

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 421 318

RC 021 566

TITLE Gifted and Talented Students. IDRA Focus.
 INSTITUTION Intercultural Development Research Association, San Antonio, TX.
 ISSN ISSN-1069-5672
 PUB DATE 1998-07-00
 NOTE 17p.
 PUB TYPE Collected Works - Serials (022)
 JOURNAL CIT IDRA Newsletter; v25 n6 Jun-Jul 1998
 EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
 DESCRIPTORS Bilingual Education; Cultural Pluralism; Educational Needs; Educational Strategies; Elementary Secondary Education; *Gifted Disadvantaged; *High Risk Students; *Limited English Speaking; Minority Groups; Parent Role; Parent Student Relationship; Special Education; *Talent Identification
 IDENTIFIERS *Coca Cola Valued Youth Program; *Reform Strategies; Texas

ABSTRACT

This theme issue includes five articles that focus on issues surrounding gifted and talented students, especially as they relate to poor, minority, or limited-English-proficient children. "Traditional Methods of Identifying Gifted Students Overlooks Many" (Linda Cantu) presents findings from the National Educational Longitudinal Study that minority and economically disadvantaged students are underrepresented in gifted and talented programs. Reasons for the disparities and recommendations for improving the identification process are presented. "Raising 'Will Hunting'--10 Tips for Parenting Gifted and Talented Children" (Hilaria Bauer) suggests that programs that overlook cultural differences in learning may be responsible for the fact that gifted minority learners do not perform to their full potential and may have problems in school. Ten recommendations are presented in Spanish and English for parents of gifted students struggling with school. "Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program: Looking for Gifts in All the Right Places" (Josie Danini Supik) discusses an example of a program that uses gifted and talented strategies successfully with limited-English-proficient students. "At-risk" secondary students are placed as tutors of primary students, allowing previously overlooked talents to shine. More than 98 percent of participants stay in school. An accompanying article, "Reflections," presents comments from participants. "Insights into Gifted and Talented English Language Learners" (Andrea B. Bermudez, Judith A. Marquez) presents strategies for identifying gifted and talented English language learners, including collecting background data and work samples for each student, determining if cultural and linguistic behaviors obscure the child's giftedness, considering all nominations, and examining standardized test scores in light of demographic data. Sidebars present comments on the passage of California proposition 227, Web sites on education of gifted and talented students, and definitions of and recommendations concerning children with outstanding talent. (TD)

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TRADITIONAL METHODS OF IDENTIFYING GIFTED STUDENTS OVERLOOKS MANY

Linda Cantu, M.Ed.

Gifted and talented students represent one of our nation's greatest resources. They can become the leaders, inventors, artists, scientists and problem solvers of tomorrow. But trends in gifted and talented education across the country indicate that a significant number of students with exceptional abilities are not receiving high quality services either because they have not been identified as gifted or their programs do not address their unique strengths and needs.

Gifted and Talented Program Participation Nationally

The National Educational Longitudinal Study (NELS) found that the representation of racial and ethnic groups in gifted and talented programs favors some groups more than others. The study found that gifted and talented programs are comprised of:

- 17.6 percent of all Asian students,
- 9 percent of all White students,
- 7.9 percent of all African American students,
- 6.7 percent of all Hispanic students, and
- 2.1 percent of all Native American students (Resnick and Goodman, 1997).

Additionally, economically disadvantaged students are among the most underserved. In the NELS results, students from the bottom quartile in family income made up only 10 percent of gifted and talented program participants, while students from the top quartile made up 50 percent (Resnick and Goodman, 1997).

Gifted and Talented Program Participation in Texas

Texas figures also show that minority, poor and LEP students are underrepresented

in gifted and talented programs. There are 313,142 students in gifted and talented programs in Texas in pre-kindergarten through 12th grade (TEA, 1998). White students are overrepresented in gifted and talented programs by 16 percentage points, and Hispanic and African American students are underrepresented by 15 percentage points and 5 percentage points (respectively) compared to their school population (see box on Page 10). LEP students represent only 3.4 percent of students in gifted and talented programs but make up 12 percent of the student population. African American and Hispanic students and students from low socio-economic backgrounds are the least represented in gifted programs.

Reasons for the Disparities

There are a variety of reasons that gifted and talented students are not being identified as such. In some cases, educators are unable to recognize gifted and talented behaviors exhibited by certain students due to a lack of sensitivity and adequate training (Resnick and Goodman, 1997).

Traditional methods of identifying gifted and talented students – IQ, achievement tests and teacher recommendations – are not the best ways to identify gifted students. Studies have found that these methods identify only half of the brightest students. In fact, such methods tend to overlook the most talented students (Resnick and Goodman, 1997).

Additionally, tests are generally administered in English making it difficult for LEP students to do well. Being able to speak two languages requires cognitive ability.

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The Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA) is a non-profit organization with a 501(c)(3) tax exempt status. The purpose of the organization is to disseminate information concerning equality of educational opportunity. The *IDRA Newsletter* (ISSN 1069-5672, copyright ©1998) serves as a vehicle for communication with educators, school board members, decision-makers, parents, and the general public concerning the educational needs of all children in Texas and across the United States.

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IDRA REACTION TO PASSAGE OF CALIFORNIA PROPOSITION 227 (UNZ INITIATIVE)

SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS (June 1998) – On behalf of the Intercultural Development Research Association, Dr. María Robledo Montecel, executive director, presents the following reaction to passage of the Unz initiative in California:

“With the passage of Proposition 227 on June 2, this is a sad day for children. It is a sad day for effective education, for equity and for democracy. A few individuals with financial might were able to manipulate the democratic system to impose their will and infringe on the rights of minority students for quality instruction. Passage of the Unz initiative in California was largely based on misinformation about the effectiveness and appropriateness of good bilingual education programs and the students they serve. **Bilingual education is a better way to learn English.**

“It makes sense to teach children in a language they understand. It also makes sense to teach them English. Volumes of data have documented that a well-designed, well-implemented bilingual education program is the most effective way to teach English to children who speak another language while also teaching core subjects like math, social studies and science. In our state, the Texas Education Agency has identified successful bilingual programs that demonstrate this fact.

“The passage of the California initiative does not have to lead us to hurt Texas students or those in other states. Well-funded, well-implemented bilingual programming in Texas can close the gap in achievement between English-speaking students and English language learners.

“This is a wake up call for minority parents, educators and concerned citizens to assert themselves, be pro-active and make schools more accountable for the appropriate education of all children.”

IDRA is an independent, non-profit organization that advocates the right of every child to a quality education. It is particularly concerned about the education of children who are poor, minority or limited-English-proficient. Currently celebrating its 25th anniversary, IDRA envisions public education that...

- Keeps all students in school through high school graduation.
- Ensures that children who speak a language other than English benefit from quality instructional programs that capitalize on students' language and culture.
- Ensures that children in every neighborhood have access to excellent public schools.

*All children are valuable;
none is expendable*

Most parents think their children are talented, at least in some areas. Truly, every child is. Recent initiatives to address multiple intelligences has revamped many classrooms. It has enabled children to be valued and respected for the abilities they bring into the classroom. However, although all children are talented in many areas, not all of them are academically gifted.

