GIFTED EDUCATION PRESS QUARTERLY

10201 YUMA COURT
P.O. BOX 1586
MANASSAS, VA 20108
703-369-5017

SPRING 2008
VOLUME TWENTY-TWO, NUMBER TWO

www.giftededpress.com

During Black History Month, I was reminded of the great jazz pianist Oscar Peterson who passed away in December 2007. He had the extraordinary ability to expand a basic melody into a complex interplay of themes and variations while using such jazz forms as bop, progressive, and stride. I recently listened to his rendition of Autumn Leaves which demonstrates this wonderful style. The complexity of his playing was similar to classical music performances; some of his critics even complained that his playing overwhelmed the melody with too many involved musical passages. (This criticism is similar to what Emperor Joseph II said about one of Mozart's operas, *The Seraglio*, as having "too many notes.") Peterson was raised in a musical family in Montreal, Canada. He started playing the piano at five years and was trained in classical music. His father served as an excellent role model through his keen interest in music and leadership of an orchestra that played in the Peterson home. His life demonstrates how talent, persistence, dedication and opportunity can come together to produce a unique musical genius and personality. I also recalled that when, as young college students, Michael Walters and I marched in a group with Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. in Richmond, Virginia. It was January 1960, shortly before the Commonwealth rescinded its misguided "massive resistance" to integrating the public schools by closing them down. We marched from the Mosque Auditorium to the State Capitol building to reaffirm our support for integrating the educational system and American society. Looking back on the 1960s, there has clearly been significant progress from the legally segregated societies of Virginia and other states. But there is a long way to go in the gifted education field to provide a challenging education for high ability children from Black and Hispanic groups by using more innovative identification procedures and educational programs.

Susan Winebrenner, M.S. and Dina Brulles, Ph.D. have based their article on a new book on cluster grouping. Winebrenner is one of the most influential educators in the gifted field through her numerous workshops and books. Dina Brulles is the director of gifted programs in Paradise Valley Unified School District in Phoenix, Arizona, and a faculty member at Arizona State University. Her dissertation work has documented increased achievement for all students by providing gifted services in a cluster grouping model that has limited budget implications. Gilman Whiting, Ph.D. is an Assistant Professor in the College of Arts and Sciences at Vanderbilt University. He has written other articles for GEPQ on identifying and teaching gifted minority students. This current one will help educators to increase understanding of how test bias can affect the assessment of these students. Stephen T. Schroth, J.D., Ph.D. and Jason A. Helfer, Ph.D. are both faculty members in the Educational Studies Department at Knox College in Galesburg, Illinois. Their discussion reflects an ongoing concern with educating gifted students in the arts. They have previously published essays in ***GEPQ*** and ***Gifted Education News-Page***. Douglas King, Ph.D. is an Assistant Professor of English at Gannon University in Erie, Pennsylvania where he teaches composition, literature (including Shakespeare, of course), and film at the undergraduate and graduate levels. His discussion of teaching Shakespeare presents both theoretical and practical ideas based on his work with gifted children. One of his dreams is to form a theatre company consisting of children performing Shakespearean plays. Michael Walters, Ed.D. discusses the value of John Grisham's work in teaching gifted students about the legal system. As long-time subscribers know, Mike's essays on the humanities and literature have appeared in almost every issue of this quarterly.

Maurice D. Fisher, Ph.D., Publisher

The Schoolwide Cluster Grouping Model (SCGM)

Susan Winebrenner
San Marcos, California

Dina Brulles
Paradise Valley Unified School District
Phoenix, Arizona

Within the current politics of education, the majority of an educator's focus is on the learning needs of students scoring below grade level standards. There is a general assumption that students who can score well on important tests must be learning. When we speak of children being "left behind," the group to which we usually refer is those students who are scoring below desired levels. Yet, if learning can be described as forward progress from entry point at the beginning of a school year, it is clear that the students who are most likely to be "left behind" one year's academic growth for each year spent in school may be the students with exceptionally high ability; those we call gifted learners. At the beginning of many of their school years, they have already mastered many of the required grade level standards.

Since most teachers and administrators have had little training in gifted education, they often do not know exactly *what to do* regarding the grouping and teaching of gifted students. They need to learn to recognize gifted behaviors, and to accommodate the exceptional learning needs of gifted students. To make this happen, we support a specific model of cluster grouping called the Schoolwide Cluster Grouping Model (SCGM). It can provide full-time academic services to gifted students without major budget implications, and it has the potential to raise achievement for all students in the entire school.

With the SCGM, *all* students are grouped into classrooms based on their abilities and potential. Classroom compositions are carefully structured with two main goals: to ensure a balance of abilities throughout the grade level, and to reduce the learning range found in any given classroom. These careful grouping practices allow teachers to more readily respond to the needs of all their students, to challenge gifted students clustered together in mixed-ability classes, and to engage in practices that lead to the potential for improved academic achievement for all their students.

The SCGM is an inclusion model, in which students with exceptional learning needs are integrated into mixed-ability classrooms and the teachers are expected to provide appropriate differentiation opportunities within the classroom. This inclusion model has already been in use for many years to provide special education services to students who have been identified as having exceptional educational needs. Since gifted students are as far removed from average as are special education students, they are equally entitled to any differentiation opportunities they need. However, it is only when teachers have a noticeable group of gifted students in their classes that those students' learning needs will be accommodated (Winebrenner, 2001). The pacing of instruction and the depth of content that gifted students need is made possible through compacting, differentiation, and flexible grouping arrangements within and between classes.

Research Supporting the Practice of Cluster Grouping Gifted Students

Research which documents the benefits of keeping gifted students together in their areas of greatest strength for at least part of the school day supports cluster grouping (Allan, 1991; Brulles, 2005; Kulik, 2003; Rogers, 2002). Research on the effects of cluster grouping indicated positive achievement effects for large numbers of students of gifted, average or below average abilities. (Brulles, 2005; Gentry, 1999; Gentry & Keilty, 2004).

The following section provides brief answers to commonly asked questions about the practice of cluster grouping gifted students:

What does it mean to place gifted students in cluster groups?

Cluster grouping occurs when a group of identified gifted students is purposefully clustered in a mixed ability classroom. A group of four to eight identified gifted students, usually in the top 5-8% of ability in the grade level population, is clustered and placed with a teacher who has had training in how to teach exceptionally capable students. If there is a higher number of gifted students, two or more classes may be designated as gifted cluster classrooms. The gifted cluster comprises about 20% of the entire class, but that

does not imply that 20% of the grade level population is being identified as gifted.

Isn't cluster grouping the same as tracking?
No. In a tracking system, all students are grouped by ability for much of the school day, and students tend to remain in the same track throughout their school experience. Once placed in a "track," students rarely move into another track. In cluster classes, students may work at different levels for different subjects. A second difference between tracking and clustering relates to the curriculum taught. In a tracking system, students are assigned a set curriculum based on their ability level, and they generally do not veer from that curriculum. With cluster grouping, all the classes in the grade level have students with a range of learning abilities and levels. In order to reach that range, the teachers modify or extend the grade level standards.

In the SCGM, all classes are heterogeneous. Only one or two classes have a cluster of gifted students, but all other classes have a cluster of high ability students who are not gifted, but can serve as positive academic role models. In a cluster model, learning opportunities are open to all students in the class and teachers use their students' entry points, or readiness, to determine levels and pace of curriculum.

Why should gifted students be placed in a cluster group instead of being assigned evenly to all classes?
Gifted students benefit from learning together, and need to be placed with similar students in their areas of strength (Brulles 2005; Kulik, 2003; Rogers, 2002). Cluster grouping allows gifted students to learn together, while avoiding permanent grouping arrangements for students of other ability levels.

When teachers try to meet the diverse learning needs of all students from levels of very advanced to very low, it becomes extremely difficult to provide adequately for everyone. Often, the highest ability students are expected to "make it on their own." When a teacher has a cluster gifted students, taking the time to make appropriate provisions for them seems more realistic. Furthermore, gifted students can better understand and accept their learning differences when there are others just like them in the class. When gifted students have opportunities to work and learn together, they are more comfortable working at extended levels of complexity and depth in a given area. Gifted students' willingness to take risks in learning experiences increases when they spend time with learning peers who are similar to them in interests and abilities. They are then more likely to take on challenging work and stretch themselves.

What are the learning needs of gifted students?
Gifted students need exactly what all other students need: consistent opportunities to learn new material and to develop the behaviors that allow them to cope with the challenge and struggle of new learning. Since these students have previously mastered many of the concepts they are expected to "learn" in a given class, a huge part of their school time may be wasted. Cluster grouping provides gifted and talented students with an opportunity to engage in stimulating intellectual endeavors with others who are equally capable of learning at advanced levels (Gentry, 1999; Gentry & Keilty, 2004).

Why is it so difficult to teach gifted students in totally heterogeneous classes?
Most teachers assume they must teach all the standards assigned to their grade level or subject area. To be an effective teacher of gifted students, a teacher must accept the fact that it may not be necessary to actually teach all the required standards to all students. State legislation requires that all students must be able to demonstrate mastery on the assigned standards, but it does not specify *when* that mastery of content should be assessed. Gifted students are often able to demonstrate mastery before a lesson is actually taught. Likewise, gifted students can often learn new material in a fraction of the time needed by other students who learn in a manner compatible with their chronological age. Accommodating those specific learning needs represents a challenge when many other students in the class are working at or, perhaps below, grade level standards.

