WHAT RESEARCH SAYS ABOUT ACCELERATION

Although most children receive adequate intellectual stimulation in traditional learning environments, gifted children often need alternative placements or curriculum modifications in order to continue to be challenged intellectually (Elkind, 1988). Acceleration is a concept that addresses this concern. Julian Stanley, a pioneer of the talent search model, advocates such acceleration practices in order to help youth with special talents “move ahead better and faster educationally” in order to meet their educational needs. Several definitions of acceleration abound: “a way of progressing through an educational program at rates faster or ages younger than conventional” (Mackenzie-Sykes, 1996); flexibility in the curriculum (King, 1996); and “developmental placement” (Christopherson, 1981).

Studies of accelerated programs and practices with gifted students have proven to be overwhelmingly beneficial academically and socio-emotionally. Results of studies conducted over 33 years focusing on early entrance to school and grade skipping indicate that acceleration improves student motivation, increases confidence among students, and contributes to their scholarship. Benefits of acceleration also include positive long-term and short-term academic performance, and cognitive and educational gains (Kulik & Kulik, 1984; Mackenzie-Sykes, 1996).

Parents and educators often consider the social and emotional development of the child the most critical aspect of acceleration. Some fear that their child may face adjustment difficulties as a result of the acceleration practice. Research about acceleration indicates that no evidence exists about the negative effects on social and emotional development of gifted students (Swiatek & Benbow, 1991), which may be attributed to the social maturity of intellectually gifted students, which often leads them to seek older friends (Mackenzie-Sykes, 1996).

Stakeholders in the decision should evaluate the possibility of acceleration based on the individual characteristics, performance, and needs of the child. Careful consideration of the maturity level of the child should be a factor in advancing a child, particularly at the elementary level. Additionally, consultation among the student, parent, and school personnel should be conducted in order to determine if the child desires to be accelerated, if he/she has the appropriate intellectual skills for advancement, and if he/she is ready to move forward. If the child indicates a desire to remain in the current placement rather than be accelerated, the child’s wishes should be honored, otherwise the benefits of acceleration may not be achieved. Likewise, the parents, teachers, and administrators should come to a consensus based on their observations of the student, the student’s interest in accelerating, and the strategies to be employed in the acceleration process (Lynch, 1994; Mackay, 1994).

When the school administrators, teachers, counselors, parents, and the child have decided to move forward on the road to acceleration, an additional instrument can be helpful in making the determination. A tool has been developed to assist stakeholders with the decision to accelerate students in grades K-8: The Iowa Acceleration Scale (Assouline, Colangelo, Luptowski-Shoplik, & Lipscomb, 1999). This instrument helps turn the subjective decision to advance a student into a more objective one. The scale thoroughly measures and weights factors that should be considered, including the child’s motor coordination, behavior, social skills, attendance, motivation, self-concept, attitude towards learning, and results of achievement tests. These and other factors are scored, and the sum of scores results in a classification into one of four groups: exceptional candidate, good candidate, marginal candidate, or whole-grade acceleration not recommended. Based on the results of this research-based tool, the family and school personnel can use this information as additional information in the discussion about acceleration.

In order to increase the effectiveness of acceleration, several points should be considered. If possible, accelerate more than one student. Also, modifications may be needed in addition to acceleration, such as enrichment, independent study, higher-order thinking skills, mentorships, and problem solving. The teacher’s role is also critical; acceleration will be more successful if the instructor has a positive outlook towards acceleration, can modify existing curriculum to meet the needs of the student, has an advanced...
FROM THE DIRECTOR

DEAR FRIENDS,

Acceleration is one option for serving gifted youth. Within this newsletter are resources on acceleration, which can take many forms from grade skipping to dual enrollment. The personal experiences of adults who were involved in several forms of acceleration as children and youth are testimonies to the positive aspects of it. Experts in the field of gifted education also offer information on this topic.

Our former students continue to set the pace in their college/university endeavors and in their positions across the United States. We are proud of them and also the graduate students who are adding new knowledge to gifted education.

Members of the Advisory Council at our recent meeting offered many suggestions for our student programs, public relations, and sources of funding for needy youth to attend our programs. We are indebted to them for their assistance and ideas.

Sandra Parks, a professional and personal friend for many years, will keynote our fall conferences: “The Day of Sharing for Teachers of the Gifted” on September 27, and “The Parenting Gifted Children Conference” on September 28. Sandra volunteered to be with us in memory of our late son, Christopher J. Karnes.

There are also several initiatives that will be expanded in the near future. The data on the number of gifted disabled indicates a need for more investigation and planning for those children and youth. Focus groups will be convened in early fall to determine how school districts are accomplishing the screening, identification, and instruction for these twice exceptional youth.

The culturally diverse gifted students are a continuing priority. The need to establish a best-practices model for the identification of these students will build on the prior research conducted by the Center. There are several non-verbal measures of intelligence that will be utilized for the purpose of assisting school districts to enhance their effectiveness. In addition, the best instructional practices for teaching these students will be identified and disseminated.

My special thanks to all of you for being supportive of our programs. Please offer ideas for the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the Center in 2004.

Sincerely yours,

Frances A. Karnes, Ph.D.
Professor, Curriculum, Instruction, and Special Education
and DIRECTOR, The Frances A. Karnes Center for Gifted Studies

Thank You! Thank You! We wish to thank our donors who have continued to support the Frances A. Karnes Endowed Scholarship, the Christopher J. Karnes Gifted Education Memorial Funds, the Summer Program for Academically Talented Youth, and Friends for Gifted Education. The Friends fund was established in 1999 for scholarships for needy and eligible students to attend our summer programs and the Saturday Gifted Studies Program.

