcement,

it is also common that these gifted youth apply their hobby pursuits in creative ways, even while engaging in work (school, chores, etc.) – as mentioned previously, these participants often use their hobbies as a way of getting through particularly difficult, unpleasant, or lengthy tasks.

Research Question (B): *In what ways do gifted youth approach the search for, use, and sharing of information about their hobby pursuits, and how does this impact other areas of the gifted young person's life?*

This question addresses the primary construct of "mastery of life." In ELIS, *mastery of life* refers to one's approach to solving problems, an approach informed by social and cultural factors in interaction with one's personality and unique life experiences. Savolainen articulates the malleable nature of *mastery of life*, but argues that when development does occur (and sometimes it does not), the process is rather slow and thus difficult to observe and dissect (1995). All of his own work, however, has been done with adults. While humans continue developing across a lifetime, beyond a certain age this process typically slows down quite a bit. Young people, however, are known to develop quite rapidly, making it reasonable to assume that a young person's *mastery of life* might develop at the same type of rapid pace when compared with that of adults.

While "orienting information" processes can be tied to *way of life*, "practical information" processes are more closely aligned with *mastery of life*. These processes are where information is actively sought in response to a problem or situation. Whereas orienting processes are ongoing and largely habitual or automatic, practical information activities are by their nature episodic, generally possessing an active arc of engagement with specific information processes (seeking, finding, using, sharing).

One's approach to solving problems, according to Savolainen (1995), can be primarily optimistic or pessimistic, and either cognitively or affectively situated. Presumably the most well-adapted typology is the optimistic-cognitive, where one believes that a systematic approach to a problem will lead to a solution; the least well-adjusted would be the pessimistic-affective typology, where one simply believes oneself incapable of solving a presented problem. Another aspect of one's approach to problem solving is the belief that a problem is worth solving and that one has the (internal and/or external) tools necessary to do so.

When it comes to hobby-related problem solving approaches, this small group of gifted young people consistently evidences, as demonstrated in the earlier discussion regarding autonomy, a confidence in the worthiness of the challenges they face, belief in the solvability of those challenges, and faith in their own capacity to do so. What was also a consistent theme, however, was the feeling that things they had learned in pursuit of their hobby could also be applied effectively to other endeavors. For example, one young sculptor discovered in the course of her artistic pursuits that if she really focused her mind on the project itself instead of letting her mind wander, her work improved. Her work, that is, more closely matched the image she had of it in her head. That worked so well and so consistently for her that she thought it might work in other things too, like schoolwork. It turned out that her instincts were right and she was doing better work in a lot of areas just with that one "little" thing she learned. Not, she was quick to clarify, that she was doing badly before; but, "I get more out of the [school]work now, and it's easier to understand that some stuff might be important even if you don't understand why at first. Focusing more on it helps that to make more sense."

Another common experience was that of starting out learning broad things related to the hobby and then increasing in specialization as expertise grows, along lines of interest and

experience. For example, a young person might begin by taking photographs of absolutely

everything while learning or discovering general things related to lighting and composition; once

those basic techniques reach a certain level of mastery, however, it is not unusual for these

activities to become more tightly focused on a certain subject or certain lighting effects, as broad

experience introduces one to more and more possible areas of interest. Just as the young dancer

began with a general introduction to dance and then has narrowed her focus over the years, so,

too, do other young hobbyists begin to specialize once broad coverage is insufficient to keep one

curious. This experience appeared to transfer readily to other situations as well, as one young

hobbyist said:

> And since my hobby works that way, I wondered if other things did too, like if you're
>
> studying history at school and it's really boring because it's the whole United States,
>
> which is huge, and maybe the Revolutionary War and you have to know names and stuff,
>
> that maybe it would help to learn more about just King George or something, to be more
>
> interesting and see how it all fits together better. So I tried it and King George is actually
>
> really cool, but it didn't happen exactly like the book says, so it was fun figuring that out.

Research Question (C): *How do gifted youth maintain interest in the pursuit of their hobbies*

over time?

Just as the vast bulk of LIS literature has been problem-focused, so, too, has a great deal

of the literature on intrinsic motivation. So many of the motive forces suggested in this body of

work are derived from a response to a problem base state. And just as the body of literature in

LIS has experienced the first glimmerings of research that does not take a problem state for

granted as the underpinnings of inquiry, so, too, has work in psychology and motivation begun a

shift to the right of zero. Indeed, if this single set of participants were to be examined as the test

case and solely for what motivates them internally, especially in hobby pursuit, the entire body

of literature would likely need to be re-imagined with a wholly positive premise from which to

derive other maxims.

As it currently stands, scholarship on intrinsic motivation generally concludes that

individual traits (personality, preferences), the context in which the individual is situated (social,

cultural), and the nature of the task (structure, topic, difficulty) are all important variables when

examining the origin of internal motive forces. Physical and/or social needs, cognitive

dissonance, and the desire for the world to be predictable have all been examined as motive

factors. Less deficit-based is the scholarship on desire or pleasure as motive forces. While desire

and pleasure seem, in a common sense way at least, to play a role in motivation in hobby pursuit

(enjoyment being unanimously the first trait participants in this study used to define the word

"hobby"), the occasional need to persevere and/or overcome difficulty makes it clear that

pleasure is a necessary but not sufficient motive force.

In contrast to the LIS and psychological literature, research in serious leisure has from the

beginning had an emphasis on joyful pursuit and pleasure seeking. The differentiation between

types of serious leisure (volunteering, casual leisure such as watching television, and hobby

pursuit) provides a convenient distinction where information behavior is concerned, but until

recently none of the literature has connected serious leisure and information behavior. Volunteer

work is quite similar to paid work in terms of motivation and information seeking and casual

leisure pursuits tend to be shallow and thus not remarkably noteworthy in terms of information

seeking (Stebbins, 2007). Hobby pursuit, however, has been demonstrated to be information rich

(Hartel, 2007) and thus worthy of continued examination.

Hobby life cycle. The discussion in psychological literature regarding outside influences that can have a positive impact on intrinsic motivation has a great deal to contribute to this part of the conversation, regardless of whether it is based in or outside of the aegis of schools. This literature (see Brophy, 2004; Deci, Koestner, & Ryan, 2001; Gottfried, 1985, 1990; Hickey, 2003; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Stipek, 2002) has suggested that when a child experiences some freedom in his learning experiences or autonomy in deciding where or how she places her learning energy, this can be very motivating. One of the things that commonly appeals to children being newly introduced to a potential hobby is the flexibility and free exploration afforded by a lack of external pressure to perform. Personal interests are an important part of motivation in hobby pursuits, but external factors like this often play a significant formative role when a hobby is just beginning.

An appreciative audience and positive feedback are also quite important in the early stages of hobby formation. As one artist said, when he first started drawing it was because he thought it seemed cool and he just wondered if he could do it. When it turned out he could, his teachers and parents encouraged him and his friends asked him to draw things for them. Early on, he even had a small cadre of peers willing to pay a bit for new installments of his original superhero comic.

Once some time has been invested and expertise has been built, a shift occurs where the pursuit becomes more challenging. At this point, however, the investment already put into the pursuit begins to weigh into the value of continued pursuit. In addition, the building up of small successes, solving problems while they are small and easily manageable, creates a problem-solving history which can increase confidence for facing current and future challenges. Quitting at this point would be wasting all the time already invested along with minimizing the

importance of those early successes. Social factors also play a role here; as one young hobbyist said, "If you just sit there and not do anything [*when it gets hard for a little while*], if you quit on that hobby, that proves that you'd be a quitter. And no one really likes a quitter."

Novelty within familiarity. Another very common refrain was the juxtaposition of known and unknown. One can draw a single object in an infinite variety of ways; likewise with a few bars in a musical piece. One can apply familiar techniques to unfamiliar objects or situations, as well. There appears to be something compelling about the idea of roots and wings – grounding and exploration. As one young man said, "[Learning new tricks in skateboarding] gives your mind something to think of while you're having something fun to do."

Feeling of accomplishment. Often, the motivation when a hobby related task is difficult is anticipation of the accomplishment that will result. As mentioned earlier, many participants are quite familiar with the feeling that leads to a victory dance – knowing it has happened before is often enough on its own to keep a young hobbyist struggling through. They know that "If you keep going, your mind will get smarter." And they understand from experience that, as one young actor said, "the success you feel after nailing an audition, getting a lead, it's worth all of it."

Curiosity. Aside from this expected feeling of accomplishment (a response that could conceivably be categorized under "pleasure"), curiosity is the factor that appears to underlie all of the motivating factors addressed here. In psychology literature (Duckworth & Quinn, 2009; Duckworth & Seligman, 2005; Mischel, Shoda, & Peake, 1988; Reeve, Nix, & Hamm, 2003; Rotter, 1966), four traits of the individual have been discussed as likely being very important to the discussion of intrinsic motivation: "grit," or the combination of passion and perseverance, an internal locus of control, self-discipline, and the ability to delay gratification.

Curiosity, though, if properly cultivated, might have a positive impact on each of these personal factors. For example, a person who is not necessarily all that self-disciplined might, in the face of deep curiosity, develop the self-discipline required to satisfy it. It certainly warrants further study.

Durable benefits. Another way to examine motivating factors is to view participants' hobby pursuits through the lens of Stebbins' (2007) eight durable benefits that hobbies are purported to possess. These durable benefits are related to hobby pursuit, in contrast with other forms of serious leisure like volunteer work or casual pursuits, and thus tie in also to information seeking and use behaviors. The eight durable benefits of hobby pursuit are: self-actualization, self-enrichment, self-expression, regeneration/renewal of self, feelings of accomplishment, enhancement of self-image, social interaction and belongingness, and lasting physical products of the activity. These, while not explicitly mentioned in participants' own definition of hobbies, were nevertheless in evidence in their discussion, as illustrated below.

Self-actualization. One of the ideas most frequently stated among participants was the enjoyment of finding new challenges in their hobby (information seeking). The challenge itself is part of what makes the hobby appealing, and the chance to enhance their own growth, whether or not they said that in so many words. One young artist mentioned the "so many different things you could draw and ways you could draw them," even though when she started drawing she was not, according to her, very good at it. This striving to discover and meet new challenges, to use and stretch their own talents, embodies self-actualization.

Self-enrichment. These young people could spend all of their time watching television or hanging out at the mall. Instead, they choose to pursue these activities that are, in their own words, sometimes difficult, sometimes even boring. Yet even when their pursuit of

these activities is not quite so enthusiastic as usual, they still return to it, finding they get more out of it even at its worst moments than they do from other, more casual pursuits. As one young musician expressed it, he "has something to look forward to," because he knows it will be fulfilling when he gets past the difficult part.

Self-expression. Without exception, these young people like sharing their work with others (information sharing). Whether this takes the form of achievement badges on video game consoles, drawings or other art, or playing sports or musical instruments, they are proud of their work as an extension of themselves. In fact, these participants not only enjoy sharing their work, but also use their hobbies as a way of identifying themselves to others. They display hobby-related artifacts in shared spaces as a way of showing that they like the activity, that it is important to them. In fact, many identify so strongly with their hobby as an extension of themselves that this was a common sentiment: "That's really the main half of my body part. Like, most of me is this hobby. Half of me is this hobby." Beyond using the hobby as a marker of their identity, they emphasize showing their best work – they don't want to show their "mess-ups" not because they are ashamed of those mess-ups, but because they do not feel that errors are an accurate representation of themselves or their work.

Regeneration/renewal of self. Activities related to their hobbies are sought out as both consolation and rewards in their lives. Many participants mentioned that after completing something hard that they did not want to do (homework, chores, etc.), they would reward themselves with working on their hobbies. The depletion they experience as a result of completing an assigned but unwanted task is thus balanced out and exceeded by the fulfillment experienced from participating in a challenging but self-selected task. As one participant stated succinctly, "I do it [the unpleasant or difficult task] and then reward myself with drawing."

Feelings of accomplishment. In some form or other, all participants talked about being proud of and liking the work that they produce in their hobby. Whether it is a well-blocked goal in soccer, completion of an especially difficult level in a video game, or mastering a complex passage for guitar, "It's exciting, once you beat that super tough thing." Many participants mentioned doing victory dances after successfully completing something difficult.

Enhancement of self-image. Because these young people identify so strongly with their hobbies and are proud of the work they do in their hobbies, they have many opportunities to experience pride in themselves. While many spoke of enjoying showing off to others, a balanced picture emerged of young people who are well aware of what they are able to do and not afraid to show it, but also aware of and comfortable with their limitations and getting help when they need it (information sharing and seeking). One musician, for example spoke of her pride in performing for her family, friends, and teachers during recitals; and while a rather large error she once made in a performance bothered her, it only made her get more help and work harder; and then she was even more proud of herself.