Clustering gifted students requires that teachers differentiate instruction. To be successful, the cluster teacher must have on-going training in how to teach exceptionally capable students in the cluster model (Brulles, 2005; Winebrenner & Devlin, 2001). Clustering creates a setting for providing differentiated instruction that is feasible for teachers, and for enhancing the likelihood that differentiation will take place (Gentry, 1999).

Won't the creation of a cluster group rob the other classes of academic leadership?
No, because the SCGM insures that *all* classes have academic leadership. When a cluster of non-gifted, high achieving students is placed in all other classes, all classes have students who can serve as academic role models. Surprisingly, gifted students are not always the best academic leaders. Their ability to learn quickly and with less effort may frustrate them when working with students who do not learn as quickly as they do.

They frequently make intuitive leaps, and thus do not always have to follow all the same steps as others to master new concepts. Since they may not follow the prescribed step-by-step methods taught by the teacher, it is unrealistic to expect them to be able to teach those steps to others.

High ability students in the classes without the gifted students have new opportunities to become academic leaders. When these students have been in the same classes with identified gifted students, their achievement potential often was overshadowed by the presence of highly verbal, highly competitive classmates. Parents of these high ability students will be happy to know that with the SCGM, their children will have a unique opportunity to shine, perhaps for the first time in their school experience. These high ability students actually *can* be seen as academic leaders for average students in the class because they are more realistic role models than gifted students. Therefore, the SCGM leads to the discovery of more

academic leaders than may appear using traditional grouping practices.

Exactly how are cluster groups set up in the SGCM?
All students at a grade level are divided into five groups. Group 1 includes the gifted students who will be in the gifted cluster. Students who are identified as gifted, but who also have a learning challenge are placed in Group 1, as are gifted students who are not fluent in English. Group 2 includes high achieving students who are not gifted but are very capable students. These students will be clustered in the classes that do not have the gifted cluster. Group 3 includes students who are average in their academic work, while Group 4 includes students who are below average. Group 5 includes students who are significantly below grade level expectations, or those with significant learning challenges.

One class, taught by a teacher with some gifted education training, should be assigned the cluster group of gifted students (Group 1). As soon as the gifted clusters have been determined, students from Group 2 are placed in all the non-cluster classes. Next, students from groups 3 and 4, are placed in the same class with the gifted cluster, and the remaining students from groups 3, 4, and 5 are placed in all other classes. This is recommended because if one teacher is pulled equally strongly by students at both ends of the learning continuum, he is likely to feel justified in spending more time with students from Group 5. Therefore, the class with the gifted cluster will have students from groups 1, 3 and 4. All other classes will have students from groups 2, 3, 4 and 5. This method creates a narrower range of student achievement levels in all classes without returning to tracking, while it allows gifted students to learn with each other on a daily basis.

Is it OK to create small groups of at least three gifted students in *all* classes, if I have the numbers to evenly distribute them?

No. If the integrity of the SCGM model is tampered with, the likelihood of experiencing the desired outcomes would be greatly diminished. Each teacher would still have the full range of abilities, which would lessen the potential for achievement gains across the board. Fewer teachers would be motivated to pursue advanced training in gifted education, since it would not be needed in order to be assigned a gifted cluster.

Aren't gifted students needed in all classes so they can help others learn through cooperative learning, peer tutoring, and other collaborative models?

No. When gifted students are placed in mixed-ability groups for cooperative learning, they frequently become dictators! Other students in these groups may rely on the gifted students to do most of the work and may actually learn less than when the gifted students are not in their groups.

Research on role modeling (Schunk, 1987) indicates that to be effective, role models cannot be drastically discrepant in ability from those who are supposed to be motivated by them. Therefore, it is unlikely that gifted students can provide effective role modeling for students who are struggling to learn grade level standards.

How does the cluster grouping concept fit in with the inclusion models that integrate students with exceptional educational needs into regular classes?

The two models are totally compatible. Students with special education needs have often been purposefully clustered in the same classroom. For example, if a school is housing a program for students with hearing impairments, it would make no sense to split those students up so that each class at a grade level had one. When these students are clustered together, their teacher, who is a specialist in teaching hearing impaired children, can work as a coach or co-teacher with the regular classroom teacher. The students themselves take comfort from being with other children with a similar learning challenge. The hearing-impaired specialists have fewer teachers to coach. When we cluster gifted students together, we do so for exactly the same reasons.

Won't the presence of the clustered gifted students inhibit the performance of the other students in that class, and create a negative effect on their achievement?

No. When the gifted cluster group is kept to a manageable size, many cluster teachers report that there is general improvement in overall achievement for the entire class (Saunders, 2005). This suggests the exciting possibility that when teachers learn how to provide what gifted students need, and offer modified versions of the same opportunities to the entire class, expectations and the levels of learning are raised for all students. Therefore, the SCGM can actually raise achievement for many students when the placement recommendations of the model are closely followed (Gentry, 1999; Gentry & Keilty, 2004; Brulles, 2005).

How should gifted students be identified for the cluster group?

Identification should be conducted each spring, preferably with the help of someone with training in gifted education. A combination of qualitative and quantitative data, which includes *both* verbal and non-verbal measures of ability, should be used to identify the students who will be placed into gifted clusters. In addition, some schools give the cluster candidates the end-of-the-year assessment from the math and language arts/reading texts for the following year so the students can document that they will not be struggling with the advanced pacing or learning levels.

If there will be one cluster, its highly capable students should be those who have demonstrated that they will need curriculum that exceeds grade level parameters. If there will be more than one cluster, those highly capable in specific subjects might be grouped together in separate clusters. This works especially well at the middle school level.

When there are not enough gifted students for separate advanced sections of a subject area, clustering those advanced students in one or two sections during the school day will make it easier to meet their advanced learning needs.

What specific skills do gifted cluster teachers need?

Cluster teachers should know how to recognize and nurture behaviors usually demonstrated by gifted students. Ongoing professional development should help prepare teachers to create learning environments in which:

• all students will be stretched to learn

• differences in learning needs are respected

• there are flexible grouping opportunities for all students

• students are allowed to demonstrate and get credit for previous mastery of standards (compacting)

• there are opportunities for faster pacing of new material

• students' passionate interests are incorporated into their independent studies

• sophisticated research investigations are facilitated

• technology is utilized for differentiation

• the pacing of instruction and the depth of content that gifted students need is made possible through ability grouping arrangements within and between classes.

Should the SCGM replace pull-out services for gifted students?

No. The SCGM provides an effective complement to all gifted education services available in your school. For example, the cluster model makes scheduling out-of-class activities easier for a school that already has a pull-out program for gifted students. The resource (or pull-out) teacher has only one cluster teacher's schedule per grade level with which to work, instead of the schedules of all the teachers at that grade level. The gifted cluster teacher understands that while the gifted students are out of class, the remaining students should experience activities that reinforce standards the gifted students have already mastered. Therefore, when the students who are involved in the pull-out program return, they do not have anything to "make up."

Gifted students need time to be together when they can just "be themselves." Pull-out programs allow this to happen. However, to justify a "pull-out" component, its curriculum should be beyond the academic reach of age appropriate learners. This could include content replacement in the core subjects in which students receive daily instruction in an advanced group.

If your school has a gifted education teacher, he would teach the pull-out class, and might also serve as a resource to cluster teachers as they differentiate the curriculum for students who need it.

Is clustering feasible only in elementary school?

No. Cluster grouping may be used at all grade levels and in all subject areas, but the structure will vary when incorporated at the middle school and high school levels. Gifted students may be clustered in one section of any heterogeneous class or team, especially when there are not enough students to form an advanced section for a particular subject. Cluster grouping is also a welcome option in small rural settings.

Are cluster groups "visible' in the classroom? Do cluster students always sit and work together?

No. Cluster groups are mostly invisible in the classroom. Since opportunities for moving faster or going deeper into the curriculum are consistently offered to the entire class, there are times when some students in the cluster group will be experiencing differentiation, and times when they won't. There are also times when students who have not been identified as gifted can benefit from available differentiated learning opportunities.

What are the advantages of cluster grouping?

In addition to the reasons described on pages 2 and 3, cluster grouping of gifted students can provide academic, social and emotional advantages to the students, and make teaching gifted students more manageable for the teachers. The school is able to provide a full-time, cost-effective program for gifted students, since their learning needs are being met every day. Gifted English Language Learners and non-productive gifted students who are placed in gifted cluster classes are more likely to reach their learning potential. Parents who are satisfied that their children are experiencing consistent challenge at school are less likely to remove their children from public education.

In classrooms without the gifted clusters, teachers report they are able to pay more attention to the special learning needs of those for whom learning may be more difficult, because they are not distracted by a few highly capable learners vying for their time and attention. Thus the SCGM benefits students for whom learning does not come easily as much as it benefits gifted students.

What are the disadvantages or challenges of cluster grouping?

There may be pressure from parents to have their children placed in a cluster classroom, even if they are not in the actual cluster group. Gifted students may move into the district during the school year and may not be able to be placed in the cluster classroom. These situations may be handled in the following ways:

• Provide training for all staff in compacting and differentiation so parents can expect those opportunities in all classes.

• Rotate the cluster teacher assignment every two to three years among teachers who have had appropriate training so parents understand that many teachers are capable of teaching gifted students and that it's not just what the school considers to be the "best teacher" who always has the gifted cluster placed in his classroom.

