

To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Sara S. Baker entitled "English Education for High-Ability Students in the Association of Christian Schools, International." I have examined the final copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science, with a major in Curriculum and Instruction.

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ENGLISH EDUCATION FOR HIGH-ABILITY STUDENTS
IN THE ASSOCIATION OF CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS,
INTERNATIONAL

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Degree
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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the Honors and Advanced Placement students at the Christian Academy of Knoxville with the hope that my work on this project will help me better meet their needs.

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ABSTRACT

While much has been written on appropriate education for the gifted, small Christian schools have few resources that discuss education for the gifted in their special environments. This project was designed to assess the state of high-ability English education in high schools involved in the Association of Christian Schools, International, and to use the literature on gifted education to discuss the findings.

It was found that 44% of the schools surveyed offered special programs for students with high ability in English, and another 44% planned to offer such programs as the necessary resources became available. These programs were offered mainly to students with previous academic success as evidenced in their grades and by their teachers' recommendations. Of the special programs in place during the survey year, 60% were honors classes, while of the projected programs, 60% were Advanced Placement. Other options in use or projected were accelerated classes, gifted classes, and college courses during high school.

Instructional methods in the high-ability classes emphasized traditional techniques such as lecture, whole class and small group discussions, films and

videos, oral question and answer, and individual or group written work and projects. Rarely used were computer-assisted instruction or games.

Evaluation methods were correspondingly traditional, with classroom tests and assignments being the most commonly used methods. Other methods used were observation, standardized tests, and student or parent surveys.

In rating the effectiveness of their high-ability classes, six of seven responding teachers rated their classes as very effective based on completion of course objectives. The remaining teacher cited specific causes for her dissatisfaction with her course, causes which were similar to approaches that other teachers had tried in the past and had found ineffective. That teacher planned to change her high-ability course to an approach very similar to other effective classes.

In analyzing the high-ability classes in light of the literature on gifted education, the researcher determined that the ACSI classes were primarily directed at providing more challenging academic work for students demonstrating high academic abilities already. The selection criteria, instructional methods, and evaluation criteria reflect this emphasis on academic success.

Several suggestions for ACSI teachers beginning high-ability programs were drawn from the information gathered. In particular, respondents agreed that a structure using a whole class of high-ability students worked best and that the motivational abilities and teaching methods of the instructor were especially important in the success of the class. In the students themselves, motivation, attitude, and academic ability were seen as highly important.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Introduction to the Problem

Throughout recorded history, societies have recognized the existence of people with superior abilities and have tried to cultivate those abilities for the good of the group. Sparta cultivated military skills and leadership; Greece valued persuasive and logical thinking and speaking, while Rome did the same for architecture, engineering, law, and administration (Davis and Rimm, 1989). Somewhat later, during the Renaissance, artistic abilities were most highly valued by some, while philosophical, administrative, or financial abilities were valued by other groups. In more primitive societies, on the other hand, hunting and fighting skills were most important. Each society values most highly the abilities it needs most for survival and growth.

Modern America is no different in this respect. Today Americans recognize the existence of superior abilities and understand that the nation as a whole benefits when these abilities are used for the good of society. They also recognize the right of each individual to receive the kind of training that best

develops his or her unique pattern of abilities. Because life in the twentieth century has become so complex and diverse, however, Americans often disagree on what abilities contribute most to national or individual well-being and on how such abilities can be nurtured and developed. To complicate the issue, the idea of special treatment for a superior group seems antithetical to a democratic society even while the special opportunities may be necessary for that society's survival and growth.

The current interest in appropriate education for those with superior abilities was sparked by a combination of people and events in the mid-1900's. The Soviet launching of Sputnik in 1957, in particular, triggered much criticism of American education, especially the lack of special programs for the scientifically gifted.

The resulting focus on appropriate and effective education of students with high abilities produced many theoretical studies and practical programs in a burst of enthusiasm and government funding that prevailed for the next five or ten years. By the mid-1960's, however, interest in, and support for, education of the gifted had waned, being supplanted by concern for civil rights and controversy over the VietNam War. Not until the mid-1970's, when desegregation of schools and

special programs had been accomplished--in law and in form, if not in substance--and when anti-war protests no longer occupied the energies of those in higher education, did special education for the gifted re-emerge as a priority.

Since that time, education of special populations in schools has been the focus of much research and the recipient of many federal funds. While special education initially focussed on the handicapped and learning disabled, the proponents of education for the gifted succeeded in attaching their cause to that of the disabled learner, thereby allaying some of the negative reactions to gifted education as elitist and establishing it as a basic right for gifted students.

At this time, each of the 50 states has an official definition of giftedness, and most mandate that special services be available for those classified as gifted (Davis and Rimm, 1989). Educators, parents, and psychologists have formed groups to study the gifted and their education, journals devoted to studying the gifted have sprung up, and pilot projects have shown success in helping the gifted achieve their potential.

All of these advances, however, will always be subject to fluctuations in four contributing factors: the availability of funds, a felt-need for brain power,

the current popular values in education, and the balance between elitism and egalitarianism (Greenlaw and McIntosh, 1988). In schools where money is scarce, gifted education is unavailable. During times when exceptional abilities are not seen as essential, or in environments where they may even be threatening, gifted education suffers. When educators embrace theories that deny the need for special education for the gifted, such education will, of course, not be offered. And when the equality of individuals takes precedence over their uniqueness, special programs decline. Because of variations in these factors, education of the gifted varies from school to school, region to region, and year to year.

In Christian schools, the climate for gifted education is affected by spiritual factors as well as these practical and philosophical factors. Biblical principles tend to support each individual's need to develop and use the unique combination of gifts he or she has been given. This support can be seen in both the Old Testament and the New: during the building of the Tabernacle and later the Temple, those with special artistic gifts were singled out for special positions and jobs, while in the New Testament church the Christians were often admonished to use their gifts appropriately. Neither of these groups of passages

deals specifically with training in the use of special gifts, but the need for special training is implicit in the responsibility for special use.

Not all Christian educators, however, agree on the form this training should take. Some, still influenced by the anti-intellectualism of the fundamentalist movement in the early 1900's, see a need only for intense spiritual training. Others see a need to train gifted young people in all areas to prepare them for leadership roles where they may be able to influence the course of politics, technology, culture, the arts, or business. Most Christian school educators, however, are committed to providing the best possible education for their students so that attendance at a Christian school will not penalize their students academically or professionally.

B. Statement of the Problem

This study was designed to assess the state of gifted education in high schools affiliated with the Association of Christian Schools, International (ACSI). Because ACSI schools share a specific philosophy of education and similar student, faculty, and administrative environments, they may share a particular combination of the four factors influencing education of the gifted. This unique combination of

factors may in turn produce a characteristic approach to gifted education in ACSI schools.

This study was also designed to use the literature available on gifted education and the experiences of teachers in other ACSI schools to make recommendations to teachers and administrators planning to begin some kind of special program for high ability students in ACSI schools.

Specifically, this thesis was designed to answer the following research questions:

Question 1: What are selected ACSI schools in the

Northeast, Southeast, Southcentral, and Mid-America Regions doing to achieve education of students with exceptional abilities in high-school English? This question dealt with the following specific areas:

- a. What percentage of schools in these regions offer special opportunities to these students?
- b. What types of special opportunities do these schools offer?
- c. What selection criteria and procedures are used to identify students for the programs?
- d. What percentage of students in each school participates in a special program?
- e. What instructional methods and classroom strategies do teachers in these programs use?

- f. How are these programs evaluated?
- g. What has been the success of these programs as evidenced by completion of their objectives?

Question 2: How do these programs offered by ACSI schools relate to the literature available on education of the gifted? This question dealt with the following specific areas:

- a. In what ways do the ACSI schools' programs reflect the major theoretical models for gifted education?
- b. In what ways do the ACSI schools' programs reflect recommended procedures for planning and implementation of gifted programs?
- c. How does the identification of students for special programs in ACSI schools relate to accepted definitions of giftedness?
- d. How do the evaluation procedures in ACSI schools' programs compare with suggested evaluation procedures in related literature?

Question 3: What insight into planning and implementing a special program for gifted and talented students can personnel in an ACSI school gain from other ACSI schools and from related literature?

C. Need for the Study

While much has been written on appropriate education for the gifted and on pilot projects and programs in large public school districts, little information is available on the state of education of the gifted in small private schools. Because federal and state requirements for special education do not apply to private schools, these schools are not required to report the existence of, and participation in, special programs. Nevertheless, these schools often do offer special programs for their exceptional students, using the resources they have to meet the needs that exist. Because these special programs exist but remain largely unreported, no one can accurately describe or make recommendations for the state of education for the gifted in small private schools. In addition, personnel in other small private schools cannot easily learn from the experiences of those who have tried special programs and have found approaches that work.

A study of educational programs is particularly lacking for schools in the Association of Christian Schools, International (ACSI) and other religious school organizations. Because these schools exist for the primary purpose of providing education from a

uniquely Christian perspective, the literature produced by ACSI members and publications deals mostly with the very real and important spiritual issues confronting member schools. Educational issues tend to take second or third place, based on the assumption they are dealt with adequately in secular publications.

Currently, however, many ACSI schools are well established enough, and have dealt thoroughly enough with the spiritual issues, to have developed effective, workable programs for the exceptional students in their communities. Other ACSI schools are growing and are beginning to plan special programs that they can implement as soon as they have enough money, students, teachers, and facilities to make such programs possible.

Both of these groups of schools, those that offer special programs and those that plan to offer programs, can benefit from a study of established programs for high-ability students in ACSI schools. The first group can benefit by seeing their own programs in the context of other programs in similar schools and in the context of literature and research on education of the gifted. They can recognize what they are doing well and can see other options for areas in which they are still struggling. The second group, the schools with a need for special programs in the foreseeable future, can

benefit from the experiences of their counterparts and from the information available in the literature.

Personnel in these schools can avoid mistakes that have been made in other schools and can implement procedures whose usefulness has been established by experience.

