

GIFTED EDUCATION PRESS

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This issue is dedicated to the gifted educators of Pennsylvania who have developed some of the finest educational programs in the nation. Important innovations that have occurred in Pennsylvania during the last twenty years have been the provision of due process rights for gifted students, the requirement that all of these students should have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), and the design of differentiated Humanities curricula.

Because of current deficits in Pennsylvania's special education budget, Governor Robert P. Casey and State Secretary of Education Thomas Gilhool have proposed to reduce programs for the gifted by cutting personnel in the intermediate units and school districts. They have also proposed to "mainstream" gifted students back into the regular classroom, thereby placing the full burden of educating them upon classroom teachers. As the history of this field during the last several decades clearly demonstrates, the most effective approach for educating the gifted is by offering rigorous pull-out and self-contained programs.

If the the Governor and his State Secretary of Education were aware of and understood this history, they would surely realize that mainstreaming is a regression to the dark ages of differential education. Their proposed cuts in the intermediate unit budgets will seriously damage the careers of some of the best educators in the gifted field -- who have devoted ten to twenty years to designing effective programs for exceptionally bright children.

We predict that gifted students who are not being properly served by their Pennsylvania school districts will be moved by their parents to other nearby states which have thriving differential education programs. The loss of this greatest of Pennsylvania's natural resources, its gifted students, will have a considerably greater long term effect on the future economic and intellectual development of this state than the closing of its steel mills. We strongly urge you to call the Secretary of Education (1-717-787-5820) or the Pennsylvania Association for Gifted Education (PAGE) Help Line (1-412-941-6945) to express your concerns. Or write: The Honorable Robert P. Casey; Governor of Pennsylvania; Harrisburg, PA 17120. Yes, Pennsylvania has many friends of the gifted. We must stand with and support them in their time of crisis, or divided we will all eventually fall!

For your summer reading, enjoy the interesting and informative articles by Cecile Frey on the disadvantaged gifted, Maurice Stanley on teaching logic and clear thinking, and Michael Walters on the life of Barbara Tuchman. To encourage analysis of all matters pertinent to the gifted, the letters-to-the-editor discuss Dean Herbert London's article from our April-June 1989 issue.>> Maurice D. Fisher, Publisher

IDENTIFYING AND EDUCATING THE DISADVANTAGED GIFTED BY CECILE FREY
COORDINATOR OF PROGRAMS FOR THE GIFTED, LOWER MERION, PENNSYLVANIA

In the past twenty years, professionals in the field of gifted education have written about the underrepresentation of disadvantaged and minority children in programs for gifted and talented children. Bernal (1979) refers to these students as "culturally different," which "means to be behaviorally different in group identifiable ways." (p. 67) As Yancy (1983) indicates, 73% of students in the public schools are White, while they comprise 82% of gifted program enrollments. There are 17% Blacks in the public schools, yet only 9% are in gifted programs. Asians are the only minority group that is statistically overrepresented in gifted programs, since they comprise a mere 2% of the public school population but are 4% of the students in gifted programs.

Minorities are the "invisible gifted" of Davis and Rimm (1985), who do not "share the dominant middle class values and experiences that represent the predominant public school approach to the education of gifted students. [They] often score lower than they should on standard measures of intellectual ability because of a different emphasis on cognitive development in their own home and neighborhood setting." (Gallagher, 1988, p. 109) This article will examine some of the reasons for this underrepresentation, and then offer corrective suggestions. One caution: the reader should not lump any ethnic, racial or socioeconomic group into a stereotyped set of characteristics. As Beane (1985) points out, "all stereotyping on the basis of race or ethnicity can be counterproductive because being a member of a particular ethnic group does not mean cultural distinctiveness." (p. 3)

Identification

The first problem which arises is that of identification. Most public school gifted programs have one basic criterion: an IQ of at least 130 on an individualized test such as the Stanford-Binet or WISC-R. Experts believe that this requirement is the most basic cause of underrepresentation (Baldwin, 1984; Yancy, 1983). Studies bear this out. Harty (1984), for example, has found that identification measures are insensitive discriminators and somewhat biased against economically disadvantaged and minority students. It is beyond the scope of this paper to speculate on the reasons that such students perform less well on standardized tests; hypotheses range from genetic differences to the impoverished, disorganized early life of the child.