Social interaction and belongingness. While all of the participants enjoy showing off their work to any appreciative audience, there is a special place reserved for those who are really in the know regarding their hobby pursuits. These young people, for example the young woman whose grandfather introduced her to photography and for whom her grandfather is her favorite critic and confidant, derive great satisfaction from talking about their work with other people who really understand it (information sharing). This not only allows them to be completely themselves but also provides opportunities to dig deeply into a topic that they love with people who are important to them (if only by virtue of the fact that they understand and

echo it back). These interactions are an important way that hobby pursuits are encouraged, reinforced, and renewed.

        Lasting physical products of the activity. Physical products of their hobbies come in all forms, shapes, and sizes for this group of young people. For some, it is the art work they display on their walls, for others it is the ribbons or medals they earn from games and competitions. For yet others, it is their collections on display or artifacts that relate to their work (for example, playbills or theater tickets). Interestingly, the case of video games and their products do not seem to be fully covered in this condition. While some things certainly qualify as physical products, such as video game cases or game manuals, other things do not seem to fit. Gaming achievement badges, a phenomenon limited almost solely to pixels and codes within consoles and games themselves, usually have no physical manifestation, yet they are on display as much as any other ephemera related to hobby pursuit, for anyone with a game console and gaming "friends" (relationships that are manually set up online with others that one may or may not know "in real life" but who can view player statistics, chat, and even engage in multi-player games together with the hobbyist).

Main Research Question: *What are the everyday life information behaviors of gifted young*
        people related to their hobby pursuits?

All of the participants are simultaneously quite self-sufficient, perfectly comfortable attempting to address challenges on their own, and quite savvy about where to get help when they need it. They make decisions every day about who to share secrets with and who to show off to. It is important to note that their reasons for sharing differ based on how experienced their audience is. That is, when one is sharing hobby information with newcomers to the hobby, the reasons for sharing tend to lean more toward showing off or recruiting people into the hobby.

When sharing with fellow experts, however, the emphasis tends to be on giving or receiving feedback. They also decide who to trust (and who not to), where to go when they need help versus when they need encouragement, and what sorts of information sources will give them what they need.

Age is not a relevant factor in any of the choices these young people make, except where it comes to purely practical issues of finances and transportation. This section gathers all of the previously discussed ideas into a cohesive whole in order to provide a beginning understanding of gifted young people's information behaviors surrounding their hobby pursuits.

Adults as information source and audience. Adults play a number of important roles in young peoples' lives and hobby pursuits. From a purely practical standpoint, adults are the primary forces behind such things as extracurricular class enrollments, magazine subscriptions, and transportation to and participation in a variety of enriching activities that can both reinforce existing hobbies and introduce potential new areas of exploration.

Adults also serve as a potentially appreciative audience when young people are ready to show off their hobbies. Here, though, young people exercise more overt autonomy. Parents, for example, are typically not sought for in-depth advice regarding a performance or other product of hobby pursuit. This is similar to findings in other LIS research on young people. For example, in their work with urban teens, Agosto and Hughes-Hassell found that mentors are often sought who can be helpful with particular issues and parents are rarely among those mentioned, and for similar reasons (2006b). Parents are generally considered as not being expert in the hobby area and so are sought (in the context of hobby pursuit) only when an appreciative audience or a new class, subscription, or experience is desired. In the current study, only one instance arose where a parent was actually expert in his own child's hobby, lacrosse. In this case, the parent was sought

when lacrosse-specific hobby information was desired but not consulted for information about

playing drums. Fisher, et al. (2007) found, in contrast, that while tweens rely on adults for a lot

of their information needs, there is a perceived disconnect and adults are often seen as limiters

rather than providers of information. The current study addressed the same age group but

because the focus was on pleasure seeking, the findings are less grounded in deficit and

frustration.

Even within these loose guidelines, young people make choices about which work to

show to which appreciative audience. One young artist, for example, shows flower drawings to

her mother because she knows her mother loves flowers, but reserves portrait drawings for her

uncle, an experienced artist and favorite mentor.

Other kids as information source and audience. Other young people serve most often

as touch points when it comes to being information sources. Essentially, it is important for young

people to know what other young people are doing, and what is cool (and not so cool). When it

comes to hobbies like video games or Legos, school mates are a good way of determining the

buzz. For other hobbies, schoolmates might play a smaller role in this function than would

teammates or band mates. Again, these findings are similar to others in LIS, with the exception

that in other studies (e.g., Agosto & Hughes-Hassell, 2006b, Fisher, et al., 2007), seeking

information from peers is often considered preferable to seeking it from adults for reasons like

avoiding trouble or embarrassment.

When other young people are the audience rather than an information source, other

factors come into play. As stated earlier, hobby pursuit is a way that young people identify

themselves both to themselves and to others. Showing off to other kids takes on a different

dimension from showing off to adults, as well. Typically with adults, young people show off in

order to garner approval; when showing off to other kids, however, it tends to be more of a one up man ship process, even when very friendly. Along the same lines is the dichotomy between wanting to share information and help others learn about the hobby and wanting to keep artists' secrets. Financial gain seemed to play a role (as in with the young man who sold his comics to other kids and did not want to add market competition) in a lower willingness to share, as did a reluctance to engage with people who are "clueless" about the hobby and "would have lots of questions about stuff you already did a long time ago." There was also a reluctance to share information if it would spoil someone's experience (e.g., telling how a book ends or giving cheats for an important boss in a video game).

Other information sources. As part of their perpetual environmental scanning, these young people rely on a wide variety of sources and source types to keep them informed about hobby-related facts, opportunities, and activities. Some of these resources are posted in places they typically frequent, especially related to their hobby (for example, announcements for specialized class offerings on a bulletin board in a practice hall for a musician or ad posters in video game stores). Topical magazine subscriptions are also a popular choice across a variety of types of hobby pursuit, available in a broad array of subjects that continues to expand into finer and finer areas of specialization as well as out into other areas entirely. Radio is another way to connect, especially with community events related to hobby pursuit. Nonprofit radio, being community oriented, is an excellent source for some, but others rely more on popular music stations without feeling as though they are missing out on important things.

While surfing online in general, pop-up ads, in their (un)fortunate tendency to map to a user's known interests, have become a way that the participants in this study encountered new information related to their hobby. These ads could be anything from a new free video game to

horse race announcements to spa day specials, particularly interesting to those young women who pursue glamour as a hobby. The fact that they are already hyper aware of hobby related phenomena make them that much more likely to note and respond to this sort of advertisement.

Sometimes young people go online specifically for hobby-related purposes, including reading or posting to hobby-related online bulletin boards and perusing hobby-related online marketplaces. This was true across all categories of hobbies. When there is not a specific site in mind, however, often a hobby-related search will yield surprises that can lead a young hobbyist in unanticipated directions.

"Talking shop." "Talking shop," regardless of a conversational companion's age, incorporates aspects of both showing off and of giving and receiving feedback. In one young gamer's case, showing his "geek friends" how he's recently beaten a game is great fun. He and these friends talk about video games a lot:

> It'll start off somebody mentioning a game, we'll talk and talk, sometimes we talk about strategies. It'll remind us of another game, and so on and so forth. This lasts until we get completely off topic and start arguing about something. Usually about video games.

Belonging to a group of people who speak one's own unique language, who get the things that one values, provides reinforcement and validation of the hobby and thus, because hobby pursuit is so closely tied to identity, of the validity and value of the self. This is in contrast to attempting to engage in hobby-related conversation or activity with a non-expert. When someone doesn't know about the hobby, "it's hard to explain to them and you get stuck doing something you learned a long time ago when you want to do or talk about more advanced stuff."

Worthy of note is the fact that although these young people appeared to be very comfortable with technology, utilizing email and the web both for informational and casual

purposes, none in this study made use of online communities in the pursuit of their hobbies. Email was utilized to get information about upcoming practices or other hobby-related events, the internet was used to search websites and hang out in casual chat rooms, but as far as hobby-specific support and encouragement, these participants stayed much closer to home. All of these young people had hobbies that were able to be pursued and supported locally, however. That is, they had established networks surrounding their hobbies close to home and did not have the need to look further, and thus did not look further. For hobbies that are less commonly practiced, online communities might provide the kinds of support and encouragement not available locally. This concept is worth exploring further.

Recognition of reliable vs. unreliable information sources. When it comes to finding hobby-related information, this group of young people is very savvy about evaluating the source. As mentioned previously, the participants of this study treated adults who are not experts in their hobby (namely, parents) with a sort of doting affection, allowing them to view and offer encouragement, but not to contribute in any substantive way beyond actual resources. That is, positive feedback is nice but does not take up the mental space that feedback from an expert requires and deserves. Expert feedback, on the other hand, really helps a hobbyist to improve their work, because this feedback is specific and detailed, pointing to new techniques or alternative ways of doing things. In addition, when an expert is impressed with one's work, this carries more weight than it does coming from a parent whose job, it is generally understood by this population, is to be supportive and encouraging, regardless.

Other young people who are not in the hobbyist's crowd are often considered suspect sources of information. On the one hand, they all want "to be cool like the other kids who have done cool things. So, everyone's talking about it and they don't want to be the only one left out

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so they want to act like they've [done the cool thing] like the other kids." Sometimes those kids also lie just because they really want the lie to be true. These hobbyists have been known to do it themselves occasionally so they understand the impulse, but also recognize that the practice makes others unreliable about specific things (but not necessarily overall).

Then there is the group of kids who knows a lot about a hobby-related topic and thus might be adequate information sources if they "didn't get all crazy about it and then start arguing with you." These kids will do things "like getting bossy, telling you you're doing it wrong. I'd rather learn better ways to do it on my own. And maybe they might tell you things they think are right but aren't."

Hobby pursuit, information seeking, and academic success. Data collected for this study did not directly address topics like academic success. A prolonged discussion of academic success related to success in hobby pursuit is, therefore, beyond the scope of this discussion. However, it is worthy of note that homework came up often in participant responses. Universally, homework was considered to be a top priority, taking precedence over both hobby pursuit and other, more casual pursuits like just hanging out with friends. While it cannot be concluded for certain that these young people, so manifestly successful in their hobbies, were therefore also successful academically, it might reasonably be inferred. Likewise, skills learned during hobby pursuit that transferred successfully to academic pursuit were mentioned often enough in the participants' discussion that further exploration into the direct impact of successful hobby pursuit on academic performance is definitely in order.

In addition, more refined hobby pursuit leads directly to more refined information seeking. During the hobby life cycle, as discussed above, there is a movement from general and broad-based exploration to more specific and focused exploration. Once one is aware that the

possibility of an interesting pursuit exists, it is important to understand not only that there might be more information about it, but also where that information might be found and how to go about finding it. Beyond this, once a broad and general understanding has been established, one must be able to synthesize new information with older information and to derive further inquiries from it. This is a lot of what keeps these young people coming back: the ability to continue finding new things to hold their interest within the hobby. And again, while definitive conclusions cannot be drawn based upon the data collected in this study, there is enough to suggest that further research into the connections between success in information seeking related to hobby pursuit and success in other information seeking is warranted.

Limitations

In addition to those supposed limitations brought on by the very nature of qualitative research, this study had some signification limitations of its own that will need to be addressed in future research. These limitations relate primarily to three factors, including the fact that the researcher acted alone throughout the project, thus introducing potential biases and errors in interpretation; the homogeneous nature of the participant pool with regard to age and the apparent structure of their home lives (regardless of family make-up); and the minimal nature of demographic data collected, making it difficult to draw conclusions based on demographic factors.

The most significant limitation of this study is the fact that it was conducted by one person, the researcher gathering and analyzing the data alone. The lack of input from others can introduce a significant bias to findings. In addition, errors of interpretation can, without the input of others familiar with the data, lead to erroneous conclusions. This limitation is mitigated in small part by an awareness and earlier discussion of biases the researcher holds. In addition,

results of the analysis were presented to participants for their feedback. They were given a web page that contained preliminary findings in child-friendly format and two weeks in which to identify any errors and add anything they felt was missing. All three participants providing feedback confirmed the researcher's findings. This provided an added level of insurance that the findings reflect the authentic lived experience of the participants as much as possible. Still, the study will need to be replicated in order to provide confirmation and refinement of these findings.

Although a great deal of data were collected and analysis was confirmed by participants based on their own experience, this study was conducted with a very small sample. This small sampling could be considered a limitation, although the qualitative nature of the study, the depth and breadth of the data collected, and the confirmation of findings from participants themselves argue against this as a true handicap. Likewise, the study itself was designed to be exploratory in nature rather than explanatory. More research will certainly be required to confirm and add to the conclusions here, but even with the small sampling, what has been discovered and explored at least begins to fill a significant gap in the literature regarding young people, hobbies, information behavior, and motivation.

