

Advocacy

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The Spill-Over Effect: An Advocacy Strategy

The effectiveness of advocacy efforts is often dependent on the concepts of positioning and timing. Advocates recognize that where and when ideas are promoted maximizes their abilities to influence. As educational programs vie for fiscal and academic support in today's socio-political climate, positioning and timing become even more vital to gain the attention and support necessary to sustain gifted education as a concept and service.

The spill-over effect is intended to gather support for gifted education by illustrating where and when it can provide meaningfully and successfully for the education of students in other programs. Germane to the spill-over effect is the concept of reciprocity among educational programs or the means by which one program can share content and pedagogy to enhance another program. The spill-over effect reinforces the affiliation, rather than the isolation, of gifted education. This advocacy strategy evokes controversy. Some people argue that the spill-over effect obliterates the distinctiveness of gifted education and diminishes its value. Others argue that every specialized educational program can contribute to the education of all students *under certain conditions*. While these arguments continue and are not resolved easily, the need and efforts to advocate on behalf of gifted students also continues and must be addressed.

Positioning and timing the spill-over effect is dependent on a sequence of activities, each of which demands specific attention to purpose and appropriate rhetoric. This is necessary in order to achieve where and when gifted education can be shown as a significant contributor and partner with other programs.

Positioning the Spill-Over Effect

Step 1: Similarity

This step requires that the advocate listen intently to identify the “place” where gifted education and another program share a common goal. “We are trying to accomplish the same objective!” is the rhetoric stimulating the possible connection between programs.

Step 2: Attachment

This step reinforces the benefits of a shared effort, the establishment of an academic relationship, and the development of collegiality. “We can work together to . . .” is the rhetoric important to initiate the attachment process.

Step 3: Explanation

This step stresses the specific qualities of the content or pedagogical practice that will spill over from gifted education to another program. This step pro-

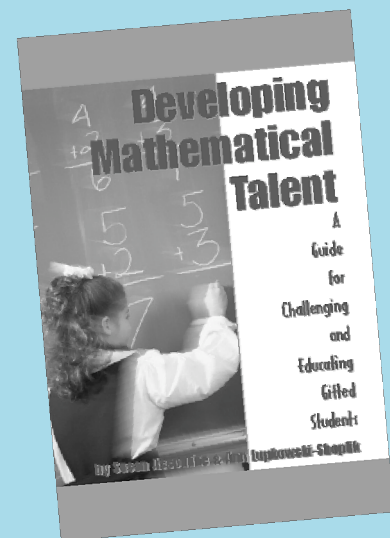
vides the clarity necessary for implementation of the practice that will spill over. "This is how to . . ." is the initial rhetoric important to this step.

Step 4: Integration

This step facilitates how each program can share practices without loss of the program's identity and uniqueness. "While we will be . . ., we still will be . . ." is the essential rhetoric of this phase of the

spill-over advocacy strategy.

Advocacy efforts that are specific in purpose and precise in procedure are more apt to be influential in shaping opinion and action. The steps to conduct the spill-over effect have the potential to create the opportunity for educators to engage in dialogue and either directly or indirectly find the place and time to support their own and each other's programs. [GCT](#)



Written for teachers and parents of mathematically talented youth in elementary and middle school, *Developing Mathematical Talent* is a multifaceted handbook that integrates the unique roles of educators and parents. Rather than providing a formula to address the needs of all mathematically gifted students, the book responds to the issues concerning the wide range of abilities represented by talented students. The regular curriculum is inappropriate for most talented youth, and this book provides a means for identifying the needs of mathematically talented students and matching the curriculum to those needs.

Taken as a whole, *Developing Mathematical Talent* describes a systematic model for comprehensively programming and planning for mathematically talented youth. It provides teachers and parents with the tools they need to plan effectively for their students. It will be an essential addition to the libraries of gifted coordinators and mathematics curriculum specialists.

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