

SIGNificance.

The newsletter for the AERA Research on Giftedness and Talent SIG

A Challenge to the SIG and to the Field of Gifted Education

Letter from the Chair, Carolyn Callahan

As we face times of dwindling resources in education in general and the field of gifted education in particular, more challenges to services and programs for gifted students are likely to arise. Administrators and school boards who must manage fixed, or even reduced, budgets and in that context must strive to meet the achievement standards set by No Child Left Behind will be faced with difficult decisions and are apt to be looking for evidence of effectiveness of programs and services offered to all groups of students. Programs and services that are designed to

Are we prepared as a field to provide evidence of the effectiveness and efficacy of our programming decisions for gifted students?

meet the needs of smaller populations of students that do not carry federal mandates for service are certainly going to rise to the surface in considerations of resource allocation. Are we prepared as a field to provide evidence of the effectiveness and efficiency of our programming decisions for gifted students?

A second challenge has emerged to identify and provide appropriate services to a more diverse population of talented students. I am afraid that we still have much work to do to support the decisions we make. So I am offering a set of challenges to the group that I believe has the most expertise, the greatest commitment and the most opportunity to provide the necessary evidence to decision-makers as they weigh options. While I respect and give great weight to the importance of descriptive and correlational studies as contributing greatly

to our understanding of the characteristics of gifted students, their teachers and parents, the limitations of the current body of research with regard to “scientifically based evidence of effectiveness of services” are notable. We have a pressing need to:

- Develop and validate or validate existing identification strategies that are effective and efficient in measuring the construct of giftedness in diverse populations.
- Identify meaningful, measurable and viable expected short-term and long-term outcomes of services provided for gifted students.
- Develop and validate assessment tools that will measure those outcomes.
- Translate the vast qualitative literature that has emerged through case studies and other qualitative study into hypotheses that are then tested with quantitative, more generalizable studies.
- Develop and/or apply evaluation and research paradigms that will allow for cause-effect attributions so decision-makers can make more informed decisions about the effectiveness of services. (cont'd p. 10)



Spring 2006

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Editor

Holly Hertberg-Davis

Please email submissions and suggestions for the newsletter to me at hertberg@virginia.edu

Annual Meeting Highlights. San Francisco, April 7-11, 2006

Michael Matthews, *University of South Florida*

Cheryll Adams, *Ball State University*

The AERA Research on Giftedness and Talent SIG is making a strong showing at this year's annual meeting in San Francisco. Consult the schedule below for the dates, times and locations of sessions relevant to giftedness and talent. See pages x-x for detailed information about each session, including the titles of papers and presenters.

Saturday, April 8

4:45-5:35 p.m.: **Social Context in Gifted Education** (paper discussion). *Moscone Center West, 3rd Floor, Room 3009*

Don't miss the Gifted SIG Business Meeting on Sunday, April 9 from 6:15-8:15 p.m. in Moscone Center West, 2nd Floor, Room 2001

Sunday, April 9

1:15-1:55 p.m.: **Identification and Instruction of Gifted Students** (paper discussion). *Moscone Center West, 3rd Floor, Room 3005*

6:15-8:15 p.m.: **SIG- Research on Giftedness and Talent Business Meeting**. *Moscone Center West, 2nd Floor, Room 2001*.

Monday, April 10

8:15-9:45 a.m.: **Identification in Gifted Education** (paper session). *Moscone Center West, 2nd floor, Room 2000*.

10:35-12:05 p.m.: **Investigating Diverse Learners in Gifted Education** (paper session). *Moscone Center West, 2nd floor, Room 2014*.

12:25-1:55 p.m.: **Student Characteristics in Gifted Education** (paper session). *Moscone Center West, 2nd floor, Room 2014*.

2:15-3:45 p.m.: **Social Processes in Gifted Education** (paper session). *Moscone Center West, 2nd floor, Room 2009*.



For descriptions of these sessions, please see pages 7-8.

