ABSTRACT

An Explanatory History of Gifted Education: 1940–1960

Jennifer H. Robins, Ph.D.

Mentor: Susan K. Johnsen, Ph.D.

This study provides an explanatory history of the field of gifted education from 1940–1960. The study focused on the overall context of these years, the individuals who influenced the field, the streams of research and educational practices in the field, and the changes that occurred during this period. Each of the four areas was addressed using a framework developed to view and interpret the data. The framework consisted of four lenses, which included legislation, educational practices, gifted education publications, and advocacy efforts. These four areas, with the overarching context as a backdrop, combined to provide an explanation of what was occurring in the field of gifted education during 1940–1960.

Using primary and secondary sources, in addition to interviews, the study offers an overview of the field of gifted education during the two-decade period. These materials served as data that were categorized into the framework and reviewed for both similarities and differences. Identifying how the pieces fit together helped provide a narrative account of the field of gifted education during the period between 1940–1960.
An Explanatory History of Gifted Education: 1940–1960

by

Jennifer H. Robins, B.S., MS.Ed.

A Dissertation

Approved by the Department of Educational Psychology

Eric L. Robinson, Ph.D., Interim Chairperson

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Approved by the Dissertation Committee

Susan K. Johnsen, Ph.D., Chairperson

Janet H. Bagby, Ph.D.

Eric L. Robinson, Ph.D.

Terrill F. Saxon, Ph.D.

T. Michael Parrish, Ph.D.

Tracy L. Cross, Ph.D.

Accepted by the Graduate School
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J. Larry Lyon, Ph.D., Dean
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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

There has been a “love-hate” relationship (Colangelo & Davis, 1997) with the field of gifted education. Although there has been an interest in educating our brightest learners throughout history, our country also is dedicated to ensuring equality for all students. Gifted education is caught between both excellence and equity (Davis & Rimm, 1998)—wanting to help our most talented students achieve their potential and, at the same time, having to defend the argument that gifted programs are elitist and undemocratic. It is important to look at the past in order to understand how we arrived where we are today.

Historical investigations provide us with an understanding of how and why we arrived at our present situation, no matter what topic is being studied. Why should we look at the history of a movement? In what ways does knowledge of the past affect how we view the present and even the future? Historians study the past in order to develop an understanding of not only what happened, but the context surrounding the events (McDowell, 2002). According to Stearns (1998), historical investigations help us understand people and societies, as well as the change that has occurred over time.

Only through studying history can we grasp how things change; only through history can we begin to comprehend the factors that cause change; and only through history can we understand what elements of an institution or a society persist despite change. (Stearns, 1998, para. 7)

Thus, in an effort to learn how gifted education arrived at its present state, it is important to look at the field through a historical lens. Doing so will allow us to gain an
in-depth understanding of how the field has changed over the course of time, who the important contributors were, and what the context was that provided a backdrop for these events to occur.

**Early Concepts of Individuals With Gifts and Talents**

The concept of giftedness has evolved over the course of time. Societies throughout the world have long held varying views of how the term *gifted* is defined. Early societies valued people who excelled in military skills (Spartans), academics and physical fitness (Athenians), and engineering (Romans). In Athens, upper class males were sent to private schools and higher education institutions, although many females also contributed greatly to Roman society (Colangelo & Davis, 2003; Gallagher & Weiss, 1979). Early China recognized child prodigies and nurtured their gifts as much as possible, bringing them to the imperial court to do so. The Chinese believed that children from all social classes had the right to be educated, and they differentiated for the students based on their abilities (Colangelo & Davis, 2003). In Japan, schooling was based on status in society. Children of Samurai were well-educated and received training in a number of areas, including history, classics, and martial arts. Lower class children received training in obedience and loyalty instead of the traditional school subjects learned by the upper class students (Colangelo & Davis, 2003). During the important European Renaissance period, artists, architects, and writers—any and all intellectuals—were highly valued, and those who were considered gifted based on their performance were sought after and rewarded (Colangelo & Davis, 2003; Witty, 1951c). Throughout history, cultures have recognized and encouraged what they defined as giftedness, based in part on what was important to that particular time period. However, there was not one
distinct way to define or measure giftedness until the concept of individual differences was introduced.

Assessment of Individual Differences

Throughout that late 1800s and into the early 20th century, the assessment of individual differences became an important field of study. Beginning in 1884, Francis Galton set up his psychometric lab in London, where he began testing different mental abilities. Galton (1892) published *Hereditary Genius*, which was a study of English families (Gallagher, 1994; Tannenbaum, 1983). The book has been regarded as the first study on human ability, and Galton concluded that heredity is the determinant factor in intelligence. Cattell worked with Galton and established the first “mental tests” and also set up the first psychology laboratory in the United States in 1890. He studied mental ability and demonstrated that this type of ability could be studied in an experimental and practical manner. Although his mental tests were unsuccessful, he helped pave the way for future testing.

In France, Binet, Henri, and Simon began developing methods to study higher mental processes. They argued that intelligence was best measured by looking at these higher mental processes instead of the simple sensory functions that had been studied in the past. In 1905, the Binet-Simon scale was developed. At the time, the test was used to help identify school-aged children who were mentally retarded. This scale became the first practical intelligence scale applied to identifying differences in school settings. Acknowledging age-based cognitive development, the items were arranged in order of difficulty and the directions were standardized. The Binet-Simon test was translated into English by Henry Goddard, who worked at the Vineland Training school in the United
States. This scale was then revised by Terman at Stanford University and subsequently became known as the Stanford-Binet in 1916. The test used the concept of mental quotient, which was determined by dividing a person’s mental age by his chronological age. The term was then renamed *intelligence quotient* (IQ; Sattler, 2001). Gifted students were defined as those with an IQ above 140, which was considered to be in the highest intellectual range (Colangelo & Davis, 1997). The test was standardized and normed so one could compare an individual’s score to the average score found in the general population, which made it appealing to schools (Lagemann, 2000).

In the spring of 1917, Terman joined the Committee on the Psychological Examination of Recruits, which was chaired by Yerkes. The committee consisted of a group of psychologists that was developing tests to be used to screen and then classify army recruits (Lagemann, 2000). Two group intelligence tests were developed: the Army Alpha, which was administered to those who could read, and the Army Beta, for those who were illiterate. This use was significant because tests formerly identified mentally retarded children; now, intelligence tests were relevant to the masses.

After World War I, with school enrollments skyrocketing (enrollment increased 20% between 1910 and 1920 and increased 22% between 1920 and 1930; Lagemann, 2000, p. 92), tests began to fill the void for schools looking for ways to differentiate the students in their classes. According to Lagemann (2000), “[b]y 1922 testing was a well-established means by which educational psychologists could help shape school practices and educational policy” (p. 93). Assessment of individual differences had become accepted in public schools throughout the United States and became an important area of research designed to differentiate between student differences. By this time,
Intelligence could be measured by tests and expressed in a single numerical ratio. This ability was largely constant and determined by heredity. Class and racial inequality could be explained in large part by differences in intelligence. Used in schools, intelligence tests could be used to identify ability, prescribe curricula, and determine students’ futures. (Chapman, 1988, p. 92)

During the mid-1920s, the use of group intelligence tests had become more popular within U.S. schools (Valencia & Suzuki, 2001), and schools began differentiating curriculum based on the results of these assessments.

In the 1930s, Wechsler began studying standardized testing. He selected 11 subtests to form a scale called the Wechsler Bellevue Intelligence Scale, which was to be used as an aid in psychiatric diagnosis. An overall IQ score on this test represented an index of a person’s general mental ability.

The use of standardized group-administered intelligence testing in schools continued as an accepted practice throughout the 1940s and 1950s. In a little more than one generation’s time, intelligence testing become commonplace in the United States. Although it gained a life of its own within the school system, actual research on intelligence tests dropped throughout these decades (Valencia & Suzuki, 2001), quite possibly due to U.S. entry into both World War II and the Korean War, during which the American population’s focus was placed on those situations and not as much on research.

With the introduction of intelligence tests, “giftedness now could be quantified, operationalized, and addressed within America’s schools” (Jolly, 2004, p. 4). Even though times were tough in American society during the early part of the 19th century, gifted education had become a part of the educational system, however small or seemingly unimportant to the masses. The rise of testing for individual differences in
students of all abilities led to programming changes within the American public school system, as schools begin to see the need for differentiated schooling.

*Programs for Gifted Students in the United States*

Gifted education in the United States has been present in one form or another since the mid-19th century. Between the 17th and mid-19th century, little focus was placed on the education of gifted students. During this period, people in America subscribed to the “political philosophy which held that all men are created equal” (Witty, 1951c, p. 1) and schools offered children similar curricula. Until the passing of compulsory schooling laws, few gifted students were accommodated based on their abilities. Students could attend secondary school and college, but their attendance was based on their academic achievement and their ability to pay for the schooling (Newland, 1976). By 1870, St. Louis instigated a tracking program, which allowed some students to finish their schooling through grade 8 in fewer than the typical 8 years needed to do so (Colangelo & Davis, 2003). In 1884, Massachusetts allowed gifted students to participate in the “Doubled Tillage Plan,” which moved first-grade students to the second grade after the first semester in the regular first-grade class. New Jersey also permitted gifted students to move through the school system more rapidly than the other students, beginning in 1886 (Abraham, 1976). By the turn of the century, some “rapid progress” classes began appearing in places such as New York, which combined 3 years of schooling into only 2 (Colangelo & Davis, 2003; Nazzaro, 1977).

At the beginning of the 20th century, Worcester, MA, opened its first preparatory schools specifically for gifted students (Nazzaro, 1977). Although gifted programs were not commonly found in all cities during this period of time, by 1911 the United States
Bureau of Education survey noted that 6% of cities did have some kind of special classes for gifted children (Nazzaro, 1977), which indicated a small, but increasing, interest in gifted education.

Within the next decade, gifted education did become more of a priority in the U.S. educational system. By 1920, almost two thirds of large cities across the country had some form of a program to educate bright students (Colangelo & Davis, 2003). Cleveland began offering its major work classes for gifted students (Abraham, 1976), and Los Angeles founded “Opportunity Classes,” which focused on enrichment. It was during this same period that Teachers College, Columbia University started preparing teachers to teach gifted students (Nazzaro, 1977), the first higher education program offered in gifted education. However, during the next two decades the education of gifted students became less of a priority. The 1920s and 1930s were a time in United States history in which people strived to be alike—there was no interest in pushing students to excel beyond a set standard. Equity was of utmost importance and gifted students took a back seat in this movement. The end of the 1920s saw the Great Depression, a time in which people were concerned more about day-to-day survival instead of educating the nation’s brightest students (Colangelo & Davis, 2003).

*Early Researchers in Gifted Education*

Researchers became interested in gifted education and individual differences during the early 19th century. Terman, who became known as the father of gifted education, conducted the first longitudinal study of gifted children, which he published in five volumes of *Genetic Studies of Genius* (Burks, Jensen, & Terman, 1930; Cox, 1926; Terman, 1925; Terman & Oden, 1947, 1959). Another important researcher in this
period was Hollingworth of Columbia University. She spent her days advocating for and working with gifted students in New York, drawing attention to the unique emotional and counseling needs of highly gifted students (Colangelo & Davis, 2003) in her publications, which included *Gifted Children: Their Nature and Nurture* (1926) and *Children Above 180 IQ Stanford-Binet: Origin and Development* (1942), published posthumously. Both Terman and Hollingworth are considered to be the pioneering researchers of the field in most historic works (Jolly, 2004).

Although some researchers had taken an interest in gifted child education in the 1920s and 1930s, it was not until the 1957 Soviet launching of Sputnik, the first Earth satellite, that there was a resurgence in the common concern for educating America’s brightest students. The United States quickly focused on science education for gifted students, because the Russians were perceived as ahead of the Americans in the space race. Coursework was telescoped for gifted students, and college courses were offered for students in high school (Colangelo & Davis, 2003). As Tannenbaum (1979) described, there was a “total talent mobilization” in the United States immediately after the Sputnik launch (p. 12). It was at this time that acceleration and ability grouping became popular, the focus intensified on math and science, and efforts were made to identify students from minority backgrounds. With Sputnik came a renewed interest in identifying and educating the brightest minds.

*Historical Investigations in Gifted Education*

Surprisingly, there have been a limited number of historical investigations within the field of gifted education, even though there has been interest in educating these learners throughout history. Most of these investigations provide only an overview of the
field as a whole, thus not providing an entirely clear picture of how gifted education has grown since its beginnings (see Table 1 for a summary of the works). There is specifically a dearth of information found regarding the years between 1940 and 1960—the years leading up to and immediately following Sputnik. In 1977, Nazzaro authored a book called *Exceptional Timetables: Historic Events Affecting the Handicapped and Gifted*, published by the Council for Exceptional Children. It offered a brief glimpse into the climate of the times; advocacy and litigation; technology, science, health, and innovation; programs; state policy; and federal policy. Although Nazzaro does touch on the years between 1940–1960, her timetables only offer a brief glimpse into what was occurring during these years (e.g., In 1941, “The Japanese bomb Pearl Harbor” and “The International Council for Exceptional Children joins the National Education Association as a department” [p. 28]).

Gallagher and Weiss (1979) wrote *The Education of Gifted and Talented Students: A History and Prospectus*. This Council for Basic Education bulletin provided a short synopsis on topics such as characteristics of gifted students, the history of educational programs for the gifted, the modern era (1955–1970s), and future trends.

Their historical overview focused on gifted programs in the schools and in the six pages devoted to this topic, Gallagher and Weiss look at the following time periods: 1895–1900, 1900–1925, and 1925–1950. Only two pages were devoted to the years 1925–1950, with two more focusing briefly on the late 1950s and early 1960s.

Hildenbrand (1981) presented *Democracy’s Aristocrat: The Gifted Child in America, 1910–1960* at the American Educational Research Association’s (AERA) annual conference. She provided an overview of the gifted child movement during a
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<td><em>Exceptional Timetables: Historic Events Affecting the Handicapped and Gifted</em></td>
<td>Nazarro, J. N. (1977)</td>
<td>Offers brief highlights in timetable format of gifted and special education from 1800–1977.</td>
<td>Includes 1940–1960, but only touches on major events, reducing them to one sentence each.</td>
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<td><em>An Historical Look at Gifted Education as It Relates to Reading Programs for the Gifted</em></td>
<td>McIntosh, M. E. (1982)</td>
<td>Provides a history of gifted education in the U.S. since the late 1800s, with a specific focus on reading instruction.</td>
<td>Provides a brief glimpse at organizations that were formed after World War II, financial aid available for students in the 1950s, gifted education funding, the Advanced Placement program, and Sputnik. Briefly discusses the decline in writing about gifted education in the 1940s, and mentions the revival of interest in the 1950s.</td>
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<td><em>Gifted Children</em></td>
<td>Tannenbaum, A. J. (1983)</td>
<td>Two chapters are devoted to the history of gifted education, with the focus on the historical aspects of the field between 1950 and 1980.</td>
<td>(Continues)</td>
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<td><em>Education of the Gifted and Talented Students in American Public Schools: A Retrospective View</em></td>
<td>Ericson, S. C. (1985)</td>
<td>Provides an overview of programs, research, and provisions in gifted education from the beginnings of the field through 1985.</td>
<td>Chapter 2 is devoted to the years 1945–1957 and discusses some of the research being conducted at the time.</td>
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period of 50 years, focusing on the testing movement, trends in grouping, and the effects
of World War II and the Cold War. The paper included two sections that discussed the
years 1930–1940 and 1950–1960, but focused on gifted education as it relates
specifically to democratic principles in America.

In 1982, McIntosh wrote “An Historical Look at Gifted Education as It Relates to
Reading Programs for the Gifted.” This paper looked at the history of gifted education
since the late 1800s. McIntosh emphasized reading and reading instruction within the
larger framework. She provided definitions of the term gifted throughout the past
century, and then described the history of the field, beginning with Sir Francis Galton.
McIntosh offered a glimpse into the years 1940–1960, but focused on organizations that
were formed after World War II, financial aid available for students in the 1950s, gifted
education funding, the Advanced Placement program, and Sputnik.

In 1983, Tannenbaum published Gifted Children. In this book, two chapters were
devoted to the history of gifted education. Chapter 1, “Historical Concerns About the
Gifted,” addressed influences that guided public opinion toward gifted education, as well
as early scientific and educational efforts in the field. He touched on some of the early
researchers, including Terman and Hollingworth, but did not focus on the 1940–1960 era
in any detail. Tannenbaum noted that the early 1940s brought about a decline in
professional writing about gifted education (p. 15), but mentioned that the United States
saw a renewed interest in gifted education in the 1950s. Chapter 2, “Modern Trends and
Prospects,” looked at the historical aspects of the field from the 1950s through the 1980s.
Tannenbaum addressed each decade separately, highlighting the major events that
occurred, but did not touch on the first half of the 20th century. Eight pages were devoted to the 1950s.

In 1985, Ericson completed her dissertation entitled *Education of the Gifted and Talented in American Public Schools: A Retrospective View*. Her chronological study looked at programs, provisions, and research in the field of gifted education from its earliest beginnings through 1985. Ericson devoted five chapters to this topic, each divided into a major time period: the beginnings of the field to World War II (WWII), post-WWII to Sputnik (1945–1957), Sputnik through the 1960s, the 1970s, and the end of the 1970s through 1985.

In 1994, Gallagher contributed “Current and Historical Thinking on Education for Gifted and Talented Students” to O’Connell Ross’ national report, *National Excellence: A Case for Developing America’s Talent*. In his paper, Gallagher provided historical background on the education of the gifted, briefly discussing ancient history, the Terman and Hollingworth studies, and the Sputnik era and beyond. He focused on the nature of superior intelligence, school adaptations, current and unresolved issues in the field, and policy issues (Gallagher, 1994). Only one page was devoted specifically to the general history of the field, including the 1940–1960 period.

The November/December 1999 issue of *Gifted Child Today* (Johnsen, 1999) examined the previous 100 years of the field. Prominent gifted education researchers were asked to discuss what they felt were the most significant events that had occurred during this period of time. The researchers identified common threads, which included the construct of intelligence, the importance of organizations and their legislative efforts, the contributions of people such as Terman and Hollingworth, and societal influences like
the launch of Sputnik and the Civil Rights Movement. Almost every researcher mentioned the launch of Sputnik as a major even in the 1940–1960 era. Brief mention also was made about Guilford’s 1950 address to the American Psychological Association (Delisle, 1999), and the founding of the National Association for Gifted Children in 1954 (Haensly, 1999).

In Colangelo and Davis’ (2003) Handbook of Gifted Education, they included an introductory chapter that briefly addressed the history of gifted education, and discussed the concept of giftedness around the world and in the United States. This chapter included information on the testing movement and a cursory look at the historical happenings during the past 100 years. Colangelo and Davis mentioned the launch of Sputnik in 1957, but did not discuss any other year during 1940–1960.

In 2004, Jolly completed a dissertation entitled A Conceptual History of Gifted Education: 1910–1940. In it, she focused on the foundations of the field of gifted education, the pioneering researchers and practitioners, definitions and theoretical positions regarding giftedness, and streams of research and educational practices. She did not focus on the years after 1940.

Problem Statement

With the exception of Jolly’s examination of the period between 1910–1940, most of the preceding works provide a cursory look at the field during a snapshot of a 100-year period. Historical events and influences are not discussed in great detail. Although there is a focus on some of the important individuals who helped shape the field of gifted education, most of these individuals made strides in the first part of the 20th century. Most of the works emphasize the period of time after the launching of Sputnik—1957
through the present day. These historical works are not able to answer questions about
the growth and change of the field from 1940 to 1960, the individuals who helped
influence this growth and change during this period, the context of this two-decade
period, and how all three of these influenced the strands of research and educational
practices found in subsequent decades. An in-depth history of the field is incomplete at
this point. Researchers (e.g., Jolly, 2004) have described the field’s beginnings and post-
Sputnik years (e.g., Ericson, 1985; Johnsen, 1999; Tannenbaum, 1983); however, there is
a gap in this historical discussion. The years 1940–1960 have been briefly touched upon
in the literature and a more in-depth perspective is needed to determine what changes
occurred during these years and how these changes might have influenced the direction
the field took in subsequent decades.

It is important to look at the field of gifted education through a historical
perspective. As Wiederholt (1974) noted in his historical study on learning disabilities:

Without a historical perspective, the uniqueness of present-day contributions and
“discoveries” tends to be overemphasized. But in fact these contributions
represent extensions, modifications, verifications, or duplications of previously
observed phenomena or stated positions. Unless we use the past as points of
reference and guides, investigators of LD may either recommit past follies or
“rediscover” the contributions of their professional progenitors when they should
instead extend and correct the works of those who pioneered before them. (p. 103)

The same line of thinking can be applied to gifted education. In order to fully understand
the field, we must first look at its history. After a review of the relevant literature, it is
apparent that no systematic review has focused on the years 1940–1960 in gifted
education. In order to gain an in-depth look and understanding of the field of gifted
education at this particular point in time, it is important to look at the growth and/or
change of the field, the individuals who influenced this growth through their work, and
the context of this time period. Looking at these themes and individuals will provide detailed information on how gifted education reached its present state, as well as highlight what ideas, educational practices, and streams of research from this period impacted the field.

**Research Questions**

The following questions will be addressed in this dissertation:

1. What was the context that influenced change in the field of gifted education during the period from 1940 to 1960?
2. Who were the individuals who influenced change in the field of gifted education during the period from 1940 to 1960?
3. What influenced the streams of research and educational practices in the field of gifted education from 1940 to 1960?
4. How did the field of gifted education change during the period from 1940 to 1960?
CHAPTER TWO

Review of the Literature

The literature review will explore the historical investigations of the field of gifted education that were referenced in Chapter 1. This review will establish a relationship between what has already been written and the present study, which focuses on the time period of 1940–1960. This chapter has been divided into sections, each addressing the research questions in this dissertation: what was the historical context that influenced the growth and change during this period, who were the individuals who influenced the growth and change, what influenced the streams of research and educational practices in gifted education, and how did the field grow and change?

Historical Context

Due to a dearth of information within the historical investigations reviewed explaining the historical context of education in this period, I consulted three additional resources not discussed in Chapter 1. These included Aksoy’s (1998) overview of elementary education in the United States, Wraga’s (2000) discussion of the comprehensive high school, and Pulliam’s (1987) review of the history of education.

In the years leading up to the period between 1940 and 1960, the educational system in America had become more important to the masses. In the 1800s, elementary schools were found across the country and focused on student recitation of material that had been learned or memorized from books read in school. Rote learning was key in these early schools. By 1860, the elementary school was viewed as an institution in
America (Aksoy, 1998). Elementary education became standard for almost all children by the late 19th century, with secondary education not far behind. The growth of secondary education was tremendous during the first quarter of the 20th century and it soon became standard for most children (Pulliam, 1987). By 1920, approximately 2.5 million students between the ages of 14 and 17 were in school—one third of the total population between those ages (Pulliam, 1987).

At the turn of the century, schools began to provide an education for all students. This was a period of growth for the country, with a time of an increased standard of living for Americans. Schools responded to the need for a better trained labor force, and became comprehensive in nature (Pulliam, 1987). Secondary schools offered a variety of courses, programs, and activities that were applicable to the more heterogeneous student population that was now in attendance (Wraga, 2000). The growth of secondary education during this period was astounding: In 1895, schools had offered only 18 subjects collectively, but by 1934, schools around the country were offering more than 200 different classes for students (Wraga, 2000).

In the first few decades of the 20th century, schools and education in the United States were influenced greatly by the progressive movement (Aksoy, 1998). The following principles were adopted by the Progressive Education Association in 1919:

- freedom to develop naturally;
- interest as the motive for all work;
- the teacher [as] a guide, not a taskmaster;
- scientific study of pupil development;
- greater attention to all that affects the child’s physical development;
• co-operation between school and home to meet the needs of child life; and
• the progressive school [as] a leader in educational movements. (as cited in Pulliam, 1987, pp. 157–158)

The progressive movement flourished in the early part of the 20th century, but by mid-century, the movement had begun to decline. With the United States’ participation in World War I and World War II, education began to take a new focus. These world events, as well as events on the home front such as the Great Depression, had an effect on the United States and all Americans living there.

Elementary and secondary education had been used to prepare students to enter either the labor force or college. College attendance grew steadily during the early 20th century, except during the Great Depression. Prior to World War I, both practical and scientific courses had been in demand, but with the entry into the War, as well as World War II, there was a need for more people to have college training for specialized jobs such as technicians and engineers during this period (Pulliam, 1987).

During the early 1940s, the United States was still recovering from the Great Depression that had occurred in the 1930s, and with its entrance into a world war, society was strained in terms of coming together as a united whole (Hildenbrand, 1981). Americans were encouraged to work together as a team, and social division was something that was frowned upon. With a war occurring, all members of U.S. society had to ban together in unity to help those overseas.

After the Second World War came to a close, as the United States moved into the 1950s, there was some emphasis on the education of the most talented students, as concerns grew about shortages in professions such as engineering and science.
(Tannenbaum, 1983). The United States had the need to remain the superpower it became, along with the Soviet Union, at the conclusion of the war. Although there was concern voiced about America’s public schools in this period, most was rhetoric instead of action. It was not until the Russian launching of Sputnik, the first satellite into space, that the United States actually took serious action.

This event helped shape the history of the United States and was a point in history that many cite as one of the most influential in shaping the U.S. educational system (Corn, 1999). When the Russians launched Sputnik in 1957, the United States realized that its students were far behind in both mathematics and science, which caused a dramatic shift in the way education was conceptualized (Coleman, 1999). The Cold War, which began in the 1940s and was foremost on people’s mind during the 1950s, caused most Americans concern that the Russians would soon dominate the world (Cross, 1999), especially in the math and science fields.

This “space race” had an unprecedented effect on education. Namely, Americans realized that the brightest students held the key to the future and the one-size-fits-all approach that had been used in most schools was no longer going to work. At this point, America had “to earmark superior students for an enriched education and to dedicate their abilities to the defense of their country” (Tannenbaum, 1983, p. 20). Gifted students were placed in special schools to learn new math and science curricula that had been developed by leading educators and scientists (Delisle, 1999). During the period after Sputnik, both private and public funds became available to students, especially in science and technology fields (Tannenbaum, 1983), which led to an increase in research in
science and math, and training for teachers in different methods and materials (Aksoy, 1998).

The period between 1940 and 1960 saw a tremendous change in education in the United States. A skilled workforce was needed, and with the launching of Sputnik, Americans realized they needed to catch up to other countries that were ahead in the areas of both math and science.

**Key Individuals**

This section will describe key individuals in the field as identified by the literature. Within the historical literature, Lewis M. Terman and Leta Hollingworth “are mentioned as the preeminent pioneering researchers in gifted education” (Jolly, 2004, p. 18). These two key figures are featured prominently in historical works and detailed information is provided about their work, giving us an insight into their important contributions to the field.

Terman’s groundbreaking longitudinal study, as well as his work with standardized intelligence tests, contributed greatly to the field of gifted education (Colangelo & Davis, 2003; Cross, 1999; Ericson, 1985; Imbeau, 1999). Terman, who is known as “the father of the gifted education movement” (Colangelo & Davis, 2003; Davis & Rimm, 1998), influenced gifted education in both the practice of education and understanding students who are gifted (Delisle, 1999). Terman studied at Indiana University as an undergraduate and devoted his senior class project to both mental deficiency and genius (Delisle, 1999), and his dissertation for his Ph.D. from Clark University focused on the distinction between “stupid” and “bright” boys (Ericson, 1985; Jolly, 2004).
In 1916, Terman modified the Binet-Simon tests for an American population, developing the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Test, which is considered the forerunner of all standardized IQ tests (Colangelo & Davis, 2003; Davis & Rimm, 1998; Delisle, 1999; Jolly, 2004). Terman’s work on this test was significant because he focused on the upper limits of the test, as opposed to previous intelligence tests that focused on identifying students on the lower end of the spectrum. He was interested in learning more about gifted students’ cognitive and affective characteristics, and other individual differences (Imbeau, 1999).

Arguably, Terman’s other important contribution was his longitudinal study of gifted children. After World War I, beginning in 1921, Terman began gathering data on gifted students with a grant from the Commonwealth Fund (Ericson, 1985). Terman identified students with the Stanford-Binet based on recommendations by teachers who considered the students to be highly intelligent (Colangelo & Davis, 2003; Gallagher & Weiss, 1979). Most of the participants in the longitudinal study were in the upper elementary grades and had IQ scores of 135 and above, with most having IQs above 140 (Colangelo & Davis, 2003; Tannenbaum, 1983). Results of Terman’s longitudinal study, which eventually followed 1,528 gifted children (856 boys, 672 girls), were published in the five-volume series over the course of four decades, Genetic Studies of Genius (Burks et al., 1930; Cox, 1926; Terman, 1925; Terman & Oden, 1947, 1959). The researchers studied the children in terms of their physical, psychological, social, educational, and professional development using data gathered from tests, questionnaires, and interviews (Davis & Rimm, 1998; Colangelo & Davis, 2003; Jolly, 2004). Terman and his colleagues concluded from the data that, as a group, the gifted students in the study were
academically superior to other students and slightly better both physically and emotionally compared to average students (Colangelo & Davis, 2003; Gallagher & Weiss, 1979; Hildenbrand, 1981). Although in many respects his research has been criticized for some of its flaws (Coleman, 1999; Cross, 1999; Delisle, 1999; Imbeau, 1999; Weber, 1999), it greatly impacted gifted education and encouraged future research in the field.

A second key individual in the history of gifted education is Leta Hollingworth. Whereas Terman is considered to be the father of gifted education, Hollingworth has been bestowed the honor of being the “nurturant mother” (Davis & Rimm, 1998, p. 6). Hollingworth is remembered for her contributions in the research and education of highly gifted students in New York during the 1920s and 1930s (Ericson, 1985). Hollingworth began her work at Columbia University (Teachers College) after receiving her Ph.D. She first became interested in gifted students in 1916 during a demonstration of how to administer a Stanford-Binet test. The student scored a 187 IQ on the test, something Hollingworth had not seen in her previous administrations of the test (Davis & Rimm, 1998; Delisle, 1999).

Hollingworth’s contributions to the field and her accomplishments can be seen in a number of areas. Hollingworth began the first public school in New York City for gifted children, with special classes taught by Hollingworth specifically for those students with 150 IQ and above. In 1937, she began working with gifted children who scored between 130 and 200 IQ on the Stanford-Binet at the Speyer School, P.S. 500. She had an interest in the emotional needs of gifted students as well, and also focused on enrichment experiences in addition to the regular advanced curriculum (Davis & Rimm,
She was the first to teach a course on gifted children at the college level (Weber, 1999). Hollingworth published two books pertaining to her work with gifted children, *Gifted Children: Their Nature and Nurture* (1926) and *Children Above 180 IQ Stanford-Binet: Origin and Development* (1942; published posthumously), both of which are still relevant to the field. Unfortunately, Hollingworth did not have much time to continue her work with highly gifted students, as she died in 1939.

Both Terman and Hollingworth are mentioned quite frequently in the historical reviews of the field. Although both had books published in the 1940–1960 period of time, the majority of their work was conducted prior to these decades (Terman died in 1956). Within the literature, only a few other key individuals are mentioned, and in most cases, only a sentence or two has been devoted to them. Among these individuals who are highlighted briefly are Paul Witty and J. P. Guilford.

In the 1930s and 1940s, Paul Witty emerged as one of the leading spokespersons of gifted education (Hildenbrand, 1981). He cautioned against the reliance on IQ as the only means of identification (Hildenbrand, 1981; Tannenbaum, 1983). In 1951, Witty edited *The Gifted Child*, a book published by the American Association for Gifted Children that helped increase the interest in gifted education during this decade (Nazarro, 1977; Tannenbaum, 1983).

J. P. Guilford is also a name that appears, albeit briefly, in historical works. His address to the American Psychological Association in 1950 helped stimulate educational efforts that focused on problem solving and creativity (Gallagher & Weiss, 1979). His paper, “Creativity,” proposed multiple aptitudes, some of which IQ tests cannot identify such as divergent production (Tannenbaum, 1983).
As noted, historical works about the field of gifted education tend to focus on Terman and Hollingworth as the two key individuals in the field. Although they both can be considered to be pioneers whose research helped serve as a basis for the field, what about the others who should not be overlooked as key contributors to gifted education? Witty and Guilford are sometimes mentioned briefly in the literature, but are there others whose research and activism contributed to the growth of gifted education? Who are the other key individuals and pioneers in the field, most notably those whose work is found in the period between 1940 and 1960?

Streams of Research and Educational Practices

Research in gifted education grew out of the first research on individual differences and the use of intelligence tests, which first allowed the concept of giftedness to be measured (Cross, 1999). In the 1920s and 1930s, Terman’s and Hollingworth’s longitudinal research stood out and both gathered data that gave great insight to their gifted subjects.

Although not much is mentioned about the research conducted in the 1940s (most likely due to the United States involvement in World War II), a few historical reviews cite research that was occurring in the 1950s. Gifted education received increased funding in the 1950s, and in 1953–1954, three experiments were funded by the Fund for the Advancement of Education (McIntosh, 1982). These experiments focused on the needs of college-bound students, most specifically on (a) quality high schools that were ahead of some colleges in terms of the challenging curriculum being offered high-ability students, (b) early entrance to college, and (c) what became known as the Advanced Placement program (McIntosh, 1982).
Guilford’s 1950 address to the American Psychological Association spawned future research in the areas of divergent production and creativity (Tannenbaum, 1983). After the launch of Sputnik in 1957, there was “massive research activity” (Tannenbaum, 1983) that focused on the characteristics and education of gifted children. Research at this time tended to look at (a) the effectiveness of program designs, (b) social status of gifted students at school, (c) underachievement, (d) motivation, and (e) divergent thinking processes (Tannenbaum, 1983).

Historical reviews in the literature detail educational practices in gifted education since its earliest beginnings in the United States. By the turn of the century, acceleration, enrichment, and segregation were all in use with gifted children (Hildenbrand, 1981). In the early 20th century, gifted students often were grouped together in special classes (Jolly, 2004). Acceleration also was used during World War II, with the increased emphasis of having students move quickly through the school system so they could help with the war effort (Gallagher & Weiss, 1979).

Of particular interest to this paper are the years between 1940–1960. As mentioned, ability grouping was popular during the first part of the 20th century. However, following World War II, with its emphasis on equal opportunities for everyone, there was a decline in special programs such as these for gifted students (Gallagher & Weiss, 1979). One change in educational practices that occurred in the late 1950s is the emphasis on content and skills instead of a complete focus on administrative arrangements such as ability grouping or acceleration practices. Particularly after the Russian launching of Sputnik, American schools had a renewed interest in science and focused on bringing its brightest students up to speed with other countries (Gallagher &
Weiss, 1979; Hildenbrand, 1981). After Sputnik, educational practices such as telescoping, college courses offered at the high school level, and new math and science curriculum came into vogue (Colangelo & Davis, 2003).

In the late 1950s, there were a number of trends in educational practices in gifted education. These included (a) curriculum development; (b) expanded definitions of gifted; (c) acceleration; (d) more college programs focusing on teaching training; (e) increased funding for research; (f) emphasis on underrepresented gifted populations such as women, minorities, and students from low socioeconomic backgrounds; (g) increased funding at both the state and national level; and (h) increased programming at the local level (Hildenbrand, 1981, pp. 24–25). Also during this time period were the familiar programming ideas that had been in place during the first half of the century, including acceleration, enrichment, and grouping by ability (Ericson, 1985).

Although the historical reviews of the field mention educational practices during the 1940–1960 era, it allows only a cursory glance at what was occurring during this period. The reviews often depend on secondary sources to inform about the practices and more depth is needed to understand the educational practices and research that were going on during this period. A clear understanding cannot be taken from the small glimpse the literature provides at this time.

_Growth of Gifted Education_

From its earliest beginnings, gifted education has tended to experience times of interest and growth, as well as times during which there is a tendency to ignore the brightest students in favor of providing all students an equal opportunity to succeed educationally. As Gallagher (1994) noted,
the attitude toward gifted students at a personal and societal level has often been
one of ambivalence, in both the educational setting and society at large. We may
love the creative products of their mental processes but still feel the sting of envy
when we observe some persons doing, with apparent ease, what is so difficult for
others to accomplish. (p. 3)

The pendulum in education tends to swing back and forth between both excellence and
equity: Society often pushes education for the brightest and most creative students,
focusing on developing their potential, but at other times the focus is on bringing students
at the other end up to meet the average (Davis & Rimm, 1998).

As far back as the mid-1800s, there is evidence of special programming for high-
ability learners and special classes and schools were developed for gifted students in K–
12 classes throughout the early 20th century (Tannenbaum, 1983). The field has seen a
variety of programming put forth for its ablest, including acceleration, telescoping,
enrichment, and ability grouping (Colangelo & Davis, 2003; Gallagher & Weiss, 1979;
Hildenbrand, 1981; Tannenbaum, 1983).

Gifted education also grew in terms of how it defined giftedness. From an
emphasis on IQ and intelligence testing during the years with Terman and Hollingworth
conducting research, the field slowly began to downplay that importance on one single
test score in the 1930s (Hildenbrand, 1981).

Gifted children were not much of a focus in the “decades of crisis” (Hildenbrand,
1981, p. 20) that were present during World War I and the subsequent depression, but
there was still some interest. Gifted education’s growth was probably at its minimum
level during the years of World War II (Tannenbaum, 1983), although there was a
pressure to put the best and brightest through schooling at an advanced pace so they
could help with the war effort (Coleman, 1999). There appeared to have been a renewed
interest in gifted education in the late 1940s and early 1950s, prior to the much-discussed launching of Sputnik (Hildenbrand, 1981; Tannenbaum, 1983a). In this same period, two gifted education organizations were formed: the American Association for Gifted Children in 1946 (McIntosh, 1982) and the National Association for Gifted Children in 1954 (Haensly, 1999).

Arguably, the field expanded at an extremely rapid rate with the launching of Sputnik in 1957. There was a renewed interest in science and math and the belief that the brightest were the United States’ hope. Sputnik’s impact was a turning point in gifted education (Coleman, 1999; Corn, 1999; Delisle, 1999; Gallagher & Weiss, 1979; McIntosh, 1982). Some would even argue that the 5 years after its launching were a peak period in gifted education until the late 1970s saw another resurgence (Tannenbaum, 1983).

Conclusion

Chapter 2 has focused on the literature base of historical investigations of the field of gifted education. The rise and fall of interest in gifted education can be seen in terms of its overall effect on each decade described in the literature. However, because of its broad overviews of historical events, the literature is lacking the detail needed to truly understand what happened to the field during 1940–1960. Although historical context, influential individuals, streams of research, and the growth of gifted education have been addressed within the literature, there is a lack of depth and rich description, especially for the two decades of 1940–1960.

This dissertation used historical methods to fill gaps in previous historical investigations during this period of time. An explanatory history (Thomas, 2003) will be
used to guide the research, thus allowing the story of both events and individuals to emerge. In using both primary and secondary sources to analyze these two decades, a better description of the field of gifted education can be uncovered.
CHAPTER THREE

Methods

Historical methods focus on the identification of how a phenomenon has changed (or remained the same) in a specific period of time (Thomas, 2003). This study incorporates one type of historical method of research. Specifically, this study provides an explanatory history of the field of gifted education during the years 1940–1960. According to Thomas (2003), the central concern of an explanatory history becomes “the question of why things happened in a particular way” (p. 20). It is important to look at the history of a field, as it provides insights into and explanations of what happened in the past and offers suggestions for moving forward into the future without repeating previous mistakes (Best & Khan, 1998). A review of the literature generated the primary research questions for this investigation:

1. What was the context that influenced change in the field of gifted education during the period from 1940 to 1960?
2. Who were the individuals who influenced change in the field of gifted education during the period from 1940 to 1960?
3. What influenced the streams of research and educational practices in the field of gifted education from 1940 to 1960?
4. How did the field of gifted education change during the period from 1940 to 1960?
Research Design

According to Gall, Gall, and Borg (1999), “historical research is the process of systematically searching for data to answer questions about a past phenomenon, in order to better understand the phenomenon and its likely causes and consequences” (p. 391). Historical analysis is one that is past-oriented, and it provides a method to look at the history of a particular phenomenon in a systematic manner (Anderson, 1990; Marshall & Rossman, 1995). This type of design is one that is grouped with other qualitative research methods, which focus on meaning and interpretation within a specific context (Anderson, 1990). An historical research method is one that is used in order to gain an in-depth understanding of areas that have been previously unexamined systematically (Marshall & Rossman, 1995). In this research, the “phenomenon,” the field of gifted education, will be systematically studied using an explanatory history.

In order to address the research questions, the research design incorporated a narrative that is guided by a specific theory of cause (Thomas, 2003). Historical analysis involves making causal inferences, “the process of reaching the conclusion that one set of events brought about, directly or indirectly, a subsequent set of events” (Gall et al., 1999, p. 403). Using this theory, a researcher is able to determine how important events during a period of time affected subsequent events. Accordingly, there are three ways in which this is accomplished: (a) great-person theory, (b) influential-times theory, and (c) a combination of both. The first theory, great-person, looks at events as a result of people’s actions. Secondly, the influential-times theory holds that events result not as a result of one individual’s actions, but instead is the confluence of a number of factors. The combination theory does what its name suggests: It is the belief that events can be viewed
as the interaction between individuals and societal factors. This study used the combination theory to address each question. Information about the events in gifted education during the 1940s–1960s were collected from episodes found within the literature that was described, as well as explained, by the researcher (Thomas, 2003). This approach has the researcher “creating a method of interpretation by analyzing a sequence of historical events, then estimating which earlier events were responsible for the later ones and how such a causal process operated” (Thomas, 2003, p. 21). Explanatory histories offer a distinct advantage in that they focus on why events occurred as they did in addition to describing what occurred historically (Thomas, 2003).

