The History of Urban Gifted Education

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The history of the world could be told through countless biographies, as Carlyle said, and these biographies undoubtedly would represent gifted individuals and their contributions at different times in different cultures of our world. The Greeks and Romans recognized the value of talent, as did the tribes of the Bible, responding to the parables told by Jesus. The Chinese Dynasties and Confucius as a scholar saw value in educating those from all social strata according to their talents. Cultures embraced the recognition and development of giftedness as a way to determine potential contributors to a society—as leaders, even philosopher kings in Plato's imagined world, or guildsmen, or clerics. Galton made the observation that we lost a unique possibility of inherited ability during the Middle Ages when gifted males were recruited into the clergy, thus losing valuable contributions from potential children of these brilliant men. And the history of the world and these societal contributions have occurred predominantly in cities, as Arnold Toynbee (1972) has noted in his text *Cities of Destiny*.

Thus, it is not surprising that cities are where gifted education began, from Hollingworth's Speyer School experiment in New York City on the East Coast, to Terman's efforts on the West Coast in large cities like San Diego, to the work of others in large Midwestern cities like St. Louis, Cleveland, Quincy (IL), and Chicago. In 1918, in Los Angeles, so-called opportunity classes and similar groupings in Rochester and Cleveland sought to identify the brightest grade-school children and separate them from their slower learning classmates through application of individual ability testing (Chapman, 1988). By 1940, in Cleveland, more than 1,200 bright children were enrolled in 17 major centers catering exclusively to their needs, utilizing some of the methods of earlier experimental schools like Horace Mann and Winnetka (Tannenbaum, 1983).

During the 1930s, honors classes, special classes in foreign languages, and other extracurricular programs were offered to the gifted in the secondary schools. In various parts of the nation, special schools exclusively for the gifted were established; these schools were typically situated in big cities with large concentrations of students from which could be drawn the most intellectually able.

Early research in gifted education was conducted in these urban sites, and our first longitudinal research on program effectiveness was carried out in New York on the Speyer School (Hollingworth, 1926) and in Cleveland on the Major Work Program (Barbe, 1953). Thus, the history of our field is inextricably linked to the work that went on in cities throughout most of this past century.

In many respects, an examination of urban settings as a rich reservoir of insight about gifted education seems counterintuitive. We know the problems that urban education has faced over the past half century, and the spate of reports that have been issued at regular intervals, decrying the conditions in large city school districts in respect to serving the poor and culturally diverse, the bureaucracies that keep anything from getting done effectively, and the problems with facilities' upkeep, teacher unions, and a myriad of other problems that escalate, based on the scope and size of the problems (see Passow, 1963). However, for all of the problems in urban America, gifted education has always been a bright spot.

Urban programs often have been more highly evolved than other settings for gifted learners because the critical mass of learners is available to try multiple delivery models and respond to needs in different ways. It is also possible for urban centers in our country to provide comprehensive articulated options across the breadth of needs. Moreover, leaders in urban education of the gifted, typically being able to devote full-time efforts to program development, have been more circumspect about the nature of what programs and services should be able to do and why. As the Director of Chicago Public Schools' Gifted Program from 1970–1990 stated:

> When administrators of gifted programs can feel they have converted their more superficial add-on programs into major curriculum strands, and that they have pushed their programs toward greater comprehensiveness in the areas of curriculum scope, range of ability level, program type, and support services, then they may wish . . . to ponder whether schools have a great or limited potential to affect positively the education of gifted students. (Ronvik, 1989, p. 240)

From the beginning, urban settings also have grappled with the poverty issue in respect to gifted education because these settings have always had a large percentage of children coming from poverty backgrounds. In New York City throughout the 20th century, the majority of students have come from low-income backgrounds, many children of immigrants. Moreover, 60% or more of urban populations in general are comprised of different ethnic groups. Thus, the central issue of our field has been studied and addressed through urban programs for almost a century. Recommendations from early reports on improving the state of gifted education have focused on the need to include more students from underrepresented groups, provide more diversity in program options, and conduct more research to demonstrate the efficacy of gifted programs in various configurations. One early chronicler of gifted education even specifically addressed this issue (Gold, 1965):

