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Current Research on the Social and Emotional Development of Gifted and Talented Students: Good News and Future Possibilities

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A recent summary of research produced by a task force of psychologists and educational researchers associated with the National Association for Gifted Children and the National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented indicated that high-ability students are generally at least as well adjusted as any other group of youngsters. This research also found, however, that gifted and talented students can face a number of situations that may constitute sources of risk to their social and emotional development. Some of these issues emerge because of a mismatch with educational environments that are not responsive to the pace and level of gifted students' learning and thinking. Others occur because of unsupportive social, school, or home environments. In this article, current research about the social and emotional development of gifted and talented students is summarized and suggestions are made about strategies to enhance these students' school experiences. Suggestions are provided for assessment and educational programming based on students' strengths and interests that may result in helping talented students realize their potential.

Current press and popular television portray a rather skewed view of gifted and talented youth as the "dorky" misfit. However, this portrayal is generally inaccurate. A recent summary of research produced by a task force associated with the National Association for Gifted Children and the National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented indicated that high-ability students are generally at least as well adjusted as any other group (Neihart et al., 2001). However, gifted and talented students may face sources of risk to their social and emotional development. This article summarizes current research about the social and emotional characteristics of gifted individuals, with the hope that researchers interested in gifted and talented students will consider the use of positive psychology (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Sheldon & King, 2001) to maximize understanding and encouragement of the talents of high potential children.

Defining Gifted and Talented Students

A perception that giftedness and high IQ are synonymous continues to exist despite more current research supporting multiple components of intelligence (Gardner, 1993; Sternberg & Davidson, 1986). More recent work defines giftedness as having

multiple qualities and disputes the use of an IQ score as an inadequate measure of giftedness. Motivation, high self-concept, and creativity were found to be key qualities in many of these broadened conceptions of giftedness (Siegler & Kotovsky, 1986). Renzulli's (1978) three-ring definition of gifted behaviors consists of an interaction among three basic clusters of human traits—above average ability, high levels of task commitment, and high levels of creativity. Renzulli believes that individuals capable of developing gifted behavior are those possessing or capable of developing this composite set of traits and applying them to any potentially valuable area of human performance.

In summary, current work suggests that gifted and talented students are a very diverse group of individuals who have ability, in one or more domains, that is sufficiently advanced and requires changes in the school environment, such as the instructional curriculum and teacher behaviors. The widely accepted federal definition of giftedness (Ross, 1993) highlights their "intellectual, creative, and/or artistic areas, unusual leadership capacity, or excellence in specific academic fields," and indicates that "outstanding talents are present in children and youth from all cultural groups, across all economic strata, and in all areas of human endeavor" (p. 26). This diversity of talents is represented in the following two case studies.

Andy

At only three years of age, Andy's emotional intensity, curiosity, and inability to relate to his peers were evident to his parents and his preschool teachers. When Andy was in the second grade, he was described as "out of sync," demonstrating notable academic advancement over his peers while simultaneously showing signs of social isolation. In addition, Andy began to complain of stomachaches and begged his parents to allow him to stay at home. Despite the efforts of his parents and educators, these problems continued sporadically throughout elementary and middle school. By the time Andy entered middle school, his reputation as a "nerd" was established and his differences exacerbated to the extent that his parents sought an evaluation and support both in and out of school. The school psychologist observed Andy to spend the majority of time trying to avoid the school bullies who had made him a favorite target. His feelings of social isolation were accompanied by increasing academic invisibility, as he spent most days trying not to be noticed either socially or academically.

As a result of these findings, several schedule changes were made for Andy, such as cluster grouping him into classes with a few other academically talented students. The school psychologist and counselor began periodically seeing Andy and meeting with his teachers to receive regular updates. Andy had his curriculum compacted (Reis, Burns, & Renzulli, 1992; Renzulli, 1978) to avoid wasting time learning what he already knew, and his curriculum was differentiated and extended to accommodate the varied pacing he needed. One of his teachers became a mentor and helped him with a science fair project and also provided opportunities for accelerating instruction in an advanced math class for Andy and other classmates. A gifted specialist also worked with Andy and several other students on a regular basis, encouraging more supportive relationships between Andy and other students. His parents carefully

monitored his school situation and encouraged some initial friendships with students who Andy had academic similarities. His father reduced his work schedule to spend more time with Andy.