In schools, the identification of a "gifted and talented" student has been determined primarily by a series of cognitive abilities that place the child in a category of his or her own. Many times we think of these children as those who almost effortlessly are able to bring home the straight "A" report card. Yet, in many instances, gifted children are not bringing home straight "As." They often are not performing to their full potential and may be having problems in school. In the case of gifted minority learners, the struggle with school can be caused by programs that overlook cultural differences in learning (Ford, 1994).

Raising children is a challenging endeavor. Raising a gifted child who struggles in school can be downright



burdensome. Parents can feel overwhelmed and frustrated facing the challenge of knowing their child is talented but is struggling in school. In addition to struggling with academic content, many of these students are experiencing problems as they challenge teachers and become rebellious.

The box on Pages 3 and 4 lists 10 recommendations for parents of gifted students struggling with school. The box on Pages 6 and 7 has the same list in Spanish. Photocopy them and review them with your students' parents.

Overcoming feelings of frustration and guilt is one of the most difficult steps parents of struggling gifted children need to take. After that major step is taken, using some guidance can prove promising in helping

their gifted child reach his or her full potential.

Resources

- Callaghan, C. "Preparing Your Child for the New School Year (President's Column)," *Parenting High Potential* (September 1997).
- Cooper, C. "When Your Child Is Way Ahead: What Your School Should Be Doing," *Parenting High Potential* (September 1997).
- Ford, D. *The Recruitment and Retention of Black Students in Gifted Programs: Research-Based Decision Making Series* (Storrs, Conn.: National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented, The University of Connecticut, 1994).
- Green, C. "Cruising the Web with English Language Learners," *IDRA Newsletter* (San Antonio, Texas: Intercultural Development Research Association, May 1997).
- Karnes, F. and S. Bean. "Leading the Way to Leadership," *Parenting High Potential* (September 1997).
- Tomlinson, C. and C. Callaghan and K. Lelli. "Challenging Expectations: Case Studies of High-potential, Culturally Diverse Young Children," *Gifted Child Quarterly* (Spring 1997) Vol. 41, No. 2, pp. 5-17.

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HISPANIC FAMILIES AS VALUED PARTNERS: AN EDUCATOR'S GUIDE

María Robledo Montecel, Ph.D., Aurora Gallagher, Aurelio M. Montemayor, M.Ed., Abelardo Villarreal, Ph.D., Ninta Adame-Reyna, M.S., and Josie D. Supik, M.A.

This publication explores the role of Hispanic families, particularly parents, in U.S. education. Through a presentation of facts about Hispanics in the United States and an honest discussion of Hispanic cultural values and mores, the authors dispel the myths that many educators have about their Hispanic students' families. Most importantly, the book focuses on the common ground shared by schools and Hispanic homes – most notably that education is important. It seeks to show administrators and teachers the value of family participation in education. Instructions and worksheets for implementing a parental involvement program tailored to Hispanic families and a comprehensive resources list are also provided. (ISBN: 1-878550-47-0; 90 Pages; 1993; \$19.95)



To order, send check or purchase order to: Intercultural Development Research Association, 5835 Callaghan Road, Suite 350, San Antonio, Texas 78228-1190; or send purchase order by fax, 210/684-5389. For more information call 210/684-8180 or e-mail: indra@indra.org.

INTERCULTURAL DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH ASSOCIATION
10 TIPS FOR PARENTS OF GIFTED STUDENTS

- 1. Support your child.** Despite barriers of language, poverty, fear and distance, parents who consistently support their children and are proud of them are good resources for schools (Tomlinson, 1997). All children flourish in the care of supportive parents. Self-esteem and a sense of security are critical elements in the lives of children. Gifted students who struggle with school require the same kind of nurturing environment.
- 2. Identify your child's interests.** By virtue of their extraordinary potential, bright underachieving children require learning experiences based on their interests and sufficiently sophisticated to match their potential. For example, consider a child consumed by an interest in computers or insects, this child needs to be able to act on this intense interest and express his or her concerns about it. The child can do so by engaging in research using the same investigative methods professionals use in their work. Professionals usually like to share their findings with children and adults who are interested in the same topic. This is real world learning (Cooper, 1997).
- 3. Request an appropriately challenging curriculum.** One of our rights as parents is to collaborate with schools to design better programs for our children. Many times, we feel that if we share our ideas with our child's teacher, we will appear to be interfering in the teacher's business. Although teachers can get to know children well, nobody knows children better than their parents. Usually, teachers welcome information about their students in order to provide better instruction. Feel free to share information that may help your child's teacher design a better curriculum for your child. For example, if your child complains at home that school is "too boring," set an appointment with the teacher and ask for more challenging work for your child. You may want to suggest that your child will benefit from preparing a special assignment or project.
- 4. Help your child set goals.** Discuss with your child some things he or she wants to achieve within a certain period of time. These goals can be related to grades or to other accomplishments, including social goals. Goal setting contributes to developing a child's decision-making skills (Callaghan, 1997). For example, children may have an interest that they want to pursue in school, they may want to help the family in some way, or they may want to contribute in the community.
- 5. Emphasize responsibility.** Provide your child with opportunities to exercise responsible choices and allow him or her to experience the consequences of those choices. For example, completing homework has been used to practice certain skills beyond the classroom as well as to help students organize their time after school and learn to prioritize. A gifted child may see homework as futile since he or she usually does not feel the need for extra practice. However, parents need to guide their children to see the importance of fulfilling their responsibility. Parents can help gifted children understand that responsibility does not mean we have to like something in order to do it, such as doing

continued on next page

INTERCULTURAL DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH ASSOCIATION
10 TIPS FOR PARENTS OF GIFTED STUDENTS (CONTINUED)

household chores. It is also important for your child to reflect on the consequences of the choices he or she makes (Karnes, 1997).

6. Provide opportunities.

Sometimes there are many opportunities for our children that are available at little or no cost to parents, but they go unnoticed. One way of finding such opportunities is to ask the teacher or the school office. Today, many schools offer programs after school that may be excellent opportunities for gifted children to get involved in extracurricular activities. These activities may offer opportunities that sometimes are hard for us as parents to provide, such as field trips, contests, research and community projects.

7. Look for resources.

Many community resources are available to children. One of the most valuable resources at no cost to parents is the public library. There, gifted children have access to all kinds of information. Most public libraries have computers with Internet access that can provide learning experiences in collecting information in different ways (Green, 1997).

8. Encourage your child.

In addition to supporting your children, verbally express how you feel about them. It is important to encourage children to fulfill their interests and dreams. Encouragement provides children with the assurance that they are capable of carrying out a certain venture. For example, if your child wants to do something to help the community, as a parent, you can promote his or her idea with loving guidance.

9. Be an advocate of your child and others.

When children struggle in school, there is a tendency to blame the child or to blame the system. However, parents who know their child is gifted but struggling in school, may sometimes feel ashamed and frustrated. Sharing your situation with other parents helps you see you are not alone. Forming groups of parents who are willing to collaborate with the school can help children by demonstrating to them responsible leadership. It is important to let the school know about your values, goals and heritage and about how they may influence your child's attitude in school if these are not respected or valued.

10. Don't give up.

Gifted and talented children need special attention. Finding ways to support your child in developing his or her talents may be difficult, but it is worthwhile. Although gifted children may sometimes appear "giftless," in order for them to believe in themselves they need the perseverance of a caring family. Although they may face a poor teacher or an apathetic principal, the support and encouragement of a loving family will eventually help them achieve success.



