

# Gifted students

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Beth Lindenberg Gifted Curriculum November 7, 2012 Bridging the Divide “ Benefits of Providing Enrichment to High-Potential Students from Low-Income Families” by Rachelle Miller and Marcia Gentry This article, from Teaching for High Potential, Fall 2011, was illuminating, and, at the same time, left a few gaps for me. A quick summary. Researchers, Miller and Gentry, based this piece on the “ Validity Evidence of the HOPE Scale: Instrumentation to Identify Low-Income Elementary Students for Gifted Programs. (The HOPE Scale is an instrument of 13 items to be used by teachers to identify academic and social components of giftedness in elementary students. ) Scholarships were given to low-income students who were identified as gifted through this instrument in order to participate in Project HOPE.

A student who scored at least 70% on the Scale was eligible for a scholarship. Project HOPE allowed a student to attend Super Saturday, an enrichment programs for K-8 gifted and talented students.

The question was whether the low-income, high-potential students would be able to successfully achieve in an enrichment program with other nonlow-income gifted students. All Super Saturday participants “ completed a My Class Activities form which assesses the frequency that students perceive the interest, challenge, choice and enjoyment of their classes. ” Three groups of Super Saturday students were examined: scholarship students who agreed to be observed, scholarship students who did not agree to be observed, and a group of nonscholarship gifted students.

It was concluded that all saw the experience as favorable, that they “ learned advanced content...experienced hands-on learning and social

support,” and that the scholarship and nonscholarship students viewed their classes no differently.

After this group of 113, a group of 247 was assessed. These findings matched the former. Five tips were given regarding providing this Super Saturday or Super Summer enrichment program “ at your school. ” 1. Courses created should include advanced content outside of the students’ curriculum. 2.

Remember costs and keep it small, at first. 3. Educators should believe in the program. . Extend the activities within the program with field trips, speakers, real life experiences.

5. Make sure your participants have a strong interest and be clear on eligibility. Beth Lindenberg -2- What new information did you learn? Not really new (except the answer to the next question), but my feeling that gifted strategies should be made available to a population of kids outside those who are gifted was reinforced. What information surprised you? And three questions.

I was very much taken aback by one statement: “..., it is important to note that students from low-income families who achieve at or above the 75th percentile are comparable to other students who achieve at or above the 95th percentile. They possess high levels of motivation, enthusiasm, and good grades in school.

” Of course, I had to wonder how many low-income kids we have in Pinellas who have scored at the 75th percentile when tested. Is 75% on the K-bit

enough? Is 75% of the 130 needed on an IQ test enough? Does this 75% only hold up on Saturday or summer programs where grading is not included?

Do teachers teach better when the pressure is off? How does this relate to your classroom? I very much wanted it to relate to my classroom, as my students have never been invited into the gifted circle. The article did not discuss any gifted strategies or processes used. It offered no examples of especially successful classes, nor did the article say where these classes have occurred or if there has been continuing success within the same programs. As I read, I continued to wonder if these programs were successful for the scholarship students because they felt good about being placed in a group they were not normally grouped in.

Because there was not the pressure of grades? Because the teaching was fun? If the answer to these questions is “ yes,” one has to question the way we teach, what we teach, what we assess and how we assess (and a million other questions). I have such a pull to have more fun, but am stymied by Reading framework, especially by the constant testing (pre and post tests for every standard, FCAT practice testing, empower3000 testing twice a week, at least, and all data collection. The data collection is a problem when kids have been so over-tested that they just don't care about testing.

I'm pretty sure I would feel exactly the same, especially when it seems to get a kid nowhere, but being told, once again, how stupid you are. As much as I sugarcoat data that I am, honestly, forced, to give, the kids either stiff-upper lip it or end up acting out because of it. We are not doing our students any good by doing what is boxed as reading “ best practices.

” Or, at least, I am not. As an afterthought, maybe this pushes me to realize I am just not in the right branch of this profession or that I have to be much, much more of a rebel.