Assessment, Identification, and Evaluation

Performance Assessment and High-Performance Students

Ann Robinson
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In the field of gifted education, we often think of assessment as a part of the identification process. Our efforts to locate talented students has captured our attention and our time. In this regard, the field has made considerable advance. We use multiple criteria for identification; we have extended try-out periods for students to display their talents; and we have adopted non-traditional assessments, particularly in the performing arts and with culturally-diverse and young gifted children.

Assessments as Expectations and Outcomes

Assessment, however, has another important meaning for educators and parents of talented youngsters – documentation of student learning. In other words, assessment often means student progress or student outcomes rather than student identification. Because opportunities for talented students in the elementary school are frequently ungraded and not "covered" by the traditional end-of-year achievement test battery, many of us may not be aware that new initiatives in the assessment of student progress have profound implications for our highest-performing students. On the other hand, teachers and parents of older students, particularly those who must demonstrate what they know on state-initiated minimum competency tests, are likely to have an ear for the current assessment debate.

A Move to Alternative Assessments: Initiative and Debate

As advocates for talented students, the debate which has most resonance for us is in the discussion of the changing nature of student assessment. In recent years, there has been a move away from multiple choice, "bubble-in" achievement tests to alternative, authentic, or performance assessments. In such assessments, students are expected to be active and to construct their answers rather than to respond to a question by choosing among given answers. According to Wiggins (1991), new forms of performance assessment ask students to be apprentice performers

(See ROBINSON, p. 22)
THE STATE OF THE ASSOCIATION

As I began to plan this article, I found myself thinking about an event of January, 1994 - President Clinton's "State of the Union" address. Many of you were probably watching and listening that evening, too, as the chamber of the House of Representatives filled with all the important members of Congress, the President's family and guests, and the members of the Cabinet. Writing this, I picture all of you TAGT members who came to this column ready to "listen" to me. With this picture in mind, I want to talk to you in the same goal-setting vein, to share with you the "State of the Association." The purpose of my article, then, is to sketch for you my agenda as your President.

To do this, I want to tell you part of the story of two English poets, Robert and Elizabeth Barrett Browning. You probably already know their love story - how they read and admired each other's poetry, and eventually eloped to Italy, their love triumphing over the invalid Elizabeth's chronic poor health and her domineering father. Although they lived and wrote in the time of Queen Victoria, we would hardly label their actions "Victorian." These two were not bound by the unreasonably strict rules of conduct that we associate with this time. Rather, they epitomized other characteristics of this period, such as personal growth and social reform. The revolution changed the Industrial Revolution transformed England from a country of cottage industries to one of factories and workshops. Conditions for women and children who worked in these places were atrocious. In 1841, Elizabeth Barrett Browning published a poem called "The Cry of the Children," in which she eloquently protested the horrors children were forced to endure. She contrasted the beauty of nature with the ugliness of the factories and emphasized the numbing monotony of the droning, turning, iron wheels of machinery that ground out the long days. In the poem she called on the wheel to "be silent" so the children could "hear each other breathing." She begs:

Let them feel that this cold metallic motion
Is not all the life God fashions or reveals.
Let them prove their living souls against the notion
That they live in you, or under you, O Wheel!

The poem's eloquence moved the nation and played a major role in influencing Parliament to enact child labor laws protecting children from the dangers and monotony of dark, dirty, and dangerous factories.

If a few prophetic voices could make changes more than 150 years ago, so can they today. For that reason, I believe that the first thing on our agenda must be to advocate - prophetic voices - for gifted children, to keep repeating that "the cold, metallic motion" of some educational environments is not "all the life that should be fashioned or revealed." (See PRESIDENT, p. 30)
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR UPDATE

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

TAGT participates in SBOE discussion of Proposed Advanced High School Program

TAGT continues to give input to the state board’s Committee on Students in the discussion of the proposed advanced high school program. On March 10, TAGT representatives attended the Committee on Students’ meeting to hear Agency revisions to the program. At the February SBOE meeting, nine additional options for determining student performance were suggested by individuals giving testimony. TEA had originally recommended (1) a score of 3 or higher on the Advanced Placement (AP) examination, (2) a score of 4 or higher on the International Baccalaureate examination, or (3) a grade point average of 3.0 or higher on a college course taken for high school credit. On March 10, Agency staff recommended only three additional items—(1) products of professional quality as judged by a panel of professionals in the field that is the focus of the project, (2) original research/project conducted under the direction of mentor(s) and reported to an appropriate audience, and (3) selection as a National Merit Finalist. TAGT had recommended these options and several others in our February testimony. We were pleased when Patay Johnson (District 9) asked that National Merit Semifinalists be added to the list of options. TAGT had also recommended adding semifinalists as this group of students represents the top two percent of 1,078,660 students participating in the 1993-94 National Merit Program. Agency staff noted that other recommendations, such as local honors courses or summer programs, had not been added to the list but that student products developed in these options could be reviewed by a panel of professionals. We are also pleased that TAGT’s recommendation to recognize students who demonstrate performance equivalent to work done at a professional level in the arts, business, science, industry, and/or community service has been included in the purpose statement for the Advanced High School Program.

Mary Knotts Perkins (District 8) supported the new items; she said many of the districts in her area did not offer AP or International Baccalaureate examinations, but they did have students working with professionals in the field. Mrs. Perkins asked if other items could be added to the list of requirements or if districts were restricted to the present list. Evelyn Hiatt, Division of Gifted and Talented Education, said the committee could adopt in rule the standards by which options could be selected, then approve additional options without the required three readings.

TAGT monitors AP Incentive Program

On March 9, representatives of TAGT, the College Board, and TEA met with Camille Meyer, clerk for the House Public Education Committee, to discuss public concern about reimbursements for AP teacher training taken in the summer of 1994. We learned that TEA had received approval from the Comptroller’s office for reimbursements for summer 1994 AP teacher training. Subsequently, on March 10 the Committee on Students unanimously approved that Proposed New 19 TAC Chapter 75.197, Texas Advanced Placement Incentive Program rule be amended (at second reading) as follows:

Applications for funding may be filed with the agency at a date determined by the commissioner (beginning July 15, 1995).

As many of you know, funding for the 1994-95 Texas AP Incentive Program was taken from the gifted and talented appropriation.

Mary Perkins’ request of Agency staff on March 10 that a legislative recommendation be brought forward to seek separate and additional funding for the Texas AP Incentive Program was more good news!

TAGT invited to go before Joint Select Committee

TAGT president-elect and Killeen ISD G/T coordinator, Ann Wink; Martha and Rick Morrison, TAGT parent members from LaPorte; Roslyn Blache, TAGT board member and San Antonio ISD G/T teacher, and I, as Executive Director, have been invited to testify before the Joint Select Committee on March 25 in San Antonio on the adequacy and effectiveness of programs designed for special populations of students and for teacher and administrator staff development. Senate Bill 7, enacted by the 73rd Texas Legislature, created the Joint Select Committee to consider and recommend a restructuring of the public education system to better meet the needs of Texas students. The bill also instructs the Commissioner of Education to rewrite the Texas Education Code as it applies to public schools. TAGT is pleased to respond to the Joint Select Committee’s invitation; this is a unique opportunity to testify on behalf of appropriate educational opportunities for gifted and talented students. We will continue to monitor the Select Committee’s work as it conducts statewide hearings in the coming months, and we will notify TAGT members of findings affecting the education of the gifted and talented.

Grassroots involvement in the legislative process

Member participation at the grassroots level is of decisive importance to the success of TAGT’s legislative initiatives. TAGT members from every geographic region of the state should begin now to schedule appointments with legislative candidates from their areas, even though an incumbent may be running unopposed. The 1994 Governor’s race will continue to highlight public education as a major campaign issue. By meeting with elected officials and promoting the education of Texas’ gifted and talented students, our membership can greatly enhance TAGT’s name recognition and influence for gifted students as we approach the 74th Session of the Texas Legislature.

SPRING 1994
Not long ago I walked along the beach looking for seashells. One of my greatest pleasures in walking along a seashore is discovering unusual, beautiful shells. Seashells are among the most familiar and fascinating of nature’s creations. As I searched the shore for special seashells, my mind wandered to the parallel between gathering seashells, for there one can't discover the greatest find. We need to stop, sift, and observe carefully in order to find the most fascinating and unique seashells. Often the seashell that someone else overlooked is just the find we coveted. It isn’t necessarily the largest or most perfectly-formed shell that we desire. But, without close inspection, many rare, unusual shells would go unnoticed by beachcombers. Evaluation programs, like seashells, also vary greatly. Without close inspection, it’s difficult to assess their beauty and their flaws. We have to read, observe, study, ponder, and experiment to choose the best options to meet our program goals.

No manual or field guide is available to tell us how to evaluate and assess our gifted and talented programs. It is impossible to describe the full range of variation for each evaluation and assessment. However, our spring issue presents several perspectives that we think you will find interesting. Dr. Ann Robinson’s article encourages “graduated world-class performance standards” for gifted students. She suggests that it’s time for new assessment initiatives to “take into account that some youngsters are capable of quite extraordinary performance.” Dr. Dorothy Siak discusses her work with Project Step-Up and the successes they have found in identifying and serving minority gifted. Dr. Susan Johnson and Susan Lucenay share how students can design and implement their own evaluation instruments for evaluating student products.

Cynthia Shade’s article talks about the use of portfolio activities to help teachers build strong portfolios for G/T screening and identification. Dr. James Miller’s view of student portfolios reminds us that assessment portfolios aren’t simply folders of student work, but demonstrations of student growth and tools for student and teacher reflection. We hope that this issue will pose questions for you, offer suggestions on program improvement, and encourage thinking about how we are evaluating, identifying, and assessing programs for gifted students in Texas.

Every year it is important for us to evaluate whether our gifted and talented programs are being implemented as planned, where their strengths and weaknesses lie, and whether revisions to current programs are necessary to strengthen program effectiveness. Our state’s Results-Based Monitoring should help school districts evaluate current program options, assess student performance and product performance, and clarify identification procedures to be sure that underserved populations are being represented. We need to know if our gifted students are developing discipline in learning. We want to be sure that our students are becoming more independent and self-directed in their quest for knowledge. And we can’t forget that people who support the funding of gifted and talented programs like to see results from that special programming. We need to assure them that their money is being spent well and their investment will pay dividends as our students become leaders.

We educators need to look closely at our gifted and talented programs and ask, “Do we have sufficient support for these programs in our districts?” and, “How can we generate additional support? What part of evaluation, identification, and assessment needs to be closely examined, reworked, and polished?” We need to be ready to show that other aspects of the school program have improved as a result of the presence of gifted programs.

As the tide begins to rise and the waves beat stronger against the shore, we advocate for the gifted and talented need to be sure that our programs survive the shifting sands. We develop five-year plans for gifted and talented students cautiously these days. It’s time to take a closer look at how our gifted and talented programs have changed the lives of the students served. How can our programs be structured to best meet the needs of the gifted students for whom they are designed? Are they offering depth and complexity to challenge gifted learners?

Every day we must look for some small way to improve the way we do our jobs. We must remain open, flexible, and curious. We will continue to sift the sand and search the shore for the variety of evaluation and assessment options we can use to strengthen our programs. For without careful examination, we might miss the wonderful ideas buried beneath the sand. Remember, “most people resist change, and yet it’s the only thing that brings progress.” Gifted education is changing across the nation. We can’t just keep walking along the beach, but must pause, look around, and examine carefully all of the options available for us to choose so that gifted education changes and grows. Working together, all things are possible.
Identification, Assessment, and Evaluation

NEW DIRECTIONS FOR EDUCATING MINORITY ECONOMICALLY-DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN

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Disadvantaged children are capable of more than is typically expected or required of them. If these children are to reach their potential, educators must plan, develop, and implement educational practices that reflect high expectations. Children of poverty experience failure disproportionately in their early school years and they often leave school ill-equipped for adult life. This predicament is not new; the federal and state government has spent considerable funds and involved numerous scholars and practitioners in a search for more effective ways to reverse the "poverty cycle." The Jacob Javits' Grants for Gifted and Talented in the Federal Department of Education provide educators an opportunity to engage in research and program development. For three years, Dorothy Sisk, Pamela Gilbert, Charles Whaley, and Robert Seney from Lamar University, June Maker from the University of Arizona, and Roberta Daniels from the University of Arkansas were involved in a collaborative project with more than 216 minority economically-disadvantaged children and their parents and teachers in four states: Arizona, Arkansas, Florida, and Texas. From this experience, alternative approaches and new directions to the education of children of poverty have emerged.

Project Step-Up (Systematic Training for Educational Programs for Underserved Pupils) had six major goals.

1. The development of alternative criteria and methodology for identifying underserved gifted and talented minority economically-disadvantaged, bilingual, and special education students;
2. The development of new approaches to teacher training and professional development;
3. The development of new and appropriate curriculum focusing on self-concept development, communication and the arts, problem solving, and higher-level thinking processes;
4. The development of methods to involve actively the parents of at-risk children in their children's education and development;
5. The development of educationally-appropriate and effective programs that will positively influence the total educational school climate.

Development of Alternative Criteria and Methodology for Identification

Project Step-Up addressed the four barriers to identifying gifted minority students reported by Frasier (1989): 1) attitude, 2) access, 3) accommodation, and 4) adaptation. According to Frasier, there is often a negative attitude toward giftedness in minority groups. To change this attitude, Project Step-Up staff met with central administrators, building principals, teachers, and parents to discuss the objectives of the project.

Teachers in the 13 original sites of the project were provided a behavioral checklist developed by Dorothy Sisk (1991) based on research of minority economically-disadvantaged children (Barkin, 1990; Bernal, 1990; Cummins, 1984; Machado, 1987; Richert, 1982; Tonemah, 1985; Zappia, 1989), which includes selected characteristics from the four ethnic groups of children participating in Project Step-Up: the African-American, Hispanic, Asian, and Native American. The children who demonstrated a majority of the
(See SISK, p. 7)
FIGURE 1: PROJECT STEP-UP "CHILD-FIND" ASSESSMENT & SELECTION PROCESS AND PROCEDURES

High Potential, At-Risk, Child-Find

Traditional Assessment:
Locate achievement and ability information and scores on file at school

Non-Traditional Assessment:
Classroom observation based on the Howard Gardner model
Structure of Intellect Battery
The Ravens Matrices
Children's portfolios

Creation of Minority Disadvantaged student Talent Pool by teacher, principal, G/T staff, and Step-Up staff

Selection for participation in Step-Up transitional curriculum:
Self-concept development, higher-level thinking skills, creativity, etc.

Individual district identification procedures for G/T

Teacher Referral:
Checklists, etc.
characteristics on the checklist were placed in a school talent pool. The teachers then prepared a portfolio of student products and compiled available achievement and ability test scores.

These traditional tests were supplemented by alternate tests including the Raven's Progressive Matrices, the Structure of Intellect (SOI) battery, and selected problem-solving tasks based on the Howard Gardner Multiple Intelligences (MI) model developed by June Maker.

This information was considered by teachers, principals, gifted and talented supervisors, and Project Step-Up staff. This information became baseline data for the 18 children who were selected to participate in each Project Step-Up class.

None of the children selected for Project Step-Up would have been considered for screening or identification for traditional gifted programs. The standard achievement scores of the participating students were for the most part well below average. However, all of the students who were administered the SOI battery achieved a level of giftedness in one or more of the processing/diagnostic abilities. According to Meeker (1969), this performance qualifies the students for consideration as gifted students.

The flexible model process of identification is depicted in Figure 1.

Project Step-Up Principles

Seven principles guided Project Step-Up:

1. Develop and implement the philosophy that all children from all ethnic and socioeconomic groups have gifts and talents.

2. Develop and implement the practice of flexible grouping to allow high-potential minority economically disadvantaged students to be grouped for appropriately differentiated curriculum.

3. Develop a cadre of teachers, mentors, and community members who are willing to nurture talent in all ethnic and socioeconomic groups.

4. Provide training and time for Project Step-Up teachers to collaborate, plan, and share information with other teachers in their schools and other district sites.

5. Provide after-school and summer program enrichment options for Project Step-Up students.

6. Use technology and telecommunication systems to link Project Step-Up students and teachers.

7. Develop community and business partnerships to provide involvement with the real world and to provide fiscal and human resources for Project Step-Up schools.

These seven principles were introduced and discussed in the summer institutes at Lamar University and reiterated at local and regional meetings. The seven guiding principles were placed on a Likert scale of 1-5, low being 1 and 5 being high. The supervisors of the gifted programs, principals, and Project Step-Up staff members used the checklist of principles to evaluate each site. Lack of implementation of any of the principles was found to be in direct proportion to the successful performance of the students.

New Approaches to Teacher Training

A teacher training process was implemented concentrating on four skills: 1) focusing, 2) empowering, 3) facilitating, and 4) transforming. Focusing, the ability to center one's attention and energies to maximize time and resources, helped the teachers achieve focus in themselves and in their students. Using their creative energy, the teachers maintained a balance between Project Step-Up goals and school district goals and did not become sidetracked. Successful Step-Up teachers steadfastly focused on a singular purpose: developing the children's potential.

The teachers were empowered by Project Step-Up staff and they developed a trusting relationship with one another. They identified shared purposes and clarified mutual values concerning these students. The teachers were further empowered by presenting the Step-Up curriculum at local, state, and international meetings. As the teachers experienced empowerment, they in turn empowered their children and emphasized a "can do" philosophy.

The teachers were supported with positive feedback in a move from traditional teaching styles to more facilitating styles. Opportunities were provided for the teachers to experience free flow of information and ideas in numerous discussions. Using the skill of facilitating, the Project Step-Up teachers created a classroom learning environment which one teacher described as "electric and eclectic."

The skill of transformation helped administrators and Project Step-Up staff remove and surmount a number of barriers. Barriers included stereotypes of these children and their parents, such as "they won't arrive on time," "they aren't interested in their children's work," or "the children are slow, lazy, and underachieving." We transformed education for the children with Project Step-Up. An example of transformation was the identification of gifted children in schools that previously had never identified any gifted students. In these economically disadvantaged schools, many students had been identified as emotionally disturbed, learning disabled, delinquent, and retarded, but not as gifted. In these same schools, the teachers were not viewed as innovative, effective, or creative. We are demonstrating that these children and their teachers can achieve excellence. We hypothesized that 60 percent of the children would be identified as gifted and talented, using district and state criteria. This Project goal has been realized as an overall percentage; however, some sites were not as successful as others. The Step-up formative and summative (See SISK, p. 8)
information has identified important program variables that were essential for program success.

