

IDENTIFYING AND COUNSELING THE SUPERIOR  
STUDENT IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOL

by

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## INTRODUCTION

America has always been a land of opportunity for people with all sorts of ability. For the work of creating a new civilization, this country has always found men and women of extraordinary talent as well as those of ordinary ability.

America has brought a relatively large proportion of potential talent to realization, through economic and educational opportunity. Yet it is known that many gifted young people have not developed their talents--in this respect society has been wasteful, as have all other societies in the past. But this country has probably been less wasteful than other countries.

At present there is great popular interest in what has been called "wastage" of talent. Probably a more accurate term would be "shortage of trained talent," since there is actually less "wastage" than in earlier years, but a much greater demand for trained talent.

The great popular interest is partly the result of a demand for greater numbers of people with highly developed economic skills to meet the needs of economic expansion superposed on the increasing complexity of modern society. It is also partly an attitude on the part of the public as public opinion responds to the shortages of trained manpower in mainly scientific and technical occupations.

It has been demonstrated that there are enough young people with high learning ability to fill all the manpower shortages, provided these young people were discovered and given the neces-

sary training. Therefore, questions have been raised about the quality of the educational system which permits these shortages to exist. Why does the system not produce more highly literate and professionally trained people to meet the demand for engineers, research scientists, and school and college teachers?

Although one could answer with truth that the American educational system today does produce a higher proportion and also a greater absolute number of such people than it has ever done before, yet many educators are loath to make this kind of answer because they feel that American education does not do as good a job with gifted children as it might and should do.

It is time to restore perspective to the views on help for the gifted. Educational practice is a set of slow pendulums. Just now the gifted student is in fashion--and in a little danger, too. School systems all over the country, sensitive to a fierce pressure from society for technicians and experts of every kind, are rushing headlong into programs to produce highly efficient, useful, skilled, dependable, ready-made cogs for a scientific economy. The uncertainty about exactly how to develop talent is only one part of the greatest unsolved problem in American education--the problem of how to help every child realize his maximum potential; the problem of individual differences.

Important functions of the counselor are to make each child aware of his abilities, to evaluate his interests, and to provide the kinds of stimulation that will increase motivation to achieve. People will get the greatest satisfaction in life if they develop and make use of such special abilities as they have.

### Purpose of Study

The purpose of this report is to point out the need, planning and organization, procedure, and methods, through improved and more systematic guidance services, of identifying and counseling superior students, to help them to develop to their maximum capacity, and to help them in the selection of their life's work. Under the tenets of our philosophy of human rights and equality, we hold it to be the birthright of every man to have as rich and appropriate opportunity for self-realization, for acquiring self-knowledge and self-discipline, as his capacities and aspirations allow him.

### Method of Study

The first section of this study was made by reviewing books and current periodical literature dealing with the subject, by interviewing other high school guidance counselors, and by drawing upon the personal experience of the writer while serving as a high school instructor and director of a guidance services program.

The second section is a report of actual cases, with information that was compiled for counseling purposes and for special services to the school, one of which was the identification of superior students. This information was gathered from permanent records, test scores, counseling interviews, vocational questionnaires, vocational preference tests, informal visits with the parents, and observation.

## Past Conception

In the past there has been quite a misconception about the superior student. Quite often we have thought of the superior or gifted child as a genius who is unhealthy, puny, all brain and no muscle, weak-sighted, wearing thick glasses, and a so-called sissy in every sense of the word. This was the cartoonist's conception of the mental prodigy. Anyone who might attempt to use this description as a measure in finding a superior student is due for a rude awakening. Nor is it true that mentally gifted children are stronger, larger, and healthier than those of average mental powers. They are more inclined to be but it is not always the case. In other words the gifted child compares favorably with his brothers, sisters, cousins and associates in health, physical development, character and other desirable traits. All of this makes it very difficult to define or identify a superior student by any standardized set of rules.

In his book Psychology of Exceptional Children and Youth Cruickshank (2) indicated that superior students are usually defined by school people in terms which reflect the latter's background and experiences as well as their philosophy of education and life. To many teachers and school administrators, bright children are those who are conspicuous because they do the best classwork, conform to rigid classroom standards, participate eagerly in class discussions and complete assignments promptly--other teachers recognize high level ability in pupils who demonstrate depth of thought--this may all well be a part of the picture but



it may not present the complete story that we need in identification.

Witty (8), p. 62, in his discussion of the student with the high mental ability says, "Any student is gifted whose performance in a potentially valuable line of human activity is consistently remarkable." He possesses qualities of initiative, aspiration, and self-motivation. The characteristics and needs of children with high mental ability are different from those of children talented in arts, mechanics or leadership. This brings us to another point of misconception and that is the possibility of confusing talent with superior ability. A child may be both intellectually gifted and talented, gifted but not talented, or talented and not gifted.

#### Present Definition

If gifted students are to be identified and helped to develop their potentialities, it is necessary to understand the nature of giftedness--what it is, how it originates, how it develops. One also needs to know how widely it is distributed, by what general characteristics it may be recognized, and what variations may be expected among gifted individuals.

Giftedness is one feature of the total development of the child. It is related to all the other aspects of his growth. Although the gifted child is different from the average child in certain ways at every stage of his development, at no age is he completely different. As one wise mother said, "I know my child is gifted, but he is, first of all, a child."

Giftedness is many-sided, many-patterned. Among the intel-

lectually gifted are found persons talented in many different fields. Different patterns of personality have been noted among children with different kinds of talent--scientific, artistic, musical, leadership ability. Giftedness may take many forms, depending upon the particular circumstance.

Gifted children are far from being a homogeneous group; there are wide individual differences among children designated as gifted. Giftedness exists in different degrees; it may be described as a continuum ranging from a small talent to the highest level of genius.

