URBAN SCHOOL DISTRICTS' ENRICHMENT PROGRAMS: WHO SHOULD BE SERVED?

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Abstract: Public schools often offer enrichment activities only to certain students. Educator assessments of which students should receive enrichment services are of great importance in such circumstances. Little is known, however, regarding educator beliefs regarding which students should receive enrichment services. The current national study surveyed 900 urban educators regarding which students they believed would benefit most from enrichment. The educators believed that a majority of students should receive enrichment services, but were less likely to think so for students who demonstrated talents in the visual arts, theatre, music, or dance. Certain educators also demonstrated a belief that enrichment should only be available for those students who engaged in certain teacher-pleasing behaviors. Such results are potentially devastating to urban students, who may depend more upon the schools for enrichment than their suburban peers.

Many school districts, schools, administrators, and teachers work to ensure that their students receive an education that is commensurate with their needs and abilities. Many feel a special obligation to provide enrichment and extension for highly talented learners. These same school districts, schools, administrators, and teachers feel pressure to close the achievement gap between Caucasian students and those from other groups. Services offered to either group vary greatly from place to place. Certain jurisdictions provide legal mandates that require provision of such services. Other schools or districts, although free of requirements regarding enrichment, gifted education, or advanced classes feel an obligation to their students to provide all learners with appropriate challenge. Parents, the media, and local business concerns compel still other school districts to provide opportunities for highly able students. Although the impetus for offering gifted education services may vary, such services exist in a broad variety of settings.

Little is known about the perceptions of enrichment services held by those who deliver services to students. This study mailed surveys to a national sample of 900 urban educators to determine beliefs about a wide-ranging array of topics central to talent development, enrichment, and gifted education. These topics include factors influencing which students are selected receives services. This study focused around two research questions: 1) What perceptions do administrators, gifted education specialists, and regular classroom teachers have regarding key beliefs for enrichment opportunities?; 2) Are there differences of perceptions regarding key beliefs of gifted education across these groups? Data was analyzed that demonstrates the varying beliefs of these three groups and areas where the groups demonstrate statistically significant differences.

Review of the Literature

Effective school enrichment programs offer educational services that are qualitatively different than those offered in regular education classrooms (Avery, VanTassel-Baska & O'Neill, 1997; Callahan, 2005; Ford, Baylops & Harmon, 1997; Karnes & Karnes, 1982; Landrum, 2001; VanTassel-Baska, Willis & Meyer, 1989). Such services are frequently provided in conjunction with, or through, a school district's gifted education program (Borland, 2005; Renzulli & Reis, 1997; Renzulli & Reis, 2003; Tomlinson, Gould, Schroth & Jarvis, in press). Even in those districts where the enrichment program is viewed as successful, however, certain schools and classrooms are more successful than others (Avery et al., 1997; Callahan, 2005; Landrum, 2001; VanTassel-Baska et al., 1989).

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Where enrichment programs are not successful, either at a particular school or with an individual teacher, various variables are identified as possible reasons for the failure (Avery et al., 1997; Callahan, 2005; Landrum, 2001; Van Tassel-Baska et al., 1989). The variables most commonly identified include poor communication, inadequate training, or lack of administrative vision and support (Avery et al., 1997; Callahan, 2005; Landrum, 2001; Van-Tassel-Baska et al., 1989). It may also be that, since such programs are often intertwined with gifted education, the various individuals charged with referring gifted students, delivering gifted education services, and administering gifted programs have divergent notions of what enrichment services should look like and how and to whom they should be delivered.

Even when enrichment education programs offer quality services to their students, these programs are sometimes decried as elitist, discriminatory, or worse (Oakes, 2006; Sapon-Shevin, 1994). Dual pressures exist for enrichment programs to serve more students, yet also to serve all enrolled effectively. To date, most attempts to achieve an evenhanded solution to this quandary have been unsatisfactory (Borland, 2005; Borland, Schnur & Wright, 2000; Moon & Callahan, 2001; Tomlinson, Callahan & Lelli, 1997). Failure to achieve both excellence and equity may come about because prior training related to serving gifted learners hinders developing talents in diverse learners. Many gifted education programs, for example, traditionally have had identification procedures that, whether intentionally or not, have excluded many children of color, English-language learners, and low-SES students (Borland, 2005; Callahan, 2001; Ford & Harris, 1999; Oakes, 2006). Some school districts have attempted to become more inclusive in their identification of gifted learners, hoping that this step would make their enrichment programs more accessible to underrepresented groups. While altering identification procedures can, and has, increased participation by many of these previously underrepresented groups in enrichment programs, most are dissatisfied with the results (Borland, 2005; Callahan, 2001; Ford, 2003). Enrichment has not always proved enticing for certain learners, especially those who are children of color, English language learners, or from low-SES backgrounds (Cooper, 1998; Fullilove & Treisman, 1990; Moon & Callahan, 2001). If educators believe that only certain students benefit from enrichment programs, even when the disparities stem from other inequities, it seems unlikely that they will deliver enrichment equitably or fairly.

