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## The Identification of Gifted Children at the Kindergarten and First-Grade Level in an Urban and Rural Population

Flora Carter Roberts  
*Old Dominion University*

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THE IDENTIFICATION OF GIFTED CHILDREN AT THE KINDERGARTEN  
AND FIRST GRADE LEVEL IN AN URBAN AND RURAL POPULATION

by

Flora Carter Roberts

A.B. 1970, University of North Carolina  
M.S. 1976, Old Dominion University

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MAY 1989

Approved by:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Stephen W. Tonelson,  
Dissertation Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Member

\_\_\_\_\_  
Concentration Area Graduate  
Program Director

\_\_\_\_\_  
Member

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dean, College of Education

## ABSTRACT

### THE IDENTIFICATION OF GIFTED CHILDREN AT THE KINDERGARTEN AND FIRST GRADE LEVEL IN AN URBAN AND RURAL POPULATION

Flora C. Roberts  
Old Dominion University, 1989  
Director: Dr. Stephen W. Tonelson

This study examined the nomination procedures and assessment instruments employed in the gifted programs in ten urban and four rural southeastern Virginia school divisions. The nomination procedures and assessment instruments were examined in relation to the proportionate number of black and white children nominated for and determined eligible for the gifted program at kindergarten and grade one. Data were collected through the use of a mailed instrument to gifted program administrators and through structured interviews. The odds-ratio, a measure of association, was the primary data analysis technique employed.

Results suggest that divisions which employ only teacher and parent nomination as nominating procedures are the least likely to nominate a proportionate number of black children for the gifted program. Results also tentatively suggest that the individually administered Kaufman Assessment Battery for Children (K-ABC) is more useful as an

assessment instrument for identifying gifted black children than a group ability test.

In urban divisions in which K-1 membership was reported as white, black, other, white children were four times as likely to be a member of the gifted program at the end of the 1987-88 school year as black children. In urban divisions in which K-1 membership was reported as a total and the percentage of white and black/other, white children were 2.73 times as likely to be a member of the gifted program as black/other children. In rural divisions, white children were six times as likely to be a member of the gifted program in kindergarten and grade one at the end of the 1987-88 school year as black/other children.

This study concludes with the introduction of the concept of 'Action/Inaction', which presents the identification of gifted black children within the context of each local division and community. In school divisions in which the issue of the identification of gifted black children has been viewed by the community or division as a concern or priority, the identification of gifted black children has been addressed assertively. The profile of an 'Action' division is an urban division which usually has a certain number of predominantly black elementary schools. The profile also includes a gifted program administrator who has six or more years of experience and who spends 100 percent of his or her time administering the gifted program.

The profile of the division least likely to seek out and find gifted black children may be described as rural, or in some cases urban, with a relatively small percentage of black children in the student population. The program administrator in the 'Inaction' division spends less than 60 percent of his or her time administering the gifted program and has five years or less experience in the position of gifted program administrator.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Finally, and most importantly, this study is a tribute to the love and patience of my husband, Barry.

In memory of my father, William Burt Carter

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Providing special services for gifted children in public schools in this country can be justified on three basic premises. First, each child is to be provided with an education which meets his or her individual needs. Second, the potential of each child is to be developed to the highest level. Third, the abilities of our nation's children are required to meet the emerging needs of the work force of this country.<sup>1</sup> Most people would agree with these premises. Most also would agree that gifted children can be found in all ethnic groups. In actual practice, however, small percentages of minority children are found in gifted programs.<sup>2</sup> Baldwin when describing the minority gifted child uses the term "undiscovered diamonds" to provide the image of untapped resources of high value.<sup>3</sup>

More specifically, a 1980 U.S. Office of Civil Rights survey of public schools reported that blacks constituted 15.7 percent of the over forty million children in the sample, but 10 percent of the gifted children. In the South, blacks constituted 26.8 percent of the total school population; 60 percent of the educable mentally retarded

population was black compared to 12 percent in the gifted population.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, in 1983, High and Udall reported that the large southwest school division that they studied had a minority population of 42.6 percent. However, approximately 1 percent of the minority population participated in the division's elementary gifted program.<sup>5</sup>

As a result of these and additional data emphasizing the small percentage of minority children enrolled in gifted programs, this study examined procedures used to identify gifted children at the kindergarten and first grade level in ten urban and four rural southeastern Virginia school divisions. For the purpose of this study, a school division is classified as urban or rural if more than 70 percent of the population of the city or county is so classified by the 1980 Census.

The identification procedures were examined in relation to the number of black and white children nominated for, and determined eligible for, the gifted program at kindergarten and grade one. Identification procedures which appear to be most effective in identifying gifted black children are reported. Kindergarten and grade one were chosen as the appropriate grade levels for this study because of the on-going nature of the identification of gifted children in Virginia school divisions. Examining the number of children nominated for, and determined eligible

for, the gifted program at upper elementary grade levels during a one year period would produce misleading data in that a number of children already would have been screened in earlier grades.

Chapter I of this study examines the background for this research project and introduces and explores the problem of the identification of black gifted children. The significance of the study and its limitations also are presented in Chapter I.

Chapter II provides the theoretical framework for the study. The review of the literature is presented in four major sections:

1. Definitions of Giftedness
2. Identification of the Gifted
3. Current Efforts to Identify gifted Black Children and Barriers which Contribute to their Underrepresentation in Gifted Programs
4. Gifted Education in Virginia

Chapter III presents the research methodology for the study. A data collection instrument was sent to gifted program administrators in ten urban and four rural Virginia school divisions. Structured interviews were conducted with the gifted program administrators subsequent to data collection. The primary method of data analysis utilized was the odds-ratio.

### Background of the Study

The identification of gifted children within the school setting in this country is in a general state of confusion and disarray.<sup>6</sup> Differences exist between philosophical conceptions of giftedness and definitions around which educators develop and operate programs within the school setting. Pragmatic considerations such as space and funding often require limiting the number of children identified and the areas of giftedness served.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, the literature suggests that schools for the most part are lagging behind in implementing procedures for identification of gifted children which reflect current knowledge.<sup>8</sup>

For example, two national reports have presented the identification of gifted children, including the identification of gifted minority children, as one of major concern and importance to our society. A 1972 Report to Congress by the then U.S. Commissioner of Education, Sidney Marland, concluded that there is a tremendous social cost to a nation whose childrens' talents go undiscovered. Marland reported: "Special injustice has occurred through apathy toward certain minorities, although neglect of the gifted in this country is a universal and increasing problem."<sup>9</sup> The



Marland Report recommended a definition of giftedness which was adopted by the U.S. Office of Education:

Gifted and talented children are those identified by professionally qualified persons who by virtue of outstanding abilities, are capable of high performance. These are children who require differentiated educational programs and/or services beyond those normally provided by their regular school program in order to realize their contribution to self and society.

Children capable of high performance include those who demonstrated achievement and/or potential ability in any of the following areas, singly or in combination:

1. general intellectual ability
2. specific academic ability
3. creative or productive ability
4. leadership ability
5. visual and performing arts
6. psychomotor ability<sup>10</sup>

The U.S. Office of Education definition was later revised in 1978. Today it is incorporated into many state plans for gifted education.<sup>11</sup>

The National Report on Identification was prepared for the U.S. Department of Education in 1982. This study was undertaken due to the national importance of equitable identification procedures for identifying gifted children. The report advocated basic principles which should be inherent in identification procedures. Among the principles cited are pluralism, comprehensiveness and equity.<sup>12</sup>

The National Report on Identification concluded that major problems exist in the identification of gifted youth in this country. For example, the study found that it is common practice to use tests in ways which they were never

intended to be used by the test developers. The Otis-Lennon Mental Ability Test was designed to measure general intellectual ability but reportedly was being used to identify specific academic ability, creativity, arts and leadership abilities. Achievement tests, intended to measure specific academic abilities, were being used inappropriately to measure abilities such as general intellectual ability and creativity. Furthermore, respondents reported a widespread use of tests with subpopulations for which they had not been normed. The use of the Slosson and WISC with disadvantaged and minority populations is one example cited.<sup>13</sup>

Black children often do not respond to the traditional identification criteria, such as standardized tests, used for admission to gifted programs.<sup>14</sup> Frasier cites hindrances to the identification of black gifted children as the use of standardized tests, low referral rates from teachers and parents, low socioeconomic status (which in turn inhibits environmental opportunities and school achievement), and cultural differences which affect the manifestation of gifted behaviors.

Current efforts at identification which address these hindrances, according to Frasier, are noteworthy because they focus on inclusion of black children in gifted programs rather than exclusion. Seeking nominations from sources

inside and outside the school setting and using checklists which focus on behavioral characteristics of black children are examples of such efforts.<sup>15</sup>

State regulations charge each local school division in Virginia with developing a local gifted plan which includes identification procedures. To date, no study has examined the representation of black children in gifted programs in kindergarten and grade one in relation to the procedures used to identify them. Such information will provide information with which to pursue new and improved procedures for identifying gifted children at these grade levels.

#### Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to examine the nomination procedures used and assessment instruments employed in the gifted program in kindergarten and grade one in ten urban and four rural southeastern Virginia school divisions. The nomination procedures and assessment instruments were examined in relation to the proportionate number of black and white children nominated for and determined eligible for the program at kindergarten and grade one. A second purpose of this study was to determine identification procedures which appear to be most effective in identifying gifted black children at the kindergarten and

first grade level. The following research questions guided this study:

1. What is the current gifted program membership in kindergarten and grade one by ethnic group in each school division?

2. What were the nomination procedures used to nominate students for the gifted program at kindergarten and grade one during the 1987-88 school year in each school division?

3. Was there a difference between the proportionate number of black and white children nominated for the gifted program at kindergarten and grade one during the 1987-88 school year?

4. What were the assessment instruments employed to determine students eligible for the gifted program at kindergarten and grade one during the 1987-88 school year in each school division?

5. Was there a difference between the proportionate number of black and white children determined eligible for the gifted program at kindergarten and grade one during the 1987-88 school year?

6. What identification procedures, including nomination procedures and assessment instruments, appear to be most effective in identifying gifted black children?

### Significance of the Study

Developing an appropriate early identification procedure for gifted children of all ethnic groups is of critical importance. Also of critical importance is developing a procedure which results in fair representation of black children. Furthermore, the identification procedure must be based on research as well as be a procedure which can be implemented in a public school setting.

Gifted children need special educational programs, and society needs the contributions of the gifted. Beyond the importance of contributions made to society, however, is the potential cost of not locating the gifted among the culturally or economically disadvantaged. Abilities which are not channeled in constructive directions often lead to counterproductive behaviors which inevitably can burden this society.<sup>16</sup>

In addition to the issue of social utility, Whitmore cites the early identification of the gifted as critical in preventing underachievement in underserved populations such as the culturally different. According to Whitmore, an inadequate assessment of a child's abilities leads to inappropriate educational services and fosters educational neglect. This neglect simply perpetuates low expectations

of these children's abilities already held by many teachers.<sup>17</sup>

### Limitations of the Study

This researcher is the program administrator for gifted education in a Virginia school division and was a member of the Executive Board of the Virginia Consortium for Administrators of Programs for the Gifted during the 1987-88 school year. This researcher is also a member of the Southeastern Virginia Council for the Gifted which consists of the gifted program administrators of sixteen southeastern Virginia school divisions. The sample for this study consisted of fourteen school divisions from the Southeastern Virginia Council and is comprised of ten urban and four rural school divisions. One limitation of this study is that data were collected from one region of Virginia making it difficult to generalize the results to a statewide or nationwide level.

Second, the data collection was determined largely by the willingness and ability of the respondents to furnish the information requested on the data collection instrument. In some cases, information regarding the number and ethnicity of the children nominated for, and determined eligible for, the gifted program at kindergarten and grade one was not available.

Summary

This chapter has provided an overview of the study and has presented the problem of the identification of black gifted children as one of significant importance to society. Chapter II will present a review of the literature which addresses this complex and important issue more thoroughly.