Giftedness is progressive from birth to maturity. It is continually elaborating itself as the child responds to his environment. On the other hand it may be blighted by extreme deprivation of love, by a lack of intellectual stimulation, or by limited opportunities for social relationships. Under favorable conditions, truly gifted children may be expected to maintain their initially high level of spontaneity, originality, creativeness, and achievement.

So, in order to simplify the conception and to have a definition that is more easily understood, it is more practical following broad and general classifications.

The term superior refers to children who are markedly above average in intelligence and have the potential ability to complete college and as adults to assume substantial positions in their communities.

The term gifted is applied to the top fraction of the superior group who have good intelligence and show potential promise of



making contributions of a high order to their generations.

The superior would have an I.Q. of 120 to 125 and above-- that is the top 5 to 10 per cent of unselected high school students.

The gifted would have an I.Q. of 135 to 140. Approximately one fifth to one tenth of the superior group would be within this classification.

The extremely gifted would have an I.Q. of 170 to 180 or over. They represent the top one tenth to one hundredth of the gifted group--or the top one in 10,000 to 100,000.

In school work, superior students are considered to be delightful people to work with. They talk freely about interests, activities and aspirations. They analyze adults and are quick to recognize insincerity. Bright children are, first of all, children. They need love, security, companionship, acceptance, motivation, challenge, opportunity for self-expression, guidance, appreciation and other fundamental support. As they move out into the larger, less congenial world, adjustment of children with high mental ability may become difficult--activities of their associates may take place at different tempo. School work is usually geared to students of average or just above average ability and does not make provision for his unique personal qualities. This may cause a little deviation from the expected norms and this makes it necessary to be on the alert and not so prone to downgrade because of all types of deviant behavior.

Society has a stake in exceptional ability--an ever-increasing need for able leadership--from today's students with high mental ability will have to come tomorrow's able leaders.

## CHARACTERISTICS

As was mentioned earlier, it is necessary to have all the information possible in order to make a more accurate evaluation. It is desirable to have subjective as well as objective measurements. The first concern should be with the observable characteristics of students with high mental abilities. Intellectually capable students present the same variety of characteristics, mental as well as social, emotional, and physical--as any group of students. Many are friendly, some are shy and retiring, most are happy and secure, a few are anxious or depressed, a majority are normal or better than normal physically. Not all superior students are easily identified. Parents, accustomed to the child's level of performance, often fail to recognize symptoms of high intelligence. Teachers, even though versed in nature and significance of individual differences, are not always able to understand individual students. Even expert judgement needs to be supplemented by objective evidence.

### Positive Characteristics

As a group, superior or gifted students tend to be strong and healthy, well-adjusted, friendly, understanding and alert. In a congenial setting they are likely to have a great many positive characteristics. The following list of these positive characteristics is the result of a survey of articles written by authorities on the subject.

1. Be curious as indicated by the kind, depth, scope and frequency of their questions.

2. Show interest in words and ideas, demonstrated by their use of dictionaries and encyclopedias.
3. Have rich vocabularies--originality and expression.
4. Enjoy reading, usually on mature level.
5. Read rapidly and retain information.
6. Seek older companions and enjoy adults.
7. Good sense of humor and be cheerful.
8. Have a strong desire to excell.
9. Be quick to comprehend.
10. Follow directions easily and carefully.
11. Be able to generalize and see relationships.
12. Be interested in man.
13. Show initiative and imagination.
14. Have good memory.
15. Quite often he is an early starter. (Walking, talking, reading)
16. He seems to remember everything he hears.
17. In a great many instances he is younger than his fellow students.
18. He doesn't care much for rough group games like football. Prefers tennis and swimming.
19. He is different, so he is likely to have school and social problems.
20. His intense interests tend to drive him in upon himself.
21. High moral character traits.

Witty (8), p. 48-49, found that evidence of superiority may be readily observed in most gifted children when they are very young.

Some of the characteristics of such children follow:

1. The early use of a large vocabulary, accurately employed.
2. Language proficiency--the use of phrases and entire sentences at a very early age, and the ability to tell or reproduce a story.
3. Keen observation and retention of information about things observed.
4. Interest in or liking for books--later enjoyment of atlases, dictionaries, and encyclopedia.
5. Early interest in calendars and in clocks.
6. The ability to attend or concentrate for a longer period than is typical of most children.
7. Demonstrations of proficiency in drawing, music, and other art forms.
8. Early discovery of cause-and-effect relationships.
9. The early development of ability to read.
10. The development of varied interests.
11. He is able to recognize underlying principles more quickly.
12. The gifted student is likely to have an unusual interest in numbers.

Parents must be cautious not to overestimate or to underestimate a child's ability. And they must not exploit him but simply accept his gifts gladly and provide him with the recognition and encouragement that his abilities merit.

If the above characteristics were standardized and represented every superior or gifted student the procedure of selection would be comparatively simple but this is not the case.

## Negative Characteristics

Sometimes the presence of negative or undesirable characteristics make it difficult to recognize students of high ability. Some superior students may have the following negative characteristics.

1. Restless, inattentive, disturbing, annoying to those around because of unmet needs.
2. Poor in spelling, careless in handwriting or inaccurate in arithmetic because they are impatient in details.
3. Lackadaisical in completing routine assignments because the class work may be uninteresting.
4. Outspokenly critical of themselves and others. This attitude will alienate adults as well as children.
5. They are quite often the leader of disorderly discussion in the classroom.
6. If they trap the teacher, there may be indolence.

By evaluating the possible positive characteristics and the possible negative characteristics it is not easy to select the superior student by observation or the subjective method. As previously stated it must be a cumulative process and, therefore, we need objective information to be used in the evaluation. One then turns to the consideration of academic grades and standardized tests in the process of identifying the superior student. It is necessary, however, to keep in mind that standardized test scores are variable and classroom grades may be affected by the growing pressures for conformity in American life.

## IDENTIFICATION

Identification consists of two processes: screening and selection. Screening is the process whereby all the children in a group are tested or observed under as standardized conditions as possible and ranked from the highest to the lowest in ability according to their tests or observed performance. Selection is the process of determining which of the children observed should be included in the specialized program.