Little is known about the philosophical goals of teachers, administrators, and gifted education specialists with regard to enrichment, especially at the elementary school level. As a result, it is impossible to know if curricular offerings at schools are aligned with identification processes, service delivery, or instructional methods. Without understanding perceptions of administrators, gifted education specialists, and regular classroom teachers regarding key elements of enrichment programs, much spending on enrichment is wasted. If, for example, regular classroom teachers are able and willing to provide differentiated instruction to all students in a regular education classroom, separate pull-out programs are probably unnecessary for some students now served solely or largely in pull-out settings. If, however, most regular classroom teachers are incapable of or averse to serving all students, high-quality enrichment pull-out programs or special classes will prove crucial to assure highly-able students' continued development. The success of enrichment programs would thus seem to rely, at least in part, upon the cooperation of administrators, gifted education specialists, and classroom teachers. Incongruity between these groups' views of such issues as populations to be served by gifted education, inclusiveness, commitment, and rationale may

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be the cause of many of the problems some programs face.

METHODOLOGY

The target populations for this study included three groups of educators: administrators, gifted education specialists, and regular classroom teachers who work in urban school districts. The sampling plan was developed based upon data obtained from Market Data Retrieval (MDR), a division of Dun & Bradstreet, Inc. MDR provided, in Excel format on CD-ROMs, information regarding elementary school personnel: number of individuals employed at elementary schools in the United States, categories of employment, schools that serve students enrolled in grades K through 5, names, and mailing addresses. Included amongst those categories of employment are listings for *administrators*, *gifted education specialists*, and *classroom teachers*. The MDR listings were chosen because of the scope of its database. MDR provides access to all administrators, gifted education specialists, and regular classroom teachers with an urban elementary school background.

From the lists of eligible members from these three populations, random sampling methods were used to obtain a representative sample of 300 from each group. The research design chosen for this study includes descriptive statistics because descriptive studies are concerned with assessing attitudes, opinions, and preferences and inferential statistics to explore the descriptive results (Brown, Renzulli, Gubbins, Siegle, Zhang & Chen, 2005; Gay & Airasian, 2003; Pedhazur & Schmelkin, 1991). The survey items were constructed using a three-step process. First, an extensive literature review validated student characteristics that influence the selection of students for inclusion in enrichment programs (e.g., Borland, 2005; Callahan, 2001; Ford, 2003; Renzulli & Reis, 2003; Sternberg, 2003; Tomlinson, 2003). Next, a panel of enrichment experts, including classroom teachers and administrators from urban school districts and three past presidents of the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) reviewed the survey for construct validity. Finally, survey reliability was ascertained to be at a .94 level using the Spearman-Brown split-half approach (Cohen & Swerdlik, 2005). The 900 surveys were mailed to respondents via United States Mail. After ten business days, a post-card reminding recipient of the survey was mailed to all members of the sample who had not, at that point, responded to the initial mailing. The response rate, $n = 411$, was 45.6%.

After collection, the data was analyzed pursuant to standard procedures (Cohen & Swerdlik, 2005; Fink, 1995; Pedhazur & Schmelkin, 1991). First, the number of dependent variables were counted and entered into SPSS. A determination was made for each whether to use nominal, ordinal, or ratio scales for each of the variables. For those variables asking for the respondent's job title, for example, nominal scales were used since these produce data that fit into categories (Cohen & Swerdlik, 2005; Fink, 1995). Ordinal scales were used with those questions that asked for ratings of agreement (e. g., strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree) (Cohen & Swerdlik, 2005; Fink, 1995a). Ratio scales were used with items that asked for information such as number of students eligible for federally funded free or reduced-price lunch (Cohen & Swerdlik, 2005; Fink, 1995). Descriptive statistics, including frequencies and summary statistics by survey item were produced.