This study is necessary, then, for the following reasons:

1. to describe to the ACSI community what is currently being done in the area of education for the gifted in member schools;

2. to allow ACSI school administrators and teachers to see what has worked and what has not worked in other ACSI schools;

3. to summarize information in published literature relevant to education of the gifted in small schools;

4. to make recommendations to ACSI schools planning for education for the gifted; and

5. to describe, for those who train teachers, effective programs for high-ability students in small schools.

The need for this study, then, is a need to describe and to summarize information, not a need to evaluate or criticize programs. Simply because the programs described here have been unreported and unexamined previously does not mean that they have been

ineffective or inappropriate. This study is not intended to be a criticism of existing ACSI programs; rather, it is intended to be a study of existing programs for the benefit of those involved in the programs, those who would like to begin similar programs, and those who train teachers who may later be involved in such programs.

D. Delimitations of the Study

This study was limited to selected member-schools in the Association of Christian Schools, International, and was further limited to schools in the four regions closest to Tennessee.

In addition, the study was limited to schools of intermediate size because size affects many aspects of a school's programs. Large private schools have many of the resources of public schools and so would not benefit from the focus on programs feasible in smaller schools, while very small schools generally are concerned with other aspects of growth before they become interested in special programs for the gifted.

The survey itself was limited to programs for students with exceptional abilities in English because of this writer's involvement in developing an honors and later an Advanced Placement program in English.

In the survey and application of literature, this study was limited to areas directly related to planning and implementing programs for high-ability students in intermediate-sized schools. Research on giftedness itself was outside the scope of the study, as were studies of gifted programs in large school districts. The study of literature did include information on theoretical models for education of the gifted, homogeneous versus heterogeneous grouping, guidelines for planning and implementing special programs, curricula for special programs in English, and existing programs and recommendations for programs in small schools.

E. Assumptions and Limitations

A few assumptions and limitations affect any study based on voluntary responses to mailed questionnaires. The researcher must assume that the questionnaires are completed with reasonable care and truthfulness. The amount of detail available through a questionnaire is necessarily limited because increasing the complexity and length of a questionnaire reduces the response rate dramatically.

The study is also limited to those who responded, leaving some question about the validity of percentages extracted from the responses. Administrators in

schools without special programs for high-ability students may not have responded either because they thought their answers would not be relevant or because they did not want to go on record as not having a program. On the other hand, administrators of schools having special programs may not have responded because they lacked the time to answer the questions about their programs or because they were reluctant to have an outsider examine their programs.

The effectiveness ratings reported in this study are limited by the fact that they are self-ratings. Were the courses rated by someone other than the teachers of the courses, the ratings might have been lower.

The survey of literature was limited by two factors: the focus of much of the literature on elementary programs and on large schools with well-funded programs.

F. Definition of Terms

Authors writing on education for the gifted use many terms with widely varying definitions. In fact, the confusion in terminology is so extreme that an entire book has been published consisting solely of definitions and explanations of terms in hope of

encouraging a more consistent use of terminology in future literature (Jellen and Verduin, 1986).

In this study, the following terms have been used as described below. This usage is consistent with much of the literature available, although, as noted above, the literature itself is not consistent.

Gifted

Although there are many helpful and insightful definitions of giftedness, the most appropriate for this study is the one formulated by the U.S. Office of Education in 1972:

Gifted and talented children are those identified by professionally qualified persons who by virtue of outstanding abilities are capable of high performance. These are children who require differentiated educational programs and services beyond those normally provided by the regular school program in order to realize their contribution to self and society. Children capable of high performance include those with demonstrated achievement and/or potential ability in any of the following areas, singly or in combination.

1. General intellectual ability
2. Specific academic aptitude
3. Creative or productive thinking
4. Leadership ability
5. Visual and performing arts
6. Psychomotor ability (Maker, 1982a, pp. 140, 143.)

When the term gifted has been used here, it refers to students formally identified as gifted or to programs formally designated for those identified as such.

Gifted Education

This author is well aware that gifted education is not a grammatically correct way of referring to education of the gifted. However, because of its economy of expression, this usage has become idiomatic to the literature on education of the gifted and will be used in this paper. Likewise, gifted program or gifted class will be used, as will similar phrases using the labels talented and high-ability.

Talented

This term is perhaps the most inconsistently used in the literature, and, therefore, will be avoided in this paper.

High-ability

This term is not used extensively in the literature on gifted education, there being no general agreement on what to call a good student who may or may not be formally identified as gifted. Some authors use exceptional, some use academically talented, some use academically able. In this paper, a high-ability student is one who consistently performs well in a particular area and so appears to be capable of advanced work in that area. Because many of the

schools in the population studied here do not use formal identification instruments in selecting students for their advanced classes, a general term like high-ability is a more appropriate label than gifted.

Enrichment

This term refers to one method for offering advanced work to high-ability students. Enrichment involves a broader or deeper investigation of material than is usually presented in the student's grade level.

Acceleration

This term refers to the other major method for offering advanced work to high-ability students. Acceleration involves moving a student through the work for his/her grade level more quickly than usual and then allowing that student to progress to subjects normally covered in higher grade levels.

Pull-out Program

This term refers to a program structure that allows the high-ability student to remain in his/her regular classroom for some part of the school day and then to attend some other type of program for the rest of the day. Pull-out programs vary widely in the amount of time spent in the regular classroom.

Cluster Group

This term refers to a program structure in which a group of high-ability students is deliberately placed together in a regular class and is sometimes grouped to work on advanced material in the classroom while their classmates work on the regular curriculum.

Homogeneous Grouping

This term refers to a class in which students have been placed because they all have abilities within a certain narrow range.

Heterogeneous Grouping

This term refers to a class in which students have been randomly placed or in which students have been placed with a deliberately selected wide range of abilities.

G. Overview of Presentation

Chapter I of this study serves as an introduction to the ideas, terms, and structure of the project. In this chapter the area of gifted education is surveyed and the specific need for this study is explained.

Chapter II is a review of literature related to the topic of the study. In this chapter is a summary

of the historical literature on the subject of giftedness and gifted education, followed by a section on current issues in gifted education. The last, and longest, section of the chapter deals with the literature on specific related topics, such as planning and implementing programs and curricula for special programs in English.

Chapter III outlines the procedures of the surveys completed for this study, including the sample, instruments, procedures, and results. The three surveys used are described and the timetable for their use is discussed.

Chapter IV presents an analysis and discussion of the data accumulated from the surveys. The data are presented and are then discussed in light of the related literature. Finally, the data are discussed in application to other ACSI schools.

Chapter V concludes the study, summarizing the major ideas, drawing conclusions that answer the research questions in Chapter I, and making recommendations for further study.

Four appendices include the surveys, the responses to the surveys, and a list of schools surveyed.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A. Historical Survey

Today's programs for gifted or high-ability education grew out of an interest in gifted education that had begun before the Soviet launching of Sputnik initiated a surge of interest in that area. Researchers were already investigating the nature of intelligence, objective measurements of intelligence, and long-term studies of education for gifted students (Davis and Rimm, 1989). But extensive study of gifted education did not begin until the late 1950's, when many books and articles severely criticized America's education of her most able students. At that time, educators raised the question of whether differentiated educational experiences benefited gifted students, and if they did, what differences in education these gifted students needed (Maker, 1986). In addition, several studies focussed on the characteristics and identification of gifted students, on their special needs, and on appropriate techniques for parenting, teaching, and counseling gifted children (Davis and Rimm, 1989). These studies prepared the way for

special programs in many schools for high-ability or gifted students.

However, interest in gifted education flagged during the mid- to late-1960's when the civil rights movement focussed attention on equal opportunities for all students rather than special opportunities for a few students. Some schools with existing programs maintained those programs, while others replaced them with special opportunities for minority students or with special-interest electives. No new ideas or programs for gifted education were promoted during that decade. The mid-1970's showed a resurgence of attention to gifted education which has remained strong, in varying degrees, until today.

B. Types of Literature

Recent literature on gifted education covers many topics, only some of which are relevant to this study. Unfortunately for the secondary teacher, only 12% of the research on gifted education programs deals with secondary education, and very little of that is of direct value to the classroom teacher (Rogers, 1988).

Nature of Giftedness

One area of importance receiving much attention is the nature of giftedness, with authors adding new

findings from more recent studies to what was already known. Gullford's Structure of the Intellect model, especially, has provided a springboard for new definitions of giftedness by suggesting many other abilities than the traditional use of IQ alone. New aspects of giftedness include spatial awareness, leadership abilities, and creativity, among many others. Most definitions of giftedness include the three major areas of talent, creativity, and aptitude (Sellin and Burch, 1981). Many states or school districts define giftedness, and the U.S. Office of Education has its definition of giftedness (Maker, 1982a, p. 143). In addition, many pilot projects begin with a definition of giftedness (Loftus, 1980). All the definitions include aspects of academic ability, creativity, and the ability to accomplish tasks.

Despite, or perhaps because of, these complex and detailed definitions of giftedness, educators still do not wholly agree on the characteristics of the gifted student or on appropriate, fair, and objective ways to identify such students. Most writers who discuss gifted programs begin with a discussion of identification procedures. These generally include intelligence tests, creativity tests, and formal or informal observation (for examples, see Davis and Rimm, 1989; Tuttle and Becker, 1983; and West, 1980).

Researchers place special emphasis on finding identification procedures that identify appropriate proportions of minority and disadvantaged students as gifted, although culturally biased procedures are still evident in many places (McKenzie, 1986). Perhaps because of the remaining, even if unintentional, bias, several authors have studied giftedness in special populations, including girls, learning disabled students, minorities, and rural students.

Homogeneous and Heterogeneous Grouping

Another area receiving much attention has been the issue of homogeneous versus heterogeneous grouping of students. Many researchers have studied different uses of homogeneous and heterogeneous grouping and have produced largely inconclusive and conflicting results (Cheney and Beebe, 1986). However, in their meta-analysis of all the available studies on this issue, Kulik and Kulik (1982) are able to draw some conclusions about ability grouping. Although using ability to track general and low-ability students produces no significant difference in performance or self-concept when compared with non-tracked students, high-ability students grouped homogeneously significantly outperform their peers in heterogeneous classes. Butler (1987) also shows a significant

improvement in reading comprehension in all ability levels when students are grouped homogeneously, although performance in other areas is unaffected.