• Try to provide an opportunity for almost all students to be assigned to a gifted cluster class at least once while they are in the school.

• Develop a method of screening students when they enroll during the school year or by offering gifted testing two or three times during the school year.

• Ensure that cluster teachers are expected to consistently compact and differentiate the curriculum. Their supervisor

must expect them to maintain the integrity of the program, and must provide the needed support.

Summary

Cluster grouping small groups of gifted students in otherwise heterogeneous classes may be the only way to save gifted education in our schools during these political and economic times. Using the Schoolwide Cluster Grouping model, cluster grouping programs can be relatively easy to create and manage. A list of schools that used cluster grouping, along with the names of contact people who are prepared to answer questions from schools considering cluster grouping, is available at www.susanwinebrenner.com.

References and Resources

Allan, Susan D. (1991). Ability grouping research reviews: What do they say about grouping and the gifted? *Educational Leadership, 48*, 60-65.

Brulles, D. (2005). An examination and critical analysis of cluster grouping gifted students in an elementary school district. (Doctoral Dissertation. Arizona State University).

Brulles, (2005); Brulles, Cohn, & Saunders (2006). Cluster grouping elementary gifted students: Everyone benefits, *Gifted Child Quarterly*, pending publication.

Gentry, M. (1999). *Promoting student achievement and exemplary classroom practices through cluster grouping: A research-based alternative to heterogeneous elementary classrooms.* Storrs, CT: National Research Center for the Gifted and talented, RM99138.

Gentry, M., & Keilty, B. (2004). Rural and suburban cluster grouping: Reflections on staff development as a component of program success. *Roeper Review, 26*, 147-155.

Gentry, M., & MacDougall, J. (in press) Total school cluster grouping: Model, research, and practice. In J. S. Renzulli & E. J. Gubbins (Eds.), *Systems and models for developing programs for the gifted and talented* (2nd ed.). Mansfield Center , CT : Creative Learning Press.

Kulik, J.A. (2003). Grouping and tracking. In N. Colangelo and G Davis, *Handbook of gifted education*, 3rd edition., pp. 268-281). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Rogers, K. B. (2002). *Re-Forming gifted education: Matching the program to the child*. Scottsdale: Great Potential Press.

Saunders, R. (2005). A comparison study of the academic effect of ability grouping versus heterogeneous grouping in mathematics instruction. (Doctoral Dissertation, Arizona State University).

Schunk, D. H. (1987). Peer models and children's behavioral change. *Review of Educational Research, 57*, 149-174.

Winebrenner, S., & Devlin, B. (2001). Cluster grouping of gifted students: How to provide full-time services on a part-time budget. Eric Digest E538 (ED397618). www.ericec.org.

Winebrenner, S. (2001). *Teaching gifted kids in the regular classroom*. Minneapolis: Free Spirit Publishing.

Winebrenner, S., & Brulles, D. (2008). *The cluster grouping handbook: A schoolwide model book with CD-ROM: How to challenge gifted students and improve achievement for all*. Minneapolis: Free Spirit Publishing.

A Never Ending Debate: Cultural Bias in Testing

Gilman W. Whiting Vanderbilt University

Marcia was recently referred by her teacher for gifted education screening. Ms. Jackson considered Marcia to be her strongest student, not only this year, but in her four years of teaching. She earns As in most subjects, with language arts (spelling, reading and writing) being her weakest area. Despite this, Ms. Jackson recognizes that Marcia is quick witted, quickly and easily grasps what is taught, often asks complex questions, is not satisfied by one-dimensional or simplistic answers, enjoys playing with ideas, and often asks for more challenging work. She is less confident in language arts. While still very thoughtful and involved during language arts instruction, Marcia's writing and language skills appear to be average. Rather than let this one area of challenge hinder her from making the referral, Ms. Jackson feels obligated to ensure that Marcia gets more challenge. Her parents know little about gifted education, but the form they completed was consistent with observations made by Ms. Jackson. . . .Once tested, Marcia is not recommended for placement; the committee does not think her IQ score of 123 is high enough to warrant placement and services. Essentially, despite high grades and one of the strongest recommendations the committee has received from a teacher, Marcia's test score is viewed as the most important criterion.

Tests have always played a role in the decisions educators make about students. In the last decade or two, high-stakes testing increased, resulting in tests playing an unparalleled role in placement decisions, grade promotion, graduation opportunities, college admissions, and employment decisions. Schools are the primary user of intelligence and achievement tests. Thus, the discussion about which test to use, how tests impact decision makers, and how test performance affects the opportunities of those tested is by no means trivial.

In this article, I focus exclusively on intelligence tests and present an overview of issues surrounding test bias primarily related to African Americans[1], share definitions and examples of test bias, and present recommendations for reducing bias. Although I focus primarily on African Americans, I recognize that test bias is not unique to African Americans; however, the majority of research and discussions focus on this student group. Second, I acknowledge that different types of tests – aptitude, achievement, career/vocational, etc. – are not exempt from discussions about bias. However, this article focuses specifically on bias regarding intelligence tests as they are the most controversial type of test. Intelligence tests, and the meanings attached to the word 'intelligence' carry more significance than those associated with achievement tests. Intelligence tests are more likely to be associated with genetic endowment, while achievement tests are associated with learning opportunities and educational experiences (that is, the environment) and their effect on test performance/scores.

The test bias controversy and debate is by no means new. It is grounded in findings about differences in average IQ scores between various racial groups (Blacks) and ethnic groups (immigrants) in the early 1900s (Cole & Zieky, 2001). Specifically, several studies indicate that African Americans score, on average, 15 points lower than their White counterparts on traditional intelligence tests; by 'traditional,' I am referring to tests with high linguistic/verbal and cultural loadings (Flanagan & Ortiz, 2001). This finding of differential group test score performance in intelligence tests has fanned the fires of controversy over test bias (Gregory, 2004). Under inspection, have been all versions and editions of traditional intelligence tests, including the Wechsler tests, the Binet tests, Otis Lennon School Ability Test, and Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test. Non-verbal intelligence tests have also been studied and examined for bias (e.g., Ravens Progressive Matrices; Universal Nonverbal Intelligence Test, and Naglieri Non-Verbal Ability Test) (e.g., Bracken & Naglieri, 2003). These types of tests measure intelligence non-verbally.

Intelligence tests have also been challenged legally. One of the most famous legal cases is *Larry P. v. Wilson Riles*. In 1979 Judge Peckham ruled that intelligence tests are culturally biased that are used for the assessment of Black children for placement in special education classes (educable mentally retarded). One year later, Judge Grady ruled in *Parents in Action in Special Education v. Joseph P. Hannon* that intelligence tests are not culturally biased. These cases, set one year apart, mirror the opposing positions that continue some 30 years later.

View 1: Intelligence Tests are Not Biased

Advocates or proponents of intelligence tests maintain that tests are valid and reliable instruments for all groups, regardless of culture, language, gender, and class. According to Armour-Thomas and Gopaul-McNicol (1998), support for this position falls into at least three categories or assumptions: (1) tests are culturally fair; items do not favor a particular cultural group; (2) the tasks assess the cognitive abilities underlying intellectual behavior for all groups; and (3) the tests accurately predict performance for all groups.

It is also important to note that test construction is grounded in two assumptions. The first is the assumption of homogeneity and the second is the assumption of equal opportunity to learn and acquire knowledge and experiences (Armour-Thomas & Gopaul-McNicol, 1998; Flanagan & Ortiz, 2001). These assumptions essentially mean that: (a) the test items measure the everyday experiences of populations; and (b) everyone has had an equal opportunity to learn and be exposed to the tasks in the tests and its format (Ford, 2004). It is, therefore, believed that tests are not discriminatory; the test is not at fault. Again, considering Marcia, those who hold this particular position are less likely to find fault with the test and more likely to believe that, if Marcia were gifted, she would have tested at the designated level. She, not the test, is at fault.

View 2: Intelligence Tests are Biased

Tests are often viewed as being biased *against* Blacks, other culturally and linguistically diverse groups, and low socioeconomic status (SES) students, but biased *in favor of* White and middle-SES students. According to Gregory (2004), "an intelligence test is a neutral, inconsequential tool until someone assigns significance to the results derived from it. Once meaning is attached to a person's score, that individual will experience many repercussions, ranging from superficial to life-changing. These repercussions will be fair or prejudiced, helpful or harmful, appropriate or misguided – depending on the meaning attached to the test score" (p. 240).

Many professionals who oppose using intelligence tests with Black students focus on the social and educational consequences – fairness and disparate impact. The primary argument and belief is that persons from backgrounds other than the culture in which the test was developed will always be penalized; they will likely score lower on the test and, thus, have their opportunities limited and face misinterpretations about their worth and potential as gifted students. They argue that intelligence tests have seldom been standardized with representative numbers (not just percentages) of culturally and linguistically diverse populations. Therefore, the test scores are not valid and reliable for them, rendering the test inappropriate to use. As an illustration, if a test is normed on or standardized with 3000 students and 12% of them are African American, then there are only 360 African Americans in the sample. Is the small sample representative of the larger African-American population, and are there sufficient numbers to generalize across income, gender, geography, etc.?

[1]The terms 'African American' and 'Black' are used inter-changeably.