Ordinary least squares (OLS) regression in its various forms (correlation, multiple regression, analysis of variance) is the most common linear model analysis in the social sciences (Pohlman & Leitner, 2003). Appropriate analysis techniques were performed in order to determine answers for each of the study ques-

tions. These techniques included descriptive statistics and the calculation of an analysis of variance (ANOVA) (Maxwell & Delaney, 2004). ANOVA was chosen over other alternatives because it assists in formulating a linear model that is appropriate for analyzing data and is most superior to other models insofar that it combines "simplicity with adequacy" (Maxwell & Delaney, 2004, p. 67). While an α of .05 was desired, and used, throughout, the investigators were aware that for items with multiple subparts, some might argue that the chance of a Type I error increases to the number of subparts multiplied by .05 (Maxwell & Delaney, 2004). To control for this, the α for multiple contrasts can be controlled by dividing .05 by the number of contrasts conducted (Maxwell & Delaney, 2004). Such controls were conducted as part of this investigation.

FINDINGS

The study's first research question sought to ascertain educators' beliefs about the importance that gifted education programs serve certain groups of students. For the most part, educators favored an inclusive approach. As indicated in Table 1, 94.6% of educators believed that it was either very important or important to serve students whose academic performance is at an advanced level compared to their age peers. Over 90% of educators also thought that students who learn material rapidly, who understand complex and abstract concepts, and who use advanced thinking, processing, and problem-solving skills were all the type of students enrichment programs should serve. Many fewer educators, however, felt it important that students with poor grades, who are not well behaved, who do not complete assignments, or are enrolled below the third grade, be served by enrichment programs. Fifty-five educators additionally indicated they did not know whether students with poor grades should receive enrichment services.

Table 2 shows administrator, gifted education specialist, and regular classroom beliefs related to the importance that enrichment programs serve various constituencies of students. Many of these items, culled from the literature regarding the characteristics of gifted students, demonstrated certain alignments and disagreements between the groups. On the one hand, all three groups indicated it was important to some degree that students who use advanced thinking, processing, and problem-solving skills and those who understand complex and abstract concepts receive such services. On the other hand, gifted education specialists showed more preference for serving students enrolled below the third grade and those who do not receive good grades in the regular classroom.

Differences between groups

The study's second research question investigated whether differences of perceptions existed regarding key beliefs toward enrichment amongst administrators, regular classroom teachers, and gifted education specialists. The authors had hypothesized that no statistically significant differences would exist between groups. ANOVAs indicated, however, that statistically significant differences between groups existed at the $p < .01$ level relating to rapid learners and students who possess a well-developed memory. Table 3 also demonstrates that statistically significant differences between groups existed at the $p < .05$ level relating to students whose academic performance is at an advanced level; students who do not make good grades; students who understand complex and abstract concepts; and students who use advanced thinking, processing, and problem-solving skills.

The Tukey and Scheffé tests indicated that a statistically significant difference at the $p < .01$ level existed between administrators and gifted education specialists relating to rapid

learners; and between regular classroom teachers and gifted education specialists with regard to students who possess a well-developed memory. A statistically significant difference at the $p < .05$ level also existed between gifted education specialists and regular classroom teachers relating to students performing at an advanced Level between

Table 1: Educator Beliefs Regarding Importance that the Following Groups of Students Receive Enrichment Services