According to McDowell (2002):

The past cannot be directly experienced, and those events which have been observed by other people may have been forgotten, misunderstood or misrepresented, or perhaps taken out of proper sequence. . . . A proper historical perspective may enable us to see the significance of events which may not have been regarded as important to those who witnessed them at the moment they occurred. . . . Unless we fully appreciate the circumstance and the context in which historical events occurred, and approach them without preconceived ideas, then our speculation may lead us to the wrong conclusions. The historical record of many events is, in any case, always incomplete. Our task is to provide the best interpretation of the events which is possible and is supported by the available primary and secondary source material. (pp. 8–10)

Explanatory histories require the researcher to not only describe events, but also interpret them.

Sampling Procedure

Historical researchers tend to follow a somewhat different type of research methodology than other types of qualitative research. In general, the researcher follows the following six steps:

1. Specification of the universe of data required to address the problem adequately.
2. Initial determination that sufficient data are available.

3. Data collection through:
   a. consideration of known data,
   b. seeking known data from primary and secondary sources, and
   c. seeking new and previously unknown data.

4. Initial writing of report and descriptive phase of research.

5. Interaction of writing and educational data search and examination.


   Historical methods require the researcher to uncover data that already exists
   instead of creating data, the focus of other research methods (Anderson, 1990; Gall et al.,
   1999). Because of this, the researcher has to work with the data that already are in
   existence. To determine what was happening in the field of gifted education during the
   two decades of 1940–1960, both primary and secondary sources were reviewed. These
   were obtained from libraries, archives, interviews, and the Internet. Primary sources are
   the “materials on a topic upon which subsequent interpretations or studies are based,
   anything from firsthand documents such as poems, diaries, court records, and interviews
   to research results generated by experiments, surveys, ethnographies, and so on”
   (Hairston & Ruszkiewicz, 1996, p. 547). Secondary sources, therefore, are materials that
   were not generated at the time of the event. They are secondhand accounts of an episode
   that occurred during a specific period of time (Anderson, 1990).

   First, the researcher examined secondary sources, or sources that were not
   firsthand accounts of this time period. In order to locate these materials, the researcher
   began a trace using both the Education Resources Information Center (ERIC) and
FirstSearch online databases. The FirstSearch database was used to access WorldCat, which catalogs books in libraries throughout the world, as well as ArticleFirst, which catalogs journal articles. In addition, databases such as PsychARTICLES, PsychINFO, ProQuest, and America: History and Life were used to search for journal articles, books, and dissertations. Key words used in these searches included gifted, gifted education, history of gifted education, and variations of these terms. More restrictive Boolean searches also were conducted, such as “history” and “gifted education” together. Once the researcher located secondary sources that specifically pertained to the history of gifted education, the resources cited in those books, articles, and dissertations were reviewed and any relevant materials were sought for additional review.

In addition to secondary sources such as the ones mentioned above, primary sources were also reviewed. Primary data sources are vital to the historical analysis (Anderson, 1990). The researcher began her search with a physical search of journals in the field in gifted education, as well as journals from outside of the field that included research on gifted education and/or individual differences. To determine the “great people” (Thomas, 2003)—authors who were contributing to the field and those being cited—during the time period being studied, in addition to the topics being discussed, the researcher worked her way back from present-day issues to the earliest publication of each major journal in the field. The journals included Gifted Child Quarterly (1957–present), Gifted Child Today (1976–present), Journal for the Education of the Gifted (1978–present), and Roeper Review (1978–present). Additional searches through journals outside the field that address individual differences, including Journal of Educational Psychology (1910–present), Teachers College Record (1900–present), and
Journal of Educational Research (1920–present), also were conducted. Journals that focus on the history of education were reviewed for possible insight into this period of time. These journals included The History of Education Quarterly (1961–present) and Paedagogica Historica (1961–present).

As McCullagh (2004) noted, “facts have no independent existence outside the context in which they are placed” (p. 139). Therefore, in conducting an explanatory history of the field, the context of the time period must be taken into careful consideration. The researcher consulted secondary source documents and archival information located in Presidential Libraries to determine the historical context during the years 1940–1960 as has been established by historians who have studied this period in history. In addition, newspaper archives from these two decades were used as sources of information, especially The New York Times archives. These searches provided a backdrop for and a clearer picture of the events that occurred and the great people who were involved. The researcher relied on historians’ interpretations of the context surrounding this period to help paint the backdrop, as her primary interest is the field of gifted education, and historical investigations on major events and the greater context during 1940–1960 have been well-documented by historians elsewhere.

One important aspect of historical investigations is the interview, or oral testimony (Best & Khan, 1998). Oral evidence provides researchers with additional knowledge that may not be obtained from written sources and offers a different perspective that might otherwise have not been heard (McDowell, 2002). This testimony comes directly from a participant who experienced the phenomenon. For this study, the researcher contacted and interviewed key individuals who were working or conducting
research in the field of gifted education during the years between 1940–1960 in order to gain an understanding of their experiences and insight into these particular decades. The formal, or structured, interviews (Hatch, 2002) were conducted by phone. The interviews were taped and the individuals’ answers to the questions were transcribed.

To determine which people in the field of gifted education might provide insight into this period of time, the researcher used the primary and secondary sources discussed previously. These sources highlighted the people who were researching and publishing on the topic of gifted education during the years of focus, and provided information on additional people they were referencing who were also of importance to the field. Because research and publications tend to bring about awareness of and change within a field, these people were assumed to be some of the great people described by Thomas (2003) who also could provide insight on other important contributors and events that influenced gifted education. After reviewing these sources and consulting with prominent researchers in the field, a list of names was compiled. This list was then reviewed to determine how many people were still living and would be able and willing to participate in the interview process with the researcher. The researcher contacted these individuals via e-mail and mail with an explanation of what the interview would be used for, how much time it would entail, and additional information such as confidentiality and interview procedures. Once the interviewees agreed to participate, the researcher and interviewee set a date for the phone interview that was convenient to the person being interviewed. A list of interview questions is included in the Appendix. Hatch (2002) noted that a structured interview is also flexible in that although questions are prepared ahead of time, the researcher was open to exploring different avenues that may arise
during the interview. Five people were selected as potential interviewees, and four people responded. The researcher tried to contact the fifth scholar three times, but did not receive a response.

Data Analysis

This study used both primary and secondary sources to look at the field of gifted education from 1940–1960. The study was limited to these years, as Jolly (2004) conducted a study that focused on the emerging years of gifted education (1910–1930), and the subsequent two decades had not been studied in a systematic and in-depth manner to date. Due to the overwhelming amount of data that could be collected from an historical period of 20 years, the researcher developed a preliminary framework in which to gather, analyze, and interpret the data (see Figure 1). Because most research within the field of gifted education can be categorized into (a) local, state, and federal legislation; (b) educational practices found within the schools; (c) publications (e.g., journals, books, and other scholarly works); and (d) national organizations and advocacy efforts, these areas will form the preliminary framework by which the researcher viewed the data. This research was placed within the overall historical context of the 1940–1960 period. Because the focus of this study was specifically on the field of gifted education, the researcher chose to focus on the larger historical context as a backdrop and did not address in detail the cultural context of the period, such as social, economic, and political factors as this information has been addressed elsewhere. These four areas, with the overarching context of the period, combined to provide an explanation of gifted education during 1940–1960.
Each of the four research questions was addressed using the following framework, focusing specifically on the years 1940–1960:

**Question 1:** What was the context that influenced change in the field of gifted education?

1.1 What legislation occurred in gifted education?

1.2 What were the common educational practices that addressed individual differences?

1.3 What publications focused on gifted education?

1.4 What national organizations were advocating for gifted education?

*Figure 1. Preliminary framework.*
Question 2: Who were the individuals who influenced change in the field of gifted education during the period from 1940 to 1960?

2.1 Who were the individuals who influenced legislation in gifted education?

2.2 Whose educational practices were being implemented in gifted education or were addressing individual differences?

2.3 Which scholars were writing about gifted education?

2.4 Who were the leaders in the national organizations that were advocating for gifted education?

Question 3: What influenced the streams of research and educational practices in the field of gifted education from 1940 to 1960?

3.1 What were the streams of research?

3.2 What were the educational practices?

3.3 What legislation influenced the streams of research and educational practices in gifted education?

3.4 What publications influenced research themes and educational practices?

3.5 What national organizations or advocacy groups influenced streams of research and educational practices?

Question 4: How did the field of gifted education change during the period from 1940 to 1960?

4.1 How did legislative policy in gifted education change?

4.2 How did educational practices in gifted education change?

4.3 How did research themes in publications change?
4.4 How did national organizations and the focus of advocates in gifted education change?

The historical context was provided by using secondary sources such as books, articles, and newspaper accounts that highlight important political, social, economic, and legislative events that occurred during the 20-year period. Historians have provided descriptions of this time period already, and the researcher used their interpretations to provide a context for what is happening in the field of gifted education at this same time. Because the researcher’s focus was on providing an explanatory history of the field itself, and not of the overall historical context of the entire period in general, it became necessary to rely on secondary sources to help fill in this information.

As the data were collected from books, journals, archives, and other sources, coding became important on a number of levels. The first level of coding was used to identify the piece of data and where it was placed within the framework (i.e., legislation, educational practices, publications, and national organizations and advocacy efforts), and the second level of coding involved interpreting and analyzing the data (Merriam, 1998). As the researcher compiled and began reading the data, she determined in which category each piece of data should be placed. The constant comparative method was employed to compare and contrast the data to highlight both similarities and differences within the categories (Merriam, 1998). Data collection and analysis was an ongoing process, and it was continued until only inconsequential changes in the data became apparent (Merriam, 1998, pp. 163–164). In the process of writing an explanatory history, the “historian searches for and constantly sifts through sources for the purpose of writing the narrative”
Identifying how the pieces fit together helped provide a narrative account of the field of gifted education during the period between 1940–1960.

**Trustworthiness**

It is important for research to be both valid and reliable. Firestone (1987) noted that the research must be trustworthy and the “qualitative study provides the reader with a depiction in enough detail to show that the author’s conclusion ‘makes sense’” (p. 19). The study’s internal validity may be enhanced by a number of different strategies, including triangulation, member checks, peer examination, and clarifying biases (Merriam, 1998).

Triangulation involves using multiple sources of data to confirm the findings of the study (Merriam, 1998). Mathison (1988, as cited in Merriam, 1998, p. 204) noted that it is important to rely on a “holistic understanding” of what happened in order to develop “plausible explanations about the phenomena being studied” (p. 17). For this study, the majority of documents collected included materials found in books, journals, newspapers, and archival records. These items allowed for triangulation of the data, as they were from multiple sources and authors. The researcher used both primary and secondary sources to provide multiple perspectives, which helped provide triangulation.

In addition, historical analysis requires data to be trustworthy and valid. In order to establish trustworthiness, data are examined using two types of criticism: external and internal (Best & Khan, 1998). External criticism looks at the authenticity of the source, including the author, date of publication, and place of origin (Best & Khan, 1998; Gall et al., 1999). Questions to consider when evaluating the authenticity of primary documents include:
1. *Who* wrote this document?

2. *For what purpose* was the document written?

3. *When* was the document written?

4. *Where* was the document written?

5. *Under what conditions* was the document written?

6. Do different forms or versions of the document exist? (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006, pp. 549–550)

Second, the research must evaluate the accuracy of the data, which is called internal criticism. Internal criticism asks the researcher to view the author of the document in a critical light. Gall et al. (1999) noted the following criteria should be addressed when evaluating an author of a primary document:

- (1) the author’s presence or absence during the events being described;
- (2) whether she was a participant in or an observer of the events;
- (3) her qualifications to describe such events accurately;
- (4) her level of emotional involvement in the situation;
- (5) whether she might have a vested interest in the outcomes of the event. (p. 399)

It is important for the historian to carefully assess and interpret the data to ensure that it is both trustworthy and valid. As the researcher began locating and identifying potential sources, she viewed each piece using both external and internal criticism to determine its accuracy and trustworthiness. For example, one of the scholars who was interviewed described being present at important events such as J. P. Guilford’s (1950) American Psychological Association presidential address in which creativity was stressed. His recollections were compared with what was found from other sources on the same topic and were deemed to be trustworthy and valid when all sources described the event in a
very similar manner. The interviews were used as a checkpoint on the data, as the people who were interviewed had lived through this period and witnessed the events.

Bias is always an inherent possibility in qualitative research. “Because the primary instrument in qualitative research is human, all observations and analyses are filtered through that human being’s worldview, values, and perspective (Merriam, 1998, p. 22). According to Merriam (1998), researchers must make note of personal biases that may potentially influence their research. Historical research provides the opportunity for bias on the part of the researcher to occur in both data collection and analysis (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006). “When an historian’s preconception of the past is motivated by an attitude of approval or disapproval of whatever the past is assumed to be, then the resulting history may be not merely mistaken but also biased” (McCullagh, 2004, p. 31). In addition, conducting interviews introduces possible bias, as recollected memories are distorted due to people’s inability to remember and describe events as accurately as they occurred (McDowell, 2002).

Therefore, it is important for the researcher to do her best not to approach the period in question with any preconceived notions and analyze the data as a whole in order to limit the potential bias that may be present in this study. The researcher did not make preliminary conclusions about the data; instead, it was important to remember that data analysis is an ongoing process. Because the data collection took place over the course of a year, the researcher reviewed the data numerous times to ensure that she had interpreted it correctly and not made preliminary conclusions. In addition, any assumptions or theoretical orientations that may affect the researcher’s interpretation were clarified and addressed. To limit potential bias on the part of the interviewees, the researcher
incorporated member checks as needed, in which tentative interpretations of the data were submitted to the person interviewed for feedback on whether the conclusion is one that is plausible (Merriam, 1998). To reduce the potential bias in this study, the researcher used peer examination from two colleagues in the field of gifted education as findings emerged to verify the researcher’s interpretations.
In September of 1939, World War II began with Germany’s invasion of Poland (Moss, 1995). America declared itself neutral until December 7, 1941, the day on which the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor in Hawaii (Moss, 1995). The country was in turmoil at the beginning of this new decade, as it entered into another world war. This context sets the backdrop against which one views the field of education in general and gifted education, particularly during the war and reconstruction years.

The researcher developed a framework in which to view the data from 1940–1960, categorizing information into four areas: (a) legislation; (b) educational practices; (c) publications (e.g., journals, books, and other scholarly works); and (d) national organizations and advocacy efforts. These four areas, with the overarching context of the period, combine to provide an explanation of gifted education during 1940–1960.

The first research question, “What was the context that influenced change in the field of gifted education during the period from 1940 to 1960?,” is the focus of this chapter. The question is answered through the lens of the framework mentioned above.

Gifted Education Legislation

Public support for gifted education has gone through various stages throughout the last century, and has varied across states and even districts within states (Resnick & Goodman, 1994). With the introduction of intelligence tests in the early part of the 20th century, schools became more interested in defining giftedness in terms of an IQ score,
and as a result accelerated programs, enrichment classes, and special schools sprang up (Resnick & Goodman, 1994). However, unlike its counterpart in the schools, special education, the federal government has been much slower to develop legislation for the education of the gifted.

Although a surge of interest in gifted education brought about by the use of intelligence tests existed in the schools in the early 20th century, by 1947, only California, Oregon, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin had taken legislative action to establish special classes for the gifted and only two provided financial backing to do so (Knight, 1952; Santayana, 1947). In 1952, Kansas became the only state that specifically included gifted children with those deemed “exceptional” and requiring special education (“Special Education Is Becoming Regular,” 1952). By 1960, only six states had legislation (Jackson, 1979). The October 1957 issue of The Gifted Child Newsletter (which later became Gifted Child Quarterly) shared that the California State Legislature had passed a Bill to provide assistance to gifted children. However, programs for the gifted were not funded in California until 1961 under the Special Educational Programs for Mentally Gifted Minors (California Education Code sections 6421–6434; California State Department of Education, 1975). Because of the lack of legislation found in the states, The Gifted Child Newsletter urged readers to encourage the passage of similar legislation in all states.

At the federal level, the United States Office of Education established the Section on Exceptional Children and Youth in 1931; however, it was not given any legislative or fiscal authority (DeLeon & VandenBos, 1985; Russo, 2001; Zettel, 1982).
The Servicemen’s Readjustment Act of 1944 was signed into law by President Roosevelt on June 22. More commonly known as the GI Bill of Rights (U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs, 2009), the bill provided World War II veterans low-interest loans for houses, farms, and businesses, and offered educational benefits, which allowed veterans whose education had been interrupted by the war (i.e., those who were age 25 and under, although this requirement was changed the following year) to return to college (Moss, 1994). Although the legislation was not aimed specifically at gifted students, it did revive an interest in higher education and education in general—something that had been lacking during the wartime years. As Olson (1968) discovered, “the veterans who were first generation students demonstrated that far more of the nation’s youth could profit from education than previously had done so” (p. 6). There were opponents to this legislation, including Harvard’s president James B. Conant, who felt that colleges and universities would not turn away unqualified students, but for the most part, the bill was considered to be a success (Olson, 1968). Within 3 weeks of the bill’s passage, more than 1,000 applications for the educational benefits had been filed with Veteran Administration offices around the country (“GI Bill of Rights Prompts Inquiries,” 1944).

It was not until 1950, with the passage of the National Science Foundation Act (NSFA, 1950), that the federal government took a greater interest in the education of gifted students. World War II had come to an end, and the belief that the United States should focus on scientific research and training in order to maintain a prominent position in the world was foremost on people’s mind (DeLeon & VandenBos, 1985).

In May of 1950, President Truman signed the bill that created the National Science Foundation. In his statement, the President stressed the importance of science
to the United State’s future in the postwar era:

We have come to know that our ability to survive and grow as a nation depends to a very large degree upon our scientific progress. Moreover, it is not enough simply to keep abreast of the rest of the world in scientific matters. We must maintain our leadership. The National Science Foundation will stimulate basic research and education in nearly every branch of science, and thereby add to the supply of knowledge which is indispensable to our continued grown, prosperity and security. (“Truman Signs Bill for Science Study,” 1950, p. 24)

The Act had six purposes: (1) to initiate and support scientific research and programs at all levels, (2) to award scholarships to students in the sciences, (3) to cultivate the exchange of ideas among scientists in the United States and their colleagues around the world, (4) to promote the development of various scientific methods and technologies for both research and education, (5) to identify the needs in the various branches of science, and (6) to establish a national clearinghouse of scientists (Zettel, 1982, p. 52).

With the establishment of the National Science Foundation, gifted students moved to the forefront of the nation’s mind, as there was a push to improve science curriculum in the schools and a desire to encourage these students to pursue careers in the sciences to help the United States maintain its position in the world.

On October 4, 1957, the Russians successfully launched the world’s first satellite, named Sputnik, shocking the United States. “It tended to confirm the claim by Moscow six weeks ago of the first successful test of an intercontinental ballistic missile, and indicated that the U.S.S.R. was—for the moment, at least—ahead of the U.S. in the crucial rocket race” (“Round the World,” 1957, p. 193). As Tannenbaum (1979) noted,

Suddenly, the prestige and survival of a nation were jeopardized because the enemy’s greatest minds of the day had outperformed ours, and the Russians capitalized on this coup by broadcasting to every nation on earth its success, at long last, in reducing America to a second-class power. (p. 7)
Although Sputnik was a profound science breakthrough for the world as a whole, the United States did not like being beaten to the table, especially by its enemy (and onetime ally during the war). In the years since the Second World War, the two countries had developed feelings of mutual distrust and embarked on the Cold War, during which both superpowers denounced each other. The United States had developed a policy in which it worked to be superior in all aspects, including the science and technological fields, and was therefore shocked when the launch occurred (Douglass, 1999). The launching of Sputnik quickly stimulated a public concern about the quality of education students were receiving (Gold, 1979).

John M. Stalnaker, President of the National Merit Scholarship Corporation, discussed Americans’ response to Sputnik:

No one was more astonished than the American public to have a positive demonstration that scientists working in other lands were ahead of us not only in the most advanced theories but in the practical application to a working model. (Conant, 1958, p. 18)

The public was very quick in its response to the launching of Sputnik, with outcries to fix the American public school system (Conant, 1958).

Statements in the press about Sputnik and its implications for American education were causing general anxiety in the mind of the public about the adequacy of the public schools. Further, school administrators were being subjected to diverse pressures to “do something” about science education. (Stanley, Broudy, & Burnett, 1958, n.p.)

Broudy (1958) compared U.S. schools to the Russian’s system:

American youth appeared to lack the zest for scientific work when compared with their Russian counterparts. Our schools did not sufficiently exploit the gifted child, and, in general, our young people were permitted to go through school without exerting great effort or achieving great results. (p. 19)
With the launching of Sputnik came the realization that:

the obvious accomplishments of the Russians have given a tremendous impetus to the efforts to capitalize on our human resources. It is from the academically talented pupil of today that most of our trained minds of tomorrow will come, and, if there was ever an age when such minds were in high demand, this is the age. (Conant, 1958, p. 19)

Barbe (1959) summed up the situation by saying, “Sputnik awakened the nation to the need for better provisions for our talented youth. The continued Russian successes have firmly cemented the concern of American people in the fullest development of the ability of all of our children” (p. 63). This event helped spawn a national interest in the education of American’s gifted children and set the stage for unprecedented funding from the federal government (Jolly, 2009).

Although there may not have been a strong legislative push throughout the United States to support the field of gifted education, scholars who attended a 1958 National Education Association conference chaired by James B. Conant, by that point President Emeritus of Harvard University, argued that legislative provisions and planning, as well as financial support, needed to be a priority in order to have successful gifted and talented programs in the schools.

That same year, on September 2, Congress passed the National Defense Education Act (NDEA). The Act responded to the “national emergency” that resulted from the Sputnik launch, and focused federal attention on the nation’s gifted and talented (Zettel, 1982). NDEA (1958) specified:

The Congress hereby finds and declares that the security of the Nation requires the fullest development of the mental resources and technical skills of its young men and women. The present emergency demands that additional and more adequate educational opportunities be made available. The defense of this Nation depends upon the mastery of modern techniques developed from complex
scientific principles. It depends as well upon the discovery and development of new principles, new techniques, and new knowledge.

We must increase our efforts to identify and educate more of the talent of our Nation. This requires programs that will give assurance that no student of ability will be denied an opportunity for higher education because of financial need; will correct as rapidly as possible the existing imbalances in our educational programs which have led to an insufficient proportion of our population educated in science, mathematics, and modern foreign languages and trained in technology. (p. 1581)

Flemming (1960) further clarified:

The National Defense Education Act recognizes that education is a national unifying force, and it regards an educated citizenry as the country’s most precious resource. Its ten Titles are designed to motivate the discovery of intelligent and talented young men and women and stimulate them to devote themselves to the sciences, foreign languages, technology, and in general to those intellectual pursuits that will enrich personal life, strengthen resistance to totalitarianism, and enhance the quality of American leadership on the international scene. (p. 132)

The National Defense Education Act helped increase interest in locating and encouraging gifted and talented students. Less than a year and a half later, scholars already were reporting positive gains that resulted from the Act. According to Brickman (1960),

Reports emanating from the Government indicated that the National Defense Education Act of 1958 was succeeding in influencing gifted high school graduates to enter college, in increasing the number of qualified college instructors, and raising the standard of teaching mathematics, the sciences, and the modern foreign languages. (p. 227)

In reviewing legislation pertaining to gifted education, Russo (2001) found that “aside from commission reports and rhetoric, little [had] been done at either the federal or state level to offer appropriate programming for gifted and talented children’s educational needs” (p. 729). Despite that fact that there was a limited amount of legislation aimed directly at gifted students during the 1940s–1950s, the passage of the National Science Foundation Act in 1950 and the National Defense Education Act in 1958, in addition to
the launch of Sputnik, helped bring unprecedented attention to the plight of gifted and talented students throughout the nation.

*Educational Practices*

Gifted education in the United States has been present in one form or another since the 1800s. Although various terminology has been used to identify the educational practices offered for these students, the three most common types of programming has included acceleration, enrichment, and special classes (Hildenbrand, 1981; Jolly, 2004; Philadelphia Suburban School Study Council, Group A, 1954). However, in 1948, in a nationwide survey of more than 3,000 cities with populations of 2,500 or more, only 15 cities reported having special schools or classes for gifted children, with the largest enrollments found in New York, Cleveland, Worcester, and Los Angeles (Heck, 1953). Although only a small number of schools across the country offered programming for their brightest students, educators and scholars had been working for more than 30 years to adapt school programming to meet the students’ needs—and felt that once gifted education received general public support, there would be no obstacles to educational programming in the schools (Sumption, 1953). There had been a growth of interest in gifted students, based on the number of books, articles, and newspaper stories that had been published about providing for them, but few schools seemed to have risen adequately to the challenge (Passow, Goldberg, Tannenbaum, & French, 1955).

Because the most common educational practices for gifted students have included acceleration, enrichment, and special classes (Hildenbrand, 1981; Jolly, 2004; Philadelphia Suburban School Study Council, Group A, 1954), the researcher focused on these when analyzing the data. During the 1940s–1960s, these practices can be viewed in
terms of leadership and democratic principles (the reason contributing to why gifted and
talented students should be identified and educated), identification, academics, national
talent screening programs, mental hygiene, administrative issues, and teacher education
and characteristics.

Leadership and Democratic Principles

As early as 1940, Garrison described the greater challenge for schools: “The
challenge to our schools on the part of our present social order is for better and more
intelligence citizenship [italics in original]” (p. 108). One year into the Second World
War, the United States had begun to realize the importance of an intelligent and educated
population. The desire to “[get] the wisest and ablest to the top” (Russell, 1941, p. 381)
was something that Leta Hollingworth, one of the major proponents of gifted education in
the early 20th century, also had pondered. Russell (1941) explained:

[Hollingworth] saw the problem, and rightly I think too, not only in terms of
respect for the individual but in the light of the welfare of the State. . . . [N]o
government will succeed or long endure which keeps stupid people at the top. It
must devise means to discover and educate the able, and for its own welfare give
them positions of influence and power. (p. 381)

The war brought about an intense interest in developing future leaders for the country
(Bruner, 1941b): There was an “imperative need in the present crisis for training leaders
who will fearlessly locate, relentlessly attack, and intelligently bring to desirable solution
the problems with which democracies are faced” (p. 397). Distinguishing between the
typical need for leadership and the new type of leader needed, Bruner (1941b) explained:
“In so-called normal days there is need for real leaders. Because of conditions at present,
this need for the discovery and proper development of the right kind of leadership is
greatly intensified” (p. 399). Scholars also noted the need to focus on gifted students
during this wartime era: “The present disastrous state of the world cries aloud for the best abilities of mankind to prevent our civilization from dissolving into chaos” (Pitner, 1941, p. 407). Gifted children were seen as the future leaders in business, education, journalism, labor, scientific research, and government of the country, thus their education was beginning to become more relevant to educators, scholars, and laypersons alike (Witty, 1953).

Gifted children will in future years make outstanding contributions to the progress and human welfare of our nation; indeed, the very survival of the democratic way of life may lie in their hands. Many of them will serve as leaders in government, industry, labor, and crafts; some will be the inventors, engineers, and scientists, the artists, composers, and writers, the leading doctors, educators and farmers of their times. (Scheifele, 1953, p. vii)

Gifted leaders were important to have in both industry and business, as they were needed to not only manage others, but they also could offer specific skills such as the ability to reason, patience and consideration, and expert knowledge in their respective fields (Du Pont, 1941; Worchester, 1956).

In addition, the call for leaders came from high school administrators, who acknowledged that the future depended on gifted students (Odell, 1951):

The increased range of the mental capacity of our pupils has resulted in contributing to a condition where we do not actually provide equalization of educational opportunity for our bright children. . . . Democracy, in order to endure, must develop leaders that have the training, the vision, the courage, and the ability to furnish enlightened leadership. . . . Our gifted children constitute the schools’ greatest political asset. (p. 40)

Pritchard (1952) acknowledged that this new interest in the education of gifted children is the outgrowth of the increasing awareness of the dearth of real leadership in this country, and of the ever-increasing pressure placed upon the schools to better equip our superior youth so they may assume positions of leadership. (p. 107)
Scholars (DeHaan & Havighurst, 1957; Meister, 1956; Terman, 1954a) were concerned about the national manpower shortage, the United States’ shortage of qualified persons in all fields.

What is new is the general awareness of [gifted students] caused by the manpower shortage of scientists, engineers, moral leaders, statesmen, scholars, and teachers that the country must have if it is to survive in a threatened world. These problems are now being investigated on a scale never before approached, and by a new generation of workers in several related fields. Within a couple of decades vastly more should be known than we know today about our resources of potential genius, the environmental circumstances that favor its expression, the emotional compulsions that give it dynamic quality, and the personality distortions that can make it dangerous. (Terman, 1954a, p. 230)

Democracy versus excellence was an issue that was addressed throughout the 1940s and 1950s. Striving for a completely democratic society (i.e., “equal”) actually denied opportunities for gifted students to cultivate their talents, especially during World War II (Keys, 1942). Alpern (1952) believed “we must reinterpret the meaning of democracy—not in the sense of equality of gifts or abilities but in the sense of equality of opportunities” (p. 110). Superior ability was not being identified or recognized on the whole, and this ability was seen as being wasted (Pitner, 1941). S. Miller (1941) addressed it in a discussion focused on the place of the gifted in modern life:

One of the prime educational issues which face our nation is between democracy and excellence, between our commitment to the education of all the people and the education of the gifted few. . . . [We] must rest upon the sound doctrine of equality of educational opportunity in a democracy—opportunity for all, gifted, average, and handicapped alike, to realize their highest potentialities. (pp. 387–388)

Pitner (1941) reminded educators that superior ability was universal. He argued that they “must seek out superior ability not only among children of favorable economic status, but also, and more particularly, among those in poor economic circumstances” (p. 416).
Gifted students could be found in all races and socioeconomic levels, and it was important to locate these children for the sake of the country (Williams, 1955).

This acknowledgement that all students should receive an education appropriate for their strengths and needs resulted in a somewhat renewed interest—although quite small and localized—in gifted students (Butts, 1941). The objective of education in general was to allow all children to meet their maximum potential, which would be important to the benefit of others, especially in light of the “national emergency” that was taking place during the early 1940s (Burnside, 1942b).

However, this renewed interest was not as widespread as some had hoped. Summarizing the years leading up to and after the war, Witte (1949) noted:

Studies [sic] show that from 1920 to 1940, scarcely a beginning was made in recognizing and providing for especially bright pupils throughout our school system. During World War II, educational facilities were curtailed sharply and opportunities for gifted pupils were affected adversely. It appears that one of the greatest shortcomings of school systems today is their failure to recognize and conserve human ability and talent. We need better prepared teachers, more abundant and varied materials of instruction, and generally improved conditions for learning in order to avoid further waste of our greatest human resources—bright and gifted children and youth. (p. 264)

The Conference on the Education of Youth in America was held November 18–19, 1946, at Teachers College, Columbia University in New York. Committee No. 4 (1947) argued that the United States needed to identify and develop talent early in order to allow people to contribute to human welfare and make their maximum contribution. The committee felt that it was important to identify students with outstanding talents and to develop a roster of their names in order to benefit the country as a whole. The committee proposed that schools conduct a search each year to identify youth with exceptional abilities. The top one tenth of 1% of these names would be made public so
they could receive “special treatment” (Thut, 1947, p. 224) from interested parties, including higher education, research foundations, and other industries. However, others (Thut, 1947) disagreed with the committee’s recommendations and likened that type of thinking to Hitler’s school system in Germany.

After World War II, scholars continued to lament the potential waste of American talent (Hattery, 1950). As early as 1950, Hattery noted the need for leadership in science and identified factors contributing to the loss of talent, including (a) inferior instruction, (b) inadequate or no guidance, (c) the absence of individualized remedial attention, (d) economic hardship, (e) uncorrected physical deficiencies, and (f) lack of motivation provided from both school and home (p. 84). Schools needed to find effective incentives to keep talented youth in school and moving toward the specialized professions including the sciences.

In his address to the U.S. Conference of Mayors in New York City on February 18, 1948, James B. Conant shared his thoughts about talent and the future of the country’s leaders:

Thanks to our public schools we are today, I believe, finding and developing a larger percentage of our potential talent than in any other nation, with the possible exception of the Soviet Union. But I am convinced there is a considerable untapped reservoir in many sections of the country because of the inadequacies of the elementary and secondary schools. . . . To the extent we fail to discover and utilize the potentialities of the youth of each generation, we are dissipating our greatest source of wealth: the young people of the nation. (p. 52)

Throughout the 1940s and 1950s, there was a deep desire to keep the United States at the forefront of the world’s stage in terms of leadership and superiority. The cry for recognizing gifted and talented students and the future of the country was loud and clear—locate and educate these students for the sake of the nation.
Identification

Identification is the process of screening children using standardized tests and observational procedures to determine whether or not they should be included in a specialized program (DeHaan, 1959; DeHaan & Havighurst, 1957). A formal process was viewed as necessary, as DeHaan (1959) noted:

[One] would not be able, by casual observation only, to distinguish the gifted pupils from the others. The gifted are not staggering under a towering load of books. Neither are they blundering along the fringes of the group trying unsuccessfully to “get in” with other children, as is sometimes supposed to be true of them. On the contrary, they are quite as carefree and as well adjusted as any children in the hallway; hence the need for inaugurating methods of identifying them. (p. 75)

The use of standardized group-administered intelligence tests was an accepted practice in schools during this period, and schools identified gifted students using these tests. However, some scholars asserted that group tests were inadequate, as the ceilings were too low for gifted children and suggested that they be tested in smaller groups with trained administrators watching them (Munson, 1944). In addition, Munson (1944) felt that schools should look at a variety of data to identify gifted students, and child studies should be conducted with all students.

Many factors were to be taken into consideration when identifying gifted students (Bristow, Craig, Hallock, & Laycock, 1951). In addition to intelligence test results and academic achievement, scholars (Bristow et al., 1951) argued that teachers also should focus on physical, emotional, and social characteristics of children. They encouraged teachers to use anecdotal records, photographs, and self-evaluations in the identification process.
Reports from parents and teachers were used in identifying students. Parent reports were helpful, as they had intimate knowledge of the child’s formative years and could provide information that teachers and others would be unable to provide (Sumption & Luecking, 1960). However, it was noted that parent reports were almost always biased and often failed to keep in mind how their child might compare to the child population in general (Bristow et al., 1951). Teacher reports were often used, as they were able to observe how students worked on a daily basis (Sumption & Luecking, 1960), but there was some concern that they may not be as reliable as they could be.

Teachers . . . tend to underestimate the ability of gifted children because they overlook the factor of chronological age. They forget that the gifted child may be one or two years younger than his classmates. Reactions to the personality of different children may influence the teacher’s evaluation of ability. Thus, a poorly adjusted teacher may be annoyed by the brilliance of the gifted child and be jealous of him. Such a teacher may be unwilling to acknowledge the child’s ability. Still other teachers do not have adequate standards of child development by which to judge the gifted child’s status and hence to estimate his ability. (Bristow et al., 1951, p. 16)

Although there were some concerns about including parent and teacher reports in the identification process, both could be useful in helping to identify gifted students and provided a more well-rounded look at the student than did only an intelligence test.

Scholars (DeHaan, 1959) noted the importance of implementing ongoing identification processes in which all students were screened at regular intervals, as the alternative would be overlooking many children who should have been identified and placed within an appropriate educational program.

Otto (1955) outlined the following steps that should be taken when identifying gifted children:

1. set up and maintain cumulative pupil records,
2. examine the child’s developmental history as recorded by his or her parents,
3. administer intelligence tests and appropriately interpret the results of such tests,
4. devise means of discovering and determining special abilities,
5. observe the performance of children showing superior potential in many different situations, and
6. note identifying personal characteristics (p. 13).

In the 1940s and 1950s, schools seemed to be aware of the need for using multiple measures (instead of one intelligence score) to identify gifted students. However, whether or not the majority of school systems identifying gifted students actually followed the recommended best practices is unknown.

*Academics*

*General recommendations.* By the early 1940s, New Jersey, Wisconsin, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Ohio, California, and Maryland were conducting classes for gifted students (Connor, 1940). Connor (1940) described special problems that gifted children faced, including boredom, isolation, concern about good and evil, and worry about social responsibilities. He felt that all gifted education programs should engage children according to their abilities in order to make them more useful contributors to American society and noted the need to enlist the “ablest” teachers and resources in the education of these students.

During the 1940–1960 time period, some schools focused on individual differences. Cook (1948) noted, “Our conclusion up to this point must be that the more effective the instruction, the more individual differences are provided for, the more
heterogeneous instructional groups become” (p. 145). He offered schools suggestions for addressing individual differences that included:

- reducing class size to 25 and 30 for elementary and high school respectively,
- using a systematic testing program,
- keeping a permanent record folder for all students,
- grouping students on the basis of status in specific learning areas,
- organizing the curriculum by large units or problems in social studies or natural sciences,
- discontinuing the grade-level designation at which specific information should be learned, and
- allowing students to be responsible for setting goals and evaluating their work.

Because gifted children often were taught in the regular classroom, Scheifele (1953) suggested that classrooms include the following:

- the classroom environment must be stimulating in atmosphere and materials,
- the program for gifted students should be developed around a unit of experiences that surpasses most traditional methods, and
- enrichment activities should be included to enhance the regular program (e.g., school and community service activities, group projects, independent activities, creative activities).

In addition, a good program:

- aims to develop a variety of talents;
- has a systematic procedure for the discovery of a wide variety of talents;
- seeks to motivate gifted children to make use of and to develop their talent;
• makes use of a variety of community resources in the development of talent, in addition to the schools; and
• uses effective methods of teaching, curriculum materials, and administrative procedures in the schools. (Havighurst, Stivers, & DeHaan, 1955, p. 3)

A call went out for administrators to buy into the belief that schools should meet the needs of gifted students (Odell, 1951):

When our high-school principals agree that they have a special responsibility to our gifted children and are willing to translate this belief into some experimentation in educational practice to help carry out this responsibility—then we will begin to record the evidence we need to support the conviction that, as a precious resource, our gifted boys and girls deserve special consideration. (p. 46)

More people continued to highlight the importance of addressing gifted students’ needs in the school—and not leave them to chance or the youngsters themselves to develop (Passow & Tannenbaum, 1954). In order to develop gifted students’ talents, schools should:

• begin to probe more deeply into the nature of talent;
• try to understand what the general objectives of their schools mean when tailored to fit children with special abilities and potentials;
• analyze existing traditions and administrative procedures to test their validity in practice;
• attempt total school planning for talented youth rather than indulge in isolated efforts;
• try to increase their sensitivity to the impact of peers, parents, teachers and community on talented youth and vice versa; and
• recognize the enormity of planning for every conceivable talent. (Passow & Tannenbaum, 1954, pp. 154–155)

Others pointed out that many schools did not have provisions for their gifted students (Passow, 1956). In 1947, not more than 30–40 school systems across the nation were doing much more for their gifted students than allowing them to accelerate their learning by skipping a grade (Santayana, 1947), a finding in concert with Heck’s (1953) study, which noted that only 15 cities he surveyed had special schools or classes in place for gifted students. According to Passow (1956), schools failed to get many of the brightest students to go on to college, guidance and educational procedures were failing to get talented youth motivated to work up to their potential and go to college, American schools lacked the quality found in European schools, and high schools had been watered down and contained an incohesive education.

Program models for gifted students. When planning for gifted programming, schools had to determine whether to use acceleration, enrichment, or special classes—or a hybrid of two or more of the above. Santayana (1947) summarized: “Whatever technique may be generally adopted, we can be sure that the individual needs of the gifted children will receive utmost attention and consideration, so that they may become tomorrow’s leaders” (p. 267).

Enriched classes were used to meet the needs of gifted students. In Brockton, MA, students were placed in an enrichment program that focused on art, literature, science, and music (Handy & Lindstrom, 1944). Students worked together to prepare their new classroom, and the program focused on their individual strengths. They studied
civic responsibility and did service projects for the school in addition to helping out in the community during wartime (Handy & Lindstrom, 1944).

Not all schools successfully implemented enrichment programs for gifted students. In some cases, “too often, ‘enrichment’ [had] become little more than a term which served as the rationale for giving the gifted pupil more of the same thing—more problems in arithmetic, more spelling words, another book to read” (Justman, 1951, p. 42).

Schools also accelerated gifted students during this time period. Keys (1942) cited a research study in California that focused on acceleration. It found that acceleration was not harmful to the students who were accelerated. Young college entrants and accelerated high schoolers made higher grades, had better health, rated themselves happier, and joined more student activities than the control group.

Acceleration was not a widely accepted educational practice and it often was debated in both the lay and educational presses (Wilson, 1951a). Pressey (1954) felt it was probably one of the worst ways of facilitating a student’s educational progress, as “it involves disjunctions in school programs and social contacts” (p. 59). Terman (1954a) admonished, “It seems that the schools are more opposed to acceleration now than they were thirty years ago. The lockstep seems to have become more and more the fashion, notwithstanding the fact that practically everyone who has investigated the subject is against it” (p. 226). Nevertheless, Terman and Oden’s (1947) follow-up to their longitudinal study indicated that acceleration did work. According to the evidence, acceleration should be determined based on individual needs and more harm than good was done by not allowing gifted students to accelerate (Wilson, 1951a).
In addition, Flesher and Pressey (1955) noted, “During World War II acceleration was the most hotly debated of all educational topics, and most colleges and technical schools had some form of accelerated program” (p. 228). They conducted a study that looked at 104 women at The Ohio State University who completed their undergraduate program in 3 years (1941–1945). An additional 41 women completed their degree in 3 years in 1946 and these were paired with a control group of 41 women. The researchers gathered data in 1954, when the women averaged 32 years old, asking questions about employment while in school, acceleration, extracurricular activities, further schooling, marital status, employment, and community participation. The authors concluded that very few unfortunate outcomes related to completing college in 3 years. Most accelerates took part in War-related activities, but tended to participate in fewer typical activities in undergraduate years. Twice as many accelerates earned additional degrees and twice as many continued their career after marriage (Flesher & Pressey, 1955).

Special classes, such as one that began in Massachusetts in 1940, were also popular during this period. The special class consisted of third and fourth graders with whom individualized instruction was used (Nelson & Carlson, 1945).

