special issue
Implementing the New State and National Gifted Programming Standards
PART II
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From the Executive Director
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C.P.’s Corner
Clyde Peterson

Opinions expressed by individual authors do not necessarily represent official positions of TAGT.
FROM THE EDITOR

by Krystal Goree

Susan Winebrenner, in her book Teaching Gifted Kids in the Regular Classroom (2001), shares with readers a product resulting from a gifted student’s response to the question, “What is it like to be gifted in the regular classroom?” The 10-year-old’s answer came in the form of an adaptation of Richard Brautigan’s poem, “The Memoirs of Jesse James,” and read:

All the time I just sat there….waiting,  
Waiting for something new to learn.  
My teachers should have ridden with Jesse James  
For all the learning time they have stolen from me!

Winebrenner refers to the sentiments of this young gifted student as the “Jesse James syndrome” and, unfortunately, we still have children suffering from the “Jesse James syndrome” sitting in our classrooms today. It is incumbent upon those of us responsible for providing appropriate educational experiences for every child to ensure that these children—our gifted and talented children—are challenged and engaged in meaningful learning.

The updated Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted and Talented Students (State Plan) and The 2010 NAGC Pre-K–Grade 12 Gifted Programming Standards (National Standards) are available to guide educators in providing challenging and engaging educational experiences for gifted kids. The last issue of Tempo (Part 1—Implementing the New State and National Gifted Programming Standards) included a copy of the National Standards along with articles authored by Susan Johnsen, Joyce VanTassel-Baska, and Donna Ford. Susan Johnsen provided a comprehensive overview of the State Plan and the National Standards, comparing the two documents and highlighting the need for a common set of programming standards in gifted education. Joyce VanTassel-Baska wrote to the design and development of appropriately differentiated curriculum for gifted learners. Donna Ford addressed the need for standards to be used to ensure that districts are responsive to cultural needs and differences.

This special issue of Tempo (Part 2—Implementing the New State and National Gifted Programming Standards) once again features articles written by well-known researchers in the field. Manuscripts include Using Standards to Design Identification Procedures, by Dr. Susan Johnsen; Evaluation of Programming: Student Outcomes, by Dr. Carolyn Callahan; Implementing the NAGC Pre-K–Grade 12 Standards During Professional Development, by Dr. Sandra Kaplan; and Implementing the NAGC Pre-K–Grade 12 Standards in the Classroom, by Dr. Julia Roberts.

The new National Standards are powerful in several ways. First, they focus on student outcomes. Second, they are comprehensive in nature, addressing every aspect of programming including the affective realm and the need for collaboration among educators, parents, and other advocates of gifted children. Third, they speak to educator behaviors and responsibilities in light of creating and offering programs that are designed relative to research-based best practices.

Having been a school administrator myself, I can appreciate the value of having standards written as statements that describe what the school or campus should do to ensure that they are in compliance. Standards written in this form make it very easy to “check off” the items that have been implemented and focus attention on those that have not. The negative side to standards being presented in this form is that we tend to use instruments formatted in this way as a checklist to show that we are in compliance or offering programs that are in alignment with rules and laws—oftentimes resulting in the absence of asking ourselves the most important questions of all: What is happening for the kids? Are the needs of the children being addressed in ways that challenge them, keep them engaged in learning, and allow them to produce professional-level products? Are we doing all we can to ensure that gifted kids

continued on page 33
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**Thursday Morning Session:**
Dr. Bertie Kingore
*The Rights of Gifted Learners*
*When Life-Long Learning is the Goal*

**Friday Panel Discussion:**
Ian Byrd, Deborah Mersino, Joel McIntosh and Dr. Lynette Breedlove
*Transforming Education through Social Networking Tools*

**WEDNESDAY CONFERENCE INSTITUTES**

**FULL-DAY INSTITUTES**
- The Schoolwide Cluster Grouping Model: How to Challenge Gifted & High-Performing Students with Dina Brulles
- Adding Depth and Rigor in the Pre-AP/AP Classroom with Bob Iseminger
- Digital Storytelling: Narratives for the 21st Century with Dr. Kristen Stephens
- Technology in the Classroom: Using Electronic Portfolios with Lannon Heflin
- Tiered Instruction: 35 Ways to Make It Work with Dr. Bertie Kingore
- SENG Model Parent Group Facilitator Training with Sheri Plybon and Lori Comallie-Caplan (1½ day)
- Discovering the Art & Science of Tracking Dinosaurs with Christina Cid and Paula Owen

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- Writing High Level Narratives with Big Patterns with Ian Byrd
- Increasing Depth and Complexity in Math with Ian Byrd
- If Our Child Is So Smart, Why Aren’t Our Lives Easier? with Dr. Linda Silverman
- The Unique Inner Lives of Gifted Children with Dr. Linda Silverman
- Incorporating Depth and Complexity and Content Imperatives into the Core Curriculum with Erik Mikelson
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Texas Association for the Gifted & Talented
There’s an old expression often used in Texas, “Dance with the one that brung ya.” Translated, it simply means to go with your strengths and to keep doing what has been successful for you. Personally, this philosophy has served me well throughout my life. When faced with a challenge, I have found that focusing on what I do well provides me with the energy necessary to navigate turbulent waters triumphantly.

To say that Texas schools are in the midst of trying times is an understatement. Texas educators and families are being challenged with severe budget cuts and the elimination or reduction of important programs. For TAGT, it is difficult to project the ways the economic hardships will affect our beloved association, but we know that our members and programs will likely struggle. How we evolve and ultimately succeed will depend on our ability to be proactive and build on what has made us successful.

TAGT is well known for many positive attributes, including our fantastic professional development and educational opportunities and our committed and dynamic volunteer leadership. We also have the benefit of a healthy fund balance generated by a history of frugal planning. These will all be important factors in TAGT’s continued success. However, it is the diversity and passion of our existing and potential membership that will best help us through this difficult time. By building on the solid foundation of our membership, we will be able to continue to meet the needs of the gifted children in Texas.

Our members are university educators and leaders, school administrators, classroom teachers, and parents, all with a deep and abiding passion for gifted and talented children. TAGT is a great association because of the contrasting member viewpoints, all united by a shared passion. And while it may be challenging at times to balance association services and programs to meet the varying needs of these members, the unique diversity and passionate fervor of our stakeholders creates a powerful collaboration.

The TAGT Board of Directors has charted a course intended to see that this association will thrive in the face of pending challenges. Recently, the board revised the statements of mission and vision and set goals and strategies for the coming years. The direction set by TAGT leadership emphasizes the strengths of the organization outlined above. This will certainly be a challenging time for all. But I am confident that by “dancing with the one that brung us,” TAGT will continue to be a relevant leader in the field of gifted education and will remain a significant influence in the lives of all who care so deeply for gifted children.

TAGT Mission: The Texas Association for the Gifted and Talented connects and empowers educators and parents to meet the unique needs of gifted and talented individuals through awareness, advocacy and action.

TAGT Vision: The Texas Association for the Gifted and Talented strives to positively impact the lives of gifted and talented individuals by providing relevant, innovative programs and services through an engaged, diverse membership.

TAGT Organizational Goals & Strategies:

Governance

Structure Goal: Restructure the organization to develop leadership, diversify membership and increase transparency.

2011 Strategies:
- Widely communicate the new organizational structure.
- Monitor and assist with the implementation of the new structure.

Membership Goal:

Increase and diversify membership by providing avenues for focused advocacy and increased services.

2011 Strategies:
- Create Parent Division and increase parent membership by 10%.
- Explore and/or implement at least 2 new avenues that serve current students and alumni as future members of TAGT.

Financial Capacity Goal:

Distribute financial risk through the creation of diverse revenue streams and a data-driven business development plan.

2011 Strategy:
- Explore and present practical avenues for diversifying and increasing revenue.
Have you ever ridden a roller coaster? Waiting in line forever with a mixture of terror and excitement, not knowing for sure what lies ahead? That seems to be what we have been doing this spring in relation to the legislature and the state budget process. Every tidbit of news brings a new rise or fall of the tracks, with the accompanying physical sensations. Some of us are excited to be on the ride, as we see good things coming out of the process for our district and programming. Others are terrified at what the decisions made at the Capital will mean for our students in the coming years.