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by Hilaria Bauer

10 RECOMENDACIONES PARA PADRES DE NIÑOS SUPERDOTADOS

- 1. Provea apoyo para su hijo(a).**

A pesar de las barreras del idioma, la pobreza, el miedo a una organización desconocida, o la distancia entre nuestra cultura y la de la escuela, los padres que apoyan a sus hijos y se sienten orgullosos de ellos, son recursos invaluable para la escuela (Tomlinson, 1997). Todos los niños, superdotados o no, florecen al cuidado de un hogar con una familia que los apoya. El autoestima y la seguridad son elementos críticos en la vida del niño. Los niños superdotados que experimentan dificultades en la escuela necesitan el mismo cariño y cuidado que cualquier otro niño.
- 2. Identifique los intereses de su hijo(a).**

Lo que los niños superdotados requieren, debido a sus habilidades extraordinarias, son experiencias educativas basadas en sus intereses y lo suficientemente sofisticadas para presentar un verdadero reto a su potencial académico. Por ejemplo, un niño(a) extremadamente interesado en algún tema como puede ser las computadoras, los insectos, etc., este niño(a) necesita actuar y desarrollar ese interés a su nivel, expresar su punto de vista acerca del tópico, e investigar el tema a fondo, usando recursos parecidos a los de los expertos en ese área. A este punto los niños(as) se interesan en compartir sus hallazgos con otras personas interesadas en el mismo tema. Esto representa aprendizaje para la vida real (Cooper, 1997).
- 3. Solicite un plan de enseñanza adecuado para su hijo(a).**

Uno de los derechos mas importantes que tenemos como padres es el de colaborar con la escuela para diseñar programas ejemplares para nuestros hijos. A veces como padres nos sentimos cohibidos, y evitamos compartir nuestras ideas con los maestros. Pensamos que no queremos ser entrometidos y preferimos dejar que el maestro decida cual es la mejor enseñanza. Sin embargo, nosotros como padres conocemos mejor que nadie a nuestros hijos. Comparta con el maestro(a) la información que usted crea le pueda ayudar al maestro a diseñar un mejor plan de estudios para su hijo(a). Si su hijo(a) se queja de que lo que hace en la escuela es muy aburrido, haga una cita con el maestro(a) y pídale que le de a su hijo(a) algo que le presente mas reto. Sugíerale que quizá si le encarga algún proyecto o reporte especial el niño(a) se sienta con mas aliento a terminarlo.
- 4. Ayude a su hijo(a) a fijarse metas.**

Pregúntele a su hijo(a) acerca de lo que le gustaría lograr con el tiempo. Ayúdele a establecer metas que le ayuden a lograr sus planes. A veces puede relacionarse con la escuela, pero a veces puede ser otra área. Fijar metas le ayuda a niño(a) superdotado a adquirir el proceso de hacer decisiones (Callaghan, 1997). Por ejemplo, algunos niños tienen intereses no solamente en contribuir con la escuela pero también en casa o en la comunidad.
- 5. Enfaticé la responsabilidad.**

Provea a su hijo(a) la oportunidad de ejercer decisiones y de experimentar las consecuencias de esas decisiones. Por ejemplo, la escuela asigna tarea para que el alumno practique ciertas destrezas en casa que aun no ha logrado adquirir en la escuela. Para el estudiante superdotado, esto quizá represente un asunto sin importancia ya que el o ella han logrado adquirir la mayoría de las destrezas y sienten que no es necesario practicar. El niño(a) superdotado necesita que se le guíe a comprender que una responsabilidades no es necesariamente un gusto. Dele como ejemplo las tareas en la casa, quizá no sean divertidas, pero son necesarias.

10 RECOMENDACIONES PARA PADRES DE NIÑOS SUPERDOTADOS

Es muy importante que el niño(a) reflexione en las consecuencias de las decisiones que toma (Karnes, 1997).

6. Provea oportunidades para actividades fuera de la escuela.

A veces las demandas de sostener una familia nos impiden darnos cuenta que nuestros hijos necesitan involucrarse en actividades que les den oportunidades de sociabilizarse fuera del hogar. A veces pensamos que no tenemos los recursos necesarios para proveer alguna de esas oportunidades. A veces esas oportunidades se encuentran mas cerca de lo que pensamos. Muchos programas gratuitos se ofrecen después de escuela o durante los fines de semana. Pregúntele al maestro(a) o pregunte en la oficina acerca de las actividades extracurriculares que se ofrecen en la comunidad.

7. Busque recursos para ayudar a su hijo(a) a desarrollar su talento.

La mayoría de las comunidades proveen recursos al alcance de todas las familias, solamente hay que preguntar. La biblioteca pública es un lugar de múltiples recursos para los niños dotados. La mayoría de las bibliotecas públicas provee libros, CD's, películas, etc. Además, la biblioteca pública también tiene acceso al internet, que es un recurso valuable para conseguir toda clase de información.

8. Dele aliento a su hijo(a).

Además de proveer apoyo para su hijo(a) dotado, hágale saber verbalmente lo orgulloso que usted se siente en tenerlo. Muchos niños superdotados que experimentan problemas en la escuela se les acusa de ser "flojos" o "distraídos." A veces es necesario indagar la situación para ver la raíz del problema, y ayudar a nuestros hijos con lo que no pueden. Al dar aliento, los padres proveen la seguridad que algunos niños no sienten. A veces nuestros hijos se interesan en emprender algún proyecto comunitario y necesitan nuestro apoyo para llevarlo a cabo.

9. Abogue por su hijo(a) y otros.

Cuando nuestros hijos tienen dificultad en la escuela, a veces tendemos a culpar al niño o a la escuela. Sin embargo, cuando el niño(a) superdotado enfrenta dificultades, nos sentimos frustrados y culpables. Pensamos que "este niño(a) no debe de batallar." Cuando compartimos nuestras experiencias con otros padres nos damos cuenta que no estamos solos. Al formar grupos de sostén con otros padres, le demostramos a nuestros hijos que estamos dispuestos a colaborar con otros para encontrar soluciones a nuestros problemas. Es importante como padres comunicar como grupo con la escuela y hacerle, notar nuestros valores, nuestras metas, y nuestra herencia. Esto le ayudara a la escuela a valorar a nuestros hijos, y le ayudara a nuestros hijos a sentirse orgullosos de quien son.

10. No se de por vencido.

Los niños superdotados necesitan atención especial. A veces es difícil encontrar los medios para ayudarlos, pero vale la pena. Aunque el niño superdotado a veces no lo parezca, la perseverancia de una familia que lo apoya es lo que necesita para confiar en si mismo. A pesar de que nuestros hijos enfrentan algún mal maestro, o algún director apático, es el cuidado familiar y el aliento constante lo que los llevará al triunfo.



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por Hilaria Bauer



COCA-COLA VALUED YOUTH PROGRAM TUTORS: GIFTED ROLE MODELS

Editor's Note: Josie Danini Supik's article (on Page 9) discusses the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program as an example of gifted and talented strategies used successfully with limited-English-proficient (LEP) students. Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program participants are secondary students who are considered to be in at-risk situations and are placed as tutors of primary students (tutees). They do not fit the traditional profile of gifted and talented students, but when their schools redefined how they value students, previously overlooked gifts and talents began to shine. Below are some of the tutors' comments.

High Expectations

"I don't want any kids to drop out of school. I don't want people to tell them they are stupid like they told me. I believe I could teach some of these kids a lot of things."