> Anxiety in official quarters over problems in the big cities must eventually transcend concern with the culturally deprived alone and come to grips with superior educational opportunity for young people in the culture-rich metropolis. . . . the spate of research in the next decade on urban education cannot fail to give attention to problems of educating the gifted in large cities. (p. 445)

Yet much of what we know about the effectiveness of urban gifted programs from the past is anecdotal or descriptive in nature, not empirical, making it difficult to generalize to today's efforts in any setting. Most urban programs that were run from the 1960s through the 1980s collected data on student learning and did formal evaluations. However, the work was never translated into journal articles to find its way to the field. Rather, it was archived in Research and Evaluation offices in the individual urban school district, never to be used as a basis for further study or as the foundation on which to build future programs.

Leadership in gifted education in urban settings historically has been strong, with many of these leaders having the deepest knowledge base of anyone in the field about programs and services that work. People like Dave Hermanson in San Diego and Rick Ronvik in Chicago had depth of experience with the way that programs played out in urban contexts and were successful in developing and institutionalizing their efforts across decades.

As problems of diversity and poverty have exacerbated achievement of learning for all, urban education reform movements have turned away from gifted education as an acceptable avenue of practice, often decentralizing program efforts to the building level and stripping the program leadership of authority to do what is needed. In the process, they have dismantled some lighthouse programs and services that have been stellar in the history of this field. Perhaps this article and special issue may serve as a beacon of hope that we need, as never before, to heed our history and learn from it and the urban pioneers who forged it. The model gifted programs throughout the 1960s–1980s were in San Diego, Chicago, and selected sites in New York City. Today, the sites of greatest interest to international visitors are of two types: (a) our residential and day high schools that serve the gifted in 13 states but are often not located in urban settings, or (b) exurban sites that offer an array of program options, including full-time centers and school-based services, and are linked to a surrounding metro area such as Montgomery County, MD, and Fairfax County, VA, both sprawling school districts that are in the top 20 in population in the country. Yet, the models that were developed in cities in earlier times remain important testimony to effective program development and implementation for our best learners.

The next section of this article chronicles the history and evolution of urban programs in three sites—Chicago, New York, and San Diego—to profile the extensive efforts that have preceded our work in this field today and to illustrate the extensiveness of those efforts to focus on this population of learners within our largest and most diverse national settings.

Chicago Public Schools as a Prototype

A system-wide model that stressed coherent and cohesive design and implementation, the Chicago Public Schools gifted program served more than 25,000 students out of an overall student population of half a million in the 1980s. At its height, the program ran 40 citywide options, six regional centers, and 518 local programs in individual schools. It employed 25 full-time personnel to work on the administration and service delivery aspects of the program at the central office or regional center sites, including six full-time program coordinators who were responsible for program design and curriculum, and psychologists and social workers who assisted with testing, counseling, and home visits (VanTassel-Baska, 1983).

The program offered museology options at 24 different museums in the city for students in grades 7–12 where they could be assigned to a curator one day a week for a semester to learn how the museum worked, the nature of its subject matter, and exhibit construction, culminating with a student exhibit as the project. Chicago's cultural enrichment program was selected as one of the top 10 programs for disadvantaged gifted students in 1984 as it showcased opportunities to use the city's resources to benefit the promising poor—attending concerts at Orchestra Hall by The Chicago Symphony; seeing professional classical and contemporary theater, ballet, and art in world-class venues like The Goodman Theater and the Art Institute; and even experiencing opera (Maxwell, 1984).