With these supports in place, Andy overcame many of the social problems he had initially faced. As he grew older, his differences became less noticeable and he found a small group of friends. Through high school, he was placed in classes that challenged him academically as well as nurtured his interests, and he continued to see his school guidance counselor on a periodic basis. Andy is presently finishing his senior year of high school and is academically successful, is active in music and drama, and has friends in both his academic and extracurricular life. Andy's case demonstrates that this type of success can occur when educators work together to develop Andy's talents and address social and emotional issues that, if unattended, might have affected him very differently.

Daphne

A recent article profiled a similarly talented student who experienced a very different outcome (Allen, 2001). Daphne was once heralded on the cover of *Parade* as one of the brightest high school students in the country and the smartest girl in Maine. Although she grew up in a home with few resources, from the time she entered school it was clear that she was extremely advanced intellectually. Her parents and teachers recognized these talents at a very young age, but while school personnel made some efforts to help Daphne, little encouragement and support were offered at home. Daphne learned little about effort, earning high grades with absolutely minimal effort. When she was in middle school, she won a scholarship to attend a summer program for gifted and talented students. Despite this opportunity and her work with a gifted and talented program specialist in her public school, the absence of consistent school and home support took a toll. Daphne's grades in high school were variable. Few home resources, non-supportive parents and little high school challenge affected Daphne, who eventually attended and subsequently flunked out of college. Later, she lost a few low paying jobs and struggled to find a way to utilize and further develop her talents and find personal support. Friendships have been slow to develop and personal contentment is yet to be realized in her life.

Both Andy and Daphne experienced some of the social and emotional issues that can affect gifted and talented students. With greater understanding, educators are able to make many of the changes that offer the challenges, flexibility, and acceptance that these students need to flourish. Indeed, many gifted young people possess assets that, when supported, may enhance their resilience to negative life events, enabling them to utilize their talents and live productive and satisfying lives. Applying some of the tenets of "positive psychology" (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Sheldon & King, 2001) may help to encourage and enhance the talents of high potential children and youth.

Social and Emotional Adjustment of Talented Youth

A recent review of research (Neihart et al., 2002) pointed to one clear finding: high-ability students are generally at least as well adjusted as any other group of youngsters, meaning that most talented students do not face any more social and emotional problems than do other students. However, this review also found that gifted and talented students can and often do face a number of situations that, while not unique to them, constitute sources of risk to their social and emotional development if their needs are not met (Neihart et al., 2002). The failure to address affective components that often help to develop talents in young people may compromise or thwart the actualization of their high potential (Robinson, 2002). Three major areas constitute risks to the social and emotional development of gifted and talented children, including (a) issues deriving from their academic advancement as compared with their age peers and from unevenness in their development; (b) common areas of psychological response to talents, including underachievement and perfectionism; and (c) their dual identification as twice exceptional, such as having a learning disability or attention deficit and also having talents and gifts (Neihart et al., 2002).

Issues Deriving from Students' Advancement Compared with Age Peers

Some talented and gifted students face social and emotional issues deriving from their academic advancement in comparison with their age peers that makes them appear different in school and/or with their social groups (Neihart et al., 2002). Recent research indicates that teachers can seldom adequately meet the needs of gifted children in regular classrooms with classmates of their age (Archambault et al., 1993; Westberg, Archambault, Dobyns, Salvin, 1993). It is unfortunate that this lack of knowledge exists, as numerous strategies can be used to make the classroom environment more challenging and developmentally appropriate for gifted students while simultaneously improving education for *all* children. These techniques include "compacting" the curriculum to avoid wasting time teaching what children already know (Reis, Burns, & Renzulli, 1992), differentiating and extending what is taught to accommodate varied pacing and levels of development (Renzulli, 1988; Renzulli & Reis, 1997; Tomlinson, 1995), acceleration of instruction (Rogers, 2002), and using high-interest content and hands-on activities to create high engagement and creativity (Renzulli & Reis, 1985, 1997).

Gifted children may also be affected by social context, perhaps because they demonstrate more mature social competence than their chronological peers. Some may have fewer friends, and in order to feel accepted and make more friends, talented students may deny their academic needs to satisfy social needs. As early as elementary school, some gifted youngsters hide their talents; by adolescence, the situation becomes more common. Students who are able to find intellectual peers, either by placement in a special program or by acceleration, generally feel less pressure to conform and more freedom to pursue academics. The situation can be even more awkward for those students who are extremely talented and who have few peers, as they may become less socially adept, more introverted, and more inhibited and lonely (Neihart et al., 2002).

