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The validity of teacher nomination of pupils for inclusion in a gifted programme in "Indian" schools

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2014-12-17
http://hdl.handle.net/10539/16006

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that, in order to measure unique qualities, several approaches to identification are essential. Student products and interviews by persons knowledgeable in the field can be an essential part of the identification process. In addition, nominations by teachers, parents, peers, and the student him/herself may be appropriate.

Skuy et al (1988) found that academic achievement was a valid criterion for selecting the brightest pupils for the purpose of enrichment. They are supported in this by Deschamp and Robson, 1984; Fliegler and Bisch, 1959. However, this criterion was applicable only when comparisons were limited within the particular community tested.

Skuy, Gaydon, Hoffenberg and Fridjhon (1990) caution against the exclusive reliance on a single criterion for selection of children for gifted programmes.

The multiple criteria approach attempts to provide for an unbiased approach to gifted education. It postulates that affording all students the possibility of being chosen will destroy old stereotypes about expectations of and provisions for gifted students.

3.4 THE BEHAVIOURAL IDENTIFICATION MODEL

Another method of identification is behavioural identification. This technique was devised and successfully piloted by Malone and Moonan in 1975. Research on behavioural identification indicates that discrete behaviours displayed by the gifted are not readily found in non-gifted children (Malone, 1974). The results indicate that selected combinations of behavioural characteristics can be used to correctly

categorize gifted and non-gifted preschool children.

Research by Jenkins (1948) which was later confirmed by Alder(1967) revealed that the commonality of behavioural characteristics of gifted persons clearly crossed boundaries of race and socio-economic status. This method of identification did not restrict the inclusion of culturally different children.

3.5 THE REVOLVING-DOOR MODEL: A NEW WAY OF IDENTIFYING THE GIFTED

The authors of this model are Renzulli, Reis, and Smith (1981). This Model for identifying and teaching the gifted stems from the concept of differentiated giftedness. It contends that individuals display "gifted" behaviour at particular times and in specific contexts.

The authors argue that well-developed test-taking skills and lesson-learning abilities are not always accompanied by other attributes of giftedness, i.e., task commitment and creativity, and thus challenges identification procedures and school programmes for the gifted that have adopted an all-or-nothing approach. The model can be applied to young children, as its flexibility allows for the developing of gifted behaviour.

3.6 IDENTIFICATION THROUGH NOMINATION

Hagen (1980) and Fatouros (1986), are of the opinion that parents, peers, and teachers are some of the best sources of information for identification of gifted pupils. Hagen (1980) emphasizes that the influence of parental bias, racial and ethnic prejudices, and peer popularity needs to be taken cognisance of.

3.7 TEACHER RATINGS AS A POSSIBLE METHOD OF EARLY IDENTIFICATION

Hagen (1980) contends that teachers are a valuable and reliable source of information for children in the primary school. It is thus reasonable to assume that teachers would be able to serve as resources in the early identification of gifted pupils. This assumption needs to be evaluated in the context of the accuracy and validity of the information that teachers are assumed to have.

Several researchers have advocated the need for caution in the use of teacher nomination as a method of identifying gifted pupils. Renzulli & Smith (1977) and Jacobs (1971), found that accuracy of teacher judgment in the identification of gifted children decreases as the chronological age of the child decreases. In other age groups, teacher judgment is considered to be a very important factor in the identification process. Training teachers in identification procedures can improve their efficiency (Gear, 1975) and, considering the importance of teacher involvement (Renzulli & Smith, 1977), this is an area that should be explored.

A series of studies by Denton and Postlethwaite (1983) on the "Effectiveness of teacher-based identification of pupils with high ability" concluded that teachers may be far more accurate in their nominations of able pupils than previous research would have suggested. They also established that the influence of social class, neatness and sex, (variables which are often thought to be powerful in influencing teachers' judgments) was weaker than was commonly supposed. In fact, they found that these variables were rarely

strong enough to produce noticeable biases and that it was possible to escape from test based measures of ability and rely on knowledge accumulated from day to day, provided an element of teacher training was introduced. Gear (1980) also demonstrated that with training, teachers became better qualified at nominating appropriate children for gifted programmes.

Venter (1985), in "Developing an enrichment programme in a junior primary school", contends that in the absence of I.Q. scores in the Junior Primary phase to help with identification, the total reliance on teachers' intuition and assessment of pupils' ability proved successful provided the staff were given certain criteria, such as high quality of questioning, divergent thinking, verbal ability, high powers of concentration, creativity and sense of humour, on which to base observation and selection.