The purpose of identifying gifted children is not to stamp them with a blue seal marked "Premium Gifted Child." Identification is not an end in itself. Rather, it is the means to the goal of getting each child into the educational program most suited to develop his capacities and his "whole person."

### Methods of Identification

Two general approaches to identification are possible. The first of these is through the use of standardized tests, and the second is through the use of observation. Some abilities are better measured by objective tests, others by observation, and still others by a combined approach. For the purpose of this study the writer used every available source of information which included personal observation, classroom grades, standardized testing, vocational and personal questionnaires, autobiographies, interviews with student and parents, participation records, interest inventories, and teachers' observations. The extent of the use of



each varied with each individual case. The writer believes that each individual is unique in development and in response to his environment.

### Academic

First, one needs to analyze the proposition of the classroom grade and why it is not advisable to use it alone as a measure for superior intelligence.

1. After his graduation, the student is going to use his ability to compete with people from all parts of the country, from all social levels, and with varying degrees of maturity. The classroom grade compares him to the members of that particular class. The classroom is not standardized.

2. The classroom grade is only one person's impression of the student. Down the hall or in the next town the grade may be higher or lower.

3. If the student has an A, the stranger does not know what may be included. There is no way of telling how much more he could have done. Only the student and the teacher know what the grade means. Sometimes only the teacher knows.

It is not the intention of the writer to devalue the classroom grade as a means of measuring the student's achievements. They give us a good measure of initiative, study habits, integrity, neatness, promptness, and ability to carry out instructions. In fact, only achievements have been measured in this particular subject. It is necessary to know about other abilities, aptitudes,

interests, disabilities, and plans for the future. This information may be supplied by a program of standardized testing with definite objectives in view. It is very important that all test scores be interpreted for each individual case. Any test must be given with a specific purpose in mind.

### Standardized Tests

Many kinds of tests are available for use in identifying gifted students. Some of these will be described in brief.

General Intelligence Tests. These are, perhaps, more accurately described as tests of academic aptitude since they are primarily tests of verbal and reasoning ability. These tests usually yield an over-all intelligence quotient.

Differential Aptitude Tests. These tests are designed not only to measure the general intellectual level of the individual tested but also to differentiate the various mental factors which are believed to account for intellectual ability.

The advantage of differential aptitude tests over general intelligence tests is that the former give some indication of the pattern of mental abilities, whereas the latter do not. It is recommended that differential aptitude tests be used in preference to general intelligence tests, particularly after the primary-grade level when the primary mental abilities become well enough differentiated to be reliably measured.

Individual Intelligence Tests. The individual test gives a more reliable measure of intelligence than a group test does and,

hence, increases confidence in the accuracy of the selection. These tests are often used in order to get some estimation of the intellectual ceiling of the individual.

Tests of Specialized Aptitudes. There are many tests of specialized abilities which may be of interest to those who wish to establish an identification program. Some of the more important ones are tests of clerical ability, mechanical aptitude, and various tests of motor aptitudes. These can be used to gain a more complete understanding of an individual student or to identify students for certain very specialized courses.

Identifying Scientific Ability. Because of the current emphasis being placed on science, it is desirable to find a way to identify potential scientists. It appears that, for persons manifesting a persistent interest in science problems, no special test is necessary but, rather, that high aptitude in verbal and mathematical abilities, together with adequate muscular and eye function, provide as good a set of indicators of potential scientific ability as any single test.

Interest Inventories. A wide variety of interest inventories are available. Some inquire directly into the student's interest, others are more indirect, using incomplete sentences which the student needs to complete. Still other interest tests ask the student to list his activities, assuming that if the student's activities are known the interests lying back of them can be inferred. A counselor who knows his students intimately usually is well aware of their interests.

Personality Tests. Personality factors are often taken into

account in identifying gifted students. These tests are also useful in that they yield supplementary data to be used diagnostically, in counseling and guidance, or in planning the educational program for the student.

Personality tests range from the check-list variety to the projective type. The latter should be used by a trained psychologist.

Achievement Tests. Achievement tests are well known to teachers, since they are probably the most commonly used of any kind of test. They usually test the areas of academic learning such as reading, spelling, arithmetic, language, and science. From the point of view of the education of gifted students, their most important use is to discover academic abilities of high order.

There are many kinds of tests with many purposes and uses. It is the intention of the writer to focus on the kinds of tests which have proven most practical and effective in identification of academic talent for the purpose of this study. Such tests, whether labeled "intelligence," "aptitude" or "ability," consist usually of two chief components generally called "verbal" or "linguistic," on the one hand, and "quantitative" or "mathematical," on the other. These two components do not measure all of the dimensions of academic talent, but what they do measure seems clearly and consistently related to academic achievement.

The verbal element is likely to involve word meaning, reading comprehension, analogy and sentence completion. The quantitative element most frequently involves numerical computations and problems.

Now, what do such verbal and mathematical tests actually measure? Do they, dependent as they are on learning and environmental influence, pretend to measure pure brightness or innate intelligence? The answer is definitely negative. To avoid any such implication, it is better to speak of testing "developed ability." For at any point when a student is tested, he must be dealt with as he is--a product of certain interactions between his heredity and his environment. And, as a matter of fact, it has so far proven impossible to isolate and measure separately these hereditary and environmental influences.

However, it is the present verbal and mathematical abilities of an individual--regardless of the different influences which may have accounted for them--which offer the best prediction of his future academic achievement. Tests of developed ability actually gain in predictive effectiveness by tapping some basic verbal and mathematical learnings of the sort that all of our schools emphasize for all of their students.

One may well raise the question, why use a test at all? Why not depend entirely on previous school performance for prediction? The quick answer is that test scores and school marks together predict more accurately than either one separately and each one sheds a somewhat different light. In general, there may be greater expectancy of future academic success for those pupils who rank high on both predictors; the expectancy of success is somewhat lower for those who rank high on one predictor but not on the other; and least, for those who rank low on both.