These principles are:
1) Direct instruction of thinking skills
2) Language arts and arts focus in curriculum
3) Emphasis on content and process
4) Visual reinforcement
5) Positive classroom climate
6) Use of positive language
7) Teacher flexibility and creativity
8) Parental Involvement
9) Use of Step-Up teacher materials.

In teaching thinking skills, the teachers and Project Step-Up staff modeled the cognitive processes. For example, when they read to the children, understanding the author’s point of view was encouraged. The children learned to use one another as resources in classroom discussions. On a regular basis, the Step-Up second, third, and fourth grade children assisted younger children in their schools by reading stories, introducing centers, and helping with skill development in mathematics and spelling. Teachers placed a high priority on establishing a positive classroom environment. They modeled flexibility and creativity by using a variety of materials and teaching strategies.

The curriculum for Project Step-Up concentrated on more complex tasks, more sophisticated products and performances and focused on higher-order thinking. The students were exposed to multiple perspectives by a variety of speakers and participated in field trips that also provided a broadened scope of information. There was an emphasis on understanding knowledge, retaining knowledge, and, even more important, using the knowledge. This focus personalized the students’ learning and gave it purpose.

To appraise the children’s performance, each day the teachers used a checklist of behaviors that included responsiveness, flexibility, empathy, communication skills, sense of humor, problem solving, and autonomy.

Influencing the Total Educational School Climate

This program was successfully demonstrated at several schools. In these schools, the Step-Up teachers were released from their classrooms to teach thinking skills to other classes. Most of the Step-Up schools that had positive school involvement expanded their programs to additional classes. Starting with one second grade at each school, as the children moved up a grade, another class of second graders was added. At the end of the third year, many of these schools had three Step-Up classes.

(See SISK, p. 9)
Method/Materials for Parent Involvement

The parent component of Project Step-Up was a vital part of the total change process. Constance Shannon worked with the parents to provide information on how children learn. She demonstrated specific ways to support their critical and creative thinking through six interactive seminars. Her goal was to enable parents and children to learn and work together. She conducted individual interviews with the parents and reported that the self-esteem and confidence of the parents in helping their children learn were positive benefits of the parent component.

Locating/Involving Community Members as Mentors, Role Models, and Instructors

Working with the Chamber of Commerce and a variety of professional groups, university and college personnel, and staff, Project Step-Up provided the children with role models and speakers. Schools were encouraged to involve their business partners. Successful schoolwide activities included “fun days” such as toy making, creative writing, storytelling, computer and mathematics games, and contests.

One Site: Up Close and In Detail

Worsham Elementary School in Houston is a primarily Hispanic Chapter 1 school with 940 students, 80 percent receiving free lunch. Two teachers and the assistant principal attended the summer institute at Lamar University and planned and developed two Step-Up classes. Prior to establishing the Step-Up classes, the school had considerable difficulty locating gifted children using traditional measures.

Using the Step-Up Identification Process (Figure 1), a talent pool of students was established at the second grade level based on Structure of Intellect (SOI) scores, available achievement and ability test scores, and teacher recommendation using the Minority Checklist developed by Sisk (1991). Two classes were taught by Susan Burkitt and Norma Leza. Each class was comprised of twenty children. In Ms. Leza’s bilingual class, the children were primarily Spanish speaking and the test scores reflected their difficulty with English. La Prueba, a Spanish version of the ITBS, was administered to the students and this test proved to be quite easy, with most of the students performing at the 93rd percentile or higher. Children in Ms. Leza’s and Ms. Burkett’s class were identified for the gifted program using DCAT (Developmental Cognitive Abilities Test) scores, teacher recommendation, and SOI scores.

Carolyn Bronson conducted two teacher-training sessions with the staff at Worsham Elementary on communication and the arts. In evaluating Worsham Elementary on the program elements in Step-Up, the assistant principal, Robyn Madden, ranked the site five on all elements, except parental involvement which she ranked four.

Texas Step-Up Sites

In Killeen at Reeces Creek Elementary, seven Step-Up minority economically-disadvantaged children were identified as gifted using the Step-Up identification process. In Beaumont at Fehl Elementary, five children were identified as gifted and in Fort Bend at Briargate Elementary, eleven students were identified as gifted.

Expansion of Project Step-Up

Dorothy Sisk and her staff at Lamar University have been awarded an Even Start Grant in collaboration with Beaumont Independent School District to provide Step-Up programs in grades K-2 to five Chapter 1 elementary schools (Blanchette, Fehl, Fletcher, Lucas, Pietzch).

This grant provides assistance to the parents of the Step-Up children in securing GED certificates and developing parenting and tutoring skills. The original Beaumont Project Step-Up site has been extended to 17 of the 20 elementary schools in grades three, four and five.

Several Project Step-Up sites are being extended to additional sites, such as Deland, Florida, with a second program being implemented at five additional sites. In Rockpoint, Arizona, the enthusiasm for Project Step-Up was demonstrated by the program officer, Bobbie Ackley, sending three teachers to Lamar University’s Summer Institute to be trained to expand their program. In Grades K-12, they have identified 90 students as gifted. In Ft. Bend, Texas, the program has been expanded to the second, third, fourth, and fifth grades.

A gratifying aspect of Project Step-Up was the enthusiasm of teachers, parents, and administrators. The building principal was a key ingredient for Project Step-Up success. This was reflected in the comments of the principal at Fehl Elementary school, Cathy Chavis, “I hope to continue to improve my school so that all children who leave Fehl are able to compete with anyone.” And by Carlton J. Young, the principal in Crawfordsville, Arkansas, “Many of the students involved with the project are so intrigued with the materials and the challenging components in Step-Up that they can hardly wait to enter the classroom each day to start work.”

Still another positive side effect of Project Step-Up was the enthusiasm of the children for the educational process as they realized their giftedness. One third grader said, “I want to be..."
a teacher so I can pass on what I've learned to other kids. I've been given a gift and that gift was a brain.”

Project Step-Up will be holding a summer teacher training institute June 5-10. Interested school districts and/or educators that want to participate may call (409) 880-8046 or write to:

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The cost of the seminar is $345, which includes room and board, a three-hour graduate course in gifted education, and teaching materials.

Bibliography


FIGURE 2: Selected Teaching Strategies Based on the Gardner MI model

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AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT: IS IT HAPPENING?

Jayne Kinghton
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AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT: IS IT HAPPENING?

Susan Johnsen
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Within the past decade, the field of education has seen a movement toward authentic assessment. This desire for authenticity can be viewed as a means of genuinely attempting to assess student progress so that mastery in the classroom may also lead to mastery in other settings. Authentic assessment, therefore, involves more than paper/pencil tests or numerical grades; it goes beyond what is typically found in most school classrooms and focuses on outcomes. These outcomes reflect what has been learned and relate to performance in the “real world.”

Pat O’Connell Ross (1991), director of the US Office of Gifted Education, agrees that one of the most important goals for school reform in the 90’s centers around the need for authentic assessment and improved methods for examining students’ progress. This desire for authentic assessment is indeed a challenge but is even more challenging with the concurrent movement toward inclusion and heterogeneous classrooms. Due to these trends, our gifted and talented children are spending more time in the regular classroom. The classroom teacher is challenged to evaluate all students’ progress in light of their own diversity and match instruction to their changing differences.

The use of portfolios has been viewed as a means for authentic assessment. The idea of portfolios, although relatively new, has been implemented in many schools in recent years. Implementation, however, seems to vary. For example, Ballard (1992) has found that most teachers use their first experience with portfolios as simply a filing system. They keep all of their students’ writings in folders and eventually pass what they have collected on to the next teacher. With time, he reports that teachers evolved in their use of portfolios toward a more measurable means of assessment. On the other hand, Spann (1991) found that the schools in his study used checklists along with portfolios and were more effective in evaluating students at all academic levels.

The purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of the teacher’s use of portfolios and other methods of assessment in one Texas school. The objectives were: 1) to discover the methods teachers use in the assessment of student achievement; and 2) to discover how teachers use portfolios in assessing student progress.

METHOD

Subjects

Twenty-three elementary teachers in an inner-city school participated in this study. The school had 392 students — 44 percent White, 39 percent Black, 15 percent Hispanic, and 2 percent Oriental. Since the use of portfolios was prevalent in the building and encouraged by the principal, the faculty was asked to participate in this study. Participants included individuals who taught kindergarten through fifth grade, as well as “special” teachers such as resource, gifted and talented, and Chapter 1. Four teachers chose not to participate. These individuals were teachers of kindergarten, second grade, fifth grade, and content mastery.

Instrument

A structured survey consisting of 38 questions was developed to identify the methods and use of different assessment procedures. The survey questions fell into four general categories of assessment methods: 1) preassessment; 2) post-assessment; 3) skill and concept checklists; and 4) portfolios. A panel of professionals reviewed the survey before its actual administration.

On 29 of the questions, the participants rated each response on a scale from “always” to “never” regarding their uses of assessment in the classroom. On the remaining nine questions, the participants selected multiple answers from an array of choices and added additional comments as needed to describe how they used different kinds of assessment procedures in different subject areas. Some of the questions included:

- Do you use the results of preassessments to individualize instruction?
- Do you use skill or concept checklists based on TAAS objectives?
- Might you give different tests to different children in your class (covering basically the same material) in order to key into individuals’ learning differences?

(Author's note: See KINGHTON, p. 12)
• Do you have common items that are placed in all children's portfolios?

Upon completion of the surveys and tabulation of the results, follow-up probes were conducted with approximately half of the participants to clarify survey responses.

RESULTS

Preassessment

All 23 participants responded that they administered preassessments and used the results for the primary purpose of individualizing instruction. In fact, 65 percent said that the information gained from a preassessment allowed teachers to individualize instruction. However, only 26 percent of the participants used the results of preassessments to group children.

The findings also indicated that teachers used a variety of types of preassessment from pre-made pretests to correspond with a textbook (52 percent) to homemade evaluations (61 percent). A majority of the participants also stated that they used oral preassessments (61 percent). In addition, the participants were most likely to use preassessment in math (57 percent) and reading (43 percent). Only 26 percent of the participants said that they used pretests in social studies, and no teachers indicated that they administered preassessments in science. In summary, the majority of teachers used a variety of preassessments in math and reading, but did not appear to group students using the information gained.

Post-assessment

The study showed that teachers preferred homemade tests (61 percent) over textbook-published tests (35 percent). The participants also indicated that the assessments they developed might be oral or written (57 percent). When developing written tests, the participants most often used short answer questions (57 percent) and multiple choice (48 percent).

Although most teachers in the study implied that a variety of techniques are best when administering post-assessment, only 26 percent said that they were likely to give different tests (covering basically the same material) to different children. The majority (52 percent) said that they would consider this option on occasion and 13 percent said that they would never give different tests to different children due to their learning differences. While 74 percent of the teachers said that they would use the results from post-assessment to individualize instruction, again only 26 percent felt that they would use those same results to group children.

As one might expect, 57 percent of participants felt that a post-assessment allowed the teacher to know what students learned, but the participants did not use the information in a similar way: 43 percent said that they almost always used assessment for the purpose of grading, while 43 percent said that they generally used assessment for reasons other than grading. In summary, the majority of teachers used homemade post assessments but did not use the information in similar ways. More importantly for gifted and talented students, this information is not used to group children for instruction.

Skill or Concept Checklist

The majority of participants (65 percent) used some form of checklist to assess student achievement. According to this study, approximately half of the teachers used checklists based on the essential elements or a specific program. The other half used teacher-made checklists based on an understanding of what they felt was expected and required of their students. The participants also indicated that they used checklists in a variety of subject areas. The most common subject in which checklists were used was math (61 percent), followed by reading (43 percent), and language (26 percent). Few teachers said that they used checklists in other subject areas. However, a large group of teachers indicated that they issued checklists based on TAAS skills. Of the teachers who taught grades three, four, and five (the grades in which the TAAS is given), 86 percent said that they used some form of checklist to indicate progress on TAAS objectives. By comparison, only 29 percent of the kindergarten, first, and second grade teachers used such checklists regularly. It appears that the use of a TAAS checklist directly corresponds to the outcomes expected at a specific grade level.

Portfolios

With the principal's encouragement in using portfolios as a means of documenting student progress, it was not surprising that every teacher except two said that they used portfolios to monitor achievement. Seventeen percent said that they always used portfolios, 30 percent indicated that they often used portfolios, and 35 percent said that they used portfolios on occasion.

Although almost every teacher cited portfolios as a viable means of assessment, there were differences in the items collected in the portfolios, the methods used to gather data, and the management of portfolios. The participants did agree on one concept: 74 percent said that they almost always have common
items placed in every child’s portfolio, but, beyond that, different teachers handled their portfolios in different ways. For example, 43 percent of the participants usually allowed student input as to what items were placed in a portfolio, while 39 percent said that they would never or only occasionally allow student input.

It is also notable that the teachers involved in this survey evaluated portfolios differently and for different purposes. Only 26 percent of the participants used their students’ portfolios to individualize instruction and even fewer (13 percent) said that they used portfolios for the purpose of grouping students by ability or interests. Furthermore, the reactions of the teachers were mixed in terms of whether the contents of the portfolio should be used for grading purposes. Half said that they issued grades based on the contents of their students’ portfolios, while the other half indicated that grades were rarely given based on portfolios. In spite of these mixed results, the majority (67 percent) still felt that portfolios usually allowed teachers to know what students have learned more so than grades. The participants also differed in their ideas about how much time is required to successfully use portfolios. Some of the teachers (39 percent) felt that portfolios required more time than traditional grades while 43 percent indicated that they took less time.

Although 88 percent of the teachers involved in this survey appeared to agree that portfolios of student work should be collected, they did not seem to agree about how portfolios should be used or evaluated. In fact, 43 percent said that their standards for evaluating students’ portfolios were less than adequate, admitting that their evaluation process for portfolios was, in fact, “too new to have standards.”

**DISCUSSION**

The vast majority of the participants in this study indicated that assessment is a critical tool in evaluating student progress. The findings showed that the participants used all four types of assessment surveyed, but differed in the ways that they used the results.

Although the majority said that preassessments are useful tools for monitoring student achievements, few teachers used the findings of a pretest to group children either by ability or interests. On the other hand, the majority believed that preassessment aided in identifying students’ strengths and weaknesses. The findings of the survey and follow-up interviews with the participants also revealed that teachers administered pretests primarily in math and reading and rarely gave the same preassessment format repeatedly. The participants felt that such variation might accommodate for student differences.

(See KINGTON, p. 14)
Almost every teacher acknowledged that portfolios are the assessment tool of the future and their enthusiasm for using such tools was evident. However, their knowledge of how to evaluate items in the portfolios was limited. Follow-up interviews showed that the teachers desired to evaluate student progress using portfolios, but they admitted they need help in knowing how to use the information. In fact, the survey indicated that the teachers seldom used the results for grouping or individualizing while the majority felt that portfolio information was critical to a thorough evaluation. Every teacher interviewed said that they were confused about the purpose of portfolios in conjunction with numerical grades.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion, the findings of this study revealed that all participating teachers attempted to assess their students in some way. While these teachers desired to assess students meaningfully, it appeared that they were limited in their understanding of the design and implementation of authentic assessment methods. Not only did they not know how to use the information gained, butthey were confused about the relationship between traditional grades and portfolio assessment.

There also seems to be a need for teachers to understand how TAAS and other state-mandated tests relate to authentic assessment. Educators should be moving toward a method that does not place state requirements and authentic assessment in conflict but rather allows the state-mandated skills to become standards for authentic assessment.

Finally, assistance for educators is needed so that the results gained from assessment will be used in a meaningful way. If authentic assessment evaluates student progress, then the results of such findings should be used to individualize instruction and allow for flexible grouping. **This application is critical for gifted and talented children.** Learning to apply the information gained from assessment to changes in classroom activities appears to be a pressing need which should be addressed by teacher educators.

Future studies should be conducted with larger populations of teachers to replicate these findings and determine if trends found in this study are present across other settings.

References


PORTFOLIOS FOR GIFTED STUDENTS IN AT-RISK SITUATIONS: A SENSIBLE MATCH

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It is a popular assumption that gifted students, because they have a "surplus of ability or talent in certain areas of development" (Kirk, Gallagher, & Anastasiow, 1993, p. 123), will, by reason of their outstanding abilities, perform and achieve at a level commensurate with those abilities. Kirk, et al., refer to this assumption as the Cannonball Theory, which asserts that "...these children cannot be stopped from achieving their potential." The fact is, however, that many gifted students never reach their academic potential.

Ogden and Germinario (1988) maintain that all students can at times be considered "at-risk" because they fail to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them, passively or actively reject learning opportunities. Others, however, believe that the students themselves are not at risk, but that they are trapped in at-risk situations (Hopfenberg, et al., 1993). Hopfenberg, et al., define "...at-risk students as those students who are unlikely to succeed in schools as schools are currently constituted because they bring a different set of skills, resources, and experiences than those on which school success is traditionally based (p. 9)."

All students, whether in gifted education or general education, have the right to fair evaluation procedures which accurately reflect their performance levels. Fair and accurate performance assessment is essential for designing instructional programs based on individual needs and for determining progress in those programs. This paper focuses on the issue of evaluation for gifted students in at-risk situations and suggests an alternative procedure which may be more appropriate for this population.

Rationale for Portfolio Assessment

One of the most promising alternatives to traditional evaluation and monitoring of student progress is portfolio assessment. Portfolio assessment has been described as "...records of a student's work over time and in a variety of modes to show the depth, breadth, and development of the student's abilities; (it) is the purposeful and systematic collection of student work that reflects accomplishment relative to specific instructional goals (Pierce & O'Malley, 1992, p. 2)." Portfolios have also been described by Wolf (1988) as "biographies of works, a range of works and reflections (p. 37)."