New Gifted SIG Electronic Journal Announced

Jonathan Plucker, *Indiana University*

The SIG is sponsoring a new electronic journal on gifted education research. The journal, which will be distributed electronically in PDF format twice a year, is being organized by the SIG's publications committee. The publications committee is chaired by Jonathan Plucker and includes Dona Matthews and Robin Kyburg. Del Siegle was chair when the idea was first hatched and deserves credit for helping to develop the project.



Leigh Kupersmith,
Jonathan's publications edi-

tor at the Center for Evaluation and Education Policy, is serving as the graphic designer and production editor and is an ex officio member of the committee. Content will focus on research-related material that is not traditionally included in the field's journals, such as short articles on the future of the field, reviews of out-of-field research that may be relevant to the study of giftedness and gifted education, and question-and-answer columns with experts both within and outside of the field.

The first issue of the electronic journal should appear in mid- to late spring of this year. Questions and suggestions are encouraged and can be directed to any member of the committee. The new journal will be discussed at the Business Meeting on Sunday, April 9.

Jonathan Plucker can be reached at: jplucker@indiana.edu

Gifted Education in New York City: A Time of Change and Possibility

Dona Matthews, *Hunter College, City University of New York*

New York is an exciting place to be involved with gifted education right now. New York State has just im-

Gifted education is hitting the news regularly, from all kinds of perspectives. Issues of equity, excellence, entitlement... are being considered from every angle.

plemented a regulation that all teachers working with gifted and talented children are required to have an extension to their teaching certificate that requires 12 graduate credits in gifted education, so there is a strong demand for courses, a demand I'm working hard to

help fill with a new program at Hunter College. The New York City Department of Education has made a major commitment to upgrading and expanding its programs for gifted and talented learners.

I'm on a citywide task force with Joe Renzulli and several others thinking about policy and best practice in identification and programming.

Gifted education is hitting the news regularly, from all kinds of perspectives. As you might predict, issues of equity, excellence, entitlement, diversity, and inclusion are controversial topics, and are being considered from every angle. The NYC Department of Education is doing a lot of professional development for teachers and administrators, bringing in Elissa Brown and

Joyce VanTassel-Baska from the College of William and Mary, and Joe Renzulli, Sally Reis, and others from the University of Connecticut, as well as using New York City experts like Barry Oreck, Felice Kaufmann, and myself. It is one of those exciting and impossible times of passionate discourse, change, and opportunity.



Dona Matthews can be reached at: dmatt@hunter.cuny.edu

Scientia Study: The Long-Term Impact of Gifted Program Participation

Karen Rogers, *University of New South Wales*

Four hundred ten participants in a gifted program, *Scientia*, offered during school holidays in New South Wales, Australia, between 1993-2003, were surveyed about the longer term impacts their participation might have had on their choices of university, choices of career, and perceived levels of success as adults.



A survey and on-line questionnaire were given to participants who, as of 2003, ranged in age from 18-30 years of age. Among the questions asked were several open-ended questions that encouraged them to describe the greatest catalysts in their own talent development. Rich data were collected, espe-

cially from the open-ended responses, that suggest that these students who, for the most part, have achieved at high levels in university and career, look upon their lives as satisfactory and full of hope.

When reflecting directly upon *Scientia* outcomes, the students showed strong agreement with having learned new knowledge and skills, and for the course choice(s) having led them to a field that ultimately became their career choice. Although the university a majority of the students ultimately selected was not directly influenced by their experiences in *Scientia*, the rigor of coursework taken in *Scientia* seemed to influence their ultimate choice of university program. Respondents reported

Parents have been the most powerful attribute in influencing these students' perceived success in their careers.

having chosen the university they did for its reputation for rigor and excellence.

For a minority of students (n=50), however, the *Scientia* experience was a strong influence in their choice of the UNSW campus as their first choice for tertiary studies. Although careers ranged from temporary (warehouse worker, station hand on a sheep farm, etc.) to professional (doctor, lawyer, television executive, etc.), the participants generally responded that they have succeeded "well" in their careers due to their own hard work.

