

THE IDENTIFICATION AND EDUCATION OF THE  
INTELLECTUALLY GIFTED

by

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## INTRODUCTION

During the past fifty years, particularly in the last decade, an unusual amount of attention has been centered on a group of children formerly neglected and little understood - the intellectually gifted.<sup>1</sup> As new information is discovered it is continuously necessary to review and revise methods of identifying and educating these children. We cannot afford to waste the abilities of the intellectually gifted individual.

### The Problem

Statement of the problem. It was the purpose of this study (1) to discover what means are being employed to successfully and accurately identify the intellectually gifted child, and (2) to discover ways of educating the gifted child adequately to assume his role as a superior intellect in society.

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<sup>1</sup>  
Gertrude H. Hildreth, Introduction to the Gifted (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1966), p. ix.

## Scope and Procedures

The research design. This was a survey of the literature, analyzing materials in periodicals and books.

Sources and kinds of data. Sources of data were materials that the researcher could secure in libraries and bookstores.

These types of data were needed: (1) information about the development of methods of identifying the gifted; (2) information about developing programs for the gifted; (3) discussion of problems involved in setting up programs for the gifted; (4) reports on current programs in this area; (5) data as to conclusions reached by researchers on trends in identifying and educating the intellectually gifted.

Procedures. After collection of data, it was necessary to analyze the material to (1) compare the methods used in identifying and educating the gifted; (2) formulate ideas about basic areas of difference among the various methods; and (3) reach some conclusions in regard to the original problem.

## Definitions of Terms

Acceleration. A general term including all administrative practices which result in completing a school program in less than the usual time allotted.<sup>2</sup>

Education. The social process by which people are subjected to the influence of a selected and controlled environment (especially that of the school) so that they may attain social competence and optimum individual development.<sup>3</sup>

Enriched Curriculum. A curriculum planned to take care of individual differences so that pupils of all levels of ability may be stimulated to do their best work.<sup>4</sup>

Gifted Child. A child whose mental age is considerably higher than his actual age compared with children in the general population is gifted.<sup>5</sup>

Grouping. The process of classifying pupils for instructional purposes; applied to class groups or intraclass groups.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Carter V. Good (ed.), Dictionary of Education (second edition; New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1959), p. 4.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 191.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 150.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 89.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 256.

Skill Subjects. School subjects in which the acquisition of special skills are the chief aims, such as reading, penmanship, and arithmetic.<sup>7</sup>

Standardized Test. Tests for which content has been selected and checked empirically, for which norms have been established, for which uniform methods of administering and scoring have been developed, and which may be scored with a relatively high degree of objectivity.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 534.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 565.

## REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

"No educational movement of recent decades has had greater importance than the movement toward increased educational opportunities for our gifted children."<sup>9</sup> Actually, however, interest in gifted children and their education goes back to ancient times and the Platonic Era, when proposals were made for selecting potentially gifted children in early childhood, testing them, and training them for leadership.

### Historical Orientation

Among the earliest records of talented children is the story of Daniel and three other remarkable boys recounted in the Bible. These boys were among the most promising children taken captive in Jerusalem and sent to Babylon at the command of King Nebuchadnezzar to be educated at the palace.<sup>10</sup>

"The Emperor Charlemagne is said to have urged the education at state expense of promising children among the common people."<sup>11</sup>

"Comenius, writing in the seventeenth century, made frequent reference to students of unusual aptitude for learning and advocated financial aid for bright students from poor homes."<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> William K. Durr, The Gifted Student (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. v.

<sup>10</sup> Gertrude H. Hildreth, Introduction to the Gifted (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1966), p. 42.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.



Early in the eighteenth century Thomas Jefferson proposed a bill for the 'Diffusion of Education' providing for the education of promising youths at public expense at a university where they would receive the training in the arts and sciences that leadership in the New World required.<sup>13</sup>

Interest in gifted and talented youth was for some time concentrated on the child prodigy, but the rise of scientific interest in the latter part of the nineteenth century shifted attention in new directions. The testing movement focused attention on mental variability, provided objective means for the appraisal of giftedness and superior achievements, and stimulated interest in special education.<sup>14</sup>

Events generally continued this way until the middle of the twentieth century. At this time James B. Conant warned that we were in danger of losing out as a world power unless more concern was shown for the training of all promising youths in science and other areas. This was further pointed out in 1957 when Russia launched its first earth satellites. This aroused public interest in education to a greater extent than ever before.