These high IQ children could progress so rapidly that, by the time they were in the fifth grade, many of them were able to do advanced eleventh-grade work on achievement tests and it actually became necessary for the teacher to try to hold them back. (Nelson & Carlson, 1945, p. 7)

The school hadn’t prepared itself, however, for continuing the program through junior high and high school, so even though it had accelerated the students, there was no place for the students to go at the end of elementary school. The school held a conference for the students in the special class to gather their ideas for what curriculum they should take in junior high. Students wanted a curriculum that would prepare them for the problems
that would arise during postwar times, which included science (chemistry especially), history (including modern history), and math. The school did decide to continue the accelerated program into junior high, as the class was small enough to do so (16 students). The school acknowledged that it “must bear in mind the fact that the children were, of necessity, to some extent discouraged from proceeding at their maximum rate of progress” (Nelson & Carlson, 1945, p. 8), so one can only wonder what these students might have achieved had they had the opportunity to reach their full potential.

Although special classes often worked well, Justman (1951) warned schools that a special class for gifted children does not and cannot exist in an educational vacuum. It is only when the special class is accepted as an integral, functional part of the total school organism by the entire school staff that it can make a worthwhile contribution to the growth and development of its pupils. (p. 44)

**Special in-school programs.** Some schools offered well-thought-out educational programs for gifted students. In the early 1920s, Cleveland, OH, became one of the first school districts to focus on the education of the gifted. Peters (1941) described its 20-year attempts to make provisions for gifted students by using flexible promotions and then acceleration. However, neither of these practices completely addressed the needs of gifted students, and Cleveland created separate classes for these students called MWG (major work group) classes. In these classes, the regular curriculum was expanded, widened, and more in depth, although students did study French as well (Barbe & Norris, 1954). Unlike most classrooms, the room was set up quite informally and with little direct instruction (Peters, 1941). Instead, the MWG classes focused greatly on independent study. In 1957, Barbe surveyed graduates of the program, receiving replies
from 456 former students from the past 15 years. Ninety-one percent of men and 63% of women attended college, and those who didn’t cited financial issues.

In 1941, Hunter College Elementary School (New York) began enrolling only gifted students (French, 1959) who scored in the top 1% on the Stanford-Binet. Students ages 3–11 were placed in classes based on chronological age (instead of by grade levels). Hunter College Elementary School was developed to give students the freedom to help design their educational program, as students were allowed to give input on topics of study and complete independent studies (French, 1959). As French (1959) described,

Study units are worked out in group conference and each day’s work is an outgrowth of the preceding day’s activities. The children are encouraged to participate in discussions and to develop attitudes of tolerance toward different opinions expressed by others. (p. 212)

The school focused on careful planning to help meet the needs of the whole child, with the goal of a well-balanced student in mind (Witty, 1959b).

Burnside (1942b) shared her thoughts on gifted education based on her experience in Rochester, NY. Early identification and a challenging education program—one that meets individual needs and includes high-level subject matter—were two important aspects of a gifted education program. In addition, students should find outlets to develop social leadership skills through community cooperation (Burnside, 1942b). Describing an experimental program at Monroe High School in Rochester, Burnside (1942a) shared its objectives:

- provide a program to gifted students that allows them to reach their full potential,
- experiment with procedures that would “stimulate the desire for subject mastery and promote effective thinking” (p. 276), and
• “contribute to the meager fund of scientific data having to do with the development and education of the gifted adolescent . . . [to] evolve an educational program of experiences significant in the training of prospective leaders” (p. 276).

Monroe High School officials selected students based on their superior academic record and the top 1% of scorers on an intelligence test. In 1942, there were 60 pupils in the program (male = 25, female = 35). The students were organized into two ungraded classes that took math, English, social studies, French, and science (physics and chemistry), in addition to typewriting. Students also were given a “permanent pass” to attend any class in the school at any time, as long as there was a legitimate educational reason to and as long as they didn’t interrupt the class (Burnside, 1942a).

Students progressed at their own pace in the classes, which were a combination of enrichment and acceleration; however, the school did not believe that students below age 16 should graduate, so it wasn’t used primarily as an acceleration tool. Students also rated their own progress in the program instead receiving a typical report card from the teacher. Although the program had been in place since 1938, Burnside (1942a) noted that it had not existed long enough to develop even tentative conclusions from the data. However, all of the program’s graduates except one entered college and that student failed to do so due to a lack of finances, to which Burnside (1942a) responded: “For a gifted child to be denied opportunity because of lack of money is a waste of our most valuable asset” (p. 285).

In 1954, Hedwig Pregler, principal of Pittsburgh’s Colfax School, described its educational programming for gifted students. She noted:

Equality lies in providing opportunity in accordance with the ability of each group, not in providing the same program for all. Today the emphasis is shifting
more and more from a uniform education of the group to a child developmental program that centers its interest on the child and his needs. (p. 198)

At the start of the program, the Colfax School first pulled gifted kids 2 hours a week from their regular classroom (it identified children who were 2 years above grade level on an achievement test). However, this approach didn’t work because students were missing class and teachers had various responses to this (some had them make up work, while others did not). Next, Colfax School adopted a schoolwide club program in which all of the other students got to participate during the same 2 hours each week; however, the gifted students didn’t get to participate in the club program, and this caused problems. The school finally decided to have a workshop program in which the gifted children were grouped together part of the day and then with the other students the other half (for specials such as art, music, and PE). Spanish and typing were added to the workshop program.

*Special out-of-school programs.* Out-of-school experiences also were offered to gifted students during this period. For example, the University of Texas provided a 5-week summer program with a focus on chemistry for 28 rising seniors. Students were able to work with university professors and the program consisted of lectures, lab work, visits to local jobs, demonstrations, development of science projects, and discussion sessions (Haskew, 1956).

Durst (1959) described a 5-week course offered at Rice University in the summer of 1957 to support gifted math students’ interests. The program was sponsored by a grant from the Fund for the Advancement of Education. To be nominated, the student had to be in the top 1% of students in the state, had to have completed one year of algebra and
one year of geometry, and had to have a year of high school left to complete. The program received nominations for 160 students and 25 were accepted (19 boys, 6 girls). The classes consisted of lectures, discussions, exposition by students, and lectures from Rice faculty members (Durst, 1959).

In 1957, the National Science Foundation held its first demonstration class in mathematics (Montague, 1959). The class was designed in hopes that lecturers who attended and observed would understand how material could be presented to high school students. This class provided an opportunity for gifted students to learn advanced material they wouldn’t otherwise learn in school. In the summers of 1957 and 1958, 25 students participated. The demonstration class met 5 days a week for 4 weeks (Montague, 1959).

In 1958, the National Science Foundation offered a summer mathematics camp for talented high school students (Nichols, 1959). The program was a 6-week camp held on the Florida State University campus. Nichols (1959) described its purpose:

- To identify talented high school students capable of becoming research mathematicians or exceptional math teachers.
- To develop and enhance the interests of these students by providing them with new insights into the expanding body of research and knowledge in the math field.
- To bring these students into contact with math research and content that was not taught in conventional high school courses and provide the students with opportunities to engage in creative mathematical activities.
The National Science Foundation provided a grant for 40 students to attend the camp (a total of $9,300). Each day provided approximately 3 instructional hours in math and 1 hour in Russian. The rest of the time students were able to attend special lectures and other fun functions (Nichols, 1959).

Fairview High School in Dayton, OH, adopted an advance-placement program in 1958 (Longnecker, Herbst, & Kavanaugh, 1959). The school instituted a summer school program for gifted students called “An Enriched and Advanced Experimental Summer School.” During the first summer, it offered 12 courses and enrolled 170 students. The students were selected based on intelligence and achievement tests, past performance, and teacher and principal recommendations. The program offered courses such as algebra, science, backgrounds of American democracy, English, literature appreciation, art appreciation, chemistry, advanced science/math, advanced biological science, introductory college mathematics, trigonometry, study skills and techniques for taking college entrance exams, and speed/developmental reading (Longnecker et al., 1959). Longnecker et al. (1959) found that 100% of the students who participated in the summer program planned to go to college, and more than 90% already had an idea for a future vocation (engineering, teaching, and science being among the most popular).

Lovelass and Harnly (1959) discussed how summer schools had been used to enrich the educational program of gifted students. University High School at Illinois State Normal University found that summer school programs could be an effective way to meet the needs of their most talented students. University High School’s summer school went from one that was remedial to one that focused on enrichment and acceleration. In doing so, the program experienced tremendous growth, from 172
participants in 1952 to 434 students in 1958, with 38 different high schools participating (Lovelass & Harnly, 1959).
College-level practices. During the 1940s–1960s, discussions about educational practices for gifted students were not limited to K–12 schooling. Butts (1941), an associate professor of education at Teachers College, summarized a discussion that took place at the Conference on Education for the Gifted in December of 1940 at Teachers College in honor of Leta Hollingworth (who passed away in 1939). The education of the gifted should also be continued at the college level, and four major issues were discussed in the breakout session. These included: (a) How should colleges define giftedness? (b) Should gifted students be segregated? (c) What type of curriculum should be developed for these students? and (d) How can their education be financed? (Butts, 1941).

Participants in the session felt that giftedness should not be defined too narrowly and that students should not be segregated from others, as developing leadership skills was important. In addition, curriculum should be flexible enough for students to pursue an area of interest, yet also provide the basic knowledge that all students need to learn. The group noted that finances wasn’t an issue that was limited specifically to gifted students, as that should be viewed as a large-scale issue for all students who wanted to attend college (Butts, 1941).

Summary. During these two decades, schools addressed gifted students’ needs most often by implementing some form of enrichment, acceleration, or special classes (or a hybrid model of the above). In addition, special programs, including the well-known Advanced Placement program, were implemented during this time, and offered students a chance to excel.
National Talent Screening Programs

By the mid-1940s, the Science Talent Search (now known as the Intel Science Talent Search) had been in progress for 5 years, having begun in 1942 (W. Davis, 1951; Edgerton & Britt, 1946). The search was originally conducted by Science Service and awards were financed by the Westinghouse Electric Corporation. The program was implemented to improve science teaching in the United States and encourage high school students’ interest in science through the development of original research projects (Kaye, 2001). The objectives of the Science Talent Search were:

1. to discover and foster the education of boys and girls whose scientific skill, talent, and ability indicate enough potential creative originality to warrant the granting of scholarships;
2. to focus the attention of large numbers of scientifically gifted youths on the need for developing their scientific and research skill and knowledge in order that they can contribute to the rehabilitation of an insecure world and, with the aid of science, help the world to achieve peace; and
3. to aid in making American adults grow aware of the varied and vital roles played by science in world affairs and in the general welfare of our people. (W. Davis, 1951, p. 236)

Finalists were selected to travel to Washington, DC, and compete for the top scholarships.

In 1951, the Ford Foundation established The Fund for the Advancement of Education as a philanthropy to support the advancement of the field of education in American schools and colleges (The Fund for the Advancement of Education, 1957). The Fund focused on five programs that allowed students to move into college early:

1. a joint effort by three preparatory schools and three colleges (Harvard, Yale, and Princeton) in which grades 11–14 were treated as one continuous process;
2. the Atlanta Experiment in Articulation and Enrichment in School and College, which focused on enrichment;
3. the collaboration between Portland, OR, public school system and Reed College to identify exceptional students early and enrich their educational opportunities;

4. the School and College Study of Admission with Advanced Standing, which enriched and accelerated education in grades 11–14 by giving students college-level work in high school (this program became the Advanced Placement program in 1955 when the College Entrance Examination Board took over); and

5. the Program for Early Admission to College (The Fund for the Advancement of Education, 1957, pp. 2–5).

The Program for the Early Admission to College was formed through The Fund as one way to develop the diverse abilities of students. In the fall of 1951, 11 colleges and universities (an additional college was added later, making the total 12) accepted 420 early entrance freshmen students who were allowed to leave the typical “lockstep” system of American schooling and complete their education at a pace more appropriate to their needs (The Fund for the Advancement of Education, 1957). By the end of the 1950s, results of the program looked promising: All participating colleges deemed the program to be successful, all scholars outperformed their classmates (and comparison group) academically, difficulties adjusting to campus life (which were more common among the early entrance students than the comparison group) tended to be minor and were overcome quickly, and among the groups of students who had graduated, the early entrance group had more participants planning on attending graduate school (The Fund for the Advancement of Education, 1957). Financial support for the program ended by the end of the decade, but all of the participating colleges and universities except one decided to incorporate early admission policies into their programs.
The National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) reacted strongly to the Early Admission to College program when it was first announced (Meister, 1956) and developed a statement to its members opposing the program, stating that they would not support a program that curtailed students’ secondary education. The NASSP would:

present . . . the implications of the unsound practice of curtailing secondary education and the subsequent admission of students to college before graduation [and] point out as effectively and as forcibly as possible these dangers, even with the alluring inducement of funds provided by the Ford Foundation. [They] must make citizens generally aware of the sinister implications of such a program especially if a scholarship award is offered to their sons. (Meister, 1956, p. 221)

However, by 1956, the resulting findings showed that these students had excelled and “no serious educational tragedies have resulted. On the contrary, these early-admitted students have fared better than expected, in every way” (Meister, 1956, p. 221).

The Advanced Placement (AP) program began in 1953–1954 as part of the School and College Study of Admission with Advanced Standing—supported financially by The Fund for the Advancement of Education—and in 1955, the College Board took over the administration of the program (Douglas, 1959).

During the first school year, the first 18 schools offered AP courses. The next 2 years, the numbers increased to 38 and then 104, and by 1956–1957, it was at 212 schools. During 1957–1958, 356 schools offered AP courses to students (Keller, 1958).

In June 1954, the first conference focusing on the Advanced Placement program was held for high school and college history teachers.

During this period, quite a bit of excitement occurred surrounding the program: The AP program “has been called, and rightly so I believe, ‘one of the most encouraging recent innovations in education’” (Keller, 1958, p. 11). Dudley (1958), 1957–1958
director of the AP program, also described the growth of the AP program in the previous years and noted that:

The more mature level of study and discussion and examination demanded in the Advanced Placement classes provides the stimulus which our superior students need if they are to receive the education best suited to their high potential—for the very fast student, like the very slow student, needs a pace different from the average. (p. 1)

As one college freshman who had participated in the program shared:

Not only did Advance Placement work permit me to begin my college studies without having to fumble with the fundamentals in the two advanced courses I have, but it also oriented me both to a system of study and to an appreciation of what my immediate goals in studying should be. . . . It is disturbing to see other students who are willing and able to absorb concentrated advanced knowledge held back because they must spend half a year learning fundamentals that are rightly learned in high school. (Keller, 1958, pp. 7–8)

The number of AP exams taken each year grew greatly in the first 5 years of the program:

- in 1954, 500 students took 900 exams;
- in 1955, 900 students took 1,500 exams;
- in 1956, 1,200 students and 2,100 exams;
- in 1957, 2,100 students and 3,800 exams; and
- in 1958, 3,800 students and 6,800 exams (Keller, 1958).

By 1958, approximately 375 colleges and universities allowed students who had taken and passed AP courses/tests to qualify for advanced placement in college (usually at a sophomore starting place; College Entrance Examination Board, 1958). There were 13 AP exams at this time: Literature and English Composition, American History, European History, French, German 3, German 4, Latin 4, Latin 5, Spanish, Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry, and Physics (College Entrance Examination Board, 1958).
Keller (1958) put the program into perspective:

Six years ago the belief that something special should be done for able and ambitious students in the form of quality education was a small ground swell. The Advanced Placement Program came into being in those days as a national effort to provide challenging and rewarding experiences for superior students in both high schools and colleges. It had—and has—a firm foundation in basic academic disciplines and a simple structure. It was—and is—more than merely a Program concerned with able students. Developed in pre-Sputnik days, the Program, fortunately, was there when what had been a ground swell became a series of mighty waves. (p. 12)

Schools were participating in the AP program by the late 1950s. F. Hamilton Whipple (1958), principal of Memorial High School in New York, explained the two objectives of the program:

An Advanced Placement Program has as its first objective the stimulation of superior students in order to induce them to use their talents to the utmost. A second objective is advanced placement in college on the basis of Advanced Placement examinations prepared by the College Board and given in May of the senior year. (p. 24)

Memorial High School began offering AP courses in the spring of 1956, during which it identified rising seventh graders, ninth graders, and tenth graders to participate in the program (F. H. Whipple, 1958).

Teachers (Engelstein & Miller, 1958) also were impressed with this new program:

America’s security and future rests, to a great extent, upon the best development of the potentials of scholarship creativity and leadership in our young people. At present, when much attention is focused upon re-evaluating and redirecting education in terms of the maximum development of the able student, the Advanced Placement Program is one of the provocative and realistic approaches to the problem. By providing challenging experiences to meet the needs and abilities of these students the program is effectively serving the welfare of the nation. (p. 32)

At one high school, students used college-level materials and attended lectures at colleges and universities for “practice” (Engelstein & Miller, 1958). Engelstein and Miller (1958) stressed the importance of the entire school system buying in to the program, as
administrators, librarians, and all teachers need to be involved, and even went as far as suggesting that the AP program be extended to the elementary school level.

Midwood High School in New York offered a vertical AP program that began in the 10th grade and lasted for 3 years (Bernstein, 1958). Gifted students were divided into two groups: those who showed an interest in math and science and those with an interest in the humanities. All gifted students took the AP courses and exams in order to avoid repeating the material in college (Bernstein, 1958).

Another important program still in existence today also began in the mid-1950s. The National Merit Scholarship Corporation was established in 1955 to:

- identify and honor academically talented U.S. high school students;
- stimulate increased support for their education; and
- provide efficient and effective scholarship program management for organizations that wish to sponsor college undergraduate scholarships. (National Merit Scholarship Corporation, 2008, para. 2)

The National Merit Scholarship Program was an independent nonprofit whose entire focus was to locate high school seniors who would most profit from a college education (Stalnaker, 1957). In 1956, the National Merit Scholarship Corporation granted its first 4-year college scholarships to 556 students designated as Merit Scholars using a nationwide screening program. Approximately 5,000 students applied, and the winners were selected by a committee of eight educators who ranked them on

- rank in class,
- academic ability,
- motivation-breadth of interest-accomplishment,
• personality-social relations/leadership, and
• scholastic aptitude test (Holland & Stalnaker, 1958, p. 9).

The committee looked at students who were “the most promising students for college work” (Holland & Stalnaker, 1958, p. 10). According to research at the time (Holland & Stalnaker, 1958), the average male Merit Scholars were 18 years old, lived in a populated state, and attended a large high school. Males were usually the oldest child and had plans to enter the scientific field. The average female Merit Scholars were 17 years old, lived in a populated state, and attended a large high school. Females usually planned to enter the teaching or scientific field. The average stipend awarded the first year was $630 (Stalnaker, 1957).

Brickman (1958) recognized that teachers during this period were concerned about the exceptionally gifted and tried to meet their special needs. He acknowledged the importance of the National Merit Program, as it provided a competitive scholarship program “to give qualified students an opportunity to go to college.” (p. 124).

These special scholarship and national programs provided outlets for gifted and talented students to grow and reach their potential. As Stalnaker (1957) summarized:

If national scholarship and talent-searching programs can stimulate the interest of the country in our able youth, encourage high school students to do better work, and increase the number of scholarships offered, they will serve the schools and the nation. (p. 266)

Prior to these programs’ establishment, America’s brightest students had few—if any—opportunities on the national level to develop their strengths and challenge themselves.
Mental Hygiene

In addition to the need for academic programming for gifted students, scholars (Burnside, 1942b; French, 1959; Johnson, 1943; Laycock, 1940; Terman & Oden, 1954) stressed the importance of developing their mental health. Gifted children matured mentally much faster than they did physically, which often caused issues for them (Boardman & Hildreth, 1948). Problems could arise from specialized (one-sided) interests, the exploitation of gifted children, the failure of children to work to their ability, and parent contributions (Boardman & Hildreth, 1948). Noting once again the importance of gifted students’ future leadership abilities, Boardman and Hildreth (1948) stressed: “If these children who have the capacity to become leaders are to develop leadership qualities they must be aided in developing superior personal and social traits along with high intellect and creative ability” (p. 41).

Hollingworth (1942) described gifted students as a whole, indicating that students with IQs between 130 and 150 were in the “‘optimum’ range of intelligence, if personal happiness is being considered” (p. 265). These students tended to be physically superior, were emotionally well balanced, and had opportunities for leadership. However, she indicated that those with an IQ of 160 or above often had “special problems of development which are correlated with personal isolation” (Hollingworth, 1942, p. 266). Citing the need for what she called emotional education, Hollingworth (1942) described five problems highly gifted students faced: “(1) to find enough hard and interesting work at school; (2) to suffer fools gladly; (3) to keep from becoming negativistic toward authority; (4) to keep from becoming hermits; (5) to avoid the formation of habits of extreme chicanery” (p. 299). Hollingworth (1942) concluded that gifted students need
guidance: “It is during childhood that the gifted boy or girl is at the mercy of guardians whose duty it is to know his nature and his needs much more fully than they do now [italics in original]” (p. 283).

During this time, scholars felt individual guidance should be made available to students, as well as their parents (Burnside, 1942b). Laycock (1940) believed that the advanced curriculum and teaching methods could be causes for frustration and argued that students also needed a sense of self-worth, a contribution to the welfare or others, and freedom to pursue various areas of interest in all aspects, including schoolwork, play, and future career.

Strangely enough, the gifted, too, often have acute problems of adjustment in achieving a sense of personal worth. The desire not to be different and not to be thought a pansy drive many a gifted child to the level of mediocrity in mental tasks. (Laycock, 1940, p. 245)

Strang (1951) discussed the importance of maintaining mental health among the gifted:

First, undeveloped talent is expensive to society: it represents a lost contribution. Second, misdirected ability or talent, as in the case of the criminal or the mentally disturbed leader, constitutes a social menace: intelligence and talent can be misused for aggressive, destructive purposes. Third, the maladjusted individual himself fails to attain the deep satisfaction that accompanies self-fulfillment and service. (p. 131)

Strang (1951) noted that gifted children tended to be more emotionally stable than nongifted children, but gifted children do have the same problems all children encounter as they grow up, some of which may be experienced more intensely due to their intelligence. These included feelings of inferiority and inadequacy, unsatisfying relationships, and failure to realize intellectual potential. In addition, she provided an overview of conditions that often led to gifted students’ maladjustment, such as parental
pressure and overemphasis on the student’s intelligence, parental indifference or neglect, lack of opportunity to develop a philosophy of life, financial limitations, poor instruction in thinking and study methods, and an unchallenging curriculum.

Researchers were in agreement that, as a group, gifted students had better mental health than average children (Cutts & Moseley, 1957). However, their mental hygiene was important and teachers were provided with suggested classroom principles to practice in order to help keep “pupils emotionally well” (Cutts & Moseley, 1957, p. 173). These principles included liking (because teachers could not be called on to love) every child in the classroom and treating students with affection, accepting students for who they are, recognizing students’ achievements and strengths, providing security for all children and helping them fit in, allowing students to express themselves, and building a friendly classroom atmosphere.

Sanford and French (1955) called upon schools to offer guidance programs, diverse curriculum experiences, a variety of instructional materials, a rich program of extraclass activities, more real-life work experience, and additional staff to facilitate the education of nonacademic students.

Sumption and Luecking (1960) included a section on mental hygiene in their book, *Education of the Gifted*. In it, they described gifted students as a group as being “generally superior to typical children in their age group in emotional maturity, adaptability, strength of character, and wholesomeness of social attitudes” (Sumption & Luecking, 1960, p. 132), and noted the loss to both the individual and society when a child has poor mental health. Problems attributed to poor mental health included a limited curriculum to which the gifted child must adapt his academic ability and a low
socioeconomic background. The authors suggested three types of guidance for gifted students: personal, educational, and vocational (Sumption & Luecking, 1960).

Vocational guidance was a tangential need of the gifted in addition to ensuring they had good mental health. Terman and Oden (1954) discussed the need for guidance and counseling in light of the fact that 40% of students who were capable of attending college did not go or did not graduate even after attending. They cited two issues as the cause of “this appalling wastage of brainpower at a time when there is an acute shortage of well trained minds in nearly every field of science, teaching, scholarship, and business” (Terman & Oden, 1954, p. 231): failure to identify students as gifted and the lack of counseling provided to them in schools. They stressed the need for vocational counseling, as this would help students prepare for future education and their eventual job.

M. G. Fox (1953) described the guidance services department at Evanston Township High School in Illinois. Although guidance services were available to all students, the program provided counseling in both academic and extracurricular areas for the gifted. Like Terman and Oden (1954), she emphasized the program’s career counseling offered in the students’ junior year, which helped them make plans for college and their future career. The guidance program also noticed when students were not meeting their potential academically: “Then counseling is stressed with the hope that the pupil will realize the waste of his ability and want to do something about it” (M. G. Fox, 1953, p. 81).
Scholars noted the need for guidance programs for gifted students during the 1940s and 1950s. They stressed the importance of educating the whole child—not just focusing entirely on his or her academic capabilities.

**Administrative Issues**

Administrative issues became a factor when deciding which educational practices should be implemented in a school. Because of the small number of gifted and talented students compared to the total school population (1–10% of the total population, depending on the school’s definition), issues often arose concerning the administrative planning of meeting their needs (Sumption & Luecking, 1960). The administration of gifted programs often fell on the shoulders of the school superintendent, but policies were usually enacted by the school board members (DeHaan & Havighurst, 1957; Sumption & Luecking, 1960). The support of these people was of utmost importance:

> No problem is likely to succeed unless it has community support. Such support will normally be reflected in the board. If the superintendent is not able or willing to counsel with and advise the board, then the program will be seriously handicapped if not a complete failure. In turn, if the staff does not understand or is unsympathetic to the program, it is probably doomed to failure. (Sumption & Luecking, 1960, p. 160)

At the school level, principals were in charge of administering how gifted education programs would be implemented. They provided a leadership role in developing policies to be followed at the school and for ensuring that district policies were followed for gifted education services (Sumption & Luecking, 1960). Principals were in charge of coordinating administrative issues such as instructional schedules, teacher responsibilities, and student assignment to the program, as well as providing the needed materials, equipment, and facilities needed (Sumption & Luecking, 1960).
However, administrators had to rely on the teachers themselves to carry out the aims of the programs within the classroom (Krueger, Allen, Ebeling, & Roberts, 1951).

In thinking through administrative issues that came with developing a program for gifted students, the following questions had to be asked:

- What personnel in the school should be responsible for the program?
- What budget provisions need to be made for the program?
- What policy statements need to be made?
- What materials and facilities must be provided to teachers to carry out the programs?
- Should classroom enrichment be the primary focus? If so, what materials and assistance need to be provided for the teacher in order to carry this out in her classroom?
- Should special groupings be used within the classroom, within a single school, or within the school system?
- Should gifted children be accelerated? If so, how should this procedure be administered? (DeHaan & Havighurst, 1957, p. 72)

Sumption and Luecking (1960) also outlined questions that administrators needed to consider when implementing gifted programs. These included:

- Is the program system-wide?
- Is there an effective screen program for the discovery of gifted children?
- Are the responsibilities of all personnel working in the program specifically defined and their relationship to the regular professional staff and to each other clearly set forth?
• Is there a carefully designed plan for selecting teachers for the program?
• Are provisions made for orienting teachers to the program?
• Is provision made for all staff personnel to contribute to the development and success of the program?
• Are lines of communication established between the school and the parents of children in the program?
• Is there an adequate pupil guidance program?
• Are there adequate and suitable physical facilities and equipment?
• Are provisions made for periodic evaluation of the program? (pp. 179–180)

Evaluating whether or not a school’s gifted education program met these criteria was an important step for an administrator to take to ensure its success.

Another administrative issue was financial in nature, although gifted programs were found to incur the least amount of additional expenditure for programs designed for exceptional children (DeHaan & Havighurst, 1957; Sumption & Luecking, 1960). The majority of the expense was typically for the additional personnel needed for gifted education programs, including additional teachers, supervisors, guidance workers, psychologists, and administrators (Sumption & Luecking, 1960).

During this period, Baltimore schools encountered a number of issues when providing services for gifted students in the district, such as determining identification practices, choosing whether or not to segregate students, establishing which educational practice was best (acceleration vs. enrichment), aligning the program from elementary school to junior high and then high school, procuring different materials for gifted
classes, locating experienced teachers, and finding the financial means to carry out a program for these students (Weglein, 1941).

Rural schools encountered difficulties in developing gifted education programs due to their location (Meister, 1956). Suggestions for schools in rural areas included acceleration, correspondence courses, district-wide consultants and special services, and individualized instruction on the part of master teachers (Meister, 1956).

Administrative issues played a factor in determining what kind of program would (or would not) be offered to gifted students. Deciding how to meet their needs had to be balanced with the everyday realities of funding issues and experienced teachers, to name a few. School districts and schools themselves had to take a lot of factors into account when determining what to do for their brightest students.

*Teacher Education and Characteristics*

Teachers, next to parents, are in the most important position, as they exert tremendous influence on students’ development (Ryan, Strang, & Witty, 1951). “Truly, the teacher of a heterogeneous [sic] class must be Superman himself” (Meister, 1951b, p. 31). Teachers were asked to teach a classroom full of students of all ability levels, and too often didn’t receive any extra training, especially on the needs of gifted students. The professional development and training offered to teachers of the gifted did not keep pace with the training given to teachers of other exceptional children (Justman, 1951). Oftentimes, schools assigned gifted students to teachers with the most experience, and these classes were considered an “easy” load (Justman, 1951). As gifted education became more widespread, some administrators argued that because teachers often didn’t
get preservice training about these students, school districts should provide in-service training (Scharer, 1952).

It is important to look at the various state standards required for teaching all exceptional students during this time period—defined as students with special needs or gifted students. “The areas in which the least number of states issue special certificates are for teachers of the blind, deaf, socially maladjusted, and the gifted (Mackie & Dunn, 1953, p. 271). Unfortunately, only Pennsylvania offered a special credential for teachers of the gifted at the mid-century point, and only two colleges had a sequence of preparation for teachers of gifted students (although it may be interesting to note that 40 colleges offered a sequence of preparation for the mentally retarded; Mackie & Dunn, 1953).

Wilson (1951b), however, cited different findings, although it is more likely that the two studies defined “sequence of preparation” differently. In a study conducted by the National Society for Crippled Children and Adults and the United States Office of Education, six institutions were found to provide preparation for teaching the gifted, through the use of one three-credit course at five of the universities and three courses of varying credit at the other. Wilson (1951b) located the six institutions to determine what courses were being offered. The University of Miami, Illinois State Normal University, Northern Illinois State Teachers College, the University of Minnesota, Hunter College, and Pennsylvania State College offered courses that focused on the nature and needs of gifted students, as well as educational provisions for them (Wilson, 1951b). In addition, 122 institutions reported offering a general course for students on the education or
psychology of exceptional students, in which gifted students might have been covered (Wilson, 1951b).

Members of a graduate class in the education of the gifted were asked to discuss the characteristics they felt teachers of the gifted should have (Wilson, 1951b). Overwhelmingly, the students responded that teachers of the gifted need to be gifted themselves. In addition, the graduate students felt that characteristics such as tolerance, good will, humor, and fairness were important for teachers to have when teaching the gifted, more so than any other students (Wilson, 1951b).

A total of 14,000 students submitted letters in response to the Quiz Kids radio program’s contest on “The Teacher Who Has Helped Me Most” (Ryan et al., 1951). The traits mentioned most often, in order of frequency, were:

- cooperative, democratic attitude;
- kindliness and consideration for the individual;
- patience;
- wide interests;
- pleasing personal appearance and manner;
- fairness and impartiality;
- sense of humor;
- good disposition and consistent behavior;
- interest in pupils’ problems;
- flexibility;
- use of recognition and praise; and
- unusual proficiency in teaching a particular subject. (Ryan et al., 1951, p. 107)
Teachers of the gifted were those who had to “have the ability to recognize
giftedness, to create an atmosphere favorable to its development, [and] to provide
conditions that give it a chance to emerge and blossom” (Ryan et al., 1951, p. 113).
Teachers were responsible for recognizing early talent, developing special ability,
providing a stimulating learning environment, guiding class discussions, combining
group and individualized instruction, providing a variety of activities in every field, and
being aware of conditions that might affect learning (Ryan et al., 1951).

Teachers of the gifted also had a great responsibility for ensuring that their
students became the future leaders of the United States:

It is of the utmost importance that the teacher of the gifted in our schools be able
to convey, along with the richer intellectual and emotional experiences he
provides for these children, also an understanding of the greater social
responsibility and ethical integrity which democratic leadership entails. (Selvi,
1953, p. 499).

Strang (1954a) noted the importance of the teacher and felt that teachers of the
gifted needed to understand the following:

• who gifted children are and how to identify them early;
• how they are influenced by the contemporary culture and other environmental
  factors;
• what their characteristics are and how they learn;
• what kind of education will best meet their needs;
• how many institutions for the education of teachers prepare their students to help
gifted children realize their potentialities; and
• some of the main issues and problems in the education of the gifted. (p. 210)
N. Davis (1954) argued that teachers of the gifted also should have experience with all children on the spectrum, as working with other students provides insight into gifted students, and reminded teachers that “a gifted child is still a child” (p. 221).

Cutts and Moseley (1957) charged teachers with the important task of teaching gifted children, reminding them:

if the education of a bright child is left to chance, if he is challenged only part of the time, if he is allowed to start each year far below his level of achievement, he will surely be handicapped in his development. (p. 10)

Oliver (1960) summarized goals for teachers he felt were important when developing programs for the gifted. In order to individualize instruction for gifted students, teachers needed to have a broad cultural background; have the ability to help students open their minds; understand when to guide students, when to direct, and when to allow students to proceed on their own and “get out of the way”; and encourage new ideas (Oliver, 1960, p. 336).

Sumption and Luecking (1960) listed qualifications they felt teachers of the gifted should be expected to have. These included:

• superior intelligence,
• interest in students,
• creativity,
• resourcefulness in method,
• broad knowledge,
• diversified personal interests,
• good physical and emotional health,
• understanding of democracy, and
• high personal qualifications (e.g., dress attractively, set a good example for students, good manners).

However, Sumption and Luecking (1960) cautioned:

Merely checking off a list of qualifications, scanning a transcript of credits showing college preparation, and determining previous success in teaching in some fashion will not, in and of themselves, guarantee the selection of a teacher who will be consistently successful in working with gifted students. There is something beyond what can be put onto paper and analyzed; there is the quality of the person himself which must be judged by the administrator or supervisor in charge of employing teachers. It is that indefinable spark that makes the difference between people of similar preparation and experiences; it is that nameless attribute that makes one person a stimulating, inspiring teacher, and another individual a droning bore. (pp. 248–249)

Summary

The state of educational programming for gifted education during 1940–1960 may best be described as follows:

There is a real and growing interest in gifted children throughout the country. But special education for the brilliant child is still not implemented with time and money to nearly the extent of that for the retarded or physically handicapped child. Unless the advantages to the country of education for the gifted, and the need of the gifted children themselves for special provisions can be demonstrated, not only in New York and other large cities, but in all parts of the country, it may be many years before these children, the potential leaders of America, have the opportunity to develop their abilities that they deserve. (Brumbaugh, 1958, p. 195)

Gifted Education Publications

Between 1940–1960, the field of gifted education experienced somewhat of a resurgence in the interest of educating gifted students, especially in the late 1950s after the launch of Sputnik. This was a period of “rapid dissemination of knowledge” about gifted children thanks to the numerous publications that were available (Witty, 1951e, p. 7). Books and professional journal articles both abounded with information about gifted
students, especially at the end of the 1950s, allowing one author to claim, “more articles concerning the gifted have appeared in the last three years than in the preceding thirty years” (French, 1959, p. v).

A number of important and well-known books were published in these two decades. In 1942, *Children Above 180 IQ*, by Leta Hollingworth, was published posthumously. The book focused on 12 case studies of profoundly gifted children, and was considered a definitive resource on the topic. In 1947, Terman and Oden’s *The Gifted Child Grows Up* was published, becoming the fourth volume in Terman’s *Genetic Studies of Genius*. Witty (1951e, 1959b) felt that Terman and Oden’s book was the most significant piece of work during the 1940s to help raise general awareness about the gifted, and felt the book revealed the neglect of gifted students in the United States.

In 1950, the Educational Policies Commission published *Education of the Gifted*, a book read widely among educators (Witty, 1959b). The Commission had published a book titled *Education for All American Youth* in 1944, but had left out gifted students; thus, the publication of *Education of the Gifted* a few years later remedied that omission (Kandel, 1957). The book discussed gifted students’ role in a democracy, the waste of talent in America, and the identification and education of gifted students.

In 1951, the American Association for Gifted Children published *The Gifted Child*, edited by Paul Witty. The book was comprehensive in nature, and focused on identification and education of gifted students, the Terman studies, teachers of gifted students, mental hygiene, and program examples, among other topics. In a lecture, Terman (1954a) offered praise:

> the best survey of thought and action in this field of education is the book entitled *The Gifted Child*, written by many authors and published in 1951 (16). In
planning for and sponsoring this book, The American Association for Gifted Children has rendered a great service to education. (p. 227)

At the end of the decade, *Education for the Gifted* (Henry, 1958) was published as the fifty-seventh yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education. It was the first yearbook that specifically focused on gifted and talented students since the publication of the twenty-third yearbook in 1924 titled *The Education of Gifted Children* (G. M. Whipple, 1924), indicating the revived interest in the topic thanks to the launch of Sputnik.

Professional journals also were used as outlets for sharing information about gifted children. Witty (1951c, p. 65) reviewed the number of articles published about gifted children between 1940–1948. Results are shown in Table 2. The highest number of articles appeared toward the beginning of the decade, with interest falling during World War II. Using Periodicals Index Online, a recent search of journals that published articles with a keyword of “gifted” between 1940–1960 resulted in a list of 548 articles. An additional search using “talented” as the keyword resulted in an additional 127 articles.

In reviewing journal articles for this dissertation, it is clear that a wide variety of professional journals were willing to publish articles on gifted children and gifted education during the 1940s and 1950s. For purposes of this dissertation, the researcher located articles in the professional journals listed in Table 3. Frequency count for each journal also is shown.
### Table 2

*Articles Published on Gifted Children 1940–1948*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Articles Published</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
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<td>33</td>
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<td>1945</td>
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<tr>
<td>1946</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1947</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 3

*Professional Journals and Frequency of Articles 1940–1960*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Journal Title</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>American Journal of Orthopsychology</em></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>American Psychologist</em></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science</em></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Atlantic Monthly</em></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>British Journal of Educational Psychology</em></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>California Journal of Educational Research</em></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>California Journal of Secondary Education</em></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The Clearing House</em></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Educational Administration and Supervision</em></td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Educational and Psychological Measurement</em></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Educational Leadership</em></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Educational Research Bulletin</em></td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Elementary School Journal</em></td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Exceptional Children</em></td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Gifted Child Quarterly</em></td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>High Points</em></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>International Review of Education)</em></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Journal of Consulting Psychology</em></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Journal of Educational Psychology</em></td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Journal of Educational Research</em></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Journal of Educational Sociology</em></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Journal of Experimental Education</em></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The Journal of Genetic Psychology</em></td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Journal of Higher Education</em></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Journal of Negro Education</em></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Journal of Psychology</em></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Continues*
During the 1940s and 1950s, articles that appeared in the journals—both research and descriptive—typically covered topics such as characteristics of gifted students, attitudes, identification, educational provisions, psychological aspects, and teacher education. These topical themes appear to be consistent throughout the two-decade period.

A number of special issues were published during these decades. In 1941, *Teachers College Record* published a special issue with an emphasis on democratic principles and leadership issues as related to gifted students, characteristics of gifted students, educational programming, and administrative issues in the schools.

In 1948, *Understanding the Child* published a special issue called “The Gifted Child.” This issue also included articles on characteristics of gifted students, a review of the data from Terman’s longitudinal study, a follow-up interview with the parents of one
of Hollingworth’s high-IQ case studies, adjustment problems of the gifted, an article on identification, a summary of the American Association for Gifted Children’s work, and a bibliography of gifted resources.

In 1954, the *Journal of Teacher Education* published a special issue that included articles on the gifted child in society, psychological aspects and characteristics of gifted students, teachers of the gifted, educational programming, and guidance for the gifted. *The School Review* also featured a special issue on gifted students in 1957 that covered topics such as educating the gifted, developing talent, and the manpower shortage. In 1958, *School and Society* published a special section on the gifted, and in 1959, the same journal published a full issue on the topic. Both covered educational provisions for and characteristics of gifted students.

The publications in the 1950s also covered similar topics as those found in 1940s, but with a greater emphasis on programming for gifted students. With the passage of the National Science Foundation Act in 1950 and the public outcry after the 1957 launch of Sputnik came the emphasis on math and science curriculum in the schools. Due to this increased interest in locating and educating the United States’ future mathematicians and scientists, articles focused on curriculum and program effects in the schools, as well as who should teach math and science for the gifted and how to identify students in these areas (see, for example, Fehr, 1954; Passow & Brooks, 1959; Witty & Bloom, 1954, 1955). In addition, educational provisions for the gifted were discussed in journals such as *Exceptional Children* and the *NASSP Bulletin*, typically in the form of descriptive articles (e.g., Brumbaugh, 1958; Dodes, 1959; Gallagher & Crowder, 1957; Haskew, 1956; Pregler, 1954).
One finds similar topics covered within the periodicals during the 1940s and 1950s. The journals tended to examine characteristics of gifted students, attitudes, identification, educational provisions, psychological aspects, and teacher education, with articles on the educational provisions increasing in number during the 1950s.

The 1940–1960 era typically has been overlooked—or mentioned only briefly—in historical overviews of the field, with the exception of the events surrounding Sputnik (e.g., see Gallagher & Weiss, 1979; Hildenbrand, 1981; Tannenbaum, 1983). However, this was a period during which five groundbreaking books were published that brought an awareness of gifted children to educators in general. In addition, professional journals welcomed articles that focused on gifted education—well before the frenzy to locate and educate America’s best and brightest that came about after the 1957 launch of Sputnik.