There are some other advantages of test scores. They furnish

a standardized, comparable set of observations of students who may have had different teachers and come from different schools with different marking systems. They are unaffected by any disciplinary element such as may affect course grades. However, it is not necessary to pit one predictor against the other. For purposes of identification and prediction, both marks and test scores--as well as such other data as may be accessible and relevant--can make significant contributions.

### COUNSELING THE SUPERIOR STUDENT

Counseling is a complicated and delicate process. It could hardly be otherwise. The foundation of counseling lies in the fact that there are personal choices to be made; thus, the whole person is at once involved. The counselor cannot lay down rules and arrive at prompt or authoritative decisions. He is at best a wise friend who helps in the analysis of personal situations. He has at his command facts obtained in interviews which might otherwise not be available, answers to questions the student might not think of asking for himself, scores on tests particularly selected for him that he might not otherwise have had the chance to take, an assembly of marks and observations which no one else would have brought together or had the time to study. These are the counselor's advantages; and to these he should add a more comprehensive view than others can easily attain of the entire educational scene, its vocational outcomes and possibilities, and the social and domestic circumstances of each case.



Counseling of the gifted does not differ in nature from counseling of other students, but it does vary in its demands on the counselor. Interviews will be concerned primarily with the personal strengths and limitations of the superior student and about his current and future opportunities. Its aims will be in terms of achieving more immediate goals of education although the ultimate goals will always be kept in mind. The counselor will not at any time minimize the importance of group work, the subject matter taught in any field of study, or the goals of social welfare that are commonly sought, but his approach to the individual superior student will be a more personal, more specific, and more immediately practical one.

Counseling of the superior student varies from the usual primarily in these respects:

1. Educational and occupational opportunities for the superior are usually greater than for others.
2. Superior students become ready for self-appraisal and self-conceptualization at higher levels and at earlier ages.
3. Superior students may be subject to unusual pressures by parents, teachers, peers, and others.

Theoretically the educational and vocational potentialities of the gifted are greater since they can achieve at higher levels than their peers and consequently have a greater range of choices. Nevertheless, in actual practice, the range is less because the superior do not choose lower-level occupations. They get more advanced training and actually choose vocations from a narrow range at top occupational levels.

It is within the higher ranges of education and careers that the multipotentiality of the superior student creates problems in the making of decisions. The gifted is not usually intellectually onesided, and he is often faced with the problem of choosing among many training opportunities and careers, each of which he may be capable of doing well. A case of this particular type will be found in "Case Studies" which is the final section of this report. There seemed to be no one clear-cut choice of a field to study or a stand-out career for which he should prepare. In this case the tasks of the counselor were those of: (a) keeping all roads open until full consideration had been given to as many possibilities as could be examined by the time that deadlines for application to places of training must be met; (b) assisting him in the weighing of appeals of recruiters for colleges and careers; (c) emphasizing the social as well as personal implications of his choice; (d) considering the advantages and disadvantages of a choice of a career that required immediate specialization at the college freshman level versus the choice of a period of liberal arts during which exploration could be continued.

In a counseling situation which involves a superior student, the professional training of the counselor is of utmost importance. It is quite essential that counselors are not biased in favor of certain fields of study. It is difficult for specialists in subject fields to keep from promoting their own specialty. Not knowing enough about the advantages and opportunities of fields other than their own, they tend to recruit, sometimes unwittingly, for what seems best to them. Gifted youth are sometimes literally

torn apart by several teachers, two parents, their religious advisors, and sundry others who cannot see beyond their own specialities and concerns. This type of case underlines the importance of having information from many sources to present to the superior student for his use in self-evaluation and for use in the confidential interview.

Much can be said about the counseling interview, especially when it concerns our greatest resource and the leaders of tomorrow, our gifted students, but it is not the intention of the writer to make a detailed report on counseling techniques. Each individual is unique and presents a different set of problems. There can be no standardized procedure. With the country's greatest national resource at stake, there is great need for longitudinal research and deep philosophizing about the kind of counseling that should be given them.

## CASE STUDIES

The following studies are actual case reports with information taken from the files and cumulative records which were compiled by the writer while performing his duties as director of a high school guidance services program.

In order to protect the identity of the student and the confidential counseling relationship, all names are fictitious. In order to protect still further the confidential relationship, the name of the school is omitted from all reports.

It is the intention of the writer to present a wide variety

of cases, with interrelated socio-economic and educational problems ranging from simple to complex, illustrating the different approaches which may be necessary for proper counseling. There has been no attempt to force the specific case into the same style or degree of completeness. There is no systematic pattern to be followed in individual counseling, therefore, there is no standardized pattern for the comments. Each case is as unique as the individual and should receive special consideration.

The case reports in this study do not include all the students in the school who may be classed as superior, nor does it make any attempt to show that guidance has been terminated or that counseling is no longer needed. Even the graduates, especially college freshmen, quite often return to their high school counselor for help.

Since test results are given to students only in the interview, the ninth graders have not had an opportunity for personal interviews at the time of this report, therefore, all necessary information is not available.

In order to protect the confidence in the use of personal information that could be used for identification of the student, it was necessary to omit pertinent facts in some of the case reports.

Grades and test results are given with an indication of the grade in which they were secured. The Differential Aptitude Test scores are given in detail, while for other tests as much information is given as seems relevant to the reporting.

## Case A---Mary Smith

A Graduate. Academic standing in high school indicated by final semester grades:

A---35,      B---4,      C---0,      D---0,      F---0

She ranked first in a class of 75 students.

## Standardized Tests---Grade 11

Otis I.Q.---132

Differential Aptitude Tests---Percentile ranks:

Verbal---97	Mechanical---95
Numerical---99	Clerical---97
Abstract---97	Spelling---99
Space Relations---85	Sentences---97

Kuder Vocational Preference Record---Percentile ranks:

Computational---97,    Scientific---92,    Literary---79.