Talented children often experience uneven development in that some areas are advanced while others are average. Affect regulation in gifted children, for example, is often more mature than expected for chronological age. Affect regulation involves managing emotional experience in a healthy way (Keiley, 2002). Gifted and talented children often have fears that are similar to those of older children but they do not know how to cope with these fears as older persons do. Some talented children are advanced in understanding their own emotions and demonstrate compassion, moral sensitivity, loyalty, and courage that can set them apart from their peers (Neihart et al., 2002).

Common Areas of Psychological Response

Current research has identified common areas of psychological vulnerability experienced by some gifted students such as perfectionism (Schuler, 2002), underachievement (Reis & McCoach, 2002), and indecision about which of several talents to pursue. Dabrowski believed that some gifted individuals experience "forms of psychic overexcitability" in the five areas of psychomotor, sensory, intellectual, imaginational, and emotional experience (O'Connor, 2002). This overexcitability can explain a number of issues faced by talented children and adults.

Perfectionism is another common area of psychological response that can affect many talented and gifted students, and it generally involves holding very high standards for one's performance, which can produce both very negative or highly positive outcomes. Perfectionism can translate into persistence, leading to success—but unhealthy, unrealistic perfectionism can also result in avoidance, anxiety, and failure (Schuler, 2002).

Underachievement is widely regarded as one of the most pervasive problems affecting gifted and talented students (Reis & McCoach, 2000, 2002), and can result from multiple sources such as under-challenging schools, peer pressure for conformity, social isolation, and family dysfunction. Unfortunately, the pattern of underachievement is difficult to reverse and often persists into adulthood.

As noted, with the exception of creatively gifted adolescents who are talented in writing or the visual arts, studies do not confirm that gifted individuals manifest significantly higher or lower rates or severity of depression than those for the general population (Neihart & Olenchak, 2002). Gifted children's advanced cognitive abilities, social isolation, sensitivity, and uneven development may cause them to face some challenging social and emotional issues, but their problem-solving abilities, advanced social skills, moral reasoning, out-of-school interests, and satisfaction in achievement may help them to be more resilient (Neihart, 2002b). Similarly, no research indicates that suicide is more common in gifted adolescents than other adolescents (Neihart et al., 2002). Recent incidents of school violence by bright young people have suggested that gifted youngsters may be at special risk for delinquent behavior, but research evidence to date suggests the opposite—that gifted students evidence less delinquency than average students (Neihart et al., 2002).

Groups of Gifted Students with Special Needs

Social and emotional issues may be experienced by gifted and talented students who are members of specific groups, such as gifted females, gifted students with learning disabilities, or individuals who are highly creative (Neihart et al., 2002). For example, talented females' belief in their ability and their feelings of self-confidence may be undermined and/or diminished during childhood and adolescence (Reis, 1987, 1998). This may exist because of external factors including stereotypes and barriers to achievement presented by parents, school, and the larger society; and from internal barriers that include personal priorities for social rather than achievement goals, declines in self-confidence, and competing choices (Reis, 1987, 1998). Talented boys are often praised for their athletic prowess but not for their academic abilities (Hébert, 2002).

Another group of gifted and talented children with special needs are children of color who are consistently underrepresented in gifted programs, an area of widespread concern (Ford, 2002). Gifted Black students encounter more barriers to racial identity development than do White students, particularly when they feel they must choose between academic success and social acceptance (Ford, 2002; Neihart et al., 2002). In addition, students who are creatively talented in the arts may not fit in or excel academically in traditional educational settings. A special risk for bipolar mood disorders exists for those with high creative ability in writing and in the visual arts, although most creative artists and writers are not subject to such diagnosable conditions (Neihart & Olenchak, 2002).

Finally, gifted students with learning disabilities are often misunderstood because their giftedness can mask their disabilities and their disabilities can camouflage their talents. They may be considered "lazy" because, while they are outstanding in some areas, such as verbal skills, they may have trouble producing high-quality written work (Baum, Owen, & Dixon, 1991; Olenchak & Reis, 2002; Reis, Neu, & McGuire, 1995). Even those who are appropriately identified may encounter difficulties in social adjustment because in settings for gifted students, there is less tolerance for their struggles with self-direction and completing work efficiently, and because some impairment of social skills may accompany their learning difficulties (Olenchak & Reis, 2002; Reis, 1995). For example, gifted students with attention-deficit disorder, with or without hyperactivity (ADHD) are at risk for difficulties with social and emotional adjustment (Moon, 2002). Some gifted children who have ADHD face risks such as misidentification, emotional immaturity, peer rejection, family stress, and school stress—all of these enhanced by their difficulties with consistent management of attention and organization (Moon, 2002).