Development of Programs

Much of the most recent literature on gifted education deals with the development of gifted programs in the local school, including curriculum planning, teacher selection, student identification, program implementation, and evaluation. Both Davis and Rimm (1989) and Greenlaw and McIntosh (1988) offer a comprehensive discussion of gifted education, with Greenlaw and McIntosh including an annotated bibliography at the end of each chapter. Tuttle and Becker (1983) deal with the practical side of designing a gifted/talented program in a local school, while Karnes and Collins (1980) discuss many of the commercial materials available for gifted education. Parke (1989) thoroughly discusses gifted programs for students in the regular classroom. These sources are generally based on the findings of researchers and the results of gifted programs over the last fifteen years, making these findings accessible to the classroom teacher or school administrator in a practical and useful form.

Description of Programs

In addition to literature on the development of programs, several studies of programs that are in place are available. Linda Loftus (1980) describes a system called "The Turnstile" for individualized instruction, including charts showing responsibilities, flowcharts of activities, reporting forms, and schedules. Clarke and Nyberg (1984) describe and evaluate the gifted education program in six Edmonton (Canada) Catholic schools. LaRose (1986) examines the effects of the Lighthouse program in which cluster-grouping of gifted students in a regular classroom is most effective. Crealock (1986) analyzes the implementation of a special education program (including gifted education) over a three-year period.

Teacher Selection and Training

Besides how-to articles, recent literature on gifted education also includes studies of teachers, with teacher training, teacher attitudes, and teacher behavior among the most common topics. Gail Hanninen (1985) finds that teachers with specialized training in gifted education do respond to real-life situations involving gifted students differently than teachers without such training. Specially trained teachers

offer more specific, more organizationally-oriented, more strategy-oriented, and more wide-ranging responses to classroom scenarios than teachers without such training. Tomlinson (1986) studies gifted education in-service training itself, finding that long term training (several sessions spanning a semester or year) is more effective than short term (one session) and that participants most value hands-on and group participation training in groups divided by grade level and subject area. Gross and Dobbs (1987) present findings from all fifty states to show trends in preparing teachers for gifted education. They find that the major concerns of in-service programs are (a) an understanding of the needs of the gifted student, (b) an application of instructional models in the classroom, and (c) an approach to modifying or designing curricula for use with gifted students. Anderson and Kleinsasser (1986) discuss the beliefs and attitudes of educators toward gifted education in small rural schools. They find that most educators are generally aware of the nature and needs of gifted students but lack specific knowledge of instructional practices or curriculum models. These studies all suggest that teachers do need specialized training to prepare them to teach gifted students and that the

training needs to emphasize classroom strategies and curriculum.

Still dealing with teachers, Peters (1985) studies effective teachers' intellectual dispositions and classroom strategies. He finds that teachers with a high complexity intellectual disposition (a) are more effective than low complexity teachers in teaching students to interpret literature, (b) move students into higher levels of cognition than low complexity teachers do, and (c) use more varied teaching methods during the course of a semester than other teachers. This study suggests that teacher selection, as well as teacher training, contributes to an effective program.

Program Evaluation

One final topic in gifted education is just beginning to become common in the literature: evaluation of gifted education programs. Theoretical models and practical programs for gifted students proliferated long before serious attempts were made to find objective, verifiable ways to evaluate them, but now that many programs are well established, evaluation is becoming paramount. Schools, school systems, and state governments are spending much money on gifted programs; common sense demands that the money be spent on proven, effective programs rather than on untested

innovations. In addition, teachers and administrators initiating programs must know which ones have worked in environments similar to theirs if they are to make best use of their time and effort in beginning their programs. Further, teacher training institutions must know which approaches work in various situations in order to teach potential teachers and administrators most effectively. Finally, school personnel must be able to evaluate their own programs accurately to make sure that the needs for which the programs were established are really being met.

Carter (1986) suggests a practical, validated approach to evaluating gifted programs in a variety of situations. In their evaluation of gifted programs in several Canadian schools, Clark and Nyberg (1984) model evaluation based on a program's objectives. Dickason (1984) practices a different type of evaluation by studying students' later success in college to evaluate the benefit of a high school honors program. The consensus appears to be that evaluation of a gifted program cannot rely simply on an exit test to measure student learning; there must also be observation of student behaviors, attitudes, and abilities.

Summary

Recent literature, then, covers many theoretical and practical topics related to gifted and high-ability education. Authors offer a variety of definitions of giftedness with identification procedures designed to find students with different kinds of gifts. Many educators report on methods for developing programs, grouping students in programs, and evaluating programs. Writers speak from widely varying viewpoints: some are experienced educators, some are researchers who have surveyed teachers or observed programs, some are theoreticians speaking from their understanding of the human mind.

C. Models for Gifted Education

One major area in the literature on gifted education relevant to this study is the development of theoretical models for gifted education.

VanTassel-Baska (1986) discusses three overall categories of models: content, process-product, and epistemological. Maker (1982b) deals with several different models for gifted education, describing them, discussing their characteristics in light of what is known about the educational needs of gifted students,

and making suggestions for their implementation in the classroom.

Although many models exist, they all fall into two basic categories: enrichment models and acceleration models. Initially, these two approaches to education of exceptional students were kept totally separate, with a presuppositional gulf between them that split proponents of each approach into warring camps. Now, however, educators are beginning to realize that different students prosper under different conditions and are more willing to combine elements of each approach to find a method that best suits the needs of their students (Horowitz, 1986).

Enrichment Models

Renzulli's Enrichment Triad is perhaps the best known of the enrichment models (Horowitz, 1986; Maker, 1982b). In this model, all students spend some time in the regular curriculum, mastering basic skills. All students also explore many areas of potential interest to them and master processes for learning and dealing with content. Then as a student develops the ability and motivation to pursue a topic on his/her own, that student rotates into an enrichment program in which he/she investigates the topic fully and produces some

kind of culminating product for a real audience (Maker, 1982b).

Sidney Parnes' Creative Problem Solving is another enrichment program using the regular curriculum as a springboard for further investigation in which the process is at least as important as the product, if not more so. In this model, students find problems in the material they are studying and learn problem solving techniques to resolve these problems (Maker, 1982b).

Other enrichment models focus less on process and product and more on systems of thought and knowledge. Bruner's Structure of a Discipline model, for example, uses the regular curriculum but with a very different approach to presenting the information, an approach which he sees as being especially appropriate for students gifted in a particular area of study. In his approach, to study history, for example, a student learns the tools and methods of the historian and discovers principles, concepts, and facts for himself. The teacher's role in this model is to structure the investigation to make discovery of important material likely (Maker, 1982b).

Calvin Taylor's Multiple Talent Approach, built on Gullford's Structure of the Intellect model of intelligence, recognizes the lack of consistency between success in school and success in the real

world. In his approach, skills necessary for real world success are deliberately cultivated in school, including creative talent, decision-making talent, planning talent, forecasting talent, communication talent, and thinking abilities (Maker, 1982b).

Behind all of these enrichment models is the assumption--expressed first by Piaget--that gifted students must follow the same cognitive stages as their age-mates and should not be pushed ahead of their chronological age but instead should explore in greater depth and breadth the material and skills their peers are learning more superficially.

Acceleration Models

Proponents of acceleration, on the other hand, recognize that in practice gifted students do progress through the stages of cognitive development more quickly than their age-mates and believe that appropriate structuring of their environments can compact these stages significantly. Hilda Taba's Teaching Strategies Program, for example, can be adjusted to let students progress at any pace that permits them to master the concepts (Maker, 1982b).

Donald Treffinger, responding to the despair of teachers who have tried without success to allow their gifted students to move ahead using independent

studies, offers a model for developing self-directed learning skills gradually. Beth Atwood's Building Independent Learning Skills (1974) shows how to teach Treffinger's self-directed learning skills in the classroom.

Other acceleration models are less complex, involving the familiar but sometimes disapproved practices of grade skipping, early admission (to kindergarten, middle school, high school, or college), course compacting, correspondence courses, Advanced Placement classes, and continuous progress in ungraded classrooms (Sisk, 1988).

As noted earlier, enrichment and acceleration are no longer the mutually exclusive options they once were, and school districts are beginning to combine aspects of several models to construct programs that meet the needs of their students.

D. Program Options for Gifted Education in Small Schools

Most of the pilot projects in gifted education have been carried out in large, affluent school districts or in large school districts that have received grants. But small schools also have students with high abilities and need to find effective ways to meet the needs of those students within the resources

of the school. In discussing small rural schools, Moore (1987) identifies several potential problems: location, size, resources, funding, and faculty. With the exception of location, small schools in non-rural areas are affected by these factors as well. The pool of high-ability students is proportionately smaller in a small school than a large one, as is the number of faculty members to share the added work of special programs. Libraries, laboratories, and other special resources tend to be small in a small school, and funding is a problem for all but the wealthiest schools. For these reasons, small schools can rarely offer the elaborate gifted programs required by many of the enrichment models.

Small schools do have some advantages over larger schools, however. Bull (1987) points out that small schools often have smaller classes with greater flexibility and greater student-teacher interaction than large schools. In a small school, each student is more vital to the group, and the school itself tends to be more important to the parents and/or the community than large schools are.

Several writers have suggested appropriate techniques for gifted education in small schools, techniques that maximize the advantages of their size while minimizing the disadvantages. Clasen (1987)

recommends a combination of continuous progress, program modifications within regular classes, curriculum compacting, instructional strategies modifications, acceleration, and enrichment for gifted education in small schools. Moore (1987) suggests acceleration, independent study, mentoring, and seminars.

One overwhelming consensus in the literature on gifted education in small schools is that acceleration is effective, inexpensive, and unfairly maligned as a gifted education option (Howley, 1987; Sisk, 1988; Southern, 1988; and others). Luhman (1988) recommends college studies during high school because this opportunity offers able students a wider range of course offerings pursued at greater depth and breadth than high school classes while still allowing the student to participate with his/her peers in high school activities. Karnes and Chauvin (1982) studied early admission policies at private and public colleges and universities and found that 77-80% offer this option. The SMPY (Study of Mathematically Precocious Youth) at Johns Hopkins University has had outstanding success offering accelerated opportunities in mathematics (Sisk, 1988). Its background information asserts that no properly done acceleration program has been detrimental to students. Other research supports

this contention, and adds further that acceleration maintains a gifted student's strong abilities and performance, diminishes boredom, and enables gifted individuals to go further and become productive sooner than those who are not accelerated (Sisk, 1988).

