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INTRODUCTION

Rationale

This book is about the selection of gifted, talented, or high ability students for special programs at the secondary level. During the past ten years, there has been a resurgence of interest in identifying and providing services for gifted students, manifested in a proliferation of articles, programs, conferences, and books on gifted children. However, the majority of this work has concentrated on programs for elementary-age children; only a few articles or books have looked specifically at secondary-level programming. Furthermore, the emphasis has been on program models and options, not on secondary selection procedures. Thus, there is a need to clarify and develop procedures for identification at the secondary level. Several key considerations make the need for a book on secondary identification relevant at this time. First, as mentioned above, the preponderance of work in the past decade has been conducted at the elementary level. Educators at the secondary level have often looked at these efforts and have found that, in general, they are not appropriate.

A second, and very crucial point, is that in most elementary programs a single type of giftedness is identified, generally of an academic-intellectual nature, and all selected children are provided the same curriculum and program. While this may be an acceptable, albeit very limited, conception of giftedness and programming, it is one that is relatively effective at the elementary level. However, at the secondary level the selection of gifted students to receive a comprehensive program of differentiated curriculum across all content domains is unrealistic. Instead, there is a need to develop identification procedures which will identify students selectively for the variety of program and curricular options. Merely using elementary-level selection procedures at the secondary level fails to identify youth in relation to their talents nor does it assure that they will be enrolled in the appropriate honors and accelerated classes.

The third point which arises regards the instruments. Careful consideration must be given to the use of appropriate instruments and rating scales for identification at the secondary level. While there are numerous standardized tests which can be used at this level, rating scales which were designed for elementary-level selection are likely to be invalid for the selection of students for secondary programs. Therefore, a major thrust of