	Very Important	Important	Unimportant	Very Unimportant	Don't Know	Missing
Students whose academic performance is at an advanced level compared to age peers	289 (70.3)*	100 (24.3)	9 (2.2)	0 (0)	3 (0.7)	10 (2.4)
Students who do not make good grades in the regular classroom	49 (11.9)	122 (29.7)	146 (35.5)	13 (3.2)	55 (13.4)	26 (6.3)
Students who are well-behaved	17 (4.1)	114 (27.7)	191 (46.5)	64 (15.6)	12 (2.9)	13 (3.2)
Students who complete assigned tasks such as homework	50 (12.2)	122 (29.7)	164 (39.9)	39 (9.5)	20 (4.9)	16 (3.9)
Students enrolled below the third grade	84 (20.4)	165 (40.1)	91 (22.1)	42 (10.2)	19 (4.6)	10 (2.4)
Students who learn material rapidly	172 (41.8)	207 (50.4)	18 (4.4)	3 (0.7)	0 (0)	11 (2.7)
Students who understand complex and abstract concepts	301 (73.2)	94 (22.9)	6 (1.5)	0 (0)	0 (0)	10 (2.4)
Students who demonstrate talent in the visual arts	94 (22.9)	208 (50.6)	80 (19.5)	6 (1.5)	9 (2.2)	14 (3.1)
Students who demonstrate talent in music	96 (23.4)	188 (45.7)	86 (20.9)	12 (2.9)	12 (2.9)	17 (4.1)
Students with a high degree of motivation	171 (41.6)	171 (41.6)	50 (12.2)	3 (0.7)	3 (0.7)	13 (3.2)
Students who use advanced thinking, processing, and problem-solving skills	333 (81)	62 (15.1)	6 (1.5)	0 (0)	0 (0)	10 (2.4)
Students who demonstrate intense interest in certain areas of study or academic work	174 (42.3)	188 (45.7)	32 (7.8)	0 (0)	7 (1.7)	10 (2.3)
Students who possess a well-developed memory	83 (20.2)	224 (54.5)	81 (19.7)	3 (0.7)	10 (2.4)	10 (2.4)

** ( ) indicates % of respondents.*

Table 2: Summary Data Regarding Importance That the Following Groups of Students Receive Enrichment Services

	Very Important			Important			Unimportant			Very Unimportant		
	A	GS	T	A	GS	T	A	GS	T	A	GS	T
Students whose academic performance is at an advanced level compared to age peers	94 (64)*	94 (81)	101 (69)	41 (28)	19 (16)	40 (27)	6 (4)	0 (0)	3 (2)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Students who do not make good grades in the regular classroom	6 (4)	31 (27)	12 (8)	52 (35)	31 (27)	39 (26)	60 (41)	31 (27)	55 (37)	3 (2)	0 (0)	10 (7)
Students who are well-behaved	0 (0)	9 (8)	8 (5)	47 (32)	26 (22)	41 (28)	76 (51)	53 (46)	62 (42)	10 (7)	22 (19)	32 (22)
Students who complete assigned tasks such as homework	15 (10)	9 (8)	26 (18)	52 (35)	33 (28)	37 (25)	55 (37)	59 (51)	50 (34)	11 (7)	11 (10)	17 (12)
Students enrolled below the third grade	18 (12)	41 (35)	25 (17)	73 (49)	29 (25)	63 (43)	30 (20)	30 (26)	31 (21)	16 (11)	6 (5)	20 (14)
Students who learn material rapidly	45 (30)	67 (58)	60 (41)	81 (55)	45 (39)	81 (55)	12 (8)	0 (0)	6 (4)	3 (2)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Students who understand complex and abstract concepts	95 (64)	91 (78)	115 (78)	43 (29)	22 (19)	29 (20)	3 (2)	0 (0)	3 (2)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Students who demonstrate talent in the visual arts	29 (21)	18 (16)	45 (31)	74 (50)	66 (57)	68 (46)	33 (22)	21 (18)	26 (18)	3 (2)	21 (18)	2 (1)
Students who demonstrate talent in music	34 (23)	20 (17)	42 (29)	64 (43)	64 (55)	60 (41)	37 (25)	18 (16)	31 (21)	3 (2)	6 (5)	5 (3)
Students with a high degree of motivation	54 (37)	39 (34)	78 (53)	68 (46)	59 (51)	44 (30)	16 (11)	15 (13)	19 (13)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Students who use advanced thinking, processing, and problem-solving skills	108 (73)	103 (89)	122 (83)	30 (20)	10 (9)	22 (15)	3 (2)	0 (0)	3 (2)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Students who demonstrate intense interest in certain areas of study or academic work	53 (36)	52 (45)	62 (42)	74 (50)	52 (45)	62 (42)	13 (9)	6 (5)	13 (9)	0 (0)	3 (3)	0 (0)
Students who possess a well-developed memory	22 (15)	29 (25)	69 (47)	87 (59)	68 (59)	69 (47)	30 (20)	16 (14)	35 (24)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)

( ) indicates % of respondents.

between gifted education specialists and regular classroom teachers relating to rapid learners; and between administrators and gifted education specialists relating to students who use advanced thinking, processing, and problem-solving skills. *Post hoc* tests also indicated statistically significant differences between gifted education specialists and regular classroom teachers relating to students who do not make good grades in the regular classroom and between administrators and gifted education specialists relating to students who understand abstract and complex concepts.