The hallmark feature of Chicago's elementary programs was the focus on critical thinking, achieved through the careful selection and use of materials like Matt Lipman's *Philosophy for Children* and Jerome Bruner's *Man: A Course of Study* curriculum, among others. Its secondary programs were early examples of the use of the Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) programs in addition to mentorship and internship

opportunities. The research and evaluation department in Chicago conducted a landmark study for its time (circa 1978), an assessment of critical thinking gains of gifted students in programs, using a regression discontinuity design model. Results showed significant and important gains for the gifted students in programs. This study was never formally published although the report circulated in Illinois for several years (Chicago Public Schools, 1978).

Chicago was one of the first large cities to adopt the talent search concept, using off-level testing and providing programs at local universities for gifted students who met the criteria for participation in fast-paced and advanced mathematics, Latin, creative writing, and other courses at middle school age. It became incorporated into their testing and programming efforts in 1981 and has continued to this day as one of the most viable options for the highly gifted (Ronvik, 1989).

University-based programs in gifted education have also been hallmarks for Chicago, including Northwestern University. It has offered summer and academic year programs for Chicago students since 1983 along with scholarship support for Chicago students to attend several special programs including a Fry Foundation initiative to work with families of poverty on transition issues during the middle school years for gifted learners, providing counseling, seminars on getting scholarship aid, and visits to campuses. However, other universities in the city also have offered important program options to gifted students in Chicago such as Loyola University, University of Chicago, Chicago State University, and the University of Illinois at Chicago among others.

Currently more than 92% of the student population of Chicago Public Schools is non-White, and 95% are on free or reduced lunch. Students in Chicago Public Schools are identified as gifted through the use of multiple approaches, including ability, achievement, and recommendations from parents and teachers. Threshold cutoffs are determined based on performance citywide each year on the relevant measures employed. Use of both traditional and nontraditional measures are used to assess students for selection, including nonverbal assessments and off-level achievement testing. Students scoring above the 80th percentile nationally in both reading and math achievement are considered for most full-time programs in the city. Approximately 5% of these students are served in 155 gifted programs at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. Thirteen centers are in place across the regional areas of Chicago to serve these students, including three for English language learners (ELL). Classical schools offer accelerated comprehensive services to K–6 students at several sites, including full-day kindergarten. Six academic centers for seventh and eighth graders provide fast-paced instruction in academic areas. The International Gifted Program is offered at two school sites for grades 6–8 and offers intensive language study in French in addition to the other core academic subjects and advanced research and technology opportunities.

In the wake of Illinois losing statewide funding for several years, Chicago has become more decentralized in the administration of gifted programs, ceding authority to principals while retaining control over admissions to the city's programs. Consequently, there is little control over curriculum, instruction, the use of differentiated materials , or professional development of teachers at a centralized level of program organization. However, in recent years, the integrity of the program structure has been shored up, with the program staff retaining control over the models to be developed through grouping and curriculum. One strategy used by program administrators has been to establish a curriculum framework that represents the program goals and outcomes from grades K–8. The structure of that framework may be seen in Figure 1. Each of the goals has been translated into specific outcomes with sample activities provided in each of the four core subject areas, and sample performance-based assessments worked out with a task and rubric. A menu of recommended materials also is provided to offer direction for teachers in their work. The framework then is operationalized through annual workshops that provide content-based instructional approaches for use in classrooms.

Strong secondary schools and programs abound with International Baccalaureate schools, magnets, and other specialized options. A tiered service delivery system also still functions at elementary and middle school levels, with centers citywide for the highly gifted, classical schools, magnets, and neighborhood school-based programs for students with strong academic aptitude in one area. Citywide programs such as cultural enrichment, museology, and music still operate (T. Wallace, personal communication, June 2010).

New York City as a Prototype

A loosely strung necklace of citywide options open to students from all five boroughs in addition to school-based opportunities, dependent on interest and resource decisions, characterize the nature of New York City's programs and services for the gifted. The oldest continuously operating programs now exist in New York City—Brooklyn Tech (1918), Bronx High School (1938), the Hunter College Schools (1930), and Stuyvesant High School

GOAL 1:
To develop selected themes, issues, concepts, and real-world problems.