The movement for better education of the gifted is not only broader and more extensive than in previous years, but it is better organized and more widely supported by persons of influence both within and outside the teaching profession.

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<sup>13</sup>  
Ibid., pp. 42-3.

<sup>14</sup>  
Ibid., p. 43.

## Methods of Identifying Gifted Children

Methods of identifying gifted children must be thoughtfully chosen. If we define gifted in terms of potential alone, intelligence tests might be the major method of identification; if we define gifted in terms of demonstrated achievement, standardized achievement tests might be used.

It is very important also that identifying procedures should be varied and diversified. Evaluating instruments have not yet reached a stage of perfection where any single one is infallible.

Teacher observation and judgment. One commonly used technique used for identifying gifted children is that of teacher judgment. A teacher is professionally trained, has many opportunities to observe each student, and has the experience to make comparisons between children. Despite these assets, "only limited agreement is found between giftedness as judged by teachers and giftedness as measured by standardized tests."<sup>15</sup>

Since teachers work with students in many challenging situations, they can, through observation, learn many things about students which are undetectable in standardized tests alone. These observational data, however, should not eliminate children classified as gifted by more objective sources. They may provide indications that there is a need for re-evaluating students not originally classified as gifted.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>

William K. Durr, The Gifted Student, p. 18.

<sup>16</sup>

Ibid., p. 19.

There are many factors that block efficiency in judging giftedness. One factor is that teachers are generally oriented to middle-class values, and tend to overrate the docile, obedient child and to have their opinions colored by annoyance at independent behavior. Also, often in making an evaluation only classroom achievement is taken into consideration.

Another factor which can block efficiency in teacher judgment is that "some children deliberately hide a propensity for learning which they think would lead to rejection by their peers."<sup>17</sup>

The following list may serve as a guide in judging giftedness. The gifted child is likely to have:

- (1) Above-average language development. This may show in an unusually large listening and speaking vocabulary and a depth of understanding for words that is above average for the child's age. The young gifted child often demonstrates this language maturity through agility in using complex sentences.
- (2) Persistence in attacking difficult mental tasks. Compared with children of lower mental ability, the gifted child is more likely to be challenged by thought provoking activities and to show a higher degree of tenacity in pursuing them.
- (3) The ability to generalize and see relationships. A gifted student may see relationships and generalize from these relationships more quickly than others.
- (4) Unusual curiosity. Although most children pass through a stage of great curiosity about almost everything, the gifted child often never outgrows this curiosity.

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<sup>17</sup>

Ibid., p. 18.

- (5) A wide variety of deep interests. This may take the form of many apparently deep interests at one time, or it may be a succession of activities which he follows intently, one after the other. In either case, the gifted child is likely to select mature interests and to dig more deeply into them than his less gifted peers.<sup>18</sup>

Standardized achievement tests. Standardized achievement tests measure the amount of learning that has occurred in subjects normally covered in school. An achievement measure that compares the results for one student with the results for thousands of other students improves the chances of accurate identification.

In addition to national standardization, achievement tests have two other assets for identifying the gifted. First, since experts have constructed the items in these tests, you can usually expect questions that are more representative of the areas tested and more properly worded than teacher-made tests. Second, standardized achievement tests almost always have comparable forms which allow for accurate re-evaluation.<sup>19</sup>

Although standardized achievement tests have valuable strengths for identifying the gifted, they also have marked limitations. One of the most serious limitations is that these tests indicate only the levels of achievement that students have actually attained. "They do not identify students who have unusually high potential for achievement but who, for some reason, have not attained this achievement."<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., pp. 19-20.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 22.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

For instance, children from lower socio-economic homes, despite their inherent ability, may not have the materials or the facilities for study which would enable that ability to show on an achievement test.