Another criterion in identification practices for gifted programs is, "they must score at the 90th %ile or higher on achievement tests." This, of course, leads to the same difficulties as reliance on an IQ score. Low interest and low motivation as well as weaknesses in certain

basic skills make such tests inaccurate measures of disadvantaged and minority students' abilities. A similar problem exists when regular classroom teachers nominate candidates for gifted programs. Their stereotyped image of the gifted as "teacher pleaser" eliminates whole segments of underserved children from gifted programs.

Better predictors of giftedness among disadvantaged and culturally diverse students include creativity tests, parent nominations and peer nominations. School personnel must look for "signs" of giftedness by using checklists (e.g., Davis and Rimm, 1985; Fisher, 1988; Yancy, 1983) or Alexinia Baldwin's Identification Matrix (1984), all of which take into account cultural differences.

Another problem is the language deficits found in culturally diverse populations (Beane, 1984). Identification procedures which rely on spoken interaction and performance need to take precedence over grammatically correct and/or written responses. Thus, a UCLA study (Skager and Fitz-Gibbon, 1972), which used objective, cognitive screening of all students at a certain grade level, showed a large discrepancy between verbal and performance scores. For gifted and talented individuals, these were usually heavily weighted in favor of performance.

It is important that identification take place as early as possible, e.g., in the kindergarten or primary grades. As a study conducted in Los Angeles in 1985-86 revealed, "...the large disparity in the test results of city and suburban high schools [is] strongly related to the racial background and income of students' families." (Daniels, 1987, p.22) Hence, the cycle of failure must be broken early. Yet only a strong commitment from school districts -- and this includes school board members, central office administrators, principals AND classroom teachers, together with supportive parents -- will change the narrow definition of giftedness to include those from culturally different and low SES backgrounds.

Program Modifications

Once a child has been identified as being gifted, all of his or her problems obviously do not disappear. In fact, they may be exacerbated in certain environments (both socially and intellectually) -- especially in the short run. As Bernal (1979) said: "...gifted programs for culturally different youngsters must be suited to them...not designed and implemented with only little deliberation about their psychological, cultural and linguistic characteristics." (p. 397) Such children may be exposed to the kinds of living conditions and implicit messages from family and peers that discourage learning and academic achievement. Individuals from such backgrounds may, "regard certain forms of behavior and certain activities or events, symbols and meanings as NOT APPROPRI-

ATE for them because [they] are characteristic of white Americans ...Doing well in school is seen as acting white." (Fordham and Ogbu, 1986, p. 181)

In order to work against such perceptions, there must be several modifications within the public schools. First, teachers must understand that giftedness and "middle class" are not synonymous. Furthermore, they need to become alert to gifted behaviors (Fisher, 1989), not merely the "teacher pleasing" behaviors that pass for intellectual ability. As Barbara McCloud (1981) found, teachers must be formally trained both to understand nontraditional ways to identify disadvantaged gifted children and to develop alternative methods of dealing with them in the classroom.

Many authors (e.g., Davis and Rimm, 1985; Mary Frazier in Colangelo and Zaffran, 1979) recommend the addition of a strong counseling component to the gifted program to help students with such problems as self-esteem, family relationships and career planning. Counselors can also help these students to determine educational and career goals, and identify the specific steps needed to achieve them. Students must learn to balance the demands of the dominant culture with their own backgrounds through self-understanding. Moreover, counselors should arrange for successful persons to speak about their lives, and put students in contact with appropriate mentors. Mary Frazier (in Colangelo and Zaffran, 1979) said that counselors can also encourage questioning attitudes, prevent the loss of self-esteem caused by alienation from one's subculture, help with problems of upward mobility, and develop an awareness of alternative paths to achievement in and outside of school.