As Table 4 indicates, controlled *p*-values indicated statistically significant differences existed between groups with regard to the need to provide gifted education services to students who learn rapidly and those with well-developed memories.

Table 3: Analysis of Variance of Administrator, Gifted Education Specialist, and Regular Classroom Teacher Beliefs Regarding Importance That the Following Groups of Students Receive Enrichment Services

	Administrators		Gifted Education Specialists		Regular Classroom Teachers			
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*F*	Sig.
Students whose academic performance is at an advanced level compared to age peers	0.37	0.56	0.16	0.37	0.47	1.20	4.5*	.01
Students who do not make good grades in the regular classroom	2.17	2.07	1.91	2.49	2.76	2.63	4.1*	.02
Students who are well-behaved	1.94	1.31	1.96	1.30	1.99	1.30	0.04	.96
Students who complete assigned tasks such as homework	1.70	1.45	1.69	0.97	2.08	2.14	2.4	.09
Students enrolled below the third grade	1.51	1.39	1.44	1.92	1.69	1.76	0.7	.45
Students who learn material rapidly	0.81	0.67	0.40	0.49	0.63	0.56	14.9**	.00
Students who understand complex and abstract concepts	0.34	0.52	0.19	0.39	0.23	0.47	3.6*	.02
Students who demonstrate talent in the visual arts	1.05	0.73	1.27	1.31	1.15	1.58	0.8	.41
Students who demonstrate talent in music	1.21	1.26	1.27	1.34	1.26	1.61	0.07	.92
Students with a high degree of motivation	0.72	0.65	0.78	0.66	0.78	1.30	0.1	.83
Students who use advanced thinking, processing, and problem-solving skills	0.25	0.48	0.08	0.28	0.19	0.44	4.9*	.01
Students who demonstrate intense interest in certain areas of study or academic work	0.76	0.87	0.77	1.33	0.76	1.22	0.01	.99
Students who possess a well-developed memory	1.15	1.02	0.88	0.62	1.44	1.74	6.2**	.00

** $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.*

Table 4: Controlled p-Levels for Significant F-Tests & Effect Size

	Controlled *p*-level Significance Level of .004	Effect Size η^2
Students who learn material rapidly	.00***	.07
Students who possess a well-developed memory	.00***	.03

**** $p < .001$.*

DISCUSSION

The data used in this study provides a snapshot of administrator and teacher views on enrichment. The survey items ascertained perceptions based upon student behaviors and modes of representation that occur inside of schools. While obvious, this point is significant insofar as the preferences of teachers and administrators are structured through three sorts of experiences:

- Theoretical knowledge gained through professional development (broadly defined),
- How this information is supported or reconsidered by work in the schools with children, and
- By the *outside* resources that support individual enrichment programs (i.e., the amount of funding, continued professional development, in-school resources that constitute the enrichment programs).

Thus, while this snapshot provides a picture of perceptions of enrichment services as considered in light of the administrators and teachers experiences with enrichment, it is also important to consider possibilities in light of: the importance of enrichment opportunities for those labeled as academically advanced; taking into account central concepts invoked when enrichment is considered by administrators, gifted education specialists, and regular classroom teachers; and the question of criteria and the seeming disconnect between classroom teachers and administrators and gifted education specialists in regards to who ought to be served.

The data show that all parties believe that children whose academic performance is advanced should receive special services. Yet, opportunities for special services are dependent upon numerous factors outside the control of any individual administrator, classroom teacher, and gifted specialist, regardless of personal philosophical stance. For instance, while an administrator may believe that children who show academic prowess in particular domains ought to have access to enrichment opportunities, the reality of school resources may obscure or completely hide the possibility from ever reaching children. That is, beliefs about who ought to receive services and what these services "are" *may* be impacted by the types of programs and opportunities that can be presented to children. Furthermore, beliefs about what constitutes an academically advanced student are contingent upon the means and modes of representation that the school can offer as part of the general education curriculum. Thus, while this study provides data about the perception of the importance of enrichment programs for the academically advanced students, further research should investigate how the views of enrichment by administrators, classroom teachers, or gifted specialists are necessarily tempered by the local realities of schooling. These views are especially important in light of the often large discrepancies in terms of resources in urban schools.