Portfolio assessment can serve many purposes: 1) to document students' progress through a continuous record of student performance; 2) to provide an alternative to traditional informal assessment measures; 3) to verify the effectiveness of instruction and make educational decisions; 4) to motivate; 5) to promote reflection; 6) to facilitate discussion; and 7) to foster active collaborative participation in educational programming (Poteet, Choate, & Stewart, 1993; Valeri-Gold, Olson, & Deming, 1992). If portfolios are accurately collected and assembled, they become an intersection of instruction and assessment; they are not "just instruction or just assessment but, rather, both (Paulson, Paulson, & Meyer, 1991, p. 61)."

Benefits of Portfolio Assessment

The major benefits of portfolio assessment for gifted students in at-risk situations are that portfolio assessment:

1. Provides a picture of student growth over time;
2. Allows students to demonstrate what they can or will do versus measuring knowledge only;
3. Uses real-life situations, thereby increasing assessment validity;
4. Encourages students to take active charge of their own learning;
5. Provides a venue for student participation in determining criteria for judging merit;
6. Encourages reflection and critical thinking;
7. Teaches students to value the diversity of others;

Designing Portfolios

Although each student's portfolio will be an individualized composite, certain guidelines may be followed when considering how to set up and determine what to include in a portfolio. Caution is required, because as Poteet, Choate, and Stewart (1993) warn, "the purpose of the portfolio should determine its contents. If it has no purpose, the portfolio is simply a folder of student work (p. 8)." Examples of goals could be to provide an alternative means of assessing student progress; to supplement traditional methods used in both

(See MILLER, p. 16)
formal and informal evaluations; and to guide current and future programming decisions or to allow students the flexibility and creativity of collaboratively designing their own educational program.

Once the goals have been established, guidelines for the content of the portfolio must be determined. The content of the portfolio must reflect the established goals and should focus on both process and product. The process is how the student collects and reflects on what is included in the portfolio. The processes by which the product may be prepared for the portfolio could be documented by video or audio recordings, interviews, activities, lab journals critiquing scientific experiments, etc. The products are the actual portfolio entries. Products may include video/audio tapes, poems, puzzles, photo displays, creative writing samples, reports of experiments, exhibits, etc. Decisions regarding what should be included in the portfolio should be based on each student's individual strengths, interests, experiences in the home and community, and learning style.

Timelines and criteria for selection and evaluation of portfolio contents should be collaboratively determined by the student and the teacher. In addition, evaluation criteria must be clearly and specifically defined in advance so that both teacher and student know precisely how the products and processes will be judged. Unfortunately, there are no specific guidelines on how to best evaluate the content of a portfolio (Poteet, et al., 1989). However, general evaluation criteria might include ongoing collaborative assessment between the teacher and student, which includes feedback and reflection, and evidence of student progress as judged by carefully-selected, predetermined standards. Banbury (1987) suggests that qualitative evaluations can be converted into more objective (i.e., quantitative) scores through checklists or rating scales in which numerical values have been assigned to predetermined mastery levels.

Perhaps one of the strongest arguments for the use of portfolios is the opportunity for student reflection. Reflection allows students to actively participate in and establish criteria for assessing their educational growth and achievement. Student reflections or self-evaluations can take several forms: for example, a discussion of reasons for including specific items in the portfolio, examination of feelings regarding processes involved in creating specific components of the portfolio, or responding to teacher-directed questionnaires which request an evaluation of performance for a specific task or time period. Reflective activities promote interest and motivation in learning activities because the students are actively involved in the evaluation of their own work and are viewed as valued participants in the development of their educational program.

Summary

If gifted students in at-risk situations are to be accurately and fairly tested and graded, alternative assessment procedures must be adopted. Banbury (1987) convincingly reminds us that "since a myriad of ways exist [for students] to demonstrate achievement, educators should not persist in using only one or two traditional methods (p. 179)." Portfolio assessment is an alternative assessment option which educators can use in addition to or in place of traditional written tests or assignments. Portfolio assessment would allow teachers to use verbal or visual review, demonstrations, exhibits, journals, reflections, and various other activities and assignments in place of traditional assessment procedures to judge and evaluate students' progress. This would allow for more qualitative feedback as well as student self-comparison, assessment, and grading procedures.

It is the responsibility of educators to provide a true and accurate picture of a student's current level of functioning. Portfolio assessment is an ideal way of accomplishing this goal. Portfolios are effective when they provide a comprehensive picture of a student's overall performance and serve as a vehicle for students to become independent, self-directed learners (Paulson, et al., 1991). Traditional assessment of student progress and achievement is largely based on the results of a "snapshot" of a student at one particular point in time (Tierney, 1992), while a portfolio is a carefully constructed "portrait" which draws from the richness of a student's entire educational experience.

References


ON THE EDGE - IDENTIFYING LOW SES HISPANIC GIFTED STUDENTS

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Identifying gifted young Hispanic students is much more than choosing proper testing criteria—it is part of a total, integrated process that leads to a program model that uniquely serves the district’s student population. An understanding of Hispanic students’ culture, environment, strengths, and weaknesses is needed for designing an identification model appropriate for those being tested. Without these considerations, the identification process may eliminate a disproportionate number of Hispanic students from the program. To assure success of students after screening, attributes used for identification should mirror attributes emphasized in the gifted program’s curriculum.

Unidentified Hispanic Students

Unidentified gifted Hispanic students represent undiscovered potential for society. During the 198-91 school year, the total percentage of Hispanic students in Texas was 33.90 and the percentage of Hispanic students identified as gifted was 17.40 (Hiatt, 1991). Across the nation and across Texas, numbers of Hispanic students in gifted programs rarely mirror demographics of the larger population.

Gifted Hispanic Students

Barkan and Bernal (1991) discovered a long history of under-representation of gifted children from the non-dominant ethnic groups. They suggested that this stemmed from decisions about what constitutes actual or potential giftedness. Pressures on educators to use procedures such as individual IQ tests and multiple screenings actually serve to eliminate a disproportionate number of students from gifted programs. Students from a language-minority culture can be particularly difficult to identify as gifted because these students are usually admitted to gifted programs only after they have mastered English. Thus, by default, one needs to be fluent in English to be gifted (Barkan & Bernal, 1991).

In many cases, rather than being thought bright for having the ability to speak two languages, bilingualism created barriers between students’ cultures and their access to programs which would nurture their skills and talents. Moreover, due to the extra work needed to acquire a second language, the gifted bilingual Hispanic child may not be able to achieve scores as high as a gifted monolingual, English-speaking child (Zappia, 1989).

Zappia (1989) concluded that bias permeated the entire screening and identification process. She found that Hispanic students have been tested with minimal considerations for students’ environment, culture, and language. Traditionally, Hispanic students have been evaluated in their non-dominant language and with testing procedures and instruments which were standardized or normed on an Anglo-American, middle class population. These assessment practices have resulted in inappropriate labeling and misplacement of many minority students (Zappia, 1989).

The background and experiences of a student have a direct effect on standardized test scores (Rivlin, 1978). Differences in scores among students may be due to a difference in a particular student’s background and experiences, and not necessarily in the student’s ability and potential. Poverty can mean that certain children never leave a small neighborhood and have few enrichment opportunities or meet other people of the local or national society. When this occurs, a culture particular to the neighborhood develops.

Thus, the processes of identification must be unique to each district and the culture of its neighborhood. In addition, certain pre-testing activities may be needed to prepare the students for screening experiences. Enrichment opportunities must be provided so that students will become prepared to take identification tests.

Testing Conditions

Several conditions need to be met in testing minority gifted students. First, tests must be appropriate to students’ language skills, students must have an understanding of what is expected of them during the test, and there needs to be an elimination of all distractions. Second, the test should be interesting enough to motivate the test taker and yet not so difficult that excessive frustration will occur during the examination. To ensure successful testing, students should have the appropriate test-taking skills and preparation for the examination (Bernal, 1982). A third condition is that the students who are going to be testing spend some time with the educator who will be giving the tests. Thus, students should be in an enrichment talent pool environment where they can become comfortable with the person who will give the tests as well as be able to perform the same types of activities as those which will be experienced during testing (Shade, 1993).

Bernal (1989) also implied that a program should be designed around the creativity and diversity of the learners. Torrance and Wu (1981) completed a 22-year longitudinal (See SHADE, p. 18)
study which researched the adult life of children who had been identified as creatively gifted but not as intellectually gifted. The creatively gifted children became adults who contributed to society much more than those who had been identified as intellectually gifted. From these findings, authors Torrance and Torrance (1985) expressed their concern for using intelligence quotient (IQ) scores as the sole criterion for gifted.

The use of intelligence tests as identification of gifted students missed about 70 percent of those who show high levels of creativity (Torrance & Torrance, 1985). Other research done by Torrance indicated that elementary teachers who allowed students to get started with things for which they had a passion increased their chances of adult achievement. To nurture creativity, children must be in an environment which allows them to explore and extend their talents (Torrance, 1988). Students succeed when they are allowed to build upon their strengths.

**Identification and Program Goals**

Gifted Hispanic students should be placed in programs where identification instruments have direct relationships to program goals. For example, if screening instruments measure ability, reading achievement, and creativity, program goals should be those which emphasize and nurture like skills. Udall (1989) stated that no one profile of a gifted Hispanic student exists. Continuing, she noted that even though all gifted students share similar cognitive, affective, and social characteristics, the behavioral expression of giftedness will vary among cultures (Udall, 1989). Each district's identification model will be varied to meet the needs of its diverse population.

After three years of trials and subsequent modifications of screening instruments and program design, Edgewood Independent School District (EISD) redesigned the Education Designed for Gifted Edgewood Students (EDGES) program. EDGES became the model for a gifted and talented program for Hispanic students. The model prepares Hispanic students for participation in regular gifted identification.

**Enrichment Activities**

Enrichment revolves around skills measured by the screening instruments. Student tests include: ability test (SAGES-P), achievement test (SAGES-P), reasoning test (Matrix Analogy Test - Short Form), and creativity test (Torrance Test of Creative Thinking Figurative Form A). (The other screening instruments are: teacher checklist (Scale for Behavioral Characteristics of Superior Students) and Parent Questionnaire (developed by Susan Johnson, Baylor University).) Activities include teaching kindergarten students basic concepts concerning testing and activities for testing. For example, students need to be taught how to do individual work — no cooperative test taking, please! For the SAGES-P, trade workbooks which contain similar activities to those tested are given to the students for practice. In preparation for the Matrix Analogy Test, students are given colored plastic attribute blocks; teachers arrange shapes and colors of three designs and ask students to arrange what would come next in the series. To prepare for the Torrance test, the teacher draws a squiggle on the board and asks students to draw something from the squiggle that no one else would sketch.

Due to the lack of enrichment opportunities for low SES populations, the introduction to preschool-type activities takes time and the official screening is not completed until spring. When the actual identification instruments are given, students feel comfortable with the teacher, environment, and activities. Even though this process is arduous, it has been beneficial - more "gifted" students have been identified and fewer "non-gifted" students have been "set up" for failure. In the case of EISD, screening instruments have been selected to predict student success in...
Identification and screening is not simple by any means. However, it can be accomplished with careful consideration of students' culture, students' strengths, and use of screening instruments which test the same skills as needed for student success in the program. This is obtained by providing activities that will fill in the gaps for students whose environments have stifled intellectual growth. Also required are astute teachers who implement the program properly.

Accurate identification can be accomplished. Three years ago, EISD had less than three percent of its population identified; however, after the changes, 4.52 percent of the district population was identified as gifted in May of 1993. These identified students have been successful — TAAS scores of the identified G/T population have steadily increased and are extremely high.

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Identification, Assessment, and Evaluation

**Brown Eyes, Blue Eyes Revisited**

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There are two hard tasks in the land of the gifted. One is to evaluate a program with honesty and validity, and the second is to find the right children to call gifted.

There is a long history of difficulties in using the criteria we have come to regard as “standard” for the identification of a gifted child. These standards have typically been:

- Some sort of teacher evaluation of the child,
- Some sort of parent nomination,
- Something to help us judge his creativity,
- Some measure of her I. Q.,
- An offering of examples of her brilliance in a file folder,
- A percentile of his achievement in language arts and reading, disciplines from which most G/T programs usually grow,
- A personal interview if we are lucky enough to have the resources to do so,
- And, for good measure, another I. Q. number of some kind.

These are all good.

The complaint counter begins to get crowded when these criteria seem to be identifying all blue-eyed children (a metaphor for moving up to high SES). There are reasons for this. It is not the face value of this list, it is the reality of what happens with the instruments. We have worked through a number of these problems in our district by trials and errors, frustration attacks, breast beatings, soul searching, and margarita musings. We are sharing some of what we have learned here.

First, consider the parent evaluation or nomination form. The parents of the highly gifted are frustrated. While parents generally are quite good at knowing whether their child is demonstrating unusual developmental progress, they are worried about why he is so off-the-wall unique. They do not understand why this child behaves the way he does. He seems really smart, but he will not do the workbook pages or the review sheets, or he is not a very good speller. One mother told me that her child “was such a smart little girl before she started school.” Some of these parents are not quite sure that this child of theirs should be called gifted. On the other hand, the parents of the young children who are going to become the honors students usually know that they want their child in the gifted class – “He would profit from all that enrichment.” The parents of the blue-eyed children do a better job of filling out the parent nomination forms because they are sometimes a wee bit better at the filling-out game than the conscientious, bona-fide gifted child’s parents who are struggling to be accurate. This is not always the case, but it happens enough times to make us take notice.

We have learned that these differences can be minimized by calling the parent nomination a “Parent Information Form” and by sending it home each April with the kindergarten packet. We send it in Spanish as well as English. And everyone rests easier knowing that it is going to be one of seven criteria, all equally weighted, to be considered in the placement of a child in the G/T program.

Teachers. Another tough job. By and large, the teacher have not been trained at the pre-service level to understand gifted children. It is not surprising that they often do not have a sense of the vast differences between honors students and gifted children.

The state requirement of 30 hours of training for a teacher to be pronounced ready to teach gifted children may have muddied the waters. These 30 training hours for teachers have often been fragmented and poorly designed. The training is not always systematic and in-depth, but instead sometimes has allowed only the gathering of isolated cursory information and, on occasion, has been known to have little to do with promoting better understanding of the personality, characteristics, temperament, needs, or unique behaviors exhibited by gifted children. In some perhaps rare instances, teachers who have been assigned to teach the gifted have had no training at all.

To help guide teachers in our district who are trying hard to understand and deal with the problems relating to identification, two teacher nomination instruments are in use. One of these asks for the teacher’s assessment of the child cognitively and the other helps with a judgement about the child’s behavioral differences. More about these will be mentioned later.

Creativity is judged in our identification process by writing and drawing. The drawing test is similar to the Torrance, with ideas drawn from Guilford and Meeker, and is looking for the child’s ability to break rules; elaborate; use humor, detail, variety, and diversity of idea; and otherwise demonstrate a different kind of thinking. The writing sample scoring uses the same sort of criteria and is looking for that unique turn of mind – a child who thinks differently from other children. The stories are dictated by the kindergarten children.

(See SEAY, p. 21)
A long and serious search was launched for an unbiased intelligence test that would be realistic for minority as well as majority groups, given the confines of our budget. Our second graders all take the Cognitive Abilities Test as a result of district policy. It is a group test, however, and we are aware that not all children perform at their maximum, or even optimum (maybe not even marginal), ability levels when tested in a group. What our team was searching for was a test to be used for our kindergarten identification which would be foolproof at finding at least one kind of high intelligence. The team finally settled on the Raven's Coloured Progressive Matrices. This test has no language bias, no bias for linguistic talent and ability, and finds the child who can see intricate relationships and can problem solve and analyze to a high level, both inductively and deductively. We are aware that we do not pick up all the highly gifted children using this measure, but we are very confident that the children that we do find are among the truly gifted children – brown, green, and grey-eyed, as well as blue-eyed. (Two years ago, we even found a little boy who had pink-eye.)

by using other instruments in first and second grade, we add the children who are linguistically gifted, an area which is fraught with greater challenges for finding the highly gifted and where the older child's maturity level mitigates in favor of the legitimately gifted's being identified.

At the end of second grade, we begin the search for the mathematically gifted for our third through sixth grade mathematics program. We call this program MESA, which is our acronym for Mathematics Excellence in San Angelo. Our primary program is called San Angelo New Directions (SAND), and our humanities program is the San Angelo Gifted Education, or SAGE. You must be guessing that we live in the wild west.

We do not use a portfolio assessment because our district uses portfolios for the regular primary grading instead of report cards. We found it difficult to find the time and money to train our teachers how to compile portfolios which were different both in degree and kind of demonstrable ability from the assessment portfolios which they were already preparing. Instead, we ask teachers to include anecdotes of the child's activities which they feel would help us find the right children in the child's profile packet. In addition, when the team members go onto campuses to administer the Raven's to the children whom they have chosen to be on the screening list, they also test any other child which the teachers point out in their kindergarten classes as likely candidates for screening.

Except for mathematics placement, we do not use normed achievement tests for placement in our program. We are philosophically opposed to their use for placement in a gifted program. They find honors children with much greater accuracy than they find the gifted.

Finally, we seek anecdotal annotations from teachers, counselors, principals, parents, strangers off the street – anyone who can present any evidence of the kinds of mental or physical behaviors typical of gifted children. We rate these by a scale we have developed to match our profile score ceiling of seven.

Teacher Referral

In a study in 1989, Minner discovered that if teachers' perceptions of an unidentified gifted child were that the child was a behavior problem and a troublemaker, they were much less willing to refer the child for screening. Other studies have reported that some teachers believe that the child should "earn" – by good grades and good behavior – the "right" to be in the gifted program. In Exceptional Children, Howard and Orlansky (1988) noted that many of the most classic characteristics of gifted children are viewed by teachers as negative traits. Even the fact that they learn material quickly is not seen positively because it causes the children to become easily bored. After becoming bored, they may engage in inappropriate behaviors or attempt to undermine the teacher's authority. An unidentified child may become frustrated and engage in even more deviant behaviors, and the teachers are even less inclined to refer the student to a program where special things will be happening. As Minner (1989) writes, the solution to the dilemma is to provide greater training to teachers concerning the needs and characteristics of atypical gifted children, including those with social difficulties.