While we are hearing disheartening news of gifted programming cuts and personnel elimination from across the state, we have seen a few places with positive trends. Pearland ISD, under the leadership of TAGT member Margo Gigee, will be opening a gifted academy for students in grades 5-8 in the fall. Spring Branch ISD is moving forward with a school for the highly gifted, an effort championed by TAGT President Elect, Lynette Breedlove. Midland ISD is expanding gifted services at the Carver Center campus under the leadership of TAGT Past President Judy Bridges. ACE Academy in Austin has exceeded their enrollment capacity and is now seeking a larger facility to serve more students. There are many other examples across the state where gifted services are being maintained or actually expanding in the time of budget reduction and staff consolidation. Even in my own district, we have seen an awakening of parents to the needs of their gifted children and a renewed advocacy effort on their behalf.

As the roller coaster ride continues into the summer, I encourage our membership to hold fast to the passion for the population we serve and to seek out opportunities to increase awareness, advocacy, and action on behalf of gifted students. When this ride comes to an end and school begins, I hope you will be able to look back and find the positives that have emerged from this process.
Four foundational issues have influenced the development of standards related to identification (Johnsen, 2008). These issues determine the design of the overall identification process, the assessments used, the interpretation of the assessments, and ultimately the students selected for gifted programming.
Issue 1. Gifts and talents are developed. The conceptualization of “giftedness” and “talents” influences the establishment of procedures for identifying and serving students. If educators believe intelligence is primarily innate and does not change over time (Jensen, 1980; Spearman, 1904), then they are more likely to believe that an intelligence test is the only instrument needed to identify those students who are really gifted. On the other hand, if they believe giftedness is more domain-related and diverse in its manifestations, then they will select an array of assessments for specific domains and alternative assessments that allow students to show their talents in varied ways. Theorists and more recent research suggest that giftedness is indeed developmental and includes a set of interacting factors such as general intelligence, domain-related skills, creativity, and environmental and nonintellectual factors such as self-concept and mental health (Cattell, 1971; Gagné, 1999; Renzulli, 1978; Tannenbaum, 1991). All of these factors need to be considered when selecting assessments for the identification process.

Issue 2. Giftedness is exhibited not only within a specific domain but also within an interest area. Tests that examine a student’s achievement in a specific domain may not necessarily identify a student with a gift or talent. For example, a student who is interested in astronomy, specifically black holes, may not demonstrate his breadth of knowledge on a typical grade-level achievement test that is linked to school district or state benchmarks. This talent might be discovered only through information from home, products, and observations during free reading times or independent research opportunities.

Issue 3. The presence or absence of a gift is dynamic, not static. Researchers have raised questions about how well one-point-in-time assessments are able to identify learning potential, particularly with students from low-income backgrounds who have limited school-related experiences (Banks & Neisworth, 1995). Collecting information over time or in an interactive learning situation may provide more information about students’ abilities and their developmental trajectories (Budoff, 1987; Campione, 1989; Lidz, 1991; McCoach, Kehle, Bray, & Siegle, 2001).

Issue 4. Giftedness is exhibited across all racial, ethnic, income levels, and exceptionality groups. Ford (1996) estimates that African American, Hispanic American, and Native American students are underrepresented by about 50% in programs for the gifted. Given this underrepresentation, specific attention needs to be paid to ensuring that definitions encompass a wide range of student characteristics, developing positive teacher and parent attitudes toward gifted education programming and the diversity of gifted students, and selecting assessments that are fair to all populations.

Each of these issues (i.e., developmental and dynamic nature of giftedness, domain-specific and interest-specific knowledge and skills, and diversity) is reflected in the three NAGC Programming student outcomes within the Assessment Standard (NAGC, 2010). The first standard requires educators to create a classroom that differentiates for students with gifts and talent; the second, to implement an identification procedure that is comprehensive, fair, equitable, and incorporates multiple assessments; and the third, to focus on diversity and equal access.

**SETTING THE STAGE: STUDENT OUTCOME 1**

While there are no parallel standards in the Texas State Plan (TEA, 2009), the first student outcome in the NAGC Programming Assessment Standard (NAGC, 2010) relates to establishing an environment where all students are able to show their gifts and talents:

All students in grades PK–12 have equal access to a comprehensive assessment system that allows them to demonstrate diverse characteristics and behaviors that are associated with giftedness (NAGC 2.1, 2010).

**Collecting information over time or in an interactive learning situation may provide more information about students’ abilities and their developmental trajectories.**

To ensure that this standard is implemented, educators need professional development regarding the variation in characteristics of students with gifts and talents and how to develop classrooms and other learning environments that differentiate for individual differences in content, rate, preference, and environment (Johnsen, 2004a).

- To differentiate what students are learning (i.e., content), teachers might use higher level questioning, use problem- or concept-based curriculum, add depth and complexity to their curriculum, provide variations in assessments and assignments, and allow students time to pursue their interests.
- To differentiate for how quickly students learn new content (i.e., rate), teachers might use fewer examples to teach something new, incorporate above-grade-level acceleration, use preassessment and curriculum compacting so that students do not have to review what they already know, and organize flexible groups around students’ academic strengths and interests.
- To differentiate for how students learn (i.e., preference), teachers might vary the method of presentation; give
students choices of products, processes, and content; and arrange for mentors to work with students in their interest areas.

• To create an environment that encourages motivation (i.e., environment), teachers might establish a system for long-range assignments, provide opportunities for independent research, offer open-ended, self-directed activities, and allow students to work by themselves, with others, and in small groups.

When teachers differentiate, students who have gifts and talents are more likely to show themselves and be recognized. Teachers also need to know that giftedness assumes many forms and not stereotype the characteristics of a “gifted child.” For example, researchers have reported that teachers who view vocabulary as an important characteristic rate the gifted characteristics of English language learners as lower than native English students (Fernández, Gay, Lucky, & Gavilan, 1998; Plata & Masten, 1998).

When teachers differentiate, students who have gifts and talents are more likely to show themselves and be recognized. Parents also need to be aware of the available programming for students with gifts and talents and the assessment process. While parents from lower income backgrounds may be helpful in identifying their children for gifted programs (Johnsen & Ryser, 1994), some minority parents may not request evaluations of their child for future placement in the gifted program (Scott, Perou, Urbano, Hogan, & Gold, 1992). Therefore, it's essential that parents be well informed so that they can not only provide opportunities for their children to develop but also important information to the school about their children’s talents.

GATHERING AND INTERPRETING ASSESSMENT EVIDENCE: STUDENT OUTCOME 2

Eleven of the Texas State Plan standards (TEA, 2009) focus on the second student outcome in the NAGC Programming Assessment Standard (NAGC, 2010), which relates to assessment evidence:

Each student reveals his or her exceptionalities or potential through assessment evidence so that appropriate instructional accommodations and modifications can be provided (NAGC 2.2, 2010).

The related evidence-based practices for this standard focus on three major areas: identification procedures, qualities of assessments, and interpretation of assessments.

Identification Procedures

The procedures for identifying students with gifts and talents need to be “comprehensive, cohesive, and ongoing” (NAGC 2.2.1, 2010). To address this practice, school districts need to look at their entire K–12 program to ensure that the identification procedures are in alignment with one another and with the program. For example, if the school district serves students with potential in math beginning in kindergarten, then what assessments might be used at each level? Would high performance on the assessments in the elementary school predict high performance on the assessments in middle and/or high school? Would high performance on the assessments predict high performance in the math programs for students with gifts and talents? These are important questions to address in building comprehensive and cohesive identification procedures. If not, then a student might conceivably be identified as gifted in math in the elementary school and then not be identified as gifted at the secondary level. Moreover, the assessments need to be ongoing. Not all children have similar educational opportunities and may not demonstrate their potential until they have access to challenging curriculum or a special teacher who has preparation in gifted education. Once they experience the challenge, they are able to show their gift or talent.

Comprehensive programs also need to have policies and specific provisions for addressing such areas as informed consent, committee review, student retention, student reassessment, student exiting, furloughs, and appeals (TEA 1.1, 1.2, 2009; NAGC 2.2.1, 2010). These provisions are listed in both the TEA and NAGC
Assessment Qualities

The selection of assessments is often dependent upon the characteristics of the available programming and the characteristics of the students. For example, if a school offers special programming for young scientists, then the identification instruments would most likely be different from those used for identifying students with potential in the writing area. In addition, if the majority of students within the district are from special populations (e.g., English language learners, low income), then different types of assessments might need to be considered such as those that are non-verbal or linguistically reduced. In all cases, the NAGC and TEA standards identify these assessment qualities as important:

1. **Variety of sources.** Multiple sources such as parents, teachers, students, and peers provide a variety of perspectives of a student’s gifts and talents (Coleman & Cross, 2005; Johnsen, 2004b). It’s particularly important to include the family and the community because not all students will exhibit their potential during the school day. It’s equally important not to include the same source of information more than once. For example, a teacher might nominate students for gifted programming and also rate their products. In this case, one source is used twice and may bias the overall identification process.