Another limitation of the study, however, is that except for three participants, all were aged eight to eleven years old. Initially, it was intended that equal numbers of young people in two separate age groups would participate (eight to eleven year olds in one age group and twelve to fourteen year olds in the other). It is unknown why there were not more participants in the older age group. As a result, no conclusions can be drawn based on different age groupings.

In addition, no systematic data were collected on family make-up, for example single parents, blended families, family occupations, number/age of siblings, etc. This information

could have an impact on certain aspects of the findings. While this is not necessarily a limitation of the study, it does point to potential areas for further exploration.

While the findings here can only be said to be true for this select grouping of gifted young people, it remains to be seen whether the results can apply not only to other gifted youth but also to more typical youth. The interest for this particular project was in gifted young people, but these frameworks have yet to be used in the context of youth in general. This project has demonstrated that at least with a sub-population of young people these frameworks provide a valid lens through which to examine them.

Recruiting subjects was a significant challenge throughout the course of the project. Because the research was being conducted specifically outside the school environment, recruiting efforts in schools – from attaining county permission to attaining individual school permission, to attaining individual teacher permission, to traveling all over the tri-county area to hand out flyers and answer young people's questions on the fly – ended up having such little return on investment that it is not a recruiting method this researcher will attempt again. Instead, a much more successful method turned out to be recruiting through online venues that are gifted friendly and more likely to be seen by parents than a flyer stuffed into a backpack. The participant pool had to expand to allow for participation from out of the city and even out of the state, which meant additional layers of permission from the human subjects review board were necessary. In future research projects, this venue will be utilized more heavily and there will be more flexibility in scheduling group sessions. It was assumed that a weekend session would be the easiest for families to attend, but that did not turn out to be the case and contributed to the lower than hoped for number of participants.

Implications

Although the issues as discussed above inarguably limit the full applicability of this study, the preliminary findings do imply some exciting possibilities in terms of both research and practice. The discussion below illustrates some of these possibilities.

Implications for Research

In terms of the frameworks at play in this project, all were devised with adults in mind and have been tested primarily with adults. While Savolainen's ELIS has been used to examine young adult information behaviors (see, for example, Agosto & Hughes-Hassell, 2006a, 2006b, Hughes-Hassell & Agosto, 2007), the emphasis to date has been on problem solving rather than on information seeking for pleasure. This project demonstrates that these frameworks may be used effectively with younger populations and with a focus on information seeking for pleasure. However, it is necessary to add a new dimension in order to account for the need that young people have for adults to facilitate their access. While both the study with urban teens (Agosto & Hughes-Hassell, 2006a, 2006b; Hughes-Hassell & Agosto, 2007) and with tweens (Fisher, et al., 2007) briefly addressed the role of adults in the information lives of young people, neither really addressed adults in depth as people who introduce concepts (like potential hobbies to pursue) or who (can) play a consistent positive mentoring role in young people's lives. In all but one case, the hobbies that the participants engaged in were introduced to them by adults in their lives; in all cases, some sort of continued adult support was necessary. It is possible that other populations possess the same sort of need for support and/or mediation in terms of meeting their information needs. Especially for more vulnerable populations such as the frail elderly, prisoners, and homeless, this added dimension may be crucial to a complete understanding of their information behaviors.

While it has been demonstrated that the models can be applied effectively to a youth population there is still a need for a clearer understanding of the ways that everyday life information behavior develops in young people and the extent to which academic and everyday life information behavior inform and are informed by one another. This project illustrates that transfer can occur between the two; it behooves us to discover exactly why and how this transfer occurs so that it can be fostered to encourage success and empowerment in young people.

Implications for Practice

In addition to implications for research and the theoretical frameworks at play, this project can also speak to practical issues. It is now known, for example, that the majority of hobby pursuits in which these young people are engaged were introduced to them through programs at school (art class or chorus, for example). It is also known that hobby pursuit plays a significant and positive role in the growth and development of these young people both within and beyond their hobby pursuit. In an era of deep budget cuts in schools, this project provides an argument for rethinking these cuts and keeping these programs alive.

Given the reality that these programs are, however, being cut right and left, it also becomes important for the general public to be made more fully aware of community activities and events, especially those that are free or low cost. Public and school libraries can play a significant role in this effort, both by providing these sorts of activities (as with the public library that hosted a rock climbing wall for one of the participants) and by providing easy access to information about other things happening locally.

In addition to offering community-based activities and serving as a warehouse of information on other community activities, libraries can also support the genesis and maintenance of hobby pursuit through a variety of other means. From this small sample, it can be

inferred that activities such as drawing, musical performance, team sports, and dancing are popular among young hobbyists. Shifting themes (displays, activities, etc.) that illustrate these pursuits might expose young people to aspects of which they were not previously aware and thus potentially introduce them to a lifelong passion. Offering child-friendly research guides on a variety of activities is another way that libraries (both school and public) can support hobby pursuits – in fact, young hobbyists themselves might derive a great deal of satisfaction from helping to create a research guide in their own areas of expertise.

It can also be inferred from this study that adult mentors play a significant role in hobby pursuits for young people. A library could keep a database of willing and experienced mentors in a variety of areas of expertise, run workshops on how to be an effective mentor to young people, and/or play a role in helping to arrange "internships" in a variety of hobby-related fields for their young patrons.

For adult caretakers, the research suggests that exposure to a wide variety of activities can help a child to discover areas he or she would like to explore further. Once a child decides upon a hobby (or hobbies) to pursue, parents/guardians can most effectively support the pursuit by following the child's lead: provide the information and tools they need when they request it, and provide cheerleading as necessary (including working through resistance), but otherwise a "hands-off" approach allows the young hobbyist to develop the confidence, pride, and autonomy evidenced by the young participants in this project.

Because gifted young people are, first and foremost, young people, the findings from this study are very likely applicable to youth in general. Certainly, the work that libraries and schoolteachers do to support the growth and development of hobbies can benefit more than just those young people identified as gifted. Hobbies, because they are self-selected based on interest

and the belief that one has or can reasonably acquire the necessary skills, provide enjoyment and fulfillment for those who undertake them, regardless of their intellectual ability.

Future Research Directions

Further research is definitely warranted. This project should be replicated with the limitations discussed above addressed in order to confirm the findings independently. Beyond this, however, several areas of potential interest emerged in the course of analysis as being beyond the scope of the current study but worthy of future inquiry:

1) At what point does information seeking in hobby pursuit shift from the practical to the orienting? How does this happen and what does the process look like?

    Gaining a better understanding of this process could provide a means through which learning in general and hobby pursuit specifically might be supported.

2) How do young hobbyists find/identify experts?

    An understanding of this process can provide a great deal of information that can be helpful to teachers, parents, mentors, librarians, etc., in working with young people and teaching them to think critically about information sources.

3) How does hobby pursuit grow and change over time?

    While this project has provided a snapshot of the ways that hobby pursuit works in the lives of this sample of young people, a longer term project that follows subjects over the course of several years could provide valuable insight into the especially complex areas of relationships among factors impacting hobby pursuit as well as the ways in which hobby pursuit grows and changes over time.

4) To what extent do specific factors impact a hobbyist's tendency to address challenges on their own versus seeking expert help?

This project identified some factors that seem to impact when and how young people seek out help with their hobbies. It would be beneficial to explore this more deeply to discover if there are other factors at play as well and how these factors come to play in these decisions. An understanding of this phenomenon can provide guidance that could help other young people with frustration, or ways to approach potential sources of information, or a variety of other important factors.

5) In what ways might the experiences of hobby pursuit and everyday life information seeking differ for young people from less fortuitous backgrounds than those who participated in this study?

All of the participants in this project reported highly positive social experiences regarding their hobby pursuit. Yet each of them practiced hobby pursuit in culturally well-accepted areas of interest, within engaged and highly supportive families and communities. An awareness of the experience of information seeking and sharing within hobby pursuit for a broader spectrum of participants will enable a more complete and nuanced understanding of the processes involved and may have significant implications for outreach to and support of more vulnerable populations.

Conclusion

Everyday Life Information Seeking, serious leisure, and theories of intrinsic motivation, when taken together and examined at the points where they coincide, appear to be effective lenses through which to view the information behaviors of gifted youth regarding their hobbies. This exploratory study has established that although the frameworks were derived with adults in mind (or with school work as opposed to leisure time pursuits), at least for this sample the results translated well to the youth context. While more work needs to be done, this project has begun to

fill significant gaps in the literature on young people, information behavior, hobbies, and

motivation.

MAJOR CHILD DEVELOPMENT AGES AND STAGES

Table A.1 *Major Child Development Ages and Stages*

	Piaget	Erikson	Vygotsky
important concepts	1. Children learn through interaction with their surroundings. 2. Learning does not take place until development has made it possible. 3. Development is an internal process that does not rely on feedback from others but on observation.	1. Each stage is a conflict that must be mastered 2. The environment has a significant impact on a child's ability to master each level of conflict. 3. Development occurs throughout the lifetime [only childhood is covered here]	1. Presence of a More Knowledgeable Other (MKO) 2. Language use 3. Zone of Proximal Development, where a child is presented with material just beyond his or her ability and is supported by a MKO
stage (birth to 12-18 mos.) [Erikson] (birth to 2 years) [Piaget]	Sensorimotor - the child learns through using his senses and his reflexes. - primary tasks include sense of self as separate from other and object permanence	Trust vs. Mistrust - task is to form a trusting relationship with a caregiver	Stages in this theory are related not to the development of the child from one level to another, but to mastery of each challenge with which he or she is faced. This process begins with a task which the child cannot complete alone but can complete with support and moves through attempts and then success at completing the task alone and generalizing to similar tasks.
stage (18 mos. - 3 years)	(text above)	Autonomy vs. Shame/Doubt - task is to develop physical skills including toilet training	N/A

Table A.1 *Continued*

	Piaget	Erikson	Vygotsky
stage (3-6 years) [Erikson] (2-7 years) [Piaget]	Preoperational - use of language leads to using symbols to represent objects - personifies objects and has a rich fantasy life - believes everyone sees things the way he does, but this lessens during this stage - difficulty understanding time	Initiative vs. Shame/Guilt - task is to develop and state preferences successfully	N/A
stage (6-12 years) [Erikson] (7-12 years) [Piaget]	Concrete Operational - able to think logically about objects and events - can organize objects according to a variety of traits - no longer egocentric	Industry vs. Inferiority - task is to meet demands for learning new skills	N/A
stage (12-18 years)	Abstract Operational - able to think logically about abstract ideas, including the future and ideological problems	Identity vs. Role Confusion - task is to achieve sense of self in regards to sex roles, occupation, spirituality, etc.	N/A

APPENDIX B

DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

Background Information

Background information will be collected as a means of identifying connections between context (life circumstances and experiences) and the phenomena under observation (information behavior during hobby pursuit). The following questions will be included on a form participants will receive with consent and assent paperwork. Participants' parents will complete this form while young participants are being oriented to focus groups, both as a time saving measure and in the hope of obtaining more detail than young subjects might provide. Rationale for each item can be found in Appendix C.

1. School Status (e.g., public, private, homeschool, unschool, other)

2. Gifted Services Participant Receives at School (e.g., grade-skip, subject acceleration, full-time gifted class)

3. Parent's Highest Level of Education Completed (high school, 2 year degree, 4 year degree, graduate degree)

Focus Group One

The first focus group session will focus almost entirely on information behavior surrounding hobby pursuit. Each question was devised based on the research questions and the theories of interest for the study (ELIS, intrinsic motivation theories, and Serious Leisure). The instrument follows below. Rationale for each item can be found in Appendix C.

1. How would you define the word 'hobby?'

    a. Is there anything about your own hobby that doesn't fit that definition?

2. What activities are involved in your hobby?

    a. How do you fit these activities in with the things you have to do like schoolwork and chores?

    b. Has your life changed around to fit your hobby in? In what way?

3. When you want to know more about your hobby, what do you usually do?

    a. Why do you approach it this way?

    b. What do you believe will happen when you do this?

    c. Has this changed since you started your hobby?

4. How do you keep track of new things happening that have to do with your hobby? (e.g., magazine subscriptions, email discussion groups, TV shows, etc.)

    a. How did you find out about these things?

    b. How does keeping track like this fit into the rest of your life?

    c. Has this changed since you started the hobby? How?

5. What are some of the ways you've shared information about your hobby with other people?

a. What's your favorite way to share your hobby?

b. What do you like about sharing it this way?

6. What else do you think I should know about how you find out about or tell others about your hobby?

Focus Group Two

The second focus group session will concentrate on motivation for hobby pursuit, development, and the potential impact of hobby pursuit on other areas of life. Each question was devised based on the research questions and the theories of interest for the study (ELIS, theories of intrinsic motivation, and Serious Leisure). The instrument follows below. Rationale for each item can be found in Appendix C.