Busse, Dahme, Wagner and Wieczerkowski (1986) think that it is more useful to allow teachers to identify highly gifted students and then detail the characteristics of these persons. They concur with Gallagher (1979) that "it is important not to force a view of giftedness on the teachers, particularly given the state of current knowledge".

Most of the research findings quoted thus far have related to preschool or older children. Very little research on the validity of teacher nomination in identifying giftedness amongst 6 to 9 year old children has been conducted.

3.8 COMMENTS / CRITIQUE OF MODELS

Most research indicates that traditional methods of identifying gifted or potentially gifted individuals are inadequate for use with very young children and, given the importance of early identification, more efficient and effective methods must be put into practice. Furthermore, such methods (e.g. a psychometric approach, individual testing) are highly impractical in terms of time spent and expense incurred. Traditional identification procedures also tend to overlook minority group children. (Renzulli and Smith, 1977 and Skuy et al., 1990).

Basing the identification procedure on a variety of types of information is certainly a step in the right direction and is the best and most appropriate method at present; this is, nevertheless, very time consuming and, in practice, is unlikely to take place in a thorough and systematic manner for every child. Although multiple approaches are useful and valid they have to be based on resources that are readily available. One does not have to use multiple specialists to tap the different aspects of a pupil's environment; instead, different informal sources of information could be used.

Most of the models discussed deal with the identification of pupils who do not fall into the age group addressed by this study i.e. six to nine year olds. Furthermore, the models require a large investment of time, funds, personnel and expertise which is currently lacking in the Department of Education and Culture, House of Delegates.

The impact of political and socio-economic conditions on pupil development and achievement has largely been

ignored by most current models of identification. Models need to be structured so that these factors do not become the reasons why pupils are excluded from programmes. Identification procedures which consider manifest ability, achievement levels and observed performance as sole criteria would, in the current South African context, exclude the vast majority of black gifted pupils. Models need to be geared towards identifying potential rather than achievement (Skuy, 1990; Feuerstein, 1979; Baldwin, 1987).

In models that employ teacher-nomination as a component of the identification procedure, it is important that the teacher is aware of the context in which such nomination occurs. The attitude of the teacher needs to be one where he does not see achievement as the sole criterion. Baldwin (1987), argues that "the attitude of the teacher is a crucial element in the child's development. This attitude must be one which is free of prejudice or preconceived stereotypes. There must be acceptance of the child as person who is potentially capable of high achievement. Teachers will need training in recognizing and interpreting these behavioural patterns and the relationship of these patterns to giftedness".

Richert (1987) quotes figures published by the U.S. Department of Education's office of Civil Rights which reveal that "minority groups such as blacks, Hispanics, and native Americans are under-represented by 30 - 70% in gifted programmes throughout the nation (and over represented by 40 - 50% in special education programmes)". She argues that this is not a true reflection of the ability of Black pupils but is instead a flaw in the identification procedures used. If this is the situation in a highly developed country

like the United States of America, it follows that in South Africa (where a deliberate policy to arrest the development of black people has been implemented) these figures would be significantly higher. Baldwin (1987) highlights the importance of using "restructured processes for locating and developing abilities of gifted black children", to compensate for the fact that in America 48% of all black children live in poverty and that they represent 32% of all poor children. Most current programmes provide enrichment activities for the high achieving child. Very little (if any) consideration is given to whether the child actually needs such a programme. The extent to which this practice promotes elitism needs to be evaluated. Rather than emphasising the extending of present achievement, programmes need to be structured so that the realisation of the potential of pupils is facilitated and emphasised. Thus, the identification process cannot be separated from the programme.

Baldwin (1987) believes that the integration of personal development goals such as improved self concept is important in a program for the gifted. The political and socio-economic milieu of Black South Africans engenders a negative world-view that includes feelings of powerlessness to effect change within themselves and their total environment. The purpose of identification should be much broader than the mere selection of pupils for programmes that will enhance existing skills. It should form part of a liberatory process i.e. a process that empowers people to unshackle themselves from limiting political and socio-economic conditions, and promotes a positive self image, self confidence and a sense of competence.

The preceding discussion focussed on the need for an effective and cost efficient method of identifying pupils for a gifted programme, within a definition that saw giftedness from a multiple-criteria perspective. Several models of identification were evaluated and it was decided to explore the validity of Teacher nomination as a method of early identification as it was assumed that such a method would be cost effective, efficient, and time-conserving.