Although the *Scientia* classes opened up a direction that became a career in many cases, participation in these courses did not directly impact the success they have had in that career. The qualitative analysis of open-ended responses suggests that parents have been the most powerful attribute in influencing these students' perceived success in their (continued on p. 10)

On a *QUEST* for Research:

10 Years of Articles from the NAGC Research and Evaluation Division Newsletter

In this issue, we have reprinted (with permission, of course) two articles from *QUEST*, the newsletter of the NAGC Research and Evaluation Division, representing some of the research ground the field has covered in the past ten years. The selected articles represent a sampling of topics that have been, and continue to be, focal points of research and discussion in our field. The first article, Donna Ford's "Conducting Research with Racially and Culturally Diverse Groups: A

Commentary," was published in the Spring, 1996 (Volume 7, No. 2) edition of *QUEST*. The second article, Carol

Tieso's "Relationship Unmasked: The Whole True Story of SES and Academic Achievement," was published in the Spring, 2003 (Volume 14, No. 1) edition of *QUEST*.

A compact disc containing 10 years of the *QUEST* newsletter is available from the NAGC Research and Evaluation Division for \$10.00 Contact Carol Tieso at clties@wm.edu to order.

Together, these articles represent some of the voices and conversations that have been at the heart of our field for the past decade. For a richer sampling of the concerns and interests of your colleagues in the field of gifted education, be sure to get a copy of the *QUEST* compilation disc. For ordering information, see the highlighted text box on this page.

Tieso's "Relationship Unmasked: The Whole True Story of SES and Aca-

Conducting Research with Racially and Culturally Diverse Groups: A Commentary

Donna Ford, *Ohio State University*

Historically, students in research courses were taught that research is indeed objective, that science is and must be objective. One traditional view of research was that the only values to influence research were the scientific values placed on truth and objective methodology, a view that prescribed complete detachment of personal values from research. Researchers are perceived to be cool, detached, impassive, and dispassionate observers of phenomenon that had no emotional mean-

ing for them. More specifically, researchers have been expected to be paragons of objectivity and passionless purveyors of the truth (Kimmel, 1988, p. 126). Without such objectivity, the results are considered invalid and unreliable. The notion of research being free of values and biases has been seriously challenged; impor-



tant questions have been raised about the appropriate relationship between scientific research, objectivity, and the role of researchers' values and beliefs (Kimmel, 1988). Achieving scientific objectivity is an onerous task, one that requires superhuman characteristics. One must not become personally or emotionally invested in the study, interpretations must not reach beyond the data, conclusions must not be value-laden, and so forth. Yet, we all have some level of both professional and personal investment in our work, including research. We consciously or

Relationship Unmasked: The Whole True Story of SES and Academic Achievement

Carol Tieso, *The College of William and Mary*

There is little doubt that tremendous inequities exist between Caucasian and culturally-linguistically diverse gifted students with respect to academic achievement. Many researchers have explained this gap as a manifestation of racial rather than economic or class differences. In fact,



there is an extremely complex relationship between Socio-Economic Status and academic achievement. In studies of the relationship between SES and academic achievement, the correlations may vary from .10 to .80. These discrepancies may be due to home environment rather than social or economic factors. The relationship is further muddled by the different units of analyses used in the studies: individual, aggregated, individual and aggregated within the same study. Because of these confounding issues, SES must be defined clearly and accurately prior to making pronouncements about the racial origins of underachievement to

assure that the differences are not caused by the effects of home environment rather than strictly social and economic factors, the effects of aggregate rather than individual units of analyses.