GOAL 2:
To develop critical and creative thinking skills.

GOAL 3:
To develop problem-solving skills.

GOAL 4:
To develop metacognitive skills that foster independent and self-directed learning.

GOAL 5:
To develop high-level advanced communication skills in oral, written, viewing, and technological modes.

GOAL 6:
To develop self-understandings and social skills that promote healthy relationships and coping mechanisms.

Figure 1. Chicago Public Schools curriculum framework, 2009.

(1904), where intellectually gifted and scientifically prone students could matriculate. Waiting lists for these schools have sometimes numbered in the thousands. At Hunter, for example, 3,000 were on the elementary waiting list in 2003.

The Hunter programs have historically offered advanced learning systematically at secondary levels and sporadically at elementary levels, dependent on differing philosophies of principals, many of whom were not socialized or trained in gifted education, taking the school in the direction of a good developmentally appropriate program for typical learners rather than a sterling example of gifted education. Part of this evolution may be grounded in the history of both schools, the elementary school being started in 1870 as a demonstration school for Hunter College faculty, whereas the secondary school, begun in 1955 as a school for intellectually gifted girls, always was focused on the education of the gifted. These programs have been subject to both a written descriptive study of their impact and a more contemporary evaluation of effectiveness (Subotnik, Soller, & Hood, 2004), which challenged the extent to which the schools currently have a clear sense of mission regarding target audience and interventions.

Bronx, Stuyvesant, and Brooklyn Technical High Schools, established in the early part of the 20th century, have continued to be models for secondary gifted programming, especially in mathematics and the sciences, where students are carefully mentored to participate in the Intel (Westinghouse) competition throughout their years of attendance. Together, they serve 12,000 New York students annually. Other than a few residential schools, these three schools have little competition in the quality of mentoring their students have received during the past 75 years. The commensurate rewards that have accrued to students and the school testify to this success (see Berger, 1994). Moreover, each school boasts Nobel laureates as graduates, 7 from Bronx and 4 from Stuyvesant to date.

Begun as a single school in 1926, the Speyer School, under the direction of Leta Hollingworth, became the first example of an elementary school for gifted children in the city, even before Hunter. It soon became a prototype all its own for several features: differentiated curriculum carefully developed into units of study, the use of special enrichment options like foreign language and philosophy introduced at primary level to gifted children, and the use of diagnostic assessment for curriculum decisions in a nongraded setting (Hollingworth, 1926). Sadly, the school was disbanded a year after Hollingworth's death, only to be resurrected in recent years by educators at her university—Teachers College—who ran an early childhood program for the gifted in her name (see Borland & Wright, 1994).

Other pioneering efforts in gifted education can be traced to New York City as well. Arts programs for gifted students have flourished over the past 100 years in the city. The Performing Arts School model originated in New York and spread to other large cities and to states that have established residential schools for the arts over the past 30 years. Perhaps the best national model for early childhood education of the gifted was pioneered by Virginia Ehrlich in New York City through funding from the Astor Foundation in the 1970s. Targeted at pre-K–3 gifted children, it provided differentiated content-based curriculum delivered in self-contained cross-graded classrooms, demonstrating the viability of early identification and intervention for urban children.

The role of competitions in academic areas has a long and rich history in New York City, especially in both math and science areas including the Intel science competition mentioned earlier, MATHCOUNTS, and the International Olympiad competitions across subjects. Special math camps and Math Circles are popular new additions to mathematics program emphases in the last several years for students who can take advantage of them (Mitchell, 2009).