2. **Qualitative and quantitative.** Using both qualitative and quantitative assessments provides a broader view of students with gifts and talents and provides different types of information (Ryser 2004a). First, qualitative assessments use words to describe a student’s strengths and weaknesses whereas quantitative assessments use numbers. Second, quantitative assessments are static and controlled so results are consistent across testings whereas qualitative assessments provide flexibility and more freedom. For example, a portfolio allows both the teacher and the student opportunities to select artifacts that might best represent the student’s talents. Similarly, a teacher may collect data on how quickly a student learns or acquires new information by using a test-teach-test dynamic approach. On the other hand, an intelligence test needs to be administered using standardized procedures. Finally, since quantitative assessments are more controlled, they may not represent the student’s performance in more authentic settings. Qualitative assessments have the advantage of simulating performance or gathering information from more real-world contexts. Ryser (2004a) adds a cautionary note to educators who assign numbers to qualitative assessments. In those cases where numbers are applied, the qualitative assessment actually becomes a quantitative assessment and loses its power in providing more information about the student.

3. **Off-level testing.** Given that students with potential, particularly in the four core content areas, may be performing above grade level, off-level testing is needed to uncover their talents. On-level tests such as TAKS and most diagnostic achievement tests do not have enough ceiling so students are not able to show what they know. In fact, since assessments have more error at the upper end of a scale, students who are gifted in a particular domain may appear to perform more poorly than students who are on grade level.

4. **Nonbiased and equitable.** Students from special populations are underrepresented in gifted education programs (Ford, 1996). For this reason, special care needs to be taken to...
interpretation of assessments

once technically sound assessments are selected and the information is gathered, the data need to be interpreted by those who are familiar with gifted education and have knowledge about measurements. the texas state plan describes the number of hours of training in gifted education that the committee should have about gifted education (tea 1.7, 2009). nagc suggests that educators meet national teacher preparation standards (nagc 6.1, 2010). the committee needs to have knowledge about the diversity of students who might be identified as gifted and/or talented and the influences that might affect their development.

the committee also needs to have psychometric knowledge and understand different types of scores such as raw scores, standard scores, percentile ranks; standard error of measurement; and the limitations of assessments (johnsen, 2004b; nagc, 2010). for example, if a student were to score 125 on an intelligence test, perform at the 95th percentile on an off-level achievement test, and be ranked within the 8th stanine on a teacher checklist, how would you describe his or her performance? if you said that the student was performing in the top 5% on all of the assessments, you would be correct. caution does need to be exercised when comparing numbers, however. in no case should raw scores or grade/age equivalent scores be used when comparing performance across quantitative assessments or when adding ratings such as in a matrix; standard scores are generally best (johnsen, 2004b).

besides knowledge of specific types of scores, the committee also needs to understand that every measurement tool has error. thus a score of 125 lies within a range of scores—the true score. if a student were to score 125 on a test and the standard error of measurement was plus or minus 3 points, then 99% of the time his or her score would fall within the range of 116–134 (about the 84th percentile to the 99th percentile). tests also have more error in the upper ranges (e.g., 130 or greater). therefore, extremely high, rigid cut-off scores on individual assessments should not be used because they do not consider the error in assessments. (for a more complete discussion of scores and error in assessments, see johnsen, 2004b.)

finally, the committee needs to understand that all assessments have limitations. they may not sample the behaviors that would show a particular student’s talent. they might not be sensitive enough to identify those students who are performing above grade level or those who have disabilities that inhibit or mask performance. they may have bias toward particular groups. the school needs to select carefully the way that it organizes the data from assessments so that the presented qualitative and quantitative information shows each student’s strengths and weaknesses and considers scores and measurement errors.
# Case Study Format for Organizing Assessment Data

**Student:** Roger Ortiz  
**D.O.B.:** 10-31-2003  
**ID#:** 97-4253

**Home School/Grade:** Spring/Grade 3  
**Date of Review:** 3/18/11

## I. Nomination Scales for Identifying Gifted Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Score (Standard Score)</th>
<th>Met School Standard</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>95th percentile (SS 124)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Likes building rockets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counselor</td>
<td>91st percentile (SS 120)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>See interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>84th percentile (SS 115)</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Doesn’t do homework</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Achievement

**Iowa Tests of Basic Skills**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Score (Standard Score)</th>
<th>Met School Standard</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>84th percentile (SS 115)</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Above average range</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>95th percentile (SS 124)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Superior range</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>93rd percentile (SS 122.5)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Superior range</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>82nd percentile (SS 113.5)</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Above average range</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Other: Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking**

- Verbal, 55 (5th stanine)
- Figural, 95 (9th stanine)

Parent submitted from previous school

## II. Screening committee recommendation (committee members’ signatures on back)

The Screening Committee has reviewed this student’s data and has determined that he/she:

- [ ] Is recommended for additional screening.
- [x] Is recommended and an exception is made because ____________________________________________________________________________
- [ ] Is not recommended for additional screening.

## III. Screening

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Screening Activity</th>
<th>Score (Standard Score)</th>
<th>Met School Standard</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interview</td>
<td>Exhibits characteristics</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>See notebook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tests Administered:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Screening Assessment for Gifted Elementary and Middle School Students-2: Reasoning</td>
<td>98th percentile (SS 130)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Very superior range</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test of Nonverbal Intelligence-4</td>
<td>99th percentile (SS 135)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Very superior range</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portfolio</td>
<td>Exhibits characteristics</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Science experiments show complex thinking.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## IV. Selection Committee Recommendation (see committee members signatures on plan):

Recommended for gifted education programming in science and math with support in reading.

**Figure 1.** Case 1: Roger Ortiz.
A model case study form for organizing information is provided in Figure 1. It is clear from Figure 1 that Roger’s data from the nomination phase indicates that he has relative strengths in math and science and relative weaknesses in reading and social studies. Given that English was Roger’s second language, the committee decided to use intelligence tests that were more nonverbal in nature during the screening phase and discovered that he was performing in the very superior range. Qualitative assessments such as interviews and portfolio items corroborated his superior performance in science. The committee recommended that he receive gifted education programming in science and mathematics and more classroom support in the area of reading, perhaps gearing his reading assignments toward his interest areas in science.

**EQUAL ACCESS: STUDENT OUTCOME 3**

The underrepresentation of minority students in gifted education has been well documented (Daniels, 1998; Ford & Harris, 1994; Morris, 2002). Therefore, the final student outcome in the NAGC gifted education programming standards relates to equal access:

*Students with identified needs represent diverse backgrounds and reflect the total student population of the district (NAGC 2.3, 2010).*

This standard is very similar to Texas State Plan Standard 1.6 (TEA, 2009). Three other Texas Standards (1.1, 1.2, 1.5.2) also stress the importance of using nonbiased and equitable approaches for identifying students with gifts and talents. The sheer number of standards in both the Texas State Plan and in the NAGC Standards indicates the significance of including students from diverse backgrounds in gifted education programming.

Along with the selection of nonbiased and equitable assessments, educators need to be aware that bias may occur at any point in the identification process. For example, selective referrals sometimes exclude special groups (Frasier, Garcia, & Passow, 1995; Peterson & Margolin, 1997). Educators may develop their own conceptions of giftedness such as high verbal or academic ability and nominate children who model these characteristics (Dawson, 1997; Hunsaker, Finley, & Frank, 1997; Spiers Neumeister, Adams, Pierce, Cassady, & Dixon, 2007). Because of misconceptions, children who have disabilities, who are economically disadvantaged, or who are English language learners are referred less frequently (Harris, Plucker, Rapp, & Martinez, 2009; Morrison & Rizza, 2007; Peterson & Margolin, 1997; Plata & Masten, 1998). Moreover, without training and the knowledge of how to differentiate and challenge students, teachers often find it difficult to complete the required assessment forms and checklists reliably to validly refer a student for further testing.

Underreferral is also a problem for parents with fewer minority parents referring their children for gifted education programming (Frasier et al., 1995; Scott et al., 1992). Because parents are most often the best source of information for identifying students early for gifted programming, they need training regarding diverse characteristics, identification procedures, and the benefits of gifted programming. Researchers have reported that when minority students are identified early and attend classes for gifted and talented students, they have higher achievement than those who are placed in general education classrooms (Borland, Schnur, & Wright, 2000).

Researchers recommend extensive training of educators who are involved in the identification process. When all educators are trained about specific characteristics of gifted and talented students, they are better able to contribute to the identification process (Johnsen & Ryser, 1994; Shaklee & Viechnicki, 1995). Educators also include support personnel such as special education teachers, psychologists, counselors, and administrators since they may not have received any information about gifted and talented students in their educational preparation.

**SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS**

Understanding the developmental nature of giftedness and all of its manifestations is important as educators begin the process of developing and implementing standards-based identification procedures. The first NAGC student outcome in the Assessment Standard (NAGC, 2010) focuses on the dynamic interaction between gifted students and their learning environments. Only through the design of classrooms that differentiate for individual differences and homes that encourage interests are students able to develop and demonstrate characteristics and behaviors that are associated with giftedness. The second NAGC student outcome emphasizes the need for multiple assessments to capture the variation in talents and gifts. Assessments need to incorporate a variety of sources of information, provide both qualitative and quantitative information, be off-level, be nonbiased and equitable, and be technically adequate. Moreover, assessments need to be interpreted by those who are familiar with gifted education and psychological measurements. Finally, the overall identification procedures need to be sensitive to students who represent diverse populations. Selective and underreferrals can be particularly problematic for students who have disabilities or who are from lower income or minority backgrounds.

Given these issues and attitudes about high-ability learners, all educators (e.g., administrators, general education teachers, special education teachers,
gifted education teachers, counselors, psychologists) and families who are involved in the identification process need to receive professional development training in the characteristics of gifted and talented students, assessment procedures, and programming options. Local education agencies need to become familiar with the standards and allocate sufficient material and human resources so that training is sustained over time with regular follow-up. In this way, all qualified students will have access to nondiscriminatory procedures and programming options that will develop their gifts and talents.

REFERENCES


IMPLEMENTING
the NAGC Pre-K–Grade 12 Standards During PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Sandra Kaplan, Ed.D.
The acquisition of competencies versus the rendering of credit often are perceived as competitors rather than compatible features to promote attendance for professional development experiences. Compliance versus learning used as attractors to promote professional development do not have to be viewed as dichotomous. This issue can be resolved easily by addressing three questions while planning and implementing professional development: (a) How does the professional development experience provide personal and individualistic gains for the participant?, (b) How does the professional development experience enhance the professional roles of the participant as an educator?, and (c) How does the professional development experience relate to school and district expectations for the gifted program and teachers of the gifted?

There are many renditions available representing the conceptual and procedural process to plan and implement professional development experiences (see Figure 1 for an example). Regardless of the selected procedure, a gifted program should have a clear means to explain how and why professional development experiences are selected and provided to the program’s constituents.

Planning and implementation of professional development is dependent on conducting an assessment that establishes the parameters responsive to both program and participant needs. While there is a variety of needs assessment forms, all needs assessment processes should address these areas: (a) real versus perceived needs for the professional development experience, (b) non-negotiable versus negotiable elements to be included in the professional development experience, and (c) immediate or short- versus long-term outcomes derived from the professional development experience.

The importance of determining perceptions and misconceptions as a preface to teaching and learning with students also is a requirement for professional development experiences with educators. Discussions that reveal beliefs and dispositions prior to the experience mitigates against the loss of impact derived from the participants’ attendance (see Figure 2).

Fundamental to planning and implementing significant professional development experiences is determining the means by which all standards relative to a gifted education and a gifted program are addressed over time. As shown in Figure 3, prioritizing standards or areas of recognized need(s) facilitates answering the basic question as to why a topic was the selected focus of a professional development experience. Prioritization is predicated on data,
time, fiscal support, and most importantly, the immediacy of the recognized need to initiate, defend, and/or extend practices within the gifted program.

Clustering the standards (see Figure 4) also can accommodate prioritization of the standards. The process of clustering the standards to plan professional development recognizes the fact that the standards can reinforce each other, thereby expediting the learning and implementation process.

Data derived from needs assessments also become a source to determine emphasis to be placed on the content of the professional development experience to (a) know about gifted students, (b) know how to teach gifted students, (c) know why and how to support gifted educators, and (d) know when and where in the curriculum particular instructional strategies and materials are needed to accommodate gifted students. There is sufficient support by professional developers to relate the various forms or structure of the professional development offerings to their respective purposes. Recognizing this relationship reinforces the intent and the outcomes of the professional development experience available to educators and parents involved in gifted education. Discontentment about a professional development experience has been associated with a misunderstanding about the form or structure and function of the particular professional development experience (see Table 1).

Alternative delivery modes to configure professional development experiences need consideration to accommodate the needs and interests of participants. Changes in topics for professional development should match the need to change the mode of delivery for the topic. In-classroom demonstrations (see Figure 5) afford teachers real-time opportunities to observe and note the implementation of a topic in relationship to the reality of the actual classroom dynamic. Comments such as “That will not work with my students” can be averted when participants can actually see the interactions of the teacher and student with the dimensions of the topics.

Side-by-side professional development (see Figure 6) is based on establishing a team of participants to attend the professional development experience with the explicit expectations that the shared knowledge gained during the professional development experience becomes a shared or collective endeavor for its implementation. Participation as a team reinforces the team involvement for implementation.

Coaching as the delivery mode for professional development or as the extension from a professional devel-
opment experience has many valuable assets (see Figure 7). Primarily, coaching provides a one-to-one learning experience for a teacher that is responsive to individual needs and abilities. Designating peers as coaches has long-term benefits to both acknowledge and support the development of expertise among educators within a school or district gifted program.

All members of the educational community are responsible to be informed to some degree with respect to the professional development experiences provided by a school, district, etc., regarding gifted education. The issue is the nature and degree of the information each educator is expected to acquire and utilize. While there is no single role that governs these expectations, Table 2 represents some guidelines to define these expectations.

The responsibilities of a coordinator and a teacher of the gifted cannot be defined simply as the translation of learning from the professional development into practice. Each educator of the gifted is also responsible for utilizing the information within a spectrum of opportunities:

- Communicate appropriately to peers about the professional development opportunities.
- Be able to define and exemplify specific areas from the professional development that are “easily” misunderstood.
- Defend and or argue the importance or value of the professional development experience to educators and parents.

### Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Forms</th>
<th>Purposes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Courses: within or outside</td>
<td>Series of sessions to meet a specific goal over time or a goal supported by a set of sessions over time culminating in a formal type of credit or acknowledgement for attendance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the school district</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshop</td>
<td>Defined experience to achieve an objective usually providing some form of active involvement of the participants towards acquiring a specific competency or strategy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conference</td>
<td>A sponsored event consisting of many and varied topical sessions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent Study</td>
<td>A learning experience tailored to meet the specific educators needs and interests in alignment with programmatic requirements.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### In-Classroom Demonstrations

- 1. Purpose of demonstration & relationship to standard
- 2. Pattern for demonstration
- 3. Follow-up reflection
- 4. Coach-teacher demonstration
- 5. Assessment

**Figure 5.** In-classroom demonstrations.

#### Side-by-Side Training

- Purpose:
- Information/Competencies:
- Information/Competencies:

**Figure 6.** Side-by-side “training”.

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**Texas Association for the Gifted and Talented**

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Illustrate how the professional development experience supports the specific gifted program and the general areas of gifted education.

Connect the areas of gifted education to general education programs and professional development experiences.

Typically, evaluation of professional development experiences is inclusive of reactions to the presenter and mode of delivery used for the presentation. Measures of participants’ responses to the professional development often become the evidence used to determine the quality of the professional development event. Often, comments regarding how well the presenters executed the professional development as opposed to comments reporting how much the participants learned illustrate that more emphasis is placed on what occurred during rather than after the professional development experience. A more integrity-bound evaluation of the professional development experience should center on the impact of how what was presented within the presentation impacts what transpires outside of the presentation—in the participants’ classrooms. Within a reasonable time frame, the value of the experience should be related to the degree to which the participants’ classrooms exemplify the knowledge and competencies for which the professional development was designed. This type of assessment is the assurance that gifted education achieves the standards that govern the qualities essential to a gifted program.

**REFERENCE**


Sandra Kaplan, Ed.D., is associate clinical professor for learning and instruction at the University of Southern California. She has served as the lead consultant for the Carnegie Middle Schools Project, Texas Education Agency, from 1993 to present. Dr. Kaplan is a past president of the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC), of which she has been a member since 1982. She also is a past president of the California Association for the Gifted. One of the world’s foremost authorities in the field of gifted education, she has made presentations at the World Congress on Gifted and NAGC and TAGT conferences. Recent honors include the Award of Achievement from the California Association for the Gifted and the Distinguished Service Award from NAGC.
The new standards give gifted educators at every level a “toolbox” they can use to plan, implement, and refine the programs offered to highly able students.