Coleman (1966), in his seminal study of the complex relationship between Socio-Economic Status (SES) and academic achievement, indicated that schools bring little influence to bear on a child's achievement that is independent of his background and general social context; and that this very lack of an independent effect means that the inequalities imposed on children by their (continued on p. 5)

Conducting Research with Racially and Culturally Diverse Groups: A Commentary, Cont'd

subconsciously hope that our hypotheses will be supported (e.g., SAT scores predict college achievement), that relationships are significant (e.g., GPA and achievement test scores are highly correlated), that one intervention is more effective than another, and that the experimental group will have different outcomes than the control group. Imagine a study whose results showed that urban Black students had significantly higher IQ scores than suburban White students. When the expected results are not found, there is some level of disappointment and concern—what went wrong? what could the researchers have done differently? should another statistical analysis have been used? how will the results be explained to and received by the scientific community? As Cyril Burt demonstrated, a researcher may even result to unethical practices when results conflict with preconceived notions. There are, of course, other alternatives. For instance, the researcher may choose not to publish the results, may seek a larger sample size, may modify the measures for another study, or may replicate the study.

Researchers must be aware that ethical conflicts and moral dilemmas are inevitable. As human beings, we are not free of biases; we bring our values, attitudes, and beliefs into our work, be it teaching or research. If such biases did not exist, there would be less need for Human Subjects Committees.

Researchers must be aware that ethical conflicts and moral dilemmas are inevitable. As human beings, we are not free of biases; we bring our values, attitudes, and beliefs into our work.

Much has been written on the impact of teacher expectations on student outcomes. Teacher expectation literature provides educators with much data on the effect of low expectations on Black students' achievement.

Conversely, less is known about the effects of researcher and interviewer expectations, probably because of our zeal for achieving the ideal-scientific objectivity. Nonetheless, biases, ethical decisions, and moral judgments are affected by our own cultural and personal characteristics, interests, and beliefs. Essentially, an objective methodology guided by a utilitarian set of ethical standards cannot always overcome the initial biases associated with individual decision making (see Kimmel, 1988, p. 125).

We must work toward the realistic goal of reducing biases in ourselves and our work. Personally, we can seek greater awareness and understanding about biases, stereotypes, and mistaken perceptions regarding minority groups. Ample opportunities for increased cultural competence and sensitivity are available via literature, conferences, and educational institutions that focus on multiculturalism. We can also become more involved in the lives of minority groups. Ideally, such involvement takes place with ethnographic research; one alternative is to seek the assistance of a minority person to serve as a minority or cultural translator. For example, I often ask colleagues to critique my work, not only for editing, but also for inaccuracies in assumptions and conclusions, for polemic literature reviews, and other *(continued on p. 9)*

Relationship Unmasked: The Whole True Story of SES and Academic Achievement

(continued from page 4) home, neighborhood, and peer environments are carried along to become the inequalities with which they confront adult life at the end of school (325). Boocock (1972) added that the family characteristic that is the most powerful predictor of school performance is socioeconomic status (SES): the higher the SES of the student's family, the higher his academic achievement. This relationship has been documented in countless studies and seems to hold no matter what measure of status is used (occupation of principal breadwinner, family income, parents' education, or some combination of these) (p. 32).

Other researchers disagree with the predominance attached to SES in its effect on academic achievement. Previous research examining the relationship between socioeconomic status and academic achievement has suggested that the correlations between SES and academic achievement vary from .100 to .800 (White, 1982). In his meta-analysis of 101 studies of the relationship between SES and academic achievement, White (1982) found that the average correlation between SES and academic achievement was .251. He suggested that there are two major explanations for this discrepancy in reported correlations. First, SES is typically a variable that is an aggregate of

many other variables: parent's income, occupation, and level of education. In other studies, SES is composed of variables that may better be defined as Home Environment variables, (i.e., variables associated with quality and quantity of time spent with children, time spent reading to children, etc.). When these additional factors are introduced into one's definition of SES, the relationship becomes much stronger.