Interventions to Promote Healthy Social Emotional Development in this Population

Some prevention and intervention approaches have been found useful in supporting the healthy social and emotional development of gifted and talented students (Reis & Moon, 2002). Practices that facilitate positive development include (a) the support and encouragement of accelerative learning experiences; (b) time to learn with

others of similar abilities, interests, and motivation; (c) engagement in areas of interest with a variety of peers; (d) mentoring and pragmatic coaching to cope with the stress, criticism, and social milieu associated with high levels of performance in any domain; (e) early presentation of career information; and (f) social-emotional curriculum approaches to help gifted children support one another (Neihart et al., 2002).

Various counseling formats have been recommended for working with gifted students who need additional support, ranging from psychoeducational formats like affective curricula delivered by teachers as one component of a comprehensive gifted program to more traditional therapeutic interventions such as group counseling, individual counseling, and family counseling. Group counseling is an excellent support and preventative strategy if trained counseling personnel are available to implement the groups . For example, counselors who specialize in working with gifted and talented youth find that these children may experience stress related to their giftedness in home and/or school. Thus, stress management techniques and/or counseling provided by individuals with training to work with this population may be beneficial. Specific strategies such as bibliotherapy (reading books about gifted persons; Hébert & Kent, 2000) or cinematherapy (watching movies about gifted individuals; Milne & Reis, 2000) can serve as a different kind of self-help experience. True stories, such as biographies of famous people, and fictional stories, like *Little Man Tate* and *October Sky*, can help gifted youth understand their giftedness and inspire them to persist in developing their talents.

In addition to direct counseling, several preventative strategies can be used to address the affective needs of gifted and talented students. Teachers can model kindness, caring, and concern for all students, and maintain high standards for positive behavior such as zero tolerance for any acts of unkindness. Teachers can also give positive feedback and recognition for appropriate behavior, and can provide experiences for students to learn problem solving and how to mediate arguments. Classroom teachers can develop and implement affective curriculum units in areas such as conflict resolution, decision-making, and leadership. In addition to these individual strategies, an integrated continuum of special services has been proposed and implemented with success.

An Integrated Continuum of Special Services

One approach to providing an integrated continuum of special services is through the use of the Schoolwide Enrichment Model (SEM). The Schoolwide Enrichment Model (Renzulli, 1977a; Renzulli & Reis, 1985, 1997) was originally created as a programming model for gifted students, but it has also been used as a talent development approach to provide enriching learning and affective experiences for all children. The SEM has three major goals: (a) developing talents in all children; (b) providing a broad range of advanced-level enrichment experiences for all students; and (c) using the ways that students respond to these enrichment experiences as stepping stones for follow-up advanced learning for children with high potential and demonstrated gifts and talents. The SEM uses three components to accomplish these goals: (a) The Total Talent Portfolio (individual portfolios for talent development in each child focusing on abilities,

interests, and learning styles); (b) Curriculum modification, including a system of curriculum compacting; textbook analysis and curriculum mapping; and expanding the depth of learning to enable students to learn something they select in an advanced manner, and (c) Enrichment teaching and learning (a series of enrichment strategies that take into account the uniqueness of each learner and the enjoyment of learning experiences). Curriculum compacting, the most popular method of the second component, is an instructional technique designed to make appropriate curricular adjustments for students in any curricular area and at any grade level. The procedure involves (a) defining the goals and outcomes of a particular unit or segment of instruction, (b) determining and documenting which students have already mastered most or all of a specified set of learning outcomes, and (c) providing replacement strategies for material already mastered through the use of instructional options that enable a more challenging and productive use of the student's time.