Yet, these tools are only a set of guidelines for the general context, and therefore, must be translated and applied in the specific context of a given school district or school with its unique characteristics. Not only are there many individual circumstances in the school or school district that must be taken into account and affect how the standards get translated into practice, there are numerous other factors that intervene between the adoption of the guidelines and their implementation. Thus, there are many intervening variables that affect the quality of programming and curriculum for individual students in a particular school district—even when educators are doing their very best...
to apply the standards. Those factors range from the degree to which the standards are appropriately translated to meet the circumstances of a given school district to the degree to which the principles are actually implemented as intended.

The resources available in a school district, the demographics of the gifted population (race, socioeconomic status of the district, etc.), the philosophy of education in a school district, the existing curricular focus, and numerous other variables all will influence how standards are translated and applied. The degree to which teachers, administrators, and counselors have the necessary training and the commitment to serve gifted students (skill and will) further influence the impact that any curricular decisions have on the instruction that can be offered to students. Hence, educators and parents cannot be sure of the ways in which any program will impact students until they evaluate the process of implementation and the products of the translation of standards into practice. In this sense, the evaluation standards are the yardstick, the tape measure, and the scale in the toolbox. Evaluation standards provide the critical indicators of the quality and appropriateness of the implementation of the other standards in the particular school context and give us evidence of whether the desired outcomes/goals of the program/services for gifted students are achieved. Hence, program evaluation is a key component of high-quality gifted programming.

Recognition of the importance of applying evaluation standards is certainly not new to gifted education; however, it is rare for administrators to plan for or fund evaluations of gifted programs. Why? Many factors that stand in the way of undertaking program evaluation have been identified: fear of endangering gifted programming, lack of clear outcome statements, fear of program denigration, inexperience in program evaluation, and lack of funding for evaluation. All of these potential impediments can and should be overcome when program administrators engage in program planning with the goal of creating the best program possible. If educators are serious about providing quality programs and truly ensuring the other standards are having the desired impact, evaluation cannot be dismissed or put off until “we have the time.”

**OVERARCHING MESSAGES OF THE STANDARDS RELATING TO EVALUATION**

**Standard 2.5: Evaluation of Programming: Student Outcomes**

Students identified with gifts and talents demonstrate important learning progress as a result of programming and services.

**Standard 2.6: Evaluation of Programming: Student Outcomes**

Students identified with gifts and talents have increased access and they show significant learning progress as a result of improving components of gifted education programming.

Standards 2.5 and 2.6 enumerate the core set of guidelines for the evaluation of programming and both focus on student outcomes. Therefore, these standards direct attention in the evaluation process to the most important concern of gifted programs—ensuring that students identified as gifted and talented achieve at a level commensurate with expectations and develop cognitive, affective, and psychomotor skills reflective of instruction and other program activity. These overarching two standards also include the clear directive to evaluate all program components with the goals of improving services as well as ensuring effectiveness and efficiency of services delivered. Hence, the Standards are directed at both process and product outcomes and formative and summative evaluation. That is, the Standards provide direction for the collection of data to see if the program is implemented in ways that reflect excellence in practice—hopefuly, evidence-based practice (formative evaluation)—and to determine whether actions taken at each phase of program implementation result in the intended outcomes (summative evaluation). These outcomes may be end products of the identification process, the process intended to create quality curriculum, the establishment of an appropriate counseling program, etc., but these outcomes are moot if there is no evaluation of whether students are achieving outcomes related to goals for gifted students in the cognitive, affective, and/or psychomotor domains.

**WORKING TO ENSURE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EVALUATION STANDARDS**

Satisfactory application of the guidelines provided by the two standards stated above requires the development of a long-term plan for data collection, assignment of specific responsibilities to program staff, and the commitment of administrators to allocate the resources necessary. A long-term plan avoids the situation that too often occurs when evaluation is relegated to the “when we have time” category of administrative activities. Whether because of the daunting nature of creating a complete evaluation design, fear of the ramifications of discovering flaws in program or curriculum, or lack of funding, that time doesn’t ever seem to come. As a result, inadequate or non-existent program evaluation leaves a program vulnerable to questions about the program’s impacts, the prudent use of scarce school resources, and even without a clear rationale for why we have programs for the gifted at all. After all, if these programs cannot show demonstrable effects, what is the purpose of programming?
BEGINNING TO ADDRESS THE EVALUATION STANDARDS

Planning for evaluation is really best executed when it is considered part of the overall planning process. That is, every step of evaluation planning should be integrated with program planning, and every aspect of program planning should be integrated with evaluation planning. Clearly, this process cannot be so simple or nearly every program would have a clear, articulated, and regularly implemented evaluation. Because that is not the case, we need to think about what administrators can do to get in sync with program planning and/or revision to set the stage for quality evaluation.

Step 1: Identify Program Components and Desired Outcomes (Goals)

The most important part of a solid, defensible program planning process is the identification of the individual aspects of the complete program and the expectations we have for the successful implementation of the program. The Standards have provided a minimal listing of those components that should be considered in planning an evaluation and specifically reflect the importance of focusing on outcomes of each component.

- 2.6.2. The evaluation plan is purposeful and evaluates how student-level outcomes are influenced by one or more of the following components of gifted education programming:
  (a) identification,
  (b) curriculum,
  (c) instructional programming and services,
  (d) ongoing assessment of student learning,
  (e) counseling and guidance programs,
  (f) teacher qualifications and professional development,
  (g) parent/guardian and community involvement,
  (h) programming resources, and
  (i) programming design, management, and delivery.

Adequately addressing this standard requires the program staff to identify what should happen as the component is implemented (the process) and to designate what successful implementation would look like (the product). This is not evaluation, but rather, good program planning. Careful designation of the parameters of each component—accomplished by creating a simple chart that lists each component, the resources available to carry out the activities of the component, and expectations for success—is not only a guide to deciding if the program was successful, but also provides a good roadmap for program implementation.

In many cases the Standards have provided generic statements of outcomes, but to be useful in specific contexts, that is for a specific gifted program, specific outcomes must be specified that reflect observable/measureable outcomes or objectives. It is insufficient to create outcome statements that are open to such broad interpretations as to not guide program planning or direct program evaluation. So, the key questions to ask cluster around the big question, “What would it look like if the goal or objective were achieved?” For curriculum development, for example, what would the curriculum look like if it were adequately differentiated to meet the needs of gifted students? What criteria would we judge the content by? What processes would be included and at what level of complexity? What would be characteristics of the products required by the curriculum? If we clearly articulate teacher qualifications and professional development we should be able to specify the behaviors we expect to see. For example, do teachers prepare...
for students who did not receive the services? These questions need to be posed relative to affective outcomes as well as cognitive outcomes. Will students demonstrate greater motivation to pursue in-depth study in an area of interest? Further, the questions should be posed relative to guidance and counseling services. Do students develop career and college aspirations reflective of potential and interests? Expand their self-knowledge? Widen their consideration of college options?

It is obviously important to note that students who receive different services would be expected to achieve different outcomes. That is, students who were accelerated might be expected to achieve at higher levels on standardized assessments (out-of-level testing, of course); while students who participated in an enrichment program based on the Schoolwide Enrichment Model would be expected to produce products that reflect more sophisticated and advanced levels of data gathering and analysis in the discipline of their independent investigations.

Step 2: Establishing a Data Warehouse

One of the biggest barriers to carrying out the kinds of evaluations called for in the Standards is the absence of data relevant to answering the kinds of evaluation questions that are most important in answering key evaluation questions. For example, as noted above, the Standards call for significant student learning progress as a result of improving components of gifted education programming. Yet, few school districts have established the most basic data collection system that would prove useful in answering questions about the outcomes of services provided for gifted students. Not only have educators not carefully identified the outcomes and the valid measures of those outcomes, they seldom even establish records that track the services received by individual students over time.

A very first step in ensuring that the impacts of services for gifted students can be assessed would be to establish a system for keeping longitudinal records of identification and services received by individual students. Program administrators need to first establish a mechanism for systematically recording information that is longitudinal in nature across these variables:

- Date of identification
- Scores on identification measures
- Date of first service(s)
- Type of service delivery model(s): acceleration (skipped x grade, specific subject matter acceleration), pull-out program for x number of hours per year, special class, special school, etc.
- Student demographics (birthdate, sex, race, whether or not on free and reduced lunch, etc.)

Then, for each year a child is enrolled in any gifted program services, the nature of those services should be recorded. In addition, grades earned, any test scores or other assessment outcomes from school-wide or state-wide assessment measures, any data from special assessments, awards received, and any other services received should be noted.

