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SECTION ONE:

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The purpose of this volume is to bring together in a single, comprehensive manual a variety of resources for experienced professionals to use in helping schools or school regions to define, plan and carry out a new generation of programming for giftedness and talent development.

The Programming for Giftedness Series

The three volumes in the *Programming for Giftedness Series* have emerged from our consultation, training and collaboration with many colleagues in several situations and places, now spanning more than two decades of work. Our earliest efforts to create and implement innovative, flexible and inclusive approaches involved work with schools in Lawrence and Shawnee Mission, Kansas. Other early efforts to broaden and individualise gifted programming at the school or regional level were undertaken by one or both authors of this series in partnership with several regions in Western and Central New York State, including the Williamsville Central Schools, the Orchard Park Central Schools, the Honeoye Central School and the North Tonawanda Schools. Our more recent work at the regional level, and particularly efforts to attain a better synthesis of gifted programming and school improvement, have involved collaboration with a number of school regions, but most extensively with the Holt, Michigan Community Schools and the Cowichan School Division #65 in Duncan, British Columbia (Canada).

At the state level, our efforts to define principles and guidelines, and to offer leadership training, were supported and enhanced by our work with the New Hampshire State Education Department, through the Governor's Institutes on Gifted Education and related projects in 1986 and 1987. These efforts were extended and expanded through the 1992 Guidelines Project, which we conducted in collaboration with the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, supported in part by a Javits Grant to North Dakota from the United States Department of Education.

These programs and projects provided important challenges to refine and develop a new approach (which we will refer to in this volume as a "fourth generation of gifted programming"). They also provided support and resources to facilitate the transition from concept or theory into more concrete realities.

SECTION TWO: TODAY'S EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT

The resources in this section deal with several of the important issues that make up the foundation for a new generation of programming for giftedness. It is essential to recognise that gifted programming is only one of many dimensions of school programming undergoing great change in contemporary schools. Efforts to recognise and develop many talents must be considered as just one part of a very complex and dynamic tapestry that constitutes today's educational context. These resources are closely related to Section Two (Chapters 3, 4, 5 and 6) of Volume I in this series, and to Chapters 3 and 4 in Volume II in the series.

We have organised the materials in this section into five parts. The first, *Dimensions of Change*, focuses on the nature and impact of change in education today. The second part, *Educational Goals*, involves new and emerging understandings of the fundamental outcomes of schooling. *Paradigms and Paradigm Shifts* addresses the challenges that arise as educators seek new answers to entirely new questions about the processes of teaching and learning. *Understanding Styles* summarises the structure of three major models that help individuals to understand better their own preferences and styles as well as those of other people. Finally, *Blocks and Barriers* provides materials to help identify and overcome internal and external obstacles to change.

Dimensions of Change

Change is one of the "givens" in education today. Schools, and the actions taking place in and around them, are changing more and more rapidly each year. There is every indication that the reality of change is constant, or even increasing, hand-in-hand with rapid change in many other aspects of modern life. We cannot design programs for schools that used to be, nor create models that are predicated on long-term stability of people, processes or resources. In order to prepare to respond constructively and confidently to these new realities, the first steps are to acknowledge their existence and explore the impact they have on curriculum and instruction. We provide several resources (related particularly to Chapter 4 in Volume I) to promote understanding and discussion of these issues.