Howley (1987) suggests that acceleration has fallen into disfavor because of misuse during the Depression when students simply wanted to finish school more quickly than usual and emphasizes that an effective acceleration program must be well administered. Sisk (1988) adds that three factors make an acceleration program work: a careful diagnosis of the needs and abilities of students, a careful analysis of all the options available, and a positive attitude among all involved.

E. Curricula for Gifted Programs in Secondary English

Regardless of which program options are used in a high-ability English class, certain material must be covered if the students are to have their educational needs met. Sawyer (1988) warns of the tendency he sees to let style replace subject in gifted education. Many published materials for gifted programs, he says, teach thinking skills without giving students anything significant to think about, as in the example of an

anthropology unit studying the life and culture of gnomes. If a program is to prepare high-ability students for success in the real world, it must teach subjects and skills that are of real importance. In this context, the author recalls the resentful words of a student she was tutoring in college English. The student had been identified as especially able in high school English and so had been removed from the regular classroom to do special projects. She arrived at college never having written an essay or paper of any kind--those were part of the regular curriculum, which she was "too smart" to need.

Daniels, Affholder, and Sims (1984) identify basic competencies that should be mastered by gifted and talented students, grade by grade. From a survey of 600 administrators and teachers they find that competencies in six main areas are most often cited as essential: creativity, affective development, academic management, research, critical thinking, and psychomotor skills. They show how these competencies can be developed throughout the curriculum, which continues to include the usual knowledge and skills like punctuation, sentence completeness, and paragraphing.

Several curriculum guides for gifted and talented programs, honors programs, A.P. programs, and general

programs are available, some from particular school districts and some, like the Parkland Curriculum Guide (1983), from ERIC or other published sources. Abbott, Catz, and Ford (1977) describe three thematic units for a gifted and talented humanities program. They include classroom procedures, readings, and media for use with these units.

Reynolds, Kopelke, and Durden (1984), working with a Johns Hopkins University project, outline writing instruction for verbally talented youth. Because of the Johns Hopkins success with SMPY, their newer writing program merits attention. Kitano and Kirby (1986) describe a unit approach for teaching gifted students. In this approach, content is primary, with mastery of complex thinking skills occurring as an adjunct to the content. NEA's Teaching the Gifted and Talented in the Content Areas series includes a volume on English, as well (West, 1980).

Much of the literature on curriculum for high-ability classes emphasizes the use of goals and objectives for the students, with all curriculum planning growing out of these goals and objectives. Seen in this light, curriculum planning for high-ability classes is no different from planning for any other kind of class--the teacher must know what

he/she expects the students to be and do by the end of the class and then plans accordingly.

The literature most relevant to this study, then, includes information on planning, organizing, and implementing a program for high-ability students, models for gifted education, program options for gifted education in small schools, and curricula for gifted education in secondary English. Except for the models for gifted education, most of the literature in this area is based on the authors' experiences in the classroom or on surveys of existing gifted programs. The literature in these areas is used later in this study to answer the various sections of research question two.

CHAPTER III

PROCEDURES OF THE STUDY

A. Sample

This study was designed to discover, describe, and discuss English programs for high-ability students in schools associated with the Association of Christian Schools, International (ACSI). An essential part of the study, then, was to select schools to study.

In the U.S., ACSI schools are divided into eight geographical regions. The eight regions combined contain 2,347 schools, each with some or all of pre-school through twelfth grade, serving 340,626 students. This study surveyed schools in the four easternmost regions: Southeast, Northeast, Southcentral, and Mid-America. The Southeast Region is comprised of 252 schools serving 45,222 students; the Northeast Region, of 257 schools serving 34,717 schools; the Southcentral Region, of 363 schools serving 49,570 students; and the Mid-America Region, of 385 schools serving 54,285 students. These four regions were selected because they are the four closest to Tennessee, where this author teaches in an ACSI school. Schools in neighboring regions share information and experiences through conferences and

publications; thus, neighboring regions tend to have ideas and programs in common and tend to be willing to help one another by responding to requests for information.

This study looked at schools in the middle range of student population in order to gather information that would be most relevant to schools big enough to need high-ability programs but small enough to have difficulty initiating a full-fledged gifted program. Schools were selected that had between 300 and 800 students in grades preschool-12, or that had between 100 and 300 students in grades 7-12, or that had between 75 and 200 in grades 9-12.

Of the 1257 schools in the four regions, 118 met the size criteria for this study, with 19 from the Northeast, 34 from the Southeast, 33 from the Southcentral, and 32 from the Mid-America Region having the targeted number of students enrolled. Most of the other schools in the four regions were either smaller or did not include grades 9-12. A few schools were larger than the targeted number of students. Of these 118 meeting the criteria, 51 schools were selected using a stratified random sample with the proportion of schools from each region equal to the proportion of schools from that region in the target population. Thus, the sample population included 8 schools from the

Northeast, 15 from the Southeast, and 14 each from the Southcentral and Mid-America Regions. This size sample was selected to insure sufficient responses for valid conclusions and to insure broad enough coverage that all relevant trends would be revealed. The stratified random sample was used because of the possibility of regional differences affecting the results if a purely random sample left one or more regions under-represented.

A list of schools surveyed is available in Appendix D.

B. Instruments

No appropriate published instruments were discovered to elicit the information needed. For this reason, three questionnaires were created for the study.

The first was a three-page questionnaire for administrators, asking about the existence of high-ability programs in their respective high school English departments. (See Appendix A.) This survey was designed to be answered very easily and quickly and to reveal what type of high-ability program a school had, if any, and to elicit the name and address of a teacher who could provide more detailed information. All questions were multiple choice for ease in

responding except the question asking for a name and address of a teacher.

The second was a five-page, more detailed questionnaire for English teachers of high-ability programs. (See Appendix B.) This instrument consisted of sections dealing with organization, selection of students, classroom strategies/instructional methods, evaluation procedures, and background information on the design and implementation of the program. Like the administrators' survey, many of the questions were multiple choice in this questionnaire, although some short-answer questions were necessary as well.

The third was a five-page questionnaire for teachers who had previously (on the second questionnaire) indicated a willingness to answer further questions about the goals and curricula of their high-ability programs. (See Appendix C.) This instrument contained sections on how the goals were established, evaluated, and used; how the curriculum was established, evaluated, and used; and whether any of the theoretical models for gifted education were used in planning or teaching the high-ability classes. This questionnaire was sent separately from the second one because its greater length and complexity might limit the response rate to the second questionnaire if the two were combined.

C. Procedures

Before beginning the survey part of this project, permission was obtained from the ACSI Consultant for Academic Affairs to send the questionnaires. Cover letters signed by him were also obtained for the first two questionnaires.

The questionnaire to headmasters was mailed during March of 1989.

The second questionnaire was sent to English teachers during April of 1989, and was followed by the third questionnaire to some of the same teachers in June of 1989.

D. Responses

Thirty-four of the 51 administrators responded to the first survey. The responses to each question were tabulated on a master survey. Percentages were calculated and were used to answer the research questions posed in Chapter I. Fifteen of these indicated that their schools offer some kind of program for students with high ability in English.

Fifteen of the second survey were sent to the English teachers identified on the administrator surveys, of which eight were returned. The responses were again tabulated on a master survey and percentages

were calculated. These responses were also used to answer the research questions.

Five of the eight respondents to survey two indicated a willingness to answer further questions on goals and curricula. These five received the third survey, with two responding. These two responses were used for descriptive purposes and no statistical calculations were performed on them.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

A. Introduction

In this chapter, the data gathered from the surveys are presented first. Following the presentation of the data is an analysis of the ways in which these data relate to the literature on high-ability education in small schools and a discussion of implications of the data for small Christian schools. In terms of the research questions presented in Chapter 1, section B presents findings that answer question 1; section C discusses answers to question 2; and section D answers question 3.

B. Presentation of the Data

Responses to the Surveys

Of the 51 surveys initially sent to administrators of schools, 34 were completed and returned, or 67%. Of these 34, 7 were from the Northeast region; 11, from the Southeast; 9, from the Mid-America; and 7, from the Southcentral.

The second survey was sent to the 15 schools that indicated on the first survey that they had a

high-ability English class in place. Of these, 8 were completed and returned.

The third survey was sent to the five teachers that had indicated on the second survey that they would be willing to give more information on their program's goals and/or curricula.

Percent of Schools with Special Programs

Almost all of the 34 respondents recognized a need for high-ability English classes, although not all had such classes in place. Fifteen of the 34 schools offered a high-ability English class of some kind, while 15 others planned to offer such a class in the future. Four respondents saw no need for, or were philosophically opposed to, such classes. Table 1 shows the distribution of existing and projected classes according to region.

Types of Special Programs

The 30 schools offering or projecting high-ability English classes indicated four different types of high-ability classes or indicated that their classes do not fit any of those four types. Nine schools offered honors English, the most frequent response for existing programs. Other schools offered gifted, accelerated,

Table 1
Number and Percentage of Schools with Existing or
Projected High-ability English Classes

Region	Existing Programs		Projected Need		Opposed	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Northeast	4	12	2	6	1	3
Southeast	6	18	4	12	1	3
Mid-America	2	6	6	18	1	3
Southcentral	3	9	3	9	1	3
TOTAL	15	44	15	44	4	12

Note. The percentages are drawn from all the responses.

advanced placement, or other high-ability programs. Of the schools projecting high-ability classes in the future, on the other hand, the greatest number of responses identified advanced placement, with nine schools projecting this option. Five schools projected honors classes, with others identifying gifted, accelerated, or other types.

Tables 2 and 3 show the number of schools with each type of existing or projected program.