. . . .Back to Marcia. All data – except her intelligence test score – indicate that she could benefit from gifted education services. Those who oppose using intelligence tests with culturally and linguistically diverse students would likely argue that the test is biased against Marcia; that the test has underestimated her skills and abilities. Recognizing that Black students in particular were and are negatively affected by their intelligence test performance or scores, The Association of Black Psychologists (Williams, 1970) charged that Black students were/are, subsequently, denied many educational opportunities; they charged that intelligence tests are not valid measures for Black students and that they are more harmful than helpful. This notion of tests being harmful goes against the principles of fair and equitable testing, a key feature of professional testing standards (e.g., American Psychological Association, American Educational Research Association, National Council on Measurement in Education, 1999). No test should be used to harm students; they should benefit the test taker; no one test should be used for making decisions; and the test results should be used with other corroborating information.

Test Bias: Technical and Social Definitions

Gregory (2004) defined test bias as "objective statistical indices that examine the patterning of test scores for relevant subpopulations" (p. 242). He adds that consensus exists about the statistical criteria that indicate when a test is biased (see the statistical procedures of Berk, 1982; Cleary, 1968 and Darlington, 1971 for commonly used statistical procedures and models.) A review of definitions indicates that test bias can be categorized in two ways: technically and socially. Technically, test bias refers to differential validity for definable, relevant subgroups of persons (Sattler, 1992, p. 616). Hence, a test would be considered biased if the scores from subpopulations did not fall upon the same regression line or a relevant criterion: "Bias is present when a test score has meanings or implications for a relevant, definable subgroup of test takers that are different from the meanings or implications for the remainder of test takers. Thus, bias is differential validity of a given interpretation of a test score for any definable, relevant subgroup of test takers" (Cole & Moss, 1989, cited in Gregory, 2004, p. 242).

When a test is biased, from a social or social values viewpoint, the concern relates to denial of opportunity and the false negative hypothesis. Two other terms or concepts are relevant to discussions regarding testing CLD groups. It can be argued that while a test might not be biased technically, it can still be unfair (see Cole & Zieky, 2001). Test fairness is fundamentally about the social consequences of test results (Gregory, 2004, p. 249; also see Hunter & Schmidt, 2000). 'Test fairness' is the extent to which the social consequences of test usage are considered fair or unfair to relevant subgroups; test fairness is especially important to consider when used for selection or placement decisions. From a legal point of view, this is related to the notion of 'disparate impact' (see *Griggs v. Duke Power*, 1971). If a test hinders opportunities for a group to participate in gifted education, for example, then it has a disparate impact and should not be used. Out of this case came the Griggs Principle, which states: "If a group consistently performs poorly on a test, why do we continue to use it?"

Types of Test Bias

Four types of test bias often appear in the literature and are discussed next. At the core, all concerns about bias concern the differential performance between and among groups. Why does one group perform differently than another group, especially on a consistent basis? Efforts to account for differential performance focus on the individual characteristics of examinees, the testing environment, and/or characteristics of the test or test items (Berk, 1982; Scheuneman, 1985).

1. **Bias in construct validity**: A type of bias demonstrated when a test is shown to measure different hypothetical constructs or traits for one group than another. This type of bias also exists when the test measures the same trait for groups but with differing degrees of accuracy. Statistics regarding factor structure are often employed here. A biased test will show different factor structures across subgroups; there will be a lower degree of similarity for the factor structure and the rank or item difficulty across groups (Sattler, 1992). A key and common illustration relates to language. Testing a student in English who has yet to become proficient in English is problematic. The student or group may have the knowledge and experiences to answer the item correctly, but cannot do so if they do not understand the question due to language barriers. An intelligence test then becomes a language test. The ultimate question: Does the item or test measure what it is intended to measure?

2. **Bias in content validity**: Reynolds (1998) defined content bias in this way: "an item or subscale of a test is considered biased when it is demonstrated to be relatively more difficult for members of one group than another when the general ability of both groups is held constant and no reasonable theoretical rationale exists to explain group differences on the item or subscale in question" (cited in Gregory, 2004, p. 243). For example, if asked the question, "How is a tuba like a clarinet?" a student or group who has never played or seen or had instruction about one or both instruments is at a disadvantage. Lack of exposure and experience is the problem. Reynolds (1998) lists three examples of content bias:

a. The items ask for information that minority persons have not had equal opportunity to learn;

b. The scoring of the item is inappropriate, since the test author/developer has arbitrarily decided on the only correct answer and diverse groups are inappropriately penalized for giving answers that would be correct in their own culture;

c. The wording of questions is unfamiliar, and minority groups may not be able to respond because they do not

understand the question(s) and/or are unfamiliar with the test format.

3. **Bias in item selection**: A type of bias demonstrated when the items and tasks selected are based on the learning experiences and language of the dominant group. This is somewhat related to content validity, but addresses more directly concerns about the appropriateness of individual items. While the overall test may not be biased statistically, a few of the items can be. This issue concerns how an item gets included in a test but another item does not.

4. **Bias in predictive or criterion-related validity**: A type of bias demonstrated when the inference drawn from the test score is not made with the smallest feasible random error, or when there is constant error in an inference or prediction as a function of membership in a particular group. The overarching question here is: Do the test scores accurately predict how the student or group will perform on a future task? It is often presumed that a high intelligence score predicts future competence, performance or success, such as a high grade point average, success in college, success on the job, and so much more. A concern of opponents is that intelligence tests are given too much power, and if an individual or group scores low on an intelligence test, there is a high probability that they will be denied an opportunity to access a program or service. In other words, a test is considered "unbiased if the results for all relevant subpopulations cluster equally well around a single regression line. . .an unbiased test predicts performance equally for all groups, even though their means may be different" (Gregory, 2004, p. 244).

Non-Discriminatory Assessment: Some Recommendations for Reducing Bias

In newer editions of intelligence tests, most producers endeavor to ensure that their tests are low in bias, and their manuals address such efforts. No matter how diligent and attentive these efforts are, there is no such thing as a bias-free test or culture-free test; so, we must aim for bias-reduced and culture-reduced tests. Some suggestions for achieving this goal are:

1. ***Language-related considerations***: translate tests into the language of the examinee; use interpreters to translate test items for examinees.

2. ***Statistical analyses and technical considerations***: examine all test items/tasks to see if groups perform differently and eliminate those items/tasks; eliminate items that are offensive to examinees; review norming data and sample sizes. While diverse groups can be proportionately represented in the standardization sample, their actual numbers may be too small to be representative, which hinders generalizability.

3. ***Social considerations:*** when interpreting test scores, always consider the examinee's background experience; do not support the assumption of homogeneous experience or equal opportunity to learn; groups have different backgrounds and experiences that affect their test performance; always consider the technical *and* social merits of tests because a test can be technically unbiased and simultaneously unfair (i.e., have a disparate impact).

4. ***Ethical considerations:*** never base decisions on using one test and/or one score. one piece of information cannot possibly be useful in making defensible, effective and appropriate decisions; do not interpret test scores in isolation; collect multiple data and use this comprehensive method to make decisions; when an individual or group scores low, consider that the test may be the problem – it may be inappropriate and should be eliminated; if a group consistently performs poorly on an intelligence test, explore contributing factors and the extent to which it is useful/helpful for that group (Griggs Principle); always use and interpret test scores with testing principles and standards in mind, such as those published by the American Psychological Association et al. (1999), which address professional responsibility and ethics, as well as working effectively with culturally diverse populations (Ford & Whiting, 2006 ; Whiting & Ford, 2006).

5. ***Alternative measures considerations:*** include culture-fair or culture-reduced tests in the assessment or decision making process; these tests are designed to minimize irrelevant influences of cultural learning and social climate and, thereby, produce a cleaner separation of ability or performance from learning opportunities; non-verbal intelligence tests fall into this category, with their reduced cultural and linguistic loadings (see Bracken & Naglieri, 2003; Flanagan & Ortiz, 2001).

Summary

As of 2004, 2 in 5 students in our nation's schools are culturally and linguistically diverse. Demographers predict that this percentage will increase to the point that those deemed 'minority' will soon be the majority. Given these current and impending changes in school demographics and the ever-increasing reliance on tests for decision making purposes, debates regarding test bias are not likely to decrease or cease.

While test developers, as they should, have increased their efforts to decrease or even eliminate biases in their tests, this goal has yet to be achieved. I support the assertion that tests in and of themselves are harmless tools; nonetheless, this philosophical viewpoint often fails to hold true in actual practice. In practice, tests (why they are chosen, and how they are misused and misinterpreted) can and do serve as gatekeepers, often resulting in closed doors and limited options for African Americans and other culturally and linguistically diverse groups (Ford & Joseph, 2006).

Tests may be objective and neutral, but humans are not necessarily so. We must work diligently to reduce human bias – stereotypes and prejudice – because they can and do undermine test selection, administration, interpretation and use. And more often than not, African-American and other culturally diverse students are the recipients of this injustice. Marcia is just one more reason, one more reminder, that we must seek to improve tests and seek to improve ourselves. Like tests, we must seek to help rather than harm.

References

American Educational Research Association (AERA), American Psychological Association (APA), and National Council on Measurement in Education (NCME). (1999). *Standards for educational and psychological testing*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Armour-Thomas, E. & Gopaul-McNicol, S. (1998). *Assessing intelligence: Applying a bio-cultural model*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Berk, R. A. (1982). (Ed.). *Handbook of methods for detecting test bias.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Bracken, B.A. & Naglieri, J.A. (2003). Assessing diverse populations with nonverbal tests of general intelligence. In C.R. Reynolds & R.W. Kamphaus (Eds.), *Handbook of psychological and educational assessment of children* (2nd ed.). New York: Guilford.