Second, whereas the data from this study shows that students with various sorts of abilities (i.e., either within particular subject areas or a general disposition to excel in specific domains), this data set does not consider the importance of examining how administrators and practitioners define, and more importantly operationalize, concepts such as talent, interest, and motivation. These three concepts are distinct and far more individualistic than academic performance or behavior, which are viewed in comparison to other children engaged in a similar activity. Looked at differently, if a teacher spends much of her or his time focusing on academic behavior as a means to identify children that could benefit from enrichment, issues such as a talent, motivation, or interest which may or may not be demonstrated in the areas that are likely emphasized when considering academic performance, may be overlooked.

The data seems to support this insofar as 94.7% of respondents stated that in comparison of age peers, students who show advanced academic performance ought to receive enrichment programs. This is in distinction to 73.5% of children that demonstrate talent in the visual arts and 69.1% of children that demonstrate talent in music should receive enrichment in those areas. This view accentuates a very real problem for many children in urban schools.

That is, those students who attend an underfunded school or school with exceptionally limited resources (not to mention the numbers of schools that are cutting their arts education programs), may be overlooked for the specific types of enrichment that may serve them most deeply. Thus, additional research should be conducted examining the thoughts of teachers and administrators in regards to their operationalized definitions of ideas such as talent, motivation, and interest, and the relationship of these definitions and operations to the enrichment opportunities provided in specific school spaces.

Third, the disconnect between administration and classroom teachers and gifted specialists is telling insofar as it provides another entry space for the analysis of the previous points. More specifically, this discrepancy allows for the consideration of how, in a very general way, enrichment programs are viewed as a reward for certain types of behaviors in the classroom. The gifted educational specialists, possibly because of their distance from the everyday work with children, showed greater preference towards offering enrichment programs for those who were enrolled below the third grade and those who did not receive good grades in the regular classroom. While it is difficult to get a sense of the reasons for this difference in preference, it can be suggested that the role of enrichment programs in schools are such that one must "earn" entrance through showing academic prowess, the ability to think abstractly, and the ability to get good grades. Unfortunately, these sorts of "hoops" are not only potentially exclusionary, but also imply that particular sorts of learning and representation are valued more highly than others. This in no ways implies that children should not be held to high academic standards of accountability. Rather, when considering the reality of many urban schools, the district by district criteria for admission into enrichment programs, the view that one earns his or her way into enrichment programs seemingly denies the chance for participation for many students. While research that attempts to examine if one's academic achievement is higher from engagement in a variety of enrichment programs has not shown improvement in other areas (see Winner & Cooper, 2000), it would be useful to study the program offerings, criteria for admission into enrichment programs, and student achievement in light of access to enrichment activities.

Great disparities exist in schools, of course, that are caused by conditions outside of practitioners' control. Evidence of this difference is manifest in a plethora of areas (Kozol, 2005; Oakes, 2006). African American and Latino students, for example, each now make up over 17% of American students (U. S. Senate Health Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee, 2002). These groups, however, score consistently lower on the SAT and ACT exams than do their Caucasian or Asian counterparts (College Board, 2000; Ford & Harris, 1999; Oakes, 2006). This disparity in performance begins early and is startling in its pervasiveness (College Board, 2000). In a study that examined the academic performance of nearly 3 million students, for example, the College Board (2000) found that African American students comprised 1% of those scoring above the 95th percentile in first grade reading achievement while Hispanic students made up only 5% of this group. Caucasian students constituted 88% of the high-achieving group, and Asians comprised 5% of these students (College Board, 2000). Other measures of success are equally grim. For example, "median black family income is 64% of white family income and median black family net worth is only 12% of white family net worth" (Levine, 2005, p. 1). By the end of fourth grade, African American and Latino students, and low-SES students of all ethnicities, are two grade levels behind wealthier peers in reading and math (Levine, 2005). Recent studies indicate that the problem has

grown to gargantuan proportions in some areas, such as Los Angeles, where more than half of adults are deemed functionally illiterate (Uranga, 2004). This performance gap may influence teacher perceptions of talent and need.

Conclusion

To be sure, no school can offer unlimited enrichment opportunities for every student. The differences in perception between central concepts of enrichment, and who ought to be served will be as different as the various school districts, administrators, classroom teachers, and gifted specialists. Further research is necessary to consider how preferences affect work in the schools, and to identify those concepts and realities that both support and deny children the opportunity to receive enrichment services. In this way, hopefully, children from all backgrounds can receive opportunities to succeed in schools and professional development can be delivered to assist practioners in devising ways, within their unique localities, to ensure that children have enrichment opportunities.

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