In our district, as mentioned, we use two teacher inventories to help keep teachers reminded that deviant behaviors are sometimes the way we can best find these children. The SEAY-MORGAN INVENTORY OF GIFTED CHARACTERISTICS, developed by a colleague at Arkansas Tech University, Gwen Morgan, and me, allows the teacher to look for and report behaviors that might otherwise prejudice their referring the child, such as:

"I sometimes regard the questions and remarks as inappropriate."
"I feel the child is what might be referred to as a 'big mouth.'"
"The child has difficulty staying in his/her seat."

(See SEAY, p. 23)
with knowledge rather than “learned spectators of other people’s knowledge” (p. 6).” Examples of performance assessment are performances, exhibitions, portfolios, or complex tasks which represent questions practitioners or experts face in the real world.

Changes cause controversy and the new assessment initiatives are no exception. The debate about student assessment has two components, the second of which is of considerable importance to educators and parents of gifted children. The first component is the nature of the assessment itself. Here, the issue largely concerns the technical adequacy of new kinds of tasks we use to assess students’ progress. Are the measures valid? Can we tell what a student knows from one performance task with one product as easily as we can from 20 multiple choice questions or 10 short answer questions? How many performance tasks does it take for us to be certain we have given the child the opportunity to demonstrate what he knows? While these are very important questions, they are to be battled over by measurement experts (Linn, Baker, & Dunbar, 1991). While we are interested in the outcome of this component of the assessment debate, we are not likely to enter into it except as technical experts.

However, the second component of the assessment debate – the issue of standards – has important practical implications for talented students. In this part of the debate, we can inform ourselves and we can be active voices on behalf of high-performing children. Here, the debate has to do with what kind of performance we expect of students (National Endowment for the Humanities, 1991). In other words, what are our standards? What do we expect students to know and to be able to do? How well do we expect them to do it? Much of this debate has centered on the issue of world-class standards.

Reforming curriculum and assessment to assist students in meeting world-class standards is a lightening rod issue. Embedded in the larger context of general school reform, however, the linkage of high-performing students, alternative assessment, and rigorous standards has received little attention from most school reformers (Robinson, 1992). As advocates for excellence and for meeting the needs of talented learners, we are interested in how the conversation might play out. We are interested in the ways that world-class standards might improve school experiences for these capable students. The question for us becomes, “will these new rigorous standards serve to reduce the boredom and repetition that academically-talented students face every day?”

The Importance of Standards for High-Performing Students

Our voices are important to this debate because the discussion will affect the curricular fortunes of talented students. Why? Because standard setting does not guarantee that either the content standards (what children know) or the performance standards (how well they know it) are world class. We need to define what such standards mean. Do world-class standards imply that we will make our talented students competitive internationally? There is evidence that, at present, they are not (United States Department of Education, 1993). Will performance standards provide an arena for excellence? How might these standards be constituted? Do all students meet them at the same level? At the same time?

There is considerable debate in the assessment community and among professional organizations representing various disciplines on the issue of performance standards. Those who believe we should have standards – and there are a number of experts and policy makers who do – differ on whether we should have a single performance standard that all students meet or whether there should be gradient standards ranging from competent to advanced.

For those of us interested in developing high-level talents in children, the choice between single and graduated performance standards is important. By definition, a single performance standard is a minimum. While the use of more rigorous curricula, rich performance assessments, and higher standards will raise the floor of what we expect of all children, the single standard is unlikely to raise the ceiling. It is unlikely to allow talented students to demonstrate the full extent of their accomplishments.

In years past, we have successfully argued that multiple choice standardized tests, with their emphasis on basic skills, have depressed the manifest performance of talented students by setting test ceilings too low. It is possible that by setting a single performance standard or by setting gradient standards too low, we will have blundered into the performance assessment equivalent of ceiling effects.

For example, when a rubric is developed to score student writing and the higher levels of this rubric are undemanding, it is possible that many students appear to be quite competent. If one tries to map these rather pedestrian rubrics onto a

(See Robinson, p. 23)
world-class standard, it becomes clear that our rhetoric is lofty but our practice is not.

Precocious Performance

Why does such an outcome concern us? When standards are set so that all students can meet them at the same level, within the same amount of time, extraordinary performance is obscured. What is not measured is masked. Let us take the example of a fifth-grade student who is very good in mathematics, producing mathematics portfolio equivalent to those produced by ninth-grade students. How would the Vermont state assessment system, which uses portfolios to assess both writing and mathematics, handle such performance? Evaluations of portfolios are general, and usually not sensitive to out-of-grade-level performance.

Let us assume that the Vermont state assessment system would identify extraordinary performance and produce a mathematics portfolio equivalent to the one produced by the ninth-grade student. How would the Vermont state assessment system handle such extraordinary performance? It is crucial for us to measure, note, recognize, and, finally, to rejoice in extraordinary academic performance.

References


Seay, M. L. & Morgan, G. "Seay-Morgan Inventory of Gifted Characteristics." San Angelo ISD, San Angelo, TX.
One of the important steps in moving children toward more independent learning is to teach them how to evaluate their products. One teacher used a unique process to involve her fifth grade students in designing their own rubrics for assessment. This article will describe each of the five steps.

At the beginning of the school year, the teacher developed a list of 30 possible projects that related to the study of dinosaurs. (Jurassic Park had recently captured all of their interests.) The projects were organized into three categories: the arts, words and writing, and research. This organization schema allowed the teacher an early preview of each student's talents and interests. The teacher initially asked the students to examine the list and select one project from each category. These three projects were due in three weeks. Since it was the beginning of the year, she was not sure what to expect.

The teacher noticed that the students were excited about their projects, using their classroom and library project time to develop individual, unique creations. She furnished a variety of supplies, such as graph paper and art materials, and continually offered support and encouragement. The students developed many different projects: interesting poetry displayed on colorful posters; laminated dinosaur pictures made into challenging jigsaw puzzles; dinosaur plays staged creatively and choreographed with music, dancing, and costumes; and many games. In fact, so many students developed board games that one entire day was devoted to the students playing games that their classmates had designed.

She divided the class into five groups and gave each group a list of the ten most popular projects. She asked the groups to brainstorm the most important characteristics of each one. In other words, what were the essentials for a good board game? A recorder in each group listed the ideas and gave them to the teacher for collation and distribution. The teacher ended up with five rough lists for each of the ten projects.

The next week, the teacher divided the class into ten groups and gave each group the task of compiling the ideas from the rough lists into one list of what they thought were the essentials for each project. The rule was that if two or three members of the group agreed that the characteristic was important, they wrote it down on a specific project list. These lists were again returned to the teacher.

The next week, the students received a compiled list for each of the ten projects. The teacher asked each student to edit the list and prioritize the essentials by numbering the most important, "1," the next most important, "2," and so on. This step appeared to be the most difficult one for the students because the students felt that many of the details were equally important. The final results included the student-identified essentials printed on the following page.

In summary, the students were able to develop rubrics for these ten projects by following five steps. First, the teacher developed a list of possible projects. Second, the students selected projects to complete. Third, in five small groups, the students brainstormed important characteristics for the ten most popular projects. Fourth, in ten groups, the lists were combined to one set for each project, and, fifth, the essential attributes on these lists were prioritized. While the essential project attributes still remain to be field-tested, the students took the first steps toward becoming more aware of ways in which they can evaluate their own work.

(See LUCENAY, p. 25)
When WRITING the SCRIPT for a PLAY, it should:
• Be well organized and tell who's speaking
• Have an introduction
• Have an easy-to-follow plot, with a problem and solution
• Have a plot designed to last a reasonable amount of time
• Be creative
• Have proper grammar and spelling
• Be neatly written or be typed
• Have a title

When PERFORMING a PLAY, it should have:
• Actors that speak loudly and clearly
• Actors that have their lines at least somewhat memorized
• Actors that express feelings and emotions
• Stage managers helping, if needed
• Understandable props

When WRITING a POEM, it should:
• Use the proper form for that type of poem
• Have a title
• Have correct spelling
• Have correct punctuation
• Use emotions or feelings
• Stick to the subject
• Have interesting words
• Be written neatly or be typed

When giving a POETIC READING, the person should:
• Speak loudly
• Pronounce words clearly
• Use emotion and feelings
• Practice reading it ahead of time
• Have props, pictures, etc., to go with the poem

To make a good MAP, you need:
• Up-to-date, accurate information
• A map key
• Labels printed neatly
• Places colored different colors
• A reasonable title

To make an interesting BOARD GAME, you need:
• To know the object of the game
• Rules and directions to know how to start and finish the game
• To make it challenging for the age group it is designed for
• To tell what age group it is designed for

To make a good MAP, you need:
• The game to be designed for at least two players
• The game to last long enough to enjoy it
• To be creative
• An answer key if there are questions
• It to be organized, with all the game pieces included

To make a good WORD FIND PUZZLE, you need:
• A word bank
• Bold, readable, printed letters
• Correct spelling
• Camouflaged words written diagonally, vertically, and horizontally
• An answer key
• A reasonable number of words hidden
• Challenging words

To make a good JIGSAW PUZZLE, you need:
• An interesting picture
• A colorful picture drawn neatly
• To make the puzzle pieces different shapes
• To tell how many puzzle pieces there are
• To tell what age the puzzle is recommended for

To make an interesting CROSSWORD PUZZLE, you need:
• To do good research on a subject
• Good clues
• Correctly-spelled words
• To be sure words fit in boxes
• To set an age level for the puzzle
• To make it challenging for the age level
• An answer key
• Straight lines and boxes
• To have it printed neatly
• A word bank, if necessary

To make an interesting FACT FILE, you will need:
• Correct facts written on cards
• Something to hold the cards
• Interesting information
• Facts divided into categories
• Correct grammar
• Neat writing
• A title
Porfolios as a Means of Assessing

Myra Taylor and Shauna Leonard
Grapevine-Colleyville ISD

Knowing that identifying young children is a difficult task, the use of a product portfolio is beneficial. The portfolio is one of the measures used to identify gifted and talented students in the Grapevine-Colleyville ISD. The product portfolio provides information not available from the other four criteria used: intelligence test, creativity test, teacher checklist, and parent checklist. The Grapevine-Colleyville ISD uses G/T specialists as send-in teachers in grades K-2. The specialist goes into the classroom and teaches differentiated curriculum to the identified children.

The criteria for evaluating the portfolio are both structured and unstructured. Portfolio samples include products completed after lessons taught by the G/T specialist as well as items generated by the regular classroom teacher. Each grade level has a key teacher who has gifted/talented training. This teacher assists the G/T specialist during screening and selection. She also helps the teachers on the team with activities that are differentiated in selecting appropriate portfolio activities.

Products are evaluated in the areas of critical, creative, and logical thinking. A portfolio checklist which has the following criteria is used to rate the products: detail in presentation of an idea, creative responses to tasks, work advanced beyond grade level, in-depth understanding, advanced vocabulary or sentence structure, and high quality of work. (An example of the portfolio checklist is given on page 27.) Teachers are encouraged to include a variety of samples, notes explaining spontaneous responses, and photographs of cooperative group projects, as well as things the child has chosen to include. Products can also be included that were produced or completed at home.

A selection committee composed of the gifted/talented specialist, key teacher, classroom teacher, and an administrator reviews information and products to determine a score for each portfolio. Products are given a zero if a particular characteristic is seldom or never exhibited, a one if it is occasionally seen, and a two if the characteristic is almost always observed. The classroom teacher only has input when questions arise since s/he rates the portfolio independently. This has been appropriate for our purposes; however, yes/no answers would also be appropriate for criterion-referenced decisions such as these.

In order for students to receive a holistic rating, classroom teachers are asked to mark assessments on the left-hand side of the checklist and the committee marks assessments on the right-hand side. When classroom teachers are rating, they base their opinions on the performance of the child every day. Members of the committee base their decisions on the products included in the portfolio. Therefore, the two scores are often very different. The two scores are then averaged and transferred to the matrix.

An example of an appropriate portfolio for kindergartners could include:

1. Sequencing pictures from a story (in-depth understanding). Students could then write or dictate an explanation of the pictures (advanced vocabulary/sentence structure).
2. An activity using all the pieces (die-cut pattern block pieces) given in order to create an object (creative response).
3. An activity requiring the child to create a picture after listening to a story (See Taylor, p. 27).

Samples from first grade students' portfolios might include:

1. A creative activity where children are given die-cut shapes and asked to use the shapes in a unique way (detail, creative response).
2. An activity in which the teacher reads a story starter to students. Students write an ending for the story (advanced vocabulary/sentence structure, detail).
3. A drawing/art activity where students are encouraged to be creative (creative response, detail).
4. Discuss many uses of buttons and allow students to write or draw new and/or different uses of buttons (detail, in-depth understanding, creative response).
5. An activity where students are shown pictures presenting a problem for a creative problem-solving lesson. Students can draw a solution and write facts, problems, and solutions (advanced vocabulary, sentence structure, detail, in-depth understanding, work beyond grade level).

(See Taylor, p. 27)
Ideas for products in second grade portfolios include:

1. Students design a postcard which includes message, address, and picture (detail, in-depth understanding, advanced vocabulary, sentence structure).

2. Give students a variety of supplies (wallpaper, sequins, lace, construction paper, etc.) and brainstorm what comes to mind when you hear “Turkey and Dressing.” Have students dress a turkey (creative responses, detail).

3. Have students trace one of their feet. Make this into a person that shows what they want to be when they grow up (detail, creative response, work beyond grade level, in-depth understanding).

4. Discuss characteristics of animals and then have students write a “why” story explaining how an animal got a certain characteristic (advanced vocabulary, sentence structure, creative response, work beyond grade level, in-depth understanding).

5. Show and discuss a variety of alphabet books. Students carry an object through the alphabet, telling and illustrating what happens to the object with each letter (detail, creative response, work beyond grade level, in-depth understanding, advanced vocabulary).

This article addresses grades K-2, however, portfolios are also used to assess in grades 3-5. Our district has plans to expand this into middle school and eventually to high school. We presently have children in our G/T program from many varied ethnic and socio-economic groups and other special populations.

In a field study of 46 students, 98 percent of these students’ portfolio performance levels met the district criteria. We use the third grade as a benchmark for assessing our program and we have noted that approximately 96 percent of the children are successful.

We have found that portfolios often show strengths of students that are indicative of gifted/talented characteristics. At times, these characteristics are not evident in the classroom and do not show up in testing. Teachers have found other benefits in keeping portfolios and they have proven most beneficial in our gifted/talented program.

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Grapevine-Colleyville Independent School District
Gifted/Talented Program

NAME: ___________________ TEACHER: ___________________

SCHOOL: ___________________ GRADE: _______ DATE: _______

PORTFOLIO CHECKLIST

The Selection Committee will review information and products provided during the placement meeting to determine this student’s portfolio rating. The Portfolio will reflect data collected over a period of time (at least one (1) six weeks).

Rating

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Teacher Rating</th>
<th>Committee Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

0 1 2
Seldom or Never Occasionally Almost Always

1. Detail (elaboration) in presentation of an idea, i.e., art, projects, written work, etc.

2. Creative responses to tasks, i.e., unusual and/or original products, unique solutions, etc.

3. Work (reading, math, science, art, or computer, etc.) advanced beyond grade level; i.e., child could work comfortably in next grade level.

4. In-depth understanding (a passion for an idea, skill, or subject that shows up in almost every product and/or conversation).

5. Advanced vocabulary or sentence structures (oral language/written language).

6. High quality of work, i.e., to what extent are products of overall excellence?

Comments: ____________________________________________
A Critique of Identification Practices

Harold Poelzer, Ph. D.
University of Texas - Pan American

Nationwide surveys of the identification practices in gifted education have been conducted periodically since the Marland Report, 1972. A national survey of identification practices (Alvino, McDonnell, & Richert, 1981) for placing students in gifted programs revealed some questionable methods. Participants in the survey were asked to respond in relation to the federally-defined categories of giftedness (general intellectual ability, specific academic aptitude, creativity or productive thinking, ability in visual or performing arts, and leadership ability), as well as certain federally-designated subpopulations (disadvantaged, ethnic minority, limited English speaking, rural, exceptionally gifted). Problems associated with selection of students for gifted programs were identified in the following areas: definition of gifted; selection and use of appropriate instruments for categories of gifted; combination of results for various indicators; selection and use of appropriate instruments for minorities, disadvantaged, and culturally different; and no mention of the gifted handicapped. A consequence of these problems is that a disproportionate number of middle class children are identified for gifted programs compared to minorities.

The identification of gifted students for programs depends on the definition of the term gifted. At present, there is no consensus on any particular definition of giftedness (even the terms general intelligence and creativity are used interchangeably for gifted). Are gifted students those who score in the top one percent on a Stanford-Binet Intelligence Test, or are gifted students those who consistently perform at a remarkable level in any valuable human endeavor? Is intelligence a general factor, along with specific factors, or is it a multitude of factors? Are high scores on a test of creativity a substitute for high IQ scores regarding success in academic subject areas? Are the terms talented and gifted used interchangeably or is talent a specific trait and gifted a general trait? What non-intellectual factors ought one take into account in the identification process? This lack of consensus concerning the definition of gifted has led to confusion among those who are trying to identify students, student needs, and programs to meet these needs. With regard to specific aptitude and general intelligence, Alvino et al. (1981) suggested that the lack of clarity in the federal definition and the uncertainty in the field as to what constitutes intellectual and academic abilities are possible explanations for the practice of using either achievement tests or intelligence tests for measuring either category of giftedness.

The survey found that in many instances instruments were used inappropriately. For example, Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking were used to assess general intelligence; achievement tests were used to measure general intelligence, and IQ tests were used to measure specific academic aptitude; and the Otis Lennon Mental Ability Test was used to measure general intelligence, specific academic aptitude, creativity, arts, and leadership.

Hansen and Linden (1980) warned that tests used inappropriately may have damaging consequences. Hansen and Linden suggested a checklist for selecting an appropriate test. This list includes: (1) defining the goals of the identification process - listing the goals of the gifted program and the areas of giftedness to be served; (2) noting whether the instrument is relevant for measuring the behaviors listed in the identification goals; (3) noting the types of reliability coefficients and validity evidence reported as well as their values; (4) noting what other evidence may be relevant to measure the behaviors listed; (5) noting the practicality of the test in terms of cost, scoring, and administrative time; (6) judging the limitations of the test; and (7) engaging someone knowledgeable in psychometrics to interpret the test results. Hansen and Linden pointed out, for example, that an audition would be appropriate for the identification of a student for an advanced music program whereas a paper and pencil test would not.