The family must also play an important part in the development of disadvantaged gifted children. Parents and siblings must serve as an additional anchor; otherwise, despite their outstanding abilities, these children could be easily drawn into a negative lifestyle. Joyce VanTassel-Baska (1988) found that academically successful disadvantaged students all "...came from families which serve as a major source of encouragement and influence. They all had limited peer interactions and involvement, with most such interactions emerging out of common academic or school-related interests." At least one parent monitored academic performance consistently and carefully.

The counselor can assist parents by helping them to understand the nature of giftedness, the way to set goals for their children, and the educational and emotional needs of gifted students. The school can thus serve as a support system for parents and their children, thereby helping to insure academic and personal success.

Conclusion

Although much is written (despite little agreement) about what type of curriculum is "appropriate" for gifted youngsters, this literature contains few articles specifically on the disadvantaged gifted. (Fortunately, a new book edited by June Maker [1989] has recently been published on this topic.) The primary issues which should be addressed when developing a curriculum for these students are: (1) they may have real gaps in basic skills (especially reading) and knowledge of subject content; (2) teachers must learn to identify and adapt to different learning styles of disadvantaged gifted students, and emphasize and encourage their strengths rather than merely trying to remediate their weaknesses; (3) students cannot be asked to shed their racial and ethnic identities in favor of those of the White middle-class; rather, through reading, listening to speakers and self-exploration, they can become more comfortable with who they are and what their legacies should mean to them; and (4) more than middle class students, they need extracurricular cultural opportunities -- visits to museums, plays and concerts, and exposure to experts and successful professionals in various fields. With these suggestions in mind, teachers and administrators can successfully design a viable program for disadvantaged gifted students.>>

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THE IMPORTANCE OF TEACHING LOGIC AND CLEAR THINKING TO THE GIFTED
BY MAURICE F. STANLEY, PH.D., SUNSET BEACH, NC

Logic is mostly about arguments. But an argument for a logician is not a spat or a quarrel. Presenting a logical argument is simply a matter of giving good, clear reasons for what you think. This, for example, is an argument:

Abortion is murder
Murder is wrong
Therefore abortion is wrong.

Now a great many things might be said about this argument. It is valid -- that is, the conclusion follows from the premises. But are the premises really true? Is an abortion murder if it is performed in order to save the life of the mother? Or in the case of rape?

That is what logic is all about. And so logic applies to everything, and the ability to argue clearly and forcefully and to analyze the arguments of others are skills which are important in every area of life.

In business, for example, we must often try to get our point across to others. Clarity and reasonableness inspire confidence, and policy is usually made by those who can argue and think clearly.

In science and mathematics, logic is built-in. The scientist must present his or her case and argue for it in journals and at conferences. Sloppy thinking, even by the most brilliant person, will usually lose out to disciplined thinking. Even good ideas must be presented persuasively and cogently.

In law, logic is of central importance. the essence of law is rational argumentation, analytic thinking, and the analogical reasoning necessary to show that a certain case fits in its logical structure with a precedent. And of course there is the Law School Admission Test (LSAT), which is full of logic problems.

In politics, disputes are often heated and shamefully emotional (e.g., the "Pledge of Allegiance" issue in the last Presidential election). And yet a logical person -- such as say, Thomas Jefferson -- will stand out and will be a major asset to his or her community.

So arguments are found in every dimension of life. We argue at home, at work, at school. Those people who argue best and most persuasively are precious, as are those who can spot a bad argument. For our American culture assaults us constantly with irrationality. As an example,

"Mother, everyone is wearing Reeboks (or whatever)."

This is a standard fallacy known to logicians as mob appeal. There are lots of such fallacies -- the appeal to fear, the appeal to pity, the appeal to authority, the black-and-white fallacy, equivocation, and so on. Such fallacies pop up everywhere. It is fun to detect them, and instructive, too. The fallacies constitute what logicians call "informal logic," which is an important part of a logic course.

Most young people, and especially gifted ones, enjoy thinking and arguing. They should be given the opportunity to debate such real issues as abortion and the Middle East, within the context of a logic class. There is hardly anything as satisfying as watching a bright student present a well-researched, well-argued case on a serious issue.