1. What made you interested in your hobby?

    a. How did you hear about it or think of it?

    b. What about the hobby made you want to do it or caught your interest/attention?

2. What is it about this hobby that keeps you interested in it even if you've been doing it a long time?

    a. Does it ever get boring? What do you do about it when your hobby gets boring?

    b. Does your hobby ever get really difficult? What do you do about it when your hobby gets difficult?

    c. What is it that makes you want to solve these problems instead of changing hobbies?

3. If you're doing something that isn't your hobby (for example, schoolwork or chores), what do you do if it's boring? What do you do if it's too hard?

4. When you're working or playing with your hobby, what kinds of things are you thinking?

5. When you're talking about your hobby, do you prefer telling people about it who don't know about it, or talking with people who know lots about it? Why?

6. Would you say that your life has changed because of your hobby? If so, how?

7. Is there anything else you think I should know about how hobbies fit in your life and keep you interested?

Home Visits

        Questions for the interview will be largely individualized to each participant based on the focus group sessions and initial data analysis. Any questions from the focus groups that were not addressed because of time constraints will be covered in the home visit.

Purpose of home visits:

1. Observe how child participants organize and retrieve their hobby-related items

2. Observe how child participants interact with their hobby-related items

3. Follow up on focus group sessions to clarify and refine initial data analysis

4. Historical context for hobby behavior provided by parent(s)/guardian(s)

Initial interview questions:

1. What is your earliest hobby-related memory?

2. (for parents) What do you remember about your child's hobby interest/pursuit before that time?

3. I'd like to see your hobby-related stuff and I'd like to hear what you have to say about your hobby-related stuff.

Additional questions:

1. What makes you want to know more about your hobby?

2. I'd like to hear you tell about a time when you were frustrated in trying to find out more about your hobby.

   a. What did you do?

   b. What did you believe would happen?

   c. How did it turn out? Why do you think it turned out that way?

3. Think of a time when you discovered something important about your hobby. What did you

do as soon as you discovered this new thing?

   a. What were you thinking when you did that?

   b. Is this what you usually do when you learn new things about your hobby?

   c. What other kinds of things do you/might you do?

APPENDIX C

RATIONALE FOR INSTRUMENT QUESTIONS

Each of the instruments discussed in Appendix B was devised in order to address a particular issue related to the research questions and tied back to the theories of interest. What follows is a rationale for each item that includes the research question it addresses and the theory from which it borrows. The research questions are included below for easy reference.

Research Questions

What are the everyday life information behaviors of gifted young people related to their hobby pursuits?

a) In what ways do gifted youth integrate the seeking, use, and sharing of information about their hobby pursuits into their daily activities, and how does the pursuit of hobbies impact the way activities are organized? ("way of life")

b) In what ways do gifted youth approach the search for, use, and sharing of information about their hobby pursuits, and how does this impact other areas of the gifted young person's life? ("mastery of life")

c) How do gifted youth maintain interest in the pursuit of their hobbies over time? (intrinsic motivation)

Background Information

Table C.1 *Rationale for Items on Background Information Instrument*

Question	Rationale	Reference	Research Question
1 school (pub/priv/etc)	Examine possible link between school situation and hobby pursuit	Savolainen (1995)	all - context
2 gifted services	Examine possible link between gifted accommodations received and hobby pursuit	Savolainen (1995)	all - context
3 parent's highest education level completed	Specifically related to mastery of life and the impact that the circumstances into which one is born have or do not have	Savolainen (1995)	all - context

Focus Group One

Table C.2 *Rationale for Items on Focus Group One Instrument*

Question	Rationale	Reference	Research Question
1 define hobby	ice-breaker; generate codes for hobbies from participants' own words	N/A	all - context
2 hobby activities	hobby description/typology; "way of life"	Stebbins (2007); Savolainen, (1995)	(a)
3 actions to learn more	information seeking; "mastery of life"; growth and development	Wilson (1999); Savolainen (1995); Csikszentmihalyi (1990, 1992)	main; (b); (c)
4 keeping up to date on hobby info	information seeking; "way of life"; growth and development	Wilson (1999); Savolainen (1995); Csikszentmihalyi (1990, 1992)	main; (b); (c)
5 how information is shared	information use; information sharing	Wilson (1999)	main
6 anything else	full coverage	N/A	N/A

Focus Group Two

Table C.3 *Rationale for Items on Focus Group Two Instrument*

Question	Rationale	Reference	Research Question
1 origin of hobby pursuit	ice-breaker; personality/personal interests	Savolainen (1995)	all - context; (c)
2 maintaining interest	"mastery of life" in hobby pursuit; persistence; motivation	Savolainen (1995); Csikszentmihalyi (1990, 1992), Festinger (1957), Hunt (1965)	(c)
3 overcoming challenges in other areas of life	"mastery of life" outside hobby pursuit (basis of comparison)	Savolainen (1995)	all - context; (b); (c)
4 what does hobby pursuit feel like	intrinsic motivation experience	Csikszentmihalyi (1990, 1992), Festinger (1957), Hunt (1965)	(c)
5 talking with others about hobby	sharing information; gaining expertise; social aspects of intrinsic motivation	Savolainen (1995); Csikszentmihalyi (1990, 1992), Festinger (1957), Hunt (1965)	main; (c)
6 hobby impact on life	impact of hobby pursuit on other areas of life ("mastery of life;" "way of life")	Savolainen (1995); Csikszentmihalyi (1990, 1992), Festinger (1957), Hunt (1965)	(a); (b)
7 anything else	full coverage	N/A	N/A

Home Visit

Table C.4 *Rationale for Items on Home Visit Instrument*

Question	Rationale	Reference	Research Question
1 organization and retrieval of hobby items	"way of life," "mastery of life"	Savolainen (1995)	(a); (b)
2 interaction with hobby items	"way of life"	Savolainen (1995)	(a)
3 follow up from focus groups, TBD	to be determined based on data collected	N/A	all
4 development of hobby pursuit	growth and development; "mastery of life"	Savolainen (1995); Csikszentmihalyi (1990, 1992)	(a); (b); (c)
5 earliest hobby memory	context; growth and development	Savolainen (1995); Csikszentmihalyi (1990, 1992)	(a); (b); (c)
6 parent describe history before child's memory	context; growth and development	Savolainen (1995); Csikszentmihalyi (1990, 1992)	(a); (b); (c)
7 participant describe and discuss hobby related items	"way of life," "mastery of life;" sharing information	Savolainen (1995); Wilson (1999)	main; (a); (b)
8 trigger of desire to know more	identifying a need for information	Wilson (1999)	main
9 frustration	information seeking; "mastery of life"	Wilson (1999); Savolainen (1995)	main; (b)
10 what to do with information	information use; information sharing	Wilson (1999)	main

RECRUITMENT AD

The following notice will be placed in local Mensa newsletters in Region 10 -- Florida; email notice on the Young Mensa local listserv in Orlando; and flyers placed in family communication folders of young people in gifted programs in local area schools.

GOT HOBBY?

Are you 8-14 years old?
Are you in a gifted program at school or a member of Mensa or otherwise identified as gifted?
Have you had a hobby for at least a year?

If so, you're invited to a special event where you can share your hobby and do fun hobby-related activities.

Debi Carruth, a doctoral student at Florida State University, is researching gifted kids' hobbies. She'll be conducting activities as part of her research, but although it's schoolwork for her, it'll be fun for everybody. Privacy and confidentiality will be protected as much as possible.

Please contact Debi for details or to receive a participants' packet.

APPENDIX E

CONSENT/ASSENT FORMS

* Parent/Guardian Consent Form: Focus Groups/Activities
* Minor Assent Form (Tween): Focus Groups/Activities
* Minor Assent Form (Teen): Focus Groups/Activities
* Parent/Guardian Consent Form: Home Visit
* Minor Assent Form (Tween): Home Visit
* Minor Assent Form (Teen): Home Visit
* Parent/Guardian Consent Form: Data Analysis
* Minor Assent Form (Tween): Data Analysis
* Minor Assent Form (Teen): Data Analysis

Florida State University
College of Communication and Information
School of Library and Information Studies

INFORMED CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Gifted Youth and Hobbies: An Exploration of Information Behavior
Parent/Guardian Consent Form: Focus Groups and Hobby-Related Activities

Your child has been invited to participate in a research study conducted by Debi Carruth, Doctoral Candidate, from Florida State University's School of Library and Information Studies in the College of Communication and Information. Your child was invited because you or your child expressed an interest. Your child's participation in this study is voluntary and will not affect his or her participation in any other activities. Please read the information below and contact Ms. Carruth to ask questions about anything that seems unclear before deciding whether or not to allow your child to participate. Your child does not have to participate even if you agree to their participation. It is anticipated that 60-70 young people will be involved in this study, but they will be divided into smaller groups of 8-10.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY
The purpose of this study is to learn about the information processes involved in hobby pursuit for gifted youth, including hobby growth and development; the effects of hobby pursuit on other aspects of the lives of gifted youth; and how gifted youth interact with others regarding their hobbies.

PROCEDURES
Participants in the focus groups will be scheduled according to their chronological age (8-11 year olds, and 12-14 year olds). You will be provided with a link to a confidential scheduling website where you and your child will be allowed to select the age-appropriate session that best fits your schedule.

Discussion in the focus groups will be guided by a series of questions regarding information seeking and use, sharing hobby pursuits, motivation toward hobby pursuits, and pursuit of hobbies over a long period of time. These sessions will be audio- and video-recorded to ensure data integrity -- no one but Ms. Carruth will have access to the recordings or transcripts, and they will be kept in a password-protected external hard drive in a locked cabinet in a locked office.

At least one break will be provided where participants will be given nutritious and appealing snacks at no charge. Break times will be largely unstructured, but participants will have the opportunity at that time to share any hobby-related materials they may have brought. The camera will remain on during break sessions, in the hopes that participants will engage in sharing their hobbies with others and thus inform the researcher about largely spontaneous sharing behaviors. Again, no one but Ms. Carruth will have access to these recordings and transcripts, and they will be kept in a password-protected external hard drive in a locked cabinet in a locked office for which only Ms. Carruth has password and keys.

Ms. Carruth may contact you after the focus groups are finished to seek consent for your child's participation in additional research activities. For example, she may ask to interview you and your child at home about your child's experiences with his or her hobby. This will help establish a sense of the context surrounding your child's hobby pursuit, and provide a chance to observe your child's interaction with his or her hobby-related items. For any additional research where we ask for your participation, we will provide a separate consent form and answer any questions you may have.

Ms. Carruth will retain the raw data from this study for a period not to exceed ten years, in the event that a longitudinal study is conducted at a later date. This data, in the form of digital recordings and transcripts, will be saved on a password protected external hard drive, which will be held in a locked cabinet in a locked office.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS
The potential risks and discomforts to your child are minimal. The questions asked in the focus groups are not intended to make your child uncomfortable, but there may be some questions that he or she does not want to answer. Your child may choose not to answer any question, and still participate in the study.

Your child may feel uncomfortable with a video-recorder present. Typically, this discomfort fades quickly and the camera's presence is forgotten. However, this is not always the case, and Ms. Carruth is aware that gifted young people are, in general, more sensitive than typical young people. If your child's discomfort persists, you may be asked to come and get him or her. This will be handled quickly and discreetly, and debriefing will be available after the focus group sessions are over if necessary. Your child's safety and comfort are the highest priority. Even if your child is unable to complete the focus group sessions, he or she may participate in later phases of the research study if he or she wants.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY
It is expected that participants will enjoy discussing and sharing their hobbies with the researcher and their peers in the focus groups. It is also likely that the participants in this study will appreciate learning what's involved in original research, and playing a significant role in creating new knowledge.

In addition, knowing how gifted youth challenge themselves and keep themselves engaged, in both the presence and the absence of appropriate school accommodations, may reveal insights that can have wide-ranging societal impact in the areas of overall child wellness, gifted education and curriculum development, career studies, learning and motivation.

COMPENSATION
Participants will be provided with nutritious and appealing snacks at no charge. In addition, they will be given the opportunity to share their hobby-related items during the breaks (although this is not required). At the conclusion of the focus group sessions, participants will be given a custom-designed pencil and other small tokens as a gesture of gratitude for having provided their time and expertise. There will be no cost to you or your child for their participation in this study.

CONFIDENTIALITY
Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with your child will remain confidential and will be disclosed only as required by law. In written reports and publications of the research, no information will be included that may reveal your child's identity and a pseudonym will be used if your child is specifically referenced.