Feldhusen, Asher, and Hoover (1984) outlined five major steps that are necessary for a sound identification process: (1) defining program goals and types of gifted youth to be served; (2) nomination procedures; (3) assessment procedures; (4) individual differentiation; and (5) validation of the identification process (p. 150). For example, they suggested that the appropriate instruments for selecting students for a pullout program for verbally precocious youth are achievement tests in language arts and reading, as well as rating scales for assessing creativity and writing skills. Creativity assessment is included because the nature of the program requires the student to be flexible, fluent, and imaginative.

Hansen and Linden (1990) and Feldhusen, Baska, and Womble (1981) recommended that scores from various assessment instruments be converted to standardized T-scores and then added to form a total score. Feldhusen et al. proclaimed this technique as a statistically defensible and reliable way of reducing data and overcoming the problems of arbitrary intervals, inaccuracy, and precision loss that is associated with a matrix approach to data reduction.

During the nomination phase, it is important not to overlook those students who are potentially gifted. A variety of instruments are recommended for this purpose: rating scales, school marks, school records, and teacher, parent, peer, and self-nomination. Richert (1987) encouraged input from members in the community who may know of outstanding work done by a student.

(See POELZER, p. 29)
A nationwide survey of state consultants (Addvreholtz-Elliot, Algozinne, Algozinne & Haney, 1991) indicated that 90 percent of classroom teachers and teachers of the gifted, 80 percent of parents or guardians, and 60 percent of principals and school psychologists participated in the identification process. The survey also indicated that 80 percent of state programs used group achievement tests and teacher checklists, 70 percent used group and ability tests, and 66 percent used individual achievement tests to identify gifted students. However, the survey did not indicate at what stage each instrument was employed. Feldhusen et al. (1984) recommended that locally-developed rating scales by someone not trained in psychometrics may very well be invalid and unreliable for the purposes intended. In addition, they suggested that few published rating scales have adequate evidence of validity and reliability. They also noted that teacher-raters need to be trained in the use of published scales that are acceptable so that they have a clear understanding of terms and concepts employed by these scales. Finally, they suggested that several people using that same instrument to rate a child will likely increase the reliability and validity of the ratings.

Besides improper use of instruments for identification of gifted potential in specific categories of gifted (creativity, specific academic aptitude, and so on), instruments were being used on populations for which they were not normed. For example, achievement tests normed on white, middle-class students would not be suitable for areas that are predominantly working black. Richert (1987) suggested re-norming subpopulations and stated that some tests (e.g., Stanford-Binet Intelligence Test) had already been re-normed for certain subpopulations. Richert also suggested establishing local norms for standardized achievement tests in areas where the local population (e.g., cultural) differs substantially from the normed population. In addition, Richert suggested the use of instruments such as the Raven's Progressive Matrices as a means of identifying children from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds in the nomination stage of identification.

A national survey (Patton, Prillaman & Van Tassel-Baska, 1990) indicated that a disproportionate number of disadvantaged gifted (culturally diverse, low socioeconomic) have been selected to programs for the gifted. The survey indicated that traditional methods (teacher nominations and norm-referenced tests) of identification prevailed. Smith, LeRose, & Clasen (1991) noted the same underrepresentation in Milwaukee (67 percent minority, but only 41 percent of the identified gifted). Patton, Prillaman, & Van Tassel-Baska recommended that different kinds of instruments need to be used or to be developed in order to identify those students who have gifted potential but who elude traditional methods of identification. Perhaps a checklist of behaviors that tend to screen the gifted out may be in order.

After the data has been gathered, the problem of selection for the program still exists. In some instances where the number of students is limited, a rank order of selection may be acceptable. In other instances, a cutoff criterion may be established (for example, one standard deviation above the mean for composite standardized scores). Students just below the cutoff may need to be reassessed or additional information may indicate potential giftedness. These students would then be included.

In summary, the most prevalent problem with current identification processes appears to be the inappropriate use of instruments in selecting students for particular gifted programs. This inappropriate use may stem from several factors acting singly or in combination: failure to articulate program goals and behaviors, failure to delineate among various categories of gifted, failure to select instruments with appropriate norms, failure to use an instrument that reflects program goals and behaviors, and failure to devise methods that would identify gifted potential among the disadvantaged. On the positive side, the identification process appears to look for a plurality of giftedness and to use a number of ways to identify gifted students, including a variety of instruments and a variety of people who know the students.

It does not appear that a great deal has been done to assess the validity of the identification processes for success in a particular program. Studies done to assess the contribution of each kind of instrument to predict success in the program would be desirable.

Finally, it would be interesting to try a self-selection process: the program goals and behaviors would be clearly articulated, the student would decide whether to challenge the program, a trial period would be entered, and continuation in the program would be based on performance. This arrangement may put a stop to the outcry of elitism—students that feel overwhelmed may decide to exit after the trial period.

References


Some of our schools, like those factories, need to change! It should always be our first goal to make a difference, to be change agents for those children in our care. Whatever else we do to inform, to encourage, or to convince should be done with advocacy in mind.

Robert Browning's life story speaks to us as eloquently as Elizabeth's. He was born to parents who appreciated his giftedness and were wealthy enough to give him many advantages. Although he had no "regular" education after the age of 14, he had many advantages - travel, opportunities to attend the theater and concerts, exposure to art and books. Young Robert showed many characteristics of a gifted child. He loved to read, was passionate about drama, was highly sensitive to moral issues, and shared with his father a fascination with crime and the macabre. When he began to write poetry, many of those interests appeared. Some of his early work was very difficult, and at first he was judged too intellectual - a "nerd" - for most readers. However, as he matured and developed, he found a form - the dramatic monologue - which was a perfect vehicle for him to express his themes of love and faith and their ultimate triumph against the powers of poverty, war, and neglect. For Robert Browning, it was legitimate for goals too high and seemingly too idealistic for achievement. "Man's reach" could (and should) "exceed his grasp." That idea is the second item on my agenda. We must keep our goals high. We can't give up on our students, their parents, and our colleagues, even though, at times, it seems that our reach exceeds our grasp.

Unfortunately, things didn't always go well for the Brownings. Elizabeth was never really healthy. She came under the influence of a spiritualist, and this caused an estrangement between them. They were perennially short of money. In 1861, after 15 years of marriage, she died. Robert lived until 1889. More than 100 years later, it is the optimism and faith of his work rather than its intelligence and beauty that is remembered. His poetry gave courage to Sir Ernest Henry Shackleton, an Antarctic explorer, who recited "Childe Roland" to keep up his hope and his strength when he was isolated, freezing, and alone. Browning's last poems were great favorites of British soldiers fighting in the Boer War. In retrospect, it was his hope and courage that are his most permanent gifts to the world. I want hope and courage to be our gifts to others this year. I am confident that you share this goal.

The last poem in Browning's last volume is called "Epilogue." One evening, just before his death, he was reading the poem to his daughter-in-law and sister. He stopped after one stanza and said, "This almost sounds like bragging, and as if I ought to cancel it; but it's the simple truth, and as it's true, it shall stand." Referring to himself, he said he was:

One who never turned his back but marched breast forward,

Never doubted clouds would break.

Never dreamed, though right were worsted,

Wrong would triumph,

Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,

Sleep to wake.

Like Browning, we have had high hopes and deep disappointments. Like him, may we never turn our backs, may we march forward. May we never dream our right cause will be worsted; when we fall, may it only be to rise and fight better. Most of all, may we never doubt that whatever clouds there are will break.

These are my goals for our association.

LONG RANGE PLANNING...

Future sites and dates of the TAGT Annual Staff Development Conference are as follows:

- 1994 - Fort Worth Convention Center, November 16-19
- 1995 - George R. Brown Convention Center, Houston, November 15-19
- 1996 - Austin Convention Center, November 20-23
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- "Creative Writing Strategies" with Nancy Roberts.
- "Creative Strategies for Teaching Math (gr 6-12)" with Susan Williams.

** Week Three:**
June 27-July 1, 1994
- "Advanced Creative Problem Solving" with Joyce Juntune.
- "Creative Strategies for Teaching Literature" with Donna Norton.
- "Creative Strategies for Teaching Math (gr K-8)" with Juanita Copley.

** Week Four:**
July 11-15, 1994
- "Creative Thinking Strategies" with Joyce Juntune.
- "Portfolios: An Intersection of Instruction, Curriculum and Assessment" with David Woodcock and Julia Shahid.

** Week Five:**
July 18-22, 1994
- "Tools and Techniques for Facilitating Effective School-Based Decision Making (for Administrators)" with Joyce Juntune.
- "Creative Strategies for Teaching Literacy in the Content Areas (gr 3-12)" with Mark Sadoski.

** Week Six:**
July 25-29, 1994
- "An Overview of Gifted & Talented Education (gr K-12)" with Joyce Juntune.
- "Interdisciplinary Science and Independent Research Projects" with Vic Willson and Patti Nason.

Call 409/845-1802 and leave your name and address with the secretary or on the answering machine to receive the Summer ICE Brochure in early 1994 or fill out the form below, detach, and mail it to Dr. William R. Nash, Institute for the Gifted & Talented, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843-4225.
Six-year-old Joseph Ford seemed an unlikely revolutionary. This exceptionally bright, cute little boy sought only to enter first grade of the public “magnet school” attended by his older sisters. But Joe lived in Chicago where school officials had very different plans for him.

They were adamant that Joe should attend a segregated school for children who, like him, had physical disabilities. Children with such severe disabilities as Joe simply did not go to the city’s outstanding magnet schools.

School officials extolled the benefits of all the physical therapy Joe would receive in the segregated school and insisted that he could not be educated in a magnet school. Joe’s mom reasoned through the problem somewhat differently. She knew no amount of physical therapy would “cure” his cerebral palsy and that he would eventually have to earn his living using his superior intellect.

After a year-long struggle involving federal regulatory agencies and the highest officials in the school system, Joe won entry into the magnet school.

Even after he was allowed to enroll, the work was not over for Joe and his family. They had to overcome such barriers as school employees with negative attitudes, staff who often lacked skill at modifying instruction for him, and odd traditions (such as segregated school buses) within the school district. Joe’s experience has been paralleled by hundreds of children in hundreds of communities throughout the country as parents have increasingly demanded and won integrated schooling for their children with disabilities. Pioneering kids like Joe have opened the schoolhouse doors in each of their communities for others to follow.

What’s happened to Joe? He continues to thrive and is now a successful third grader. He is a bright, loving young man with strikingly mature values and an excellent chance to seize the future his parents have always believed he can attain.

**JOURNAL DEADLINES**

Remember to check the Call For Articles on the inside back cover of *tempo* for themes in your field of speciality or interest.

Receipt dates for articles, spreadsheet submissions, and advertising are as follows:

- **Summer 1994** – Due May 15
- **Fall 1994** – Due August 15
- **Winter 1995** – Due November 15

You are encouraged to submit your materials as early as possible; we will hold early submissions for publication in the issue for which they are intended. See the Call For Articles for more details.
The Book Shelf

FOR YOUR PROFESSIONAL LIBRARY

**Bringing Out the Giftedness in Your Child: Nurturing Every Child's Unique Strengths, Talents, and Potential**

By Rita Dunn, Kenneth Dunn, and Donald Treffinger


Reviewed by Karen Fitzgerald, Spring Branch ISD

This book is a valuable resource to help parents with questions about raising children who will realize their full potential in life. The authors offer a larger concept of giftedness which deals with finding and nurturing the gifts in every child. They define giftedness as “the potential for creative accomplishment over a sustained period of time (years, perhaps even decades) in a number of different possible fields.” They believe that giftedness should be understood as the success achieved from one’s efforts over many years, not just scores achieved on certain tests given for identification in a gifted program.

One chapter outlines strategies that will help parents identify their child’s abilities, creativity, motivation, and special interests. The authors urge parents to be aware of their child’s learning style to help the parents recognize their child’s strengths and personal interests. Two different information processing styles are discussed—analytical and global.

The chapter on the preschool years offers suggestions for raising children from birth to help them develop gifted characteristics. The school years chapter suggests appropriate goals and expectations for a quality education for children. It tells how parents can support their school’s efforts toward educating children so that they reach their full potential.

Creative problem solving is explained and general tips are given for using these techniques at home. Problem solving, creativity, and teamwork at home are the focus of this chapter. “The more skillful and effective young people become as problem solvers, the better they will be prepared to become creatively productive, successful adults,” say the authors.

Over 50 ideas are listed which offer practical activities to stimulate giftedness in a child at home. By creating new, interesting projects and activities at home, the authors feel that parents can help stimulate their child’s creative thinking.

Twenty pages are devoted to identifying a child’s learning style. Forms are provided which can be used to recognize learning styles and patterns. The book concludes with a chapter telling how you can teach your child to guide his own learning. Large appendices assist parents who wish to do further research. The book offers easy and enjoyable reading for parents who want advice on how to guide their child’s education at home.

**The Young Scientists: America’s Future and the Winning of the Westinghouse**

By Joseph Berger

Addison Wesley, 1994

Review reprinted from Gifted Education News-Page, Volume 3, Number 3

“The striking thing about schools for the gifted is in their application of the obvious: They expose students to the doing of science rather than the more sterile study of science. As Berger notes, this technique is so successful that it is beginning to find its way into programs in ordinary schools, described as hands-on, activity-based, discovery methods.” (From the Foreword by Dr. Leon M. Lederman).

The author, a reporter and Bureau Chief for The New York Times, has written a fascinating account of the schools, teachers, and students that participate in the annual Westinghouse Science and Talent Search. In doing so, he has presented one of the strongest arguments currently in print for maintaining and expanding gifted education programs. The Westinghouse competition began in the 1930s as part of a science fair in New York City, and eventually spread to high schools throughout the country. Although every high school in the United States receives information about this science competition, many do not participate. The question concerning why every high school does not compete should be the subject of another book. High schools in the New York City metropolitan area dominate the list of national winners year after year. As Berger says, many early winners were the children of Jewish immigrants. Beginning in the 1970s, the number of students from Asian families increased enormously; their relatives immigrated from Taiwan, China, India, Korea, and Japan. In 1989, 44 percent of the winners were from New York State, primarily because interest in the Westinghouse was greater in New York than in other states.

This is a beautifully written book that conveys the thinking and scientific research of teachers and students in schools such as those in the New York area, the North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics, the Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy, and the Texas Academy of Mathematics and Science. The author’s extraordinary ability to describe excellent teaching is illustrated by his description of David Kiefer’s method of teaching science at Midwood High School in Brooklyn, New York: “David Kiefer conducts his class like an orchestra. Taut, controlled, his burly shoulders rising in an agony of anticipation, he squeezes information from his students as if he were drawing a poignant adagio from a violin section…” (Chapter 3: A Tree Grows in Brooklyn, page 44). The Westinghouse is not just a science contest; it has served for 60 years as an instrument for launching the careers of the world’s greatest scientists. Among the Westinghouse winners, five have received Nobel Prizes in Physics and Chemistry, two have been awarded the Fields Medal in Mathematics, and eight have received MacArthur Fellowships. In addition, 28 winners later became members of The National Academy of Sciences. Teachers and parents will find this book to be inspiring and informative. It clearly shows how young gifted scientists are the products of gifted teachers and world-class high schools.
The Advanced Placement (AP) Incentive Program offers districts a real opportunity to provide advanced level services to their high school students. While not a replacement for services to gifted students, AP courses offer the chance for students to obtain college credit while engaging in in-depth content studies. The State Board of Education is considering the rules that will govern the program and thought-provoking questions have been raised in the discussions over future implementation of the law.

One concern that has been expressed by many people is that smaller school districts can not implement the program. Yes, they can! Just ask Hal Ratcliff, superintendent at Friona Independent School District. His high school, which has about 300 students, has four AP courses and the district paid for 75 AP examinations last year. Mr. Ratcliff is one of many educators who has found a way to provide challenging services to their students despite apparent obstacles. While there is little question that it takes great commitment, it also can benefit a large percentage of a district’s high school students. Of course, it takes careful planning and thoughtful consideration of the following issues.

The first step is attending a session for administrators so that the superintendent and/or principal can determine how their district might best provide AP courses for their students. Sessions currently are being offered at education service centers and will be again next year. Also, summer sessions for administrators are available at a number of sites around the state. These sessions provide administrators the information they will need to make knowledgeable decisions about the program’s future in their district. They also enable principals and superintendents to talk with others who either have implemented AP courses or are thinking about it. By discovering how other districts have started their services, it is possible to gain a good understanding of what will be required to initiate the program.

Two of the issues that must be addressed early in the process are the strengths of campus teachers and professional development needs. Developing an AP course requires that the teacher have a strong background in a discipline. Even then, the teacher will need a good understanding of the components expected in an AP course, on the concepts and content for which the student will be held accountable, and on the teaching skills needed to assure students mastery of those concepts and skills. The training a teacher receives in these areas will benefit all students, not just those in AP classes. In smaller districts, where one teacher might teach a class, the district may determine it may be possible to impact every student in a high school.

The more background the teacher has in the discipline, the less additional inservice will be needed. However, all prospective teachers benefit from attending the five-day summer sessions offered throughout the state at various colleges and universities. A small school district might select one or two strong teachers and send them to nearby training to determine if they wish to continue in the process of developing and providing an AP course. The importance of these workshops, as well as the ones offered for administrators, is that they provide an opportunity for novices to the program to interact with AP “veterans.” Additionally, teachers develop support systems with other teachers that will help them through difficult spots during the development process.

Districts also have to consider the resources available to students as they plan courses that will be offered. Students will need access to research materials and additional equipment might be needed in some classrooms. As an example, it might be difficult to offer a Physics AP class because the school science lab is not equipped for the work required. On the other hand, the district might obtain permission for students to use community college libraries that would supplement an English AP or an American History AP class.