Logic should not be presented as a purely abstract, symbolic business, although there is certainly a point to Venn diagrams and deductive proofs. The teacher must integrate the standard logical material toward the end of constructing and analyzing real arguments about real issues. Logic is a discipline as old as Plato and Aristotle, and can certainly be studied for its own sake; but its real power lies in its applicability to interesting issues.

It is important for bright students to learn that people can be logical and still disagree, and that disagreement can be civil and rational. Looked at this way, it is perhaps not too grandiose to think that logic might be the hope of the world.

But, more modestly, logic does offer skills that are important to everyone, and especially to the gifted person: disciplined argumentation, and argument analysis.

It is possible for a logic class to be boring. But the teacher who is willing to argue, and willing to let her students argue and criticize one another's arguments, might hear what I once heard a student say about my logic course: "This is the best course I have ever had, in anything, anywhere."

Logic has great potential for fun and excitement, and it offers the gifted student the opportunity for disciplined intellectual growth. It is a subject which has developed since ancient times, and has genuine content. It needs only a good teacher to bring it to life.>>
EDITOR'S NOTE -- Dr. Stanley has a doctorate in philosophy from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and teaches philosophy courses at Brunswick Community College in Supply, NC. Gifted Education Press will publish his book on teaching logic this summer.>>

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A TRIBUTE TO BARBARA TUCHMAN, HISTORIAN: 1912-1989
BY MICHAEL E. WALTERS, NEW YORK CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

"Historic continuity with the past is not a duty, it is only a necessity." Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr.

"And I can see no reason why anyone should suppose that in the future the same motifs already heard will not be sounding still...put to use by reasonable men to reasonable ends, or by madmen to nonsense and disaster." Joseph Campbell, Foreword to The Masks of God: Primitive Mythology, 1969 (quotation at the beginning of The March of Folly by Barbara Tuchman).

The death of Barbara Tuchman leaves a major gap within the community of American Humanities scholars since the study of history is one of the most significant components of the Humanities curriculum. It grants us a perspective from the past to develop ideas for the future. As an historian, "perspective" was her most important creative trait. History for her was not a mere chronicle of past events but an attempt to educate the public, thus enabling citizens to restrain governments from committing folly. Her sense of folly is in the tradition of the great Dutch Renaissance Humanist, Erasmus. His magnum opus, The Praise of Folly, was a description of the follies of human thought and action. Folly to Erasmus was rooted in greed, lack of intellectual integrity, intolerance, and violent social behavior. For Barbara Tuchman, her quest for historical perspective expressed a similar concern for the intellectual, cultural, political and social follies of human conduct as perceived by Erasmus.

She derived this sensibility from her own intimate personal encounters with contemporary history. In her twenties, she was a reporter for The Nation during Spain's tragic and fratricidal civil war in the 1930's. Among her fellow participatory witnesses were such leading literati as Lillian Hellman, Langston Hughes, George Orwell, John Dos Passos, Stephen Spender, Andre Malraux and Ernest Hemingway. During World War II she had a unique position to observe national and

international events at close quarters because her uncle was Henry Morgenthau, Jr., Secretary of Treasury in the Roosevelt administration where he also served as an advisor to the President.

Tuchman did not begin to write history books until she was 36 years old. Her first work, Bible and Sword (1956), was about a situation which concerned her at a deeply emotional level, the founding of the State of Israel. Her next books dealt with the role of folly in World War I. In The Zimmerman Telegram (1958) she illustrated the folly of German provocation that helped to promote American involvement in that conflict, and The Guns of August (1962) catalogued the array of follies that laid to waste an entire European generation during World War I. She won a Pulitzer Prize for her book, Stilwell and the American Experience in China (1971), which discusses this general's work in China from 1920 to 1946, and his efforts to restrict the United States from a Vietnam-like involvement in the Civil War between the Chinese Nationalists and Chinese Communists after World War II.