"Since I became a tutor, the most important thing I learned about myself is that I can teach students. I thought I didn't have any skills."

"This past month, the best thing about tutoring was that I feel good about using my knowledge to teach others."

"Since I became a tutor, the most important thing I learned about myself is that I can be loved by other people very easily. I can be trusted also."

"I remember the advice I give to my tutees and try to follow it myself."

"Seeing the little kids trying hard to do good in school gives me motivation."

"I have learned that life is important when you are a tutor."

Role Models

"I am able to apply my good working habits and talents to teaching my tutees. These kids depend on me to go [to school], and it makes me feel great. I'm important, and I can help somebody else succeed."

"One of my students came up to me. He was crying because he had never passed a spelling test before. He was telling me 'thank you,' and I was telling him that it was his hard work that did it. I just gave him that extra push. I came over [to the high school] and started crying with Mrs. W."

"I know that I was a good role model and I made a difference in somebody's life."

"The children count on us to help them function and succeed in their own academic skills. At the same time, we earn respect. I remember when I was a young kid their age, I struggled keeping up because I never had someone to help like these kids have us. I know how these kids feel because I was once in their position. I didn't learn how to read until the fifth grade and that's because tutors started coming. That's what inspired me to become a tutor...to help them learn to spell, read, write...because I teach them to learn before they go to the third grade so they don't go through the humiliation I passed through."

"We are important to our kids. We are their examples, heroes."

"I have learned to 'practice what I preach.' So if I expect my kids to have their homework done on time, I had better have it done also."

"I feel better about myself, more confident knowing that the tutees look up to me."

COCA-COLA VALUED YOUTH PROGRAM: LOOKING FOR GIFTS IN ALL THE RIGHT PLACES

Josie Danini Supik, M.A.

In the year 2000, the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program will be 16 years old. The first of the program's tutors will be in their early thirties. Then, they were valued youths, now they are valued adults who remember their tutees—the younger children who trusted and needed them. They remember the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program as something that made them feel special and wanted and as something that gave them a chance when no one else would.

Their tutees, now in their early twenties, will remember their tutors as people who believed in them and gave them special attention, recognizing their inherent gifts and talents.

Beginning in 1984 with a \$100,000 grant from Coca-Cola USA to the Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA), the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program has given thousands of valued youths a chance to be special, to use their gifts and talents, to contribute and to achieve.

More than 68,000 students, parents, teachers and administrators have been impacted by the program. It is now in more than 90 schools in the continental United States, Puerto Rico and Great Britain and will expand this next school year.

Since 1987, the program has maintained less than a 2 percent dropout rate. More than 98 percent of the students who participate in the program stay in school – a remarkable achievement for students perceived to be “at risk.”

These “at risk” students are primarily U.S.-born, minority, limited-English-proficient (LEP) and from low-income families. One-quarter to one-third were retained in their elementary or middle school years. Many read below grade level and had a history of higher than average disciplinary referrals and absenteeism.

These are the students who many schools and adults find hard to value. These are the students who are never considered for the schools' gifted and talented programs, where program selection is usually based on IQ, standardized achievement tests and teacher nominations (Hartley, 1987; Frasier, 1991). Reporting about gifted and talented programs in Texas, E. Hiatt says:

Despite changes in the student

***THE SUCCESSES OF PROGRAMS
SUCH AS THE COCA-COLA VALUED
YOUTH PROGRAM COMPELLINGLY
ARGUE THAT “NON-TRADITIONAL”
STUDENTS HAVE EXTRAORDINARY
TALENTS, GIFTS AND STRENGTHS
THAT CAN BE A RICH RESOURCE TO
THOSE WHO RECOGNIZE THEM,
WHO TRULY “SEE” THEM.***

population, despite new state board rules that provide great flexibility in student assessment, districts tend to rely on traditional standardized tests for program placement. Other measures are reviewed, but over and over, provisions such as “Students must score at or above the 97 percent in order to be considered for the program” are found in district identification procedures (1991).

It is not surprising, given these narrow criteria, that in the 1997-98 school year, only 24 percent of students in Texas gifted and talented programs are Hispanic and 10 percent are African American compared to 62 percent who are White. LEP students comprise only 3 percent of gifted and talented students, yet they comprise 12 percent of the total student enrollment (see box on Page 10).

Given the narrow selection criteria, the label “G/T” may be a misnomer – “G/T/T” (great test takers) may be more appropriate.

Furthermore, those “non-traditional” students who *do* make the cut must then deal with gifted and talented programs that “accommodate” them with a watered down curricula rather than “adapt” their curricula into a challenging one that is based on specific student characteristics (Frasier, 1991).

The successes of programs such as the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program compellingly argue that “non-traditional” students have extraordinary talents, gifts and strengths that can be a rich resource to those who recognize them, who truly “see”

them. But that requires seeing beyond test scores, the stereotypes and biases. It also requires adapting the institutional infrastructure to provide opportunities and support for all students, especially the “non-traditional” ones.

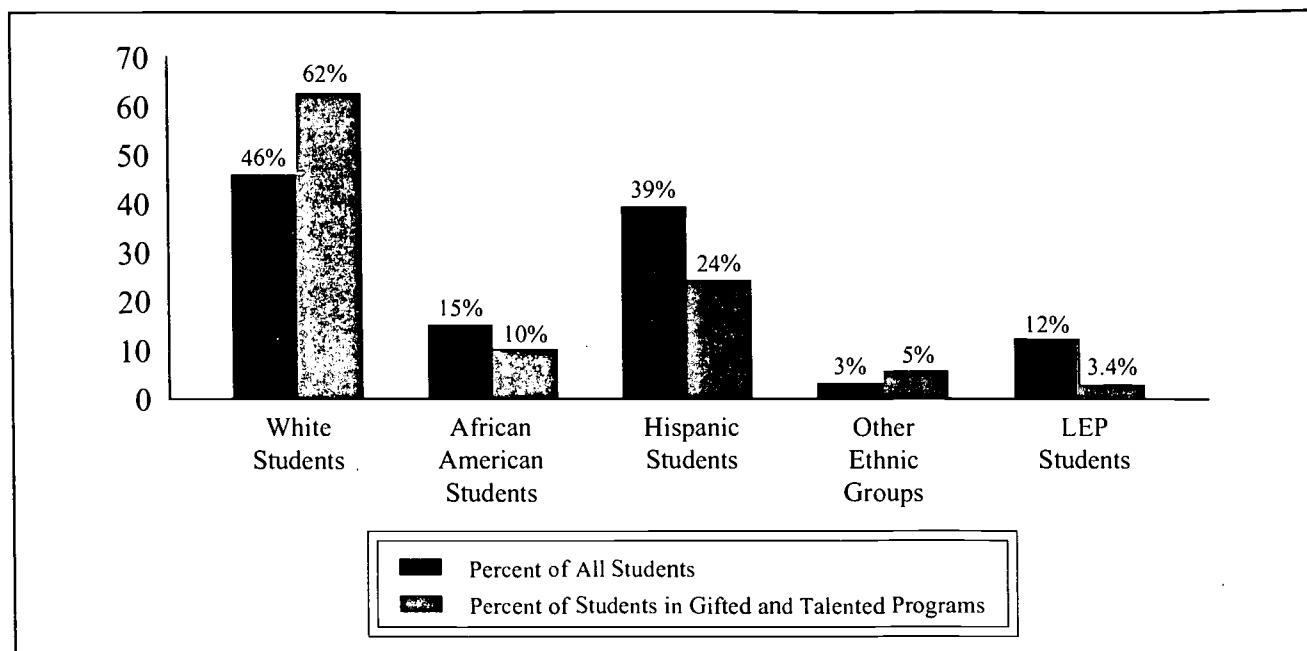
Creating a context for nurturing the rich resources that students inherently bring with them must begin with educators. They must believe in their hearts and minds that “all students are valuable, none is expendable” and that all students have gifts and talents that must be valued and nurtured. The Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program has been one way that those beliefs manifest themselves. The program provides a way for educators – from central office staff to principals, and from teachers to counselors – to truly understand the power of their beliefs, words and actions. It is a means for some adults to renew their faith in youth, and for others to re-affirm what they have always believed – that they do make a difference in their students' lives. Perhaps that is one of the reasons for the program's success.

The Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program is a powerful testament to all that is good and decent and hopeful in people. The

Looking for Gifts - continued on page 10

In Texas, educators of LEP students and state planners of gifted and talented programs and bilingual education programs convened in the spring of 1997. They began a process to address low representation of LEP students in gifted and talented programs and change the way schools implement requirements of the *State Plan for the Education of Gifted Students* and the *State Plan for Educating Limited-English-Proficient Students*. This August (1998), the Texas Education Agency and the STAR Center will host a conference to focus on this issue. The STAR Center is the comprehensive regional assistance center funded by the U.S. Department of Education to serve Texas. It is a collaboration of IDRA, the Charles A. Dana Center at the University of Texas at Austin, and RMC Research Corporation.

PARTICIPATION IN GIFTED AND TALENTED PROGRAMS IN TEXAS, 1997-98 SCHOOL YEAR



Source: Texas Education Agency, 1997-98 Fall PIEMS Data.

Looking for Gifts - continued from page 9

relationships that adults forge with young tutors and their families and the relationships that tutors forge with their tutees are based on the conviction that people matter and that someone cares. Schools are transformed into places where people know they belong, where they are acknowledged and trusted, where their gifts and talents are nurtured.

For 14 years, the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program has been an effective mechanism for transforming schools and for helping people "see" students in a different way. The program's instructional components (classes for tutors, tutoring sessions, field trips, role models and student recognition) and its support components (curriculum, coordination, staff enrichment, family involvement and evaluation) provide schools with the structures and processes needed for mining the gifts and talents of valued youth. The transformations are often dramatic:

- A migrant student in Los Angeles, improved his grades to a 3.8 grade point average and was awarded a scholarship to study electrical engineering at the University of Southern California. He was one of two valued youth tutors (the other was in Houston) who were selected through an essay competition to carry the Olympic torch on its way to Atlanta.
- A former valued youth tutor was named an 1997 Exemplary Migrant Student by

the University of Texas. After participating in the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program, she became a cheerleader, participated in basketball and track, and was in the National Junior Honor Society.

- A valued youth high school senior, was awarded more than \$40,000 in college scholarships last year.

There are countless other examples of students, families and school staff who have found their "gifts" and "talents" for contributing and excelling: principals and teachers who changed the "system" and made a difference, parents who began to hear good things about their children and became partners with their schools, and tutors who learned they could listen and contribute to their tutees in unique ways. The tutors had been there and understood their tutees' looks of confusion and frustration. Their gift of profound understanding, coupled with their talent for reaching children in ways that make a difference, have led to extraordinary accomplishments for themselves and their young charges (see Reflections on Page 8).

As the national conversation continues about school reform and creating contexts for high performance among traditionally low performers through "research-based models," it would serve us to remember there is much that we already know about what works for children and youth. What is

missing is the conviction and the commitment to do what is right for *all* children.

It has been said that how civilized a society is can be judged by how it treats its most vulnerable citizens. Our most vulnerable are our children, and every day should be judgment day for us. We should ask ourselves at the end of each day, did we do right by them? With the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program, the answer is yes. All children need and deserve a "yes" every day.

Resources

- Frasier, M. "Eliminating Four Barriers to the Identification of Gifted Minority Students." *Update on Gifted Education: Identifying and Serving Diverse Population* (Austin, Texas: Texas Education Agency, 1991) Vol. 1, No. 3.
- Hartley, E.A. *How Can We Meet All Their Needs? Incorporating Education for the Gifted and Talented into the Multicultural Classroom* (ERIC Document Reproduction Service, 1987) No. ED 336 9968.
- Hiatt, E. "An Update on the Javits Project: Identifying and Serving Disadvantaged Gifted Youth," *Update on Gifted Education: Identifying and Serving Diverse Populations* (Austin, Texas: Texas Education Agency, 1991) Vol. 1, No. 3.
- Texas Education Agency. *Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted and Talented Students* (Austin, Texas: Texas Education Agency, 1996).

Josie Danini Supik, M.A., is director of the IDRA Division of Research and Evaluation. Comments and questions may be sent to her via e-mail at idra@idra.org.

Yet, bilingualism has often been treated as a handicap needing remediation instead of a gift requiring enhancement. IQ and achievement tests penalize non-English speakers and do not take into consideration the diverse talents of students (i.e., students who are talented in music and art).

Disparities also occur when students, teachers and school professionals have low academic expectations for culturally and linguistically diverse students. Some educators do not see LEP students as capable of being talented. Too many schools focus on deficiencies in students of cultural and ethnic groups. These students are viewed primarily as language or culturally deficient. Little is done to enhance their primary language and culture.

States that rely heavily on IQ and achievement tests are more likely to have large disparities between racial and ethnic groups within their gifted and talented programs than those who use a variety of measures to identify students (OERI, 1993).

Improving the Identification Process

The definition used in the federal *Jacob K. Javits Gifted and Talented Students Education Act* states, "Outstanding talents are present in children and youth from all cultural groups, across all economic strata and in all areas of human endeavor" (see Page 14) (OERI, 1993).

To assure that all racial and ethnic minorities, economically disadvantaged youth and LEP students who are gifted and talented are identified, the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) and others such as J.S. Barnwell offer some recommendations.

- Look at a range of disciplines for gifted and talented – art, music, language, etc.
- Use many assessment measurements to assure that different ages and different talent areas are selected.
- Create an appraisal system that is free of bias, allowing students from a variety of backgrounds to be identified.
- Guide teachers in the assessment of giftedness (OERI, 1993; Barnwell, 1991).

Taking steps such as these will lead us toward a more diverse population of students in gifted and talented programs that better serves students of all types who really are gifted and talented.

Resources

Barnwell, J.S. "Limited-English-Proficient Students Can Also be Gifted!" *IDRA Newsletter* (San Antonio, Texas: Intercultural Development Research Association, April 1991).

Office of Educational Research and Improvement. *National Excellence: A Case for Developing America's Talent* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, October 1993).

Resnick, D. and M. Goodman. *Northwest Education* (Northwest Educational Laboratory Resources, Fall 1997).

St. Jean, D. "Valuing, Identifying, Cultivating, and Rewarding Talents of Students from Special Populations," Internet posting (Storrs, Conn.: The National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented, University of Connecticut, Spring 1996).

Texas Education Agency. 1997-98 Fall PIEMS Data (Austin, Texas: Texas Education Agency, 1998).

Linda Cantu, M.A., is an education associate in the IDRA Division of Professional Development. Comments and questions may be sent to her via e-mail at ldra@idra.org.