The curriculum differences of the various schools must also be taken into account and considered. For example, one school may postpone the introduction of formal arithmetic instruction to a later grade than most schools. When tested in an early grade, a standardized achievement test may penalize the students in the first school although they would equal or excel others when tested at a later grade.

While there are limitations to achievement tests, their limitations do not outweigh their advantages as aids in identifying the gifted. "In their own particular province, the results of achievement tests should generally carry more weight than teacher judgment."<sup>21</sup>

Intelligence tests. Unlike achievement tests, intelligence tests judge what a student should accomplish in school, not what he has accomplished.

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<sup>21</sup>

Ibid., p. 23.

In the past, authorities have disagreed vigorously about the basis for intelligence test scores. Some contended that intelligence tests basically measured inherited abilities, while others contended that they measured abilities primarily determined through environmental influences. The vigor of this disagreement has generally subsided, and there is now fairly common agreement that intelligence test scores depend on both heredity and environment.<sup>22</sup>

While achievement tests locate children who have already demonstrated that they can learn, intelligence tests locate students who may have potential which has as yet gone unrecognized.

In spite of strengths that make intelligence tests an important aid in identifying the gifted individual, there are limitations that must be considered when interpreting the results. One is the variability of test scores, since intelligence quotients do vary for a given child from test to test and from time to time. However, the scores are generally constant and consistent within limits.

As with achievement tests the socio-economic background of the child influences his I. Q. "At six months of age children from different social strata have approximately the same average I. Q.'s but by six years of age the average difference favors the upper socio-economic group."<sup>23</sup> In

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 24.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 25.

general, it is contended that gifted children from low socio-economic strata are handicapped in the intelligence tests.

When identifying the gifted, a student who receives a high I. Q. score may be classified as gifted. On the other hand, a student who makes a lower I. Q. score may have done so because of limiting environment. A teacher using intelligence tests must look for other guides to these possible exceptions.

Psychological services. According to Cutts and Moseley, the "surest method of identifying bright children includes, in addition to systematic observation by the teacher, individual psychological studies of every pupil."<sup>24</sup>

A few school systems are fortunate enough to be able to arrange for a psychological study of every child on his first entering school, in kindergarten or later, and at least one subsequent study to determine whether expected development is being made. In the interval, these systems give standardized tests, and when anything unusual about a child is disclosed, he is referred to the psychologist.<sup>25</sup>

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Norma E. Cutts, Nicholas Moseley, Teaching the Bright and Gifted (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1957), p. 34.

25

Ibid.

## Methods of Educating Gifted Children

Early and accurate determination of a child's real abilities has advantages for everyone concerned. If, from the beginning of the child's education, teachers challenge the child to do his best, he learns good study habits and keeps his interest in school.

Until 1958 or 1959, there was little legislative attention or statewide promotion of educational plans for the gifted. A few states made special legislative provisions. In some cases authority to support special programs was granted by a separate law, but in most states authority to provide for the gifted is included in legislation designed to serve all exceptional children. An increasing number of states are now making special studies or grants toward improvement of education of the gifted.<sup>26</sup>

There are three general procedures whereby a school can stimulate gifted children and help them to develop their abilities. Enrichment is primarily a teaching procedure, while special grouping and acceleration are administrative devices. Any two of these can be combined, and all three can be combined, but this paper will consider them separately.

Enrichment. Enrichment consists of giving the gifted child an opportunity to go deeper or to range more widely than the average child in his special field of

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Maurice F. Freehill, Gifted Children (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1961), p. 191.



interest. It keeps the gifted child in his own age group and with children of various levels of ability.

The nature of the unusually capable student is such that enrichment in its most productive form consists not of adding more of the same kind of content and activity to the program but of providing experiences in greater variety and at a more advanced level. Such a program may be characterized by (1) emphasis upon the creative or the experimental; (2) emphasis on the skills of investigation and learning; (3) independent work, stressing initiative and originality; (4) high standards of accomplishment; (5) co-operative planning and activity that provide opportunity for leadership training and experience in social adjustment; (6) individual attention given by teacher to student; (7) firsthand experiences; (8) flexibility of organization and procedure; (9) extensive reading, and (10) concern with community responsibility.<sup>27</sup>

Since the individual classroom teacher is the person most involved in providing for enrichment, the following question must be considered: How can the teacher organize the class so that effective enrichment methods can be provided for the gifted?