CONGRATULATIONS
Program Sponsors
Sponsorships for our programs also provide necessary funding for program support and student scholarships. Programs and sponsors are:

SATURDAY GIFTED STUDIES PROGRAM

SUMMER GIFTED STUDIES PROGRAM

LEADERSHIP STUDIES PROGRAM

SUMMER PROGRAM FOR ACADEMICALLY TALENTED YOUTH

MISSION STATEMENT

Beginning in 1974, programs and other endeavors in gifted education were initiated at The University of Southern Mississippi. The Center for Gifted Studies was established in 1979 and dedicated as the Frances A. Karnes Center for Gifted Studies in 1999, its central purpose to further the education of gifted students and those with leadership abilities through teaching, research, and service. Emphasis is also placed on these areas for those interested in the gifted: teachers, parents, administrators, psychologists, counselors, and other concerned citizens.

Many services are offered through the Center. Instructional programs are provided for intellectually gifted students in grades kindergarten through 12. The Saturday Gifted Studies Program provides instruction for students in kindergarten through eleventh grade for seven consecutive Saturdays during the months of January and February. The Summer Gifted Studies Program, a three-week residential program, serves students in grades seven through 10. The Leadership Studies Program is a one-week summer residential program designed to develop leadership concepts and skills and is offered for students enrolled in grades 6 through 11. Leadership Competitions are held for students in grades 7 through 12 each year and are designed to develop leadership skills and style and to build self-confidence. Teacher training and staff development are provided for regular education personnel and for teachers who specialize in gifted education. A conference for parents of gifted youth and other concerned adults is provided on an annual basis. In addition, research is conducted in rural and urban schools in response to issues in the field of gifted education.
knowledge base from which to draw, and has superior classroom management skills (Mackenzie-Sykes, 1996). Highly successful acceleration programs have similar features. VanTassel-Baska (1986) notes that these programs address the affective needs of gifted students, their need for interaction and discussion with peers are shaped to ensure that appropriate curriculum is provided for the gifted student, and diversity in learning experiences and teaching strategies is provided. Well-adjusted children, students who participate in extracurricular activities, youth with leadership qualities, students with a strong locus of control, children who have strong interpersonal skills, and students with a variety of interests — which can be shared with older children — are likely to find success in accelerated programs. Furthermore, children who are exceptionally gifted may find accelerated programming appropriately challenging, and they may benefit more from educational programs that incorporate a variety of options, including grade skipping, subject acceleration, and enrichment (Evans, 1996).

The benefits of acceleration are numerous. It can reduce the amount of time a child spends on previously mastered material. Flexibility in curricular options is another positive aspect of acceleration, especially when a student can compact multiple years of learning into less classroom time, allowing for a schedule to provide opportunities for future studies in areas of his/her choosing. The student may also gain a competitive advantage in college acceptance, scholarships, awards, and other recognition (Pyryt, 1999).

The school’s atmosphere is vital to successful acceleration. Counseling services should also be available to students to assist in their transition. The receiving teacher should be carefully considered, as his/her attitude towards acceleration can greatly affect the outcome of the acceleration program. Teachers with positive, rather than hostile, attitudes are highly preferred. Parents and school psychologists should have input into the judgments about the child’s maturity level, as perceived immaturity by the teacher or administrator may be a sign of boredom, frustration, or dissatisfaction with their current educational placement. Acceleration points should also be considered, including the beginning and midpoints of school years (Feldhusen, 1986).

The key to making a successful acceleration decision is shared input from a variety of sources. First, consideration of all data about the student should be collected and used to inform decision makers about appropriate placement (Evans, 1996). Individual characteristics of the student also indicate whether acceleration may be appropriate, including maturity, interpersonal skills, and participation in extracurricular activities. Additionally, performance on skill tests should indicate average scores for the target grade level. Results of the Iowa Acceleration Scale may also yield useful information in planning. With the shared input of the child, parents, administrators, teachers, and counselors, a consensus about acceleration will help to ensure the most optimal learning experience for the child; one that will provide an opportunity for the student to reach his/her potential.

REFERENCES


In-class acceleration or content acceleration - Learning centers, contracts, or mentors are utilized to provide students the opportunity to progress in a content or subject area at the appropriate rate based on ability, motivation, interests, or current performance. Small groups may be formed among students with similar abilities, interests, and motivation to pursue a designated area of study within the classroom. Parents, community volunteers, and specialists may be involved in assisting the student/groups in the learning process.

Independent study - A student completes coursework or material that is self-selected at his or her own pace. A contractual agreement may exist between the student and a teacher or mentor. Credit for the work is predicated upon this agreement. The study may be done independent of any contractual arrangement and based on the student’s interest and motivation to investigate an issue, problem, concern, or topic of interest.

Mentorships - A specialist provides advanced training or experiences in a specific field.

Self-paced instruction - The student proceeds at a self-determined rate on material appropriate for their ability and based on their achievement.

Subject acceleration - A student is advanced to an appropriately challenging level in a content area based on achievement but is maintained at the appropriate grade level in other subjects without being grade skipped in all areas. A student may be advanced several years in math, for example, but retained in language arts based on abilities.

Telescoping - A prescribed amount of work is covered in a shorter period of time by an entire class.

Whole class acceleration - A course designed for students with similar abilities. The course is taught at a fast pace appropriate to the ability of the learners. This class is typically composed of gifted students.

Adapted from Evans, 1996, and Mackenzie-Sykes, 1996.
ACCELERATION: PERSONAL EXPERIENCES

DR. LISA HERRINGTON

Dr. Lisa Herrington, an optometrist, was accelerated from 11th grade to college, skipping her senior year of high school since she needed only two credits to complete her senior year. Rather than remain in high school for those two courses, she took the ACT, was accepted into college and enrolled at The University of Southern Mississippi.