She then proceeded to write two brilliant studies demonstrating how there is a continuum of social and political folly in world history, and how this situation offers important lessons for contemporary Americans. In the first study, A Distant Mirror: The Calamitous 14th Century (1978), she linked the social upheavals, wars, and plagues of that century to contemporary issues, e.g., urban crime, racial conflict, contagious diseases, and the wars of Third World countries such as Iran and Iraq. The second study was a collection of historical essays showing how wars wrought by folly lead to national disasters. This book, The March of Folly: From Troy to Vietnam (1984), was a review of war and folly from the Trojan War to the Vietnam conflict. (An interim work, Practicing History (1981), presented her collected essays on writing history and her conception of the historian's role in our society.) Her last volume, The First Salute (1988), described the background and diplomacy of the The American Revolution.

Barbara Tuchman is indeed a superb role model for gifted females. She demonstrated how a woman who was socially, intellectually and morally committed to her nation can use her unique talents for challenging faulty government policies. Although a college graduate, she was not an academically trained historian. She clearly demonstrates the powerful contributions that can be made by gifted thinkers, especially women. For there was no hesitation to write, debate or express her views despite how, at times, they were not very popular. Therefore, she represents a woman of great moral courage with a profound social conscience. Programs for gifted females, such as the one at Mary Baldwin College in Staunton, Virginia, would easily find this distinguished historian to be worthy of emulation.>> "Every age confutes old errors, and begets new ones." Thomas Fuller. *****

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR -- COMMENTS ON DEAN HERBERT LONDON'S CRITIQUE OF THE STANFORD UNIVERSITY CULTURES COURSE (GIFTED EDUCATION PRESS NEWSLETTER, APRIL-JUNE 1989) BY ANDREW FLAXMAN, DIRECTOR, EDUCATE YOURSELF FOR TOMORROW

Herbert London, Dean of the Gallatin Division of New York University, writes a well-reasoned defense of Stanford's Western Civilization course, which has been replaced by a new requirement entitled, "Cultures, Ideas and Values." The new curriculum includes selections from third world, female and minority sources. While appreciating the universal values in the great works of Western Civilization on an intellectual level, Dean London fails to note the deeper spiritual underpinnings of the Humanities. So long as Humanities advocates themselves do not realize the inspirational mission of higher education for every human being, no matter what the sex, color or race, there will continue to be demands for the "Balkanization" of the Humanities.

The Liberal Arts curriculum has become over-specialized and over-intellectualized at the expense of an education of the heart and will. The sense of concrete purpose to develop the whole Human Being has been completely lost in most modern education. No wonder that every group wants to be represented in such an abstract, theoretical education system, dominated by limited and limiting parochial philosophies.

Of course this successful attack upon the traditional core curriculum of the Humanities did not begin this past semester at Stanford. The problem stems in great part from the very onset of our modern curriculum development, when we failed to follow the most crucial advice of Amos Comenius (1592-1670), the great Moravian educator who is responsible for many aspects of modern education. For those who are not familiar with Comenius, his book, The Visible World, was the first textbook in which pictures were as important as the text. He was determined to translate into reason what previously had existed as tradition, and he describes this intention in his great book, The Temple of Pansophia. He wished to construct a Temple of Wisdom as the same type of sacred edifice for education that was employed in the construction of the Temple of Solomon. This temple would be a school of universal wisdom, a pansophic or school of all-embracing wisdom, a workshop into which we are admitted in order to attain skill for everything necessary for life -- both the present and the future life -- and to be able to do this fully.

To facilitate this grand design, he urged a much broader education to be taught in the vernacular and promoted the establishment of many schools and universities. He was asked to set up the curriculum for the recently established Harvard College, but turned this position down in

favor of organizing the educational system for Sweden. He pioneered the use of academic specialization but warned that if the spiritual focus was not emphasized, the educational unity would be lost. We have reached far beyond that point today and know more about less and less, leaving us with almost nothing at all in the way of wisdom or any unifying principle with which to appreciate the value of Liberal Arts as it relates to living.