Cleary, A. (1968). Test bias: Prediction of grades of Negro and White students in integrated colleges. *Journal of Educational Measurement, 5*, 115-124.

Cole, N.S. & Moss, P.A. (1989). Bias in test use. In R. L. Linn (Ed.), *Educational measurement.* Washington, DC: American Council on Education.

Cole, N.S. & Zieky, M.J. (2001). The new faces of fairness. *Journal of Educational Measurement, 38*(4), 369-382.

Darlington, R. B. (1971). Another look at "culture fairness." *Journal of Educational Measurement, 8,* 71-82.

Flanagan, D. P. & Ortiz, S. O. (2001). *Essentials of cross-battery assessment.* New York: Wiley Press.

Ford, D.Y. (2004). *Intelligence testing and cultural diversity: Concerns, cautions, and considerations*. Storrs, CT: University of Connecticut, National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented.

Ford, D.Y. (2007). Intelligence testing and cultural diversity: The need for alternative instruments, policies, and procedures. In VanTassel-Baska, J.L. (Ed.). *Alternative assessments with gifted and talented students* (pp. 107-128). Waco, TX: Prufrock Press, Inc. and the National Association for Gifted Children.

Ford, D.Y. & Joseph, L.M. (2006). Non-discrimnatory assessment: Considerations for gifted education. *Gifted Child Quarterly, 50(*1), 41-51.

Ford, D.Y. & Whiting, G.W. (2006). Under-representation of diverse students in gifted education: Recommendations for nondiscriminatory assessment (part 1). *Gifted Education Press Quarterly, 20*(2), 2-6.

Gregory, R.J. (2004). *Psychological testing: History, principles, and applications*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Griggs v. Duke Power Co., 401 U.S. 424 (1971)

Hunter, J.E., & Schmidt, F.L. (2000). Racial and gender bias in ability and achievement tests: Resolving the apparent paradox. *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law, 6*, 151–158.

Jensen, A.R. (1980). *Bias in mental testing*. New York: Free Press.

Larry P. v. Riles, 485 F. Supp. 926-992 (1979).

Reynolds, C.R. (1998). Cultural bias in testing of intelligence and personality. In A. Bellack & M. Hersen (series eds.) & C. Belar (vol. ed.), *Comprehensive clinical psychology: Sociocultural and individual differences.* New York: Elservier Science.

Sattler, J.M. (1992). *Assessment of children: Rev. and updated 3rd ed*. San Diego: Jerome M. Sattler Publishers, Inc.

Scheuneman, J. (1985). *Exploration of causes of bias in test items.* GRE Board Professional Report GREB No. 81-21P, ETS Research Report 85-42. Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service.

Whiting, G.W. & Ford, D.Y. (2006). Under-representation of diverse students in gifted education: Recommendations for nondiscriminatory assessment (part 2). *Gifted Education Press Quarterly, 20*(3), 6-10.

Williams, R. (1970). Danger:Testing and dehumanizing Black children. *Clinical Child Psychology Newsletter, 9*(1), 5-6.

Aesthetic Percipience, Part 1: The Value of Supporting Gifted Students' Appreciation of and Affinity for the Fine Arts

Jason A. Helfer Stephen T. Schroth Educational Studies Department Knox College

Introductory Remarks

Gifted children's teachers and parents often worry about how best to introduce them to the fine arts in a manner that will allow the children continued growth. This trepidation may stem from parents' and practitioners' personal lack of familiarity with artistic exemplars. The uneasiness may also be due to a self-perceived lack of "talent." These apprehensions, when coupled with the tripartite artistic capacities of *creator*, *performer*, and *aficionado*, make developing talent in the fine arts an arduous task. This task is further complicated by the limited scope of fine arts classes most public schools offer. In elementary school, for instance, children are frequently offered a general music or art class taught by a specialist. Traditionally these classes have focused on production of art or music. The creation of the National Standards in Arts Education (1994) has placed greater focus on the value of appreciation (that is, in developing the student as aficionado). Despite this change, the opportunities for sustained development of these skills are often scant. Within secondary education, the emphasis on performance or creation increases. Yet the assumption is questionable that developing fluency as a performer or the skills necessary to create will

adequately support the development of an aficionado. Familiarity with, and appreciation of great works of art must be a distinct, distinguishable, and demonstrable goal of schooling. That is, the fine arts should be available to *all* gifted children, not just those with identified ability as a performer or creator. Happily, all gifted children's enjoyment and fulfillment of the fine arts can be developed through thoughtful practice that can be provided by teachers or parents.

Within the discipline of aesthetic education, the focus is upon a variety of anchor points essential to develop sensitivity of and enjoyment from engagement with art. Different instructional strategies stem from different perspectives. For instance, aesthetic criticism is distinct from aesthetic valuing, and a formalist considers topics in a different light than a referentialist. Aesthetic percipience, however, is one common element that fuses many types of aesthetic engagements. *Aesthetic percipience emphasizes experiencing artworks as objects of contemplation as opposed to experiencing them through performance and creation.* Such an approach is chiefly premised upon the work of the British philosopher Harold Osborne. Osborne provides the theoretical foundations for aesthetic percipience while rightfully avoiding any pedagogical assertions other than percipience can be taught, and that it is contingent upon capacity, cultivation, and practice. Osborne's omissions provide ample opportunity to consider how the gifted child develops the skills necessary to reap the rewards of deep and life-long engagement in the fine arts. This paper shall show that percipience can be cultivated and practiced in a variety of settings that require little ability to create or perform. According to Osborne, one experiencing percipience is, "aesthetically preoccupied with a thing . . . enter[ing] into a growing awareness of it, in [a] special kind of way . . ." (1970, p. 19). Such an aesthetic preoccupation raises a number of instructional issues and challenges. First, the novice aficionado[1] must learn *how* to engage with works of fine art. This might involve the act of looking at or listening to a work of art. Second, the novice aficionado must be able to communicate his or her developing understanding of the work of art in question. Such communication can be formal or informal in nature. Third and last, the novice aficionado must have numerous opportunities for cultivation and practice that are differentiated by individual capacity. This exposure must be continuous and longstanding. These are three interrelated but distinct ideas—each will be examined in turn to explicate how aesthetic percipience can foster the development of the life-long aficionado.

Engaging With Fine Art

A variety of perspectives exist regarding how one might engage with a work of art. Some favor using the art work to release the imagination (Tolstoy), whereas others accentuate examining formal principles of art (Bell). Both perspectives have merit. Neither outlook, however, provides entry for individuals lacking familiarity with the fine arts. Those seeking to use art to fire the imagination may simply look at a sculpture or listen to a sonata and allow their focus to drift. As a consequence, *anything* can be considered art and that entrance is only limited by one's imagination. Those searching for additional examination of art's underlying principles must already be aware of basic formal elements within an artwork. When working with gifted children it is inappropriate to state either, "Listen/look and let you mind wander," or "In order for you to take meaning from this work, you must focus upon the melodic contour/balance." Novice aficionados must be provided pedagogically sound entry points to the fine arts. These entry points are best investigated with a seasoned guide, namely the teacher, supporting the novice in his or her development. Such an approach builds aesthetic percipience simultaneously with engagement with the fine arts.

Teachers must begin with what the child already knows. The philosopher Suzanne K. Langer suggests, "The limits of thought are set not so much from the outside, but by the fullness or poverty of experiences that meet the mind, as from within, by the power of conception, the wealth of formulative notions with which the mind meets experiences" (1942, p. 8). Aesthetic percipience entails far more than what the novice perceives. Indeed, another way of understanding aesthetic percipience is to ponder Langer's belief that one can only perceive what one *already* conceives. This is easy enough to demonstrate. Two individuals can, and very often do, see very different things when looking at a painting. The individuals may agree upon the basic subject matter of the painting, but the significance of that subject matter may be viewed in different ways. Similarly, 2D and 3D visual arts and multiple genres of music are much more than the sum of their subject matters. The development of aesthetic percipience thus must focus on providing novices opportunities to delve beneath the obvious (e.g., the ship, bowl of fruit, or human form in the visual arts) and the affect (e.g., a musical piece is happy or sad). This focus does *not* mean that the novice is merely drilled with terms and expected to apply them accurately to describe the elements of the work in question, nor that one ought to look or listen to a work only as a springboard for imaginative fancy. Rather, aesthetic percipience demands that the novice have frequent and deep opportunities to "enter into a growing awareness of it [the artwork]" (1970, 19). This entry is not easy. As Osborne (1970) suggests: "When the subject of the arts crops up in any tea-table conversation you may hear one man remark: 'I don't understand modern art,' while another will say: 'I have read up on it but it still leaves me cold.' Both statements conceal the same fundamental error, namely the assumption that to perceive a work of art, to grasp it fully in awareness, is an automatic thing and easy of accomplishment, something equally within the competence of any man, while the difficulties of appreciation begin later with the 'understanding' of what has been perceived or with the emotional response to it" (p. 20).