Small group work constitutes the most common organization providing for these differences. Children may be grouped in such areas as reading and arithmetic so that those most nearly alike in intellectual abilities learn together.

Also, the teacher should use the course of study or the textbooks only as guides or springboards for

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Robert J. Havighurst, Eugene Stivers, Robert F. DeHaan, A Survey of the Education of Gifted Children (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1955), p. 20.

additional learning.

The extent to which individualization occurs depends largely on the extent to which a gifted student differs from other students. Generally, the greater such deviation, the greater the amount of individualized instruction which must be provided.<sup>28</sup>

It is not essential that all activities of the gifted contribute to or even relate directly to the learnings of other students in the room. The activities in which the gifted child engages must be selected in terms of what is most profitable for him.

At this point, it must also be explained that there are three basic dimensions of enrichment methods: horizontal, vertical, and supplementary. "Although they overlap and are seldom found in pure form, they provide direction for choosing learning activities that can directly affect the growth of gifted students."<sup>29</sup>

Horizontal enrichment proceeds outward from the regular program, when a regular program is defined as the learning experiences planned for average students. It extends that program while scrupulously avoiding learnings normally covered at a later grade level.<sup>30</sup>

Vertical enrichment concentrates on encouraging gifted students to progress through the normally required school learnings at a more rapid pace than normal. This type of enrichment is more readily

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<sup>28</sup>

William K. Durr, The Gifted Student, p. 120.

<sup>29</sup>

Ibid., p. 122.

<sup>30</sup>

Ibid.

exemplified in skill subjects...It is so classified because it deliberately crosses grade level designations to provide learnings that other children will acquire in later years.<sup>31</sup>

Supplementary enrichment is the third classification. It emphasizes activities not immediately or directly related to the regular grade level program and not included in the curriculum at later grade levels.<sup>32</sup>

In general, enrichment programs as described have been extremely successful, however, as with all programs there is also a negative side. The biggest disadvantage of an enrichment program in the regular classroom is that it often places an intolerable burden on already overloaded classroom teachers and it makes it difficult for them to manage.

Acceleration. "Acceleration offers opportunity for a gifted pupil to move at a pace appropriate to his ability and maturity and to complete an educational program in less than the ordinary amount of time."<sup>33</sup>

There are three basic types of acceleration. One type is grade-skipping; another is steady progress through a particular series of grades in less than the usual time; and a third is early entrance to school.

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., pp. 122-3.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 123.

<sup>33</sup> Robert J. Havighurst, Eugene Stivers, Robert F. DeHaan, A Survey of the Education of Gifted Children, p. 28.

James J. Gallagher stated that:

For many years, most of the public and many educators have felt that acceleration and grade-skipping were synonymous terms. As a matter of fact, grade-skipping is considered one of the least desirable methods of accomplishing acceleration of gifted students.<sup>34</sup>

Some of the arguments presented against grade-skipping are as follows:

- (1) Although students may be intellectually gifted, their social and emotional development is not equal to that of older students; consequently, placing them with older students can lead to maladjustment in these areas.
- (2) Singling out a gifted student calls attention to a superiority, which can lead to later maladjustment.
- (3) Students who skip a grade will miss important learnings which will hinder their later academic growth.
- (4) Children who spend less than the normal time in elementary or high school are being deprived of the chance to work with teachers who specialize in students of their age levels and are being placed with teachers who specialize in older students.
- (5) These children may be deprived of leadership opportunities when placed with older students.
- (6) Children of the same mental age, but markedly different chronological ages will not learn in the same way.<sup>35</sup>

In all fairness it must also be stated at this point that all of these arguments have been fought against and other research studies have found these arguments to

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<sup>34</sup>

James J. Gallagher, Teaching the Gifted Child (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1964), p. 257.

<sup>35</sup>

William K. Durr, The Gifted Student, pp. 100-1.

be without foundation and false. Counter-arguments have been presented for every point mentioned. It must be realized that grade levels are merely divisions in a series of developmentally arranged learning experiences.