*National Organizations That Were Advocating for Gifted Education*

During the 1940s and 1950s, various organizations were advocating for gifted children. In some publications, local organizations were mentioned, including The Metropolitan Association for the Study of the Gifted (New York), the Ohio Association for Gifted Children, and The Pennsylvania Association for the Study of Mentally Gifted Children and Youth (N. Davis, 1954; Sumption & Luecking, 1960; Wilson, 1953a). However, two national organizations were formed to advocate for gifted children and their education. Although various state organizations are mentioned briefly in the literature of this era, the national organizations became the voice of the field.
The American Association for Gifted Children was established on September 6, 1946, in New York City for the purpose of “recognizing, appreciating, and stimulating creative work among gifted children” (Williamson, 1948, p. 53). The organization’s leaders decided to form an organization:

- to help teachers and others understand and help one group of children who seemed not to be getting the consideration they need—the gifted children. The founders of this new association felt that in a real sense here was minority group that should be identified, understood, and worked with in such a way as to enable them to contribute most effectively to themselves and to our society. (“Editorial: Understanding the Gifted Child,” 1948, p. 33)

The first board meeting was held on November 21, 1946 with the following leadership: Charles Coburn, Honorary President; Harold F. Clark, President; W. Carson Ryan, Vice-President; Pauline B. Williamson, Secretary; Ruth Strang, Treasurer; and Joseph H. Collins, Counsel. Terman later became Honorary Vice-President.

Applications for membership to the organization had to be approved by the board members, and membership was open to anyone in the book publishing industry, schools, or any other organization that focused on children (Williamson, 1948, 1953). At this meeting, Williamson (1948) noted the group discussed future plans it had in mind, including the development of a yearbook (for scholarship funds and to help fund the organization); writing articles; and organizing a Department for Gifted Children within the National Education Association.

The first annual meeting of the American Association for Gifted Children was held on November 14, 1947. At this meeting, the members discussed outlets in which articles on gifted children could be published to help them disseminate information about this group of children. In addition, other discussions included:
identifying gifted children; ways of helping teachers and parents to understand their problems; the relationship of the Association to industries and professional organizations seeking personnel with special talents, to organizations offering scholarships and awards, and to motion pictures and radio; and proposals for publications. (Williamson, 1948, p. 54)

The organization had many supporters, among them Paul Witty (1951c), who noted, “It is hoped that the work of the American Association for Gifted Children and other organizations will lead to more widespread efforts to care for the gifted” (p. 79).

The American Association for Gifted Children was responsible for a large number of activities focused on gifted children, such as:

- developing a widespread understanding of the nature and needs of gifted children,
- training more effective teachers to work with this population,
- improving relationships between the school staff and parents,
- developing more stimulating curricula, and
- conducting more research on gifted students (Clark & Williamson, 1951, p. v).

The organization received letters from parents and teachers indicating a need for a nontechnical publication that contained practical advice for working with gifted students, and voted unanimously to develop a book (Clark & Williamson, 1951). Witty chaired the organization’s publications committee that took on this project and spent 2 years developing it. The resulting publication, The Gifted Child (Witty, 1951b), became one of the most important contributions to the field.

The organization’s leaders worked hard to educate others about gifted children. Pauline Williamson, Secretary of the American Association for Gifted Children, working in conjunction with the editors of The Journal of Teacher Education, prepared a symposium on the gifted child featured in the journal (Strang, 1954a). Strang (1954a)
noted the importance of the teacher and indicated that teachers needed to understand the gifted child.

Williamson (1953) described the reason for the growth of the organization, which indicated how busy the leaders and members were, advocating for the needs of gifted students:

Members of AAGC are responsible for its growth through: Preparation and distribution of literature including bulletins, articles, and the book, *The Gifted Child*; conferences with local, national and international groups; speeches; informal discussions; seminars; workshops; courses for teachers; administration of special schools; research; cooperation with other professional groups on joint programs; and correspondence with parents, professional, business and governmental leaders, as well as with administrators, teachers, and students in universities, colleges, high schools, and elementary schools. (p. 123)

*National Association for Gifted Children*

The National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) was founded as a nonprofit organization in 1954 with three objectives:

- the formation of an association,
- the publication of a journal, and
- the establishment of a fund for [the] gifted with which to sponsor research and aid school systems who wished to embark on programs for their gifted. (Isaacs, 1957a, p. 2)

Ann Fabe Isaacs founded the organization when, as she described: “teachers and other educators noticed that some children who had been identified as superior in preschool years failed to maintain this level of performance in later school years. They decided to learn the reason for this disappointing behavior” (Isaacs, 1968, p. 32). NAGC’s original goals were expanded into four objectives:
to aid schools in providing more effective programs and practices for the gifted; to help parents see the need to give understanding and encouragement to their children and to plan programs designed for their benefit; to reach the gifted themselves and to provide them with insight into their potentialities and the need to use these for the general good; to educate the public to appreciate the gifted and the contributions they are capable of making. (Isaacs, 1968, p. 32)

*The Gifted Child Newsletter* was published in January of 1957, the first issue of what later became *Gifted Child Quarterly*. NAGC planned to publish the newsletter for one year and then transition it into a quarterly journal once funds were established. By the next issue of the newsletter (April of 1957), a tentative board for the journal was proposed and listed.

Like the American Association for Gifted Children, NAGC held annual meetings, most often held as a joint meeting with another organization (e.g., a joint meeting with American Association for the Advancement of Science [AAAS] was held December 26–27, 1956, in New York City). Membership was open to anyone interested in helping gifted and talented students develop their strengths (Isaacs, 1968).

NAGC grew slowly, in Isaacs’ mind. By 1968, 14 years after it was founded, there were only 12 chapter affiliates throughout the United States; Isaacs (1968) was somewhat disappointed, as she felt there should be that many affiliates in Ohio (where NAGC’s headquarters were located). However, with the only journal devoted entirely to the needs of gifted students during the 1950s, NAGC helped to provide the leadership and advocacy needed for the field of gifted education.

**Summary**

By the mid-1950s, these organizations had become prominent in the United States and were working to advocate for the nation’s most talented youth. Witty (1954)
reminded readers that there had been a resurgence in gifted education in the past 8 years. In 1948, James B. Conant shared: “I wish some organization identified in the public mind with concern for all American youth would take some dramatic action to demonstrate a vigorous interest in the gifted boy or girl” (p. 51). Witty (1954) pointed out the American Association for Gifted Children and other organizations would help lead the way.

Conclusion

In looking at the context of the 1940s and 1950s, one finds the United States involved in World War II (1941–1945), the Korean conflict (1950–1953), a space race (trying to catch up after the launch of Sputnik in 1957), and a fight to maintain its leadership status in the world. It is against this backdrop of turmoil that gifted education during this period can be viewed.

Little was done in the way of federal or state legislation specifically for gifted students’ education during the 1940s and 1950s. However, the passage of the National Science Foundation Act in 1950 and the National Defense Education Act in 1958 helped bring unprecedented attention to the plight of gifted and talented students, especially in the areas of math and science. The launch of Sputnik was a wake-up call for the United States, which had never dreamed that its enemy, Russia, would beat the U.S. to space. With the scramble to catch up, gifted students were the beneficiaries of the new focus on educating the best and the brightest in hopes of developing future leaders, as well as mathematicians and scientists.

Although this was a time in which there was a growing interest on the gifted child throughout the country, compared to the financial and legislative support provided to special education, it was still lacking (Brumbaugh, 1958). The United States had a vested
interest in developing the talents and potential of its gifted students; however, their needs were not addressed in a manner that provided for special educational provisions for them in all schools.

During the 1940s and 1950s, schools addressed gifted students’ needs by implementing some form of enrichment, acceleration, or special classes (or a hybrid model of these models). In addition to meeting the students’ needs in school with programs such as the Advanced Placement program, talent search programs such as the Science Talent Search and the National Merit Scholarship Program were implemented during this period, and provided students with outlets in which they could challenge themselves and reach their potential.

Publications abounded on the topic of gifted children and their needs during this period, providing information on topics such as characteristics of gifted students, attitudes, identification procedures, educational provisions, psychological aspects of gifted students, and teacher education. In addition, two national organizations were founded with the specific purpose of advocating for gifted students and spreading the word about best practices to use with them in- and outside of school.

The context of this period, with the turmoil going on in the world and the United States’ belief that it had to remain a leading presence on the world stage, explains its desire to locate and educate the gifted. However, although information about these students was researched and shared and curriculum was developed, without a federal mandate for educating these students in a manner that met their needs, it was almost impossible to guarantee system-wide change in every school and district in the nation—no matter how important it was to do so.
CHAPTER FIVE

Individuals Who Influenced Change in Gifted Education

In order for a field to progress, individuals must be willing to take on leadership roles and help provide direction for the field to take. Gifted education may have been present in one form or another during 1940–1960, but it would have remained stagnant if not for the men and women who stepped up and took leadership positions and encouraged others to take note of gifted students’ needs. The second research question, “Who were the individuals who influenced change in the field of gifted education during the period from 1940 to 1960?,” is the focus of this chapter. Individual contributions will be viewed through the lenses of contributions to legislation, educational practices, publications, and advocacy efforts.

_Gifted Education Legislation_

During the 1940–1960 period, very little legislation was passed that supported the education of gifted students. One of the only pieces that impacted gifted students, albeit indirectly, was the GI Bill of Rights (U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs, 2009). Providing educational benefits to war veterans, it helped increase the interest in higher education. James B. Conant, president of Harvard when the bill was passed (1944), was a critic of it, assuming that it might dilute the quality of college applicants and students, but the bill was deemed a success (Olson, 1968).

However, in 1958, a little more than a decade later, former critic James B. Conant, by then President Emeritus of Harvard, chaired a conference of the National
Education Association that focused on the problems of finding and educating gifted and talented students. The conference, held in Washington, DC, and attended by more than 200 people, discussed many important issues, including society’s responsibility of providing for the academically talented, community acceptance of gifted programs, programs in secondary schools, strengths and weaknesses of grouping models, and coordination at the local level. In addition to these topics, the importance of legislation was discussed. Attendees argued that legislative provisions and planning were needed to have successful gifted and talented programs, in addition to financial support (Conant, 1958). Conant helped lead the rally cry for quality education for gifted students and supported legislation to do so.

The National Science Foundation Act (NSFA, 1950) was passed in 1950, with the support of President Truman, who had vetoed an earlier version of the Act. The Act, with its promotion of and support for research and education in the sciences, impacted the nation’s brightest students because schools focused on developing more challenging curriculum and encouraged students to pursue careers in these areas. Truman’s support of the Foundation was invaluable. If he had not understood the purpose in developing support for the sciences, the National Science Foundation might not have been created, and there might not have been as big of a push for developing science knowledge in the decade following the war. In a statement made when he signed the bill, Truman shared the history behind the Act:

The establishment of the National Science Foundation is a major landmark in the history of science in the United States. Its establishment climaxes 5 years of effort on the part of the executive branch, the Congress, and leading private citizens. Three months after I assumed the Presidency in 1945, I received a report . . . [that] recommended the creation of an agency, such as the National Science Foundation, to promote the development of new scientific knowledge and new
scientific talent. It was assumed at that time that the world was close to an enduring peace. The Foundation was to be an instrument in promoting reconstruction, and in maintaining our wartime momentum in scientific progress.

The fact that the world has not found postwar security in no way lessens the need for the National Science Foundation. On the contrary, it underscores this need. . . .

The Nation’s strength is being tested today on many fronts. The National Science Foundation faces a great challenge to advance basic scientific research and to develop a national research policy. Its work should have the complete support of the American people. (Truman, 1950, para. 3–4, 8)

Without Truman’s support, the establishment of a foundation similar to the National Science Foundation may have taken even longer and more rigorous science curriculum might not have been developed to cultivate the potential of gifted students in the sciences.

President Eisenhower also was an important advocate for developing science talent. When the Russians launched Sputnik in 1957, he met with advisors to discuss what should be done. In a conference held with his advisors on October 16, 1957, Eisenhower questioned how the Russians approached science and was informed that they focused on science as an important tool to getting ahead and encouraged students to enjoy studying it (Goodpaster, 1957). It was agreed that the United States needed to follow Russia’s lead and develop its scientific talent. Without the President’s support, this would have been difficult. One advisor, Dr. Land, questioned whether:

there [was] not some way in which the President could inspire [the] country—setting out [the] youth particularly on a whole of scientific adventures. If he were able to do that, there would be tremendous returns. (Goodpaster, 1957, p. 2)

Eisenhower confirmed he would be willing to “try to create a spirit—an attitude toward science similar to that held toward various kinds of athletics in his youth” (Goodpaster, 1957, p. 2).
Eisenhower convened the National Committee for the Development of Scientists and Engineers in 1956, prior to Sputnik’s launch. The name changed to the President’s Committee on Scientists and Engineers in May 1957 (“U.S. President’s Committee on Scientists and Engineers,” n.d.). In September 1958, almost a year after Sputnik, President Eisenhower signed into law the National Defense Education Act, which focused on developing the science talent in the nation’s youth.

Soon after, the United States named the month of October National Science Youth Month and encouraged nationwide support for it. The chair of the President’s Committee on Scientists and Engineers, Dr. Howard L. Bevis, called for the country’s support:

On October 4, 1957, the world was startled with the news that Russia had sent a satellite into orbit. In the wake of that news, our need for more scientists and engineers became a national concern. In the year since, the American people have become aware that this nation can no longer afford to delay pre-professional training of potential scientists or engineers until they reach college. Preparation of informed citizens of tomorrow, whether or not they ever become scientists or engineers, must begin in junior high school—even senior high school may be too late. (The President’s Committee on Scientists and Engineers, 1958, p. 1)

Eisenhower understood the importance of educating America’s gifted youth in order to develop the science talent needed to maintain the country’s status in the world.

Although this period of time did not see any national legislation passed aimed specifically at gifted students, supporters did write about the need for it. Ann Fabe Isaacs, founder of the National Association for Gifted Children, presented a paper at the association’s first annual meeting held in New York City on December 26–27, 1956 (“Report on the Annual Meeting,” 1957). The paper, entitled “The Needs of Today’s Gifted Children,” focused on the need for (a) greater interest in gifted children from all groups, (b) more research, (c) federal legislation, (d) state legislation, and (e) guidance
centers. Ten years later, advocates in the field, as well as national organizations, were still presenting the need for federal legislation. The National Association for Gifted Children’s 1966 board meeting notes indicated that its president, Walter Barbe, was still focused on working together with other organizations in a united effort for federal legislation (Porter, 1967).

**Educational Practices**

During this two-decade period, schools across the country were implementing educational practices that focused on the education of gifted students (Barbe & Norris, 1954; Burnside, 1942; Connor, 1940; Cutts & Moseley, 1953; Fox & Wiles, 1943; Froehlich, McNealy, & Nelson, 1944; Meister, 1951b; Peters, 1941; Pregler, 1954). A 1955 review of the literature on gifted children found three main types: Terman’s *Genetic Studies of Genius*, Hollingworth’s published studies, and suggestions and reports for school programs (Greenberg, 1955). Greenberg (1955) pointed out, that, “But, on the whole, these materials [suggestions and reports for school programs] are theoretical in nature, with suggestions for the identification and classification of gifted children and for curriculum planning for them based on the original research of Terman and Hollingworth” (p. 26). In addition to Leta S. Hollingworth and Lewis M. Terman, a number of individuals, including Paul Witty and A. Harry Passow, helped influence which educational practices were being implemented in the classroom or discussed the importance of individual differences in their writings. In addition, J. P. Guilford also was considered to be an important figure in this period (J. J. Gallagher, personal communication, February 10, 2010; R. Myers, personal communication, February 5, 2010; J. S. Renzulli, personal communication, February 10, 2010), as his call for more
research on creativity and a more expansive definition of giftedness were translated into educational practices.

*Leta S. Hollingworth*

Leta S. Hollingworth was born in 1886 in Chadron, NE. She received her Ph.D. from Teachers College, Columbia University in 1916 and was appointed to a faculty position at the college soon after (Symonds, 1940). Although she began her career focusing on “subnormal” children (among other early interests such as the psychology of women; H. L. Hollingworth, 1940), “she early saw that the greatest reward should be derived from fostering the development of superior deviates” (Symonds, 1940, p. 140). She conducted longitudinal studies, some for 20 years, in order to look at the “make-up, origin, education, and destiny of bright children” (H. L. Hollingworth, 1940).

Hollingworth passed away in 1939; however, her legacy lived on despite her early passing. Her contributions to and early leadership in the field made a profound impact on educational practices, even after her death (Symonds, 1940). A conference on the Education for the Gifted was held in Hollingworth’s honor December 13–14, 1940, and was “designed to promote increased activity in the discovery and education of the gifted—the task to which she so earnestly devoted herself and which she considered of paramount importance in our national life” (Bruner, 1941a, p. 375). The attendees used Hollingworth’s past leadership focus to discuss the following problems:

- Promoting a wider understanding of the importance of improving ways of discovering and nurturing leadership.
- Appraising present accomplishments in the discovery and education of the gifted.
- Identifying the issues.
Furthering next steps in research, instruction, guidance, and making procedures which will lead to sounder methods of finding and making use of the abilities of the gifted. (Bruner, 1941a, p. 375)

Pitner (1941) discussed Hollingworth’s important work with gifted students and noted the importance of (a) finding students with superior ability and (b) educating them properly, two areas that Hollingworth’s work had supported. That same year, E. L. Thorndike (1941), professor emeritus of education at Teachers College, discussed the difficulties of educating gifted children in small cities. He suggested developing a “Hollingworth room” where gifted students could go for part of the day to experiment, study, read, or earn money, thus suggesting that her ideas for gifted education were still being followed in the years after her death.

In addition, Hollingworth’s use of an IQ score of 130 or above to define gifted children was found throughout the literature, and many schools followed this suggestion (Sumption & Luecking, 1960), although for her own experimental work, she defined gifted students as those in the top 1% in general intelligence (Pritchard, 1951). She felt the use of individual intelligence scales was the single best way to identify gifted students and believed this was the most democratic way for determining who should qualify for special services in the schools (Pritchard, 1951). However, Hollingworth also took into account other criteria besides an IQ test, selecting her students for her own classes on the basis of social adaptability, emotional maturity, and physical ability. Although many called for a broader identification procedure, intelligence tests were still the go-to standard for most schools (Cherkis & Di Biaso, 1959; Otto, 1955; Williams, 1955; Witty, 1959b).
Hollingworth advocated for special grouping of gifted children in the schools. She felt homogenous grouping was the best way to meet their needs, although she believed the grouping should be used for intellectual pursuits and that gifted children should have the opportunity to join the other students for other activities as the opportunity arose (Pritchard, 1951). During this period, some scholars encouraged schools to follow this model of grouping gifted students into special classes as Hollingworth had suggested (Baker, 1943; Cook, 1948; Santayana, 1947; Weglein, 1941).

Hollingworth’s tireless efforts on behalf of gifted students helped pave the way for future leadership in the field. Soon after her death, Hollingworth’s husband expressed the difficulties she had encountered throughout her tenure in the field:

The difficulties, objections, and discouragements she encountered in endeavoring to carry forward educational experiments with gifted children, and the sacrifices she had finally to make of her own energy and resources in order to accomplish what she did, constitute an eloquent testimonial, to those who know about them, to the social apathy toward and jealousy of the gifted, against which she always had to struggle. (H. L. Hollingworth, 1940, p. 187)

**Lewis M. Terman**

Considered the father of gifted education (Karnes & Nugent, 2004), Lewis M. Terman was one of the pioneers of the field. Lewis M. Terman was born on January 15, 1877, the 12th of 14 children. Hilgard (1957) described Terman as the consummate scholar, noting he was still interested in research being conducted in the days before he passed away a few weeks prior to his 80th birthday in 1956: “even within a week of his death he was able to arouse himself enough to inquire about the topics discussed at a scientific meeting” (p. 472). Terman received his Ph.D. from Clark University in 1905,
where he studied under G. Stanley Hall. Terman undertook a wide variety of research projects, among them the revisions of the Binet-Simon scales (known as the Stanford-Binet), the development of the Stanford Achievement Tests in the early 1920s, and his landmark *Genetic Studies of Genius* series of books that documented his longitudinal studies of 1,500 gifted children (five books published between 1925 and 1957; Hilgard, 1957). Indicating his dedication to the study of gifted children, in 1957, 98% of the children who were still living were still participating in the study. In describing his own research, Terman (1954a) bragged, “I take some pride in the fact that not one of the major conclusions we drew in the early 1920’s regarding the traits that are typical of gifted children has been overthrown in the three decades since then” (p. 223). Although his work was more descriptive in nature (Stanley, 1976), it still influenced educational practices and provided leadership for the field.

As the country headed toward the century’s midpoint, Witty (1949) provided an overview of *The Gifted Child Grows Up*, Terman’s work with Oden, in hopes that its recent publication would bring about a renewed interest in the education of gifted children.

In 1951, Wilson stated that acceleration of gifted students had been debated in the lay and educational presses in recent months. He noted the common arguments against acceleration, but presented Terman and Oden’s (1947) *The Gifted Child Grows Up* as proof that acceleration was not harmful. Terman’s work provided evidence that showed (a) acceleration should be determined based on individual needs and (b) more harm than good was done by not allowing gifted students to accelerate. Wilson (1951a) argued that:

*With the impending two years or more of military service to come for years ahead out of the school careers of all youth who should attend college, the saving of*
time by providing acceleration appropriate to individual needs seems most
desirable for the benefit of our country and its relations with other peoples as well
as in respect to best meeting the needs of every youth. (p. 410).

In 1954, Terman wrote about the discovery and encouragement of exceptional
talent. In this article, he discussed his journey in the field of gifted education, mentioning
his longitudinal studies. Terman (1954a) also focused on the manpower shortage and its
potential effect on the future of gifted students, noting that the increased awareness of the
country’s brightest students had the potential to lead to more research. That same year,
Terman and Oden looked at the major issues in the education of gifted children. They
argued that not all children should be educated the same, and felt that the educational
lockstep found in the school system wasn’t working for gifted students. The authors
pushed for early identification of gifted students in addition to guidance and counseling.
Passow (1955/1959) pointed out that the “unusual success in adult life of more than one
thousand subjects in Lewis M. Terman’s studies . . . attests to the ability to identify gifted
children” (p. 30). Terman’s use of intelligence tests as one aspect of the identification
process was something that most schools implemented during this period.

Terman’s research on acceleration was discussed throughout the literature
(Gleason, 1958; Newland, 1953; Santayana, 1947; Wilson, 1951a; Witty, 1948). In 1954,
Wilson surveyed educators about their opinions on accelerating gifted students. He
developed a 6-item questionnaire that was sent to education officials in 48 states, Alaska,
Hawaii, the Canal Zone, and Puerto Rico. Interestingly, 50% of all respondent groups
agreed with Terman’s view of acceleration, 50% of public school administrators
disagreed, and 20% of college respondents disagreed. There was an overall concern
about gifted students’ maturity levels when being accelerated, a belief that was in conflict with Terman’s research findings.

Terman (1954a) discussed the state of educational practices in the schools during this period:

Along with the increasing use of tests, and perhaps largely as a result of it, there is a growing interest, both here and abroad, in improving educational methods for the gifted. Acceleration of a year or two or three, however desirable, is but a fraction of what is needed to keep the gifted child or youth working at his intellectual best. The method most often advocated is curriculum enrichment for the gifted without segregating them from the ordinary class. Under ideal conditions enrichment can accomplish much, but in these days of crowded schools, when so many teachers are overworked, underpaid, and inadequately trained, curriculum enrichment for a few gifted in a large mixed class cannot begin to solve the problem. (p. 227)

He continued:

But however efficient our tests may be in discovering exceptional talents, and whatever the schools may do to foster those discovered, it is the prevailing Zeitgeist that will decide, by the rewards it gives or withholds, what talents will come to flower. (p. 227)

Paul Witty

Paul A. Witty was born July 23, 1898, in Terre Haute, IN. He received his doctorate from Teachers College, Columbia University in 1931 (McFadden, 1976). A year before he was awarded his Ph.D., he became professor of education at Northwestern University, where he founded and served as director of Northwestern’s Psychoeducational Clinic (McFadden, 1976). Witty was a well-known advocate for gifted education, and published extensively on the topic. In addition to his work with gifted students, he also focused on reading programs and helped found the International Reading Association, was an associate editor of Highlights for Children, and established the Quiz Kids radio and TV show (Cricket, n.d.; McFadden, 1976). Witty worked
tirelessly to help dispel inaccurate and prevalent myths about gifted children. (Cricket, n.d.)

At the end of the 1940s, Witty (1949) summarized the recent past and current state of gifted education, and called for challenging materials and improved conditions for gifted students. In a *New York Times* interview, Witty asserted that a “moderate” amount of acceleration was justified for gifted students, but indicated that enrichment programs also would be beneficial, as they would help alleviate the time spent in classes in which the material had already been learned (Eckel, 1950).

Witty (1951) reviewed the literature to determine the number of articles published on gifted children between 1929–1948 (440), and noted that most articles were published between 1939–1942. As a member of the American Association for Gifted Children, he hoped it and other organizations would “lead to more widespread efforts to care for the gifted” (Witty, 1951, p. 79).

In 1953 (4 years before the launch of Sputnik), Witty argued that the United States had neglected one of its greatest resources: gifted students. He felt these students should be the country’s future leaders in business, education, journalism, labor, scientific research, and government. A year later, a hopeful Witty (1954) noted a resurgence of interest in gifted education in the past 8 years: People were more interested in providing for gifted students in the regular classroom. He discussed various programming options, and focused on acceleration: “During the past thirty years, acceleration or grade skipping has again and again been proposed as a desirable way of meeting the educational needs of the gifted. Once again it is being recommended and defended” (Witty, 1954, p. 228).
In 1955, Witty and Bloom mentioned the increasing interest in special education, including services for the gifted, and the need for every student to meet his or her potential development in school. They cited the fact that recent publications by Witty, Hollingworth, and Terman had helped lead to the renewal of current interest in the type of recommendations made since 1925. Arguing that “the question is not whether provision should be made for the gifted but rather how it can best be offered” (Witty & Bloom, 1955, p. 10). Witty helped provide leadership to others in the field by focusing on meeting the educational needs of all students, including the gifted.

In 1959, Witty wrote a chapter on “Identifying and Educating Gifted and Talented Pupils,” which appeared in Creativity of Gifted and Talented Children. In it, he noted that Education of the Gifted (Educational Policies Commission, 1950), Genetic Studies of Genius: Vol. IV: The Gifted Child Grows Up (Terman & Oden, 1947), and The Gifted Child (Witty, 1951b) were all influential books that helped bring about this reawakening of interest in the field. Witty also focused on the concept of creativity and suggested that the definition of giftedness be expanded: “Perhaps it is desirable to broaden our definition of the gifted and to consider as ‘gifted’ any child whose performance, in a valuable line of human activity, is consistently or repeatedly remarkable” (Witty, 1959b, p. 10).

A. Harry Passow

A. Harry Passow was born in Liberty, NY, in 1920, the son of Russian-Jewish immigrants (“Harry Passow,” 1996). After graduating from State College for Teachers (New York) in 1942, he taught school for a year and then served in World War II. After the war, he taught high school science, and completed his doctorate in 1951 at Teachers College, Columbia University (Stout, 1996). A prolific writer, he wrote or edited 31
books, pamphlets, and monographs and authored more than 225 articles and book chapters (“Harry Passow,” 1996).

Passow entered the field of gifted education when the dean of his college asked him to study this topic (personal communication, A. J. Tannenbaum, February 19, 2010). To get acquainted with the field, Passow asked his research assistant, Abraham Tannenbaum, to go to the library and summarize the literature on the gifted to date (personal communication, A. J. Tannenbaum, February 19, 2010). Passow became director of the Talented Youth Project, which began in 1954 at Teachers College (Tannenbaum, 2000). The project, which began 3 years before the launch of Sputnik, “assisted school administrators and their staffs in different parts of the country to develop, implement, and evaluate their own programs for the gifted,” similar to Hollingworth’s work with schools in New York prior to her death (Tannenbaum, 2000, p. 34). The Talented Youth Project, which lasted for 12 years, had three purposes:

1. to initiate and conduct studies of the nature of talent and its role in modern American life,
2. to experiment with program modifications by which schools can improve their programs for the talented, and
3. to summarize and interpret past and current research for schools (Passow, 1957b, p. 199).

In 1954, Passow and Tannenbaum argued for “a well-developed framework to guide experimentation and program development efforts” (p. 150). However, they also were somewhat positive in their view of the educational system:

First, our secondary schools are recognizing the need for making special provisions for talented youth and are not willing to leave these either to chance or
to the ingenuity of the youngsters. “Don’t worry about the talented, they’ll take care of themselves,” is an approach which is neither acceptable nor accepted. (Passow & Tannenbaum, 1954, pp. 153–154)

Passow and Tannenbaum (1954) felt educators should:

- begin to probe more deeply into the nature of talent;
- try to understand what the general objectives of their schools mean when tailored to fit children with special abilities and potentials;
- analyze existing traditions and administrative procedures to test their validity in practice;
- attempt total school planning for talented youth rather than indulge in isolated effort;
- try to increase their sensitivity to the impact of peers, parents, teachers and community on talented youth and vice versa; and
- recognize the enormity of planning for every conceivable talent. (pp. 154–155)

Passow and Tannenbaum (1955) also focused on talent and its neglect. They pointed out that:

half of those capable of acquiring a college degree enter college; about two fifths of those who start are not graduated, and for every high-school student who eventually earns a doctoral degree there are twenty-five others, just as able, who do not. (p. 12).

The two researchers felt it was important for potential leaders to be identified and have their skills developed.

One of Passow’s most important and relevant articles was first published in 1955 and entitled, “Are We Shortchanging the Gifted?” In it, he proposed that gifted students, like all students, need to be able to develop their talents and reach their potential. Passow suggested using a broad identification process in which, in addition to intelligence tests,
schools should take into account school records, anecdotal materials, leadership records, achievement data, and background information (Passow, 1955/1959). He also provided an overview of three common types of programming found in schools (special grouping, acceleration, and enrichment) and cautioned schools that:

for the gifted, good teaching procedures are those which enable the child to work independently as well as with others, to experiment with ideas and materials, to explore more widely in order to achieve greater mastery of content and skills, to experience numerous opportunities for creative expression. (p. 33)

In 1957, Passow described nine studies that were underway at the Talented Youth Project:

1. the effects of ability grouping on both gifted and nongifted elementary-school pupils (New York and Norfolk County);
2. the effects of acceleration and partial ability grouping in the elementary school (two schools in Dade county);
3. the effects of English honors classes on the achievement of gifted and nongifted students (Evanston, IL);
4. the attitudes toward self and school of intellectually gifted achievers and underachievers and of overachievers of average ability (Evanston, IL);
5. underachievement among high-ability student entering 10th grade (the Bronx, NY);
6. the effects of a special guidance program on the development of gifted high school youth (Colorado);
7. the effects of a weekly seminar for selected gifted students from six small high schools (Lyons Fall, NY);
8. peer attitudes toward high school students; and
9. an instrument that secondary schools can use to appraise their educational programs for the talented.

Passow and his assistants focused on research that would help improve school procedures and programs for gifted students (Passow, 1957).

*Ruth Strang*

Ruth Strang was born in Chatham, NJ, and began her career as a home economics teacher (“Dr. Ruth Strang of Columbia,” 1971). She, too, received her Ph.D. from Teachers College, Columbia University, graduating in 1926. Although her work crossed into multiple fields, she provided some leadership and guidance to the field of gifted education.

In 1954, Strang chaired a symposium that was included in the *Journal of Teacher Education*. She focused on the importance of the teacher in gifted education and indicated teachers needed to understand the gifted child as a whole, as well as what type of educational provisions work best for these students (Strang, 1954a).

In addition to her focus on the important characteristics needed in teachers of the gifted, Strang (1954b) also looked at the psychological makeup of gifted students: “The gifted tend to learn by complex associative methods rather than by rote drill; they look for generalizations, are interested in abstract aspects of school subjects, and are able to work independently” (p. 216). She cautioned that, “The psychology of gifted children is still to be written. And some of the most authentic information, significant insights, and practical suggestions for their education will come from the gifted youngsters themselves” (Strang, 1954b, p. 217), indicating the need for more research on gifted students. Strang, like Terman, indicated the need for guidance programs for gifted
students (Strang & Oliver, 1955). She encouraged schools to have workers available in order to help identify gifted students, help the student understand him- or herself and talents, help provide community experiences, and help parents understand their gifted child. Strang and Oliver (1955) cautioned:

> We have to face the fact that some school people are unsympathetic, others are unsuspecting. The net result is: to confuse inquisitiveness and impudence, to be intolerant of non-conformity, to stifle with inflexible routine, to fail to heed the warning, “You can’t make a genius; but it’s very easy to kill one!” (p. 291).

**J. P. Guilford**

One of the well-known contributors to the field of individual differences, albeit someone who was not in the field of gifted education, was J. P. Guilford. Considered to be one of the most influential people during this period, Guilford left a lasting legacy on the field and its educational practices (J. J. Gallagher, personal communication, February 10, 2010; R. Myers, personal communication, February 5, 2010; J. S. Renzulli, personal communication, February 10, 2010).

Joy Paul Guilford was born on March 7, 1897, in Nebraska (Comrey, 1993). He graduated from high school in 1914 and began teaching in 1915 (Michael, Comrey, & Fruchter, 1963). His college years were interrupted by the first World War, but Guilford returned to study psychology and graduated in 1922 with his undergraduate degree and 1924 with his master’s degree, both from the University of Nebraska (Michael et al., 1963). He pursued his doctoral degree at Cornell University, studying under renowned psychologists such as Titchener, and graduated in 1927 (Comrey, 1993).

Guilford secured positions at the University of Illinois, the University of Kansas, and then the University of Nebraska, all of which led to his appointment as professor of
psychology at the University of Southern California (USC) in 1940 (Michael et al., 1963). During World War II, Guilford worked in the United States Army Air Force, conducting research and developing tests that would select and place pilots, bombardiers, and navigators (Comrey, 1993; Michael et al, 1963). After World War II, he returned to USC and continued his career.

Guilford contributed to a variety of fields, most notably:

(a) experimental psychology including such areas as attention and visual perception, learning and memory, and experimental esthetics; (b) statistical psychology embracing such problem fields as test theory and evaluation, factor analysis, psychophysics, and scaling; (c) mental abilities with emphasis upon the knowledge gained from factor analytic studies and from the theoretical model of the structure of intellect; and (d) personality theory and measurement again based largely upon factor analytic formulations. (Michael et al., 1963, pp. 3–4)

Guilford was a prolific writer and researcher, publishing more than 25 books, 30 tests, and 300 articles during the course of his career (Comrey, 1993). Two of his greatest contributions to the field of gifted education appeared in the 1950s (J. J. Gallagher, personal communication, February 10, 2010; R. Myers, personal communication, February 5, 2010; J. S. Renzulli, personal communication, February 10, 2010). First, his 1950 APA presidential address, published in *American Psychologist*, brought the subject of creativity to the forefront, with Guilford indicating that more research was needed about this construct (Guilford, 1950).

Second, in the mid-1950s, Guilford published a series of articles on his model, the Structure of Intellect (SOI). In one of the first iterations of the model, which appeared in *Psychological Bulletin*, Guilford (1956) described 40 factors that were divided into two groups: thinking and memory factors. Guilford did not adhere to the theory that intelligence was based on a single trait: “He believed that human abilities are
differentiated into increasingly complex systems as a function of more and more education. He believed that children can be trained to be smarter; ‘Intelligence education is intelligent education’ became his motto” (Comrey, 1993, p. 204). This belief translated into a broadened definition of giftedness in which intelligence was considered more than just a score on an IQ test.

Summary

Hollingworth, Terman, Witty, Passow, and Guilford were among the most influential scholars who helped to influence which educational practices were being conducted in the schools. Hollingworth, who was credited with the development of enrichment programs for gifted students in New York City schools (personal communication, A. J. Tannenbaum, February 19, 2010), influenced not only practices in New York, but elsewhere—even after her death.

Terman and Witty, who both conducted longitudinal studies on the gifted, promoted the use of acceleration with these students, indicating no real harm would come from the practice.

Passow developed the Talented Youth Project to help schools around the country develop and implement their own gifted programs (personal communication, A. J. Tannenbaum, February 19, 2010). He also suggested using multiple means to identify gifted students, instead of using only one IQ score.

Finally, Guilford, although most of his work was conducted outside of gifted education, had a large influence on educational practices. His 1950 call for more research into creativity helped focus the field’s attention on that topic (personal communication, J. S. Renzulli, February 10, 2010). In addition, with the development of
the Structure of Intellect model, Guilford suggested that intelligence was a more multifaceted construct. This helped lead to a more broad definition of giftedness, one that didn’t focus entirely on one IQ score.

Gifted Education Publications

A brief look at the reference list for this dissertation indicates a wide variety of people were writing and publishing about gifted students. Although one can pick out names of those who became gifted education’s most prolific and well-known contributors to the field, there are many names that are unfamiliar. However, the following writers were among those who consistently wrote and had their material published during the 1940s and 1950s: Lewis M. Terman, Paul Witty, A. Harry Passow and colleagues, and Ruth Strang.

Lewis M. Terman

Terman, best known for his longitudinal study, Genetic Studies of Genius, was a frequent contributor to the literature during this period. In 1940, Terman (and coauthor Oden) published two chapters that focused on the longitudinal study in The Thirty-Ninth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education: “Status of the California Gifted Group at the End of Sixteen Years” and “Correlates of Adult Achievement in the California Gifted Group.” In 1942, Terman wrote an article titled “The Vocational Successes of Intellectually Gifted Individuals,” which appeared in Occupations. In this article, he reviewed the occupations chosen by participants in his longitudinal study. Terman and Oden (1951) submitted a chapter on “The Stanford Studies of the Gifted” that appeared in The Gifted Child. Conclusions from the longitudinal studies also were
published in two books published during these decades. The first, *The Gifted Child Grows Up* (Terman & Oden, 1947), was the fourth volume in the series, and the second (published 3 years after Terman’s death), *The Gifted Group at Mid-Life* (Terman & Oden, 1959), was the fifth volume in the series.

In addition to publishing material on his biggest contribution to the field, Terman also wrote on other topics. In an article that appeared in *American Psychologist* (Terman, 1954a), he discussed how to discover and encourage talent in students, noting the importance of early identification of gifted students’ abilities. That same year, an article that looked at the differences between scientists and nonscientists was published in *Psychological Monographs* (Terman, 1954b). Terman and Oden (1954) identified what they felt were the major issues in gifted education, including the lockstep procedure in United States school systems, identification, educational programming, and the need for guidance, in an article that was included in the special issue of the *Journal of Teacher Education*.

**Paul Witty**

Paul Witty can be considered one of the most prolific writers during the 1940s and 1950s. He had a variety of interests during his career, including reading, the effects of television on children, gifted students, and creativity (Beckstrand, n.d.). His most important contribution to the field of gifted education was editing *The Gifted Child*, which was published in 1951 as a product of the American Association for Gifted Children, and considered to be one of the very best texts published on the gifted (personal correspondence, A. J. Tannenbaum, February 19, 2010). In addition to editing the book, Witty wrote three chapters: “Progress in the Education of the Gifted,” “Nature and Extent
Witty also wrote a number of articles that appeared in books and journals during these two decades. At the beginning of this period, he published his conclusions from his longitudinal study in a chapter titled “A Genetic Study of Fifty Gifted Children,” which appeared in *The Thirty-Ninth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education* (Witty, 1940). Soon after, he coauthored a follow-up study on the educational achievement of gifted African Americans, which appeared in the *Journal of Educational Psychology* (Witty & Theman, 1943). That same year, the authors also published case studies on gifted African Americans in an article that appeared in *The Journal of Psychology* (Theman & Witty, 1943). In 1949, Witty wrote an article on “The Gifted Child in the Secondary School.” This appeared in the *NASSP Bulletin* and provided an overview of Terman’s study, as well as an overview of the provisions provided for gifted students.

The same year he edited *The Gifted Child*, Witty wrote an article that was similar to a chapter that appeared in his book (it even had the same title). Witty (1951c) discussed the “Nature and Extent of Educational Provisions for the Gifted” in an article that appeared in *Educational Administration and Supervision*. In 1952, another article appeared in the same journal, focusing on students who had participated in the *Quiz Kids* program. In 1953, Witty provided an overview of the gifted child in an *Exceptional Children* article, the fifth in a series of articles that discussed students with exceptionalities. In the same journal, Witty (Witty & Coomer, 1955) published their case study on gifted twin boys, providing an in-depth look into the lives of two highly gifted
students. In the mid-1950s, Witty (Witty & Bloom, 1954, 1955) published articles that focused on gifted students and science, both of which appeared in *Exceptional Children*.

Witty also was a contributor to some of the special journal issues published during this period. In the April 1948 issue of *Understanding the Child*, he summarized the findings of Terman’s longitudinal study to that point. Witty (1954) once again looked at the various programs in place for gifted students in his article that appeared in the special issue of the *Journal of Teacher Education*. In *School and Society*’s special issue on the academically talented, he provided an overview of the same topic (Witty, 1959a).

*A. Harry Passow and Colleagues*

Although Passow came to be interested in gifted students in an unusual way (his dean requested that he focus on the gifted; personal communication, A. J. Tannenbaum, February 19, 2010), he quickly became a frequent contributor to the field. Passow and his colleagues, Abraham Tannenbaum (who started out as a research assistant in the Horace Mann-Lincoln Institute of School Experimentation in 1954) and Miriam Goldberg (who was appointed research associate in addition to her duties as an assistant professor at Teachers College), published material from the mid-1950s and continued doing so in subsequent decades.