IDENTIFICATION OF RESEARCHER
If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact:

Debi Carruth
Doctoral Candidate
Florida State University
College of Communication and Information
School of Library and Information Studies

Dr. Melissa Gross, PhD
Florida State University
College of Communication and Information
School of Library and Information Studies

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS
You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue your child's participation without penalty. Participation in this study will have no impact on your or your child's participation or membership in Mensa and Mensa-related activities. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, you are encouraged to contact the FSU IRB.

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.

SIGNATURE OF PARENT OR LEGAL GUARDIAN
FOR CONSENT TO MINOR'S PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH

I understand the procedures described above, and I understand fully the rights of a potential subject in a research study involving people as subjects. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to my child's participation in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

_____   _____
Minor's (Subject's) Name   Date

_____   _____
Parent/Guardian's Signature   Parent/Guardian's Name (please print)

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCHER

I have explained the research to the subject's parent or legal guardian, and answered all of their questions. I believe that the parent or legal guardian understands the information described in this document and freely consents to participate.

_____
Name of Researcher

_____   _____
Signature of Researcher   Date

PARTICIPATION IN ADDITIONAL RESEARCH

After the focus groups are over, Ms. Carruth will be conducting follow up home visits and interviews with those participants who are willing. This will provide more information about the contexts in which hobbies emerge and develop for gifted youth. The interviews will take 1.5 - 2 hours, and will be scheduled at a time most convenient for you.

Please indicate if you would be willing to participate in this phase of the research. You are under no obligation to participate, but it is anticipated that the home visits will be fun and engaging for youth and families. Confidential information will be safeguarded in a password-protected external hard drive which will be stored in a locked cabinet in a locked office.

___ Yes, you may contact our family about scheduling an interview after the focus group.

___ No, please do not contact my family about scheduling an interview after the focus group.

_____   _____
Minor's Name   Parent/Guardian's Name

_____   _(_____)_____
Email   Telephone Number

Florida State University
College of Communication and Information
School of Library and Information Studies

ASSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Gifted Youth and Hobbies: An Exploration of Information Behavior
Teen Assent Form (12-17): Focus Groups and Hobby-Related Activities

My name is Debi Carruth. I am a student researcher from Florida State University, working on earning my PhD. I am asking if you would like to participate in a research study called "Gifted Youth and Hobbies: An Exploration of Information Behavior," which is about how hobbies are important in gifted kids' lives and how gifted kids get new information about their hobbies. You were invited to participate in this study because you or one of your parents expressed an interest.

WHY I'M DOING THIS STUDY
The reason I'm doing this research is so that I can find out how hobbies are important in gifted kids' lives and how gifted kids get new information about their hobbies. Asking questions in a group is a good way to get a lot of information, because many times what other people say will help you think of things you want to say.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN
If you agree to be in this study, you'll join with a small group of other kids around your age and answer some questions about your hobbies. You'll also get a chance to share other important information about your hobbies with the other kids and me. We'll all meet together for about two and a half hours, but there will be snacks and a break. There will be about 60-70 kids participating, but only 8-10 kids in your group.

I will have an audio/video-recorder on while we're all talking and hanging out, to make sure I can remember everything you say.

I might also contact you after the focus groups over to ask you to participate in more research activities. For example, I might ask if I can interview you at your house so you can show me your hobby related things and tell me more stuff about your hobby that you didn't get to talk about in the group discussions.

POTENTIAL RISKS
Some kids feel uncomfortable at first being on camera, but that usually goes away after a little while. It's normal sometimes, though, to stay uncomfortable with the camera. If that happens, you can let me know and I'll make sure your mom or dad comes to get you. You won't get in trouble.

You might also be uncomfortable with some of the questions that I or the other kids ask. The questions aren't meant to make you feel uncomfortable, but if there are any that you don't want to answer, it is okay if you don't answer them.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS
It's very likely that you will have a good time talking about your hobbies with me and the other kids. You might also like helping out in a research project and finding out how research projects work.

Your help can lead to a better understanding of gifted kids and their hobbies.

PAYMENT
You will not receive any payment for your participation in this phase of the study. However, for helping out, you will get a custom-designed pencil and other small tokens of gratitude. This won't cost you anything, and you'll be able to keep them even if you are unable to complete the focus group sessions.

PRIVACY
Any recordings made of the focus groups and activities, and the transcripts made from them, will be saved to a password-protected external hard drive that is locked in a cabinet inside a locked office. All the data that I report will be general, based on everybody's contribution. If I use something you say as an example, though, I will change your name to protect your privacy.

I will keep the recordings for ten years in case I want to find out about changes as kids get older. I'll protect these recordings so that nobody can get to them but me for the whole time.

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS
Please talk this over with your parent/guardian before you decide whether or not to participate. I have asked your parent/guardian to give their permission for you to take part in this study. But even if they said "yes" to this study, you can still decide not to take part in the study, and that will be fine.

If you do not want to be in this study, then you do not have to participate. This study is voluntary, which means that you decide whether or not to take part in the study. Being in this study is up to you, and no one will be upset in any way if you do not want to participate or even if you change your mind later and want to stop.

You can ask any questions you have about this study. If you have a question later that you did not think of now you can call me. You can also email me if you would like.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, you can contact the FSU IRB.

Signing your name below means that you agree to be in this study. You and your parent/guardian will be given a copy of this form after you have signed it.

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH SUBJECT

I understand the procedures described above, and I understand fully the rights of a potential subject in a research study involving people as subjects. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

Please sign on the lines below:

_____
Name of Research Subject (please print)

_____ _____
Signature of Research Subject   Date

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCHER

I have explained the research to the subject and his or her parent/guardian. I have answered all of his or her questions. I believe that he/she understands the information described in this document and freely assents to participate.

_____
Name of Researcher

_____ _____
Signature of Researcher   Date

Florida State University
College of Communication and Information
School of Library and Information Studies

ASSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Gifted Youth and Hobbies: An Exploration of Information Behavior
Tween Assent Form (7-11): Focus Groups and Hobby-Related Activities

My name is Debi Carruth. I am a student from Florida State University. I am asking if you would like to participate in a research study called "Gifted Youth and Hobbies: An Exploration of Information Behavior," which is about how hobbies are important in gifted kids' lives and how gifted kids get information about their hobbies.

These are some things I want you to know about research studies:
1) Your parent/guardian needs to give permission for you to be in this study. You do not have to be in this study if you don't want to, even if your parent/guardian has already given permission.
2) You are allowed to stop being in the study at any time. If you decide to stop, no one will be angry or upset with you.
3) Sometimes good things happen to people who take part in studies, and sometimes things we may not like happen. I'll tell you more about those things below.

How many people will be in this study?
If you decide to be in this study, you will be one of about 60-70 people, but you'll only be in a group of about 8-10.

Why am I doing this research study?
The reason I'm doing this research is so that I can find out how hobbies are important in gifted kids' lives and how gifted kids get new information about their hobbies.

Why are you being asked to be in this research study?
You were invited to be in this study because you or one of your parents told me you might think it was fun.

What will happen during this study?
If you decide to be in this study,
1) You will join with other kids around your age at the RG and talk to me and each other about your hobbies.
2) You will hang out and talk with us for about two and a half hours.
3) You'll have a break where you will get snacks and we'll do fun activities about your hobbies.
4) I will audio- and video-record everybody talking about their hobbies and hanging out during the break. After we're all done, I'll save the recording in a secret place where nobody will be able to get to it, and nobody except me will know the exact things that you say.

5) After we are done talking today, I might ask if I can talk to you and your family at your house.
6) I will keep the recordings for ten years in case I want to find out about changes as kids get older. I'll protect these recordings so that nobody can get to them but me for the whole time.

What are the bad things that might happen?
Sometimes things happen to people in research studies that may make them feel bad. These are called "risks." The risks to you for being in the study are:
1) Some kids feel uncomfortable at first being recorded on camera. This feeling usually goes away after a little while, but sometimes it stays. If that happens, you don't have to stay. Your mom and dad can come get you. You won't get in trouble, and I won't embarrass you.
2) Some questions might feel uncomfortable to answer. I don't mean to make you uncomfortable. If you don't want to answer any question, you don't have to. I won't get mad.

What are the good things that might happen?
People may have good things happen to them because they are in research studies. These are called "benefits." The benefits to you for being in the study are:
1) It will probably be very fun to talk about your hobbies with me and the other kids.
2) You might also think it's really fun to learn about how real live research happens.
3) I will say "Thank You" to you by giving you a special pencil and some other small but coll things -- you can keep these, even if you have to leave early today.

Who will be told about the things I learn in this study?
Nobody except me will know your private information. If I write about a special thing you said, I will protect your privacy by changing your name so nobody knows it's you. Most of the things I write about will be common to everybody in the study, though, and everybody's who's interested can read about that.

What if you don't want to be in this study?
If you do not want to be in this study, then you do not have to. Being in this study is your choice, and I will not be upset in any way if you don't want to, or even if you change your mind later and want to stop.

Who should you ask if you have any questions?
You can ask me any questions you have about this study. If you have a question later that you did not think of now you can call me. You can also email me if you would like. My name is Debi Carruth, and you are allowed to call me Debi or Ms. Carruth, whichever you like better.

If you sign your name below, it means that you agree to take part in this research study. You and your parent/guardian will be given a copy of this form after you have signed it.

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH SUBJECT

Title: *Gifted Youth and Hobbies: An Exploration of Information Behavior*
Researcher: Debi Carruth

_____
Print your name here if you want to be in the study

_____   _____
Sign your name here if you want to be in the study   Date

SIGNATURE OF PARENT OR LEGAL GUARDIAN
FOR CONSENT TO MINOR'S PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH

I understand the procedures described above, and I understand fully the rights of a potential subject in a research study involving people as subjects. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to my child's participation in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

_____   _____
Minor's (Subject's) Name   Date

_____   _____
Parent/Guardian's Signature   Parent/Guardian's Name (please print)

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCHER

I have explained the research to the subject's parent or legal guardian, and answered all of their questions. I believe that the parent or legal guardian understands the information described in this document and freely consents to participate.

_____
Name of Researcher

_____   _____
Signature of Researcher   Date

PARTICIPATION IN ADDITIONAL RESEARCH

After the focus groups over, Ms. Carruth will be conducting follow up home visits and interviews with those participants who are willing. This will provide more information about the contexts in which hobbies emerge and develop for gifted youth. The interviews will take 1.5 to 2 hours, and will be scheduled at a time most convenient for you.

Please indicate if you would be willing to participate in this phase of the research. You are under no obligation to participate, but it is anticipated that the home interviews will be fun and engaging for youth and families. Confidential information will be safeguarded in the same manner as all data in this research project.

___ Yes, you may contact our family about scheduling an interview after the focus group.

___ No, please do not contact my family about scheduling an interview after the focus group.

_____ _____
Minor's Name   Parent/Guardian's Name

_____ _(_____)_____
Email   Telephone Number

Florida State University
College of Communication and Information
School of Library and Information Studies

INFORMED CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Gifted Youth and Hobbies: An Exploration of Information Behavior
Parent/Guardian Consent Form: Home Visit

Your child has been invited to participate in a research study conducted by Debi Carruth, Doctoral Candidate, from Florida State University's School of Library and Information Studies in the College of Communication and Information. You were both invited because your child participated in hobby-related focus groups and activities. At that time you agreed to allow me to contact you for a home visit.

Your family's participation in this study is voluntary and will not affect your participation in any other activities. Please read the information below and contact Ms. Carruth to ask questions about anything that seems unclear before deciding whether or not you want your family to participate. Your child does not have to participate even if you agree to their participation. It is anticipated that eight to ten young people and their parents/guardians will be involved in this phase of the study.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY
The purpose of this phase of the study is to follow up on the focus group sessions by asking questions that clarify, deepen, and individualize what was learned from the focus groups about gifted youth and their hobbies. The interview will provide a chance to clarify early analysis from the focus groups, and expand on what has already been earned. Observing your child interacting with his or her hobby-related items, and hearing how they think about and gather these items, will provide new information that can be incorporated into the findings. Finally, you as the parent/guardian will have the opportunity to provide a historical context regarding your child's hobby pursuits.

PROCEDURES
Home visits will be scheduled at your convenience, and will last from 1.5 to 2 hours. The interview with your child will involve questions that follow up on general findings from the focus group sessions, and that go more in-depth about your child's specific hobby pursuits, including how they find and use information about their hobby, how they share their hobby, what keeps them interested in their hobby, and how they think their hobby affects other areas of their life. Questions to you will involve the historical aspects of your child's hobby pursuits, from a time before your child might remember.