For the most part they are based on what an average child can learn at succeeding age levels, and on value judgments about what this average child should learn at each level. Since the gifted child is not average, it is difficult to see why he should be held to this learning pace.<sup>36</sup>

The best example of the second type of acceleration is the nongraded school or part of school. These are not specifically designed for the gifted, but they do facilitate a type of acceleration that differs from other major programs.

Nongraded sections are confined almost exclusively to the early school years, although the program could expand with comparative ease throughout the elementary grades. At the early levels, this procedure is usually designated as an ungraded primary and replaces the more customary first, second, and third grades. Students enter the primary, where, theoretically, they proceed at their own best rate. When they complete the primary program, they are assigned to fourth grade. This fourth grade assignment occurs whenever the child is ready; he is not required to spend exactly three years before entering fourth grade.<sup>37</sup>

Perhaps the greatest drawback regarding the non-graded primary and the gifted child is that in most situations the curriculum flexibility concentrates on the

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<sup>36</sup>

Ibid., p. 103.

<sup>37</sup>

Ibid., p. 105.

slow learning students. It is primarily a way of permitting some students four years to complete the equivalent of the first three grades without ever having failed or repeated a grade.

To turn to the positive aspect of the nongraded program, it must be realized that it provides a very workable administrative arrangement for promoting acceleration. "The gifted child who matures more rapidly becomes well known to the teacher, since she is with him long enough to verify his rate of growth through objective testing and careful observation."<sup>38</sup> A gifted child can then complete the three-year curriculum plus enriching activities in two years.

The third type of acceleration to be discussed is early entrance to school.

Experimentation on the early admission of bright children to elementary schools yielded favorable results. Mature four-year-olds have been allowed to start kindergarten; five-year-olds have been placed in first grade; and bright children who have learned to read at home start school in the second grade, when they are six.<sup>39</sup>

Although the research shows favorable results regarding early school entrance, most school districts

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<sup>38</sup>

Ibid., p. 106.

<sup>39</sup>

Jack Kough, "Administrative Provisions for the Gifted," Bruce Shertzer (ed.), Working With Superior Students (Chicago: Science Research Associates, 1960) p. 158.

use an arbitrary single cut-off date for admittance. While this arbitrary rule has certain advantages, it lacks any provision for individual differences.

Assuming that we have a school district which recognizes the advantages of early school entrance, the most common procedure would involve thorough testing by a school psychologist.

Parents of young children are informed of the testing opportunities and they may bring their children for evaluation if they wish. More desirable, although certainly more expensive, is the program that tests all preschool children and encourages selected ones to enter early. Additional testing and close observation may show that some can profitably spend two years in kindergarten, but when accurate predictions are made, these children often enter first grade with their older kindergarten classmates.<sup>40</sup>

Thorough parent education procedures are essential when early school admission is adopted. Parents should be helped to understand that only a few children will be admitted and that placement for school entrance is determined solely by the child's best interests.

"Some authorities contend that early school entrance, although difficult to administer, shows the greatest promise as a method of acceleration."<sup>41</sup>

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William K. Durr, The Gifted Student, pp. 104-5.

<sup>41</sup>

D. A. Worcester, The Education of Children of Above-Average Mentality (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1956) pp. 28-9.

Special grouping. Many educators feel that the best way to serve the needs of all students is to bring together students of similar ability for all or a portion of their educational experience.

Although the process of grouping has been called by many names (ability grouping, segregation, multi-level or multitrack curriculum, homogeneous grouping), the aim has always been to provide greater opportunities for students of similar intellectual capacity.<sup>42</sup>

As is true with other methods of educating the gifted, there are advantages and disadvantages to grouping.

The most widely used argument in favor of special grouping is its efficiency both in facilitating learning and for in-service teacher training. When placed with a group on his own intellectual level, the student is forced to appraise his own abilities more realistically and is motivated to work harder as a result; he is stimulated and challenged to progress beyond his age-grade level; he can explore new areas and exchange ideas with confidence of group acceptance rather than with fear of group rejection.<sup>43</sup>

In a homogeneous ability group the teacher is able to intensify and enrich an area of learning and to bring greater depth to each student's educational experience. Total curriculum planning is simplified and individualized instruction facilitated in a group where abilities and interests are similar.<sup>44</sup>

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Jack Kough, "Administrative Provisions for the Gifted," Bruce Shertzer (ed.), Working With Superior Students (Chicago: Science Research Associates, 1960) p. 152.