Table 2
Types of Existing Programs in Each Region

Region	Gifted	Honors	Accelerated	A.P.	Other
Northeast	0	2	1	1	0
Southeast	0	5	0	1	0
Mid-America	0	0	1	0	1
Southcentral	1	2	1	0	0
Total	1	9	3	2	1

Note. A.P. means an Advanced Placement program that uses the ETC advanced placement test for college credit.

Table 3
Types of Projected Programs in Each Region

Region	Gifted	Honors	Accelerated	A.P.	Other
Northeast	0	0	1	1	0
Southeast	0	3	0	3	0
Mid-America	1	1	0	4	1
Southcentral	0	1	2	1	0
Total	1	5	3	9	1

Note. A.P. means an Advanced Placement program that uses the ETC advanced placement test for college credit.

Planning and Implementation of Special Programs

In all of the responding schools, these high-ability classes were planned and implemented by the classroom teacher or department head, sometimes in conjunction with an administrator. Eleven of the programs were planned and implemented by the classroom teacher; four, by a department head (who may also be a classroom teacher). In six of the schools, the administrator was also involved in the planning.

One of these teachers indicated that, when the planning was done, the goals were based on the observed needs of the students, on the expressed interests of the teachers and/or the students, and on the administrator's and/or teacher's assessment of what would benefit the students most. Two teachers said that their goals were then used to determine the class structure and teaching methods among other uses. Both teachers said that their goals were evaluated yearly using teacher and administrator observation.

Student Selection for Special Programs

In selecting students for these high-ability English programs, teachers and administrators depended primarily on successful classroom performance as shown

by grades and teacher recommendations. Of eight teachers responding to survey two, all eight use grades in previous English classes, six use teacher recommendation, four use standardized tests, three use parental requests, and two use student requests.

Table 4 shows the types of criteria used in selecting students for high-ability programs.

Table 4
Identification Criteria for High-ability
English Programs

Criteria	Number of schools using criteria
Grades	8
Teacher recommendation	6
Standardized test	4
Parent request	3
Student request	2

Percent of Students Participating in Special Programs

Although numbers vary, a majority of teachers (five out of eight) said that 10-20% of the students participated in high-ability programs when these classes were offered in the students' grade level. No teachers cited fewer than 10% participating, while 3 teachers cited higher levels of participation. Table 5 shows the level of participation in high-ability

classes in the eight schools whose teachers responded to survey two.

Table 5
Participation Level in High-ability
English Classes

Percent of Student Body Participating in Program	Number of Schools
0 - 10	0
11 - 20	5
21 - 30	1
31 - 40	2
over 40	0

Classroom Structures in Special Programs

As well as offering different types of high-ability classes, the schools surveyed also used different class structures. By far the most common type of class structure was a separate class for the high-ability students. Twelve of the 15 schools with existing programs used this structure, while 13 of those projecting programs planned to use a separate class. A few schools used methods that left the high-ability students in the general classroom part or all of the time but offered the students advanced work. Two schools indicated that they used cluster-grouping,

a structure in which a few high-ability students are grouped in a general classroom, but teachers in both schools said that they preferred not to use this method because it had not worked well for them. One teacher indicated that he/she used a pull-out structure, but this was actually a situation in which the student took a college class during released time from school. One other school used independent study for one or two high-ability students in a grade.

Tables 6 and 7 show the number of schools using or projecting each of five categories of class structures for their high-ability programs.

Teaching Methods in Special Programs

As well as offering a variety of class types and structures, high-ability programs in surveyed schools also offered a variety of teaching methods. In general, the preferred methods were traditional instructional methods used in general classrooms: lecture, films and videos, discussion, oral question and answer, and individual written work. Seven of the eight respondents to survey two cited the aforementioned methods, while the eighth did not answer the question because her school's program is one in which capable students attend college classes during

Table 6
Class Structures Used in High-ability
English Classes

Region	Class	Cluster	Ind. Study	Pull Out
Northeast	4	0	0	0
Southeast	5	1	0	0
Mid-America	1	0	0	1
Southcentral	2	1	1	0
TOTAL	12	2	1	1

Table 7
Class Structures Projected for High-ability
English Classes

Region	Class	Cluster	Ind. Study	Pull Out
Northeast	2	0	0	0
Southeast	4	0	2	0
Mid-America	6	1	0	1
Southcentral	1	0	0	0
TOTAL	13	1	2	1

high school. Close behind those five teaching methods were individual self-paced projects in six schools, and small group discussions and projects with five schools each. Rarely used were computer-assisted instruction and games, with two respondents identifying each of those. Table 8 shows the number of responding schools using each teaching method.

Table 8
Number of Schools Using Teaching Methods

Teaching Method	Respondents
Lecture	7
Films/Videos	7
Whole class discussion	7
Oral question and answer	7
Individual written work	7
Individual self-paced project	6
Small group discussion	5
Small group self-paced projects	5
Computer-assisted instruction	2
Games	2

Evaluation Methods for Special Programs

Like the teaching methods, the evaluation methods used by the surveyed programs are traditional methods used in general classrooms, although observation also was cited frequently. Most frequently cited evaluation

methods were classroom tests, with seven respondents; classroom assignments, with six respondents; and teacher observation, with five respondents. Less frequently used evaluation methods included standardized tests and administrator observation, with three respondents each; student survey, with two respondents; and parent survey, with one respondent. Table 9 summarizes these findings.

Table 9
Evaluation Methods Used in High-ability
English Classes

Evaluation Method	Respondents
Classroom tests	7
Classroom assignments	6
Teacher observation	5
Standardized tests (A.P. or other)	3
Administrator observation	3
Student survey	2
Parent survey	1

Success of Special Programs

Teachers were asked to rate, using the evaluation methods they cited, the effectiveness of their high-ability programs in meeting the goals or objectives set for the programs. They indicated the effectiveness of their programs on a scale of 1 to 5,

with 1 being ineffective and 5 being very effective. All but one teacher indicated an effectiveness of 4 or 5. The one teacher rating her program as a 2 said that she had been using a cluster-grouped honors program that did not work with the students she had selected for the program. That program has since been changed to a separate class, advanced placement program that has been much more effective than the cluster group had been.

Table 10 shows the effectiveness rating, on a scale of 1-5, of seven responding schools.

Table 10	
Effectiveness of High-ability English programs	
Effectiveness Rating	Respondents
1	0
2	1
3	0
4	5
5	1

Teachers cited several reasons for the overall effectiveness of their classes. Primary among these were teacher and student qualities. Six teachers cited

teaching methods and motivational abilities as teacher qualities that contributed to success, and attitudes and motivation as student qualities contributing to success. Five teachers added students' academic ability as a factor. Four teachers cited the teacher's relationships with students, the students' creative abilities, and supplementary curricular materials, while three added the teacher's modelling of content, skills, or attitudes and the textbook as success factors. One or two teachers cited other success factors: films and videos, classroom activities, flexibility of the curriculum, students' writing ability, and students' willingness to read. Table 11 summarizes these findings.

Summary of Findings

These data indicate that administrators and teachers in most of the surveyed schools do see a need for special programs to meet the needs of their high-ability students. Most, when they have the resources, offer separate classes for these students, although some use other methods when they have too few students to make a separate class feasible. Most of the existing high ability classes are designated honors English, while most of the projected programs are advanced placement. In these classes, traditional

Table 11
Factors Contributing to the Success of
High-ability Programs

Success factor	Teachers
Teacher Qualities	
Methods	6
Motivational ability	6
Modelling of content, skills, attitudes	3
Relationships with students	4
Student Qualities	
Attitude	6
Academic ability	5
Creative ability	4
Motivation	7
Other (writing, reading)	1
Curriculum Qualities	
Textbook	3
Supplementary material	4
Activities	2
Non-textbook content (film/video)	1
Other (flexibility)	1

teaching and evaluation methods are generally used. High-ability English programs serve at least 10-20% of the students in each grade level where they are offered, with some schools reporting participation as high as 40%.

C. Discussion of Findings in Relation to Literature

Theoretical Models for Gifted Education

When gifted education first came under scrutiny, researchers concluded that gifted students need qualitatively differentiated education. This conclusion has become a basis for government funding of programs and for much evaluation of gifted programs. Educators do not necessarily agree on what qualitatively differentiated means, but they do agree that this differentiation is important.

By recognizing a need for special programs for their high-ability students, ACSI schools are concurring with this finding. They recognize that the educational experiences offered to the general student population do not meet the special needs of high-ability students. The traditional nature of the high-ability courses offered in ACSI schools, as evidenced by their traditional instruction and

evaluation methods, does call into question the differentiation of these programs; are they really qualitatively different or are they instead just quantitatively different? However, since the educational community as a whole does not agree on how to tell what is qualitatively different, this question remains moot.

Procedures for Planning and Implementing Programs

Much literature on gifted education deals with recommended procedures for planning and implementing gifted programs. These procedures vary from author to author but always include certain essential characteristics. The following steps for planning and implementation reflect information from many of the sources mentioned in the review of literature.

1. Recognize the need for a program.
2. Determine a rationale for the program.
3. Set goals.

The next few steps could happen concurrently or successively, but all authors indicate that they must be done at some point in the planning process. Decisions on how to do each of the remaining steps should be based on the goals of the program, the

available resources, and the preferences of the administrators, teachers, students, and parents.

4. Select a program structure.
5. Establish a curriculum.
6. Select and train a teacher or teachers.
7. Identify students, explain the program to them (and usually to their parents, too), and give students a chance to choose to be in the program or not.
8. Plan daily lessons and classroom activities to accomplish the goals set for the program.
9. Monitor the program during implementation and evaluate at specified points, usually year end.

The data presented in section B indicate that ACSI schools do follow most of these procedures. All respondents indicated that their programs did have written goals. Most respondents indicated that the programs were planned and implemented by the classroom teacher in conjunction with a department head or administrator. These responses show that high-ability programs in ACSI schools do exhibit the first step in planning a gifted program: establishing goals.

In some schools the separate, full-time class was selected deliberately, either after trying other

structures or at least considering others. In all programs, some type of structure had been selected.

Five of eight respondents indicated that their programs had written curricula, three descriptive and two prescriptive. The fact that three of the five programs with written curricula had descriptive rather than prescriptive guides suggests that the teachers had much freedom to determine the content of the classes each year.