Such data warehousing may seem a daunting task at the outset; however, if the gifted program works closely with school officials who already must record significant data points in order to report on AYP, the process of expanding the database becomes far less daunting. And, furthermore, it provides a clear and easily accessible source for analyzing data to meet Standard 2.5.3:

- 2.5.3. Educators assess the quantity, quality, and appropriateness of the programming and services provided for students with gifts and talents by disaggregating assessment data and yearly progress data and making the results public.

Step 3: Securing Funding for the Design and Implementation of a Full Evaluation

There is no question that many gifted program administrators do not have the skill, time, and/or confidence to evaluate their own programs. But a well-documented program description that will emerge from steps one and two can provide the ammunition they need to approach the school district administration with good arguments for seeking the assistance—financial or human resource support—they need in developing a sound evaluation design, for help in identifying and developing appropriate assessment tools, and for collecting and analyzing evaluation data that will achieve the goal of improving program services. For some programs, the resources may be tapped by collaboration with internal staff in the school division with expertise in evaluation; in other school divisions the resources may of necessity be external. In either case, the investment in evaluation of the gifted program is a major investment in ensuring defensible, quality programming.

REFERENCE


Carolyn M. Callahan, Ph.D., has been on the faculty at the University of Virginia since 1973 and currently holds the Chair of Commonwealth Professor of Education. Her academic appointment is in the area of gifted education. Dr. Callahan developed the Summer and Saturday Enrichment Programs at UVA as well as the master’s and doctoral programs in gifted education. She has been recognized as Outstanding Professor of the Commonwealth of Virginia and Distinguished Scholar of the National Association for Gifted Children and has served as President of The National Association for Gifted Children and the Association for the Gifted. She has published over 100 articles and more than 50 book chapters on the topics of evaluation of gifted programs, gifted females, curriculum, and the identification of gifted students.
The 2010 NAGC Pre-K–Grade 12 Programming Standards: A Blueprint for Quality Gifted Education Programs is a guide for educators at the classroom, school, and school district levels for planning and implementing best practice. A blueprint for a house provides the basic plan, but it takes a builder, carpenter, plumber, electrician, and lots of specialists to build that house. Likewise, it takes teachers in classrooms; special teachers of music, art, and physical education; gifted resource teachers; special education teachers; counselors; librarians; and principals working together to implement quality gifted education programming or services in a school. At the middle and high school levels, the business teachers, foreign language teachers, and other content teachers add to the pool of teachers who develop talent in their students.

Collaboration is essential in providing the most optimum learning environment for students. All educators have the opportunity to develop the talents of all children, and the phrase all children includes young people who are gifted and talented. Standard 5.2 highlights the importance of educators working together toward the goal of offering quality gifted education services: Standard 5.2 Coordinated Services: Students with gifts and talents demonstrate progress as a result of the shared commitment and coordinated services of gifted education, general education, special education, and related professional services, such as school counselors, school psychologist, and social workers.
For educators across a school or district to be working together to coordinate services for gifted children requires leadership in the school to coordinate the plan, initiate the implementation of the standards, and support the efforts of those responsible for implementing them.

In addition to collaboration, educators implementing a comprehensive gifted program must consider all of the standards. As the 2010 NAGC Pre-K–Grade 12 Gifted Programming Standards document is rolled out and the various education specialists at a school look at this blueprint for building a safe, solid, and satisfying learning environment for gifted children, attention must be paid to each of the standards—just as building contractors consider all aspects of a home while working with craftsmen who are specialists in their respective trades to ensure the construction of a safe, solid, and satisfying living environment. The following is an overview of how district and school personnel can use the Standards to guide them in the design and construction of meaningful educational experiences and opportunities.

**DEFENSIBLE DIFFERENTIATION**

Advanced learners benefit from experiences that allow them to make continuous progress in classrooms. Standard 3.1 Curriculum Planning states that students with gifts and talents demonstrate growth commensurate with aptitude during the school year. A classroom teacher who focuses on grade-level learning or proficiency will not be creating a classroom in which all children make a year’s academic growth for each year in school. In fact, it is possible that advanced learners make little or no growth in such a classroom. Gifted children can actually make greater gains than one year’s achievement growth if the teacher implements best practices for differentiating learning experiences to remove the learning ceiling.

Although the root of the word differentiation is different, providing different learning experiences for children in a class without any data to support instructional decisions is not defensible. Defensible differentiation focuses on learning experiences that are matched to the students based on their interests, learning preferences, and readiness to learn specific content. Standard 2.2 Identification specifies that each student reveals his or her exceptionalities or potential through assessment evidence so that appropriate instructional accommodations and modifications can be provided. The teacher must learn as much as possible about each student in order to ensure that all students are learning on an ongoing basis. It is the match between the learning experience and the student’s knowledge and skills in relationship to the topic or concept being studied that is the first priority in the planning for differentiation.

Defensible differentiation follows three questions (Roberts & Inman, 2009b).

- **The Planning Question**—What do I want students to know, understand, and be able to do?
- **The Preassessment Question**—Who already knows, understands, and/or can use the content or demonstrate the skill?
- **The Differentiation Question**—What can I do for him, her, or them so that they can make continuous progress and extend their learning? (p. 9)

Defensible differentiation is intentional. Teachers must expect to differentiate, so they plan from the beginning to do so. Consequently, they do not see differentiating as a burden, but rather as the normal way to visualize the class. Even in a class of advanced learners, there is the need to differentiate because all students will not be at the same place in all content areas nor will they have identical interests or preferred ways of learning. Consequently, differentiation is a “must” if each student in the class is to learn on an ongoing basis.

Certainly, if there is the need to differentiate in a class of advanced learners, there is the need to differentiate in a heterogeneous class. Often the range of reading abilities covers several grades, posing an impossible situation when the text is the major resource and it is too difficult for some students and too basic for others. Differentiation requires teachers to use a repertoire of strategies and multiple resources in order to ensure that all students learn what they need to learn and advance at a pace that is commensurate with their abilities.

**Preassessment**

One key component of defensible differentiation is preassessment. Standard 2.4 Learning Progress and Outcomes says that students with gifts and talents demonstrate advanced and complex learning as a result of using multiple, appropriate, and ongoing assessments. Contrary to the assumptions that some teachers make, preassessing students to determine what they already know and can do in relation to the planned unit or lesson actually saves time. Teachers may find that no one in the class knows much about the topic or concept; however, they may also discover one or several students who know quite a bit about the topic. Knowing what the students already know and are able to do can save valuable teaching/learning time by not requiring a student or students to spend time on basic information about the topic or concept they already know; instead they can study more complex content on the same topic or concept. When discussions of the topic or concept occur, all students contribute ideas, and no one is held back in terms of learning.

Preassessment provides the information to allow the teacher to match learning experiences to what the students know and are able to do in relation to the content, the abilities to
cognitively process the content, and the experience with the specific product each student will develop at the conclusion of the unit. Preassessment comes in many forms, and different forms of preassessment can be used, depending on the one the teacher deems most appropriate for the unit. They may be end-of-the-previous-unit tests if the learning from one unit to another is sequential. Another possibility is a five-minute writing on the concept. Yet, another is a T-W-H Chart (What do you think about the topic, What do you want to know about the topic, and How do you want to learn about the topic?; Roberts & Boggess, 2011). Preassessments also help teachers discern students’ interests and learning preferences.

Preassessment combined with formative assessment present an ongoing picture of what students are learning. Standard 2.4. Learning Progress and Outcomes details the importance of multiple, appropriate, and ongoing assessments. The results are worth the effort. A landmark review by Black and Williams (1998) found that focused efforts to improve formative assessment provided learning gains greater than one-half standard deviation, which would be equivalent to raising the score of an average student from the 50th percentile to the 85th percentile.

The important step after gathering preassessment data is to do something with the information and not just file it. The teacher must determine what the data tell about grouping the students for instruction as well as how the learning experiences can be differentiated to ensure that all students are challenged to learn new information about the topic or concept and to hone their skills in doing so.

**Meaningful and Challenging Learning Experiences Engage Learners**

Differentiation in the classroom can involve the content, process, and product.

**DIFFERENTIATION of CONTENT, PROCESS, and PRODUCT is ESSENTIAL if students are TO STAY ENGAGED in learning on an ongoing basis.**

- The content is what the teacher plans for the students to learn.
- The process is what the teacher wants the students to do cognitively.
- The product is how the teacher wants the students to demonstrate what they have learned.