This comment must be clarified in light of the present context. To begin, note that Osborne provides examples of both sorts

[1]The term novice aficionado is used instead of student to emphasize that aesthetic percipience is not age dependent. Any child or adult can learn how to engage in percipient experiences. Thus, we use the term novice throughout.

of interaction. Individuals who do not understand modern art may assume that art should "speak" to him or her without any sort of tutelage. Individuals who have read up on art assume that studying art allows the meaning of art to be bestowed upon them. Osborne suggests that both views are mistaken. Many focus on *understanding* as the primary goal of aesthetic engagement. This belief, common with novice and expert alike, is erroneous. Understanding a picture or a symphony is distinct from understanding algebra. Both algebra and the visual and performing arts rely on symbols to transmit meaning to the individual. Algebra, however, uses a stable set of symbols to communicate shared understanding. The visual and performing arts do not. The arts do use the same tools to transmit their essences (i.e., paints, brushes, rhythm, sound). What the creator does with these tools, however, is what makes art a joyous yet challenging struggle for meaning and expression.

Novices must *unlearn* the sorts of understanding that are often the focus of schooling in order to develop aesthetic percipience. While *unlearn* may be objected to as too strong a term, perhaps it is better to recommend putting aside everyday stresses and obligations when preparing to encounter art. Osborne (1970) suggests that when individuals gaze or listen intently at a picture or composition with no intended outcome, they are beginning to engage in aesthetic percipience (p. 27). Specifically, one engages in contemplation, with the object of contemplation placed upon a pedestal—a picture viewed in a museum or a concerto heard in a concert hall. The contemplator does not view the work as an example of genre *x*, nor is he or she making judgments about the individual parts. Rather, a work is seen as, "a complex structure of interrelated parts, [and] this is different from theoretical analysis." (p. 29) Percipience is developed through this sort of focused contemplation, leading to absorption with an object. The object of contemplation must *not*, however, be used merely for self-indulgence or as a tool to assess how one feels (pp. 34-35).

Attaining the aforementioned balance presents a challenge for novice and expert alike. This challenge becomes greater when one considers Osborne's implications that percipience "needs cultivation and directed practice," and it is the fine arts that "can extend to full capacity the faculties of perception exercised within this mode of attention" (p. 37). While Osborne was not a teacher in the sense of those who work with children in the public schools, his suggestion regarding capacity, cultivation, and practice provide space for further consideration.

Communicating About Fine Art

Osborne is quite specific regarding *explanation's* placement in the overall percipient experience. Language is not to be used to explain or describe the experience, rather it *may* be used as a tool to *reflect* upon what was seen or heard. Language is used to classify or describe interpretations, but these uses in and of themselves do not constitute an aesthetic experience or an adequate representation of the experience. Rather, they are wholly distinct insofar that engaging with the artwork is expressly intended to classify, or substantiate, interpretations. Nonetheless, those who teach are left with a conundrum; it is not enough to simply allow children a variety of opportunities to engage with art, since novices need to get a sense of a work's meaning and ways to engage in aesthetic percipience. Novices also must appreciate that understanding is not the goal of the aesthetic engagement, and finally, an opportunity to think and discuss *how* the complexities of the artwork mingled into a cohesive experience. Although words alone are insufficient for this sort of work, they do provide a vehicle to assist the cultivation and practice of aesthetic percipience.

Langer (1942) provides an alternative lens through which to consider aesthetic percipience. This approach favors providing entry points through the mingling of language and thoughtful opportunities with works of art. This enables novices to cast a wider conceptual "net" from which they can gather experiences necessary to becoming an expert aficionado. Assisting novices with introductory experiences that help them to acquire the appropriate language used when reflecting upon artworks is essential. For instance, experiences that accentuate the importance of line (length and thickness) in the work's apperception helps develop gifted students' conceptual and perceptual abilities. Indeed, to perceive a thing one must be aware of the thing in the first place; language has much to do with this awareness (Helfer & Schroth, 2007).

Osborne also suggests a wide range of structured experiences that novices ought to experience as part of their aesthetic experiences. In this regard, consider the following statement by Jacques Barzun: "Sensitivity to words is part of pedagogy at large. But words—correct words—are also indispensable to the teaching of art. Critical judgment, appreciation, stylistic analysis, disputations about taste, historical comparisons, and efficient instruction itself depend upon the appropriate use of words and the benefits of teaching art to the young will consist mainly in the pleasure that comes of being able to see and hear works of art more sharply and subtly, more consciously, to register that pleasure in words, and compare notes with other people similarly inclined" (Barzun, 1978, p. 20).

Aesthetic percipience is part of the larger domain related to learning about art. Students must make critical judgments, engage in stylistic analysis, and share their ideas concerning the quality of the artwork with others. Aesthetic percipience is both the foundation for such study and an outcome insofar as people with no formal tutelage can have meaningful experiences while contemplating art; yet when one is aware of what is seen or heard, *and* has the conceptual foundations from which to make multiple sense of the object, the engagement, resultant enjoyment, and illumination received is far greater. A novice's engagement, enjoyment, and illumination are limited, of course, by opportunities for cultivation and practice as well as individual capacity.

Conclusion

Familiarity with, and appreciation of, great works of art must be distinct, distinguishable, and demonstrable goals of schooling. Fine arts instruction thus should be available to *all* gifted children, not just those with identified abilities as a performer or creator. The unique perspective that aesthetic percipience demands is an important entry point to understanding how ideas may serve as the bedrock of practice. Deep, extended, and expansive experience with art allows gifted children to cultivate their sensitivity toward the variety of artistic exemplars. This assists novices in *learning about* art. This experience also, and more importantly, imparts the benefits of aesthetic engagement for lifelong fulfillment. Aesthetic percipience affords gifted children entry points into the fine arts including those who do not demonstrate high levels of performance ability or skill at composing or creating artworks. This article has attempted to make the case for the importance of exposing gifted children to aesthetic percipience. The second part of this article will extend the theoretical discussion by including instructional strategies and methods that allow aesthetic percipience to be incorporated into the classroom.

References

Barzun, J. (1978). Art and educational inflation. *Journal of aesthetic education, 12*(4), 20.

The Consortium of National Arts Education Associations (1994). *National standards for arts education: Dance, music, theatre, visual arts*. Reston, VA: The National Association for Music Education.

Helfer, J. A., & Schroth, S. T. (2007, Spring). Seeing and seeing as: The challenges in the identification of gifted children. *Conceptual Foundations, 15*(1), 12-17.

Langer, S. K. (1942). *Philosophy in a new key*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Osborne, H. A. (1970). *The art of appreciation*. London: Oxford University Press.

Gifted Children and Shakespeare: Using Monologues and Scenes

Douglas King

Gannon University Erie, Pennsylvania

A great irony in humanities education is that generations of teachers and parents have grown up frustrated with Shakespeare's plays, yet believing that Shakespeare is of course great and should be passed on to the next generation. A sort of mind/heart dichotomy prevails, as many adults believe intellectually that Shakespeare is important, while their heart-level experience tells them that Shakespeare is painful and difficult. So dutifully they teach Shakespeare, with a smile to hide a grimace. However, as we know, children (especially the gifted) are perceptive, and will pick up on the cues subtly communicated by the adult; that is, they will see through lines such as 'Shakespeare is the greatest playwright who ever lived . . . the language really isn't difficult . . . Shakespeare's plays are fun,' if they are delivered with clenched teeth by well meaning parents and educators. And of course children, without confident guidance from their parents or educators, may have their own difficulties experiencing the delights of Shakespeare and thus join the cycle of misery, as they internally feel the same paradox: 'Everyone says that Shakespeare's so great, yet I don't get it—I guess there's something wrong with me.' So what is the cure for this cyclical syndrome that sometimes prevents even our gifted students from enjoying Shakespeare's plays?

For centuries, at least since Charles and Mary Lamb produced their "Tales from Shakespeare" (1807), one solution to this Shakespeare dilemma has been to introduce children to Shakespeare's "stories" while sparing them from the difficulties of his language. I will not spend much time addressing this philosophy except to reject it utterly on two counts. First, virtually all of Shakespeare's stories were borrowed from other sources (and often culled together from several), and thus, paring the plays to the essential "tales" does not give us much "Shakespeare"—and sometimes, not terribly coherent narratives. Second, much of what makes Shakespeare interesting and great *is* his use of language—as fused with character, plot, and dramatic situation—and I believe firmly that this language, despite its undeniable challenges, can be made accessible and enjoyable for children.

Another solution to the Shakespeare dilemma logically seems to present itself: Since Shakespeare is so daunting, why not wait until children are older—at least, say 9th, 10th, maybe 12th grade?—before introducing them to the rigors of Shakespeare? Then they'll be ready for it. Again I disagree thoroughly. As researcher Fred Sedgwick (1999) notes, "the difficulty of Shakespeare is part of the case for teaching it, not against" (p.14). In keeping with the well proven principle that the earlier one undertakes language acquisition, the better, children can and do experience Shakespeare from a very early age—pre-kindergarten is not too young. At any school age, and certainly by the late elementary years, students can enjoy Shakespeare in some form (the rest of this article will assume that we're mostly thinking about gifted students between 4th and 12th grades). The question naturally becomes: In what form? Clearly it's absurd to think that even the most talented 5th graders can read, say, *King Lear*, if we plop the text down in front of them. I suggest that a key to overcoming the Shakespeare dilemma is overcoming what Sedgwick calls "the tyranny of the whole play" (p. 91). Frustration with

Shakespeare can perpetuate when educators feel—and the curriculum dictates—that in grade x we must teach Play A, in grade y we teach Play B, and so forth. Each of those plays is intimidating to a teacher afflicted with Shakesphobia, which syndrome is then passed on to students. Meanwhile, for earlier grades, there's usually no room in the curriculum (or the teacher can't imagine the room) to tackle a play. But through over a decade of research and practice, I have found that using small pieces of Shakespeare—scenes and monologues—works wonderfully and creates great benefits for students and adults.