## Standardized Tests---Grade 12

Essential High School Content Battery---Percentile ranks:

Mathematics---99	Social Studies---78
Science---75	English---99

Battery---99

Kansas High School Senior Comprehensive Examination---Percentile ranks:

English---97	Physical Science---65
Mathematics---98	Total---97
Social Studies---90	General Ability---99

S.Q.T. Test---October, 1957. Percentile ranks:

Verbal---69.6

Quantitative---96.4

Mary's entire elementary school record presents a picture of a happy, well-adjusted, exceptionally well-cared-for child whose achievements were well above average. This probably was due to exceptional educational advantages in the home---trips, books, friends, etc.--and to the "halo" effect on teachers' grades of an attractive, bright-looking, well-mannered child.

In junior high school her grades, in comparison with those of her classmates, were quite high. In grade 10 she began to have some difficulty in maintaining her high academic record to which she and her parents were accustomed. To a great extent this was due to an increased class load which was brought on by her desire to carry extra subjects. After two counseling interviews, in which she was encouraged to completely revise her study habits, she was again at the top of the class.

Eleventh grade counseling dealt with vocational choices. She was having difficulty in making the selection of a vocation and, as a result, experienced a sense of frustration and defeat. Looking for special aptitudes, interests, or abilities, the counselor found in the Differential Aptitude Tests a profile which showed outstanding high spots, especially in the fields of English and mathematics.

In the interviews which followed, Mary seemed, again, a pleasantly ordinary girl so far as personality was concerned; alert and anxious to be agreeable, but with no specific interests except artificial ones growing out of suggestions made by friends or relatives. The counselor provided Mary with a great variety of vocational in-



formation to be read during the summer with the suggestion that she report to the counselor's office immediately after the opening of school in the fall.

Counseling---Grade 12. Mary reported for her first interview during the first week of school as planned. The first interview was quite informal with most of the time being spent in conversation about the activities of the summer. Mary was given a vocational questionnaire to fill out and several appointments were made for future interviews.

During interviews with the counselor the following activities were carried out:

1. Test scores were interpreted.
2. Certain sections of the vocational questionnaire were discussed in relation to her interests and aptitudes.
3. A final check was made on her transcript of credits to be sure that she was fulfilling all requirements of the college preparatory course.
4. She had many questions about colleges which were answered for her by the counselor or material was provided for her reading.
5. Selection of a college, expenses, and possible scholarships were discussed.
6. Finally the moment of decision was at hand. With much help, suggested materials, verification of aptitudes, aid in the solution of personal problems, but without direct recommendation from the counselor, Mary had decided on a career in elementary education.
7. The counselor provided all necessary blanks of appli-

cation for scholarships and college admission. A few more short interviews were necessary before the application blanks were completed and on their way.

Mary received a scholarship and is now working toward her degree in elementary education. She has received special recognition by the college for her outstanding work in the field of mathematics.

### Case B---Bill Brown

A Graduate. Academic standing in high school indicated by final semester grades:

A---36,            B---0,            C---0,            D---0,            F---0

He ranked second in a class of 75 students.

Points are awarded for each semester credit.

### Standardized Tests---Grade 11

Otis I.Q.---132

#### Differential Aptitude Tests---Percentile ranks:

Verbal---99	Mechanical---99
Numerical---95	Clerical---90
Abstract---80	Spelling---99
Space---90	Sentences---97

#### Kuder Vocational Preference Record---Percentile ranks:

Literary---94,            Musical---80,            Persuasive---70

Essential High School Content Battery---Percentile ranks:

Mathematics---99

Social Studies---99

Science---99

Battery---99

English---99

## Scholarship Qualifying Test (S.Q.T.)---Percentiles

Verbal---99

Quantitative---75.6

While in elementary school Bill was identified by his teachers as a leader in the classroom who always made perfect marks by doing a little more than the teacher asked for each assignment. His reading, even in elementary school, was more on the adult level. He seemed to enjoy any type of work that involved a challenge in vocabulary, especially when the origin and derivation of words presented the major problem. He was noted for the number of questions that he asked each day but the teachers encouraged this because his type of question reflected sincerity and deep thinking.

At the time that he entered the ninth grade and made the change to high school Bill could easily have been classed as an introvert. He was very shy, retiring, and seemed to be uneasy in the presence of teachers. He would seldom respond in class unless called upon but, when forced to answer, he would show much originality. In class drills and exercises, Bill would be finished before anyone else and seemed to show disgust with the others for taking so much time. High school seemed to be a challenge to him and, for a short time, it seemed that his intense interests would destroy any qualities of leadership that might be developed from participation in activities or taking part in social functions.

As a sophomore he seemed to develop a good sense of humor and to feel the need for companionship, especially with boys of his own age group. He was encouraged by his parents to attend school dances and to take part in the activities of the school, especially those for which he seemed to have some ability such as dramatics, vocal music, and basketball.

Before the end of the sophomore year Bill had gained much self-confidence and was showing qualities of leadership. He was elected to offices of responsibility by his classmates and seemed to be vitally interested in the affairs of the student body and the general welfare of the school.

Counseling. Early in the junior year Bill came to the guidance office and expressed a desire to take a battery of tests which might help him in the educational and vocational choices that he would soon have to make. After the individual testing program was completed, Bill was invited to talk over the test results with the counselor.

The orientation of the excessively ambitious student is a delicate task requiring great skill and a willingness to wait until the student is ready to make his own discovery of what may be best for him. The Differential Aptitude Test scores helped the counselor to show Bill some of the specific areas in which people with scores similar to his had been successful. It was pointed out that the scores on this battery have specific applicability in a way that a single-score intelligence test or test of general scholastic ability would not.

In Bill's case, there had never been any question about going

to college. His parents are college graduates and there was no problem of financial assistance. He had much encouragement and help at home but never any pressure.