With a group of educators in 1981, I organized and tested a curriculum which unifies various topics in the Humanities by the inspirational theme of "Know Thyself!" Our program directs students to the hidden dimensions of the SELF through literature, art and music. This self-developmental approach goes beyond the conventional approach to the Humanities found in colleges and universities today. My experience, for example, as a Princeton undergraduate had been to try to understand the works of Plato by studying his writings. In contrast, the unique approach that we have created is to study yourself by using Plato's Symposium to facilitate the process of self-knowledge. Self-knowledge is the goal. Plato is the guide. The same approach is taken with the study of the different works selected by our faculty. This presentation creates the conditions for a superior understanding of this wisdom because it is based on the familiarity with your own experiences, rather than on some abstract interest in learning, or in obtaining good grades. The motivation in our program is that you are interested in uncovering secrets about yourself.

In this way, Shakespeare, Rembrandt, Mozart, Lincoln, Dante, Homer, et al., speak very clearly to a Chicano student or any other minority because everyone is a SELF. Since our program relies on experience rather than on memorizing, it demands a commitment to self-knowledge and is totally interdisciplinary.

Many teachers are afraid of or unprepared for this approach to the Humanities. When I showed our program to the Gallatin Division of New York University, for example, there was almost no interest in using it for their students. From our experience, the students would have loved this exposure to Liberal Arts, but not over-intellectual and over-specialized teachers. Our program demands an open-hearted and open-minded devotion to truth, not to any previous investment of time and money in any one academic discipline.

A free brochure is available to any reader who is interested in the specifics of our curriculum, faculty and educational philosophy. Write to: Andrew Flaxman, Director; EDUCATE YOURSELF FOR TOMORROW; 411 West End Avenue, #14; New York, NY 10024.>>

RESPONSE TO ANDREW FLAXMAN'S LETTER BY DEAN HERBERT LONDON OF NEW YORK UNIVERSITY -- The Flaxman letter is easy to agree with, until he gets on a hobby horse. When he refers to "showing his program to the Gallatin Division," I don't have the slightest idea of that which he is referring. I don't recall chatting with him. But I am suspicious of people who dismiss approaches different from one's they've adopted. If self-knowledge is the key to mastery of great ideas, then narcissism should be the catalyst for wisdom. Plato may indeed be the guide, but humility should be the compass.>>

The Oct.-Dec. 1989 issue will include a commentary on London's article by Diane Ravitch of Teachers College, Columbia University.

RECOMMENDED BOOKS FOR SUMMER OR FUTURE READING AND ENLIGHTENMENT

1. A World of Ideas by Bill Moyers (Doubleday, 1989). Contains Moyers' PBS interviews with famous thinkers and writers such as Barbara Tuchman, Isaac Asimov, Noam Chomsky, Northrop Frye, Joseph Heller and Tom Wolfe. Moyers is a great national journalist who has much to tell educators of the gifted about the sensibility of the intellectual's mind.

2. On The Firing Line by William F. Buckley, Jr. (Random House, 1989). Here are twenty-three years of television interviews with the likes of Barry Goldwater, Norman Thomas, Richard Nixon, Ronald Reagan, Jimmy Hoffa, Abba Eban, Sam Ervin and so on. Buckley is a highly articulate spokesman for conservatism in this nation and an exemplar of the keen analytic mind.

3. Critical Issues in Gifted Education: Defensible Programs for Cultural and Ethnic Minorities by C. June Maker, Editor (PRO-ED, 1989). This book is the first of its kind in the gifted education field to present detailed articles on identifying and teaching Hispanic, American Indian, Asian-American, and Black students. The editor and authors should be commended for their conscientious efforts to clarify this difficult and important national problem.

4. Patterns of Influence on Gifted Learners: The Home, the Self, and the School by Joyce L. VanTassel-Baska and Paula Olszewski-Kubilius, Editors (Teachers College Press, 1989). This is an excellent set of articles on topics which are not usually covered in a systematic manner such as home influences, personality development, and moral values.

5. The Child Buyer by John Hersey (Vintage, 1989, first published in 1960). All educators should read this work of fiction about the plan of Mr. Wissey Jones to purchase gifted children "and reduce them through drugs and surgery to brilliantly efficient thinking machines....">>