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Ibid.

44

Ibid.



Another advantage which must be considered is that in a country such as ours where individual achievement is encouraged, the educational system must encourage and aid in the fullest development of each person. This can be achieved by grouping so that each student receives the educational experience best adapted to his intellectual abilities, aptitudes, and interests.

Those who oppose grouping stress the possible danger of setting up an elite by singling out students for special attention. They seem to feel that

When the brightest students are removed from a class, there is a loss of stimulation that might have vitalized the learning experiences of less able children. The superior students, isolated from classmates of average ability, may become overly concerned with achievement and competition.<sup>45</sup>

Another argument against grouping is that since special grouping often requires additional classrooms, extra materials, and specially trained teachers, many school systems cannot realistically carry on an effective program.

As with the other methods of educating the gifted previously discussed, the method of grouping also consists of different types. There are two major divisions of

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<sup>45</sup>

Ibid., p. 153.

total and partial grouping and then the various subdivisions of each.

The specialized school would be an example of total grouping. "In such schools academic requirements are considerably stiffened but the benefits of a normal school environment are maintained."<sup>46</sup> Special schools exist mainly in large metropolitan areas where the population is highly concentrated. Although most of the special schools are high schools, the Hunter College Elementary School in New York City, a public nursery, kindergarten, and six-year elementary school, is well known as a special school for gifted elementary children. Another specialized school is the University of Chicago Laboratory School which "offers a full twelve-year enrichment program, accelerated so that eight years of the regular public school curriculum are covered during the first seven<sup>47</sup> years."

Admission to special schools is based on a variety of factors including intelligence test scores, achievement test results, and special aptitude test scores, in addition to such other factors as social maturity and emotional stability.

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<sup>46</sup>

Ibid.

<sup>47</sup>

Ibid., pp. 153-4.

Since special schools require a large student population, a grouping procedure much more common at both the elementary and secondary levels, are schools that have grouped their gifted into special classes for their educational programs.

At the elementary level this usually involves screening a number of students who are in one grade, selecting those who qualify, and assigning them to one teacher for the school year. The remaining students in that grade are randomly assigned to other rooms, or they too are classified on some intellectual criteria and assigned by groups.<sup>48</sup>

Under this procedure gifted students are separated for all purposes, except perhaps in health education classes and in extracurricular, co-curricular, and recreation activities.

More common than the total grouping of the gifted are the various programs that allow bright children to spend part of their time in heterogeneous groups and part in special groups with other gifted children.

Part-time grouping in the elementary grades takes many different forms. For example, gifted students from a number of classrooms meet several times each week to pursue topics of interest, such as current events, hobbies, or other areas of interest.

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Anthony V. Freitas, "Gifted Fifth Graders in a Class by Themselves," The Instructor, 69:51+, May, 1960.

Part-time special groupings may be also deliberately organized to tie in with the regular school curriculum. For instance, the gifted from several elementary rooms are grouped for reading instruction during a set period each day.

Children whose achievement is well above grade level in a certain area are regularly excused to study a foreign language, art, or typing, while others in their rooms are studying the subjects in which the gifted excel.<sup>49</sup>

It must be realized that there are many possible purposes for establishing gifted groups, and the goals of schools will vary considerably. It is imperative, however, that clear-cut goals be established and carried through. If the goals are important enough, and it can be shown that special groupings are the best means to achieve them, plans can be mapped out for overcoming obstacles to their establishment.

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William K. Darr, The Gifted Student, p. 87.

## SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It was the purpose of this study to: (1) state information about the development of methods of identifying the gifted; (2) report information about developing programs for the gifted; (3) discuss problems involved in setting up programs for the gifted; (4) report current programs in this area; and (5) present data as to conclusions reached by researchers on trends in identifying and educating the intellectually gifted.