Much of my experience has come through working with children as a coach, parent, and judge with the Pittsburgh Public Theatre's annual Shakespeare Monologue and Scene Contest. I first became involved in using monologues and scenes in the mid-90's as a parent of gifted children. I coached my sons with their monologues for the Public Theatre's competition, an activity that dovetailed nicely with my research—my doctoral dissertation was on Shakespeare as adapted for and taught to children under twelve. While their classmates were doing karaoke and dance routines, my children and their friends did Shakespearean scenes for their school talent shows, beginning in first grade, and had great fun. Later I volunteered to help coach other children at my son's middle school (where as with many schools participating in monologue and scene activities, the gifted coordinators facilitated the experience). The children—though not all natural thespians—were able to internalize Shakespeare's words and the meanings and emotions behind them.

I was invited by the Public Theatre to coach at other area schools, and also to help judge contestants during performance week at the theatre. Thus I've seen from various perspectives—parent, researcher, coach, and judge—the benefits of student immersion in monologues and scenes from Shakespeare's plays, often without exposure to an entire play (though clearly some familiarity is desirable in helping students to understand the contexts for the pieces with which they're working). Particularly for students younger than the conventional age at which our curricula deem them ready to experience Shakespeare, memorizing and performing a single scene or monologue can give a great sense of satisfaction and accomplishment.

Though I've been involved with a large project—the Public Theatre contest annually involves over 900 children between grades four and twelve, many through gifted programs in their schools—one does not need the resources of a theatre organization to fruitfully use Shakespearean monologues and scenes with children. An individual gifted coordinator can do this in-house, as can a home schooling parent or any interested educator. The project can be as small or large as one desires—from an activity for one or two children in the home, to a class-wide activity, to a large contest such as the one sponsored by the Public Theatre. Even if one is afflicted with Shakesphobia, or one is inexperienced in teaching Shakespeare, one can facilitate a great learning experience. It all begins with a child and a page of script.

The first step is to find pieces for children to work with. Even if a teacher is not very familiar with the Shakespeare canon, texts can easily be located. Online resources can help; for instance, a great list of Shakespearean monologues can be found at:

http://www.shakespeare-monologues.org/, and great scene selections at: http://www.ppt.org/documents/scenes.pdf. Example scenes on video can be found at several locations, including:

http://mainelyshakespeare.com/sceneofmonth.html

Though students often gravitate toward the most famous speeches—perhaps guided by their teachers' familiarity with those (e.g., Hamlet's "To be or not to be," Macbeth's "Is this a dagger I see before me?"), it's nice if they can consider more esoteric options. Particularly if there is a contest involved, audiences and judges may appreciate the variety. Gender is of no consequence—any student can play any part, male or female.

Once a student has located a scene or monologue with which to work, there are several principles I emphasize:

1. British accents are generally not helpful.

When a student affects a British accent, this usually reinforces the idea that Shakespeare is foreign and highbrow, which works against the goals to make the language accessible and natural and to help the student understand and relate to the character.

2. Actions speak louder than words.

The key to a good monologue or scene is not the words. Most students and teachers naturally think that the main task is to learn those strange lines, to remember what one is supposed to say. But *doing* something with the words can help the student inhabit the character and make sense of the piece. Actions—even small gestures—can bring the monologue or scene to life. For example, without direction, most students naturally stand somewhere in the middle of the stage area and start saying the words. It can be far more interesting for someone to start a monologue, e.g., by laughing offstage before appearing, by running onstage backwards and falling, or leaping, sitting, or whatever action might work for the dramatic situation, than by standing in place and reciting lines. As Rosanna DiMillo Sandell (2000) and others have noted, multiple intelligences can be developed through children working with Shakespeare, and while the verbal-linguistic dimension will inevitably be used, other intelligences can be stimulated from the outset, particularly the bodily-kinesthetic. By taking direction as to actions and gestures, many students will gain a more visceral/kinesthetic experience of the dramatic situation and the character. Some students will not reach this stage. Some will truly get hung up on memorizing and reciting the words and have little capacity to free themselves to incorporate suggestions for actions or even

variant ways to read the lines. That's ok. Those students too can reap great benefits from the experience—for example, gaining confidence, feeling pride at having mastered challenging language, and overcoming fear and nervousness at performing a speech in front of people.

3. The bigger, the better.

Once students have learned their lines and begun to speak them, I tell them, 'The world does not need another timid monologue. Put it out there.' Tell them that it's hard to be too loud, but it's easy to be too quiet (assuming that they will have some sort of audience). If a monologue is spoken to another character, have the student imagine that listener is not beside him/her onstage, but way out in the audience. If you are the teacher/audience, try to stand or sit as far away from the performer as possible and tell him/her if you can't hear the words.

4. Watching videos is not cheating; it's enrichment.

If a good version of the piece exists on video (and with the last 20 years' spate of Shakespearean adaptations, many are available), I strongly encourage students to watch it. Often they'll end up watching the whole film, which enriches their overall experience and understanding. Parents and teachers can of course decide which versions and scenes are age appropriate.

To give the reader a sense of a typical process of working with students on monologues and scenes, I'll now recount a journal entry from one of my first school visits to coach gifted students preparing for the Monologue and Scene Contest.

***

The first scene I see is four girls doing an all-male scene from *Much Ado About Nothing* (III.ii), in which Claudio, Don Pedro, and Leonato harass the dentally-ailing Benedick about being in love. I have them begin the scene, then quickly stop them when it's clear that they have their lines cold but don't know what they're saying. Curious as to whether they have any dramatic context for the scene, I ask whether any of them has read or seen the play. No. I then ask them to explain what the scene is about. The answers reveal that the girls have thought about the scene and have a well-developed—and thoroughly misguided—interpretation: "they're arguing about who should go . . . *those* two think that . . ., but *these* two think . . . ." It's all conflictual. I see that my task is to encourage and redirect. I explain that the whole scene is light, funny, all just *teasing* this one guy who vowed he'd never fall in love but now has. Varying degrees of wattage register over each of their heads; these girls are flexible and eager to make sense of the scene.

We block the scene to bring it to physical life; I get them to prod, touch, hold, restrain, and buzz around Benedick, and the girl playing Benedick quickly picks up on the feeling that she/he's the one being teased and adopts a suitably indignant persona, trying to escape the good-natured torment. The girls begin to have fun in character; I get them to say the sort of culminating line, "he's in love," *ensemble* and then have a hearty laugh. The girls are delighted and so am I.

The second scene is from *Macbeth*—three girls and one boy doing the climactic combat scene between Macbeth and Macduff (V.vii): "Turn, hell-hound, turn!" Unlike the other group, these children are all completely on script; like the other group, they have no context for the scene and little idea of what they're saying. I explain that this scene is stage combat and requires clanging and beheading (though we agree that the latter can take place offstage!). I give the background for many of the lines ("too much charged with blood of thine already . . . Macduff was from his mother's womb untimely ripped," and so forth), and try to choreograph minimalist stage combat that takes the pair offstage for decapitation and to allow the entrance of Malcolm, Ross, and Old Siward. The children haven't worked out how they'll do this section with only two additional actors, so I splice a few lines and eliminate Ross. We get them all to kneel to Malcolm on "Hail, king of Scotland, for so thou art!" With only a week or so to go before they perform for the judges, and lines far from being memorized, there's little chance that they'll pull together a credible scene, but nonetheless they're having fun.

I have two monologues to tackle, and both are difficult choices. One girl has the Rosalind epilogue to *As You Like It*, an easy piece to make coherent but decidedly undramatic. I advise Ally to make direct eye contact with audience members/judges, to smile and keep it light and charming—her job is simply to elicit applause, with a few little jokes thrown in, as with a gesture indicating bad breath. She gamely incorporates these ideas, and is much happier for having little bits of action to do.

Emily has chosen Titania's rich speech from II.i of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, as she indicts Oberon for his pettiness and for the imbalance and desecration of nature ("These are the forgeries of jealousy"). She has the lines beautifully, and understands the basic context of the feud (she says they're fighting over Puck rather than over the changeling boy, but what the heck). I'm short on time, and do the best I can to develop some simple, strong blocking, beginning with the placement of the imaginary Oberon to the top and rear of the house, i.e., over the judges' heads rather than to her side onstage, to encourage projection. I hope this will help Emily to make her Titania bigger, and to this same end we develop a few fairy queen gestures to convey her power and dominion over these areas and forces of nature she's speaking about, and get her to move forward during the piece to suggest confrontation with her nemesis. Emily seems to gain confidence and feel good about her monologue when we part. The children thank me profusely—particularly the girls from *Much Ado*—and I leave, feeling my efforts have been fruitful.