**Standard 1.6 Cognitive and Affective Growth** states that students with gifts and talents benefit from meaningful and challenging learning activities addressing their unique characteristics. Differentiation of content, process, and product is essential if students are to stay engaged in learning on an ongoing basis. It is the combination of basic or complex content, lower and higher level processes, and a variety of authentic products that will allow young people to have meaningful and challenging learning experiences. Implementing differentiated learning experiences allows for the cognitive and affective growth.

Content is both basic and complex. Preassessment will inform the teachers as to which students are ready to proceed from the basic content to more complex learning about the same topic or concept. Complex content includes issues and problems related to the concept or topic being studied. When preassessment results tell the teacher that the student knows the basic information, then moving on to complex content about the concept or topic is in order. Teachers are never limited by lack of content as most topics taught in school have high-level content that can extend the learning.

Process includes many skills that allow students to think at high levels and communicate in myriad ways. Standard 4.5: Communication Competence states that students with gifts and talents develop competence in interpersonal and technical communication skills. They demonstrate advanced oral and written skills, balanced biliteracy or multiliteracy, and creative expression. They display fluency with technologies that support effective communication.

The buzz in education now is to develop 21st century learners. Among other skills, creative and critical thinking skills are included under the umbrella of 21st century skills. All children should be taught to think creatively and critically. These skills can be combined with content in all learning experiences. It is important to move beyond the right-answer questions—who, what, when, and where—just as soon as basic information is learned. Inquiry and problem-based learning are great ways to enhance the learning of young people who are comfortable and expert at thinking creatively and critically. “Rather than just talking to students about thinking, teachers must actively engage students in thinking in areas such as the writing process, scientific experimentation, reading comprehension and analysis, computation, and study skills” (Robinson, Shore, & Enersen, 2007, p. 106).

Products are an effective way to address Standard 3.3: Talent Development. Students with gifts and talents develop their abilities in their domain of talent and/or area of interest. Teachers are often more concerned with whether or not students have learned the content than with how students demonstrate what they have learned. It can be quite motivating to students to have a choice in the product they will develop to demonstrate their knowledge. Usually young people give their
best efforts when they work on products that allow them to use their talents and to explore their interests.

Teachers are more inclined to offer choice of products if they have rubrics ready to use. The DAP Tool (Developing and Assessing Product Tool; Roberts & Inman, 2009a) provides a protocol to use with all products. Consistent in form and vocabulary, four components are common across all DAP Tools: Content, Presentation, Creativity, and Reflection. Certain aspects of every product, whether that be a monologue or an experiment, are essential. Students must have an accurate level of understanding of the content that goes beyond a surface understanding (i.e., Content). They must also put something of their own personalities into the product itself and into the way they approached the content (i.e., Creativity). In addition, students should think about the impact the learning process has had on them (i.e., Reflection.) Only the Presentation component changes from product to product as the essentials of a podcast differ from the essentials of a model, poster, technical report, or DBQ (Document-based Question). Each DAP Tool has three versions or tiers ranging from less to more sophisticated so that teachers can differentiate the expectations for students who have different levels of experience with a specific product (e.g., some students have never produced a documentary while others have had successful experiences doing so).

Differentiated learning experiences need to be equally or nearly equally engaging. It does not work to give one student or a cluster of students a worksheet at the same time that others have something very engaging to do. All students need to have minds-on learning experiences. Only some of the time will the learning experiences be hands-on and minds-on. Never should they be solely hands-on. Minds-on learning experiences require students to think about what they learned, to reflect on what questions the learning experience prompted, and to determine what follow-up learning they would enjoy doing.

Multiple Resources

Also important to differentiation are the resources students use as they learn. Standard 3.6 Resources states that students with gifts and talents benefit from gifted education programming that provides a variety of high-quality resources and materials. Teachers can remove the learning ceiling through differentiation, and multiple resources that support differentiated learning opportunities are a must. Reading materials need to be available so that students who read at any level can access information about the topic being studied at an appropriately challenging reading level. Technological resources are both motivating for young people and useful in terms of developing skills needed to continue to access information that will support their inquiries and aid them in solving problems in the classroom.

Resources must also include human resources. As the teacher plans differentiated learning experiences, he needs to consider individuals who may bring expertise to the classroom. For example, a physician who specializes in infectious diseases would be a wonderful resource in a classroom in which students are engaged in a problem-based unit on infectious diseases. An architect would have experiences to share on the usefulness and importance of developing spatial skills or in demonstrating the importance of using models in a career. Teachers in differentiated classrooms will welcome parents and community members into the classroom for myriad purposes.

Policies and Procedures

Standard 5.6 Policies and Procedures states that students with gifts and talents participate in regular and special education programs that are guided by clear policies and procedures that provide for their advanced learning needs (e.g., early entrance, acceleration, credit in lieu of enrollment). Policies open up possibilities for accommodating the needs of advanced learners in various ways. Each policy should have the intent of ensuring that young people who are advanced learners make continuous progress. Such policies pave the way for implementing strategies that allow children to learn at levels at which they are ready to learn, even if they are ready before their age-mates are ready to do so. Policies put in place the expectation that a child may be taking a class before the age that it is traditionally taken (e.g., an AP class in the 8th or 9th grade) or moving up to read or learn mathematics with an older class of children. It is so important to remove barriers to learning, and policies are key to doing that on more than a one-time basis.

Continuous Progress

Students who are gifted and talented need to make continuous progress just as every other child. Without appropriate academic challenge, students develop incorrect ideas about being smart, often thinking that smart equates with easy. Quite the contrary, students who are highly capable need to link hard work with success. Standard 1.2 Self-Understanding states students with gifts and talents possess a developmentally appropriate understanding of how they learn and grow; they recognize the influences of their beliefs, traditions, and values on their learning behavior. Young people need to understand that working hard on academic tasks will build them as independent, capable learners. They need to realize that a strong work ethic is essential if they are going to do well in postsecondary opportunities and later in careers. Teachers need to understand that it hurts advanced
learners when they are not challenged to work hard on meaningful tasks.

**USING ALL SIX STANDARDS IN THE CLASSROOM**

It would be easy to assume that the standard or standards affecting the classroom would be one or two of the six standards, but such an assumption is incorrect. All six standards impact learning in the classroom, so they must be considered in combination. Just as it takes all educators working together to implement quality gifted education programs and services, all standards are addressed when programming is implemented at a level described as reaching that high level. Educators need to know the standards and work with colleagues to implement them at the highest levels. The NAGC Pre-K–Grade 12 Standards can help educators as they collaborate with other educators and parents. When everyone knows the guiding principles (the standards), it enhances the opportunities of implementing them. The standards provide the blueprint, and the educators implement the standards to provide quality gifted programs or services for young people in pre-kindergarten classes through their senior year.

**REFERENCES**


Julia Link Roberts, Ed.D., is the Mahurin Professor of Gifted Education at Western Kentucky University. She is the Executive Director of The Center for Gifted Studies and the Carol Martin Gatton Academy of Mathematics and Science in Kentucky. She is a member of the Executive Committee of the World Council for Gifted and Talented Children and of the board of directors for The Association for the Gifted (TAG) and the Kentucky Association for Gifted Education. She may be reached at The Center for Gifted Studies, Western Kentucky University, 1906 College Heights Boulevard #71031, Bowling Green, KY 42101-1031 or at julia.roberts@wku.edu.

Their gifts will change our world someday.
Your gift can change their world today.

Since 1982, TAGT has touched the lives of thousands of gifted and talented students with nearly a million dollars in TAGT Scholarships, enabling K-12 students to attend summer enrichment programs and assisting graduating seniors with college tuition.

If you value this program, show your support using the form on page 19 or visiting txgifted.org/donate.

Your gift is tax deductible.
What’s Up With My Family?
Middle School Confidential™ Series
©2010
Annie Fox, M.Ed.
Free Spirit Publishing, Inc., Minneapolis, MN
$9.95

This is the latest book in the Middle School Confidential™ Series—a family relationships book for every middle schooler who ever asked, “What’s up with my family?” Previous titles in the series include Be Confident in Who You Are, and Real Friends vs. the Other Kind.

Middle school educators and parents need this book in their libraries. It features insider information on a wide range of family matters, including sibling rivalry, divorce, and other difficult transitions. Readers will find helpful tips for building trust with adults at home and making relationships stronger.

As the characters in this book realize, life in a family isn’t always perfect. Fortunately, this book is here to help! This third book in the series follows six characters as they deal with tween and teen issues that can come up in any home. It is part graphic novel and part nonfiction advice. Gifted kids will love to read it and will pick it up again and again.

Students will find expert advice on how to deal with strong moods and tips for making good decisions in heated situations. Particularly helpful will be the “Advice for tough times” and “Suggestions for being responsible and earning more independence” sections. This short book is filled with character narratives, quick quizzes, quotes from real students, and resources.