HIGHLIGHTS OF RECENT IDRA ACTIVITIES

In April, IDRA worked with 10,108 teachers, administrators and parents through 79 training and technical assistance activities and 143 program sites in 10 states plus the United Kingdom. Topics included:

- ◆ Fifth Annual IDRA *La Semana del Niño* Early Childhood Educator's Institute
- ◆ Parent Leadership for Bilingual Education
- ◆ Racial and Gender Bias: Accessing Curriculum and Learning
- ◆ Stress Management
- ◆ Writing Across the Curriculum

Participating agencies and school districts included:

- ◆ McAllen Independent School District (ISD), Texas
- ◆ Artesia Public Schools, New Mexico
- ◆ Carrizo Springs ISD, Texas
- ◆ Tulsa Public Schools, Okla.
- ◆ Texas Education Service Center, Region XVII (Lubbock)
- ◆ New Orleans Public Schools, Louisiana

Activity Snapshot

The STAR Center has created its *Excellence and Equity through Technology Network (EETNet)* in collaboration with several Texas education service centers (ESCs) to help schools with Title I schoolwide programs to increase achievement for all students through innovative instruction that is technology enhanced. The STAR Center is the comprehensive regional assistance center funded by the U.S. Department of Education to serve Texas. Through EETNet, campus teams collaborate and receive intensive professional development. Activities include an on-line needs assessment to provide immediate electronic feedback; hands-on introductions to cutting-edge technologies; individual consultations with experts in instructional technologies and school reform; and long-range technology planning supported by a network of colleagues and technical assistance providers (facilitated by an ongoing on-line discussion hosted by ESC, Region 20). So far more than 115 people from 24 campuses in 20 districts have participated. This network is developing capacity in campus teams to integrate technology into their schoolwide reform efforts to enhance student achievement. The STAR Center is a collaboration of IDRA, the Charles A. Dana Center at the University of Texas at Austin, and RMC Research Corporation.

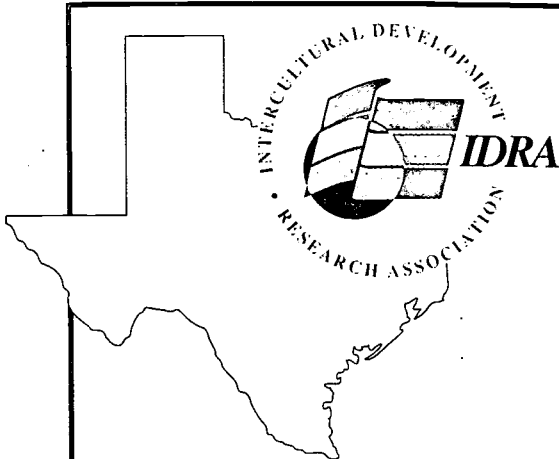
Regularly, IDRA staff provides services to:

- ◆ public school teachers
- ◆ parents
- ◆ administrators
- ◆ other decision makers in public education

Services include:

- ◆ training and technical assistance
- ◆ evaluation
- ◆ serving as expert witnesses in policy settings and court cases
- ◆ publishing research and professional papers, books, videos and curricula

For information on IDRA services for your school district or other group, contact IDRA at 210/684-8180.



WOW: WORKSHOP ON WORKSHOPS

SEPTEMBER 24-25, 1998
THE CENTER AT IDRA
SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

ALSO CAN BE SCHEDULED
FOR GROUPS BY
SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

This two-day experience spurs participants to become **more effective presenters**. The workshop uses an experience-based model that has practical application for you in your job. Current, research-based principles provide a context for participants to collaborate in creating informative, practical and engaging presentations. The *WOW* is **highly participatory** and directly addresses participants' needs and challenges. During the *WOW*, participants will:

- Experience a **complete process** for planning and conducting workshops.
- Review **principles of adult learning**.
- Contrast **needs assessment** approaches.
- Write and refine workshop **objectives**.
- Design innovative **activities**.
- Practice and **expand facilitation skills**.
- **Network** with other professionals.

The *WOW* is facilitated by Aurelio Montemayor, M.Ed., lead trainer in IDRA's Division of Professional Development and creator of the highly popular *WOW*. With more than 25 years of professional training experience, he can teach your staff or group the techniques every trainer needs to conduct meaningful workshops!

The cost is \$150 per participant. This includes all training materials and personalized instruction, plus a copy of the *WOW Workbook* (a \$25 value). Designed for people who are responsible for conducting training and workshops, the *WOW* is particularly useful for participants who bring workshop titles and materials that they want to work on.

To schedule a WOW for your group, call Rogelio López del Bosque, Aurelio Montemayor or Anna Alicia Romero at 210/684-8180.

WEB SITES ON EDUCATION OF GIFTED AND TALENTED STUDENTS

Council for Exceptional Children 1-888-CEC-SPED www.cec.sped.org
 ERIC (Educational Resources Information Center) Digests* 1-800-LET-ERIC www.ed.gov/databases/ERIC_Digests/index
 Gifted Resources Page (no phone) www.eskimo.com/~user/kids.html
 Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA) 210-684-8180 www.idra.org
 National Association for Gifted Children 202-785-4268 www.nagc.org
 Neag Center on Gifted Education and Talent Development 860-486-4826 www.gifted.uconn.edu
 National Institute on the Education of At-Risk Students 202-219-2239 www.ed.gov/offices/OERI/At-Risk
 National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented (Javits Center) 860-486-4676 www.ed.gov/offices/OERI/At-Risk/javitctr.html
 Odyssey of the Mind 609-881-1603 www.odyssey.org
 Office of Educational Research and Improvement 1-800-424-1616 www.ed.gov/offices/OERI
 STAR Center** 1-800-FYI-STAR www.starcenter.org
 Texas Association for the Gifted and Talented 512-499-8248 www.tenet.cc.utexas.edu/tagt
 Texas Education Agency 512-463-9734 www.tea.state.tx.us
 Texas Education Network 512-475-9440 www.tenet.edu



* Search on-line for digests such as:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Blending Gifted Education and School Reform" "Challenging Gifted Students in the Regular Classroom" "Culturally Responsive Curriculum" "Developing Learner Outcomes for Gifted Students" "Discovering Mathematical Talent" "Fostering the Post-secondary Aspirations of Gifted Urban Minority Students" "Gifted Learners and the Middle School: Problem or Promise?" "Giftedness and the Gifted: What's It All About?" "Helping Gifted Students with Stress Management" "Helping Your Highly Gifted Child" | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "How Parents Can Support Gifted Children" "Identifying and Serving Recent Immigrant Children Who Are Gifted" "Instructional Strategies for Migrant Students" "Nurturing Social Emotional Development of Gifted Children" "Providing Curriculum Alternatives to Motivate Gifted Students" "Should Gifted Students Be Grade-Advanced?" "Supporting Gifted Education through Advocacy" "Underachievement among Gifted Minority Students: Problems and Promises" "Using Museum Resources in the K-12 Social Studies Curriculum" "Using Performance Assessment in Outcomes-Based Accountability Systems" |
|--|--|

** The STAR Center is the comprehensive regional assistance center funded by the U.S. Department of Education to serve Texas. It is a collaboration of the Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA), the Charles A. Dana Center at the University of Texas at Austin, and RMC Research Corporation.

The web sites listed here are for reference only. IDRA does not rate or endorse specific web sites or organizations.