Today, the city is the largest public school system in the country, serving

more than a million students whose ethnic background numbers 40% Hispanic, 32% Black, 14% White, and 14% Asian/Pacific Islander and who are 60% diverse in respect to background or being born in another country (Berger, 2007). Matthews (2009), in her contemporary case study of New York City gifted programs, reported that there were 268 gifted programs in the city in 2006, including elementary and secondary, self-contained, and schoolwide options. Out of 1,300 schools in the city, this figure would be seen as spotty and uneven as programs and services do not reach all of the students who even qualify, based on ability and achievement measures. Her analysis of what is needed is stronger administrative support, a systematic teacher training program, using the new teacher education standards, and some consistency in program design and accountability for gifted student learning. She also suggested the need for a multidimensional approach to identification that would yield greater numbers of diverse learners in the city's gifted programs. As in many locales, both urban and suburban, the use of standardized tests as sole criteria for program entry too often becomes the lightning rod issue, detracting from providing programs to children who can clearly benefit.

San Diego as a Prototype

San Diego is the oldest continuously operating citywide gifted program in the country. The catalyst for the gifted and talented program (GATE) origins rested with a 1948–1949 large cities testing report, showing that the achievement of superior students in the city was less than would be expected given their ability. Coupled with social adjustment data suggesting that they had only a 50% chance to achieve at their level of capacity, a pilot program was begun with 300 students. In 1950, an NEA report substantiated the locally identified need to provide for the mentally superior in schools. Terman himself was a consultant to this effort (*History of San Diego Gifted Program*, n.d.).

Although the program had nascent beginnings as a pilot effort in the late 1940s, the major activities began to develop and expand in 1958 under the direction of a citywide committee, chaired by the deputy superintendent, and have continued in some form today. In 1958, a district-wide screening program was adopted for grades 3, 7, and 10. Sixteen elementary schools were designated as centers for the gifted, with gifted students grouped with high-achieving students. In 1974, there were 37 programs serving students in grades 3–6. Special classes or seminars for "poorly adjusted gifted students" were limited to 15 students per site. Secondary students tested out of classes and accelerated graduation requirements. Smaller groups and independent learning allowed the students to work at a higher level. A site-based teacher worked with these gifted students and their teachers to facilitate progress. A counselor also worked with the gifted students at each school site.

A "Study of the First Order Gifted Children" was conducted in 1957–1959 to determine who should be identified as gifted in San Diego (see *History of San Diego Gifted Program*, n.d.). Researchers found that students with IQ 148+ were the most dissatisfied with their school situations and thus the most in need of special services. The solution employed was to group them in small seminar classes. At the same time, a state study came to similar conclusions, and a Mentally Gifted Minor Program was started at the state level. This program was established 11 years after the start of the San Diego program and provided meager financial backing to support both identification and services in local districts within the state. By 1961, identification had become two-tiered due to state guidelines. Scores of IQ 132–139 on a Binet were named "state gifted." Scores from IQ 140+ were classified "San Diego gifted." State-identified gifted students were placed in classes for rapid learners at their home school while the higher scoring group of students was placed in regional centers. As early as 1972, the state of California and the city of San Diego were concerned about the lack of culturally diverse students in the program and sought to remedy the problem by examining alternative measures for identification, coupled with lowering the cutoff scores to the top 2% on ability. An evaluation of the identification model in 1987 led to the inclusion of the Raven's nonverbal ability assessment as a tool for finding more underrepresented populations.

In 1966, four First Order Gifted (FOG) secondary seminar centers for students were opened for students with IQ 155+. An experimental independent study program was started at Point Loma High School for these students. It was modeled after the "Oxford Plan" with seminars, teachers as tutors/mentors, and the use of community resources. A summer program was begun in the 1970s but disbanded in the 1980s due to lack of funding.

Throughout the 1960s, the education of teachers was a priority, with elementary teachers expected to attend 6 weeks of summer training each year related to gifted education and the nature of their teaching with gifted students. In 1969, the Association of San Diego Educators of the Gifted (ASDEG) formed to support teachers of the gifted and put on an annual conference, which continues to this day. Since 1982, the city also has sponsored a Distinguished Lecture each year,

focused on the education of gifted children.