After a district considers the competencies of staff, possible supplemental professional development, and its own resources, it is time to consider program format. Small districts have always been innovative in assuring that their students receive opportunities that benefit and prepare them for the challenging future. For neighboring small districts, cooperatives might be formed where each district assumes responsibility for one or more courses. These classes would be open to students from any participating district. Another option is distance learning, with the students receiving the bulk of their instruction through interactive courses offered through, as examples, TF-IN or Interact. Both of these systems are increasing their AP offerings and this can be an effective way of expanding the horizons of the students. Some districts even offer Saturday sessions to supplement the regular high school classes and to prepare students for the level of challenge offered in an AP examination.

Throughout the process, it is important to focus on the strengths that small districts bring to the educational process. Campus personnel in these districts, particularly at the high-school level, really get to know their students. Teachers who have the same students for several years can more easily individualize services to accommodate identified needs. The teachers probably see their students around town, and know their families, their interests, and their weak spots. This knowledge is extremely valuable in understanding how to motivate students to get them to do their best. AP courses are not difficult just for teachers; they’re a challenge to the students as well. They will need support and assistance from campus educators if they are going to succeed in this new opportunity being presented to them.

AP courses are only one of a number of options that can challenge students to set high goals, to excel in the various disciplines, and to prepare for college-level courses. The AP Incentive Program provides an impetus to set even higher expectations of the students. Some districts may have been holding back, thinking, “We can’t do that.” Yes, you can! Both your district and the students in the course will benefit from the experience.

Should you have questions, you can contact our office at the Texas Education Agency (512-463-9455) or Tom New at The College Board Advanced Placement Offices in Austin (512-472-0231). We want to assist you in expanding services to your students. And remember, yes, you can!
CORRECTION...

In the winter 1994 issue of *tempo*, photos for Region III Director Armando Villarreal and Region XI Director Benny Hickerson were transposed. Mr. Villarreal and Dr. Hickerson are correctly identified in the photos below. *tempo* apologizes for any confusion this error may have caused.

Armando Villarreal

Benny Hickerson

ON-LINE COMMUNICATION

TAGT is currently exploring options for sending dated communications to the membership via electronic services such as tenet/internet. Brief updates would include reports on items of interest discussed in State Board of Education meetings, legislative calls to action, and other items in which expediency is required.

If you are interested in receiving special TAGT information on your electronic information network at work, home, or school, please drop us a line with your name, electronic address, and current electronic mail retrieval system (i.e. Tenet, AppleLink, CompuServe, etc.).

As our electronic services continue to expand, we will communicate with membership on-line, giving you access to the most timely information possible for use in your advocacy efforts.

NEW ADDRESS FOR FIDUCIARY BUSINESS

TAGT is now using a lockbox to route all monetary transactions. If you are sending a check to TAGT for dues, publications purchases, subscriptions, registration fees, or any other financial transaction, please send your check and all accompanying information to:

TAGT
DEPT. R. B. #0471
P. O. BOX 550
AUSTIN, TEXAS 78789-0471
After months of planning, the Grand Prairie Association of the Gifted and Talented (GPAGT) was established in March of 1993. At that time, officers were elected and bylaws were passed. Officers serving for the 1993-94 school year are: Karla Chandler, President; Steve Smith, Vice-President, and Vernita Mitchell, Treasurer.

An Executive Committee was established to conduct the day-to-day activities of the organization. The elected officers and the heads of the various committees serve as members of this committee. Additionally, to encourage the involvement of the school district in activities of the organization, the district’s G/T coordinator serves as an ex-officio member of the Executive Committee.

The primary purpose of the Grand Prairie Association of the Gifted and Talented is “to promote and improve education of gifted children by supporting new and existing activities significant to their education and development.”

Areas of focus for the organization include:

- Work with the school district to ensure that the gifted education programs meet the needs of the children involved.
- Heighten the awareness of parents and educators of the need for specialized education of the gifted.
- Encourage parental involvement in public education programs for the gifted.
- Promote and help develop funding sources for the education of the gifted.

In its first year of existence, GPAGT conducted a full schedule of activities for the families of the gifted and talented in Grand Prairie. These included:

- **Odyssey of the Mind** – The kickoff activity of the organization was participation in Odyssey of the Mind (OM). In the first year, six teams competed in the regional competition. Although no awards were won, the ability to work together in a creative team-building exercise proved invaluable for both the children and the adult coaches. This set the stage for a major expansion in the level of involvement in this year’s OM activities. At last count, more than 100 teams from Grand Prairie will compete in the 1994 OM program.

- **Super Saturday** – The major spring activity for the organization was a day of fun and learning called Super Saturday. On Super Saturday, a team of educators from East Texas State University conducted a full day workshop for children, teaching them the cultural values of other countries of the world. The 50 participants were each issued “passports” and participated in a variety of activities indigenous to other cultures. The activity was so well-received that a follow-up Super Saturday is scheduled for this spring. This year’s topic is “The Universe of Space.”

- **Programs** – GPAGT conducts regular meetings for its members every other month of the school year. At each meeting, a speaker presents a topic of interest to the families of the gifted and talented. During the past year, several excellent programs have been presented.

  - **Social Relationships of G/T Children** – John Ross, counselor with The Fourth Street Project, described the challenges faced by gifted children as they deal with the day-to-day social scene.
  
  - **Challenges Facing Gifted/Talented Education** – Dr. Kathy Hargrove, then president-elect of TAGT, described the need for specialized education of gifted children and offered tips in successfully dealing with the various power structures that compete for educational resources.
  
  - **Maximizing Giftedness** – Dr. Michael Sayler, author of TAGT’s Raising Champions, spoke of making the most of giftedness and overcoming the societal obstacles which hinder the natural development of the gifted.
  
  - **Scholarship Workshop** – One of the obstacles to achieving full intellectual development for many children is the lack of financial resources to pursue formal education to its conclusion. One answer is to take advantage of available scholarship opportunities. To help families become aware of available scholarships and to navigate the maze of the scholarship application process, the GPAGT is presenting a spring workshop on applying for and receiving scholarships.

The GPAGT works very closely with Grand Prairie ISD as an advocate of gifted and talented programs. Debbie Midkiff, GPISD Gifted and Talented Coordinator, helps facilitate the two-way communication between the education system and the concerned parents of gifted children. In today’s environment, in which educators face increasing demands for diminishing resources, GPAGT strongly believes that cooperation – rather than confrontation – is in the best interests of everyone who supports specialized education for the gifted.
TRIBUTE TO TEXAS CHILDREN

The Texas Elementary Principals and Supervisors Association (TEPSA) and the Texas Association of Secondary School Principals (TASSP) are coordinating a statewide project to create a permanent monument to Texas children. The concept, called a Tribute to Texas Children, is to place 18 bronze statues of children on the grounds of the Capitol as a lasting tribute to the value and significance of children to the future of Texas.

In April 1993, legislation was passed directing the State Preservation Board to include on the Capitol grounds a permanent monument in tribute to children and to accept the funds raised totally by private donations. This project has been endorsed by the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and Speaker of the House. TAGT also supports such recognition of our state's greatest resource.

The project to raise funds began in January 1994 and will conclude in May 1995; the monument will be dedicated in May 1996. The challenge of raising $750,000 is great, but supporters feel confident that Texas will rise to meet the challenge. Texas schools have the unique opportunity to assist children to honor children by participating in fundraising efforts to erect these tributes.

TEPSA and TASSP have developed a variety of materials to present fundraising suggestions to school campuses, including a six-minute video presentation to show classes and parent organizations. For more information about the tribute, contact TEPSA at (512) 478-5268 or (800) 252-3621, or TASSP at (512) 443-2100.

TAGT PARENT CONFERENCE PLANNED

The 1994 TAGT Parent Conference will take place June 11 at the University of Houston Hilton Hotel and Conference Center. Make your plans now to attend Texas' only conference for parents of gifted children, and learn new ways to help your gifted children meet their potential. See page 43 for a complete registration form.

CONGRATULATIONS

Dr. Charles Patterson, superintendent of Killeen ISD and winner of the 1993 TAGT President's Award, was recently elected President-Elect of the International Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD).

REGION XVII NEWS

Region XVII Director Katherine Fergusen of Slaton ISD shared timely TAGT information with the Region XVII Advisory Committee at their February 8 meeting. Other topics discussed at the meeting included information on summer G/T institutes, the National Excellence report, advanced placement issues, and regional junior high and senior high student seminars.
**The Challenge of Change**

TAGT 17th Annual Staff Development Conference

Fort Worth Convention Center • November 16 – 19, 1994

**Conference Preview**

**Wednesday, November 16**

8 AM to 9 PM  
Registration

9 AM to 4 PM  
Pre-Conference Institutes

**Thursday, November 17**

8 AM to 6 PM  
Registration Continues  
Exhibits Open

8:30 to 10 AM  
First General Session, Featuring  
Dr. Carolyn Callahan,  
University of Virginia, Presenting “Gifted Children:  
Hope for the Future”

10:15 to 11:30 AM  
Concurrent Breakout Sessions

11:45 AM to 1:15 PM  
Membership Luncheon and Keynote

1:45 to 4:45 PM  
Concurrent Breakout Sessions

7 to 9 PM  
Creativity Potpourri

**Friday, November 18**

8 AM to 5 PM  
Registration Continues  
Exhibits Open

10:15 to 11:30 AM  
Second General Session  
Featuring Ray Bradbury, America’s Favorite Science Fiction Writer and Futurist, Speaking on “Great Years Ahead”

12 to 1:15 PM  
Administrator’s Luncheon and Keynote, Featuring Dr. Lionel Meno, Texas Commissioner of Education

1:45 to 4:45 PM  
Concurrent Breakout Sessions

**Saturday, November 19**

8 to 10 AM  
Registration Continues

8:30 to 11:30 AM  
Concurrent Breakout Sessions

12 Noon  
TAGT Annual Business Meeting

TAGT is approved by the Texas Education Agency as a sponsor of 
GM/LT training, School Board Member Training, and inservice credit 
towards the fulfillment of the state requirement of 30 hours of G/T training.

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**Dear Colleague:**

You are cordially invited to attend the Seventeenth Annual Staff Development Conference of the Texas Association for the Gifted and Talented, which will take place November 16—19 at the Fort Worth Convention Center. “The Challenge Of Change” is the theme for the conference.

The current restructuring movement has provided many opportunities for all of us to adapt to change. Join us in Fort Worth to discover how gifted education can provide leadership in the areas of authentic assessment, inclusion, interdisciplinary curriculums, national standards, problem-based learning, site-based management, technological networking, and other change movements. Since all serious change requires a collective effort to stimulate, envision, implement, and monitor the innovation, we need to work together to ensure that gifted children continue to be served in the midst of all of the state and national restructuring efforts.

TAGT also wants to ensure that conference participants are able to receive the state-mandated training that is required of teachers by the State Board of Education and the Texas Education Agency. Specific sessions will deal with the five areas included in the endorsement sequence.

Your attendance is important to the growth of our strong state advocacy for gifted and talented education. Only through the continued support of better teacher training, community involvement, and focused research will we be able to meet the challenges of change.

Sincerely,

Susan Johnson
Chair, 1994 Conference Committee
TAGT First Vice-President
WISDOM OF THE OWL, VISION OF THE EAGLE:  
THE CHANGING ROLE OF THE G/T COORDINATOR

Please join us April 21-22 at the Stouffer Austin Hotel for the 1994 G/T Coordinators’ Conference, sponsored by the G/T Coordinators’ Division of TAGT.

Guest speakers include keynote by John Samara of The Curriculum Project; Dr. Peggy Kress of Round Rock ISD; Joel McIntosh of Baylor University; Dr. Michael Sayler of the University of North Texas; Dr. Dorothy Sisk of Lamar University; Dr. Paul Slocumb of Lamar Consolidated ISD; Paul Williamson of The College Board; and Evelyn Hiatt and Jeanette Covington of the Texas Education Agency. A crossfire panel of G/T visionaries from throughout the state will present a session on current G/T issues and initiatives.

ACCOMMODATIONS
TAGT has reserved a block of rooms at the Stouffer Austin, 9721 Arboretum Boulevard, for the G/T Coordinators’ Conference. Please call the Stouffer at (512) 343-2626, ext. 45 to make your reservations. You MUST inform the reservationist that you are with the TAGT G/T Coordinators’ Conference to receive the group rate.

Prices are $79 plus tax per night for single occupancy, $99 for double occupancy. The guest room block for the G/T Coordinators’ Conference will be held until March 31 – reservations MUST be made prior to this date to receive the special rate AND to ensure a room will be available.

GM/LT CREDIT
Six hours of GM/LT credit will be awarded for attending all activities and breakout sessions of the G/T Coordinators’ Conference.

REGISTRATION FEE MUST BE RECEIVED BY APRIL 11, 1994.

REGISTRATION FORM
1994 G/T COORDINATORS’ CONFERENCE

Name: ___________________________ TAGT member? _______ Yes _______ No
Home Address: ______________________________ City, State, ZIP: ______________________________
Position: ________________________________
School District: ______________________________ City, State, ZIP: ______________________________
Work Address: ______________________________ City, State, ZIP: ______________________________
Telephone: Home ( ) __________________ Work ( ) __________________
TENET/Internet Address: (if applicable) ______________________________

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION FEE:
$60 FOR DIVISION MEMBERS, $70 FOR NON-MEMBERS
(Fee includes Thursday dinner, Friday lunch, coffee break, and registration for all sessions.)

PLEASE SEND COMPLETED REGISTRATION FORM AND FEES TO:
TAGT, DEPT. R. B. #0471, P. O. BOX 550, AUSTIN, TEXAS 78789-0471
LEON JAWORSKI AWARDS DUE

The Leon Jaworski Awards for Teaching Excellence in Law Focused Education in Texas recognize educators who have made an outstanding contribution to law-focused education and whose programs: 1) foster understanding of the values of our legal and judicial system; 2) inform and educate students as to the roles in society of the law, the courts, the law enforcement agencies, and the legal profession; 3) stimulate a deeper sense of individual responsibility, instructing students to recognize their duties as well as their rights; 4) encourage effective law-focused education programs in their schools and communities; and 5) increase communication and understanding between students, educators, and those involved professionally in the legal system.

Any public or private school classroom teacher in the state of Texas with a minimum of five years of experience may apply for an award. Two or more teachers may enter as a team if they show effective teamwork. Individuals and teams will be awarded $500 to be used to purchase law-focused education materials or to cover travel expenses to attend an educational conference.

Entries must be postmarked no later than April 15, 1994. For complete information, contact the State Bar of Texas, Law-Related Education, (512) 463-1463 or (800) 204-2222.

KAUFMANN, CEC ENCOURAGE TEXANS TO ATTEND PRESENTATION

The Council for Exceptional Children is hosting a presentation featuring Dr. Felice Kaufmann on June 10-11 in Little Rock, Arkansas. Many airlines are offering discounted airfares for that time period between Arkansas and Texas, and Dr. Kaufmann extends a special invitation to her “Texas friends” to attend the CEC conference. For more information about the presentation, contact Dr. Kaufmann at CEC, (703) 264-9463.

THE NEED DEFINED:
GIFTED EDUCATION IN TEXAS

The Need DEFINED: Gifted Education in Texas is a documentary about the current needs of gifted education programs in Texas and the work of the Texas Association for the Gifted and Talented. The video is filled with factual information and personal interviews with educators, parents, and students involved in gifted education programs.

Filmed on location in cities throughout Texas, The Need DEFINED is a memorable video that can be used to provide information to school administrators, members of state and local government, and community decision makers. The various personal interviews provide eye-opening accounts of what it means to be gifted — from the viewpoints of all involved.

SHADE RECEIVES RESEARCH AWARD

The Institute for Educational Research recently announced their 1993 Awards for Action Research in Schools. Dr. Cynthia Specia Shade was given a Special Merit Award for her research entitled, “Effect of Gifted and Talented Program on Hispanic High School Students in Edgewood Independent School District, San Antonio, Texas.”

Awards for Action Research recognize outstanding action research which is significantly improving education in today’s schools. Researchers and their schools, systems, or organizations are recognized and honored for their contributions to the advancement of education. The Institute for Educational Research is a non-profit organization dedicated to excellence in educational research, staff development, and communication.

MORE CONGRATULATIONS

Five TAGT members were honored as finalists in the state competition for 1993 Teacher of the Year. TAGT congratulates Lisa Burns of College Station ISD, Mae Pierce of San Felipe-Del Rio ISD, Connie Howell of Midland ISD, Freddie Peters of Socorro ISD, and Eduardo Reyna of McAllen ISD for their achieving this honor.

ORDER FORM: TAGT VIDEO

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Please send completed order form and payment to:
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P. O. BOX 550, AUSTIN, TEXAS 78789-0471.

SPRING 1994
OVERVIEW: PROJECT MUSTARD SEED

Project Mustard Seed is a three-year research program conducted jointly by Baylor University and Texas A&M University. Funded by the United States Department of Education, the purpose of the project is to support classroom teachers adapting instruction to meet the needs of students of varying talents and abilities.

The project will involve six school districts - two in Region VI, one in Region XI, and three in Region XII. School districts involved in the project will receive several benefits. Involved teachers will benefit from extensive, individualized training in methods for adapting instruction. To support the teachers as they implement adaptive instruction, the project will provide instructional material support and technological support. For example, every site in the study will be given a computer for curriculum sharing and networking with other sites in the study. Because of the project’s unique training model, at the conclusion of the project each site will have 19 teachers who will be highly able to train and mentor new teachers in adapting instruction.

Training Model and Support System

Because bringing about change requires strong support, careful attention has been given to providing teachers involved in the project with quality material, and human and technological support. Human support is provided to teachers via a highly individualized, collaborative training program, a mentoring system, and a teacher network. Material support includes provisions for needed classroom materials and reference materials. Technological support includes a computer network for inter-district collaboration and electronic curriculum dissemination.

Classrooms

Project Mustard Seed classrooms will be an innovative mix of successful, research-based methods for adapting instruction for students of varying abilities. For example, a project classroom might include learning centers, flexible groupings of students for specialized instruction, independent and small group study, and individualized student planning. Teachers would be free to use individual, small group, and whole group instruction when appropriate.

The cornerstone of such classrooms is flexibility. Project teachers will have a wide array of strategies available to them for meeting each student’s needs.

Research Focus

A key strength of the project is its ability to meet the needs of all children. However, the thrust of the project’s research is to examine the potential benefits of adaptive instruction on gifted children in the regular classroom. The model adapts for these students’ rapid rate of learning and ability to deal with complex, abstract ideas just as it does for the special learning needs of other students in the classroom.