An additional problem is created when the units of analysis used in SES and achievement data are confounded (i.e., aggregated versus individual as the unit of analysis). White (1982) found that when the unit of analysis is the aggregate school or district, the relationship is strengthened (.544) while when the unit of analysis is the individual student, the effects of SES are diminished (.318). White also suggested that when the units of analysis are confounded (i.e., the SES is an aggregated variable while student achievement is an individual variable), the correlation averages .338 for all studies. When researchers recognize that the variables that represent SES are vastly different from study to study while the units of analysis are also inconsistent, it is easier to see why there is such a discrepancy in reporting the actual correlation and relationship between SES and academic achievement. *(continued on p. 9)*

The AERA SIG: Research on Giftedness and Talent invites you to...

First, the business...

Size Does Matter: To What Extent and in What Manner Have Researchers in Gifted Education Reported Effect Sizes During the Last Decade?

Sunday, April 9, 6:15-8:15 p.m.

Moscone Center West, 2nd Floor, Room 2001

Then, the pleasure...



Sunday, April 9, 8:30 p.m.

<http://www.chaamthaisf.com/>

Address: 701 Folsom St. at 3rd St.

Approximately \$19.00 per person.

Please R.S.V.P. to Betsy McCoach at: (betsy.mccoach@uconn.edu)

Please plan to join us!

Descriptions of AERA Gifted SIG Sessions

Identification in Gifted Education

Abstract: Identification serves as a gateway to the provision of appropriate educational services for gifted learners. Papers in this session present a variety of recent research on this important topic through both applied and theoretical studies.

Participants:

- Matthew Todd McBee, *A Multilevel Study of Gifted Identification Across Race and Socioeconomic Status in Georgia Elementary Schooling*
- Del L. Siegle, Michelle Moore, & Rebecca L. Moore, *Factors that Influence Teacher Nominations of Students for Gifted and Talented Programs*
- Sandra Sabatino-Buldo, *Practice Versus Policy and Theory: A Study of Student Identification for Gifted Placement*
- Karen Rogers & Louise Makjut, *The New WISC-IV: Role of FSIQ and GAI in Identification for Gifted Programs*
- David F. Lohman, *Understanding and Predicting Regression Effects in the Identification of Academically Gifted Children*

Discussant: Carolyn M. Callahan

Chair: Nancy B. Hertzog

Investigating Diverse Learners in Gifted Education

Abstract:

Issues of appropriate representation have been the subject of much recent work in the field of gifted education. Presentations in this session offer a variety of approaches to the issues raised by these concerns.

Participants:

- Deirdre Thompson & Denise M. McDonald, *An Examination on the Effects of Assignment Structure on Achievement Patterns of Gifted and Advanced Students*
- Joyce Vantassel-Baska, Kimberley L. Chandler, Xuemei Feng, Chwee G. Quek, Julie Swanson, *Case Studies of Special-Needs Gifted Learners*
- Carol L. Tieso, D. & Betsy E. McCoach, *Comparing the Affective Characteristics of Gifted Students and Students With Learning Disabilities*
- Pamela Richardson, *Relating to Psychosocially Advanced Research Participants: Working With Girls in a Radically Accelerated High School*
- Joyce Vantassel-Baska, Bruce Albert Bracken, Xuemei Feng, Elissa F. Brown, *Results From Two Years' Curriculum Intervention With Gifted Learners of Low-Income and Minority Background*

Discussant: Michael C. Pyryt

Chair: Seon-Young Lee

Identification and Instruction of Gifted Students

Abstract: Learners who are culturally, linguistically, and economically diverse often are underrepresented in gifted programs. Papers in this session examine diversity in gifted education through issues of both identification and programming. Topics in this session consider technical education, service learning, reading achievement, spatial ability, and identification and instruction in large-scale contexts.