### Summary

Since educators and lay people have realized that some children are different from others in intellectual ability, research has been conducted to discover which children were truly superior and how superior in comparison to others. Various methods of identifying the gifted were approached and many of these methods are in full use today. Of the methods described in this report, it must be stressed that very rarely, if ever, will a child be positively identified as gifted on the basis of one method alone; usually a combination of two or more criteria are used.

After the gifted child has been positively identified, the educator is faced with the problem of how to best provide for the child's superior intellectual ability without damaging him socially. With regard to this,

such factors as his physical and emotional maturity must be considered as strongly as his intellectual maturity. When considering methods of educating the gifted, the size and financial resources of the school system must also be considered.

#### Conclusion

This was a limited study as only the most commonly used methods of identifying and educating the gifted were taken into consideration. Also the major emphasis was concerned with the elementary school age child with very little mentioned about high school or college programs which are available.

The method most highly recommended for identifying the gifted child was the standardized achievement test. However, if possible, this criteria should be used in conjunction with teacher judgment and intelligence test scores. The more criteria used, the more accurate the identification will likely be. If possible, identification should be made even before the child enters school. To aid in this many school systems provide psychological services which aid in the early identification of gifted children.

The best method of teaching the gifted student is one of tremendous controversy. Most authorities agree that special education should be provided, but few agree

as to which is the best method of educating the gifted student. Although rarely is any one method carried on in pure form, enrichment seems to be easiest to adapt to most school programs since the individual classroom teacher is the person most likely to provide it. The method of acceleration appears to be the most controversial, while grouping appears to be accepted and recommended by most educators. It must be realized that each method has its positive and negative side and no one method will work for every teacher, every school system and every gifted child.

#### Recommendations

In view of the fact that there is such a great amount of controversy concerning the education of the gifted, it seems imperative that more research should be done and more findings published.

Since one of the greatest problems involved in the teaching of the gifted is lack of facilities and trained personnel, it seems that by consolidating the smaller school systems into one larger system, better and more adequate methods of education could be provided.

Although methods of identifying and educating the gifted have progressed tremendously in the past fifty years, much is still left to be discovered. Now

that people are aware of the problems concerning the gifted, it is hoped that more grants will be forthcoming to enable research to continue and that the public will stand behind, rather than oppose its school system when it is trying to provide the best possible education for all children.



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## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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THE IDENTIFICATION AND EDUCATION OF THE  
INTELLECTUALLY GIFTED

by

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AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S REPORT

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

College of Education

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY  
Manhattan, Kansas

1967

It was the purpose of this study to examine, present, and evaluate the various methods of identifying and educating the intellectually gifted child.

A review of related pertinent literature available in books and periodicals was presented and analyzed to:

- (1) state information about the development of methods of identifying the gifted;
- (2) report information about developing programs for the gifted;
- (3) discuss problems involved in setting up programs for the gifted;
- (4) report current programs in this area; and
- (5) present data as to conclusions reached by researchers on trends in identifying and educating the intellectually gifted.

The review of the literature revealed this to be an extremely controversial issue with some writers presenting information and arguments for one method of identification and education of the gifted, and other writers presenting information and arguments in favor of other methods. All agreed, however, that early and accurate identification was necessary in order to provide the best possible program of education. The majority of writers placed most confidence in standardized achievement test scores as the most reliable means of identifying the gifted, but also emphasized the importance of teacher

judgment and observation, intelligence test scores, and psychological judgments. A controversy continues regarding methods of educating the gifted also. Most writers agree that special education should be provided, but few agree as to which is the best method of educating them. Although rarely is any one method carried on in pure form, enrichment seems to be easiest to adapt to most school programs since the individual classroom teacher is the person most likely to provide it. The method of acceleration appears to be the most controversial, while grouping appears to be accepted and recommended by most educators.

As a result of this study, it was recommended that more research should be done and more findings published. Also, since one of the greatest problems involved in the teaching of the gifted is lack of adequate facilities and trained personnel, consolidation of smaller school systems into one larger system might ease this problem. It was also recommended and hoped that more grants will be provided to enable research to continue and that the public would stand behind, rather than in opposition to its school system when it is trying to provide the best possible education for all children.