Every middle school teacher of the gifted should have copies of this book on the library shelves in their classrooms!

For more information, contact Free Spirit Publishing at 800-735-7323 or www.freespirit.com.

Reviewed by Karen M. Fitzgerald,
TAGT Past President
At a time when our country needs to foster all the math and science talent it can muster, this 2nd edition of the Assouline and Lupkowski-Shoplik book appears full of advice on building student success in math for advanced learners in grades K–8. The authors are nationally recognized math education experts who know how to take a focused look at educating our most able math learners.

If you are looking for the perfect book for elementary and middle school math teachers who want to challenge gifted learners in their math classrooms, this is the guide. The authors provide concrete suggestions for identifying mathematically talented students. They follow with offering the tools for instruction planning and finish with specific programming approaches.

Featured topics include: strategies for identifying mathematically gifted learners, strategies for advocating for gifted children with math talent, how to design a systematic math education program for gifted students, teaching strategies and approaches that encourage and challenge gifted learners, and specific curricula and materials that support success.

Teachers who want to build student success in the gifted and talented math classroom will welcome this comprehensive guide for developing math talent. This book is more than just a guidebook, though. It offers a comprehensive, in-depth approach to mathematics education for gifted students.

The nine chapters include helpful information on parent advocacy and talent searches. The final chapter concludes with case studies from the thousands of students the authors have worked with over the past several decades. You won’t want to miss their recommendations for organizing and teaching an outstanding advanced math program for gifted students.

This book was copublished with the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC).

For more information, contact Prufrock Press, Inc. at 1-800-998-2208 or www.prufrock.com.
Bright, Talented, and Black:
A Guide for Families of African American Gifted Learners

©2011
Joy L. Davis, Ed.D.
Great Potential Press, Scottsdale, AZ
$24.95

Children who are gifted and talented and African American, are identified as double minorities. The issues they face can be very different from those faced by most other gifted children.

This new book provides excellent insights and guidelines for the parents of Black gifted children. It also offers suggestions on the education of gifted African American children who attend our schools and bring different challenges to the classroom than other gifted students might bring.

Underachievement is one of the challenges frequently experienced by gifted and talented Black children. Add that underachievement to the low expectations of their abilities, and parents and teachers can use a resource guide to learn more about empowering these children in school.

This helpful book was designed to assist both African American parents and the educators who teach these bright, talented children. Because Black children often must also deal with issues of discrimination and stereotyping, the challenges they face can be overwhelming.

Dr. Joy Davis offers practical advice based on her personal experiences as a parent of gifted children and a gifted education professional. She is an Assistant Professor at the University of Louisiana, Lafayette, where she teaches courses in Diversity Education and Gifted Education.

In addition to the practical advice throughout the book, in the back of the book you will find useful resources for minority gifted children, as well as reading lists to help empower these children and their parents. Educators who teach minority children and parents of African American children will find assistance in this book for providing support and understanding for this population of bright students.

For more information, contact Great Potential Press, Inc. at 888-946-2314 or www.giftedbooks.com.

101 Success Secrets for Gifted Kids

©2011
Christine Fonseca
Prufrock Press, Inc., Waco, Texas
$14.95

This outstanding new book for gifted children was written by a school psychologist who understands the social and emotional needs of gifted and talented children. Fonseca writes for gifted children ages 8 through 12 who want to find success in school and life. Her expertise as a resource to parents and educators is offered through educational training sessions in the Southern California area. Her previous book, released in 2010, was titled Emotional Intensity in Gifted Students.

Kids will love the way this book is chock full of fun suggestions and practical strategies on many topics. Some of the most popular topics include bullying, perfectionism, friendships, sibling rivalries, and school performance. Fonseca has included a potpourri of activities for gifted kids: fun quizzes, tip sheets, practical suggestion from other gifted kids and preteens, and insight into everything they've ever wanted to know about being gifted.

Gifted kids will especially enjoy the proven strategies for dealing with stress management, anxiety, friendship troubles, parents' and teachers' expectations, and cyber-bullying. This book is a must-have guide for every gifted kid!

The book is divided into four parts: And So It Begins, The World of School, The World of Friends, and The Whole of Family. It presents information in ways that kids will welcome and understand. Some familiar popular sections include, “Why Are You Yelling at Me?,” “What is ‘Normal’ Anyways?,” and “Why Homework Takes So Long.”

Each of the twelve chapters end with a What Do You Think? section where gifted students can take their turn at discussing topics, feelings, and emotions. Parents won't want to miss the Recommended Resources guide at the back of the book. This is a book that can be picked up over and over again. It isn't a destination book, but a delightful journey along the path to discovering more about what it means to be gifted. Parents and teachers alike will want a copy of this must-read book to share with their children!

For more information, contact Prufrock Press, Inc. at 1-800-998-2208 or www.prufrock.com.
are not suffering from the "Jesse James syndrome?"

By focusing on the new State and National Standards and collecting data based on student outcomes, we will be able to responsibly evaluate the services we are offering gifted students and collect data that provide valuable rationale in support of the need for quality gifted programming. Then, those responsible for making funding decisions (State legislators, school boards, district administrators) will be able to—practicing due diligence and with confidence—support appropriate services for gifted kids. It is really a matter of accountability . . . and doing the right thing, isn’t it? Don’t all kids deserve the opportunity to acquire new knowledge and be challenged?

Please note:
The State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students may be accessed in both English and Spanish at http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index3.aspx?id=3822
The 2010 NAGC Pre-K–Grade 12 Gifted Programming Standards may be accessed at http://www.nagc.org/index.aspx?id=546

Using Standards to Design Identification Procedures, from page 15

Evaluating the gifted and talented (pp. 135–153). New York, NY: Merrill Education/Prentice Hall.

Susan K. Johnsen, Ph.D., is professor in the Department of Educational Psychology at Baylor University where she directs the Ph.D. program and programs related to gifted and talented education. She is the author of over 200 publications including Identifying Gifted Students: A Practical Guide, books related to implementing the national teacher preparation standards in gifted education, and tests used in identifying gifted students. She serves on the Board of Examiners of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, is a reviewer and auditor of programs in gifted education, and is chair of the Knowledge and Skills Subcommittee of the Council for Exceptional Children. She is past president of The Association for the Gifted (TAG) and past president of the Texas Association for Gifted and Talented (TAGT). She may be reached at Department of Educational Psychology, Baylor University, One Bear Place 97301, Waco, TX 76798; susan_johnsen@baylor.edu.
Call For Manuscripts

Here is your chance to have your voice heard! If you would like to be considered for publication in an upcoming issue of TEMPO, please follow the guidelines for article submissions below. We are currently soliciting manuscripts for the following issues. For deadlines and more details regarding upcoming issues, please contact TEMPO editor Krystal Goree at Krystal_Goree@baylor.edu.

Increasing Ethnic Diversity in Gifted Programs
Due September 1, 2011

Application of RtI to Serve Gifted Populations
Due December 1, 2011

Perspectives on Gifted Education
Due March 1, 2012

Conference Issue (Topic TBA)
Due June 1, 2012

Affective Needs of Gifted Students
Due September 1, 2012

Guidelines for Article Submissions

Tempo, a quarterly publication, welcomes manuscripts from educators, parents, and other advocates of gifted education. Manuscripts may focus on all areas of gifted/talented education including policies, applications of research, programs, and practices. Tempo is a juried publication and manuscripts are evaluated by members of the editorial board and/or other reviewers.

Please keep in mind the following when submitting manuscripts:
1. Manuscripts should be 2,000 to 10,000 words on a topic related to gifted education.
3. Submit an electronic copy, typed, 12 pt. font, double-spaced manuscript. Use a 1 1/2” margin on all sides and number pages.
4. In addition to the title page, a cover page must be attached that includes the author’s name, title, school or program affiliation, home and work address, e-mail address, phone numbers, and fax number.
5. Place tables, figures, illustrations, and photographs on separate pages. Each should have a title and be referenced in the text.
6. Submit electronically with manuscript.
7. Author(s) is fully responsible for accuracy of quotations, citations, figures, and facts.
8. Author(s) of accepted manuscripts must transfer copyright to Tempo, which holds copyright to all articles and reviews.
9. Upon acceptance of a manuscript, the author(s) submits a 50–100 word biography and a 100–150 word abstract of the manuscript.

Please send manuscripts and inquiries to:
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Pearson’s assessments help you identify students for gifted and talented placement from multiple perspectives. Regardless of a student’s language or cultural background, we can help you identify their strengths so you can match them to appropriate gifted program options.

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