Participants:

- Frank C. Worrell & Nicole Webster, *Academically Talented Students' Attitudes Toward Service-Learning*
- Marcia L. Gentry, Scott Peters, & Saiying Hu, *Career Technical Education and Gifted Students: A Qualitative Inquiry*
- Rebecca Pierce, Cheryll M. Adams, Kristie Speirs-Neumeister, Jerrell C. Cassady, Felicia A. Dixon, & Tracy Cross, *Development of an Identification Procedure for a Large Urban School District: Identifying Culturally Diverse and Academically Gifted Elementary Students*
- Felicia A. Dixon, Jerrell C. Cassady, Cheryll M. Adams, Rebecca Pierce, Kristie Speirs-Neumeister, & Tracy Cross, *Enhancing the Quality of Teaching Gifted Students in the Urban Setting: Project CLUE*
- Rena B. Lewis, Margic K. Kitano, Marjorie Fox, & Lucy Vail, *Improving the Reading Achievement of Highly Gifted Students From Low-Income Backgrounds: Which Tutoring Activities Are Effective?*
- Rebecca L. Mann, *The Identification of Gifted Students With Spatial Strengths*
- Marcia L. Gentry, Adrian T. Thomas, Jonathan A. Plucker, Rebecca S. Martinez, Bryn Harris, Kelly Rapp, & Steven V. Owen, *Underidentification of Minority, Poor, and English Language Learners as Gifted: A Statewide Evaluation Study*

Research in Gifted Education Business Meeting

Abstract:

Featured speaker Bruce Thompson will give an invited presentation, "Effect Sizes: What, How, and Why?" This will be followed by an invited panel discussion of effect sizes in gifted education research, "Size Does Matter: To what extent and in what manner have researchers in gifted education reported effect sizes during the last decade?"

Participants: Bruce Thompson, Felicia Dixon, Marcia Gentry, Dona Matthews, D. Betsy McCoach, and Frank Worrell

Discussant: Michael S. Matthews

Chair: Carolyn M. Callahan

Descriptions of AERA Gifted SIG Sessions, cont'd

Student Characteristics in Gifted Education

Abstract

Papers in this session explore theoretical and practical aspects of educational research examining the characteristics of gifted students. Topics range from the What Works Clearinghouse and large-scale studies to qualitative investigations examining the characteristics of individual learners.

Participants

- Carolyn Elizabeth Barber, *An Analysis of High-Ability High-School Students Not Recommended for Advanced Programs*
- Kathryn A. Noel, Alan L. Edmunds, *An Analysis of the Writing of a Child Prodigy*
- Ann E. Robinson, Frances S. O'Tuel, Betty Wood, Carolyn Pearson, Alicia Cotabish, *The Effects of a State-wide Evaluation Initiative in Gifted Education on Practitioner Knowledge and Concerns*
- Valsa Elizabeth Koshy, Ronald Casey, Alexis Taylor, *The Gift of Higher Education for Gifted Lower Classes*
- George M. Bass, Roger R. Ries, *What Works: Clearinghouse Criteria for Gifted Education*

Session Organizer: Michael S. Matthews

Discussant: D. Betsy E. McCoach

Chair: Cheryll M. Adams

Social Processes in Gifted Education

Abstract

The role of social processes in identifying and serving gifted children is often overlooked. The presentations in this session provide insight into a variety of ways that social processes may impact behaviors of and school's responses to gifted students. Paper topics include underachievement, perfectionism, vocational interests and aspirations, and the Big Fish—Little Pond effect.

Participants

- Matthew Todd McBee, Michael S. Matthews, *Evidence for the Nonentrenchment of Underachievement Behavior Among Gifted Students*
- Michael C. Pyryt, Sal Mendaglio, *Little Fish, Bigger Pond: Understanding Social Comparison Processes in a Congregated Gifted Setting*
- Kristie Speirs-Neumeister, Holmes Finch, *Perfectionism in High-Ability Students: Relational Precursors*
- Kathryn Burleson, *Transitioning to an Accelerated School: The Bflpe and Other Prevalent Social Comparison Experiences*
- Miriam Vock, Olaf Koeller, *Vocational Interests and Aspirations of Intellectually Gifted Youths*

Discussant: Frank C. Worrell

Chair: Carol L. Tieso

Social Context in Gifted Education

Abstract

The varied papers in this session offer a window into the social context of gifted education. Historical, foundational, and applied perspectives are represented.