She finds that the educational landscape has changed dramatically since she was in high school 20 years ago. Advanced Placement courses were not available at her rural county high school, nor were fourth-year mathematics or science labs. In order to be challenged academically, she opted to advance to an educational setting that could offer her these opportunities. Now, however, Lisa says that the schools are offering high school students—particularly gifted high school students—more options to challenge them.

Dr. Herrington says that parents and students should consider several factors before opting for grade skipping. She cautions parents and high school students to exhaust all available options, including advanced courses, dual enrollment, extracurricular activities, independent study, and other opportunities for acceleration that were not available to her. Now that high schools have courses that are rigorous and challenging to bright students, she is more hesitant to advocate grade skipping at the secondary level, but she strongly supports it at the elementary level, if it is the best decision for the child.

Maturity and support are also considerations in the acceleration decision. Parents should examine the child’s maturity level in order to determine if an advanced setting would be manageable for their child, and if they can handle the transition socially and emotionally. She also recommends that parents of gifted children at all grade levels become attuned to the opportunities available to their children in their school. If parents find that their child’s school does not support grade skipping when appropriate, or if the school does not offer appropriate challenges, parents may consider supplementing his or her school education. Extracurricular activities, summer programs, special clubs, or relocation to another school that better serves the gifted can be beneficial to the child.

Reflecting on her school experiences, she realizes that the support of her parents and the opportunities they created for her helped her to grow. But when she entered college, other students who had academic challenges and appropriate activities were clearly ahead in terms of preparation for school and the work world. Fortunately, in the last 20 years, significant changes have occurred in schools that have created appropriate educational opportunities for gifted children that were not available to her while she was in school.

ELIZABETH FUNDERBURK

Elizabeth Funderburk participated in gifted programs while growing up in Olive Branch, Mississippi. She was not challenged by seventh grade, so she was accelerated to ninth grade. Still looking for academic stimulation, Elizabeth and her parents decided that Mary Baldwin College would be the solution to their education dilemma. The Program for the Exceptionally Gifted offers an opportunity for intellectually gifted girls to complete their college education during their high school years while living in a fully supervised residence hall with their true peers on the campus of Mary Baldwin College in Staunton, Virginia.

Elizabeth credits this experience at Mary Baldwin with changing her life by offering a completely different learning opportunity than what was available through the public schools. In addition to taking college-level courses with college students, she was afforded the opportunity to think for herself, make daily life decisions not usually available to 15-year-old girls, and to make friendships with other young women who shared her academic abilities.

After two years at this program, Elizabeth, like many of her peers, transferred to another university. This experience, however, proved to be less challenging academically and less fulfilling socially than her previous education at the Program for the Exceptionally Gifted. Dissatisfied with college life, Elizabeth took a year off from college to contemplate her future. She later enrolled in another university, and studied there for three years before leaving to pursue her own interests.

She notes that acceleration can be a life-changing experience—if the child wants to be advanced. Also, parents who encourage their children to be independent, expressive, and inquisitive, and those parents who relinquish control of their children, will be preparing them for a smooth transition into an environment that requires autonomy by the student. Also, certain age-honored experiences may have to be altered for the child if he or she is to assimilate smoothly into this new environment.
LEADING THE WAY...

- Amy Bisland, doctoral student in Curriculum, Instruction, and Special Education with an emphasis in gifted education at The University of Southern Mississippi, recently had her paper, “Student Created Public Relations for Gifted Education,” accepted for publication by Gifted Child Today.

- Amy Bisland and Frances A. Karnes, Ph.D., recently published “Summer Programs for Bright Students” in the Mississippi Professional Educator.

- Kristen R. Stephens, Ph.D., a 1998 graduate of The University of Southern Mississippi department of Curriculum, Instruction, and Special Education, and Frances A. Karnes, Ph.D., have recently published Young Women of Achievement with Prometheus Books. The Ultimate Guide to Getting Money for your Classroom and School, another of their collaboration efforts, will be published in fall 2002 by Prufrock Press.

- Elizabeth Shaunessy, doctoral student in Curriculum, Instruction, and Special Education with an emphasis in gifted education, was recently initiated into the national Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi and Kappa Delta Pi, International Honor Society in Education. Her manuscript, “State Policies Regarding Gifted Education,” has been accepted for publication in Gifted Child Today.


ACCELERATION: PERSONAL EXPERIENCES (continued from page 4)

For instance, says Elizabeth, parents who had set limits on dating to be at a certain age may want to reconsider if their child is being educated with like-ability peers who are older and allowed to date.

Elizabeth feels that her acceleration experiences were critical learning experiences that positively impacted her life. For those considering similar acceleration, Elizabeth stresses that “it will change your life in a positive way.”

- Dr. Michael Herrington

Dr. Michael Herrington, an oncologist, considers his early years of education non-traditional, but very beneficial. He attended The University of Southern Mississippi’s (USM) Ungraded Primary School, a continuous progress school that educated students by their intellectual age. He still credits this early learning experience with motivating and challenging him, and regrets that the experience had to end, since the program only served students in grades K-1.

Dr. Herrington entered a public school following his experience at USM’s Ungraded Primary School, but found the learning environment a stark contrast to his previous school. Bored and frustrated with the curriculum, he was tested, and based on his test results, was promoted to the third grade, although school officials would have allowed him to advance two grades to the fourth grade. His father, however, felt his son’s small size in comparison to fourth graders might have been problematic, so Michael was advanced to third grade.