IN MEMORIAM: KAY COFFEY

By Mary Sea

At Christmas time, gifted education lost the staunchest ally we have ever had. Never has anyone in this field asked so little for herself and demanded so much from the world for gifted children as Kay Coffey. From her home base in New Orleans, she was a fury of determination that this whole country, beginning with Louisiana, would recognize and provide for exceptional children in public education. Even though life had dictated that she begin her crusade in Louisiana, Kay was a Texan, a west Texan; she had a degree in government from Texas A&M University and the State University of Louisiana in 1975.

Her husband’s job brought her to New Orleans in 1944, where she immediately sought to get school board members elected who cared about children, and especially about gifted children. She organized a group called Citizens for Public Schools, served on the Library Board, the Federation of Girl Scouts Councils, the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, AAUW, and the Mayor’s Housing Commission. She was in Who’s Who of American Women and was awarded “Parent of the Year, 1982” by the National Association for Gifted Children.

Kay was founder and president of AGTS, the Association for Gifted and Talented Students, and she was active in the founding of the Louisiana School for Math, Science, and the Arts, a state-supported residential high school for gifted children. She served as a charter member of the Board of Directors and as chairman in 1985 and 1987. She served on the National Association for Gifted Children’s Board of Directors from 1977 to 1986.

Kay was the editor of the Journal for the Education of the Gifted and published articles, newsletters, and an overview of legislation, policies, procedures, and options in Louisiana programs for the gifted and talented. She did whatever it took to get the legislature on the side of the gifted child and was made an honorary senator for “outstanding service to the State of Louisiana” in 1975.

Kay was named as recipient of the award for “Outstanding Service to Gifted and Talented Students” by Dr. Harold Lyon, Director of the Office of Gifted and Talented, U. S. Office of Education, Washington, D. C., where she had served as a project reader.

There are two more things you have to know, and I have left out scores of honors and jobs-well-done. Kay was instrumental in establishing the Benjamin Franklin High School for the Gifted in Orleans Parish. In recognition of her many contributions to the education of gifted and talented children, the new library at the Benjamin Franklin School was dedicated to her and named for her by the students of the school. In 1988, for the same reasons, Kay was awarded an honorary doctorate, Doctor of Letters, from Northwestern State University.

She was a bundle of energy, a crusader extraordinaire, a passionate fire burning for gifted children. She had determination, courage, dedication, spirit, and heart.

Kay Coffey was my good friend, valued advisor, and trusted mentor. I can say nothing better of Kay than what Richard Brown said of her in 1987 at the state “Kay Coffey Day” celebration:

"Si monumentum eisque requiris circumspice – If you seek her monument, look around.

SPRING 1994
PARENT AFFILIATES: WE'RE GROWING!

With the revision and expansion of guidelines for parent groups affiliating with TAGT, we have received some welcome additions to our growing list of parent affiliates. Below is the current roster of TAGT parent affiliates, with recent affiliates marked in bold print. If you are interested in joining TAGT as a parent affiliate group, please call the headquarters office or contact Ms. Myrtis Smith, TAGT Third Vice-President and chair of the Parent and Community Involvement Committee.

- Apollo Parent Club, Laredo, Region I
- Brownsville Parent Association (Contact: Brenda Fernandez), Brownsville, Region I
- Brownsville Parent Association (Contact: Cynthia Hamilton), Brownsville, Region I
- Challenge Support Association, McAllen, Region I
- Discovery Support Organization, Los Fresnos, Region I
- Edinburg Association for the Gifted and Talented, Edinburg, Region I
- Lyford Parents Association for the Gifted and Talented, Edcouch, Region I
- South Texas High School For Health Professions Parent Association, Mercedes, Region I
- Cy-Fair Association for the Education for the Academically Talented (AEAT), Houston, Region IV
- Humble Area Association for the Gifted and Talented, Humble, Region IV
- Katy Parents of Gifted and Talented Students, Katy, Region IV
- La Porte Association for the Gifted and Talented, La Porte, Region IV
- Parent Association of Gifted and Talented Students, Houston, Region IV
- Parents for ACademic Excellence (PACE), Sugar Land, Region IV
- Spiral-PGP Parent Advisory Group, Houston, Region IV
- Spring Parents Association, Spring, Region IV
- Southeast Texas Association for the Gifted and Talented, Orange, Region V
- Gifted Student Supporters, Trinity, Region VI
- Kilgore Association for the Gifted and Talented, Kilgore, Region VII
- Tyler Friends of the Gifted, Tyler, Region VII
- Paris Association for the Gifted Education (PAGE), Paris, Region VIII
- Electra Gate Parents Association, Electra, Region IX
- Wichita Falls Association for the Gifted and Talented, Wichita Falls, Region IX
- Carrollton-Farmers Branch Parents Association, Carrollton, Region X
- Duncanville Parents Association, Duncanville, Region X
- Gateway, Allen, Region X
- Grand Prairie Association for the Gifted and Talented, Grand Prairie, Region X
- International Baccalaureate, Garland, Region X
- Plano Association for the Gifted and Talented, Plano, Region X
- Richardson Association for the Gifted and Talented, Richardson, Region X
- Bedford Parents Association, Bedford, Region XI
- Birdville Association for Gifted and Talented Students, Watauga, Region XI
- Burleson Association for the Gifted and Talented, Burleson, Region XI
- Denton Parents Association, Denton, Region XI
- Fort Worth Association for the Gifted and Talented, Fort Worth, Region XI
- Glen Rose Association in Support of Reaching and Achieving Potential, Glen Rose, Region XI
- Corsicana Association for the Gifted and Talented, Corsicana, Region XII
- FOCUS, Temple, Region XII
- Hamilton Gifted/Talented Association, Hamilton, Region XII
- Heart of Texas Advocates, Waco, Region XII
- Killeen TAG Association, Killeen, Region XII
- Temple Association for the Gifted and Talented, Temple, Region XII
- Buda Association for the Gifted and Talented, Buda, Region XIII
- Round Rock TAG Association, Round Rock, Region XIII
- Deleon Parents Association, Deleon, Region XIV
- W.O.L.F. – P.A.C.K., Bonham, Region XIV
- Academic Booster Club, San Angelo, Region XV
- Panhandle Plains Association for the Gifted and Talented, Amarillo, Region XVI
- South Plains Association for the Gifted and Talented, Plainview, Region XVII
Effecting Change: the Parents' Challenge
1994 State Conference for Parents of the Gifted and Talented
June 11 • Houston, Texas
University of Houston Hilton Conference Center
Sponsored by the Texas Association for the Gifted and Talented and the Texas Education Agency

Schedule of Events

Friday, June 10
6:30 to 8 PM Welcome Reception

Saturday, June 11
8 to 9 AM Registration, Coffee, & Networking
9 to 10 AM Dialogue with Linda Cimusz, TEA Executive Deputy Commissioner for Curriculum, Assessment, and Professional Development
10:15 to 12 PM Concurrent Breakout Sessions
12:15 to 1:30 PM Luncheon Program & Keynote featuring Jean Watts, teacher/cartoonist
1:45 to 3:45 PM Concurrent Breakout Sessions
4 to 4:45 PM Special Closing Session – Forum: Parent-to-Parent

Session Topics Include:
✓ Characteristics & Adventures of G/T Kids
✓ Gifted Girls, Special Stresses
✓ The Pursuit of Passion: How Parents Contribute
✓ Advocacy at the School District Level
✓ Implementing Successful Individual Education Plans (IEPs) for G/T Students
✓ Creativity
✓ What's Happening for Gifted at the High-School Level
✓ Reading: Suggestions and Strategies
✓ Things All Parents of the Gifted Need to Know
✓ Parenting Potpourri
✓ Forum: Parent-to-Parent

Questions for Parent Forum:
Topics discussed in the Parent-to-Parent Forum will be determined by audience questions that are given to the panel at registration. If you have specific questions you'd like addressed, please come prepared! Cards will be provided for your questions when you come to registration.

Accommodations: University of Houston Hilton Conference Center
A guest room block is currently reserved for the TAGT/TEA Parent Conference attendees. The cost is $65 for single occupancy; $75 for double. You must make your reservations no later than May 24, 1994, to receive these special rates and to guarantee a room. Call Hilton Reservations direct at (713) 741-2447 from 8 AM to 5 PM, Monday through Friday; be sure to identify yourself as a TAGT/TEA Parent Conference attendee to receive the discounted rate. The University Hilton is located at 4800 Calhoun on the main campus of the University of Houston.

Registration Form for the 1994 State Conference for Parents of the Gifted and Talented

Name(s): (First and Last for each participant, please)

Home Address: ___________________________________________ City, State, ZIP: ___________________________

Telephone: Home ( ), Work ( ), TAGT member? Yes ____ No _____

Electronic address (if applicable): ___________________________

Conference Registration Fee: $35, or $60 for two family members
(Fee includes Friday reception, Saturday coffee and lunch, and all Conference sessions.)

Please send completed Registration Form and fees to:
TAGT Parent Conference
Dept. R.B. #0471
P. O. Box 560
Austin, Texas 78789-0471

Registration fees must be received by June 1, 1994.
(Limited on-site registration, space permitting.)
INTERVIEWING FOR CLASS?

Judi Lynham
East Central ISD

"The program should fit the needs of the students you are teaching" - we all know this to be true. I find myself changing my expectations more and more as the group of students I'm involved with changes each year. It is vital that the identification process for gifted and talented be refined.

Unfortunately, there is no "perfect" test that determines who those gifted students are. For a more reliable and intrusive look at these students, I have contributed in developing methods and evaluation criteria for conducting personal interviews and rating the outcome. We started using this identification measure as a means of observing each student's level of creativity on our campus; we have now expanded its use to a district-wide procedure.

The students being screened for the program select a page with a picture-start and an open-ended situation. The students complete the picture by adding what they wish. Each student is given the opportunity in a private setting to express what his drawing means to him and what thoughts surfaced as he went through this process.

The panel of evaluators, made up of familiar campus personnel with extensive gifted and talented training who represent different roles, pulls information from that student using higher-level questioning.

Finally, each student is scored on a scale of 0-5 according to his ability or demonstration of thinking in the areas of creativity, problem solving, risk taking, and global responsibility. After the child leaves the interview, responses are discussed among the evaluators and strength areas are analyzed. The score totals are then averaged and used as one portion of the information gathered on each candidate.

We feel we have begun a more authentic assessment than what was already being used in our district. Each year we improve our process, but looking at the "big picture" we realize we have been able to gain insight into each child's potential and tell how well our program fits his needs.

SCIENCE TRAINING INSTITUTE SCHEDULED

The Center for Gifted Education at the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia, is sponsoring a Summer Training Institute for Administrators and Teachers on Exemplary Science Curriculum and Instruction for High Ability Learners K-8. The program will take place June 20 to June 24 at the Williamsburg Hospitality House and is scheduled to repeat June 27 to July 1.

The institute, funded by the Jacob Javits Program, will address the major and interrelated problems currently experienced in science education across the country. Greater attention must be paid at elementary and secondary levels to attracting students into science and mathematics and educating them well if the United States is to lead in these critical areas as stated in the goals for America 2000: An Education Strategy. The National Science Curriculum Project carried out by the Center for Gifted Education has contributed to this effort by reviewing and evaluating existing curriculum materials and developing exemplary science curriculum units for use with high ability learners K-8.

Participants

The Summer Institute is organized for teams of educators throughout the United States. This training program is designed for school administrators at all levels, specialists in science and gifted education, and teachers of high ability learners K-8. It is strongly suggested that a team from one school, or school district, attend. An ideal team would be composed of two teachers and an administrator.

Stipends

There is no fee to attend the Institute. A $400 stipend, to assist with living and travel expenses, will be provided for the first 25 participants to register for each week. Housing, meals, and transportation are the financial responsibility of each participant. No more than 25 participants can be funded for each week of training. However, a school district may choose to sponsor additional members of a team. A small number of additional participants can be accommodated but will not receive a stipend.

College Credit

A one-hour credit may be arranged for the Institute through the College of William and Mary or with out-of-state institutions if prearranged by participants. The Institute contact time per week is 30 hours.

The registration deadline is May 1. For more information or a registration application, contact Dr. Joyce VanTassel-Baska or Dr. Victoria Damiani at The College of William and Mary, School of Education, Center for Gifted Education, 232 Jamestown Road, Stetson House, Williamsburg, Virginia, 23185; (804) 221-2862, (804) 221-2184 FAX.
TEXAS ASSOCIATION FOR THE GIFTED AND TALENTED
EXECUTIVE BOARD CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

If you would like to be considered for a position on the TAGT Executive Board, please complete the information below and submit as noted. Additionally, if you know someone who would like to be considered for the Board, please give them this application (or a copy) to submit to TAGT.

NAME: ____________________________________________

PREFERRED MAILING ADDRESS: ____________________________________________

City: ____________ ZIP: ____________

TELEPHONE: ( ) ____________ FACSIMILE: ( ) ____________

POSITION FOR WHICH YOU WOULD LIKE TO BE CONSIDERED: ____________________________

*Any member who has served a minimum of one year on the Executive Board or as an appointed member of a standing committee may be nominated as an Officer in the Association. Any member in good standing may be nominated as a Regional Director.

PREVIOUS AND/OR CURRENT TAGT SERVICE (if applicable):

Standing Committee:

Name of Committee: __________________ Dates of Service: __________________

Regional (Representative) Director:

Region Number: ____________ Dates of Service: __________________

Officer Position:

Title of Office: ____________ Dates of Service: __________________

CURRENT JOB TITLE (Include district/campus, university, business, etc.): ____________________________

I. List your formal education:

Degree(s): __________________ Special Certifications or Endorsements: __________________

Credentialing Institutions: __________________

II. All TAGT members will receive biographical information about each candidate. Please assist us by listing the five experiences (activities, jobs, offices, etc. either professional or volunteer) that you believe will be most helpful to you in carrying out the obligations of the office for which you want to be considered:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

III. If you like, you may attach a brief resume or vita (not to exceed two typewritten pages).

IV. Candidates are asked to provide a statement of 50 words or less indicating what they hope to accomplish if elected during their tenure in office. You might wish to include your vision of what TAGT should be doing as well as what image you think the Association should project. Your statement, or a portion of it, will appear on the TAGT Elections Ballot:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

V. Please attach a black and white photograph of yourself, preferably wallet-sized.

Photo enclosed: Yes ________ No ________

VI. Would you like to order a set of membership mailing labels? Costs must be borne by the candidate.

Yes, please send me an order form for mailing labels. ________ No ________

Return completed form with all attachments to: TAGT Elections Chair, 406 East 11th Street, Suite 310, Austin, Texas 78701-2617, (512) 499-8248

To be considered by the TAGT Elections Committee for nomination, this form and all attachments must be received in the TAGT office no later than May 15, 1994.

To be included on the Elections Ballot as a self-declared candidate, this form with all attachments plus the following must be received in the TAGT office no later than June 15, 1994:

• For an officer position, the self-declared candidate must also include a minimum of 20 statements of endorsement from active TAGT members who support the person's candidacy.

• For a Regional Director position, the self-declared candidate must also include a minimum of 10 statements of endorsement, at least five of which must be from active TAGT members, supporting the person's candidacy.

SPRING 1994
ARCHIVAL LIST OF TEMPO ARTICLES – 1980 TO PRESENT

SEPTEMBER 1980 – No theme
PARENT IDENTIFICATION OF GIFTED AND TALENTED CHILDREN AND YOUTH; by Gaydey Uli

DECEMBER 1980 – Conference Issue; What’s Happening With The Children?