The third component, enrichment teaching and learning, is accomplished through use of the Enrichment Triad Model (Renzulli, 1977a), which was designed to encourage creative productivity on the part of young people by exposing them to various topics, areas of interest, and fields of study, and to further train them to *apply* advanced content, process-training skills, and methodology training to self-selected areas of interest. Three types of enrichment are included in the Triad Model. Type I enrichment is designed to expose students to a wide variety of disciplines, topics, occupations, hobbies, persons, places, and events that would not ordinarily be covered in the regular curriculum. In schools that use this model, an enrichment team consisting of parents, teachers, and students often organizes and plans Type I experiences by contacting speakers, arranging mini-courses, demonstrations, or performances, and/or distributing films, slides, videotapes, or other print or non-print media. Type II enrichment consists of materials and methods designed to promote the development of thinking and feeling processes. Some Type II training is general, and is usually carried out both in classrooms and in enrichment programs. Training activities include the development of: (a) creative thinking and problem solving, critical thinking, and affective processes; (b) a wide variety of specific learning how-to-learn skills; (c) skills in the appropriate use of advanced-level reference materials; and (d) written, oral, and visual communication skills. Other Type II enrichment is specific as it cannot be planned in advance and usually involves advanced methodological instruction in an interest area selected by the student. For example, students who become interested in botany after a Type I experience might pursue additional training in this area by doing advanced reading in botany; compiling, planning, and carrying out plant experiments; and seeking more advanced methods training if they want to go further.

Type III enrichment involves students who become interested in pursuing a self-selected area and are willing to commit the time necessary for advanced content acquisition and process training in which they assume the role of a first-hand inquirer. The goals of Type III enrichment include providing opportunities for applying interests, knowledge, creative ideas and task commitment to a self-selected problem or area of study and acquiring advanced level understanding of the knowledge (content) and methodology (process) that are used within particular disciplines. In Type III studies, students are encouraged to develop authentic products directed toward bringing about a

desired impact upon a specified audience. Through the development of self-directed learning skills in the areas of planning, organization, resource utilization, time management, decision making and self-evaluation, students develop task commitment, self-confidence, and feelings of creative accomplishment that contribute to their healthy social and emotional development.

The Continuum of Services in the SEM. The SEM includes an integrated continuum of services for talented and gifted students that can also be applied to other students (see Figure 1). Services provided in the model range from general enrichment for both wide-ranging and targeted subgroups to highly individualized curriculum modification procedures for rapid learners and first-hand investigative opportunities for highly motivated individuals and small groups. The model also includes a broad array of specific grouping arrangements based on commonalities in abilities, interests, learning styles, and preferences for various modes of expression.