The first few counseling interviews were spent in helping Bill to get a good understanding of himself, his aptitudes and evaluation of his interests. Much vocational information was provided for him to read, which was of great interest to him because he was intrigued with every field of study. This is quite common among high-level students and especially those who are not receiving pressure from any source.

Significant aspects of the counseling procedure during the senior year were as follows:

1. Vocational possibilities were discussed.
2. The counselor provided a systematic means for canvassing the world of occupations to make sure that no sort of vocation would be overlooked.
3. An attempt was made to organize Bill's thinking in terms of concepts of "field" and "level."
4. The counselor injected as much realism as possible into Bill's thinking.
5. Demands and trends were discussed.
6. In the use of occupational information every attempt was made to bring it into the counseling interview in such a way as not to break down or confuse the essential structure of the counseling relationship. Bill was the type of student that did not want things handed to him or pointed out for him. The counselor tried to avoid the restructuring of the counseling situation by

arranging procedure so that Bill seemed to get facts from the printed materials rather than from the counselor.

7. The counselor directed Bill's attention to his high scores in Verbal Reasoning, Numerical Reasoning, and Language Usage on the Differential Aptitude Tests. It was pointed out that this furnished definite support for his selected fields of interest as indicated by high scores in Literary and Persuasive on the Kuder Vocational Preference Record. The counselor handed Bill a packet of new vocational leaflets, among which was one with information about careers in law. This proved to be the turning point from pseudo-decision to genuine decision.

8. Applications of admissions were filled out.

Comment---Bill is attending one of our leading universities and was assigned to take part in the program for gifted students. He is enrolled in Pre-Law.

#### Case C---Joe Adams

A Senior. Joe did not attend the local elementary school but entered the school system to begin work in the ninth grade, therefore, no records were available previous to the freshman year.

#### High School Academic Record

English I---C	Geometry---A	Latin II---B	Chemistry---B
English II--B	Algebra III-A	AM. Hist.--B	Constitution--A
English III--B	Trig.---A	Mech. Draw.--A	Physics---A
Algebra---B	Latin I---B	Ind. Arts---A	Speech---B



## Standardized Testing---High School

Differential Aptitude Tests---Percentile ranks:

## Form A---Grade 11

Verbal Reasoning-----95	Mechanical---99
Numerical Reasoning---99	Clerical-----65
Abstract Reasoning---99	Spelling-----90
Space Relations-----99	Sentences----97

Otis I.Q.---130

## Form AM

Kuder Vocational Preference Record---Percentiles:

Mechanical---97      Computational---96      Scientific---94

National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test---Percentiles:

English Usage-----97	Word Usage-----82
Mathematics Usage---99	Humanities Composite--93
Social Studies-----90	Science Composite-----95
Natural Science-----80	Total Composite-----95

## Form B---Grade 12

Differential Aptitude Tests---Percentile ranks:

Verbal Reasoning-----85	Mechanical---95
Numerical Reasoning---99	Clerical-----75
Abstract Reasoning---99	Spelling-----95
Space Relations-----99	Sentences----90

Otis I.Q.---134

## Form BM

Apart from the problem of realistic career planning, Joe presented a problem of immaturity and social maladjustment. Vocational counseling could not be isolated from his more fundamental needs. The careful counselor carries on vocational counseling, not only for its own results, but also as an experience for the counselee in self-appraisal and in developing habits of objectively viewing his own problems. The counseling process itself is intended to be a maturing experience and not just a decision-making activity.

During the first two years in high school Joe received no attention and was considered to be only slightly above average in his class work. He was shy, retiring, very quiet, and would not respond in class except to briefly answer a direct question. He did not participate in the athletic program nor was he interested in any of the activities of the school.

During the early part of Joe's junior year the counselor was making an attempt to start cumulative files on all juniors. A numerical aptitude test and an I.Q. test were given to all members of a junior English class. Joe was on the 99th percentile in numerical reasoning and had an I.Q. of 130.

Counseling. Joe was invited by the counselor to drop around to the guidance office for a friendly chat. At first Joe was not very responsive, giving the impression that he was afraid of the possibility of being forced into something. After he discovered that the counselor was showing a genuine interest in his problems, Joe became quite interested in talking about his school problems, senior class schedule, and vocational plans for the future. He was invited to complete the battery of Differential Aptitude Tests

and to take the Kuder Vocational Preference Inventory so that his aptitudes and interests might be compared. He seemed to be much impressed by the explanation of tests, interpretation of test scores, and the importance of measuring aptitudes and abilities instead of selecting a vocation because of interest alone.

After the tests were completed Joe became a frequent visitor to the counselor's office for short visits and to read vocational information on mathematics and science. He was invited to bring his parents for an interview. The selection of subjects for Joe's senior year were discussed and there was a general agreement that he should have both physics and chemistry to help provide the background for future study in the fields of science or engineering. At this time and while the parents were present, the counselor suggested that Joe take the National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test which was to be given in the near future. The results of the test were quite satisfying, even from the point of added experience in taking standardized tests.

Immediately following the opening of school Joe reported to the guidance office to talk over plans for his senior year. He expressed a desire to be tested in the same general areas as before to help determine the effectiveness of his learning experiences of the past year. He was tested with Form B of the Differential Aptitude Tests which seemed to be his first choice. The high correlation between Forms A and B seemed to indicate, without the slightest doubt, that encouragement toward mathematics and science was justified.

This obviously turned into one of those pleasant counseling

cases in which the main concern was to help Joe arrange a suitable program for a high-level career. His weakest ability, Clerical Speed and Accuracy, is more than adequate for most careers and is due to his desire for extreme accuracy which decreases his speed.

He has selected Kansas State as his college and plans to enroll in the School of Engineering. The counselor had a personal interview with the Associate Dean of the School of Engineering and Architecture and made an appointment for Joe and his parents to visit the campus and to talk with members of the staff.

Joe's parents are farmers and can be of some financial assistance to their son but he will need additional aid or a scholarship. At the time of the interview it seemed quite likely that serious consideration would be given to his application for a scholarship or other financial assistance which would make it possible for him to enroll in the School of Engineering.