Even with the grade advancement, Michael still found school unstimulating, a dilemma he faced throughout the remainder of his elementary experience. Having exhausted all academic and elective courses (with the exception of agricultural courses), Michael’s parents recognized their son’s boredom, frustration, and irritation and decided to transfer him to a school that offered Advanced Placement classes. Michael did find more appropriate educational opportunities late in high school in these accelerated courses.

Additionally, he participated in the Springboard Program at USM, which allowed high school juniors and seniors to enroll in college courses and earn college credit. This program allowed him to complete 20 hours of coursework prior to high school graduation, leaving less than a semester’s work to becoming a college sophomore when he entered The University of Mississippi full time. During his summers home from college, he enrolled in courses at USM to supplement his education. He found college much more stimulating academically, at one time taking four lab courses simultaneously. He thrived in the atmosphere of a university, majoring in biology and physics and nearly completing bachelor’s degrees in mathematics, chemistry, and the classics.

Michael finally found an educational setting where he found stimulation and excitement with peers of similar abilities and interests: medical school. His experience at The University of Mississippi Medical Center proved to be the challenge he sought, especially since his classmates were equally as eager to work, learn, and thrive in this educational environment.

To parents of gifted children, Dr. Herrington encourages letting their children move at a pace commensurate with their abilities, preferably in an educational setting that is attentive to the individual needs of the gifted child and makes accommodations to appropriately serve this student.

To the gifted child, Dr. Herrington advises sharing his or her information about the learning environment with others, particularly if the setting is not challenging or stimulating. He urges gifted students to become self-advocates and to communicate to parents, teachers, and administrators that the system is not meeting his or her needs. Without knowledge of the problems with the system, change agents will not be aware of the need to rethink education programs for the gifted.
Connections

Participants in Programs Conducted by The Frances A. Karnes Center for Gifted Studies

JESSIE R. ALLEN participated in the Summer Gifted Studies Program and Saturday Gifted Studies Program in 1992 and 1993. He is currently a second-year law student at Baylor School of Law in Waco, Texas. In 2000 he graduated from Baylor University with a bachelor’s degree in international studies. Currently he is the Lexis-Nexis student representative for Baylor Law School, where he assists students and faculty with legal research and technical needs. In 1998 he participated in a study-abroad program in Germany for language training, and in 1999 he studied in Turkey for credit in political science. He has distinguished himself at Baylor through recognition as a quarter finalist in the Baylor Law Intraschool Moot Court Competition, represented Baylor as a delegate to the Air Force Academy Assembly on World Affairs, and received a Baylor Achievement Scholarship and Wendlandt German Scholarship. He has also been the member of Sigma Iota Rho, the International Studies Honor Society, and Omicron Delta Kappa, the National Leadership Honor Society.

CHARLES BAKER participated in Center programs in 1978. He currently works as a web developer for Rockwell Automation. His duties include writing server-side programs in Java and PERL. He also does some remote part-time work for a dot-com. For a number of years, and before finally getting his degree, he worked as a manager of B. Dalton Booksellers in Atlanta. He is interested in computers, particularly Linux and other free software. He is also a practitioner of tai chi, and loves to read science fiction and mysteries when not reading computer journals and books. He graduated from the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga with a bachelor of science in computer science in 1999 after attending Yale University (84-86) and the University of Mississippi (87-88). He is married to a Furman University librarian and has two children, a girl and a boy, and is expecting a third child. Charles and his family reside in Greenville, South Carolina.

PAMELA MONTGOMERY BAKER participated in programs through The Frances A. Karnes Center for Gifted Studies in the summer of 1978. She is currently a software developer for Accenture with BellSouth in Birmingham, Alabama. She has worked in software development since her graduation from The University of Southern Mississippi in 1987. Following graduation she was employed in the defense industry in Huntsville, Alabama. Her expertise in software development includes medical practice management and, more recently, telecommunications. In 1994 she received her M.S. degree in operations research from the University of Alabama in Huntsville. Pamela married Tim Baker in 1998 and they have two young daughters, Julie and Emily. Pamela enjoys spending time with her family as well as running and aerobics, which she taught while living in Huntsville.

RILEY BROWN participated in the Leadership Studies I in 1986 and Leadership II in 1987. Currently he serves as the recreation pastor at Ingleside Baptist Church in Macon, Georgia, where he has served for more than 3 years. He has been married for eight years; he and wife Amanda have two children, a son, Kice, 4, and a daughter, Hunter Cate, 20 months old. In his spare time Riley serves in a soccer ministry, Brilla Soccer Ministry, which is based in Clinton, Mississippi. This year he will be a coach and team pastor of Brilla’s international team in Madrid, Spain. This is his seventh international tour and his third opportunity to serve in this capacity.

TERRI CAMP participated in The Saturday Gifted Studies Program in 1987, 1989, 1990, and 1991. She recently graduated from Millsaps College with a degree in anthropology and biology. Currently, Terri is working at the University of Mississippi Medical Center in the physiology department as a research assistant studying the structural proteins of the heart. Terri is involved with the Millsaps Archaeological Field School, which will conduct its third field school in Loundon County, Virginia, this summer. Terri enjoys rock climbing and playing the piano.

JEFF CROMARTIE participated in The Saturday Gifted Studies Program in 1982, Leadership I in 1988, and Leadership II in 1990. He resides in Birmingham, Alabama, where he is studying finance at The University of Alabama-Birmingham. He recently received the Wall Street Journal Award and the Thomas A. Fetherston Scholarship. His hobbies include traveling, boating, and creating mosaic art pieces, including tables, birdbaths, and stepping stones.