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## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter will provide the theoretical framework for this study. Review of the literature will be presented in four major sections:

1. Definitions of Giftedness
2. Identification of the Gifted
3. Current Efforts to Identify Gifted Black Children and Barriers which Contribute to their Underrepresentation in Gifted Programs
4. Gifted Education in Virginia

In the first section of this chapter, major definitions of giftedness, provided chronologically, will be presented. The literature indicates that definitions of giftedness have evolved from IQ-based definitions to definitions which are multifaceted in nature. The first section concludes with the definition of giftedness as defined in the Virginia Regulations Governing the Education of Gifted Students, the definition of giftedness employed in this study.

The second section of this chapter addresses the issue of identification of gifted children within the school

setting. Studies reflecting teachers' and parents' abilities to identify giftedness in children as indicated by the effectiveness of their nominations of children for the gifted program will be examined. In addition, researchers' views of the 'state of the art' of identification procedures will be examined.

In the third section of this chapter, current efforts to identify gifted black children and barriers which contribute to their underrepresentation in gifted programs will be examined. Researchers have developed numerous identification instruments and procedures designed to include rather than exclude black children from programs for the gifted. Variables cited by researchers which contribute to underrepresentation of black children in gifted programs also are presented in section three of this chapter.

The fourth section of this chapter presents an overview of Virginia regulations which defines the mandates with which programs for the gifted in public school divisions in Virginia must comply. The development of a local plan for the gifted based on these mandates is a requirement of each local school division in the Commonwealth.

Definitions of Giftedness

In 1924, Terman initiated a study in California for the purpose of locating and determining the characteristics of children with superior intellect. Terman equated giftedness with the top 1 percent on a test of intelligence or a score of approximately 140 or above on the Stanford Binet or comparable intelligence test. In order to develop an initial pool of children to be tested, Terman asked teachers in the study to nominate their most intelligent students. Group intelligence tests followed by the administration of the Stanford Binet was the primary method used to determine the final sample of 1444 subjects.<sup>1</sup>

Kitano and Kirby acknowledge that the longitudinal studies of Terman have contributed in a positive way to society's perceptions of giftedness by generally finding through follow-up studies that gifted individuals maintain a degree of superiority into adulthood. However, they caution that the original sample consisted mainly of white middle-class children who were nurtured in a strong home environment and identified as gifted by an intelligence test.<sup>2</sup>

In 1929, Hollingsworth, while acknowledging the arbitrary nature of the definition, defined giftedness as the top 1 percent on a test of mental ability. Citing the literature and the general practice of school psychologists, Hollingsworth concluded that the top one percent of children

test at approximately 130 IQ or higher and may be defined as gifted.<sup>3</sup>

In recent years, however, there has been a trend to view many facets of giftedness beyond simply the IQ-based definition. Witty, in 1958, defined giftedness as more than just a score on an intelligence test:

There are children whose outstanding potentialities in art, in writing, or in social leadership can be recognized largely by their performance. Hence we have recommended that our definition of giftedness be expanded and that we consider any child gifted whose performance, in a potentially valuable line of human activity, is consistently remarkable.<sup>4</sup>

Witty cautioned that high intelligence test scores are merely indicators of potential and suggested that exceptional accomplishments should be a determiner of giftedness.<sup>5</sup>

The work of Getzels and Jackson and Torrance in the 1960's identified creativity as an important dimension of giftedness. Getzels and Jackson found that creative children and high-IQ children were not necessarily one and the same.<sup>6</sup> Torrance maintains that a common characteristic of people throughout history who have made significant contributions to society has been creativity.<sup>7</sup> Despite the need for nurturing ingenuity and creativity in our rapidly changing society, educators seem to express a degree of ambivalence toward incorporating creativity into the identification of giftedness.<sup>8</sup>

The U.S. Office of Education definition of giftedness which was generated from the Marland Report legitimized the multifaceted nature of giftedness by defining it in terms of six specific areas: (1) general intellectual ability, (2) specific academic ability, (3) creative or productive thinking ability, (4) leadership ability, (5) visual and performing arts ability, and (6) psychomotor ability. While Renzulli acknowledges that the U.S. Office of Education definition has been helpful in calling attention to the wide range of abilities that should be considered in a definition of giftedness, he also cites specific problems that have arisen from its widespread use. The lack of inclusion of motivation in the definition is seen by Renzulli as a major problem as is the nonparallel nature of the six areas. Third, Renzulli contends that the definition, by its very nature, has led to misuse by educators. One example of misuse is that many educators have adopted a version of the federal definition, but continue to use intelligence test scores as the major indicator for gifted program admission.<sup>9</sup>

Consequently, Renzulli's definition of giftedness incorporates high levels of: (1) above average ability, (2) task commitment and (3) creativity. The interaction of these traits is the critical element in defining giftedness. Each trait, according to Renzulli, is an equal partner. Renzulli faults identification procedures which put

overemphasis on exceptional abilities at the expense of task commitment and creativity. He offers the following definition:

Giftedness consists of an interaction among three basic clusters of human traits - these clusters being above-average general abilities, high levels of task commitment, and high levels of creativity. Gifted and talented children are those possessing or capable of developing this composite set of traits and applying them to any potentially valuable area of human performance. Children who manifest or are capable of developing an interaction among the three clusters require a wide variety of educational opportunities and services that are not ordinarily provided through regular instructional programs.<sup>10</sup>

Taylor provides another perspective on the definition of giftedness by defining it as a multiple-talent concept, components of which are possessed by most children. Furthermore, suggesting that all children can be found to be outstanding in something, Taylor lists the typical talents found in a classroom to be academic, creative, planning, communicating, forecasting and decision making.<sup>11</sup> Davis and Rimm suggest that Taylor does not actually define giftedness but rather calls attention to the fact that most children have strengths in some area of endeavor.<sup>12</sup>

Understanding of the nature of intelligence and its inextricable relationship to the definition of intellectual giftedness has changed considerably since the days of Terman and Hollingsworth. Sternberg contends:

There is much more to intellectual giftedness than high IQ. Conventional intelligence tests measure some

of the structures and processes underlying intelligence as an "internal trait," but their measurement is incomplete and in some instances misleading.<sup>13</sup>

Sternberg's triarchic definition of giftedness states that intelligence must be understood in terms of the internal and external experience of a person and also in terms of the "interface" of these two experiences as they develop through experience.<sup>14</sup> Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences also has implications for the definition of giftedness. Using information from a variety of sources, Gardner contends that the seven multiple intelligences are linguistic, musical, logical-mathematical, spatial-kinesthetic, inter-personal and intra-personal.<sup>15</sup>

The definition of giftedness as stated in the Virginia Regulations Governing the Education of Gifted Students is a version of the U.S. Office of Education definition as recommended in the Marland Report in 1972. For the purpose of this study, the definition of giftedness in the Virginia Regulations will be employed:

"Gifted Students" means those students in kindergarten through grade 12 whose abilities and potential for accomplishment are so outstanding that they require special programs to meet their educational needs. These students will be identified by professionally qualified persons through the use of multiple criteria as having potential or demonstrated abilities and who have evidence of high performance capabilities in one or more of the areas as follows:

1. General Intellectual Ability
2. Specific Academic Ability
3. Visual and Performing Arts Ability



4. Practical Arts Ability
5. Psychosocial Ability
6. Creative and Productive Thinking Ability<sup>16</sup>

In summary, numerous and varied definitions of giftedness are found in the literature. A general shift from an IQ-based definition to a multifaceted definition has taken place. The next section will focus on the task of identifying gifted children within the school setting.

#### Identification of the Gifted

As stated previously, this section will address the issue of the identification of gifted children within the school setting. Studies examining teachers' and parents' abilities to identify giftedness in children as indicated by the effectiveness of their nominations of children for the gifted program will be presented. In addition, researchers' views of current identification procedures as employed within schools today will be examined.

Identification of the gifted usually begins with a method of screening the entire school population. Teacher nominations are used frequently as an initial method of screening. Teachers have been found to have difficulty locating gifted children in their classrooms; however, this ability improves with training.<sup>17</sup>

Baldwin conducted a study in which kindergarten teachers were asked to indicate the gifted children in their

classes on two different occasions during the school year. An individual intelligence test, the Stanford Binet, was administered to these children. A group intelligence test was administered to all children in the twenty-two different classes, and those with a 125 or higher were administered the Stanford Binet. The criterion used to determine giftedness was a 130 or higher on the Stanford Binet. The results of the study which included one hundred kindergarteners in the sample found that teachers as well as group intelligence tests have limitations in identifying gifted kindergarten children. Teacher accuracy was 26 percent and 38 percent on their first and second judgments respectively; group intelligence test administration resulted in 39 percent accuracy.<sup>18</sup>

Jacobs examined the effectiveness of teacher, as well as parent, nominations of gifted kindergarteners. Six hundred and fifty-four children were evaluated using the Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence (WPPSI) and children were determined gifted based on an IQ of 125 or above. Teachers did not nominate nineteen of the twenty-one children determined gifted by the WPPSI. Parents nominated a total of twenty-six children as possibly gifted; sixteen were found to be gifted and ten were found to be of average ability. The forty-four children nominated incorrectly by

their teachers as gifted were above average children found to be verbally adept and cooperative in the classroom.<sup>19</sup>

In a study of four classes of sixth graders, Cornish asked parents, teachers and pupils to rate all children in the classes as gifted, above average, average, below average, or retarded. He also collected group achievement and intelligence test scores and individual intelligence test scores on the children. Students were determined gifted if they scored approximately 130 on the group or individual intelligence test or in the upper 3 percent on the group achievement test. Cornish found that teachers correctly identified only 31 percent of the children determined gifted. Parents and other students located only 12 percent of the gifted in this study.<sup>20</sup>

A study by Pegnato and Birch conducted in a junior high school setting also examined the ability of teachers to locate gifted children. Other methods of nomination included honor roll listing, art or music ability, student council membership, math ability and group intelligence test data. Seven hundred and eighty-one students were nominated based on these methods and subsequently administered the Stanford Binet. Students were determined gifted with a score of 136 or higher on this individual test of intelligence. Teachers were not found to be effective or efficient in locating gifted children in this study. Only

45.1 percent of the gifted children located were present on the teachers' lists, and 31.4 percent selected by teachers tested in the average range on the Stanford Binet.<sup>21</sup>

Another study in which kindergarten teachers were found to have difficulty locating gifted children in their classrooms was conducted by Ciha et al. in 1974. A stratified sample of 465 kindergarteners was administered the Slosson Intelligence Test and two performance subtests of the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children. Children who scored 132 or above on the Slosson or a WISC equivalence score of 120 were considered gifted for the purpose of this study. Teachers and parents were asked to identify the children whom they believed to be gifted according to stated criteria. Parents correctly nominated thirty-nine of the total number of fifty-four gifted; 201 children nominated by parents were determined to be non-gifted. Teachers nominated only thirteen of the children determined to be gifted. These results support the idea that some parents may, in fact, overestimate their child's ability. However, the authors concluded that parents provide a useful source of information which should be utilized in the search for gifted children at the kindergarten level, and that parent nomination is more effective than teacher nomination.<sup>22</sup>

Borland takes issue with the claim that teachers cannot identify gifted children in their classrooms. He

found that when teachers were asked to assess specific student behaviors, positive correlations between teacher ratings and IQ were found. Borland's sample included 195 gifted students from third, fourth and sixth grades in a New Jersey school district. Children from twelve elementary schools varying in socioeconomic status were represented in the study. While the children in the study were predominantly white, there were some black and Hispanic children in the sample. Teachers were asked to complete a rating scale which contained fifteen examples of possible student behavior by indicating whether the gifted student exhibited the behavior frequently, occasionally, or never. In order to determine a relationship between teacher ratings and IQ, based on the California Test of Mental Maturity (CTMM), the Pearson Product-Moment correlation was computed. The correlations between the teacher ratings and IQ were .22 and .32 for 1975-76 and 1976-77 respectively. Borland concludes that significant moderate correlations were obtained in each case.<sup>23</sup> Gear found that following training sessions on characteristics of gifted children, trained teachers were twice as effective as untrained teachers in locating gifted children.<sup>24</sup>

In conclusion, research suggests that kindergarten as well as elementary and junior high school teachers have difficulty identifying gifted children in their classrooms.