4. PILOT STUDY

4.1 RATIONALE AND AIMS

Based on the study of the models discussed above, the researcher conducted a pilot study to determine the feasibility of substituting less formal methods of identification for formal ones. The Renzulli Rating Scale (RRS) was identified as a possible, less formal, measure of identification of pupils for gifted programmes. Whilst the RRS has proved both reliable and valid (Renzulli, Hartman and Callahan, 1971), this applied only to American subjects. Consequently, there was a need to determine if the Renzulli Rating Scale was valid for "Indian" South Africans. The purpose of this pilot study was to establish if there was a positive correlation between the RRS and the Junior South African Individual Scale (JSAIS).

4.2 METHOD

4.2.1 SUBJECTS AND SAMPLING

The researcher selected 5 pupils from each grade 1 and grade 2 class in a school in Laudium, on the basis of

high academic performance. The total sample was comprized of 40 pupils. However, during the course of the pilot study 3 pupils were transferred to other schools and the sample was reduced to 37.

4.2.2 PROCEDURE

The pilot study used the following procedure:

All selected pupils were subjected to an intellectual assessment (Junior South African Individual Scale - JSAIS) administered by the researcher. The Renzulli Rating scale (RRS) was administered by class teachers who had been appropriately orientated. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation was used to ascertain the relationship among the subscales and the total of the JSAIS scores and the different category scores of the RRS.

4.3 MEASURES

4.3.1 THE RENZULLI RATING SCALE (RRS)

The Renzulli Rating Scale (RRS), initially called the Scale for Rating Behavioural Characteristics of Superior Students, consists of three categories viz. Intellectual, Creativity and Task Commitment (see appendix 1). The rater has to assess aspects of each category on a 4 point scale. The RRS can be administered by any one who has sufficient knowledge of the child being rated. The RRS is used at the University of Illinois (U.S.A) for identifying pupils for the Retrieval and Acceleration of Promising Young Handicapped Talented (RAPYHT) programme and is based on an interactional definition of giftedness. Since 1978 the RAPYHT programme has been replicated nationwide and

the RRS has been used in Head Start programmes. The RRS proved itself a reliable and valid instrument for identification of gifted and talented pupils (Karnes and Johnson, 1986; Renzulli, Hartman, Callahan, 1971).

Table 1 reflects the statistical data with regard to the Stability and Interjudge reliability of the RRS.

TABLE 1

STABILITY AND INTERJUDGE RELIABILITY CORRELATIONS FOR THE RRS (Renzulli, 1971)

CATEGORY	COEFFICIENT OF STABILITY (N = 78)	INTERJUDGE RELIABILITY (N = 80)
INTELLIGENCE	.88	.89
TASK COMMITMENT	.91	.85
CREATIVITY	.79	.91

$p < .01$

As can be seen from table 1, the stability of ratings over time and the consistency of ratings among judges appears to be quite high, and thus these data lend support to the reliability of the instrument.

The validity of the RRS was determined by comparing scores on the different categories with scores from standardised tests of intelligence, achievement and creativity. The Intellectual and Task Commitment categories correlate fairly well with traditional IQ measures (.61 and .50; $p < .01$) respectively. The Creativity category correlated favourably with verbal subtest scores (.48; $p < .01$). However, a low non-

significant relationship was found between the Creativity category and non-verbal subtest scores (.24; $p > .05$), suggesting that caution should be exercised in using this category to identify pupils for programmes that emphasise non-verbal creativity.

4.3.2 THE JUNIOR SOUTH AFRICAN INDIVIDUAL SCALE (JSAIS)

The Junior South African Individual Scale (JSAIS) was constructed in 1981 and standardised on "White" 3 to 8 year-olds by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC). In 1983 it was standardised for "Indian" South Africans. The population from which the sample was taken was defined as all the six, seven and eight year old Indian pupils from grade 1 to standard 2 who attended a school in the RSA during 1983.

The complete scale consists of 22 verbal and non-verbal subtests structured along the lines of traditional standardised tests of intelligence.

Reliability coefficients for each subtest were calculated according to Mosier's formula and ranged from ($r = 0.77$ to $r = 0.972$). Construct validity ($r = .47$ to $r = .82$; $p < .01$); Concurrent validity ($r = .47$ to $r = .55$; $p < .01$) and Predictive Validity ($r = .47$ to $r = .65$; $p < .01$) was also established for each subtest.

4.4 RESULTS

Table 2 reflects the correlations obtained between the subscale scores of the JSAIS and the category scores of the RRS.

TABLE 2

CORRELATIONS AMONG THE SUBSCALE SCORES OF THE JSAIS AND THE CATEGORY SCORES OF THE RRS.