THOMAS EASON participated in the Summer Gifted Studies Program in 2000. He is currently a senior at Jesuit High School in Mandeville, Louisiana. He was chosen to attend the National Youth Leadership Forum on Medicine for the summer of 2002. He has also been selected to attend the National Student Leadership Conference in Business and Technology. His interests include business, management, chemistry, genetics, technology, swimming, and wrestling.

BETH GLOVER participated in the Center’s programs in the late 1970s. She is currently on a national tour of “Dirty Blonde,” a play about Mae West’s life story by Claudia Shear, which ran on Broadway for two years. She lives in New York City when she is not on tour acting or performing.

POLLY C. WHITE HAMMOND attended the Summer Gifted Studies Program in 1984-1986, as well as the Leadership Studies Program in 1986. She currently resides in Auckland, New Zealand and received a master’s degree from the University of California Los Angeles.

DELISA LEWIS attended the Summer Gifted Studies Program in 1979. She is the co-owner and operator of an organic farm near Columbia, Missouri, Terra Bella Farm, where she grows a wide variety of specialty European and Asian vegetables and fruits for direct markets, natural food stores, and statewide restaurants. She graduated in 1990 from Indiana University with a degree in linguistics. She studied horticulture and soil science at Cabrillo College in Aptos, California, and worked four years with Blue Heron Farms in Santa Cruz County.

WESLEY MALPASS participated in the Summer Gifted Studies Program in 1989. He is a senior at The University of Southern Mississippi majoring in computer science. He enjoys reading, listening to music, playing the trumpet, and marching with the Pride.

SHEILA MASSENGALE participated in the first Summer Gifted Studies Program in 1978. She is currently the administrative assistant to the COO at Wesley Medical Center in
Hattiesburg, Mississippi. She is married and has two children. She and her family have enjoyed living in Charleston, South Carolina; Tampa, Florida; Greenville, North Carolina; and Dayton, Ohio. She graduated from Forrest County Agricultural High School in 1983, and went on to graduate from Pearl River Community College with special honors. She also attended The University of Southern Mississippi.

**JAY MONTGOMERY** participated in The Summer Gifted Studies Program in 1979. He now works for Intel Corporation in Santa Clara, California, developing semiconductor processes used in creating microprocessors. Jay graduated from Oak Grove High School in Hattiesburg, Mississippi State University with a B.S., and North Carolina State with a Ph.D. in physics. He lives in the San Francisco Bay area and enjoys sailing.

**SUSAN MAHAN NIEBUR** participated in the Leadership Studies Program in 1987 and 1988. She received a Ph.D. in physics while her husband, Curt Neibur, received a Ph.D. in Earth and planetary science. Both graduated in 2001 from Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri. Susan now works in Washington, D.C., at NASA Headquarters in the Office of Space Science. The couple live in Maryland with their two dogs, Watson and Kepler.

**LAUREN PIGOTT** participated in the Summer Gifted Studies Programs from 1990 to 1994. For many years she corresponded with other participants in the Summer Gifted Studies Program. She credits her experiences with the Center for helping her grow as a person since the program provided her with academic challenge and social development. She graduated in May 2002 from The University of Southern Mississippi with a mathematics degree. She plans to pursue a master’s degree in college student personnel.

**K.J. ROLLINS** participated in the Summer Gifted Studies Program in 1987. She completed her high school graduation at Yazoo City High School, her undergraduate studies in English at The University of Mississippi, and her master’s in business administration at Lindenwood University in St. Louis, Missouri. She has been employed by Gersham Investment Corporation as a loss mitigation supervisor, and with Safeco Insurance Company as a Personal Lines underwriter. Presently she is employed with Southwestern Bell Communications—Advanced Solutions Incorporated in project management.

**DENISE COURTNEY WESLEY** participated in The Saturday Gifted Studies Program in 1985, 1986, and 1987. She is a third-year law student at The University of Mississippi, where she is the recipient of the J. O. Eastland Merit Scholarship (three-year full tuition). She has served as President of the Christian Legal Society and is an active member of the Black Law Students Association, the Black Graduate and Professional Students Association, and the Law Association for Women. Currently, Denise serves on the *Journal of National Security Law*. She is also a teaching assistant for the Legal Research and Writing Program. She graduated from Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee, in 1999, where she had been the recipient of a four-year, full-tuition scholarship. Denise received numerous academic and service awards while in college and high school, including the Harriet Tubman Award, Sophomore Academic Excellence Award, Omicron Delta Kappa National Leadership Society, and the Gold Award from the Girl Scouts of the Gulf Pines Council.

**CRAIG T. WINSHIP** participated in the Summer Gifted Studies Programs from 1978-1979, and taught in the programs in 1992-1993. He also received his master’s degree in gifted education in 1993 through The University of Southern Mississippi. He currently teaches gifted students at West Jones High School and is also the boys basketball coach. He received the honorable distinction of All-Star teacher at the Mississippi School for Math and Science in 1998. He has two children, Carly Jo, 10, who participates in the Star-Reach Program in Jones County, and Cassie, 2.

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**Program committee members Georgie McMullan, Bob Pierce, Richie Elkins Malone, and Diane Reidy discuss ideas for center programs. Suggestions will be incorporated into 2003 programs.**

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**Advisory Council Meeting**

In February, the Advisory Council members of The Center met at the rustic grounds of Tom Rhea and Barbara Phillips’ Hattiesburg camp. The meeting included discussion of current research initiatives undertaken by the Center, an overview of the Saturday Gifted Studies Program, and information about upcoming summer programs. Following the sharing of Center updates, members separated into planning committees. Several innovative and helpful ideas were generated from this committee-planning time, including public relations strategies, recommended course offerings, and fund development suggestions. The Advisory Council had the opportunity to discuss future plans, work closely together, and offer valuable ideas for the Center.