Participants

- Carol L. Tieso, *Ability Grouping, Self-Efficacy, and Self-Concept: A Bad Rap?*
- Ronald A. Beghetto, James C. Kaufman, *Creativity and Learning: A Case for "Mini-c" Creativity*
- Jonothan Neelands, *Socialising the Concept of Giftedness*
- Tonya R. Moon, Catherine M. Brighton, Holly Hertberg-Davis, Carolyn M. Callahan, *Feasibility of High-End Learning in a Diverse Middle School*
- Wendy Robinson, *Gifted and Talented Education in England Through a Historical Lens: Forgotten Research, 1960-75*
- Thomas P. Hebert, *Gifted High-Achieving University Males in a Greek Social Fraternity*
- Jim Campbell, *The Social Origins of Gifted and Talented Students in England: A Geodemographic Analysis*

Don't forget the Gifted SIG party after the business meeting on Sunday, April 9.

See the invitation on page 6 of this newsletter for details.

Conducting Research with Racially and Culturally Diverse Groups: A Commentary, Cont'd

(continued from p. 5) potential barriers to quality and equity. It is essential for the research team to be as racially and culturally diverse as early as possible at all stages of the study—from the literature review, statement of the problem, and research design (including sampling, methodology, instrument development, data collection) to interpretation. A few years ago, I reviewed a manuscript in which the author argued that the lower IQ scores of Blacks compared to Whites is largely due to Blacks being genetically inferior; conversely, the lower IQ scores of Whites compared to Asian Americans was due to the environment. What guides the different assumptions and interpretations? The following biases may be less blatant: (1) I recently attended a national conference presentation in which the speaker stated that most Black mothers do not value education and achievement for their children; (2) in a recent manuscript under publication review, the instrument was problematic—all items pertaining to Hispanic-American fathers were worded negatively, while those for White fathers were worded positively; (3) in several articles, authors examine gender differences but ignore racial differences; and (4) in another manuscript, the author stated that most Black families are dysfunctional. In the first example, two studies from the early 1970s were the sole source of the conclusion; in the second example, the

author also stated that the results were generalizable to all people of Hispanic descent; in the third example, about 60% of the respondents were Black and 30% were female; in the last example, conclusions were based on a sample size of 26. These are contemporary examples from a long list of manuscripts, published articles, and conference presentations that inappropriately stereotype, generalize, and draw unfounded conclusions regarding persons of color. Some biases are even less blatant. Several studies today, as in the past, refer to students of color as 'disadvantaged.' For example, gifted minority students are found in the ERIC database as 'disadvantaged gifted.' Many other students are automatically given the label 'at risk' because they are persons of color, without attention to their socio-economic status, health, parental educational level, family structure, or family achievement orientation, and other factors that place students at risk for poor educational and social outcomes. Such global and unqualified labels as 'disadvantaged' and 'at risk' are offensive and demeaning for those groups to whom the labels are applied; they send subtle and not-so-subtle messages that are humiliating and hurtful, and not bias free. Is this insensitivity the result of malice? oversight? lack of cultural awareness? lack of understanding? or several of these factors? Is the insensitivity conscious or unconscious?

Regardless of their sources, the recipients of such insensitivities are negatively affected. This brief commentary cannot possibly capture the complexities of conducting research with minority groups. It offers thoughts for further consideration. How can researchers become more culturally competent? As stated earlier, personal and professional growth are essential. We begin first by accepting that we, as researchers, are human and therefore infallible. We must also begin the difficult process of looking inward for the sources of biases. What assumptions do you hold about African Americans? Hispanic Americans? American Indians? Asian Americans? males and females? in what ways might these preconceived notions affect your research? how willing are you to change negative perceptions? will you look for biases in your own work and the work of others? With increased insight and awareness, researchers are more likely to seek, receive, and provide constructive feedback regarding minority groups; they become more proactive in their willingness to ask for the assistance of diverse persons throughout the research process. In essence, culturally competent researchers seek equity through bias-reduced research. There is little that researchers can do to foresee how their work will be used or interpreted, yet they must try to make the best possible prediction of how (continued on p. 10)

Relationship Unmasked: The Whole True Story of SES and Academic Achievement, Cont'd

(continued from page 5) This literature holds three major implications for gifted education. First, researchers must be certain to define exactly what factors constitute SES in their studies. This will allow researchers to distinguish factors that may be due to economic deprivation from those that are due to perceived racial differences.