Interviews will be audio recorded to ensure the integrity and completeness of the data. Photographs will also be taken of your child's room or the place where he or she keeps hobby-related items, in order to get an idea of how these items fit into your child's life and how he or she thinks about them. No one but Ms. Carruth will have access to these recordings and photographs, and they will be kept on a password-protected external hard drive in a locked

cabinet in a locked office. Ms. Carruth will retain the raw data from this study for a period not to exceed ten years, in the event that a longitudinal study is conducted at a later date. This data, in the form of digital recordings and transcripts, will be saved on a password protected external hard drive, which will be held in a locked cabinet in a locked office. In written reports of the research, your family and child will never be connected with personally identifying information. If your child is used as an example, his or her name will be changed to protect your family's privacy.

Ms. Carruth may contact you after the home visit is over to seek consent for your child's participation in additional research activities. For example, she may ask for your child's feedback during the process of data analysis. This will help to ensure that the final analysis truly reflects the experiences of the participants involved in the study. For any additional research where we may ask your child's willingness to participate, you will receive a separate consent form and any questions you may have will be answered.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS
The potential risks and discomforts to your and your child are minimal. The questions asked in the interview are not intended to make you or your child uncomfortable, but there may be some questions that you or they might not want to answer. You or your child may choose not to answer any question, and still participate in the study.

You or your child may feel uncomfortable with an audio-recorder present. Typically, this discomfort fades quickly and the recorder's presence is forgotten. However, this is not always the case, and Ms. Carruth is aware that gifted young people are, in general, more sensitive than typical young people. If discomfort persists, the interview can be terminated with no consequence to you or your child. Your child will still be allowed to participate in later phases of the study if he or she wishes.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY
It is expected that participants will enjoy discussing and sharing their hobbies with the researcher. It is also likely that the participants in this study will appreciate learning what's involved in original research, and playing a significant role in creating new knowledge.

In addition, knowing how gifted youth challenge themselves and keep themselves engaged, in both the presence and the absence of appropriate school accommodations, may reveal insights that can have wide-ranging societal impact in the areas of overall child wellness, gifted education and curriculum development, career studies, learning and motivation.

COMPENSATION
Participants will not be paid for their participation in this phase of the study. However, as a small gesture of gratitude for their contribution and expertise, participants will be given a custom-designed t-shirt. Your child will get to keep it, even if the interview is terminated. There will be no cost to you or your child for participation in this phase of the study.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with your child will remain confidential and will be disclosed only as required by law. In written reports and publications of the research, no information will be included that may reveal your child's identity, and a pseudonym will be used if your child is specifically referenced.

IDENTIFICATION OF RESEARCHER

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact:

Debi Carruth
Doctoral Candidate
Florida State University
College of Communication and Information
School of Library and Information Studies

Dr. Melissa Gross, PhD
Florida State University
College of Communication and Information
School of Library and Information Studies

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue your child's participation without penalty. Participation in this study will have no impact on your or your child's participation or membership in Mensa and Mensa-related activities. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, you are encouraged to contact the FSU IRB.

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.

SIGNATURE OF PARENT OR LEGAL GUARDIAN
FOR CONSENT TO MINOR'S PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH

I understand the procedures described above, and I understand fully the rights of a potential subject in a research study involving people as subjects. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to my child's participation in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

_____   _____

Minor's (Subject's) Name   Date

_____   _____

Parent/Guardian's Signature   Parent/Guardian's Name (please print)

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCHER

I have explained the research to the subject's parent or legal guardian, and answered all of their questions. I believe that the parent or legal guardian understands the information described in this document and freely consents to participate.

_____

Name of Researcher

_____   _____

Signature of Researcher   Date

PARTICIPATION IN ADDITIONAL RESEARCH

After the home visit is over, Ms. Carruth will be providing participants the opportunity to help with the analysis of general data from the study. This will ensure that the final analysis matches the experiences of the young people involved in the study. It is expected that this phase of the project will take a total of 3 - 5 hours spread out over four weeks. This phase of the project will take place on a password-protected website to which only study participants will have access.

Please indicate if you would be willing to participate in this phase of the research. You are under no obligation to participate, but it is anticipated that the analysis process will be fun, engaging, and pleasantly challenging for the young people involved in the study. Confidential information will be safeguarded on a password-protected external hard drive which will be stored in a locked cabinet in a locked office.

___ Yes, you may contact our family about participating in data analysis.

___ No, please do not contact my family about participating in data analysis.

_____   _____
Minor's Name   Parent/Guardian's Name

_____   _(_____)_____
Email   Telephone Number

Florida State University
College of Communication and Information
School of Library and Information Studies

ASSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Gifted Youth and Hobbies: An Exploration of Information Behavior
Teen Assent Form (12-17): Home Visit

My name is Debi Carruth. I am a student researcher from Florida State University, working on earning my PhD. I am asking if you would like to participate in a research study called "Gifted Youth and Hobbies: An Exploration of Information Behavior," which is about how hobbies are important in gifted kids' lives and how gifted kids get new information about their hobbies. You were invited to participate in this study because you attended focus groups about this subject. At that time, you said it was okay for me to contact you about doing a home visit.

WHY I'M DOING THIS STUDY
The reason I'm doing this part of the study is to ask you some more about your own hobby, and to let you show me and tell me about your hobby-related stuff. Asking questions one on one is a good way to get deeper information about individuals, because there is more time to talk about each question without interruption. Conducting the interview in your house is a good way to see how you organize your hobby stuff, and to see how you think about hobbies when you're actually working on them.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN
If you agree to be in this part of the study, I will ask you some more questions about your hobbies, and you'll get to show me your hobby-related items and tell me how you think about and use those items. We'll meet for 1.5 to 2 hours.

This interview will be audio-recorded, and I will take pictures of your hobby-related stuff.

I might also contact you after the interview is over to ask you to participate in more research activities. For example, I might ask if you want to help out with data analysis by showing me where I've gotten it right and where I've gotten it wrong.

POTENTIAL RISKS
Some kids feel uncomfortable at first being recorded, but that usually goes away after a little while. It's normal sometimes, though, to stay uncomfortable. If that happens, you can let me know and we'll stop the interview. You won't get in trouble, and you'll still be able to help with other parts of the project if you want to.

You might also be uncomfortable with some of the questions that I ask. The questions aren't meant to make you feel uncomfortable, but if there are any that you don't want to answer, it is okay if you don't answer them.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS
It's very likely that you will have a good time telling me more about your hobby and showing me your hobby-related stuff. You might also enjoy helping out more in a research project, and learning more about the process of research.

Your help can lead to a better understanding of gifted kids and their hobbies.

PAYMENT
You will not receive any payment for your participation in this phase of the study. However, as a small token of appreciation for helping out, you will get a custom-designed t-shirt. This won't cost you anything, and you'll be able to keep it even if you are unable to finish the interview after we've started.

PRIVACY
Any recording or photograph made during the interview, and transcripts from the recording, will be saved on an external hard drive that's password protected and locked in a cabinet in a locked office. All the data that I report will be general, based on everybody's contribution. If I use something you say as an example, though, I will change your name to protect your privacy.

I will keep the recordings for ten years in case I want to find out about changes as kids get older. I'll protect these recordings so that nobody can get to them but me for the whole time.

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS
Please talk this over with your parent/guardian before you decide whether or not to participate. I have asked your parent/guardian to give their permission for you to take part in this study. But even if they said "yes" to this study, you can still decide not to take part, and that will be fine.

If you do not want to be in this study, then you do not have to participate. This study is voluntary, which means that you decide whether or not to take part in the study. Being in this study is up to you, and no one will be upset in any way if you do not want to participate or even if you change your mind later and want to stop.

You can ask any questions you have about this study. If you have a question later that you did not think of now, you can call me. You can also email me if you would like.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, you can contact the FSU IRB.

Signing your name below means that you agree to be in this study. You and your parent/guardian will be given a copy of this form after you have signed it.

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH SUBJECT

I understand the procedures described above, and I understand fully the rights of a potential subject in a research study involving people as subjects. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

Please sign on the lines below:

_____
Name of Research Subject (please print)

_____   _____
Signature of Research Subject   Date

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCHER

I have explained the research to the subject and his or her parent/guardian. I have answered all of his or her questions. I believe that he/she understands the information described in this document and freely assents to participate.

_____
Name of Researcher

_____   _____
Signature of Researcher   Date

Florida State University
College of Communication and Information
School of Information Studies

ASSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Gifted Youth and Hobbies: An Exploration of Information Behavior
Tween Assent Form (7-11): Home Visit

My name is Debi Carruth. I am a student from Florida State University. I am asking if you would like to participate in a research study called "Gifted Youth and Hobbies: An Exploration of Information Behavior," which is about how hobbies are important in gifted kids' lives and how gifted kids get information about their hobbies. This is the second part of the research project, where I'll learn more about how hobbies fit into gifted kids' lives.

These are some things I want you to know about research studies:
  1) Your parent/guardian needs to give permission for you to be in this study. You do not have to be in this study if you don't want to, even if your parent/guardian has already given permission.
  2) You are allowed to stop being in the study at any time. If you decide to stop, no one will be angry or upset with you.
  3) Sometimes good things happen to people who take part in studies, and sometimes things we may not like happen. I'll tell you more about those things below.

How many people will be in this study?
If you decide to be in this study, you will be one of about eight to ten families.

Why am I doing this research study?
The reason I'm doing this part of the research is so that I can find out more about how hobbies are important in gifted kids' lives and how gifted kids get information about their hobbies.

Why are you being asked to be in this research study?
You were invited to be in this part of the study because you helped out in the group discussions earlier at the library. At that time, you and your parent/guardian said that it would be okay for me to contact you for a home visit.

What will happen during this study?
If you decide to be in this part of the study,
  1) You will answer some more questions about your hobby.
  2) You will show me your hobby-related stuff and tell me about that.
  3) I'll ask your parent/guardian about hobbies you had from before you remember.
  4) I will audio-record our talking together, and I'll take pictures of your hobby stuff. After we're all done, I'll save the recording in a secret place where nobody will be able to get to it, and nobody except me will know the exact things that you say.

5) I will keep the recordings for ten years in case I want to find out about changes as kids get older. I'll protect these recordings so that nobody can get to them but me for the whole time.
6) After we are done talking today, I might ask if you want to help me later by reading about what I found out and telling me whether I'm right or wrong.

What are the bad things that might happen?
Sometimes things happen to people in research studies that may make them feel bad. These are called "risks." The risks to you for being in the study are:
1) Some kids feel uncomfortable at first being recorded. This feeling usually goes away after a little while, but sometimes it stays. If that happens, you can let me know and we can stop the interview. You won't get in trouble, and you'll still be allowed to help out with the research later if you want to.
2) Some questions might feel uncomfortable to answer. I don't mean to make you uncomfortable. If you don't want to answer any question, you don't have to. I won't get mad.

What are the good things that might happen?
People may have good things happen to them because they are in research studies. These are called "benefits." The benefits to you for being in the study are:
1) It will probably be very fun to talk more with me about your hobbies.
2) You might also think it's really fun to learn more about how real live research happens.
3) I will say "Thank You" to you by giving you a custom-designed t-shirt -- you can keep this, even if you are not able to finish the interview with me.

Who will be told about the things I learn in this study?
Nobody except me will know your private information. If I write about a special thing you said, I will protect your privacy by changing your name so nobody knows it's you. Most of the things I write about will be common to everybody in the study, though, and everybody's who's interested can read about that.

What if you don't want to be in this study?
If you do not want to be in this study, then you do not have to. Being in this study is your choice, and I will not be upset in any way if you don't want to, or even if you change your mind later and want to stop.

Who should you ask if you have any questions?
You can ask me any questions you have about this study. If you have a question later that you did not think of now you can call me. You can also email me if you would like.

If you sign your name below, it means that you agree to take part in this research study. You and your parent/guardian will be given a copy of this form after you have signed it.

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH SUBJECT

Title: *Gifted Youth and Hobbies: An Exploration of Information Behavior*
Researcher: Debi Carruth

_____
Print your name here if you want to be in the study

_____   _____
Sign your name here if you want to be in the study   Date

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCHER

I have explained the research to the subject and his or her parent/guardian. I have answered all of his or her questions. I believe that he/she understands the information described in this document and freely assents to participate.

_____
Name of Researcher

_____   _____
Signature of Researcher   Date

SIGNATURE OF PARENT OR LEGAL GUARDIAN
FOR CONSENT TO MINOR'S PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH

I understand the procedures described above, and I understand fully the rights of a potential subject in a research study involving people as subjects. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to my child's participation in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

_____   _____
Minor's (Subject's) Name   Date

_____   _____
Parent/Guardian's Signature   Parent/Guardian's Name (please print)

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCHER

I have explained the research to the subject's parent or legal guardian, and answered all of their questions. I believe that the parent or legal guardian understands the information described in this document and freely consents to participate.