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### ADVISORY COUNCIL

Our continued gratitude to the members of the Advisory Council who have agreed to offer suggestions and support for the advancement of teaching, research, and service initiatives of The Frances A. Karnes Center for Gifted Studies.

#### Council Members

- Gail Atkinson
- Richard Bostwick
- Dr. James Davis
- Dwight Dyess
- Layla Essary
- Mark Fairchild
- Mark Henry
- Dr. Michael Herrington
- Warren Hood
- Robert Jackson, Sr.
- Paul Laughlin
- Charles Lawrence
- Duncan McKenzie
- Richie Elkins Malone
- Georgie McMullan
- Dr. David Scott Moore
- Dr. Toxie Morris
- Bill Oliver
- Carol Paola
- Susan Petty
- Dr. Tom Rhea Phillips
- Bob Pierce
- Diane Reidy
- Betty Reuben
- Ben Samel
- Bob Smith
- Dr. Larry Smith
- Pamela Smith
- Robert St. John
- Rae Turner

#### Ex Officio Members

- Dr. Conrad Castle
- Dr. Carl Martray

When Sally Reis, president of the NAGC Board of Directors, invited a task force to compile a comprehensive report on the social and emotional needs of gifted children, she emphasized that some of the recent disasters that have taken place in our schools had involved gifted adolescents. The Columbine, Colorado, shooting was a horrible example of gifted children with social and emotional problems. The result of the task force effort is The Social and Emotional Development of Gifted Children: What Do We Know? It's based on carefully compiled reviews of literature by experts in the field. This volume makes a thorough and excellent textbook to accompany a graduate course on social-emotional concerns and provides a compendium of the knowledge in the field for counselors, psychologists, teachers, and administrators who require heightened awareness about gifted children's emotional needs.

The editors are to be complimented on their important contribution to the field of gifted education and congratulated on their fine work. NAGC and other educational associations can use this work to “shout out” to the public that gifted kids do have emotional needs that must be met. Schools need to be sensitized to how much dollars invested might have prevented the disasters that were carried out by gifted students. There are no magic solutions, but certainly the last section of the book, “What We Must Do,” needs to be operationalized and broadcast. At minimum, counselors in every school district should have strong grounding in understanding the variety of needs of gifted children, adolescents, and their families.

The Social and Emotional Development of Gifted Children belongs in every educator’s library, and it will be accompanied by a call to action. It is true that gifted children are often emotionally healthy, but for those many parents and educators who see troubled gifted children, the call to action will speak even louder than the words of the book.

-Reviewed by Sylvia B. Rimm, Ph.D.

Clinical Professor, Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine Director, Family Achievement Clinic, Cleveland, Ohio

ACCELERATION BIBLIOGRAPHY


This text offers in one volume a compilation of information, research, curricular strategies, and resources that previously could only be found piecemeal in multiple sources from various authors. Divided into four sections: characteristics and needs of gifted learners, instructional planning and evaluation, strategies for best practices, and supporting and enhancing gifted programs; the 21 chapters are written by specialists in the field of gifted education.

The two chapters in Section I provide a concise, but comprehensive overview of the various diverse populations of gifted children as well as covering the often-neglected aspect of the learning environment in relation to the unique needs of gifted students. Section II is comprised of eight chapters that move the reader from the theoretical review of current curricular models for the gifted through the actual processes used to differentiate curriculum for the gifted learner in content, process, and product and concludes with strategies to evaluate both learner and program outcomes. Strategies for best practices with gifted students in the classroom are highlighted in Section III. Topics include analytical and critical thinking, problem-based learning, creative thinking, research skills, affective and character education, independent study, mentorships, leadership potential, cooperative learning, and simulations. Each chapter in section III also provides contact information for resources in the specialized topical areas. Section IV includes valuable approaches and ideas for enhancing and promoting the growth of gifted programming and instruction through public relations and advocacy, obtaining innovative funding, and gathering and selecting instructional materials appropriate for gifted students.

This text is an invaluable resource not only for teachers of the gifted, but also for regular education teachers who have gifted students in their classrooms. The plain language and ease of organization of this book makes it a “must have” resource for any educator’s professional bookshelf.

-Reviewed by Stephanie A. Nugent, M.Ed.

Visiting Assistant Professor
Department of Teaching and Learning
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ACCELERATION: What the Experts Say

Gifted students benefit when provided with the opportunity to move through the curriculum at their own pace, which is generally at a more rapid pace when compared to their same-age, non-gifted peers. Allowing a student to accelerate in his or her strong academic area(s) not only provides an appropriate level of challenge for the student but also helps sustain his or her motivation and high interest in learning. While some students may be accelerated an entire grade level, others may benefit through acceleration in a single subject area (i.e., acceleration in math).

Before considering acceleration as an option, a comprehensive psychological evaluation of the child should be conducted by a psychologist familiar with the characteristics and needs of gifted children or adolescents. The child’s intellectual ability, academic skill levels, interests, and social-emotional adjustment should all be considered prior to making a decision. In addition, the teacher(s) receiving the child must have a positive attitude and be willing to help the child adjust. The school counselor should also provide the student with support during the implementation of the new educational experience to monitor and ensure the child’s academic, social, and emotional progress.

The best time to accelerate a child is during a natural transition point such as between elementary and middle school or at the beginning of a school year. Furthermore, initially arrange acceleration on a trial basis, so that if things do not go well, the student can return to his or her original educational programming.