Passow and colleagues contributed to the literature on the talented in schools. In 1954, Passow and Tannenbaum coauthored an article in *Educational Leadership* titled “What of the Talented in Today’s High Schools?” In it they provided an overview of talent, looked at the talents needed during that period, and suggested various ways schools could meet talented students’ needs. One year later, Passow’s Talented Youth Project published a pamphlet called *Planning for Talented Youth: Considerations for*
Public Schools (Passow et al., 1955). Passow (1955) continued discussing talented youth in his article, “Talented Youth: Our Future Leaders,” which appeared in Teachers College Record. Passow and Tannenbaum (1955) coauthored another article on the talented in the NASSP Bulletin. In it, they discussed the definition of talent, the talented needed by the country, and planning for these students. In keeping with the subject of most of his other publications, Passow (1956) contributed an article on “The Comprehensive High School and Gifted Youth” to Teachers College Record. Passow (1957a) discussed “Identifying and Counseling the Gifted College Student” in his article in The Journal of Higher Education. In a chapter that was included in Educating the Gifted: A Book of Readings, Passow (1955/1959) questioned whether the gifted were being shortchanged in school. The chapter originally appeared as an article in School Executive in 1955.

In addition to discussing the gifted and talented in schools, Passow also focused on his Talented Youth Project (TYP). In the Educational Research Bulletin, he reviewed the research that was in progress at the Horace Mann-Lincoln Institute of School Experimentation at Teachers College, describing nine studies being conducted around the country (Passow, 1957b). This article was reprinted in the NASSP Bulletin in 1958.

Passow and Goldberg (1958) conducted a study on gifted underachievers, as part of the TYP. The results were included in an issue of Educational Leadership.

Passow and Brooks (1959) submitted an article that was published in the NASSP Bulletin on gifted students and math. In it, they identified problem areas, such as identifying mathematically gifted students, determining what should be taught, what provisions should be made, and who should teach these students.
Passow’s colleagues, Miriam Goldberg and Abraham Tannenbaum (who went on to contribute more in the decades after the 1940s and 1950s), also contributed their own articles to the literature during this period. Goldberg (1956, 1958/1959, 1959) discussed provisions for the gifted in *Exceptional Children*, provided an overview of recent research in *Teachers College Record*, and described a program for gifted underachievers in *High Points*. Tannenbaum (1958) contributed a chapter on the history of interest in the gifted to *The Fifty-Seventh Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education*.

*Ruth Strang*

Ruth Strang contributed a large number of chapters and articles on the topic of gifted education during the 1950s. She had four book chapters published in books on the topics of giftedness in general (Strang, 1958), psychology/mental hygiene of the gifted (Strang, 1951, 1955a), and educational trends (1955b).

In addition to book chapters, Strang also published journal articles. She chaired the symposium that was published as a special issue of the *Journal of Teacher Education* in 1954 and published an article on “The Psychology of the Gifted” in that issue. She contributed two articles on gifted adolescents’ viewpoints and concerns to *Exceptional Children* (Strang, 1950, 1956b). One of her topics of interest was guidance of the gifted. In 1952, she wrote about the “Guidance of the Gifted” in an article published in the *Personnel and Guidance Journal*. In 1955, Strang and Oliver discussed guidance programs and talented youth identification in an article that was published in the *NASSP Bulletin*. Strang (1956a) discussed “The Counselor’s Contribution to the Guidance of the Gifted, the Underachiever, and the Retarded” in an article in the *Personnel and Guidance Journal*. 

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Summary

The authors included in this section represent some of the most prolific writers during the 1940s and 1950s. They published on a wide variety of topics, including longitudinal study data (Terman and Witty), talented youth and their development (Passow and colleagues), educational provisions for the gifted (Terman and Witty), and guidance of the gifted (Strang). Witty edited one of the most important books published as an overview of gifted children, *The Gifted Child*, in addition to contributing to the case study literature on gifted African American students. Although many other writers were publishing during this period, Terman, Witty, Passow (and his colleagues), and Strang were among those who had the greatest influence on the field during the 1940s and 1950s.

Leadership and Advocacy Efforts in National Organizations

In his 1948 address to the U.S. Conference of Mayors in New York City, Conant suggested that public schools could be doing more to locate and educate talented youth and believed that when schools failed to discover and nurture these students, the United States was unable to utilize its greatest resource.

The American Association for Gifted Children (AAGC) and the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) were founded in 1946 and 1954, respectively. Like Conant, these two organizations felt gifted children were the country’s most neglected students and worked to advocate for them. Both of the organizations consisted of strong leaders who helped found and guide AAGC and NAGC to the forefront of gifted education during the 1940s, 1950s, and beyond.
American Association for Gifted Children

Ruth Strang and Pauline Brooks Williamson were two friends who founded the American Association for Gifted Children, believing that “the gifted were the most neglected children in our democracy” (American Association for Gifted Children, 1999, para. 1). The Association, housed at the University of the State of New York, was the first in the nation that was devoted exclusively to gifted children. Strang served as the organization’s first treasurer, and Williamson volunteered as secretary (Williamson, 1948). Both women were advocates for gifted children, Strang in her capacity as a professor at Teachers College, and Williamson who was a school health educator and administrator (American Association for Gifted Children, n.d.)

As discussed above, Ruth Strang was a “Renaissance woman,” in that her work crossed into a number of fields of interest to her, including student guidance and personnel services, reading, health education, education, testing, group work, and gifted students (Melnik, 1960). Strang joined the faculty of Teachers College in 1929, and became a full professor in 1940 (“Dr. Ruth Strang of Columbia,” 1971). Although much of her work centered on guidance and personnel services, she also was concerned with gifted students. Founding the American Association for Gifted Children helped develop an outlet for advocating for gifted students. At the time of her retirement from Teachers College (1960) as professor emerita of education, she had written one book, one pamphlet, and 18 chapters and articles on gifted education. Strang’s thoughts on her lifelong devotion to education (and her decision not to get married) were included in her obituary:

My work has always been so exacting and demanding that social activities other than those directly related to my work have been crowded out. My chief
satisfactions have been the responsiveness of classes and other audiences, the success and friendship of my students, the excitement of new ideas, and the “things of beauty” that John Keats describes. (“Dr. Ruth Strang of Columbia,” 1971, p. 39)

Pauline Brooks Williamson was cofounder of the AAGC. However, not much is included in the literature about her. Williamson wrote three articles on the AAGC, one of which appeared in *Exceptional Children* in 1954, and two of which appeared in *Understanding the Child* in 1948 and 1953. What is known, however, is that she was the State Rural Supervisor in Charge of Health Work for the Virginia State Department of Education prior to the establishment of the AAGC (Winslow & Williamson, 1925). She became the Chief of the School Health Bureau, Welfare Division, of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company in New York in 1926 (Williamson, 1938). Williamson retired from her position as Chief in 1947, one year after the AAGC was founded (“Health Worker Honored,” 1947). How her interest in health education transferred to advocating for gifted students and becoming a silent leader in the field of gifted education is unknown. It must have been important to her, as her brief obituary that appeared in *The New York Times* mentioned that she cofounded the AAGC, but little other information was included (“Pauline Williamson,” 1972).

*National Association for Gifted Children*

Ann Fabe Isaacs founded the National Association for Gifted Children in 1954. At the time, she was director of The Personality Development Preschool in Cincinnati, OH. Her advocacy efforts for the field can be viewed in a series of letters written between 1954 and 1956, in which Isaacs sought advice from Lewis Terman on a number of issues. Isaacs first became interested in the field of gifted education after reading
some of the literature and noting that many of her preschool students had the potential to be classified as gifted, with some students scoring as high as 174 on the Stanford-Binet (personal communication, A. F. Isaacs, May 4, 1954). In addition, she realized her school offered what could be considered an enriched curriculum, and she was curious as to how other schools met the needs of gifted children.

In her letter dated May 4, 1955, Isaacs outlined her plan to Terman (noting that she had recently joined the American Association for Gifted Children at the suggestion of Paul Witty):

First I plan to organize a local section on the gifted. Secondly I am starting a fund for the gifted, the money is to be used to help schools who wish to initiate programs for the gifted and my third interest, a publication, exclusively devoted to articles on the gifted.

Isaacs further outlined the reasons she felt a publication was needed:

1. A publication would serve to increase the interest of teachers, supervisors, administrators and lay groups in the gifted.
2. A publication would point to the existence of articles in other periodicals. I surveyed the literature for the past 30 years and found over 230 references in more than 80 publications (JOURNALS, [sic] and PERIODICALS)
3. A publication would be most helpful in orienting new students to the literature on the gifted.
4. A publication would help divorce the present tendency of classifying the gifted with the defective and the deficient. (What is the advantage of this grouping?)
5. A publication would serve as an up-to-date source of programs in progress. (personal communication, A. F. Isaacs, May 4, 1955)

Isaacs closed her letter to Terman by asking him to look over the proposed idea for a new publication and “honor it with your suggestions and recommendations” (personal communication, A. F. Isaacs, May 4, 1954).

Terman quickly responded with a somewhat cautionary note:

I agree with you that it would be desirable if possible to have a journal devoted entirely to articles on gifted children. However, printing costs have soared terribly in recent years and one would have to be pretty sure that the subscriptions
would pay the costs. I would suggest that some group be persuaded to explore the
financial situation and to make plans for the journal if it is decided to launch one.
(personal communication, L. M. Terman, May 10, 1954)

Terman did, however, agree to be one of Isaacs’ advisors and even agreed to potentially
be one of the associate editors should his name be suggested. Isaacs moved quickly, and
by February 15, 1955, had moved forward with the formation of a journal and identified a
tentative editorial board that consisted of 30 of the gifted education researchers during
that period, including Lewis M. Terman, Paul Witty, Robert Havighurst, Walter Barbe,
Nicholas Mosely, Norma Cutts, and A. Harry Passow. Terman deemed the list of board
members as “excellent” and suggested that the publication be titled The Gifted Child or
felt that the journal should be quarterly, at least in the beginning, as he felt there was not
enough material to fit a monthly publication (personal communication, L. M. Terman,
February 21, 1955).

Although Terman had given his blessing to establish this new publication, he
apparently was confused as to why Isaacs had felt the need to found the National
Association for Gifted Children, even noting that he “was under the impression that the
National Association for Gifted Children was the American Assn. for Gifted Children”
(personal communication, L. M. Terman, December 29, 1955). He went on to say:

Now I am wondering why there should be a national association in addition to the
American Association. Certainly many people would be confused and will
probably prefer to support the American Assn which was organized some years
ago and which was responsible for the splendid book edited by Witty, entitled
THE GIFTED CHILD.

Isaacs now had to defend her reasons for establishing another national
organization to Terman, the leading researcher in the field. Her tenacity and love for
gifted education was evident in her correspondence (which now contained a new header that read “The National Association for Gifted Children” instead of the previously used letterhead with her preschool’s name):

I am a life member of the American Association for Gifted Children and Know of the Fine [sic] A.A.G.C. publication which Dr. Witty edited entitled THE GIFTED CHILD. He is also a member of our Board.

Our N.A.G.C. was formed with a number of purposes in mind. You may recall our discussing them briefly when I had the pleasure of talking to you on the phone last summer, and you had agreed to be on our board. We hope to unify and establish new local study groups, create a fund for graduate research on gifted and to work with parent groups (personal communication, A. F. Isaacs, January 12, 1956).

Terman responded within days, indicating he was still puzzled and questioned whether there was a way to ensure that the names of the two organizations could not be confused (personal communication, L. M. Terman, January 23, 1956). Isaacs gently reminded him that he also had questioned this the previous summer (Terman was in his late 70s at this point, thus maybe the reason for his apparent forgetfulness):

Last summer when we spoke you also wondered about the need for two associations. May I quote in answer to this question Dr. Havighurst’s words. “It seems to me that there should be a good future for an Association for Gifted Children and it may be that the National Association is the one which can grow into leadership. I do not hear very much about the American Association for Gifted Children.” (personal communication, A. F. Isaacs, January 31, 1956)

Interestingly enough, Havighurst’s prediction proved true, as NAGC did take upon itself a leadership role and is still the leading organization focused on gifted children more than 50 years later.

Isaacs continued with her plans for the journal, and the first issue of The Gifted Child Newsletter debuted in January 1957 as a quarterly publication of the National Association for Gifted Children. It became known as Gifted Child Quarterly (GCQ) the
following year, and Isaacs remained as editor for 18 years (Isaacs, 1974). Isaacs was instrumental in growing both NAGC and GCQ, and both are held in high esteem today.

Isaacs (1960), continuing her advocacy efforts for the gifted, conducted a study to evaluate the number of states with provisions for gifted students. Isaacs mailed inquiries to each state department of education and received 27 responses. She assumed that most of the nonrespondents had no programs in which a formal director was needed. At the time of the writing (March 1960), Isaacs found that 11 states had full- or part-time directors of gifted child programs: California, Hawaii, Illinois, Minnesota, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, Rhode Island, Tennessee, and Washington (Isaacs, 1960). Eighteen states indicated receiving information requests about identification, curriculum, financing, and legislation for the gifted.

Isaacs wrote an autobiographical article that appeared in a 1974 issue of GCQ and her personality shines throughout it. Isaacs received her master’s degree in counseling and guidance from Xavier and started her doctoral work in the same field at Ohio State University (although she did not complete the degree). Isaacs held staunch beliefs about gifted education and noted that although she was invited to be a consultant for the United States Department of Education, she declined “until such a time as gifted, creative and talented persons are no longer categorized in that office under Defective Exceptional-Handicapped which [I feel] is damaging to these individuals” (Isaacs, 1974, p. 75).

Later in her life, she formed The National Association for Creative Children and Adults (1974), indicating her desire to continue advocating for gifted and creative people. Isaacs wrote more than 250 articles that focused on gifted and talented children and adults and advocated for them widely (Isaacs, 1974). Her tireless work on behalf of
gifted children, beginning at the preschool she directed, and ending with the establishment of two national organizations and professional journals, has benefited gifted education immensely.

**Conclusion**

The 1940s and 1950s were a period of time in which a number of leaders emerged in the field of gifted education. Even before the launch of Sputnik (the event many people cite as the rallying point for gifted education; Tannenbaum, 2000), these men and women advocated for gifted students’ right to a quality education that would meet their needs. Scholars and other gifted education advocates—even those outside of the field—made a case for locating and developing the future leadership of the country, as well as nurturing the potential of potential scientists and engineers. The United States did not want to be a country that was behind others in the world, and its citizens were encouraged to support the national interest in the sciences. From the writers in the field of gifted education to Presidents such as Truman and Eisenhower, the country was focused on protecting its interests in the world and developing the minds of its brightest students.

In addition to efforts outside of the field of gifted education during this period, three women founded the two leading organizations in the field. First, Ruth Strang and Pauline Brooks Williamson, both of whom started out their careers in other fields and with other interests, cofounded the American Association for Gifted Children, the first national organization devoted specifically to gifted students. Second, Ann Fabe Isaacs, a parent and former preschool director, became active in the field, founding what became the largest national organization supporting gifted children and starting the National Association for Gifted Children’s journal (*GCQ*) with advice (both encouraging and
cautionary) from Lewis M. Terman. With their writings, speeches, and other advocacy efforts, these early leaders helped pave the way for the many to follow during the second half of the 20th century.
CHAPTER SIX

Streams of Research and Educational Practices

A field of study can either progress or be hindered by the streams of research being conducted. Unless scholars are committed to conducting research, a field can become stagnant. Educational research is important, as it helps inform what educational practices should be used with various student populations in schools. Gifted education is no different; research informs best practices and helps guide the field, as well as future research.

The third research question, “What influenced the streams of research and educational practices in the field of gifted education from 1940 to 1960?,” is the focus of this chapter. This chapter first will answer the question through the lens of the framework: legislation, publications, and national organizations and advocacy efforts. The chapter will then describe the educational practices at this time and conclude with an overview of the streams of research.

Legislation That Influenced Streams of Research and Educational Practices

The federal government was slow to develop any legislation supporting the education of gifted students, and the years between 1940–1960 saw very little progress in state or federal legislation for gifted education. However, as discussed in Chapter 4, three events had an effect on education in general, as well as gifted education and gifted students.
The GI Bill of Rights (U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs, 2009) was signed into law in 1944. The bill was designed to aid World War II veterans who had returned from war by providing low-interest loans and educational benefits for college (Moss, 1994). The GI Bill of Rights helped increase the general interest in higher education, something that had been lacking during the period of turmoil. Although the bill was aimed at educating war veterans, not gifted and talented students, it did emphasize the importance of an educated workforce, thus paving the way for public support for quality education in general.

Six years after the GI Bill came the passage of the National Science Foundation Act (NSFA, 1950). This was the first Act in which the federal government took a specific interest in the education of gifted and talented students, as there was a concern about the shortage of scientists and engineers (Wolfle, 1959). Speaking before a Congressional committee hearing on the National Science Foundation bill on March 7, 1947, Conant laid out the importance of such a bill for the nation:

In all the discussion about research that goes on these days, an obvious fact is sometimes overlooked, namely, that it is men that count. And today we do not have the scientific man power requisite of the job that lies ahead. The bottleneck of our scientific advance is essentially a man power shortage, and unless something is done about it, the bottleneck will be more constricted a decade hence. Now let no one imagine that, like some of the man power shortages in the war, this can be cured by mobilizing and training for a short time the first people who come to hand. Scientific and technical advances depend on quality as well as on quantity or, to put it another way, on the quantity of exceptional men. These men have to be located when they are young and then given a long and expensive scientific education. For only in this Nation, where universal education reaches to the high school level, is it possible to locate the hidden reservoir of talent which, if tapped, can enrich our life and that of all mankind. (Meister, 1951a, p. 225)

Within the first decade of its establishment, the National Science Foundation had granted more than $4 million to 16 institutions of higher education. These grants were
established to support one-year institutes in which high school science teachers could improve their knowledge and skills to teach science to talented students (Abraham, 1958). Between 1951 and 1958, the National Science Foundation awarded more than $36 million for research, conferences, and teacher preparation (Abraham, 1958). With this new focus on science:

> a vision of science education emerged in which memorization of scientific facts was de-emphasized and was replaced by one in which students developed understandings that they could apply throughout their lives. In addition, an emphasis was placed on students developing scientific attitudes through scientific investigations, as well as learning the big principles of science. (Krajcik, Mamlok, & Hug, 2001, p. 210)

With the support of the federal government, and the establishment of the NSF, school systems began emphasizing the importance of science and the need to locate students with talent in this area.

The push for science continued with the 1957 launch of the Russian Sputnik. American public outcry was immediate, as evidenced in Broudy’s (1959) description:

> The early response was what might have been expected. One grade teacher is reported to have found a set of science texts in the room one morning wherewith she was to institute an immediate renaissance in science education. Legislators drafted bills. Resolutions were passed, letters written to the editors. Magazines rushed authoritative authors into print with blueprints for reforming American secondary and higher education. Plans for granting scholarships, recruiting science teachers, training science teachers, finding the gifted, and promoting research were embodied in proposals and counter-proposals. Here and there enterprising youths reassured the anxious public by shooting off homemade rockets. (p. 20)

Although Broudy’s description sounds somewhat comical, the United States felt it had been bested by its enemy, and it needed to develop America’s talent to its potential (Barbe, 1959).
In response to the Sputnik launch and the “national emergency,” Congress passed the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) in 1958. The nation’s focus was on its gifted and talented students (Zettel, 1982), and this Act would help ensure the nation’s security through the development of its brightest students’ mental abilities (Flattau et al., 2005). The key features of NDEA included a student loan program to colleges and universities that would increase the flow of talent into careers in science, mathematics, and foreign language; a National Defense Fellowship for graduate study that would lead to a career in higher education; and various programs that focused on teacher training and public understanding of science and technology (Flattau et al., 2005).

In a 1998 interview, A. Harry Passow was asked to recall the Act and what happened as a result of its passage:

The National Defense Education Act (NDEA) was passed in 1958 and it provided the impetus for curriculum reform in science, math, and foreign languages, later expanded to other subjects, that lasted into the ’60s. The NDEA (1958) was originally designed to improve the math and science curriculum for bright students, as well as the teaching of math and science in general. The programs that emerged were available to all levels of students, but were most appropriate for the brighter students. It was acknowledged that bright students needed a differentiated curriculum in the content areas in order to maximize their educational development. Consequently, there was more recognition of the specific curricular needs of the gifted and talented than there is today [at the end of the 20th century]. (Kirschenbaum, 1998, pp. 194–195)

Although there was very limited legislation aimed directly at the education of gifted and talented students during the 1940–1960 era, the passage of three Congressional Acts did influence both the research being conducted and educational practices in the schools. The GI Bill, passed in 1944, was among the first to focus on the need for and importance of a highly educated workforce. Soon after, the schools were pressed into a focus on science and math, in an effort to produce talent to go into science and related
fields. The National Science Foundation Act first and then the National Defense Education Act, which resulted from perceived national threat of the Sputnik launch, also placed pressure on schools and teachers to focus on science and math classes and to identify the nation’s most talented students in these areas. Scholars quickly began conducting research that focused on math and science talent (e.g., Anderson, Page, & Smith, 1958; Hone, 1959; Roudebush, 1959) and published articles that described example programs in the schools (e.g., Witty & Bloom, 1954, 1955).

Publications That Influenced Streams of Research and Educational Practices

During the 1940s and 1950s, articles that focused on gifted education and gifted children were found in both academic works and the popular press. However, five publications stand out as the ones that were most influential in influencing research themes and educational practices. These were: (a) Exceptional Children, (b) NASSP Bulletin, (c) Teachers College Record, (d) Gifted Child Quarterly, and (e) The Gifted Child (Witty, 1951b). In addition, Understanding the Child published a special issue on the gifted in 1948; the Journal of Teacher Education published one in 1954; The School Review published one in 1957; and School and Society published a special section in 1958, following that with a special issue in 1959.

Exceptional Children

Exceptional Children, which began as the Journal of Exceptional Children, published 63 articles in the 1940s and 1950s of relevance to this dissertation. Many articles provided overviews of educational programs such as the Major Work Classes in Cleveland (Barbe & Norris, 1954; Froehlich, McNealy, & Nelson, 1944), Hunter College
Elementary (Brumbaugh, 1955), and the Brockton Public Schools (Fox & Wiles, 1943), or focused on descriptive narratives of gifted students or educational best practices (Johnson, 1943; Pritchard, 1952; Witty, 1953). In addition, the journal included case study research of gifted students (Crowder & Gallagher, 1957; Witty & Coomer, 1955). 

*Exceptional Children* also focused on research and published current studies that were conducted with gifted children (e.g., Baker, 1943; Nelson & Carlson, 1945; Rex, 1952).

More than half of the articles in this publication (36, or 57%) focused on educational provisions for gifted students, although these were typically not research studies; *Exceptional Children* often published articles in which authors described their school’s programming models and indicated what worked well with these students. Eight articles described characteristics of gifted students, and four discussed identification issues. The journal tended to publish articles that fit within the streams of research identified above, although the focus of the journal was more descriptive in nature instead of research-based. *Exceptional Children* has teachers as its primary audience, which could explain the heavy focus on programming examples found in classrooms and schools across the country (and world; see Thompson, 1949a, 1949b).

With its focus on providing descriptive information and some research results, *Exceptional Children* most likely was influential in which educational practices were used in the schools. Although the journal tended to publish the majority of its articles on special education instead of gifted education, the 63 articles published in the 1940s and 1950s certainly provided teachers and others valuable information on the gifted child.
In this two-decade period, the *NASSP Bulletin* published 72 articles that focused on topics of interest to this research. A publication of the National Association for Secondary School Principals, the *Bulletin* covered topics that focused on subjects applicable to middle and high school principals. This journal provided a sounding board for many schools to discuss their programs for gifted students and focus on best practices for the gifted (see, for example, Bernstein, 1958; Bonawit & Ivins, 1959; Cherkis & Di Biaso, 1959; Dodes, 1959; Elder, 1959; Engelstein & Miller, 1959; Flory, 1956; Lovelass & Harnly, 1959). The majority of these articles were written about educational provisions for the gifted offered in the schools (63, or 87.5%).

It is somewhat interesting to note the large number of articles focusing on gifted education that were published in this journal, especially during the 1950s. In the latter part of the 20th century and at present, secondary education for gifted students has been a somewhat neglected area of research when looking at services and programs offered for these students (Hertberg-Davis & Callahan, 2008). For the most part, schools today tend to use the Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) programs as substitutes for gifted services at the secondary level (Hertberg-Davis & Callahan, 2008). However, during this period, it appears that schools were focused on developing programs and services to meet gifted students’ needs in the secondary schools.

The *NASSP Bulletin* provided examples of quality programs, suggested best practices, and offered overviews of programs such as the AP program, which began in 1953. With the number of articles that described current gifted programming found within the schools, this publication most assuredly helped influence educational practices
in the schools, especially with its audience of school administrators who were in charge
of this type of decision.

*Teachers College Record*

*Teachers College Record* is a journal that has been published by Teachers
College, Columbia University, since 1900. Focusing on research and commentary in the
field of education, it is one of the longest-running publications devoted to educational
issues. In the 1940s and 1950s, 16 articles focusing on gifted education were published
in the journal. Following Hollingworth’s death in 1939, a special issue was devoted to
her contributions to the field, focusing on the six fields in which she had lectured and
conducted research. In December 1940, a Conference on Education of the Gifted was
held at Teachers College, Columbia University (Bruner, 1941a). The conference was
held in honor of Leta Hollingworth and was designed to increase awareness about the
identification and education of gifted students (Bruner, 1941a). Another special issue of
*Teachers College Record* was published in February 1941 and included some of the
addresses from the conference, as well as information on issues and problems identified
during the conference.

The journal published articles on topics including Hollingworth’s contributions to
the field, leadership and the gifted, recent research, education of the gifted at various
levels, and talent development. *Teachers College Record* may have published these
articles and the special issue devoted to gifted education due to the fact that it was housed
at Teachers College, Columbia University. In the early part of the century, and also in
the 1940s and 1950s, Teachers College graduated and hired many scholars who had an
interest in gifted education, including Leta Hollingworth, Ruth Strang, A. Harry Passow,
and Paul Witty. These scholars were well-known and quite prolific during this period and may have helped influence what was being published in Teachers College Record. The topics were similar to those covered in other publications of the period, but the fact that influential writers such as those listed above were publishing in the journal may have helped it in terms of its relative influence on streams of research and educational practices.

**Gifted Child Quarterly**

*Gifted Child Quarterly* first began as *The Gifted Child Newsletter* in January 1957. The newsletter was a quarterly published by the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC). It was designed as a newsletter with the intention to publish it “for one year, nurturing its growth until it achieves maturity as a Journal” (Isaacs, 1957a, p. 2). Because it was the first publication developed specifically for material related directly to gifted education and gifted children—and nothing else—it can be considered one of the most important publications during this period. In the 3 years leading up to 1960, 40 articles were published.

The newsletter, and subsequently the journal, started out with a combination of articles and columns. The very first newsletter, published in January of 1957, only contained one article, titled “How I Teach Gifted Children” and did not give credit to the author. The first newsletter also included columns called “Coming Soon,” which shared a list of important upcoming publications; “You Will Want to Read,” which suggested current readings on gifted children; and “News and Notes,” which discussed important events going on throughout the states.
By the second year of its publication, *Gifted Child Quarterly* seemed to hit its stride. Another column specifically for parents had been added, and more articles appeared. The articles became somewhat more scholarly in nature and included some studies. (The first year of publication included articles more descriptive in nature.) During 1958 and 1959, many articles were included that focused on examples of gifted programming offered in the schools, at both the elementary and secondary levels (19, or 47.5%), as well as articles that discussed gifted students’ characteristics (7, or 17.5%). In addition, the journal featured articles on the mental health of gifted students and what action schools could take in guiding the gifted.

*Gifted Child Quarterly* came to the table late in the 1950s, but within 3 years it had published 40 articles. Although it contained many articles on educational programming (similar to other publications during this period), it also focused on topics such as foreign language acquisition, art talent, underachievement, and college credit for students in high school. Because it was the only publication specifically developed for disseminating material on gifted education, it naturally became influential in both streams of research and educational practices in the school, especially at the start of the new decade beginning the 1960s. However, it wasn’t until much later that *Gifted Child Quarterly* became a true empirical research journal (personal interview, A. J. Tannenbaum, February 19, 2010).
Heralded by Terman (1954a) as the “best survey of thought and action” (p. 227) in the field of gifted education, *The Gifted Child* was published in 1951. It was conceptualized by the American Association for Gifted Children (AAGC) and edited by Paul Witty. The book consisted of a “who’s who” in the field during this period, with some of the most influential writers contributing chapters, including Paul Witty, Lewis Terman, and Ruth Strang.

The 15-chapter book contained chapters on various topics that would have been of interest to scholars and educators in the classroom. Covering topics (most of which were the same as the streams of research during this period) such as the progress of the field to 1951, identifying gifted students, the Terman studies, contributions of Leta Hollingworth, highly gifted children, the teacher of gifted children, mental hygiene, and educational provisions, among others, the book shared research and suggestions for the education of gifted students. *The Gifted Child* was among the first compilations to be written in which a plethora of information and research was included in one publication.

At the end of the 1950s, Witty (1959a) felt that *The Gifted Child* helped bring about a resurgence of interest in gifted students and their education. In his review of the book, Havighurst (1951) shared, “the book does a good job of pointing out that we still have a long way to go in recognizing talent and in giving it a chance to develop under really favorable circumstances” (p. 53).
Special Issues

A few journals published special issues on the gifted child during this period. In addition to the *Teachers College Record* issue discussed above, these included *

In 1948, *Understanding the Child* offered an overview of various topics in the field. It provided information on characteristics of gifted students and discussed two research students (Terman’s and a follow-up study on one of Hollingworth’s high-IQ students). In addition, it included information on identification, psychological aspects, and the work of the AAGC. Although the issue may not have influenced future streams of research or educational practices in the school per se, it did provide readers timely information on gifted education topics during that period of time.

In 1954, the *Journal of Teacher Education* printed a symposium on the gifted child. These articles, too, tended to be categorized into the same categories as the research at the time: characteristics and psychological aspects of gifted students, teachers of the gifted, and educational provisions. Specifically written for an audience of teachers, this information may have been influential in teachers wanting to address gifted students’ needs in the classroom.

*The School Review* published a special issue on gifted children in 1957, with a heavy focus on educating the gifted and the provisions that work best with them. In 1958, *School and Society* published a special section on the gifted that contained articles on educational provisions, peer relationships, and characteristics of gifted students. The next year, *School and Society* published an entire issue devoted to the topic of gifted
students, containing even more articles on educational provisions (Stanley, 1959a; Witty, 1959a; Woodring, 1959).

How much of an impact on educational provisions for gifted students and the streams of research these special issues made during this period is unknown, but one can assume that there was one. The fact that these journals, which tended to focus on general education, published entire issues devoted to the gifted indicates an interest in the topic and the need for the information to be disseminated to educators, administrators, and scholars alike.

Summary

Each of the five main publications discussed above most likely contributed to the streams of research and educational practices being conducted during the 1940s and 1950s. The four journals, Exceptional Children, NASSP Bulletin, Teachers College Record, and Gifted Child Quarterly, published a wide variety of articles intended for both researchers and educators working with gifted students. In addition, The Gifted Child provided a framework to bring together current research and information on gifted children for people to use in working with gifted children. With those publications, as well as the special issues published during this period, readers were provided with a large amount of material on the gifted. Had these publications not existed, or not included articles on gifted education, there would have been a detrimental effect on the field—possibly even ceasing its existence.
In the years between 1940 and 1960, two major groups advocated specifically for gifted children. The American Association for Gifted Children and the National Association for Gifted Children were both concerned with the needs of gifted students and played a large role in helping influence streams of research and educational practices in the schools.

**American Association for Gifted Children**

Established in 1946 in New York City for the purpose of “recognizing, appreciating, and stimulating creative work among gifted children” (Williamson, 1948, p. 53), the AAGC advocated for gifted children, who it considered to be a minority group of students that was not being given adequate provisions in school. One of the group’s main objectives was to focus on writing articles in order to spread information on gifted children and their education (Williamson, 1948).

The organization made it its objective to help others understand the nature and needs of gifted students, help provide effective training for teachers of the gifted, develop more stimulating curricula for use in the schools, and conduct more research on the gifted (Clark & Williamson, 1951).

Perhaps the most important advocacy contribution of the organization’s history was the publication of *The Gifted Child* in 1951. Edited by Witty, the book provided an overview of important issues and research in the field of gifted education. In the introduction, Clark (Clark & Williamson, 1951), president of the AAGC, expressed the organization’s interest in “enlarging our concept of ability and . . . the discovery of better
ways to identify the gifted in many different fields. And it is particularly interested in furthering educational opportunities for gifted children and youth” (p. v).

Pritchard (1952), who was associated with the American Association for Gifted Children, attributed the definition of the term gifted adopted by the AAGC to Paul Witty. The definition the group promoted indicated, “We should broaden our definition of gifted and consider any child gifted whose performance, in any potentially valuable line of human ability, is consistently remarkable” (Pritchard, 1952, p. 109).

Pritchard (1952) also argued:

progress toward the successful implementing of an effective program for special education for the gifted has been severely hampered by too great indulgence in useless controversy over such questions as nature versus nurture, homogeneous grouping, acceleration versus enrichment, and the like. (pp. 107–108)

She revealed that there may not be definite answers to the questions proposed about educational programming and that developing programs for gifted students should not be hindered by arguments or preoccupation with various styles or programming (Pritchard, 1952).

In 1954, the Journal of Teacher Education published a special issue that contained a symposium on the gifted child. The symposium was suggested by the journal editors, who approached Williamson, one of the founders of the AAGC (Strang, 1954a). In the introduction to the issue, Strang (1954a) highlighted the importance of the teacher and indicated teachers need to understand important educational practices such as identifying gifted children early and the best kind of programming to meet their needs.
The National Association for Gifted Children was founded in 1954 by Ann Faber Isaacs. The organization’s objectives focused on the formation of an association, the publication of a journal, and the establishment of a fund to sponsor research and aid districts who were developing programs for the gifted (Isaacs, 1957a).

Of utmost importance was the publication of *The Gifted Child Newsletter* (which later became *Gifted Child Quarterly*). During this period, the journal was the only publication devoted entirely to issues that focused on gifted education and gifted students, thus giving it a prominent position in the field (although it must be noted that it did not require its authors to submit empirical research until years later; personal communication, A. J. Tannenbaum, February 19, 2010).

By the fourth issue of *The Gifted Child Newsletter*, NAGC had grown. The organization consisted of members from 31 states and four countries, made up of superintendents, teachers, psychologists/counselors, schools/school systems, parents, professors, and libraries (Isaacs, 1957b). As it transitioned into a full-blown journal, *Gifted Child Quarterly* began publishing more research articles, thus helping to establish a research agenda for the field (or at least report what studies were being conducted at the time).

NAGC held annual conferences, often cosponsored with other educational organizations. These conferences provided an outlet for presentations that highlighted current topics in the field, including “The Needs of Today’s Children,” “Motivating the Gifted Underachiever,” “The Role of Parents and Teachers in Guiding the Gifted,” and “Studies on Gifted Children.”
In 1958, Barbe, president of NAGC, reminded readers of the importance of developing quality education programs for the gifted: “We must be certain that the programs which we support for the gifted child are not ‘crash programs,’ to last only while the gifted child is the center of attention” (p. 55). He clarified:

the role of N.A.G.C. is a clear one. We must provide intelligent leadership for those who are eager to “do something for the gifted child:” but we must be certain that the leadership which we provide is for the benefit of all children. . . . Attention is now being given to those children who are intellectually gifted, and this attention is long overdue. We must continue in our efforts also to assist in the identification of other kinds of gifts and the proper development of them. (p. 55)

NAGC was able to influence streams of research and educational practices through its publication of the Gifted Child Quarterly, as well as its annual meetings, which helped bring current information to both scholars and educators in the field of gifted education.

Educational Practices

The most common educational practices used with gifted students during the 1940s–1960s included acceleration, enrichment, and special classes (Hildenbrand, 1981; Jolly, 2004; Philadelphia Suburban School Study Council, Group A, 1954). The Educational Policies Commission (1950) suggested that the most effective approach to educating gifted students was a combination of the above strategies; however, it was difficult to determine how many schools followed this suggestion.

Acceleration

Acceleration was one of the first programming methods offered to gifted students in the 1800s (Sumption & Luecking, 1960), and throughout the early 1900s, it was the most common programming model used with gifted children (Educational Policies
Commission, 1950). Witty (1954) noted that acceleration was once again en vogue.

“Acceleration offers opportunity for a gifted pupil to move at a pace appropriate to his ability and maturity and to complete an educational program in less than the ordinary amount of time” (DeHaan & Havighurst, 1957, p. 122). DeHaan and Havighurst (1957) found that 2–3 years of acceleration did no harm to gifted students and 1–2 years seemed to work well, especially for students who were mentally and socially ready to do so. Wilson (1951a) believed that there was evidence that showed that acceleration should be based on each student’s needs and that it caused more harm if gifted students were not allowed to accelerate. Allowing students to accelerate their schooling helped provide challenging experiences on par with their intellectual abilities (Educational Policies Commission, 1950).

There were three types of acceleration offered to gifted students: grade skipping; rapid- or special-progress classes, in which the material for each grade was covered in a faster period of time; and early entrance to kindergarten or college (DeHaan & Havighurst, 1957; Sumption & Luecking, 1960). Early entrance to school was found to have various advantages, including the fact that students could become productive adults one year earlier, and students were able to continue through school without missing important milestones in grades that they might have missed if skipping a grade (Sumption & Luecking, 1960). Grade skipping was usually found at the elementary level, and it was important to ensure that students who were accelerated were not lacking any fundamental information (Sumption & Luecking, 1960). Rapid-progress courses allowed groups of students to finish more years of study in a much shorter period of time, and were often found at the junior high level (Sumption & Luecking, 1960).
Many advantages were found for accelerating gifted students (Abraham, 1958; Luecking & Sumption, 1960), which included helping gifted students’ develop at their rate of progress instead of hindering their learning; alleviating boredom and lack of challenge often found in the students’ age-based grade level; allowing students to become creative, productive adults who have finished school early enough to begin their careers; and providing students with opportunities to work with other students with more advanced interests. Abraham (1958) suggested that acceleration was one of the most cost-effective ways to provide for gifted students, as there was no disruption to the classes. Disadvantages included the fact that students might skip over important concepts needed, students might not be as socially or emotionally prepared as the other students in the new grade level, and students might develop personality difficulties by being singled out as an accelerated student (Keys, 1942; Luecking & Sumption, 1960).

Brumbaugh and Roshco (1959) provided a list of items for parents to consider when deciding whether or not to accelerate their gifted child. These included: (a) the child’s physical development, (b) the child’s social development, and (c) how frequently the school accelerated children. Brumbaugh and Roshco recommended acceleration to parents, stating, “If the parent is given a choice, and there is no good reason for not accelerating the child, he should probably be allowed to move ahead” (p. 118).

**Enrichment**

Cutts and Mosely (1957) defined enrichment as “the substitution of beneficial learning for needless repetition or harmful idleness” (p. 37). They cautioned that enrichment was best carried out for the purpose of helping gifted students make the most of their potential and not as an “excuse [for] haphazard planning or lack of planning, or
impulsive, superficial following of will-o’-the-wisps” (p. 39). Enrichment programs had as their general objectives to: (a) challenge students’ full abilities; (b) broaden the knowledge base; (c) deepen understanding; (d) increase skill level; (e) develop students’ love of learning; (f) offer new methods of learning, thinking, and sharing; (g) encourage initiative; and (h) provide a creative outlet for students (Cutts & Mosely, 1957).

Sumption and Luecking (1960) defined enrichment as something that “develops and enhances the learning experiences of gifted students in such a way as to add both breadth and depth of meaning beyond what is normally acquired by the typical student” (p. 203). DeHaan and Havighurst (1957) described it as providing more opportunities for gifted students to “go deeper and to range more widely than the average child in his intellectual, social, and artistic experience” (p. 97). As cautioned by Cutts and Mosely (1957), Sumption and Luecking also stressed that enrichment programs had to be planned carefully, with both the teacher and the student understanding the purpose and goals of the program. “Enrichment is not the same thing everywhere. It is not a static activity. It is relative to the child’s ability, achievement, and experience, and to the ideas and skills that the teacher brings to the situation” (DeHaan & Havighurst, 1957, p. 102).

Students could participate in individual or group enrichment. Individual enrichment could be conducted within the regular classroom, but materials such as books, audio-visual materials, and live materials (e.g., plants, animals) had to be available for gifted students to avail themselves (Sumption & Luecking, 1960). Sumption and Luecking (1960) described what individual enrichment may look like:

A gifted student can usually do the work of his regular grade in half the time ordinarily devoted to it, so enrichment will not use time required for regular studies. He may then have supplementary or additional work to pursue involving reading, creative projects, experimentation in science and other fields,
independent study in areas of interest, interviews and consultations with experts in the fields he is studying, further work to develop knowledge of and skills in research—the possibilities are limitless insofar as the child’s program is concerned. (pp. 210–211)

Group enrichment worked best when students were organized into groups specifically for that purpose (Sumption & Luecking, 1960). These types of programs included special schools, special classes, and seminars (usually found in secondary schools).

Abraham (1958) argued that enrichment was the favorite programming option for gifted students at this time, but explained, “while its heart is in the right place, it remains unproven and unsatisfying” (p. 82). Proponents of enrichment believed that it was a natural option for schools of all sizes and the least expensive option, as students were educated in the regular classroom, with only the breadth and depth changed for those who were gifted. In addition, proponents indicated that leaving gifted students in the regular classroom provided a stimulus for the slower students to improve their own work (Abraham, 1958). On the other hand, opponents of this arrangement argued that gifted students could not be stimulated in the regular classroom in which there may be no other children like them, and they may become lazy without being challenged to reach their full potential. Often, teachers misunderstood the concept of enrichment and believed that extra homework or more problems would suffice for gifted students (Abraham, 1958).

Dunlap (1955) provided an example of an enrichment program for gifted students in Universal City, MO. Students in grades 2–6 were identified for the program based on tests of ability and achievement, teacher recommendations, and an individual intelligence test. The school typically used a 140 IQ as the minimum required for participating in the program, although sometimes the students’ minimum IQ was higher (Dunlap, 1955). The gifted students met with the enrichment teacher twice a week for approximately 40–50
minutes. Students were encouraged to study topics not typically studied in the regular curriculum; the emphasis was on language, social studies, and science (Dunlap, 1955). Dunlap expressed concern by noting that these enrichment periods added up to a total of only 2 to 2 ½ weeks out of the whole school year, but even with the limited amount of time offered to students, they were able to participate in challenging enrichment activities.