It appears that counseling has opened up a new way of thinking for Joe. It has helped him to get a clearer look at the day-to-day problems that every young person has to face when their high school training is ended. The profile sheet of the aptitude tests was a good means of showing the areas in which he needed to be seriously concerned. By accepting the weaker areas as problems he had taken the first important step toward solving them.

Case D---Connie White

At the End of the Junior Year. Connie came from a small

rural school and the change to high school was one of great adjustment for her. During her freshman year there was evidence that she was an overachiever, much of which was due to her determination to overcome her feeling of inferiority which was caused by her sense of insecurity in her new surroundings. She was a referral case, the statement of reasons being "apparent worry over problems of school associations and adjustment." During the first interview the counselor suggested that she take a test that might help in making plans for the future. At that time no mention was made of problems or possible solutions. The SRA Youth Inventory was given with the following results:

Percentiles:

My School---68	My Home and Family---85
Looking Ahead---70	Boy Meets Girl---80
About Myself---30	Health---88
Getting Along with Others---77	Things in General---80

Since the test is so designed to indicate a greater problem by a higher percentile, it was apparent that she had some problems that were worrying her, and there was a possibility of their being imaginary instead of real. There is a profile sheet which is intended for student use in identifying and helping to solve their own problems. For counseling purposes the better plan is to replace the answer sheet in the test booklet and see what kind of questions stimulated the greatest response. Quite often, in a test of this kind, the unanswered questions are of greater significance than those which the student chose to answer.

In the interviews that followed it became quite evident that

there were family conflicts and social conflicts which were caused by inner-group bickering. Connie seemed quite pleased to talk over her problems with the counselor, especially since she now understood them herself. She was asked to consider the following steps before trying to adopt a practical solution:

1. What is the real problem I face?
2. What obstacles prevent my solving the problem?
3. What advantages do I have to work with in solving this particular problem?

4. What are some possible solutions?
5. What will be the probable results of each solution?
6. Which solution seems best for me?

In a short period of time Connie became a happy, well-adjusted girl and an excellent student. No attempt was made to test her until the second semester of her junior year.

#### High School Academic Record

English I---A	Geometry---B	Stenography---B
English II---A	Am. History---A	Typewriting---B
English III---A	Gen. Bus.---A	Home Ec. I---A
Algebra---A	Bookkeeping---A	Home Ec. II---A

She ranks seventh in her class of 74 students.

#### Standardized Tests---Grade 11

##### Differential Aptitude Tests---Percentile ranks:

Verbal Reasoning-----80	Mechanical---95
Numerical Reasoning---95	Clerical-----95
Abstract Reasoning----99	Spelling-----90
Space Relations-----75	Sentences----80



Otis I.Q.---120, Form AM

Kuder Vocational Preference Record---Percentiles:

Literary---90      Social Service---89      Clerical---70

This case was presented to show that academic grade ratings and testing are not necessarily the first steps in identifying the superior student. It may be necessary to solve problems of adjustments before an accurate evaluation can be made.

Case E---Susan Jones

A Sophomore. Elementary School Record:

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
Reading	A	A	A	A	A	A		
Arithmetic	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Language Arts	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Spelling	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Geography			A	A	A	A	A	
History							A	A
General Science				A	A	A		A

Standardized Testing---Elementary School

California Achievement Test---Percentile rank:

Grade 4

Reading Vocabulary---99	Mech. of Grammar---95
Reading Comprehension---99	Spelling---99
Arithmetic Reasoning---95	Total Language---99
Arithmetic Fundamentals---95	Total Test---99

Stanford Achievement Test---Grade Equivalent:

	Par. Mean.	Word Mean.	Spell	Lang.	Arith. Reas.	Soc. Stud.	Sci.	Battery Median
Grade 5	10.4	11.5	12.0	9.9	7.7	9.7	10.3	10.3
Grade 6	10.2	10.5	11.3	11.6	10.3	11.2	9.5	11.2
Grade 7	12.7	12.9	12.3	11.7	11.8	11.2	11.3	11.8

Standardized Testing---High SchoolDifferential Aptitude Tests---Percentile rank:Grade 9

Verbal Reasoning-----99	Mechanical---85
Numerical Reasoning---97	Clerical-----97
Abstract Reasoning----90	Spelling-----99
Space Relations-----90	Sentences----99

Otis I.Q.---122

Kuder Vocational Preference Record---Percentiles:

Literary---90      Musical---68      Clerical---66

Observation Reports. The elementary school which Susan attended did not keep records of personal development. One year after her graduation from the eighth grade several of her teachers were asked for reports on Susan's behavior while in elementary school. One teacher reported that she was conscientious, and that she habitually influenced the activities of her associates, that she seemed secure in her social relationships, and that she was concerned about the welfare of others. Another reported that Susan was more mature than many persons who were twice her age which was probably due to the fact that she was an only child and

had grown up with only adults for companions and in an adult world without the opportunity of a childhood.

Various observers of Susan reported that she seemed mature, poised, serious, and dignified. She talked freely during interviews, asked many questions, and seemed glad to talk over her plans with somebody.

Counseling. During interviews with the counselor the following activities were carried out.

1. Susan was encouraged to talk about her problems and plans.
  2. Most of her questions were answered and she was directed to sources for the answers to others.
  3. She was given a personal and vocational preference questionnaire to fill out.
  4. Her choices of subjects were discussed.
  5. Test scores were interpreted.
  6. College entrance requirements were discussed.
  7. She was given vocational information which was to be read before the next interview.
  8. Some assistance in study habits and scheduling of time was provided.
  9. She was complimented on her achievements, her academic record, and her participation in well-selected activities.
  10. She was given every opportunity to satisfy the desire that most students have to "talk over plans with somebody."
- Counseling will continue during the sophomore year with special effort being made by the counselor to determine vocational preferences and to make available related vocational

information.