Conclusion

The reader may feel that one must know these plays well in order to provide the kind of direction I gave to these children. Yes and no. While I indeed drew upon my existing close knowledge of these plays and my theatrical experience, I have sometimes worked with students doing pieces from plays with which I was far less familiar. This can become a great process of discovery, a chance for collaboration between the teacher/coach/facilitator/parent and the student: If we don't know what's going on—and thus we don't know how to say the line or what to do while saying it—let's try to figure out what works. Any decent version of Shakespeare's plays has notes and other material to help illuminate meanings and contexts. Again, video or live versions of the plays can also help elucidate and bring them to life.

Along with helping the student make sense of the words and context, one can also encourage theatricality. Though the student and/or teacher may have little to no theatre experience, again the solution is collaboration. Together, the performer and educator can ask and answer simple questions such as:

• Which lines might be read with which emotions? With what volume?

• Is the performer audible?

• When might the dramatic situation call for sitting down? Standing up? Crumbling to the ground? Moving (try not to move unless you know why you're doing it)? Throwing something? Waving one's hand, or combing one's hair, or eating a banana?

• In general, what would make the piece interesting for an audience?

In theatre, there is never one correct answer to such questions. The key is to be open to the creative possibilities, to help the student free him/herself to experiment and to have fun.

Shakespeare should not be held on a pedestal. Placing him there can perpetuate a kind of unhealthy reverence that removes teachers and students from the actual joys of his works. As Sedgwick notes, "Children should not study Shakespeare because of his greatness but in spite of it. They should learn to ravish him. . . .there is in our culture a tendency toward an offensive sentimentalization of Shakespeare which disempowers his work" (1999, p. 11). One of the best ways of demystifying Shakespeare is through using monologues and scenes to give young people a visceral and enjoyable experience with Shakespeare's language, characters, and dramatic situations.

References

Sandell, Rosanna DiMillo (2000). Shakespeare in the classroom: The bard is back. *Gifted Education Press Quarterly*, *14* (1), 5-8.

Sedgwick, Fred (1999). *Shakespeare and the young writer*. NY: Routledge Press.

John Grisham: Literary Entertainments for Gifted Students

Michael E. Walters

Center for the Study of the Humanities in the Schools

John Grisham is a writer of excellent literary entertainments. His format not only has popular appeal but simultaneously has a special attraction for gifted students. Every one of his books eventually becomes a best seller, and a movie or television drama. His legal thrillers have an intellectual content that gifted students can easily relate to, e.g., environmentalism in **The Pelican Brief** (1992) and racism in **A Time to Kill** (1989). These legal thrillers also deal with ethical issues involving lawyers and the legal system. In **The Rainmaker** (1995) Grisham has an attorney battling an insurance company and a powerful legal firm to gain compensation for a poor family. In the last several years there have been many high profile jury cases such as the O.J. Simpson and Robert Blake cases in California. The juries were essential to the resolution of these legal proceedings. He has written books on the dynamics of jury selection, and how the psychological battle between the prosecution and defense are among the most exciting legal battles presently occurring in the public view (e.g., **The Runaway Jury**, 1996).

The range of his writing is valuable for gifted students. He has written about growing up in the rural South (**A Painted House**, 2001). Presently he has three books on best seller lists. **The Innocent Man: Murder and Injustice in a Small Town** (2006, paperback) is a nonfiction work about an unjustly convicted individual who was eventually released from death row. **Playing for Pizza** (2007, hard-cover) is the story of an American quarterback for the Cleveland Browns who became an expatriate in Parma, Italy. Rick Dockery was a goat in an AFC Championship game that resulted in his being fired. His agent gets him a new position as quarterback for the Parma Panthers who are seeking to win their first Italian football Super Bowl. The author describes how Rick achieves athletic

success, and also comes to appreciate and understand Italian culture. Grisham's descriptions of Italian food are wonderful adventures in cuisine which encourage the reader to taste these delicious foods. Rick's physical struggle is very similar to that of the main character in Hemingway's **The Old Man and the Sea** (1952): The joy of the struggle is more important than the actual goal. Grisham's latest fiction best seller, **The Appeal** (2008, hardcover), is about the manipulation of a state Supreme Court election by a greedy corporate mogul.

This author has drawn ideas from his own life to ignite his literary craft. He was born in rural Jonesboro, Arkansas, and grew up in Mississippi. After graduating in accounting from Mississippi State University, he attended law school at The University of Mississippi. He spent nearly ten years as a practicing lawyer in rural Mississippi specializing in criminal defense and personal injury. As a youngster he dreamt of being a professional baseball player. He still maintains an interest in the sport but now as a commissioner for a local Little League. He currently resides in Charlottesville, Virginia where he has built and maintains six ballfields on his land for Little League games. Gifted students will enjoy Grisham's works, and be informed and inspired by his insights into the American legal system.

Announcing a New Book from Gifted Education Press for Gifted Students and Their Teachers

Solar Power, Fuel Cells, Wind Power and Other Important Environmental Studies for Upper Elementary and Middle School Gifted Students and Their Teachers

A Technology, Problem-Solving and Invention Guide

(ISBN 0-910609-54-3)

Harry T. Roman Technology and Engineering Educator

East Orange, New Jersey

COST: $20.00 + $2.00 (10% P&H). Total = $22.00

- **Written by a design engineer with extensive experience in teaching at the public school and college levels. The author is primarily concerned with teaching students How to Think and Solve Problems. This overriding concern is reflected in great detail in each chapter!**
- **An excellent resource for use in Differentiated Technology and Design Units, Programs and Courses.**
- **Addresses many current Environmental Issues such as the use of Solar Energy, Wind Power and Fuel Cells, and Recycling Waste Products. The chapters on these issues and many others contain fascinating, thought-provoking problems for students to work on Individually and in Teams.**
- **This book is an outstanding resource for use in Technology, Creative Problem-Solving, and Design and Invention competitions such as Science Fairs, Odyssey of the Mind, Future Problem Solving International, and Invention Convention.**
- **Contains an extensive Bibliography of relevant books, periodicals and Web Sites.**
- **The Fourteen Enriched Chapters in Harry's book are designed to stimulate the Imaginations and Problem-Solving Skills of gifted students. The chapters are: Solving Problems: A Quick Reflection; About Technology Education; Technology – History – Economy – Society Connection; Building Critical Career Skills While Still in School; Solar Power: Here Comes the Sun; Fuel Cells: An Exciting, New, Clean Energy Option; Wind Power: The Fastest Growing Alternate Energy Technology; Archaeological Investigations of Garbage; Organizational Skills: Teaching Timelines; Creative Communications: A Portal to Invention; The Internet: You Ain't Seen "Nuttin" Yet; Creative Makeovers in Your School; More Communications "Stuff"; Edison's Hands: Study of a Genius of Technology and Invention.**
- **Four Appendices are also included: I- Keeper of the Flame; II-Some Thoughts on Creativity; III-Why We Compute; IV-The Learning Corporation.**
- **Order this fascinating book today! You will like it and so will your gifted students!**

ADDITIONAL BOOKS FROM GIFTED EDUCATION PRESS

***SNIBBLES*: REALLY Creative Problem Solving Lessons and Mind-Stimulating Exercises for Gifted Students and Their Teachers, Ages 5 through Really Old! (ISBN 0-910609-50-0)**

Judy Micheletti Teacher of Gifted Students Berwick, Pennsylvania COST: $19.80 including P&H.

"Judy's creativity will delight and push you and your students to *wonder or think outside of the box!"*

Franny McAleer Professor Indiana University of Pennsylvania

Using the Internet: American History Projects for the Gifted Classroom, Grades 4 - 8 From Exploration to Revolution (ISBN 0-910609-53-5)

Janis Purnell Gifted Education Instructor Littlestown, Pennsylvania COST: $19.80 including P&H.

"If I were a history teacher or teacher of the gifted, Purnell's book would be an invaluable resource for differentiated instruction." Eugenia M. Fisher, Ed.D. Reading Education Consultant

This book emphasizes the integration of traditional print media with Internet resources. It contains hundreds of Web Links that teachers and students can use to study various aspects of American history.

Gifted Education Comes Home: A Case for Self-directed Homeschooling (ISBN 0-910609-40-3)

Lisa Rivero, Parent and Home Educator COST: $17.60 including P & H.

Quotations for Creative Insights and Inspiration: A Quotations Based Differentiated Humanities Curriculum for Gifted Students and Their Teachers in Middle and High School (ISBN 0-910609-29-2)

Ross Butchart Vancouver, British Columbia COST: $17.60 including P & H.

Coercive Egalitarianism: A Study of Discrimination Against Gifted Children (ISBN 0-910609-25-X)

Stephen Schroeder-Davis Elk River, Minnesota School District COST: $14.30 including P & H.

Books for Science and Mathematics Instruction

Essential Chemistry for Gifted Students: Preparation for High School Chemistry, Grades 4-8

(ISBN 0-910609-44-6)

Francis T. Sganga, Science/Math Educator Volusia Cnty, Florida COST: $19.80 including P&H.

Essential Mathematics for Gifted Students: Preparation for Algebra, Grades 4 – 8

(ISBN 0-910609-43-8)

Francis T. Sganga, Science/Math Educator Volusia Cnty, Florida COST: $19.80 including P&H.

Send Your Check or Purchase Order To: Gifted Education Press; 10201 Yuma Court; P.O. Box 1586; Manassas, VA 20108. Telephone – 703-369-5017. Email: Mfisher345@comcast.net All Orders under $50.00 must be Prepaid. *THANKS!*