Stanley (1959a) summarized the concept of enrichment by explaining:

Possibilities for “enriching” a given subject with respect to the intellectually gifted within regular classes are restricted only by the ingenuity, resourcefulness, and especially the energy of the teacher and his colleagues. Causing students to think rather than merely to memorize is the key concept. While departing from rote learning would enliven most classes it is doubly important for the brightest pupils. (p. 170)

Special Classes

Special classes also were implemented as educational programming for gifted students. Witty, Conant, and Strang (1959) noted the increased interest in this type of programming: “During the past ten years a strong interest in special classes for the gifted has emerged, and many programs are being initiated in which gifted pupils are placed in such classes” (p. 6). These classes were considered to have distinct advantages:

“Because standards of achievement are higher, each pupil is challenged to use his intellectual powers to a fuller extent than in the typical heterogeneous class” (Educational Policies Commission, 1950). Gifted students were grouped together based on ability, and students were introduced to a larger variety of challenging learning experiences than could have been offered in a heterogeneous classroom (Educational Policies Commission, 1950). One advantage to grouping children by ability was the fact that they
could be taught by a teacher specifically prepared to teach gifted learners (Educational Policies Commission, 1950). Abraham (1958) felt that gifted students who were segregated would be “less conceited and smug than in a situation where [they are] the standout, the . . . ‘brain’ in a class of average and below-average students” (p. 70).

However, some pointed out potential disadvantages of grouping students by ability. French (1959) summarized some of these concerns:

[People] are afraid that a differentiated instructional program will prevent some children from receiving their fair share of instruction, will create an elite class, will keep the gifted from learning to understand others, will not speed up the emergence of talent, or will not significantly help because teachers do not know enough about the new provisions. (p. 210)

In addition, other concerns included the belief that special classes were undemocratic, the fear that gifted students would become arrogant or conceited and feel superior to other students not selected for the special class (Heck, 1953), the cost of having smaller classes and additional teachers needed to provide for special classes, and the question of who would “want to teach the ones left? Most teachers will resent remaining with the [nongifted students]” (Abraham, 1958, pp. 71–72).

Justman (1951) stressed the need for total school buy-in for this form of programming for gifted students, arguing that the entire school must accept the special class arrangement for it to work.

Cutts and Moseley (1957) also discussed the characteristics desired of teachers in the special classes. They desired:

The teacher of a special class should be eager to teach the class, not as a matter of prestige, but because he believes that ability grouping of the type which his school uses offers the best means of serving the pupils and through them the community. . . . He has to have a mind open to new methods, and he must be willing to experiment and to improvise in order to satisfy individual differences and needs. (p. 100)
The Major Work Classes in Cleveland were one of the most successful examples of special classes for gifted students during this period (Peters, 1941). Froehlich et al. (1944) described the program, indicating that students who participated in the classes had to have an IQ of 125 or above, and noting that “students do not earn places in Major Work [C]lasses; it is theirs by right of native capacity” (p. 208). Students in the Major Work Classes followed the regular program of study, but in a much more flexible manner. They were provided additional experiences, such as French creative writing, literature, and attendance at symphony concerts (Froehlich et al., 1944). Although the gifted students were grouped by ability, they were provided opportunities to be with the other students during recess, PE class, and club periods (Froehlich et al., 1944).

Summary

Heck (1953) highlighted the following principles to keep in mind when planning for programming for gifted children:

1. It should provide the gifted with the same opportunity to develop their talents that is provided for the average child and for the child of low I.Q.
2. It should guard against the development of conceited individuals among the gifted.
3. It should provide for social and physical placement, as well as for proper mental placement.
4. It should develop a real enrichment program.
5. It should prevent the development of wasteful and bad social habits.
6. It should seek for each gifted child a sane, all-round development educationally, socially, physically, and morally.
7. It should be based, in the last analysis, upon the most careful study of each child.

(pp. 386–397)

Although schools most commonly implemented acceleration, enrichment, or special classes for gifted students during the 1940–1960 period, according to the Educational Policies Commission (1950):

No one method . . . can by itself, even under the most favorite circumstances, adequately provide gifted children and youth with the total educational program that they need. Such a program must combine general education with special education; that is, it must provide for the needs that they have because they are children and youth while at the same time providing for the needs that they have because they are gifted. (p. 66)

Streams of Research

During the 1940s and 1950s, a large amount of research was conducted pertaining to gifted education. For example, in a review of research conducted between 1944 and 1953, Newland (1953) cited 80 studies. A little more than half a decade later, Fliegler and Bish (1959) reviewed additional research that was conducted since Newland’s (1953) review, and cited more than 250 studies. Because it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to discuss every study that was published during this period, the researcher chose to focus on the major themes found within the research and included summaries of the most relevant studies.

The researcher used the themes identified in the research reviews published during the 1940s and 1950s (Fliegler & Bish, 1959; Newland, 1953) as a starting point for categorizing the research studies into thematic areas. In doing so, the studies were grouped into the most common themes of research, which included characteristics of gifted students, attitudes, identification, educational provisions, teacher education,
creativity, and reviews of the literature/suggested directions for future research. Relevant research studies published during this period are grouped thematically and presented below. In some cases, the researcher determined it would be helpful to further group together studies within a theme, thus some themes contain subgroups of research with that particular theme.

**Characteristics of Gifted Students**

During this period, some research focused on the characteristics of gifted students. Within this category, studies highlighted the characteristics of gifted students in the areas of cognitive/academic, social/emotional, demographics, and longitudinal studies. In addition, other research described characteristics of special populations of gifted students, including those with high IQs, minority students, and gifted underachievers.

*Cognitive/academic characteristics.* Some researchers looked at specific areas of giftedness. Courvoisier (1940) was interested in musically gifted seventh-grade students in San Francisco. Out of 3,660 students in the seventh grade, 240 scored in the 90th percentile or above on a music test and were tested further with two additional music assessments, focusing on music memory and music discrimination. A total of 68 students reached or exceeded the 90th percentile on all three tests. She found that many of the students were superior in intellectual ability as well as music talent, as 28% of them had an IQ of 135 or above. Reviewing questionnaires answered by teachers, Courvoisier found that 30% were superior in both math and music, 30% were consistently found on the honor roll, and 12% were considered to be maladjusted. She noted that “many gifted children have their problems, too—of integration of personality, of finding their true
paces in the ranks of artists. They are often in extraordinary danger of being misunderstood, unappreciated, or neglected” (Courvoisier, 1940, p. 181).

Academic attainment of gifted students was one area of interest to researchers. Using additional data from the Advisory Committee of Coordinated Studies in Education, Inc., Lewis (1944) looked at the academic achievement of gifted and retarded students in grades 4–8. Focusing on the upper 10% (4,529 students) and the lower 10% (4,627), Lewis (1944) found that the students in the retarded group tended to achieve above expectations, while the students in the superior group achieved less than what would be expected based on their ability. Citing programs such as the Major Work Program in Cleveland and Hollingworth’s classes in New York City, Lewis (1944) argued that gifted children can reach their potential provided they are given opportunities that allow them to do so. He concluded:

Special projects in the education of gifted children have shown that their level of achievement can be raised by giving them as much attention as the dull children receive and that they can achieve much more than dull or average children in much less time, both in years spent in school or hours of the school day given to the standard curriculum. This would seem to provide the best evidence that the gifted child is working below capacity. His level of achievement rises when he is given the attention that is due him. (p. 109)

Edgerton and Britt (1944) conducted a follow-up study of participants of the annual Science Talent Search to determine college status and receipt of scholarships. The researchers mailed 3,175 questionnaires to contestants who participated in the 1942 talent search, and received back 2,475 (78% return rate). They found that among the males, 97% of the winners, 87% of the honorable mentions, and 76% of the other participants had enrolled in college. Among the females, 89% of the winners, 92% of the honorable mentions, and 70% of the other participants had enrolled in college (Edgerton & Britt,
1944). Of the 216 students who had won or who were honorable mentions, 100 of them had received scholarships that amounted to almost $70,000 in total.

Wilson (1953b) conducted a study of ability test scores of 11-year-old gifted children at Hunter College Elementary School between 1947–1950. Students were assessed on art judgment, music memory, music accomplishment, science knowledge, and mechanical ability, and showed, in general, a superiority in their abilities.

Science was another area of research interest. In 1956, MacCurdy provided an overview of the characteristics and backgrounds of gifted science students using winners and honorable mentions from the 1952–1953 Science Talent Search. Gifted science students were found to have intense curiosity, were social-minded, had more solitary interests such as reading about science or playing chess, and were considered to be scholarly and did well in school, including math. Gifted science students often had a scientific mentor and considered their science teacher to have an important impact on their interest in science. In addition, students had decided on a career in science early, often in elementary school (MacCurdy, 1956a).

That same year, MacCurdy (1956b) published a more in-depth description of the characteristics of gifted science students that appeared in Science Education. Students were considered to be leaders and self-disciplined; often had a disinterest in athletics and entertainment; had interests that were more solitary in nature; participated in school activities that were focused on the sciences; came from advantaged families that allowed students to develop their potential in science; and decided to pursue a career in science at a young age. MacCurdy (1956b) also included specific characteristics of subgroups of gifted science students, including winners of the Science Talent Search, potential
scientists, potential engineers, women, and professionals. All were found to be similar to the group as a whole.

Anderson et al. (1958) looked at the variability of gifted high school students’ achievement in science, math, English, social studies, and intelligence. The authors studied 145 seniors in both the lowest 10% and highest 10% in each of the five areas that were tested. They found that the upper 10% group in science, math, and social studies contained more males than females; however, the opposite was true in the case of English. In addition, Anderson et al. noted that the students who were the highest achievers in science also tended to achieve well in the other areas, compared to those students at the lower ends of the spectrum. Looking at the students’ achievement in science and their IQs led the researchers to conclude that “there are forces other than intelligence at work leading to exceptional achievement in science and other areas, such as motivation, originality, and creativity” (Anderson et al., 1958, p. 59).

As a group, gifted students were considered superior in ability, but some were achieving below expectations. Whether this was due to a school system that often disregarded the gifted child’s needs or due to other factors was still cause for concern. However, for students gifted in a particular area such as science, researchers found some common characteristics. These included having an intense interest in the subject, participating in solitary activities at times, and having someone who encouraged their interest.

*Social/emotional characteristics.* Researchers examined the hobbies and interests of gifted students in a number of studies. Lewis and McGehee (1940) compared the interests of gifted and retarded children. Using data collected by the Advisory
Committee of Coordinated Studies in Education, Inc., the authors focused on the mentally superior (top 10% of 45,000 children in grades 4–8) and the mentally retarded (lowest 10% of the same group). The researchers had the students’ teachers make checkmarks on a list of 10 extracurricular activities and a list of 21 hobbies in which the students participated. Among the findings, they noted that more than twice as many gifted students played musical instruments, as well as participated in school music activities. In addition, more than twice as many gifted students counted science and history reading as a hobby. Lewis and McGehee (1940) concluded, “The mentally superior, because of the nature of their interests, would appear to be best equipped to benefit most from a program that stresses the academic phases of education” (p. 600).

Witty (1952) conducted a study of graduates of the Quiz Kids program (a program in the 1940s and 1950s that was heard on the radio and then moved to TV) to ascertain the relationship of a type of recognition (selection for and participating in the program) to the development/adjustment of these students. In 1951, questionnaires were sent to students who had participated in the program three or more times. These questionnaires focused on education, vocations, hobbies, marriage and family, recognition and awards, and attitudes surrounding the participation in the program. A total of 41 forms were returned. Respondents were avid readers, and they enjoyed novels and plays as well as biographies and autobiographies. Witty (1952) found that the participants “agreed that the neglect of the above-average or gifted pupil is great at the present time, and that the public school is the single great institution that has the opportunity to correct this situation” (p. 271).
In 1952, Barbe focused on the gifted child’s reading habits and interests. His sample consisted of 103 (53 boys, 50 girls) freshmen and sophomore students with IQs of 130 and above. Students answered questionnaires that focused on their reading habits, and more than one fourth of the students were interviewed as a follow-up to clarify answers and perform a check on their responses. Barbe (1952) found that 47% of the girls and 33% of the boys had learned to read prior to entering school, and students read 6 hours a week on average. Gifted boys reported enjoying mysteries, biographies, and historical books most, whereas gifted girls enjoyed historical fiction, modern novels, and biographies best. However, 35% of the students reported using the school library less than once every 6 months, something Barbe (1952) felt was “a sad commentary on the enriched program for gifted students when so little use is made of libraries. These figures indicate the need for guidance in reading and the development of interests in reading” (p. 153).

In addition, emotional issues of gifted students were of interest to researchers who wanted to determine whether or not these children differed from others. In 1949, Burns looked at gifted children in Birmingham. Data were collected from questionnaires answered by head teachers in the schools, as well as a study of cases referred to the Child Guidance Clinic in Birmingham, and yielded 87 students (71 of which had IQs of 116 and above). Burns found that a high number of cases referred to the clinic were students with superior intelligence, and found more incidents of neuroses among the boys and behaviors problems among the girls than what was typically found in cases sent to the clinic.
In 1945, Carlson looked at another aspect of the special class for superior students in the Brockton Public School system: mental hygiene. Carlson (1945) described the project:

From a research point of view, this was an experiment to determine whether a class set up for gifted children in the middle years of childhood could serve a mental hygiene function; whether it could be used as a therapeutic device for intellectually superior boys and girls to avoid those pitfalls in personality development which are often encountered by the highly endowed. (p. 648)

Using the same group of gifted students and control group discussed in Nelson and Carlson (1945), Carlson (1945) grouped students into three categories based on personality evaluations: well-adjusted students, those with personality and behavior problems, and those who were maladjusted. The special class used a term project and seminar method and no grades were given. Children were responsible for helping establish certain objectives at the beginning of the semester and would periodically compare their progress with the desired goal. (So engrossed in the class activities, the students were able to continue their classwork by themselves with no interruption when their teacher was absent for a week.) The researchers concluded that 20 of the 25 children (16 children and the control group of 9) improved noticeably based on teacher, parent, and other staff opinions. For students who were considered well-adjusted, this meant that they showed more progress than other gifted students not in the special class, they were able to focus on developing their abilities, and “they did not succumb to the kinds of personality defects which frequently appear in the highly endowed” (Carlson, 1945, p. 660). Improvement for those who had been identified as having personality or behavior problems or who were maladjusted meant that the students had no symptoms of maladjustment present and they evidenced healthier development. Carlson (1945)
focused on a number of factors that may have attributed to these improvements, including a more open and less restrictive classroom environment, a focus on student interests and aptitudes, activities that encouraged self-discipline, and a cohort environment that provided enjoyable learning experiences for students.

Ruth Strang (1950) looked at the inner world of gifted adolescents in an article that appeared in *Exceptional Children*. The article summarized data from compositions written by gifted high school students; all students had been given the same prompt: “Describe how you felt one time when you were upset or disturbed.” Strang (1950) felt that the data would help teachers and counselors understand what it feels like to be a gifted adolescent during this time period.

Strang (1956b) conducted another study that focused on gifted adolescents’ views of growing up in order to obtain information about their adjustment during the adolescent period. She asked 1,124 students in grades 7–12, 241 of which had IQs above 120, to write an essay on “How It Feels to Be Growing Up.” Gifted and nongifted students had similar frequency among both groups for various responses. Both sets of students mentioned feeling dissatisfied with changes in their bodies, and both sets had common experiences with siblings and parents. Gifted students were, however, more concerned with world peace and they also expressed satisfaction with their friendships, something that was contrary to popular opinion at the time (Strang, 1956b). Gifted students reported much more enjoyment of voluntary reading, especially at the junior high level, than nongifted students. Strang (1956b) felt this research had implications for all teachers, as they were able to obtain more insight into gifted adolescents’ views of growing up, and
she suggested that teachers have their own gifted students write similar essays to provide even greater insight into their students’ world.

Liddle (1958) looked at talents and maladjustments in 1,015 students, part of 10-year action research project. He focused on aggressive maladjustment, withdrawn maladjustment, social leadership ability, artistic talent, and intellectual ability. Liddle found that those talented in one area tended to be talented in other areas and were very unlikely to be seen as maladjusted by other students and teachers.

Other researchers looked at the more positive aspects of being gifted. In an attempt to study forms of giftedness besides intellectual, Jarecky (1959) looked at “social giftedness,” something he noted had not been paid attention to until after 1940. Defining students with social giftedness as those who “possessed . . . an exceptional capacity for mature productive relationships with others—both peers and adults” (p. 415), Jarecky focused on locating socially gifted students in two freshman classes \(N = 76\). Various questionnaires were used, along with a rating scale and a teacher ranking procedure, and socially gifted students were found with relative ease. However, Jarecky did not include any generalizations on how this information could be used in the classroom or elsewhere.

Another area that is included with the social/emotional characteristics is gifted students’ relationships with their peers. R. V. Miller (1956) looked at social status and socioempathic (“an individual’s awareness of his own and other’s sociometric status in a given group of which he is a member”; p. 114) differences between superior, typical, and retarded students. R. V. Miller noted:

The last two or three decades have witnessed some very important and fundamental changes in educational theory and practice in the United States, one of which is the growing recognition of and educational adjustment to individual differences. . . . This emphasis fostered an increased interest in special education.
for mentally deviate groups, the mentally retarded having received more attention in this respect that the mentally superior. (p. 114)

Overall, the superior were most able to predict their own social status and that of others. In addition, gifted students were most wanted as friends by their classmates, and gifted students chose other gifted students as friends more frequently than the other students. Discussing the findings, R. V. Miller felt it could be argued that it would be valid to group retarded students together, as they were the least socially accepted among the three groups. However, the author concluded otherwise for the gifted students:

The superior students, however, seem to be most socially accepted by their classmates and consequently the evidence of this study would contribute in part to questioning a need for special classes for the gifted on the allegation that they are being socially spurned or rejected by their classmates in the regular classroom. (p. 119)

R. V. Miller (1956) did acknowledge that the study did not look at the academic or intellectual aspects of the groups, so no grouping decisions could be made on those bases. Grace and Booth (1958) were concerned as to whether the gifted child was a “social isolate,” as many people had assumed based on the belief that gifted students were “nerdy” or outcasts. The authors looked at 294 children in grades K–6 in a California elementary school. They asked children the following questions: (a) “Which three children in your room do the best schoolwork?” (b) “Which three children in your room do you do things with most often?” (c) “If you could sit near any three children you want to, whom would you choose?” Based on the results, the researchers indicated that gifted children were not social isolates in this school.

Mann (1957) conducted a study that looked at how real the friendships were of gifted and nongifted students in a program in which partial segregation was used. The researcher looked at the gifted children in grades K–6 at Colfax School (Pittsburgh, PA),
where 50% of their time was spent in regular class with typical students, and 50% of their
time was in workshop rooms, with other gifted children. The school principal, Dr.
Pregler, believed this allowed the gifted students to maintain friendships with the other
students in their regular class, and Mann attempted to validate this belief using two
student questionnaires and a parent questionnaire. The first asked children three
questions:

1. Which children attending this school would you *like* to have near you at a school
   party?
2. Which children attending this school would you *like* to have help you catch up on
   your school work after you have been absent?
3. Which children who attend this school would you *like* to have on your side or
   team in playing games. (Mann, 1957, p. 199)

The second student questionnaire asked two questions:

1. Which three children who attend this school would you *like* to have give you their
   criticism concerning the art work you have done?
2. Which three children who attend this school would you *like* to have give you their
   criticism concerning the music work you have done?

On the two student questionnaires, the students also were asked questions that had
been rephrased with “least like” instead of “like.” In all cases, the gifted students and
typical students both accepted and rejected more students from their own groups. In
addition, the parent questionnaire found that the gifted students tended to have the same
friends they had in school outside of school (those who attended the same workshop
class). In a finding similar to that of R. V. Miller (1956), Mann found that the gifted
students did not have relationships with typical students that could be considered true friendships, which called into question what the best provision for students should be in the schools—grouping or otherwise.

Williams (1958) also looked at acceptance of and performance among gifted elementary school children. She studied a sample of 117 gifted children from three elementary schools in Connecticut. A total of 888 children (117 gifted children and a random sample of classmates) were given the Classroom Social Distance Scale, which had students use a 5-point scale to rank other children on the following items:

- Would like to have him as one of my best friends.
- Would like to have him in my group but not as a close friend.
- Would like to be with him once in a while but not often or for long at a time.
- Don’t mind his being in our room but I don’t want to have anything to do with him.
- Wish he weren’t in our room. (Williams, 1958, p. 217)

Williams conducted case studies on 12 of the children in the gifted sample (6 highly accepted and 6 highly rejected by classmates) and found no significant differences in intelligence between the high and low acceptees, although social performance favored the high acceptees. She did note that none of the gifted children were concerned about being a “big brain” (Williams, 1958, p. 220). Summarizing her research, Williams concluded:

If further investigation can demonstrate that the performance of gifted children is generally affected by considerations of group acceptance, as seemed true of the children in the study reported here, then the school must re-examine those practices which are inimical to acceptance and change them. Such change, aimed at cultivating the child rather than his particular gifts, might well prove less expensive and more effective than the practices now relied upon to help intellectually endowed children attain performance commensurate with their special capacities. (p. 224)
Gallagher (1958) examined peer acceptance of 55 highly gifted students (29 boys, 25 girls) in grades 2–5. Based on teacher recommendations and group test scores, students were identified to take an intelligence test. The students selected to participate in this study were those who scored a 150 or above on the Stanford-Binet, Form L. Each class that contained one of the highly gifted students received directions from their teacher to “Write the names of the five people in the class who you feel are your best friends. Write your very best friend’s name first” (Gallagher, 1958, p. 466). Students were then asked additional questions to answer on their paper, but these had no purpose for the study. The results showed that 52% of the highly gifted students were in the top 25% of their class in terms of social choice by other students. Eleven percent of the highly gifted students were in the lowest 25% of their class. Gallagher (1958) compared those students who scored above 165 on the IQ test to those who scored in the 150–164 range, to see if there was a difference in peer acceptance. Noting that the group of students above IQ 165 was very small, he found that more than 25% of students were in the lowest 25% of their class as compared to only 5% of those who scored in the 150–164 IQ range. Gallagher (1958) concluded that the results suggested that “the gifted child is not concerned or unduly influenced in his choice of friends by their intellectual ability, nor is he chosen by other bright children more frequently than by classmates of average or below-average ability” (p. 469).

In the social/emotional area, gifted students were found to have numerous hobbies and a variety of interests, including reading. At this time, people often were concerned about the potential of gifted students to be maladjusted, but research indicated this typically was not the case. Liddle (1958) found that gifted students were unlikely to be
viewed as having issues such as these. Finally, gifted students tended to be accepted by classmates, dispelling the myth that they were socially awkward loners with no friends.

Demographic characteristics. Research looked at the demographic characteristics of gifted students such as family background, socioeconomic status, and educational attainment. McGehee and Lewis (1942) continued studying the data collected by the Advisory Committee of Coordinated Studies in Education, Inc., focusing once again on the mentally superior (top 10% of 45,000 children in grades 4–8) and the mentally retarded (lowest 10% of the same group) students. The authors looked at the socioeconomic status of the students’ families, as well as the occupation of their parents. McGehee and Lewis (1942) found that “superior and retarded children come from all types of homes. They come from the poorest as well as the best, but the great bulk of them come from ‘average homes’” (pp. 379–380).

Musselman (1942) looked at the factors associated with gifted students’ achievement, specifically personality and home backgrounds. The study included 297 high school students (143 boys and 154 girls) with IQs of 120 and above from five schools in Baltimore. Musselman administered two group intelligence tests to the students, as well as achievement and personality assessments and questionnaires regarding information on students’ home background. He found that the majority of the gifted students were not achieving in school based on their potential. In addition, he noted that, as a group, gifted girls were more well-adjusted socially and emotionally than the boys (Musselman, 1942). The researcher also found that superior students with “handicaps”—defined as coming from broken homes, being a child of immigrants, having parents with poor health, or having poor personality adjustment—tended to work
harder in school to overcome these issues, and therefore had a higher achievement ratio (defined as the measure of discrepancy between promise and performance) than students without such handicaps (Musselman, 1942).

In 1945, Lewis again used data from the Advisory Committee of Coordinated Studies in Education, Inc., to look at the sex distribution of intelligence in groups of superior (upper 10%) and retarded (lower 10%) students. Noting that earlier studies indicated that “the distribution of intelligence among school children appeared to indicate that a greater number of boys were to be found both at the upper levels of intelligence and at the lower levels” (p. 67), Lewis (1945) found “no evidence . . . to support the view that more boys are found at both the lower and higher levels of intelligence” (p. 71).

Based on the Kuhlmann-Anderson Test given to students in grades 4–8 in the study, girls were found to be predominate at the upper levels, while boys were found to be predominate at the lower levels. Lewis (1945) believed the number of boys found at the lower levels was a result of their slower development.

Bonsall and Stefflre (1955) studied the temperament of gifted children, looking at differences between 1,359 White gifted and nongifted high school boys to see if any temperament differences were a function of giftedness or socioeconomic background. The researchers looked at 10 items found on the Guilford-Zimmerman Temperament Survey: General Activity, Restraint, Ascendance, Sociability, Emotional Stability, Objectivity, Friendliness, Thoughtfulness, Personal Cooperation, and Masculinity of Interest. Gifted boys whose fathers had professional positions had greater objectivity than nongifted boys in the same category. In addition, gifted boys with fathers in
managerial or clerical work had more restraint and displayed more thoughtfulness than nongifted boys with fathers in these fields. Bonsall and Stefflre concluded:

This study indicates that the previously found superiority of the “gifted” as regards temperament stems much more from the socio-economic level at which most gifted children are found than from any other difference in “gifted” children as such. When socio-economic background is taken into account, relatively few significant differences are found between “gifted” and others, but when the parent background of these children is disregarded, there seems to be differences in seven of the ten areas measured and in all these areas the “gifted” child has superior temperament scores. . . . failure to keep constant the socio-economic level in making comparisons of the temperament of gifted and other children results in misleading assumptions about the superior adjustment of the gifted. (p. 163)

In a study that focused on the family background of gifted students, Barbe (1956) looked at graduates of the Major Work Program in Cleveland (N = 456). He found that their IQs ranged from 120 to 164, and most of the children were upper middle class. The students were often the firstborn (of two) or the only child, and 87.5% of the graduates were raised by both parents. Half of the students had a parent who was foreign born. Interestingly, the students’ mothers’ education was slightly higher than the fathers’, but most fathers had attended college (Barbe, 1956).

Studies concluded that gifted students could be found at all socioeconomic levels and come from a variety of backgrounds. In one interesting study (Bonsall & Stefflre, 1955), findings indicated that differences in personality of gifted students was based not on intelligence, but on socioeconomic background. Lewis (1945) dispelled the myth that more boys than girls were found at both the upper and lower levels of intelligence.

Longitudinal studies. Terman’s groundbreaking longitudinal study on gifted students began in the 1920s, and provided the field with information about these students over time. In addition to Terman, Witty also conducted a longitudinal study. Witty
(1940) described his longitudinal study of 50 gifted students (26 boys and 24 girls) from the Midwest, which began in 1924. He focused on family background, physical development, intelligence, educational achievement, and social characteristics of the gifted students. Ninety-six percent of the students’ parents were born in America, and 64% of fathers were businessmen while 34% of fathers were professionals. Half of the parents had graduated from college (Witty, 1940). He found that the students’ physical development tended to be above average, thus providing data that refuted the common misconception of gifted students at the time. In the sample of 50 students, IQs ranged from 140 to 183, with 153 as the mean at the time of the first testing (1924–1925); a second testing in 1930–1931 yielded a range of IQs of 121 to 180, with 136 as the mean (Witty, 1940). At the time of the third follow up (1933–1934), all students scored within the top 5% of all college students, indicating that students had maintained their superior ability. Regarding educational achievement, the students exceeded the norms for children of their same age in all of the subjects. The students appeared to have superior social adjustment compared to a control group (Witty, 1940).

Terman (1942) discussed the vocational successes of 1,425 gifted subjects (800 men and 625 women) in his longitudinal study. At this point, the gifted cohort ranged between 24 and 39 years of age. According to Terman (1942), 86% of the students entered college and 80% of those students graduated. Of those students who graduated, approximately two thirds of the men and half of the women went on to graduate school. He classified the subjects into three groups: those in the professions (e.g., teachers, lawyers, engineers, physicians), those in higher business and semiprofessional occupations (e.g., business executives, bankers, accountants), and those in white color
professions. He found 48% of the women were employed full time, and noted “some of the most gifted women [were] engaged in secretarial work” (Terman, 1942, p. 496).

One of the major research contributions to the field during this period was published in 1947. Terman and Oden’s (1947) fourth volume of the *Genetic Studies of Genius* focused on a 25-year follow-up. At this point, the average age of the group was 35 years old. Terman and Oden (1947) found that almost half of the men and more than half of the women who were employed were in professional occupations. In addition, almost 90% of the gifted students enrolled in college and almost 70% of them graduated (Terman & Oden, 1947), numbers somewhat different than those reported by Terman (1942) a few years earlier. The authors found that the group was rather prolific, as by 1945, a total of 90 books or monographs and 1,500 articles had been published. None of the group members had achieved eminence, although Terman and Oden (1947) explained this by reminding readers that nearly half of the subjects were still under 35, “an age when a considerable number of the most eminent persons of history were still unknown to fame” (p. 367).

One of the first studies to employ factor analysis in the field of gifted education focused on the factors related to the achievement of gifted students in eighth grade (Bishton, 1957). Ninety-nine junior high students who had an IQ of 120 or above were given the California Achievement Battery, the Mental Health Analysis, the Ohio Youth Survey Needs Questionnaire, and a general information sheet. Sixteen orthogonal factors emerged from the data, and these were used to compare this study with the longitudinal studies of Terman (1925) and Witty (1930). Like Terman and Witty, Bishton (1957) found that gifted children tended to exceed the norms for physical development of
average children. Bishton (1957), however, found that this group of students were achieving approximately one to two years beyond their grade placement; Terman (1925) and Witty (1930) had found students exceeding approximately two to three years, but their students were noted to have IQs of 140 and above.

Another important study was Terman and Oden’s (1959) book, *The Gifted Group at Mid-Life*, published 3 years after Terman’s death. The group had been studied for more than 35 years at this point, and 95% of the group were still actively participating in the study (Terman & Oden, 1959). The authors collected data on intellectual development; educational, vocational, and marital history; and physical and mental health information on the group. Terman and Oden (1959) concluded that, with a few exceptions, gifted children age into able adults and are superior in regards to intellect, educational attainment, economic production, and health and emotional stability. In a review of the book, Pearson (1960) noted argued that “the longitudinal studies by Dr. Terman and his associates stand almost unquestioned as the most important single source of information which to base future plans and programs” (p. 25).

Longitudinal studies provided the field of gifted education information that had been previously unknown, or only captured at one moment in time. Studies found that gifted students had above-average physical development, exceeded the norms on achievement for same-age peers, typically went on to college and often graduate school, and, as a whole, aged into superior adults.

*Students with high IQs.* In addition to studies that looked at the various characteristics of gifted students, others examined specific populations of gifted students. One special population included the highly gifted. Published posthumously, *Children*
Above 180 IQ included 12 case studies of highly gifted students who were studied between 1916 and 1939 (Hollingworth, 1942). Hollingworth (1942) included detailed information on the students, including early childhood development, test performance, school history and adjustment, and work samples. This book presented the field with the only information to date on high-IQ children (those at the very upper end of the spectrum), and offered information on personality and social adjustment in addition to considerations for educating these very bright students. Hollingworth’s studies on the highly gifted remained in place as the field’s definitive source until scholars such as Gross (1993, 1999) added to the literature more than 50 years later.

In 1948, Understanding the Child published an article that followed up on Hollingworth’s case study of Child E, which originally appeared in Children Above 180 IQ (1942). At this point, Child E was teaching at a theological school and preaching. His father had been interviewed to learn more about his home and school life as a child. According to his father, the family always treated E as if his behavior was just expected of him—the family didn’t treat success or failures with extra attention. The father noted the importance of educating teachers about gifted students (“Teachers need to be helped to understand that they should have the same kind of appreciation for the gifted that they have for the underprivileged”; p. 47), as well as cooperation between school and home (“Growing Up With a Gifted Child,” 1948).

Lewis (1943) also described the characteristics of superior students, looking at their home backgrounds and educational and personality adjustments and whether these are impacted by an IQ of 145 and above. Using data collected by the Advisory Committee of Coordinated Studies in Education, Inc., Lewis (1943) compared students
with an IQ of 145 or above to students with IQs between 125 and 144. In addition, he selected the 10 students in each grade with the highest IQs, as some of the grade levels did not have students who scored in the highest ranges. Like other researchers, Lewis (1943) found that highly gifted students could be found at all socioeconomic levels. He also found that these highly gifted students, as a group, had more extensive interests, especially in music and reading. Regarding educational attainment, the highly gifted were deemed to be doing little in the way of achievement, especially considering their potential (Lewis, 1943).

Witty and Coomer (1955) conducted a case study of highly gifted 12-year-old twin boys, indicating that the two boys had IQ scores of 190 and 195 on the Stanford-Binet. (The boys also had a 7-year-old sister who scored a 148, causing the authors to note that “her performance was by no means so outstanding as that of her brothers”; p. 106.) The boys were both described as attractive and both learned to read at age 3. The boys attended public school and were double promoted when they entered. The twins had a variety of interests and reportedly read as much as possible when they found a new interest. Both boys were talented writers, but hoped to enter the law profession like their father. The authors concluded that:

boys such as these twins, fortunate in the endowment of unusually high mental ability as well as in security and motivation and in a stimulating home, are among the nation’s most valuable resources. Such children should be identified early, as have been these boys, and should be encouraged to develop their potentialities in order to make their greatest contribution to society. (p. 125)

The studies that focused on high-IQ children illustrated that these children could be found at all levels of society. These children typically had a variety of interests and
tended to achieve, although some researchers (e.g., Lewis, 1943) believed that they were not achieving to their maximum potential based on their ability.

 Minority students. Another special population of the gifted included minority students. Jenkins helped pave the way for literature on minority populations, something that was lacking during the early part of the 1940s. In 1943, he published an article that featured an overview of 14 case studies of Negro children with IQs of 160 and above. The article had three goals: “(1) to ascertain the existence of such children in diverse populations; (2) to examine the origin and characteristics of the children; and (3) to follow the development of the subjects over a period of years” (Jenkins, 1943, p. 159). Jenkins (1943) described the difficulty of locating “verified cases” of Negro students with IQs of 160 and above and stated:

    so far as the writer has been able to ascertain, not a single Negro child who scores as high on 160 IQ on the Binet has been identified in any of the southern states, probably because there are extremely few places where such a child might be identified. (p. 161)

Jenkins (1943) focused on mental test performance, achievement test performance, school progress, parents’ occupation and education, family background, and racial composition. He concluded that African Americans with extremely high IQs were able to be located, indicating that individual differences should be emphasized rather than racial differences. African American students with high IQs may be unrecognized in schools and may be denied educational opportunities that could meet their needs because of the societal beliefs that they were inferior to others, which limited their development (Jenkins, 1943).
In 1943, Witty and Theman published an article about Theman’s follow-up study of the educational attainment of gifted Negroes. Theman’s dissertation, *A Follow-Up Study of Negro Youth of Superior Intelligence*, was written in 1942. Theman located 84 of the original 103 children in Jenkins’ dissertation in 1935. Findings included:

- Educational attainment on Myers-Ruch High-School Progress test was above average, but not up to the level expected of these children based on mental tests in 1934.
- Mean percentile rank on Iowa Every-Pupil Test in Understanding of Contemporary Affairs was slightly above average.
- GPAs for all but two students were above average.
- Youth had a stronger interest in school than did gifted White students.
- English was the students’ favorite subject, followed by science, chemistry, French, and history, in that order.
- All but one set of parents indicated their child had an interest in college.

The same year, Theman and Witty (1943) published an article entitled, “Case Studies and Genetic Records of Two Gifted Negroes.” The authors wanted to add to the literature, as there was a paucity of case studies during this period (Theman & Witty, 1943). Two case studies were included: “B,” a girl, who at 9 years of age had an IQ of 200 (originally studied by Witty and Jenkins in 1935), and “E,” a boy with an IQ of 163 at age 10. In-depth information on each child’s history, family background, mental ability, and educational achievement was provided (Theman & Witty, 1943). “B”’s parents were above average in intelligence, but had divorced. Her mother encouraged her to make the most of her academic skills and pursue educational opportunities. “B” spent
much of her free time reading (typically 7–12 hours a week and averaged five books per week). Although she was well liked by her classmates, she did not have many close friends (Theman & Witty, 1943). “E” had been achieving at a level higher than what could be expected for his ability, and was accelerated so that when he was in the eighth grade, he was 10 years old (3 years younger than the average eighth grader). He came from a family with a high socioeconomic background; his father was a lawyer and his mother was a teacher. Superior in math, “E” received his bachelor’s degree at the age of 16 and his Ph.D. 2 months shy of his 19th birthday. “E” was described as being well adjusted socially and having friends.

In 1947, Robinson and Meenes looked at the relationship between African American students’ intelligence and their parents’ occupations. Subjects were 444 students in 1938–1939 and 491 students in 1945–1946; all were third-grade students in 12 public schools in Washington, DC. Students were given the Kuhlmann-Anderson Intelligence Test and parent occupational information was obtained from teachers (the majority of the information used was based on the father’s occupation; however, when that was not listed, the mother’s occupation was noted). The mean IQ of the first group of students was 97.02, while the mean IQ of the second group of students was 99.76 (a statistically significant difference). Robinson and Meenes (1947) found that the parents of the second group of students had obtained higher paying jobs, thus providing them with more buying power to provide additional items for the home (e.g., books, newspapers, radios). The study confirmed that students of high and low IQs can be found at all levels of occupational class; only a slight relationship between the African
American child’s IQ and the occupation of his parent was found (Robinson & Meenes, 1947).

Jenkins (1948) looked at the upper limit of ability among African American students. He hypothesized:

If race in itself is not a limiting factor in intelligence, then, among Negroes whose total environment compares favorably with that of the average American white, there should be found a “normal” proportion of very superior cases, and the upper limit of ability should coincide with that of the white population. (p. 399)

Jenkins (1948) provided an overview of various African American children who could be considered highly gifted (e.g., 18 children with IQ of 160 and above on the Stanford-Binet). All of the children were found in the Northern states. He concluded that students could be found at the most superior levels within this population—more so than what people generally believed at this time.

Research found that gifted students—at even the highest levels—could be located in diverse populations, but it also indicated that many of these children were not being identified and served in schools during this period, especially in the South.

Underachievers. Another area in which a great amount of research was conducted was gifted students’ underachievement. Based on their ability, underachieving gifted students were not attaining what they could academically.

In 1941, Lewis examined differences in achievement. He argued:

that our information relative to superior children is deficient in that we know far too little about those who are designated as superior by standardized intelligence tests but who are not making effective use of their superior ability, and, as a result, often are never recognized as superior. (p. 207)

Once again utilizing data collected from the Advisory Committee of Coordinated Studies in Education, Inc., Lewis (1941) looked at two groups of gifted students who were
selected from the 4,529 students who comprised the top 10% in intelligence. One group was deemed the accelerated group \((n = 1,078)\); these students had educational ages (based on achievement scores) of one year or more above their mental ages. The other group was called the retarded group \((n = 756)\), and consisted of students who had educational ages one year or more below their mental ages. Students in the accelerated group were found to possess more desirable traits, such as dependability, originality, and self-reliance, and had a greater interest in music than those in the retarded group.

Underachievement research also looked at individual characteristics. In 1950, Edelston presented case studies of gifted students who were considered to be underachievers, or educational failures. Edelston (1950) hypothesized that when a child’s performance does not match his potential, other factors must be considered. These included external causes (e.g., home situation), reaction character formations (e.g., rebellion), infantile neuroses, defects of character, and abnormal psychopathic states. Edelston (1950) included 18 cases of students who fit the various classification factors he discussed.

Thirty-two students with IQs of 130 and above, 16 of which were achievers and 16 of which were underachievers, were the focus of a study on underachievement (Barrett, 1957/1958). He found a pattern of underachievement was evident by the fifth grade, and those children who performed poorly in elementary school tended to do the same (or worse) in secondary school. In addition, underachieving students tended to have parents with either a neutral or uninterested view of education. Schoolwise, underachievers had a more negative attitude than those who were achievers, were accepted less by classmates compared to the achievers, and had less interest in reading.
than the achievers (Barrett, 1957/1958). Concluding that no generalizations could be made to the larger gifted population because the sample size was so small, Barrett (1957/1958) summarized that “if the individual is underachieving it is because he cannot adequately utilize his inner resources or because he chooses not to” (p. 194).

Goldberg (1959) described a study conducted by the Talented Youth Project in New York City that focused on gifted underachievers. At DeWitt Clinton High School, approximately 50% of gifted students in grade 10 were identified as underachievers. The study commenced to “(1) study the academic, personal and social characteristics of underachievers, and (2) assess the effects of grouping gifted underachievers in a homeroom section, and retaining them as a group in one subject matter class taught by their section officer” (Goldberg, 1959, p. 8). She found that underachievers more often came from homes with disruptions (e.g., absence of a father) and were less satisfied with their performance in school than gifted achievers. Underachievers also recognized their potential, but tended to resist the effort it would take to reach it. Goldberg (1959) noted that when the underachievers were grouped together in a homeroom class with a teacher who also taught their social studies class, the class made gains. However, when this special grouping was changed the following year, the underachievers did not do as well under a different, stricter teacher (Goldberg, 1959).