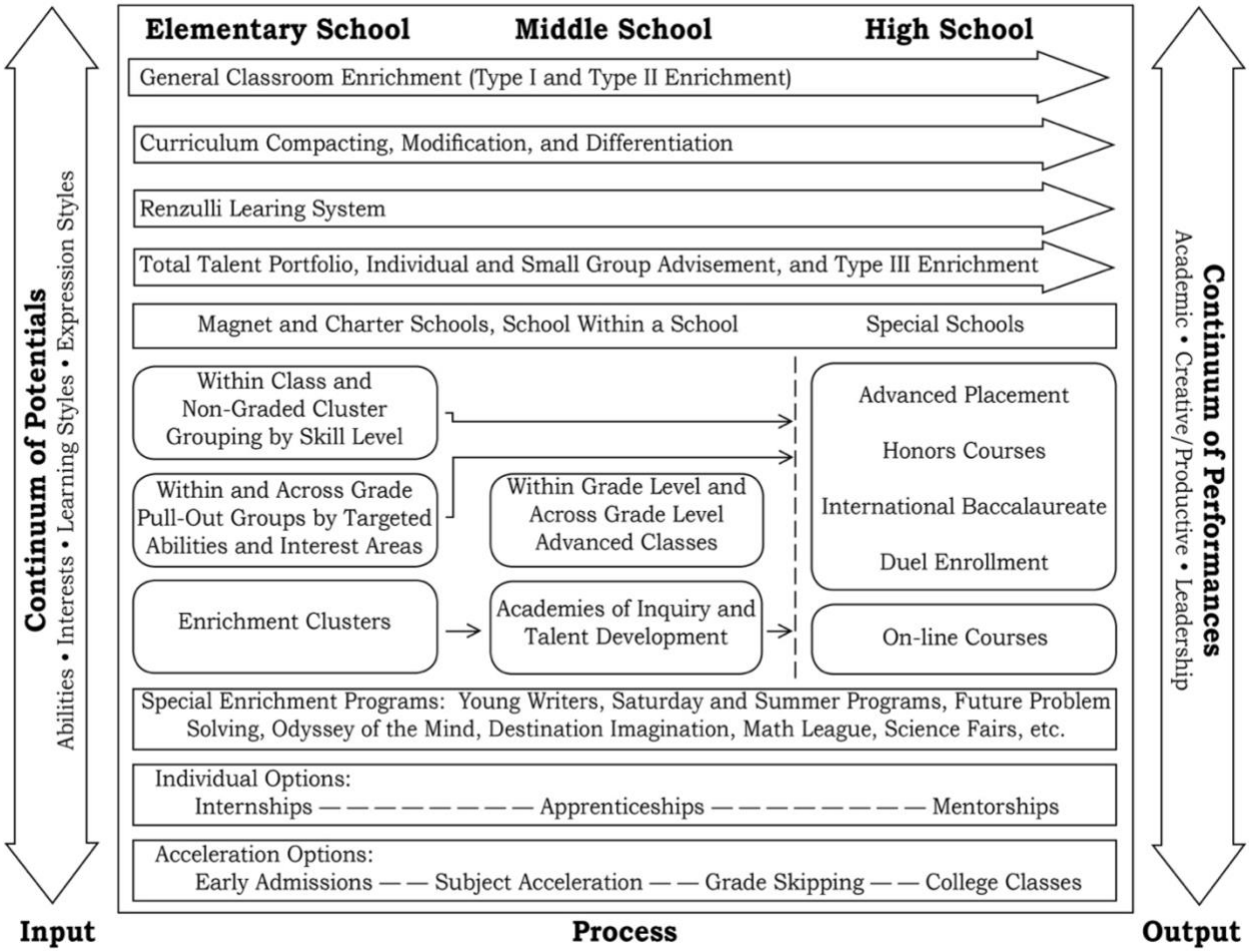

Figure 1. The integrated continuum of special services.

As seen in Figure 1, the arrow on the left-hand side of the figure, Continuum of Potentials (Input) is intended to convey the broad range of abilities, interests, and learning styles that exist in any population and subpopulation of students. Even in highly targeted groups (e.g., advanced math students), there is always a range of abilities, interests, and learning styles, and this range requires that differentiated learning experiences must be provided to accommodate individual differences. The arrow on the right hand side of Figure 1, Continuum of Performances (Output) is intended to illustrate the range of performances and modes of expression that will result from differentiated learning experiences. When considering this range of performances, we should take various modes of expression into consideration as well as levels of ability. The center section of Figure 1 (Process) represents many of the organizational methods for delivering various types of services to students. An important consideration is that any and all services provided through differing organizational approaches are integrated or interconnected so that an experience in one organizational setting can be capitalized upon by connecting it with options from another organizational component. If for example, eight or ten primary age students across two or three grade levels have demonstrated extremely high achievement in mathematics, classroom teachers should provide curriculum differentiation and compacting services for such students, and teachers should be using the time gained through compacting to provide within-class acceleration and mathematics enrichment opportunities. But equally important is the need to arrange a special grouping situation that allows these students to interact with their mathematically able peers on a regular basis, known as cluster grouping (Gentry & Owen, 1999). Both compacting and cluster grouping will be further enhanced if the classroom teachers and the person(s) providing instruction to the special group are in close communication about the respective activities in classroom and special group situations.

Effectiveness of the SEM. The SEM has been implemented in over 3000 schools across the country and the world, and interest in this approach continues to grow. Extensive evaluations and research studies indicate the effectiveness of the model in over 20 years of research and field-testing. The research on SEM has been investigated in over 30 different studies summarized in various articles (Olenchak, 1988; Olenchak & Renzulli, 1989; Renzulli & Reis, 1994). This research is subdivided into eight areas: (a) the effectiveness of the model as perceived by key groups; (b) research related to student creative productivity; (c) research relating to personal and social development; (d) the use of SEM with underserved populations; (e) research on student self-efficacy, (f) the use of SEM as a curricular framework; (g) research relating to learning styles and curriculum compacting, and (h) longitudinal research on the SEM. Research on the SEM suggests that the model is effective at serving high-ability students in a variety of educational settings and in schools that serve diverse ethnic and socioeconomic populations.