Currently, the San Diego City Schools GATE seminar program for intellectually gifted students serves students who score at the 99.9 percentile on the Raven Progressive Matrices and students who score at the 99.6–99.8 percentile with one or more factors (environmental, economic, language/cultural, social/emotional, and health). Seminar programs currently exist in 51 schools, including 20 elementary schools, 15 middle schools, and 13 high schools. Students who score below those threshold levels, but above the 95th percentile on the Raven, and also score at the 95th percentile or higher for 2 years on two subtests of a standardized achievement battery, qualify for a cluster-grouped program at a local school site where they are placed with 25%–75% of children not identified as gifted, depending on the school's grouping model decision. Options also include placement of diverse students not identified in the classrooms in order to attain balance that is representative of the school site and cross-grade grouping. In smaller school sites, where grouping may be impractical, gifted children are provided an individualized plan for instruction.

Administratively, the program has evolved to include a GATE administrator, appointed to oversee GATE personnel and all aspects of the program. A Pupil Study Center was formed consisting of a half-time psychiatrist and two clinical psychologists to provide services for gifted children with severe adjustment problems. Psychologists increased to eight in the 1980s but have decreased somewhat in subsequent years. Teacher resource specialists also work with teachers and designated GATE sites to assist with differentiation practices. Several state and local rule changes have affected the operation of the program in various ways, including the decision to include at least 50% of the students in classes as GATE-identified, the decision to do away with a 200-minute-a-week contact time requirement, and the decision to encourage differentiation in every subject area (M. Dejiosia, personal communication, February, 2010).

Comparison of Prototypes

In all three cities, there was an early concern voiced from within the school structure to respond to the needs of the gifted. These voices came from the ranks of teachers and administrators, and in the case of San Diego and New York, also outside consultants from universities in the area. There was little evidence that parents were a major force in the initiatory stages of program development in these sites. Although the concerns were more for academic rigor in Chicago and New York, the San Diego concerns were clearly more in the realm of social adjustment and underachievement.

All three cities chose citywide responses to the issue of how best to serve the gifted. All selected some form of ability-grouped settings throughout each city center. Both Chicago and San Diego had a citywide plan of action that distributed the efforts equally among elementary and secondary levels. In New York, the strongest responses were at secondary level and in the math and science subject areas. Interestingly, Hunter College High School was set up for girls only, testimony to concerns about the education of this group in particular. Chicago was exemplary among the three in delineating the nature of the curriculum to be provided at each level and the most desirable packaged programs that might be used to accomplish program goals. In New York, Speyer School was the one site that, through Hollingworth's work, had a written, defined curriculum for use in each area of study. All three cities spawned comprehensive programs within sites that included testing, academic, and social and emotional services to the gifted population. Each urban locale employed psychologists, social workers, and counselors on a full-time basis to address the needs of this population, recognizing the need to address all aspects of development in their schooling process.

The growth of urban programs was marked by political problems from the start, however. New York City could not or chose not to retain the Speyer School and did not expand its Hunter College school operations K–12 although enough students qualified for several such schools. In San Diego and Chicago, the local budget has shrunk considerably over the years as other priorities have pushed gifted education to the side. Urban education problems of poverty and race have dominated the political landscape in these settings for decades, leaving gifted education as an easy target for reduction in spending if not elimination in some aspects of program support.

State funding for gifted education in both Illinois and California, which constitute the two oldest state programs in the country, have always been inadequate for fully funding the cost of gifted education in those states. Both started as incentive funding programs and never moved to the next level of support. Thus, both San Diego and Chicago suffered from a paucity of per pupil state allocations equal to the amount needed to run their programs effectively. New York as a state put no or limited money into gifted education over the years, rendering the city even more helpless to try to initiate citywide opportunities for these learners.

What Were the Hallmarks of Strong Urban Gifted Education Programs?