Second, researchers must attempt to use individual rather than aggregate measures of SES to insure the

most accurate representation. Finally, if home environment issues create the stronger relationships, researchers and educators in gifted education may be able to reach students whose economic deprivations cannot fully mask their underlying giftedness and creativity.

References

Boocock, S. S. (1972). *An introduction to the sociology of learning*. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin.

Coleman, J. S., Campbell, E. Q., Hobson, C. J., McPartland, J., Mood, J. A., Weinfeld, F.D., & York, R. L. (1966). *Equality of educational opportunity*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Carol Tieso can be reached at: cties@wm.edu

You can get PDFed copies of these, and many other, articles on the QUEST compact disc. See page 4 for details.

Conducting Research with Racially and Culturally Diverse Groups: A Commentary, Cont'd

(continued from page 9) their work will be used and, to the extent possible, try to protect those who are the focus (directly and indirectly) of the research. We must also take special care to note the limitations of our study and its results. Researchers should also inform readers of known consequences of the results that should be considered. Equally important is that we must avoid hasty conclusions and interpretations.

Finally, researchers must be

willing to assume responsibility for the knowledge they generate, and seek the guidance or assistance of those who can point out sources of biases and other problems.

Conducting bias-free research is certainly an ideal and a worthy endeavor. However, bias-reduced research is a reality that is within our grasp and our control.

References

Graham, S. (1992). Most of the sub-

jects were White and middle class : Trends in published research on African Americans in selected APA journals. *American Psychologist*, 47(5), p. 629-639.

Kimmel, A.J. (1988). Ethics and values in applied social research. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Donna Ford can be reached at: Ford.255@osu.edu

Scientia Study: The Long-Term Impact of Gifted Program Participation, Cont'd

(continued from page 3) careers. Mothers were consistently described as *pushy* (never stopped expressing positive expectations for the student's work and success), *catalytic* (making opportunities available as the student showed interest), and *supportive* (frequently checking that the student was/is 'on track'). When the sample was asked what the single most important influence in their lives was, family support, followed by personal passion for what they are doing, and spiritual belief were the three most frequently mentioned

influences.

The group, as a whole, reported feeling 'very satisfied' with the ways their lives are progressing, with many expressing 'surprise' that they have done so well. Of particular interest in this study has been the extraordinarily rich comments that have accompanied the questionnaire. These young adults appear pleased and proud to talk about how their lives have progressed and positive about what will occur in the future, due to their own efforts, support, and belief systems.

In summary, participation in *Scientia* did appear to influence the students' choice of university and the direction of their career, but there was less consensus among participants that the courses taken actually affected their current levels of success in their careers. The greatest influences on their ultimate education, career, and life direction were family, personal drive, and spiritual belief system.

Karen Rogers can be reached at: k.rogers@unsw.edu

A Challenge to the SIG: Letter from the Chair, Cont'd

(continued from p. 1)

- Translate the research jargon-loaded literature into language and guidelines that decision-makers can understand and use.

There is nothing new or creative in

these challenges, and many current researchers are doing research that addresses these challenges.

I simply believe we must do more and must do a better job of constructing our questions, choosing our

methodologies and communicating our results to those who are on the firing line in making resources allocations and doing program planning and implementation.

Carolyn Callahan can be reached at cmc@virginia.edu

Working on something interesting?

Share the wealth...

Write an article for the *SIGNificance* newsletter.

Next deadline: July 15, 2006.

Submit your writing to Holly Hertberg-Davis: hertberg@virginia.edu