	RRS CATEGORIES			
	INT	CRE	TAS	TOT
RRS				
INTELLECTUAL	-	.82	.80	.93
CREATIVITY	.82	-	.84	.95
TASK COMMITMENT	.80	.85	-	.93
TOTAL	.93	.95	93	-
JSAIS				
GENERAL IQ (GIQ)	.70	.48	.47	.58
VERBAL IQ (VIQ)	.63	.44	.42	.53
PERFORMANCE IQ (PIQ)	.67	.41	.44	.54

CORRELATIONS AMONG JSAIS SUBSCALES

	GIQ	VIQ	PIQ
GENERAL IQ	-	.93	.91
VERBAL IQ	.93	-	.77

SAMPLE SIZE = 37

LEVEL OF CONFIDENCE = .001

KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS:

INT = INTELLECTUAL CRE = CREATIVITY

TAS = TASK COMMITMENT TOT = TOTAL

4.5 DISCUSSION

Lewin (1979, pg. 374) indicates that for a sample size of 37 the critical values of correlations needed for statistical significance is .55 at a .001 level of confidence and .44 at a .01 level of confidence).

The correlations between JSAIS General IQ scores and the Intellectual category on the Renzulli Scale was strong ($r = .70$; $p < .001$). The correlation between JSAIS General IQ scores and the Creativity and Task Commitment categories of the RRS were moderate ($r = .48$ and .47 respectively; $p < .01$). The correlations between the categories of the RRS were very high ($r = .80$ to .95; $p < .001$).

The strong correlation between JSAIS scores and the Intellectual category on the RRS suggests that the Renzulli Scale could be used as a substitute for the JSAIS in the identification of pupils for inclusion in a programme for giftedness. The high correlations between the Intellectual, Creativity, and Task Commitment categories on the RRS lend credence to the interactional definition of giftedness and suggests that the RRS could be a superior assessment instrument than the JSAIS in terms of this interactional definition. However, it needs to be borne in mind that rating scales are subject to limitations that arise from a halo effect. The high correlations among the categories on the RRS therefore raises the possibility of a halo effect operating among the raters. Thus a pupil seen as superior on one category could be seen as superior across all the categories.

5. THE STUDY

5.1 RATIONALE AND AIMS

The prevailing attitude towards identification of children for the current Pilot Enrichment programme reflects the belief that identification and assessment procedures should promote the inclusion of pupils by creating conditions that are not restrictive in nature. Such a stance toward identification appears especially relevant when one is working with children still in their formative years i.e. who are still developing their talents.

The extension of enrichment programmes to all "Indian" schools in the Transvaal is seriously hampered by the inability of Psychological Services in the House of Delegates to adopt a comprehensive, multiple criterion approach to assessment. Any approach that requires formal, standardised testing measures is not viable because of the lack of trained personnel.

Teacher prediction of academic performance, especially when related to the extreme upper and lower levels, has been established as accurate and valid, (Hagen, 1980; Renzulli and Smith, 1977; Gear, 1975; Denton and Postlethwaite, 1983). In an attempt to minimise the use of formal assessment measures it was postulated that the RRS as well as teacher nominations could be used to identify pupils for inclusion in enrichment programmes.

If teachers are able to make valid nominations they could facilitate the selection of appropriate pupils and promote the extension of enrichment programmes.

This study seeks to establish if there is a significant correlation between teacher nominations and scores on the RRS and thus to assess the validity of teacher nomination as a means of selecting pupils for inclusion in enrichment programmes.

5.2 METHOD

5.2.1 SUBJECTS AND SAMPLING

Subjects were drawn from Grade 2 and Standard 1 pupils in the Laudium area, attending five primary schools under the control of the Administration: House of Delegates, Department of Education and Culture.

The total population consisted of 465 grade 2 pupils and 377 standard one pupils. These pupils were spread over 15 grade 2 classes, and 13 Standard 1 classes. A random sample of 5 pupils per class was drawn, giving a total sample size of 140 pupils. Table 3 reflects the breakdown of pupils for the sample used in this study.

TABLE 3

TOTAL POPULATION OF PUPILS IN GRADE 2 & STANDARD 1 IN LAUDIUM AND NUMBER OF PUPILS SELECTED FOR SAMPLE.

GRADE/STD	TOTAL NO OF PUPILS	NO IN SAMPLE	% IN SAMPLE
GRADE 2	465	75	16.1%
STD 1	377	65	17.2%
TOTALS	842	140	16.6%

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Name of thesis The validity of teacher nomination of pupils for inclusion in a gifted programme in Índian' Schools 1990

PUBLISHER:
University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg
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