_____
Name of Researcher

_____   _____
Signature of Researcher   Date

PARTICIPATION IN ADDITIONAL RESEARCH

After the interview is over, Ms. Carruth will be providing participants the opportunity to help out with the analysis of general data from the study. This will ensure that the final analysis matches the experience of the young people involved in the study. It is expected that this phase of the project will take a total of 3 - 5 hours spread out over four weeks. This phase of the project will take place on a password-protected website to which only study participants will have access.

Please indicate if you would be willing to participate in this phase of the research. You are under no obligation to participate, but it is anticipated that the analysis process will be fun, engaging, and pleasantly challenging for the young people involved in the study. Confidential information will be safeguarded in a password-protected external hard drive which will be stored in a locked cabinet in a locked office.

___ Yes, you may contact our family about participating in data analysis.

___ No, please do not contact my family about participating in data analysis.

_____   _____
Minor's Name   Parent/Guardian's Name

_____   _(_____)_____
Email   Telephone Number

Florida State University
College of Communication and Information
School of Information Studies

INFORMED CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Gifted Youth and Hobbies: An Exploration of Information Behavior
Parent/Guardian Consent Form: Data Analysis

Your child has been invited to participate in a research study conducted by Debi Carruth, Doctoral Candidate, from Florida State University's School of Library and Information Studies in the College of Communication and Information. Your child was invited because your family participated in a home visit about their hobby pursuits, and at that time you said it was okay to contact you about participating in data analysis. Your child's participation in this phase of the study is voluntary and will not affect his or her participation in any other activities. Please read the information below and contact Ms. Carruth to ask questions about anything that seems unclear before deciding whether or not to allow your child to participate. Your child does not have to participate even if you agree to their participation. It is anticipated that five to eight young people will be involved in this part of the study.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY
The purpose of this part of the study is to give young participants the opportunity to demonstrate where the researcher's ongoing work is correct and where it is incorrect. They will be able to make these judgments and to give examples based on their own hobby experiences. This will ensure that the final analysis truly reflects the experience of the study participants.

PROCEDURES
Participants in the analysis phase will be provided with unique and anonymous User IDs and passwords to access a secure website where ongoing analysis will be posted. They will be given an orientation to the analysis process, which will take approximately 20 minutes -- this will consist of a PowerPoint 'lecture' embedded in the site, some examples on which they can practice, and a period for questions and answers. This orientation will be scheduled at your child's convenience, so that the researcher can be present to answer questions in real time. There will also be a place where participants can ask ongoing questions on the website, and the researcher will remain available throughout the analysis process via email or phone to answer questions as well.

There will be up to three distinct phases of the analysis process. In each phase, your child will be asked to read through the results so far. These results will be presented in a developmentally appropriate and appealing format, in order to ensure participants' understanding and engagement. After reading through the results, your child will be asked to evaluate the results based on his or her experiences. Where he or she determines that the results are incorrect or incomplete, he or she will be asked to provide examples from his or her own experience that demonstrate what a more correct or complete interpretation should include.

Other participants will be able to see your child's contribution, but no names or other personally identifying information will appear on the site. In addition, no adults except for the researcher will have access to the site, to ensure your child's safety and privacy.

Each time a new phase of the analysis is complete (up to three separate times), the researcher will contact you and your child to alert you to its posting. Your child will have a week to complete each phase. The orientation materials and previous stages of analysis will remain available for review at all times.

Participants may converse anonymously with each other on the website via discussion forums. This will help to clarify, challenge, and extend points made by individual participants. All discussion will remain largely focused on the analysis and its processes, although slight digressions will be permitted in the interest of participant enjoyment and goodwill. All conversation will be monitored by the researcher, to ensure maintenance of the safety, comfort, and privacy of all participants.

I will keep a record of these discussions on the secure website for the duration of the current study. Once the study is complete, I will remove the conversations from the site and store them on a password protected external hard drive that will be stored in a locked cabinet in a locked office. I will keep this data for a period not to exceed ten years, in the event that a longitudinal study is conducted at a later date.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS
The potential risks and discomforts to your child during this phase of the study are minimal. Some children might be unfamiliar with the format of online discussion forums and secure websites, but training will be provided as necessary, and at your convenience, to ensure your child's comfort with the process.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY
It is expected that participants will enjoy arguing with the researcher's findings and proving her wrong -- critical disagreement will be encouraged both in the orientation to this phase of the work, and in ongoing conversation about the analysis. It is also likely that the participants in this study will have fun learning about what happens after data is collected in the research process.

Your child's participation in this phase of the research will help ensure that any findings are consistent with the actual lived experience of participants in the study, and that they are as complete as possible.

COMPENSATION
This phase of the study is the most demanding for the young participants.

For each phase of the analysis to which your child contributes, he or she will be given a $5 gift card to either Target or Chik-Fil-A, up to $15 all together. He or she can choose either or both, in whatever denomination they desire, up to the full amount. Gift cards will be sent via regular mail.

Those participants who complete the entire project will also receive an embossed certificate documenting their learning and participation, and will be entered into a drawing for a $50 gift certificate to MindWare. It is anticipated that five to eight participants will be entered in the drawing. The winner will be notified by email, and will receive the gift certificate via regular mail.

CONFIDENTIALITY
Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with your child will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your and your child's permission or as required by law. In written reports and publications of the research, no personal information will be included that may reveal your child's identity and a pseudonym will be used when referring to your child.

IDENTIFICATION OF RESEARCHER
If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact:

Debi Carruth
Doctoral Candidate
Florida State University
College of Communication and Information
School of Library and Information Studies

Dr. Melissa Gross, PhD
Florida State University
College of Communication and Information
School of Library and Information Studies

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS
You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, you are encouraged to contact the FSU IRB.

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.

SIGNATURE OF PARENT OR LEGAL GUARDIAN
FOR CONSENT TO MINOR'S PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH

I understand the procedures described above, and I understand fully the rights of a potential subject in a research study involving people as subjects. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to my child's participation in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

_____   _____
Minor's (Subject's) Name   Date

_____   _____
Parent/Guardian's Signature   Parent/Guardian's Name (please print)

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCHER

I have explained the research to the subject's parent or legal guardian, and answered all of their questions. I believe that the parent or legal guardian understands the information described in this document and freely consents to participate.

_____
Name of Researcher

_____   _____
Signature of Researcher   Date

Florida State University
College of Communication and Information
School of Library and Information Studies

ASSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Gifted Youth and Hobbies: An Exploration of Information Behavior
Teen Assent Form (12-17): Data Analysis

My name is Debi Carruth. I am a student researcher from Florida State University, working on earning my PhD. I am asking if you would like to participate in a research study called "Gifted Youth and Hobbies: An Exploration of Information Behavior," which is about how hobbies are important in gifted kids' lives and how gifted kids get new information about their hobbies. You were invited to participate in this part of the study because I visited your home and at that time you said it was okay to ask if you'd like to help me with analyzing the results of our work together.

WHY I'M DOING THIS STUDY
The reason I'm doing this part of the study is to make sure that my thinking about what you and the other participants said matches your actual experiences with your hobbies.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN
If you agree to be in this part of the study, I'll give you a private user ID and password so that you can read online about what I've been thinking so far about gifted kids and their hobbies, based on all the research we have done together. I'll show you how to critique my work, and let you practice some to make sure you're comfortable.

Once you know how to do the work, you'll get to read my findings and show me where I got things incomplete or wrong, and also how I can fix it to better fit your own experiences with your hobbies. We'll do this about three times, and each time you can respond both to my work and to what the other kids have posted. Everything except what I post will be anonymous. I encourage you to argue with the other kids, but I want you to be kind in your arguments, so that everybody can have a good time. I'll also make sure that the other kids are kind to you.

I'll keep a record of everybody's conversation for ten years, in case I want to find out later about how kids change as they get older. I'll protect these records offline after this project is finished so that nobody can get to them but me for the whole time.

POTENTIAL RISKS
Sometimes when people learn new things, it can be a little bit uncomfortable for a while until they're sure of how it's done. Since you'll be learning how to do something new in this part of the research, it's possible you'll be uncomfortable for a little while. You'll get to practice as much as you want to, though, and ask as many questions as you want until you feel okay about it. I think it's fun to teach kids, so I won't be annoyed even if you have a lot of questions.

Sometimes people also worry about doing things wrong when they learn something new. It's okay if you don't do this perfectly -- you're still the expert about your own hobby experiences. If I don't understand something you say, I'll just ask you for a little bit more information or another example. You don't have to provide any more information if you don't want to, and I won't be upset with you either way.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS
I think you'll have a fun time figuring out where I'm wrong in my analysis, and thinking up examples from your own life to demonstrate your points. Also, learning how to do the analysis might be a fun challenge for you.

Your help will make sure that my findings match your actual experiences, so that my research will be as true as it can possibly be.

PAYMENT
Each time that you work on a separate part of my analysis, you'll get a $5 gift card at either Target or Chik-Fil-A (your choice), up to $15.

If you complete the whole process, you will also receive a certificate with a golden seal, and you'll have your name placed in a drawing to receive a $50 gift certificate to MindWare. I expect five to eight kids to be in the drawing. I'll notify the winner through email and send gift cards and certificates through regular mail.

PRIVACY
Your participation in this part of the research process will be anonymous to everybody but me. You will get a private password to the website that only you and I will know, and you won't be asked any questions about personal things that might lead others to be able to identify you. If I use something you write as an example in writing up the research, I will not use your real name. This way, other people cannot identify you.

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS
Please talk this over with your parent/guardian before you decide whether or not to participate. I have asked your parent/guardian to give their permission for you to take part in this study. But even if they said "yes" to this study, you can still decide not to take part, and that will be fine.

If you do not want to be in this study, then you do not have to participate. This study is voluntary, which means that you decide whether or not to take part. Being in this study is up to you, and no one will be upset in any way if you do not want to participate or even if you change your mind later and want to stop.

You can ask any questions you have about this study. If you have a question later that you did not think of now, you can call me. You can also email me.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, you can contact the FSU IRB.

Signing your name below means that you agree to be in this study. You and your parent/guardian will be given a copy of this form after you have signed it.

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH SUBJECT

I understand the procedures described above, and I understand fully the rights of a potential subject in a research study involving people as subjects. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

Please sign on the lines below:

_____
Name of Research Subject (please print)

_____   _____
Signature of Research Subject   Date

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCHER

I have explained the research to the subject and his or her parent/guardian. I have answered all of his or her questions. I believe that he/she understands the information described in this document and freely assents to participate.

_____
Name of Researcher

_____   _____
Signature of Researcher   Date

Florida State University
College of Communication and Information
School of Library and Information Studies

ASSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Gifted Youth and Hobbies: An Exploration of Information Behavior
Tween Assent Form (7-11): Data Analysis

My name is Debi Carruth. I am a student from Florida State University. I am asking if you would like to participate in a research study called "Gifted Youth and Hobbies: An Exploration of Information Behavior," which is about how hobbies are important in gifted kids' lives and how gifted kids get information about their hobbies. This is the last part of the research project, where I'll find out if what I'm thinking about gifted kids and hobbies is right or wrong.

These are some things I want you to know about research studies:
1) Your parent/guardian needs to give permission for you to be in this study. You do not have to be in this study if you don't want to, even if your parent/guardian has already given permission.
2) You are allowed to stop being in the study at any time. If you decide to stop, no one will be angry or upset with you.
3) Sometimes good things happen to people who take part in studies, and sometimes things we may not like happen. I'll tell you more about those things below.

How many people will be in this study?
If you decide to be in this study, you will be one of about five to eight other kids.

Why am I doing this research study?
The reason I'm doing this part of the research is so that I can make sure that what I'm learning about gifted kids and their hobbies matches your actual experiences with hobbies in your life.

Why are you being asked to be in this research study?
You were invited to be in this part of the study because a little while ago I came over to your house to talk to you and your family about hobbies. At that time, you and your parent/guardian said that it would be okay for me to contact you later to ask if you'd like to help make sure I learned the right things about gifted kids and their hobbies.

What will happen during this study?
If you decide to be in this part of the study,
1) You will learn, on a secure website, how to read and think about my work.
2) You will get to ask me as many questions as you want, so that you're comfortable with the job you'll be doing.
3) You will read my work and tell me about things in your life that don't fit what I found.
4) You might talk and argue in a nice way with other kids on the secure website.

5) I'll keep a record of everybody's conversation for ten years, in case I want to find out later about how kids change as they get older. I'll protect these records offline after this project is finished so that nobody can get to them but me for the whole time.

What are the bad things that might happen?