However, some evidence suggests that asking teachers to look for specific behaviors in children and also providing training sessions are two ways in which this difficulty can be minimized. Additionally, research suggests that parents may be able to recognize giftedness in their young children to the degree that parent input is useful in the nomination process. However, in spite of data that supports the use of parent nominations, teacher nominations, achievement tests, group IQ tests and grades are the most common nomination procedures used.<sup>25</sup>

Once children have been nominated for a gifted program, further assessment occurs to determine those individuals from the pool of nominees who are eligible for the program. Assessment and identification of the gifted, based largely on the early work of Terman, focused for many years on IQ scores. As the definition of giftedness expanded, the use of multiple criteria in assessment and identification became necessary. Present day use of the IQ test "cutoff" for identification of the gifted is not in keeping with the dynamic and multifaceted nature of ability as currently viewed by researchers.<sup>26</sup>

In addition, numerous researchers hold suspect the entire process of identification of the gifted as it now exists in many school divisions in this country. For example, Sternberg acknowledges the widespread use of tests

in most identification procedures but contends that "tests only work for some of the people some of the time."<sup>27</sup>

According to Sternberg, four dubious assumptions underlie the use of tests in the process of identifying gifted children:

1. To be smart is to be fast.
2. Intelligence is last year's achievement.
3. Testing needs to be conducted in a stressful, anxiety-producing situation.
4. Precision is tantamount to validity.<sup>28</sup>

While Sternberg does not advocate the abandonment of the use of tests in the identification process, he urges that they be used with caution.<sup>29</sup> Treffinger addresses four common identification practices which he considers myths:

1. We need to have the same scores for everyone.
2. The cosmetic use of multiple criteria revolving around our quest for those who are "REALLY" gifted.
3. Creativity is too difficult to measure.
4. Winners and losers, also known as the Myth of the Sacred Cutoff Score, or the Exclusion Fallacy.<sup>30</sup>

Refuting these myths, Treffinger suggests that by requiring the same set of scores for admission to a gifted program we are in essence comparing children to each other and sorting out the gifted from the imposters. He asks:

Who among us would be willing to defend some of the decisions that are being made in the name of identification of the gifted--that a student whose observed IQ is 130 should be "truly" gifted and admitted

to a program, while a student whose observed score is 129 should be excluded?<sup>31</sup>

Birch also is among those who find serious fault with current identification procedures as generally practiced in this country. His central proposal is the provision for full psychoeducational assessment of all children prior to entry to school. Birch scoffs at school division personnel who use the same assessment tools with all children in the interest of fairness and describes them as "gatekeepers." He considers current identification practices undesirable and unnecessary.<sup>32</sup>

Current Efforts to Identify Gifted Black Children  
and Barriers Which Contribute to their Under-  
representation in Gifted Programs

As early as 1950, Jenkins called attention to the problems and needs of superior Negro children. At that time, Negro children were not likely to be identified as superior. School personnel did not expect to find gifted Negro children, nor did standardized tests, when available, locate those who were not performing well academically. Additional problems confronting superior Negro youth, according to Jenkins, were the likelihood of an unstimulating environment and poverty. Jenkins called attention to the importance of identification of superior Negro youth and warned that standardized testing, while important, is not sufficient.<sup>33</sup>



The identification of gifted black children remains a problem today. According to Frasier:

Probably with no other subpopulation have the definition and identification of giftedness been more complex and seemingly inextricably interwoven with factors of environment, performance on standardized tests, cultural deviation from mainstream cultures, and ambiguous attitudes regarding the degree of academic acuity possessed by black students.<sup>34</sup>

Attitudes exist that gifted children cannot be found among minority groups; particularly when the minority children are disadvantaged.<sup>35</sup> Therefore, black children may well be at a disadvantage when teacher nominations are relied upon to develop the pool from which gifted children are chosen.<sup>36</sup> There is also evidence that teachers may generate negative attitudes toward black achieving children in their classrooms. Rubovits and Maehr examined teacher behavior toward black and white children randomly labeled "gifted" and "nongifted." Results showed that black "gifted" children were criticized more and received less attention than other groups of gifted children.<sup>37</sup> Caution must be taken in generalizing the results of this study, however, in that the authors reveal that none of the teachers had had any previous experience with blacks.

Shade reviewed studies of black achievers between the ages of five and eighteen. Results indicated that teachers respond negatively to black achieving children. Shade concluded: "It appears that having Black students who are

not deficient and who do not fit the stereotype is not a particularly welcomed situation."<sup>38</sup> These results suggest that negative attitudes on the part of teachers toward bright black children, when present, could inhibit teacher recognition of potential giftedness and minimize subsequent nominations of these children for the gifted program.

Baldwin presents three major variables which affect perversely the recognition of giftedness in certain populations, one of which is American blacks. The variables are cultural diversity, socioeconomic deprivation, and geographic isolation. She contends that a long list of misnomers, such as the "culturally disadvantaged" and the "culturally deprived," are used interchangeably to describe the children most affected by these influences. Clearly, children from cultures other than the mainstream are not, by virtue of their differences, necessarily disadvantaged. These variables, according to Baldwin, overlap and interrelate. For example, a child living on a farm (geographic isolation) who is poor (socioeconomic deprivation) and from a different culture (cultural diversity) would be affected by all three variables. However, a black child (cultural diversity) may or may not be affected by the variables of socioeconomic deprivation and geographic isolation. These environmental influences,

according to Baldwin, interact with a child's ability and result in the performance level in the classroom.<sup>39</sup>

Among the factors which contribute to the underrepresentation of minority children in gifted programs cited by Maker are the use of a narrow, middle-class definition of giftedness, and the use of tests for identification with groups for which the instruments were not standardized. Maker concurs with Baldwin by including socioeconomic and geographic influences as contributing factors to the underrepresentation of minorities in gifted programs.<sup>40</sup>

Barriers which contribute to the underrepresentation of black children in gifted programs can be explored further by examining current efforts to identify black gifted children. Checklists which address characteristics of giftedness in black children, the development or adaptation of standardized tests, the case study approach, the use of a quota system, and a screening device based on the child's environment are examples of current efforts.

For example, in 1976 Hilliard developed the "Who" and "O" checklists for use in the identification of the gifted black child. The checklists were based on the contention that behavioral styles are the vehicles through which intelligence is expressed.<sup>41</sup> The O test contained characteristics for an individual child and was completed by

teacher, student and parent. Items were marked only when they pertained to the child in question. Examples of items on the O test were, "Can make up good stories," and "Is good at making things up like games, dances, jokes, music, and pictures."<sup>42</sup> The Who test was completed by teachers and students and asked about characteristics of children in the classroom, such as: "Who is always getting excited about new things?"<sup>43</sup>

Gay contends that giftedness in black children often is displayed in the school setting in ways that differ from gifted behaviors exhibited by children in the majority culture. With twenty years of experience teaching black children and three years teaching the gifted, she developed a list of characteristics often evident in gifted black children. For example, a black child may have a large vocabulary, but it is inappropriate for the school setting; or a black child with a wide variety of interests may neglect school work in order to pursue those interests. The six-step identification procedure proposed by Gay includes as part of the process asking teachers to nominate a black child who best fits the characteristics on the checklist. The process also includes submission of names by teachers of all children who are doing grade-level work but who attend school irregularly, are on welfare, have problems with language, or suffer from apparent neglect.<sup>44</sup> Another list

of descriptors has been developed by Baldwin which lists characteristics of children affected by cultural diversity, socioeconomic deprivation and geographic isolation. Baldwin encourages awareness of such descriptors as clues in developing identification procedures. Included with the descriptors are characteristics to look for and possible environmental causality. For example, a child's ability to solve problems pragmatically may be manifested as uncluttered or logical thinking. This type of thinking may in turn be caused by his early responsibility regarding his own survival.<sup>45</sup>

The development of culture free or culture fair tests was an effort to eliminate test differentials between the majority culture and various subpopulations. One view among researchers is that differences in test performance reflect true differences in ability. However, the reasons for the differences in ability have resulted in age-old arguments concerning the genetic or environmental influences on test performance of black and white children. Another view is that the tests themselves do not reflect true ability due to such factors as the presence of unfamiliar items or the verbal nature of the tests.<sup>46</sup> Following a study of culture fair tests, Arvy tentatively suggests that their use may actually increase the differential between advantaged and disadvantaged populations.<sup>47</sup> Tests developed and purported

to be culture fair include Cattell Culture Fair Intelligence Test, Raven's Progressive Matrices, Goodenough Draw a Man, and Leiter International Performance Scale.<sup>48</sup> Current efforts to identify gifted black children often include the use of culture fair tests, as well as the development of new tests or the adaptation of existing tests.<sup>49</sup> For example, Bruch examined available Stanford Binet scores on 1,800 southeastern Black students and identified four items which were completed successfully by the sample. The successful items formed the Abbreviated Binet for the Disadvantaged (ABDA).<sup>50</sup>

The System of Multipluristic Assessment (SOMPA) was developed initially to prevent the mislabeling of minority children as mentally retarded, but is recommended as useful for identifying gifted minority children as well. SOMPA consists of three assessment models. The pluralistic model compares WISC-R scores on children from the same sociocultural and socioeconomic background. The adjusted WISC-R is considered the child's estimated learning potential (ELP). In the pluralistic model of SOMPA, a child's performance is compared only to those in his or her sociocultural group. Results of a field test of the instrument showed that five children would have been identified as gifted compared to only one using the standard WISC-R scores.<sup>51</sup>

Ryan investigated the effectiveness of traditional and nontraditional identification procedures in identifying gifted black and white children from a sample of 2,039 kindergarten and third grade children. Traditional screening methods were teacher nomination and group test scores (DAM); nontraditional screening methods were pupil product and peer nomination. The upper 5 percent of the black children nominated by any of the four methods were further assessed using the Stanford Binet, the traditional method, and the Leiter International Performance Scale, the nontraditional method. Based on the criterion of giftedness as 120 or higher on either instrument, the Stanford Binet located 44 percent of the twenty-five black children identified as gifted, whereas the Leiter identified 80 percent of the twenty-five black gifted children. Ryan concluded that there is a need to search for nontraditional screening and assessment methods to locate gifted black children.<sup>52</sup>

In addition to the use of checklists and standardized instruments, the case study approach is an effort to increase representation of black children in gifted programs. Renzulli and Smith compared traditional identification procedures to the case study approach. First, third and fifth graders from seven school divisions were included in the sample. Traditional procedures used in

three of the school divisions included administering a group ability test to students followed by an individual IQ test to those scoring above a certain level on the group test. The case study approach was implemented in the four remaining divisions. Data compiled included achievement and ability test data, ratings by past and present teachers, performance information, parent and self information. Results suggested that the case study method was not costly or particularly time consuming. In the authors' opinion, the case study method appears more sensitive to the abilities of minority children than the traditional method.<sup>53</sup>

In another example of the case study approach, Baldwin cites twenty-four black fourth graders who were selected for a gifted program based mainly on interviews and teacher and peer nominations. Only one of the children would have been selected for a gifted program had IQ and achievement test data been the criteria for selection. This longitudinal study finds all of the children today in college with most having earned substantial scholarships.<sup>54</sup>

Another effort to identify gifted black children is the use of a quota system in which spaces are reserved in the gifted program in proportion to the cultural makeup of the community. However, quota systems may deny access to more qualified children in one cultural group while a space



is being filled by a less qualified member of another cultural group.<sup>55</sup> Frasier cautions that, while the use of a quota system appears to focus on inclusion of children, the denial of access to any child which might result from the goal of cultural balance is inappropriate.<sup>56</sup>