Implications of the SEM for School Psychologists. School psychologists can also play an important role in guiding educational interventions by focusing on two dimensions of the assessment as related to the SEM. The first dimension deals with gathering strength-based information that extends beyond simple cognitive assessment. Every learner has strengths or potential strengths that can serve as a foundation for

effective learning and creative productivity, and in the SEM, educators are asked to consider interests and learning styles. We recommend that this information be systematically gathered through a vehicle called *The Total Talent Portfolio* (Purcell & Renzulli, 1998). School psychologists who participate in creating the TTP can help teachers learn more about students and can help to develop more appropriate learning experiences.

The first type of information recorded in the TTP deals with status information, such as test scores, course grades, teacher ratings of various learning behaviors, and formal and informal assessments of interests and learning styles. Abilities, or maximum performance indicators (as traditionally defined in the psychometric literature), deal with competencies that represent the highest level of performance a student has attained in a particular area of aptitude or scholastic achievement. A teacher-rating instrument that is both valid and reliable such as the *Scales for Rating the Behavioral Characteristics of Superior Students—Revised Edition* (SRBCSS; Renzulli et al., 2002) can also provide insight into student abilities and talents. Although SRBCSS has traditionally been used to identify students for special services, it can be useful in a TTP as a way to gain insights about student strengths.

Building educational experiences around student interests is probably one of the most effective ways to guarantee that enrichment practices will be provided for students. A planned strategy for helping students examine their present and potential interests is based on a group of instruments called the *Interest-A-Lyzer* (Renzulli, 1977b, 1996). The *Interest-A-Lyzer* family of instruments is available in three levels, Primary (K–3), Elementary (3– 6), and Secondary (7–12). The main purpose of the *Interest-A-Lyzer* is to help to identify patterns or factors that might emerge from the instrument include: Performing Arts, Creative Writing and Journalism, Mathematics, Business and Management, Athletics, History, Social Action, Fine Arts, Science, and Technology. These factors represent *general* fields or families of interest and that numerous ways exist in which an individual may be interested in any particular field. Thus, identifying general patterns is only the first step in interest analysis. General interests must be refined and focused so that students identify specific problems within a general field or combination of fields.

Attention should also be given to the ways in which young people might go about pursuing their interests. The use of an instrument entitled *The Learning Styles Inventory* (Renzulli, Rizza, & Smith, 2002) enables us to determine the amount of structure that students prefer in various learning environments. The instrument ranges across the following nine areas of student preference (ranging from more to less structured): Drill and Recitation, Direct Teaching, Instruction Through Technology, Peer Teaching, Discussion, Teaching Games, Simulations, Independent Study, and Projects. While including learning style preferences in the TTP is important, teachers should understand that most students will vary their preferences according to subject and age and so this component should be used to help teachers consider how learning can be more enjoyable for students if opportunities are provided to enable them to work within their area of preference occasionally.

Another category in the Total Talent Portfolio deals with the ways in which people prefer to express themselves. Knowledge about the ways in which young people prefer to express themselves can be a valuable tool for organizing cooperative learning and project groups. An instrument entitled *My Way: An Expression Styles Inventory* (Kettle, Renzulli, & Rizza, 1998) has been developed to help teachers and students identify preferences for products in the following categories: Written, Oral, Artistic, Computer Technology, Audio/Visual Technology, Commercial, Service, Dramatization, Manipulative, and Musical. Each of these instruments, used in enrichment programs for decades, have been revised during the last ten years, and have high reported validity and reliability (Kettle, Renzulli, & Rizza, 1997; Renzulli, Rizza, & Smith, 2002).

In addition to playing a role in the creation of the TTP, the school psychologist can work with teachers to periodically review portfolios, and the portfolios can serve as focal points for meetings with parents. The portfolio should travel with a students from year to year and should serve as the basis for understanding the complete picture of individual student strengths and accomplishments.

Conclusion

It is our hope that in the future more school psychologists will be devoted to answering questions from teachers and parents about how we provide appropriate learning options for our most potentially able students. It is also our hope that school psychologists will be able to provide support and advice for parents and teachers regarding social and emotional problems or issues that may be faced by students with gifts and talents. Some of these issues emerge because of a mismatch with educational environments that are not responsive to the pace and level of gifted students' learning and thinking. Others occur because of an unsupportive social, school, and/or home environment. When these problems are identified early, school psychologists can help to resolve them and provide advice about the next logical step to resolution. One of the biggest challenges for the future is to help to provide opportunities for gifted and talented students to realize their potential and to emerge as confident, positive leaders and problem solvers. School psychologists can help in numerous ways to realize this dream.

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