The underrepresentation of English language learners in programs for gifted and talented students shows schools' lack of ability to identify these students adequately. Some of the reasons for the lack of representation include: (a) the presence of systematic bias in the standardization process, as instruments and approaches follow a middle-class mainstream basis of measurement; (b) the pervasive lack of cultural awareness and sensitivity on the part of teachers and appraisers due to inadequate training; and (c) the common practice of identifying gifted and talented students on the basis of a single test administration.

Population forecasts indicate that, while the total number of public school students is decreasing across the nation, the number of Hispanic students is growing. Schools with high minority student enrollment are also growing. Despite these demographic trends, few gifted and talented English language learners benefit from special services. Therefore, developing relevant identification procedures and instructional practices for these students is an urgent need in education.

Identifying Gifted and Talented English Language Learners

It is common knowledge that language minority students are left out of the identification process because the initial screening step consists of a standardized measure that does not reflect the linguistic and cultural characteristics of some student populations. No single solution can achieve this complex goal. But, multiple identifying sources are effective, including nominations from teachers, students and parents; translations of standardized tests; teacher and parent observations of creative behaviors and exceptional abilities; and information gained through value-derived scales representing salient characteristics appreciated within the subculture.

However, these instruments are not free from bias. Parents do not seem to be able to objectively assess their children as they view them either as "run-of-the-mill" or "top of the heap" with little understanding of the many ramifications of their judgment. In addition, teachers tend to be influenced by grades and standardized scores or by transcultural comparisons that cloud their

GIFTED AND TALENTED ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS HAVE JOINED THE RANKS OF THE POPULATION AT-RISK OF DROPPING OUT OF SCHOOL AS, MORE OFTEN THAN NOT, THEY ARE VICTIMS OF UNCHALLENGING STRATEGIES AND MATERIALS THAT DO NOT ENTICE THEM TO STAY IN SCHOOL.

decisions (i.e., "comparing apples and oranges"). Finally, self assessment by students seems to be affected by what others (e.g., peers, parents, teachers) think of the student. Therefore, it seems necessary to avoid relying on a single information source and to clarify giftedness for school personnel as well as for parents, so that gifted and talented English language learners can be properly identified.

Strategies for Planning Adequate Identification Practices

Parting from the premise that all children have the potential for giftedness, ensuring opportunities for these gifts to develop should be an educational priority. Teachers must generate a multiple source assessment record for each student with formal and informal data, including work samples. The following steps can be useful in gathering information.

Collect background data and work samples for each student. Determine the language proficiency of the student, cultural and socio-economic background, home environment, parental education level and school involvement. Important inferences that can facilitate the interpretation of additional data included in the assessment records can be drawn from this information. If the educator is unfamiliar with the implications of the background data of the student, it will be helpful to request assistance from members of the child's cultural enclave. Additionally, work samples from home and school could be enlightening in assessing language development and creativity.

Observe the child's language and social behaviors. Make use of a gifted and talented English language learner's

behavioral profile to determine if any of these behaviors show potential for giftedness. Add to the profile by requesting parental input on how the child is perceived and how he or she acts at home. A community member can also serve as a source of input if parents are unavailable.

Examine cultural and linguistic behaviors of the child and determine if they can be obscuring the child's potential giftedness. For example, student A is quiet, retiring and hardly asks questions. The initial teacher reaction is to pronounce him or her as not bright, not curious or not interested. However, these behaviors may be a result of the child's language fluency level or of inhibition resulting from particular cultural canons (e.g., "Don't speak unless spoken to").

Consider all nominations. If nominations have been offered, consider them as part of the student identification records. Note characteristics that reappear in these instruments and in the behavioral and linguistic inventories.

Examine standardized test scores in light of the demographic data collected on the student. Determine if these scores are consistent with the rest of the information

Insights - continued on page 14

UPCOMING EVENTS

Language, Race and Power in Schools

Sponsored by
National Coalition of Education Activists

Co-sponsored by
Network of Educators on the Americas

July 30 - August 2, 1998
Washington, D.C.

For more information, call 914-876-4580
or e-mail <rfbs@aol.com>.

WOW Workshop on Workshops

Sponsored by
Intercultural Development
Research Association

September 24 - 25, 1998
San Antonio, Texas

For more information, see Page 12, see
<www.idra.org> or call 210-684-8180.

collected. If bias is evident, use these scores as a teaching tool as they are indicative of what the student must learn.

Draw a profile of the student and determine placement based on the traits emerging from the previous information compared with profiles offered in the research literature on culturally and linguistically diverse students. This information enables educators to determine whether the student should be recommended for a talent pool to be monitored for later entry into a gifted and talented program or if he or she should be recommended for

participation at the present time.

Existing biases and lack of awareness regarding gifted and talented English language learners have hindered the process of determining the most appropriate identification, placement and instruction procedures and have led to identification procedures that only spotlight students who most apparently fit the norm used by the schools. These factors, coupled with escalating school dropout rates, particularly for Hispanic youth, are indicators that schools have failed to adequately serve these students.

Gifted and talented English language

learners have joined the ranks of the population at-risk of dropping out of school as, more often than not, they are victims of unchallenging strategies and materials that do not entice them to stay in school. The suggestions offered in this article are not to be conceived as an effort to standardize the process of identifying and instructing gifted and talented English language learners. They are a set of guidelines to assist teachers and other school personnel in better serving this population.

Andrea Bermúdez, Ph.D., and Judith Márquez, Ph.D., are professors of multicultural studies in the school of education, University of Houston at Clear Lake.

DEFINITION OF CHILDREN WITH OUTSTANDING TALENT

Neuroscience and cognitive psychology provide us with new insights into what it means for children and youth to be outstanding talents and require us to develop a new definition of this population. The term “gifted” connotes a mature power rather than a developing ability and, therefore, is antithetic to recent research findings about children. The following definition, based on the definition used in the federal *Jacob K. Javits Gifted and Talented Students Education Act*, reflects today’s knowledge and thinking:

Children and youth with outstanding talent perform or show the potential for performing at remarkably high levels of accomplishment when compared with others of their age, experience or environment.

These children and youth exhibit high performance capability in intellectual, creative and/or artistic areas, possess an unusual leadership capacity or excel in specific academic fields. They require services or activities not ordinarily provided by the schools.

Outstanding talents are present in children and youth from all cultural groups, across all economic strata and in all areas of human endeavor.

To put this definition into practice, schools must develop a system to identify gifted and talented students that

- **Seeks variety** – looks throughout a range of disciplines for students with diverse talents;
- **Uses many assessment measures** – uses a variety of appraisals so that schools can find students in different talent areas and at different ages;
- **Is free of bias** – provides students of all backgrounds with equal access to appropriate opportunities;
- **Is fluid** – uses assessment procedures that can accommodate students who develop at different rates and whose interests may change as they mature;
- **Identifies potential** – discovers talents that are not readily apparent in students, as well as those that are obvious; and

- **Assesses motivation** – takes into account the drive and passion that play a key role in accomplishment.

With a broader understanding of intelligence, and with many ways to identify and develop talent in children, we can build the excellent schools we need for the future and provide our exceptional students with better opportunities.

Recommendations

The responsibility for challenging students with exceptional talent much be shared by many sectors of society and levels of government. Society must first value intellectual and artistic accomplishment in children as much as it values athletic ability or physical beauty. In addition, schools and parents need to encourage hard work, hold high expectations for students and push students to the outer limits of their potential. Achieving such a goal requires that appropriate educational options be made available for talented students. The following national recommendations for action would provide pathways toward an education that allows U.S. students to be as well prepared as those anywhere in the world.