Underachievement was also found at the college level. Dowd (1953) focused on gifted underachievers, arguing that “the student of outstanding capacity who fails to achieve scholastically at a level reasonably commensurate with his ability presents a challenge to educators, administrators, and counselors” (p. 327). His sample consisted of a group of the best and poorest achievers of 78 (originally 89, but 11 left school after the
first semester) freshmen at the University of New Hampshire in 1947. These students had scored in the highest decile in aptitude; academic success was based on the each student’s grade point average (GPA) after the first semester of college. Underachievement was defined as having a GPA of 2.2 or below, with A’s counting 4 points, and F’s counting 0. The students were designated as achievers (n = 19) and nonachievers (n = 16), with the remaining students falling in between. Dowd found that achievers tended to study much more than the nonachievers, and employed better study habits. He also found a greater incidence of underachievement in the male students in his sample.

Shaw and Brown (1957/1958) looked at underachievement in gifted college students. Comparing two matched groups (30 achievers, 28 underachievers), the researchers concluded that “although these two groups differ significantly from the point of view of grade point average at the end of their freshman year, they do not differ at all when compared on the basis of standardized achievement tests” (Shaw & Brown, 1957/1958, p. 199). This meant that the students who were not achieving up to their potential had learned just as much information as those who were considered achievers.

Gowan (1955) offered suggestions for working with underachievers. He summarized recent unpublished research on underachieving gifted students conducted by school personnel enrolled in his classes at Los Angeles State college. He defined gifted underachievers as those who were two or more standard deviations above the mean, but who also were performing 30 percentiles or more below their ability level. Based on his students’ research, Gowan (1955) concluded that the gifted underachiever:
tends to be *self-sufficient* and unsociable;

has not identified well with his parents, and they are less supportive of him than other parents;

tends to find fewer role models among his teachers because of his lack of social skills; and

seems to have not as many skills as others to obtain work, make more money, or obtain scholarships for college (p. 249).

Gowan (1955) offered suggestions for school counselors who may encounter gifted underachievers in the school. He suggested that counselors identify how many underachievers were present in the school, and if this number was greater than 15%, the school needed to look at various factors that may contribute to this issue (e.g., low morale). In addition, he noted that because most underachievers were male, it might be beneficial to have a male counselor on staff to work with these students. Counselors were encouraged to help underachievers build on their strengths and to find membership roles for them in various activities in which they might be successful.

Gifted underachievement was a frequent area of study during this period. Researchers found that underachievers tended to come from backgrounds in which parents were not supportive or did not have an interest in education. Often, students came from a home in which one parent was absent. In addition, underachievers tended to have fewer role models than did achievers. Underachievement patterns were usually noted during elementary school, and students with a history of underachievement progressed in the same manner through school. Researchers indicated that males tended to be underachievers.
Attitudes

Researchers also were interested in attitudes about gifted education and gifted children. These studies can be grouped into the categories of student attitudes, family attitudes, and teacher and administrator attitudes.

The first set of studies focused on attitudes held by gifted students. A 1948 study by Luchins and Luchins looked at children’s attitudes toward homogenous groupings. The researchers conducted experiments in schools in New York in which students were grouped into “1- or bright-classes,” “2- or dull-classes,” and “3- or average-classes.” They then interviewed the children in grades 4–6 (N = 190), and found that the students were aware of the group in which they were placed. Luchins and Luchins asked the students five questions regarding classes, including:

1. Imagine that you have been transferred to another school. . . . Which class would you choose?
2. Would you parents prefer that you be in 6B1 or 6B2?
3. After you were put into the class that you selected, suppose you found out that the teacher of the other class was better and kinder than yours. Would you try to change classes if given the chance?
4. Would you frequently admit into your games and make friends with children in the other class?
5. From which class, 6B1 or 6B2, would you select your best friend? (p. 4)

The results indicated that most students selected the 1-class (regardless of their current placement) as their preferred choice, and most students said their parents would prefer them to be in that class. Students already in the 1-class would not change classes based
on teacher characteristics, although students not in the 1-class would. In addition, students not in the 1-class would prefer to select a friend from that class (Luchins & Luchins, 1948).

French and Skogsberg (1954) gave a questionnaire to 7,000 seniors who took the National Scholarship examination in the spring of 1952, and asked students to identify both strengths and weaknesses of high schools that they felt had affected their experiences. The strengths included good teachers, valuable courses/departments, good facilities/equipment, small class size, and good guidance/strict discipline. The weaknesses included poor/inadequate teachers, poor facilities, classes that were slowed down because of other students, too crowded, and rigid schedules.

Dye (1956) investigated a group of 160 gifted fifth-grade students and a group of 160 average fifth-grade students to compare their attitudes toward school, the curriculum, and their teacher. Gifted students were students who scored in the upper 10% of the Lorge Thorndike Intelligence Test, whereas average students scored in the 45th–55th percentile. Questionnaires were used to determine their attitudes. Dye concluded that most of the students, gifted and average, liked and approved of their teacher. In addition, she found that 1 in 10 gifted girls and 2 in 10 gifted boys in the study were not happy in school, while 1 in 20 average students felt the same way. Dye wrote, “It would appear that perhaps the gifted students are more in need of guidance than the average students” (p. 307), but perhaps the school was not effectively meeting the needs of its gifted students. Finally, regarding curriculum, more than 75% of both groups indicated a desire to include a foreign language in the curriculum.
Michigan educators (Dressel & Grabow, 1958) decided to survey gifted students from their various school districts to determine what they thought about their high school experience. The researchers noted that obstacles to working with gifted students included: (a) negative attitudes on the part of the regular classroom teacher, (b) reluctance to release students for “special” classes for the gifted, (c) indifference to special programs for the gifted, and (d) the conviction that the usual class does or can challenge every gifted student who is at all interested in working (p. 394). The researchers developed an open-ended questionnaire, although there was some difficulty establishing a definition for the term gifted. A total of 502 students replied to the survey. The responses showed that they were generally satisfied with the extracurricular activities and social aspects of schooling. The authors were surprised:

this generally high appraisal of the extra-class aspects of their high school experience was the most unexpected feature of the response, for it conflicted with the tendency, to think of the good student as one who is more interested in books and ideas than in the more mundane activities of school. (p. 395)

On the whole, classes were unchallenging to students, and students indicated that some teachers were incapable of teaching gifted students and felt that various methods of teaching should be used in school. The students wanted the standards for achievement to be set higher, as they noted that the first year of college was unchallenging and very repetitious of their high school work (Dressel & Grabow, 1958). The authors concluded:

“Cleary our most able students have not been fully challenged by their high school experience and will not be until special measures are taken” (p. 396).

In 1959, Thistlethwaite looked at the effects of social recognition upon the educational motivation of talented youth. He noted, “A persistent problem in American education—made more imperative by recent concern over Sputnik—is that of stimulating
able students to realize their educational potential” (p. 111). His study compared two groups of students who received different amounts of public recognition (an *ex post facto* study). One group of students were Certificate of Merit winners who’d had their name published in a booklet and often appeared in the press. The other group had received a letter of commendation and less press recognition. Thistlethwaite found that “increased recognition was observed to increase the favorableness of attitudes toward intellectualism, the number of students planning to seek the Ph.D. or MD degree, and the number planning to become college teachers or scientific researchers” (p. 116).

Family attitudes also were of interest to researchers. McGehee and Lewis (1940) conducted a study of parent attitudes of gifted, average, and retarded children to see if differences in attitudes existed and, if so, the nature of these differences. Part of the data from the Advisory Committee of the Coordinated Studies in Education, Inc., the researchers delegated students from 36 states into various groups, including the average/normative group, superior group, and the retarded group, and reviewed teachers ratings of parental attitude as superior, average, or inferior. For students in the superior subgroups of upper 10%, upper 2%, “genius,” and “genius” and upper 10% together, teachers rated 40% or more of all parents of these children as possessing superior attitudes. The researchers found that those classified in the retarded group had a greater percentage of parents classified with average attitudes than those in the superior group. They concluded that teachers rated parents in the superior group as having more favorable attitudes than those parents of the average or retarded children.

Drews and Teahan (1957) examined mothers’ attitudes in terms of “permissiveness, protectiveness, and domination” (p. 331). Mothers of 40 junior high
school gifted students (IQ of 130 or above) and mothers of 28 average or high average students (IQ of 93–120). The authors hypothesized that mothers of the high academic achievers would be less permissive than mothers of low achievers, and the results tended to indicated that was true.

Finally, researchers examined attitudes held by teachers, administrators, and other professionals who worked with gifted students. In the spring of 1948, Wilson mailed a four-question questionnaire to colleges and universities with teacher training programs, more than 100 large cities, and the state departments of education. Wilson (1949) surveyed people to determine the educational provisions for young gifted children in the United States. A total of 384 were mailed and 139 returned. The results indicated a need for: (a) curricular materials, especially those for enrichment in the regular classroom, (b) trained teachers of the gifted, and (c) more information about the nature of gifted students.

Justman and Wrightstone (1956) looked at the expressed attitudes of teachers toward special classes for intellectually gifted children. They developed a questionnaire to determine teachers’ attitudes toward the intellectually gifted children (IGC) classes in New York schools. The authors concluded that teachers who had experience with these classes had a more favorable attitude toward them, as did teachers with fewer than 20 years of experience. The researchers noted that teachers had unfavorable reactions to these classes because they (a) rejected the philosophy behind the classes, (b) felt that the classes contributed to social and personal maladjustment, (c) resented the activities of parents of children in these classes, and (d) felt these classes led to administrative practices that were undesirable (Justman & Wrightstone, 1956).
Abraham (1957) surveyed 180 school administrators in Arizona to determine their thoughts about gifted students. These administrators tended to view giftedness in a broad manner, with 122 of them indicating that intelligence and other special abilities should both be considered. The majority (123) of the administrators felt like identification should not be placed entirely upon the students’ teachers, and that other factors should be taken into consideration including IQ and achievement tests, observations, parent reports, and the like. The administrators noted that acceleration and various forms of enrichment were the most popular methods of meeting the needs of gifted students in their schools. Unfortunately, Abraham (1957) found that only 5 administrators had a line item in the budget for educating gifted students.

Alexander (1958) looked at increasingly used terms found in the popular press—superior students (those who perform well in the classroom) vs. gifted students. He sent a set of questionnaires to 121 colleges and universities to determine their attitudes on the difference between these two sets of students. In response to the question asking whether their school had a large number of gifted students, 66% of the respondents indicated “yes,” 15% said “no,” and 19% responded with various answers such as “we have no reliable statistics” or “we do not know” (Alexander, 1958, p. 173). One third of the respondents noted that their professors were not informed of students who were gifted and one half noted that students were not informed if they scored high on an intelligence test. Alexander questioned how colleges and universities can do an effective job of educating the gifted if students go unrecognized or are not stimulated to reach their potential. He called for a redesign of higher education in order to help gifted students.
Stanley (1959b) studied tests biases of prospective teachers for identifying gifted students. He hypothesized that a contributing factor to a person’s attitude about intelligence tests would be his or her past experience with testing instruments. His sample included 34 college students (mostly juniors) who were taking the child and adolescent development course for education students. Toward the beginning of the semester, students were given Terman’s Concept Mastery Test and told of their results and rank in class based on this test. The class soon began a 5-week unit on mental development, with a focus on gifted children. At the end of the unit, 8 students (4 men, 4 women) were selected for a panel discussion on how to identify gifted students in kindergarten. Two of the men and two of the women were the highest scorers on the Terman test; the other two men and other two women were the lowest scorers on the tests. The panel members each presented a speech of no more than 5 minutes in length during which they discussed how to identify the gifted students. The rest of the class had been told to take notes about those who emphasized testing for identification measures and those who did not. Finally, the panelists were asked to agree or disagree with a statement that indicated tests were more useful than other procedures for identifying gifted students. Stanley (1959b) found that those who had scored highest on the Terman “intelligence” test tended to believe tests were the best form of identification, while those who had scored lowest thought other procedures were better.

Student attitudes were generally positive toward their schooling, although they preferred to have quality teachers, small classes, and flexible courses. Some students felt that their schooling could have been more challenging to help them prepare for college. Mothers of gifted students tended to have less permissive attitudes than parents of
nongifted students. Finally, teachers and administrators with more experience and an understanding of the aims of gifted education tended to look on special classes and programs with more favorable attitudes. Administrators did have more favorable attitudes toward the gifted, but this was not reflected in the school budgets (Abraham, 1957).

Identification

Other studies focused on identification of gifted students. A study of elementary teachers from 36 states was conducted in which teachers were asked to classify the children in their class as mentally retarded, genius, or problem (Lewis, 1947). No definitions were given for the three groups. Interestingly, 7.3% of all students were selected for the retarded group; 4.4% of all students were selected as problems, and .74% were considered geniuses. The percentage cited for gifted children was lower than the statistical average found in the population, thus leading to the question of whether teachers had a true understanding of gifted students and how many students were not being identified in schools (and whether some teachers were grouping gifted students into the “problem” group unknowingly).

Hone (1959) developed a checklist of traits that could be used to identify children gifted in science. She reviewed the literature and developed a list of characteristics of students gifted in science, following that with a list of general traits of giftedness. She found an overlap among many of the traits and reduced the checklist to a list of 49 traits. Hone submitted the checklist to 60 elementary and high school teachers and administrators for feedback and concluded that she was in the process of revising the instrument for future testing with a larger sample. Interestingly, she questioned:
Since Sputnik has awakened the general public to the need for more science in school, we see a slowly increasing amount of science in the schools at all levels. Is it not conceivable that we may eventually face a shortage of social scientists, leaders in human relations, long-rang planning, government, unless we improve the child’s early environment along these lines? In other words, do we not owe it to gifted children to give them rich experiences in all fields of knowledge? (Hone, 1959, p. 65)

One of the most cited studies to come out of this time period is one by Pegnato and Birch (1959). They focused on locating gifted students in a Pittsburgh, PA, junior high school, and looked at the various methods of identification to ascertain which procedure (or combination of procedures) could be considered the best method. The seven different methods of locating gifted students included teacher judgment, honor roll listing, creative ability in art or music, student council membership, superiority in mathematics, group intelligence test results, and group achievement test results. After conducting all seven screening procedures, 781 children (more than half of the student population) had been included on the list as potential gifted students. All students were then given the Stanford-Binet to obtain IQ scores, and 91 had scores of 136 or higher (the top 1% of the population). The researchers looked at all seven methods in order to determine which method(s) were the most effective and efficient, defining these terms as: “The best screening method is one which combines high effectiveness and high efficiency, for that would result in most of the gifted being found with a minimum amount of wasted motion” (Pegnato & Birch, 1959, p. 302). Pegnato and Birch found that the most effective screening procedures, out of those included in the study, were the results of the group intelligence and group achievement tests, as together, those screening procedures located almost 97% of the gifted students as identified by the IQ test. However, the authors cautioned:
The use of group intelligence test results for screening is found to have advantages over other methods both in effectiveness and efficiency; they are of little value, however, for actual identification. The latter should be left to psychologists employing individual examination methods if measures of intelligence are to be the criteria used. (Pegnato & Birch, 1959, p. 304)

They also noted the importance of early identification:

The international events of recent years have heightened the urgency for the prompt and early discovery of all gifted children—those who show their capacity through exceptional achievements and those in whom great potentialities are latent—in order that they may be given the best possible guidance toward self-realization through education and training. (Pegnato & Birch, 1959, p. 300)

Testing was an important area that fell under the theme of identification, as IQ tests were the primary way of identifying gifted students. Researchers during this period looked at assessment instruments’ stability of IQ across time and their validity, and suggested the use of multiple assessments. Street (1942) reviewed IQ changes in gifted students in public schools in Michigan. A total of 1,318 students were originally tested, with 920 of them retested. In 43 of these cases, IQ scores changed 10 points or more. Street indicated possible causes of variability could be found in the tests themselves. He concluded that “the intelligence test probably serves its best purpose in combination with other information which permits a broader picture of the individual’s potentialities” (p. 246).

In 1942, Laycock and Clark focused on the comparative performance of children on items on the Stanford-Binet, Form L. Students were found in 12 public schools in Saskatchewan, Canada and ranged in mental age from 8 years, 6 months to 10 years, 6 months. Two groups were formed: the old-dull group, which included students ages 11–15 with IQs of 85 and under; and the young-bright group, which included students ages 6–9 with IQs of 115 and above. A total of 34 boys and 6 girls were in each group. No
statistically significant differences between the two groups’ performance in school were found. The authors concluded that “the policy of accepting an obtained IQ as valid without considering the extent to which the testee’s background of environment and training differs from that of the children on whom the norms were obtained, may be called into question” (p. 12).

R. L. Thorndike (1947) focused on how accurately intelligence at the time of college entrance could be predicted from tests given at various earlier ages. He looked at the correlation between the Scholastic Aptitude Test and intelligence tests given prior to that and concluded:

The data indicate[d] that the drop in accuracy of prediction as one goes from a test administered in the same year as the terminal test [SAT] to one administered two, four, six, or even eight years earlier is small, irregular, and possibly non-existent. (p. 130)

R. L. Thorndike (1947) felt these findings provided implications for schools in that, based on intelligence test results, students can be given academic guidance beginning in high school that can be followed throughout high school and college.

Hildreth (1943) looked at the validity of the Stanford Binet and suggested using multiple measures for identification to supplement the IQ test. Hildreth examined the Stanford Binet retest results of gifted students in a private school, using 130 IQ as the cut-off for the study. She divided the students into three different groups: Group I, both tests taken were the 1916 edition; Group II, one test taken was the 1916 edition and the other was the 1937 version; and Group III, both tests taken were the 1937 edition. The median changes in scores for all three groups were 6.5 points, 19.75 points, and 15.4 points, respectively. Based on the data, she concluded best practices for measuring intelligence of gifted students would be to (a) “obtain successive ratings several years
apart” and (b) “to supplement the Binet ratings with developmental and observation data as a means of determining more reliably the child’s position in the range of mental ability” (p. 301).

Studies into identification and testing found that, although ability and achievement test scores often were used in isolation to identify gifted students, best practices would suggest using multiple criteria, as that would be a more reliable assessment of identifying students’ ability.

*Educational Provisions*

Educational provisions were a focus of research during the 1940s and 1950s. Researchers focused most often on programs that utilized acceleration and special classes (some with an enrichment focus). In addition, two studies looked at gifted students in the regular classroom.

*Acceleration.* Within the area of acceleration, the studies examined achievement, continuity of programming, early admission, acceleration in college, personal and social adjustment, and educator opinions about this provision.

Focusing on achievement, in 1942, Keys wrote an article in *Exceptional Children* that questioned whether or not gifted students should be accelerated. Citing a research study in California that focused on acceleration, he noted that acceleration was not harmful to the students who had been accelerated. Young college entrants and accelerated high schoolers made higher grades, had better health, rated themselves happier, and joined more student activities than the control group. Based on this
research, Keys suggested that the best grade placement would be an average of the mental, physical, and chronological age of the child.

Justman (1954a) looked at the academic achievement of intellectually gifted accelerants as compared to nonaccelerants. He conducted the study at a New York junior high school at which students completed junior high in 2 years instead of 3. Justman matched two groups of intellectually gifted students from the special-progress classes and normal-progress classes, and concluded there was some value of taking part in the special-progress groups, thus providing support for acceleration for gifted students.

Justman (1954b) also looked at the achievement of students in grades 10 and 11, comparing gifted students who had been enrolled in special classes in New York during junior high (completing junior high in 2 years rather than 3) and gifted students who were not in the special classes. Justman (1954b) found that both groups of students achieved the same degree of mastery in high school, thus indicating that accelerating students by one year did not have a detrimental effect on future achievement.

Another aspect of acceleration concerned the continuity of programming from one school level to the next. Nelson and Carlson (1945) highlighted the results of a 3-year study of the Brocton, MA, special class that begin in 1940 with a group of third and fourth graders. The class was very small (N = 16 [10 boys, 6 girls], with a control group of 9), so individualized instruction was used. The researchers indicated that by the time the students reached fifth grade, they were able to do eleventh-grade work. Unfortunately, the school hadn’t prepared itself for continuing the program through junior high and high school, so even though the acceleration had been successful, students were discouraged to reach their maximum potential. When asked what they
should study in junior high, the students came to a consensus that the curriculum should be one that would help prepare students for the problems that would arise during postwar times, including science, history, and math (Nelson & Carlson, 1945).

Early admission was used as one way to accelerate gifted students. Boardman (1943) reviewed findings from selected studies on early admission to college, focusing on whether younger students possessed the mental ability and emotional maturity to succeed and whether the student would be better served in high school acceleration instead of skipping a grade. He found that:

very few accelerated students find any difficulty in becoming adjusted to academic work in college, and the small proportion reporting such difficulties perform as well as their young classmates who report no difficulties and as well as, or better than, their older fellows. (p. 466)

Berg and Larsen (1945/1946) recalled that:

In the autumn of 1942 a committee of the National Education Association recommended that selected high-school students who had completed the junior year should be allowed to enter college. The purpose of this proposal was to give prospective soldiers a semester or two of college before entering military services. (p. 33)

The University of Illinois developed an early entrance program specifically for gifted students to enter college early. Berg and Larsen identified 36 early entrants who had completed one semester of college at the time of their study. The students had a mean grade point average of 3.91 (B), which was more than one standard deviation above the mean for college freshmen.

Birch (1954) looked at 43 mentally advanced children who were accelerated by a full year in first grade in the Pittsburgh Public Schools, and found the procedure to be promising. He did, however, note that further investigation into early school admission was needed.
One of the studies that focused on the acceleration of college students was published by Flesher and Pressey in 1955. These researchers looked at 104 women at The Ohio State University who had been accelerated during the war. The women had completed their undergraduate program in 3 years (1941–1945), and an additional 41 women graduated 1946. These were paired with a control group of 41 women. Flesher and Pressey gathered data in 1954, when the women were an average of 32 years old. The researchers asked questions about employment while in school, acceleration, extracurricular activities, further schooling, marital status, employment, and community participation. From the data, the authors concluded that there were few issues related to completing college in 3 years. Compared to the control group, twice as many accelerates earned additional degrees and twice as many continued their career after marriage (Flesher & Pressey, 1955).

In 1953, Justman studied the personal and social adjustment of gifted students in New York who had been accelerated and those who hadn’t in junior high. The New York schools felt that the organization of these special classes also would benefit gifted students in their personal and social adjustment in addition to helping provide challenging and stimulating curriculum. Using the Friendship Nomination technique, a modified form of the Ohio Social Acceptance Scale, and a “Casting Characters for Class Plays” survey, Justman (1953) found few differences between accelerants and nonaccelerants and indicated that “the failure to place gifted pupils in homogeneously organized groups will not be reflected in less adequate personal and social adjustment, nor will such placement be associated with greater personal and social adequacy” (p. 478).
Educators’ opinions about students being accelerated were included in the research. Wilson (1954) developed a 6-item questionnaire, focused on educators’ opinions about acceleration, and sent it to education officials in 48 states, Alaska, Hawaii, the Canal Zone, and Puerto Rico. Half of all respondent groups agreed with Terman’s view of acceleration, 50% of public school administrators disagreed, and 20% of college respondents disagreed. For those who disagreed with the practice of acceleration, there was concern about gifted students’ maturity levels.

During the 1940s and 1950s, research pertaining to acceleration found it was not harmful to gifted students. Students who were accelerated did well both academically and socially and there appeared to be no reason not to accelerate a gifted student should there be reason to do so. Unfortunately, schools and administrators (Nelson & Carlson, 1945; Wilson, 1954) sometimes had inherent obstacles or biases against acceleration, and these may have come into play and denied some students the ability to accelerate at the rate they needed.

Special classes/enrichment programs. Research also looked at special classes and enrichment programs. Within this area, studies can be grouped by ability grouping, program descriptions, program effects, and administrators’ attitudes.

Welke and Bragg (1958) conducted a study that focused on ability grouping. The authors noted that very little scientific data focused on ability grouping and believed that “as the public schools increased their enrollments, especially with nonacademic students, the differences in achievement and ability among students in the ungrouped classes became increasingly noticeable and, in some cases, ridiculous” (p. 85). Welke and Bragg
surveyed the practices of ability grouping among 15 randomly selected Wisconsin high
schools (all of which responded). The questions included:

- Do you group according to ability in all subjects having more than one section?
  (Only one school said yes.)
- Do you group according to ability in only the required subjects? (Five said yes.)
- Do you group only the very slow ones in the required subjects? (One said yes.)
- Do you group only the very bright students in the required subjects? (One said yes.)
- Do you use a different system than the ones mentioned in the above four
  questions? (There were various responses by the schools.)

Based on the responses of the 15 schools, the authors noted that the trend was to group
gifted students together. Welke and Bragg felt that this special grouping also demanded a
special kind of teacher and questioned whether schools should ability group before
locating teachers who may be best suited to this type of arrangement. They also pointed
out that because smaller schools may be unable to group based on ability, the use of
acceleration or enrichment may be more suitable for their needs. The authors concluded
that ability grouping may actually help students reach their potential within a class of
their peers, but provided no concrete evidence to prove this point.

Some of the studies provided descriptions of special classes or enrichment
programs in which research was conducted. Baker (1943) described an experimental
program in the Detroit public schools. The school district grouped the top 2–3% of
superior children into major work groups known as X, Y, and Z groups. Detroit selected
four elementary schools to include in the study and the schools developed enrichment-
type courses for the students. The students were kept in their regular classes most of the time, but met in special groups for their enrichment. The teachers of these students limited direct instruction, instead taking a more minor role in the students’ projects. Baker found that students from different grades began to join together based on common interests, and younger students in the groups worked well with the older children and had no sense of inferiority.

Albers and Seagoe (1947) discussed an enrichment program designed for gifted students in algebra. Defining enrichment as “materials which broaden and deepen the knowledge and content of the regular work” (p. 482), the authors helped construct enrichment units that helped students develop an understanding of math in relation to other subjects, introduced students to additional information not typically studied in high school math, and strove to create more interest in math for students (Albers & Seagoe, 1947). Gifted students were defined as those with IQs at 125 or above, and 64 subjects participated in the enrichment. Albers and Seagoe concluded that gifted students could reduce their time in algebra class by 15% and not miss anything, and that enrichment as a program option would be useful to those in small schools who could not group gifted students separately.

Angermann, Field, and Angermann (1958) reviewed an experimental study at a Pennsylvania school that had been in place for 5 years. Called the Advanced Curriculum, the school was one of 17 schools who pioneered the study (at the time of the publication, 200 schools were involved). The Advanced Curriculum was supported by the Ford Foundation at first and then came under the College Board. At this particular school, 9% of the students participated (around 200). Students began taking special classes in 10th
grade, and they were only allowed to participate if they took the advanced classes in all subjects, called a “block roster”—a concept that had been seriously debated. However, Angermann et al. found that during the last 2 years of program, the students had a 90% passing rate on AP tests.

Roudebush (1959) described a pilot study that began in 1952 for gifted math students in Seattle. The school’s objective was to determine what mathematics could be mastered in junior high if gifted students were segregated in a special class. The study found that these students could cover junior high arithmetic plus enrichment topics in grade 7 and almost all of an introductory algebra course in grade 8. Because of this study, students who participated in these programs were placed in intermediate algebra instead of plane geometry when they entered grade 9.

Other studies looked at a program’s effect on gifted students. Three Hundred Gifted Children (Sumption, 1941) was published in 1941. In it, Sumption (1941) described a follow-up study of children who had participated in the Major Work Classes in Cleveland, OH, which was a program of enrichment. She compared three groups: students who had not participated in the classes, students with 1–3 years of participation, and students with 4 or more years of participation. The groups were matched for age, sex, IQ, and family background. Through questionnaires, the three groups were compared on social relationships, self-expression, critical thinking, worthwhile activities, knowledge and skills, and health (Sumption, 1941). The two groups of students that had participated in the Major Work Classes were found to be somewhat better than the control group (the group that did not participate) on the first four variables. One criticism
noted that “the differences, however, are often small and not too well defined” (Oden, 1942, p. 306).

In 1955, Barbe conducted an evaluation of the special classes for gifted children in Cleveland. A questionnaire was mailed to graduates (between the years 1938 and 1952) of the Major Work Program to look at their attitude toward special classes for gifted children, best and least liked aspects, suggestions for improvement, and whether the program influenced later adjustment. Barbe (1955) indicated that this research was an evaluation of an enrichment program, although most of the respondents were probably unfamiliar with the term. Almost half of the students enthusiastically approved of the special classes for the gifted, with 37% approving of them with some hesitancy (Barbe, 1955). The best-liked aspects of the program included the opportunity to express individuality, the curriculum offered, foreign language (French) study, the challenge, and the classmates. The least-liked aspects included attitudes of other students and teachers toward the gifted students, lack of social contact with other students, and the lack of ability to advance more rapidly. More than half of the students felt that no improvement could be made to the program, although others suggested that there be more contact with other students, more vocational guidance, better trained teachers, and more acceleration, among others. Two thirds of the respondents felt that participating in the Major Work Program had helped them with later adjustment. Based on the data from this study, one could conclude that the program of enrichment was successful.

Barbe (1957) continued his research on the graduates of the Major Work Program in Cleveland. He received replies from 456 former students from the past 15 years. A
total of 91% of men and 63% of women attended college, and those who didn’t cited financial issues.

Administrators’ attitudes toward special programs were also a focus of the research. Justman and Wrightstone (1951) mailed a questionnaire to the principals of the 89 junior high schools in New York in order to determine their opinion about the organization of special classes. A total of 79 questionnaires were returned. More than half of those responding \((n = 46)\) indicated they would keep the Special Progress (SP) classes. Respondents were asked to discuss the most valuable contribution of the classes, their weaknesses, and suggested changes to help make the classes more valuable. They found their most valuable characteristics included saving time, allowing students to work at their capacity, and providing provisions for competition. The principals felt the special classes’ weaknesses included the feelings of snobbery that the children and parents developed, the stress, and immaturity of students.

Special classes and enrichment programs tended to have favorable results based on research studies. Students and administrators found this type of programming to be valuable and offer positive aspects to students’ school experience. However, it is uncertain as to whether these types of provisions had the same impact as might have been seen had acceleration been in place instead.

*Gifted students in the regular classroom.* In 1957, Gallagher and Crowder published the first part of study that focused on the adjustment of gifted children in the regular classroom. The study looked at the extent to which gifted children may have difficulty adjusting to being in the regular classroom in four areas: academically, intellectually, socially, and emotionally. The research was conducted with 35 students in
grades 2–5 (20 boys and 15 girls) in a Midwestern city. The students had a Stanford Binet 150+ IQ. The authors were unable to make any generalizations for the entire group of students, as there were many individual differences that were extreme. However, 29% of the kids seemed to be adjusting “as well as could be expected” (Gallagher & Crowder, 1957, p. 318). The students’ difficulties were found in lack of motivation and creativity/originality.

The second part of the study was published the same year (Crowder & Gallagher, 1957). This article focused on case studies conducted on the 35 children in Part I using assessments and interviews to help modify the regular classroom environment to meet their needs. The authors presented five in-depth case studies and looked at the educational implications of accepted practices on each of the students (i.e., acceleration, special classes, enrichment, traveling consultant). They concluded that schools needed to have flexibility in planning programming for gifted students, based on information such as the child’s social-emotional adjustment, family background, and attitudes and feelings. The authors warned:

There is enough evidence available in these case studies to suggest there will be a substantial loss in adult potential unless distinct changes are made in the educational and family environment. Each school district, community, and state must decide whether the cost of better training for our future leaders, scientists, artists, executives, and professional persons is worth the cost of increased services at the elementary and secondary school level. (Crowder & Gallagher, 1957, p. 398)

Gifted students often were educated in the regular classroom alongside other students. Researchers (Crowder & Gallagher, 1957; Gallagher & Crowder, 1957) indicated that there may be some loss of potential for gifted students who did not have provisions made to differentiate their education.
In looking at the research conducted on acceleration, special classes and enrichment programs, and educating gifted students in the regular classroom, the one practice that stood out as having overall research support was acceleration. However, one can not be certain how many schools actually implemented this educational provision for gifted students and how many students could have benefited from this option if only the school system had understood its merits and allowed for it to be in place.

Teacher Education

In 1953, Wilson looked at the preparation for teachers of the gifted throughout the United States. The researcher surveyed state superintendents, superintendents of large city school systems (at least two in every state), and heads of all accredited colleges and universities preparing teachers in 1953. The research was conducted “to discover what provisions were currently being made for the teaching of the gifted, what improvements administrators deemed advisable, and what special preparation of teachers was being provided for the education of these children” (Wilson, 1953a, p. 78). The data from the survey found that only Pennsylvania required special certificates to teach gifted classes, and “no requirements as to understandings or readiness to meet special needs of gifted children for regular teaching certificates or licenses were reported” (p. 79).

In another study focused on teacher preparation, Wilson (1957) stated:

The increasing concern (if not anxiety) about the education of unusually able children in our nation is shown by attempts to improve offerings in many schools in cities, towns, and rural areas, and by much discussion of what should be done. (p. 295)

In light of that, he conducted a study to compare what school systems were doing for in-service training to help teachers meet the needs of gifted students, and reviewed what
colleges were doing at the undergraduate level to help prepare future teachers (Wilson, 1957). Wilson (1957) sent a questionnaire to 64 school systems and 62 colleges. Forty school systems from 24 states and 29 colleges from 17 states responded. Only 11 of the responding schools indicated that they provided special courses on the gifted in their inservices. Only 4 colleges had specific courses, although 25 reported teaching units on this topic within courses.

Unfortunately, during this period of time, very few, if any, formal requirements were required for teachers of the gifted. Most colleges tended to address needs of the gifted in units taught within courses, if at all, instead of devoting whole classes or programs on teaching gifted children.

Creativity

The study of creativity became immensely popular when J. P. Guilford addressed the American Psychological Association in September 1950. In his presidential speech, he discussed creativity, something Guilford (1950) felt had been a neglected area of study. Defining creativity as a set of traits that result in creative behavior, such as inventing, composing, and designing, Guilford (1950) stressed the social importance of the study of creativity and indicated:

The most common complaint I have heard concerning our college graduates in [scientific and technical areas] is that while they can do assigned tasks with a show of mastery of the techniques they have learned, they are much too helpless when called upon to solve a problem where new paths are demanded. (p. 446)

Guilford (1950) cited Terman’s longitudinal study, and shared that although there was some indication of superior achievement among the students, “there seems to be as yet little promise of a Darwin, an Edison, or a Eugene O’Neill” (p. 447). Unfortunately,
creativity was one of the areas Terman neglected to examine in his longitudinal study (Gowan, 1977). Guilford (1950) identified factors he felt were indicative of creativity, including fluency, novelty, flexibility, synthesis, the ability to reorganize, complexity, and the ability to evaluate, and proposed conducting a factor analysis would benefit the study of creativity.

In 1954, Wilson, Guilford, Christensen, and Lewis published a factor-analytic study that focused on creative thinking abilities. The authors explored the abilities they felt were important to the success of high-level personnel. A battery of tests were given to air cadets and student officers at Lackland Air Force Base. Wilson et al. (1954) identified 14 factors of creative thinking, 5 of which were previously known (verbal comprehension, numerical facility, perceptual speed, visualization, and general reasoning). The researchers did find 9 new factors, which included sensitivity to problems, fluency (three types), flexibility, originality, closure, and judgment.

Guilford (1956) described what he termed the “structure of intellect” in an article that appeared in *Psychological Bulletin*. In it, he discussed 40 factors that were divided into two groups: thinking and memory factors. The thinking factors were further categorized into “cognition (discovery), production (convergent thinking and divergent thinking), and evaluation” (Guilford, 1956, p. 292). This contribution helped to broaden people’s way of thinking about intelligence and creativity.

In 1958, Getzels and Jackson examined the concept of giftedness. Indicating that giftedness had been equated with a certain score on an IQ test and that creativity was usually synonymous with artistic ability, the researchers set out to describe two groups of students: the “highly intelligent” group and the “highly creative” group. The sample
consisted of 500 adolescents in a Midwestern private school in grades 6–12. The highly intelligent students were those who scored in the top 20% on an IQ test, but who did not score in the top 20% on creativity assessments. Likewise, the highly creative students were identified as those who scored in the top 20% on creativity assessments, but not in the top 20% on the IQ test. (The authors specifically excluded the group of students who scored in the top 20% on both assessments.) The two groups of students were compared on variables such as school performance, teacher ratings, student preferences, and a story-writing activity. Getzels and Jackson found that the two groups were equally superior in school achievement (despite there being a difference of 23 points in the mean IQ’s of the groups). Teachers preferred to have the highly intelligent students in class over the highly creative. The creative students were found to rank their personal sense of humor much more highly than the intelligent group. Finally, on the writing activity, “creative students exhibited a degree of imagination and originality (not by any means the same as correct grammatical construction) unmatched by the high I.Q. students” (Getzels & Jackson, 1958, p. 77). The authors concluded:

We believe the high academic performance of our creative children coupled with the related lack of recognition which they received from teachers points to the core of the program of expanding the present conception of “giftedness,” and of breaking the bonds that the I.Q. has on this concept in the school situation. . . . Once we set a precedent by allowing an exception to the practice of labeling only high I.Q. children as “gifted,” the possibility of expanding the concept to include other potentially productive groups becomes a genuine challenge to both educators and research workers. (p. 77)

Another study used graduate and advanced undergraduate students in the science and arts departments at the University of Nebraska as its sample (Drevdahl, 1956). Although students weren’t specifically identified as gifted, one could assume that some of those taking graduate-level courses may have been gifted. Students were given tests
that included Cattell’s Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire, Thurstone’s Primary Mental Abilities Test, and tests used in Guilford’s study of creative thinking. The creative students were those who scored in the top 50% of these assessments, while the noncreative students were those who scored in the bottom 50%. Drevdahl (1956) found that creative students scored better on verbal facility, fluency, flexibility, and originality than noncreative students. In addition, creative students tended to be more individualistic and nonconformist than noncreative students. Discussing the difference between the two fields of study, Drevdahl (1956) felt:

As far as the science fields are concerned, it may be necessary for the creative individual to be conventional in accepting knowledge, known methods and, perhaps, goals. Once these are accepted and internalized, the scientist’s unconventionality . . . can be expressed within this framework by means of flexibility and fluency in approach, and in his originality. With respect to the art fields, on the other hand, the creative artist may be less dependent upon what has gone before, and may depend to a greater extend upon his personal unconventionality. (p. 26).

With Guilford’s (1950) speech to the American Psychological Association, an interest in the study of creativity was born. Most of the studies helped further the definition of creativity and described important factors that needed to be in place for a person to be creative. Although the studies, for the most part, were not conducted with samples of identified gifted students (or this information was not included), these findings helped contribute to a fuller understanding of creativity and indicated more research needed to be done in order to gain more insight into the creative mind.

Reviews of the Literature/Suggestions for Future Research

A few scholars wrote reviews of the literature in the field of gifted education or suggested topics for future research. The Review of Educational Research included an
article on the mentally gifted in 1941, the first mention of gifted students in that journal since 1936. Newland (1941) looked at the literature published between 1930 and 1940 (91 references), which included articles on the identification and description of gifted children; case studies/small-group studies; follow-up studies that focused on students’ accomplishments; contrast studies of gifted and nongifted children; achievement of gifted students, educational provisions, including acceleration, enrichment, and special classes; social and emotional adjustments, and studies of superior African American students. Newland (1941) found that the evidence of so much research in the field leading up to the new decade was very encouraging to current researchers. He urged researchers to make an effort to look into problems associated with educating gifted students. In addition, he noted the need for research into social conduct of gifted students.

Three years after Newland (1941) provided a review of the research in the field published during the 1930s, the Review of Educational Research included another article on the topic (Woods, 1944). In this 3-year period, an additional 22 research studies had been published about gifted children. The studies were grouped into the following categories: social and emotional adjustments; personalities, interests, and socioeconomic status; case and small-group studies; contrast studies; hobbies and special gifts; educational achievement of superior children; studies of superior Negro children; follow-up studies; and constancy of IQ. Woods (1944) argued:

> interest in the mentalities, personal characteristics, academic achievement, social adjustment, and life success of gifted individuals is continuously in evidence, both in popular writing and in research studies, but the problem, especially as it concerns the school’s duty and magnificent opportunity in relation to gifted children, is far from solved. (p. 229)
She suggested that future research should focus on best practices for identifying students early, providing challenging curriculum for students, working with parents of gifted children, and looking at the causes and possible treatments for social maladjustment (Woods, 1944).

Witty (1948) provided a brief overview Terman’s research from 1921 through 1946, and focused on the school’s role in educating gifted students, children’s play activities, personality development, vocational/marital adjustment, college attendance, and curricula. He put a call out for future studies to focus on challenging curricula for gifted students.

In another review of gifted education research between 1944 and 1953, Newland (1953) categorized 80 studies into the topics of social awareness, psychological aspects, and the educational picture. He found evidence that suggested an increase in graduate research on the gifted, with four master’s theses and five doctoral dissertations focused on gifted education between 1946 and 1952 (Newland, 1953). Newland (1953) argued that future research should focus on the social outcomes of different educational programming experienced by gifted students. In addition, he suggested focusing research on the nature of mental superiority and creativity, as well as personality traits of the gifted.

In 1954, the Division 16 Subcommittee on Needed Research on Gifted Children provided a list of needed research on gifted children in American Psychologist. The major topics included research on educational administrative procedures, the effect upon the gifted child of organizing school in various ways, relationship between ability and performance, the teacher’s role in training the gifted, life work, personal relationships,
special frustrations, satisfactions, undesirable personality traits, status, and special needs regarding the subject matter to learn or the age at which it should be taught.

Newland (1955) discussed the definitions of giftedness and pointed out that more research should be done relating to intellect, social needs, and artistic talent. He included possible research questions and areas, such as socioemotional needs of the gifted, the psychological constitution of giftedness, the conceptualization processes of the gifted, the leadership behavior of the gifted, the effectiveness of educational methodologies with the gifted, social loss aspects of the neglect of the gifted, and the costs of making different kinds of educational provisions for the gifted. Newland (1955) summed up his thoughts about the context of the time: “It is unfortunate that the fact of international tensions has had to be injected into our thinking to increase sensitization to the need for more study of an intelligent planning for the gifted” (p. 292).