Another effort to identify giftedness among black children is an environmental approach to screening advocated by Stallings. Stallings contends that many children, most of whom live in urban communities, are required to take tests which have no meaning to them. Stallings advocates an environmental screening instrument in which the child's community serves as the test content. For example, teachers are encouraged to use street signs or types of automobiles to measure recall. The author suggests that an environmentally-based screening instrument can be structured after traditional test instruments with modification in the content to reflect the child's environment.<sup>57</sup>

#### Gifted Education in Virginia

In accordance with Standard 5 of Virginia Standards of Quality: "Each school division shall conduct a program acceptable to the Board of Education for the early identification of gifted and talented students."<sup>58</sup>

The Virginia Plan for the Gifted, originally approved in 1980 by the Board of Education, was the first plan

developed for the education of gifted students in Virginia by the Department of Education.<sup>59</sup> Revised during the 1983-84 school year, the Virginia Plan for the Gifted together with Regulations Governing the Educational Program for Gifted Students provide the guidelines by which Standard 5 of the Standards of Quality shall be met.<sup>60</sup>

Article II of the Regulations Governing the Educational Program for Gifted Students addresses identification:

2.4 No single criterion shall be used in determining students who qualify for programs for the gifted. The eligibility of students for programs for the gifted shall be based on two or more of the following:

1. Individual or group IQ test;
2. Individual or group achievement test in specific academic ability;
3. Creativity test(s) by trained personnel;
4. Appropriate rating scales, checklists, interest inventories or questionnaires;
5. Previous accomplishments;
6. Pupil products judged by an expert in the area of product being judged;
7. Test(s) of special ability in the visual, performing, and practical arts;
8. Additional valid and reliable measures or procedures.<sup>61</sup>

Furthermore, in Article III of the Regulations, each local school division is charged with submitting a local plan for the education of gifted students to the Department of Education. The procedures used for the identification of gifted children within the local school division are a required component of the local plan.<sup>62</sup>

Part of the data collection in this study included the dissemination of a data collection instrument to gifted program administrators in ten urban and four rural southeastern Virginia school divisions. Each gifted program administrator was asked to complete and return the instrument, along with a copy of the division's local gifted plan for the school year 1987-88. Chapter III includes the research methodology for this study in detail.

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CHAPTER III  
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This study first examined the nomination procedures used and assessment instruments employed in the gifted program at kindergarten and grade one in ten urban and four rural school divisions in southeastern Virginia. The nomination procedures and assessment instruments were examined in relationship to the proportionate number of black and white children nominated for and determined eligible for the gifted program at kindergarten and grade one. A second purpose of the study was to determine nomination procedures and assessment instruments which appear to be most effective in the identification of gifted black children at these grade levels. The purpose of this chapter is to present the research methodology of the study including the research design, description of the sample, and the methods of gathering and analyzing the data.

Research Design

Data were collected for this study through the dissemination of a data collection instrument and through structured interviews. The independent variables are:

1. Nomination procedures used
2. Assessment instruments employed
3. Urban or rural designation of school division
4. Ethnicity (black or white) of children in

kindergarten and grade one

The dependent variables are the proportionate number of black and white children nominated for and the proportionate number of black and white children determined eligible for the gifted program at kindergarten and grade one during the 1987-88 academic year.

A nonparametric method of data analysis, the odds-ratio, was selected as the appropriate data analysis technique for this study. The odds-ratio is a measure of association. Odds are ratios of the number of events to the number of nonevents. In this study, events are children nominated for the gifted program and children determined eligible for the gifted program. Nonevents are the children not nominated and the children not determined eligible for the gifted program.

The odds-ratio measures the change in the odds associated with ethnicity, grade level, urban or rural classification of school division, and types of nomination procedures and assessment instruments employed. Several properties of the odds-ratio make it an appropriate statistical tool for this study. For example, it can be

used to examine the proportionate number of students nominated in relation to ethnicity and the urban or rural classification of the school system. In addition, shifts in sample size do not affect its value.<sup>1</sup>

Subsequent to data collection and data analysis, nomination procedures and assessment instruments are reported which appear to be most effective in the identification of gifted black children at kindergarten and grade one. The proportionate number of black and white children nominated for and determined eligible for the program in the sample divisions in conjunction with the nomination procedures and assessment instruments employed were considered when determining the most effective nomination procedures and assessment instruments.

#### Description of the Sample

Fourteen of the sixteen member school divisions of the Southeastern Virginia Council for the Gifted comprised the sample for this study. Ten of these school divisions were designated by the researcher as urban and four school divisions designated as rural. The urban and rural designation is based on the percentage of the total population of the city or county designated as urban or rural by the 1980 Census. The following definitions from

the 1980 Census of Population are included for the purposes of clarity:

urbanized area - An urbanized area is an area consisting of a central city or cities, and surrounding closely settled territory. An urbanized area comprises an incorporated place and adjacent densely settled surrounding area that together have a minimum population of 50,000.

urban population - The urban population comprises all persons living in urbanized areas and in places of 2,500 or more inhabitants outside urbanized areas.

rural population - The population not classified as urban constitutes the rural population.<sup>2</sup>

For the purpose of this study, a school division is classified as urban if more than 70 percent of the total population of the city or county is classified as urban by the 1980 Census, and a school division is classified as rural if more than 70 percent of the total population is classified as rural by the 1980 Census.

Therefore, the fourteen school divisions in the sample were designated as urban or rural school divisions as follows:

URBAN

Chesapeake	Hampton
Newport News	Norfolk
Poquoson	Portsmouth
Virginia Beach	Williamsburg
Suffolk	York

RURAL

Accommac

Northampton

Southampton

Gloucester

Methods of Gathering Data

An instrument, developed by the author, was utilized for data collection. Prior to dissemination, a copy of the instrument was mailed to five nationally- known gifted education researchers, an Assistant State Superintendent for the Virginia Department of Education and the two personnel in the Programs for the Gifted at the Virginia Department of Education. The researchers and Department of Education personnel were asked to review the instrument for clarity, readability, content validity, construct validity and face validity.

Recommendations received from the reviewers were studied and used to refine the data collection instrument. Items on the data collection instrument which were questioned by two or more of the reviewers were revised to reflect the reviewers' comments. The final draft of the data collection instrument was developed and disseminated to the gifted program administrators of the fourteen Virginia school divisions in the sample. In order to ensure a high rate of return, the Division Superintendent of the school division in which the researcher is employed sent a letter

to each of the Superintendents in the fourteen sample school divisions requesting cooperation in the data collection effort. Each of the fourteen gifted program administrators was asked to complete the data collection instrument and return it, along with a copy of his or her school division's local gifted plan, by September 15, 1988. Follow up with gifted program administrators who did not send the information by the requested date was conducted by personal contact, telephone calls and written correspondence. A copy of the data collection instrument is included in appendix 1.

In addition, a structured interview was designed to clarify and to elaborate on the information provided in the data collection instrument. The interview consisted of closed questions and open-ended questions with probes.

In that a structured interview is designed to minimize response effects, the interviews were conducted by the researcher. The structured interviews were conducted with the gifted program administrators who returned the data collection instrument.

Answers to closed questions were analyzed and data are displayed in frequency tables. Data collected through open-ended questions were analyzed for trends and reported in narrative form. A copy of the structured interview is included in appendix 2.

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## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

The results of this study will be presented in the following order. First, the data collection procedures will be summarized. Second, a summary of the training and experience of the gifted program administrators will be presented. In addition, the areas of giftedness served at kindergarten and grade one in the urban and rural school divisions will be examined. Third, the nomination procedures used during the 1987-88 school year to nominate students for the gifted program at kindergarten and grade one will be presented. In addition, the odds-ratio will be employed to present the difference in the number of black children and white children nominated for the gifted program at kindergarten and grade one in the urban and rural divisions. Fourth, the assessment instruments used during 1987-88 to determine students eligible for the gifted program at kindergarten and grade one will be reported. In addition, the odds-ratio will be employed to present the difference in the number of black and white children determined eligible for the gifted program at kindergarten and grade one in the urban and rural school divisions. A



summary of the chapter will be presented following the reporting and discussion of the results.

Data for this study have been collected through the use of a mailed instrument and through the use of a structured interview. The data collection instrument was mailed to the gifted program administrators from ten urban and four rural southeastern Virginia school divisions. Data collection instruments were returned by 100 percent of the gifted program administrators from the urban school divisions. In addition, 75 percent of the gifted program administrators from the rural school divisions returned the data collection instrument. One Superintendent from a rural school division advised the division's gifted program administrator not to participate in the study. All of the requested data were not supplied by the respondents. However, 70 percent of the urban gifted program administrators and 75 percent of the rural gifted program administrators provided most of the information requested. A structured interview, conducted by the researcher, was held with the gifted program administrators from nine urban and three rural school divisions. An interview in one urban school division was not conducted, following three attempts to schedule one.

Gifted Program Administrators

During the structured interview, the gifted program administrators indicated their years of experience in administering the gifted program in their divisions. Responses were recorded in the following categories: (1) 1-2 years experience, (2) 3-5 years experience, (3) 6-10 years experience, and (4) More than ten years experience. Results are presented in table 1. Of the gifted program

TABLE 1  
EXPERIENCE OF GIFTED PROGRAM ADMINISTRATORS  
FROM URBAN AND RURAL DIVISIONS

Experience in Years	Urban Administrators (N=9)		Rural Administrators (N=3)	
	Number	%	Number	%
1-2 years	1	11		
3-5 years	4	44	2	67
6-10 years	2	22	1	33
More than 10 years	2	22		

administrators from urban school divisions, 44 percent reported their years of experience as six or more years, with 22 percent having more than ten years of experience.

Of the gifted program administrators from rural school divisions, 67 percent reported years of experience in the category of 3-5 years; 33 percent reported having experience in the category of 6-10 years.

During the interview, the gifted program administrators described the training that they have received for the position of gifted program administrator. Responses were recorded in the following categories: (1) Extensive graduate work in gifted education, (2) Primarily on-the-job training with access to workshops and conferences, and (3) Little or no training at this time. Results indicated that 78 percent of the gifted program administrators from urban school divisions reported that their training was primarily on-the-job training with access to workshops and conferences. Also, 22 percent of the administrators from urban school divisions reported that their training was a combination of extensive graduate work in gifted education and on-the-job training. Eleven graduate hours in gifted education and a doctorate in special education were the reasons cited for these responses. Furthermore, 67 percent of the gifted program administrators from the rural school divisions reported that their training was primarily on-the-job training with access to workshops and conferences. One gifted program administrator reported that her experience was a combination

of on-the-job training and eighteen hours in gifted education.

The gifted program administrators indicated, during the interview, the percentage of time that they spend administering the gifted program in their school divisions. Responses were recorded in the following categories: (1) 100%, (2) 70%-90%, (3) 40%-60%, (4) 10%-30%. Results reporting the percentage of time spent administering the gifted program are reported in table 2. Of the gifted program administrators from urban school divisions, 44 percent reported that 100% of their time is spent administering the gifted program in their school divisions.

TABLE 2  
PERCENTAGE OF TIME SPENT ADMINISTERING  
THE GIFTED PROGRAM

Time Spent	Urban Administrators (N=9)		Rural Administrators (N=3)	
	Number	%	Number	%
100%	4	44	1	33
70%-90%				
40%-60%	4	44	1	33
10%-30%	1	11	1	33

In addition, 44 percent of the urban administrators spend 40%-60% of their time administering the gifted program; and one urban administrator, or 11 percent, spends 10%-30% of her time administering the gifted program. The gifted program administrators from the three rural divisions reported the percentage of time spent administering the gifted program in the categories of: (1) 100%, (2) 40%-60%, and (3) 10%-30%. The administrator indicating that 10%-30% of her time was spent administering the program clarified the response by stating that she had actually shared responsibility for program administration with a central office director for 20 percent of her time and taught gifted children for 80 percent of her time.