The student of generally superior abilities who has not yet made a firm choice of a career can be encouraged to investigate several rather different areas during the first year in college and should enter the type of institution which makes this exploration possible. He should be advised of the necessity of appraising this broad educational experience so that he may later select an area of concentration that is both intellectually satisfying and appropriate from a career standpoint. Since Susan is only a sophomore and, since most of her decisions have always been made for her at home, she may pass through a stage of development that will give her a sense of maturity and, in turn, help her to do more serious thinking about aptitudes, interests, and vocations.

#### CONCLUSIONS

Less than 30 years ago it was generally believed that very bright and gifted children were eccentric, queer, or emotionally unstable. Some writers asserted that eccentricity and genius were inseparable. Some believed that the extent of the genius was in direct proportion to the amount of instability. Bright and talented children were sometimes shunned; occasionally they were looked upon with jealousy and suspicion. In school, many very bright children, responsive to the attitudes of others, hesitated to reveal their abilities. Accordingly, their potentialities were unrecognized and their rare abilities were unchallenged. Giftedness may, in some instances, be smothered by behavior prob-

lems, physical handicaps, severe personality limitation, a limited background, or poor achievement in the early grades. Thus, gifted children should be identified early, given good care and treatment, and finally, an education with guidance and counseling to challenge and enlarge their abilities and expectations.

People are happiest when they use their abilities in ways which they enjoy and which their society finds valuable. A good society cultivates its members, and by their fruits the society is made better.

There are two good reasons why special attention should be given to the identification and counseling of the superior student at this particular time. One is the great need of our society for trained manpower in a variety of walks of life, not just in the field of science as advocated by so many writers. The other reason is that gifted students are not sufficiently stimulated or challenged in America's program of mass education. This country has a wonderful educational system, especially valuable in that it gives opportunity to the average child to reach his limits of development; but this system does not always give a similar opportunity to the gifted student.

Educators now have at hand a remarkable array of technical aids in the discovery of talent. We have a variety of adequate and practicable tests and other procedures for identifying talented youth.

There are two special target groups to which counselors should pay special attention. One is the large group of economically underprivileged but able boys and girls who stand a good chance of

going through life with their talents largely underdeveloped unless they are stimulated and guided. The other special group is an able but contented middle-class cluster who are willing to go through life without putting forth much effort. Life will be fairly easy for these people, and they will be tempted to coast along its highway. The really able members of this group should be discovered and stimulated to make the most of their talents.

The basic elements of a sound process of identifying gifted students should include close and continuous liaison with the feeder schools. The better this liaison, the earlier the identification of talented students, the more prepared they are for the next educational step; the more complete are the records the schools transmit about students; and the more clear is the knowledge about higher education. It is reasonable to believe that appropriate counseling will increase the self-realization and independence of the student.



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IDENTIFYING AND COUNSELING THE SUPERIOR  
STUDENT IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOL

by

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B. S., Fort Hays Kansas  
State College, 1932

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AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S REPORT

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requirements for the degree

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This is a study of the plans, purposes, and various procedures for identifying and counseling the superior student in high school. It is not the intention of the writer to infer that the process of identification should be delayed until high school or should be discontinued after graduation. High school is merely a focal point where all previous records are processed and organized for the purpose of helping the individual to develop to the maximum of his capacities. At no other time in history has there been such a demand for highly developed leaders in such a wide variety of useful roles. Other countries are devoting themselves to identifying able children and to giving them an education in keeping with their high abilities.

Inevitably, this challenge to the welfare of society makes continued neglect of talent a luxury that can no longer be afforded. This has caused a great surge of interest in giftedness; in its early identification and in ways of dealing with high-ability students, rapid learners, and talented individuals. It is the sincere belief of the writer that a highly organized and efficient guidance services program in each school, headed by a professionally trained counselor and working with all members of the staff, can identify, encourage, and challenge talented boys and girls.

The purpose of this study was to consolidate information gained from several sources which could be used to help formulate a workable plan for identifying superior students. In this way the guidance program could become more realistic and valid. In this report there has been an attempt to point out the need, planning and organization, procedure, and methods of identifying

and counseling superior students in order to help them to develop to their maximum capacity, and to aid them in the selection of their life's work.

Information used in writing this report was obtained by various means. A review of periodical literature written on the subject was made. From this source recent trends were noted. Material from books of well-known authorities was used for basic references. The case reports are based on actual experiences of the writer and present a more comprehensive report on problems such as methods of identifying superior students, their physical and mental traits, results of counseling, and their subsequent careers in high school and college.

In the past there has been a great misconception about the superior student. Less than thirty years ago it was generally believed that very bright or superior children were eccentric, queer, or emotionally unstable. Some writers asserted that eccentricity and genius were inseparable.

Present culture seems to have built-in attitudes that place children in one of two categories---normal or different. To be normal means to be accepted, to have majority status, and, perhaps, to be popular. Even the parents have a tendency to reward the attempts to dress, eat, talk, act, and play like their peers. This attitude is one of the greatest forces which is working in opposition to the present belief in the value of recognition of individual differences.

Giftedness is one feature of the total development of the child. It is related to all the other aspects of his growth.

Although the gifted child is different from the average child in certain ways at every stage of his development, at no age is he completely different.

There is no one way to identify any specific class of superior human beings. It is a cumulative process, both objective and subjective, with due consideration given to environment, health, academic achievement, behavior, emotional stability, interests, aptitudes, abilities, and any other quality that may tend to set the individual apart in the slightest degree from other members of the group. They may have a great many positive characteristics or negative characteristics that are apparent in other children. Identification must be a cumulative process, resulting from the expert judgement of someone who is versed in the nature and significance of individual differences.

In the evaluation of human beings, there are facilities with which to measure their capabilities with a reasonable degree of accuracy but there is no way of predicting how they will react to certain unexpected situations. In evaluating younger people, there must be fewer labels and more understanding; less rejection and more acceptance; and less fiction and more fact.