Although we can see the marks of deterioration within these citywide programs across the decades for a variety of reasons, we can also see the vestiges of our richest history as a field. If urban education was the heart of advanced and sophisticated program development and implementation of gifted education, what were the features that made these programs so effective and provided the continuity and longevity so often not seen in gifted programs in other types of settings? We can identify five such distinctive features that have marked urban education of the gifted. They are:

1. **Citywide offerings targeted at cross-age groups of gifted learners.** Cities that have made their mark in serving gifted learners well have been those that have used their cultural resources to the advantage of their top learners and those from poverty backgrounds. Community resources like museums, libraries, symphonies, universities, laboratories, and theaters have become sites for programs, and their staffs have taken on the mantle of experts in instructing gifted learners in real-world learning. These learners also have been congregated by interest and aptitude, not age, into these off-site successful programming opportunities.
2. **Full-time centers or schools for gifted learners, experimental in orientation.** Cities also have been the major sites for experimentation in gifted education via full-time placements of these learners in differentiated full-day programs and services. Beginning with the Speyer School in New York and other options in that city, urban sites have been showcases of what is possible in effective education of the gifted. By visiting New York, Chicago, or San Diego, it has been possible to see most of the viable models for gifted education in operation, allowing practitioners to make reasonable judgments about what works in practice, especially with students from low-income and culturally diverse backgrounds. San Diego's focus on underachieving highly gifted learners in self-contained settings over the last 50 years has been an admirable model.
3. **Comprehensive articulated offerings across the span of K–12.** Large cities have been more successful than programs in other settings at establishing a strong emphasis on program scope and connections, with articulated offerings among the levels of programs (i.e., elementary, middle, and high schools) and across subject areas in core and noncore areas. Specialized secondary schools that offer innovative opportunities to gifted learners also have most often been located in cities in subject areas like science, technology, and the arts. Full offerings of all AP courses and IB schools may also be seen in these cities, allowing educators to sample from among the various secondary options available to gifted learners. Thus, the developmental span of opportunities for the gifted also can best be viewed in one urban setting.
4. **Content-based advanced learning in core and noncore areas.** Again, perhaps because of size, the full-time nature of programs, and historical precedent, programs for the gifted in urban settings have always used content-based approaches to curriculum differentiation as the appropriate model to serve these students. They also used core differentiated materials as the means of meeting their differentiation goals rather than trying to have teachers create their own differentiated materials. Thus, adaptations to curricula in gifted programs could be easily described, professional development provided for, and continuity of learning established.
5. **Concern for the highly gifted.** Urban programs have been the contexts where the highly gifted have often been served the most effectively. Beginning with the San Diego program, where special centers were established for students with IQ's above 148 and special seminars for those above 155 who experienced social adjustment problems, urban sites have diversified services to cater to the highly gifted. Chicago's use of talent search data on the highly gifted in math and verbal areas led to the installation of fast-paced classes at local university sites on school time.
6. **Counseling for psychosocial needs and future opportunities.** Urban programs also did more to establish an emphasis on academic planning and career guidance than other settings in this country. The Chicago model of using full-time psychologists and social workers to provide IEP's for highly gifted learners and to offer assistance in social and emotional development to other cases of need still serves as an exemplar for what gifted learners deserve with respect to guidance services. San Diego's model of full-time psychologists and school-based counselors also exemplifies the focus of urban programs on the psychosocial issues of gifted students. Special career guidance activities were also mounted in cities, involving university personnel

and other professionals to work with gifted learners on the activities, beliefs, and habits of mind of real-world careers.

What Can We Learn From These Programs Today?

Often, it is assumed that the past cannot be replicated as situations and people change each generation. Our history of innovation in schools speaks to this reality, that when leadership, teachers, and issues of need change, so too do the programs and services that were purported to be effective in earlier times. However, Ralph Tyler, in a visit to The College of William and Mary shortly before his death, commented that while the culture changes, the verities of principles that work in curriculum (or programs) do not. He desired to update his 1962 text to illustrate this principle. His point, I believe, has viability in respect to what we can extract from the history of urban gifted education in this country. Urban programs can offer important models of successful practice that have been operative across decades for gifted students, to be modified for current populations of learners in our schools. These models represent the best principles and practices of the field: the judicious use of acceleration; the employment of appropriate types of enrichment; the use of full-time and part-time grouping; attention to social, emotional, and future planning needs; and coherent and connected opportunities across grade levels in all areas of learning.