Sometimes things happen to people in research studies that may make them feel bad. These are called "risks." The risks to you for being in the study are:

1) Sometimes it can be hard to learn things that are very different from what we know. I will make my instructions as clear as I can for you, and you can ask me any questions you want to until you're comfortable with how to do things.
2) Some people feel worried about doing things wrong when they learn something new. I will let you practice until you feel ready to do the work. When you're doing the work, I might ask you questions if I don't understand exactly what you said or if I need more information. This will not mean that you did it wrong, it will just mean that I want to understand you better.

What are the good things that might happen?

People may have good things happen to them because they are in research studies. These are called "benefits." The benefits to you for being in the study are:

1) Each time you post a response to my work on the website, I will send you a $5 gift card to either Target or Chik-Fil-A (up to $15). You get to choose which, or you can choose both and tell me how much, up to the full limit of $15, you would like on each.
2) When you complete the study, you will get a certificate with a golden seal on it.
3) When you complete the study, you will also be entered into a drawing with the other kids who finished the study for a $50 gift certificate to MindWare. There will probably be eight to ten kids in the drawing.
4) I will send these things to you in regular mail, and I'll let you know by email if you won the gift certificate to MindWare.

Who will be told about the things I learn in this study?

Nobody except me will know your private information. If I write about a special thing you said, I will protect your privacy by changing your name so nobody knows it's you. Most of the things I write about will be common to everybody in the study, though, and everybody's who's interested can read about that.

What if you don't want to be in this study?

If you do not want to be in this study, then you do not have to. Being in this study is your choice, and I will not be upset in any way if you don't want to, or even if you change your mind later and want to stop.

Who should you ask if you have any questions?

You can ask me any questions you have about this study. If you have a question later that you did not think of now, you can call me. You can also email me if you would like. You'll also be able to ask questions any time on our project website.

If you sign your name below, it means that you agree to take part in this research study. You and your parent/guardian will be given a copy of this form after you have signed it.

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH SUBJECT

Title: *Gifted Youth and Hobbies: An Exploration of Information Behavior*
Researcher: Debi Carruth

_____
Print your name here if you want to be in the study

_____   _____
Sign your name here if you want to be in the study   Date

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCHER

I have explained the research to the subject and his or her parent/guardian. I have answered all of his or her questions. I believe that he/she understands the information described in this document and freely assents to participate.

_____
Name of Researcher

_____   _____
Signature of Researcher   Date

SIGNATURE OF PARENT OR LEGAL GUARDIAN
FOR CONSENT TO MINOR'S PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH

I understand the procedures described above, and I understand fully the rights of a potential subject in a research study involving people as subjects. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to my child's participation in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

_____   _____
Minor's (Subject's) Name   Date

_____   _____
Parent/Guardian's Signature   Parent/Guardian's Name (please print)

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCHER

I have explained the research to the subject's parent or legal guardian, and answered all of their questions. I believe that the parent or legal guardian understands the information described in this document and freely consents to participate.

_____
Name of Researcher

_____   _____
Signature of Researcher   Date

APPENDIX F

IRB APPROVAL LETTERS

Office of the Vice President For Research
Human Subjects Committee
Tallahassee, Florida 32306-2742
 (850) 644-8673 · FAX (850) 644-4392

APPROVAL MEMORANDUM

Date: 03/14/2011

To: Debi Carruth

Address: 2100

Dept.:   COLLEGE OF INFORMATION

From: Thomas L. Jacobson, Chair

Re: Use of Human Subjects in Research
     Gifted Youth and Their Hobbies: An Exploration of Information Behavior

The application that you submitted to this office in regard to the use of human subjects in the research proposal referenced above has been reviewed by the Human Subjects Committee at its meeting on 04/14/2010
Your project was approved by the Committee.

The Human Subjects Committee has not evaluated your proposal for scientific merit, except to weigh the risk to the human participants and the aspects of the proposal related to potential risk and benefit. This approval does not replace any departmental or other approvals which may be required.

If you submitted a proposed consent form with your application, the approved stamped consent form is attached to this approval notice. Only the stamped version of the consent form may be used in recruiting research subjects.

If the project has not been completed by 04/13/2011   you must request a renewal of approval for continuation of the project. As a courtesy, a renewal notice will be sent to you prior to your expiration date; however, it is your responsibility as the Principal Investigator to timely request renewal of your approval from the Committee.

You are advised that any change in protocol for this project must be reviewed and approved by the Committee prior to implementation of the proposed change in the protocol. A protocol change/amendment form is required to be submitted for approval by the Committee. In addition, federal regulations require that the Principal Investigator promptly report, in writing, any unanticipated problems or adverse events involving risks to research subjects or others.
By copy of this memorandum, the chairman of your department and/or your major professor is reminded that he/she is responsible for being informed concerning research projects involving human subjects in the department, and should review protocols as often as needed to insure that the project is being conducted in compliance with our institution and with DHHS regulations.

This institution has an Assurance on file with the Office for Human Research Protection.   The Assurance Number is IRB00000446.

 Cc: Melissa Gross, Advisor

HSC No.   2010.4339

Office of the Vice President For Research
Human Subjects Committee
P. O. Box 3062742
Tallahassee, Florida 32306-2742
 (850) 644-8673 · FAX (850) 644-4392

RE-APPROVAL MEMORANDUM

Date: 02/09/2012

To: Debi Carruth

Address: 2100

Dept.:   COLLEGE OF INFORMATION

From: Thomas L. Jacobson, Chair

Re: Re-approval of Use of Human subjects in Research:
    Gifted Youth and Their Hobbies: An Exploration of Information Behavior

Your request to continue the research project listed above involving human subjects has been approved
by the Human Subjects Committee. If your project has not been completed by 05/09/2012   , you are
must request renewed approval by the Committee.

If you submitted a proposed consent form with your renewal request, the approved stamped consent
form is attached to this re-approval notice. Only the stamped version of the consent form may be used
in recruiting of research subjects. You are reminded that any change in protocol for this project must
be reviewed and approved by the Committee prior to implementation of the proposed change in the
protocol. A protocol change/amendment form is required to be submitted for approval by the
Committee. In addition, federal regulations require that the Principal Investigator promptly report in
writing, any unanticipated problems or adverse events involving risks to research subjects or others.

By copy of this memorandum, the Chairman of your department and/or your major professor are
reminded of their responsibility for being informed concerning research projects involving human
subjects in their department. They are advised to review the protocols as often as necessary to insure
that the project is being conducted in compliance with our institution and with DHHS regulations.

Cc:
HSC No. 2011.6236

Office of the Vice President For Research
Human Subjects Committee
P O Box 3062742
Tallahassee, Florida 32306-2742
 (850) 644-8673 · FAX (850) 644-4392

APPROVAL MEMORANDUM (for change in research protocol)

Date: 08/17/2011

To: Debi Carruth

Address: 2100

Dept: COLLEGE OF INFORMATION

From: Thomas L. Jacobson, Chair

Re: Use of Human subjects in Research
Project entitled: Gifted Youth and Their Hobbies: An Exploration of Information Behavior

The application that you submitted to this office in regard to the requested change/amendment to your research protocol for the above-referenced project has been reviewed and approved.

Please be reminded that if the project has not been completed by 05/09/2012   , you must request renewed approval for continuation of the project.

By copy of this memorandum, the chairman of your department and/or your major professor is reminded that he/she is responsible for being informed concerning research projects involving human subjects in the department, and should review protocols as often as needed to insure that the project is being conducted in compliance with our institution and with DHHS regulations.

This institution has an Assurance on file with the Office for Human Research Protection. The Assurance Number is IRB00000446.

Cc: Melissa Gross, Advisor
HSC NO.   2011.6471

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS AS REPORTED TO PARTICIPANTS

Thank you for agreeing to help me with the last step of my research project! On this web page, I have posted about the things I learned while I was talking to all of you kids who participated.

Sometimes there can be misunderstandings, though. Like, some of you might have said something that I thought meant one thing but it maybe means something different to you. So here is where you get to play a really important part of the research again. You get to see the things I learned and then tell me where I got it wrong or where I missed things that are important.

It won't hurt my feelings – in fact, it would be really cool if you found anything wrong and told me about it so that I can make sure everything is as true as it can be. That way, people will be able to use what I learned from you in order to make things better for other kids who might have hobbies or want to have hobbies.

Here is how it works:

The main ideas of what I learned are a little bit further down on this page. Your job is to read about these main ideas and think about if they match you and your life and your hobbies. If there is anything that doesn't match you or your life or your hobbies, you get to tell me how I got it wrong or what I missed and how I can fix it.

Remember that you don't have to do this – nobody will be sad or mad if you decide not to. And if you start and then decide you don't want to finish, that is okay too.

Here are the main ideas:

Always Activated
This main idea is about the feeling that even when you're doing things that aren't your hobby, it's easy for you to be reminded about your hobby. Mostly this is because your hobby is very important to you so it's always at the back of your mind.
- Some said that they thought about their hobbies all the time, even when they were doing other things.
- Some said that they would do hobby things at the same time they did things that weren't their hobby, like dancing while doing chores or doodling while working on homework.

Adult Facilitated Access
This main idea is about the way that adults help you find out about your hobby. It's also about how adults help you do things in your hobby that you can't do on your own, like driving you to classes or competitions, or buying you expensive new equipment that you need.

- Some said that the way they first heard about their hobby was from an adult. Sometimes this was a teacher at school and sometimes it was a family member.
- Some said that adults helped them buy the things they need for their hobbies.
- Some said that adults helped them by driving them places they needed to go for their hobbies. Sometimes you have to work around what other family members need, too.
- Some said that adults would sometimes not allow them to do their hobby for a while, if they misbehaved or did not do their chores.

Autonomy
This main idea is about you making choices for yourself about what you do, how you do it, when you do it, and where you do it. As a young person you probably don't get choices about every single thing, but when it comes to figuring out stuff related to your hobbies you are pretty much in charge.
- Some said that they get stuck every now and then when they're doing their hobby. They came up with lots of ways to help themselves get unstuck without asking other people for help.
- Some said that when they do need help, they know exactly where to go to get the best help.
- Some said that every time they work on their hobby they have a regular thing that they do to get in the mood and help them do their best. This might be something like climbing a tree or drinking a glass of milk or just being still for a little while and filling your mind with hobby thoughts.

These are the main ideas that I learned from talking with all of you kids about your hobbies. I would like for you to read through each one again carefully and answer the following questions about each example or idea (the main ideas and the bullet point ideas underneath them):

1.   Where did I get it wrong?
2.   How did I get it wrong, or how would you change it?
3.   What else should I add?

You can send your answers to my email so that they will be as private as possible.

Thank you again for helping me with this part of the project! We're almost done now!

Debi Carruth

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

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EDUCATION

Dec 2013	**PhD**, School of Information & Library Sciences, College of Communication & Information, Florida State University
	Graduate Certificate, Online Instructional Development
Aug 1, 2000	**Bachelor of Science**, University of Central Florida
	Major: Liberal Arts – Education & Humanities
	Minor: Health Sciences
Apr 1, 1995	**Associate in Arts**, Valencia Community College
	Honors Program, President's List, Dean's List

EXPERIENCE

08/04 - Present
FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF COMMUNICATION & INFORMATION, SCHOOL OF LIBRARY & INFORMATION STUDIES
Graduate Instructor, Teaching Fellow, Research Assistant, Teaching Assistant

- **Major**: Information Behavior of Youth
- **Minor**: Gifted Education
- **Design**: Info & Society (undergrad online asynch)
- **Guest Lecture**: Research Methods: *Qual. Methods*
- **Guest Lecture**: Youth Info Behavior: *Informal Info Beh.*

- Information Leadership (2 sem)
- Information Needs of YAs (3 sem)
- Information Srcs & Srvcs (3 sem)
- Collection Development (1 sem)
- Info Needs of Children (1 sem)
- Information & Society (12 sem)
- Undergraduate Research (1 sem)

04/01 – Present
BARNES & NOBLE BOOKSELLERS, INC.
Bookseller

- Nook sales/support
- Membership sales
- Cashiering

- Customer service
- Maintain store
- Assorted special projects

06/03 – 08/04
FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCES, ENGLISH
Graduate Instructor

- Designed/taught 4 freshman comp courses
- Honors, computer-assisted, & at-risk classes
- Invited presentation – Listening Skills (training for comp instructors)

- First Year Writing committee
  - Selected text for all freshman comp classes
  - Selected writing & teaching award winners

09/03 – 08/04
FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY HONORS PROGRAM
Academic Advisor

- Student advising on-site in Honors residence hall, all majors
- Trained new advisors to take my place on-site

- Freshman advising at Orientation, declared & undeclared majors

10/00 – 09/03
FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY HONORS PROGRAM
Assistant Director

- UG advising: liberal studies, university reqs, honors, major, career, undeclared
- Database design, management, & upkeep

- Administered Honors in the Major program, faculty & student side
- Web page design & upkeep