The gifted program administrators specified, on the data collection instrument, the areas of giftedness served at kindergarten and grade one during the 1987-88 school year. Areas of giftedness presented on the data collection instrument included: (1) General intellectual ability, (2) Specific academic ability, (3) Visual or performing arts ability, (4) Practical arts ability, (5) Psychosocial ability, and (6) Creative and productive thinking ability. Of the gifted program administrators from urban school divisions, 80 percent reported that one area of giftedness was served, namely, general intellectual ability. One administrator from an urban division reported that general

intellectual and creative and productive thinking were the areas of giftedness served, and one reported that all areas of giftedness were served except the area of practical arts ability. Of the administrators from rural school divisions, 67 percent reported that general intellectual ability was the area of giftedness served. The third administrator from a rural division reported that general intellectual ability and specific academic ability were the areas of giftedness served.

#### Nomination Procedures

The gifted program administrators were asked on the data collection instrument to indicate the nomination procedures employed during the 1987-88 school year to nominate students for the gifted program at kindergarten and grade one. Administrators were asked to check all that apply from the following categories: (1) Teacher nomination, (2) Parent nomination, (3) Peer nomination, (4) Self nomination, (5) Nomination based on certain test results, and (6) Other. Results reporting the nomination procedures employed are reported in tables 3 and 4.

Teacher nomination is employed as a nominating procedure in 100 percent of the school divisions, with parent nomination being used in 85 percent of the divisions. The third procedure most frequently employed is nomination

based on certain test results which was reported as a procedure used in 54 percent of the school divisions. 'Other' nominating procedures were reported in use by 38 percent of the divisions. The procedures categorized as 'Other' reported in use by four urban divisions include: (1) Classroom observation by gifted education specialist, (2) Levels of math or reading achievement (kindergarten only), (3) School administrator and psychologist, and (4) Gifted teacher observation and enrichment activities. The procedures categorized as 'Other' reported in use by one

TABLE 3  
NOMINATION PROCEDURES USED AT K AND 1  
IN URBAN AND RURAL DIVISIONS

Procedure	Urban Divisions (N=10)	Rural Divisions (N=3)	Total No. Divisions	Total %
Teacher nomination	10	3	13	100
Parent nomination	8	3	11	85
Peer nomination	1		1	8
Self nomination	1		1	8
Nomination based on certain test results	6	1	7	54
Other	4	1	5	38

rural division include a parent checklist at kindergarten, a teacher checklist, and an informal classroom test, the Cognitive Development Assessment Form. Self nomination and peer nomination were reported as the least frequently used nominating procedures at kindergarten and grade one (see table 3).

As indicated, 54 percent of the school divisions reported using certain test results as a nominating procedure. The specific names of the tests being used, and their frequency of use, are presented in table 4.

TABLE 4

TESTS USED TO NOMINATE CHILDREN FOR THE GIFTED PROGRAM  
AT K AND 1 IN URBAN AND RURAL DIVISIONS

Test	Urban Divisions (N=6) No. Using Test	Rural Divisions (N=1) No. Using Test
Cognitive Abilities Test (Cogat)	6	
Metropolitan Readiness Test (MRT)	1	
Kindergarten Diagnostic Abilities Test (KDAT)	1	
Group Inventory for Finding Talent (GIFT)		1



In addition, gifted program administrators reported the approximate percentage of nominations for the gifted program that were generated during 1987-88 by: (1) Teacher nomination, (2) Parent nomination, and (3) Nomination based on test results. Results reporting range and mean for each nominating procedure in urban and rural divisions are presented in table 5.

TABLE 5  
PERCENTAGE OF NOMINATIONS GENERATED BY TEACHER,  
PARENT, AND TEST RESULTS

Procedure	Urban Divisions (N=9)		Rural Divisions (N=3)	
	Range	Mean	Range	Mean
Teacher nomination	25-99	70	30-100	77
Parent nomination	1-50	15	-- <sup>a</sup>	5
Nomination based on test results	1-70	33	-- <sup>a</sup>	65

<sup>a</sup> only one score reported

Finally, gifted program administrators responded to the question of whether or not the nomination procedures employed during 1987-88 would change for the 1988-89 school year. Responses indicated that 67 percent of the administrators from urban divisions and 65 percent of the

administrators from rural divisions would not be changing the nomination procedures employed during the 1987-88 school year. Changes in the nomination procedures for 1988-89 were cited by 33 percent of the urban administrators and 33 percent of the rural administrators. The changes in the nomination procedures cited by urban administrators include: (1) The addition of a series of 'interaction lessons' taught by the gifted teacher and the classroom teacher in order to train classroom teachers to be more sensitive to the characteristics of gifted children, (2) The use of the Cognitive Abilities Test as a screening tool only and not as an assessment instrument, and (3) The implementation of a special effort to identify minority gifted children contingent upon decisions made under the leadership of a new gifted program administrator for the division as of Fall, 1988. The change in the nomination procedures cited by the rural administrator includes eliminating the administration of the Group Inventory for Finding Talent (GIFT) to all kindergarten and first grade children due to the time and expense required to administer the instrument.

#### Number of Children Nominated by Ethnic Group

The number of urban and rural children nominated for the gifted program at kindergarten and grade one by ethnic group is reported in tables 6, 7, and 8. These tables also

report the odds, or likelihood, of nomination occurring based on ethnic group and grade level. Table 6 reports the

TABLE 6

URBAN CHILDREN NOMINATED AT K AND 1 BY ETHNIC GROUP  
(K-1 Membership Reported as White, Black, Other)

Ethnic Group	Grade Level	Nominated		Odds <sup>a</sup>
		Yes	No	
White	K	174	2440	.07
	1	1383	1287	1.07
Black	K	88	2018	.04
	1	943	1380	.68
Other	K	6	82	.07
	1	92	15	6.13

N=4 divisions

<sup>a</sup> Odds-ratio (white/black): 1.75 (.07/.04) - K.  
1.57 (1.07/.68) - Gr. 1.

number of children nominated in urban divisions in which K-1 membership was reported in the categories of white, black and other. The odds-ratio (white/black) is 1.75 (.07/.04) for kindergarten children and 1.57 (1.07/.68) for first graders. Specifically, white kindergarten children were 1.75 times as likely to be nominated for the gifted program as black kindergarten children. In addition, white first

graders were 1.57 times as likely to be nominated as black first graders (see table 6).

In urban school divisions in which membership was reported as total K-1 membership and the percentage of white

TABLE 7

URBAN CHILDREN NOMINATED AT K AND 1 BY ETHNIC GROUP  
(K-1 Membership Reported as Total and Percentage  
of White and Black/Other)

Ethnic Group	Grade Level	Nominated		Odds <sup>a</sup>
		Yes	No	
White	K	1153	1812	.64
	1	692	2569	.27
Black/Other	K	522	2025	.26
	1	190	2506	.08

N=3 divisions

<sup>a</sup> Odds-ratio (white/black, other): 2.46 (.64/.26) - K.  
3.38 (.27/.08) - Gr. 1.

and black/other, the odds-ratio (white/black, other) is 2.46 (.64/.26) for kindergarten children. The odds-ratio is 3.38 (.27/.08) for first graders. White kindergarten children were 2.46 times as likely to be nominated for the gifted program as black/other kindergarten children, and white

first graders were 3.38 times as likely to be nominated as black/other first graders (see table 7).

Table 8 reports the number of rural children nominated for the gifted program by ethnic group at kindergarten and first grade. The odds-ratio (white/black, other) is 10 (.03/.003) for kindergarten children and 3 (.03/.01) for first graders. In rural divisions, white kindergarten children were ten times as likely to be

TABLE 8

## RURAL CHILDREN NOMINATED AT K AND 1 BY ETHNIC GROUP

Ethnic Group	Grade Level	Nominated		Odds <sup>a</sup>
		Yes	No	
White	K	20	630	.03
	1	17	527	.03
Black/Other	K	1	310	.003
	1	3	278	.01

N=3 divisions

<sup>a</sup> Odds-ratio (white/black, other): 10 (.03/.003) - K.  
3 (.03/.01) - Gr. 1.

nominated for the gifted program as black/other children. White first graders in rural divisions were three times as

likely to be nominated for the gifted program as black/other first graders (see table 8).

### Assessment Instruments

Once children have been nominated, they are assessed to determine if they are eligible for the services of the gifted program. On the data collection instrument, the gifted program administrators listed the assessment instruments employed to determine students eligible for the gifted program at kindergarten and grade one. A complete list of the instruments reported is included in appendix 3. For the purposes of data analysis, the assessment instruments have been categorized as follows: (1) Tests of mental ability (group), (2) Tests of mental ability (individual), (3) Achievement tests/academic progress, (4) Tests of creativity, (5) Checklists/observations by parents, (6) Checklists/observations by regular or gifted staff, and (7) Locally developed tests or procedures.

Table 9 summarizes the assessment instruments used in the ten urban and three rural school divisions. The three most frequently used instruments in urban divisions are: (1) Checklists/observations by regular or gifted staff, (2) Tests of mental ability (group), and (3) Achievement tests/academic progress. The three most frequently used assessment instruments in rural divisions are: (1) Tests of

mental ability (group), (2) Checklists/observations by parents, and (3) Checklists/observations by regular or gifted staff. Tests of creativity were not used in urban divisions, but were reported as being used in 67 percent of the rural divisions (see table 9).

TABLE 9  
ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENTS USED AT K AND 1  
IN URBAN AND RURAL DIVISIONS

Assessment Instruments	Urban Div. (N=10)		Rural Div. (N=3)		Total Div. (N=13)	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Tests of mental ability (group)	7	70	3	100	10	77
Tests of mental ability (individual)	3	30	1	33	4	31
Achievement Tests/ academic progress	4	40	1	33	5	38
Tests of creativity	0	0	2	67	2	15
Checklist/observa- tions by parents	3	30	3	100	6	46
Checklists/observa- tions by regular or gifted staff	9	90	3	100	12	92
Locally developed tests/procedures	3	30	1	33	4	31

In addition, 58 percent of the gifted program administrators indicated that the assessment instruments employed during 1987-88 would change in some way for 1988-89. Changes reported by the gifted program administrators from urban divisions are: (1) Less reliance will be placed on the Otis-Lennon School Ability Test, (2) The Otis-Lennon Mental Ability Test will be used at grade one, (3) The Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT) will no longer be used, (4) The Matrix Analogies Test will be used in all schools following a pilot in six schools during 1987-88, and (5) The implementation of a special effort to identify minority gifted children will be initiated contingent upon decisions made under the leadership of a new gifted program administrator for the division as of Fall 1988. The changes in the assessment instruments employed cited by the administrators from the rural divisions include: (1) New procedures include the addition of an identification matrix, and the elimination of the Slosson as an assessment instrument, and (2) A student interview to be conducted by the program administrator with nominated children will be added.

Number of Children Determined Eligible  
by Ethnic Group

The number and ethnic group of urban and rural children determined eligible for the gifted program from



those nominated are reported in tables 10 and 11. The tables also report the odds, or likelihood, of children being determined eligible based on ethnic group, grade level, and urban or rural classification of school division. Table 10 reports the number of kindergarten children determined eligible in urban and rural divisions by ethnic group. The odds-ratio (white/black) is 2.25 (9.13/4.06) for urban kindergarten children. Specifically, a white urban kindergarten child, once nominated, was 2.25 times as likely to be determined eligible for the gifted program as a black

TABLE 10

K CHILDREN DETERMINED ELIGIBLE IN URBAN AND RURAL  
DIVISIONS BY ETHNIC GROUP

Ethnic Group	Divisions (N=7 urban; 3 rural)	Eligible		Odds <sup>b</sup>
		Yes	No	
White	Urban	1196	131	9.13
	Rural	14	6	2.33
Black	Urban	463	114	4.06
	Rural	0	1	-- <sup>a</sup>
Other	Urban	35	4	8.75
	Rural	0	0	-- <sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Cannot be computed

<sup>b</sup> Odds-ratio (white/black): 2.25 (9.13/4.06) - urban.

urban kindergarten child, once nominated. The odds-ratio (white/other) is 1.04 (9.13/8.75) for kindergarten children in urban divisions. The odds-ratio (white/black) for rural children cannot be computed with the data available (see table 10).