This freedom is inconsistent with establishing a curriculum as the recommended procedure states, and in a large program with several teachers this freedom might not work well. In a program in which the one teacher involved in the program was also instrumental in planning and setting goals for it, this freedom does not contradict the intention of the recommended procedure, which is that the curriculum support the goals.

The fact that the classroom teacher and an administrator worked together in most of the programs suggests that teacher selection occurred before the goals were established. In small schools this is often necessary, as there may be only one or two high school English teachers on the faculty and often the teacher is the first person aware of the need for a high-ability program and initiates the planning

process. No information was obtained about training for teachers of high-ability classes in ACSI schools.

Daily lessons and classroom activities in ACSI programs are planned to accomplish the goals for the programs. This conclusion is evident from the responses indicating that classroom tests, assignments, and teacher observation are the three most commonly used measures of whether the goals are being accomplished (see Table 9, p. 53) and is supported by the effectiveness rating of four or five (on a one to five scale) for all but one of the programs (see Table 10, p. 55).

Little information was available on monitoring of programs in ACSI schools, although one respondent indicated that she filled out weekly reports of objectives accomplished in her classroom. Two respondents cited yearly evaluation and revision of goals and programs.

Identification of Students for Special Programs

Identification of students for ACSI high-ability programs, as shown by Table 4 (p. 48), is based primarily on traditional classroom success as shown by grades and teacher recommendations. These criteria are inconsistent with many recommended identification procedures, especially for enrichment programs, which

stress measures of creativity, leadership, artistic ability, and psychomotor skills as well as academic aptitude and intellectual ability. However, these criteria are very consistent with identification procedures for many acceleration programs, which primarily require that a student be able to grasp the material presented in class more quickly and more effectively than others in the class and that the student show sufficient motivation and perseverance to move more quickly toward college and a career than most students can move.

These findings do suggest, however, that students gifted in areas not identified by the ACSI selection procedures may not have their needs met in ACSI schools. This population is small, since the total population of gifted students in an average school is estimated at 5% of the student body and many of these students would be identified by ACSI procedures. But even a small number of creatively or interpersonally gifted individuals have great potential for good, and thought should be given to how their needs may be met.

Evaluation Procedures for Special Programs

Evaluation procedures have yet to be well defined in the literature, although progress toward valid evaluation design is evident. The major emphasis in

evaluation is that programs must be evaluated according to their goals and objectives and that exit tests are useful only in determining knowledge gained or skills acquired. Observation and students' later success are other ways to determine the effectiveness of programs.

ACSI programs use classroom tests, classroom assignments, and teacher and/or administrator observation as the primary means to determine whether their goals have been met. The Advanced Placement classes also use the Advanced Placement test at the end of the year to evaluate their effectiveness.

These evaluation tools are closely related to the goals and objectives of the programs as long as the tests and assignments are related to the goals, and the responses indicated that they were. The strong use of observation also indicates that outcomes other than knowledge and skills are evaluated. These evaluation procedures are consistent with recommended evaluation procedures.

Summary

In summary, ACSI schools follow the basic procedures recommended for planning and implementation of programs with some exceptions. Teacher selection appears to be based on the available faculty and occurs as one of the first steps, if not the first step of

program planning. Curricula are not prescribed in many of the ACSI programs but are determined by the classroom teacher. Identification procedures identify students who are already showing success, allowing for the probability that high-ability underachievers are not selected for programs. The only one of these exceptions that appears to seriously endanger the programs is the teacher selection procedure in schools having no one with the characteristics and knowledge needed to teach high-ability students effectively. The responses show that the classroom teacher tends to have much influence in the planning and much freedom in determining curriculum for these programs, making the right teacher essential for each program's success.

In spite of this possibility of poor teacher selection, however, that does not appear to have happened in the programs studied. Teacher qualities were cited as one of the most important factors for the success of the programs (see Table 11, p. 56), suggesting that in actuality the ACSI programs do have well-qualified teachers and that these teachers, in large measure, make their programs successful.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

A. Summary

This study was designed to assess the state of high-ability English education in high schools affiliated with the Association of Christian Schools, International, and to use the literature on gifted education and experiences of ACSI schools with such programs to make recommendations for those planning to begin high-ability programs in English. Such a study is needed because the purposes, populations, and situations of ACSI schools make them similar to one another and different from the schools whose programs are most often studied and reported. Because many ACSI schools are using their resources to provide specialized education for students with high abilities, other ACSI schools need to know that they do it and how they do it.

Specifically, this investigation was designed to answer three research questions dealing with the state of high-ability English education in ACSI schools and with the application of information from literature and other schools to ACSI schools planning to begin high-ability programs. (See Chapter 1, pp. 5-6.)

To answer these questions, the researcher sent three surveys to administrators and teachers in ACSI schools and then analyzed the responses to the surveys in light of the literature available on education of the gifted.

B. Conclusions

The conclusions from this study are as follows.

1. Most ACSI schools recognize a need for differentiated programs for their most able students. At least one of the administrators that responded that his school never planned to add a special high-ability class added that a good teacher should be able to meet the needs of all ability levels in the general classroom, so even that administrator recognized that these students may have special needs that should be addressed.

2. The special programs for highly able students are designed for students with previous academic success and therefore do not address the needs of highly able underachievers or students gifted in non-academic areas. This population is small, since the total population of gifted students in an average school is estimated at 5% of the student body and many

of these students would be identified by ACSI procedures. But even a small number of creatively or interpersonally gifted individuals have great potential for good, and thought should be given to how their needs may be met.

3. The percentage of students participating in the ACSI special programs is higher than the average percentage of gifted students in a school population (5%). Teachers in schools with higher than 20% participation commented that their schools accept only average and above average students, a fact which may account for the high level of participation. Teachers in schools planning to offer high-ability programs in the future commented that they had to wait until there were enough students to make a high-ability class economically feasible, a fact which may account for the absence of lower participation percentages. Many of the schools surveyed have only 25-30 students per grade level, so participation of fewer than 10-20% means very few students would be involved. Additionally, the identification procedures and criteria for the ACSI programs differs from the procedures used to formally identify gifted students and probably identifies students as highly able that would not be identified as gifted.

4. The teachers surveyed overwhelmingly prefer a separate class for high-ability students. One respondent indicated that a cluster group had been tried but that the separate class structure had been found more successful, while another mentioned that the school had used a cluster group during the survey year but was changing to a separate class structure the following year because of lack of success. One school offered an independent study program for gifted students when there were only one or two, but the teacher indicated that this was not the preferred method. Still another respondent said that his/her program has used a multi-graded high-ability class but he/she preferred to have a single grade level in a class when there were enough students to make that economically possible.

5. Teachers in the high-ability classes use traditional teaching and evaluation methods that are used in most general classes as well. This finding calls into question the qualitative differentiation of the high-ability programs, suggesting that the classes may be only quantitatively different. In terms of the literature on gifted education, this traditional nature of the high-ability classes is a weakness; this literature asserts that gifted students need

qualitatively differentiated instruction. However, in terms of the growing body of literature on acceleration as an appropriate way to meet the needs of gifted students, the traditional nature of the classes is not a weakness as long as the students are moving through the material as quickly as they are able to master it. Teachers of high-ability programs should examine their programs to make sure that these programs are not just requiring more work for the able students but are instead offering students the chance to develop their abilities fully.

6. In evaluating their high-ability programs, teachers use the same methods they use for evaluating their students, based perhaps on the assumption that if the students are qualified for the program and are succeeding in it, then the program is accomplishing its objectives. The strong use of teacher observation is encouraging in that it indicates that more outcomes are examined than just knowledge and skills.

More formal evaluation methods would help teachers and administrators determine whether their programs are really meeting the needs of the students. In particular, program evaluation could include information gathered from alumnae of such programs to determine whether they found that their program did

indeed prepare them for the next stage in their education and in their lives.

7. The teachers of the high-ability programs are satisfied that their programs are accomplishing their objectives. One teacher who rated her program as ineffective indicated that she had used a cluster group during the survey year and that it had not worked well for the students in the program. She planned to use a separate Advanced Placement class the following year. Since most of the teachers involved in the programs were also heavily involved in planning the programs and setting goals, the high effectiveness ratings suggest that these classes are meeting the needs that were originally targetted.

8. Characteristics of acceleration models are more evident in ACSI high-ability programs than are characteristics of enrichment models; however, many of the existing programs are called honors rather than accelerated or Advanced Placement and these may actually be enrichment programs using a separate class structure.

9. The programs studied are aimed particularly at preparing the students for college and at meeting their observed or expressed needs. No respondents indicated

that a particular theoretical model had been used in planning a program, although several followed or planned to follow the Advanced Placement guidelines.

10. All the reported programs have goals and objectives and use these to plan their curricula and daily lessons, a condition consistent with recommended procedures for planning and implementation of high ability programs.

11. All of the programs had been planned and implemented by the classroom teacher, either alone or in conjunction with an administrator or department head. This finding implies that current faculty were the source for teacher selection and no special search was made for a teacher who fit the characteristics of a teacher of the gifted. However, qualified teachers may have been hired prior to the initiation of a high-ability program with the future need for such a program in consideration or with the expectation that all teachers would need to offer special help to the high-ability students in their regular classes.

Teachers of high ability programs could gain ideas and approaches from the literature on gifted education or from formal training in gifted education. ACSI schools offering high ability programs should consider

ways to offer training in gifted education to the teachers who teach these classes.

12. From the literature on gifted and high-ability education, educators in ACSI schools can learn the theory and recommended procedures for high-ability education. They can learn the different models for gifted education and can evaluate which model(s) fits their situations best. They can learn from the experiences of a broad spectrum of educators and theorists in the literature.

13. From other ACSI schools, teachers and administrators can learn the procedures and methods that have succeeded best in environments and under conditions similar to their own. By using the experiences of other ACSI schools, they can recognize which of the theoretical models and recommended procedures are most appropriate for small schools that share their characteristics.