JUNE 1981 – No theme
Poem: They Always Wanted To...., by Anonymous

DECEMBER 1981 – Conference Issue; Giftedness: Legacy for the Future

SEPTEMBER 1982 – Conference Issue; Giftedness...A Lifelong Challenge

APRIL 1983 – No theme
LITTLE WHILE... BIGGER THAN LIFE; by Unknown

SEPTEMBER 1983 – Conference Issue; Unwrapping the Gift of Giftedness

WINTER 1984 – No theme
THE DYNAMICS OF UNDERACHIEVEMENT: A DIMENSIONAL PHENOMENON; by Teaching Gifted Chilen, July-August, 1981

THIS MAN IS WANTED; by Moggie Kennedy

SPRING 1984 – No theme
COMMUNITY BY THE SEA; by Charlene Gilbert

DEVELOPING THE THINKING SKILLS OF YOUNG CHILEN; by Bertie Kingore

SUMMER 1984 – No theme
CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS: DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENTS ENROLLED IN A TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM SIGNIFICANCE AND IMPLICATIONS; by Unknown

UPDATE ON SUMMER OPPORTUNITIES FOR GIFTED STUDENTS; by Judith L. Martin

PARENTS CAN NURTURING THE CRITICAL AND CREATIVE THINKING OF OLDER CHILEN; by Bertie Kingore

GIFTED AND TALENTED GOES OUT THE DOOR; by Wayne Cralgen

TEXAS’ PARTICIPATION IN THE TALENT IDENTIFICATION PROGRAM; by Carol Rigby

FALL 1984 – Conference Issue; Spectrum of Potentialities
W. T. U.’s GIFTED AND TALENTED INSTITUTE: AN OBSERVATION; by Betty Jeffery

THE EDUCATION OF GREAT BRITAIN’S GIFTED AND TALENTED STUDENTS; by Anne Pierce and Richard E. Isher

SUMMER 1985 – No theme
STAFF DEVELOPMENT AT AN AFFORDABLE PRICE; by Paul Stolcumb

A LETTER FROM A TEACHER SUICIDE; by Jeanne Harlitzky and Ann Spilgas

FIELD TRIP JOURNALS; by David Evans

FALL 1985 – Conference Issue
GIFTED EDUCATION AND SCHOOL REFORM; by Charles Patterson

PERCEPTIONS OF KEY PERSONNEL TOWARD GIFTED CHILDREN; by Donna Clapton and Robert Splawn

G/T DINNER THEATRE; by Wayne Cralgen

SUMMER 1986 – No theme
SUBJECT SENTENCES A TANTALED SOFTWARE CHOICE FOR BRIGHT MINDS; by Bertie W. Kingore and Kathy Aldridge

DEVELOPMENT INDEPENDENCE IN CHILEN; by Joyce E. Juntune

SOMETIMES PARENTING REQUIRES IDEAS FOR DEALING WITH PEER PRESSURE INCIDENTS; by Dee Trevino

FALL 1986 – Conference Issue; Accepting the Challenge: Meeting the Needs of Able Learners
G. T. PARENTING; PARENTS MAKE IT HAPPEN; by Kathy Hairy

WINTER 1987 – No theme
TAGT CONFERENCE JOURNAL; A PARENT’S VIEW; by Susan Roberts

RESEARCH THINKING SKILLS; by Mary K. Talbert

DEAN LEARNING CENTER HOST; by Frank Williams, Mary Meeker, Kay Williamson

DUKE UNIVERSITY’S TALENT IDENTIFICATION PROGRAM IN TEXAS; by William C. George

SPRING 1987 – Leadership

LEADERSHIP AND ADVOCACY; by Bertie W. Kingore

LEADERSHIP IDENTIFICATION AND DEVELOPMENT; by Dorothy S. S. So YOU WANT TO START A PARENT SUPPORT GROUP?; by Donna Clapton

WE’RE GLAD YOU ASKED.....; by Donna Clapton

URGENT... IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUESTED; by Jo Ann Houston

GOOD ADVICE: by James Webb

SUMMER 1987 – ARTS
CONFESIONS OF A GIFTED STUDENT; by William Westeyn

CREATIVITY AND THE ARTS; by E. Paul Torrance

VIEWPOINT; by Donna Clapton

GIFTED EDUCATION CELEBRATES FIVE YEARS AT FORT CONCHO; by Bob Butchard

FALL 1987 – Conference Issue: Celebrating the Possibilities of Gifted/Talented Children

YOUR GREATEST GIFT; by Rebecca Conner

WINTER 1988 – Thinking Skills

REFLECTIONS...ON TEACHING THINKING SKILLS; by Janis M. Laughn

EVALUATING PROGRAMS THAT TEACH THINKING; USING RESEARCH TO GUIDE THE REVIEW; by Susan Johnson

SPRING 1988 – Creativity and Creative Problem Solving

PHOTOGRAPHY: VISUAL LANGUAGE; by Polly James

CREATIVITY: THE FORGOTTEN BASIC; by Joan Rivero

HOW TO BE “PLEASANTLY... PRODUCTIVELY... POSITIVELY... PUSHy”; by Julie Jackson Lusby

TEXAS FUTURE PROBLEM SOLVING PROGRAM; by Tom Fehrn

FUTURE PROBLEM SOLVING FROM A PARENT’S PERSPECTIVE; by Pam Weilstein

COACHING FUTURE PROBLEM SOLVING; by Suzanne Patty

PROBLEM SOLVING SKILLS PREPARE STUDENTS FOR PRODUCTIVE FUTURES; by Wendy Dickson

HOW MANY DAYS UNTIL OM, MOM?; by Debbie Bolt

SUMMER 1988 – Reading, Relaxing, Reflecting

READING, RELAXING, RELAXING; by Anne McCray Sullivan

INDIAN SUMMER; by Lenora Cohen

THE VALUE OF DOING NOTHING; by Hilary Duffer

FALL 1988 – Conference Issue: Gifted for Life

GIFTED FOR LIFE: A PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE; by Wayne Cralgen

LET’S KEEP THEM GIFTED FOR LIFE; by Marnell Hayes, Robert Scott

DUKE Talent Search; GIFTED FOR LIFE; by Katherine Lewis

WINTER 1989 – Who is Gifted?

OVERVIEW OF STATE-APPROVED G/T PROGRAMS; by Donna Clapton

VALEING GIFTEDNESS IN THE FINE ARTS; by Lori Deahl

CHILEN’S THEATER: DEVELOPING GIFTS; by Charlotte Hufstaker

SPRING 1989 – Preschool Primary

MATCHING THE SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL NEEDS OF GIFTED CHILDREN; by Nancy Robinson

SUZUKI PARENTING; by Beth Moreno

MEETING THE MANDATE; by Bob Soney

ISSUES IN IDENTIFICATION; by Susan Johnson

EFFECTS OF GROUPING ON GIFTED STUDENTS; by Barbara Clark

GUIDELINES FOR GROUPING; by Kathy Hargrove

EARLY READERS AND GIFTEDNESS; by Gail Lewis

SUMMER 1989 – Gifted Education

THE SCIE NCE OF GIFTED EDUCATION; by Mary Meeker

FUTURE OF GIFTED EDUCATION, by John Raye

CAREER GUIDANCE FOR GIFTED STUDENTS; by Becky Anderson

THE SPRING ISD PYRAMID PROGRAM; by Robert Smith, Martha Riddle

FALL 1989 – Conference Issue: A Love of Learning

A LOVE OF LEARNING; by Jeanne Hantlly

WHO IS THAT STUDENT?; by Rosemary Monferdini

WHAT SHOULD YOU CHILDREN BE LEARNING?; by clinic G. Katz

GIFTED DOWN UNDER; by Martha McKee and Bob Soney

THE GIFT THAT KEEPS GIVING; by Maggie Cox

WINTER 1990 – A Menu for Secondary Gifted Programs

WHAT IS APPROPRIATE INSTRUCTION?; by John Feldhusen

SPRING 1990 – Curriculum Alive!

A TIME TO REINK DIFFERENTIATION; by Sandra Kaplan

STUDENTS CRITIQUE AUTHOR; by Shella Richards

AUTHORS THROUGH PROGRAMS FOR GIFTED CHILDREN; by Bertie Kingore

MORE EFFICIENT UNITS FOR G/T STUDENTS; by Patricia Alexander

CURRICULUM TAILOR-MADE; by Debbie Brunson

DEVELOPING TALENT IN YOUNG PEOPLE; by Benjamin Bloom

COORDINATIVE PROGRAM PLANNING; by Wayne Cralgen, Kathy Hargrove, Adelle McClelland

GROWTH AND NURTURE OF A SECONDARY PROGRAM; by Pat Millerick

FALL 1990 – Conference Issue; Facing the Challenge

SOCRATIC QUESTIONING; by Betty Rebal

CALCULATORS: KEYS FOR FACING THE PROBLEM; by Sherry Yensen

KNOWLEDGE, LEARNING AND LITERACY; by Richard Paul

PORTFOLIOS IN KINDERGARTEN; by Mary Beth Harwood

DIRECTIONS FOR THE FUTURE; by Charles Patterson

GIFTED STUDENTS WHO ARE NOT TASK COMMITTED; by Marjorie Furr
TAGT Executive Board Highlights

Meeting Date: January 28-30, 1994

The Executive Board of the Texas Association for the Gifted and Talented met January 28-30, 1994, at the Doubletree Hotel in Austin, Texas. A summary of initiatives and actions follows.

The January meeting of the TAGT Executive Board is the first regular meeting of the year following election to the board. Association officers conducted intensive training for new regional directors. Training included information on TAGT’s mission, history, and development; board members’ roles in policy making and direction setting; board involvement in the annual conference; the nature and purpose of association publications; financial operations; and association policies and procedures. Returning regional directors were paired with new directors for exercises in membership development and services.

Connie McLendon, TAGT Executive Director, reported that the membership total as of December 31, 1993, was 7,456, including 992 family memberships, 5,946 individual memberships, 339 G/T Coordinator Division memberships, 62 Research and Development Division memberships, and 28 institutional memberships. She also gave the December 31, 1993, quarterly financial report. Mrs. McLendon reminded the board of the March 1 deadline for applications for summer scholarships. She announced that the Joint Select Committee, established by the 73rd Texas Legislature to review TEA, will meet in San Antonio on March 25, 1994, to discuss the adequacy and effectiveness of programs for special student populations. TAGT was invited to present testimony to the Committee.

Ann Wink, G/T Coordinator Division liaison to the TAGT Executive Board, announced that the Spring G/T Coordinators’ Conference will be held April 21-22, 1994, at the Stouffer Hotel in Austin. (See registration form, page 39.)

Myrtis Smith, Third Vice President, announced that the summer parent conference will be held on June 11, 1994, in Houston. (See registration form, page 42.) She will name an ad hoc parent/community involvement planning committee to plan this year’s parent conference and establish long-term goals for TAGT’s parent/community involvement initiative.

TAGT will be sending a team to the TEA Symposium on Gifted Education in Austin, February 21-23. Team members will include TAGT President Kathy Hargrove, President-Elect Ann Wink, Second Vice-President Ann Williams, Immediate Past President Ann Trull, and Executive Director Connie McLendon. The team will also be represented by Amanda Batson, former TAGT President and Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Program Development, Round Rock ISD; Elizabeth Herbert, Assistant Superintendent, Houston ISD; Wayne Craigen, former TAGT President and Gifted Specialist, Ft. Bend ISD; and Adelle McClendon, former TAGT President and Director of Gifted Programs at Cypress-Fairbanks ISD. Suggestions were also received from Fort Worth and Sugarland G/T parent support groups. TAGT will be represented by Mrs. Hargrove and Mrs. McLendon, Executive Director, at the Committee on Students meeting on February 10.

Other actions included: approval of revisions to the Elections Guidelines; acceptance of the resignation of April Meacham, Region XII Director, who has moved; approval of the recommendation from the 1993 financial audit report to amend the TAGT check-signing policy and procedure to comply with the recommendation of the Association’s accountant; approval of scholarships for students participating in the Future’s Edge Leadership Extension of the Governor’s Honors Program at Lamar University; and approval of procedures for the appointment of an assistant regional director for regions with membership exceeding 600.

President Kathy Hargrove convened the TAGT task force on the Advanced High School Program in conjunction with the January Board meeting to formulate and recommend TAGT’s suggestions for alternative quality outcomes for Commissioner Meno and the Committee on Students of the State Board of Education, who will meet on February 10, 1994. Task force members include the TAGT Executive Committee; Linda Ross, school board member of Marble Falls ISD; Peggy Kreas, former TAGT President and Director of the Talented and Gifted Programs, Round Rock ISD; and Clay Boyd, President of the GT Parent Support Group in Round Rock. Prior to the meeting, the task force received suggestions from Amanda Batson, former TAGT President and Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Program Development, Round Rock ISD; Elizabeth Herbert, Assistant Superintendent, Houston ISD; Wayne Craigen, former TAGT President and Gifted Specialist, Ft. Bend ISD; and Adelle McClendon, former TAGT President and Director of Gifted Programs at Cypress-Fairbanks ISD. Suggestions were also received from Fort Worth and Sugarland G/T parent support groups. TAGT will be represented by Mrs. Hargrove and Mrs. McLendon, Executive Director, at the Committee on Students meeting on February 10.

Susan Johnsen, 1994 Conference Chair, announced the theme of the 1994 conference, “The Challenge of Change.” The conference will take place at the Fort Worth Convention Center and the Radisson Hotel in Fort Worth on November 16-19. The 1994 Annual Conference Committee will meet on February 16.

The next meeting of the Texas Association for the Gifted and Talented will be held April 22-23, 1994.
TAGT is a proud sponsor of the Texas Teacher of the Year program. Because of the extended involvement of GfT teachers and their willingness to assist students in discovering potential and achieving excellence, we know there are many teachers of the gifted and talented who are particularly deserving of this prestigious award. We encourage you to nominate a deserving GfT teacher as the 1993-94 Texas Teacher of the Year.

Every fall, the Texas State Teacher of the Year program honors two teachers—one in elementary education and one in secondary education. These educators become spokespersons for all the teachers in the state. They also serve as traveling ambassadors for public education with a demanding schedule of speeches, workshops, and presentations while continuing to teach in the classroom. The program’s mission is to select outstanding classroom teachers who are also able to speak for, motivate, and exemplify the contributions of all teachers.

The state program is affiliated with the National Teacher of the Year program, the oldest and most prestigious awards program in the country to focus public attention on excellence in teaching. Texas’ finalist selection committee nominates one teacher every year to be considered for national honors. A selection committee representing the major national educational organizations selects the National Teacher of the Year from among Texas’ nominee and the other State Teachers of the Year.

Every spring, the National Teacher of the Year is introduced to the nation by the President during a Rose Garden ceremony and is honored at special events in the nation’s capital.

**Eligibility**

All classroom teachers employed by an accredited public school in Texas during the 1993-94 school year are eligible for nomination. The nominating district shall be the district in which the teacher has worked during the 1993-94 school year. School librarians, counselors, or administrators are not eligible for program recognition.

The following criteria, prepared by the national Council of Chief State Officers, are used for both the state and national programs:

- A concern for students and the capability to inspire them.
- The ability and willingness to work cooperatively with colleagues.
- A drive to initiate activities that improve instruction for students.
- An ability to work effectively with different groups in the community.
- The desire to stay informed of current educational theories and practices.
- An ability and willingness to make meaningful contributions to education.
- Examples of innovations started in the nominees’ classrooms.

For more information on this honor, please contact your regional service center or TEA’s Division of Communications at (512) 463-9780. The deadline for signed cover sheets including nominee information is June 3; the deadline for completed essay questions is July 1.

Best wishes and good luck!

**Confratute ’94**

A unique summer experience awaits educators and advocates of the gifted and talented. From July 18-29, 1994, the University of Connecticut’s School of Education is hosting Confratute ’94. Confratute combines the best aspects of a conference and an institute, featuring presentations by the nation’s best-known leaders in gifted education and creativity.

Strands include:
- Secondary Programs
- Learning and Teaching Styles
- Administration
- Language Arts
- Science Programs
- Math & Computers
- The Arts, Art History and Heritage
- Pre-School and Primary Programs
- Puppetry
- Developing and Implementing Curriculum
- Counseling the Gifted
- Evaluating Programs
- Scope and Sequence Training

Registration information is available by contacting:

Sally M. Reis  
Confratute ’94  
The University of Connecticut  
362 Fairfield Road, Box U-7  
Storrs, Connecticut 06269-2007  
Telephone (203) 486-4826.
# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

## APRIL

| Date: April 7-9 | Event: ATPE Annual Conference | Site: Loews Anatole, Dallas | Contact: ATPE, 512/467-0071 |
| Date: April 11 | Event: Registration deadline for TAGT G/T Coordinators’ Conference | Site: Stouffer Arboretum Hotel, Austin | Contact: TAGT, 512/499-8248 |
| Date: April 12 | Event: Technology: Key to the Future, Association for Gifted and Talented Students Annual Conference | Site: Union Building, Baton Rouge, Louisiana | Contact: Linda Wright, 318/357-4572 |
| Date: April 15 | Event: TAGT Summer Scholarship Winners notified by this date | Site: Not applicable | Contact: TAGT, 512/499-8248 |
| Date: April 21-22 | Event: TAGT G/T Coordinators’ Conference | Site: Stouffer Arboretum, Austin | Contact: TAGT, 512/499-8248 |
| Date: April 22 | Event: TAGT Annual Conference Call for Proposals due | Site: Not applicable | Contact: TAGT, 512/499-8248 |
| Date: April 22-23 | Event: Association for the Education of Gifted Underachieving Students Annual Conference | Site: University of St. Thomas Conference Center, St. Paul, Minnesota | Contact: Linda Emerick, 612/962-5385 |
| Date: April 29 - May 1 | Event: Texas Future Problem Solving State Bowl | Site: Austin | Contact: Texas Future Problem Solving, 800/333-5888 |

## MAY

| Date: May 1 | Event: Nomination deadline for TAGT Parent & Teacher of the Year, Regional Advocates | Site: Not applicable | Contact: TAGT, 512/499-8248 |
| Date: May 15 | Event: Submissions due for summer tempo | Site: Not applicable | Contact: Beverly Lowry, TAGT, 512/499-8248 |
| Date: May 20 | Event: TAGT Annual Conference Proposal presenters notified by this date | Site: Not applicable | Contact: TAGT, 512/499-8248 |

## JUNE

| Date: June 1 | Event: TAGT Parent Conference registration deadline | Site: University of Houston Hilton Hotel and Conference Center, Houston | Contact: TAGT, 512/499-8248 |
| Date: June 5 | Event: Duke TIP Recognition Ceremony | Site: Lamar University, Beaumont | Contact: Duke University, 919/684-3847 |
| Date: June 8-10 | Event: TASSP Summer Workshop | Site: Austin Convention Center | Contact: TASSP, 512/440-2100 |
| Date: June 8-10 | Event: TEPSA Summer Work Conference | Site: Stouffer Arboretum, Austin | Contact: TEPSA, 512/478-5268 |
| Date: June 11 | Event: TAGT Parent Conference | Site: University of Houston Hilton Hotel and Conference Center, Houston | Contact: TAGT, 512/499-8248 |
| Date: June 13 | Event: Duke TIP Recognition Ceremony | Site: Trinity University, San Antonio | Contact: Duke University, 919/684-3847 |

## JULY

| Date: July 1-6 | Event: National Education Association Annual Convention | Site: New Orleans, Louisiana | Contact: 202/332-7750 |
| Date: July 31-8 | Event: 14th Annual International Conference on Critical Thinking and Education Reform | Site: Sonoma State University, California | Contact: 707/684-2940 |
These are changing times and gifted education needs support from every segment of the population. Please focus your articles for this issue on how your district is restructuring and how this affects your gifted program, what reforms work for and against gifted, the types of legislation that help or hurt, and how parents and educators of the gifted can become stronger and better through this wave of reform.

We would like to hear from a variety of people. We all have dealt with problems and successes that current reforms may help or hurt -- please share your experience with tempo readership.

The deadline for receipt of articles is May 15, 1994.

Guidelines for article submissions

1. Address the article to the theme of an upcoming issue or to a regular feature.
2. Submit a double-spaced typed or computer-printed copy (50 characters per line, 25 lines per page). Please send a computer disk (save as "text only" [Macintosh], DOS, RTF, or ASCII; indicate software used). Preferred article length is 1,000 - 2,500 words.
3. Include a cover sheet with your name, address, position/role, school district and region, and daytime telephone number.

Send all submissions to: TAGT tempo, 406 East 11th Street, Suite 310, Austin, Texas 78701-2017.

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Winter '95: Highly Gifted/Highly Talented Students
Spring '95: Counseling and Affective Needs
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