The Need to Build on the Past Rather Than to Destroy Its Footprint

One of the most important lessons is to keep alive the history of our field so that we do not regress in our practices in schools. Many current students of gifted education think that our contemporary models are all equal in their capacity to meet the needs of diverse gifted learners in diverse areas of learning. Yet our history suggests that this is not true—that some organizational models like special classes and schools have proven their viability as contexts where differentiated curriculum is best delivered; that using a differentiation model within subject areas allows for the most effective reorganization of curriculum for the gifted, using differentiated materials as the tool; and that multiple program offerings are essential to adequately address the needs of a diverse group of learners. These conclusions have been well documented in the literature of the field (Little, Feng, VanTassel-Baska, Rogers, & Avery, 2007; Neihart, 2007; Sternberg, Torff, & Grigorenko, 1998).

The Models That Worked Then Can Work Again With Appropriate Updates

There is little from the history of urban gifted education that could not be updated, à la Ralph Tyler's vision, by tailoring identification and programming options to the needs of today's learners, by using updated curriculum materials designed for the gifted as the main source of differentiation, and by renewing the research and evaluation agenda in these settings. In order for this renewal to occur, however, urban settings also must value the need for knowledgeable leadership that can devote full-time energy to the needs of urban gifted education. The importance of gifted education as a part of the urban education landscape must then be restored to its rightful place in stimulating innovation and quality for our best learners.

Community-Based Services Need to Be Reinstated and Expanded

The last two decades in education in general have been about partnerships and collaboration in educating learners to the standards of this century—working with business, government, and various contexts through telecommunication means as well as apprenticeship opportunities in person (Besnoy, 2006; Feng, 2006). The past exempla from urban gifted programs of engaging with community organizations to offer programs deserve to continue, perhaps using new media. Museum exhibits, organized by gifted learners, can now become virtual and be disseminated to broader audiences. Cultural enrichment opportunities can be accessed by DVD and discussed in classrooms rather than handled through time-intensive field trips. Teleconferencing and Skype can bring expert professionals into contact with students and their questions at will. Thus, the community can continue to contribute to gifted education in urban centers in even more viable ways through technological means.

Apply the Lessons Learned From Working With Students of Poverty and Color

Perhaps no aspect of work from urban gifted education is more important to heed than what was accomplished with children of poverty and color. The targeted focus of intensive programs for these learners was to enhance their abilities through offering the same high-level opportunities afforded more advantaged learners, including access to the arts as an aes-

thetic enrichment and another avenue of learning, to provide intensive assistance with educational future attainments, and to address directly the issues associated with poverty—the need for scholarships, free Saturday and summer programs, free instruments for learning to play music, and free entry to the city's cultural events. Because educational attainment is the single most critical variable in predicting future success defined by career and income, urban gifted program personnel worked extra hard to ensure that students reached successful entry to college and had the resources to negotiate that environment as well. Recent research on the urban poor continues to suggest the need for early intervention that bridges affordable opportunities, scholarship assistance, and the need for acquiring intellectual, social, and cultural capital for optimizing life chances (Ford, 1996; Swanson, 2006; Worrell, 2007).

Conclusion

The role of cities has always determined the growth and development of civilizations worldwide from Athens to Rome, to Beijing, to St. Petersburg (Toynbee, 1972). It is little surprise then that the evolution of gifted education as a field has been highly dependent on what has been done in these capitals of innovation in the United States over the past 75+ years. As cities have lost favor as hubs of educational innovation in other areas of endeavor, it is perhaps most timely to reflect on what they have given us as inspirations for programs and services to use with our best learners. GCT

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