14. Based on the number of schools planning to add special high-ability programs, in the future, more ACSI schools will probably offer special programs for their high-ability students. As schools grow and stabilize financially, they will be able to meet the needs of more specific sub-groups within their student bodies,

including both the gifted and the learning disabled. As schools add programs, teachers and administrators should consider several issues: the definition of giftedness they use, the purposes of the programs they initiate, the qualifications of the teacher(s) for the programs, and the content of the programs.

Administrators and teachers in schools adding programs can learn much, both from the literature available and from other administrators and teachers who have learned from experience what works well.

C. Recommendations for Further Study

This study has revealed several other areas that might profitably be researched.

1. Ways to identify and provide help to students with gifts in non-academic areas should be studied.

2. Alumni of high-ability programs in ACSI schools could be questioned to determine the results of the programs and the strengths/weaknesses of the programs.

3. Especially strong programs, based on the outcomes in students' lives, could be systematically studied and evaluated and then used as models for others beginning programs.

4. ACSI programs could be compared with high-ability programs in secular schools to determine the spiritual and ethical distinctions of ACSI programs and the effect of these distinctions on educational effectiveness.

5. ACSI schools could develop training opportunities for teachers of high-ability programs.

6. ACSI schools could develop more formal evaluation techniques for their high-ability programs to insure that these programs do accomplish their purposes.

Clearly, education of high-ability students is an important concern in most ACSI schools, and many schools offer special programs at this time. The main area of need is to make sure that what is being done is adequate and effective for the students who need it and then sharing the effective methods with personnel in other schools. In general, the consensus among teachers of high-ability English programs is that the programs are effectively accomplishing their goals and meeting the needs of their students.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

This letter and survey were sent to 51 administrators of ACSI schools to discover the number and types of high-ability English programs in these schools. Thirty-four administrators responded. Their responses are summarized with each question.

Dr. Anthony C. Fortosis
Consultant for Academic Affairs
1001 E. Beltline, N.E.
Grand Rapids, MI 49505

Dear ACSI Administrator:

I'm sure you know that ACSI is committed to the dual goal of providing high quality education from a Christian perspective, and I'm equally sure that you share that commitment. But many small, young ACSI schools are limited in the breadth of their curricula. They must find ways to stretch their limited resources as far as possible to meet the needs of as many different students as they can. Because of this need, I'm asking you to take a few minutes to provide some information about programs you may offer so that other growing schools can learn what has worked for you and can benefit from your experience.

Sara Baker, an English teacher in an ACSI school in Knoxville, Tennessee, is surveying some of the larger ACSI schools about their programs for students with above average ability in English. If you could take a few minutes to complete the enclosed survey, she would be better able to develop a high ability English program for her students and she would make her findings available to other ACSI schools as well.

Thank you for taking the time to provide this information.

Yours in Christ,

ENGLISH PROGRAMS SURVEY

Thank you for taking the time to answer these questions about your English programs. This information will help other schools learn from your experience. Please return the survey in the enclosed envelop as soon as possible, preferably by April 15.

For the following questions, circle or check the appropriate response or write in a response of your own.

1. Does your school offer honors, Advanced Placement, gifted, or other high ability classes or groups in secondary level English?

15 Yes--please answer questions #2-6

19 No--please answer questions #7-13

If you answered YES to question #1, please answer questions 2-6.

2. What type(s) of high ability secondary English classes do you offer?

1 gifted
9 honors
3 accelerated
2 advanced placement
1 other (specify)

3. What is the structure of these high ability classes?

12 separate class
2 high ability cluster within regular class
1 independent study
1 pull-out program
0 other (specify)

4. Which grade levels offer high ability groupings?
Please circle all grades that apply.

7 8 9 10 11 12
(1) (1) (5) (7) (10) (15)

5. Who is responsible for planning and implementing these courses?

6 administrator (specify position)
4 department head
11 classroom teacher
0 resource/gifted teacher
0 other (specify)

6. Would I be able to contact this person/these people to find out more about how you began your high ability classes, your objectives, your classroom structure and techniques, and any practical suggestions for other schools beginning similar programs?

Yes (14)

No (1)

If Yes, please list the name(s) and address(es) of the appropriate person(s) to contact.

If you answered NO to question #1, please answer questions 7 through 13.

7. Do you see a future need for some type of high ability class in secondary English?

Yes (15)

No (4)

8. What conditions would have to exist for you to offer high ability classes in secondary English in relation to the following factors?

Number of qualified students?	1-5	6-10	11-15	16+
	(1)	(6)	(3)	(2)

New faculty needed?	0	1	2+
		(8)	(1)

New facilities needed?			
more classroom space	bigger library	other	
(4)	(7)		

New textbooks needed?			
advanced level texts	supplementary texts	novels	
(7)	(6)	(3)	

Other factors? (specify)
(funding--2, scheduling--1)

9. When do you anticipate adding high ability classes in secondary English? Please circle the appropriate response.

Never	1-2 years	3-5 years	6-10 years	not sure
	(2)	(6)	(1)	(6)

10. If you were to add high ability classes in secondary English, what type would you add?

5 honors
9 advanced placement
1 gifted
3 accelerated
0 other (specify)
1 not sure

11. If you were to add high ability classes in secondary English, what type of grouping/structure would you use?

13 separate class
1 cluster of high ability students in a regular class
2 independent study
1 pull-out program
0 other (specify)

12. If you were to add high ability classes in secondary English, who would do most of the planning and implementing?

9 Administrator (name the position)
0 Outside consultant
2 Department head
11 Classroom teacher
0 Other (specify)

13. If you were to add high ability classes in secondary English, would you consult information about how other ACSI schools have implemented high ability classes if the information were available?

Yes (12) No (3)

APPENDIX B

The second survey was sent to the teachers of the high-ability English programs identified by the respondents to the first survey. The second letter and survey appear below, with the spacing condensed to remove the large spaces allowed for responses. The summarized responses are enclosed in parentheses with each question.

Dr. Anthony C. Fortosis
Consultant for Academic Affairs
1001 E. Beltline, N.E.
Grand Rapids, MI 49505

Dear ACSI Teacher:

I'm sure you know that ACSI is committed to the dual goal of providing high quality education from a Christian perspective, and I'm equally sure that you share that commitment. But many small, young ACSI schools are limited in the breadth of their curricula. They must find ways to stretch their limited resources as far as possible to meet the needs of as many different students as they can. Because of this need, I'm asking you to take a few minutes to provide some information about programs you offer so that other growing schools can learn what has worked for you and can benefit from your experience.

Sara Baker, an English teacher in an ACSI school in Knoxville, Tennessee, is surveying some of the larger ACSI schools about their programs for students with above average ability in English. Your administrator has identified you as the person best able to provide information on your school's program in this area. If you could take a few minutes to complete the enclosed survey, she would be better able to develop a high ability English program for her students and she would make her findings available to other ACSI schools as well.

Thank you for taking the time to provide this information.

Yours in Christ,

HIGH-ABILITY ENGLISH PROGRAMS SURVEY

Thank you for taking the time to answer these questions about your English programs. This information will help me and teachers in other schools learn from your experience. Please return the survey in the enclosed envelope as soon as possible.

For the following questions, circle or check the appropriate response or write in one of your own.

1. What courses or other opportunities within the curriculum does your English department offer to students with above average ability or performance in English? Please circle the course name(s) and grade levels.

TITLE	GRADE LEVELS						(RESPONSES)
Honors English	7	8	9	10	11	12	(5)
Advanced Placement	7	8	9	10	11	12	(1)
Accelerated	7	8	9	10	11	12	(2)
Gifted	7	8	9	10	11	12	(1)
Other(please specify)	7	8	9	10	11	12	(1)

2. What factors are considered in selecting students for high-ability placement? Please mark all that apply and specify the standard used.

(8) Prior English grades--Minimum grade accepted:

(6) Teacher recommendation--Basis for recommendation:

(0) Other recommendation--Source of recommendation:

Basis for recommendation:

(4) Standardized test scores--Test(s) used:

Minimum score accepted:

(2) Student request

(3) Parent request

(0) Other (please specify)

3. How are the high-ability classes structured? Please mark the appropriate structure(s).

- (6) Separate class of high ability students
- (1) Cluster(s) of high ability students within regular class
- (1) Independent study for individual high ability students
- (0) Pull-out program for high ability students in a regular class to spend specified times with another program
- (2) Placement of high ability students in a class of a higher grade level
- (1) Other structure (please specify)

4. Approximately what percentage of the students in each grade level is involved in a high-ability placement?

GRADE	PERCENT OF STUDENTS				
				(1)	
7	0.....10.....20.....30.....40.....50.....60+			(1)	
8	0.....10.....20.....30.....40.....50.....60+			(2)	
9	0.....10.....20.....30.....40.....50.....60+			(1)	(1)
10	0.....10.....20.....30.....40.....50.....60+	(1)	(3)	(2)	
11	0.....10.....20.....30.....40.....50.....60+	(5)	(2)	(1)	
12	0.....10.....20.....30.....40.....50.....60+				

5. What teaching methods are used in the high-ability English classes? Please mark all that apply.

- (7) Lecture
- (7) Films, videos
- (7) Discussion
- (7) Oral question and answer
- (5) Small group discussion
- (7) Individual written work
- (2) Games
- (2) Computer-assisted instruction
- (6) Self-paced individual projects
- (5) Self-paced group projects
- Other (please specify)

Yes (7) No (0)

Yes (5) No (2)

Yes (<u>prescriptive</u>) (2)	Yes (<u>descriptive</u>) (3)	No (1)
------------------------------------	-----------------------------------	-----------

Yes (4) No (1)

(7) Classroom tests
(6) Classroom assignments
(3) Standardized tests
(5) Teacher observation
(3) Administrator observation
(2) Student survey
(1) Parent survey
(0) Other (please specify)

1. 2. 3. 4. 5
not effective very effective

95

program that I have not listed here. Use the back of the sheet if you need additional space.

TEACHER QUALITIES

- 6 teaching methods (specify which ones)
- 6 motivational abilities
- 3 modelling of content, skills, or attitudes
- 5 relationships with students
- 1 other (specify)

CURRICULUM QUALITIES

- 3 textbook (specify which one and why)
- 4 supplementary material (specify)
- 2 activities (specify)
- 1 non-textbook content (specify)
- 1 other (specify)

STUDENT QUALITIES

- 6 attitudes
- 5 academic abilities
- 4 creative abilities
- 6 motivation
- 1 other (specify)

CLASS STRUCTURE (Does your class structure, whether a separate class, a pull out program, etc., make it effective?)