Table 11 reports the number of first graders determined eligible in urban and rural divisions by ethnic group. The odds-ratio (white/black) is 2.59 (.57/.22) for urban first graders and .28 (.55/2) for rural first graders.

TABLE 11

GR. 1 CHILDREN DETERMINED ELIGIBLE IN URBAN AND RURAL  
DIVISIONS BY ETHNIC GROUP

Ethnic Group	Divisions (N=7 urban; 3 rural)	Eligible		Odds <sup>b</sup>
		Yes	No	
White	Urban	750	1325	.57
	Rural	6	11	.55
Black	Urban	201	920	.22
	Rural	2	1	2
Others	Urban	13	91	.14
	Rural	0	0	-- <sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Cannot be computed

<sup>b</sup> Odds-ratio (white/black): 2.59 (.57/.22) - urban.  
.28 (.55/2) - rural.

The reason that the odds of rural black children determined eligible is 2 is due to the fact that only three black first graders were nominated and two of the three were determined eligible (see table 11).

In addition, a component of this study was to examine the socioeconomic status of the children determined eligible for the gifted program at kindergarten and grade one during 1987-88. Gifted program administrators were asked to indicate the number of children who were determined eligible for the gifted program and who also were eligible for and received free lunch during 1987-88. Five school divisions (three urban and two rural) provided this information. Fifteen children, or 7 percent, of the 227 identified gifted children were reported as having received free lunch.

Finally, tables 12, 13, and 14 report the kindergarten and first grade gifted program membership at the end of 1987-88 by ethnic group in urban and rural divisions. The odds-ratio (white/black) is 4 (.04/.01) for urban divisions reporting kindergarten and first grade membership as white, black, and other. White children comprised 53 percent of the total K-1 membership and 76 percent of the gifted program membership. Black children comprised 45 percent of the total K-1 membership and 23 percent of the gifted program membership. In addition, 4 percent of the white children were a member of the gifted

program compared to 1 percent of the black children (see table 12).

TABLE 12

URBAN K AND 1 GIFTED PROGRAM MEMBERSHIP AT THE END OF  
1987-88 BY ETHNIC GROUP  
(K-1 Membership Reported as White, Black, Other)

Ethnic Group	% K - 1 Membership	K - 1 Gifted Program Member		Odds <sup>a</sup>	Percentages			
		Yes	No		Rows		Cols.	
White	53	196	5088	.04	4	96	76	53
Black	45	59	4370	.01	1	99	23	45
Other	2	4	191	.02	2	98	1	2

N=4

<sup>a</sup> Odds-ratio (white/black): 4(.04/.01).

Table 13 presents an odds-ratio (white/black, other) of 2.73 (.41/.15). White children comprised 54 percent of the total K-1 membership and 73 percent of the gifted program membership. In addition, 46 percent of the children in kindergarten and grade one were black/other compared to 27 percent black/other in the gifted program (see table 13).

Table 14 presents rural kindergarten and first grade gifted program membership at the end of 1987-88 by ethnic

TABLE 13

URBAN K AND 1 GIFTED PROGRAM MEMBERSHIP AT THE END OF  
1987-88 BY ETHNIC GROUP  
(K-1 Membership Reported as Total and Percentage  
of White and Black/Other)

Ethnic Group	% K - 1 Membership	K - 1 Gifted Program Member		Odds <sup>a</sup>	Percentages			
		Yes	No		Yes	No	Yes	No
White	54	1802	4424	.41	29	71	73	49
Black/ Other	46	676	4567	.15	13	87	27	51

N=3

<sup>a</sup> Odds-ratio (white/black, other): 2.73 (.41/.15).

group. The odds-ratio (white/black, other) is 6 (.03/.005). A white rural child was six times as likely to be a member of the gifted program at the end of 1987-88 as a black/other child. White children comprised 67 percent of the total K-1 membership and 92 percent of the gifted program membership. Black/other children comprised 33 percent of the total K-1 membership and 8 percent of the gifted program membership. Furthermore, 3 percent of the white children were members of the gifted program compared to 1 percent of the total black/other population (see table 14).

TABLE 14

RURAL K AND 1 GIFTED PROGRAM MEMBERSHIP AT THE END  
OF 1987-88 BY ETHNIC GROUP

Ethnic Group	% K - 1 Membership	K - 1 Gifted Program Member		Odds <sup>a</sup>	Percentages			
		Yes	No		Rows		Cols.	
White	67	35	1159	.03	3	97	92	66
Black/ Other	33	3	589	.005	1	99	8	34

N=3

<sup>a</sup> Odds-ratio (white/black, other): 6 (.03/.005).

#### Summary

The experience and training of the gifted program administrators may be summarized as follows. Of the urban program administrators, 22 percent reported having more than ten years experience, with only 11 percent having experience in the 1-2 year category. The majority of the program administrators from rural divisions, or 67 percent, reported experience in the 3-5 year category, with 33 percent reporting 6-10 years experience. Furthermore, 66 percent of the administrators from urban divisions and 100 percent of

the administrators from rural divisions reported their experience in the range of 3-10 years.

Of the administrators from urban divisions, 78 percent reported their training for the position of gifted program administrator as primarily on-the-job training with access to workshops and conferences. In addition, 22 percent of the administrators from urban divisions and 33 percent of the administrators from rural divisions reported their training as a combination of extensive graduate work and on-the-job training.

Furthermore, 44 percent of the administrators from urban divisions and 33 percent of the administrators from rural divisions indicated spending 100 percent of their time administering the gifted program. Results indicated that 44 percent of the administrators from urban divisions and 33 percent of the administrators from rural divisions spend 40 percent to 60 percent of their time as gifted program administrator. In addition, program administrators reported the areas of giftedness served at kindergarten and grade one during the 1987-88 school year. General intellectual ability was reported as the only area of giftedness served by 80 percent of the urban administrators and 67 percent of the rural administrators.

Gifted program administrators reported the nomination procedures employed during 1987-88 to nominate children for

the gifted program at kindergarten and grade one. Teacher nomination was the procedure most frequently employed and was reported as used in 100 percent of the urban and rural divisions. Parent nomination was the second most frequently used procedure; nomination based on certain test results was the third most frequently used nomination procedure.

The number of children nominated at kindergarten and grade one by ethnic group was reported by the gifted program administrators from seven urban and three rural school divisions. In urban divisions reporting K-1 membership in the categories of white, black, and other, the odds-ratio (white/black) is 1.75 for kindergarteners, and 1.57 for first graders. Urban white kindergarten children were 1.75 times as likely to be nominated for the gifted program as urban black kindergarten children. In urban divisions reporting total kindergarten and grade one membership and the percentage of white and black/other, the odds-ratio (white/black, other) is 2.46 for kindergarten children and 3.38 for first graders. The odds-ratio (white/black, other) in rural school divisions is 10 for kindergarten children and 3 for first graders. In rural divisions, white kindergarten children were ten times as likely to be nominated for the gifted program as black/other, and white first graders were three times as likely to be nominated as black/others.



Once nominated, children are assessed to determine if they are eligible for the services of the gifted program. The three most frequently used assessment instruments in urban divisions are: (1) Checklists/observations by regular or gifted staff, (2) Tests of mental ability (group), and (3) Achievement tests/academic progress. The three most frequently used assessment instruments used in rural divisions are: (1) Tests of mental ability (group), (2) Checklists/observations by parents, and (3) Checklists/observations by regular or gifted staff. The number of kindergarten and first grade children determined eligible in urban and rural divisions by ethnic group was reported. The odds-ratio (white/black) for urban school divisions is 2.25 for kindergarten children and 2.59 for first graders. Specifically, in urban divisions, a white kindergarten child was 2.25 times as likely to be eligible for the gifted program, once nominated, as a black kindergarten child, once nominated. In addition, a white first grader was 2.59 times as likely to be eligible as a black first grader. The odds-ratio (white/black) for kindergarten children in rural divisions cannot be computed with the data available; the odds-ratio (white/black) for first graders in rural divisions is .28 (.55/2). The reason that the odds of black children being determined eligible is 2 is due to the fact that only three black first graders were nominated and two

of the three were determined eligible (see tables 10 and 11).

Finally, gifted program membership in kindergarten and grade one at the end of 1987-88 was reported by the program administrators of seven urban and three rural school divisions. In urban divisions reporting total K-1 membership as white, black, other, the odds-ratio (white/black) is 4. White children comprised 53 percent of the total K-1 membership and 76 percent of the gifted program membership. In urban divisions reporting K-1 membership as a total and the percentage of white and black/other, the odds-ratio (white/black, other) is 2.73. White children comprised 54 percent of the K-1 membership and 73 percent of the gifted program membership.

In rural divisions, the odds-ratio (white/black, other) is 6. A white rural child was six times as likely to be a member of the gifted program in kindergarten or grade one at the end of 1987-88 as a black/other child. White children comprised 67 percent of the total K-1 membership and 92 percent of the gifted program membership.

CHAPTER V  
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS  
Summary

The identification of gifted children in this country is reported to be in a state of confusion. Using tests for identification in a way that they were never intended to be used and using tests with subpopulations for which they were not normed are two examples of this confusion. Furthermore, the identification of gifted black children remains a major problem facing gifted education in this country. Black and minority children are reportedly underrepresented in gifted programs nationwide. The use of traditional identification criteria, such as standardized tests, low referral rates from teachers and parents, low socioeconomic status, and cultural differences which affect gifted behaviors are cited as hindrances to the identification of gifted black children. The literature suggests that current efforts to identify gifted black children focus on inclusion of black children in gifted programs rather than exclusion. Seeking nominations from inside and outside the school setting and using checklists which focus on characteristics of gifted

black children are among 'best practices' cited in the literature.

Furthermore, each local school division in Virginia is charged by state regulation with developing a local gifted plan which includes identification procedures. To date, no study has examined the representation of black children in gifted programs in kindergarten and grade one in relation to the procedures used to identify them.

Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine the nomination procedures used and the assessment instruments employed in the gifted program in kindergarten and grade one in ten urban and four rural southeastern Virginia school divisions. The nomination procedures and assessment instruments were examined in relationship to the proportionate number of black and white children nominated for and determined eligible for the gifted program at kindergarten and grade one. A second purpose of this study was to report identification procedures which appear to be most effective in identifying gifted black children at the kindergarten and first grade level.

In order to achieve these purposes, data were collected for this study through the dissemination of a mailed instrument to the gifted program administrators from ten urban and four rural southeastern Virginia school divisions and through structured interviews. The odds-ratio

was the primary data analysis technique employed in this study. The odds-ratio, a measure of association, indicates the change in the odds, or likelihood, of children being nominated or determined eligible for the gifted program based on ethnicity, grade level, and urban or rural classification of school division.

The results of this study suggest that the experience and training of the gifted program administrators from the urban and rural school divisions vary widely. For example, 66 percent of the administrators from urban divisions and 100 percent of the administrators from rural divisions reported their experience in their current position in the range of 3-10 years. In addition, 22 percent of the administrators from the urban divisions reported having more than ten years of experience. Training received for the position of gifted program administrator was reported by 78 percent of the administrators from urban divisions as primarily on-the-job training with access to workshops and conferences. Furthermore, 22 percent of the urban administrators and 33 percent of the rural administrators reported their training as a combination of extensive graduate work and on-the-job training. Results indicated that 44 percent of the administrators from urban divisions and 33 percent of the administrators from rural divisions

reported spending 100 percent of their time administering the gifted program.