- ✓ **Establish challenging curriculum standards.**
- ✓ **Establish high-level learning opportunities.**
- ✓ **Ensure access to early childhood education.**
- ✓ **Expand opportunities for economically disadvantaged and minority children.**
- ✓ **Encourage appropriate teacher training and technical assistance.**
- ✓ **Match world performance.**

Understanding the strengths and weaknesses of U.S. education helps us to define the kind of schools we need to compete in the world economy. The schools we need in the future must provide a richer curriculum for all students, realize each student’s potential and develop outstanding talent.

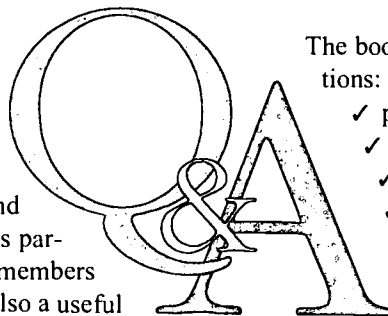
– This is an excerpt from *National Excellence: A Case for Developing America’s Talent* by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (October 1993).

IDRA PUBLICATION AVAILABLE...

Questions and Answers about Bilingual Education

by Dr. Alicia Salinas Sosa

Even after 30 years of federal funding for bilingual education, questions continue to surface about this educational program. *Questions and Answers about Bilingual Education* identifies the 23 most frequently asked questions and provides brief but complete answers to clarify misconceptions and misunderstandings held by non-educators such as parents, community board members and school board members regarding bilingual education and its goals. It is also a useful resource for educators, such as principals and assistant superintendents, who may not have had formal training in bilingual education.



The book is divided into four easy to follow sections:

- ✓ program questions,
- ✓ rationale questions,
- ✓ implementation questions,
- ✓ evaluation questions.

This publication is designed to clarify the benefits to be derived from a quality bilingual education program and to empower the reader to assist other educators and members of the community.

(ISBN 1-878550-48-9; 1993; 32 pages; \$10)

Published by the Intercultural Development Research Association. A truly bilingual publication: *Questions and Answers* is printed in both English and Spanish. Price includes shipping and handling. Discounts are available for large orders.

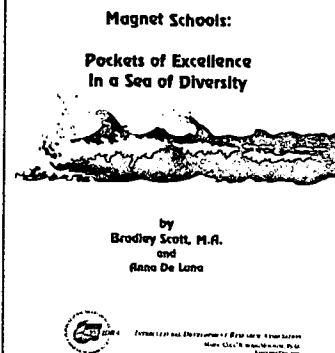
To order, send check or purchase order to: Intercultural Development Research Association, 5835 Callaghan Road, Suite 350, San Antonio, Texas 78228-1190; or send a purchase order by fax, 210/684-5389. For more information call 210/684-8180 or e-mail: idra@idra.org.

MAGNET SCHOOLS: POCKETS OF EXCELLENCE IN A SEA OF DIVERSITY

Bradley Scott, M.A. and Anna De Luna

Learn 12 strategies that have been proven to work!

- ✓ Strategies for staffing
- ✓ Strategies for student selection and assignment
- ✓ Strategies for student selection and enrollment
- ✓ Strategies for student-teacher ratios
- ✓ Strategies for curriculum
- ✓ Strategies for the magnet school image
- ✓ Strategies for the physical environment
- ✓ Strategies for student outcomes
- ✓ Strategies for student support
- ✓ Strategies for race relations
- ✓ Strategies for parent and community involvement
- ✓ Strategies for magnet and non-magnet school collaboration



One of the only multi-district studies of magnet schools, the book examines 12 important indicators of effectiveness in magnet schools that are used as a strategy for school desegregation. *Pockets of Excellence* reports on 11 magnet school campuses in four school districts in Federal Region VI involving the states of Arkansas, Louisiana and Texas. In addition to the information listed above, *Pockets of Excellence* also offers recommendations about effective strategies in the operation of magnet schools that might be adopted by non-magnet schools in desegregated settings as a part of their school improvement and restructuring efforts. Wherever students may be found – regardless of their race, sex, national origin or economic circumstance – they can succeed. What *Pockets of Excellence* demonstrates is that schools with diverse populations can produce success. (ISBN: 1-878550-54-3; 1995; 100 pages; \$25)

To order, send check or purchase order to: Intercultural Development Research Association, 5835 Callaghan Road, Suite 350, San Antonio, Texas 78228-1190; or send a purchase order by fax, 210/684-5389. For more information call 210/684-8180 or e-mail: idra@idra.org.

CHANGING FACES, CHANGING PLACES: CHALLENGES AS WE ENTER A NEW CENTURY



Anniversaries make us pause and pull out memories. We think back about the early days when people joined together and about why they did so. We think about that purpose and how it may have changed through the years.

In IDRA's case, that purpose has not changed. As long as excellence in schools is available to only a few students, IDRA will keep its purpose – its mission – to create schools that work for *all* children.

In this issue of the *IDRA Newsletter*, we focus on **gifted and talented students who are English language learners, minority or economically disadvantaged**. As the articles in this newsletter examine, procedures for identifying gifted and talented students have shortchanged many children by using inappropriate tools and an inappropriate language. Then, when “atypical” students *are* placed in gifted and talented programs, they often face an inappropriate curriculum and environment.

IDRA envisions schools that create more inclusive identification and assessment processes that rely less on English language proficiency and specific cultural experiences and more on procedures that recognize giftedness through such means as parent surveys, observations, criterion-based performance and portfolios. Thus, other qualities of giftedness would be recognized, such as skills in logical and creative thinking,

the ability to transfer knowledge from one situation to another, and using knowledge in multilingual situations to solve problems and face real-life challenges.

To this end, IDRA has worked in various ways, such as the following.

- IDRA provided training and technical assistance to administrators and teachers to improve gifted and talented programs. Examples include *Project SUPERIOR* funded by the U.S. Department of Education to make gifted and talented programs more inclusive, accessible and productive and the *Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Program in Immigrant Education* through which IDRA helped a middle school implement innovative strategies for serving secondary level recent immigrant populations.
- IDRA worked with a group of *educators convened by the Texas Education Agency* to seek answers to key questions about equity and excellence in various arenas including gifted and talented programs.
- IDRA designed and implemented a model dropout prevention program, the *Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program*, demonstrating that “non-traditional” students have extraordinary gifts and talents.

IDRA will continue to be committed to working with policy-makers, educators

and parents to assist them to raising the right questions in assessing how equity and excellence are being addressed in gifted and talented programs that propose to serve all students. Such questions include:

- Does the vision embrace student diversity, and is this reflected in the identification and programmatic processes?
- Are equity and excellence part of the criteria for assessing the quality of gifted and talented programs? Is inclusion defined in terms of accessibility of linguistically and culturally different learners to these programs and to learning?
- Is there a multi-pronged, multi-criteria identification and assessment process that ensures inclusivity of diversity?
- What evidence exists that gifted and talented programs have not overlooked minority students, poor students or students who are learning English?
- How is instruction modified for gifted students who are not proficient in English?

This is our continuing commitment to the future, to equity-based excellence and to creating schools that work for all children – including “atypical” gifted and talented children.



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