Kristen R. Stephens, Ph.D., Support Services Coordinator, Duke University Talent Identification Program, and Adjunct Assistant Professor, Programs in Education, Duke University

Acceleration of gifted learners is an essential part of programming for them effectively at all levels of schooling. It requires educators to examine the level of functioning of advanced learners in each area where they excel and provide advanced learning opportunities beyond tested levels of performance. By definition, all gifted learners exhibit advanced development in one or more areas. Therefore, acceleration in some form is required to accommodate their needs. This central tenet of gifted education is frequently overlooked in the push to enrich curriculum without attending to the level of the curricular transactions. Other issues related to accelerated learning is when, how often, and in what form it should occur. One of the key understandings to have about accelerated learning is that it needs to be continuous for gifted learners throughout the schooling process. The type of acceleration most beneficial at a given time will depend on individual variables; however, most gifted learners could benefit from exposure to content acceleration through fast-paced classes, independent study, tutoring, and at the secondary level dual enrollment, Advanced Placement courses, and International Bacchalaureate program options. Some gifted learners may benefit from early entrance and exit from key stages of learning, including kindergarten, middle school, high school, and college. A few gifted learners may benefit from large doses of grade-skipping as well.

As a field, education has placed limits on learning based on age and grade-level considerations, often to the detriment of gifted children and young adults. The key to sustaining accelerative opportunities for students rests on providing flexible environments that entertain individual differences and needs as a part of the agenda of learning. Such an agenda must also include competent teachers educated to work effectively with advanced students within key learning areas and knowledgeable counselors savvy about the range of options from which students might select at given developmental stages. As technological options, summer program options, and Saturday program options proliferate, parents of gifted students will become brokers even more in accessing meaningful educational opportunities that are accelerative in nature.

Joyce VanTassel-Baska, Ph.D., College of William and Mary, Jody and Layton Smith Professor of Education and Director of the Center for Gifted Education

In gifted education, acceleration refers to placing students in educational environments that provide access to advanced coursework at younger ages than is typical. While critics suggest that acceleration can result in poor adjustment and learning problems, there is strong research support for acceleration as an effective way to meet the learning needs of students with advanced cognitive abilities and skills.

Acceleration can take many forms. The more radical is for students to advance in grade placement, an appropriate strategy for students who are advanced in all areas and have the social and emotional maturity to adjust to being placed with older students. However, many gifted students accelerate in only one or two subjects (e.g. math) and otherwise remain in their grade placement. They may work with older students for part of the day or work independently on advanced content in their classroom. Other students seek accelerative opportunities outside of school through distance education, summer programs, or at a local college. In general, a distinction between acceleration and enrichment is that an accelerative experience provides an opportunity for students to advance to the next level, while students do not typically get credit or advanced placement for enrichment. For example, a summer science program that does not affect a student’s placement in school would be an enrichment experience, while a summer course in biology that allows the student to bypass biology and take AP biology instead is an example of acceleration.

Decisions about accelerating a student should be based on a careful review of options and alternatives, following an assessment of the student’s academic abilities and skills, social and emotional maturity, interests, and motivation. The type and degree of acceleration that is appropriate for students depends on the lack of fit for their needs within the regular school program. More radical options are needed for students who are profoundly gifted or who are gifted in all subject areas than for students who are more moderately gifted or whose special talents are in only one area.

Linda E. Brody, Ph. D., Johns Hopkins University, Department Head, Study of Exceptional Talent (SET).

Fall 2002 Day of Sharing for Teachers of the Gifted

On September 27, 2002, Sandra Parks will present “Infusing Critical Thinking Into Standards-Based Content Instruction.” Sandra has co-authored Building Thinking Skills, and Organizing Thinking, two series of instructional books for K-12 students. She has coauthored Infusing the Teaching of Critical and Creative Thinking into Content Instruction and founded the National Center for Teaching Thinking. She brings more than 20 years of experience in curriculum and staff development consultation on teaching thinking skills to schools and school districts.

Sandra conducted research on teaching critical thinking while at the Indiana State University Laboratory School and was founding president of the Indiana Association for the Gifted. She taught gifted education courses at the University of North Florida and The University of Miami.

Currently Sandra serves as a facilitator of Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development Teaching and Thinking Network, an organization of teachers, administrators, staff development specialists, and teacher educators involved in improving the quality of students’ thinking.

The Day of Sharing for Teachers of the Gifted will be held at the Forrest General Hospital’s Center for Healthy Living, housed within the Hattiesburg Family YMCA.

Parenting Gifted Children Conference

Sandra Parks will also be the keynote speaker at the 2002 Parenting Gifted Children Conference. She will discuss “What Parents Do Right To Promote the Thinking and Learning of Their Children.” She will discuss the connection between good health and efficient learning, parenting habits that promote thinking and learning, the use and misuse of television, and selecting toys that teach.

The Parenting Gifted Children Conference will be held Saturday, September 28, 2002, on the campus of The University of Southern Mississippi in Joseph Green Hall.
Acceleration Websites

http://www.hoagiesgifted.org/acceleration.htm
“Academic Acceleration.” A comprehensive site that has links to various acceleration sites, resources, and personal accounts of acceleration.

http://www.jhu.edu/~gifted/pubres/accel.htm

http://www.hoagiesgifted.org/elkind.htm

Evans, S. (1996). “Acceleration: A Legitimate Means of Meeting the Needs of Gifted Children.” Defines acceleration; its forms; arguments against; arguments for; factors contributing to successful acceleration, including teacher personality and student personality, the child’s level of giftedness; and a summary of research findings and conclusions.