Gifted program administrators reported the nomination procedures employed during 1987-88 to nominate children for the gifted program at kindergarten and grade one. The three most frequently employed nomination procedures in the urban and rural divisions were teacher nomination, parent nomination, and nomination based on certain test results. The number of children nominated at kindergarten and grade one by ethnic group were reported by the gifted program administrators from seven urban and three rural school divisions. The odds-ratio (white/black) for urban divisions reporting membership in the categories of white, black, other, is 1.75 of kindergarteners and 2.57 for first graders. In urban divisions reporting total K-1 membership and the percentage of white and black/other, the odds-ratio (white/black, other) is 2.46 for kindergarten children and 3.38 for first graders. The odds-ratio (white/black, other) for rural divisions is 10 for kindergarten children and 3 for first graders.

Once nominated, children are assessed to determine if they are eligible for the services of the gifted program. The three most frequently used assessment instruments in urban divisions are: (1) Checklists/observations by regular or gifted program staff, (2) Tests of mental ability

(group), and (3) Achievement tests/academic progress. The three most frequently used assessment instruments in rural divisions are: (1) Tests of mental ability (group), (2) Checklists/observations by parents, and (3) Checklists/observations by regular or gifted program staff. The number of kindergarten and first grade children determined eligible for the gifted program by ethnic group was reported by seven urban and three rural gifted program administrators. The odds-ratio (white/black) for urban divisions is 2.25 for kindergarteners and 2.59 for first graders. The odds-ratio (white/black) for rural kindergarteners cannot be computed with the data available; the odds-ratio (white/black) for rural first graders is .28.

Finally, gifted program administrators from seven urban and three rural school divisions reported the gifted program membership in kindergarten and grade one by ethnic group as of the end of 1987-88. In urban divisions reporting total K-1 membership as white, black, other, white children comprised 53 percent of the total K-1 membership and 76 percent of the gifted program membership. In urban divisions reporting K-1 membership as a total and the percentage of white and black/other, white children comprised 54 percent of the K-1 membership and 73 percent of the gifted program membership. In rural divisions, white

children comprised 67 percent of the total K-1 membership and 92 percent of the gifted program membership.

### Conclusions

There is a great diversity of nomination procedures and assessment instruments employed to determine children eligible for the gifted program at kindergarten and grade one in the urban and rural school divisions examined in this study. The number of children nominated and determined eligible range from no students to as high as 72 percent determined eligible in kindergarten in one urban division. Nomination and assessment procedures range from simple to complex, and from one step to multi-step procedures. In addition, the number of children nominated and determined eligible during 1987-88 by ethnic group was information that was not routinely determined by most gifted program administrators.

The years of experience of the gifted program administrators range from one year to seventeen years. Most training has been received on-the-job. The most comprehensive local gifted plans and identification procedures generally were most evident in large divisions which employ fulltime gifted program administrators.

Circumstances within each school division and community clearly have shaped the way in which the gifted



programs at kindergarten and grade one have evolved. For example, divisions which have half-day kindergarten tend to have an uncomplicated identification procedure at kindergarten which is based largely on academic progress. Furthermore, six divisions have integrated the Cognitive Abilities Test, a new component of the Virginia State Assessment Program and first administered in Fall 1987, into their first grade nomination and/or assessment procedures in some way.

Nomination procedures and assessment instruments which may result in a fair representation of black children in the gifted program at kindergarten and grade one be recommended from those procedures which have resulted in an odds-ratio closest to one from the divisions studied. Specifically an odds-ratio (white/black) greater than one indicates an increased likelihood of white children being nominated or determined eligible for the gifted program. Therefore, it is significant that the two urban school divisions with the highest odds ratio (white/black) for children nominated at kindergarten and first grade employed only teacher nomination and parent nomination as nominating procedures. In addition, the program administrators from these two divisions also estimated that teacher nomination accounted for approximately 99 percent of the nominations generated at kindergarten and grade one. The two urban

school divisions with the lowest odds-ratio (white/black) for children nominated at kindergarten and grade one listed nomination procedures as follows: (1) teacher nomination, parent nomination, nomination based on test results (Cognitive Abilities Test), other (school administrator, psychologist), and (2) teacher nomination, nomination based on certain test results (Cognitive Abilities Test subscores), other (Classroom observation by gifted education specialist). These data suggest that the first consideration in addressing the issue of the identification of gifted black children should be to employ nomination procedures in addition to teacher and parent nominations. It also suggests that the results of the state-mandated Cognitive Abilities Test at the first grade level has been useful as a nominating source in some divisions. Other procedures such as nominations from school administrators, psychologists and classroom observations by a gifted education specialist also are nominating procedures unique to the two urban divisions which, based on the data, nominated children in approximate proportion to the ethnic make-up of the K-1 population, thus generating an odds-ratio of one.

Determining the assessment instruments which locate gifted black children most effectively is more complicated due to the fact that the odds, or likelihood, of a child

being determined eligible is first contingent upon him or her being nominated. Also, it is important to clarify that each division defines program eligibility in a different way, making any definitive conclusions regarding effective assessment instruments speculative at best. It also is important to clarify that while knowledge of the specific assessment procedures used is important, of equal importance is the manner in which these procedures are employed. For example, divisions may use the same group ability test, but require different scores for program eligibility. Additionally, several divisions may combine multiple criteria into a matrix or grid, and place different point values on the identical type of student information. However, several conclusions may be drawn from the data regarding assessment instruments which appear to be identifying gifted black children.

In one urban division, a special program has been developed to address the issue of the identification of the gifted black child. As a component of the gifted program, a pool of black first graders were administered the Otis-Lennon School Ability Test. Scores on this group test generally were not high, nor did they concur with the feelings of the teachers regarding children who were exhibiting characteristics of giftedness. Consequently, a gifted education specialist administered the K-ABC, an

individual ability test, to approximately 41 children. As a result of the administration of the K-ABC, 22 children were determined eligible for the gifted program. Few of these children would have been determined eligible on the Otis-Lennon School Ability Test. Also of interest is that 11 of the 22 were 'high ability, high achievement' children, and 11 were 'high ability, low achievement'. These findings concur with the literature in suggesting that the K-ABC is showing promise as an instrument which assists in identifying gifted black children.<sup>1</sup>

A second school division which actively and aggressively has addressed the issue of the identification of gifted black children has approached the issue in a somewhat different way. Approximately six years ago, an enrichment program was designed to serve the 'top' children from a group of predominantly black elementary schools in a disadvantaged section of the city. One class of first graders and one of second graders is organized each year. Students are identified by a group ability test. The classes are filled with the most able children from the predominantly black elementary schools, even if test scores fall in the average range. This program, taught by teachers of the gifted, is designed to nurture these children and to provide them with experiences and enrichment. The number of children from these classes who have qualified for the

elementary gifted program at the end of grade two has been increasing each year since the program began. These children have been identified as gifted and included in the data provided by the program administrator for this study. While standards for eligibility for this enrichment program are different from the division's regular primary gifted program, the program has increased the number of black children who ultimately have been determined eligible for the elementary gifted program which begins at grade three. This school division's method of determining students eligible for a gifted program, albeit different than the regular primary gifted program, has clearly addressed a need in the city in a positive and effective way. It is a conclusion of this researcher that, since this approach to identification is designed to nurture children, it should be considered as a viable assessment and program option in communities with similar needs.

In a third urban division, the odds-ratio (white/black) for program eligibility was .9 and .97 for kindergarten and grade one respectively. While the ratios for nomination were considerably higher, the odds of a black child being determined eligible, once nominated, were approximately the same as the odds of a white nominated child being determined eligible. Assessment instruments used in this division included a group ability test, a group

achievement test and a student observation form completed by the classroom teacher. The program administrator also indicated that program eligibility is determined by the use of a matrix in which points are allotted for each criteria being measured. According to the program administrator, there is flexibility in the use of the matrix if the placement committee thinks that there are extenuating circumstances regarding a child.

A fourth urban program administrator shared another approach to assessment and program eligibility which relates directly to the issue of the identification of the gifted black child. Several years ago, out of concern for the underrepresentation of black children in the gifted program, she began allocating two slots for minority and two slots for nonminority children to each school. Each school was asked to nominate its four best second graders, two of whom were to be nonminorities and two were to be minorities. These children were determined eligible for the gifted program, and have done well. In addition, the percentage of black children in the division's gifted program has risen from 6 percent to 12 percent since this method was initiated.

In addition to examining identification procedures, it is critical to consider the context within which each gifted program administrator operates in order to gain a

more complete understanding of the issue of the identification of gifted black children. Two questions were asked during the interview which addressed the issue: (1) To your knowledge, has anything occurred within the community or school division which has called attention to the issue of representation of black children in the gifted program? and (2) Is the number of black children in the gifted program at kindergarten and grade one perceived by you or others as a problem? Answers to these questions, in conjunction with the characteristics of the school division, directly relate to the degree to which the issue of the representation of black children in the gifted program has, or has not, specifically been addressed. In school divisions in which the issue of the identification of gifted black children has been viewed by the community or division as a concern or priority, the identification of gifted black children has been addressed assertively. The following Action/Inaction Chart presents this concept: Column 1 (The Initiating Force) is the way in which the issue of the identification of gifted black children has been perceived (or not perceived) as an issue within a community and/or school division. Column 2 (The Descriptors) presents characteristics of school divisions in this research project which have experienced this Initiating Force. Column 3 (Action/Inaction) is the action or inaction being taken to

address the issue. Column 4 (Administrator) is the experience of the gifted program administrator and the percentage of time he or she spends administering the gifted program, and Column 5 (Resulting Force) is evidence through membership of black children in the gifted program and/or new program development efforts that progress is being made, or not being made, in the identification of black gifted children. The results of this study suggest that a positive Initiating Force, specific identifiable Descriptors, and an experienced gifted program administrator who spends a majority of his/her time administering the gifted program are three factors which are present in school divisions which currently are taking positive and aggressive action to identify gifted black children. These 'Action' divisions which have a positive Resulting Force are large urban school divisions (see figure 1).



1	2	3	4	5
<u>Initiating Force</u>	<u>Descriptors</u>	<u>Action/Inaction</u>	<u>Administrator</u>	<u>Resulting Force</u>
Level IV Issue viewed as priority (+)	-Large urban divisions -Expressed interest in issue by Superintendent, central office personnel, principals -Some predominantly black elementary schools	-Staff development provided for gifted staff and principals -“Target” or “enrichment” programs designed to identify and/or serve gifted black children -Active involvement with urban university to assist with “alter-native” assessment procedures	Administrator usually has 6 or more years experience and spends 100% time administering program	(+)
Level III Strong community and/or school division interest and concern (+)	-Public and school division awareness of disparity between achievement of black and white children	-Creation of Minority Task Force to study issue of disparity in achievement -Allocation of “slots” for minority and nonminority children from each school for gifted program		(+)
Level II Comments, questions by staff and/or community (-)	-Interest on part of administrator but lack of knowledge on how to address it -or- -Perception that division is “fortunate” that issue has not been seen as a problem	-Verbal encouragement to “look for gifted black children” -Little or no evidence of specific effort to identify gifted black children	Administrator usually has 5 years or less experience and spends less than 60% time administering program	(-)
Level I Little or no interest or concern expressed (-)	-Rural divisions or urban divisions with small % of black children -Gifted children “served” in regular classroom -1/2 day kindergarten -low “visibility” of K-1 gifted program	-Gifted program kept at “low profile” -Standards so high that few children, of any ethnic group, are eligible		(-)

Fig. 1. Action/Inaction Chart

This study examined a small number of rural divisions; therefore, any conclusions regarding this sample should be considered tentative. However, in each case, rural divisions examined in this study may be placed at Level I or Level II which implies a negative Initiating Force. Consequently, in this study rural divisions exhibited Inaction and a negative Resulting Force (see figure 1).

In summary, this research has examined nomination procedures used and assessment instruments employed to determine children eligible for the gifted program at kindergarten and grade one in urban and rural divisions. There are nomination procedures and assessment instruments which appear to do a better job of locating gifted black children, within the context of each school division's 'definition' of giftedness, than other procedures and instruments currently being used.