OTHER POSITIVE QUALITIES (List any that apply.)

11. What characteristics of your program do you see as needing improvement or change so that they will contribute to the success of the program more fully?

Please list techniques that have not worked/are not working, limiting factors, and other unhelpful characteristics. Use the back of the sheet if you need additional space.

Please list also any approaches that were tried in prior years but have been abandoned because they did not work well.

12. What advice would you give someone beginning a high-ability English class in a small secondary school? List things that this person should do as well as things he or she should not do to achieve a successful program.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR TAKING THE TIME TO RESPOND TO THIS SURVEY.
YOUR THOUGHTFUL INPUT WILL HELP OTHERS WHO ARE TRYING TO DEVELOP
PROGRAMS LIKE YOURS IN OTHER ACSI SCHOOLS.

APPENDIX C

The third survey was sent to five teachers of English programs for high-ability students. These teachers had previously indicated their willingness to answer further questions about the goals and/or curricula of their programs.

9212 Topoco Dr.
Knoxville, TN
37922

June 22, 1989

Dear

Thank you so much for your response to my survey on high-ability English programs. Already from the responses I have studied I can see areas that I will change in our program next year, and I begin to understand why I felt some frustration with the way we structured our program.

On your survey, you indicated that you would be willing to answer further questions about the goals and/or curriculum of your program. I appreciate that willingness to help and have tried to keep these questions as short as possible, although in these areas multiple-choice answers don't often give as much helpful information as longer answers do. Thank you for taking the time to answer as many of these questions as you can based on the program that you have.

Yours in Christ,

Sara S. Baker

GOALS FOR HIGH-ABILITY ENGLISH PROGRAMS

Below are several questions concerning goals for English programs for students of above average ability, including honors, Advanced Placement, accelerated, gifted, and other high-ability programs. Where the term 'goals' is used, it is used loosely to include any type of formal statement of what the class or program is intended to accomplish, either generally or specifically, either long-term or short-term. Please answer the questions based on the program in your school. Thank you.

1. Who initially wrote the goals for your program?
Check all that apply.

- ☐ Administrator
- ☐ Classroom teacher
- ☐ Department head
- ☐ Other

2. When the goals were developed, what were they based on (if you know)? Check all that apply.

- ☐ Observed needs of students
- ☐ Another existing program (A.P., gifted program in another school, etc.) Specify which program:
☐ A theoretical model for teaching such as Bloom's taxonomy of cognitive behavior, Renzulli's enrichment triad, Taylor's multiple talent approach, or any other model. Specify which model:
- ☐ Expressed interests of teacher and/or students
- ☐ Administrator's and/or teacher's assessment of what will benefit students most
- ☐ Other (please specify)
- ☐ I don't know

3. How are the goals used? Check all that apply.

_____ Explaining program to parents and/or students

_____ Developing curriculum for classes

_____ Deciding on structure for classes

_____ Determining teaching methods to use in classes

_____ Developing specific lesson plans or unit plans

_____ Other (please specify)

4. How often are the goals evaluated and modified? Check the appropriate response.

_____ Never

_____ Yearly

_____ After 2-5 years

_____ As needed, variably

_____ Other (please specify)

5. How do you determine whether the goals have been met? Check all that apply.

_____ We don't really

_____ Teacher observation and informal evaluation

_____ Administrator observation and informal evaluation

_____ Teacher observation with formal evaluation instrument (checklist of behaviors, skills, and knowledge to identify or similar instrument)

_____ Administrator observation with formal evaluation instrument (as described above)

_____ Classroom tests based on content of goals

_____ Standardized test(s) related to content of goals

_____ Student evaluation

_____ Parent evaluation

_____ Other (please specify)

6. If possible, could you attach a copy of your goals to this when you return it to me, as well as a copy of any evaluation instruments you may have developed based on the goals.

_____ A copy of our goals is attached

_____ I cannot send you a copy of our goals, but their basic content is the following:

Thank you very much for your time and effort in responding to these questions. Your help will benefit me and my classes directly, and may also benefit others who take advantage of this information once it is collected and presented.

CURRICULA FOR HIGH-ABILITY ENGLISH PROGRAMS

The following questions deal with the content of English programs for students with above-average ability, including honors, Advanced Placement, accelerated, gifted, and other programs. In this questionnaire, the term descriptive curriculum is used to mean a summary of what is currently taught in the program. Prescriptive curriculum is used to mean a summary of what the administration has mandated must be taught in the program. Thank you for your time and effort.

1. Who establishes the curriculum for the high-ability English program in your school? Check all that apply.

- ☐ Administrator
- ☐ Department head
- ☐ Classroom teacher
- ☐ Parents
- ☐ Students

2. What is the curriculum for your program based on? Check all that apply.

- ☐ The text(s) for the class
- ☐ The observed needs of the students
- ☐ The expressed interests of the students
- ☐ The expectation of what students will need for college
- ☐ Traditional high school curriculum enhanced for high-ability students
- ☐ An existing program such as the Advanced Placement program or a gifted program in another school (specify which program)
- ☐ A theoretical model for teaching such as Bloom's taxonomy of cognitive behaviors, Renzulli's enrichment triad, Taylor's multiple talent approach, or any other theoretical model (specify which model)

_____ Other (specify)

3. How frequently is your curriculum evaluated and/or changed? Check the appropriate response.

_____ Yearly

_____ Every 2-5 years

_____ Variably as needed

_____ Never

4. If your curriculum is prescriptive, what does it prescribe? Check all that apply.

_____ Teaching methods

_____ Major units

_____ Specific concepts

_____ Specific skills

_____ Specific reading material

_____ Specific assignments or projects

_____ Other (specify)

5. If possible, please attach a copy of your curriculum to this when you return it to me.

_____ Yes, a copy is attached

_____ No, I cannot send you a copy, but a typical curriculum for a 12th grade high-ability class in my school would include the following areas:

Thank you very much for your time and effort in answering these questions. They will benefit me and my classes directly and my benefit others as well who make use of this information when it is collected and presented.

APPENDIX D

Survey 1 was sent to all of the 51 schools listed below. Survey 2 was sent to 15 of the schools, and survey 3 was sent to 5 schools. The numbers below each school name show which surveys were sent to that school.

Northeast Region

Annapolis Area Christian School 1, 2	Annapolis, MD
Arlington Baptist School 1, 2	Baltimore, MD
Lexington Christian Academy 1, 2	Lexington, MA
Hawthorne Christian Academy 1	Hawthorne, NJ
Timothy Christian School 1, 2	Piscataway, NJ
Upper Room Christian School 1	Dix Hills, NY
Shalom Christian Academy 1	Chambersburg, PA
Living Word Academy 1	Lancaster, PA

Southeast Region

Central Park Christian Schools 1	Birmingham, AL
Parkway Christian Academy 1	Birmingham, AL
West End Christian School 1, 2	Tuscaloosa, AL
Keswick Christian School 1	St. Petersburg, FL
Warner Christian Academy 1, 2	South Daytona, FL
Colonial Hills Christian School 1	East Point, GA
C M & I High School 1	Jackson, MS
Southern Baptist Educational Center 1, 2, 3	Olive Branch, MS
Christian Academy of Knoxville 1, 2, 3	Knoxville, TN

Harrison Chilhowee Baptist Academy	Seymour, TN
1, 2, 3	
Timberlake Christian School	Forest, VA
1	
Hampton Christian High School	Hampton, VA
1	
Norfolk Christian High School	Norfolk, VA
1, 2, 3	
Roanoke Valley Christian Schools	Roanoke, VA
1	
Atlantic Shores Christian School	Virginia Beach, VA
1	

Southcentral Region

Arkansas Baptist High School	Little Rock, AR
1	
Maranatha Christian Center	Arvada, CO
1	
Central Christian School	Hutchinson, KS
1	
Blue Ridge Christian School	Kansas City, MO
1	
Lincoln Christian School	Lincoln, NE
1	
Bellevue Christian Academy & High Sc	Omaha, NE
1, 2	
Oklahoma Christian Schools	Edmond, OK
1	
Oklahoma Bible Academy	Enid, OK
1	
Grace Christian Academy Jr/Sr High	Oklahoma City, OK
1	
Life Christian School	Oklahoma City, OK
1	
Liberty Academy	Shawnee, OK
1	
First Baptist Academy	Dallas, TX
1, 2, 3	
Lake Country Christian School	Fort Worth, TX
1, 2	
Evangel Temple Christian	Grand Prairie, TX
1	

Mid-America Region

Bethany Christian School	Berwyn, IL
1	

Peoria Christian School	Peoria, IL
1	
Liberty Christian School	Anderson, IN
1	
Blackhawk Christian School	Fort Wayne, IN
1	
Lakeview Christian School	Marion, IN
1, 2	
Walnut Ridge Baptist Academy	Waterloo, IA
1	
Calvary Christian School	Covington, KY
1	
Highview Baptist School	Louisville, KY
1	
Lenawee Christian School	Adrian, MI
1, 2	
Oakland Christian School	Auburn Hills, MI
1	
Meadow Creek Christian School	Andover, MN
1	
Mansfield Christian School	Mansfield, OH
1	
First Baptist Christian School	Medina, OH
1	
Willo Hill Christian School	Willoughby, OH
1	

VITA

Sara S. Baker was born in Elizabeth, New Jersey, on July 19, 1954. She attended elementary and secondary public schools in Chagrin Falls, Ohio, and graduated from Chagrin Falls High School in June 1972. She received the Bachelor of Arts degree in English from Marietta College in December 1975. In June 1979 she received the Master of Science degree in Bible from Columbia Bible College, Graduate School of Bible and Missions.

Mrs. Baker began teaching at the Christian Academy of Knoxville in Knoxville, Tennessee, in 1982 and continued to teach there while taking education classes at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

She began study toward a Master of Science in Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, in 1984. This degree was awarded in December 1989.