Mackenzie-Sykes, L. (1996). “Acceleration: An Expanded Vision.” Author addresses the concepts, definitions, types and ranges of acceleration, rationale for acceleration, research overview, benefits of, social and emotional development pertaining to acceleration, suggestions for practice, how to increase the effectiveness of acceleration, references, and a reading list.

http://www.acs.ucalgary.ca/~gifteduc/resources/articles/pyryt2.html

http://www.bctf.bc.ca/PSAu/AEGTCCBC/publications/broch/accel.html
“What Educators of Gifted Learners Need to Know About ... Acceleration.” Tips for teachers of the gifted for implementing acceleration practices, implications for the classroom, and a bibliography.

http://www.hoagiesgifted.org/grade_skipped.htm
“Grade Skipped and Successful.” (2002). A list of individuals who skipped one or more grades, and who are successful in their fields... from basketball player to scientist to actress to Nobel Prize winner.

http://ericce.org/digests/c526.html
Lynch, S. (1994). “Should Gifted Students Be Grade-Advanced?” Author addresses issues related to acceleration, including whether the practice is harmful to children, whether there will be gaps in the child’s knowledge, educator’s opinions of acceleration, suggestions for parents considering accelerating their child, cautions about acceleration, modifications to acceleration, steps in the acceleration process, and sources.

http://www.hoagiesgifted.org/montage/V1n1.htm
King, V. (1996). Montage. An electronic journal for gifted education. This issue is devoted to a discussion of acceleration practices, recommendations, and tips for educators and parents involved in or considering the acceleration process.

http://www.ctd.northwestern.edu/resources/articles/earlyentrance.htm
Olszewski-Kubilius, P. (1999). “Thinking Through Early Entrance to College.” This article provides a rational for early entrance to college, information about how students who enter college early fare academically, socially, and emotionally; feelings of students who enter college early; what happens to students who enter college early; tips for deciding who should consider entering college early; alternatives to entering college early; and a list of programs that accept early entrance students to college.

http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/farmer/gftscacc.htm
“Acceleration.” This web site provides information on acceleration including discussion of responding to student gaps in certain skill areas, socio-emotional considerations, and possible trial periods and transitions.

http://www.jhu.edu/~gifted/pubres/accel.htm
John Hopkins University Center for Talented Youth. This site offers information on the definition of acceleration, as well as the benefits. Pace of learning is discussed, and research-based effects of acceleration are shared.

http://www.nc.uk.net/gt/general/04_acceleration.htm
The Guidance on Teaching Gifted and Talented Pupils. This web site discusses acceleration, including the benefits for students and considerations schools must review before initiating whole-grade advancement.

http://www.ccsd.k12.co.us/GT/primary_peeks/acceleration.htm
Primary Peeks. This site includes resource information for parents and educators on acceleration. Types of acceleration, guidelines for acceleration, tips for parents, and tips for teachers are each addressed.

PUBLIC OPINION ON GIFTED EDUCATION

Mississippian place a high value on gifted education, according to a study conducted by The University of Southern Mississippi. At a time when the Legislature is advocating reduced spending on education at all levels, this study indicates that Mississippi residents approve of increased funding for specialized programming for gifted students in public schools.

Results from the study on public support for gifted education in the state, commissioned by The Frances A. Karnes Center for Gifted Studies at Southern Miss, showed that a large majority of respondents feel:

Gifted students have different educational needs than average or below- average students.

Gifted children and youth should have the same legal protections as students with disabilities.

Education of gifted students in the state should have a high priority.

Public schools should be required to have special instructional programs to help gifted students reach their potential.

Gifted education programming should begin at the preschool level.

Gifted students should have the opportunity to skip grades if a student can demonstrate mastery of educational material.

Socially mature gifted students should be allowed to enter kindergarten early.

Gifted students should be allowed to complete above-grade-level course work if they have demonstrated content mastery at their current grade level.

The state legislature should provide more funds to educate gifted students in specialized programs in public schools to meet their educational needs.

Small school districts in the state should join together to pool resources in order to provide appropriate services for gifted students.

Business and industry outside the state will be more interested in locating in the state if good educational programs for the gifted are provided in public schools.

Business and industry in the state should give financial support to public schools for instructional programming for gifted students.

Economic growth and development of the state depends on educating gifted students to their fullest potential.

Gifted students are in families at all socio-economic levels.

Gifted students can be found in every ethnic and racial group.

Trained surveyors from the USM Department of Marketing and Management conducted the study using a questionnaire developed with assistance from professionals in gifted education at the local, state, and national levels.

For further information about services for gifted children and youth, please contact The Frances A. Karnes Center for Gifted Studies at The University of Southern Mississippi at (601) 266-5236 or at gifted.studies@usm.edu.
I want to become a Friend for Gifted Education. The funds generated will apply to scholarships for financially disadvantaged gifted students and for other notable purposes.

Please enroll me in the category checked below.

- Suma Cum Laude ($1000+)
- Magna Cum Laude ($500)
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- I would like information about how to include The Frances A. Karnes Center for Gifted Studies in my will.
- I would like more information about how to give stocks, property, and life insurance.
- I give my permission to have my name listed with other donors.

Please send all donations to
THE USM FOUNDATION/FRIENDS FOR GIFTED EDUCATION
USM Box 10026, Hattiesburg, MS 39406-10026

Questions? Please call The Center at (601) 266-5236 or 5246.
The Frances A. Karnes Center for Gifted Studies
USM Box 8207, Hattiesburg, Mississippi 39406-8207
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Let us hear from you about what is happening in your life. Also, over the years we have lost contact with some of our former program participants. Please help us find them by forwarding their names, addresses, and phone numbers. Thanks for helping.

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THE FRANCES A. KARNES CENTER FOR GIFTED STUDIES

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