Passow (1957b) summarized the research being conducted by the Talented Youth Project. Researchers were working on nine studies, which focused on: (a) the effects of ability grouping, (b) the effects of acceleration and partial ability grouping, (c) the effects of English honors classes, (d) attitudes toward school and self, (e) underachievement, (f) the effects of a guidance program, (g) the effects of a weekly seminar, (h) peer attitudes, and (i) an instrument used for assessing educational programs. Each of these studies was concerned with obtaining information that had consequences for educational practices in the school.

Tyler (1957) explained the increase in interest in gifted education: “Probably the most important reason for this increase is our national concern about possible shortages of top-level personnel, particularly in the science fields” (p. 391). In his review, he
discussed recent research focusing on the manpower emphasis; encouragement of college
going; broader concepts of giftedness; temperament, motivation, and school achievement;
enrichment; acceleration; guidance; science talent; and surveys.

J. C. Gowan (1958) summarized the recent research in the field categorized by
research questions. Most research that had been conducted focused on the relative merits
of administrative plans (e.g., enrichment, special classes, acceleration). Gowan (1958)
found that although many schools practiced enrichment, there were “practically no
research results to substantiate its superiority” (p. 140), due to the difficulty of
conducting valid experimental research on this type of arrangement. He did note,
however, various studied that found positive outcomes of acceleration (e.g., Flesher &
Pressey, 1955; Justman, 1954). Gowan (1958) concluded that the three methods worked
best in conjunction with each other.

Conant (1958) summarized a focus group’s ideas for needed research on the
gifted. Topics included research on critical thinking, creativity, attitudes, interests, high-
ability-low achievers, materials, and improving the quality of teaching, among others.

Goldberg (1958/1959) reviewed the recent research on the gifted and talented. In
it, she commented on the “recent concern with the education of superior students [which]
has resulted in a sizable crop of studies” and indicated “to report them all, even briefly,
would be a task beyond the scope” of her article (Goldberg, 1958/1959, p. 150). She
focused on studies categorized into social and personal characteristics, identification,
administrative provisions, course content and methods, motivation and attitudes, and
current trends. Goldberg (1958/1959) suggested future research should focus on content
and method of teaching gifted students, as this would provide a more defendable definition of enrichment.

In 1959, Fliegler and Bish provided a review of more than 250 research articles on the gifted and talented. They categorized the studies into major contributions to the field, social concerns/manpower problems, portrait of the gifted (in which characteristics, achievement, peer relationships, and achievement issues were included), educational provisions, creativity, and needed research.

Allison (1959) looked at the education of the gifted in California. He sampled educators’ opinions as to where research was most needed. A total of 93 people responded: 36 junior/high school teachers (Group 1); 41 supervisors, counselors, psychologists, and professors (Group 2); and 16 secondary school principals and vice principals (Group 3). Allison found that all three groups indicated research is needed in educational administrative procedures (e.g., grouping, class size). Groups 2 and 3 ranked second (Group 1 ranked it third) the teacher’s role in training the gifted as an important research agenda. Groups 2 and 3 ranked third (Group 1 ranked it second) the relationship between ability and performance. Allison cautioned:

Some students of history have indicated that the strong interest in the education of the gifted is not a new topic, but rather one which appears from time to time. There is evidence, however, to indicate that the research and experimentation now in progress will provide knowledge which should allow us to do a better job. Even so, most of us know how to do a better job than we are presently doing. (p. 106)

A criticism of research being conducted in the field came from Newland (1959). He felt that the “experimental research” methods that had been used to determine the value of provisions such as enrichment, acceleration, and special classes were unable to
be used to determine which is best because there were a number of factors in play within each community that make it impossible to generalize. Newland (1959) added:

Research findings always must be evaluated in terms of the population which has been studied, in terms of the situation in which the study was made, and in terms of the particular methodology employed at the time. A large portion of our studies of and about the gifted warrant only cautious generalizations. (p. 198)

Abraham (1959) also criticized the state of research in gifted education. He noted that scholars were still having discussions about the same things they were discussing 3–5 years ago. Abraham (1959) felt that gifted education needed to broaden its net by sharing information with the public and doing a better job of public relations and gaining community support. He pointed out the overlooked gifted child (those from small towns or rural areas, low-SES, bilingual [i.e., minority], and twice-exceptional students) and argued that these children must be found. Suggesting future research directions, Abraham (1959) felt these should include: the gifted child and family relationships, flexibly school entry/advancement, surveys of people’s attitudes, how gifted students fit in with peers, and community attitudes. He summed up the sad state of gifted research during this period: “We continue to define, identify, list characteristics, argue about enrichment versus acceleration versus special classes, quote the Terman study, and compile names of people and places contributing to the field” (Abraham, 1958, p. 316). He continued:

With education as a whole in a death struggle to solve its own problem under pressures from almost innumerable directions, and with our tendency toward national binges whether they consist of hula hoops, purple people eaters, or gifted children, it becomes necessary to single out some problems for special consideration, thought, and action. (p. 316)
Summary

During the 1940s and 1950s, themes of research included characteristics of gifted students, attitudes, identification, educational provisions, teacher education, creativity, and reviews of the literature/suggested future research. Although some themes were touched upon more often, the studies presented above provide evidence that there were many scholars who were interested in both the educational and social and emotional needs of gifted students. These men and women conducted research throughout these two decades to help ensure that additional, relevant knowledge was uncovered about gifted students, even if it might not have been implemented in schools.

Conclusion

This chapter viewed the streams of research and educational practices through the lens of legislation, publications, and national organizations and advocacy efforts. It then highlighted the educational practices and streams of research during the 1940s and 1950s. Streams of research and the subsequent educational practices that are administered based on the data can help a field move forward or remain stagnant. During this period, little legislation was passed that specifically focused on gifted and talented students. However, the GI Bill, the National Science Foundation Act, and the National Defense Education Act helped increase awareness of gifted students and the importance of quality education in the schools. In addition, the latter two acts were passed in response to the demand for more challenging coursework in math and science and to identify the nation’s most talented students in these areas, which in turn impacted math and science research and curriculum in the schools.
The most common educational practices found in this period were acceleration, enrichment, and special classes; more than 60 years later, these are still the main avenues for providing service to the gifted in schools. The research published during the 1940s and 1950s often focused on characteristics of gifted students, attitudes, identification, educational provisions, teacher education, creativity, and reviews of the literature/suggested future research. These themes carried over to nonresearch publications that also helped to influence the educational practices in the schools throughout the 1940s and 1950s. This information was disseminated to scholars, educators, and laypersons alike. Finally, the two national organizations that were founded during this time, AAGC and NAGC, helped provide leadership for the field through publications and conferences. Both organizations helped direct the focus onto research and best practices for gifted students.
CHAPTER SEVEN

Changes in Gifted Education

Historians study the past to determine what happened and explain how we arrived at the present state. Looking at the past provides us with details of what has occurred and it allows us to see the change that has taken place over a period of time (Stearns, 1998).

The final research question, “How did the field of gifted education change during the period from 1940 to 1960?,” is the focus of this chapter.

Gifted Education Legislation

As described in previous chapters, very little legislation was passed at either the state or federal level in support of gifted students during the 1940s and 1950s. At the state level, throughout this period little was done to legislate gifted education. Toward the end of the 1940s, only California, Oregon, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin had legislation written to establish special classes for the gifted (Knight, 1952; Santayana, 1947). A decade later, this count had only increased to six states (Jackson, 1979). This was not much of a change, but given the fact that there was basically no legislation at the federal level at this time, it is interesting that six states felt gifted education was important enough to introduce and vote into law legislation that supported it.

At the federal level, very little legislation specifically written for gifted students and their education was passed between 1940 and 1960. However, three major Acts were enacted and these affected gifted and talented students’ education.
As World War II was winding down, President Roosevelt signed the Servicemen’s Readjustment Act of 1944 into law. More commonly known as the GI Bill of Rights, it providing World War II veterans low-interest loans and educational benefits (Moss, 1994). This provided an opportunity for those who had their education interrupted by the war to go back to college. This was a step in a new direction, as it helped to revive an interest in both higher education and education in general. Education had not been a focus of the United States during the war years, and this Act encouraged people to complete their educations. The GI Bill was popular, evidenced by the more than 1,000 applications for the educational benefits within the first 3 weeks of its enactment (“GI Bill of Rights Prompts Inquiries,” 1944). Although the GI Bill was not enacted specifically for gifted students, and we are unable to know how many may have even been affected by it, it did cause a gradual change in the minds of the American people and reminded them that education was important and would be needed in the new era of America’s role as a world superpower.

Six years after the passage of the GI Bill, the federal government passed the National Science Foundation Act (NSFA, 1950). With this Act, the government placed more of an emphasis on its brightest students. With the end of World War II, and the U.S. emphasis on retaining its leadership role on the world stage, came the belief that it was important to focus on the need for scientists and engineers (Wolfle, 1959). There was a manpower shortage in these areas and the United States was concerned that it would fall behind if this was not addressed. President Truman noted the need for stimulating both research and education in every science field, as this progress would
enable the United States to grow and prosper while maintaining its leadership status in the world (“Truman Signs Bill for Science Study,” 1950).

The establishment of the National Science Foundation (NSF) in 1950 provided the country’s first national emphasis on encouraging gifted and talented students to become scientists. Schools were pressed to develop and teach science curriculum and the nation’s gifted students became its hope for the future. The emphasis was no longer on basic science facts; students were challenged by curriculum developed around the overarching scientific principles and applying these to larger problems (Krajcik et al., 2001). The NSFA changed switched the country’s attention to education—more specifically, science education—and the gifted and talented students who would take on the challenge of becoming world-class scientists.

The third legislative Act during this period was a reaction to the launch of the Russian Sputnik in 1957. Seven years after the NSF was established, the United States was caught by surprise in early October 1957 when its enemy launched the first satellite into space. America’s earlier emphasis on science at the beginning of the decade had not been enough to beat the Russians into space.

The public’s reaction was swift and there was a concern about the quality of education in the country (Gold, 1979). America needed to once again turn its attention to its most gifted and talented and help develop these students’ potential (Barbe, 1959). In response to the public outcry, Congress passed the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) in 1958 and began to focus on the brightest students (Zettel, 1982). In addition to science, this Act provided a new emphasis on math, as well as foreign languages, and
spawned the development of challenging curriculum that met the needs of gifted students (Kirschenbaum, 1998).

During the 1940–1960 period, there wasn’t a strong legislative push to address the needs of gifted children. However, the passage of the GI Bill of Rights, the NSFA, and the NDEA did help turn the country’s focus on its best and brightest, all in the name of securing America’s place in the world and maintaining a leadership position. At the beginning of these two decades, no legislation for gifted students was in place at the national level. With the end of World War II and the interest in retaining its position as a world superpower, the United States gradually began to look to gifted and talented students as its future. The change in direction came from the fear of outside forces beating the United States, but it did provide an impetus to pass Congressional Acts to help improve the science and math education of all students, including gifted students. Gifted students’ needs went from being neglected in the schools at the beginning of the period, to the country’s answer to its problems by the end. This was quite change in a two-decade period.

Educational Practices

During the 1940s and 1950s, the most common educational practices implemented with gifted students were acceleration, enrichment, and special classes. Meister (1953) argued that because 80% of high-school-aged youth were attending school, it was difficult to provide an adequate education for all students. However, schools turned their attention to their gifted and talented students, as they were being criticized for not educating high-ability students to reach their potential (Meister, 1953). Schools “devised special curricula, different kinds of school organization, and a variety
of teaching procedures in the hope of preventing such waste,” and began implementing strategies such as ability grouping, honors classes and special schools, acceleration, and enrichment (Meister, 1953, p. 107).

Even with a national interest in educating gifted students, it is unknown how many schools actually did provide quality educational programming to meet their needs (Passow et al., 1955). Isaacs (1956) offered a harsh criticism in her article, identifying something she called “mirage literature.” She believed that there were:

articles appearing in educational journals which are descriptive of programs or practices supposedly existing in a given school system. Repeatedly, closer investigation has resulted not in an increase of insight into the various manifestations of the program, but in keen disappointment as the actual picture unfolds itself. . . . It is quite possible that a given article may appear in the literature describing the actual existence of a program which in reality should receive classification only as a hypothesis. (p. 289)

Assuming, however, that most of the programs described in the literature during this time were not a figment of the author’s imagination, some schools across the country had been offering acceleration, enrichment, or special classes (or a combination of these three) to gifted students since the late 1800s (Sumption & Luecking, 1960). Isaacs (1956) pointed out that all three practices contained relative positives and negatives, but that those that had remained in place for extended periods of time typically had the backing of both the superintendent and the community. She argued: “To create a program which will truly meet the needs of the community’s gifted at all times will require provision for continuous study, evaluation, and reëvaluation” (Isaacs, 1956, p. 290).

During the 1940s and 1950s, educational programming for the gifted remained unchanged, and all three options—acceleration, enrichment, and special classes—were
supported in the literature (e.g., Abraham, 1958; Brumbaugh & Roshco, 1959; Dunlap, 1955; Educational Policies Commission, 1950; Justman, 1951; Peters, 1941; Wilson, 1951a).

What did change, however, was the emphasis on math and science curriculum being taught in the schools. With the passage of the National Science Foundation Act in 1950 and the National Defense Education Act in 1958, there was an emphasis on educating gifted and talented students to fill the void in science and technology fields because there was a need to improve programming to help students develop their talent in these areas (Norton, 1959). Thus, schools had the finger pointed at them, and they scrambled to develop challenging curriculum that would help America’s brightest students get up to speed in both science and math.

Brandwein (1953) argued that high-ability students could develop aptitude in both science and math. Most of the students who were talented in the sciences were those who had a high IQ, high verbal ability, and high mathematical ability (Brandwein, 1953). He noted that many schools assumed that all students should be taking the same science courses, but he countered that “equal opportunity need not mean uniformity of opportunity” (Brandwein, 1953, p. 112).

Opportunities in math and science were opened to gifted children across the country in hopes that these students would become top scientists, thus saving the United States from losing its leadership position in the world. Havighurst (1958) suggested that schools should:

- encourage bright students to go to college (only two thirds of the top 25% of students were attending at this time),
• encourage top students to enter science and math fields,
• teach the last two years of science (chemistry and physics) in a manner that was more consistent with courses students would encounter in college,
• teach higher level math to students interested in pursuing science careers, and
• pay teachers better in order to attract future teachers to help with the manpower shortage. (p. 191)

Norton (1959) provided an overview of successful practices and provisions found in junior high math and science courses for gifted students and highlighted enrichment activities: (a) teaching an enrichment unit “designed for developing greater insight, interest, and motivation in science and mathematics” (Norton, 1959, p. 102), (b) developing students’ creativity by allowing them to write articles for an authentic audience on topics of interest in math and science, (c) offering students the ability to work on individual and group projects in math and science, and (d) encouraging an environment in which students can exchange ideas about these subjects.

Although the three main programming practices of acceleration, enrichment, and special classes that were implemented most often with gifted students did not change during this period, the curriculum did. With the dawning of the 1950s, and the desire to develop the math and science skills of America’s brightest students in hopes that they would become top-level scientists to help alleviate the manpower shortage in those areas, schools began implementing challenging curriculum in these areas. At the end of the 1950s, Norton (1959) noted:
Although progress is being made in this area, much more is left to be done. But as in the past, teachers, administrators, parents, and others interested in the welfare of our youth and the nation will meet the challenge and continue to build better programs for our future scientists and mathematicians. (p. 106)

**Gifted Education Publications**

During the 1940s and 1950s, a number of journals, magazines, and books published material on gifted children. Various reviews published during this period cited the number of publications and indicate just how much was being written during these decades. In his examination of research studies, Newland (1941) located 91 publications that had been written between 1930 and 1941. Woods (1943) continued this review, looking at 22 additional research studies published in 1941, 1942, and 1943. In 1953, Newland again reviewed research on the gifted, this time between the years of 1944–1953. He found 80 new studies in this area. The U.S. Office of Education provided a recommended list of readings on gifted children published between 1942–1946 that included 90 articles and books (“Selected References on Gifted Children,” 1948).

Martens (1951) wrote an annotated bibliography that appeared in *The Gifted Child* (Witty, 1951b). In it, she included a comprehensive list of references from the 1930s–1950. More than 100 were listed for the years between 1940–1950 alone. At the end of this period, Fliegler and Bish (1959) summarized research on the gifted and talented that had been published since Newland’s (1953) review. In a period of 6 years, an additional 251 articles were published. In addition to research studies, articles and books that were more descriptive and informative in nature (i.e., not research studies) also were published and were found in journals, magazines, and books. This increase in publications was greater than the total number written in the previous 23 years.
During the 1940s and 1950s, themes of research included characteristics of gifted students, attitudes, identification, educational provisions, psychological aspects, testing, teacher education, creativity, and reviews of the literature/suggested future research. These themes appear to be consistent throughout the two-decade period.

Although articles published in the 1940s typically covered identification, psychological aspects, characteristics of minority students, attitudes, testing, democratic principles, and leadership issues, one finds a heavy emphasis on characteristics of gifted students and educational provisions for them. In 1941, *Teachers College Record* published a special issue on the education for the gifted. This issue examined democratic principles and leadership issues as related to gifted students and their future contribution to society and business. In addition, the issue included articles that described characteristics of gifted students, educational programming, and administrative problems found in the schools.

Seven years later, *Understanding the Child* published a special issue called “The Gifted Child.” Like the *Teachers College Record* special issue, *Understanding the Child* included articles on characteristics of gifted students. In addition, it included an overview of Terman’s longitudinal study, a follow-up of one of Hollingworth’s high-IQ case studies, psychological aspects of gifted students, an article on identification, a summary of the American Association for Gifted Children’s work, and a bibliography.

Transitioning to publications that appeared in the 1950s indicates similar topics covered as those in the 1940s. However, there was a much greater emphasis on programming for gifted students. *Exceptional Children* and the *NASSP Bulletin* published multiple articles each year of this decade that discussed programming options
for gifted students. Most often, these journals carried articles that contained descriptions of programs found in schools and effective programming options for gifted students (e.g., Brumbaugh, 1958; Burnside, 1958; Dodes, 1959; Elder, 1959; Haskew, 1956; Gallagher & Crowder, 1957; Pregler, 1954). One can wonder whether or not this increase in information on programming in publications was a result of what was going on in the larger context. The National Science Foundation Act was passed in 1950, and this influenced the schools to focus more on science curriculum. Toward the end of the 1950s, with the launch of Sputnik and the passage of the National Defense Education Act in 1958, schools once again were provided incentives to develop high-quality and challenging curriculum in both math and science. The nation’s attention was turned toward gifted students and their education, so it is only natural that publications in gifted education during the 1950s included many articles describing educational provisions.

In 1954, the *Journal of Teacher Education* published a special issue on “The Gifted Child.” This issue included articles on the gifted child in society, psychological aspects and characteristics of gifted students, teachers of the gifted, educational programming, and guidance for the gifted. Three years later, *The School Review* also featured a special issue on gifted students. In this issue, articles included an overview of education, educating the gifted, developing talent, the manpower shortage, educational implications of this shortage, and educational provisions for the gifted. The following year, *School and Society* published a special section on the gifted. In it, articles discussed talent development, educational provisions, characteristics of gifted students, and peer relationships. Finally, in 1959, *School and Society* published a full issue on the academically talented. This issue contained a heavy focus on educational provisions for
gifted students (Stanley, 1959a; Witty, 1959a; Woodring, 1959), as well as characteristics and motivation of gifted students.

Although the themes of research remained the same throughout the 1940s and 1950s, there was more of an emphasis on programming in the 1950s. This could be due to the fact that the nation was emphasizing the importance of locating and educating its brightest students in math and science, and schools were beginning to implement educational programs for the gifted. It is only natural that scholars and teachers would publish information about these programs and let others know which practices were effective with gifted students.

National Organizations

At the beginning of the 1940–1960 period, no national organizations were devoted specifically to advocating for gifted students. By the end of this period, two major organizations, both established by women, had emerged and taken on active leadership and advocacy roles in the field of gifted education.

The first organization founded to advocate for gifted children and their education was established on September 6, 1946, in New York City and housed at the University of the State of New York. The American Association for Gifted Children (AAGC) was founded in hopes that people would recognize and help encourage gifted students’ creative work (Williamson, 1948). Ruth Strang and Pauline Brooks Williamson were determined to start an organization that advocated for gifted children, as they both were concerned that these students were the most overlooked and neglected children at this time (American Association for Gifted Children, 1999).
The second organization, the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC), was founded in 1954 by Ann Fabe Isaacs. Isaacs felt the need to establish another advocacy organization in addition to the AAGC and wanted to publish a journal devoted to gifted education. The AAGC had not done so, and this was one way that the two organizations could be distinguished. The publication began in 1957 and turned into *Gifted Child Quarterly*, a prominent journal in the field still today. Havighurst suggested that the focus of NAGC be a leadership role for the field (personal communication, A. F. Isaacs, January 31, 1956), and this was the direction the organization took, remaining the field’s largest organization advocating for gifted children more than 50 years later.

These two organizations both helped fill the void in organized advocacy efforts that were missing in the field prior to their establishment. Without this change, it is hard to imagine what might have happened in these years without their advocacy efforts for gifted students and their needs. Even with the federal government’s emphasis on gifted students and math and science curriculum in the 1950s, a field is hard pressed to move forward (or in any direction) without organized groups of advocates helping to provide leadership for scholars, teachers, parents, and students alike. Before these two organizations came into play, it seems as if there were pockets of scholars and teachers in the field advocating for gifted youth and trying to affect change in the system. With two large organizations came a more organized effort to disseminate information to the public, whether that was the AAGC-sponsored publication, *The Gifted Child* (Witty, 1951b), or NAGC’s *Gifted Child Quarterly* and yearly conferences. Their existence brought the field together.
Within a short period of 8 years, two organizations were founded, both focusing on the needs of gifted children. The time was ripe for change, and AAGC and NAGC were able to organize their respective efforts and help advocate for these students.

**Conclusion**

Looking at two-decade period of 1940–1960, one cannot make a case that a moderate amount of change occurred during these years. However, in reviewing the legislation, educational practices, gifted education publications, and national organizations and advocacy efforts, one can see that small changes were helping to move the field forward. The passage of the three federal Acts—the GI Bill, the National Science Foundation Act, and the National Defense Education Act—helped focus the spotlight on its most talented students, especially in the areas of science and math. Before this time, gifted students were often an afterthought or even overlooked in the school system, and these three Acts helped bring them to the forefront of this country’s mind.

In addition, although schools tended to follow the three educational provisions most commonly used for gifted students (i.e., acceleration, enrichment, and special classes), a new emphasis on math and science curriculum brought about a more challenging curriculum for gifted students.

Publications in the field of gifted education tended to follow the same themes during the 1940s and 1950s, but as the context changed, so did the content in the publications. A heavier emphasis on programming, especially after the implementation of the National Science Foundation Act in 1950 and the National Education Defense Act in 1958, appeared in journals, magazines, and books. These publications helped provide
information to those who did not quite know what to do with gifted students and offered an overview of effective practices.

Finally, at the beginning of this period, no national organizations advocated specifically for gifted and talented students. By 1954, the American Association for Gifted Children and the National Association for Gifted Children had both been founded. These organizations provided the leadership needed to bring advocacy for gifted children to the national level.

The sum of all these small changes helped to bring gifted students to the forefront of the nation’s attention by the end of the 1950s, which is remarkable considering at the beginning of the 1940s, the nation was concerned about the possibility of war, not the education of gifted students.
CHAPTER EIGHT

Conclusions and Implications

This historical study looked at the years 1940–1960 through the lenses of the following framework: (a) local, state, and federal legislation; (b) educational practices found within the schools; (c) publications; and (d) national organizations and advocacy efforts. Using historical and qualitative methods, these four areas were used to gather, analyze, and interpret the data on this two-decade period. In addition to these four lenses, the overarching context of the 1940s and 1950s was considered. Taken as a whole, these four lenses and the overall context helped provide an in-depth look at gifted education during these 20 years, as until this point only a cursory examination had been made into these years.

The following research questions were answered:

1. What was the context that influenced change in the field of gifted education during the period from 1940 to 1960?

2. Who were the individuals who influenced change in the field of gifted education during the period from 1940 to 1960?

3. What influenced the streams of research and educational practices in the field of gifted education from 1940 to 1960?

4. How did the field of gifted education change during the period from 1940 to 1960?
This chapter will summarize the conclusions from each research question through the four lenses, discuss the limitations of this research, and provide implications for future research. The chapter will conclude with a look at the field of gifted education today and how it compares to gifted education during 1940–1960.

The Four Lenses

The researcher viewed the research questions through four lenses. A summary of each of the lenses is included below.

Legislation

During the 1940s and 1950s, and indeed in the years following, little had been done in the name of legislation for gifted students’ educational needs, especially at the federal level (Russo, 2001). Despite this fact, this two-decade period did see three Congressional Acts that helped bring some attention to gifted and talented students. The GI Bill, which was passed in 1944, was the first bill to address the United States’ need for an educated workforce. With this encouragement and support, people in the military were able to take advantage of educational benefits and go (or return) to college after the war. This interest in education, and especially higher education, had been lacking during the war years of the early 1940s, and many people took the opportunity to go to college.

After World War II, the government was focused on maintaining the country’s leadership presence in the world. There was a focus on developing scientific talent, as this was thought to be the way to remain ahead of other countries (DeLeon & VandenBos, 1985). With this in mind, Congress passed the National Science Foundation
Act (NSFA) in 1950 to help initiate and support research and provide scholarships to students going into scientific fields.

After the launch of Sputnik in October 1957, Congress passed the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) and this Act made federal money available for the sciences (personal communication, J. S. Renzulli, February 10, 2010). The United States scrambled to catch up to the Russians, and “the flag they were waving said, ‘We can’t let the Russians get ahead of us!’” (personal communication, R. Myers, February 5, 2010).

As Gallagher recalled:

Most states across the country had a reaction in one way or another because of the—really—shakeup of the ideas that we were inevitably first in mathematics and science and we were slightly scared by the fact that the Russians were ahead of us. It proves a fundamental principle—that fear drives democracy. And that is that you’ve got so any pockets of interest in a democracy that you need something overwhelming to influence them all and get them to go in the same direction. (personal communication, February 10, 2010)

Sputnik was one event that helped influence those in power to move in the same direction, namely educate gifted students. NDEA (1958) sought to provide educational opportunities for America’s brightest youngsters, with an emphasis on science education.

With the passage of the second two Acts, namely the National Science Foundation Act in 1950 and the National Defense Education Act in 1958, in addition to the launch of Sputnik, an unprecedented attention was brought to the plight of gifted and talented students throughout the United States. Unfortunately, no other legislation addressed the needs of gifted and talented students directly during this period.
**Educational Practices**

The most common educational practices found in schools during the 1940s and 1950s that were used to meet gifted students’ needs were most often some form of enrichment, acceleration, or special classes (or a hybrid of the above). Administrative issues played an important role into the type of program that would (or would not) be provided for a school’s gifted students.

In addition to these academic practices provided to gifted students, during this period a number of special programs, including the Advanced Placement program in the schools and talent search programs such as the Science Talent Search and the National Merit Scholarship Program, were implemented. These programs offered the country’s brightest students opportunities to challenge themselves and develop their strengths in academic areas. Scholars also argued for guidance programs for the gifted in hopes of educating the whole child, and not just focusing on students’ academic abilities.

Unfortunately, although scholars argued that special programming was needed to educate gifted students, many were not given an opportunity to develop their potential (Brumbaugh, 1958). The growing interest in gifted education was helpful, but schools at the local level had to make some changes to provide for their gifted students, and it is unclear just how many actually did.

However, scholars such as Hollingworth, Terman, Witty, Passow, and Guilford did help influence which educational practices were being conducted in the schools. Hollingworth developed enrichment programs for gifted students in New York City schools (personal communication, A. J. Tannenbaum, February 19, 2010), and Terman and Witty both noted the benefits of accelerating gifted students. Others such as Passow
helped schools around the country develop and implement their own gifted programs (personal communication, A. J. Tannenbaum, February 19, 2010). Guilford (1950) suggested that more research focus on creativity and this helped inspire the field to do so (personal communication, J. S. Renzulli, February 10, 2010). In addition, his Structure of Intellect model indicated that intelligence was a complex construct, and this helped broaden the definition of giftedness.

Although the field of gifted education remained stagnant as far as the types of programming offered gifted students (i.e., acceleration, enrichment, and special classes), the 1950s did see an emphasis on science and math curricula, as this was warranted in light of the fact that the United States wanted to develop future scientists to lead the country.

Publications

Between 1940–1960, a resurgence of interest occurred in educating gifted students, especially after the launch of Sputnik (Herbst, 1967). Witty (1951e) described this period as one of a “rapid dissemination of knowledge” about gifted children thanks to the numerous publications that focused on gifted education. Books, journal articles, and the popular press published information on this topic (the researcher found more than 350 articles for the purposes of this dissertation). Publications during the 1940s and 1950s that included descriptive articles focused on topics such as characteristics of gifted students, attitudes, identification procedures, educational programming, psychological aspects of gifted students, and teacher education. Research themes included characteristics of gifted students, attitudes, identification, educational provisions, psychological aspects, testing, teacher education, creativity, and reviews of the
literature/suggested future research. These topics and themes were consistent throughout
the two-decade period, although there was more of an emphasis on programming in the
1950s. This was probably a result of the nation’s emphasis on educating the gifted in
science and math—with this focus, writers began publishing more articles on programs
that were effective with the gifted.

Four journals—Exceptional Children, NASSP Bulletin, Teachers College Record,
and Gifted Child Quarterly—each published a wide variety of articles on gifted education
during the 1940s and 1950s. The journals had different audiences, but all included
articles that contained important information on the needs of gifted students. One of the
most popular texts that provided an introduction to the field and the current research was

Some of the most prolific writers at this time were Lewis M. Terman, Paul Witty,
A. Harry Passow (along with his colleagues at Teachers College), and Ruth Strang.
These scholars contributed to the literature during these two decades and left a lasting
legacy on the field through their work with longitudinal studies, provisions for talented
youth, and guidance suggestions.

During the 1940s and 1950s, a large amount of information was published.
Educational reviews cited 91 publications written between 1930–1941 (Newland, 1941),
22 research studies published between 1941–1943 (Woods, 1943), 80 articles published
between 1944–1953 (Newland, 1953), and 251 additional articles published between
1953–1959 (Fliegler & Bish, 1959). An annotated bibliography was included in The
Gifted Child, in which Martens (1951) listed more than 100 publications in the field of
gifted education during the preceding decade alone (interesting, given the fact that World
War II was the nation’s focus at the beginning of that decade). Given that the authors may have excluded some publications inadvertently, one can only estimate the number of books, articles, and other publications that were written during the 1940s and 1950s.

**National Organizations and Advocacy Efforts**

Two organizations at the national level founded during the 1940s and 1950s were the American Association for Gifted Children (AAGC), which was founded in 1946, and the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC), which was founded in 1954. AAGC’s founders, friends Ruth Strang and Pauline Williamson, organized it in order to provide a general understanding of gifted children, to train educators in working with these students, to help encourage and develop challenging curricula, and to conduct research on the gifted (Clark & Williamson, 1951). The organization was one that advocated for gifted students, as it considered them to be one group of children whose needs were not being met in schools.

The group organized and published one of the most popular texts on gifted children, *The Gifted Child*. The book provided an overview of important issues and research in the field of gifted education at this time.

The second organization, NAGC, was founded as a nonprofit organization with three objectives that included forming an association, publishing a journal, and establishing a fund to sponsor research and help school districts with their programs for the gifted (Isaacs, 1957a). It was founded by Ann Fabe Isaacs, a parent who was interested in the gifted (personal communication, A. J. Tannenbaum, February 19, 2010).

One of its most important contributions to the field was the publication of *The Gifted Child Newsletter* (which later became *Gifted Child Quarterly*), the only
publication devoted entirely to gifted education topics. Although its earliest articles were not empirical in nature (personal communication, A. J. Tannenbaum, February 19, 2010), the journal led the way for future journals to be published in gifted education (e.g., *Journal for the Education of the Gifted, Roeper Review, Gifted Child Today*). As part of its advocacy efforts, NAGC also held annual conferences, often in conjunction with other educational organizations.

The AAGC and NAGC, the two national organizations devoted to advocating for gifted students, helped provide leadership for the field through publications and conferences, as well as sharing research conclusions about and best practices for the gifted. Prior to the 1940s, there were no national advocacy efforts. At the end of the 1950s, two national organizations, both established by women, helped to establish an organized effort in both leadership and advocacy in the field.

**Summary**

Throughout the 20 years reviewed in this dissertation, evidence shows that people were aware of the need to identify and serve the nation’s brightest learners. People, both within and outside of the field of gifted education, published material and advocated for gifted students in hopes that something would be changed within the school system—that their needs would begin to be acknowledged and the school would match its services to each child’s distinct needs. Although there is ample evidence of a growing interest in gifted students and a concerted effort to make changes, what is unclear is to what extent this actually took place in the schools. With no federal mandate to identify and serve gifted students, even with a “national crisis” such as Sputnik and the potential of the United States to fall behind on the world stage, one cannot say with certainty that gifted
students across the board, in all states and all schools, benefited from the efforts of individuals such as Hollingworth, Terman, Witty, Passow, and Strang, as well as the organized advocacy brought about from the American Association for Gifted Children and the National Association for Gifted Children. Unfortunately, it often takes a crisis of some kind for the country to wake up and focus on gifted students. Gallagher described this in relation to the response to Sputnik:

The only thing that really gets a special interest in educating gifted students in the citizenry is if they are scared. We used to say, “The Russians are coming! The Russians are coming!” which is a way of trying to tell people that we are in danger and we should be developing our intellectual resources in our country to combat that danger. (personal communication, J. J. Gallagher, February 10, 2010)

However, sometimes even that is not enough to meet these students’ needs without a true commitment by all parties involved, from the federal level, to the state level, to the local level.

Limitations

There were several limitations to this study. Although I was able to request photocopies of documents from the collections of Ann Fabe Isaacs and Paul Witty, access to other individual’s collections (if even available) were limited by time and financial costs. Given no restraints, I would have visited the collections in person to go through the primary documents myself, in addition to visiting the Presidential libraries of Truman and Eisenhower. Because I was unable to make the trips required to do so, I relied on material found on the respective websites and was able to either request what I needed or review it online.
I had the opportunity to interview four men who were involved in the field of gifted education either during this time period or soon hereafter. The interviews with James J. Gallagher, Robert Myers, Joseph S. Renzulli, and Abraham J. Tannenbaum were conducted by phone and recorded. All four of these scholars began working in the 1950s, with most beginning their work in the field at the end of that decade and becoming more prominent during the 1960s and beyond. Unfortunately, many of the pioneers in the field who were active in the 1940s and 1950s have passed away in recent years (personal communication, J. S. Renzulli, February 10, 2010), and their insight, especially into the early years, is lacking in this study. In some of the interviews I conducted, the scholars mentioned that they were just entering the field at the end of the 1950s, and weren’t sure how much knowledge they could contribute about the time period of interest.

Finally, although I spent more than a year combing the literature of this period, it is possible that key articles, studies, books, and other materials from this time may exist and I was unable to locate them at the university libraries I visited (four libraries in Texas and Louisiana) or through Interlibrary Loan requests or other avenues. I reached a point of saturation in which the same topics were being discussed and the same publications and authors were being cited in the materials I had obtained, so I was able to conclude my data collection for the purpose of this dissertation. Even with World War II taking place at the beginning of the 1940s, these two decades saw a large number of publications on the topic of gifted education, and some may have been inadvertently excluded from this study.
Implications for Future Research

As with any historical investigation, this study focused on a specific period of time (1940–1960) and looked at the context, key individuals, streams of research and educational practices, and change that occurred during these 20 years, all through the four lenses described above. This dissertation and Jolly’s (2004) dissertation have described the early years of the field and laid the groundwork for further investigation into other topics and other years.

Future research on other time periods, such as the latter half of the 20th century, would be beneficial. As the field grew during the 1960s, it led to what Renzulli (personal communication, February 10, 2010) has referred to as a “Golden Age of Gifted Education” in the 1970s, during which every state provided for gifted students and there was “a lot of excitement.” A look at the 1960s and 1970s, either as separate decades or combined into a 20-year period, would most likely provide fascinating information and insight into years in which gifted education was a focus of states and the country (e.g., the Marland Report, which contained an expanded definition of giftedness that has been widely accepted, was published in 1972).

A look at various types of schools, as well as how these schools addressed gifted education, would be beneficial to study. This would include a review of public and private schools and urban and rural schools in addition to special schools for the gifted.

In addition, future research may want to look at how giftedness has been defined over time. During the 1940s and 1950s, although there was a call for an expansion of the definition, gifted students were most often identified as gifted based on an IQ score.
How a teacher, school, or school district defines the term gifted impacts who may be identified for a program and what services are offered (if any).

Future research also is needed on populations historically underrepresented in gifted programs. More than 60 years ago, researchers were studying minority populations (e.g., African Americans), as well as students from low socioeconomic backgrounds (see, for example, Jenkins, 1943, 1948; McGehee & Lewis, 1942; Miller, 1956; Theman & Witty, 1943; Witty & Theman, 1943), and found that gifted (and highly gifted) children existed in all races and all socioeconomic levels. However, although more than a half-century has passed, the field is still concerned with these populations of students and their lack of representation in formal gifted programs. Perhaps with the national focus on all students acquiring basic skills (e.g., No Child Left Behind Act, 2001) we have forgotten that gifted students—all gifted students, and especially those from historically underrepresented groups—deserve to move beyond the basic skills and be challenged to reach their potential in school. Tracing the studies conducted with these students over time would be an interesting snapshot to see how and why the field is still discussing this issue more than 60 years after researchers such as Jenkins (1943, 1948) first brought it to attention.

Because it was beyond the scope of this dissertation to examine the specific cultural context during the 1940s and 1950s, it would be of interest for future examination. The effect of World War II’s conclusion on returning soldiers and the men and women who had been supportive on the home front, as well as race, gender, and ethnicity issues (e.g., Civil Rights Movement, women’s rights) that were coming to the forefront during this era, would be topics to study. Looking at how this cultural context
impacted the people of the United States and education in general—as well as gifted education—would help provide a rich description of another aspect of this period of time.

Finally, future research on the overall context of the field of psychology during this period would provide another piece of the puzzle. A look at various schools of thought, such as behaviorism, that were coming into vogue during this period and a larger focus on assessment would offer a snapshot of the larger picture of the field of psychology. In addition, looking at what was occurring in the field of special education and comparing and contrasting it to the field of gifted education would give a more complete description of education in the United States for students at the two extremes during these two decades.

**Final Thoughts**

According to Tannenbaum (personal communication, February 19, 2010), there has been progress made and some meaningfulness in the field now that didn’t exist during the 1940s and 1950s, in that national organizations such as NAGC have annual meetings with thousands of educators, including teachers, administrators, and scholars, in attendance; this was not the case more than 60 years ago. However, as he noted:

When you get to the ground level, except for the special schools for the gifted, the special classes, the schools within schools, regular schools, for the gifted—what has happened is that you get a fairly consistent picture of two points of light . . . on a dark canvas, and you wonder how serious schools and school systems are really in dealing with the gifted. Some of them are downright against it.

We’ve often heard the mantra that the “gifted can fend for themselves” (A. J. Tannenbaum, personal communication, February 19, 2010), but this indifference is cheating these students from the education they deserve. In the words of Abraham J.
Tannenbaum, one of the great scholars and thinkers in the field beginning in this period and throughout his tenure at Teachers College:

To me, there are two persistent problems in the field, and we have never either acknowledged them or solved them, even if we have acknowledged them. One is the fact that in so many schools and school systems you have what I call “educational provisions” for the gifted. If they do anything, they provide educational provisions. Educational provisions are temporary. They are basically educational electives, not imperatives. They are fragmentary; they are not sequential. That is, if a teacher in the fourth grade decides to do something on computer programs for the gifted, then somebody in the next grade will receive these very same students [and] will not do a course on computers, too, because that second person is interested in raising chicks, so that will be the focus of the provisions. And so it really is fragmentary. The administrators are not terribly interested themselves in dealing with the issue for its own sake, but they respond to pressure from parents. And once these pressuring parents’ children graduate and the pressure is eased, they go back to business as usual.

Programs, on the other hand, are educational imperatives. You have a program in mathematics in the elementary school. It is called arithmetic. Nobody would ever dream of dropping arithmetic. We could change arithmetic in various ways, but nobody would ever drop that. Nobody would ever drop science, or social studies, or language arts. These are our educational imperatives. So you have programs for the nongifted there. As for the gifted, we hardly see programs in that sense that are educational imperatives because these children require such programs and they deserve them.

That’s one problem—that there are too many provisions. There is too much neglect, too many provisions, and too few programs.

The other [problem] is that when a school decides to initiate a provision or a program, there is almost always an effort to reinvent the wheel. There are programs out there—there are educational experiences out there for the gifted, designed for the gifted, and administered very well to the gifted, and why reinvent the wheel when we can learn so much from them and perhaps become copycats. We are too much afraid of becoming that kind of a copycat.

Studying history is one way we can determine what has worked and what hasn’t, especially in the field of gifted education. Maybe if we turned to the lessons learned from the past, we can offer our gifted students a brighter future.
APPENDIX
APPENDIX

Interview Questions

• Share a little bit about yourself and how you came to be a part of the field of gifted education.

• What was your role in the field during the 1940–1960 period?

• Describe the context in regard to what was occurring in the field of gifted education between 1940 and 1960. Focus specifically on what you may remember about local, state, and/or federal legislation; educational practices found within the schools; academic publications; and national organizations/advocacy efforts.

• Recall some important individuals who you feel helped influence the field during 1940–1960. Who were these people and in what ways did they influence the field?

• How did the context of the times and the individuals affect the field? What important streams of research and educational practices may have evolved as a result of what happened during this period of time?

• Describe your thoughts about how the field changed throughout these two decades.
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