In addition, another important conclusion is an emerging profile of an urban division which may be described as one which is most likely to seek out and to find gifted black children. The profile depicts an urban division which, due to integration and the resulting nature of the student population, usually has a certain number of predominantly black elementary schools. As a result, the community and the school division have viewed the issue of

the identification of gifted black children as a priority. The profile also includes a gifted program administrator who has six or more years of experience and who spends 100 percent of his or her time administering the gifted program. The profile of the division least likely to seek out and find gifted black children may be described as rural, or in some cases urban with a relatively small percentage of black children in the student population. The program administrator in the 'Inaction' division spends less than 60 percent of his or her time administering the gifted program and has five years of experience or less in the position of gifted program administrator.

In conclusion, this study confirms much of the literature which cites the underrepresentation of black children in gifted programs as a problem facing public education today. However, this study also illuminates elements which directly relate to the issue which go beyond procedures and assessment instruments. It appears that, based on this investigation, the identification of gifted black children is contingent upon forces unique to each community and school division. The concept of Action/Inaction is not an indictment of high or low ratios, but rather an observation, which if examined further, may shed new light on this complex issue.

Recommendations

The results of this study suggest that there are unexplored dimensions to the issue of the identification of gifted black children which warrant further research. One recommendation is to examine indepth, and with a larger sample, the nomination procedures and assessment instruments which appear to result in the nomination and eligibility of black children for the gifted program in urban and rural divisions. A second recommendation is to study central office staff organization and the impact of staff assignments on the productivity of the gifted program administrator within a division. Third, an examination of the attitudes and backgrounds of Superintendents regarding gifted education in 'Action' and 'Inaction' divisions is recommended.

In addition, it is evident that the present Virginia Department of Education procedure for the submission and approval of local gifted plans has not resulted in a system in which local divisions are provided technical assistance required to develop comprehensive identification procedures for all children. It is recommended that Virginia Department of Education procedures, including support to rural localities, be reexamined. Currently, the Programs for the Gifted in the Virginia Department of Education is staffed by only two people, hardly the staff required to

provide ongoing support and assistance needed as evidenced by the results of this study.

Lastly, as schools become increasingly multi-ethnic, and minority teachers become increasingly more difficult to find, it is critical that educators be given training in the cultural characteristics of all of the children with whom they work.

Furthermore, it is important that research on the identification of gifted black children be conducted within local school divisions in order to balance important theory with pragmatic considerations of the day-to-day operation of a school division. In addition, it is recommended that gifted program administrators maintain gifted program membership by ethnic group.

#### NOTES

1. Mary M. Frasier, "The Identification of Gifted Black Students: Developing New Perspectives," Journal for the Education of the Gifted 10, no. 3 (1987): 163.

APPENDIX 1  
DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT

## DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT

## SCHOOL DIVISION

## GIFTED PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR

1. Indicate the areas of giftedness served at kindergarten and grade one during the 1987-88 school year: (Please check all that apply.)

☐ General intellectual ability  
☐ Specific academic ability  
☐ Visual or performing arts ability  
☐ Practical arts ability  
☐ Psychosocial ability  
☐ Creative and productive thinking ability

2. Indicate the nomination procedures employed during 1987-88 school year to nominate students for the gifted program at kindergarten and grade one. (A nomination procedure is defined as a procedure used for developing a pool of candidates from which participants for the gifted program may be selected.): (Please check all that apply.)

☐ Teacher nomination  
☐ Parent nomination  
☐ Peer nomination  
☐ Self nomination  
☐ Nomination based on certain test results  
Name of test(s):  
  
☐ Other  
Please specify:



3. List the assessment instruments employed to determine students eligible for the gifted program at kindergarten and grade one. (Assessment instruments are defined as the instruments employed to determine students who qualify for the gifted program. Tests as well as checklists and rating scales are considered instruments.)

Kindergarten

Grade One

4. Average Daily Membership of kindergarten and grade one by ethnic group at the end of the 1987-88 school year:

Kindergarten

Grade One

\_\_\_\_\_White

\_\_\_\_\_White

\_\_\_\_\_Black

\_\_\_\_\_Black

\_\_\_\_\_Other

\_\_\_\_\_Other

\_\_\_\_\_Total

\_\_\_\_\_Total

5. Number of students in kindergarten and grade one who were nominated for the gifted program DURING THE SCHOOL year 1987-88 by ethnic group:

Kindergarten

Grade One

\_\_\_\_\_White

\_\_\_\_\_White

\_\_\_\_\_Black

\_\_\_\_\_Black

\_\_\_\_\_Other

\_\_\_\_\_Other

\_\_\_\_\_Total

\_\_\_\_\_Total

6. Number of students in kindergarten and grade one who were determined eligible for the gifted program DURING THE 1987-88 SCHOOL YEAR by ethnic group:

<u>Kindergarten</u>	<u>Grade One</u>
_____White	_____White
_____Black	_____Black
_____Other	_____Other
_____Total	_____Total

7. Number of students in kindergarten and grade one who were determined eligible for the gifted program during 1987-88 and who also qualified for and received free lunch during that school year:

<u>Kindergarten</u>	<u>Grade One</u>
_____White	_____White
_____Black	_____Black
_____Other	_____Other
_____Total	_____Total

8. Gifted program membership in kindergarten and grade one by ethnic group at the end of the 1987-88 school year:

<u>Kindergarten</u>	<u>Grade One</u>
_____White	_____White
_____Black	_____Black
_____Other	_____Other
_____Total	_____Total

Please return this data collection instrument along with a copy of your school division's 1987-88 local gifted plan to:

Flora Roberts  
Coordinator of Language Arts and Gifted Education  
Administration Annex  
Isle of Wight County Schools  
P.O. Box 78  
Isle of Wight, Virginia 23397

APPENDIX 2  
STRUCTURED INTERVIEW

## STRUCTURED INTERVIEW

## A. GIFTED PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR

A.1. How long have you been gifted program administrator in your school division?

1-2 years

3-5 years

6-10 years

More than 10 years

A.2. What percentage of your time is spent administering the gifted program in your school division?

100%

70%-90%

40%-60%

10%-30%

- A.3. How would you describe the training you have received for the position of gifted program administrator?

Extensive graduate work in gifted administration

Primarily on-the-job training with access to conferences and workshops

Little or no training at this time

B. NOMINATION PROCEDURES

- B.1. Of the total number of nominations for the gifted program at kindergarten and grade one during 1987-88, what was the approximate percentage generated by each of the following procedures?

Teacher Nominations\_\_\_\_\_

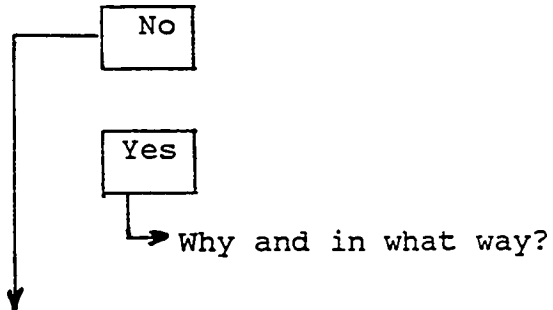
Parent Nominations\_\_\_\_\_

Nominations Based on Test Results\_\_\_\_\_

Other\_\_\_\_\_

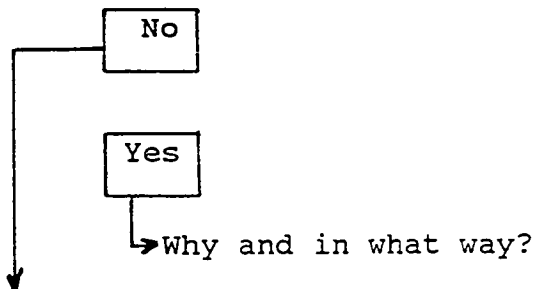
Explain:

B.2. Will nomination procedures at kindergarten and grade one change for 1988-89?



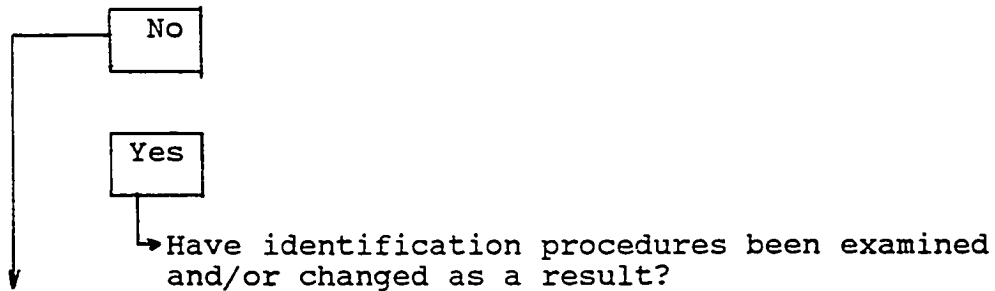
C. ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENTS

C.1. Will the assessment instruments employed during 1987-88 at kindergarten and grade one change for 1988-89?

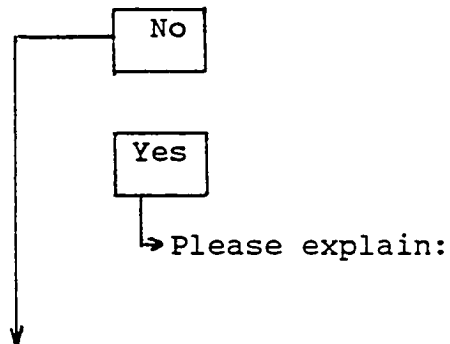


D. REPRESENTATION OF BLACK CHILDREN IN THE GIFTED PROGRAM  
AT KINDERGARTEN AND GRADE ONE

D.1. To your knowledge, has anything occurred within  
the community or school division which has called  
attention to the issue of representation of black  
children in the gifted program?



D.2. Is the number of black children in the gifted  
program at kindergarten and grade one perceived by  
you or others as a problem?



E. OTHER COMMENTS



### APPENDIX 3

#### ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENTS EMPLOYED TO DETERMINE CHILDREN ELIGIBLE FOR THE GIFTED PROGRAM AT KINDERGARTEN AND GRADE ONE IN URBAN AND RURAL SCHOOL DIVISIONS

ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENTS EMPLOYED TO DETERMINE CHILDREN  
ELIGIBLE FOR THE GIFTED PROGRAM AT KINDERGARTEN  
AND GRADE ONE IN URBAN AND RURAL SCHOOL  
DIVISIONS

Tests of Mental Ability (Group)

Otis-Lennon Mental Ability Test

Otis-Lennon School Ability Test

Primary Mental Abilities Test

Draw-a-Person Test

Cognitive Abilities Test

Matrix Analogies Test

Tests of Mental Ability (Individual)

Slosson Intelligence Test

Kaufman Assessment Battery for Children (K-ABC)

Achievement Tests

Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT)

Peabody Individual Achievement Test (PIAT)

Metropolitan Readiness Test

End-of-Level tests in basal math and reading programs

Tests of Creativity

Group Inventory for Finding Talent (GIFT)

Torrance Test of Creative Thinking

Additional Assessment Instruments Employed

Checklists by parents

Checklists/observations by regular or gifted staff

Locally developed tests or procedures

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Autobiographical Statement  
Flora Carter Roberts

Place and Date of Birth:  
Wilmington, Delaware  
December 14, 1947

Academic Training:

University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina  
Bachelor of Arts, June 1970

Old Dominion University, Norfolk, Virginia  
Master of Science, June 1976

Professional:

1983-Present	Isle of Wight County Schools Coordinator of Language Arts and Gifted Education Isle of Wight, Virginia
1977-1983	Isle of Wight County Schools Coordinator of Elementary Education Isle of Wight, Virginia
1976-1977	Southampton County Schools Principal Ivor, Virginia
1971-1976	Isle of Wight County Schools Teacher Isle of Wight, Virginia
1970-1971	Franklin City Schools Teacher Franklin, Virginia